LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

THE UNIFYING THEME OF THE MIND OF CHRIST IN PHILIPPIANS DEMONSTRATED BY

PAUL'S USE OF RHETORICAL AND LINQUISTIC DEVICES IN ORAL/AURAL CULTURE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

DAVID ALAN POSEY

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

DECEMBER 17, 2018

APPROVAL SHEET

THE UNIFYING THEME OF THE MIND OF CHRIST IN PHILIPPIANS DEMONSTRATED BY

PAUL'S USE OF RHETORICAL AND LINQUISTIC DEVICES IN ORAL/AURAL CULTURE

David Alan Posey

Read and approved by:

    Chair Person: Leo Percer

    Reader: Chad Thornhill

    Reader: Kevin King

    Date: December 17, 2018

To my wife, Bonnie. You have loved me unconditionally, believed in me unwaveringly, and encouraged

me unceasingly. My life is fuller, sweeter, and richer because of you.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This journey has been long and difficult; however, it has never been lonely. I am so grateful for those who have traveled this road with me over the last ten years. Your steadfast support has meant more to me than you can possibly know. I am grateful that Liberty University had the foresight to develop a quality and respected PhD program that did not require full-time residency.

I remember with great fondness the first cohort seminar in 2008. There were numerous times that first year when I considered packing up and going home. But Chad or Lee or Rob or Ronnie would come along side and offer an encouraging word at just the right time. With each seminar, the list of encouragers would grow and ultimately include my own son, Evan (who gave me a two-year head start and still beat me to graduation). I acknowledge a debt owed to many fellow-travelers on this PhD road.

Every seminar was facilitated by exceptionally gifted professors who led with passion for their subject and compassion for their students. Long days and weeks of seminar intensives were shortened by their enthusiasm and encouragement. I should acknowledge all the professors by name and could do so easily; however, I shall mention three who are exemplars of the rest. These have served as my committee. I am indebted to Drs. Leo Percer, Kevin King, and Chad Thornhill for their patience, insight, and encouragement.

I also must acknowledge the support and sacrifice of the wonderful members of Crosspointe Church. They have shared my time and energy with reading and writing. I am grateful to the elders who have taken on extra ministry so I could focus on this labor. To Darrell Head, Jim Ferguson, Tracy Roper, Michael Sabo, Chad Capps, Troy Davis, Chad Kellett, and Tres Thomas I will always owe a debt. Your friendship is a treasure.

I cherish the love and devotion of my wife, Bonnie, who has walked with me for forty-five years. She has made the journey, especially these last ten years, smoother and the burden lighter. She believes in me when I doubt. She lovingly prods when I want to quit. I will always remember the look in her eyes when I told her that I had defended successfully. It was reward enough.

My children, Whitney and Evan, deserve much appreciation for their sacrifice as I have served the Church and pursued various degree programs. Even as grown children with families of their own, they have served with me at Crosspointe and stood fast by my side through difficult and challenging days. No father could be prouder as he contemplates their own ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ. Let these names be written and remembered: Chad and Whitney Capps, Cooper Capps, Dylan Capps, Ryder Capps, and Tate Capps; Evan and Leslie Ann Posey, Perry Lane Posey, Monroe Posey, Shiloh Mae Posey, Blaise Posey, Castleberry Posey, Briar Lark Posey. I love you all.

Finally, I acknowledge the influence and support of my parents, James Newton 'JN' and Minnie Bell Posey. I regret that Dad did not live to see the completion of the process. He developed within me a love of words and reading that served me well in this program. I hope Mom can be proud for both of them.

ABSTRACT

Among the debatable issues arising from Paul's epistle to the Philippians are questions concerning the structure, integrity and thematic emphasis of the letter. This dissertation argues that the "Christ Hymn" (2:6-11) is the central point of a chiastic structure of the letter, establishing the "Mind of Christ" as the primary and, thus, unifying theme of this correspondence. Four primary fields of research lend support to this hypothesis. First, rhetorical criticism seeks to understand the meaning of the biblical text through recognized persuasive devices utilized within first-century literature and speech. Second, linguistic studies, in its simplest form, examines the selection and frequent use of words by a particular author. The frequency of the Greek word, φρονέω, supports the major theme and the structural chiasm proposed in this dissertation. These areas of rhetoric and linguistics require a third area of investigation – the oral/aural first century culture. This investigation highlights the importance of rhetorical devices and carefully chosen vocabulary to aid in the reception and retention of a publicly read letter. Finally, these areas of inquiry conclude with an examination of Paul's cruciform theology in the context of the Christ Hymn.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

There have been significant developments in various fields that have benefited the study of the New Testament. Among these disciplines are rhetorical criticism, linguistic/philological studies, and cultural backgrounds. New Testament scholars have championed these new fields of inquiry and sought to apply them for a better understanding of the New Testament. Often these scholars focus on one area and its implications for a narrow slice of the New Testament such as synoptic issues or apocalyptic material or the Pauline corpus.

For example, Watson and Bloomquist utilize first century rhetorical devices to analyze the book of Philippians.[1] In doing so, each draws certain conclusions about structure, outline, and major themes. Rhetorical criticism may focus on the use of formal Greek-Roman structures (*exordium*, *narratio*, *probatio*, *peroratio*, etc.) or simply highlight rhetorical devices (asyndeton, periphrasis, chiasmus, etc.). Reed puts a finer point on this discussion when he distinguishes between prescriptive and descriptive use of rhetoric in Pauline correspondence. Prescriptive observations place Paul on par with rhetoricians of the first century who deliberately and thoughtfully structure oral and written communications in the framework of a rhetorical presentation. Descriptive approaches simply recognize rhetorical elements when they appear naturally within the letter, owing more to cultural and informal applications.[2] This present work relies more upon the latter approach.

---

[1] Duane F. Watson, "A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians and Its Implications for the Unity Question," *Novum Testamentum* 30 (1988), 57-88. Gregory L. Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (JSNTSup 78; Sheffield, 1993).

[2] Jeffrey T. Reed, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 160.

Stanley Porter, in his most recent contribution to New Testament studies, highlights the importance of the current state of linguistic studies.

> Modern linguistics encompasses developments that have taken place in the analysis of language over the last hundred years. In the same way that other social sciences have developed and have been brought to bear in biblical studies, in the same way that new historical data and new frameworks have been incorporated in exegesis, and in the same way that various theological positions have been developed – so too modern linguistics must become a part of biblical study…The promise of linguistics is that it can provide a proper interpretive foundation for a text-based discipline – which, after all, is what biblical studies is supposed to be.[3]

Therefore, it is not only important to understand the best definition of various words used within the New Testament but also how phrases, sentences, and paragraphs are formed to communicate most effectively. This is especially important in an oral/aural culture such as the first century. Brodie acknowledges this dependence and development.

> Unlike modern writing, which is generally geared to the eye, to being seen on the page, previous writing was largely geared to the ear, to being read aloud. This aural aspect was a development of the concern for sound that prevailed in times of purely oral communication. There are three periods: that of textless oral communication (before the advent of writing); that in which writing after its invention continued to be pervaded by the rhythm and formulas of oral communication (c. 3000 BCE – 1800 CE); and the modern period, in which the text very often loses almost all traces of orality and in which the reader, in order to understand the text, has to see it on the page.[4]

As one considers the structure and thematic development of the New Testament, the aural aspect must be considered. This must also include certain observations about the role of the memory in first century communication.

---

[3] Stanley E. Porter, *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic [EBooks edition], 2015), _____.

[4] Thomas L. Brodie, *The Birthing of the New Testament: The Intertextual Development of the New Testament Writings* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 5.

This presentation focuses these general areas of inquiry in a specific direction, that is, the discovery of a centralizing theme of Paul's epistle to the Philippians. Just as house right, house left, and center stage lights illuminate the principle characters of a play, these several schools of inquiry draw the primary theme out of the shadows to its central and critical place. Under the exposure of these 'lights' the mind of Christ, as presented in 2:6-11, moves to center stage and unites the other themes of the epistle.

A primary area of debate relative to the Philippian correspondence is the integrity or cohesiveness of the epistle. Although the apostle makes frequent appeals for unity within the church at Philippi, many scholars assert a lack of unity within the correspondence itself. Is this one letter written or dictated at one sitting, or is it multiple tractates forcibly (and, unimaginatively) strung together? If the material was not fashioned at one sitting, was the final form composed by the apostle or compiled by a redactor who may have edited as well as collated the letters into one? Although the preponderance of scholarship affirms Pauline authorship of the correspondence, there remains two disparate opinions concerning the time frame of composition and possible involvement of an editor.

The argument for compilation (multiple letters combined later into the present form) rests upon external and internal considerations. The external evidence consists of four observations. First, there is the more likely emendations in the Roman and Corinthian correspondence (Rm. 15:14-33; 16:1-23, 2 Co. 6:14-7:1; 10-12). Therefore, the interpolations in Philippians should not be seen as anomalies. Secondly, one might expect Paul to write multiple letters to such a beloved

congregation. In addition, there is an ancient Syriac stichometry that mentions two letters. Finally, Polycarp also mentions that Paul wrote *letters* to the church in Philippi.[5]

One of the internal issues is based upon two observations at 3:2. It certainly appears that the apostle is preparing his closing comments when he abruptly engages in another lengthy discourse. Not only is that true but the tone of this section, particularly 3:2 and 3:18, 19, is significantly harsher than the rest of the letter. Also, one wonders why the apostle waits so long to thank the church for their gift (4:10-20)? These issues have led many to postulate a compilation theory.[6]

As an advocate for the compilation[7] theory, Reumann proposes a time frame of one year to eighteen months during which the apostle penned three separate letters.[8] While his approach affirms Pauline authorship, it weakens the argument for integrity and thus a continuity of exegesis around a central theme. He acknowledges, "there are many purposes to Philippians because it

---

[5] Davorin Peterlin, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians in Light of Disunity in the Church* (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1995), 12.

[6] C. Leslie Mitton, *The Formation of the Pauline Corpus of Letters* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock; London: Epworth Press, 2009 [1955]), 26. See also Helmut Koester, *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Berlin: De Gruyler, 2000), 53,4. An excellent synopsis of the history of these approaches is found in Reed's *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1997), 125-31.

[7] Within this paper, *compilation* is understood as advocating Pauline authorship of the separate letters during an extended time frame, finally compiled by a redactor with possible editing. On the other hand, *composition* refers to Pauline authorship during a brief time frame, if not at a single seating, without further editing. Therefore, a composition does not deny what Buckmuehl (1997) calls a temporal rather than a literary partition.

[8] John Henry Paul Reumann, *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 3. Reumann's partition is as follows. Letter A, written in AD 54, includes 4:10-20 and expresses Paul's thanks for the church's concern for him and joy at their relationship. Letter B, composed in late 54 or early 55, includes 1:1-3:1, parts of 4:1-9, and 4:21-23. This letter recounts his joy and appreciation in their sharing in the gospel. Finally, Letter C is written in 55 and contains 3:2-21 with parts of 4:1-9. It is more polemical and direct concerning issues of enemies without and disunity within. The final composite form is attributed to an unknown collator within the Philippian church between AD 90-100.

combines letters for different situations. The commentary must treat each section in its original setting *and* further meanings in the redacted epistle."[9] This protracted hypothesis *de facto* dismisses the charges usually leveled at a compilation theory, except for the woodenly awkward efforts of the redactor.

Collange agrees that the epistle presents the reader with a compilation of at least three separate fragments. His position becomes clear early in his defense of the authorship of Paul. "It is difficult to appreciate the motive a forger could have had in writing so disjointed a letter, which continually refers to a definite situation (but with so little precision) and the message of which does not stand out clearly."[10] Therefore, he delineates purpose, occasion, and major themes for three letters, written over a three-year span.[11]

Advocates for an intact Pauline composition do not view the external and internal challenges as insurmountable. Kent points out that no manuscript evidence exists for multiple letters to the Philippians. Regarding Polycarp's reference to a plurality of letters, he notes that Polycarp may be referring to other letters sent to churches in Macedonia in general or to other letters to Philippi that are no longer extant. Paul's delay in communicating his gratitude may be answered by the

---

[9] Reumann, *Philippians,* 3.

[10] Jean-Francois Collange, *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 3. Collange argues that the first letter sent was his brief "thank you" note of 4:10-20. From prison Paul sent his second letter consisting of chapters one and two. This letter was returned at the hands of Epaphroditus. The final correspondence was a polemical tractate (3:2-4:9) written after Paul was released and the Jewish opposition had intensified. Along with Reumann, Collange asserts that the final collation took place in Philippi as other letters of the apostle began circulating.

[11] Ibid, 20. Mitton (2000 [1955]) also asserts "that 3:1b-4:3 reads like an intrusion. Not only does 3:1b lack any conceivable connexion with the preceding words, but it is very noticeable that 4:4 would follow on from 3:1a with complete naturalness. All these dislocations have been generally accepted as demonstrated. Vincent Taylor…is only summarizing the consensus of opinion among scholars when he allows 2 Co. 10-12, 2 Co. 6:14-7:1, Ro. 15:14-33; 16:1-23, and Ph. 3:1b-4:3 may be regarded as 'parts of earlier letters.'" This position is also affirmed by Koester (2000), 53, 54.

likelihood that rather than dictating to an amanuensis Paul personally penned this section (4:10-20), as he did in his Corinthian correspondence (1 Co.16:21). Also, λοιπόν can be understood as transitional rather than final, as in 1Co. 1:16, *beyond that,* and 1 Co. 4:2, *moreover* (ESV).[12]

The counter-point to the abrupt change of topic and tone in 3:1, 2 questions the skill of a redactor who would leave such an obviously awkward transition. As an example, O'Brien retorts, "The interpolation theory is unable to account for the *redactor's method of working,* since it explains neither the abruptness at the beginning of chap. 3 nor the placing of the note of thanks at the end of the letter…Why would an editor incorporate a separate document at this awkward point between 2:30 and 3:2? Or insert the note of thanks after 4:9, where it has been thought to be out of place?"[13] Therefore, the evidence for a later compilation does not seem sufficiently overwhelming to reject the integrity of the epistle.

However, along with advocates of a compilation theory, those who affirm the letter's integrity acknowledge the difficulty in discerning a clear structure or outline as well as an over-arching theme. Bockmuehl, while accepting the unity of the epistle, nonetheless acknowledges that this epistle does not follow Paul's standard form of thanksgiving, doctrine, application, and closing words of personal affairs. He continues, "It is very difficult to discern a convincing outline of Philippians, and many conflicting proposals have been made. The very difficulty of recognizing a clear purpose and argument continues to raise the question of whether this is indeed written as one letter."[14] Mounce argues that "since Philippians is an intensely personal letter, it resists all

---

[12] Homer A. Kent, Jr. "Philippians," Frank E. Gaebelein, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 11* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 97. See also Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 11-18.

[13] Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 15.

attempts to force it into a logical outline."[15] Silva also recognizes this difficulty while affirming the literary integrity of the epistle.[16] Carolyn Osiek offers an insightful observation concerning this issue of coherency, especially as it relates to the oral/aural nature of first century compositions. She states, "To label a text incoherent if one does not understand its source and its purpose is simply ethnocentric. A pragmatically oriented analysis begins with the assumption that most linguistic productions are not inept or pathological or primitive, and that those which appear foreign, even if they are in the language of the analyst, probably are."[17] This is particularly important for this study because Osiek is evaluating the *Shepherd of Hermas,* a text from the early to middle second century CE.

This dissertation addresses these challenges arising from the debate about the integrity of Philippians. The areas of rhetorical and linguistics studies along with a fundamental understanding of the oral/aural nature of first century communication uncover a centrifugal theme which, in turn, holds the important but secondary themes in orbit. This central theme is the Mind of Christ.

---

[14] Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (London: A & C Black Publishers, 1997), 20.

[15] Robert Mounce, "Philippians," in *Wycliffe Bible Commentary,* Charles F. Pfeiffer, E. Harrison, eds. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1962) _____. Hawthorne shares a similar opinion that "the letter is like a chat, the subject matter changing without notice as in an informal conversation between 'friends;' hence "the letter follows no logical progression." (G. F. Hawthorne, "Philippians" *Word Bible Commentary* [Waco: Word Publishing, 1983]), xlviii. Hendriksen also affirms that "the writer passes from one subject to another just as we do today in writing to friends…Thus attempts to construct a formal outline of the letter are misled, either lacking distinctiveness …or comprehensiveness." (W. Hendriksen, *Philippians* [Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 1992]), 37, 38.

[16] Moises Silva, *Philippians* in *The Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2005), 14.

[17] Carolyn Osiek, "The Oral World of Early Christianity in Rome: The Case of Hermas," in *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome,* Karl P. Donfried, Peter Richardson, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 162.

PRESENT STATE OF RESEARCH

While a consensus exists relative to the purpose(s) of Paul's correspondence to the Philippians, there is diversity of opinions concerning the major theme of the letter and the subsequent outline that unites the various parts around this central premise. Three areas of hermeneutical investigation examine the present state of research in this area – rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis, and epistolary analysis – resulting in several conclusions regarding the major theme of the epistle. This section highlights examples of recent scholarship in each of the aforementioned categories. The direction of these scholars leads to an assessment of the major theme and a proposed structural outline. How do these interpreters view the Christ Hymn in the overall structure of the epistle? Is it a supplemental and supportive argument for a greater purpose?

Interpretive Strategies based on Rhetorical Analysis

Building upon Kennedy's *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism,* Watson presents a strong case for Philippians as an example of the deliberative rhetorical species. He first evaluates the rhetorical situation that motivates the apostle's letter. What one is looking for here is the primary problem or issue. Watson defines *rhetorical situation* as "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence."[18] He proposes

---

[18] Duane F. Watson, "A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians and Its Implications for the Unity Question," *Novum Testamentum* Vol. 30, fasc. 1 (Jan., 1988), 57-88. While acknowledging his indebtedness to Kennedy, Watson differs on the species of Philippians. Watson is convinced that it is deliberative while Kennedy prefers it as epideictic.

that the exigency behind the epistle is the arrival of another gospel in Philippi, one that insists on observance of the Law.

Against this background Watson sees the apostle raising and answering an evocative question: What kind of life is worthy of the gospel? Is it the life lived under the demands of the ceremonial Law, i.e. circumcision, or is it the life lived in, by, and through the grace of God in Christ Jesus? Paul answers this question through a rhetorical arrangement with 1:27-30 as the central proposition. Using classical rhetorical terminology Watson outlines the epistle thusly,

Exordium	1:3-26
Narratio	1:27-30
Probatio	2:1-3:21
Propositio (1)	2:1-11
Propositio (2)	2:12-18
Digression	2:19-30
Propositio (3)	3:1-21
Peroratio	4:1-20
Repetitio	4:1-9
Adfectus	4:10-20 [19]

Witherington shares Watson's view that Paul is utilizing deliberative rhetoric to accomplish his purpose. "This sort of rhetoric [deliberative] is what we find in Paul's persuasive missives as he seeks to shape the course charted by his charges into their future, including when he will no longer be around."[20] Where Watson locates the exigency in the challenge of another gospel, Witherington suggests that the epistle is "fundamentally a progress-oriented, not a

---

[19] Watson. *Exordium* is the Introduction of the discourse where one seeks to inform the audience of the subject without giving it away and also may be used to ingratiate the oneself. *Narratio* is the statement of the case under consideration. *Probatio* (or *Confirmatio*) is the proof of the case. *Peroratio* serves as the conclusion of the discourse. See Edward P. J. Corbett, Robert J. Connors, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student 4th Ed.* (New York; Oxford: Oxford Press, 1999), 256-291 for a fuller definition and description of these classical parts of a discourse.

[20] Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 25.

problem-solving, discourse and so Paul will praise the positive examples and critique the negative ones so that the audience will indeed continue to live lives worthy of their calling and avoid potential pitfalls and misleading persons who would impede their progress."[21] Therefore, Witherington acknowledges the power of the epideictic (praise or blame) sections of the letter. His outline of the epistle is like Watson's outline.

Epistolary Prescript	1:1-2
Exordium	1:3-11
Narratio	1:12-26
Propositio	1:27-30
Probatio	2:1-4:3
Peroratio	4:4-9
Concluding Arguments	4:10-20
Epistolary Greetings, Closing	4:21-23[22]

Witherington also highlights the importance of rhetorical skills in a predominantly oral/aural culture. "Texts in Paul's world were largely surrogates for oral communication, for when one was at a distance from the person or group one wanted to talk to. They were oral texts, composed to be read aloud…Indeed, the use of *scriptum continuum*, the continuous flow without breaks between words, sentences, or paragraphs inhibited such private and silent reading."[23] Whether Paul writes the letter himself or uses an amanuensis, he is dependent upon someone such as Timothy or Epaphroditus to read the letter.[24]

Heil also emphasizes the oral/aural importance of New Testament epistles, especially Philippians. He describes his approach as a "literary-rhetorical method that treats Philippians as a

---

[21] Witherington, *Philippians,* 25

[22] Ibid., 29, 30.

[23] Ibid, 12, 13.

[24] Ibid, 112.

hortatory letter with a rhetorical strategy of persuading his implied audience to his viewpoint." He also refers to his method as "audience-oriented, [determining] how the implied audience are meant to respond to Paul's rhetorical strategy as it develops through the dynamic progression of the letter's chiastic structures."[25] His methodology spans the three primary hermeneutical approaches to the letter – epistolary, rhetorical, and discourse analysis with its emphasis on the audience. He contends that the chiastic structure aids the lector in presentation as well as the auditors in following and retaining the content of the correspondence.[26]

Often the critique of a rhetorical approach to a text is the arbitrary imposition of rhetorical structures. Hansen voices this concern: "When a rhetorical analysis of Paul's letter portrays Paul as someone devoted to following the dictates of rhetoricians of his time, the methodology becomes suspect. A preoccupation with rhetorical form over substance is an obstacle to understanding the meaning of the theological themes and practical exhortation in Paul's letter."[27]

Countering this concern Heil presents a nine-fold criteria for legitimizing at least rhetorical devices such as a chiastic structure. This test may be applied both at the micro- and macro-level of the New Testament document.[28] Utilizing this literary-rhetorical approach Heil defends the

---

[25] John Paul Heil, *Philippians: Let Us Rejoice in Being Conformed to Christ* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 7-9.

[26] Ibid, 12.

[27] G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2009) 15.

[28] Heil, 10. These criteria are 1) the text resists conventional outline approaches; 2) clear examples of parallelism between the two "halves" of the hypothesized chiasm; 3) linguistic (or grammatical) parallelism as well as conceptual (or structural) parallelism should characterize most if not all of the corresponding pairs of subdivisions; 4) linguistic parallelism should involve central or dominant imagery or terminology important to the rhetorical strategy of the text; 5) both linguistic and conceptual parallelism should involve words and ideas not regularly found elsewhere within the proposed chiasm; 6) multiple sets of correspondence between passages opposite each other in the chiasm as well as multiple members of the chiasm itself are desirable; 7) the outline should divide the text at natural breaks recognizable even to those who adopt a more conventional outline methodology; 8) the central or pivotal

integrity of the epistle and proposes a centralizing theme. This theme combines two of the recognizable topics of the epistle – joy/rejoice and the aspiration to be conformed to Christ; hence, the title to his book.

Like Witherington and Heil, Gregory Bloomquist proposes a hybrid approach. He utilizes an epistolary analysis as well as a rhetorical analysis to assess the theme and structural outline of Philippians. His approach also can be described as a thematic analysis since his thesis is to demonstrate that suffering is the overriding subject. "Suffering…clearly runs through this letter like a scarlet thread."[29] First he reviews the ancient and modern evaluations of suffering in the Pauline corpus and Philippians, in particular. Next he addresses ancient letter-writing models and concludes that Paul's correspondence adheres to the category of epistolary material. Finally, Bloomquist develops the thematic emphasis of suffering through a classically oriented rhetorical outline.

Exordium	1:3-11
Narratio	1:12-14
Partitio	1:15-18a
Probatio	1:18b-4:7
Confirmatio	1:18b-26
Exhortatio (1)	1:27-2:18
Exempla	2:19-30
Reprehensio	3:1-16
Exhortatio (2)	3:17-4:7

---

as well as the final or climactic elements normally play key roles in the rhetorical strategy of the chiasm; and 9) rupturing in the outline should be avoided if at all possible.

     He also recommends multiple sets of criteria for chiasmus including Blomberg's in "The Structure of 2 Corinthians 1-7," *Harvard Theological Review* 4 (1989), 4-8; Wayne Brouwer, *The Literary Development of John 13-17: A Chiastic Reading* (SBLDS 182; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000); John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the New Testament," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis,* ed. John W. Welch (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981) 211-49.

    [29] L. Gregory Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 13.

As is obvious from these examples the rhetorical analysis of Philippians has yet to arrive

at a consensus opinion relative to an outline structure or a major theme. However, there is

encouragement for continued investigation especially when there is willingness to adapt or merge

rhetorical criticism with other models as evidenced by Witherington, Heil, and Bloomquist.

How do these interpretive approaches view the Christ Hymn? Watson, Witherington, Heil

and Bloomquist propose differing primary themes for the epistle. Watson views Paul's letter as a

deliberative argument, convincing the Philippians to live a "life worthy of the gospel." Verses 27-

30 of chapter 1 establish the apostle's primary purpose statement. "To persuade his audience to

adopt a pattern of life and faith Paul's case is aided by a succinct statement of what he conceives

this to be. His case is also aided by a very persuasive factor in the *narratio,* ethos derived from his

own manner of life."[31] The *narratio* (1:27-30)*,* a brief and lucid declaration of the purpose of the

letter, is followed by the *probatio.* In this section, 2.1-3.21, the apostle musters arguments from

example and amplification in support of the *narratio.* By inclusion in the *probatio* Watson views

the Christ Hymn as secondary and supportive to the larger purpose advocated in the *narratio.*

"Verses 5-11 provide another example of the figure of thought known as exemplification, which

here embellishes, adds plausibility, clarifies, and vivifies. The example of Christ gives the

Philippians a better understanding of the mind conducive to selfless giving and humble service to

others."[32]

---

[30] Jason C. Meyer, "Philippians, Letter to the, Critical Issues," John D. Barry, David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, Wendy Widder (eds.) *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).

[31] Watson, *Rhetorical Analysis,* 67.

[32] Watson, 69.

Witherington asserts that in this epistle "Paul is not so much trying to change the course of the Philippian Christians' behavior as to keep them united and on track by providing good examples (and pointing out negative examples), the chief good exemplum being Christ himself."[33] He emphasizes the language of progress – "progress in Christian maturity, progress in working out one's salvation with fear and trembling, progress in leaving the pagan past behind and striving for the goal of being fully conformed to the image of the crucified, risen, and glorified Savior."[34] Therefore the purpose of the Christ Hymn and the larger context of 2.1-18 is to "strengthen the unity of the Philippian church so that they can make progress in a positive direction toward living a life worthy of the gospel…"[35]

Heil approaches the epistle as a hortatory letter in which Paul appeals to his listeners to find joy in their conformity to Christ. Heil bases his argument upon Paul's use of chiasm, both at the macro- and micro-levels within the text. The macro-chiasm, developed in ten textual units, reaches its climax at 2:1-16 (unit E) and 2:17-30 (unit E'). While the Christ Hymn is part of one of the climactic units, Heil subordinates the hymn to a supporting role. "Christ Jesus is the motivation and model for this mind-set [*elucidated in 2:1-4*] …The audience are to adopt a similar mind-set by "considering" one another more important than themselves, thinking nothing according to self-seeking (2:3)."[36] Joy in conformity to Christ is bolstered by the example of Christ's own selfless act of service and death.

---

[33] Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians,* 15.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid, 118.

[36] Heil, *Let Us Rejoice,* 87, 8.

Bloomquist seeks to demonstrate that the epistle's primary theme is suffering and the corresponding attitude of confidence. The epistle is "an authoritative letter of comfort in which Paul reassures the Philippian believers of the gospel's advance in the light of Paul's imprisonment."[37] He acknowledges that "[2.6-11] form a nucleus within the letter"[38] but concludes his assessment of the Christ Hymn in a supportive role: "In sum, the reason for Paul's appeal to the example of Christ in 2.6-11 becomes now clear: it is meant to clarify the appeal to his own example in 1.27-30 and 2.12-18 as a fulfilment of the Christ type."[39] Therefore, the servant model of Christ is intended to amplify Paul's own role as servant as well as Timothy, indicated in 1.1 and 2.22.

<div align="center">Interpretive Strategies based on Discourse Analysis</div>

Discourse Analysis is a relatively new interpretive voice in the conversation of biblical research. It is a subset of linguistic studies and shares much in common with text-linguistics. Porter recognizes the nuances of Discourse Analysis and text-linguistics advocated by scholars. "Text-linguistics focuses on the written form of communication while Discourse Analysis is more interested in the communication event."[40] Jeffrey Reed extends this understanding by stressing "(a) the dynamic between the intended meanings of speakers and variant responses of hearers, (b) the grammar of language beyond the level of sentence, (c) the social and pragmatic functions of

---

[37] Bloomquist, *Function of Suffering,* 149.

[38] Ibid, 165.

[39] Ibid, 168.

[40] Stanley E. Porter, "Discourse Analysis and New Testament Studies: An Introductory Survey," Stanley E. Porter, D. A. Carson, eds. *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 17 fn. 16.

language, and (d) the ways in which language is used to create cohesiveness in discourse."[41] Therefore, the motivation of the analyst is the recovery of and comprehensive description of the many separate parts of a discourse and their cohesiveness in presenting a coherent structure that effectively communicates the intentions of the author(s).

This approach pays particular attention to "semantics or how meaning is conveyed through forms or symbols, syntax reflecting the organization of the forms or symbols into meaningful units and pragmatics or meaning of these forms in specific linguistic contexts."[42] Porter emphasizes that this process involves "an understanding analysis of informational structure (lexical choices), cohesion (connective devices), prominence (priority of material), linguistic co-text (immediate internal textual environment) and context (external, larger environment)."[43]

Reed provides an extensive assessment of Paul's letter to the Philippians using a form of Discourse Analysis. Reed highlights the importance of a 'top down' and a 'bottom up' examination of the discourse to identify and to assess accurately the structure of the discourse. The 'bottom up' approach begins with individual words. Then these words are considered in groups or phrases. Phrases, particularly nominal and verbal, form clauses, followed by sentences. The next discernable form is the paragraph which combine to constitute the discourse. This highly technical

---

[41] Jeffrey T. Reed, "Identifying Theme in the New Testament: Insights from Discourse Analysis," Porter, Carson, eds. *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 75. Reed's approach is more extensively developed in his monograph *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate over Literary Integrity* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

[42] Porter, 18.

[43] Ibid.

16

evaluation seeks to determine those sections that are more prominent and develop an outline accordingly. If there is an overarching theme or motif, it will present itself during this investigation.

> One way to build thematic structure in discourse is by creating *prominence* (also known as grounding, emphasis, relevance, salience), i.e. by drawing the listener's/reader's attention to topics and motifs which are important to the speaker/author and by supporting those topics with other less significant material… [Reed defines] prominence *as those semantic and grammatical elements of discourse that serve to set aside certain subjects, ideas or motifs of the author as more or less semantically and pragmatically significant than others*.[44]

However, the discovery of a proper prominence is not as easy as one might think.

Prominence appears at three levels of the discourse. *Background* is ancillary material supporting the main argument. Information central to the author's primary objective constitutes the *theme*. Themes differ from background material by their reappearance throughout the discourse. The final level of prominence is the *focus*, which typically appears unexpectedly with the intention of directing the listener/reader back to the flow of the discourse.[45] All or any of these levels may appear in a phrase/sentence, paragraph, or the entire discourse.

Reed provides numerous assessment tools to aid in the discovery of prominent material. These include the genre of the discourse, the extent to which linguistic elements reappear in the discourse, and the manner in which the speaker/author uses linguistic codes to communicate prominence. This final category reflects the highly technical aspect of Reed's research in which he delineates seven subsets that once parsed help to determine prominence. These include semantic

---

[44] Reed, "Identifying Theme in the New Testament", 75-6.

[45] Ibid., 78-80.

fields, verbal aspect, verbal voice, verbal mood, noun-verb relations, word order, and boundary markers.[46]

Relative to the issues and interests of this paper, Reed's analysis of Philippians affirms the integrity of the epistle but rejects the idea of one dominant theme. "[T]his study maintains that there is no one theme in the body of the letter…Similarity in language should not be confused with thematic foreshadowing [of prominence]."[47] This paper will challenge this conclusion while availing itself of various tools of discourse analysis.

<center>Interpretive Strategies based upon Epistolary Analysis</center>

Epistolary analysis utilizes the form of ancient Greco-Roman letter writing to assess the epistles of the New Testament. The stylistic indicators include a standard greeting as well as a closing. The letter may also include a prayer of thanksgiving prior to the body of the letter, introduced by a disclosure formula. Many have acknowledged these elements in Paul's correspondence to the Philippians.

Loveday Alexander criticizes certain epistolary approaches that acknowledge some of these basic elements but depart from epistolary analysis when it comes to the body of the letter. She retorts, "Formal analysis needs to be seen to be illuminating if it is to make good its claim to be an essential tool in reading Paul's letter."[48] Utilizing specific letters from the first century, Alexander analyzes the entire Philippian epistle. She particularly compares "family" letters with Paul's correspondence to the Philippians. The point of the family letter is its brevity and lack of

---

[46] Reed, "Identifying", 83-90.

[47] Ibid, 94.

[48] Loveday Alexander, "Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 37 (1989), 87-8.

any real "business" section. As Alexander states, "the most significant structural feature of this letter [from a son to his family] and others like it is the lack of a clear 'body,' if by that we mean a 'business' section framed by, and clearly separable from, the exchange of family greetings and news. Put another way, the whole point of these letters – their real 'business'- is this exchange of news between the sender and his family."[49]

Therefore, the Philippian epistle may be viewed as a Greco-Roman family letter. The primary theme or subject is the interaction of the apostle's situation and that of the Philippians. Alexander builds her outline based upon this give-and-take between Paul and the recipients. "Almost everything which is discussed in the body of family letters is an extension of the correspondents' interest in each other's welfare…there is no isolable message or body apart from the correspondents'' interest in each other's welfare."[50]

Gordon Fee views the epistle as a letter of friendship with a stronger hortatory application. He examines the nature of friendship in the Greco-Roman culture. Among the categories of friendship discussed in philosophy, the predominant model was friendship of "equality between virtuous people, whose relationship is based on goodwill and loyalty (including trust). [Within these friendships] a certain 'core of ideals' emerges that [are] thought to be applicable to all genuine friendships."[51] Fee also notes that this kind of friendship often entails reciprocity and obligation. A unique element of this relationship is "agonistic (competitive) in the sense that it was

---

[49] Alexander, 94.

[50] Ibid., 93.

[51] Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995) 5.

often discussed in the context of 'enemies.' That is, to have friends automatically meant to have enemies, so that 'constant attention to friends meant constant watchfulness of enemies.'"[52]

Examining the letter thusly, Fee extends the argument of Alexander. Where her outline omits the sections dealing with the Philippians' enemies in 3:2-21, Fee finds a natural connection within this hortatory letter of friendship as the apostle addresses the enemies of his friends. Thus, Paul maintains the larger theme of concern for his friends and their mutual relationship with Christ.[53]

Fee comes closest to the thesis of this paper in his assessment of the centrality of 2.6-11. "Whatever else the Christian faith is, and whatever else Christian life is about, it finds its central focus ever and always on Christ."[54] It is the ground of Paul's confident affirmation, "for me to live is Christ." It provides the foundation of hope in the midst of suffering. It serves as the fountainhead of the apostle's eschatological proclamations.

Hansen acknowledges the difficulty of identifying the letter under one rubric. He accepts the terminology of "friendship letter"[55] but also understands it as a deliberative speech to be read publicly. The purpose of deliberative speeches is to "recommend a course of action as better and

---

[52] Fee, *Philippians,* 5.

[53] Ibid, 14.

[54] Ibid, 227.

[55] Hansen observes ten language motifs in Philippians that parallel Hellenistic friendship letters – language of affection such as "I long for you," language of partnership or *koinonia,* the recurring theme of unity, not only within the church but with Paul, sympathy of thought, the imagery of the yoke, reciprocity of giving and receiving, agonistic terminology of shared struggles, acknowledgement of separation and hope of return, honor language, and legitimate moral challenges. *The Letter to the Philippians,* kindle location 390-425.

dissuade by advising against behavior as worse."[56] As such, the letter covers multiple topics of unity, suffering, and opponents. These, however, point to two major themes – the Gospel of Christ and the community in Christ.[57]

How does Hansen incorporate the Christ Hymn within this friendship letter that is to be read in a congregational setting with a view to advocating for a course of action and dissuading counterproductive attitudes and behaviors? The hymn divides two discourse units with deliberative purposes.

> "When Paul finishes the Christ Hymn, he returns to giving practical guidelines for life in the community. His ethical appeal in this section [2.12-18] continues to develop what he introduced earlier as the way to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (1.27). By presenting the person and work of Christ in the great Christ Hymn, Paul strengthens his appeals for unity in the church (1.27; 2.2) and establishes a sound foundation for the encouragement to work out your salvation…without grumbling or arguing (2.12, 14)."[58]

Clearly, according to Hansen, the primary emphasis of Philippians is the appropriate attitudes and actions that represent the transforming power of the gospel.

The variety of approaches and subsequent outlines and thematic emphases represent depth of scholarship and continuing interest in Paul's letter to the Philippians. Lack of consensus invites further study and investigation. Can one combine multiple approaches to develop an outline that reflects a satisfactory theme to address the exigencies of the letter?

---

[56] Hansen, *Philippians*, 12.

[57] Ibid., 30.

[58] Ibid.

PROCEDURE AND PLAN OF THIS STUDY

The larger context for this inquiry into the centralizing and cohesive theme of Philippians is the cultural milieu of the first century. It is reasonable to assume that Paul is a product of his time and, therefore, possesses at both a conscious and subconscious level certain skills and thought patterns reflective of the era. It is particularly important to examine the oral/aural nature of this era in order to understand and appreciate the demands of carefully constructed correspondence.

This topic not only includes the influence of the culture upon Paul. It also considers the cultural influence upon the audience, i.e. the Philippian church, who must depend upon their ears as the primary receptor of the apostle's message. What challenges are faced by authors and audiences in an oral/aural culture? Are oral and written communications fashioned in a manner to facilitate retention? How did the first century world understand memory? Casey W. Davis addresses many of these issues in his oral analysis of Philippians.[59] His analysis and bibliographical entries provide helpful platforms for this paper's discussion of first-century backgrounds relative to orality, rhetoric, and literary composition.

The cultural techniques available to the apostle comprise two fields of inquiry – rhetoric and linguistics. "Aristotle defines the rhetorician as someone who is always able to see what is persuasive (*Topics*VI.12). Correspondingly, rhetoric is defined as the ability to see what is possibly persuasive in every given case (*Rhet.* I.2)."[60] A significant part of persuasion, whether 1st century correspondence or 21st century soundbites, is the reception, retention, and repetition of the

---

[59] Casey W. Davis, *Oral Biblical Criticism: The Influence of the Principles of Orality on the Literary Structure of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

[60] Christof Rapp, "Aristotle's Rhetoric", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/>. (Accessed September 17, 2015).

message. This inquiry will focus on the tools of rhetoric that are discoverable in Pauline correspondence, especially within the epistle to the Philippians. Paul's use of chiasmus or concentric patterns will point to a central idea within this epistle.

The third area of study is that of linguistics and philology. A simple distinction between these two fields is that linguistics deals with spoken words while philology addresses the written word. This presents a challenge for the New Testament scholar since only written records remain. However, the author of a first century document understood that his recorded thoughts would probably be communicated to a listening audience. To some degree every text had either a previous or a future life as oral communication. The question addressed in this section is "Why does Paul choose the word φρονέω ("to think, have this attitude, mind") and use it so often in this letter? Does it serve as an anchor device, keeping the mind of the auditor from drifting?" The defining moment for φρονέω occurs at the introduction of the Christ Hymn.

The next chapter addresses the Christ Hymn from the perspective of Paul's Cruciform Theology. Regardless of its origin (Pauline or pre-Pauline) the apostle makes use of it, highlighting the cross as the center of a chiastic structure. While key Pauline themes are noticeably absent in this epistle, the crucified Christ prevails as the transcendent and unifying linchpin of a joyful, encouraging, edifying, and highly personal missive to a beloved congregation.

Based upon these four areas of investigation, the conclusion recommends a particular structure and outline for Philippians. This unfolds a chiastic or concentric structure, both in the Christ Hymn of 2:5-11 and the epistle. This, in turn, answers the questions of structural integrity, outline, and theme. Does this proposal offer a reasoned response to the critical challenges to the letter's unity? Does the central theme draw together the major sections of the epistle? In order to

substantiate these claims, it is necessary to understand the communication context of the first century. The following chapter examines the foundational considerations of Paul's milieu - the dynamics of orality, aurality, and memory.

CHAPTER 2: THE COMMUNICATION MILIEU OF THE FIRST CENTURY
LITERACY, ORALITY, AND AURALITY

From preserving a baby's first words to capturing historic utterances from the surface of the moon, modernity takes for granted the ability to capture and replay sound (and image). Prior to 1860[1], people depended on written records of past events, both momentous and mundane, or the fidelity of oral histories to transmit information. It is exceedingly difficult to appreciate the treasure that is speech or sound when one is accustomed to replaying it over and over. It is like watching a high school football game and expecting a replay of the miraculous touchdown, only to discover that there is no video record. The event is gone and only a vague memory, at best, remains. However, it is not difficult to appreciate the power of the spoken word.

While the images of the first lunar landing – the planted flag or the boot tread in the lunar dust – are vivid, it is the statement, the voice that carries the profundity of the moment. For many, that seven second pronouncement (*one small step for man; one giant leap for mankind*) is not a self-contained sentence. It is not a snippet of history. It has a context. It conjures memories. It enlivens other profound moments such as a young, vibrant President on the campus of Rice University in the sweltering Texas heat declaring seven years earlier that "we choose to go to the moon in this decade…" and profounder still the somber words of Walter Cronkite reporting the death of that young and vibrant President. Future generations can google the recording of these words - profound, exhilarating and tragic. But those who were alive at their first utterance hear them differently. Such is the power of sound and memory.

---

[1] The oldest recorded sound is now recognized as the work of French inventor Edouard-Leon Scott de Martinville's song "Au Claire de la Lune," recorded on his invented phonautograph on April 9, 1860. Cited at noiseaddicts.com/2008/08/earliest-recording-human-voice/. Verified at history.com/speeches/world's-oldest-recording.

This chapter explores the underpinnings and strategies of ancient communication. Does Paul write or dictate the letter with an understanding that the church at Philippi will hear the letter read in a congregational setting? If most of the church are non-readers but astute hearers, does he structure the letter so that hearers follow a reasoned argument and trajectory of the epistle? What kind of aural engagement is anticipated as the letter is presented to the church? Ben Witherington argues that "most ancient documents including letters were not really texts in the modern sense at all. They were composed with their aural and oral potential in mind, and they were meant to be orally delivered when they arrive at their destination."[2] Therefore the issues of oral/aural techniques as well as memory can aid in assessing theme and structural development. This paper asserts that these questions are important for a careful exegesis of the book and to demonstrate that the Christ Hymn (2:5-11) is the central theme of the book.

LEVELS OF LITERACY

A fundamental rule of proper exegesis relies upon an understanding of the historical and social context of the original recipients of the document. "Exegesis involves analyzing a text in its historical, cultural, and literary setting with concern for its lexical, grammatical, and theological content. The exegete focuses primarily on explaining the text's message for its initial audience."[3] This hermeneutical challenge includes the communication process in the ancient world, for instance, that of Paul and the recipients of his letter in Philippi. Jeffers asserts that "if we try to make sense of the Bible with no knowledge of the people who wrote it, those who read it and the society in which they lived, we will be inclined to read into the Scriptures our own society's value

---

[2] Ben Witherington, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 2.

[3] Roy B. Zuck, *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 12.

and ideas."[4] Even this assertion reflects a modern bias toward reading and writing. One must pay attention to speech and hearing as well as writing and reading.

The interpreter's knowledge of those who wrote and those who read should include the concepts of literacy, orality, aurality, and memory if the first century society is to be better comprehended and, thus, the exegesis better construed. James Maxey observes that translations of the biblical texts are, in part, interpretations. Therefore, the translator and interpreter of Scripture wisely consider the full range of the social structures of the original author and audience.

> The activities of Bible Translation have for centuries presupposed literacy rather than orality as the predominant means of communication for the Bible's creation, transmission, and reception. I suggest that this understanding distorts both historical and anthropological evidence. The Bible was for the most part created, transmitted, and received in a predominantly oral context. This should affect how we go about Bible Translation today.[5]

Joanna Dewey similarly affirms that "the task of understanding Christianity in terms of its own media environment is worthwhile, indeed essential, for our interpretive enterprise."[6] Thomas Boomershine observes that "if the medium does significantly influence the meaning of a biblical tradition, [then] historical interpretation requires an effort to experience the tradition in its intended

---

[4] James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 11.

[5] James A. Maxey, *From Orality to Orality: A New Paradigm for Contextual Translation of the Bible*, vol. 2, Biblical Performance Criticism (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 1.

[6] Joanna Dewey, "Introduction," in *Semeia 65: Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature,* Joanna Dewey, ed. (Atlanta: SBL, 1994), 2. J. A. Loubser asserts the same: "[The fact that first century literary conventions were still largely dependent on speech conventions] compels us to take note of orality and oral conventions if we want to make sense of first century manuscripts." *Oral and Manuscript Culture in the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 117.

medium."[7] Modern scholarship has begun to recognize the importance of these matters, especially as they pertain to Paul's use of rhetoric in his epistles.

In his commentary on Philippians, Ben Witherington acknowledges John Harvey's work on the oral nature of the New Testament and proceeds to address the rhetorical dynamics of the apostle's letter. "Philippians…is an oral text, a document meant in the first place for the ears not the eyes, and it is the intended oral and rhetorical character of the document which needs to be attended to the most. When such attention is given to the document, we have the key that unlocks some of the document's mysteries and meanings, purposes and points."[8] In a companion book Witherington emphasizes the oral nature of first century communication. "The world of the New Testament was a world where the spoken word was supreme. In fact, the New Testament was written in a largely oral culture where the written word did not have the first or last word."[9] Again, speaking particularly of the Pauline letters, he states that "[they] serve as a sort of surrogate for the oral conversations Paul would like to have had with them could he have been present."[10] As

---

[7] Thomas E. Boomershine, "Peter's Denial as Polemic or Confession: The Implications of Media Criticism for Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Semeia 39* (1986): 47-69, Lou H. Silberman, editor (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1986), 50. "When applied to contemporary study of ancient texts, the implication of media criticism is that a change in the medium in which we study and experience an ancient text will inevitably change its meaning. Therefore, to the degree that our goal is to understand the meaning of the biblical documents in their original historical context, it is essential to know the medium in which they were intended to be experienced." Ibid, 51. Again, he asserts, "To the degree that our goal is to understand the meaning of the biblical texts in their original historical context, we need to study and experience the texts in their original medium, namely, as sounds recited and heard at least in private but preferably in public readings." Ibid, 53.

[8] Ben Witherington III, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2011), 21.

[9] Ben Witherington III, *The New Testament Story* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 3.

[10] Ibid, 4.

surrogates Paul's epistles carry the earmarks of rhetorical conventions with which his hearers would have been familiar.

Witherington's assertions raise questions about the relationship of orality and literacy during the first century CE. The Scriptures reflect a dynamic interplay between orality and literacy. Paul admonishes the churches to read his letters in the church (Col.4:16, 1 Thess.5:27). The preamble in the Book of Revelation also suggests a conjoining of reading and hearing (1:3). John Harvey notes that "the normal mode of writing is by dictation, and that which is written down is intended to be read aloud to a group rather than silently by the individual."[11] Walton and Sandy also assert that "reading and writing are more often individualistic exercises and coincide with the value of independence in modern western society. People gather to hear; they go off on their own to read and write."[12] In the specific context of the Apocalypse Kayle De Waal advocates for a similar understanding of the first century Christian's interaction with the text. "[I will seek] to articulate a hermeneutic of hearing for an ancient audience. The aim … is to demonstrate that the early Christian heard and experienced the message of Revelation through a dynamic reading and that this communal approach to understanding the book has been overlooked by the scholarly community."[13] Although the genres are different, these same assertions are applicable to Paul's letters.

---

[11] John D. Harvey, *Listening to the Text* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), xv.

[12] John H. Walton, D. Brent Sandy, *The Lost World of Scripture, Ancient Literary Culture, and Biblical Authority* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013), 19.

[13] Kayle B. De Waal, An *Aural-Performance Analysis of Revelation 1 and 11* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2015), 3.

Modern assumptions of a text-based culture should not obscure the importance of orality and aurality within first century communication, especially of sacred texts. Vernon Robbins describes this problem as "a 'print culture' appropriate for our time [being] imposed onto the first centuries of the common era in such a manner that the relation between oral and written culture during early Christian times is badly misconstrued."[14] Robbins goes on the describe and name the culture of the first century CE. While oral cultures have no written literature and scribal cultures focus on the copy of extant material, a rhetorical culture such as the first century CE experiences a lively "interaction between oral and written speech."[15] Therefore, one should anticipate linguistic markers and structural framing to aid the hearers in comprehension and retention of the material. What are the bases for assigning this nomenclature to the first century and building a case for the influence of orality upon the biblical text? One issue related to this discussion is the rate of literacy in the first century CE.

In his much-referenced work, William Harris acknowledges general confusion over clear definitions of and parameters for understanding ancient literacy. He notes that "the Greek *agrammatos*[16] and the Latin *illitteratus* seem to veer between the meanings 'uncultured' and

---

[14] Vernon K. Robbins, "Writing as a Rhetorical Act in Plutarch and the Gospels," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy,* JSNT Sup50, Duane F. Watson, ed. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 144.

[15] Robbins, 145.

[16] ἀγράμματος. This word is used by the Jewish leadership along with ἰδιώτης to describe Peter and John in Acts 4:13. These are variously translated "unlearned, uneducated, untrained, no special training, unschooled, illiterate, not yeshiva-trained, unlettered," and "ignorant, inexperienced, ordinary, common, non-professional, laymen, plebeian" respectively. Louw and Nida understand ἀγράμματος as "pertaining to one who has not acquired a formal education (referring primarily to formal training)— 'uneducated, unlearned.'" (Johannes P. Louw, Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* [New York: United Bible Societies, 1994], 27.23). Schlier describes ἰδιώτης as a private person in contrast to public figures. This contrast can apply to a citizen and a soldier, a layman and a priest, even a writer of prose in contrast to a poet. He concludes that "in general it is evident that the term ἰδιώτης takes on its concrete sense from the context or the specific contrast. There can be no fixed rendering, though it always maintains the basic sense of one who represents his own interests as

'incapable of reading and writing.' Even the expression *litteras ne(scire),* 'not-to-know letters,' may refer to lack of culture rather than to illiteracy in the narrow sense."[17] An additional challenge involves the implied equivalence of 'illiterate' and 'ignorant.' Within a predominant oral culture this is a *non-sequitur* and betrays an anachronistic perception. Lee and Scott assert that "the ancient world attached no stigma to illiteracy, and the inability to read did not necessarily disadvantage the illiterate financially."[18] Harris cites the high capacity for memorization among non-literate (or, oral) cultures as a strong mitigating factor against perceived ignorance or disadvantage. "At all events, there is reason to believe that non-literate cultures are characterized by people with remarkably capacious and tenacious memories for continuous texts."[19] The continuing importance of memory reflected in rhetorical handbooks of the first century testifies to the abiding influence of a once dominant oral culture. Harris avers that this oral culture remained the communication milieu of the masses within the first century CE.[20]

Harris recognizes a continuum of literacy skills extending from an oral-dependent society to a fully functioning literate-rich one. Within this broad spectrum reside people of various skill levels. He defines 'scribal literacy' as that "which predominated in ancient Near Eastern cultures and in the Minoan and Mycenaean worlds, literacy restricted to a specialized social group which

---

compared with the official or public interest." (Heinrich Schlier, ἰδιώτης in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Gerhard Friedrich, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964).

[17] William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1989), 5.

[18] Margaret Ellen Lee, Bernard Brandon Scott, *Sound Mapping the New Testament* (Salem, OR: Polebridge Press, 2009), 12.

[19] Lee, Scott, 31.

[20] Ibid, 327.

used it for such purposes as maintaining palace records…"[21] 'Craftsman's literacy' refers to the

"condition in which the majority, or near-majority, of skilled craftsmen are literate, while women

and unskilled labourers and peasants are mainly not."[22] Beyond these refined categories, Harris

avoids a definition of literacy. Even these two classifications are more descriptive than defining.

Michael Wise observes that "Harris refused to say precisely what he meant by 'literacy'…since

the term defies all efforts at simple definition. He found its absence easier to define. An illiterate,

he suggested, was a person 'who cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple

statement on his [or her] everyday life.'"[23] Chris Keith acknowledges the challenge of definition

of literacy and adds the classification of "semi-literates" whom he defines "those literate enough

to participate in the local economy or carry on their trade but could not, for example, read a page

of the *Iliad* if asked or write a personal letter."[24]

As a historian, Harris details the archaeological and archival records of literacy within the

Greco-Roman world from the eighth century BCE to the fifth century CE. The scope of his

investigation details a multi-dimensional world of literacy. He details not only epochs from the

first Greek alphabet to the 5th century CE; he also includes the various strata of societies from the

highly literate cities of Pompeii and Alexandria to the more rustic and agricultural environs of the

---

[21] Lee, Scott, 7. Erick Havelock shares a similar view of a continuum of skill levels regarding literacy. He acknowledges a pre-literate culture, a craft-literacy, a recitation-literacy and script-literacy, and a type-literate culture. Havelock positions first century Palestine as a craft literate culture where only a small percentage of the population would have been capable of reading and writing. Cited in De Waal, *An Aural-Performance Analysis of Revelation 1 and 11,* 29.

[22] Ibid, 8.

[23] Michael Owen Wise, *Language and Literacy in Roman Judaea: A Study of the Bar Kokhba Documents* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2015), 21.

[24] Chris Keith, "In My Own Hand: Grapho-Literacy and the Apostle Paul," accessed at www.biblicalstudies.ru/NT/15pdf, 47.

Roman Empire in which he places the eastern regions of Judaea. Regardless of one's locale, Harris concludes that "the written word always remained less vital to the individual than in practically any modern culture. Even though literacy was always, from early Greek and Roman history, virtually universal among men who made up the political and social elite, most people could live out their lives, if they were content to do so, without the use of reading or writing."[25] In reference to first century Judaea, Harris cautions against the overly optimistic use of numerous passages within the gospels where Jesus uses the phrase "Have you not read…?" He points out that the audience of these dialogues are once again social elites, albeit religious.[26] In contrast to these conversations, when Jesus spoke to a larger and more plebeian crowd, such as his Sermon on the Mount, he references not reading but hearing (You have heard that it was said…). Harris's general conclusion regarding literacy in the first century CE follows:

> After all this we can give only very rough estimates of the extent of literacy in Rome and Italy. The most important considerations which should cause us to suggest figures which diverge from the 20-30% male literacy and the less than 10% female literacy …lead to a lower estimate. In order of importance, these factors are the evident feebleness of the school system and the general shortage of interest in financing it, the lack of any imperatives which might have led to the well-to-do to take an interest in the education of the free born poor, and the evidence for the illiteracy or semi-literacy of some well-to-do freedmen. I conclude that the overall level of literacy is likely to have been below 15%.[27]

These figures from the heart of the Empire extend to the outer reaches as well. While acknowledging reservations about some of Harris's methodology, Gamble affirms his conclusions as they relate specifically to the early Christian congregations.

> It cannot be supposed that the extent of literacy in the Christian church was any greater than that of the Greco-Roman society of which Christianity was a part. Not only the writing of Christian literature, but also the ability to read, criticize and

---

[25] Harris, 29,30.

[26] Ibid, 281.

[27] Ibid, 266,7.

interpret it belonged to a small number of Christians in the first several centuries, ordinarily not more than ten percent in any given setting, and perhaps fewer in the many small and provincial congregations that were characteristic of early Christianity.[28]

While Harris provides the most thorough historical study of literacy within the Graeco-Roman world, others have investigated the topic from additional viewpoints and in more focused populations and times.

Using sociological markers Meir Ben-Ilan attempts to extrapolate literacy rates in first century Israel by comparing that culture with modern cultures. One such indicator is the dominance of agriculture within a society. Countries with a high degree of agriculture (excluding corporate agriculture) reflect a lower rate of literacy. However, as a society transitions from a rural to an urban culture, the literacy rate increases. Along with this urbanization there follows population growth. According to Ben-Ilan's rubric, population growth also heralds a rising literacy. Therefore, he cites the building and re-building of cities in Israel under the Romans as an indication of urbanization and population growth and thus higher literacy rates. After examining these various cultural markers, he turns his attention to rabbinic rules governing local synagogues. *Soferim 11.2* states, "A town in which there is only one who reads; he stands up, reads (the Torah), and sits down, he stands up, reads and sits down, even seven times."[29] Ben-Ilan understands this regulative principle as an indication of a frequent problem within first century synagogues and draws the following conclusion: If the fact is not overlooked that in all the synagogues that have been unearthed there was place for more than 50 people, the conclusion must be reached that while

---

[28] Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1995), 5.

[29] Meir Ben-Ilan, "Illiteracy in the land of Israel in the First Centuries CE," accessed at https://faculty.biu.ac.il/~barilm/illitera.html.

issuing that rule the Tanna was speaking of a town where the literacy rate was approximately 1 percent (if not lower).[30] Allowing for larger cities with a larger literate male population, he arrives at a final literate, male population of three percent.[31] Catherine Hezser gives a similar view of the Jewish population, asserting that "less than ten percent of the populace would have been able to read elementary texts and sign their name during the imperial period."[32]

David Rhoads represents the majority opinion when he declares, "Everyone agrees that ancient Mediterranean societies were heavily oral cultures in which close to 95% of the people were not literate. Everyone agrees that the writings would have been heard rather than read silently."[33] Walton and Sandy agree with this assessment: The classic discussion of literacy is by William Harris, and though his work has been analyzed and qualified by many scholars, his basic conclusion has found near consensus.[34] While the conclusions of Harris, Ben-Ilan, and Hezser help set the stage for this chapter's emphasis on orality, aurality, and memory within the culture of the first century CE,[35] the extent of literacy or illiteracy within this era does not alter the premises of

---

[30] Ben-Ilan, "Illiteracy".

[31] Ibid.

[32] De Waal, 36.

[33] David Rhoads, "Performance Events in Early Christianity: New Testament Writings in an Oral Context," in *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres (Biblical Performance Criticism),* Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote, eds. (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 167.

[34] Walton and Sandy, *The Lost World of Scripture,* 83.

[35] While Rhoads speaks of "agreement of everyone" and Walton and Sandy speak of "near consensus" Harris and Hezser's conclusions continue to raise questions in scholarship. One example is Brian J. Wright's article, "Ancient Literacy in New Testament Research: Incorporating a Few More Lines of Enquiry" in *Trinity Journal* 36 (2015): 161-189. He first raises questions about frequent methodologies within these historical and sociological studies. He asserts that there are unfounded and anachronistic parallels between modern and ancient cultures. One example is the assumed relationship between literacy rates and public education. Another is the nature of an agrarian society and lack of leisure time to invest in reading. Wright also notes that Hezser argues from the paucity of books, writing

this chapter. Paul's letter to the Philippians is written with the expectation that it will be read in a communal setting, heard by the church. With this understanding, the Apostle writes or dictates with language and structure that aids the listeners in their reception and retention of the material.

The first century has been described variously as a "manuscript culture" where writing is the dominant vehicle for communication even though those written texts are most often read aloud in a public gathering, or a "scribal culture" that is aware of written documents but continues to operate within the confines of orality. The more frequent designation of the first century within scholarship at present is "rhetorical culture" which Vernon Robbins describes as "an environment where oral and written speech interact closely with one another."[36] John Harvey asserts that in the rhetorical culture of the first century "literacy is limited, and reading is vocal. The normal mode of writing is by dictation, and that which is written down is intended to read aloud to a group rather than silently by the individual."[37] Walter Ong puts a finer point on this interaction:

> Written texts all have to be related somehow, directly or indirectly, to the world of sound, the natural habitat of language, to yield their meanings. 'Reading' a text

---

materials, Torah scrolls, libraries and literacy activities. However, when she addresses the community at Qumran, she views this as anomalous. Wright, then, offers six additional lines of enquiry which may alter the view of literacy in the first century. These include the funerary monument of the youth Quintus Sulpicius Maximus erected by his parents in 94CE on a prominent thoroughfare with a plea for all to read, the popularity and ubiquity of the stylus, Greco-Roman associations which were quasi-trade guilds or unions, sophistication of Greek syntax within the New Testament, unpublished archaeological evidence and lost evidence. His conclusion: In sum, it seems likely that ancient literacy levels were at neither end of the spectrum. While it may be argued that any one of the examples provided in this study does not necessarily impact literacy levels, when these categories and evidence are combined with statements contained in multiple authors over multiple centuries, the possibility of higher literacy during the same eras is more plausible…than the current status quo suggests. While hesitant to offer a counter literacy rate, Wright quotes the opinion of Udo Schnelle, "We may confidently state that in the early Christian urban congregation more than 50% of the members could read and write at an acceptable level." (Udo Schnelle, "Das fruhe Christentum und die Bildung," in *NTS* 61.2 (2015): 113-43), 189, fn116. See also, Larry Hurtado, "Greco-Roman Textuality and the Gospel of Mark: A Critical Assessment of Werner Kelber's *The Oral and the Written Gospel*" in *The Bulletin for Biblical Research* 7 (1997), 91-106.

[36] Harvey, *Listening to the Text,* 39.

[37] Ibid, xv.

means converting it to sound, aloud or in the imagination, syllable-by-syllable in slow reading or sketchily in the rapid reading common to high technology cultures. Writing can never dispense with orality.[38]

Lee and Scott offer an additional approach to naming the first century which serves as a helpful companion to the discussion of orality and literacy. They observe that "in the Greco-Roman world, knowledge was public and communal, the community's shared resource. Following Carruthers' nomenclature, the Greco-Roman world was not a documentary culture: even though it produced written documents, it was a *memorial culture* (emphasis added)."[39]

The interest of the remaining portion of this chapter is the relationship between the oral world with which Paul and his epistolary audience were most accustomed and the strategies to evoke responses and memories within the Pauline correspondence. Anthony Le Donne and Tom Thatcher observe that

"studies of the Bible's media culture are generally concerned with three sets of interlocking issues: the nature of ancient oral cultures; the dynamics of ancient oral performances; and the workings of memory. As a corollary, the intersection of these three concerns have led to an increasing interest in aurality, particularly in the active dimension of hearing oral art/texts/tradition performed and in the hermeneutical implications of the relationship between a composer and a lively listening audience."[40]

While the inter-relatedness of these communication dynamics makes it difficult to unravel the threads, they are discussed under separate headings of orality, aurality, and memory.

---

[38] Walter Ong, John Hartley, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* 30th Anniversary Edition (London; New York: Routledge, 2012), 7.

[39] Lee and Scott, *Mapping,* 62.

[40] Anthony Le Donne, Tom Thatcher, eds., *The Fourth Gospel in the First Century Media Culture* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 1,2.

AURALITY/ORALITY[41]

The most influential treatment of the first century's oral culture is the work of Walter Ong.

Building on the work of Milman Parry and Albert Lord,[42] Ong challenges the premises of modern

form criticism[43] and insists upon a serious investigation of the "residual orality" of the first century

and its influence upon the textuality of the New Testament. Considering the work of Parry, Lord,

Ong, and others, Werner Kelber observes that:

---

[41] The discussion of orality, for this paper, focuses on the cultural milieu of the first century and the interaction of orality and textuality, particularly as this interaction relates to the Pauline epistles. Therefore, investigation into "oral tradition," defined by David Aune as "the transmission of material through speech rather than written form over a relatively extended period of time," is not within the purview of this paper nor does it contribute to or detract from its conclusions. David Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament & Early Christian Literature & Rhetoric* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), Kindle loc. 8743.

[42] Milman Parry (d.1935) was a classicist who revolutionized the modern understanding of Homeric poetry. Under the supervision of linguist Antoine Meillet at the Sorbonne, Parry began to recognize repetitive elements in Homer that led him to propose that Homer was, in fact, an oral poet. Much of his work was established by a comparative study of 20th century Yugoslavian oral poets. "Parry contends that epic poetry such as Homer's was performed by the poet before an audience. The poet actually recomposed the poem each time it was performed. This composition was facilitated by a supply of stereotyped formulae that enabled the poet to tell the story fluently within the parameters of the traditional style." Harvey, *Listening to the Text,* 5. Albert Lord accompanied Parry on his trips to Yugoslavia and, after Parry's untimely death in 1935, extended Parry's work with subsequent trips to Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Lord's *The Singer of Tales* formalized the theory of Parry as the *Oral-Formulaic Theory.* The theory states that "Homeric epics were composed orally because of the occurrence of word-groups that correspond to the practice of oral epic poets. For Parry, a "formula" is "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express given essential idea." Aune, *Westminster Dictionary,* Kindle loc. 8767. Ong summarizes Parry's theory: "…virtually every distinctive feature of Homeric poetry is due to the economy enforced on it by oral methods of composition." Ong, *Orality and Literacy* Kindle loc. 734. See also Casey W. Davis' synopsis of Parry's and Lord's work in *Oral Biblical Criticism: The Influence of the Principles of Orality on the Literary Structure of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 12-14.

[43] Casey Davis addresses the distinctions between source and form criticism and his field of oral biblical criticism: Source criticism and form criticism both seek to go behind the literary text to explore its oral precursors. However, these methods attempt to determine basic literary or oral units and then dissect the biblical material to determine its genetic history. The method of oral biblical criticism…[takes] a teleological approach, examining influences of orality in the biblical material as they appear in canonical form. Casey W. Davis, "Oral Biblical Criticism," in Stanley E. Porter, D. A. Carson, eds., *Linguistics and the New Testament: Critical Junctures* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 103. See also J. A. (Bobby) Loubser, *Oral and Manuscript Culture in the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 6-13.

neither European or American biblical scholarship has profited in depth from the Anglo-American oralist school…The main reason for this neglect, one suspects, is the tendency among biblical scholars to think predominantly, or even exclusively, in literary, linear, and visual terms. Despite, and in part because of form-critical assumptions, it is difficult, if not impossible, to find in biblical scholarship a genuine appreciation of orality as a linguistic phenomenon in its own right.[44]

In linguistic studies Ong shares Kelber's surprise when he asks "why the scholarly world had to reawaken to the oral character of language. It would seem inescapably obvious that language is an oral phenomenon."[45] One may argue that Ong's labor has little to do with New Testament studies since his dominant focus is on primary oral cultures, which he defines as those cultures "totally unfamiliar with writing."[46] Regardless of one's opinion of literacy rates of the first century, it is not a culture of primary orality.

However, Ong extends his treatment of primary orality to encompass cultures, and even epochs, where orality and textuality overlap and intermingle. Within these time periods oral residue is found. Ong defines this as "habits of thought and expression tracing back to preliterate situations or practices, or deriving from the dominance of the oral as a medium in a given culture,

---

[44] Werner Kelber, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 2. Paul J. Achtemeier shares a similar opinion: "There is one aspect of the [cultural environs of the earliest Christian community], however, which has been neglected in NT research. That aspect centers on the fact that we have in the culture of 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." Paul J. Achtemeier, "*Omne Verbum Sonat:* The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109/1 (1990) 3-27. Viewed at www.jstor.org/stable/3267326. See also Pieter J. J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 3-20; Jack Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 60.

[45] Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* Kindle loc. 499.

[46] Ibid, 572.

or indicating a reluctance to dissociate the written medium from the spoken."[47] Robert Henke poetically describes "residually oral cultures [as those where] the media of orality and writing 'overlap or move through one another like galaxies of stars, each maintaining its basic integrity but bearing the stamp of the other.'"[48] Ong argues that a residual orality persisted well into the nineteenth century. In *The Presence of the Word* he notes that "once a student had learned to read and write Latin in which his studies were conducted, the student then proved his ability in logic, physics or natural philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, law, or medicine as well as theology by disputation and possibly a final oral examination in a disputation-like form."[49] The strength of orality's influence on an era's literature depends upon temporal distancing. "The closer in time a literature is to an antecedent oral culture, the less literary or 'lettered' and the more oral-aural it will be."[50] Therefore, one may conjecture that the literature of the New Testament should contain oral residue. Harvey concurs, stating that "the predominantly oral nature of a rhetorical culture (that is, a manuscript or a residually oral culture) requires speakers to arrange their material in ways that can be followed easily by a listener. Clues to the organization of thought are, of necessity, based on sound rather than sight."[51] Casey Davis argues that the New Testament authors were keenly aware that "they were addressing hearing audiences…as such, aural structural and mnemonic clues were just as important in the literary composition of the first two centuries CE as

---

[47] Walter J. Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 25,6.

[48] Robert Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia Dell'Arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 31.

[49] Walter J. Ong, *In the Presence of the Word* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1967), 59.

[50] Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance,* 25.

[51] Harvey, *Listening,* xv.

in oral compositions in primary-oral cultures."[52] An understanding of the characteristics of oral communication will assist in the interpretation of that literature.

Professor Ong provides both general and specific characteristics of primary oral communication, some of which may also appear in residual oral communication. The first general concept of orality is pneumatic, that is, powered by aspiration or exhalation. "Sound exists only when it is going out of existence. It is not simply perishable but essentially evanescent, and it is sensed as evanescent…There is no way to stop sound and have sound."[53] Whether Paul pens his own letters or dictates them to an amanuensis, he exhales the words. Achtemeier affirms that

> …no writing occurred that was not vocalized. That is obvious in the case of dictation, but it was also true in the case of writing in one's own hand. Even in that endeavor, the words were simultaneously spoken as they were committed to writing, whether one wrote one's own words or copied those of another. The poet Eumolpus, in the throes of composition in his cabin on a ship, was oblivious to a passing storm; his voice, as he wrote, drowned out all other sounds in his cabin…In the last analysis, dictation was the only means of writing; it was only a question of whether one dictated to another or to oneself.[54]

Paul vocalizes the letter even as it is penned with the understanding that the letter would be vocalized again upon its reception in Philippi.

The second general characteristic of oral communication is mnemonic. "In a primary oral culture, to solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving carefully articulated thought, you have to do your thinking in mnemonic patterns, shaped for ready oral recurrence."[55] Quintilian acknowledges the power of memory to supply "the orator with the order, not only of things, but of

---

[52] Casey W. Davis, "Oral Biblical Criticism," in Stanley E. Porter, D. A. Carson, eds., *Linguistics and the New Testament: Critical Junctures* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 103.

[53] Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* Kindle loc. 901.

[54] Achtemeier, *Omne Verbum,* 17.

[55] Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* Kindle loc. 941-49.

words, not connecting together a few only, but extending a series almost to infinity so that in very long pleadings, the patience of the hearer fails sooner than the memory of the speaker."[56] Quintilian suggests numerous mnemonic devices to aid the memory, including object and spatial associations.[57] Ong discusses two tools of memory enhancement which also characterize oral thought and expression – the use of formulaic phrases and rhythmic patterns. "Oral recurrence relies upon thoughts which come into being in heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns, in repetitions or antitheses, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and other formulary expressions. Serious thought is intertwined with memory systems. Mnemonic needs determine even syntax."[58]

Citing Parry's uncomfortable discovery that Homeric poems made great use of repeating formulas or clichés, Ong observes that "not only the poet but the entire oral noetic world or thought world relied upon the formulaic constitution of thought. Formulaic thought patterns were essential for the retention of knowledge."[59] Examples of formulaic thought patterns within the New Testament are indicators of oral residue. Paul's confident declaration, "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1: 21) serves the purpose of formula, though phrased as antithesis, as does his more abbreviated declarations such as "being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord" (Phil. 2:2). About these verses (2:1-4), Davis notes that

> repetition of sounds… is more often employed in couplets as a mnemonic tool or in concentrated groups which indicate a unit of the composition. [Here] sound repetition augments the syllabic, content and lexical rhythm. There is repetition of the παρά- prefix in the first two lines of v.1. Homioteleuta are formed with ἔχοντες

[56] Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory,* Lee Honeycutt, ed. and John Selby Watson, trans. XI,2,8. http://rhetoric.eserver.org/quintilian/ (accessed Feb. 20, 2017).

[57] Quintillian, XI,2,11-16.

[58] Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* Kindle loc. 949.

[59] Ibid, Kindle loc. 782.

and φρονοῦντες in v. 2 and σκοποῦντες in v. 4. Finally, τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος parallels τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστος phonetically as well as grammatically and lexically in v. 4.[60]

The general communicative characteristics of an oral culture continue to influence the literary style of the New Testament.

Beyond these general qualifiers of oral thought and expression, Ong assesses orality in more refined categories. These give greater clues to the oral residue of the first century and, especially, the oral underpinnings of Paul's letter to the Philippians.

The first observation Ong makes about thought and expression in a primary oral culture is that it tends to be *additive* instead of subordinative. He uses the example of the creation story in Genesis 1:1-5. The text is influenced by the oral thought processes. This is evidenced by the repetitive use of the conjunction, *wa.* He contrasts the Douay translation, which maintains the use of "and" throughout, with the *New American Bible,* which translates the *wa* as "and," "when," and "thus." He argues that the Douay Bible translates appropriately for its culture which was still a residually oral one. Addressing a higher literate culture, the *New American Bible* chooses to use subordinate clauses introduced by the *wa.[61]*

Albert Lord acknowledges the same additive quality in South Slavic oral traditional epic. He also observes that this additive characteristic can be expressed through asyndeton (the absence of conjunctions). Lord also cites Parry's recognition of other additive methods such as parataxis, appositives, and parallelisms. In the same article, Lord notes that subordination is not an unknown

---

[60] Davis, "Oral Biblical Criticism," 113.

[61] Ong, *Orality,* Kindle loc. 989.

technique among the Slavic poets.[62] These categories of orality and textuality, as well as the corresponding characteristics of each, are more fluid than fixed.

As an example of asyndeton, Paul strings together a list of qualities upon which the Philippians are to think on (4:8). He immediately follows that with a polysyndeton construction in verse nine, "what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me – practice these things." Witherington describes this passage as "two of the most rhetorically powerful and carefully constructed verses in the whole discourse."[63] One might just as easily describe them as two of the most orally-rich verses. Paul also uses a polysyndeton construction when describing Epaphroditus (2:25).

Ong observes that oral thought and expression is *aggregative* rather than analytic. This is built on Parry's observation of the 'noun-epithet' formula in Homeric poetry. "Oral folk prefer, especially in formal discourse, not the soldier, but the brave soldier. Oral expression thus carries a load of epithets and other formulary baggage which high literacy rejects as cumbersome and tiresomely redundant because of its aggregative weight."[64] In a primary oral or residually oral culture this 'weight' enables the idea to sink into and become part of the linguistic treasury of the community.

Like the idea of aggregative is *redundancy* or *copiousness* rather than sparseness. The similarity resides in the expenditure of words to maintain continuity and retention between the speaker and the audience. Unlike textuality with its luxury of rereading or back looping, oral performance "must move ahead more slowly, keeping close to the focus of attention much of what

---

[62] Albert B. Lord, "Characteristics of Orality," in *Oral Tradition Journal* 2/1 (1987): 54-72. Accessed at journal.oraltradition.org/articles/2iarticles=lord on Feb. 21, 2017.

[63] Witherington, *Philippians,* 254.

[64] Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* Kindle loc. 1011.

it has already dealt with. Redundancy, repetition of the just-said, keeps both speaker and hearer surely on track."[65] Speaking of the Gospel of Mark, David Rhoads calls "repetition the lifeblood of oral narration."[66] This repetition need not be artless or unimaginative. Davis suggests that it may appear as "ring composition, concentric structure, inclusio, parallelism, or chiasm."[67] Peter Pickering concurs that repetition in the ancient world was not that "of the verbal [kind] that modern readers may find offensive and tiresome but what we should call 'tropes' or 'figures of speech.'"[68]

Lord offers the cautionary observation, based upon his studies of Slavic epics as well as Homeric poetry, that redundant elements do not serve to simply recall mundane parts of the story or to insure the audience's retention of the basic plot; instead, redundancy is reserved for 'ritual elaboration' of significant people, objects, or events.[69] This parallels Parry's and Lord's observations about memory in the Slavic cultures. Although the singers asserted that they were singing the same words, the audio recordings demonstrated otherwise. The truest recall between various performances of the same song centered on these 'ritual elaborations' of significant people or events.[70] Ong acknowledges that this stylized aspect of orality has been perpetuated in literate cultures. "Rhetoricians were to call this [fluency, fulsomeness] *copia.* They continued to encourage

---

[65] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, Kindle loc. 1034.

[66] David M. Rhoads, "*Reading Mark, Engaging the Gospel*" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 195.

[67] Davis, "Oral Biblical Criticism," 101.

[68] Peter E. Pickering, "Did the Greek Ear Detect 'Careless' Verbal Repetition?" in *The Classical Quarterly* 53, No. 2 (Nov., 2003), 492.

[69] Lord, "Characteristics of Orality," 57.

[70] Harvey, *Listening,* 41.

it, by a kind of oversight, when they had modulated rhetoric from an art of public speaking to an art of writing."[71]

Paul utilizes this aggregative style or redundancy, according to Lord's observations, to highlight key concepts. His constant vigilance against the enemies of the cross is a topic throughout his epistles. His use of anaphora in 3:2 (beware…beware…beware…) rivets this cautionary admonition in the minds of the Philippians.

Oral thought and expression organizes knowledge in the context of the human lifeworld.[72] This is especially evident in what Ong calls *agonistically toned language.* "Writing fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another."[73] This is certainly played out within the Gospels as Jesus confronts the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes. Even in more congenial conversations this agonistic tone is struck although it seems foreign and offensive to a 21st century ear. Jesus' terse response to his mother at the wedding in Cana (Jn. 2:1-5) or his rebuff of the Syrophoenician woman (Mk. 7: 24-29) are examples of an agonistic culture. Honor and blame, praise and vilification are all part of the first century culture and the language of the New Testament.

In Philippians, Paul praises Timothy and Epaphroditus as exemplary servants. This is especially significant for the Philippians to hear when Epaphroditus returns with the letter. The greatest honor belongs to Jesus Christ (2:5-11) and the greatest reproach to those who are enemies

---

[71] Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* Kindle loc. 1050.

[72] Harvey, 41.

[73] Ong, Kindle loc. 1096.

of the cross (3: 18,19). The oral world is marked by polarization, agonistic relationships, virtue

and vice, villains and heroes.[74]

The method of dealing with heroes is unique to oral thought and expression. Within the

context of an agonistic world, *"heavy" heroic figures* live in epic songs and cultural memory.

> The heroic tradition of primary oral culture and of early literate culture, with its massive oral residue, relates to the agonistic lifestyle, but it is best explained in terms of the needs of oral noetic processes. Oral memory works effectively with 'heavy' characters, persons whose deeds are monumental, memorable, and commonly public. Thus, the noetic economy of its nature generates outsize figures, that is, heroic figures, not for romantic reasons or reflectively didactic reasons but for much more basic reasons: to organize experience in some sort of permanently memorable form. Colorless personalities cannot survive oral mnemonics. To assure weight and memorability, heroic figures tend to be type figures: wise Nestor, furious Achilles, clever Odysseus.[75]

One can discover in Philippians the confident Paul (1:20-24), the faithful Timothy (2:19-22), the

sacrificial Epaphroditus (2:25-30) as well as the blameless and innocent Philippians (2:15). The

weightiest representation is reserved again for Jesus Christ who is displayed in the central and

unifying passage (2:5-11).

These heroic figures, presented in agonistic contests, instruct as well as entertain. This is

not accomplished at the abstract level but in the lived world. "Primary oral culture is action-

oriented, not abstraction-oriented as in the fully literate mentality, and so a book about God's

mighty acts is especially attuned to the primary oral mentality."[76] Therefore, while interpreters

wrestle with the nuanced meaning of ἁρπαγμὸν in Ph. 2:6, the first century audience hears action,

not abstraction.

---

[74] Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* Kindle loc. 1126.

[75] Ibid, Kindle loc. 1540.

[76] Walter J. Ong, "Text as Interpretation: Mark and After," in Lou Silberman, ed. *Semeia 39* (1986), 31.

Heavy heroic figures elicit *empathetic identification*, another characteristic of oral thought and expression. Oral presentations, like drama, draw the performer and his/her hearers into the life and *pathos* of the hero. Speaking of *The Mwindo Epic* and the performer, Candi Rureke, Ong observes that "so bound together are narrator, audience, and character that Rureke has the epic character Mwindo himself address the scribes taking down Rureke's performance…In the sensibility of the narrator and his audience the hero of the oral performance assimilates into the oral world even the transcribers who are de-oralizing it into text."[77]

The poetic nature of the Christ Hymn with its *pathos* elicits an empathetic identification from the Philippians. Any accompanying identification with Paul or Epaphroditus is secondary to the solicitation of the Great Exemplar.

The final characteristic of oral thought and expression is perhaps all too obvious; it is *aurally-oriented.* William Stanford comments: "Unlike a modern writer, who may write for the eye and the brain alone, the ancient Greek poet always had to choose *some* kind of sound-group for his compositions, since the silent enjoyment of literature was out of the question in his time."[78] De Waal argues that "recognizable aural patterns and themes were essential for ancient hearers to organize what they heard, to follow the argument of the lector or author, to understand and perhaps even predict what may lay ahead in the narrative landscape and to remember the flow and direction of communication."[79] In a residually oral culture such as the first century CE, Paul must be attune

---

[77] Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* Kindle loc. 1142.

[78] William B. Stanford, *The Sound of Greek. Studies in the Greek Theory and Practice of Euphony* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), 77 (emphasis his), cited by Harvey, *Listening,* 42.

[79] De Waal, *Aural-Performance,* 5.

to the manner in which his letter would be heard. Compositional devices as well as word selection reflect this sensitivity.

It is difficult to suspend discussion of one partner of this dyad to give exclusive attention to the other. However, the oral utterance is different than the aural reception. One can argue that the aural takes precedence over the oral because the orator, and especially the writer, must consider how his words will be received and processed by the auditor. Lee and Scott observe that "sound, not the written symbols used to encode them, communicated ideas in antiquity."[80] They quote William Stanford's assessment of the reading process: "Normally, it seems, an ancient Greek or Roman had to pronounce each syllable before he could understand a written word. The written letters informed his voice; then his voice informed his ear; and finally his ear, together with the muscular movements of his vocal organs, conveyed the message to his brain."[81] William Graham makes a similar observation, "There is, however, much to be said for the contention that, whether we recognize it or not, reading is an oral process: 'reading' a text means converting it to sound, aloud, subvocally, or in the imagination, syllable by syllable in slow reading…"[82] It seems that Graham is describing an aural process as much as he is an oral one. Referring particularly to the Gospel of Mark, Joanna Dewey declares that

> ancient Christians neither heard isolated snippets nor read the entire Gospel silently in isolation. In antiquity, people in groups would have heard the Gospel performed in its entirety…There was virtually no evidence to contradict the assertion that

---

[80] Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping,* 91.

[81] William B. Stanford, *The Sound of Greek: Studies in the Greek Theory and Practice of Euphony* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967), 1. Cited by Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping,* 91.

[82] William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Analysis of Scriptures in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 33.

private, silent reading and writing simply did not exist in the period. Texts were produced to be read aloud in a communal setting.[83]

Whether this "performance" includes enactments or gesticulations, it most certainly involves a verbal presentment of phonemes, morphemes, and sentences, structured in such a fashion to be heard, understood, and retained in the memory.

One interesting phenomena which effected the oral-aural dynamic in first century communication was the method of placing words in a written format. "It will be noticed on even the most casual inspection that most Greek manuscripts are written without separation between words and sentences. This kind of writing, called *scriptio continua*, is easiest to read when one is reading aloud, syllable by syllable."[84] Gregory Nagy also notices that *scriptio continua* serves as an impediment to the "process of 'silent reading.'"[85] It is Nagy's opinion that this style of writing, that persisted into the 9th and 10th centuries CE, is closely aligned with the oral-aural culture of performance and allowed the text to mimic the oral rhythm as one read. "In ancient Greece, the text was meant not only for reading as we understand the phenomenon of reading today…was regarded as a re-enactment of live speech."[86] Alan Kirk makes a similar assertion:

> The bookroll's lack of structural devices that might assist in reference consultation mirrors the ancient reader's apparent indifference to the use of books for random retrieval of information.' In other words, the scrolling format of the bookroll aligned with the oral mode of its enactment; it was 'played' much in the same way that we play a videotape or witness a stage performance. The written scroll was the

---

[83] Joanna Dewey, "The Gospel of Mark as an Oral-Aural Event: Implications for Interpretation," in Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, Edgar V. McKnight, eds., *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 145.

[84] Bruce Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Palaeography* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 31.

[85] Gregory Nagy, "Performance and Text in Ancient Greece," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies,* George Boys-Stones, Barbara Graziosi, Phiroze Vasunia, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Ch. 34.

[86] Nagy, "Performance and Text," Ch. 34.

material counterpart of an oral/aural event and the means of the latter's actualization.[87] The presence of signs on a parchment or a bookroll 'cry out' for a faithful consideration of the aural dynamics within the text.

It is this acoustical dynamic that invites consideration of the aural aspects of first century communication. Harvey asserts that "thought and expression were shaped, to a greater or lesser extent, by sound. These facts suggest that an investigation of oral patterning must focus on 'acoustic resonances' *heard* by the original audience rather than on conceptual parallels found by silently rereading the texts."[88] Casey Davis also affirms that "the New Testament authors never seemed to lose track of the fact that they were addressing hearing audiences…As such, aural structural and mnemonic clues were just as important in the literary compositions of the first and second centuries CE as in oral compositions in primary-oral societies."[89] Werner Kelber acknowledges the same preference of the oral/aural over the textual. He asserts that "in Pauline theology the ear triumphs over the eye."[90]

In *Sound Mapping the New Testament,* Lee and Scott provide a highly technical but intriguing approach to the aural aspect of the New Testament. In so doing, they take seriously the acoustic nature of first century communication.

---

[87] Alan Kirk, *Q in Matthew: Ancient Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition* (London; New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2016), 103. The beginning quote is from William A. Johnson, "Toward a Sociology of Reading," in *American Journal of Philology* 121 (4) 2000, 616.

[88] Harvey, *Listening,* 56.

[89] Casey W. Davis, "Oral Biblical Criticism," in Stanley E. Porter, D. A. Carson, eds., *Critical Junctures: Linguistics and the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 103.

[90] Werner Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 143.

The authors acknowledge the challenges intrinsic to their approach. How does one propose to address the aural or acoustic nature of the New Testament when its language of origin is a dead one? "Although Hellenistic Greek is a dead language, much can be known about its pronunciation through literary evidence and especially orthographic errors, puns, and descriptions of sounds in the natural world."[91] Acknowledging that accentuation within the New Testament is inexact, they confidently affirm "that however the sounds were pronounced, they were pronounced consistently."[92] While their answer to this dilemma is far less precise than one would wish, their efforts are worth attention and further investigation. Like an archaeologist carefully sifting through the remains of an ancient site, Lee and Scott confidently believe that a careful investigation of the acoustics of the *Koine* Greek will produce exegetical insights worthy of the effort.

Lee and Scott insist that written manuscripts are tools of sound. The true composition remains in the mind of the orator/writer and is realized only or most truly in the sounds of an oral presentation. They note that the word, *text*, comes from the Latin, *textere*, which means "to weave." The corresponding Greek word for weaving is συμπλόκῇ.[93] The authors detail the process of weaving in the ancient world and draw the conclusion that συμπλόκῇ "does not apply to simple juxtaposition or to mere additive processes, but only to combinations that involve close interlacement wherein the components combine under tension and are difficult to distinguish from each other. [It] applies to combinations that create something new through effort or struggle."[94]

---

[91] Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping,* 81.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid, 74. It is interesting that Walter Ong uses the Greek word, *rhapsoidein*, to describe Homer's frequent use of formulaic expressions as "stitching songs together." *rhaptein,* to stitch, and *o ide,* song. Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* Kindle loc. 758. A rhapsode is a performer of epic poetry.

[94] Ibid, 74.

The word is also used about wrestlers grappling in a contest, ships engaged in battle, and medicinal concoctions.[95] This background leads to a discussion of συμπλόκῆ as used in the ancient world of grammar and syntax.

Plato uses συμπλόκῆ when referring to putting syllables together to form words and putting words together to form sentences. Dionysius of Halicarnassus is quoted as saying that "the varied effect of the syllables is produced by the interweaving of letters," and "the most elegant writers of poetry or prose…both arrange their words by weaving them together with deliberate care, and with elaborate artistic skill adapt the syllables and the letters to the emotions which they wish to portray."[96] Their conclusion avers that these ancient practitioners refer not only to the weaving of words but rather the "weaving of written signs with vocal sounds…Thus compositions were understood as συμπλόκῆ, the creation of a rich fabric of beauty and meaning through the interlacement of written marks with the sound of the voice."[97]

This weaving process envelopes the fields of grammar and lexical studies. Lee and Scott note at each level the emphasis always remains on sound. "Grammarians were concerned with the flow of language, the ability to capture and preserve it in writing and then reconstitute writing as speech. [They] included with the study of grammar phonetics and phonology – the study of speech sounds and their functions in language."[98] Λεχις, Λεξις "describes the combination and arrangement of speech sounds to create sensible discourse, the beginnings of literary composition

---

[95] Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping,* 74.

[96] Ibid, 74,5.

[97] Ibid, 75,6.

[98] Ibid, 97.

…The Stoics defined Λεξις as 'voice in written form.'"[99] The final phase of this weaving of grammar and arrangement of speech sounds produces "a combination of elements to create an integral whole, at the phonetic, morphological, and syntactic levels, as well as at the level of a complete literary composition," which is called ἡ σύνθεσις.[100] Within their discussion of σύνθεσις Lee and Scott also include the concepts of harmony, melody, and rhythm as integral parts of a final structure which is appealing to the ear and captured by the memory.

The historical background is important, and the evidence is clear that the oral-aural world of communication continued to influence the first century. However, for biblical exegesis, the question remains – how does the contemporary scholar access that oral-aural world when addressing a written text? Thankfully, Lee and Scott are just as thorough in their approach to sound mapping (with abundant examples in each New Testament genre) as they are in their historical background.

When evaluating the structure of a text of the first century one must remember that "in memorial cultures dependent on speech, the dynamics of comprehension differ because they depend on sound. Auditory signals organize a spoken composition's surface instead of the visual marks that interpret print."[101] Harvey examines oral patterning in antiquity to provide a background for the New Testament, especially the Pauline epistles. He notices the use of inversion, echoes, and ring composition in the work of Homer. Plato frequently uses transposition, where the same two words of one sentence are inverted or transposed in the following sentence. Aristotle

---

[99] Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping*, 101.

[100] Ibid, 105.

[101] Ibid, 135.

recommends bringing dissimilar ideas into proximity for rhetorical impact. "Such a lexis is pleasing because opposites are most knowable when put beside each other and because they are like a syllogism, for refutation [*elenkos*] is a bringing together of contraries."[102] He also used the same word to bracket a complete discussion of a subject. Repetition of phrases were not uncommon when returning to a subject after a digression. Wrapping up this overview of oral patterns, Harvey concluded that "there were numerous precedents in Greco-Roman culture for Paul's use of oral patterning in his letters."[103]

The sound mapping approach of Lee and Scott builds on the colometric restructuring of the New Testament text. Metzger defines colometry as "the division of a text into *cola* and *commata*, that is, sense lines of clauses and phrases so as to assist the reader to make the correct inflection and the proper pauses."[104] Henry Gamble observes the differences in colometric and stichometric representations of a text. The stichometric style is the standard form of *scriptio continua,* where economy of space dictated the number of syllables on a line. The colometric transcription is governed by the sense and sound of the syllables and is extremely utilitarian. Much of a reader's work is done by breaking the text according to sound.[105]

Lee and Scott are convinced that accurate colometric versions of a New Testament text can be constructed. This is accomplished primarily through the observable and frequent use of repetition at the level of the colon.

---

[102] Aristotle, *A Theory of Civic Discourse on Rhetoric,* trans. George A. Kennedy (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.8, 242.

[103] Harvey, *Listening,* 62-82.

[104] Metzger, *Manuscripts*, 39. Cited in Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping,* 136.

[105] Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 229,30. Cited in Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping*, 137.

> The analysis of sound begins with the ancient definition of a colon as a breath unit and seeks to account for sound's linear character and reception in real time. And just as Hellenistic literary criticism analyzed how cola were blended into periods and built a unified composition, so a skillful analysis examines compositions colometrically, sound by sound and breath by breath, to discern a composition's structure and meaning.[106]

The repetition of sounds benefits both the reader and the audience. It establishes relationships, both within the sounded text and within the memory lexicon, engendering previous experiences and thoughts. "In the linear dynamics of auditory reception, sounds heard one at a time are comprehended in relation to other sounds occurring earlier or later in sequence. Listeners hold sound groups in memory to comprehend them, mentally reaching backward in memory to previous sounds and forward to anticipated sounds."[107] Repetition is more than merely repeating the same word. In fact, most often the repetition is a repeated sound of a syllable or phoneme. This can be done by alliteration (repeating initial sounds) or assonance (repeating an internal sound) or rhyme (repeating the final sound).

Two passages from Paul's letter to the Philippians have aural characteristics and may serve as simple examples of sound mapping. The introduction to the Christ Hymn (2:1-4) can be mapped in this fashion, with emphasis on anaphora and homoeoteleuton.

> Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστω
> εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης
> εἴ τις κοινωνία Πνεύματος
> εἴ τις σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί
> πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν
> ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε
> τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες
> σύμψυχοι τὸ ἓν φρονοῦντες

---

[106] Lee and Scott, *Sound Mapping*, 141.

[107] Ibid, 142.

Also notice the aural resonance and structure of 3:2.

> Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας
> βλέπετε τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας
> βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν·

While advocates of rhetorical criticism recognize the use of rhetorical devices, Lee and Scott assert that one should first hear the aural nature of the language and structure in the exegetical enterprise.

The strengths of Lee and Scott's mapping technique are the serious attention given to the aural nature of first century communication and a reasonably prescribed method of uncovering those sound units to aid the exegete's recovery of the text's structure. Also, along with Harvey and Ong, they remind the modern interpreter of the importance of the memory in first century communication.

Although Ong has a strong aversion to the notion of "oral literature," it can be nuanced in an appropriate fashion. It is a reasonable, though oxymoronic to the 21st century ear, description of an internal process that governed the public declamation of the first century. Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian speak of 'capturing' sense perception and 'writing' onto the wax tablets of the memory. Yates asserts that "the [wax] metaphor, which compares the inner writing or stamping of the memory images on the places (*loci*) with writing on a wax tablet, is obviously suggested by the contemporary use of the wax tablet for writing."[108] This process in the memory produces a "text" of sorts from which an oration emanates. Long before oratory is transcribed in an external text (manuscript) it is transcribed on the memory.

Any discussion of first century communication which fails to discuss memory is an incomplete presentation of the dialogic process. The oral and aural dynamics of information

---

[108] Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Random House, 2010), 47-8.

transfer places a premium on the memory capacities of both the speaker/writer, the amanuensis,

the lector, and the audience/receptors of the speech or letter.   The following chapter examines the

important role that memory plays in communication and rhetorical presentations.

CHAPTER 3: THE COMMUNICATION MILIEU OF THE FIRST CENTURY: MEMORY

"The first basic fact which the student of the history of the classical art of memory must remember is that the art belonged to rhetoric as a technique by which the orator could improve his memory, which would enable him to deliver long speeches from memory with unfailing accuracy."[1] Maxey also acknowledges that "memory was integral to public presentation. As a result, documents were composed not only for the *aesthetic appreciation* of the spoken word, but for retention. The compositions were structured to facilitate the retention for the oral performer as well as for the hearing audience"[2] (emphasis added). As it relates to the assessment of Philippians, the aesthetic issues of transitional flow and continuity perhaps should not trump the retention of the letter. Frances Yates suggests that "in Plato's *Phaedrus,* the perfect orator is the one who knows the truth and knows the nature of the soul, and so is able to persuade souls of the truth."[3] The Platonic view of the immortality of the soul and the extraordinary power of the memory leads one to the conclusion that effective rhetoric, i.e. persuasion, begins with the memory of the orator and ends in the reception and retention of the hearer's memory. Memory, among philosophers and rhetoricians, represents both the organ of retention and the technical ability of recall.

---

[1] Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Random House, 2010), 16. Cicero asserts a similar view of the power and importance of the memory: "But what business is it of mine to specify the value to a speaker and the usefulness and effectiveness of memory?...of giving such close attention to the instructions of your client and to the speech of the opponent you have to answer that they may seem not just to pour what they say into your ear but to imprint it on your mind? Consequently only people with a powerful memory know what they are going to say and for how long they are going to speak and in what style, what points they have already answered and what still remains…" Cicero, *De Oratore,* translated by Harris Rackham, Edward W. Sutton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), 15. Accessed at http://archives.org/details/cicerodeoratore01ciceuoft.

[2] James A. Maxey, *From Orality to Orality: A New Paradigm for Contextual Translation of the Bible,* Vol.2 (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2009), 112.

[3] Yates, 58-9.

The technique of memory, mnemonics or *ars memoriae*, is first associated with Simonides (d. 468 BCE). Having miraculously escaped a collapsing banquet hall, he was later able to identify all the deceased guests by remembering their location at the banquet table. From this experience he developed the first mnemonic technique called the *method of loci,* whereby people and things are associated with a vivid place in the memory through which the mind walks and recollects. Memory and mnemonics are recurring topics within philosophic and rhetorical treatises of the ancient culture. The works of Plato and Aristotle provide the framework for Cicero's and Quintilian's observations concerning the place of memory in rhetoric.

In *Phaedrus,* Socrates recounts a dialogue between the god Thamus, king of the whole country of Egypt, and a lesser deity, Theuth, an inventor of many arts, including letters. When Theuth presents these arts to Thamus, he receives a less than enthusiastic response concerning letters.

> O most ingenious Theuth, the parent or inventor of an art is not always the best judge of the utility or inutility of his own inventions to the users of them. And in this instance, you who are the father of letters, from a paternal love of your own children have been led to attribute to them a quality which they cannot have; for this discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality.[4]

Plato posits the memory as an integral aspect of the soul which he considers immortal. Through numerous transmigrations the soul may vividly or faintly recollect the Ideas (universals) when it encounters facsimiles of these realities within its present state. "A man must have intelligence of

---

[4] Plato, *Phaedrus.* Trans. by Benjamin Jowett. Accessed on March 16, 2017 at http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/ancient-greece/plato/plato-phaedrus.asp?pg=48, 48.

universals, and be able to proceed from the many particulars of sense to one conception of reason; - this is the recollection of those things which our soul once saw while following God - when regardless of that which we now call being she raised her head up towards the true being."[5] The Socratic method of interrogating dialogue engages the memory and seeks to draw out the truth once imbedded in the "wax tablets" of the soul. This is the essence of Plato's aversion to letters or writing.

Interestingly, the Rabbis took a similar stance toward the Oral Torah. Contrasting the Written Torah, constituted in a fixed literary form of twenty-two books, the Oral Torah was an interpretive supplement. It was passed down from teacher to disciple in a verbatim fashion. Elizabeth Alexander notes that "throughout its transmission the Oral Torah remains a discrete and defined body of material, which each tradent reproduces in a verbatim manner for the recipient. The significant difference between the Written Torah and the Oral Torah is that one is fixed in writing and the other is fixed in memory and conveyed by word of mouth."[6] Before the compilation of the Mishnah, the rabbis were adamant in their protection of the Oral Torah. Alexander quotes two sources that assert that "those who write down the words of *halakhot* (Oral Torah) are likened to one who burns the Torah," and, again, "one may not recite oral teachings from a written document, and one may not recite written teachings from memory."[7]

Plato, therefore, views true intelligence as that which is imprinted on the 'wax tablet' of the mind and induces a recollection of a previous awareness of the Ideas. In *Theaetetus*, Plato

---

[5] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 22.

[6] Elizabeth S. Alexander. "The Orality of Rabbinic Writing," Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert, Martin S. Jaffee, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 39,40.

[7] Alexander, "The Orality of Rabbinic Writing," 46.

conceives of a block of wax in the mind, differing in each man according to its size and impressionable nature. "This tablet is a gift of Memory, the mother of the Muses; and that when we wish to remember anything which we have seen, or heard, or thought in our own minds, we hold the wax to the perceptions and thoughts, and in that material receive the impression of them as from the seal of a ring; and that we remember and know what is imprinted as long as the image lasts."[8] This is preferred to the marking of letters on parchment which weakens the engagement of the memory. Reminiscence of someone else's thought in signs is not the same thing as a memory impression.

The real value of memory is the recollection of things which the soul has known in a previous state of existence. One does not learn; neither is one taught. Learning is recollection. In *Meno* Socrates demonstrates this process through the inquisition of a servant boy about the geometric properties of a square. Through this dialogic enquiry, the boy discovers facts about the relationship of a square's sides and area which Meno admits he had not been taught previously. The only conclusion, asserts Socrates, is that the soul is immortal and memory is the residue of the soul's previous existence. Therefore, the memory is at once the residual impressions of a previous existence and the wax tablet impressed by present sense experience.

Aristotle adopts the wax tablet in his discussion of memory also. Mary Carruthers asserts that for Aristotle "a memory is a mental picture (phantasm; Latin *simulacrum* or *imago*) of a sort which Aristotle defines clearly in *De anima*, an 'appearance' which is inscribed in a physical way upon that part of the body which constitutes memory."[9] Aristotle acknowledges that in people

---

[8] Plato, *Theaetetus.* 2, 21.Trans. by Benjamin Jowett. Accessed on March 16, 2017 at http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/ancient-greece/plato/plato-theaetetus-2.asp?pg=21.

[9] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 35.

ruled by passion the memory is constituted of a substance like water which cannot receive a permanent impression. Ideally, "the process of movement (sensory stimulation) involved the act of perception stamps in, as it were, a sort of impression of the percept, just as persons do who make an impression with a seal."[10] Unlike Plato, who prefers metaphysical language, Aristotle is interested in the physiological aspects of memory impressions.

Another image or metaphor appears in the dialogue between Socrates and Theaetetus. About true knowledge and false opinions, Socrates compares the memory to an aviary which a man constructs to house wild birds. Once the birds are captured (i.e., sense perceptions obtained) they are placed in the aviary from which they may be retrieved at will. False perceptions occur when one returns to the aviary and mistakenly retrieves a pigeon when a dove is intended. The point is that one can return to the aviary as often as necessary until the correct bird is retrieved.

Cassiodorus takes this image of the memory and enhances it in order to correct these misperceptions. He refers to this dove cote as *topica memoriae* (places of memory) where knowledge is gathered and sorted. The dove cote becomes a more ordered arrangement than the open and indiscriminate aviary. Commenting on Cassiodorus' *schema* Mary Carruthers observes,

> One is not born with this structure, nor is it passively gained; one constructs it oneself during education. And whatever experiences one has will be channeled by the previously laid out inventory, and will find their appropriate place, each contributing its matter to the general store. Without the sorting structure, there is no invention, no inventory, no experience, and therefore, no knowledge – there is only a useless heap, what is sometimes called *silva*, a pathless forest of chaotic material. Memory without conscious design is like an uncatalogued library, a useless contradiction in terms. For human memory should be most like a library of texts, made accessible and useful through various consciously applied heuristic schemes.[11]

---

[10] Aristotle, *On Memory and Reminiscence.* Trans. by J. Beare. Accessed on March 16, 2017 at http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/ancient-greece/aristotle/memory-reminiscence.asp?, 3.

[11] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory,* 55,6.

Among other ancient authors this 'place of memory' is called a treasure chest or *thesaurus*. Cicero avers, "What need to speak of that universal treasure-house (*thesauro*), the memory? Unless this faculty be placed in charge of the ideas and phrases which have been thought out and well-weighed, even though as conceived by the orator they were of the highest excellence, we know that they will be wasted."[12] This metaphor highlights the contents of and retrieval from the storage place. Carruthers asserts that the image refers to the riches of the memory and their value for present usefulness. "Nothing that you have seen or heard is useful, however, unless you deposit what you have seen and heard in the treasury of your memory."[13] These words are reminiscent of Jesus' cryptic parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13. He refers to the failure of the eyes and ears to perceive and understand the truth of the kingdom. Once his disciples affirm their understanding of the parables, Jesus asserts that "every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (v.52). Similar are the words of Quintilian:

> "All knowledge depends on memory, and we shall be taught to no purpose if whatever we hear escapes from us. It is the power of memory that brings before us those multitudes of precedents, laws, judgments, sayings, and facts of which an orator should always have an abundance and which he should always be ready to produce. Accordingly, memory is called, not without reason, the treasury of eloquence."[14]

Since the memory is a treasure chest or store house of valuable knowledge, it is incumbent upon the rhetor to possess a method of retrieval.

---

[12] Cicero, *De Oratore,* translated by Harris Rackham, Edward W. Sutton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), 15. Accessed at http://archives.org/details/cicerodeoratore01ciceuoft.

[13] Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 37.

[14] Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*. Ed. Lee Honeycutt. Trans. John Selby Watson, XI, 2, 1. Accessed at http://rhetoric.eserver.org/quintilian.

One of the earliest and most thorough treatments of memory retrieval is the anonymous *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* of the first century BCE. Having discussed the other four principles of rhetoric (invention, arrangement, style, and delivery), the author introduces his section on memory thusly, "Now let us turn to the treasure house of inventions, the custodian of all the parts of rhetoric, memory."[15] He begins this section by distinguishing natural memory from artificial memory. This assessment of memory's importance corresponds to that of Plato. Yates notes that "The *Phaedrus* is a treatise on rhetoric in which rhetoric is …an art of speaking the truth and of persuading hearers to the truth…This depends on a knowledge of the soul and the soul's true knowledge consists in the recollection of the Ideas. Memory is not a 'section' of this treatise, as one part of the art of rhetoric; memory in the Platonic sense is the groundwork of the whole."[16]

However, this is where the similarity ends because Plato is not an advocate of mnemonic techniques or artificial memory. "It is clear that, from Plato's point of view, the artificial memory as used by the sophist would be anathema, a desecration of memory…A Platonic memory would have to be organized, not in the trivial manner of such mnemotechnics, but in relation to the realities."[17] Overburdening the memory with arbitrary places and images distracts it from its real field of inquiry, *Ideas.*

The anonymous rhetoric teacher finds a greater affinity with Aristotle as he develops his techniques of recall. Imagination and memory, which belong to the same part of the soul, play an integral role in Aristotle's epistemology. Perceptions received via the senses are first "treated or worked on by the faculty of the imagination"[18] and then stored in the memory as mental pictures.

---

[15] Yates, *Art of Memory,* 19, 20.

[16] Ibid, 49, 50.

[17] Ibid, 45.

There is no thought without these mental pictures. Kelber understands the relationship of memory and imagination.

> Mnemotechnics did not facilitate instant recall simply based on sound tracks drilled into the mind. They also involved the formation of memory images, i.e., heroic figures, dramatic scenes, striking places, etc. The ideal was to express everything one wanted hearers to retain in a way that encouraged imaging. A flourishing of imagination and visions, a rich inner visualized world, was an essential part of ancient oral operations.[19]

Is there a more heroic figure than Jesus Christ or a more dramatic scene than Calvary's cross? Paul anchors his practical instructions to the Philippians by capturing their imaginations and imprinting upon their memories with the evocative Christ Hymn.

In *Memory and Reminiscence*, Aristotle differentiates memory and reminiscence, or recollection. In fact, he draws a distinction between remembering and recollection. Animals are capable of remembering but not recollection, because the latter requires inference or deliberation which man alone possesses.[20] Also, one may remember without recollection but one cannot recollect without remembering. "Recollection is the recovery of knowledge or sensation which one had before. It is the deliberate effort to find one's way among the contents of memory, hunting among its contents for what one is trying to recollect."[21] Aristotle advocates two principles to aid one in this heuristic endeavor – association and order.

---

[18] Yates, *Art of Memory*, 45.

[19] Werner H. Kelber, "Narrative as Interpretation and Interpretation of Narrative: Hermeneutical Reflections on the Gospels," Lou H. Silberman, ed., *Semeia* 39 (1986): 122.

[20] Aristotle, *On Memory and Reminiscence.* Translated by J. Beare. Accessed at http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/ancient-greece/aristotle/memory-reminiscence.asp?, 8.

[21] Yates, 47.

Association within the mental pictures of the memory may be based upon similarity, dissimilarity, or nearness. Aristotle asserts:

> Whenever therefore, we are recollecting, we are experiencing certain of the antecedent movements until finally we experience the one after which customarily comes that which we seek. This explains why we hunt up the series (of kineseis) having started in thought either from a present intuition or some other, and from something either similar, or contrary, to what we seek, or else from that which is contiguous with it. Such is the empirical ground of the process of recollection; for the mnemonic movements involved in these starting-points are in some cases identical, in others, again, simultaneous, with those of the idea we seek, while in others they comprise a portion of them, so that the remnant which one experienced after that portion (and which still requires to be excited in memory) is comparatively small.[22]

For example, Paul may use the image of a 'near to dying' Epaphroditus as an example of the mind of Christ as well as the enemies of the cross who 'mind' earthly things. Either image arouses the ultimate goal or mental picture – the suffering and exalted Jesus. Therefore, the midpoint of the letter, the Christ Hymn, allows the hearer to recall that which has preceded it as well as that which follows.

The imagination aligns sense perceptions in the memory as mental pictures in the same sequence with which they are received. Therefore, order aids in recollection. However, Aristotle points out that one need not recall a sequence of events or thoughts from the beginning; one may, in fact, begin in the middle and move forward or backward.

While there are examples of extraordinary memory skills in the ancient world, those most valued are not rote memories capable of long lists of names and facts; rather, the most impressive are those individuals who could quote lengthy treatises from any given point or backwards. Augustine refers to such a man, Simplicius. When asked to recite any passage from Virgil or

---

[22] Aristotle, *On Memory,* 8.

Cicero, he performed the task flawlessly.[23] Concerning memory skills in the ancient world, Carruthers writes, "The proof of a good memory lies not in the simple retention and regurgitation even of large amounts of material. Rather, it is the ability to move it about instantly, directly, and securely that is admired."[24]

In order to move about the objects of memory one must organize the material of sense perceptions within the memory. Building on the principle method of Simonides, rhetoricians constructed mnemonic techniques initially intended to aid the orator in extemporaneous speech. In Book XI of *Institutio oratorio,* Quintilian outlines this method. First, the orator must imprint on the memory a place (*loci, topoi*). This may be a street with shops, houses, statues; or an architectural structure with porticos, anterooms, bedrooms, each decorated with vivid ornamentation. Next, with ordered intention, objects corresponding to elements of the speech are placed within the *locus.* With these steps accomplished, the orator's imagination can easily move through the structure or the street and capture the images and compose his speech accordingly.[25]

---

[23] Augustine, *The Nature and Origin of the Soul.* Trans. by Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis, IV, 9. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/15084.htm. A certain man who from his youth has been a friend of mine, named Simplicius, is a person of accurate and astonishing memory. I once asked him to tell me what were the last lines but one of all the books of Virgil; he immediately answered my question without the least hesitation, and with perfect accuracy. I then asked him to repeat the preceding lines; he did so. And I really believe that he could have repeated Virgil line after line backward. For wherever I wished, I made trial whether he could do it, and he did it. Similarly in prose, from any of Cicero's orations, which he had learned by heart, he would perform a similar feat at our request, by reciting backwards as far as we wished.

[24] Carruthers, *Book of Memory,* 38.

[25] Yates, *Art of Memory,* 17, 18. Cicero makes the same observation about memory with reference to Simonides: "Persons desiring to train the [memory] must select localities and form mental images of the facts they wish to remember and store those images in the localities, with the result that the arrangement of the localities will preserve the order of the facts themselves, and we shall employ the localities and images respectively as a wax writing tablet and the letters written on it." *De oratore,* Rackham, Sutton translation, 467.

Aristotle acknowledges the use of "places" or *topoi* as mnemonic apparatuses; however, he develops the idea of *topos* specifically as it relates to rhetorical argument. He admonishes the rhetor to gather material from experiences, writings, and previous orations which may have benefit for future arguments. These are stored in the mind, catalogued and identified under a numeric or alphabetical mnemonic system for ease of recall. The skilled rhetor recalls and inserts these arguments or illustrations deftly into his oration or text. Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee observe that

> the word *place* was originally meant quite literally. Lists of topics were first written on papyrus rolls, and students who were looking for specific topic unrolled the papyrus until they came to the place on the roll where the topic was listed. Later, this graphic meaning of *place* was applied conceptually, to mean an intellectual source or region harboring a proof that could be inserted into any discourse where appropriate. Even later, the terms *topic* and *place* referred to formal or structural inventive strategies, like definition, division, or classification.[26]

While the modern researcher scans the index of a book for topics and references, the ancient rhetor "looked within the structures of language or in issues that concerned the community…available to anyone who spoke or wrote the language in which they were couched and who were reasonably familiar with the ethical and political discussions taking place in the community."[27]

In a simpler form, George Kennedy states that what "the literary critic calls 'themes,' the theologian 'doctrines,' and the philosopher 'premises,' the rhetorical critic calls 'topics.'"[28] He also notices that "most of what goes on in rhetorical composition is *amplification* of the basic

---

[26] Sharon Crowley, Debra Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students* (New York: Pearson Education, 2009), 117.

[27] Sharon Crowley, Debra Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetoric*, 118. See also George Kennedy's treatment of Aristotle's definition and explanation of *topoi* in *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, London: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 20-1. He discusses the philosopher's categories of places, both specific and general, and gives examples of NT uses. For an extended rhetorical examination of John's Upper Room discourse by means of *topics* see pages 78-85.

[28] Kennedy, *NT Interpretation,* 78-9.

thesis of the speaker by means of the topics which he has chosen to utilize in support of it. This, in turn, must be related in some way to the experience of his audience. All speech thus involves the 'working out' of its inventional topics."[29] Pauline topics are the observable themes developed within his epistles, situated to the unique challenges or issues of each Christian community. Ben Witherington discusses some of the topics developed by Paul, describing them as narrative story lines. His list includes "the story of God the creator, of Adam and the world gone wrong, of God's people, of the Jewish Messiah, and the story of Christians with Paul's own story as a subset."[30] One of those topics or narrative story lines is Paul's cruciform theology which is developed in chapter five of this paper.

The importance of vivid descriptions of these *topics* do not only benefit the memory capabilities of the orator. They also have wide-ranging advantages for the hearer as well. Ann Vasaly highlights the value of these mnemonic techniques in *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory.* While multiple words are used for this oratorical technique, Vasaly categorizes them under the term, *evidentia* or vivid descriptions. These descriptors may refer to the immediate surroundings of the oratorical moment or to a distant location, person, or experience. The benefit is the emotional appeal, both for the orator and the audience. "The successful employment of *evidentia* caused the listener to picture what was described with 'the eyes of the

---

[29] Kennedy, *NT Interpretation*, 21.

[30] Ben Witherington, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 237. He develops these stories or topics more fully in *Paul's Narrative Thought World* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994). See Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), J. A. Fitzmyer, *Paul and His Theology: A Brief Sketch* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989.

mind.'"[31] The influence of these descriptions upon the memory are comparable to actual sensory perceptions. "We may suppose that verbally induced images could potentially be indistinguishable from the actual in the impressions that they leave on the mind and, therefore, in their availability to processes of memory and feeling."[32] The apostle Paul suggests the same notion in his rebuke of the Galatians: O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified (3:1). Paul's references to the cross (1:4; 2:20,21; 3:1, 13; 5:11; 6:12,14) direct the Galatians to the aviary, the dove cote, the thesaurus of their memory in order to retrieve the truth of the gospel.

The value of Vasaly's assessment of *evidentia* lies in the process of motion from the memory of the orator to the memory of the audience. Quintilian asserts that the orator can train himself to produce particular images in order to bring about the emotional response (both for himself and his audience) that accompanies these images. He first creates the desired emotion within himself by imagining a vividly detailed scene. Here Quintilian relies on the mnemonic technique of places (*loci*). Vasaly observes that:

> So far, Quintilian is speaking only of the orator and the process by which he could summon remembered images in his own mind. Then, however, he makes a critical intellectual leap by connecting this process, which takes place in his own mind, with his use of verbal description, in order to stimulate visualizations in the mind of his audience. The reader of the passage is therefore led to see the entire process as a connected sequence: the speaker first summons images from his memory, where they are stored; if the orator is skillful and imaginative, these stimulate the particular emotional response that he had hoped to create in himself; the orator then, through vivid description stimulates corresponding *visiones* in the minds of the audience; and these, in turn, produce a seemingly inevitable emotional reaction in the listeners.[33]

---

[31] Ann Vasaly, *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 90.

[32] Ibid, 94.

[33] Ibid, 96-7.

The power of memory to store "backgrounds" upon which various images could be affixed

provides the necessary material from which the able orator could retrieve the right information to

be utilized at the right time. This power in communication presumes a shared field of backgrounds.

Carruthers notes that "the rhetorician or pragmatist, having to speak, accepts that words…can be

used meaningfully so long as speaker and audience share a common cultural and civic bond,

whether that of *civitas Romana* or *civitas Dei,* a bond forged by the memories of people and their

texts."[34] Paul makes such an appeal to the Philippians, who understand the privilege of their unique

civic status as an imperial colony with "all the rights and privileges there unto appertaining." But

it is not a temporal status that carries Paul's argument in his Philippian epistle but an eternal one.

Their shared citizenship is in heaven, from which they await a Savior. Paul has previously

presented this Savior is a vivid portrayal of his condescension and exaltation (2:6-11).

What Carruthers calls 'a common cultural or civic bond' forged by the memories of people

and their text, James Dunn refers to as 'axiomatic' or 'allusions' or 'take-for-granted' constructs.

In reference to the Koine language, Dunn notes "that the texts composed by Paul are inextricably

rooted in the speech context of their time, linked by myriad roots and shoots to the meanings and

metaphors which such language commonly conjured up in the minds of the recipients of Paul's

letters."[35]

These axiomatic realities also include a familiarity with OT Scripture, especially the LXX.

He asserts that:

> unless we are to suppose that Paul was quite unconcerned whether the recipients of
> his letters appreciated the force carried by such allusions, we have to take it that

---

[34] Carruthers, *Book of Memory,* 44-5.

[35] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), Kindle loc. 628.

> Paul felt able to assume a considerable knowledge of the LXX on the part of his converts – a knowledge gained in many cases at least, presumably, by previous exposure to the Jewish scriptures prior to their conversion as well as by intensive teaching thereafter.[36]

Therefore, Paul can use formulae or kerygmatic expressions, confident that his recipients will fill in the gaps based on their commonly-held memories. N. T. Wright makes similar observations, based on the work of Richard B. Hays. "The narrative turn in Pauline exegesis…belongs closely to Paul's use of the Old Testament [where] a single allusion can conjure up an entire world of thought."[37]

When one considers communication in a residual oral or memorial culture such as the first century, the bookends of the process is memory. Quintilian and Cicero believe that memory undergirds or governs the process of invention, arrangement, style, and delivery. Therefore, the memory must be organized for ease of retrieval. The originator of the communique relies upon his memory to fashion a persuasive argument. The language and structure of the oration or letter aid the recipient(s) in their retention of the material. The effective orator or writer is not necessarily the one who presents new ideas but rather the one who adds information to a topic already residing in the memory, where a previous impression has been made in the wax or a 'pigeon hole' already exists. Cicero recognizes this important characteristic when he states, "The efficacy of the whole of this science of rhetoric is not that it wholly originates and engenders something no part of which is already present in our minds, but that it fosters and strengthens things that have already sprung to birth within us."[38]

---

[36] Dunn, *The Theology of Paul*, Kindle loc. 637.

[37] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 10.

[38] Cicero, *De oratore,* 469.

Yates references the 4th century BCE treatise, *Dialexeis,* also known as *Dissoi Logos[39],* which advocates a three-step process of memory. First, one is to pay attention or direct one's mind through discipline to the objects of inquiry. Next, they should be repeated again and again. Finally, to the previous point, these objects or thoughts should be *placed upon what one already knows by association.*[40] Their imaginations take the information via their sense of hearing and catalogue the mental pictures in their memories. In the case of Paul's letter to the Philippians, the cross of Christ is the central image from which the Philippians can recall both that which precedes and that which follows. This ordering of the letter associates each section with this key concept.

If the book of Philippians begins with Paul's memory and ends with its reception and retention in the memories of the Philippians, what kind of mnemonic techniques does Paul use to aid in the retention of his message? Ong recognizes this fundamental challenge and asserts that

> in a primary oral culture, to solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving carefully articulated thought, you have to do your thinking in mnemonic patterns, shaped for ready recurrence. Your thought must come into being in heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns, in repetitions or antitheses, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and other formulary expressions, in standard thematic settings, in proverbs which are constantly heard by everyone so that they come to mind readily and which themselves are patterned for retention and ready recall, or in other mnemonic form.[41]

---

[39] Dissio Logos is an anonymous sophistic treatise on a variety of subjects written in literary Doric at some time before the Peloponnesian War. Section IX contains the following insight on memory: (1) The greatest and fairest discovery has been found to be memory; it is useful for everything, for wisdom as well as for the conduct of life. (2) This is the first step: if you focus your attention, your mind, making progress by this means, will perceive more. (3) The second step is to practice whatever' you hear. If you hear the same things many times and repeat them, what you have learned presents itself to your memory as a connected whole. (4) The third step is: whenever you hear something, connect it with what you know already. For instance, suppose you need to remember the name " Chrysippos ", you must connect it with chrusos (gold) and hippos (horse). Accessed at http://myweb.fsu.edu/jjm09f/RhetoricSpring2012/Dissoilogoi.pdf

[40] Yates, *Art of Memory*, 42-3. (emphasis added).

[41] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 2015), Kindle loc. 942.

This paper argues that the Christ Hymn (2:6-11) is the primary theme of the letter upon which hang the other important, albeit secondary, themes of joy, unity, suffering, and partnership. Mnemonic elements present themselves to bolster this argument. The very form of the Hymn most likely makes it the most memorable part of the epistle, particularly in an oral-aural presentation. Also, the key verb form introducing the hymn, φρονειⁿσθω, is a peg or link word used throughout the epistle.

Ruben Zimmermann examines the role of genre as a critical aspect of "collective memory" in the early Christian communities. His thesis suggests that the form in which oral traditions are communicated is a vital part of the community's memory. "The form in the remembered communication act is simultaneously assumed as well as constituted and extended. Thus, the formalizing memory is central to the process of the constitution of tradition."[42] He argues that before the Christian tradition was "textualized," it was conveyed in oral presentations. He also contends that certain genres lend themselves to effective presentation and retention. "Certain forms or media of memory are established that then become carriers of memory. In this process, the conventionalized forms of language, the genres, are able to become the condition for and the medium of expression for cultural memory…Thus, the form guarantees the permanence and the stabilization of the memory as well as the community."[43] Prior to the macro-genres of the Gospels, the community's memory galvanized around micro-genres. Zimmermann believes that 'parable' was such a micro-genre.[44] One may also argue that hymns are a micro-genre, a formalizing

---

[42] Ruben Zimmermann, "Memory and Form Criticism: The Typicality of Memory as a Bridge between Orality and Literality in the Early Christian Remembering Process," Annette Weissenrieder, Robert B. Coote, eds., *The Interface of Orality and Writing* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 134.

[43] Ibid, 135.

[44] Ibid, 138.

memory of the early Christian community.[45] As most could attest, much theology, both good and bad, has been embedded in our memories through the songs we have sung!

Alan Kirk also recognizes the power of language well-formed to memorialize the undergirding truth of a community's ethos and identity.

> In fact, a community is able to remember, inculcate, and transmit its formative past only to the extent that that past has been mnemonically consolidated in the schematic forms of a tradition. Tradition artifacts are media-borne symbolic entities that objectify or as Jan Assmann expresses it, make 'visible…permanent, and transmittable (and, we should add, replicable) the defining elements of a community's moral universe.'[46]

As one considers the various paraenetic sections of the letter to the Philippians, does any other passage convey the ethos and identity of the Christian community more powerfully that the Christ Hymn?

The very structure of the Christ Hymn aids in its mnemonic force. Proposals for elaborate and perfectly balanced strophes are not necessary to enhance the compelling example of Jesus. The parallelism, chiasmus, or concentrism is itself a *tour de force* of the condescension and humility of the one who now has a name that is above every name. Brad McCoy notes the use of chiasmus in antiquity when he writes

> The use of chiasmus in antiquity was encouraged by the fact that it provided a needed element of internal organization in ancient writings, which did not make use of paragraphs, punctuation, capitalization and other synthetic devices to communicate the conclusion of one idea and the commencement of the next. A

---

[45] Robert J. Karris, quoting Ralph P. Martin's *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii.5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), offers the following list of NT hymns: the Lukan canticles, hymns of the Apocalypse, Jewish-Christian fragments and ejaculations (Amen, Hallelujah, Hosa'na, Marana tha, Abba), sacramental (Eph 5:14; Tit 3:4-7), meditative (Eph 1:3-14; Rom 8:31-39, 1 Cor 13), confessional (1 Tim 6:11-16; 2 Tim 2:11-13), Christological (Heb 1:3; Col 1:15-20; 1 Tim 3:16; John 1:1-14; 1 Pet 1:18-21; 3:18-21; Phil 2:6-11). *A Symphony of New Testament Hymns* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 15.

[46] Alan Kirk, "The Memory-Tradition Nexus in the Synoptic Tradition: Memory, Media, and Symbolic Representation," Tom Thatcher, ed., *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 151

second major factor which reinforced the use of chiastic organization of rhetorical material in the ancient mind was its inherent benefit as mnemonic aid. Relatively unconcerned about a linear…flow of ideas, biblical communities relished sayings that were memorable, and they appreciated repetition that we might consider redundant. Breck notes, 'The ancients learned by rote. Once an individual had in mind the first half of a chiastic structure, it was a relatively easy matter to recall the rest.[47]

Whether it was original to the hymn or added by the apostle, the phrase "even the death of the cross" serves as the linchpin of the chiastic or concentric structure and demands denouement, both structurally and theologically. Again, this paper argues that once this central passage is embedded in the individual and collective memory of the community, the memory moves back and forth through the epistle to recall the consolations and challenges of the apostle.

In addition to formalized genres and structural devices, ancient writers relied upon words to aid memory. Craig Richard Cooper proposes that

> Mnemonic devices would be used to organize the information newly taken into the memory in a way that would facilitate its recall. In this circumstance, organizational mnemonics would have been used that encompassed such techniques as peg words and link words. To achieve recall of information in the correct order, various cohesion strategies were used. One such cohesion strategy is the use of a key word. The repetition of the key word provides structure that holds the main elements of the text together … Quintilian recommended dividing the text into sections each one marked with the word one had chosen for oneself as the keyword.[48]

Sidney Greidanus also acknowledges the value of repetition of key words. He states that "Repetition is apparently the basic building block of most ancient structural patterns. Simple repetition of words, phrases, and clauses is, of course, frequently found in biblical literature. As a

---

[47] Brad McCoy, "Chiasmus: An Important Structural Device Commonly Found in Biblical Literature." Accessed at www.chafer,edu/journal/back_issues/Vol%209-2%20ar2.pdf.

[48] Craig Richard Cooper, *The Politics of Orality* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 183.

literary device known as 'the keyword technique,' repetition of words or phrases is a device that can mark literary units."[49]

Many exegetes recognize the frequency of χαιⁿρω and its cognates and, therefore, propose joy or rejoicing as the major theme of the epistle. This paper, however, proposes that Paul uses the peg word or link word Φρονεⁿω (*phroneo*) to pull the paraenetic sections as well as his personal testimony and his note of gratitude to the center of the letter.

Phroneo is used twenty-nine times in the New Testament. It appears twenty-six times in the undisputed Pauline letters and twelve times[50] in the epistle to the Philippians, counting the compound, ταπεινοφροσυⁿνη, which includes the root for Φρονεⁿω, φρηⁿν. David deSilva notes the frequency of *phroneo* and emphasizes the previous argument of Greidanus, that repetition of words can mark literary units.

> Forms of the verb 'to consider, regard, think' (*phronein*) appear frequently and in particularly high concentrations near the introduction of the Christ hymn, the conclusion of Paul's personal example, the appeal to Synteche and Euodia, and the beginning of the postponed note of thanks. This verb thus serves to highlight the more important points Paul makes in the letter and, again, suggests the unity and coherence of the work.[51]

It does not satisfy Greidanus' criterion completely for it does not appear in every major section. However, it appears strategically as will be demonstrated. Prior to examining the specific uses in

---

[49] Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 60.

[50] *Phroneo* appears in 1:7; 2:2 (2), 5; 3:15 (2), 16, 19; 4:2, 10 (2).

[51] David A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, and Ministry* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 648.

Philippians, we should consider the meaning of the word and its appropriate connection with the Christ Hymn.

Φρη□ν means "diaphragm, which the ancients considered the location and origin of intellectual and spiritual activity. The diaphragm determines the nature and strength of the breath and hence also the human spirit and its emotions"[52] It is difficult to assign one English word to translate the Greek because it has an intellectual component as well as an emotional aspect that results in activity or outworking. Joseph Hellerman recognizes this challenge and the deficiencies of modern translations. "Φρονε□ω is a distinctively Pauline word with a broad semantic range and is of major importance for Philippians. [To] emphasize the mind or the emotions only partially [does] justice to the term. In addition, it includes an intentional, volitional component,"[53] When contrasted with or used in combination with *sophia* or *nous*, Φρη□ν carries the more practical side of wisdom. "As practical acumen it is distinguished in its multiplicity from theoretical and therefore simple wisdom."[54] Φρονε□ω means "to employ one's faculty for thoughtful planning with emphasis upon the underlying disposition or attitude – to have an attitude, to think in a particular manner."[55] Therefore, Paul uses *phroneo* to exhort the Philippians (or Romans) to

---

[52] Georg Bertram, "Φρήν, Ἄφρων, Ἀφροσύνη, Φρονέω, Φρόνημα, Φρόνησις, Φρόνιμος," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 220

[53] Joseph H. Hellerman, "Philippians," Andreas J. Kostenberger, Robert W. Yarbrough, eds., *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Nashville: B & H Publishers, 2015), 56.

[54] Ibid, 222-23.

[55] Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 324.

possess "a common attitude or unity of thought and will that moves them in a uniform direction."[56] Udo Schnelle includes *phroneo* in a linguistic constellation through which the apostle conveys the new life in Christ Jesus. "This word describes the direction and goal of one's thinking, the 'striving and meaning' of life. The inner orientation and will of Christians are prefigured by what has already occurred in Christ, and the new being and life are stamped in conformity to Christ."[57] Perhaps Thompson and Longenecker come closest to the breadth of the word. "[Paul's] task is to offer an alternative way of seeing reality and a set of values – a communal *phronesis* – that will produce the habits and conduct that will result in their moral formation before the day of Christ."[58] Witherington makes a similar observation concerning a communal identity and ethos as he discusses Paul's use of military and political metaphors. "It is not an accident that only in Philippians do we hear Paul speak about citizenship and the heavenly commonwealth. But Paul is not merely urging the Philippians to be good citizens of Philippi. He is promoting a heavenly commonwealth and a kind of citizenship that recognizes Christ as Lord and heaven as the central locale from which he rules his people."[59] But even here the Christ Hymn casts its shadow. He has been highly exalted, given a name. This is the narrative into which we have been enfolded.

---

[56] Georg Bertram, "Φρήν, Ἄφρων, Ἀφροσύνη, Φρονέω, Φρόνημα, Φρόνησις, Φρόνιμος," 232.

[57] Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), Google Books.

[58] James W, Thompson, Bruce W. Longenecker, *Philippians and Philemon (Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 27.

[59] Ben Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2011), 28.

Thompson and Longenecker conjoin the two mnemonic techniques of the narrative contained in the Christ Hymn and the frequent and strategic use of *phroneo*, emphasizing identity and ethos.

> Paul's prayer for their moral formation and his exhortations establish a communal ethos and urge them to participate in God's work of bringing them to completion. Their narrative provides their *phronesis,* the moral reasoning that is foundational for their habits and conduct. The community will overcome the obstacles that face them only when they are united by the story that shapes their imagination and values. The *phronesis* is the foundation for the moral formation that he encourages among his readers.[60]

When these two thoughts work together, one can make a strong argument for the centrality of the Christ Hymn, both regarding the primary theme of the book and its coherence.

Paul's first use of *phroneo* appears in his prayer for the Philippians (1:7). Those, such as Witherington, who recognize formal rhetorical features in the New Testament observe elements of an exordium in this introductory passage (1:3-11). "These prayers are better seen as something of an exordium meant to establish rapport with the audience and give a preview of coming attractions."[61] Certainly, major topics appear within this preliminary section, such as fellowship, partnership in the gospel, joy, and spiritual progress. In comparison to these, one mention of *phroneo* seems to be too subtle to have an impact. However, Paul's 'mind-set' toward the Philippians is matched by the church's own 'mind-set' toward the apostle. This is established by Paul's acknowledgement of the Philippians' gift in chapter four. Twice in verse 10, Paul refers to the care (*phroneo*) that the Philippians expressed toward the apostle. This concentric structure wraps around the main reference to *phroneo,* 2:2, 5. This mutuality of thought, emotional

---

[60] Thompson, Longenecker, *Philippians and Philemon,* 29, 30.

[61] Witherington, 13.

investment, and praxis is the bond of their fellowship (v.5) and partnership in the gospel (v.7). The very request of Paul on behalf of the Philippians can be construed as an ever-increasing *phronesis* (vv. 9-11).

The central and main use of Φρονε□ω is found in the introduction to the Christ Hymn with clear expectations of its practical applications. The "alternative perspective," advanced by Paul, finds its first test in the relationships within the church. Before he admonishes Euodia and Synteche to have "the same attitude" (4:2), he speaks to the entire congregation as this letter is read. Paul's appeal for an alternative perspective flies in the face of the 'race to honor' culture of the Greco-Roman and the pride of place that pervaded this recognized Roman colony.

This attitude is reflected in humility and a genuine concern for others. "The fundamental demand of Paul is a uniform direction, a common mind, and unity of thought and will. According to 2:5 the confession of Christ is itself the standard for the mind of believers whose fellowship is constituted by Christ."[62] Thompson and Longenecker recognize two simple rhetorical techniques in 2:1-4 to aid the memory of the Philippians. "This section is distinguished by the carefully arranged parallelism (2:1) and antithesis (2:2-4). The first strophe, with the four parallel *ei tis/ti* clauses, provides the foundation for the appeal that follows. As the use of *phron-* in the first and fourth items indicates, a community with a shared *phronesis* (moral reasoning) is his goal."[63] It is likely that Paul was not only securing the active memory of the Philippians in this section but also prepping them for the most important section of the letter to follow.

The next use of *phroneo* comes in chapter three, after three examples worthy of the word but, interestingly, never used. Why doesn't the apostle describe Timothy or Epaphroditus as

---

[62] Bertram, *TDNT*, 235.

[63] Thompson and Longenecker, *Philippians and Philemon,* 82.

individuals who possess the mind of Christ? Why does he wait until the end of his own personal testimony to once again engage the Philippians with the admonition, "Let those of us who are mature think this way"? Most likely he includes Timothy and Epaphroditus in this group of mature believes.

Even though he does not use *phroneo* to describe Timothy, the apostle does use words that clearly portray his disciple as one who exemplifies the character of the Christ Hymn. Paul describes Timothy as likeminded (ι□σο□ψυχος, *isopsuchos*) who genuinely cares for the Philippians. So, Timothy does, in fact, model the behavior of 2:1-4. Epaphroditus is also described in terms of service and great concern for the Philippians. "In recalling that he came 'close to death' for the work of Christ, Epaphroditus followed the path of Jesus, who became obedient to death. In this way Paul indicates that Epaphroditus had imitated Christ."[64] Paul's own testimony mimics the sacrificial obedience and humility of the Christ Hymn.

The most interesting use of *phroneo* appears strangely in Paul's description of the 'enemies of the cross.' These individuals mind earthly things. Their *phronesis* (moral reasoning) is flesh-bound, much like those described in Romans 8:5-7 who mind the things of the flesh. These individuals are the perfect foil for the mind of Christ presented in the hymn. "Paul has set before the Philippians two alternative ways of thinking. One takes on the mind of Christ while the majority culture sets its mind on earthly things."[65]

Paul uses two major mnemonic devices to rivet the attention and memory to the central theme of the epistle. Even though the word *phroneo* does not appear in every section of the letter,

---

[64] Thompson and Longenecker, *Philippians and Philemon*, 103.

[65] Ibid, 133.

it does appear in strategic places, either in anticipation of the central theme or in reflection upon it. The poetic narrative of the Christ Hymn, set out in a parallel or concentric structure, lends itself to ready recall. By so doing, the other sections are also called to mind.

The value of the memory in an oral culture cannot be overstated. The ability of the orator to recall his speech via mnemonic techniques corresponds to the retentive powers of the memories of the auditors. There remains the rhetorical necessity to present the oration (or, a written facsimile) in such a fashion to aid in the retention and recall of the material. The following chapter will discuss the apostle's rhetorical skills and his story-telling ability. An oration well-structured and a story well-told are more likely to be remembered.

CHAPTER 4: PAUL, THE RHETOR AND STORY-TELLER

Since the world of Paul was primarily an oral culture that continued to rely upon the spoken word as well as the receptive and retentive power of memory for effective communication, rhetoric remains a valuable tool within the repertoire of both orator and writer. Loubser asserts that "the existence of writing did not rule out an oral substratum in the text. In the manuscript culture of the first century the written word was still regarded as a superficial and secondary record of the *vox viva.*"[1] Steve Walton also asserts that "there is a considerable overlap of speech and letter as means of communication. Based on the ubiquity of rhetoric in antiquity, one may conclude that the conventions of rhetoric are important for understanding ancient letters."[2] One should also consider the likely repetitive presentation of the document within the life of the congregation to whom the letter was written. It is not only the initial report of the letter that was important but subsequent readings. What ideas within the letter carry greater weight? What sections would the congregation anticipate as the letter was read the second and third time? These questions are relevant for the oral and rhetorical understanding of the epistle. Dean Flemming acknowledges that:

> Paul wrote letters within a largely oral culture. In the Greco-Roman world, rhetoric as a means of communication was both persuasive and highly esteemed. Despite Paul's insistence that his preaching did not imitate the kind of ornamental rhetoric practiced by the Sophists of the Hellenistic world (1 Cor. 2:1-5, cf. 2 Cor. 11:6), he makes extensive use of the cultural forms of ancient rhetoric with a view to influencing the thinking and behavior of his audiences. It is only natural that he would do so, since Paul's letters are stand-ins for his own face-to-face

---

[1] J. A. (Bobby) Loubser, *Oral and Manuscript Culture in the Bible* (Stellenbosch: SUN Press, 2007), 87.

[2] Steve Walton, "Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction," *Themelios* 21, no.2 (1996): 4-8.

communication, intended to be 'read publicly to a corporate audience who use their ears rather than their eyes.'[3]

Whether in a formal or informal setting, people were accustomed to hearing rhetorical presentations.

Ben Witherington claims that "rhetoric was a popular spectator sport in the first century AD. Most persons were either producers or consumers of some kind of rhetoric, and rhetoric had long been a staple of education, at all levels beginning with elementary education."[4] Vernon Robbins differentiates the first century from an oral culture where there is no written literature and a scribal culture where writing is concerned with the copying of extant material. He describes the first century as a rhetorical culture where there "exists a lively interaction between oral and written speech."[5] Aida Besancon Spencer describes this relationship from a linguist's perspective. "For a linguist there is no gap between oral and written speech. Linguists generally agree that the spoken language is primary and that writing is essentially a means of representing speech in another medium."[6] Loubser agrees with this assessment when he asserts that "from a theory of orality and literacy we can assume that this oral mode of communication not only affected the form and style of their communication, but in an indirect way also the contents and impact of the message."[7]

---

[3] Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Missions* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 132.

[4] Ben Witherington, *New Testament Rhetoric* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 11.

[5] Vernon K. Robbins, "Writing as a Rhetorical Act in Plutarch and the Gospels," in *Primitive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* JSNT Sup50. Duane F. Watson, ed. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 144.

[6] Aida Besancon Spencer, *Paul's Literary Style* (Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 2007), 17.

[7] J. A. (Bobby) Loubser, *Oral and Manuscript Culture in the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 80.

Longenecker recognizes that "oral and written forms of expression existed side by side in the ancient world, and interaction between the two were common…In antiquity, writing was usually used 'as a help to memory rather than as an autonomous and independent mode of communication.'"[8] How does this dynamic relationship of orality, rhetoric. and epistolary convention influence one's understanding of Paul's letter to the Philippians?

This chapter asserts that Paul exhibits skill in the use of rhetorical structure and devices. The understanding of rhetoric for this discussion is that proposed by Patrick and Scult. "Rhetoric is the *means by which a text establishes and manages its relationship to its audience in order to achieve a particular effect.* This, of course, includes stylistic devices, but goes beyond style to encompass the whole range of linguistic instrumentalities by which a discourse constructs a particular relationship with an audience in order to communicate a message."[9] As this relates to the book of Philippians, the apostle utilizes these structures and devices to direct the listening audience to the key influential thought of the letter, the Christ Hymn of 2:6-11. This passage is *not just* the most theologically rich section or the most aesthetically pleasing portion of the letter. It is the *strategic center* of the epistle, linking Paul's ancillary admonitions and affirmations to this beloved congregation.

Validation of this assertion requires some preliminary investigation. Is Paul a rhetorical strategist or a simple writer of letters? Is Paul's rhetorical ability the product of formal training or

---

[8] Richard N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2011), 171.

[9] Dale Patrick and Allen Scult, *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1990), 12.

informal awareness of the surrounding social environment? Can Paul's social location be ascertained and, if so, what does it tell us about the apostle's communicative repertoire?

A second set of questions concerns rhetorical criticism as it pertains to the Pauline literature. From the Church Fathers to modern scholarship, rhetorical analysis of the apostle's letters has yielded fruitful insights and has engendered vigorous debate. Until the 20th century rhetorical investigation largely focused on Paul's use of devices in smaller, individual sections of his epistles. More recent inquiries have emphasized the formal rhetorical structure of Paul's correspondence. This modern scholarship, exemplified in the work of Betz, Witherington, and Watson, does not hesitate to use the formal language of Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks in describing the structural outlines of the letters of the apostle. Are these conclusions warranted? Do they provide interpretive insights that cannot be garnered otherwise?

PAUL'S SOCIAL LOCATION AND RHETORICAL ACUMEN

While *Sitz im Leben* refers more specifically to the immediate context of a particular text, one's social location addresses the general cultural context of one's life with its influences. Vernon Robbins states that "a social location is a position in a social system which reflects a world view, or what Peter Berger calls 'a socially constructed province of meaning': a perception of how things work, what is real, where things belong, and how they fit together."[10] Paul's social location, if determined, can inform one of his social status and accessibility to education. His level of education, in turn, can provide a window into his knowledge and use of rhetorical skills. Witherington goes so far as to say that "indeed, it has gotten to the point where some scholars

---

[10] Vernon K. Robbins, "The Social Location of the Implied Author of Luke-Acts," Jerome H. Neyrey, ed., *The Social World of Luke-Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991), 306. Accessed at www.academia.edu/9291575/The_Social_Location_of_the_Implied_Author_of_Luke-Acts

would say that the historical Paul cannot be adequately understood or evaluated without due attention to the issue of his literacy, his literary abilities, and his rhetorical skills."[11] While there are many facets and implications of one's social location, this paper investigates the relationship between Paul's status, his education, and his rhetorical skill.

These questions of social location and education for Paul (as well as the other writing apostles) seem to fall out on a continuum. As shall be seen, some scholars advocate for a high status for Paul and the accompanying access to a robust Greco-Roman educational system. This end of the spectrum can be viewed as the formal educational influence, particularly in rhetorical skills. Others approach the influence of the Greco-Roman culture from an informal, 'street level,' understanding. Either in the environs of Tarsus or Jerusalem, the young Saul could hear Stoics and Sophists arguing persuasively, following the rudiments of first-century rhetoric. In the following discussion, Jerome Neyrey represents the 'formal' approach while Schellenberg, following Deissmann, represents the 'informal' approach.

At the turn of the last century Adolf Deissmann determined to liberate Paul, the religious man, from Paul, the theologian and dogmatist, as the 19th century had predominantly ensconced him. In one respect Deissmann and Witherington agree: the man and his letters are inextricably connected, that is, how one views the man will necessarily inform one's view of the epistles (or, letters, as Deissmann preferred). Deissmann asserts, "The letters of St. Paul therefore share with their writer the fate of having been frequently misjudged…Their intimate, peculiar character – their soul – has been misunderstood. They have been regarded as treatises, as pamphlets in letter form, or at any rate as literary productions, as theological works of the Primitive Christian

---

[11] Witherington, *Rhetoric,* 95.

dogmatist."[12] With great intention Deissmann stepped out of the lecture hall of academia and presented his assessment of the apostle's world in a travelogue of his own journey through the Mediterranean regions of Paul's life and mission. Paul must be discovered in his own world. "[The] problem of the social position of St. Paul is an important special aspect of our subject, 'the world of St. Paul.'"[13] While acknowledging difficulty in defining social stratifications in the first century, Deissmann spoke in general terms of the literary upper class, a non-literary class, and a proletarian class.[14] He situated Paul in the middle class, based upon two observations. One distinguished Paul from the literary upper class; the other, from the lower, proletariat class.

First, Paul's occupation positioned him in the non-literary, artisan class. "[Although Tarsus] was a seat of high Greek culture, [Paul] did not come from the literary upper class, but from the artisan non-literary classes, and there he remained with them. The conspicuous remark of the Acts of the Apostles, that St. Paul was a tentmaker and worked as such at Corinth, is here of extraordinarily great importance."[15] Referencing passages from Acts as well as the epistles, he observed that tentmaking was no avocation for Paul; it was the means of livelihood that occupied the bulk of the apostle's day. "He was much rather a plain and simple man whose trade was the economic foundation of his existence."[16] Deissmann believed also that this arduous and dexterous activity accounted for Paul's comments to the Galatians about his 'large letters' (6:11). These large letters "are best explained as the clumsy, awkward writing of a workman's hand deformed by

---

[12] Adolf Deissmann, *St. Paul, A Study in Social and Religious History,* translated by Lionel R. M. Strachan (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912), 8.

[13] Ibid, 49.

[14] Ibid, 50, 51.

[15] Ibid, 51.

[16] Ibid.

toil…; writing was probably not particularly easy to him, and possibly he dictated many a passage in his letters while he was actually at his work."[17]

Secondly, Deissmann recognized that the apostle was not a member of the lowest, proletarian class. He offered two reasons for this conclusion. First, Paul's Roman citizenship mitigated against placing him on this social rung. "The mere fact that he was born a Roman citizen shows that his family cannot have been in poor circumstances. As a freeborn man he was socially above the slaves who were so numerous in his churches."[18] In addition to his status as citizen, Deissmann believed that Paul's linguistic aptitude placed him socially above the masses. While Paul does not write literary Greek (a distinguishing characteristic that separates Paul for the social elite), his vocabulary distances him from the lower class. "This observation [of his vocabulary] confirms our thesis that his place of origin and the place he is historically entitled to occupy are situated somewhere below the literary class, [but]…his Greek is not really vulgar to the degree that finds expression in many of the contemporary papyri."[19] Therefore, he concludes that Paul occupies a high status but not comparable to the literary class. Relative to his general social standing, Deissmann places the apostle in the large middle and lower classes with whom he finds much affinity and with whom he could easily associate without the appearance of patronization or

---

[17] Deissmann, 51

[18] Ibid, 52, 53.

[19] Ibid, 53. As a philologist Diessmann's early contributions to NT scholarship involved textual criticism. Prior to the 20th century, the Greek of the NT was considered a unique language, occasionally referred to as "Holy Ghost Greek", distinguishing it from the literary Greek as well as the popular Greek of the marketplace. With the discovery of the Oxyrhynchus papyri, Deissmann, J. H. Moulton, and others transformed the world of lexical and textual studies of the NT. The Egyptian papyri demonstrated that the language of the NT was in fact the common language of the people. It was from this foundational study of language that Deissmann turned his attention to the Apostle Paul with a similar goal of reclamation of St. Paul and grounding him in the social construct of the populace of the first century.

condescension.[20] And yet within this mass of humanity, like another Benjamite Saul, "he towers high above the masses of that epoch as a leading personality."[21]

Based on his assessment of Paul's social location, how did Deissmann view the apostle's education and, particularly, formal rhetorical training? Deissmann relegates Paul's education in a formal setting to the synagogue and the instruction of Gamaliel. Paul's style, evidenced in his speeches and his letters, demonstrate the dialectical model of his Jewish pedagogy. "In Paul's dialectic, we again see the influence of his Jewish teachers, and especially the influence of the methods of teaching and demonstrating associated with oral disputation. The letters of St. Paul being mostly dictated, the methods of oral demonstration are quite appropriate."[22] Further, Paul's use of allegory and analogy is traced to the house of instruction. "We find farther the analogical conclusion from the less to the greater, and also the conclusion from the greater to the less."[23] Yet, even here, Deissmann does not ascribe too much external influence. He insists that the apostle is indeed a *homo novus,* a man of internal, religious genius.

This genius could, however, avail himself of cultural influences around him. Without formal rhetorical or philosophical training, even a younger Paul absorbed certain aspects of the Hellenistic culture. Deissmann's understanding of Acts 22:3 leads to the conclusion that "it is nevertheless probable that the son of Tarsus spent his boyhood in the Hellenistic city of his birth."[24]

---

[20] Deissmann, 54.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid, 106.

[23] Ibid, 107.

[24] Ibid, 92. W. C. van Unnik, *Tarsus or Jerusalem: The City of Paul's Youth,* interprets Acts 22:3 as conclusive evidence that Paul left Tarsus at an early age and received his formal education in Jerusalem. His line of argument is followed by F.F. Bruce, Ben Witherington, H. Conzelmann, I.H.

His mastery of the Septuagint and his proficiency with the Greek language are indications of a significant influence of his Tarsian upbringing. Unlike the rustic language of Jesus, Paul's analogies reflect an urban setting – the stadium, courtroom, and the military.[25] The real controlling factor in Paul's cultural influence was the man himself. Deissmann asserts:

> His large soul had without learned training absorbed much from the cosmopolitan civilization of the east and west which was roaring around him, and not least from the common stock of ethics. His secular education, as we might call it, is not drilled in, but *breathed* in. He had picked up several things from the rhetoricians, he knows pithy sayings from the poets and lines that lived in the mouth of the people.[26]

Although Paul had picked up or absorbed certain rhetorical techniques, Deissmann adamantly disavowed any intentional education. "Everywhere we find not the meditated artificiality of the rhetorician, counting the rhythm of his sentences, but the natural radiation of hidden greatness."[27] While Deissmann's evaluation of Paul's correspondence as letters comparable to other first century papyri instead of epistles has been largely set aside,[28] his assessment of Paul as a middle-class artisan with limited formal education still resonates with contemporary scholars.

Marshal, C.K. Barrett. However, Porter and Pitts make a compelling argument for a formal Greco-Roman education in Tarsus through the grammatical stage before removing to Jerusalem at the age of twelve or thirteen to enter the school of Gamaliel. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, "Paul's Bible, His Education and His Access to the Scriptures of Israel," in *Journal of Greco-Roman Judaism and Christianity* 5 (2008) 9-40.

[25] Deissmann, 73,4.

[26] Ibid, 80.

[27] Ibid, 61.

[28] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor acknowledges that compared to the formal epistles of Cicero and Seneca the letters of Paul do, in fact, appear as very personal correspondence addressing very specific personal or congregational issues. Cicero anticipated and desired a wider audience for his 'publications.' "Seneca often begins with a concrete fact, but this is purely a literary device, an attractive beginning to what immediately becomes a philosophical treatise.". While Deissmann succeeded in anchoring Paul's letters in their first-century context, "today no one uses the terms *letter* and *epistle* to imply Deissmann's distinction; they are employed as synonyms. Nonetheless 'real letters' and 'apparent letters' remain the basic genre categories." *Paul the Letter-Writer. His World, His Potions, His Skills* (Collegeville, MN:

In *Rethinking Paul's Rhetorical Education*, Ryan Schellenberg evaluates the social location of Paul as it impacts one's understanding of the apostle's access to and use of formal rhetorical education. Once again, the apostle and his epistles are intimately connected, especially by those who insist upon a formal education and, thus, a formal rhetorical structure in his epistles. In a Deissmann-esque flair Schellenberg regrets that "it now seems Paul the rhetorician cloaks whatever of the man himself might yet be uncovered. It is not Paul but Paul's rhetorical strategy that our work in this realm has sought, and so, in the absence of any explicitly articulated portrait, the man behind the text becomes, by default, a strategist, carefully selecting persuasive words…to manage his converts from afar."[29] Like Deissmann, he wishes to extricate Paul the man from the proposed rhetorical strategist. There is a way of accomplishing the task without stripping the apostle of certain rhetorical devices which were accessible in the first century outside the walls of formal education.

Concerning Paul's social location, Schellenberg believes those advocating for a high social position for the apostle back into that assertion with questionable or circular logic. First, they assert that Paul's letters yield favorably to analysis based upon Greco-Roman rhetoric. It, thus, follows that he had access to a formal rhetorical education. Secondly, this kind of instruction was the

---

The Liturgical Press, 1995), 43-44. Echoes of Deissmann can be heard in Alfred Plummer's description of Philippians as "a real letter, and not a treatise, or an essay, or a homily, or anything else, dressed up to look like a letter…Its simplicity and artlessness all through is the natural outpouring of a very affectionate, cheerful, and grateful but somewhat anxious and sensitive friend and teacher, to disciples who (as he knows) admire and love him, but are in need of both encouragement and warning. *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), xvii.

[29] Ryan S. Schellenberg, *Rethinking Paul's Rhetorical Education* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 2.

unique privilege of wealth. Therefore, one must conclude that the apostle's family was among the wealthy elite.[30]

As an example of this argument one notes Ben Witherington's claim that "Paul had the motive, the means, and the opportunity to obtain these [rhetorical] skills, even in Jerusalem, and he is likely to have done so before he even took up formal training outside the home. As we shall see, his letters bear witness that he used these skills…to great advantage."[31] Therefore, reasoning from the undisputed letters of the apostle, Witherington goes on to assert that the writer of these epistles is a "person of considerable education and knowledge, [who] has some knowledge of Greek philosophy (particularly popular Stoicism) and reflects a considerable grasp of Greco-Roman rhetoric."[32] After looking at specific letters and their macro-rhetorical structures, he finally concludes that Paul "is a well-educated, articulate person. [He] was no rustic backwoods preacher rattling off whatever exhortations came to mind. To the contrary, these letters reflects significant learning, skill, organization and preparation."[33] Even before he was a preacher of the Gospel, Saul "was earnest about strictly preserving the boundaries of early Judaism but also the propagator of the true faith. This would have provided considerable impetus for [him] to become conversant and

---

[30] Schellenberg, *Rethinking*, 28.

[31] Ben Witherington, *The Paul Quest* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), Kindle loc. 1220.

[32] Ibid, 89.

[33] Ibid, 126. Porter and Stanley observe similarly that "as a Roman citizen and the son of a person with a productive trade (which probably resulted in the citizenship of his father or an earlier relative), Paul would apparently have had sufficient status and economic support to finance and facilitate his attending the grammar school," Stanley E. Porter, Christopher D. Stanley, eds., *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 102.

literate in Greek, rhetoric, and to gain some knowledge of Greek literature and philosophy, so that he could communicate well with Diaspora Jews coming to Jerusalem."[34]

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor shares this opinion of Paul's education and social position. He challenges those who suggest that Paul's Roman citizenship is Lukan fable by affirming Paul's obvious educational privilege.

> "What Paul says about his social status is also considered an objection [to his Roman citizenship]. On the basis of certain statistics, which do not derive from Tarsus, it would appear that Roman citizens in the east belonged to the provincial aristocracy. Paul, however, presents himself as an itinerant manual laborer. The postulated incompatibility is severely diminished, if not eliminated, both by Paul's educational attainments, which suggest a background infinitely superior to that of the average artisan, and his rather upper-class view of manual labor as 'slavish' (1 Cor 9:19) and 'demeaning' (2 Cor 11:7)."[35]

Witherington and Murphy-O'Connor place a great deal of weight on the presence of rhetorical structures and devices within the Pauline corpus and, thus, postulate both a significant degree of education and social status. In response to Paul's own declamation (1 Cor 1:17; 2:14, 2 Cor 11:6) and the Corinthians' apparent disappointment in his oral presentation (2 Cor 10:10), Murphy-O'Connor notes that the apostle's conscious decision not to rely upon "the wisdom of men" implies that he could have, in fact, done so and, indeed, manifests certain rhetorical skills in his correspondence, which even his detractors describe as "weighty and strong" (RSV). Christopher Forbes concludes that "what we have seen of Paul's rhetoric suggests a mastery and an assurance unlikely to have been gained without long practice, and possibly long study as well."[36]

---

[34] Witherington, *Paul Quest,* 102.

[35] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 40.

[36] Ibid, 51, quoting Christopher Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise, and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric," *NTS* 32:1 (January 1986),1-30. E. A. Judge arrives at a similar conclusion in his evaluation of Paul's critics in 2 Cor 10:10, 11:6. "The language and style of St. Paul annoyed even his own converts. His being 'an amateur' in speech (*idiotes*) was part of the problem. His

Jerome Neyrey provides a detailed argument for Paul's high social status. His argument entails three premises.[37] First, the examination of Paul's letters reveals considerable evidence that the apostle was very literate with significant rhetorical skill and some knowledge of philosophy. Secondly, the skill evident in the letters reveals a significant level of education, including progymnastic instruction. Finally, this level of education is available only to those near the top of the social pyramid of the first century. Relying on Gerhard Lenski's model of social stratification, Neyrey outlines eight levels of an advanced agrarian society. The top three levels are primarily "the imperial and urban elite" comprising 7-10% of the empire's population. The lower level of this elite group is the "retainer class." Lenski describes this class as "a small army of officials, professional soldiers, household servants and personal retainers" who serve as a buffer between government elitists and the common people.[38] Neyrey argues that Paul is a member of this retainer class. He bases this conclusion upon the level of literacy and education available to us in the letters of Paul. "It is our hypothesis that Paul was a very literate person, who knew rhetoric and even some philosophy; this level of literacy was available only to urban persons of a retainer class and higher."[39]

'bodily presence' was 'weak' and his speech 'contemptible,' yet strangely his letters were 'weighty and strong.' I take this to mean that he knew well how to make a rhetorical impact but refused to impose himself in the desired manner when actually present." E. A. Judge, "Ethical Terms in St. Paul and the Inscriptions of Ephesus," in James R. Harrison, ed., *The First Christians in the Roman World* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 368.

[37] Jerome H. Neyrey, "The Social Location of Paul. Education as the Key," David B. Glower, L. Gregory Bloomquist, Duane F. Watson, eds., *Fabrics of Discourse. Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 126-64.

[38] Neyrey, ___. See Gerhard Lenski and Jean Lenski, *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), and Gerhard Lenski, *Power and Privilege. A Theory of Social Stratification.*

[39] Ibid, __.

Neyrey categorizes ancient letters under the broad rhetorical classifications of forensic, deliberative, and epideictic styles. He, then, proceeds to catalog certain letters and portions of letters from the hand of the apostle under this rubric. While acknowledging the critique of epistolary scholars,[40] Neyrey argues that "while not all rhetorical analyses are of equal acuity or accuracy, we find ample examples to warrant the conclusion that the author of the letters …knew sophisticated rhetorical theory, both in terms of the three types of rhetoric and arrangement."[41] C. B. Puskas and Mark Reasoner arrive at a similar decision, concluding that:

> although we know little of Paul's education…it is clear, for example, in 2 Cor 10:12, how skillful Paul is in the rhetoric of persuasion. [His] stylistic techniques, such as irony, synecdoche, aphoria, and gnome, provide a special emphasis to what Paul is saying. The way Paul employs logic (*logos*), emotional appeal (*pathos*), and his own example (*ethos*) …shows that he must have had some training in rhetoric.[42]

In defense of Paul's formal education, Puskas and Reasoner also acknowledge Paul's use of allegory which he has in common with the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, Philo, and his

---

[40] Stanley Porter has taken a more cautionary stance toward the proposed rhetorical approaches to Pauline literature exemplified in the work of Hans Dieter Betz, Duane Watson, Margaret Mitchell, Gregory Bloomquist. Porter points out the following concerns: 1. There is little consensus between the results of those who utilize formal rhetorical categories. Snyman acknowledges such. "The wide diversity raises serious questions regarding the theoretical justification for applying categories of classical rhetoric to Paul's letters, and compels scholars to seek other ways of describing the persuasive force of his letters" (A. H. Snyman, "Philippians 4:10-23 from a Rhetorical Perspective," *Acta Theologica* 2007:2, 168-186). 2. These scholars cannot decide upon Roman or Greek rhetorical theories. 3. There is, specifically, little agreement upon the outline of the material included in the various proposals. 4. There is little ancient discussion of merging rhetoric and epistolary handbooks. Stanley Porter, ed., *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Porter's own assessment of Paul's education supports his likely participation in the *grammaticus* level in Tarsus before departing for Jerusalem and Gamaliel. This would not include formal rhetorical training. See Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, "Paul's Bible, His Education and His Access to the Scriptures of Israel," *JGRChJ* 5 (2008) 9-40.

[41] Neyrey, "Social Location of Paul," ___.

[42] Charles B. Puskas, Mark Reasoner, *The Letters of Paul: An Introduction* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013), 17

knowledge of philosophy. "These literary characteristics are what we might expect from an educated person in the first-century Mediterranean world."[43]

Neyrey also argues that Paul uses a variety of rhetorical devices within his letters. The effective use of these techniques indicates a level of education and expertise that could not be achieved by casual or cultural assimilation; it must be learned in a formal setting. The progymnastic curriculum prepares the student to write in a literary fashion beyond that of the scribe. While the scribe learns to write or transcribe another's thoughts,[44] the Progymnasmata trains one to create. One accomplishes this through the adaptation of various tools such as *chreia*, narrative, speech-in-character, and comparison. One interesting element of progymnastic instruction is "speech-in-character" (προσωποποιια). "Speech-in-character is a rhetorical and literary technique in which the speaker or writer produces speech that represents not himself or herself but another person or type of character."[45] Regarding Paul's use of προσωποποιια, Stanley Stowers makes the following observation:

> On general grounds even before observing Paul's specific use of προσωποποιια, the level of education reflected in the letters makes it likely that Paul received instruction in the subject. Paul's Greek educational level is roughly equivalent to

---

[43] Charles B. Puskas, Mark Reasoner, *The Letters of Paul*, 19.

[44] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor recognizes the distinction between this rudimentary education in transcription and "creative" writing. "In the Greco-Roman world all who went to school learned to write, and were trained by being obliged to take down dictation…Thus any educated person could become the recorder of the words of another provided they were spoken slowly. Cicero said on one occasion, 'I dictated it to Spintharus syllable by syllable.' Murphy-O'Connor also observes Quintilian's opinion of this scribal deficiency: If the secretary is a slow writer, or lacking in intelligence, he becomes a stumbling-block, our speed is checked, and the thread of our ideas is interrupted by the delay or even perhaps by the loss of temper to which it gives rise. (Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 8,9.

[45] Stanley K. Stowers, "Romans 7:7-25 as a Speech-in-Character (προσωποποιια)", Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (London: T & T Clark International, 1994), 180.

that of someone who had primary instruction with a *grammaticus* or a 'teacher of letters' and then had studied letter writing and some elementary rhetorical exercises…Paul's ability to read and write letters, even if not in the traditions of high literary culture, makes it almost certain that he had been instructed in προσωποποιια.[46]

Beyond these arguments from micro-rhetorical techniques, Neyrey points out thematic similarities between Paul and current philosophical schools, especially the Stoics. These considerations lead Neyrey to the following conclusion about Paul's education and social location:

> The previous inventory of Paul's compositional abilities argues that Paul's education was not "craft literacy" available to slaves, freedmen and artisans. It goes beyond mere stenographic ability, competency to copy and keep books, and compose "documentary" letters. Paul's compositional skills indicate that he was trained in "liberal studies," both rhetorical and progymnastic studies typical of the second stage of education, but also philosophy characteristic of the third stage of the educational process which was exclusively the prerogative of the wealthy and elites…Thus when we seek to locate Paul in terms of the Lenski pyramid of social strata, it seems that the minimum level at which we might locate Paul is in the retainer class.[47]

Neyrey's interest is the social location of the apostle. His assessment of Paul's education, derived from an investigation of Paul's letters, leads him to an obvious conclusion. However, like many who recognize certain affinities with rhetorical techniques, Neyrey draws back from ascribing to the apostle a formal and exclusive rhetorical education, the third and final level of a Greco-Roman education. As Gregory Bloomquist points out, "A presupposition of these [practitioners of rhetorical criticism] is not that Paul engaged in formal study and imitation of rhetorical models but that he and other New Testament authors shared basic cultural insights into appropriate forms of communication and address."[48] Neyrey seems to affirm more than cultural immersion and osmosis;

---

[46] Stowers, "Romans 7:7-25 as a Speech-in-Character", 181,82.

[47] Neyrey, "Social Location of Paul," ___ .

[48] L. Gregory Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 95.

he sees a formal education that includes two of the three levels of a Hellenistic pedagogy. The tertiary phase would have included specific rhetorical instruction for those entering governmental service or the legal profession. Ronald Hock acknowledges, with some curiosity, the reticence of modern scholarship to attribute to the apostle this formal, tertiary education. He asserts that "given the pervasive, varied, and accurate use of rhetorical forms and styles in Paul's letters…it is hard not to draw the conclusion that Paul had formal rhetorical training…[and] that [his] preaching was built on much earlier study and practice under a rhetor."[49] Winter arrives at a similar conclusion regarding Paul's education. "[The fact he was educated in Jerusalem in the Jewish tradition at the feet of Gamaliel] does not preclude his training in rhetoric, including the tertiary level, at one of the Greek schools which operated in Jerusalem from the third century B.C."[50] What Neyrey and others attribute to formal education, others prefer to assign to the natural influence of culture. This is the position of Schellenberg, to which we now return.

Schellenberg proposes an interesting hypothesis for understanding the apostle and his rhetorical skills. His assessment of Paul's social location is similar to Deissmann's. The apostle does not reside among the social elite and, therefore, does not have access to the exclusive formal education afforded the small population at the top of the social pyramid. Like Deissmann, he contrasts Paul with Josephus and Philo, fellow Jews who imbibed deeply at the fountain of Greek culture, especially its formal rhetoric. The starting point of his argument rests with those who are closest to Paul chronologically. Therefore, he notes Chrysostom's evaluation of the apostle:

> For patristic interpreters, Paul's social location was uncontroversial: he was a tentmaker. Paul was not 'distinguished by great ancestors,' observed Chrysostom, 'for how could he be, having such a trade?' Moreover, Chrysostom and his peers

---

[49] Ronald F. Hock, "Paul and Greco-Roman Education," J. Paul Sampley, ed., *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 215.

[50] B. W. Winter, "Rhetoric," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*

had no difficulty inferring from Paul's trade his *paideia* – or, rather, his lack thereof: Paul was a 'leatherworker, a poor laborer, ignorant of outer wisdom.' Indeed, in the social imagination of Paul's early readers, to be a manual laborer was, by definition, to be devoid of learned culture.[51]

He also provides Augustine's assessment of Paul's access to and use of a formal rhetorical education. Acknowledging the profitability of rhetoric (*Doct. Chr.* 4.2.3), Augustine prioritizes wisdom, which, in turn, produces its own eloquence, which may or may not resemble certain rhetorical traits. (*Doct. Chr.* 4.6.9, 10). It seems that, for the bishop of Hippo, rhetoric becomes the hand maiden of eloquence, and its presence within the sacred writings appears subtlely. As an exemplar of Paul's wisdom and eloquence, Augustine examines Romans 5:3-5 with its elegant use of climax or *gradatio.* While recognizing certain effectively used devices, he wonders, "Now were any man unlearnedly learned (if I may use the expression) to contend that the apostle had here followed the rules of rhetoric, would not every Christian, learned or unlearned, laugh at

---

[51] Schellenberg, *Rethinking Paul,* 17. One must evaluate the opinion of Chrysostom within the context of the rhetorical prowess of the renowned Church Father and his homiletic purposes within the works Schellenberg quotes. In his *Homilies on 2 Timothy* Chrysostom describes the apostle in contrast to the power and pomp of Nero as "a Cilician…a tent-maker, a poor man, unskilled in the wisdom of those without, knowing only the Hebrew tongue, a language despised by all, especially by the Italians." (*Homilies on 2 Timothy. 4.3*, accessed at www.newadvent.org/fathers/230704.htm on 29 Nov. 2017.) Chrysostom introduces this description by twice referring to the 'opinion of the multitude, and of unbelievers.' Is this the evaluation of the Church Father or the opinion of the multitude? Schellenberg leaves out the last phrase. 'knowing only the Hebrew tongue.' Surely Chrysostom would acknowledge Paul's skill in Greek and Aramaic. Margaret Mitchell provides an excellent commentary on Chrysostom in *The Heavenly Trumpet* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002). She recognizes Chrysostom's description of Paul "as a type of creative literary mosaic, [drawn] upon the biblical sources of the letters and the Acts of the Apostles, but reconfigure and recast them in the forms of Greco-Roman rhetoric" (Preface, xvii). Ben Witherington cites Chrysostom and draws a different conclusion: "Reading some of the early church fathers' commentaries on Paul's letters, such as John Chrysostom's commentary on Galatians, one becomes aware that those who lived in a rhetorical environment recognized Paul's letters for what they were – rhetorical speeches within an epistolary frame-work and with some epistolary features (*The Paul Quest,* 119). In contrast to Schellenberg's position, Janet Fairweather observes that Chrysostom, in his commentary on Galatians, recognizes formal rhetorical structures similar to those proposed by Hans Dieter Betz ("The Epistle to the Galatians and Classical Rhetoric: Parts 1 & 2," *Tyndale Bulletin* 45.1 (1994) 1-38. The possibility of a rhetorical flourish on the part of Chrysostom and other patristic exegetes is not without merit and has been argued effectively by Mitchell. Schellenberg responds to her argument in "Revisiting Patristic Testimony on Paul's Rhetorical Education," *Novum Testamentum* 54 (2012), 354-68.

him?...As then I do not affirm that the apostle was guided by the rules of eloquence, so I do not deny that his wisdom was naturally produced, and was accompanied by, eloquence."[52] Schellenberg concludes that these men, both trained in the art of rhetoric, do not view Paul as the product of a formal rhetorical education. "Paul's earliest exegetes simply could not imagine a tentmaker with rhetorical training…[H]is letters sounded more like rhetoric of the heart' than the careful compositions of an educated orator."[53]

So, what is to be made of Chrysostom's and Augustine's frequent references to rhetorical devices within the Pauline corpus? Schellenberg's answer is two-fold. First, their recognition reveals more of the exegetes' familiarity with formal rhetoric than the apostle. Kelber seems to agree that "theologians of the stature of Ambrose, Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Methodius, among many others, could well appreciate the Pauline letters as rhetorical pieces because these men were rhetorically trained and practicing rhetoricians themselves."[54] Secondly, rhetoric as a social or cultural construct predates any codification of regulatory principles.[55] This

---

[52] Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine, in Four Books* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 4.7.11. Accessed at ntslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/Augustine%20doctrine.pdf on 2/8/18.

[53] Schellenberg, 5. In another monograph Schellenberg gives more detail and observations from additional patristic scholars. See Ryan S. Schellenberg, "Revisiting Patristic Testimony on Paul's Rhetorical Education," *Novum Testamentum* 54 (2012), 354-68.

[54] Werner H. Kelber, "Biblical Hermeneutics and the Ancient Art of Communication: A Response," Lou H. Silberman, ed., *Semeia* 39 (1986), 99.

[55] Schellenberg, "Revisiting," 367. Steven DiMattei makes a similar observation concerning Chrysostom's rhetorical understanding of Galatians: Such claims tell us less about what Paul meant than they do about the apologetic and hermeneutical agenda of early Christian exegetes as they vied to defend Paul's scriptural hermeneutic from contending "heretical" positions. Furthermore, such claims also continue to construe Paul's use of Scripture through an anachronistic a posteriori Christian hermeneutical and theological grid that ends up divorcing Paul from his Jewish context and from other Jewish hermeneutical practices of the first century. Steven DiMattei, "Biblical Narratives," Stanley E. Porter, Christopher D. Stanley, *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 61.

coheres with Aristotle's own preface to his project in *Rhetoric* – "to observe and theorize the reasons why speakers succeed in persuasion (1.1). Aristotle takes for granted that rhetoric is, "to a certain extent, within the knowledge of all people. (1.1 [trans. Kennedy])."[56]

From this starting point, Schellenberg proposes that Paul was not the product of a formal education but rather a pervasive culture. He asserts that

> [Rhetorical elements and even rhetorical strategies] found in Paul's letters derive not from formal education but from informal socialization…[It] is not only or even primarily formal training that instills in speakers conventional patterns of language use. On the contrary, participation in particular speech communities necessarily involves and indeed inculcates competence in conventional 'ways of speaking' – that is, the ability appropriately to use established genres, forms, tropes, and figures. 'Communicative competence,' therefore, requires mastery not only of grammar but also of 'a repertoire of speech acts' – in other words, the ability to utilize what I will refer to as informal rhetoric.[57]

Schellenberg's development of Paul's informal rhetoric borrows heavily from George Kennedy's idea of traditional or natural rhetoric.

While acknowledging indebtedness to the Greeks for their conceptualization of rhetorical devices and strategies and labeling their approach as classical rhetorical theory, Kennedy affirms that "rhetoric is a historical phenomenon and differs somewhat from culture to culture, more in matters of arrangement than in basic devices of invention."[58] In contrast to limited formal rhetoric, Kennedy asserts that "there are a number of informal rhetorical features that are, if not universal, at least ubiquitous, recurring, albeit with local variation in usage and meaning, across a range of societies."[59] In Schellenberg's proposal, this idea of informal or natural rhetoric brings Paul down

---

[56] Schellenberg, *Rethinking,* 188.

[57] Ibid, 6.

[58] George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 8.

from the lofty pinnacle of the social elite with their privileged access to formal rhetorical training and places him in the appropriate stratum of menial artisans, the expected location for a tentmaker. He proposes that "like many other such speakers, Paul learned rhetoric not as curriculum but as informal social practice."[60]

To demonstrate the validity of Kennedy's claim of natural rhetoric and its impact on Pauline studies, Schellenberg selects multiple comparators from various cultures and times. His criteria for selection are an obvious lack of rhetorical education, a persuasive oratorical skill, and the use of some of the tropes found in Pauline literature, especially in 2 Cor 10-13. One of these comparators is the 18th century Iroquois Sagoyewatha, or Red Jacket.[61]

Schellenberg's thesis challenges the necessary connection between Paul's use of rhetoric and a formal rhetorical education. Secondarily, he demonstrates that Paul's use of rhetoric should be described "by the means of the theoretical category of informal rhetoric. Finally, Schellenberg locates Paul's voice, understood as "the discursive dispositions, correlative of his social location but also distinctly his own, that characterize his letters as artifacts of social practice. Paul's voice comes from Paul's body; Paul's body inhabits a particular social location, and it does so in its own peculiar way."[62]

Schellenberg proposes a logical approach to his diachronic comparisons between Paul and other 'orators.' First, the speeches of Red Jacket demonstrate a level of rhetorical effectiveness

---

[59] Schellenberg, *Rethinking,* 6.

[60] Ibid, 186.

[61] Ibid, 11.

[62] Ibid, 12, 13.

and the presence of certain rhetorical devices. Historical accounts by Europeans trained in rhetoric acknowledge that his speeches are favorably compared to those with formal training. This oratorical skill was not unique to Red Jacket. For example, "Thomas Jefferson famously praised Native American 'eminence in oratory,' singling out Logan's speech to Lord Dunmore: 'I may challenge the whole orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, and any more eminent orator, if Europe has furnished more eminent, to produce a single passage, superior to the speech of Logan.'"[63] Secondly, Red Jacket possesses no formal rhetorical education. Therefore, Schellenberg concludes that his ability must be accounted for as the result of informal rhetoric. If this is true for Red Jacket, then Paul's rhetorical ability can likewise be ascribed to informal rather than formal rhetoric. Through this comparison, [space is created] "for an analysis of the rhetoric of both Paul and Red Jacket on their own terms, without assuming that formal Greco-Roman rhetorical categories best describe their arts of persuasion."[64]

It is not just the general tenor of Native Americans' oratory (Red Jacket in particular) which attracts the attention of Schellenberg. He also notices the presence of rhetorical devices which are observed in Paul second letter to the Corinthians, especially chapters 10-13.

> I [identify] four ways in which Paul's rhetoric does correspond to what was recommended and practiced among ancient orators. First, with regard to what later became known as *periautologia*, Paul evidently shares his contemporaries' belief that it is better to be praised by others than to praise oneself…Second, Paul utilizes what the rhetoricians called *prodiorthosis*, warning his addressees in advance that he is about to say something unpleasant. Third, Paul approximates *prosopopoeia*, by speaking in the voice of his opponents…And, finally, Paul's list of tribulations is composed in what has been called 'catalogue style' and contains numerous related

---

[63] Schellenberg, *Rethinking*, 194. Logan was an Iroquois war chieftain, whose eloquence is memorialized in the document preserved by Thomas Jefferson commonly referred to as Logan's Lament. Accessed on Nov. 17, 2017 at https://nativeheritageproject.com/2014/01/26/logans-lament.

[64] Ibid, 199.

rhetorical features: rhythm, anaphora, isocolon, asyndeton, and patterned use of conjunctions and assonance or rhyme.[65]

He asserts that these same techniques are visible in the oratorical presentations of Red Jacket.

For example, in defense of a friend accused of murder, Red Jacket uses the rhetorical device, *prodiorthosis*, which anticipates and prepares the audience for difficult or painful comments. "Altho' the matter we have to communicate with you on this occasion is of a disagreeable and melancholy nature, yet we hope will open your ears to what we shall say and reflect seriously on the subject."[66] In a similar fashion Paul prefaces his harsher comments to the Corinthians, "I do not want to appear to be frightening you with my letters"(2 Cor 10:9, ESV). This comparison leads Schellenberg to the following conclusion. "Rhetorical analysis of Red Jacket's self-defense has demonstrated that these rhetorical strategies…which Paul does share with his educated Greek and Roman contemporaries are too general and too widespread to be compelling as evidence for Paul's formal rhetorical education."[67] As a matter of fact, when rhetorical devices are evaluated along with grammatical and syntactical polish, Schellenberg concludes that Red Jacket compares more favorably with ancient orators like Demosthenes than does the apostle.[68]

Grammar and syntax as observed in Paul's epistles, especially 2 Cor 10-13, provide the greater argument for Schellenberg's assessment of the apostle's social location, or as the place from whence comes the apostle's voice. Returning to Deissmann's defense of the *homo novus*,

---

[65] Schellenberg, *Rethinking*, 201.

[66] Ibid, 217.

[67] Ibid, 211.

[68] Ibid, 311.

Schellenberg seeks the voice behind the popularized rhetorician. "Whether we like it or not, Paul's letters derive from a human subject, and thus his discourse must be interpreted as human behavior."[69] The human subject is a primary part of the rhetorical exigency of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians as he defends his apostleship. Schellenberg believes that Paul is not using rhetorical irony in 2 Cor 10-13 nor is he assuming an inferior place to deflect the accusations of his opponents and garner the sympathy of the Corinthians. Paul is, in fact, acknowledging the truthfulness of the Corinthians assessment of his person, reflected in his physical appearance and his weak oratorical presentation. The voice that is heard in 2 Cor 10-13 is a real voice devoid of rhetorical artifice. This voice belongs to a man whom Schellenberg describes as "weak and servile, subject to derision and subjugation…[he] did not occupy an elevated social location; he was not a respectable freeborn man…and his speech was rude and uncultured."[70]

Does Paul's grammatical, syntactical, and rhetorical weaknesses, as highlighted by Schellenberg, betray a street level understanding of communicative arts? Schellenberg reminds us that within the epistles of Paul we are dealing with a passionate individual who seeks to persuade, correct, and reclaim allegiances to himself and, more particularly, Jesus Christ. Or, as James Thompson observes that "one may assume that the arrangement of his thoughts approximated his normal mode of presentation. His torrential style, passion, and involved sentences bear the mark of the spoken rather than of the written word."[71]

---

[69] Schellenberg, *Rethinking*, 319.

[70] Ibid, 321, 22.

[71] James W. Thompson, *Preaching Like Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 28.

Does rhetorical training necessarily mask this passion and demeanor? Jan Swearingen believes that Paul's use of rhetorical devices is both adept and adaptable. "On three levels -lexicon, rhetorical genre, and implied audience – I propose, these letters [Romans, 1 Corinthians] cannot be wholly innocent of classical rhetorical understandings or practices on the part of Paul and the communities he addresses."[72] Peter Lampe also acknowledges that rigorous adherence to rhetorical handbooks was not the *modus operandi* of many first century orators. "According to the self-understanding of ancient orators, handbook theory and actual rhetorical praxis were two pairs of shoes. With *dissimulatio artis,* speakers even strived to conceal the theoretical model that had inspired them, so that in praxis the speeches were more flexible and multifaceted than the [handbooks].[73] David deSilva suggests that if the apostle was hiding his rhetorical ability in his Corinthian correspondence, then he was in good company. He observes the orator Dio Chrysostom making similar deferential claims. "My purpose is …neither to elate you nor to range myself beside those who habitually sing such strains, whether orators or poets. For they are clever persons, mighty sophists, wonder-workers; but I am quite ordinary and prosaic in my utterance."[74] Neither is the difference between Paul's oratorical skills and his epistolary acumen (as assessed by his enemies, 2 Cor 10:10) unique to the apostle. Cicero acknowledges this same tension between extemporaneous oration and thoughtful epistolary communication. "Often when I have attempted to discuss this topic with you face to face, I have been deterred by a sort of almost boorish

---

[72] C. Jan Swearingen, "The Tongues of Men: Understanding Greek Rhetorical Sources for Paul's Letters to the Romans and 1 Corinthians," Anders Erikssen, Thomas H. Olbricht, Walter Ubelacker, eds., *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International Press, 2002), 233.

[73] Peter Lampe, "Rhetorical Analysis of Pauline Texts – Quo Vadit?", Paul Sampley, Peter Lampe, eds., *Paul and Rhetoric* (London: T&T Clark; New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010), 11.

[74] David A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2004), 561.

bashfulness; but now that I am away from you I shall bring it all out with greater boldness; *for a letter does not blush.*"[75]

Are Paul and his letters the product of a formal rhetorical education, capable of analysis by Greco-Roman rhetorical standards? Are they better understood as non-literary documents penned by one who became familiar with both rhetorical and philosophical concepts through informal enculturation? While resolution of this debate does not appear to be on the horizon, the dialogue and dissemination of proposals have benefited New Testament scholarship. The fundamental definition of "rhetoric" is the "art of persuasion." Patrick and Scult broaden this definition to "the means by which a text establishes and manages its relationship to its audience in order to achieve a particular effect."[76] Paul Sampley observes that the undisputed letters "are rhetorical through and through, because the different letters are oriented towards future performance and try to move their audiences to live out the gospel more fully…"[77]

Most participants in this debate agree with Porter and Dyer "[t]hat Paul made use of rhetorical techniques – even some of those techniques or categories, especially of style, described in the handbooks and Progymnasmata – is not in serious doubt."[78] Witherington asserts that "rhetoric was a tool useable with the educated and uneducated, with the elite and the ordinary, and

---

[75] David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, E. Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Paul, An Introduction to His World, Letters, and Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 63.

[76] Dale Patrick and Allen Scult, *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 12.

[77] J. Paul Sampley, "Ruminations Occasioned by the Publication of These Essays and the End of the Seminar," J. Paul Sampley, Peter Lampe, *Paul and Rhetoric* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010, ix. Quoted from Matthew R. Malcolm, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal in 1 Corinthians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[78] Stanley E. Porter, Bryan R. Dyer, eds., *Paul and Ancient Rhetoric: Theory and Practice in the Hellenistic Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press), ___.

most public speakers of any ilk or skill in antiquity knew they had to use the art of persuasion to accomplish their aims."[79] Capes, Reeves, and Richards acknowledge that Paul was a capable rhetorician even though his training was not that of the elite orator. As many others, they assume that the apostle's rhetorical education occurred in the marketplace as he listened to street preachers and philosophers. As a matter of fact, they note rhetorical devices within the epistles that compare favorably with the contemporary philosopher, Epictetus.[80]

Often the distinction between a formal or classical rhetoric and informal rhetoric is the use of structural development at the macro-level and the frequency of rhetorical devices at the micro-level. While acknowledging a logical pattern within the book of Romans, Porter argues that

> the pattern does not conform to any of the established patterns of classical rhetoric. He also utilizes various stylistic features such as parallelism, metaphor, simile, metonymy, and antonomasia, to name a few. This is not to deny that Paul also uses some of the other means seen in the rhetoricians for creating and structuring an argument. But he does not do so in a systematic way that would distinguish him as a classical rhetorician, any more than any other persuasive writer of the time.[81]

This awareness of rhetorical devices parallels the insight of John Harvey, whose emphasis highlights the oral/aural nature of Paul's epistles. He catalogs multiple examples of distinctive features of oral communication, including chiasm, repetition, ring composition and inclusion.[82] It remains an important aspect of exegesis to understand the context of the community to which the

---

[79] Ben Witherington, *New Testament, An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 5.

[80] Capes, *Rediscovering Paul,* 62,3.

[81] Stanley E. Porter, *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2016), __.

[82] John D. Harvey, *Listening to the Text Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 18

text is addressed. However, there is another community that should be considered – the community of the origin of the epistle. This community may consist of one more individual, a secretary or amanuensis, or a group of co-laborers who assist the apostle in the letter-writing event.

Paul's Collaborative Community

If the apostle was present with the Philippians then communication follows a straight forward process: Paul's memory, Paul's oral presentation, Philippians' aural reception, Philippians' memory retention. (This over-simplification does not ignore the recent psychodynamics of speech-act theory or Performance Criticism. It is only intended for contrast purposes.) When Paul was absent, the act of communication necessarily involves additional elements. The most obvious one is the lector who reads the letter to the church: Paul's memory, Paul's oral presentation inscribed, the lector's memory, the lector's oral presentation, the Philippians' aural reception, the Philippians' memory retention. For the purpose of this paper, the role of amanuensis or secretary carries greater weight than that of the lector. Since this paper is concerned with the integrity of the book of Philippians and the proposal of a centralizing theme that unites the epistle, the possible role of an amanuensis may impact our understanding of these issues. Here, we are more interested in the origin of the epistle than the delivery (performance). We will look at the initiating process of Paul's memory, Paul's oral presentation, the amanuensis's aural reception, the amanuensis's memory, the amanuensis's inscription.

Calvin Roetzel notes that "a whole class of professional scribes sprang up to serve the government bureaucracy, to assist wealthy patrons in need of their reading and writing skills, and to read and write letters for the illiterate."[83] Did Paul use the services of an amanuensis? Murphy-

---

[83] Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 51.

O'Connor confidently asserts, "Although Paul composed his letters, both independently and with others, he did not personally commit them to paper. Most letter writers in antiquity used a professional secretary and the Apostle was no exception. [The fact that he used a secretary] is beyond question."[84]

There are both direct and indirect evidence within his letters that he did. In Romans 16:22, the amanuensis greets the recipients in Rome – "I, Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord." In utilizing the ability of Tertius Paul conforms to the pattern of first-century letter writers. "Employing amanuenses was a common practice in the first-century letter writing."[85] "Assuming that chapter 16 is an integral part of Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome," Longenecker observes, "here is the clearest indication in all of Paul's letters that an amanuensis was involved in the composition of his correspondence."[86] While this is the most obvious reference to secretarial assistance, there are additional indicators that the apostle as well as other biblical authors frequently used scribal aids.[87]

Sometimes the closing autograph or subscription is an indication that the author has taken the writing instrument in his own hand to verify that the letter is, in fact, an authentic expression of his thoughts. "The Greek papyri indicate that ancient letters frequently ended with an autograph statement. Whereas the letter body was dictated to a secretary, the letter closing – or, at least, part

---

[84] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-writer, His World, His Options, His Skills* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 5-6.

[85] Jongyoon Moon, *Mark as Contributive Amanuensis of 1 Peter* (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2009), 14.

[86] Richard N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2011), 6.

[87] Ibid, 8.

of the closing – was written by the sender in his own hand,"[88] Klauck and Bailey observe that the subscription did not simply include the name of the sender (as in most modern postscripts) but also included a brief synopsis of the letter.[89] Capes, Reeves, and Richards recognizes this tendency and notes that some scholars have suggested that 2 Corinthians 10-13 is a Pauline postscript to the previous nine chapters![90] In numerous letters Paul follows this cultural convention (1 Cor 16:21, Gal 6:11, Col 4:18, 2 Thess 3:17, Phlm 19). Although the apostle does not refer to himself by name in the Galatian's closing, he does seem to follow the convention of including a synopsis of his argument. Some hold the position that Paul's words in 6:11 refer to the entire epistle. However, the presence of an abbreviated version of his argument indicates that this is a true subscript, hence the only portion penned by the apostle.

The question of recent scholarship is how Paul used secretaries. In the first-century world it was not unusual for secretaries to exercise various roles in the production of letters. Karel van der Toorn notes that

> The traditional distinction between authors, editors, and scribes is misleading because it obfuscates the fact that authorship and editorship were aspects of the scribal profession. In the words of James Muilenburg, scribes 'were not only copyists, but also and more particularly composers who gave to their works their form and structure and determined to a considerable degree their wording and terminology.' [The] involvement of scribes in the process of literary production exceeded that of mere copyists. They had an active part in the formation and the transformation of the tradition.[91]

---

[88] Jeffrey A.D. Weima, "The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings," Stanley E, Porter, Sean A. Adams, eds. *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 337.

[89] Hans-Josef Klauck, Daniel P. Bailey, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 58.

[90] David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, and Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters and Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007), 73.

[91] Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 109,10.

While van der Toorn's focus is the Jewish scribal culture, Greco-Roman culture reflects the similar roles for secretaries. Pieter Botha suggests that "the scribe, the literate slave, could be used as a mere copyist, just as a means to get words onto papyrus, but more often than not the scribe was a secretary, research assistant, reader and messenger. He (or she) could even be a co-author."[92] Charles Draper also acknowledges that

> the amanuensis might be trained in rhetoric and letter writing and could participate in the writing at several levels. He might simply take dictation and prepare the letter for the writer's signature. Often, however, he might edit what was written. Sometimes the amanuensis was a full participant, or collaborator, with the named writer in the content of the letter. He might even compose the letter according to guidelines given by the person sending the letter.[93]

Randolph Richards similarly classifies the potential role of the secretary in the following spectrum of participation. He could function as a "recorder," who simply inscribed the letter by dictation, either syllable-by-syllable or word-for-word. If he served as "editor," he made small alterations to syntax, vocabulary, and style. The secretary might work as a "co-author," with greater contribution to the final version. Lastly, he could function as "composer," writing the letter without instruction by the sender.[94] Murphy-O'Connor recognizes this flexibility as well. "The secretary sometimes served merely as a copyist. Yet he could be entrusted with a slightly greater degree of responsibility. The author could permit [him] to make minor changes in the form or content of the letter when preparing the final text from the rough dictation copy."[95]

---

[92] Pieter J.J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012), 82.

[93] Charles W. Draper, "Letter Form and Function," ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1026.

[94] E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004, summarized by Botha, *Orality and Literacy,* 84.

[95] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer,* 14.

Capes, Reeves and Richards propose that the letter-writing process for Paul was considerably different than that of the 21ˢᵗ century. They argue that not only the secretary but all of Paul's coworkers who were present collaborated in his epistles. They picture a communal environment where a give-and-take discussion took place, notes were taken, and final version sent. The basis of their argument is the distinction between the overly-individualized Western culture and the "dyadic" nature of the Mediterranean world where consensus was valued. The Jerusalem council and the subsequent letter (Acts 15) provide a reasonable picture of this process.[96] Maxey concurs with this picture. "The critical point about letter writing in an oral setting is the communal and auditory components. The true import of the issue [of amanuenses] …is that communication was not experienced as a message from one mind to another. It was a communal event."[97]

Is there any evidence in Paul's correspondence that his letters were collaborative, either with a group or an individual? Particularly, does the inclusion of individuals in Paul's introduction indicate participation in the letter's composition? Sean Adams addresses this issue. "In evaluating the Pauline letters, the issue of co-authorship becomes apparent. Eight out of the thirteen letters include a co-author, with a majority of the co-senders being Timothy. Is this inclusion of other people common practice within the ancient letter-writing genre or is it particular to Paul?"[98]

When extant letters such as those from Oxyrynchus are examined, one finds few that include multiple names in the address and none that are analogous to Paul's epistles. Murphy-O'Connor concludes, "Contemporary data from papyrus letters…suggest that Paul's inclusion of

---

[96] Capes, *Rediscovering Paul,* 74-6.

[97] James A. Maxey, *From Orality to Orality: A New Paradigm for Contextual Translation of the Bible*, vol. 2, Biblical Performance Criticism (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 117.

[98] Sean A. Adams, "Paul's Opening and Greek Epistolography," Stanley E, Porter, Sean A. Adams, eds. *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 40.

associates in the address should be explained in terms of the letter, i.e. he selected them to play a role in the creation of the epistle as co-authors."[99] Was this inclusion a mere courtesy as suggested by the Church Fathers or were they included because of a special relationship with the church to whom the letter was addressed? Murphy-O'Connor disagrees. Prisca and Aquila were with Paul when he wrote 1 Corinthians. "If companions such as these are passed over in silence, it means that a relationship to the community addressed was not Paul's criterion for mention in the address."[100] Witherington also assumes that "the naming of another person in the address was anything but a meaningless convention…This means that when we are dealing with a Pauline letter where more than one person is mentioned in the address…we should probably assume that there are collaborators in the composition of such a letter."[101] If there was group collaboration as Capes, Reeves, and Richards suggest or secretarial collaboration as Murphy-O'Connor and Witherington propose, then we may offer possible solutions to questions concerning the letter to the Philippians.

Collaborative work, either with two individuals or a larger group, may involve multiple rough drafts before agreement is achieved. An amanuensis may take notes on wax tablets or parchment and offer a preliminary letter for the sender to critique. This seems to be the standard procedure with Cicero and his secretary, Tiro. Botha records this comment of Gellius about a letter from Cicero: Therefore, I am not so much surprised that Tiro erred in that matter, as that it was not noticed later and corrected either by Cicero or by Tiro, his freedman, a most careful man, who

---

[99] Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Co-Authorship in the Corinthian Correspondence,' *Revue Biblique* Vol.100, No.4 (October E 1993), pp. 562-79.

[100] Ibid, 563.

[101] Ben Witherington, *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 107.

gave great attention to his patron's books.[102] Botha also suggests a possible scenario when co-authors collaborate. "The authors may have considered the substance of the letter individually, and then gone over the general plan of what they were to compose, or perhaps suggested the style and expression which they separately chosen while thinking about the message before collaborating towards an agreed content and form."[103] Murphy-O'Connor asserts that "[we] might reasonably assume that Paul consulted his companions and, as the leader, did the actual dictation." He also argues that "there is little doubt that a single mind lies behind most of the Pauline corpus. But the differences, even between letters universally accepted as authentic, are far from negligible, and demand an explanation. Of the possible explanations a variety of secretaries and coauthors is the simplest."[104] Stirewalt also recognizes this collaborative dynamic. "The execution of the letter-event required consultation with co-workers and emissaries, and often support by members of the congregation from which he was writing. They formed a kind of temporary chancery."[105]

Within a collaborative discussion in the "dyadic" Mediterranean world, consensus is valued over exactitude of form. The rhetorical form and syntax of the amanuensis may differ from letter to letter. If Timothy serves as amanuensis in 2 Corinthians and Philippians, there are interesting parallels between the two epistles. Michael Gorman observes that "2 Corinthians is a challenging and complicated composition, addressing distinct yet related topics. Scholars have often divided the letter into two or more letters, distinguishing among the tone and contents of

---

[102] Botha, *Orality and Literacy,* 82.

[103] Ibid, 83.

[104] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer,* 35.

[105] M. Luther Stirewalt, Jr., *Paul, the Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), Kindle loc. 1033.

chapters 1-7, chapters 8-9, and chapters 10-13."[106] It has already been noted that some suggest that Timothy or another secretary penned chapters 1-9 and chapters 10-13 serve as a lengthy Pauline subscript (p. 76).

Also, a close parallel of theme found in the Christ Hymn of Philippians (2:6-11) is also found in 2 Corinthians 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 you by his poverty might become rich."

Additionally, in both letters, there is a level of intense emotion and urgency. This may have precluded the final collaborative step, which would have resulted in a more polished, aesthetic, and rhetorically refined letter. Paul was concerned about Epaphroditus' health and the subsequent delay of his return to Philippi (2:25-30). Concerning 2 Corinthians, Murphy-O'Connor states, "The effect of 1 Corinthians at Corinth did not conform to Paul's expectations; it served only to intensify the alienation of the spirit-people. The 'severe letter' occasioned him profound anxiety. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that he should have invoked the aid of Timothy in the delicate task of composing."[107]

Finally, these letters are two of Paul's most personal, although for different reasons. Compared to a well-reasoned tractate such as Romans, filled with OT references and allusions, both Philippians and 2 Corinthians bear the tone of personal intensity, which often defies clear and thoughtful structure. One can imagine the challenge facing the amanuensis or a group of collaborators trying to keep up with the apostle as he shares these very personal thoughts!

---

[106] Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 202.

[107] Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter-Writer,* 34.

The first century world was largely an oral culture. It was also one greatly influenced by the Greek culture, particularly in its development of formal rhetoric. However, for the apostle Paul, there was another key component of his world – Judaism.

Paul's Narrative Location

Where does Paul find his location in the larger narrative of Israel, as it is embodied now in Jesus Christ? Richard Hays, N. T. Wright and others explore this enveloping story and Paul's utilization of narrative to re-tell and enfold others into the story. Therefore, one may argue that the Christ-hymn in 2:6-11 serves a greater purpose than substantiating Paul's appeal for unity; it, in fact, re-tells the story and invites the Philippians into the story with multiple implications regarding their individual lives and their corporate life. Stephen Fowl makes a similar assertion as he analyses the hymnic material found in Paul's letters. "Paul's aim is to present each community with a story of its founder – a story to which they are committed by virtue of their community membership – and then to spell out the implications of this story for their everyday life and faith and practice.[108] Wright highlights the importance of narrative in second-Temple Judaism:

> The main point about narratives in the second-Temple Jewish world, and in that of Paul, is not simply that people liked telling stories as illustrations of, or scriptural proofs for, this or that experience or doctrine, but rather that second-Temple Jews believed themselves to be *actors within* a real-life narrative. To put it another way, they were not merely story-tellers who used their folklore (in their case, mostly the Bible) to illustrate the otherwise unrelated joys and sorrows, trials and triumphs, of everyday life. Their narratives could and did function typologically, that is, by providing a pattern which could be laid as a template across incidents and stories from another period without any historical continuity to link the two together. But the main function of their stories was to remind them of earlier and (they hoped) characteristic moments *within the single, larger story* which stretched from the creation of the world and the call of Abraham right forwards to their own day, and (they hoped) into the future.[109]

---

[108] Stephen E. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul: An Analysis of the Function of the Hymnic Material in the Pauline Corpus* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1990), 199.

[109] N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 114.

Judaism exerts its influence on the Apostle Paul through its narrative world and its own brand of rhetorical structures and devices.[110] DeSilva insists that one's understanding of Paul and his education must take into account "his facility in Old Testament and intertestamental Jewish traditions [and] his skill in argument not only in terms of what would come to be known as rabbinic exegetical procedures but also the kinds of argumentation promoted by Greek and Latin rhetoricians."[111] While much of the rhetorical criticism of the New Testament relies upon the classical Greco-Roman model, others advocate for sensitivity toward Jewish rhetoric. Lampe urges that:

> when comparing ancient rhetoric with early Christian literature, we need to have in mind not only the pagan Greco-Roman culture, but also the *Jewish* rhetorical (and epistolary) practice, both in its Hellenistically influenced and its apocalyptic specifications…[W]e need to observe the Jewish rhetorical and epistolary *praxis,* trying to systematize it and then compare it with the New Testament.[112]

Duane Watson makes a similar observation concerning the rhetoric of the apostle's letters. His particular admonition addresses those who wish to ascribe formal rhetorical categories such as forensic, deliberative, and epideictic to the epistles. He prefers to consider the possibility of a convergence of Jewish and Greco-Roman rhetoric, producing a unique *Christian rhetoric*.[113]

---

[110] Among the more obvious traces of Jewish influence within Paul's letters, according to Ebel, are the writing of advisory letters, which include the adapted 'peace greeting,' as well as various exegetical methods such as Qal Wa-homer, Gezerah shavah, midrash-like exegesis. Eva Ebel, "The Life of Paul," in Oda Wischmeyer, ed., *Paul: Life, Setting, Work, Letters,* 77. Porter recognizes Jewish influence in the Pauline corpus as well, adding that these rabbinic forms may have very well been adaptations of Greek rhetorical strategies. Stanley Porter, *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2016).

[111] David A. deSilva, *Introduction,* 478.

[112] Matthew R. Malcolm, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal in 1 Corinthians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 5.

[113] Malcolm, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal*, 6.

Malcolm nuances this relationship between Jewish and Greco-Roman rhetoric differently. While Paul uses aspects of Jewish and Greco-Roman rhetoric, he subjugates them as servants to a greater end, *kerygma.* Speaking of 1 Corinthians, Malcolm "proposes that the macro-structure of the letter evidences the innovative compositional impact of Paul's *kerygma.* The movement of the letter body from 'cross' to 'resurrection' exemplifies the early Christian interest in identifying believers with Christ's passion, which was itself interpreted with the Jewish conceptual motif of divine reversal."[114] Kenneth Bailey makes similar proposals in his commentary on 1 Corinthians. "Paul, as a trained rabbinic scholar, would have memorized at least most of the Torah and the Prophets. [Being] familiar with the various literary styles developed by the writing prophets, Paul fell back on his own sacred literary heritage in the Hebrew prophets" and their rhetorical patterns.[115]

The dynamic between the controlling narrative of Jewish identity and the rhetorical constructs used to convey this narrative provides the background of New Testament rhetoric, especially Paul's use of rhetoric and narrative. One particular device brings the storyline and the presentation together most effectively. Rhetoric and oral/aural principles serve the greater purpose

---

[114] Malcolm, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal ,* 6.. Wright makes a similar claim regarding Paul's use of Greco-Roman thought and rhetoric: [We] may propose…that what Paul thought he was doing was offering an essentially *Jewish* message to the *pagan* world…There is no sense that one would have to abandon Jewish and biblical categories in order to have something to say to the wider world. It is a central part of Israel's scriptures that the God of Israel intends to summon the nations of the world to worship and serve him…This doesn't mean that he refused to make use of [themes and categories of pagan thought]. Indeed, he revels in the fact that he can pick up all kinds of things from his surrounding culture and make them serve his purposes. Paul can both confront pagan culture and adapt pagan culture. Paul's determination to 'take every thought prisoner and make it obey the Messiah' is not a cavalier attitude but is based on Paul's robust creational monotheism: all the wisdom of the world belongs to Jesus the Messiah in the first place, so any flickers or glimmers of light, anywhere in the world, are to be used and indeed celebrated within the exposition of the gospel. N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 200-1.

[115] Kenneth E. Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), 34.

of conveying either the big story or a smaller slice of the metanarrative. Witherington speaks of this construct as the "V" narrative pattern.[116] This pattern is found in much of the Old Testament. Israel's identity is most powerfully captured in its descend into Egyptian slavery and its subsequent deliverance. This national history is acted out personally in the lives of its patriarchs, particularly Jacob and Joseph. This narrative pattern frames the disciplinary actions of Yahweh in the Babylonian captivity and eventual return. The following chapter discusses this narrative with greater detail in reference to the Cross as the nadir of the ultimate or overarching "V" narrative of God's redemptive work. As shall be demonstrated in the following chapter, this "V" narrative or motif of divine reversal follows the rhetorical principle of parallelism or chiasmus. Brad McCoy defines chiasmus as "the use of inverted parallelism of form and/or content which moves toward and away from a strategic central component."[117] While many acknowledge (or, question) the ubiquity of chiasmus as asserted by some, this rhetorical device fits the national narrative of Israel.

N. T. Wright also recognizes this foundational narrative which governs Paul's place in his world.

> For Paul, to be 'in the Messiah,' to belong to the Messiah's body, meant embracing an identity rooted in Judaism, lived out in the Hellenistic world, and placing a counter-claim against Caesar's aspiration to world domination, while being both more and less than a simple combination of elements from within those three…[T]his world could be described in terms of its multiple overlapping and sometimes competing *narratives.*
> [118]

---

[116] Ben Witherington, *Paul's Narrative Thought World* (Louisville, KY: Westminster-John Knox, 1994), 95.

[117] Brad McCoy, "Chiasmus: An Important Structural Device Commonly Found in Biblical Literature," *CTS Journal* Vol. 9/2 (F2003), 18-34. Accessed at chafer.nextmeta.com/files/v9n2_2chiasmus.pdf.

[118] N. T. Wright, *Paul, in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 9.

It is not just any narrative but as Wright notes "it is a *story in search of an ending.*" As such, and "if Israel's God was indeed faithful, then the story could not simply collapse, implode, or self-destruct."[119]

Anthony Thiselton acknowledges this power of Jewish narrative. "Successive generations of God's people, even if separated in time and place, perceive themselves as taking their stand and as staking their identity through *sharing in the same narrative,* and through the recital and retelling of the same founding events."[120] These narratives not only compete and overlap in their content but also in communicative methodology. Witherington acknowledges this overlap.

> It is not true that this Story amounts simply to Paul's appropriating the narratives or even the nonnarrative portions of the Hebrew scriptures. Although these scriptures are in many ways the primary source of, and resource for, this Story, it also involves elements from other traditions (Jewish, Greco-Roman, Christian), elements of logic, and perhaps most important, elements drawn from Paul's own and other Christians' experiences of God in Christ….For Paul, Christ is the central and most crucial character in the human drama, and everything Paul says about all other aspects of the Story is colored and affected by this conviction.[121]

One should expect both Jewish and Greco-Roman rhetorical devices within the New Testament.

This is especially true when one encounters narrative material outside the Gospels and Acts. Paul's use of narratival material within epistolary documents should raise certain questions. What is the purpose of this narrative? Does it stand alone, or does it induce echoes or allusions to a broader story? How does this narrative material connect with the rest of the document? Is narrative more effective in an oral/aural culture? Can it serve as an anchor or hook for the more didactic material? Can the observations of Greidanus concerning narration also be applied to

---

[119] N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 109.

[120] As quoted in Malcolm, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal,* 8.

[121] Witherington, *Paul's Narrative Thought World,* 3.

epistolary material? "When the narrator slows the pace by lengthy quotations, stylized speech, or detailed description, he may be providing a clue as to what he considered important."[122]

Witherington insists that the Story is foundational for "*all* Paul's ideas, all his arguments, all his practical advice, all his social arrangements…Paul's thought, including both theology and ethics, is grounded in a grand narrative and in a story that has continued to develop out of that narrative."[123] Wright also affirms the integral part this narrative plays in the life and ministry of the apostle. "Any narrative analysis of the letters he would write as Paul the apostle has to begin with a proper understanding of the stories in which he had lived all his life."[124] If Witherington and Wright are correct, then any glimpses of this narrative should be given precedence and primacy in understanding the overall structure of the document in which they are found. Also, if eloquence (and rhetoric) is the servant of wisdom as Augustine suggests, then rhetorical structure should reflect the importance of the narrative section.

With multiple questions still on the table and little resolution concerning specific elements of Paul's social location, what conclusions provide a way forward as consideration is given to a central and cohesive theme for the Philippian epistle? If the first-century world was still an orally/aurally rich environment, then rhetoric was an art of speech and hearing. This also means that Paul had ample opportunity and occasion to hear skilled rhetors even if he had no opportunity for a formal education in rhetoric. There is not a clean break from oral to written communication. Stylistic flair and devices found in oral presentation are also found in written communication,

---

[122] Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 214.

[123] Witherington, 2.

[124] Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God,* 109.

especially since these written texts are read in public settings. There is little doubt that Paul located himself within a narrative thought world, defined by YHWH's actions on behalf of his covenant people. This story is radically transfigured through his encounter with the resurrected Jesus. This cruciform-ed story becomes the new horizon of this pervasive and persuasive reality.

Simply put, Paul is re-telling the story from the place of the Skull. He is able to look back with clarity as well as look forward with hope. He tells the story, lives in the story, and invites others into the story as well. Any rhetorical device that aids in the telling of the story and persuades people to enter into the story is made to serve the story. However, nothing is permitted to obscure the story, which has become the story of a cross.

The following chapter will examine the cross as the central theme of Paul's life and ministry. From one perspective, the cross is culmination; yet, from another, it is anticipatory. The Christ hymn of Philippians 2:6-11 presents the cross as the nadir of Jesus' humiliation and yet the platform of his exaltation. The hymn mimics the trajectory of Israel's history and some of the nation's most celebrated heroes.

CHAPTER 5: PAUL, THE THOLOGIAN
THE CROSS: THE MARROW OF PAULINE THEOLOGY

The previous chapters located the apostle Paul within the social and cultural context of the first century, particularly in reference to Hellenistic and Jewish influences on his worldview and ministry. The present chapter locates the center of Paul's theology, the primary framework from which he addresses the challenges facing local churches. This is especially relevant to the study of Philippians.

One of the challenges in the exegesis of Philippians is the perceived fragmented or unstructured nature of the letter. This leads some scholars to view the letter as a composite of three letters put together by an editor. Others suggest that Philippians is a friendship letter unconstrained by the structural conventions of a literary epistle. Still others view the letters of Paul as fragmented due to the multiple exigencies of the local congregations. For example, Teunis Erik van Spanje proposes that:

> it is also possible that within one letter Paul, as pastor, applies the Gospel as revealed to him to a variety of difficult concrete situations within one and the same congregation. This is the main reason why his letters have a fragmentary structure. Each fragment has its own specific theological theme, and within each fragment, as a theologian, Paul elaborates that theme. In sum, *each fragment has its own characteristic discourse.*[1]

This chapter contends that the multiple challenges faced by the Philippian congregation are addressed in a uniform and coherent fashion by establishing a theological center. This core theme

---

[1] Teunis Erik van Spanje, *Inconsistency in Paul?* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 215. As the title suggests, van Spanje challenges the Finnish theologian Heikki Raisanen's view of Pauline contradictions within his epistles, especially as it relates to Paul and the Mosaic law. Heikki Raisanen, *Paul and the Law* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1983), republished in 2010 by Wipf and Stock, Eugene, Oregon.

provides the foundation for multiple paraenetic sections. Prior to proposing a central theme in Philippians, this chapter examines the center for Paul's theology in general.

The scope of Paul's theology, in general, and proposals for a centering core or theme are commanding considerations. Paul did not write a systematic theology; he wrote letters. He was a missionary and an absentee pastor who taught, counselled, corrected and rebuked congregations from a distance. His thoughts were often driven by the exigencies of the local churches. However, this need not imply a lack of coherence in Paul's thought world and theological understanding. George E. Ladd observes that:

> Paul's letters are not theological treatises nor formal literary productions but "unliterary," living, personal correspondence, written with deep feeling to Christian congregations that for the most part Paul himself had brought into being. Some scholars have therefore discounted the importance of a theological element in Paul, describing him as a religious genius rather than a theologian. While it is obviously true that Paul has not left the church a systematic theology, and he cannot be called a systematic theologian in the sense that he deliberately tried to work out a consistent, balanced, coherent system like a modern theologian, it is equally true that Paul was a theologian from his Jewish origins, and clearly tries to think through the implications of God's redemptive work in Christ as far as the needs of his churches demanded it. Therefore…we can recognize a Pauline theology as an interpretation of the meaning of the person and work of Christ in its practical relevance for Christian life, both individual and collective.[2]

Frank J. Matera affirms a similar position when he states, "Paul presents a concrete pastoral reflection on [key theological topics]. Pauline theology, then, is embedded in the pastoral responses that Paul gives when he encourages, rebukes, and counsels the communities to which he writes *in the light of the gospel he has received.*"[3] Stanley Porter acknowledges that some of Paul's letters contain a fuller expression of his theology, yet none can serve as a compendium of

---

[2] George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 376,77.

[3] Frank J. Matera, *God's Saving Grace: A Pauline Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), 7.

his thoughts. Instead, the apostle is selective in his presentations, depending on the immediate needs or issues.[4] This understanding of Paul and his epistolary work has not prevented scholars from systematizing his material legacy under the rubric of Pauline theology. Many of these approaches include a specific central theme. Thielman notes that "locating a 'center' to Paul's thought is one of the most common strategies among interpreters of Paul for making sense of his theology. [They] hope to find a basic concept or set of convictions that can bring some order to the apostle's…divers theological claims, demands, and arguments."[5] Schreiner agrees that the task of a Pauline theology "is not merely to reproduce Paul's thinking on various topics, but to rightly estimate what is most important in his thinking and to set forth the inner connections between the various themes."[6] Hasel also asserts that "the problem of the unity of the New Testament cannot be divorced from that of the center because the latter is customarily conceived of as the key to the unity of the New Testament itself."[7] But how does one determine an appropriate core or foundational concept?

In *Rediscovering Paul*, Capes, Reeves and Richards suggests the following rubric. A proposed central theme of Pauline theology must be:

- Integral: it finds expression in all parts of all his letters;
- Generative: it participates in – and to some degree generates – all his theologizing;
- Experiential: it results from encounters he has with the risen Jesus;

---

[4] Stanley E. Porter, *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2016), Google Books.

[5] Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 230.

[6] Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001), 7,

[7] Gerhard Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 141.

- Traditional: it is consistent with the traditions he inherits and uses;

- Scriptural: it serves as the interpretive key to new readings of Scripture;

- Theological: given Paul's commitment to monotheism, the theological center is ultimately a word about God, explaining and revealing him; and,

- Presuppositional: at times it sits beneath the surface of Paul's letters, supporting and limiting the argument.[8]

Ralph Martin offers his own tests to insure "a model of Pauline theology that seeks to be as comprehensive as possible."[9]

- It should set the sovereign design of God in his initiative and grace at the heart of the matter.

- It touches both the cosmic and human predicament.

- It effectively moves from the historical "is"-ness to the ethical "ought"-ness.

- It resonates with what is found in the gospels.[10]

Thomas Schreiner, on the other hand, proposes one simple criteria for assessing any model. Speaking of the more familiar proposals that have been offered over the past hundred years (some of which are iterations of older models), he states "that each theme fails as the 'center' for the same reason. Every proposed center suppresses part of the Pauline gospel."[11] For example, he suggests that the classic Lutheran approach of 'justification by faith' fails as a center simply because it magnifies the gift over the giver. Similarly, Martin's theme of reconciliation or Beker's center of

---

[8] David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves, and E. Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Paul* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007), 268.

[9] Ralph P. Martin, *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1989), 2.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ,* 18.

apocalyptic triumph also fails due to their emphasis on the promise instead of the One who promises.[12]

Schreiner prefers a different analogy all together. A central theme or core concept to Paul's thoughts suggest an image where 'secondary' themes are positioned in relative importance to the central theme. Certain topics are then marginalized or domesticated in order to 'fit' within the prescribed system. "We may be tempted, therefore, to erect a 'canon within the canon' in which the core represents Paul's 'real' convictions and in which other themes (which do not fit with 'our' center) are dismissed as secondary and unimportant."[13] Schreiner develops his Pauline theology on the analogy of a house, the foundation of which is God himself (Rom 11:36, 1 Cor 8:6). Other Pauline themes, such as justification by faith or his apocalyptic persuasions, "frame the house and give it detail, but all these themes depend on the foundation...Hence, the image of the house nicely captures various dimensions of Paul's theology – the foundation is God and Christ, salvation history portrays the progress…, and the theme is the gospel."[14]

Schreiner's analogy falters at certain points. He acknowledges one himself since God and Christ serve both as the foundation of the structure as well as the architect and 'project manager' of the construction of the house. Secondly, he quickly turns from the foundation to address the significance of the gospel in Paul's preaching and congregational instructions. Finally, the very nature of his analogy loses the organic and dynamic nature of the gospel. Perhaps another analogy

---

[12] Schreiner, *Paul,* 18.

[13] Ibid, 17.

[14] Ibid, 20.

will capture this dynamic nature of the gospel and its powerful relationship with other aspects of Pauline theology.

The skeletal structure of Paul's theology finds its life source in the marrow of the gospel – the cross of Jesus Christ. The functionality of the human body and it's several organs depends upon the support and protection of the skeleton. Beyond the vital organs and the circulatory system that supports each necessary part, the marrow resides within the center of the major bone structures. This central, spongy material produces at least three distinct cells which are critical to life and applicable to our consideration of the cross. The marrow produces red blood cells with hemoglobin which carries oxygen to tissue in the heart, muscle, and brain. It also produces white blood cells which fight infection and disease. Platelets assist the body in healing through its coagulating properties. Perhaps the most fascinating development in modern science is the discovery of stem cells. Stem cells produced within the bone marrow (hematopoietic) have the ability to produce another cell like itself or differentiate into one or more subsets, becoming bone, muscle or cartilage. Differentiation depends upon certain contingencies.

Within the framework of Paul's theology, disclosed within his epistles, the cross of Jesus acts as the center (or, marrow) of his thoughts. While the word "cross" appears infrequently within the Pauline material (1 Cor 1:17,18; Gal 5:11;6:12,14; Eph 2:16; Php 2:8;3:18; Col 1:20;2:14), there is a constellation of terms that directs his readers/listeners to the pivotal point of Jesus' passion: death of Christ (Rom 5:6,8,10; 6:3,5,9; 8:34; 14:9,15; 1 Cor 8:11;11:26;15:3,26; 2 Cor 1:10;5:14,15; Php 2:8;3:10; Col 1:22; 1 The 4:14;5:10), delivered (Rom 4:25;8:32; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:25), sacrifice (Eph 5:2), blood (Rom 3:25;5:9; 1 Cor 10:16; Eph 1:7;2:13; Col 1:14,20).

When Paul addresses the infectious danger within the Galatian congregation, he describes himself as an apostle "through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (1:1) and he describes Jesus as the one "who gave himself for our sins to deliver us…" (1:4). His self-identification is grounded in the cross of Jesus Christ (2:20,21; 6:12-14). The apostle reminds the "foolish Galatians" that his preaching was a public portrayal of a crucified Messiah as the only foundation of saving faith (3:1). This death is a scandal because Christ became a curse (3:13; 5:11). After his personal postscript, Paul summarizes the message of the epistle: We are either enemies of the cross (cf. Phil 3:18) or embracers of the cross (6: 12-14). It is the marrow of the cross and its various applications that alone fights the theological infections that attack the body of Christ.

When the Corinthian church begins to bleed from the daggers of divisiveness over personalities, spiritual gifts, immorality, and class distinctions, the marrow of the cross produces the necessary platelets to heal the wounds. The ground of unity within the church is not power, personality, or persuasive speech; it is, rather, in the message of the cross (1 Cor 1:10-12, 17). The corrupting influence of immorality is countered by the corrective of discipline grounded in the sacrificial death of Christ, the Passover Lamb (5:7). The unity of the Body of Christ is an organic reality, since the believer has been bought with a price (6:20). Social status with its potential divisiveness is also resolved by the spiritual status of the freed man and the bondservant, both having been bought with a price (7:23). Liberty in Christ is balanced by one's concern for the weaker brother for whom Christ died (8:11). The Corinthians have lost sight of the very foundation of their fellowship expressed in the Lord's Supper and the unity it proclaims (10:16; 11:26). As Cousar notices, "The death of Jesus serves as the focal point of arguments that affirm the unity of

Jews and Gentiles in the Christian community, arguments that face the shameful disregard of poorer members of lower social standing and address the moral sensitivity of the congregation."[15]

Like red blood cells, the cross of Jesus Christ vivifies Paul's eschatological program. He reminds the Thessalonians that it is Jesus who died and rose again who will bring with him those who have fallen asleep (1 Thess 4:14). Jesus has delivered us from the future wrath through his death (5:10). Ridderbos notes that:

> the interdependence between the 'eschatological' and the 'christological' ground motif of Paul's preaching is of the highest importance for the understanding of both. It is determinative for insight into the real nature of Paul's preaching of Christ. This has in principle a redemptive-historical, eschatological content. It is decisively defined by what has taken place in Christ, by the acts of God that he wrought in him for the fulfillment of his redemptive plan and of which the death and resurrection of Christ constitute the all-controlling center.[16]

The marrow of the cross enlivens all aspects of Paul's theology. As Ralph Martin states, "The cross remains crucial to Paul's salvation teaching both as an event in time and as related to creation's recovery and humanity's need as sinners."[17]

The historical event of the death of Jesus serves as the transformative reality to Paul's worldview and theological framework. Roy Harrisville asserts that:

> if we look at the New Testament authors, the preponderance of the evidence is not with those who argue that what mattered was that Jesus was believed to have risen – and not the circumstances of his death. The evidence is rather with those who

---

[15] Charles B. Cousar, *A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1990), 20.

[16] Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 49.

[17] Ralph P. Martin, "The Center of Paul's Theology," Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 93.

contend for the 'abnormality' of a faith for which the death of a man executed as criminal, and yet as the Messiah, assumes the center.[18]

Perhaps no one asserts the Pauline emphasis on the scandalous death of Jesus on a cross more powerfully or succinctly than James D. G. Dunn. "Jesus was Messiah as the crucified one, or he was no Messiah at all. The only Christ Paul knew or cared about was 'Christ crucified' (1 Cor 1:23; 2:2)."[19] Ernst Kasemann places a similar and emphatic exclamation point on the cross. "[T]he center of Pauline theology is fixed here, that is, in the cross; the cross is the ground and test of Christology; without the cross, no Christology, and in Christology no single feature which cannot find its justification in the cross."[20]

Paul shares the "Christological hermeneutics evident at the cross, a decisive 'paradigm change' resulting from the acknowledgement of Messiah's death."[21] The New Testament presents an indivisible unity between the death and resurrection of Jesus. However, Paul certainly emphasizes the efficacy of his death. Stanley Porter states that "Paul clearly accepts that Jesus was God's anointed Messiah, as evidenced through his death, resurrection, and exaltation…He puts an emphasis upon the crucifixion or the cross of Christ…not as a heroic event but as one that was ignominious and disgraceful…and yet a very important element in salvation history."[22] In the

---

[18] Roy A. Harrisville, *Fracture: The Cross as Irreconcilable in the Language and Thought of the Biblical Writers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 5.

[19] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), Kindle location 3690.

[20] Demetrius Williams, *Enemies of the Cross of Christ: The Terminology of the Cross and Conflict in Philippians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 16, fn. 22.

[21] Dunn, 75.

[22] Stanley A. Porter, *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2016), http://books.google.com. Herman Ridderbos acknowledges this scandalous nature of the cross as well. "For, as [Paul] himself expresses it, when it pleased God to reveal his Son to him (Gal 1:15), that was first and foremost the evidence for him that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified and had

Lutheran perspective of the theology of the cross it "was not merely the basis of human salvation; it was the basis of God's revelation in which 'true theology and the knowledge of God' alone could be found…[This perspective] declares that the cross is the starting point of authentically Christian theology,…from its center radiate statements on ethics, anthropology, and the Christian life."[23] Speaking of Philippians 2:5-11, McGrath notes that "the phrase 'even death upon a cross' disrupts the scansion of the text, suggesting that it has been added by Paul. The significant modification of this text, which now includes an explicit and important reference to the cross, illustrates Paul's concern to focus his theology on the crucified Christ."[24]

---

died and whom he himself has persecuted, was the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel. And it was this certainty, entirely foreign and even offensive to Jewish thinking, which determined his insight into the redemptive-historical significance of Christ's death and resurrection in a decisive manner." Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology,* 55. Udo Schnelle notes that "[b]y using the expression *scandal/stumbling block of the cross* (1 Cor 1:23; Gal 5:11), Paul refers to the concrete, degrading manner of the crucifixion, which identifies someone as a criminal, not as Son of God." Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology,* translated by M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), http://books.google.com. Cousar observes that "Kasemann begins his discussion of the apostle's theology of the cross 'with the passages emphasizing 'the scandal of the cross,' because crucifixion language…represents a distinctively Pauline contribution. This becomes Paul's way of underscoring not only the fact that Jesus died by means of a punishment reserved exclusively for criminals, but also that he died as one cursed and forsaken by God. Charles B. Cousar, *A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1990), 11.

[23] Alister E. McGrath, "The Theology of the Cross," Hawthorne, Martin, Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 192-93. See also Charles Cousar, where he presents Luz' marks of a true 'theology of the cross': (1) It understands the cross as the exclusive ground of salvation, with the result that all other saving events (such as the resurrection and Parousia) are considered in relation to it and all current understandings are critiqued by it. (2) It understands the cross as the starting point of theology, in the sense that it is not merely an isolates component of theology, but theology itself pure and simple, in the light of which all issues are at stake. (3) It understands the cross as the hub of theology, in the sense that from it statements of anthropology, views of history, ecclesiology, ethics, etc., radiate. Charles B. Cousar, *A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1990), 8fn17. See also Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross: Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997) where Forde contrasts a theology of glory with a theology of the cross.

[24] Ibid. The proposal of an interpolation by the apostle to a previous work was first suggested by Ernst Lohmeyer in his monograph *Kyrios Jesus* (1927/8). Morgan states: The most important contribution to the interpretation of the Christ-hymn in Philippians was and remains Ernst Lohmeyer's short monograph. Lohmeyer presented what he thought was the original structure of the hymn. It

Certain cells produced by marrow have a multipotent nature that allows them to remain as they are or to become completely different cells. In a similar fashion Johan Christiaan Beker proposes an alternative understanding of a center for Paul's theology. He prefers "coherence" over "core" in order to emphasize that "Paul's fundamental convictions express themselves as a 'network of interlocking parts' rather than inflexible doctrinal concepts; moreover, a similar awareness of the 'basic fluidity' and the 'fusion of horizons' between Paul's basic convictions and their interaction with contingent situations."[25] The convergence of the coherence of Paul's thought (universality) and the contingencies of the unique historical settings (particularity) of his letters insures that "the eternal Word of the gospel is able to become ever anew a *word on target* for the people to whom the gospel is addressed (emphasis added)."[26] Frank Thielman offers this evaluation of Beker's approach:

> Beker proposes that Paul's thought cannot be separated from the circumstances in which he expressed it either for the purpose of locating its 'center' or for the purpose of imposing a finished, systematic structure on it. His theology can only be understood as his effort 'to make the gospel a word on target for the particular needs of his churches without either compromising its basic content or reducing it to a petrified conceptuality.[27]

---

contained two parts, each with three verses or stanzas, each containing three short lines. The phrase 'even death on a cross' at the end of v.8 does not fit into this structure, and Lohmeyer adjudged it an addition by Paul himself. Robert Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology: Ernst Kasemann's Interpretation of Philippians 2:5-11," Ralph P. Martin, Brian J. Dodd, eds., *Where Christology Began* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 45, 51. Martin also notes the influence of Lohmeyer: Of all the attempts at literary analysis which have been surveyed there is none which meets with general agreement. The pioneering work of Lohmeyer probably has the least difficulty, and possibly for that reason is the most favored. Lohmeyer considered the line θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ to be a later addition. Ralph P. Martin, *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997),

[25] J. Christiaan Beker, *The Triumph of God: The Essence of Paul's Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), xii.

[26] Ibid, x, 24. See also J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1982), 10.

[27] Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 222.

This dynamic nature of the gospel must not be lost to conceptualize Paul's theology in a systematized structure. Beker observes that "the letter form…suggests the historical concreteness of the gospel as a word on target in the midst of human, contingent specificity. Therefore, the letter must be bent toward the oral, dialogical nature of the gospel."[28] This repeated phrase, word on target, emphasizes the dynamic, stem cell-like, nature of the coherent message to transform itself based upon the contingency of the situation. Michael Gorman affirms that "a cursory reading of [Pauline texts] reveals that the death of Christ on the cross is multidimensional, indeed polyvalent. Various interpretations of that death appear, constituting a 'dazzling array of colors in the mural of Paul's theology of the cross,' no doubt often linked to the rhetorical purpose for mentioning the death in the first place."[29]

Dunn also prefers this dialogical nature of Paul's theology instead of the notion of a center or core. "The problem with the imagery of center or core or principle, however, is that it is too fixed and inflexible. It encourages the impression from the start that Paul's theology was static and unchanging."[30] Hays also affirms that for Beker "the 'core' then is not a frozen unity, but has interpretive fluidity,…a steady interaction between the constant elements of the gospel and the variable elements of the situations, so that in each situation the gospel comes to speak again."[31] Dunn believes that Beker's approach is the best solution for resolving the dynamic relationship

---

[28] Beker, *The Triumph of God,* 24.

[29] Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 82.

[30] James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 20.

[31] Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3;1-4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 1.

between a stable center and multiple applications or extensions of the core message of the gospel. "The strength of [Beker's] model is precisely that the coherence does not reduce to some static formulation or unalterable structure of thought, and so cannot be easily broken by the shifting currents of contingency. Rather, the coherence is that stable, constant element which expresses…'the convictional basis of Paul's proclamation'."[32]

The letters of the apostle are dialogical, mimicking as closely as possible a face to face conversation. Other than Romans, the recipients of Paul's letters are personally familiar with the apostle's preaching. They expect to hear some consistent language and allusions. These are the coherent elements according to Beker. The dynamics of these coherent factors are translated into the contingencies of the particular situations of the local congregations. "The uniqueness of Paul's interpretive method lies in his ability to allow the true content of the gospel to be relevant to the various and particular problems – the 'contingent' – with which his churches were wrestling."[33] Beker likens this relationship of coherence and contingency to a military command center communicating with different outposts. "The symbol of 'righteousness' is proper for the situation in Galatia or Rome, but it does not meet the needs in Corinth, where 'wisdom' is employed."[34] These symbols are contingent representations of the cross, the center of Paul's "network of interlocking parts" (Gal 2:16-21; 3:10-13, 1 Cor 1:17-24).

The coherence/contingency paradigm is an appealing approach to Paul's theology. Coherence implies a multi-form center, a "network of interlocking parts." Beker proposes that

---

[32] Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 23.

[33] J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1982), 10.

[34] Beker, *Paul the Apostle,* 18.

Paul's apocalyptic of the coming *regnum Dei* is the real center of this network. And yet, he often refers to the cross and resurrection as the beach head of this apocalyptic vision. This understandable tension between Paul's emphasis on the cross and the coming kingdom of God appears frequently in Beker's discussion. For example, he asserts that "if we cannot maintain the apocalyptic of Paul as the crucial ingredient of his gospel, are we then forced to live with an abbreviated gospel…that even in its central core is subject to the contingencies and fluctuations of history?"[35] He also acknowledges that "if the abiding and ultimate signature of God's incursion into our world is the cross of Christ, and if the abiding message of the gospel concerns the cross and our participation in it, then no other center of Paul's gospel seems possible, and every other aspect of Paul's thought becomes simply an effluence from that center."[36] This tension in Beker may be part of the reason that Luke Johnson offers the following critique: The frame is sharp, but the picture is somewhat fuzzy.[37] The picture comes into sharper focus when the cross stands as the central image in Paul's theology. Like stem cells, it then displays itself as the righteousness of God or the wisdom of God or even the apocalyptic *regnum Dei.*

While systematizing Paul's theology around a central core should not necessarily imply a static or inflexible pattern, recent interpreters prefer to look at the narrative world that enfolds the apostle. It is well to remember that the world of Paul was an oral community where stories were valuable tools for communicating and reinforcing identity and mores. Elizabeth Minchin asserts that narrative benefits both the performer and the listeners. "Listeners typically find narrative the

---

[35] Beker, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel,* 65.

[36] Ibid, 70.

[37] Quoted by Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3;1-4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 7.

more engaging medium; they are interested in the onward movement of narrative (which is presented to awaken curiosity, or suspense), and they are interested in character and motivation. We find it easy, therefore, to engage with and follow narrative."[38] This engagement becomes more powerful when the listeners hear the narrative as their own story. Thompson and Longenecker recognize that "communal identity requires a shared narrative that unites the people, placing them within a larger story. While Paul places the community within Israel's story of the God who will triumph over all powers, the centerpiece of the community's narrative is the one who empties himself, died on a cross, and was ultimately exalted. This story has become the community's story."[39] The challenge for the Philippian church is to stay true to the narrative of the cross when the surrounding culture is shouting a different narrative in your ear!

Flemming notes that there is "a foundational narrative or story about God and Christ [underlying] Paul's concrete theological arguments in his letters, or as an abiding coherence within Paul's thought that is constantly interacting with the contingent circumstances of the mission field."[40] If Dunn's suggestion of dialogue to understand Paul's theology is correct, then it would help to know the underlying story within which Paul lives and interacts with others. "Although Paul nowhere narrates the story in detail, his writings provide considerable evidence that he

---

[38] Elizabeth Minchin, "Describing and Narrating in Homer's *ILIAD,"* E. Anne MacKay, ed., *Signs of Orality: The Oral Tradition and Its Influence in the Greek and Roman World* (Leiden; Boston; Koln: Brill, 1998), 57,8.

[39] James W. Thompson, Bruce Longenecker, *Philippians and Philemon (Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament)* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 29.

[40] Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Academic, 2005), 91.

conceived of God's saving work within the framework of an overarching metanarrative of God's

dealings with humankind, a story that spans from creation to the consummation of history."[41]

Based on the dynamics of an oral culture, N. T. Wright argues that a detailed accounting

of the story or a segment of the story is unnecessary.

> A small allusion to one of the major narratives of the Old Testament is usually a safe indication that we should understand the whole narrative to be at least hovering in the background…A small allusion could and did summon up an entire implicit narrative, including narratives within which speaker and hearer believed themselves to be living.[42]

Dunn acknowledges that Paul also utilized allusion and formulae as shorthand for his cruciform

theology when addressing the churches. "Formulaic or allusive references were sufficient to recall

a central theme in their shared faith."[43] For Paul's congregations, symbolic words such as death,

blood, or sacrifice carry a larger story which the apostle previously explicated in his personal

proclamation.

Richard Hays observes that "the framework of Paul's thought is constituted neither by a

system of doctrines nor by his personal religious experience but by a 'sacred story,' a narrative

structure which provides the foundational substructure for Paul's argumentation."[44] The major

events (creation, exodus, exile/return) and major personalities (Adam, Abraham, Moses, David)

provide rich fodder for Paul. From his specific interpretation of Paul's use of narrative substructure

in Galatians, Hays proposes a general conclusion: If Paul's theological exposition in this central

---

[41] Flemming, *Contextualization*, 95.

[42] N. T. Wright, *Paul, in Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 8.

[43] Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 212.

[44] Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3;1-4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 5, 6.

section of Galatians can be shown to rest upon a narrative substructure, we may reasonably ask whether this observation might be generalized to include other major passages in Paul's letters.[45] This does not occur as sterile historical facts but as the lively backdrop of Paul's own personal history.

N. T. Wright asserts that for the second-Temple Jews "the main function of their stories was to remind them of earlier and (they hoped) characteristic moments *within the single, larger story* which stretched from the creation of the world and the call of Abraham right forwards to their own day, and (they hoped) into the future."[46] Dunn proposes a layered structure where the story of God and creation is foundational upon which is placed the record of Israel, beginning with Abraham. The story of Jesus is followed by Paul's own personal story.[47] This layered narrative provides the skeletal structure within which the marrow of the gospel develops and functions within Paul's life and ministry. Ben Witherington figuratively describes this storied world as "a tune always playing in Paul's head, which occasionally we hear the apostle humming or singing."[48]

---

[45] Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ,* 209.

[46] N. T. Wright, *Paul, in Fresh Perspective*, 11.

[47] Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 18. Wright summarizes the narrative as a story "about a creator and his creation, about humans made in this creator's image and given tasks to perform, about the rebellion of humans and the dissonance of creation at every level, and particularly about the creator's acting, through Israel and climatically through Jesus, to rescue his creation from its ensuing plight. The story continues with the creator acting by his own spirit within the world to bring it towards the restoration which is his intended goal for it." N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 132. Witherington sets forth five stories which constitute the grand drama: (1) the story of God, the One existed before all worlds and made them; (2) the story of the world gone wrong in Adam; 93) the story of God's people in that world, from Abraham to Moses and beyond; (4) the story of the Jewish Messiah, the Christ, which arises out of the stories of humankind and of Israel, but also out of the larger story of God as Creator and Redeemer; and (5) the story of Christians, including Paul himself, which arises out of stories 2-4. Witherington, *The Paul Quest,* 237.

[48] Ben Witherington, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 232 (Kindle).

This polyvalent world of Paul is critical for a right understanding of his coherent theology and the proper interpretation of his communication to the various congregations. "Without a sense of the scope and dimensions of the drama out of which Paul lives and thinks, it is difficult to understand how the individual parts or details of his thought world fit together."[49]

This drama that is always running in the background now has a new center, a hinge upon which it all turns for the apostle Paul. Wright puts it this way:

> As has recently been shown in relation to some key areas of Paul's writing, the apostle's most emphatically 'theological' statements and arguments are in fact expressions of *the essentially Jewish story now redrawn around Jesus.* This can be seen most clearly in his frequent statements, sometimes so compressed as to be almost formulaic, about the cross and resurrection of Jesus: what is in fact happening is that Paul is telling, again and again, the whole story of God, Israel and the world as now compressed into the story of Jesus.[50]

Whether it is the story of the cosmos or the story of Israel or the story of the Church (or an individual member of the Church), Christ, in his cross and resurrection, is the denouement of the story. "The death and resurrection of Christ are the pivotal events in human history, cosmic events in which we are included vicariously."[51] Gorman affirms the same: Both Philippians 2:6-11 and 2 Corinthians 8:9 indicate that for Paul the death of Christ is the culmination of a story, a process that is more than the death itself. 'The cross' is an icon for Paul of the full story of Christ's becoming human, suffering, and dying.[52]

---

[49] Witherington, *The Paul Quest,* 232 (Kindle).

[50] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 79.

[51] Hays, *The Faith of Jesus,* 212.

[52] Michael J. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), Kindle loc. 981.

How does this narrative substructure or backdrop influence the apostle and his interaction with his congregations and the challenges they face? Michael Gorman insightfully points out that Paul "is always telling stories, no matter how brief they may be: stories about God in Christ, about himself, about his relationship with the recipients and their reception of the gospel, about life within the community, and so on."[53] Paul's epistles, consistent with unliterary letters, contain narrative elements such as personal greetings and itinerary plans. More than this, they include obvious narrative fragments (Rom 4, Gal 3, 1 Cor 10) and allusions which, as Wright has suggested, tease from the recipients' imagination the fuller story (1 Cor 5:7). Paul uses narrative to draw his congregations into the story of God, to build a community of co-participants, and to remind them that the story is moving to a climactic resolution. Across all these various scenes the cross casts its lengthening shadow. "Paul's goal is always to guide those to whom he writes toward a way of life, an ongoing personal and corporate narrative, that is more congruent with the gospel narrative of the death and resurrection of God's Messiah."[54]

If the cross is the center of Paul's theological framework and Hays is correct in his assessment of the importance of narrative material found in the epistles, then an appeal can be made for an interpretive model for Philippians based on the hymnic or narrative material of chapter 2, verses 6 – 11. Under the rubric of "cruciformity," Michael Gorman proposes to "uncover what Paul means by conformity to the crucified Christ, showing that this conformity is a dynamic correspondence in daily life to the strange story of Christ crucified as the primary way of

---

[53] Michael J. Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2017), 93.

[54] Ibid, 96.

experiencing the love and grace of God."[55] The rest of this chapter will demonstrate that 2:6-11 is the marrow of the book by which Paul addresses matters of unity, partnership, suffering, maturity, and joy.

This portion of Scripture has generated an enormous number of pages of interpretation and investigation. Did Paul author the passage or appropriate an existing hymn or narrative tradition? Is the background of the passage found in Old Testament themes (Adam, Isaiah's Servant, Wisdom), OT Apocrypha (righteous martyrs, Maccabees), or possible parallels in Greco-Roman cultic myths? How are the theologically-weighted words, such as μορφῇ θεοῦ, ἁρπαγμὸν, ἐκένωσεν, ὁμοιώματι, σχήματι, to be understood? If the passage is a hymn, what is the strophic structure? While these areas are important, especially in discussions of Christology, this paper is interested in the themes of humility, service, obedience, and suffering (under the encompassing theme of the cross) and their centripetal force applied to the paraenetic portions of the book.[56]

The discussion, however, concerning the purpose of the passage is pertinent to this paper's thesis. Is the text to be taken as a 'hortatory/ethical' passage or as a 'kerygmatic/soteriological' passage? Is the apostle presenting Jesus as Savior or as exemplar? This will necessarily involve

---

[55] Gorman, *Cruciformity,* Kindle loc. 71.

[56] Failure to address these critical concerns opens one up to the kind of criticism leveled at earlier commentaries from the School of Religion and their ethical idealism. Robert Morgan points out this weakness in his essay on Kasemann's critique of Lohmeyer and others who advocate for an ethical interpretation of the hymn. "This passage has central importance for the church's Christology and deserves a weighty interpretation that takes it seriously as a whole. Listing individual motifs – the paradox of humble renunciation, the factuality of Christ's humanity, his humble obedience unto death, and his new status of Lord worshiped in the cult by the whole world – does not add up to an interpretation. The commentary of W. Michaelis (1935) leaves its readers similarly at sea. The only idea he can see in the hymn is obedience of Christ towards the will of the father, and the way he works this our again fails to take the myth seriously as speaking of the work of salvation. Robert Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," Ralph P. Martin, Brian J. Dodd, eds., *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 58.

the translation and interpretation of the introductory appeal of 2:5: τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.[57] Hurtado notes that "from the Reformation on the passage had been seen as referring to Jesus as a model for Christian life. Only with the kerygmatic theology movement of this century did this view of the passage come under heavy attack."[58] The alternative translations will be covered in the views of proponents for the 'ethical' and 'kerygmatic' approach to vv.6-11.

The traditional view of the text has emphasized the hortatory or ethical understanding. The majority of translations reflect this perspective with comparable language to the New American Standard: "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." Of the fifty-eight versions on Bible Gateway, fifty-two follow a similar translation, highlighting Christ Jesus' attitude or mindset as the example for the believer.[59] The challenge for the translator is the absence of a verb in the second clause, ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Cousar notices that "the translation actually depends on the Christology of the passage. If one takes the hymn as only a model of humility presented as an ideal to be imitated, for readers to follow, then one covers the ellipsis with some form of the verb 'to be.'"[60] Witherington strongly advocates for this translation.

> [T]he only really natural verb to insert here is some form of 'to be' for the very good reason that a comparison is being made, which the *kai* indicates: 'Having among yourselves (or, 'within you all') …which was also in … The attempt to supply a verb such as 'you have' rather than 'was' is an example of exegetical gymnastics to avoid the conclusion that Paul is drawing an analogy between Christ and believers or, better said, between Christian behavior and that of Christ, with

---

[57] Michael W. Holmes, *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* (Lexham Press; Society of Biblical Literature, 2011–2013), Php 2:5.

[58] Larry Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example in Philippians 2:5-11," Peter Richardson, John C. Hurd, eds., *From Jesus to Paul* (Waterloo. Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 116.

[59] www.biblegateway.com. Accessed on June 9, 2018.

[60] Cousar, *A Theology of the Cross,* 51. Cousar somewhat betrays his own position in preference for the kerygmatic/soteriological understanding of the passages when he asserts that an ethical perspective views the hymn as *only* a model of humility (emphasis added).

Christ providing the leading example. As Osiek says, insertion of 'you have' rather than 'was' is a minority interpretation that undermines the exemplary nature of the passage and would thus force a different understanding of the whole structure of the letter.[61]

This translation fits Witherington's rhetorical approach to Philippians, which he views as a deliberative discourse. In this genre the basis for argument and admonition is most often found in historical examples with which the orator and listeners are familiar. He notes that "no historical example would be more obvious than the example of Christ himself…a paragon of a paradigm."[62] Again, Witherington insists that "Paul is mainly interested in the *ethical* implications of Christ's example. This whole discourse has a paraenetic function. The disposition desired in the converts as listed in vv.1-4 was first exhibited by the Son of God (vv.6-8). The issue here is ethics, which involves both a mindset and a lifestyle."[63]

This mindset and lifestyle set the Philippian church at odds with the prevailing and surrounding culture. This social context confirms the exemplary translation of verse 5 and the hymn that follows. Hellerman acknowledges:

> that Paul strongly resisted the "race of honors" (Lat. *Cursus honorum*) that marked social life in Philippi. The apostle recognized that a stridently Roman honor culture had the potential to seriously undermine the radically different relational *ethos* that Jesus intended for his community of followers. And so, Paul confronts Roman social priorities throughout the letter, preeminently in the epistle's magnificent centerpiece, Philippians 2:5-11. In his portrayal of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, Paul turns Rome's race of honors on its head, forcefully challenging anyone – then or now – who would utilize his power, authority, or social capital in the service of his own personal agenda.[64]

---

[61] Ben Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2011), 138.

[62] Ibid, 111.

[63] Witherington, 117.

[64] Joseph H. Hellerman, *Philippians, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Broadman & Holman Publishing, 2015), 4.

Using social identity theory, Sergio Nebreda arrives at the same conclusion concerning the purpose

of the Christ-hymn.

> The goal of my study is to assess the apostle's implicit *strategies* as well as to recognize his aims of creating a social identity based on Christ-orientation as displayed in Phil 2:6-11, which Paul himself affirms he follows (3:12,13). [Therefore], I approach the text under the premise that Paul portrayed an example of self-giving and self-humiliation as a paradigm of Christ-like identity. In this way the Philippian Christ-following community could live out the good news in the midst of a context where identity was based upon privilege and the search for honor.[65]

Paul fixes the social identity of the Philippian church within the personal history of Jesus Christ,

which is told in the brief poetic epic of the Christ hymn. Paul speaks of citizenship and its necessary

obligations and opportunities. In Phil 1:27, the apostle admonishes the Philippians to conduct

themselves, *politeuesthe*, in a manner worthy of the gospel. In 3:20, in contrast to those described

as "enemies of the cross", Paul reminds them that their citizenship, *politeuma*, is in heaven. He

links this truth to the Christ hymn with the repetition of *huparcho.* The example of the king

establishes the experience of his subjects or, as Hellerman puts, "Philippians 2:5-11 is Christology

in the service of ecclesiology."[66] Similarly but more specifically related to the cross, Demetrius

Williams asserts that "the terminology of the cross, while having great theological significance,

was also a *rhetorical cipher* for Paul. Cross terminology, as a *rhetorical* or *argumentative*

metaphor, could be used to express a wide range of theological, ethical and ecclesiastical

concerns."[67]

---

[65] Sergio R. Nebreda, *Christ Identity: A Social-Scientific Reading of Philippians 2:5-11* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 28,9.

[66] Hellerman, 106.

[67] Demetrius Williams, *Enemies of the Cross: The Terminology of the Cross and Conflict in Philippians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 3.

Ernst Kasemann championed the alternative translation of 2:5 (which is yours in Christ Jesus, ESV) and the subsequent alternative understanding of the Christ hymn, with its emphasis on the kerygmatic nature of the hymn. Kasemann, and those who followed him such as Ralph P. Martin in his magisterial work on the Christ Hymn, considered the material pre-Pauline and proposed an initial purpose within the early church. Therefore, they conjectured that the hymn was originally intended as "doctrinal, confessional, witness, and proclamation (*kerygma*) of indicative truths (rather than imperatival exhortations)."[68]

As such, the preferred understanding of 'in Christ Jesus' in the second clause of 2:5 parallels Paul's typical identification of the believer's union in Christ. "Kasemann is convinced we must treat the 'in Christ' in Paul's more technical sense."[69] Therefore, Paul uses the hymn "to show believers that they belong to Christ as Lord of all, are now 'in Christ,' and must therefore live and behave appropriately within the realm of Christ established by the events narrated in vv. 6-11. Only in this way does the passage…serve paraenetic ends, by reminding believers how they came to be 'in Christ' (v.5) and summoning them to obedience."[70] In alignment with Kasemann

---

[68] Richard J. Weymouth, "The Christ-Story of Philippians 2:6-11: Narrative and Paraenetic Purpose in Paul's Letter to Philippi" PhD diss., University of Otago, New Zealand, July 2015. Accessed at ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10523/6389/WeymouthRichardJ2016PhD.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, 138.

[69] Robert Morgan, "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology," Ralph P. Martin, Brian J. Dodd, eds., *Where Christology Begins: Essays on Philippians 2* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 62. Kasemann follows the previous work of Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel "In Christo Jesu"* (1892): Meines Erachtens muss jeder, der an die Stelle unbefangen herantritt, zu dem ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ein φρονειτε erganzen, und damit ist von selbst die locale Fassung des ἐν in einer dem Sinne der paulnischen Formel nahekommenden Bedeutung gegeben. [In my opinion, anyone who approaches this text (Phil 2:5) in an unbiased way must add φρονειτε to the ἐν Χριστῷ. Therefore, the use of ἐν should follow a meaning like that of Paul's normal formula. For a modern and concise treatment of Deissmann's argument, see Moises Silva, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 96,7.

[70] Weymouth, 138.

and Martin, Cousar asserts that "the drama of God's saving event…is intended directly to shape the thinking and life of the community (2:5). The text does not ask that an extraordinary virtue, such as humility, be abstracted from the story and made a virtue to be emulated. Rather, the whole story, including the eschatological worship of Jesus as Lord, takes on a mind-shaping role."[71]

Moises Silva adopts the latter approach to Phil 2:5, translating it as, "be so disposed toward one another as is proper for those who are united in Christ Jesus."[72] Silva also notices, along with others, that these two approaches (ethical/hortatory and kerygmatic/soteriological) are not necessarily antithetical. Is the ethical approach only interested in abstracting a moral virtue (humility) while ignoring the grander scope of the pre-incarnate Christ and his post-ascension dignity? Are there no ethical applications within the kerygmatic approach? Silva acknowledges that "much of the current discussion is plagued by false dichotomies" and quotes Morna Hooker: "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 the pattern as seen in Jesus himself."[73]

Both the humiliation and the exaltation of Christ Jesus serve as exemplary models for the believer as well as establish the culture within which the believer(s) are empowered to live the Christ-like life. Paul uses the thematic scope of the Christ-hymn to appeal to the Philippian church. The humility and obedience that led to the death on a cross and the subsequent eschatological hope via his exaltation are utilized throughout the letter to develop and/or strengthen cohesion and identity within the congregation. Michael Gorman calls this passage Paul's 'master story' and

---

[71] Cousar, *Philippians and Philemon,* 19.

[72] Moises Silva, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 97.

[73] Silva, 97.

concludes that in Philippians "the polyvalent character of Christ's story…is sufficient to address the multifaceted stories of Paul, his colleagues, his opponents, and especially the Philippian community."[74] There are both direct language and thought connections to the Christ hymn as well as allusions to this central passage, which, in turn, is anchored in the death on a cross.

Paul begins his letter by identifying Timothy and himself as servants of Jesus Christ. This is the only epistle where he addresses himself in this fashion. He introduces himself to the Romans as a servant of Jesus Christ but also adds 'called as an apostle.' The word, ἀπόστολος, is used only once in Philippians and that is in reference to Epaphroditus. Why does Paul use this singular designation for himself and Timothy? While acknowledging the ignominious nature of slaves, Hansen also sees a dignity attached to the title within the early church. This appellation was used in the Old Testament in reference to Moses, Joshua, and David. Dignity is also infused into this derogatory term with its reference to Jesus Christ (2:7).[75] O'Brien asserts that "is more likely that the readers would understand the Greek term in its common sense of 'slaves'…In a letter that gives prominence to humility it is more likely that Paul is focusing on the word's reference to lowly service than its nuance of privileged position."[76] O'Brien also notices that while Paul follows many epistolary conventions, he uses great creativity in his personal descriptions. "He adapts his description of himself and his credentials to the circumstances of each letter…and pours theological content into his greetings."[77] This is especially true in his most personal letters. For

---

[74] Gorman, *Apostle,* 491.

[75] G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), Kindle loc. 755-61.

[76] Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), Kindle loc. 1520.

[77] O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, Kindle loc. 1485.

example, the apostle pleads for Onesimus as "a prisoner of Jesus Christ" in his personal and affectionate letter to Philemon. Hellerman makes an interesting observation when considering the unique personal description and the specific designations of 'elders and deacons.'

> The two anomalies in the salutation should be taken together since they interpret one another when read against the social background of Roman Philippi. By (1) deemphasizing his own status (δοῦλος *sans* ἀπόστολος) and (2) honoring the congregation's leaders with their titles (ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις·), Paul intentionally subverts the honor culture of Philippi, where rank and titles were viewed as prizes to be competitively sought and publicly proclaimed, in order to enhance the holder's social status. Paul thus begins, at the outset of the letter, to model a relational *ethos* he will later (1) commend to the Philippians (2:5) and (2) vividly portray in his remarkable narrative of the humiliation of Christ (2:6-8).[78]

Is Paul only addressing socio-cultural dynamics within the church, which may be influencing the crucial matter of unity or, is he setting the stage for the pivotal narrative of Christ's abasement as servant and subsequent exaltation as Lord? Are the Philippians surprised when they hear Paul described as δουλος Χριστου ᾿ Ιησου and not απο στολος Χριστου ᾿ Ιησου? From the very first words of the letter, the theme of humility and servanthood is established in the ears and minds of the hearers, to find its climax in the Christ Hymn.

Having presented Jesus as the consummate servant (2:7), Paul once again describes Timothy as one who "has served (ε δου λευσεν) with me in the gospel" (2:22). Hellerman believes that Paul deliberately "portrays Timothy patterning himself after Christ, who assumed slave status for the sake of others. [It] also echoes 1:1, where Paul and Timothy are introduced as 'slaves of Christ Jesus."[79] The apostle alludes to his protégé's humility when he describes his service as 'a son with a father' (2:22).

---

[78] Hellerman, *Philippians*, 41.

[79] Ibid, 180-81.

Paul also contrasts attitudes that are directly opposed to those of Christ and constitute a violation of their true citizenship and cultural identity. While rejoicing in the preaching of the gospel, Paul acknowledges that some do so out of envy, rivalry (1:15), selfish ambition, and insincerity (1:17). These are the antithetical traits to which Paul juxtaposes the mind (attitude) of Christ reflected in his servanthood and humble obedience. Κενοδοξιαν is one of the hapax legomena (an adjectival cognate appears in Gal 5:26) within Philippians. It stands in contrast to Christ Jesus who emptied himself (εαυτον εκενωσεν) and humbled himself (εταπεινωσεν εαυτον). Hellerman suggests that "it is not by accident that the two parts of the compound (κενος + δοξα) appear in vv.6-11: εκενωσεν (v. 6) to describe the kind of self-emptying that is the precisely opposite of κενοδοξια; δοξαν (v. 11) to express the glory that accrues to God, when the self-emptying One receives divine vindication and the worship of all creation."[80] Paul utilizes κενος again in his hopeful admonition that the Philippians would "do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent…holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud (καυχημα) that I did not run in vain (κενος) or labor in vain (κενος)" (2:15,16). Paul's eschatological hope for vindication and validation of his ministry is intricately tied to the lives of the churches. In 4:1, Paul refers to the Philippians as "my joy and crown." He also designates the Thessalonians as his "hope or joy or crown of boasting (καύχημα)

---

[80] Hellerman, 130. Reumann notes that *self-interest* and *vainglory* were typical Greek vices, a mind-set and path of action *not* wanted in the church…In Aristotle, these terms are used for political intrigue in pursuit of office or power. Paul has already admonished the Philippians to live as proper citizens (πολιτευεσθε), reflecting the character of their allegiance to their heavenly Lord (1:27; 3:20). John Reumann, *Philippians: A new Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 325.

before our Lord Jesus at his coming" (1 Thess 2:19). If their lives are not lived in vain or empty pursuits, then his glorying or boasting in the day of Christ will not be in vain.

However, Paul reserves his most severe reproach not for those who pursue vainglory but those who "glory in their shame" and "walk as enemies of the cross" (3:18,19). Thompson and Longenecker, in agreement with most scholars, acknowledge the difficulty of identifying the 'enemies of the cross.' Therefore, they believe "the opponents serve as a rhetorical foil for Paul's larger purpose. Paul uses the opponents as a negative example to provide a contrast to the appropriate response."[81] Cultural identity is informed and strengthened through examples. Paul has set forth the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus, as well as his own. Each, in its own fashion, has mirrored some aspect of the ultimate story of Christ Jesus. Not only do positive examples aid in establishing boundaries for a community; negative examples provide the contrasting culture. Contrasts appear throughout the epistle. "In 1:15-18 Paul contrasts those who preach Christ from envy and rivalry to those who preach from love. He contrasts those who seek their own interests to Timothy, who is concerned for the welfare of others (2:20-21)."[82] These last groups are contrasted with Paul himself and others 'who walk as Paul' (3:18). The essence of these contrasts is one's relationship to the cross, particularly in its call to discipleship and death.

---

[81] James W. Thompson, Bruce Longenecker, *Philippians and Philemon (Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament)* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 110.

[82] Thompson, Longenecker, *Philippians,* 111.

CONCLUSION

The book of Philippians is certainly one of the most personal and least polemical of Paul's epistles. This, however, does not mean that the book contains no challenges for the biblical scholar or the pastoral exegete.

The pressing issue of the book's unity continues to occupy the attention of commentators. Is the letter a single composition penned or dictated at one time, or is it the work of an editor who compiled it by 'patching' together multiple compositions of the apostle? Running parallel to this question is that of an overarching theme. Is there a single theme which can pull together the apparent disparate texts and topics? Options have been multiplied: joy, suffering, unity, ministry partnership, reconciliation. Each of these proposals and the outlines that follow subordinates the most significant passage of the letter to a supportive role.

The "Christ Hymn" of Philippians 2:6-11 has generated a massive amount of literature. Did the apostle Paul write this section or did he appropriate an existing hymn? Is the background of the hymn found in Jewish history (Adam mythology, Isaiah's Servant, Wisdom literature, Maccabean martyrology) or Gnostic exalted man literature? With these source criticism matters, the passage also generates numerous theological inquiries. The passage holds many provocative words and phrases, such as μορφῇ Θεοῦ ὑπάρχων and ἁρπαγμὸν. ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν has generated multiple iterations of kenotic theology. Each of these phrases has produced, and doubtless will continue to produce, volume after volume. However, to address them in this paper would have multiplied the length far beyond measure.

The purpose of this paper was not to dissect this critical passage of the book but rather to consider it within the context of the book; more particularly, to demonstrate that the Christ Hymn

156

is not a subordinate text supporting a separate primary theme. It is, in fact, the superlative and central theme that provides the connective tissue of the letter and grounds the other themes such as joy, partnership, suffering and unity. The methodology to accomplish this purpose was four-fold.

Summary of the Research

After observing the contributions of various methods applied to the book of Philippians, one looked hard to find a method that encompassed the best of these approaches and applied them to the epistle. This was the intended goal of this paper. The method utilized was a four-fold one.

First, the paper examined the oral/aural nature of first-century communication. The first audience of the epistle relied upon auditory skills to comprehend and retain the recited letter. One would expect the apostle to fashion his correspondence by structure and language in order to aid the church in its aural exercise. Relying on the works of Lord, Parry, and Ong, the oral/aural dynamics were applied to the book of Philippians. Certain principles found in non-literate societies were also located within the New Testament and Paul's letters, in particular. This inquiry, being new to the writer, provided the most interesting field of study and the most illuminating insights into the works of Paul. Lee and Scott took a more definite linguistic approach in *Sound Mapping the New Testament.* While there is no certainty about the vocalization of Greek in the first century, Lee and Scott fashioned a reasoned system of evaluating the use of aural cues to aid in the comprehension for the first audience.

If there is value in understanding how the church in Philippi heard the letter, then Lee and Scott offer techniques for useful exegetical work. These lines of study challenge a contemporary scholar, accustomed to working with a written text. However, De Waal has provided an excellent

example of sound mapping in *An Aural-Performance of Revelation 1and 11.* Hopefully there will be similar treatments of more New Testament books.

Next, the paper argued that oral/aural communication relied upon memory. Platonic and Aristotelian approaches to memory can be viewed as contrasting and complementary. Plato was persuaded of the transmigration of the soul. Through numerous iterations the soul may vividly or faintly recollect the Ideas when it encounters facsimiles of these realities within its present state. The Socratic method of interrogating dialogue thus engaged the memory and sought to draw out the truth once imbedded in the "wax tablets" of the soul. This engagement of the soul and excitement of the memory cannot be accomplished by another person's thoughts on page or parchment. Plato's aversion to writing was shared by the Rabbis regarding the Oral Torah. The significant difference between the Written Torah and the Oral Torah was that one is fixed in writing and the other was fixed in memory and conveyed by word of mouth. While Paul doubtless preferred face-to-face oral communication, he utilized letters as an acceptable substitute for his presence.

Contrary to the Greek philosopher, Paul wrote with a confidence to excite the memory of his churches concerning their hearing of and participation in the gospel. In this Paul resembles Aristotle. Aristotle distinguished remembering and recollection. Recollection, for Plato's student, was the deliberate search for information previously placed in the memory and brought before the imagination once again. For Aristotle and others, the memory was typified as a dove cote or a treasure house, within which one placed information and from which one retrieved it. Order, frequency, and similarity (even dissimilarity) aided with ease the retrieval from memory's repository.

Within the book of Philippians, Paul uses familiar imagery and language to induce the memory of his beloved church and, then, implore them to action. If one desires to find the most frequently-accessed topic of Paul's dove cote or treasure house, one must consider the cross of Jesus Christ. The Christ Hymn sets at the center of the epistle and the cross at the center of the hymn. Epaphroditus' devotion and service to the point of death also reminds one of the Great Exemplar. Paul uses the dissimilarity of the enemies of the cross to excite the memory of the cross of Jesus. But memory alone is not enough; actions are to follow if the memory be true.

The action that Paul intended within the church was first a change in attitude. To this end, the apostle linked the Christ Hymn with other key admonitions with the use of the recurring word, φρονε□ω. The word-group for joy certainly appeared often in the letter. However, joy was a fruit or product of a right attitude. Φρονε□ω is primary; χαρα□ is significant but secondary.

The third section investigated the popular area of rhetorical criticism as it relates to Paul and its bearing upon the interpretation of the book of Philippians. Among scholars, there appeared to be two distinct approaches to this issue.

One school, represented by Betz and Witherington, concluded that the apostle used rhetorical skill in crafting his epistles. They demonstrated their position by offering outlines of various letters using classical rhetorical terminology. In order to substantiate their claims, they also defended a high view of Paul's social standing. The kind of rhetoric perceived within the apostle's communiques indicated a level of education only available to the upper class of Greek and Jewish cultures. This level of education was attainable by Paul's family either in Tarsus or Jerusalem. They also called upon the testimony of the Church Fathers such as Chrysostom to defend the rhetorical skills of the apostle. Jerome Neyrey argued for such an approach to Paul. They

159

acknowledged that Paul used epistolary conventions to open and close his letters but the body reflected rhetorical conventions.

The other proposal, represented by Ryan Schellenberg, argued that the apostle does not possess the rhetorical skills represented by more literary writers. Adolf Deissmann provided the foundation to this approach when he sought in the last century to distinguish Paul the theologian from Paul the mystical, religious genius. Both Deissmann and Schellenberg located the apostle below the status proposed by Betz and Witherington. As such, any formal education was limited and any rhetorical skill was likely absorbed from the surrounding culture. They did not deny that Paul's epistles contained rhetorical devices but rejected any formal structuring.

Ryan Schellenberg offered an interesting argument to substantiate his claims. He challenged the logic of those advocating a formal rhetoric within the epistles of Paul. This logic contained two premises. One, Paul's writings contained formal rhetorical structures. Two, this formal rhetoric is only learned through education. Schellenberg used a diachronic argument against this logic. He cited the historical example of Red Jacket and his speeches on behalf of the native tribes in the early days of American colonization. Thomas Jefferson favorably compared Red jacket's oratorical skills with both ancient and contemporary speeches. Yet, Red Jacket was never educated in formal rhetoric. Interestingly, Schellenberg also called upon Chrysostom as well as Augustine to bear witness to the apostle's want of rhetorical skill.

George Kennedy emphasized that rhetoric was not the unique possession of the Greeks. They certainly formalized it but, as Kennedy pointed out, general rhetoric existed in other cultures. What Kennedy called general rhetoric, Schellenberg referred to as informal rhetoric. At its heart, rhetoric is the art of persuasion and, to that end, the application of appropriate means.

A convincing structure does not, of necessity, require formal Greek rhetoric. Parallelism can provide sufficient structure to move the minds of listeners to the heart of the matter and its various implications. Jewish thought and narrative provide examples of this method, a method with which Paul is most familiar. Along with various rhetorical devices, Paul uses a parallel pattern which moves toward the Christ Hymn and away from it. In the process he pleads that the church have the same mind.

The final section of the argument addressed the biblical material in question, the Christ Hymn. This exquisite piece of Scripture, whether original to Paul or not, still reflected the heart of Paul's theology. The paper examined numerous proposals for the center of Pauline theology but remained persuaded that the cross of Jesus Christ is the marrow of his thought world.

Christiaan Beker proposed the apocalyptic triumph of God as the center of Paul's theology. Though disagreeing with Beker's conclusion, the writer found his notion of coherence and contingency effectively applicable to the cross. The cross provided the coherent center of Paul's thought and he most effectively applied this unwavering center to the various challenges faced by his congregations.

Returning to Deissmann for a moment, no one desires to turn the apostle into a cold or calculating doctrinaire. One cannot read his missives and come to that conclusion. The cross does not stand aloof; it stands in the midst of Paul's thought and his teaching. This is evident especially in his letter to the Philippians. From the center of a parallel structure the cross pulses with life throughout the rest of the epistle.

For Paul, the cross is not simply the center of this book nor the center of his preaching. It is also the center of the narrative of his life, the narrative of the Church, and the narrative of the world. Christ, in his cross and resurrection, is the denouement of God's work. Michael Gorman

161

asserts that Paul is a storyteller. When these stories appear in his epistles, they should be given weight. He also points out that these narratives have an edifying purpose. He invites or implores his listeners to participate in the story. By linking the narrative of Christ's humiliation and exaltation with the appeal of φρονέω, Paul paints a picture for the Philippians of their role in this grand epic of redemption – be joyful in suffering, be faithful, be united, be alert, be reconciled.

<div align="center">Proposed Outline of Philippians</div>

What does an outline of the Epistle to the Philippians look like if the mind of Christ, presented in the Christ Hymn, is the central theme that holds the letter together? The end-game of this structure, or any structure, is to understand the letter as it was heard in that first-century context? If this can not be done, at least the structural outline should reflect the understanding of the one who proposes it. Moises Silva makes this observation: An outline, therefore, should be no mere table of contents, but an interpretive summary of the document. And while the effort should be made to approximate the original author's conception (assuming he had self-consciously constructed an outline), the success of an outline is to be gauged primarily by whether or not it communicates clearly *the interpreter's* understanding of the letter.[83] Therefore, the present interpreter offers this outline built around the key passage of 2:5-11 with hopes that it reflects a genuine, not stilted, coherence while faithfully addressing the contingent elements of the letter.

Pre-script: Identification of senders and recipients 1.1,2

Paul's Affection and Hope for the Philippians 1.3-11

Paul's Adversity and Advancement of the Gospel (Examples) 1.12-26

Paul's Admonition to the Philippians 1.27-2.4

Paul's Presentation of the Mind of Christ 2.5-11

---

[83] Moises Silva, *Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), Google Book.

Paul's Admonition to the Philippians 2.12-18

Paul's Adversity and Advancement of the Gospel (Examples) 2.19-4.1

Paul's Affection and Hope for the Philippians 4.2-20

Post-script: Greeting from Paul's friends 4.21-23

Proposals for Applications of Research and Further Study

This paper proposed an argument for the coherence of Philippians based upon the centrality of the Christ Hymn. Other legitimate themes such as joy, unity, suffering, or the progress of the gospel were acknowledged as secondary considerations. While defending this proposal, the writer discovered valuable lessons, enhancing his own exegetical practices and outcomes. These were pleasant surprises which should prove beneficial to the larger Christian community.

First, the social and cultural context is an important aspect of proper exegesis. With continuing research, the first-century world of Paul takes on greater depth and solidity. Becoming conversant with the Greco-Roman world as well as Second Temple Judaism offers significant insight into the world and the writings of the New Testament congregations. As with so many other areas of biblical research, this background information is accessible through the diligent efforts of scholars such as Ben Witherington III, Stanley Porter, and James D. G. Dunn. The socio-rhetorical commentaries of Witherington combine two popular fields of study. The social constructs of the first century assist the exegete in understanding the relational dynamics between individuals and groups. This helps one appreciate the communication dynamics of letter-writing and, especially, the use of rhetorical strategies within the epistles of Paul. Within the developing field of Rhetorical Criticism there is a continuum between formal and informal strategies as well as a continuum

between micro- and macro-rhetorical applications. The larger Christian community benefits from continued investigations into the cultural practices of the first-century.

A better understanding of the rhetorical structures within the New Testament also aids the church's appreciation and application of primary and secondary arguments within the biblical text. The modern western mind's proclivity for linear argument must adjust to the first century's fondness for circularity and parallelism. An addition tendency of modernity which may restrict the richness of the biblical text is its preference of written texts.

The first century was a primary "oral-aural" culture, relying upon the ear as the first line of knowledge acquisition. As such, the rhetorical art of persuasion had a dual focus – how could one most effectively insure the retention of one's argument in the audience's memory, and how effectively could the argument be retrieved from the memory and replicated. The narrative preaching model, especially see in following Jesus' example in the Gospels, is but one method of capturing the first century's emphasis on the memory. The rhetorical devices within the epistles should also be mined for their power to impress the 'wax tablet' of the modern memory.

Another aspect of the oral-aural nature of the Scriptures is the reading of entire letters as they would have been heard in their original setting. While it is commendable for pastors and teachers to encourage congregants or students to follow along with the reading of the text in their own Bibles, this focuses the learning on the eye rather than the ear. This research has convinced this author that there is value in encouraging the people of God to *listen* to the text.

The modern conveniences of technology have certainly made the Bible more accessible. Pastors now read their text from an I-pad or an I-phone. Congregations follow along with the text projected on a screen. Massive libraries of commentaries and theological works are contained on

a lap-top computer rather than shelved on a wall. None can argue against this luxury. However, one wonders if our memories have atrophied due to neglect. The importance of memory and mnemonic devices are still important for retention and retrieval of information. This, in turn, is a critical element is life transformation or sanctification. There needs to be a cautionary suspicion of technology's ability to increase learning but decreases one's ability to come to the knowledge of the truth. "Let this mind be in you" will continue to be a call to retain the truth of the Gospel in one's memory and retrieve that truth as transformative power amid the contingencies of life in the 21st century as it was in the 1st century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abel, Ernest L. "Psychology of Memory and Rumor Transmission and Their Bearing on   Theories of Oral Transmission in Early Christianity." *Journal of Religion* 51 (1971): 270–81.

Achtemeier, Paul J. *"Omne Verbum Sonat* The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109/1 (1990).

Adams, Sean A. "Paul's Opening and Greek Epistolography." In *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form,* edited by Stanley E. Porter and Sean A. Adams. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010.

Alexander, Elizabeth S. "The Orality of Rabbinic Writing." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature,* edited by Fonrobert, Elisheva and martin S. Jaffee. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Alexander, Loveday. "Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians." *Journal for Study of the New Testament* 37 (1989): 87–101.

Anderson, R. Dean. *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul,* CBET 18, 2nd ed. Leuven: Peeters, 1999.

Aristotle. *A Theory of Civic Discourse.* Translated by George A. Kennedy. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

————. *On Memory and Remembrance.* Translated by J. Beare. www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/ancient-greece/aristotle/memory-reminiscence.asp.

Assmann, Jan. *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Augustine. *On Christian Doctrine, in Four Books.* Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library. http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/doctrine.html.

————. *The Nature and Origin of the Soul.* Translated by Peter Holmes and Robert Wallis. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/15084.htm.

Aune, David. *The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament Early Christian Literature & Rhetoric*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 2003.

Bailey, James L. and Lyle D. Vander Broek. *Literary Forms in the New Testament.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992.

Bailey, Kenneth E. "Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels." *Themelios* 20 (1995): 4–11.
————. "Middle Eastern Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels." *Expository Times* 106 (1995): 363–67.

————. *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes.* Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011.

Barth, Karl. *The Epistle to the Philippians*. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1962.

Beare, F. W. *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*. 3rd ed. Harper's New Testament Commentaries. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1973.

Beker, J. Christiaan, *Paul's Apocalyptic Gospel: The Coming Triumph of God.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.

_____. *The Triumph of God: The Essence of Paul's Thought.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1982.

Ben-Ilan, Meir. "Illiteracy in the Land of Israel in the First Centuries CE." https://faculty.biu.ac.il/~barilm/illitera.html.

Bertram, Georg. "Φρήν, Ἄφρων, Ἀφροσύνη, Φρονέω, Φρόνημα, Φρόνησις, Φρόνιμος." In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* edited by Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1964.

Betz, Hans Dieter. *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia*. Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

Black, David Alan. "The Discourse Structure of Philippians: A Study in Text linguistics." *Novum Testamentum* 37, no. 1 1995.

———. "Paul and Christian Unity: A Formal Analysis of Philippians 2:1–4." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28, no. 3 1985.

_____, ed. *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation.* Downers Grove: Broadman, 1992.

Blass, F. and A. Debrunner. *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* Trans. Robert Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Bloomquist, L. Gregory. *The Function of Suffering in Philippians*. JSNTSup 78. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.

Bockmuehl, Markus N. A. *The Epistle to the Philippians.* BNTC 11. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998.

_____. "A Commentator's Approach to the 'Effective History' of Philippians." *JSNT 60* 1995.

Boomershine, Thomas E. "Peter's Denial as Polemic or Confession: The Implications of Media Criticism for Biblical Hermeneutics." Lou H. Silberman, ed. *Semeia 39* (1986). Atlanta: SBL, 1986.

Botha, Pieter J. J. *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012.

Brodie, Thomas L., *The Birthing of the New Testament: The Intertextual Development of the New Testaments.* Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006.

Bruce, F. F. *Philippians*. NIBC. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995.

Brown, R. E. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Letter to the Philippians.* The Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York; London: Doubleday, 1997.

Capes, David B., Rodney Reeves, and E. Randolph Richards. *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters, and Theology.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007.

Carruthers, Mary. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Chrysostom, John. "Homilies on Philippians." *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Edited by Philip Schaff. 1889. Repr., Peabody, MA Hendrickson, 1999.

Cicero. *On the Ideal Orator.* Trans. James M. May and Jakob Wisse. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

_____. *De Oratore.* Translated by Harris Rackham and Edward W. Sutton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942.

Clark, D. L. *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1957.

Classen, Carl Joachim. *Rhetorical Criticism of the New Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Collange, Jean-Francois. *The Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians*. Translated by A. W. Heathcote. London: Epworth Press, 1979.

Cooper, Craig Richard. *The Politics of Orality.* Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007.

Cotterell, Peter and Max Turner. *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1989.

Cousar, Charles B. *Reading Galatians, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians: A Literary and Theological Commentary.* RNTS. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2001.

_____. *A Theology of the Cross: The Death of Jesus in the Pauline Letters.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1990.

Crowley, Sharon and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetoric for Contemporary Students.* New York: Pearson Education, 2009.

Culley, Robert C. "Approach to the Problem of Oral Tradition." *Vetus Testamentum* 13 1963.

———. *Oral-Formulaic Language in the Biblical Psalms*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1967.

———. *Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Narrative*. Semeia Supplements. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.

Davis, Casey Wayne. *Oral Biblical Criticism: The Influence of the Principles of Orality on the Literary Structure of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series 172; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

_____. "Oral Biblical Criticism." In *Linguistics and the New Testament: Critical Junctures.* Edited by Stanley E. Porter and D. A. Carson. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.

Davis, W. D. *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism,* 4th ed. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.

Debanne, Marc. J. "An Enthymematic Reading of Philippians: Towards a Typology of Pauline Arguments," in *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible,* Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, eds. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Deissmann, Adolf. *St. Paul, A Study in Social and Religious History.* Translated by Lionel R. M. Strachan. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912.

De Silva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, and Ministry.* Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2004.

Dewey, Joanna, "Introduction." Dewey, Joanna, ed. *Semeia 65: Orality and Textuality in Early Christian Literature.* Atlanta: SBL, 1994.

_____. "The Gospel of Mark as an Oral-Aural Event: Implications for Interpretation." In *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament,* edited by Malbon, Elizabeth Struthers and Edgar V. McKnight. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.

Donfried, Karl P., and I. Howard Marshall. *The Theology of the Shorter Pauline Letters*. NTT. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Doty, William. "The Epistle in Late Hellenism and Early Christians: Development, Influences, and Literary Form." Ph.D. dissertation. Drew University, 1966.

Draper, Charles W. "Letter Form and Function." In *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary,* edited by Chad Brand et al. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003.

Dunn, James D. G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998.

Edwards, Mark J. *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians.* Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture viii. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Engberg-Pedersen, T., ed. *Paul in His Hellenistic Context.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

_____. *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

Erickson, Anders and Thomas H. Olbricht, Walter Ubelacker, eds. *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts.* Harrisburg: Trinity; London: SCM, 2002.

Exler, Francis. *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography.* Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America, 1922.

Fee, Gordon D. *Philippians*. IVP NTC 11. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010.

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

Fitzgerald, John T. *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.

_____. *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World.* NovT Sup 82.

Fitzmyer, J. A. *Paul and His Theology: A Brief Sketch.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989.

Flemming, Dean. *Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Missions.* Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005.

Fowl, Stephen. *A Commentary on Philippians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

_____. *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul: An Analysis of the Function of the Hymnic Material in the Pauline Corpus.* London: Bloomsbury Academic, 1990.

Gamble, Harry Y. *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995.

Garland, David E. "Philippians." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. 13 vols. Revised edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

_____. "The Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Literary Factors." *Novum Testamentum* 27, no. 2 1985.

Gerhardsson, Birger. *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity; with Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity*. Translated by Eric J. Sharpe. The Biblical Resource Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

Goody, Jack. *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Gorman, Michael J. *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2009.

_____. *Reading Paul.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books (Wipf and Stock Publishers), 2008.

_____. *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishers, 2004.

_____. *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishers, 2001.

Graham, William A. *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Analysis of Scriptures in the History of Religion.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Greidanus, Sidney. *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1988.

Hansen, G. Walter. *The Letter to the Philippians*. PNTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Harris, William V. *Ancient Literacy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Harrisville, Roy A. *Fracture: The Cross as Irreconcilable in the Language and Thought of the Biblical Writers,* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006.

Hartog, Paul. *Polycarp and the New Testament: The Occasion, Rhetoric, Theme, and Unity of the Epistle to the Philippians and its Allusions to New Testament Literature.* Wissunt zum Neun Testament Series. II, 134.

Harvey, John D. *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters.* Evangelical Theological Society Studies.

_____. "Orality and Its Implications for Biblical Studies." *JETS* 45/1 (March 2002).

Hasel, Gerhard. *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978.

Hays, Richard B. *The Conversion of the Imagination.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2005.

_____. *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002.

Hawthorne, Gerald F. *Philippians*. Word Biblical Commentary, 43. Waco: Word Books, Publisher, 1983.

Heil, John P. *Philippians: Let Us Rejoice in Being Conformed to Christ*. SBL ECIL 3. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010.

Hellerman, Joseph H. "Philippians." In *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament,* edited by Andreas J. Kostenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough. Nashville: B & H Publishers, 2015.

Hendriksen, William. *Exposition of Philippians*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962.

Henke, Robert. *Performance and Literature in the Commedia Dell'Arte.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Hock, Ronald F. *The Social Context of Paul's Ministry.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.

_____. "Paul and Greco-Roman Education." In *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook,* edited by J. Paul Sampley. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003.

Holloway, Paul A. *Consolation in Philippians: Philosophical Sources and Rhetorical Strategy*. SNTSMS 112. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Holmes, Michael W. *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition.* (Lexham Press; Society of Biblical Literature, 2011-2013.

Hooker, Morna. "Philippians." *The New Interpreter's Bible*. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000.

_____. "Philippians 2:6-11" in *Jesus und Paulus,* festschrift Georg Kummel, eds. E. Earle Ellis and Erich Grasser, 2nd. Ed. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1978.

Hurtado, Larry. "Jesus as Lordly Example in Philippians 2:5-11." In *From Jesus to Paul,* edited by Peter Richardson and John C. Hurd. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984.

Jaffee, Martin S. *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BC–400 CE*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Jeffers, James S. *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

Jewett, Robert. "Epistolary Thanksgiving and the Integrity of Philippians." *Novum Testamentum* 12, no. 1 1970.

Judge, E.A. "Ethical Terms in St. Paul and the Inscriptions of Ephesus." In *The First Christians in the Roman World,* edited by James R. Harrison. Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

Karris, Robert J. *A Symphony of New Testament Hymns.* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996.

Keck, Learden E. *Paul and His Letters,* Proclamation Commentaries. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.

Kelber, Werner. *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

_____. "Narrative as Interpretation and Interpretation of Narrative: Hermeneutical Reflections on the Gospels." In *Semeia 39* (1986), edited by Lou H. Silberman.

Kennedy, George A. *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

_____. *Comparative Rhetoric: An Historical and Cross-Cultural Introduction.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

_____. *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

_____. "Historical Survey of Rhetoric." Pages 3–50 in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period, 300 B.C.—A. D. 400*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

_____. *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

Kennedy, H. A. A. "The Epistle to the Philippians." *The Expositor's Greek Testament*. Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1917.

Kent, Homer A. Jr. "Philippians." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Vol. 11. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978.

Keith, Chris. "In My Own Hand: Grapho-Literacy and the Apostle Paul." www.biblicalstudies.ru/NT/15pdf.

Kirk, Alan. *Q in Matthew: Ancient Media, Memory, and Early Scribal Transmission of the Jesus Tradition.* London; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016.

____▁▁▁. "The Memory-Tradition Nexus in the Synoptic Tradition: Memory, Media, and Symbolic Representation." In *Memory and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity,* edited by Tom Thatcher. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

Kittel, G. and G. Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* 10 Vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1933-1976.

Klauck, Hans-Josef and Daniel P. Bailey. *Ancient Letters and the New Testament.* Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006.

Koester, Helmut. *History and Literature of Early Christianity.* Berlin: De Gruyler, 2000.

Koperski, V. "The Early History of the Dissection of Philippians." *Journal of Theological Studies* 44 (1993): 599–603.

Ladd, George. *A Theology of the New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974.

Lampe, Peter. "Rhetorical Analysis of Pauline Texts – Quo Vadit?" In *Paul and Rhetoric,* edited by Paul Sampley and Peter Lampe. London: T&T Clark; New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010.

Lausberg, Heinrich. *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Studies.* Leiden: Brill, 1998.

Le Donne, Anthony and Tom Thatcher, eds. *The Fourth Gospel in the First Century Media Culture.* London; New York: T&T Clark, 2011.

Lee, Margaret Ellen and Bernard Brandon Scott. *Sound Mapping the New Testament.* Salem, OR: Polebridge Press, 2009.

Lenski, Gerhard and Jean Lenski. *Human Societies: An Introduction to Macrosociology.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974.

Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians.* Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1946.

Lightfoot, J. B. *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., repr. of 1913 edition.

Llewelyn, Stephen. "Sending Letters in the Ancient World: Paul and the Philippians." *Tyndale Bulletin* 46 1995.

Longenecker, Richard N. *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2011.

_____. "On the Form, Function and Authority of the New Testament Epistles," in *Scripture and Truth,* eds. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodridge. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.

Lord, Albert B. "Characteristics of Orality." *Oral Tradition Journal* 2/1 (1987).

Loubser, J. A. (Bobby). *Oral and Manuscript Culture in the Bible.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013.

Louw, Johannes P. and E. A. Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains.* New York: United Bible Societies, 1988.

Lund, Nils W. *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Form and Function of Chiastic Structures.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992.

Luter, A. Boyd. "Partnership in the Gospel: The Role of Women in the Church at Philippi." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39 (1996): 411–420.

_____ and Michelle V. Lee. "Philippians as Chiasmus: Key to the Structure, Unity and Theme Question." *NTS* 41 (January 1995) *CTS Journal* 9 (Fall 2003).

Mack, Burton L. *Rhetoric and the New Testament*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990.

Malcolm, Matthew R. *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal in 1 Corinthians.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Malherbe, Abraham. *Ancient Epistolary Theorists.* Atlanta: SP, 1988.

Maxey, James A. *From Orality to Orality: A New Paradigm for Contextual Translation of the Bible.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009.

Marshall, I. Howard. *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Matera, Frank J. *God's Saving Grace: A Pauline Theology.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2012.

Martin, Ralph P. *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary*. The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980.

_____. *Philippians*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980.

_____. *A Hymn of Christ: Philippians 2:5–11 in Recent Study and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

_____ and Gerald F. Hawthorne. *Philippians*. Rev. and enl. ed. Word Biblical Commentary 43. Nashville: Nelson, 2004.

_____. *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul's Theology.* Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1989.

_____. "The Center of Paul's Theology." In *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters,* edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

McCoy, Brad. "Chiasmus: An Important Structural Device Commonly Found in Biblical Literature." www.chafer,edu/journal/back_issues/Vol%209-2%20ar2.pdf.

McGrath, Alister E. "The Theology of the Cross." In *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters,* edited by Gerald Hawthorne, Martin, and Reid. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

McRay, John. *Paul, His Life and Teaching.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003.

Metzger, Bruce. *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Palaeography.* New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Meyer, Jason C. "Philippians, Letter to the, Critical Issues." Barry, John D., Bomar, David et al, eds. *The Lexham Bible Dictionary.* Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015.

Meynet, Roland. *Rhetorical Analysis: An Introduction to Biblical Rhetoric.* JSOT Supplement Series 256. Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1998.

Miller, Robert D. *Oral Tradition in Ancient Israel*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011.

Minchin, Elizabeth. "Describing and Narrating in Homer's *ILIAD.*" In *Signs of Orality: The Oral Tradition and Its Influence in the Greek and Roman World,* edited by E. Anne MacKay. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998.

Mitchell, Margaret. "New Testament Envoys in the Greco-Roman Diplomates and Epistolary Conventions: The Example of Timothy and Titus." *Journal of Biblical Literature* III (1992).

Mitton, C. Leslie. *The Formation of the Pauline Corpus of Letters.* Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock; London: Epworth Press, 2009 [1955].

Moon, Jongyoon, *Mark as Contributive Amanuensis of 1 Peter.* Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2009.

Morgan, Robert. "Incarnation, Myth, and Theology." In *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2,* edited by Ralph P, Martin and Brian J. Dodd. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Motyer, J. Alec. *Philippian Studies: The Richness of Christ*. Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966.

_____. *The Message of Philippians: Jesus our Joy.* Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984.

Moule, H. C. G. *The Epistle to the Philippians*. Cambridge: The University Press, 1873.

Mounce, Robert H. "The Epistle to the Philippians." *Wycliffe bible Commentary*. Edited by C. F. Pfeiffer and E. F. Harrison. Chicago: Moody, 1962.

Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome. *Paul the Letter-Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills.* Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995.

_____. *Paul: A Critical Life.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

_____. "Co-Authorship in the Corinthian Correspondence." In *Revue Biblique* Vol. 100, no.4 (Oct 1993).

Nagy, Gregory. "Performance and Text in Ancient Greece." In *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies,* edited by Boys-Stones, George, Barbara Graziosi, and Phiroze Vasunia. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Nebreda, Sergio R. *Christ Identity: A Social-Scientific Reading of Philippians 2:5-11.* Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011.

Neusner, Jacob. *Oral Tradition in Judaism.* New York: Garland, 1987.

Neyrey, Jerome H. "The Social Location of Paul: Education as the Key." In *Fabrics of Discourse: Essays in Honor of Vernon K. Robbins,* edited by David B. Glower, L. Gregory Bloomquist, and Duane F. Watson. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003.

Niditch, Susan. *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature.* London: SPCK, 1997.

Oakes, Peter. *Philippians: From People to Letter.* SNTSMS 110. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

O'Brien, Peter T. *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text.* New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991.

Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word.* New Accents. London: Methuen, 1982.

_____. *Rhetoric, Romance, and Technology.* Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell University Press, 1990.

_____. *In the Presence of the Word.* New Haven: London: Yale University Press, 1967.

_____. "Text as Interpretation: Mark and After." In *Semeia 39* (1986). Edited by Lou Silberman.

Osiek, Carolyn. "The Oral World of Early Christianity in Rome: The Case of Hermas." Donfried, Karl P., Richardson, Peter, eds. *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998.

Park, M. Sydney. *Submission within the Godhead and the Church in the Epistle to the Philippians: An Exegetical and Theological Examination of the Concept of Submission in Philippians 2 and 3.* LNTS 361. London: T&T Clark, 2007.

Patrick, Dale, and Allen Scult. *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation.* JSOTS up 82. Sheffield, England: Almond, 1990.

Peterlin, Davorin. "Paul's Letter to the Philippians in Light of Disunity in the Church." NovTSup 79. Leiden: Brill, 1995.

Peterman, G. W. *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift-Exchange and Christian Giving.* SNTSMS 92. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

175

Pickering, Peter E. "Did the Greek Ear Detect 'Careless' Verbal Repetition?" *The Classical Quarterly* 53, No. 2 (Nov 2003).

Plato. *Phaedrus.* Translated by Benjamin Jowett. www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/ancient-greece/plato/plato-phaedrus.asp.

_____. *Theaetetus.* Translated by Benjamin Jowett. www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/ancient-greece/plato/plato-theaetetus-2.asp?pg=21.

Porter, Stanley E. *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330BC-AD400.* Leiden: Brill, 1998.

_____. *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2016.

_____. *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015.

_____. *Verbal Aspect in the Greek New Testament with Reference to Tense and Mood.* New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

_____. "Discourse Analysis and New Testament Studies: An Introductory Survey." Porter, Stanley E. and D. A. Carson, eds. *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

Porter, Stanley, and Jeffrey T. Reed. "Philippians as a Macro-Chiasm and Its Exegetical Significance." *New Testament Studies* 44 1998.

Porter, Stanley E. and Christopher D. Stanley, eds. *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture.* Atlanta: SBL, 2008.

Puskas, Charles B. and Mark Reasoner. *The Letters of Paul: An Introduction.* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2013.

Quintilian. *Institute of Oratory.* Translated by John Selby Watson. Edited by Lee Honeycutt. United States: [publisher unknown], 2015.

Rapp, Christof. "Aristotle's Rhetoric." In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2010 ed.), edited by Edward N. Zalta. http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/

Reed, Jeffrey T. *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate Over Literary Integrity*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 136. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

_____. "Identifying Theme in the New Testament Insights from Discourse Analysis." Porter, Stanley E. and D. A. Carson. *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek.* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

_____. "The Epistle." Pages 171–92 in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 BC—AD 400)*. Edited by S. E. Porter. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

———. "Philippians 3:1 and the Epistolary Hesitation Formulas: The Literary Integrity of Philippians, Again." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 1996.

_____. "Using Ancient Rhetorical Categories to Interpret Paul's Letters: A Question of Genre," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference,* eds. Stanley E. Porter and Thomas H. Olbricht. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993.

Reicke, Bo. *Re-examining Paul's Letters: The History of the Pauline Correspondence.* Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001.

Reumann, John. *Philippians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AYB 33B. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Rhoads, David. "Performance Criticism: An Emerging Methodology in Second Testament Studies." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 36, no. 4 2006.

_____. *Reading Mark, Engaging the Gospel.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

_____. "Performance Events in Early Christianity: New Testament Writings in an Oral Context." In *The Interface of Orality and Writing: Speaking, Seeing, Writing in the Shaping of New Genres.* Edited by Weissenrieder, Annette and Robert B. Coote. Eugene. OR: Cascade Books, 2015.

Richards, E. Randolph. *Paul and First Century Letter-Writing: Secretaries, Composition, and Collection.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

Ridderbos, Herman. *Paul: An Outline of His Theology.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997.

Robbins, Vernon K. *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio Rhetorical Interpretation*. Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1996.

_____. "Writing as a Rhetorical Act in Plutarch and the Gospels." In *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy,* JSNT Sup50, edited by Duane F. Watson. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991.

_____. "The Social Location of the Implied Author of Luke-Acts." In *The Social World of Luke-Acts,* edited by Jerome H. Neyrey. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991.

Roetzel, Calvin J. *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Rosenberg, Bruce A. "The Complexity of Oral Tradition." *Oral Tradition* 2, no. 1 1987.

Sampley, J. Paul. *Pauline Partnership in Christ: Christian Community and Commitment in Light of Roman Law*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980.

_____. "Ruminations Occasioned by the Publication of Three Essays and the End of the Seminar." In *Paul and Rhetoric,* edited by J. Paul Sampley and Peter Lampe. New York: T&T Clark, 2010.

_____ and Peter Lampe, eds. *Paul and Rhetoric*. New York: Continuum, 2010.

Sanders, E. P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.

Sanders, Jack T. *The New Testament Christological Hymns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Schellenberg, Ryan S. *Rethinking Paul's Rhetorical Education.* Atlanta: SBL, 2013.

_____. "Revisiting Patristic Testimony on Paul's Rhetorical Education." In *Novum Testamentum* 54 (2012).

Schenk, Wolfgang. *Die Philipperbrief des Paulus: Kommentar.* Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1984.

Schlier, Heinrich. "ἰδιώ της." In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Gerhard Friedrich. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.

Schnelle, Udo. *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

Schreiner, Thomas R. *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology.* Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001.

Silva, Moisés. *Philippians.* The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary. Chicago: Moody Press, 1988.

Spencer, Aida Besancon. *Paul's Literary Style.* Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 2007.

Stamps, Dennis. *Rhetorical Criticism and the Bible: Essays from the 1998 Florence Conference.* Library of New Testament Studies. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. London: T&T Clark, 2002.

Stanford, William B. *The Sound of Greek: Studies in the Greek Theory and Practice of Euphony.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967.

Stirewalt, M. L. *Paul, the Letter Writer.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

Stowers, Stanley K. *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity.* Library of Early Christianity 5. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.

_____. "Social Typification and the Classification of Ancient Letters." Pages 78–90 in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in Tribute to Howard Clark Kee.* Edited by J. Neusner, et al. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.

_____. "Friends and Enemies in the Politics of Heaven: Reading Theology in Philippians." In *Pauline Theology: Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon*, vol. 1, edited by J. M. Bassler, 105–21. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

_____. "Romans 7:7-25 as a Speech-in-Character." In *Paul in His Hellenistic Context,* edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. London: T&T Clark, 1994.

Swift, Robert C. "The Theme and Structure of Philippians." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141, no. 563 1984.

Thielman, Frank. *Theology of the New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

Thomson, I. H. *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters.* Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 111. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995.

Thompson, James W. *Preaching Like Paul.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Thompson, James W. and Bruce W. Longenecker. *Philippians and Philemon (Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.

Thrall, Margaret E. *Greek Particles in the New Testament: Linguistic and Exegetical Studies*. New Testament Tools and Studies. Leiden: Brill, 1962.

Tolmie, D. Francois. *Persuading the Philippians: A Text-centered Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter.* Tubingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 2005.

Van der Toorn, Karel, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2007.

Van Spanje, Teunis Erik. *Inconsistency in Paul?* Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999.

Vansina, Jan. *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973.

Vasaly, Ann. *Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Walton, John H. and Sandy, D. Brent. *The Lost World of Scripture, Ancient Literary Culture, and Biblical Authority.* Downers Grove: IVP Academic Press, 2013.

Walton, Steve. "Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction." *Themelios* 21, No. 2 (1996).

Wansink, Craig. *Chained in Christ: The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul's Imprisonments.* Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1996.

Watson, Duane F. "A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians and its Implications for the Unity Question." *Novum testamentum* 30, no. 1 1988.

Weima, Jeffrey A. D. "What Does Aristotle Have to Do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism." *Calvin Theological Journal* 32 1997.

_____. "The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings." In *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form,* edited by Stanley E. Porter and Sean A. Adams. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010.

Wendland, Ernst R. *Finding and Translating the Oral-Aural Elements in Written Language.* Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2008.

Weymouth, Richard J. "The Christ-Story of Philippians 2:6-11: Narrative and Paraenetic Purpose in Paul's Letter to Philippi." PhD Diss. University of Otago, New Zealand. July 2015.

White, John L. "Ancient Greek Letters." Pages 85–105 in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament*. Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study 21. Edited by D. E. Aune. Atlanta: Scholars, 1988.

White, John L. *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter,* SBLDS 2, 2nd ed. Missoula: SP, 1972.

_____. "The Greek Documentary Letter Tradition, Third Century BCE to CE Third Century," *Semeia* 22 1981.

_____. "Introductory Formulae in the Body of the Pauline Letter." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90 1971.

_____. *Light from Ancient Letters.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986.

Wick, Peter. *Der Philipperbrief: Der formale Aufbau des Briefs als Schlüssel zum Verständnis seines Inhalts*. Beiträge Zur Wissenschaft von Alten und Neuen Testament 7/15. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994.

Williams, Demetrius K. *Enemies of the Cross of Christ: The Terminology of the Cross and Conflict in Philippians.* JSNTSup 223. New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Winter, B. W. "Rhetoric." In *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters,* edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Wise, Michael Owen. *Language and Literacy in a Roman Judaea: A Study of the Bar Kokhba Documents.* New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2015.

Witherington, Ben, III. *Friendship and Finances in Philippi: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians.* NTC. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994.

_____. *New Testament Rhetoric: An Introductory Guide to the Art of Persuasion in and of the New Testament.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books (Wipf and Stock Publishers), 2009.

_____. *Paul's Narrative Thought: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph.* Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.

_____. *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

_____. *The Christology of Jesus.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1990.

_____. *The New Testament Story.* Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.

_____. *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

Wright, Brian J. "Ancient Literacy in the New Testament Research: A Few More Lines of Enquiry." *Trinity Journal* 36 (2015).

Wright, N. T. *Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why He Matters.* New York: HarperCollins, 2011.

_____. *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009.

_____. *Paul: In Fresh Perspective.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 005.

_____. *The Resurrection of the Son of God (Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol. 3).* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

_____. *The New Testament and the People of God (Christian Origins and the Question of God, Vol.1).* Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.

_____. *Jesus and the Victory of God.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1989.

Yates, Frances. *The Art of Memory.* New York: Random House, 2010.

Zimmermann, Ruben. "Memory and Form Criticism: The Typicality of Memory as a Bridge between Orality and Literality in the Early Christian Remembering Process." In *The Interface of Orality and Writing,* edited by Annette Weissenrieder and Robert B. Coote. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015.

Zuck, Roy B. *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament.* Chicago: Moody Press, 1994.