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YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

'HAVE THIS MIND': A SOCIO-SCIENTIFIC READING OF PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

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Before the message there must be the vision,
Before the sermon the hymn, before the prose the poem.

(Amos N Wilder, *Theopoetic*, 1)

It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness.

(Karl Marx)

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Preface

A research of this type is both the culmination of a long journey and the commencement of something new. During these years of study I have been drawing wisdom from many to whom I am directly or indirectly indebted. My search actually started in the winter of 1994, when Prof. Mulholland Jr. provided me—perhaps unaware of it—with a new angle for glancing at the texts of the New Testament, during his course on 'Judaism' at *Asbury Theological Seminary* in Wilmore, Kentucky. This was followed, years later, by the reading of G Lohfink, B J Malina, W A Meeks and J H Elliott's works, which challenged me to seek for the 'unnamed' characters behind the Biblical texts; a search that has accompanied me since.

During our family's stay in South Africa in 2004-2005, due to work-related reasons, I met with Prof. van Aarde, who kindly encouraged me to pursuit a PhD degree at the University of Pretoria. By then I was already enrolled in a PhD programme in Madrid, Spain. However, Prof. van Aarde's personal appeal and contagious enthusiasm led me to apply for it. I was awarded a generous bursary which greatly encouraged me to centre in the task ahead. Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances, Prof. van Aarde could not continue supervising me and it was then that Prof. Joubert kindly accepted to supervise my research. I owe Prof. Joubert a great deal of gratitude, both for his academic competence and for his personal interest. Out of a busy schedule he has taken the time to enhance and much improve this research.

I have enjoyed many hours of fruitful discussion at the *United Evangelical Seminary* (SEUT) in El Escorial, Spain, where I teach, with my colleague Prof. J Rowe. It has been an encouragement to share and discuss concepts and ideas that have, I believe, helped my own views on the application of the socio-scientific method. Professors M Abbott and D Byler also helped me by proof-reading some chapters. Mrs. Rona van Lill, my sister-in-law, has kindly served as critical-loving reader of this work in order to improve its written style. Any mistakes in content and style, of course, remain my own.

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I am also in debt to both SEUT and OMS International for granting me the time to focus on the writing of the dissertation. Without their support I would not have been able to complete this research.

This study, I believe, is a meaningful step in this life-long search in Scriptures for a more adequate and coherent method of understanding biblical texts. We are what we are today in part due to their faithful witness to the Christ-way we find in its pages, and to our comprehension of it. This fact alone is reason enough to dedicate most of my energies to this exciting and challenging venture.

Lastly, I am profoundly grateful to my family for their support and understanding during this busy period where, as dad and husband, I have not been able to be with them as much as I wished to. My parents, Mr. F Rosell and Mrs. J Nebreda, have been instrumental in my understanding of 'life' as a continuous search; skills that have helped me persevere during this busy period. It is to my children Andrea, Josh and Pieter, and especially to my life-partner Annette, who so delicately accompanied me and supplied for the family during my busyness, that I dedicate this work.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Sergio Rosell
El Escorial, Spain. December 2008

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Abbreviations

Old Testament

Gn	Genesis	Ec	Ecclesiastes
Ex	Exodus	Can	Canticles
Lv	Leviticus	Is	Isaiah
Nm	Numbers	Jr	Jeremiah
Dt	Deuteronomy	Lm	Lamentations
Jos	Joshua	Ezk	Ezekiel
Jdg	Judges	Dn	Daniel
Rt	Ruth	Hs	Hosea
1 Sm	1 Samuel	Jl	Joel
2 Sm	2 Samuel	Am	Amos
1 Ki	1 Kings	Ob	Obadiah
2 Ki	2 Kings	Jnh	Jonah
1 Chr	1 Chronicles	Mi	Micah
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	Nah	Nahum
Ezr	Ezra	Hab	Habakkuk
Neh	Nehemiah	Zph	Zephaniah
Es	Esther	Hg	Haggai
Job	Job	Zch	Zechariah
Ps	Psalms	Ml	Malachi
Pr	Proverbs		

Sir	Ben Sirach (Wisdom of Sirach)
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon

New Testament

Mt	Matthew	1 Tm	1 Timothy
Mk	Mark	2 Tm	2 Timothy
Lk	Luke	Tt	Titus
Jn	John	Phlm	Philemon
Ac	Acts	Heb	Hebrews
Rm	Romans	Ja	James
1 Cor	1 Corinthians	1 Pt	1 Peter
2 Cor	2 Corinthians	2 Pt	2 Peter
Gl	Galatians	1 Jn	1 John
Eph	Ephesians	2 Jn	2 John
Phlp	Philippians	3 Jn	3 John
Col	Colossians	Jude	Jude
1 Th	1 Thessalonians	Rv	Revelation
2 Th	2 Thessalonians		

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Classical Sources

Ael	Aelius Aristides	
	AdRm	*Ad Roma*
	Euol	*Euology of Rome*
	Dis	*Discourse*
Apol	Apollodorus (Pseudo-Apollodorus)	
	Bib	*Bibliotheca*
App	Appian of Alexandria	
	BCiv	*Bella Civita*
Apul	Apuleius	
	Asc	*Asclepius*
	Met	*Metamorphoses*
Aristop	Aristophanes	
	Wasps	*Wasps*
Aristot	Aristotle	
	EthEud	*Ethica Eudemia*
	EthNic	*Ethica Nicomachea*
	Met	*Metaphysica*
	Pol	*Politica*
	Rhet	*Rhetorica*
Cass Dio	Cassius Dio	
Cic	Cicero	
	Amic	*De Amicitia*
	Att	*Epistulae ad Atticum*
	Balb	*Pro Balbo*
	Caecin	*Pro Caecina*
	Cat	*In Catalinam*
	DeOr	*De Oratore*
	Div	*De Divinatione*
	DivCaec	*Divinatio in Caecilium*
	Fam	*Epistula ad familiars*
	Fin	*De Finibus*
	Flac	*Pro Flacco*
	HarResp	*De Haruspicum Responso*
	Imp Pom	*Pro Lege manilia (De Imperio Cn. Pompeii)*
	Leg	*De Legibus*
	Luc	*Lucullus*
	Off	*De Officiis*
	PartOr	*Partitiones Oratoriae*
	Phil	*Orationes Philippicae*

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	Planc	*Pro Plancio*
	QFr	*Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem*
	Quinct	*Pro Quinctio*
	Sen	*De Senectute*
	Tusc	*Tusculanae Disputationes*
	Verr	*In Verrem*
Columella	Columella	
	Rust	*De re rustica*
Dem	Demosthenes	
	Cor	*De corona*
Dig	*Digesta*	
Dio	Cassius Dio	
	HistRom	*Roman History*
	Or	*Orationes*
DiodSic	Dioduros Siculus	
DiogLaert	Diogenes Laertius	
DionHal	Dionysius of Halicarnassus	
	AntRom	*Antiquitates Romanae*
	Dem	*De Demosthene*
	Pomp	*Epistula ad Popeium*
Epict	Epictetus	
	Diss	*Dissertationes* (also known as *Diatribiai [Diatr]*)
Eur	Euripides	
	Bacch	*Bacchae*
Gaius	Gaius	
	Inst	*Institutiones*
Galen	Galen	
	Pulse	*On the Pulse*
Gellius	Aulus Gellius	
	Noct att	*Noctes atticae*
Hdt	Herodotus	
	Hist	*Historiai*
Hom	Homer	
	Od	*Odyssea*
Hor	Horace	
	ArsP	*Ars Poetica*
	Carm	*Carmina*
	CarmSaec	*Carmen Saeculare*
	Ep	*Epodes*
	Od	*Odes*
Iamb	Iamblichus	
	Protr	*Protrepticus*
	VPyth	*Vita Pythagorae*

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Isoc	Isocrates	
	Dem	*Ad Demonicum*
	Paneg	*Panegyricus*
Jos	Flavius Josephus	
	Ant	*Antiquitates Judaicae*
	Ap	*Contra Apionem*
	BJ	*Bellum Judaicum*
	Vit	*Vita*
Juv	Juvenal	
	Sat	*Satires*
Livy	Livy	
	Hist	*History of Rome*
Longus	Longus	
	Dafnis and Cloe	
Lucan	Lucan	
	Bell Civ	*Bellum Civile*
Luc	Lucian of Samosata	
	Cat	*Cataplus*
	Peregr	*De morte Peregrini*
	Quo Hist	*Opera III: Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*
	Somn	*Somnium (Vita Luciani)*
	Tox	*Toxaris*
	VerHis	*Verae Historiae*
Mart	Martial	
	Ep	*Epigrams*
	Spect	*Liber spectaculorum*
Men	Menander	
	Georg	*Georgos*
	Treat	*Treatises*
Min	Minucius Felix	
	Oct	*Octavius*
Ov	Ovid	
	Am	*Amores*
	ArsAm	*Ars Amatoria*
	Met	*Metamorphoses*
Pet	Petronius	
	Sat	*Satirycon*
Phaed	Phaedrus	
	Append	*Appendixes*
Philo	Philo of Alexandria	
	Abr	*De Abrahamo*
	Agr	*De Agricultura*
	ConfLing	*Confusione Linguarum*

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DeusImm *Quod Deus sit Immutabilis*
Flacc *In Flaccum*
Jos *De Iosepho*
Leg *Legum allegoriae*
LegGaj *Legatio ad Gajum*
MigAbr *De Migratione Abrahami*
OmnProbLib *Quod omnis Probus Liber sit*
OpMund *De Opificio Mundi*
Plant *De Plantatione*
QG *Quaestiones et solutions in Genesin*
Som *De Somniis*
SpecLeg *De Specialibus Legibus*
VitMos *De Vita Mosis*

Philostr Flavius Philostratus
VitAp *Vita Apolonii*

Pl Plato
Alc Maj *Alcibiades major*
Apol *Apologia*
Ep *Epistulae*
Gorg *Gorgias*
Leg *Leges*
Phaed *Phaedo*

Plin Pliny (The Elder) Gaius Plinius Secundus
NHist *Naturalis Historia*

Pliny Pliny (The Younger) Gaius Plinius Caecilius
Ep *Epistulae*
Tra *Epistulae ad Traianum*

Plut Plutarch
Mor *Moralia*
Am *Amatoribus*
Amic Mult *De amicorum multitudine*
Def *De Defectu Oraculorum*
Precep *Precepts of Politics*
VitPar *Vitae Parallelae*
Aem *Aemilius Paulus*
Ag *Agiatis*
Alex *Alexander*
Ant *Antonius*
Brut *Brutus*
Caes *Caesar*
Dem *Demostenes*
Lyc *Lycurgus*
Is. Os. *De Iside et Osiride*

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	Per	*Pericles*
	Pomp	*Pompeius*
Polyb	Polybius	
Porphy	Porphyry	
	Christ	*Contra Christianos*
PsDem	Pseudo-Demetrius	
	Ep Typ	*Typoi Epistolikoi*
Quint	Quintilianus	
	Orat	*Institutio Oratoria*
Sen	Seneca (The Younger)	
	Apocol	*Apocolocyntosis*
	Ben	*De Beneficiis*
	Clem	*De Clementia*
	Cont	*Controversiae*
	Ep	*Epistulae*
	Ira	*De Ira*
	Tranq	*De Tranquilitate Animi*
	Vit Beat	*De Vita Beata*
Strabo	Strabo	
	Geog	*Geography*
	Hist	*Historical sketches*
Suet	Suetonius	
	Aug	*Augustus*
	Calig	*Gaius Caligula*
	Iul	*Divus Julius*
	Ner	*Nero*
	Tib	*Tiberius*
Tac	Cornelius Tacitus	
	Agr	*Agricola*
	An	*Annales*
	Germ	*Germania*
	Hist	*Historiae*
Val Max	Valerius Maximus	
Varrus	Marcus Terencius Varrus	
	LingLat	*De Lingua Latina*
	Rust	*De Re Rustica*
Varus	P. Quintilius Varus	
	RelAnt	*Religious Antiquities*
Vel Pat	Vellius Paterculus	
	Hist	*History of Rome*
Virgil	Virgil	
	Aen	*Aeneid*
	Ecl	*Eclogae*

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	Geo	*Georgics*
Xen		Xenophon
	Oec	*Oeconomicus*

Early Christian Literature

Apologists, Apostolic Fathers

ClRm		Clement of Rome
	1Cl	*Epistula Clementis ad Corinthios*
Did		*Didache*
Diog		*Epistula ad Diognetum*
Epiph		Epiphanius
	Pan	*Panarion (Adversus haereses)*
Ign		Ignatius
	Eph	*Epistula ad Ephesios*
	Mag	*Epistula ad Magnesios*
	Phld	*Epistula ad Philadelphos*
	Pol	*Epistula ad Polycarpum*
	Rm	*Epistula ad Romanos*
	Smy	*Epistula ad Smyrnaeos*
	Trall	*Epistula ad Trallianos*
MartPol		*Martyrdom of Polycarp*
Mel		Melito of Sardis
	Pas	*Homilia in Passionem Christi*
Pol		Polycarp
	Ep	*Epistula ad Philippenses*
Ps-Cl		Pseudo Clement
	Hom	*Homilies*

Greek Fathers

Chrys		John Chrysostom
	Ep ad Phil	*Epistula ad Philippenses*
ClAl		Clement of Alexandria
	Str	*Stromata*
Eus		Eusebius of Caesarea
	HE	*Historia Ecclesiastica*
	PE	*Praeparatio Evangelica*
Ire		Irenaeus
	EpFlor	*Epistula ad Florinum*
	Haer	*Adversus haereses*
Or		Origen
	Cels	*Contra Clesum*

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Latin Fathers

Aug		Augustine
	CivD	*De Civitate Dei*
	Trin	*De Trinitate*
Cyp		Cyprian
	Ep	*Epistulae*
D. Chr		Dio Chrysostom
	Or	*Orationes*
Hier		Hieronymus/Jerome
	VirIl	*De Viris Illustribus*
	Vulg	*Vulgata*
Lact		Lactantius
	Inst	*Divinae Institutiones*
	OpD	*De Opificio Dei*
Tert		Tertullian
	Apol	*Apologeticum*
	PraescrHaer	*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*

New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

AcAnd	Acts of Andrew
AcPaulThec	Acts of Paul and Thecla
AcPaul	Acts of Paul
AcPt	Acts of Peter
3Cor	*3 Corinthians*
2En	2(Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch
GPh	Gospel of Philip
4Mac	4 Maccabees
MartPtPaul	Martyrdom of Peter and Paul
PssSol	Psalms of Solomon
SibOr	Sibylline Oracles

Late Christian Authors/Writings

ApConst	*Apostolic Constitutions*
ApTrad	*Apostolic Tradition*
ThAq	Thomas Aquinas
Sum	*Summa Theologica*
VitPol	*Vita Polycarpi*

Gnostic Literature

CorpHer	*Corpus Hermeticum*

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Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

ApAb	Apocalypse of Abraham
AscenIsa	Ascension of Isaiah
3Mac	3 Maccabees
OdesSol	Odes of Solomon
PssSol	Psalms of Solomon
SibOr	Sibylline Oracles
T12P	Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
TAsh	Testament of Asher
TDan	Testament of Dan
TAb	Testament of Abraham
TJac	Testament of Jacob
TJos	Testament of Joseph
VitAdEv	Vita Adae et Evae

Mishnah, Talmud and Related Literature

Erub	*m. Erubin*
M. Abot	*ʾAbot*
M. B. Qam	*Baba Qamma*
M. Peʾah	*Peʾah*
M. Šabb	*Šabbat*

Nag Hammadi Codices

AcPtTwAp	Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles

Papyri

P. Mich	Michigan Papyri
P. Oxy	Papirus Oxyrhynchus

Qumran Literature

1QS	The community rule Manual of discipline

Journals and Reference Books

AA	*American Anthropologist*
AB	*Anchor Bible*
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by D N Freeman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
AEth	*American Ethnologist*
AHR	*The American Historical Review*
AJEC	*Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*
AJP	*American Journal of Philology*

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ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Edited by J B Pritchard. Princeton, 1954.
AnQ	*Anthropological Quarterly*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römichen Welt*
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ARA	*Annual Review of Anthropology*
ARP	*Annual Review of Psychology*
AS	*Ancient Society*
ASR	*American Sociological Review*
AV	Authorised Version
BA	*The Biblical Archaeologist*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BCH	*Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*
BCHSuppl	*Bulletin de correspondance hellénique Supplément*
BDAG	Bauer, W; F W Danker; W F Arndt, and F W Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago, 1999.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament
BHT	Beiträge zur historichen Theologie
BI	*Biblical Interpretation*
Bib	*Bíblica*
Bibl	*Biblica*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BJSoc	*The British Journal of Sociology*
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BR	*Biblical Research*
Bsac	*Bibliotheca Sacra*
BTB	*Biblical Theological Bulletin*
CAnth	*Cultural Anthropology*
CB	Cuadernos Bíblicos
CB.NTSer	Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CE	*Cognition and Emotion*
CH	*Church History*
CIL	*Corpus Incriptorum Latinum*
CLNT	Cómo leer el Nuevo Testamento
CP	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*The Classical Quarterly*
CSSH	*Comparative Studies in Society and History*
CuAnth	*Current Anthropology*
DNTB	*Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Edited by C A Evans and S E Porter. Downers Grove, 2000.

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DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
DPAC	*Diccionario patrístico y de la antigüedad cristiana*. 2 tomos. Directed by A di Bernandino. Salamanca, 1991.
DPL	*Dictionary of Paul and His Interpreters*. Edited by G F Hawthorne and R P Martin. Downers Grove, 1993.
EA	*Estudio Agustiniano*
EB	*Estudios Bíblicos*
EDNT	*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. 3 vols. Edited by H Balz, G Schneider. ET. Grand Rapids, 1990-1993.
EE	*Estudios Eclesiásticos*
EEGSc	*Environmental and Engineering Geoscience*
EJS	*European Journal of Sociology*
EJSPsy	*European Journal of Social Psychology*
EJT	*European Journal of Theology*
Encounter	*Encounter*
ERSP	*European Review of Social Psychology*
Ethos	*Ethos*
ExpTim	*The Expository Times*
FGH	*Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Edited by F Jacobi. Leiden, 1954-1964
FIRA^{2}	*Fontes Iuris Romani Anteniustiniani*^{2}
FN	*Filología Neotestamentaria*
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatue des Alten und Neuen Testaments
FuP	Fuentes Patrísticas
GNB	Good News Bible
GNC	Good News Commentary
GNT^{4}	Greek New Testament 4th edition
GR	*Greece and Rome*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
HBT	*Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HR	*History of Religions*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
HTK	Herders Theologischer Kommentar
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HvTSt	*Hervormde Teologiese Studies*
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
InSoc	*International Sociology*
Int	*Interpretation*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JAC	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*

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JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JHC	*Journal of Higher Criticism*
JHI	*Journal for the History of Ideas*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JIH	*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*
JRAI	*Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*
JR	*The Journal of Religion*
JRH	*Journal of Religious History*
JRS	*The Journal of Roman Studies*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Series
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
KJV	King James Version
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LSJ	Liddell, H G; R Scott, H S Jones. *A Greek-Englllish Lexicon*. 9th ed. With revised supplement. Oxford, 1996.
Man	*Man*
MFL	*Marriage and Family Living*
MTZ	*Münchener theologische Zeitschrift*
MUSJ	*Mélanges de l'université Saint-Joseph*
NA27	*Novum Testamentum Graece*, Nestle-Aland , 27th edition, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 1995
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCB	New Clarendon Bible
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEB	New English Bible
Neo	*Neotestamentica*
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NIGTC	New International Greek Theological Commentary
NIV	New International Version
NovTes	*Novum Testamentum*
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTD	*Das Neue Testament Deustch*
NTS	*New Testament Studies*
Numen	*Numen: International Review for the History of Religions*
NVGL	*Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine*, Nestle-Aland, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 1979
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
Past and Present	*Past and Present*
Phoenix	*Phoenix*
PolPsy	*Political Psychology*
P&R	*Philosophy and Rhetoric*

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PSPB	*Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*
Queen	*Queen: a journal of rhetoric and power*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RBL	*Review of Biblical Literature*
RelSRev	*Religious Studies Review*
ResB	*Reseña Bíblica*
RevPhil	*Revue de philologie, de littérature et d'historie anciennes*
RivB	*Rivista biblica italiana*
RSV	Revised Standard Version
R&T	*Religion and Theology*
SBJT	*Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*
SBLDS	Society for Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSBS	SBL Sources for Biblical Study
SBLSPS	SBL Seminal Papers Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibel Studien
Semeia	*Semeia*
SK	*Skrif en Kerk*
SM	*Studia Moralia*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SocAn	*Social Analysis*
SocAnth	*Sociological Anthropology*
SocP	*Social Problems*
SocRel	*Sociology of Religion*
SP	Sacra Pagina
SR	*Sciences Religieuses/Studies in Religion*
ST	*Scripta Theologica*
StuMor	*Studia Moralia*
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by G Kittel and G Friedrich. Translated by G W Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964-1976.
Them	*Themelios*
ThTo	*Theology Today*
ThZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
TQ	*Theologische Quatarlschrift*
TS	*Theological Studies*
TynB	*Tyndale Bulletin*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WTJ	*Westminster Theological Journal*
ZNW	*Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche*

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Summary

This research focuses on how the Philippian Christ-followers would have received Paul's letter addressed to them. Many studies merely take Paul's words at face value, without a thorough analysis of the social and personal issues that were involved in the communication process. Social, historical, literary and theological elements are studied in order to understand the effect Paul wanted to create via his letter. The text of Acts 16 is used as a sort of test case, in order to assess our hypotheses. We also make use of sociological and anthropological lenses at our disposal in order to evaluate first-century Mediterranean characteristics of the society Paul was addressing, and which he also shared. Social Identity Theory supplies us with important tools to assess how ancient people might have constructed their group identity.

We defend the idea that the apostle Paul, who had greatly suffered at Philippi, and who writes from a prison somewhere in Rome, desires to affect the Philippians believers to acquire a Christ-orientation based on the Christ-hymn. Phlp 2:6-11 forms the core of Paul's theological narrative that aims at constructing a sense of *imitatio* and *conformatio* in the Christ-following community. Paul makes use of a 'friendly' style in Phlp in order to produce rapport and trust in the community. Paul poses himself as *examplum ad imitando* following that of Christ so that the Philippians may have a concrete point of reference. It is because Paul so fully identifies with Jesus Christ that the apostle presents himself as a 'slave'.

In the midst of a society ill with the desire for honour and power, the Christ narrative stands as a radical call for an alternative life-style, based on the exercise of humility and seeking the interest of others. Paul insists through the Christ-hymn that such a life-style reveals God's character.

Was the message understood *as Paul had intended*? We cannot know it for sure, but we can observe a certain level of continuity in a letter written to the same community six decades later by Polycarp. In a different context, we can nevertheless observe similar emphasis as well as the lingering influence of the apostle. His Christ-like message, no doubt, still affected how the early Christian community aimed at living their day to day.

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Key Terms

1. Colony
2. Friendship Letters
3. Honour and Shame
4. Humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη); Christ-*phronesis*
5. Identity
6. Modelling
7. Paul
8. Romanisation
9. Slavery
10. Suffering

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Theory, for Lewin, only had validity to the extent that it was effective in promoting social change: "research which produces nothing but books will not suffice."[1]

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

1. *Status Quaestionis*

Looking at the sheer volume of research centred on the text of Philippians 2:6-11, it may seem that a new study on the Christ-hymn is but an easy way of covering well-trodden paths on the part of researchers with either a serious lack of imagination or too much daring, who have not assessed (even worst, not read) the *quasi*-astronomical amount of material focused on this text alone. After all, Bockmuehl (1997a:115) recently observed that this is 'a passage which in the twentieth century has been the subject of an uncontainable deluge of scholarly debate, quite possibly more so than any other New Testament text'. In spite of this, I believe to be neither too daring nor someone who, for that matter, has obviated the centre-stage position Phlp 2:6-11 enjoys in New Testament interpretation. In the course of this research I have become quite familiar with much of salient scholarship on the subject, and I still believe this study can add to its better comprehension. I focus on two important elements in Phlp 2:6-11: identity formation and what the text might have affected in the intended recipients.

One of the problems we encounter when we study this well-known text is the nomenclature used to describe it, which colours the way it is understood. The simple fact of calling it a 'hymn' is in itself a strong statement about its supposed liturgical use, its provenance, Paul's latter appropriate/inappropriate

[1] Lewin (1948), quoted in Brown (2000:xvi).

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use, etc. The particular (re)-construction of the social milieu strongly affects the outcome of the researcher's conclusions. This is clear in Bousset's 1913 *Kyrios Christos*, who studied the text, typical of the *religiongeschichtliche Schule*, in the context of the Hellenistic Christian communities in Syria under the influence of a *Kyrios*-religion. Bousset proposed the title *Kyrios* to be a Hellenistic appropriation on the part of the early church. Jesus, thus, had been divinised in the same way the Greeks and the Romans had done with their heroes. This approach, however, has found little impetus after new insights about the early worship of Jesus were brought to light (cf. Bauckham 1998; Hurtado 1999, 2003). Impelled by the debate Bousset's work had stirred, Lohmeyer produced an insightful study, *Kyrios Jesus*, in 1928, that marked a new era in the understanding of Phlp 2:6-11, attending mainly to its structure and original background. Most scholars have assumed his views on the nature of the text—as a hymn—as starting point (Brown 1998:6). Lohmeyer's work widely impacted current scholarship with his view that the text represented a pre-Pauline Psalm. I contend that such a preoccupation with the provenance of the text (*viz*. the 'original community which produced it') has to a certain degree obscured the study of its *function* within the larger context of the letter. The reconstruction of both its possible liturgical setting (if indeed coming from Christ-following communities in Palestine) and its 'original' function has produced a sort of circular reasoning. My study takes the text's present location as the starting point from where to understand its function, since it had—primarily, although not exclusively—the Philippian Christ-following community in mind[2].

A second landmark in the study of the Christ-hymn was Käsemann's study 'Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2, 5-11', which appeared in 1950. Käsemann tried to limit any possible ethical interpretation of the text; an error he thought Lohmeyer had committed (cf. Martin & Dodd 1998). Käsemann was opposing the liberal Protestant ethical idealism tendency of his own day which presented a reductionist view of the Biblical texts (Morgan 1998:43-44). Thus, for him the hymn (and for that matter for Paul) never tried to present Christ as a *Vorbild*, rather it displayed a soteriological drama where readers are *only* invited as observers, not as imitators. The hymn has to do then with soteriology and eschatology, not ethics (Käsemann 1978:76-77). This passage cannot be reduced to mere ethical example, but the ethical element cannot be so easily dismissed as Käsemann assumed, as new studies reveal (Basevi & Chapa 1993).

[2] Johnson (1999:374) affirms that, although it is important to ascertain a plausible *Vorlage* for the hymn, there are more pressing elements: 'Certainly of greater significance is the content of the hymn, and how it functions for Paul as part of his larger argument in Philippians'.

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Both Lohmeyer and Käsemann have left a powerful hermeneutical tradition behind. I believe, though, that new approaches can help us perceive Phlp 2:6-11 from other angles, shedding new light as we study the hymn in closer relation to the context of the letter (cf. Horrell 2005c:206-207). To date, Martin's (1983) massive study on the hymn continues to be the best source of information for anyone wishing to review the history of its interpretation. Martin's more recent work as editor with Dodd (*Where Christology Began*, 1998) adds a needed update to his prior work and clarifies some hermeneutical tendencies and places them in their discrete historical contexts.

Paul's letters were correspondence *ad hoc*, that is, written in order to address the diverse situations the communities by him established were undergoing. This does not mean that there is not a generic component to Paul's theology; after all we possess a Pauline *corpus* as evidence of the influence his *letters* exerted in the Church. The 'gospel according to Paul' presents a peculiar way of understanding the incarnation and the person of Jesus, and the character of God; that much is clear. Having said this, I want to stress the fact that what Paul wrote to a concrete community in the Roman colony of Philippi must have been understood in a peculiar way by the addressees; an element seldom studied in depth.

This understanding is crucial when we study the letter, since it forces the interpreter to scrutinise the historical context in order to understand its message, better informed both of the local circumstances and the occasions. The goal is to assess the letter to the Philippians on its own merits, attending to how the local situation is addressed in the letter. However complex this relationship might be (cf. Kreitzer 1998:113), it is the only way we can 'allow' the letter to speak unheeded as the Philippian community would had first received it.

This is not a denial that Paul's exhortations have a more general applicability beyond their immediate context, but the *ad hoc* component acquires greater relevance (cf. Adams 2000). An example will clarify this. Since I find no relevant evidence of a strong Jewish influence in the colony, due to the lack of Jewish presence and of a synagogue in the area during Paul's time, we need to ask: How could the Christ-following community have understood texts such as 3:5-11, where Paul presents his honourable pedigree in clear Jewish fashion? I am not suggesting, though, that Paul's symbolic universe could not include Jewish conceptions in Philippians, after all he identified himself as one, but that something different is to emerge *if* we focus on how the recipients *may have received* his words.

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2. The Reading of the *Carmen Christi* in a New Light

Phlp 2:6-11 is a text truly familiar to Bible interpreters; the paradigm of Christological discussion. However, just as ancient interpreters of the Hebrew Scriptures spoke of the 'seventy sides' (*Shivi'm Panim*) of the Torah, I think we can approach the text from yet another angle, focusing on its function as a vehicle for *social* communication. The text then, is not just relegated to doctrinal use alone, but becomes a vehicle of communication with a Christ-following community searching for true identity, that aims at living the Christ-like life in the midst of a matrix of social values that threatens its fundamental core: that of looking at others as equal in worth.

Paul cannot escape his own cultural conditioning and therefore makes use of common stereotypes and forms of understanding difference that reveal his mentality as a Mediterranean person in the first century AD. It is because of these reasons that I approach the study of Phlp 2:6-11 through a pertinent socio-scientific methodology. This needs not suppose a relinquishment of theological emphasis; rather, it is a statement that 'ideology alone' will not reveal the complexity a text such as this presents. Thus, I devout a great deal of space to discuss the more salient features of first-century Mediterranean society. My aim is to understand 'ideas' and 'people' and how they relate with one another.

The reasons for this research have to do firstly with a personal interest in the social context that surrounds Philippi. This was first spurred in the winter of 1994 during a J-term dedicated to 'Judaism and Christianity' under Prof M R Mulholland, Jr. at *Asbury Theological Seminary*. There we learnt that texts were embedded within social dynamics (or 'social matrix', as Prof Mulholland liked to express it). The second reason relates to the first: I had the sheer need to investigate this well-known text from a different angle of incidence, that is, the effects of written communication in discrete social groups. For some time I had been wondering about it, since texts are in essence vehicles of social communication with a specific function, as ancient rhetoric has shown us. What it has been at times forgotten is that texts were meant *to affect something specific* in the recipients. When it comes to this matter, most studies I came across either took for granted a mechanical type of 'social/ideological transference', which was automatically ascribed to the addressees, or presented ambiguous results, as if (text)-function and social setting were two independent realities. My motivation, thus, has to do with an ongoing study of New Testament texts in order to assess their pertinence for our own day and age. This, I believe, cannot be done unless we make an effort for understanding what it was meant to affect in its original audience. Implicitly, this work is a personal search for a more coherent Christ-like identity.

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In the course of my research on Philippians I have realised I was not the only person approaching the Christ-hymn through new angles; some of them—may I add—dangerously close to my own! During 2005 I had the opportunity to read J Hellerman's monograph on Phlp 2:6-11: *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi. Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum*. His was a thorough and well-written study on the very topic I was investigating, using a socio-scientific approach in order to discern how the honour and shame model could be applied to this text. Hellerman's otherwise impressive research lacked, in my opinion, a concrete 'social seat' (by that I mean a 'real community') to complement his ideological/anthropological reading[3]. The questions I had in mind were: How would have the Philippian Christ-following community received Paul's words?[4] Do we have to assume that Paul's comprehension of 'life' and 'ethos' was readily accepted as *the* proper way for the community? I soon realised that in order to answer these questions I needed to go beyond the *assumed performative dynamic* of the text and venture into new areas for the purpose of assessing the possible effect of written words[5].

The goal of my study is to assess the apostle's implicit *strategies* as well as to recognise his aims at creating a salient social identity which is based on the Christ-orientation we find displayed in Phlp 2:6-11, which Paul himself affirms to follow (3:12-13). Lastly, I attempt to ascertain if such strategies resulted both in a concrete perceived behaviour and an understanding of their social identity as they lived in the colony. In doing this I believe that we can bring together 'soul and body'; that is, ideology and social structures (cf. Scroggs 1980:175), without stressing one at the expense of the other.

I approach the study of the text under the premise that Paul was trying to portray an example of self-giving and self-humiliation as a paradigm of Christ-

[3] 'We have been seduced into a description of a *Sitz im Leben* that lacks a concrete (i.e., non-theological) "seat" and offers only the most abstract understanding of "life"' (Smith 1975:19).

[4] In the course of this study I explain why I use this expression rather than the traditional term 'Christian'. J H Elliott, Malina, Esler and others have defended the necessity for rethinking our terminology lest we fall trap of projecting modern conceptions and prejudices on ancient groups. I am not totally convinced about these efforts, since neologisms need to be explained and nuanced in order to convey this new sense and then we face the fact that most of current scholarship still remains faithful to traditional labels, which makes the option stand out as a *rara avis* amongst the rest. It is true that Christ-followers did not use the name χριστιανοί as self-designation until the second century AD (Witherington 1998:371), although some Roman historians used it (e.g. Tacitus, *An* 15.44). My preference is to use 'Christ-followers' when speaking about the Pauline communities and 'Christians' from the second century onwards in order to stress this chronological distance. See also Campbell (2008:12)

[5] For some clarifying comments on the Pauline indicative-imperative formulations; see Furnish (1968) and Horrell (2005c:94).

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like identity. This way the Philippian Christ-following community can live out the good news in the midst of a strenuous context where identity is based upon privilege and the search for honour. This model of identity, I conclude, is not merely the result of theological reasoning, but based both on Paul's own experience at Philippi (Ac 16) and his present imprisonment (Phlp 1:14).

Paul the apostle, who established a network of communities across the Roman Empire, was a person under great pressure, since his understanding of the gospel met with strong opposition in some quarters. There is also an existential tension in Paul, as a 'man between aeons'. While he writes this letter from prison, Paul struggles to decide whether to remain in his present situation or part with the Lord, but ultimately opts to remain because he believes he is still needed to strengthen his communities (Phlp 1:25).

Paul's suffering is a key to his identification with Christ. I believe that as a consequence of his repeated sufferings (cf. Phlp 1:12; 1:29-30; 2:17; 3:8-10), the apostle arrived at a deeper comprehension of Christ's, which ultimately led him to understand his own life as a libation on behalf of the communities he had established. Perhaps his shameful experience at Philippi (1 Th 2:1-2) influenced him to write in the way he did. Both the local situation he addressed at Philippi and his own imprisonment seem to confirm this[6]. He concludes that society's common search for honour (as opposed to the loss of honour he experiences for Christ's sake; 3:8-11) is futile (1:28). There is an alternative way of understanding themselves (identity) and of living it out. The community possesses a hymn that can shape its life. The issue at stake here is *Christ-like identity*. From where are they to draw and understand who they are in order to display a life style worthy of their calling? How are they to live in *politeia* (the public realm)? Paul is presenting a new way of 'living' in the threat of a society invaded by the love of honour and status. Thus he remembers the Philippian Christ-followers that they need to be focused on life in the city (*politeuesthe*), but in a manner 'worthy of the good news of Christ' (1:27). It is only from this *kyrios* that salvation and status ultimately come (3:20-21).

Upon a closer reading of Acts 16:1-40, where Paul and Silas—'Jews'—suffer the weight of Roman law upon charges of "teaching *mores* and practices not allowed to *us* Romans" (Ac 16:21), I have become more convinced about the *historical reliability* of this passage (Winter 2002). It is, thus, a good starting point from where to commence our research on Paul's first contact with Philippi. For

[6] Many are the 'suffering-lists' that appear in his letters (Rm 8:35; 1 Cor 4:10-13a; 2 Cor 1:8-9; 2 Cor 4:8-9; etc.), proof that such experiences of rejection not only strengthened Paul's role as a 'person on a mission', but also shaped his own theological thinking. This may just seem to be a passing comment, but upon closer observation several elements stand out as he writes to the Philippian Christ-following community.

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Paul, his experience of rejection at the colony left a mark. Paul was not 'above culture', 'above pathos', but was affected by the circumstances that surrounded him during his life. It is clear that there is something in the background of this letter that triggers Paul to present the information the way he does. I base these insights on the following observations:

Paul writes several times about examples of humility and service (Epaphroditus, Timothy, Paul, and then, of course, Jesus Christ) to a church that has been supporting his ministry since the beginning and for whom Paul feels a strong token of appreciation. Why some much emphasis on humility, humbleness and service if they have been an example of generosity and self-giving to him? The 'struggle' between the two principal women in the church (4:2) cannot possibly give reason for the writing of the entire letter. This 'disunity issue' is placed right at the end and would then force the readers/hearers to recall all that has been read/said in light of that. This view is hardly sustainable after close scrutiny. There is, of course, a great deal of disunity that has arisen in their midst, no doubt, as many have shown (Peterlin 1995; de Vos 1999a; Oakes 2001; Hellerman 2005). I wish to add to those possible reasons the struggle they are undergoing as the imperial values threaten to undermine core 'Christian' values represented, above all, through the text of Philippians 2:6-11.

Paul refers to the Philippians using a Latin form of the vocative (φιλιππήσιοι, based on Latin *Philippenses*), not the usual Greek (φιλιππεῖς or φιλιππηνοί). Why? Assessing the status of the colony in the eastern part of the Roman Empire helps to understand the kind of privilege Philippi had. Perhaps this is one of the great problems within the community that Paul is trying to correct through the presentation of concrete examples of those who live in self-giving manner. If we tie their *natural* superiority complex with Paul's experience at Philippi during his stay there, it is feasible that in his pastoral role he wants to correct a wrong identity that threatens the core of the 'Christian' community. Honour (as Hellerman has shown) is at stake here, yes, but in the context of *identity*, in the context of the gospel Paul is conveying to them.

Much has been written about the supposed identity of the 'enemies' and 'opponents' in the letter. Phlp 3 implies we are dealing with Jewish-Christian teachers, but even then the core of the argument deals with their reliance on an identity based on merit and honour. Perhaps, then, the 'enemy' has become more of an insider than what some specialists had originally entertained. The issue at stake is *filotimia*, which seems to be all-prevalent in the colony and threatens their Christ-like identity. In this context, I believe, we can better appraise the profundity of 2:6-11 as a reminder of where upon their faith is

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based. The 'enemy', then, also refers to the general situation in the colony under the pressure to conform to traditional social *mores*.

The repeated references to 'participation', 'sharing', 'working together'—by the use of παν- and συν- terminology—point towards the creation of a new identity (or the solidifying of the one they are supposed to live by) that stands out in the face of a world of privilege. Paul invites the *entire community* to participate of this, not just the leaders (1:1). Paul presents an alternative life in opposition to a system based on the love of honour at the exclusion of others. The opposition they suffer is indeed a *gift* (1:29); part and parcel of the true Christ-like identity that they experience as they practice ταπεινοφροσύνη (2:4).

3. Research Itinerary

The choice of my approach follows a structure that aims at arriving at a clear understanding of the Christ-hymn and its function within the Philippian community. In order to do so I dedicate chapters 2 and 3 to a thorough description of both the methodology I propose (*Social Identity Theory*; henceforth SIT) and models derived from social anthropological studies. These two chapters form the core of the higher level of abstraction of my research.

In chapter 2 I describe why I think SIT is germane to a better understanding of Paul's letter within a culture characterised by collective persons (Malina & Pilch 2006:23). As with any socio-scientific approach which uses contemporary theories and applies them to ancient texts (which in turn reveal 'social worlds', that is, ways of relating and common understanding; cf. Meeks 1983:8), there are great advantages as well as possible pitfalls that need to be addressed. One of the strengths of the socio-scientific method is that it allows to make explicit both my perspectives and point of departure.

There follows a definition of terminology. What do we mean by 'identity'? How is identity formed? Do we study identity as whether it is something we are born with (primordialist view) or something which is construed during our life-time (constructivist approach)? Then I focus on group-identity formation in Philippi, which presents some elements that ultimately influence the make-up of the Philippian community, amongst these, no doubt, the Christ-hymn.

In chapter 3 I discuss the anthropological and sociological filters applied to first-century Mediterranean society. I centre on how we go about reading ancient texts as readers who come from a modern culture, distanced both in time and by culture from the ancient one. I address the perilous (implicit) familiarity with biblical texts and with ancient society and respectfully try to

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bridge the gap between the 'then' and the 'now'. I focus on the *emic-etic* element, the social location of the interpreter as well as the proper way for reading ancient texts through 'models' derived from cultural anthropology, which provide coherence to what is observed in the texts.

Our discussion leads to a definition of first-century Mediterranean society and to an assessment of its main characteristics, both general (advanced agrarian, pre-industrial city, structures, high context society, etc.), and particular (human relations, the person in such a context, etc.). There are a number of contested areas in this way of reading the evidence that I discuss in greater detail. For one, whether there is a circum-Mediterranean area which displays a similar value-system. I assess the view that stresses the existence of the so-called 'pivotal' Mediterranean values, especially honour-shame and limited good perception, which ultimately is thought to create a kind of 'agonistic existence'. I conclude with my own evaluation on the use of 'models' and its usefulness for the study of New Testament texts.

In chapter 4 there is a transition to a lower level of abstraction. It is impossible to study how the Philippian Christ-following community received Paul's letter unless their historical and social context is described. I look at its history within the larger context of Roman expansion, alluding to what some scholars have called a process of 'Romanisation'. Since the term is contested and I have not found a straight forward definition of it, I have arrived at my own model/definition of Romanisation adapted to the local context of Philippi. This process was more than mere conquering of new territories. It was also worked on the symbolic and ideological levels. Rome's ways were pressed into 'other peoples', who needed to have their 'customs softened' (cf. Pliny the Elder, *NH* 3.39). How did this empire, based on privilege and honour (i.e., hierarchical) affected local populations? How was life lived in Philippi? These questions are addressed in turn to offer us a window into the life of the colony.

Fortunately the book of Acts narrates a crucial incident in Paul's first visit to European soil. I conclude that the book of Acts can be used as a reliable historical source, especially with reference to the accusation Paul and companions receive as 'Jews' disturbing the city, advocating customs not lawful for Romans to accept or practice (Ac 16:21). The incident at Philippi is used as a test case from where I draw several conclusions that I apply to the Christ-hymn. As we can see, the level of abstraction has lowered substantially and we are defining with more accuracy both the community who received the letter and its author.

In chapter 5 we get closer to Paul, limiting the focus to the evidence in Phlp. We disclose how Paul identifies himself through his presentation to the Philippian

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audience. Two elements stand out from the rest. Firstly, he describes himself as a 'slave of Christ Jesus' (1:1), in close reference to the Christ-hymn. Secondly, the apostle seems to experience a close identification with the way of Jesus Christ through his own suffering, no doubt, exacerbated by his imprisonment. In chapter 3 I specify that words and letters are part of complex social systems which are taken for granted in high context societies as the one we focus on. Therefore, in order to understand Paul's way of writing, we need to (re)-construct the ancient setting and assess both how slavery and suffering were perceived in antiquity. Only then can we have a balanced view of the issues at stake. I suggest that suffering becomes for Paul a key element in defining his identification with Christ. Paul does not ascribe suffering an absolute value, as if it had an intrinsic power to transform human beings, but he reads his own experience as mirrored in the example set by Jesus in the Christ-hymn. Jesus became a slave and suffered to the outmost as example of ταπεινοφροσύνη. When this 'virtue' is placed in its social milieu, we soon discover how radically counter-cultural it is. The way of Christ is not a mere 'high example of virtue', but a radical call to an alternative orientation in life. The symbolic world needs to be reconfigured, not merely based on ideology, but firmly established on personal examples (Jesus, Paul, Epaphroditus, etc.), and against negative ones (*viz*. 'enemies of the cross'; 3:18).

Chapter 6 concentrates on the letter. It has been a long journey in order to get here, and I address critical issues that surround both the letter and the 'hymn'. Reading ancient letters was something different to what scholars do nowadays. If we want to have access to the way in which the Philippian community understood the letter, we need to describe the process in some detail. I use an *emic* perspective in order to elucidate how this complex process was carried out.

As an ancient letter, we approach Philippians through rhetorical lenses. My aim is not a thorough literary description of all its parts but to recognise the type of letter Philippians is and how this *affects* the overall strategy of Paul (cf. Reed 1997). I read Phlp as a 'friendly letter' rather than categorised it as perfectly fitting the genre of 'friendship letters'. I pay attention to what Paul wants to affect in his audience, so the focus rests on how he describes both the members of the ingroup and of the outgroup. Paul's own version of Christ-*phronesis* (*viz*. according to his exercise of ταπεινοφροσύνη; cf. 2:4 and 2:6-11) delimits where people are placed within this scheme. The level of abstraction has lower considerably here, and I try to ascertain the identity of those who belong to Paul's ingroup. The apostle is aiming at constructing their identity according to strict parameters. Is Paul capricious in his choice of such identity markers? I believe his inspiration comes from the Christ-hymn.

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Chapter 7 is concerned with a thorough study of 2:5-11. Verse 5 is included as a key element which determines how the hymn is to be read in the context of the letter. I describe the *three movements* of the Christ-hymn and arrive at some conclusions concerning identity-formation. As if it were looking from above, the hymn discloses God's way of assessing ταπεινοφροσύνη in clear defiance of a traditional Graeco-Roman value-system. God places his approval of Christ's orientation in life and death. This is for Paul the most powerful source of encouragement and serves him to appeal to the community to follow in the exercise of such a counter-cultural virtue. If God himself assesses Christ's choice in this manner (2:9), is there any reason why the Philippians should do otherwise?

First century Mediterranean society had its own hymns as well. By 'hymns' I refer to narratives which shaped its way of thinking and of perceiving life. It is then appropriate to compare the Christ-hymn with other hymns and reflect on points of continuity and discontinuity. After all, Paul's gospel was not solely 'religious' but political as well[7]. I look then at the function of Phlp 2:5-11 and what it tries to affect in the Philippian community.

The search concludes with chapter 8, centred on the Philippian Christian community after Paul had left Philippi, and how his words might have affected them. We are fortunate here, because we possess a letter written six decades later by Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna to the Philippian Christian community. My attempt to link these different epochs requires of a certain dose of creativity and tentative echoing, but I think the study is justified once we attend to issues of literary nature and historical plausibility. Paul's words were highly regarded in the colony even after his death, and Polycarp refers to the impact the apostle had in them. However, they are now living in another time, the first quarter of the second century, and the social context has changed. We need to look for clues that can help us better understand some of the themes reflected in Polycarp's letter and recognise that, once again, the themes of suffering and identification with Christ stand out. What is it with suffering? Why does it seem to have such a prominent place in the theology of second century apologists? Polycarp's own experience, as that of many Christians who were persecuted or suffered martyrdom on account of their faith, may be part of the answer. Actually, after Paul left Philippi, the memory of him who willingly gave himself

[7] By this I mean two things: 1) religion was not something apart from other human activities, but an intrinsic part of 'life', since people did not perceive a separation between the 'sacred' and the 'secular'. 2) *political* refers to life as it was lived in the public domain (life in *politeia*), as contrasted with the domestic sphere (the *oikia*), although the two were not necessarily antithetical. Some scholars understand this 'political' sense solely in reference to the Roman Caesar and the Imperial cult, but recent studies show that much more is at stake here (cf. Winter 1994).

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on behalf of others, still marked the lives of those who had understood the meaning of this Christ-*phronesis* according to Paul's gospel.

4. Concluding Remarks

As with any research, I am aware that opting to focus on certain areas may leave others unattended or partially undisclosed. I have tried to get as close to the evidence of Philippians as possible. Some may criticise my approach as myopic, but I appraise Phlp on its own merits rather than using other letters of Paul (i.e., Romans) as the centre from where to move in and out. This could have been a possibility, but I think the limitations of such an enterprise are aptly dealt with in Smith (2005). For some, focusing mostly on Phlp may amount to nothing else than a way of eluding ideologically-charged discussions on Paul's theological concerns. This has not been my intention, though. I have focused on Philippians because my interest was to learn how the community that received the letter would have understood the apostle's words. It is indeed a focused search, and one that can add to a more accurate comprehension of the letter as an *ad hoc* document (cf. Campbell 2008:11). I think one of the strengths of this research is that it reads the text not merely from an ideological point of view, but as part of a larger social context that includes many other aspects.

There are some areas I wish I could have included, but unfortunately these only opened new avenues that would have taken too much space. I am interested in discerning the link between the Christ-hymn and early Christian community formation, i.e., how did the different communities arrange themselves in light of the Christ-*phronesis* displayed in the text. How did the different communities exert authority and serve one another under this new understanding of society? However, these, as many other areas of interest, will have to wait to be more fully studied in the future.

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People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as they are who they say they are[1].

One thing I have learned in a long life. That all our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike —and yet it is the most precious thing we have.
(Albert Einstein)

CHAPTER 2:
READING ANCIENT TEXTS THROUGH SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

1. Description of the Task

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the reasons I have chosen *Social Identity Theory* (SIT) to access the social and ideological scenario Phlp portrays.

Although the New Testament reveals a variegated gamut of what could be termed 'Christian identity', my search is concerned with what Paul is trying to accomplish in the Philippian community *via* written communication. I focus on what Paul *actually* wrote to the Christ-following community at Philippi, trying to discern what elements in the letter point to the consolidation of a Christ-like identity. The Christ-hymn is a clear example of what the apostle desires for the community to consider as a basis for their daily life.

Throughout this study I begin from a higher level of abstraction in order to get as close as possible to the social context of the Philippians. I want to discern the

[1] Holland et al (2003:3).

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kind of social interactions, experiences, ways of understanding, etc., typical of a Roman colony on Greek soil in first-century, which can be then applied to the colony at Philippi. Issues of nation, race, religion, etc., play a critical part in the total make-up of who the Philippians are. Through the use of SIT we can get closer to the way things could have been as we read the texts in their social context[2]. SIT can help us avoid the danger of *reductionism*, i.e., using a lower level of explanation to explain all higher-level phenomena (Hogg & Abrams 1998:12). I focus thus on how the ideas, contexts, and social dynamics expressed in the text shaped the life and practice of *communities*[3]. With this in mind, I plan to move from a wider and higher level of abstraction into the more concrete matrix of daily life. I am aware, though, that we all bring projections and subjectivity to our interpretation of the texts. For this reason these elements are made explicit as we approach the texts.

Our goal is to describe how Paul aims at forming a concrete Christ-like identity in the Philippian community when the example he uses goes against the normal pattern of Graeco-Roman society. The apostle, moreover, ascribes to this radical pattern of behaviour (and status) a positive sense of esteem. How he goes about it is an important part of our search.

2. *Social Identity Theory*: Description

Social Identity Theory was first developed in the 1970s by Henri Tajfel, a sociologist of Polish-Jewish background and further developed by John Turner[4]. Influenced by his own tragic personal and family experience during

[2] Rohrbaugh (1987) wrote an important article calling into question much of the scholarship done under the rubric of 'the sociological approach to the New Testament'. Rohrbaugh pinpointed that the relationship between thought and social location was at best vague and produced the same kind of indefinite results. He defended the *explicitness* of the methodology used and a deeper knowledge of original conditions rather than projecting modern ideas under the guise of sociological approach. There is much to commend to his critique and to the corrections he proposed during those earlier years of the discipline.

[3] SIT will demonstrate its incisiveness especially here, since many New Testament specialists explain social group in terms of the properties of the individual. Individuals are ultimately the ones who need to apply the basic insights to daily life (Esler 1998:43; Cohen 1994). However, when we refer to the world of the New Testament, its texts are composed in the context of the larger group. We need to develop both models for social and personal identities. I hope to accomplish this by focusing on group formation in the first-century Mediterranean world, as well as on Paul's life.

[4] The idea that social identity derives from group membership had been assessed much earlier (e.g. G H Mead in 1934), but it was Tajfel who proposed that the processes may have implications for intergroup behaviour (cf. Brown 2000:311).

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World War II, Tajfel sought to explain how group-identity was formed and why these processes gave rise to prejudice (at different levels) towards other groups[5]. Tajfel found (based on earlier experiments carried by Sheriff in the 1950's) that the simple fact of seeing oneself differently constitutes a significant part of one's identity, since 'something only is to the extent that it is distinguished from something else' (Esler 2003:19). Tajfel affirmed: 'We are what we are because *they* are not what we are' (Tajfel 1982, my emphasis). It is crucial to keep this in mind, since difference is an important constituent in identity formation[6]. SIT argues that humans are not just individuals, but part of a broader socio-cultural domain. This frame of mind is in fact assumed in the corporate first-century Mediterranean society, where 'people strive to achieve a positively valued social identity' (Ellemers et al 1988:497). This particular socio-cultural domain then influences how people perceive themselves, their kin and other groups.

SIT's insights clarify how groups relate to each other and how they understand themselves as different from the outgroup. I focus on group formation because 'we are no longer satisfied with […] idealistic individualistic theological understanding of the biblical texts. We have rediscovered that biblical literature is about the problems and experiences of real people' (Horsley 1994:3). The apostle Paul is not merely displaying his own theological understanding for the Philippians; he aims at influencing them to align themselves in light of such concepts. His concern is firstly with the group, not just the individual, as we have tended to assume.

Social psychology involves the study of groups but distinguishes between large–scale social categories (race, nation, etc.) and small collections of individuals. The latter is what is considered to be a group (Hogg & Abrams 1988:3). Brown (2000:2-3) discusses the meanings that account for the description of 'group'. These are varied, but he comes up with three major lines of thought: 1) common fate (i.e., the Jews during WW II); 2) social structure (family), and 3) face-to-face interaction with one another. Only 2) and 3) can be referred to small groups as that of the Christ-following Philippian community. These definitions, though, beg for a more subjective one in terms of people's *self-categorisation*, one of SIT's main focuses.

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[5] This was established by his first experiments on the 'minimal group' (cf. Hogg & Abrams 1998:x).

[6] The importance of difference, as it has been demonstrated, should not be exaggerated. Who we think we are is also a matter of autobiography; of what we know about ourselves, or how we believe ourselves to be (cf. Cohen 1994:120).

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Early social psychology solely dealt with group interaction and failed to conceive the way groups furnish the individual with an identity. However, it quickly overcame these limitations by focusing also on the group *in* the individual, which was termed the *social identity approach*. Hogg and Abrams (1988:3) affirm that the 'central tenet of this approach is that belonging to a group (of whatever size and distribution) is largely a *psychological* state which is quite distinct from that of being a unique and separate individual, and that it confers *social identity*, or a shared (collective representation of who one is and how one should behave)'.

Social Identity Theory involves three central concepts: categorisation, identification, and comparison. The first, *categorisation*, includes the idea that in order to understand objects or persons, we categorise them so as to make sense of their social context. This process helps to simplify the world around us. We refer thus to people as 'blacks', 'whites', 'women', 'children', 'poor', etc. As we assign a category to a person, we immediately receive feedback on certain salient aspects that help us comprehend our own environment. Tajfel summarizes this process in two correlated hypothesis: 1) 'if a category is imposed on a set of stimuli [...] such that some of the stimuli fall into class A and the remainder into class B, this will have the effect of enhancing any pre-existing differences between the two categories'; and 2) 'differences within the categories will be attenuated' (Brown 2000:267). '[W]e find out things about ourselves by knowing what categories we belong to. We define appropriate behaviour by reference to the norms of groups we belong to'[7], but we can only do this as long as we have the ability to define who belongs to our group, that is, as long as we perceive our group as different from others[8].

The second important idea is *identification*. We identify with groups which we perceive ourselves to belong to. Thus, once we have categorised, we are able to identify ourselves with certain characteristics in groups that help us belong to them. Identification has two different sides. On occasion this identification becomes *corporate*, that is, we tend to think in terms of "us" versus "them", or "we" versus "they". At other times we think of ourselves in terms of "I" versus "you" (sing.) or "s/he", that is, within a personal emphasis. These two sides refer to the self-concept, and they are termed *social identity* and *personal identity*[9].

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[7] Australian National University (19/02/2007), 1.

[8] For example, when dealing with ethnic identity, some authors consider that since Barth's (1969:9-38) assertion '"ethnic groups are products of contact rather than isolation", *difference* has been privileged over similarity in explanation of ethnic phenomena' (Bentley 1991:171, my emphasis).

[9] An area developed by John Turner.

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Thus, 'social identity refers to that part of a person's self-concept (admittedly from a much larger whole) that derives from his or her membership in a group' (Esler 2003:20). SIT presents three aspects to this identification:

> A cognitive recognition (of belonging to the group, membership);
> Evaluative connotations (of value added to such belonging); and
> Emotional investment ("*us* Romans", "*we* Jews").

This accounts in the first place for what we call *ingroups*, that is, people with whom we identify in a real, concrete way (in other words, we perceive ourselves as the same or identical to other people). Secondly, the *outgroups*, that is, people we understand to be different from us, with whom we do not identify. Myers (1987:502) explains this aspect: 'The social definition of who you are – your race, religion, sex, academic major- can also imply a definition of who you are not. The circle that includes "us" excludes "them"'. This means that people decide (or 'are prone to', depending on the theory applied) which objectifications to which they are emotionally attached, become their proactive identities, taking into account the context and the interests concerned (Holland 2003:4).

The final concept is social *comparison*. The basic idea is that belonging to certain groups provide people with a positive self-concept, which makes them feel good about themselves. Therefore people gain a certain measure of self-esteem and group prestige as they compare themselves with other groups. This explains, as Stark (1997:37) observes, why people may shift religious alliances: 'It is obvious that people do not embrace a new faith if they are content with an older one'. In normal circumstances we opt for that which we assess it is better than the other. By extension people perceive themselves positively; since social comparison is done in such a way that the end result is that people receive positive feedback by sheer comparison/contrast. However a word of caution is needed. Although first-century Mediterranean culture is corporate, and characterized by the so-called dyadic personalities, we must be aware of the remarks of Hinkle and Brown (1990:67): we could envisage a group in a collectivist culture which is not particularly given to intergroup comparison. 'This means that a second dimension requiring attention is whether a comparative or non-comparative ideology pervades a group or the context in which it finds itself' (Esler 1998:47). When we come to speak of the Roman colony of Philippi, immersed in the context of an honour-seeking mentality, specific to Roman colonies on foreign soil, we seem to find a situation where comparison is common.

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According to Tajfel (1982:2), 'there can be no *inter*group behavior unless there is also some "outside" consensus that the group exists'. This perception can also change. If the positive perception is lost when people compare with the outgroup (which seems to display superior traits), members can shift loyalties and identify with other groups, as Stark has signalled above. In the case of the Christ-hymn, where loss of status is presented as a virtue, it is interesting to study what mechanisms the apostle uses in order to justify such a counter-cultural behaviour to a community under threat.

SIT's basic tenet is that these central ideas: categorisation, identification, and social comparison, usually reinforce the ingroup's inner perception, and display a tendency to view outgroups less positively than the ingroup. 'In everyday life, ingroup bias gets magnified by the tendency of people to interact with members of their own groups' (Myers 1987:504). The strategies are as diverse as the contexts. Aguirre (1994:27-28) offers an extreme example in this regard:

> En un reportaje de TVE sobre los judíos etíopes que habían regresado a Israel, se le preguntaba al Sumo Sacerdote –pues aún conservaban tan venerable figura– cómo habían podido mantener su identidad judía en tan difíciles circunstancias, y nada menos que desde los tiempos del rey Salomón y de la reina de Saba, que es el momento en que ellos sitúan su instalación en Etiopía. La respuesta, impresionante antropológicamente, fue: "Porque nunca hemos comido con alguien que no fuese de nuestro grupo". Sin duda no hay mejor medio de garantizar la pervivencia de una cultura étnica.

The first idea is positive distinctiveness: 'people are motivated to see their group as relatively better than similar (but inferior) groups. The second idea is negative distinctiveness: groups tend to minimize the differences between the groups, so that our own group is seen favourably'[10]. Within that networking of ideas and attitudes the group chooses which characteristics/dimensions of the groups are maximized in order to perceive themselves in a more positive light (what is termed *social creativity*)[11]. Dealing with intergroup behaviour, we find what is called stereotyping, that Stallybrass defines as 'an over-simplifed [sic] mental image of (usually) some category of person, institution or event which is shared, in essential features, by large numbers of people […] Stereotypes are commonly, but not necessarily, accompanied by prejudice, i.e., by a favorable or unfavorable predisposition toward any member of the category in question'

[10] Australian National University (19/02/2007), 1-2.

[11] Brown (2000:338): '[T]here is now accumulating evidence that the hypothesized link between social identity and biased intergroup comparison proposed by Tajfel and Turner, while undoubtedly a potent motivator of intergroup behaviour in some contexts, may not be quite as generic as they had originally assumed'.

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(Tajfel 1982:3, quoting Stallybrass 1977:601). Members of the ingroup tend to display uniformity *ad intra*, while they tend to perceive the outgroup as a kind of 'undifferentiated items in a unified social category' (Tajfel 1981:243). This will be later described as 'social stereotyping' (Tajfel 1982:13). A traditional case in anthropology is the study carried by Pitt-Rivers in the Andalusian town of Alcalá. Although Alcareños had developed a stronger sense of being Andalusian than toward the more remote concept of Spain, they still presented a strong sense of stereotyping towards the neighbouring towns of the Sierra. Their differences were not deemed as neutral, but actually conveyed strong connotations of abuse and denigration. Pitt-Rivers (1971:8-10) observes:

> The sentiment of attachment to the pueblo is counterbalanced, as might be expected, by the corresponding hostility towards neighbouring pueblos. Thus, for the Alcareño, those of Jacinas are boastful and false, those of Montejaque cloddish and violent, those of Benalurin are mean, those of El Jaral drunken and always drawing their knives [...] Each pueblo possesses a collection of ballads recording local history, and of sayings and rhymes in which the praises of the pueblo are sung and derogatory observations are made of its neighbours.

The interesting fact is that these towns were paired, but even then it was the differences which they reviled and rejected. We thus encounter here the principle that 'the finer the differences between people, the stronger the commitment people have to them' (Cohen 1985:110). Categorisation, labelling, and stereotyping have much to do with maintaining order in a plural and complex society. Cohen (1985:114) says that 'the stereotype constrains the expression of internal diversity by providing the vocabulary of values through which people construct their understanding of the social world'. More graphic still is Brown's (2000:265-6) remark: 'the world is simply too complex a place for us to survive without some means of simplifying and ordering it first. Just as scientists use classification systems to reduce nature's complexity to a more manageable number of categories, so too do we rely on categories in our everyday lives'. This process entails the creation (or definition) of boundaries, which provide security for the ingroup. It is critical to understand that 'boundedness is integral to the idea of identity, for it is boundaries that both enclose those who share what is common and exclude those who belong outside' (Lieu 2004:98). These boundaries may change with the passing of time to encourage interaction with former antagonistic groups, but they provide order and rules for such an interaction (:104-108). 'With this, attention was drawn particularly to the negative or destructive potential of identity-formation, the exercise of power in labelling and exclusion. How far is this intrinsic? How far does it have to be said with Regina Schwartz that "acts of

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identity formation are themselves acts of violence?"[12]' Without falling prey to possible extremisms, it is fair to assume that categorisation implies a potential level of control. The *different* quickly becomes the 'other', since the standard is usually applied by the more powerful. However, even in these cases we need to be careful and not generalise. For instance, in the second century, the apologetic treatise *Ad Diognetum* was able to take the supposedly negative and weaker 'otherness' of the Christians (as viewed by the larger pagan audience) as a token of virtue. *Diog* 5.4 expressed it so: 'But while they [i.e. the Christians] dwell in both Greek and barbarian cities, each as his lot was cast, and follow the customs of the land in dress and food and other matters of living, they show forth the remarkable and admittedly strange (παραδόξον) order of their own citizenship (πολιτείας)'. It is important to be aware that at times *Diog* plays on this 'otherness' (cf. 5.5) as characteristic of the morality of the Christians. In other instances, it strengthens the notion of their similarity or 'lack of difference'; (*Diog* 5.1): 'For Christians are distinguished from the rest of men neither by country nor by language nor by customs' (Χριστιανοὶ γὰρ οὔτε γῇ οὔτε φθνῇ οὔτε ἔθεσι διακεκριμένοι τῶν λοιπῶν εἰσιν ἀνθρώπων).

The text above points to something central: everybody functions in life under a multiple variety of identities, which can be salient or ameliorated depending on the context (Lieu 2004:155). Thus, at work I can function as a director with a group of fifty people working under me, but when I come home I am no longer functioning within the framework of this social identity, but as a father, a husband, a son to my parents, a friend to my neighbours, etc. To do otherwise would be to cross the line of sanity and show signs of deviant behaviour, i.e., not conforming to the usual pattern of society. 'Multiplexity thus calls for means of discriminating roles, not to de-personalize them, for they all merge in the person of the actor, but to signal to others appropriate behaviour' (Cohen 1985:30). Some of these identities may seem unimportant to outsiders, but mark basic boundaries for the individual and the group. North American social psychology, with a strong individualistic slant, sees the individual essentially as a basket of selves which come to the surface at different social moments, as it is appropriate. The basket, then, is the individual's identity (Cohen 1994:11).

As it was mentioned earlier, several elements make people who they are and how they grade/categorise themselves. Some assumptions of SIT are that 'society is treated as a heterogeneous collection of social categories which stand in power and status relations to one another, and whose dynamics are subject to the forces of economics and history. People derive their identity (their sense of

[12] Lieu (2004:15), quoting Schwartz (1997:5).

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self, their self-concept) in *great* part from the social categories to which they belong. The group is thus in the individual, and the psychological processes responsible for this are also responsible for the form that group behaviour takes' (Hogg & Abrams 1998:18-19, my emphasis). These identities are never stagnant in the sense that I, the manager, could be laid off the next day and then have to look for a job as a worker under the supervision of somebody else. If I try to live out my 'supervisor identity' in this new job I am heading for disaster. We add new identity elements to who we are as we grow in life experiences and depending on the social context and their utility in these different social settings (Nagel 1994:155). In this regard, my (e.g. Spanish) ethnic/social identity may be quite dormant—consciously speaking—while in Spain, but become suddenly salient as I travel to a distant country in which I discover myself totally at loss trying to understand the locals' cultural script. In this new context my ethnic/cultural identity (i.e., my Spanish*ness*) is salient and I need to decide whether to learn another cultural script or reject it on grounds of the so-called superiority (or any other cognitive device) of my own cultural identity. Of course, we are not speaking here of an 'essence', as if it were something which had a life of its own. Rather, what is of interest to us is that, spurred by the culture of the 'other', I am able to recognize my own *differentness* and thus proceed accordingly. This same conflict can happen even within one's own group, as it is demonstrated by Bentley's reference to the Maranao woman as a test case (Bentley 1987:29-32), although his analysis suffers from ascribing ethnicity too wide a role in culture (cf. Yelvington 1991:158). Cohen (1985:15) explains this well: 'Symbols do not much express meaning as give us the capacity to make meaning'[13].

We hope to be able to recognize, through the emphasis we observe in Paul's way of communicating, the salient elements present in Philippi at the time.

[13] Anyone married to a person from other culture/country or who has lived abroad for an extended period of time is aware of the presence of such complexities. The same is also true concerning the massive arrival of immigrants to European countries at present. The increasing number of foreigners in one's own country *usually* tends to reinforce feelings of patriotism, dormant nationalistic impulses and the like. This is fertile ground for prejudice. However, unless there is a level of continuity between both cultures/ways of life, it is impossible to make any sense of other's cultures. We can only make sense of the 'other' through bridging from our own context to the strange one (cf. the complexities and dangers of such processes in Cohen 1985:40, where he writes that 'the *appearance* of similarity may dissuade people from questioning its *reality*', original emphasis). However, to acknowledge the 'other' we do not need to do so, only be aware that they are different from us. As I said earlier, we come to know who we are as we recognize differences in others/us. Cohen (1985:14), while commenting on symbols (age, father, death, doctor, etc.), writes that 'their [symbols] meanings are *not* shared in the same way. Each is mediated by the idiosyncratic experience of the individual' (original emphasis).

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However, this angle of incidence points to a possible limitation/obstacle of our approach to SIT, namely, the difficulty we experience when trying to understand the 'formative experience of a shared world' of those whom we refer to as 'Christians' since we are speaking 'of the generation of a new and distinctive set of such patterns through and within the experiences and the responses of individuals' (Lieu 2004:156). That is, however, a limitation that any study of this sort faces at the outset, although it might be *a*critically (i.e., implicitly) assumed. We are dealing with a formative phase in the Christ-following movement and study the texts with the hope of discerning insights that will aid us in describing how identity was intended to be formed through the letter.

2.1 Defining Identity

One of the important tasks ahead is to propose a definition of identity[14]. Esler (2003:11) complained, in light of its profusion in recent scholarly works, that identity is 'frequently used, rarely defined'. What forms, then, a person's identity?

> Identities —if they are alive, if they are being lived— are unfinished and in progress. Whether they be specific to the imagined worlds of romance or the careers of mental illness, or generic to ethnic, gender, race, and class divisions, identities never arrive in persons or in their immediate social milieu already formed. They do not come into being, take hold in lives, or remain vibrant without considerable social work in and for the person. They happen in *social practice*.
>
> (Holland et al 2003:vii; my emphasis)

What can be done when we are dealing with ancient texts and do not engage with 'living subjects'? The Socio-scientific study of the New Testament argues that we can get closer to ancient cultures by transposing what we know from similar extant or researched cultures into the constructions we have created of the ancient ones.

But the question still stands: What is identity? According to some anthropologists identity is defined as 'a concept that figuratively combines the intimate or personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social

[14] Lieu (2004:11) is aware that labels like 'identity' or 'construction' are anachronisms and reflect 'the particular intellectual and ideological preoccupations of the contemporary world'. Indeed, the term 'identity' is comparatively recent, entering the scholarly discourse only after 1950.

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relations' (Holland et al 2003:5). Lieu (2004:12) in turn presents a 'rudimentary' definition of identity which 'involves ideas of boundedness, of sameness and difference, of continuity, perhaps of a degree of homogeneity, and of recognition by self and by others'. Nagel (1994:153) discuses ethnic identity and presents the central elements in its construction: language, religion, appearance, ancestry and regionality. Some of these elements have been contested. 'Appearance' (i.e. physiognomy) for example, might not have played such a differentiating role in the Graeco-Roman world (cf. Duling 2003; Cromhout 2005). To these we can add other elements: status, wealth, clothing, occupation, etc. González (1997:132) affirms that 'la identidad no consiste en modo alguno en una igualdad de un sujeto consigo mismo, sino de unos esquemas intencionales que recibimos de los demás'. This is important: What others tell us about us forms an important part of how we identify ourselves as individuals. But the problem we face is discerning whether, when speaking about identity we are talking a sort of an 'essence' (the primordial view) or something which is socially constructed. Acknowledging that identity is formed by a multiplicity of elements, we are, obviously, born with some (ethnicity, nationality, physiognomy, family, etc.), whereas others are acquired culturally (language, customs, trade, etc.). Depending on what part of the identity element we are focusing on will determine the usefulness of such an approach, since distinction blurs sometimes on account of the context and the cultural stresses. These elements, *viz*. 'ethnicity', are not as stable as they may seem at first sight. Barth (1966) recognises ethnic identity as 'malleable', since it is articulated at the boundary, where ethnic groups encounter one another (cf. Cohen 1994:10).

2.2 Identity: Born or Made?

An important point of tension among specialists has to do with whether identity (in this concrete case ethnic-identity[15]) derives from a 'primordialist'

[15] Although ethnicity is just one element which constitutes identity, it is true at the same time that even religious practices were deemed part of the group's ethnicity, especially in the Graeco-Roman world (cf. Lieu 2002b:53; 2004; Esler 2003:63-65; 71). Van Aarde (2006:355) citing Williamson (1998:5), affirms: 'The "religion" of classical Greece or Rome […] is simply the totality of cultic practices, mythology and speculation about the gods current among the people of a specific area or ethnic-linguis[tic] unit or network of such units' (cf. Duling 2005). Nagel (1994:152) finds that 'identity and culture are two basic building blocks of ethnicity'. In that case identity should be subsumed within the wider concept of ethnicity, but it is still 'ethnic identity'. Identity, what the person agglutinates on, encompasses other elements besides ethnicity, as we will have opportunity to see.

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view or rather from a 'constructivist' one[16]. Broadly speaking primordialism emphasizes that 'ethnic groups have intense and emotional bonds to a family, territory, language, customs and religion. The differences run so deep that they may be regarded as involuntary, "natural affections"' (van Aarde 2006:366; quoting Duling 2005:126). These affections are embedded in the matrix of groups and individuals from the earliest times and are part and parcel of the core identity of such. The person's (ethnic) identity is not 'so much a question of choice, let alone of any rational choice, but of tradition, which evokes intense emotions because it can be traced back to memories, sometimes of a mythical nature, of shared ancestors and a shared origin' (van Aarde 2006:366; cf. Esler 2003:45). The constructivist approach emphasises the role of culture in integrating the individual within a set of agreed patterns, thus socialising the individual into the larger group. Cromhout (2005:84) defends that there exists the possibility of maintaining both elements (constructivist/primordialist) in tension without having to opt for either one. As a matter of fact, when it comes to speaking of identity, some authors clearly take both as a combination of what occurs in daily life:

> Thus persons and, to a lesser extent, groups are caught in the tensions between past histories that have settled in them and the present discourses and images that attract them or somehow impinge upon them. In this continuous self-fashioning, identities are hard-won standpoints that, however dependent upon social support and however vulnerable to change, make at least a modicum of self-direction possible. They are possibilities for mediating agency.
>
> (Holland et al 2003:4)

Different schools of thought prefer one approach over the other, but it seems fair to make the observation that the 'essentialist' view presents a far too rigid view of the human subject (Geertz 1995; cf. Esler 2003:45). After all, it is better to hold onto a view that can balance the tension between extremes and avoid the danger of reification (and of 'social laws') as well as of utter chaos, where nothing can be observed and studied because there is no expected pattern to

[16] Bentley (1987:24-27) provides a clarifying summary of this debate, which is still open: 'Primordialism' and 'constructivism' are here used as basic references, although anthropologists also refer to this tension/dichotomy as 'primordialist-instrumentalist' approaches, or even 'essentialism' *vs* 'constructivism'. 'This dichotomy […] continues to orient studies of ethnicity despite a growing sense that it obscures important aspects of the phenomena under study' (:25). One of the critical aspects not answered through these approaches is how people (who form a group) come to recognize basic commonalities in the first place. It is here that Bentley believes that the *theory of practice*, formulated by P Bourdieu (1977) may provide an answer. What is noteworthy is that Bentley himself cannot answer it conclusively either (cf. Yelvington's 1991 critique of Bentley).

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human behaviour. Who people *are* is more clearly observed in how they behave, but only when we have researched their culture with adequate detail can we 'predict' their behaviour with a certain degree of accuracy. 'Behavior is better viewed as a sign of self in practice, not as sign of self in essence' (Holland et al 2003:31). Lieu (2004:14) says that 'to recognize that identity is constructed is not to talk only about origins, but also about mechanisms for managing and claiming continuity, even, or especially, when these may be differently interpreted by different individuals who still recognize one another as belonging'. Horrell (1996:23) criticizes the aim of social science to predict and thus control, while he maintains that there is a constant 'systematic unpredictability' in human action which causes such search to be futile. However, the goal of my study is not to produce and apply law-like generalizations, but to approach the texts with certain educated/tested questions in mind rather than simply let the reader imply the methodological angle we choose to apply to the texts. In the case of SIT we can predict that social identity may lead to group bias both in terms of rewarding the ingroup and of stereotyping the outgroup[17]. It will be clarifying to see if such 'predictions' are reflected in the letter to the Philippians. Paul stereotypes outgroups (2:15), that is clear, but he is concerned with not closing the boundaries with them too tightly, since the Philippian Christ-followers (the ingroup) must remain part of the larger society (1:27) where they are to shine (2:15).

3. Potential Limitations of the Chosen Approach

The angle of incidence and the methodology we choose presents both potential discoveries and obviations (due to a limited focus) on the subject under study. Often only the former aspect is addressed, but we are slowly learning the value of making explicit the core of the methodology employed so that readers can keep track of the path we trod. With this in mind, let us first examine some potential obstacles of our approach.

[17] There is clearly a subjective element in this identity construction process. As Anderson (1991:6) points out by his famous term 'imagined community', all groups identities, from the biggest (e.g., nation) to the smallest, share this trait, in that they 'will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their community' (cf. Miles 1997:5).

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3.1 Modern Theories Applied to Ancient Texts

It may be argued that it is not possible to apply a modern theory of social relations (from industrialised societies) to ancient *literature* —which derive from different cultural contexts (pre-industrial societies)— without doing serious violence to the latter. It is true that cultural ways differ substantially from one epoch to another. Even in our modern world this same principle holds true. Any person who has travelled abroad quickly realizes that what one assumes as the 'normal way of things' back home can be overtly challenged in a different setting. Written some decades ago, E T Hall's *The Silent Language* (1973) presents the reader with a whole array of examples that just confirm our ethnocentric perspective as we try to make sense of what we see around us. His work is a caution against a stereotyped and forced view of society today through the eyes of Western observers (ethnocentrism). The same could be applied when this fixed perception is transposed across time (anachronism).

But the problem has already been stated: how can we make sense of the 'then' from the 'now'? This is what is referred to as the 'problem of incommensurability'. It is a complex problem, since the gap between the *now* (the contemporary perspective, the *etic*) and the *then* (the *emic* one) may just be too huge to be able to make sense of ancient society without projecting a great deal of our values into our reading and interpretation of past events, be it via archaeological artefacts or through the exegesis of ancient texts. A socio-scientific study of the New Testament argues that we can get closer to ancient cultures by transposing what we know from similar extant or researched cultures into the construction we have created of the ancient one[18]. This can be done because we believe there is a reasonable level of *commensurability* (transposing across time and space), which is acceptable *if* it is aptly justified by the interpreter (the debate about whether such a practice is correctly aimed is highly complex, see Cohen 1985:39-40).

Although this approach may sound extremely subjective and allow for too grand a projection, the crude reality is that many old (and modern!) interpreters of the Bible often assume this bridging in an uncritical way, as if our times and

[18] We are aware that not all socio-scientific studies need to make use of comparative models, since some of them can just focus on a particular area and be more descriptive that explanatory. Horrell clarifies this concept even further when he writes that 'comparative study can equally aim to illumine the *distinctiveness* of each particular socio-historical context' (Horrell 1996:23, original emphasis).

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occasions could be read onto ancient texts without proper historical *and* cultural filtering. Here I argue again that the use of an informed and explicit sociological imagination serves to guide us in our endeavor to find meaning within the texts. But this is not the only reason. Texts should not be treated just as 'secondary to the lived experience of actual communities' (Lieu 2004:300). These texts were preserved because these communities valued them. Somehow they identified with them and received encouragement and strengthened their own identity in dialogue with them. Texts (as mediated by many voices and not just necessarily only by their authors) are what we possess, so we have to allow them to become the voices with whom we ultimately engage and not with our own self-made methodologies. Finally, as Kee (1989:25) points out, '[w]hat is required of historical study, including that of early Christianity, is to be faithful to the evidence as well as the dominant epistemological paradigms in the natural and social sciences'.

Rather than justifying the *status quo* (as a 'social Darwinist'), 'the social identity approach simply states that social groups are inevitable because they are functional —they fulfil individual and societal needs for order, structure, simplification, predictability, and so forth' (Hogg & Abrams 1998:18). But we are speaking of more than pure functionalism, since '[g]roup formation is a [sic] not merely an effect of interpersonal relationships; it actively determines and qualitatively changes people's attitudes and behaviours toward each other' (Turner 1999:15).

Ling (2006:2-7) presents two answers that the socio-scientific study of the Bible has so far provided to the problem of incommensurability. One of them is 'modelling', which presupposes that reality is a social construct and as such somehow 'fixed' and 'stable' in the form of social structures. We can therefore overcome the gap through an *ad hoc* model of contemporary agrarian society that closely resembles that of first-century 'pre-industrial advanced agrarian society of the circum-Mediterranean region' (Ling 2006:4, citing Elliott 1986:49, who derives this description from Lenski & Lenski 1987 and Sjoberg 1960). Thus, 'modelling of normative social values, combined with an "abductive" strategy working from evidence to hypothesis in a back-and-forth movement of suggestion checking is presented as a means to circumvent the problem of incommensurability. However, modelling is about discerning typical patterns, which are liable to become, if they are not already, caricatures or stereotypes which may interfere with understanding rather than illuminate it' (Ling 2006:4). We shall devout a great deal of energy to answer to these concerns in the next chapter.

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The second answer is the 'interpretivist' approach, which opts for greater emphasis on human agency. 'Social structures are therefore deemed to have only a virtual existence, existing only in so far as they are reproduced and transformed by acting human subjects' (Ling 2006:5). The interpretivist approach tries to face the problem of incommensurability by 'seeking to overcome the interpreter's distance from any text's context of origin, by "tackling between the most local of detail and the most global of structure in a continuous dialectical process", which brings both into simultaneous view, whilst keeping the transformative dimension of social embodied meaning always in mind' (Ling 2006:5, quoting Garrett 1992:91ff). Probably, the problem with such an approach is that it 'obscures the relations of individuals to social structures which repeated empirical studies suggest order people's lives' (Ling 2006:5). Although these approaches seem quite opposite, both stress a back-and-forth movement or dialectical process (:6). Here, it is best to take into account both emphases and pay attention to possible structures as they are played out in the social arena, but always aware of the danger of possible projections onto the texts.

Coming back to our first concern, one way to escape both ethnocentrism and anachronism is to be explicit about the context from where I direct the questions to the text so as to allow (implied) readers to judge if the application is fair to the methodology and to the world of the text. This requires of a constant back-and-forth movement specialists term *abduction*[19], or the aforementioned dialectical process, since neither structure nor agency should have the upper hand in this complex human dynamic we are trying to describe. Though the application of abduction is time-consuming, the fact of the matter is that it provides the interpreter with valuable resources which can in turn filter preconceptions, unwelcomed projections, unconscious elements, etc. Horsley (1994:12) arrives at a similar conclusion: 'To establish an adequate historical sociology or anthropology, we must move beyond illustrating models (such as those of structural-functional sociology or pan-Mediterranean cultural anthropology) to a more dialectical movement between textual and other evidence of ancient social structures, conflicts, and meaning analyzed with the

[19] This is just a tool which allows the interpreter to be aware of possible projections on the data, as Malina (1991:254) aptly expresses: 'What occurs as one reads or hears depends largely on the reader's and/or listener's interest. For every text, whether written or spoken, evokes what can never be put into a text by any writer or speaker, and this is the commonsense, socially shared, understanding of the reader […] Interpretation is in fact supplying what is lacking in a text so that the text might mean something'. I can identify with the 'uneasiness' statements such as these might trigger in some interpreters, but we need to remember we are only speaking of an assessment process which may help us validate/invalidate our insights. Cf. Estévez (2003:54-55).

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help of modern Western sociological methods, on the one hand, and models and methods which we critically adapt and revise on the basis of our historical analysis of texts and cultural artifacts, on the other'. An honest approach (with the use of abduction) will prepare interpreters to face our preconceptions, since 'it is important to allow the evidence from early Christianity to question one's own chosen approach' (Horsley 1994:9). We always need to be aware of the unavoidable limitations and reductionist tendencies of any chosen angle of incidence.

SIT is being used to access the texts of the New Testament as yet another tool within the gamut of socio-scientific approaches. Esler was the first scholar to study the texts of the New Testament via SIT (Esler 1998:41; 2000, 2003)[20]. He succeeded both in clarifying the social setting and explaining the relational matrix embedded in them. Esler states that we need to be aware that 'there must be a reasonable correspondence between the etic concept and the emic data upon which it will be employed, to avoid doing violence to the latter' (Esler 2003:8). Scholars who use social-scientific approaches on the New Testament have been quite clear in stating that as important as to describe the *Sitz im Leben* of the text is to describe the point of departure of the researcher (Horsley 1994). Before we engage with a detailed exegesis of the Christ-hymn, we will try to construct a plausible scenario that is congruent with the data we possess concerning first-century Philippi[21]. We aim at finding a proper social location of thought that is congruent with the context we are studying. On this precise topic Rohrbaugh (1987:110) complained about the improper use of generalizations that gave way to descriptions that were 'fragmentary, random, and often unclear' (citing Meeks 1983:72). However, we cannot escape this 'fragmentary' character of our interpretation for several reasons: 1) we cannot interview the major characters of the event; 2) we possess only a portion of the communication process between Paul and his communities; 3) we do not have the written thoughts of the Philippian community; 4) at best our approach to the social location is filtered, subjective and incomplete (as is our knowledge of the history of the colony). Having said this, is it still worthwhile to continue

[20] More scholars are now benefiting from the insights of a broader use of theories of ethnicity, in which issues of identity and intergroup relations are pivotal. See in this regard the recent University of Pretoria PhD thesis by M Cromhout (2005)—also van Aarde (2006).

[21] Horsley (1994:4): 'Biblical studies is in an experimental stage and will remain so while interpreters sort out, by trial and error, what tools, models, and approaches are useful and adequate for studying New Testament history and literature.' Writing more than a decade ago, Horsley was well aware that the field needed further development in concrete areas. However, after some decades of research, the social-scientific method seems more consolidated as new scholars build onto the information and wisdom of their predecessors in the discipline. For a good review on the progress (and its challenges) of the discipline, see Horrell (1999).

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with this endeavor? Of course! Provided we are aware that our interpretations and constructions are only plausible approximations, never the last word on the subject. Paraphrasing Einstein's words on the frontispiece, 'we do the best we can with what we have'. This leads us to our second concern.

3.2 Lack of (Ancient) Evidence

Horsley points out that when studying New Testament texts we confront a serious obstacle, the problem of 'evidence' (Horsley 1994:5). The evidence for early Christianity and its cultural *milieu* is 'simply scarce and fragmentary at best' (:5). Secondly, the available data does not provide much direct evidence of what can be called 'social' or 'sociological'. I aim to construct a plausible model with the evidence at hand, aided by what Esler calls 'socio-scientific imagination' (Esler 1996:256). Esler follows what Elliott had affirmed earlier, encouraging interpreters to go beyond mere historicism and detect the *implicit testimony* through the use of sociological imagination and conceptualization (Elliott, J H 1995:37, original emphasis). However, Rohrbaugh (1987:112-13) complained that much research done from a sociological point of view tends to project modern ideas on how people functioned in the pre-industrial era, what he terms 'sociocentrism'. His criticism is taken into account. After more than three decades of research and development, the 'field of social-scientific interpretation is no longer in its infancy' (Ling 2006:1), and much has been gained. Nevertheless, Rohrbaugh's cautionary words need to be heard: 'Without sufficient data to see patterns fully, we tend to fill in gaps with social imagination uncritically drawn from the industrial world'. Ling (2006:5-6), aware of this problem, quotes Meggitt (1998:39f), who suggests it is an impossible one to solve. These limitations invite us to be humble in our conclusions. The only way to overcome these *lacunae* is to gather crucial information about our topic and be precise and thorough in our observations. The temptation to 'fill in the gaps' is not easily overcome, but demands that interpreters be conscious of the presuppositions we bring to the table.

When dealing with literary texts it may seem that we are then in a precarious position from where to gain basic information on identity-formation. Nevertheless texts can shed much-needed information, since they are part and parcel of the process of identity-formation. Cameron (1991:21) remarks:

> But if ever there was a case of the construction of reality through text, such a case is provided by early Christianity […] Christians built themselves a new world. They did so partly through practice—the evolution of a mode of living

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> and a communal discipline that carefully distinguished them from their pagan and Jewish neighbours—and partly through a discourse that was itself constantly under control and disciplined[22].

As we get down to the concrete context, it becomes clear that we need to rely mainly on the written texts at our disposal. Lieu (2004:10, original emphasis) explains it this way:

> studies of identity in antiquity have focused on texts, not only because it is these that survive, but out of a recognition of the constructive role of texts in that world, particularly that of the Roman Empire. Moreover, numerous references to reading as well as to writing demonstrate an assumption that a wide audience would have experienced Christian texts. It is the texts' own presupposition that they will shape their audiences' self-understanding even if their authors must have taken for granted how few would actually *read* them.

Again, an explicit methodology, with the recurrent use of abduction, can prevent *some* (unconscious) subjective deviations in this regard. Ultimately, looking both at the discrete (the evidence drawn from the texts) and the typical (with the use of the social sciences), we aim at drawing nigh to the Philippian Christ-following community. This takes us then to our third concern.

3.3 History *versus* Sociology

I mentioned above that one of the 'negative' aims of this study is to avoid both ethnocentric and anachronistic tendencies by understanding first-century Mediterranean world *prima facie*. Horsley (1994:8) remarks that 'it may be absolute essential to devote much more attention to reconstruction of the most pertinent ancient social structures and conflicts before we can seriously proceed to satisfactory explanation'. This research is concerned with how people interact and how they live out their values in the midst of an ancient heterogeneous society that 'invited' different groups and individuals to surrender to the all-pervasive 'world-view' proposed by the Roman Empire[23]. This complex process is referred to as *Romanisation*, and although difficult to describe it cogently, it

[22] Quoted in Lieu (2004:27).

[23] The expression 'world-view' may be too charged. This term seems to encompass ample diversity into a homogeneous frame of mind, which is always dangerous. However, what I am trying to express here is that the Roman Empire was a masterful propaganda machine which aimed to convince its subject-peoples of the superiority of its life-style. Zanker's insightful work on the power of images in the age of Augustus (1992) reveals the craftiness and studied efforts to project a benevolent, yet all-powerful, image to the rest of the world.

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forms one of the strongest sources for identity-formation. It would be an error to try to homogenise all human groups to make them fit into a neat grid, or a single model. However, it is important to clarify that in following SIT's insights, my aim is not to show that such could account for all experiences a person/group underwent in first-century society, but to describe a plausible *typical* way in which they related to each other[24].

Whereas sociological studies look for the typical, historical studies focus on the distinctive character, the concrete situation. When we speak of 'identity-formation' in the Graeco-Roman world we start from a high level of abstraction, but it is worthwhile to remember that this sense of self-definition must have been 'particular pressing during the Hellenistic period, the late Republic, and the early Empire, as horizons extended, and as people needed to locate themselves within a wider world that could claim both unity and multiple difference […] identity is to do with change and with the encounter with others, two major features of this period' (Lieu 2004:17). What we have to research, ultimately, is not the co-existence of multiple identities within the individual and the group, but whether 'being a Christ-follower' could in any way be perceived as an obstacle to being *authentically* Philippian, according to the Empire (cf. Yelvington 1991:162).

Campbell (2008:74) observes that 'real life does not correspond to the neat categories of sociology'. However, it will be naïve to think we have immediate access to ancient texts without a proper comprehension of the *humus* in which they were embedded, as if texts offer mere *raw* data. That is a powerful reason to apply diverse disciplines to the study of the texts in question. Haslam (2003:4) captures this perspective accurately: 'A well-known assumption in the philosophy of science is that creative ideas and novel hypothesis more easily emerge when insights from different areas of research are combined'.

4. Identity in the First-Century Mediterranean World

As we focus on first-century Mediterranean society, we need to take a look at how the apostle Paul defined his own version of 'Christ-like identity' in his writings. We touch on the issue of his identity only by way of introduction here, since we deal more directly with Paul and his self-understanding in chapter 5.

[24] Hanson and Oakman (1998:13): 'In social-scientific perspective, our primary focus will be on the typical and general in its application to understanding the particular and unique'.

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4.1 Identity for Paul

There are three passages where Paul describes his life previous to his conversion (Gl 1:13-14; Phlp 3:4-6; 2 Cor 11:22). While conversion to Christ did not mean for Paul the repudiation per se of his former life and identity, some of it came to be re-evaluated and re-interpreted (Taylor 2002:587). Lieu (2004:139) observes: 'For Paul, what separates him from his life in Judaism is God's apocalyptic intervention (Gal 1. 15-16): this is not a mystical experience that enhances but does not structurally alter his sense of self and destiny, but something that compels him, and those whom he converts, to discover new bonds of identity'. Lieu alludes to the 'mystery' which God revealed to him and which is frequently alluded to and further developed in Eph (see Dunn 1999:174). Paul's own self-definition (his identity) comes to the fore when he writes to his communities that he is a 'slave of Christ Jesus' (Phlp 1:1, δοῦλος), and a sent-one of God even in the face of internal and external opposition. It is clear that for Paul his role as apostle to the churches is of utmost importance[25]. Focusing on the text of Philippians, Paul's use of δοῦλος adds a critical dimension to the term[26]. After all, being a slave/servant, Paul identifies fully with Christ who in Phlp 2:7 takes on the form of a slave.

More striking still is the fact that he proposes a close identification with Jesus Christ in a way that the distinction between Paul's own life and that of Christ seems at times to blur (cf. Phlp 1:21, ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ Χριστὸς). 'Christocentric identity is defined "through faith in Christ Jesus" (διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ιησοῦ —Gl 3:26) and adoption into God's family, with status as children of God and Abraham superseding previous criteria of identity' (Taylor 2002:592)[27]. We will see that Paul does not make use of Abraham or any patriarch in order to instil a sense of 'Christ-identity' in the Philippian community, comprised of gentile Christ-followers. Rather, there is a radical reference to 'in-Christ-

[25] Both images of δοῦλος and of ἀπόστολος appear more often than any other in the self-presentation Paul makes in his (genuine) letters. *Apostle* appears in Rm 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1, 1; Gl 1:1 and Col 1:1, but not in Phlp. Interestingly the only mention to *slave* (or slaves, δοῦλοι) in the heading of the letter is found in Phlp 1:1. Another term used only once is *prisoner* (δέσμιος) in Phlm 1.

[26] Brown (2001) thinks we are dealing with a technical term.

[27] Watson (2000:114), in clear disagreement with Dunn (1998b), affirms that Paul's theology of God is distinctively Christian, since for him the word 'God' means 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' and it can no longer be affirmed that 'Jewish monotheism' remains foundational for the apostle.

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identity' based on deep theological reflexion expressed in the Christ-hymn[28]. Something else than mere imitation is at stake here: it is an identity based on the principle of he who rules the world and is able to save and transform their very lives (Phlp 3:20-21). It is out of this new alternative identity that the Philippians are encouraged to live in the context of the city (1:27). Far from 'spiritualizing' Christ-like life, the apostle is concerned with concrete ways of application.

As I mentioned earlier, people's identities are in constant progress. Paul also understands this as he shares with the Philippians about the fulfilment that is to come on the day of Christ (Phlp 1:6-10). His *parousia* is exactly what is referred to in 3:20-21. Christ's coming is a future event which should confirm the community's present outlook in life, since a deeper transformation is to take place (3:21 μετασχηματίζω). The apostle also uses his own coming (παρουσία, cf. 1:26; 2:12) to reinforce present behaviour.

Buell and Hodges centre on Paul's letter to the Romans, particularly on the dialogue between Judeans and Christ-followers, when it comes to identity formation. They conclude that Christ is presented in the letter as an agent of ethnic transformation. Their case is solid in certain areas, since they capture an (original) emphasis that does not shy away from ethnic obliteration in Christ (as has been traditionally read into Gl 3:28), but about an identity both ethnic-based and potentially open to all. 'Paul establishes a kinship for gentiles with Israel that is based not on shared blood but on shared spirit […] an identity marked by a privileged sign of fixity: inclusion in a lineage. Paul constructs a myth of collective identity for his gentiles; they can trace their beginnings not only to their baptism into Christ but also to their ancestor Abraham' (Buell & Hodges 2004:245-246). However, their argument is weakened when we look at the final part of the letter where the real centre becomes God's action in Christ that gives birth to a new community (with her God-given adoption) and which goes beyond biological/ethnic Israel, even if it is spoken of in spiritual terms. Paul's 'ethnic reasoning' (in the sense of recovering the importance of ethnicity in the new model of Christian community) makes sense at certain points in his correspondence to the Romans, but it is almost absent in Philippians. Paul's appeal in Phlp 3:5-10 radically supports the view of an all-encompassing and universal Lord above ethnic differences. At least *these* are not mentioned or alluded to as a central part of their identity, maybe because they still hold, in

[28] Lieu (2004:131): 'For Paul it is surely right to say that identity is fundamentally Christocentric, and that from this stems all else'. As she aptly observes, this analysis cannot rest here since 'faith in Jesus Christ' begs further definition and exegesis. However this may be interpreted, it is clear that the Christ-hymn spouses the same view in which the true mark of identity is to 'confess that Jesus Christ is Lord' (Phlp 2:11).

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fact, much weight in their experience. Here, if at all, ethnic reasoning takes on a different form: there is no reference to the stories of their ancestors, and Paul is not trying to bring them to an understanding of their new and common ancestry in Abraham (as could be argued for Romans and Galatians)[29]. Rather, the radical call to identity is drawn to their identification with Christ, who in the form of God, abased himself and took human form, becoming a slave. It is then that the Christ-following community is called to eagerly await the coming of the saviour who comes from above, where their *politeuma* (commonwealth, citizenship) resides. Paul's appeal to the members of the Philippian community includes a firm imperative (πολιτεύεσθε, 1:27) to live such values in the context of the *polis* where they are planted. Soteriology and ethics are closely related. This is not a case of escapism, but a call to live in their present context reflecting the values that come from above.

4.2 Social Identity Theory and the Mediterranean World

When we speak about group identity it is crucial to define what a group is. According to Tajfel and Turner a group is 'a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their groups and of their membership in it' (Tuner & Bourhis 1996:30). Cohen (1985:12, original emphasis) advances the definition of community (not just 'group') a little further when he writes: 'A reasonable interpretation of the word's use would seem to imply two related suggestions: that the members of a group of people (a) have something in common with each other, which (b) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups. The word thus expresses a *relational* idea: the opposition of one community to other or to other social entities'. People of the Mediterranean world in ancient times tended to view themselves as mirrored in others. They were, as it is commonly termed, 'dyadic personalities'. Membership to a group is, therefore, a 'must' in such a corporate society. This is crucial, since the groups to which people belong, whether by assignment or by choice, will be immensely significant in determining their life experiences (Hogg & Abrams 2003:2). Just by way of simple introduction, most modern western readers of the Bible today — especially in the English-speaking world— forget that most of the pages of the New Testament are aimed at communities, even when they are addressed by

[29] The only possible link with a 'myth of ancestry' might be Phlp 2:6-11, which functions as a *theological narrative* and, in such a fashion, could be serving that purpose. I will deal more concretely with this possibility in later chapters.

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the term 'you', which is mostly, if not always, used in the plural form (Gk ὑμεῖς; which unfortunately goes unnoticed in many English versions). Paul refers to the Philippians using the 'you' (ὑμεῖς) or group-oriented language in Philippians more than fifty (50) times, but not even once refers to an individual by using the singular form of direct address 'you' (σύ)[30]. Clearly his message focuses on the group and not on individuals, although the latter are included in the group. I believe this justifies the use of SIT in order to clarify elements in the communication process between the apostle and his community that otherwise can be concealed to us.

We need to remember, moreover, that the initial observations of Tajfel, which led him to form this theory, were the *unexpected* reactions that happened within the framework of what has been termed 'minimal group paradigm' (Haslam 2003:6-7). The initial observation can be described as follows: people in an experimental situation which excluded the operation of conflicts of interest showed a tendency for favouritism to members of their own ingroup (allocation of resources), even though it was done on a anonymous basis (both for ingroup and outgroup members) and they could not benefit from their discriminatory behaviour. These results were replicated and confirmed in different contexts later on, giving way to the initial definition of SIT. The reactions he observed happened in 'individualistic' twentieth century Western society. This allows us to assume that there may be elements in our societies that might potentially shed light on first-century Mediterranean society, with a more salient need for group belonging.

Anthropologists and New Testament scholars who approach the texts with the help of social sciences agree in that ancient Mediterranean people were dyadic personalities, that is, they came to know who they were through others and not mainly due to self-assessment (Malina 1981; 1995:87-88). In this context, for 'the majority of the population, particularly those with least freedom of association, the household to which they belonged through birth or through a social transaction was the primary source of their identity' (Taylor 2002:577). What is true in Graeco-Roman cities is even stronger in the rural/agrarian contexts, where '[l]oyalty to family, clan, village, political faction, and religious group is fundamental. The integrity of the group is more important than self-reliance' (Hanson & Oakman 1998:7). Kinship is of fundamental value, also the status and role (*paterfamilias*, son, daughter, uncle, slave, concubine), and the rank

[30] We will address this theme more directly when we focus more specifically on 'all-expressions' (πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν) as we apply SIT to the letter combined with the other approaches which merge in chapter 7.

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people play in the local context (trade, political office, patron, client, slave, foreigner, etc.).

In light of Acts 16:1-40, Paul's first encounter in the colony, the impact this had on him (1 Th 2:2), and his way of addressing the Philippian congregation (partaking on the same struggle; Phlp 1:29-30), all point to the possibility that the crisis experienced is a rejection on account of being followers of Jesus Christ. Some Judaizers have visited the Philippians, challenging the teaching of the apostle[31]. It is at this point that SIT needs to account for social structure as well. It is clear that in the present context we are referring to the social mores of the Roman Empire that permeated every corner of this Greek conquered land. The so-called *Pax Romana* had made her way throughout the Empire and great efforts were made to ensure that this ushered in a new age. But the structure of ordinary society had indeed changed little. The upper classes ruled in the same old manners, and social mobility, although present, was no more than a *mirage* for the great majority of the population. Hogg and Abrams (1998:27, original emphasis) affirm that:

> subordinate group membership potentially confers on members evaluatively negative social identity and hence lower self-esteem, which is an unsatisfactory state of affairs and mobilizes individuals to attempt to remedy it. They can accomplish this in various different ways, depending in part upon *subjective belief structures*, that is the individuals' beliefs concerning the nature of society and the relations between groups within it. Subjective belief structures usually reflect the dominant ideology (after all, it is initially through social consensus about one prefabricated version of reality that the dominant group hopes to retain its privileged position), *but* the dominant ideology does not necessarily have to coincide with the 'true' nature of society.

The code of ethics of the Christ-followers 'militates' against a violent revolution of any sort, which precludes then the overturning of the *status quo* through other means than those of passive resistance or tough love in the face of the adversary. SIT recognizes that within a system where social mobility is possible subordinate members adopt individualistic strategies rather than collective efforts. This 'leaves the status quo unchanged, in terms of the power and status relations between the groups, and inhibits collective action as such as riots and demonstrations on the part of the subordinate group, it is clearly very much in

[31] Their previous status prior to becoming Christ-followers should not deter us now from understanding that now they have received yet another identity with its own consequences. Paul addresses them as more than 'Christians' (or Christ-followers), of course, since he takes into account that they are complete human beings, but it is obvious that he has chosen to highlight their in-Christ identity as that which should drive and guide their life style.

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the interest of the dominant group to promulgate an ideology of social mobility' (Hogg & Abrams 1998:28).

It is obvious that some measure of social mobility was present during the early part of the Roman Empire, but in practice it was far from being the aspiration of the majority. In an environment where this change is not realistic, where boundaries cannot be crossed so easily or at all, we nevertheless can still speak of social change. There are mainly two ways to proceed in such a situation, both group strategies: either through social creativity (when there are not cognitive alternatives for change) or through social competition (when there are available cognitive alternatives). 'Social creativity strategies do not alter the status quo, yet they do render the social identity of the subordinate group relatively more positive' (Hogg & Abrams 1998:28). Creative strategies are diverse. One usually pointed to refers to those characteristics that were deemed negative traditionally, as in the case of 'black is beautiful' of the 1960's in the USA (:28; cf. Nagel 1994:166). This is an important element we observe in the letter to the Philippians, where a lower-status attitude, as displayed in the narrative of Christ self-abasement is presented as the 'higher' example to emulate. This strategy clearly corresponds to social creativity: a negative trait according to the dominant culture (humiliation, enslavement, loss of status) is presented in a radical re-definition, as a higher value-system, in such an honour-seeking society. This alternative is not other-worldly but presented through traditional cultural patterns. However, this re-definition ultimately deprives the previous vision of its all-pervasive status and renders it, at best, as of relative value.

Let us be more precise: Paul's letter to the Christ-following community at Philippi (especially in light of 2:6-11) is aimed at social change via —although not exclusively— *social creativity*.

Esler (1998:51-55) shows that within the structure of social creativity, where change in actual relationships is impossible, different strategies exist. These are: 1) comparison with the outgroup on a new dimension, 2) redefinition of existing comparison, and 3) comparison with a different outgroup. All these are based on the 'secure comparison-scheme' proposed by H Tajfel. Social change is the usual pattern of behaviour when social mobility is difficult or almost impossible to arrive at (common in the Roman Empire). We do not find admonitions to social mobility/change per se within the letter to the Philippians, but we do find two drastic examples of status reversal or honour relinquishing: one that presents Jesus the Christ (2:6-11) and other the apostle Paul himself (3:5-10). The question is how the group receives self-esteem when the model is one of abasement, that is, of loss of status. The answer may rest in

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the fact that it is God who grants the ultimate status, beyond present earthly systems. But, is this not mere wishful thinking? Paul would assuredly answer that his own life is modelled under such a principle. This is not carried *only* via the example of the apostle, but also through the living example of Epaphroditus. The entire community of believers is called to be on guard and not be deceived by the false appearances society places on the present socio-political system. Although society expects its salvation/liberation (σωτηρία) exactly there, it shall ultimately experience loss (ἀπωλείας). The only one capable to save and transform them is the one whom they must eagerly await (3:20-21), who abased himself to utter nadir (2:6-8). Their salvation depends on his παρουσία, not alike the 'coming' of Caesar who 'saved' the city in earlier times. Brown (2000:359) rightly reminds us that 'acquisition or maintenance of self-esteem may not be the sole or main reason for social identification' (cf. Ellemers, Barreto & Spears 1999:127).

This is an extremely important point, since there are elements that threaten identity: sometimes the mere fact of being categorised (where the group seems to be underprivileged) or belonging to a group with low public self-esteem. There are also distinctiveness threats, threats to value, acceptance, etc. (Bramscombe et al 1999:39). Bramscombe and others (1999:41) present a contemporary example from a study carried out in 1995. They found that when…

> Black American students think that they are likely to be categorized in terms of racial group membership, their performance on dimensions on which their group has historically fared poorly suffers. The extra burden of being seen as representative of one's own group and the possible confirmation of the negative group stereotype appear to impede performance on verbal tests […] When Black American do not believe that they have been categorized according to their racial group membership, but assume instead that they are simply completing a reading test, their performance is equivalent to that of White Americans.

This can illumine our study, since 'the nature of the threat depends on the social context in which it is encountered, and how the way in which people are likely to respond to each type of threat depends on the content of the social identity of the dimension of social comparison, and above all, on the extent to which individuals feel committed to the group' (:55). To be categorised by a more influential outgroup may leave 'indelible' marks. Nagel (1994:156) presents a clarifying contemporary example of such a categorisation practice:

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> For instance, white Americans have considerable latitude in choosing ethnic identities based on ancestry. Since many whites have mixed ancestries, they have the choice to select from among multiple ancestries, or to ignore ancestry in favour of an 'American' or 'un-hyphenated white' ethnic identity. Americans of African ancestry, on the other hand, are confronted with essentially one option—black. And while blacks may make intra-racial distinctions based on ancestry or skin tone, the power of race as a socially defining status in U.S. society makes these internal differences rather unimportant in interracial settings in comparison to the fundamental black/white boundary. The differences between the ethnic options available to blacks and whites in the United States reveal the limits of individual choice and underline the importance of external ascription in restricting available ethnicities[32].

I believe that as we clarify a plausible context for the Philippians community, we will be in a better position to apply these findings. The Philippian community is at risk of division and threatened at various fronts (inside and outside) which may be the reason why the apostle makes use of friendship, military and *koinonia*-type language in order to strengthen the seemingly 'unstable' identity of its members.

Paul becomes a model to imitate. He presents himself accepting a role/status reversal in direct identification with Christ and for the sake of the community[33]. The willingness of Epaphroditus to suffer on behalf of the Philippians (2:25-30) no doubt, also functions as an example of one of their local members. In other words, the goal does not seem to imitate the basic honour-seeking trait of the surrounding society (*typical* of Roman colonies in foreigner soil), but to follow an alternative model of social relations where humility, in living identification with Christ, is a life of reward that includes salvation (σωτερία). Within this 'secure comparison' scheme, Paul commends the Philippian believers to live as citizens (1:27, πολιτεύεσθε) 'worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ'. In order to carry this out Paul stereotypes society, as in the expression in 2:15: 'crooked and perverse generation'. The Philippian Christ-followers are to live differently within this hostile environment. Categorisation processes produce stereotypic perceptions (Hogg & Abrams 1998:20) not exempt of passion, but which usually have direct reference to the self of the ingroup. Paul presents this alternative way of living, based on a new identification in Christ, which aims at re-

[32] This example illuminates the fact that ethnic identity cannot be expressed merely as the choice of the individual. Both structure and agency are combined in this respect.

[33] Hellerman (2005:145) observes: 'The shameful manner in which Jesus died, moreover, carried with it unavoidable implications for those who worshipped him, and Paul's status-sensitive readers at Philippi would surely have been uncomfortable with the fact that a logical line could be drawn, in this regard, from the cross of Christ to the social status of his followers'.

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directing society's values toward a more humane dealing with those outside[34]. Paul's own ideological/theological understanding, based in large part on his own suffering experience, determines his *ad hoc* approach. However clear we want to be in our conclusions; the truth of the matter is that finding such *intentionality* in ancient texts may lead us to a slippery slope. We can hypothesize based on clear observation of the text in relation to the constructed *Sitz im Leben*, but as Haslam (2003:11) says, even when dealing with SIT today, 'an important challenge for future research is to further refine methods for the empirical assessment of what group members are actually trying to achieve in any given situation, so that these specific goals can be related to the behavioral strategies they employ'.

The previous observation is a value-judgment about my own understanding of Paul's letters. I believe Paul was indeed trying to incite, change, and encourage a particular congregation for which we only know a few basic facts. I do not assume the apostle was applying a cut-and-paste approach as he communicated with local congregations. What he shared with them was carefully meditated and craftily articulated to address their precise situation. In chapter 6 we will study in more detail Paul's use of ancient rhetorical devices at his disposal, but it is important at this point that the interpreter's presuppositions are spelled out. Here I follow Kee's (1989:22) advice: 'The interpreter of the text must, therefore, take fully and critically into account his or her own social setting as well as the relationships to the society in which the communication originated, and above all, the social dimension of that society'.

5. Group-Identity Formation in Philippi

Up till now we have been speaking at a reasonable high level of abstraction on the subject of identity-formation, although we have carried out some rather timid skirmishes on the local level at Philippi. Now, however, it is time to focus more specifically on the situation at the Roman colony at Philippi. The apostle Paul is communicating with a young Christ-following community —coming from a pagan background— those aspects of the 'Christian' doctrine which he deems are apropos for their present situation.

[34] Although referring to a later epoch, I fervently agree with Lieu's conclusion at the end of her impressive work on Jewish and Christian identities: 'the claim "I am a Christian" need not exclude all other forms of being, but might be situated within them, as individuals relocated themselves or redefined the structure of their allegiances' (2004:301). This fact not only created individual Christians but a peculiar people, ultimately a *tertium gens*.

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When we speak of 'Christianity' or Christian-identity we are aware of certain limitations. Firstly, we are not dealing yet with a homogeneous body of tradition as that of Judaism (or 'Judeanism')[35], since we are dealing with a young local community of Christ-followers in the Greek East part of the Roman Empire. Paul does not seem to make use of the Old Testament as a way of creating a shared identity based on kinship relations and a myth of common ancestry, or even as a loose connection with a homeland[36]. Rather, and as we will have opportunity to see, some of these elements are 'present' in the letter but need to be re-created since his audience comes from a different background than that of Judaism and finds herself in the process of internalizing what we can describe as an appropriate 'Christ-like identity'. This is exactly the point we need to justify, if it is there at all.

Secondly, we should not expect the letter to directly address all the elements that concern us. It would be tempting to project what we know into the letter and make it confirm what we are searching for, but that would simply be sheer projection on our part. What we need to do is scrutinize the letter carefully in order to find possible elements that might be disclosed and contrast them with what we know about the 'secular' history of the colony. In this way we can tie the contents of the letter to a plausible scenario. It is just too easy to revert to a scheme in which we ideologize/theologize what we see in order to escape the confrontation with the world of the text and its specific *Sitz im Leben*[37].

We have much information to process before we can confidently apply SIT to the specific context of Philippians. I believe it will be helpful to provide a diagramme which can better show the different elements which impinge on the identity make-up of the colony.

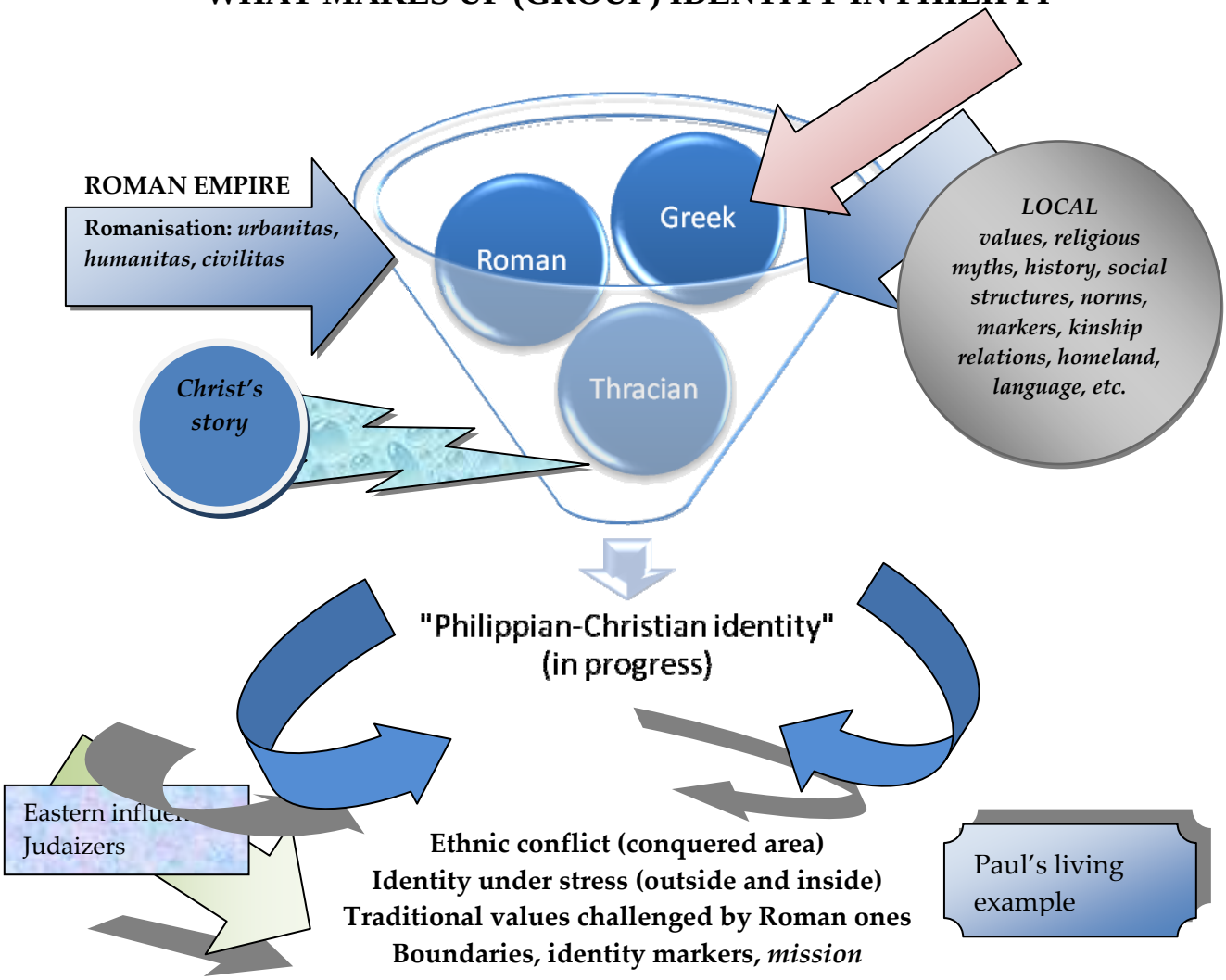
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[35] See the interesting discussion on Judean ethnicity in Cromhout (2005:86-88), which favours a 'predominantly primordialist approach' against Esler's (2003), who defends a synthesis of both sides, ultimately opting for a constructivist approach.

[36] Again, as we enter in deeper dialogue with the letter to the Philippians, we might find echoes or possible concomitances of such elements, as in 3:20-21 ('our commonwealth is in heaven'), but radically re-constructed.

[37] I am using *Sitz im Leben* to describe the local context of the community within the larger context of society. I am aware that the term was originally intended to describe other elements (the relationships between oral traditions and their uses in culture). However, the term has come (or has degenerated, as some may opine) to mean what it is today (cf. Keck 1974:446).

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No diagramme, however depurated it may be, can do justice to a dynamic process as that of identity-formation. However, the advantage of this tool is that it allows us to distinguish different forces at work which affect the way the Philippian community understands herself and her role in the larger context of the colony and beyond[38]. The elements highlighted in the diagramme represent general headings that point to important societal elements that have a strong

[38] It is part of our task to discover what identity markers appear in the letter and which ones are missing. However, we need to walk this path carefully, since there might be a strong temptation to mirror-reading in the text, i.e., finding an opposite situation in the background for every single statement in the letter. We cannot expect the apostle to have written, in such a short letter, everything important relative to Christian doctrine, even if it was relevant for the Philippian community. With these warnings in mind, our search will still shed much light on our comprehension of the issues at work.

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bearing both on the local population and the Christ-following community. For example, under the heading of 'local social structures' we will study the slave-system, its implications for this type of society and why and how the Christ-hymn presents it in order to understand it in a new light.

The diagramme displays a multitude of factors that affect what I categorise as a (typical) 'Philippian-Christ-like identity'. That is, I insist on local social, geographical, ethnic factors which, associated with other forces brought with by the conquerors (*Romanisation*, a concrete way of understanding relationships based on hierarchy, etc.), affect who the Philippians were. In the midst of this clash of ideas and values, the apostle Paul focuses on the example of Christ, who presents an alternative life-style supposed to be lived in the here and now. Such an example, though, is at odds with both local and foreign values, which in essence prime the survival of the fittest. The diagramme allows us to appreciate the general state of affairs, so that we can pass from a descriptive phase to an explicative one. These areas, however, will have to wait to be developed in the chapters that follow.

5.1 Identity and Ethnicity

Many scholars have turned to the issue of ethnicity as one of the key sources from where individuals and groups draw their basic identity. Esler refers to six indicia in this regard (2003:43-44, citing Hutchinson & Smith 1996:6-7), namely: 1) a common proper name to identify the group; 2) a myth of common ancestry; 3) a shared history (shared memories); 4) a common culture; 5) a link with the homeland; and 6) a sense of communal solidarity. These elements account for the makeup of one's own ethnicity, but we must not forget that ethnicity is just one element (although a powerful influence) among others that informed the Philippians' identity.

As we see, ethnicity is a powerful element that defines personal and corporate identity. Buell (2001:449) argues that 'ethnicity and race *have* in fact been central to formulations or early Christian self-definition' (original emphasis)[39]. Buell understands this has been done in two different ways, which I call 1) *emic* and 2) *etic*, that gave rise to opposing views: '[A]ncient ideas about race and

[39] One weakness in her work is the lack of first-century Christian evidence to support her thesis, which centres solely on Graeco-Roman and Jewish data when referring to the first century. Second-century Christian literature is appropriate and helpful, but it lacks continuity with, for example, Pauline literature. She seems to have corrected these weaknesses later in Buell and Hodges (2004).

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ethnicity were valuable for early Christians in their varying attempts to define Christianness' (:449). That is, using 'ethnic reasoning', the language and categories familiar to their contemporaries; and then 'modern ideas about race and ethnicity' which 'have also shaped understandings of early Christian self-definition but have led to the opposite conclusion—namely, that Christians, from the very beginning, viewed race as a form of human difference to be transcended or made irrelevant' (:449). Lieu (2004:20-21) reviews a number of historical reconstructions of early Christianity that present the stereotypical view of those historians (Joshua Fishman, Guy Stroumsa, etc.) who argued that ethnicity or race was something that the early Christianity wanted to overcome, quoting texts such as Gl 3:28 and the like. Lieu deems such comments as oversimplifications. It is important to point out that ideas about race, ethnicity and even religion tend to change over time and that competing views coexist at a given time within the same cultural context (Buell 2001:449-450), so that being aware of *emic* understandings may prevent us from projecting a modern concept that just wasn't there then. This represents Buell's goal. Through the study of this so-called *ethnic reasoning*, some ancient Christian authors depicted the Christian movement as a race/ethnicity that was peculiar but nevertheless inclusive, since people could join it. '[T]hinking about race and ethnicity allowed Christians to define themselves as a race that one can join, a race characterized especially by *religious practices*' (:451, my emphasis).

Thus, although a combination of essentialism and constructivism seems necessary (whichever percentage each one adds is futile to discern!), identity was perceived in their (religious) practise. Buell (:458-459) cites Schwartz (1997) and Nock (1933) as exponents of this view. See for example Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis* (second century) where Clement links religious practice with a sort of a *genos* (ethnicity? race?) in a passage where he juxtaposes Jews, Greeks and Christians: 'Do not worship … as the Greeks … neither worship as the Jews. But we, who worship [God] in a new way, in the third way [or form] [*genei*], are Christians' (*Strom* 6.39.4; 41.2; 41.6; in Buell 2001:461). However, Buell's view is, in my opinion, rather limited and does not fully account for other elements that contribute significantly to a people's self-definition: social mores, laws, language, origin, genealogical lines, place of dwelling, etc. Buell (:466-467) presents modern notions of race and ethnicity as immutable elements, and then shows that ancient writers like Dionysius of Halicarnassus (late first century AD) spoke plainly about ethnicity as something permeable

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and mutable where people—by way of language, customs, laws and religious practices—could change one's race (*AntRom* 1.89.4)[40].

As we deal with anthropological and sociological descriptions in the next chapter, I hope these different ways of approaching the text will be made clear. After all, Rome's *humanitas/urbanitas* was a way of changing conquered people's identity to the Roman way, expressed both in language and social *mores*. Roman efforts at conquering the world were deemed 'humane', as the term *humanitas* conveyed: culture, *philanthropia*, *paideia*, etc. *Humanitas* was a technical term fully imbued with the concept of ideological naturalization: through it the *homo* becomes a human being (Woolf 1998:56). It is clear that *humanitas*, by late first century BC, 'had been formulated as a thoroughly Roman concept, embodying concepts of culture and conduct that were regarded by Romans as the hallmark of the aristocracy in particular, yet also appropriate for mankind in general' (:55). This fact did not necessarily mean that their local identity was completed obliterated and replaced by Roman ways of life. We have already seen that people can hold different identities at once, and that some of them will be more salient than others, depending on the context[41]. This is precisely one of the impinging factors that substantially influenced the identity formation of the inhabitants of the colony at Philippi. This process is *Romanisation*, and has a definite and powerful influence on the make-up of the population[42].

[40] This is also true in Judaism; cf. Philo, *VitMos* 2.44: 'I believe that each [*ethnos*] would abandon its own ways, and, throwing off their ancestral ways [*patrioi*], turn to honoring our ways [*nomoi*] alone' (in Buell 2001:469).

[41] We are all but too aware of this fact in our own days, as globalization tends to merge traditional and new values together. However, when studied in more detail, we can perceive salient identities that are sometimes at odds with each other. Cf. the study of anthropologist Nagata (1974:331-350) on Malayan society, as well as Buell and Hodges (2004:248). The same can also be said about Mexican emigrants to the USA and the clash of traditional ways with Western ones in the 'new South Africa' where traditional African culture based on group solidarity and local territoriality needs to adapt and recognize the curse and blessing of Western ways of progress. Within this first-century context we can appreciate this model of multiple identities which can enhance our understanding of passages such as Gl 3:28: 'Paul appeals to permanence or essence while simultaneously constructing these various identities as malleable' (Buell & Hodges 2004:248).

[42] It is important to clarify the fact that primordialist and instrumentalist/constructivist approaches differ on the assumptions of human action. Whereas the primordialist views actions as value-oriented (with the inherent emotional power of symbols, etc.) instrumentalist stresses human action as goal-oriented (cf. Bentley 1987:25, n 2).

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5.2 The Source of Social Identity according to Philippians

Though tentative, our diagramme allows us to propose a general application of social identity theory's insights to Philippians. Paul is exhorting the Philippian community to understand herself in light of the Christ-story. In this way they may come to an understanding of the present tensions they experience that are but the necessary result of a clash of values where powerful outgroups propose a life-style based on an honour-seeking mentality that runs counter to the example of Christ. Although outgroups are stereotyped as a 'crooked and perverse' society and as 'enemies of the cross', the call to the community is not to withdraw from the public arena, but to participate in a Christ-like manner in the welfare of the city. This adverse public realm has been already challenged by the God-incarnate saviour who shall transform their present existence. This promise expresses a strong sense of positive identity and self-esteem.

Paul's insistence on the unity and cohesion of the group using traditional imagery of the Graeco-Roman world (*viz*. friendship, military, etc.) does not necessarily play a positive or negative role, it is simply the means of forming boundaries that allow proper interaction with the outgroup[43]. Since Paul's audience is experiencing difficulty because of their status as Christ-followers, the apostle emphasizes the divine opinion and reward as 'higher view' in matters of ethos and eschatology. We need to be aware that the 'process of becoming part of a group often provokes anxiety' (Brown 2000:24-5). Often we tend to think about group formation as a way of creating stability, but we need to remember that sometimes something dear needs to be displaced in order to accept the new. The newness of the Christ-hymn might present the Philippian community with an unsurmountable challenge, too radical to be accepted without regrets, especially when it is understood against the social context in which it is proposed. After all, before people join groups there is a reconnaissance process, where people assess before deciding. One answer is that people join groups that will be 'maximally rewarding to them and minimally costly' (:26, presenting the old idea of social exchange theory; cf. Levine & Moreland 1994:305-36). However, it is clear that although the apostle does not put aside the rewards of such a membership (3:20-21), the radical call to an alternative life-style (2:5 τοῦτο φρονεῖτε) places the cost of discipleship up front. The hope of future reward, no doubt, outweighs present difficulties. The Christ-hymn plays a crucial part in this literary/social communication, since it

[43] As we study the letter through rhetorical lenses, we will have opportunity to ascertain the recurrence of the koinonia-*topos*, which is certainly strengthened in the light of intergroup conflict.

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introduces an alternative life-style at odds with current society which is nevertheless a guarantee of success and salvation in the face of this present 'stable system', geared to destruction[44].

We must not lose sight of a deeper element that runs through the Christ-narrative as presented in 2:6-11. As much as we may think that Paul uses it as basis for an in-Christ identity as alternative life-style to the status quo in the colony, its core message starts with the *radical self-determination of God-incarnate to identify completely with the human race, stripping himself of all benefit and privilege* (cf. Volf 1996:24). Wengst (1988:51) highlights this action: 'the humiliation of Christ in the hymn in Phil.2 is an act of the deepest solidarity'. It might look as if we are suddenly jumping from a purely sociological approach to a more ideological (*viz*. theological) one, but nothing could be further from the truth. Our comprehension of what surrounds us and how we react to it is strongly affected by the way we *think* about such issues. Identity is not just a matter of 'primordial attachments' (Geertz) but a thought process in dialogue with 'reality'. This process is clearly in view when we study Paul's correspondence with the Philippian community. Socio-scientific studies of the New Testament have at times been criticized for providing little room for a thorough theological discussion, focusing mostly on social dynamics. However, as Aguirre (1985:305) pointed, socio-scientific studies should not be seen as the latest fad but as a 'desarrollo coherente de estudios clásicos y de métodos exegéticos ya consagrados' (which, I add, balances both historical and theological concerns). I mentioned it at the outset: we are trying to recover aspects of the texts which have been neglected or not taken into serious consideration when addressing the texts (Estévez 2003:49). To deny now a theological/ideological interpretation of the texts will be falling into the trap of a naïve reductionist reading. Thus, any discussion on Christian identity needs to commence from God's action towards humanity, from his radical identification with it in Christ.

> The trend within society goes against this. [...] during the Roman empire society was marked strongly by a concern for upward social mobility. That against such background Paul invites not isolated individuals but members of the community to behave in the opposite way to that prevalent in society makes this sphere 'in Christ' another society, an alternative society as a society which

[44] Paul's tendency to present 'reality' as two extremes or two opposed endings might have its based in something Ellemers and others (1988) pointed and which Brown (2000:327) echoes: 'the mere knowledge that passage from one group to another is possible has the effect of lowering subordinate group members' level of identification with their group'. However, much depends on the level of identification of the individuals with the group, which can persist even in the face of internal problems.

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> shows solidarity. But in that case 'humility' is not individual renunciation but the basic condition for a new society which really is all-inclusive.
>
> (Wengst 1988:49)

Hellerman's (2005) incisive and attractive reading of the Christ-hymn as *cursus pudorum* portrays a view earlier observed by Wengst (1988). What interests us, though, is the manner in which the Philippian community could accommodate such a challenging view without losing all hope of a 'social resurrection'. Hellerman draws on ancient writers to support his understanding of the text, but does not answer the question that concerns us: what social process did the Christ-following community at Philippi use in order to be able to make sense of such a reverted view of social standing? Hellerman's (2005:154) contention that the hymn narrates the story of Jesus the Christ, who becomes an example of how to use real power and status for the benefit of others is attractive but ultimately lacks a 'flesh-and-blood' community that may reflect such values. I mean, what is the situation of the Philippian Christ-following community? Are some of them in a position of power and influence that such an exhortation becomes necessary? It is not sufficient to rely on the honour-seeking context of the colony; but we must tie the message to a definite model of community which may explain its *ad hoc* purpose. Of course, it may be argued that Paul's admonition was to call for a reversal of values in a general way, what Bartchy describes as 'the redefinition of the basis for attaining honor: serving rather than competing' (Hellerman 2005:165 quoting Bartchy 2003:146). Such a thorough search begs, nevertheless, for a discrete Christ-following community.

Hellerman's description of honour among the non-elite in the *colonia* requires yet a more focused application. It is here that Rohrbaugh's (1987:115) admonition for a concrete 'social location', as heuristic tool, is necessary, since it includes both a discrete position and social order (that is structure, not sociability) as well as identification of the process by which such location is constituted.

These matters, though, will have to wait until we are able to draw a more cogent picture of the colony, taking into account all we know from its history and the biblical witnesses.

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Con frecuencia el estudio de los orígenes del cristianismo se convierte unilateralmente en historia de las ideas. Pero sólo se hace justicia al proceso si se atiende también a las instituciones, a los factores socioeconómicos y a las opciones prácticas, relacionando todo con las elaboraciones teológicas.[1]

There is no 'immaculate perception', and there are 'no facts, only interpretations'.

(Nietzsche, 1911)

CHAPTER 3:
THE LARGER CONTEXT: FIRST-CENTURY MEDITERRANEAN SOCIETY THROUGH THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

1. Introduction

As modern readers from a Christian background who approach the letter to the Philippians, and take special interest in the so-called Christ-hymn of 2:6-11, we are immediately filled with a particular sense of familiarity. In a sense, we feel we have finally come to terms with its meaning. After all, two thousand years of Christian tradition, with its thorough interpretation of the text, leave us in a good position from whence to grasp its meaning. Unfortunately, this easy-to-arrive-at understanding may at times obscure the depth of the 'familiar' text to contemporary readers, not so much because of its intrinsic message but because the text no longer speaks from its context, but is directed, perhaps, towards lines that might be quite far from its intended meaning.

If in the previous chapter we touched upon identity formation, we now turn to the social matrix that produced the texts we scrutinise. Texts are *in nuce* the

[1] Aguirre (1984:50).

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product of *social communication*, social products therefore, and thus, the outcome of social interaction. This basic point is often taken for granted[2]. Texts then yield information not only about the world of ideas (what we would in our case call a 'theological reading' of the text) but also concerning the symbolic understanding of the communities involved in the communication processes. The historical-critical method has shown us the need for understanding the backgrounds of the communities that received the letters as well as their different *Sitze im Leben*. This is the starting point of the exegetical process and of any approach that seriously endeavours to get closer to the world of the text and of the 'original/intended' readers/hearers. But, as Craffert (1996:449) correctly remarks: 'New Testament interpretation is inevitably cross-cultural'; and it just may be that the above-mentioned approach falls short in this respect.

The historical-critical reading of the texts is not sufficient for our particular enquiry and needs to be supplemented with new questions that open up new possibilities for analysis[3]. Although this is not the place to review the new trends that have appeared in the area of New Testament interpretation in the last fifty years or so—others have already done it with great skill[4]— it is important nevertheless to explain why this fact justifies yet another research on Philippians 2:(5)6-11. The use of new approaches is not a departure from the insights found by means of traditional historical-critical methods, but a way of building upon them and in continuity with them (Aguirre 1985)[5]. Earlier scholarship had paid attention to the situational context of the biblical documents, but only when there was an *explicit witness* that illuminated or completed the overall picture. The methodology we propose adds the detection of the *implicit witnesses* through the use of sociological imagination and conceptualization (Elliott 1995:37). Simply put, we (re)-create social contexts with their explicit and implicit social elements in order to infer with more accuracy what these texts are trying to communicate/affect.

Our particular search ultimately asks for a methodology which is able to go beyond the historical account into a wider comprehension of human behaviour

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[2] The so-called Christ-hymn has at times been alienated from its literary context (the one in which we find it in the letter as it stands today) to be studied under the notion that even the apostle used it for reasons which were not part of the original intention of the author of the hymn. This kind of circularity is found quite often in dealing with the text, where an *a priori* concept becomes the springboard from where to understand the text. For an interesting review of some of these, see Fee (1992:29-46).

[3] This is no trivial matter. Those questions we put to the texts may serve 'both to illumine and to distort them' (Riches 1996:433).

[4] Cf. Horrell (1999); Osiek (1989:260-78); Scroggs (1980:164-79); and Kee (1989:2-64).

[5] We dare not say that cultural and social elements have not been taken into account, but that these have not been presented as *essential* for the interpretation of the biblical texts (Estévez 2003:49).

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and how it is affected in the course of social communication. It is here that the application of the social sciences could aid us in clarifying certain aspects pertaining to the world of the text and first-century Mediterranean society that would remain unobserved without these hermeneutical tools. The method I propose, aided by the insights of the social sciences, looks for patterns of behaviour, typical in society and human relations, since it considers that persons are 'social actors within social systems' (de Wit 2002:170). While the historical-critical method focuses on the unique, the social-scientific focuses on the recurrent, building upon the former. Our interest then, as we study the social dimension of Early Christianity is not naïve, trying to conform such a complex set of human, social, theological forces to mere social dynamics. It rather seeks to avoid the typical reductionist approach that limits such a movement to an inner spiritual reality or an objective-cognitive system (Elliott, J H 1995:39). Thus, we try to avoid what some have termed a *methodological docetism*, where the world of ideas and beliefs of ancient persons are separated from their own individual and corporate structures[6]. The aim is to join soul and body as they co-existed from the beginning. Elliott (1993:7) defines the social-scientific method as:

> that phase of the exegetical task which analyzes the social and cultural dimension of the text and of its environmental context through the utilization of the perspectives, theory, models, and research of the social sciences.

This shift in perspective is not unique to the interpretation of Scripture, but has a background in many other fields, as Osiek (1989:260) recalls:

> The shift in the modern age from philosophy to science as foundational method for human endeavour has had an effect in all theological disciplines, including biblical studies. The predominant historical-critical paradigm that has held sway for a century is the child of the "higher criticism" of the late 19th century, which was a response to the new scientific enthusiasm that was sweeping that era. The belief that scholars had developed a foolproof method for establishing the meaning of the text in its own context was long in dying. If today that myth has been shattered and we find ourselves somewhat less sanguine about our ability to enter and interpret a world of thousands of years ago, still the scientific investigative mode is proving useful, now by approaching the texts in questions with specifically social questions and models formulated from social science.

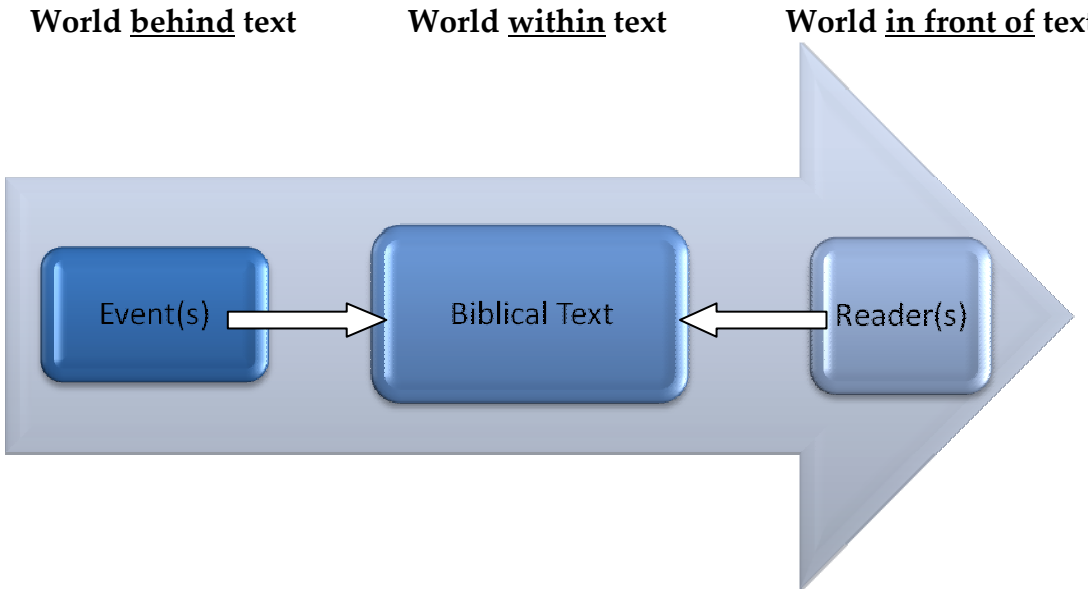
This approach allows us to listen not just to the well-known figures of the past, but to the voices of the unnamed, who were nevertheless an important part of

[6] The well-known expression was first coined by Scroggs (1980:165-166).

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the difficult beginnings of the Christ-following movement[7]. I believe one of the strengths of this methodology is that it allows us to take into consideration the social role the Christ-following communities played in the formation of what later on was to permeate the entire Roman Empire.

For this search we need an *explicit* reading methodology, based upon a three-tiered structure. I have been influenced by the simple, yet insightful diagram in Martínez (2006:170) to which I add my own observations:



Our first source of information is, of course, the biblical text, but in order to access to it 'respectfully' (i.e. attending to its social world) we need to understand not only the 'world' it portrays (which will be peculiar and unique to it) but also the world that surrounds such literary communication. The *world behind the text* refers to all those elements which give meaning to the words of the text. We try to approximate such a world through the use of historical and literary critical tools (cf. Martínez 2006:170-72), aided also by social sciences. The *world within the text* refers to the text we have at our disposal today. Here is where we add up knowledge derived from other disciplines in order to enhance our own exegesis of the text. Words and meaning are not foreign to social scripts, but a product of them, therefore we carefully bring both sides to bear on our hermeneutical process. Lastly, the *world in front of the text* refers to the context of the implied reader(s), interests and aims, which certainly colours the outcome of the interpretation process. All of these aspects, however briefly described here, will be addressed in the rest of the study. An important part of the diagramme is the arrow pointing forward. I believe the hermeneutical process does not end with the application of exegesis to the text in such a way

[7] See as example of these efforts in Schotroff and Stegemann (1984); Fiorenza (1989); Also Jobling and others (1991).

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as to deduce its inner meaning. Such insights need to be applied and tested in the *world which receives the text anew*. Far too many insightful studies, in my opinion, wrap up with only a few pages (sometimes a few lines!) of concluding remarks, which I believe signals a deficiency in understanding the function of any biblical text in question for the community that receives it. Historical inquiry is necessary, but it is only a part of the hermeneutical process[8]. It is with this idea in mind that we have allowed for a whole chapter where to test our conclusions, focusing on the Christ-following community in Philippi years after Paul had already died. Only then we may have a clearer idea of what such a text affected. Of course the same process should be ultimately carried out further to arrive at a clearer understanding of the text for our own day and age. 'Engaged hermeneutics' is not an added value, but should be at the core of our intent, at least if we expect Biblical texts to convey to us the truths about God's will for humanity[9].

2. Reading Ancient Texts[10]

> 'The Reason of a Thing is not to be inquired after, til you are sure the Thing itself be so. We commonly are at *What's the Reason of it*? before we are sure of the Thing'. Selden pursues the point with an anecdote about Sir Robert Cotton who was exclaiming over the strange shape of a shoe which was said to have been worm by Moses, or at least by Noah, when his wife, apparently a much more simple soul, asked: "But Mr. Cotton, are you sure it is a Shoe?"
>
> (John Selden's *Table Talks*, 1689)[11]

Any person or group who reads an ancient text needs to bridge the gap between the present and the past (the 'now' and 'then'). There are thus 'two horizons' that need to intersect in order to make sense of what we are reading,

[8] I have found the quote by Wallerstein in the frontispiece of Aunger (1995:97) to be a propos: 'History is the study of, the explanation of, the particular as it really happened in the past. Social science is the statement of the universal set of rules by which human/social behavior is explained. This is the famous distinction between idiographic and nomothetic modes of analysis, which are considered to be antithetical […] Though undertaken separately, differently and for dissimilar (even opposing) purposes, it would be fruitful for the world of scholarship to combine the two modes'.

[9] I believe that the exegetical task is a privilege, enjoyment, risk and challenge. It is because of the creativity of scholars such as Malina (and others) that I, too, can appreciate colour where there seem to be 'monochrome life' (echoing Hellerman 2001:xiv). Cf. Malina (1991a:253).

[10] We postpone the discussion on ancient rhetoric, which will be dealt with in chapter 6. At this point we are concerned with how to approach ancient texts from within a different culture and epoch.

[11] Quoted in Craffert (1992).

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which is more than mere written words[12]. Any person who reads an ancient text approaches it with a mental picture of how things *were supposed* to be in the past, which in social-scientific terminology is usually referred to as a *reading script* or *scenario*. The question is whether such a scenario does justice to the social context in which the text was created[13]. Malina strongly cautions modern readers of the New Testament texts to be aware that, when reading and interpreting them, they enter 'foreign' soil[14]. Thus, the reading scheme must respect the social and symbolic world of first-century Mediterranean context, remembering that even the most trained modern reader still follows patterns of behaviour strange to the world of the ancient text. Being aware of these pitfalls can better equip us to avoid both anachronism and ethnocentrism[15]. Once again Malina (1995b:24 = 1981:10, original emphasis) cautions:

> If commentators, historians, and ordinary Bible readers derive meaning from the New Testament, the question we might put to them is whether such meaning comes from *their* cultural story or the cultural story of the people who produced the texts.

This is why it is important to define the 'social location' of the interpreters: what ideas, background, interests we bring to the study of the text(s) and which, if implicit, may not be open to validation and assessment by contemporary

[12] The expression 'two horizons' was coined by Thiselton (1980), who points out that the aim of the interpreter is that of forming an active and meaningful relationship between the interpreter (him/herself) and the text, in such a way that the horizon of the former is re-formed and expands. The aim is the fusion of both horizons, which may imply a clear understanding of limitations in application and understanding due to the problem of incommensurability, which social-scientific methodology boldly addresses (cf. Craffert 1996). Our model expands on one of the 'horizons' since the text is *already* a product of social interaction and as such addresses its world in order to correct, change, or confirm it. This is a necessary caution, since many New Testament texts function counter-culturally, assuming an alternative way of behaviour.

[13] I am here speaking of more than 'mere' translation, or reading an already-translated text, as Malina (1991:306) observes: 'Alcuni valori tradizionali mediterranei però sono ancora discernibili in talante città moderne, anche se in modo attenuato e sfumato; più marcati, viese, nei villaggi e nelle campagne del Mediterraneo'.

[14] Malina has been primarily aiming at helping 'North-Atlantic' readerships realize they cannot impose their own cultural values onto ancient texts. In this respect, these efforts may at times, from the *Mediterranean* point of view of this author, suffer from a sort of stereotyping syndrome of the ancient Mediterranean person that is still hotly debated (see the criticisms posed by Mediterranean anthropologists like de Pina-Cabral 1989:399-406). However, once the social location of the interpreter is spelled out, it is easier to understand the reasons behind this tendency (cf. Giordano 2001:43-44). It is clear that contemporary southern European scholars apply models which are generally more flexible.

[15] *Ethnocentrism* is in essence to impose on the ancient text our own interpretations relative to our own culture, values, people, etc., whereas *anachronism* is a similar practice applied onto the history of the people we are studying, imposing on them cultural instruments, meanings and conducts from our own time. The (supposed) spatial and temporal gap is thus obliterated and the ancient text becomes strangely familiar, but in effect it has lost any real relevance.

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readers[16]. The task of the interpreter is to situate the text in its original social context and try to understand its social dynamics. Moreover, we need to assess the text as *product* of such social dynamics.

> Por lo general, quienes leen o interpretan la Biblia con una preocupación teológica o religiosa suelen estar muy interesados por el sentido que el texto pueda tener en el presente. Se trata de una operación de 'recontextualización', de lectura del texto con unos modelos sociales diferentes de los supuestos por el autor, con el afán de hacerlo significativo para un lector separado por una distancia de veinte siglos.
>
> (Aguirre 1994:21)

In order to make sense of past societies (and their texts) we need to create social models which enhance our own comprehension of their complexity and diversity. These models are constructed from our contemporary perspectives.

2.1 *Emic – Etic*

We tend to make sense of what is foreign to us through *analogy* (cf. Briggs 1984:139), that is, we search into our own set of categories for elements, which may resemble (a subjective approximation) what we observe 'out there'[17]. The problem with such an approach is that the observation process is wholly carried within an *etic* frame of reference. Riches (1996:432) signals its weakness: 'We may in the first instance too easily overlook certain aspects of ancient culture and over-emphasise others by pressing analogies with our own' and comments on Tyrell's famous taunt that 'Harnack looked down the well of history and saw his own, Liberal Protestant, face reflected at the bottom'. We find, thus, that there is no conscious effort to put ourselves 'in the shoes' of others. An *emic* approach, on the contrary, will try to establish some points of contact between their world and ours without imposing our own values and views, by taking into account the standpoint of the *insider*. This last approach is mainly followed by trained anthropologists and ethnographers, through a series of learnt skills which may not be readily available for general observers[18]. With this little introduction in mind, let's proceed to define in more detail what is *emic* and *etic*.

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[16] I agree with Craffert (1996:449) in that 'the idea of neutrality towards one's own context is nothing but a display of ethnocentric blindness'.

[17] As a matter of fact this has been an accepted principle of historiography (cf. Riches 1996:432).

[18] Anthropology has experienced a profound development. Not too long ago anthropologists simply labeled different cultures as 'primitive', 'modern', without understanding them from the inside, solely using *etic* categories. Some of the same old cloth still lingers in New Testament scholarship, as general descriptions of places, cultures, and persons make no effort to read the data from an insider's perspective.

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Anthropologists' search for objectivity (as in any scientific discipline) aims at purging the methodology from any element that will project or impose conceptions foreign to those of the subjects under study. This is the basic reason for an *emic* analysis, which is 'a form of understanding that is, to some extent, like that which subjects have of themselves and their world' (Feleppa 1986:243). However, it is clear that as much as we wished, 'it is impossible to "purify" even the emic component from *all* forms of imposition' (:243, original emphasis).

Emic derives from the word 'phonemics 'and *etic* from 'phonetics'. 'In language theory phonemics investigates the dialogue of how natives speak. It is a quest for the natives' internal point of view. Phonetics is about how an "external" observer perceives it, and how one should speak according to models of pronunciation' (van Aarde 2006:367). The logical application to the social-scientific studies is obvious: whereas the *emic* point of view seeks to describe social data from the point of view of native agents (their internal codes), the *etic* perspective aims at explanation from the point of view of the scholar (cf. van Aarde 2006:367)[19]. Geertz—as 'symbolic anthropologist' (cf. Garrett 1992:92)—argues that subjectivity should neither be denied nor feared, and proposes instead a thorough fieldwork which is interpretive and focuses on the *microscopic* (Geertz 1995:32). He complains about ethnological work which is realized without carrying on a proper 'thick description', and without knowing the people first-hand[20]. He is not impressed by certain form of advanced knowledge that pretends to help us comprehend human beings *without knowing them* (Geertz 1995:39). What Geertz warns concerning cultural analysis is true of any theological, exegetical approach as well (Geertz 1995:40):

> Siempre está el peligro de que el análisis cultural, en busca de las tortugas que se encuentran más profundamente situadas, pierda contacto con las duras superficies de la vida, con las realidades políticas y económicas dentro de las cuales los hombres están contenidos siempre, y pierda contacto con las necesidades biológicas y físicas en que se basan esas duras superficies. La única

[19] For a more nuanced explanation see Lawrence (2005:5-6).

[20] However, it is worthwhile to pinpoint that even a 'thick' description is not a deterrent of ethnocentrism or of an *etic* approach, since we cannot describe a whole culture, but always focus on the particular side of it, which may not always best explain the whole. 'Thickness and significance are not the same' (Rosaldo 1989:2). For an interesting account of such an experience, see Cummings (2000) and Barley (2005). Esler (1995:6-7) criticizes an excessive concentration in particularity which can result in the 'failure to produce an interpretive framework necessary to discuss cross-cultural differences', which seems typical of some ethnographic research. 'Finally, at the practical level, in the case of research dependent on ancient texts like the New Testament documents, although one would certainly not wish to say that interpretive criticism is impossible, plainly the customary total immersion in another culture by a trained observer is out of the question and this suggests that a model-oriented approach is less problematic'.

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> defensa contra este peligro y contra el peligro de convertir así el análisis cultural en una especie de esteticismo sociológico, es realizar el análisis de esas realidades y esas necesidades en primer término.

Esler criticises Geertz's excessive emphasis on the *emic* element[21]. For him, 'without an *etic* apparatus set at a reasonably high level of abstraction it is difficult to translate between cultures and to engage in intercultural communication' (Esler 2003:46), and for that reason defends the use of cross-cultural models set at a high-level of abstraction which enhance the communication between the two worlds. '[O]ne cannot explicate the discourse of another culture without *any* reference to the observers' own (etic) categories, since to do so would be "not to explain anthropologically but to become completely assimilated socially"' (Garrett 1992:93, quoting Wilson 1979:xviii).

2.1.1 The Social Location of the Interpreter

> Biblical interpretation is rooted in reading, and reading entails the reader's bringing a set of scenarios about the world—internal, external and experiential—and allowing an author to rearrange those scenarios by means of textual communication.
>
> (Malina 1991a:254)

I think we need dare to find ways in which we can get as close as possible to the 'original/intended' recipients of the letter so as to be able to 'feel' as they 'felt' and understand as they would have understood. This idealistic search is, however, the *implicit* position that many a specialist communicate to those who read them. We have learnt from the social scientific approach that it is important to make *explicit* what the researcher's implicit reasoning is so that readers have a chance to assess and criticise his/her views, not based on 'hunches and guess-work', to borrow Neyrey's expression (Neyrey 1991:xvi), but on the premises brought forward by the interpreter[22]. Our aim is to approach the text not only from the traditional point of view of the world of ideas, but also as the product of intense social (in its wider possible meaning)

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[21] Esler might just have been too hard on Geertz, since the latter also reminds us that 'all ethnography is in the last analysis the product of the describer's description'. Any pretention that ethnography is 'more than the representation of one sort of life in the categories of another is impossible to defend' (Craffert 1996:450; quoting Geertz 1988:144-145).

[22] This is a sure way to avoid imposing our values onto the texts without proper verification. Riches (1996:433): 'It is not so much the role of the analogical imagination in historiography which is at fault but the desire to conform the subject of our study to those aspects of our experience which provide the closest analogies, which leads to bias and distortion'. The Lutheran traditional interpretation of Paul is a clear example of such enterprise, although we can observe variations within the same school (cf. Stendahl 1976, also a Lutheran scholar).

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interaction where it is no longer important to know *only* the mind of the author (in this case the apostle Paul), but the mind and soul of the Philippian church who received the letter and who had to make sense of its words in order to live as 'blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among who you shine as lights in the world' (2:15 RSV) and 'as *good citizens*, worthy of the gospel' (1:27 my trans.). But living as *good citizens*, Where? How? and Why?[23]

For such an enterprise I have chosen to approach the subject of study through different angles, conscious that *any* angle implies both limitations and personal projections. But as Joubert (2000b:9, n 25, my emphasis) observes:

> The various theoretical paradigms presently operative within the field of New Testament research are no safeguards against personal prejudices on the part of researches. All approaches, be it the trusted historical-critical methods, or new literary or social-scientific approaches, are by their very nature, perspectives. They have a certain innate distorting quality since they approach the New Testament from a preconception of what is to be looked for. But then again, *whoever looks for nothing finds nothing*.

I am convinced that no single approach can exhaust the deepest meaning of a text, no matter how thorough it might be. I conceive the study of the text as a type of concentric approach, that is, looking at the text from several angles and letting the resulting picture reveal the values, feelings, ideas, etc., that the author might have wished to communicate to his or her audience. In a sense, each new discovery within the text has the capacity to modify and alter the final representation, since it provides us with new information which sheds light onto other areas that can now be better explained and appraised. *Abduction* refers to the process of travelling back and forth from the evidence to the model and our particular approach, which should serve to modify pre-conceived ideas we bring to the text as it relates to the application of social-scientific models.

My eclectic ('porous') approach claims that looking at the object of study from a single angle is not more true to life than contemplating it from different angles, as to be able to perceive more nuances and details that may have escaped us. It is impossible to present a complete picture of the object under scrutiny, but I believe that nuanced observations may shed light on previous areas, which

[23] Riches (1996:446-7) speaks of the danger of 'annexation', a 'too easy identification of one's own cultural appropriation of particular texts with their meaning *tout court*, a tendency to universalize one's own reading and therefore to impose it on others, together with its higher estimation and privileging of one's own culture. At the root of this lies the too easy conversion into *identities* of perceived *analogies* between present (culturally determined) experience and belief and that of the communities which first produced the texts being studied' (original emphasis).

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mean shadowy spots may now receive a fairer treatment in that they are better interrelated with one another. What is important, however, is to be clear and a propos in our intentions. It is a common temptation to apply a certain model to the text only to convince ourselves that the text conforms completely to the model. Abduction comes into place to allow interpreters revisit their own preconceptions in order to let the text speak more clearly, so that the model becomes a useful means of approaching and uncovering the text, and not the iron matrix that might, ultimately, obscure it (Carney 1975:37).

2.1.2 Ethnocentrism and Anachronism

We have stated that one of the 'negative' aims of this study is to avoid, as much as possible, ethnocentric and anachronistic interpretations, which are 'not welcome guests' in our search. We shall focus first on ethnocentrism, which seems more pervasive and subtle than anachronism, easier to spot. The question is, however, if it is at all possible to avoid ethnocentrism in our interpretation of ancient texts. Craffert (1996) describes three types of ethnocentrism: 1) factual, 2) moral, and 3) epistemological. Let's briefly examine each one:

> *Factual*: If ethnocentrism implies 'judgments based on irrational preferences incapable of rational validation'[24], then a degree of factual ethnocentrism is found in all societies and cultures, since 'both conscious and unconscious preferences for inherited practices and beliefs are facts of socialization' (Craffert 1996:450).
>
> *Moral*: this type is constituted by the 'uncritical prejudice in favour of one's own culture and the distorted, biased criticism of alien cultures'[25].
>
> The third type, *epistemological*, is related to factual ethnocentrism, and has to do with the 'notion that one cannot do otherwise than interpret alien cultures from one's own perspective' (Craffert 1996:450). In this sense 'everybody is ethnocentric'[26], there is just no human way of avoiding it.

It is clear that when we refer to ethnocentrism in our research we are not dealing so much with the first two types as concentrating on the epistemological aspect thereof. Is it possible to arrive at a sound interpretation which somehow does not project our own views on the text? Epistemologically

[24] Bidney (1968:546), in Craffert (1996:450).
[25] Bidney (1968:546), in Craffert (1996:450).
[26] Rorty (1985:13), in Craffert (1996:450).

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speaking it seems impossible to see the world through other means than our own self-understanding (Craffert 1996:450)[27]. The problem starts when we expect everyone to agree with our particular vision of the 'other', as if we had a fair advantage over others' perception. Craffert describes three different ways in which we can face the challenge of ethnocentrism: we can *deny* it, we can *avoid* it, or we can just face the fact that it is always going to be there and therefore *celebrate* it[28]. Here is the strength of social-scientific studies of the New Testament, which consciously try to avoid ethnocentrism by 'use of social-scientific models and by acknowledging the theory dependence (or model dependence) of all interpretation' (:451).

2.2 Reading Perspective

I believe Paul´s letters were *ad hoc* communications with his congregations, and therefore we can expect a great deal of common or agreed knowledge, personal references (implicit or explicit), etc., which may be obviated in our reading of the letter. Belonging to a *high context* society, Paul no doubt shared insights on issues that are only briefly mentioned in the letter but which form the cultural matrix that adds sense to his over-all message. Taking such communication process into account I will scrutinise the cultural, religious, etc., situation of the colony in order to see what kind of references the apostle might be drawing in order to convey his message regarding their *true* identity in Christ. Of particular interest is the comparison/contrast (wherever possible) of religious and literary myths common in the area with the presentation of the abased Christ in the hymn in Philippians 2. Thus, I opt for a historical reading, emphasizing the bigger *Sitz im Leben* with its social and psychological repercussions.

Reading ancient texts can be undertaken basically in two ways: either through a propositional model or a scenario model (Malina 1982:230; 1991:13-17). In the first model the focus is placed on the wording, at sentence and word levels. Thus the task is parsing, translating, and seeking relationships and structures

[27] Martin (1994:118): 'In historiography, as in popular cultures, the representation of others, of those removed from ourselves in time as by geography, invariably involves an interpretative imposition of one's own cultural values upon ideological muted subjects'.

[28] Some scholars specifically stress the fact that ethnocentrism should not be avoided, by explicitly reflecting their socio-political agendas onto the texts. There is a huge difference, nonetheless, between allowing some measure of projection onto the texts despite all of our best efforts, and celebrating the fact that texts can then serve our own interests unapologetically. As Craffert (1996:454) aptly points, the argument against such fragrant projection is the *myth of the framework*, 'which exaggerates a difficulty into an impossibility'. We argue that it is impossible to arrive at an ethnocentric-free interpretation, but this is no excuse for not trying to develop a methodology that seeks to let the texts speak to us from their own background. This projection-approach 'confuses enabling conditions with limiting conditions' (:454).

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within the written texts, which imply a conceptual approach to texts. This model, however, cannot be verified and argues for language as the product of 'highly abstract entities' like words and sentences: 'For words and sentences are not the end products of language. Rather the end products of language are spoken and/or written texts—meaningful configurations of language intended to communicate. And what texts invariably communicate is information from a social system' (Malina 1982:230).

The second model seems to reflect what really takes place when we read texts: they invoke a succession of explicit and implicit scenes which resonate in the mind of the reader. Estévez (2003:58-59) recalls:

> Las investigaciones en el área de la psicología experimental han puesto de manifiesto que la lectura comprensiva se produce cuando el lector/a [sic] interacciona con las informaciones contenidas en el texto confrontándolas con los esquemas culturales en los que ha sido socializado (*modelo escenario*), y no tanto analizando las proposiciones de que se compone y mostrando las correlaciones existentes entre los distintos elementos, como si el significado estuviese en el texto mismo (*modelo proposicional*).

Moreover, within such a scenario we discern the *strategy* of the author, the deliberate design of the text calculated to have a specific social effect on the hearers or readers (Elliott, J H 1995:50)[29]. The task of the contemporary interpreter of the New Testament (an ancient but familiar text) is to re-construct a hypothetical cultural framework in which such beliefs and behaviours make sense. To arrive at this scenario we make use of conceptual models that enhance our comprehension both of the cultural settings which produce such texts, as well as the meanings which the texts propose according to a common belief system which is, to a degree, shared by the people of the circum-Mediterranean area in the first century AD.

2.2.1 Social Scripts

For my present study, there are a series of social scripts (reading scenarios or models) that need to be developed in order to arrive at a coherent answer to the questions I pose. One of these scenarios deals with the process of Romanisation of the Greek part of the Roman Empire. When such a scenario is defined,

[29] The term *strategy* is extremely important for Elliott, since it describes the different fields of personal interaction which give form to the composition of the texts: whether to correct, to clarify, consolidate the group, etc. Strategy is chosen because it encompasses both the intention/goal of the author as well as the form the document receives in order to arrive at such a goal. For further comment on this concept; cf. van Staden and van Aarde (1991:76).

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however tentatively, we are in a better position to see the incidence of this process both in the lives of those who suffered/endured it as well as in the accompanying values produced in the local community at Philippi. This approximation moves from a high-level of abstraction to a lower level, in which I hope to explain the manner in which local communities could have responded to Paul's alternative model as explicated in the Christ-hymn.

A second scenario (or model) is related to the first, since Romanisation was a cultural, social and political process with enduring repercussions both in the psyche and the daily life of local communities. We need to clarify the customs and values which were portrayed, and it is here that a whole plethora of social scientific studies (both of anthropological and sociological nature) dictate our search: honour and shame, patronage, emperor worship, identity formation, etc. All these 'pivotal values' affected how people lived in community, and more important, should affect the way we read the texts now. But there is a further problem, the society we are referring to was mainly silent concerning these social dynamics, since they were mostly taken for granted and not explicated so that we could recognise them at first sight. Here again we face the problem of the dangerous familiarity with the text we referred to earlier.

2.2.2 High and Low Context Societies

If letter-writing is a social phenomenon, a social communication process, we must assume that words convey more than concepts. The very way they are organized reflects ways of knowing, as well as manners of perceiving the surrounding 'reality' that are shared between messenger and receiver. We are dealing, obviously, with ancient texts from which we are separated in time and space: They present a different way of thinking and of relating to nature, and to 'reality' in general[30]. These written texts reflect ancient worldviews, ways of knowing that modern readers do not necessarily share with the original recipients[31]. Without being aware of these simple facts we run the risk of ethnocentrism and anachronism. Both dangers ultimately prevent the modern interpreter from acquiring a tested appraisal of the meaning of the texts, which is more than mere ideological reflection[32].

[30] Cf. Craffert (1996:458-460), who aptly describes both the 'subject's cultural system' and the 'interpreter's cultural system' before engaging in 'cross-cultural comparison'.

[31] Paul cannot escape his own cultural conditioning and therefore makes use of classical stereotypes and forms of understanding difference that reveal his mentality as a Mediterranean person of the first century AD.

[32] See the useful description of this dynamic in Malina and Pilch (2006:1-9).

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We are, furthermore, dealing with what has been termed 'high-context societies[33]', that is, societies which do not experience sudden change or do not change at all over long periods of time. As a result, such texts tend to be less explicit, since messenger and receiver share a common perceived view of their reality (cf. Guijarro 1998:36-37). There are then many elements that are pre-supposed as shared between author and recipients that are actually omitted in the texts. They offer little detail and explanations of social *mores*. These texts tend to be desperately concise (at least for modern readers). After all, things are as they have always been[34]. Why explain what is *common* knowledge?

Modern industrial societies are called 'low-context societies', where little is assumed and where profusion of detail in written texts is a must in order to communicate in an ever-changing culture. Texts, within these societies, tend to be meticulously crafted: little is left to the imagination of the reader[35]. It is for this reason that we need access to the ancient world of the text of the letter to the Philippians through reading scenarios which will facilitate that which in many cases is but a silent word(!) within the text.

Hoping to get as close to the minds of the Philippians as possible I am interested in how they would have understood the Christ-hymn and what plausible echoes it would have triggered in them as they read the letter out loud in the midst of a Roman colony, where the emperor was recognized as *kyrios*, and where another *kyrios* was proclaimed (2:10).

If the aim of our study is to 'bridge' the two horizons it is important that we clarify both *their* world and *ours*. However general Malina's observations may be at times in his application of models, one of the strengths of his influential monograph: *The World of the New Testament* (1981) is his conscious effort to

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[33] Cf. Malina (1991:20), who bases his observations on Hall (1976:91-101; 1983:59-77).

[34] However, when dealing with Biblical texts this is more complex, since we speak of normative language which is not isomorphic with practice, *viz*. what the text may tend to present as normative may in fact be far from the practice of the communities who received such texts. This element complicates matters a bit more; cf. Chance (1994:145-46). Gilmore (1982:180) writes: 'One striking commonality in the Mediterranean literature occurs at a deeper level than that of surface regularities. Everywhere one encounters implicitly an underlying theme of a dynamic tension between contrasting elements, a "structural dualism". This dynamic dualism occurs in all aspects of culture and ideology, in both conscious and unconscious processes. There is nothing unique about an element of ambivalence in belief systems and norms; and of course binary oppositions are universal. *But in the Mediterranean lands these oppositions are so immediate and directly experienced that one may speak of internal cultural contradictions as being more discernible and more systematic than in most other societies*' (my emphasis).

[35] Hall (2003:97-98): 'Talking is a highly selective process because of the way in which culture works. No culture has devised a means for talking without highlighting at the expense of other things. It follows that writing is a symbolization of a symbolization'.

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describe not only ancient society, but also contemporary society[36]. In order to understand Paul's way of thinking that we must survey some of the core values common to the Mediterranean basin, although there is no lack of controversy and divergence when referring to this area as 'homogeneous'. However, these descriptions, undertaken on a high level of abstraction, can enhance our understanding of the values that surely were common, to a certain degree, to the peoples of the Mediterranean world of the first century AD. What then are the most characteristic values of the ancient Mediterranean world? Defining these values from a high level of abstraction allows us to acquire a grasp on the wider subjects without having to impose a too-fixed mould akin to a social law, an extreme that is to be avoided at all costs (Esler 1998b; Horrell 2000; Craffert 1992, 1996) To do so would be to fall in the trap of anachronism and ethnocentrism as we mentioned earlier. So, how do we go then about this enterprise?[37]

3. Curse and Blessing of 'Modelling'

> We do not have the choice of whether we will use models or not. Our choice, rather, lies in deciding whether to use them consciously or unconsciously[38].

There is a hotly debate, current in social-scientific scholarship, whether the use of models is appropriate or it would be preferred to attempt an 'interpretive' approach. The issue, helpful for sharpening the interpretation of the texts, is rather complex and demands a careful use of words. Garrett (1992:93) called scholars of Christian origins to 'engage in sustained reflection on the philosophical implications of the perspectives and models that they choose to employ'. However, Craffert (2001:22) calls the debate a settled matter within social-scientific circles, where the concern now has to do with the 'goodness of fit', which has been neglected. Upon reflexion, I think he is right.

We have already commented in the previous chapter that the use of 'modelling' derives from the notion that 'reality' is a social construction, and as such it is sustained through language and symbol (Scroggs 1980:175). The implications are clear: 'Thus theological language and the claims made therein can no longer be explained without taking into account socio-economic-cultural factors as

[36] 'Despite what they *say* a good deal of the time, anthropologists do not begin from an understanding of our own culture' (Jarvie 1986:163; in Craffert 1996:459, original emphasis).
[37] As we shall discuss later, there is a great deal of controversy on this point, related to the application of such a wide and abstract description to particular texts, which at times are used to fit the mould rather than to be allowed to speak for themselves. There is always the danger that the model used will usurp the 'essence' of the texts and will make them subservient to it.
[38] Carney (1975:5).

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essential ingredients in the production of that language' (:175-176, my emphasis).

If we are interested in getting to know something of the past, we need to arrive at a certain model of such a society in order to compare/contrast[39]. Trying to bridge such a gap, as we have amply written earlier, we all approach the text and its world with a model in mind. Malina (1991a:356) believes modelling makes sense since models are based on actual behaviour of real people and as such '[i]t seems that it is far better to argue from what exists to what is possible, than from what is possible to what should exist'.

A model is like a 'cognitive map' (Elliott 1986:5), selective representations which focus on major components of interest and their priority of importance (Carney 1975:7). Esler (2006:3) offers the following definition in this regard: 'Models are essentially simplifications, exemplifications, and systematizations of data used for comparative processes'. Those who explicitly make use of models frequently advocate that these are merely tools at the disposal of the interpreter which carry no ontological value (others will say nomothetic). As such, the only accurate assessment of a given model is its usefulness, not whether it is 'true' or 'false' (cf. Barrett 1996:216). Since models do not possess ontological value, it is non-sensical to ask about their trueness or falseness. We can only assess them as tools. What we can question however is the application of the model *per se*.

Malina (1982:241) proposed six features that will define a proper model: 1) it should be cross-cultural; 2) at a sufficient level of abstraction to allow similarities for the purpose of comparison; 3) be able to fit a larger sociolinguistic frame for interpreting texts; 4) it should derive from experiences that match what we know of the time and place under scrutiny as closely as possible; 5) the meanings it generates should be *irrelevant* but understandable to us in our own historical context[40]; and 6) the application of the model should be acceptable to other social scientists, although they may not agree with the approach[41].

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[39] Malina (1991:254): 'What occurs as one reads or hears depends largely on the reader's and/or listener's interest. For every text, whether written or spoken, evokes what can never be put into a text by any writer or speaker, and this is the commonsense, socially shared, understanding of the reader […] Interpretation is in fact supplying what is lacking in a text so that the text might mean something'.

[40] Malina, writing mainly for a North-Atlantic readership, assumes that Mediterranean meanings are irrelevant to such addressees. Irrelevant seems too a strong a word, since there exists more correspondence between 'values' and 'behaviour' at times than what is assumed.

[41] Malina (1982:233) distinguishes three kinds of social science models: *structural functionalism*, in which society is perceived in equilibrium and all elements are girded towards maintaining such balance (as a whole, integral system); *conflict theory*, which presupposes that elements in society

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3.1 Advantages of Being Explicit

> Unless one takes the effort to develop cross-cultural, comparative scenarios, the witnesses can only be heard in terms of one's own operative presuppositions and the scenarios that provide those presuppositions.
>
> (Malina 1991a:258)

Scholars who practice 'modelling' defend such an approach on the basis of its openness to verification by peers (Elliott 2001:12; Esler 2000b:109), and not based on 'guesswork and hunches' (Neyrey 1991:xvi)[42]. The advantage of such an approach is that anyone with sufficient expertise can verify the fit between data and model and their capacity for explanation. This practice compensates for what have been considered 'received views' (Elliott 1986; Malina 1986), i.e., unchallenged historical presuppositions which adopted (for some) the view that through history the issue of what was 'reality' was thus settled. However, the application of an explicit model does not guarantee the success of the enterprise, it only stresses the fact that the methodology is easier to follow and to assess. As such, the only value of being explicit is exactly that, the method is not hidden, covered, but it is open to review.

3.2 Heuristic or Prediction Tool?

One of the major critiques about modelling is that the supposed heuristic tool tends to colour the evidence and hence there exists the real danger that it will ultimately swallow 'reality' and will stereotype and fixate what could be a multi-faceted first-century Mediterranean society. In other words, the danger of modelling is that the heuristic nature of the tool may ultimately serve to anticipate (some social sciences use the term 'predict', but in the sense that the hypothesis anticipates the finding which needs to be confirmed —or not— by a controlled test) what is there. Esler (2001a:7), however, recognizes no ontological status to model, only its heuristic value.

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are always changing and we are on the look out for what factors interfere with the normal process of change; and *symbolic*, which focuses in society as a system of symbols—values and feelings— 'about the meanings and values that are attached to and embodied by persons, things, and events' (Malina 1982:235). See also van Staden and van Aarde (1991:71-75).

[42] Though, as Joubert (2000b:11) keenly observes, academic approximation to ancient societies is sometimes enhanced by academic 'guesswork'.

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So it is not as easy as it seems that the use of models can prevent the dangers of ethnocentrism to which we have referred earlier. Craffert (1992:226) is quite vocal in this respect:

> It is no exaggeration to say that the emphasis in New Testament social-scientific research is on the omnipresence of models and the resultant demand that models be used consciously and explicitly. Unfortunately the impression is being created that anachronistic and ethnocentric interpretations can be reduced in that way. However, a contemporary sociological model can just as readily result in anachronism and ethnocentrism as a contemporary theological or literary model. The point is that the explicit and conscious use of models, even so-called cross-cultural models, does not necessarily prevent anachronistic or ethnocentric interpretations, since the way models function is determined by preferences which are not implicit in the models themselves.

Models too, present a strong *etic* component which might be undisclosed to the reader and thus the interpretative process is again blurred and filtered (although giving the erroneous impression that it is adjusted to ancient data).

Esler (1998b:255-56) firmly believes the heuristic nature of the model should guide its use: '[A]lthough models derive from science-orientated approach to reality, their use need not be accompanied by determinist and nomothetic assertions; model-use involves an analogy with scientific method which can only be taken so far. Many are adamant that there is no such thing as a social law'[43]. In a recent publication, Esler (2006:14) again defends the use of models and criticises the projected idea that equates them with social laws:

> The phrase 'social law' is not language employed by those using social-scientific models; it is not inside language. Rather, it is an inaccurate discourse, like the charge of 'positivism,' mobilized by outsiders hostile to the enterprise. I am drawn to the conclusion that such views are triggered by a perhaps understandable unhappiness with work where there is arguably too much model and too little data, or where models are being utilized way beyond their use by date.

However, the critique goes beyond the use of models to an application which seems to have difficulties in regarding differences. As such, Lawrence (2003:12, original emphasis) ponders:

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[43] The notion of 'social laws' commenced with positivism as expounded by A Comte (1798-1857), inventor of the term 'sociology' and who thus referred to a 'science of society that could explain the past of humankind and predict its future course by using the same methods of inquiry, especially observation, experimentation, and comparison, that had proved so successful in the natural sciences' (Esler 2006:4).

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> The model is a stereotype and it is admitted that honour can mean different things to different people. But rarely is this claim demonstrated in exegetical conclusions. The model is defined prior to exegesis then applied to the biblical text. The model remains unchanged throughout the process. Moreover, whilst incommensurability between different *kinds* of cultures is illustrated, the model does not seem to be able to show differences of *degree* within the same culture.

Just (2001:46) criticises the excessive tendency of anthropologists to define both linguistic terminology and behaviour and in the case of honour, for example, concludes that anthropologists often talk a different language than that of the people they are studying[44].

3.3 The Problem of 'Fixed' and Inflexible Models

Horrell (1999:15) complains about a certain repetitive use of models which only builds onto what previous scholars have already stated: 'illumination is not necessarily increased with frequent repetition […] models have sometimes become somewhat inflexible tools, which lead to a rather "homogenised" view of "Mediterranean culture"'. However, this practice is not alien to what happens in any other discipline, including New Testament interpretation carried through traditional methods[45]. Carney (1975:34-37) warned about an obvious limitation of models, which impose an 'iron law of perspective' and tend, thus, to swallow up the data in order to make it fit into the mould (or 'determinism', as commented by Lawrence 2005:14). Models should be used with caution and we should expect continuous refinement and updating of them (Craffert 2001:24)[46].

But the problem is acute and needs to be addressed. Craffert (1992:227) objects that many scientific models, as human creation in time and space[47], are based

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[44] 'Whether it would prove a useful tool remains to be seen. It would be a difficult tool, for the risk of creating stereotypes and of reduplicating errors of the "culture and personality" school would be high' (Just 2001:46).

[45] For a quick review of such continuity (and discontinuity), cf. Riches (1996).

[46] This is not, of course, something based on evidence, only on a hunch which is nevertheless informed in terms of the way in which the *Context Group* of Malina and others functions. I have attended some conferences where members of the *Context Group* were present and where we were told that one of the strengths of their work is its seriously-applied peer review process. I wonder whether this might be one of the reasons why at times work done by members of the *Context Group* tends to follow a kind of orthodoxy at modelling, where strict views are applied without much questioning about their origins. As I said it is just a hunch, but how it is actually possible that some scholars just seem to start their textual interpretation with the same models applied to different texts and end up without modifying the model a single bit?

[47] See Scroggs' (1980:167) reference to sociological models, but the same can be applied to anthropological ones, or, as a matter of fact to any social-scientific model.

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on a particular conception of contemporary society (*etic*) as well as ancient society (*emic*) and as such they also 'age' and may give some clues as to their *datedness*. This is critical, since some of our models are built (as we have seen) on presuppositions which are today under serious accusations of blurring regional differences, as well as of using anthropological studies which are now outdated. This is one of the reasons why I believe that New Testament research can no longer be a specialized area isolated from other disciplines, but one whose aim is to dialogue with other disciplines in order to make its ultimate goal to interpret life both then and now[48]. It needs to be a 'social enterprise', since we need to pay attention to one another in order to avoid falling into the trap of trying to pronounce *das letzte Wort* in our exposition of biblical texts (Elliott, J H 1995:54; cf. Rosell 2006:545).

Barrett (1996:216), although in favour of the use of models, is concerned with the *priority* of the model:

> The model could be erected prior to research, based on general theory and the relevant literature, and then refined in light of the research findings, but I am quite opposed to this deductive procedure; the risk is too great that the fieldworker's perceptions and interpretations will be distorted. The model then, should not be a guide to research, but a product of it. It should grow out of the data that one has collected.

Malina (*The World of the New Testament*) leaves a section ("Testing the Hypothesis") at the end of each chapter so that readers can check his application of the different models onto the texts, but I find (maybe because it was designed as a basic textbook) that some of the applications are too mechanical, predictive and projected upon the texts rather than deriving from them. Barrett (1996:216) opines that the task of building an overall model should be postponed until the fieldwork is completed, 'partly because one must continue to have the capacity to be surprised by the data, leading one to *unanticipated* interpretations' (my emphasis).

Ling (2006:13) criticizes the self-perpetuating attitude of some social scientific scholars towards the model of ancient shame and honour when not even the original sources contemplated such a coherent and closed system of belief. For

[48] This is, at least from a point of view of Christian belief, why we carry on with such an endeavour. If we are unable to translate what we observe in ancient texts to the present, our interpretation is only accomplished half-way. What I have been commenting with regards to the *emic-etic* relation is no mere historical device, but ultimately, the actualization of an old message which later generations have considered to be of utmost importance for their *daily* living. I can sense part of such 'unsettling' in Theissen, as he concludes one of his latest books (2002) with a sermon on the topic of study, as if reminding readers that the last step in Bible interpretation is homiletics. Cf. also Theissen and others (1994).

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him, '[r]evising this definition to include both internal and external dimensions, virtue and repute, is an important and necessary corrective to prevent obscuring the complex social realities of the first-century social world'

3.4 One Model *vs* Many Models?

There is no doubt that upon reviewing some recent applications of 'pivotal' models to the texts of the New Testament, there is a sense in which much of what is written tends to repeat verbatim what the 'parents' of the discipline wrote more than two decades ago. Because of this some scholars complain about ceaseless repetition and mechanical application of others' findings which leads to boredom and not necessarily to illumination, but this seems to be a too general assessment[49]. The problem is that working at such a high level of abstraction, models tend to swallow any possible nuance or exception.

I can see the value of using models in our search to reasonably bridge the gap between horizons, but at the same time I am aware that as we get closer to the data (the text), models should be adapted in order to fit the data, not the opposite. Estévez (2003:57) argues for maintaining the same level of abstraction throughout the research, since models vary in their level of abstraction depending on the social phenomena under scrutiny. However, what is not clear to me is if the model ever suffers any changes in this process, or if as a *tool*, it just gets to be labelled 'useful' or 'not-useful'. Can we make use of different models when studying the same phenomena at different levels of abstraction and within different contexts? Maybe this could be an answer to the oft-heard complaint that models—when *applied*— are becoming stereotypes, akin to social laws. It is difficult to understand how, in our search from the typical towards the particular we could remain at the same levels of abstraction throughout the process. To me it implies that the model remains unaffected whereas our interpretation of the text is open to change[50]. Should it not be the other way

[49] See, as an example, Chance's observation (1994:140) on the use of the honour-shame model: 'The papers in this volume [*Semeia* 68] might give the unwary reader the impression that anthropologists are largely in agreement on the meaning and significance of honor and shame in Mediterranean contexts. This is definitely not the case, however'. Different authors espouse contrasting emphases which only add to a clearer understanding of honour in diverse settings.

[50] Kressel's response (1994:153-161) is quite illuminating in this respect. The issue of *Semeia* 68 is dedicated to the application of the honour-shame model to different texts, in which Kressel, as an anthropologist, reviews and assesses each contribution. His critique can be summarized as a tendency in the scholars to homogenized views which are quite dissimilar (1994:158) and in the wrong application of a model which is not 'appropriate' for certain scenarios (1994:153, 157, 159). As such, the matter here is not whether the model is useful or not, but on the application of a general model which does not pertain to the nature of the text and tends to blur differences, but is applied anyway as if brought light to the texts and the contexts.

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around? Chance (1994:142-43), although finding it refreshing that biblical scholars use anthropology carefully to access ancient texts, nevertheless states that most of them drink from the same well (that is, the work edited by Peristiany in 1966) and that 'the anthropology employed in these papers is beginning to look at bit dated' (cf. Domeris 1993:292-293). However, Crook (2006:92) defends the use of scientific models, since when they are properly applied, every encounter with new data brings greater nuance to the model, since the model is the *result* of observation and not the source of those observations' (my emphasis). Craffert (1992:226) understands that models work at different levels of abstraction, but warns that the higher the level, the higher the risk of losing the historical contour and vice versa[51].

Finally, there is the issue of thinking across time, that is, how cultural values have experienced transformation through the ages. Chance (1994:149), who focuses on honour and shame, believes it to be an 'elusive goal', save for Caro Baroja's (1996) historical analysis in Spain. However, the fact that some social scientific scholars might have failed to address appropriately such complexities could be the result of the lack of interest that numerous ethnographers have demonstrated in their research on ancient history. Therefore, if ethnographers and social scientists of the Bible begin to refine and expand their research tools, more accurate approximations to such enriching areas could be in the pipeline[52]. Modelling, thought not the panacea, certainly exposes our preconceptions and enhances our search. The problem, as we shall see later in the chapter, is to not let the model simply take control of the evidence.

Now, however, we need to turn once again to the social/historical context in which we place our text, as to assess with more accuracy the validity of our particular approach.

4. The Context: The Pre-Industrial Society

When we speak of the geographic area of the Mediterranean world around the first century AD, scholars widely agree that we are dealing with a society

[51] Craffert (1992:226): '[…]the explicit and conscious use of models, even so-called cross-cultural models, does not necessarily prevent anachronistic or ethnocentric interpretations, since *the way models function is determined by preferences which are not explicit in the models themselves*' (my emphasis).

[52] Personally, as I have worked towards ascertaining a proper model of *Romanisation* for the area in the eastern part of Greece, I came to realise that the term is either avoided by some authors (since it is 'contested', cf. Woolf 1998a) or merely used without a thorough definition of what it actually entails (cf. MacMullen 2000). Therefore, I had to come up with my own definition and description of the process.

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whose main thrust is agricultural and whose population lives—except for a small elite that inhabits a few *megapolises* scattered here and there in the rural context[53]. This manner of living, coupled with the harsh circumstances of daily life, and some other elements we shall describe later on, characterize a human structure which could be described as *advanced agrarian societies*. The Roman Empire constitutes a clear example of such a society. This type of society lives according to values common to the region we are concerned with in this study, despite local differentiation and stark differences between city and country, even over the next four centuries (Markschies 2001:21). We must therefore look at some of these salient features. Within this model, we will focus on the pre-industrial city, since Philippi is a clear example of such a social environment[54].

4.1 Characteristics

For our interests and purposes, we are going to focus on what we believe are four salient characteristics of this type of society that have a strong bearing on the population in terms of defining how relationships are formed and maintained. We need to understand that, from a macro-sociological point of view, societies such as the one we survey are characterized not only as agricultural states, but states where conquest—and for the same reason wars—have an important impact on their development, both on account of territorial accumulation and on warfare technological advances. War is in this setting a 'chronic condition' (Lenski 1969:205, 207-208)[55]. This will be crucial in the formation of local Roman colonies in the eastern part of the empire, including Philippi.

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[53] Jones (1964:465) comments that the economy of such a society consisted of two distinct parts: the rural agricultural sector and the urban commercial and industrial one. These two were of equal importance. Jones estimates that the Roman state derived as much as twenty times more from the agricultural sector (in terms of tax revenue) than from trade and industry. Certainly the burden for the peasant is huge, within an agriculture system that often reveals a strong domestic industrious character. Lenski and Lenski (1987:183-188) present a diagram that shows the steady flow of goods from villages to county seats and from there to the regional and national capitals, where surplus is accumulated (for a discussion on the benefits of political office and rights to own national product, see Lenski 1969:232). Although some scholars have argued for a symbiotic relationship between urban and rural economies, 'the historical record shows that the relationship was largely one-sided and that the peasants were forced to give far more than they perceived. The peasants obviously resented this, as indicated by the frequency of their protests and revolts' (Lenski & Lenski 1987:185).

[54] As it is clear, we are using a macro-sociological approach to understand the bigger scenario (cf. Rohrbaugh 1996:112). In chapter 4 we shall focus on the particular.

[55] Lenski (1969:209) believes that such a type of agricultural society, where war is so accentuated, tends to tilt towards a monarchic system. In the next chapter we will have a chance to observe in more detail some of the reasons which brought the change from a Republican system to the Principate within Rome's form of government.

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4.1.1 Hierarchical

Lenski and Lenski (1987:185) describe this advanced agrarian society as one in which 'the governing elite (which includes religious leaders) owned a grossly disproportionately share of the land [...] Typically, a minority of 1 to 3 percent of the population has owned from one-third to two-thirds of the arable land in these societies'. Lenski (1969) portrays a human society which is based both in ecological and technological factors, and Hellerman (2005:3-4), drawing on Lenski's information, highlights the fact that advanced agrarian society is the one model in which there exists the more extreme degree of social inequality. Why? Lenski (1969:222) believes the first reason is the very form of government. Here we need to observe that Rome had perfected her own way of ruling by a clearly demarcated system of honours and strata (Lendon 2001) which, as we will see, extended even to the *coloniae* in the eastern part of the Empire, where imperial force had to deal with local elites, trying to keep the whole social system in place (Lendon 2001:7; Oakes 2001:32). When a form of government can only accommodate a small number of people, it is clear that the struggle for control is more acute since elite groups have ample control over great portions of economic surplus, land, and the spoils of conquered nations (Lenski 1969:222-229)[56].

Garnsey and Saller (1987:109) focus on membership groupings and the processes which enhance inequality, and observe three processes, namely: 1) the property system, 2) the legal system, and 3) the occupational system (division of labour). I shall comment briefly on 1 and 2, and leave 3 for later: 'In general, emperors did not, and could not, closely monitor entry into the propertied class. But they introduced one new way of gaining admission, duties in the service of the regime and the empire. Soldiers were rewarded for their role in preserving the social order with adequate, and in the case of officers, generous pay and a substantial remuneration on retirement, which put veterans in a position to establish themselves as prosperous members of local communities' (Garnsey & Saller 1987:110). This system of maintaining difference was to affect how local populations perceived their day to day life, especially in the colonies. As we pointed already in chapter 2, a society such as this is not characterized by a system of social mobility (Rohrbaugh 1996:110). Garnsey and Saller (1987:45) assess it:

[56] To run for office within the Roman Empire (even during the Republic), or to undertake liturgies, potential members needed to secure certain amounts of drachmae. Cf. Plutarch, *Precepts of Politics*; Dio, *Or* 34.21-3; in Winter (1994:86).

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> in pre-industrial societies the prevailing value system is that of landed aristocracy. A prosperous merchant class, the source of whose wealth is not land, and whose success rested on enterprise and skill rather than traditional precepts and models of behaviour, provides a potential threat to aristocratic values. But successful merchants fall easy prey to the dominant ideology: they buy or marry their way into the aristocracy and seek political office. Only the rise of a class of industrial owners, who possess social prestige and economic power independently as profit makers and employers of labour, endangers the traditional social order. In ancient Rome there was no prospect of the emergence of such a class.

The practice of law is also a clear example of such inequality, which perceives Roman citizens above those of conquered lands[57] (Sherwin-White 1973:264). We need to be aware, though, of over-hasty generalizations, as Judge (1972:25) observes: 'Roman citizenship may not have been so decisive a status factor in Greek cities of the first century as has been supposed. It has now been argued that the social class ranking system that applied later was already beginning to cut across distinctions between citizens and aliens'. Paul's incident at Philippi (Acts 16) will give us a clearer picture of such matters. We will pay greater attention to this within the context of Romanization, which clearly worked to strengthen and support the Roman way of life, especially as understood by the elite (Garnsey & Saller 1987:110-11)[58].

4.1.2 Wide Gap between Rural and Urban Settings

According to Lenski and Lenski (1987:188), the urban population reached no more than 10 per cent of the entire Roman population. The Roman economy was underdeveloped, which essentially meant that the mass of the population lived near subsistence level: 'In a typical underdeveloped, pre-industrial economy, a large proportion of the labour force is employed in agriculture, which is the main avenue for investment and source of wealth' (Garnsey & Saller 1987:43). We find at this time that a certain level of technological development (hardening of iron to produce steel, different weapons and utensils, although it was not uniform; cf. Lenski & Lenski 1987:176-78) permitted the larger size of simple agrarian societies. The mortality rate was

[57] According to Jones (1974:107): 'Roman law gradually prevailed in the Greek East. Its acceptance in the actual practice of the courts was presumably gradual. But it seems to have been systematically enforced by Diocletian'. For an in-depth study of such questions, cf. Sherwin-White (1963).

[58] The elite tried to legitimize their rule by appealing to absolutes, to tradition (*mores*), the opinion of the experts and appealing that it was done for the benefit of the governed. The by-product of such a process is a certain sense of fatalism, especially on the humbler strata, whose social ceiling is too firmly established (i.e. lack of social mobility; cf. Sjoberg 1960:225-228).

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quite high compared to contemporary standards. During Imperial Rome (*ca* AD 120), the average age at death for adults was 40.2 for males and 34.6 for females (Lenski & Lenski 1987:179); although Brown (1993:22), concludes that during the second century AD, at the climax of Imperial Rome, 'sólo cuatro de cada diez hombres, y una proporción de mujeres inferior, vivía más allá de los cincuenta años'. Brown (1993) describes average life expectancy at twenty-five years, a figure which may appear to be a bit low, but is nevertheless backed by important historical studies.

Sjoberg (1960:110-11) highlights the urban character of the elite. This is an important observation[59]. According to Ramage (1973:67): 'in this period as before there are two kinds of existence, a city life and a country life, contrasting in obvious ways, the urbanites and rustics are still routinely identified as two different groups with two separate sets of qualifications. The man of the city shows a remarkable interest in the rustic and his life at this time, and his attitude is not always one of opposition. But in matters of refinement the countryman is brushed off because he is basically ignorant and lacks polish'. In the next chapter, when we study specifically the urban context at Philippi, we will have a chance to study with more detail terms such as *urbanitas* and the like, which capture the essence of the sense of superiority of Rome over subjected nations.

4.1.3 Division of Labour

We find an increasing differentiation in the economy, a division of labour:

> The Roman Empire provides a good illustration of both regional and local specialization. North Africa and Spain were noted as suppliers of dried figs and olive oil; Gaul, Dalmatia, Asia Minor, and Syria were noted for their wine; Spain and Egypt for salted meats; Egypt, North Africa, Sicily, and the Black Sea region for grain; and the latter for salted fish as well.
>
> (Lenski & Lenski 1987:182)

The advancement of technology and trade, together with the huge step in communications carried by the Roman Empire (roads, *vias*, harbours, colonies, the benefits of the *pax Romana*, etc.) enhanced the creation of a new class of

[59] This mention is not fortuitous. For long it had been *opinio communis* that pre-industrial families were extended and multi-generational (from the time of Le Play, at the end of the 19th century), but at least in the cities, only the urban elites were able to afford such large families. I believe, though, that new studies have corrected this misrepresentation (cf. Saller 1984:124; Dixon 1992; Pomeroy 1998:140; etc.).

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traders and merchants that facilitated relationships among different cultures, religions and peoples, who could now communicate amongst themselves via the steadily positioning of Latin as *lingua franca*. This is clear in Philippi, in the route of the *via Egnatia*, where we find the existence of numerous cults and associations, no doubt, due to the fact of easier access to traditionally remote areas. That there was an important harbour (Neapolis) near Philippi further enhanced communications. But this growing awareness of other areas and cultures did not change the position of women, as we would expect coming from a modern western mentality. Sjoberg (1960:163) describes these elements in the pre-industrial city in big strokes: 'Women are unquestionably subordinate to men. The pre-industrial city is a "man's world"; a woman's social and legal right were startlingly few. In childhood she is dependent upon her father, after marriage upon her husband, and upon widowhood upon her sons [...] In essence a woman's lot in life is determined first by the kind of family she is born into, and then by the family she enters through marriage'. Malina (1981:41-44 = 1995:68-70) perceives the division of gender in labour solely as a result of the honour-shame code of conduct, but I think such an approach is perhaps too limited, although we cannot deny its influence. This division of labour based on gender is not strange even to our modern world[60], but it is clearly accentuated in first-century Mediterranean society[61].

4.1.4 Strong Group-Based Character[62]

In this type of subsistence economy, where the household is the basic unit of industry, it seems appropriate that strong ties would develop amongst kinship lines (cf. Brown 1993:21-27). The ideal family would be self-sufficient (Pomeroy 1998:141). At least we know this much; that 'an *oikos* that could not support its members was, to the Greeks, no *oikos* at all' (Lacey 1968:15). Sjoberg (1960:187) affirms that the 'most obvious aspect of the pre-industrial city's economic organization is its guild system'. Besides economic interests (monopoly over

[60] A recent study has shown that in Spain women earn thirty per cent less than men for the same kind of work. In our Western and developed world there are many areas where women struggle in order to rise to the same position as men. Also jobs that have been traditionally ascribed solely to men (taxi driver, plumber, soldier, etc.) or to women (nurse, 'house*wife*', etc.).
[61] Of course we are speaking at a high level of abstraction. The study of women in antiquity has developed much in later years. For an excellent and recent work on the subject, with its necessary nuances depending on regions and epoch, see Osiek, MacDonald and Tulloch (2006).
[62] Oakman and Hanson (1998:16-17): 'Social scientists debate the role of ecological adaptation in the formation of human culture and social institutions. Without resolving that debate, it is important to recognize that *environmental factors* like climate and geography affect both culture and social institutions. For example, environmental adaptation in the rugged and climatically challenging eastern Mediterranean world has led to the prevalence of strong-group orientation there' (original emphasis), but present no further evidence to support this observation.

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trade), I believe we can also claim that the need for belonging to a social matrix wider than that of the family should at least be kept in mind (although such a view is not exclusive of other reasons; cf. Wilson 1996:14). No wonder that during this time there is a strong emergence of voluntary associations ('typically urban phenomena'; cf. Wilson 1996:14), which in some cases imitate the social structure of the patriarchal family, although not in every aspect[63].

Most people who had travelled to the urban setting in search of work had developed a sense of 'up-rootedness' and needed to belong to something complementary to family lines. Even those in the city of lower strata, devoid of any power and impact in the affairs of the city, found in voluntary associations a sense of value that met both social and individual longings (Kloppenborg 1996:26)[64]. Even Christ-following communities were understood in such a manner (cf. Ascough 2000; 2002; 2003a; Tellbe 2001). While some associations were mostly 'social' in nature, the truth of the matter is that the religious element was always embedded (Harland 2003:59), the same way that the social familiar unit participated in the domestic cult (e.g. the Roman *lares*). While the public domain was controlled by a small elite, the rest of the population engaged in relationships at grassroots levels somewhat distant from the tyranny of the powerful. Notwithstanding, many a times these associations were structured in a hierarchical fashion that imitated that of the rest of society, although it tended to assimilate a more familiar structure where members felt more at home. So it seems one of the biggest impulses for the creation and multiplication of these associations is the need for finding a proper social niche where to belong, added to the sense of security that belonging to a wider group offers, especially when the individual knows him/herself through the opinions others have of him/her rather than just by self-analysis. According to Kloppenborg (1996:17): 'The reasons for the growth of such associations are not especially difficult to grasp. The ties that bound a citizen to the polis were weakened by the relative ease of travel and by the diminished influence local inhabitants had over their own affairs'.

[63] For a useful comparison of such features, cf. Hellerman (2001:4-14).

[64] 'Their aim was not to overthrow the existing political system, but to find their niche within it' (Wilson 1996:3). It is also necessary to distinguish in the taxonomy, function and membership of the different groups (*collegia*, *thiasoi*, *sodalites*, etc.); see Kloppenborg (1996:16).

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4.2 Structures

In a social system as the one we have described, there is no separation between religious and economic structures. On the contrary, both are part of a unified reality which is influenced as much by kinship as by politics (Hanson and Oakman 1998:5)[65]. This is convenient for the survival of elites, where kinship ties are of primary importance. Such is the case that even the emperor often appears as 'father of the nation'[66]. Wallace-Hadrill (1996:306) speaks of the changes which took place during the Principate: instead of a plurality of households having the power to govern (Republican nobility), it now centred on a single household, that of the *princeps*. The same could be said about the patron image, which often described the emperor (cf. Joubert 2000b:26-27. Cf. Wallace-Hadrill 1996:293).

The family is the basic unit of socialisation and of the (domestic) industry, since the Roman Empire was underdeveloped and could not cater for what we may refer to as 'equal opportunities' for all her subjects. Thus, the family is the key socialising agent in the community, and 'given the low level of social mobility, a man's family is the chief determinant of his future career, be this in the top bureaucracies or, in the case of the commoners, in the lower-status jobs' (Sjoberg 1960:325). This basic definition of the advanced agrarian society, such as the Roman Empire will in turn produce men and women with certain particularities we need to discuss in order to ascertain what bearing they may have upon the texts we study. First, however, we need to study this region and its common values, since in anthropological circles this understanding is still somewhat contested.

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[65] As such, McCready (1996:61, citing Kloppenborg 1993:213 and Hatch 1881) aptly observes that: 'Christianity did not have to "invent the notion of a religious society distinct from the family and the *polis* or state" since forming associations was a regular activity of ancient Mediterranean societies'.

[66] Cicero, *Fam* 13.23.1, 13.46; Seneca, *Ep* 47. 4; Pliny, *Ep* 8.14.16. All of them considered the *domus* as a miniature *res publica*. Philo, in clear Hellenistic-Roman attitude, perceives the father-son relation as working model for society. In *SpecLeg* 4.181, he writes:

> The ruler should preside over his subjects as a father over his children so that he himself may be honoured in return as by true-born sons, and therefore good rulers may be truly called the parents of states and nations in common, since they show a fatherly and sometimes more than a fatherly affection.

Cf. also Reinhartz (1993:68).

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5. First-Century Circum-Mediterranean Region[67]

There is no general consensus amongst scholars when defining the Mediterranean basin as a 'culturally homogeneous region', a sort of 'independent region' that sets it apart from all others on the basis of its unique idiosyncrasies, although there can be observable local differences when studied at a lower level of abstraction[68]. According to Guijarro (1998:41) comparative anthropological studies have shown that such an area can be considered as an 'independent cultural region', which presents a high degree of internal cohesion as far as shared values is concerned[69]. It seems to me that at a higher level of abstraction it is easier to lump together various regional traits that are important when dealing with concrete texts although this definition is still helpful if we keep in mind that there are significant local differences which need to be taken into account as they emerge in our research[70]. Esler (2000b:109), aware of this tension in anthropological studies, still maintains his position: 'I strongly disagree [sic] the notion (now starting to be heard) that recent research into the Mediterranean by people like Herzfeld (1987) in some way invalidates or is radically different from that by earlier researchers such as Pitt-Rivers, Campbell, Peristiany and Bourdieu. I see helpful development and

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[67] It is not our aim to carry out an exhaustive study on such a controversial and complex matter. There are as many anthropologists and ethnographers in favour of a Mediterranean-region working model (Gilmore 1987:3; Braudel 1986) as those who refuse such a 'homogenising' label (Herzfeld 1987:88, de Pina-Cabral 1989:399; Geertz), and maybe as those more interested in particularistic ventures who do not show a distinctive leaning toward either of the two (Peristiany & Pitt-Rivers 1992; Davis 1977:255).

[68] Horden and Purcell (2002:485): 'No agreement has been reached on the crucial question of what gives Mediterranean anthropology its credentials of what (if anything) makes it a discrete and coherent subject of study'.

[69] For Braudel (1986:21): 'La unidad esencial del Mediterráneo es el clima, un clima muy particular, semejante de un extremo a otro del mar, *unificador* de los paisajes y de los géneros de vida' (my emphasis). However, anthropologist de Pina-Cabral (1989:399) argues that 'the notion of the Mediterranean Basin as a "culture area" is more useful as a means of distancing Anglo-American scholars from the populations they study than as a way of making sense of the cultural homogeneities and differences that characterize the region', and (:403): '[T]he notion of "culture area" proves deficient as a comparative tool as soon as sociological and historical considerations get the upper hand'.

[70] Kressel (1994:160) believes there are important nuances depending on the region we focus on that are relevant since they may posses a demonstrated value when interpreting the texts, for example: 'On the Southern (Muslim) littoral of the Mediterranean basin, the agnatic ethics (i.e., the etiquette of the tribe, the extension of which is the *ummah*) is the essence of the spiritual, in contrast with the material interest of households. On the European (Christian) littoral, the individual accountability vis-a-vis the divine in the moral code, which conflicts with individual material interests. Honor operates differently; you can be dishonourable in the eyes of your fellowmen and yet honourable in the eyes of God. The two littorals once encountered are at cross-purposes and the absurd can come into play'.

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nuancing in the field, but no radical discontinuity'. Now, I do not believe there is a single scholar which would argue that the Mediterranean area was entirely homogeneous, sharing the same values as a kind of *copy-cat* of Rome's mores. No, we are aware that diversity (even in the apparent face of uniformity) is as much a part of human life as any other element. Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers (Peristiany 1976; Peristiany & Pitt-Rivers 1992) warn us that to speak of 'Mediterranean society', 'conduce, sin embargo, algunas veces al error de pensar que nos proponíamos establecer que el Mediterráneo era un "área cultural". No era ésta nuestra intención […] De hecho estamos tan interesados en las diferencias culturales entre los pueblos que rodean el Mediterráneo como en las semejanzas' (Peristiany & Pitt-Rivers 1992:22). Thus, Lawrence's (2003:34) remark is timely: 'To claim that all people located within a particular group or region operate in alignment with a generalised cultural script, is to risk losing the uniqueness of their thought, actions and lives[71]'. She opts for an approach which takes into consideration the 'many possible voices' that speak within the texts, which in the end allows us to appreciate different ways of reacting under similar stimuli. Although anyone somewhat familiar with ancient Mediterranean texts cannot avoid the weight which honour and shame places on them, it is better to see honour and shame as important options that may at times predominate, but also consider that other valid options may also exist (cf. Downing 2000:31)[72].

The Mediterranean world is an 'essentially contested concept' (Horden & Purcell 2002:523)[73]. Moxnes (1996:34) recognises clear levels of difference on values and practices, but supports the idea of using present-day anthropological studies (and modelling) since this working hypothesis has been

[71] But such a perception may in fact misconstrue what some social-scientific scholars in the *Context Group* claim, even if they use modelling: 'In social-scientific perspective, our primary focus will be on the typical and general in its application to understanding the particular and unique' (Hanson & Oakman 1998:13).

[72] Horden and Purcell (2002:503) study the theme of honour and comment that 'no other topic of contemporary anthropological concern has produced so much evidence that so strongly suggests a high degree of Mediterranean unity'.

[73] Neyrey (1998:8-9) tries to address the controversy concerning the use of the label 'Mediterranean' and maintains that when speaking of the theme of honour and shame, although recognizing that 'Greece was not Egypt, nor Egypt Rome', we can make use of rhetoric as a unifying factor, since we know it was the usual mode of communicating by those who created opinion, and it was governed by standard rules. However commendable his effort, the truth of the matter is that we always come to the same point which stresses 'ethnographic particularism', i.e., ultimately the focus is on the particular and unique. But even here the problem stands out: How can we consciously develop such a 'thick description' when we are busy with ancient texts? Esler (2006:13) equating the Geertzian expression with 'particularity', perceives practical problems as the above when any such approach is applied to anything other than contemporary culture.

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supported 'by historical and classical studies[74]'. Now, the real task is not so much to exert ourselves in finding an ultimate definition of *Mediterraneanism* which will fit into any conceivable category, but to acknowledge that there are clear similarities as well as strong differences[75]. It is true that the unity which the Roman Empire tried to impose whether by violence/peace, architecture, language, mores, laws, etc., can only be accomplished to a certain degree, and one which escapes us ultimately. It is more useful then to research the area which concerns us (starting from the Greek East and moving onto the area of Philippi) with as much detail as possible and the pertinent texts as thoroughly as our skill permits.

The matter under discussion is if postulating such a homogeneous region is enhanced by the use of modelling, based on the assumption of commensurability and cross-cultural comparison[76]. At the end of the day the two approaches which New Testament scholars using social-scientific tools opt for are modelling or ethnographic particularism (the *interpretivist* approach) or, as Horrell (2000:84) points out, 'social historians' and 'social scientists', but such definition adds different nuances to the debate which we are not going to treat here[77].

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[74] Moxnes (1996:34) mentions that such studies have been carried specially among small Mediterranean communities, so their results are 'mostly applicable to similar small-scale communities in earlier periods'. In my opinion, these studies can also be strengthened with more complete studies which show a sharper *emic* focus (Barton 2001; Bettini 1991) and thus present a lower-level of abstraction to enhance our interpretive task.

[75] Horden and Purcell (2002:523) include this insightful observation: 'As we have argued throughout, the region is only loosely unified, distinguishable from its neighbours to degrees that vary with time, geographical direction and topic'.

[76] Already in 1980 Judge warned against what we termed the *sociological fallacy*, which pointed to the danger of using models constructed from other cultures and then imported to the New Testament. Stowers (1985) also cautioned towards a too-quick assumption of commensurability in certain applications of the discipline to the texts of the New Testament (cf. Craffert 1992:217-8). Craffert (2001:23) contends that commensurability cannot be assumed, but needs to demonstrate and argue a correct fit between model and evidence.

[77] The first approach is strongly defended by the *Context Group* and scholars akin to such an approach, while the second, interpretivism, is defended by a new group of scholars mainly teaching in the British Isles (Horrell, Lawrence, Ling, Aguilar). Although such a view may just be pure stereotyping on my part, there is sense in which one perceives some 'tendencies' from each side, as if camps have been formed and need to be maintained. It is interesting, nonetheless, that both 'camps' comprise people who are not Mediterranean, since southern European scholars (Aguirre, Estévez, Guijarro, de Miguel, Arbiol, Rivas, etc.) tend to make use of more flexible approaches, maybe due to the fact that as *Mediterraneans* they perceive more diversity within a seemingly homogeneous way of life than when it is studied from outside. But this too, may just be pure stereotyping. We have already expounded upon the epistemology behind such approaches in the previous chapter, so there is no need to belabour this point again.

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Thus, it seems that once having heard the cautionary words of both sides of the dialogue, it is important to keep in mind the old adage of historical-critical exegesis and bring forth a 'hermeneutic of suspicion' to the homogenising tendency which seems to prevail in much of social-scientific literature reviewed. If such a homogenous element 'is there', it will be because it is shown and apparent, not merely because it is expected, predicted, and ubiquitous by all means. Downing (2000:42), although dealing with the theme of honour, insightfully concludes his first chapter with these timely words: 'The issue of honour, of respect in community, is important, and may even *on occasion* be of prime importance. It does not help to assume—irrespective of the evidence—that it always must be dominant'.

Finally, within the social-scientific endeavour, it is only logical that higher-level constructions will be a fair aim of anthropological study. Although ethnography is essentially the discipline in which the researcher surveys and jots down particular events, opinions, feelings, etc., expressed by the informants, the anthropologist is in part motivated by the feeling that 'any generalization we entertain about man (and consequently about ourselves) should be shown to be applicable to many times and places of human existence' (Ember & Ember 1973:4). However, this approach to anthropology seems to be a bit outdated. Today, even with the critique the concept of 'culture' in anthropology, the shift in focus has turned onto the diversity of human action, the individual, rather than to the proposition of grand theories (cf. Lawrence 2005:14). With this change in focus, the clash in epistemology comes as no surprise when we observe the set of assumptions which are brought to the research, since 'modellers' base their approach in a philosophy of human action that regards it as predictable and regular (cf. Horrell 2000:86, commenting on Malina 1982:231). Can we get something clear out of this discussion? The first thing is to define what are these values that are perceived as characteristic in this 'somewhat homogenous' socio-cultural area.

5.1 First-Century Mediterranean Values?

Malina has done, up to date, what I consider to be the best arranged summary of Mediterranean values with the above-mentioned proviso. Drawing on the insight of anthropologists and social historians, Malina proposes five great areas which tend to characterize the people and ways of first-century Mediterranean society. These are: i) honour and shame; ii) dyadic personality (the individual and the group); iii) society with perception of limited good; iv) kinship (and marriage), and, finally, v) clean and unclean. All these values are not independent from each other; rather, together they present us with a clear picture of what typical social behaviour was in first-century Mediterranean

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society. As we advance in presenting the salient characteristics of each 'pivotal value', we will present some examples of how each of them relates to the others, thus, building up to a society which is described both as *agonistic*[78] and in which people act according to what is called *dyadic personality*, that is, having in mind the group as that which provides the individual with a sense of identity. Our way of assessing such features follows a different route although it is clear that it is firmly based upon the systematic presentation Malina has facilitated.

For our purposes, I focus first on two salient models: honour and shame and limited good perception, which in essence (more than other models), seem to provide the social frame which produces the type of personality first-century Mediterranean person characteristically manifests. Kinship is clearly a strong and recurrent feature of Mediterranean societies, especially embodied in the Graeco-Roman world through the institution of the *pater familias*. However, due to space constrictions, I have opted for presenting just a limited description of kinship since it will be dealt with as we further comment on the letter to the Philippians. The same can be said about purity and impurity. Where it is pertinent for our discussion, I shall include substantial comments on the issue. First, however, some clarifying comments on our itinerary.

5.1.1 Anthropological Approach

What follows is a brief summary of a complex discussion taking place within anthropological circles. If anthropology in the 60's and 70's emphasized the general and typical (social structures, grand theories which could explain the particular, etc.) it seems that today there is a marked shift in orientation, giving more weight to agency[79]. Overholt (1996:4-5) states that '[t]here is, however, no single theory on which most anthropologists agree', and provides the student of the Biblical texts with three keys he deems necessary in order to choose which approaches s/he should make use of: 1) a focus on agency, that is, individual human action, but also in structure[80]; 2) an approach which takes into

[78] From Greek ἀγών, the term used for the gladiatorial games and translated as 'dispute', 'fight', which characterizes a society of constant struggle for supremacy and consolidating one's *status* in the order of survival, be it social of or any order.

[79] Such changes are manifest in many areas. Alcock (1993) applies a new archaeological methodology which focuses more in what is called 'pedestrian surface survey', rather than in the traditional focus of archaeology, which tended to search for monumental, palace-based, evidence. The search is now for the iconographic *landscape*, a way of understanding it as a social product. 'Human activity, human involvement forms the key element: landscape is "never simply a natural space […] always artificial, always synthetic, always subject to sudden or unpredictable change"' (Alcock 1993:6-7, quoting Jackson 1984:8).

[80] Here is the core of the interesting, sometimes delightful, dialogue between Esler and Horrell: the relationship between agency and structure (cf. Esler 2000a:110-11).

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consideration that social life contains contradictions and inconsistencies, which are nothing other than the logical outcome of individual choice (human agency) within structured parameters (social structure); and 3) the use of 'non-positivist' epistemology, that is, a view which 'holds that anthropological description does not so much mirror social reality as provide one of several possible maps that can guide us in our attempts to understand society'. Thus, I oppose any concept of *social laws* (*viz*. the view that humans behave according to a set of social parameters that are found outside of themselves, and to which they ultimately conform), which leads to determinism and as such contradicts human existence as we experience it daily.

Since we are concerned with ancient texts (as social products) and not 'living' subjects as such, our anthropological work is, logically, incomplete, but can be somehow complemented by a process of comparison (cf. Dumont 1987:27).

5.1.2 Social/Sociological Description

We are aware that ancient texts do not verse only on the world of ideas. R Scroggs reminded interpreters that they should unite their body and soul as it was in the beginning, that is, that social concerns (the different *Sitze im Leben*) transform and modify the way people understood the message directed to them. If we believe, as I have already argued, that written communication is a social enterprise, a way not only of passing on of information, but a vehicle by which audiences can be challenged, invited to change, etc., then the range of situations that are addressed should be perceived and understood within their own frame of mind, to be able to make sense of them as they were, most probably, understood in origin[81].

However, there has been a confusion of terminology since early days, which has equated social approach with sociological analysis[82]. If any social approach is guided towards a *description* of the social milieu, sociological analysis aims at explaining the reasons why people socialize they way the do. These two levels cannot be merged as if they pursue the same goals. I am not content with merely adding up historical information to better describe the social setting in

[81] Joubert (2000b:12-13), building on the insight of Krieger (1964), calls for looking at texts both as 'mirrors' and 'windows', i.e., reflectors of important aspects of socio-historical contexts in which the texts were produced.

[82] The tendency nowadays seems to be more accurate when describing the different approaches, although it is still necessary to describe what each of them aims for. For a good review of such a discussion, cf. van Staden and van Aarde (1991:55-87).

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which the texts of the New Testament were redacted[83], I aim at explaining how the communities which created such texts related both to each other and with the wider social context. Since texts are products of social communication, we need to get behind the scenes in order to better capture the social matrix which illuminates the texts. 'For a truly sociological approach, however, one must move to the second level, that of *explanation*. Here the tools and techniques of modern sociological study are used, not merely to describe but also to probe the inner dynamics of the early Christian movement, regarded not as a unique event but as an example of patterns of behaviour which may be widely observed and objectively studied[84]'.

According to Weber, the object of sociology is to understand social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of both its process and effects. Social action is thus all human behaviour in which the individual actor imprints his/her subjective signification' (González-Anleo 2000:27). Therefore we are concerned with human agency and for that reason we focus not just on the macro-sociological but also on the micro-sociological. Both levels need to be fully compatible, hence our concern with the issue of Mediterraneanism and the label of Mediterranean 'pivotal values', to which we now turn.

5.2 'Pivotal' Values Re-Examined

Malina's *The World of the New Testament* (1981, 1993, 2001)[85] has done students of the New Testament a tremendous favour when describing what he believes to be 'pivotal' values in first-century Mediterranean society[86]. Let us then proceed

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[83] Van Staden and van Aarde (1991:56). This approach could be termed '*naive description of social setting*, whereby social information was used to undergird and supplement historical supposition'.

[84] Van Staden and van Aarde (1991:57), quoting Best (1983:185).

[85] Bockmuehl (2002) has reviewed the third edition where he praises Malina's insights for the benefit of the study of the New Testament. At the same time he criticizes the fact of the book's lack of interaction with new anthropological studies which could bring nuancing to his generalizing style. 'As a result, astounding generalizations proliferate, seemingly unsupported by evidence and reminiscent of grand anthropological theories of a bygone day […] We hear about what is characteristically, and it appears timelessly, "Mediterranean" behaviour. But for every valid or at least plausible insight one stumbles over others burdened with rather too many unmentioned exceptions' (Bockmuehl 2002:2).

[86] Regardless of how much generalizing and Western projection there might be in the book, the truth of the matter is that his work has represented a quantitative step forward for the discipline. It is easier now, some decades later, to appreciate strengths and weak points, as our knowledge of the area and of the use of anthropology have sharpened. But it is only fair to recognize that his five-fold categorization has served many to advance in the search for a more accurate description of society in first-century Mediterranean, however complex and diverse it might have been. Lawrence (2003) and Ling (2006), for example, take his work as basis for their

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and comment briefly on these salient features which most social scientific scholars term 'models'. Without trying to bridge what might be in fact a huge gap, it seems to me that the use of 'models' somehow resembles Weber's notion of *idealtyp* ('ideal type'). The function of the ideal type is 'an attempt to analyze historically unique configurations of their individual components by means of genetic concepts' (Kee 1989:38). The danger is something Weber himself already warned about: that of identifying reality with the types or of using them as procrustean beds into which the evidence is ultimately forced. 'The goal of ideal-typical construction is always to make clearly explicit, not the class or average character, but rather the unique individual character of cultural phenomena' (Weber 1949:93-94; cited in Kee 1989:38). Esler (2006:6-8) believes that Malina's insights owe much to Weber.

5.2.1 Honour and Shame

If there is *one* characteristic that stands above any other as we describe the Mediterranean world, that would be, without a doubt, the search and defence of *honour* (Malina & Neyrey 1991b:25; Moxnes 1996:19). According to Malina (1981:27) honour refers to the value of the person in his or her own eyes *plus* the same value now in the context of his/her social group (the 'court of reputation'). Mainly drawing from Peristiany (1966, especially Pitt-Rivers' chapter on 'Honour and Social Status'), Malina proposes the following salient features: 1) honour and shame form a value system rooted in gender distinctions in Mediterranean culture. Preservation of male honour requires an active defence of the shame (the feminine version of honour) of the women in the family (virginity, modesty, etc[87].); 2) honour, closely associated with males, refers to one's social status and to its public recognition. Shame is closely linked with females, refers to sensitivity to one's reputation, or in the negative sense to the loss of honour; and 3) Mediterranean societies are agonistic or competitive, since challenges to one's honour are frequent and must be met through the use of appropriate ripostes. The resulting public verdict determines who has won honour and who has lost it (taking into consideration the view of limited good perception which follows; cf. Chance 1994:142).

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criticisms. It is precisely Malina's insistence of being explicit (although some times his sources are unacknowledged) that allows/invites such open criticism.

[87] In most anthropological circles shame was defined from a male perspective, but as women anthropologists venture deeper into some gender-segregated cultures, they are being able to express through their unique way of being. Cf. Abu-Lughod (1999:105) uses the word 'modesty', 'propriety' (Arabic *hashama*) to encircle such a vast array of aspects.

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Honour has been described as the pivotal value of the Mediterranean and the source of typical behaviour[88]. If honour is described in masculine terminology, then its female counter-side is shame, especially in light that we are dealing with a culture which manifests a separation of roles, spaces, etc., on account of gender. Such binary opposition on account of gender has been called into question in some recent studies (cf. Weidman 2003:520-21; especially since Abu-Lughod's work 1986). As Weidman (2003:525) aptly stresses:

> The pertinence of the honor/shame is especially cast into doubt when changing notions of femininity and female respectability are considered. Here (in the context of study of how gender and music practice are related) analysis cannot rely on a structuralist model in which the opposition between honor and shame explains cultural values and behaviors; rather, gender roles are constructed at particular historical moments, in complex relation with colonialism, nationalism, and capitalism.[89]

Honour is thus perceived as ruling over all social relations, which are, by definition, agonistic and competitive, although not all anthropologists agree on this[90]. In the case of men, one of their greatest worries is the defence of the

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[88] The works that are based on such insight are vast, and too numerous to be replicated here, but expound, nevertheless, different perceptions about its value when interpreting biblical texts: Moxnes (1996); Neyrey (1998). Not all are on the same terms when it comes to define its value as interpretative and heuristic tool for ancient Mediterranean: Chance (1994:139-151); Downing (1999:53-73; 2000); Lawrence (2003). For the anthropological sources on which the honour-shame model is based: Peristiany (1966); Pitt-Rivers (1979); Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers (1992); Gilmore (1982:175-205; 1987). Other authors posed a different view: Herzfeld (1980:339-351); Stewart (1994); Lever (1986:83-106).

[89] We have to be aware of generalizations (cf. Malina 1995:68-70). Downing (2000:24-25) recalls the γυναικῶν ἀρεταί whom Plutarch mentions, which could be translated as 'Excellences' or even 'Honour of Women'; in *Bravery of women* (F C Babbitt's trans. of Plutarch, *Mor* III). This and some other incidences in classical literature he terms 'significant exceptions'. Downing's position is that rather than assuming honour to be an all-prevalent value that shapes our perception of the texts, 'I intent here to argue that "respect" («honour and shame») is an issue of which we need to be aware, but that it is only dominant ("pivotal"), central ("the core") *when and only where it is clearly shown to be*' (Downing 2000:21 my emphasis). Neyrey (1998:4) finds that this cultural value is not just an added element to the hermeneutical inquiry, but one which is necessary to read biblical texts (concretely Matthew) correctly. However, my criticism of his application of this particular cultural value is the fact that is tends to control the exegetical process in such a way as to become the dominant filter and tends to show up even there when its influence is not clearly needed or explicit. Honour (in its various forms and manifestations) is a central characteristic, there is no doubt about it, but only when the texts manifest such a value clearly is where we should engage in modelling. To do otherwise is to project incessantly the whole weight of our abstraction onto a text that may very well become denaturalised.

[90] Lever (1986:83-106) suggests, after anthropological work of the Castilian town of San Santiago, that anthropologists (Pitt-Rivers, Kenny, Lison, Acebes and Davis) who focused on Spanish pueblos tended to concentrate in specific age males with specific characteristics (middle age married men, fathers and with the economic burden for the family—dominant classes)

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family honour by creating a wall of protection around the women in the family, especially in aspects of sexual behaviour (virginity, modesty, etc.), which produces a society where males tend to be pro-active and go public whereas women's actions are reduced to the domestic context and are perceived as passive[91]. Honour is the public recognition of the social value of the person, but always in relation to others. Society grants or recognises status or social standing as defined through three categories: power, gender and religion. However all-pervasive some authors see honour in this particular context, others criticise the fact that honour and shame have received a sort of quasi-ontological standing that colours any other possible approach to the text (Chance 1994:142; Lawrence 2003:82; Downing 2000)[92].

Some criticise the fact that a potentially useful model had taken the form or an inflexible mould that cannot possibly allow for any detection of differences, and which implies an 'exoticization' and 'archaization' of these cultures (Herzfeld 1987:64; Giordano 2001:43). Herzfeld (1980:339) believes '"honour" and "shame" are inefficient glosses on a wide variety of indigenous terminological systems'. Bowman (2006:7-8) quite aptly illustrates this difference of response to what is honourable when he discusses his rejection of serving in the army during the Vietnam war—informed by society that it was immoral to do so—while others held pride in just opting for the opposite action: joining the army to defend the country's honour. Using the model in a way that overlooks such variant reactions, or just basing it in the fact that ultimately both groups were

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which in turn could have produced misleading results, since their studies gave the impression that the whole of society participated of such honour perception when other classes only paid lip service to such values. She concludes that 'emphasis on honour/shame as typically Mediterranean takes much for granted' (Lever 1986:86). For her, the honour-and-shame model, as presented, becomes a 'red herring' which obscures class/gender divisions and distracts from possible links between communities and the world outside (Lever 1986:104). Showing a similar contention is Just (2001:46-47).

[91] It is clear that such generalizations cannot do justice to the huge array of situations we encounter. One criticism some female anthropologists pose is that earlier anthropological studies tended to project their mainly male view even onto supposedly female perceptions. See Lever (1986:94) who criticizes Pitt-Rivers (1954), especially his chapter on 'The Values of the Female' exactly on these terms. Moreover, Lever (1986:100) challenges 'typical' descriptions on female shame: 'In many works on Mediterranean communities, women appear as objects to be controlled, rather than actors in their own right. They have been caricatured as posing a threat to the family's honour, and needing to be controlled by men, whose task it is to hold the family together. In San Santiago, where Lever worked for some time, both parents are concerned for their children's reputation, which is linked to their marriage prospects and chances to improve their economic position.

[92] Just (2001:41-43) presents a strong argument against an agreed-upon definition of honour since it is defined from those outside (*etic*) and then implemented onto the subjects' context with a strong weight of *etic* filters.

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reacting towards the 'honour of fighting the enemy' seems to me reductionist at first sight.

Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers (1992:4) explicitly underline the fact that practically every social group holds onto divergent conceptions of honour. But if 'honour' is placed on this high ground, all other possible values run the risk of being obviated or pushed aside, even when the evidence seems to support that some collectives, the cynics, for example, placed other values above honour: When 'Diogenes' has adopted poverty and as such has made his father angry, he imagines him as appealing him to change with these words: 'You should be glad that your son is satisfied with little, and is free from subservience to public opinion' (Pseudo-Diogenes 7.1, quoted in Downing 2000:41). I can already hear critics saying: 'But the fact is that the Romans themselves placed it at such a high level, above everything else'.

According to Lendon (2001:73): 'Honour was a filter through which the whole world was viewed, a deep structure of the Graeco-Roman mind, perhaps the ruling metaphor of ancient society'. My response to such an assessment is that even then texts are ultimately the ones which must yield such information, since we are aware that, provided we apply the appropriate filters, they can say almost anything. Personally, although I greatly appreciate the accurate insight that texts are 'part of social systems' (Malina 2007), I still feel uneasy when the social system is so inflexibly defined that the text has no chance of speaking otherwise (only for or against such a 'social system'). Social systems are extremely complex and dynamic; they elude clear definition since human agency is so diverse, even within supposed 'closed' social systems. My somewhat informed answer? Let the text define the social system (if it can, and at whatever level possible) and modify our model, however trustworthy it may seem prior to its application, and even after it has been applied. Lawrence (2003:29-30) affirms that what is needed is a more specific definition of honour that allows differentiating between 'honour precedence' (that which the person acquires and holds in front of the audience) from 'honour virtue' (more closely related with the individual conscience of the person), which was already pointed out by Pitt-Rivers (1965)[93]. But the application of the model seems to go beyond such concerns.

[93] The same approach is used by Ling (2006). This approach tends to obliterate a classic distinction between 'shame-cultures' and 'guilt-cultures', deemed by many as a Western projection on Mediterranean and Oriental cultures. Malina (2007) in a recent and highly-charged review of Ling's doctoral dissertation observes that 'there are only three internalized sanctions human groups use with regard to discordant behaviour: anxiety, shame, and guilt'. He further stresses the fact that collectivist societies *generally* use shame in child rearing techniques, while individualistic ones use guilt. One recent comparative study (Fisher, Manstead & Mosquera 1999), however, discusses broad definitions of cultures as that of

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In Downing's (2000:26) opinion: 'A concept which explains everything explains nothing'. And judging sometimes on the excessively recurrent conclusions of some social scientific studies on the New Testament, it gives the impression that honour-shame were omnipresent, the ubiquitous values that ultimately move human beings, akin to social laws. Horsley complains about the use of such all-encompassing models to illustrate pan-Mediterranean culture. 'The honor-and-shame or any other modern pan-Mediterranean model cannot really be tested by illustration from ancient texts, but would have to be applied to and tested against textually portrayed social behavior and values understood "ethnographically" in their own historical context critically established and delineated by close attention to ancient sources and social structures' (Horsley 1994:12). He proposes the dynamic practice of *abduction* (although he does not use such a term) which he defines as 'a more dialectical movement between textual and other evidence for ancient social structures, conflicts, and meanings analyzed with the help of modern Western sociological methods, on the one hand, and models and methods which we critically adapt and revise on the basis of our historical analysis of texts and cultural artifacts, on the other' (:12).

What justifies the use of sociological methods more than the use of models derived from anthropology? Why not use both and in such a way amplify our angle of incidence on the text(s)? I believe Horsley is reacting to the perception of a mechanical application of cross-cultural models. His warning concerning understanding social behaviour and values 'ethnographically' is applicable, but the problem starts when we try to decide what values are these and how we arrive at such conclusions. The model, with all its inherent dangers, if applied with continuous abduction, at least bridges the way back and forth from the *emic* to the *etic* more explicitly. Horsley himself, upon review of his insightful and prolific work, carries on a significant measure of ideological projection onto the texts, especially when reading Paul's literature through anti-emperor lenses (Horsley 1997, 2000, 2004), which is not exactly justified by ethnographic work. Such generalizations are common and trigger surprise when we read that even our familiar 'heroes' of the New Testament are enmeshed in these dealings (cf. Malina & Neyrey 1996:62, my emphasis):

Spanish culture as an 'honour culture' and contrasts how different people's groups (in this case nations: Spain and the Netherlands, where they oppose the notion that such countries belong to different psychological cultures) are situated (through their respondents) either in the medium range on the individualism/collectivism dimension (Spain) or in the individualistic extreme of the dimension (the Netherlands). Nevertheless, the conclusion of the research seems to confirm the usefulness of the label 'honour cultures' where concern for others' judgement is high and pride is viewed in a more negative manner (1999:176).

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> Paul's goal in life is the security, survival, and honor of the limited range of in-groups in which he finds himself embedded. The outcome of his successes in founding various Messianic groups is an increase in *his own reputation*, which contributes to the in-group's goals. Rather than seeking personal satisfaction, Paul shows that he will do what he must as dictated by his group commitments and by those in authority over the group: God, various patron figures, and the like.

Statements as the above give the impression that honour-seeking, agonistic persons were just the 'norm' as people could not help but act under such unwritten—yet unavoidable—patterns[94]. In the same strict key we could argue that today pastors and church ministers in North-Atlantic[95] countries serve their communities moved by a thirst to build on their *individual* egos, trying to impact on groups in order to demonstrate that their authority is built on their reliable character and independence of character, moved by a sense of guilt regarding a task never accomplished, ever expanding, since 'the sky is the limit'. After all, our contemporary individualistic society predicts such patterns of behaviour, doesn't it?[96] Chance (1994:147) for example, believes that all stratified societies share some values which carry challenge-and-riposte outcomes: 'Indeed, vivid portrayals of how these work in the United States in the highly charged context of crime and punishment appear nightly on our television screens'. Lawrence could say the same as she comments on the work of deSilva (1994) who does not pay particular attention to cross-cultural comparison, and as such does not consider the 'great divide' (the gap between the social context of the interpreter and that of the interpreted) which is so crucial for Malina and others. For Lawrence (2003:15) 'honour discourse, as deSilva presents it, would be *apropos* to any marginal group (including groups in North America and Northern Europe – two areas that, in Malina's view, exhibit vastly different cultural traits from the communities populating the

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[94] This is, precisely, what Domeris (1993:284) spouses when commenting on a single case he describes in Luke 14:7-14 (the invitation to the banquet and guests trying to get the better seat) as stereotypical: 'Apparently *all* social interactions with people of similar status is, in some form, a challenge of honour' (my emphasis). Such an assumption colours any future approximation to the text, but it remains, I believe, just an assumption.

[95] However we may be accustomed to such expression in social scientific literature, the truth of the matter is that such terminology equates quite diverse cultural areas. Many USA citizens travelling to Europe complain about the 'typical' critical attitude of Europeans compared to the more benevolent side of the North Americans (this author has personally encountered many people, from close and far relations, who think is such broad categories). For a more in depth approach to the subject, cf. Stewart (1994:77).

[96] I am here playing on some of the contrasted values Malina charts in *The World of the New Testament* which compare ancient Mediterranean preferences with contemporary USA. We are quite aware that although striving for such independence (the goal of individualism), lobbying, political and polity regulations, etc., strain such *desideratum* in everyday life; more than what we are prepared to acknowledge, anyway.

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Mediterranean world)'[97]. However, that deSilva is not interested in cross-cultural comparison is no excuse from observing the substantial difference in outlook on who/what was considered honourable in first century Mediterranean and in today's Western society[98]. Honour is felt and lived in all societies and epochs, although it might have manifested different *vias* and enjoyed different levels of appreciation. Berger (1979:343) speaks of difference in use and meaning amongst epochs: 'The concept of honor implies that identity is essentially, or at least importantly, *linked to institutional roles*. The modern concept of dignity, by contrast, implies that identity is essentially independent of institutional roles'[99] (my emphasis). Bowman has recently published a study on honour which clarifies some of these observations, to my knowledge, with great insight, and always with one eye looking at contemporary society and current events, which is helpful. Bowman (2006:6) makes the distinction between *reflexive honor* (similar to what we call honour virtue) and *cultural honor* (honour precedence). It is true that he is no specialist in the area and his use of honour and anti-honour becomes at times too general, but there are, nevertheless, rich insights when comparing the old and new in society which are helpful for our search.

Besides all this, there exists also the problem of avoiding the dreadful mention of 'social law'. I believe it is fair to say that no specialist who makes use of social-scientific tools wants to be accused of applying such an approach, but the

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[97] Lawrence (2003) has carried out, to my knowledge, the most thorough and extensive critique of Malina's perception of Mediterranean society through the use of models based on pivotal values. Crook (2006), a member of the *Context Group*, has carried out an extraordinary effort at reviewing and disputing Lawrence's work in a recent book review. His response, based on a thorough scrutiny of her work denotes a rather sarcastic view of her work (2006:95). Whosoever does not believe that *challenge-and-riposte* is as real today in North-Atlantic countries as it was in first century Mediterranean society should read this review essay!

[98] Barton (2001:270-273) contrasts, at the end of her detailed work, how these concepts differ stressing the fact that honourable people in our day and age tend to be those who, although dependable, are independent and ultimately serve their own autonomous consciences. Moreover, Malina (1997) has written a critical review of deSilva's doctoral dissertation on Hebrews (1995) in which he appropriately criticizes his assumption that citing many ancient writers on the theme of honour is a safeguard against projective tendencies. Malina (1997:378) rightly argues: 'The naive belief that a collection of passages intuitively chosen as parallel to some NT passage hereby explains and clarifies that passage remains what it is—a naive belief. The fact is that meanings come from social systems, including meanings in the past. And without some insight into the social systems of antiquity, the meanings are more those of the interpreter than of past authors. Moreover, the belief that a citation of a passage from the ancient world is self-explanatory is a delusion as long as the social system within which the passage makes sense is not available to the modern scholar (reader)'.

[99] Clearly Berger depends on an epistemology in which the comprehensive world is humanly constructed, and as such is capable of reassembling and change. Such definitions have reality-generating power, that is, human beings not only 'define themselves, but they actualize these definitions in real experience—*they live them*' (Berger 1979:344, original emphasis).

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fact is that the line between what a sociological theory tends to *predict* and what some have construed to be *social laws* is not that far apart as we aim at explaining ancient texts. Social psychology, for example, tended to show such a tendency. 'Human beings are law-governed machines that react to stimuli very much like any physical object, and so to understand human social behaviour we need only isolate the various stimuli and establish the laws which determine their effects' (Hogg & Abrams 1988:8). As we will see, it was because of the too limiting focus of social psychology that the social identity tradition was developed, which focused more on a group-oriented approach than solely on the properties of the individual. Lawrence (2003:33-35) prefers to speak of the danger of *reification*, converting abstractions in substance-holding entities; 'no value system or cultural trait should be used to prescribe behaviour on certain groups and individual in different areas, times, and situations'[100]. The danger is always that of determinism and reductionism[101]. 'The basic point is that too great a reduction of level of analysis makes it impossible to answer many of the important questions posed at the original high level' (Hogg & Abrams 1988:12). Moxnes (1996:22-23) after having 'established' the importance of honour and shame in the world of the New Testament (although with no literary, anthropological back-up, assuming perhaps in his chapter work done by previous members of the *Context Group*) applies the model to several texts (although in a limited manner, due to space constrictions). We are going to focus concretely on his comments on Luke 13:10-17, a narrative in which Jesus performs a healing on a Sabbath (A) and has an encounter (challenge and riposte) with the leader of the synagogue (B), indignant that this healing had occurred during the day of rest. Jesus has the upper hand in the contest (C) whereas his opponents are put to shame (D). There is nothing 'out of the ordinary' with such a reading until Moxnes (1996:23) asserts,

> In this narrative we see Jesus' skill at riposte. The modern reader understands Jesus' healing of the woman (A) primarily as an act of compassion. But for the

[100] However, after much research Lendon (2001:47) concludes that Roman honour was sharply reified, '[m]ore than merely the insubstantial sum of public perception, honour was perceived as something with real existence'. This seems to be an *emic* perception since honour was considered to be 'the possession of—or adhering to, or essential to—an individual, much as we conceive merit as a quality that someone 'has', although upon reflection we realize that merit is no more than an assumption about other people's opinion' (Lendon 2001:47). Such possession, however, unlike merit, could be granted by his possessor to another without losing for that matter his own honour (cf. Lendon 2001:47-48, against a perception of limited good as we will discuss later on).

[101] Stewart (1994:78), although open to cross-cultural comparison when appropriate, opines that the search for a pan-Mediterranean honour concept is erroneous. 'For one thing, different human groups can react very differently to similar circumstances; and for another, the fact that people have been deeply influenced by their location does not mean that this has been the only, or even the main, influence on them.

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> cultural informed reader, Luke places the story in a different perspective [...] Jesus skilfully shows that he can turn Jewish law and tradition against a defender of the law.

Now, there is nothing to object to such *added* perspective. It is true that the narrative reflects a clash of values and it is presented in a typical scenario of argument and contra-argument (or challenge and riposte). Luke is interested in presenting a new alternative way of dealing with others, less constricted by regulations but open to the 'other', the marginalized. But to claim that the core of the passage rests on such an agonistic disposition is reductionist. Jesus had compassion for the woman, there is no doubt about it, as it is also correct to assume that Jesus wanted to make a statement on the higher value of the person above religious regulations[102]. I think modern readers can get a glimpse of both realities after some detailed reading of the narrative. But to only stress the latter aspect as the important (and of course only spotted by 'certain ones') is missing the point. That way Jesus appears to be simply using people for his purposes rather than serving them on account of divine compassion (σπλάγχνα). Downing (2000:31) expresses this observation with precision:

> We do well to allow that for the first-century Mediterranean world, too, 'honour and shame' were important options, which could predominate. But there were other options; and we have to ask which values and which combinations of available values were actually chosen, and not re-translate everything in terms of one set.

It can also be argued that by focusing on literary texts we enter into a difficult mine-field since we do not have the luxury of working with living subjects. Are we then just reading the ancient author's opinion (normally male elite) transmitted top-down, or does the text also reflect on the issue of common ancient practices? We have already dealt with the issue of essentialism (primordialism) and constructivism (instrumentalism) in the previous chapter so we will not pause again on the theme. Yes, even in this so-called (by some scholars) *agonistic* context of the Mediterranean, there was still the 'possibility of choice'[103]. Peristiany and Pitt-Rivers (1992:20) clarify their position:

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[102] Form criticism also had a name for such narratives: 'apothegms' or 'paradigms' and sought for a *Sitz im Leben* for them.

[103] Potter (1999:152-5), quoted in Lieu (2004:30). In the tradition of practice theory, Bentley (1987:34) espouses a correct observation which is imperative to assume as we study ancient texts, even when dealing with living subjects: 'Since one can never be fully conscious of the assumptions that one brings to an encounter, gaps in understanding are inevitable […] we cannot assume congruence between the generative schemes of habitus and their surface expressions'.

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> Es un error por lo tanto, considerar el honor como un concepto constante y único más que como un campo conceptual dentro del cual la gente encuentra la manera de expresar su amor propio y su estima por los demás.

Coming to the Roman world, Lendon (2001) has produced an insightful work of how the Romans ruled by the use of honour strategies focusing on Xenophon's *Cyropedia*, a work on political theory. In one section that focuses on the honour amongst aristocracy, Lendon envisions Greek and Roman concepts of honour merging at one point: during the time of Augustus. Part of such merging was enhanced by the monolithic quality of rhetorical education, which was quite similar across time and space. In his own words, 'within the world of the Roman and the Romanized, the Hellenic and the Hellenized, standards of honour converged over time; the long centuries of empire were a quiet solvent of aristocratic particularism' (Lendon 2001:44).

Honour is, apart from theoretical considerations on degrees, a powerful element in Graeco-Roman society. As we have already pointed out, Lendon's work (2001) rests on the premise that the Roman Empire was sustained by applying the honour system concretised through—although not exclusively—patronage. As we focus more closely on its value and effect for a colony in the east of the Empire, it is useful that we take heed of these words, for honour ultimately functions on the value of the human yearning for human solidarity, 'to be included is an extremely powerful motivation' (Lendon 2001:33). But the opposite is also true: one person's or group's desire to exclude others. 'Graeco-Roman honour drew its vigor from both impulses, from its ability to include and from its role in differentiating one man from another' (:33).

Hellerman (2005:37) is correct when he observes:

> It would be overly simplistic, of course, to suggest that honor served as the sole force energizing social relations in the ancient world. Human societies are much too complex to support such reductionism, for other dynamics often come into play. It is fair to assert, however, that in the solar system of ancient goods and values, honor occupied the place of the sun which other priorities orbited.

Can we conclude that there is solid agreement on the theme of honour and shame as pivotal values of first-century Mediterranean society? I do think so, but maybe not to the degree some would claim it to be. But such hedging should not deter us from acknowledging its significance, there where it appears. It is better to 'go in search' of honour within the texts than to 'expect' honour in every single line of the texts we confront. Perhaps we might be surprised by finding it where we do not expect it!

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5.2.2 Limited Good Perception

Although Malina (1981) goes into great detail when describing this model of cognitive orientation, it seems fairer to deal in the first place with some of the (unacknowledged) sources which have facilitated such a model. Foster (1965:296), an anthropologist who worked among rural peoples in Mexico in the decade of the 60's defines the *Image of Limited Good* ('limited good perception' for Malina) as that by which:

> peasants view their social, economic, and natural universes—their total environment—as one in which all of the desired things in life such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love, manliness and honor, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety, *exists in finite quantity* and *are always in short supply*, as far as the peasant is concerned. Not only do these and all other 'good things' exist in finite and limited quantities, but in addition *there is no way directly within peasant power to increase the available quantities*.

Bennett (1966:206) believes Foster's model derives from 'a version of what sociologists and interactionist theorists call the "zero-sum-game", the human behavior which proceeds from the assumption that any value is inherently limited in quantity, and that therefore if any portion of this quantity is used or dissipated, there is less to go around'. This model refers to *goods* (entities) which are both tangible and intangible (cf. Lawrence 2003:181). A person lives thus depending on what comes daily, which in turn imprints on the psyche the notion that 'what is, is *all* that is' and therefore it needs to be carefully administered and kept, be it a house, family, honour, health, etc. (Malina 1981:75)[104]. Foster is here referring to 'classic peasant societies' which follows Kroeber's statement: 'They form a class segment of a larger population which usually contains also urban centers ... They constitute part-societies with part-cultures'[105]. But, far from perceiving such a cognitive orientation to be solely found in these societies, Foster (1965:311, n 5) states:

> I do not believe the Image of Limited Good is characteristic only of peasant societies. Quite the contrary, it is found, in one degree or another, in most or all socio-economic levels in newly developing countries, and it is, of course, equally characteristic of traditional socialist doctrine. I am not even sure that it is *more* characteristic of peasants than of other groups.[106]

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[104] This effect, if it were like this indeed, creates then competitive relationships, since if you get above what you have somebody else is now lacking. This 'zero-sum game' plays strongly on the less-favoured, who accept unquestioningly their fate in life since they belong to such a rigid system.

[105] Kroeber (1948:284), quoted in Foster (1965:311).

[106] Some of these same perceptions are common to all of us, although, I concede, with differences of degree which sometimes may have to do with personal/group contexts. Not only

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Foster's application of the constructed model is based on its usefulness, since he believes that, applied to the concrete peasant community he worked with, the model *goes further* in explaining behaviour, although it could be applied to many Mexican urbanites, who share the same type of perception (:311). So, what makes it so 'predicting' if it can be found in some more *complex* (his expression) societies as well?[107]

Now, a very important and *decisive* element follows: Foster chooses to consider such a peasant society as a 'closed system', for in this way his research can be further enhanced (:296), which constitutes an explicit *etic* element he adds to the model. Yes, in such a closed system 'a peasant sees his experience as determined and limited by the natural and social resources of his village and his immediate area' (:296, 306). It is here, in this context, that it makes sense to say that from this follows that '*an individual or a family can improve a position only at the expense of others*' (:297). In a closed system such as the one he *has created*, it is normal that someone's improvement may be regarded by others as a threat, not only to some, but to the entire community (:297). Foster, naturally, never intended that his observations with the local people of Tzintzuntzan, Michoacan Mexico, should be applied universally, although he recognizes that upon reading other anthropologists' accounts[108], he appreciated certain similarities that could lead to a formulation of a wider scope (:312, n. 6).

Foster stresses that if the model is applied as a high level integrating principle characterizing peasant communities, it follows that unsuspected similarities could be detected, which reflects the proper use of a model which can be tested against ethnographical survey and review by peers (:297). Now, this is very different from Crook's (2006:92-93) proposal, where he compares the work of ethnographers and 'modelers' (his own terminology). He contends that ethnographers work close to the ground and are involved in a more individualistic *tête-à-tête* work (interviewing individuals, etc.). For them, generalizations are like irresponsible statements, since they are completely immersed in the complexities and differences of human existence. 'Modelers' (survey researches), on the other hand, work with huge amounts of data, and in order to make sense of such information they need to draw more general conclusions which can hold meaning at a higher level of description. Now, up to that point his assessment is correct as he describes different approaches to

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that, in anthropological circles Foster's model has been criticized for it seems to imply an economic truism. 'Doesn't everyone have a conception of finite quantities of goods and resources in certain spheres of life?' (Lawrence 2003:296). We all do, sometimes!

[107] This is the same criticism Kaplan and Saler (1966:204) present.

[108] Lawrence (2003:183) criticises the model because it does not derive from a 'Mediterranean model'.

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'reality'. But when it comes to his example in order to facilitate what he means, his value judgment reaches levels close to *reification*: 'If I may indulge in a metaphor, people in airplanes—those who use models—see the world differently from people on the ground—ethnographers. Those at 26,000 feet see patterns in the geography that those closer to the earth cannot see; *it does not mean those patterns are not there*. As the altitude is lowered—at a lower level of abstraction—one exchanges the broad perspective for greater details; that the details are not visible from a higher altitude does not mean they are not there either. Regardless of the altitude (or the level of abstraction), what one sees can be equally accurate and correct' (:93, my emphasis).

It seems to me that if the patterns are there already, personal interviews cannot help but disclose the *obvious*, which according to Crook had *already* been 'spotted' from 'above'. This is an imposition on the evidence that colours any effort at discovering or hoping for originality or newness, since it only allows for variation within established parameters. De Pina-Cabral (1989:403) argues for an approximation which commences from a regional and local level which then moves upward, as much as it is possible. Despite Crook's assertions to the contrary, this is exactly what Foster has done, starting from individual informants and then moving to a higher level of abstraction.

But the question is whether such a closed system does indeed exist in real life (or remotely resembles life as it is experienced by a large community). If it only exists in the test-tube of the scientist, then the model needs to account for such an element when it is applied. Gregory (1975:73-92) shows that some peasant societies do not conform to this closed system and for them goods can be increased. Not only that, Ling (2006:49) argues that Foster's model has been grossly exaggerated and that there are numerous exceptions which have been documented which disprove his model (cf. Gregory 1975:81, and also Foster 1972:62 who supplies some examples). However, exceptions or disparaged examples are not necessarily a denial of such a perception. Sharma (2001:120) presents different scenarios in first person which seem not only to confirm Foster's findings, but even his view on closed systems, when she defined it as 'relatively self-contain social environment'.

Foster then jumps from a description of the circles he knows best to others more uncertain. He uses descriptions that are vague, which sometimes include a whole country/culture: 'In Greece *philotimo*, a "love of honor," equates closely with Mexican machismo' (Foster 1965:301), which obscures complexity and cultural diversity, but that seem nevertheless necessary for him in order to

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draw a typology of peasant society[109]. This 'threatened' existence, since fame, honour, etc., are limited goods, provokes people to react normally in two ways: 'maximum cooperation and sometimes communism, burying individual differences and placing sanctions against individualism; or extreme individualism. Peasant societies seem always to choose the second alternative' (:301).

Kaplan and Saler (1966) wrote a short but detailed critique of Foster's study and found six areas which are problematic with his model[110]:

> 1) They have questions regarding the relationships between ethnographic facts and theory since—in their view—Foster portrays a *Baconian inductionism*, *viz*. 'the view that theories and generalizations are somehow synthesized from collections of particular facts' (1966:203). How can he say that his model derives from 'observed behaviour'? What were the principles of selecting evidence? He never seems to answer such queries[111].
>
> 2) 'A large portion of Foster's paper is devoted to offering what he regards as evidence that conforms to his model. At the same time the model in some sense is claimed to "explain" the evidence. But the evidence, in fact, largely consists of rather broad generalizations about the nature of "classical" peasant societies supported by carefully culled illustrations' (Kaplan & Saler 1966:203). Both authors think Foster uses circular reasoning, but Foster (1996:213) argues he has already answered this when he expanded on their first criticism.
>
> 3) Foster seems to imply that such cognitive perception amounts to a sort of metaphysical perspective (Foster 1965:293, in the frontispiece, as he quoted Hallowell and his 'ethno-metaphysics'). 'But does a notion of "limited good" necessarily constitute a metaphysical perspective?' ask Kaplan and Saler (1966:204). Nowhere does Foster seem to answer the

[109] The problem is acute, since Foster lumps together tangible and intangible goods. But there is enough reason to argue that some intangible goods are deemed limitless in society: *grace*, for example (cf. Lawrence 2003:219).

[110] Bennett (1966) wrote his critique in the same volume of the journal. Foster (1966) then replied to both articles in an article that followed these two. For the sake of agility we will try to preserve the dialogue among these anthropologists and add our own perception of the matter when necessary.

[111] Foster (1966:212-213) replies that although inductive reasoning was used, it was not the major element in the process, since much was researched on the ground. Thus he began with ethnographic data and returned to it. Foster complains about this accusation when that's all ethnographers do: record and report.

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question, which could either refer to a 'metaphysical perspective' or just to a particular perception based on comparison *vis à vis* other groups[112].

4) Foster speaks of the nature of the cognitive perception as something 'psychologically real' (1965:294), but at the same time recognizes that '[a]t no point has an informant even remotely suggested that this is the vision of his universe' (:297). Kaplan and Saler (1966:204) take this as proof that there seems to be clear disagreement between both statements, but I believe Foster answers such concerns when he writes that most people are not able to describe their world-views cogently, much as we cannot give reason for all grammatical rules although we speak a particular language[113].

5) They criticize the fact that the resulting model is set out from Foster's own conception of it (Kaplan & Saler 1966:204). Basically their concern is that there seems to be circular reasoning once again in his approach: Once he sets the model at a high level of abstraction, he looks for examples to confirm it but which in the first place were used to conform the model (:204-205). In such a scenario testing the model becomes problematic. But there is more: 'The model itself strikes us as being only a compressed rephrasing of the cognitive orientation inferred from behavioural data. Thus the Image of Limited Good is essentially a tautology and contributes to the *ad hoc* character of Foster's explanation' (:205)[114]. However, Malina (1991a:257) assumes that such a circularity is

[112] Kaplan and Saler (1966:204): 'Foster fails to recognize the logical independence of these two possibilities—or at least nowhere in his paper can we find this distinction clearly spelled out'. If Foster considers his model within a closed world, this comparison is then impossible, of course, but the *etic* element may then obscure the outcome of his study. Foster (1966:214) allows this point of departure because it serves him to test his theory: 'I am making use of an ideal type […] that nowhere corresponds with reality'. Lawrence (2003:208) sees in this *ad hoc* use a serious danger of misrepresentation of facts, since most peasant societies have some degree or another of relationship with the urban environment, which presupposes, in my opinion, certain possibility for social mobility which then questions the validity of the model for such a generalizing application. Later on, Foster (1972:62) further clarified his approach: 'Classic peasants behave the way they do, I believe, because they *perceive* their system to be closed, not because it *is* closed' (original emphasis).

[113] Foster (1965:297) further states that each member of the Tzintzuntzeno village 'organizes his behavior in a fashion entirely rational when it is viewed as a function of this principle which he cannot enunciate'. However, Foster's expression (1965:306) about peasant societies 'ruled' by this cognitive orientation seems to carry a bit more of weight (and psychological coercion?) than he readily admits.

[114] Such criticism is similar to what later Lawrence (2003:12) would have to say on the general use of models: 'The model is defined prior to exegesis then applied to the biblical text. The model remains unchanged throughout the process. Moreover, whilst incommensurability between different *kinds* of cultures is illustrated, the model does not seem to be able to show differences of *degree* within the same culture' (original emphasis). Foster (1966:214) believes that

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not extraneous to some human thought processes (modern systems of processing information and cybernetics). Actually, abduction is deemed part and parcel of such a circular reasoning, travelling between data and hypothesis.

Lendon (2001:57), a Roman historian, comments on how people increased status and honour on account of others' correspondence and writes: 'This may seem to be curious, but since praising someone and thus increasing his honour *cost none of one's own*, a great man would carry on any number of mutually laudatory correspondences. Indeed, one of the chief purposes of friends was to praise' (my emphasis). We can always argue that Lendon's position is assumed and not explicit, but this is exactly the point, that not all historians need to work under such premises. Making explicit one's insights/approaches is no token that the end result is correct, only that it can be verified more easily. Moreover, Lendon also cites ancient writers to support his view, as in the case of Dio Chrysostom: 'Crowns and proclamations and seats of honour, *costing nothing to those who give them*, are worth everything to those who receive them' (Lendon 2001:78, citing D.Chr 31.106, my emphasis). Circularity can either enhance our perception or confirm (unjustifiably) our assumptions. The problem, again, has to do with the correct application of methodological tools.

6) Foster starts with the psychological (the cognitive orientation) as primary and a causal variable for social changes, but at the end of his paper he interchanges roles and it is then the social which is responsible for psychological change (Foster 1965:310) which Kaplan and Saler (1966:205) consider a 'surprising ingenuous statement'.

Although Foster's observations have much to be commended for, there exists, in my view, a very real danger that both physical goods and psychological ones are lumped together as if they formed part of the same cognitive orientation. In our own Western experience we may lack (at some stage of our life) one of the two (e.g. because of being laid off from work, lack of salary, which strikes us in such a way that the 'unlimited*ness*' of our relying on physical good is suddenly put into place and we become conscious of limitedness). But there is still a stronger reason why we should be cautious when applying the full force of such a model to the Mediterranean region. According to the model of Mediterranean society expounded by Malina (1981:71-72), no more than ten per

although his results could be considered erroneous, he has tested the model against his ethnographical observation and field data. In this case, there is certainly a measure of movement between field data and model and field data, 'but assume the utility, or lack of utility of the model, in the final analysis'.

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cent of the population was under direct control of the city, which is ruled by a small group of elite people no larger than two per cent. Thus, the remaining ninety per cent is what we call the peasant society (Malina 1981:73), who nevertheless carefully models the values of the city's elite. Now, once this is settled, the problem emerges as far as methodology is concerned, as follows: If the model of 'perception of limited good' derives in origin from ethnographical observation and interpretation, how come it is then in its application reinforced by the writings of the elites, as in the case of Esler[115]? We know that only elites (and part of the eight percent alluded by Malina) were literate and thus it is from them only that we possess writing evidence. But I *assume* that their day to day life was quite different (in cognitive terms) from that of the masses who depended on their hands and the elements to survive. The elites, on the contrary, did not perceive 'reality' as through the eyes of the peasants, since in their quest for *cursus honorum* —the political career from office to office— they had to gather huge amounts of money[116]. However, Malina 'asserts that both "beggar and king" share the same "classic peasant" perceptions[117]. How would you go about, as an elite male, if you think that limitedness of good is a sure constrain? Yes, you can go on robbing others, despoiling the poor even more, but the point is not this, but about a mentality which seems to pervade the realms of thought and behaviour, and which sees goods as limited. How can we account for such a thing?

Although I do not discard the possibility of such a cognitive orientation for a great section of the population, I have strong reservations regarding the use of elite's writings to confirm such a perceived value, even if it has to do with psychological elements (intangibles) such as honour, manliness, security, etc. Foster (1972:58) later on re-defined his model: 'Although people in Limited Good Systems believe their "good" is finite, they also know that there is more "good", perhaps in unlimited quantities, beyond the boundaries of their system, hence normally not available to them'.

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[115] Esler (1998:48) cites Iamblichus (cf. Neyrey 1998) as representative of typical Graeco-Roman perception of limited good: 'People do not find it pleasant to give honour to someone else, for they suppose that they themselves are being deprived of something'. It could be argued that Iamblichus only expresses what is a common predisposition in people he personally knows, but I am curious to see whether he refers to the circles he best knows or to the general population. Esler (1998:48) also quotes Plutarch's *On Listening to Lectures*, 44B (cf. also *Old Men in Public Affairs* 787D) as ratification of this popular view in the context of people, after hearing a good speaker, who refrain from complementing the person due to envy: 'As though commendation were money, he feels that he is robbing himself of every bit that he bestows on another'. However, compare it with Lendon's quote (2001:57) mentioned above in p. 102.

[116] Even Plutarch writes a whole treatise on such enterprise (*Precepts of Politics*, πολίτικα παραγγελματα), advising young men on what are the requirements for such career, whether psychological or financial. Cf. Winter (1994:86-89).

[117] Ling (2006:50), citing Malina (1993:90).

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This cognitive orientation, as it is stated, seems to imply that people either hold on to a closed system of reality, or that they have in mind the totality of the realm (the 'whole picture') when they act[118]. This is something which cannot be tested in our research, only assumed or denied. I do not see the point of pursuing this element further than what we have done up to here, since it is not the aim of the study to elucidate such every single element ('model') *assumed* by many social-scientific approaches to the New Testament, but to assess their usefulness for our purposes. However, as the social-scientific method develops and new findings call attention to such discrepancies, we would do well in looking also to the possible *datedness* of such general models[119].

5.2.3 Kinship

The extended family is the supreme institution which guides human existence both at the individual and collective levels. People make sense of their existence within the context of the larger group to which they belong. This trait is clearly attached to the dyadic personality and plays a firm role on the way individuals act in society. 'Kinship refers to patters of [...] social norms that regulate human

[118] What I mean by this is that individual people in first-century Mediterranean society are portrayed as acting out of a global comprehension of their world in which they are fully conscious that whatever act they perform may have effects in the whole system (dyadic personality at the extremes). Allow me to explain: it is as if the actor is aware that there is a *market share* 'out there' and that whichever percentage s/he uses or takes will affect the rest. This overtly-conscious actor lives publicly as transparently as possible (the public façade), but internally seems to be eaten by envy: always on guard for any change in the 'whole' and in his 'share'. However, such an assumption rests on a model of a highly developed introspective personality that we know does not seem typical of the epoch under study. Malina, (2001) expands little on the element of envy as characteristic of such a society with limited good perception. 'Whilst a number of ancient Mediterranean observers agree about the nature of envy and its social dimensions, no ancient observer realised that the way the game of envy was played always presupposed that all goods in life are limited. Without the perception of limited good and the use of goods to express one's good fortune, envy does not emerge' (quoted in Lawrence 2003:186, adding British English style to Malina's American English!). I quote this text because it replicates my doubts concerning the elite's sharing in the same cognitive orientation. Lawrence (2003:187): 'One must ask whether peasant mentality would be experienced in the same way, or even at all, by elite city inhabitants or rural landowners as by the socially marginal, populating both rural and urban areas'.

[119] Ling (2006:48-53) reviews the category of 'peasant society' historically and perceives that behind this description there were political and economic interest during the 1960's, which comes as no surprise, but hints that the sociopolitical context of those years should be read to give meaning to Foster's model. Of course all models/abstractions are based on concrete interests and particular concerns, which should alert us about the applicability of the models. For an interesting reflection on the use of the 'sect model' within the midst of the *Context Group* and how it is differently perceived, see Elliott (2001:16-17).

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relationships' (Malina 1981:94). The patrilocal family is the primary locus of identity and the social structure which glues society together. However, the family participates of the social environment and is even affected by it, to levels which in our mind-set are unimaginable[120]. Saller (1984:349) points out that in the 'Roman view, *domus* as house and household had a direct bearing on a man's standing and prestige. It has perhaps not been sufficiently emphasized that in Roman society, in which wealth and social respectability were closely related, the *domus* was a central symbol of status and honor'.

5.3 The Person in This Context

These values characterise the person which we can call *typical* in this Mediterranean context, with two salient features: a strong communal sense as well as a rather 'agonistic' (*viz*. defensive/aggressive, insecure) personality. Many have already argued that such values are not necessarily Mediterranean (cf. Kressel 1994:157), but shared to one or another degree amongst other societies. However, social scientists deem such features as constant elements within this type of society and therefore expected in any social relationship.

We have also chosen to add a third heading, *patronage*, since it best describes the hierarchical mentality of the age and seems to illustrate well the afore-mentioned salient features, since it is a dominant social pattern (Joubert 2000a), as well as a reflection of the search for public recognition.

5.3.1 Dyadic Personality

Individual persons in the circum-Mediterranean region display a very definite group-oriented perception which is known as 'dyadic personality'. An individual knows him or herself as reflected in others, in the wider context of the group[121]. Such perception creates a certain degree of insecurity about what the person is, since the 'intrinsic' value of the individual is conditioned in the

[120] As with Family laws developed by Lycurgus (Spartan) and Solon (*ca* 638–558 BC), cf. Pomeroy (1998:62-6); Garnsey and Saller (1982:127). Augustus legislated against families which did not procreate children and rewarded those who had two or more children.

[121] Lawrence (2005:11) speaks also of the *anti-introspective self*, that is, that people within an honour-based society are 'outwardly (publicly) orientated rather than internally orientated (shame-based rather than guilt-based). As a result, people afforded little significance to individual consciousness and thought'.

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public arena, which, added to the struggle for maintaining honour, gives birth to an agonistic culture[122].

According to Malina and Neyrey (1991a:72-73), for people of first-century Mediterranean 'the basic, most elementary unit of social analysis is not the individual person but the dyad, a person in relation with and connected to at least one other social unit, in particular, the family'. For these authors people in such a context think 'socially', not 'psychologically', i.e., they define who they are based on outward relationships which generally include family and clan, place of origin, group of origin, inherited trade or craft, and finally parties and groups[123]. These elements are stereotypes (Paul of Tarsus, Jew, the tanner, etc.) (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:74-75)[124]. This group consciousness is quite important, as I have already mentioned in the previous chapter. It is clear that the moral norms we find in the New Testament have relevance for individual behaviour, but they are seldom directed to the individual: in fact they are directed to the group, although we need to understand the individual included within the group. As Malina and Neyrey (1991a:77) comment, these exhortations 'are written from the point of view of the individual-as-embedded-in-something-bigger, the objective horizon of the social body'[125].

With this prospect, it is not strange to observe a strong emphasis in Philippians about protecting unity (1:27 συναθλοῦντες; 2:1 τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι; and active calls to 'think the same' 3:15, together with exhortations to 'think about the others also' 2:4). As with everything we have been

[122] It is clear that this mode of perceiving ourselves is common in many of our contemporary societies, but the focus here falls on the accentuation of such trait in ancient Mediterranean societies. Thus, it is also clear that individuals in this context had a certain degree of individuation, recognised in the ancient world as well. Cf. Downing (2000:57, 46) cites a contemporary philosopher of history Harré (1984), who finds our culture also deeply concerned with what others opine of us, and concludes '…whether or not as strong in practice as those posited for the ancient eastern Mediterranean. Our society, too, is "agonistic", more weighted to drama than to work'.

[123] However, the agonistic or agonic experience can also be ascribed to the individual. Roman *virtus* (from *vir* = man) prescribes an agonic movement since it tries to establish a relationship of self-dominion of the person (man) upon himself. Such a movement will be later on developed into ascetic and enchratic movements (from ἐν-κρατός, 'to have power over one's own').

[124] This general model is based on the assumption of the unity of the Mediterranean as well as a certain presumption of constancy within such a context.

[125] Martin (1994:123) comments on Plato's *Apology*, were 'Socrates defends himself as a master of "taking care of the self" (*epimeleia heautou*), for in teaching people to occupy themselves with themselves, he teaches them to occupy themselves with the city (*Apol* 29E). Based in political concerns, Socratic "care", and with it knowledge of oneself, was a communal injunction'. Martin further develops his thesis and finds the same kind of insight in the early Christian anti-individualistic ideology encapsulated in the 'love your neighbor as yourself' which is very close to the afore-mentioned *epimeleia* trait of Socratic care so central of the social ethics of Hellenistic philosophy (:129).

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discussing, 'dyadic personality' is a general model which helps us to put the stress on the group and not, as we have habitually done in the past, on individual action. Such a scenario helps us understand that people tended to value group-orientation to degrees which are not even imagined in our own time. However, it will be an error to either opt for a simplistic and mechanical application of this model or to conclude that we need to deny individual tendencies in Mediterranean society even if we spot them. It is clear that Paul can speak with the 'I' as an individual, but as such he is also concerned for the community (local communities, even Israel as a whole) and his nation (Rm 9-11). The model is a warning against a (reductionist) individualistic reading of the texts. Martin (1994:117-18) comments on the 'anti-individualistic ideology of Hellenistic culture' with the comment on Monty Python's film *The Life of Brian* (1973) where the main character is confused with the Messiah and finds himself followed everywhere he goes, until he, disgusted, addresses the crowds, 'You don't need to follow anybody', 'you've got to think for yourselves. You're all individuals'. The crowd concurs with one voice: 'Yes, we're all individuals'. The dyadic model should not deter us then from observing individual behaviour within the communal matrix of society[126].

> Persons (as individuals and as groups) were embedded in others: at the immediate kinship level, in the head of their family; at the local geographical level, in their neighbourhood or village; and interpersonally, perhaps in one or more powerful patrons. Furthermore, one did not survive on one's own "merits," but by being personally connected to networks: family, friends, brokers, and patrons. These were the means by which one dealt with the serious power differentials in the peasant world[127].

The above quote points to a very characteristic feature of this type of society, namely, the patronage system. In short form, the lower and less-favoured people groups (to avoid the anachronistic 'class' terminology) are bound to the more powerful people if they want to succeed in life. Thus, between these two groups, a form of exchange social structure is formed in which the powerful (the patron) becomes the stronger link for the weaker, the client. This structure permeates the whole of society and it is both affirmed and regulated by Roman law in some of its forms, and, at least in Roman society, it showed a much

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[126] As a matter of fact, far from a homogenized picture of the 'Mediterranean person', during the late Roman Empire (AD 200-400 right before its total decline at the hands of Barbarians, *ca* AD 410) there is a growing trend to displace the sacred locus from sacred space, which is transposed now to the 'divine man' (θείος ἀνήρ) in paganism and to Christ (ἀνήρ θεοῦ) in the Christian church. The Homeric man did not display an integrated self, but was only the sum of his parts; there is no such interrelated mentality. It is Socrates (fourth century BC) who arrives at 'know yourself' (γνῶθι σεαυτόν). It is with Augustine (fourth century AD) that such expression is understood as of humanity made in the 'image' of God.

[127] Hanson and Oakman (1998:70).

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ritualised form[128]. It is interesting to highlight that patron/client relations are 'vertical (hierarchical) and *dyadic* (between individuals or networks of individuals), and, thus, they undermine the horizontal group organization and solidarity of clients and other patrons [...] based on a strong element of *inequality and difference* between patrons and clients' (Hanson & Oakman 1998:72).

Such a structure, which permeates all levels of society (from the Caesar down to the lesser structures/relations) also enhances the creation of colonies in conquered lands as 'friends' and clients of Rome, indeed strengthening the hierarchical model[129]. This element leaves a strong mark on the inhabitants of the colony; not only in the way they perceive themselves, but also in the way others are perceived. This element determines much of what we describe, in general terms, as 'first-century Mediterranean identity'. Nevertheless, in the back-and-forth process of abduction (cf. Wilson 1996:8) it is wise to attend to what the text of Philippians may yield in this regard rather than imposing our own mould, however erudite it might be, since there is always the danger of projection[130].

It is important, in this context, to define what a group is. According to SIT, a group is 'a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their groups and of their membership in it' (Tuner & Bourhis 1996:30, quoted in Horrell 2005c:92, n. 21). People of the Mediterranean in ancient times tended to view themselves as mirrored in others, thus 'dyadic' personalities. Membership in a group is, therefore, a must in such corporate societies, and one of the prime values that characterised people of the

[128] Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984); Joubert (2000a:66-78); Lampe (2004); Moxnes (1991). It is noteworthy to observe that the Romans were a folk immensely concerned with the 'outer sphere' (image?) and whose ethical criteria were esthetics (a good man is both καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός; it is in fact a work of ἄσκησις, 'beautification').

[129] Hanson and Oakman (1998:73): 'Patronage facilitated the maintenance of power differentials and control by those with power (patrons), exchanging their exercise of it on behalf of others (clients) in return for their clients' support, honor, information, and loyalty. In other words, it kept the social hierarchy intact'.

[130] Holland and others (2003:29-30): 'Although Western representations of the self found in philosophical and psychological texts may indeed bespeak a person who is autonomous, bounded, and transcontextual, people's representations of themselves in the stream of everyday life reveal a multitude of selves that are neither bounded, stable, perduring, nor impermeable […] the differences between the West and the non-West have been greatly exaggerated'. The same advice can be use when we speak of the ancient Mediterranean setting observed from a two thousand years distance.

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Mediterranean[131]. And this is crucial, since the groups to which people belong, whether by assignment or by choice, will be massively significant in determining their life experiences (Hogg & Abrams 1998:2).

However, a dyadic personality/person should not prevent certain measure of individualism, even if it is referred on account of the larger group. Woolf (1996:30), commenting on monumental writing, affirms that most ancient cultures practice monumentality, but that during the early Roman empire we discover something rather novel: the 'private and personal nature of many Roman monuments, perhaps a sign of the greater individualism of ancient societies as compared to most prehistoric ones', although in some other respects such a monumentality seems to conform to well-attested patterns in other societies. Woolf also comments on a peculiar Roman form of competition termed *aemulatio*, which contained a tension between superlative and normative behaviour. Individuals then struggled to surpass their peers, but were at the same time aware that in trying to do so they could transgress cultural norms of what was appropriate. 'Epigraphy, with its highly formulaic presentation of social *personae* standardized yet at the same time individualized, offered a partial remedy to the problem of how to surpass and conform at the same time' (:32). Here we have a balanced example of both dyadic personality and agonistic culture.

5.3.2 Agonistic Existence

I believe Foster was the first one to suggest that a cognitive orientation strongly marked by the image of limited good led to an agonistic existence. In such a context, each 'minimal social unit' (the family or the individual), sees itself in 'perpetual, unrelenting struggle with its fellows for possession of or control over what it considers to be its share of scarce values' (Foster 1965:302). This mental/social predisposition encourages 'suspicion and mutual distrust', and, of course, a typical *machismo* on the part of the men. Thus, Foster concludes that a 'great deal of peasant behaviour, I believe, is exactly what we would predict from these circumstances' (:302). In a sense Foster perceived society as a system which needs to balance itself through the social interaction of its members: 'Individuals and families which are seen to or are thought to progress violate the preferred norm of behaviour, thereby stimulating cultural mechanisms that redress the imbalance' (:302).

[131] Martin (1994:134) concludes his essay with these words: 'For the Greeks and Romans, in any case, any concept approaching that of modern, Western individualism was irrelevant. Their ideas and icons, discourse and practices, acts and gestures all confirm the anti-individualistic and collective character of a shared cultural ideal—an inter-individualistic construction of self that continues to mark traditional societies of contemporary Greece'.

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How do people bring balance to this seemingly agonistic existence? Foster (1965:302-303) proposes that this self-correcting mechanism works at three different levels: 1) individual and family behaviour, 2) informal and unorganised group behaviour, and 3) institutionalized behaviour. People in such a context do not reveal evidence of social advancement (riches, upward mobility, etc.), as a way to elude sanctions from the rest of the community. The opposite is also necessary: do not let yourself fall behind your rightful place. For Foster, this social system produces a strong desire to look and act as everyone else in the town, not calling attention to the person lest it be sanctioned. Malina (1981:77 = 1995:123) would speak of 'predictable, transparent, socially open existence'. Foster (1965:303) speaks of this peasant context as one in which there is no competition on account of dress, housing or food. However, we know this is quite different in the urban setting, where dress code immediately betrayed social status (Garnsey & Saller 1987:116-7), and where sheer imitation without the right to do it (because they were not citizens) carried a strong punishment, as can be observed in the writings of Suetonius concerning the fate of some men that fell prey of such temptation and were executed by word of Claudius (Suetonius, *Claud* V.15.2-3). In this peasant context, writes Foster (1965:304), there is an absence of compliment. I imagine Foster would argue that this is so since the person does not want others to share the honour which is offered when a laudatory word is directed to other individual. However—although this limitation is common to all enterprises which study ancient literature—we do not really know if this was the general attitude of the population, since they have not left us written testimony of their social understanding. The textual evidence we posses comes from the elites and we are well aware that even here literary genre prescribes such a practice (laudatory letters, encomium, friendship letters, etc.)[132].

Gregory (1975:74) questioned Foster's perception of limited good and presented an alternative to agonistic experience with what he termed *the expectation of circumstantially balanced reciprocity* (ECBR), which does not follow the zero-sum game. ECBR simply holds that if you have more than others, you should share with them. If good increased, there is a redistribution of it so that the balance is maintained. Such reciprocity is 'circumstantial', i.e. it depends on a particular

[132] As a Mediterranean person, I can somehow relate to Foster's observation in the practice of complementing others. I was always struck by how *easily* North American people complemented each other (notice my bias). In Spain it is common to refrain from complementing others with the argument that 'too much complementing swells the head' (people become puffed up and proud). That this may reflect a particular agonistic mode is a long jump that needs to be appraised in every singular case, but it is an observation that others also share.

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set of circumstances which trigger the expectation[133]. Gregory (1975) based this alternative pattern on studies carried amongst the Mopan in Guatemala. Whereas Foster inferred his findings from verbal and non-verbal behaviour, although he never encountered a subject which expressed the thought per se, Gregory has found that people in the village he studied expressed ECBR quite plainly, what he mentions as 'consistent repetition of explicit verbal statements' (Gregory 1975:81). He further rejects Foster's contrary-to-fact assumption of the closed system. Mopan people had also experienced a nearly closed system prior to the 1930s, but had ample opportunity to see that economic good could increase in absolute quantity. Gregory further stresses that contrary to Foster's model, ECBR is applied to villagers and outsiders alike (Gregory 1975:82)[134].

Lawrence (2003:212-13) complains that though limited good has been mentioned in the context of honour and ethnography, it is rare that the same ethos would then be extended to all good and to every interaction. Her view is that such a perception does not (cannot) really account for the difference between tangible and intangible goods. 'Those agonistic reflexes presumed to exist within peasant communities operating from a limited good ethos are often "ideologically" not associated with rural areas but rather urban ones' (:213)[135]. Coming more specifically to Graeco-Roman values, Lawrence (:213) comments on Roman historian R MacMullen (1974:29), who reveals that 'traditions reaching back to Hesiod and Theocritus offered a favourable estimation of the country on account of the moral "other-orientated" values and put an emphasis on the limitless capacity to share'[136].

Kressel (1994:157) assesses Hanson's work on makarisms and reproaches as typical biblical expressions of the 'agonistic' nature of Mediterranean cultures.

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[133] However, ECBR can only refer to economics goods and to political/educational ones. It cannot answer for intangible goods as honour, health, friendship, manliness, etc.

[134] Foster (1975:86) perceives that ECBR and Limited Good are actually quite similar, and both function as equilibrium models. However, one of the major differences is that ECBR is less comprehensive than his own proposal, since, as I have already noted, it cannot account for intangibles. The crux of the matter, though, is that ECBR does not allow for the zero-sum game, and as such, according to Foster cannot explain why sharing is desirable (:87): 'I therefore conclude that ECBR is a special case of Limited Good rather than an alternative explanation'. Lawrence (2003:208-209) commends Gregory's for not trying to ascribe ECBR the status of 'master cognitive orientation' as the limited good models does, 'ECBR was rather only *one* aspect of the value orientation of the people studied' (original emphasis).

[135] Lawrence (2003:209-210) further mentions the work of Pitt-Rivers conducted in rural peasant communities in Southern France where he observed a largely mutual, and not agonistic, perception of peasant values.

[136] Lawrence (2003:213-214) also mentions Cato the Elder, *De Agricultura*, where Roman virtue is displayed. In this work, the non-agonistic ethos is expanded: 'It is from amongst the farmers that the bravest men and soldiers come. The gain they make is the most blameless of all, the most secure, and the least provocative of envy'.

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For Kressel 'social values that motivate *homo agonisticus*, i.e., the wish to be honoured and to avoid the consequences of being ashamed, are omnipresent and are not the monopoly of the peoples of the Mediterranean'. However, Joubert (2000b:43), though focusing on benefit exchanges, maintains that Mediterranean culture can be defined as agonistic, since it turned 'most forms of social interaction, from invitations, meals, public debates, recitals, business transactions, right up to gift-exchanges, into agonistic contests for honour'[137].

Ling (2006:52-53) draws on Ortner's (1989) ethnographic history of Sherpa Buddhism and concludes that despite the fact of clear hierarchical structures, exacerbated by geographical isolation, parcelisation of family land, etc., such a merging of elements did not create a monochrome 'essentially' agonistic society. Ling is certainly tilting more towards agency than structure, and maybe for that reason he tends to forget that 'agonistic society' is, at least as I come to understand it, an abstract model, not a description of reality[138].

Looking at the evidence I have reviewed, I do not discount the fact that valuing people's assessment of the individual definitively contributes to a certain agonistic experience of life. However, I do not clearly see that it should be *partially* based on (a weak link as) Limited Good Perception, which presents more questions than answers, as I have contended above. To my knowledge, a so-called agonistic experience (in quite general terms) is the outcome of the fact that in such contexts there exists a 'continual assertion of personal worth before a court of popular opinion that is always potentially hostile, since it is made up of people equally anxious to assert their own worth in a currency whose value is *strictly comparative*' (Just 2001:37, my emphasis). However assertive I wish to be, my preliminary conclusion on the possible reasons for agonistic experience is clearly open for correction, but I believe it rests on a close scrutiny of the data at my disposal.

[137] As such, Joubert (2000b:49) comments on *De Beneficiis* (II.25.3) where even gift-exchange—although Seneca's rejects the agonistic attitude—is placed in the context of athletic contest.
[138] To be honest about my outlook on the subject, for me the problem lays not so much on the term itself as with the way the general model tends to take possession of the social structure which is supposed to be portrayed in the text.

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5.3.3 Patronage

Joubert (2000b:23) describes patronage as the most important form of social exchange in the Graeco-Roman world. Bormann (1995:187) reaches the same conclusion: 'Die römische Patronatsrechts- und Sozialbeziehung, bzw. Das Klientelwessen ist die grundlegende Rechts- und Sozialbeziehung zwischen sozial, rechtlich, materiell oder in anderer Hinsicht Ungleichen im römischen Kultukreis'.

Malina develops the patron-client structure as a necessary one within the world of limited good perception, part of the informal principle of reciprocity[139]. Patronage is the social structure which allows for reciprocal relationships between equals and non-equals. These relationships are strongly marked by honour, honourability, etc. No person can live in this society solely on the bases of his/her own merits, but always as within a network of relations that influences both who s/he is and how is considered by the wider community (Hanson & Oakman 1998:71). The repercussions of such structures cannot be considered as autonomous entities, but within political and economic contexts (Lampe 2004:499-500).

> Mediterranean societies are all undercapitalized agrarian civilizations. They are characterized by sharp social stratification and by a relative and absolute scarcity of natural resources. There is little social mobility. Power is highly concentrated in a few hands, and the bureaucratic functions of the state are poorly developed. These conditions are of course ideal for the development of patron-client ties and a dependency ideology […] patronage relations provide a *consistent ideological support for social inequality and dependency* throughout the Mediterranean area[140].

For Davis (1977:146), '[i]t is the bedrock of political life in most of these countries which anthropologists have studied'. Patronage allowed for a relationship of un-equals, that is true, but at the same time prevented that the lower strata could come to what we can call a 'class consciousness' (cf. Lampe 2003:492). Neyrey (2005:467) believes this social structure (and model) to be

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[139] Malina identifies three main forms of reciprocity: 1) generalised reciprocity (open sharing based primarily on generosity and which usually involves fictive kin); 2) balanced reciprocity (involves exchange which is beneficial for both parties, e.g., business agreements); 3) negative reciprocity (based on interest and usually related with dealings with strangers) (cf. Malina & Rohrbaugh 1996:56 = 1992:56 [English original]). Cf. Lawrence (2003:183). However, Joubert (2000b:45) points out that some of these elements were not always taken into account (people did not always act under submission to the 'rule'), especially in respect to balanced reciprocity, and as such put the chief bond of society (according to Seneca) in jeopardy.

[140] Gilmore (1987:192-193, my emphasis).

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most pertinent to describe all sorts of social relationships: God-man, saint-devotee, godfather-godchild, lord-vassal, etc. This social structure presents the following features (based on Eisenstadt & Roniger 1984:48-49; cf. Neyrey 2005:467-68): 1) asymmetrical relationships, usually representing vertical dimensions of superior and inferior relationships[141], but such relations are particularistic and diffused; 2) simultaneous exchange of different types of resources (protection, economic, etc.); 3) a clear and prevalent interpersonal obligation (loyalty between patrons and clients); 4) a sort of 'package-deal', that is, the resources cannot be exchanged separately; 5) reciprocal, not voluntary (Joubert 2000b:37); 6) these kind of relationships are not fully legal or contractual (Eisenstadt & Roniger 1984:48), but informal, although strongly binding; 7) people enter in such relation voluntarily and it seems possible, despite its strong binding element, to abandon it voluntarily also; 8) lastly, Neyrey (2005:468) mentions that honour, both given and received, was a significant element in these relationships[142].

The emperor, at least in the city of Rome, was its sole *patronus*, as *pater patriae*, and functioned as the exclusive *euergetēs* of his city (Veyne 1990:388-389). We quickly realize how all aspects of society were embedded in such a context and, as I hope as we study more aspects in more details, how the apostle Paul made use of these structures (mental, social, etc.) to communicate with the Christ-following community at Philippi[143].

Joubert (2000b:36-37) concludes his historical survey of Roman patronage acknowledging that it 'took on many shapes, ranging from long-term, even hereditary, responsibilities toward each other and each other's families, to groups of people who organized themselves in solidarity around certain powerful figures, who could further their common causes. During the Early Empire, the *princeps* usurped much of the traditional powers of the patrons. Therefore, the role of brokers became increasingly significant to secure access to the benefactions of the emperor'.

I believe that an ancient culture which is in principle characterised by a strong group orientation justifies that we approach the study of its texts from a group-

[141] Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984:49) highlight the monopolisation of certain positions which are of crucial importance for the clients: access to 'means of production, major markets and centres of society'. Cf. Saller (1982:1).

[142] And rightly so. For the client to have as patron someone important was certainly a show of honour, despite the fact that it placed him on unequal footing with the patron. For the patron, having as many clients as possible waiting to greet him and praise in the morning, was a manifestation of his influence and standing.

[143] Both Joubert (2000b), with a thorough analysis of this system, focusing on the *Collection* for the saints at Jerusalem, and Lampe (2003), focusing on Paul, had carried excellent works in this respect.

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oriented theory, based on anthropological and sociological/psychological findings. For it 1) presents a leaning towards viewing the individual in the context of the larger group; 2) receives its main identity from its group orientation; and 3) is certainly concerned with the opinion of others as to where social standing is concerned (honour-seeking). However, how we go about it is of utmost importance, for a proper interpretation of the insights is at stake. The path we choose will in some measure define what we shall find there.

6. Conclusions

Where can we from here? It seems 'camps' have been strongly defined in current scholarship and each seems to defend its perception as 'truer' to life than the other. The truth of the matter is that both approaches are closer in some of their procedures than it may look at first sight (cf. Ling 2006), and it is for that reason that an eclectic option is likely to be able to draw the best out of them[144]. Any given approach carries a particular epistemology which limits the scope of comprehension of the social phenomena, although it illumines certain areas we deem salient and important for our own interest. Thus, since it is impossible to do away with subjectivity and with a certain measure of ethnocentrism, the best we can do is to propose an approach which is both transparent and verifiable. As Lawrence (2005:15) aptly concludes: 'as long as one reads comparatively, with humility, in order to cast fresh light on, rather than dictate or presume to wholly understand patterns, hazards can be ameliorated to some degree'. Gilmore (1982:191) had long ago discerned the same dangers and defended a view in which polysemic concepts (as that of honour) were appraised with a mixture of comparative *emic* study.

A social-scientific reading of the text allows us to approach it having this double agenda both theological *and* social (not just theological-ethical; cf. Horrell 2005c:92-93) with certain guarantees as we make our approach explicit and apply a continuous movement between evidence and method. As such, models should not take priority, but only serve as tools at a high-level of abstraction that may illumine our path towards a better comprehension of the data available, but never dictating what the results are going to be. If this were the case, the tool has taken then control of the process; it has become an *idée fixe*.

[144] Overholt (1996:5): 'The fact that there is no obvious consensus among anthropologists invites us to be eclectic, carefully choosing theoretical insights that seem useful for explaining the particular texts on which we are currently focusing'. I completely agree with his estimation and argue that this is one of the reasons, focusing on Philippians, that we can make use both of a high-level abstraction approach (SIT, cross-cultural anthropological models) as well as a focus on particularity.

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Whatever the dangers inherent in such an enterprise, there is much to learn from it, since we can apply it to the central ideas of the texts paying, attention to the life they both bring forth and reflect.

> Culture is a [sic] always a delicate blend of story and daily living, of mythos and ethos. Mythos is the story a people tell, ethos is the way a people live. Biblical scholars study one; anthropologists the other. It is impossible to understand any culture, ancient or modern, without studying both[145].

It will be incoherent to assess modelling as a completely *etic* practice which imposes on ancient texts and then apply social identity theory's insights without further justification[146]. No, I am well aware that analogy is our normal way of bridging across cultures and time. I am, however, concerned with the blurring of the lines when we approach ancient texts, as if they were already labelled and prejudged before delving into its pages to feel and think as the (intended) readers felt and thought. For such a complex and exciting enterprise, we need all the help we can get!

It is pertinent to end this chapter with a cautionary word which invites us both to dare find significance in what we are doing as well as be careful on how we read the evidence before us:

> As anthropologist, however, as professional sense–makers of other people's sense-making, we are accustomed to making explicit what is in reality implicit, to expressing in language much more than is ever linguistically expressed. That in itself is no bad thing. That, indeed, is part of our job. The trouble is that in so doing we run the risk —and I think it is a grave risk— of sometimes representing all that is implicit in action and context as it if were the explicit content of the linguistic terms that social actors habitually employ. We thus commit a twin error. On the one hand we mistranslate those terms —build into their meanings more than (and other than) their users themselves would consider them to contain; on the other hand we deny social actors the very ambiguity and indirection which, in context, their enunciation of those terms so often entails. In fact we arrive at a paradox: it is anthropologists' common human ability to pick up on what is not said that tempts them to portray those whom they study as much more baldly forthright than they are.
>
> (Just 2001:34-35)

[145] Matthews and Benjamin (1994:19).

[146] Exactly what Crook (2006:87) criticises about Lawrence's practice (2003) with the use of Bakhtin's heteroglossia and dialogism; and Malina (2007) on Ling (2006) and his 'virtuoso' religion drawn from Weber. We all project from the present to the past; after all, *analogy* is the in-word.

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If you wish to get a thorough and complete understanding of the books of the New Testament, put yourself in the place of those to whom they were first delivered by the apostles as a legacy. Transfer yourself in thought to that time and that area where they first were read. Endeavour, so far as possible, to acquaint yourself with the customs, practices, habits, opinions, accepted ways of thought, proverbs, symbolic language, and everyday expressions of these men, and with the ways and means by which they attempt to persuade others or to furnish a foundation for faith. Above all, keep in mind, when you turn to a passage, that you can make no progress by means of any modern system, whether of theology or of logic, or by means of opinions current today.

(J J Wettstein, *Novum Testamentum Graecum*, Amsterdam, 1752)[1]

CHAPTER 4:
THE ROMAN COLONY OF PHILIPPI

1. Introduction

There are several sources of information about the colony at Philippi available to us. The first one is the material study of its territory as of old, in order to gain insight as to the size and social composition of the *colonia*[2]. In this study I look

[1] Quoted in Klauck (2003:1). Although I fully endorse the first part of Wettstein's insightful description on how to go about understanding a people's context separated from us by time *and space*, we cannot, of necessity, concord with the second. There is neither objective approach to the study of ancient culture nor historical 'Received View', to borrow the oft-used phrase. One of the strengths of the social-scientific method is the unavoidable disclosure of the interpreter's set of assumptions which allows readers to appraise the exactness and appropriateness of his/her angle of incidence. Modern systems can thus aid in providing us with a whole new set of tools which can in turn enhance and sharpen our focus. However, and taking into consideration the date of the writing (1752), Wettstein's assessment remains quite impressive.

[2] Oakes (2001) has carried a superb work providing a plausible model of the colony's population and even adventuring riskier ones: the size and social make-up of the *Christian* community at Philippi.

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at some archaeological findings to reconstruct the pattern of life of its inhabitants, although this historical discipline is painfully aware of the provisional nature of any conclusions (Woolf 1998:xi)[3]. Another source of information is the Biblical texts. Fortunately we have access to a personal letter written by the apostle Paul to a local Christ-following community that gathers in Philippi, and we also have several mentions in some of his other letters concerning his stay in Philippi somewhere near the beginning of the second half of the first century AD. We have, furthermore, access to some more biblical material: the book of Acts —part of a two-volume work— which describes in vivid manner the progress of the Christ-following community across the Mediterranean basin. I consider that Acts reflects the situation in the Roman Empire with accuracy. In this case, chapter 16 of Acts becomes a valuable inside testimony of the social and political situation in the colony, and it will therefore be used as a test-case. However, since its historical reliability is disputed among scholars, I shall endeavour to answer why we see it fit to use it as a means to draw information on the local population.

We have access to ancient records cited by Roman historians that help us appraise the life and history of the colony. The present description seeks to situate the text and the Christ-following community under scrutiny in its broader historical, cultural (religious, economic, etc.) setting in order to better appreciate the *function* of the text in the audience. I follow here Malina's insight: 'Interpretation is in fact supplying what is lacking in a text so that the text might mean something'[4]. This information may help us understand the impact of the text in its 'historical-discrete' (as far as we can construct it) setting as well as to provide some clues in dealing with the events recorded in Acts 16. No historical description, however detailed it may be, is able to assure that the *interpretation of the text* is completely accurate. It merely aids us in clarifying a possible *Sitz im Leben* and its repercussions in the social psyche of the audience of Philippians, since it is better adjusted to the conditions that took place there[5].

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[3] I am well aware that archaeological findings, like any other historical piece of evidence, need to be interpreted, and so are open to different readings. It is not my task to discuss all these different opinions here, but filter through the available information in order to present a coherent picture that is both fair to the main interpretations of the archaeological findings, as well as adjusted to the texts we are dealing with. Thus, I am interested not just in reconstructing ancient sites, but assessing social *mores* that were part of the colony. In this sense the search is more at home with the so-called 'new' archaeology that seeks dialogue with the data in order to derive anthropological and social insights from it (cf. Aguirre 1985:305-331; Alcock 1993).

[4] Malina (1991:254). I understand this affirmation as supplying not new (and all too often ethnocentric and anachronistic) meaning from outside, but rather filling up gaps in the history, cultural milieu, and *Weltanschauung* of the recipients of the texts that are typically taken for granted in high-context societies.

[5] We should be aware of the advice of some historians that call our attention to resist the too-often practise of generalising, as if what it was current in Rome was necessarily typical in the

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The historical perspective is one among many possible approaches, but it is nevertheless *chosen* here because I consider it a basic way to gain information from the local *humus*. Together with other available sources the field can be both better appraised and more accurately delineated to answer the questions I choose to formulate[6].

The history of the colony is well-attested in both exegetical commentaries and in some excellent monographs[7]. Much archaeological information we know today comes from efforts carried by the *École Française d'Athènes*, which took place mainly during the period between the two world wars, especially through the work of P Collart and P Lemerle[8]. The work has notwithstanding continued and has been incredibly fruitful[9]. As Abrahamsen (1995:7-8) has rightly noted,

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rest of the empire. Price (1984b:177) is one of them: 'Put bluntly, there is no necessary connection between the imagery of the Ara Pacis (a monumental altar in Rome in honor of Augustus) or the poetry of Horace and the thought world of the Greek East. The issue is whether the provinces took any notice of developments in Rome, and if so, how they did so, and what differences (if any) local reception made to the local context. In other words, *understanding the Greek context on its own terms is crucial*' (my emphasis). Sharing the opinion is Arens (1995), who complains against the common tendency to agglomerate facts without discerning regional differences.

[6] 'During the reading process the reader fills in "gaps" in the text through and act of interpretation. Here it becomes clear that *the "meaning" arrived at through the reading process is dependent on what gaps in the text are being filled*' (Zetterholm 2003:8, original emphasis). I believe it is helpful to recall the experiences of those who have earlier focused on Philippians, i.e., Oakes (2001:xiii): 'How much explanatory power can there be in a study of the historical social context of a church to whom Paul wrote a letter? As I have sat reading archaeological reports, and stood looking at the ruined town in its wide, fertile plain, I have been surprised by how complete a framework the context seemed to provide for understanding Paul's letter to Philippi'.

[7] Besides general and well-known commentaries, we find monographs by Portefaix (1988); Bormann (1995); Peterlin (1995); and more recently Hellerman (2005). Also Engberg-Pedersen (2004), who compares Paul's Philippians with Stoic ideas, as well as quite recent works that read the letter from particular interests in mind: Smith (2005), Marchal (2006), and Park (2007).

[8] Portefaix (1988:59, n. 1): 'The scholarly exploration of ancient Philippi began in the year 1861 by Leon Heuzey at the request of Napoleon III. The excavations have been continued by French and Greek archaeologists and are still going on'. Collart (1937) and Lemerle (1945) were not the only ones who carried on a detailed field-work on the Macedonian (and thus Philippi) region; others include Heuzey and Daumert (1876), Picard (1922:117-201), and Festugière (1968[4]). Much of the information on later excavations can be derived from reports of the Greek Archaeological Service, all of them in Greek, («Chronika» of *Archaiologikon Deltion*) as well as the ones from the Archaeological Society of Athens (*Ergon*, 1958-9, and *Pratika Archaiologikes Hetaeias*, 1958-67). The University of Thessaloniki has focused mainly on the Christian centre, while the *École Française d'Athènes* on the Antonine Forum area, on the early imperial period (cf. Oakes 2001:3).

[9] Some New Testament scholars are spending time researching on-site in order to provide a more informed, accurate, and 'felt' interpretation of the texts. See for example de Vos (1999a); and Oakes (2001). Pilhofer has recently published a second volume (2000) of his study of the colony which contains a detailed and painstaking classification of all inscriptions found in the area. This book follows a first approach to the text: Pilhofer (1995).

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the scarcity of material we can gather from the letter itself makes it the archaeological data the more important in order to understand the socio-historical setting of the *colonia*.

2. The Roman Colony of Philippi

It is clear then that our starting point should be aimed at understanding the history of the colony, within the wider efforts of the Roman Empire at enlarging its territory and in the context of its goals of *Romanitas*, *Humanitas* and *Urbanitas* that ideologically drove its conquering underpinnings. The best place to start is thus with the history of the colony.

2.1 History, Archaeology

The area of the colony is attested in several inscriptions and reached approximately 1900 square kilometres (Oakes 2001:10)[10]. Prior to its foundation in 360 BC it was inhabited by Pieri and Edoni tribes commonly referred to as 'Thracians'[11]. Herodotus (7.112) reports that these so-called Thracian tribes were active during the time of Xerxes´ invasion of Greece and that they mined with gold and silver[12]. This fact was to be determinant in its history because the area was under the continuous scrutiny of other nations (Portefaix 1988:74).

The arrival of peoples from the island of Thasos under the lead of the Athenian exile Kallistratos establishes the date of the foundation of the colony formerly known as *Krenides* ('fountains') due to the existence of numerous springs in the region[13]. Little more is known of the place until the arrival of these Greeks from their once-powerful island around 361/359 BC[14]. These Thasians had former trade relations with the peoples of the coast, but by then had decided to establish a permanent colony in the area. In 356, maybe due to the felt need for protection in the face of Thracian threat, the young colony called upon Philipp II of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great) to come to her aid. As a

[10] Its territory extended to Mt. Pangaion and its surrounding area, towards Mt. Symbolon and the port of Neapolis and reached SE to form a border with Thrace.
[11] Oakes (2001:10) acknowledges that the terminology is not unanimous because Thracians came from the East whereas these other tribes came from the West as they were expelled from Thessalonika and Mygdonia. Cf. Papazoglou (1988).
[12] Strabo, *Geog* VII, fr. 34. Hendrix (1992:314).
[13] Appian, *BCiv*. IV 105: οί δὲ Φίλιπποι πόλις εστί, ἣ Δάτος ὠνομάζεο πάλαι καὶ Κρενίδες ἔτι πρὸ Δάτου. Κρῆναι γάρ εἰσι περὶ τῷ λόφῳ ναμάτων πολλαὶ. Elliger (1978:34) comments: 'der auf die zahlreichen Quellen rings um den Hügel von Philippi hinweist'.
[14] It is difficult to accurately determine when these colonists finally established in *Krenides*. Commentators and historians differ along the dates suggested above.

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privileged mining region, many were the potential invaders eager to take control of the area, and the timely call for help resulted in placing the colony under the allied protection —rather than be conquered— of Philipp II, although the inhabitants had a heavy price to pay for their protection[15]. The mines are exploited by the Macedonians and quickly exhausted (Oakes 2001:1)[16]. Philipp renamed the colony after himself, 'Philippi'[17]. Large areas were drained and gained for agricultural use: Philippi and surrounding areas became well-known for their grain and wine well into the turn of the era[18]. Philippi flourished under Alexander the Great, but little is known about her history during the Hellenistic era (Schuler 1960:90). All that remains is the Greek theatre, the foundations of a house under the Roman forum, the walls, and a little temple dedicated to a hero cult. This monument covers the tomb of a certain Exekestos and is dedicated to the κτιστὴς (*ktistès*), the foundation hero of the city[19].

In *ca* 168 BC the last of the Macedonian kings, Perseus (179-168 BC), was defeated at Pynda by the Roman armies. The province was thus incorporated into the Roman Empire at the hands of general Aemilius Paullus, who gathered ten leaders from each community in Amphipolis[20] where he proclaimed:

> First of all it was laid down that the Macedonians were to be free people, possessing their cities and fields as before, enjoying their own lands, and electing annual magistrates; and they were to pay the Roman people half the

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[15] Philipp built a fortress where his Macedonian troops had a privileged view of the plateau, Appian, *BCiv* IV.105; cf. Beare (1973:6). The colony possessed a strategic situation, 'it sat as sentinel to the large agricultural plain of Datos; it was well-protected by its acropolis; and, most important to Philipp, it was nearby to Mount Pangaion on the northern side of the plain, which at that period was rich in mineral deposit, including gold' (Fee 1995:25). See Bockmuehl's (1997a:3) correction of Fee at this point, since it is located in the South; also Hendrix (1992:314).

[16] 'Dioduros claims that Philip used the gold coins minted from the local mines to pay off Greek mercenaries hired to fight in his army' (Diod Sic 16.8.7, in Hellerman 2005:65). See also Martin (1980:3).

[17] Royal coins issued after 356 BC call the city 'Philippou' (Bockmuehl 1997a:3). Philipp struck his first gold coins with local gold, but allowed the city to continue producing her own coinage (cf. Koukouli-Chrysantaki 1998:7).

[18] '[E]xcavations of the fourth or fifth-century Bishop's House have brought to light two very large wine presses, presumably for his own and diocesan use' (Bockmuehl 1997a:3).

[19] 'Greece. Philippi', in http://www.sacred-destinations.com/greece/philippi.htm (11/1/07).

[20] That Philippi is not mentioned seems not to be that strange. Strabo, the Greek historian (*ca* 63BC-AD19/21), refers to Philippi in his *Geographiká* as a κατοικία μικρά (VII, fr. 41). Collart (1937:189f) describes it as 'Bourgade mediocre du premier district de la Macédoine! See also Oakes (2001:19-24) who lessens the effect of this statement in light of several inscriptions from the IV-II centuries BC that imply Philippi was not such an unsubstantial place after all. Oakes comments the fact that a Greek writer, Marsyas of Philippi, who produced a multi-volume work on Μακεδονικά and Αρχαιολογία (which unfortunately has not survived) was quoted by classical authors (Pliny, Athenaeus). This seems to support, if only rather thinly, his argument about the relative importance of a city which could produce such a recognized writer.

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> tribute which they had been paying to the king. Secondly Macedonia was to be broken up into four separate districts[21].

The purpose of the division into four regions (μερίδες) was clear: the destruction of the political unity of Macedonia, '[t]o prevent any sort of generalized insurrection against Roman rule, the four *regiones* were kept as separate from each other as possible (Tajra 1989:4). These genuine sub-provinces had each their own regional council (συνέδριον). Philippi was included in the first administrative district but this did not convey a special honour, since Thessalonica became the capital of Macedonia. The construction of the *Via Egnatia* (*ca* 130 BC), the first highway to cross the Balkan peninsula and the first road built by the Romans outside Italy, connected Philippi with the rest of the Roman Empire and was responsible for the increase in trade and cultural interchange that had quite an impact on the variegated design of its religions.

Apparently the colony enjoyed an important measure of autonomy. Roman troops were retrenched for a period, but had to return to extinguish an outburst of rebellion where members of the *synedrion* of the third district were killed (Polybius 31.2.12; 31.17.2, in Gill & Gempf 1994:402). In 149 BC, Andriksos, a local blacksmith who claimed to be son of Perseus, was crowned king in Pella in open revolt against Rome (Koester 1983:19). The quick response of the Roman army was ruthless and was followed by the appointment of Q. Caecillius Metellus as governor over the province. The protection of the colony fell under the authority of the Roman army (Gill & Gempf 1994:403). The colony was forgotten for long until the Roman Civil War placed it again on the spotlight[22]. Not only did Pompey use Thessalonica as his base while hiding from Julius Caesar, the province was also the setting for the battle of Philippi in 42 BC, where Brutus and Cassius[23] —Julius Caesar's assassins— were defeated by Mark Antony and Octavian (soon to become Augustus Caesar). The historical memory the battle produced in the Philippians must not be underestimated. The battle, rather 'battles', for the incidents took place for more than a month and in different terrains, involved large numbers of legions that needed to be fed and kept there for some time after. The 'triumviral legions [Antony,

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[21] Although the speech was delivered in Latin, it was translated to Greek by the praetor Gnaeus Octavius (Gill & Gempf 1994:401). Perhaps the impressive rhetoric of the speech did not match the expected outcome, at least in Macedonian favour. The conquest reported between 120 000 000 and 300 000 000 sesterces into Roman treasury, and eventually limiting laws were introduced (:401-2).

[22] Its distance from the port of Neapolis may have played an important part in this (cf. Martin 1989:3).

[23] During this battle, Neapolis, today's Kavalla, served as naval base for these two men; cf. Appian, *BCiv* IV.13 § 106. Cf. Fitzmyer (1998:584).

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Octavian and Lepidus, although the later did not participate] had perhaps nearly 100,000 infantry, the Liberators [Cassius and Brutus] something over 70,000; but the Liberators were the stronger in cavalry, with 20,000 against 13,000' (Pelling 1996:8). Perhaps these *memoirs* left such an imprint on the population that Paul saw it fit to include extensive military terminology in order to better convey his message to the Philippians (see the useful comments in Krentz 2003:355-363).

Pelling (1996:52) recalls that 'Roman civil wars were always fought in Greece, for precisely this reason: it was natural for one side to flee to exploit the resources of the East, but then virtually impossible to force a passage back to a defended Italy'. This area, Appian tell us, was the 'gateway between Europe and Asia' (*BCiv* IV.106; in Oakes 2001:12). This element is important, at least from the point of view of those who suffered the consequences, which, very often escape us. Levick (1996:645) reminds us that the 'Greek East suffered more in the thirteen years of intermittent civil war that followed Caesar's death than in the swift campaigns that made him supreme'. The effects of this 'civil strife' (that actually involved a huge extension and many nations under Rome) as well as the expansion of the Empire were quite strenuous on local populations. An example will suffice: when Antony, in 40 BC, arrived at Asia Minor, 'his first demand was "the same ten years" worth of taxes that had been produced for Brutus and Cassius. After Philippi there was the disbandment of thirty legions to be paid for, and in 39-38 and 36-34 campaigns against the Parthians to be financed' (Levick 1996:645).

This event marks the turning point that transits from the Republic into the Principate, with a new ruling system in which the Caesar-Imperator administers power in a more concentrated manner (Santero & Gascó 1990). After the battle the colony was reconstituted as *Colonia Victrix Philippensium* in memory of the victory which 'saved' the Roman people Oakes (2001:13)[24]. As a consequence of the victory, the *pomerium* —the sacred boundary of the city[25]— was extended 2 km to the west of the wall to include the field where the battle

[24] We posses numismatic evidence of this fact (cf. Gill & Gempf 1994:411).

[25] The *pomoerium* is an ideal line 'que marca los límites del territorio urbano. Para los romanos toda la ciudad era un templo, y su trazado había sido inaugurado religiosamente, siguiendo ciertos ritos atribuidos a los etruscos (*etrusco ritu*)' (Guillén 1977:19). Cf. Varrus, *LingLat* 5, 143. MacMullen (2000:127) sees in this practice a clear replication of Roman ways: 'the more fully Roman centers, *coloniae*, were marked out from their very inception by a priest' plowing of a sacred furrow, depicted on the coins of Emerita or Philippi, for example, according to the same rites that had initiated Rome itself; and from that moment forward, if there was any doubt just how a cult should be conducted, questions could be directed to the capital, to find out what was the custom, the form, at the shrine of Diana or of some other appropriate deity'.

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took place[26]. Antony settled some of his veterans in the area[27], which accounts for the *Roman-ness* of the colony from this period onwards and reinforced with the coming to power of Augustus, who added more veterans (Wilkes 1996:573)[28]. The evidence seems to confirm that despite Roman presence, many Greeks still dwelled in the colony. Defining the supposedly pervasive Latin character of the colony versus its Greek one has been a source of conflict from old (i.e. Collart *vs* Lemerle). Pilhofer (1995:90) concluded, after extensive cataloguing and researching of all available inscriptions, that:

> Gewiß waren die Römer zahlenmäßig nicht in der Mehrheit, wie es das römische Gepräge der Stadt vermuten lassen könnte, aber das Lebensgefühl war durch und durch römisch[29].

The strong Roman feeling in the colony should not be taken for granted, since not all cities in Roman Greece had been romanised on the same levels[30]. Philippi, specially its town, appears to be composed mostly of Roman

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[26] Strabo, *Geog* VII, fr. 41: Οἱ δὲ Φίλιπποι Κρηνίδες ἐκαλοῦντο πρότερον, κατοικία μικρά, ηὐξήθη δὲ μετὰ τὴν περὶ βροῦτον καὶ Κάσσιον ἥτταν. Cf. also Collart (1937:322-3) and Portefaix (1988:62), although other authors (e.g., Lemerle 1945:26-7) express doubts about this large extension on account of two factors: i) sarcophagi discovered in this area which was supposed to be free from burials, and ii) the strange lay-out Collart proposed (cf. Lemerle 1945:26-27; Oakes 2001:13). Against this large extension is Bockmuehl (1997a:14-15), who states: 'As it happens, the Roman law prohibiting foreign cults inside the *pomerium* was probably in any case no longer enforced at this time'.

[27] Strabo, *Geog* VII, fr. 41. It is impossible to know the number of veterans settled in the colony at this time. Hendrix (1992:314) calculates around 500 in 42 BC and the same rough number following Actium. What we know is that most Caesarean and Triumviral colonies received 2 000-3 000 colonists, and there is no reason to suspect that the same could have occurred in Philippi (cf. de Vos, 1999a:236; Appian, *BCiv* IV.13-17 §§102-31; Fitzmyer 1998:584). However, in about twenty years, more than 46 000 veterans were placed on about 500 cities (MacMullen 2000:9-10).

[28] This included a cohort of Praetorian as well as civilian supporters of Antony, some of which had been dispossessed of their properties in Italy (Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 51.4.6). See also Collange 1979:2. The work of Oakes (2001) is useful in its explanation of the division of the land, the change of ownership, and the pressure Greek colonists faced under new landholders. However, his conclusions on the composition of the colony's inhabitants run counter to those of de Vos (1999a:238-44).

[29] Despite this assertion, de Vos (1999a:241) refutes Oakes' (2001:34-39) conclusion that the population was mainly Greek because he considers that Oakes has given too much weigh to Greek inscriptions and has forgotten a probably large depopulation during the campaigns at Philippi. As far as the appearance of Greek letters as alignment markings is concerned, de Vos thinks their presence is 'meaningless', firstly because they are the markings of slaves recruited for building purposes and secondly because the evidence comes from the second century and therefore does not necessarily apply to this period under study (cf. de Vos 1999a:41-2).

[30] In his comparison and contrast of several cities were Paul held his missionary venture, de Vos (1999a:294-296) contrasts Thessalonica, a *civitas libera*, and widely Greek in outlook to Philippi, strongly Romanized and thus with different social values and differing civic expectations.

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population, many of them veterans who settled there and later on some *liberti*, who had been under different patrons but had become now artisans and merchants (de Vos 1999a:251-254)[31]. It seems only fair to assume that because of a large and influential Roman population, the colony experienced ongoing peace once Augustus held sole power over the Empire. Pilhofer (2000:202) depicts a honorary inscription for Lucius Tatinius Cnosus, dated before AD 96, in which he is identified as a Roman officer, a *beneficiarius tribuni* who dedicated a statue base in the forum (cf. Pilhofer 1995:203) to the *Quieti Aug(ustae) col(oniae) Philippens(is)*, the 'quiet Augustan colony of the Philippians'. How to interpret the inscription is complex. We are aware that Greek cities rivalled with one another to obtain better and more numerous titles, sometimes having little relation to the relative station and importance of the city itself (cf. Ascough 1998a:97). It may thus be that the inscription merely reflected the opinion of its benefactor.

Philippi (and Macedonia) was once again in the centre of events in 31 BC, when Octavian defeated his former ally, Mark Antony (together with Cleopatra, the last of the Ptolemaic rulers) in the battle of Actium, although the battle was fought at different levels, not least of them the symbolic. The fight for power amongst the two stronger men of the triumvirate (by 32 BC a *de facto* duumvirate) experienced a turning point when Octavian used Antony's infatuation with Cleopatra, a foreigner, to erode his fame in Italy. Horace, who wrote this *Epode* (IX.11-16) in 31 BC, shares the same sentiment:

> Future generations will not believe it – a Roman soldier,
> Bought and sold, carrying stakes and bearing arms for a woman,
> Even bringing himself to serve under withered eunuchs! And amid
> The army's standards the sun glimpses a shameful mosquito net.

Much was at stake in this battle. Octavian was able to make use of old fears to his advantage. After the sack of Rome by the Gauls in 390 BC there had been a proposal to relocate the city in the newly conquered Veii, to which Livy and others fervently opposed. 'There had been a fear that Caesar would move the seat of Empire from Rome to the East, a fear that was revived by Antony's dalliance with Cleopatra. Augustus, however, was to promote Rome as the capital of the empire' (Price 1996:812). Antony, following ancient customs, had identified his family lineage with that of Hercules and Dionysos, whereas Cleopatra appeared before the public as the earthly representation of Aphrodite (Plutarch, *Ant* 26). Dionysos and Aphrodite, wine and love, the most attractive images of life lived to the utmost, in the midst of the internal strife that decades of civil wars had brought to the population. Octavian, on the contrary, had

[31] Oakes (2001:48-49) thinks the majority were Greek colonists, few Romans and a great deal of slaves (around 10 per cent).

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developed a very different approach. His auspicious birth, under the constellation of Capricorn was used to strengthen the concept of his 'divine' origin as well as his predestination to be 'saviour of all the peoples' (Suetonius, *Aug* 94). The signs, epiphanies and wonders that accompanied him needed a context, and little by little his identification with Apollo became evident, (Suetonius, *Aug* 50 and 70). Apollo was symbol of 'moral and discipline', just the thing Rome needed to overcome this difficult situation (cf. Zanker 1990:47-53; Beachan 2005:156-57). This victory put to rest years of strife and civil war[32]. It was going to be now to Augustus the start of a new era of 'peace and safety' that was going to last the forty-five years of his *imperium*, an age later described by the Senate as *Saeculum Augustum* (Suetonius, *Aug* 100). He then re-founded[33] the colony in honour of the Julian family, *Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis*[34] and gave especial privileges to his veterans:

> Imperator Caesar, son of a god, triumvir for the second time for the settlement of the state, declare: I have decided to proclaim that all veterans shall be granted [exemption from] tribute [_ _ _], to bestow on them, their parents and children, and the wives they have or shall have, exemption in every respect, and so that they may be Roman citizens with every proper legal right, they are to be exempted (from taxation), free from military service, and excused from the performance of compulsory public services. […] Moreover, just as I wished veterans to be exempt in respect of the points mentioned, I grant that they may be permitted to have, use, and enjoy whatever priesthoods, offices, rewards, benefits, and emoluments they possessed. I have decided that they are not to be appointed against their will to other magistracies or as ambassadors or superintendent or tax-farmer; moreover, I have decided that no one is to be billeted in their homes in order to lodge or spend the winter there[35].

Oakes (2001:26-27) comments that the process of colonisation and of veteran allocation must have been certainly painful for local communities and cites Appian (*BCiv* V.12) as prime example:

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[32] The decisive moment came later when Augustus conquered Alexandria and defeated both Antony and Cleopatra for the last time in 30 BC. Although there was then no 'apparent' threat of internal mutiny against the *princeps*, it is known that in certain situations he wore, even in the Senate, his armour underneath his *toga*. Only now was Roman power represented by a *sola persona* (Zanker 1990:86).

[33] Augustus tended to re-found established colonies. He also founded a city on the site of his victory at Actium which he named Nikopolis ('city of the victor/victory') in 30 BC, modelled after the classic Greek city both with status of free city and autonomous (cf. Sartre 1994:214-15).

[34] Both Bockmuehl (1997a:3) and Pilhofer (1995:47) clarify that this had nothing to do with Augustus' own daughter (Julia) as some commentators have suggested (*pace* Fee 1995:25 n. 79; Hendrix 1992:314), but followed the standard form of naming the colonies after their benefactors.

[35] *FIRA*^{2} 1, n. 56 (I-III) (papyrus, Egypt, late 1st century BC), Florence (1940-3). Cf. Campbell (1984:282); also Campbell and Campbell (1994:208).

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> The task of assigning the soldiers to their colonies and dividing the land was exceeding difficult. For the soldiers demanded the cities which had been selected for them before the war as prizes for their valour, and the cities demanded that the whole of Italy should share the burden, or that the cities should cast lots with other cities, and that those who gave the land should be paid the value of it: and there was no money. They came to Rome in crowds, young and old, women and children, to the forum and the temples, uttering lamentations, saying that they had done no wrong for which they, Italians, should be driven from their fields and their hearthstones, like people conquered in war[36].

Colonisation meant dispossession of land at the hands of new landowners. This must have created, no doubt, a strong resilience on the local population. Roman practice in Greek East was to bolster local Greek elites and used them as vehicles of government. But Oakes (2001:27) thinks this was *not* the case in Philippi, though there is no specific epigraphic evidence to support his argument.

M. Licinius Crassus was appointed governor of Macedonia and Achaia which became a joint-province. Augustus granted the colony the *ius Italicum*, which placed it under equal footing to cities in Italy[37]. That meant that the colony's political and juridical institutions were designed after Rome's model[38]. A Roman colony 'differed from a *municipium* and from a *civitas libera* in having a Roman form of administration and in the use of the Roman law and judicial procedure' (Tajra 1989:7). The '*Ius Italicum* was the pinnacle of colonial status and denoted the closest possible ties with Rome. It was reserved for the relative few colonies which were the direct historical descendants of the *coloniae maritimae* of the early middle Republic. Only these colonies were thought worthy of being regarded as part of Italy through a legal fiction' (Watkins 1973:434, in Tajra 1989:7). The Roman *ethos* was all-pervasive: proof of that is the administrative organisation with *quaestors*, *aediles*, legates, etc. (see Ac 16:36-38; Collange 1979:2). The city came to be a senatorial province by order of Augustus and later, in AD 15, recalled as an imperial province under direct control of Tiberius (who unified the three provinces: Macedonia, Achaia, and Moesia under one)[39]. By AD 44 Claudius placed Macedonia and Achaia once

[36] Although this description has to do with the settling of colonists in Italy, it is only logical to conclude that it would have been harder for Macedonia.
[37] Koester (1983:333) concludes that this meant the agricultural land of the colony did not have to be burdened with taxation (cf. Collange 1979:2).
[38] It is perhaps this fact that accounts more strongly for the Roman-ness of the colony. After all, the colony's manner of foundation echoed that of Rome itself (cf. Price 1996:844).
[39] Unlike imperial provinces —less secure because they were located closer to the frontiers with Barbarian territories— where it was all-the-necessary the presence of the army, senatorial

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again under the senate's authority, 'solidifying Roman local control and assuring the vitality of the colony at Philippi' (Hellerman 2005:66, Alcock 1993:14). From then on the colony developed steadily, rather 'quietly' as we mentioned earlier. By the fourth century Philippi had become an important bishopric (Oakes 2001:14)[40].

The old colony of Philippi (known as Αρχαία Φίλιπποι) is not inhabited today, a fact that has allowed for extensive archaeological excavations (Osiek 2000:25). Bakirtzis (1998:37-8) explains: 'Philippi as it is now bears very little relationship to the city that Paul visited in 49/50 CE. […] There remains intact from Paul's time, however, the general site and the surrounding ridges formed by Mounts Pangaion, Symbolon, and Orbelos, as well as the general landscape, though the now fertile plain was largely marshland in the early Christian period'. The colony's surrounding wall had three city gates. The eastern gate that led the Via Egnatia towards Neapolis and went through the city's necropolis (the 'Neapolis Gate'). The Via Egnatia crossed through the city along the north side and exited through the western gate, also known as the 'Krenides Gate'[41]. The smaller of the three gates, the south western one, the 'Third Gate', leaves the Via Egnatia to the east and faces the river that runs north-south at a mere 50 metres of distance. The extension of the *intra-muros* area (*ca* 70 Ha) of the city speaks of its reduced size[42]. Even the Via Egnatia, the city's *decumanus maximus*, is only two-metre wide which gives evidence of the narrowness of space arrangement. Aware that the rest of the streets are in the range of 2-3 metre wide, and combined with the crowded nature of the lay-out arrangement with villas and *insulae* close to the forum, de Vos (1999a:238) concludes that 'Philippi's life was very communal and that it functioned as *Gemeinschaft*-type community. Given the small size of the actual *urbs* this sense of "community" may have been particularly strong'[43]. Although archaeological evidence derives primarily from

provinces were considered more secure and fell under direct authority of the Senate (cf. Gill & Gempf 1994:404).

[40] For the importance of such sites, especially after the demise of the Roman Empire, see Sjoberg (1960:57).

[41] Bockmuehl (1997a:14) affirms that despite this nomenclature —because of the many springs there are in the area— it is better to refrain from this use since it can lead to wrong conclusions: the town of Krenides is a nearby village situated to the *east*. It is better to speak of the 'Amphipolis Gate'. However, it may be that this designation is 'fairer' than he assumes. There is a brook running west of the city called Krenides, most surely the place of meeting called *proseuche* in Acts 16 (cf. Festugière 1947:132-33; Légasse 1994:7).

[42] It forms roughly a rectangle of 1 km x 730 m, impeded by the marsh area at the SW corner and the steep hills on the NE-SE side.

[43] De Vos studies social conflict from the base of Tönnies' typology in which the *Gemeinschaft* (or "community") socialization is contrasted to the *Gesellschaft* type (roughly "association"), characterized by impersonal and more individualistic relationships. Cf. de Vos (1999a:15) and Tönnies (1957).

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the second century onwards, the arrangement is consistent with other *coloniae* of the first century. De Vos (1999a:238) affirms:

> It is clear from this arrangement of space in the town that there was a close connection between the commercial, religious, political, social and residential aspects of life.

In this type of society 'the socially constructed world is more likely to be taken for granted' (:15)[44]. This feature is common to both pre-industrial and Mediterranean societies, as Sjoberg (1960:227) has rightly pointed[45]. I believe it will demonstrate its importance once we start putting all the pieces and insights together in order to better understand Phlp 2:6-11 and its impact on the Philippian community[46]. Such assessment is in line with Woolf's (1998:112) comparison between *civitates* in Britain and northern Gaul with those of the Mediterranean basin, which were smaller and able to maintain a higher level of homogeneity.

Philippi was, as with any medium-size concentration of people, mainly dominated by an agriculture-based economy. According to Fowl (2005:12): 'Trade, which had a way of diffusing power in the Roman world because it demanded interaction and cooperation across ethnic groups, played a limited role in Philippi. As a result, Romans and Roman institutions exercised an unusual amount of influence'. This being so, the make-up of the colony only exacerbated the Roman-ness of the city. The typology of a small urban centre as Philippi (almost town-like) presents a good case of possible social confrontation, consistent with anthropological and sociological models which turn away from the evolutionary social theory that considered urban settings more complex than rural ones, when the opposite is true (cf. Cohen 1985:28-29). The inherent complexities of socialization in a small settings are many, since any potential problem may involved people in close kin, and thus, what can be just a trivial event in our own setting (discussion with a bus driver on account

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[44] Despite the fact of being structured as a typical Roman colony, the epigraphic evidence witness to ample social interaction enhanced, no doubt, by the patronage system. Cf. de Vos (1999a:250).

[45] Sjoberg affirms that both natural law and legal/moral order are deemed non-rescindible. 'Tampering with the social order is not permitted to any but to the highest powers in the land' (1960:227).

[46] De Vos centres on the aspects of socialization and social conflict and compares three communities within the context of the wider civic community according to the questions he poses. My study benefits greatly from his insights, but focuses on a rather different topic, with complex and different nuances: the role of the hymn/text on the *mentalité* of the Philippian Christ-following community. Literary echoes, historical memoirs and their present situation, all play an important part to create a unique and profound communication between Paul and this community that I seek to discover through the study of these components.

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of reckless driving) and supposedly not affecting our life, may not be so when that same 'driver'/person (as it were) is somebody whom I depend on for my allowance or my working aspirations. The smaller the community, the higher the potential those I encounter have of being close kin, speaking, as we are, of first-century Mediterranean society.

2.2 Religion(s)[47]

The study of the different cults and gods/goddesses within the colony gives us the opportunity to deal with the Philippian *mentalité* from different angles that can help clarify not only the historical (re)-construction of the events as reflected in Acts 16 and in the letter, but the impact and echoes that the Christ-hymn could have affected in the audience. My aim is limited to the evidence we can recover from the area and the general practice of the time. When we adventure in the study of the practice of the colonies we enter uncharted territory: we must assume that there was both adaptation and change. How did colonies conform to Roman religion? One possible channel is Varrus' *Religious Antiquities*, a treatise from first century BC, which for long remained as the only general source on Roman religion. However, how such patterns were implemented in the colonies (when some of their citizens had never been in Rome) is hard to say. 'The problem is a useful remainder, however, that any such statement as "the *coloniae* imitated the religion of Rome" is always liable to be a short hand for 'the *coloniae* imitated their own image (or conflicting images) of the religious institutions of the capital' (Beard et al 1998a:331).

I approach this aspect from the observation of the religious situation according to several studies of the history of religion in the area as far as it can be constructed. Portefaix (1988) produced a substantial work focusing on the reception of the letter by first-century Philippian women using this same hermeneutical key. A similar effort was carried by Abrahamsen (1995), but the hymn's vocabulary and style, even its universe of meaning, allows for further research. Kee proposes an approach that differs from the traditional history-of-religions school in that it does not assume that 'external similarity of religious phenomena attested in different ages or cultures is to be perceived as evidence of identity or of direct causal link' (Kee 1982:118-119). Rather, the alternative is to explore how 'in a religious tradition, human self-understandings –personal, social and cosmic– undergo significant shifts even though the external features

[47] It will be extremely lengthy and outside the scope of this research to describe the overall impact of Roman religion in the eastern part of the Empire. My interest lay in the possibility that the discrete religious context of the colony had somehow crept into the letter to the Philippians. For a basic description of the relationship between Roman religion as it was brought to the eastern provinces, see Garnsey and Saller (1987:170-174).

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of a religion's myth and ritual seemingly perdure' (:119). That frees us to explore the world-view or 'life-world' in a flexible manner, attending not only to generalities, but paying attention to the significance of the epoch and context under scrutiny[48]. What we observe during this time is a nuanced shift to a more religious emphasis in philosophy (Roman Neopytagoreanism and Neoplatonism) and an emergence of mystery religions. This was a fusion of oriental cults that appealed to the wider population, which tended, especially in the East, to such oriental cults and not to the official Hellenistic gods (Jones 1963:10).

Paul was writing so that his audience could not only be comforted in the midst of outside adversity and internal strife, but also affirmed in their faith and practice amidst a thoroughly pagan environment where Christ reigned as *Kyrios*. Jewish presence seems to have been limited. There is no archaeological evidence for Jewish settlements in the colony, which presupposed the lack of significant Jewish presence in the colony at the time of the visit of the apostle; a situation confirmed by the reading of Acts 16:13 (τῇ τε ἡμέρα τῶν σαββάτων ἐξήλθομεν ἔξω τῆς πύλης παρὰ ποταμὸν οὗ ἐνομίζομεν προσευχὴν εἶναι, καὶ καθίσαντες ἐλαλοῦμεν ταῖς συνελθούσαις γυναιξίν), where Paul was told that there was a place where prayer occurred (Koukouli-Chrysantaki 1998:27). Murphy-O'Connor comments that despite Luke's use of a 'place of prayer' outside the city limits —which does not exclude the possibility of a building— all the known first-century Diaspora synagogues are within cities (Murphy-O'Connor 1997:213). Despite this, the term is sometimes used to refer to a 'place of prayer' (*3Mac* 7:20; τόπον προσευχής), although sometimes it denotes a synagogue building (Philo, *Flacc* 6 §41).

However, according to recent research, 'the προσευχή was the oldest designation of a Jewish assembly hall' (Koukouli-Chrysantaki 1998:27, n 128). Noy (1992:119) affirms this observation: 'Προσευχή in the concrete sense of 'a place of prayer' is found almost entirely in a Jewish context, indicating the building which later became known as συναγωγή'. Moreover, a recent find in Philippi's west cemetery has confirmed the existence of a Jewish synagogue in the city, though perhaps not earlier than the end of the third century AD[49]. This

[48] Kee (1982:136) successfully demonstrates that in the original shrine at Epidarum, where the god was said to be born, the Asclepius cult functioned in the Hellenistic era as an out-patient clinic, while with its move to Pergamum during the period of the Antonines, it had become an all-purpose sanatorium, healing even wounded psyches.

[49] Koukouli-Chrysantaki (1998:28): 'It is a grave stele of local marble, narrowing towards the bottom and with a curved top'. The inscription reads:
Ivy leaf

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fact agrees with 'available literary and archaeological evidence from Palestine and the Diaspora, where there is no reference to the synagogue as a religious meeting place before the third century CE' (:35). The lack of Jewish influence might also be assessed by the absence of any direct Old Testament reference within the text of the letter, most assuredly as result of the Philippians' lack of knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures[50].

One of the problems when dealing with the different and numerous cults in Philippi is that the evidence has been treated in anachronistic ways which has produced a rather inexact picture of the area[51]. Bormann researched the area thoroughly and concludes that despite common assertions religious syncretism was the norm of the day. The Philippian religious character was mainly Graeco-Roman during the first century AD, and only later the local cults of Isis and Silvanus gained wider status even when earlier evidence is found (Bormann 1995:61-67). This fact seems to be confirmed also by Abrahamsen (1998:46), who describes various pagan rock reliefs 'which date to the end of the second and beginning of the third century and which number close to 200'. This is quite suggestive because it means that non-Christian groups were quite alive and active in the decades after the founding of the first church in European soil by the apostle Paul. Dorcey (1992:67) remarks that the cult to Silvanus in the Eastern Empire appealed mainly to 'highly Romanized individuals' and that there is evidence that a *collegium* of Roman citizens of both eastern and western origin erected an elaborate inscription invoking him and other Roman traditional gods (Liber Pater, Hercules, and Mercury)[52]. The fact that Silvanus is mentioned in one inscription in Philippi is not without interest, for this is the only one found in the entire area of Macedonia. We must not forget, however,

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ΝΙΚΟΣΤΡΑΤΟ(Σ)	Νικόστρατο(ς)
ΑΥΡ.ΟΞΥΧΟΛΙΟΣ	Αὐρ(ήλιος) Ὀυχόλιος
ΕΑΥΤΟ ΚΑΤΑΣΚΕΥ	ἑαυτο κατασκεύ
ΒΑΣΑ ΤΟ ΧΑΜΩΖΟ	βασα τὸ χαμώσο
ΡΟΝ ΤΟΥΤΩ. ΟΣ ΑΝ ΔΕ	ρον τούτω. ὃς ἂν δὲ
ΕΤΕΡΩΝ ΝΕΚΥΝ ΚΑΤΑΘΕ	ἕτερων νέκυν καταθέ
ΣΕ ΔΩΣΙ ΠΡΟΣΤΕΙΜΟΥ ΤΗ ΣΥ	σε(ι) δώσι προστείμου τῇ συ
ΝΑΓΩΓΗ *ΜΡ	ναγωγῇ *ΜΡ

(tr.: Nikostratos Aurelios Oxycholios himself furnished this flat tomb/grave (and) if someone lays down (on it) a dead body of others, he will give (a fine) to the synagogue).

[50] That they had to meet outside the gate by the river confirms that there was no *mikveh* (ritual bath) either inside the city walls; (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:14).

[51] Bockmuehl (1997a:7) comments in this regard on the work of Beare (1973[3]:7) and O'Brien (1991). The latter certainly speaks of the 'syncretistic' religious climate of the colony, although he further confirms that 'the official imperial religion tended to dominate' (O'Brien 1991:5).

[52] Cf. the inscription in *CIL* III 633, where Silvanus is named 'Augustus'. The shrine contained a bronze image of the god (Dorcey 1992:91).

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that archaeological evidence points to an overwhelming majority of female figures[53].

The large number of *ex votos* found speaks of a large female activity in the religious *cultus* of many local deities, especially that of the Roman goddess Diana, counterpart of the Greek Artemis. All these religious practises need to be understood against the context of the colony staying in touch with the 'mother'-city (*metropolis*) of Rome (cf. de Coulanges 1971:162).

2.2.1 Literary, Religious Myths

The symbolic world of ancient myth left a permanent mark in ancient society. Its vocabulary, according to Champlin (2003:237), functioned as a universal code. If this were so, the question refers to the symbolic connotations Phlp 2:6-11 could trigger in the minds of a Christ-following community with a majority from pagan origin, surely familiar with pagan cults and ideas. Hays has produced seven criteria in order to recognize possible echoes or traces (allusions) of the surrounding culture (having mostly in mind Jewish-Christian relations) within the writings of Paul[54]. These criteria (or 'tests') are: availability, volume, recurrence, thematic coherence, historical plausibility, history of interpretation, and satisfaction (Hays 1989:29-32)[55]. However, when we come to the letter to the Philippians we quickly realize that there is a surprising absence of direct citations of the Old Testament and even of the LXX, which Hays assumes as the basis of communication between Paul and his 'primarily Gentile Christians' (:29)[56]. While Hays' methodology might be useful with most Pauline

[53] To have an appreciation of this ubiquitous female-worship in later centuries, see Abrahamsen (1995:26).

[54] Hays (1989:28) explains his task in this way: 'The hermeneutical event occurs in my reading of the text, but my reading always proceeds within a community of interpretation, whose hermeneutical conventions inform my reading. Prominent among these conventions are the convictions that a proposed interpretation must be justified with reference to evidence provided both by the text's rhetorical structure and by what can be known through critical investigation about the author and original readers. Any interpretation must respect these constraints in order to be persuasive within my reading community. Claims about intertextual meaning effects are strongest where it can be credibly demonstrated that they occur within the literary structure of the text and that they can plausibly be ascribed to the intention of the author and the competence of the original readers'.

[55] These are not exhaustive and apply at different levels and in different ways (cf. Wright 2005:61-2).

[56] Bockmuehl (1997a:9) also notices the lack of OT quotations and assumes then a complete lack of familiarity of the Philippian readership with the Hebrew Scriptures or the LXX. It is true that we can appreciate firm echoes of the LXX in the Christ-hymn and even in other verses (1:19; 2:10-11, 15) and even references which seem to make sense within a Jewish frame of mind (3:5-

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texts, when it comes to Philippians we are certainly immersed in a different context. Why not open the limited scope of Hays' approach to allow other elements from Greek and Roman sources (and these not only literary) to appear as echoed within the apostle's letter? I believe the aim of my research encourages this. I wish to place the letter within a social system that allows, in principle, for as many echoes as possible to emerge, since the text is an *ad hoc* letter which needs to make sense in *their* (i.e. Philippians) own context. Hays' insights are helpful to know more about plausible intentions on the part of Paul, but may be short of the mark when we try to ascertain the effect of the text in the Philippian Christ-following community.

The archaeological study of the city confirms the idea that there existed a great deal of religious freedom combined with certain restlessness at the time both of Paul and Polycarp (Bakirtzis 1998:44). Christian religious buildings appear in some cases to have been built upon former pagan ones. Although much of the evidence comes from the fourth century, it is nevertheless important to recognize the fact that pagan and Christian lived side by side and that religious buildings stand very close to each other[57]. This fact confirms the above observation of de Vos (1999a) and allows us to trace the importance of religious parallels and echoes for a Christian community which was used to live door to door with her pagan neighbours. Religious competition must have a strong bearing within the community, a fact that should then be confirmed from our study of the letter. Paul's continuous emphasis on modelling the Christ-Spirit to the community, more here than in any of his other letters, may respond to this religious and social climate.

However, we need to limit ourselves to comment on a few features of some of the cults and religious orientations that are present, amongst them the imperial cult. Later on, as I comment the Christ-hymn in more detail (chapter 7) I will make the necessary connexions. Several sources confirm that cults which had quite extended following, like those of Silvanus and Isis, were not strong in the area until the mid-second century AD and for that reason were not in serious competition with official religion (Bormann 1995:61-67; Bockmuehl 1997a:7). Most of the epigraphic evidence is in Latin and reflects Roman interests (Hemer 1989:231).

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11), but what it is really striking is the absence of direct references rather than the appearance of some echoes.

[57] Bakirtzis (1998:43-4): 'In 351 Julian the Apostate learned, to his surprise, that the Christians of Troy held their Christian martyrs and pagan heroes in equal veneration'. He was told by bishop Pegasios in the most natural of manners: Καὶ τί τοῦτο ἄτοπον, ἄνδρα ἀγαθὸν ἑαυτῶν πολίτην, ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς μάρτυρας θεραπεύουσιν ('And why should it be strange that the Trojans venerate one of their honourable citizens as we worship the martyrs?), in Julian, *Lettres et fragments* 85:5-6; in Bakirtzis (1998:45).

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2.2.2 The Imperial Cult

The heading of this section, as it stands, could lead to error. I am not referring to *the* imperial cult *per se*, for such a thing did not actually exist (Beard et al 1998a:348), but to *imperial rituals* which include different practices and contexts, as we shall see. Rather than describe the reasons why the cult of the emperor emerged and was so satisfactorily accepted in the East (which had a longer tradition than in the West), we want to focus on the impact the cult had on local populations and of, course, how it was faced by the emerging Christ-following communities[58]. After all Paul and the Philippian community lived in the Imperial age (Deissmann 1910:344)[59]. Let's us proceed and focus on the Greek eastern part of the Empire[60].

Jones (1963:11) affirms that the emperor cult (especially of Augustus) was received with relief in the Greek East, where the Hellenistic concept of monarchy was imposed to the Empire at large[61]. During the time of the Republic there is evidence of the worship of proconsuls and provincial governors as gods, which proved to be quite onerous to local populations: 'in general the worship of proconsuls became one of the many devices whereby provincial governors fleeced their subjects; a fund was raised and the new god pocketed it' (:11). Therefore the worship of a sole individual was greeted more enthusiastically[62]. Within a system of governance based on honour the emperor

[58] The emperor worship of the Greeks was based on the *isotheo timai*, to render honours equivalent to the ones given to the gods (although the ruler was not perceived unquestionably as a god in the east). This practice had been in place at least from the time of Alexander the Great (cf. Price 1980:28). Price rightly argues for understanding emperor cult both as a political and religious institution. Religion and politics were embedded in this kind of society, as we saw earlier. Without this conception it is impossible to render the appropriate significance to such an institution.

[59] Horrell (2005b:251), commenting on Deissmann's insight, says that the German scholar proposed that the 'Christian claims about Christ were expressed using terms also familiar from their application to the deified emperors of from the context of emperor worship: "Thus there arises a polemical parallelism between the cult of the emperor and the cult of Christ"' (quoting Deissmann 1910:346).

[60] I follow here the same pattern that characterizes our search: in the East part of the Empire the imperial cult was experienced differently from the West part. For some examples of this different outlook, see Fishwick (1989 and 1992; cf. Rowe 2005:280). However, Beard and others (1998a:349) deem more important than the geographic distinction (east/west) that of the status of the different communities who offered the cult.

[61] For an in-depth discussion see Price (1984b:23-52). Wallace-Hadrill (1982:35) affirms that much 'about the situation of the Hellenistic king is also applicable to the Roman emperor'.

[62] 'To the Emperor likewise the Greeks transferred the Hellenistic philosophic doctrine of the kingship and of the royal virtues which the ideal king should cultivate' (Jones 1963:11). However, Jones recognizes Greek willingness to accept emperor-worship as an external ritual

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looms large and as it is, communicates virtues which are associated precisely with his status, since prestige and morality are joined in the social system. The person of the emperor served a number of functions within the Roman state: military exploit and martial glory. He was the sole patron of the Empire, he had a critical and decisive role of mediation between man and god (he held the central role in the act of sacrifice) and was the 'primary guarantor of *Roma eaterna*' (Noreña 2001:146). The emperor was given religious cult through sacrificial rites, as pointed by Price (1980:29) who further notices that such rituals had a strong cognitive component rather than just the anachronistic *religio animi* which Christian tradition brought later on: 'Religion should be treated not as an emotional but as an intellectual enterprise which attempts to provide a way of interpreting and ordering reality' (see also Will et al 1960, who perceive ritual as 'une pensée informulée'). This element is important when we try to describe what could have been the effects on local populations, especially those who conformed to a strict monotheistic faith. Within this context of imperial ideology the emperor was ascribed with the highest of virtues as personal characteristics which can be easily observed on the reverse type of the coinage minted during the early Empire (Noreña 2001:146-47). The process of such ascription of virtues by prominent Romans had already taken place during the Republic. As Noreña observes, 'Q. Caecilius Metellus assumed the cognomen Pius and arrogated to himself a virtue, *pietas*, that had long been associated with the *populus Romanus* as a whole' (:152). There was not a fixed canon of virtues associated with each and every emperor, although with Octavian some are added to his name: *Augustus* that characterized the new cult to 'Augusta'[63]. In a society where 'politics' and religion were embedded, the actions of the emperor held special significance. Price (1984b:245) presents examples which demonstrate the movement from Hellenistic kings to the imperial mentality in which the emperor takes preeminence and higher consideration. An example: the birthday of Augustus was perceived not merely as 'good news', but as 'the beginning of all things'. On the other side of the coin, Wallace-Hadrill (1982:48) studies the efforts emperors displayed for appearing as 'simple citizens', based on some public rituals, and concludes that these were not a sham or charade. It is no difficult to see both poles at work in the same person-institution, since they help to keep balance in the social mirage the

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while they continued with the worship of their own gods. 'The loyalty of the Greeks to the Empire was in fact completely passive, and Rome evoked no active patriotism' (:12).

[63] Noreña (2001:153, 164-65) warns about the importance of distinguishing between 'personifications' and 'virtues' when studying coins in order to assess imperial ideology. However, the most important insight drawn from this author is that the iconography found in the coinage he studied (over 140 000 coins!) reveals that it forms a symbolic system which advertises the emperor's virtues. Thus, the nature of the economic system imposed by the Romans (see later when studying the effects of 'Romanisation') meant the ubiquitous presence of his *persona* in the public realm even in distant colonies in Macedonia.

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Empire presents. After all, the emperor wanted to be presented as one citizen more among the citizens of the empire, in continuity with the republican past. If we look at the eastern provinces, we realize that the imperial cult received there an early impetus on the part of the provincials. The reason is clear: these provinces had supported Anthony during the civil war and needed now to come to good terms with Augustus, 'anxious to eradicate the memory of their support' for the loosing side (Garnsey & Saller 1987:165). How emperors received this worship is not entirely clear. To be reckoned as a god during one's life-time was politically awkward, since it cut across the constitutional mask which disguised the emperor's supremacy (Hopkins 1978:203).

Price (1984a:79-85, 93-95) advices readers to take in consideration basic distinctions in vocabulary usage between Romans and Greeks since otherwise we may commit the fatal the error of amalgamating or mechanically translating one Latin term for a Greek one (e.g., *divus* and *theos*; cf. Sartre 1994:121-122). Price (1980:32-33) traces a sharp distinction between sacrifices *to* the emperor from those *on behalf of* him, and points out that the majority of these were carried on behalf of the emperor. Thus, there was a definite avoidance to treat the emperor as a god; however some earlier scholarship had presented this faulty observation as correct (:28-29). This assessment cannot deny the fact that the ambiguous performance of some sacrifices tended to blur in effect such distinctions or that some sacrifices were offered *to* the emperor[64]. Price (:36) comments on the differences in emperor cult in Rome and in Greece and concludes that the Roman system allowed for a more direct intentionality toward the deified emperor than in the Greek East. 'The crucial difference is that the category of *Divus* emerged to distinguish emperor from *deus* and *homo*, and within the category direct sacrifices were unproblematic. In the west as in the east, the institution of the imperial cult could produce a system whose relationship to both gods and men was ambiguous' (:36)[65].

Together with great acceptance in the provinces, the imperial cult became a source of problems for the Empire. This happened when several eastern cities competed agonistically with each other to hold more splendid, more extravagant feasts (*Kaisaireia*, *Rhômaia Sebasta*, *Sebasteia*, etc.) in honour of the emperor, which each city in turn usually organizing for the *koinon* (Sartre 1994:116-117). Festivals as these brought wealth to the city in question, since they invited many visitors from neighbouring cities. These practices are to be understood within the more ample context of competing for honour common in

[64] The treatment also differed depending on the emperor. While some emperors refused that sacrifices were performed *to* them, others like Caligula, tried to avoid sacrifices being carried to his *genius* and ended receiving 'direct worship in Rome' (Rowe 2005:281).

[65] For epigraphic evidence from Asia Minor (especially Pergamum), where Augustus was referred to as *Zeus Patroos*, see Buckler (1935).

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the Mediterranean. Tacitus (*Hist* 2.21) reveals an incident that occurred between cities in which they attacked each other on account of their common jealousy with the aim of destroying buildings which attracted more honour and prestige than their own (cf. Lomas 1998:75).

How did monotheistic faith accommodate to this practice?[66] This is one of the crucial questions to address if we are to understand the text of Philippians. In principle the Jews had no query and sacrificed on behalf of the emperor as they had done earlier (Schürer I, 1973:486)[67]. The relationship of the Jews with the imperial cult was certainly controversial, although they could offer prayers on behalf of the emperor. In Philo's *LegGaj* (see previous footnote) we find Alexandrian 'Jews' trying to improve their rights in the city, especially their religious ones. They particularly wished to be exempted from any orders to sacrifice to the emperor as to a god (Beard et al 1998b:259), so we cannot really avoid the fact that tensions were common despite the fact of how Hellenized some ethnic communities had become. Tacitus (*Hist* V.4-5) is one among many who had stereotyped Jews as holders of an uncritical faith that only demonstrated solidarity among kin and did not hold rulers and king at the same level of esteem as Romans did (cf. Juvenal, *Satires* 14.96-106, who likewise describes them as 'despisers of Roman laws').

For the Christ-following communities, in principle, the situation was not better. 'For Christians, however, the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross had in principle totally superseded Jewish sacrifices, and the only possible sacrifice was the repetition of this ultimate sacrifice in the form of the eucharist' (Price 1980:36). With regard to the persecutions they suffered, the cult to the gods played in effect a stronger role than that of the emperor cult. In two particular cases imperial sacrifice was required of Christians as a lesser alternative after refusing to sacrifice to the gods (see Price 1980:36, who cites the evidence). Such an offer displays the difference in kind of these sacrifices. Beard and others (1998a:360-61) explain this by affirming that imperial cult did not displace traditional cults. As a matter of fact many cities identified with traditional gods and goddesses rather than with the imperial cult (e.g., Ephesus with Artemis, cf. Acts 19, and the Ephesian decree quoted in Beard et al 1998a:360 from *Inschriften von Ephesos* 24). It is here that we observe that ritual 'is firmly located in society and is one

[66] Tellbe (2001:35) observes how extraordinary Greek and Romans considered Jewish monotheism. Cassius Dio (37.17.1-2) commented: 'They are distinguished from the rest of mankind in practically every detail of life, and especially by the fact that they do not honor any of the usual gods, but show extreme reverence for one particular divinity'.

[67] Problems started when Gaius requested from the Jewish delegation something more than sacrifices on behalf of the emperor (cf. Philo, *LegGaj* 349-67, esp. 357). For a brief review of the Jewish situation from the early Principate until the reign of Domitian (late first century AD), see McLaren (2005).

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important channel for the articulation and reinforcing of the ideas of society' (Price 1980:43). For Price (1984b:248) the imperial cult 'constructed the reality of the Roman Empire'. Now, when it comes to bring some of these elements to the discussion of the text of Acts 16 we quickly realize that there is no mention of the imperial cult at Philippi. Lest we fall prey of the danger of parallelomania (Rowe 2005:285), it seems that Luke-Acts refrains from mentioning the subject (maybe there is fear that if it is addressed directly the Christian community will be under fire). How it this possible when the imperial cult was so pervasive, as Price (1984b:2-3) describes it?

> Travellers in the empire would not have been surprised to meet the cult wherever they went: they would have found the cult located both in local communities and in the associations formed of these communities in particular Roman provinces.

Rowe (2005) discusses several options and, in the face of this conspicuous absence, concludes that Luke-Acts presents an alternative view to the imperial cult. Focusing on Acts 10:36 within the larger narrative where Peter meets with the εκατοντάρχης Cornelius, Peter affirms that 'this one [Jesus] is Lord of all' (οὗτός εστιν πάντων κύριος)[68]. For Rowe (2005:291) this bold affirmation sets the tone of the narrative and constitutes not just 'one piece of the conceptual puzzle of Christology but the structure itself into which the other pieces fit' (:298). Thus, the imperial cult is there in sight, but only referred to tangentially, but not devoid of the opinion Luke holds (cf. Walton 2002:26-27). This manner of proceeding witness Luke's particular strategy of 'critical distance' (:35)

We are getting closer to Philippi. Oakes (2005:307) affirms that the imperial cult was practiced 'in every town of any size in the eastern Roman Empire with the possible exception of exclusively Jewish areas'. It is hardly necessary to justified the point any further, although we are aware that its practice was far from monolithic (Tellbe 2001:21). Witherington (1994:100): 'The presence of the imperial cult in Philippi seems clear enough from the inscriptional evidence, and in fact there were both imperial and local aristocracies that participated in this cult in Philippi. One example, probably from the first century C.E., is that of C. Oppius Montanus, honored as *flamen* and patron of Philippi (*CIL* 3:3740). As the first century progressed, there was greater and greater stress on the imperial cult and its propaganda about the emperor-as-saviour when cities, especially Roman colonies cities, sought to enhance their ties with Rome and thus their access to its resources and aid'. For further epigraphic evidence see Collart (1933:340-41). We know from archaeological findings that Philippi's forum has

[68] Rowe (2005:291) is correct when he emphasizes the fact that οὗτός should be taken into consideration in the translation (usually translated as a parenthetic 'He is lord of all') since it sets Jesus Christ apart from any other κύριοι.

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revealed an ample temple dedicated to the imperial family, and 'of particular relevance to Paul's day, a large monument connected with the cult of Livia, who was deified by Claudius' (Oakes 2005:307-308)[69]. Now, what follows is how could such a 'pervasive presence' have affected the inhabitants of the colony, especially those holding to the Christ-belief as preached by Paul?[70] Governors in the provinces expected provincials to perform the annual *vota* (vows followed by sacrifice) for the emperor and the Empire (Tacitus, *Agr* 21)[71]. After all, as Beard and others (1998a:361) point: 'Maintenance of the social order was seen by the Romans to be depended on maintenance of this agreed set of symbolic structures, which assigned a role to people at all levels'. This set was impinged upon provincial cities because it quite clearly demonstrated that the emperor formed part (in his role as first citizen) of a people which was superior to all other groups (similarity and difference at the same time).

Oakes (2005:314) thinks that the imperial cult raised two different challenges. First, it was the fact that everybody participated of this institution. It was not a sectional interest like the cults of the local gods. He furthers explains that for any one holding a public position the pressure to attend such events must have been enormous. The second challenge has to do with the fact that the imperial cult was an expression of imperial ideology. The implications are clear: to reject participation in the cult was to a larger extent rebellion against the *status quo*, the ways of the conqueror. 'To dishonour the imperial gods was, of course, to dishonour the emperor' (:314). What then? Can we see anything in the texts of the New Testament that amounts to an almost open rebellion toward the Empire?[72] I think Oakes is correct when he asserts that such a connection poses

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[69] Pilhofer (1995:93) minimizes the presence of the imperial cult: 'Ähnlich steht es mit dem Kaiserkult: Einschlägige Priester gibt es in Philippi in ausreichender Zahl, aber die Bezeugung speziell für die erste Hälfte des ersten Jahrhunderts — darüber können die eindrucksvollen Listen nicht hinwegtäuschen — ist überaus schmal'.

[70] Even in regards to the effect on local population there are further nuances. Price (1984b:114-115) speaks of the 'issue of élite scepticism', that is, the imperial cult seems to have affected more directly the man-in-the-street than the élites.

[71] 'On the other hand, Roman provinces were not Rome; and the religious rules governing practice in Rome itself did not apply directly elsewhere in the empire' (Beard et al 1998a:320).

[72] It is helpful to observe that Oakes (2005:302-305) categorizes possible relations between Christianity and imperial ideology under four headings: 1) Rome and Christianity follow common models (use similar models when referring to the emperor or of the Lordship of Christ; *parousia* language, etc.); 2) Christianity follows Rome (accommodation of language and structures, which are part of the breathed social system and as such adopted without much further reflection); 3) Rome conflicts with Christianity (as Christians suffer from Rome, this is reflected in the texts); and 4) Christianity conflicts with Rome (*viz*. Jesus' exaltation is presented evoking ideas of Roman imperial apotheosis). Under these general headings Oakes is able to place some scholars' work, which is useful as a means to understand their broad emphases. Headings 2-4 are all cases of Christian discourse that follows elements of Roman ideological discourse; although Oakes thinks it is helpful to distinguish among them. These different

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a methodological problem about finding evidence in the texts, since the discourse on Christ's sovereignty 'almost inevitably uses terms and concepts found in Roman imperial ideology, whether or not Christ is really being compared with the emperor' (:314-15). He insists that in this search, which involves both Christology and eschatology[73], we should detect specific elements that evoke imperial ideology and go beyond general discourse, and not assume that similar language implies either compliance or rejection (comparison, relativization, etc.) of such an ideology[74].

In Philippians we find numerous echoes which point directly to a comparison/contrast with the Roman emperor. Christ is presented as becoming emperor of the universe (2:9-11). They are told that they belong to a different πολίτευμα which determines their ethics (3:20), and that they await a different σωτήρ who will save them due to his immense power (3:20-21) which goes beyond earthly means. 'Is the imperial cult in view here?' asks Oakes, and he answers that 'most probably not' (Oakes 2005:318-19). However, I would not so quickly discount such a possibility in the larger context of the letter. Here, nevertheless, I just point to some of the recurrent elements which affect the way the Philippian community understood Paul's letter. To conclude on Oakes' study, Paul is not ultimately interested in speaking against the power of Rome but on redrawing the map of the universe. Marginalized Christ-followers are brought near to the centre (:321). Rightly so, the important outcome is that the centre has shifted and it is no longer where it used to be. Rome has been de-centralized and Jesus now occupies that space. In chapter 7 we will relate in more detail how the Christ-hymn challenges the traditional Roman imperial symbolic universe.

Price (1984b:234) describes the Roman imperial cult in the Greek east as an expression of the place that Greeks assigned Roman power in their universe: a great translocal, divine force on a par with that of the Hellenistic monarchs[75]. As a matter of fact 'the Greek subject of the Roman empire attempted to relate

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headings should not be viewed in isolation from one another. We can perceive different emphases even within the texts of the New Testament. For further nuancing within the different communities of the New Testament, see Pilgrim (1999).

[73] A recent article deifies earlier conclusions on the eschatology of 1 Thessalonians, which perceived it within the Jewish apocalyptic framework. Harrison (2005) believes Paul uses common terminology to ultimately overturn the absolutist claims of the imperial cult.

[74] However cautious we need to be, I think that there are many instances in the New Testament where it is plain that not only the language, but the echoes and resonances are clearly aimed at presenting an alternative view to the order of the cosmos and of society. See for example the insightful article by Maier (2005) for the letter to the Colossians.

[75] See Bowersock (1965:112), who confirms that mutual 'interest buttressed the system of honours, and therefore underlay the worship of benefactors, magistrates, and kings'.

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their ruler to their own symbolic system' (:235). Paul, as we will have opportunity to see, radically rearranges this universe (Oakes 2005:322).

3. Rome's Mission to the World[76]

> ...a land nourished by all, and yet parent [mother] of all lands, chosen by the power of the gods to make even heaven more splendid, to gather together the scattered realms and to soften their customs [*ritus molliret*] and unite the discordant wild tongues of so many peoples into a common speech so they might understand each other, and to give civilization to mankind [*humanitatem homini*], in short to become the homeland [*patria*] or every people in the entire world.
>
> (Pliny the Elder, *NHist* 3.39)[77]

Augustus is said to have inaugurated a new age of peace, to which Augustus himself referred as the *Pax Augusta* (*Res Gestae* 26.2)[78]. It is clear, from whatever angle we approach the matter, that this peace was won at the price of war and

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[76] Although a thrilling (and certainly complex) field of study, my interest does not lie on the ideological/economic reasons for Rome's conquest (cf. Woolf 2005:120). Augustus does part of this already in his *Res Gestae*, published posthumously. Rather, assuming such a process as informed by its history, I look both at how Romanisation affected local populations and their reactions. Gruen (1996:147-197), who focuses on the expansion of the Empire under Augustus, observes that Republican Rome admired and envied the exploits of the conquerors. For him, such sentiments shaped the character of the Augustan years. Commenting on this process of expansion, Gruen affirms: 'One need not assume that the *princeps* had a structured blueprint for empire. Nor did his actions adhere to a uniform pattern imposed on all sectors of the *imperium Romanum*. Different circumstances in different areas provoked a variety of responses, sometimes cautious, sometimes bold, occasionally calculated, often extemporaneous. Augustus was less concerned with a systematic plan for world dominion than with a systematic construct of his image as world conqueror' (:147).

[77] The elder Pliny (AD 23-79) confirms Romans' *maiestas* in this fashion. It is perhaps too early in our search to trace parallels, but certainly, at least at an ideological level, Philippians' Christ-hymn seems to echo this challenge and speak of a different sort of mission to the world: a mission not based on coercion but on sheer self-abandonment.

[78] Nevertheless, Gruen (1996:188) argues against a typical characterization of this peace as the new order brought about by the *princeps*. Gruen understands that Augustus' use of the expression (only once in *Res Gestae*) 'does not represent a slogan emanating from the government'. However, contemporary Roman historians surely made peace a characteristic of the empire. Cf. Strabo, *Geogr* VI, 4.2:

> It is difficult to control and administer an empire as large as Rome's other than by entrusting it to one man, as to a father. And indeed the Romans and their allies have never enjoyed such an abundance of peace and prosperity as that which Augustus Caesar provided from the time when he first assumed absolute power, and which his son and successor, Tiberius, is now providing. Tiberius has made Augustus the model of his administration and ordinances, as have his children, Germanicus and Drusus, who are helping their father.

For a brief but insightful comment on this 'harmony', see Woolf (2005:119).

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bloody conquest (Wengst 1987:11)[79]. One example of this juxtaposition was found in Rome (Gruen 1996:194):

> Close connexion held between the Ara Pacis and the Egyptian obelisk that stood as the *gnomon* of the colossal sundial, the *Solarium Augusti*. The shadow of the obelisk pointed squarely at the centre of the Ara Pacis on 23 September, the birthday of Augustus himself. The obelisk itself was set up to memorialize Augustus' subordination of Egypt to the control of the Roman empire. The collective message dramatically linked peace with military authority and imperial expansion.

Woolf (2005:115) affirms the role of provinces in the history of this expansion, which has been ineludibly written from the point of view of the Roman Empire. Ancient historians (Polybius, Appian) could not think otherwise. In order to arrive to this *Pax*, 'meaning security and order rather than tranquillity', many others were involved, amongst them the provinces, which were not mere spectators of the events[80]. During the battle at Actium, Plutarch (*Ant* 68.4-5) recalls the experience of his great grand-father:

> Caesar sailed to Athens, and after making a settlement with the Greeks, he distributed the grain which remained over after the war among their cities; these were in a wretched plight, and had been stripped of money, slaves, and beasts of burden. At any rate, my grand-grandfather Nicarchus used to tell me how all his fellow citizens were compelled to carry on their shoulders a stipulated measure of wheat down to the sea at Antikyrrha, and how their pace was quickened by the whip; they had carried one load in this way, he said, the second was already measured out, and as they were just about to set forth, when word was brought that Antony had been defeated, and this was the salvation of the city; for immediately the stewards and soldiers of Antony took flight, and the citizens divided the grain among themselves.

It is difficult to ascertain the deeper motives for the spreading of this *Pax Augusta*. While some historians refrain from perceiving 'peace' within the context of imperial propaganda, both in the sense of tranquillity and submission to Rome (peace as result of no more rebellion), I believe that monumental ascriptions, 'Augustan' poets (Vergil, *Georgics*, *Aeneid*; Horace, *Carmen Saeculare*, etc.) and the new coinage (even in the provinces), all argue in favour of a conscious effort to present this new found era on these precise terms

[79] Álvarez Cineira (2007:302) says it well. It was *pax* in the Roman sense: it was based on war and conquest to ultimately arrive at a pact with the conquered people.

[80] Alcock (1993:14) believes we need to be cautious and not generalize as if the strains of the military were felt in the same way everywhere: 'Even so, the harsh treatment of Greece, particularly in the first century BC can hardly be denied, and must certainly be taken into account in assessing conditions under the reign of Augustus'.

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(cf. Weinstock 1960; Wengst 1987; Zanker 1990)[81]. After all, that peace was carried because it was better to pardon the people (with assured safety) than annihilate them:

> *Bella terra et mari civila externaque toto in orbe terrarium saepe gessi, victorque omnibus veniam petentibus civibus peperci. Externas gentes, quibus tuto ignosci potuit, conservare quam excidere malui.*
>
> (Augustus, *Res Gestae* 3.2-3).

3.1 An Empire of Honour

In chapter 3 I commented on Lendon's work (2001) which describes the Roman Empire as a sort of 'great machine' that was able to govern over 60 millions inhabitants *via* a meagre administration. We need to realize moreover that there were around forty provinces 'governed by a thin spread of centrally appointed officials' (Garnsey & Saller 1987:21). I shall not discuss the strategy per se here as much as describe some outcomes of this practice in local populations that we can be applied to Acts 16.

The responsibility of the Roman Estate was considerably different from that of our contemporary governments which tend to cater for more 'humane' elements (the right to housing, work, social welfare, sanitary attention, education, etc., and in more developed countries the right for a person to perceive a 'salary' when the person is not longer active, the right for nursing at home when impeded, etc.)[82]. The ancient Roman Empire had a more limited responsibility towards the citizen: the gathering of taxes, the maintenance of peace (home and abroad), the fielding of an army, the administration of justice and... little more! (cf. Lendon 2001:2).

The above observation is pertinent to my concern, since this structuring meant that for the local inhabitant of the village or the small city the Roman government did not 'bulk very large in the consciousness of a majority of its subjects, who had, from week to week and month to month, few, if any, dealings with it at all' (:2). However, such a lack of input in the day to day does not necessarily imply that the ubiquitous presence of the government was not

[81] There is clearly a huge difference between how Romans perceived themselves to how others might have perceived them. Augustus accomplished *Pax* both through hard (military) and soft (culture) powers (Galinsky 2005:4). However, in his *Res Gestae* (34) he presents himself as one not welding *potestas* (power) but as exerting *auctoritas* (influence). Augustus was cautiously trying to calm the fears of those who had firmly supported the Republic.

[82] For an in-depth discussion of these factors in today's democratic countries, cf. Navarro (2002), who argues that a higher degree of democracy is directly related to social welfare development.

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felt by other subtle means. Zanker expounds how there was a basic programme of 'presence' from the side of government which was carried out through the use of images and monuments. This new programme established during the Principate was in need of a 'new visual language' (Zanker 1990:3). The presence of government personnel could not be ubiquitous, but coins[83], monuments, statues, decrees, *vestimenta*, etc., were all a clear manifestation that someone else was in charge of the territory, however Hellenistic the outward styles might have been[84]. But the move was subtle. To govern 50-60 millions subjects with a limited administrative body demanded that the imperial forces earn the support of local notables, differentiated from their social inferiors (Lendon 2001:7). This system (based on honour-relationships) permeated the empire and it translated into an honour-system that was more than mere rhetoric: it was engraved in the psyche of the people in a way that was to become a powerful factor of Roman *ideology*. I fully concur with Oakes (2005:302) description of *Roman ideology*: 'Roman discourse which sustains certain power relations. The power relations in question are those of Roman society. They have both external and internal dimensions. Externally, they constitute Rome's dominant position over against any competing values. Internally, they constitute a hierarchy that runs from the emperor down to the most marginal inhabitants of the Empire'. Lendon (2001:25) affirms: 'In the ancient world, honour was a form of power in its own right; it had its own dependent well-spring in the soul, in the sense of pride, and had broad significance for Roman imperial government'. This is important. In antiquity there was a clear association between morality and prestige. Therefore, Greek aristocrats, if asked to put a name to their stratum, would probably call themselves 'the fair and good' (καλοὶ ἀγαθοί, from καλός = beautiful; and ἀγαθός = good), whereas the Romans would refer to them only as 'good' (*boni* from *bonus* = morally good)[85].

[83] 'A coin could not reliably circulate in the market-place without the emperor's head upon it' (Lendon 2001:19).

[84] It is clear that Greece influenced Rome more than the reverse. These effects were felt in artistic manifestation, which tended to be expressed now according to Greek patterns (Octavian appears in coins, even at a young age, as a new Alexander the Great or the Dioscuri). Augustus appears with the Hellenistic mantle and not with the Roman toga (Zanker 1990:37-38).

[85] Lendon (2001:41) believes that to a great degree Graeco-Roman society was a shame culture, since 'concern for reputation could be considered the main bulwark of morality, for "to scorn fame is to scorn virtue"' (Tacitus, *Ann* 4.38, *contemptu famae contemni virtutes*). Whether we agree on the term 'shame culture' or not is not as important at this point as the recognition that such a system of belief tended to produce a strong distinction between levels in society: at individual level, among local populations and within Roman colonies that strived for honour.

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3.1.1 Granting of Privileges

It is not difficult to see that a system based on honour would tend to polarize between groups by privileging some above others. Granted that differentiation and scales are ubiquitous in most known societies, the truth of the matter is that the Roman Empire thrived on these distinctions. Such was the depth of the matter that it permeated institutions which for us, accustomed in theory to the language of 'equal rights', is difficult to imagine; among them the juridical system. Garnsey (1970:221), speaking about the 'vocabulary of privilege', offers no doubts:

> The jurists of the classical period of Roman law presented Imperial society as divided into two main groups, of higher and lower status. This is commonly referred to as the *honestiores/humiliores* distinction[86].

The core of society was influenced by a system of privilege that discriminated without apology. Rapske (1994:46) observes that when a person was summed before a tribunal, the first question asked by the magistrate was: 'Who stands before me?' Garnsey (1970:271) summarises it well: 'In Roman society legal and political capacity depended, not only upon the *persona* or character of the individual as defined or recognized by the civil law (free or salve, citizen or alien), but also upon his background or status'. 'The right to prosecute was not granted to all. If the defendant was a parent, a patron, a magistrate, or a person of high rank, then charges could not be brought by children, freedmen, private citizens and men of low rank respectively' (Winter 1994:107-8; cf. Garnsey 1970:182).

These observations justify Lendon's line of thought and reinforce SIT's idea that a group's identity cannot be assessed only in terms of what it actually is (i.e., similarity, the shared element) but also on what it is not (difference). Regardless how benevolent Rome presented herself towards the Greek, there was a line that could not be crossed: that of privilege, however admired the 'other' were.

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[86] This distinction receives new impetus after Caracalla's edict in 212 AD which grants general citizenship to the general population. The distinction between citizen and no-citizen was by then not so crucial, and it was therefore necessary to 'create' another system to perpetuate privilege (cf. Williams 1999:149). It is important to notice that these terms had a definite moral flavor (cf. Garnsey 1970:223) and were linked to political/social predominance. This is the 'social system' where people in the Roman Empire related and perceived life. Garnsey (:2) comments: 'The Romans saw men as subordinated to or raised up above one another by their involvement in conventional social relationships (so a father was placed above a son, a patron above a freed man, and a master above a slave), by their involvement in the political relationship (the magistrate was placed above the private citizen); and by their respective positions in society'.

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Difference, if it is to have any meaning at all, needs to be maintained by all means.

Hellerman (2005:56) affirms that the values of the aristocracy during the Republic were perpetuated in the Principate. Although he limits the search to the *cursus honorum*, these promulgated values extend to all areas of society, for even *collegia* and Greek cult associations contained a plethora of honourific titles that replicated Roman values[87]. Ascough (2003b:160-61) maintains that Christian communities in Macedonia functioned in ways which in a certain sense replicated those of *collegia*. These associations aped the hierarchies which were also displayed at grander scale in the cities. Oakes (2005:304) comments that 'Roman power relations might thus be partially replicated in those of the Christian community'.

3.1.2 Patron-Client Relations

As I mentioned earlier, patron-client relations were embedded in society to a degree which is quite difficult for our modern mind to grasp. Relationships were arranged under this social pattern even to the level of what we call 'friendship'. Throughout the empire, both in Greek and Latin areas, the 'patronage system aligned people in society and provided channels for the exercise of influence' (Martin 1990:22). Patronage not only manifested in person to person relationships, but involved nation to nation relations as well, in unequal relationships, regardless how much the term *amicitia* tried to hide the fact that they were indeed *clientes*[88]. Augustus in his *Res Gestae* speaks of *amicitia* as something he had compelled foreigners to seek (cf. Woolf 2005:113). Caesar appeared as the sole *patronus*, encapsulating the essence of the Roman Empire[89].

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[87] Within this social matrix of honour Hellerman (2005:56-63), following Lendon's insights, perceives a hierarchical value-system among burial societies, the army, and even slaves! Beard and others (1998a:339) are quite explicit: 'Religious display must have been central in the competition for status, both inside and outside the local community. We can only guess how different it might have *felt* to make a dedication to Mars rather than mars Alator; we can only guess what costs (as well as benefits) there might have been in publicly displaying allegiance to explicitly Roman gods. But it is clear enough that local élites expressed their own status, as against their social and political inferiors, by parading close ties with the gods of Rome' (original emphasis).

[88] Although some specialists treat master-slave relationships under the heading of 'patronage' (e.g. Crossan, Malina, Scott, etc.), it seems that different dynamics were at work in the case of slavery, and it is not, therefore, included here (cf. Glancey 2002:115, 122-128). For example, some deem this relationship as 'voluntary' (i.e., patron-client, as Scott does) which is of course sort of absurd when it comes to slavery, unless, of course, we refer to some cases when people sold themselves or relatives as slaves in order to pay personal debts.

[89] Joubert (2000b:26): 'As holder of *imperium proconsulare* the *princeps*, not only governed all senatorial provinces and acted as commander-in chief of the army, but, through his possession

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Rome related to the peoples under her care not only as subjugated peoples, but as client nations (Sartre 1994:60-61). This was an ingenious way of governing such a vast and complex territory with a rather small administration, which tended to delegate power on local elites. Alcock (1993:18) remarks this aspect: 'The Roman empire's lack of a formal bureaucracy—with, according to one estimate, a ratio of only one official for every 350-400,000 provincials—is well known'. Whereas some provinces were governed as Roman provinces, other areas were subjected through a skilful system of client princes. These regions (as in the case of Lydia in Asia Minor, an autonomous federation of twenty-three cities) had the burden of defending and administering themselves and at the same time the duty of supporting their patron, 'who could give, trim their kingdoms as he chose' (Levick 1996:646-647). Rome allowed local government to be in place as long as the 'peace' was kept sound, but is was ready to intervene, even in the smallest of cases, at the sight of any tumult or unrest. Major cities in Greece and Asia Minor learnt this lesson very quickly: in 6 BC the city of Cnidus had to recognize the *princeps'* jurisdiction in a local homicide case (Dio, LIV.312; cf. Levick 1996:649). However, when all this is said, we need to confess that much still escapes us. The Principate organized itself in ways which are not always obvious to the historian, since much was decided in the private and not in public assembly as it had been done earlier. Wallace-Hadrill (1996:284) studies the imperial court and how the system of patronage was extensively used and the distribution of power. At the same time, despite the advances in getting a more comprehensive picture of its form of government, Wallace-Hadrill perceives clear limitations, as expressed long ago by Cassius Dio: 'Monarchial rule involved a retreat of political life and the decision-making process from open places (the Senate, the Forum) into privacy. Dubious official announcements and hearsay represent the only access to what was going on' (Dio LIII.19)[90].

Within this insufficient system of administration Rome found that patronage was the most effective way to govern a vast empire. As we recall the emperor was the patron of the empire and his subjects were to pay loyalty to him in return for his benefactions on their favour (Veyne 1990:347). This was the basis of his power (Lendon 2001:11-12). As Seneca (*Clem* 1.13.5) writes in popular

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of the *tribunicia potestas*, he was also in the position to introduce any new legislation in the name of the interests of the people of the Roman Empire'. For the changes in the patronage system applied to government, see Wallace-Hadrill (1996:293): 'The reign of Augustus was one of transition from the pluralist patronage system of the Republic, whereby the nobility competed with each other to maximize their following and thus their influence with the *populus Romanus*, to the imperial pattern under which the emperor monopolized the support of the *populus*, and the elite looked to him for favours, which they in turn distributed to others'.

[90] For a detailed description of the administration of the Empire in such respects, see Bowman (1996:345-370) and Sartre (1994:60-66).

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fashion: 'An emperor is kept safe by benefaction: he has no need for guards—weapons he keeps for decoration'. But the emperor could not be, in practice, patron and benefactor of all the subjects. He could do it, nevertheless, by a web of favoured aristocracies which in turn mediated with the lower levels of society. 'It is the web of favors given or owed that enables an imperial administration of only a few hundred to rule an empire' (Lendon 2001:12). I am aware that these elements alone cannot account for such intricate and complex reality, but they help us understand the social ambiance which surrounded cities and people, where '[p]atron-client bonds extended out from Rome to the provinces. Like the emperor, governors and other officials representing his power had a patronal role' (Garnsey & Saller 1987:151).

> In their official capacities governors could help provincials secure citizenship, offices and honours from Rome, and they could also make administrative and legal decisions in their favour. The public dedications to governor 'patrons' from lawyers (advocate) may strike the modern reader as an ominous sign of corruption, but in fact highlight the differences between ancient and modern ideologies of administration[91].

Patronage is clearly a system which thrives both on distinction and on the granting of privileges as benefit for services rendered. Garnsey and Saller (1987:151) speak of the *quid pro quo* which provided the basis for patronal exchange. It is thus a system of exchange that cuts across all levels of society and enhances social exchange within an unbalanced economic and social system[92]. Even when we speak about the imperial cult we can perceive that both the granting of privileges and patronage system function at once, as in the case of provincial cities that offered cult to the emperor and requested privileges in other matters (cf. Price 1984b:66-67 for examples). Patronage and benefaction (or *euergetism*) seem one and the same thing. Many scholars hold this opinion. 'However, when patronage and benefaction are approached on a lower level of abstraction within Graeco-Roman contexts, a number of differences between them become apparent' (Joubert 2000b:63). This is also true when we compare patronage in the Roman and Greek contexts. They refer to two different, although related, forms of social interchange[93].

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[91] Garnsey and Saller (1987:151-152).

[92] My aim is not to give a detail account of the system. Others had done it with great skill and detail (Saller 1982; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984; Joubert 2000b). What interests us is the way in which the system is supported by a series of honour-based relationships that pervade the core of society. Within this social system is where the Christ-hymn exploits an alternative ideology and life-practice which is impossible to apprehend unless such social system is fully recognized.

[93] Joubert (2000b:66-69) explains several differences: of structure, form and content; of social nature; etc. 'It is only during the late Empire, with Roman ideologies firmly embedded, that one could probably speak of patronage as a universal phenomenon, usurping all the functions of the civic benefactor' (:69).

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Álvarez Cineira (2007:300) sums up well how this constructed system was kept:

> La obediencia provincial a la dominación romana fue una construcción ideológica. Su realización dependía de que muchas personas compartieran un conjunto de creencias que sancionaban una noción romana peculiar del orden social. Roma misma aportó la articulación inicial de los valores, a los que los súbditos orientaban su vida como miembros de la comunidad, y fue la creencia de que otros compartían esos valores lo que legitimó la representación de Roma del orden social. Asentimiento y lealtad hacia Roma requería el reconocimiento de que la construcción de la sociedad romana, en las relaciones entre las provincias, ciudades e individuos, emperadores e imperio, organizaba adecuadamente el valor colectivo de los compromisos de sus súbditos […] Roma también universalizó los beneficios de sus logros, es decir, presentó acuerdos institucionales que servían a los intereses de algunos individuos como si sirvieran a los intereses de toda la población. La ideología subyacente presentó el imperio como una colectividad que incluía a todos, minimizando las diferencias de cultura y clase, y enfatizando la similitud de las relaciones personales hacia el emperador.

Lastly, as Martin (1990:29-30) affirms, the 'strength of the patron-client structure and its accompanying patronal ideology solidified the hierarchical and authoritarian social forms of the empire. The structure discouraged class consciousness and solidarity from developing among the lower classes along horizontal lines, but it did allow some upward movement for those few persons who could make use of the vertical lines connecting clients and patrons'. In chapter 6 we will study how Paul apparently opts for as different way of defining the relationship with the Philippian Christ-following community (friendship, *imitatio*, etc.). I suggest that this is based on the example displayed in the Christ-hymn rather than on traditional Graeco-Roman lines.

3.2 Romanisation: *Urbanitas*, *Humanitas*, and *Romanitas*

The influence of Rome on local populations were arresting in innumerable areas of their daily life, due to the crude superiority of their culture and administration. 'You turned to a Roman to discover how to get on your side the gods who had helped them to conquer the world – and all the better, now, if the god was one of the Romans' own rulers. Religion had of course long shaped the honours, immunities and privileges for which communities vied' (Purcell 2005:112). This affirmation does not run counter to my previous observation. It is true that Roman administration was insufficiently represented in everyday concerns for local populations outside Rome, but the system of patronage had quite an influence on the local citizenry and invaded most areas of life. The

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empire used it as a vehicle which was already accessible and easy to adopt even in areas which were deemed 'already cultivated', as the Greek East. However, when I refer to 'Romanisation', I mean something more ample, and we need to be aware that in fact we are, once more, making use of a model. As Woolf (1998:7) puts it:

> Romanization has often been used as an umbrella term to conceal a multitude of separate processes [...] Romanization has no explanatory potential, because it was not an active force [...] But used descriptively, Romanization is a convenient shorthand for the series of cultural changes that created an imperial civilization, within which both differences and similarities came to form a coherent pattern.

Contemporary Roman historians use this terminology aware that it represents a 'modern construct' (Laurence 1998a:2). I believe it is useful as a way of organizing different elements which can in turn enhance our understanding about how ethnic and cultural identities were challenged and how people learnt to live in such a context[94].

I now focus more closely on the different forms 'Romanisation' took on as it spread further and further away from Rome and the *Latium*. My interests lie, logically, in the East side of the Empire and for that reason I will devout more space to this area. However, it is also pertinent that I briefly comment on how it developed in the West to trace possible bridges between areas in order to conform a wider and more accurate picture of the process. Bowman (1996:344) observes:

> if East and West differed in pace of "Romanization" and in many a significant detail, the broad objectives did not: the need to encourage or create civilized and self-sufficient communities (whether based on *polis* or *civitas* governed by their indigenous aristocracies; the need to ensure Rome's military security and the protection of her imperial interest in the broad sense, the cost of which would be met (at the least) by the revenue which Rome could draw from the province enjoying her protection.

[94] Laurence (1998b:95): 'The historian's conception of the process known as "Romanisation" often depends on a bipolarity between the Romans and those conquered by them. In many ways, the Romans are represented as a nation state imposing their will upon subject peoples. However [...] the concept of the nation state was not well developed in the Mediterranean, and in nearly all cases the ancient concept of "Romans" as a people was highly negotiable and could be undercut by alternative forms of identity'.

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There are, within the model I describe below, a few characteristics that, *grosso modo*, are common to the enterprise[95]. I am moreover aware that the term 'Romanisation' is contested and that some historians do not want to use due to the different connotations it has received (Woolf 1998). However, the model I propose draws on certain common features taking place across the expanding process of Republican Rome and later with the Principate. Such a model does not assume that 'Romanisation' was a conscious effort, a premeditate plan of imposing Roman culture upon the inhabitants of the provinces. In this respect Saddington (1975:132), aware of the oft-repeated lines from Vergil (*Aeneid*, VI.851f: *tu regere imperio populous, Romane, memento [hae tibi erunut artes], pacisque imponere morem, parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*), starkly affirms: 'there is no cultural programme here', and concludes that Romanisation should be understood as 'local voluntary adoption of things Roman and adaptation to Roman civilization', not as an enforcement on the part of Rome (:134). Despite this, I wonder if Saddington, writing from former Rhodesia in the midst of the turbulent decade of the 70's did not have a bearing on his conclusions: 'This distinction [between the two possible ways of understanding Romanisation as we have presented above] is of great importance and is another factor in the picture of generally successful race relations that has been built up: enforced acculturation, to use an unfortunate modern term, is a great breeder of resentment' (:134). With the above warnings in mind, let us then proceed and describe the model of Romanisation I have developed:

1. It implies a process of placing both Roman veterans[96] and Italian (civil) populations in foreign soil (Marchal 2006:55f) as well as the incorporation of local elites to administrative functions to act as link between local communities and the Empire (cf. Stambaugh 1988:247-248). We know that in time some of the ruling classes were former veterans who became quite influential in the areas where they were allotted land. In the case of the Greek East, despite some stereotyping from the part of the Romans on Greek 'weakness of character', the truth of the matter is that Greek tutors

[95] Levick (1967:71) warns against any homogenisation of perception in the relationship between Roman settlers and native populations, which for her were strictly *ad hoc*.

[96] If older commentaries had rather mechanically assumed the pervading presence of veterans in conquered areas, Bormann (1995:28) more cautiously but equally positively, asserts that their presence strongly affected the 'Selbstverständnis' of the city as a Roman one. Oakes (2001:52-53) believes the number of veterans might not have been so high in Philippi, but many of them attained decurial status, and as such held some office in the local government of the colony (also Bormann 1995:28), and shaped a direct identification with imperial policy. It is clear that we do not have a definite number of veterans and of Italian emigrants in the area of Philippi, but according to Brunt's (1971:236) estimates Julius Caesar had planned the emigration of 80 000 Italians to the colonies, which gives a rough average of 2 000-3 000 strong. To this huge number (due to the small size of cities like Philippi) we need to add the number of displaced Italian civilians who had supported Antony during the Social War.

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and *paedagogues* had a lasting impact on many Republican families (cf. Bowersock 1965:34-5) and for that reason were easily trusted. Making use of such elites in local communities did much to enhance the empire's administration. Woolf (1998:36, 47) highlights the importance of the 'new aristocracy' in the transition to a Roman Gaul (for Achaia, see Alcock 1993:9). Rome did not shy away from using violence to assert her power, but once it was established, the picture usually changed dramatically for there was a sort of tacit agreement of no interference in local affairs unless it was strictly necessary (Saddington 1975:124-25).

2. It appears that there existed a certain effort at bridging linguistically among different communities, *viz*. the use of Latin to de-brutalise barbaric peoples; which was to develop in quite a different manner in the 'Latin' West than in the mainly Greek areas[97]. However, how conscious such an effort was is highly conjectural. There was for sure a tendency to see other nations as barbaric even in the manner of speaking, and it is true that poets during the Augustan era complained about the 'babbling' practice of barbarous peoples. But we cannot jump to easy conclusions. Whereas Spain was said to have adopted Latin in such a guise that they had forgotten their own language (Strabo, *Geog* III.2.15), it did not happen likewise in Germania, although the tribes there were also adopting Roman ways. In Greece the influence of Latin vanished within the third century AD.

3. A conscious effort to connect strategic places through an efficient system of roads and maritime *vias* to enhance the flow of commerce and the exporting of goods (Sartre 1994:80-82). Such complex matrix of *vias* and roads had multiple purposes in mind, not least the quick response of transportation of military troops in case of need to defend far-away boundaries of this ever-expanding empire. Trade and commerce were also facilitated the year round[98]. Woolf (1998:28) believes that 'Roman expansion is not convincingly explained, however, as driven by a search of raw materials, cheap labour or new markets, and the distribution of Mediterranean goods in Gaul does not confirm very closely to the patterning predicted by centre-periphery theory'. I see evidence that these elements are part of the whole (for example, Spain was to function as a giant silo for the Empire), but it is certainly limiting to argue for only one

[97] Having in mind regional differences and the practices of the Caesars, it is interesting to notice that Claudius withheld Roman citizenship from those in the colonies who could not speak Latin (Salmon 1969:148, see Dio LX.17.4f.).

[98] Mitchell (1987:336-7): 'The major highways of the Empire were another military and administrative requirement, but were largely built at local expense, or, to make the point more realistically, with compulsory local labor'.

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of these elements as sole reason for the process. Sartre (1994:55), based on the work of Aelius Aristides (*Eulogy of Rome*, *Discourse*, XXVI.10-13), affirms that the abundance of riches that came from the Orient to Rome made then 'useful' for Rome, who needed to feed her growing population with cheap products and luxurious materials to garland the city.

4. There was a strong pressure to conform to the 'higher' model[99] (ideological, cultural and social) which provided a *new identity* for local populations. Part of Rome's endeavour was to 'humanize' the world. For the Empire *humanitas* amounted to culture, philantropia, *paideia*, etc., but 'it is clear that by the late first century BC *humanitas* had been formulated as a thoroughly Roman concept, embodying concepts of culture and conduct that were regarded by Romans as the hallmarks of the aristocracy in particular, yet also appropriate for mankind in general' (Woolf 1998:55). Some intellectual Romans also embraced Stoicism which promulgated a philosophy of unity of the human race. One of the most notorious, Seneca, encouraged the cultivation of *humanitas* (*Ira* III.43.5; cf. Saddington 1975:114). Roman architecture, coinage, poetry, etc., were partly subservient to accomplish this effort, even in the case of Greece, with the acknowledgement that they had conquered a great and magnificent culture. But then, again, the Romans felt to certain extent as natural heirs and successors and 'perfectors' of them. Salmon (1969:148) observes the crucial function of these Roman cities as sort of cultural outposts: 'The *coloniae* were centres of Roman influence from which the Latin language spread into the surrounding sea of alien tongues; they helped to promote the imperial cult; and they familiarized the natives with Roman institutions'. As far as religious practice was concerned, Romans were quite open to the idea that conquered nations continued with their cults unless they could pose a threat to the *status quo*. However, Roman conquest did bring some religious changes: 'the establishment of particular cults of loyalty to Rome in the conquered territories and the "Romanization" of various local traditions. Religion was one of the means through which Rome regulated its relations with its foreign subjects and displayed its power' (Beard et al 1998b:246). During the Principate, with the imperial cult, the influence was even stronger.

5. The redistribution of land (Alcock 1993). Land implies more than mere 'terrain'; for it also includes a strong sense of belonging and of identity. As Purcell (2005:97) observes: 'Rather than simply moving Italians into

[99] We need to recall that Roman colonies were a *petit* Rome. Bowersock (1965:69) cites Gellius (*Noc att* 16.13.9), who refers to the colonies as *quasi effigies parvae simulacraque* of Rome. Thus, 'the colony at Pisidian Antioch was divided into *vici* which bore the names of districts at Rome' (:69).

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the provinces, *coloniae* rearranged the diaspora [...] Turning the tables on the usual arrangement where the Romans were outsiders, however honoured, a *colonia* is a city in which it is the non-Romans who are the "residents"'. There was also a strong effort at urbanizing foreign areas in order to reflect Rome's preferred form of social, political and administrative organisation throughout the empire. This element was more prevalent in the western side of the empire (cf. Lomas 1998:64)[100], since we know that subjugated peoples (*viz*. Germanic tribes) looked down at urban life for it was the chief symptom of servitude to Rome (Tacitus, *Hist* 4.64). A chief element was the structuring of space (city space), in order to meet the needs of society, which in turn shaped its social life (cf. Perring 1991:273-293).

6. The 'pacific' government and administration of the conquered region (whether as client or subjugated nation/city) was based on a system of punishment and reward[101]. The description of the history of Philippi has already given us a brief example of this practice. Woolf (1998:37) confirms this point. Heavy taxation or freedom from it (*immunitas*), heavy military presence or just a small portion of it (as in the case of Achaia [*provincia inermis*, i.e. unarmed province] in the early Imperial period) and many other actions were carried out in order to make such a point clear. Alcock (1993:21) affirms: 'On the whole, it is agreed that taxation rates for the early empire were kept consistently low; […] How onerous taxes were *perceived* to be by the provincials, however, is not a question the extant documentary sources can answer' (original emphasis). The granting of rewards could also account for individuals. That is, the city could praise and honour a wealthy benefactor who provided certain services for the city, with the granting of citizenship as reward for fidelity and services to the empire, etc. As I explained earlier, this system presented a mirage-effect and functioned as a deflector for the lack of practical social mobility. Woolf (1994:33) allows for a greater measure of social mobility, enhanced by geographical mobility. As the empire extended and became more cosmopolitan, it created more possibilities for emancipation from

[100] For Roman views on the ager, see Strabo, *Geog* IV.1.5; Tacitus, *Agr* 21, *Germ* 16, *Hist* 4.64.

[101] I find the discussion in Weinstock concerning the meaning of *Pax* challenging. For him, such a term conveys two different senses. The first one derives from etymology, were the root-noun originally meant 'pact' (the agreement which ended the war and resulted in submission, alliance or friendship) and not peace per se, although this nuance followed soon. *Pax* also became a political slogan with two different aspects, the first one appealed to the citizens of Rome and equated *pax* with *concordia* (both were considered goddesses and had altars built in their honour), while the second was a message to foreigner countries which were not considered equals of Rome: '*pax* was no longer a pact among equals or peace but submission to Rome, just as *pacare* began to refer to conquest. But submission guaranteed peaceful life and the Romans liked to stress this point' (Weinstock 1960:45; cf. Álvarez-Cineira 2007).

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the classical structures: the city and the family. Thus, people had the chance of reconstructing their social identities. This 'favour' could revert both on the community at large or certain individuals[102].

7. A ('subtle' or not so subtle) challenge to local and ethnic identity as it was known until then. I am aware that with this element I address a rather 'psychological' aspect which is hard to assess, since we only possess either monumental or literary evidence that comes from the élites. Plutarch quickly comes to mind, who wrote a history of the conquerors having fresh in the memory the image of the glorious days of his own nation. My search, nevertheless, aims at looking at what people generally experience as they were subjugated, even if it was, by a 'distant admirer' as the Romans were. There is something to say about what ancient authors reflected in their writings. Alcock (1993:27), who discusses whether ancient sources reflect 'reality' or 'rhetorical' interests, identifies two main *tropes* during the epoch: 'ancient perceptions of *oliganthropia*' (depopulation) and 'an obsession with past glory compared to present obscurity'. Alcock (:30) concludes that in light of new surface archaeological evidence, ancient sources are somewhat lacking due to their omissions and recurrent use of common literary *topoi*. Therefore they should not be allowed to dictate the shape of (in this particular case) the Achaian province. Sartre (1994:224-29) asks the same question, and answers it with some general observations concerning the long-term effects that wars and forced labour had on Greek peoples and on the depopulation process of the region.

   Another source which yields information is Rome's concern with *urbanitas*, which implied more than 'refinement' or 'polished' (as Cicero expounds in *Off*), but a complex matrix of meanings (cf. Ramage 1973:55-56, 67) which in essence divided experience as they knew it. Having this in mind, even if it worked mostly at the rhetorical level, we can picture the difficulties and obstacles that those coming from the country (the *ager*, and thus the *agrestis* and *rusticus*) suffered at the hands of the *urbanus homo*. Cicero was one worried about the country's (*ager*) influence on city life and wanted to preserve the refinement of the Republic against this threat. It could also mean that the general outlook on the country folk used of these and other stereotypes which did not facilitated life in the

[102] Saddington (1975:126) correctly points to the fact that some existing towns were raised to the status of *municipia* on account of Rome's recognition of having attained an adequate level of Roman culture. These grants could work no other way than as incentives for local populations. It was important to be on good grounds with Rome, since there were many examples when cities, having suffered devastation due to earthquakes, came to the emperor seeking timely help (cf. Mitchell 1987:349-52).

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city for these newcomers. MacMullen (1974:31) observes that *urbanitas* not only distinguished between the urban people and the *rusticus*, but also worked against *peregrini* (i.e., non-citizens). Another example illustrates this point: Romans distrusted democracy and believed that government would be more stable 'if vested in the better sort of citizens, whom they identified with the richer' (Jones 1963:6-7). Although externally the form of government in the East did not change much, internally the decisions of the popular assembly were now filtered through the propertied class[103]. The deployment of *coloni* into foreign land brings with it changes in cultural identity which can be understood as 'practice' or as a process closely related to that of the 'constitution of meaningful world' (Friedman 1992:837)[104]. These 'challenges' do not necessarily assume that the conqueror readily imposed new customs and ways on the conquered. Especially in the case of the Greek East, as we will see, some of this 'dialogue' moved in the opposite direction[105]. However, it would be naïve to refrain from describing much of Roman effort as plain forcing her way onto subjected peoples, as in the case of urbanisation[106].

Looking at the overall model, numbers 1 through 6 are quite straight forward to account for. With number 7, we move into what could at first sight be perceived as a 'private' sphere, and it could very well be so, but we must not forget that 'identity' is not only based on personal agency but that it also encapsulates 'social' identity and social 'structures'. What we do with the resources we have as a group is also part of such an identity. Dyson has written on 'native revolt patterns' in the Roman empire and although scanty (due mainly to lack of literary evidence), he believes that Rome carried out several actions which, compounded, gave rise to these revolts: the demand for a regular payment of taxes, usually in coin, 'which forced tribal societies to adopt a monetary

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[103] Jones (1963:7): 'The Greek city state sank to the status of a municipality, and even in its internal government all vital political activity was stifled'.

[104] For a useful study of such cultural change in Sardinia see van Dommelen (1998), who uses these two elements ('cultural identity' and 'colonialism') as descriptors of the necessary accommodations and changes people *on both sides* needed to allow in order to place themselves in the new world.

[105] Van Dommelen (1998:33) rightly argues against a definition of colonialism based on a holistic interpretation of culture as a clear system in which the ways of the conqueror are *assumedly* imposed on subjected peoples. He believes the study should centre on the relationship between the colonisers and the colonized, which presents then a dualist nature of such conceptions. My search leans strongly on such preoccupation: the relationship between the 'them' and 'us' in the colony that is complex and cannot be easily labelled.

[106] Lomas (1998:64): 'The relationship between urbanisation, imperialism and acculturation is not, however, a straightforward one. The processes at work are highly complex, and any understanding of them must include both the direct and overtly imperialist imposition of urbanisation, most graphically seen in Roman programmes of colonisation, and the more indirect processes of acculturation within existing cities'.

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economy' (Dyson 1975:171), and the fact that Romans 'favored an agricultural economy and promoted this often to the detriment of the native patterns of life'. Religion was a logical way of constructing national identity, but as a norm Rome did not abolish native forms of religion unless they portrayed potential social threat[107] (e.g., Druidism). Perhaps we may think about the implementation of the imperial cult as a way to bring cohesion at a national level. Saddington (1975:122-23) affirms on this respect that:

> With unimportant exceptions, the Romans allowed their subjects freedom of worship. The Romans had no objection to identifying their gods with those of their subjects. This led to interesting religious fusions that are referred to by the phrase *interpretatio Romana*. Originally this meant little more than a Roman translation or explanation and was first used by Tacitus when explaining a cult of a German tribe in terms that were intelligible to his Roman audience. Conversely, when a German is found making a dedication to Mercury, he is probably not honouring that deity but his native Wodan under a new name. Since both sides were prepared to adopt this approach, it can be appreciated that a major area of possible friction was usefully avoided.

Here, as in many other cases, we need to remember that boundaries are never static but allow for processes of interaction, negotiation and are even open to infiltration and are by definition, permeable (cf. Lieu 2002a:302).

Once these previous elements have affected the people and the land, it is difficult to go back to the same 'good old days'. There are strong and lingering effects: depopulation, lack of national pride (the country is at the hands of the 'other' and it may provoke questions regarding theodicy, even if at a popular level), familial bonds are broken, etc. As a matter of fact, some populations in Greece lost status and influence from a city status to be now considered villages (cf. Sartre 1994:224-25). Plutarch speaks of examples where one can travel through the entire country without seeing anybody but a few shepherds (*Def* 414 A). Apuleius (*Met* VII.15; VIII.22) speaks of slaves who are now working as shepherds or others as managers of properties.

Woolf (1998:28) writes that it 'is striking that empires impose not one but a variety of constrains on the societies they dominate, and that the different pace of these impositions means that there is no single moment of incorporation'. Nevertheless, we hope that the model will be useful in order to better appreciate how these elements may have ultimately impinged upon the population of Philippi.

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[107] For a case that involved religion and foreign intervention at Bessi (Macedonia-Thrace), see Dyson (1975:169-70).

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3.2.1 Romanisation towards the West

Alcock (1993:3) complains about the general tendency historians show in which they mainly focus on the Roman West but forsake the study of Greece under Roman rule. It is true that information on Latin West (Spain, Gaul, etc.) is readily available, but it seems to be scarcer when it comes to speaking about Roman Greece. I shall only detain briefly in the West, since our area of concern is other.

In general terms we can speak of Romanisation in two different ways and into two different areas. Strabo, who describes the empire from what he knows of the middle years of Augustus' principate, does not speak of acculturation. Rather, he perceives that the Romans exerted their power in the east in a more administrative manner, with the spread of colonies, while it was the barbaric west that needed the sword to be subdued. 'For him, the barbarism to be overcome was violent, savage behaviour, not boorish ignorance or bad manners. It stood in the way of peace and prosperity' (MacMullen 2000:135). How Gaul surrendered to Rome's armies seems to account for such a view in the West, while in the East (specially the Greek region), also spoiled to a certain extent, experienced a different and softer treatment.

This view for the western part of the empire is obviously reductionist. Having in mind Rome as the centre of the world, Cicero (*QFr* I.I.27) perceives that 'Africans, Spaniards, and Gauls are repugnant wherever they are to be found, because they stand for everything that is gross and barbarous in humanity. People like the Scythians are even less acceptable. The Roman, on the other hand, is infinitely superior in any number of ways, and he never forgets it' (Ramage 1961:489; 1973:73-74; cf. also Cicero, *Verr* 2.5.150; *DeOr* 1.15.).

3.2.2 Romanisation towards the East

When it comes to speak of this area, historians divide it in three regions: mainland Greece and the islands, western Asia Minor and the Anatolian plateau. I shall specifically focus on the region of Macedonia and Achaia, where Philippi was located, as a tiny piece within the immense chessboard of the Roman Empire[108].

[108] Levick (1996:641) perceives important similarities within this area: 1) geographical (subjected to common Mediterranean geological and climatic conditions, with a clearly marked seasonal aridity which govern Mediterranean agriculture); 2) linguistic (predominantly Greek-speaking); 3) historical (the entire area had once come under he sway of Alexander the Great and later of

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How Rome's conquest affected this Hellenistic area is not an easy task to explain. Historians seem to assert a paradox (Alcock 1993:2). That is, either Rome conquered Greece due to her own decline[109], or Rome's conquest did not affect her, surprisingly, in the least. Alcock perceives these extremes as a projection, a 'European construction of Hellenic history, written by outsiders in order to define their own modern and western identity' (:3). She prefers to study the 'surface', the landscape, in search of clearer evidence of the process[110]. It is fair to assume that both elements affected the manner in which Rome expanded, but it is difficult to assess which one has more explanatory power. It is true that Rome had high respect for Greece's heritage. Cicero, writing to his own brother, during Augustus' childhood, states: 'Even as we govern over that race of men in which civilization is to be found [...] we should certainly offer them what we have received from them [...] for we appear to owe them a special debt' (*QFr* I.I.27-29; MacMullen 2000:2). Pliny, in a letter to a colleague who is to serve as *corrector* (overseer), writes: 'Remember that you are sent to the province of Achaia, to the pure and genuine Greece, where civilization and literature, and agriculture too are believed to have originated […] Pay regard to their antiquity, their heroic deeds, and the legends of their past. Do not detract from anyone's dignity, independence, or even pride, but always bear in mind that this is the land which provided us with justice and gave us laws, not after conquering us but at our request' (*Ep* 8.24.1-4). However, this complex process needs to be further described. Let us then proceed in more detail.

Rome), and finally a 'devotion to common political ideals, those of the city-state (*polis*)'. Within this homogeneity, there is—it could not have been otherwise—variety.

[109] 'The history of Greece under foreign domination records the degradation and calamities of the nation which attained the highest degree of civilization in the ancient world' (Finlay 1857:ix, in Alcock 1993:1). For Alcock such a view is daughter of the 19th century perception of cultures through organic metaphors: cultures are birthed, grow and develop and finally decline. This posture invites certain 'inevitability' (Alcock 1993:3).

[110] If traditionally archaeology focused on monumental evidence, since the 1970's and 1980's archaeology has studied also survey evidence to evoke rural conditions in Greece. This new focus receives the name of *archaeological surface survey* (cf. Alcock 1993:33, 49-53 for a presentation of the limitations of the discipline).

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3.2.2.1 Conquest of the Admired

Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit.
(Horace, *Ep* 2.1.156)[111]

'The most surprising feature of Roman rule in the Greek East is that despite its long duration it had so little effect on the civilization of the area. The influence was indeed in the other direction' (Jones 1963:3). Although Rome had triumphed over the eastern side, specially over the much envied Greece, the truth of the matter is that the form of government prevailing in the cities continued to be what it was prior to the conquest: oligarchic, and people tended to live very much as usual (MacMullen 2000:4). Although the Greeks flattered and followed Roman mores even beyond what it was prescribed, MacMullen observes that 'Latin names thus appeared increasingly in the public record and might be called a form of Romanization; yet the customs social or political, which accounted for their appearance were entirely Hellenistic' (:6). He further clarifies it:

> The logical consequence, that conquest led on to the imposition of Roman law, did not follow, because in Augustus' day there were so many exceptions negotiated by treaty at the time of individual cities' surrender to the conqueror, and such a great latitude of action enjoyed by governors. These officers in effect were law and could impose or more often permit whatever they chose. The result is in fact a confusion made worse by the lack of adequate evidence, and most of the little that survives dates post-Augustan periods […] what counts is how much alien legal practice was introduced into people's lives, and so became a part of their thoughts; but my question, even a little limited in this fashion, *cannot be very well answered*. Even the best scholarly survey of what is known and knowable makes that clear. (:10-11, my emphasis)

MacMullen is right in his assessment. Meggitt (1998:27-28) is aware that many laws in operation in the empire were not applied at all. They were not intended to be used, for 'it was their *existence* that was crucial [...] The law functioned to reaffirm symbolically élite self-identity; to re-emphasise the distinctions between the rulers and the ruled' (:28). Moreover, Roman law was not the only operating law in such a vast empire. The former was used in flagrant cases or when a public display of power was necessary.

[111] The sentence is longer: *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artis agresti Latio…* (Greece, the captive, took her savage victor captive, and brought the arts into rustic Latium…). Cultural superiority is what is here celebrated. Alcock (1993:3) believes this perspective focuses mainly in the response of the political and intellectual Greek élite.

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'With the exception of a narrow zone along the Via Egnatia in Southern Macedonia, and Beirut, rightly called "an island of Romanization" by reason of its determined loyalty to the ruling tongue, Latin did not take root for ordinary communication. It generally vanished within a generation or two in immigrant families. In the long run, not even veteran colonies in the east succeeded in establishing it in their own streets, to say nothing of the surrounding region' (MacMullen 2000:13)[112]. However, there were things that had changed, at least in some areas. Whereas classical *poleis* did not practice heavy taxation and recurred to wealthy citizens to face *ad hoc* needs (e.g. *euergetes*), Rome imposed her system of taxation, although not in all Greek areas, and even when it did, it was applied at different levels (cf. Alcock 1993:19).

Together with the admiration for Greek heritage, the Romans also perceived the Greeks under the influence of strong stereotyping. As Alcock recalls:

> The defeated Greeks were also prime targets for Roman invective. *Volubilitas*, *ineptia*, *levitas*, a tendency to mendacity and effeminacy: all were charges slung at the *Graeculi*. Against this model, the antithetic, characteristic Roman virtues of *gravitas*, *dignitas*, *pietas*, military valor and so on could be compared and validated; the Greek downfall offered Roman moralists a splendid opportunity to celebrate the triumph of the *mos maiorum*. More than that, however, this construction of Greek character allowed the Romans to define themselves in opposition to their defeated rivals, to distinguish themselves from a fallen power. A very similar presentation is to be found in the accounts of early modern travellers to Greece, who generally found the "descendants of Pericles" to be ignorant, superstitious, vain, perfidious, and cunning – a people who at best deserved pity from the visiting Europeans. (:28)

This sanguine attack is not surprising. Rome needed to assert her own power and identity differentiating herself from that of the Greeks. Romans resented the latter because they were referred to as barbarian[113]. Rome could not come to terms with the fact that Greek writers had sided with another 'barbarian' power like Carthage during the First Punic War instead of the new emerging power (Drench 1995:69). It is always difficult to be labelled outside the 'in' circle from

[112] This is somewhat confirmed by Levick (1967:131), who points out that the use of Latin in the local coinage does not prove that it was spoken in daily life: 'Again, the standard of Romanization of the die-engraver need not be that of the population at large'. This is important because the evidence signals that we are speaking of a flow in the *Pax Romana*, characterized by 'evolution and compromise' (Lintott 1993:154).

[113] The 'we-they' boundary was widely practiced by the Greeks. Marshall (1998:49-58) displays some of these uses in the history of Greece. The boundary is not necessarily coherent and may shift depending of the kind of relationship and context there exists between the two sides, as Marshall explains when he discusses the case of the Lybians and the Cyrenians. This aspect only remind us that to search for a 'unified version' is really doing away with the different reactions and postures we might find in Greek and Roman literature.

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someone you admire![114] 'Cato's opposition to the Greeks is well known, and much of it must have stemmed from a conviction that Rome had an identity of her own and that part of this identity was a refinement worth fostering' (Ramage 1973:32). In this respect it is noteworthy to observe that Romans followed the Greek trend when they described other nations as 'barbarians'[115].

3.2.2.2 Changes in Property

During the time of republican Rome *negotiatores* (or *pragmateuomenoi* in Greek areas) had come to Greece in quite substantial numbers, although their number diminished from the time of Augustus (Brunt 1971:210)[116]. Apart from these *negotiatores*, 'other potential classes of outside landowners include colonists or discharged veterans [...] the relative few formal colonies in Achaia were located where the structure of landholdings had already been severely disrupted, and in some cases even placed where territory was already possessed by Rome' (Alcock 1993:77).

Alcock, who concentrates on Achaia, reveals that the evidence points to the region as receptor of veterans settling as new land-owners is meagre. Focusing on Achaia, she remarks that Roman domination did indeed change some of the patterns concerning land-holding, since prior social barriers erected to prevent excessive accumulation in the hands of the few were now subverted and there is an emergence of larger estates under native *possidentes* (possessors). If we were to conclude on a general note, the documentary sources reveal instability in the countryside in the last centuries BC, mainly owed to warfare and the disruptive political influence of Rome (Alcock 1993:77). Wars fought on Greek terrain meant the use of native dwellers for diverse tasks, the earlier death of male residents, the (forced) provision for the armies as well as pillage and destruction of fields and buildings as logical outcome (:89-91). The resulting scenario reflects an increasing social stratification as well as growing economic polarization (:79).

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[114] Drench (1995:69): 'At times, Greeks would focus on the barbarian origins of Rome to explain her present suspicious character. Rome's claims of kinship with the Greek world through descent from Trojan Aeneas could be countered by the insistence that Aeneas never left Troy, and Greeks could dwell on the less respectable of Rome's alternative, 'indigenous' myth of origins, the Romulus-story'.

[115] For an in-depth discussion of the provenance of this use for Romans and the relationship between barbarism and *urbanitas* (or lack of it) see Ramage (1973:35-51; esp. 50-51). For the commonest terms used by Romans concerning foreigners (*barbari*, *externi*, *gens*, *natio*, etc.), cf. Saddington (1975:117-118).

[116] 'Roman appropriation of the coveted right of *enktesis* (the right of a foreigner to hold property in a city's territory) was resented, and occasionally resisted – though with little success' (Alcock 1993:74).

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However, we need to move to a more specific terrain —that of Philippi— to assess how these changes affected the local population. Oakes (2001:14-50) has presented, to my knowledge, the more exhaustive model on the development of society in the area of Philippi and its 'town', taking in consideration the area prior to colonisation[117]. I mentioned that prior to 42 BC Philippi seemed to be an insignificant Greek city. Despite some scholars' assertions (e.g., Bormann), Oakes believes the area was substantial and as such, attractive for colonisation due to the fact that it was located within a fertile region where only eighteen per cent was arable (:20) and he assumes that the land was farmed[118]. In his model of colonisation, Oakes reveals that there are four stages which make the town's composition what it was at the time the Christ-following community at Philippi received Paul's letter. These are: 1) *prior to colonisation* the area of influence is relatively small and reveals the existence of satellites villages dependent on the city. Land is both in the hands of elite Greek landowners as well as in the hands of small farmers. 2) *an initial colonisation* phase in which the land nearby the city is *centuriated* (divided into grids) and worked by local farmers who now need to commute[119]. 'The first effect on the city was the replacement of Greek commuting farmers and élite landowners by commuting peasant colonists and colonial élite landowners' (:27)[120]. As a result of these changes, some adjacent cities are somewhat depopulated and reduced to villages. It was Roman practice to use local elites to help with the administration of colonised areas[121], but according to Oakes there is no direct evidence to confirm this practice in Philippi. There is an unavoidable loss of land for those small farmers (cf. Alcock 1993:89-91, 116-17) when people moved to new settlements. 3) during the *spread to the maximum extension of the territory* we find some colonists moving away from the nucleus into some

[117] Oakes' purpose is to arrive at a plausible description of the town and of the Christ-following community of Philippi in the first century AD. I find his model useful because it reveals the strenuous situations experienced by the local population there. These situations could have influenced the way Paul corresponded with them.

[118] This information is confirmed by other scholars who stress the fact that Roman colonies were usually created in prosperous territory; (cf. Marchal 2006:103).

[119] The acquired (confiscated) land was thus divided and given to the veterans and new colonists according to their rank (Oakes 2001:25). Salmon (1969:13) comments that colonised territory was either given to *coloni* or in their absence appropriated as *ager publicus* (state domain) as liable to be leased for farming or stockbreeding purposes. Whatever the use the profits were ultimately reverting into Roman hands. To see the two ways in which land could be colonised (*assignatio* which did not confer self-administration, or proper colonisation) see Salmon (1969:14-15).

[120] For a general description how land was transferred from native hands to Roman ones, see Brunt (1971:246-55).

[121] Emperors often used the services of skilled Greeks from the East to solve problems in other parts of the empire (cf. Sartre 1994:57).

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semiautonomous Greek cities that contain colonists as landowners[122]. This move meant further dispossession of local landowners (cf. Oakes 2001:29).

MacMullen (1974:5-16) observes that direct violence or economic pressure was a normal feature used against local populations as a means to acquire more land. The colonists tended to spread out and control local populations, although they mingled with local elites in the administration of local villages[123]. The last step reveals 4) the *concentration of landholding*. Oakes (2001:33) recognizes three factors which induced such a concentration: peasants who lost most of their land, wealthier elites which tended to acquired more land, and larger estates which were now run by *actores*, 'brokers' who managed property for elite landowners who lived away[124]. Evidence of the colony's wealth is attested by monuments built, which required both expert handiwork and the use of costly material. Oakes' model is based on the progression of elites toward land concentration and that forced dispossessed groups to move closer to the city to seek better opportunities. However, there is also an ideological reason behind this regrouping, which as Sartre (1994:216) points out, may had in mind that small and scattered territories were more difficult to be self-administered. This practice was already implemented in Macedonia[125].

This movement of people, forced by land dispossession and who were now seeking better opportunities within the larger urban nucleus, was likely to produce resentment on the local and less privileged population. Land is more than a commodity with which people trade or use in order to survive. Land is part of one's identity; it is the *humus*, the soil which has been in the family and ties ancestry to a common ground. We know of too many modern examples where local populations have been forced to leave their rural setting in order to settle within a new urban centre (cf. Aguirre 1998:80-81). We are painfully aware of the struggle to regain identity, the sense of belonging, the difficulty of starting from scratch and of finding orientation in a new environment[126].

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[122] Sartre (1994:216): 'Filipos recibió un territorio que englobaba la totalidad de la llanura de Drama hasta el puerto de Neápolis (Cavala) que estaba incluido también, así como las antiguas ciudades de Oisimé y Apolonia'. After exhaustive archaeological review, Oakes (2001:32) highlights the fact that Philippi is the only city in Macedonia from which we possess inscriptional evidence that suggests that there were villages dependent on it.

[123] Archaeological evidence reveals the existence of a smaller city within the area which was Greek-speaking. Oakes (2001:31) writes concerning this data: 'Independence would be highly unlikely, so one probably ought technically to describe those in Philippi's territory as *vici* (villages) of Philippi'.

[124] For epigraphic evidence of two such *actores*, see Oakes (2001:33), who cites Collart (1937:289).

[125] Cf. Vatin (1962:57-63), who recounts the grouping of a small number of *poleis* or *ethne* within the same region.

[126] Zetterholm (2003) has researched the effects of migration to the ancient city both on people receiving the newcomers and on those who migrated. Focusing on Antioch, Zetterholm seeks to

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Although what may automatically come to mind is our contemporary city, the threat to personal and social identity was certainly similar in the old days (cf. Woolf 1996), with all its nuances and added particularities[127].

3.2.2.3 Preliminary Conclusions

As it has happened elsewhere, dispossession of land and forced migration (however localised and close to the original setting it may be) result in hardship: family bonds are broken; the less privileged suffer in silence, without leaving behind traces which can be later reconstructed. With the coming of the new landowners, it is quite plausible that former economic differences were now even more marked. A legionary, after the prescribed years of service, received a *praemium* of 12 000 sesterces (Oakes 2001:52), while the average worker in Rome received 3-4 sesterces per day; a farm-worker a little less: 2-3 sesterces per day (Campbell 1984:162, 177). An average family needed 450 sesterces worth of wheat per annum to survive, while the census requirement for a Decurion was 100 000 sesterces per annum (Oakes 2001:52). The social divide seemed to be ever expanding, certainly manifested at greater scale at the urban level, especially where these migrating families needed now to settle and start anew[128].

MacMullen (2000:28) thinks that the effect of *Romanisation* in the East was not so influential, at least on the Greek East: 'The explanation of course lies in the fact that the east was, in Romans' own terms, *civilized*' (original emphasis). Sartre (1994:80) concurs with this assessment. Even though Rome carried so many

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explain the incident described in Galatians 2, looking at how religious structures, voluntary associations, etc., accommodated or placed obstacles to these newcomers. For him migration always implied social isolation to some extent (:61), even for people who belonged to a certain *collegium* and wanted to transfer membership to the same one in a different location (:126).

[127] For example, we know that in veteran colonies, prior to the time of the Severus, soldiers were not allowed to marry and so they often took concubines who could be native women. The children of such relationships did not acquire but the mother's status, so generally the offspring were not citizens (Brunt 1971:247), since the right of *conubium* with foreign women was not granted until later.

[128] No wonder then that in light of such a situation Oakes (2001) centres his study on the Christ-hymn as 'a carefully crafted piece of exhortation and encouragement written specifically for the Philippian situation' (:xiii). For Oakes the principal locus of suffering for the Philippian Christian community is economic (:xiv) In this context Paul proposes a three-fold parallel: Christ, Paul and the Philippian congregation, directed to the transformation of their attitudes and behaviour in the face of suffering.

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efforts in the East, Greek steadily supplanted Latin by the time of Hadrian. As such, cultural influences were ameliorated in a relative short period[129].

Vergil (*Aeneid* I.279) had spoken of an *Imperium sine fine* ('empire without end'), after the Republican ideal, not in the sense of 'an infinite empire covering the entire world, but of an empire not defined by physical boundaries. It is precisely Augustus who leaves to his successor an empire confined within limits, limits which not only restrain the ambition to conquer, but which place a *territorial marker between us and them*' (Wallace-Hadrill 2005:80, my emphasis).

Within this generalised search for privilege, honour and distinctiveness, which for some of us in the West may seem so distant, is where some scholars understand that the process of colonisation finds its *raison d'être*. Purcell (2005:96) is one historian who so opines:

> The foundation of *coloniae* was a conspicuous, prestigious, and expensive, action; but despite the link with imperial authority, we should not be tempted to see it as a 'colonizing effort'. It was rather the insertion of another strategy of status, another deployment of favour, another rearrangement of rights and privileges, into the geography of Roman overseas.

It seems that nowhere like in Philippi had the Romans such a success at permeating the core of society. On this respect, Oakes (2001:36) comments on the work of Collart who dug up the Roman forum, the market and the gymnasium as well as the Roman baths and concludes: 'It is actually very significant that the Roman inscriptions there are all in Latin because that was not the case in most Eastern colonies [e.g. Corinth] after they had been running for some time'.

3.3 Identity in the Graeco-Roman Context

> *Cum alienigenis, cum barbaris aeternum omnibus Graecis bellum ist et eritque*.
> (Livy, *Hist* XXXI.29. 15)[130]

I have already expressed the view, informed by SIT, that identity not only responds to what people actually are, but also that which they are not. Romans

[129] 'Nada testimonia tampoco una difusión de los cultos romanos, dejando aparte los cultos militares propiamente dichos que no salen de los círculos de soldados y veteranos' (Sartre 1994:80; cf. Levick 1967:162).

[130] 'With those of other races, with barbarians there is and will be for all Greeks an eternal war', Livy puts these words in the mouth of the Macedonians who address the Aetolian league against the Romans. Here, he echoes earlier words of Plato (*Rep* V.470C). The first distinction is between Greek and barbarian, a pattern which Romans would follow (cf. Lieu 2004:104-5).

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in the provinces, according to Purcell (2005:90), were the more conspicuous type of Romans, since their privilege was tied to *that* distant city which nevertheless granted them a far higher right than the rest[131]. Difference, as much as similarity, is a strong element in the equation. Thus, Romans tended to use stereotypes when referring to others. Saddington (1975:115) observes that a 'Roman tradition soon developed in the historians of the republican period and culminates in the 'Germania' of Tacitus. It became standard practice to consider foreign peoples under various more or less fixed headings of τόποι'. These included origin, autochthony, physical appearance, clothing, housing, matters of religion, political institutions, and military strength.

Purcell (2005:86), focusing on the cultural identity of this period, complains about the lack of serious study on Roman diaspora after Actium:

> Most Romans in the provinces in this age are simply names to us, accidentally preserved in the inscriptions of the towns where they resided for short or long periods. The systematic study of names, onomastics, is a painstaking discipline, which has only in the last generation accumulated the critical mass to make a large contribution to history. Nomenclature clearly identifies certain aspirations to Roman-ness, but remains an ambiguous window on a blurry world. It is a better guide to community than it is to culture: claiming to be in some sense Roman was more likely to be a political statement than an ethnic one. Romans were not like other outsiders. They were privileged citizens of the Power that ruled the world […] Their choices of religion, clothing, tableware, recreation, language, and food were extremely diverse, like their places of residence and their genetic origin. What linked them, in East and West, across the Mediterranean, was the aspiration to, or the deployment of, certain types of political relationships with the imperial state[132].

We observed in chapter 2 that the construction of identity is a complex process that involves personal interaction between individuals and groups at different levels who stand at different positions of power. Generally speaking, the elites' impact on the masses is greater than the opposite and so it happens usually with conquering nations towards the conquered. Thus, it is only logical to conclude that 'Roman literary description and categorization of those outside her boundaries cannot be directly correlated with the archaeological data concerning those groups; yet the categorization by others, particularly by the more powerful, clearly does impact on the way that groups understand

[131] Purcell (2005:95): 'The identity of diaspora Romans depended far more on their relationship to Roman power than on any cultural ties. And privileged status could be maintained while worshipping non-Roman gods, speaking Punic or Greek, or living in the style of a non-Roman city'.

[132] For what he says we can clearly imply that many gained a strong sense of identity in the face of others, that is, in realising what *they were not*, based on the privileges they did enjoy.

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themselves' (Lieu 2004: 102). Purcell (2005:95) presents a good case on the reading of the evidence: 'A schematic separation of real Romans outsiders from genuine indigenes has lured many into a too polar approach to the composition of these cities' populations as seen from the inscriptions. The difference in status between groups within the population and between cities continued to make a real difference. Roman-ness continued to be distinctive in its relation to power, whatever it may have meant in cultural terms'.

Roman self-image 'entailed not simply the conquest of others, but also the rule of others for their own good and even their inclusion within the Roman self, for example by the bestowal of citizenship and even [during the Republican period] subsequent admission into the senate' (Braund 1998:12). In this expansionist context it is not strange to see Roman self-image described as that of the beneficent imperialist who just displays power and authority over others in order to bring order and tranquillity to the world. Woolf, in a short but incise article which discusses the 'epigraphic habit' popularised by MacMullen (1982), prefers to speak of an 'epigraphic culture' which he inserts in the context of personal preoccupation for the future as a way to be remembered (Woolf 1996:32). To address such a topic would be too lengthy but it is, nevertheless, worthwhile to dwell on his insights for a while in order to capture part of this anxious preoccupation with the self and the future within a society with 'little agreed eschatology' (:32). In such a context, 'Roman testaments were often pre-occupied with ensuring that they be remembered, whether by establishing foundations to preserve their tombs, by setting up foundations to fund public celebrations on their birthdays, or through legacies and manumissions' (:32). It is in this *milieu* that voluntary associations, cults, *collegia*, etc., functioned as means to preserve the memory and social identity of individuals and groups.

To preserve the memory is a critical element, a basic block of social identity that depends much on others for the continuation of one's presence in the future. This is the reason why one of the harshest sanctions the Estate could carry against the individual was the device termed *damnatio memoriae*, 'which involved the destruction of all monuments to an individual, images as well as inscriptions' (:32) or even the ban for his descendants to continue using his *praenomen*.

3.3.1 Philippi as Colony

> Wer —wie Paulus — aus dem Osten nach Philippi kam, kam in eine andere Welt. Römische Kolonien konnte man auch in Kleinasien besuchen, aber keine war auch nur annähernd so »römisch« wie Philippi.
>
> (Pilhofer 1995:92)

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It is always risky to trace a bridge between the general—and sometimes scant historical evidence we possess—and the audiences behind the text which we study. However cautious we may be, it is also true that the ubiquitous presence of Roman law, architecture, religious cults, etc., was the means by which the colony remained closely knitted to its *patria*. The impression of the traveller arriving to a Roman colony was that of a 'Rome en miniature' in foreign ground. The Latin or Roman character of the city was still quite present during Paul's time as it is derived by the fact that in Phlp 4:15, when Paul uses the vocative 'Philippians', is in the Latin form *philippēsoi* instead of the Greek *philippoi*. Probably this Latin form 'reflects the self-designation of the inhabitants of the city' (Lincoln 1981:221, n. 69; cf. Bonnard 1950:7-8). Philippi received the grant of *iuris Italici*; a privilege clearly in line with the way Rome tended to administer territory in foreign areas through punishment and reward (Brunt 1982:169). The majority of Greek cities were deemed as *civilised* populated areas by the Romans[133], but on top of that Rome conferred a higher status, sometimes as reward for past services.

Among the colonies in the Greek East, Philippi was ahead in the use of Latin, which 'displayed astonishing vigour' in the area (Levick 1967:161). A quick look at local inscriptions confirms this fact: out of the 421 inscriptions, only six are in Greek, and one of these is surely post-colonial. When we study the coinage system, we perceive the same overall dominance of Latin. Levick ascribes this Roman-ness to two different factors: first the existence of two settlements of veterans at Philippi coupled with a larger number of colonists. Secondly, to the fact that the colony lay on a main road which linked the eastern and western halves of the empire (:161-162). These are surely elements which contribute to such a lay-out, but I think Portefaix (1988:68) adds a third emphasis which is worth to mention: the numerous Latin inscriptions found in the area with Greek and Thracian names attest to the efforts in order to flatter the Roman government in the search that Roman citizenship might be achieved in the course of time. I believe our picture of Philippi at the time of Paul becomes a bit clearer. The crowd's affirmation of their Roman-ness, as implied in Acts 16, is in line with a way of behaving where Roman mores needed to be displayed as standards to maintain. It is possible that the Philippian community at large would have experienced the same proclivity to action, which makes the Christ-hymn the more subversive[134].

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[133] This is not as obvious as it looks. When we come to speak of Roman Gaul, the typical thought that crossed the mind of the Romans is that they were dealing with barbarians, who lacked *humanitas*, and were therefore, deficient (Woolf 1998:60).

[134] Beard and others (1998a:361-62) trace the relationship between imperial cult participation and civic status.

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Jones describes at length the great regard for Greek culture Romans had, and how many of them felt as much at home speaking Greek as with Latin. However, the feeling was not mutual. The Greeks, though admiring Roman military prowess and political sagacity, still considered them barbarous. 'The result is that the Greeks had no impulse to Romanize themselves and the Roman government felt no mission to impose their civilization on the East' (Jones 1963:3). For that reason it is the most striking yet to observe Philippi's strong Roman accentuation in her identity.

Bockmuehl (1997a:14) has called attention to the 'oddly placed apposition *kolōnia*' in Acts 16:12, and deduces that first-century Greeks in the region referred to the city simply as 'the colony'. As he remarks, 'this provides local confirmation of Philippi's self-consciously colonial status' (:14).[135] Paul's letter to the Christ-following community at Philippi further attests this when we observe the apostle's recurrent use of military imagery which he deemed apropos in order to communicate with his audience. In the following chapters we will have ample opportunity to assess these observations within Paul's overall rhetorical strategy.

3.3.2 Living in the Colony

> The relationship of natives and Roman settlers, whether or not regulated by law, varied in each case with the circumstances and object of the settlement, the condition and attitude of the previous inhabitants of the site, and probably with a number of lesser factors at which we can only guess. Between complete exclusion of the natives, physical as well as legal, and their wholesale incorporation in a single, integrated society, Roman policy ran the gamut.
>
> Levick (1967:68-69)

When we focus on matters pertaining to the construction and practice of identity, we must also look at special events that affected entire populations. However careful I wish to be in this respect, the proposals and conclusions can only be tentative. Recalling some elements in the history of the colony that so closely lived the outcome of the Civil War, it comes to mind the 'psychological' warfare that took place while the troops fought both on ground and at sea. It is worth to remember that Augustus' continuous critique of Antony´s associating himself with Cleopatra (a foreigner from the Orient!) had a huge impact in Italy as he used this element quite effectively as political propaganda on his favour.

[135] Pilhofer (1995:160) shows an inscription (711/G736) which corroborates this assessment. As a matter of fact, only Ac designates Philippi under this expression, although there were eight more cities (Troas, Lystra, Syracuse, etc.) with the status of colony, but were not addressed in this way (cf. Tellbe 2001:218).

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Augustus had a special sensibility for traditional mores (perhaps to show that he was not, after all, the reason for the downfall of the Republic). He applied *moral* laws legislating marriage, family relations, etc., in close connexion with ancient traditional understanding. This influence led to the rejection, even in later years, of anything that was not Roman, especially in the colonies in the East. This might have been especially so in a colony like Philippi, which sided with Anthony during the war. When the colony was re-founded after the Julian family, it is plausible that the local population would have made special efforts to earn the trust and sympathy of Augustus, the now sole *patronus* of the Empire. In order to reinforce his own position, Augustus used his Roman-ness and that of those who followed him in terms of what they were not. Using in this case Anthony *and* Cleopatra as counter-examples of what was *eastern* and lascivious, decadent, etc., to his own advantage (cf. Beacham 2005:154-60). On the other side, Augustus' identification with Apollos did not always earn him the favour of the masses. In one occasion the exaggerated luxury of a so-called 'banquet of the twelve gods', where he dressed up like Apollos (Suetonius, *Aug* 70) caused the populace to criticise him, especially because while they lacked food, Augustus' banquet was perceived as an extravagant offense. The masses are willing to follow a person based on difference against 'others', but there always exists the danger that those who model the way may fall trap of the same errors which criticise in others in becoming *too* different!

Marchal (2006:103) rightly points out that whatever privileges Philippi could have received these were mainly targeted towards the citizenry rather than at the local population who, as we have seen, suffered the dispossession of land and the stress of having to change location and/or trade. For Marchal, the 'conditions of Roman colonization would only exacerbate whatever resentment existed between the retiring military forces and the local populations' (:103). Although this cannot be readily accounted for through literary evidence, it seems justified once we take into consideration the different elements of Romanisation from my proposed model. We know, moreover, that cities were 'major bearers of local meaning' (Price 2004:176) and this was even more so in a *colonia*, where the whole community followed specifically Roman rules.

3.3.2.1 Day to Day Living

De Vos describes Philippi under the typology of a *Gemeinschaft* model that is useful to answer some of our concerns. Here relationships are intimate, face to face, and typical of a city with narrow streets that were actually perceived as continuation of one's own house or shop (de Vos 1999a:29-30). Stark (1997:149-151) describes how densely populated life in Graeco-Roman cities was. Cities tended to be small, seldom containing constructions more than five stories tall,

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and people shared streets and space with monumental constructions... and livestock! How was life experienced in such a context? What sorts of relationships were strengthened and which were a source of potential tension? Making use of our (somewhat informed) social-scientific imagination, and building on the efforts of some specialists, let us describe some of these concerns.

The citizen of a city is the person who participates in the same religious practices than that of the city. After all we know that cities were spaces where order could be maintained. Geared toward public space where life was 'lived to the outside'; cities were designed to produce social cohesion and the common identity of its dwellers through participation in ways that are acceptable and support the *status quo* (cf. Moxnes 1995:112). De Coulanges (1971:145) observes that in Rome 'era preciso haber estado presente en la ceremonia santa de la lustración para gozar de los derechos políticos [cf. Cicero, *Caecin* 34]. El hombre que no había asistido, es decir, que no había tomado parte en la oración común y en el sacrificio, no era ciudadano hasta el siguiente lustro'. How this was enforced is another matter which cannot be answered with certainty. Goodman (1994:105) recalls that for the new Christ-followers no participation in the pagan ritual must have marked them out of the system and drawn them to seek a sense of belonging in the new community (cf. de Vos 2000:870-871).

3.3.2.2 Voluntary Associations

I think it is fitting to place voluntary associations under the umbrella of a social system both based on honour and on the need of individuals to belong to meaningful groups larger than the *oikos*. However, *collegia* are not mere philanthropic gatherings, in the same way that patronage relations were not based on such a concept. Garnsey and Saller (1987:156-157) point to the social function of some of these gatherings: '*Collegia*, made up of a few score or few hundred urban residents, were essentially mutual aid societies formed to met basic needs of their members. Organized around cults to patron deities or by occupation, these associations provided for decent burial of the dead as well as periodic festive dinners for the living'. Out of the different kinds of voluntary associations—at least in the provinces—there existed a larger context of the most famous kind of association of citizens in the Roman world: that of the *coloniae civium Romanorum*, 'in which, typically, discharged citizens-soldiers were given the institutions of a city, and the agrarian base from which to make themselves into a prosperous citizen-community' (Purcell 2005:96). It is important to have this is mind when we think about the overall atmosphere of privilege that impregnates the colony in daily life. A privilege based on 'being Roman', as we shall study next.

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3.3.2.3 Roman Citizenship

> For you have divided all the people of the Empire [...] in two classes: the more cultured, better born, and more influential everywhere you have declared Roman citizens and even of the same stock; the rest vassals and subjects.
>
> (Aelius Aristides, *Ad Roma* 59-60)

No city-state in antiquity had ever admitted a hundred per cent of her inhabitants as full-citizens. At most, only a quarter of the population possessed such an honour, for women, children and slaves were excluded (Redfield 1993:193, in Stegemann & Stegemann 2001:372). Citizenship was the privilege of the few, since if it was granted to all it would have ceased to be a mark of distinction (as after Caracalla's edict in AD 212). Rome was not going to be different in this respect. Within a strongly hierarchical society, citizenship was the privilege of the 'good' and the 'able'. Sherwin-White (1973:225) explains it this way: 'the extension of Roman citizenship within the provinces is limited to areas where there is a solid foundation of Italian immigration, and that communities where the native element preponderated were favoured with a grant of Latin rights rather than of the citizenship'. It had been a practice of Rome that had started with Caesar and Augustus and had subsequently slowed down with Tiberius but had found new energy under Claudius until its demise with the *Constitutio Antoniniana* above mentioned. It is under Claudius' reign that we are to understand the much-discussed words of Seneca in *Apocolocyntosis* 3, where Clotho speaks: *Ego mehercules pusillum temporis adicere illi voleban dum hos pauculos qui supersunt civitate donaret. Constituerant enim omnes Graecos Gallos Hispanos Britannos togatos videre; sed quoniam placet aliquos peregrines in semen relinqui, et tu ita iubes fieri, fiat!* ('Lord, I wanted to give him a little time till he could make citizens of the few Greek, Gauls, Spaniards, and Britons in togas. But as the powers would have a few foreigners left for propagation purposes, and your will commends it, so be it'. Trans. Sherwin-White 1973:237)[136].

It there was a clear value to citizenship for Romans, this was mostly appreciated in the provinces. For example, Roman citizens living outside Rome could not vote unless they came to the Mother city. However, 'it was in the company of, and by comparison with, other sorts of Roman *in the provinces* that it was worth having' (Purcell 2005:91). Citizenship, in its fullest sense, and as it appears in the forensic writings of Cicero, contains a double aspect, as Sherwin-White (1973:264) indicates:

[136] This supposed mission of Rome finds echo in Velleius Paterculus' *History of Rome* (1.14-15) which Lomas (1998:103) discusses.

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> It affects both a man's public and private life; politically it brings the exercise of the *honores* and *munera* of the Roman state, and socially the various *iura* by which private life was regulated. The new citizen enters into the contacts and contracts of daily existence under the guidance and protection of Roman law.

It is thus a privileged relationship before the Empire. It is a passport to the exclusive, to a world of privilege that seems to embrace it all. It is a sense of belonging to the *Orbs romanus*, for people are aware that this present world, *hic mundus*, is in reality a sole *civitas*. As Arens (1995:96) reminds us:

> El atractivo de la ciudadanía romana residía en particular en el hecho de que daba a quien la poseía un carácter de exclusividad; lo distinguía de muchos otros individuos, especialmente de los extranjeros, le daba acceso a los privilegios inherentes a la ciudadanía y también a los grupos más privilegiados de la comunidad, si se pertenecía a las altas esferas sociales. La ciudadanía le permitía poseer tierras dentro de los límites de la ciudad, entre otros privilegios. Desde mediados del s. I d.C., los ciudadanos romanos no pagaban impuestos[137].

We need to be cautious, less we fall prey to the error of ascribing excessive value to citizenship, since class ranking was starting to cut across differences between citizens and aliens (Judge 1972:25). Still, some historians have no doubts when they ascribe to citizenship the more definitive identity marker of all. Laurence (1998:103) is one of these: 'It can be seen to be similar to the notions of French nationality that in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was constituted above all through membership of the citizen body rather than being based upon language or ethnicity' (quoting Hobsbawn 1990:88).

There were different and readily-noticeable ways of knowing who was a citizen, not only by the toga, but also by the name of the person. A Roman citizen had three names, the *praenomen* (personal name, with only about fifteen different possibilities), the *nomen* (the surname, from the place of origin) and finally the *cognomen* (the family name the person kept). Thus, when a provincial was admitted as citizen or when a slave was manumitted, he automatically assumed the *praenomen* and *nomen* of his patron and as such would be transmitted to his kin. 'This is a valuable principle of epigraphic dating, for the mention of persons named "Ti. Claudius" or "T. Flavius" immediately sets a *terminus a quo* in the time of Claudius or of Vespasian'; (cf. Hemer 1985:179).

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[137] The subject is dense and complex and my aim is to describe some characteristic which impinge once more on the system of privilege and honour. For the rights of citizens, see Guillén (2000:131).

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Paul is said to be a Roman citizen in the book of Acts, although there is some doubts about this fact, since he never mentions it in his genuine letters. According to Acts (21:39), Paul held a double citizenship that is nevertheless concurrent with certain practice of *poli*-citizenship (cf. Levick 1967:70-71) that could be acquired through different means (Guillén 2000:202: *Ut sit ciuis aut natus oportet, aut factus*). I cannot develop the point further now. I suppose that Paul could have acquired Roman citizenship from his father (cf. Ac 22:28), who at the same time could have acquired it as payment for services to the Empire, as Jerome (*VirIl* 5) pointed out. But it will be in the next chapter that I will use this data to show its relevance for our reading of Philippians.

4. Paul's Experience in Philippi

Usually, little weight is given to the letter to the Philippians as a whole when reflecting on Paul's theology. Those of us who live in the 'Protestant West' have received our major theological emphasis from the more 'theologically dense' letters of Romans and Galatians, which usually form the core of Pauline doctrinal discussion. This factor may both illumine and/or blur our perception of Paul and, aware of this general frame of reference, I would like to suggest that Paul's experience in the colony had a strong bearing on his later theological development. After all, whether the apostle himself wrote the Christ-hymn or made use of a previous tradition, the text of Phlp 2:6-11 responds to a crucial question which is deeply subversive and counter-cultural, as we had opportunity to discuss. Is there anything else in his experience at Philippi which could inform this observation?

4.1 Paul's visits to Philippi

The first information we have about Philippi is found in 1 Thessalonians 2:2 where the apostle Paul narrates the events that surrounded his mission in the area of Thessalonica. He does not mentioned that he founded a community in Philippi; only that he and his companions suffered and were shamefully treated (προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες … ἐν Φιλίπποις). I think this mention is not fortuitous, after all, the letter to the Philippians contains ample references to sufferings for the cause of Christ, perhaps not only on account of Paul's present imprisonment at the time of writing, but because of the Philippians' own situation[138]. The second reference comes from the detailed narrative of events in

[138] In the ancient world there were known many lists that described various sufferings, which eventually became a formal literary genre, especially in the Stoic world. It is today known as

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Acts when Paul and Silas were embarked in their second missionary trip around 49 or 50[139]. In Acts 16:12 we read that Luke refers to the colony as 'the leading city of the district of Macedonia' (RSV), following the best attested reading (ἥτις ἐστὶν πρώτη μέριδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις)[140]. This reference is deemed by many to be a wrong statement which cannot be ascribed to Luke, well acquainted with local geography. The fact is that Philippi was neither a capital nor Macedonia a 'district' (Koester 1998:51)[141]. As we have pointed above, Macedonia was one of the provinces, and it is therefore better to translate the expression as 'which belongs to the *first* district of Macedonia' (ἥτις ἐστὶν *πρώτης* μέριδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις), following the conjecture of the GNT[4] (its support [it[c] vg[mss] slav], though meagre, makes better sense.) However, this cannot, and does not, settle the issue. Ascough (1998a:93) believes that 'despite losing the factual accuracy of the passage, the better attested reading πρώτη μέριδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις must be retained at Acts 16.12. This reading finds support in the social context of civic pride in Greco-Roman antiquity'. The above discussion shows that at times textual decisions are made on historical, rather than manuscript evidence[142]. Although Ascough's work does not alleviate all the obstacles (the use of 'district' rather than 'province'), it has the benefit of dealing with the better-attested text and from then dealing with the historical issues, rather than starting from the other end[143]. From the insights he presents we learn that rivalry among Greek cities on account of *honour* seems to have been a source of instability with which Roman authorities had to deal (Magie 1950:635-639; in Ascough 1998a:100). If

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Peristasenkatalog = catalogue of difficult circumstances (from Greek περίστασις). Cf. Dunn (1988:505). 2 Cor 6:4-10 is a typical case of this type of lists. We will have ample space to treat this subject in more detail in the next two chapters.

[139] Acts tells us of a possible second trip to the colony (Acts 20:1-6), and even a third one could be pointed at in 2 Corinthians 7:5.

[140] 𝔓[74] ℵ A C Ψ 33 36 81 181 307 453 610 945 1175 1678 1891 2344 *l* 884.

[141] The D text has added a further incongruence to 'fix' the scenario: κηφαλὴ της, which obviously points to the fact that the scribe who produced it had no knowledge of the local geography (cf. Witherington 1998a:489; Bockmuehl 1997a:13).

[142] As Ascough (1998a:94) points out, Macedonia was not a district (μερίς) but a Roman province (σατραπεία) divided into four districts (μερίδες). Nowhere do we learn that Philippi was a first city of Macedonia. Such an honour belonged to Thessalonica, and Philippi was never the capital of any district, an honour enjoyed by Amphipolis. Neither can the reference be to the first Macedonian city where Paul arrived, for Philippi's port was Neapolis. Ascough concludes: 'Thus, the description of Philippi as "a first city of the district of Macedonia" is factually wrong on several points' (:94).

[143] Contrary, among others, with the conservative and more cautious commentary of Bruce (1988b:308-9) who allows an 'unattested' Greek manuscript reading, ἥτις ἐστὶν πρώτης μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις, only supported later on in Latin, Provençal and German. (Bruce follows here presuppositions already posed by F Field, F Blass and C H Turner that were later defended by E Haenchen and H Conzelmann).

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Luke made use of a different source here, the so-called 'we'-passages source[144], then we could be tempted to think that the author was from Philippi and such a recourse was not other than 'civic-pride rhetoric', possibility already contemplated by some specialists[145]. However, there is a strong possibility that this expression portrays Luke's view of the honour of the colony rather that an accurate statement of the political role of the city. 'What Luke has done here is praised the city in accordance with the rhetorical rules for the praise of a city[146]'. Another attractive explanation of the text comes from Sherwin-White, that is, that Philippi, being a Roman colony in Greek soil, provoked on their inhabitants a sense of superiority over neighbouring cities, however larger or more populous these could be (Sherwin-White 1963:94)[147]. He goes onto assert that despite the difficult reading as it stands, it actually 'guarantees its authenticity' and that its mention (of the districts in this case) 'suggests the eye-witness' (:93-95). The list of suggestions grows larger as many look at the issue

[144] We cannot detain here for long. It is rather revealing to see that there is a shift in the reference to the characters (from 3rd p. plural to the 1st p. plural) from the time Paul and companions travel to Troas and receive this vision ('*they* travel', '*they* attempted', etc.) until the moment they respond to this call for help in 16:10: 'And when he had seen the vision, immediately *we* sought…'. The 'we-passage' source extends to 16:17 and it will reappear once again at 20:5 (cf. Haechen 1971:495; Bockmuehl 1997a:12-13). After much opposing opinion, there is a growing trend to treat this source as first-hand acquaintance material (see Hemer 1989). For a complete treatment on the possible sources; cf. Fitzmyer (1998:80-89).

[145] Among others, Ramsay (1895:206-9), who confirms the validity of civic honour and the way the Philippians considered their own city. Pilhofer (1995:155-8, 205) maintains that Luke himself was a native Greek from Philippi who referred to himself as the 'man of Macedonia' in Acts 16:9. This arrangement is hardly plausible and excessively intricate, and 'unnecessary' (Ascough 1998a:102), but it could signal the use of local knowledge; (cf. Sherwin-White 1963:93).

[146] Witherington (1998a:489) cites the works of Menander Rhetor, *Treatises* and Dio Chrysostom, *Or* in support of this view. Neyrey (10/01/2007:8) provides useful comments on the significance of honour rating of cities and its impact on their dwellers. For Ramsay (1895:206-9) this mention concerning honour rating is not other than how the Philippians viewed the importance of their own city, and thus it implies local knowledge.

[147] Purcell (2005:86-87) comments on the fate of how Roman colonisation/occupation clashed at times with the plans of local kings. The case of Mithridates (88-7 BC) king of Pontus serves as paradigm of some other cases. Mithridates ordered that Romans (perhaps between 80 000 to 150 000) be executed in the areas under his control, since they were becoming a hindrance to his own plans (Memnon, *FGH* 352.22.9). The next generation of Romans never forgot the massacre (Cicero, *Imp Pomp* II). But the important point is that after Mithridates' death the 'new arrangement for Roman outsiders in communities became more than ever the primary language for statements about the status and privileges for those communities in relation to the ruling power. The Mithridatic war thus placed the Roman diasporas' centre-stage in the spectacle of intercity competition and the quest for status, honour, and prosperity. Their fortunes became the gauge of loyalty. Exact and detailed record of how each community had behaved before, during, and after the conflict was therefore essential, and remained so until the *domus Augusta* took over as the principal currency of pro-Roman zeal' (:87). Somehow for Purcell diaspora Romans served as a kind of historical witness to the loyalty of the city, colony, etc. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the area around Philippi (Pella) had at least experienced an upsurge in 149 BC that succumbed under ruthless Roman deployment.

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with new eyes and apply different disciplines to the text. Rather than looking at the complexity of the reading of the text as sure proof of its need for emendation or as proof of Luke's historical inaccuracy, it can be understood as portraying a sort of personal significance beyond a mere historical 'flat' reading of it[148].

Paul visited Philippi on two other occasions. There is a mention in 1 Cor 15:5f (his allegedly second visit) which 'does not seem to have been particularly peaceable to judge by the note in 2 Cor 7:5' (Collange 1979:2). The third visit could have taken place due to a confabulation on the part of some Jews against Paul, that forced him to move to Macedonia (Ac 20:1-6). Clearly Paul was trying to get soon to Jerusalem with a delegation from his Gentile churches as a token of appreciation (together with the Offering) to the mother church there (cf. Joubert 2000b).

'We have to wait some decades until the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians in the first quarter of the second century before we hear again of the Christian community at Philippi, upon which the memory of the great apostle remained deeply impressed' (Collange 1979:3. See also Polycarp, *Ep* 9:1f; 3:2; 11:2f).

4.2 Acts: A Reliable Historical Source?

Since my search for a better understanding of the letter to the Philippians is to rely on the text of Acts, it seems appropriate to focus on its historical reliability that so strongly has been contested by some. It is clear that Acts, following the historiographical patterns of its time, depicts an ideal Christian community that fulfils both the longings of the Hebrew Bible promises and the highest ideals of the Graeco-Roman world. Hengel (1979:35-39) perceives Acts as a good example of Hellenistic historical monograph. Aguirre (1989:21) mentions in this regard the Assyrian-Roman historian Lucian of Samosata (*ca* AD 120-190), who composed a treatise on how to write history which we know through its Latin title *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit*. He was the only person of antiquity from whom we have received a 'manual' on such matters. It is then possible that, although writing perhaps a century earlier, the author of Luke-Acts could have accommodated to the principles Lucian remarks as he comments on several historians that have preceded him. Witherington (1998:24-39) agrees with this observation and further remarks that it goes against the old argument which said that ancient historians did not discriminate between myths and historical

[148] For further suggestions on this and the identity of Paul's companion on the 'we-passages', see Witherington (1994:106-107; 1998a:490). Bockmuehl (1997a:16) opines that neither it is possible or appropriate to attempt a 'neutral' reconstruction.

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facts (:25), and places Luke-Acts as a piece of historiography which draws from several traditions which in fact presents a general apologetic aim (:39). Maddox (1982:16) concurs with this assessment and defines Luke-Acts as 'theological history'.

Neyrey (1991) argues from a different perspective that complements this historical search. For him, historical questions are only part of the wider search and adds to the former the *rhetorical strategy* in order to better appraise the intention of the author and how he wanted to present Paul in the book of Acts. But Neyrey's argument places the weight on the intention of the author and leaves unanswered questions about historical reliability. His idea, though, helps us look beyond mere historicism as the only validating tool. Witherington (1998:2-21) studies the nature of the genre of Acts and finds no obstacle in defining it as a historiographical work, primarily theocentric and christocentric, which is decisive as far as where the author places his focus and interest. However, such efforts seem to evade the crucial question of Acts' historical trustworthiness. Tellbe (2001:15-16) has noticed a shift in the way scholarship perceives Acts, which is turning from the hyper-critical perception of the Tübingen school to a more moderate and nuanced position. Winter (2001:xiv) defends Act's reliability which, although unfashionable for a certain part of New Testament scholarship, 'it is certainly not among ancient historians; they gladly accept it where such parallel exist with a corpus, and information about activities of its author is found elsewhere: the measured use by ancient historians of the letters of Cicero in dealing with the Catiline rebellion and the only slightly later history of it by Sallust [...] The approach of ancient historians must question the judgment of those who would dismiss outright or unscholarly any use at all of Acts in work on a letter in the Pauline Corpus'. I agree with Tellbe's assessment of a paradigmatic practice in some current scholarship that seems to take a face-value any ancient quote as representative of that society's make-up, but rejects any possible historical reliability for Acts on grounds that its author's purpose is too theologically nuanced and excessively pro-Pauline:

> Considering that Luke obviously had both a historical and a theological purpose with his two writings (Luke 1:1-4), the challenge for today's scholars is to take both the historiographical function and the theological-rhetorical conception of this double work at face value (Tellbe 2001:16).

Luke's use of κολωνία (Ac 16:12) rather than the usual ἀποικία, reflects that he was knowledgeable with the fact that this term implied certain legal and constitutional specifications that the second did not (Tajra 1989:5). The above discussion on the use of πρώτη or πρώτης for Philippi (16:12) shows that the different 'parties' for or against Luke's historical reliability may shift to conform

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to a pattern sometimes well outside the control of Luke himself. Take for example Ascough's (1999:95) timely comments: 'Some, having emended the text to reflect accurately the historical situation, then go on to praise "Luke" for factual accuracy in details of geography, status and terminology for Philippi, even suggesting that this shows Luke to be the actual author of this passage. It is too quickly forgotten that without the emendation Luke is factually inaccurate in describing Macedonia as a μερίς'. Much has been said against the use of Acts as a reliable historical source for the study of Paul that cannot be treated here[149]. I believe Acts is historically trustworthy in the broad details of the incident, although I am aware that it is narrated according to the literary conventions of the day. Thus, the exorcism as it is told finds parallel in the stories of powerful deeds carried by Christian miracle-workers (Ps-Cl, *Hom* 9.16.3) or the earthquake as result of the apostles' singing (cf. TJos 8.5; in Koester 1998:52).

Luke's use of the term στρατεγοὶ (16:20) has also disconcerted some, since in the colonies it was expected to use Latin designations (for example Koester 1983:333). Haverfield (1899:434-5) mentions that Luke's στρατηγοὶ expression was the standard translation of the Latin term *praetores*, which was superseded by *duoviri* by the end of the first century BC. Ramsay affirmed that the magistrates of a colony could at times be known by the name στρατηγοὶ or ἄρχων. 'Perhaps in such a case we may understand that ἄρχων is the more general term, meaning "member of the supreme board", while στρατηγοὶ was the more exact and precise designation of the board by its official title' (Ramsay 1899:114-115)[150].

If the first part of the Philippian narrative seems to have been generally accepted as a kind of straight-forward story, many questions arise when

[149] Just to give a glimpse, there are those who maintain an extreme historical scepticism (Stegemann & Stegemann 2001) as well as others not nearly so sceptical although not renouncing that the text has suffered from a strong redactional process; (cf. Callahan 1998:70-2; for the Philippian incident, see pp. 76-77). My stance is that although recognising Lukan redaction as part of the literary conventions of the epoch, and his particular theological emphasis, we can be confident that the narrative is faithful to the *core* of the events and its interpretation. Oakes (2001:77-8) reminds us that '[m]any elements of New Testament texts that were once seen as indicating redactional seams are now seem as features of rhetorical, epistolary or narrative technique'. Meeks, who was at first sceptical about the reliability of Acts seems to have changed his mind in later years (Meeks 1991:331, n 6).

[150] This use must not be overlooked. If we are dealing with a Roman colony, the *logical* way to refer to the *praetors* would have been in Latin (*duumviri/duoviri*, literally 'two men'), especially when it has been suggested that Roman-ness was breathed through and through. But Luke was writing in Greek and needed to translate the term in such a way that it could be apprehended by his readers. Sherwin-White (1963:93) reminds us that we are dealing in fact with an 'untranslatable term'.

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dealing with the miraculous events that take place in the local jail[151]. Certainly the story presents a colourful background that closely parallels that of Peter's in Acts 12. It is important for the author of Luke-Acts to convey the message that 'the Word' is in no way prisoner to the desires of those opposing forces and extends all over despite bitter persecution[152]. There are several elements in the second part of the chapter (the scene at the jail) which beg for further explanation, but the author has deemed that the information which it already contains must have been sufficient to account for the core of the message. The author's silence at this point may frustrate our deeper search for historical reconstruction, but it serves him for the purpose he is writing it for (Lk 1:1-4; Ac 1:1-2)[153].

Although we could dwell longer on the subject, what really matters for my particular concern is to ascertain if the general lay-out we perceive in Acts is historically trustworthy and as such a useful source to understand the context of Roman colonies in Greek soil. Sartre (1994:200-201) concurs with the view that what Acts provides in its major frame of work seems to be perfectly apropos with what had taken place at the time:

> Los Hechos de los Apóstoles sin duda no exageran la agitación que se apodera de las ciudades cuando Pablo y sus discípulos se presentan para predicar. En todas partes el pueblo manifiesta un interés extraordinario por todo lo que es nuevo y milagroso. En Listra, Antioquía de Pisidia, Tesalónica, Corinto, Filipos, Iconio, Beroia y tantas otras ciudades, la gente se precipita para escuchar a

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[151] For our concerns, it is worthwhile to listen to Lieu (2004:157): 'The Philippians jailer who responds to the earthquake with the question, "What must I do to be saved?", and is then immediately baptized (Acts 16. 25-34), presents a colourful and compelling dramatic character, but a highly problematic model of self-conscious Christian identity, and one that is simultaneously challenged by the unasked-for baptism of his household'. This is true, although there are other social dynamics at play here that need to be accounted for (kinship, especially *paterfamilias*, etc.), but she is right about the lack of information that leads to his total acceptance of the Christian faith.

[152] This is indeed a very Pauline use of the term (2 Tm 2:9: ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ οὐ δέδεται), but no less certain for Luke.

[153] Although in general terms I accept as historically reliable the account of Acts, the truth of the matter is that we can do so attending to the *emic* historiographical elements mentioned above (Lucian of Samosata). Having said this, there exist some elements in the narrative which lack explanation in order to be more fully understood. For example, nothing is commented about the earthquake which shutters the local jail but does not to affect the rest of the city. The strange mention in 16:28 where Paul warns the jailer not to commit suicide, since they are 'all here' (ἅπαντες γάρ εσμεν ἐνθάδε), awakes more questions than answers. Is Paul referring to all the inmates or just to Silas and himself? If the former is true, does this mean that all the inmates went back to jail in order to preserve the life of the jailer? As much as we can argue over these issues, the truth of the matter is that secondary details are just that, secondary, at least for the ancient author of Luke-Acts.

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> Pablo, lo mismo que acudirían ansiosos para oir [sic] a Apolonio de Tiana o a cualquier retor de talento.

Thus, despite strong criticism, exaggerated nuancing and skepticism, I maintain that the book of Acts can be used as a historical reliable source to provide a general but nevertheless accurate description of first-century milieu in the area which concerns us.

4.3 The Incident at Philippi as Test Case

The text of Acts 16:1-40 is inserted within Paul and Silas' second missionary journey. For reasons of space we only reproduce verses 9-24 which form the core of our discussion.

> 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing
> beseeching him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 And
> when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia,
> concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. 11 Setting sail
> therefore from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the
> following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is the leading
> city of the district of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. We remained in this city
> some days; 13 and on the sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside,
> where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to
> the women who had come together. 14 One who heard us was a woman named
> Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper
> of God. The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul. 15
> And when she was baptized, with her household, she besought us, saying, "If
> you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay."
> And she prevailed upon us. 16 As we were going to the place of prayer, we were
> met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much
> gain by soothsaying. 17 She followed Paul and us, crying, "These men are
> servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." 18
> And this she did for many days. But Paul was annoyed, and turned and said to
> the spirit, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it
> came out that very hour. 19 But when her owners saw that their hope of gain
> was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place
> before the rulers; 20 and when they had brought them to the magistrates they
> said, *"These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city.* 21 *They advocate customs*
> *which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice."* 22 The crowd joined in
> attacking them; and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders
> to beat them with rods. 23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them,
> they threw them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. 24 Having
> received this charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in
> the stocks.

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4.3.1 Setting up the Scene

Little is said about Paul's stay in the area if we are to assume that he founded one of his most loyal communities that continued supporting him and his cause for long (cf. Phlp 4:15). The incident reflects the most outstanding event in the colony, the 'first clash between the apostle and non-Jewish interest involving ordinary citizens of a commune, which was in fact a Roman colony' (Sherwin-White 1963:79). Whereas in other cities it was the Jewish population the one opposing Paul, here we have Roman citizens, a rather marked shift in the narrative of Acts. However, one of the characteristic that stands out as we look at the passage is Luke's rich attention to detail in concern to geographical and historical references. No wonder some scholars have concluded that Luke himself drew from first-hand witness when commenting on the events in Philippi. The passage is sufficiently well-known that we need to focus only on the more relevant aspects. Acts suggests that Jewish population was meagre if represented at all in Philippi. Luke does not report anything of importance until the Sabbath day arrived and they went 'to the *outside* of the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer' (Ac 16:13 RSV)[154]. There they met with a few women, amongst them a merchant from Thyatira named Lydia, a woman of relative means that lodged Paul and Silas in her house (16:15) after having been baptized with her whole household (16:14, ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς)[155]. Luke uses the curious expression καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς ('and she prevailed upon us', 16:15) that some understand as a necessary yielding to the offer (εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι, εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε) because to 'refuse hospitality was always a serious breach of etiquette in antiquity, but to do so in this case would in addition suggest that Paul and Luke

[154] This practice is consistent with what Paul does elsewhere (Ac 9:20; 13:5, 14-48; 14:1; 17:1; 18:4). For the possible location of the 'place of meeting', cf. Festugière (1947:132-33). That this place was outside the city is revealing. Maybe it had to do with lack of legal status (legal/accepted religions were practiced within city limits). This situation is rather odd since Jews were normally allowed to carry on with their own customs and religion unless it transgressed the *status quo*. It may be impossible to know, although we may read this episode in light of Claudius' decree in AD 48. What we can consider, nevertheless, is the importance of cultural/symbolic use of space in the narrative of Acts (cf. Elliott 1991 & Neyrey 1991).

[155] Amongst the many interesting discussions on the identity of Lydia, see Fitzmyer (1998:585-6) and de Vos (1999a:256-58). According to the latter, although a person of means, she needed not be a Roman citizen, and is likely she was a *liberta*. However, Bockmuehl (1997a:17-18) thinks that 'Lydia' could very well refer to a proper name and not to a geographical epithet ('Lydian woman'). He comments that some Roman authors referred to that name as a Roman proper name (Horace, *Odes*; Martial, *Epigrams*) in the context of Philippi, and opines she could be deemed Roman. See also Haechen (1971:494), who amusingly comments on the different identifications of Lydia in the history of interpretation. One of these interpreters, Renan, identified her as Paul's wife!

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and Silas and Timothy thought of Lydia's conversion and faithfulness were less than genuine' (Witherington 1998a:492)[156].

Later on, as they set for the 'place of prayer' once more[157] (16:16 εἰς τήν προσευχὴν) they encounter a salve-girl with a spirit of divination (a 'python spirit', that is, she was inspired by the spirit of Apollo, who on occasion was embodied as a snake) that follows them, day after day (16:18), until Paul, annoyed, is forced to perform an exorcism. The *pythōn* was the mythical serpent slain by Apollo (Ovid, *Met* 1:438-447; cf. Johnson 1992:293). It was depicted in this way in the temple at Delphi (cf. Witherington 1998a:493-4). For a more complete description of the term, see Fitzmyer (1998:586). It is interesting to observe that the slave-girl associates them with the 'Most High God'. This reference has been interpreted in many and varying ways. Some think that it depicts a true utterance by the power of an evil spirit, which cannot be entirely ruled out, but which does not fit with the colony's pattern of lack of Jewish presence. Bruce (1988b:312-313) speaks of an expression both fitting to Jews and Gentiles for a supreme being and goes on to show evidence both in the LXX and other Greek texts. Haechen (1971:495) believes the reference is clearly to Jesus since the narrative is set in Gentile soil and believes that 'our passage has nothing to do with the syncretistic divinity Θεὸς ὕψιστος'. Whether true or false statements[158], Paul is deeply annoyed by her persistent vociferous actions

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[156] Maybe the answer has to do more with the awkwardness of several men lodging in a woman's house in a society with strict social and genre-related conventions. Reimer (1995) thinks that behind Lydia's urging is her interest to protect them from the official mob of violence that she perceives likely to occur (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:15). It is possible that Luke is just portraying here a parallelism with what has earlier happened to Peter and Cornelius (Ac 10), see Fitzmyer (1998:586). Moxnes (1991:262-3) perceives Lydia as a type of Christian benefactor and her offer as an act of reciprocity for the greater benefits received. For further (and possible) implications of this designation in the Lukan narrative; cf. Stale (1999:124-25).

[157] The river where the meeting took place has been identified by many as the Gangites, but this river is 2.4 km from Philippi. This distance, however, would prevent the pious practicing Jews from attending on the Sabbath, since it was too far for a Sabbath-day journey (see Ac 1:12; *m. Erubin* 4:3: 2 000 cubits or 800 metres); cf. Fitzmyer(1998:585). Koukouli-Chrysantaki (1998:21) reads παρὰ ποταμόν (16:13) modifying τῆς πύλης ('the city gate at the river side') and not προσευχήν. Thus, it refers to the third gate which is a mere fifty metres from the river. It makes sense therefore to identify the river (rather 'creek') close to the south-western gate, i.e., 'Crenides' (an affluent of the Gangites); cf. Festugière (1947:132-33). The expression 'where we supposed (οὗ ἐνομίξομεν) that there was a place of prayer' (Ac 16:13) has an alternative reading in A*vid E 36 307 610, etc., and points to 'as it was customary' (cf. Tellbe 2001:221). It looks as if Paul and companions did not know whether there was a synagogue in the city and had no contacts to secure it. Luke's use of the term may just reflect this uncertainty.

[158] I think the utterance of the slave-girl was probably accurate, but had the unfortunate link with the god Sabazius, frequently addressed in such a manner (*Theos hypsistos*), cf. Beare (1973³:7-9; *pace* Haechen). The consequences of such an action are clear: the people to whom Paul's group was trying to reach could then come to the conclusion that what they were announcing was the advent of the divinity already worshipped in the colony since old. Rapske

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and responds accordingly: by the 'name of Jesus Christ' he casts out the spirit. 'No spirit' translates in no powers of divination to help her owners amass their share[159]. Trouble is sure to come.

4.3.2 The Charges

At the sight of such a source of income depleted of its former power, the slave-girl owners bring Paul's delegation before the rulers/magistrates (ἄρχοντες) in the agora, the public place of meeting (see 17:17)[160]. However, despite Luke's previous mention in which he focused on the 'many gains that the girl provided to her owners' (16:16), it is striking for many specialists that the charges against Paul's group are of a different and double nature (Sherwin-White 1963:79). As far as we know, exorcism was not an illegal practice, neither it was to profess the Jewish religion; cf. Tajra (1989:13). Rapske (1994:116) is illuminating in this respect: 'As the aggrieved owners of the girl could hardly make a case by alleging property damage, they constructed other charges'. The accusations are actually two[161]. On the one hand the owners[162] accuse 'these Jews[163] of

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(1994:116-7) opines that the *pagan* connotations of the title account for Paul's disquiet, but concludes that it is better to think in the overlapping of both Jewish and Greek influences. However, there is still another possible explanation. Sabazius had been associated with Yahweh, although this association has not been explained up to date. We know that Jews were expelled from Rome in 189 BC on account of trying to corrupt Romans with the cult of Sabazius Jupiter: *Ioudaeos qui Sabazi Iovis cultu Romanos inficere mores conati errant* (Val Max 1.3.2; cf. Koester 1983:195). If this fact was known to the inhabitants of the colony, Why not use it against Paul and Silas on similar grounds at the incident at Rome much earlier? Maybe here is the clue in order to explain the apparently strange charges the slave-girl owners brought against Paul and company.

[159] Staley (1999:127-134) provides an interesting contrast between the 'good' woman (Lydia) and the 'bad' one (slave-girl) in the overall planning of Luke-Acts. These two women reflect 'the conflicted status of colonized people' (:134).

[160] This is very much the idea behind the MS D, which reads: 'that they had been deprived of the money-making they had through her' (cf. Fitzmyer 1998:587). Johnson (1992:295) calls attention to the parallelism between 'that same hour it came out' and 'hope for their profit had gone out', characteristically Lukan of linking the fate of persons with their earthly possessions (Lk 11:21-22; 12:20-21; Ac 8:20).

[161] Talbert (1997:152), followed by Staley (1999:125), perceives three accusations: 1. being Jews, 2. disturbing the peace, and 3. advocating (unlawful) customs, but the 'Jewishness' of the accused plays in both charges as we have them in Acts

[162] Are they Roman by birth or maybe from a rich class and were able to acquire Roman citizenship? The narrative does not answer the question, but we can affirm that their status gives them the right and privilege of going against the 'others' even call for justice in a case which is quite dubious unless privilege gives the upper hand in this context.

[163] Greek Ἰουδαῖοι. This word is usually translated as 'Jews', but Esler (following the lead of J H Elliott and others) suggests that it actually reflects a 'miss-translation', since it carries a weight and significance which entails a series of memories (persecution, laceration, Jesus' killers, Second World War, etc.) that do not do justice to how the people of first century Mediterranean

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disturbing the city' and of 'advocating customs which is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice' (16:20-21)[164]. We do not really know what kind of practices (ἔθη) they refer to. I think it actually matters little. Once the mechanism of stereotyping is set into place, it is quite easy to understand the 'other' through such lenses[165]. The charge of 'disturbing the peace' is a serious one in a Roman context, especially when we are dealing with a colony at a distance from the neuralgic centre of the Empire. Sartre (1994:198-99) observes: 'El miedo al desorden aparece permanentemente en filigrana en los discursos de los retores, los *Hechos de los Apóstoles* o las cartas de Plinio el Joven. Las autoridades romanas temen, tanto como los notables, los movimientos del pueblo. Cualquier cosa que puede provocar la agitación o facilitarla es objeto de una atención particular'. Sartre follows with a description of cases in which emperors revoked certain rights of assembly (e.g., a youth association in Cyzicus) in areas where there was a concern that such bodies could function

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society understood themselves. Thus, he opts for a neologism, 'Judeans', which has reference to a geographical description ('people of Judea') and their cultic practice rather than to events which took place after the first century, and which he sees nuanced in Josephus, *BJ* 2.43. Esler (2003:65f, especially 68) concludes: 'To honor the memory of these first-century people it is necessary to call them by a name that accords with their own sense of identity'. However, this usage is by no means universally accepted and most authors opt for the traditional designation. Oakes (2004:513), who reviews Esler's study on Romans, affirms: 'I can see the strength of Esler's argument for "Judean". However, I am sceptical about the prospective stability of neologism, especially quasi-neologisms such as this one, which would always need glossing with the adding that it did not mean "resident of Judea"'. Of similar opinion is Horrell (2005:91-92), this time concerning Esler's use of "Christ-followers", which the latter prefers instead of "Christians" (which Horrell ultimately rejects on similar grounds as does Oakes with "Judean"). What it is important here, though, is to recall that in the Graeco-Roman world 'to be an ethnos was as much a matter of customs as of place of origin, it becomes evident that this should be seen as an ethnic and not as a purely religious self-definition' (Lieu 2004:244). I have chosen to quote the complete phrase although she is referring here to 2 Mac 6:1-6. However, what she writes can perfectly apply to our context provided we understand that in this case we are not talking of self-designation but of categorization done by others. There is much to say on this respect. Tellbe (2001:65) observes that early on in history Jesus' followers were addressed as χριστιανός (Ac 11:26), which is equivalent to the Latin version *Christianos* used by Tacitus (*An* 15.44). According to Tellbe (2001:65), the distinction between 'Jews' and 'Christians' had become a matter of public consciousness in some parts of the eastern empire already by the beginning of AD 40s.

[164] The owners could have been husband and wife (κυρίοι, 16:19), perhaps wealthy and with strong influence in the community (cf. Rapske 1994:119). See also *BDAG*, 459 for examples of this use, but it could also mean a corporation or a business syndicate. Beard, North and Price (1998:240) comment on the accusation and mention that such a feeling must have been prevalent in the second century, with the spread of Roman-style cults in the west.

[165] Lieu (2004:123-4), citing Greek and Roman authors on Jewish 'misanthropy', writes that '[m]ost of these authors [Tacitus, Horace, Diodorus Siculus, etc.] are writing about the "Jews" of Judea, an ethnographical oddity who resisted total absorption into either the Hellenistic or the Roman Empire', but that nevertheless was easily repeated once the stereotypes were established, since some of these peculiar practices required an aetiological explanation.

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beyond established patterns. It is worth recalling the in that city, in 20 BC Roman citizens had been beaten and killed in rioting (Dio LIV.7), for which the city had been severely punished (Purcell 2005:94). This accusation, as de Vos (1999b:51) suggests, can only refer to the accusation of the slave-owners who bring Paul and Silas to the magistrates, not the crowds, that until then are not involved in the event. But, 'as it stands in the text an accusation of disturbing the peace is one that could easily have been refuted by Paul and Silas' (:52).

The second accusation may refer, as some commentators understand it, to a legal ban on foreign cults, but as far as I am aware, there was no specific law against Roman citizens becoming Jews, not until later, in the fourth century (:52). For Fitzmyer (1998:587) the reason that links both charges resides in the fact that those who disturb are *Jews* and thence the owners play exploiting the general Roman suspicion towards Jews. He cites Tacitus (*Hist* 5.5): *adversus omnis alios hostile odium*, "of all others (they have) a hostile hatred", and Juvenal (*Sat* 14.96-106). We cannot be certain that such a suspicion was wide-spread among the population. What we know, however, is that the charge of exorcism could have brought with it 'unwanted' explanations from the owners (perhaps of abusing gullible people? These could perhaps be inferred from Luke's use of the Hellenistic technical term μαντεύομαι). The breaching of the harmony of the city by their foreign practices 'forced' upon the inhabitants of the colony could carry with enough strength as to convince —in the rush of the moment— both magistrates and crowd alike. We know that Claudius had recently tried to extinguish Jewish dispersion expelling these from Rome, and some historians take this instance as the resurgence of this sentiment in colonial areas (Sherwin-White 1963:81)[166]. We are dealing with a rather sensible issue. Sherwin-White is helpful in this respect: 'The Julio-Claudian period was characterized by general laxity towards foreign cults, which spread freely in Italy and Rome. But this laxity is occasionally interrupted by a sharp reversal of policy when the extravagances of a particular sect call down a temporary and ill-enforced ban upon its activities' (:79). Recognizing this thin line helps us see that the slave-girl owners could have very well orchestrated the charges as to mean that unless Paul and Silas were punished there was danger of social instability in the known-for-its-quietness colony, a breach in the worshipped *Concordia* that no magistrate would want to be accused of.

For what we know, there was no legal banning concerning citizens accepting other faiths—unless their practices violated the *mos maiorum* (precisely the

[166] According to Schwartz (1984:359) there is evidence that Jews were expelled from Rome in 139 BC on account of a syncretistic Jewish preaching of Jupiter Sabaizos. To justify his claim he names Valerius Maximus (supposedly?) quoted in Stern (1974:357-60), and believes that if the accusers were really interested in this issues they should have stated their case as in the case of Valerius Maximus.

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second accusation, 16:21: ἔθη, from Latin *mores*)[167]. It is the more striking to see how strong Roman sentiment is placed within the charges, and how 'Roman' the scene is portrayed. Even at the sight of this, Jones affirms that Roman law was rarely applicable in the Greek East: 'It was the law of the colonies and the *municipia*, but the vast majority of cities followed their own codes' (Jones 1963:4). Though in Roman legislation conversion of Roman citizens to Judaism was a punishable offence (see Cicero, *Leg* 2.8.19), the law was not enforced in a rigid manner (cf. Rapske 1994:118, 128). I believe Rapske is right at pointing that magistrates outside Rome could probably be stricter within the limits of their *potestas*, and thus within the law. The reaction in Ac 16:39 confirms it.

'Despite Gentile misunderstanding and antipathy toward Jews caused by "these" customs [impossibility of military service, Sabbath observance, dietary regulations, etc.], their practice *by* Jews did not constitute a chargeable offence in Roman law. Proselytism, however, was a different matter'[168]. We need to comment on the high privilege Romans had over their native neighbours in the colony. I find the fact that the accusers so readily identify themselves as Romans as evidence that their status in the colony was not contested. We have seen before that the process of colonisation did have and still had its own difficulties and potentially entailed tense relationships with local inhabitants. Their 'freedom' as Romans to accuse others put a bit more of pressure on the local magistracies that, according to the narrative, are only informed of the Roman-citizenship status of the accused after all harm has been done. It is important for us, in order to reconstruct this passage more faithfully, to recall what Purcell (2005:94-95) says: 'Recognized, conciliated, lionized, hated as collectivities in the cities, groups of Roman citizens in the formal sense might think of themselves as microcosms of the self-conscious Roman citizen-community as a whole. Their self-estimation was supported by magistrates at Rome, who allowed, or encouraged, through patronage, no doubt, and with patronage's usual rewards in mind, recognition of some of these groups of citizens as formal collectivities under Roman law, Associations of Roman Citizens (*conventus civum Romanorum*)'. The *coloniae* were a kind of this type of associations with important *beneficia*. Without a fair appreciation of such privileges we are in danger to be side-tracked from the 'factual grounds' in

[167] De Vos (1999b:52-53) observes: 'Furthermore, a charge related to the ban would not fit the historical context of Philippi in the first century CE. For example, the cult of the Egyptians gods appears to have been very popular in the city in that period, and Romans were clearly among the adherents'. Nevertheless, there was certain antipathy against the Jews as of people who upheld absurd ideas (e.g., Tacitus, *Hist* 5.4.1 and 5.5.5; cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:15). Curiously, the incident is presented in the narrative as the reverse of the perception the Jerusalem church has concerning Peter approaching a pagan's house in Acts 10-11. 'Difference' is always in the 'eye of the beholder'.

[168] Rapske (1994:118, original emphasis, my brackets). Rapske agrees with Schwartz's conjecture in that the accusers are Roman *Jews*.

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which the charges take place. Some commentators speak of Judaism as a *religio licita* and comment that Luke was trying to portray that Christianity was on her way to become one 'legally-accepted religion' as well[169]. Koester (1980:233) affirms that this opinion is, at best, anachronistic. Rajak (1984:107) already pointed out that there was not a formalised 'Jewish charter' and that the expression is not representative of the vicissitudes Jewish communities underwent in the Graeco-Roman world (cf. Tellbe 2001:54-56).

However, for some scholars the charges the accusers present before the magistrates do not seem to 'fit' with what is really taking place[170]. De Vos believes the charges are ultimately redactional and that underneath these we can find, through the use of the theory of deviance, accusations of using 'magic' (de Vos 1999b:58)[171]. We are not really told how the slave-girl owners came about with these accusations, but Luke notes that the crowds quickly join in as they are upheld in front of the magistrates in the agora. Having in mind de Vos' description of Philippi as a *Gemeinschaft*-type community, it is not difficult to imagine how the influence of locals would have had pressed on both the magistrates and the driven masses against Paul and Silas. The narrative seems

[169] This is one of the purposes that Fitzmyer (1998:588) discerns behind Luke's narrative and one that he specially underlines in the incident in Philippi.

[170] Schwartz's (1984:361-363) arguments to convince us that the accusers are Jews (and Roman citizens) and that by their accusation are trying to put some distance between Paul and Silas and themselves opens the text up to new questions rather than answer them. If they had known the apostle's teaching it must have been by the river bank and Luke makes clear that no Jewish men were about (16:13). If the slave-girl was present there, why did Luke narrate the exorcism as on the way to the meeting (for several days) and not as an encounter there were they met? Schwartz bases his case on differentiating between ὑπάρχω ('continuity with a previous state', that is, with a concessive sense; 16:20) and εἰμί (simply 'to be'; 16:21). But he goes too far with this insight in order to make sense of a difficult passage. His translation of these verses would read like this: 'And they brought them to the magistrates, saying: These men are upsetting our city, although they are Jews, and are teaching practices which it is unlawful for us to accept or to do, being Romans' (:363).

[171] His proposal is attractive but allows for much conjecture. Through the use of the theory of deviance, in which behaviour is perceived as contravening accepted norms and values, and thus 'deviant', he concludes that whether they had made use of magic or not it was of no real value, since the labelling as 'magicians' by the slave-owners already carried the necessary strength so as to lead the magistrates to order their flogging. 'What matters was how they and their actions were perceived and interpreted. Since such a charge does not fit Luke's theological agenda, however, he plays down the possible association with magic and presents charges that can easily be refuted' (de Vos 1999b:62). So in fact his reflections try to prove that Luke ultimately redacted the accusation differently to fit Luke's particular agenda. Exorcism could be easily associated with the use of magic in Jewish contexts and Luke, aware of this and the satanic origin of magic, tries to do away with it within the narrative. I believe de Vos is to commend for trying to find a charge that fits in with the situation, which is actually rather eschewed, but Luke's silence on this respect cautions us about not reading too much between the lines, and does not, in the end, explain why Paul and Silas were later released. Can there be a different explanation?

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to confirm this assessment. According to Sherwin-White (1963:82-83) the judicial process is in order. The accusers make the charge, the accused are arrested 'and the case not been abandoned, the next step would have been the dispatch and arraignment of the prisoner before the proconsul, either at the capital of the province, or at the nearest assize city' (:83). Johnson (1992:295-296) concurs: 'They have raised the sort of charges that would guarantee local resentment against a population that resided within a *polis* (or in this case a *kolōnia*) without fully participating in its civic life'. However, and according to the archaeological evidence we posses, Johnson can only generalize on the Hellenistic world, but not draw the conclusion about Philippi, for apparently there were no Jews in the colony with whom Paul could meet. His reference to Alexandria may have nothing to do with Philippi.

The attitude of the magistrates in Ac 16:35: 'Let those men go' is a clear reflection —within the flow of the narrative— that they confirm their former resolution as one done in haste, unfair and unjustified. Paul's innocence is a feature stressed by Luke (cf. Maddox 1982:94; for a different opinion, see Rapske 1994:128-9, who justifies the conduct of the magistrates on grounds of being ignorant of Paul and Silas' Roman citizenship). We know that the preindustrial city is generally characterised by its distrust of foreigners and resilience to changes in the *status quo*, and the way the slave owners presented their case, certainly appealed to such a breaching in both accounts (Sjoberg 1960:255-28)[172]. The answer to our question may dwell in understanding that we are dealing with a colony far away from Rome. As Sherwin-White (1963:82) points out:

> It is perhaps characteristic that it is in an isolated Roman community in the Greek half of the Roman empire that the basic principle of Roman 'otherness' should be affirmed, whereas in Italy the usual custom prevailed of treating alien cults on their merits.

4.3.3 What Then?

If we compare Philippi with other Roman colonies outside Italy we concur in that the tendency of these cities, however small, would follow a similar pattern of honour-seeking, specially when they had been granted the Latin right (Beard et al 1998a:328-29)[173]. Although the agonistic search for honour could be

[172] Witherington (1998a:496) interprets the rapid action of the officials (stripping them naked and flogging them, 16:22) as trying to avoid any possible tumult among the crowds that join in the accusation.

[173] This is the case with Urso, a colony in southern Spain founded by Caesar in 44 BC that received the Latin right. A re-inscription of the original rules was found containing the same

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explained in reference to diverse aspects (psychological, sociological, etc.). Jones (1963:7) speaks of the pacification of the Greek city states and how, at the sight of not being allowed to carry wars against each other, they started to compete tenaciously to obtain greater honour than their neighbouring cities. Such was the zeal in their rivalry that Rome had to intervene because local treasuries were exhausted to provide with the better buildings and more extravagant festivals. No doubt Philippi shared in this value-system. This is related to the importance identity possesses in terms of 'space' and 'place'. If according to the Empire Rome was at the centre of the world, the territory under her influence needed to acknowledge this through the symbolic (and 'real', for its legal consequences) marking of the territory through the setting of the *pomerium*. I have already explained some of its functions, but it is important to recall that this act implied a 'careful exercise of control, domestication, or exclusion held in check the potential infiltration by Greek and other deities' (Lieu 2004:212). Price (1996:846) indicates that the use of the *pomerium* brought a new consciousness of place. Within its limits the cults of Rome could be carried and only inside were civil auspices possible. 'Outside the *pomerium* were foreign cults, the sphere of military authority, and the burials of the dead' (:846). What was not permitted inside the *pomerium* area was also outside Roman identity (Lieu 2002a:297). Mythical stories also influenced and shaped public law. In the case of Rome, the foundational narrative of Remus' trespassing the *pomerium* and his subsequent death, because he violated the boundary of the new city, became decisive: those who damaged city walls were executed according to Roman law because it was justified by the story (cf. *Dig* I.8.II, Pomponius; cf. Price 1996:818)[174].

When we study Acts through the author's overall strategy, it is plain to see that the narrative reflects the people's hidden motives to reject the Word because of their *ethos*[175]. We also observe that compounded with it, Paul reiterates the suffering-*topos* in his correspondence with the Philippians. However, we cannot be sure that the same conditions were present in the colony at the time of his writing the letter than when he first arrived in the city. Both Paul and the Philippians shared in the common bond of suffering for Christ as if it were a kind of 'endowment' (Phlp 1:29: ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ Χριστοῦ, οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν).

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willingness to do as it was done in Rome, more than a century after her foundation. These rules had to do with the organising of the priesthood, but it is noteworthy of mention due the fact that having received such a significant honour, it is sure that the *colonia* strived to stay above surrounding and less-privileged cities.

[174] In this context, it is not strange to see that Augustus was perceived as a 'second Romulus' (Price 1996:846).

[175] See, for example, Johnson's (1992:295) comments on verse 21. This fact, however, should not make the historicity of the narrative less reliable. Sherwin-White (1963:82) remarks that the 'positively archaic' formulation of the charge, though unusual, it is not entirely without parallel in Julio-Claudian usage.

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It is becoming clearer that Paul's experience in the colony left a profound mark. Even later, when he writes to them a letter that many have labelled as a 'friendship-letter', he calls them using the Latin designation Φιλιππήσιοι, a rather 'un-Greek rendering' (Ramsay 1899:116). Could it be that after all Paul's scars were still healing and needed to share with them that the ruthless and derogatory treatment he endured in the colony? They were 'ashamed' (1 Th 2:2), but this was part and parcel of being a 'worthy citizen on account of Jesus Christ' (cf. Phlp 1:27).

Many questions still remain that have no clear answer. For example: why is it that neither Paul nor Silas did speak out or bring forth the usual papers that every Roman citizen carried with in order to prove that the trial was not concurrent with the usual process?[176] Why did they make mention about their personal status at a latter stage (16:37)?[177] Could it be that the *tempo* and the nature of events prevented them from doing so? We know that Paul made use of his citizenship, at least, on another occasion in Acts, as he did during his arrest in Jerusalem (Ac 22:22-29). We do not really know the reasons, despite all that has been written on this respect. Rapske (1994:129-134), after a lengthy and well-attested description of the way Roman citizens could give proof of their citizenship in places far away from their native towns, concludes that Paul's negative to assert his citizenship at the moment of his accusation in the agora could have led to lengthy delays in the process.

The second reason is that holding onto his Roman citizenship would have meant a denial of his Jewish standing, detrimental for his missionary career in Philippi. Attractive as it is, Rapske's insight leaves the question of why Paul changed his mind later on, and asked the magistrates to release them (16:37),

[176] They were treated as *peregrini*, foreigners; and also as *humiliores*, because they were kept in chains and in prison awaiting trial (cf. Sherwin-White 1963:82).

[177] Tajra (1989:25) believes we are dealing with a literary artifice that Luke uses in order to focus on the suffering of the missionaries. But it does not solve why he proceeded so in certain occasions and not in others. Witherington (1998b:71) thinks Paul could suffer from a 'status inconsistency' and did not want to make use of privileges to avoid suffering since he was a model to so many. Again, we face the same problem of discerning why he does it at times and not at others. Hengel (1991:6-7) opines that Paul acted this way 'in order to follow Christ in his suffering. For him, the "marks of Jesus on his body" (Gl 6:17) were tokens won in an honourable battle'. Other scholars take this omission as a hint that Paul's Roman citizenship is but a mere fiction, since it is never affirmed in his genuine letters. Stegemann and Stegemann (2001:403-407) acknowledge Luke's interest in presenting the apostle as pertaining to the upper strata, but affirm that Paul '[n]o habla nunca de su ciudadanía tarsiana o incluso romana'. Rapske (1994:130) thinks that 'Paul's disclosure of his and Silas' Roman citizenship is troubling because its lateness is so 'un-Roman'. Any citizen could be expected to preserve both self and dignity by the earliest, most favourable, and most forceful presentation of his legal social status possible'.

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unanswered. My own contention is that at this point in time it was not so much Paul's own safety that was at stake but the future of the missionary enterprise. Having suffered unjustly on account of the gospel, despite the fact that he could have fought for recognition of status, might present a strong reminder of his willingness to suffer for Christ that he mentions in Philippians. This view, I believe, is in clear correspondence with how Luke portrays Paul. In Ac 20:24, when Paul addressed the elders of Ephesus at Mitylene by a kind of farewell discourse, he affirms: 'But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God'. One should not forget. Luke's purpose to present the progress of the Word in spite of suffering and opposition is affirmed. No one can prevent the message of the 'Way' to reach even the heart of the empire which seems to pervade their daily experience (cf. Bolt 1998:204-210).

5. Conclusions

It is obvious, after what we have observed, that Paul's experience in Philippi marked his 'psyche' in some important ways, as we judge it by the way he referred to this incident later on in 1 Th 2.2. In his letter to the Philippian Christ-following community some years later, he appears filled with joy in the midst of suffering. The apostle presents suffering as an ongoing experience that both community and apostle share. I am not implying that the apostle was showing some kind of anxiety or revenge against those he suffered under, but that his suffering experiences did fit within his own theological programme as a man between two aeons. He was ready to be with the Lord, but willing also to remain for their sake (Phlp 1:23-24), exposed to death in clear fulfilment of what it was his vocation (cf. Romans 8:36).

That the apostle chose to rejoice in his suffering and abasement is not surprising when we discover the way he presents himself in the letter. This, however, is something we shall describe in the next chapter.

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And among the many Paul also was brought bound; to him all his fellow-prisoners gave heed, so that Caesar observed that he was the man in command. And he [Nero] said to him: 'Man of the great king, but (now) my prisoner, why did it seem good to thee to come secretly into the empire of the Romans and enlist soldiers from my province?

(*Acts of Paul and Thecla*)

CHAPTER 5:
PAUL: MAN UNDER CONSTRAINT

1. Introduction

It may seem almost ludicrous to try to say something new on Paul in light of the extensive and ever-increasing list of works devoted to his life, career, and theology. My aim here is to study Paul's self-identity and theology through what he has reflected in Philippians. It is, however, impossible to say something meaningful about Paul without reference to his other letters, mixing triumphal proclamations with the tensions inherent to his role as an apostle. An important part of his struggle is based on elements that directly pertain to identity, both personal and social[1]. It is on these features related to identity-formation that I focus more exhaustively. Paul wrote *ad hoc* letters, and it is only logical to read Philippians within proper social systems that allow us (and them!) to arrive at both its meaning (*Bedeutung*) and sense (*Sinn*)[2]. It might be objected that such an

[1] Roetzel (1999:9) acknowledges that 'Paul's own letters contain starkly negative sketches of the apostle as a weak, uncharismatic, dishonest, self-serving, unimposing interloper in the apostolic circle (2 Cor 10:1-2, 10)', but much of it needs to be understood within the realm of his rhetoric, although certainly he was reacting to *real* attacks.

[2] See Martin (1990:136-137). This is in fact what we have discussed earlier. On the one hand, we place the text in a historical context of our own creation (to what I refer to as its '[re]-creation' or reading scenario) that helps us arrive at its *meaning*. The *sense* of the text refers to its inner

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approach merely presents the 'rhetorical character', but this is certainly the closest evidence from Paul's own hand at our disposal. The results may not be complete and exhaustive, but they draw from the wealth of information derived from the apostle's own description, rather than from secondary sources. The aim is to place the apostle within a coherent social milieu that can in turn illuminate his message.

Coming back to how Paul assessed his visit to the Philippian community (1 Th 2:2; cf. also 2 Cor 11:24-25), I observed that the mention both of suffering and 'having been ashamed' in the colony mattered to him[3]. This data is confirmed when we read the book of Acts, where its author presents it as part and parcel of the apostle's experience. Throughout Acts we are given an account of continued persecution and escape, from city to city, until his final voyage to Jerusalem where he is to suffer at the hands of local Jews (Ac 21); an event earlier announced by the prophet Agabus (Ac 21:10-11). Suffering has a central role in the letter to the Philippians (Bloomquist 1993:13), not just as reference to the apostle's personal experience, but as something that both the community and the apostle share (1:29, 1:7)[4]. It could not have been otherwise, for it was the way of the master himself (2:6-11). Suffering is, surprisingly perhaps, a χάρις from God, not a curse. Here Paul sides with the understanding of the suffering righteous so clearly displayed in the Old Testament and in Judaism (cf. Hafemann 1993:921)[5].

This chapter hinges thus on these two main axes: Paul's self-description and suffering, for which the insights of social identity theory (SIT) prove quite illuminating. Personal and social identities are not something which exist 'out there' and are then lived and concretised in the present. Rather, as we shall have opportunity to see, there are ways both to model (descriptive mode) and to demand (prescriptive mode) what is the proper behaviour for the ingroup, which contrasts with the behaviour of those who are outside. It is my contention that the apostle Paul makes use of both means (prescriptive and

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structure and syntax. Commencing with this chapter, we shall move between both worlds in order to arrive to a coherent picture of the communication process between Paul and the Philippian community.

[3] Both Gaventa (1998:23) and Richard (1995:78) warn against identifying 1 Th 2:2 with the incident in Ac 16 (cf. Glancy 2004:102), but offer no support for their view. However it might be understood, my argument does not change, since I focus on the *topos* of suffering and, surely, Paul suffered while he was in Philippi and at the time he wrote the letter.

[4] I suspect that this inherent suffering in Paul is more than mere external opposition but is also related to his own struggle at defining, both in practice and internally, who he was and how he should live out his role as a faithful convert to the ways of the Messiah. Of the same opinion is Jervis (2007:38-39).

[5] However, this does not mean that suffering, although crucial, should be considered the main thrust of the letter (cf. Bloomquist 1993:181).

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descriptive) in order to exhort the Philippian community to adhere to the values that more faithfully reflect Christ's way (Furnish 1968:75). I shall focus on Paul's definition of his role towards the Philippians based on the example of Christ, which parallels the apostle's own career. As such the chapter is not merely a description of psychological, ideological and theological factors, but engages us in the interpretation of several portions of Philippians relevant to my discussion. Paul's definition of Christ's way is set against a particular symbolic universe that gives both content and coherence within concrete social systems which I now go on to discuss.

2. Paul through Many Lenses

Dunn (1999:174-175) recalls that according to Acts (22:3, cf. Phlp 3:5) Paul began his career as a diaspora Jew. However, Paul is also the first person from whom we possess a direct account of his conversion to the Messiah Jesus. 'The transformation of Saul the Pharisee to Paul the apostle inevitably involved some transformation in self-identity. But, What? Who did Paul think he was?' (:175)

2.1 Paul according to Himself

Although I need to limit the search to the text of Philippians, there are several places in his letters where the apostle speaks of himself autobiographically. Dunn (1999:177-178) summarizes these instances, which I follow here with minor alterations:

> Rm 11:1: 'I am an Israelite, from the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin'.
>
> Rm 11:13: 'I am apostle to the gentiles'.
>
> Rm 15:14-21: '... the grace given me from God, so that I might be a minister of Christ Jesus for the gentiles, serving the gospel of Christ as a priest ...'.
>
> 1 Cor 9:1-2. 'Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen our Lord? ... If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you'.
>
> 1 Cor 15:8-10: 'Last of all, as to a miscarriage, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called apostle; ... but by the grace of God I am what I am'.
>
> 2 Cor 11:22, 24-25: 'Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? ... I more. ... Five times I have received from the Jews forty lashes less one ... Three times I

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have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea'[6].

Gl 1:12-16: 'I did not receive it [the gospel] from a human being, nor was I taught it, but through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my way of life previously in Judaism, that in excessive measure I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it; and that I progressed in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my people, being exceedingly zealous for my ancestral traditions. But when it pleased the one who set me apart from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, in order that I might preach him among the gentiles, I did not consult immediately with flesh and blood ...'.

Gl 2:19-20: 'I through the law died to the law ... No longer I live, but Christ lives in me'.

Phlp 3:4-7: 'If anyone else thinks to trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eight day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in terms of the law a Pharisee, in terms of zeal a persecutor of the church, in terms of righteousness in the law blameless. But whatever was gain for me, that I counted loss on account of the Christ ...'[7].

In light of Paul's self-introductions, Dunn concludes that the term that predominates is ἀπόστολος (apostle, the sent-one)[8], which is to be linked to the targeted people: 'the gentiles' (:178). For Dunn the reason for this presentation is clear: 'it was Paul asserting his authority in relation to his churches and in the face of those (within the churches or coming from without, usually other Jewish missionaries) who questioned it' (:178). His self-identification is closely linked with his mission and sense of calling. For that reason it is the more interesting when we come to Philippians that Paul makes use of a different term that has much to do with the content of the letter: slave (1:1, δοῦλος, rather δοῦλοι, since he also includes Timothy)[9]. This observation is crucial in order to understand Philippians, specially if we compare it with Rm 1:1 where he identifies himself both as a slave and as an apostle (cf. Tt 1:1). In these instances 'apostle' stands in apposition to 'slave', but when addressing the Philippians, Paul has no need to refer to his apostolic authority, perhaps because it was not under threat in this

[6] It is possible that one of these occasions refers to his experience at Philippi, where Paul, as we have already observed, was beaten with rods without proper trial (cf. Witherington 1998:500).
[7] Another possible mention is Rm 1:14. Dunn (1999:177) believes that it expresses Paul's sense of obligation (by virtue of his apostolic calling) to both Greeks and barbarians.
[8] Epictetus (*Diss* 3.22.33) writes that the true teacher is one 'sent' by God (Weidmann 1997:251).
[9] Although the practice is rare, Paul tended to include his present companion as co-author of the letter (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Th 1:1; 2 Th 1:1; Phlm 1). Fee (1995:60) observes that this never occurs outside the Pauline corpus and that the only known ancient reference is found in Cicero (*Att* 11.15.1). Hawthorne (1983:3) calls the presence of δοῦλοι a 'unique feature in the literary legacy left by Paul'.

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context (O'Brien 1991:45)[10]. Lohmeyer (1964:5, 9) believes that slave functions as substitute for apostle in Philippians, which was composed as a treatise on martyrdom. His insightful observation does not explain, for example, why both terms appear in Rm 1:1[11]. Why did Paul choose to present himself in this way? Let us proceed with the definition of the terms.

2.1.1 A δοῦλος of Christ Jesus (Phlp 1:1)

> In the early Roman Empire people could see slaves everywhere they looked. Slaves occupied all sorts of jobs, and they mingled freely with non-slaves, both freeborn people and freedpersons. Many slaves were, of course, in desperate positions, destitute, mistreated, and oppressed. But others seem to have lived relatively normal lives—normal, that is, compared with other people not in the highest class. Some modern scholars even seem determined to prove that slavery was a rather benevolent institution. Of course, it was not.
>
> (Martin 1990:1)

Scott Bartchy complains about some versions (e.g. KJV, AV, RSV, NRSV, GNB, etc.) which render the term δοῦλος as 'servant' rather than 'slave', and concludes that slave is preferable 'in order to stress the legally regulated subordination of the person in slavery' (Bartchy 1992:66). Our understanding of slavery is filtered by our knowledge of the slavery system in the 17th and 19th centuries, which often muddles the way first century slavery is perceived[12]. It is clear that when it comes to Paul's self-designation we are dealing with a metaphor; but it is nevertheless religious language 'inextricably intertwined with social structures, ideological constructs, and rhetorical strategies of the society at large' (Martin 1990:xiv). We only have to remember that about one-

[10] It is interesting to observe that 'of the four epistles in which Paul does not introduce himself as an apostle, three were addressed to Macedonian churches [Phlp, 1 Th and 2 Th]' (Silva 2005:39).

[11] Bloomquist (1993:142-144) assesses the way specialists have interpreted this usage, and agrees with Lohmeyer. More than in a substitutionary function, this term could be explained due to the early date of the letter, when Paul did not use to include the term 'apostle' (cf. 1 Th and 2 Th). However, the term appears in 1 Cor 1:1, which is supposedly earlier than Philippians.

[12] Bartchy (1992:66) presents these differences. In first century slavery racial issues had no bearing; education was greatly encouraged (some slaves were better educated than their owners); slaves carried sensitive and specialised tasks; they could own property and even other slaves; their religious and cultural traditions were the same as those of the free born; there were no laws which prohibited their association, and above all, 'the majority of urban and domestic slaves could legitimately anticipate being emancipated by the age 30'. Harrill (2004:581) deems this last conclusion as superficial, since it can only find literary support in a claim by Cicero (*Phil* 32), which contains a rhetorical value rather than serve as an accurate social description. Both Hopkins (1978:126) and Glancy (2002:95) share this opinion, although manumission was a common practice which had to be legislated in order to control it (under Augustus, *lex Iunia*, *lex Fufia Caninia* and *lex Aelia Sentia*; cf. Weaver 1974:97).

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third of the inhabitants of any large city at this time were slaves (Bartchy 1992:67)[13]. With this in mind, the assertion on the part of some scholars (e.g. Conzelmann, Cranfield, Beare), that Pauline use of slave-imagery was incomprehensible for his communities seems to forget how embedded this system was in urban society and how *urban* Paul's communities were (Martin 1990:xvi; Harrill 2006:31). Martin (1990:xvii) further advises against the 'genetic fallacy of historical explanation', as if finding the origin of the metaphor can mechanically provide the meaning it had when used within the context of the Christ-following communities. This, of course, applies both to eastern origins (*ANET*, OT) and Greek ones: 'Regardless of the origin of the language, one must explain how it worked among and for Greek-speaking Gentiles' (:xvii). Fee, in my opinion, too hastily assumes that Paul's Greek-speaking communities (even in the Greek East) upon converting to the Christian message became part of a 'society' well-acquainted with Judaism and thus with the LXX. These communities, thus, would have understood that 'slaves of Christ' referred to 'servant of God' in Old Testament fashion as those who depended on God as well as an honorific title designating those in special service to God (Fee 1995:63).

However, I have already pinpointed that, remarkably, Philippians does not contain a single direct quotation from the Old Testament, although there are some echoes from the LXX (as in the case of the Christ-hymn)[14]. Thus, it is doubtful that the hearers of the letter, upon listening to the salutation in which Paul and Timothy appear as 'slaves of Christ Jesus', would immediately derive the LXX sense of 'servant of God'. Moreover, this is not the only possibility. Similar uses are found in the Graeco-Roman world for those who are dedicated to the service of a specific god or goddess. For these 'Greeks', slavery was a different reality than that of the 'elevated' perception of the Old Testament Fee so readily assumes. The possibility that the expression connoted total submission to the master (Christ Jesus) looks correct in any given context (Lyall 1984:38), but it does not answer the question of why it was used in this letter.

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[13] We do not really know their number, which fluctuated at different periods. We do know that it was large, as Seneca (*Clem* 1.24.1) recounts: 'A proposal was once made in the Senate to distinguish slaves from free men by their dress; it then became apparent how great would be the impending danger if our slaves should begin to count their numbers'. As we will see later, it did not exist what we could call a 'class-consciousness' among slaves, and of course the elites did not even wish to hint at such a thing. After all, a system based on privilege and difference cannot afford a rising group-consciousness. In order to get a glimpse of the percentage of slaves in those societies, which can be counted as slave-holding and large scale slave-systems, see Patterson (1982:350-364).

[14] We must not press this argument too far. It could be that the Philippians were not familiar with it, but Paul certainly was (Segal 1990:xi-xii). We have no reason, other than pure and direct observation of the evidence, to deny that he could have used the LXX at will (although see Stanley 1999).

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It is clear that 'slaves of Jesus Christ' functions in Phlp 1:1 as a title together with 'holy ones', 'overseers' and 'servants/deacons' (Martin 1990:51)[15]. This 'slave' language comes across the New Testament, and in several places it refers to Christ-followers as leaders, after the Old Testament manner of referring to the prophets, so that we are warned against taking the term only in light of humility. Martin (:55) presents an alternative reading:

> The very fact that so many early Christian authors use "slave of Christ/God" for those very figures they wish to hold up as authoritative proves that the term was not heard as self-effacing. It was a title of authority and power by association. Slaves of Christ are those who represent Christ; they are active in the world as Christ's agents and wield his authority. Furthermore, it is expected that they will be rewarded with higher status, more authority, and more power.

However, before arriving at a conclusion on what 'slave' meant as Paul's self-designation, we need to take a closer look at the context from which slavery derived its significance. What is striking is that in other letters (e.g.: 1 Cor) the apostle depicts himself as a Roman *legatus* (Joubert 1995:16), as a 'diplomat of the state', as broker/mediator between God and the community of believers who 'could therefore claim the highest rank for himself within the *ekklesia'*; he was subordinate to nobody else. In Philippians, however, his choice of words—slave—implies (at first sight) something quite different.

2.1.1.1 Slavery in Greece and Rome

Aristotle (*Met* 1.982b, 25-27) had already affirmed that the free man is his own cause (ἕνεκα). From this we can deduce (although never so expressed) that the slave finds his *cause* outside of himself. He is therefore, incomplete and fulfils his end in serving the free person[16]. Why people tend to dominate others to the point of frustrating their potential in life lies outside the scope of our study, but it is nevertheless a basic starting point. O Patterson (1982) has done a superb job comparing diverse slave-holding societies, trying to arrive at an answer to such a question, and he defines it as *parasitism*. Here the master is the one in sheer need of someone else to carry on with the hard tasks that are to be completed daily[17]. However, Graeco-Roman mentality perceived it very differently within

[15] As a matter of fact Paul, in the words of Luke, described his ministry as 'slavery to God' (δουλεύω, Ac 20:19). For possibilities on the interpretation of 'overseers' and 'deacons', cf. Reumann (1993:446-450). These terms could just refer to those in charge of the apostle's offering and, as such, he greets them separately *after* 'all the saints'.

[16] I owe this insight to Prof. Antonio González in the course of a private conversation.

[17] Although Patterson's view may seem ideologically charged, the concept is quite in line with what Hopkins (1978:108-109) presents. For wealthy classes, not accustomed to work, it was

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the system of patronal ideology. Slavery was commonly defined as living for the benefit or profit of another (Martin 1990:51), almost as if by the mercy of the master the slave had secured a purpose in life. When we look at ancient Greece (especially Athens) around the fifth century BC, we observe that about a third of the population were slaves. However, by the time the apostle travelled around the Mediterranean, within the Roman Empire numbers seemed to have dwindled to around 16-20 per cent (Patterson 1982:354). Both Athens and Rome were what we can define as large-scale slave systems, since their social structure was largely dependent on the institution of slavery, although with clear differences between them. For our interest, Harrill (2004:576) opines that the Roman system is more illuminating (also Lyall 1984:23). I will pinpoint some of these differences where it is germane.

2.1.1.1.1 Sources of Slavery

Most slaves in Rome were originally brought as prisoners of war, especially with the decline of the Hellenistic world (Vogt 1974:42). We need to remember that Romans conquered the whole of the Mediterranean in about two centuries (Hopkins 1978:102). It is reported that whole populations, conquered during both the Republic and the Principate, were brought to slavery in such a number that it even amply surpassed the numbers of slave trade in the New World at its highest point (Bradley 1998:48; Hopkins 1978:9, 25)[18]. Piracy and kidnapping were other methods of enslaving people, which could be carried by raiding small populations, even neighbouring ones (Finley 1980:78-79; Patterson 1982:115). The waters of the Mediterranean were a 'breeding ground' for such practices until the intervention of Rome as controlling master of the zone after the Punic wars, although with little success, since her policy was contradictory and used to her own benefit. It was to be later on, with Pompey, that the Mediterranean was pacified, interestingly right when trade came to a standstill in the area (Patterson 1982:116)[19].

Enslavement as a result of the inability to pay tribute or meet debts was also common in the ancient world, both at the communal and personal levels,

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cheaper to own slaves than to depend on wage labourers, who could refuse some hard tasks. Slaves were at their master's beck and call. The only possible element of disadvantage was their high capital cost.

[18] If at its peak the African slave trade was that of 60 000 *per annum* in the 1800's for the New World, Italy needed around 100 000 annually, and between 50 BC and AD 150 around 500 000 slaves annually for the whole empire. Plutarch (*Caes* 15.3) comments on Julius Caesar's campaigns in Gaul, which brought nearly a million prisoners (cf. Harrill 2004:579).

[19] Bartchy (1992:67) believes that 1 Tm 1:10, which uses the term ἀνδραποδιστής, translated as 'kidnapper' (RSV, NEB) or 'menstealer' (AV) indicates that the practice continued still during New Testament times (cf. Rv 18:13).

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although we need to be aware of differences between debt-slavery and true slavery[20]. Another reason was for crimes committed. Penal slavery in Rome was a far more established institution than in Athens. In Rome 'a person convicted of crime and sentenced in one of certain ways suffered *capitis deminutio maxima*, and became a slave. It was essentially capital punishment, and the *capitis deminutio* had all its ordinary results' (:126). But this was not always carried out in this way and for everybody, as we might have already guessed (usually only for lower-class freemen). Child exposure, not uncommon, was another source of slaves, even if a minor one in classical Greece. It became an important source during the early empire for Rome, especially in the case of girls (:129-130). The last source for slavery was self-enslavement. At times people chose to become a slave to someone else rather than die in complete poverty[21]. Although freedom was logically viewed superior to slavery, in some cases ancient authors tried to convince slaves that there was really no point in seeking freedom at all costs, that to remain as they were was a better choice (cf. Epictetus, *Diss* 4.1.34-37, and Philo, *OmnProbLib* 156, who criticises those who, upon acquiring freedom from slavery, believe that their future life will be better). It could be argued that Paul uses the same kind of reasoning (cf. 1 Cor 7:21), but here the apostle encourages the active search for freedom, though not at the price of becoming enslaved to other vices or structures outside the Christ-sphere (1 Cor 7:23). Paul did also express his opinion that persons remain in the status in which they found Christ[22].

As slaves reproduced, their children came to be part of the wealth of the master, who could make use of them at will. The internal production of slaves became

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[20] The former was common among peoples more advanced in commerce, as in ancient Mesopotamia and among the Hebrews (Patterson 1982:124-125).

[21] Bartchy (1992:70) believes this option to be quite common, but most classicists do not share that this practice provided a considerable number of slaves (cf. Glancy 2002:80). Bradley (1998) does not even consider it as a source to be taken into account. Other historians confirm the paucity of evidence, but allow its occurrence, although it was treated as taboo in honour-seeking societies (cf. Harris 1999:67-74 for concrete cases).

[22] Kyrtatas (1995:220) believes that Paul was consistent in his admonition, since there was a clear expectation that the end of the world would occur during his life-time (cf. 7:29) 'The amelioration of one's social status was not an important issue; in fact, it was not an issue at all' (:220). Epictetus approached the subject from a different point of view, but arrived at a similar conclusion. For him the body of the slave is nothing but slavish, clay, lifeless. Therefore, the slaveholder can exert dominion over the body (*to sōmation*, literally 'little body', that of the exposed child who was then raised as a slave; cf. Glancy 2002:32-33), but such a dominion cannot go deeper and affect the innermost part of the person (*Diss* 2.1.23-28; 3.22.40-41; 3.10.15: *to sōmation, to ouk emon, to physei nekron*; 'my paltry body, something that is not mine, something that is by nature dead'). Himself an ex-slave, Epictetus seems to hold in view the self-mastery value that was characteristic of philosophers and elites, but seems to account for little hope when we think about the situation of chattel slaves. 'Moreover, extreme physical assaults such as torture have the potential to erode the very structure of personhood' (Glancy 2002:34).

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the major source for the Empire (Bartchy 1992:67). The status of the new born was that of the slave mother, according to the *ius gentium*, without minding who the father was: *semper conubium efficit ut qui nascitur patris condicioni accedat; aliter vero contracto matrimonio eum qui nascitur iure gentium matris condicionem sequi* (Gaius i, 80). In this way they were born into slavery, and received the name of *vernae* (Bradley 1998:50). After all, if slaves were not allowed *connubium* (right to legal marriage), there was no other way than to recognise only the mother's legal standing (Buckland 1908:398). Usually *vernae* were preferred, since they were considered tamer. Their condition of slaves was the only one they had ever experienced and it was easy, in such an impermeable society, to conclude that thinking differently was out of the question. There existed, therefore, two different lineages: patrilineal for the free and matrilineal for the slaves[23].

2.1.1.1.2 Justification of Slavery

We must not think of slavery as an economical category, since there was not a strict separation between slave labour and labour carried out by free people or even hint that there was competition between them (Bradley 1998:87). Many manumitted slaves continued with the same occupation they had formerly practiced as slaves. Rather, it was a social institution controlled by the free citizenry and scattered across the social strata. Why can we think so? Very simply, looking at the different lists of work they carried out it is clear that slaves were present in all areas of life except the military (Bradley 1998:79-85). Slaves were legally and especially excluded from this service. Slaves did not possess what we may call a 'class-consciousness', but it is not too far fetched to see what the consequences could have been if they had been armed[24]. Their representation in most spheres of life reflects the needs of the Roman masters, who required various levels of expertise, experience and formation in so many and different contexts and with such diverse social significance that slaves never became a social class on their own (Bradley 1998:95). This legal preponderance of Roman citizens (free men) over the rest of the population

[23] This is precisely the Roman custom law that Paul uses in his argument for the two sons of Abraham, one of the free woman, and other of the slave one in Galatians 4. For a fuller discussion of such perspective see Glancy (2002:34-38).

[24] Spartacus' rebellion (73 BC; cf. Appian, *BCiv* 1.549) commenced with only seventy slaves, but ended with around 120 000 men (Alföldy 1988:69) and lasted three years. Surely this event served as a permanent warning against this potential danger. When they were defeated, more than six thousand partisans were crucified between Capua and Rome (Glancy 2002:152). The fear that slaves could kill the master was always present; one more reason to use general coercion towards slaves (see Pliny the Younger, *Ep* 3.14).

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found broad support in a society that did not aspire to the equality of all its members but tried to achieve some sort of balance based on the *mores maiorum*:

> Man possesses by nature dominion over it [i.e. nature], because the deliberative skill is less notorious in the woman, is not yet present in children, and it is completely absent in slaves. The skill for the management of the house, which involves the dominion over it and the things which are related to it is the sole property of man[25].

At least in Rome, where freedom was considered part of natural law, the *Digest* (1.5.4.1) at the same time stated that slavery was an 'institution of the law of nations, where thereby someone is subjugated *contra naturam* to be the property of another' (*servitus est constitutio iuris gentium, qua quis dominio alieno contra naturam subicitur*). Both concepts seemed to clash with one another. For that reason slavery was something of an ambiguous institution at Rome[26]. Although there was some willingness to promote changes (*viz.* more humane treatment of slaves, warnings against using disproportionate violence against them, etc.) the truth of the matter is that slavery was never abolished in the Roman Empire. But it was abolished in less than a century in the New World (*ca* 1807-1888) due to social pressures based on moral reasoning. This shows the different public opinion towards the institution in these different historical and territorial contexts[27].

Justification of this servile status, already patterned in nature (Aristotle's *kata physin doulos*) based itself on stereotyping in order to reinforce its application to daily life, since 'reality' demonstrated a more complex set of conflicting

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[25] Arius Didymus 149.5-10, cited in Guijarro (1998:129, my trans.). Later on, the stoic philosopher and emperor Marcus Aurelius, theoretically more open to the idea that all humankind possess the potential to share in the divine logos of the universe, concludes that both women and children, and of course slaves, shared a common tendency to the irrational and 'bestial' which makes them *de facto* inferior beings. See Widemann (1989:7-8, who quotes M. Aurelius' *Reflections* or *Meditations*, 5.11; 4.28). These ideas find strong support in the earlier reflections of Aristotle (*Pol* 1254b13-15, 1259a40-b4, 1260a9-11; *EthEud* 1244a10), where domination and subordination were perceived as elements that are biologically determined, and thus, unavoidable (cf. Pomeroy 1998:201).

[26] As Harrill (2006:21) signals, 'this case is the only one in the entire extant corpus of Roman private law in which the *ius gentium* and the *ius naturale* are in conflict'. Slaves did not have the benefit of free people, though in some cases were given the right to sign contracts, purchase property, etc., but always representing the *persona* of their master (Hopkins 1978:131).

[27] However, we must not think of classical antiquity as a monolithic period. In both Greece and Rome there were discordant voices which defended a society of equals. Utopias were constructed after traditions in which men lived happily without slaves (Vogt 1974:27). Some 'slave' festivals (e.g.: Saturnalia) played exactly on this topic: roles between masters and slaves were reversed, if only for a while (see Finley 1980:96).

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dynamics set at work[28]. Slaves, who were not a class as of themselves, were nevertheless lumped together under certain moral and physiological characteristics: 'All slaves are enemies' (*quot servi, tot hostes*) went a Roman proverb (Hopkins 1978:119). 'Seen from above, a lowly attitude goes with a lowly social position: the lowly position leads to a lowly disposition, which expresses itself in flattery and insubordination. The slave also has a slave morality' (cf. Wengst 1988:5, who cites Plutarch, *Mor* 336E, 475E, and 554F-555A as typical examples of ταπεινοφρωσύνη). Harrill (2006:37-40), based on the 'physiognomic principle' presents several examples both in Greek and Roman culture that only serve to strengthen this idea. Slaves 'look' small and weak, they were, by virtue of their anatomy, built for servility (Aristotle, *Pol* 1.2 [1254b25-35]).

One final comment. Greek influence on Roman thought is perceptible in many areas, but none as clearly as in the structuring of the *domus* as reflection of the Republic (Fernández 2003:505). As such, the dominion of the family/household corresponds to him who is fittest for leadership: the eldest male, the *pater familias*. His role on the household (his *potestas*) was a clear signal against any subversion of values, so that slaves and inferiors were demarcated a social space both by way of custom and biology[29].

2.1.1.2 The Slave's Status

Juvenal (*Sat* 4.219-222) describes a dialogue between husband and wife which is well-known. The wife shouts at the man to have a certain slave crucified. 'But what is the slave's offence?' the husband asks. 'You must hear his defence. No delay can be too long when a man's life is at stake.' He receives the following reply: 'So a slave's a man now, is he, you crackpot?' (cf. Kyrtatas 1987:27). However cruel the situation is depicted, it does not account for the entire gamut. Seneca (*Ep* 57.1) considers them to be 'companions' and 'born of the same lineage', and warns his contemporaries to respect them for they too could be in the same situation. Even on occasion Seneca (*Ep* 47.1) describes them as

[28] For example, Euripides' characters (IV century BC) depict slaves as non-trustworthy, as those who are supposed to carry hard tasks, who obey in silence, etc. (cf. Vogt 1974:16). However, before Aristotle's idea of 'natural slavery', in Aeschylus it is claimed that Fortune and not Nature was to be held responsible for slavery. 'The impulse to find ideological justifications for slavery came from the institution of slavery itself' (Kyrtatas 1987:31).

[29] The *pater familias* exerted authority (*potestas*) on four levels of relationships: 1. As master of the slave (*dominica potestas*); 2. As father towards his children (*patria potestas*); 3. As husband towards his wife (*manus*); and 4. As a free man over other free persons (*mancipium*). Cf. Guillén (1977:111). For a tripartite description of the authority that distinguishes between *potestas* (over persons) and *dominium* (over property), see Crook (1967:113).

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'friends of lower status' (*humiles*), ...as if they had a choice! Epictetus, an ex-slave, calls them 'brothers by nature' (*Diatr* 1.13.3-4)[30].

When we come to discuss slavery in the Greco-Roman context we are indeed entering a complex system constantly open to the unexpected and exceptional (Bradley 1984:13; 1998:17)[31]. For example, it was not unusual for some slaves serving under powerful masters to posses their own entourage, as in the case of Musicus Scurranus, *dispensator* of Tiberius Caesar Augustus (*ILS* 1514), who counted among his personal slaves three secretaries, a *medicus*, a cook, two chamberlains, and others, to a total of sixteen (Weaver 1974:211; Patterson 1982:184; Bradley 1998:15). As such, there were no better situated slaves than that of the *familia Caesaris* (cf. Phlp 4:22), which can be counted as an *ordo*, since they possessed a legal and functional identity (Alföldy 1988:147)[32].

However benign some sources may tend to present slaves, legally speaking the slave was a 'thing' (*res*), merchandise (*merx*) without rights[33], an 'articulated tool' (*instrumentum vocale*) as Varrus (*Re Rustica* 1.17) pointed out. Slaves were bought in to the slave markets, where any potential client could ask them to be stripped of their clothes to assess if there were any physical defects, illnesses or wounds, especially around the neck, which could signal that the slave had tried to commit suicide and was not trustworthy (cf. Bradley 1998:71-76 for a detailed description). We only have to recall that the master had the right of life and death (*ius vitae necisque*) over the slave and that the cases of physical, verbal, and sexual abuse were many and a private affair between master and slave. Although some efforts were made in the legislation to prevent excessive aggression on the part of the masters (cf. Seneca, *Ep* 47), the truth of the matter is that we have little direct knowledge of what happened behind doors[34]. We possess, however, ample popular literary evidence (much of it fables) that may

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[30] Barbaglio (1992:48).

[31] We must, then, appreciate both a generalised disparagement of slaves, addressed as 'boys', even when they were much older than those who addressed them but of free status, to cases which reflect the care for slaves, as they were given a share in the testament of some of their masters (*Dig* 34.1.17, 34.1.20). See Bradley (1998:125-128) for concrete cases.

[32] After all, these slaves had in the emperor himself their master and patron. However, they formed a heterogeneous group (Weaver 1972:295).

[33] Patterson (1982:30-32) discusses the new legal paradigm in Roman legislation which added to *persona* and *res* the concept of *dominium* (absolute power/ownership), since it needed to distinguish slaves from other people in different ways from the citizen/non-citizen scheme which was at work in Greece, since Roman society was highly inclusive. This absolute power 'involved not simply the capacity to derive the full economic value of a thing, to use (*usus*) and enjoy its fruits (*fructus*), as well as "to use it up" (*ab-usus*)'.

[34] Disinterested humanitarianism on the part of the masters cannot be discounted when it is visible, but slave-care (e. g.: Columela's recommendations in his *Res Rusticae*, who followed on the tradition of Xenophon, Varrus and Cato) was actually designed to promote servile efficiency (Bradley 1984:22-23).

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contain a certain degree of verisimilitude (Phaedrus, *Append* 20; Martial, *Spect* 7; for castration: Martial, *Epig* 9.6; Longus, *Dafnis and Cloe*, etc.). Ulpian reports in the *Digest* (35.1.59.2 and 49.15.18) that, legally speaking, slavery is comparable to death (Bradley 1998:39).

Glancy (2002:24) provides an insightful observation concerning the status of slaves: The male slave (*doūlos*, rather than the *doulē*, the 'female slave' which she differentiates) was the one who endured the permanent status of a boy (*paīs*), and was forever excluded from maturing into the category of manhood (cf. Gl 4:1-2). It is general knowledge that slaves (in this case male slaves) were addressed as 'boy' (*paīs*, *puer*) even by the children of the household (Harrill 2004:577), or even as 'rogue', i.e.: as someone in need of a whipping (Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1297-8; 1307; cf. Finley 1980:96. Harrill 2006:20). These actions were a continuous reminder of his lack of status, honour, and power. The same can be said about female slaves, always under the dominion of their masters and at the expense of their sexual whims (Bradley 1984:117-118). 'Since sexual exclusiveness is the mark of female honor, female slaves lived with a state of perpetual shame' (Glancy 2002:27)[35].

Patterson (1982:38) speaks of the 'uprootedness', de-socialisation and depersonalisation of slaves, who underwent a process of social negation. Having been removed from their own land and kin, they entered into a different household without rights. In Roman law a slave was considered *pro nullo*, someone who was recognised no father and no fatherland (:40)[36]. In a very real sense, *all* now depended on the relation with the new master, who had absolute dominion over him/her[37]. The status of the slave was largely determined by the status of his owner (Bartchy 1992:70; Petersen 1985:241), since slaves were deemed to be part of the *domus* or *familia* (Dixon 1992:2), although we need to remember that in Greece the term *oikos* referred to a more ample institution than that which we usually have in mind, and which readily translates as 'family'[38]. *Oikos* included not only the members of the family per

[35] Glancy (2002:27) mentions the case of Thecla being assaulted by a prominent citizen, Alexander, who approaches her thinking she is a female slave due to the way she dresses, and not as the elite lady she in fact is (AcPaulThec).

[36] No wonder, then, that slaves possessed no reason whatsoever for honour, which was based upon fatherland, parents and ancestors, according to Quintilian (*Orat* III 7.10).

[37] Against such a sweeping assessment, Martin (1990:6-7) affirms that some slaves were able to maintain their own nuclear families and were akin to the lower classes. Bradley (1984) devotes a whole chapter to describe the 'slave family' and 'family life' as incentive on the part of the masters to appease any potential revolt. However, family life for slaves was generally precarious until all its members had acquired emancipation.

[38] This is only logical in such a context. Those slaves that belonged to an elite *familia* were, therefore, normally better taken care of, since it was important to display as much wealth as possible even in the way the slaves dressed and looked physically (cf. Bradley 1998:128). For a

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se, but also unmovable property (house, buildings, land, etc.) and movable property (slaves, animals as well as all which was produced, consumed and distributed by the *oikos*)[39]. Here it is useful to follow Patterson's (1982:63) description of the two kinds of fictive kinship. Whereas 'adoptive kinship' involved genuine assimilation and the granting of all privileges, rights and obligations pertaining to any family member, he identifies another category as 'quasi-filial', which is basically expressive: it serves to describe a relationship of authority between master and slave.

The more powerful the *kyrios/dominus*, the more powerful the slave, which on occasion created strained relations, because in a sense even the slaves acted in ways that could enrage those who had to deal with them and were of lower status than the slaves' master. People in the higher class resented such encounters, but it helps us understand that 'slave of X' could have positive connotations depending on the status of the master and the perception of the person who observed it. Harrill (2004:578) disagrees with this perception and recognises that even though some managerial slaves had quite a substantial authority, it was always derivative and thus, fragile. Though it is true that some slaves, especially those from the *familia Caesaris* were often elevated in position, it was 'not *in spite of* but *because* they were bereft of true honor' (:578)[40]. The same could be said of eunuchs, who usually enjoyed a considerable political power (Hopkins 1978:172-181; Patterson 1982:314-331). However, it seems to me that for those who had these encounters, resentment was nothing but the logical result of the representative force of those slaves serving powerful masters. As a matter of fact, literary sources tend to stereotype the views elite classes had on powerful slaves and freedmen. One of these, Trimalchio, is portrayed in comic guise by Petronius (*Sat* 32):

> We were in the midst of these delicacies when, to the sound of music, Trimalchio himself was carried in and bolstered up in a nest of small cushions, which forced a snicker from the less wary. A shaven poll protruded from a scarlet mantle, and around his neck, already muffled with heavy clothing, he had tucked a napkin having a broad purple stripe and a fringe that hung down all around. On the little finger of his left hand he wore a massive gilt ring, and on the first joint of the next finger, a smaller one which seemed to me to be of

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definition of both terms: *domus* and *familia*, see Saller (1984:344-348), who concludes that the 'range of meaning made *domus* a more widely applicable measure of social respectability than *familia* in the Principate'; the former included both agnate and cognate members.

[39] Pomeroy (1993:155). Slaves did not have the same favourable standing in the Greek *oikos* than in Roman *domus*. In Roman comedy slaves are given a greater degree of movement and freedom, and in general are placed on a more positive light (Vogt 1974:130-131).

[40] Patterson (1982:80-81), drawing on the work of Pitt-Rivers, Davis, and other anthropologists, suggests that slaves were without honour because they were not even in the race for it in the first place. Honour is closely related with personal autonomy.

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> pure gold, but as a matter of fact it had iron stars soldered on all around it. And then, for fear all of his finery would not be displayed, he bared his right arm, adorned with a golden arm-band and an ivory circlet clasped with a plate of shining metal[41].

Cases such as the one above may reflect common opinion amongst the elites. Although some measure of social mobility was present and allowed, it was perceived also as a real threat (Wengst 1988:9). Pliny, Seneca, Juvenal, Martial and others 'even promoted it, as long as they were able to maintain strict control over it' (Martin 1990:44). There were other slaves, on the other hand, who were highly appreciated, since Romans benefitted from their education and expertise (especially for higher managerial positions, school teachers, tutors, pedagogues, etc.; cf. Vogt 1974:112-113, 123). These were recruited from foreign lands to serve in Rome (see Hopkins 1978:124).

In the context of the honourable, so firmly established in Graeco-Roman society, slaves ranked last in honour[42]. Within this Roman mentality, which did not take much into account race or skin-colour as honourability (in contrast with slavery in the New World, see Bradley 1998:173), slaves were deemed as those who did not posses beauty and decor. If it was not proper for a free person to run in the street, it was common for slaves to run in order to carry on with their tasks on time[43]. It was because the person was *free* that he needed not run (Bradley 1998:173). As Joubert (1995:214) observes, people 'generally knew their respective social roles and how to behave accordingly'.

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[41] Trans. W C Firebaugh, in http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl_text_satyricon1n.htm (8/1/2008).

[42] Plato's influence is felt in this view. For him (i.e., *Republic*) manual labour is 'slavish, servant-like, illiberal'. It was the way to make a split between upper and lower classes. Aristotle follows the same pattern. For him the *eleutheros*, the 'free man' is related to manual labour, or rather, as it is being observed, the avoidance of it. 'That is why, Aristotle says, it is the mark of the nobleman, the beautiful man (*kalos* means both), to have long hair. The long hair shows that he does not engage in manual labor, as it would get in the way if he did. The very definition of *to kalon* specifies the absence of any craftlike skill (*banausos technē*)'; cf. Martin (1990:44).

[43] The *servus currens* ('running slave') was common in Roman comedy (*comoedia palliata*). 'Socially, it dishonors slaves by stereotyping them as infantile adults whose puerile self-absorption and unmanly lack of emotional control invariably retard their own efforts to do even the most straightforward of duties asked of them' (cf. Harrill 2006:60-61, 65, who proposes that the story of the slave Rhoda, Acts 12, may just be another variation of a common literary theme which nevertheless uses hegemonic discourse). Harrill's tendency to perceive slaves in the New Testament (and in classical literature) as mostly literary objects has been recently contested by Glancy (2007:207), who in this case argues that, for starters, Acts is 'not a theatrical comedy'.

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2.1.1.3 Slavery as Social Death

Henri Wallon (1879:408), a precursor to the study of slavery, wrote concerning ancient Greece:

> The slave was a dominated thing, an animated instrument, a body with natural movement, but without its own reason, an existence entirely absorbed in another. The proprietor of this thing, the mover of the instrument, the soul and the reason of this body, the source of this life, was the master. The master was everything for him: his father and his god, which is to say, his authority and his duty […] Thus, god, fatherland, family, existence, are all, for the slave, identified with the same being; there was nothing which was made for the social person, nothing which made for the moral person, that was not the same as his personality and his individuality[44].

In light of such a shattering assessment, Patterson (1982:5) affirms that archetypically 'slavery was a substitute for death in war. But almost as frequently, the death commuted was punishment for some capital offense, or death from exposure or starvation'. We can then speak of slavery as social death, since the slave is far removed from all that he knew into a different situation where he lives *publicly* in the fringes of society. 'The essence of slavery is that the slave, in his social death, lives on the margins between community and chaos, life and death, the sacred and the secular' (:5). Martin (1990:32), on the other hand, believes that slavery should be understood as a common channel for social mobility, especially among those outside the system, who had then a chance to enter the mainstream of Roman power structures[45]. It is

[44] Quoted in Patterson (1982:4-5). We may tend to think that upon the master's death the slave was automatically manumitted, but this was not always the case. As 'merchandise' they could be transferred to the other households, sold or even given as concubines/spouses to third parties (cf. *Dig* 40.4.59, in Bradley 1998:69). It is clear that the master possessed absolute control over the slaves even after his death.

[45] It is indeed difficult to ascertain the validity of these apparently contradictory statements. Perhaps the social location of the different contemporary authors, as well as their strategies, influence the way evidence is portrayed. For Martin (1990) *upward mobility* is a necessity in order to establish his thesis that Paul can use the self-designation of 'slave of Christ' as a title, depicting a grand measure of authority. At times, although he does never affirm it, slavery is portrayed as a necessary stepping stone, as a 'necessary evil', which may in fact be not such an evil if we were to compare it with some low-class population. Patterson (1982) and Glancy (2002) approach the subject from a more psychological/anthropological point of view and present it as a crude and bestial reality for slaves, deprived of dignity and of any control over their own lives. I believe Martin's arguments may have better application within the level of managerial slaves, where he places Paul, as does Harrill (2006), who places Paul as a slave with authority over others (*vilicus*). Glancy seems to have a more comprehensive picture of slavery in mind, and stresses, not just historically or socially, but theologically (2007:207) that humility and self-abasement are in view. Certainly we cannot discount the expression 'slave of Christ' as

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difficult though, to perceive slavery as a 'necessary' stepping stone for social upward mobility. Not denying the possibility of great internal mobility among urban lower strata (Alföldy 1988:137), and as such amongst mostly managerial slaves (Tacitus, *An* 13.27), it is also clear that upward mobility was limited by law and custom[46].

Patterson (1982:1-34) identifies three elements that must be present to produce what he describes as 'social death': 1) use of direct and indiscreet violence (a social force), 2) sentencing to anonymity and to a social death (a psychological force); and 3) an indefinite situation of lack of honour (a cultural force)[47].

Slaves were not treated as persons but as merchandise, thus we also speak of 'chattel slaves'[48]. Glancy (2002:10-11) observes that in some literary evidence they are addressed merely as 'bodies' (*ta sōmata*) or 'enslaved bodies' (*ta sōmata doulika*; cf. *P. Mich* 5.323.325, Egypt AD 47)[49]. Glancy (2002:16-18) further recalls how both male and female slaves were abused physically and sexually as society accepted that they were completely at the disposal of their masters[50]. There are many the examples in popular literature where slaves are whipped or slapped and where nobody in the scene turns even to make a comment. People who possess no *dignitas*, no honour and no status are not worth the time unless some emotional bond may exist between master and slave[51]. As a matter of fact 'Roman law treated violence against a slave as an insult to the owner' (:119).

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a title of authority, as Harrill confirms when he comments that one 'gains status by giving up status. Hierarchy remains' (Harrill 2007:216). The crucial element is that it is not an authority based on 'position' or 'office' but on *service* and *sacrificial love* (after Christ himself) *on behalf of* others, not *over* others. It is on these grounds only that it is possible to balance such extremes in reference to the person of Paul.

[46] For example, in the case of slaves, some emperors placed a two-generation-free burden (e.g., under Tiberius) before they could move up on the social scale (especially for equestrian or senatorial orders). See numerous examples in Suetonius (*Claud* 24.1; *Ner* 15.2), Pliny (*NHist* 33.32).

[47] See the short comments on these elements in Harrill (2004:577-578).

[48] Slaves were compelled to wear iron collars that bore their owners' names and addresses so that fugitives could be properly returned (Bradley 1984:120-121).

[49] The NRSV follows this pattern in Rv 18:13 and translates σωμάτων as 'bodies'.

[50] Prof. Dennis Byler has pointed me in a private conversation to another evil dimension of this, which may be defined as pure intrinsic cruelty. There are cultures were the abuse of the slave does not report any social benefit but pure psychological satisfaction. This perversion, projected against the no-person, must have affected slaves considerably.

[51] In such a complex setting it is impossible to avoid unjust generalizations. However, despite numerous cases in which slaves received grand sums of money and possessions as directed in their master's will, others who were favoured even by emperors soon found out how fragile such relation was (Suetonius, *Aug* 67). For examples in the New Testament, see Mt 18:23-35; 21:33-41; 22:1-10; 24:45-51, and 25:14-30, which portray managerial slaves who are still under the impending physical discipline of their master (Glancy 2002:112).

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Such objectionable and despicable treatment received by slaves should have, we think, contrasted with the re-definition this relationship received in the early Christianity, which nevertheless presents some notable concomitances with pagan use[52].

2.1.2 Slavery Redefined: A Model of Discipleship

It would be unfair to relegate 'discipleship' language to the purely spiritual without paying attention to the social and economic effects that Paul so clearly manifests, especially with what has to do with slavery. Firstly, the slave was a person who had to work daily in order to comply with his/her duties. This is obvious but important to highlight. Why? Because in the Graeco-Roman context manual labour was deemed of inferior status and was therefore not encouraged among the higher strata. Cicero (*Off* 1.150) stated that 'working every day to earn a living with one's hands was a "dirty business"' (Bartchy 1992:69). As a matter of fact, when a *domus* lacked slaves it was not so much perceived as misery but as a barrier of a socio-economic nature, of null respectability. It meant that servile tasks had to be assumed by free people (Fernández 2003:458). Paul was pressed to abandon his manual labour (tent-making) in order to receive a stipend as that of the super-apostles (2 Cor 11:12), but for the apostle this refusal becomes his glory (καύχεσις). This was his distinct manner of following Christ, his alternative up-side-down mark of pride in a society which holds to a different value-system based on honour (cf. Plutarch, *Mor* 1B, C; *Per* 2,1; *Aem* 8,6).

Paul not only maintains intact his position on manual labour, but exhorts his communities to do likewise (Hock 1980:59-60)[53]. Working daily to provide for the needs of the family of God and for those outside became an identity marker of the *ekklesia*, part of the way of discipleship (cf. 1 Th 4:11-12; see also Eph

[52] Commenting on Col 4:11 ('Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven'), Hopkins (1978:123) writes: 'Ideals no doubt affected practice; but moral prescription is usually weak evidence of actual behaviour'. Harrill (2006:85-86) contends that much contemporary exegetical conclusion tends to read the text through anti-slavery lenses (what he calls the 'seed growing secretly hermeneutics') that do not correspond to the social reality portrayed in the ancient text. He reads these texts under the image of the *vilicus*, i.e., the slave in charge of the house and other slaves who nevertheless are understood to still be under the authority of the master.

[53] This is only one possible explanation of his moral character, so vehemently attacked in 2 Cor 10:10. Other authors do not resort to economical interpretations but opt for a 'pneumatic' deficiency in the apostle (lack of powers) to contend with the invectives he suffered from some sectors. See Harrill (2006:35-36) for other options in the history of interpretation.

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4:28)[54]. This, I believe, had to do with the new 'solidarity' that cut across the class-system and allowed the Christian communities to become the locus of new interrelations, alternative households, where slave and free were one in Christ (Gl 3:27-28). However, we also find exhortations to both masters and slaves to reckon with each other in 'brotherly' manner, without obliterating present social structures but giving viability to behaviour within accepted social ways. Bartchy (1992:71) explains: 'This fact also prompted exhortations to Christians in slavery to subordinate themselves to their owners, even to the overbearing ones, in imitation of Christ's self-subordination to his suffering and life-demanding mission. The reception of these admonitions as divine counsel surely, if unintentionally, contributed to the smooth functioning of the Greco-Roman slave system (1 Pet 2:18-25; 1 Tim 6:2)'.

Martin (1990:56) writes: 'In such patronal society, as long as the hearer understood that Christ signified the god-founder of the movement, the phrase slave of Christ would have carried, to all but the upper levels of the society, meanings not of humility but of authority and power. The power of the slave, of course, was inextricably linked to that of the owner'[55]. But this assessment assumes that the early Christian movement looked at the world from an upper class perspective. However, this evaluation only touches on only one part of the equation. We will discuss this later, but Phlp 1:1 needs to be understood in light of 2:6-7, which then adds the element of abasement/humility as core of this complex understanding of discipleship (Briggs 1989:349-357). 'Paul's corporal hosting of the abased and crucified slave Christ is key [...] to his self-designation as *doulos Christou*' (Glancy 2007:205).

From the point of view of social identity theory what Paul does here is a re-definition of terms to construct a new identity based on alternative values to the society in which he is immersed. Martin has shown that this use of slavery is no novel, but the overall structure in which the apostle places is. Paul turns an institution devoid of honour into a title of close identification with the God in the flesh Jesus. This social model serves the apostle for the development of some areas of his theological spectrum. For example, Paul's three more theologically tinted terms (redemption, justification, and reconciliation) partly

[54] If we approach Paul's practice even amongst pagan communities, we could revert to the Jewish concept of labour, which was positive, even necessary for the Pharisees (cf. Reisner 1998:154-155, who cites Shemaiah and Abtalion's saying that demands the scholar to 'love labor and hate mastery'; *MAbot* 1:10). It is doubtful that Paul should have used this argument in speaking to a Graeco-Roman audience, but equally striking is his Jewish depiction in Phlp 3:5-11.

[55] Patterson (1982:300) comments on the classic study of Weaver (1972) and describes the five-fold status division (*servus vicarius*, *liberti servus*, *liberti libertus*, *Caesaris servi*, and *Augusti liberti*) to conclude that actually the most important factor in status and authority (even when just delegated or represented) was *proximity* to the emperor.

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derive from the slave-system world (Rupprecht 1993:882; Patterson 1982:70). Redemption or expiation (ἀπολύτρωσις) referred to the setting free of a slave, and it functioned in Paul's theological thinking as a metaphor of the work Christ has carried on behalf of those under the power of sin[56]. For Lyall (1984:157) the background of this use is to be found in Jewish law, although nothing precludes that these elements from Roman (or even Greek) law would be juxtaposed. Justification (δικαιοσύνη) had to do with the setting of a trial of the person who is then found not guilty, as well as the freedom a slave enjoys once he has been manumitted, 'the restoration of his natality with the legal fiction that he had been wrongfully enslaved' (Patterson 1982:70)[57]. Reconciliation (καταλλαγή) is 'used to convey the idea that as a slave, excluded from the rights and privileges of a free society, became a member of that society upon his manumission so the one who comes to Christ becomes now a member of God's family' (Rupprecht 1993:882). It is clear that the manumission practices in view here conform to the 'formal procedure' which conferred on the freedperson rights as citizen, which together with Paul's concept of 'adoption' (υἱοθεσία) finely closed the circle from a position of loss of status to that of complete sharing of privileges in the household[58].

These images in Paul, stressed above all the agency of the master and little that of the slave, which tended to be role-specific, corresponding to their belonging to someone else (Petersen 1985:242). However, the behaviour of the slave, which reflects the values of his master (the faithful slave) is prevalent in Paul as *imitatio domini*. In Philippians, one more element—that of being citizens (1:27)—is also at work, as we shall later see.

Manumission was also used to produce subordination of slaves while they were under the dominion of the masters (cf. Finley 1980:97). Uncertainty over the whims of the master after the term of *compulsory* labour or until the slave had saved enough to pay for his release 'made freedom an effective form of social manipulation' (Bradley 1984:112). The three Pauline metaphors above mentioned closely correspond to the three manners in which formal manumission could be carried out (Bradley 1998:188-189)[59]. Despite this,

[56] Many slaves bought their own freedom with the *peculium* accumulated during their years of service. This money managed by the slave was still under the legal ownership of the master, who could refuse such release at the stipulated time (cf. Hopkins 1978:168-169; Lyall 1984:38).

[57] Justification, more than any other element, seems to speak of Paul's Jewish symbolic universe, according to Käsemann (1969); cf. Campbell (2008).

[58] Deissmann (1910:326-330) gathered many examples of manumission under Greek law. See also Hopkins (1978:115-171).

[59] The 'informal' manner of manumission needed not be raised in public and depended on the wish of the master in its application and it did not carry citizenship rights. Here again we need to differentiate between Greek manumission (which included the element of *paramonē*),'which required the former slave to remain with and serve the ex-master, often "as a slave" until the

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Bradley is still critical of the role played by the Christian movement on slavery, since, even accepting that some changes were introduced; on the whole slavery was relegated to a moral or spiritual condition, and as such with little real improvement for the slaves themselves[60].

The transition from physical slavery to moral/spiritual slavery brought with it, no doubt, a potentially dangerous theological dimension. Slavery was now equated with sin, and manumission had to do with being freed from the dominion of sin rather than physical freedom[61]. Bradley criticises both early Christianity's and Paul's use of the terms related with slavery, since the moment they were given a spiritual slant any possibility for improvement in human relations was automatically blocked by their inner incapacity to develop new intellectual perspectives from where to criticise slavery (:185)[62]. Although slavery per se was never attacked as an evil in society by early Christian thinkers (like Paul), it is fair to recognise that the movement opted consciously for an alternative view on abasement/humility (same word in Greek, ταπεινοφρωσύνη) to the common in Graeco-Roman society. It is what Wengst (1988:45) has called 'the condition for a new community'. It is clear that Paul may have this in mind when he identifies himself as a 'slave of Christ', since the theme of humility runs throughout the letter (cf. Phlp 2:3; Glancy 2007:206).

Patterson (1982:71) points to this subtle change: 'Slavery, which on the level of secular symbolism was social death, became on the level of sacred symbolism spiritual death'. And, when united with the concept of the death and resurrection of Jesus, Patterson observes that two different explanations were offered in Paul's theology:

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master's death' (Harrill 2004:581), from Roman manumission. The Roman version could encompass full-enfranchisement (becoming a Roman citizen) or partial enfranchisement (becoming a *Junian Latin*, which carried with it certain rights as *commercium*, but not *connubium*, and when they died their properties reverted to their masters); cf. Harrill (2004:581) and Glancy (2002:94).

[60] Bradley's complaint is to be taken seriously. Stoics had been speaking of slavery as a spiritual and moral element which needed not affect the 'real' inner person. But they addressed, for the most part, people and individuals at the same level in the social scale and their focus of attention was on themselves. It was different with early Christianity. They addressed people also within the slave population who had come to receive the good news of Christ (Bradley 1998:181). However, regardless of benign ascriptions to Christianity by some New Testament scholars, the early movement accepted slavery as a normal practice (Hopkins 1978:122).

[61] That a few centuries later, Augustine could affirm (*CivD* 19.15) that sin was the first cause of slavery, came as no surprise (cf. Bradley 1998:183).

[62] Harrill (2006:33), who carries out a study on Rm 7 in light of the institution of slavery under the rubric of the fictive 'I' (speech-in-character or *prosōpopoiia*), concludes: 'In the end, Paul's representation of "the slave" consists of a bland moral polarity of good and bad and is an artificial construction serving Roman slaveholding ideology'. Some of Paul's opponents questioned his practice (*auctoritas*, his self-ascribed authority) by deeming his speech 'slavish'.

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> One explanation, which has profoundly conservative spiritual and social implications, held that Christ saved his followers by paying with his own life for the sin that led to their spiritual enslavement. […] Spiritual freedom was divine enslavement. Here was a confluence of two old ideas: the Near Eastern and Delphic notion of freedom through sale to a god, and the Judaic idea of the suffering servant and sacrificial lamb. […] There was a far more satisfactory and at the same time liberating symbolic interpretation of the crucifixion. The slave, it will be recalled, was someone who by choosing physical life had given up his freedom. Although he could, of course, have kept his freedom and died, man lacked the courage to make such a choice. Jesus, "his savior," by his death made this choice for him. It is this feature that was completely new […] he annulled the condition of slavery in which man existed by returning to the original point of enslavement and, on behalf of the sinner about to fall, gave his own life so that the sinner might live and be free (:71).

Patterson's evaluation recaptures what became common practice in the first centuries of the Christian movement and the theological understanding that followed. His useful assessment, nevertheless, does not touch on a critical issue: what sense the term conveyed for Paul as it was used in Philippians. Here we need to pay attention to Martin's (1990:57-58) observations on the use of the metaphor in the larger context, which is relevant to the study of personal and social identity. Admittedly, marginality may work either for or against a social group, or it may do both at the same time. It may keep some people from joining, but it may even solidify the group's identity. For instance, many of the parables in the gospels use the social structure of the king or householder with his slaves and servants. The slaves are representatives of the patron and dependent on him. They derive their identity from their place in the patronal structure and possess power and position because of that structure. This early Christian appropriation of patronal society as the scaffolding for its own symbolic representation is simply an adoption into symbolic form of a dominant social structure. Yet the manner in which the Christian group uses this structure reveals a certain sectarian mentality. The people within the household deal with one another as fellow slaves in that household, but they are contrasted with outsiders, who appear in the parables as tenant farmers, potential wedding guests, and so on. The outsiders are not slaves within the household; nor are they of lower status than the inside slaves. They are simply outside. But outsiders do not share in the power by association held by the slaves of the king or patron. By construing the church as a large household staffed by slaves at various levels of authority, early Christians reinforced their own sense of difference between them and the rest of society. Such a perception might correspond, to a certain degree, to what Nietzsche (1969:8) regarded as

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'slavery morality', i.e., a morality which does not value the virtues of the powerful and which centres on easing the existence of those who suffer[63].

> In Philippians, the central paradigm of Jesus' humility and exaltation shapes the rest of the letter. Paul holds up Jesus the onetime slave as a model for the Philippians to emulate. Like Jesus, they should look to the interests of others rather than to their own (2:4). Paul does not stop with his call to humility. He pictures this downward movement as the precursor to upward movement for the Philippians, as well. This is the way they will "work out their own salvation" (2:12). By following Christ down, they will eventually follow him up [...] All the good characters, the heroes, of Philippians are involved in this same down-up movement (Martin 1990:131).

I have pointed in chapter 2 that Philippians seems to use of *social creativity* in order to turn around a negative self perception into a positive one. It is remarkable, I think, the way the apostle works such a transformation within the flow of the letter, as we shall see.

However harsh and honour-less the slavery-system may have looked to Paul's contemporaries, we cannot escape the conclusion that his use as self-designation carries positive overtones[64]. After all, Paul seems to base his own standing on the example of Jesus Christ: self-abasement *on behalf of others*[65]. Thus, it is not fortuitous, but a rational decision to become a 'slave to all' (1 Cor 9:19). The radical expression of his understanding of his apostleship (Wengst 1988:46-47), not void of (delegated) authority, but characterised by his zealous

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[63] With this Nietzsche affirmed that Christianity had claudicated to Jewish values (an inversion of values) even though it dwelled in the midst of an aristocratic classical world. Although I cannot deny that part of his critique is insightful, some of the values he portrays (violated, suffering unfree, oppressed, etc.) and his description of Christian origins are generally deemed 'demographically inaccurate' (Glancy 2002:132). Wengst (1988:16) allows for a more positive perception of Jewish thought for virtues that also applied to the rich, whereas he concludes that Greek and Latin texts tend to detach negative concepts from its social roots, since even wealthy citizens could end up as the lowly due to different circumstances. In light of this *fatum*, privilege still needs to be protected!

[64] For a review of major trends in the history of the church on the theme of slavery, see Swartley (1982:31-64) and Harrill (2006:165-196).

[65] What is more; I believe Paul's self-adscription in Phlp 1:1 could not have been fully understood unless it was based on the example of Christ in 2:6-11. After all, even if the expression had a markedly Jewish background, it is highly improbable that it would have been taken at face value if it was directed to a Greek urban audience. Petersen (1985:245-247) commenting on Phlp 2:7-8, observes that the 'shape' (σχήμα) and 'likeness (ὁμοιώμα) of man' has the 'form of a slave' (μορφὴν δούλου), and concludes that ultimately for Paul human existence is characterised as a form of slavery. Here social and moral structures merge, which is more than an allegorical possibility when it is understood in light of 2 Cor 5:21. The 'choice' is thus to be enslaved to Christ or to our base desires (σάρξ, σῶμα) and the basic elements of this world (Gl 4:3, στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου).

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service for the communities (2 Cor 11:28, in the form of 'burden', μέριμνα), is placed at the end of one of his 'lists of sufferings', albeit within a peculiar context[66]. Far from seeing slavery as social death, the early Christian movement perceived it as a metaphor for salvation, so that Paul's self-designation has an important soteriological component. Salvation was for Paul the passing of one household to that of Christ (Martin 1990:66). It is within this new household that Paul describes himself working and living on behalf of others, going against a society in which the free person (*eleutheros*) was assessed for his/her ability to act as s/he wished (Epictetus, *Diss* 2.1.23). Although Martin focuses on 1 Cor 9, his observations can be transposed to Philippians:

> Because Paul sets himself up here as an example, the implication is that any of the Corinthians who intend to be leaders must follow Paul's example and model their leadership on that of the self-enslaving leader. Their leadership cannot simply shore up the existing status hierarchy. By enslaving themselves to their social inferiors, they challenge that hierarchy. By using rhetoric about the self-lowering leader, Paul does just what conservative Greco-Roman leaders wanted to avoid when they portrayed leaders as benevolent fathers: he throws normal social hierarchy and status indicators into disarray (:126).

1 Clement 55.1-3 deems a noble act the self-selling of some amongst them in order to feed their kin or as a ransom for others. This practice is perceived as genuine self-sacrifice (cf. Glancy 2002:82). If, for 'honour-seeking' eyes, this practice was not in accord with Roman *dignitas* (cf. Alföldy 1988:106-115), the early Christian movement, by contrast, had already looked at it through the example which nowhere was more clearly manifested than in the text of Phlp 2:6-11: that of Christ. It is necessary to read Paul's self-designation as a 'slave of Christ' (Phlp 1:1) in the light of the Christ-hymn and not the other way around, although once this is done, it is impossible to read the Christ-hymn without reference to Paul' own presentation. After all, Christ becomes the ultimate model as well as the beginning of the group's identity. However, I need to postpone the discussion for later, when we study Paul's structure of authority within this symbolic universe of patronal ideology where 'to alter one's behaviour to meet the expectations and demands of low-status persons was usually perceived as offensive social self-abasement' (Martin 1990:141).

[66] The genre of this passage is similar to a diatribe, where Paul uses hyperbolic comparison in order to stress that he should not be despised by the Corinthians. Still, the elements he points to in his defense seem to be based on realities he is now 'forced' to manifest in light of such vain accusations. These are useful in order to ascertain the depth of his apostleship.

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2.2 Luke's Portrait of Paul: The Roman Citizen

My aim is not to break the flow of the argument, but to contrast what we have seen with other descriptions of Paul in the New Testament corpus. Looking at Acts we glance at a quite different picture of the apostle.

It is interesting to observe that much contemporary scholarship reads Paul through Lukan lenses, perhaps unconscious of the fact that this depiction does not always coincide with that of the apostle himself (Segal 1990:14). There is much to say on this topic, but space only allows for brief comments on some facets of Paul according to Luke which are important for my interest in light of the letter to the Philippians. What I say about Paul here, no doubt, had some impact on the way the community perceived the apostle, but always depending of the level of historical reliability we ascribe to Acts.

On the question of whether Paul was a Roman citizen —that Acts so clearly expresses— I must confess that it raises numerous questions. My greatest doubts, however, do not derive primarily from the observation that the apostle never confirms the evidence in his letters, but from the fact that the setting was prepared for such a mention in Philippians 3. To a mostly pagan audience, where honour is so highly priced and where the apostle has just spoken about honouring people who suffer on behalf of the community (Epaphroditus, see 2:29-30), Paul chooses to reveal his background and former pride from a totally Jewish point of view. This presentation seems to complicate not only the identification of the recipients of the letter, but the reason for refusing to use an opportunity as clear as this to undermine the value and influence Roman citizenship had in this context.

At least on two occasions Acts presents Paul as a Roman citizen. One of them in Ac 22:25-28, where the apostle reproaches the Roman centurion, who is about to flog him uncondemned. The centurion confers then with the tribune who in turn directly asks Paul whether he is a Roman citizen. Paul answers: 'I was born a citizen' (22:28). Roetzel (1999:12-19) comments about the city of Tarsus and its importance under Roman rule, so that Paul's Roman citizenship, even as a Jew, is plausible under such circumstances. Another mention appears in Ac 16:37-38, a text which I commented upon that strangely presents Paul and Silas bringing up their 'superior' status quite late in the narrative.

I am aware, however, that this is a hotly debated subject, with two sides well-differentiated. On the one hand stand those who readily affirm the historical accuracy of Acts (e.g.: Ramsay, Welles, Sherwin-White, Hengel, Lüdemann,

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Bruce)[67]. On the other, those who assert the contrary (Tarn, Goodenough, Stegemann, Conzelmann, Haenchen, and Koester)[68]. The four main arguments against Paul's Roman citizenship run like this (Roetzel 1999:20-22):

1. Granting citizenship to Jews in the East was rare[69], although not impossible (Rapske 1994:89-90). Josephus had acquired it and singled out his own nephew (*Ant*), although he deems such an event as a desertion of the tradition of the fathers. Some of the cases we possess favour only those of wealthy status.

2. 'If Paul's piety reflects that of his parents, the piety of his home would argue against Roman citizenship' (Roetzel 1999:20). Since citizenship demanded civil involvement in religious festivals and allegiance to the imperial cult, it is difficult to see how a pious Jew like Paul could have continued with such a tension. Moreover, Paul tells us that as to the law he was 'blameless' (Phlp 3:6).

3. Certain omissions in the letter definitively argue against a 'Roman' Paul. 'If Paul were a Roman citizen his endurance of oppression so severe that he despaired of life itself (2 Cor 1:8, 9) is difficult to understand, when an appeal to his Roman citizenship offered a ready escape' (:21). He also points out the difficulty in ascertaining the omission in Phlp 3:20-21 when referring to the heavenly *politeuma*[70], and to 1 Cor 4:1: 'While an *argumentio ex silentio* when taken alone is hardly convincing, when added to the other evidence noted previously it weighs against Roman citizenship' (:22).

4. Most scholars opine that Paul's citizenship served Luke's theological interest. Neyrey (1996:252) affirms that Luke has chosen to place Paul in a particular social niche, and claims that for Luke's purposes, he 'portrays Paul in the company of the elite of the world, acting comfortably in the role of citizen trained for public duties'. Lentz

[67] Each of them study the evidence presented in Acts with different levels of acceptance (for example Hengel (1991:11-12) accepts it in the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary). Ramsay (1908). Welles (1962:62-75). Sherwin-White (1973:181-185).

[68] Tarn (1927:176-177). Goodenough (1966). Stegemann (1987:200-229). Conzelmann (1987). Haechen (1971), and Koester (1980).

[69] For Stegemann (1987:200-29) is not only rare but completely impossible, an extreme view van Minnen (1994:43-44) rejects.

[70] Jews living abroad under Roman rule were gathered as *politeumata*, which conferred on them a sort of intermediate status between that of the πολίτης (citizen) and of resident alien (metic, *peregrinus*); cf. Philo, *LegGaj* 349f. Cf. Cazeaux (1984:8); and Goodenough (1967:3). These *politeumata* were not only designed for Jews, but for Greeks, Syrians, etc. (cf. Roetzel 1999:22).

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(1993:131-133) shares the same opinion and believes it to be a Lukan creation.

In light of the evidence Roetzel (1999:22) concludes: 'If Paul was not a citizen, then it is probable that he was a member of a Diaspora Jewish *politeuma* or association in Tarsus'. This observation, if it were correct, could have direct consequences concerning his level of education[71], the fact that in Acts he is repeatedly portrayed as having a trade and even takes pride in it[72]. However attractive these questions might be, we do not have the space to discuss them in detail within the limits of my particular interest (cf. Witherington 1994; Reisner 1998). But the arguments against his citizenship are not as crystal clear as they seem to be (cf. Reisner 1998:154). There could be other profound theological reasons which prompted Paul to keep such a powerful identity from emerging in his letters.

In spite of these difficulties and the strange silence of the apostle regarding his identity as a Roman citizen, Witherington (1998b:501) suggests that Paul suffered from considerable status inconsistency. The apostle refrained from identifying too closely with his Jewish customs (1 Cor 9:20), and could have done likewise with his privileged status as Roman citizen (cf. Rapske 1994:129-134), since he did not want his ministry to be based on privilege but on service after the example of Christ. Preaching a *crucified Kyrios* could not go hand in

[71] See Hock (1980:35), who believed Paul came from the elite, and thus could speak of the diminution of honour which hand-labour brought. Roetzel (1999:23) critiques Hock for not offering evidence to support his claims and because the general trend of his book actually goes against it! Again, the only 'direct' mention to his formal education comes from Acts, where Paul says he studied under Gamaliel and maybe learnt at the same time a trade as a good Pharisee. Hengel (1991:3) doubts whether Paul was trained in the common schools of rhetoric, since he distinguishes between Greek elementary education and instruction in rhetoric, but leaves the question open for lack of definitive evidence. However, he confirms Paul's Roman citizenship (:38).

[72] Hock (1980) is the scholar who has studied the subject more thoroughly. Aguirre (1998:172-173) observes that Paul's trade becomes an element of identity for the apostle. Paul is pressed to conform to other apostles and missionaries and leave his manual work aside in order to dedicate himself completely to his mission (2 Cor 11:12), but he is not willing to yield in to this. The context in 1 Corinthians is a polemic against what Paul believes to be a wrong concept of apostleship, against those so-called super-apostles, who are false apostles (2 Cor 11:13). But in addition, Paul practices his trade because he is aware that in this context to do so is to concretise the fact of becoming a slave to all although being free (1 Cor 9:19). Aguirre criticises that this statement is usually understood in purely spiritual terms when Paul's intention is other: 'paradójicamente Pablo tuvo que pagar esta libertad al alto precio de esclavizarse («me he hecho esclavo» v. 19). Al trabajar perdía su estado, ya que, como decía Cicerón reflejando la mentalidad de su tiempo, un taller no era un lugar adecuado para un hombre libre' (cf. Cicero, *Off* 1.150; in Aguirre 1998:173). Again we can perceive how Paul's self-designation as a 'slave of Christ' emerges in concrete ways across his apostolic practice.

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hand with a life of privilege (Hengel 1991:7). Rapske's (1994:134) observation is clarifying:

> Moreover the self defence of an early citizenship claim would probably have been construed by the magistrates and populace as an assertion of commitment to the primacy of Roman, over against Jewish (i.e. Christian), customs. The signals sent would also have put the church at risk of dissolution if the new Philippian converts did not possess the Roman franchise. At the least there would have been uncertainty surrounding Paul's commitment to his message. Converts might wonder whether only those suitably protected (i.e. by Roman citizenship) should become believers in Christ, and they might think it disingenuous for Paul and Silas to ask others to suffer what they themselves were able to avoid.

It is then the more illuminating that Paul chose to present himself as a 'slave' to the Philippian community and even refrained from mentioning his privilege as a Roman citizen. After all, if the information in the book of Acts is reliable, the Philippians *already* knew he was a citizen from his visit to the colony, since he spent some time comforting the brethren before his departure (Ac 16:40). It might just be that the argument of silence plays here in favour of his Roman citizenship![73]

But it is also true that on occasion Paul made use of his right as a citizen. What then? Witherington (1998b:501) responds: 'When all this is put together, it suggests that Paul could well have chosen to use his Roman citizenship in an opportunistic way when it furthered his Christian purposes and not merely when it was personally advantageous. Paul's sense of identity came first from his Christian faith, secondly from his Jewish heritage, and only thirdly from his Greco-Roman heritage'. Although the argument is by no means definitive, I believe it makes good sense at least when we read Philippians. As Dunn (1999:176) qualifies, when we try to construct Paul's identity via his letters, we need to keep in mind that it is a 'textual or rhetorical construction' we are dealing with. Reisner (1998:150) allows for the possibility that the apostle refrained from using his privilege as he became fully identified with the example of Jesus. In his own words:

> No even moderately convincing reason can be adduced regarding why Paul would have had to mention his citizenship in one of the extant letters. Not one of these writings is addressed to a Roman authority or official. Compared with the heavenly πολίτευμα (Phil. 3.20), Roman citizenship was of tertiary significance, and the apostle preferred to portray for his churches his suffering

[73] Reisner (1998:150) comments on cases where Romans from the equestrian order (Josephus, *BJ* 2.306-308) were whipped and crucified before they could prove their status (although it seems the procurator was oblivious to such matters).

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in Christ rather than some privilege of status. By contrast, it is commensurate with the narrative of Acts to inform us how in certain situations Paul did make use of the privileges of the *civitas Romana* for the sake of furthering his work (:156).

3. Suffering in Paul: A Theology of Discipleship

> *He [Paul] went over to the side of the victim.*
> *Instead of continuing the crucifixion he joined the crucified.*
> (Hamerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence*, 82)

Bloomquist (2007:270-271) describes the Mediterranean world as pessimistic, since death (and suffering) are ever-present realities that exert a heavy burden both on the individual and society. Based on Dodds (1965), he places Paul within this milieu. Although it is somewhat general, the truth of the matter is that Paul introduces suffering and death as present realities, as we shall see.

I have already mentioned that Paul makes use of a literary device available in his time to describe his experience of suffering. These lists of difficulties or *Peristasenkatalog* have been traditionally studied in line with Stoic values of self-mastery and test of character of the wise man (cf. Malherbe 1968:72; Hodgson 1983:59-60). Also in line with Old Testament and Jewish perceptions of the suffering of the righteous (especially Jewish apocalyptic thought), some scholars have attempted to see a combination of factors rather than perceive these in dichotomised fashion[74]. Bultmann (1910) understood these Pauline lists to have sprouted from a Hellenistic philosophical influence that had parallel in Epictetus (*Diss* 2.10.17; 19.24) amongst others[75]. 'For Epictetus the περιστάσεις or "adverse circumstance" represented those obstacles to a dispassionate life to whose hurdling the Stoic gradually trained himself. The Stoic's ability to bear hardship or mortal danger with equanimity lay in his προαίρεσις "moral purpose"' (Hodgson 1983:68). However, it is clear that Paul confesses to have experienced distress on occasion under these situations:

> For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we

[74] E.g., Garrett (1990:99-117), although with not a great following, since it is difficult to account for isolated Stoic values as such (cf. Hafemann 1993:921).

[75] In his commentary on 2 Corinthians, Bultmann (1975) highlights two different elements in Stoic and Pauline thought: 1) in Stoic thought suffering does not impinge upon man's being, whereas for Paul 'man as man is qualified as a suffering being'. 2) the ability to transcendssuffering is for the Stoic part of man's constitution, assured by the right use of the moral purpose, whereas for Paul 'the ability to transcend suffering is χάρις "gift"' (cf. Hodgson 1983:68).

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> despaired of life itself. Why, we felt that we had received the sentence of death; but that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead (2 Cor 1:8-9).

Paul attributes the victory over these circumstances not to 'self-mastery' but to the power of God (2 Cor 12:9-10), which runs counter to Stoic pride. A clear example is found in Epictetus, *Diss* 2.19.24: 'Show me a man who though sick is happy, though in danger is happy, though dying is happy, though condemned to exile is happy, though in disrepute is happy. Show him! By the gods, I would fain see a Stoic!' (Hodgson 1983:67).

There are, moreover, other lists in popular Graeco-Roman moral and philosophical portraits of the sages, philosophers: Plutarch (*Mor* 326D-333C; 361E-362A; 1057D-E); Seneca (*Ep* 85.26-27); Dio Chrysostom (*Or* 3.3), etc. (cf. Hafemann 1993:921; Kruse 1993:19). Fitzgerald (1988:43) argues that in Graeco-Roman literature the scars that the good man bears are visible tokens of his virtue (again the grouping together of *bonum* and *virtus*). However, Glancy (2004:101) affirms that Fitzgerald's presentation is selective since scars could signify either virtue or contemptibility: 'The scars that some men bore in their bodies, impressed by lash and rod, testified not to virtue but to a lack of integrity' (:101). For Glancy, Paul's reference is not to a wound caused by a sword but by a whip and concludes that Paul does not boast about his ἀνδρεῖα (manliness) but about 'his humiliating corporal vulnerability' (:101). Pretorius (1998:562) observes that Paul's attitude is similar to that portrayed by Seneca: 'As Seneca regarded death forced upon someone as the highest form of setting an example, so Paul saw his possible execution as setting an example of the attitude of Christ to the Philippians—they even both used the same metaphor of libation in this matter!'

Hock (1980:60-61) has shown that Paul's use of such lists (at least in the Corinthian correspondence) resembles that of the typical descriptions of suffering that were common of artisans in the ancient world. Hock, for example, compares Paul's comments on the seeming weakness that his trade awakens in the Corinthian community to the impact of Lucian on the shoemaker Micyllus (Lucian, *Cat* 1, 14-15, 20, 22; *Somn* 6-9, 13)[76].

Many specialists have studied the occasions in which these lists appear in the intertestamental literature, 'pointing out not only formal and material parallels to Paul but also showing that the apocalyptic frame of reference for such lists is more congenial to Paul than the Stoic' (Hodgson 1983:68). The texts are

[76] As Hock (1980:60) points out, for the wealthy the artisan's appearance was that of a slave (δουλοπρεπές).

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numerous, and a few will suffice: 2En 66:6; TJos 1:4-7, 2:7; PssSol 16:14-15; 4Mac 17:11-16; Sir 2:1-5; Wis 3:5-6. Some of these display the overlap between Hellenism and Judaism that took place during Paul's time. We can be certain that this influence (more literary than ideological/theological) had informed the apostle's way of writing[77]. However, when we come to the crux of both the function and context of these lists, it seems clear that Paul is more influenced by the Old Testament and his christology (Hafemann 1993:921).

The apostle Paul, on at least eight occasions, speaks of difficult circumstances that 'either have imperilled or threaten to imperil his apostolate and the faith of Christian churches' (Hodgson 1983:63; although he mentions the suffering *topos* at least sixty times). These texts are: Rm 8:35; 1 Cor 4:10-13a; 2 Cor 4:8-9; 6:4b-5; 6:8-10; 11:23b-29; 12:10, and Phlp 4:12[78]. Out of these instances, the more complete list is 2 Cor 11:23-29, where Paul mentions up to thirty specific tribulations.

Kyrtatas has studied the theme of slavery as moral training both in pagan and Christian authors. Focusing on the Graeco-Roman context, Kyrtatas perceives that corporal punishment is a necessary element in the education of children and, of course, of slaves. The latter lacked self-control and were treated even as inferior to children, since at least children grew to become men. Kyrtatas (1995:230) places Paul's view of suffering in this light, which allows us to see how pervasive Paul's self-identity as a slave runs through much of his letters[79]. In Galatians 4:1-2 Paul seems to have this theme in mind, not just comparing children with slaves, but believers who needed to progress in their Christian walk:

> I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father.

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[77] For further examples, see Josephus, *BJ* 2.8.10; IV.3.10; *Ant* 3.2.2; I.6.6. Also in the Mishnah (*M. B. Qam*. 1:1; *M. Pe'ah* 2:7; *M. Šabb*. 2:5, etc.) following the common Jewish notion that all suffering is part of death (see 1 Cor 15:31; cf. Hafemann 1993:919). The Coptic texts of Nag Hammadi (AcPtTwAp VI, 1,5,20-30; GrPow VI,4,39,126-30, etc., although most of them from the second and fourth centuries AD) preserve Gnostic speculations on the origin and condition of this world which can read back, to a certain extent, to the first century AD. Cf. Hodgson (1983:72-75).

[78] To perceive the differences in these two groups of four instances each, see Hodgson (1983:63, 67), who divides them between 'simple' and 'antithetical' lists.

[79] On his review of the history of interpretation of suffering in Philippians in the first centuries of the Christian era, Bloomquist (1993:33-34) allocates suffering in the realm of martyrdom and *imitatio Christi* rather than in slave language imagery.

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But that is not all. In Gl 6:17 Paul declares that he wears the marks of Jesus (τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ) in his body, which could certainly refer to *cicatrices*, literal scars, as Paul depicts himself in military guise in the advancement of the gospel (Martyn 1997:568). Such wounds (if they were scars on the back, due to whipping), were not worn by soldiers and warriors but by servile bodies. Building on this observation, Glancy affirms that something similar is revealed in 2 Cor 11:23-25 where Paul boasts in the sufferings (beatings) he has endured. She writes that 'every body tells a story' (Glancy 2004:100). Paul's close self-identification with the sufferings of Christ in 2 Cor 13:4 (Christ was crucified in weakness; ἐξ ἀσθενείας) seems to me to have parallels in the Christ-hymn (Phlp 2:6-11, as well as in Phlp 3:10 and, actually throughout the letter; cf. 2:17). The apostle perhaps had this general reference in mind as he writes to the Philippian community; especially if the incident in Ac 16 is more than a fantastic story, as I have argued earlier[80]. The only instance in antiquity where whipping was seen as a mark of masculinity was the Spartan flagellation contests known as διαμαστίγωσις (Cicero, *Tusc* 2.14.34), which could end with the death of the contenders (Glancy 2004:116). But, do these marks on the body identify Paul as a slave? Glancy believes this inference is incorrect, for one solid reason. Slaves were branded by slaveholders, but at no time is Paul implying that Jesus himself is the one causing him such pain (:132). What then? 'Because Paul believed that in the stripes of his own flesh the story of Jesus' passion could be read, he ascribed phylactic properties to his στίγματα. But to those informed by Roman *habitus* [the 'embodied history, internalized as a second nature and forgotten as history'], his whipped body instead announced that he was whippable' (:133).

What if his sufferings were viewed under this light, adding the element of corporal punishment as moral training, and as such slavery as spiritual progress? After all, this is also in line with such Roman *habitus*[81]. In fact Paul might just do so: 'Referring to himself, the apostle reminded his readers of the "sharp physical pain" he had received "as Satan's messenger to bruise" him. He had asked the Lord to rid him of it, but the answer was that "power comes to its full strength in weakness"' (Kyrtatas 1995:230). Sandnes (2002:161-162), in my opinion, correctly speaks of Paul's 'body-theology' and notices that 'the body of the believers is an appendage of Christ's body, which implies present participation in his sufferings and humiliation and future transformation of the mortal body'.

[80] The crucial question is if Paul's readers were able to understand such affirmations in this way. Glancy (2004:115) believes that 'Paul never labels his own marks battle scars, nor does he use language of military engagement to describe his subjection to whip and rod'.

[81] Glancy (2002:143), who comments on the *Haustafeln* focusing on Colossians 3, believes this to be quite clear: 'The household codes identified submission and obedience as the highest virtues that slaves could attain. Slavery was thus perceived as a kind of moral training'.

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I believe this concept has pervaded Christian thought, much more than we would like to acknowledge[82]. Though somewhat lengthy, Kyrtatas' (1995:232) conclusion reflects quite clearly what I mean:

> A slave-owning society, it seems, having at first threatened some free persons with servile treatment as an educational device, developed the idea that slavery was actually beneficial to slaves as well. The value of submission and suffering as moral training was taken over by intellectuals of Hellenistic and Roman times and appealed greatly to Christian moralists. Whatever the perils of slavery to some individuals, it has been accepted in Western culture that it was a necessary phase through which humanity had to pass in its attainment of moral ideas and universal freedom. Consequently, the moral ideals and the concept of freedom in the modern (Western) world have preserved some essentially servile elements, clearly visible in the ethics of discipline and labour. Even the remotest of modern utopias take the form of happy men fishing, hunting and cultivating the land — not wandering idly in Paradise.

Suffering is not perceived in Paul as a virtue; rather, it is the natural and concrete outcome of a life devoted to the service of others, patterned after Jesus the Christ (cf. Jervis 2007:43, 'believer-specific suffering'). It is possible that the Philippian community experiences severe suffering that threatened to discourage and divide it. Together with a 'realistic' view of suffering, Paul exhorts them to joy (2:18; 3:1; 4:4). But surely, after all this, Paul has a purpose in mind. Suffering is not elevated merely in terms that it reflects on the example of Jesus Christ. It also serves the apostle to deal with his peculiar situation of lack of honour and of dire vulnerability.

3.1 Prisoner for Christ's Sake (Phlp 1:13)

We could perhaps think that Paul is trying to communicate in Phlp 1:13 ('my imprisonment is for Christ') that he is not in prison as a common rogue, but on account of his faithfulness to the message of Christ[83]. It could be argued that in this timocratic society the apostle wants to maintain his honour intact, as that of the righteous person unfairly incarcerated. These elements, of course, could be part of his purpose, although the Philippian community must have known that already. If we allow some measure of historical reliability to the account of Ac

[82] For an interesting development of this rhetoric of slavery and the transition from a physical slavery to a spiritual one, see Glancy (2002:29-38).

[83] It is clear that Paul's imprisonment had provoked some doubts in the Philippians' attitude towards the apostle. This may be the reason why Paul uses an apologetic tone here (cf. Jewett 1970:366).

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16, we could say that when Paul is speaking about imprisonment, the Philippians are already in 'familiar territory'[84].

No, the expression is more than a rhetorical artifice or a possible alibi against wrong interpretations, even in the face of the numerous adversaries Paul has (Phlp 1:15). Wansink (1996:71) affirms that Paul's chains serve a wider purpose: they somehow shaped early Christianity. I would like then to interpret Paul's expression within the wider frame of reference to his sufferings/slavery on account of Jesus Christ (cf. Martin 1990:135). I believe this intuition is on good course, but SIT can add further light to it. However, I postpone these observations till after I have defined Paul's situation in more detail.

Where Paul was imprisoned at the time of writing the letter is of no great concern now[85]. It will be dealt with in the next chapter when we look at the overall structure of the letter and seek to identify Paul's adversaries. Here I need to point to an important caveat: my aim is not to re-construct Paul's imprisonment(s), but to study how such a strenuous situation is used rhetorically and theologically to imprint on the audience Paul's own understanding of his life and mission patterned after the life of Jesus Christ. After all, the apostle's sufferings and many trials made Paul who he was.

Some specialists have taken the text in the *Dig* 48.18.9 (*Carcer enim ad continendos hominess non ad puniendos haberit debet*: 'Prison indeed ought to be employed for confining men, not for punishing them') at face value, as if prisons were 'holding tanks' rather than bestial places for punishment (Wansink 1996:28). However, ancient sources (even the *Dig* itself, cf. 48.19.9) offer a more variegated and complex picture, for we are aware that people were left in chains for years (Rapske 1994:315-323). Cicero affirms that prison removes hope from men (*Cat* 4.8-9; for the experience of women see Wansink 1996:55-58). We are, furthermore, speaking of a legal system which unapologetically discriminates between persons depending on their status. See, for example *Dig* 48.19.11 (Ulpian): *Se denim sciendum est discrimina esse poenarum neque omnes*

[84] Witherington's (1994:31-32) comment that Paul's incarceration may in fact be a house arrest and that there is no hint in the letter that he may be in any impending danger seems to forget the overall emphasis of the apostle on the suffering *topos* and the likely possibility of his death (1:23; 2:17). Capper (1993:208) thinks that Paul's imprisonment may have provoked a breach between Paul and the Philippians (1:12). For this reason he needs to assure them that this circumstance has rather helped the progress of the mission.

[85] At least three different locations have been proposed: Rome, Ephesus and Caesarea, even a fourth one —Corinth—which has a long history behind it (already in 1731, by G L Oeder; cf. Hawthorne 1983:xl). However, AcPaulThec 8 speaks of an imprisonment in Philippi from where Paul wrote *3 Corinthians*. Wansink (1996:16-17) argues against a too strict positioning on this matter since other ancient authors speak of no less than seven different imprisonments (cf. *1 Clement* 5:6)!

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eadem poena adfici posse ('But it should be known that there are differences in penalties, and not all can suffer the same penalties'; cf. Garnsey 1970:103). We need little effort to imagine the different treatment people might have suffered depending on their personal status and financial means (Wansink 1996:41-43).

3.1.1 Incarceration and Shame

There is another point of contention. Was imprisonment understood as a shameful situation by the people closest to the imputed person? Ancient sources speak of the desertion of friends when these are in chains (cf. Cicero, *QFr* 1.3). But we need to move from general appreciations to the concrete experience of the apostle. Paul speaks often of his imprisonments, which frequently appear in his 'lists of sufferings'. In 2 Cor 11:23, in a polemical context, he presumes of more imprisonments than any of the super-apostles. Wansink (1996:58-61) presents several texts where imprisonment leads some people to commit suicide before risking loss of honour. However, the comments are brief and need further consideration. Paul, no doubt, felt he (they) had been ill-treated at Philippi (cf. 1 Th 2:2, ὑβρισθέντες), which could have included imprisonment. But the important point is that incarceration—a priori a shameful state—when it is placed within the context of sufferings *on behalf of Christ*, is for Paul a token of hubris. It is part of his necessary (ἀνάγκη) and faithful service on behalf of his *kyrios* and his *ekklesiai*[86]. It neither brought shame to the Philippians, nor should it bring it to Paul (1:20), although it may just be that the apostle was trying to anticipate any opinions in that direction (cf. Wansink 1996:138). The idea of imprisonment as a shameful state is clearly present in the letter[87]. In reconstructing the possible events the letter reflects we could say that upon his imprisonment the Philippians had tried to help the apostle. However, due to their own difficult circumstances, along with the uncertainty about the whereabouts of Paul, they had lost hope to see the apostle again and could/did not send their aid (Phlp 4:10). 'More and more people had deserted Paul, and Timothy alone could minister to him in this dark hour' (Silva 2005:4; cf. Phlp 2:19-30). Though the apostle turned bad experiences into opportunities, the truth of the matter is that he desired to be freed. But freed, in what sense? Phlp 1:19-20 tells us:

[86] Precisely what Malina and Neyrey (1996:207-208) point out, although without explaining its functions within Paul's overall presentation of his mission.

[87] If our present modern legal system functions upon the presumption of innocence of the person awaiting trial, for first century Mediterranean society the awaiting of trial *in* prison was already a sure sign of the culpability of the prisoner. I owe this insight to Prof. Dennis Byler in the course of a private conversation.

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> Yes, and I shall rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance (σωτηρίαν), as it is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all ashamed (αἰσχυνθήσομαι), but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored ('made great', μεγαλυνθήσεται) in my body, whether by life or by death.

Whereas some authors understand this 'salvation' as deliverance from prison (Hawthorne 1983:39-40, who takes away the eschatological sense and prefers the 'lesser' sense found in the papyri), many others opine that the expression carries eschatological overtones (Beare, Collange, Gnilka, Silva, O'Brien). Paul's wording closely parallels Job 13:16, LXX. The apostle has applied these words in Job to his own situation because, like Job, he is sure that whatever the outcome, he shall be vindicated. He is speaking of ultimate vindication (O'Brien 1991:108-110), if we attend to the textual parallel. Silva (2005:70) complains that most scholars do not attend to Job's overall context and miss this emphasis. Silva (1992:76-78; 2005:70-72) seems to have decisively shown that release from prison is not a realistic option, but Fowl (2005:45) suggests that both senses may be present 'in order to undermine any excessive desire on the Philippians' part to be delivered from physical suffering taken on in Christ'. Perhaps then Paul continues sharing with them his own version of the Christ-like way, which contains both elements.

Paul has not been left alone in chains. He has at least two close collaborators near by (2:19, 25). He also has a community that genuinely cares for him, and for which he is grateful (4:10). It seems such caring might have been absent for a while due to difficult circumstances, but it is now renewed with zeal. We need to recall the shame criminals experienced as friends and relatives left the convicted without warm support, and the shame imprisonment brought to relatives (cf. Cicero, *QFr* 1.3.1). These experiences, it seems, were not the general practice in the first centuries of the church, for the different communities were encouraged to carry on with their visitation ministry, but in smaller numbers, lest the local authorities might become suspicious (Cyprian, *Ep* 4.2; cf. Wansink 1996:81-82).

3.1.2 Incarceration and Paul's View of Discipleship

I have repeatedly affirmed that Paul's experiences shaped his theology. Paul's theology is based on more than the cognitive: it comes from a personal experience with the living God whom he serves (Gl 1:12; cf. Ac 9). It is in this sense that we can speak of a 'conversion' (Segal 1990:11). Both sublime experiences (2 Cor 12) and hardships (cf. his 'lists of sufferings' above) inform

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his theology. Droge (1988:285) boldly affirms that there 'are numerous passages in his letters which lend themselves to a martyrological interpretation. Like Ignatius after him, Paul seems almost pathologically fascinated with his sufferings and possible death, and he devotes considerable space to their theological implications. In these passages Paul expresses the thought that his apostolic mission will ultimately cost him his life, and that his death, like the death of Jesus, will have salvific consequences'. Statements like these lead Droge to affirm that Paul thinks of himself as a 'second Christ', but that is taking it too far, although admittedly some Pauline texts (i.e.: Col 1:24, 'completing the sufferings of Christ') come quite close to it. I'd rather stress the intimate identification he experiences with his *kyrios*, which includes even sharing the same fate, not because it is sought after, but precisely because his trials bring him so close to this identification. This line of thought perceives certain pathological predisposition (which some affirm was general to the epoch, Seneca's *libido moriendi*, in *Ep* 24.25; cf. Dodd 1965) in Paul, while ours reflects a continuous experience of constraint which influences his theology. In identifying with the weak Paul finds a social categorisation that serves his theological purposes and feeds the way he writes to his communities. Ultimately, Paul finds his deeper identification mirrored specially in Christ.

Paul's mention of his imprisonment (1:13) is placed within a larger section (1:12-30) which can be divided into two parts (1:12-26 and 1:27-30)[88]. The first part deals with Paul's imprisonments and its effects. These go beyond the spreading of the message, whether for right or wrong reasons (1:14-18), to the apostle's own out loud thoughts concerning life and death. Thus, after the well-known passage in 1:21 ('For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain') Paul considers both *living* (and staying on account of his mission) and *dying* (and being with Christ, his desire) as ...*real* options. Is it a mere rhetorical device or was Paul pondering on the possibility of taking his life (Droge 1988:278-286)?

> If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose (τί αἱρήσομαι) I cannot tell (Phlp 1:22, RSV).

[88] In the next chapter I deal with the rhetorical structure of Philippians in more detail. Here it suffices to point out that the first part is the epistolary body that starts with the 'I want all of you to know' plus the *narratio* (1:12-26). The second part (1:27-30) would be the *propositio*, where we find the central exhortation (Witherington 1994:50). Watson (1988:65) includes 1:27-30 within the *narratio*, but Fee (1995:16) opposes to it in strong terms: 'to turn the first imperative (1:27-30) into "narration", as Watson does, is to superimpose a rhetorical template onto this letter that simply does not fit'. In spite of how some scholars view it, my opinion is that both formally (Alexander 1984:94; Bloomquist 1993:126-127) and thematically (Lohmeyer 1964:70; Wansink 1996:104) the two sections are closely linked and for that reason we can trace a relationship between what the apostle experiences with the way he perceives the Christian way.

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The crux of the problem lies in how to interpret the verb αἱρέω (τί αἱρήσομαι), which is either translated as 'to take with the hand, to grasp'; or in its medial sense 'to take for oneself, to choose' (LSJ) or 'to choose, to prefer' (BAGD). Wansink (1996:101-102) compares it with other instances in the New Testament (2 Th, Heb) and Roman literature (DionHal, *AntRom* 53.9.3) and concludes that it is better to translate it as 'to choose' rather than 'to prefer,' since the former incorporates important nuances to the overall meaning of the section, as we shall see.

Whereas some commentators stress the fact that, while in prison, Paul was under the control of others and thus could not decide for himself, others take this affirmation within the wider context of Greek and Roman discussions on 'noble death', stressing Paul's own volition on the matter (Droge 1988:279). Wansink (1996:104-119) presents literary and social parallelisms between Cicero's *QFr* and Phlp 1:18b-26, which are illuminating, although he is careful to point out that a direct dependence on Paul's account cannot be deduced automatically. After some clarifying discussion, Wansink concentrates on the rhetorical function of this expression within the larger context of the letter and concludes that Paul's purpose in vocalising such deep thoughts is exemplary:

> Almost immediately after Paul's discussion of life and death (1:18b-26), he expresses his hope that he may hear that the Philippians "stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (1:27). Paul writes such a statement, knowing full well that to "stand firm...striving side by side" involves more than each individual's pursuing her or his own desires or goals (:115).

It seems to me that this exemplary assessment (not focusing merely on Paul's right of choice, *pace* Droge) serves the apostle to exhort the community to understand their present tribulation and purpose as a community under the light of sacrificial love. Only in this manner does he understand the higher example of Christ in 2:5-11. For Paul, his own sufferings become a way of identifying with Christ's death (2:17; 3:10)[89]. So, perhaps his expression 'to die is gain' is not *only* an escape from life's miseries, but perceived as 'gain' (κέρδος) in light of his intimate identification with the way of Christ (*pace* Palmer 1975:218)[90]. Speaking in light of the context of Phlp 1:21-26, Droge (1988:285)

[89] I cannot discount Paul's religious experiences (mainly christophanies; cf. Gl 1:13-17; 1 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor 3:7-4:6; 12:1-10) as powerful encounters that shaped his theology. Hurtado (2000:190-191) welcomes this renewed emphasis in New Testament studies. No doubt religious experiences can lead to profound innovations, and for what we observe in Paul, such was the case in the new definition of God's people identity (including gentiles) he portrays in Philippians.

[90] There is no doubt that Paul had death as a present reality (2 Cor 5:1-8), and even as a path to a deeper intimacy with his Lord (Droge 1988:282). But even this preference is put aside for the

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affirms that if 'voluntary martyrdom and suicide cannot always be clearly distinguished, then it would be indeed correct to assume that Paul had in mind the possibility of suicide, although he of course would likely have referred to it as martyrdom'. As a matter of fact, earlier on Lohmeyer had conceived the letter as a treatise on martyrdom (Lohmeyer 1964:5-6), although this view did not have a great following (Marchal 2006:24). Droge has, in a later work with Tabor (1992), softened his terminology and employs 'voluntary death' rather than suicide. The point is that to define 'active voluntary death' or 'passive voluntary death' is an important matter. Wansink (1996:120-124), after describing the model of defence Jesus had left his followers (being silent), concludes his chapter on the rhetoric of voluntary death with a profound insight that might just get us out of this impasse:

> In Philippians, Paul faced a choice between an active defence (which also involved an ἀπολογία τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, 1:16) and no defence at all (in *imitatio Christi*). Neither silence nor obstinacy would have gone far either in preserving his life or his mission. Paul's choosing to defend himself seems very plausible (:124).

How Paul's view developed thereafter in his communities upon his death is difficult to assess. We know though, that at the beginning of the second century, Ignatius valued martyrdom highly and based his theology of martyrdom both on the example of Christ and on Paul's writings. As the bishop stops to salute some communities on his way to martyrdom, Ignatius, with clear echoes of *imitatio Christi*, writes to the Roman Christians (*Rm* 4.1-2; 4.2-3) not to prevent his death but to value it as the highest of all callings a Christian can have access to (cf. Stark 1997:180-181). Martyrdom and voluntary death for the cause became so intricately joined (cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Str* 4.16.3-17-4) that some church authorities had to put a strict control to a practice which was becoming just too carnal in its focus, since people were attracting attention to themselves rather than to God (Tabor 1992:578).

Whatever else might be added to the discussion, the apostle Paul wants to make clear that as a servant of Christ he chooses to be spent on behalf of others. It could not be otherwise (cf. 1 Cor 9:16, where Paul speaks of his mission as a necessity, ἀνάγκη), and he wants to model a behaviour in which the care for the other is crucial, as the example of Jesus the Christ is about to reveal[91].

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interest of those whom he serves. I believe that his reasoning is coherent, and unites both his identification as a *slave* with that of *leading* others by example.

[91] For Paul's use of 'rational wish' (βούλησις) after the manner of the Stoics, see Ramsaran (2005:297).

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However, why this extreme thought (as I have defined it) was entertained by the apostle may only be proof of the hardness of life in prison[92].

A very different matter it would have been if Paul suffered prison because of reasons other than the defence of the gospel. Nevertheless, imprisonment carried with it shame and the danger of impending death. Elevating these chains (for Christ) as something akin to a model of discipleship, allowed the apostle to turn a negative self perception into a positive element. This he did not only in order to preserve his authority among this congregation, but as an avenue for the Philippian believers to gain courage in the face of danger.

3.2 Abased but Content (Phlp 4:11-12)

Bloomquist (2007:270) is correct when he emphasises that both suffering *and* joy form a 'tapestry which serves as a backdrop for Philippians'. Within a context where joy was deemed as an illusion, Paul was able to exhort this community to rejoice (4:4) even in the direst of situations.

At the end of his letter, Paul addresses the believers with incredible candour and opens a window into his own personal life. Here we read that he has learnt to be content (αὐτάρκης) regardless of the situation he undergoes, in seemingly Stoic fashion, but with a different source of strength: Christ himself (4:13)[93]. He also shares with them his experience of lacking material support. He has experienced the abasement/humiliation (4:12, ταπεινόω) that comes with it. I believe that what he writes at the closing of the letter has direct relation with what he has shared with the Philippians until then. Paul is not delighting in his own self-mastery, as if displaying virtue, but he reflects on Christ's model once again. Humility (ταπεινοφρωσύνη) is, as I have mentioned, the *new way of relating with others*: 'Humility is concerned not with one's own advantage but with that of others' (Wengst 1988:49). After all, this has been the way of Christ:

> The trend within society goes against this [...] the Roman empire society was marked strongly by a concern for upward social mobility. That against such a background Paul invites not isolated individuals but members of the

[92] It could be claimed that my argument is unnecessary. As a matter of fact Paul believes he is going to be released soon (Phlp 1:19, 26-27), although he speaks with uncertainty about the future (1:27; 2:17, etc.). The burden of proof, however, stays in demonstrating that what the apostle wrote was a mere rhetorical device: he never intended his words to be understood as plausible action. Why bother then the Philippians with such intimate thoughts? Was Paul trying to manipulate then into something?

[93] Berry (1996:115). Some recent studies propose that a (moderate) Cynic or even Pythagorean understanding may be more relevant than the intellectual Stoic view (Engberg-Pedersen 2000:101). Cf. Malherbe (1996:131-135).

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> community to behave the opposite way to that prevalent in society makes this sphere "in Christ" another society, an alternative society as a society which shows solidarity. But in that case "humility" is not individual renunciation but the basic condition for a new society which is really all-inclusive (:49)[94].

It is in this context that Paul reflects on this God-given sufficiency which allows him to affirm: 'I can do all things in him who strengthens me' (4:13). It is not inner strength, but a source of power for living available for the entire community. 'Joy is the emotional side of one's new normative self-identification as a being who is primarily, indeed exclusively, defined as one who belongs to Christ' (Engberg-Pedersen 2000:96-97). Joy is therefore crucial in the letter. There is a clear movement towards joy and triumph at the end of the letter, as if previous suffering has been conquered and triumph announced.

3.3 Apostolate and Suffering

'Rather than questioning the legitimacy of his apostleship because of his suffering, Paul considered suffering to be a characteristic mark of his apostolic ministry' (Hafemann 1993:919; see Gl 6:17; 1 Cor 2:1-5; 2 Cor 11:23-29, Phlp 1:30; 2 Tm 1:11-12; 2:9). But this assessment comes short of the mark. More than as an 'office', Paul thinks of himself in terms of identification with Christ. In the well-known passage of Phlp 3:5-11, we find that the suffering *topos* becomes *the* way to closest union with Christ: *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death* (RSV). This close identification led some scholars in the 19th century (who reformulated the suffering theory set forth by Ignatius and later on by Augustine as ethical *intentio*, see Bloomquist 1993:34), to base it on the new findings of the Christ-mysticism which led them to rather extreme claims. Schmitz (1924:185-187) went as far as to conclude that Paul's sufferings and those of Christ were undifferentiated. There was no separation whatsoever. But the identification I propose does not imply the dissolution of one's identity in Christ; the individual particularity of our identity remains (Campbell 2008:156)[95]. As I

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[94] I think it is rather difficult for modern interpreters to grasp such a novel mentality. Andrews (1995:266) describes how those who experienced hardships were separated by social status. Those who endure possessed *dignitas*, and deserve the respect of others. Those who fail to endure misfortune (ἀτυχέω) are the weak, the 'humble' (ταπεινός) and 'slavish (ἀνδραποδώδης). The kind of solidarity with the weak Christ's and Paul's example display is a radical turn of events. 'As Aristotle wrote [*Rhet* 1.9.1], noble persons (ἀγαθός) deserve one's praise while the base (κακός) deserve one's blame' (:266).

[95] Bloomquist (1993:39-40) comments of this interpretation and mentions Windisch's work (1934:162), who observes that Paul sought to mirror Jesus' career and even self-designates (1:1) in the same manner as the master (2:6-7), in which he is right to perceive the mimetic nature of Paul's ministry. However, he goes too far in ascribing the apostle's longer career a higher value

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argued earlier, suffering in Paul, however important, points to close identification, but it does not possess a value on its own.

3.4 The Persecutor Persecuted

The early Paul is depicted as a furious persecutor of those who followed the Way (Ac 9), with such a zeal as to coldly attend as a spectator to the stoning of one of the disciples (Ac 7:58-8:1). Luke puts in Paul's own mouth this slanderous behaviour (Ac 26:9-11):

> I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And I did so in Jerusalem; I not only shut up many of the saints in prison, by authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme; and in raging fury against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.

These accounts readily correspond to Paul's own discourse in Galatians (1:13) where he painfully recognizes his former life as persecutor and destroyer of the faith. However, Roetzel (1999:38-39) advises against reconciling both accounts in an uncritical manner. It is true that Paul does not rejoice in his former life, but he does not deny it either. As a matter of fact he mentions it in Phlp 3:6 when he asserts that 'as to zeal, persecutor of the church'. No wonder that the first disciples of the churches in Judea distrusted him: 'He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy' (Gl 1:23). It is true that we do not possess a great deal of information on Paul's persecution of the church and the Way, but what he mentions in his letters is enough evidence to accept Acts as a reliable account. Why should we be maintaining such a tenacious and absolute distrust against what is but a historiographical work with a definite Hellenistic style?[96] Whatever links between Acts and Paul's letters may be, the

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than that of Jesus as if a longer period of suffering could be measured qualitatively. However, both Paul's and the Philippians' sufferings are never presented as *completing* soteriological matters (cf. Gnilka 1976:102, who comments that all are part of the same ἀγῶν), since we need to take into consideration the eschatological element and the distance between redeemer and redeemed, that both Schmitz and Windisch forget.

[96] It is interesting to see that such distrust leads many specialists to rely rather on their 'solid' theories, which many times are solely based on hunches and the reconstruction of sources which are quite alien to western scholars both in time and space! I have opted for a study of Acts on a case by case basis, which I think it is more useful. Otherwise our own filters colour the outcome a priori. Roetzel (1999:40) argues that several elements in the Acts narrative are unhistorical, like the mention of the death penalty for the followers of the Way (22:4), since Jewish leaders had no authority to administer such punishment (cf. Hengel 1991:67, 72 is of the same opinion, although he does not discount lynching as a possible cause of death in certain instances). Roetzel (1999:40) believes that Luke plays with this stark antithesis in order to

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fact is that his former life bears negatively, as a heavy weight, upon the apostle, who struggles as he exhorts the churches: 'Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God' (1 Cor 15:8-9). I believe this mention is more than a mere rhetorical device. As it appears also in Phlp 3:6, Paul profoundly 'resents' the pain and destruction he caused the church of God, and it is only standing in God's grace (1 Cor 15:10) that a new identity has been formed[97]. However, we need to refrain from thinking that—as was typical of the Lutheran tradition—Paul suffered from a guilt-ridden (existential) anxiety. Stendahl (1976) put to rest such Western-like ideas with good skill and refreshing arguments.

If we look at Phlp 3:4-6, where Paul speaks about his former life as a Pharisee, we observe that there is neither room either for guilt feelings nor lack of self-esteem (Segal 1990:5). Whereas his conversion has been studied mainly from a psychological point of view, new approaches (i.e., sociological) allow us to move away from the 'introspective conscience of the West' into more fruitful fields where we can contemplate Paul as an active subject rather than as a passive object[98]. Clearly, after Paul's experience of conversion he had been transformed. There is a past and present reality that is observed in the grammatical counterpoint between *formerly* and *now* (Phlp 3:6; cf. 1 Cor 15:9, Gl 1:23), which 'opposes Paul the persecutor to Paul the persecuted teacher' (:117).

The list of reasons why Paul could have persecuted 'Hellenistic Christianity' are multiple and diverse, and as Roetzel (1999:39) discloses, it is easier to argue about the reasons why Paul *did not* persecute than those which affirm it. We can be sure that the elements involved were not solely religious, but political and social as well. It is true that the issue is complex and cannot be only settled by looking at a single focus point. However, my interest lays in reference to the construction of identity. Sanders (1993:95-99, 150) adds an insightful element to the discussion when he mentions that Paul and others who so vehemently

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strengthen the apostolic figure of Paul. However, it is important to assess Hengel's concluding remarks, after weighing both Acts and Paul's letters (1991:85): 'the apostle's own testimonies indeed have priority over Luke, but despite his contrary tendency Luke's accounts, some of which correspond with Paul in an amazing way, may not just be swept away as being fictitious and utterly incredible'.

[97] The verb 'destroy' (πορθεῖν) appears both in Ac 9:21 and Gl 1:23 and, according to Hengel (1991:71) possesses a 'harsh ring and denotes violent action'.

[98] 'Conversion can only take place where religious decisions are possible and necessary, which means that most ancient societies had no mechanism for conversion, though individuals may have felt called to a special vocation. Hellenistic society, as opposed to traditional first-temple Israelite society, contained multiple possibilities for religious choice. Indeed, this difference between Hellenistic society and ancient Israelite society is one reason why it is more appropriate to call Paul a convert [*pace* Stendahl] than a prophet' (Segal 1990:30).

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attacked the deviant Christians did so because they wanted to preserve their Jewish traditional boundaries and their self-identity as a culture in the face of the threat posed by the Christians, just at the same time the gentiles were also attempting it. We can be sure that Paul's determination and intensity were great, carried to the utmost level (Phlp 3:16, καθ' ὑπερβολὴν). The same determination and zeal he displayed during his 'pre-Christian' life is found in his apostolic service (διώκω, Phlp 3:12, 14; the same verb he uses in Gl 1:13, 23); although the former life was practiced as a righteousness aside from correct knowledge (Rm 10:2-3 and Phlp 3:6), like many of his fellow Jews (Luter 1993:461).

It seems logical to think that Paul did not persecute the 'messianists' (Roetzel's expression) because he wanted to force them to be circumcised. There is ample evidence that those gentiles who did not want to become proselytes did not have to go through it. We also know from the letters to the Galatians and Philippians that there were groups which exerted strong pressure to conform to such practices. Although Roetzel (1999:41) argues that the references speak of a later period and were exerted by other messianists, there is no reason to suppose that Paul could not have been driven by the same zeal which, after his Christ epiphany, he was to combat so decisively upon the new revelation. Fredricksen (1991:555-556) believes that one of the reasons was the fear of Roman retaliation in the face of apparent seditious activity, since the *ekklesia* celebrated both the coming of a new order (the Messianic age) and the worship of a Messiah, recently executed by Rome in charges of disturbing the peace. Fredricksen is more sympathetic with the idea of converging some of Paul's affirmations with the narrative of Acts at this point (:563-564). It is clear that in his presentation to the Philippian community (3:5-6) Paul identifies himself as a Pharisee is his (wrongly focused) zeal for the law, which compelled him to persecute the church. How he did it and the reasons for it are not as important as the fact that he presents himself in this way to an *ekklesia* that was experiencing strong pressure to conform to practices which were not part of their new citizenship (3:20).

'The change in Paul's career itself, the vision of the Risen Christ in his glory bestowed by God and the "shining forth" of the glory of Christ in his heart which made him a missionary to the Gentiles (2 Cor 4:6), ceases to be part of the theme of the "pre-Christian Paul", for with it begins a completely new and radically different period of his life' (Hengel 1991:79). Engberg-Pedersen (2000:93) speaks of a change in perception of his identity: 'It is not merely a case of taking note, as it were from the outside, of what properties one may ascribe to oneself, but of assigning a value to the properties one takes oneself to have. Identification of what one values serves to identify "who one is" as seen from within, the kind of being one *wishes* to be' (original emphasis). Certainly so; and

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the outcome is that the persecutor becomes the persecuted. This transformation and change in perspective earned Paul no few adversaries. Paul's letters reflect his continuous dialogue with his adversaries who in Philippians become 'enemies of the cross' (3:18). The experience with those who persecuted and opposed the apostle must have left a strong mark on Paul's self-perception[99]. Whereas with the advent of the Christ-mysticism, suffering was perceived as the means through which the death and life of Christ become real to the world[100], later developments have concluded that suffering functions as a *topos* (that is, rhetorically) against Paul's many adversaries (Koester 1962:323-325; Jewett 1970:387-388). Nevertheless, there is no general consensus on the matter (Bloomquist 1993:49). Suffering becomes in Philippians one of the identity markers that separates the apostle from the false brethren. It is a sensible message; for, who wants to suffer following him who is supposed to be Lord of all (Phlp 2:11)?[101]

4. Leadership in Paul's Style: *Imitatio*, Control or Both?

Traditionally, scholars have for the most part tended to perceive Paul in a positive light and as an example of what is nowadays called a *servant-leader*. Paul appeared as the ultimate disciple of Christ (cf. Bruce 1988a:15, who affirms to have written his *Paul: Apostle of the Free Spirit* on account of *amore Pauli*). However, as new hermeneutical approaches have developed (liberationist, feminist, womanist, etc.), the apostle has been viewed through different lenses. Some of them, not surprisingly, perceive him as trying to establish a *kyriachal* relationship (Marchal 2006:204) or exerting undue authority based on his own *persona* (Castelli 1991:23-24). Amongst these diverse perceptions lies a whole array of versions and interests. With this in mind, I must limit this effort to the element we have already studied in this chapter, i.e., how does the concept of 'slave of Christ' and his own self-identity, so marked by suffering, come about as Paul exercises his apostolic authority? How did Paul carry on his care and

[99] It is not my aim to distill a psychological profile of Paul, as if his opponents would bear a terrible imprint in his soul from which he never recovered completely (cf. Hengel 1991:79). No, I am aware that the version of Paul we study is a rhetorical construction, which may closely resemble the 'historical Paul', but which is indeed impossible to ascertain beyond the shadow of doubt. Mindful of the limitations imposed by the scant data at hand, my purpose is more limited. The way Paul presents himself to the churches he writes reflects the identity markers which more aptly define the apostle.

[100] For Schweitzer (1968 [1931]:141) individuals are thus transformed into a corporate identity, *viz*. the church; cf. Williams (2002:73). This way a new order takes place (see Phlp 1:20, 29; 2:17).

[101] Malina and Neyrey (1996:51-52): 'A cursory reading of Philippians quickly reveals that Paul knows of rival preachers of Christ Jesus who make Paul the target of their opposition (1:15-18). He sets out to persuade the Philippians not to engage in honor claims and challenges (2:1-4)'. Although exclusively focused on the honour-shame element, the observation is accurate.

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oversight for the communities he had established? How can SIT help us at discerning his practice? Smith (2005:75f) thinks Paul had social patterns at hand to follow in the leading of his communities. For him, the image of the psychogogue, him who leads the souls amongst Greeks and Romans, is a model available which many a philosophical school practiced (e.g., Epicureans). Stowers (1991:108-109) had come to the same conclusion some years earlier.

4.1 Power Relations

We can glean from a quick reading of Paul's undisputed letters that his authority was questioned and challenged in most of the communities he established (Belleville 1993:55). Paul was not part of the original Twelve, and as such his apostolic authority was often perceived as self-aggrandizement and emerging from a pure need for notoriety. Although the apostle recognises some of these views, as well as his lack of 'status' compared to others among some of his communities (cf. 1 Cor 15), he bases his authority on direct contact with the Lord (Gl 1:1, 10) and on his travails and hard-working efforts on behalf of the churches (1 Cor 15:10). It is these two elements, what I call the 'works of the slave' and his identification with Christ in suffering, that characterise his practice of authority towards the communities he has established.

Paul may have had to resort to a personal revelation *in him* (Gl 1:16: cf. Hooker 2002:379-380) as the means to assert his authority in the gentile churches under his jurisdiction. As Campbell (2008:57) observes concerning Paul: 'But having no official status other than that given to him by Christ as apostle to the gentiles, and the recognition of this at the summit meeting in Jerusalem, it is understandable that his letters are sometimes strongly worded and that the burden of his churches sat heavily upon him'.

4.2 A δοῦλος in Command?

When it comes to perceiving Paul's authority as it is reflected in Philippians, we need to study it through his own self-definition, lest we conceive of his theology and apostolic practice as two separated entities, which, in my opinion, just won't do. Not only that, it is impossible to make 'real' sense of Paul unless we study his thought and practice (however rhetorically displayed) as part and parcel of his social milieu. I mentioned earlier that Paul's identities are dynamic, they are alive *in practice*; and this is nowhere more concrete than in Paul's example. Castelli (1991:21), who studies Paul's imperative 'Be imitators of me' (cf. 1 Cor 4:16; Phlp 3:17 et al) with the help of Foucault's analytic of power, describes *mimesis* as an asymmetrical relationship: 'for imitation does

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not involve both elements moving simultaneously towards similarity, but rather one element being fixed and the other transformed into an approximation of the first'. She complains that much scholarship of early Christianity has skirted discussion on the relationship of mimesis and power, or else has assumed the text as normative (as a model) and its authority and normativeness as given (:30). Now, with such an ideologically charged view of mimesis, it is clear that Paul's exhortations cannot be looked at but with suspicion[102]. Castelli's questions force the interpreter of Paul to re-consider Paul's imperative/invitation in order to contrast it not only with modern descriptions of power (i.e. Foucault 1982; cf. Fowl 1993:430) but also to locate it in the context of Paul's self-designation as a 'slave of Christ'[103]. For Craffert (1993:258): 'If Paul is to be blamed for anything, it is for furthering the mentality of divine sanction and absolute truth for his viewpoint. Paul rejected all who disagreed with his viewpoint and even identified his view with the divine view'.

Engberg-Pedersen (1995:270-271, 284) also thinks that ultimately Paul desires a structured hierarchy within his communities:

> This comes out in a number of ways in his remarks about this relationship with the Philippians in 1.18-2.18, with Timothy in 2.19-24 and with Epaphroditus in 2.25-30 leading to his exhortation that the Philippians should receive Epaphroditus well and "hold such people in honor" (2.29). It also comes out in his description in chapter 3 of his own conversion as a model for the Philippians (3.17) [...] There is God at the top. Then there is Christ, who subordinated himself and became obedient to God. Then there is Paul, who has both subordinated himself to Christ [...] and is also to some degree at one with Christ [...] Then there are the helpers like Timothy and Epaphroditus and other leaders at this level. And finally there are the Philippians—who are at least higher up in the scale than those outside the Christian circle.

It is then a 'hierarchy of benefaction', although Engberg-Pedersen (1995:289) recognises that this is not central to the purpose of the letter, but helpful nonetheless. Sisson (2003:251-253) agrees with this view in which Paul acts as immediate agent to secure the salvation of the Philippians, but under Christ, whom he models. To this theme I now turn.

4.2.1 *Imitatio Pauli* and/or *Imitatio Christi*?

[102] Agosto (2004:117) perceives both Paul and Epaphroditus in a radically different light, as rendering a service (λειτουργία) not based on status, but on self-risk (*vs* imperial ideology).
[103] I have chosen to limit myself to Paul's usage within his corpus rather than trying to trace the origin of the expression. Castelli (1991:59-87) has a whole chapter dedicated to the study of mimesis in antiquity.

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In Phlp 3:17, after he has shown the Philippians that ethnic and religious status/privilege amount to nothing in the Christ sphere (3:9), Paul uses the imperative to exhort the brethren to 'become fellow imitators of/with me' (συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί). Such an expression (the compound noun συμμιμητής appears only here in all of Greek literature, see O'Brien 1991:445; Bockmuehl 1997a:229) is open to more than one interpretation. Out of the many proposed, I follow Hawthorne (1983:160): Paul derives the noun συμμιμητής from the verb συμμιμεῖσθαι ('to join in imitating', LSJ), which gives better account of the unique usage[104]. The call to be modelled after Paul might seem to our modern eyes a clear case of arrogance, but the truth of the matter is that the call to imitation is crucial in Paul's moral discourse is integrated in every major section of the letter (Bockmuehl 1997a:254). It is crucial because Paul's message wants to be *incarnated*[105]. As Thompson (2000:305) observes, 'Paul cannot move the Philippians toward the goal without demonstrating the impact of the gospel on his life'. It needs thus to be filled with specific content, lest it become a general admonition with no clear modelled practice in mind (Fowl 1993:430-431).

Esler (2003:36-37) writes that when dealing with leadership (he mentions the organizational work place), where social identity is salient there are several predictions which can be made. One of them is to encourage the group to work collaboratively to further the interest of the group rather than looking at the interests of the individuals. In this context 'leaders and followers must define themselves in terms of a shared social identity so that the activities of each are seen as collective rather than personal in nature (:37). To be effective, leaders must represent the interest of the collective, something to which Paul refers repeatedly (1:6-7, 12, 18, 24; 2:16; 3:20-21).

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[104] Hawthorne presents four reasons for this choice. 1) it best accounts for the origin of the compound word; 2) it does justice to the genitive μου as the object of the action implied in the noun it modifies; 3) it takes into consideration that there is nothing in the context that points to the idea that Paul would be adding 'as I imitate Christ'; and 4) the συν particle reinforces the idea of corporate life which plays such a crucial role in the letter.

[105] Ph. Yancey (2001) masterfully recalls an episode in the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Once a woman approached this wise man asking him to please tell her child to stop eating sugar because she was afraid the boy could lose his teeth. Gandhi, after pondering for a while asked her to have him brought a week later. After that time the boy came to him with his mother and Gandhi told him starkly: 'Stop eating sugar'. The mother, obviously bewildered, reproached Gandhi why it had taken a week to pronounce such a simple order. Gandhi replied: 'Madam, last week I also ate sugar'.

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Moreover, Paul is not alone in this modelling. He appeals to the example that the Philippians have in 'us' (καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς)[106]. Therefore the Philippians may contrast the exhortation with the manner of behaviour of Paul's delegates, exactly his purpose (cf. 2:19-22; 2:25-29). The call to imitation is common in the rhetoric of persuasion (Fiore 2004:228), and part of deliberative discourse[107], grounded as it is by proof of example (Mitchell 1991:42)[108]. One could argue that mimesis is the 'representation of reality and not reality itself' (cf. Betz 1967:3, quoted in Castelli 1991:29), but here is where Paul plays his cards face up: He is in front of them, a prisoner for the cause of the gospel (1:13), ready to be poured out (2:17). He is a slave of Christ on behalf of the communities he serves (1:1; 3:12). Fowl (1993:430) writes that new converts needed living examples to guide them, as occurred in many areas of life. Fowl presents the analogy of the apprentice who sits in front of the master silversmith to copy every move, every skill until s/he too can master the art[109]. The analogy can only be pressed so far, although depending on the skill of the apprentice, s/he could in time surpass the master. Castelli, on the other hand, with her iron-matrix definition of mimesis, never allows for such a possibility to take place. Allen (1992:293), who reviews Castelli's work, criticises her approach wittily: 'Foucault's analysis of power relationship itself has an asymmetrical, privileged place in this analysis of power in Paul. In a manner of speaking, why should we *imitate* Foucault's analysis?' (my emphasis).

The above explanation begs the question that I anticipated: Isn't this call to mimesis a way of exerting authority and power over the Philippian community? Rightly so! Paul presents himself as a model to be imitated, and that requires authority (Schütz 1975:226-232; Holmberg 1978:78), but it is always grounded in the example of Christ (cf. Pretorius 1998:557). Maybe it would have been easier for our sensitive Western conscience if he had added: 'as I imitate Christ', but there is no hint of this here. Imitation is an asymmetrical relationship, no doubt. One is the model and other the copy/imitator, the aspiring person/group to be made after the model. After all, this type of relationship finds its niche in a hierarchical society, as we had ample

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[106] Dunn (1998:195): '*typos* in the Pauline corpus almost always has a personal reference—a particular individual (or individuals) providing a pattern or example of conduct'.

[107] Fowl (1993:430) comments that the call to imitation was quite extended in antiquity, and cites Isocrates, *Dem* 4.11; Seneca, *Ep* 6.5-6; 7.6-9; 11.9; Quintilian, *Orat* 2.28; Philostratus, *VitAp* 1.19; 4Mac 9:23, and 2Mac 6:27-28 as evidence.

[108] Campbell (2008:37) speaks of Paul's appeal to the will rather than to pure use of power: 'This preference simply for voluntariness is based on the example of Christ, who "did not please himself" (Rom 15.1). Paul does not refer to Christ's teaching […] but rather to his life and example as the normative pattern for life in Christ'.

[109] Some scholars (e.g. Krentz 2003; Geoffrion 1993) emphasise imitation within the context of military speeches. Certainly, military language appears throughout the letter, but my particular focus requires a different set of questions.

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opportunity to see in previous chapters (cf. Smith 2005:67). Castelli (1991:21) then argues that in such a context 'sameness' becomes the more highly valued quality. Castelli, in my opinion, understands 'sameness' in a rather monolithic fashion, as a univocal, oppressing category, which is then logically threatened by any possible deviation. Paul exhorts the Philippian community to pursue a like-mindedness (3:15, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν), but he 'allows' a certain measure of divergence, which will eventually become subsumed as they mature (3:15, καὶ εἴ τι ἑτέρως φρονεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν ἀποκαλύψει)[110].

Not wishing to minimise Castelli's nor Marchal's critique, it seems to me that some of Paul's expressions read as authoritarian could also be understood as the normal manner of expression for friendship letters. Friends are those who think the same thing (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν; cf. Fitzgerald 1996:145). He only asks that they *keep in step* (στοιχέω) with what they have arrived at so far (3:16)[111]. Does Paul's practice of authority share these elements of power and imposition to which Castelli refers? Yes and no. On the one hand, he is conscious that he exerts authority over the churches he has established[112]. On the other, this authority (many a time resisted) is based on his calling, but ultimately on his sacrificial service for them and on his *imitatio Christi* (Phlp 2:5-11, *pace* Castelli). Paul is exhorting the community to display a salient social identity rather than centre on their personal identity. It is only when the former is placed higher than selfish interest that the community can fulfil her task and mirror the model of Paul, Epaphroditus, Timothy and Christ. There must be a common perspective on reality, which 'leads them to expect to agree with one another on matters connected with their group membership and actively to seek agreement through processes of mutual influence' (Esler 2003:36).

We can say that Paul embodies a paradox: he is both a slave and a leader (a *vilicus*?). Foucault would like to call such a practice 'pastoral power', which he colours with individualistic overtones, stressing the one-sidedness of the analytic of power. Foucault's model is useful, but not complete. However, it allows us to perceive certain areas that otherwise would go unnoticed[113]:

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[110] Fowl (2005:169) points out that Paul's call 'requires multiple acts of discernment and practical reasoning'. Campbell (2008:38) proposes a similar line of thought, arguing from the text of Rm 14:5-6, which appeals to personal conscience but regarding the ingroup's well-being.

[111] This expression seems to be drawn from military imagery (Bockmuehl 1997a:228).

[112] I believe Hvalvik (2005:127) is helpful at this point. This *imitatio* goes beyond individuals, and for Paul, it comprises of entire communities. In the case of Thessalonica, Paul praises the church for being both an example and encouragement to all. Hvalvik thinks it is only logical to conclude that the Macedonian and Achaian communities were in his mind, including Philippi.

[113] That Castelli assumes a modern ideology and applies it to an ancient text is something I assume (cf. Sisson 2003:245), and her analysis, notwithstanding, sheds some welcome light into this discussion.

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1. It is a form of power whose ultimate aim is to assure individual salvation in the next world.

2. Pastoral power is not merely a form of power which commands; it must also be prepared to sacrifice itself for the life and salvation of the flock. Therefore, it is different from royal power, which demands a sacrifice from its subjects to save the throne.

3. It is a form of power that does not look after just the whole community, but each individual in particular, during its entire life.

4. Finally, this form of power cannot be exercised without knowing the inside of people's minds, without exploring their souls, without making them reveal their innermost secrets. It implies a knowledge of the conscience and an ability to direct it.

   This form of power is salvation oriented (as opposed to political power). It is oblative [self-offering] (as opposed to the principle of sovereignty); it is individualizing (as opposed to legal power); it is coexistent and continuous with life; it is linked with a production of truth—truth of the individual himself[114].

Though referring to a different context, Foucault's analysis helps us to perceive several elements that are coterminous with Paul manner of writing. Paul does make mention of his authority several times (1 Cor 9:1, 12; 2 Cor 12:12; Rm 15:19; 1 Cor 4:1-2; tribulation lists, etc.), but it is an authority which aims at edifying, rather than to tear down (2 Cor 10:3). He prefers to speak about his authority in familial terms (1 Th 2:7, 11-12; 2 Cor 1:24, which is not, by the way, a direct parallel with our understanding of family life today[115]), and on occasion he is forced to come with a rod (1 Cor 4:21)[116]. Although Castelli (1991:54) emphasises the idea that mimesis is akin to a 'discourse of power' that corresponds to structural realities which dictate 'who speaks and who is silent'; it is not less true that she may just be underestimating the agency of those, at least in the Pauline letters, who oppose the apostle with all their might (e.g. 1 Cor 10:10)[117]. Paul's rhetoric of power/authority is usually introduced in the midst of severe attacks to both the message of the good news (again some would say 'according to Paul') and to the apostle himself. These attackers, I

[114] Foucault (1982:214-215; cited in Castelli 1991:47).
[115] Petersen (1985:130) says it right: 'He makes full use of the ambiguity of the metaphorical paternal role'.
[116] Belleville (1993:56).
[117] I refrain from using the text of Acts in this discussion, but I think we could quite comfortably read some passages (e.g. Ac 21) to realize the strength and zeal of some of Paul's adversaries. Paul's understanding of the good news was not created in a vacuum, but in opposition to a particular perception, which was ethnically charged.

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suppose, were also trying to force their way on the community (see an example in 2 Cor 11:20)[118]. We cannot take from Paul the right to hold strong convictions about his particular way of understanding the Chris-like life: he is more than prepared to put his life at stake (both *living* and *dying* for it; cf. Phlp 2:17) for the sake of it. Does such zeal give him the right to act as he does? The question is pointless. He thinks it does and that is sufficient for him (cf. Fortna 1990:222, who speaks of a 'God-given hierarchy'). Let his communities deal then with this particular manner of applying his authority[119]. Such a practice was common in antiquity and it went with the 'flow of the time'[120]. Quintilian (*Orat* 2.1.35-36) reasoned that children needed to copy down the thoughts of the great men as an exercise to convey moral lessons to them and build up their character (Fiore 2004:233). There would not appear, therefore, to be any need whatsoever to defend the apostle in the face of attacks that claim he is authoritarian[121]. As a matter of fact, I think he is, although it is an authority based on humility and service and not on lordship over others (cf. Engberg-Pedersen 2000:127). That he is vehement in his way of presenting his particular understanding of following Christ, I cannot but agree.

One of the values of Castelli's work is her incisiveness of angle, which forces us to admit that even as a 'slave of Christ', Paul, does not shy away from his (delegated, *viz*. God-given) authority and confronts those who think differently, with extraordinary fervency (Castelli 1991:87):

> To stand for anything other than what the apostle stands for is to articulate for oneself a place of difference, which has already implicitly been associated with

[118] Maybe those who opposed him were preaching a sort of perfection as fulfilled eschatology (Phlp 3:15), but Paul, with sarcasm, recognizes that even he, as their model, has not attained it yet! (Weidmann 1997:253).

[119] Witherington (1994:32) is right when he points out to the fact that from the very beginning there existed a three-tiered structure in the Pauline communities where there was a clear hierarchy of power and authority, although it needed not be based on ethnic, social or gender-related factors, although these surely affected the structure. The old view which proposed an evolutionary process from a charismatic office to a more institutionalised one has now lost support.

[120] Epictetus (*Diss* 3.22.45-50) liked to refer to himself as a model of the Cynic way of life ("Look at me!" cf. Fiore 2004:238).

[121] Marchal (2006:96-97) does an excellent job of placing Paul's exhortations in the wider social, cultural and rhetorical contexts. It is there that I observe that the apostle's manner of writing matches that of many a classical author. The problem is that all hierarchical relations (whether political, familial, etc.) are described as 'systems of domination' which precludes any ideological distancing whatsoever. This manner of perceiving the social system is ultimately generalising and too-ideologically tainted, and does not allow for divergences in perception. I just wonder where Paul's self designation (slave of Christ) fits in with this for Marchal (which he does not discuss when dealing with 1:1; cf. Marchal 2006:119-120), as well as the pastoral care the apostle displays in his letters. After all, 'systems of domination' can even be extended to written literature (even modern ones), which tries to change our concepts in either way!

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> discord and disorder. To stand in a position of difference is to stand in opposition, therefore, to the gospel, the community, and Christ[122].

It is interesting that in the section mentioned above (3:12-21) Paul begins his address to the Philippians as brethren (ἀδελφοί), which emphasises not only his preoccupation for the unity of the community, but is a subtle call to be *inside*, as opposed to those who are acting as if they actually belong *outside*. SIT helps us see that Paul stereotypes, with rather strong terms, those who do not follow his pattern (3:18, ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ Χριστοῦ), and then describes what their fate will be (3:19). This is a theme that recurs throughout the letter (cf. their fate 1:28; enemies: 1:15-18; 1:28). It is not only their fate that distances the Philippian Christ-followers from the enemies (part of one particular outgroup, but not all outgroups), but also their focus in life: the enemies' god is their belly, the earthly things (τὰ ἐπίγεια 3:19). The brethren, on the other hand, will be transformed and await a heavenly commonwealth (πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς 3:20-21). Again, lest we tend to forget the strength of such manifestations, I believe Castelli's (1991:96-97) words are quite a propos:

> The impact of this rhetoric is powerful. Christian identity is linked, on the one hand, with the humility displayed by Christ on the cross and, on the other hand, with the imitation of Paul. There exists only one alternative to this identity, and that is to "live as enemies of the cross of Christ" for whom "their end is destruction, their god is the belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things." These two identities—the Christian and the non-Christian—are set up as polar opposites; practicing humility like that of the crucified Christ and imitating Paul promise a heavenly transformation while the rejection of these paths assures destruction. Therefore, the unity that is demanded in Paul's discourse, unity that grows out of both the imitation of Paul and the practice of humility akin to that exhibited by the crucified Christ, means a commonality against the polar opposite, those who face certain destruction. The lines between the "insiders" and the "outsiders" have been constructed ineluctably[123].

Castelli (1991:123) observes that Paul does have the means to create his particular way of relating with the churches other than the 'ideological'. Rather he has two simultaneous means: the rhetorical and the appeal to his personal authority. I think she is right to point this out, but she lacks the connection between this so-called 'discourse of power' and Paul's self-designation as a

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[122] Marchal holds the same view. His thesis is that the rhetoric of power can be perceived behind Paul's exhortation in 4:2, which seeks that these two important women in the community think the same thing *as Paul* (2006:207).

[123] Castelli's depiction of 'Christian' and 'non-Christian' identities may be too rigorous and fit better within a later phase in early Christianity. However, her message is communicated with unusual strength.

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'slave of Christ', which functions both as a title of authority and in reference to his eagerness to be spent in service on behalf of others[124]. Again we learn that Paul's self designation (self-categorisation) is crucial. Haslam (2001:66) presents the point with accuracy:

> Consistent with this perspective, one important way in which self-categorization theory conceptualizes the leader (the group member who is likely to exercise most influence in any given instance) is as the *ingroup prototype*. As the (most) prototypical group member the leader best epitomizes (in the dual sense of both *defining* and *being defined by*) the social category of which he or she is a member. This means that to be seen as displaying leadership in a given context a person needs to be maximally representative of the shared social identity as consensual position of the group[125].

4.2.2 Living the Cruciform Life

It would be erroneous to claim that Paul's seemingly paradoxical practice of authority is novel. It reflects continuity with the Jesus tradition (cf. Jn 13:13-17) where the one in authority (Jn 13:3) nevertheless serves others as if of superior status. Even the emperors were aware of this fact and were therefore encouraged to deal with the people with *cura* (diligence, care) and model thus the 'good emperor' (Knust 2000:437)[126]. Martin (1990:92) places the practice within the Graeco-Roman demagogue *topos*, that of the populist leader (servant-leader) who accommodates the people, and lowers himself socially, but whose ultimate motivation is personal gain[127]. However, in the context of his study of Philippians, Oakes (2001:199) comments: 'To obey a call to act below your status would seem likely, in the Graeco-Roman context, to be seen as carrying a risk of actual loss of status'. Both Paul and the Christ-hymn reflect this second and more radical element: the risk of actual loss of status. The only answer which I find in Paul has to do with his understanding of the Christian life as a 'cruciform life' for which he is described as being a fool (ἄφρων, cf. 2 Cor 11:16; cf. 1 Cor 1:27)[128].

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[124] A recent book (Park 2007) thoroughly reviews Castelli's critique on Philippians and places mimesis within the context of the entire letter together with a view on church structures.

[125] Quoted in Esler (2003:37).

[126] Marchal (2006:48), in his critique of the understanding of Philippians as a 'friendship letter' argues for the hierarchical nature of friendship and presents some examples of euphemisms in Roman society (*amicus*) to disguise what it actually referred to an otherwise asymmetrical relationship (*patronus* and *cliens*). These and other expressions used for those in authority had the same disguising *raison d'être*, although it is impossible to know their overall effect on the population. I study this contrast in more detail in chapter seven.

[127] This accommodation or *levitas*, perceived as weak character, was rejected by the Romans (Martin 1990:96).

[128] Becker (1996:280-289).

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It seems clear that the cruciform life, with all its inherent complexities, is in Philippians both the mark of total surrender and of laying down one's life on behalf of others[129]. I believe that more than any other element in his life and theology, Paul's identification with Christ (both in the manner of living and of dying), sometimes to the level of becoming almost blurred (cf. Col 1:24 if it were of Paul, although see also Phlp 3:10), is the key to understanding both his use of authority in the churches and in his mission to the world. As a matter of fact, both formally and linguistically, many scholars in the past have noticed the extraordinary parallels between the Christ-hymn and Paul's example and exhortation in 3:4-16 (cf. Holloway 2001:29). That such a scheme is imbued with strong *kyriarchal* connotations or that it is far from presenting an egalitarian view of the Christ-following community is only part of the social world of this period. Those who study this letter proceeding from a hermeneutic of suspicion (e.g. Castelli, Marchal) shed some light on the fact that Paul may be more authoritarian than what it is commonly allowed; but that only locates Paul within a milieu which I have amply described above. Their criticism is useful and welcome, especially in light of the fact that some modern interpretations of the apostle merely transpose patterns of leadership (some will add 'potentially oppressive') to our own day without giving second thoughts about the social and ideological context they were part of. Paul's world—his culture and society—was quite different to ours, and it cannot be endorsed as normative just because it happens to be somehow seconded in his writings. I think the apostle would have advised modern readers to make use of our reasoning as we seek to apply his general principles under the light of the cruciform life (Phlp 3:15, *pace* Castelli).

Having said this, though, it is only fair to recognize that Paul's understanding of hierarchy, filtered through the Christ-hymn, presents a subverted version (Weidmann 1997:249). It is no longer the privilege of power and hierarchy (*pace* Fortna 1990), but of total submission and abasement[130]. The downward-upward movement I perceive in the Christ-hymn is also addressed in Paul's perception of his mission to the churches as slave of Christ. Authority ultimately derives

[129] Dunn (1998:728-729) looks for a centre in Paul's theology, this: 'Probably most profound of all was Paul's concept of the process of salvation as a growing conformity to Christ, and not least to his death […] For he saw it as part of the process of salvation in which all believers shared, indeed in which the creation as a whole shared (Rm 8:17-23). The dying of the flesh and to the flesh could nor be experienced solely in moments of worship, but had to be expressed also in the discipline of daily walk in accordance with the Spirit. Within that context the theology of suffering which it enshrined, suffering as a sharing in Christ's suffering, had a powerfully positive pastoral potential. Outside that context it could appear only idealistic and lacking in seriousness'.

[130] It is what Volf (1996:71) describes as the 'de-centred centre', where at the centre of the self lies self-giving love.

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from abasement (radical service, self-sacrificing love). The story of Christ so confirms it. It is God's *consensus*, his own view on authority. As such, Paul's self-designation works both as radical service and sacrifice on behalf of others as well as an authority figure within the downward-upward movement which contrast with the common perception in Graeco-Roman society.

5. Conclusions

I do not pretend to have reached a definitive understanding of Paul as he presents himself in Philippians. My focus is partial, and stresses the fact that both his difficult situation and that of the Philippian community drives him to write a unique letter. Paul is concerned with representing the interests of the community (their common mission) and needs to revert to his personal example in numerous occasions. He has to strengthen his position under peril both because of his struggle in chains and because he is under the attack of adversaries that deny his teaching and example. Social identity theory has helped me understand that Paul longs for a social identity salience in the community, based on the examples of individuals that function as models. 'All of this means that within a social identity perspective the preference of group members for leaders is not a function of those leaders' qualities in the abstract, but of their capacity positively to differentiate between ingroup and outgroup and to make their group "special"' (Esler 2003:38). To do so when the apostle is in prison is not an easy task, so Paul reverts to a seemingly negative identity, according to society, to show the Philippians that such is the pattern of the heavenly commonwealth.

It is not a commonwealth void of power. Its ruler is able to bring salvation (1:28) and to transform the lowly into something glorious (3:21). But it calls for humility and the rejection of the honour-seeking system.

Lest I give the impression that Paul's self-identification is solely based on his present sufferings, we need insist on the element of joy (χαρά) which emerges throughout the letter as much as the suffering *topos*. Holloway (2001:74-75) observes that the apostle mentions χαρά and cognates sixteen times in the letter. As a matter of fact χαρά is used as one of the two consolatory *topoi* in Philippians (the other being the *adiaphora topos*, that is, the distinction between things that matter and those which do not, as in Phlp 1:10a)[131]. Holloway (2001:101) affirms, quoting John Chrysostom's commentary on Philippians (*Ep ad Phil*, praef. 1), that suffering and joy are two sides of the same coin:

[131] For a detailed description of the function of χαρά as consolatory *topos*, see Holloway (2001:78-83).

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> In the beginning of his letter Paul offers the Philippians much consolation regarding his imprisonment, showing not only that they should not be troubled, but that they should rejoice.

In the next chapter I apply rhetorical lenses to the letter to the Philippians to ascertain the manner in which the apostle presents an alternative social identity based on his own example and that of Christ, and coherent with their own particular situation. Many scholars have described Philippians as a letter of friendship because of its form (Alexander 1984; Fitzgerald 1996; White 1991) and quite amicable both in form and content (Fee 1995). Marchal (2006:24-26, 36), however, points to the fact that there are several ways to understand friendship relations in this context which can in turn, illumine our perhaps too-modern views on the subject (cf. Marshall 1987). As I study Philippians having in mind Paul's particular way of understanding Christian discipleship, I hope to get a clearer picture of the letter as a whole from where to access to the Christ-hymn. My contention is that friendship imagery is used to convey the sense of ingroup and to enhance the reception of the apostle's radical call for self-abasement.

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I never receive a letter from you without being in your company forthwith. If the pictures of our absent friends are pleasing to us, though they only refresh our memory and lighten our longing by a solace that is unreal and unsubstantial, how much more pleasant is the letter, which brings us real traces, real evidences, of an absent friend! For that which is sweetest when we meet face to face is afforded by the impress of a friend's hand upon his letter—recognition.

(Seneca, *Ep* 40:1)

CHAPTER 6:
CORRESPONDING WITH THE COMMUNITIES

1. Paul: The Letter-Writer Apostle[1]

If in the previous chapter I focused on Paul's self-designation and the impact it had on his message, here I study the literary artistry he displays in order to accomplish his purpose. My thesis is quite straightforward: Paul writes to the Philippian community from a perilous situation. He appeals to their identity as a group to overcome the challenges they face. The apostle wants to persuade them to adopt alternative ways of dealing with both internal and external threats. The social identity of the group should be placed above particular ('selfish') ambitions. He exhorts the community to fully identify with the values of 'above', and uses antithetical models to define what they should *not* be like.

[1] The old discussion whether Paul wrote 'letters' (with no concern for literary form and style) or 'epistles' (conscious works of literature) Deissmann (1910) proposed is no longer relevant, for modern scholarship places the apostle within the Graeco-Roman literary milieu of first century AD (Reed 1997:154-155). Murphy-O'Connor (1995:44) concludes: 'Paul wrote to specific people for a limited purpose. In this respect he wrote letters. Nonetheless they were meant for public consumption (Col 4:16). In this respect they are epistles'. Nowadays no one uses the terms with Deissmann's distinction in mind but as synonyms.

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In this letter Paul uses friendship language to achieve its maximum persuasive effect (Williams 2002:92; Malherbe 1996:127).

It is here that we need to relate rhetoric with identity formation. As Lieu (2002a:298) has expressed, scholarly consensus perceives identity in a constant process of *being*, and it is therefore not primordial:

> As has been increasingly recognized, texts are rhetorical constructs and are engaged in rhetorical construction: both early "Judaism" and early "Christianity" are constructed through their texts, both as they are accessible to us, and through the priority of text in their development and self-understanding. This does not mean that those identities are nothing other than textual constructs: the texts reflect the experience or aspirations of a male literary elite, while the equally valid experience of others, particularly of women, is rarely directly available to us. The relationship between social experiences and the worlds constructed by the texts remains problematic.

What Lieu points to is important. The relationship between the rhetorical aim and the social reality it assumes and appeals to is complex. Thus, it is important that I endeavour to define more closely both the social and rhetorical contexts. There is one element in this social equation which has not yet been described in detail: the Christ-following community at Philippi. Once I have assessed a plausible make-up of the community we will be in a better position to understand the function and impact of the letter.

The only way Paul the prisoner has to persuade and encourage the Philippians is *via* written correspondence mediated by his collaborators. In what follows I present a summarised view of the complexities inherent to written communication in the ancient world. It is also necessary to access the letter through the study of socio-rhetorical criticism in order to ascertain how the apostle tries to persuade his audience and how he presents the opponents.

Theissen (2003:99) believes that Christian epistolary literature was mainly motivated by a crisis[2]. That is, these letters are answer both to the need to supply guidance to local congregation and to correct errors that threaten their life and unity. Paul discovers in these letters a tool to supervise the communities he has established[3]. To my knowledge, this supposes a novel way to interact with these groups geographically distant (cf. Becker 1996:20-21).

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[2] Such crisis, or *stasis*, is crucial to understand the reason(s) which produced the letter. The search for the crisis is, nevertheless, 'plagued with difficulties'.

[3] Paul's letters can be paralleled to those of Epicurus, who 'exhorted, encouraged, gave advice, settled disputes, taught his doctrines, and maintained fellowship through his letters' (Stowers 1986:40). The major difference is that Paul's letters addressed groups. 'Paul's focus is not on the

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1.1 A New Way of Being in Touch

As Paul's mission enlarged and new areas were reached with the good news of Jesus Christ, the apostle had the challenge of caring for and overseeing the communities' spiritual health amongst hostile forces. This he carried out essentially through two means. The first was the mentoring of new local leaders to oversee the work or to leave some of his collaborators, although eventually local leadership took over the task[4]. The second was to address a direct message to these new communities *via* letters—usually appealing to the entire community—which were to be read out loud (1 Th 5:27, cf. Col 4:16). In this sense, letters functioned as a substitute for *oral communication* (Botha 1992:209). This is an important element to keep in mind, since Paul did not write his letters out of sheer pleasure (in contrast with Cicero, *Att* 1:18, 3:3), but to accomplish something specific (Murphy-O'Connor 1995:67). If this is true, it implies that he used the written medium as the major way to persuade, change, and challenge different situations that were ailing the communities. 'Lacking any mechanism to impose his will, he could not enforce; he was inescapably bound to persuasion' (:69)[5]. However, we can never know for sure how effective these words were in accomplishing the goal, although in chapter 8 I attempt to discern possible lines of inquiry (cf. Lieu 2004:300).

1.2 How to Understand Written Correspondence in Antiquity

If in chapter three I dealt with the distance between the modern interpreter and the ancient text, I now proceed with the text's own social context. As we come to the study of Philippians, we face a methodological problem sometimes obviated. Most people in the first century AD were illiterate[6]. This means that the majority of the population was dependent on oral means (Casey 1995:24). Achtemeier (1990:3) observes that this element has generally been neglected in

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development of individual character but on building communities in which divine grace becomes active' (Murphy-O'Connor 1995:44).

[4] For the possibility that Paul's associate (included in the "we-passages"; cf. Ac 16) remained in the city until his next visit (Ac 20:5-6), see Fitzgerald (1992:319).

[5] Hooker (2002:393) speaks of Philippians as a kind of final testimony, reflecting Paul's urgent appeal so that their faith and unity will not be compromised.

[6] Botha (1992:199) believes that during the period of the Roman Empire 10-15% of people were semi-literate, very few (mostly elites and some specialised slaves) were literate and 'for most the written word remained inaccessible'. Esler (2003:17) lowers the numbers of literacy to 5-10%, but does not make the distinctions Botha points out between literate and semi-literate. Harris (1989:272, 328-330), who has carried out the most detailed work on ancient literacy, concluded that the range was 10-20% for this period.

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New Testament research: 'That aspect centers on the fact that we have in the culture of late Western antiquity a culture of high residual orality which nevertheless communicated significantly by means of literary creations. Such a predominantly oral environment presented a situation almost totally different from that within which we currently operate, even though they had written documents as do we. The apparent similarity has led modern scholars to overlook almost entirely how such an oral overlay would affect the way communication was carried on by means of written media'. Meeks' model of Pauline communities is useful in order to arrive at a general idea of their social structure, and it has found wide acceptance amongst scholars[7]. Meeks (1983:72-73), based on prosopographic descriptions concludes:

> It is a picture in which people of several social levels are brought together. The extreme top and bottom of the Graeco-Roman social scale are missing from the picture. It is hardly surprising that we meet no landed aristocrats, no senators, *equites*, nor (unless Erastus might qualify) decurions. But there is also no specific evidence of people who are destitute—such as the hired menials and dependent handworkers; the poorest of the poor, peasants, agricultural slaves, and hired agricultural day labourers. There may well have been members of the Pauline communities who lived at the subsistence level, but we hear nothing of them.
>
> The levels in between, however, are well represented. There are slaves, although we cannot tell how many. The "typical" Christian, however, the one who most often signals his presence in the letters by one or another small clue, is a free artisan or small trader. Some even in those occupational categories had houses, slaves, the ability to travel, and others signs of wealth. Some of the wealthy provided housing, meeting places, and other services for individual Christians and for whole groups. In effect they filled the roles of patrons.

To this observation I add the insights of Smith (2005:72-73), who brings some balance to the discussion:

> While illiteracy silenced the hoi polloi, it would not have prevented them from having access to a largely oral-based tradition of communicating ideas. That is, while the literary form of philosophical ideas certainly bears out the "great traditions" through history, it was "by *hearing* them recited, listening to public speeches, attending lectures, hearing sermons and homilies and exhortations that one learned the tradition. Thus, when we consider those whom Paul is writing, we can affirm Malherbe's claim that Paul readers can be expected to have been familiar with the philosophical traditions to which Paul adhered, and that there is no reason Paul should not have drawn directly from the popular philosophical tradition.

[7] For a critique, see Stegemann and Stegemann (2001:407f).

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1.2.1 Written Letters to Be Read Aloud

If we accept Meeks' model, then most in the Pauline congregations would not have had the ability to read[8]. Moreover, even those few who were able to read surely could not afford to own a copy of Paul's letter (parchment was expensive, cf. Stanley 1999:127) and had to rely on someone else to read it aloud publicly. If this were the situation, Paul's letters were to be read aloud for the benefit of the larger community.

1.2.1.1 Oral/Aural Elements

It has been a common assumption that *omne verbum sonat*; *viz*. reading was essentially a practice carried out *aloud* (Achtemeier 1990). But Gilliard (1993) has shown that reading with the lips without emitting any sound—'private reading'—was also common in antiquity. We are all aware that reading aloud supposes a point of inflexion on the part of the reader. This is especially true with the Greek text of what later became the 'New Testament', since it was written without spaces between words and without a punctuation system[9]. Reading aloud, in a sense, is akin to interpretation, because the person who recites inflects and stresses certain words more than others. Therefore no single reading is equal to another. Casey (1995:27) describes how this oral influence in the New Testament reflects itself by way of numerous aural indications of structure within the material as markers for the reader. Achtemeier (1990:17-18) indicates some of them: repetition, formal parallelism of the repetition, repetition of a phrase at the beginning and end, a theme which is introduced and is later developed, *inclusio*, chiasm, etc. 'What is of greater importance to keep in mind here, however, is that to be useful, such indications had to make themselves apparent to the ear rather than to the eye' (:18). This is all the more necessary when we think that letters did not posses a narrative thread to enhance its flow and its reception on the part of the audience. Moreover, while 'the average length of a letter of Cicero was 295 words, and that of Seneca 955, the average length of a Pauline letter is 2,500 words' (Achtemeier 1990:22, cf. Witherington 1994:7-8)[10]. This may be one of the reasons why Paul's letters are 'mixed' in terms of their style and content when they are studied under the light of ancient epistolary theory. Another element to bear in mind is that the apostle might have had more than one purpose in mind (Fitzgerald 1996:142).

[8] Lest we fall prey to easy generalisations, it is important to recall, for example, that Rome had a daily gazette of events, the *Diurna Populi Romani* (Tacitus, *An* 16:22), which was kept in archives. Suetonius (*Calig* 8.2) was able to consult it (Achtemeier 1990:11).

[9] It seems such a practice was common for literary works in ancient Greece and Rome (Achtemeier 1990:10).

[10] In the case of Philippians the total word-count is 1622 + 7 words in brackets added in NA27.

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Also, as the different themes of the letter suggest, this may also refer to several situations haunting the community. Aune (1987:203): 'Most early Christian letters are multifunctional and have a "mixed" character, combining elements from two or three epistolary types […] Paul in particular was both a creative and eclectic letter writer. The epistolary situations he faced were often more complex than the rhetorical situations faced by most rhetoricians. Many letters therefore exhibit combinations of styles'. If these letters were widely read and were later edited to fit a grander and more general audience (Trobisch 2000:60-62), the arguments for the modern search for the *Ur*-text is somewhat devoid of its reason (Witherington 1994:9; cf. Casey 1995:13 on oral communication, although with the transition from oral communication to written one the stability of the fixed text becomes a concern of major importance). For Paul it was his communities who were the important and living letters (2 Cor 3:2-3), his legacy; not his written correspondence, which was a vehicle for a higher goal (Becker 1996:21; Campbell 2008:73). So, perceived from the side of Paul and his communities at its infancy, this matter of the importance of the text needs to be re-thought as to how it might help us understand this communication-dynamic.

In the case of Philippians, Achtemeier (1990:26) observes the influence of oral/aural markings in the letter:

> Here again, what in a text shaped for the age, with its structural changes indicated by paragraphing, could be taken as indications of composite sources, in a text shaped for the ear may well have been intended as oral/aural signs of structure. Instead of a series of written sources combined to produce the letter, with its resulting wide variation of topics, with the changes of topic indicated for those who were to hear it. It is noteworthy that conclusions of discussion in the letter are clearly signalled. A doxological form in 1:11, 4:9, 19; words expressing closure in 3: 1 (τὸ λοιπόν) and in 4:1 (ὥστε), with the whole letter concluding with a doxology. Each of those closures would have alerted the listener that one topic had ended and another was about to begin.

As I comment on the structure of the letter we will realise that Paul made use of simple but effective rhetorical devices, repetition, *inclusio*, etc., in order to stress his most important points. Redundancy, as Silva observes, is a positive feature in human communication: 'In short, no reasonable Greek author, when wishing to make a substantive point, is likely to have depended on his readers' ability to interpret subtle syntactical distinctions' (Silva 2005:11; cf. Tolmie 2005:98).

I propose here an area of study which should be further pursued because of its possible implications for Pauline interpretation. I shall only highlight the most important elements. As we study the structure of the letter, some of these element will surely surface.

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1.2.1.2 The Role of the Emissaries

This audible reading, I suggest, could have also included explanations from the part of the reader/messenger in order to clarify the meaning of certain sections of the text. That Paul's letters were meant to be read repeatedly seems obvious, since they were collected within a corpus and were amply used at different locations (cf. Esler 2003:17). This meant, within an oral society used to memorisation as a part of 'being in touch' with the author, that letters were read and re-read in the same congregation at different times and occasions. If, as we suspect, the early Christ-following communities patterned their worship after that of the synagogue, there must have been a special place for the reading both of the Jewish Scriptures (the LXX; although see Stanley 1999:126) as well as the 'new' scriptures (i.e., the letters). Ac 2:42 refers to the young community at Jerusalem sharing on the 'doctrine of the apostles' (διδαχή τῶν ἀποστόλων) and Ac 6:4 to the apostles' ministry of the word (διακονία τοῦ λόγου). Surely this ministry included the use of *Testimonia* as based for their teaching. Later on we hear of a collection of Paul's letters which was read in the churches (cf. 2 Pt 3:15-16, who deems some of its content 'hard to understand'; δυσνόητά τινα).

Witherington (1994:9) reminds us of the fact that Paul's letter-carriers were entrusted with additional oral communication, which could have shed light on the overall comprehension and acceptance of the written message. O'Brien (1991:351) seems to understand exactly this when Paul writes concerning his prior sending of Epaphroditus (2:25-30) and Timothy (2:19-23) who conveyed *orally* what he mentions in 3:1 ('to write the same things [τὰ αὐτὰ] to you…'). What effect emissaries could have in later public readings is unknown to us, although their reading emphases might have had an impact on subsequent readings[11]. That this was done in the context of a worship service is only an informed assumption, for the few passages we have concerning the worship of the churches (1 Cor 11:17-34; 14.1-40; Eph 5:19-20) do not mention specifically Scripture-readings as a common practice (Stanley 1999:128).

[11] Elliott (2004:72-73) mentions the 'acoustic space' which Paul's letters (and emissaries) created, in the orbit of oral power. As such, Elliott stresses the role of the apostle in preparing the oral performance of the reader/emissary to convey Paul's own emphases.

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1.2.2 Letters Addressing *Ad Hoc* Situations

'In reading the letters of Paul, we are necessarily reading from an inner-community perspective. His letters were not directly addressing the Jews who did not identify Jesus as Paul understood him. Moreover the letters were not addressed to other leaders of the Christ-movement nor the adherents of their missions' (Campbell 2008:36). With this is mind, we should not expect Paul to display a complete theological treatise in any given letter. Letters were not intended to be read as such, but as substitute for the physical presence of the author. Achtemeier (1990:10) speaks of ancients' preference for oral accounts over written records and quotes Papias ('For I did not suppose that things gained from books would profit me so much as things gained by means of a living surviving voice', in Eusebius, *HE* 3.39.4) and Seneca (*Ep* 6.5: 'Of course, however, the living voice [...] will help you more than the written word') as evidence.

Murphy-O'Connor (1995:42) recognises that Paul's letters were 'occasioned by problems in or requests from the communities for which he was responsible. Thus they differ significantly in content'. It could not have been otherwise if they indeed addressed specific situations. However, from the point of view of form analysis the apostle was more consistent at the beginning and closing of his letters. It is for this reason that looking at variations here that we can infer local emphases in Philippians. Witherington (1994:10) stresses the fact that Paul's letters addressed specific matters of particular groups of Christians, 'though they included directives and principles that can be applied in many other situations'. This applicability is only possible, though, because the Church at large decided to keep such letters for the benefit and guidance of her communities on a later stage. These two sides of the coin need to be balanced lest we treat the letter as purely occasional or with such a wide scope in mind that it no longer speaks to the particular situation. The *ad hoc* element does not deny the possibility of using extant traditional material (perhaps 2:6-11 and 3:20-21?), but it does affirm that whatever is used has in mind its relevance for the situation addressed.

Campbell has summarised this well and confirms my earlier observation that only by reading Philippians as an *ad hoc* letter do we rightly appraise its content and form:

> Yet this interaction with context does not represent the whole of Paul's theologizing. Along with this, inextricably intertwined, is the Christ-event as a radical new perspective on the actual context and the vital relationships taking place there. And the Christ-event is not the only narrative into which Paul sets

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> the issues he has to deal with in Corinth or elsewhere. There is also a wider story of Israel and Israel's scriptures in which the interaction between this people and their God is the primary focus. Paul does not simply retort or repeat the theological tradition of Israel's scriptures. Rather, he combines all of the above-noted factors in a marvellous fusion of creative imagination in which his pattern of, what some have termed, 'scriptural reasoning' results in contextually-related letters in which theological and social factors are dramatically fused to offer practical guidance within an implicit and/or explicit eschatological framework (Campbell 2008:11).

1.2.2.1 *Ad Hoc* but Universal also

At this time it is critical that we deal with an obvious element: How do we know the letter is *ad hoc*? What are the circumstances which bring the letter into being? Traditional exegesis has looked for clues within the text that aimed at a reconstruction of the order of events. I believe, however, that some important points may just be missed in this process. New Testament scholars who make use of the social sciences signal that texts exist within social systems that provide them with sense and significance. Thus, πολιτ-language (1:27; 3:21, etc.) becomes more than mere general language about behaviour amongst the brethren: it is political language, that is, it concerns life as lived in the public arena. The Christ-hymn allows for a radical denouncing of core social values, including life in the city, in society, and not just as a typical *ad intra* communication about church-related issues[12].

The Philippians' opponents are thus not just possible visiting Judaizers (Phlp 3), but also people with whom they have contact on a daily basis (1:28). It is logical to think that Paul is dealing with diverse situations in the colony (cf. Snyman 2006:262). But as Koperski (1996:122) pointed out, by the time Paul is finished exposing his example as a counter-argument to that of the opponents, it has 'become universally applicable'[13]. Although Doughty (1995) over-emphasises the general nature of the letter's message, the apostle carries on precise efforts to express his staying side by side with the Philippian community (4:15; cf. Reumann 1993:440). It is, no doubt, thanks to his insight and capacity to address the lives of his audiences that his letters transcended time and became a cherished treasure for his incipient communities and later on for the rest of Christianity (cf. Becker 1996:21-24). Marshall (1993:357) recognises this last observation: 'When a first-century church received a letter from Paul, it paid

[12] Georgi (1991) recognizes a political edge in Paul's theology (cf. Harrison 1999:80).
[13] Doughty (1995:102-103, revised [14/05/02]), however, takes a radical stance that perceives Philippians as Deutero-Pauline and his teachings as already universalised. There are no concrete opponents in view, only general teachings.

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attention. Something about Paul's letters made people want to read them, obey them, copy them, preserve them and study them. Paul's letters were effective. They were persuasive'. This does not mean, nevertheless, that all of them were *entirely* persuasive. Campbell (2008:72), on the other hand, reminds us of the opposite danger, and affirms that we must resist the temptation to generalise Paul's statements to a particular gentile audience into a universal norm that applies to the whole church. Focusing more on Paul's own time, Hvalvik (2005:133) speaks about the general character of Paul's letters aiming at creating a sort of 'ecumenical way of thinking'. This observation is valid, and reflects the kind of cross-pollination the apostle desired amongst different communities (cf. Phlp 4:22).

1.2.2.2 Not Thorough but to the Point

Letters were usually addressed to the entire community with a clear focus on being read aloud. Casey has pointed this out (e.g., oral biblical criticism) when he studies ancient written correspondence. The schemes, elements, and rules typical of oral communication were also used in written literature. What I am suggesting here is more a hunch than a fully developed thought, but it nevertheless points to something which is critical. As I study written communication in the context of a mostly oral communication culture, we come to the written texts with certain provisos in mind. Firstly, I stress that written communication functioned as a substitute for physical presence, which implies that the author had 'one chance' (*the* letter) to bring about what he could aim at doing in the congregation if in person; only on this occasion *via* written communication. Therefore, at what point are we to expect too many literary subtleties when addressing mostly illiterate audiences? I believe it is a propos to recall Casey's (1995:100) admonition: 'A word of caution is necessary at this point. In a print culture, where a scholar has the time and availability of text to methodically evaluate the occurrences of various elements of a composition, it is easy to formulate extremely complicated patterns from the simple repetition of common parts of speech'. I am not contending for a 'naïve' reading of the texts per se, but to use caution and bear in mind that we are dealing with texts which, above else, have an aim in mind different from artistic embellishment. Moreover, that the letter could be a valid substitute for physical presence does not guarantee that it will act as a piece of oration in the technical sense (Reed 1997:158-159). Secondly, we can never know the actual role the reader/emissary *played* in shaping the accents of the message. All we possess is the written texts, but usually no record of its impact (although see 2 Cor 2:5-11).

Casey, who bases his work on Kennedy and Mack, points out: 'All religions are rhetorical in that they seek to persuade people in their beliefs and actions. In

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fact, religious rhetoric tends to exhibit characteristics which distinguish it from other forms of language' (Casey 1995:38). The differences between biblical rhetoric and Greek religious rhetoric, although general in nature, are nevertheless useful[14]. These are (:39-43): 1) an emphasis in discovering the truth; 2) understanding appears as something revealed rather than discovered; 3) the rhetoric is inspired, therefore the rhetorical training of the author is not an *a priori*[15]; 4) success depends on whether God allows the audience to receive and understand the message; and 5) there is always the presence of external authority (be it God, the Holy Spirit, an orator, etc.; cf. Kennedy 1984:121-122). Mack (1990:95-96) agrees with Kennedy and adds some distinguishing marks to Christian discourse: 1) great use of figurative speech; 2) a relative lack of historical examples; and 3) 'a high polemical quotient, bifocal address (two audiences at once) and the prevalence of argument by negative contrast throughout entire argumentations' (:96). 'He [Mack] claims that the final characteristic "reflects a process of self-definition by means of comparison and contrast with the surrounding cultures of difference"' (Casey 1995:39). This last element, comparison and contrast, plays a crucial role in the letter to the Philippians as we read the texts through SIT's filters. Paul is trying to construct a 'We-They' dynamic which aims at persuading the Christ-followers concerning the proper model of behaviour worthy of Christ (1:27)[16].

It is important to remember that the recipients were not necessarily familiarised with the theological content of Paul's other letters. Thus, any drawing from these should be aimed at clarifying what the author tried to convey in Philippians rather than to describe what the recipients would have necessarily assumed. It is important to recall that letters 'create appearance in the experience of the recipient(s) by evoking the physical presence of the author(s)' (Botha 1992:209). In the case of Philippians this is quite clear, since the apostle

[14] Casey (1995:38) cites Grassi's work (1980:103-104) on the characteristics of religious (i.e., not necessarily 'biblical') rhetoric which displays these distinctive features: 1) it presents information through revelation rather than by seeking to persuade through logical means; 2) it is immediate rather than mediated; 3) it is imagistic; 4) its pronouncements are timeless; and 5) it is absolute and urgent.

[15] To ascertain here if Paul had access to *progymnasmata* or other rhetorical materials is of no more importance than to recognize his literary ability through the study of the letter itself.

[16] Sisson (2003:252) observes that ideology 'is seldom explicitly developed in a text; in fact, writers often avoid explicit statement of their interest or aims. A critical issue for interpreters exploring the ideological texture of a text is how to identify where and how ideology shows itself in the text'. Sisson concludes that Paul's ideology has to do with defining hierarchical relationships, after the concept exposed by Engberg-Pedersen (1995). The problem with this terminology, i.e., hierarchy, is how to interpret the term. I mentioned in chapter 5 that Paul viewed his authority as one which both modelled and suffered on behalf of others. Sisson (2003:256) points to another facet of this hierarchy: 'He and the Philippians are striving to attain the same prize, eschatological honor, but for the moment he speaks to them as one who is further along in the race and closing in on the finish line'.

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appeals to his presence/absence, example, his possible coming to them, etc., throughout the letter. The question is how well did the audience know the apostle? Did they understand his biblical quotations? This element is a double-edge sword. In the case of Philippians I have stressed the fact that the letter never quotes the LXX directly, so I suppose that the recipients were not particularly familiarised with it. However, upon a closer reading of the letter the echoes of the Jewish Scriptures (LXX) are many. Firstly, we can be sure that the apostle used these expressions consciously (Silva 2005:124), for the resemblance is remarkable (cf. 2:14-15 with Ex 15:24; 16:2, and Dt 3:5 LXX). Secondly, this is no assurance that the Philippian congregation did necessarily understand such inter-textual play, although it cannot be discounted (cf. Ehrensperger 2005:7). Stanley (1999:133) concludes that the presence of such echoes 'reveals the literary capabilities not of the audience but of Paul himself, whose engagement with the Jewish Scriptures was such that his thinking and mode of expression were shaped by the symbolic universe of the Bible and the language of specific passages'. Ehrensperger, in a recent article (2005), develops how this influence works in Paul's mode of reasoning. This matter is important. 'Contemporary rhetorical theory insists that the efficacy of a piece of rhetorical communication depends largely on the degree of congruence between the speaker/author's expectations about the audience and the audience's ability to understand and act upon the speaker's recommendations' (Stanley 1999:125). In the context of letters being read aloud, Stanley affirms that the only quotations Paul's communities would have recognised were those marked as such within the text, at it happens in 1 Cor 15:27: 'as it is written...' (:132). However, if we also attend to the role of the reader/emissary, it is possible that some of these 'obscure' quotations (rather 'echoes', allusions, etc.) could have been made more explicit for the benefit of the community during the reading of the letter, but again, this is just a guess. It is in this respect that I believe Hays' *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (1989) projects too heavily these modern presuppositions into the ancient setting; but then his goal is to produce 'late twentieth-century readings of Paul informed by intelligent historical understanding' (:28).

If then the letter was to be read aloud that would have given Paul some relief as far as how the entire congregation could receive its message with its literary echoes. Stanley (1999:135) opines that it is fair to assume that Paul would have in mind mainly the literate portion of the congregation, although he wanted all to benefit from his message. The structure of Pauline churches, were those of means usually hosted the community, may have had an impact in how his letters were later transmitted to the bulk of the believing community[17]. Lastly,

[17] This observation has important implications. Those literate in the congregation would surely had some knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures and were thus, able to confer with Paul's use of

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we must be aware that Paul was developing his theology as he wrote to different communities (cf. Becker 1996:16-17). Paul then 'relates themes coherently from the centre of his thought to contingent situations which he faces. The occasion may call for a truth to be asserted and how it will be articulated, but the apostle makes determination of these matters' (Reumann 1993:457; cf. Becker 1996:443-450). To expect, as it is often the case, perfect theological coherence in his extant literary corpus is a bit unfair: he might never had the chance to retrieve his sent-letters to add any possible new developments (cf. Fortna 1990:220)[18]. As we said, the role of the emissaries must have been more important than suspected. But this, as with many other things, is something we may never know for sure.

1.2.2.3 Danger of 'Mirror-Reading'

In the search for the reasons which 'caused' the letter, we must beware of the kind of 'mirror reading' which assumes that for each and every assertion in the letter there is a contrary position either in the context to which the letter refers or as an element portrayed by his adversaries (Fowl 2005:11). This is especially important in the case of polemical passages, as the one in Phlp 3. This applies to Paul's echoing the Jewish Scriptures as well (cf. Stanley 1999:136).

Williams (2002:80-81) alerts to a number of points in this regard. Firstly, Paul nowhere addresses the opponents directly, but the Philippians *about* the opponents. As such, we only posses Paul's angle of incidence on the adversaries and not the voice of those he attacks (cf. Becker 1996:17). Secondly, 'this is no calm and rational conversation that we are overhearing, but a fierce piece of

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them. On the other hand, as Stanley (1999:140) points out, reference to these old sources was, in this context, the highest bidding for authority he had at his disposal. It is strange then that such a device is not present in Philippians. Paul, rather than appearing as an apostle quoting the Jewish Scriptures to support his claims, self-depicts as a slave, in chains (see previous chapter) but with an unshakable moral authority based on his modelling after Christ.

[18] This may be particularly frustrating when we turn to Philippians in search of how the apostle dealt with the relationship between 'Judaism' and the gentile world. Whereas in other letters the interaction between Christ-followers and the synagogue communities—and the problems which derive from it—is in view (e.g. Romans), in Philippians the potential problematic interaction embraces other groups as well. This sole focus on Judaism is one weakness Campbell (2008:68) readily recognizes in previous scholarship, since the source of conflict is tripartite: Paul's mission, synagogue and state. As I study the phenomenon of identity formation we are reminded that Paul's vision for the gentiles 'originated from his understanding of the divine purpose for Israel and the nations' (:55), but apart from the autobiographic account in Phlp 3:5-11, Paul has other concerns in mind as well (cf. Tellbe 2001). We could always draw from our knowledge of Paul in other letters (i.e. Rm, Gl) and include his emphases here in Philippians, but I much doubt whether this methodology can ultimately allow us to hear the letter's unique voice and impact.

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polemic in which Paul feels his whole identity and mission are threatened and therefore responds with all the rhetorical and theological powers at his command' (Williams 2002:81, original emphasis). Lastly, it is possible that in his presentation of the facts he might have misunderstood or characterised his opponents incorrectly. This complex relationship calls for a cautionary word. We need to beware of tracing a sharp distinction between the 'rhetorical situation' and the historical analysis of the letter, 'suggesting that the former is how a particular speaker perceived the rhetorical situation and responded to it, while historical analysis is restricted to establishing "the historical circumstances lying behind a text"' (Esler 2003:16)[19]. Holloway (2001:35) allows for the possibility that the rhetorical situation exists ultimately in the mind of the author. I prefer a combination of both emphases with the theory of "rhetoric-as-essentially-related-to-situation" proposed by Lloyd Bitzer (1968:3)[20].

Casey (1995:61-62) brings a good closure to the discussion:

> The literature of the New Testament was composed predominantly by writers who had learned to write for practical reasons and had little, if any, training in aesthetics. They viewed literature as a practical means of communicating with others when they were absent but saw it as inferior to the spoken word. They expected their compositions to be read aloud to a gathered community, who would, in turn, use that material to establish a dialogue among themselves and, especially in the case of a letter, with the reader, who was often the writer's official representative.

2. Philippians through a Socio-Rhetorical Approach

In order to study the letter we need to look at its structure as it relates to its social world of which it was part. Thus, a social-rhetorical approach, which takes into consideration both elements, is called for.

Robbins (1996:1-3) complains about the lack of agreement in biblical studies: 'The emergence of so many movements and methods in such a short span of time has produced a scientific revolution in biblical studies, and revolutions are times of disunity rather than widespread cooperation'. J H Elliott (1995:54) defends that biblical interpretation should be a cooperative task, which I believe social-scientific scholars have readily understood when they incorporate

[19] Not all specialists agree on this. Williams (2002:94-95) cites the work of Schüssler-Fiorenza (1987), who differentiates between the *rhetorical situation* and the *historical situation*. The same is proposed by Hughes (2000:253-254).
[20] Cited in Holloway (2001:35), who deals with the criticism of Bitzer's ideas in pp. 36-39.

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insights and methods from diverse disciplines. It is in this sense that we study Philippians with the aid of a socio-rhetoric approach in mind, not as *the* sole method, but as one which presents yet another angle to better comprehend the letter and the people involved in this communication process (cf. Pretorius 1998:551-552).

Sisson (2003:242) observes that socio-rhetorical interpretation identifies 'four distinct, but interrelated, textures of rhetorical discourse: inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, and ideological texture'. The first one of them is the formal structuring of argumentation. The second refers to the support for the argumentation which the author uses (via allusion or direct citation) to antecedent oral or scribal traditions. The third has to do with the 'evocation of tacit forms of social and cultural knowledge' (:243). The fourth reveals the ideological angle the author chooses, depending on the aims and interest of the interpreter; what Sisson identifies as 'the ideology of the interpreter' (:243). This means that whatever angle of incidence we choose will affect our perception of the text and the outcome thereafter. I believe these four features (with different names) have already been addressed in previous chapters, but merge here with the application of this type of analysis to the letter. Sisson points out, furthermore that the 'Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle in physics provides an apt analogy for how the ideological aims and interest of an interpreter may influence the configuration of the object of interpretation. The light required to observe the activity of electrons affects the very activity being observed' (:243).

Achtemeier (1990:20) affirms that to 'the extent that rhetoric was intended to facilitate comprehension, one must speak of the "rhetoric" of the NT, yet it is not necessary to understand by that statement that the NT authors had formal training in rhetoric'. Witherington (1994:3) believes Paul was fully influenced by Greek rhetoric beyond the mere use of rhetorical devices, which was a regular part of the literary milieu. Fitzgerald (1996:142) describes Paul as a 'skilled epistolographer'. Such a discussion, though, goes beyond our scope. When we study the letter with the help of social-rhetorical criticism we aim at what Kennedy (1984:44-45) calls a 'circular process' which consists of several phases: 1) determine the rhetorical unit to be studied; 2) define the 'rhetorical situation'; 3) determine the *stasis*[21]; 4) determine the specifics of rhetoric; 5) determine the arrangement of material; and 6) examine the entire unit and determine its success (that is, the exigency and implications for both author and

[21] Snyman (1993:328) agrees that this is the most important element, since it reflects the question which dominates the rhetorical situation. Following Watson's (1988:60) lead, he suggests that the 'question to which Philippians is the response can be phrased as: "what is a manner of life worthy of the gospel?"' (:328). I believe my own interpretation of the letter confirms this assessment.

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audience). However, we are called to beware of applying the full force of rhetoric to New Testament literature. Esler has timely warned us about the fact that the practice of rhetoric as performed by Aristotle was only one strand, since there were others (amongst them that of Gorgias). 'In particular, a strand of rhetoric developed in Asia Minor during the Hellenistic period characterized by emotional effect, bombast, rhythm, and wordplay. Paul was probably influenced by this style of rhetoric if he was born in Tarsus' (Esler 2003:16). A second caution is that no rhetorical analysis of Philippians has yielded identical results, so we need to be aware of 'definitive' rhetorical structures[22]. Reed (1997:124-152) criticises the tendency to see a controlling theme (*propositio*) which is prevalent in rhetorical analyses of Philippians. He argues for a presentation of the letter which allows for a multiplicity of purposes even though it reflects a unified letter (cf. Sandnes 2002:136; Smith 2005:35, 40-41).

My goal in reading Philippians is to place the letter within plausible social systems which can enhance our understanding of Paul's literary strategy[23]. Then, with the help of the social sciences I aim at (re)-constructing the historical situation which is reflected in the letter, which goes beyond what it is normally implied by the term 'rhetorical situation'. I do not really know the point at which these two levels interact, but my preference is for the close interrelation of them. Smith (2005:19) has pointed to the erroneous undifferentiating between function and information in the writings of Paul, which has led most scholars to search for a definite Pauline theology in his writings. My approach is wider in scope and combines elements which are not compartmentalised in 'real' life. Campbell (2008:160) prefers the more active sense of 'theologising', which takes into account both strategy and convictions. 'Theologizing in Paul is designed to change people, to transform communal life and to create a Christ-like pattern of life within his communities. Thus it is with the social realities of their life that Paul begins to theologize rather than with an already developed creedal form of theology, even if such were to consist of "sound doctrine"' (:161).

Values, claims, exhortations, etc., are indissolubly placed within social systems that provide them with meaning. To ascertain the function of the text is also the aim of socio-rhetorical analysis, since it is concerned with the 'real' world of the text, and takes seriously its content and the possibility to be lived/practiced

[22] Williams (2002:88-90) includes useful charts displaying the different results of various rhetorical/epistolary outlines applied to Philippians. Although by no means complete (only three authors are displayed), the results show differences in emphasis which affect major elements (i.e., *propositio*).

[23] Fowl (2005:11-12) believes that a thorough historical reconstruction is not necessary in order to better understand the letter, since it involves large amounts of speculation. Speculation, nevertheless, always exists. I think a (re)construction of the historical setting, together with an in-depth study of the social systems, allow for a more *informed* reading of the letter, my goal.

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historically (Robbins 1996:7)[24]. The aim of the present study is to 'put body and soul together', that is, 'in reference to the "everyday lives and social needs and contexts of real human beings"', as Scroggs reminds us (cf. Brown 1997:xv)[25]. In the words of Robbins (1996:14):

> New Testament texts are not simply historical, theological or linguistic treatises. Rather, their written discourse is a highly interactive and complex environment. Interpreting a biblical text is an act of entering a world where body and mind, interacting with one another, create and evoke highly complex patterns and configurations of meanings in historical, social, cultural and ideological contexts of religious belief. Rhetorical argument, social act and religious belief intertwine in them like threads and yarn in a richly textured tapestry.

Stanley (1999:144) recalls that Paul's quotations of the Jewish Scriptures can also be used for general study: 'A rhetorical study that looks only at the structures of Paul's argumentation can tell us how Paul hoped his audience would respond to his arguments, but not whether the audience was able (or willing) to give the desired outcome. To evaluate the effectiveness of Paul's quotations, we need a realistic set of assumptions concerning the literary capabilities of Paul's first-century audience'. I recourse then to rhetoric understood as the 'art of persuasion' (Aristotle, *Rhet* 1.1.1354b31), an 'essential component of influencing an audience' (Williams 2002:78). That is, my purpose is not so much to find a clear-cut division of all its parts, but to arrive at a general understanding of how Paul made use of the available tools at his disposal in order to convey his message and purpose *successfully* to the Philippian community[26]. In this process we can better appreciate the invaluable help SIT lends to this comprehension, since we do not only deal with the 'rhetorical situation', but with how people are expected to interact with each other based on a study of the values that seem to permeate first-century Mediterranean society.

2.1 Provenance

[24] Smith, based on Austin's work, concedes that interpreting a text is more than the search for the impact of the text. It recognizes that texts 'are part of the performance of a larger communicative structure' (Smith 2005:22).

[25] Craffert (1993:243) observes that in order to break the tendency of the history-of-ideas approach, the best direction is to engage the texts through an interdisciplinary approach where historical data and contemporary social science models come to an interpretive dialogue.

[26] Ramsaran (2005:286) comments that the success of the rhetorical method for most of the undisputed Pauline letters indicates that at a deep level Paul was inclined to argue out of a general *dispositio* framework, that is, to identify with the audience (*ethos-pathos*), establish terms and background, argue the case (*logos*), and conclude strongly for a decision to be made in his (Paul's) favour (*pathos-logos*). I agree in that the rhetorical structure aims at persuading his audiences. However, the matter of his success calls for another approach which needs to go beyond the scrutiny of his letters, into the history of the Pauline mission.

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What is left for us to do is to ascertain the occasion that gave birth to the letter. Many scholars have tried to reconstruct a plausible order of events which depends largely on the location of Paul's imprisonment. Deciding where he was at the time of writing his letter has important implications. Among these, it is said, the one affecting the identification of Paul's opponents. However, Fowl (2005:9) comments that whatever option is chosen does not really make much interpretive difference. Although there is no a strict consensus in this matter, the possibilities which show more potential are really three, since the other ones (up to four more) are based on speculations which do not find support either in external or internal evidence. I mentioned earlier that though Rome seems to be the place of writing with a larger following and represents the 'traditional view', scholars have challenged this view and have put forward two different locations: Ephesus and Caesarea[27].

It is mandatory to comment on my own stance on the letter in order to understand the arguments I present. My view is that Philippians is a single letter, not a composite of three (o four) letters. The latter option naturally allows for a variety of provenances for each of the letters[28]. This understanding of the letter's integrity supports the existence of a single place of origin.

Hawthorne (1983:xxxvii), who acknowledges that it is impossible to decide the provenance without some degree of uncertainty, presents seven elements which any theory needs to account for: 1) Paul was in prison at the time of writing; 2) Paul faced a trial which could end in death (1:19-20; 2:17) or acquittal (1:25; 2:24); 3) the existence of a *praetorium* as well as those who belonged to the household of Caesar in the location he was at the time of writing; 4) Timothy was with Paul (1:1, 2:19-23); 5) extensive evangelistic efforts were carried around Paul when he wrote (1:14-17); 6) the fact that Paul soon wanted to visit Philippi (2:24); and 7) the several trips made back and forth between Philippi and Paul's place of imprisonment.

With this is mind, Rome seems to be the more plausible place for Paul's imprisonment (Smith 2005:49-55), and if so, only three communications between the apostle and the Philippians are necessary to account for (maybe a fourth one, 2:26 but this is only an inference; cf. Silva 2005:6), which did not need to extend for more than a one year period[29]. The problem of distance is

[27] The Marcionite Prologue already mentions Rome as place of origin, as do the postscripts of some MSS (B^1, 075, and the Majority Text); see O'Brien (1991:19) and Bockmuehl (1997a:30).
[28] Murphy-O'Connor (1996:215-230) describes this reconstruction with skill, but he dismisses the letter's integrity on rather subjective grounds.
[29] Hawthorne (1983:xxxviii) allows up to a period of two years for Paul's house arrest in Rome, but cannot fit the frequent visits in such a short period due to the long distance between Rome

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thus ameliorated to a certain degree. The reference to the 'household of Caesar' (4:22) seems to have a better reason to be mentioned specifically to the honour-conscious Philippians (cf. 4:15) if Rome were the place of origin (Fee 1995:34)[30].

Ephesus has received wide support due to its geographical proximity, which would have facilitated more visits. The three or four communications reflected in the letter could have been carried out in less than a year even if the provenance were Rome (*ca* 1 300 km). Silva (2005:4) opines that actually only between four to six months are needed. So this geographical distance, becomes a 'pseudo-problem' and not a strong support for the Ephesian theory. Moreover, the reference to the praetorian guard (1:13, πραιτώριον)[31] cannot be positively accounted for in Ephesus, a senatorial province (Fee 1995:35). Added to this is the fact that we do not have external evidence which confirms Paul was imprisoned there (Witherington 1994:24). However, this argument *ex silentio* cannot be entirely overruled. 1 Cor 15:32 speaks of having 'fought with wild animals at Ephesus', which evidences great distress (Osiek 2000:29). There are, nevertheless, elements which go against this possibility: the lack of any mention of the Collection (so central for Paul, cf. Gl, 1 and 2 Cor, Rm), the *type* of imprisonment[32], etc. However unlikely, the possibility of Ephesus (then written *ca* 54-55 AD) cannot be discarded completely; it still remains an option (Bockmuehl 1997a:28)[33]. Despite this, Hawthorne (1983:xxxviii) is blunt: 'The fatal flaw in the Ephesian imprisonment hypothesis is that it is totally built on conjecture'.

Caesarea, where Paul was imprisoned for two years, had an imperial palace (cf. Ac 23:33, Herod's *praetorium*), and has therefore found ample support (Lohmeyer, Hawthorne, Reisner, Kümmel, etc.). But, as Silva (2005:7) observes,

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and Philippi, although he seems to be more open if the place were Caesarea (1983:xlii), although the distance is roughly similar!

[30] This expression is 'most naturally taken to refer to the Christian members of the imperial service in the capital, who may have special links with the citizens of Philippi as a Roman colony' (O'Brien 1991:20).

[31] Lightfoot (1868:99-104), arguing for the traditional view, conceded that *praetorium* could signify 'a body of men' and not only a reference to a palace guard (in Silva 2005:65).

[32] That Paul could have been in prison in Ephesus is an element that cannot be discounted. He mentions to have suffered chains in more occasions than any of his opponents (cf. 2 Cor 11:23) and even a tenuous inference that this could have taken place at Ephesus (2 Cor 1:8-10). However, Bockmuehl (1997a:27) is concerned with the *nature* of the imprisonment: 'Philippians requires him to have been detained on a capital charge for a considerable length of time', whereas Ac and the epistles speak of a relative freedom on Paul's side to travel and to teach. Moreover, it is strange that Paul had not appealed to Caesar in such a circumstance (cf. O 'Brien 1991:22).

[33] Alternative answers are offered which allow still for an Ephesian provenance: 1) the language of 1:23 and 2:17 shows that the Paul was in no mortal danger; 2) the apostle's danger came not from legal procedure, but from an unofficial attempt on his life (cf. O'Brien 1991:23-24).

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'it cannot be said to hold a *higher* status of credibility than the Roman theory', though it does held great plausibility (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:29). The element of geographical distance that discouraged some scholars in favour of Rome cannot be upheld here, since there existed a considerable distance between the two localities (*ca* 1 900 km, see O'Brien 1991:23). If we pay attention to the witness of Ac 24:26 and 25:27, it does not appear that Paul had to fear for his life there, since Felix was prepared to release him and Festus found no capital charges against him. Thus, a Roman trial seems more probable (Bockmuehl 1997a:30). Caesarea Maritima seems to have been a 'political backwater' and thus unable to hold a big group of Christ-followers to fit the description of 1:14-18. A *Caesarean* theory nevertheless will push the letter's composition to *ca* 57-59 (O'Brien 1991:19).

None of the options is really without its own problems[34], and it would be unfair to press the letter for univocal internal evidence which it is just not provided. If we opt for Rome, the letter would have been written some time after 60 AD, probably during 62 AD (Bockmuehl 1997a:32). What are the implications? One that comes to mind is that Philippians would then be one of Paul's last letters, where we could expect some mature theological development (*pace* Fortna 1990). A second one is that his imprisonment could be close to the end of his career, although he still had hopes of visiting them once more (1:26). However, I do not consider the settling of the provenance as a crucial element in order to be able to understand the message of the letter with certain degree of accuracy, since this is not provided by Paul.

2.2 The Importance of the Social Location for SIT

However, when all these possibilities have been dealt with, it seems as if a basic ingredient is still missing. Whatever the city Paul writes from, the most important element is to perceive the prison as a powerful social location, which lends a particular feeling to the letter. Grieb (2007:261), who compares the mood and intensity of the letter to the 'prison letters' written by Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr., and others, comments that the social location adds a special weight and urgency:

> Very probably, Paul's prison letters had the same powerful effect in part because of their origin [...] In Philippians, too, Paul calls attention to the danger

[34] In Rm 15:23-24, written from Corinth, the apostle shares his desire to visit Rome and Spain, since he does not have any room for work in those regions (which should be understood as Greece and the East). However, in Phlp 1:26 he speaks of his hope to return to Philippi (Osiek 2000:28). It is possible that certain events forced Paul to change his course, and the Roman theory needs to answer obstacles such as these.

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> he is in and the possibility of his death. He does so, not for his own sake, but to underline the importance of the cause for which he and the Philippians are in partnership, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lest we lose perspective, I would like to suggest that it is precisely this social location which lends Paul an authority and a platform from where to launch his theology of identity with Christ's sufferings (3:10). Sander's (1977:463f, 456) observations on Paul's 'participation theology'—it is by dying with Christ that the person obtains new life, becoming part of the redeemed community, the ingroup—seems to be present here (cf. Hooker 1982:48). The other element has to do with his attacks on the various groups of opponents whose life-style is based on self-interest (3:19) or who acted out of partisanship (1:17)[35].

Paul addressed this lesson on unity and togetherness to the Philippians in the midst of serious strife, where, as we saw, his life was in real danger. From prison he referred to another powerful social location that identifies the Philippian community: the *polis*. Grieb (2007:261) refers to the prison as a 'social location for doing constructive political theology'. I think she has a point, although she does not develop the thought beyond that observation. I suggest that both social locations (prison, *polis*) function as epitomes of seemingly contrasting worlds, when in fact the element of being "in Christ" transcends both. Allow me to explain it: Whereas prison life is characterised by peril and struggle, the *polis* appears as the place of harmony and safety. We find numerous treatises on safety (ἀσφάλεια) and harmony (ὁμόνοια) in ancient sources, so these *topoi* are well known. The city provides both the individual and the group with a place to belong and a corporate identity: individuals find solace and identity within its social matrix. In a sense, prison and *polis* are contrasted as opposite locations, but only in theory. In Paul's thought, although he acknowledges the peril he is in (1:19-24), he reveals that the safety of the city is an illusion, for those who defend her (theoretical) harmoniousness are in deep danger as well (1:28). In this context Paul calls the community to be of the same mind (2:2). Is this a call to be a self-critical transformative Christ-following community? (Grieb 2007:259; cf. Horsley 1997, 2000, 2004). I do not think we can really speak in these terms. Paul was trying to consolidate a different identity for the ingroup based on the values displayed in the Christ-hymn, that much is clear, but I do not believe that the Philippians considered themselves as a "subculture" within the Graeco-Roman *polis*. Rather, I take the letter as a one-way communication device (Paul → Philippians) which embraces a larger

[35] I find Fortna's (1990:221) critique of Paul as egocentric and solely preoccupied with his own situation amusing (supported also by Murphy-O'Connor 1996:225). True, the apostle reverts to his life over and over, but this, as I shall explain, is a common rhetorical device at his disposal. It is also his most powerful tool to persuade the Philippians. For a thorough dialogue with Fortna's thesis, see Weidmann (1997:245-257).

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number of interactions and it is, therefore, the result of a back-and-forth communication process. As I mentioned earlier, it was Paul's opportunity to set clear the manner in which the community ought to live in accordance with Paul's understanding of the Christian way[36]. Paul did not stand alone. Although he does not reveal their identity, there were brethren who stand side by side with him (4:21), as a sound reminder of true harmony even in the midst of what it would be without Christ, dire hopelessness[37].

Prison and *polis* are two opposed social locations which the apostle used in order to persuade a dear community to adopt an up-side-down life style that finds its epitome in the Christ-hymn[38]. Paul will attempt such a task through a letter with special characteristics[39].

2.3 Is It All in the Style? (Letter-Forms)

With the application of rhetorical studies to the New Testament, scholars have read Philippians under certain rhetorical conventions that have clearly coloured the way it has been interpreted, sometimes with an atomistic procedure applied to the reading of the letter (cf. Pretorius 1998:552). Because of its apparent 'friendliness' of style and form, as well as Paul's amicable personal sharing, some scholars (White, Stowers, Fitzgerald, Bloomquist, Fee) have categorised Philippians as a 'letter of friendship' (φιλικαί), though with important nuances[40]. Others, paying attention to its language, overall structure and

[36] Grieb (2007:256): 'That Paul and the Philippians hold a set of beliefs about God and the world in common is to be presumed from the fact of his writing a letter to them and their preservation of it'. The letter suggests, furthermore, quite strong and major differences that Paul is resolute to appease.

[37] Holloway (2001:41-49), with a different set of concerns in mind, perceives that the social location is akin to the rhetorical situation. It is from the prison that Paul reminds the community of those things which are really necessary in an effort to encourage and console them. Holloway's reconstruction of events is helpful as a reminder of the internal dialogue between Paul and the Philippian community.

[38] Grieb (2007:263): '…we can see how Christian beliefs in God and God's relationship to the world become embedded for Paul in specific social attitudes and political actions. In other words, we are shown the socio-political consequences implied by a theology of the cross'. Cf. Williams (2002:2-3).

[39] PsDemetrius, *Ep Typ* praef.: 'Letters are to be composed from those types that are always fitted to the situation'.

[40] Stowers, who in his 1986 book denied the possibility of calling Philippians a 'letter of friendship', switched his opinion in his 1991 article, despite the lack of words like φιλία or φίλος in the letter: 'Philippians is clearly a letter of friendship' (Stowers 1991:119, n. 45). The opposite action was taken by Perkins, who in her 1987 article observed both friendship imagery and features of the 'family letter' in Philippians, but changed her view in the revision of her essay in 1991. See Reumann (1996:88-89) for a detailed description.

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function, concluded that it belongs to an ancient genre of consolation letters (Holloway 2001:2). Still others, impressed by the combination of military, athletic, and political imagery interpret it as if it were a sort of pre-battle harangue, with the ἀγών motif as centre (Pfitzner 1967; Krentz 2004:355). Some recent works, as I have already mentioned, perceive the letter as Paul's attempt to impose his will and modelling through a rhetoric of power (or 'persuasion') to establish a kyriachal hierarchy (Marchal, Park). Marchal is not concerned with rhetoric as a set of oral/literary conventions per se, but with its sheer nature to convince the audience, i.e., to 'have an effect' (Marchal 2007:246)[41]. It is clear that any attempt to identify Philippians (or any other of Paul's letters) in terms of *one* specific type of letter becomes an oversimplification (Fitzgerald 1996:143). Paul's letters are of a 'mixed' type, and he could have drawn from several well-established social conventions that governed the manner of expressing his language[42].

However, and not discounting the many facets of the letter and its many linguistic echoes (political, military, etc.), my understanding is that the letter reflects some of the rhetorical conventions of the 'letter of friendship', without being subjected to a rigid structure[43]. Rather, as many scholars have already pointed out (cf. Pretorius 1998:562), I concur with Fee (1995:341) in that 'Paul uses the rhetoric of friendship to evoke appropriate responses in his readers'. Stowers (1989:60) confirms it: 'Although there are no letters of friendship in the New Testament, some letters employ commonplaces and language from the friendly letter tradition'. Fitzgerald (1996:143) presents the argument convincingly:

> To refer to it as a *Freundschaftsbrief* or "letter of friendship" is misleading to the extent that such a characterization neglects other features of the letter (such as its rhetorical elements) or suggests that the letter conforms to a particular *Gattung*. Yet this designation is quite useful in calling attention to the presence in the letter of a remarkable number of terms that were associated in antiquity with the topic of friendship[44].

[41] The vision of Paul as an autocratic spiritual despot had been pointed out earlier (cf. Pretorius 1998:550).

[42] Smith (2005:78) believes that Paul could be categorized under the term *psychogogue*, as one who is in the business of 'guiding the souls', a model of spiritual guidance widespread in Graeco-Roman society. Rhetoric was defined by Socrates as an 'entirely psychagogic art' (Plato, *Phaed* 261A-B).

[43] Ramsaran (2005:284) describes Paul as 'eclectic in his employment of persuasive methods'.

[44] Scholarship seems to agree in such a point. It is better to speak of 'letters of friendship' as a series of *topoi* than as of a *Gattung* (Reumann 1996:86).

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We are dealing here with more than a mere literary genre[45]. When studying friendship we come to a powerful social system with ancient roots in classical Greece and in Rome. Once again the aim is to study the letter paying attention both to the rhetorical component and to the social system(s) that provide the letter with the social matrix from which it receives its significance (*Bedeutung*)[46]. Paul's use of this friendship language is the most effective means the apostle has in order to persuade the Philippian community to opt for their common identity as a group rather than give way to a salient personal identity. The language, the examples, the tone, all point to the strengthening of ingroup features and to raise the self-esteem of the group and to stereotyping and lower down the behaviour of outgroups. This is what Johnson (1999:341-344) has called a 'rhetoric of friendship', which Paul uses in order 'to invoke appropriate response in his hearers'. Koperski (1996:79-80) has observed numerous (+25) instances of κοινωνία relationships in the letter (1:5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 19, 21, 23-24, 26, 29; 2.12, 13, 15, 19-20, 25-26, 30; 3:3, 17, 20; 4:1, 2-3, 7, 10, 14, 15-16, 18, 19).

2.3.1 A Friendly Letter

Paul never uses the word 'friendship' or 'friend' in the letter to the Philippians. However, when we dig into the meaning of friendship in the ancient world, we quickly realise that the letter is permeated by such values, and it is for this reason I describe it as a 'friendly letter' (cf. Berger 1984:1329)[47]. Fitzgerald, who acknowledges that Paul does not use φίλος ('friend') even once in his letters[48], alerts us to pay attention to the 'linkage group', a term that derives from genetics and which makes reference to 'a group of hereditary characteristics that remain associated with one another through a number of generations' (Fitzgerald 2007:288). When applied to abstract concepts, this expression reminds us that 'terms and ideas have remained associated with one another' across time, and that elements which may not be connected today were

[45] Reumann (1996:105): 'The chief finding from the history of research and patristic references is that the notion of influence from the vocabulary of φιλία or friendship *topos* on Paul is better supported than a literary category of ἐπιστολὴ φιλική'. Cf. Duling (2003:181).

[46] I believe part of the problem when trying to account for the 'opponents' in the letter comes from not paying enough attention to the social systems in which the letter is embedded. Thus, when it comes to describe them, the letter is used as a sort of mirror into which we can reconstruct their identity. As will be shown later, my contention is that we need to pay attention to both the adversaries and to those who are part of the larger context and who are pointed to (if rather dimly for some) in the letter.

[47] Already in 1974 Judge concluded that Paul did not include friendship language because it was charged with patronal status, something he tried to avoid between him and his communities (cf. Reumann 1996:86).

[48] For possible reasons that tried to avoid anthropocentric connotations or some other element, see Malherbe (1996:138-139).

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nevertheless embedded with one another in antiquity. Friendship was, from the classical Greek period, an ideal of social relationships. Originally it was a relationship between equals, but later on added the level of un-equals (benefaction). During the Roman period the Latin term *amicitia* broadened its range of meaning to include patronage, which could be expressed in the technical language of friendship (White 1991:211). Pretorius (1998:562) observes that a comparison with Seneca's *Epistulae morales* could be especially illuminating to discern the genre of Philippians. Interestingly, he ties the emphasis in this kind of letter to autobiographical material with the element of death and sufferings as moral examples:

> Seneca freely utilises his own person and life as an example for his moral teaching, although he acknowledges his own failure and honours the example that Socrates in turn set for him. [...] As Seneca regarded death forced upon someone as the highest form of setting an example, so Paul saw his possible execution as setting an example of the attitude of Christ to the Philippians—they even both used the same metaphor of a libation in this matter! Direct influence may not be the explanation of these similarities—they nevertheless indicate a common understanding of the form and teaching of the '*friendly*' type of letter.

These elements, which appear throughout the letter (and not just in Phlp 4, as has been commonly regarded) are the following:

> Phlp 1:27 speaks of 'one soul' (μιᾷ ψυχῇ) and in 'one spirit' (ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι). Aristotle, *EthNic* 9.8.2 and Plutarch, *Amic Mult* 96, speak of 'two bodies sharing one soul' (cf. DiogLaert 5.20).
>
> In Phlp 2:20 Paul calls Timothy, whom the Philippian community deeply appreciates, 'of equal soul' (ἰσόψυχον). This is a common theme in Cicero, *Amic* 15; *Planc* 5. This use is close to Phlp 2:2, where Paul exhorts the community to be of 'fellow souls' (σύμψυχοι), which clearly relates with the common *topos* where friends 'think the same thing' (Fitzgerald 2007:293). Dio Chrys, *Or* 34.20 shares the opinion (see Phlp 2:2 and 4:2), which was long based on Plato's idea that 'friends have all things in common' (*Alc Maj* 126-127). This sharing is basic for the maintenance of ὁμόνοια or concord, one of the highest values for life in the city. Aristotle (*EthNic* 8.12.1) speaks in terms of κοινωνία, but it is a harmony and fellowship between socially and morally equal men (Stowers 1989:66).
>
> In Phlp 1:30 Paul exhorts the community to 'share in the same struggle' (τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες), in clear allusion to this sameness not only of opinion, but even to the point of sharing the misfortunes of others as

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one's own[49]. Note also the high concentration of συν-compounds: 1:7; 1:27; 4:3; 2:2; 2:17, 18; 2:25; 3:10; 3:17; 3:21; 4:14; (cf. Smith 2005:56-67).

When we come to Phlp 4, especially vv. 10-20, horticultural and agricultural imagery is used to describe friendship on account of its services (Fitzgerald 2007:294). Thus, expressions as 'bloomed again' (ἀνεθάλετε, referring to their renewed concern and the gift sent to Paul in prison) and 'fruit' (καρπόν, 4:17) are used to describe 'the interest that accrues to their "account"' (Fitzgerald 2007:294; see also Berry 1996:119-120). Here Paul merges horticultural and commercial language to speak of his friendship with the Philippians (Malherbe 1996:129; cf. Cicero, *Amic* 26), something that surely contemporary westerners would try to keep apart. Sampley (1980:51) believes that Paul understands his relationship with the Philippian congregation as one of contractual reciprocity grounded in their common goal of spreading the gospel and in their common experience of salvation in Christ (cf. White 1991:210). Thus, the Philippians needed to reimburse Paul for his expenses in his evangelistic endeavours as if he were acting as their representative (Sampley 1980:51-62). However, Sampley defines the semantic field of friendship too narrowly and relegates it to Latin *societas* within a quasi-legal setting (Berry 1996:118)[50].

Although Sampley's proposal touches on one of the realities of friendship in antiquity, we need to move beyond that[51]. Friendship is not only a social convention but an ideal of virtue (White 1991:212). Aristotle thinks there are three types of friendship. The first one he calls 'character friendship', that which is based on virtue (*EthNic* 8.3.1-9). The second type is friendship based on pleasure, and the third type is based on utility and advantage (Fitzgerald 1996:157)[52]. It is clear that the first is the higher type of friendship, since it looks at the other from an altruistic standpoint and seeks the friend's good. The other two types are inferior, unstable, and egoistic (:157). Fitzgerald concludes that Paul's friendship towards the Philippians mirrors the first type and seeks to

[49] For an understanding of the athletic contests as context for this expression, see Pfitzner (1967) and Sisson (2007).

[50] Despite Sampley's narrow focus, White (1991:210), who works within the broader understanding of φιλία and Roman *amicitia* (which includes hospitality, φιλοξενία, letter-writing, συστατικαὶ ἐπιστολαί, and patronage/benefaction, εὐεργεσία), admits that the legal/contract complex and benefaction have social grounding in φιλικία. Capper (1993:200) believes Sampley provides us with an exegetical key with which to understand the letter.

[51] Sampley's proposal had an earlier version. John Chrysostom, in his *Homilies* on Philippians already observed that the term ἀπέχω (4:18) referred to a debt paid and not to a mere expression of gratitude (Capper 1993:198).

[52] It seems Epicureans taught friendship according to the utilitarian view, for it has its basis in such needs as help, protection, etc. (DiogLaert 10.120); cf. Berry (1996:111-112).

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persuade and correct the Christian community to imitate him. Basing his observations on Phlp 4:8, the list of virtues, Fitzgerald (:157-158) believes that such a list aims at correcting a wrong understanding on the part of the Philippians, that is, elevating it from the third type to the first one[53]. It is through these lenses that the problem between Euodia and Syntyche (4:2) is perceived as a call to remain in harmony and fulfil the highest virtue[54]. It is a passage that plays a strong rhetorical role for several reasons, although I do not think it is the main reason Paul has in mind for writing to the Philippians (*pace* Dahl 1995:14)[55].

Earlier I commented on the hierarchical structure of Graeco-Roman society, focusing on patronage. Roman application of *amicitia* also embraced patronage as a form of friendship, even if of an inferior type. Those on the lower side of the relationship were called 'friends' rather than *clientes*, for the latter had derogatory overtones. It might just be that Paul's appeal to his αὐτάρκεια or 'self-sufficiency' (4:11) is part of his plan not to be viewed by the Philippians as an 'inferior' to those from whom he needs to make a request (Perkins 1987:515; but cf. Malherbe 1996:138). This section, 4:10-20, is what some scholars have termed a '*danklose Dank*' (coined by Holsten; cf. Reumann 1993:441; Berry 1996:107)[56]. Does such observation run counter to what I have noticed about the apostle's voluntary humiliation after the Christ model? Not really. Paul is aware that voluntary abasement places him under risk, but for the right reasons, as imitator of Christ[57]. However, financial dependency could in the end bring him to an involuntary subjugation, which in turn could threaten his mission (cf. Witherington 1994:123-124; 127). The *quid* is never to use privilege as a means to accomplish the goal, which goes against the example in the

[53] Fitzgerald (1996:157): 'Like philosophers who use friendship language to describe utopian communities, Paul uses friendship language to depict the Christian community as it should exist ideally, and he adduces several examples of those who practice the friendship that belongs to this ideal of society'.

[54] However, ἀρετή (4:8) should not be understood in the Greek sense of 'moral achievement' or 'excellence', since that would go against the apostle's ethics based on grace alone. It is better to understand it in its general use (cf. Malherbe 1996:137, n 27).

[55] Agosto (2004:118-119) highlights the fact that Paul addresses women in a male-dominated world: 'In the extensive collection of Roman commendation letters by Cicero and Fronto, *none* commends women' (original emphasis). They, as Paul's co-workers, have also taken risks on behalf of the spread of the gospel. However, they may also function in a less positive light, that of being in danger of becoming self-absorbed and lose sight of the community's highest benefit, which Agosto seems to elude (cf. Luter 1996:414).

[56] Others (Sampley 1980:52; Hawthorne 1983:194) understand 4:10-20 as the thank-you note or receipt for the gift.

[57] Peterman's 1992 King's College dissertation defends the argument that Paul's mode of expression in 4:10-20 actually aims at changing traditional perceptions about 'gift-exchange' or 'social-reciprocity' by bringing Christian attitudes to the system (cf. Peterman 1997).

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Christ-hymn[58]. Both the goal and the means are loving sacrifice (self-giving) in imitation and identification with Christ's way, never utilitarian. Berry (1996:120) notices it well: 'Paul makes clear that he does not seek his own personal gain, but what will profit them'. It is as the Philippians give themselves (even through the gift sent to Paul) that they have received the message of grace (χάρις).

The weight of friendship-like language and tone cannot be denied; it permeates the letter. However, I believe that this is only one element in a wider social matrix. It is interesting to observe that Paul uses (fictive) kinship language to refer to the members of the ingroup (ἀδελφοί, Phlp 3:11) and not as φίλοι. Reumann (1996:93), commenting on the work of Klauck (1991), perceives an ecclesiological emphasis in Paul, who prefers familial language, where 'these Christian ἀδελφοί are not friends in the Greek sense but *Geschwister* [siblings] by baptism into Christ's body, transcending Jew and Greek, slave and free, male or female'. Although baptism is not mentioned here as in Gl or Rm, the truth of the matter is that this 'unbalanced' terminology (friends-siblings) points to the deeper identification of the ingroup[59]. Paul is not just worried about their harmony being at stake. He is aiming at constructing in the Philippians a deeper sense of who they are not just internally, but against a hostile environment which does not reflect the ideal of virtue that is displayed in the Christ-hymn and in the lives of Paul, Epaphroditus and Timothy. The Christ-like life needs to reflect these values that are worthy for the ingroup. The outgroup(s), on the other hand, can only reflect enmity against such a virtue, no matter how they might want to disguise it.

The elements which describe the outgroups are built in 'antithetical models' of friends and enemies (Reumann 1996:89). Thus one group acts because of 'rivalry' and 'envy' (1:15-17); others act as adversaries (1:28) and as enemies (ἐχθροί, 3:18). While friends seek the best for the other, these antithetical characters have their 'belly' as their god (3:19), the lower passions. Their egoistic outlook in life contrasts with that of Paul and, of course, Christ's example (2:6-11). This example, it is suggested, 'would have recalled to its ancient readers stories about those who gave up their lives for their friends' (:90), as it appears in Lucian's *Toxaris*, although 'it would be a "novel" or "un-

[58] I believe this theology of 'voluntary abasement' is radical in Paul and drives him to boast even in his financial freedom from the churches. This boasting (καύχημα) is his trade-mark, and appears in two occasions in Philippians (1:26 and 2:16).

[59] Reumann (1996:95): 'It is worth considering that the *philia topos* was therefore one Paul encountered at several times and places. He at times employed some of its language. But he did not create a special ecclesiology out of it with the Philippians as he struggled to maintain apostolic independence amid the social pressures of the implied patron-client relationship in contemporary friendship networks'.

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Greek" twist to suffer on behalf of unequals' (:90)[60]. However, this thought is paralleled with that in Rm 5:6-11.

But this is not all. The outgroup is not just composed of those referred to as 'enemies of the cross'. I have already pointed out that the letter addresses diverse adversaries and one of these is the honour-seeking system amid which the Philippian congregation dwells (cf. Witherington 1994:100-102)[61]. Throughout his self-presentation the apostle wants to correct a perverse view of relating among people (even friendship understood this way) which operated with a *do-ut-des* principle of reciprocity ('I give you and you are expected to give back more in return) under a patron-client scheme (Reumann 1996:98). The Philippians seem to expect this reciprocity, but Paul radically challenges the view. Paul does not desire a relationship of patronage (even a father-son relationship or a partnership, *pace* Sampley) with the Philippians, but a brotherhood (Bormann 1995:104). Paul's way of presenting himself abased, in a weak situation, may also just be aimed at challenging the Philippians' expectations that Paul will repay them later[62]. For this reason some scholars (cf. Berry 1996:108) observe that 'as much if not more space is devoted to explaining that he [Paul] could have gotten along well enough without the gift (vv. 11-13) and that he does not seek their gift (vv. 17-18), as well as to recounting their relations in the past (vv. 15-16)'. Holmberg (1978:92-94) comments on this 'power play' and notes that the apostle is willing to receive the aid only after he has left the church, and the relationship has turned into a full-fledge κοινωνία (cf. Reumann 1993:441). What is important, though, is that the apostle reacts in a way that does not give way to a too dependant relationship that could be erroneously understood.

2.3.2 A Unified Letter

[60] *Toxaris* functions as a paradigm of friendship, but it is just one among many Hellenistic treatises on the topic (White 1991:213). It is a literary work where two men compete in telling the best narratives about the ideal of friendship. In one of them one of the main characters, Demetrius, abases himself for the sake of another (cf. Stowers 1991:119-120).

[61] Holloway (2001:41) considers that the adversaries in view here (1:27-28) are political. I cannot but agree with his assessment. Tellbe (1994:105) calls them an '*external* threat from the surrounding society' (original emphasis).

[62] Bormann (1995:206-207; 212-213) presents "retarding factors" in Paul (cf. 4:11, 17, 'not that I…', etc.) to undercut any possibility of being perceived as a client to their patronage. Paul tries to create an "emancipated clientele" in the Philippian community. Paul is at odds with the social system of the Empire based on the merits of some over the others. As Reumann (1996:98) points out, the Julio-Claudian house was patron over Philippi: 'Here Paul's εὐαγγέλιον stands in ultimate opposition to the εὐαγγέλια or "good tidings" about the emperor and a religio-political ideology (Dionysius of Halicarnassus)'.

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White (1991:206) indicates that the use of the semantic complex of friendship (and its related fields) is not one of the chief arguments in favour of Philippians' integrity. Surely it is not, but it tilts the scale in that direction. Some scholars hold to a composite view of the letter (two, three or four different letters arranged by a later editor; cf. Murphy-O'Connor 1996:215), in view of its sudden changes in theme and its abrupt transitions[63]. The element that sparked the search for several letters was the reading of Polycarp's *Ep* 3.2, where he refers that Paul wrote "letters" (ἐπιστολάς) to the Philippians (Silva 2005:12), as well as the double listing of Philippians in the *Catalogus Sinaiticus* and the mention of "the first epistle to the Philippians" in the *Chronographia* of the ninth-century Byzantine historian Georgius Syncellus (Holmstrand 1997:90-91; Holloway 2001:8)[64]. Only the first point seems to have any historical value, reason for which some scholars (cf. Lightfoot 1868:138-142) tried to explain its plural form as really referring to one single letter, although without much success[65].

Recently the trend is shifting toward a position that defends the unity of the letter[66]. Murphy-O'Connor (1996:216) boldly writes that methodologically 'literary unity is a presumption. It cannot be proved without the direct witness of the author'. Such an assertion, no doubt, is a bold presumption[67]. As Reed (1997:412) points out, the arguments in favour of the multiple-letter theory 'almost always become circular (Paul would not have done this but a redactor would have)', which make its defence an all-or-nothing case. With all, Reed observes that of the multiple-letter hypotheses, only the two-letter partition

[63] Fee (1995:21-23) summarises this theory well. Although with some differences in emphasis, those who defend the composite theory divide the letter thus: Letter A (4:10-20), which was written to thank the Philippians for their gift. Letter B (3:1b-4: some point up to v. 9) is called the "interpolated fragment". Letter C (1:1-3:1a and possibly parts of 4:1-9 and 4:21-23), which refers to the letter Paul sends together with Epaphroditus. To appreciate how the different letters fit into a hypothetical reconstruction of events, see Murphy-O'Connor (1996:216-230). Becker (1996) proposes two: A) 1:1-3:1, 4:1-7, 10-23; and B) 3:2-21, 4:8-9. Cf. Koperski (1996:69-72).

[64] Others trace its beginning to Stephanus Le Moyne in 1685, although Koperski (1993:599) debunks this erroneous perception. On this, see Jewett (1970:40-53), who supports the letter's integrity.

[65] Polycarp's unique witness can be explained in a number of ways. It can refer to a memory lapse, to a reference to the other Macedonian letters (1 Th and 2 Th) or something he inferred from the reading of 3:1 or 4:16. 'Even if we accept that Paul did actually send several letters to the Philippians and that Polycarp knew of this, that fact alone does not directly support a compilation theory' (Holmstrand 1997:92; also Smith 2005:39).

[66] Mostly in English-language, though hardly so for German scholars (Engberg-Pedersen 2000:82); but see Wick (1994:11-12).

[67] Holmstrand (1997:94) comments that 'a weakness inherent to compilation theories in general is that they necessitate a number of supporting hypothesis about a compiler and his intentions and methods'.

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seems to be the more "plausible" one in light of comparative evidence of genre and linguistic texture (:412).

Rather than presenting a thorough discussion on the reasons in favour of and against the theory of the one single letter or the multiple-letter, I assume its present canonical form (external witness), since there is no external evidence that shows that sections of the letter have appeared separately, and there is no proof that such cut-and-paste practice was carried out somewhere else (Fee 1995:22)[68]. Watson (1988:58), based on literary/rhetorical information (internal evidence), concludes that 'for the purposes of rhetorical analysis it can be affirmed that as it now stands Philippians is a single rhetorical unit which can be analyzed as an integrated whole'[69]. This does not mean that the abruptness of some seemingly concluding sections (3:1; 4:8) as well as the "late" thank-you (4:10-20) are dismissed, but that on the whole the scale tilts the side of its integrity[70]. Furthermore, the thematic unity and parallels (e.g. 2:6-11 and 3:20-21; 1:3-11 and 4:10-20; cf. Pollard 1967:58, 66; Dalton 1979:99-100; Engberg-Pedersen 2000:129) lead me to perceive a broader unity than is usually assumed (Flanagan 1956:8-9; Pretorius 1998:559). For all these reasons, then, Philippians is studied as a single letter[71].

2.4 Structure of the Letter to the Philippians

> Let no one however demand of me a rigid code of rules such as most authors of textbooks have laid down, or ask me to impose on students of rhetoric a system of laws as immutable as fate [...] The rules of rhetoric have not the formal authority of laws and decrees of the plebs, but are, with all they contain, the children of expediency. I will not deny that it is generally expedient to conform

[68] Sellew (1994:17-28) opines that the author of the letter to the *Laodiceans* based his work on a *Vorlage* of Philippians that lacked some sections of the canonical letter. For him such evidence points to the composite nature of our canonical Philippians. Smith's (2005:39) discussion on its integrity (based on Aland's study) is rotund: 'The manuscript tradition has no argument against the epistle's integrity'.

[69] (Garland 1985:162) argues also for a deep thematic unity; also Holmstrand (1997:94-96).

[70] Schenk (1984:328-335) believes the shift is so marked that it can be signaled using rhetorical categories: Letter A is a *genus deliberativum* and Letter C is *genus iudiciale*. Reed (1997:124-152) carries out a comparison scheme on the different treatments of the unity issue that he assesses through the use of discourse analysis. He concludes in favour of the integrity of the letter. Recently Holloway (2001:7-33) has presented an in-depth discussion on the issues for and against the integrity of the letter and equally defends its integrity. Holmstrand (1997:92) points out that the traditional view that τὸ λοιπόν (3:1) necessarily introduced a closing exhortation is now sufficiently proven to be erroneous.

[71] I fully concord with Dibelius' maxim: 'All the peculiarities of the sequence of thought are comprehensible without assuming editorial work or interpolations' (quoted in Luter and Lee 1995:101).

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> to such rules, otherwise I would not be writing now. But if our friend expediency suggests some other course to us, why, we shall disregard the authority of the professors and follow her.
>
> (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 2:13.1-7)

With this in mind, Murphy-O'Connor (1995:79) comments: 'Refusal to acknowledge the truth of what Quintilian said [...] has led to the use of the rhetorical schema for an end for which it was never intended, namely, to demonstrate the limits of a literary unity with a view to establishing its original independence'. Tolmie's (2005) recent effort at studying Galatians through rhetorical analysis is in accord with such a warning. Rather than imposing an outside rhetorical template, the idea is to draw the rhetorical structure from the text itself (see Snyman 1993:335; 2006:259), and I can only agree[72]. However, it is also important that we approach the text with the proviso I have mentioned earlier: texts are embedded in social systems (*social scripts*) that need to be made explicit in order to appreciate the edge of their influence.

Murphy-O'Connor draws from his wealth of knowledge to show what a common letter structure would have looked like. With this information in mind it is easier to compare ancient letters with Philippians in order to assess both similarities and differences, and thus discern its originality. Philippians is a letter largely fashioned after deliberative rhetoric, that is, the style which 'objective is to secure the adoption or repudiation of a course of action' (Murphy-O'Connor 1995:68). This type of oratory is essentially comparative and aims to persuade or dissuade the audience[73]. It implies that the audience needs to make a choice, an informed one, and for this reason the time reference is the future[74]. Philippians is a mixture of styles, although the overall structure seems to be that of deliberative rhetoric[75]. Paul's argumentation is not reserved for a special section of the letter but is an integral part of it (cf. Snyman 2006:263).

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[72] Reed (1997:47-48) calls this the 'top-down' analysis, which is to start from larger sections of discourse and go on analysing then the smaller units. The bottom-up analysis is the search for the 'texture' (:296-400).

[73] Kennedy (1984:77) thinks Philippians is largely demonstrative, but his assessment cannot be applied to the entire letter with equal force. There are parts (i.e., 3:2-4:1) that are clearly deliberative (cf. Murphy-O'Connor 1995:71).

[74] The other two types of oratory, forensic and epideictic, have other aims in mind. Forensic rhetoric wants to ensure that justice is done and uses the device of attack or defense over issues in the past. Epideictic rhetoric (also called 'display rhetoric') is essentially demonstrative and uses praise and blame devices in order to present someone worthy of honour or the reverse. The time used is present tense.

[75] Pretorius (1998:566), following Wick (1994), believes the letter should be better understood as epideictic, although there are sections with a clear deliberative structure, like those which deal with Euodia and Syntyche. I observe a mixture of both elements in the letter, although opt for a general deliberative outlook.

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Deliberative speech may contain the following elements. 1) The *exordium* (the introduction of the speech), which aims at obtaining the goodwill of the audience and thus focus its attention. 2) The *narratio*, which aims at displaying the facts that constitute the background of the issue. 3) The *disgressio*, not an integral part, but designed to win the favour and give the audience a break from the main theme. 4) The *propositio* aims to define the thesis precisely what the author is going to argue for (if too complex it can then be divided into *partitio*). 5) The *confirmatio*, the main body of the discourse (either by *probatio* or *argumentatio*). The form of the speech which touches on emotions is the *exhortatio*; and it can be accompanied by the *refutatio*. 6) The *peroratio*, which is the conclusion (Gk *epilogos*). Here the speaker recapitulates his arguments (*enumeratio*); refuses the alternative (*indignatio*) and may win sympathy from the hearers (*conquestio*). As oral communication, the rhetorical tradition of the 'letters of friendship' followed a movement-pattern which is clear in Philippians (Thompson 2007:302)[76]:

Ethos →	***Pathos*** →	***Logos***
Argument from the speaker's character. It includes the auto-biographical sections (1:12-26; 3:1-4:1)	Argument from emotion, which is legitimate in the art of persuasion (Aristotle, *Rhet* 1.2.5 [1356a]). It creates a personal bond with the community (1:7-8; 1:24-25; 2:16-18; 4:1)	Appeal to cognition. It shows example of appropriate behaviour (2:6-11, 19-30, 3:1-4:1)

The identification between the rhetor and the audience that calls the audience to trust the rhetor (ἦθος) is crucial in Philippians. Paul places himself as a model to be followed (3:17) and in order to do this he draws from the common experience which binds the Philippians and himself together (cf. Marshall 1993:360).

Epistolary theory basically agrees with this rhetorical structure, which in Paul is usually tripartite: the address, the body, and the farewell (Murphy-O'Connor 1995:45). With some degree of variation, Holmstrand (1997:218) concludes his comparison of some major proposals on Philippians with a tripartite division: 1:3-2:30; 3:1-4:9; 4:10-18, leaving aside both the initial salutation and the final farewell (cf. Watson 2003.176-177). Wick (1994:41-57) proposes a thematic structure of the letter in which joy, opponents, personal news, etc., for a ten-part structure that seeks coherence from the inside of the text rather than at applying a fixed rhetorical form. His analysis is helpful, and we coincide in the importance Paul places on several themes as part of his rhetorical strategy (cf.

[76] This pattern is in alignment with Witherington's (1994:12-13), who emphasises these elements as the basic pattern Paul followed in his letters. See also Snyman (1993:326).

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Pretorius 1998:555-556), although my study gives more credit to the role of suffering as part of the *imitatio*.

2.4.1 Major Divisions

Scholars who apply rhetorical analysis generally agree on the basic divisions, but not all place the emphasis identically. Such a disagreement has led some scholars to despair in the application of rhetorical analysis to the New Testament. However, disparity of results should not be a deterrent in the search to understand the letter from as many angles as possible. Witherington (1994) has structured the letter succinctly according to its rhetorical function in an appealing manner: 1) Epistolary prescript (1:1-2); 2) *Exordium* and thanksgiving prayer (1:3-11); 3) The *narratio* (1:12-26); 4) The *propositio* (1:27-30); 5) The *probatio* (2:1-4:3), which includes four appeals: 5a) The first appeal: The example of Christ (2:1-18); 5b) The second appeal: The paradigmatic partners (2:19-30); 5c) The third appeal: Paul vs. appalling dogs (3:1-4:1); 5d) The fourth appeal: Women at odds (4:2-3); and finally, 6) The *peroratio* (4:4-20), which contains two sections (4:4-9 and 4:10-20)[77].

I have divided Phlp as follows, although I am aware that others have opted for a more detailed division in smaller units, witness perhaps to the difficulty in finding a semantic coherence for the letter (Holmstrand 1997:89).

1:1-2	Recipients and salutation (*epistolary prescript*)[78]. This is the only occasion in which the apostle addresses the church's leadership apart from the rest of the community. However, the use of πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν language implies that the entire community is ultimately in view.
1:3-11[79]	Thanksgiving and prayer on behalf of the addressees (thanksgiving and *exordium*)[80]. Many of the themes mentioned in this first section play key roles in the rest of the letter: partnership, imprisonment, grace, joy,

[77] Garland (1985:160-161) proposes the body of the letter (1:27-4:3) in the form of an *inclusio*. The words πολιτεύεσθε, στήκετε and συναθλοῦντες from 1:27 appear in the same order near the end of the section: πολίτευμα (3:20), στήκετε (4:1), and συνήθλησάν (4:3), which give a clear coherence to the letter. This structure goes against the idea of the composite nature of Philippians that "discerned" major thematic and terminological coherence after the Christ-hymn (cf. Koperski 1996:104). See Sandnes (2002:151) in order to observe the relationship between faithful living in the πόλις (1:27-28) with the heavenly πολίτευμα (3:20-21).

[78] Witherington (1994:18).

[79] I believe 1:1-2 is the salutation, but others defend that 1:1-11 serves this same purpose (cf. Holmstrand 1997:88).

[80] Garavelli (1988:70) comments that Quintilian preferred to call it using the Greek term *proóimion* (*proemium*), since it signals a section which comes before the real argument.

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blamelessness, the glory of God, etc[81].

1:12-30 Paul's imprisonment and its effects.

1:12-26 Epistolary body (*narratio*). Paul's missionary report[82].

1:27-30 Central exhortation (*propositio*). Christian citizenship[83].

2:1-11 A praxis based on Christ's example (introduced by οὖν).

2:1-4 *Probatio* (presentation of arguments to support Paul's case)[84].

2:5-11 The Christ-Hymn: source of identity[85].

2:12-18 Exhortation to obedience and joy.

2:12-16 Obedience as blameless children.

2:17-18 A personal appeal.

2:19-30 Two model lives: Timothy and Epaphroditus.

2:19-24 Timothy.

2:25-30 Epaphroditus.

3:1-21 Imperatives towards the community as warnings. Paul's personal commitment.

(3:1a) (τὸ λοιπόν, transition to a new element)[86].

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[81] Cf. Jewett (1970:53); Sandnes (2002:138).

[82] Silva (2005:59).

[83] Silva (2005:80) places 1:27-2:4 under this heading, and it may be so, since 2:1 joins what follows with the preceding through ἔι τις οὖν. In the next chapter, as I look at the Christ-hymn, we will have opportunity to see how these verses relate to the general admonition to imitate Christ.

[84] Witherington (1994:55-56) believes that Paul's case is supported by four different arguments. 1) Christ's example (2:1-18); 2) Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-3:1a); 3) Paul in contrast with the 'dogs' (3:1b-4:1); and 4) Euodia and Syntyche and the problem of disunity (4:2-3). Watson (1988:76-77) proposes to include the fourth argument in the *peroratio*, as recapitulation of the principal arguments exposed in the *probatio*.

[85] The reasons why I include v. 5 within the context of the Christ-hymn (although with all rigor should not be included here) will be explained in chapter 7.

[86] Holmstrand (1997:115). Holloway's (2001:19) periphrastic translation of Phlp 3:1-2 avoids the seeming abruptness of the alleged shift of tone: 'Finally, my brothers, set your desires on the Lord. You have heard me say this before, but I don't mind repeating myself on such important matter, and for you it is a wise precaution. Watch our for the dogs…'. But it is better to translate τὸ λοιπόν as 'therefore', 'furthermore', as it is attested in some papyri and it should not be viewed as concluding the letter (Alexander 2004:242, Smith 2005:39). Paul's admonition begins thus with 3:1b (Snyman 2006:266). Also Reed (1996:63-90; 1997:239-241).

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3:1b-16	Paul *vs* the outgroup[87].
3:17-21	Christian brethren and enemies of the cross. Two ends.
(4:1)	(Exhortation to remain firm, transitional verse).
4:2-20	Exhortation and thanksgiving.
4:2-9	Further exhortations to unity. Personal appeal to two members[88].
4:10-20	A word of thanks.
4:21-23	Final greetings and farewell[89].

2.4.2 Function

Engberg-Pedersen (2000:98-99) observes that Paul acts very much like the Stoic sage when it comes to his personal experience of suffering (since it has to do with his relationship with his *socii*, the Philippians; cf. 1:7, 12, 17, 19, 20-21, 29-30; 2:17, 28). He believes Paul overstates his suffering in order to make clear that deep identification with Christ is an assurance of joy. It is clear that by the middle of the letter (after the hinge-passage in 3:1) the theme of suffering does

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[87] Silva (2005:148f) divides this section into smaller ones in order to capture the essence of the argument: 1) 3:1-3; 2) 3:4-6; 3) 3:7-8; 4) 3:9-11 under headings of theological nature. For me it is clear that more than theology is presented here. Paul is describing the demarcation between the behaviour of the ingroup and that of the outgroup. The outgroup is stereotyped. There is no room for nuances: they act contrary to proper Christ-like living regardless of their doctrine.

[88] It is remarkable that Paul sets apart these two women by name when in the latter section (the farewell) he does not greet anybody directly, as he does in other letters. Fee (1995:457) regards this laconic closing to the typical style of friendship letters. Watson (1988:76-77) places this section as part of the *peroratio*, but it does not seem correct, since Paul deals with a grave concern here when setting apart these two names (Witherington 1994:104). However, Snyman (1993:328-329) fully concords with Watson's analysis, since the *peroratio* has two functions: to refresh the memory (*recapitulatio*) and to elicit pathos in order to move them to affective response (*indignatio/conquestio*). I really can't think of any other special reason why the two women should be signaled in the public reading of the letter lest the news brought in by Epaphroditus meant that they had enough influence on the community as to put it at risk (cf. O'Brien 1991:478). Garland (1985:173) believes that until now Paul had dealt with the disunity issue covertly, but now he brings it to the open. In first-century Mediterranean society, such public admonition would have carried, no doubt, loss of face. It is impossible to assess with accuracy Paul's reasons for this strong appeal. Maybe the apostle decided that selfish ambition could not be tolerated, since it threatened the core of the message. His exhortation is even graver when we consider that he could possibly do it via one of his emissaries instead of by a public letter. For the importance of women in the Philippian community, cf. Portefaix (1988:135-154) and Luter (1996:411-420).

[89] Paul, interestingly, exhorts the community to greet every saint (4:21). It is not clear who needs to carry the imperative, if the church leadership or all the saints (see Fee 1995:457).

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not disappear altogether (cf. 3:10), but that joy (and related semantic field) takes a greater role in the letter. Bloomquist (1993), who studies the suffering-*topos* as a theme which runs across the letter, perceives joy (χαρά) as one of the important elements that provide the rich tapestry of the text (Bloomquist 2007:270)[90]. There is no doubt that the letter displays a progression that moves from the tribulation which both Paul and the Philippians share to a higher note of praise and rejoicing in the renewed contact (whether financial or personal). The progress of the mission is assured (4:17-19), and Paul hopes this partnership, that started earlier on (1:5; cf. 4:15), will yield much fruit.

Now, however, I need to turn to the description of those with whom Paul is corresponding.

3. Recipients: the Crux of Generalisation in the *Umwelt* of the Roman Empire

My historical and social (re)construction of the colony (chapter 4) was aimed at a clearer understanding of social currents that shaped the inhabitants of Philippi at the time of Paul's mission. However detailed I want to be, it is certainly impossible to know the members of the community first-hand. My goal is to approach them through an informed study that can reveal aspects which otherwise could be hidden. The crux is that the letter reveals little about the identity of the recipients. Whoever they may be, it certainly affects the interpretation of the text. Jewett (1970:372) blames the lack of interest in their identification to the fact that the letter was deemed 'almost wholly commendatory', which implied there were not serious problems in Philippi.

Unfortunately some scholars have depended on a too general a description of the community. Friedrich (1962:92) commented that Philippians was a well-off community fully involved in supporting the apostle[91], in line with what Sampley (1980) would recapture years later. However, such a view seems distorted, according to Oakes (2001:68-69). Bornhäuser (1938:17), on his part, referred to the great number of veterans in the colony to whom the letter

[90] Engberg-Pedersen (2000:100) perceives a shift from present emphasis to future in the two halves of the letter, but his appreciation (although noticeable to certain extent) looks to fit a dynamic letter into a well-defined mould that he has earlier rejected.

[91] Friedrich (1962:92-93): ‚Im Gegensatz zu andern Orten setzt sich diese Gemeinde warscheinlich nicht aus Proletariat, sondern größtenteils aus Angehörigen des Mittelstandes zusammen, so daß es keine krassen sozialen Unterschiede gibt und der Verdacht auf Bevorzugung und Benachteiligung von Besitzenden und Besitzlosen nicht entsehen kann, wenn Paulus irgendwelche Gaben annimt. Die in Philippi angesiedelten Veteranen sind keine Sklaven, sondern freie Menschen, die meinstenteils Grundbesitz als Eigentum haben [...] Eine Gemeinde, die finaziell so gut gestellt ist, kann Paulus materiell unterstützen'.

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addressed[92]. That the colony had a sufficient number of veterans does not imply that the Christ-following community was mainly composed of them (cf. Oakes 2001:131). It is best to start from a higher level of abstraction and then move towards a more accurate, data-specific model of the community.

As Pretorius (1998:563-564) observes, Paul's use of terminology related to life in the city points out, once more, to the apostle's concern to communicate in context (cf. Agosto 2004:109). The Graeco-Roman *Umwelt*, as it should be obvious, permeates the letter through and through (cf. Sisson 2003:257-259; 2007:1-18, Reumann 1993:439), but it is only as we dig deeper in the social script that we discover these connections. Meeks' earlier general model needs to be adjusted according to the (re)construction of the Philippian setting.

3.1 The Christian Community at Philippi (the Ingroup)

There are indeed very few literary sources besides *Philippians* from where we can draw direct information on the Christ-following community at Philippi. We have sparse mention in some of Paul's letters, and the picturesque narrative of the book of Acts 16. From there we move onto shakier ground, for as I have observed, the archaeological data does not yield precise and accurate information on the decade(s) when the apostle ministered there. For this reason my description is not extended and tries to answer for what we can gather from the text and the make-up of the colony. The many theories proposed about where the Philippian members came from are highly subjective and do not necessarily add new insights to the comprehension of the letter[93].

3.1.1 Demographic Figures

Oakes (2001:63) places the size of Philippi *grosso modo* at around 10 000 inhabitants in the town and other 5 000 for those living in the suburbs[94].

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[92] Thus, Bornhäuser believed that the phrase μορφῇ θεοῦ (2:6) had to be understood in reference to Caius Caligula—since it fitted better with the soldiers' experience—and not in Aristotelian fashion (which would be *Intelligibles Verhältnis!* for the community as such). What drives the interpretation is the social make-up of the Christ-following community. Therefore it is important to arrive at plausible conclusions in this regard.

[93] Peterlin (1995:168): 'It is generally dangerous to extract too much about a person's nationality only from his or her name without further information, just as it is so about his or her social standing'. For this reason I do not discuss the identity of σύζυγε (4:3).

[94] Oakes (2001:46) takes into account the extension of the colony and adjacent areas (1 900 sq. km). Taking the population density of Pompeii as reference (24 inhabitants per sq. km), he comes out with a total number of 46 000, one third of which resides in the town. Malina's (1981:72-73) model for pre-industrial societies, where 10 per cent dwelled in the city, would

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Pilhofer (1995:74) draws his figure from the size of the theatre, with a capacity for 8 000 spectators after its restoration in the second century, and lowers the count to approximately 5 000-10 000. Pilhofer's and Oakes' figures are relatively close to each other and are thus useful to guide our discussion. Malina's (1981:72-73) general model for the pre-industrial city works on a 20 per cent elite and 80 per cent craftspeople, which appears too general, especially for a case like Philippi where we have a good number of peasants and commuting farmers (Peterlin 1995:136-138; Oakes 2001:42)[95]. When we come to the size and make up of the Christ-following community, Oakes (2001:61-64) concludes that the majority would have been farmers who lost their land, and a 'negligible proportion of veterans among the hearers of the letter' (:53; cf. Peterlin 1995:161). In his model of the community, Oakes (2001:17) displays a membership belonging to elite classes of ½ to 1½ per cent. In the case of a community of *ca*. 100 members perhaps one or no-one belonged to such elite, which roughly corresponds with Meeks' assessment above[96]. For Oakes (2001:18), around 15-20 per cent were slaves, few Roman citizens[97] and mostly 'Greeks' (although he includes here Thracian, Macedonian, and even Asian). Kyrtatas (1987:45) believes the number of slaves was not large, since not all slaves followed their masters' religious affiliation and, in the case of Philippians, 'did not make their presence felt'.

3.1.2 Prosopographic Description

Marchal (2004:11), who agrees with Oakes' overall picture, thinks it unlikely that veterans (or their descendants) would have joined the audience Paul addresses, since the movement did not particularly appeal to elite members of society. Whatever the composition of the community, de Vos (1999a:25), who argues for a *Gemeinschaft* socialisation type, proposes that the social medium was potentially charged with tension, since city life was experienced under

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push figures to an unlikely 90 000 in the region around the town, which requires to double the population density of Italy for the same period.

[95] For Peterlin (1995:152) Paul's horticultural and financial language could be an illustration of this rather than as sure evidence.

[96] Peterlin (1995:165) concludes: 'Nothing in the sources and our study points to their presence in the Christian church. In the approximately 12-year period with which we are dealing these social strata [bankers, shippers, ship-builders, rich merchants, and landed aristocracy] remained outside the reach of the Christians'.

[97] Romans permeated all segments but the lowest, according to Peterlin (1995:166), but most Romans surely enjoyed a privileged social status that must have been reflected in the Christ-following community. That their presence is felt can be drawn from the fact that Paul mentions 'Caesar's household' (4:22) as an important element in the greeting. Unless the Philippian knew some of them personally, it makes little sense to mention them solely as a rhetorical device (to reinforce the theme of 1:13).

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strong pressures to conform to traditional norms. Added to the small size of the city and the crowded nature of human relations, it seems logical that Paul's exhortations (1:27-28; 3:20-21) had these potential struggles in mind[98].

De Vos (1999a:243) concedes a 'considerable degree of ethnic integration', but for what we know, the Jewish presence was missing (Peterlin 1995:165-166)[99]. Pilhofer (1995:240-243) demonstrates that there were no Thracian names amongst the sixty-four members of the Philippian community known to us by literary evidence in the first six centuries. We could suppose this integration to be partially represented in the Christ-following community, although the names of those addressed reveal little more than possible *liberti* and slave-like names. Only Clement (4:3) has a Roman name that was also used by freeborn plebeians (de Vos 1999a:255), but there is no way to know for sure (Peterlin 1995:167). However, that he is addressed separately offers good indication that he could have been either a host for the church or one of Paul's appointed leaders (συνεργῶν μου). For de Vos (1999a:254) the bulk of the Christ-following community was non-Jewish, mostly *liberti* and highly Romanised. Euodia and Syntyche (4:2), the two notorious women addressed by Paul, carry Greek names and could be *libertae* (Witherington 1994:107-108). Epaphroditus is consistent with a *libertus'* name.

If we move to the text of Ac 16 the gaoler would refer most surely to a public slave and not to a *libertus*, although Oakes disagrees on grounds that he 'owned' his house (Ac 16:32)[100]. Lydia, the purple merchant from Thyatira, was not necessarily wealthy, according to what de Vos distils about her trade. He thinks she could be a *liberta* (1999a:257). Peterlin (1995:158), on the other hand, thinks she could enjoy a favourable economic condition, and that she had enough confidence to 'prevail' over them in her hospitable offer. The slave girl's conversion is not attested, and therefore she is not included. The three women mentioned bear Greek names, but that tells us little about a possible high status (*pace* Meeks, cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:18).

3.1.3 Conclusions Concerning the Recipients

[98] Repeated exhortations to ὁμόνοια were common in ancient society. 'It was regarded as the avoidance of the evil of city strife (stasis) and the preservation of national solidarity in the face of any external threat' (de Vos 1999a:32). Oakes (2001:89f.) exposes several reasons why Christ-following families could suffer persecution based on Phlp 1:28, which share some common elements with de Vos, although he relates it more with local *collegia*.

[99] Portefaix (1988:65), though, divides religious cults geographically: South of the *Via Egnatia* the Roman cults; in the North were the Thracian and Greek cults; but she ignores the sanctuary of Silvanus to the north of the road (cf. de Vos 1999a:247). For a more detailed discussion on these and other cults, see de Vos (1999a:248-249), Oakes (2001:235-237) and Bormann (1995:64-65).

[100] For other possibilities, see Peterlin (1995:144-150).

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However we represent the Christ-following community, there is an element which is certain: the close relationship amongst colony dwellers due to the make-up of the city. Perhaps with this caveat in mind we can better picture how personal and working relationships played an important role at different levels, regardless of the social composition of the 'church'.

The picture I draw highlights that few people belonged to the elite classes, which was underrepresented. Those of Roman origin could not escape a higher degree of social recognition, although Paul chose a local (Epaphroditus) to function as his personal emissary. The few people who are named possibly reflect the strong influence women had in the Macedonian communities (Hawthorne 1983:178; O'Brien 1991:8). Lastly, the mention of Clement and the *familia Caesaris*, together with Paul's vocative in 4:15 only strengthens the idea that the Roman element was valued and as such the community felt the weight and influence to pattern itself after traditional ways. The mention of (unnamed) local leaders (1:1) after the apostle addresses 'all the saints', may point to a tendency in leveling social structures under his more general tone of status-as-service I have touched on in chapter 5.

It is clear the apostle had a special relationship with this community. This aspect is revealed not only in what we have already observed, but in the text of 2 Cor 8:1-5 (RSV), which contains an 'extravagant' testimony (Fee 1995:28):

> We want you to know, brethren, about the grace of God which has been shown in the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints — and this, not as we expected, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

This implies that Philippi was not the only church that had helped the apostle, but it was the first to have done so (Phlp 1:5; 4:15), despite their dire situation (cf. Peterman 1997:183-184)[101]. The Philippians are for Paul the ingroup, those whom God has set apart (1:1). He addresses 'all' of them, although he at times may focus on certain individuals. This point is important, for it signals Paul's effort at including all the members in spite of tensions and differences that threaten the unity of the community. They are a heavenly commonwealth from which their ethic is determined. Lest they think this may refer to some

[101] Holloway (2001:44) believes that the community's role in supporting Paul had become a strong identity-marker that caused the sudden discouragement when they learnt that the apostle was undergoing affliction.

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'elevated', 'other-worldly' ethic, the apostle reminds them that it is to be lived here and now (1:27), following the example of Jesus Christ (2:6-11), who both saves and sets the right pattern before them.

How the Philippian community was structured is something we do not really know beyond a few general statements. Trying to trace a concrete link between their social identity and the structure of the Christ-following community would be highly speculative at this point and does not really respond to my concerns here. Ascough (2003a:110-161) studies the colony with great detail and concludes that the Philippian community was gender-inclusive, since women exerted some measure of authority (Phlp 4:2), and that it was similar to a religious *voluntary association*. Philippi had many *collegia funeriticia* (:160) and Ascough finds some superficial similarities between these and the Christ-following community, although he states: 'Overall, if the Philippian community is to be classified as analogous to a voluntary association, it is the religious associations rather than the professional associations that make the best analogy' (:161).

It is also as we define the *stasis* of the letter that we learn more about who the Philippian *are* and what they *should be not*. To arrive at this we need to study the opponents' identity.

3.2 Adversaries: the Many Faces of the Outgroup

Perkins (1987:509-510) refers to three sources of opposition clearly indicated in the letter: 1) tensions among Christian preachers both in the city where Paul is held in chains and in Philippi; 2) 'non-Christians responsible for imprisonment of the apostle and hostility that may be experienced by Christians at Philippi as well' (:509); and 3) a group of judaizing Christian missionaries that she thinks have parallel with those in 2 Cor. I am convinced about her identification on the first and third sources, but I disagree with the second. This group of opponents, it seems to me, has a definite political character that reflects the values of an honour-seeking society which contradicts the message of the Christ-hymn.

Williams (2002:55) comments that at least 18 different proposals have been offered—no doubt—due to the difficulty in identifying the adversaries in reference to internal evidence (cf. Jewett 1970:362-363; Snyman 2006:264). Watson's (1988:56-57) efforts to merge all opponents in a single group is not convincing. Many proposed identifications have been criticised on grounds that they reflect a faulty "mirror-reading" of the text (Fee 1995:7-10; Bockmuehl 1997a:18-19; Hooker 2002:378). We know that the letter's one-way

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communication obscures our curiosity in this matter[102]. However, could it also be that Paul's lack of definition has something to do with the general and more effective device of stereotyping his opponents as a way of giving the community the responsibility of discerning who they are based on their conduct? This is only an observation, but it is interesting that whereas the "enemies" are bundled together, those who are models for the community (Timothy, Epaphroditus, Paul, Christ) are singled out, and their behaviour explained so that there is no doubt about the course the Philippians need to choose (cf. 3:17).

Rather than trying to distil the precise identity of the adversaries, my aim is to discern how these different outgroups are depicted by Paul in order to strengthen the social identity of the Christ-following community[103]. The first group is different from the other two. Although this group is trying to inflict pain on Paul, its members are still part of the community and even help to the advance of the Pauline mission. The other two, on the other hand, are headed for disaster.

3.2.1 Envious and Rival Preachers (1:15)

Paul does not criticise this group of preachers on account of faulty doctrine, but because of their wrong attitude. However, he rejoices that despite this, Christ is still proclaimed (1:18)[104]. The apostle is concerned with the progress (προκοπὴν, 1:12) of the gospel in this section, and these preachers-for-the-wrong-reasons are contrasted with the brethren who are encouraged because of Paul's imprisonment (1:14). Even then, Paul recognises these as part of the brethren and refuses to perceive them as rivals (cf. Hooker 2002:379). Once more we return to the *topos* of suffering I described in the previous chapter. While some understand that the Christ-like life implies one of suffering modelled after the Master, and are encouraged to be bold, others seem to do it for strange reasons that escape an obvious explanation[105]. Hooker (2002:379)

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[102] Williams (2002:55) believes that Paul is at rest in this, since his audience knows who the opponents are.

[103] Peterlin (1995:78) argues that the precise identification of the opponents is not a crucial element for understanding what Paul expresses in Phlp 3.

[104] Smith (2005:120) carefully distinguishes between two kinds of preachers: those who do it out of 'envy' and those who do it out of 'truth and good will'.

[105] How could they afflict the apostle by proclaiming Christ (1:17)? One possibility could be that these rival preachers consider Paul has lost all respect and honourability because he is in chains. They have failed to grasp this important element of the Christ-like life. Preaching Christ unheeded they feel thus superior to the apostle. Capper (1993:209) thinks these rival preachers boasted in that they were spreading the messaged *freely* (i.e. free of charge), while Paul was receiving support from the church at Philippi, but unable to fulfil his apostolic ministry. While

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believes that the problem is not doctrinal, but concerns a personal conflict between the apostle and these brethren. Some proclaim Christ out of love and good will (εὐδοκία, cf. 2:13), whereas others out of rivalry and envy try to afflict Paul. Φθόνος and ἔρις 'appear together in secular Greek as attitudes that were considered to endanger the common good' (Hooker 2002:381), which fit well in the context of friendship[106]. There is definitively a strong tension here which the apostle defines from his own social location[107]. His chains are clear witness that he is modelling the example of Jesus Christ. He has renounced his own safety in order to proclaim Christ. His imprisonment is *for Christ* (ἐν Χριστῷ, 1:13), a fact widely known everywhere, according to Paul, even in the *praetorium*[108].

Whatever the identity of these other preachers may be, Paul rejects their attitude, which does not reflect the values that should characterise the genuine Christ-like ingroup (2:2-5), although he never describes them other than "brethren" (1:14). As we noted earlier, Paul uses his authority in order to trace the boundaries between what is proper and what is not (cf. 4:8-9), which is the way to secure God's presence in their lives (ταῦτα πράσσετε καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν, 4:9). Hooker (2002:379-380) observes an element in Paul's argumentation that is crucial: The apostle is not arguing against doctrinal issues but against practical incoherence. The good news is not mere ideology; it is an incarnated message. 'Describing his call in Gal 1:16, Paul speaks of God choosing ἀποκαλύψαι τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν ἐμοί, and if we take that ἐν seriously,

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the interpretation is attractive, I find its logic enmeshed in the too limited structure of a legal partnership, which is not convincing. For Paul the core of his apostolic mission is identification with Christ, not just the proclamation of the message. Moreover, Capper does not explain why the imprisonment broke the terms of the agreement. Did they have a stipulation assessing such circumstances? Whatever it might be, it is clear that 'his role as an advocate of the gospel is being challenged' (Jewett 1970:365). Smith (2005:133) focuses on those who preach the gospel out of love (for Paul), but this latter group is not perceived as rival, rather, it functions as counter-model to those who do it out of partisanship. Suffering (chains) can result in two different attitudes: boldness in preaching or preaching that tries to sadden the apostle. Paul, nevertheless, rejoices in that Christ is proclaimed (1:18).

[106] Φθόνος, ἔρις and ἐριθεία are included in the list of "works of the flesh" (cf. Gl 5:19-21) and are elements that threaten the unity of the church (Hooker 2002:379 n 10). The last element, ἐριθεία, appears again in Phlp 2:3, where Paul exhorts the community to do nothing out of selfishness.

[107] Capper (1993:208-209), who draws on the work of Sampley, believes Phlp 1:12 signals a possible breach in the *societas* between Paul and the Philippians that the apostle needs to solve. It is for this reason that he needs to reassure them that even what seems negative has nonetheless turned out for the better: the advancement of the gospel.

[108] It is interesting to notice that the *praetorium* becomes an ally of Paul in his argument. Even the "enemy system" is portrayed as positive witness and support for his cause. In a sense this attitude is reminiscent of that of later Christians who used Roman legal records to confirm the martyrdom for Christ of deceased disciples. The political adversary becomes the means to prove one's righteous suffering. Hooker (2002:384) comments: 'The word κεῖμαι in v. 16 suggests that he thinks of himself as being "placed" in prison or "appointed" to be there'.

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then Paul is placing the emphasis on Christ being revealed through what he, Paul, becomes—i.e. his manner of life—rather than through what he proclaims' (:379-380). This agrees with what I observed earlier: Paul's own manner of living is the strongest evidence against those who oppose him or the manner in which he understands Christ-like discipleship (cf. 4:9: ἃ καὶ ἐμάθετε καὶ παρελάβετε καὶ ἠκούσατε καὶ εἴδετε **ἐν ἐμοί**, ταῦτα πράσσετε).

Few people understand the Christ-like life as Timothy does. Thus, 'Paul's unhappiness regarding the motives of his fellow-Christians in Rome surfaces again in Phil 2:20-21, when he complains that of those whom he might send to Philippi he can trust only Timothy to have the interests of the Philippians at heart, since the rest are all concerned about their own interest [...] It seems that Paul is determined that his envoy should be the ideal role-model' (:380).

To conclude about this first group, we observe that Paul rejects their arrogant attitude although he never infers they have ceased to be "brethren". It is not a strange outgroup, but it witnesses to the carnal mind even in the midst of the Christ-following community. 'Beware of these, they do not follow the same Christ-like pattern as I (we) do', says Paul (cf. Holloway 2001:116-120)[109].

3.2.2 Political Adversaries (1:28)

Hooker (202:377) refers to this group as one that is acting *within* the Christ-following community and the same which persecuted Paul. However, these adversaries are not called 'brethren'. On the contrary, they are said to be under pending danger of destruction (ἀπωλείας, 1:28). Such an argument could not be carried out against those whom the apostle has just been addressed as brethren (1:14). No, Paul refers to an external threat (Tellbe 1994:105) that is felt (Koperski 1996:115). It is clear that there were tensions in the colony that affected daily life. De Vos (1999a) has demonstrated how the make-up of the ancient colony favoured potential strife, and how close people lived with each other. Pledging alliance to a different deity, joining a different religious group (perceived as a *collegium*)[110], not attending to the emperor cult, etc., was not something that could be easily hidden from neighbours and friends (Fox 1986:61-62). I have no reservations in reading the narrative of Ac 16 as adjusted

[109] It is fitting to conclude this section like this, because it displays Paul's particular view through and through. While they are guided by pretext (πρόφασις) he is only motivated by the truth (ἀληθεία, cf. 1 Th 2:5 where his mission is accused of this exact charge). There resides the difference (cf. Hooker 2002:385).

[110] Stegemann and Stegemann (2001:371ff) believe that Christian gatherings were already known as *factio* (i.e., as a political club or forbidden political party).

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to fact, so we can imagine that tensions on account of religious adherence were a realistic possibility.

The apostle in chains, due no doubt to his 'political' dealings, and the Philippians share in the "same ἀγών"(1:30)[111]. It is a conflict that they *saw* while Paul was amongst them (a reference to Ac 16?) and which now they *hear* is in him[112]. These references point to a tension whose source is thoroughly political, not internal. This becomes clearer when we turn to the "Philippian hymn", where we detect a direct challenge to the emperor system (cf. 2:10-11). Perkins (1987:517-519) observes the political atmosphere the letter breathes in light of some of its language. However, her comments refer mainly to 3:20-21 and 2:6-11 (opposing the heavenly πολίτευμα to the earthly one; the denunciation of Caesar as σωτήρ, the imperial cult, etc.), but leaves 1:27-28 out of this scene to link it only to the language of the games. Koperski (1996:121) picks up on the political usage of 3:20 and links it to 1:27-28, since both passages contain σωτηρία/σωτήρ language. 'The language in 3:20-21 is closely related to that used in connection with the opponents of 1:27-28, and the "Roman connection" makes it likely that the opponents referred to in 1:28 are Roman civic authorities in Philippi' (:121). That this reflects political tensions should not be doubted (cf. Clarke 2000:193).

Πολιτεύεσθε (1:27) is a debated term in the history of interpretation[113]. I prefer to translate it as '"live as citizens" worthy (ἀξίως) of the good news of Christ'. O'Brien (1991:143), anticipating what the apostle will say later (3:20-21), gives the sense 'live as citizens of heaven', but it is too ideologically charged. Paul usually comes uses the verb περιπατέω ('to walk', cf. 3:17) when he exhorts his communities. What is more, 'The apostle employs ἀξίως in phrases usually by way of admonition and normally with the verb περιπατέω' (:145). So it seems clear that Paul has added this unusual term (*hapax* in Paul, and only in Ac 23:1 in the NT) to call his audience's attention to its peculiar context (Brewer 1954:76). I believe the political ('life lived in the public arena') sense of this term cannot be denied (Winter 1994:84-85), and has in mind the Philippians'

[111] "Political" has its original sense here, that of *politeia*, the public discharge of duties or 'public life' (cf. Winter 1994:13-14; cf. Clarke 2000:196). Paul's mission as such (public speaking, addressing groups, etc.) has concrete *political* overtones (cf. Ac 16:1-40).
[112] The possibility that the opponents could be Jewish is thwarted by the fact that there were few Jews in the colony at Paul's first visit. Moreover, if this group opposed to such a degree that the Christ-followers in Philippi feared for their own safety, there is no doubt that the colony's authorities would have intervened (cf. Tellbe 1994:115).
[113] Roberts (1937-38); Brewer (1954); Miller (1982); and Winter (1994).

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adversaries in the context of life in the colony, not just within the inner walls of their meeting place(s)[114].

3.2.3 Enemies of the Cross (3:2, 18-19)

Chapter 3 of Philippians has been studied more than any other section in search of identifying the opponents. Specialists are divided at this point; whereas some defend a one-front hypothesis, others see at least two different groups, though Klijn (1965:278) already considered the discussion settled on the side of the one-front thesis[115]. Although it is impossible to affirm this with certainty, I believe the opponents referred to in chapter 3 share the same identity, so I opt for the one-front theory, which brings coherence to the chapter as a whole (cf. Sandnes 2002:136-137). The supposed different emphases between the two are more theoretical than real. The element of the circumcision could well fit with 'dogs' (3:2) as with 'enemies of the cross' (3:18). Their trust in the religious ritual (circumcision, 3:2-3) fits well with 'their god is their belly' (κοιλία, 3:19), a term also used for the sexual organ: '[I]n Jewish propaganda a man's circumcised penis was called his "glory"' (Malina & Pilch 1993:120). Klijn (1965:283) allows the possibility to refer to σάρξ. Koperski (1996:126) points out various possibilities, among them the "older view", i.e. Jewish food laws, supported by patristic interpretation (Theodore of Mopsuestia, Ambrosiaster, Pelagius). Sandnes (2002:151) concludes that it refers to 'self-love' (φιλαυτία) and it is then contrasted in the letter with its contrary: 'friendship' (φιλία). However, once this is said, there is nothing which would have deterred Paul from the possibility of depicting other opponents in his career (Lincoln 1981:97).

The opponents in Phlp 3 are not considered to be part of the congregation (Jewett 1970:376). They are described as 'dogs' (κυνάς, 3:2) and the Philippians are warned to 'watch out' for these. Williams (2002:157) thinks that Paul's expression may be drawing from Hebrew usage that was directed against gentiles. If this were correct, it implies that those Judaizers who call the Philippian Christ-followers to deny the cruciform life are indeed out of the reach of the true promises. They are evil workers (οἱ κακοὶ ἐργάται, 3:2, which finds no exact parallel in the NT, although it resembles 2 Cor 11:13 where

[114] Winter (1994:101) opines that 1:27 should be tied with 4:2-3, where the apostle calls these two preeminent women to *concordia*, the supreme value of life in the *polis*. However, such a view limits the scope of the letter, which has in view the *totality* of the members.

[115] Jewett (1970:382, 390) proposed a general outline followed by many since then. The adversaries in 3:17ff are: a) former members of the Pauline congregation in Philippi expelled from the congregation; b) denied saving efficacy of the cross; c) practised libertinistic behaviour (food and sex); and d) believed to have achieved final salvation. Those opponents featured in 3:2ff are Judaising missionaries that offer circumcision as a means of salvation.

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opponents are called 'deceitful workers', ἐργάτα δόλιοι; cf. Williams 2002:157)[116]. Williams points out that these adversaries are thus outside of the covenant, and he is right (cf. Klijn 1965:282). This does not imply a breach between 'Christianity' and 'Judaism', which is only to come later. However, it does signal a different understanding on Paul's christocentric comprehension that assumes a concrete social practice (Campbell 2008:44). SIT helps us see that this is no mere theological description, but that it contains a sense of belonging as well as the capacity of the disposed group to categorise what seems to represent the stronger group. There are those who are good and faithful emissaries (Timothy, Epaphroditus) and also those who are evil, deceitful (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:187). With Paul's invective, the 'inferior' group redefines the boundaries; and in this case the expressions are inversions of Jewish boasting (Tellbe 2001:259). For Paul and the Philippians it is clear: Christ's example becomes the new boundary[117]. The inner reality (the true circumcision, 3:3; the new commonwealth, 3:21) that re-defines[118] external rituals that have lost the power for human transformation and are indeed 'mutilation' (κατατομή, 3:2), a terminology used elsewhere (LXX Lv 21:5; 1 Ki 18:28) to refer to cutting oneself in a way that displeases God (Fowl 1990:99). Christiansen (1995:272) observes how Paul re-defines circumcision 'inasmuch as his christo-centric identity influences his theology of ritual boundaries'. He refers to baptism as that element which replaces the old boundary. It is interesting to notice, however, that baptism does not appear in Philippians. In this particular letter Paul speaks rather of the direct knowledge of Christ (3:9-11), as righteousness from God which depends on faith. After all, the Philippians are called the 'true circumcision' (3:3). At least in Phlp it appears that it is the mark of suffering (i.e., sacrificial love for others) what becomes the new identity-marker, which in a sense, is the outward and concrete practice of the transformation that baptism receives in Paul's other letters (cf. Rm 6; 1 Cor 1:10-17; 10:2; 12:13; Gl 3:26-29, etc.). This righteousness bears fruit (1:11) and is a reflection of God's (and Christ's) character (cf. Schlösser 1995:388-389), and as such relativises ethnic and social boundaries. *Pace* Campbell (2008), this righteousness could also be understood in this context in opposition to the way the emperor exerted his particular understanding of 'justice' (cf. Álvarez Cineira 2007:12). What is more, although seemingly offering safety (ἀσφάλεια, cf. 3:1) their end is nothing but

[116] Fowl (1990:98) assumes this term (ἐργάτης) as technical reference for 'missionary'.

[117] Lincoln (1981:95): 'There are a variety of ways in which those who opposed Paul made themselves "enemies of Christ's cross" (verse 18), but all of them involve theological viewpoints which somehow derogate from the significance of Christ's death'. This is exactly what Paul is going to stress in the Christ-hymn.

[118] I need to be careful with the choice of words. Paul does not *replace* Jewish circumcision with a spiritual kind of circumcision (for gentiles) in this passage. He merely categorises the internal reality as the 'real' thing, not that external circumcision is to be rejected altogether (cf. Campbell 2008:102).

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destruction and loss[119]. This outcome coincides with that of the political adversaries (ἀντικείμενοι) in 1:28, whose apparent security is nothing but an omen (ἔνδειξις) of destruction[120].

Even Jewett (1970:386), who opts for the two-front hypothesis, indicates that the Judaizers of 3:2ff appealed to a congregation 'marked by spiritual enthusiasm with latent tendencies in the direction of Gnosticism and libertinism'. Such an appeal to the "flesh" would have come short of the mark unless the Philippian community suffered also from another weakness: They lusted after status[121]. This is reflected both in the way they have reacted in the face of Paul's chains and in the way the apostle addresses them: Φιλιππήσιοι (4:15). Paul refers to the Philippians using a Latin form of the vocative (φιλιππήσιοι, based on Latin *Philippenses*), not the usual Greek one (φιλιππεῖς or φιλιππηνοί; cf. Ramsay 1899:116; Reumann 1993:440). Why? I suggest that the Christ-following community was completely immersed in the search for status typical of the age. It might just be that this is one of the great problems that Paul tries to correct through the presentation of the examples of those who lived under-privileged in order to serve others. Honour (as Hellerman has aptly shown) is at stake here, yes, but in the context of *identity* formation. Maybe, in their search for status and acceptance, they were tempted to be viewed as a sort of Jewish πολίτευμα (Tellbe 1994:118) instead of being willing to suffer loss of status like Christ and Paul had done on their behalf. Barclay (1991:58-59) speaks of the precarious social identity of gentile Christians, who thought of themselves as true 'Jews' yet could not be members of the Jewish synagogues nor participate in their ancestral practices. They were abiding in a sort of permanent *liminality* that was for some difficult to accept[122]. No wonder some of them were even

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[119] Holloway (2001:133) believes Paul's biting invective is not out of control. The apostle uses anaphora (βλέπετε … βλέπετε … βλέπετε …), as well as assonance (κύνας … κακοὺς ἐργάτας … κατατομήν) and other devices. 'Paul's tone in 3:2 is best described as impassioned but measured, reflecting the seriousness of his exhortation in 3:1'. Cf. Bockmuehl (1997a:185) and Snyman (2006:269)

[120] Some discussions on a direct antithesis between Jewish and Christian theologies (covenantal nomism *vs* faith in Jesus; cf. Dunn 1990:196) seem at times to be later theological insights read back into earlier history (cf. Campbell 2008:45). I believe Campbell is right: this head to head opposition is not part of the apostle's theology yet; rather, it reflects a general perception of ideology/behaviour not based on the example of Jesus the Messiah.

[121] Tellbe (1994:100-105) expounds both theological and sociological reasons (which actually juxtapose). Circumcision functioned in Judaism as a primary 'identity marker', as a boundary of separation. 'More than anything else, circumcision marked the social identity of the Jewish community, and circumcision was the critical requirement for adopting Jewish identity. Therefore, the agitators' teaching would not only have been appealing as a means of securing membership in God's true people and inheritance in God's promises, but also as a means of gaining *social identity*'.

[122] Goodman (1994:105) affirms that Christians welcomed converts into their communities with a warmth that exceeded and distinguished them from that of the Jewish ambivalence. Either the

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willing to undergo circumcision in order to participate of Jewish status (Winter 1994; Tellbe 2001:263). For this reason the apostle insists on their living their citizenship as is worthy of Christ (1:27), since it is from him they await a heavenly commonwealth (τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς, 3:20). Perkins (1987:518) offers an attractive possibility that is adjusted to the make-up of the Christ-following community, where the majority do not enjoy Roman citizenship and who were, no doubt, in search of whatever element that could raise their status:

> Assuming that the political language of Phil 3.20-21 is linked to the claims being advanced by those whose position Paul is opposing, we may suggest that seeking "status" as a *politeuma* of "Israelites" provided an alternative to the persistent danger of suspicion and persecution. Christians would be able to defend their rejection of civic cult by reference to their Jewish heritage and the privileges granted the Jewish community even by emperors who were also suspicious of the Jews as a cause of civic discord. Paul's insistence on the heavenly *politeuma* not only rejects such aspirations, it also insists that Christians remain vulnerable to the sufferings attendant upon their confession that Christ is "kyrios", not the various benefactors of the civic order.

Tellbe (2001:271) offers an attractive alternative that understands πολίτευμα as a possible designation for a club society or a voluntary association (a 'religious association' is what Ascough 2003a:153 perceives). Tellbe finds the link with pagan society and thus with civic cults, including emperor worship. Because the identity of the opponents in 3:18 may be different to that of 3:2-4, I leave this option open. For this implies that the Philippians struggle with their own pagan background that entices them to seek refuge and security in their old traditions, rather than being confronted because of their fidelity to a new way of understanding life in the city. If Paul were using πολίτευμα as a kind of catchword (as Tellbe argues) with a double sense ('state' and 'association'), he would be exhorting the Philippians not to fall back into their pagan ways, making use of all the stereotyping that was to him available ('their god is their belly', *viz*. lower appetites; 'they glory in their shame', etc.; cf. Rm 1:24-25)[123].

This search for status presents many sides. Oakes (2001:199-200), who understands the Philippians' suffering in economical terms, believes that part of

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person was inside or outside of the community, there was not middle ground. 'No extant early Christian text refers to sympathizers on the fringe of Christianity' (:105). This is just mere lucubration, but I wonder if this practice had not direct relation with the fact of the Philippian believers' sensible situation and their enormous need for belonging that was satisfied within the community of faith.

[123] Ascough (2003a:160), somewhat more loosely, is open to the remote possibility of understanding the Philippian community as one of the common *collegia funeriticia* (after Beare's [1973³:9] original insight).

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the problem of disunity comes as result of lack of solidarity amongst the brethren:

> that in their situation of suffering, some in the church (who are suffering little and who tend to be of higher status) are failing to help (financially) others in the church (who are suffering more and who tend to be of lower status) [...] various imperatives of Philippian society would operate against the wealthier Christians offering this help. Such association could both endanger their status and be seen as acting below their status [...] The example of Christ who did not take advantage of his status but willingly lowered it is a reinforcement which would closely fit a call to unity in this particular kind of situation.

For Oakes the struggle comes as a result of becoming a Christ-follower. This change prevents some members from having access to their former *collegia* (due to incompatibility), and as a result they experienced a lack of financial help. This crisis is not used by the wealthier members to display solidarity, but who cling to their superior status. Ascough (2003a:160), on the other hand, understands the community as a gender inclusive one on these same principles, where women hold some measure of authority (cf. Phlp 4:2).

The above observations may also apply to the adversaries described in 3:18-19. We should not view status solely as social power, but also as religious/spiritual positioning. These adversaries propagate a doctrine of fulfilled eschatology which masks immaturity and fleshly lust. Paul refrains from perceiving himself in this manner (3:12), for he knows it is the work of God in process (1:6), not an immediate experience. Paul uses an argument filled with emotion which seems to capture the *pathos* of the audience: he often spoke about these enemies of the cross when he was with them and now he tells them even *with tears* (3:18)[124]. Paul's use of the past/present scheme (1:12, 30; 2:4-6, 12; 3:18; 4:3, 9) strengthens the emotional ties that should prevail now and guide them in their future path.

3.2.4 Concluding Remarks on the Adversaries

It is here where the rhetorical and historical contexts *somehow* merge. I stress this because the apostle makes use of the adversaries to drive his point home. They live as those who are outside the proper pattern of Christ-like life[125]. It is not enough to proclaim the message; it needs to be lived out faithfully. There is no doubt about who sets the example: Jesus Christ. But then it is also Paul, and

[124] To relate "tears" with a Christian identification of this group is too conjectural (*pace* Koperski 1996:130).

[125] Klijn (1965:280) notices that in Phlp 3 Paul starts from the position of his opponents and then he 'adds to it, corrects it and he puts his own position against it'.

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Timothy, and Epaphroditus ... as many as the Philippians recognise are in front of them (3:17). The adversaries play an important role in the letter. They are the antithetical models; those whom the Philippians are not to imitate[126]. However, these are not defined by name, although the positive models are. There could be several reasons for this omission. In a very real sense not naming the 'other', but implying who there might be through their negative example, exerts a much stronger effect on the community than a direct list of names that may risk people taking sides with the imminent danger of a division. Some scholars derive from this silence that Paul may just be speaking about a threat in the future, not to a concrete situation or even that he may not have a thorough knowledge of the situation (Marshall 1993:361). I side with Lieu (2002a:301) in that both boundaries and 'the other' constitute a binary oppositional model which is nevertheless, 'inherently unstable'. Still, I do not discount Marshall's (1993:361) observation—assumed rather than explained—as a remote possibility: 'My reading of Philippians […] suggests that Paul had some vague information that there was trouble in the church at Philippi, but very little specific information; to meet his rhetorical challenge, he cast a wide net'. It might just be that the Christ-following community is affected at several fronts and Paul proceeds to present diverse models in order to deal with each and every threat to unity. Having the power to opt for a concrete way of life gives the Philippians the possibility to make use of their social creativity to regain confidence in the midst of a hostile environment where they feel intimidated (1:28). This social creativity calls for an upside down understanding of core values: security, honour, ontological perfection, religious ritual, etc. These strengths are contrasted with the (apparent) weaknesses of the Christ-like life: suffering, shame, imperfection, and grace, which ultimately triumph over the former[127]. Sandnes (2002:142-143) observes these contrasting features in Phlp 3:

	Ingroup		**Outgroup**
(1)	Their mind is turned ἄνω (cf. 3:21)	(1)	Their mind is set on τά ἐπίγεια
(2)	Like athletes they are committed to reaching their goal	(2)	They are devoted to the belly
(3)	Like Christ they are not self-centred, but prepared for suffering and death	(3)	They are 'enemies of Christ's cross'
(4)	Their τέλος (3:12) is the crown or resurrection with Christ (3:11, cf. 3:21)	(4)	Their τέλος is perdition (ἀπώλεια)

[126] If the adversaries are described as "evil workers" (3:2), Timothy has "served" (ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, 2:22) faithfully, 'as a son with a father'. Epaphroditus is called αδελφός, συνεργός, συστρατιώτης, ἀπόστολος καὶ λειτουργός on their behalf (2:25; cf. Agosto 2004:117). Perhaps the same idea is behind the appeal in 4:2-3 to the two salient women and to Clement.

[127] The shift in 3:3 to ἡμεῖς (we) is rhetorically significant (Snyman 2006:270). Paul and the Philippians are "other" than the adversaries. They have acquired a new common identity.

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'Within Paul's rhetoric, then, the image of the athletes' *agôn* represents a counter-image to belly-devotion. Belly-worship means to be fully devoted to the moment, neglecting to be prepared for what comes, and for suffering in particular' (:143).

Paul's own example shines forth, not only as he presents it in Phlp 3, but already in 1:20. Sandnes (:160) offers again valuable help. The body is a distinctive mark (as we saw in chapter 5):

Phlp 1:20	**Phlp 3:19**
Paul will not be put to shame (αἰσχυνθήσομαι)	Shameful living (ἐν τῇ αἰσχυνη αὐτῶν)
Christ is praised (μεγαλυνθήσεται)	Praise or glory (ἡ δόξα)
The body (ἐν τῷ σώματί μου) is an instrument in worshipping Christ	The belly is itself worshipped (ὁ Θεὸς ἡ κοιλία)

Such an experience, however, is to be lived both within the ingroup and in society, not isolated from others. Paul urges the community as a whole (see emphasis in *all*-language) to be united, side by side, thinking the same, of one spirit. Only then can they shine in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (2:15).

In Paul's rhetorical strategy these different opposing groups play a crucial role. They are categorised as acting either for dubious reasons (1:15), frontally hostile (1:28) or even as enemies (3:18). There is no way in which either Paul or the Philippians can identify with them: their very behaviour denies the core of the Christ-like message, even if some are still considered brethren (1:14)[128]. The two-way identification (Christ with us / us with Christ) permeates the letter and aims at preventing the different outgroups from inflicting more damage than that already caused to the Philippian Christ-followers. There is a clear contrast between the Philippian community and the outgroup, not merely on account of concrete behaviour, but in terms of where they are heading to[129]. Present behaviour and affiliation determines future destiny. All this is possible because

[128] There is much to say about this group which differentiates itself from the other two. These rival preachers are still brethren. Paul thus allows for a measure of difference in his theology and even rejoices in that the gospel message advances. He is not, however, happy with the attitude of those who preach for the wrong reasons, although his pragmatism goes beyond forms.

[129] Smith (2005:124): 'While Paul's comments are descriptive to some degree, they *perform* the function of setting up the one group as clearly other than Paul and the church at Philippi; furthermore, these comments re-mark the boundary between the inside and outside of the Christian group in general, or at least, the boundary of the Pauline Christians' (original emphasis).

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Christ, self-abased, has become κύριος over all (2:10-11)[130]. Although at first the ingroup may feel inferior and intimidated, Paul's future vision (3:20-21) and assurance of a glorious τέλος are meant to break away any resilience on the part of those who may still doubt: 'Worshippers of the belly are not citizens to be trusted in hard times' (Sandnes 2002:150). Such a hope is a reminder of how to live Christ-like in the present (1:27; cf. Winter 1994:84-85)[131]. Tellbe (2001:268) has rightly perceived Paul's strategy at this point. For him, the apostle aims at reinforcing the 'court of reputation', *viz*. while the Philippians are approved by God on account of their orientation in life and their *telos* is salvation, the opponents' end will be their shame (3:19).

4. Philippians Aimed at Identity Formation

Murphy-O'Connor (1995:42) recognises that Paul's letters were 'occasioned by problems in or requests from the communities for which he was responsible. Thus they differ significantly in content'. Silva (2005:5) equally observes that 'hardly anything is more important to understand a polemical passage than to know what the writer is polemicizing against'. The problem is that trying to present a complete answer to Paul's aim or aims may turn into a cul-de-sac or likely to remain unfulfilled (cf. Engberg-Pedersen 2000:81-82)[132]. This is true. We all tend to emphasise certain aspects of the text that call our attention more than others. If we take our subjective emphasis as part and parcel of the exegetical process, we can proceed in our search for a better understanding of the letter with an open methodology and transparent strategy. Once we have defined both the contours of the letter and of the recipients, we can approach its study better informed about the occasions and aware of what outside elements (our particular interest) we bring to its study. My focus all along has been to approach Philippians looking specifically at identity formation. It is time to put the thesis to the test.

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[130] The term κύριος is used fifteen times in the letter. 'Even though among the Pauline letters this is not the highest frequency of this title, the letter nevertheless demonstrates a special emphasis on Jesus Christ as κύριος' (Tellbe 1994:111). The critical factor is not the frequency but the political intentionality behind these mentions, exactly what happens in the case of Philippians.

[131] Strathmann (1988:535) denies any 'political' overtones to this terminology in Philippians, but in his criticism he seems to understand the terms in a modern fashion rather than adjusted to its first century milieu. Even the belly-*topos* has important political overtones, as Sandnes (2002:149) points out (cf. Demosthenes, *Cor* 296, where Demosthenes accuses Aeschines and his party of being self-loving citizens: τῇ γαστρὶ μετροῦντες καὶ τοῖς αἰσχίστοις τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν; 'they measure their happiness by their belly and their baser parts').

[132] For a summarized view of Paul's multi-purposes, see Smith (2005:40-41).

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4.1 Paul's Purpose(s)

I noticed in chapter 2 that SIT is concerned with that part of the person's self-concept that derives from his or her membership in a group, which comprises three broad aspects: *cognitive recognition* (that of belonging to a group), *connotations* (which bring added value to such belonging) and the *emotional dimensions* that accompany it (Esler 2003:20). Let us proceed to see how each one of them may explain Paul's rhetorical purpose in the letter.

If in general Paul has refuted the erroneous attitude of the adversaries, he has always done it with reference to modelling a Christ-like pattern. He does not hesitate to use his own experience as a mirror in which the Philippian community can look at itself (3:17). Paul is consistent in this sense. In 2 Th 3:6-15 the apostle exposes some brethren who are not walking according to the model and instructions (παράδοσιν, 3:6) Paul left with them. The pattern of example (τύπον, 3:9) is the apostle himself (and possibly Silvanus and Timothy). However disorderly these members are acting, Paul's admonition is to stay away from such persons (στέλλομαι, 3:6), but never to treat them as enemy (ἐχθρός, 3:15), rather to admonish them as brethren. The strongest coercive action Paul is willing to apply is the breach of relationship with the disobedient (μὴ συναναμίνυσθαι αὐτῷ, 3:14, which Wanamaker 1990:289 understands as excommunication). Paul expects the person deprived of the warmth of relationship will suffer a "saving" shame (ἐντρέπω, in its passive sense) with the hope of bringing him/her back: s/he has not ceased to be a brother/sister. This incident shows that Paul is quite aware of the difference between those who act as enemies from those who, although brethren, walk disorderly. This is further proof that we are dealing with different groups in Philippians.

In Phlp 3:4-11 Paul takes a long personal detour to prove his point: He, like Jesus Christ, has forsaken the seemingly necessary in order to attain a higher calling[133]. He uses his own Jewish pedigree in order to establish his "natural" reason for boasting (cf. Barclay 1988:244). Why is this so, in the midst of a thoroughly gentile audience? Most commentaries seem to be at ease with such a presentation and start right away with a definition of Paul's attack against the Judaizers. But these are not there necessarily. Paul addresses a gentile community who may or may not be so versed on Jewish traditions. How would they have understood Paul's exposition?

I mentioned in the previous chapter that my expectation would be Paul to use his Roman privilege (cf. Ac 16:37) as something he was ready to put aside in order to fulfil Christ's mission. Rather, he uses his Jewish background to

[133] A typical argument based on the speaker's experience (cf. Snyman 2006:280).

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accomplish the same purpose. I present a reasonable explanation for it. Firstly, Paul's rhetorical purpose is to compare himself with those who have come to the community in order to present a message based on confidence in the flesh (Phlp 3:4). This group has a strong Judaizing component. It was within this context of resting on human achievement that Paul became a persecutor of the church and its message (3:6). Now he is willing to suffer whatever trial for the exact opposite: what he earlier categorised as worthy of pity (and proper religious hate) has come to be the most precious treasure[134]. Compared with this new found element, everything else is mere dross (3:8)[135]. His own transformation is, once again, the point of contrast with those who serve themselves rather than the community[136]. He, as well as the Philippians, belonged to a former *ethnos*, but now all have been called to a different identity that is characterised by its identification with Christ and its relationship with others[137]. It is thus both a social and personal identity, because 'ethnic identity [is] only the beginning of Paul's self-identity' (Duling 2003b:240). I think the point is well taken[138]. Paul has entered another *genos*, a family, after his encounter with Christ, one with its own values, boundaries, and symbols that contrast with former ones (cf. Duling 2003b:240-241). It is on account of this that he refers to the Philippians as 'brethren' (3:1, 13, 17) and to those who refuse such a standing in Christ as 'enemies', not of Paul or the Philippians, but of *the*

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[134] Duling (2003b:240): 'This phrase clearly shows Paul's ethnic value orientation: his willingness to persecute what at the time he considered to be deviant outsiders'.

[135] Snyman (2006:272) points out that the shift from ἅτινα…ταῦτα (3:7) to πάντα…τὰ πάντα (3:8) is a clear example of *correctio*, an argumentative technique used to impress the correction [everything which seems honourable is loss compared with the knowledge of Christ] on the audience.

[136] Smith (2005:5) points out that Paul's modelling is a typical feature of the time: 'Greco-Roman philosophy was overtly ethical in nature (all philosophy was eventually *moral* philosophy) and as a result there was an emphasis on the psychagogic principle that a philosopher's deeds ought to match his words' (original emphasis). Cf. Seneca, *Ep* 83.1; *Vit Beat* 20.5. Sandnes (2002:139) calls it a rhetoric of imitation. Imperial propaganda also supported Augustus' life as moral *exempla* in all sorts of discourse (Knust 2004:161).

[137] Duling (2003b:230-231) makes some useful comments in this regard: 'The Greek tended to refer to others with the term ethnos and to themselves as *genos*, that is, a *genos Hellēnōn*, "a family of Hellenes" […] The Romans tended to refer to others as nation and to themselves as *populus'*. We perceive then that *ethnos* is broader in meaning than *genos*. Bockmuehl (1997a:195-196) mentions that the Jews liked to call themselves the *race of Israel*, although they might be known to the rest simply as "Jews". Duling continues: '…*ethnos* can be contrasted with *genos* as an in-group, that is, "they" are an *ethnos* (the "X people") but "we" are a *genos* with the same or similar roots ("our family, tribe, clan"). Thus, *ethnos* can have an ethnocentric flavor. The distinction is especially prevalent when the plural *ta ethnē*, "the peoples," appears and for Israelites means all non-Israelites, thus "Gentiles"' (2003b:235).

[138] I have discovered that Wright had arrived at a similar conclusion earlier. For him Paul's concern is against the emperor cult (paganism), although described always in Jewish disguise. For Wright (2000:175) Paul's presentation of his Jewish pedigree is a general appeal to abandon one's status 'in order to find the true status and privilege of one in Christ'.

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cross (3:18). Once again, categorisation does not ultimately hinge on personal or communal dealings, but on the firm example of Jesus Christ, which has both ethical, soteriological *and* identity-marker effects[139]. Having said this, however, it is clear that Paul's manner of speaking aims at drawing a sharp hedge with those who do not reflect the ingroup's desired values. It implies, as Stark (1997:205) mentions, not mere *adherence*, but *conversion*. Non-exclusive faiths (e.g., the Isis cult) were unable to generate *belonging* (:206).

Paul's manner of writing would no doubt struck a cord with the Philippians, who although gentile and citizens of another *genos* (Roman and/or Philippian citizenship), also belonged to a tribe: the *tribus Voltinia* (Bockmuehl 1997a:196, Hellerman 2005:115). But I still wonder if there could be more points of connection with a gentile audience. A further point that can shed some light is if we identify these adversaries as Jewish Christ-followers and not merely as Jews (*pace* Hawthorne 1983:125). Their boasting is then strongly contrasted with one (i.e., Paul) who had indeed reason to boast more than any of these (3:4).

There has been a strong tendency in New Testament studies to perceive the apostle Paul as presenting a definite breach between Judaism and what was later to be known as 'Christianity'. Campbell (2008:50-51) rightly points to the anachronistic practice this comprehension supposes, since it reads a later theological conclusion back into the earlier historical setting. It is, nevertheless, quite difficult to withdraw from such a powerful influence that has pervaded the history of interpretation since F C Baur in the 1830's. However, a careful reading of Philippians reinforces the idea that Paul's dichotomous theological reasoning places the Christ-centred *phronesis* as core value. Thus, it is not only the Jewish search for righteousness outside Christ to which the apostle opposes. It is also the gentile tendency to seek after virtue outside the grace of God revealed in Christ. Rather than a rejection of Judaism's values (cf. Campbell 2008), Paul opposes any kind of understanding of life that is not Christ-based and that does not reflect appropriate behaviour after that of a δοῦλος who became the κύριος[140].

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[139] With this I want to go beyond the tortuous search about whether the Christ-hymn's nature is ethical or kerygmatic, which has lost by now its former appeal (cf. White 1991:210; Stowers 1991:119). In light of the letter, Phlp 2:6-11 seems to give coherence to the whole which was not in sight in some earlier commentators. What possible consequences may Paul's positioning affect in the relationship between Judaism(s) and his communities is something beyond the scope of this study (see Craffert 1993:256-257). It is clear that Paul's repeated use of 'in Christ' and not 'in Jesus' (only in 2 Cor) has a particular purpose in mind. 'It is most likely that Paul deliberately and self-consciously uses terms that tell his mainly gentile communities that this Jesus whom they proclaim is the Messiah of Israel' (Campbell 2008:155).

[140] Campbell (2008:51): 'Modern conceptions of identity have made us aware that Paul's identity, even after his vision of Christ, is basically Jewish, and precedes the notion of "Christian" identity proper'. Campbell's particular concern stresses Paul's use of righteousness

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Watson's (1986:178) reading of Phlp 3 as a way of presenting a definitive chasm between Christianity with Judaism reveals important elements to take into account, with the above caveat in mind. Watson perceives that Paul is trying to define his version of Christianity as different from the 'parent religious community'. This relationship is done in three ways: a) *denunciation* (pointing to the moral/theological faults of the 'parent movement'; b) *antithesis* (describing the absolute gulf between both communities; and c) *reinterpretation* (where religious traditions are reapplied). Watson certainly presents a wider angle of vision (i.e. sociological), but he completely forgets both the Philippian community that receives the apostle's words and the peculiar context addressed.

We need to consider a final element. Paul shifts from his personal self-identification to a call for social-identification with the values which come from above (ἄνω). The Philippians are not to be understood as mere individuals following the example of Christ, Paul, and others. No, they acquire a new social identity based on values that come from God (3:20). They are called to be a 'heavenly *politeuma*', akin to the known Jewish ones which had earned a sensible measure of self-government (cf. Runia 2000:363). Many specialists have dealt with the meaning of this *hapax*, so we will not use the space here[141]. However it is translated, πολίτευμα reveals powerful social identity imagery. If the in-word in the colonies is "peace and security" (εἰρήνη καὶ ἀσφάλεια, cf. 1 Th 5:3), it is only a mirage, because the system is bound to destruction (1:28; cf. 1 Th 5:3)[142]. Is it from heaven, from above, that they await a saviour and Lord (σωτῆρ καὶ κύριος, 3:20), severing from political recognitions of the Roman emperor? Maybe, but the text does not yield further information on the matter. We could lucubrate on Paul's intention here, but I think it is more practical to leave the discussion for chapter 8, when we look at how later Christians would

in his letters, and I think he is correct when we look at Paul's reference in Phlp 3:8-9, which it is also placed in the wider setting of Christ-participation (3:10-11) that opens the way for any person regardless of ethnic or social status.

[141] Lincoln (1981:98); Gnilka (1987:67); Comblin (1988:64); O'Brien (1991:460); Witherington (1994:98). For ancient sources see Aristotle, *Pol* 1278b; Josephus, *BJ* XII, 2, 12.108; *Letter of Aristeas* 310; Philo, *Agric* 81; *ConfLing* 109; *Jos* 69; *SpecLeg* II, 45; *OpMund* 143; Plutarch, *Caes* 8, 4; *Pomp* 21, 5. See also LXX (2 Mac 4:2; 7:17; 12:7).

[142] Mulholland (1991:312) proposes an attractive theory: 'The word Paul uses for 'destruction' (*apôleias*) means literally, to be uncitied, to experience the loss of that matrix of life that gives meaning, value, identity, and purpose to the community and the individual'. But this will never do exegetically speaking, since the etymology presented is faulty. At another level, a possible reading device is an attractive option. The wordplay between πολιτεύεσθε ('living as citizens') and ἀπωλείας ('destruction') may work as presenting contrasting ideas using similar sounds (*paronomasia*). Cf. Garavelli (1988:235)

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have understood and applied the apostle's exhortations[143]. What is manifest is that the identity of the diverse groups is quite different, as Tellbe (2001:268) remarks:

> These contrasting groups are portrayed as two different communities with distinct boundaries—belonging ultimately to different kinds of πολιτεύματα: the opponents belong to and have their identity in the social order of an earthly πολίτευμα, and the believers are citizens of a heavenly πολίτευμα and have their identity and security in the coming of their "Savior" and "Lord".

Rather than exposing an opposition between realised eschatology and an apocalyptic expectation, there is an opposition between earth/heaven, up/down (Doughty 1995:9; cf. also Harrison 1999). Paul ties 3:20-21 with 1:27-28 in such a way that we can confidently say that he calls the Philippians to live the values of heaven in the now (cf. Engberg-Pedersen 2000:125). Πολίτευμα could then be understood as 'commonwealth' or state, remembering that it possesses the particular nuance as 'the state as a constitutive force regulating its citizens' (Lincoln 1981:99). With 'this active force πολίτευμα can be compared to the significance of the term Βασιλεία as reign rather than realm' (:99)[144]. Social identity is thus aimed at transforming values which are in consonance with the higher model[145].

4.2 The Centrality of Christ as Identity Model

Theology and ethos can both be narrative. Paul has been stressing all along that, in order to form part of the ingroup, the Philippians need to strive for the common good, be of one spirit and work side by side. Paul roots this calling in a common narrative that is nowhere better expressed than in the Christ-hymn. Paul's story and that of the Philippians merge in the hymn. 'The rhetorical effect of the Philippian hymn is to establish the common vision that holds the

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[143] Geoffrion (1993:23-28) understands the citizenship metaphor in a spiritual way that stresses co-citizenship: 'rather than describing the Philippians' existence in terms of a colony of heaven, Paul emphasizes their identity in terms of their relationship to their fellow citizens of heaven'. I do not discount such an understanding, but when it is combined with 1:27 its reach goes beyond a mere image and calls for a concretion in the social plane.

[144] 'These conclusions are reinforced when it is noted that Philo, whose conceptual world may be indirectly influential on the background of our passage, uses πολίτευμα in this figurative sense of state or commonwealth, cf. especially *OpMund* 143f. and *Agric* 81 where the ideal world is seen as a realm which *determines* the quality of the lives of those who belong to it' (Lincoln 1981:99, my emphasis).

[145] Jewett (1970:52) calls attention to the fact that the term 'humble' (ταπείνωσις, 3:21) is the only occurrence in Paul's writings, which is paralleled in the Christ-hymn (ταπεινόω, 2:8) and in the discussion concerning the gift (ταπεινοῦσθαι, 4:12).

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church together as a model for conduct [...] responding to the tensions within the Philippian house church with the invitation to place their own narrative within the narrative of Christ' (Thompson 2007:306).

We have seen above that one of Paul's rhetorical purposes is that of contrasting different models which either reflect the Christ-like pattern or otherwise flatly oppose it, or defend its viability even under an erroneous conception of Christ-like fellowship. The scene is set and the decision placed before the Philippians. Paul's art of persuasion has been displayed in all its splendour; the choice is theirs now. If there has been an element that has appeared again and again is the message incarnated by the Christ-hymn. It forms the centre on which all else hinges. Actually, the apostle has been quite repetitive in his presentation. He insists in his argumentation once more:

> Phlp 2:4: μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες αλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι[146].

This verse marks the entrance to the highest example of "radical altruism" (Engberg-Pedersen 2003:198) that calls for communal participation. The call is not fortuitous or part of Paul's vivid imagination. It is based on the life of Christ. For Engberg-Pedersen Paul partly encapsulates the Stoic theory of οἰκείωσις, which comprises a movement of self-identification "from I to we"; where the individual, arriving at a rational level can perceive others also as rational beings (:33-44)[147].

> The movement takes place within what I have elsewhere called the I→X→S-model, where "S" stands for "*Socii*" (the "companions" or "friends" or members of the we-group), and "X" stands for whatever acts as the focal point or "node" of self-identification that generates the movement (:203)[148].

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[146] Engberg-Pedersen (2003:200) discusses the reason why apparently the scribe of D (Claromontanus), from where the "Western" text derives, excluded the καί. It might be caused due to the fact that he did not understand its function. Engberg-Pedersen understands it as a sign to the reader: 'Emphasize the next word(s)!', and translates it thus: '... not looking out for your own interests, *but* for the interests of others' (:200, my emphasis).

[147] That this should be so comes as no surprise. Paul's theology was strongly influenced by two sources: one his Pharisaic background (see Phlp 3:5-6) and secondly Stoicism of Middle Platonism (Kee 1995:73). If Acts is to be taken as face-value, Tarsus (Paul's place of birth) was in this period a major centre of Stoic learning (Strabo, *Geog* 14.673-674).

[148] By "radical altruism" Engberg-Pedersen means not that "abject self-denial", since it is not renunciation of the self (in principle) that it is at stake here. Rather, it is the perception of oneself as one-of-the-others. This concept is consonant with Stoic ideas: 'not paying any (special) attention whatever to one's own matters, but caring instead for those of the others as equals seeing oneself as just one of the others, which again equals treating them as having just as much value as oneself' (:209). The element of self-sacrifice is clearly present in the Christ-hymn, and no doubt in the way the apostle is willing to suffer on behalf of the community (2:17).

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Where for the Stoic the X-element is *logos* (reason), for Paul it is Christ. The apostle's greatest concern is not to extend the Jewish religion within the Christian one or adapt the latter to Judaism. His essential concern is to proclaim the Christ present in the gospel as the one who defines all and gives it a new value (Becker 1996:445). Because of his personal experience, Paul has become a "Christ person" (Engberg-Pedersen 2000:93). This experience provokes a profound transformation:

> instead of merely staying for himself at the level of his new knowledge or of looking joyfully down for his own sake at his own earlier (and still partial) existence at the I-pole or at others' present existence there, he actively turns or bends towards *them*, leaving behind his own exalted state of knowledge, addressing them at the level to which *they* belong and aiming in this way to move up to his own level. In accordance with [...] Paul's knowledge at X, this act was seen by himself as a kind of recapitulation of Christ's saving act as described in the 'hymn'. Christ left behind his own exalted position (2:6) and reached down to human beings (2:7-8, X→I). Christ also caught hold of Paul (cf. 3:12) at the I-pole by making him acquire Christ's own knowledge (cf. 3:8). And Paul now repeats the same movement (X→I) on behalf of the Philippians, trying to make them undergo the change from I to X which he has himself already undergone. If we may risk the pun, what Paul does to the Philippians in his *paraklēsis* (exhortation) is what God did to Paul himself through Christ in God's *klēsis* (call) of him (:106-107).

5. Conclusions

The path from selfish desire to self-giving on behalf of others is not common, as the plethora of antithetical examples shows. However, without this human transformation there is no hope; only the expectancy of judgment and destruction. Is it actually so radical? Paul's rhetorical intention seems to set forms of social behaviour that are radically different to the expected pattern. He not only challenges the Philippian community to adhere to the Christ way; but also presents himself as *exemplum* and *imitatio* (3:17) in the footsteps of Jesus Christ (2:6-11). As Engberg-Pedersen (2000:107) comments, the apostle tries to persuade the community to join in with him (and others). There is no better way than to appeal to their common bond of friendship, which has worked for the progress of the gospel (1:12; 4:17). Precisely, this 'greater benefit for others' is what Smith (2005:46) believes to be the centre of Paul's message in Philippians, which he summarises as 'the advancement of the gospel'. Thus, all the examples which appear in the letter (including Christ's) are geared towards this goal.

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However, there are clear signs that point to discouragement and loss of hope within the Christ-following community. Adversities both external and internal threaten the progress of what was once commenced. Suffering and tribulation are understood as indication that something is going badly; and feelings of discontentment and hopelessness creep in. Paul challenges this view, lest they forget that Christ—who has the power to transform them fully—underwent such trials on their behalf. The seemingly weak and status-less is both saviour and Lord of all. The urgent call, then, is to identify with an apparently weak value-system (cf. 1:28), which ultimately takes them to an up-down-up movement in consonance with their source of identity: Jesus the Christ. This adhesion to counter-cultural values demands a conscious choice[149]. It is therefore a cognitive exercise (cf. 1:9-10), where they have to focus (φρονέω) and recognise/discern/scrutinise (ἐπιγνώσις, αἴσθησις, δοκιμάζω) what is excellent (1:10; cf. 4:8; τὰ διαφέροντα, 'the differences'; cf. Engberg-Pedersen 2000:109). Ramsaran (2005:297) observes that the *imitatio* formula in 4:9 invites 'contemplation, reflection, possibly even discussion among community members. "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do"'. Paul tries to live a life which in many respects is counter-cultural (*pace* Neyrey 1990:18; cf. Peterman 1997:199). All this they already know (1:5-6), but there is always opportunity to repeat things that are important (3:1). Despite acknowledged diversities in 'earliest Christianities' (Hvalvik 2005:123), I believe the Pauline communities were prone to share certain characteristics close to the apostle's heart, as I have described in this chapter.

Paul's admonitions do not solely concern *ad intra* matters but emerge in a context of the reconfiguration of piety and power under the figure of the emperor (Knust 2004:156). This is somewhat evident in what I have exposed in this chapter, but it is overwhelmingly clear in the Christ-hymn, to which I now turn[150].

[149] I believe that what Paul proposes to the Philippians is in itself counter-cultural. The fact that they were inclined to look for a 'way out' (following the example of the 'others') is already an indication of this tension. However, that scholars place Paul's arguments within the context of Stoic practices (e.g. Engberg-Pedersen) does not take away from its singularity at this point. Rather than an appeal to self-transformation via reason alone, Paul presents Christ's example (2:6-11) not only as the pattern of *conscious* imitation (cf. 3:9-11), but also as a salvation-event (cf. 3:20-21). See Judge (1984:12ff) for specific areas in which Paul goes *contra* culture. Other authors (e.g., Ramsaran 2005:287) place Paul together with Hellenistic moralists who appealed to 'not living according to social convention' but to 'live according to nature', which Paul's theology ultimately transcends due to God's *extra nos* action.

[150] As Lieu (2002a:298) observes, early 'Christian' identity was constructed through its texts.

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Like all cultures, the community knows other songs; their adversaries also had stories that shaped their values[1].

The biggest job in getting any movement off the ground is to keep together the people who form it. This task requires more than common aim: it demands a philosophy that wins and holds the people's allegiance.

(Martin Luther King Jr., 1958)[2]

CHAPTER 7:
THE SOURCE OF IDENTITY: THE SO-CALLED CHRIST-HYMN

1. Introduction

The diversity of opinion prevailing among interpreters in regard to the meaning [of this passage] ...is enough to fill the student with despair and to afflict him with intellectual paralysis.

(A B Bruce, 1876)[3]

The text of Phlp 2:6-11 has received ample attention in the history of interpretation, and, as Hellerman (2005:129) observes, has produced an 'almost unmanageable bibliography'. It is in fact one of those texts that has shaped the theology (i.e. Christology) of the Christian church as few others have done. However, it is also true that the prevalence of an ontological/theological focus has tended somehow to disfigure a more comprehensive view of the text. Therefore, I shall not repeat what others have so aptly exposed. In the search for a more complete understanding of the hymn, I aim at establishing its inner structure and rhetorical function, embedded in the core of Mediterranean life,

[1] Thompson (2006:306).
[2] In Hogg and Abrams (1988:92).
[3] In Hooker (1978:151).

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as a powerful counter-model which ultimately shapes the life of those who become part of the in-group. In order too do this, I contrast the hymn with contemporary Hellenistic literature in the hope that the socio-cultural *Umwelt* may reveal elements Paul has been arguing for or against[4]. The search for a plausible Philippian audience has not been in vain. We should now relate the content of the hymn to the social and cultural level of the audience Paul is addressing, lest we be carried into complex interpretations which have to do more with our own social location than that of the primary hearers of the letter[5]. However, to expect a one-to-one relationship between the Christ-event (2:6-11) and the Philippians' situation is not reasonable, as I mentioned in chapter 6 (cf. Fowl 1990:92).

2. A Closer Look at 2:[5]6-11

I approach the text of Phlp 2:6-11 through as many angles as possible in order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of its content and function within the overall tone of the letter. Although strictly speaking the text of 2:6-11 could function as a self-contained poetic unit, verse 5 sets the pace for a concrete way of interpreting it. This is the reason which has driven me to include verse 5 as part of the rhetorical unit all along, whose confession pervades the entire letter (Kraftchick 1993:29). However, before dealing directly with the texture of the text we need to address an important issue that seems to surface in every commentary: What type of literature is Phlp 2:6-11?

2.1 The Question of Genre

Lohmeyer (1928:7) was the first to define Phlp 2:6-11 as 'ein Carmen Christi in strengem Sinne', though the poetic of this passage had been earlier noticed by J Weiss in 1897 (cf. O'Brien 1991:189; Bockmuehl 1997a:116). Lohmeyer's study has notwithstanding set the stage for later interpreters, and there has been a general consensus in that the text should be described as a hymn, since the apostle did not usually craft his paragraphs with the same care as in Phlp 2:6-11

[4] I believe Fowl's (1990:197) comment to be a propos on account of Phlp 2:6-11 and all the passages he studies: 'The content of the hymnic passages is not in dispute. Paul takes it for granted that Phil. 2.6-11, Col. 1.15-20 and (explicitly) 1 Tim. 3.16b are all acceptable interpretations of the traditions about Christ to which each community was heir'.

[5] I agree with Oakes' (2001:190) assessment that 'Käsemann assumes an implausible level of conceptual sophistication among the hearers'. This has not so much to do with certain theological sophistication as with that he denies any possible connection with the *topos* of imitation, which is uncritically projected onto the audience. Oakes (2001:191) continues: 'Käsemann requires the Philippians to make distinctions that they seem very unlikely to have made'.

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(Murphy-O'Connor 1996:225)[6]. As a matter of fact, Martin (1983:28) is so confident on Lohmeyer's influence that he calls it a *sententia recepta* of literary criticism. Martin Hengel, in his 1969 doctoral dissertation, emphasised the common early Church practice of hymn-composition that came from its Jewish roots (1971:3-4). However, there is nowadays a high degree of discrepancy on the part of scholars who prefer to see it as 'exalted prose' (Fee 1992:29-46; Basevi 1998:450; although Silva 2005:93 believes such an expression to be an understatement). Collins (2003:367) speaks of 'rhythmic prose', a branch of ancient rhetoric, while others deny its hymnic nature altogether (Pretorius 1992:549-550, who cites Risenfeld 1983 and Schenk 1987:3300-3303)[7]. It seems to me that the issue here is not only related to its literary form but to its original context if it really were a hymn. Are we to find its *Sitz im Leben* in the cultic life of Palestinian communities? Does its present Greek form reflect an Aramaic *Vorlage* (Fitzmyer 1988:470-483, Martin 1997:39-41)[8] based on *parallelismus membrorum* (Jeremias 1953:150-154; Talbert 1967:141-153)?[9] What changes did Paul introduce in order to make it fitter for the Philippian situation? As we can see the possibilities are endless and the results as diverse as the entry points. Rather than discuss them all, I prefer to study the so-called hymn in its extant form, as it is presented in the context of Philippians.

On the question of its genre, regardless of the original provenance, it is clear that the text presents an inner texture and a rhythm which reflects a poetic composition (Silva 2005:93). What is not clear is that we are dealing with a hymn *stricto sensu*[10]. O'Brien (1991:188-189) uses sort of a loose definition of

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[6] Pliny, governor of Bithynia, writes the emperor seeking advice concerning certain irregularities carried out by Christians. The accused group argues that the only crime they have committed is to worship Christ. Pliny writes then back stating that the Christians' guilt is to assemble on a set day before dawn to sing amongst themselves a hymn to Christ as to a God, *carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem*, (Pliny the Younger, *Ep* X, 96). Could our text be one of such hymns?

[7] For Lohmeyer the hymn had been composed in Greek by a poet whose mother-tongue was a Semitic language. Therefore it was pre-Pauline and belonged to the Eucharistic liturgy of the Christian community of Jerusalem (cf. Collins 2003:364).

[8] Fitzmyer (1988:481-482) assured that the hymn could be satisfactorily re-translated into a tolerable form of contemporary Aramaic, although at times he had to recur to late Aramaic because there was not direct equivalence with Middle Aramaic (cf. Collins 2003:364). Deichgräber (1967:126-131) lists at least eight expressions that were quite difficult to imagine as the product of a Semitic *Vorlage* (cf. O'Brien 1991:199).

[9] For a critique of this alleged parallelism, cf. Fee (1992:31-32). Fowl (1990:23-24) understands this parallelism as the first line 'seconding' the following (cf. Heen 2004:137).

[10] Bockmuehl (1997a:117) points to several features against such an understanding: 1) Although Eph 5:19 affirms Christians used 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs', and we have some evidence of liturgical Christian expression in the early Church (*Odes of Solomon*, *Apostolic Constitutions*, etc.), we do not possess a clearly controlled typology which would help us identify this text with any degree of confidence. 2) The so many and contrasting attempts at structuring the text lead to the conclusion that its structure escapes easy typology. We may even

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'hymn' that is helpful: 'a certain rhythmical lilt based on parallelism; and unusual display of vocabulary distinct from its surrounding context) and which need not assume nothing else than these mentioned elements'[11]. Are we studying a poetic piece that the apostle just used *verbatim* as core for his message? Did he compose it himself (Fee 1992)? Or perhaps he reformulated it to fit it within the Philippian situation (Oakes 2001:210)? However it might be considered, the majority of scholars opt for a *pre-Pauline* origin based mainly on three arguments (O'Brien 1991:198-202):

1. The *structural* critique. It is assumed that an Aramaic *Urschrift*, with a fixed strophic arrangement, was later translated and edited by the apostle to fit the Philippian situation. There are several glosses[12] (θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ, etc.) that reflect a Pauline emphasis and break the original paralleled arrangement (cf. Eckman 1980:258-266). 'However, an Aramaic original does not immediately preclude Pauline authorship, since the apostle's mother tongue was Aramaic (Acts 21:37-22:3; cf. 26:14) and he clearly enjoyed considerable facility in using Greek' (O'Brien 1991:199)[13]. The question of the strophic arrangement is powerful but not determinant, since Lohmeyer's arrangement is not the only possibility, and at least twelve different ones have been proposed (cf. Fitzmyer 1988:470-483; Silva 2005:93)[14]. Hooker's (1978:157) remark is

be dealing with a fragment of a hymn, for in v. 6 the ὅς points to an antecedent which is missing. 'This lack of agreement about the very form and outline of our passage suggests that, even though poetic *style* and creedal *language* are undoubtedly present, it is unwarranted and potentially misleading to call it a "hymn" in the absence of evidence of its liturgical usage' (:117).

[11] It is in this sense I feel comfortable using the term 'hymn' for 2:6-11 (cf. Basevi 1998:439). What I do not accept as part and parcel of it are the highly subjective reconstructions of a supposed original *Sitz im Leben* as well as the possibility that the presence of a 'hymn' goes automatically against Pauline authorship.

[12] Lohmeyer (1928:6) perceived at least the gloss we refer to in brackets. Others (e.g.: Murphy-O'Connor 1996:225-226) allow for other indicated in the text below.

[13] This possibility had been already suggested by Martin (1983:60). However, when we come to the nitty-gritty translation of this complex passage, we realize that such an assertion is not so obvious. For example, with the translation of the much-debated ἁρπαγμός in v. 6 we find the author's use of a precisely nuanced idiomatic in a particular Hellenistic way which makes it so complex. Although this does not preclude an Aramaic *Vorlage* per se, it makes it easier to believe that it was originally composed in Greek (Wright 1986:351).

[14] Lohmeyer argued that the Greek version of the hymn consisted of eighteen lines structured in two strophes which contained three verses each. Thus, every line had three accents and three stresses. Each strophe had roughly the same length, but this harmonious arrangement was clearly sacrificed by the apostle to fit the hymn into the situation he addressed (cf. Martin 1983:26). Dibelius, Cerfaux, Jeremias, Martin, Murphy-O'Connor, and others have introduced important variations (cf. Martin 1983:30-38 for a summarised description). Cerfaux, nevertheless, admitted Pauline authorship (cf. Hengel 1971:61).

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paradigmatic: 'I myself have produced six or seven different analyses—and found each of them convincing at the time!'

2. The *linguistic* factor is adduced to support a non-Pauline authorship[15]. These verses contain language which is not usual in Paul. Terms like μορφὴ θεοῦ, ἴσα θεῷ, ὑπερυψόω, ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγέομαι, καταχθόνιος, do not appear at all in his other letters or even in the rest of the New Testament. Some expressions (e.g., δοῦλος) are never addressed to Christ in Paul's writings elsewhere. Concerning the linguistic register, it is reasonable to expect that an author may use different expressions at given times. What is striking here, nevertheless, is the high degree of incidence in a few verses[16]. Notwithstanding, O'Brien (1991:199-200) shows that the argument is not as strong as it may seem at first, and allows for the possibility that Paul might have just penned his thoughts differently. Martin (1983:51) cites a phrase by E Schweizer: 'It cannot be shown in any other of Paul's writings that he would assemble together such a long series of Christological expressions unless led to do so by the context', as final proof against apostolic authorship which might just as well play as counter-argument (cf. O'Brien 1991:200)[17]. Linguistic evidence seems to rule out Pauline authorship for a great majority of scholars, but such appreciation is by no means conclusive, as some authors (O'Brien, Hurtado, Fee, et al) have explained[18].

3. The last argument is the most significant. It has to do with *theological* reasons. It is argued that the theological ideas expressed (equality with God, lack of reference to the resurrection[19], no mention of the saving

[15] The linguistic factor cannot be strictly separated from the theological, since both juxtapose; cf. Martin (1983:48-51).

[16] Bockmuehl (1997a:118) complains about Lohmeyer's analysis that prescribed such a narrowness of style for Paul that nobody would dare to impose on any other author. Besides that factor, on account of the *hapax legomena*, he aptly observes: 'Given the very limited extent of Paul's surviving literary output, such evidence really leads nowhere—especially if one considers that it is precisely in poetical or lyrical contexts that one might well expect an author to resort to unusual language'.

[17] For O'Brien the exaggerated predisposition to perceive difference in the language of the hymn is not fully contrasted when we look at Paul's vocabulary elsewhere. Although admitting difference nuances, most of the hymn's vocabulary can be found in Paul's letters (cf. Rm 15:8 where Jesus is called a διάκονος, closely resembling δοῦλος); the '*hapax legomenon*, ἁρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο, and the metaphorical use of κενόω do not seem to be outside Paul's range of vocabulary' (O'Brien 1991:200).

[18] For Fee (1992:42) this fact may just point to how much of Paul 'we do *not* know from his preserved literary remains' (original emphasis).

[19] O'Brien (1991:200): 'No reference is made to the resurrection, which, according to 1 Cor. 15, was a central theme of the Pauline gospel. Instead, Phil. 2:9 moves directly from our Lord's death to his exaltation'.

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significance of Christ's death 'for us', lack of mention of the cross, the tripartite division of the cosmos, etc.) are notably un-Pauline and play against apostolic authorship. O'Brien (1991:200-201) recognises the lack of certain soteriological elements in the text, but adduces that we should not expect Paul to express his soteriology *in toto* whenever he mentions the saving event, since he does not do it elsewhere[20]. Some of the lacking elements are noteworthy, although others reflect a circular reasoning which works against its very base (especially with the alleged 'secondary' mention of the cross; cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:118-119; Fee 1995:193). O'Brien (1991:201) is quick to point out that Paul's lack of treatment on the personal soteriological significance of the Christ event remains *even after* the hymn has been edited by Paul. If we follow the logic of such argument, then the hymn, at it stands now, could not possibly be Pauline![21] Martin (1983:48) remarks that nowhere in the New Testament Jesus receives the designation of δοῦλος. In chapter 5 I discussed at length the reasons why the apostle opts for such a self-description (1:1). I think it ultimately derives from the hymn and not vice versa, as we shall see later as we study Phlp 2:5-11 in detail. Moreover, Marshall (1993:129) has shown Christ's self-humbling to be thoroughly Pauline (cf. 2 Cor 8:9). The lack of a more definite mention of the resurrection is combated on grounds that the tripartite structure of the hymn (pre-existence, humiliation and exaltation) is widely attested in early Christianity and thus the resurrection scheme is assumed within

[20] The resurrection is also absent in some important texts as Rm 10:6-15; Gl 2:20f.; 1 Th 5:10, etc. (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:118)

[21] O'Brien (1991:201): 'The most natural inference is that his central concern in mentioning Christ's death was for something other than its saving significance'. This observation has to do with the apostle's purpose in shaping or placing the hymn in this way. It would not so much aim at displaying what Christ's obedience meant for us, but what it did *for him*, which actually agrees with my previous observations (see chapter 6). It is true that if we focus solely on the hymn, this absence is striking, but I suggest that we study the hymn as part of the larger context of the letter, which then becomes the springboard for what Paul shares in the rest of the letter. Paul speaks in terms of double final destination (salvation/destruction, cf. 1:28; transformation/destruction, cf. 3:19-21) but also mentions the Philippians' task of working out their own salvation (ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε, 2:12). In 3:5-11 Paul speaks about his standing before God in terms of righteousness, but interestingly not in soteriological guise (as it is typically Pauline with the pattern of forgiveness of sins), but with a peculiar understanding of righteousness as identity marker. God's righteousness stands in contrast with humanity's own effort (encapsulated in the person of Paul). Philippians, we may say, displays a peculiar theology of righteousness which I believe is perfectly fitted for the Philippian situation, where status and honour-seeking, and the avoidance of suffering as a Christian identity-marker, threaten the community. The apostle's focus in this letter is different to what we could typically expect from him, but *only* if we attend to his other letters and expect a similar display *without* having in consideration the powerful influence of the local context. I have stressed earlier that I work on the assumption that Paul's letters were *ad hoc* communications, which only bears in favour of what I observe.

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> the last stage (cf. Marshall 1968:121-122; O'Brien 1991:202). For Martin (1983:50) this omission is a clear evidence of its Jewish-Christian origin. But again, this argument is weaker than it seems: Paul himself could be categorised under such a rubric. We are dealing here with subtle differences which can tilt the scale to any of the sides depending on the stress it is placed on the evidence[22].

All the above reasons are not conclusive to ascertain both its authorship and its original literary setting. Despite Nagata's (1981:95) bold assertion: 'it is safely assumed that the hymn in Phil 2:6-11 is of pre-Pauline origin. The burden of proof lies on those who wish to argue for Pauline authorship', I choose to concern ourselves with a different focus. On the one hand, I perceive a greater linkage between the ideas and language of the hymn with the rest of the letter than has been usually admitted. On the other, I observe different emphases from other letters of Paul. However, these differences can be accounted for without sacrificing academic rigor[23]. Whether Paul made use of a previous tradition or composed it himself (even in hymnic guise, why not!) is not as important as to what the text tells us about Jesus Christ and the role it plays in the apostle's overall rhetorical strategy. As Hooker (1971:356) observed, even if the hymn were pre-Pauline, Paul has used it in a very Pauline way[24]. So I will proceed with the text *prout extat*[25].

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[22] Murphy-O'Connor's (1996:225-226) insistence on Paul's egocentric bias as he reformulated the hymn is too daring. Accusing the apostle of fitting the hymn to his own theology is absurd, not because he was not able to have done so, but on account of trying to present ourselves as objective interpreters of his theology. Paul stresses certain elements in his presentation of the good news, according to his own understanding and on account of the situation which he was addressing to. No one ever said that there exists an objective gospel devoid of human interpretation.

[23] Bockmuehl (1997a:119) observes that Paul uses different expressions and theological motifs in 1 Cor 13. Although Paul may be using traditions ('intertextual attempt'; cf. Heb 2:9; *AscenIsa* 3:13-18, etc.) with clear resonances on his audiences, it does not necessarily require a pre-Pauline authorship.

[24] Bockmuehl (1997a:119) asserts: 'Modern readers of Philippians will do well to recognize that these lines would have formed a seamless part both of Paul's continuous dictation of the letter, as well as of its intended oral delivery'.

[25] There are several reasons which call for such action, well-reasoned by Fee (1992:34): 1) Our only access to the hymn is to its present form and context; 2) 'We must begin any legitimate exegesis by assuming that all the present words are included because they contribute in some way to Paul's concerns'; and also because to 'assume otherwise is a form of exegetical nihilism, in which on non-demonstrable prior grounds, one determines that an author did not mean anything by the words he uses'.

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2.2 Philippians 2:6-11 in Its Present Context

The simpler way to proceed with such a complex text is to display the Greek text and observe its different parts. According to many scholars the text presents a double movement in three stages: upwards-downwards-upwards. Jesus the Christ is presented sharing in God's glory; he abases himself to the lowest possible level to be then lifted up to the highest position by God the Father[26]. However, before we can do that it is necessary that we delimit more precisely the larger context in which 2:6-11 is placed. I believe Holloway (2001:120) is correct when he points out that Paul shifts from a consolatory argument to exhortation commencing with 1:27. The announcement of his potential visit (1:26) may function both to strengthen the faith of the Philippians and as a warning concerning his overseeing role towards the community (cf. also 1:27). Now, however, he turns to a direct exhortation introduced by μόνον (1:27) which appeals to a public conduct 'worthy of Christ' in spite of severe opposition. Holloway (2001:120) points out two problems Paul confronts: firstly the problem of disunity in the Christ-following community which is addressed in 2:1-4. The only solution for such a problem is self-sacrificing humility. Secondly, there is the grumbling against God that can only be combated with a spirit of uncomplaining obedience (2:12-18). For Holloway, the text of 2:5-11 functions to present Christ as example of these qualities. I would like to suggest that the reasons for this grumbling are conditioned by their suffering (1:27-28), which seems to go against the promise of the good news as they had understood it. It is for this very reason that the apostle stresses the close identification of suffering with Jesus Christ throughout the letter. However, Holloway's insights are basically correct.

Phlp 2:5 sets the tone: τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὅ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ[27]. The traditional rendering: 'Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus' (KJV, similar in NASB and NIV), says Silva, 'is sometimes referred to as the ethical interpretation because it understands Paul to say that Christ is our pattern of behaviour' (Silva 2005:95)[28]. The second part of the verse usually

[26] Not all coincide in this assessment. Some specialists do not perceive any reference to a preexistent Jesus and only focus on his earthly ministry (e.g. Talbert, Murphy-O'Connor, Howard, Dunn), while I think it is crucial that we do so to arrive at a proper understanding of the hymn.

[27] Fowl (1990:89) warns that the obscure syntax of this verse can be used to support competing readings. 'This means that illumination of the syntax and semantics alone will not solve the problems of this verse'. We are forced to look at the larger context.

[28] The *Biblia del Peregrino* (version by L A Schökel) directly translates it as: 'Tened los mismos sentimientos de Cristo Jesús' (*Have the same feelings/sentiments as those of Christ Jesus*), which clearly resembles the traditional rendering of the Spanish Reina-Valera (1960 revised version).

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assumes the verb ἦν ('was') and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ as Jesus' inner thoughts, which matches the first expression ἐν ὑμῖν as 'within you'[29]. The possible reading that takes away the stress of the imperative and adds a γαρ ('for'), rests on secondary manuscript tradition (Bockmuehl 1997a:121) and does not seem to fit well with the preceding context.

Starting with Käsemann's 1950 (ST 1978) contribution, the translation of this verse has suffered important variations which relates the text's exhortation to the realm of Christ and not to ethical imitation by adding φρονείτε or φρονεῖν δεῖ in the second part of the verse (Käsemann 1978:78). The rendering allows for diverse translations: 'Think among you that which you also think in Christ Jesus' or 'Think among yourselves as it is necessary to think in view of your corporate union in Christ' (cf. Silva 2005:95). The NEB follows this: 'Let your bearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus'. If this soteriological interpretation is correct, argues Käsemann, then Christian conduct sprouts from the act of salvation (cf. Rm 6:1-11), not from imitation (Käsemann 1978:117). Moreover, Martin (1976:93) stresses that 'Paul does not habitually point to the earthly life of Jesus as an ethical example', as an emphatic piece of support.

So, which rendering is more accurate? Hawthorne (1983:81), insisting on the parallelism between the two ἐν of the verse, finally accepts the Majority Text reading in the first part, φρονείσθω, and to supply a passive form in the second part, ἐφρονεῖτο, which renders it as 'Let this be thought by you that was also thought by Christ Jesus'. According to Silva (2005:96), this becomes a 'counsel of despair', since Hawthorne himself acknowledges that the first variant (φρονείσθω) is introduced in an effort to explain more smoothly the two paralleled clauses. The translation of φρονεῖν as 'have this mind' is also problematic, since in Greek it plainly expresses 'think' (Silva 2005:96)[30]. Another

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Silva (2005:95-96) believes that the traditional syntax adopted by most conservative writers is in fact difficult to account for. 'The idea of individuals thinking to or within themselves would normally be expressed with *eautois* rather than *hymin* (cf. *legein en heautois*, Matt. 3:9); moreover, this idea is not expressed with *phronein en* elsewhere'.

[29] Bockmuehl (1997a:123-124) prefers to understand it in its present sense, since it refers to a *present reality* that should mark the lives of the Philippians. For a more detailed discussion on what verb has been supplemented in the history of interpretation, see Martin (1976:91-93).

[30] For Paulsen (1993:438-439) it expresses both 'to think' and 'to set one's mind on'. The sense of 'setting one's mind' on something as the focus on one's life is well attested and is influenced by φρήν (sense, understanding, originally 'diaphragm'; cf. Bertram 1973:220), which could be roughly paraphrased as the 'seat of intellectual and spiritual activity'. For Plato, while σοφία expressed pure intellectual knowledge, φρόνησις had a more practical component, although at times they were used indistinctively. For Socrates it denotes the rule of good over the soul (:221). For Aristotle φρονέω is the ability to comprehend, while φρόνησις is the moral insight and it is a gift from God. In neo-Platonism φρόνησις is related to ψυχή because it denotes the intellectual activity of an individualised soul bound to a body. In the Old Testament it has both

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important objection was proposed by Deissmann (1892; in Silva 2005:96), who appealed to two other parallels of the expression φρονεῖν ἐν, one of them in Phlp 4:2. Here the apostle exhorts these two principal women τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν κυρίῳ ('to think the same in the Lord', 'to agree in the Lord' RSV). The other text (Rm 15:5) sheds further light on Philippians, since it is also an exhortation to unity and humility: τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν ἐν ἀλλήλοις κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, rendered as 'to think the same thing among each other according to Christ Jesus'. For Silva (2005:96), it is certain that ἐν ἀλλήλοις plays a similar role that ἐν ὑμῖν in Phlp 2:5, and should not be translated as 'in you', 'within yourselves', but as 'among you'[31]. Fee (1995:200) observes that such a paraenetic expression includes both the communal and individual levels, but I would like to suggest that all the above points to a social attitude that affects social behaviour (cf. Witherington 1994:64). Likewise the expression ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ corresponds to κατὰ Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, 'according to Christ Jesus', which has in mind our relationship to Christ (Silva 2005:96-97; *contra* this technical reading of 'in Christ', Fee 1995:200-201).

Silva (2005:97), after a thorough review of different renderings, states: 'We conclude, therefore, that *en Christō Iēsou* in Phil. 2:5 is a reference to the Philippians' relationship to Christ and that the verse is best understood thus: "Be so disposed toward one another as is proper for those who are united in Christ Jesus"'. To which he adds: 'Does this conclusion lead us to abandon the ethical interpretation of verses 6-11? By no means' (Silva 2005:97). I agree with Silva in that the current discussion is 'plagued by false dichotomies' which I have pointed out in the previous chapter. Once Phlp 2:6-11 is studied within the larger context of the letter, this 'impossible' tension disappears[32]. The imitation-

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positive and negative nuances. It has to do with the field of reason and insight as well with that of being a נבל, a 'fool' (:225). Out of the 26 occurrences in the New Testament, 22 are found in Paul. It is certainly a familiar and usual term for the apostle. For Paul φρονέω refers both to 'to think' as well as the 'inner attitude which determines the orientation in life of the individual and the community' (cf. Bornkamm 1983b:145).

[31] Against critics, Silva (2005:97) is quick to point out that Rm 15:5 is likewise set in the context of an appeal to Christ as the model of one who did not please himself (Rm 15:3).

[32] Strimple (1978-1979:255) complains against the false dichotomy between *Heilsgeschichte* and ethics. Hooker (1978:154) shares the opinion: 'It is only the dogma that the Jesus of History and the Christ of faith belong in separate compartments that leads to the belief that the appeal to a Christian character appropriate to those who are in Christ is not linked to a pattern as seen in Jesus himself'. To see how she ties this with Paul's own example, see Hooker (2002:379-380). Martin (1976:93) criticises Strimple on grounds that any other interpretation than that proposed by Käsemann leaves verses 9-11 'in the air' and should be treated as an excursus, for Christ's 'elevation to world rulership cannot be the theme of the Christian's imitation'. But this is, once again, fruit of the dichotomous tendency to separate these two sides (cf. Silva 2005:98). It is only on account of such elevation that the Philippian Christian have now the hope of a future transformation (3:21) beyond any power here on earth. It is that hope that allows them to maintain their focus (φρονεῖν) on the right track, after that of their model(s). Witherington

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topos runs across the letter as well as the solid confidence of that salvation which comes from outside the Philippians. The set up of 2:5 compels the Philippians to follow the Christ-model as normative knowledge and attitude (Engberg-Pedersen 2000:106). Polycarp will follow the same pattern later in his letter to the *Philippians* (8:2; 10:1; cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:122). For Witherington (1994:60), verse 5 functions as the link between the exhortation of 2:1-4 and Christ's example in 2:6-11. But to say this is only to touch on the surface. There is much more here than a mere call to Christ-like imitation, which, at some specific points, it is just not in view in the so-called hymn. Hurtado (1984:118) has observed that even those 'mythical' Jewish (VitAdEv, *Enoch*, Wisdom of Solomon, Qumran literature) and Graeco-Roman writings that have been studied as background for the hymn possess a definite interest in ethical matters. To draw a too-sharp distinction goes against the flow of the times.

Although it is legitimate to study 2:6-11 as a separate piece, in search of a possible origin back in the early Christ-following communities in Palestine, I believe it is not *methodologically* sound to focus solely on it when we have the entire letter in view (*pace* Martin 1983:215)[33]. I mentioned earlier the role of aural/oral markings. Before the hearers of the letter have a chance to listen to the powerful words of 2:6-11, they have heard verses 1-4 as background. Especially there, in 2:2, we have another reference to 'be of one accord' (σύμψυχοι), to 'think the same' (τὸ ἕν φρονοῦντες). In these verses Paul exhorts them to draw from the wealth found in the triune God (Christ, 2:1; Spirit, 2:1; and God the Father, later in 2:11) in order to act humbly (ταπεινοφροσύνη, once again) towards each other, being united, putting others first, etc[34]. In this context, even 'if τοῦτο in verse 5 does not explicitly refer

(1994:58) concurs with this: 'The story of Christ is the paradigm and pattern for the life of the believer in a variety of ways, though there are also a variety of ways in which Christ was unique and his experience not imitable'.

[33] One observation will suffice to show the importance of this assessment. If we consider 2:6-11 as a pre-Pauline hymn and search for its background outside its present context, our answers would be directed towards the original setting in life which produced its making. Questions about the nature of the 'original' community, theology, etc., take precedence over everything else. However, when we receive 2:6-11 as it stands and ask for its present function *within* the letter, we quickly ascertain that it comes right after a passage which speaks about suffering (1:27-30) due to external sources. Then, when the hearers hear that Christ died a death on a cross (2:8), they are bound to hear such a mention not only as exemplary (cf. Oakes 2001:190), but as directly relating to their present situation. And, I may add, also as a source of encouragement and deep identification which him who so closely identified with them. See also the important warnings in Hurtado (1984:119).

[34] Witherington (1994:63): 'It has been rightly stressed that humility was not seen as a virtue in Greco-Roman antiquity. This word means something like "base-minded," "shabby," "of no account," and in its adjectival form it was no compliment at all (it meant having the mentality of a slave)'. While this is true, we must not lose sight that the Old Testament (Ps 10:17-18; Pr 3.34; Job 5:11) and the Qumran literature (1QS 2.24) valued humility as a virtue towards God which

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backwards at all, the hearer is expecting that the content of "conduct yourselves" is going to be somewhat along the lines that Paul has just been calling for' (Oakes 2001:190).

Holloway (2001:122) adds an important comment on the proceeding context of 2:6-11. The exhortation which begins in 2:12-16 starts with Ὥστε, ἀγαπητοί μου, καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπηκούσατε, etc., derives it force from the example of Christ, which has been mentioned earlier[35]. As a matter of fact there is a clear linguistic and thematic link between 2:12 (ὑπηκούσατε) and 2:8b (γενόμενος ὑπήκοος): They are to show the same quality which was in Christ[36]. Hooker (1978:153) lists four occasions where Paul links the behaviour of the Philippians with that of Christ in the present context.

Witherington (1994:56) reminds us that this section belongs to the *logos* part of the deliberative speech. Thus, its purpose is to provide for 'proofs' or appeals to persuade the audience to pursue an advised course of action[37]. Having observed the rhetorically adept prose of Phlp 2:1-4, Witherington affirms:

> Since Paul uses such emotive argument even in his letters, I suspect he chose his messengers to deliver and *perform* these letters with some consideration of their speaking abilities so that these nuances would not be missed by the audience (:56, original emphasis).

To conclude this section, let me cite the timely words from Caird (1976:104, as found in Silva 2005:92) which I fully endorse:

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clearly influenced the apostle *via* Wisdom tradition. 'Paul's most striking contribution to this development is that he connects this idea with the founder of his faith' (:63).

[35] To whom they need to render their obedience in 2:12 is not clear. Some authors point to Paul himself whereas others to God. We have commented on this already in chapter 5.

[36] The refusal to perceive 2:6-11 as exemplary alludes to the salvific acts which only Christ can perform and which are not to be imitated (especially vv. 9-11). That much is clear. However, this element does not preclude that the text might function as *exempla* in those areas in which the hearers of the letter are being directly addressed as well as sources of consolation (the abased will be exalted by God, contrary to the law of society). It is only as we place the text in its larger context that such reasons emerge. Holloway (2001:123) finds no problem in extending the ethical exhortation to 9-11, for the Christ-follower may also expect to be exalted if s/he holds fast to the word of life (cf. 2:16 and especially 3:20-21). I think vv. 9-11 are not so easily applied ethically or can be used for *imitatio*, as Martin (1983:290-291) has observed. I find Capes' (1999:297) suggestion that those aspects of the life of Jesus that could not be imitated were 'liturgised' quite attractive, although it need not be exclusive: 'Memory (*anamnesis*) is of course a prerequisite of imitation (*mimesis*)' (:297).

[37] After all, 'examples [*paradeigmata*] are most suitable for deliberative speakers, for it is by examination of the past that we divine and judge the future', Aristotle, *Rhet* 1.9.40 (in Witherington 1994:58)

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> The meaning of this passage in Philippians is the meaning Paul intends it to have, the meaning he has imposed on the ambiguities of its language [...] There may be some justification for [isolating this passage from its context] when we are speculating about early Christian origins, but not when we are expounding a letter of Paul.

2.3 Divisions/Movements

'Movements' or 'acts' refer to what I see as a three-stage sequence which frames the dynamic flow of the passage. Although many have focused on a three-stanza arrangement or other literary divisions, my aim is different. From one point of view, it reflects a willing downward movement which has been described as *cursus pudorum* (as opposed to the established *cursus honorum*; cf. Hellerman 2005) that climaxes on an upward movement with Christ's exaltation. I am aware of Moule's (1970:274) comments that this pattern of 'descent-ascent' may just be part of Paul's irony, since '*essentially*, that humiliation *was* itself exaltation' (original emphasis). However, when seen from the point of view of the hearers of the letter, this down-up movement is obvious and carries out a powerful *stage-imagery* (thus 'acts'), which is not fully apprehended (in paradoxical fashion) until we arrive at vv. 9-11 (cf. Wright 1986:350-351). The assumption, succinctly stated, is that Phlp 2:6-11 is a theological narrative or a narrative with theological overtones. However, I do not think that Paul's primary purpose is to display an ontological theology (*viz.* Jesus' preexistence). His message is simple though deep, and its narratological wrappings only enhance the subtlety of its powerful and counter-cultural content.

The text of 2:6-11 does not present textual difficulties that are worth mentioning. The crux of its complexity springs from the unique way of displaying its powerful imagery with unusual expressions. With the above background in mind, let us attempt a translation which reflects its flow and full force as it stands in the letter as it was received in the canon[38]:

[38] In italics those possible Pauline additions some scholars have suggested.

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6 ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων	6 who being in the form of God
οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο	did not consider an advantage
τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,	to be equal with God,
7 ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν	7 instead he emptied himself
μορφὴν δούλου λαβών,	taking the form of a slave,
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος·	having become in the likeness of men[39];
καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος	and in appearance being found as a man
8 ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν	8 he humbled himself
γενόνεμος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου,	becoming obedient to death,
θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ	*and death of a cross*
9 διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν	9 Therefore also God super-exalted[40] him
καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα,	and granted him the name that is above all name,
10 ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ	10 so that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow
ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων	*in heaven and on earth and under the earth*
11 καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσηται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς	11 and every tongue shall confess[41] that Jesus Christ is Lord
εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός.	*to the glory of God the Father.*

2.3.1 First Act: Christ's High Existence (2:6)

The first thing the text reflects is the down-up movement that some scholars have defined as a three-stage Christology: pre-existence → abasement (earthly existence) → exaltation (cf. Jeremias 1953; 1963; Bornkamm 1983b:150)[42]. I find this scheme useful for my interests and thus I follow it with minor

[39] Murphy-O'Connor (1996:225) prefers the singular ἀνθρώπου in order to make it parallel to the singular form of δοῦλος above (but cf. Fee 1995:214; Witherington 1994:59; Silva 2005:99).

[40] I prefer the more rudimentary sense of 'super' rather than 'highly' (cf. Fee 1995:195) in order to reflect the force of Greek ὑπερ + ὑψόω (cf. Silva 2005:94 translates it as 'exalted').

[41] The NT4 and the NA27 provide ἐξομολογήσηται as probable reading. The NT4 supports it with a {C}. The subjunctive aorist receives support from 𝔓[46] ℵ B 256 263 etc. However, the Majority Text and the combination of Alexandrian (A, C) and Western (D, F, G) witnesses support the future indicative ἐξομολογήσεται (Silva 2005:116, followed by MacLeod 2001:446). The last reading permits the translation 'every tongue will confess', which might shed eschatological overtones and is supported by Loh and Nida (1977:63). This last reading is the more difficult, but is preferable to see it in parallel with the subjunctive aorist κάμψῃ in v. 10.

[42] Some see it as an advancement on the 'two stages' of Rm 1:3f; cf. Martin (1983:318).

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modifications[43]. Although the mood of the passage does not address (mostly) questions of ontological nature (*pace* Lightfoot), it is true that its formulations are consonant with trinitarian formulas of the fourth century church (cf. Silva 2005:102). Christ is presented in two different ways: both as slave (2:7) and as absolute ruler (2:10-11; cf. Portefaix 1988:142). These elements might have appeared contradictory, at first sight, to the Philippian audience[44]. There are, nevertheless, certain elements that strike an immediate response: Jesus Christ (the ὅς in v. 6 which introduces other hymnic material; cf. Col 1:15; 1 Tm 3:16; Heb 1:3; see O'Brien 1991:206) is said to be both in μορφῇ θεοῦ and ἴσα θεῷ. These two expressions are never used elsewhere in the Pauline corpus or the New Testament. Many have been the discussions around the meaning of these expressions. Witherington (1994:65) aptly expresses that μορφή represents the idea of the outward form that 'truly, accurately, and fully expresses the real being that underlies it'. As such, μορφῇ θεοῦ is roughly equivalent to ἴσα θεῷ or should be understood in that light. This is not a discussion about the double nature of Christ (also Nagata 1981:66), nor is there sufficient data in the text to provide for such a speculation. Rather, the point is to suggest that Christ willingly surrendered the highest of all conceivable positions[45]. This expression,

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[43] Portefaix (1988:142), allowing the possibility of a pre-Pauline *Vorlage*, expresses it rightly: 'Since there is no evidence, however, that Paul's Philippian audience had any knowledge of the pre-Pauline hymn his possible alterations are of no importance to their understanding of the message'.

[44] Most scholars display a model-background from which to interpret the so-called hymn. Seeley (1994:49-50) categorises earlier efforts within six basic categories: 1) Gnostic redeemer; 2) wisdom pattern; 3) Adam speculation; 4) Suffering Servant (Is 52-53); 5) stories of the suffering righteous (e.g. 2Macc 7); and 6) earthly rulers. The problem has been to see these categories as exclusive moulds. Seeley personally opts for a *mélange* of three of these. Käsemann (1978) placed a strong emphasis on background reconstruction as a major exegetical determinant (cf. Hurtado 1984:117).

[45] If we stress the classical usage of μορφή, in Aristotelian fashion, we understand it as the equivalent of οὐσία (substance, essence), which speaks of 'essential or characteristic attributes and thus is to be distinguished from *schēma* (the changeable external "fashion")', Silva (2005:100). Lightfoot (1868) was a strong proponent of such classical philological usage, while Käsemann, focusing on Hellenistic religions, understood it in the context of the Gnostic 'heavenly man' myth which blurred the overall text of Phlp 2:6-11 (cf. Silva 2005:100). Trying to escape both the classical and Hellenistic approach, some authors reconsidered a Jewish background looking at the LXX. The evidence in the LXX (e.g. Job 4:16; Dn 4:36, etc.) for this term is meager (only four times in the canonical OT, although six times in the LXX; cf. O'Brien 1991:207). The results show this scarcity of data and render it either as 'visible appearance' or equivalent with δόξα. But, as Silva (2005:101) points out: 'The discussion of LXX backgrounds is often complicated by fuzzy linguistic arguments and by the implication that the various theses proposed are mutually exclusive'. Hawthorne (1983:81) attests the difficulty of arriving to any conclusive understanding since the only two occurrences in the entire New Testament are here and in v. 7 (also in Mk 16:17, although it is a later interpolation). He thinks the author did not want to affirm straightforwardly that Christ was θεός and used a linguistic detour. Basevi (1998:456), more positively, finds clear concomitances in Hebrew (תמונח תבנית תאר צלם) and always refers to the 'modo de ser real'.

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moreover, stands in stark contrast with its counterpart μορφὴν δούλου in v. 7[46]. Bockmuehl (1997a:127) prefers to understand μορφή in its plain sense, i.e., as the visual characteristic of a person or object, which is found in Philo, *VitMos* 1.66, when Moses approached the burning bush (Ex 3):

> A most beautiful form (*morphē*), not like any visible object, an image supremely divine in appearance, shining with a light more brilliant than that of fire. One might suppose this to be the image of Him Who Is (*eikona tou ontos*); but let us call it an angel.

Drawing on this as well as on some first-century texts (from the Dead Sea Scrolls) and later mystical writings, Bockmuehl (1997a:129) concludes that μορφή 'probably simply means the visual characteristic of his heavenly being, which Christ shared but took on the characteristics of a servant'. This term usually takes on an anthropomorphic shape, which in the present passage, strongly affirms Christ's pre-existence. I believe Nagata (1981:170), on good grounds, denies the mythical picture of Gnostic divine redeemer-figures in his commentary on Phlp 2:6-11 and observes that these hymnic-like texts (e.g. Col 1:15-20; 1 Tm 3:16) 'are formulated according to a particular theological schemata, which may reflect the religious concerns of a Christian community which is seeking to respond to, or reflect upon, these concerns with the use of Christology'[47]. Naturally, Nagata has in mind the *Ur-Gemeinde* who produced the 'hymn', but I believe that it is equally valid to ascribe this sense to Paul's use of the text in its present context. According to Nagata, μορφή refers to a visible appearance (so Behm 1967:751), and the phrase μορφῇ θεοῦ 'must be interpreted to indicate a perceptible divine form by which the divine reality is vividly recognizable, whether δόξα or otherwise' (Nagata 1981:208)[48]. This interpretation takes proper notice of the fact that the phrase is introduced by ἐν, which reflects that Christ was *in* the form of God, not *the* form of God. For O'Brien (1991:211), this unusual expression refers to 'that form which truly and fully expresses the being which underlies it'. Thus, it is not just a reference to

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[46] Oakes (2001:196) believes that the *distance* between Christ's position as God and that of becoming human is what Paul wishes to stress.

[47] *Pace* Käsemann (1978:72-87), who argued for a *Daseinsweise* or 'mode of existence' as it was reflected in Hellenistic religious dualism; cf. *Sybilline Oracles* 8.458 or the *Corpus Hermeticum* 1.13-14.

[48] Behm (1967:752) does not follow the equation μορφῇ θεοῦ = εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ (*versus* an Adamic relationship prevalent for Dunn 1998 and Hooker 1978; but see the arguments *contra* in Hurst 1986:454; Wanamaker 1987:180-181; Fowl 1990:50-52). He affirms that the 'image of God is Christ, while the μορφὴ θεοῦ is the garment by which his divine nature may be known'. Nagata (1981:204) agrees with Behm's perception on account of its use with ὑπάρχων ἐν, which renders the meaning 'to be wrapped in'. However μορφή may be described, Behm (1967:751) correctly points out that its sense can only be drawn in light of the context (in contrast with μορφὴν δούλου).

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outward appearance, but to the (pre-existent) Christ clothed with garments of divine majesty and splendour. It represents Christ's glory (Fowl 1998:142).

The verb ὑπάρχων expresses present reality, thus 'to exist', 'to be present', and refers to his original exalted condition. Although many have attempted to explain the distinction between Christ's present state and his original state (i.e. Lightfoot; cf. O'Brien 1991:207) it is better to settle the issue of Christ's pre-existence on grounds different to the lexical, since during the Hellenistic period this verb had lost the possible nuances Lightfoot proposed (Fee 1995:202). Christ enjoyed the highest position together with God; that seemed to be Paul's purpose here[49]. This high position is something he enjoys (even 'possesses', the other sense of ὑπάρχω; cf. Probst 1993:395-396, although his more common use is synonymous for εἶναι; cf. BDAG 1979:838; Basevi 1998:457) prior to his humiliation. Whether this can be called 'pre-existence' or other technical terminology, it is crucial that we recognise that in the hymn he already enjoys this privilege (however it is interpreted) *prior* to his self-abasement (cf. Wanamaker 1987:179)[50].

Such enormous privilege is not something which deters Christ from surrendering it completely, as we learn, in obedience to God (2:8); a theme the apostle is going to stress elsewhere (2:12; cf. Fowl 1990:96). The point we need to observe, nevertheless, is Christ's disposition throughout the passage (Portefaix 1988:142), which becomes the model of humility Paul wants to encourage in the Christ-following community.

The phrase οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ in 2:6b has become 'one of the most thorny questions in the whole field of New testament exegesis'

[49] Silva (2005:102), not discounting the use of μορφή as 'position' or 'status', does not consider it to be correct as applied to God, although he thinks it has precisely this meaning in 2:7 with the expression μορφὴν δούλου that finds a clear parallel in 2 Cor 8:9, which exactly suggests such a connotation.

[50] However, there is another possibility to take into account. I owe this insight to Prof Antonio González in the course of a private conversation. A more detailed treatment of the subject can be found in his twenty-four page long chapter 'Las cosas' (forthcoming in Herder). The meaning of ὑπάρχω is also that of 'emerging' (*commencer* or *sortir du fond*, in Bailly 2000:1994). Etymologically ὑπάρχω means *sub rego*, that is, a combination of 'under' and 'governing, leading', but essentially it refers to 'appear' (the Spanish *surgir* is closer to the Latin translation of the verb), or even 'to give' or 'to take the initiative', after Aristotle (*Met* 1004a 4-5) or Homer (*Od* 24, 286; in González, p. 19). Though with the passing of time (in Middle Ages philosophy) it came to mean 'to be', the nuances of the above possibility of meaning are attractive, even if only tentative. Jesus is he who 'emerges' as God himself, acquiring then the hymn a kind of dramatic turn in that his presence is made felt in the scenario of history. He is equal to God (v. 6b), but when he appears in history, his appearance will be other than expected. What a dramatic turn of events! His παρουσία displays a different character, a unique way of dealing with power and authority. The stage is set, the audience prepared for the drama to unfold.

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(Martin 1983:134)[51], and has received, perhaps, more attention than it was due[52]. The accusative form ἁρπαγμός is certainly a difficult word to translate, since its presence is also scarce in Greek literature (Fee 1995:205) and it never appears in the LXX (Wright 1986:321). Hoover (1971) has carried out the most extensive study of the word, later followed by Wright (1986), so it is not necessary to repeat here the different complex—and at times confusing (cf. Wright 1986:327-328)—understandings in the history of its interpretation. Silva (2005:102-103) usefully summarises the diverse options under two main headings:

I. *Active* (or abstract: the act of snatching, robbery, usurpation): 'Precisely *because* he was in the form of God, he reckoned equality with God not as a matter of getting but of giving.'
II. *Passive* (or concrete: the thing possessed or to be snatched): [only attested in the passive in the form ἅρπαγμα]
    A. *Positive* (windfall, piece of good luck): 'Jesus did not regard equality with God as a gain to be utilized.'
    B. *Negative* (booty, prize)
        1. *Res rapta*. 'He, though existing before the worlds in the form of God, did not treat his equality with God as a prize, a treasure to be greedily clutched and ostentatiously displayed.'[53]
        2. *Res rapienda*. 'He did not regard the being on an equality with God as a thing to be seized, violently snatched.'

These disparate positions are the result of a too strict concentration on the grammatical element without proper account of a wider unit of meaning (Wright 1986:328). The immediate context shows that Christ both 'emptied himself' (2:7, ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν) and 'abased himself' (2:8, ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν), so that one 'could argue, on that ground alone, that verse 6 is simply concerned to state negatively what the main verbs in verses 7-8 state positively: Jesus refused to make a selfish choice with respect to his divinity' (Silva 2005:103; cf. 2 Cor 8:9 and Rm 15:3, which confirm this sense). Most

[51] Martin (1983:xxiii) confuses the connection of ἁρπαγμός with μορφὴ θεοῦ instead of with τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, which is its grammatical object (cf. Wright 1986:327, 329).
[52] So Silva (2005:102): 'In particular, one is impressed by the futility of trying to reach a decision regarding Jesus's preexistence and deity on the basis of whether *harpagmon* has an active or a passive meaning' (cf. Hoover 1971:107, 117). Even earlier efforts (Jaeger 1915) at contrasting the use of this term in Hellenistic literature rested more on literary evidence (genre and form-related) than on philological grounds (cf. Hoover 1971:99).
[53] However, as Moule (1970:267) pointed out, this sense should be placed under the heading *res retinenda* proposed by Lightfoot (cf. Wright 1986:323), since what Christ did not do, was not so much to snatch something as to *cling* to it. According to Wright (:325), Martin's (1983:136) understanding of the passive sense is confusing. This view was proposed by the Latin Fathers (cf. Wright 1986:333), although theirs is only one version among many.

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commentators' interpretation today falls either on B1 or B2, although some (e.g. Hooker, Nagata) opt for an intermediate position. My translation reflects an active sense which stresses the fact that Jesus already possessed what he was willing to refrain from using for his own advantage. Thus, Jesus did not give up being equal to God all along; he merely did not use this privilege in order to advance, but sought the interest of the *other* in complete submission, totally abased. 'The real humiliation of the incarnation and the cross is that one who was himself God, and who never during the whole process stopped being God, could embrace such a vocation' (Wright 1986:346). This sense fits nicely with the preceding context (2:1-4), but also links adequately with vv. 9-11, and not just with vv. 6-8, as Martin had observed.

After a long and detailed philological discussion, Hoover (1971:118) attempts a translation of Phlp 2:6 'which is both appropriate to the Philippian context and confirmed by comparable usage in other literature: "he did not regard being equal with God as something to take advantage of," or, more idiomatically, "as something to use for his own advantage"'[54]. Hoover stressed the necessity of taking ἁρπαγμός together with ἡγέομαι as an idiomatic expression rather than focusing solely on the former. His translation assumes that τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ represents a status which belonged to the pre-existent Christ (:118). The question then is not whether one acts to acquire something or clings on it by grasping it (against both *res rapta* and *res rapienda*), but whether or not one is ready to exploit it[55]. The key issue, then, is attitude. Both Moule and Hoover propose that the 'grasping' or 'taking advantage of' do not aim at τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, but begin *from* it (cf. Wright 1986:339)[56].

> The all-important difference in meaning between this view and the standard *retinenda* approaches is that *nothing described by either* ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων or τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ *is given up*: rather, it is reinterpreted, understood in a manner in striking contrast to what one might have expected. Over against the standard picture of oriental despots, who understood their position as

[54] O'Neill (1988:445-449) wrote a brief critique of Hoover's 'definite results' some years later and concluded that the text was actually corrupt. For O'Neill the original text ran: 'ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο μὴ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, "who being in the form of God thought it not robbery not to be equal with God" (but emptied himself, freely humbling himself for a time in order to die for sinners). The second "not" was omitted or replaced with τὸ by pious scribes, who could not bear to see words on the page that to the literal minded might suggest Christ was not equal with God' (:448). O'Neill observed that this type of corruption was common in the New Testament. His proposal has not received substantial support (cf. Silva 2005:104). Other critique comes from Vollenweider (1999).

[55] Dunn (1998:281-288) denies that the early Church had any concept of a pre-existent Christ and reads Phlp 2:6-8 with the background of Genesis in mind, but his linguistic use seems faulty; cf. Hurtado (2003:121-122).

[56] Such a view goes against the Adamic christology proposed by some authors (e.g. Dunn), although there are other elements that also preclude it.

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something to be used for their own advantage, Jesus understood his position to *mean* self-negation, the vocation described in vv. 7-8 (:345).

2.3.2 Second Act: Christ's Humiliation (2:7-8)

If Christ's voluntary thought-leading-to-action was stated negatively in 6b (οὐχ ἁρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο), in vv. 7-8 his voluntary act is expressed positively. Christ's action is reflected by two main verbs: κενόω ('to empty'; metaphorically 'to nullify') and ταπεινόω ('to humble'), both accompanied by ἑαυτὸν, which sets the proper frame of mind and context. Whatever this double action may mean, Christ underwent it *willingly*[57] (cf. Koperski 1996:334, 'of free choice'). Are we speaking about two separate stages? Silva (2005:104) correctly denies this possibility; since his self-emptying is clearly part of his humiliation and *vice versa*, which ultimately leads to his death.

The question is again posed, provoking multitude of proposals: Of what did he empty himself? The Church Fathers flatly rejected any ontological change in Christ divinity at the time of the incarnation[58]. So, rather than entering into a complex ontological lucubration—did Christ cease to be divine while in his earthly economy? Does the form of a slave preclude the form of God? etc.[59]—we should understand these expressions looking both at the preceding and following contexts[60]. Moreover, Silva (2005:104) believes such questions are futile in light of the verb κενόω in other contexts. Thus, in Rm 4:14 Paul affirms that 'if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith has been emptied' (κεκένωται ἡ πίστις), of which Silva (2005:104-105) rightly complains: 'but no one thinks of asking, "Of what is faith made empty?" Clearly, the idea is that faith would

[57] This repeated expression is a subtle signal to the Philippian community to be thoughtful/rational (again deliberative argumentation) about their way of orientating their life (φρονεῖν), as I already expressed in chapter 6.

[58] So Augustine, *Trin* 1: 'This He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, not losing the form of God. The form of a servant was added; the form of God did not pass away'. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*: 'He emptied Himself, not by laying down the divine nature, but by taking human nature' (cited in MacLeod 2001:319).

[59] The thesis, already sustained since Plato's time, is that of divine immutability, to which many Church Fathers adhere (cf. Basevi 1998:462).

[60] The Kenotic view proposed that at the incarnation Christ divested himself of certain attributes (omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence) while he kept others (love, holiness, etc.; cf. Collange 1979). The text, however, does not give ground for such speculations and this approach is avoided nowadays (cf. Fowl 1990:57; O'Brien 1991:218). Käsemann's (1978) perception of Christ as the Redeemer who becomes subjugated to the forces of evil is not convincing (on account of Christ taking the form of a slave). I believe to have shown in chapter 5 that we are to understand slavery as a concrete social system rather than as a mythical element. This sense does not harmonise with Phlp 2:3-11 (Hawthorne 1983:86) or indeed with the general tone of the letter.

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come to nought, as the following clause confirms: "and the promise has been nullified"' (καὶ κατήργηται ἡ ἐπαγγελία)[61].

Despite some English translations which begin v. 6 with 'although', 'though' (RSV), inferring that during his humiliation Christ did not cease to be equal with God, it is worth noticing that this expression is not present in the Greek text (Bockmuehl 1997a:133). Christ' self-humiliation is never opposed to 'being equal to God'. Jesus Christ never lost this privilege (τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ), but willingly renounced to use it for his own advantage (Wright 1986:344; Koperski 1996:332-333), even when it was to cost him his own life on the cross[62]. As Bockmuehl (1997a:133) expresses it, the text 'takes Christ's self-humbling as an expression of his divinity'. This means that the sense of κενόω should be the metaphorical ('to make null') rather than the literal one ('to empty'). This understanding is crucial. It implies that there was no exchange in Christ of the form of God for the form of a slave, 'instead, he *manifested* the form of God in the form of a slave' (Bockmuehl 1997a:134; O'Brien 1991:216)[63]. Thus, the core message of the passage is not simply a new view about Jesus, but a new understanding of God (Wright 1986:345-346). This aspect is central, as Koperski (1996:334) expresses it:

> It is likewise because of the free choice of Christ that the power of God becomes operative. Not only in Paul and in Jewish wisdom literature, but throughout the Hebrew scriptures, there is the consciousness that God does not choose as human beings choose. God's perspective is not that of human beings. God's power is operative in the midst of what appears to be human weakness.

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[61] For similar examples see 1 Cor 1:17; 2 Cor 9:3, etc. In 1 Cor 9:15 we find the other use in the active of κενόω in the New Testament (the other being Phlp 2:7). Fee (1995:210) argues against those who expect the presence of an unspecified genitive qualifier—not needed—which has provoked so much ontological discussion.

[62] Vollenwieder's (1999:423) article is insightful here. He studies ἁρπαγμός (2:6) and contrast his use with the attitude of the Hellenistic kings whose hubris led them to usurp equality with God (*Gottgleichheit*, or ἰσοθεΐα). Christ's humility is but a brutal contrast in the face of this well-known practice. As I will comment later, the political components of 2:6-11 are undeniable once we place the hymn in its proper setting. The Philippians were surely aware of repeated efforts on the part of Roman generals and emperors: 'In die Position von Usurpatoren der universalen Herrschaftsmacht Gottes rücken auch andere Herrscher wie Pompeius, Caligula und Nero' (:421-422). For example, in PssSol 2.25-32 Pompeius appears as κύριος γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης (also in 17.11-15). Caligula in Philo's *Leg* 77; for Nero, see Champlin (2003).

[63] Both authors cite the famous phrase by Bruce (1980-1981:270). Hooker (1971 and 1978:155) uses the term 'interchange', that is, Jesus became what we are, enabling us to become what he is. The imagery is helpful, but I consider that the term easily yields to abuse, especially when it is used ontologically, and too closely linked with an Adamic christology that is not supported in the text.

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The first part of this second act corresponds to Christ's self-empting, which has either been interpreted as Christ being poured on behalf of the people (a sense which closely resembles Paul's latter use in Phlp 2:17) or as making himself powerless in the act of accepting a vocation 'which led to the real humiliation of his incarnation and finally his death on the cross' (O'Brien 1991:217). Both interpretations seem to make good sense but, not denying the obvious effect of Christ's self-giving on behalf of humanity, the object of obedience focuses mainly on God. Thus, my choice lies with the second understanding, more in line with the flow of the three-act passage. Jeremias (1963:188) relates this self-emptying to the cross and not to the incarnation[64]. However, there seems to be a clear relationship in v. 7 between emptying and taking the form of a slave that is further described in v. 8, with his total surrender in obedience. I cannot see how the incarnation can be ruled out here without doing violence to the flow of the text. Moreover, such a view would imply an already incarnated Christ in v. 6, something that obscures the logic of the text (cf. Seeley 1994:49).

Beside the two main verbs, vv. 7-8 contain four participle aorists (λαβών, γενόμενος, εὑρεθεὶς, γενόνεμος). The aorist participle normally 'denotes that the action is simultaneous with that of the main verb' (Loh & Nida 1977:58; *pace* Silva 2005:105). O'Brien (1991:217) rightly points to the modal aspect of the first two, which modify the manner of Christ's self-emptying; thus, 'he emptied himself *in that* he took (or *taking*, cf. Hawthorne 1983:86) the form ...'.

So, Christ's taking the form of a slave, means that he *became* one, *stricto sensu*? He pursued a course of status reversal, a *cursus pudorum* (Hellerman 2005:129f; cf. Witherington 1994:67). Hellerman's analysis presents a three status level scheme that begins with Christ's equality with God. Here I just pay attention to his second level, that of becoming a slave[65]. A slave, as I mentioned earlier, was at the complete disposal of the master. He had no rights, no saying: only the task of obeying[66]. I would like to suggest that it is specifically his status as a slave what links him directly to v. 8, where it is said that he became radically obedient (γενόνεμος ὑπήκοος), willing to

[64] He bases his case on a possible Hebrew retro-translation of ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν in Is 53:12 which reads: 'he gave himself to death'. His translation leaves out some words and is not consistent (so thinks Bornkamm 1983b:148-149).

[65] Although there exist clear textual echoes with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 42-53 (especially Is 52:13-53:12, LXX; so Jeremias 1963:182-188), Hellerman (2005:136) is quick to point out that there are no traces of servant imagery of Jesus elsewhere in Paul. Nor do I want to pursue that line of argument when having in mind the Christ-following community at Philippi, where more assuredly the apostle would not have chosen such imagery in light of his audience's lack of familiarity with the LXX (cf. O'Brien 1991:220).

[66] See the interesting quotes from classical authors in Hellerman (2005:139-141).

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undergo outmost suffering (μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ)[67]. Hellerman (2005:136) is correct in stressing the plausible connotations of the term δοῦλος when we have in mind a Christ-following community with perhaps 16 per cent slaves (Oakes 2001:61). In a society like that of Philippians, preoccupied with power and the search for honour, this *willing* status reversal must have sounded overwhelmingly radical and disconcerting[68].

Even if Stoic philosophy (based on universal rationality) allowed for the possibility of coming out of oneself to treat others accordingly, the truth of the matter is that its perception of society was still imperialistic, prone to power. Thus, Dio, *Or* 14.1 speaks about the meaning of slavery: 'Men desire above all things to be free and say that freedom is the greatest of blessings, while slavery is the most shameful and wretched of states (αἴσχιστον καὶ δυστυχέστατον ὑπάρχειν)'[69]. The association of slavery and shame was common, as I pointed out earlier. Even amongst those who willingly sold themselves as slaves for a time, it was because they lacked both means and honour, unlike the case of Christ as portrayed in 2:6. No matter how we may disguise it; to 'ascribe to Jesus the status of δοῦλος (2:7) was to assign him a position of greatest opprobrium in the social world of Paul's readers' (Hellerman 2005:142).

Now, having said all this, the question remains: Was Jesus a literal δοῦλος? If we return to what we know about the earthly Jesus *via* the gospels, the answer is a qualified 'no' (although Mk 10:45 par.; Jn 13:3-5). No in the technical sense of the word, but yes in its metaphorical sense: looking at his inner and outward disposition to serve unconditionally, as if without rights. His self-giving, self-interest denial, willingness to carry with others' burden, etc., all point out to a metaphorical use of δοῦλος, or, as Paul uses it of himself (1:1); a δοῦλος in the sense of a person laying down whatever rights s/he has on behalf of a 'higher' (notice the pun) cause (cf. Bockmuehl

[67] According to my observations, this repeated and advanced clause makes perfect sense not only here but in light of the rest of the letter. As a matter of fact, the apostle uses such imagery later (3:18), in a context which closely portrays the emphases I detect here.
[68] Oakes' (2001:194-196) analysis brings an extra element to the discussion. Authors have basically opted either for an understanding of δοῦλος as identification with humanity (understood as δουλεία) or under the influence of the Suffering Servant imagery, whose obedience is directed towards God. Oakes proposes a different understanding which stresses the distance between Christ's former position and what he becomes (human). For him the key is the synonimity between ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος and σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωτος.
[69] In Hellerman (2005:139).

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1997a:136)[70]. As we saw earlier, slavery was a complex social system with many nuances, and the important element here is the strength of the imagery utilised (cf. Briggs 1989:143)[71]. We can only properly comprehend this term here in reference to the rest of the letter and to the specific function Paul wants it to have when addressing his audience[72].

Hurtado's (1984:112) emphasis that Christ was a slave *to* God makes sense here, since the other main character in the text is God himself. Slavery is thus used to express complete surrender to God's ways rather than as an image of unredeemed humanity or humanity as such (*contra* Käsemann). However, Silva (2005:106) opines that 'taking the form of a servant' is expanded and explained by 'being made in the likeness of men', which gives way to the next clause, 'being found in appearance as a man' that sets the stage for the beginning of v. 8: 'he humbled himself'.

Christ's self-emptying is further qualified by ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος, 'in the likeness of human beings'. Does this 'likeness' mean an illusory outward appearance (as Gnosticism would later propose) or that Jesus Christ became fully human? Loh and Nida (1977:59) allow for the etymological understanding of 'being born', which both RSV and NAB reproduce (cf. Gl 4:4). Why the use of the plural ἀνθρώπων instead of ανθρώπου? Loh and Nida suggest that the plural emphasises that 'Christ became like a member of the human race in general, not like any particular individual' (:59; which finds support in Bockmuehl 1997a:137). This same term (ὁμοιώματι) appears in Rm 8:3, what has led some authors to argue that it reflects Jesus that assumed all of humanity except its sinful nature (cf. 2 Cor 5:21). However correct this further comment may be, it is hard to expect the Philippian audience to grasp all these subtle nuances. I believe that the strength of this complex phrase derives from Jesus' radical self-identification with the human race. If, as I have already shown, Jesus maintains his special privilege but refuses to use it to his advantage, the stage is set for this further explanation of what it means. He is the one who takes the initiative in this process of personal and social identification with the human race. Irenaeus (*Haer* 4.33.4), commenting on the

[70] Fee (1995:212-213) sums up this well: 'He entered our history not as a *kyrios* ("Lord"), which name he acquires at his vindication (vv. 9-11), but as a *doulos* ("slave"), a person without advantages, with no rights or privileges, but in servanthood to all'.
[71] Briggs' (1989:148) observation of the hymn: 'The paradox of someone, indeed a divine being, choosing the degradation of a slave had a potentially scandalizing effect on a slaveowning society. Yet, this was neutralized by Christ depicted as possessing and exercising the very opposite of slavery—freedom', presents a serious handicap. She forgets that such freedom led him to death on a cross (2:8). This, however it may be understood, is a powerful ideology.
[72] For other possibilities, see Bockmuehl's (1997a:134-136) useful summary.

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Pauline concept of the incarnation, writes: 'The Son of God was made man, assuming his ancient handiwork into his very self'[73].

Καὶ σχήματι εὑρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωτος ('and in appearance of man being found') further qualifies this self-emptying. I have pointed out that σχῆμα refers to the way things/persons appear to our outward senses, rather than to their inherent nature (cf. Loh & Nida 1977:59). With his expression Christ's humanity is reaffirmed (Martin 1983:207).

This phrase links the rest of v. 7 with the verb ταπεινόω in v. 8 *via* καί, although this does not mean that the two participial clauses in v. 7 are not linked (O'Brien 1991:226; Bockmuehl 1997a:137; Silva 2005:106). Verse 8 continues with the second main verb ταπεινόω with the reflexive (ἑαυτὸν), accompanied by the aorist participle γενόμενος. Again the syntactical structure reflects a similar relation to what we observed in v. 7, so it will not be repeated. Here Jesus reaches the 'utter nadir of his *cursus pudorum*' (Hellerman 2005:143). It is clear that the verb used (ταπεινόω) has a direct link to vv. 3-4. This humility in life is what the apostle begs from the Philippians' daily intercourse (2:3), and it is a quality Paul has learnt as well (4:12) drawing from the strength of God, not of his own (4:13). I have already mentioned that Paul tends to fill his exhortations with concrete content, as he does here. In what manner did Jesus humble *himself*? By becoming obedient, even to death, even death on a cross. It is the final downward step of his self-abasement (Bockmuehl 1997a:138). Although I have some reservations about understanding first-century Mediterranean culture as *mainly* 'agonistic' (cf. chapter 3); it is correct to infer that the search for honour was a priority amongst a major part of the (male) population, categorised on account of honourability (cf. Garnsey 1970). People tried to gain honour and admiration from others either by use of their privilege or by publicly humiliating others. Here, in radical contrast, we have someone with the highest privilege who willingly humbles himself to utter depths[74]. Christ's self-humiliation is the dethronement of selfish ambition and of self-interest (Doble 2002:11). In the case of Christ, it expresses the deepest solidarity with the lowly, as Wengst (1987) had earlier pointed out. Let us describe what this willing public humiliation entails.

Christ became obedient (ὑπηκόος), but to *whom*? The text does not answer this question directly, although the only other important character is God. This is both coherent with Paul's theology (cf. Gl 1:4) and with the use of the δοῦλος

[73] Quoted in Bockmuehl (1997a:137).
[74] Bockmuehl (1997a:138) observes that Christ's willingness is the essential element that Paul draws on in order to use his obedience as a model for the Philippian congregation (*contra* Bloomquist 1993:166, who takes his humiliation and obedience as acquiescing in the inevitable).

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word group elsewhere (Hurtado 1984:122)[75]. Christ became completely submitted to God, to follow thus with God's plans (cf. Heb 5:8-9)[76]. The effects of such obedience must be so obvious for the audience Paul has in mind that he does not care to explain it, nor does he expand it later in the letter. Rather, Paul has a hortatory purpose in mind. What the text answers is the *type* of obedience Christ displays. It is 'unconditional and unlimited' (Bockmuehl 1997a:139)[77]. Obedience seems to be opposed, in this society, to the human quest for freedom and autonomy, especially when it is perceived from the point of view of the Roman elites, who perceived in it a marked element of inferiority (cf. Lendon 1997:21). The apostle concludes this section with an *anadiplosis* (a reiterating phrase: θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ) which many authors have assessed as a particular Pauline gloss (Lohmeyer, Jeremias, Käsemann, Murphy-O'Connor et al). What concerns us here is Paul's desire to stress the extremity of his obedience (Hurtado 2003:237). Crucifixion supposed more than a cruel death; it meant death without honour, in complete shame (Hellerman 2005:144). It was, furthermore, a death fitting for a slave (Hengel 1986:143). Scholarly discussion centres on whether θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ refers to the salvific event of just to the shame and degradation that this type of a death carried along. As I mentioned above, I believe the first understanding runs through Paul's presentation of the good news, though it is not cited directly in the passage[78]. But the mention of the manner of Christ's gruesome death is more than a stylistic recourse. Christ dies on a *Roman* cross. Such a death carried with it a *damnatio memoriae* (Georgi 1991:74). Together with the shame attached to the cross (Bockmuehl 1997a:139), we also find the concept of dying to one's own interest as primary orientation in life. This is why we assume that the apostle can effectively use the term 'enemies of the cross' (3:17), because his audience is able to make the proper connections (cf. Fowl 1990:91)[79]

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[75] It makes sense to say that this obedience is directed towards God, who ultimately grants his favour over him (cf. Fowl 1990:63).

[76] A possible submission to demons, death or other elements is not justified by the text, as much as Käsemann (1978) and Wanamaker (1987:189) wish to infer (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:138-139).

[77] It might just be too speculative in the present context, but it is certainly cogent with Paul's theology. The humility-to-the-extreme displayed here is consonant with the highest ideals of friendship. Christ becomes the model *par excellence* for the Philippians. He is not just willing to share earthly possessions, even sentiments; he is willing to spend himself on behalf of his enemies (cf. Rm 5:6-7). However, as Bockmuehl (1997a:140) has observed, the text implies much more: 'This is where Graeco-Roman comparisons and parallels fail to do justice to Paul's emphatic little phrase *thanatou de staurou*: Christ did more than just 'make the Philippians into his friends' (contra Stowers 1991:120). I cannot but agree with such an assessment.

[78] Hengel (1986:97): 'The heart of the Christian message, which Paul described as the 'word of the cross' (λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ), ran counter not only to Roman political thinking (cf. Feuillet 1965:504), but to the whole ethos of religion in ancient times and in particular to the ideas of God held by educated people'.

[79] Allow me to engage with the kind of circularity sometimes found in some specialised interpretation of NT texts. If the meaning of the cross is primarily that of dying in shame, there

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We must not detract, however, from the shame attached to this death. Hengel (1986:93) rightly points to it as that which 'distinguishes the new message from the mythologies of all other peoples'. The ancients' abhorrence towards the 'crucified God' can only be understood on these terms: as embodying the weakest values (e.g. ταπεινοφροσύνη) as if they were actually worth something[80].

> He who hung the earth [in its place] is fixed there, he who made all things fast is made fast upon a tree, the Master has been insulted, God has been murdered, the King of Israel has been slain by an Israelitish hand. O strange murder, strange crime! The Master has been treated in unseemly fashion, his body naked, and not even deemed worthy of a covering, that [his nakedness] might not be seen. Therefore the lights [of heaven] turned away, and the day darkened, that it might hide him who was stripped upon a cross.
>
> (Melito of Sardis, *Homily on the Passion* 96)

2.3.3 Third Act: Christ's Exaltation (2:9-11)

Διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς: the last word in this matter is not yet said. The tone is about to change dramatically in this third act. We shift from utter humiliation to highest exaltation; from one character (Christ) to another (God)[81]. God is ultimately the one who assesses Christ's course of action, the key argument in Paul's strategy. God's approval on Jesus' action, by granting him the highest of names, reinforces the concept Wright (1986:347) observed, with a paraenetic meaning in mind:

> God himself recognizes and endorses self-abnegation as the proper expression of divine character. This removes any doubt in the Philippians' mind as to the nature of the behaviour to which they are urged in vv. 1-5. It is not merely the

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could be no better reason to reject the 'cross' than that posed by the adversaries depicted in Phlp 3. After all, who would want to be ashamed in such a society? However, if the cross depicts *furthermore* the manner which sums up God's way of accomplishing things, then the soteriological element is *also* present. Suffering has no meaning independently of the manner, purpose, and setting presented. Hellerman (2005:144) takes good account of both tendencies and equally refrains from opting for one excluding the other.

[80] See Tacitus, *An* 15.44.3; Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 9.4: 'To say that their ceremonies on a man put to death for his crime and on a fatal wood on a cross (*hominem summon supplicio pro facinore punitum et crucis ligna feralia*) is to assign to these abandoned wretches sanctuaries which are appropriate to them (*congruentia perditis sceleratisque trinuit altaria*) and the kind of worship they deserve' (quoted in Hengel 1986:95).

[81] Nagata (1981:264) observes that Jesus now 'becomes the passive recipient and object of God's own acts'. Christ cannot be imitated, since he does not act (cf. Oakes 2001:201).

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> imitation of Christ: it is the outworking of the life of the Spirit of God [...] The implication is clear. As God endorsed Jesus' interpretation of what equality with God meant in practice, so he will recognize self-giving love in his people as the true mark of the life of the Spirit[82].

This is a powerful message in the midst of an honour-seeking society that abhors such abased and improper behaviour. Exactly what the apostle has in mind: the close identification with a perceived weak way of life, which the author of their faith assumes, in order to show forth that this is actually God's way. Paul's own earthly pilgrimage is evidence that he has already made the same choice (3:4-11; cf. Hooker 1971:356)[83]. What could be seen as a privilege (his Jewish pedigree, his honourability) receives now, in light of the Christ event, new meaning. It is a new categorization, no longer as an elite identity marker, but the privilege to serve others; deriving from the 'I-to-we' mentioned earlier. Christ's *thought* (v. 6) called for a specific course of *action* (v. 7), which is what the apostle displays here and throughout the letter (cf. Wright 1986:350)[84].

Διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς speaks thus of result with emphasis: 'therefore God also...' [85]. If Christ takes the initiative, God seconds it by super-exalting (ὑπερύψωσεν) him, giving (ἐχαρίσατο) him a name which is above any other name[86]. The upward movement has commenced with full force. Many scholars have seen in the use of this verb, ὑπερυψόω, a clear reference to Christ's glorification (1 Cor 15:27; cf. Basevi 1998:466).

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[82] This message is not originally Pauline. I believe Bockmuehl (1997a:137) has captured an undeniable hint of this same divine predisposition in Lk 22:27, where Jesus stands amidst his disciples as 'one who serves'. It is also worthwhile to notice Lk 12:37 with a reference to the master's (κύριος) *future* return: 'Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve (διακονήσει) them'. It is the upside-down world reflected in Phlp 2:6-11, which displays divine sanction through and through.

[83] Paul demonstrates this by putting aside his rightful privilege (ἐξουσία) in other passages: 1 Cor 9:4-6, 15, 19. It is necessary to stress the fact that for the apostle, this Christ-*phronesis* should produce immediate social effects.

[84] Hofius' (1976:3-17) emphasis on 'death on a cross' as climax of Christ's goal (*Zielangabe*), to which God ultimately reacts approvingly, is acknowledged (cf. Heb 2:9); although it need not be exclusive (cf. O'Brien 1991:233-234).

[85] The exact relationship between this combination of particles (διό, καί) is debatable, and much has been written on account of it. The emphasis of the expression is clear. For a summary of different proposals see Silva (2005:115). Bockmuehl (1997a:141) sees in this expression echoes of the vindication of the faithful believer (Is 53:12; Ps 18:24; Ezk 37:12). Against the idea that Paul may be trying to explain an OT passage; see Bruce (1980-1981:14).

[86] This verb (ὑπερυψόω) is only used here in the entire New Testament. With the emphatic construction we find it in Philippians is found in the LXX (Ps 96:9), where it refers to God's supreme position (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:141). The verb in its simple form (ὑψόω) is repeatedly used in the NT for the exaltation of Jesus, and functions both at the literal (cf. Jn 3:14) and the figurative (Ac 2:33) level, or even as a blending of them (Jn 8:28); cf. O'Brien (1991:236).

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As Silva (2005:108) rightly observes, vv. 9-11 constitute one sentence with the two verbs above mentioned, followed by a purpose clause introduced with ἵνα ἐν. God's approval of Jesus' action has an immediate public (*viz*. 'social, political') effect: that at the mention of his name *all* will bow down. The question that immediately emerges is if God's approval and granting are to be viewed as a reward, as a 'natural or logical outcome' (Hawthorne 1983:90), pure grace, or if, as I pointed out above, it reflects God's own way of acting. Silva (2005:108-109) reflects on the tension that the 'reward' interpretation has caused in Protestant circles, which has been flatly rejected (cf. Barth 1928:60-62). The element of grace seems to be supported by ἐχαρίσατο in 2:9. However, Martin (1983:232) mentions the close connection between 'reward' and 'merit', helpful in order to get out this impasse:

> It is not so much the thought that because He rendered this obedience He was glorified as that, having accomplished the mission He came into the world to fulfil, God interposed and reversed the seeming finality of death by raising Him to the place of dignity. The obedience of Christ did not force the hand of God, as a doctrine of merit implies. The action of God is but the other side of that obedience, and a vindication of all that the obedience involved.

Rather than focusing on christological concepts too ideologically charged in the history of interpretation, the main focus of the upward movement seems to rest on God's approval to such a course of action (*pace* Wanamaker 1987:189). The stress lies exactly there: although society in general may assess self-emptying and/or self-humiliation as a despicable praxis, which reduces both the individual and the surrounding community to degrading levels, God has the highest regard for it. It is the world upside down, where social structures are devoid of their apparently absolute value and thus dispossessed of their power[87]. The text, I believe, is unambiguous at this point.

Καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα. Scholarly debate has focused on the nature of the name[88]. Is it the title κύριος which represents the ineffable name of God (YHWH) in the Old Testament?[89] Moule (1970:270) thought it referred to the name 'Jesus', but this assessment seems

[87] Fowl (1990:95): 'If God does not vindicate Christ's suffering and humiliation, there is no reason to expect the same God to save the Philippians if they remain steadfast in the face of opposition'.

[88] A possible rendering without the article (ὄνομα), supported by D, Ψ 075 0150, etc, does not change the stress the expression 'above all name' captures.

[89] O'Brien (1991:238) proposes at least four different reasons why this understanding is the correct one, based on the idea that for a Jew (like Paul) the superlative name was YHWH. I am not sure, though, that this would have been necessarily understood so by the Philippian community.

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to run counter to the flow of the text, since it has been revealed as such earlier (2:5). Silva (2005:110) believes, notwithstanding, that Jesus is the best option, following Moule. 'However, it is not entirely clear whether we all shall bow to him because Jesus *has* the name above every name, or because "Jesus" *is* that name' (Bockmuehl 1997a:115)[90]. Although Paul may certainly have an Old Testament usage in mind (i.e., Is 45), we know little about the Philippians' familiarity with the Hebrew scriptures (or even with the LXX)[91]. Hurtado (2000:197) believes that Paul's theology might have been strongly influenced by his own religious experiences (christophanies) which were at the same time shaped by his own social upbringing (Jesus' glorious status after the radiance of God, etc.). In the present context, however, it seems more logical to expect the title κύριος (2:11) to contain *also* political and anti-imperialistic resonances, especially when 2:6-11 comes so closely after the mention of the political adversaries (1:28)[92]. It is a name *above any other* name, so the element of comparison is present. In it most basic sense, then, the granting of this name outranks all other titles everywhere (O'Brien 1991:238). The strength of this affirmation may just rest in the fact that the 'other names' need not be mentioned directly, because they are quickly evoked in the mind of the hearers as they focus on their own social context[93]. Nevertheless, the clear reference to the text of Is 45 may give us a clue to

[90] With O'Brien (1991:240) and many others (e.g. Hellerman 2005:151), I take the genitive in τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ (v. 10) as possessive rather than explicative.

[91] Howard (1978:384-385) denies the traditional connection of κύριος with the Tetragram יהוה, but finds the connection between 'Jesus' and its superlative form YHWH. Thus, for Howard 'the name of Jesus' is YHWH. Howard takes a subtle liberty and affirms that God gave *his* name to Jesus (:386), but this is not what Philippians says. I think it is better to recognize the strong Isaianic echoes (i.e. Is 45, LXX, which Paul also uses in Rm 14:11) in Phlp 2:10-11, which reflect a stern monotheistic context (cf. Seeley 1994:53). If the Philippians were able to trace the literary connection, then we are on firm ground. However, Seeley signals the community where the hymn originates as the true Israel, but he does not demonstrate clearly whether it had any direct application to the Philippian church or if it was just in Paul's mind. It recognises a certain resonance of these elements in 3:3f, but this is an aspect Seeley does not expand on.

[92] Georgi (1991:72-78) is unapologetically sure of this deeper message within Paul's correspondence. Bockmuehl (1997a:143) is also aware of such connotations: 'If Christ the servant has become the Lord above all, then this has a dual effect, both of endorsing loyal service to masters and rulers, and of denying that any human lord could take the place of ultimate authority. In other words: if Christ is worshipped as *kurios*, then that title and that worship must be denied to Caesar, who also claimed it in the official Emperor cult, and whose characteristic ambition was apotheosis rather than kenosis and "obedience unto death"'.

[93] Hellerman's (2005:150) effort at situating a highly honoured person (Gaius Julius Maximus Mucianus) in the colony as recipient of the emperor's favour is actually more illustrative than illuminating of the specific context. That such inscriptional evidence dates from the second century AD does not weaken his point, since this practice was surely generalised and the inhabitants of the colony well-acquainted with it and with the use of images for political purposes (see chapter 4).

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what Campbell (2008:140-141) points out as part of the Christ-defined identity, which is placed in continuity with the narrative of Israel[94].

As I mentioned earlier, God's action produces powerful results that once again turn to Jesus Christ as object. All creatures in heaven, on earth, and below the earth bow down and confess Jesus Christ's lordship over them, to the glory of God the Father. His lordship is thus universal and embraces all of their known 'reality' (v. 10). As his humiliation and utterly degradation were public, now his exaltation is also public and has public effects: he becomes *cosmocrator*, as Lohmeyer had observed (Martin 1983:310 writes *Pantocrator*, emphasising the recurrent use of παν–language)[95]. Hellerman (2005:151) points out that κύριος specifically 'highlights Christ's publicly acclaimed social status', as if it referred to an enthronement. For Tellbe (2001:251), the use of κύριος for Christ is Paul's most notable feature in Philippians, appearing fifteen times in the letter, exactly because it resonates with the audience's social and religious setting. Although the apostle does not use this term verbatim in his letters, we could conclude that for Paul the greatest good is Christ and his *kingdom* (Campbell 2008:73).

If the Roman emperor had been able to make *his own* the peoples around Roma's Sea—the Mediterranean (*Mare Nostrum*)—and beyond, this God-approved universal *kyrios* reigns even over this three-level universe[96] which

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[94] Campbell's recent book is useful in this regard. His insistence on the still crucial role of Israel for Paul is an element that did not seem to be as present in Philippians as it was in other letters. However, while still maintaining that Philippians stands out by its lack of scriptural echoes in comparison with his other letters, it is also true that the apostle drew his theology on the sovereignty of God and of his Messiah from his Jewish background, as the Isaianic echoes in Phlp 2:9-11 suggest. 'Paul, like Jesus, still operated within a Jewish symbolic universe' (Campbell 2008:143). Álvarez Cineira (2007:331) agrees with this opinion: 'Lo que hace con el culto al emperador, proviene directamente de lo que Isaías [e.g., Is 33.22] hizo con el culto de Babilonia, que a su vez hace referencia al rechazo deuteronomista de todo paganismo a favor del monoteísmo'. These observations are correct, but it is not clear how these echoes could have been recognized or assumed by the Philippian congregation. The model of κύριος they had at hand was that of the Roman Caesar, not that of Israel's Messiah. However, though the Jewish presence in the colony was meagre, we could suppose a wider Jewish influence *via* the apostle which could enhance this *double entrée*.

[95] It is worth to point out that if Christ's exaltation produces immediate public results (universal *proskynesis*), it is because its effects are social and not just individualistic. We could say the same concerning vv. 6-8 and Christ's (tacit) effects of his humiliation, which ultimately lead him to death on a cross. The parallel could be easily pressed without exerting violence to the context. However, it seems Paul has chosen to remain implicit on this issue here, although he will make a further mention in 3:20, when he uses the term σωτήρ for the *Lord* Jesus Christ. Bornhaüser (1938:14) had already noticed that this expression was in opposition to the typical reference to Nero as lord and savior: Νέρον Καῖσαρ κύριος Σωτήρ.

[96] Whatever technical allusions we may find in this triadic expression, it seems to display a conventional description of the universe (so Bockmuehl 1997a:145), which ultimately

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stands in between the phrase relative to '*every* (πᾶν) knee shall bow' and '*every* (πᾶσα) tongue confess'[97]. There are no frontiers for him. However, it was like that from the beginning, when Jesus Christ, being equal to God, chose not to take advantage of his privilege; but laying it down, became the humblest of all[98]. This striking characteristic, more than any other one, stands out when we compare it with the Roman rulers' tendency for 'grasping their power through self-assertion, greed, rivalry, violence, and murder' (Tellbe 2001:256; also Seeley 1994:62-67).

Whether the three elements at the end of v. 10 (ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων) are masculine or neuter is of no more importance than what they portray for Paul: universal lordship attested by the reference to universal *proskynesis* and universal confession, in opposition to imperial ideology, which uses the same type of imagery[99]. However it is understood, the submission of both spiritual forces and human beings is displayed in this three-level universe (see O'Brien 1991:243-245). From the point of view of identity formation, vv. 10-11 are crucial. If the choice of identifying as a community with Christ's course of action seems the hardest option for the Philippians, the other side of the coin is that for Paul every person will ultimately have to acquiesce with God's way of assessing what the highest virtue is. The implicit eschatological element (with the use of the subjunctive) plays an important role in order to reinforce the present weak situation of the Philippians. It is not, therefore, a call to humbleness and denial of self-interest as a merit towards God, but a call to recognise God's own way. Imitation, thus, does not hinge around power-models but with incarnated powerlessness.

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emphasizes the universality of Christ's lordship. Although the third level (καταχθονίων) does not refer to the demonic realm, nevertheless Bockmuehl points to the case of the slave-girl in Ac 16:18, who is exorcised by the *name* of Jesus (:146).

[97] It is clear that the author of this text drew from Is 45:23LXX, which reads: ὅτι ἐμοὶ κάμψει πᾶν γόνυ καὶ ἐξομολογήσεται πᾶσα γλῶσσα τὸν θεόν. Cf. O'Brien (1991:241-243), who presents an interesting excursus on the text of Isaiah and the uniqueness of the God of Israel, and Hofius' (1976) insistence in that Phlp 2:9-11 presents a solution to the Jewish eschatological dilemma. However, our text seems to answer other type of questions. Some discussion has spun around whether this phrase refers to willing or forced submission. Hawthorne (1983:92-93) strongly opposes the second interpretation, but Silva (2005:111) opines he places too great a stress on the ἵνα + subjunctive clause, which is not reasonable. Thus, the two clauses refer to God's eschatological purposes characterized by 'firmness and certainty', and in this case further supported by the almost *verbatim* quotation of Is 45:23LXX. The eschatological tension, notwithstanding, remains (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:146).

[98] For a thorough discussion of the use of Is 45:23, LXX in Phlp 2:10-11 as part of Christ-worship in the early church, see Hurtado (2003:64-78), who calls this text 'the most stridently monotheistic passage in the Old Testament!'

[99] Augustus, *Res Gestae* 33: *per consensum universorum potitus rerum omnium* ('by universal consent in complete control of affairs'; cf. Griffin 2005:306). Wengst (1987), we know, holds a different view: this peace was won at the price of blood and destruction.

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What all have to confess is ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς (v. 11). I have mentioned above the different possibilities for the 'name above all names', and v. 11 certainly seems to support the logic of my assessment. The position of κύριος is emphatic and speaks of the title given to Jesus Christ. It reflects a characteristic confession of the early church (Ac 2:36; Rm 10:9; 2 Cor 4:5; cf. MacLeod 2001:448). If the Philippians are to understand what it means to be 'Lord', they need to look at Jesus and his example. This conception is cogent with Paul's description elsewhere (2 Cor 8:9) and with the rest of the New Testament (cf. Jn 13:3-5; Mt 20:28; Lk 22:26)[100].

> [T]his assertion introduces into the daily reality of Christian life at Philippi a profoundly double-edged political point: one who confesses *Jesus* as Lord enters at once into the same freedom to serve that he himself exercised, to promote the welfare of others rather than one's own. At the same time, one who says "Jesus Christ is *Lord*" cannot also agree that Caesar (or any other human potentate) is Lord": a Christian is forbidden to render to other powers, or to require from them, the allegiance that belongs to Christ alone. This conviction is unmistakable in the accounts of the early Christian martyrs[101].

Then, all is done for the glory (δόξα) of him who has the power to confer the highest name to Jesus Christ: God the father (v. 11; cf. 2:15). Phlp 2:6-11 ends with this high note that once again stresses the fact that this three-act movement is according to God's will and reflects his own character. As a matter of fact, as Kreitzer (1998:121) observes, there is a sense 'in which the exaltation of Jesus Christ *is* the exaltation of God the Father' (original emphasis). It seems to be an integral part of the so-called hymn (Hofius 1976:8-9; Hengel 1983:188; O'Brien 1991:250), the climax for it all. It represents God's seal on the way society seems to despise most. Briggs (1989:144-145), who studies the Christ-hymn with the help of Patterson's (1982) categories (natal alienation, social death and honour and degradation), masterfully describes this final element: 'The paradox is that master and slave are one and the same person. Thus, the honor, which is due Christ as being both equal with God and lord of the cosmos, cannot be separated from the degradation of Christ in the form of a slave' (Briggs 1989:144).

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[100] I believe this idea is also portrayed in the book of Revelation. In chapters 4-5, when the seer has the vision of heaven and of the throne, the angel announces that the only worthy of opening the scroll with the seven seals is the Lion of Judah (epitome of power and strength, 5:5). However, the one whom the seer contemplates is the Lamb (5:6), 'standing, as though it had been slain'. Again, the relationship between authority and suffering (abasement) runs through the Christian scriptures. For its 'binitarian' religious patterns, see Hurtado (2000:202).

[101] Bockmuehl (1997a:147).

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2.4 The Christ-Hymn and Its Literary *Sitz im Leben*

> Despite continuing assertions of this "hymn" being sung in one setting of another […] we have in fact no contextual evidence of such use; nor is the passage ever cited in this connection in Christian literature of the first or second century[102].

The Christ-following community was a singing community (Wink 1990:239, 242)[103]. In a mostly aural/oral society it is logical that the early communities expressed their devotion to Jesus as Lord through hymns, psalms and odes (cf. Col 3:16; Eph 5:19), terms which were used interchangeably then (Daly-Denton 1999:280; Collins 2003:361). If the reference to *Sitz im Leben* has generally focused on the cultic setting of the Christ-following community, we need to move beyond that limited perception and embrace the larger socio-cultural milieu, for not even Phlp 2:6-11's *Gattung* can be conclusively ascertained[104]. Käsemann (1978:73), recognising Lohmeyer's enormous influence, commented on the earliest Palestinian traditions as the proper setting for the hymn after the former scholar. His use of myth terminology in order to explain the hymn has not received equal approval amongst scholars, but nevertheless it opened an avenue to place the hymn's theology into a different plane that escaped the typical Protestant relationship of the historical Jesus with the affirmation in verse 6 on the pre-existent one, although Lohmeyer himself was not completely free from previous influence either (:73). However, this all too fixed attention on a pre-Pauline context has become a highly speculative task that tends to side-track us from our concern (cf. Fee 1995:192-193), which is to place the text of 2:6-11 within the context of the letter and its Graeco-Roman literary setting (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:119). Prior to this, scholars tended to derive the concepts of 2:6-11 solely from the Old Testament (Servant of Yahweh, Isaianic origin, etc.),

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[102] Bockmuehl (1997a:116). I refrained from making a decision on the *Gattung* of 2:6-11, although I acknowledge its rhythmic style, but I am not yet convinced about the necessity of presenting it as a pre-Pauline text. However, none of these issues really affect the core of our exegesis. In this we concur with Fowl's (1990:31) assessment that 'hymn' is a very slippery term which has been used to justify certain claims which otherwise would be unjustified, especially with issues of reconstruction.

[103] Although more than a century later than the period we are studying, Tertullian (*Apol* 39) points out that during the Christian feast called Agape each person is asked to stand and sing to God, be it through a song or through a composition of his/her own (cf. Collins 2003:362-363).

[104] Basevi (1998:452) remarks that if our text were a hymn to be sung, Paul's supposed glosses would have only altered its metre, complicating thus the singing. If it were so, then, more than sung, it would then have to be meditated upon.

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since the assumption was that any other source was not acceptable to Christianity (cf. Hengel 1971:61)[105].

Collins (2003:361-372) places the text of 2:6-11 in reference to Greek hymns dedicated to the gods for their achievements. Her analysis, though insightful on matters of literary parallelism, does not deal in depth with differences in ideology. Whereas the gods or those who have become gods are praised on account of what they have achieved, Jesus Christ is presented as having given up all achievement in his radical obedience. Hock (1988; 1998) has revived the use of Greek romances ('novels') as useful tools, since they provide 'the reader with a remarkably detailed, comprehensive, and coherent account of the social, economic, and religious institutions of the people and regions that witnessed the spread of Christianity into the Greek East of the early Roman Empire' (Hock 1998:123). Briggs (1989:145) sheds some light in order to better understand the imagery of the slave in the Christ-hymn. She exhorts us to recognise the literary and psychological parallel between 2:6-11 and the basic plot of the Hellenistic novel in their use of the theme of slavery. Her otherwise brief comments may prove helpful in clarifying (saving the ideological distance) Christ's status as slave even while being of high status:

> In Chariton's *Callirhoe*, Xenophon's *Ephesiaka*, Longus' Daphnis and *Chlöe* and Achilles Tatius' *Leukippe and Kleitophon* the story hinges on the enslavement of high-born persons through such misfortunes as capture by pirates or infant exposure, the recognition after many trials of their true identity and their restoration to a status of honor. The characterization of the heroes and heroines of these novels is reminiscent of how Christ is depicted in Philippians. When they are reduced to slavery, they are essentially not slaves, but they do not resist their role as slaves. Instead, they are exemplary in their obedience and their moral superiority to their servile status is expressed not through an attempt to claim the honor, which is intrinsically theirs, but their acquiescence in their condition of dishonor[106].

Portefaix (1988:143-145) has carried out an extended comparison of Phlp 2:6-11 with religious myths in which the god-become-man theme appears and with which the Pauline audience was surely familiar. It seems appropriate that we compare the so-called hymn, then, with some contemporary literature.

---

[105] Actually things are more complex. Under the suspicion of a pre-Pauline hymn, some scholars perceive a clear Jewish rejection of human beings trying to be treated as gods (see 2 Macc 9:12; Philo, *Legum allegoriae* 1.149; even Jn 5:18; cf. Heen 2004:146-147).

[106] I mentioned earlier the element of 'ideological distance'. It is my opinion that these Hellenistic novels aim at reinforcing the hierarchical structure of society. The elite behave like they are expected even in the midst of direst situations. Our text, however, reflects a deep and willing identification with humanity's most abhorred social status.

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2.4.1 Phlp 2:6-11 and the Literature of that Time

Once we have commented on the Christ-hymn, I must turn to the literary world which formed the basic frame of mind of those who received its powerful message. This will help us in turn to ascertain with some degree of accuracy the possible impact on the audience. Martin (1993:420) observes that though there are some parallels between christological and pagan hymns, the contrasts between them are much clearer than the similarities:

> These differences center in the way in which Christian compositions appeal to God whose nature is known in Jesus Christ as a loving and faithful Father (the nearest we come to this conviction is Cleanthes' Hymn to Zeus, but that trails off in a sad identification of the father of the gods and humans with impersonal Fate) and the clear declaration that the God and Father of Jesus Christ is the God who acts in history.

Perhaps we need to understand this literary background in a new light, which goes beyond a mere religious approach. After all, Paul was writing about life as it was lived both in the more reduced context of the Christ-following community (Phlp 3) and in the midst of the city (1:27-28, 3:20-21). We soon realise that the political (again used as 'public life') connotations of his writings are more prominent than they have been allowed to emerge earlier. Harrison (2000:79-80) is well aware of this shift and defends the idea that Paul's presentation of the 'reign of grace' inaugurated by Christ (Rm 5:12-21) alludes to the Augustan golden age (Virgil, *Ecl* 4.1-62) as one superseded by the former. Paul, nevertheless, cannot present such potentially damaging affirmations in the open, although his intentional rhetorical strategy, it seems, goes in that direction. Knust (2004:156) remarks that 'I am not the first to notice that, when read carefully, Paul is decidedly critical of his rulers […] Christianity in general and Pauline Christianity in particular emerged in the context of the reconfiguration of piety and power under the figure of the emperor'. Heen (2004:126-127), in his study of the public interaction between the elite and subaltern classes (based on the work of Scott 1990), differentiates between *public transcript* and *hidden transcript*. Whereas public transcript is controlled by the elite and is culturally constrained (to serve the power-based classes), hidden transcript belongs to the subordinate classes which on occasion emerges onto the public sphere but in veiled form. Paul's use of ἴσα θεῷ for Jesus Christ, a term used in the Eastern civic traditions assigning divine honours to Roma's rulers, is for Heen (2004:126) a 'particular mode of resistance'. Beck (1997:52) expresses the same idea: 'Paul and others made their writings appear to be much less "political" than they actually were. By making their writings appear to be entirely "religious", they protected themselves, their intended readers,

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and the cryptograms from detection by their enemies'. This assessment, then, presupposes a hidden code of communication between emissary and receptor which some feel have been able to 'crack down' (cf. Wright 2000:173). My position is less bold, although it recognises echoes and even direct references to the imperial power that are quite straight forward. Other texts (e.g. Revelation of John) used complex symbolism and imagery to communicate in a similar vein.

What is true for the Roman audience then holds also true for the Philippian community I have in view, because it is equally faithful to Paul's concerns[107]. After all, there were 'other hymns' that shaped the life and orientation of people. Knox (1948:249) speculated that the closest literary parallels to Phlp 2:6-11 were Graeco-Roman panegyrics for rulers which were proclaimed in the context of the pagan public festivals (cf. Heen 2004:150). Collins (1999:246) states that Greek myths may present a closer literary tradition to texts like the Philippian hymn than Jewish traditions. She refers to Phlp 2, where the motif of exaltation following upon death seems to be lacking in Jewish literature but finds parallel in Greek literature (:246-247), and cites Herakles, son of Zeus, but mortal nevertheless, as a clear example. Perhaps her assessment goes too far. Paul seems to be more at home in his Jewish background (literary and ideologically speaking) than in the Graeco-Roman one, as judging by the times he quotes from the Hellenistic literature in his letters. However, Collins alerts us to an important element which is quickly finding its place in New Testament interpretation: to understand his letters better, we are to investigate Graeco-Roman literature in depth[108].

2.4.1.1 The Hymn to Augustus

In Virgil's *Aeneid* (VI 2.789-800) we encounter what some specialists call a 'hymn to Augustus'. Anchises, in the realms of the dead, is reciting to his son Aeneas the future glories of the Roman race[109]:

---

[107] Thus, the language of excess to express this Augustan age (ὑπερβάλλειν; ὑπερβολή) may find an ideological echo, however distant, in the verb ὑπερύψωσεν I have described earlier in v. 9; cf. Harrison (2000:87, n. 29).

[108] Many are the voices that complain against a shallow use of classical sources, as if mere imagery or vocabulary similarity accounts for a whole array of deeper connections. I am aware, though, that it is a relatively new field that still needs polishing. Nevertheless, the advice is well taken and more scholars are taking this facet into account (Nock, Aune et al).

[109] Virgil (70-21 BC) was one of the most exalted Augustan poets, together with Horace and Velleius Paterculus. The *Aeneid* might be understood as one long paean, glorifying Rome, her founders, and her greatness in the Augustan age, paying special tribute to the reigning Julii.

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> Lo! Caesar and all the Julian line,
> predestined to rise to the infinite spaces of heaven.
> This, yea, this is the man, so often foretold you in promise,
> Caesar Augustus, descended from God, who again shall a golden
> age in Latium found, in fields once governed by Saturn
> further than India's hordes, or the Garymantian peoples
> He shall extend his reign; there's a land beyond all of our planets
>
> Yond the far track of the year and the sun, where sky-bearing Atlas
> turns on his shoulders the firmament studded with bright constellations;
> yea, even now, at his coming, foreshadowed by omens from heaven,
> shudder the Caspian realms, and the barbarous Scythian kingdoms,
> while the disquieted harbors of Nile are affrighted!

Augustus appears as he who 'descended from God'. We are aware that, beginning with his rule, the honours a city could bestow on an individual as to a god (*isotheoi timai*) were limited to the emperor and his family (Heen 2004:142). However, as White (2007:62-63) points out, Virgil's *Eclogue* IV 5-10, 15-20, 48-52 (composed around 40 BC) presents a rather 'messianic' Roman text about Augustus which somehow finds echoes in the Philippian hymn[110]. In fact, Christian tradition wrongly interpreted the hymn as a pagan prophecy of Jesus Christ (cf. Klauck 2003:286-287). A quick glance reveals striking concomitances:

> Now the last age by Cumae's Sibyl sung
> Has come and gone, and the majestic roll
> Of circling centuries begins anew:
> Justice [the Virgin] returns, returns old Saturn's reign,
> With a new breed of men sent down from heaven.
> Only do thou, at the boy's birth in whom
> The iron shall cease, the golden race arise,
> Befriend him, chaste Lucina; 'tis thine own
> Apollo reigns.
>
> He shall receive the life of gods, and see
> Heroes with gods commingling, and himself
> Be seen of them, and with his father's worth
> Reign o'er a world at peace. For thee, O boy,
> First shall the earth, untilled, pour freely forth
> Her childish gifts, the gadding ivy-spray
> With foxglove and Egyptian bean-flower mixed,
> And laughing-eyed acanthus.
>
> Assume thy greatness, for the time draws nigh,
> Dear child of gods, great progeny of Jupiter!

[110] That the identity of the 'golden boy' is uncertain does not diminish its possible impact.

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> See how it totters- the world's orbed might,
> Earth, and wide ocean, and the vault profound,
> All, see, enraptured of the coming time!

Horace (*Carm* 1.12.46-48) had already sensed the universal significance of the Augustan age with the portent of Caesar's comet (cf. Suetonius, *Iul* 88), so that Augustus' Principate was but 'the culmination (τὸ τελητάτον) of Providence in the universal history of mankind' (Harrison 2000:87). Imperial propaganda ascribed Augustus a cosmic status, and no one like Horace captured this idyllic description better than in his *Carmen Saeculare* 4.516-24:

> [The] country yearns for Caesar. For when he is here, the ox in safety roams the pastures; Ceres and benign Prosperity make rich the crops; safe are the seas over which our sailors course, Faith shrinks from blame; polluted by no stain, the home is pure; custom and law have stamped out the taint of sin; mothers win praise because of children like unto their sires; while Vengeance follows close to guilt.

This description is also accompanied by eschatological messages (*Carm* 29-39; 49-56) where Augustus establishes a worldwide reign of prosperity and peace which embodies the highest values of Roma (Harrison 2000:89). A bit later (*ca* 1 AD) Ovid (*Met*, 15.745-751) wrote a hymn to Caesar which, having already in mind his 'progeny', was pointing to Augustus (cf. Klauck 2003:294)[111]. Could it not be that the Christ-hymn plays exactly against this current? After all, he who dies in the hymn not only lives as universal lord, but opens the door for the inclusion of many to his 'heavenly family' (2:15 and 3:20-21). This is what Heen (2004:127) observes:

> The Greek hymns preserved in the New Testament may provide such a middle term between the hegemonic and public transcript of the cities of the East and the potentially subversive deconstruction of it that took place among some of the early followers of Christ out of earshot of the local authorities.

This laudatory artistry was something to which Greeks were used. Klauck (2003:257) shows a cultic hymn dedicated to Demetrius *Poliorketēs* ('conqueror of cities', who freed Athens in 307 BC) which displays all the elements of

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111 He has come hither as a foreigner to our temples:
Caesar is a god in his own city. He was a man of importance
in armour and toga, but it is no less thanks to the wars
which he brought to a triumphal conclusion of victory
that he has become a star with a blazing tail.
It is not so much what he did at home that constitutes his glory—
which so quickly spreads abroad—but rather his progeny.
For none of all Caesar's great deeds was greater than this:
that he was father of his progeny.

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human elevated to the status of the divine. As we saw in chapter 4, the treatment Roman emperors received was in accord with a much earlier tradition.

2.4.1.2 Christ's Lordship *vs* Caesar's Empire

> *Jupiter controls the heights of heaven and the kingdoms of the triformed universe; but the earth is under Augustus' sway.*
>
> (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.858-60)

Despite some discussion on the matter of the dating for the evidence, most specialists support the idea that the emperor cult was firmly established in Philippi at the time of Paul's mission (Tellbe 1994:109)[112]. As I mentioned earlier, it was the fastest growing religion in the East (Price 1984b:1-22; Wright 2002:175). Thus, we may suppose that the imagery of one 'equal to God' who becomes universal κύριος and receives universal homage must have struck a cord in their mind. Paul is contrasting Jesus Christ with all other κύριοι, specifically the Roman emperor (cf. Bornhaüser 1938:14-15; Georgi 1991; Campbell 2008:135)[113]. At the time of Paul's mission in Philippi, divine honours were only ascribed to the emperor and his family. The colony 'was managed in the name of *Imperator Divus*, and the head of the administration was a high priest of a cult to Augusti' (Heen 2004:136; cf. Tellbe 1994:109). However, it is also true that the exploits of the emperors were presented as mirroring the cosmic order (cf. Maier 2005:334), so that the imperial ὁμόνοια, won by Caesar when he pacified the political power that threatened with civic chaos, mirrored that of Zeus ordering primordial chaos (Lucan, *Bell Civ* 1.33-67; cf. Maier 2005:335; Wright 2002:176). Klauck (2003:250) notes that already in 9 BC

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[112] Pilhofer (1995:93) is not certain about the dating of some epigraphic evidence and is therefore reluctant to conclude on the firm establishment of the emperor cult. Koukouli-Chrysantaki (1998:15-16) supports the idea that at least one of the temples (NE of the forum) was dedicated to the emperor; and de Vos (1999a:249) affirms that both temples were dedicated to the emperor. Despite some difficulty with the dating, it seems reasonable to infer that the emperor cult was present and alive in the first century AD (cf. Heen 2004:135). For a critical view of this, see Álvarez Cineira (2007:330), who observes that emperors contemporary with Paul (with the exception of Caligula) did not enforce the worship of the emperor.

[113] Although there is general agreement today that Paul's gospel carries political connotations, there is wide disagreement on the theme whether emperor worship eased the way up to Christ worship. Hengel, Hurtado and others oppose the notion that secular state religion could function as a model for Christian worship; rather it affected it negatively. Maier (2005:325), on the other hand, though not conceding that emperor worship can explain Christ-devotion, affirms that 'reference to the imperial cultural system in which Christianity took root and grew helps to recognize the appropriation of imperial theme ideas by Christians to make sense of their religious devotion and to communicate their own ideals' (cf. Collins 1999:241-242).

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Augustus had been called σωτήϱ in a text from an inscription in Prienne, which closely resembles the world presented in the gospel of Luke (Lk 2:1).

I commented earlier about the ancient preoccupation with the coherence between words and deeds. This is also true of the Roman emperor, whose *cura* and *clementia* (cf. *RG* 34) were assessed on how he treated those under his authority. In Dio Cassius' *Roman History* 56.41.4-5, the author exalts Augustus' benefaction in a manner which reflects the content of 2 Cor 8:9: 'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich' (RSV):

> How can one refrain from mentioning the Roman people at large? For them he provided public works, largesses, games, festivals, amnesty, food in abundance, and safety, not only from the enemy and from evildoers, but even from the acts of Heaven, both those that befall by day and those also that befall by night. There are, again, the allies: for them he freed the liberty of its dangers and their alliance of its costs. There are the subject nations also: no one of them was ever treated with insolence or abuse. How could one forget to mention a man who in private life was poor, in public life rich; who with himself was frugal, but towards others lavish of his means; who always endured every toil and danger himself on your behalf, but would not inflict upon you the hardship of so much as escorting him when he left the city or of meeting him when he returned; who on holidays admitted even the populace to his house, but on other days greeted even the senate only in its chamber?

However, we need to be careful in assessing Paul's strategy. I believe the apostle considered his communities as ends in themselves rather than means to an end (even when the progress of the gospel is in view, *pace* Smith 2005). The same can be said concerning the Roman state. I do not think that Paul's idea was to construct an alternative network of communities opposed to Roman power (*pace* Horsley 1997, 2000; cf. Wright 2002:179)[114]. The apostle was interested in explaining the work of God in Christ in them, the place of the Spirit, how all these effected their daily life, etc. Campbell (2008:73) summarises well my own thoughts regarding the communities he founded:

[114] Horsley's (1997:209) suggestive presentation of the apostle as that who 'was building an international political-religious movement also known by the political term *ekklēsia'* as 'local communities of an alternative society to the Roman imperial order' needs to be assessed in light of its outcome. However, Horsley merely remarks that 'again his practice may not have embodied his *intentions'* (:213, my emphasis). This kind of language is too slippery, and in order to have any effect it needs to be supported by more concrete evidence. For once, *Ad Diognetum* 5.5 stresses the exemplary participation of Christians in the *politeia* (public arena). See also Clark Wire (2000:127). For a balanced critique of Horsley and the *Paul and Politics Group*, see Álvarez Cineira (2007).

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> Of course we recognize that they were regarded as a new creation in Christ and they were destined to grow together towards Christ. But this makes their well-being even more important and determinative. Hence Paul's purposes for them are not designed to eventually cause separation from Judaism or opposition to Roman imperial power. Such secondary goals would hinder their sole allegiance to Christ and his kingdom, and nothing must stand in the way of this.

Am I then denying any possible 'political' value to Paul's message? Not in the least, but the apostle needs to be assessed in its own context[115]. Paul renders Christ' lordship as the *highest* lordship of all (again the element of comparison), but he is well aware that the Philippians—and he himself— function under a multitude of identities which juxtapose with one another. The problem here is not so much to obliterate any of their social identities but to submit all other identities to the lordship of Christ in a way that is both practical and plausible. A new way of dealing with the horizontal plane (the social level) and the vertical (what pleases God in his own terms) would emerge from this willing submission. After all, Paul's aim was to bring the gentile world into 'loyal allegiance —*hypakoē pisteos*, the obedience of faith— to this universal Lord' (Wright 2002:176).

2.4.2 Christ and Religious Myths

We can never be certain up to what extent Paul's audience could relate the Christ-hymn to contemporary religious myths, but I am fully aware that these were present in the colony from old days[116]. It is always easier to assume a Jewish background when we have in mind Paul as author. However, the history of interpretation shows us once and again that the 'authorial intent' (if it can be known) is not always what the audience reflects back, and that there is no need to discriminate between these two possible and not antithetical

[115] Horsley (1997:3) recognizes the still long journey ahead: 'Since so little attention has been devoted to the Roman imperial context of Paul's mission and his relation to it, we are only at the point of attempting to formulate appropriate questions and provisional research strategies'. Cf. Wright (2002:180).

[116] My approach builds on that of Portefaix, who considers that Paul's audience came from paganism and was in its first stages of development. Portefaix (1988:152) states: 'To a great extent Paul's message agreed with the religious background of his audience, but the reciprocal content of the message was new to them. Pagan worshippers recognized sorrows in the lives of their gods as paralleling their own experiences, but such coincidence did not mean imitation of divine action, and the idea of a god assuming the ills of the world was unprecedented'. Although a young community, it is fair to assume that they had been in partnership with the apostle long enough (4:15) and that they possessed more than a basic knowledge of the faith. Paul's letter is no a treatise on the rudiments of salvation, but it is aimed at dealing with specific problems that were plaguing the community and hindering its growth.

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purposes (i.e., Jew/gentile audiences), which could be in the mind of the apostle simultaneously (cf. Wright 2000:174). Moreover, the ideological/literary horizon with which specialists have to reckon today comprises a much wider scope than it was earlier acknowledged. The New Testament as *ad hoc* literature needs to account for a more comprehensive literary *Sitz im Leben*. Here I summarily present a broad understanding of some literary myths that were surely known to the inhabitants of the colony and which could have been triggered as the text of 2:6-11 was being read aloud. My aim is to point out the continuity/discontinuity the hymn may have evoked in the audience in light of these literary myths, since, as Champlin (2003:237) has observed, Roman life was pervaded by myth: 'So common was the vocabulary of myth in daily life, high and low, that it was one of the hardest currencies in public debate: it provided simple, universal codes which everyone could comprehend'. Having said this, my goal is not to produce parallelisms or loose connections, as if that would prove interdependence. The history-of-religions school's approach has been long in decline and we should not replicate the limiting focuses of past ages[117]. I shall be contented with presenting a brief overview in order to show the presence of myth in the area, no doubt, with its powerful imagery.

Collins (1999:245) emphasises that the 'motif according to which a god takes on human form is common in Greek literature', so that the Philippians may have had a clear background where to place the Christ narrative and perceive the new values the apostle was displaying. Collins presents several helpful examples: Odysseus, after returning from Ithaca, disguised himself as a beggar. Then he is mistreated by Antínöos, one of the suitors of Penelope, who is in turn rebuked by other of the suitors saying:

> A poor show, that — hitting this famished tramp —
> bad business, if he happened to be a god.
> You know they go in foreign guise, the gods do,
> looking like strangers, turning up

[117] While not discounting the new possibilities it brought, Klauck (2003:151-152) is quick to point out that the *religiongeschichtliche Schule* overlooked the fact of an intense connection between the Jesus movement with Hellenistic thought. The possible connections between the language and ideas of the mystery cults with the early Christian movement have to be carefully assessed and qualified, since their apparent relation is now perceived as distant and the 'types' (resurrection equates with the dying and rising of divinities) are considered in a differentiated manner. Thus, my approach seeks to capture some of the literary *humus* familiar in the colony and present some sporadic examples to better comprehend the atmosphere in which the Christ-hymn could have been received. Klauck once more is helpful in this sense: 'This means that no one today would wish to put up an unqualified defence of the main theses of the founders of the school of the history of religions. But this does not mean that the last word has been spoken on the subject of the relationship between the mystery cults and early Christianity. At any rate, the indisputable similarity of many phenomena remains interesting from an anthropological perspective' (:152). Balch shares the opinion (2003:49).

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> in towns and settlements to keep an eye
> on manners, good or bad[118].

The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* speaks of how Demeter, led by her grief and anger over the kidnapping of her daughter, 'went to towns and rich fields of men, disfiguring her form for a while', looking like an old woman, although there is a moment in the hymn where she recovers her divine state of being:

> When she had so said, the goddess changed her stature and her form (μέγεθος καί εἶδος ἄμειψε), thrusting old age away from her: beauty spread around her and a lovely fragrance was wafted from her sweet-smelling robes, and from the divine body of the goddess a light shone afar, while golden tresses spread down over her shoulders, so that the strong house was filled with brightness and with lightning[119].

The important function of the narrative was to guide the initiated into the mysteries of the goddess (cf. Klauck 2003:91-94). How this practice could have appealed to new Christ-followers is unknown, but the important element is that its narrative presence must have been known in the colony.

Collins cites some other examples (Apollodorus, who preserves a tradition about Zeus in *Bibliotheca*; etc.) that express how common this view was in Greek literature. Jewish sources also presented some elements which are roughly parallel with the shift from the second to the third stage of the Christ-hymn (2 Ki 3:11; *1 Enoch* 71), although the 'motif of exaltation following upon death, the pattern expressed in Philippians 2, is lacking' (Collins 1999:246). Portefaix (1988:147-148) follows the same route, focusing on those deities associated with the colony from old. She offers a valuable observation that I think has some specific value when read in light of Phlp 2:6-11: Christ is presented as reigning also over the Underworld (καταχθονίων, 2:10), which could have strong reverberations in the religious environment of Philippi. Christ is thus lord over the chthonic powers[120].

The Egyptian gods (especially Isis) played an important part in the religious life of the colony (cf. Ferguson 1993:249), though we do not really know how they could have affected the Christ-following community (cf. Portefaix 1988:114). As Klauck (2003:129) observes, with the cult of Isis we 'follow the spread of Egyptian thinking in the Graeco-Roman Mediterranean world [...] People looked to the Egyptian spiritual world of ancient, hidden wisdom that would

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[118] Homer, *Od* 17.485-487; in Collins (1999:245).
[119] *Hymn to Demeter* 93-94, cited in Collins (1999:245).
[120] That the καταχθονίων may refer only to gods and demons and not include the dead in the underworld is of no concern here (cf. Portefaix 1998:148, n 77).

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explain life's mysteries'. The myth accumulated diverse layers of tradition and only Plutarch (second century AD) presented a final form in his *De Iside et Osiride*, borrowing elements from the Eleusian myth (:130)[121]. What was actually a religious public performance eventually acquired the typical form of the mystery cult only when it was reshaped in Greece (:131). Pretorius (1998:564) discerns concomitances in Paul' use of certain technical terms that are related to the Isis cult (μυεῖσθαι, 'initiated', cf. 4:12; τέλειοι, 'the perfected', cf. 3:15), which was celebrated in Philippi since 42 BC. For Pretorius, Paul filled these expressions with new content in connection with the example of Christ's self-humiliation. Balch (2003:26) aims at opening a new possibility when approaching the communal meetings of the Christ-followers asking the question of what role did Graeco-Roman tragic art (mural pictures in tenement buildings) play in the comprehension of the gospel (especially the crucified Christ, cf. Gl 3:1)[122]. However, it is perhaps too early in the history of the movement to consider a manifested reaction to such artistic display on the part of the Christ-followers[123]. There are traces of a temple dedicated to Isis on the acropolis as well as the existence of a meeting point in the town centre (Isis was said to be the 'protectress' of the colony), but according to Abrahamsen (1995:25), this only happened during the third century AD.

'Silvanus occupies a special place in the general polytheistic system in that he stood completely outside public cult. He had no state temple, festival or holy day. Despite his ancestral standing, he was never closely bound up with political and civic life, but remained the concern of the individual and the family' (Dorcey 1992:1-2). Some historians opine that Roman private religion was underdeveloped and subordinate to state cult, because '[a]ncient religions were primarily public religions' (Price 1987:120). The weight of the argument for the study of this god resides in whether it can be proven that the cult of

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[121] 'Our chief informant about the mysteries of Isis is Apuleius, in the eleventh Book of his *Metamorphoses'* (Klauck 2003:134).

[122] Galatians 3:1 contains the word προεγράφη ('publicly exhibited'; also used for 'painting'), which provides the base for Balch's attractive approach. Bartchy (2003:27) assumes 'that the interpretation of the biblical texts would have been influenced consciously by the visual representations valued in Greco-Roman domestic culture'. We need to remember that early Christ-followers did meet in their own homes (οἰκία, οἶκος). Although to my knowledge there has not been found a *domus ecclesiae*—a second step in the development of 'church' building—in old Philippi, Balch bases his case on the paintings in the house of Livia on the Palatine in Rome and in other houses in Herculaneum and Pompeii.

[123] No doubt we have artistic display in the catacombs (peacock, water, fish, etc.) that make reference to 'Christian themes', but the Christ-followers used, until the closing of the second century, the same motifs, styles and pictures of their non-Christian neighbours (Snyder 2003:68). Balch's (2003:52-54) mention of the staurograms (where *tau* and *rho* are combined to form a cross) found in papyri dated from the second century is helpful, but it is not conclusive. In my opinion, the possible incidence of these paintings on the comprehension of the gospel of the crucified Christ is still to be proven.

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Silvanus could at any point in time, influence or rival with the worship to Christ[124]. Silvanus is the best documented example of a popular god in Roman paganism[125]. Most of Silvanus' adherents were people from the lower strata: humble folk, slaves, freedmen and free. The fact that he was the Roman god of agriculture, forests, hunting and boundaries explains why it appealed to these peoples, because it was so close to the 'humus' of society, and within the reach of the humble. De Vos presents a rather complete list of his devotees and concludes that though the majority possessed Roman tripartite names, their *cognomina* suggested they came from a variety of backgrounds. Some even held Greek *cognomina*, which would refer to a servile origin[126]. However, the problem relates with the dating of such a list and the confirmation that it comes, at least, from the first century AD.

The cult of Dionysus is the most important cult that relates to the Christian tradition. According to Herodotus (Hdt. 5, 7), Dionysus was worshipped by the Thracians; perhaps a sure evidence of the origin of the deity. Portefaix (1988:99) points to the importance the worship of Dionysus had for local women, since it provided them with an ecstatic cult that could meet the deepest needs of Philippian women. In his Bacchanals, Euripides portrays Dionysus as a god become human but who still uses his powers when the occasion requires it. Although it is difficult to ascertain if Paul may have had such an example in mind when writing Philippians, Dionysus' attitude certainly contrasts with the radical denial of use of power for personal gain that we have seem displayed in the Christ-hymn.

The common Greek notion was that an immortal (*viz.* one destined to enjoy everlasting fame) received veneration after his death due to the services rendered to humanity (Heen 2004:141). Collins (1999:247) observes that though the complex of traditions present a striking analogy to the second and third stages of the Christ-hymn (a human being suffers for the good of humanity and it is therefore exalted and given divine nature and status), they do not match the first stage (though Herakles begins from a semi-divine status by birth). Herakles (i.e., Hercules) is one of these heroes who are so venerated (cf. Diodorus of Sicily 1.2.4; Apollodorus, *Bibl* 2.4.12) and who had become the

[124] That his title *Sanctus* may have influenced later Christianity and the name of some saints (e.g., Saint Sylvester, Bishop of Rome 314-335) is of no concern to us here. My interest resides in the possible influence in the early years of formation of the Christ-following movement, especially in the Pauline version of it and its possible echoes in the Christ-hymn.
[125] He qualifies as such because of the reasons exposed above: his cult remained in the context of the family and unconnected with public life. Cf. Dorcey (1992:3).
[126] De Vos (1995a:243-4; especially n 41).

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patron deity of the philosopher (cf. Knox 1948:232)[127]. The *topos* of immortality won by valour was one of the basic concerns of the encomium (Heen 2004:141). Now, it is always risky to perceive connections that for us are the product of cross-pollination of different traditions, but in the case of Herakles, I observe that possibly both Plutarch and Paul were drawing from a commonplace of philosophic rhetoric (see Knox 1948:238)[128].

There were other deities and heroes worshipped in the colony such as Asclepius, which had been venerated since the fourth century BC, with evidence of Roman use (cf. de Vos, 1999a:248; Koester 1983:173f). Knox (1948:238) recognises in the aretalogy of Imouthes-Asclepius a striking similarity with the language of Phlp 2:11: 'every Greek tongue shall recount the history and every Greek shall honour Imouthes the son of Phtaht' (*Pap Ox* XI 1381.198f). With all, I still believe 2:11 presents a more direct dependence on Is 45LXX.

Abrahamsen (1995:8) mentions at least two goddess cults prominent in Philippi, still active by the middle of the second century AD, and draws from it the conclusion that women were quite active in the life of the city. As it could not be otherwise, the colony reflected a religious microcosm of the Graeco-Roman world. Abrahamsen reflects a strong religious syncretism in the area, since some Greek and Roman deities were worshipped under different Thracian names and vice versa (:15). Her focus shifts to the time after Paul left Philippi, so that I will return to her careful study of the religious shape of the colony in the final chapter.

I think it would be premature to transfer some elements from the known literature and religious background into the Christ-hymn as if simple structural or literary similarity could prove direct dependence or automatic ideological opposition (see Knox 1948:232). The Christ narrative provides a magnificent opportunity for the apostle to echo and contrast values and narratives that could very well have been part of the audience's ideological register. Paul's christological language may show close affinity with the descriptions and panegyrics of these figures of the pagan world[129]. Local deities were spatially

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[127] However, since the exploits of a human exalted to hero were difficult to reconcile with being the god who was the logos who provided the cohesion to the cosmos, Cleanthes believed there were two Herakles, one the hero and other the god (cf. Knox 1948:235).

[128] Plutarch (*Alex* 1.8) speaks of Alexander's caution, since he did not overrun Asia like a brigand, as if seizing it and overturning a prize (ἅρπαγμα). Alexander is later said to have imitated Herakles (*Alex* 11 [314a]). Knox (1948:238) cannot resist to the possibility that maybe this literary echo favoured Paul's choice of words in 2:6.

[129] Some, as did Justin later, would explain the 'resemblance between Jesus and Dionysus, Perseus, Heracles and Asclepius by the ingenious view that the demons had heard and

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marginalised, although they still persisted during imperial times (Hellerman 2003:335). The spatial boundary marked by the *pomerium* was likewise a powerful deterrent for those deities which Roma did not deem as worthy as the cult to the emperor and her own gods. However this was understood, Phlp 2:9-11 presented a universal *kyrios* reigning over all of these, both above and below, even in the earthly—horizontal—plane. As Ferguson (1993:582) observed, neither the truth nor the value of the Christ movement hinges on its uniqueness, rather, 'which is truly unique to Christianity is Jesus Christ'.

3. The Function of Philippians 2:5-11

I reveal nothing new by affirming that the so-called Christ-hymn functions both as an example and as a theological narrative that tells of Christ's work on behalf of humanity, providing its unity (cf. Basevi and Chapa 1993:346). There need not be any irresolvable tension between the ethical and soteriological perceptions, because, in a sense, this hymnic passage is revelatory of the character of God as reflected in the story of Christ (cf. Fowl 1990:198). Both senses, thus, have place within my understanding of the hymn, albeit with important nuances. Käsemann's preoccupation with the hymn's revealing of the 'drama of salvation' was placed against any possible ethical interpretation. His strong biased position should be understood as a reaction to contemporary trends in the German theological scene (Morgan 1998:43; Hurtado 1984:115)[130]. This argument about the 'inimitability' of Christ's acts (Martin 1983:xiv) goes, nevertheless, against the imitation typology (*Vorbild*) common of the age. The philosophers were not the only ones who provided audiences with such models, but—as I already mentioned earlier—the emperor himself[131]. Capper (1999:295) agrees: 'The authors of the NT inherited a culture in which imitation and example were part of the moral discourse'. However strict Käsemann and Martin want to be in refraining from the ethical element in the hymn, in the wider context of the letter it forms the basis for Paul's theology, both in its

misunderstood the prophecies of His coming and so provided spurious imitations in advance' (Knox 1948:247).

[130] Käsemann was reacting against liberal Protestantism's ethical idealism, also shared by Barth (1928:61), who interpreted the hymn dogmatically and avoided the ethical component. Käsemann tried to resist contemporary personal subjectivity and applied instead a critical analysis, championing a 'real objectivity' (1978:71-72; cf. Hurtado 1984:115). The *Anthropos* continues partaking of a heavenly nature and therefore cannot become a model. He is a prototype, never a model (Käsemann 1978:105).

[131] Oakes (2001:190): 'The Emperor's moral qualities were shown specifically in the way he governed the Empire. His acts were *ipso facto*, inimitable – yet they could be regarded as ethical example'. Jesus' call 'Follow me' (Mk 1:16-20 par) should be viewed also in this way (Capes 1999:293).

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soteriological and moral significance. But this is something I still need to demonstrate[132].

The so-called hymn functions as an argument against both external (1:27ff) and internal hostilities (3:1ff). It serves the apostle to support his ethical demands (Fowl 1990:77), but there is also a soteriological element present which has to do, ultimately, with the extension and the advance of the good news (cf. Smith 2005:47). It is perfectly reasonable to conclude that the narrative of Acts 16 is aiming at portraying a general scene that describes more than a persecution due to religious reasons. We are told that the reasons are primarily economical and political (even ethnic), rather than a clash of religious systems ('Christianity-versus-Paganism', as it were), within a modern mindset. No, the reasons are deeper and embrace the life-matrix of the entire society, because the choice Paul presents calls for a radical commitment, a radical shift of alliance. No wonder then, that Oakes (2001) perceives economical struggles within the Philippian Christ-following community, or that de Vos (1999) observes tensions due to the potentially suffocating atmosphere of the colony, and in the entire Macedonian region (cf. 2 Th 1:4). This message (whether Paul's or Pauline) seems to run across the New Testament (2 Tm 3:12): 'Indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted' (καὶ πάντες δὲ οἱ θέλοντες εὐσεῶς ζῆν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διωχθήσονται)[133].

There are two important elements to discuss, which I believe affect the overall understanding of the passage. Firstly allow me to start with the description of the actions the text portrays. Jesus, being equal to God, did not use this privilege for his advantage. Fulfilling his task (in the realm of his earthly ministry, to refrain from the more technical 'economy of salvation') in complete obedience, he received the approval of God. He was then highly exalted and granted a name above any other name. The question emerges: Where does Jesus start from and where does he end? Is he elevated to a higher level than he enjoyed earlier? Is there a higher honour than *being equal to God*? Secondly, if the ethical interpretation has any force, it implies that there is an explicit call to imitation, but also a presentation of what the outcome of such a course of action carries with. Are the Philippians promised then that they too will be exalted

[132] Martin (1983:288) argues that Paul nowhere else uses the earthly life of Jesus as *exemplum ad imitandum*, but Hurtado (1984:120) has shown that Martin's assessment goes against evidence already proven (cf. Rm 15:3, 8; 1 Cor 11:1; 2 Cor 4:8-11; 5:14; 1 Th 1:6; all these passages have to do with Jesus' death, but nonetheless present his self-sacrifice as pattern for behaviour).

[133] Goodman (1994:105) thinks the 'biggest agent of transformation for the convert was negative: withdrawal from pagan worship', which indeed meant social separation from the surrounding society. He believes this sense of alienation may have been crucial in leading the Christ-following communities to form an alternative societies and (I add) eventually to understand themselves as alternative.

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and given honour if they live a life not centred on the self (2:5)? That is, are we again committing the same mistake of taking vv. 6-8 as paraenetic and forgetting about the importance for Paul's ethical reasoning in vv. 9-11 (cf. Fowl 1990:82-83)?[134]

In order to answer the first question I need to ascertain if the text aims at explaining a detailed christology or if it should be understood as a theological narrative. On the ontologically plane, there cannot be a higher position than 'being equal to God' (2:6). How could then Jesus be exalted higher than that? If my interpretation of the text is well-founded, the hymn does not infer that he was. However, Wanamaker (1987:190) discerns it in the use of the *hapax* ὑπερύψωσεν, a reference to placing Jesus Christ to a higher position of dignity than he had before[135]. He was super-exalted by God on account of a life-style that reflects God's values (cf. Hurtado 1984:125). The hymn does not portray a meritorious action which grants him a higher honour than before. Jesus takes the form of a slave, in total submission to God, ready to deny even his own life. Jesus is faithful to the task to him *assigned* (although this is only implied). God bestows on him the title κύριος and encumbers him above all other κύριοι (2:11)[136]. His radical and willing identification with the human condition to utter limits grants him the approval of God the Father, because God himself fully identifies with that way of life[137]. It is in this identification with the weakness of our human existence that he is able to break through a system based on merit and honour (i.e., in power and status)[138].

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[134] Basevi and Chapa (1993:349) understand the letter as epideictic speech and 2:6-11 as encomium and not as *exemplum*. Thus, the Christ-hymn is basically a praise piece that serves as a call for the unity he has accomplished. Some scholars defend that epideictic speech cannot be linked to a paraenetic function, but Basevi and Chapa disagree with such stereotyped and inflexible approach (:351). For a detailed description of their case, see pp. 351-356.

[135] Wanamaker understands that God granted Christ what he was not willing to grasp before, not denying his pre-existence. While the possibility is attractive, I think he places too strong a stress on hierarchy as he defends that Jesus appears as the Son of God. His interpretation, though, opens new possibilities for further study. Heen (2004:138) understands ἁρπαγμός (v. 6) as *res rapienda* (something to be grasped *de novo*) in light of emperor cult practices, but his argumentation is not convincing; though he is right at pointing that in Graeco-Roman culture the line between divinity and humanity was blurred in antiquity according to our contemporary standards (:141).

[136] Not only emperors and masters were known by this title; it was also used as a reverential epithet for deities (e.g., Lord Serapis). For an in-depth study, see Hurtado (2003:108-118).

[137] It is interesting to notice, in this respect, that Paul presents a 'conceptual overlap between God and Christ' (Hurtado 2003:113) that is quite suggestive, and which is nowhere else better highlighted than in Phlp 2:10-11.

[138] It might just be a wild ideological jump, but I wonder if the following observation could point to a wider application of the hymn. The meaning of μορφή in vv. 6-7 refers to the two outward (but accurately reflecting the real being that underlies it) appearances of Christ, both as God and as a slave. Could it be that both reflect the use of μορφή as 'family resemblance' (Wanamaker 1987:183-184) which ultimately point to God's own character who is all powerful

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I cannot deny that the last phase of exaltation may have elicited certain echoes of the apotheosis theme in the audience. It is only logical to expect this in such a context. However, and linked to the second question, Does Christ's highest name change his self-giving nature? Does the now κύριος become just like any other earthly κύριος? Radically no. He becomes κύριος to the *glory* of God (whether that is an Old Testament echo of 'reflection', as כבוד has it) during the entire process. The hymn portrays a subversive[139] message that challenges the bases of the present system[140]. As Oakes (2001:206) observes:

> If Christ has replaced the Emperor as the world's decisive power then we are no longer in the established Graeco-Roman social world. Instead of a world under the high-status man, whose Roman Empire has commanded the hardening of an already stratified Mediterranean society into stone, the world is under a new lord whose command is τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε and who enjoins ταπεινοφροσύνη. The lord even exemplifies these things. The whole basis of Graeco-Roman society is done away with.

I think Seeley (1994:65) has a valid point when he affirms that in the hymn we 'can see early Christians marking off themselves from the *oikoumene*'. However, Seeley does not explain what he means by 'early Christians'; neither does he reflect a genuine concern for the historical context in which the Philippians received the hymn or how they came about this 'marking off' in daily life. The matter is more complex, for 'Christians' did not leave the social and economic imperial matrix, as much as we may wish they did (cf. Meeks 1993:2). On the other hand the hymn announces the existence of a higher system of authority that has a specific social embodiment in mind, since it calls for a specific behaviour here and now. There is a sense, then, in which they are called to live

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yet inclined toward the lowly? This use of μορφή as family resemblance stresses that children reflect their parents in outward appearance (attested in 4Mac 15.5, Philo, *De Leg* 55; cf. Wanamaker 1987:184), which could be supported by the last reference in Phlp 2:11 when all that Jesus Christ does and receives is 'to the glory of God the *Father*'. This sense of familiar identity could be a subtle marker the apostle leaves in the text in order to stress the social identity that should ultimately characterise the ingroup. For Wanamaker (1987:184) this possible reference to divine sonship is connected with 2:7, where Jesus is said to 'being born in the likeness of men'. The important point, however is that both 'forms' ultimately reflect to whom Jesus belongs, because it resembles his progenitor.

[139] Álvarez Cineira (2007:326) is right at pointing out that the term 'subversive' needs to be placed within the Graeco-Roman context rather than assume an uncritical modern stance. Whether this observation will satisfy post-colonial interpreters is of no concern here.

[140] Marchal (2006:137) reads this quite differently. Looking at 2:12 and the apostle's call for obedience, he perceives the hymn's rhetoric to support a kyriarchal status for Paul after Christ's model. Such a paradigm, it seems to me, works against the narrative inner logic of the hymn, although it points to important elements within the complex (and why not, multifaceted) function of the hymn.

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within the system but with a different set of values; which eventually conformed into diverse alternatives to imperial power (see Pilgrim 1999)[141]. Heen (2004:151) spells some of the 'ideological social effects' the hymn portrays:

> Jesus, in replacing the emperor as *cosmocrator* in the hymn, also assumes his lordship over the *archontes* of the city (Acts 16:19). Again, from the perspective of the hymn, the exaltation of Jesus means that the *decurions* of the city find themselves subordinate to Jesus rather than to the *Princeps* [...] It is also safe to assume that the high elites would not have appreciated the fact that, in the hymns of the sectarians, they too paid obeisance to *kyrios* Jesus.

These changes were not effected immediately (or even later!) on the social level, but they supposed a symbolic inversion which, according to Heen, 'provide the impetus to construct social classifications that are alternatives to those offered in the public discourse' (:152). These symbolic reversals allow the community to think creatively in providing an appropriate climate where positive social experimentation may take place marking the identity of the ingroup and affirming a better course of action in *politeia*. The 'hymn' of the community thus espouses it. When there is no realistic possibility of access to the cradle of power to change things top-down, the community needs to revert to a different symbolic social space from which they draw strength for the day to day[142]. The aim is the progress of the gospel, no doubt, which ultimately comes in line with the eschatological but already inaugurated new age in Christ the Lord. In chapter 8 I will take a look at some of these different strategies in response, perhaps, to the message of leaders like Paul[143]. There is an element the hymn

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[141] It is in a sense easier to focus on the image of the emperor as locus of this reversal. However, this change has to do with structures within the community itself (slaves and owners, employers and employees, etc.). The text does not tell us how this was managed, although Pauline literature touched on these relationships (cf. Col 3:12, 18-23; 4:1).

[142] I believe Briggs' (1989:146) otherwise helpful insights, are marred when it comes to discern the social effects of the hymn. She understands slavery in terms of 'human condition', and for her the 'rescue from slavery, whether in a fictional, christological or metaphysical setting, depends on the intervention of a higher power'. As such, this intervention is used to legitimate on the 'metaphorical and theological level' that slavery 'was a social construction of reality' which conveyed the message to those enslaved that 'opposition to their slavery was as hopeless as resistance to their humanity'. Briggs had earlier criticized the hermeneutical tendency to dictate on the original audience the values of the interpreter's own understanding, but I think she ends doing exactly this (:138). To deny any soothing effect to the Christ-hymn for slaves seems to me to be a modern liberationist projection that has little to do with how the original Philippian audience understood the text. (Maybe it would have been more helpful for all of us, prior to interpreting this passage, if we, as interpreters of Philippians, could have had interviewed slaves or former slaves, or exploited migrant workers, on what this text might have affected in *them*). My critique of Briggs is not with the use of the text as possible oppressive tool for later audiences, but with that the text itself *supported* such a vision.

[143] This does not mean that Paul was an idealist in pursuit of a chimera. He was well aware that he worked under strong social determinants (imperial structure, Jewish opposition) and

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displays with full force: Paul's aim at creating a 'Christian' identity in the Philippians. Jesus Christ is the universal Lord to whom all creatures pay homage. Therefore he sets a higher standard above any religious ritual (circumcision, Torah abiding) or *virtus* (acquired *via* human effort; as the saying went: *in virtute summum bonum ponere*)[144]. Conforming to Christ involves thus living after his example of self-giving; giving up even precious social/religious pedigree (cf. 3:5-11) or seeking after personal honour at the cost of another's (2:4). Again, Paul can exhort the Philippian community to imitate him (and some others who live likewise, cf. 3:17) because he has already made the change in orientation (Christ-centred *phronesis*) and Christ's lordship has its fruits in his own life, though he does not pretend to have reached perfection (3:12-14)[145].

On the second question, I need to ascertain the purpose and function of the hymn as part of the larger context of the letter (cf. Basevi & Chapa 1993:339). Unless this is done, there is an inherent danger of not treating vv. 9-11 with due gravity. Many have pointed to the ethical application of vv. 6-8 for the Philippian community. The Philippians are to be looking for the interests of others rather than to themselves. That much is clear, and vv. 6-8 can so be understood. Hurtado (1984:125) argued for a new approach to the text by proposing that what the apostle demands from the community is *conformitas* to Christ rather than *imitatio* (cf. Hooker 1978:155)[146]. Fowl (1990:85) complains that Hurtado does not really spell out what this *conformitas* entails. Maybe I can fill Hurtado's helpful insight with some more content. *Conformitas* links well with the Christ-centred *phronesis* (cf. Smith 2005:44) mentioned earlier, but there is an element which needs to come *extra nos*, i.e., it is not a virtue that feeble humans can wilfully exercise. The orientation is something which is asked of

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common human limitation. 'But that means we must not simply bless what emerged and confuse the actual with the possible' (Campbell 2008:8).

[144] This does not necessarily mean that Jewish Christ-followers were unfaithful as they abided by the Torah in their practices, as if there only was Paul's way (Campbell 2008:72). As I mentioned earlier, *virtus* (understood in Graeco-Roman fashion) had a place in Paul's thought (4:8-9), but he placed it under the lordship of Christ in God, and never as human achievement.

[145] I find Campbell's (2008:156) insistence that Paul is the 'paradigm for Jewish Christian-identity but not for gentile' troublesome at times. I concur with him in that the apostle never leaves his Jewish background but, at least in Philippians, his concern is wider than such Jewish-gentile dialogue. For Paul his identification with Christ is so strong that at times it seems to blur our well-defined boundaries. This does not mean that Paul's multiple identities are obliterated, but it would be equally unfair to read the concerns of Romans and Galatians into the situation in Philippi. Paul's recurrent use of *imitatio* language in Philippians argues against the limited perspective Campbell imposes on the subject. After all, human existence, even in first-century Mediterranean society, was more than ethnicity, and had to do with work-relations, social status, gender, economics, education, etc.

[146] To my knowledge, the first scholar to use such a terminology was Dahl (1976:20, 34). By this, 'believers are called to see in Jesus' action no only the basis of their obedience but also its pattern and direction' (Hurtado 1984:123).

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the Philippians, but the *conformitas* goes beyond mere *imitatio*. To understand the hymn we need to link it with the text in 3:20-21. The linguistic echoes are more than casual, and not only share terms with the previous context of the hymn (1:27, πολιτεύεσθε; πολίτευμα), but with key terms in the hymn (ὑπάρχει, κύριος, and the compounds of σχῆμα, μορφή, ταπείνωσις, δόξα, τὰ πάντα). Hooker (1971:357) observes that more important than the language is the theme:

> Our body of humiliation is to be fashioned anew by Christ—who in chap. ii humbled himself, becoming man, and was found in fashion as a man; we are to be conformed to the body of his glory—who in chap. ii took the form of a slave and became man. This is to be done by the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we expect from heaven, through the power with which he can subject all things to himself—and we remember that in chap. ii he was exalted to heaven, given the name 'Lord', and with it supremacy over all things. In these verses, then, the meaning of Christ's exaltation for the believer is worked out: in Christ the Christian shares in the reversal of status which took place when God raised him[147].

Fowl's (1990:92-93) idea that Christ functions in 2:6-11 as an *exemplar* in Paul's argument is quite illuminating and shares in with SIT's terminology. Fowl, relying on Kuhn's (1970) insights, defines an exemplar as a 'concrete formulation or experiment which is recognized and shared by all scientists'.

> This is opposed to a law-like systematic generalization. These exemplars are useful for solving various problems and gaining new insights. Yet because exemplars only exist in concrete entities, their usefulness in problem solving depends on one's ability to see a similarity-in-difference between the exemplar and any particular problem (:93).

Not every concrete formulation would then be an exemplar, but it points nevertheless to the role this formulation plays. In the case of Phlp 2:6-11, this is not mere formulation, but it conforms a christological narrative, a 'christological story' (:93)[148]. Used in this manner, for Fowl the hymn draws on the analogy of how God vindicates those who act like Christ and becomes a call to the community on how to conduct their lives (:98). In SIT's *argon*, this *exemplar* is

[147] Hooker (1978:156) would later affirm: 'Paul not only uses the so-called hymn, therefore, as the basis of his ethical appeal to the Philippians, but draws on its language in describing the goal of Christian life which he links with the Parousia'.

[148] There is an important difference, though. While scientists look for concrete solutions for particular problems, in ethics there is a tendency to find exemplars in concrete formulations of previous situations. 'In fact, it makes much more sense to see Phil. 2:6-11 as the concrete formulation to a specific situation rather than a concrete solution to a problem' (Fowl 1990:94). They are to be used through analogy.

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also understood as a *prototype*, since it captures the 'central tendency of the category and derives from multiple experiences with category members' (Esler 2003:172). Capes' (1999:297-307) distinction of those elements in the hymn which are readily imitable in Jesus from those which are only exclusive of Jesus is helpful to avoid the traditional impasse imposed by the strict anti-ethical interpretation Käsemann proposed. As I mentioned earlier, Capes discerns that the inimitable elements were 'liturgised' in the early church: 1) meeting on Sunday morning (after the day of Jesus' resurrection; implied in ὑπερύψωσεν?); 2) prayer (a. the posture of prayer, perhaps kneeling or bowing to the ground, as recognition of Christ's lordship, b. the times of prayer, which more than the Jewish threefold structure seem to reflect the third, sixth, and ninth hour that tie them later with Jesus' pattern during his last week; cf. *Apostolic Tradition*)[149]. For Capes 'the imitation of Christ was not only a platform for ethics, but also it was an expression of worship'. The recognition of his actions in worship 'activated the memory and facilitated transformation into the image of Christ' (:306). This collective memory functions in order to put order into their lives in the midst of imperial propaganda (cf. Esler 2003:22).

However, this eschatological transformation has also a present reality[150]. The lordship of Christ is displayed socially by a people who so identifies with his ways that lives accordingly. This is called *holiness*: to live according to the new set of values *in* the present social system so that the Philippians shine as luminaries in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (2:15)[151]. Although the apostle has borrowed from his Jewish background (Dt 32:5)[152], it is clear that Paul contrasts here the behaviour of the ingroup with that of the outgroup in the *public* arena. Even though he does not say it directly, Paul stereotypes outsiders as those who are inevitably tainted with moral debauchery (2:15), while the saints (cf. 1:1) preserve their purity, under the lordship of a superior κύριος (Knust 2004:157). They are made part of God's ingroup (τέκνα θεοῦ, 2:15) by virtue of their participation in Christ (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:156). Now, there is no a *unique* way to understand the practice of such values in the public arena. From the Jewish communities, early Christ-followers had learnt the

[149] It is interesting to reflect that the element of suffering is quite present in this symbolization of the ritual, where the identification with the 'victim' is highlighted (cf. Elliott, N 1995:199).
[150] This is an important element to keep in mind, for Paul may not be confronting the same over-realised eschatology problem in Philippi that he faces in Corinth (cf. Campbell 2008:92).
[151] Silva (2005:117) rightly titles the section 1:27-2:30 as 'A Call to Sanctification'. The sub-section in 2:12-18—'Christian Obedience'—should be understood as obedience toward the Lord who at the same time relates directly with God the *Father* (cf. 2:15: τέκνα θεοῦ; 'children of God') and not toward the apostle, who only acts as intermediary. Tellbe (2001:134-135) sees in this usage a typical Jewish conception that Paul applies to gentile communities (cf. Campbell 2008:153).
[152] Phlp 2:14 finds powerful echoes of Israel's misbehaviour in the wilderness (Ex 17:2, 7).

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meaning of what it was to live *in* but *apart* (e.g. Jewish *politeumata*)[153], but the challenge here is to participation in the life of the city (1:27), representing higher values (3:21). This is presented in a manner similar to what the author of *Ad Diognetum* 5.4-5, 10 would later propose[154]. There is a direct outcome of this new orientation in life: they are to be united, working together, striving, suffering, being a help rather than living an agonistic and unsupportive existence[155]. And it is, furthermore, an identity that in origin claims a universal realm, as the universal lordship of Jesus Christ would suggest (cf. Lieu 2002a:300). It is not necessarily linked to geographical boundaries but transcends them, and in Diognetus' (5.5) paradoxical expression: 'every foreign land is their fatherland, and every fatherland foreign'. Boyarin (1994:259), who contrasts Pauline Christianity with rabbinic Judaism, may have presented here with a clue for understanding Paul's strategy better. Boyarin speaks of a 'diasporizing identity', learnt in the hard experience of Israel outside her territory, where she kept her difference without imposing her value-system onto any other nation. Boyarin affirms:

> Diaspora can teach us that it is possible for a people to maintain its distinctive culture, its difference, without controlling land, a fortiori without controlling other people or developing a need to dispossess them of their lands (:259).

For Boyarin this is the strength of rabbinic Judaism, and I suggest that such a strategy is exactly what Paul may have in mind in Philippians with the use of πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς (3:20). The Philippians are to maintain their Christ-like identity (their distinctiveness) in the midst of a hostile environment (2:15), but without reverting to the same strategy common society exerts: controlling, exerting authority over conquered peoples. They need to live in ταπεινοφροσύνη, trusting their Lord and saviour to change hostile circumstances (3:21), for He is not far (4:5).

Does the Philippian congregation understand in verses 9-11 that if they humble themselves they too will be exalted? Is there any mention of 'reward' in the

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[153] According to Tellbe (1994:116-117), Jewish communities in the Roman empire were exempted from certain civic obligations which would involve them in the religious functions of the city: 'The Jews were officially exempted from worshipping Roman deities and from participating in the imperial cult; they were spared as regards the titles of the Imperial cult and of the images testifying to the cult'. On these grounds, it is possible that the Judaizers' teaching on living according to Jewish regulations could be a tempting offer for social protection.

[154] Reumann (1984:600) concedes that τὸ πολίτευμα in v. 20 could be understood against a Roman legal background having in mind the *colonia* of Philippi as a 'colony of heavenly citizens' or as a 'society Christi', although the Jewish concept is also a possibility.

[155] Campbell (2008:36) stresses that it 'was such commitment to solidarity and mutual caring that enabled the Pauline communities not only to survive but to grow despite a hostile environment. Within these communities they belong to Christ and through him to each other'.

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hymn? For many, such a concept goes contrary to an ethic based solely on the grounds of faith, but Oakes (2001:203) opines the Philippians might have just understood it in this way. It was, after all, the common coinage of the time. What Oakes proposes is that if the leader wins the followers share in his victory. Thus, it is not that suffering is rewarded per se, but that what is important is to *whom* they relate. However tenuous this sense may be, Oakes stresses a more important element: the sovereignty of Christ (:204). If he possesses universal authority, society's imperatives are relativised. This element presents a potent ideology. If the system has been usurped and made void of its power—since there is a more powerful and universal Lord—then those who follow him may become de-marginalised. 'It is the community belonging to the one in authority' (:207). The Christ-following community receives from this message the strengthening of their social self-esteem. On these grounds Paul can now exhort the community to show forth her built-in values before a society still under the grip of these *former* powers (2:15). It is both in the public and private arena that their Christ-centred behaviour becomes evidence to the world of the Philippians' salvation (1:28; 2:12; 3:20) and of the outgroup's destruction (1:28; 3:19). What Esler (2003:209-210) observes in the letter to the Romans can also be applied here:

> In a society marked by pronounced social stratification, that all members were expected to treat one another in accordance with the (often countercultural) demands of ἀγάπη must have made the movement considerably attractive, especially when the poor and destitute could also expect support and sustenance from members with more resources[156].

There is a penultimate element in Paul's theology I need to comment on: his eschatology. The apostle uses his discernment on behalf of the Philippians concerning those who, by their behaviour demonstrate that are part of the ingroup, and those who act contrary to it, calling them enemies[157]. Earlier on we saw that this assessment is actually more complex when I pointed to the way Paul deals with rival preachers in Phlp 1, where he does not dare deny them the label 'brethren'. In all of this, however, there is an element that stands out: ultimately it is God, in light of the Christ event, who will decide the fate of

[156] The possible lack of sharing resources in the community Oakes (2001) observes does not run counter to my argument. Rather, it adds another reason why the hymn is inserted in the letter.

[157] Tracing these boundaries (friends/enemies, etc.) is a complex process. Boundaries are always difficult to define precisely, because by definition they are permeable. Lieu (2002a:302) explains this practice with skill: 'boundary drawing always involves a process of selection: in relation to those defined as "other", it is the selection of certain differences over actual similarities, in relation to those defined as "us", it is the selection of certain similarities as overriding undoubted differences. Moreover, boundaries also involve the exercise of power: who draws them, who enforces them, who observes them, who excludes, and who is excluded; the balance of power within, as well as the tensions with the power exercised from outside'.

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humankind (cf. Kreitzer 1998:121). Paul's repeated reference to salvation and destruction, as two antithetical realities, captures this eschatological element. The Philippian community, by means of their inclusion in the ingroup, are to be striving together, living out the Christ-solidarity which is found in the Philippian hymn. In this light we are to read the mention of σωτηρία in 2:12, which has direct concomitances with its insertion in 1:28 (cf. Fowl 1990:96). Their living in unity is an omen (ἔνδειξις) of their salvation (σωτηρία), not only to them, but to their adversaries, who somehow perceive in the Philippian Christ-followers' attitude their own impending destruction (ἀπώλεια)[158]. The Philippians' obedience (to be Christ-like) is what Paul's refers to as 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling' (2:12)[159]. Then, in 3:18 the apostle likewise refers to the τέλος of the 'enemies of the cross' as 'destruction' (ἀπώλεια). Both 'salvation' and 'destruction' are terms which ultimately point to future events[160]. Paul shares with the Philippian community his concern for the 'hints'/'proofs' he can already perceive in the different groups *via* their behaviour, but the last word is always in God's keeping, as it happens in the Christ-hymn. The fulfilment of this eschatological hope is advanced in 3:20-21: the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ will give full shape to the transformation (μετασχηματίζω) of their body of humiliation (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεος) to be just like his glorious body (τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ) by means of his unmatched power. Humiliation and glory are once again united in one single event. Rather than suggesting that the Christ-event has not changed anything (humiliation continues to be humiliation), it *already* supposes the change of lordship, although its full implications are *not yet* totally present[161]. It is in this tension they are to live their daily lives. It is the business of the Philippian Christ-followers (and those of the other communities, both Pauline and non-Pauline) to give concrete shape to this inaugurated kingdom: they have examples amongst them they can look up to.

Lastly, while much attention has been given to the role of the Philippians at receiving the so-called Christ-hymn, we need to point out a more crucial

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[158] This 'proof' is used elsewhere by Paul (2 Th 1:5; cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:101).

[159] Fowl (1990:96-97): 'In Eph. 6.5 it reflects the attitude of humility and willing submission slaves are to have toward their masters. In these cases μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου seems to be used as an idiomatic expression for a virtuous attitude of submission that people exhibit towards those over them'. This obedience (*pace* Castelli) is to be expressed ultimately to God (2:13), who gives impulse to their life.

[160] For the possible links of 3:18-21 with Ps 8, 101 and 1 Cor 15:24, see Doble (2002:24-25), who describes the heavenly Lord who ultimately lays the enemies at his feet.

[161] Doble (2002:26-27) may just be right when he observes that 'the body of our humiliation' (3:21) refers rather to those who have embraced the virtues of the new *politeuma*, which include humility because their lord underwent the same experience willingly (2:8). Thus, instead of rendering it as 'lowly body', the disciplined dimension (exercising humility after that of the master) is what is in view.

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element. Phlp 2:6-11 is ultimately about God's self-determination in Christ to identify with humanity's fate. I believe the hymn distils once more the essence of the good news Paul proclaims: divine grace poured onto feeble human beings. There is really no call in 2:6-11 to the community per se, only the demonstration of the character of God as seen both in Christ's course of action *and* in God's approval of what is according to his nature. From the point of view of identity formation, Phlp 2:6-11 invites reflection upon God's identification with what is deemed *un*worthy and *dis*honourable in the human realm. The Christ-hymn is more than an ethical appeal; it is the radical presentation of the character of God in the economy of our social level. It is both denunciation of the *status quo* and call to identify with God's mindset. As I mentioned earlier, the Philippian congregation, unable as it seems to climb up in the social scale, looks for social change *via* social creativity (Hogg & Abrams 1988:55). The group now looks for new dimensions for intergroup comparison and finds a crucial one: They belong to a superior kingdom which is so defined by God *their* father (2:15). Oakes had referred to followers sharing on the triumph of the victor, but here this lordship serves even a higher purpose. It re-defines the value of the *status quo* (which remains unchanged), and releases a positive social identity which has now a narrative (the Christ-hymn) that serves to consolidate the social memory of the group[162]. Ideas and opinions may come and go, but the powerful evocation of the Christ-narrative links the Philippians with their own practice, which ultimately aids them at comparing and assessing Paul's and others' living examples. Through social creativity strategies the apostle can then try to invert the values in society and proclaim something like 'humility and servanthood are beautiful' (cf. Hogg & Abrams 1988:28)[163]. This, furthermore, links them with past history, so that they have a place in the historical line. We need to understand that ancient persons did not precisely value something come *ex novo* as particularly attractive[164].

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[162] I add nothing new if I state that even today true-to-life stories have a much stronger impact on audiences than pure cognitive appeals. The power of narrative to influence and link with our own life-narrative is a powerful element in the creation of collective memory (cf. Esler 2003:23). Horrell (2002a:168) explains it with accuracy: 'The fundamental story of God's gracious dealings with humanity reach their zenith in the Christ event, itself the generative centre of this story, which *then* provides the paradigmatic story with which Paul shapes his telling of any other stories, including those about himself'. The apostle's desire is for the Philippians to share in this story themselves, because the promise of salvation embraces their entire existence (Phlp 3:21).

[163] 'These social creativity strategies are most likely to be used in combination with historical circumstances dictating their relative predominance, in order to improve the self-image through positive social identity of members of low-status groups' (Hogg & Abrams 1988:29).

[164] Many monographs mentioned in this study that deal with Philippians from a specific angle seem to obviate what Campbell is trying to recover: the continuation of the value of Israel and God's promises to them in the mission of Paul to the gentile world. The sheer mention of Jesus the Christ (Messiah) implies a determinate Jewish usage in Paul that needs to be taken into account. Thus, Campbell (2008:156) argues that this 'particular identity of Jesus as the Messiah of Israel also means, as we have already noted, that the life in Christ is further defined – it is not

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However, this is not to be used as privilege (as an earthly *politeuma*), since the apostle encourages then to 'remain vulnerable to suffering that results from their confession that Christ is *kyrios'* (Elliott, N 1995:197). This element is basic in order to understand Paul, for, independently of how the Philippians applied his teachings to daily life, Elliott is right in that such a calling was pressing:

> Indeed, this radical vulnerability in the world is one of the most striking characteristics of Pauline praxis. In a time when Rome officially recognized the right of Jews, alone in the Empire, to honor Caesar by prayers to their own solitary God in his behalf, Paul steadfastly urges the Philippians (and other congregations) to resist those—probably gentile converts to Christianity—who advocate the protective camouflage of a Judaizing way of life "Look out for the dogs, the evil-workers, those who mutilate the flesh" (3:2); "enemies of the cross of Christ, their end is destruction" (3:18-19).

This last point is indeed the core of the 'good news': God has completely identified with humanity. These 'good news' are to be celebrated in worship and, though Martin and others (1983:318-319) limit it to the Hellenistic Jewish mission, it seems to me that the announcement of a universal Lord is able to cross ethnic boundaries as well. Therefore, Rejoice in the Lord! (2:18; 3:1; 4:4). This vulnerability is based on the example of their *kyrios* and saviour, who comes from on high and who is near (ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς, 4:5).

4. The Christ-Hymn: Alternative Living in the City

We need to confront the fact that in a *Gemeinschaft*-type of community, life mostly happened in the public rather than in the private realm. So, how was this Christ-centred life supposed to be lived in public? Even though I have been stressing that a great part of a group's identity is based both on what one is *not* and on internal coherence, 'it needs to be questioned whether stress upon internal group solidarity necessarily creates an exclusivity that is alienating in relation to all other groups especially where the author of this has no sectarian intention and actually opposes such attitudes as in the case of Paul' (Campbell 2008:75). The apostle's strong rhetoric in 3:2 (βλέπετε) need not cloud us from his direct message to both participation in the life of the city (πολιτεύεσθε, 1:27) and to shining in the midst of the crooked world (φαίνεσθε ὡς φωστῆρες

individualistic but corporate, and the Jesus-movement is not a new religious movement without any prehistory but linked via Christ and the earliest Christ-followers to its origins as a messianic sect of Judaism'. However, and though in agreement with Campbell, I believe that in the case of Philippians this is more an *a priori* argument than something the letter distills when read in isolation from the rest of Paul's letters. The *ad hoc* element of Philippians is quite clear here, and reflects a concern for a gentile audience in the midst of a thoroughly gentile world.

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ἐν κόσμῳ, 2:15). After all, this radical Christ-orientation does not preclude the Philippians from living as *normal* human beings (with whatever identities they function) within the contours of the *polis*[165]. All attempts to define who the early Christ-followers were by adopting one set of clear boundaries (e.g., baptism, exclusion from imperial worship, etc.), are aimed at limiting what was indeed a much more complex existence (Lieu 2004:145). However, it is obvious than in what follows I can only present a prescriptive view rather than a descriptive one: we do not really know how the Philippians applied Paul's exhortations after the letter was read publicly.

What I want to stress in this section is the fact that Paul's exhortation leaves no escape for an understanding of the hymn solely based on 'spiritual realities'. Its placing in the letter aims at living the Christ-*phronesis* values in the area of the public, in the face of a system based on the veneration of the emperor which in turn reinforces the social stratification of the colony (cf. Hellerman 2003:331).

4.1 The Paradigm of Christ-like Living

> One must ask the question, What happens to social hierarchies in the Christian community when they come under the searchlight of an ethic that calls on everyone to serve and consider the interest of others? By this schema, leaders become at most exemplary or head servants, and Roman pecking orders become irrelevant or even obsolescent *within the life of the community*. In this regard the Christian community seems to have acted rather like some ancient clubs, trade guilds, and societies (*collegia*) in that a more egalitarian approach was taken and even slaves were allowed to have their say and assume some leadership roles[166].

When we read statements as the above we quickly sense that today's church has somehow deviated a long way from this (idealistic?) pattern of conduct. One of the problems in the early Church seems to have been the practice of lordship rather than of servitude on the part of some leaders (cf. Ac 20:28, 33; 1 Pt 5:2-3). In our own day and age it is easier to discriminate between theological reasoning and practical application, as if they were separate entities. I am not so sure that this was the way people in first-century society processed their

[165] Campbell (2008:93): 'Thus, whilst theologically, ethnic, gender and sexual issues are relativized by the call of Christ, they are neither obsolete nor irrelevant when it comes to real life situation, as liberation theology and other contextual theologies have long since stressed'. Campbell is here reacting to a notorious tendency to read the identity in Christ as annulling the past and forging a new person altogether. What I have learnt from Social Identity Theory's insights about how people function under a diverse set of identities prevents such limiting reading, since it does not correspond to empirical observation.

[166] Witherington (1994:65, original emphasis).

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identity. After all, as we have seen, it was expected of those who acted as 'spiritual-guides' to match rhetoric and deed with their own lives. It seems then that to 'fully identify with Jesus' is not enough in itself unless such an experience displayed a horizontal expression concretised first in the life of the ingroup. As Campbell (2008:37) observes: 'Solidarity and mutual identification are Paul's example and ideal for his communities', and nowhere is this more concrete than in Philippians: the apostle, for one, had already made the choice and expected the Philippians to follow suit. Can we really know how such paradigmatic Christ-following life should materialise in daily living?

4.2 *Apotheosis Christi*: The Worship of Jesus Christ

Many specialists observe both linguistic and ideological concomitances between Phlp 2:6-11 and 3:20-21 (Flanagan 1956:8-9; Lincoln 1981:88; cf. Reumann 1984, who mentions Weiss and Dibelius among others)[167]. From an ideological point of view, 3:20-21 follows as a logical sequence to 2:9-11. As Álvarez Cineira (2007:312) explains, in the imperial context, the resurrected (as implicit in the 'super-exalted' expression, 2:9) Messiah of the early Christian proclamation meant that Jesus had assumed the place of the emperor, and his death was a pathway to his final apotheosis. It is then in Phlp 3:20-21 that the Lord Jesus the Christ appears as a *saviour* who is enthroned in heaven from where the Christ-followers eagerly expect his appearance (παρουσία) to save his people. The term σωτήρ was used scantly both in the LXX and in Jewish writings (e.g. *Sib Or* 1.73). Thus it seems that its political overtones in reference to the Caesar in the Roman Emperor cult cannot be denied (cf. Bockmuehl 1997a:235), and its use is consistent with Paul's thought elsewhere (cf. 1 Cor 2:6-8; 15:24-28). Álvarez Cineira (2007:313) observes that in 54 AD the apotheosis and deification of Claudius had taken place, which could have been worked as the precise background to which the apostle was echoing both the Christ-hymn and the text of 3:20-21 (cf. Suetonius, *Claud* 44.3; *Ner* 8; Seneca, *Apocol* 2.2)[168]. Some writers, Seneca amongst them (also Tacitus, *An* 13.3-4), had written about the disastrous consequences of this apotheosis, since in the case of Claudius' tragic death it was suspected he had been poisoned[169]. As a matter of fact, Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis* ('apotheosis of a pumpkin') is a powerful prose-and-verse satire of the Roman world that may have had several concerns in mind besides a

[167] The possibility that 3:20-21 might have also been a hymn later inserted in the letter is beyond our concerns here.

[168] Whatever the provenance of the letter I opt for; all dates allow this temporal link. *P. Oxy* 1.37.5-6 already presented the title *kyrios* during the time of Claudius: Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος τοῦ κυρίου, which became more widespread under Nero (cf. Hellerman 2005:152).

[169] For an explanation of how apotheosis was 'proven', see Klauck (2003:293).

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direct critique of human deification (cf. Eden 1984:9)[170]. The same can be said about Nero's reign. Lucan (*Bell Civ* 1.60-66) 'looks forward to Nero's apotheosis when, having taken his place as a star (here as the sun) in the heavens, humankind will lay down its arms and peace will govern the earth, even as it already does under the emperor's divine governance' (Maier 2005:338). Nero's return was depicted as his ascent from the underworld, which contrasts with the image of the parousia of the risen Christ coming from heaven (Klauck 2003:307). These elements alone do not necessarily confirm either a direct borrowing or a challenge to the *status quo*, but they certainly place our text within a symbolic universe which was available to common citizenry[171].

Collins (1999:241) expresses the view that the veneration of Jesus originated quite early, during the first stage of reflection on the person of Jesus in relation to his death, and not in a second stage when numbers of gentiles joined the movement in settings away from Palestine and traditional Jewish devotion, as the history-of-religions school had defended. In this she follows in the footsteps of Hengel (1981:2), who in his introduction to the *Son of God* affirms that 'one is tempted to say that more happened in this period of less than two decades than in the whole of the next seven centuries, up to the time when the doctrine of the early church was completed'. This is not the place to engage on a thorough discussion on the role of monotheism and the worship of Jesus; others (e.g. Hurtado, Collins) have already done it quite successfully. What needs to be stressed is the fact that it is in Jesus' death and resurrection ('exaltation' in Phlp) that his lordship and messianic nature are understood (cf. Ro 1:4; Phlp 3:20-21). The cross of Jesus displays, within the 'hymn', the ultimate element which separates the practice of his lordship from that of the earthly rulers. No wonder then that such a central symbol becomes for Paul the boundary that separates 'brethren' from the outgroup.

5. Conclusions

The Christ-hymn, whether originally penned by Paul or heavily edited by him to fit its new context, is a revolutionary text. It places the core of the group's identity in something other than ethnic or nationalistic elements. The universal lordship of Christ is affirmed in subverted terms: He does not lord over all as other κύριοι pretend to do, but through a close identification with the

[170] Seneca had been banished to Corsica by Claudius for some years and the philosopher took vengeance on the emperor after his death (cf. Klauck 2003:305).

[171] Signs and portents were part of such universe. At the death of Julius Caesar in 44 BC, the preceding bad weather was understood *ex post facto* as a portent of doom (Virgil, *Geo* 1.466-488) while the comet that appeared during the games held in his honour as evidence of his apotheosis (Virgil, *Eclo* 9.46-49). Cf. Nisbet (1984:1).

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'unattractive' side of humanity. The hymn evokes a narrative that shifts the emphasis from a power-based structure to a self-giving one which ultimately aims at reordering their symbolic universe. It is in following this radical re-categorisation of their context that the Philippian believers are included in the ingroup. The apostle thinks that they already are, but lack the exclusive focus (Christ-centred *phronesis*) which is needed in order for the advance of the gospel. Inclusion in the heavenly *politeuma* is based on pure grace—it comes from above—and cannot be purchased or manipulated at will[172]. The maintenance and well-being of the ingroup depends on a re-alignment with these values that reflect the content of the hymn: humility, self-giving attitude and recognition of Christ's lordship. It is here also that the Philippians may find 'peace and security'. After all, they await their saviour from heaven. As Horsley (1997:141) remarks: 'The Philippians would hardly have been unaware that since the battle of Actium they already had a savior who was their lord'. The reference to the lord Jesus Christ as 'saviour' is the common one for anyone who saves or delivers, so there is no necessary connection with being 'saved from sin' (Fee 2007:402). Christ is the one who protects them, from whom they can receive their security, even as they are being intimidated by adversaries. The power displayed by this saviour who appears in human fashion and humbled himself to utterly nadir is, nevertheless, immense: τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ *τὰ πάντα* (3:21; cf. Ps 8:7LXX and 1 Cor 15:28), since it includes *all* things.

This Christ-identity the apostle proposes is based on the Christ-event, the narrative that gives birth to a new people no longer defined in ethnic origin or social merit terms. Paul captures this quite succinctly in Phlp 3:5-8, which displays his own practical understanding of 2:6-11:

> Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless. But ***whatever gain*** I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I ***count everything as loss*** because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus ***my Lord***. For his sake ***I have suffered the loss of all things***, and count them as refuse, in order ***that I may gain Christ***

[172] According to Portefaix (1988:153), the concept of 'celestial citizenship' was not unknown to Paul's audience. The idea was common both in Utopian tales as well as in Hellenistic romances (e.g. Iambulos' travel romance, reproduced by Diodorus Siculus 2, 59, 7). Portefaix further mentions the existence in Mt. Athos of a town founded in the third century BC which still existed in the first century AD which was called Uranopolis, or 'City of Heaven' (:154).

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Paul could have said it louder, but not more clearly. Campbell (2008:88), however, critiques those who have seen in this text more than what the apostle might have wanted to express (e.g. Barclay 2002:133-156, esp. 154). Barclay (2002:149) explains that Paul's experience has produced a 'complete reconception of the self', using the metaphor of being a 'new creation'. For Campbell (2008:88) this understanding leads to a *de facto* obliteration of what is behind: 'His past history in Judaism is negated and a complete new identity is supplied in Christ. The effect of this conception of Paul is that it enables him to be the paradigm of all Christ-followers whether Jew or gentile. Previous socialization and cultural identity are obliterated. Paul's experience of Christ is thus universalized to provide the template for one undifferentiated identity in Christ'. Campbell may just be right in his assessment in light of Phlp 3:5-11. We all operate under a complex set of identities, so it is virtually impossible that any given experience, no matter how powerful, would just annul all previous identities. A 'new creation' understood in this way would imply a different person to whom we were, and that is not what the apostle has in mind. Paul is clearly speaking in terms of *comparison*, although the zeal of his rhetorical style may at times cloud this fact. His Jewish pedigree is for him a sign of status in his own context; otherwise he would not have used it as an example. He is also aware that it is important in the honour-seeking context of the Philippian audience (3:4: 'If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more'). What he is then stating is that all this privilege is like dung *compared* to the higher price of identification with and knowledge of Christ. Paul expresses it (3:8) via economical terms: surpassing worth (ὑπερέχω); gain (κέρδος); loss (ζημία; cf. 1 Cor 3:15), etc., which leaves no doubt about the fact that he has already compared and tilted the scale the side of Christ, a far superior way. This then presupposes no obliteration of the past, but a radical reorientation of Paul's value system in light of what he deems a superior one that impels him to risk even loss of honour in his search to serve others[173]. There is *necessarily* no antithetical opposition between his Jewish identity and his identity in Christ. Campbell (2008:89) calls this a 'relativization of all things in Christ', which is correct, but the important element is that there cannot be relativisation unless one compares; and this is exactly what happens in

[173] Horrell (2002a:160-161), though mainly referring to Rm and Gl, is helpful: 'Paul may consider himself to have had an experience that renders him dead to everything in his past and that causes him to see all things from an entirely new perspective, but the fact that he narrates the experience in terms drawn precisely from that past, and describes the new things precisely in the languages and categories of Judaism and its scriptures, means that there is a much more complex interrelationship between the "old" and "new" than Barclay's [2002] essay (and Paul's rhetoric) seems to imply. Paul's new epistemology, in other words, represents, as it must in all such human experience, a reconfiguring of his language and tradition rather than a creation *ex nihilo*—which would be meaningless to Paul and his contemporaries'.

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Philippians in light of the Christ-hymn[174]. This is the same social identity salience he expects from the Philippians to display in their day to day. Identification with the *Lord* Jesus Christ, as he has earlier identified with them, is the first step towards a radical re-orientation of both the individual and the group's value system that finds its core in the Christ-event (cf. Wright 1993a:166-170; Volf 1996:44-45). This salient social and personal identity helps to re-order the rest of their existence. As Lincoln (1981:107) has pointed, humiliation becomes a badge of membership for this heavenly commonwealth. The Christ-followers must follow the same path (humiliation – exaltation) of their Lord:

> There can be no attempts to find short cuts by claiming heavenly status too soon. In other words the programme of the heavenly πολίτευμα as it works itself out on earth is to be the programme followed by the heavenly Christ himself. Because Christ's exaltation the Philippians too belong to the heavenly commonwealth where Christ in his glory now is but they cannot yet claim all their rights as citizens, for its constitutive power must at present be exercised on earth through their bodies of humiliation. Their Lord is ruling and *his* programme is to be followed (:107).

Doble (2002:5) has observed this merging of values quite accurately when he stresses the fact that there is need to study both ταπ-words and φρον-trajectory terminology. These terms merge into one in Phlp 2:3, when the apostle calls the community to act towards one another in a spirit of 'humble orientation' or, as some translations render it, 'considering others higher than oneself', using the compound ταπεινοφροσύνη. This word, lest we forget, was rarely used in secular Greek and had a negative connotation as servility and expressed mean-spiritedness (Bockmuehl 1997a:110). Paul, no doubt based on the Christ-narrative, coined this term as the badge for those whose saviour and Lord is Jesus Christ, the universal Lord. This attitude, we need to remember, ran counter a social system where the search for honour had priority. As Wengst (1987:58-59) recognises, such a calling is a radical denunciation of the impeding *status quo* which ultimately leads to destruction:

> The humiliated and oppressed can acknowledge their own identity; they need not orientate themselves on prevailing standards — which are the standards of the rulers — but practise a life in solidarity. In their own orientation on the cross of Christ, in deliberate acceptance of the suffering that is forced upon

[174] Campbell (2008:89): 'We can, for example, express the change in Paul's self-understanding in this way — for him the law, ethnicity and all other human distinctions can never again be regarded as *absolute*. This means in effect that they can and must be regarded very differently from previously. A major change in their status has been effected, they have been *annulled* in Christ. It can thus be claimed that these categories, regulations, demands, have now all been *transcended'* (original emphasis).

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> them, there begins a process of creative liberation which seeks not just conversion but true humanity for the oppressed, and sisterhood and brotherhood for all.

However, social, geographical and ethnic constrains remain; and the shift in value-system is neither immediate nor easy, as the history of the Christ-movement witnesses to. It is fitting here to reflect on the wise words of Campbell (2008:156-157):

> The retention of one's particularity in Christ, whether Jew or gentile [slave or free, etc.], is a fundamental plank in our understanding of the process of identity-construction as Christ-followers. This basic claim to particularity is of great importance because we wish to stress in the light of our recent and increasing awareness of the "constructedness" of claimed identities, that despite our enormous potential for identity construction, not all structures are feasible or available to us as potential builders. We are forced to start from where we are and, in the world of Paul's day, that meant as either Jews or gentiles, accepting these components to a great extent as part of the given. So we construct from where we are and this limits the constructions open to us.

Christ's lordship is for Paul a present reality. Out of this perspective the apostle perceives his imprisonment as opportunity. Not even the stern powers of the Roman soldiers can prevent the advancement of the good news (1:12-14). Paul is sure that God, who began the good work in their lives, will bring it to completion (ἐπιτελέω, 1:6). The apostle, in the midst of a most strenuous situation, keeps his trust high, staring to the 'invisible' realm that has burst into the horizontal plane rather than solely focus on the desperate situation he is undergoing. The hope of future freedom, whether now or at the eschaton, fills the apostle with confidence (4:19). As Holloway (2001:132) has keenly observed, Paul's exhortation to rejoice in the Lord (3:1) is a call for a 'revaluation of values' which ultimately invites to find rest and contentment in their in-Christ existence. Holloway continues:

> Particularly relevant to Paul's use of joy in Phil. 3:1a is Seneca's charge to Lucilius at Ep. 23.3 that before all else he must learn how to rejoice: *Hoc ante omnia fac, mi Lucilii disce gaudere*. Seneca here summarizes his entire philosophical program in a simple imperative: "Learn how to rejoice." Paul's command to rejoice in the Lord in Phil. 3:1a is an analogous summary of Christian existence. For Paul, of course, the proper object of joy is not Stoic virtue but Christ (:132).

The challenge for us is to assess what and how the Philippian audience responded in light of the paraenetic message of the apostle.

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How may we negotiate between the texts and the social realities to which they surely bear witness? The path to be trodden has proved to be a precarious one. On the one hand, those social realities are, in our period, for the most part accessible to us only as mediated through the texts that survive; even so, they are never mediated directly. We have discovered how rarely we can read the texts as descriptive; we have endeavoured to ask what they are "doing", without always being sure what level of success they may have even expected. Yet, if it would be naive to assume that exhortation or apologetic gives an account of what people believe or did, it would be no less naive to believe that they inevitably bear witness to the complete opposite, which they try to correct[1].

CHAPTER 8:
AFTER PAUL LEFT PHILIPPI

1. Introduction

I believe it is most unfortunate that many studies on Paul's letters conclude with a general perception about the apostle's praxis after an excellent exegesis of some core texts. I recognise, however, that to go beyond the evidence of the written text is to enter into a perilous and complex journey. I wish we could find a way to ascertain how Paul's writings *affected* the very communities he was addressing. Horrell's 1993 Cambridge doctoral thesis (published in 1996) was one of the first studies that consciously tried to fill in the gap by focusing not only on Paul's Corinthian correspondence but also on *1 Clement*, written some 40 years later. Horrell attempted to explore the ways in which each formulation of Christian teaching arises from a particular context and attempts to shape the believers' social relationships (1996:4). He tried to bridge the distance between Paul's letters and *1 Clement*, in order to 'assess the social ethos of the Roman church's letter (1 Clement), and to consider the ways in which, from a sociological perspective, its symbolic order differs from that of Paul's

[1] Lieu (2004:300).

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Corinthian letters' (:5). In this study Horrell demonstrated both continuity and discontinuity between 1-2 Cor and *1 Clement* in areas as diverse as church leadership, submission, social distinctiveness, etc. (:250-280). The above observations do not *per se* recognize the impact of Paul's letters in the communities he addressed. However, the fact that we possess diverse letters addressed to the *same community* by different agents across time, serves as a useful tool that allows us to assess differences in emphases, continuity and discontinuity. Fortunately for our particularly concern, we possess a later epistle which Polycarp wrote to the church at Philippi (*Epistula ad Philippenses*; henceforth, *Ep*), somewhere in the first quarter of the second century AD. Concerning this letter, Irenaeus (*Haer* III.3) writes:

> There is also a very powerful Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth.

The letter was written for different reasons than those of Paul; that much is clear. Polycarp addresses a new set of circumstances: problems with Valens, a presbyter fond of economic gain, cf. *Ep* 4.1 φιλαργυρία, etc. Yet, I think we can study Polycarp's letter in order to discern possible allusions to themes that were already reflected in Phlp and perceive—however tentatively—how the Christian community was putting into practice some of the apostle's perceived emphases. I am aware that this task alone could require a monograph if it were treated with the depth it requires. I shall nevertheless point here to possible echoes that could in the future acquire a more formal structure.

My aim, thus, is to seek themes and echoes in Polycarp's letter that can be traced back to Paul's letter to Philippi. Current scholarship gives more credit to dependence on the part of *Ep* to *1 Clement* or the Ignatian corpus than to any direct influence on Philippians, but, after a careful reading of Polycarp's letter, I would like to suggest that there are clear parallels with Phlp. I conclude that Polycarp's letter and life display a certain resemblance with Paul's emphasis on the Christ-*phronesis* that ultimately leads to self-giving on behalf of the advance of the gospel. We are dealing here with social issues, not just theological ideas.

The aim of this final chapter, then, is to follow the natural narrative structure of the *Polycarpian* letter and allow its rhythm and content lead the discussion. However, before I proceed, there are certain elements that need clarification. After all, from the time Paul wrote to the Philippians until these received another letter, six decades had gone by.

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2. What We Know after Paul Left Philippi

The question is: What happened after the apostle left the Roman colony of Philippi? I have already commented that Paul's experience in the city had been tense as judged from what he wrote to the church at Thessalonica (1 Th 2:2). Sometime after Paul and Silas' departure (Ac 16:40) the apostle was to return to Philippi for a second visit (cf. Ac 20:1-6), and possibly for a third time (2 Cor 7:5). His relationship with the Christ-following community was cordial and in good terms. Paul had found in the Philippians a partner church willing to support his ministry in the spread of the good news (Phlp 1:5; 4:15). Such a close relationship imprints the mood of the letter. As I pointed out in chapters 5 and 6, difficult circumstances shared by both the apostle and the Philippians (1:28, and 1:30; 'same conflict') had put the relationship to the test, and Paul was impelled to write a letter in which he addressed these more pressing issues. Obviously, *Paul's letter to the Philippians is one of the crucial happenings after the apostle left the city*. This text is our most secure source of information to ascertain the situation in the colony at the time of the writing (most possibly *ca* AD 62, from a prison in Rome, if our interpretation of the provenance is correct). We have commented extensively already on the element of the historical setting of the letter so I will not repeat it here.

2.1 A Letter to Correct and Encourage

Paul's letter to the Philippians had different purposes in mind, amongst them to encourage the community to fully identify with the way of Christ despite both internal and external tensions. The apparent failure of the mission in partnership with the apostle—now in prison—is transformed in the letter to a possibility for the advancement of the gospel (1:12). There is still a more pressing problem: potential disunity, embodied by two principal women (4:2). Paul's recipe for such a threat in the midst of the community is to imitate those like him and others (3:17) who do not seek after their own interest, but have learnt the virtue of Christ-*phronesis* based on Christ's lordly example of ταπεινοφροσύνη (2:3). Encouragement and correction form the core of this friendly letter, which calls them to stand united and resist the threats of pagan adversaries (1:28). They are to stand fast, faithful to their call in Christ as they await their salvation and the fullness of their Christ-identity that ultimately triumphs over an honour-seeking system destined to failure (1:29; 3:19). The 'court of reputation' is radically transformed, and reward and punishment are placed within an eschatological framework that allows the Philippians to appreciate this transformation from a global perspective. There is no better encouragement for those in the (apparently) loosing side of society to realise that they are actually destined for victory. They follow Jesus Christ, who

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underwent a radical status reversal (Witherington 1994:67) in order to show the world what really pleases God, who has the *last word*. He who appears to the world as a slave-God is nothing less than *cosmocrator*, holding universal lordship over the Roman emperor. This is part of the Christ-*phronesis* identity the Philippians are encouraged to opt for, which implies a profound change in their value-system.

2.2 Paul's Legacy

Whatever else we could say concerning Paul, it implies tension. As I draw information from Acts with due confidence (cf. Winter 2001:xiv), we find that Paul's missionary career is filled with strife and suffering. Having completed several journeys into mainly gentile areas, Paul is eager to return to Jerusalem before Pentecost in order to present the 'saints' with a collection from the gentile churches as an indication of the community consciousness between Paul's churches and Jerusalem (Joubert 2000b:207-208). Paul had been trying, during his career, to bridge the gap between these communities called to understand each other in Christ. Now, finally, it seemed that the time had come to arrive at Jerusalem with the collection as the culmination of the agreement reached at Antioch some years earlier (Gl 2:10). Then he was to follow with his mission into the western parts of the Roman Empire. However, before the apostle was able to arrive at Jerusalem, around AD 57, Acts narrates that he travelled from Corinth to Macedonia via Philippi by boat to Troas (see Ac 20:5). From there he moved across other cities, arriving at Patara, and from there he went to Caesarea where, according to Ac 21:7-14, he was told by a prophet that he was not going to be well received in Jerusalem. In the course of this last visit to Jerusalem the apostle Paul was taken into custody and moved from place to place until he appealed to the emperor (Ac 25:11), an event which forced a perilous voyage to Rome with not a few incident. According to Acts, Paul spent two years in Rome (Ac 28:30), where he was under house arrest but preaching unimpeded (28:31). He planned to visit Spain (Rm 15:24), something which apparently never materialised (Murphy-O'Connor 1996:32). This was nevertheless followed by a circuit around the Aegean Sea to strengthen the communities. Then he returned to Rome, where he suffered martyrdom under Nero (*ca* AD 62-67), although Acts is silent on the subject[2]. Paul's chronology is

[2] Koester (1998:58-60) believes this is due to Luke's purpose in showing the triumphal progress of the gospel reaching from Jerusalem to Rome, capital of the Empire. It could also be that Luke wanted to report Paul's martyrdom in a latter volume which was never completed, though this is by no means the only possible alternative. Koester mentions three other possibilities, the last of which may have some bearing on our study of Polycarp. If Paul had not been killed under Nero and his case had been dismissed after a two-year period, there is the possibility that he later returned to the East, where he suffered martyrdom. Could it be then that his tomb is

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clouded under heavy scholarly discussion, and it is not my aim to discuss such complex arguments here. Roetzel (1999:179-183) provides useful charts with adapted reconstructions of some major Pauline scholars that witness to the complexity of the dating. Suffice is to pinpoint that most probably, as tradition confirms, the apostle suffered martyrdom in Rome or a major city in the East—perhaps—Philippi[3].

What happened in Philippi after the apostle had passed away? Did the Christ-following community experience a sudden growth instigated by the apostle's fate, or did it succumb to internal and external pressures and fall in disarray? There is actually little evidence from where to draw any substantial conclusion. What we possess is evidence that pagan cults were still prominent even a hundred and fifty years after Paul's time (Abrahamsen 1995:8). In some areas of later 'Christian' Greece churches and basilicas had been constructed outside sacred boundaries, as if Christians were avoiding any contact with pagan sacred ground or perhaps openly challenging the pagan environment. However, in Philippi the case was different:

> Potentially more important, of course, were the occasions where Christians actually took over the pagan temples. As we have seen, few examples of this phenomenon can actually be documented in Greece before the seventh century, but those which can are extremely important. One such case has been found in a recent excavation at Philippi. There, beside the remains of a lavishly decorated, octagonally shaped church, a burial of Macedonian date was discovered. Sometime after the original interment the tomb was used as a place of worship, an interesting example of the well-documented phenomenon of a hero cult. Finally, sometime before the middle of the fourth century after Christ this was taken over by Christianity and a church built on the spot. In this case there is good, solid evidence that a Christian holy place succeeded a pagan holy place. Significantly the church was dedicated to Saint Paul, the founder of the Christian community of Philippi, and it seems all but certain that the pagan hero cult was replaced by the cult of Saint Paul[4].

The practice of Christian and pagan living in close proximity was not uncommon in Philippi, where we have other examples like that of a martyrium

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actually the one found in the Octagon? (Bakirtzis 1998:47; Callahan 1998:82-83). We do not know, but Koester's reconstruction goes against the witness of the *Acts of Paul*, written in the last decades of the second century AD, which places Paul's martyrdom in Rome. Koester (1998:63, n 30) nevertheless answers that 'the pseudepigraphical correspondence known as *3 Corinthians*, preserved in the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*, locates the imprisoned apostle in Philippi'.

[3] 'Given the paucity of evidence it is exceedingly difficult to reconstruct a chronology of Paul's life that inspires confidence' (Roetzel 1999:178).

[4] Gregory (1986:237); see also Bakirtzis (1998:44), who comments on how pagan hero worship was supplanted by the cult of the Christian martyrs, not juxtaposing both cults, as von Harnack had earlier defended.

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containing relics of Saint Babylas, built in AD 351 near the temple of Apollo (Bakirtzis 1998:43). Pagan and Christian sanctuaries were functioning simultaneously side by side by the beginning of the fourth century. The earliest known public assembly hall erected by Christians is from around the beginning of the fourth century, when Porphyrios was bishop of Philippi[5]. There is an inscription that names a certain Paul, which many believe to be a reference to the apostle (:42, n 15). As a matter of fact, the unpublished text of a Justinian funerary mosaic inscription from Philippi bears such a link eloquently: '...the city of Philipp of Macedon [Philippi], whose presiding Church (of Philippi), renowned for and proud of her apostolic links ...'[6]. It seems that the Christian community at Philippi kept alive the memory of the founder in light of some monumental evidence that dates from the end of the sixth century AD. After that, Philippi quickly declined: 'its monumental buildings, including the Octagon, collapsed; its population diminished, and the once flourishing centre of pilgrimage became no more than a farming settlement' (:48). But we are getting quite ahead of our time. I must resume the discussion going back to the beginning of the second century AD. The letter to Philippians, Acts 16 and *Ep* roughly cover a span from *ca* AD 50-150, while most of the archaeological evidence we posses comes from AD 200 and later (Abrahamsen 1995:19). Abrahamsen's study shows the importance of women in the cultic life of the city and also that the pagan element co-habited with Christianity for a long time (Hendrix 1992:313-317)[7].

However, it is unfortunate that we do not possess archaeological evidence from the time span we focus on.

3. A Later Letter: Polycarp's *Ad Philippenses*

Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, has been included in the hall of fame of the *Apostolic* Fathers, mainly due to his connection with Ignatius of Antioch[8]. This 'apostolic' designation, coined by Anastasius Sinaitian (*ca* VII-VIII) and applied to Dionysus the Areopagite, referred to someone closely related with the disciples of the original apostles (including Paul), and who had left behind a

[5] Bakirtzis (1998:41-42) dates this assembly hall (or 'basilica') after the Edict of Milan in AD 313.
[6] In Bakirtzis (1998:47).
[7] From a sociological point of view, this close relationship between supposed 'rival' religions can be explained with the use of de Vos' insights on Philippi as a *Gemeinschaft*-type community.
[8] Little is know with certainty about Polycarp. He never identifies himself as a bishop, but Ignatius (*Mag* 15) does refer to him as such (cf. Hartog 2002:50). He was born *ca* AD 69-80, according to *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 9.3, where the old bishop (in AD 167) boldly affirms in the sight of those who press him to renounce God: 'For eighty-six years I have been a servant and he has done me no wrong' (cf. Berding 2002:8).

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valuable literary heritage (Ayán Calvo 1991:17)[9]. There are diverse definitions about the kind of writings included within such a rubric, as Ayán Calvo points out, but there is no universal agreement on this respect (:21)[10].

Be that as it may, Polycarp, who was born around AD 69-80, was made bishop of Smyrna (some early Christian historians assumed he was ordained by the apostle John himself; cf. Tertullian, PraescrHaer 32.1-2) and lived a long life that reached until the first years of the reign of Marcus Aurelius (died the 23rd of February AD 167, cf. Nautin 1992:1818; Lightfoot 1890:435-436)[11]. He enjoyed a close relationship with Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who left a profound mark in the church through seven extant letters, amongst them, one to his long time friend Polycarp. As a matter of fact, the letter was included in the *Long Recension* of the Ignatian corpus (Hartog 2002:69). Many think that apart from such a connection, *Ep* would have gone undetected in the history of the church. I, for one, am glad the letter was recovered, since it provides us with a window to the Christian community a few decades after Paul left the colony[12]. Surely many things had changed, but the letter may allow us the privilege of discerning what the written words of the apostle might have affected in the community as the Philippians faced new challenges.

Polycarp's life (*Vita Polycarpi*) was told by a certain Pionius, not earlier than the fourth century. Pionius' narrative mixes historical data with legendary accounts to such an extent that it is impossible to distinguish the historical from the fantastic (Ayán Calvo 1991:194). Polycarp is nevertheless a privileged witness to the apostolic preaching and defender of a tradition that was threatened by gnostic and Marcionite families. As part of the Asiatic churches, Polycarp defended the *Quartodeciman* (14th Nissan) observance of the Passover (according to the 'old tradition'), regarding which he went to confer with Anicetus, bishop of Rome, in AD 155, who defended a different date. Though they did not reach

[9] Eusebius (*HE* III.36) assumed Polycarp enjoyed an intimate relationship with the apostles as their disciple; cf. Hartog (2002:41).

[10] Grant (1964:vi-vii) established three criteria that are helpful: 1) writings addressed to the Christian community. 2) of a practical nature, they do not deal with speculative theology (a point in contention; see Ayán Calvo 1991:21) or with philosophical or cultural themes. 3) they support a strong traditional perspective, closely related to New Testament authors.

[11] Hartog (2002:41) perceives a tendency towards episcopal ordination in the retelling of the story that shaped it in order to justify the practice later on. At that time 'one could be installed as a "bishop" in the sense of elder without being installed as a monarchical bishop'.

[12] Hartog (2002:75-78) offers a different version. For him Ignatius was profoundly impacted from the moment he met the bishop of Smyrna on his way to martyrdom, rather than the other way around. His reading of the data may be tilted as he defends his own concerns (to read *Ep* on its merits), but it is, nevertheless, attractive. Hartog, following previous scholars, contends that the Ignatian corpus is extant thanks to Polycarp's recollection of the (now) famous bishop's letters.

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an agreement (the church at Rome defended the celebration of the Passover on Sunday, regardless of the date), we are told that the visit was cordial (Hartog 2002:42-43). After his meeting with Anicetus, Polycarp returned to Smyrna, where a persecution took place in AD 167 (cf. Eusebius, *HE* IV.14, 10)[13]. The elderly bishop, hidden outside the city, was betrayed by a young servant, under torture (*MartPol* 6.1), and taken into custody. He suffered martyrdom at the stake 'on the great Sabbath day', that is, on a Sunday the 23rd of February AD 167 (Epiphanius, *Pan* 24; cf. Nautin 1992:1819). He died at age 86.

3.1 *Ad Philippenses*

Polycarp wrote several letters (Irenaeus, *EpFlor*), both to communities and to private brethren (Eusebius, *HE* V.20, 8), but the only one that has survived is *Ad Philippenses* (Ayán Calvo 1991:196). For Hartog (2002:63), the evidence is meagre and inconclusive, and the witnesses late (starting from the sixth century)[14]. It is possible, though, that Polycarp could have written some other letters if he acted as Ignatius asked him to do (*Pol* 8.2):

> Since I could not write to all the Churches because of my sudden sailing from Troas to Neapolis as the will of God enjoy, you shall write as one possessing the mind to the Churches on the road in front of me, that they also shall treat me in the same way (let those who can send messengers, and the others send letters through those whom you send, that you may be glorified by a memorable deed), as is worthy of you[15].

As I have already commented, *Ep* is closely linked with the Ignatian corpus, so those who doubt about the latter's authenticity deny the former's as well (cf. Hartog 2002:72). It is not my aim to engage on complex and hotly-debated issues, but to study the letter *prout extat*[16]. The study of the letter is riddled with complexities. However interesting these may be, I must refrain from entering into such a discussion in the interest of a clear focus[17].

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[13] Persecution was not widespread during this period, and usually involved few people. It seems that authorities went first after those who were more prominent (Stark 1997:192). The example of the leaders at this crucial hour must have been a token of confidence for the rest of the community.

[14] Hartog (2002:63): 'Probably the most telling against such theories is the fact that neither Irenaeus, Eusebius, Jerome, nor Photius evidence a direct knowledge of the contents of other works besides *Phil* [*viz. Ep*]'.

[15] English translation in LCL, quoted in Hartog (2002:82).

[16] For the possibility that *Ep* may be a combination of two letters with a substantial time lapse (several decades) between them, see Koester (1987:306) and Berding (2002:15-24).

[17] Many scholars, it seems, have concluded on the lack of creativity and interest the letter sheds (cf. Hartog 2002:65), although Irenaeus (*Haer* III.3.4) thought of it as 'very sufficient' or 'very

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3.1.1 Occasion and Time

The letter reveals at least two different reasons that caused Polycarp to write to the Christian community at Philippi. The first appears in *Ep* 3.1, where the Smyrnean reveals that he writes not on his own initiative, but because he has been requested to do so by the Philippians. Perhaps as a rhetorical device, or because he did not dare compare himself with the influence the apostle Paul had in the community, he writes in 3.2: 'For neither am I, nor is any other like me able to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who when he was amongst you taught face to face with the men of that day, exactly and firmly concerning the word of truth, and when he was absent, he wrote letter(s) to you'. Berding (2002:26) observes that the Philippians have specifically asked Polycarp to write concerning righteousness (3.1, δικαιοσύνη). Berding reconstructs the likely request: 'Please write us a letter about righteousness *as Paul did*' (:27). It seems the bishop of Smyrna understood δικαιοσύνη as righteous living, with a clear ethical accent, rather than as a fundamental theological concept. Such an understanding is clear if we attend to the content of the letter. However, the request does not answer the crucial question why there was such a need for renewed teaching on δικαιοσύνη. Soon we discover that a certain Valens (11.1), former presbyter in the community, has gone astray together with his wife (11.4). When we observe how late Polycarp has placed the only mention of Valens in the letter, we realise that much of the content of earlier chapters prepares the way for such a concern: an exhortation about not judging others before time (2); remembering the past wisdom transmitted to them by Paul and the apostles (3); warnings concerning covetousness (4); living a worthy life (5); the testimony of the presbyters and deacons (5-6); warnings against docetic teaching (7-8); the example of suffering of Ignatius et al (9); exhortations to imitate such an example (10). Polycarp exhorts the community to restore the former presbyter and his wife without falling prey of excessive zeal, which can only lead to sin. They are to have a pro-active attitude (praying and interceding) towards all people (12.1-3).

The second reason appears in 13.1. The community at Philippi wants to have copies of her letters sent to Syria, and Polycarp assures that he will make them available *via* an emissary or by his own hand on their behalf. This gives impetus to the idea of the existence of private scribal networks (cf. Haines-Eitzen 2000:79)[18]. Polycarp has already sent the Ignatian letters (together with others

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adequate' (ἱκανότατη). When compared with the genius and candour of Ignatius, it certainly pales and becomes a kind of second-rating letter.

[18] The possibility that Polycarp actually knew and owned a complete *corpus Paulinum* (13 letters, not including Hebrews) is entertained by Berding (2002:188). I think the existence of these

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that are not named) they presumably requested. Polycarp is sure they will profit much from these (13.2).

No doubt the Christians in Philippi suffered the influence of some kind of heretical teaching that denied the value of the cross and the incarnation, with clear docetic overtones (*Ep* 7). Polycarp uses the expression μεθοδεύῃ τὰ λόγια τοῦ κυρίου ('twisting the words of the lord') to refer to a practice that is ultimately self-serving, since these interpret Scripture according to their own desires (πρὸς τὰς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας). It appears that the Philippian community had previous contact with Polycarp, although it is impossible to know how intimate they were. In both his *salutatio* and farewell he does not mention anybody by name, which makes me suspect he was not really acquainted with church members. Throughout the letter it is the powerful figure of Ignatius that plays one of the strongest links between the community and the bishop of Smyrna (White 2007:442-443)[19].

As far as the date of composition is concerned, despite some serious contradictions between chapter 9 and 13 (due to an erroneous translation to Latin, no doubt; cf. Ayán Calvo 1991:197), it seems the letter was composed right after the death of Ignatius, before news about his martyrdom have reached Polycarp. If Ignatius' death occurred during the reign of Trajan (based on the witness of Irenaeus, *Haer* 5.28 and Eusebius), it is logical to conclude on a date around AD 107, although this is highly disputed. Others suppose a later date, during the reign of Hadrian (*ca* AD 117-135). Perhaps the safest way is to conclude on an open date around AD 117-118 (cf. Ayán Calvo 1991:205), which is not, by any means, unanimous[20].

3.1.2 The Letter's Main Themes

Linked to the reasons mentioned above, Polycarp develops several concerns which are revealed as pressing questions for the Philippian community. The 'Valens-problem' is the focus of much of the letter, although the bishop does not give a thorough description on how to go about this gone-astray couple. Polycarp focuses on the unity and well-being of the community, encouraging

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private scribal networks strengthens the idea that possibly both, Polycarp and the Philippian church, possessed a more or less complete *corpus Paulinum*.

[19] For a reconstruction of events and dates, see Ayán Calvo (1991) and Hartog (2002).

[20] Hartog (2002:169) defends the unitary theory and opts for an earlier date (*ca* AD 115). The two-letter hypothesis defends that chapter 13 (and possibly 14) was designed as a cover letter for the Ignatian corpus while Ignatius was still alive, and that the letter which contained chapters 1-12 was composed later, *ca* AD 135. This hypothesis finds uneven support amongst specialists (cf. Ayán Calvo 1991:201-202; Berding 2002:187-188).

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them to hold fast to the true word they had received[21]. They are to stand firm in unity, as they have until then, in obvious *imitatio* terms. In the case of Valens' (and his wife) discipline, the Philippians are exhorted to be kind and do the utmost to regain them for the cause, aiding thus to the edification of the whole body (9.4). Many specialists question Polycarp's ability to express profound theological truths and even point to a lack of depth in his letter, but I basically agree with Hartog's (2002:67) assessment that 'our entire understanding of Polycarp's writing style and personality is based upon one extant epistle written for one specific occasion'. I, for one, would not like to be judged for posterity on account of a single letter written *ad hoc*. Hartog presents a description of content which is similar to what I have observed, but he adds an observation by Bauer (though with no bibliographical apparatus to situate it) that I believe is a propos:

> Bauer considers the key words of the letter to be ἀπέχεσθαι (Latin *abstinere*) (2.2.; 5.3; 6.1, 3, 11.1-2,), ἀπολείτειν (2.1, 7.2), χαλιναγωγεῖν (5.3), ἀνακόπτεσθαι (5.3) and σωφρονεῖν (4.3). All of these words are ethical terms, and most of them concern the act of distancing oneself from evil (with the exception of σωφρονεῖν, which probably does not belong in a key word list anyway). I would add (and stress even more so) the terms δικαιοσύνη, φιλαγυρία (Latin *avaritia*), ἀφιέναι, and ὑπομονή (:72-73)[22].

As we will later see, my assessment coincides with Bauer's and Hartog's to a certain extent. My concerns have to do with identity construction. On the one hand, the old bishop encourages the Philippian Christians to hold fast to the faith which was once transmitted to them, such as it ought to characterise the church as she keeps her good testimony in *politeia*. This is what they *are*. On the other, it is important to highlight what they *are not*. They are to abstain, forsake and refrain from all kinds of evil. Polycarp includes all behaviour (covetousness, all the vices listed in 5.2-3, etc.) and any *phronesis* which is ultimately self-serving. To the two lists described above, I would add another important term that captures, in my opinion, the basis of life lived in the public arena: *conversatio* (10.2; 14; possibly a translation of πολιτεύομαι, cf. 5.2)[23].

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[21] The result of Valens' incident caused dissension and internal discord in the community (cf. Hartog 2002:87). I observe that such effects are spilled everywhere in the letter: some have judged aforetime, while others, maybe younger ones (νεώτεροι; cf. 5.3), are tempted to give way to their unbridled passions. The fall of a public leader is always a matter of great distress to a small community. This, therefore, may be the reason Polycarp warns the congregation to live accordingly to what they have learnt, since God cannot be mocked (5.1).

[22] I learnt about Hartog's assessment of Bauer only after I had read through *Ep* with only Phlp in mind, in order to assess if the search was justified. I must say that after reading comments as those of Bauer and Hartog, I believe, it certainly is.

[23] As Hartog (2002:122-123) observes, this is attempted *via* a paraenetic style.

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3.2 Parallels with *Philippians*

I think the best course of action I can follow is to dialogue with the text of the letter to ascertain what themes in *Ep* somehow evoke those already pinpointed in Phlp. My reading of *Ep* aims at detecting echoes that emerge as I read the text. That Polycarp would recall Paul's authority in the letter makes sense, since for the bishop 'there is no apostolic authority other than Paul and the letter demonstrates how a bishop could conduct his office of directing and ordering the affairs of the Christian churches in the spirit of Paul, namely, in the spirit of the Pastoral Epistles' (Koester 1987:307). For Hartog (2002:122): '*Phil* displays deliberative rhetoric as Polycarp attempts to exhort his readers to follow a righteous course of action. *Phil* is an example of moral exhortation'.

3.2.1 Is the Search Justified?

According to my study of *Ep*, there are clear echoes of Paul's Philippians, but the question still stands, whether this suspicion is indeed justified beyond mere wishful thinking[24]. Some specialists conclude that Polycarp, if using the New Testament at all (*stricto sensu* still in the making), does cite it by memory (Berding 2002:2). There is a further complication with this, since the canonical status of some books of the New Testament was still 'hanging in the air', and there might have been some fluctuation in the sources used[25]. To expect then a *verbatim* citation may be asking too much at this stage, at least in some cases (cf. Hartog 2002:172). Now, if these quotations are not *verbatim*, how can we be sure they suppose an allusion at all? Hays (1989:23) adds a much-needed insight to the discussion:

> As we move further away from overt citation, the source recedes into the discursive distance, the intertextual relations become less determinative, and the demand placed on the reader's listening powers grows greater. As we near the vanishing point of the echo, it inevitably becomes difficult to decide whether we are really hearing an echo at all, or whether we are only conjuring things out of the murmurings of our own imaginations.

[24] I am here *solely* concentrating in the possible echoes of Phlp within Polycarp's letter. It is common knowledge that *Ep* makes a thorough use of *1 Clement*, which has also influenced the Ignatian corpus (even if it is not used authoritatively there). *Ep* also echoes some *Logia Jesu*, some portions from 1 Cor, Rm, Gl, Eph, the Pastoral Epistles, 1 Pt, and possibly some Old Testament texts. However, all these other possible links (as whether they were considered as Scripture) are beyond the scope of my concern.

[25] This applies also to modern discussion on Pauline and deutero-Pauline writings, which is doubtful that it was a category for Polycarp at all.

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The element of recognising when an ancient author quotes some other source is complex and it has been amply researched, so I only add a few remarks that may help to clarify how I am going about in this search[26].

I believe we need to approach this 'problem' from two different angles. It can be firstly done *via* a broad linguistic comparison, i.e.: observing whether the same type of terminology is used in both cases, whether the imagery of some expressions somehow reflects knowledge of Paul's letters, etc. Hays' (1989:29-32) seven criteria are helpful, though some other schema have been proposed, mainly focusing on the use of Israel's Scripture in the New Testament. Hartog (2002:174), dissatisfied with previous methodology, produced a five-test scheme: verbal quantity, density, recurrence, singularity, and formulaic introduction. Although such approaches are useful, the problem has to do with its application rather than with what is proposed *a priori*. Both Hays and Hartog look somehow to what I label the second angle: a historical approach. Hays (1989:30) speaks of 'historical plausibility', which answers the question: Could the author have intended the alleged meaning effect? Could the readers have understood it? I have been addressing such questions all along during the study of Philippians. Now, however, we are standing on firmer ground to answer affirmatively to this pressing question. Hartog (2002:174) aims to come close to this (but not really) with his test of 'singularity', which answers the question, 'is the proposed source the only possible origin, or it [sic] possible that Phil borrows from other similar material?' Hartog, it seems to me, lacks an approach which contains a historical plausibility element. Here is where I think my approach may shed new light: The Philippian Christian community had received a personal letter from a highly respected apostle, addressed directly to them! There is also the element of private scribal networks that allowed Polycarp to have copies of Ignatius' letters, and why not, from Paul and other apostles as well. There are manifest signs all across *Ep* that Paul's memory was cherished in the midst of the community and that his letter(s) and ministry were known (cf. 3.2; 9.1-2; 11.3; 12.1)[27]. Is there then a possibility that Polycarp (familiar with Paul) had made good use of Paul's letter to the Philippians—both

[26] Berding (2002:27), based on the work of Suggs (1957-1958:140-142), presents five different difficulties: '1) The patristic text has a transmission history of its own. 2) The patristic author may be quoting from memory instead of consulting a text. 3) The patristic author may not be intending to quote at all; he may in fact simply be reflecting biblical language because of constant use. 4) The patristic author may have altered the passage to fit the theological point he is trying to make. 5) The patristic author may be trying to improve upon the style of the biblical passage or harmonize it with the syntax of his own sentence'. These difficulties, rather than preventing the search, give testimony of the complexity of the task.

[27] Berding (2002:150f) treats these echoes with due seriousness. He even perceives Pauline 'clusters' in certain sections which may contain up to five phrases most probably drawn from Paul's letters (e.g., *Ep* 3.2-4.1; 9.1-10.1). Although his observations confirm my suspicion, I shall solely focus on Philippians and not on the entire *corpus Paulinum*.

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showing *literary* and *theological* dependence—as a way to call back the church to a traditional life-style worthy of the gospel? I think there is![28]

3.2.2 Polycarp and Paul Face to Face

Fortunately we also possess a letter by the church of Philomelius to the church of Smyrna that details Polycarp's martyrdom, written not long after the events (*ca* AD 167; Ayán Calvo 1991:241-242). Such was the impetus of the content of the letter that today is widely known as *Martyrium Polycarpi*. In the letter we observe certain features of the old bishop which can aid us in discerning up to what point he was influenced by the example of Christ and of Paul. Therefore, together with *Ep*, *MartPol* will be used when necessary in order to illumine possible connections between the two major letters to the Philippian community I have in mind.

The first thing that calls my attention is how the Christ-following community is addressed in the *prologue*:

> Πολύκαρπος καί οἱ αὐτῷ πρεσβύτεροι τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ παροικούσῃ Φιλίππους

The assembly is said to *sojourn* (παροικούσῃ) at Philippi. This term, παροικεῖν (cf. 1 Pt 1:1), means 'to dwell as an alien', 'to remain in a place for a time', 'to be a pilgrim', and it is used in opposition to κατοικεῖν, which indicates 'to dwell permanently', 'to have a fixed home' (Ayán Calvo 1991:213, n 1). Much can be said about this term, but suffice is to point out here the suggestive link with Paul's assessment of the local community in Philippi as a 'heavenly *politeuma*' (3:20). This is an element further expanded by *Diog*, as I observed in chapter 2. It is interesting to notice, nevertheless, that city life (the exercise of *politeia* so valued in the Graeco-Roman world) is not seen as an end in itself, for there is a higher order of things that transcends it[29].

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[28] Hartog (2002:177): 'Because Polycarp refers to Paul's epistle to the Philippians but does not quote it, Lindemann infers that he may not have known the letter itself. But by comparing *Phil* 9.2 and Philippians 2:16; *Phil* 2.1 and Philippians 2:10; *Phil* 12.3 and Philippians 3:18; *Phil* 1:1 and Philippians 2:17; *Phil* 5.2 and Philippians 1:27, the Oxford Committee concluded that "the general impression in favour of his acquaintance with it is stronger than can be fairly estimated from the isolated examination of single passages'. Berding (2002:133) shares the opinion: 'Though Pol. *Phil*. contains more numerous clear citations of other letters (such as 1 Corinthians and 1 Peter), there appear to be more subtle connections to the canonical Philippians than to any other source Polycarp uses'. As a matter of fact, Berding concludes that Polycarp *consciously* seeks to imitate Paul (:140).

[29] Aristotle (*Pol* 1253a.1-4) had defined man 'by nature as a political animal' (ἐκ τούτων οὖν φανερὸν ὅτι τῶν φύσει ἡ πόλις ἐστί, καί ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον…), since it is

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Furthermore, in the same *prologue* there are two titles ascribed to God (παντοκράτορος, 'omnipotent') and to Jesus Christ (σωτῆρος, 'saviour') that bring to mind two of the elements we have been studying in chapter 7. God almighty has the final saying and establishes Jesus as *cosmocrator* (cf. Phlp 2:9), whereas Jesus Christ is presented as he who saves and delivers (Phlp 3:20).

In *Ep* 1.1 Polycarp speaks of those whom the Philippians received who were μιμήματα τῆς ἀληθοῦς ἀγάπης, which Lightfoot translates as 'followers of true love'. Ayán Calvo prefers to translate it as 'imágenes del verdadero amor' (*images of true love*). Both translations reflect the sense of the verb μιμέομαι from where it derives, but I believe Ayán Calvo's version fits better with the sense of 'imitation' the term carries. Polycarp is here referring to Ignatius and his companions who visited Philippi on their way to martyrdom in Rome. What is interesting is the insistence on highlighting those who are imitators of the Lord, as living testimonies for the rest of the community[30]. These living examples are evoked later on (9.1), and we know them by name: Ignatius, Zosimus and Rufus, who are but clear images of the purest example (ὑπογραμμός, cf. *1 Clement* 5.7), i.e., Jesus Christ (cf. 8.2).

There is still more. Berding (2002:35) affirms literary dependence of Phlp 4:10 in the expression Συνεχάρην ὑμῖν μεγάλως ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ (*Ep* 1.1), which reflect similar contexts. In Phlp Paul's contention is that they rejoice together with him (cf. 1:27; 2.18). Berding continues with an interesting observation: 'This is the first in a long series of loose allusions and reminiscences to Paul's letter to the Philippians. Polycarp, in this letter, does not generally *quote* Paul's Philippians. Nevertheless, perhaps more than with any other letter, a general atmosphere of dependence upon the canonical Philippians seems to be fairly strong when taken as a whole. Grant [1965:103] comments that Polycarp has begun his letter with a reference "to the particular Pauline epistle which he believes his correspondents value most highly"' (:36, original emphasis). Despite the fact that Ignatius et al are in chains due to their faithfulness to Christ—although we are not told the causes for the persecution (cf Ignatius, *Smy* 11.2; *Phld* 10.1; *Pol* 7.1)—Polycarp uses a positive approach when the situation is shameful: they travelled chained, guarded by Roman soldiers. However, for the bishop of Smyrna such chains are diadems, 'saintly bonds' (Ignatius will call his chains 'spiritual pearls', πνευματικοὺς μαργαρίτας, in *Eph* 11.2). In a sense, then, as it happened with Paul's imprisonment (Phlp 1:12), the precarious situation they experience is nothing

in the macrostructure of the city that humanity finds its purpose in the midst of such a network of relationships.

[30] This emphasis is further stressed in *MartPol*, which, as with all martyriological writings, aims at encouraging the Christian communities in the face of stern opposition.

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but an opportunity for the gospel to be firmly established (βεβαία; cf. *Ep* 2.2 ; which recalls Paul's statement in Phlp 1:7 where he states that the Philippians are partners both in the suffering and the confirmation of the gospel, βεβαιώσει; or the one in 1:12 where he speaks of the 'advance of the gospel'). In this, as it happened in the case of the apostle, Polycarp rejoices (1.1). While adversaries may threaten their faith, it remains firm. It is faith that has come to them of old, but still today bears fruit (καρποθορεῖ).

In *Ep* 1.2 Polycarp mentions the suffering of *our* Lord on behalf of their sins, reflecting the typical Pauline pattern of death and resurrection.

Ep 2.1 uses an imperative aorist form (δουλεύσατε; based on a similar expression in Ps 2:11LXX) that encourages the response of the Philippians in light of Christ's suffering on their behalf: They are to 'serve' God in fear and in truth, a verb Paul has used in reference to Timothy in Phlp 2:22, which captures Paul's self-identification (as δοῦλος) with Christ as displayed in the Christ-hymn. As a matter of fact, a similar scene of enthronement that appears in Phlp 2:9-11 could be evoked here by the phrase πιστεύσαντες εἰς τὸν ἐγείραντα τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ δόντα αὐτῷ δόξαν καὶ θρόνον ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ· ᾧ ὑπετάγη τὰ πάντα ἐπουράνια καὶ ἐπίγεια, ᾧ πᾶσα πνοὴ λατρεύει... ('believing on him who raised our lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave him glory and a throne at his right hand. Unto whom all things [creatures] were subjected, both that are on earth or in heaven, to him every breath serves')[31]. However differently the concept might have been phrased, the similarities are striking with Phlp 2:10 (cf. *1 Clement* 65.2), and even with 3:21 (cf. Berding 2002:47). In *Ep* 2.2-3 the example of Jesus Christ is portrayed in such a way that Polycarp seeks a similar Christ-*phronesis* we observed in Phlp: as they walk in his commandments, they will 'love the things he loved'. Then follows a list of evil-doings they need to abstain from. Identity construction includes both what they are to do and what they are to abstain from. Without entertaining a too ideological reading of the letter, I observe that this virtuous life-style is based on the power of the resurrection (2.2), rather than on virtue acquired by merit. However, to read it as an either-or-issue in this sense is to fail to recognize that the gift needs to call for a conscious choice as well.

Ep 3.2 is important in itself for the fact that Polycarp recalls with affection the apostle Paul:

> For neither am I, nor is any other like unto me, able to follow the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who when he came among you taught face to face with the men of that day the word which concerned truth carefully and surely,

[31] My translation.

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> who also, when he was absent, wrote a letter (ἐπιστολάς) to you, into the which if ye look diligently, ye shall be able to be built up unto the faith given to you[32].

In light of these words, it is clear that the memory of the apostle was deeply cherished amongst the Philippians[33]. It may be a pure rhetorical device, but the mention of 'if you look diligently' (with reference to Paul's words) points out to the fact that the letter was still read and studied in the context of the local congregation[34]. As I mentioned earlier, letters functioned as substitutes for physical presence. Berding (2002:61) concedes that the reference to Paul's presence/absence (ἀπών) may be a loose allusion to Phlp 1:27.

In *Ep* 4.1 Polycarp introduces the topic of avarice (φιλαργυρία, literally 'love of money') which he is going to employ to designate the presbyter Valens (see 11.1), who has fallen prey (together with his wife) to this self-seeking error. Citing the words of 1 Tm 6:10 (and 1 Tm 6:7), the bishop of Smyrna answers the main concern of the Philippian community (Ayán Calvo 1991:196-197), who has requested him to address this (cf. *Ep* 3.1 and 13.1). Polycarp has prepared the ground by citing several *logia Jesu* in 2.3-3 which become the proper praxis that will keep them from sin and from a life of self-seeking values (cf. 3.3). Then follow some general guidelines for the leaders ('presbyter' here, though not named as such until 6.1) of the congregation that closely resembles the Pastoral Epistles[35].

Ep 5.1: Εἰδότες οὖν, ὅτι θεὸς μυκτηρίζεται, ὀφείλομεν ἀξίως τῆς ἐντολῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ δόξης περιπατεῖν (cf. Gl 6:7). Although referring to a different topic (the impossibility of mocking God trying to live a hypocritical life), Polycarp uses a vocabulary which is conceptually similar to that of Phlp 1:27: Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε... . The manner of expression is typically Pauline, though, as we have observed in Phlp 1:27 it acquires a strong political (i.e. public) sense when the apostle opts for the term πολιτεύεσθε instead of the more general περιπατεῖν. Here, it mainly refers to the life within the Christian community, but in reference to its public impact, for the progress of the gospel is always in view (its dependence upon Gl 6:7f

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[32] Lightfoot's translation, slightly adapted.

[33] Berding (2002:136) concludes that Polycarp's humility statements are a clear reference that he is consciously imitating the apostle. Such a display of humility could also correspond to Polycarp's regard for the Pauline corpus as authoritative and of further influence than any letter he could produce.

[34] On the course of a private conversation, Prof. Byler, of the *United Evangelical Seminary* in El Escorial, Spain, pointed me to a plausible alternative, that is, that Polycarp had to exhort the Philippian community to give heed to Paul's *forgotten* letter(s)! Either way the reference seems to point out to some of Paul's letters in the Philippians' possession.

[35] As Hartog (2002:117) observes, *Ep* 4.1 and 6.1 include both *Gemeindetafeln* and *Haustafeln*, after New Testament style.

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only strengthens this element; cf. Winter 1994:58, with respect to 'well-doing' as a technical term for benefactions)[36].

Likewise, when Polycarp refers to the conduct of deacons (5.2), he uses the familiar expression πολιτευσώμεθα ἀξίως, which evokes Phlp 1:27 (also present in *1 Clement* 21.1, though with a negative tone; Berding 2002:76). *If* the Philippians do so, they will also reign with him (συμβασιλεύσομεν)[37]. What is interesting for our particular focus is that this 'worthy conduct' is based on the example of the Lord, who became a servant (διάκονος) to all. Once again, the elements of servitude and lordship are integrated as part of the same continuum in relation to public praxis, not only in reference to *ad intra* conduct.

Ep 5.2 only evokes more directly what Phlp 2:9-11 and 3:20 presented in powerful imagery: the Lord our God sees everything from his high throne and every person (πάντας) will give account to him about every deed[38]. What Paul has revealed in Philippians—God has the last word—is here further expanded (cf. Rm 14:10-12). The radical reassessment of values Paul exhorts in Philippians is strengthened by the image of the κύριος to whom all need to be accountable: those who are threatening the church with death for reasons unknown to us[39].

Ep 6.3 introduces the familiar theme of false brethren (ψευδαδέλφων), who 'bear the name of the Lord with hypocrisy, and who lead foolish men astray'

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[36] It seems to me that some New Testament specialists uncritically assume at times a wider Christian community as receptor of the letters than it would be adjusted to what we now know. Having done this, then, the different letters solely address internal concerns and have little to do with life as it is lived in the public sphere. We have already seen that the Christ-following community at Philippi was small in numbers and dwelled in the midst of a *Gemeinschaft*-type community, which would preclude such an *a priori* understanding. Abrahamsen (1989:82) observes that there is no mention of a bishop in Philippi until the fourth century (Porphyrios), and that Polycarp himself, when addressing the Christian community, writes to the church without specific reference to leadership (cf. *Ep* prologue), even though Paul had addressed 'generic' bishops in Phlp 1:1. For Abrahamsen this scattered data points to the strong possibility that 'Philippi's Christianity, especially in "orthodox" form, was virtually nonexistent from the mid-second through the early fourth centuries, contrary to popular belief' (:82).

[37] Berding (2002:165) has observed that for Polycarp future resurrection is conditioned by three elements: 1) to please God; 2) to be worthy citizens; and 3) to continue believing. Berding thinks that Paul stresses divine initiative while Polycarp emphasises human response. Paul never explicitly links a conditional clause with a statement about future resurrection (Bovon-Thurneysen 1973:248); although see 1 Cor 15:2.

[38] In this case his throne has become a judgment seat (βῆμα).

[39] This is exactly the type of element which gets lost in many scholarly discussions. If the Philippians have recently seen (1.1) Ignatius and his companions in chains, it is unthinkable to conclude that some of the expressions in the letter would not have been directed towards a better comprehension of the public sphere as well. After all, Ignatius suffers *publicly*. It is difficult to ascertain the reasons why the movement was persecuted in the first century. By the second century the accusations are more explicit (for a list of these, de Vos 2000:876-885).

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(Lightfoot's trans.). There is a certain and proper way to bear the name, and one that misleads people. These themes are common in Phlp and point out to the theme of identity formation in the community. It is not just what they *are* that counts, but equally important is what sets them apart. They are to imitate those who display a worthy life-style (οἱ εὐαγγελισάμενοι ἡμᾶς ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ προφῆται), but they are also to abstain/separate (ἀπεχω, mid. voice) from other people who do not follow the same conduct. It is for this reason that they are to serve him (δουλεύσωμεν) with φόβου καὶ πάσης εὐλαβείας. Polycarp supports the traditional doctrine that derives from the apostles and the prophets.

Ep 7.1 shows a concern against antidocetic elements also found in Ignatius, which is already present in the New Testament (cf. 1 Jn 4:2-3). Polycarp had to face theologians of the stature of Marcion (Koester 1987:307), who according to Irenaeus (*Haer* III.3.4), once approached the bishop of Smyrna asking him why he was not willing to receive him. Polycarp replied calling him 'firstborn of Satan'. The same expression appears here (7.1, πρωτότοκος τοῦ σατανᾶ), but it cannot be automatically linked with Marcion (cf. Ayán Calvo 1991:221; Hartog 2002:95-101). There is a further element that, although common to all generations, evokes a major theme in Philippians: the self-seeking attitude of those who claiming to be part of the ingroup yet deny such a possibility by living a selfish life-style. Polycarp is unambiguous in his presentation of these: 'Whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross is of the devil'. What is implied by τὸ μαρτύριον σταυροῦ? According to Lightfoot (1890:II.334), it makes reference to the water and blood that sprung from the side of Christ, as referred in 1 Jn 3:8 (Ayán Calvo 1991:221). In this context of anti-gnostic (docetic) teachings it sounds plausible, more so when we recall the close relationship between Polycarp and John and the geographic area he represented. In Philippians the 'enemies of the cross' (3:18) are those who yield to their own selfish life-style and deny the saving power of Christ's sacrifice. However, the apostle places the diatribe in the context of those who look for security in their own schema, be it by way of self-interest (Phlp 2:21), be it by way of protection in the public arena (as in the status of the Jewish *politeumata*; 3:20 or, as Tellbe [2001] has argued, on account of the possibility of returning to the civic cults as a way of dodging pressure from civic authorities). If the incipient gnostic philosophy denied soteriological value to suffering *per se* (as a kind of 'disguise', 'trick', as docetic teachers pretended), the antidocetic champions (Ignatius and Polycarp amongst them) swung the pendulum to the other side, risking to assign soteriological value to martyrdom (as that which

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completes Christian anthropology; cf. Ignatius, *Rm* 6.2-3)[40]. Life-style, and not mere ideological construct, is what is at stake here.

In *Ep* 8.1-2 Polycarp focuses once more in Christ's suffering not just in reference to them, but in *imitatio* terms (cf. μιμηταί in 8.2). Christ's sacrifice on behalf of humanity, although *inimitable*, becomes the pattern of conduct (i.e., his endurance). They are to be willing to suffer for the truth as the Lord was willing to undergo it earlier on their behalf. His *pathos* becomes a ὑπογραμμόν (8:2, 'example'; cf. Phlp 3:17, where Paul uses the term τύπος), not something that needs to be denied or masked, as docetic teachers do. It is here again that I perceive close parallels between Phlp and *Ep*: this suffering (πάσχωμεν in *Ep* 8.2) on account of his name is what brings glory to God (δοξάζωμεν in *Ep* 8.2; cf. Phlp 2:11: εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός).

The element of following the example of others is now concretised in those who were in chains before them (*Ep* 9.1). Polycarp includes among these Ignatius, Zosimus and Rufus, but he does not forget the apostle Paul nor other apostles. It is noteworthy that Paul is the only apostle named, no doubt, due to his high authority in the community. Berding (2002:98) discerns a possible allusion to Phlp 1:29-30 in *Ep* 9.1, where Polycarp refers to the apostle as ἐν αὐτῷ Παύλῳ. For Berding this expression may be reminiscent of the experience of the Philippians, who saw the suffering of the apostle with their own eyes and underwent the same conflict that they saw *in him*. The bishop, profoundly influenced by Pauline imagery, praised these champions of the faith on account that they 'did not love the present age' (cf. 2 Tm 4:10), but him who died and was raised by God. Again, the element of choosing a worthy course of life on account of a conscious election is present in this late letter to the Philippian community. Once more, in 9.2 we hear the echoes of Paul: all these 'did not run in vain' (ὅτι εἰς τὸν κενὸν ἔδραμον; cf. Phlp 2:16)[41]. In *MartPol* 11.1 this element is equally present. The proconsul (ἀνθύπατος) warns him that unless he

[40] 'Bear with me, brethren. Do not hinder me from living; do not desire my death. Bestow not on the world one who desire to be God's, neither allure him with material things. Suffer me to receive the pure light. When I am come thither, then shall I be a man. Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God. If any man hath Him within himself, let him understand what I desire, and let him have fellow-feeling with me, for he knows the things which straiten me' (Lightfoot's translation).

[41] This expression, also found in Gl 2:2, presents in Phlp and *Ep* a similar rhetorical purpose: Paul uses it in order to exhort the community to behave according to the way which is worthy of Christ, as a sign of obedience to Paul, so that the career of the apostle may be said to have succeeded amongst them. Polycarp places the expression within the context of those who had been incarnated examples of obedience to the 'word of justice' (9.1). Finally, his exhortation in 10.1 presents the same characteristics of Paul: he urges them to obey and be faithful to what they have received.

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retracts (*viz*. curses Christ and swears by the genius of the emperor) he is to suffer the beasts at the circus. The answer of the old bishop is exemplary:

> Call them [i.e., the beasts] then, for *we* are not accustomed to repent of what is good in order to adopt that which is evil. The beautiful/good (κάλον) is to change from intolerance to righteousness[42].

Chapters 10-12 and 14 have only been preserved in Latin[43]. Polycarp continues here with a familiar theme: Christian unity, which has an *ad intra* component as well as it is aimed at the public arena (*politeia*). As it appears in *Ep* 10.1-3:

> *In his ergo state et domini exemplar sequimini, firmi in fide et immutabiles fraternitatis amatores, diligentes invicem, in veritate sociati, mansuetudine domini alterutri praestolantes, nullum despicentes. Cum possitis benefacere, nolite differe, quia eleemosyna de morte liberat. Omnes vobis invicem subiecti estote, conversationem vestram irreprehensibilem habentes in gentibus, ut ex bonis operibus vestris et vos laudem accipiatis et dominus in vobis non blasphemetur. Vae autem, per quem nomen domini blasphematur. Sobrietatem ergo docete omnes, in qua et vos conversamini.*

The call to unity 'firm in faith and immutable', closely resembles the expression in Phlp 1:27b, which contained military overtones. The bishop exhorts the community to 'forestalling one another' (*alterutri praestolantes*), which some scholars consider needs to be understood in light of the expression ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι in Rm 12:10 (Ayán Calvo 1991:223). What is important is that in the midst of an honour-seeking society, Polycarp continues with the message of preferring the honour of the other above oneself as mark of Christian behaviour; the same theme *MartPol* underlines (cf. *Ep* 1.2). This sense is quite at home with Paul in Phlp. Before he begins with the Christ-hymn, he exhorts the community to ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν ('consider others better than yourselves', 2:3) as a logical outcome of ταπεινοφροσύνη practice. Polycarp may have borrowed this sense from the letter to the Romans, but this kind of language was *already* part of the identity of the Philippian community *via* Paul's letter.

I mentioned earlier that the exhortation in *Ep* 10 has in mind not only the inner life of the community but public testimony also. We can no longer read the texts

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[42] It is necessary to highlight here the corporate sense Polycarp displays at this very hour. Social identity is salient here and throughout the narrative. Earlier he has confessed to be a Christian (*MartPol* 10.1: Χριστιανός εἰμι), but now the author insists in the corporate identity that sets the Christians (or elect, cf. *MartPol* 16.1) apart from the rest.

[43] The Greek text is preserved in nine different MSS, all from the same family (Hartog 2002:67). There is general agreement today that the archetype (different from *Vaticanus gr. 895*, which was earlier recognized as such archetype) is now lost; cf. Ayán Calvo (1991:207). For a thorough textual critical analysis, see Hartog (2002:67-69).

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of the New Testament (and of the apostolic period) solely entreating the life of the Christ-following communities after Winter's (1994) magisterial—and seldom-quoted—monograph on technical terms in the Graeco-Roman world. Winter (1994:19) affirms that the call to do good ('good works') God places on his people is an expression of holiness, based on the character of God who called them. However, and contrary to what it is usually assumed, this call to benefaction does not focus on the church, but on the public arena[44]. Only then does it make sense to speak of *omnes vobis invicem subiecti estote, conversationem vestram irreprehensibilem habentes in gentibus, ut ex bonis operibus vestris et vos laudem accipiatis et dominus in vobis non blasphemetur* (10.2). It is only as we acknowledge a public realm that the phrase to 'receive praise' (*vos laudem*) amongst the pagans (*in gentibus*) is filled with content. Polycarp refers to the world of *politeia* (the public arena) and uses a typical term which in the Latin text (*conversatio*) could be the translation of the same Greek verb used in Phlp 1:27: πολιτεύομαι. Naturally, this expression echoes the words of Jesus in Mt 5:16, but it is also present in Rm 15:9 and 1 Pt 2:12, which shows its importance for the Christ-following community in reaching out to the wider society instead of cloistering within itself. This is not a late issue that emerges in the beginning of the second century: Paul was already aware of the public praxis of the good news if the pagans were to be won for the cause. There is a Christ-*phronesis* identity that can be taught in the public arena: *Vae autem, per quem nomen domini blasphematur. Sobrietatem ergo docete omnes, in qua et vos conversamini* (*Ep* 10.3).

In chapter 11 Polycarp directly addresses the problem of Valens, the former presbyter, who has fallen prey of covetousness (*avaritia*; 11.1). Valens has ignored his place (*locum*, i.e.: 'ministry' or 'office') and is not therefore following the *conversatio* which is worthy of the gospel[45]. His self-seeking attitude

[44] Winter devotes several chapters to benefaction in the arena of Graeco-Roman *politeia*. Although focusing on several New Testament texts, 1 Peter is insightful for our concerns. There were three areas in which people were called to engage in benefaction: in *politeia* (2:13-17), in the 'private' sphere (2:18-3:7), and lastly in one area which is neither restricted to public nor to private relationships (3:8ff). Winter (1994:20) believes these 'good works' were not endorsed *per se*, but functioned as a witness to the authorities and the wider citizenry, assuring them that Christians were good citizens. It might just be that the 'Christian' use of the expression has in mind a wider practical outcome, since only the wealthy members of the communities were able to carry on with such expensive actions. However, I believe that the language of the Christian community would in a sense democratise this understanding. Polycarp, for one, adds amongst such benefactions alms-giving (*cum possitis benefacere, nolite differe, quia eleemosyna de morte liberat*, in 10.2; cf. Tb 12:9).

[45] The link with the benefactions mentioned in *Ep* 10.2 is most interesting. Material good should be used for the blessed name of God and of the cause, as 'doing good to others', but Valens—perhaps a wealthy patron (cf. Hartog 2002:106)—has failed to support the poor in the community, creating social chaos. However, I interpret this 'covetousness' as a self-seeking attitude with serious social consequences. Hartog (2002:106-107) traces a close relationship between the avarice and heresy already found in the Pastoral Epistles (cf. 1 Tm 6:9-10; Tt 1:11).

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invalidates his testimony and ability to lead others. Again the crux is the Pauline theme of matching words and deeds: *Qui autem non potest se in gubernare, quomodo alii pronuntiat hoc?* (11.2). Not practicing a renunciation to such a self-seeking attitude is only a sign that he is but following the way of the outgroup, which will in effect be judged by the ingroup:

> *Si quis non se abstinuerit ab avaritia, ab idolotria coinquinabitur et tamquam inter gentes iudicabitur, qui ignorant iudicium domini. Aut nescimus, quia sancti mundum iudicabunt? Sicut Paulus docet.*

The ingroup holds the key to the future (cf. 1 Cor 6:2) as long as it is faithful to the Christ-based example. Although the language of salvation/destruction does not appear in this case, the same motifs are present. The ingroup is not only characterised by a life worthy of its Lord; it is also exhorted to 'refrain' (*abstineo*; to 'stay away'; to 'keep something away') from something else. It is not only what they are that matters, it is also what they are not that forms part of their identity (cf. 1 Th 5:22). This sense is present in *MartPol*, specifically when it has to do with Polycarp's response to suffering. While I do not wish to press this element beyond its intended function, in *MartPol* 16.1, it is a specific course of action, in the face of suffering, which drives the author to assert:

> ... and all the multitude marvelled that there should be so great a difference between the unbelievers (ἀπίστων) and the elect (ἐκλεκτῶν)[46].

In *Ep* 11.3 Polycarp encourages the Philippian community by sharing with them the example in obedience they have been for the rest of the Christian communities: *De vobis etenim gloriatur in monibus ecclesiis, quae deum solae tunc cognoverant*. We could be tempted to see it as a clear case of *captatio benevolentiae*, but I would rather opt for its more direct sense, since the bishop seems to be well-informed about their whereabouts: *Ego autem nihil tale sensi in vobis vel audivi* (10.3). These Christians were indeed people who had walked faithfully and were known for such a devoted life: *in quibus laboravit beatus Paulus, qui estis in principio epistulae eius* (10.3). Polycarp understands Paul's salutation as praise to the community; and it may just be so: he calls them ἅγιοι (Phlp 1:1), and highlights their exemplary cooperation and faithfulness towards him and the gospel (1:5-6).

As he argues a bit earlier, there are some stereotypical elements in this discussion, as it was the common conception, that 'bad theology was regularly connected with bad morals' (cf. *Ep* 11.1).

[46] Right after this phrase the author further discriminates between the 'family of the righteous' (γένει τῶν δικαίων) and the adversary, the rival (ἀντικείμενος); similar expressions used in Phlp 1:28.

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The phrase *qui estis in principio epistulae eius* leads to different interpretations. Some translations imply that the Philippians were 'his letters in the beginning' (Lightfoot). This sense is attractive, and points to the fact that their example of obedience was the best means for the advancement of the gospel. Lake's translation changes the sense completely: 'who are praised in the beginning of his epistle'. Ayán Calvo presents a similar translation: 'quienes aparecéis al comienzo de su carta'. So, How can we know which is the better one? Holmes (1997:208) believes that a problem occurred at an earlier stage in the transmission of the text, which in origin must have had the following Greek form: τοῖς ἐπαινουμένοις ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς ἐπιστολῆς αὐτοῦ (roughly '(the ones) who are praised in the beginning of his letter')[47]. What is important in all this is that the re-translated expression ἐν ἀρχῇ may in fact suggest a reminiscence of Phlp 4:15, where Paul praises the Christ-following community's partnership 'from the beginning' (cf. Berding 2002:111-112).

What is to be the attitude of the ingroup toward Valens and his wife who so ostentatiously have deviated from the true way? Polycarp calls the community to invite them back to the pristine way, not considering them enemies (11.4; *inimicos*). Rather, they are still considered part of the ingroup, *sed sicut passibilia membra et errantia eos revocate* ('but as frail/ill and erring members'). He bases such an exhortation on the mercy of God, *quibus det dominus paenitentiam veram* (cf. 2 Th 3:15). The goal is not only the purity of the body (*corpus*, the ingroup), but the health (*salvetis*; roughly 'salvation') of the *entire* body. This, too, is part of their common edification (11.4).

In *Ep* 12 Polycarp distills once again the *true* situation of the ingroup: They have their portion together with the saints (12.2), under the power of the Lord and of God who raised him up. He calls the Philippians to discharge their public duties (12.3): *Pro omnibus sanctis orate. Orate etiam pro regibus et postestatibus et principibus atque pro persequentibus et odientibus et pro inimicis crucis*. These expressions are familiar to us. They are to intercede for those political powers which indeed are causing havoc amongst them. They have seen Ignatius and companions on their way to martyrdom in Rome, so they have seen first hand the wicked power of those who are supposed to defend the humble and oppose the proud. Who are these *inimicis crucis*? (cf. Phlp 3:18). Ayán Calvo (1991:227) believes it may refer to the docetic teachers mentioned in 7.1. He may be right. There is no way to know their identity for sure in light of the appearance of this expression here. If it were so, then the element of conscious rejection of the way of Christ as portrayed in the Christ-hymn and of the elements I have mentioned

[47] A copyist of the Greek text skipped from τοῖς to the end of ἐπαινουμένοις due to homoeoteleuton, a slip easily committed at mistaking similar letters (i.e., ΕΠΑ, ΕΝΑ); cf. Holmes (1997:208). As such, his sight was 'drawn to the dative plural ending of the participle instead of returning to the dative, plural article' (Berding 2002:111).

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about Phlp 3 (*viz*. search for personal security and justification based on other than Christ's merits) is what is at stake here. It is not used to vilify the political powers that persecute them *per se*, but those who, understanding the implications of the cross, willingly renounce its value for daily life under any given excuse. Tellbe (2001:271, 275) believes the identity of these enemies is to be found in civic opponents, and it is certainly a possibility to take into account. In this case, the Philippian church would be again suffering because of her non-participation in the civic cults, including emperor worship[48]. After all, Polycarp himself was to suffer martyrdom for these same reasons some years later. That the bishop's exhortation includes the request to pray for the emperors and potentates and princes (*regibus et postestatibus et principibus*) may be yet another strong argument in favour of such an understanding.

The Philippians are called, once more, to opt for the way that will ultimately bear fruit and in which they will be perfected (*ut fructus vester manifestus sit in omnibus*, *ut sitis in illo perfecti*), echoing the words of Phlp 4:17 and 3:12.

Finally the text returns to its original Greek form in the last two chapters. Chapter 13, as I mentioned, seems to have given *Ep* its rightful place in the history of Christian literature. This is the second reason Polycarp writes to the Philippians (13.1; cf. Ignatius, *Pol* 7.2; 8.1).

There is a noticeable absence in the letter: Nowhere is there a reference to Jewish-Christian heresies (cf. Koester 1987:307), so we may perhaps assume that even at this time Jewish influence in the colony was meager. However, this static view of 'Judaism' and 'Christianity' has been challenged in recent decades (Lieu 2006:218). Such a silence may purely reflect a certain continued co-existence between 'Jews' and 'Christians', against what Ascough (2003) thought it was taken place in Philippi where the Christ-following community resembled a typical Graeco-Roman association[49]. On account of the archaeological evidence to date, I must conclude that Jewish presence appears to have little impact in Philippi at the time of Polycarp. Nevertheless, I leave the options open, for Lieu (2006:219-220, 232) rightly stresses that evidence pointing to

[48] It is here that Christian-identity sets its members apart from other social groups. It requires exclusive loyalty, as Wilson (1996:9-10) observes: 'It has frequently been noted that Graeco-Roman associations did not demand the exclusive alliance of their members. There may be one or two exceptions, where inclusive commitments was required, and many people in fact have belonged to only one association as a matter of choice or practicality (the spare time of an average person was probably quite limited). Yet in principle there was usually nothing to stop a person belonging to or being the patron of more than one guild or mystery cult, each of which may have honored a different deity'.

[49] Harland (2003:214) assumes this state of affairs during the time of Polycarp in Asia Minor.

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richer interaction amongst these communities (not yet so strongly differentiated) has been either misread or ignored[50].

3.2.3 Preliminary Conclusions

Polycarp's paraenetic style is conservative and encourages the Philippian community to adhere to traditional values transmitted to them *via* Paul and the other apostles. To accomplish this Polycarp intentionally imitates the apostle (Berding 2002:127-128), a common feature of paraenetic discourse[51]. Hartog (2002:124) writes that paraenesis 'which stresses order can be divided by social model: those which stress order in the *Gesellschaft* (cosmic, social, political, and anthropological order) and those which stress order in the *Gemeinschaft* (family, club, and community order). *Phil* stresses the order of the *Gemeinschaft* (the community of the Philippian church) […] paraenesis which stresses the *Gemeinschaft* often appealed to personal relationships and feelings of intimacy'. It is true that the style of *Ep* is not highly creative and that its themes are dealt with in a traditional fashion, but what interests me is how Polycarp applies this traditional teaching to new situations which call for a specific course of action. In a sense the Smyrnean has a wealth of resources to draw from, whereas Paul had to create out of his own literary and theological Jewish background to apply it then to a mainly pagan world. That much, at least, is already won in Polycarp's case: the Philippians are by now well-versed in the Scriptures (12.1).

Bovon-Thurneysen (1973:249-250) describes the stated motivations Polycarp uses in his paraenetic style in order to encourage obedience amongst the Philippians. I observed that the apostle Paul uses both the rhetoric of friendship and his own example of moral authority to exhort the community to obedience. These elements, however, are based on the Christ-hymn and do not rest on Paul's own merits. Paul, after all, is but a slave of God. For Bovon-Thurneysen there are five areas which stand out in *Ep*. These are: 1) *theological*, which include the omniscient character of God (4.3: ὅτι πάντα μωμοσκοπεῖται, καί

[50] Notwithstanding, some authors consider that the 'Christian' praxis was different to the 'Jewish' one in that the later tended to seclusion and separation from the other in daily life: '[…] a pesar de vivir en su ambiente penetrado de helenismo, los hebreos mantuvieron su vida interna, cerrándose en lo posible a las influencias exteriores. Su fidelidad a la ley de Moisés y su orgullo racial establecía entre ellos y los griegos una barrera más sólida que la de los barrios en que vivían separados' (Fraile 1971:688). It is possible, however, that this reading may now be regarded as stereotypical rather than true-to-life, but as I read some of Philo's works (*LegGaj*; *Flacc*, etc.), the emergence of 'inherited social/political rights' seems to be quite present.

[51] Lindemann (1989:91) argued that Polycarp, just as 'Clement' and Ignatius before him, hid behind the image of Paul and his authority in order to attain the desired response from the audience. 'Polycarp's goal is not to understand Paul on his own terms. He actualizes the teachings and the portrait of the person of Paul for his setting and needs' (Berding 2002:158).

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λέληθεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲν οὔτε λογισμῶν ἐννοιῶν οὔτε τι τῶν κρυπτῶν τής καρδίας); God's honour (5.1, ὀφείλομεν ἀξίως…); and the fear of God (5.1 ὅτι θεὸς οὐ μυκτηρίζεται; cf. 2.1); 2) *christological*, mainly through the example of Jesus (5.2; 8.2; 10.1); 3) *missionary* (especially in *politeia*), so that the pagans would be impressed by their worthy conduct (prologue, παροικύση, and 12.3)[52]; 4) *ecclesiological*, so that the body may be whole (11.4); and 5) *eschatological*, which includes future rewards and punishments (2.1-3; 5.2-3, 6.2; 10.2-3; 11.2)[53]. Hartog (2002:133) is right when stressing that it is too limiting to focus solely on the persuasion (*logos*) techniques and forget the *ethos* and *pathos*. As we already saw in Phlp, there are some elements that can be added under *ethos* and *pathos*. For one, I would include the example of Jesus under the rubric of *ethos*, especially if what Polycarp evokes has any link with the Christ-hymn. There are aspects in the Christian life, *viz*. being willing to suffer on behalf of others' that do not just appeal to the mind, but include the response of the whole human person. The narrative of Christ's downward and upward movement (Phlp 2:6-11) may function in such a holistic fashion. As far as *ethos* is concerned, throughout the letter Polycarp speaks of his inferiority compared to the genius and spiritual strength of the apostle Paul (3.1-3; 9.1-2; 11.3), but he stresses the boldness and firmness of Ignatius and companions (9.1-2) as examples to admire and imitate (Hartog 2002:134). The influence of the apostle in the later bishop has been observed by many[54]. Berding (2002:2, 6) affirms that Polycarp consciously tries to imitate Paul both literarily and in terms of ethical example, following typical Hellenistic rhetorical conventions.

This summarized view of the persuasion themes allows us to trace parallels between both letters[55]. Firstly, I mentioned in our commentary on Phlp 2:6-11 that God has the last word. Even the striking abased behaviour of Christ is granted the highest value because God's character is reflected through and through in it. Secondly, the example of Jesus is the paradigm for all Christian

[52] I believe 12.3 provides mostly a reactive attitude to pagan neighbours (recognising that to pray for them must have meant something else than mere pious acts within the context of the assembly). However in 10.2, if my interpretation of *possitis benefacere* is correct (see 7.13), the call is to practice good in *politeia*, and not exclusively in the context of the local assembly.

[53] This needs to be nuanced depending to what we are referring. When it comes to the Holy Spirit, while for Paul it represents an eschatological event, for Polycarp is something in the future (Berding 2002:185).

[54] We can be sure that Polycarp's frequent mention of Paul reflects his enormous influence in Philippi. This seems to be the normal way of approaching the issue. Ignatius only mentions the apostle in those letters addressed to communities which had a tradition for Pauline presence (*Eph* and *Rm*), so we may conclude that the same is true for *Ep* (Berding 2002:131).

[55] I am aware that the differences are as many as the similarities. However, I think it is unfair to compare Polycarp's only extant letter with the whole Pauline corpus and expect the Smyrnean's one and only letter to reflect most of the major themes Paul developed in at least seven (undisputed) letters.

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behaviour. Those elements that are not imitable are celebrated and 'liturgised'. Thirdly, the concern of the apostle is the progress of the gospel (1:12). There is not turning aside from such a call, even in the midst of severe opposition. They are to live lives worthy of Christ Jesus in the realm of *politeia* (1:27), as witnessing to the gentiles that God has the last word. Fourthly, although Paul does not use the term *ekklesia* in Phlp, the call to unity and reciprocity spills throughout the letter (with the profusion of παν- and συν- language). Finally, the eschatological element is present in a similar way as in *Ep*: salvation and destruction signal the double route humanity is to face[56].

Polycarp is writing to a Christian community in Philippi six decades after Paul wrote to them. They still cherished the memory of the apostle who had left a profound mark in their lives[57]. Now, however, the situation was quite different for what we glimpse in *Ep*. There is not a strong leadership to whom the Smyrnean may address the letter (see *prologue*). The presence of some rival teachings coming from Judeo-Christian sources is absent in the letter, although the theme of the enemies of the cross is expanded to new uses: against those who deny Jesus' incarnation and *pathos*, as if these did not have any saving power (7.1-2; 12.3). It seems the Christian community had been severely affected by Valens' love of money, probably because he was a standing leader and well-off member (patron?) of the church. His action had cause a strong commotion and threatened to create further havoc. Polycarp needs to confirm and call them back to remain firm in the faith they received and not give in to base impulses. The fact that the congregation asked the bishop to address certain issues points to the fact of lack of local leadership to assume responsibility for this teaching. Polycarp points them back to Pauline (and Biblical) wisdom in order to remain steadfast, in the face of internal strife.

The church at Philippi still identifies with living examples of courage in the Lord. I believe this, once more, demonstrates the deep impact of Paul's theology in the community. The sight of Ignatius, Zosimus and Rufus (9.1), closely guarded by 'ten leopards' (Ignatius, *Rm* 5.1), must have much impressed them,

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[56] This kind of language and imagery had become common by the second century. In *MartPol* the theme of 'eternal fire' (destruction) and 'temporal fire' (suffering for Christ) appears repeatedly (cf. 2.3; 11).

[57] Hartog (2002:216) merges some views which oppose that of some scholars who contend Paul's influence was forgotten with the emergence of the 'catholic' church: 'Paul's influence went through three stages in the second century. (1) He enjoyed great popularity at the turn of the century (as witnessed by Ephesians, Revelation, 1 Peter, Hebrews, *1 Clement*, the Johannine Epistles, Ignatius, and Polycarp). (2) His popularity waned as heretics made use of his letters (as evidenced by James, Jude, *Hermas*, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, *Didache*, *2 Clement*, and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*). (3) His letters returned to popularity again (as demonstrated by 2 Peter, Justin, and the Pastorals)'.

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for they requested Polycarp to send them Ignatius' letters (13.2)[58]. It may just be that they understood well that, in order to be faithful Christians, they needed to be willing to embrace the same orientation in life that the apostle Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus and the Lord Jesus, had earlier opted for. Again, suffering was a key element in the construction and maintenance of their social identity (cf. MacDonald 1994:121).

Polycarp highly values the example of Paul. There are recurrent references to his character ('blessed and glorious', 3.2; 'Paul himself', 9.1; 'the blessed Paul', 11.3), wisdom and ministry amongst the Philippians (3.2). If we assess this evidence with due care and take seriously both Polycarp's presentation of deeds and what he supposes the Philippian community thinks about the apostle, I conclude that Paul partially succeeded in his task. One of Paul's purposes in writing to the Philippians was to present a living example based on the Christ-*phronesis* as displayed in the Christ-hymn. Both the theological narrative (Phlp 2:6-11) and the sharing of his personal struggles and choices were aimed at producing a similar desire for imitation-*phronesis* in the midst of difficult circumstances. Some decades later, problems still threatened the Philippian community (potential political persecution [9.1-2], internal sin affecting the core of their salient social identity [11.1-4]), but the message remained the same: retain the faith you already hold onto, which is firm and true (1.2; 10.1). God is all-powerful and reigns, Christ is the saviour (*prologue*) and all are to him submitted (2.1); *therefore* (διό, 2.1), 'serve God in fear and truth'. Do you want to know how to remain faithful in the midst of contradicting life-styles (Valens and wife) and hard circumstances (Ignatius et al)? Look at the blessed Paul (3.2), better yet, fix your eyes on Him whose throne is above all (2.1), and imitate their conduct (2.2; 8.2; 10.1). Because God has the last word, let us persevere:

> Now He that raised Him from the dead will raise us also; if we do His will and walk in His commandments and love the things which He loved, abstaining from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing or blow for blow or

[58] This observation is important. When I speak of Christ-following communities during this period (1st and 2nd centuries AD), we are indeed dealing with quite low numbers of converts. Oakes (2001) described the Philippian community during Paul's time at around one hundred members, although his estimation is by no means conclusive. What we gather from this, however, is that numbers were probably low until the beginning of the fourth century (based on a growth projected at 40 percent per decade). Stark (1997:3-27) provides useful information in this regard. His conclusion is that by the year AD 150 the number of Christians in the Roman Empire was no more than 40 000, in a huge territory that accommodated an estimated population of sixty (60) million, but that around AD 40 the numbers were no more than one thousand (:5). Pauline communities were small in scale, which allows for a more profound impact on the part of those who visited them and in this case, those who were in chains.

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> cursing for cursing; but remembering the words which the Lord spoke, as He taught; Judge not that ye be not judged. Forgive, and it shall be forgiven you. Have mercy that ye may receive mercy. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again; and again Blessed are the poor and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God[59].

Some years later Polycarp had to suffer a similar destiny to the one followed by those great brethren in the faith he so admired and imitated[60]. Although the narrative of his martyrdom has experienced certain re-writing in subsequent centuries (cf. Ayán Calvo 1991:235f), the core of its message stands. The now old bishop, when the crucial moment to confess Christ in the midst of insurmountable pressure came, did not fail (*MartPol* 9.2-3, 10.1):

> When then he was brought before him, the proconsul enquired whether he were the man. And on his confessing that he was, he tried to persuade him to a denial saying, 'Have respect to thine age,' and other things in accordance therewith, as it is their wont to say; 'Swear by the genius of Caesar; repent and say, Away with the atheists.' Then Polycarp with solemn countenance looked upon the whole multitude of lawless heathen that were in the stadium, and waved his hand to them; and groaning and looking up to heaven he said, 'Away with the atheists.' But when the magistrate pressed him hard and said, 'Swear the oath, and I will release thee; revile the Christ,' Polycarp said, 'Fourscore and six years have I been His servant, and He hath done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?' But on his persisting again and saying, 'Swear by the genius of Caesar,' he answered, 'If thou supposest vainly that I will swear by the genius of Caesar, as thou sayest, and feignest that thou art ignorant who I am, hear thou plainly, I am a Christian (Χριστιανός εἰμι).

By the beginning of the second century AD some understood that love towards God and his Christ found no better expression than through an ultimate testimonial act, which claimed *all* from the human subject. It was a testimonial act in the most literal sense of the word, and concluded with the death of the witness (μάρτυς), in martyrdom (μαρτύριον)[61]. It is imperative to study what

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[59] *Ep* 2.2-3 (Lightfoot's trans.).

[60] Berding (2002:138) keenly observes that Polycarp never encourages the Philippians to imitate him personally. The sometimes 'overwhelming' memory of the apostle Paul may have something to do with it, although I am not really sure that it is fair to ask for this explicit mention in his only extant letter. I would suggest, though, that his life, as it is portrayed in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, functions exactly in that category. This example in the *acts of martyrs* serves to encourage others in the faith (cf. Gager 1975:145; Stark 1997:174).

[61] I am playing with the double sense of the term μάρτυς, which in origin meant 'witness', but eventually acquired the sense of 'martyr' (giving witness to Christ with one's own life).

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characterised this new century in order to understand these emphases in their proper context.

4. Second-Century Christian Identity

It is clearly impossible to speak about 'second-Century Christian identity' with any degree of objectiveness. We are here dealing with an ideological construct that merges diverse and complex human behaviours and perceptions[62]. Wilken (1984:31) limits the number of Christians in the beginning of the second century below fifty thousand, while the Jewish population reached four to five million of a total population of sixty million in the Roman Empire[63]. Thus, it could be quite tricky to speak in such categorical terms when we possess little information on the whole of a reduced movement (Barrett 1995:1). We can speak, nevertheless, about 'broad' tendencies that are, as it could not be otherwise, reflected in the written record of the more educated of the time. I am particularly interested in how the church understood suffering on the hands of the civic authorities as a major descriptor for Christian identity. As we saw in Polycarp's martyrdom (*MartPol* 16.1), in times such as these authors commented on the big difference they observed *in* Christians when facing pain and suffering. As a matter of fact, it is because Christians so unflinchingly approached martyrdom that the author of *MartPol* 3.2 speaks of the 'God-loving and God-fearing race of the Christians' (θεοφιλοῦς καὶ θεοσεβοῦς γένους τῶν χριστιανῶν)[64]. Such was the willingness of some of them to offer themselves to the local authorities to be tortured for the sake of Christ that the author of *MartPol* 4 had to warn them not to seek this fate voluntarily. *MartPol* twice remarks that Polycarp's martyrdom was 'according to the gospel' (τὸ κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον μαρτυρίον, 1.1; 19.1), as if wanting to place this (witnessing) experience within desirable parameters, since he (the author) is aware that 'all desire to imitate it' (πάντες ἐπιθυμοῦσιν μιμεῖσθαι; *MartPol* 19.1). It is my opinion that Paul's own reflection on the suffering of Christ had much influence

[62] As Stark (1997:199) recognizes, quoting MacMullen (1981:66), we need to use of extreme caution here. If it is hard enough to discover the religious and social situation of our own time, much more is it when we refer to 'a remote and ill-documented period'. The challenge is anthropological also; it is impossible to *know* that the other is thinking and how is thinking (Cohen 1994:3). Mine is only an informed and respectful approximation.

[63] Stark (1997:7) uses an arithmetic of growth derived from contemporary religious movements and limits the total number of Christ-followers to 7 500 for the first century (only 0.01 percent of the total population). Whatever the final number, what is clear is that the size of the Christ-following population was practically insignificant, something that may be obscured by the fact that we tend to focus solely on the community's *ad intra* literature and how it perceived itself.

[64] I am hesitant to ascribe too much force to the use of this term (γένους) here, as if it were akin to the oft-used expression ascribed to the Christian movement in the second century AD as a *tertium genus*. Cf. Bardy (1990:192) and Teja (1990:91).

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in the churches in later years (Glancy 2004:99-135)[65]. The theme of imitation, so prevalent in Philippians, returns once more to centre stage. It is again suffering lived in joy, although for some it is only a symptom of the anxious epoch in which they live, based on the irrational: 'One of the elements of the morbid desire for martyrdom was the abnormal enjoyment of the pain which it involved […] Clearly, the voluntary surrender of one's self to the experience of martyrdom, when it was known that the most exquisite tortures were involved, is prima facie evidence of the presence of the tendency towards masochism' (Riddle 1931:64). Riddle goes too far in his observations because he starts from his own prejudices and antagonism towards any religious manifestation, as if these were solely based on the irrational.

On the opposite side is Stark (1997:167), who perceives the sacrificial element in the Christian religion as rational choice and suggests that 'sacrifice and stigma were the dynamos behind the rise of Christianity'. Using an 'economical approach' (rewards, losses, counting the cost, etc.), Stark defends the fact that religious adherence, even self-sacrifice, are not based upon the irrational, as some part of the scholarly spectrum had concluded (specially the Chicago School)[66]. This opinion concurs with what I observed in Paul. His life-style is not 'a compulsion laid on him from the beginning, but a deliberate choice' (Wengst 1988:46-47). Stark (1997:16-17) presents an interesting insight when he studies the experience of conversion. Drawing from contemporary examples (i.e., Moonies, Mormons), he concludes that conversion is not about 'seeking or embracing an ideology; it is about bringing one's religious behaviour into alignment with that of one's friends and family members'. Thus, within the small group of Christ-followers we could perhaps expect strong familiar bonds that reinforced the overall conduct of the ingroup. Certainly then, this Christ-*phronesis* is not merely an ideological programme, but a way of living out the common faith, in this particular case, based on the experience of renouncing self-interest on behalf of seeking the good of the ingroup and even of a society that is hostile to such a life-style. It may just be that suffering (e.g. martyrdom)

[65] In this Paul shows himself in continuity with the Old Testament (compare Rm 8:35-36 with Ps 44:22 [43:23 LXX], an almost verbatim transcription except by the word ἕνεκα), the Maccabean epoch (cf. 2Mac 7:2), and even with the Jesus tradition (cf. Jn 12:24-25). I have already spoken at length about Paul's own standing on this when we studied Phlp 1:19-26.

[66] Stark (1997) applies what is called *rational choice theory*. The presupposition of this theory is that religion provides compensators for desired rewards that are scarce or unavailable (:35-36). Compensators are the means to arrive at the reward. For Stark the promise of eternal life points to something beyond earthly existence and supposes a deep desire for immortality common to most people (:168). As such, religious compensators are beyond the possibility of evaluation, and are inherently risky (in the case of Christianity they imply faith, πίστις, according to Graeco-Roman society the lowest grade of cognition, the state of mind of the uneducated; cf. Lane Fox 1987:31).

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was becoming by then one of the strongest reinforcements of such a life-orientation[67].

4.1 An Age of Anxiety?

I believe that by our reading of *Ep* and *MartPol* we are better informed to take a glance at the difficult situation the Christian communities were experiencing by the middle and end of the second century AD. Dodds (1965:135), who studies the dialogue between pagans and Christians by the end of the second century and beginning of the third, comments that 'in a period when earthly life was increasingly devalued and guilt-feelings were widely prevalent, Christianity held out to the disinherited the conditional promise of a better inheritance in another world'. Despite pagan attacks that Christianity appealed only to 'weak souls' (Porphyry, *Christ* 87), Dodds maintains that there existed in this period a generalised conscious desire to seek death (cf. Seneca, *Ep* 24.25: *affectus qui multos occupavit, libido moriendi*)[68]. Dodds was focusing on a later period of history, but I think we can already perceive the seeds of this understanding of 'loving God to the ultimate' both in Paul and in the writings we have earlier commented on. In chapter 5 I discussed at length Paul's views on suffering and concluded that for him suffering for the sake of Christ was a manner of close identification with the Lord (Phlp 3:5-11). It seems that latter Christian leaders took Paul's emphases a little further, almost implying that martyrdom somehow completed a soteriological process, bringing full identification with Christ (precisely what Gnilka 1976:102 deduced about Paul's theologising in Phlp; but cf. Ignatius, *Rm* 6.2-3).

Dodds discerns reasons for this general anxiety during the third and fourth centuries: lack of proper interpretation of current events, lack of proper explanation about man's place in the universe; lack of vitality compared to Christianity; and especially the lack of direct support by the State at the beginning of the fourth century. I believe there were other elements that strongly impacted the psyche of the population as well (cf. Stark 1997:155). One

[67] That becoming a Christ-follower in the first century was an act of deviance is something beyond the scope of this study. There are good and recent studies that treat such elements with great skill (cf. Stark 1997 and Gil Arbiol 2006).

[68] Porphyry himself had been contemplating suicide after a period of severe illness. Dodds's affirmation may surprise us, but he bases it on what ancient authors wrote about this precise period in time. Thus, Lucian (*Peregr* 13) speaks that 'the majority of them [i.e., the Christians] handed themselves voluntarily'. Celsum (as reflected in Origen, *Cels* 8.65) expresses himself in like manner. Clement of Alexandria, *Stro* 4.17.1 comments about those who acted under 'death wish' (θανατοῦντες). Stark (1997:214) observes that during the birthday of the emperor (the Roman 'good news') there were games held in his honour, where people had to die in order to satisfy the throngs. Death and cruelty were an important part of this society.

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of them was the high rate of mortality, even in the urban setting. Brown (1993:22) believes that the average age at death in the Roman Empire in the second century AD was inferior to 25 years, although Lenski and Lenski (1987:179), elevate it to around 35-40. We know of at least two wide-spread epidemics that affected a major part of the population. Around AD 165 there was a smallpox epidemic that swept between a fourth and a third of the total population of the Roman Empire during the reign of Marcus Aurelius who died of the same disease. In AD 251, a measles epidemic caused havoc amongst the population of the empire. Although it is complex to ascertain the total death toll, we know that at the height of the epidemic, at least 5 000 people died daily in Rome alone (Stark 1997:77). How Christians generally behaved during these times contrasted with the way of self-preservation most pagans seemed to have opted for[69]. We observe that un-named Christians had well understood the social implication of living out for others. As Dodds (1965:132) expressed it, while paganism was weary and had lost faith both in science and in itself, 'Christianity, on the other hand, was judged to be worth living for because it was seen to be worth dying for'.

4.2 Suffering and Martyrdom

Once again I want to stress that suffering and martyrdom are not necessarily the strongest descriptors (norms, or patterns of behaviour, cf. Esler 2003:20-21) of Christian identity, but appear as important ones in early Christian experience. Readiness to suffer for the Name is understood both in Paul and Polycarp as fulfilling the principle of 'not looking after one's own interest'. This active expression of ταπεινοφροσύνη is not only related to suffering, but to service and self-giving on behalf of others (cf. Phlp 2:21-22 of Timothy; *Ep* 8.1 of Jesus Christ)[70].

Mysticism and martyrdom are intimately related in Ignatius' thought, heavily influenced by the apostle Paul, which impacted the younger Polycarp when the

[69] Lohfink (1998[3]) provides ample evidence for such a contrast. While the healthy and some of the 'best' amongst the Christians were dying as they cared for their sick, the 'proper' thing to do amongst pagans was to flee from affected areas. Stark (1997:82-83) presents some letters written by Cyprian and Dionysius that reflect this conduct. The social concern of these Christian communities presented a threat to the Roman Empire because they were becoming attractive and earning the trust of the people. A century later, the emperor Julian tried to combat the 'Galileans' by encouraging pagans to match the virtues of these despicable subjects by instituting State-organised charities (:83-84).

[70] However, this qualified suffering receives an impetus that it is, in my opinion, a Pauline reflection on Christ's downward movement which is found in the Christ-hymn and that indeed permeates the entire New Testament, from the Pauline letters (Rm 5:3-8), to the general ones (1 Pt, Rv) and harkens back ultimately to Jesus' words (cf. Jn 12:24-25; Mt 10:21, 38/par.).

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former visited his church while in chains. I believe this is not due to the way in which Ignatius theologises on martyrdom as that his personal experience of suffering (similarly to what happened with Paul) drove him to a closer identification with God (ἕνωσις or 'union'; cf. Ayán Calvo 1991:87). For him, martyrdom has its basis on the passion of Jesus. Martyrdom, thus, reflects for him the closest link with Christ which is depicted in three areas: 1) solidarity with the *passio Christi*; 2) the following of the *passio Christi* (*Rm* 6.1); and 3) *imitatio* (*Smy* 4.2)[71].

Martyrdom is not in Ignatius' theology a mere a descriptor of close union with Christ, it is also a sign to the world (*Rm* 3.2-3), and to heretics (those who follow gnostic and docetic teaching; *Rm* 6.1), because it implies a witness in favour of the authentic faith in the incarnation and passion of Christ (Ayán Calvo 1991:89). Ignatius, fearful that in his visit to the churches on his way to martyrdom he may be pressed by the Christians to seek a way out of this situation (*Rm* 7.2), writes with urgency (*Rm* 6.2-3):

> Pardon me, brethren: do not hinder me from living, do not wish to keep me in a state of death; and while I desire to belong to God, do not ye give me over to the world. Suffer me to obtain pure light: when I have gone thither, I shall indeed be a man of God. Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God (μιμητὴν εἶναι τοῦ πάθους τοῦ θεοῦ μου). If any one has Him within himself, let him consider what I desire, and let him have sympathy (συμπαθείτω) with me, as knowing how I am straitened.

It almost seems as if for Ignatius martyrdom completes a real Christian anthropology in *imitatio Christi* fashion. Later on, Clement of Alexandria (*ca* AD 150-215) would write in his *Stromata*—in a polemical context—that 'the ultimate reason for martyrdom is both the love for God and for the neighbour' (*Str* 7.42-55). Martyrdom is also the most authentic manifestation of the perfect man, since it is the 'perfect work of love' (τέλειον ἔργον ἀγάπης; *Str* 4.14.3)[72].

For whatever value martyrdom may have, it is clear that it functions as a powerful emotional 'reinforcement' for the group. Polycarp's remains, after he had been burnt at the stake, are picked up by his followers. The author of *MartPol* 18.2-3 writes:

> And so afterwards we took up his bones which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place; where the Lord will permit us to gather together, as we are able, in gladness and joy and

[71] Ayán Calvo (1991:88).
[72] In Merino Rodríguez (2003:15-16).

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> to celebrate the birthday[73] of his martyrdom for the commemoration of those that have already fought in the contest, and for the training and preparation of those that shall do so thereafter.

Such a statement recalls Polycarp's own reflection as he saw Ignatius and his companions as they stopped by the church in Smyrna on their way to Rome (cf. *Ep* 1.1, 'images of true love'; 'saintly bonds' and 'diadems', in reference to their chains). It is clear that this ultimate experience reinforced the identity of the group and helped it to be bolder. A special honour (and place) was given to the martyrs (Droge & Tabor 1992), as it also happened in Philippi after the time of Paul. Stark (1997) is concerned with the sociological dynamics that reinforced this attitude in the ingroup towards what appeared to be a wilful renunciation of the most precious element (*viz*. one's life) against all logic. His analysis of the situation centres then in the social aspect as the group interacted, but we also can add the powerful influence of the Christ-*phronesis* as one of *the* ideological frameworks which provides its base[74].

4.3 Christians through Other Eyes

Christians were not living as if they were part of a secret sect (Stark 1997:193). I believe they could not even if they wanted to do so in the *Gemeinschaft* context of Philippi. Neighbours were surely aware that these were meeting as a Christ-following community[75]. How were then Christ-followers perceived by the outgroup? Although the matter is complex, my aim here is once more to acquire a basic understanding of some written sources which could help us arrive at a more informed evaluation of how Christian daily life was assessed by those who observed them. We need only be aware that the first mention of the Christian movement by a Roman writer dates from about eighty years after the beginning of the movement (Wilken 1984:xix). Much anti-Christian information of first centuries has only survived partially and it is possible that what survived was edited by later Christian authors (cf. Clark 2004:16-17). This will not then be, for the afore-mentioned reason and for sheer economy of space, an exhaustive presentation of the facts.

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[73] The date of his death is the date of birth to eternal life (cf. Ignatius, *Rm* 6.1, 'The pangs of a new birth are upon me'); Ayán Calvo (1991:269).

[74] We are dealing here with doctrine (i.e., ideas) not as if it were epiphenomena, but as part of a coherent unit. On the potential problems poised by the 'delay of the parousia' and of present death in the midst of the Christian promise of eternal life, see Stark (1997:184-189). However interesting these topics may be, they go beyond the focus of this work.

[75] Space in the city was structured to encourage public use and organised in order to maintain order and social cohesion in the poorly-administered cities of the empire (cf. Perring 1991:274).

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If we look at the theme of persecution we realise that the State's perception of the Christian communities in later decades responded to its own understanding of 'paganism' (i.e., their own context), where elites commanded the crowds. As such, when persecution spurred, authorities went firstly (and almost exclusively) for Christian leaders like Ignatius and Polycarp (cf. MacMullen 1981:129). They had missed that the Christian communities were structured under a different value-system that corresponded more directly with the Christ-hymn narrative and the exercise of ταπεινοφροσύνη as virtue (see chapter 6). Authority was ideally based on the practice of service and self-giving rather than on status and merit. It is difficult to over-stress the rejection this 'virtue' would cause in the ancient world, as Judge (1986:107) has pointed out, since for classical philosophers mercy and pity were pathological emotions that had to be avoided by all means on the part of the rational man:

> Pity was a defect of character unworthy of the wise and excusable only in those who have not yet grown up. It was an impulse response based on ignorance. Plato had removed the problems of beggars from his ideal state by dumping them from is borders.

After all 'mercy involves providing unearned help or relief, it was contrary to justice' (Stark 1997:212).

Though early Christianity reflected *some* of the values of the typical Graeco-Roman Mediterranean society (domestic codes, familial structures, voluntary associations, etc.)[76], Wilken (1984:xi) is right at pointing how different indeed the movement was from the surrounding context from which it emerged (Clark 2004:21)[77]. Lohfink (1998[3]) equally invites contemporary Christian readers to shake off a typical sense of inferiority and concentrate on the boldness and capacity of early Christians in defying the unjust *status quo* by the practice of self-giving and love for the 'unlovable' ones (the sick, the dead, etc.). But now to our original question: How did others perceive the slowly growing Christian communities? Perhaps it will be helpful to accept from the outset that 'how

[76] Tertullian (AD 155-222; *Apologeticum*), in order to defend a credible case for the truth of Christianity, had to describe the movement using accepted and understood social structures within the Empire: *factio Christiana*, *corpus*, *coito Christianorum*, etc. (cf. Wilken 1984:46; Mason 1996:39), which witnesses to the fact that these cannot be easily isolated from each other. See also the descriptions in Meeks (1983); Stambaugh and Balch (1993); MacDonald (1994), and specially Craffert (1998).

[77] As a matter of fact, White (1985/6:126) believes concerning Pauline groups that 'rather than creating a *new* or competing social structure over against the Roman environment, Christianity actually "triumphed" socially precisely because it provided avenues of access and support *within* the old structures of the Roman social world' (in Craffert 1998:325, original emphasis).

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something is perceive is an aspect of what it is' (Wilken 1984:xvii)[78]. I have chosen to present a case which is somewhat similar to the situation in Philippi, where the group in question comprises mainly Christians from gentile background, accused by the local citizenry. The picture is not complete—it need not be—and clashes with local Jewry should not be underestimated, but that is something others (cf. Tellbe 2001; Lieu 2004) have already treated with adequate depth.

Pliny (the Younger) is the first Roman witness who directly addresses the Christian movement, to which he refers as *hetaeria* or 'club' (cf. *Ep* 10.34)[79]. He obtained his consulship at an early age—not yet forty—his last step in the *cursus honorum* (Wilken 1984:6). Later on, as governor of Bithynia-Pontus in AD 112 he wrote the emperor Trajan concerning the complaint a group of local citizens had brought before him concerning some Christian living in the vicinity[80]. This picture basically fits with what we know about this epoch: enforcement of law and order depended upon private initiative (Sherwin-White 1952:204). Although there were gruesome accusations against Christians as baby-eaters, as atheists and of using their meetings to practice all kinds of immorality, Pliny, after having investigated the matter thoroughly, found no guilt on them, though he had expected to find some crimes he could accuse them of (Wilken 1984:22). For Pliny their practices and rites were innocuous. They were a *superstitio*, a *foreign* cult (the same term used at the beginning of the second century by Tacitus, *An* 15.44 and Suetonius, *Ner* 16). Pliny was nevertheless unsure how to deal with the problem.

Although he wrote to the emperor Trajan asking for advice, he did not wait for a reply before taking matters into his own hands. He summoned the peculiar group of Christians—mostly from lower strata and uneducated, though some

[78] This precise element is what MacMullen (1981:206) saw lacking in the otherwise impressive and thorough classical work by von Harnack (1998 [1902]), who did not include, amongst the hundreds of ancient citations, a single one on how the movement was perceived by pagan authors.

[79] With the same term Pliny refers to the firemen's association in Nicomedia. Most mentions by Greek and Roman authors during the second century about the Christian movement are little more than casual comments. It will not be until the close of the second century that Celsus would carry on a serious study to refute the Christian faith and practice (Wilken 1984:31). The possibility that the Christ-following movement in the first generation might have appeared as a 'philosophical school' to outside observers is entertained by Mason (1996:46-47). For the second century see Galen (*On the Pulse* 2.4, who spoke of the 'schools of Moses and Christ'; cf. Mason 1996:51), casual witness to the somewhat close resemblance of 'Jews' and 'Christians'.

[80] What they had done is unknown to us, although what we can gather from diverse sources points to something related to the sale of sacrificial meat. Wilken (1984:15): 'Toward the end of the letter, written after Pliny had dealt with the problem, he observed that the "flesh of sacrificial victims is on sale everywhere, though up till recently scarcely anyone could be found to buy it"'.

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were Roman citizens—and treated it as if it were an independent sect (Wilken 1984:23). Pliny interrogated the frightened crowd and warned them that if confessing to be Christian they would be executed. Some of them persistently confessed being Christian and were sent to be immediately executed. The question is if the mere bearing of the name 'Christian' was a sufficient crime (*flagitia*) to deserve death. This element was compounded with the obstinacy (*contumancia*) on the part of the accused, who refused to bend to the wishes of the magistrates, and were thus liable for punishment (:23). Those with Roman citizenship were only put in jail, since Pliny's *imperium* did not grant him the right to judge them summarily. Later on he sent them to Rome. We do not know what their fate was.

This was not the last time Pliny had to deal with the problems posed by the Christians, who were not well-liked by part of the citizenry. Later on some other cases turned up. These Christians were accused of keeping to themselves, of being scornful of the other gods, making converts amongst the lowers classes and avoiding discussion with the more educated citizens, and of asking only to believe and not to ask questions (Wilken 1984:24). Apparently in some of these groups we find people that 'apostatised' or that affirmed to have been Christian earlier but had now pledged alliance to another cult, as it was the norm in Graeco-Roman society.

What is left for us to decide, in this complex and pluralistic context, is how these scattered and small groups of people understood the essence of the good news in Christ. Certainly their numbers were meagre and their public impact almost non-existent for many decades in the midst of the vast Roman Empire. But I would like to believe that the seed the apostle Paul had planted, giving testimony of their firm trust in Christ, did not go unnoticed even then. The society of the Roman Empire had its own 'hymns' that shaped their lives, but so too the Christian community. It was a matter of time before such a subversive message would reach the heart of cities and towns across the Mediterranean. The Christians, according to Pliny, had affirmed that:

> *hance fuisse summan vel culpae sua vel erroris; essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent. Quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium. quod ipsum facere desise post edictum meum, quo secundum mandata tua hetaerias esse vetueram*[81].

[81] Pliny (*Ep* 10.96.7), in Sherwin-White (1966:702): 'the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to

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It seems as if some members had left their Christian practices after Pliny's edict. I am wondering, nevertheless, if the sight of those who maintained their faith under cruel pressure was not a critical element for the rest of the communities to fully identify with the God-become-man who had so dramatically identified with them. The singing of hymns was not just mere wishful acclamation; it also compelled the group to a specific behaviour ('norms' or 'identity descriptors') on behalf of others, in *imitatio Christi* fashion.

5. Final Conclusions: Christian Identity

According to Meeks (1983:85-90) Pauline communities were socially distinct. 'But although to maintain separation from other groups or even a negative relation may assist in some ways in the construction of a distinct identity, it is not the only route to this desired end. A positive relation can also reduce hostility and thus avoid hindrances to growth. Nor should a positive appreciation of some aspects of the life of the other be regarded as militating strongly against a distinct group. To be socially distinct by no means rules out some form of social intercourse—it could rather be argued that it presupposes such' (Campbell 2008:74)[82]. Certainly my reading of the letter through Social Identity Theory's filters allows us to assess at this point the importance of categorisation, identification and comparison.

I have already mentioned that Christ-*phronesis*, this ταπεινοφροσύνη we discuss, was not merely a high ideal; it was understood as an inescapable service to all, even to hostile society[83]. Those who perceive the Christ-following movement as solely 'religious', forget how embedded religion and 'politics' were in Mediterranean society. It was not going to be different for the Christ-following community. Surely, but not exclusively, the early church was influenced by the 'typical' Jewish pattern in *politeumata* of securing precious rights (Philo, *LegGaj* 349f; Barbaglio 1992:40) that exempted them from a full

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any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up, after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food, but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. Even this practice, however, they had abandoned after the publication of my edict, issued on your instructions, which banned all *hetaerias'*.

[82] Pilgrim (1999:181-182) warns against reaching easy conclusions in this respect: 'Contrary to what some may think, there is no single, unified attitude toward political structures in the New Testament. […] the views range from the ethic of subordination to that of staunch opposition […] The Christian theological assessment of the state was not "dependent upon the degree of comfort in which Christians were permitted to live"' (quoting Barrett 1972:18).

[83] As a matter of fact, by the fourth century it was to be understood as the 'supreme Christian virtue'; cf. John Chrysostom (*Ep ad Phil* 5.2.1-4; cf. Merino Rodríguez 1999:291).

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participation in society (cf. Philo, *LegGaj* 133; *Flacc* 97.48; and Schrage 1971:826-827), but still allowed them to serve as 'active citizens' (Pilgrim 1999:24)[84]. The early Church, perhaps because it was devoid of any political status in its beginnings, or perhaps because it was impelled to do so in its *imitatio Christi* impetus, sought the 'peace of the city' actively, as a means of reaching good testimony amongst the watching neighbours (cf. Winter 1994)[85]. From earlier beginnings the community's only way to ensure its practices were innocuous towards the State and beneficial for society was to live transparently as exemplary citizens (*Ad Diognetum* 5:5)[86]. As mentioned in chapter 7, Boyarin (1994:259) thinks that the Christian movement, devoid of any territorial identity-marker, made a great effort at gaining the trust of society (and people in authority) *via* a transparent practice in *politeia*, but with the example of its members as only valid witness[87]. *Ad Diognetum* 5.1-10, written perhaps in the first quarter of the second century AD (during emperor Hadrian's reign; AD 117-138), expresses it with clarity:

> [1] For Christians (Χριστιονοὶ) are distinguished from the rest of men neither by country nor by language nor by customs. [2] For nowhere do they dwell in cities of their own (οὔτε γάρ που πόλεις ἰδίας κατοικοῦσιν); they do not use any strange form of speech or practise a singular mode of life. [3] This lore of theirs has not been discovered by any design and thought of prying men, nor do they champion a mere human doctrine, as some men do. [4] But while they dwell in both Greek and barbarian cities, each as his lot was cast, and follow the customs of the land in dress and food and other matters of living, they show forth the remarkable and admittedly strange order of their own citizenship (καταικοῦντες δὲ πόλεις Ἑλληνίδας τε καὶ βαρβάρους ὡς ἕκαστος ἐκληπώθη, καὶ τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις ἐθεσιν ἀκολουθοῦντες ἔν τε ἐσθῆτι καὶ διαίτῃ καὶ τῷ λοιπῷ βίῳ, θαυμαστὴν καὶ ὁμολογουμένως παραδόξον ἐνδείκνυνται τὴν κατάστασιν τῆς ἑαυτῶν πολιτείας). They live in fatherlands of their own, but as aliens. [5] They share all things as citizens, and suffer all things as strangers. Every foreign land is their fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign land [...] [9] They pass their days on

[84] Cf. Josephus (*Ant* 14.115). Goodenough (1967:4): 'The Romans on the whole scorned the Jews personally, but recognized them as good and profitable citizens, and encouraged them with such great political privileges as that of living in Alexandria with a distinct Jewish polity'.

[85] Winter (1994:1) believes this 'seeking the peace of the city' in Jeremiah 29:7 has an echo in Graeco-Roman society, where those who went against the interest of the city (due in this case to bakers who went on strike in Ephesus; *I Eph* 215 *ll*. 3.8) where accused of being indifferent to 'the welfare of the city' (τὸ τῇ πόλει συμφέρον). For Winter this concept was a convergence of Old Testament and Graeco-Roman ideas that influenced the early Church.

[86] A further aspect that could be developed is how the group was viewed by outsiders (as deviating from the 'normal' course). The theory of deviance has proven useful in this regard (cf. Stark 1991; de Vos 2000; Gil Arbiol 2003). Such a view from outside was, no doubt, an element early Christians had to deal with, as in the example of *Diognetum* above.

[87] This predisposition was not unique to Christianity. Josephus had presented similar arguments as 'numerous false accusations' were brought against 'our nation' (*Ap* 2.146-149).

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> earth, but they have their citizenship in heaven (ἐπὶ γῆς διατρίβουσιν, ἀλλ' ἐν οὐρανῷ πολιτεύομαι). [10] They obey the appointed laws, yet in their own lives they excel the laws[88].

The author of *Ad Diognetum* writes in an apologetic context where the movement suffers from strong criticism (Meechan 1949:30; Teja 1990:91). This may have influenced its style and positive tone, but what it is noteworthy is that the only resource to draw from in the slowly-growing movement was their own way of living in public (*politeia*). Again, though not directly expressed, the themes of suffering (5.5) and of self-giving (5.10) appear to be relevant.

Stark (1997:161) reflects this general perception, I believe, without falling into undue candour:

> Christianity revitalized life in the Greco-Roman cities by providing new norms and new kinds of social relationships able to cope with many urgent urban problems. To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachments. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And to cities faced with epidemics, fires, and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective nursing services.

This lived-out identity had the strength of going beyond mere ethnic boundaries and encompassed people under what I describe as 'Christian identity markers'. Stark (1997:213) would explain it as 'entirely stripped of ethnicity', since all were welcome without need to dispense with ethnic ties (cf. McCready 1996:69). But it was a call to 'sameness' (Grieb 2007:267); sameness in orientation and, why not, in identification, 'in Christ'. Boyarin (1994:9-10, 232) insightfully speaks of the virtue of Christianity in its concern for humanity, but ultimately rejects the idea of this sameness which leads to dominion over others. For him the strength of rabbinic Judaism, in turn, is that it left all the others alone (cf. Horrell 2005c:42). As we already saw in chapter 5, this 'sameness' to which I refer here could be understood in an authoritarian way, as Castelli (1991:22) shows. I suggest that norms are needed in order to bring certain predictability and order to the movement, so as to present the ingroup with a coherent set of behaviours that characterise a proper life-style, and that may present a hierarchy in value system that some leaders communicate to the mass of followers. In the case of the second century AD, suffering on behalf of Christ and to be spent in the service for others were the highest virtues people could aspire to. The horizontal plane is quite concrete in *Ad Diognetum* 10.5: 'for

[88] Translation in Meechan (1949:79-80).

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happiness lies not in lordship over one's neighbours, nor in the desire to have more than one's weaker *brethren*, nor in being rich and coercing the more needy. Not in these things can any imitate [μιμήσασθαι] God. Nay, these things are outside His majesty'. It is indeed a practice that goes against the grain of common (agonistic?) society. Again, this does not necessarily need to be seen as an exercise in 'virtuoso religion' style (Ling 2006:8-9) but as a synergy, under the guidance of God. After all, even martyrdom needs to occur according to the gospel (*Ep* 1.1; 19.1), so that some (tacit) rules are present, which devoid the experience of a potential intrinsic value apart from its object of focus (love for God and for the community). During the third century the Fathers of the Dessert said to have left the urban centres in order to experience their own personal martyrdom internally, in their day-to-day living.

It is clear that Paul's admonition cannot be assessed in every single individual—that would have been as impossible then as now. However, looking at his rhetoric and his particular emphasis we perceive an ethic that invites the individual to be part of a larger group characterised by a Christ orientation in particular ways: self-giving and self-sacrificing in order to meet the other's needs (cf. Phlp 2:4)[89]. It is expressed in the language of religious experience, which Kee (1995:3, my emphasis) describes as 'part of a *shared* public tradition and gains intelligibility because it is anchored in a history *shared* by a community'. I believe the power of the Christ-hymn resides essentially in that it is shared by the community as a hallmark of self-giving in the midst of their history[90]. Hvalvik adds an interesting element in this regard. In his opinion, Paul was consciously trying to create an 'ecumenical way of thinking' (Hvalvik 2005:133) amongst his communities. This phenomenon seems to be a logical outcome of interaction amongst small group of believers in different cities (cf. Clark 2004:21-22). The same happened in the Philippian church after the death of the apostle. When Polycarp wrote to them, it was in part because they wanted the Smyrnean to send them the Ignatian letters. In such a reduced setting, it is obvious that common identities were formed as the communities read the letters—of those who had impacted them—aloud (cf. Hvalvik 2005:138-139). Ramos-Lissón et al (1996:38) express it with insight:

[89] I am aware of Meeks' (1993:4) observation that texts do not have ethics, only people do, but as I have stressed all along this study, Paul's intentions and the Philippians' response is what has moved me to delve in this, I hope, interesting area of study.

[90] As it can be observed, I have been avoiding the term 'myth' altogether in our discussion of the Christ-hymn. It is not so much my disagreement with earlier scholarship that equated myth with something 'outdated', 'outside time', even false, as that the term, to convey what I want to express by it, needs to be continually nuanced and re-described. If we understand 'myth' as the means by which (a) truth is conveyed, then I believe we can call the Christ-hymn Paul's preferred myth (cf. Horrell 2005c:85-87).

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> La definición de la identidad cristiana se fundamenta en la Palabra de Dios y en el testimonio de vida. Esta 'identificación' se realiza gracias a la asimilación de los instrumentos conceptuales clásicos, que se convirtieron en lugar de encuentro y de diálogo, y en el proceso de diferenciación, fruto del nuevo fermento que está pronto para transformar la realidad ambiental y convertirse así en el 'alma del mundo'.

To the extent that the early church was able to identify with him who willingly allowed himself to be abased on behalf of humanity, the different communities were able to bring a sense of belonging and new hope to a society ill with the search for honour and striving to use power to submit the weak. It is what Grieb (2007:266-267) has defined as 'the politics of God lived out in practice, in the peculiar sense of "looking after the interests of others" before one's own interest'. It was this that allowed the early church to identify with the humbled and the shameful (see Bockmuehl 1997:139 on the relative late use of the cross in Christian symbolism, which reflects this understanding). Horrell (2005c:126), who studies the theme of identity from the different angle of its practice, defines this new union in Christ as a corporate solidarity, which implies, 'for Paul, neither the *erasure* of previous distinctions nor merely their *encompassing* within a new sphere of belonging, but rather their *relativization* or revaluation, with real social implications' (his emphasis).

In the midst of such a society, the Christ-hymn stands out as a revolution in orientation, calling the Christ-following community, and humanity thereby, to a reconsideration of the proper orientation in life that is ultimately bound to be established as the only way God approves of. God is, after all, Him who has the *letze Wort*[91]. His was the first step to fully identify with the weak and the despised, so that his otherworldly dominion may be experienced in the here and now of their lives. It is, if I can rephrase it this way, to 'befriend the cross' (cf. Phlp 3:18). This, as with anything that rightfully defies the prevailing *status quo*, says Paul, comes from above (Phlp 4:5).

ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς

[91] *Ad Diognetum* 10.7: τότε θεάση τυψχάνων ἐπί γῆς, ὅτι θεός ἐν οὐρανοῖς πολιτεύται ('then though your lot is on earth you will see that God 'lives' or 'has his empire' in heaven'); cf. Ruiz Bueno (1984:857).

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