

**TRUE AND FALSE BOASTING IN
2 COR 10-13**

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD

University of Cambridge

January 1999

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ABBREVIATIONS

1) **Graeco-Roman Literature:** Unless stated otherwise, citations of Graeco-Roman literature are from the Loeb Classical Library.

Aesch. <i>In Ctes.</i>	Aeschines (4th cent. B.C.) <i>Against Ctesiphon</i>
Alex. <i>Rh.</i>	Alexander (2nd cent. A.D.) <i>On Rhetorical Forms</i>
Aris. <i>EE</i> <i>EN</i> <i>Pol.</i> <i>Rh.</i>	Aristotle (4th cent. B.C.) <i>Eudemian Ethics</i> <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> <i>Politics</i> <i>Rhetoric</i>
[Aris.] <i>MM</i> <i>Rh. Al.</i>	Aristotle--spurious <i>Magna Moralia</i> <i>Rhetorica ad Alexandrum</i>
Arist. <i>Or.</i>	(Aelius) Aristides (2nd cent. A.D.) <i>Orations</i>
[Arist.] <i>Rhet.</i>	Aelius Aristides--spurious <i>Rhetoric</i>
Athen. <i>Deipn.</i>	Athenaeus (2nd-3rd cent. A.D.) <i>Deipnosophists</i>
August. <i>CD</i>	Augustine (4th-5th cent. A.D.) <i>City of God</i>
CGF	<i>Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i>
Cic. <i>Amic.</i> <i>Arch.</i> <i>Att.</i> <i>Brut.</i> <i>De Or.</i> <i>Inv.</i> <i>Off.</i> <i>Opt. Gen.</i> <i>Or.</i> <i>Parad.</i> <i>Part.</i> <i>Rep.</i> <i>Tusc. Disp.</i>	Cicero (2nd-1st cent. B.C.) <i>Letters to His Friends</i> <i>Pro Archia</i> <i>Letters to Atticus</i> <i>Brutus</i> <i>De Oratore</i> <i>De Inventione</i> <i>De Officiis</i> <i>De Optimo Genere Oratorum</i> <i>Orator</i> <i>Paradoxa Stoicorum</i> <i>De Partitione Oratoria</i> <i>De Republica</i> <i>Tusculan Disputations</i>
Dem. <i>De Cor.</i> <i>Lept.</i> <i>Or.</i>	Demosthenes (4th cent. B.C.) <i>De Corona</i> <i>Against Leptines</i> <i>Orations</i>
Demetr. <i>Eloc.</i>	Demetrius (1st cent. B.C./1st cent. A.D.) <i>On Style</i>

Dio Cass.	Dio Cassius (2nd-3rd cent. A.D.)
Dio Chrys. <i>Or.</i>	Dio Chrysostom (1st-2nd cent. A.D.) <i>Orations</i>
Diod. Sic.	Diodorus Siculus (1st cent. B.C.)
Diog. Laert.	Diogenes Laertius (3rd cent. A.D.)
Dion. Hal. <i>Dem.</i> <i>Isoc.</i> <i>Orat. Vett.</i> <i>Pomp.</i>	Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1st cent. B.C.) <i>Demosthenes</i> <i>Isocrates</i> <i>The Ancient Orators</i> <i>Letter to Gnaeus Pompeius</i>
Epict. <i>Diss.</i>	Epictetus (1st-2nd cent. A.D.) <i>Discourses</i>
Hermog. <i>Id.</i> <i>Prog.</i>	Hermogenes (2nd-3rd cent. A.D.) <i>On Types of Style</i> <i>Progymnasmata</i>
[Hermog.] <i>Meth.</i>	Hermogenes--spurious <i>On the Method of Force</i>
Homer <i>Il.</i>	(8th cent. B.C.) <i>Iliad</i>
Hor. <i>Epist.</i> <i>Sat.</i>	Horace (1st cent. B.C.) <i>Epistles</i> <i>Satires</i>
Isoc. <i>Antid.</i> <i>Evag.</i> <i>Panath.</i>	Isocrates (5th-4th cent. B.C.) <i>Antidosis</i> <i>Evagoras</i> <i>Panathenaicus</i>
Luc. <i>Apol.</i> <i>Ath.</i> <i>Peregr.</i> <i>Pr. Im.</i> <i>Prof.</i>	Lucian (2nd cent. A.D.) <i>Apology</i> <i>Athletics</i> <i>Peregrinus</i> <i>Essays in Portraiture Defended</i> <i>A Professor of Popular Speaking</i>
Lysias <i>Or.</i>	(5th-4th cent. B.C.) <i>Orations</i>
Mart. <i>Ep.</i>	Martial (1st-2nd cent. A.D.) <i>Epigrams</i>
Philostr. <i>VS</i>	Philostratus (2nd-3rd cent. A.D.) <i>Lives of the Sophists</i>
Phld. Philodemus (1st cent. B.C.) <i>Rhet.</i>	(1st cent. B.C.) <i>Rhetoric</i>
Plato	(5th-4th cent. B.C.)

<i>Men. Rep.</i>	<i>Menexenus Republic</i>
Plautus <i>Mil. Glor.</i>	(3rd-2nd cent. B.C.) <i>Miles Gloriosus</i>
Pliny the Elder <i>H.N.</i>	(1st cent. A.D.) <i>Natural History</i>
Pliny the Younger <i>Ep.</i>	(1st-2nd cent. A.D.) <i>Epistles</i>
Plut. <i>Alex. Ant. Arist. Caes. Cic. Comp. Cat.Ma. Arist. Comp. Dem. Cic. Dem. Fab. Mor. Per. Them.</i>	Plutarch (1st-2nd cent. A.D.) <i>Alexander Antony Aristides Julius Caesar Cicero Comparison of Cato the Elder and Aristides Comparison of Demosthenes and Cicero Demosthenes Fabius Maximus Moralia Pericles Themistocles</i>
Quint. <i>Inst.</i>	Quintilian (1st cent. A.D.) <i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
<i>RG</i>	<i>Res Gestae</i> of Caesar Augustus
<i>Rhet. Her.</i>	<i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>
Sen. <i>Ben. De Vita Ep.</i>	Seneca (1st cent. A.D.) <i>On Benefits On the Happy Life Epistulae Morales</i>
<i>SVF</i>	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i>
Suet. <i>Aug. Ner. Rhet.</i>	Suetonius (1st-2nd cent. A.D.) <i>Augustus Nero De Rhetoribus</i>
Tac. <i>Ann. Hist.</i>	Tacitus (1st-2nd cent. A.D.) <i>Annals Histories</i>
(Aelius) Theon <i>Prog.</i>	(1st-2nd cent. A.D.) <i>Progymnasmata</i>
Theophrastus <i>Char.</i>	(4th-3rd cent. B.C.) <i>Characters</i>
Virg. Virgil (1st cent. B.C.) <i>Aen.</i>	<i>Aeneid</i>

2) **Names of the Biblical Books (including Apocrypha):** I follow the abbreviations used by the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (cf. *JBL* 117 [1998]: 560-79). Unless otherwise stated, citations of biblical texts are from the *New International Version*, and citations of the Apocrypha are from the *Revised Standard Version*.

3) **Pseudepigraphical and Early Patristic Books, Dead Sea Scrolls, Rabbinic Literature:** I follow *JBL* abbreviations. In referring to the *Hodayot* of Qumran, I follow the numbering system of E. Peuch (cf. *JJS* 39 [1988]: 38-55)

4) **Philo:**

<i>Abr.</i>	On Abraham (<i>De Abrahamo</i>)
<i>Agr.</i>	On Husbandry (<i>De Agricultura</i>)
<i>Cher.</i>	On the Cherubin (<i>De Cherubim</i>)
<i>Conf.</i>	On the Confusion of Tongues (<i>De Confusione Linguarum</i>)
<i>Congr.</i>	On the Preliminary Studies (<i>De Congressu Eruditionis gratia</i>)
<i>Decal.</i>	On the Decalogue (<i>De Decalogo</i>)
<i>Det.</i>	The Worse Attacks the Better (<i>Quod Deterius Potiori insidiari solet</i>)
<i>Mig.</i>	On the Migration of Abraham (<i>De Migratione Abrahami</i>)
<i>Mos.</i>	Moses (<i>De Vita Mosis</i>)
<i>Praem.</i>	On Rewards and Punishments (<i>De Praemiis et Poenis</i>)
<i>Quis Her.</i>	Who is the Heir (<i>Quis rerum divinarum Heres sit</i>)
<i>Quod Deus</i>	On the Unchangeableness of God (<i>Quod Deus sit Immutabilis</i>)
<i>Spec. Leg.</i>	On the Special Laws (<i>De Specialibus Legibus</i>)
<i>Virt.</i>	On the Virtues (<i>De Virtute</i>)

6) **Josephus:**

<i>A.</i>	Jewish Antiquities (<i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>)
<i>Ap.</i>	Against Apion (<i>Contra Apionem</i>)
<i>V.</i>	Life of Josephus (<i>Vita Josephi</i>)

7) **Secondary Literature:** I follow *JBL* abbreviations. Secondary sources are cited by author and short title.

INTRODUCTION

In A.D. 55, Paul of Tarsus, arguably one of the most innovative thinkers of the early Christian movement, encountered serious opposition to his ministry in the church that he had established at Corinth. Although Paul maintained that his ministry had been initiated and directed by God, his Corinthian letters reveal various issues of disagreement between this congregation and its founder. These areas of dispute included not only matters of ethics and theology but also Paul's legitimacy as a Christian minister.

The last part of 2 Corinthians (2 Cor 10-13), perhaps the most impassioned part of Paul's Corinthian correspondence, indicates that his claims of leadership had been questioned within the Corinthian context. In fact, rival teachers, who challenged Paul's authority and ministerial competence, had apparently gained support within the congregation. As Paul addresses this situation, one of the prominent motifs of 2 Cor 10-13 is the theme of boasting. On a lexical level, terms for boasting and self-commendation occur throughout this passage.¹ More generally, in a section where Paul is responding to various criticisms levelled against his ministry, self-praise and self-presentation are related to the charges that have been made against him.² In replying to his critics, Paul asserts his understanding of the nature of proper boasting--the one who boasts should "boast in the Lord" (ἐν κυρίῳ καυχᾶσθω; 10:17; cf. 1 Cor 1:31). This statement apparently reflects Jeremiah's admonition on boasting:³

This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord. (Jer 9:22-23 [ET 23-24])⁴

In addition to Paul's reference to boasting in the Lord, he also speaks of boasting in his authority (10:8; cf. 11:10). Moreover, his denials of boasting "beyond measure" (οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα; 10:13, 15) imply that boasting may be appropriate under certain conditions. In contrast to these positive references to his own boasting, Paul describes the competitive boasting of his opponents in terms of foolishness (cf. 11:16-21), and he asserts that their actions reveal a lack of knowledge (10:12). This ambivalent evidence generates certain questions. For Paul, what is the distinction between proper and improper boasting? Is Paul engaged in special pleading or is there a conceptual framework that explains his contrasting statements on boasting? What does it mean to "boast in the Lord"?

A. A BRIEF TYPOLOGY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

An understanding of previous research is a helpful starting point for this examination of the boasting theme in 2 Cor 10-13. Rather than attempting to provide an exhaustive history of scholarship on this topic, we will focus on a brief survey of the methodological approaches that have been used in investigating this theme. In practice, the following categories are not always mutually exclusive. Nonetheless, they do offer one way of

¹καυχᾶομαι: 10:8, 13, 15, 16, 17; 11:12, 16, 18, 30; 12:1, 5, 6, 9; καύχησις: 11:10, 17; συνίστημι: 10:12, 18; 12:11.

²On the nature of these charges, cf. below pp. 111-19.

³On the relationship between Jer 9:22-23 and Paul's statements in 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17, cf. below pp. 142-59.

⁴On Jer 9:22-23, cf. below pp. 73-85.

evaluating previous work on this subject. Moreover, this typology furnishes a backdrop for the methodological commitments that will govern this study.

1. Lexical Studies

Some scholarly treatments that address the theme of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13 are lexical studies of *καυχάομαι* and its related nouns. Generally, these studies proceed by first examining the use of these terms in secular Greek literature before proceeding to the Septuagint and the New Testament. For example, in summarising the usage of the *καυχ*-word group outside of biblical literature, Bultmann notes that “[t]he sense of *καυχᾶσθαι* is ‘to boast,’ usually in a bad sense, which also attaches to *καύχημα* and *καύχησις*.” In the Septuagint, however, while *καυχάομαι* can be used in criticism of self-praise, it can also “have the same cultic sense as verbs like ‘to rejoice,’ ‘to exult,’ with which it is often combined”. Bultmann argues that this religious use of the term involves boasting that focuses not on oneself but on the character and activity of God.⁵ Thus, in the Septuagint, *καυχάομαι* can function in both positive and negative ways. Positively, it can refer to boasting in the Lord; negatively, it can refer to boasting in one’s own resources apart from God. Consistent with this usage, Paul speaks of appropriate boasting as boasting that involves praise of God rather than self; thus, Bultmann speaks of the “paradoxicality of Christian ‘boasting’”.⁶ He also notes that “[f]or Paul *καυχᾶσθαι* discloses the basic attitude of the Jew to be one of self-confidence which seeks glory before God and which relies upon itself.”⁷

Jorge Sánchez Bosch, in the most extensive analysis of the *καυχ*-word group, also begins his study with an examination of the use of these terms in non-biblical literature. He concludes that these terms normally carry negative connotations in their occurrences in secular Greek sources. He suggests four reasons why the activity of “boasting” (*gloriarse*) met with disapproval: (1) it could be offensive to the gods, (2) it could be offensive to other individuals, (3) it could sound inappropriate within society, and (4) the foundation of the boast could be insufficient.⁸

After surveying the use of this word group in secular literature, Bosch turns his attention to the Septuagint. While noting a certain degree of continuity with the usage of *καυχάομαι* in secular Greek, Bosch highlights the way in which the Septuagint elevates the terms of ‘glorying’ to the divine sphere and positively exhorts individuals to boast in the Lord.⁹ For example, Ps 5:11 states: “But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice [*καυχῆσονται*] in you.” In his discussion of Pauline literature, Bosch underscores the resemblances between the positive occurrences of the *καυχ*-word group in the Septuagint and Paul’s usage of these terms.¹⁰

⁵Bultmann, “*καυχάομαι*”, 646, 647.

⁶Bultmann, *Theology*, 1:181; cf. “*καυχάομαι*”, 646-47.

⁷“*καυχάομαι*”, 648. This type of legalistic interpretation of first-century Judaism has been cogently criticised by the “new perspective” in Pauline studies; cf. Dunn, “New Perspective”, 95-122; Hagner, “Paul and Judaism”, 111-30.

⁸Bosch, “*Gloriarse*”, 4.

⁹Bosch, “*Gloriarse*”, 85-86.

¹⁰*ibid.*, xxi.

Like Bosch and Bultmann, B. A. Dowdy highlights the religious context of boasting in the Septuagint; he notes that “[t]he real test of whether boasting is proper is its relationship to God” and suggests that this criterion for appropriate boasting is also reflected in the Pauline corpus.¹¹ Others also stress that Paul’s use of *καυχάομαι* is influenced by the usage of this term in the Septuagint. C. K. Barrett notes that the occurrences of the *καυχ-* word group in Paul reflect “the double--good and bad--use of the words found in the LXX”.¹² Similarly, Ulrich Heckel argues that the differing uses of *καυχάομαι* in Jer 9:22-23 provide a backdrop to Paul’s discussion of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13; in the divine oracle of Jer 9, *καυχάομαι* is used to refer both to those who boast in their own resources and to those who boast in their knowledge of God. Accordingly, in Paul’s discussion of boasting, the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate boasting is a difference between “Selbstruhm” and “Gotteslob”.¹³

The insights gained from these investigations have been helpful in establishing the semantic fields of the *καυχ-* word group and delineating the particular emphases of these words in the Septuagint. Methodologically, however, these lexical studies are limited in their ability to examine the theme of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13. In exploring the theme of boasting in extant Greek literature, it is important to note that a great variety of terms can be used to portray this activity.¹⁴ In fact, many authors quite naturally use a wide range of expressions to denote self-praise.¹⁵ For example, the following citation from Athenaeus, which argues that wine produces boastful behaviour, contains four different terms denoting self-praise: ‘From dry food no jests will grow nor impromptu verses’--nor yet, again, will conceit or boasting [*ἀλαζονεία*] of spirit. Rightly, therefore, the line, ‘whither are gone the boasts [*εὐχολαί*] ye uttered in Lemnos, when ye ate much flesh and drank goblets brimming with wine,’ is bracketed by the scholar Aristarchus in his notes, because it represents the Greeks as boasting [*αὐχεῖν*] after eating meat. For boasting [*καυχᾶσθαι*], ridicule, and jests spring not from every kind of heartiness and fullness, but only from that which alters the spirit so completely that it inclines to illusion, which happens only through wine. (*Deipn.* 2.39d-e) Consequently, a study focused on the occurrences of *καυχάομαι* will inevitably omit many references to boasting in Greek literature. For example, Heckel’s discussion of “sich rühmen” in Greek texts concentrates on the usage of the *καυχ-* word group;¹⁶ as a result, his treatment includes no reference to Demosthenes’ *De Corona*. While *καυχάομαι* does not occur in this oration, Demosthenes’ speech is an important source for the rhetorical

¹¹Dowdy, “KAUCHASTHAI”, 38a, 159.

¹²Barrett, “Boasting”, 368.

¹³Heckel, *Kraft*, 167; cf. 183-93; cf. also, Heckel, “Jer 9,22f.”, 207-8; Berger, *Exegese*, 149.

¹⁴Depending on the context, Greek verbs that can be used to convey the concept of self-praise include: *ἀγαλλιάω*, *αἰνέω*, *ἀλαζονεύομαι*, *ἀπειλέω*, *αὐξάνω*, *αὐχέω*, *γαυριάω*, *γαυρόω*, *δοξάζω*, *ἐγκαλλωπιζομαι*, *ἐγκωμιάζω*, *ἐπαινέω*, *εὐχετάομαι*, *εὐχομαι*, *εὐφημέω* (περὶ ἑαυτοῦ), *θρασύνω*, *καυχάομαι*, *κομπάζω*, *κομπέω*, *λαβραγορέω*, *λαλέω* (+ ὑπέρογκος), *λέγω*, *μεγαληγορέω*, *μεγαλορρημονέω*, *μεγαλύνω*, *περιαυτολογέω*, *περπερεύομαι*, *πλατύνω*, *προφέρω*, *ῥαχίζω*, *σεμνώνω*, *συνίστημι*.

¹⁵In their lexicon based on semantic domains, Louw and Nida (*Greek-English*, 1:431) treat the concept of “boast” as a subdomain under the more general heading of “communication”. They note that “[t]he primary basis for classification of meanings into domains and subdomains is the existence of shared features” (Nida and Louw, *Lexical*, 109).

¹⁶Heckel, *Kraft*, 145-59.

conventions of boasting prevalent in the Hellenistic world. In the extant rhetorical treatments of this topic, Demosthenes' use of self-praise in this speech is consistently depicted as a standard for others to follow.¹⁷ Thus, a philological study of the use of *καυχάομαι* overlooks significant evidence necessary for an evaluation of Hellenistic boasting practices. Moreover, by failing to acknowledge the variety of ways in which boasting can be expressed, these lexical studies can give the impression that an examination of the *καυχ-* word group suffices as an inquiry into the concept of boasting itself.¹⁸

In response to this type of criticism, one might argue that Paul's use of *καυχάομαι* is distinct from broader discussions of self-praise in Graeco-Roman sources. For example, while acknowledging the theme of boasting in Hellenistic rhetorical literature, Barrett urges caution in using this literature to evaluate Paul's treatment of this subject; he notes that "Paul uses *καυχᾶσθαι* rather than the language of self-praise."¹⁹ Nonetheless, although Paul's use of *καυχάομαι* may be dependent on the Septuagint, the broader argument of 2 Cor 10-13 suggests certain similarities with standard presentations of boasting in other literature. For instance, in answering his critics, Paul follows their example by engaging in competitive boasting (cf. 11:21-23); according to various sources, this type of comparison (*σύγκρισις*) was a standard element of self-praise in the Hellenistic period.²⁰ Similarly, the stereotypical boaster in Graeco-Roman literature is the *ἀλαζών*--an individual whose claims involve imposture.²¹ As we will see in Chapter Three, the charges made against Paul included the accusation that he was an *ἀλαζών*.²² Consequently, central to Paul's argument is his insistence that his boasting does not contain empty claims; rather, his boasting has been validated by the activity of God (10:12-18).²³ Thus, while Paul's use of *καυχάομαι* may be dependent on the occurrences of this term in the Septuagint, cultural and rhetorical conventions reflecting Graeco-Roman patterns of self-praise may also be present in 2 Cor 10-13.

2. Graeco-Roman Background Studies

While some studies focus on *lexical* usage, other works seek to evaluate Paul's discussion of boasting in light of possible *conceptual* parallels in Graeco-Roman literature. For example, H. D. Betz links Paul's defence in 2 Cor 10-13 with Socrates' self-presentation in Plato's *Apology*. According to Betz, Paul's critique of his opponents reflects the longstanding tension between philosophers and sophists. Noting that Socrates refuses to defend himself in court, Betz states that the background to Paul's argument is "to be found in Greek philosophy, where 'self-defense' is considered improper for the philosopher, because it is the *métier* of the rhetorician and sophist."²⁴ Betz argues that the foolish discourse of 2

¹⁷On the significance of Demosthenes' *De Corona* for the subject of boasting, cf. below p. 48.

¹⁸This involves a confusion between certain terms (*καυχ-* words) and the concept ("boasting") that those terms represent. On this type of confusion, cf. Barr, *Semantics*, 206-19; Silva, *Biblical Words*, 28-32; Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics*, 115-23.

¹⁹Barrett, "Boasting", 368; cf. Gardner, *Gifts*, 89.

²⁰On the nature of *σύγκρισις*, cf. below pp. 50-51.

²¹cf. below pp. 39-40.

²²cf. below pp. 118-19.

²³On the issue of the truthfulness of Paul's claims in 10:12-18, cf. below pp. 137-42.

²⁴Betz, "Apology", 2; cf. *Apostel*, 19.

Cor 11-12 is a parody of sophistic boasting, which was intended to expose the absurdity of the self-presentation of Paul's opponents.²⁵

While rejecting Betz's association of Paul's self-presentation with the Socratic tradition,²⁶ E. A. Judge also argues that Graeco-Roman patterns of boasting inform the argument of 2 Cor 10-13. Stating that Paul's opponents in this passage are rhetorically-trained professionals who engaged in self-praise,²⁷ Judge contends that "Paul found himself a reluctant and unwelcomed competitor in the field of professional 'sophistry'" and "promoted a deliberate collision with its standards of value."²⁸ Thus, Paul's foolish boasting represents a parody of the standard principles and content of self-praise in the Hellenistic world.²⁹

Judge concludes that

[t]he key to the extensive and apparently confused material in St. Paul on glory and boasting lies in recognizing the overlap of the two ancient traditions in the matter, Hebrew and Hellenic. The difficulty for modern readers has lain in the fact that the Graeco-Roman practice has been inadequately studied in the classical literature itself...³⁰

In addition to Judge's own work, three of his students have also evaluated 2 Cor 10-13 from the perspective of Graeco-Roman conventions of self-presentation. Peter Marshall argues that Paul's opponents in 2 Cor 10-13 "were Hellenistic Jews who had been educated in rhetoric and belonged to the mainstream of Graeco-Roman cultural tradition."³¹ He also stresses that Paul has been the victim of damaging invective within the Corinthian context.³² In evaluating Paul's response to these opponents in 2 Cor 11-12, Marshall contends that σύγκρισις "is the controlling literary form in this passage"; unlike Judge, Marshall concludes that Paul's use of comparison is an act of self-ridicule rather than a parody of his opponents' actions.³³ Like Marshall, Chris Forbes highlights Paul's use of comparison in 2 Cor 11-12.³⁴ Arguing that Paul accuses his opponents of ἀλαζονεία, Forbes remarks that Paul's emphasis on his weaknesses is a parody of his opponents boastful self-presentation.³⁵ "So far is Paul removing himself from the conventional attitudes of his opponents that, when 'forced' to boast, he will do so only ironically, in order to satirise precisely those kinds of achievements of which his opponents were most proud." Thus, Forbes concludes that "[f]or Paul *self-praise* is never legitimate".³⁶ Similar to Judge, Marshall and Forbes, Bruce Winter contends that the Corinthian church was impressed by sophistic rhetoric and that Paul's opponents in this context were well-trained in rhetorical presentation. He argues that Paul's critique of

²⁵Betz, "Apology", 9-10; *Apostel*, 80-89.

²⁶cf. Judge, "Classical Society", 35; "Socrates", 107-15.

²⁷Judge, "Conflict", 38.

²⁸Judge, "Boasting", 47; cf. "Early Christians", 125-37; "Conflict", 37-40.

²⁹Judge, "Conflict", 40, 45. However, Judge also acknowledges a potential difficulty with describing Paul's foolish discourse as a parody; the difficulty with this view is "that Paul takes his 'foolish' boasting with too much anguish for us to assume it was merely a mockery, unless of course the interjections are themselves part of the irony" ("Boasting", 47).

³⁰Judge, "Conflict", 44.

³¹Marshall, *Enmity*, 399.

³²ibid., 364; "Invective", 359-73.

³³Marshall, *Enmity*, 398, 360.

³⁴Forbes, "Self-Praise", 19, cf. 2-8.

³⁵ibid., 16, 19.

³⁶ibid., 20.

sophistic self-presentation in 1 Cor 1-4 resulted in the criticisms of Paul's self-presentation addressed in 2 Cor 10-13.³⁷ Asserting that Paul was capable of demonstrating substantial rhetorical skills,³⁸ Winter argues that Paul's theological commitments prevented him from acting like his sophistic opponents. Paul's self-presentation was "controlled by an all-encompassing theological interpretation of weakness which was erected upon the paradigm of the Messiah crucified in weakness but now reigning by the power of God (13.4)."³⁹

By investigating rhetorical practices rather than lexical usage, these studies have illuminated possible parallels between Graeco-Roman conventions of self-praise and the treatment of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13. Nonetheless, like the lexical studies mentioned above, these conceptual studies have limitations of their own that suggest a need for additional work in this area. For example, both Betz and Marshall argue that Paul's use of boasting is consistent with the guidelines found in extant rhetorical treatises.⁴⁰ Others, however, while noting similarities between Paul and popular rhetorical practices, point out that this resemblance may be coincidental. Thus, in criticising Betz's view, John Dillon argues that the similarities between Paul and standard rhetorical practice could involve "complete coincidence"; he notes that "[t]hese prescriptions are after all obvious--they are what any gifted natural orator would do".⁴¹ Dillon's observations highlight the importance of further investigation of Graeco-Roman boasting conventions. Formal similarities can be established between these conventions and Paul's self-presentation. However, do these similarities guarantee that Paul's boasting functions in the same way as boasting in the rhetorical handbooks? This question requires an investigation into the factors that shaped Graeco-Roman boasting practices.

3. Theological Studies

In addition to lexical and Graeco-Roman background studies of Paul's boasting, several other discussions of this topic can be mentioned; these studies focus primarily on evaluating Paul's use of boasting theologically. In examining Paul's discussions of boasting, several authors address the importance of Jer 9:22-23. Josef Schreiner notes that the Jeremiah passage implies that knowledge of God is the true basis of boasting; consequently, all other grounds of boasting are diminished.⁴² Furthermore, Schreiner suggests that in referring to the concept of "boasting in the Lord", Paul interprets Jeremiah's oracle christologically. Thus, from Paul's perspective, the acts of God depicted in Jer 9:23 have found their ultimate expression in Jesus Christ. Similarly, in examining the dependence of 1 Cor 1:30-31 on Jer 9:22-23, Gail O'Day highlights Paul's christological interpretation of the

³⁷Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 203.

³⁸On the issue of Paul's rhetorical training and ability, cf. below p. 113.

³⁹Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 228.

⁴⁰Betz, "Apology", 9; cf. *Der Apostel*, 74-79, 95; "De laude", 377-93; Marshall, *Enmity*, 354. For a list of possible similarities between 2 Cor 10-13 and popular rhetorical conventions of self-praise, cf. Dillon, "Response", 17-18; on the standard rhetorical conventions of self-praise, cf. below pp. 46-55.

⁴¹Dillon, "Response", 18; cf. McCant, "Paul's Thorn", 560; similarly, Barnett (*Second Epistle*, 494n1) suggests that while Paul was not "literally dependent on Hellenistic authors", he was "broadly influenced by his cultural context".

⁴²Schreiner, "Jeremia 9,22.23", 538.

prophetic oracle on boasting. “Paul does not focus strictly on Yahweh’s saving acts in the covenant, as Jeremiah does, but on God’s saving acts in Jesus Christ.”⁴³

In addition to these studies that examine Paul’s appropriation of Jer 9:22-23, others focus on the theme of boasting within the theological argument of 2 Corinthians. In his evaluation of 2 Cor 10:12-11:1, K. Wong questions the links that others have drawn between Paul’s boasting and Hellenistic patterns. While stating that Paul’s boasting is Jewish in orientation, Wong argues that Paul does not follow Old Testament patterns slavishly.⁴⁴ In examining 2 Cor 10-13, he contends that the passage has a *theologia gloriae* as well as a *theologia crucis*.⁴⁵ Thus, the concepts of boasting in the Lord and boasting in weakness should not be equated.⁴⁶ He notes that the reference to boasting in the Lord (10:17) occurs within a context that stresses Paul’s missionary achievements; consequently, he concludes that “[b]oasting is legitimate when it pertains to one’s evangelistic accomplishment.”⁴⁷ Similarly, Scott Hafemann argues that Paul recognises a type of boasting that is legitimate; “[t]o boast in the Lord is not, therefore, to cease from boasting, nor is it to engage in another mode of argumentation altogether, but it is simply to boast *only* in what God has actually accomplished in one’s own life and ministry.”⁴⁸ For Hafemann, Paul’s understanding of self-commendation calls into question Käsemann’s view that Paul lacked objective evidence with which he could defend his claim of apostolic authority.⁴⁹ Consequently, Paul does not critique boasting *per se* in 2 Cor 10. Rather, he argues that his boasting has reflected legitimate criteria, while the boasting of his opponents has not.⁵⁰ Like Wong and Hafemann, Jan Lambrecht argues that Paul perceives some boasting to be legitimate; however, Lambrecht concludes that all boasting is “in a certain sense foolish and also dangerous.”⁵¹ Nonetheless, despite potential hazards, Paul’s boasting in 2 Cor 10 functions as an important part of his self-defence.⁵²

Positively, these studies have sought to understand the flow of Paul’s argument in 2 Cor 10-13; they have been helpful in examining Paul’s presentation of legitimate boasting. Unfortunately, however, in examining Paul’s reflections on this topic, these works have not always been attuned to the social and historical contexts within which this reflection occurs. For instance, in defending the view that all boasting is dangerous, Lambrecht argues that Paul’s reference to the necessity of boasting (*καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ*) at 11:30 (cf. 12:1) indicates a reluctance to boast. However, certain Graeco-Roman boasting conventions suggest that Paul’s statement may not imply a hesitancy about boasting. As we will see in the next chapter,⁵³ self-praise was deemed appropriate when used in self-defence; in fact, one was expected to boast if one’s reputation had been questioned. In such circumstances, a standard

⁴³O’Day, “Jeremiah 9:22-23”, 266.

⁴⁴Wong, “Boasting”, 157-60, 163.

⁴⁵*ibid.*, 228-9.

⁴⁶Wong, “2 Corinthians 10:17”, 252-53.

⁴⁷Wong, “Boasting”, 252.

⁴⁸Hafemann, ““Self-Commendation””, 83.

⁴⁹cf. Käsemann, “Legitimität”, 33-71.

⁵⁰Hafemann, ““Self-Commendation””, 76-77.

⁵¹Lambrecht, “Dangerous Boasting”, 326, 337.

⁵²*ibid.*, 364.

⁵³cf. below pp. 20-21, 48.

practice was to state that one was boasting out of “necessity”. Thus, Paul’s comment may reflect his awareness that if he does not reply to the charges against him, he is acknowledging their validity.

Although not exhaustive, this brief survey of previous research has provided a typology of the methods used to study the theme of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13. In the process, we have noted the limitations that tend to characterise each of these methods. In different ways, these approaches are predisposed to omit evidence that is relevant to this topic. Consequently, these limitations reveal the need for further research that is more comprehensive methodologically.

B. THE APPROACH OF THIS STUDY

In investigating the theme of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13, this thesis will attempt to avoid the methodological weaknesses that have been observed in previous research; consequently, three methodological commitments will be foundational to our study. First, as has been stated above, a variety of terms can be used to express the theme of boasting. Moreover, individuals do not necessarily use a verb for “boast” when they engage in self-praise.⁵⁴ Thus, this study will not be restricted to examining boasting at a lexical or structural level; rather, we will attempt to evaluate boasting conceptually.

Second, studies that have sought to understand the conceptual background of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13 have often focused on Graeco-Roman conventions of self-presentation without also investigating this theme in Jewish literature (e.g., Betz, Judge, Forbes). For example, noting differences between “Hebrew and Hellenic” patterns of boasting, Judge states that modern readers are unfamiliar with Hellenic standards but “naturally familiar with the Hebrew notion, which has prevailed in our society”.⁵⁵ Although he links contemporary perceptions of boasting with Jewish traditions about this topic, Judge does not base this association on a thorough investigation of the Jewish evidence. Consequently, to illuminate the examination of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13, we will explore this theme in *both* Graeco-Roman and Jewish literature.

Third, in the overview of previous research, we noted disagreement concerning the relationship between Paul’s boasting and Graeco-Roman rhetorical standards. In addressing this issue, we will seek to move beyond an examination of formal similarities and attempt to understand the function of boasting in the literature surveyed. “Methodologically, it is necessary to show, not just that parallels to Paul’s terminology or arguments exist in Greco-Roman texts, but that these are also paralleled in *function* in both places in order not to treat *topoi* (both Pauline and Greco-Roman) in isolation from their conceptual and rhetorical frameworks.”⁵⁶ Thus, we will examine the concepts and conventions that governed and controlled the practice of self-praise; this will provide insight into the criteria by which boasting was evaluated.

With these principles in view, Chapter One will investigate the theme of boasting in Graeco-Roman literature and discuss the rationale behind the practice and limitation of self-praise. In Chapter Two, we will explore the theme of boasting in Jewish literature and pay particular attention to Jer 9:22-23 and its interpretative tradition. Chapters Three and Four

⁵⁴This point is made by Winter (*Philo and Paul*, 222n84) in criticising Bosch’s work.

⁵⁵Judge, “Conflict”, 44.

⁵⁶Mitchell, *Paul*, 67n8; cf. Malherbe, “Hellenistic Moralists”, 275, 325.

will focus on 2 Cor 10-13. Chapter Three will discuss the literary and historical setting of this passage; this will include an examination of the charges that have been made against Paul in the Corinthian context. Building on the work of these chapters, the final chapter will address the theme of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13. In this analysis, we will attempt to answer several questions: (1) for Paul, what is the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate boasting? (2) can legitimate boasting include boasting in one's activity, and (3) what is the relationship between Paul's boasting and boasting practices evident in Graeco-Roman and Jewish sources? In answering these questions, we will see that the triadic pattern of relationships between the righteous, the wicked and God found in various Jewish texts provides a conceptual structure to understand Paul's discussion of boasting in this passage.

I. BOASTING IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD

In evaluating Paul's use of self-praise, several authors suggest that Paul's self-presentation reflects standard rhetorical discussions of this topic.¹ Since Graeco-Roman rhetorical conventions may have influenced Paul's discussion of boasting, an examination of these boasting practices is relevant to our study of 2 Cor 10-13. The most extensive discussion of self-praise in Graeco-Roman literature occurs in Plutarch's "On Inoffensive Self-Praise" (*Mor.* 539B-547F). Plutarch begins his treatise with this statement: "In theory, my dear Herculanus, it is agreed that to speak to others of one's own importance is offensive [ἐπαχθές], but in practice not many even of those who condemn such conduct avoid the odium [ἀηδίαν] of it" (*Mor.* 539B). This quote suggests two divergent types of social and ethical factors at work. On the one hand, certain reasons existed to view self-praise, or specific types of self-praise, as inappropriate and problematic; Plutarch's essay reflects widely-held concerns about the acceptability of boasting.² On the other hand, factors encouraging the practice of self-praise were also in operation. In response to these issues, the majority of Plutarch's essay depicts situations and techniques that could render self-praise inoffensive. In other words, the prevailing rhetorical conventions of self-praise³ were related to cultural standards and beliefs.⁴ Thus, in examining boasting in the Graeco-Roman world, this chapter will describe the methods of self-praise and also investigate the rationale for these methods. The first section addresses the concepts and conventions that influenced the practice of boasting; this includes elements that encouraged boasting as well as those that motivated its limitation. In view of these influences, the second section briefly examines the rhetorical conventions of self-praise. Of course, the existence of these procedures does not mean that they were always followed; however, they were generally recognised as the most effective way to use self-praise in a public setting.

As we analyse rhetorical discussions of self-praise, it should be noted that advanced rhetorical education was generally limited to those of higher social status; "to belong to the (admittedly restricted) class of highly educated persons was to have received a systematic training in the techniques of persuasive argument."⁵ For example, Plutarch's treatment of boasting is addressed to the "statesman" (ὁ πολιτικὸς ἀνὴρ; *Mor.* 539D). Nonetheless, while only a small percentage of individuals may have received advanced rhetorical training, the significance of rhetorical conventions was not limited to the interaction of the social elite. "One did not have to be trained as a rhetor to appreciate hearing it or to develop a taste for it."⁶ Various ancient sources acknowledge a widespread interest in rhetorical presentation and its practitioners.⁷ For instance, the sophist Favorinus, in addressing the citizens of

¹e.g., Betz, "Apology", 9; *Apostel.* 74-79; Marshall, *Enmity*, 345.

²In describing Plutarch's treatment of the ethical problems of boasting, H. D. Betz ("De laude", 374-75) states: "For the most part Plutarch presupposes the popular morality and does not explicitly discuss it. It does, however, provide the background for most of what he says, and the philosophical doctrines only provide a rationale for what popular morality knows anyway." Similarly, E. Milobenski (*Der Neid*, 166) notes the significance of Plutarch to the study of Graeco-Roman ethics by describing him as a "reservoir" (*Sammelbecken*) of Greek philosophical traditions.

³Plutarch's discussion of boasting conventions reflects a widespread rhetorical tradition, cf. n154 below.

⁴L. Radermacher ("Studien", 419) notes that self-praise involves ethical questions; thus, it is not surprising to find this essay by Plutarch among his ethical writings.

⁵Heath, *Hermogenes*, 6.

⁶Witherington, *Conflict*, 40n121.

⁷e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.14; 8.9; 77/78.27; Pliny *Ep.* 4.16; Philostr. *VS* 491-92; cf. Litfin, *Proclamation*, 124-26. On the popularity of sophistry in the Hellenistic period, cf. below pp. 26-27.

Corinth, claims that his oratory has charmed women and children as well as men (*Or.* 37.33). Thus, regardless of the social standing of Paul and the Corinthian congregation,⁸ issues of rhetorical self-presentation may be at work in Paul's relationship with this church.⁹

In this discussion, two caveats are in order. First, although this treatment surveys the most significant influences on the activity of boasting, it is not exhaustive; undoubtedly, other factors might also affect self-praise in particular circumstances. Second, this treatment does not imply that the Graeco-Roman world was a homogeneous culture; nonetheless, the themes and viewpoints discussed are evident in a wide variety of sources throughout Graeco-Roman history.

A. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PRACTICE OF SELF-PRAISE

1. Honour

a) Boasting and Honour

Aristotle's most extensive references to boasting occur in his ethical discussions of virtues and vices. Central to his system is the view that virtue is a state of mean between two vices, "one of excess and one of defect" (*EN* 2.6.16). In respect to the virtue of "sincerity" (*ἀλήθεια*), he states that the vice of excess "is boastfulness [*ἀλαζονεία*], and its possessor a boaster" (*EN* 2.7.12). In describing the excess of boastfulness, Aristotle notes that self-praise can result from a desire for "glory" (*δόξης*) or "honour" (*τιμῆς*).¹⁰

Subsequent Graeco-Roman discussions of boasting also acknowledge a general relationship between self-praise and an ambition for distinction and public recognition. As this section will show, many sources acknowledge a legitimate and appropriate pursuit of honour¹¹ as well as the possibility of excessive ambition.¹² In discussions of boasting, criticism of self-praise is often associated with an inappropriate desire for recognition. Plutarch states that "boasting [*περιαντολογία*] has in self-love a powerful base of operations, and we can often detect its assaults even against those who are held to take but a modest interest in glory [*δόξαν*]" (*Mor.* 546B). Elsewhere, he notes that those who are consumed with a desire for "glory" are susceptible to self-praise (*Mor.* 540A; 546C, F; 547B). Likewise, Seneca insinuates a correlation between "vainglory" (*ambitio*) and a tendency to "boast" (*iactatio*; *Ben.* 4.17.1), and Dio Chrysostom states that those who pursue honour can fall "prey to vainglory [*ἀλαζονεία*]" (*Or.* 4.126).

This correlation between boasting and the quest for recognition is evident in the works of Demosthenes and Cicero, who are the most frequent authors mentioned in discussions of self-praise. Plutarch asserts that both men shared a "love of distinction [*φιλότιμον*]" (*Dem.* 3.2). In the *De Corona*,¹³ the standard example of effective self-praise, Demosthenes states that the speech is intended both to "refute the charges alleged against

⁸On the social constituency of the Corinthian congregation, cf. below pp. 124-27.

⁹On the Corinthians' negative evaluation of Paul's speaking ability, cf. below pp. 111-15.

¹⁰In this context, *δόξα* refers to "reputation" (cf. *Rh.* 1.5.8; 1.9.21). "Honour" (*τιμή*) describes the public recognition of one's character and achievements through such acts as "sacrifices, memorials in verse and prose, privileges, grants of land, front seats, public burial, State maintenance" (*Rh.* 1.5.9); in more succinct terms, honour is "the due reward of virtue and beneficence" (*EN* 8.14.2).

¹¹I am using "honour" to describe the public recognition of merit and position as well as the status and reputation that result from that recognition (cf. Aalen, "Glory", 48).

¹²cf. below pp. 25-26.

¹³On the background and content of the *De Corona*, cf. below pp. 40-43.

me” and to “establish my claim to any public distinction [ἀξιῶ τιμᾶσθαι δεικνύναι]” (*De Cor.* 4). In this speech, he is defending himself against charges levelled by Aeschines and arguing that the recognition of his public service is appropriate and justified. While Aeschines has accused Demosthenes of imposture (cf. *In Ctes.* 237), Demosthenes argues that his actions do merit public acknowledgement (*De Cor.* 298-99).

Although Plutarch ascribes φιλοτιμία to both Demosthenes and Cicero, he views Cicero’s pursuit of recognition as excessive. From Plutarch’s perspective, concomitant with this immoderate ambition is inappropriate self-praise. Thus, while Demosthenes’ cautious use of boasting was inoffensive, Cicero’s immoderate boasting manifested an “intemperate desire for fame [ἀκρασίαν τινὰ κατηγορεῖ πρὸς δόξαν]” (*Comp. Dem. Cic.* 2.1-2). Unlike Demosthenes, “Cicero boasted not from necessity¹⁴ but for glory [δόξης]” (*Mor.* 541A). In a more favourable evaluation, Quintilian acknowledges that Cicero has been severely censured in regard to his self-praise; however, he concludes that “we may regard his frequent reference to the deeds accomplished in his consulship as being due quite as much to the necessities of defence as to the promptings of vainglory [*gloriae*]” (*Inst.* 11.1.17). A. D. Leeman notes that “Cicero’s personal desire for glory was well-known in antiquity, and he, too, shows himself conscious of it”.¹⁵ In his defence of Archias, Cicero tells the jury: “I will now proceed to open to you my heart, and confess to you my own passion, if I may so describe it, for fame [*gloriae*], a passion over-keen perhaps, but assuredly honourable” (*Arch.* 11.28; cf. *Att.* 14.17a = *Amic.* 9.14). Consistent with this drive for glory was Cicero’s willingness to engage in self-adulation. After composing an account of his consulship in Greek, he informed Atticus that this piece would be translated into Latin. Furthermore, Cicero was also composing a poem about his achievements, “not to let slip any method of singing my own praises” (*Att.* 1.19). In a subsequent letter, Cicero describes the polish and elegance of his book by stating that it “has exhausted all the scent box of Isocrates, and all the rouge-pots of his pupils, and some of Aristotle’s colours too” (*Att.* 2.1; cf. *Amic.* 5.12). In view of these comments, it is not surprising that Dio Cassius describes Cicero as one “in pursuit of a reputation for sagacity and eloquence such as no one else possessed” (38.12.6); “he [Cicero] was the greatest boaster alive” (38.12.7).

These examples depict a relationship between self-praise and the pursuit of recognition. They also raise certain questions about honour. To what extent is honour a noble goal? What differentiates acceptable from unacceptable ambition? Before addressing these questions directly, it is important to observe the appropriateness of honour in response to noble achievement.

b) The Appropriateness of Honour

(1) Association of Virtue and Honour

Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* opens with a discussion of the highest good. What is the highest of all goods that action can achieve? Aristotle notes that the great majority of people are agreed on this question; the answer is “happiness” (εὐδαιμονία; *EN* 1.4.2; cf. *Rh.* 1.5.1).¹⁶ However, the exact nature of this “happiness” is a matter of dispute. Ultimately,

¹⁴In the *De Corona*, Demosthenes states that it is “necessary” for him to boast (*De Cor.* 4), cf. below p. 41.

¹⁵Leeman, *Gloria*, 189. For the development of the concept of *gloria* in the writings of Cicero, cf. Sullivan, “Cicero”, 382-391.

¹⁶On Aristotle’s discussion of εὐδαιμονία, cf. Kenny, *Aristotle*, 4-42.

Aristotle concludes that happiness cannot be equated with the pursuit of honour. While honour may be chosen as a means to happiness, happiness is never chosen as a means to pleasure or honour. Aristotle concludes that happiness is chosen as an end in itself; “happiness above all else appears to be absolutely final in this sense” (*EN* 1.7.5; cf. 1.5.5; 1.7.8).

Although Aristotle argues that honour is too superficial to be the ultimate goal of life (*EN* 1.5.4), he does not imply that honour is worthless. His perception of honour is evident in his description of the “great-souled man” (μεγαλοψυχός), who is the ultimate embodiment of virtue (*EN* 4.3.14). Since honour is the greatest external good (*EN* 4.3.10), Aristotle defines μεγαλοψυχία in terms of a proper relationship to honour; “honour is the object with which the great-souled are concerned, since it is honour above all else which great men claim and deserve” (*EN* 4.3.11). Central to Aristotle’s presentation is a close link between virtue and honour. Virtuous activity is described as being praiseworthy.¹⁷ Similarly, Aristotle suggests that the presence of genuine praise is an indication of virtue (*EN* 2.6.12). This close relationship highlights the appropriateness of honouring the achievements of others. Aristotle notes that those who have done good are “justly and above all honoured” (*Rh.* 1.5.9). In describing the μεγαλοψυχός, he states that just as honour is properly offered to the gods (cf. *EN* 1.12.3), so honour should be the prize awarded for the noblest deeds; for “honour is the prize of virtue, and the tribute that we pay to the good” (*EN* 4.3.15; cf. 8.14.2). This correlation between virtue and recognition has implications for personal motivation; it engenders a desire for honour. “[M]en’s motive in pursuing honour seems to be to assure themselves of their own merit; at least they seek to be honoured by men of judgement and by people who know them, that is, they desire to be honoured on the ground of virtue” (*EN* 1.5.5; cf 8.8.2).

Aristotle is not alone in emphasising the association between honour and noble achievement. Isocrates admonishes his Athenian audience to “honour and cherish” those who distinguish themselves publicly in their training and leadership abilities (*Antid.* 309). In *Against Leptines*, Demosthenes addresses a law proposed and enacted by Leptines concerning grants of exemption from public service. Following the financial strains on Athens of the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.) and the Social War (357-355 B.C.), Leptines was responsible for a law that revoked all previous grants of exemption for public service and made such immunities illegal in the future. In arguing against Leptines, Demosthenes states that the law shows the Athenians to be “ungrateful” (ἀχαρίστους; *Lept.* 10). He accuses the supporters of this law of “baseness” (κακία), and comments that they have cheated those who have benefited the city (*Lept.* 6, 9). Thus, the law should be repealed because acts of public service demand recognition.

At the level of popular morality, K. J. Dover notes that this relationship between virtuous achievement and honour was prevalent in classical Athens. As an example, he states that when an Athenian asserted “I want to be honest”, this was equivalent to saying “I want to be regarded as honest”. “In such cases there was no intention, of course, of drawing a distinction between disguise and reality; it was rather that goodness divorced from a reputation for goodness was of limited interest.”¹⁸

¹⁷e.g., *EN* 1.12.1-8; 2.7.8; 4.4.4; 4.7.6; 4.7.13; *EE* 3.5.14; 3.7.10.

¹⁸Dover, *Morality*, 226.

A variety of literary sources underscores this connection between achievement and recognition throughout Graeco-Roman history. For instance, noting that personal pettiness can lead one to diminish the accomplishments of others, Diodorus Siculus argues that “men of good understanding should award to those who by diligent efforts have won success the praise [ἔπαινον] due to excellence, but should not carp at the human frailties of those whose success is small” (26.1.3). Consistent with this assessment, he acknowledges the appropriateness of certain honours given to Julius Caesar (32.27.3). He also asserts that honour “gained by noble deeds” is the highest reward of those in public life (31.3.2), and he often includes reference to a leader’s honours following discussion of a military victory or public success (e.g., 16.20.6). Likewise, in Valerius Maximus’s *Memorable Words and Deeds*, a handbook of moral instruction, the author includes sections on both “The Love of Glory” and “The Rewards of Virtue”.¹⁹

One of the most significant pieces of evidence for the first-century relationship between achievement and honour is the *Res Gestae* of Caesar Augustus. The *Res Gestae* was one of four documents written by Augustus and deposited with the Vestal Virgins in order to be read in the Senate after his death; it was a “record of his enterprises” (*rerum a se gestarum*; Suet. *Aug.* 101.4) that was to be engraved on two bronze tablets outside his mausoleum (Dio Cass. 56.33.1).²⁰ The first fourteen chapters of this document describe the honours conferred upon Augustus and the services for which they were rendered. This section typifies a rhetorical pattern evident throughout the work. Consistently, first person forms are used to describe Augustus’ achievements, while third person constructions depict the honours bestowed on him. Thus, the honours bestowed by others on Augustus were appropriate responses to his actions.²¹ The *Res Gestae* moves to a climax in the last two paragraphs which include references to the most important honours given to the emperor, such as the titles “Augustus” and “Father of my Country” (*RG* 34-35). Also in this section, Augustus specifically mentions a shield given in recognition of “my valour [*virtutis*/ἀρετήν], my clemency [*clem(entia)*/ἐπέκειαν], my justice [*iustitia(e)*/(δ)ικαιοσύνην], and my piety [*pietatis*]/εὐσέβειαν” (*RG* 34). In analysing these attributes, E. Ramage notes an implied connection between *virtus* and *honor* (“honour”). He also observes that this connection was natural, since the two moral qualities had been deified and worshipped as a pair since 205 B.C.;²² in fact, by Pompey’s time they shared four sanctuaries in Rome.²³ Consequently, in its description of the honours bestowed on Augustus, the *Res Gestae* implies that these accolades have not been extravagant; rather, they have been the warranted actions of the people in response to their leader.

¹⁹cf. Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, xi-xvii.

²⁰Although the inscription outside Augustus’ mausoleum was never discovered, the majority of the text was found in an inscription at Ancyra in Galatia in 1555. Referred to as the *Monumentum Ancyranum*, this inscription includes the Latin text with a Greek translation. In this century, more fragmentary copies have been found in Pisidia at Apollonia (1911) and Antioch (1933). For the discovery of these copies and the reconstruction of the text, cf. Kornemann, “Monumentum Ancyranum”, 212-17.

²¹cf. Ramage, “*Res Gestae*”, 21.

²²Noting the way honour was viewed as the “prize” of virtue, Augustine writes: “That this ideal was ingrained in the Romans is shown by the temples of two gods that they set up in closest proximity, those of Honor and Virtus, since they took as gods the gifts of God. This gives us a clue to the goal of virtue that they chose, and the standard by which the good among them gave judgement, namely honour” (*CD* 5.12).

²³On the Roman sanctuaries to Honor and Virtus, cf. Bieber, “*Honor*”, 25-34.

(2) *Benefaction Relationships*

In terms of social conventions, the relationship between achievement and honour in the *Res Gestae* is akin to the patterns of relationships between benefactors and beneficiaries prevalent in the ancient world. “A dominant feature of Graeco-Roman culture in its various phases is the association of unusual merit, as manifested by esteemed members of narrower or broader community, with the response made by the beneficiaries of such merit.”²⁴ In the case of the *Res Gestae*, Augustus was the benefactor who has provided peace and stability for the empire; the people of the empire were the beneficiaries who have responded with acts of honour and recognition.²⁵ This type of relationship was evident at other social levels. For example, it could involve a benefactor who provided public services for a community, a person who provided support for a club or association, or a patron and an individual client.²⁶ While these examples are diverse, central to all benefactor/beneficiary relationships was the significance of reciprocity.²⁷ Concomitant with the benefaction was the expectation that the recipient would respond appropriately (cf. [Aris.] *Rh. Al.* 1421b27-1422a1); thus, the beneficial act produces a debt that must be repaid.²⁸ Seneca notes that the greatest debt is “a benefit received” (*Ep.* 81.17). Generally, benefactor/beneficiary relationships were asymmetrical; they involved a benefactor who was superior in status or wealth to those who benefited from his actions.²⁹ In this situation, the beneficiary might repay the debt in some form of public honour or recognition (cf. Aris. *EN* 8.14.3).

At a public level, these benefactor/beneficiary relationships were strategic for the maintenance of public services. As individuals provided various forms of public support, they were rewarded by different types of civic honours.³⁰ D. Engels notes that “the Greek and Roman aristocrat of the early Empire, strolling down the main street and market place of his community, would see hundreds of honorary inscriptions and statues dedicated to the public servants of the past, some perhaps, his own ancestors, extending back for centuries.”³¹ Ultimately, the possibility of acquiring honours and status was a powerful motivating force for public service.³² While noting that some benefactions were not performed for public display, A. R. Hands states that “in the records of the acceptance of such gifts, the motive which is constantly ascribed to the donor by the recipient--and, indeed, asserted by the donor himself--is *philotimia* or *philodoxia* (love of honour or glory)”.³³ The influence of φιλοτιμία as a motivation for benefaction is evident in Seneca’s treatise on giving and receiving (*On*

²⁴Danker, *Benefactor*, 26.

²⁵For the role of emperor as benefactor, cf. Veyne, *Bread and Circuses*, 292-419.

²⁶For examples of a variety of benefactor/beneficiary relationships, cf. Chow, *Patronage*, 41-82.

²⁷Richard Saller (*Patronage*, 1, 23) notes that one defining element of a patronage relationship is “the reciprocal exchange of goods and services”.

²⁸cf. Mott, “Giving and Receiving”, 60.

²⁹Saller (*Patronage*, 1) states that patronage relationships are asymmetrical “in the sense that the two parties are of unequal status and offer different kinds of goods and services in the exchange”.

³⁰For the types of honours awarded, cf. Danker, *Benefactor*, 467-68.

³¹Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 129.

³²“The machinery of Greek city life was sustained by interaction between rich and poor: the rich were led by love of honor (*philotimia*) and fear of envy to be generous to their humbler fellow-citizens, while these in turn rewarded them with an elaborately graded range of distinctions. Of these a statue was among the highest, so that in this period the word for ‘honor’ (*time*) was synonymous with it.” (Jones, *Roman World*, 31).

³³A. R. Hands, *Charities*, 43; cf. Dill, *Roman Society*, 231-32.

Benefits). Arguing against the popular view that one should benefit others because of the expectation of a particular return, he argues that “we need to be taught to give willingly” (*Ben.* 1.4.3; cf. 4.1.3); the possibility of an ungrateful recipient should not impede benevolent activity (*Ben.* 1.1.9).

In light of the reciprocal nature of benefactor/beneficiary relationships, ingratitude to benefactors was a social transgression. Thus, Seneca states that the person who does not repay a benefit “sins” (*Ben.* 1.1.13; cf. *Ep.* 81.17). In *Or.* 31, Dio Chrysostom addresses the issue of improper recognition of benefactors in Rhodes; specifically, he criticises the practice of switching inscriptions on statues. With the streets of Rhodes extensively populated by statues,³⁴ the practice of switching inscriptions became common in Rhodes. Instead of erecting new statues, inscriptions were changed on statues already in existence (*Or.* 31.9). In his critique of this practice; Dio stresses the importance of proper commendation for those who have assisted the city. “[I]f we except the honours which we owe the gods, which we must regard as first in importance, of all other actions there is nothing nobler or more just than to show honour to our good men and to keep in remembrance those who have served us well” (*Or.* 31.7). In view of this responsibility to honour leading citizens appropriately, Dio concludes that the actions of the Rhodians “must be ascribed to ingratitude, envy, meanness and all the basest motives” (*Or.* 31.25).

(3) *Virtue, Honour and Self-Praise*

To some extent, this close link between achievement and recognition, particularly in benefactor/beneficiary relationships, provides rationale for certain aspects of the rhetorical conventions of self-praise. Ideally, since honour naturally followed achievement, one should receive recognition without being required to praise oneself. While critical of self-praise, Plutarch’s discussion of boasting does presume that noble accomplishments would be duly acknowledged by others.³⁵ However, when honour was not properly bestowed or one’s status was not suitably appreciated, boasting could be a legitimate recourse of self-defence (*Mor.* 540C). Thus, self-praise is authorised by the inappropriate response of others. For example, Demosthenes’ boasting in the *De Corona* is acceptable because he has not received the recognition he deserves (*Mor.* 541E). In the speech itself, Demosthenes assumes that he should be honoured. His speech includes recitation of the decree of honour that has been made in his behalf (*De Cor.* 84); his argument stresses the legal precedents that mandate the fulfillment of this decree. Concerning a gift he has made to the theatre fund, he states “the benefaction deserves gratitude and formal thanks”; he argues that “this distinction is recognised both in the statutes and in your moral feelings” (*De Cor.* 113-14). Thus, his utilisation of self-praise results from acts of beneficence that have not been reciprocated.³⁶ Ultimately, as this speech indicates, the close relationship between achievement and recognition results in circumstances when self-praise is regarded as acceptable and appropriate.

³⁴3,000 in number according to Pliny the Elder (*H.N.* 34.17.36).

³⁵*Mor.* 539C; cf. 540B. Plutarch’s discussion assumes that one’s achievements are matters of public knowledge; his advice is addressed to the “statesman” (ὁ πολιτικός ἀνὴρ; *Mor.* 539D), who is a public figure. In describing Roman urban life, Ramsey MacMullen (*Social Relations*, 62) remarks on the high degree to which city life was lived openly and publicly. “Thus, whatever one was or did, everybody knew at once.”

³⁶cf. Danker, *Benefactor*, 468.

c) The Presence of Ambition

(1) *The Widespread Desire for Honour*

Concomitant with this close relationship between achievement and recognition in the Graeco-Roman world was a prevailing desire for honour (“ambition”, φιλοτιμία).³⁷ In describing social factors that characterised Greek culture, Alvin Gouldner notes that a “central, culturally approved value of Greek life, embedded in and influencing its system of stratification, is an emphasis on individual fame and honor.”³⁸ Similarly, A. D. Leeman states that the “aspiration to glory” was “an important psychological and historical factor in ancient civilization.” He notes a common distinction found in philosophical sources between those classes of individuals who pursue honour and glory (φιλότιμοι), those who seek money and pleasure (φιλοχρήματα), and those who desire knowledge (φιλόσοφοι). He states that “[i]n Greek and Roman society the class of the φιλότιμοι was the leading one and was indeed the only one really appreciated.”³⁹ Concerning the concept of φιλοτιμία, Ramsey MacMullen observes that “[n]o word, understood to its depths, goes farther to explain the Greco-Roman achievement.”⁴⁰ Cicero’s defence of Archias (62 B.C.) provides a clear example of the presence of ambition in the Graeco-Roman world. In this speech, Cicero states that “[a]mbition is an universal factor in life, and the nobler a man is, the more susceptible is he to the sweets of fame. We should not disclaim this human weakness, which indeed is patent to all; we should rather admit it unabashed” (*Arch.* 11.26; cf. 11.29). Underlying Cicero’s argument is an appeal to the patriotism and ambition of the jury.⁴¹

Although ambition was often associated with powerful political figures,⁴² it was not restricted to the political elite. Horace notes that “Glory [*Gloria*], with her gleaming chariot, draws on as her prisoners the unknown no less than the nobly born” (*Sat.* 6.23-4).⁴³ Writing in the second century A.D., Lucian recounts the suicide of Peregrinus, a travelling teacher who sought to gain fame and renown by throwing himself on a funeral pyre in defiance of death. Lucian describes him as one “desperately in love with glory” (*Peregr.* 34); after describing Peregrinus’ death, the author observes that ambition is “unescapable even by those who are considered wholly admirable” (*Peregr.* 38; cf. *Tac. Hist.* 4.6). Dio Chrysostom suggests that the various forms of recognition for public benefaction fuelled the desire for reputation and fame (*Or.* 66.2; cf. 31.2).⁴⁴ Thus, state-sponsored honours generated social pressures increasing ambition⁴⁵ and provided a visible means to display one’s status and achievements.⁴⁶ Epitaphs from the Graeco-Roman period also provide strong evidence for the ubiquitous drive for recognition. “[I]t is on their tombs that the

³⁷On the theme of honour in the Roman world, cf. Lendon, *Honour*, 30-106.

³⁸Gouldner, *Enter Plato*, 42.

³⁹Leeman, *Gloria*, 177.

⁴⁰MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 125.

⁴¹P. A. Brunt (*Imperial Themes*, 292n10) states that *Arch.* 12-32 is the “*locus classicus*” for the value individual Romans set on *gloria*.

⁴²e.g., Alexander the Great (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.4; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 4.4); Julius Caesar (Diod. Sic. 32.27.5).

⁴³translation from Brown, *Satires*.

⁴⁴cf. Lendon, *Honour*, 34-35.

⁴⁵Interestingly, φιλοτιμία can mean “lavish outlay for public purposes” as well as “desire for honour” (e.g., Plut. *Cic.* 8.1; *Phocion* 31.3; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 46.3; cf. LSJ, 1941).

⁴⁶On symbols of status in the Roman world, cf. Garnsey, *Status*, 234-59.

passion of the Romans for some sort of distinction, however shadowy, shows itself most strikingly.... Even the dealer in aromatics or in rags will make a boast of some petty office in the college of his trade.”⁴⁷ In this quest for recognition, one epitaph even records a mole catcher bragging of his achievements.⁴⁸

Socially, the pursuit of honour did not occur in isolation but in competition with others. Demosthenes states that “the freedom of a democracy is guarded by the rivalry [ἄμιλλα] with which good citizens compete for the rewards offered by the people” (*Lept.* 107; cf. 102). Victor Pfitzner notes that “[f]eats in every field of endeavour were acclaimed, so that the entire civic life of a Greek became, as it were, an Agon, a sphere in which to exert himself and excel over others.”⁴⁹ This emphasis on competition was not strictly a Greek phenomenon. For instance, after the death of Quintus Hortensius, Cicero describes this orator as “one with whom rivalry was more glorious than to have been quite without a rival” (*Brut.* 1.2; cf. 94.323). Similarly, in recounting the reign of Vespasian, Tacitus suggests that the Roman Empire is in constant competition with the achievements accomplished by previous generations (*Ann.* 3.55). Noting the vitality of competitive ambition in the first and second centuries A.D., C. P. Jones writes:

Desire for honor and glory was ubiquitous: cities struggled to be first in their province or to have a temple of the imperial cult, as individuals struggled to be the ‘first men’ of their city or to wear the gold crown and purple robe of office. These yearnings for distinction were all the keener now that the dead weight of peace forbade more overt forms of aggression: it is not for nothing that those who opposed such rivalries, like Dio and Aelius Aristides, constantly compare them with the classic wars of Athens and Sparta.⁵⁰ Thus, in the hierarchical social structures of the Roman world, the pursuit of honour was a competitive task that achieved and maintained one’s social standing.⁵¹

(2) *Factors Motivating the Desire for Honour*

Various factors contributed to the desire for honour in the Graeco-Roman world. For instance, recognition was valued as a means to a type of immortality. Through honour, one’s achievements would still be remembered after one’s death. Commenting on Plato’s description of immortality gained through honour (*Men.* 236D), Dionysius of Halicarnassus contends that “the view that the praise [ἔπαινος] of noble deeds can immortalize the honour and the memory of brave men has been stated by countless numbers of writers before” (*Dem.* 25).⁵² Isocrates states that “men of ambition and greatness of soul [φιλοτίμους καὶ μεγαλοψύχους]” are “zealously seeking glory [δόξης] rather than existence, and doing all that lies in their power to leave behind a memory of themselves that shall never die” (*Evag.* 2-3). In the competitive world of classical Greece, “[i]t was ‘fame immortal’ that had been culturally prescribed as the highest goal; it is fame immortal to which the ideal contestant has

⁴⁷Dill, *Roman Society*, 210; cf. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 62-63.

⁴⁸Goldman, “Eutresis”, 179-81; cf. Lattimore, *Epitaphs*, 287. For the variety of vocations mentioned in epitaphs, cf. Savage, *Power Through Weakness*, 85.

⁴⁹Pfitzner, *Agon Motif*, 17.

⁵⁰Jones, *Roman World*, 85.

⁵¹“The basic organisational principle of the social systems of the ancient world was hierarchic structure, but social mobility existed in varying degrees. Roman society evolved into one of the most hierarchic and status-conscious social orders in mankind’s history” (Reinhold, “Status”, 275).

⁵²i.e., Dionysius is criticising Plato for a lack of originality.

been oriented...”⁵³ Centuries later, this association between honour and immortality was still apparent.⁵⁴ Thus, in his critique of the Rhodian practice of changing honorary inscriptions on statues, Dio Chrysostom argues that noble men “deem it a reward worthy of their virtue not to have their name destroyed along with their body and to be brought level with those who have never lived at all, but rather to leave an imprint and a token, so to speak, of their manly prowess” (*Or.* 31.20).

Honour was valued not only as a means to immortality but also as an encouragement to virtue and achievement (cf. Quint. *Inst.* 1.3.7). Lucian asks: “if the love of fame should be banished out of the world, what new blessing should we ever acquire, or who would want to do any glorious deed?” (*Ath.* 36). Diodorus Siculus observes that “by the praise of noble behaviour the minds of many are prompted to right action” (23.15.1). He also argues that it is “both just and beneficial” for a society to commend its noble rulers; for through public honours “many men of later generations will be impelled to work for the general good of mankind” (11.38.6; cf. 37.4.1). Thus, the competitive drive for honour benefited society by encouraging individuals to achievements in behalf of the general public. Diodorus argues that “the Romans, by rivaling one another in promotion of the common weal, achieve the most glorious successes” (31.6.1; cf. August. *CD* 5.18).⁵⁵

For honour to be an effective motivation, it must be limited. “When someone is honoured, the honour is necessarily withheld from others who wanted it just as badly; no one can win unless someone else loses, and an honour shared with everybody is a doubtful honour.”⁵⁶ In his criticism of Demosthenes, Aeschines warns the Athenians about bestowing honours too flippantly (*In Ctes.* 177). He argues that the city will suffer as the standard for honour is lowered (*In Ctes.* 178-79); by contrast, it is “because the reward is rare, I believe, and because of the competition and the honour, and the undying fame that victory brings” that “men are willing to risk their bodies, and at the cost of the most severe discipline to carry the struggle to the end” (*In Ctes.* 180). In later Graeco-Roman literature, the limited nature of honour is still assumed. In his earliest rhetorical treatise, Cicero discusses arguments orators can use against the bestowal of a particular honour. For instance, one may argue that “the rewards for heroism and devotion to duty ought to be considered sacred and holy and should not be shared with inferior men nor made common by being bestowed on men of no distinction”; one may also maintain that “men will be less eager to be virtuous if the reward of virtue is made common” (*Inv.* 2.114). Similarly, Plutarch warns orators that a listener may be unwilling to grant recognition because “he feels that he is robbing himself of every bit that he bestows on another” (*Mor.* 44B). Thus, in a competitive environment where honour was limited, ambition functioned as a catalyst for achievement and manifested and reinforced the importance of recognition in the Graeco-Roman world.

d) The Critique of Ambition

1) Ambition and Rhetoric

Although ambition was a prevalent social factor throughout Graeco-Roman history, there were critics who lamented its pervasive influence. Their objections often concerned the

⁵³Gouldner, *Enter Plato*, 96.

⁵⁴e.g., Cic. *Arch.* 11.29; Diod. Sic. 1.1.5; 15.1.1; Quint. *Inst.* 12.11.7; Pliny the Younger *Ep.* 3.21.6.

⁵⁵On the use of competitive comparison in the boasting of Paul’s opponents, cf. below pp. 114, 137-38.

⁵⁶Dover, *Morality*, 232; cf. Gouldner, *Enter Plato*, 49-51.

self-presentation and oratorical activity of public figures (e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 77/78.26-27). A common criticism of the practice of rhetoric was its encouragement of excessive ambition. The Epicurean Philodemus, in his critique of rhetoric as an art, states that “[r]hetoric has said nothing to us about freeing us from love of glory [φιλοδοξία], but rather increases it by praising its advantages, and holding out glory as a prize” (*Rhet.* 2.290, fr. 14).⁵⁷ He also implies that orators are often haughty and boastful (*Rhet.* 2.159 fr. 20; 1.359, col. 70). Since persuasive oratory often generated fame and glory for a rhetor (cf. Quint. *Inst.* 12.11.7), its practitioners could be motivated by relentless ambition (cf. Suet. *Rhet.* 1). Despite the image of the ideal orator as an individual of noble character (e.g., Quint. *Inst.* 1.PR.9, 1.2.3), ignoble motives and character traits were sometimes attributed to public speakers. In criticising the public life of Alexandria, Dio Chrysostom states “to find a man who in plain terms and without guile speaks his mind with frankness, and neither for the sake of reputation [δόξη] nor for gain makes false pretensions, but out of good will and concern for his fellow-men stands ready, if need be, to submit to ridicule and to the disorder and the uproar of the mob--to find such a man as that is not easy....” (*Or.* 32.11; cf. 8.9). Similarly, in his praise of Demosthenes’ oratorical achievements, Plutarch contrasts Demosthenes with those “who are puffed up [φυσωμένους] at such success” (*Comp. Dem. Cic.* 2.3).

Beginning in the first century B.C., a recurrent theme in discussions of rhetoric was a perceived decline in the quality of oratory.⁵⁸ For example, both Quintilian and Tacitus penned essays on this topic.⁵⁹ In noting a decrease in oratory addressing substantive political issues, Tacitus tactfully hints that this change has been furthered by the centralisation of power under the Roman emperors.⁶⁰ Associated with this decline was the rise of the “Asiatic” style of oratory. Although this style of oratory is difficult to define with precision,⁶¹ it is generally viewed as more ornate and ostentatious in comparison with Attic oratory.⁶² Writing at the end of the first century B.C., Dionysius of Halicarnassus describes the ascendancy of Asiatic rhetoric that had occurred since the death of Alexander the Great: Another Rhetoric [Asiatic rhetoric] stole in and took its place [Attic rhetoric], intolerably shameless and histrionic, ill-bred and without a vestige either of philosophy or of any other aspect of liberal education. Deceiving the mob and exploiting its ignorance, it not only came to enjoy greater wealth, luxury and splendour than the other, but actually made itself the key to civic honours and high office, a power which ought to have been reserved for the philosophic art. (*Orat. Vett.* 1)

Similarly, Quintilian contends that the Attic style is “concise and healthy” while the Asiatic approach is “empty and inflated” and “deficient alike in taste and restraint” (*Inst.* 12.10.16;

⁵⁷All Greek citations refer to the volume and page number of Sudhaus, ed., *Philodemi*; for the English translation, cf. Hubbell, trans., “The Rhetorica of Philodemus”, 243-382.

⁵⁸cf. Fantham, “Decline”, 102-16; Kennedy, *New History*, 186-92.

⁵⁹Quintilian’s essay is not extant; however, he refers to it in *Inst.* 5.12.23 and 6.PR.3.

⁶⁰*Dial.* 36-41; cf. Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 181-82; Cameron, *Rhetoric of Empire*, 73-76; Murphy, “Second Sophistic”, 205-7.

⁶¹Commenting on the controversy between Attic and Asiatic oratorical styles at the end of the first century B.C., Stephen Usher (trans. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Critical Essays*, 1:2) states that “this protean debate had become so confused and bedevilled by personalities that it was utterly impossible to say, with any degree of objectivity, what constituted Attic and what Asiatic style.”

⁶²cf. Norden, *Kunstprosa*, 1:367-79.

cf. Cic. *Opt. Gen.* 3.8). Furthermore, critics of the Asiatic style claimed that it involved excessive ambition and boastfulness. Quintilian argues that the Asiatic style reflects the character of both orator and audience, because “the Asiatics, being naturally given to bombast and ostentation, were puffed up with a passion for a more vainglorious [*gloria*] style of eloquence” (*Inst.* 12.10.17). In his biographies of influential Greeks and Romans, Plutarch describes Antony as one who “adopted what was called the Asiatic style of oratory, which was at the height of its popularity in those days and bore a strong resemblance to his own life, which was swashbuckling and boastful [κομπώδη], full of empty exultation and distorted ambition [φιλοτιμίας ἀνωμάλου]” (*Ant.* 2.5). Though critical of this style of oratory, Quintilian does acknowledge that it can be effective in persuading the general public (*Inst.* 12.10.73).

Along with the rise of Asiatic oratory, a resurgence of sophistry occurred between the first and third centuries A.D.;⁶³ this movement was described as a “Second Sophistic” by Philostratus (*VS* 481), who wrote a history of it. Philostratus describes two types of sophist--the pure sophist and the philosophical sophist. The pure sophists were teachers of rhetoric; they taught primarily through declamations, or rhetorical exercises.⁶⁴ The philosophical sophist was more than a teacher of declamation; he also used oratory to expound his political and philosophical views and frequently visited cities throughout the Roman world demonstrating his eloquence.⁶⁵ Often these sophists travelled as ambassadors of their native cities or regions.

The popularity and power associated with sophistry generated ambition and self-promotion among its practitioners. In describing Herod Atticus, one of the leading sophists of the second century A.D., Philostratus states that “so overwhelming was his desire to become famous as an orator, that he assessed the penalty of failure at death” (*VS* 565). More generally, Philostratus describes sophistry as “a profession that is prone to egotism and arrogance” (*VS* 616). For example, upon entering a city it was common for a sophist to deliver a “preliminary speech” called a *διάλεξις, προλαλία, or λαλία*.⁶⁶ This speech served as an introduction and provided an opportunity for the orator to present his character and achievements in a self-flattering tone. The desire for recognition and influence engendered a competitive relationship among sophists.⁶⁷ Thus, in recounting the rivalry between Favorinus and Polemo, Philostratus observes that “when people called Favorinus a sophist, the mere fact that he had quarrelled with a sophist was evidence enough; for that spirit of rivalry of which I spoke is always directed against one’s competitors in the same craft” (*VS* 491).

While the popularity of public oratory provided a means for stressing and preserving significant cultural values, in some cases sophistry involved nothing more than pandering to

⁶³“Sophistry is the movement which saw professional speakers, whom Philostratus proudly identifies as belonging to the tradition of Gorgias of Leontini, travelling to most major cities, exhibiting their eloquence and charging students fees for lectures” (Lim, “Persuasive Words”, 123n20).

⁶⁴cf. Russell, *Declamation*, *passim*.

⁶⁵G. W. Bowersock (*Greek Sophists*, 13) describes this type of sophist as “a virtuoso rhetor with a big reputation.”

⁶⁶cf. Russell, *Declamation*, 77-79; concerning these prologues, Graham Anderson (*Second Sophistic*, 54) notes that “it is often in this medium that sophists are most readily inclined to talk about themselves.”

⁶⁷cf. Poglouff, *Logos and Sophia*, 173-78.

the whims of public opinion. In describing the scene at the Isthmian Games in Corinth, Dio Chrysostom says “one could hear crowds of wretched sophists around Poseidon’s temple shouting and reviling one another, and their disciples, as they were called, fighting with one another, many writers reading aloud their stupid works, many poets reciting their poems while others applauded them,....” (*Or.* 8.9; cf. 77/78.24).⁶⁸ Elsewhere, he criticises those sophists who are merely flatterers (*Or.* 32.11) and do nothing more than repeat the views of their audience (*Or.* 35.11).⁶⁹ Likewise, Seneca writes that “[n]othing has corrupted oratory and all other studies that depend on hearing so much as popular approval” (*Ep.* 102.16). He berates the oratorical practice that is intended simply “to impress the common herd” (*Ep.* 40.4) and asks “what is baser than philosophy courting applause?” (*Ep.* 52.9; cf. *Epict. Diss.* 3.23).

2) *Ambition and Self-Sufficiency*

At a philosophical level, these criticisms of excessive ambition reflected an ongoing debate about the nature of εὐδαιμονία, or “happiness.”⁷⁰ To what extent were “external goods”,⁷¹ or goods external to virtue (e.g., wealth, honour), necessary for happiness? Foundational to much of the denunciation of ambition was the belief that external goods, notably honour, were not central to the *summum bonum* of life. A significant good in Greek thought was the quality of “self-sufficiency” (αὐτάρκεια).⁷² Particularly in Stoic and Cynic thought, the emphasis on self-sufficiency implied that εὐδαιμονία was strictly an internal phenomenon that was independent of external factors.⁷³ Consequently, as individuals pursue honour and recognition, they are yielding their happiness to the control of outside forces.

From a Stoic perspective, the pursuit of honour resulted in “slavery” to the opinions of others. In his fourth oration, Dio Chrysostom presents a fictitious dialogue between Alexander the Great, “the greatest lover of glory” (*Or.* 4.4), and Diogenes, who epitomises the rejection of external goods. Diogenes describes Alexander as a “slave to glory” (*Or.* 4.60) and warns that the individual who chases recognition appoints others “to the mastery over his own happiness” (*Or.* 4.119). Similarly, Epictetus argues that “when you subject what is your own to externals”, you become a “slave” to that which is external (*Diss.* 2.2.13);⁷⁴ Seneca describes this surrender to externals as an enslavement to the whims of fortune (*Sen. Ep.* 9.16, 118.4). The quest for recognition and reputation did not simply entail

⁶⁸Dio’s Eighth Oration is one of his “Diogenes speeches” in which he presents himself as Diogenes, founder of the Cynic sect (cf. Jones, *Roman World*, 49-50).

⁶⁹Philodemus argues that the sophists praised individuals for “qualities considered good by the crowd, and not for truly good qualities” (*Rhet.* 1.216, col. 35a).

⁷⁰For a general overview of this debate, cf. Annas, *Happiness, passim*.

⁷¹cf. Aris. *EN* 1.8.15-17; *Rh.* 1.5.4; [Arist.] *Rh. Al.* 1440b15-25; *Epict. Diss.* 4.7.8-11.

⁷²Glenn Most (“Self-Sufficiency”, 127) defines αὐτάρκεια as “independence of external needs and freedom from external compulsion” and notes that “the extraordinary degree to which this basic ideal underlies so many aspects of ancient Greek life and thought has still not perhaps been adequately recognized”; cf. Annas, *Happiness*, 42; Wilpert, “Autarkie”, 1039-43.

⁷³Stoic thought regarded virtue as “sufficient” (αὐτάρκης) for happiness (cf. *SVF* 1:187; 3:49, 67, 208, 685). Since virtue was the only thing of value and vice the only thing to be avoided, all other things (e.g., external goods) were ἀδιάφορα, or matters of indifference (cf. Jaquette, *Adiaphora Topos*, 37-96). On the Stoic view of εὐδαιμονία, cf. Engberg-Pedersen, “Discovering the Good”, 145-83.

⁷⁴This imagery of “slavery” to externals is common in Stoic thought, e.g., Cic. *Parad.* 40; *Epict. Diss.* 4.7.8-11; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 14, 15 (which are significant sources for the Stoic belief that only the wise man is free).

imprisonment to the opinions of others and the acts of fortune, it also included bondage to one's passions. In Stoic thought, ambition was an example of "desire" (ἐπιθυμία), one of the disorders of the soul.⁷⁵ Dio Chrysostom argues that the individual seeking glory is the victim of a "malady" (*Or.* 66.2), who leads an unstable life because of the influence of "savage emotions" (*Or.* 4.126-7). Rather than lead this life of slavery to popular opinion, Dio argues that "he who has asserted his independence pays no heed to the foolish talk of the crowd" (Dio Chrys. *Or.* 66.23; cf. Cic. *Off.* 1.68).

Although emphasised in Stoic thought, the significance of self-sufficiency was also recognised by other philosophers and moralists. Concomitant with this awareness was the acknowledgement that ambition could be excessive. For example, although Aristotle contends that external goods are required for εὐδαιμονία (*EN* 1.8.15), he still stresses the importance of self-sufficiency (*EN* 1.7.6).⁷⁶ Consequently, he portrays the "great-souled man", the quintessence of virtue, as one who was more concerned with the truth than with the opinions of others (*EN* 4.3.28; cf. 4.3.18). Similarly, while acknowledging the value of "ambition" (φιλοτιμία), Aristotle notes that honour can be pursued excessively (*EN* 4.4.4). Plutarch also sees both positive and negative aspects of ambition. Positively, ambition can drive an individual to great achievements (e.g., *Alex.* 4.4; *Caes.* 48.2); without ambition individuals are ineffective in political situations.⁷⁷ However, improper ambition could lead to an unstable life as "lovers of glory" are "swept now along one course and now along another in their attempts to satisfy desire and passion" (*Agis* 1.1). While those public figures enamoured with glory are servants to the multitude (*Agis* 1.2), the man "whose goodness [ἀγαθός] is complete and perfect will have no need at all of glory [δόξης]" (*Agis* 2.1).

A common theme among those stressing self-sufficiency and criticising ambition is a distinction between true glory and the glory offered by the masses.⁷⁸ For instance, Aristotle's description of "greatness of soul" (μεγαλοψυχία) includes both a concern for honour and a disdain for the multitude; he is aware that this combination might appear contradictory (*EE* 3.5.9).⁷⁹ His solution to the problem is to posit two types of honour--small and great (*EE* 3.5.9). While the "great-souled man" accepts the honours offered by worthy persons, he despises the honours presented by commoners. Similarly, Seneca argues that there is a "difference between renown [*claritatem*] and glory [*gloriam*]--the latter depends upon the judgments of the many; but renown on the judgments of good men" (*Ep.* 102.17; cf. 7.9, 81.13). Dio Chrysostom portrays the ideal king as one who "does not himself covet the praise [ἀγαπᾷ ἔπαινον] of the vulgar and the loungers about the market-place, but only that of the free-born and noble" (*Or.* 1.33).⁸⁰

This delineation of authentic glory implies that honour and ambition *per se* were not being condemned. Generally, honour was valued among Graeco-Roman philosophers and

⁷⁵cf. *SVF* 3:394; n102 below; for the role of passions in Stoicism, cf. Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1:410-23.

⁷⁶cf. Irwin, "Conceptions of Happiness", 206-8.

⁷⁷Crassus was a political nonentity in the Second Punic War (218-201 B.C.) because of his lack of ambition (*Fab.* 25.4).

⁷⁸The distinction originated with Isocrates (cf. *Panath.* 260; Vermeulen, "Gloria", 198).

⁷⁹For a description of this contradiction, see Cooper, "Crowning Virtue", 196-99.

⁸⁰Class distinctions may contribute to the negative views of popular opinion. "It cannot be expected that public opinion and repute among the *dēmos* would control an aristocrat as effectively as the opinion of other aristocrats" (Gouldner, *Enter Plato*, 98; cf. Barry, "Aristocrats", 90-91).

moralists.⁸¹ Honour was viewed as an appropriate response to achievement; it was also acknowledged as a motivation to virtue and as a resource that enabled achievement (cf. Plut. *Agis* 2.1). In light of the value of honour, ambition could be exercised appropriately. Thus, ambition for noble achievement, which results in the appropriate recognition of one's peers, was not criticised; the rebuke of these philosophers and moralists was aimed at the ambition that simply desired popular recognition. Pliny the Younger summarises the point succinctly: "Fame [*gloria*] should be the result, not the purpose of our conduct" (*Ep.* 1.8.14). Of course, in light of the integral relationship between honour and achievement, the distinction between a desire for noble accomplishments and a desire for popular recognition could be difficult to determine (cf. Aris. *EN* 4.4.6).⁸²

3) *Self-Sufficiency and Self-Praise*

Just as an emphasis on self-sufficiency involved criticism of excessive ambition, it also included misgivings about self-praise. The connection between self-sufficiency and criticism of boasting appears in Dio Chrysostom's oration on envy. He states that the "high-minded" man "has no need of any extraneous adornment or adventitious honour"; on the other hand, those who pursue public recognition (i.e., are not self-sufficient) "are to be seen in large numbers among the would-be great--*condottieri* of a sort, popular leaders, and sophists, in theatres or before their pupils or among the tents inside a camp, uttering loud boasts [μεγαλαυχουμένους] on occasions when they chance to be tipsy at mid-day" (*Or.* 77/78.26-27). If happiness were dependent on internal factors alone, than boasting in pursuit of honour was an indication of one's deficiency of virtue and a lack of control over one's passions. For instance, in Plutarch's comparison of Aristides and Cato the Elder, he notes that "contented independence [αὐτάρκεια]" (*Comp. Cat. Ma. Arist.* 4.2) is a major asset for public service. He also states Cato's deficiency in this area:

I do not blame Cato for his constant boasting [τὸ μεγαλύνειν], and for rating himself above everybody else, although he does say, in one of his speeches, that self-praise [τὸ ἐπαινεῖν αὐτόν] and self-depreciation [τὸ λοιδορεῖν] are alike absurd. But I regard the man who is often lauding himself [ἐγκωμιάζοντος] as less complete in excellence [ἀρετήν] than one who does not even want others to do so (*Comp. Cat. Ma. Arist.* 5.2).

Underscoring the idea that excessive boasting is associated with immaturity, Plutarch states that a young man "may be allowed to plume and exalt himself [καλλωπίσασθαι καὶ κομπάσαι]" in glory; "[f]or the virtues, which are incipient and budding in the young, are confirmed in their proper development, as Theophrastus says, by the praises of men" (*Agis* 2.2).⁸³ Similarly, Seneca argues that among those attitudes that "[v]irtue tosses aside" are "haughtiness [*insolentiam*], a too high opinion of one's self and a puffed-up superiority to others" (*De Vita* 10.2).

Although those stressing self-sufficiency were critical of excessive boasting, their criticisms did not usually imply that self-praise was always inappropriate. For example, while emphasising self-sufficiency, Dio Chrysostom does engage in self-praise for the

⁸¹The Cynics were the major exception.

⁸²cf. Lendon, *Honour*, 91-92.

⁸³Plutarch states that a student should learn "to regard modesty and moderation as a mark of refinement, but to be on his guard against boasting [μεγαλαυχίαν] and self-assertion [περιαντολογίαν] as a mark of meanness [φάλλον]" (*Mor.* 29B).

purpose of self-defence (*Or.* 43.2). Furthermore, in defending one of Nestor's speeches in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 1.254-84), Dio argues that boasting may be acceptable if it is done in the best interests of the audience.⁸⁴ Both of these instances are consistent with rhetorical conventions of self-praise.⁸⁵

To some extent, the practice of self-praise by public figures (e.g., orators) and the critique of this activity by philosophers and moralists reflected the dynamic relationship between two central values of the Graeco-Roman world--honour and self-sufficiency. In a competitive environment where honour was valued, self-praise was an invaluable tool in attaining and maintaining one's social status.⁸⁶ On the other hand, from the perspective of those emphasising the importance of self-sufficiency, such activity could involve abdication of the control of one's happiness to others; it could also reveal an inadequacy of ἀρετή. Thus, it is not surprising that self-praise was both performed and condemned in the Graeco-Roman world.

2. Envy

a) The Danger of Envy

Within rhetorical discussions of an orator's self-presentation, a strategic factor affecting the use of self-praise is the problem of envy. Aristotle defines envy as a "kind of pain at the sight of good fortune" (*Rh.* 2.10.1); it is "a feeling of pain, excited, usually if not always, by the successful competition of a real or supposed rival."⁸⁷ In his essay "On Inoffensive Self Praise", Plutarch states that one of the dangers of self-praise is the possibility of generating envy. From the perspective of the audience, he notes "if we listen in silence [to self-praise] we appear disgruntled and envious [φθονεῖν]" (*Mor.* 539D). Elsewhere, as he describes ways to praise oneself without offence, he refers to certain rhetorical conventions as techniques to overcome envy (*Mor.* 540D; 542E-F; 543A, D; 544B).⁸⁸ Plutarch's concern reflects a general consensus about the problems of boasting found in the major treatises on rhetoric. Aristotle observes that sometimes "in speaking of ourselves, we render ourselves liable to envy [ἐπιφθονον]" (*Rh.* 3.17.16). Quintilian also warns public speakers that self-praise can disgust the listener and foster jealousy. "For there is ever in the mind of man a certain element of lofty and unbending pride that will not brook superiority" (*Inst.* 11.1.16). Similarly, Cicero, in addressing the orator's use of praise, comments that "most people are jealous, and this failing is remarkably general and widespread" (*De Or.* 2.52.210); he warns that "the emotion of jealousy [*invidiae*] is by far the fiercest of all, and needs as much energy for its repression as for its stimulation" (*De Or.* 2.25.209).

(1) *Isocrates' Antidosis*

This recognition that self-praise engenders envy is present not only in rhetorical handbooks but also in rhetorical examples. One of the most important examples is the

⁸⁴Plutarch also cites Nestor's speech in reference to appropriate instances of self-praise (*Mor.* 544F); cf. below p. 44.

⁸⁵cf. Plut. *Mor.* 540C-541A; 544F-545A.

⁸⁶Bruce Kaye ("Cultural Interaction", 352) notes that in the Roman tradition, "boasting performs important functions of social differentiation."

⁸⁷Cope, "*Rhetoric*", 2:124.

⁸⁸cf. Milobenski, *Der Neid*, 139-41.

Antidosis by Isocrates.⁸⁹ This piece was written after a public court hearing exposed the envy that others felt towards Isocrates' wealth and success (*Antid.* 6). In response to this situation, Isocrates desired to compose a discourse of his life that would make known the truth about his life and serve as a monument to his achievements after his death (*Antid.* 7).⁹⁰ However, he concedes in the introduction that any attempt to eulogise himself would not succeed without "arousing the displeasure or even the envy [ἀνεπιφθόνως]" of his audience (*Antid.* 8). To avoid this type of offence, he chose to design his speech "in the form of a defence" (ἀπολογίας σχήματι; *Antid.* 8). Consequently, he presents his encomium in the form of a fictitious court case in which he is on trial. He is charged with making "the weaker cause appear the stronger" (*Antid.* 15)--a standard charge against oratory and rhetoric (cf. Plato *Apology* 19B; Aristophanes *Clouds* 874). After the charges have been read, Isocrates, in a manner similar to that of Socrates in Plato's *Apology*, embarks on a lengthy defence.

Isocrates' sensitivity to envy functions at two levels. First, it causes him to present his self-praise in the form of an imagined court case. Second, it affects the approach by which the fictional Isocrates presents his arguments. In his defence, Isocrates responds to criticisms of his association with Timotheus, a former pupil who had recently been convicted of treason by an Athenian jury. Defending Timotheus' character, Isocrates places the blame for the decision primarily on the human foibles of the jury; "if you make allowance for the ignorance which possesses all mankind, for the feelings of envy [φθόνους] that are aroused in us, and, furthermore, for the confusion and turmoil in which we live, you will find that nothing of what has been done has come about without a reason nor does the cause lie outside our human weakness" (*Antid.* 130). If any blame is to be attributed to Timotheus, it involves his "proud bearing" (μεγαλοφροσύνη; *Antid.* 131) and his negligence in developing a public persona that projected a sense of graciousness and kindness (*Antid.* 132). In light of Timotheus' experience, Isocrates expresses a level of uncertainty at this stage in his defence. While he wants to recount his significant achievements, he is aware of those who have been so "brutalised" (ἐξηγρίωνται) by envy that they hate the best men and the noblest pursuits (*Antid.* 142).

At this point in his presentation, Isocrates recounts a conversation with one of his associates who has instructed him to address the jury of this case carefully. Much of this interchange contains this associate's praise for the uniqueness of Isocrates' abilities and achievements. After enumerating numerous accomplishments, this individual asks: "When you say these things to men whose conduct is the opposite of all which has been said, do you not suppose that they will take offence and think that you are showing up the unworthiness of their own lives?" (*Antid.* 146). By ascribing his encomium to someone else, the fictional

⁸⁹As one of the "Ten Attic Orators", a canon of fourth and fifth century B.C. orators (cf. Dion. Hal., *Isoc.* 1-20; Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.76), Isocrates functioned as a major model of rhetorical practice throughout the Hellenistic period (cf. Worthington, "Orators", 244-263). For the legal and historical setting of this essay, cf. Christ, "Antidosis", 147-69.

⁹⁰Noting Isocrates' "desire for renown [δόξης]", Dionysius Halicarnassus writes that "he [Isocrates] wished to be regarded as the wisest man in Greece, and it was with this end in view that he took to setting down his opinion in writing" (*Isoc.* 1). The *Antidosis* is generally regarded as the first significant example of autobiography in classical literature (cf. Misch, *Autobiography*, 1:155; Jaeger, *Paideia*, 3:134).

Isocrates avoids generating envy through self-praise.⁹¹ Thus, as both lead character and author of the *Antidosis*, Isocrates crafts his self-presentation to suppress the possibility of envy.

(2) *Examples from Other Sources*

Intrinsic to Isocrates' self-presentation was an awareness of the danger of jealousy faced by those in public life. Timotheus is an example of the predicament that might face those who were negligent in this area. Similar to Isocrates' treatment of Timotheus, other Graeco-Roman sources also depict the hardships encountered by certain public figures that result from envy. In his extensive treatise on world history, Diodorus Siculus asserts that "envy by its nature lies in wait for success, and therefore works for the destruction of those who are pre-eminent in fame" (8.29.2). At various points in this history, Diodorus notes individuals who have suffered in some way because of envy.⁹² His stated purpose in writing this work is "to provide an accurate estimate of the causes of success and failure" in order to "direct the minds of our readers to the emulation of what is good" (30.15.1). Consequently, to some extent, these accounts encourage readers to give careful consideration to the issue of self-presentation. To those who fail to handle their success with moderation, he warns that "envy dogs those who forget their common mortality" (27.14.1).

Plutarch refers specifically to envy in reference to Athenian ostracism. Enacted at the end of the sixth century B.C., the practice of ostracism provided the citizens of Athens with an annual opportunity to banish a prominent individual who had become unpopular. When an ostracism was held, the person receiving the most votes was exiled for ten years.⁹³ From Plutarch's perspective, this process was actually a way to alleviate envy corporately. After Themistocles' achievements and visibility had become tiresome to the Athenians, he was ostracised. In his account of this event, Plutarch states: "For ostracism was not a penalty, but a way of pacifying and alleviating that jealousy which delights to humble the eminent, breathing out its malice into this disfranchisement" (*Them.* 22.3). In reference to the ostracism of Aristides, Plutarch stresses that this act was not a "chastisement [κόλασις] of base practices", rather, "it was really a merciful exorcism of the spirit of jealous hate, which thus vented its malignant desire to injure, not in some irreparable evil, but in a mere change of residence for ten years" (*Arist.* 7.2).

In recounting the history of Rome, Dio Cassius observes the sensitivity to envy expressed in the actions of influential Romans. Narrating Pompey's assumption of a military command in 67 B.C., Cassius expresses two reasons why Pompey publicly appeared hesitant to assume this command. The first point involved glory; to be appointed to leadership against one's will generated a greater degree of public prestige. Secondly, Pompey camouflaged his true ambition "because of the jealousy that would follow, should he of his own accord lay claim to the leadership" (36.24.5-6). Pompey maintained his public attitude

⁹¹Noting the offence and envy that can be generated through self-praise, Aristotle advises that "we must make another speak in our place, as Isocrates does in the *Philippus* and in the *Antidosis*" (*Rh.* 3.17.16). Similarly, in a letter to Cicero (46 B.C.), Aulus Caecina states that "self-praise is always fettered... the only theme in which you have a free hand is praise of another" (*Att.* 6.7.3; cf. *Amic.* 5.12.8; *Quint. Inst.* 4.1.45; 11.1.22).

⁹²e.g., Pythagoras (10.10.2); Themistocles (11.54.5); Epameinondas (15.72.1); Dioxippus, an Athenian boxer (17.101.2); and Thessalonice, mother of Antipater I (21.7.1).

⁹³On the historical background and practice of ostracism, cf. Kagan, "Ostracism", 393-401; Hands, "Ostracism", 69-79. Plutarch describes the voting procedure at *Arist.* 7.4-5.

of reluctance in a speech delivered after he received this appointment. Acknowledging the threat of envy, Pompey asks: “what person in his right mind could take pleasure in living among men who are jealous of him?” (36.26.2). Similarly, Cassius observes specific occasions when Roman leaders refused to accept public acclamation and honour because of fear of envy;⁹⁴ this wariness is contrasted with the events leading to Julius Caesar’s death. Cassius recounts the honours and privileges granted to Caesar in an ascending order of extravagance. Although Caesar did decline a few honours (44.7.2), he proved to be vulnerable to excessive commendations. Consequently, his opponents sought to honour him at every possible occasion, “because they wished to make him envied and hated as quickly as possible, that he might the sooner perish. And this is precisely what happened” (44.7.3). These references to various victims of envy underscore the concerns about self-praise expressed in the rhetorical handbooks. Self-praise could prove detrimental to those who were unaware of envy and the animosity that it could generate.

b) Causes of Envy

The most extensive treatment of envy in the rhetorical handbooks occurs in Aristotle’s discussion of emotions (*Rh.* 2.2-11), “the earliest systematic discussion of human psychology”.⁹⁵ He notes that individuals envy those “who are near them in time, place, age, and reputation” (*Rh.* 2.10.5).⁹⁶ People envy the achievements of those whom they consider to be similar or equal to themselves. By contrast, individuals do not envy those who are markedly inferior or superior (*Rh.* 2.10.5; cf. *Plut. Mor.* 538A). Envy is particularly associated with the pursuit of glory or honour (*Rh.* 2.9.4); it is a result of rivalry and competition.⁹⁷ Thus, the pursuit of glory and reputation generates envy among rivals; “whence the saying, ‘Potter [being jealous] of potter’” (*Rh.* 2.10.6).⁹⁸ This link between ambitious desire and envy is stated by a variety of authors.⁹⁹ Dio Chrysostom notes that those in pursuit of honour are susceptible to “jealousy” (ζηλοτυπία; *Or.* 4.126). Similarly, Cicero notes that “merits and renown” are “jealousy’s favourite target” (*De Or.* 2.51.208).

Although competitive situations were a contributing factor in the growth of envy, the fundamental cause was related to character imperfection. Envy was widely regarded as one of the worst emotions.¹⁰⁰ Aristotle lists φθόνος among those emotions which do not have a due mean; “it is impossible therefore ever to go right in regard to them” (*EN* 2.6.18).¹⁰¹ Isocrates describes envy as a disease that brutalises and blinds its victims (*Antid.* 13, 142, 259); its only positive attribute is that its greatest evil is done to its possessor (*Evag.* 6).

⁹⁴e.g., Pompey (37.23.4); Julius Caesar (44.11.3); Augustus Caesar (54.1.5).

⁹⁵Kennedy, trans., *On Rhetoric*, 122.

⁹⁶cf. 2.10.2. Noting similarities between Aristotle and Cicero on the objects of envy (*Rh.* 2.10.1-2 and *De Or.* 2.209), Jakob Wisse (*Ethos*, 114) states that the parallels reflect “widespread opinion”.

⁹⁷cf. Cope, “*Rhetoric*”, 2:123; Gouldner, *Enter Plato*, 42-43, 53; on the role of competition in the pursuit of honour, cf. above p. 20.

⁹⁸cf. 2.4.21. The quote from Hesiod (*Works and Days*, 25) refers to the rivalry among craftsmen. In his discourse “On Envy”, Dio Chrysostom examines Hesiod’s aphorism and applies it to a variety of occupations in order to deny its universal validity (*Or.* 77/78).

⁹⁹e.g., Cic. *Att.* 1.19; *Amic.* 1.9.2; *Off.* 1.26; Isoc. *Antid.* 244; Suet. *Ner.* 6.53; Phld. *Rhet.* 2.154, fr. 12; Philostr. *VS* 490-91; *Plut. Mor.* 1046 B-C (referring to Stoic views of envy).

¹⁰⁰cf. Hor. *Epist.* 1.2.58-59; Menander fr. 546 (Kock); Euripides *Ion* fr. 403 (Nauck); Walcot, *Envy, passim*.

¹⁰¹Elsewhere (*EN* 2.7.15) he describes νέμεσις as the mean between φθόνος and ἐπιχαίρεκακία; however, this triad is absent from his lengthier discussion of virtues and vices in *EN* 4.

Expounding a Stoic anthropology, Cicero classifies “envy” (*invidentia*) as a “distress” rather than a disease. According to Stoic thought, “distress” (*aegritudo*) was one of the four categories of “disorders” (*perturbationes*) of the soul (*Tusc. Disp.* 4.14-16).¹⁰² Plutarch acknowledges a general contempt for envy, noting that some are in the habit of “cloaking and concealing their envy with whatever other name occurs to them for their passion, implying that among the disorders of the soul it is alone unmentionable” (*Mor.* 537E).

c) Envy and Other Emotions

In Aristotle’s paradigm, the deficiency of envy is highlighted in its comparison with other emotions. For instance, Aristotle contrasts both “envy” (φθόνος) and “indignation” (νέμεσις) with “pity” (ἔλεος).¹⁰³ However, their resemblances are not complete, for the object of envy is *deserved* good fortune, while indignation is directed toward *undeserved* prosperity.¹⁰⁴ Thus, “indignation” is acceptable while “envy” is not.¹⁰⁵ Although Aristotle specifically addresses “envy” in relation to “pity” and “indignation”, another contrast is also present. This association involves the emotion of “emulation” (ζήλος). Similar to envy, emulation is a distress at the success or fortune of others; however, this distress is “not due to the fact that another possesses them, but to the fact that we ourselves do not” (*Rh.* 2.11.1). Consequently, the achievements and successes of others function as a motivating force for those who are emulous. Aristotle’s references to these two emotions highlight their differences. Envy is ascribed to those who are “little-minded” (μικρόψυχοι; *Rh.* 2.10.3), these are those who are deficient in relationship to the mean of “greatness of soul” (μεγαλοψυχία; *EN* 4.3.35). By contrast, emulation is associated with those who possess “greatness of soul” (*Rh.* 2.11.2), the quintessential embodiment of virtue in Aristotle’s ethical system (cf. *EN* 4.3).

The emphasis on emulation as a proper response to the achievements of others appears in other sources as well. In his advice on how to profit from one’s enemies, Plutarch suggests that in rivalries with others, one should watch “carefully every means by which they get the advantage” and seek “to surpass them in painstaking, diligence, self-control and self-criticism” (*Mor.* 92 C-D). Furthermore, one should acknowledge the honest and legitimate achievements of others. Rather than being consumed by envy, the person who responds appropriately will “put into practice his own ambitions and high aspirations, and will eradicate his listlessness and indolence” (*Mor.* 92 D).

d) The Control of Envy

The possibility of envy had particular implications for the use of self-praise. While an orator’s straightforward reference to his achievements might inspire emulation within a virtuous audience,¹⁰⁶ the same was not necessarily true among those who were vulnerable to the foibles of humanity. Thus, the orator must be aware of the ways in which his self-presentation influenced the emotions and thought processes of the audience. He must adapt

¹⁰²The four disorders are “distress” (λύπη/*aegritudo*), “fear” (φόβος/*metus*), “desire” (ἐπιθυμία/*libido*), and “pleasure” (ἡδονή/*uoluptas*); cf. *Diog. Laert.* 7.110-12; *Virg. Aen.* 6.733.

¹⁰³The other emotions described in *Rh.* 2.2-11 occur in positive/negative pairs (cf. Kennedy, *On Rhetoric*, 122).

¹⁰⁴Noting that the semantic range of *invidia* includes the meanings of both νέμεσις and φθόνος, Wisse (*Ethos*, 290-92) argues that Cicero combines both elements in his conception of envy.

¹⁰⁵Plutarch makes a similar distinction between φθόνος and μῖσος, noting that “hate” can be justifiable while “envy” is not (*Mor.* 537C).

¹⁰⁶cf. below pp. 43-45.

his presentation to reflect the weaknesses of his listeners.¹⁰⁷ If his performance fostered jealousy, he was not likely to receive the verdict that he desired (Aris. *Rh.* 2.10.11).

Plutarch acknowledges the imperfections that can create envy within an audience. He notes that internally the listener may experience the tension between a desire to listen and a desire for repute (*Mor.* 40B). In fact, a tiresome listener may be so “full of festering presumption and ingrained self-assertion [περιαντολογίας]” that he fails to be moved by anything that is said (*Mor.* 44A). Thus, just as Plutarch warns speakers about the offensiveness of self-praise (περιαντολογίας; *Mor.* 539E), he also acknowledges that the same disposition may be at work in one’s listeners.

For the effective orator, avoidance of envy was related to the ability to influence the emotions of the audience. Aristotle observes that emotions are strategic to the rhetorical process because they are “those affections which cause men to change their opinion in regard to their judgements” (*Rh.* 2.1.8).¹⁰⁸ By noting a close relationship between emotions and an individual’s thought processes, Aristotle includes cognition within his definition of emotion.¹⁰⁹ Thus, the arousal or suppression of specific emotions was a strategic part of the rhetorical task of persuading an audience or jury.¹¹⁰ Particularly important for the orator’s presentation was the arousal of goodwill (εὐνοια/*benevolentia*) within the audience.¹¹¹

A contributing factor in securing the goodwill of the listener was the orator’s self-presentation. According to Quintilian, it was the gentler emotions, which he categorises as *ethos* (ἦθος), that generated goodwill; he states that “*ethos* (ἦθος) in all its forms requires the speaker to be a man of good character and courtesy” (*Inst.* 6.2.18). Generally, the type of self-presentation deemed appropriate for developing goodwill involved the absence of ostentation and pretension, or modesty. Cicero states that “attributes useful in an advocate are a mild tone, a countenance expressive of modesty, gentle language, and the faculty of seeming to be dealing reluctantly and under compulsion with something you are really anxious to prove” (*De Or.* 2.43.182; cf. *Inv.* 1.22). One of the purposes of the introduction, or *exordium*, of a speech was to induce goodwill; consequently, it was a common place for the orator’s self-presentation to emphasise modesty.¹¹² Thus, in an attempt to foster goodwill and circumvent envy, an orator’s self-presentation might accentuate modesty and avoid the appearance of haughtiness.

The references to envy in rhetorical literature imply that this hazard was a contributing factor in the development of rhetorical conventions of self-praise. For example, after describing certain ways to render boasting inoffensive, Plutarch notes that “it is perhaps for the altogether intractable [χαλεπούς] and envious [βασκάνους] that such medicines and palliatives must be invented” (*Mor.* 543A). Thus, the limitation of boasting did not

¹⁰⁷cf. Aris. *Rh.* 3.14.8; Cic. *Or.* 8.24; Quint. *Inst.* 11.1.43.

¹⁰⁸The importance of emotions for the rhetorical process was widely recognized (cf. Martin, *Rhetorik*, 158-66); Quintilian notes that “it is in its power over the emotions that the life and soul of oratory is to be found” (*Inst.* 6.2.7; cf. 2.8.8; 3.8.12; Cic. *Or.* 37.128).

¹⁰⁹cf. Fortenbaugh, “Emotion”, 53-55; Grimaldi, *Rhetoric II*, 14-15.

¹¹⁰cf. *Rh.* 1.2.5; 2.1.4; 2.2.27; 2.3.17; 2.4.17; 2.4.32; 2.5.15; 2.9.6; 2.10.11. Aristotle also makes reference to arousing the audience’s emotions towards one’s opponent, *Rh.* 2.4.32; 2.7.5-6; cf. Cic. *De Or.* 2.44.185-87; 2.51-52; Quint. *Inst.* 6.2.25-29.

¹¹¹cf. Aris. *Rh.* 2.1.5-7; Dion. Hal. *Lysias* 24; Cic. *De Or.* 2.43.82; *Part.* 5.15; Quint. *Inst.* 3.8.7, 6.2.8.

¹¹²Dion. Hal. *Lysias* 24; Cic. *De Or.* 2.19.80; *Inv.* 1.22; *Part.* 8.28; Quint. *Inst.* 4.1.5; cf. p. below 35.

necessarily imply that self-praise was inherently invalid; concerns about envy generally focused on the character and response of the listener, not the validity of boasting. The possibility of envy indicated the negative effects that self-praise could have on others; consequently, effective orators should be aware of the reactions that their self-presentation might produce within the audience.

3. Truthful Self-Presentation

a) The Vice of Excess--ἀλαζονεία

Another factor influencing the practice of self-praise was an emphasis on truthful self-presentation. Intrinsic to this stress on truthfulness was criticism of those whose self-presentation was perceived as either excessive or deficient. Aristotle depicts the virtue of “truthfulness” (ἀλαθής) as the mean between “boastfulness” (ἀλαζονεία) and “self-deprecation” (εἰρωνεία; *EN* 2.7.12; *EE* 2.3.4). He defines the “boaster” as one “who pretends to creditable qualities [τῶν ἐνδόξων]¹¹³ that he does not possess, or possesses in a lesser degree than he makes out” (*EN* 4.7.2; cf. *EE* 2.3.7). The ἀλαζών is an impostor who feigns desirable traits or possessions; his actions reflect either a basic inferiority of character or a desire for honour or financial gain (*EN* 4.7.10-13). Similarly, Theophrastus depicts ἀλαζονεία in terms of imposture and stresses the motivation of the ἀλαζών--this individual acts out of ambition for renown. For instance, one of Theophrastus’ illustrations concerns a man of meagre financial means who stands on the shore and boasts of lavish investments in shipping (*Char.* 23.1).¹¹⁴ While the ἀλαζών can be associated with such traits as arrogance, complacency, and simple-mindedness,¹¹⁵ the defining element of this character portrait is usually imposture.¹¹⁶ This image of the “boaster” as an impostor appears throughout the history of Graeco-Roman literature.¹¹⁷ For instance, in criticising Demosthenes, Aeschines accuses him of imposture and requests that “the pretence [ἀλαζονείαν]” of his achievements be separated from “the facts” (*In Ctes.* 256, 237). Centuries later, Martial portrays a number of instances where individuals fraudulently claimed the prerogatives of aristocratic status and achievement.¹¹⁸

The standard view of the ἀλαζών was maintained through rhetorical practice and Graeco-Roman comedy. One of the exercises evident in some rhetorical training involved “characterisation” (ἠθοποιία), in which students depicted individuals in terms of particular character traits.¹¹⁹ In describing this aspect of rhetoric, the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* states that “Character Delineation consists in describing a person’s character by the definite signs which, like distinctive marks, are attributes of that character” (*Rhet. Her.* 4.50.63). As an example, the author depicts the “boastful” (*gloriosi*; *Rhet. Her.* 4.51.65) man. While this individual seeks to impress others, “all his conversation is spent in boasting” (*ostentatione*; *Rhet. Her.* 4.50.63). For instance, he takes guests to a house that he

¹¹³Irwin (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 110) translates ἐνδοξος in this passage as “qualities that win reputation”.

¹¹⁴R. G. Ussher (trans. and ed., *The Characters of Theophrastus*, 193) notes that it is verbal boasting “that is chiefly illustrated in this sketch”.

¹¹⁵cf. Ribbeck, *Alazon*, 51-52.

¹¹⁶cf. Rusten, trans. and ed., *Characters*, by Theophrastus, 178.

¹¹⁷cf. Pogoloff, *Logos and Sophia*, 224-27.

¹¹⁸e.g., Mart. *Ep.* 5.8, 14, 23; on the usurpation of symbols of social rank, cf. Reinhold, “Status”, 275-302.

¹¹⁹cf. Quint. *Inst.* 6.2.17; Cic. *De Or.* 3.53.204; Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric*, 64.

does not own and presents it as his residence (*Rhet. Her.* 4.51.64). From the author's perspective, this type of imposture was a standard element in the characterisation of boasting.

In addition to being a standard part of rhetorical characterisation, the ἀλαζών was also a common figure in Graeco-Roman comedy. The author of the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, argued by some to be Aristotle himself,¹²⁰ describes the characters of comedy as “the buffoonish, the ironical and the boasters” (sec. 12).¹²¹ As a popular comedic character, the clearest example of the ἀλαζών in ancient comedy is found in the *Miles Gloriosus* (“Braggart Warrior”) of Plautus.¹²² In the prologue, a slave introduces the braggart soldier as “a bragging [*gloriosus*], brazen, stercoraceous fellow, full of lies and lechery. He says that all the women insist on running after him. The fact is, wherever he struts, he is the laughing-stock of them all” (*Mil. Glor.* 87-95). Thus, through rhetoric and comedy the role of the ἀλαζών as an impostor was perpetuated in Graeco-Roman culture.¹²³

b) Truthfulness--ἀλαθής

Just as boasting was associated with false assertions, certain sources suggested that truthful statements about oneself were not examples of boasting. If boasting involved deviation from truthful self-presentation, then accurate claims about oneself were not instances of boasting. Thus, Aristotle's μεγαλόψυχος, the embodiment of virtue, is not simply worthy of honour, he also makes claims to that effect (*EN* 4.3.9). Likewise, while Seneca is critical of those who flaunt themselves in the pursuit of public honour (*Ep.* 52.9-11), he does encourage public knowledge of one's achievements. Writing to Lucilius, imperial procurator in Sicily, he asks: “What profits it, however, to hide ourselves away, and to avoid the eyes and ears of men?... If your deeds are honourable, let everybody know them” (*Ep.* 43.5). In his criticism of the Stoic view that there are no degrees of virtue and vice,¹²⁴ Plutarch records a statement from Chrysippus, a leading Stoic philosopher, that authorises positive self-presentation:

‘As it befits Zeus to glory [σεμνύνεσθαι] in himself and in his way of life and to be haughty [μέγα φρονεῖν] and if it must be said, to carry his head high [ὕψαυχενεῖν] and plume himself [κομᾶν] and boast [μεγαληγορεῖν], since he lives in a way worth boasting about [ἀξίως βιοῦντι μεγαληγορίας], so does this befit all good men, since they are in no wise surpassed by Zeus.’ (Plut. *Mor.* 1038C-D; cf. *SVF* 3:526)

Thus, the individual who achieves true virtue can properly proclaim his exploits.

The most extensive argument defending positive self-presentation that is truthful occurs in an essay by P. Aelius Aristides, a rhetorician in the second century A.D. Having been accused of making boastful comments in one of his speeches, he responds with an oration entitled “Concerning a Remark in Passing”. While criticising the individual “who postures to astound the masses” (*Or.* 28.11), he argues that the directive to “know thyself” implies that one should neither exaggerate nor underrate one's abilities (*Or.* 28.14).¹²⁵ In

¹²⁰In defence of this view, see Janko, trans., *Poetics*, by Aristotle, xxiii.

¹²¹“ἤθη κωμωδίας τὰ τε βωμολόχα καὶ τὰ εἰρωνικά καὶ τὰ τῶν ἀλαζόνων” (*CGF* 1:52).

¹²²On the concept of the “braggart soldier”, a character type found in a number of sources, cf. Ribbeck, *Alazon*, 55-75; Hanson, “Glorious Military”, 51-86.

¹²³For the view that Paul's opponents depicted him as an ἀλαζών, cf. below pp. 117-19.

¹²⁴cf. Long and Sedley, *Hellenistic Philosophers*, 1:383-86.

¹²⁵For the Greek text, cf. Keil, ed., *Aelii Aristidis Smyrnaei*; for the English translation, cf. Behr, trans., *P. Aelius Aristides*, vol. 2.

fact, he argues that pride in one's actions "is in every way an old custom [ἀρχαῖον νόμιμον] and a Greek one too" (*Or.* 28.18). To defend this point, he traces the theme of positive self-presentation among influential poets, orators and politicians in Greek history.¹²⁶ Although Aristides distances himself from the pomposity of the sophists (*Or.* 28.128), he states that it is "the part of an intelligent [φρονίμου] and moderate [σώφρονος] man to recognize his true worth, and the part of a just [δικαίου] man to pay himself and others their proper due, and the part of a brave [ἀνδρείου] man not to be afraid to speak the truth" (*Or.* 28.145). Thus, not only does he defend his affirmative comments about himself, he argues that such activity is consistent with the fundamental virtues of Greek thought.¹²⁷

c) The Vice of Deficiency--εἰρωνεία

Consistent with an emphasis on truthful self-presentation was criticism of those who publicly underestimate their achievements and abilities. In Aristotle's ethical discussions, the excess of "truthfulness" (ἀλαθής) is "boastfulness" (ἀλαζονεία) and its deficiency is "self-deprecation" (εἰρωνεία; cf. *EN* 2.7.12; *EE* 2.3.7; [Aris.] *MM* 1.32.1). Because they deviate from truthful self-presentation, boasters and self-deprecators are both "lovers of falsehood" (φιλοψευδεῖς; *EE* 3.7.6). In defining these terms, Aristotle states that "the self-deprecator [εἰρων] disclaims or disparages good qualities that he does possess" (*EN* 4.7.3). Although self-deprecation involves a deficiency of truthfulness, Aristotle does acknowledge that "a moderate use of self-deprecation in matters not too commonplace has a not disgraceful air" (*EN* 4.7.16). Other sources also underscore the importance of truthfulness in contrast to self-deprecation. In his positive evaluation of emperor Pertinax (A.D. 193), Dio Cassius states that Pertinax was excessive neither in subservience nor haughtiness, but was "gentle without humility [πρᾶος ἔξω τοῦ ταπεινοῦ]" and "high-minded without boastfulness [μεγαλόνοους χωρὶς ἀρχήματος]" (75.5.7). Similarly, as Aristides defends the positive statements he has made about himself, he asserts that "all men who are dear to the gods and who excel their fellows are not ashamed to speak the truth". The truthful man will neither praise himself unjustly "nor avoid praising himself when necessary"; Aristides implies that avoiding appropriate self-praise is an act of slander (*Or.* 28.49, 50).

(1) Self-Deprecation as a Rhetorical Device

Even though self-deprecation involved falsehood, it could prove useful as a rhetorical device.¹²⁸ For instance, it could be particularly effective in the introduction of a speech to generate goodwill among one's listeners. Acknowledging that an orator's confidence may be interpreted as arrogance by an audience, Quintilian suggests that the orator utilise "certain tricks for acquiring good-will" such as expressions of anxiety (*Inst.* 4.1.33). Cicero notes the value of appeals made with "a humble [*humili*] and submissive spirit" (*Inv.* 1.22). The *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* states that depreciating one's oratorical abilities can help an orator secure the goodwill of the audience (*Rh. Al.* 1436b30-37).¹²⁹ Similarly, Hermogenes (second

¹²⁶Ian Rutherford ("Aelius Aristides", 203) suggests that Aristides differs from standard rhetorical treatments of self-praise by placing less stress "on social *decorum* and more on the brilliance of the subject."

¹²⁷The "cardinal virtues" of Greek philosophy were "courage" (ἀνδρεία), "prudence" (σοφία/φρόνησις), "justice" (δικαιοσύνη), and "temperance" (σωφροσύνη; cf. Plato *Rep.* 427E).

¹²⁸cf. the discussion of "modesty-*topoi*" in Curtius, *Literature*, 83-85.

¹²⁹This type of disparagement does appear in the introductions of extant speeches (e.g., Lysias *Or.* 12.3; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 35.1, 38.1, 42.2). Helen North (*Myth*, 174) states that the virtue of *modestia*, which was the antithesis of pride and arrogance, was viewed as the most appropriate virtue for the introduction of a speech according to sources ranging from classical Athens to mediaeval Europe.

century A.D.), in his discussion of oratorical styles, makes reference to self-deprecation in reference to “modesty” (ἐπιείκεια),¹³⁰ a style particularly helpful in winning the goodwill of the audience.¹³¹ Self-deprecation also appears in Hermogenes’ discussion of “indignation” (βαρύτης), a style utilising irony in a reproachful manner. This style could be effective in situations of self-defence or in arguing that one had been treated unjustly. In response to these types of circumstances, the oratory might use irony about himself (*Id.* 366). Demosthenes provides an example of this style in the *De Corona* as he ironically incorporates into his self-defence derogatory phrases that were used against him by Aeschines (*Id.* 365; cf. *De Cor.* 180). Thus, from a rhetorical perspective, self-denigration might be used in acquiring the goodwill of one’s audience or in selective situations that required reproachful irony.

(2) Criticism of Self-Deprecation

While self-deprecation might have some rhetorical usefulness, certain factors suggested that it had to be employed cautiously. First of all, self-deprecation could be viewed as an inverted form of boasting.¹³² Aristotle notes that “mock humility” is a form of boastfulness (cf. *EN* 4.7.15). Quintilian states that “the most ostentatious kind of boasting [*ambitiosissimum glorandi*] takes the form of actual self-derision”; he concludes that straightforward boasting is more acceptable than this “perverted form of self-praise [*iactatio*]” (*Inst.* 11.1.21-22). Second, the character type of “self-deprecator” (εἴρων) was generally viewed with suspicion. For example, Theophrastus’ character description of εἰρωνεία is completely negative; the εἴρων is “capricious, non-committal and evasive”.¹³³ According to Aristotle, the εἴρων may act simply out of a desire to avoid pretension (*EN* 4.7.14). Theophrastus’ portrayal, however, is a more general depiction of someone who enjoys misleading and deceiving others--an individual who is principally lazy and elusive.¹³⁴ Philodemus’ work, “On Vices” (Περὶ κακιῶν) also includes a sketch of the εἴρων.¹³⁵ Like others, Philodemus associates the εἴρων with imposture.¹³⁶ The εἴρων is also depicted as a flatterer of others; he addresses others with ingratiating greetings and constantly defers to those in authority (Περὶ κακιῶν col. 22). This connection between self-deprecation and flattery underscores the distrust of the εἴρων.¹³⁷ The flatterer was characterised by

¹³⁰*Id.* 345; for the Greek text, cf. Rabe, ed., *Hermogenis*.

¹³¹“Modesty” (ἐπιείκεια) is a subtype of “character” (ἦθος), which is one of Hermogenes’ seven primary forms of style. “[W]hat Hermogenes calls Character is simply a collection of approaches whose basic goal is to effect what Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* (1.2.4.) calls the ‘ethical appeal’” (Wooten, trans., *On Types of Style*, xv).

¹³²For example, Aristides argues that “Socrates was boastful [μεγαλαυχεῖσθα] throughout his life, even if this has escaped many people. Or what do you think his great irony [εἰρωνείαν] is?” (*Or.* 28.83; cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 42.2).

¹³³Ussher, *Characters*, 36.

¹³⁴R. C. Jebb (trans. and ed., *Characters*, 52-53) states that Theophrastus’ characters are “essentially popular, interpreting the notions currently attached in society to certain epithets”. Thus, the differences between Aristotle and Theophrastus in the depiction of εἰρωνεία imply that the εἴρων was generally viewed in negative terms in Theophrastus’ lifetime.

¹³⁵This work by Philodemus (first century B.C.) incorporates character descriptions written by Ariston of Ceos, a Peripatetic of the third century. For the Greek text, cf. Jensen, ed., *Philodemus’ περι κακιῶν*; for an English translation of the character sketches, cf. “Appendix” in Rusten, *Characters*.

¹³⁶“ὁ δ’ εἴρων ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον ἀλαζόνος εἶδος” (Περὶ κακιῶν col. 21).

¹³⁷This connection is also evident in comedic characterisation. For instance, Plautus’ Artotrogus, in “The Braggart Warrior”, and Terence’s Gnatho, in “The Eunuch”, are both flatterers who employ self-deprecation for personal gain.

inconsistency--a chameleon always adapting himself to the character and preferences of others (Plut. *Mor.* 52B, 53A).¹³⁸ From a rhetorical perspective, while flattery and self-deprecation might generate goodwill within the audience (e.g., [Aris.] *Rh. Al.* 1436b30-37), they could also result in criticism and distrust.¹³⁹

A further unfavourable aspect of self-deprecation concerned the predominant sentiment about lowly self-presentation.¹⁴⁰ Generally, a lowly attitude was associated with a lowly social position.¹⁴¹ In his discussion of anger, Aristotle states that “[m]en also are mild towards those who humble themselves [ταπεινουμένοις] before them and do not contradict them, for they seem to recognize that they are inferior; now, those who are inferior are afraid, and no one who is afraid slights another” (*Rh.* 2.3.6). Similarly, in Dio Chrysostom’s dialogue between Diogenes and Alexander the Great, Diogenes explains that each man’s “intelligence [νοῦς]” is the “guiding spirit [δαίμων]” of its owner; “the free man’s is free [ἐλεύθερος], the slave’s slavish [δοῦλος], the kingly and high-minded man’s kingly [βασιλικός], the abject and base man’s abject [ταπεινός]” (*Or.* 4.80). This association of humility with low social status extended to the occupations associated with such status. Thus, Aristotle makes a distinction between noble work and forced labour; the former belongs to the free man, while the latter belongs to the manual labourer (βάναστος). “[W]e entitle vulgar [βαναύστους] all such arts as deteriorate the condition of the body, and also the industries that earn wages; for they make the mind preoccupied and degraded [ταπεινήν]” (*Pol.* 8.2.1; cf. *Rh.* 1.9.27).¹⁴² Cicero argues that the lifestyle of a manual labourer is “vulgar” (*sordidus*) and inappropriate for a gentlemen; concerning such labourers he states that “the very wage they receive is a pledge of their slavery” (*Off.* 1.150). Plutarch states that “[I]abour with one’s own hands on lowly tasks [τῶν ταπεινῶν] gives witness, in the toil thus expended on useless things, to one’s own indifference to higher things” (*Per.* 2.1).

Arguing that happiness resulted only from internal factors, Stoic authors suggested that no one had to reflect a lowly disposition. Epictetus argues that those who reject a dependency on external goods have no reason to maintain a mindset of humility; “[w]hen you have condemned things external and outside the province of your moral purpose, and have come to regard none of them as your own...where is there any longer room for flattery

¹³⁸Lucian states that “flattery is considered the most servile--and therefore the worst--of all the vices” (*Apol.* 9); cf. Theophrastus’ description of the “flatterer” (κόλαξ; *Char.* 1); Plutarch’s “How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend” (*Mor.* 48E-75D); cf. also Marshall, *Enmity*, 70-90.

¹³⁹Forbes (“Self-Praise”, 16) argues that Paul’s opponents accused him of being a flatterer (κόλαξ) and a dissimulator (εἴρων); on the nature of the charges levelled against Paul, cf. below pp. 111-19.

¹⁴⁰“Die D. [Demut] als Tugend ist der gesamten antiken Ethik fremd” (Dihle, “Demut”, 737); cf. Rehr, “Demut”, 464; Grundmann, “ταπεινός”, 1-5.

¹⁴¹Klaus Wengst (*Humility*, 5) states that “[s]een from above [i.e., an aristocratic viewpoint], a lowly attitude goes with a lowly social position: the lowly position leads to a lowly disposition which expresses itself in flattery and insubordination”. Walter Grundmann states that “ταπεινός expresses both the low estate of the man who lives in poor and petty relations, esp. the slave, and also the base disposition resulting therefrom. The ref. is not to the ethically negative characteristic of craftiness and falsehood nor to subjection to impulses but rather to the obsequiousness of the servant due to social status” (“ταπεινός”, 2).

¹⁴²cf. MacMullen, *Social Relations*, 114-20; Hock, *Social Context*, 36-37. While noting the aristocratic disdain for manual labour, Dale Martin (*Slavery*, 124) argues that such views were not shared by members of the lower class. On the issue of Paul’s finances and the perception of his manual labour by the Corinthian congregation, cf. below pp. 115-17, 128.

[κολακείας], where for an abject spirit [ταπεινοφροσύνης]?” (*Diss.* 3.24.55-57). Elsewhere he states that humanity by nature is “noble, and high-minded [μεγαλόψυχον], and free [ἐλεύθερον]”, but those enslaved to external goods are subject to an “abject [ταπεινόν] and mean spirit” (*Diss.* 4.7.8-11). This contrast between ἐλεύθερος and ταπεινός emphasises the subservient status of those who are “humble.”¹⁴³ Consistent with these negative views of a servile demeanour is Plutarch’s endorsement of appropriate self-praise in situations that require self-defence. “For not only is there nothing puffed up, vainglorious, or proud in taking a high tone about oneself at such a moment, but it displays as well a lofty spirit and greatness of character, which by refusing to be humbled [ταπεινοῦσθαι] humbles [ταπεινούσης] and overpowers envy” (*Mor.* 540D). Plutarch also says that it is appropriate for those who have experienced misfortune to boast; “using self-glorification to pass from a humbled [ταπεινοῦ] and piteous state to an attitude of triumph and pride, strikes us not as offensive or bold, but as great and indomitable” (*Mor.* 541B). In light of the perceptions associated with a humble self-presentation, those of high social position who engaged in such practice were sometimes presumed to have covert motives.¹⁴⁴ “Such *humilitas* is not in accordance with their status, and to be in accordance with one’s status is one of the essential norms in a society dominated by status.”¹⁴⁵ As a result of this emphasis on truthful self-presentation, self-praise could be considered permissible if the content of one’s boasts were true; however, those who either exaggerated or underrated their achievements and abilities were open to criticism.

B. THE RHETORICAL CONVENTIONS OF SELF-PRAISE

The issues addressed so far illustrate the variety of complex social forces affecting self-presentation in the Graeco-Roman world. On the one hand, certain beliefs and standards encouraged the use of self-praise. The competitive drive for honour and the close link between achievement and recognition stimulated boasting. The emphasis on public distinction contributed to the profuse use of self-praise associated with sophistry and berated by the critics of popular rhetorical practice.¹⁴⁶ The stress on truthful self-presentation could also motivate individuals to proclaim their attributes and achievements publicly. Moreover, a lack of self-praise might be detrimental; self-deprecation or an unwillingness to engage in truthful self-presentation could generate suspicion and distrust among others. On the other hand, specific social factors also supported the limitation of boasting. Most importantly, the danger of generating envy was a constant hazard for orators and those in public life; envy could easily result from boasting and turn the emotions of an audience against the goals of

¹⁴³In reference to one who achieves true “freedom” (i.e., freedom from dependence on external goods), Epictetus asks: “Is it possible, then, for a man who achieves a thing so great and precious and noble, to be of abject spirit [ταπεινόν]?--It is not” (*Diss.* 4.1.54-55; cf. 4.1.2).

¹⁴⁴cf. Livy 3.35.5-6; Dio Cass. 3.13.2; 72.5.1; Diod. Sic. 9.10.2.

¹⁴⁵Wengst, *Humility*, 11.

¹⁴⁶For example, in “A Professor of Popular Speaking”, Lucian satirises popular rhetorical education. According to the sophistic professor, after the student has finished a speech, he should “let them [friends, spectators] dance attendance upon you as you go away with your head swathed in your mantle, reviewing what you have said. And if any one accosts you, make marvellous assertions about yourself, be extravagant in your self-praise [ὑπερπαίνει], and make yourself a nuisance to him” (*Prof.* 22).

the rhetor.¹⁴⁷ Self-praise could also expose one to the charge of being an ἀλαζών, an impostor simply in pursuit of personal gain. Furthermore, an eagerness to parade one's achievements could be interpreted as manifesting a deficiency of αὐτάρκεια, and ultimately a lack of ἀρετή.

To some extent, the rhetorical conventions of self-praise provided tools with which the orator could be sensitive to these diverse social factors (cf. Plut. *Mor.* 543A). For instance, Plutarch mentions that those who have experienced misfortune can boast (*Mor.* 541A). Thus, the orator could proudly proclaim his ability to overcome adversity; through this self-praise he could pursue recognition and avoid an attitude of self-deprecation. However, because he was focusing on his hardships, he was not likely to generate envy. In addition, in recounting his triumph over difficulties, he displayed a level of αὐτάρκεια that was independent of the whims of fortune (*Mor.* 541B). Ultimately, these conventions delineated the circumstances and means by which one could praise oneself “without offence” (ἀνεπαχθῶς).¹⁴⁸

Discussions of appropriate techniques of self-praise occur in several sources. Alexander, a rhetorician and sophist of the second century A.D., addresses the issues of praise and encomium in “On Rhetorical Forms” (Περὶ ῥητορικῶν ἀφορμῶν).¹⁴⁹ Although he announces that he will discuss self-praise later in the treatise, it is unfortunate that only a part of the text survives, and the explanation of boasting conventions is missing. Brief references to methods of self-praise also occur in “On the Method of Force” (Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος),¹⁵⁰ a work spuriously attributed to Hermogenes, and in the “Art of Rhetoric” (*Ars Rhetorica*) that is falsely assigned to Aelius Aristides.¹⁵¹ Quintilian succinctly addresses the issue of boasting in a broader discussion of appropriate speech that is “expedient” and “becoming” (*Inst.* 11.1.15-28). As stated earlier, the most extensive treatment of this topic occurs in Plutarch's essay “On Inoffensive Self-Praise” (*Mor.* 539B-547F). Although these discussions differ, the recurrence of common themes¹⁵² suggests that conventions of self-praise became an established topic in treatises on rhetorical theory. Furthermore, the diversity of these sources reveals the widespread appeal of these rhetorical tools. For instance, while Plutarch is a critic of certain facets of rhetorical training,¹⁵³ in his depiction of

¹⁴⁷In several rhetorical sources self-praise is acknowledged as being “burdensome” or “offensive” (ἐπαχθής; Dem. *Or.* 5.4; Dion. Hal. *Pomp.* 1; [Hermog.] *Meth.* 25; Plut. *Mor.* 539B). Quintilian notes that self-praise “in the majority of cases disgusts the audience” because it creates jealousy (*Inst.* 11.1.15). Plutarch notes that praise of ourselves “is for others most distressing” because self-praise is: (1) “shameless” (ἀναισχύντους), (2) “unfair” (ἀδίκους), and (3) a source of envy (*Mor.* 539D).

¹⁴⁸Alex. *Rh.* 4.13; [Hermog.] *Meth.* 25.3; cf. Plut. *Comp. Dem. Cic.* 2.1.

¹⁴⁹For the Greek text, cf. Spengel, ed., *Rhetores Graeci*, 3:1-6.

¹⁵⁰For the Greek text, cf. Rabe, ed. *Hermogenis Opera*, 414-456.

¹⁵¹For the Greek text, cf. Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci*, 2:459-554.

¹⁵²e.g., (1) reference to boasting in response to the attacks of an opponent ([Hermog.] *Meth.* 25.17-26; [Arist.] *Rhet.* 1.12.2.7.11-13; Quint. *Inst.* 11.1.18-23; Plut. *Mor.* 541E-F), and (2) use of Demosthenes' *De Corona* as an example of effective self-praise ([Hermog.] *Meth.* 25.11-26; Quint. *Inst.* 11.1.22; Plut. *Mor.* 541E-F; 542A-B; 543B).

¹⁵³cf. *Mor.* 6A; 41C; 79B; 142A.

appropriate boasting he has a great deal in common with standard rhetorical practices.¹⁵⁴ Thus, these guidelines were apparently used by a variety of individuals representing different perspectives on rhetorical education and practice.

1. Self-Defence and Demosthenes' *De Corona*

Plutarch begins his description of these conventions by describing those techniques particularly appropriate for addressing an antagonistic audience (*Mor.* 543A).¹⁵⁵ The first five situations mentioned involve the theme of self-defence.¹⁵⁶ Self-praise is acceptable: (1) when one responds to a charge (*Mor.* 540C-541A), (2) when the boasting is done by the unfortunate (*Mor.* 541A-C), (3) when it is done by those who have been wronged¹⁵⁷ and speak freely in response (*Mor.* 541C-E), (4) when one reverses the charges and argues that certain “wrongs” were actually “triumphs” (*Mor.* 541E-F), and (5) when one engages in self-defence by arguing that the opposite of one’s actions would have been dishonourable (*Mor.* 541F-542A).

In examining these situations, Plutarch refers to Demosthenes' *De Corona* as an example of appropriate self-praise (*Mor.* 541E-F, 542A). Plutarch's use of Demosthenes is not surprising. Demosthenes was widely regarded as the greatest Attic orator,¹⁵⁸ whose work provided a standard by which others could be judged. Furthermore, “[t]he *De Corona* was regarded as the finest oration by an Athenian from the time of its publication.”¹⁵⁹ It was highly regarded during the revival of Atticism in the first century B.C.,¹⁶⁰ and was considered a pre-eminent model of oratory during the Second Sophistic.¹⁶¹

The *De Corona* was delivered by Demosthenes in response to charges brought against Ctesiphon by Aeschines. In 336 B.C., Ctesiphon proposed that Athens honour Demosthenes with a gold crown for his civic activities. In response to this proposal, Aeschines indicted Ctesiphon on several charges, including the insertion of false statements in official documents.¹⁶² The trial (330 B.C.) took place on a single day; it began with the

¹⁵⁴Noting similarities in the citation of Demosthenes by Plutarch and the author of “On the Method of Force” (*De Cor.* 299 cited at *Plut. Mor.* 543B and [*Hermog.*] *Meth.* 25.19-22), M. Pohlenz (“Recension”, 359) concludes that the two works are closely connected and that Plutarch has utilised material from rhetorical handbooks. Radermacher (“Studien”, 420) also argues that Plutarch is dependent on a rhetorical source. Similarly, Rutherford (“Aelius Aristides”, 201) suggests that Plutarch and Aristides may be utilising a common source in their discussions of self-praise.

¹⁵⁵For an outline of Plutarch's essay, cf. Betz, “De laude”, 368-72.

¹⁵⁶cf. Radermacher, “Studien”, 421.

¹⁵⁷They have suffered acts of ὕβρις (*Mor.* 541C). N. R. E. Fisher (*Hybris*, 1) states that “*hybris* is essentially the serious assault on the honour of another, which is likely to cause shame, and lead to anger and attempts at revenge.”

¹⁵⁸Cicero states that “[f]or the perfect orator and the one who lacks absolutely nothing you would without hesitation name Demosthenes” (*Brut.* 9.35; cf. *Or.* 2.6; 7.23; 8.26; *Opt. Gen.* 4.13); Quintilian states that Demosthenes “came to be regarded almost as the sole pattern of oratory” (*Inst.* 10.1.76; cf. *Dion. Hal. Isaeus* 20; *Dem.* 33-34; *Diod. Sic.* 16.54.2; *Dio Chrys. Or.* 18.11).

¹⁵⁹Usher, trans., *Crown*, 19.

¹⁶⁰e.g., *Dion. Hal. Dem* 14; *Cic. Or.* 8.26; 28.133.

¹⁶¹For instance, in his introduction to Hermogenes' “On Types of Style”, Wooten (*On Types of Style*, xvii) notes that “in many ways the work is more than anything a description of Demosthenic style.” Wooten's index to Hermogenes' treatise includes 119 citations of the *De Corona*. More generally, in the author index to Spengel's *Rhetores Graeci* (vol. 3), a collection of rhetorical treatises, Demosthenes is the most frequently cited author and the *De Corona* is the most frequently quoted speech.

¹⁶²For a more detailed explanation of the charges, cf. Usher, *Crown*, 13-17.

case of the prosecution, followed by the speeches of the defence,¹⁶³ and the deliberation and verdict of the jury. Central to Aeschines' case was the accusation of "imposture" (ἀλαζονεία); he accused Ctesiphon of misrepresenting Demosthenes' deeds and accomplishments (e.g., *In Ctes.* 237-38, 256). Furthermore, he warned the jury that Demosthenes would defend himself with exuberant self-praise (*In Ctes.* 241). After both sides had spoken, the jury overwhelmingly decided in favour of Demosthenes; Aeschines failed to obtain a fifth of the ballots cast (*Plut. Dem.* 24.2).

As Demosthenes begins his defence, he acknowledges that self-laudation is generally resented. Nonetheless, in order to defend his reputation and establish his claim to public distinction, he "shall often be obliged [ἀναγκασθήσομαι] to speak" about himself (*De Cor.* 4). The concept of "constraint" (ἀνάγκη) was an important factor in rendering self-praise appropriate and diverting its odium towards the opponent.¹⁶⁴ In view of criticisms made against Demosthenes, his self-praise was "not recrimination but self-defence [οὐκ ὀνειδίζειν ἀλλ' ἀπολογεῖσθαι]" (*Plut. Mor.* 541E). By contrast, Plutarch criticises the boasting of Cicero; "[f]or Cicero boasted not from necessity [ἀναγκαίως] but for glory" (*Mor.* 541A).¹⁶⁵ Ultimately, underlying Plutarch's argument is a distinction between a basic craving for glory and the more noble desire of having one's worthy achievements honoured. As a consequence of the close correlation between accomplishment and recognition, self-praise was legitimate in situations where appropriate honour had been denied and one's reputation had been attacked.¹⁶⁶ In those circumstances, the offensiveness of self-praise was averted by the assault of ὕβρις.

As Demosthenes continues his speech, he narrates the events that have led up to the indictment and recounts the specific charges of Aeschines. Although he does respond to the charges, the bulk of the speech is devoted to a defence of his motivations and actions. Fundamental to his defence is an ongoing comparison between Aeschines and himself, which permeates much of the speech's argument. For example, in his discussion of the subject of the trial, Demosthenes instructs the jury: "if, in your judgement and to your knowledge, I am a better man and better born than Aeschines... then refuse credence to all his assertions" (*De Cor.* 10). Criticism of his opponent is a significant part of Demosthenes' defence. After addressing certain elements of the indictment, Demosthenes portrays Aeschines' parentage and career in negative terms (*De Cor.* 126-59); this is contrasted with a positive presentation and vindication of Demosthenes' actions (*De Cor.* 160-250).¹⁶⁷ Demosthenes argues that he has been a statesman, while Aeschines is nothing more than a sophist (*De Cor.* 276-96). Ultimately, Demosthenes concludes that he has been the "better patriot" (*De Cor.* 320).

¹⁶³Ctesiphon, the official defendant, spoke briefly before yielding to Demosthenes, the actual defendant (*In Ctes.* 201).

¹⁶⁴"On the Method of Force" describes Demosthenes' statement as an example of "necessary pretension" (ἀνάγκης προσποίησις; *Meth.* 25.3, 12-15 [citing *De Cor.* 4]); cf. [Arist.] *Rhet.* 1.12.2.7.3-5; Quint. *Inst.* 11.1.22.

¹⁶⁵Plutarch's distinction between the appropriateness of Demosthenes' self-praise and the improper boasting of Cicero (cf. above p. 14) is also discussed at *Comp. Dem. Cic.* 2.1-2. Pohlenz ("Recension", 359n3) suggests that Plutarch's discussion of self-praise in *Demosthenes* and *Cicero* might have precipitated his commitment of an entire essay to this topic.

¹⁶⁶cf. above p. 18.

¹⁶⁷cf. Kennedy, *New History*, 78-79.

The use of comparison was a recognised rhetorical tool in praising one's subject.¹⁶⁸ In his discussion of the three species of rhetoric,¹⁶⁹ Aristotle explains that amplification helps develop the topic of praise in epideictic oratory; an important aspect of amplification is comparison (σύγκρισις). Aristotle advises the orator to compare the subject with illustrious people; "if you cannot compare him with illustrious personages, you must compare him with ordinary persons, since superiority is thought to indicate virtue" (*Rh.* 1.9.39).¹⁷⁰ As an important aspect of encomium, comparison was a common element in epideictic speeches. Thus, in examining eulogistic oratory, the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* states that "[y]ou must also compare the distinguished achievements of other young men and show that they are surpassed by his [the one being eulogised], specifying the smallest achievements of the other youth and the biggest exploits of the one you are praising" (*Rh. Al.* 1441a27-30). On a literary level, Dionysius of Halicarnassus argues that comparison is an important part of critical evaluation. Having been reproached for comparing the works of Plato with Demosthenes, he argues that "many things which appear fine and admirable when considered on their own turn out to be less good than they had seemed when they are set side by side with other things that are better." Despite objections, he concludes that "the best method of assessment is the comparative [ὁ κατὰ σύγκρισιν γιγνόμενος]" (*Pomp.* 1). The use of comparison for evaluation is most clearly evident in Plutarch's *Lives*; the work utilises σύγκρισις to compare influential Greeks and Romans. Plutarch presents these biographies in sets of two (e.g., Demosthenes and Cicero); of the twenty-two pairs, eighteen are followed by a brief comparison.¹⁷¹

Comparison also functioned as a standard activity in the "preliminary exercises" (προγυμνάσματα) of rhetorical education.¹⁷² In Hermogenes' *Προγυμνάσματα*, σύγκρισις is discussed after encomium. The author notes that comparison utilises encomiastic topics (*Prog.* 8.8); these themes included an individual's race, family, city, education, character and achievements. Similarly, in Theon's *Προγυμνάσματα*, the student is instructed that in the comparison of people, one firstly juxtaposes their status, education, offspring, positions held, prestige and physique.... Next one compares actions, preferring the finer ones and those responsible for more numerous and greater benefits; those which are more stable and durable; those which were especially opportune; those for which the failure to perform them would have resulted in the occurrence of great injury; those performed out of choice rather than of necessity or chance; and those performed by the few rather than the many. (*Prog.* 113.1-13)¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸cf. Focke, "Synkrisis", 327-68; Lausberg, *Handbook*, §1130; Marshall, *Enmity*, 53-55.

¹⁶⁹(1) Deliberative speeches either exhort or dissuade the audience concerning a particular action. (2) Judicial speeches are either defences or accusations about actions in the past. (3) Epideictic speeches involve either praise or blame and are intended to show that a person (or object) is honourable or shameful (cf. Aris. *Rh.* 1.3).

¹⁷⁰On the use of comparison in amplification, cf. Quint. *Inst.* 8.4.3; *Rhet. Her.* 4.59-61; Aristotle and Quintilian distinguish comparison in rhetorical proofs from comparison as amplification (cf. Aris. *Rh.* 2.20.2, 5; 3.19.5; Quint. *Inst.* 8.4.9-14). For a general overview of σύγκρισις in rhetorical theory and practice, cf. Forbes, "Self-Praise", 2-8.

¹⁷¹Concerning the four sets that lack comparisons, Alan Wardman (*Lives*, 236) states "[i]t is not certain whether these were written but have not been transmitted, or whether they were never composed in the first place."

¹⁷²cf. Clark, *Rhetoric*, 198-99; for a concise overview of the *progymnasmata*, cf. Kennedy, *New History*, 202-8.

¹⁷³translation from Forbes, "Self-Praise", 6.

Although σύγκρισις was normally associated with the orator's praise of others, it could also be used in the first person (cf. Aris. *Rh.* 1.9.9). For example, Cicero, in stressing the excellence of his style of oratory, favourably compares himself with another orator, Quintus Hortensius (*Brut.* 93.320-24).¹⁷⁴ Additionally, as Demosthenes demonstrates, comparison could function as part of an orator's self-defence. In view of the competitive nature of the Graeco-Roman world and the stress on the limitation of honour (e.g., Aesch. *In Ctes.* 177),¹⁷⁵ σύγκρισις provided a tool that could, in the appropriate context, assist orators in presenting their superior character and achievements.

Because of his effective use of self-laudation, Demosthenes' *De Corona* became the standard example of appropriate self-praise throughout Graeco-Roman history. Recognising the potential hazards of boasting, Demosthenes stresses that he has been forced to speak of himself by the actions of Aeschines; he also acknowledges that he is sensitive to describing his achievements in a way that avoids envy (*De Cor.* 305). In his use of comparison, he highlights his worthiness to be honoured and insists that recognition is the appropriate response to his civic activities (e.g., *De Cor.* 316-17). Furthermore, in his negative portrayal of Aeschines, Demosthenes reverses the charges and insists that it is actually his opponent who is the "impostor" in this case (*De Cor.* 276). Thus, Demosthenes skillfully avoids the risks associated with self-praise, while magnifying his career and the propriety of his public recognition. As a consequence, this speech is a prominent example in Plutarch's discussion of self-praise.

2. The Pedagogical Function of Self-Praise

Plutarch's list of conventions designed for hostile audiences includes three other procedures: (1) mixing self-praise with praise of the audience (*Mor.* 542B-C), (2) praising others like oneself (*Mor.* 542C-D), and (3) attributing part of one's success to chance or the gods (*Mor.* 542E-543A). After addressing conventions of self-praise for antagonistic spectators, Plutarch describes techniques appropriate for the "fair-minded" (μετρίου; *Mor.* 543A). With this type of audience, one may: (1) amend the praise from others by transferring it to virtues more worthy of praise (*Mor.* 543A-F), and (2) include references to minor shortcomings in one's self-praise (*Mor.* 543F-544C). In both instances, Plutarch notes that these conventions minimise the danger of envy (*Mor.* 543D; 544B). Plutarch's final grouping of procedures concerns cases in which the antidote to the offence of boasting is "inherent in the very content of praise" (*Mor.* 544C). This category includes (1) emphasising one's hardships in the process of self-praise (*Mor.* 544C-D), and (2) utilising self-praise as a pedagogical device (*Mor.* 544D-546A).

As he discusses the pedagogical function of self-praise, Plutarch implies that boasting should have an ethical intent. The orator's self-laudation should do more than simply avoid creating envy, it should "have some further end in view" (*Mor.* 544D).¹⁷⁶ In this section, Plutarch is addressing self-praise primarily within the context of deliberative oratory. In

¹⁷⁴Concerning this passage, Misch (*Autobiography*, 1:335) observes: "[b]y parallel treatment with his rival in process of submergence, Hortensius, he now brings his personal superiority into full light."

¹⁷⁵cf. above pp. 20, 21; Dover (*Morality*, 236) describes Greek culture as one "addicted to comparison and competition".

¹⁷⁶Radermacher ("Studien", 423) states that Plutarch's insistence that boasting can be done for the benefit of others is where he diverges from his rhetorical sources.

other words, he is examining ways in which boasting contributes to the effectiveness of an orator's exhortation to action. This emphasis also appears earlier in the treatise. Before enumerating the various boasting conventions, Plutarch notes the appropriateness of a public figure using self-praise in certain situations, "especially when by permitting himself to mention his good accomplishments and character he is enabled to achieve some similar good" (*Mor.* 539E). He notes that establishing one's reputation through self-praise may create the confidence and credibility necessary to provide useful leadership; this is why the politician "demands" (*ἀπαιτεῖ*) recognition for his activities (*Mor.* 539F).¹⁷⁷ "For when men are trusting and friendly it is pleasant and easy to do them good; whereas in the presence of distrust and dislike it is impossible to put one's merit to use and force benefits on those who shun them" (*Mor.* 539F).¹⁷⁸ On a broader level, Stanley Olson observes that expressions of self-confidence¹⁷⁹ can be used by a writer or orator to highlight one's credibility to advise; in these situations, "[i]t is always the reader's view of the writer that is the matter of concern, and the confident assertions are part of the attempt to influence those opinions."¹⁸⁰

In his exposition, Plutarch lists several specific instances of the pedagogical function of self-praise. First, self-praise can inspire emulation and hope within one's listeners.

For exhortation [*προτροπή*] that includes action as well as argument and presents the speaker's own example and challenge is endued with life: it arouses and spurs the hearer, and not only awakens his ardour and fixes his purpose, but also affords him hope that the end can be attained and is not impossible. (*Mor.* 544D-E)

Second, self-praise can provide correction to the overconfident and encouragement to the timid (*Mor.* 544F-545D). Finally, self-praise can be used to highlight the inappropriate praise of dishonourable individuals. "[W]here mistaken praise injures and corrupts by arousing emulation of evil and inducing the adoption of an unsound policy where important issues are at stake, it is no disservice to counteract it, or rather to divert the hearer's purpose to a better course by pointing out the difference" (*Mor.* 545D). In each of these instances, self-praise augments the speaker's ability to benefit the audience (cf. *Mor.* 547F).

In this section, Plutarch uses a speech by Nestor from the *Iliad* (*Il.* 1.247-285) as an example;¹⁸¹ in this speech, Nestor boasts of his superior achievements to bolster his credibility in advising Achilles and Agamemnon. Dio Chrysostom also uses this speech in his fifty-seventh oration, which provides an instructive illustration of self-praise used for the betterment of the audience. Chrysostom begins by asking if Homer "has made a braggart [*ἀλαζόνα*] of Nestor" (*Or.* 57.2). In defending Nestor's self-praise, Chrysostom notes that individuals scorn the advice given by those of no repute; however, the counsel given by those who have been honoured will be willingly received. "This is one count, therefore, on which

¹⁷⁷This is consistent with the close link between virtue and honour in the Graeco-Roman world; cf. above pp. 14-16.

¹⁷⁸Quintilian observes that "what really carries greatest weight in *deliberative* speeches is the authority of the speaker. For he, who would have all men trust his judgment as to what is expedient and honourable, should both possess and be regarded as possessing genuine wisdom and excellence of character" (*Inst.* 3.8.12-13; cf. Aris. *Rh.* 2.1.4).

¹⁷⁹He defines an expression of self-confidence as "an assertion about the virtue of some aspect or aspects of one's character" (Olson, "Self-Confidence", 585).

¹⁸⁰*ibid.*, 596, 597.

¹⁸¹Plutarch cites *Il.* 1.260-61 at *Mor.* 544F.

Nestor commends himself [συνίστησιν αὐτόν], namely, that in days gone by has been able to persuade many men of influence, and that Agamemnon and Achilles will refuse to obey, if they do refuse, because of their own folly and lack of perception, and not because Nestor is incompetent to give advice about things of highest importance” (*Or.* 57.3). As an example, Chrysostom observes that a doctor may motivate a recalcitrant patient to accept treatment by recounting other patients he has helped (*Or.* 57.5). Finally, Chrysostom explains why he has examined Nestor’s speech; his narrative was designed to avert possible criticism as he delivers a speech that he had previously presented to the emperor. He will mention the earlier success of the speech not because he is a “braggart” (ἀλαζών), but “for the purpose of having the compliance of his hearers” (*Or.* 57.10).

Chrysostom’s concern that this type of self-praise might be misunderstood is also evident in Plutarch’s discussion. While highlighting the pedagogical function of self-praise, Plutarch insists that this is distinct from boasting that merely reflects the pursuit of glory. “This is not the self-praise of a demagogue or would-be sophist or of one who courts plaudits and cheers, but of a man who offers his virtue and understanding to his friends as security against despair” (*Mor.* 545C). Thus, although encouraging self-praise in situations where it is beneficial to the audience, Plutarch recognises that this must be done carefully; self-praise intended to produce emulation can also generate envy.¹⁸² Ultimately, the factors that encourage the limitation of boasting (e.g., envy, ἀλαζονεία) can impede boasting that occurs for the betterment of the listener.

For the orator, the rhetorical conventions of self-praise provided resources with which to address the divergent factors affecting self-presentation. In the various discussions of this topic, self-defence is highlighted as the most common opportunity for appropriate boasting. As we have seen, Plutarch, like others, acknowledges Demosthenes’ *De Corona* as the pre-eminent example of effective self-praise. Not only does Demosthenes skillfully avoid creating envy and succumbing to the charge of ἀλαζονεία, he also adroitly highlights his accomplishments and his worthiness of honour. Although Plutarch enumerates the ways in which an orator can circumvent the dangers of boasting, he also suggests that self-praise be used for the betterment of the audience. In contrast to those who boast simply for personal gain, he insists that self-praise can strengthen the orator’s ability to provide prudent advice to the listener.

CONCLUSIONS

In examining self-praise in the Graeco-Roman world, this chapter has observed certain concepts and social conventions that either motivated boasting or limited its practice. As we have seen, the theme of honour was integrally related to self-praise in various Hellenistic sources. The Graeco-Roman world was a competitive environment where honour was highly valued, and the desire for honour encouraged the activity of boasting. Furthermore, the close relationship between achievement and recognition encouraged individuals to boast in order to maintain their social status. However, the widespread ambition for public recognition was criticised by various philosophers and moralists. A frequent target of their criticism was the ambition and flamboyant self-presentation of rhetoricians and sophists. Central to this criticism was an emphasis on self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια). If “happiness” were an internal phenomenon, then the pretentious pursuit of

¹⁸²cf. above p. 31.

fame by public figures, such as sophists, indicated a lack of virtue (ἀρετή). In addition to these philosophical reservations about boasting, a more general concern about this practice was the danger of generating envy; consistently, rhetorical sources acknowledge envy as a potential hazard of self-praise. Moreover, boastful self-presentation could result in accusations of ἀλαζονεία. Thus, inherent in the social context of the Graeco-Roman world were grounds for engaging in self-praise as well as reasons for restricting this type of behaviour.

In response to these divergent concepts and social factors, the rhetorical conventions of self-praise suggested ways in which individuals might boast without offence. Rutherford notes that “[m]ost of the περιαιτολογία tradition in rhetoric is the working out of a problem in *decorum* created by a conflict between the social pressure to assert oneself in public and social criticism of excessive assertiveness.”¹⁸³ Thus, these rhetorical conventions imply that the relationship between the speaker and the audience was a central criteria in the proper use and evaluation of boasting.

In relation to our study of 2 Cor 10-13, this chapter on Graeco-Roman sources provides information that will prove helpful to our understanding of Paul’s own boasting and his critique of his opponents’ self-praise. First, this chapter has shown that boasting as a means of self-defence was consistently regarded as an acceptable and appropriate activity. Even philosophers and moralists who bemoaned the ubiquitous pursuit of honour acknowledged the legitimacy of boasting for the purpose of self-defence (e.g., Dio Chrys. *Or.* 43.2). In fact, since self-praise was an expected response when one’s reputation had been questioned, failure to boast in such circumstances might be perceived as an endorsement of the allegations of one’s critics. As we shall see in Chapter Three, Paul’s character and ministerial credentials had been questioned within the Corinthian congregation. In view of prevalent cultural patterns of self-presentation, boasting was the necessary and appropriate way for Paul to react to his critics.

Second, in examining the criticisms of boasting in Graeco-Roman sources, we have seen that such concerns could be motivated by divergent reasons. Some endorsed the restriction of boasting for philosophical reasons, noting that self-praise could manifest a deficiency of character. The rhetorical conventions of self-praise, however, did not necessarily imply that boasting was inherently improper; rather, they restricted the practice of boasting primarily for the purpose of effectiveness in communication. These divergent motives for governing self-praise suggest that one should be cautious in comparing Paul’s criticisms of boasting to similar criticisms found in other sources. As we shall see in Chapter Four, while Paul, like others in the ancient world, could criticise boastful self-presentation, the formal similarities between these concerns did not necessarily involve analogous arguments and motives. However, before investigating the theme of boasting in Paul, we will now examine this topic in Jewish literature.

¹⁸³Rutherford, “Aelius Aristides”, 201.

II. BOASTING IN JEWISH LITERATURE

As the previous chapter has shown, the evaluation of self-praise in Graeco-Roman discussions generally involved the social consequences of boasting. How was this activity perceived by those who heard it? When done appropriately (e.g., in self-defence), self-praise was a potent way to generate honour. In a competitive environment where honour was limited, boasting could be a useful tool in maintaining one's social standing. On the other hand, it could generate envy and accusations of being an ἀλαζών; it could also divulge a shortage of ἀρετή. Not surprisingly, the techniques of proper self-praise were a standard topic of discussion in rhetorical treatises and handbooks. In this context, suitable boasting was one facet of instruction concerning the self-presentation required to persuade one's audience effectively. Thus, the impact of self-praise on others was a governing factor in the discussion and practice of boasting.

Jewish literature, by contrast, beginning with the Old Testament, normally approaches this issue from a different perspective. In part, this contrast reflects diverse types of literature; the expansive corpus of Graeco-Roman rhetorical manuals and orations is unparalleled in Jewish literature. More specifically, this difference reflects a distinctive way in which boasting is evaluated. In Graeco-Roman rhetorical works, boasting is generally assessed in terms of the relationship between the speaker and the listener. When it is criticised, “[b]oasting is simply considered bad form in personal relationships, a breach of social standards, or a blot on one's personal character.”¹ As this chapter will show, however, Jewish texts generally appraise boasting from a *theological* perspective; thus, boasting affects not only one's relationship with others but also one's relationship with God. In most cases, when boasting is criticised, the grounds of this criticism are theological in nature. In fact, in certain Old Testament texts, boasting is closely related to blasphemy against God.²

This theological perspective influences the evaluation of boasting as well as the way this topic is defined and discussed. From this vantage point, boasting is often viewed not merely as praise of self but also as rebellion towards God.³ Consequently, the object of one's boast can be interpreted as the focus of one's faith and confidence. Not surprisingly, “boasting” can be closely related to “trusting” in the Old Testament.⁴ Of course, if boasting is aligned with trust, then the object of that boast does not have to be self-focused. For instance, it is possible to “boast” in the Lord just as one “boasts” in personal abilities or achievements. Thus, in Jewish texts, the concept and vocabulary of “boasting” is not restricted to praise of self but can involve more general statements of praise and confidence.⁵

In examining boasting within Jewish literature, this chapter will begin with a brief survey of relevant Old Testament texts. While not exhaustive, this discussion will survey

¹Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, 167.

²e.g., 1 Sam 17:10-45; Ps 10:3-4; Isa 10:5-19; Jer 48:29-42; cf. Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, 195-96; Childs, *Isaiah*, 88-89. In their discussions of *καυχάομαι*, Bosch (“*Gloriarse*”, 4-6) and Bultmann (“*καυχάομαι*”, 646) list several classical Greek texts where boasting is presented as an offence to the gods (Pindar *O.* 9.38; *I.* 5.65; *N.* 9.14; Soph. *Aj.* 758). This theme, however, is rare in Greek literature. Furthermore, in terms of understanding the Graeco-Roman world of the first century, it is significant that none of these examples dates from the Hellenistic period.

³cf. Bultmann, “*καυχάομαι*”, 646.

⁴cf. *ibid.*; in certain passages, the themes of “boasting” and “trust” appear together: e.g., Ps 44:6-8; 49:6; 52:1-7; Isa 16:6; 20:5; 28:15-16, 36, 37; Jer 48:7, 30; 49:4.

⁵References to “boasting” in this chapter do not necessarily imply “self-praise” but may refer more generally to expressions of praise and confidence.

selected passages that concern boasting;⁶ it will also observe certain passages that describe humility, a disposition that stands in contrast to the pride of those who boast arrogantly.⁷ Specifically, this chapter will focus on the discussion of boasting in Jer 9:22-23 and the ongoing use of this passage. Paul's dependence on this tradition is particularly evident in the quotations of 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17.⁸ Finally, this section will observe germane material in Jewish literature outside the Old Testament. Throughout this process, the goal is to understand the way boasting and self-presentation are addressed in Jewish material as a background to exploring Paul's treatment of these themes in 2 Cor 10-13.

A. OLD TESTAMENT

1. Pentateuch⁹

Although the issue of self-praise is not directly addressed in this material, certain texts do relate generally to the issues of boasting and self-presentation. In recounting an episode of opposition to Moses, Num 12:3 states that "Moses was a very humble [עָנָו] man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." This statement occurs within a larger narrative section (10:11-20:13) that highlights the rebellion of the Israelites against Moses and God.¹⁰ Although various interpretations have been offered for עָנָו in this passage,¹¹ the term generally refers to those experiencing physical or spiritual need; thus, it often stresses an attitude of dependence or humility before God.¹² Noth describes this verse as "a later addition which disrupts the close connection between v. 2b and v. 4."¹³ However, this statement about Moses is coherent within its context.¹⁴ It follows a complaint voiced by Miriam and Aaron against Moses' prophetic authority: "'Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?' they asked. 'Hasn't he also spoken through us?'" (12:2). The text continues by stating that God heard this complaint; God is the one who summons Aaron and Miriam and responds to their charges (Vv. 4-8). Thus, v. 3 underscores the reality that Moses did not

⁶"Boasting" in the OT/LXX can be closely related to other positive (e.g., "rejoicing"; "praising") and negative (e.g., "pride"; "arrogance") themes; an exhaustive study of those themes is beyond the scope of this study. To demarcate the selection of texts, passages were chosen because they were (1) specifically concerned with self-praise, and/or (2) more generally utilized vocabulary associated with boasting, and/or (3) related in some way to the boasting passage in Jer 9:22-23.

⁷The concept of "humility" involves an obedient and deferential demeanor (cf. Preuss, "Demut", 460). As in the case of Graeco-Roman literature, "humility" in Jewish texts can involve a lowly social status as well as an unpretentious attitude (cf. below p. 66).

⁸On Paul's use of Jer 9:22-23, cf. below pp. 142-59.

⁹This section will not address source-critical theories of the Pentateuch (cf. Whybray, *Pentateuch*; Rendtorff, *Old Testament*, 157-64) because our interest is not in the composition history of these texts but in their ongoing influence and use. Although these matters can be significant to the task of interpretation, my discussion of Pentateuchal texts is not dependent on particular compositional reconstructions. Rather, it will focus on these texts in their final form.

¹⁰Rendtorff, *Old Testament*, 148.

¹¹cf. Coats, "Humility", 97-107; Rogers, "Moses", 257-63.

¹²cf. Gerstenberger, "עָנָו", 265; outside of this passage, עָנָו occurs only in the plural in the OT. In translating עָנָו with *πραῦς*, the LXX interprets 12:3 as a reference to Moses' humility; the Greek term "indicates the patient, submissive spirit that, in the midst of difficulties, does not strike back but yields in faith to God" (Rogers, "Moses", 263). Subsequent authors also describe Moses with this type of terminology (cf. Sir 45:4; Philo *Mos.* 2.279).

¹³Noth, *Numbers*, 95.

¹⁴Against Noth, cf. Robinson, "Miriam", 428-32.

answer these accusations, but God did.¹⁵ Furthermore, Moses' humility stands in pronounced contrast to the self-assertiveness of Miriam and Aaron, and it diffuses the force of their attack. It undermines "any suggestion that Moses was guilty of a boastful arrogance in his supposed claim to be the sole recipient of Yahweh's word".¹⁶ In God's reply, the uniqueness of Moses' prophetic office is stressed; while God speaks to other prophets in visions and dreams, he speaks to Moses "face to face" (vv. 6-7). This oracle underlines the superiority of Moses' role to that of Miriam; it also reveals that Moses' authority does not derive from arrogance but from the activity of God. Moses' willingness to intercede on Miriam's behalf (v. 13), despite her criticism, further accentuates a lack of haughtiness on his part. Thus, while emphasising Moses' unique prophetic role,¹⁷ this text notes the humility with which that role was exercised.

The significance of this type of humble dependence on God appears within the covenant setting of Deuteronomy. In a section (8:1-20) involving the recurrent themes of "remembering" and "forgetting" God,¹⁸ 8:14 notes that the Israelites may be tempted to become proud and complacent when they experience success; in fact, they may forget God and attribute their accomplishments to themselves.¹⁹ Thus, arrogant claims of autonomy are related to disobedience of God. By contrast, the passage recounts Israel's wilderness experience, in which the nation relied on God for food and provision (vv. 2-4, 15-16). Through these events God "humbled" (הִנְיָ; vv. 2, 16)²⁰ Israel, so that the people might understand their dependence on him.²¹ Rather than boasting in their achievements, the nation should "remember" God through obedience to covenantal demands and avoidance of self-sufficient attitudes.

In another section (10:12-22) describing the covenantal expectations placed on Israel,²² God's provision and protection show that he is worthy of worship and praise. The author states that the Lord "is your praise [הַלְלָהּ/καύχημα];²³ he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes" (v. 21). The covenantal requirements enumerated involve one's relationship with God as well as one's

¹⁵The complaint of Miriam and Aaron in 12:1-2 has structural similarities with the complaint of the people in 11:1; in both cases, it is Yahweh who responds to the grievance (11:1; 12:2, 4-10).

¹⁶Davies, *Numbers*, 121; cf. Robinson, "Miriam", 431.

¹⁷In Deuteronomy, the significance of Moses' prophetic role is evident at 18:18 and 34:10. More generally, scholars have noted that Moses serves as a paradigm for other prophetic figures such as Jeremiah (cf. Holladay, "Jeremiah's Self-Understanding", 313-24; Seitz, "Moses", 3-27). For the portrayal of Moses in extra-biblical Jewish literature, cf. Jeremias, "Μωϋσῆς", 849-64; Rosmarin, *Moses*.

¹⁸cf. Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 184.

¹⁹"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me'" (8:17); Gerhard von Rad (*Deuteronomy*, 73) suggests that this verse "seems to recall the type of arrogant soliloquy probably created by the prophets" (e.g., Isa 10:8; 14:13; Ezek 28:2). In its reference to self-confidence about one's strength and wealth, Deut 8:17 has a certain thematic affinity with Jer 9:22-23.

²⁰הִנְיָ can mean to "humble", "afflict as a discipline" (BDB, 776); the latter is stressed in the LXX with the use of κακόω.

²¹cf. Milgrom, *Deuteronomy*, 92.

²²This section follows an elaboration of Israel's covenantal failures (9:7-10:11).

²³Concerning the LXX translation, John Wevers (*Deuteronomy*, 185-86) notes that "[t]he term הַלְלָהּ is probably taken here as that which is praiseworthy, thus that in which one takes pride, one's dignity." Generally, καύχημα refers to a "boast" or "subject of boasting" (LSJ, 932).

relationships with others. The opening (vv. 12-13) and closing (vv. 20-22) verses challenge the Israelites to obey God; both passages exhort the nation to “fear” (יָרָא) and “serve” (עָבַד) the Lord (vv. 12, 20). Verses 14-15 stress God’s love for Israel in choosing this nation above all others. In light of this loving election, the people have no grounds for arrogance; they are to “circumcise” their hearts and renounce their stubbornness (v. 16). Furthermore, they are to reflect God’s concern for those in need (vv. 17-19). Thus, the depiction of God as Israel’s praise (v. 21) is coupled with an expectation of covenantal obedience. “Fear the Lord your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name” (v. 20; cf. 6:13). Moreover, the presentation of God as the object of praise is related to his actions on behalf of Israel; because of divine love, Israel has been chosen by God (v. 15) and has witnessed God’s deeds of deliverance and blessing (vv. 21-22).

In his treatment of Jer 9:22-23, Schreiner argues that Deut 10:21 and 26:19²⁴ influence other Old Testament discussions of boasting. Both verses occur in passages that stress God’s activity on behalf of Israel²⁵ and underscore the concomitant obedience expected of his people.²⁶ While the former speaks of God as Israel’s boast, the latter states that Israel’s obedience will result in praise and exaltation. Schreiner states that the theological treatment of boasting in the Old Testament is primarily deuteronomistic in orientation and that Jer 9:22-23 receives its contour from these Deuteronomy passages.²⁷

2. Historical Books²⁸

Several texts in the narrative literature of the Old Testament involve the theme of boastful self-confidence. In Judges, God instructs Gideon to reduce the size of his army “[i]n order that Israel may not boast [יִתְפָּאֵר/καυχῆσθαι] against me that her own strength has saved her” (7:2). In 2 Kings 20:11, Ahab responds to the threats of Ben-Hadad with a proverb concerning boasting: “One who puts on his armour should not boast like one who takes it off” (2 Kgs 20:11).²⁹

In some texts, boastful self-presentation is associated with the enemies of Israel. For example, when Goliath comes out for battle, he “taunts” (הִרְתָּ; 1 Sam 17:8, 26, 45) the army of Israel; according to David, Goliath’s assertions have ultimately involved defiance of God (v. 45). Similarly, in the narrative accounts of Hezekiah and the Assyrian crisis (2 Kgs 18:17-19:37 // Isa 36:1-37:38; 2 Chr 32), arrogant self-assertion is evident in the actions of the Assyrians.³⁰ In recounting Assyria’s military successes, the field commander of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, implies that the god of Israel cannot prevent the fall of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:34-5 // Isa 36:19-20). The oracle against Sennacherib, king of Assyria

²⁴“And the Lord has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands. He has declared that he will set you in praise [יִתְהַלָּל/ὄνομαστόν], fame [יְשׁוּבָה/αὐτίμημα], and honour [יִתְהַלָּל/δοξαστόν] high above all nations....” (26:18-19).

²⁵10:15, 21-22; 26:18.

²⁶Both passages speak of respond to God with all of one’s “heart” (לֵבָב) and “soul” (נַפְשׁ; 10:12; 26:16).

²⁷Schreiner, “Jeremia 9,22.23”, 537-38; cf. below p. 75.

²⁸This section covers Joshua through Kings (the “Deuteronomistic History”) as well as Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah (the “Chronicler’s History”). Although these groups occur separately in the Hebrew canon, I have classified them as “historical books” based on the nature of their content (cf. Schmidt, *Old Testament*, 136-70).

²⁹On this proverb, cf. Fontaine, *Traditional Sayings*, 127-38.

³⁰The secondary literature on these accounts is vast; cf. Childs, *Isaiah*; Clements, *Isaiah*. Concerning the parallel material in Kings and Isaiah, most scholars endorse the priority of the account in Kings (cf. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings*, 2:556-57).

asks: “Who is it you have insulted and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes in pride? Against the Holy One of Israel!” (Isa 37:23 // 2 Kgs 19:22). The oracle also warns: “Because you rage against me and because your insolence has reached my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will make you return by the way you came” (Isa 37:29 // 2 Kgs 19:28).³¹ Thus, the arrogant self-presentation of the Assyrians (cf. Isa 10:8-15) has been interpreted by the oracle as an act of blasphemy towards God--an act in which God’s “honour is purposely insulted.”³²

Other texts stress the importance of dependence on God. For example, 1 Sam 1 describes Hannah’s fervent prayer that God might give her a child; when God answers her prayer, she responds with a psalm of celebration (1 Sam 2). This song commemorates God’s deliverance and warns that those who boast arrogantly will experience divine humiliation (1 Sam 2:3). As we shall see,³³ the Septuagintal version of this psalm includes an addition very similar to Jer 9:22-23; with this insertion, the hymn associates “boasting in the Lord” with God’s intervention on behalf of an individual in need.

In contrast to arrogant self-assertion, the Chronicler, “who advances the religious life of Israel as a major topic of his historical account”,³⁴ emphasises the significance of humility before God. In this case, humility is not stressed in terms of interpersonal relationships but as a precondition for repentance and the appropriate response of humanity to God.³⁵ The Israelites are instructed to “humble [ἠταπῶντες/ἐντραπή] themselves” before God (2 Chr 7:14);³⁶ consequently, a lack of dependence on God is associated with disobedience and pride (e.g., 2 Chr 36:12-13). Although the Chronicler’s theological reflection on the history of Israel does not directly address the topic of self-presentation, the emphasis on humility before God does provide evidence for the positive view of humility in the Old Testament.

3. Prophets³⁷

In prophetic literature, boasting can be ascribed to the enemies of Israel; in these contexts, arrogant speech manifests the pride and haughtiness of these nations, which God will ultimately judge. For example, Isa 10:5-19 contains an oracle of judgment against Assyria. While acknowledging Assyria as God’s instrument of punishment, the oracle condemns the arrogance of the Assyrian king--an arrogance that denies the sovereign activity of God in history. The quoted speeches (vv. 8-11, 13-14) are boasts of Assyrian power and military prowess; “By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding” (v. 13). Against this hubris, the prophet responds with a wisdom saying: “Does the axe raise itself above him who swings it, or the saw boast [ἡ δὲ ἄξω/ὕψωθήσεται]³⁸ against him who uses it?” (v. 15a); ultimately, Assyria will experience

³¹John D. W. Watts (*Isaiah 34-66*, 42), commenting on Isa 37, suggests a chiasmic structure for this oracle in which these two citations (vv. 23, 29) stand in a parallel relationship. The centre of the chiasm is v. 26a-b “which turns the Assyrian boast into a Yahwist claim of sovereignty.”

³²Baker, *Speech-Ethics*, 193.

³³cf. below pp. 76-78.

³⁴Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 45.

³⁵cf. 2 Chr 12:6, 7, 12; 30:11; 32:26; 33:12, 19, 23; cf. Japhet, *Ideology*, 260-62.

³⁶In God’s response (2 Chr 7:12-22) to Solomon’s prayer (2 Chr 6:14-42), 7:14 serves as a general response to Solomon’s request for deliverance from such calamities as drought, locusts and plagues.

³⁷This section covers the books that constitute the Latter Prophets of the Hebrew canon.

³⁸BDB (152) lists “magnify oneself against” as the translation for ἡ δὲ ἄξω here.

the judgment of God. Similar to the references to the Assyrian crisis in the historical literature,³⁹ the boastful pronouncements of the Assyrian king are also blasphemous statements against God. In addition to the reference to Assyria, the futility of boasting is also evident with reference to Moab. In Isaiah 16, the prophet laments a sudden disaster that has transpired in Moab. In response to this lament, the oracle says: “We have heard of Moab’s pride--her overweening pride and conceit, her pride and her insolence--but her boasts [יִבְרָחַ]”⁴⁰ are empty” (v. 8). As the passage continues, Moab’s downfall is attributed to its arrogance (vv. 6-8).⁴¹ Although God laments Moab’s destruction, he has brought about the misfortune as judgment on Moab’s false worship (vv. 9-12).

Besides Isaiah, other prophets also associate boasting with the enemies of Israel. Often these texts underscore the worthlessness of these arrogant statements because of God’s impending judgment. In a prophecy against Moab and Ammon, Zephaniah warns that these nations will be devastated like Sodom and Gomorrah (2:9); “[t]his shall be their lot in return for their pride, because they scoffed and boasted [יִבְרָחַ] against the people of the Lord of hosts” (2:10; NRSV).⁴² Likewise, in an oracle concerning Ammon, Jeremiah asks: “Why do you boast [יִבְרָחַ/ἀγαλλιάσῃ] of your valleys, boast of your valleys so fruitful? O unfaithful daughter, you trust [יִבְרָחַ/πεποιθῶ] in your riches and say, ‘Who will attack me?’ I will bring terror on you from all those around you,” declares the Lord Almighty. “Every one of you will be driven away, and no one will gather the fugitives.” (Jer 49:4-5 [30:20-21 LXX])

Writing in response to the Babylonian domination of Palestine, Habakkuk asks why God is silent in light of the oppressive acts of foreign domination. Once again, the prophecy anticipates God’s judgment as a response to the insolent behaviour of the wicked; their boastful actions (cf. 1:10) will be silenced. The prophecy states that the wicked individual is “arrogant [יִבְרָחַ/ἀλάζων] and never at rest” (2:5). This description is followed by a series of five woes,⁴³ which herald God’s judgment and justice. Thus, in different contexts, the prophets argue that despite the apparent success of these foreign powers, their boastful arrogance will be silenced by the judgment of God.⁴⁴

One other theme in the prophets deserves mention at this point. Certain texts note God’s identification with those who are “humble.” An emphasis on humility is consistent with the prophets’ discussion of Israel’s pride and disobedience--actions that are depicted as the origin of the nation’s domination by foreign powers. For example, Zephaniah says: “Seek the Lord, all you humble [יִבְרָחַ/ταπεινοί] of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness [יִבְרָחַ/δικαιοσύνην], seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord’s anger” (2:3). In this context, as the prophet exhorts the nation concerning God’s impending judgment (2:1-2), “righteousness” and “humility” summarize the type of behaviour God requires from those who would follow him (cf. Micah 6:8). This emphasis on

³⁹cf. above p. 60.

⁴⁰BDB (95) defines this term as “empty, idle talk ... esp. with collat. idea of imaginary pretensions or claims”.

⁴¹On Moab’s pride, cf. Isa 25:10-12; Zeph 2:8, 10; note also the parallel to Isa 16:6 in Jer 48:29-30.

⁴²The LXX translates יִבְרָחַ with ἐμεγαλύνθησαν (“magnified themselves”).

⁴³Hab 2:6-8, 9-11, 12, 15-17, 18-19.

⁴⁴“The abasement of proud oppressors, in Israel and elsewhere, is perhaps the most prominent theme in the prophetic tradition” (Ward, *Prophets*, 280).

“humility” (cf. also 3:12) stands in antithesis to various negative references to pride.⁴⁵ Similarly, the oracle of Isaiah 66:2 states: “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble [ἡγ/ταπεινόν] and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.”⁴⁶ Thus, in some texts, the deliverance of God and the expectation of the nation’s restoration are associated with those who are “humble” and needy.⁴⁷ The theme of God’s deliverance of the humble will be examined more closely as it appears in the Psalms.

4. Psalms and Wisdom Books

a) Psalms

(1) *Boasting and the “Enemies”*

Particularly relevant to the discussion of boasting and self-presentation are the speech patterns in the Psalms. A central characteristic of the Psalms is the presence of enemies or foes.⁴⁸ The majority of these references occur in individual and communal laments--psalms which express sorrow and grief over some calamity or potential misfortune and appeal to God for deliverance. Claus Westermann notes that a psalm of lament typically has three subjects--God, the one who laments, and the enemy;⁴⁹ furthermore, he suggests that “the dominant subject is ‘the enemy,’ and it is also the most elaborately developed part of the lament.”⁵⁰ In the secondary literature, a great deal of discussion involves the identity of the enemies in these various laments.⁵¹ Determining this identity is complicated by the generic way in which the psalms present the speaker’s opposition.⁵²

A major part of the formulaic portrayal of these enemies involves their speech. Frequently their speech involves contemptuous and derisive comments about the psalmist’s misfortune or the apparent lack of divine response to the psalmist’s hardships.⁵³ Westermann notes that “[t]he accusation against the enemy has two sides: a) what they have

⁴⁵2:8, 10, 15; 3:1-2, 11.

⁴⁶Dihle (“Demut”, 744) suggests that it is in the exilic prophets (e.g., Isa 57:15) and preeminently in the Psalms where the concept of “humility” as an attitude of subservience is developed.

⁴⁷cf. Isa 29:19; 57:15; 61:1; Ezek 21:26; Zeph 3:12.

⁴⁸cf. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 60-64; Kraus, *Theology*, 125-36.

⁴⁹Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 196, cf. 267. Although the exact nature of these psalms is debated, they generally include the following elements: address/introductory petition, lament, condemnation of enemies, expression of trust in God, petition, vow of praise (cf. *ibid.*, 170; Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 1:195-239; Ferris, *Communal Lament*, 89-100).

⁵⁰Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 188-89.

⁵¹For a helpful summary of divergent views, cf., Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 62-64; Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 95-99; Croft, *Identity*, 15-48.

⁵²cf. Miller, *Psalms*, 50.

⁵³e.g., Ps 22:7-8, 17; 35:19; 42:3, 10; 44:15-16; 55:2-3; 71:11; 89:50-51; 119:21, 51, 69, 78, 85, 122; cf. Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 199.

done to the people of God, and b) their slander and abuse.”⁵⁴ Thus, arrogant and contemptuous statements are associated with the oppressive actions of those who do evil.⁵⁵ Psalm 49 is a typical example of the close link between the abusive activity and the audacious talk of one’s enemy.

Why should I fear when evil days come, when wicked deceivers surround me--those who trust in their wealth and boast [תְּהַלְּלוּ/καυχώμενοι] of their great riches? (vv. 5-6 [LXX 48:6-7])

The close relationship between the speech and actions of evil oppressors also appears in Psalm 12. After acknowledging the scarcity of those who are faithful (v. 1), the speaker says: “May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and every boastful tongue that says, ‘We will triumph with our tongues; we own our lips--who is our master?’” (vv. 3-4). This is followed by the assertion that God will respond to the “oppression of the weak” and the “groaning of the needy” (v. 5). These passages show that the enemies who intimidate and malign the people of God engage in scornful and boastful discourse. Their denial of God and exploitation of his people are manifested in their self-praise and disdainful speech.

Despite the arrogant pronouncements of the wicked, the Psalms argue that such boasting will prove to be meaningless. For instance, the speaker of Psalm 94 asserts that his boastful opponents are “fools” (v. 8) who do not understand that God will act to overturn their presumption (vv. 8-10, 23). Similarly, the admonition of Psalm 75 that the arrogant cease their self-praise is followed by the declaration that God is the one who judges and pours out his wrath on the wicked (vv. 7-8). Particularly in the lament psalms, the speaker’s petition may include a request that one’s enemies experience divine retribution.⁵⁶ Thus, the author of Psalm 31 prays that “the wicked be put to shame” and that “their lying lips be silenced, for with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous” (vv. 17-18).

Westermann notes that in some psalms the focus shifts from the prayer of lament to a discussion of the impending ruin of the opposition. This change can be indicated where the enemy is addressed directly.⁵⁷ In certain psalms, the description of the opposition is developed, with a comparison between the enemy’s present fortune and future downfall. Westermann states that this type of lament psalm approximates “the language of wisdom.”⁵⁸ For example, Psalm 52 warns a wicked boaster that “God will bring you down to everlasting ruin” (v. 5). These psalms highlight the transitory nature of the exalted position of the wicked; the sources of their boasting will ultimately disappear.

(2) *The Deliverance of the Oppressed*

While the Psalms present a recurrent image of the arrogant wicked who oppose God and oppress his people, they also describe those who experience this oppression. Just as the enemies of God’s people are depicted in formulaic fashion, those exploited are typically

⁵⁴Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 180.

⁵⁵e.g., Ps 10:2-4; 17:10-12; 35:26; 38:16-20; 74:10, 18; 80:6.

⁵⁶e.g., Ps 10:15; 17:13-14; 35:1-8; 69:23-29; 74:11; 83:9-18; 86:16; 109:6-20.

⁵⁷cf. Ps 4:2; 6:8; 52:1-4; 58:1-5; 119:15.

⁵⁸cf. Ps 14; 36; 37; 52; 53; 58; “[a]lthough the structure of these Psalms is quite varied, in each is found the three motifs characterizing this type of Psalm: a) a description of the evildoer, b) the fate of the evildoer and, in contrast, c) the fate of the pious” (Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 192).

designated as the “poor”, “afflicted” or “needy”.⁵⁹ These concepts are expressed by such terms as עָנָו,⁶⁰ עָנִי,⁶¹ and אֶבְיֹן.⁶² Often the lament psalms present the situation of the community or of the speaker in these decisive terms of impoverishment and destitution.⁶³ Despite the variety of terms and images used to depict those in need, the “poor” as victims of the “enemies” or the “wicked” is a constant theme. Furthermore, in response to their disadvantaged state, the “poor” are portrayed as dependent on God for justice and deliverance.⁶⁴ “A detailed investigation of the occurrence of the terms shows that the ‘poor’ person is the persecuted and disenfranchised one, who seeks refuge against his powerful enemies with Yahweh and entrusts his lost cause to God as the righteous judge.”⁶⁵ Thus, in Psalm 9, God is described as “a refuge for the oppressed” (v. 9), and the poor are depicted as those “who know your [God’s] name” (v. 10). In this psalm, the judicial language associated with God’s activity (cf. vv. 7-8) highlights divine faithfulness that deals justly with those in need.

This description of the destitute as dependent on God shows that moral and spiritual connotations can be associated with the imagery of the poor. Although the distinction between the “wicked” and the “poor” can be one of economic and social power, these images can also carry ethical overtones.⁶⁶ Just as evil actions and intentions are associated with the “wicked”, so also acts of obedience and humility are associated with the “poor.” For instance, in certain psalms, the “poor” are associated with the “righteous.”⁶⁷ Thus, while Psalm 14 laments the activity of the wicked, the author notes that “God is present in the company of the righteous [צַדִּיק]. You evildoers frustrate the plans of the poor [עָנִי], but the Lord is their refuge” (vv. 5-6). In Psalm 69, the “poor” (עָנָוִים) are portrayed as those “who seek God” (v. 32; cf. 22:26).

This association of social destitution with submissive obedience to God also occurs in Psalm 37. This psalm is an anthology of wisdom sayings that provide instructions on living a moral life and understanding the apparent success of the irreligious. Central to the

⁵⁹As with the nature of the “enemies” in the Psalms, the image of the “poor” has generated a variety of interpretations; for helpful discussions, cf. Kraus, *Theology*, 150-54; Croft, *Identity*, 49-72.

⁶⁰e.g., Ps 9:13; 10:12; 22:26; 25:9; 34:2; 69:33; 147:6; 149:4.

⁶¹e.g., Ps 10:2, 9; 14:6; 18:28; 22:25; 34:7; 35:10; 69:30; 82:3.

⁶²e.g., Ps 9:19; 35:10; 37:14; 49:3; 72:13; 74:21; 82:4; 107:41; 109:16.

⁶³Mowinckel (*Psalms*, 196) observes that “[i]n true psalms of lamentation the character of the whole is fixed by the *lamentation*. It consists of a longer or shorter *description of the distress*, which is painted in the deepest colours, with regard to both its external and its mental aspect. Israel presents herself as being ‘oppressed, distressed, miserable, in need of help’--all these shades of meaning are implied in the Hebrew word ‘*ānī* or ‘*ānāw*, generally used here.”

⁶⁴e.g., Ps 25:16-21; 35:10; 69:33; 71:21-23; 74:19; 86:1; 94:17-19; 107; 109:21-26; 116:1-11.

⁶⁵Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 93.

⁶⁶In the secondary literature on the poor in the Psalms, an ongoing debate concerns the relationship between poverty and humility. Frequently, this discussion involves whether certain terms (e.g., עָנָוִים) refer primarily to physical or spiritual poverty (cf. Pleins, “Poor, Poverty”, 411-13). In response to this debate, Croft (*Identity*, 55-56) argues that “it is confusing to speak simply of literal or metaphorical usage”; therefore he proposes a range of meanings for the imagery depicting poverty. This range includes “afflicted”, “destitute”, “in need”, “righteous”, and “empty metaphor”. By “empty metaphor” he is referring to the usage of this imagery where the need of the group or individual in the psalm is not genuine.

⁶⁷e.g., Ps 37:11-12; 69:28-32; 72:7-12; 140:12-13; Mowinckel (*Psalms*, 1:208) notes that the terms צַדִּיק (“righteous”) and רָשָׁע (“wicked”) “express the two main notions in the ethical view of life of an Israelite.”

argument of this passage is an ongoing comparison between the righteous and the wicked. In this psalm, the concepts used to describe the righteous contain both social and ethical implications. Those attacked by the wicked are the “poor and needy” (עֲנִי וְאֶבְיָוֹן/πτωχὸν καὶ πένητα; v. 14 [LXX 36:14]); they are individuals with few possessions (v. 16), who can be the victims of the actions of those with social status and economic power (vv. 7, 12, 14, 32). They are also described as the “meek” (רַחֲמָנִים/πραεῖς;⁶⁸ v. 11 [LXX 36:11]), the “blameless” (תְּמִימִים/ἀμώμων; v. 18 [LXX 36:18]), and God’s “faithful ones” (אֱמוּנָתָי/ὁσίους ἀὐτοῦ; v. 28 [LXX 38:28]), “whose ways are upright” (v. 14). In contrast to the actions of the wicked, the impoverished are instructed to wait patiently (v. 7) and trust in God (vv. 3, 5); instead of seeking revenge, they are to depend on God’s justice and hope in him (vv. 9-10). In this portrayal of the poor, they are portrayed as dependent on others both economically and spiritually. In evaluating the representation of the poor in the Psalms, Sue Gillingham notes that various terms for poverty are “not exhausted by this meaning of material impoverishment alone,” they can also be “used to depict the humility of spirit before God which so frequently accompanies personal degradation.”⁶⁹ Thus, as in the Graeco-Roman material surveyed earlier, one’s low social status can be associated with an attitude of dependence and humility.⁷⁰

Not only does Psalm 37 portray the situation of those who are oppressed by their enemies and dependent on God, but it also anticipates a reversal of their situation. As stated above,⁷¹ in the lament psalms, the author frequently requests that the actions of the boastful wicked be judged by God. In Psalm 37, which is a wisdom psalm, the future verdict awaiting those who do evil is stated as a matter of principle. In a variety of ways, the author depicts the judgment of the wicked.⁷² By contrast, the psalm also underscores God’s intervention on behalf of the oppressed. God will make their righteousness “shine like the dawn” (v. 6). Ultimately, despite the transitory prosperity of the wicked (vv. 34-35), God delivers the righteous “from the wicked and saves them” (v. 40).⁷³

Similarly, other wisdom psalms underscore the inevitable downfall of the wicked and triumph of those dependent on God. For instance, the speaker of Psalm 49 is not fearful of the wicked who surround him (v. 5). He argues that death overcomes all (v.10); the rich take nothing with them when they die (v. 17). Thematically, this psalm is a powerful critique of those who develop faith and trust in their financial status. In contrast to the fate of the wicked, the speaker is confident that “God will redeem my soul from the grave; he will surely take me to himself” (v. 15).⁷⁴

⁶⁸In the Psalms, the LXX also translates עֲנִי with πραῦς (“gentle, humble, considerate, meek”; BAGD, 699) at 24:9(2x); 33:2; 36:11; 75:10; 146:6; 149:4.

⁶⁹She also recommends “caution” in interpreting this imagery in light of the variety of ways in which it can be used (Gillingham, “Poor”, 17, 19).

⁷⁰cf. above pp. 44-46; Dihle, “Demut”, 743-48; Wengst, *Humility*, 21-25; Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 95.

⁷¹cf. p. 64.

⁷²cf. vv. 1, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20, 28, 33, 36, 38.

⁷³Concerning the exact nature of this deliverance, Brueggemann (“Psalm 37”, 238) states “[i]t is perhaps too much to take these verses ‘eschatologically’, but the formula of ‘yet a little while’ in v. 10 encourages such a reading.” John Sailhamer, *Translational Technique*, 149) does note that “[t]he interest in both the LXX Psalm 37 and the Qumran pesher is eschatological”.

⁷⁴The meaning of “he will take me” (אֶתְּקַח) has generated an ongoing scholarly debate; cf. the excursus in Kraus, *Psalms 1-59*, 483-84.

Just as the wisdom Psalms argue that God does deliver the oppressed from the tyranny of the wicked, the lament psalms petition God for this deliverance to take place.⁷⁵ They ask that the activity of the wicked might be thwarted and that God might liberate the impoverished from oppression.⁷⁶ Thus, the speaker of Psalm 82 asks God to “[d]efend the cause of the weak [לַדָּל] and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor [עֲנִי] and oppressed [שָׁרֵף]. Rescue the weak [לַדָּל] and needy [רָעָבָאֲדָנָי]; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” (vv. 3-4). Particularly in the communal laments, the petition for deliverance can have covenantal overtones. For example, Psalm 89 opens with an account of God’s covenant with David (vv. 2-5) and protests that God has not honoured his covenantal obligations (vv. 38-45).⁷⁷ In response, the author prays: “Remember, Lord, how your servant has been mocked, how I bear in my heart the taunts of all the nations” (v. 50).

While the laments request God to rescue those in need, the psalms of praise often celebrate acts of deliverance that have already occurred. They acknowledge the ways God has responded to the pleas of those in difficult circumstances. Consequently, like the lament psalms, these songs depict God as one who abrogates the oppression of the impoverished.⁷⁸ For instance, Psalm 40 begins by stating: “I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry” (v. 1). In addressing God, the author of Psalm 92 states: “[y]ou have exalted my horn”; he also notes that he has witnessed the defeat of his adversaries (vv. 10-11). Thus, he acknowledges a reversal of status; his enemies have been defeated, while he has been empowered. Other psalms of praise also underscore this pattern.⁷⁹ According to Psalm 147, God “sustains the humble [עֲנִי/πραεῖς] but casts the wicked [רָשָׁע/ἀμαρτωλούς] to the ground” (v. 6 [LXX 146:6]). In a variety of ways, these hymns “declare the radical *transforming* power of God, a power at work on behalf of the weak, the innocent, and the righteous, and against the powerful, the guilty, and the wicked, a power that is capable of reversing reality and the human situation from its existing and expected state into a totally different state.”⁸⁰

As already mentioned, in depicting God’s deliverance of the righteous, the Psalms can associate humility with those who are impoverished and disadvantaged. However, this is not always the case; humility can also be associated with those in positions of power, particularly the king. For instance, although Psalm 18 describes God’s deliverance of a righteous individual (vv. 3-19), this individual is none other than the monarch (v. 50).⁸¹ In

⁷⁵Petition is a regular element of the laments; cf. above n49.

⁷⁶Westermann (*Praise and Lament*, 52, 64) notes that both the individual and communal laments may contain a petition that is a “double wish”, i.e., a wish that God punishes the wicked and rescues the petitioner; e.g., Ps 6:9-10; 35:23-27; 74:19-23; 79:9-12; 80:17-18.

⁷⁷On the debate about the identification of this Psalm, cf. Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, 413-18.

⁷⁸Westermann (*Psalms*, 25-26), in a manner similar to Gunkel, does make a distinction between psalms of narrative praise (Gunkel’s “song of thanksgiving”) and psalms of descriptive praise (Gunkel’s “hymn”). “*Narrative or confessing praise* is the echo of a specific act of God which has just taken place”; hymns, on the other hand, “are not the result of one single deed of God; rather, they praise God in the fullness of his existence and activity” (cf. Miller, *Psalms*, 4, 69).

⁷⁹cf. Ps 75:7; 107:33-42; 113:7-8; 146:9.

⁸⁰Miller, *Psalms*, 77.

⁸¹With only minor variations, this psalm also occurs at 2 Sam 22, where it is spoken by David; cf. Cross and Freedman, “Royal Song”, 15-34.

this royal victory hymn, the author notes: “[y]ou save the humble [יָנִי]”⁸² but bring low those whose eyes are haughty” (v. 27).⁸³ Subsequently, the psalm states that it is the king who has been exalted over his enemies and has experienced great victories (vv. 49-50). Similarly, in a psalm for a royal wedding, the king is encouraged to foster “truth”, “humility” (הַיִּשְׁרָאֵל/πραύτητος), and “righteousness” (45:4 [5]/LXX 44:5). Other psalms that may be associated with royalty also contain reference to humble dependence on God.⁸⁴

In the MT of Psalm 18, humility is not simply associated with the monarch; it is also connected with God’s acts of deliverance. The Psalmist writes: “You [God] give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down [יַעֲנֶנְהָ] to make me great” (v. 35 [36]). In view of differing readings in other sources,⁸⁵ textual emendations for Ps 18:36 (MT) have been suggested.⁸⁶ More generally, Dawes observes evidence of God’s humility and condescension in passages which state that God is both high and lifted up and one who comes down to help the needy (Ps 113:5-6; 138:6; Isa 57:15).⁸⁷ Regardless of the originality of the MT’s reading at Psalm 18:36,⁸⁸ its depiction of God’s deliverance as an act of divine condescension becomes a theme that is subsequently developed in rabbinic literature.⁸⁹

(3) *The Boasting of the Righteous*

Just as arrogant speech is ascribed to the enemies in the Psalms, so also statements of praise are associated with those who are dependent on God. Frequently the laments include expressions of trust and praise.⁹⁰ For instance, in Psalm 44, a song of communal lament, a statement of trust (vv. 4-8) precedes the description of the present crisis facing the community (vv. 10-23). In the face of opposition, rather than relying on their own prowess, they make their “boast” (יִגְלוּ/ἐπαινεσθησόμεθα) in God (v. 8). Ultimately, this trust is rooted in God’s previous acts on behalf of the nation (vv. 1-3). Similarly, while complaining about the actions of enemies (vv. 1-4), the speaker of Psalm 69 concludes with declarations of praise and confidence (vv. 30-6).

⁸²Similar to this metaphorical use of יָנִי, Stephen Dawes (“Humility”, 73) suggests that the phrase יָנִי וְאֶבְיֹן (“poor and needy”) “appears in the Psalter to be a conventional liturgical expression identifying the speaker as one who is totally dependent upon God” (cf. 40:17; 70:6; 86:1; 109:22; note also 109:16).

⁸³The LXX (17:28) underscores the reversal of status by stating that God saves the “humble” (ταπεινὸν) and “humbles” (ταπεινώσεις) the haughty.

⁸⁴cf. 40:17; 51:17; 86:1; 109:22; 138:6. The identification of royal elements in the Psalms raises a variety of complex issues; for a defence of royal content in these psalms, cf. Eaton, *Kingship, passim*; Croft, *Identity, passim*. Associated with the themes of humility and royalty is the debate concerning a possible royal humiliation ritual; for a summary of this debate, cf. Croft, *Identity*, 85-88.

⁸⁵The parallel occurrence of this psalm in 2 Sam 22 states that “your answering [or “help”]; יַעֲנֶנְהָ] has made me great” (v. 36); 4QSam^a reads ועזרתך (“your help”).

⁸⁶e.g., *BHS* suggests יַעֲנֶנְהָ as a textual emendation.

⁸⁷Dawes, “*ĀNĀWĀ*”, 45-46. The *Qere* reading of the MT at Isa 63:9 states that in the “distress” of the people, God also experienced “distress” (צָרָה); on the Rabbinic use of this text, cf. below n271.

⁸⁸Dawes (“*ĀNĀWĀ*”, 44-45), however, notes that “[b]efore concluding that some emendation of the text or revocalization is necessary it must be established that the form as found is impossible, or its meaning nonsensical: but both the form of the word and its meaning here are by no means that.”

⁸⁹cf. below n269.

⁹⁰e.g., 7:17; 13:6; 35:27-8; 56:10-13; 79:13; 109:30-31; cf. above n49.

I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.... The poor will see and be glad--you who seek God, may your hearts live! The Lord hears the needy and does not despise his captive people. (vv. 30-33)

Psalm 106, a historical psalm, acknowledges God's covenantal faithfulness despite Israel's ongoing disobedience (v. 45);⁹¹ the author associates Israel's future praise with God's restoration of Israel (v. 47).⁹² In some cases, the declarations of praise and confidence are related to statements of innocence;⁹³ thus, the conviction that God will deliver those in need can reflect the assurance that he will vindicate the righteous and remain faithful to his covenant with Israel. For instance, the author of Ps 26 says: "Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have led a blameless life" (v. 1).

Just as the lament psalms express praise of God in anticipation of divine deliverance, the psalms of praise glory in his deeds that have already taken place. For instance, identifying himself as a "poor man" (יָדָוּ) rescued by God, the speaker of Psalm 34 states: "My soul will boast [לְיְהוָה/ἐπαινεσθήσεται] in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice" (v. 2 [LXX 33:3]). Similarly, the author of Psalm 30, who has experienced deliverance from death, exalts God and encourages others to join him in praise (vv. 1, 6). More generally, the hymns of praise celebrate God's character and his faithfulness in such acts as creation, providence and redemption.⁹⁴

While not denying the variety of content and form within the Psalms, several general trends concerning boasting do emerge in this material. First, arrogant speech is sometimes evident in the stereotypical presentation of the "enemies"; however, their boasting will prove meaningless because of the intervention of God. Second, in various ways, the Psalms depict a reversal of status between these wicked individuals and those whom they oppress. The oppressed are described as individuals dependent on God; their "humility" can reflect both their social situation and their demeanour before God. Third, those who are dependent on God express praise and confidence in response to his character and deeds. Thus, in some sense, the hollow boasting of the wicked stands in contrast to the praise, or boasts, of the righteous who wait patiently for God's justice or have experienced it already.⁹⁵

b) Proverbs

Proverbs 27:1-2 addresses boasting specifically;⁹⁶ the first verse warns the reader not to "boast about tomorrow", while the second exhorts: "[I]et another praise you, and not your own mouth".⁹⁷ More generally, Proverbs criticizes arrogant and scornful behaviour.⁹⁸ By

⁹¹For the deuteronomic themes in this psalm, cf. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, 51-52.

⁹²Ps 106:47-48 is included in David's psalm of thanksgiving at 1 Chr 16:35-36; cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 312-20.

⁹³e.g., Ps 7:8; 17:3-5; 26:4; 35:7; 44:17; 86:2.

⁹⁴e.g., Ps 8; 29; 33; 100; 104; 117; 135; 136; 145-150.

⁹⁵According to Origen's Hexapla (cf. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum*), Aquila's text (ca. 2nd cent. A.D.) frequently translates the hithpael of לָלַח with καυχάομαι. Consequently, certain Psalms, according to Aquila's rendering, provide parallels to Paul's "boast in the Lord" (ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω; 1 Cor 1:31, 2 Cor 10:17)--particularly Ps 33(34):3 ἐν τῷ κυρίῳ καυχήσεται, 43(44):9 ἐν τῷ θεῷ καυχησόμεθα and 55(56):11 ἐν θεῷ καυχήσομαι. Assuming that Aquila's work is the culmination of earlier translation activity, Schreiner ("Jeremia 9,22.23", 540) argues that Paul may have orientated himself to the interpretative tradition underlying Aquila's work.

⁹⁶cf. also 17:7, 25:14.

⁹⁷Lexically, the two verses are related by the use of לָלַח (לָלַח-לָלַח, v. 1; לָלַח, v. 2), even though thematically they address different topics.

⁹⁸e.g., 8:13; 11:2; 13:10; 16:18; 17:19; 18:12; 21:4.

contrast, humility is endorsed and encouraged. While God “mocks the proud”, “he gives grace to the humble [עֲנָוִים/ταπεινοῖς]” (3:34). In its context, 3:34 occurs within a grouping of antithetical statements (3:33-36) in which wickedness, scornful behavior, and foolishness are contrasted with righteousness, humility, and wisdom. Thus, the theme of humility operates within the multifaceted distinction between the wise and the foolish. Furthermore, “humility” (עֲנָוָה) is described as a precursor to social status and honour.⁹⁹ The exact meaning of עֲנָוָה in these passages is difficult to ascertain. While it is paired with “the fear of the Lord” in 22:4, humility before God is not always evident. Rather, in the context of practical wisdom, it may refer primarily to a modesty of character and a teachable demeanour as attributes that lead to success.¹⁰⁰

B. JEREMIAH 9:22-23 AND ITS INTERPRETATIVE TRADITIONS

1. Introduction

A significant passage for Paul’s discussions of boasting in the Corinthian correspondence is Jer 9:22-23 (ET 24-25):

“This is what the Lord says: ‘Let not the wise man [חָכָם/σοφός] boast [לִלְתִּתִּי/καυχάσθω] of his wisdom or the strong man [הַגִּבּוֹר/ίσχυρός] boast of his strength or the rich [עֲשִׂירִי/πλούσιος] man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast [לִלְתִּתִּי/καυχάσθω] about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness [חֲסֵד/ἔλεος], justice [צְדָקָה/κρίμα] and righteousness [יָשָׁר/δικαιοσύνη] on earth, for in these I delight,’ declares the Lord.”

In certain treatments of this text, the sapiential elements of the passage are featured. For example, Ernst Kutsch argues that it is a “Weisheitsspruch” and suggests that the original form of this saying is similar in content to Prov 3:5-7.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, others accentuate the prophetic context of this saying.¹⁰² The messenger formula at the beginning of v. 22,¹⁰³ the concluding formula of v. 23,¹⁰⁴ and the phrase “I am the Lord” (v. 23) present this passage as a prophetic oracle.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the extent of the parallels between Jer 9:22-23 and certain wisdom texts has been disputed. William Holladay notes that “though this passage comes out of a wisdom milieu in its listing of categories of people whose boasting is beside the mark (compare the listings in Prov 30:11-31), there is no parallel in Proverbs for such negative jussives with categories of people.”¹⁰⁶ To some extent, this debate concerns which textual features should be accentuated and stressed. Taken together,

⁹⁹15:33; 18:12; 22:4; cf. also 29:23.

¹⁰⁰cf. Dawes, “*ANAWÁ*”, 43; Preuss, “Demut”, 460.

¹⁰¹Kutsch, “Weisheitsspruch”, 170. Generally, the classification of material as sapiential is based on the use of certain terms, themes, and rhetorical structures (cf. Crenshaw, *Wisdom*, 11-25).

¹⁰²e.g., Kelley, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 152; Schreiner, “Jeremia 9,22.23”, 534-35.

¹⁰³“This is what the Lord says” (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה).

¹⁰⁴“oracle of the Lord” (נְאֻם־יְהוָה). This is a common phrase in Jeremiah; in chs. 8-10 it also occurs at 8:17; 9:3, 6, 9, 22, 25.

¹⁰⁵Of course, these elements could be secondary additions. For instance, Kutsch (“Weisheitsspruch,” 170, 174) argues that the dependence of both the direct object (“me”) and the nominal clause (“that I am the Lord”) on יָדַע is awkward. He argues that the absence of the direct object in the LXX shows that this construction was perceived as problematic. Thus, he concludes that the nominal clause is a secondary addition.

¹⁰⁶*Jeremiah 1* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 317.

these divergent views underscore the presence of sapiential elements within a prophetic setting.¹⁰⁷

A further exegetical issue concerns the relationship of this oracle to its immediate context. The positive exhortation to boast in one's knowledge of God is distinct from the prophetic material that surrounds it.¹⁰⁸ Since this passage lacks decisive links with the surrounding material, a variety of suggestions have been offered. For instance, Holladay describes vv. 22-23 and vv. 24-25 as "two orphan passages" that have been inserted after 9:21.¹⁰⁹ More generally, scholars have noted certain catchwords and ideas that provide some connection between 9:22-23 and its broader literary setting. Specifically, the terms "wise" (חָכָם) and "know" (יָדָע) occur elsewhere in chs. 8-10.¹¹⁰ Thus, Robert Carroll concludes that the inclusion of vv. 22-23 may be due to the use of חָכָם in 9:12.¹¹¹ In some instances, these common terms may reflect similar themes and arguments. For example, the oracle of 8:4-13 offers a critique of the boasting associated with the scribes of the royal court: "How can you say, 'We are wise, for we have the law of the Lord,' when actually the lying pen of the scribes has handled it falsely?" (8:8). This statement is preceded by the general criticism that the Israelites "do not know the requirements of the Lord" (8:7). Similarly, in 9:22-23, boasting in wisdom stands in contrast to an emphasis on authentic knowledge of God. In both chs. 8 and 9, these comments occur within a context that warns of God's impending judgment. Noting particularly the themes of wisdom and knowledge in chapters 8-10, Brueggemann concludes that "9:22-23 is not inappropriate to its present context which concerns wisdom/foolishness on the way to death."¹¹² In light of these general connections with the surrounding context, 9:22-23 does not have to be interpreted as an extraneous and unrelated wisdom saying.¹¹³ These links, as well as the prophetic framework of the passage itself, suggest that the literary setting may provide assistance in the interpretation of 9:22-23.¹¹⁴

2. Jeremiah's Critique of Boasting

After an introductory formula, 9:22 contains three parallel cola containing jussive prohibitions;¹¹⁵ these involve warnings against boasting in wisdom, strength and riches. The contrast to these statements, introduced by the אֵין of v. 23, presents the appropriate type of boasting--boasting in one's knowledge of God. The fact that יִתְהַלֵּל¹¹⁶ occurs in both verses indicates that the point of contrast is not boasting per se; the passage is not making a distinction between those who glory and those who do not. Rather, the difference concerns the object of one's trust and praise.

¹⁰⁷T. R. Hobbs details examples of Jeremiah's appropriation of wisdom forms within his prophetic proclamation of impending judgment ("Proverbial Reflections", 62-72).

¹⁰⁸cf. McKane, *Jeremiah*, 1.213; Brueggemann, "Epistemological Crisis", 89.

¹⁰⁹Holladay, *Architecture*, 123-4.

¹¹⁰חָכָם: 8:8-9; 9:12, 17; יָדָע: 8:7; 8:12; 9:2, 5; 10:25.

¹¹¹Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 247.

¹¹²"Epistemological Crisis", 91.

¹¹³B. Duhm (*Jeremia*, 97) states that 9:22-23 is "ein harmlos unbedeutender Spruch".

¹¹⁴cf. Jones, *Jeremiah*, 169.

¹¹⁵Each statement is introduced by the negative אֵין followed by the hithpael of יִתְהַלֵּל (יִתְהַלֵּל).

¹¹⁶καυχῶσθω in the LXX. A similar double occurrence of a verb in a contrastive context involves the use of בָּטַח in 17:5-8. In that section, the comparison is between those "trusting" in human beings and those "trusting" in God; cf. also Ps 20:7; Isa 31:1.

In addressing the prohibitions of v. 23, Schreiner notes that wisdom, strength, and wealth are sometimes viewed positively elsewhere in Scripture and can be described as gifts of God.¹¹⁷ Thus, he concludes that this passage reflects a view not generally espoused in the Old Testament.¹¹⁸ What exactly is the nature of the critique of v. 23? Specifically, the prohibition does not address wisdom, strength, and wealth in isolation; the warning concerns utilization of these possessions as the basis of one's confidence. The activity under criticism involves an anthropocentric focus on one's possessions that is contrasted with a theocentric dependence on God. The self-centred nature of v. 23 is highlighted by the threefold repetition of the pronominal suffix.¹¹⁹

The broader setting of chapters 2-10 provides a specific context for this criticism.¹²⁰ In these chapters, the argument of Jeremiah includes both pleas for repentance¹²¹ and threats of impending judgment;¹²² Judah faces looming disaster from the North because of the rebellion and idolatry of the people.¹²³ Against those cultural forces that proclaim Judah to be secure, Jeremiah anticipates the nation's conquest by foreign invaders. This attitude of self-confidence is addressed in a doublet that denounces deceitful religious leaders and the complacent culture they have produced.¹²⁴ This complacency reflects the self-deception of Judah and its religious and political establishment; in their lack of concern about impending judgment, the people are "trusting in deceptive words that are worthless" (7:8). Brueggemann states that Jeremiah's criticism is addressed towards the "royal consciousness"--a viewpoint "shaped by the conviction of Yahweh's abiding, sustaining presence on behalf of legitimated political-cultural institutions, especially the royal house and derivatively the royal temple."¹²⁵ Despite this sense of security, Jeremiah admonishes the nation that God will not leave its idolatry unpunished. Three times these questions are asked: "Should I not punish them for this?" declares the Lord. 'Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this?'" (5:9, 29; 9:9). After the third refrain (9:9), there are no more expressions of God's reluctance to punish or calls to repent in this section.¹²⁶ With the fate of Judah now certain, the only appropriate response is to summon mourning women to sing funeral hymns (9:17-22).¹²⁷

Within this literary setting, 9:22 functions as a critique of "all the sources of security and well-being upon which the royal establishment is built."¹²⁸ In view of God's impending

¹¹⁷cf. discussion and examples, Schreiner, "Jeremia 9,22-23", 532-35; Heckel, *Kraft*, 165.

¹¹⁸Schreiner, "Jeremia 9,22-23", 534; cf. Brueggemann, "Epistemological Crisis", 93.

¹¹⁹עָשָׂרוֹ, גְּבוּרָתוֹ, וְעִשְׂרֵי.

¹²⁰For chs. 2-10 as a structural unit with particular thematic components, cf. O'Connor, *Jeremiah*, 123-30.

Issues concerning the authorship, date and composition history of the book of Jeremiah are complex; cf. O'Connor's helpful summary, *ibid.*, 149-57. My references to the person of Jeremiah concern the prophet as he is presented in the received text, whether MT or LXX.

¹²¹e.g., 3:12, 14, 22; 4:1-4, 12-14; 5:1-17; 6:8; 7:3-15.

¹²²e.g., 2:35; 4:5-9; 5:14-17; 6:1-8; 8:13-17; 9:12-16.

¹²³These two themes are introduced in the call narrative, cf. 1:13-16.

¹²⁴"From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practise deceit. They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. 'Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace..." (6:13-15/8:10b-12).

¹²⁵Brueggemann, "Epistemological Crisis", 90, 86.

¹²⁶O'Connor, *Jeremiah*, 124.

¹²⁷This follows laments by Jeremiah (8:18-23) and Yahweh (9:1-2, 10-11).

¹²⁸Brueggemann, "Epistemological Crisis", 93; cf. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 317.

judgment, the foundations of Judah's false sense of security and hope will be shattered. Particularly evident in chapters 8-10 is a negative assessment of those who claim to be wise.¹²⁹ Following the Temple Sermon (7:1-8:3), the next oracle opens with a wisdom saying that underscores Judah's ongoing refusal to return to God;¹³⁰ this saying may be quoting the erroneous optimism of the prophets.¹³¹ The criticism of the nation (8:4-7) continues with a focused critique of the false wisdom of the religious establishment (8:8-13); these leaders will ultimately be put to shame (8:9). The wisdom theme also occurs at 9:11; this passage (9:11-16) asserts that those who are truly wise will understand the cause of the the nation's destruction and the seriousness of the people's rebellion. By implication, the deception and complacency that the prophet has condemned underscore the lack of authentic wisdom within Judah. Thus, as a sapiential aphorism, 9:22-23 argues against a self-centred regard of one's wisdom, strength or wealth as a basis of boasting.¹³² More specifically, within the prophetic context in which this passage occurs, it warns Judah that the sources of its confidence and security will not prove to be genuine; Yahweh will judge Judah impartially (9:24-25).

3. Boasting in the "Knowledge of God"

The contrast to boasting in one's sources of self-sufficiency is depicted in v. 23. Rather than boasting in wisdom, strength or wealth, one should boast in the knowledge of God,¹³³ who exercises "kindness" (חֶסֶד), "justice" (מִשְׁפָּט), and "righteousness" (יְצִדְקָה) in the world.¹³⁴ In this statement, knowledge of God entails an understanding of God's activity "on earth" (בְּאֶרֶץ); it is "in these" (בְּאֵלֶּה) that the Lord delights. Thus, God's character and actions provide the grounds for appropriate boasting and ultimately devalue the merit of trusting in one's own wisdom, strength, or wealth. This emphasis on appropriate knowledge of God raises a significant question--does this cognizance, and the boasting that ensues from it, include a participatory, or self-referential, dimension? In other words, can this knowledge involve one's own participation in חֶסֶד, מִשְׁפָּט, and יְצִדְקָה? Answering this question negatively, Carroll argues that knowledge of God is essentially confessional in nature. Referring to the positive triad of v. 23, he states that this is "not so much an advocacy of these practices (cf.

¹²⁹cf. Jones' (*Jeremiah*, 158-59) discussion of recurrent wisdom themes and forms in this section.

¹³⁰"Say to them, 'This is what the Lord says: 'When men fall down, do they not get up? When a man turns away, does he not return?'" (8:4).

¹³¹Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 276-78.

¹³²cf. McKane, *Prophets*, 90.

¹³³In v. 23, the precise relationship between הָשָׁכַל ("understand") and יָדַע ("know") is difficult to determine. For instance, the terms could be parallel ("understand and know me"; NRSV); likewise, the second could be dependent on the first ("has the wisdom to know me; Bright, *Jeremiah*, 75). Similar wording occurs at 3:15 ("... who will lead you with knowledge and understanding [יְדָעָה וְהָשָׁכַל]").

¹³⁴These themes also occur in a prophetic setting in Hosea 2:19-20 (H 21-22): "I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness [יְצִדְקָה] and justice [וּבְמִשְׁפָּט], in love [וּבְחֶסֶד] and compassion [וּבְרַחֲמִים]. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge [וְיָדַעְתָּ] the Lord." Brueggemann ("Epistemological Crisis", 96) argues that Jeremiah 9:24 may be dependent on Hos 2:19-20. Kutsch ("Weisheitsspruch," 169), however, plays down the similarity between these passages; he notes that in the Hosea passage, these qualities are not combined as a triad but are part of two doublets (יְצִדְקָה וּבְמִשְׁפָּט and חֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים/בְּאֵלֶּה).

¹³⁵The exact referent of בְּאֵלֶּה is difficult to determine. It could simply imply that God delights in חֶסֶד, מִשְׁפָּט, and יְצִדְקָה; it could also refer to God's pleasure in those who act in this manner. In this context, both interpretations are possible (cf. Clark, *Hesed*, 182-83).

Isa 5.7; Amos 5.24; Mic 6.8) as a putting into perspective of such values as wisdom, power, and wealth.” He concludes that this oracle derives from an outlook of “piety at peace with its surroundings” and is distinct from prophetic critiques of rebellion and injustice.¹³⁶ Likewise, Heckel argues that the distinction between improper and proper boasting in this passage reflects an antithesis between “Selbstruhm” and “Gotteslob”. He states that authentic knowledge of God focuses on God’s attributes; in view of such knowledge, all human qualities lose their value as objects of boasting.¹³⁷ Along similar lines, O’Day stresses that the transition between vv. 22 and 23 “marks a shift from anthropocentric to theocentric categories”; she notes that God’s attributes provide “the only grounds for boasting.”¹³⁸ Thus, boasting in one’s knowledge of God is strictly doxological in nature and does not include reference to one’s obedient response to God.

Jeremiah, by contrast, offers a view of the knowledge of God that is primarily ethical rather than doxological. Josiah, for example, “did what was right [טָוִבָה] and just [יָדָן צְדָקָה], so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know [הִדַּעַתְנִי] me?” declares the Lord. (22:15b-16)

Thus, in an oracle with lexical links to 9:23 (טָוִבָה, יָדָן צְדָקָה), knowing God is related to ethical actions. Negatively, idolatry and injustice are indications that the people of Judah do not know God. The rebellion of the religious establishment reveals their lack of knowledge of the Lord (2:8). In an oracle denouncing the nation, 4:22 states that “they do not know me” and “they know not how to do good”; structurally, these clauses are parallel. Similarly, in 9:3 and 9:6 the refusal of the people to “know” God is reflected in their sin and deception. These examples, particularly those in chapter 9, show that 9:22-23 occurs within a literary setting where knowledge of God involves commitment to God’s ethical demands.¹³⁹ More generally, Jeremiah’s critique of the nation undermines empty claims of piety and religious fidelity. While the people may claim security based on a privileged status before God (e.g., 7:4), their statements are inconsistent with their actions. Consequently, their disobedience will result in God’s punishment; his justice is impartial (9:24-25). In this context, an endorsement of a knowledge of God that is merely confessional would appear anti-climatic.¹⁴⁰ Thus, the broader context of this passage suggests that one’s obedient response to God is an integral part of one’s knowledge of God--the knowledge that should be the focus of one’s boast.

¹³⁶Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 249; cf. Kelley, *Jeremiah 1-25*, 153

¹³⁷Heckel, *Kraft*, 167.

¹³⁸O’Day, “Jeremiah 9:22-23”, 266, 262.

¹³⁹Kutsch (“Weisheitsspruch”, 164-65) notes that the association of “knowledge of Yahweh” with “knowledge and obedience of Yahweh’s will” is most pronounced in Hosea (cf. Hos 4:1-2; 6:6; 8:2-3; etc.) and Jeremiah. Note also Isa 5:13: “Therefore my people will go into exile for lack of understanding [תִּדְעִי]”.

¹⁴⁰As we shall see in the next section, 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) includes an addition that, with a few differences, reflects Jer 9:22-23; significantly, 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) attributes justice and righteousness to the one boasting rather than to God. Emanuel Tov (“Song of Hannah”, 166n59) notes that the Samuel passage “creates a certain opposition between the boasting of men about certain qualities and possessions on the one hand and religious virtues on the other.” Tov argues that the Hebrew *Vorlage* of 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) probably once served as the original text of Jeremiah; he concludes that “the formulation preserved in Samuel is contextually more appropriate to Jeremiah and also better reflects the terminology of that book (see Jer 22:15-16).”

Lexical parallels between Deut 10:12-22 and Jer 9:22-25 may also argue for a participatory emphasis in 9:23; as stated above,¹⁴¹ in Deut 10:12-22, God is described as Israel's "boast" within a context that stresses covenantal obedience. Similarities between Jeremiah and Deuteronomy (and the Deuteronomic History) are widely acknowledged;¹⁴² however, the exact nature of this relationship is highly debated.¹⁴³ In the case of Deut 10:12-22 and Jer 9:22-25, both passages depict God as the content of proper "boasting", whose actions provide appropriate grounds for praise.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, both passages use the image of "circumcision of heart"¹⁴⁵ in association with an emphasis on the impartiality of God as judge.¹⁴⁶ In Deuteronomy, God's fairness functions as an argument for the command to be circumcised of heart (Deut 10:17). By contrast, in Jer 9:24-25, the indictment that Israel is "uncircumcised" is a warning of judgment because of God's impartiality.¹⁴⁷ The significance of these parallels is difficult to assess.¹⁴⁸ While the evidence does not necessarily imply literary dependence, it does suggest that Jeremiah's reference to boasting in the knowledge of God is not inconsistent with an emphasis on obedience and covenantal accountability.

The emphasis on a self-referential dimension to Jer 9:23 is congruous with the reference to Jeremiah's "boast" in God in 17:14. Jer 17:14-18 is one of the laments incorporated into chapters 11-20;¹⁴⁹ verse 14 states: "Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise [כִּי תְהַלֵּלְתִּי אֱתָהּ]."¹⁵⁰ Thus, Jeremiah's relationship with God ("you are my praise") undergirds his request for deliverance. This invocation is followed by reference to the speech of those who oppose Jeremiah (v. 15), whose mocking derision denies the validity of Jeremiah's message. Reference to the speech of these opponents is a recurring element in the laments of Jeremiah;¹⁵¹ their denial of Jeremiah's credibility is ultimately a denial of the message of God. In contrast to this criticism, Jeremiah asserts his innocence; "I have not run away from being your shepherd; you know I have not desired the day of despair" (v. 16). This declaration of innocence is followed by a request for vengeance (v. 18). Thus, similar to patterns identified in the laments of the Psalms, the negative speech of the wicked stands in contrast to the one whose

¹⁴¹cf. p. 60.

¹⁴²cf. the list of parallels in Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 359-61; cf. also Clements, "Jeremiah 1-25", 93-113; Holladay, *Jeremiah 2*, 53-64.

¹⁴³For a helpful summary of various views, cf. Seitz, "Moses", 3-4.

¹⁴⁴cf. Deut 10:21; Jer 9:23.

¹⁴⁵cf. Deut 10:16; Jer 9:25; on this theme, cf. Weinfeld, "Jeremiah", 30-35.

¹⁴⁶Deut 10:17; Jer 9:24-25.

¹⁴⁷Brueggemann (*Jeremiah 1-25*, 96) describes the assertion of impartial judgment in Jer 9:24-25 as a "reversal of the impartial grace" reflected in Deut 10:17.

¹⁴⁸Certain standard Deuteronomic phraseology present in Deut 10:12-22 also occurs elsewhere in in Jeremiah: "circumcision of heart" (Deut 10:16; cf. Jer 4:4); "the stranger, the fatherless and the widows" (Deut 10:18; cf. Jer 7:6; 22:3); "stiffen the neck" (Deut 10:16; cf. Jer 7:26; 17:23; 19:15). J. Philip Hyatt ("Jeremiah", 120) argues that these types of similarities result from the close chronological proximity between the production of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah; thus, common phraseology simply reflects the "terminology of the time."

¹⁴⁹cf. 11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 18:18-23; 20:7-18. For a summary of the current state of research on the interpretation of these passages, cf. Diamond, *Confessions*, 11-18; Smith, *Laments*, xiii-xxi.

¹⁵⁰Several scholars (e.g., Holladay, *Jeremiah 1*, 504) emend תְהַלֵּלְתִּי ("my praise") to תְהַלֵּלְתִּי ("my hope"); however, the MT reading fits the context equally well. The LXX of Jer 17:14 has ὅτι καύχημά μου σὺ εἶ ("for you are my boast").

¹⁵¹cf. 11:19; 12:1-2; 18:20; 20:10; cf. also Smith, *Laments*, 2.

trust, or boast, is in God. In this case, the request for God to deliver retribution is linked to Jeremiah's declaration of faithful obedience; his "boast" in God reflects his confidence that God will vindicate his prophetic ministry. Consequently, these various lines of evidence suggest that boasting in one's knowledge of God does not necessarily exclude reference to one's own actions--it can have a self-referential dimension. Since one's response to God is intrinsic to this knowledge, appropriate boasting can involve reference to one's active participation in God's acts of righteousness, justice and mercy.

4. The Boasting Tradition in 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX)

In the Septuagintal version of the "Song of Hannah" (1 Sam 2:1-10), an insertion similar to Jer 9:22-23 is present in v. 10; this addition also occurs in Ode 3. This insertion may reflect a liturgical modification of this song in association with the festival of *Rosh Ha-Shanah*.¹⁵² In several ways, the wording of 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) differs from that of Jer 9:22-23 (LXX). In Jeremiah, the LXX translates $\eta\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma/\epsilon\mu\epsilon\tau\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ with σοφός and σοφία, while 1 Sam 2:10 uses φρόνιμος and φρόνησις.¹⁵³ Similarly, $\text{for}\eta\eta\beta\eta/\eta\eta\beta\eta$, Jeremiah uses ισχυρός and ισχύς, but 1 Sam 2:10 uses δυνατός and δύναμις.¹⁵⁴ Other differences between these texts are also evident:¹⁵⁵

<u>Jer 9:23 (LXX)</u>	<u>1 Sam 2:10 (LXX)/Ode 3</u>
ἀλλ' ἢ ἐν τούτῳ καυχάσθω ὁ καυχώμενος, συνίειν καὶ γινώσκειν	
ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ποιῶν ἔλεος καὶ	τὸν κύριον καὶ ποιεῖν
κρίμα καὶ δικαιοσύνην	
ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς,...	ἐν μέσῳ ¹⁵⁶ τῆς γῆς.

The various dissimilarities between these texts suggest that this insertion did not originate with the LXX of 1 Sam 2 but that "the Hebrew copy of Samuel used by the LXX translator had already been glossed."¹⁵⁷ The assumption of an Hebrew *Vorlage* for this insertion is strengthened by the presence of an equally long addition at exactly the same point in 4QSam^a.¹⁵⁸

In addition to the lexical distinctions between these two passages, a further dissimilarity concerns the reference to "justice" and "righteousness." Jer 9 attributes these virtues to the character of God, 1 Sam 2, by contrast, implies that they should be practised by God's followers. In examining the context of Jer 9, I have argued that 9:22-23 has a participatory dimension;¹⁵⁹ boasting in one's knowledge of God can involve reference to

¹⁵²A. L. Warren ("Trisagion", 280-81) notes certain evidence that both Jer 9:22-23 and 1 Sam 2:1-10 were associated with the celebration of the New Year (cf. Thackeray, "Song of Hannah", 183-92).

¹⁵³LXX^{L0'} and Ode 3 read as Jer 9:22.

¹⁵⁴LXX^{L0'} read as Jer 9:22.

¹⁵⁵This chart is adapted from Warren, "Song of Hannah".

¹⁵⁶LXX^{L0'} read as Jer 9:23.

¹⁵⁷Klein, *1 Samuel*, 13.

¹⁵⁸Due to the poor condition of 4QSam^a, the identification of this insertion as Jer 9:22-23 is open to debate (cf. Warren, "Trisagion", 281-82; Lewis, "Song of Hannah", 42-43; Tov, "Song of Hannah", 167-68; Ulrich, *Samuel*, 49).

¹⁵⁹cf. above pp. 73-76.

one's commitment to covenantal obedience. That self-referential component becomes explicit in 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX)--here the content of appropriate boasting includes both knowledge of God and actions of justice and righteousness. Within the immediate context of 1 Samuel, the reference to appropriate boasting (2:10) occurs on the lips of one whose faithfulness to God has been vindicated by divine deliverance.

The differences between these passages raise questions about the possible literary relationship between Jer 9:22-23 and 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX). Is one passage dependent on the other? Schreiner concludes that the prophetic oracle of Jer 9 was transferred into a wisdom saying; thus, 1 Sam 2 is a commentary on Jer 9.¹⁶⁰ Tov, however, argues that the emphasis on the religious virtue of the boaster found in 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) is consistent with the broader theological context of Jeremiah. He argues that the Hebrew *Vorlage* of 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX), rather than Jer 9:22-23 (MT), is the original form of this saying.¹⁶¹ Similarly, Kutsch, also argues that the wording of the Septuagint passage reflects an earlier form.¹⁶² Alternatively, it is also possible that both versions of this boasting maxim go back to an earlier tradition. Since each of these reconstructions is plausible, the exact nature of the relationship between Jer 9 and 1 Sam 2 is difficult to ascertain; my argument here is not dependent on a particular view of this relationship.

With its occurrence in the Song of Hannah, the boasting tradition found in Jer 9:22-23 appears in a context that manifests several prominent themes concerning boasting. As observed in the previous discussion of wisdom literature, scornful speech, which may include boasting, is a regular component in the depiction of the enemies of God's people. In the case of Hannah, the MT presents Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, as one who taunts Hannah because of Hannah's barrenness (2 Sam 1:6-7).¹⁶³ In light of God's answer to her prayer,¹⁶⁴ Hannah "boasts" (πλατύνω; v. 2) over her enemies. She also warns others against arrogance and selfish boasting (v. 3).¹⁶⁵ As seen in other texts, the critique of improper boasting is associated with the activity of God. The Lord is a "God of knowledge" who "prepares his own pursuits" (v. 4 LXX). The passage goes on to explain the way God punishes the wicked and elevates the righteous (vv. 4-9); thus, vain boasting is ultimately negated by the just actions of God.

The theme of status reversal, which has already been noted in the Psalms, is prevalent in vv. 4-9. God "humbles" (ταπεινοῖ) and "exalts" (ἀνυψοῖ; v. 7); "[h]e lifts up the needy [πένητα] from the earth, and raises the poor [πτωχόν] from the dunghill" (v. 8). In powerful

¹⁶⁰Schreiner, "Jeremia 9,22.23", 541.

¹⁶¹Tov, "Song of Hannah", 166-67; cf. above n140.

¹⁶²Kutsch, "Weisheitsspruch", 172.

¹⁶³The LXX (except for LXX^L) does not include reference to Peninnah's taunting. By contrast, in its expansion of 1 Sam 1-2, Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* includes Peninnah deriding Hannah in asking: "Where is your God in whom you trust?" (50:5; translation from Charlesworth, *OTP*, v. 2). In this account, Peninnah also states: "Let Hannah not boast in her appearance; but she who boasts, let her boast when she sees her offspring before her" (50:2). The wording of this statement suggests that the author of *Bib. Ant.* might be familiar with the association of Jer 9:22-23 with 1 Sam 2.

¹⁶⁴In the LXX, v. 9 includes the assertion that "he [God] grants the prayer of the one praying" (δοῦνός ἐσχίην τῶ ἐσχόμενῳ); this may be intended to align the hymn more closely with Hannah's situation.

¹⁶⁵The translation of גְּבַהֵר וְתִבְבְּרוּ by καυχᾶσθε (v. 3) may be intended to correspond to the inclusion of Jer 9:22-23 in v. 10.

terms, the hymn celebrates the victory of the righteous and God's accomplishments in behalf of the weak and destitute;¹⁶⁶ in Hannah's case, her barrenness has been replaced by fertility. In commemorating God's activity, the hymn, as well as its narrative context,¹⁶⁷ highlights the importance of total dependence upon God. "Hannah's horn-raising was accomplished through her prayerful, but submissive request for divine activity on her behalf;" similarly, the structural *inclusio* of Hannah's "horn" (v. 1) and the "horn" of the anointed king (v. 10) suggests that Hannah's behaviour is paradigmatic for the king also.¹⁶⁸ Even the king must acknowledge God's sovereignty and respond in humble submission; for "it is not by strength that one prevails" (v. 9). Thus, in 1 Sam 2:10, the tradition of Jer 9:22-23 occurs within a context that celebrates the reversal of status of those dependent on God. In some sense, Hannah becomes an example of appropriate boasting as she celebrates God's activity on her behalf.

5. Jer 9:22-23 in Subsequent Jewish Interpretation

In addition to 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX), other ancient Jewish texts also attest the ongoing interest in the boasting tradition of Jer 9. Included in the ethical maxims of *Pseudo-Phocylides* (first cent. B.C.-first cent. A.D.)¹⁶⁹ is this instruction: "Pride not yourself [μὴ γαυρου] on wisdom nor on strength nor on riches. The only God is wise and mighty and at the same time rich in blessings" (*Pseud.-Phoc.* 53-54).¹⁷⁰ This statement also incurs at *Sib. Or.* 2.125-6, which is part of a larger section incorporated from *Pseudo-Phocylides*.

In a discussion of true glory, Sirach states: "The rich [πλούσιος], and the eminent [ἔνδοξος], and the poor [πτωχός]--their glory is the fear of the Lord [τὸ καύχημα αὐτῶν φόβος κυρίου]" (10:22).¹⁷¹ Noting that the verb must be supplied in this clause, Heckel argues that the imperative form (ἔστω) could be used rather than the indicative; this interpretation would bring the statement closer in form to the Jeremiah tradition.¹⁷² The central theme of this poem (10:19-11:6) is that "people are honorable only when they fear the Lord"; by contrast, "they are dishonorable when they transgress the Law."¹⁷³ In Sirach, the "fear of the Lord" is closely associated with obedience of Torah.¹⁷⁴ Consequently, by

¹⁶⁶For the identification of 1 Sam 2:1-10 as a victory song, cf. Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 25-26. In Targum Jonathan of 1 Samuel, this theme of victory takes on a national dimension; in this context the hymn becomes a prophetic portrayal of parts of Israel's history that culminates in an apocalyptic description of God's judgment (cf. Harrington, "Apocalypse of Hannah", 147-152; Cook, "Hannah's Later Songs", 244-49).

¹⁶⁷While the majority of critical studies argue that the Song of Hannah is a secondary addition to its literary context (e.g., Watts, *Psalm and Story*, 19-40), the poem does function as "a theological reflection on the principles underlying the events of ch. 1" (Eslinger, *Kingship*, 111).

¹⁶⁸Eslinger, *Kingship*, 110-11. In the apocalyptic context of this passage in Targum Jonathan the "anointed one" of v. 10 is more than a king in the Davidic line: he is the eschatological Messiah (cf. Harrington, "Apocalypse of Hannah", 151).

¹⁶⁹For Jewish pseudepigraphical works, I am using the dates of origin found in Charlesworth, *OTP*, 2 vols.

¹⁷⁰Translation and Greek text from van der Horst, *Pseudo-Phocylides*.

¹⁷¹Translations of the Apocrypha are from the *Revised Standard Version*. In the Hebrew text, 10:22a reads: "Resident alien, stranger, foreigner, and pauper--"; for the Hebrew text, cf. Beentjes, *Book of Ben Sira*, 137.

¹⁷²Heckel, *Kraft*, 170n160.

¹⁷³Di Lella, "Sirach 10:19-11:16", 160.

¹⁷⁴cf. 19:20; Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 75-80. Concerning Sirach's references to the "fear of the Lord", Schreiner notes that "Die Gottesfurcht wirkt sich in einem rechtschaffenen Leben aus, das in der Erfüllung des Willens Gottes besteht" ("Jeremia 9,22.23", 541).

associating true glory with “the fear of the Lord”,¹⁷⁵ the text suggests a self-referential dimension to boasting. By contrast, the passage warns against improper boasting.¹⁷⁶ With its emphasis on the “fear of the Lord”, the passage argues that one’s social status does not provide the grounds for appropriate boasting. In fact, the text contends that even the “nobleman,” “the judge,” and “the ruler” are not “greater than the man who fears the Lord” (v. 24). Furthermore, as seen in other texts, this argument is related to the theme of reversal of fortune. “Many rulers have been greatly disgraced, and illustrious men have been handed over to others” (11:6); God’s activity is concealed from humanity (11:5), and divine action can change one’s position at any moment.

In Philo’s work, although Jer 9:22-23 is not quoted specifically, *Spec. Leg.* 1.311 does reveal certain similarities to Jeremiah’s boasting passage. In a section discussing the moral lessons of Deuteronomy (1.299-318), Philo states:

Let God alone be thy boast [αὐχημα] and thy chief glory [κλέος], he [Moses] continues, and pride thyself [σεμνυνοῦν] neither on riches nor on reputation nor dominion nor comeliness nor strength of body, nor any such thing, whereby the hearts of the empty-minded are wont to be lifted up.

This statement occurs in a discussion of Deut 10:12-22 and reflects the pronouncement of Deut 10:21 that God is the people’s “boast”. However, in a manner similar to Jer 9:23, the reference to appropriate boasting is stated as an imperative. Furthermore, as in Jer 9:22, Philo issues a warning against inappropriate sources of boasting such as wealth and strength, noting that these factors are only momentary.¹⁷⁷

In the Targum on Jeremiah,¹⁷⁸ as with 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX), the form of the Jeremiah tradition stresses the ethical dimension of appropriate boasting. “But let him who boasts boast because of this: that he is wise and teaches [men] to know the fear of me, that I am the Lord...” (9:23).¹⁷⁹ Once again, boasting is not simply associated with understanding God’s character, it also concerns the character and actions of the individual who boasts. In rabbinic literature, Jer 9:22-23 is cited at *b. ‘Arak.* 10b, in a statement attributed to a Tannaitic rabbi.

In subsequent literature, this passage is also cited, at least in part, at various points in the Midrashim. For example, *Num. Rab.* 22.7 (on Num 32:1) quotes Jer 9:22 in arguing that wisdom, strength, and wealth are gifts from God that come through Torah.¹⁸⁰ In the *Midrash on the Psalms*, human achievement can be the focus of the appropriate boasting of Jer 9:22-23. As already observed in Jer 9 and its subsequent usage, boasting in one’s knowledge of God can involve reference to an individual’s obedience and faithfulness. For example, *Midr. Pss.* 52.7 (on Ps 52:5) associates the arrogant boaster of Ps 52 with Doeg the Edomite, who killed the priests at Nob (cf. 1 Sam 22:9-23). In citing Jer 9:22-23, the Midrash associates improper boasting with Doeg and appropriate boasting with David. The connection between

¹⁷⁵cf. 1:11; 9:16; 25:6.

¹⁷⁶For example, 10:27 criticises one who “goes about boasting [δοξαζόμενος], but lacks bread” (cf. 10:26, 11:4); this description is similar to the criticism of the ἀλαζών prevalent in Graeco-Roman literature (cf. above pp. 39-40).

¹⁷⁷Thematic and lexical links between Deut 10:12-22 and Jer 9:22-23 were suggested above (cf. p. 75).

¹⁷⁸The traditions of this targum may originate from the first century A.D. (Hayward, *Targum of Jeremiah*, 38).

¹⁷⁹translation from *ibid.*

¹⁸⁰citing Jer 9:23, cf. *Gen. Rab.* 35.3 (on Gen 9:16); *Ex. Rab.* 30:16 (on Ex 19:16); *Num. Rab.* 10:1 (on Num 6:2); *Eccl. Rab.* 12:1 (on Eccl 12:9).

Jer 9:23 and David is established by reference to David's actions; just as the Lord "exercises mercy, justice, and righteousness" so also David "executed justice and righteousness unto all the people" (1 Chron 18:14).¹⁸¹

Of course, in addition to these passages with strong links to Jer 9:22-23, a variety of Jewish texts address either the issue of arrogant boasting or advocate humility--an attitude antithetical to prideful self-presentation; these texts are the subject of the next section.

C. BOASTING AND SELF-PRESENTATION IN ANCIENT JEWISH LITERATURE

In this discussion of relevant texts in Jewish literature, two preliminary comments are in order. First, although recurrent themes and emphases in Jewish treatments of self-praise are evident, one should not conclude that early Judaism was a monolithic movement that lacked social diversity and disagreement concerning such matters as self-praise and self-presentation. Secondly, while discussing this literature separately from secular works of the Graeco-Roman period, this section does not imply that Judaism and Hellenism are mutually-exclusive phenomena, which can be portrayed in rigid contrasts. Rather, this section shows varying degrees of convergence and disagreement between treatments of boasting in Jewish material and in the material surveyed in the previous chapter.¹⁸²

1. Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha¹⁸³

a) Narrative Literature¹⁸⁴

Although not addressed extensively in this literature, certain texts do make reference to positive and negative self-presentation; self-praise is portrayed negatively in several works. For example, as in the Old Testament, arrogant boasting can be associated with political leaders opposed to Israel. In different contexts, figures such as Sennacherib (3 Macc 6:5), Haman (Add Esth 14:12; 16:12), Holofernes (Jdt 6:17), and Ptolemy IV Philopator (3 Macc 3:11) are portrayed as boasters. Furthermore, in several of these contexts, these arrogant antagonists are contrasted with those who humbly depend on God; thus, as seen in the Old Testament, boasting is viewed from a theological perspective. In Judith the people of Israel pray that God might recognise the "arrogance [ὕπερηφανίας]" of the Assyrians "and have pity on the humiliation [ταπείνωσιν] of our people" (6:19). Assuming an association between boasting and faith, Judith prays:

Behold now, the Assyrians are increased in their might; they are exalted [ὕψωθησαν], with their horses and riders; they glory [ἐγαυρίασαν] in the strength of their foot soldiers; they trust [ἤλπισαν] in shield and spear, in bow and sling, and know not that thou art the Lord who crushes wars; the Lord is thy name. (9:7)

¹⁸¹cf. also *Midr. Pss.* 89.1 (on Ps 89:1); 112.1 (on Ps 112.1).

¹⁸²John Barclay (*Jews*, 92-98, *passim*) argues that different kinds and different degrees of Hellenization can be evaluated under the categories of "assimilation", "acculturation", and "accommodation".

¹⁸³For the purposes of this study, it is not necessary to treat these two categories separately. This section includes texts from the eighteen books, or portions of books found in *The Apocrypha of the Old Testament, Revised Standard Version* as well as the various works contained in James Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. All quotations are from these translations; dates given for particular works are from Charlesworth, *OTP*.

¹⁸⁴I am using the term "narrative literature" to refer to stories of biblical and early post-biblical times as well as expansions of Scripture. In grouping this literature according to genre, I am following the conclusions found in Stone, *Jewish Writings*.

In contrast to the arrogance of the Assyrians, Judith notes that the Lord is the “God of the lowly, helper of the oppressed, upholder of the weak, protector of the forlorn, savior of those without hope” (9:11). This assertion is representative of the book’s central theme that “the God of Israel is the champion of the weak and the oppressed; he destroys the power of the mighty and humbles the pride of the arrogant.”¹⁸⁵

Similar to Judith, 3 Maccabees (first century B.C.) presents a story of oppression and divine intervention that may reflect a conflation of characters and events.¹⁸⁶ In the flow of the narrative, Ptolemy IV Philopator is depicted as a boastful monarch, whose insolence involves the denial of the might of God (cf. 1:26; 2:14; 3:11). In response to Ptolemy’s persecution of Israel, Eleazar prays for divine intervention (6:2-15). In effect, the prayer is a retelling of God’s earlier interventions in Israel’s behalf. As Eleazar depicts these events, he recounts the boastfulness of Israel’s enemies, as well as their defeat through the activity of God. Thus, “Pharaoh ... exalted with lawless insolence and boastful [μεγαλορρήμονι] tongue, you destroyed together with his arrogant army by drowning them in the sea” (6:4).¹⁸⁷ In many ways, this prayer is reminiscent of the Old Testament psalms that celebrate God’s acts of deliverance;¹⁸⁸ moreover, it emphasises the ongoing activity of God in punishing the arrogant wicked and rescuing Israel.¹⁸⁹

The negative depiction of boasting in this literature is not restricted to political figures. *Joseph and Aseneth* (first cent. B.C.-second cent. A.D.) presents Aseneth as a prototypical proselyte. Before coming to a point of repentance, Aseneth is portrayed as someone who boasts, particularly as she encounters potential suitors.¹⁹⁰ When she does repent and acknowledge her sin against God, she confesses: “I trusted in the richness of my glory and in my beauty, and I was boastful [ἀλαζών] and arrogant” (21:16).¹⁹¹

b) Historical Literature

After recounting the looting of the Temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (169 B.C.), 1 Maccabees describes the monarch as one who “committed deeds of murder and spoke with great arrogance [ὑπερηφανίαν μεγάλην]” (1:24). Subsequently, in the farewell address of Mattathias (2:49-70), the priest warns that “[a]rrogance [ὑπερηφανία] and reproach have now become strong; it is a time of ruin and furious anger” (2:49).¹⁹² However, he notes that while the wicked may be exalted today, their plans will eventually perish (2:63). By contrast, he encourages his children to be obedient to Torah, “for by it you will gain honor [δοξασθήσεσθε]” (2:64). In making his argument, he recounts the deeds of various heroes of

¹⁸⁵Nickelsburg, “Stories”, 47. Nickelsburg also notes that by combining biblical characters and events, the author of Judith presents a history of Israel that has a “paradigmatic quality”; thus, it “provides models for proper and improper human actions and reactions” to God (ibid., 48).

¹⁸⁶cf. ibid., 80-84.

¹⁸⁷Translation from the RSV.

¹⁸⁸e.g., Ps 78; 80; 106; 114; 135; 136.

¹⁸⁹Anderson, “3 Maccabees”, 514.

¹⁹⁰cf. 2:1; 4:12; 12:5; 21:12; concerning Aseneth’s arrogance, C. Burchard (“Joseph and Aseneth”, 189) states that “[p]ride becomes a symbol for pagan enmity against God”.

¹⁹¹Some manuscripts do not include Aseneth’s Psalm (ch. 21; cf. *OTP* 2:236 note s).

¹⁹²Commenting on 2:49, Jonathan Goldstein (*1 Maccabees*, 239) notes “[t]he verse is modeled on Isa 37:3=II Kings 19:3. As Hezekiah in his time resisted Sennacherib, God’s punishing instrument who arrogantly exceeded his mandate (see Isa 10:5-34), so Mattathias and his sons must resist arrogant Antiochus”; on the accounts of the Assyrian crisis in the OT, cf. above pp. 60, 61.

Israelite history, who received “great honour and an everlasting name” for their achievements (2:51).¹⁹³ While the arrogant wicked will be overturned, those who respond in obedience to Yahweh will be honoured.

In 2 Maccabees, both Antiochus IV Epiphanes and Nicanor¹⁹⁴ are “portrayed in almost mythical terms as adversaries who presume to resist the cosmic sovereignty of God”;¹⁹⁵ as a corollary, arrogant self-praise is attributed to both of them.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, while their boasting is associated with rebellion against God, the followers of Judas Maccabeus are described as individuals whose trust is in God. Thus, Judas instructs his army that their opponents “trust [πεποιθασιν]” in “arms and acts of daring” but the Israelites “trust [πεποιθαμεν] in the Almighty God” (8:18; cf. 15:6-7).

c) Testaments

In the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*,¹⁹⁷ Joseph is presented as a prototype of appropriate ethical behaviour.¹⁹⁸ In recounting his life, Joseph notes that he endured injustice and humiliated himself so that his brothers might not be put to shame (*T. Jos.* 17:1); he did not inform the Ishmaelites and the Egyptians that he was a free man rather than a slave.¹⁹⁹ At several points the text notes that Joseph did not exalt himself over his brothers (e.g., *T. Jos.* 10:5-6). In contrast to arrogant self-presentation, Joseph exemplifies humility; as a result, he is exalted by God. Thus, Joseph states:

I did not exalt [ὑψωσα] myself above them arrogantly [ἀλαζονεία] because of my worldly position of glory [δόξαν], but I was among them as one of the least [ἐλαχίστων]. If you live in accord with the Lord’s commands, God will exalt [ὑψώσει] you with good things forever. (*T. Jos.* 17:8-18:1)²⁰⁰

Thus, self-exaltation is contrasted with obedience to God; furthermore, God honours those who are humble.²⁰¹ The reward motif occurs elsewhere in the *Testaments* with reference to the life of Joseph (cf. *T. Levi* 13:9; *T. Sim.* 4:5; *T. Benj.* 4:1, 5:5).²⁰² In contrast to Joseph’s example, Reuben cautions against the influence of seven “spirits” or types of sins (*T. Reu.* 3:2); fifth in this list is the “spirit of arrogance [ὑπερηφανείας], that one might be boastful [καυχᾶται] and haughty [μεγαλοφρονῆ]...” (*T. Reu.* 3:5). Just as Reuben catalogues boasting

¹⁹³For honour and immortality as a motivation to virtue in Graeco-Roman literature, cf. above pp. 21-24.

¹⁹⁴A Syrian officer sent to fight against Judas Maccabeus; Nicanor was slain at Beth-horon in 161 B.C. (cf. 1 Macc 7:43).

¹⁹⁵Attridge, “Jewish Historiography”, 178.

¹⁹⁶cf. 9:4, 7, 8, 11; 15:6.

¹⁹⁷The relationship between this work’s Jewish and Christian elements is debated. Some view the *Testaments* as principally a Jewish document from the second century B.C. (e.g., Kee “Testaments”, 777-78); others contend that it must be treated primarily as a Christian text from the second century A.D. (e.g., De Jonge, “Testaments”, 368-69). This dispute suggests that the *Testaments* must be used cautiously in understanding Hellenistic Jewish ethics.

¹⁹⁸cf. Hollander, *Joseph*, *passim*.

¹⁹⁹The theme of Joseph’s silence also occurs earlier in the testament in the discussion of Joseph’s relationship to his master’s wife (cf. 9:4); in that context, Hollander (*Joseph*, 46) suggests an implied link between Joseph’s silence and his confidence in God’s saving activity.

²⁰⁰The Greek text is from de Jonge, *Testaments*.

²⁰¹Hollander (*ibid.*, 363) notes that Joseph’s attitude of endurance is closely related to humility as the basis for his glorification (cf. *T. Jos.* 10:1-4; 11:1, 17-18).

²⁰²Noting God’s deliverance of the righteous, Joseph states that he had experienced divine testing and been “approved” (δόκιμον, *T. Jos.* 2:7; cf. 2 Cor 10:18; 13:7).

as a vice, Judah explains the result of this behaviour. He confesses that his arrogance and boasting led to sexual immorality. Consequently, he warns: “[d]o not pursue evil impelled by your lusts, by the arrogance [ὑπερηφανεία] of your heart, and do not boast [καυχᾶσθε] the exploits and strength of your youth because this too is evil in the Lord’s sight” (*T. Jud.* 13:2).

In other literature of this genre, reference to boasting occurs in the *Testament of Job*. Responding to the statements of his friends (chs. 28-44), Job asserts that his throne is eternal, while that of the others is transitory. “These kings will pass away, and rulers come and go; but their splendor [δόξα] and boast [καύχημα] shall be as in a mirror.²⁰³ But my kingdom is forever and ever, and its splendor and majesty are in the chariots of the Father” (*T. Job* 33:7-8).²⁰⁴

d) Wisdom Literature

As already noted,²⁰⁵ Sirach 10 has certain thematic affinities with the interpretative tradition of Jer 9. Similarly, other statements in Sirach acknowledge the reality of self-praise while providing instruction against it. Thus, in discussing one’s deportment at a banquet, Sirach advises: “[i]f they make you master of the feast, do not exalt [ἐπαίρου] yourself; be among them as one of them; take care of them and then be seated” (32:1). Likewise, he instructs guests to “[a]muse yourself there, and do what you have in mind, but do not sin through proud speech [λόγῳ ὑπερηφάνῳ]” (32:12).²⁰⁶ More generally, Sirach warns: “[d]o not exalt yourself [ἐξύψου σεαυτόν] lest you fall” (1:30).

In addition to references to boasting, the author also addresses the importance of humility. Sirach’s comments associating the development of wisdom with the avoidance of work (38:24-25) are consistent with the negative view of manual labour found in other Hellenistic sources. Nonetheless, while the author was apparently an individual of high social standing,²⁰⁷ he does endorse a disposition of humility. “The greater you are, the more you must humble [ταπεινῶ] yourself; so you will find favour in the sight of the Lord” (3:19).²⁰⁸ Humility, therefore, is not only the province of low social but is especially required of those who are powerful. However, the author acknowledges that those of high social standing are often opposed to humility. In contrasting the rich and poor, the author notes: “[h]umility [ταπεινότης] is an abomination to a proud man [ὑπερηφάνῳ]; likewise a poor [πτωχός] man is an abomination to a rich one [πλουσίῳ]” (13:20). In this verse, pride stands in parallel to wealth as humility does to poverty. Thus, as seen in other literature,²⁰⁹ boasting is associated with a powerful social status while humility is related to social destitution. Not only does Sirach contrast boasting with humility, the work also differentiates it from wisdom. “A wise man will be silent until the right moment, but a

²⁰³Concerning the reference to an object seen in a mirror, cf. 1 Cor 13:12.

²⁰⁴The Greek text is from Kraft, *Testament of Job*.

²⁰⁵cf. above p. 78.

²⁰⁶In his discussion of customs associated with *symposia*, Athenaeus acknowledges that the influence of wine at banquets resulted in “boasting [καυχᾶσθαι], ridicule, and jests” (*Deipn.* 2.39d-e).

²⁰⁷cf. Coggins, *Sirach*, 48-50.

²⁰⁸“The humility Ben Sira urges in this poem is a combination of attitudes and virtues toward oneself and others, including an adequate self-image, patience, modesty, docility, meekness, awareness of one’s limitations, respect for others, and above all, total dependence on God” (Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 160); cf. 2:4-5; 7:17.

²⁰⁹For the association of humility with a lowly social status in Graeco-Roman literature, cf. above pp. 44-45; for a similar pattern in the Psalms, cf. above p. 66.

braggart [λαπιστής] and fool [ἄφρων] goes beyond the right moment” (20:7). Sirach also asserts that wisdom “is far from men of pride [ὑπερηφανίας]” (15:8) and that those who are wise will experience the rewards and recognition that accompany wisdom (e.g., 15:5-6; 39:6-10).

In positive references to boasting, the author insists that one’s “boast” (καύχημα) involves the fear of the Lord.²¹⁰ Within this context, the author appears to allow for the possibility of some type of appropriate self-praise. For example, while endorsing humility, the author instructs the reader to “ascribe to yourself honour [τιμήν] according to your worth” (10:29).²¹¹ Similarly, in his discussion of famous men (chs. 44-50), the author says of Elijah: “[h]ow glorious you were, O Elijah, in your wonderous deeds! And who has the right to boast [καυχᾶσθαι] which you have?” (48:4). This statement is followed by an enumeration of Elijah’s achievements (48:5-14). This depiction of Elijah is consistent with the author’s view that honour is the appropriate response to noble achievement. In introducing his discussion of these outstanding men, the author notes that “[t]he Lord apportioned to them great glory [δόξαν]” (44:2).

In its encomium of wisdom, the book of Wisdom associates boastful behaviour with those who oppress the righteous poor. While recognising that the book reflects certain Hellenistic themes and rhetorical structures, Barclay notes the prominence of the themes of “enemies” and conflict; he concludes that Wisdom “fosters a cultural antagonism in which Jews under stress are encouraged to trust that God will vindicate their righteousness and confound their enemies.”²¹² In the opening section (1:1-6:11) the author endorses the life of wisdom and warns of impending judgment for the unrighteous. While the wicked oppress the righteous, the text promises vindication for the righteous and punishment for the boastful wicked. This reversal of fortune is evident in the lament of the ungodly in the afterlife: “[w]hat has our arrogance profited us? And what good has our boasted [μετὰ ἀλαζονείας] wealth brought us?” (Wis 5:8).²¹³ Likewise, in his warning to the monarchs who “boast [γεγαυρωμένοι] of many nations” (6:1), the author concludes that the lowly will receive mercy, while the powerful will be tested (6:6). Thus, once again boasting is criticised within the context of Yahweh’s punishment of the unrighteous.

e) Apocalyptic Literature

In defining the nature of the apocalyptic genre, John Collins focuses on matters of form and content: apocalyptic literature involves a revelation mediated by a supernatural being that discloses elements of the supernatural world.²¹⁴ In formulating this paradigm, he notes that the content usually involves “eschatological judgment” of “sinners”, who are oppressors, as well as “eschatological salvation” for the righteous. Both of these events are initiated by

²¹⁰cf. 1:11; 9:16; 10:22; 25:6; Sirach’s emphasis on the “fear of the Lord” conforms with the use of this theme in Proverbs (cf. Gammie, “Sage”, 359).

²¹¹Skehan and Di Lella (*Ben Sira*, 232) describe v. 29 as a critique of “self-depreciation”, which should be distinguished from “humility.” This point may have some affinity with the emphasis on truthful self-presentation found in certain Graeco-Roman sources; cf. above pp. 40-41.

²¹²Barclay, *Jews*, 191.

²¹³The first six chapters of Wisdom are structured chiasmatically (cf. Wright, “Book of Wisdom”, 168-73) in which the lament of the ungodly in the afterlife (5:1-23) stands in parallel to the speech of the ungodly before death (1:16-2:24), where they endorse a lifestyle of sensual pleasure and persecution of the righteous.

²¹⁴Collins, *Seers*, 27-31; cf. “Introduction”, 9

supernatural means.²¹⁵ In some cases, the depiction of the unrighteous in these works can include arrogant boasting. Several examples are evident in *2 Baruch* (early second century A.D.), which uses the setting of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem to portray the city's fall in A.D. 70. The opening section (chs. 1-8) provides the narrative setting for the work in describing Jerusalem's devastation by the Babylonians. In preparation for this catastrophe, the text acknowledges that the oppressors will boast of their conquest (5:1; 7:1; cf. 67:2; 80:3). Boasting is also attributed to the Babylonian monarch in a section explaining a vision the author has witnessed. "But the king of Babylon will arise, the one who now has destroyed Zion, and he will boast over the people and speak haughtily in his heart before the Most High. And he too will fall finally" (67:8-9). In this context, reference to a boasting enemy is incorporated into a broader eschatological framework that promises both punishment for the wicked and deliverance for the righteous.

Similar to the boastful king in *2 Baruch*, references to boasting also occur in several texts that anticipate eschatological opponents of God or the coming of an "eschatological tyrant".²¹⁶ For instance, the *Psalms of Solomon* refer to a "lawless one" who will act "arrogantly" (17:11-14; cf. 2 Thess 2:4). In Books 4 and 5 of the *Sibylline Oracles*, the depiction of an eschatological adversary utilises pagan legends concerning the return of Nero.²¹⁷ This eschatological Nero is portrayed as one who is arrogant and boastful. He will "return declaring himself equal to God. But he will prove that he is not" (5:34). The eschatological ruler depicted in the *Sibylline Oracles* shares certain characteristics with the tyrant described in the visions of Daniel. These visions present an eschatological adversary whose reign is associated with the "time of the end" (8:17). This figure, generally viewed to be Antiochus IV Epiphanes, is described as one who speaks "boastfully" (v. 8; cf. vv. 11, 20) and who speaks "against the Most High" (v. 25). He is one who will "exalt and magnify [לְהַגְדִּיל/מֵגָלֹס וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה] himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods" (Dan 11:36).

2. Qumran Sectarian Literature²¹⁹

In the Qumran literature, reference to arrogant behaviour does occur in the *Rule of the Community*. One section (3:13-4:26) presents a dualism between the Spirit of Light and the Spirit of Darkness.²²⁰ In depicting the cosmic battle between these spirits, the text contrasts the behaviour and fate of those loyal to each realm. Among the character traits associated with the Spirit of Darkness are "pride and haughtiness [גִּוְה וְרוּם]" and "a tongue of

²¹⁵Collins, "Introduction", 5, 7.

²¹⁶cf. Peerbolte, *Antichrist*, 344.

²¹⁷The "legend that Nero would return and conquer Rome was widespread in the Roman world" (Collins, *Sibylline Oracles*, 80, cf. 81-89).

²¹⁸This is the reading of the Theodotion text; the Old Greek reads "ἐξάλλα λαλήσει".

²¹⁹The identity of the Qumran community is open to debate, although it is generally associated with the Essene movement (cf. Knibb, *Qumran*, 9; Dimant, "Qumran", 483-87).

²²⁰Concerning this section, Metso (*Textual Development*, 113) notes that "[n]owhere else in the document are the community's theological concepts presented in such a systematic form"; she also states that the absence of columns 1-4 in 4QS^d and 4QS^e implies that these columns were not in the earliest form of the *Rule* (ibid., 107).

blasphemy” (1QS 4:9, 11).²²¹ The antagonism between these forces occurs within an eschatological framework that concludes with divine judgment involving the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked (1QS 4:6-8, 11-14). This “Two Angels” pattern is related to the “Two Ways” motif, which appears in both Jewish²²² and Christian²²³ literature; this pattern contrasts the character and behaviour of the righteous with that of the wicked. In contrast to the negative behaviour associated with the Spirit of Darkness, the *Rule* describes the attributes that should characterise the members of the community. This document states that the men of the Community are in “the covenant”; as such they should strive to achieve “truth and humility [ענוה], justice and uprightness, compassionate love and seemly behaviour in all their paths” (1QS 5:3; cf. 4:3; 11:1). Thus, their self-presentation should reflect humility rather than arrogance.

The importance of humility is also evident in the hymns of Qumran. Consistent with the dualism found in the Qumran material,²²⁴ 1QH^a 6:3 speaks of the elect of God who are purified by obedience. They are described as “those searching for wisdom,... [those who] love compassion, the poor in spirit [יענוי רוח]”. Similar to patterns noted in the Old Testament Psalms, these hymns can contrast the arrogant behaviour of the wicked with the obedient faithfulness of the righteous; in such contexts, these hymns can utilise references to humility and poverty to describe one’s spiritual dependence on God.²²⁵ For instance, while noting that “arrogant” men mutter against him, the author of 1QH^a 10 notes that God has “freed the life of the poor person [אביון]” (line 32);²²⁶ he has “freed the soul of the poor and needy [עני ורש] from the hand of someone stronger than him” (lines 34-35).

In several hymns that describe God’s deliverance of the righteous, the personal involvement of the speaker²²⁷ is closely associated with the activity of God (cf. 10:24; 12:8; 13:15). For instance, in describing his relationship to his enemies, the author of 1QH^a 12 writes: “I remain resolute and rise above those who scorn me, and my hands succeed against all those who mock me; for they do not esteem me, even though you exhibit your power in me [הגבירכה בי] and reveal yourself in me” (lines 22-23). The hymn goes on to celebrate the wonders that God has performed through the speaker for the sake of divine glory (line 28). Thus, the Psalmist is a beneficiary in the actions for which God receives praise and glory.

²²¹ Hebrew texts and translations of the DSS are from García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scrolls*.

²²² cf. 4Q473; Sir 15:11-18; *T. Ash.* 1:3-5:4; *T. Abr.* 11:1-12; *Sib. Or.* 8:399; cf. M. Jack Suggs argues that discussions of the Two Ways generally involve: 1) a sharply dualistic introduction, 2) lists of virtues and vices, and 3) concluding eschatological admonition (“Two Ways”, 64).

²²³ In the *Didache*, the list of vices in the discussion of the Two Ways includes “boastfulness” (*ἀλαζονεία*; *Did.* 5:1; cf. *Barn.* 20); on the possible literary relationships between Jewish and Christian documents describing the Two Ways, cf. Kloppenborg, “Moral Exhortation”, 88-109; Carleton Paget, *Barnabas*, 80-82.

²²⁴ On the theme of dualism, cf. Ringgren, *Faith*, 68-80; Gammie, “Spatial and Ethical Dualism”, 356-85; Duhaime, “Dualistic Reworking”, 32-56.

²²⁵ e.g., רש: 8:14, 20; 10:34; אביון: 8:16, 18, 22; 10:32; 11:25; ענו: 8:21; 23:14; עני: 8:13-14; 9:36; 10:34; cf. Lohfink, *Lobgesänge der Armen*, 99-100; cf. Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot*, 290. David Seccombe (*Possessions*, 41) argues that the experience of persecution lies behind the use of this language (cf. 1QH^a 10:31-37; 11:23-28; 13:11-15, 20).

²²⁶ Although used in the singular in this passage, the term אביון occurs in the plural in 1QpHab (12:3, 6, 10) to refer to members of the community collectively.

²²⁷ Parts or all of the hymns written in the first person are sometimes attributed to the Teacher of Righteousness (cf. Callaway, *Qumran Community*, 185-197; Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot*, 293-95).

3. Josephus

References to self-praise occur at two levels in Josephus' work; they appear both in his own self-presentation as well as his discussions of Jewish life and history. Clear examples of Josephus' boasting occur in the *Life* and *Against Apion*. The *Life* was written in response to the writings of a rival, Justus of Tiberias, who was critical of Josephus. The *Life* entails Josephus' defence of his actions during the Jewish war;²²⁸ in the process, Josephus uses established conventions of self-praise to make his case. For instance, he argues that he must speak of himself out of "necessity" (ἀνάγκη; *V.* 338, cf. 413). Similarly, in one section (*V.* 336-67), Josephus addresses Justus directly. This section includes a comparison (σύγκριστος) between the writings of the two historians, which emphasises the superiority of Josephus' work. Both the stress on "necessity" and the use of comparison within direct address are evident in Demosthenes' *De Corona*, the standard rhetorical example of effective self-praise.²²⁹

Statements of self-praise also arise in *Against Apion*; this is Josephus' response to certain criticisms of his *Antiquities* (cf. *Ap.* 1.47-56) as well as to anti-Semitic views of various authors, including Apion of Alexandria. In this defence of Judaism to Graeco-Roman readers, Josephus utilises boasting to establish his credibility as an author and historian.²³⁰ For instance, he compares the prowess of his analytical skills with the inferior abilities of others (e.g., *Ap.* 1.1-5; 1.19; 47-59). Similarly, while he stresses the abilities and impeccable character of those priests who were custodians of Jewish records (*Ap.* 1.30, 36), he also notes that he is of priestly ancestry (*Ap.* 1.54). In his *Antiquities*, Josephus attempted to present the early history of the Jews based only on the Scriptures. Since this method has been criticised, in *Against Apion* Josephus enlarges his range of source material in defending Judaism within a Graeco-Roman context. In the process, he uses self-praise to underscore his competence as a writer and historian.²³¹

Examples of boasting are not restricted to the autobiographical sections of Josephus' writings; they also appear within his historical narratives. For instance, Josephus portrays Samson "boasting [αὐχῶν] of having with a jawbone prostrated some of his enemies"; however, recognising that "human valour is a thing of naught", Samson acknowledges that "all was attributable to God" (*A.* 6.160). Similarly, self-praise appears as Josephus describes the conflict between Korah and Moses, which is portrayed in terms of a battle between two orators or politicians.²³² Josephus describes Moses as one who "declined every honour [τιμήν] which he saw that the people were ready to confer on him" (*A.* 3.212). By contrast, Korah is depicted as a persuasive speaker (πιθανώτατος) who revolts against Moses out of envy (*A.* 4.14). In questioning Moses' assignment of the priesthood to the Aaronic line, Korah asserts his superiority to Aaron and his equality with Moses (*A.* 4.17). Moses' response to Korah contains a prayer in which he includes a positive self-assessment; he describes himself as one devoted to "tribulations on behalf of this people" (*A.* 4:42).

In addition to these types of references, Josephus does address the issues of honour and ambition, which are part of the broader social framework that informs the practice of

²²⁸cf. Cohen, *Josephus*, 114-69.

²²⁹cf. above pp. 48-51.

²³⁰cf. Kasher, "Methods", 157.

²³¹On the use of self-praise to establish the credibility of the speaker, cf. above pp. 52-54.

²³²On the "Hellenizations" in Josephus, cf. Feldman, "Josephus", 481-94.

boasting in the Graeco-Roman world.²³³ In the preface to the *Antiquities*, Josephus notes that the underlying lesson of history is that those who disobey God experience disaster, while those who are obedient receive good fortune (εὐδαιμονία; *A.* 1.14). In some sense, this type of moral interpretation of history enjoyed general support in Hellenistic works of history.²³⁴ However, Josephus does suggest that Jewish principles and practices were incompatible with an unqualified endorsement of various methods of honour and public recognition. For instance, he notes the love that Herod the Great had for honours (*A.* 16.396).²³⁵ However, while Herod possessed an undisciplined desire for recognition, as it happens, the Jewish nation is by law opposed to all such things and is accustomed to admire righteousness [δικαιοσύνη] rather than glory [δόξαν]. It was therefore not in his good graces, because it found it impossible to flatter the king's ambition [φιλότιμον] with statues or temples or such tokens. (*A.* 16.157-59)

Likewise, in addressing the topic of public recognition, Josephus states:

For those, on the other hand, who live in accordance with our laws the prize is not silver or gold, no crown of wild olive or of parsley with any such public mark of distinction. No; each individual, relying on the witness of his own conscience and the lawgiver's prophecy, confirmed by the sure testimony of God, is firmly persuaded that to those who observe the laws and, if they must needs die for them, willingly meet death, God has granted a renewed existence and in the revolution of the ages the gift of a better life. (*Ap.* 2.218)

Thus, while Josephus uses a variety of Hellenistic forms and concepts to present his Judaism in a coherent and appealing manner, he never allows "his Jewish heritage to be melted into some general cultural amalgam."²³⁶ Josephus suggests that Judaism offers a critique of popular views about glory and recognition.²³⁷

4. Philo

Criticisms of arrogant boasting occur at various points in Philo's work. In examining Philo's ethics, David Winston notes that "at the center of Philo's concern the issue of man's ultimate spiritual goal, which involves his escape from the material world of contingent reality and his mystical attachment to God."²³⁸ Consistent with this emphasis, Philo criticises those whose boasts function as a denial of God's activity; they do not realise that God "hates arrogance [ἀλαζονείαν]" (*Spec. Leg.* 1.265; cf. *Mig.* 136; *Virt.* 172-4). For instance, Philo depicts the boasting of Pharaoh and asks: "[w]hat deadlier foe to the soul can there be than he who in his vainglory [μεγαλαυχία] claims to himself that which belongs to God alone?" (*Cher.* 77). By contrast, he notes that "to be the slave of God is the highest boast [αὐχημα] of man" (*Cher.* 107; cf. *Congr.* 26; *Spec. Leg.* 1.311).

As stated in the previous chapter,²³⁹ in the Hellenistic period, moralists and philosophers frequently condemned orators and sophists for arrogant behaviour and an

²³³cf. above pp. 13-31.

²³⁴On Josephus' interpretation of history and its relationship to other approaches, cf. Attridge, *Biblical History*.

²³⁵On Josephus' portrayal of Herod, cf. Attridge, "Josephus", 219-22.

²³⁶Barclay, *Jews*, 368.

²³⁷Like Josephus, the Stoics also expressed concerns about the pursuit of popular honours (cf. above pp. 27-28); on Stoic influences in Josephus, cf. Feldman, "Josephus", 498-500.

²³⁸Winston, "Philo's Ethical Theory", 376.

²³⁹cf. above pp. 24-30.

excessive desire for honour. These types of criticisms also occur in Philo's work.²⁴⁰ In *The Worse Attacks the Better*, Philo uses Old Testament images to contrast those who love God with those who love themselves. A related theme is a distinction between those who pursue virtue and those who pursue public acclaim through oratory. While the former "are almost without exception obscure people, looked down upon, of mean estate, destitute of the necessities of life," the latter "are men of mark and wealth, holding leading positions, praised on all hands, recipients of honours, portly, healthy and robust" (*Det.* 35). Philo notes that Moses acknowledged his lack of eloquence and refused to address the "false sophistry" (ψευδεῖ σοφιστεία) of the Egyptians without Aaron, his spokesman (*Det.* 38-39). This incident contributes to Philo's argument that one should not engage sophists in debate without adequate rhetorical training (*Det.* 42, 45).

Consistent with his dualism between the visible world of changing matter and the conceptual world of truth, Philo can be critical of boasting in goods external to virtue.²⁴¹ For instance, in recounting Abraham's trust in God, Philo asks: "[f]or in what else should one trust? In high offices or fame and honours or abundance of wealth and noble birth or health and efficacy of the sense or strength and beauty of body?" (*Abr.* 263). Philo goes on to show the precarious nature of each of these elements. In describing the joy appropriate to those pursuing virtue, he states:

For strictly speaking there is no ground for rejoicing over abundance of wealth and possessions, or over brilliant position, or generally, over anything outside us, since all these things are soulless, and insecure, and have the germs of decay in themselves. (*Det.* 136) Not surprisingly, Philo criticises those who boast in the nobility of their birth. "For the true good cannot find its home in anything external [ἐκτός], nor yet in things of the body, and further not even in every part of the soul, but only in its sovereign part" (*Virt.* 187). Thus, Philo rejects self-praise that is based on external factors.

By contrast, Philo endorses the development of the soul and wisdom. While critical of those who boast in external goods, he suggests that internal traits provide grounds for legitimate self-praise. He notes that the wise individual rejoices not in the accidents of position, but in the things of the soul; "for the things that are 'in himself' are excellences of mind, on which we have a right to pride ourselves [ἄξιον σεμνόνεσθαι], but the accidents of our position are either bodily well-being or plenty of external advantages, and of these we must not boast [μεγαλαυχητέον]" (*Det.* 137). Similarly, he relates a story of Socrates "boasting" (αὐχήσαντα) to the Israelites' passage through Edom; in this account, Edom represents the realm of externals and the facade of outward appearance. Philo states that "in

²⁴⁰e.g., *Cher.* 10; *Agr.* 13, 136; *Conf.* 33-34; *Mig.* 72; *Mos.* 2.212; *Quis Her.* 302-5. Bruce Winter (*Philo and Paul*, 81) identifies the term "sophist" in Philo with "the virtuoso orators who have public followings".

²⁴¹Philo refers to Joseph's multi-coloured coat in criticising the Peripatetic view that happiness requires external goods. Philo argues that Joseph's misunderstanding:

...appears in his treatment of the three kinds of good things, those pertaining to the outside world, to the body, and to the soul.... He [Joseph] argues that each of the three classes mentioned has the character of a part or element and that it is only when they are all taken together in the aggregate that they produce happiness. In order, then, that he may be taught better ideas than these, he is sent to men who hold that nothing is a good thing but what has true beauty, that this is a property belonging to the soul as soul...." (*Det.* 7-9)

the school of Moses it is not one man only who may boast [ἀύχησαι] that he has learnt the first elements of wisdom, but a whole nation, a mighty people” (*Quod Deus* 146-47).²⁴²

In some sense, Philo’s references to self-praise and the development of the soul have connections with similar trends in Stoic ethics.²⁴³ While critical of popular forms of boasting practised by the sophists,²⁴⁴ Stoic writers do sanction self-praise based on the achievements of one’s character.²⁴⁵ However, Philo’s thought cannot simply be described as Stoic. Unlike the Stoic emphasis on self-reliance, Philo insists that God’s activity is necessary to bring about the development of virtue.²⁴⁶ For instance, Philo states that the person deserving approval is the one whose hope is in God “as the source to which his coming into existence itself is due and as the sole power which can keep him free from harm and destruction” (*Praem.* 13). Winston observes that Philo’s anthropology stresses both human responsibility and dependence on God; from Philo’s perspective the human intellect can be described in two diverse ways.

Insofar as it is a human intellect, man may well take pride in it as his own personal possession, as an independent capacity which he controls and activates at will. To the extent, however, that it forms but a portion of the Logos from which it ultimately draws all its energy, it can no longer be described accurately as a human capacity at all, but rather as a particular activation of the Divine Mind.²⁴⁷

Thus, while related to broader philosophical concerns, Philo’s understanding of appropriate and inappropriate self-praise is informed by his commitment to Judaism.²⁴⁸

In addition to various references to self-praise, the theme of humility also occurs in Philo’s work. In explaining the Peripatetic view of virtue as a mean, Philo acknowledges a negative view of humility held by some. He notes that the Peripatetics feel that “the overweening boastfulness [ἀλαζονείας] of a braggart is bad, and that to adopt a humble [ταπεινοῦ] and obscure [ἀφανοῦς] position is to expose yourself to attack and oppression” (*Mig.* 147). Although he recognises this prevalent attitude toward humility, he also asserts God’s commitment to the humble. In fact, he uses God’s commitment to those of low social status as a warning against arrogance. In discussing the Decalogue, he states that God “wills that no king or despot swollen with arrogance [ἀλαζονείας] and contempt should despise an insignificant private person [ιδιώτου]”; since God does not disdain “even the humblest [ταπεινότατον]”, Philo asks what mere mortals have to be “puffed-up [πεφυσῆσθαι] and loud-voiced” towards others (*Decal.* 40-1). Similarly, he has a warning for the “boasters

²⁴²In his use of Deut 10:12-22 (cf. above p. 79), Philo explains Israel’s selection by God (cf. Deut 10:15) in terms of merit; “out of the whole human race He chose as of special merit and judged worthy of pre-eminence over all, those who are in a true sense men [οἱ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἄνθρωποι], and called them to the service of Himself” (*Spec. Leg.* 1.303).

²⁴³E. Schürer (*History*, 3:887) describes Stoic ethics as a “most congenial philosophical system” for Philo’s views on anthropology; for similarities between Philo’s discussion of those who practise wisdom and the Stoic sage, cf. Winston, “Philo’s Ethical Theory”, 410-14; cf. also Runia, *Philo*, 480-85; Wolfson, *Philo*, 2:268-79.

²⁴⁴cf. above pp. 27-31; Philo does associate boasting with a craving for honour, cf. *Spec. Leg.* 2.18.

²⁴⁵Note the quotes by Seneca and Chrysippus on p. 41 above.

²⁴⁶cf. Schürer, *History*, 3:887-88; Wolfson, *Philo*, 2:305-9.

²⁴⁷Winston, “Philo’s Ethical Theory”, 377.

²⁴⁸“For what the disciples of the most excellent philosophy gain from its teaching, the Jews gain from their customs and laws, that is to know the highest, the most ancient Cause of all things and reject the delusion of created gods” (*Virt.* 65).

[ἀλαζόνες]” who take pride in their prosperity and mock widows and orphans: “[m]ark how the persons who seem thus lonely [ταπεινοί] and unfortunate [ἀτυχεῖς] are not treated as nothing worth and negligible in the judgement of God” (*Mos.* 2.240-41). At *Spec. Leg.* 4.176 he states that “[l]owliness [ταπεινόν] and weakness [ἀσθενές]” are attributes of widows, orphans and aliens; he maintains that these classes of people have not been renounced by God.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, he states that “the whole Jewish race is in the position of an orphan compared with all the nations on every side” (*Spec. Leg.* 4.179). Thus, despite his tendency to “dehistoricize” Jewish history in defence of universal philosophical arguments,²⁵⁰ Philo still depicts Israel in terms of humility and lowly social status.

5. Rabbinic Literature

Statements endorsing humility occur at various points in rabbinic literature. However, using this material to reconstruct views present in Second Temple Judaism raises a variety of issues concerning the nature of oral tradition as well as the genre and dating of the rabbinic writings.²⁵¹ On the one hand, some authorities are sceptical about whether even the earliest stratum of these works contains, or can be shown to contain, pre-70 A.D. material,²⁵² others, by contrast, are more positive about this possibility and suggest some level of continuity between the Pharisees and the Tannaitic rabbis.²⁵³ While it is quite possible that certain rabbinic statements do emanate from first-century sayings and traditions, it is beyond the scope of this section to argue for specific dates of origin in reference to particular sayings.²⁵⁴ Nonetheless, although this material provides only possible evidence for Second Temple Judaism, in certain respects it does reveal elements of continuity with treatments of humility found in earlier literature. For instance, in Rabbinic literature, הַנְּיָוִט is a frequent term for the virtue of humility.²⁵⁵ Stephen Dawes argues that the Rabbinic usage is anticipated in the MT,²⁵⁶ Sirach and the Dead Sea Scrolls.²⁵⁷ Similarly, in examining texts from these collections of literature, it is the contention of this thesis that “humility” can denote a virtue, and it is not necessarily associated with one’s socio-economic status.

Texts providing ethical guidance often refer to humility. In the Mishnah, a clear emphasis on humility is evident in *‘Abot*, which is the only Mishnaic tractate that contains primarily sapiential sayings rather than halakhic material. M. L. Lerner notes that this tractate provides counsel that directs one “to proper religious practice and ethical behaviour, both in regard to human relations and to one’s attitude towards the Divinity.”²⁵⁸ In addressing appropriate behaviour, various statements concerning humility are attributed to

²⁴⁹In delineating these types of individuals, Philo utilises language found in Deut 10:17-18. Thus, Deut 10 informs Philo’s critique of self-praise as well as his argument that God values the humble (cf. above p. 79).

²⁵⁰cf. Barclay, *Jews*, 170.

²⁵¹cf. Stemberger, *Introduction*, 31-55.

²⁵²e.g., the various works of Jacob Neusner; cf. Neusner’s *Rabbinic Literature & the New Testament*.

²⁵³e.g., Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 133; idem, *Judaism*, 413-14; Maccoby, *Rabbinic Writings*, 11-16.

²⁵⁴Thus, while I will focus on material attributed to Tannaitic sources, I am not assuming that rabbinical sayings must have originated with the sources to whom they are attributed.

²⁵⁵“humility, lowliness, meekness, kindness” (Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 2:1092).

²⁵⁶e.g., Ps 18:35 [36]; 45:4 [5]; cf. p. 68 above.

²⁵⁷Dawes, “*‘ANĀWĀ*”, 38-48.

²⁵⁸Lerner, “*‘Avot*”, 273; cf. Neusner, *Avot*, 19.

Tannaitic sources. Levitas of Jabneh (early second century A.D.) states: “Be exceedingly lowly of spirit [שפל רוּחַ], for the hope of man is but the worm” (4:4).²⁵⁹ Similarly, R. Meir (second century A.D.) instructs his students to “be lowly in spirit [שפל רוּחַ] before all men” (4:10). In chapter five, a collection primarily of anonymous sayings, humility is presented as a characteristic of the righteous.

He in whom are these three things is of the disciples of Abraham our father; but [he in whom are] three other things is of the disciples of Balaam the wicked. A good eye²⁶⁰ and a humble spirit [רוּחַ נְמוּכָה] and a lowly soul [וּנְפֵשׁ שְׁפִילָה]--[they in whom are these] are of the disciples of Abraham our father. An evil eye, a haughty spirit [רוּחַ בְּגוּוּהָה], and a proud soul [וּנְפֵשׁ רַחֲבָה]--[they in whom are these] are of the disciples of Balaam the wicked. (5:19) Commenting on this passage, Jacob Neusner notes: “[g]enerosity, modesty, and humility--these are the virtues inculcated through the sages’ sayings in the first four chapters. Now they are summarized and set in the balance against the bad traits, to be avoided.”²⁶¹ These references in *‘Abot* are consistent with the depiction of humility found in other rabbinic sources.²⁶²

Outside of the Mishnah, various other texts recognise the significance of humility. While much of the Talmudic material is attributed to post-Tannaitic sources, some baraitot do concern the theme of humility. For instance, in the progression of virtues attributed to R. Phineas b. Jair (second century A.D.), “holiness leads to meekness [עֲנוּוָה]” and “meekness [עֲנוּוָה] leads to fear of sin” (*b. ‘Abod. Zar.* 20b).²⁶³ Thus, in a portrayal of a virtuous individual, a significant attribute is humility. Additionally, several Talmudic texts relate humility to the proper observance of Torah.²⁶⁴ In the Minor Tractates of the Talmud, humility is a recurrent theme in discussions of appropriate behaviour. For example, *Der. Er. Zut.* 5.4 states: “[t]he adornment of [knowledge of] Torah is wisdom, the adornment of wisdom is humility [עֲנוּוָה]” and “the adornment of humility is fear [of God]”.²⁶⁵

In certain texts, God’s gracious acts, particularly in behalf of the weak and needy, are presented as examples of humility in action.²⁶⁶ For instance, the following passage is attributed to Yohanan b. Zakkai (first century A.D.):²⁶⁷

²⁵⁹This saying may be adapted from Sir 7:17: “Humble yourself greatly, for the punishment of the ungodly is fire and worms.” Translations of the Mishnah are from Danby, *Mishnah*; the Hebrew text of *‘Abot* is from Philip Blackman, *Mishmayoth*.

²⁶⁰The reference to “good eye” (עֵינַי טוֹבָה) describes “good will” or “liberality”; by contrast, an “evil eye” (עֵינַי רָעָה) depicts “ill-will, selfishness, envy” (Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 2:1071).

²⁶¹Neusner, *Avot*, 166.

²⁶²cf. Maher, “Humility”, 25-43.

²⁶³cf. *y. Šeqal.* 3.6; *y. Šota* 9.16.

²⁶⁴e.g., *b. Sota* 5b; 21b; *b. Sanh.* 43b; 88b; *b. Ta’an.* 7a.

²⁶⁵cf. *Der. Er. Zut.* 1.1; 3.5; 3.11; 7.2; 8.1; 9.11; *Der. Er. Rab.* 2.14; 2.22; 7.5; *‘Abot R. Nat.* A 7.3; 11.2; *Kalla* 2.6; 3.4; 3.5.

²⁶⁶Stephen Dawes (“Walking Humbly”, 338) states that divine humility is God’s “‘condescension’ to his people, his stooping to interest himself in them and care for them”. Peter Kuhn (*Gottes Selbsterniedrigung*, 9-10) classifies rabbinic references to divine self-humiliation according to the following categories: (1) God’s abandonment of his honour, (2) God as a servant of humanity, (3) God’s submission to humanity, (4) God’s descent from heaven to earth, and (5) God’s self-limitation in the world. Most of the passages he discusses are post-Tannaitic.

²⁶⁷The translation and Hebrew text of the Babylonian Talmud is from Epstein, *Talmud*.

Wherever you find (mentioned in the Scriptures) the power of the Holy One, blessed by He, you also find his gentleness [ענוותנותו]²⁶⁸ mentioned. This fact is stated in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and stated a third time in the [Sacred] Writings. It is written in the Torah, *For the Lord your God, he is the God of gods and Lord of lords* (Deut 10:17), and it says immediately afterwards, *He doth execute justice for the fatherless and widow*. It is repeated in the Prophets: *For thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy* (Isa 57:15), and it says immediately afterwards [*I dwell*] *with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit*. It is stated a third time in the [Sacred] Writings, as it is written: *Extol him that rideth upon the skies, whose name is the Lord* (Ps 68:4) and immediately afterwards it is written, *A father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows*. (*b. Meg.* 31a)

In this passage, biblical texts that demonstrate divine transcendence as well as divine benevolence provide evidence of God's humility.²⁶⁹ Of particular relevance to the themes of boasting and humility is the use of Deut 10:17-18. As stated above,²⁷⁰ in a context (Deut 10:12-22) stressing covenantal obedience, Deut 10:21 affirms that God is Israel's "boast". In the setting of Deut 10, vv. 17-18 use divine attributes to highlight the necessity of obedience towards God and proper conduct towards others.

Divine humility is also discussed in terms of God's participation in the suffering of Israel and the suffering of individuals. In an example from the Tannaitic midrashim, *Mek.* on Ex 12:41 (*Pisha* 14.87-92) states:

And so you find that whenever Israel is enslaved the Shekinah, as it were is enslaved with them.... And it also says: "In all their affliction He was afflicted" (Isa 63:9).²⁷¹ So far I know only that he shares in the affliction of the community. How about the affliction of the individual? Scripture says: "He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble" (Ps 91:15).

Similarly, R. Meir asks: "When man is sorely troubled, what says the Shekinah? My head is ill at ease, my arm is ill at ease. If God is sore troubled at the blood of the ungodly that is shed, how much more at the blood of the righteous?" (*m. Sanh.* 6.5). Thus, in view of God's compassion and concern for people, certain texts speak of God as one who partakes of the suffering of others.²⁷²

In some texts, the depiction of divine humility functions as a model for appropriate human behaviour; if God exercises humility in relating to others, so also should this virtue be evident in human activity. For instance, several sources recount an episode where Rabbi Gamaliel II (first century A.D.) serves several dinner guests.²⁷³ When R. Eliezer argues that

²⁶⁸"humility, patience, condescension" (Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 2:1092).

²⁶⁹*Tanh.* (B) on Gen 18:1 (*Wayyera* §3) also demonstrates divine humility by utilising passages that depict both divine power as well as divine benevolence. In addition to the three passages cited at *b. Meg.* 31a (Deut 10:17-18; Ps 68:4-5; Isa 57:15), the *Tanhuma* passage mentions Ps 138:6, 10:16-17, 146:6-7 and Isa 66:1-2. Furthermore, *Tanh.* (B) on Gen 18:1 (*Wayyera* §4) uses Ps 18:36 in reference to divine humility; this verse occurs in other midrashic discussions of God's self-humiliation (cf. *Tanh.* [B] on Gen 1:1 [*Bereshit* §4]; *Midr. Pss.* 18 §29 [on Ps 18:36]; *Gen. Rab.* 1:12 [on Gen 1:1]; *Ex. Rab.* 41.4 [on Ex 31:18]).

²⁷⁰cf. p. 60.

²⁷¹The *Qere* reading of Isa 63:9 also occurs at *b. Sot.* 5a; *b. Ta'an.* 16a; *Ex. Rab.* 2.5 (on Ex 3:2).

²⁷²cf. Kuhn, *Gottes Selbsterniedrigung*, 82-92.

²⁷³In rabbinic literature, there are three slightly different versions of this account; cf. Kuhn, *Gottes Selbsterniedrigung*, 30-31; Lightstone, "Šadoq", 86-93.

Gamaliel should not be serving others, R. Joshua retorts that Abraham, “the greatest man of his age,” served angels, whom he thought were merely Arabs (Gen 18). R. Zadok concludes that the ultimate model of humble service to others is God (*b. Qidd.* 32b). Similarly, noting God’s willingness to descend to Mt. Sinai, *b. Sot.* 5a argues that divine selflessness should be paradigmatic for humans and should serve as a warning against pride and haughtiness.²⁷⁴ Thus, in some passages, the endorsement of humility is related explicitly to the character and activity of God.

In rabbinic literature, the theme of humility also occurs in reference to particular individuals. For instance, Moses’ humility is noted in a variety of sources.²⁷⁵ According to *b. Ned.* 38a, God causes his presence to rest only upon the one who is “strong, wealthy, wise and meek [ענין]; and all these [qualifications] are deduced from Moses.” The text goes on to cite Num 12:3,²⁷⁶ which depicts Moses’ humility. Similarly, *Mek.* on Ex 20:21 (*Bahodesh* 9.98-113), noting that God’s presence indwells those who are meek, states that Moses’ humility allowed him to meet with God on Mt. Sinai. While acknowledging Moses’ humility, *Sifre Num.* §101 (on Num 12:1-16) insists that reference to Moses’ meek demeanour does not imply that he was deficient in courage or material possessions.

In addition to biblical figures, rabbinic sources also commend the humility of certain Tannaitic leaders. For instance, humility is a common theme in the traditions associated with the life of Hillel the Elder (first century A.D.).²⁷⁷ Several sources state that at Hillel’s death his colleagues lamented: “Alas! the pious [חסיד] man, alas! the humble [ענין] man” (*b. San.* 11a).²⁷⁸ Consistent with that portrayal, Hillel is reported to have said: “My self-abasement is my exalting, my self-exaltation is my abasement.”²⁷⁹ Similarly, in describing a *bath kol* favouring the halakhah of Beth Hillel, *b. Erub.* 13b concludes that humility leads to exaltation by God.²⁸⁰ In depicting the humility of biblical figures and other respected individuals, this literature suggests that humility is appropriate even for those in positions of leadership and affluence. Thus, it reflects “an awareness that all human qualities and achievements are gifts from God on whom no one, not even the greatest heroes of this world, can make a claim.”²⁸¹

CONCLUSIONS

In summarising this evidence, several conclusions can be stated concerning the themes of boasting and humility in the Old Testament. First, while the effect on the listener was a

²⁷⁴cf. Kuhn, *Gottes Selbsterniedrigung*, 66-67.

²⁷⁵cf. Maher, “Humility”, 29-31.

²⁷⁶cf. above p. 58.

²⁷⁷Schürer (*History* 2:364, 365) notes that certain biographical accounts of Hillel and Shammai “bear almost throughout the stamp of legend” in which “the mildness and severity of Hillel and Shammai” parallels “the mildness and severity of their two schools.” On the traditions associated with Hillel, cf. Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions*, 212-302; cf. also Neusner and Avery-Peck, “Hillel”, 45-63.

²⁷⁸cf. *b. Sota* 48b.

²⁷⁹*Lev. Rab.* 1.5 (on Lev 1:1); *Ex. Rab.* 45.5 (on Ex 33:18). In interpreting this statement within Hillel’s historical context, Adolph Büchler (*Piety*, 13-14) argues that the assertion may be read transitively or intransitively. In other words, it may refer to Hillel’s humiliation by others, or it may describe a voluntary meekness on his part.

²⁸⁰“This teaches you that him who humbles himself the Holy One, blessed by He, raises up, and him who exalts himself the Holy One, blessed be he, humbles” (*b. Erub.* 13b; cf. *b. Šabb.* 88b, *Der. Er. Zut.* 9.11). This is related to the theme of reversal of status that has been noted in a variety of Jewish literature.

²⁸¹Maher, “Humility”, 31.

significant issue in the Graeco-Roman evaluation of self-praise, the Old Testament appraises boasting within a theological context. Thus, boasting does not simply affect one's relationship with others; it also concerns one's relationship to God. Viewed from a theological perspective, boasting can express the object of one's trust and confidence. Consequently, the concept and vocabulary of "boasting" is not restricted to self-praise but can involve more general assertions of praise and reliance.

Consistent with this theological evaluation of boasting, self-praise is generally portrayed in terms of arrogance and opposition to God. In the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy depicts "forgetting" God in terms of arrogant assertions of autonomy. Similarly, the historical and prophetic literature often associate self-praise with the enemies of God and Israel. In depicting self-praise in terms of antagonism to God, these texts frequently describe those boasting as individuals facing impending judgment. Thus, their arrogant boasts will be overturned by divine intervention.

In the Psalms, boasting is a recurrent theme in the laments and hymns that present the triadic relationship involving the righteous, the wicked, and God. Negatively, scornful and arrogant speech can be ascribed to the enemies as they mock the righteous. Positively, praise of God is expressed by the righteous, who anticipate God's intervention or thank him for deliverance already experienced. In some sense, while the enemies "boast" in themselves, the righteous "boast" in the Lord. In many texts, concomitant with the depiction of the enemies and those they oppress is the theme of status reversal--God humbles the wicked and rescues the righteous.

Significant Old Testament passages on boasting include Deut 10:12-22 and Jer 9:22-23. In a context stressing covenantal obedience, Deut 10 states that God is Israel's "boast"; this passage also emphasises God's concern for those in need. Thus, in this passage, boasting in God is associated with the expectation of obedience and a positive assessment of humble status. Particularly crucial for Paul's discussion of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13 is Jer 9:22-23. In a setting that warns of God's looming judgment, Jer 9:22-23 denounces self-centred sources of confidence; by contrast, it endorses boasting in one's knowledge of God. This thesis has argued that the positive reference to boasting (v. 23) has a self-referential dimension; thus, boasting in one's knowledge of God can include reference to one's obedient response to God. This participatory dimension of boasting becomes explicit in the occurrence of the Jeremiah boasting maxim at 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX). The Septuagintal passage not only stresses the ethical behaviour of those who boast in God, but also places the Jeremiah tradition within a setting involving the same triad of relationships evident in many Psalms. While Hannah condemns her enemies who have boasted inappropriately, she boasts in the Lord. Furthermore, she acknowledges a reversal of status--God exalts the humble and humbles the exalted.

Related to the criticism of arrogant self-praise is the endorsement of humility; in a variety of different contexts, humility is associated with the favour of God. Passages in both the historical and prophetic literature proclaim God's love for those who are humble. Particularly in the Psalms, humble dependence on God is closely associated with the poor and destitute who are oppressed by various enemies. In these passages, as in the Graeco-Roman material surveyed earlier, a humble attitude is related to a lowly social status. However, humility is not restricted to those in positions of need; it is equally demanded of those in positions of power and leadership. Psalm 18:36 provides evidence of God's

humility; this passage becomes significant in rabbinic discussions of humility. Similarly, other Psalms associate humility with the monarch, and Proverbs speaks of humility as a precursor of honour. Humility is also evident in the description of Moses at Num 12:3.

Thus, Klaus Wengst notes that

[i]f in the Greek sphere there is a tendency to detach the negative concept [of humility] from its social roots, so that the person affected by social downfall need not necessarily be associated with it, and indeed in principle anyone can be free of it, in the Old Testament and Jewish sphere there is a similar tendency which allows the term with a positive content also to be applied to the rich.²⁸²

Once again, 1 Sam 2 is significant because it depicts the humility of both the needy and the powerful. On the one hand, Hannah lauds the divine deliverance of the needy and poor who are dependent on God. On the other hand, her song suggests that this type of behaviour is paradigmatic for the nation's king.

Certain Old Testament motifs associated with boasting and humility also occur in subsequent Jewish literature. As in the Old Testament, self-praise is normally evaluated theologically and presented as an act of opposition to God. Similarly, the narrative and historical literature of Second Temple Judaism can associate self-praise with the political oppressors of Israel in a manner similar to various Old Testament texts. These oppressors often stand in contrast to Israel's humble dependence on God. Furthermore, divergent literary settings depict a reversal of status in which God delivers the righteous and punishes the wicked. For instance, in a manner similar to the Old Testament Psalms, the hymns of Qumran often celebrate God's saving activity in behalf of a righteous individual. Thus, at both a corporate and individual level, the Old Testament portrayals of the boastful wicked, the humble righteous, and the response of God become recurrent themes in later texts.

Just as arrogant self-praise is criticised, so also the praise of God is endorsed and admired. For instance, as certain narrative and historical texts portray the enemies of Israel, they also note Israel's trust and confidence in God. Likewise, Sirach notes that one's "boast" involves the fear of the Lord. Philo states that God alone should be one's "boast", and he states that the "highest boast" is to be the slave of God. The Sirach and Philonic passages suggest the ongoing influence of texts such as Jer 9:22-23 and Deut 10:12-22.

The theme of humility also occurs at various points in the literature of Second Temple Judaism. Thus, in narrative and historical texts, God can be presented as the champion of those who humbly depend on him. Likewise, humility is endorsed in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Sirach, the Qumran corpus, and Philo; the ongoing significance of humility is evident in the rabbinic literature. Furthermore, as in the Old Testament, while humility is often associated with a modest social status, it can also be aligned with those in positions of higher status and authority. For example, Sirach argues that greatness should be accompanied by humility; similarly, in the Qumran texts, humility is an attribute that should characterise the entire community.

In some ways, the references to boasting and humility in Jewish texts are distinctive from their counterparts in Graeco-Roman literature. However, similarities between these sources are also apparent, particularly in Josephus and Philo. Josephus' self-presentation does include prevalent conventions of self-praise; likewise, Philo's criticisms of sophistic

²⁸²Wengst, *Humility*, 16.

boasting has much in common with the arguments of Stoic moralists. Nonetheless, even these authors acknowledge a level of tension between Jewish and Graeco-Roman perspectives on self-presentation and the factors that affect it. Josephus observes that Jewish principles and practices are incongruous with the extensive methods of public honour and recognition prevalent in Hellenistic society. Thus, he contends that Judaism is critical of popular views of honour and the pursuit of glory; as seen in the previous chapter, these perspectives significantly influenced the practice of self-praise in the Graeco-Roman world. Philo also recognises disparities between Judaism and Graeco-Roman ethics on the issue of humility; while acknowledging the negative view of humility held by some, Philo asserts God's commitment to the humble. These types of dissimilarities between Jewish and Graeco-Roman views of self-presentation will also become apparent in the analysis of Paul's references to boasting in his Corinthian correspondence, which is the subject of the next two chapters.

III. THE LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SETTING OF 2 COR 10-13

Having examined the theme of boasting in Graeco-Roman and Jewish literature, our focus now shifts to 2 Cor 10-13. As an introduction to this passage, this chapter will address three preliminary issues that provide a foundation for exploring Paul's treatment of boasting. In the first section, we will look at literary and historical questions concerning the relationship between 2 Cor 10-13 and Paul's activity in Corinth. The next section will explore the charges that have been directed at Paul within the Corinthian context; as we shall see, the perceived deficiency of Paul's self-presentation was a recurring theme in the accusations made against him. The final section will examine these allegations in light of the evidence concerning the social constituency of the Corinthian church.

A. 2 COR 10-13 AND PAUL'S ACTIVITY IN CORINTH

Although the apologetic nature of 2 Cor 10-13 is generally acknowledged in the secondary literature,¹ the relationship between these chapters and the rest of 2 Corinthians is a subject of ongoing debate. Closely related to this literary dispute is the location of 2 Cor 10-13 within the chronology of Paul's activity in Corinth. Concerning the question of literary unity, the change in tone between chapters 9 and 10 has led many to the conclusion that 2 Cor 10-13 is a separate letter.² The differences in outlook between these sections become apparent by contrasting specific verses;³ for instance, while the former section notes Paul's confidence in the Corinthian congregation, the latter includes Paul's fear of ongoing problems in the church and his warning of impending discipline. These dissimilarities suggest that the two sections reflect different historical circumstances within the Corinthian congregation, with differing responses to Paul and his leadership. For instance, in 7:7-16 the congregation appears favourable to Paul and his ministry. In 11:1-20, however, at least a segment of the church appears to be receptive to Paul's opponents.⁴ Undoubtedly, these differences can be overstated: despite Paul's optimism, chapters 1-9 do suggest that he is aware of criticism of his ministry within the Corinthian congregation (e.g., 3:1; 5:12; 7:2). Nonetheless, I accept the view that chapters 10-13 reflect a period of heightened opposition to Paul, which involved a different phase of Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church from that envisioned in chapters 1-9.

Among those who make a distinction between the historical situation of these two sections, dispute centres on which part was written first. One approach is to place 2 Cor 10-13 between 1 Corinthians and 2 Cor 1-9 chronologically; thus 2 Cor 10-13 is identified with the "painful" letter of 2 Cor 2:3-4 and 7:8, 12. Although this view, or some form of it, has received broad endorsement,⁵ several points weigh against it. First, while the "painful" letter apparently instructed the church to take action against a single offender who had attacked Paul (2 Cor 2:3-11; 7:8-12), reference to this individual is lacking in 2 Cor 10-13. Instead, 2

¹cf. Fitzgerald, "Paul", 193-200; Berger, *Formgeschichte*, 361-63.

²For a survey of various literary critical theories of 2 Corinthians, cf. Bieringer and Lambrecht, *Studies*, 67-105; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 3-49.

³e.g., 7:16/8:7 and 12:20-21; 2:3/7:4 and 10:2; 7:11 and 11:3 (Plummer, *Second Epistle*, xxx).

⁴cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 5-6.

⁵e.g., Plummer, *Second Epistle*, xxxi-xxxvi; Francis Watson, "2 Cor. X-XIII", 324-46; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 296-312. Similarly, Bultmann (*Second Letter*, 18) includes 2:14-7:4 with chs. 10-13 as the "painful" letter; Georgi (*Opponents*, 11-14) regards chs. 10-13 as the "painful" letter and 2:14-7:4 as part of an even earlier epistle.

Cor 10-13 states that Paul himself is ready to inflict punishment on the disobedient (10:6, 11; 13:2).⁶ Second, the “painful” letter is written in lieu of a visit by Paul (1:23-2:4), but 2 Cor 10-13 prepares the congregation for a forthcoming visit by the apostle (10:2; 12:14; 13:1-2, 10).⁷ Third, chapters 10-13 seem to presuppose an earlier painful letter (10:1, 10).⁸ Consequently, this thesis endorses the general position that chapters 10-13 were written after chapters 1-9. However, this conclusion does not necessarily imply that chapters 1-9 and 10-13 were originally separate letters. Although it is difficult to reconstruct the compositional history of this letter, the lack of manuscript evidence for separate letters gives credence to the view that 2 Corinthians is a single letter that was written on different occasions.⁹

With these literary conclusions in mind, it is possible to sketch a plausible outline of the chronology surrounding the writing of 2 Cor 10-13.¹⁰ In 1 Cor 16:5-8, Paul anticipated staying in Ephesus until Pentecost (A.D. 54 or 55) and then visiting Corinth after going through Macedonia. However, Paul changed his plans, and intended to visit Corinth before and after his travels to Macedonia (2 Cor 1:15-16). At some point, Paul received distressing news of problems in the Corinthian church; this resulted in an interim visit of Paul to Corinth from Ephesus (2 Cor 2:1).¹¹ This visit did not go well; apparently, at least one individual who opposed Paul criticised him openly (2 Cor 2:5-8). Returning to Ephesus, Paul determined not to go back to Corinth immediately. Instead, he penned the “painful” letter, which was probably delivered by Titus to Corinth. Paul stated that he had avoided returning to Corinth in order to spare the church another upsetting encounter (2 Cor 1:23). Shortly after this letter was sent, Paul journeyed to Macedonia, where he met Titus. Titus brought an encouraging report of the Corinthians’ positive response to Paul’s letter (2 Cor 7:6-16). Eventually, Paul wrote 2 Cor 1-9. Subsequently, Paul received news that the Corinthian situation had deteriorated; teachers opposed to Paul had achieved a level of influence within the Corinthian congregation and were undermining Paul’s authority. The gravity of this setting resulted in the strong statements of 2 Cor 10-13, in which he alerts the Corinthians to an impending visit. Although the exact nature of the Corinthians’ response to 2 Corinthians is unknown, Paul eventually returned to Corinth (cf. Acts 20:2-3; Rom 15:25)¹² where he spent a winter (probably A.D. 56-57).

B. SELF-PRESENTATION AND THE CHARGES MADE AGAINST PAUL

In addition to various questions concerning the literary development of 2 Corinthians, a major focus of discussion in the secondary literature involves the identity of Paul’s opponents. A spectrum of theories about the theology and cultural background of these

⁶cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 16-18.

⁷cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 38.

⁸cf. Savage, *Power Through Weakness*, 191.

⁹This is the view I accept; however, the conclusions of this thesis are not dependent on the literary unity of 2 Corinthians. Proponents of the view that 2 Cor 10-13 is a separate letter written after chs. 1-9 include: Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 7-10; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 35-41; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 5-18. Those arguing that chs. 1-9 and 10-13 are parts of the same letter that were written on different occasions include: Munck, *Paul*, 171; Prümm, *Diakonia*, 1:553-54; Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 2.

¹⁰On issues of chronology, cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 74-7; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 54-55.

¹¹For the view that Paul made an “interim” visit, cf. Prümm, *Diakonia*, 1:395-99; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 53-56.

¹²cf. Kümmel, *Introduction*, 311.

antagonists has been suggested.¹³ Despite the variety and complexity of these proposals, 2 Corinthians does not provide a detailed portrait of these individuals. Paul states that they are Jewish (11:22), and he implies that they are outsiders (11:4, 19-20). They have intruded on his sphere of ministry (10:12-18) and are contesting his leadership status within the Corinthian congregation (11:12-13). While we are given few explicit clues concerning their theological orientation, Paul focuses on addressing the charges made against his character and ministry.¹⁴ Of particular relevance to this study is the relationship between Paul's self-presentation and the accusations made against him in the Corinthian context.

The task of enumerating these allegations, however, is fraught with methodological difficulties. Specifically, the interpreter faces the challenge of determining the appropriate use of "mirror-reading."¹⁵ For instance, when Paul states that it is necessary to boast (καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ; 11:30; 12:1), is he quoting a slogan of the opponents that has been used in an accusatory manner?¹⁶ Or is he simply noting a compulsion to boast that reflects his need to defend himself and the truthfulness of his ministry?¹⁷ In attempting to understand Paul's opponents and the charges made against him, several observations are in order.¹⁸ First, a distinction should be made between explicit references and apparent allusions to Paul's adversaries; allusions should be evaluated on the basis of material deduced from explicit references.¹⁹ Second, particularly in a polemical and apologetic contexts, Paul's depiction of his opponents may not reflect their own self-understanding and self-description.²⁰ Third, although 2 Cor 10-13 contains a response to the false teachers, it may be the case that elements of their critique of Paul originated within the Corinthian community.²¹ Thus, these teachers may have been effective, at least in part, because they conformed to the Corinthians' expectations of leadership in a way in which Paul did not.²² Fourth, as suggested above, 2 Cor 1-9 and 10-13 reflect different stages in Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church; therefore, although they were probably written in close proximity to each other

¹³For a survey of various proposals, cf. Martin, "Opponents", 279-89; Sumney, *Opponents*, 15-63; Bieringer and Lambrecht, *Studies*, 181-221. A closely related issue concerns the identity of the "superior apostles" (οἱ ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι; 11:5; 12:11). Some distinguish the "super apostles" from the "false apostles" (οἱ ψευδαπόστολοι; 11:13) and argue that the former title refers to the leaders of the Palestinian church (e.g., Barrett, "Opponents", 233-54; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 342). However, this thesis adopts the view that the two titles describe the same individuals (cf. Barnett, "Opposition", 3-17; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 502-5).

¹⁴cf. Hickling, "Second Epistle", 287.

¹⁵For the problems in using "mirror-reading" to reconstruct the position of the author's opposition, cf. Barclay, "Mirror-Reading", 79-83; Berger, "Die impliziten Gegner", 375-76.

¹⁶Betz, *Apostel*, 72-74; cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 383; Savage, *Power Through Weakness*, 54.

¹⁷As stated above (cf. pp. 20, 48-49), in the Graeco-Roman world, self-praise was considered legitimate and appropriate in situations of self-defence; on 2 Cor 11:30, cf. below pp. 163-64.

¹⁸cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 50.

¹⁹Sumney, *Opponents*, 97-98; Furnish (*II Corinthians*, 50) includes the following as explicit references to the opponents in 2 Cor 10-13: 10:2, 7, 10-11, 12; 11:5-6, 12-15, 18-20, 21b-23a; 12:11.

²⁰cf. Sumney, *Opponents*, 111-112. Due to the polemical nature of 2 Corinthians, Berger ("Die impliziten Gegner," 385) argues that the "proud self-assurance" ("hohe Selbstbewußtsein"/καυχᾶσθαι) that Paul attributes to his opponents should not be taken at face value.

²¹cf. Savage, *Power Through Weakness*, 10-11. In this section, Paul does direct criticisms towards the Corinthian congregation (e.g., 11:3-4, 7-11; 12:14; 13:3).

²²cf. Barrett, "Opponents", 251.

chronologically, the material from these sections will be dealt with separately.²³ With these caveats in view, the following discussion will address the way Paul's self-presentation contributed to the accusations made against him in Corinth.

1. 2 Cor 10-13

a) Paul's Public Presence

In 2 Cor 10:1, Paul refers to himself as one who is "bold" (θαρρῶ) when absent (ἀπόν) but "humble" (ταπεινός) when present. Two points suggest that this refers to charges made against him. First, 10:2 refers to those who believe Paul is living according to "the standards of this world" (κατὰ σάρκα); Paul requests that he might not have to "be bold" (θαρρῆσαι) with these individuals when present (παρόν). Second, the polarity of presence and absence occurs again in 10:10-11,²⁴ which includes a quotation of criticism Paul attributes to his detractors; while his "letters are weighty and forceful," in person he is viewed as "unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing" (10:10). The use of ἄπειμι ("absent") and πάρειμι ("present") in 10:1-2 and 10:10-11 implies that the two contrasting depictions of Paul are related.

To some extent, this contrast between Paul's presentation when present and away involves at least a minor concession to Paul;²⁵ his detractors do acknowledge the effectiveness and potency of his letters. Consequently, the focus of his defence centres not on his written directives to the Corinthians but on his activity in their midst.²⁶ In the acknowledgement of Paul's impressive literary presence, what is the particular meaning of "weighty and forceful" (βαρεῖται καὶ ἰσχυραί; 10:10)? Betz argues that βαρύς and ἰσχυρός are technical rhetorical terms referring to a style associated with philosophers.²⁷ Similarly, Winter argues that "Paul's detractors are asserting that from a distance Paul can write impressive and persuasive letters" that reflect his rhetorical ability.²⁸ When associated with the reference to "boldness" in 10:1, 10:10 expresses the "persuasive force"²⁹ of Paul's letters that was apparently lacking in his personal presentation. Most likely, this allusion to Paul's correspondence refers to the "painful letter." This letter apparently included passionate exhortation instructing the Corinthians to take action against an opponent of Paul (cf. 2 Cor 2:5-11); while the letter may have caused them sorrow, it did achieve its intended result (2 Cor 7:8-11). However, while Paul exhibits commanding leadership at a distance, his critics claim that his activity in person lacks this type of boldness. They may have specifically contrasted his perceived inability, or perhaps unwillingness, to control the disorder surrounding his "painful visit" with the effectiveness of this subsequent letter.³⁰

In contrast to the strength of Paul's letters, his detractors berate his effectiveness in person--he is "humble" (ταπεινός; 10:1), "weak" (ἀσθενής; 10:10), and his words are

²³cf. Sumney, *Opponents*, 126; Barrett, "Opponents", 237.

²⁴Paul also returns to the absent/present theme in 13:2, 10.

²⁵Martin (2 *Corinthians*, 311) describes v. 10a as a "backhanded" compliment; cf. Betz, *Apostel*, 44-45.

²⁶Some (e.g., Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 475) argue that Paul is being criticised for writing "frightening" (ἐκφοβεῖν; 10:9) letters. However, Paul's assertion that he can be as bold in person as he is in his letters (10:2, 11) suggests that the point of contention is his perceived inadequate personal presentation.

²⁷Betz, "Rhetoric", 41.

²⁸Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 207.

²⁹Marshall, *Enmity*, 391.

³⁰cf. Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 476-77.

“unimpressive” (ἐξουθενημένος; 10:10). The reference to the weakness of Paul’s bodily presence (παρουσία τοῦ σώματος; 10:10) has generated a variety of interpretations.³¹ Several scholars suggest parallels between Paul’s self-presentation and Cynic traditions;³² thus, Paul’s “weak” appearance is consistent with those Cynics who rejected the importance of personal appearance (σχῆμα).³³ More generally, the association of Paul’s appearance with his speech in 10:10 may suggest that Paul’s presentation as a speaker is in view.³⁴ Regardless of the precise referent of this statement, the overall argument of 10:1-11 provides a general outline of the criticisms directed at Paul--his personal bearing is inconsistent with the authority and command that he exercises in his letters.

Similar to 10:10, 11:6 raises the issue of Paul’s speaking ability. Although some interpreters posit a break between vv. 5-6,³⁵ the εἰ δὲ καὶ at the beginning of v. 6 implies a close link with the preceding sentence.³⁶ Thus, having argued that he is not inferior to the “super apostles” (11:5),³⁷ Paul concedes that he may be an “amateur in speech” (ιδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ); however, he is not deficient in “knowledge” (γνώσει). One prominent view argues that Paul is being faulted for a lack of pneumatic power;³⁸ however, ιδιώτης was a standard term used to describe either one who lacked rhetorical training or one who did not practice rhetoric--a person who was a layman rather than a professional.³⁹ Since his opponents acknowledged the power of his writing, the focus of this criticism may be more on the manner of his delivery than its content. Barrett suggests that Paul may have had a speech impediment, which could have been the “thorn in the flesh” (12:7).⁴⁰ In the examination of 11:6, debate also emerges on the nature of Paul’s concession. Is this simply a statement full of rhetorical irony⁴¹ or does Paul actually concede a deficiency in this area?⁴² To some extent, the answer to this question depends on one’s understanding of Paul’s rhetorical training and ability.⁴³ Regardless of the nature of Paul’s concession, he does clearly stress that he is in no way inadequate in “knowledge.”

The negative evaluations of Paul’s speaking ability indicate that he had been assessed according to some type of rhetorical standards and expectations. As stated above,⁴⁴ the popular oratory of the first century often involved an arrogant and flamboyant style; furthermore, the popularity and power associated with sophistic practice generated ambition

³¹cf. Savage, *Power Through Weakness*, 64-65.

³²On this issue, cf. below pp. 172-73.

³³Betz, *Apostel*, 44-57; Malherbe, “Antisthenes”, 166-67.

³⁴cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 479; Winter (*Philo and Paul*, 211-13) states that 10:10 refers to Paul’s ὑπόκρισις (“rhetorical delivery”) as an orator and argues that Paul’s critics judged him a failure at extemporaneous rhetoric.

³⁵e.g., Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 278; cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 342.

³⁶Thrall, “Super-Apostles”, 45; cf. 1 Cor 7:10-11, 27-28.

³⁷cf. n13 above.

³⁸e.g., Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 204; Käsemann, “Legitimität,” 34-36; Georgi, *Opponents*, 235.

³⁹cf. Demetr. *Eloc.* 1.15; Isoc. *Antid.* 104, 201-4; Philo *Agr.* 143; Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 213-15.

⁴⁰Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 279.

⁴¹Judge, “Paul’s Boasting”, 37-38; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 48-49; cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 42.3.

⁴²Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 250.

⁴³For various evaluations of Paul’s rhetorical skill evident in his letters, cf. Norden, *Kunstprosa*, 2:492-502; Anderson, *Rhetorical Theory*, 249-56; Judge, “Boasting”, 37-48; Forbes, “Self-Praise”, 22-24.

⁴⁴cf. pp. 25-27.

and competition among its practitioners. In view of the resurgence of sophistry in the Hellenistic period,⁴⁵ a number of scholars have argued that this phenomenon provides a cultural backdrop for certain criticisms levelled at Paul.⁴⁶ Thus, within the Corinthian context, Paul has been found deficient in the rhetorical skills that characterised successful teachers and orators. Furthermore, the criticisms directed towards Paul were not made in isolation; rather, they were made in comparison with the actions and abilities of those opposing him (cf. 11:5; 12:11). Specifically, 11:5-6 suggests that his oratorical ability was deemed inferior to that of the rival teachers; moreover, Paul's statements about comparison in 10:12-18 suggest that these teachers had openly compared themselves to Paul. Rhetorically, this is consistent with the use of σύγκρισις ("comparison") as a tool of praise.⁴⁷ It also supports the view that Paul's opponents were influenced by sophistic practice, since competitive comparison was a hallmark of popular oratory.⁴⁸

In contrast to his rhetorical ability, however, Paul asserts that he has no deficiency in "knowledge" (γνώσει); furthermore, he has "manifested" (φανερῶσαντες) this knowledge in every way in their midst.⁴⁹ But what exactly does this knowledge entail? In the context of 2 Cor 10-13, Paul has already stated that he is waging war against every pretension opposed to the knowledge of God (10:5), and he has criticised his critics for their lack of understanding (10:12). In the immediate context of 11:1-6, Paul refers to the gospel that he has preached (11:4). Thus, γνώσει is often interpreted as referring to knowledge of God and the gospel⁵⁰ or more generally to spiritual insight.⁵¹ Grammatically, the ἢ of v. 7 suggests a plausible link with v. 6 that helps give clarity to γνώσει. In places where Paul uses ἢ to introduce rhetorical questions,⁵² the question is frequently related to Paul's previous statement.⁵³ If this is at work here, then Paul's willingness to preach the gospel free of charge (11:7) is a specific example of the knowledge to which Paul refers.⁵⁴ Thus, the knowledge he possesses involves his knowledge of the gospel, which has been demonstrated through his lifestyle and self-presentation.⁵⁵ The transition to v. 7 also introduces another criticism of Paul's ministry.

b) Financial Support

In two sections of 2 Cor 10-13 (11:5-12; 12:13-18) Paul makes reference to his refusal of financial support. In the first section, Paul asks if he has committed a "sin" (ἁμαρτίαν) by "humbling" (ταπεινῶν) himself and preaching the gospel without pay so that

⁴⁵Winter (*Philo and Paul*, 17-144) has provided extensive evidence that practices associated with the Second Sophistic (cf. above p. 26) were already present in the first century.

⁴⁶e.g., Munck, *Paul*, 150-54; Judge, "Boasting", 35-50; Witherington, *Conflict*, 348-50.

⁴⁷cf. above pp. 50-51.

⁴⁸cf. above pp. 26-27.

⁴⁹The final clause of the verse has no object for the participle (φανερῶσαντες). Some (e.g., Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 300; Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 280-81) would suggest that an "it" (αὐτήν), which refers back to γνώσει, should be supplied. Philip Hughes (*Second Epistle*, 382-83n44; cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 491) states that the understood object more broadly alludes to what Paul has just said; thus, "But *that in knowledge I am no ιδιότης* I made manifest to you..."

⁵⁰cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 343; Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 300.

⁵¹cf. Prümmer, *Diakonia*, 1:614; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 490.

⁵²cf. BAGD, 342.

⁵³cf. Rom 3:29; 1 Cor 9:10; 10:22; note also ἢ οὐκ οἶδατε: Rom 11:2; 1 Cor 6:9, 16, 19.

⁵⁴cf. Zmijewski, *Stil*, 124-25.

⁵⁵cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 506; Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 219.

the Corinthians might be “lifted up” (ὕψωθήτε; 11:7). Paul concludes this defence of his financial practices (11:12) by arguing that his approach is intended to undermine his opponents’ attempts to establish their equality with him. Subsequently, Paul describes his opponents as individuals who “devour” (κατεσθίει) and “take advantage” (λαμβάνει)⁵⁶ of the Corinthians (11:20); the use of these types of terms suggests that Paul’s opponents did receive financial support within the Corinthian context.⁵⁷ Coupled with these references to the activities of the opponents, v. 7 implies that Paul has been criticised for his financial affairs. Moreover, as with the issue of his public presence, criticisms concerning his financial affairs occur in comparison with the actions of his detractors.

Several factors may have contributed to criticisms of Paul in this area.⁵⁸ First, manual labour was viewed negatively within many segments of Graeco-Roman society. While positions of civic leadership were generally associated with individuals of financial means,⁵⁹ manual labour was associated with low social status and a servile disposition.⁶⁰ Apparently, Paul worked as a tentmaker to support himself in Corinth;⁶¹ however, among philosophers and itinerant teachers, manual labour was the least popular means of raising financial support.⁶² Thus, Paul’s reference to his work in terms of “self-humiliation” (ἐμναυτὸν ταπεινῶν) suggests an awareness that he had been demeaned for acting in such a manner.

Second, as with the charges concerning his public presence, Paul’s critics may have accused him of inconsistency regarding his financial practices. In 11:8-9 Paul acknowledges that he accepted support from other churches (cf. Phil 4:15-16), while declining such aid from Corinthian sources. Since he had previously argued that apostles have a right *not* to work (ἐξουσίαν μὴ ἐργάζεσθαι; 1 Cor 9:6)⁶³ and he permitted support from other churches, he was vulnerable to the complaint that he was inconsistent and erratic in regard to money. Perhaps his critics contended that, like the authoritative stance he exerted in his letters, he preferred to exercise his right of monetary support at a distance. In addition to accusations of inconsistency, Paul’s desire to maintain financial independence may have entailed the rejection of a relationship of patronage with the Corinthian congregation.⁶⁴ Such an act of rejection could have been viewed as evidence of one’s hostility toward the individual or group offering support.⁶⁵ Moreover, this situation could have been embarrassing for certain members of the Corinthian congregation, because Paul’s humble social status implied that they lacked the necessary means to support their apostle.⁶⁶ In view of the social implications

⁵⁶cf. BAGD, 464.

⁵⁷cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 512; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 532; Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 227.

⁵⁸cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 506-9.

⁵⁹cf. Judge, *Rank and Status*, 14-16.

⁶⁰cf. above pp. 44-46; Wengst, *Humility*, 5-8.

⁶¹cf. Hock, *Social Context*, 20-25; cf. Acts 18:3. Hock (*Social Context*, 36) notes that “a free man who took up a trade was viewed as having done something humiliating (ταπεινός)”; cf. Luc. *Somn.* 9, 13.

⁶²Hock, *Social Context*, 59; cf. Peterman, *Paul’s Gift*, 208-15. However, Hock does note examples of manual labour evident in certain “strict Cynics” (*Social Context*, 58; cf. Malherbe, “Antisthenes”, 168-69).

⁶³On 1 Cor 9, cf. below p. 120.

⁶⁴cf. Marshall, *Enmity*, 233-51; Hock, *Social Context*, 61-63; Chow, *Patronage*, 173-75; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 213-14; Witherington, *Conflict*, 414-19.

⁶⁵Marshall, *Enmity*, 246.

⁶⁶Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 215; Savage, *Power Through Weakness*, 87-88.

of Paul's actions, he could have been accused of lacking genuine concern and affection for the Corinthian believers. In response to these types of criticism, he affirms that his actions are consistent with his love for the church (11:11; 12:15).

After the "fool's discourse" (11:16-12:10), Paul returns to matters of financial support in 12:13-18. In 12:13 Paul again acknowledges that he has not accepted support from the Corinthian congregation. Since this statement follows Paul's description of the "signs of an apostle" (12:12), it may have been the case that his opponents considered acceptance of pay a sign of apostolic status.⁶⁷ Paul, however, does not view financial remuneration as an attestation to the legitimacy of one's ministry. In a statement loaded with irony,⁶⁸ Paul asked that he might be "forgiven" for not being a financial burden to the Corinthians (12:13).

In 12:14-18 Paul defends his actions in the supervision of the Jerusalem collection. Specifically, in 12:16 he ironically concedes that he has deceived the congregation through his craftiness; subsequently, he makes reference to the individuals he sent to collect money for those in need in Jerusalem (vv. 17-18). Quite possibly, Paul's opponents argued that he used the collection as a means to support himself. Thus, while he officially refused offers of patronage, he still received the benefits of financial assistance.⁶⁹ If this is the interpretation of Paul's opponents, then it would not be surprising for them to accuse Paul of deceit and duplicity.

c) Inconsistency and Imposture

Ultimately, the criticisms about Paul's public presence and his financial actions aroused questions about his character. Particularly the argument of 10:1-11 reveals that Paul has been accused of inconsistency. On the one hand, when he was away, he was bold and authoritative; he acted as one with authority and social standing. On the other hand, when he was present, he was humble, powerless and ineffective; these types of terms portray Paul as someone of low social status. Wengst notes that the use of *ταπεινός* in 10:1 reflects the association of humility with low social standing; it characterises Paul's appearance as "grovelling, servile, weak."⁷⁰ Marshall suggests that when the term *ἐξουθενέω* is used in reference to Paul's speaking ability ("it amounts to nothing"; 10:10), it also carries negative social nuances.⁷¹ Thus, while Paul is forceful at a distance, he is weak and humble in person. Apparently, his personal presence stood in sharp contrast to the bold and authoritative demeanour that was evident in his opponents (cf. 11:20-21). Criticisms about Paul's inconsistency may have included the financial area as well as the issue of his personal presence. It may have been argued that in his personal appearance he assumed the humble role of a manual labourer, but that from a distance he generated funds from the collection administered by his associates.

⁶⁷Sumney, *Opponents*, 166; cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 438.

⁶⁸On Paul's use of irony, cf. below p. 167.

⁶⁹cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 508; Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 324.

⁷⁰Wengst, *Humility*, 45.

⁷¹Marshall (*Enmity*, 385) notes that Paul uses a participial form of *ἐξουθενέω* ("despise, disdain", "reject with contempt"; BAGD, 277) as a sociological category in 1 Cor 1:28, where it occurs in conjunction with the status term *τὰ ἀγενῆ* (cf. 1 Cor 6:4; 16:11).

The depiction of Paul as inconsistent made him vulnerable to allegations of deceptive self-presentation.⁷² As stated above, various Graeco-Roman sources acknowledged that one's self-presentation could err either in boasting or in self-deprecation; each of these tendencies involved self-presentation that was untruthful--they both incorporated imposture.⁷³ In the descriptions of these standard character types, the "self-deprecator" (εἴρων) could be associated with the "flatterer" (κόλαξ). Characteristic of the "flattery" was inconsistent behaviour. Flatterers were chameleons who adapted themselves to the desires and preferences of others (cf. Plut. *Mor.* 52B, 53A); they acted in a servile and self-debasing manner.⁷⁴ Because their actions changed as their circumstances changed, they could not be trusted. In evaluating the argument of 2 Cor 10-12, Forbes suggests that Paul was accused of being a flatterer and self-deprecator.⁷⁵

Along similar lines, it is plausible that Paul was also characterised as a "boaster" (ἀλαζών).⁷⁶ If Paul were merely a flatterer who adapted himself to his environment, then the authoritative self-presentation of his letters must be fraudulent. Betz observes that "[t]he apparent inconsistency between Paul's letter-writing and his appearance causes suspicion also against his writing."⁷⁷ Consequently, Betz concludes that Paul was accused of being an "impostor."⁷⁸ Imposture was the defining element of ἀλαζονεία; the ἀλαζών was one who made exaggerated claims about possessions or abilities.⁷⁹ Particularly if Paul's opponents were skilled in rhetoric, allegations of ἀλαζονεία would not be unexpected; the ἀλαζών was a standard stereotype discussed in rhetorical education (cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4.51.63-65), and it could be a powerful image used in criticising one's opponent.

Support for the view that Paul was depicted as an ἀλαζών is found in two early commentators on 2 Corinthians. In paraphrasing 10:10, Theodoret of Cyrillus (c. 393-460) states that Paul was described as "speaking boastfully" (μεγαλοῤῥημονεῖ) when absent but mild and uneducated when present (*PG* 82.436). Similarly, John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) argues that Paul has been charged with ἀλαζονεία. Although living several centuries after Paul, Chrysostom was both a student and gifted practitioner of oratory, who was alert to the types of rhetorical factors that might have influenced Paul's self-presentation. In commenting on the accusation against Paul evident in 10:1, he states: "For they said this, that 'when he is present indeed, he is worthy of no account, but poor and contemptible; but when absent, swells [φυσᾶται], and brags [κομπάζει], and sets himself up against us, and threatens'" (*Hom. on 2 Cor.* 21.1; *PG* 61.542).⁸⁰ Similarly, in explaining the reference to Paul acting "according to the flesh" (κατὰ σάρκα; 10:2), he notes that "they accused him as a hypocrite [ὑποκριτήν], as wicked [πονηρόν], as a boaster [ἀλαζόνα]" (*Hom. on 2 Cor.* 21.2;

⁷²On the importance of consistency between one's speech and actions in Graeco-Roman sources, cf. Merritt, *Word and Deed*, 9-109.

⁷³cf. above pp. 39-42.

⁷⁴cf. Marshall, *Enmity*, 73-78

⁷⁵Forbes, "Self-Praise", 16.

⁷⁶pace Sumney, *Opponents*, 151.

⁷⁷Betz, "Apology", 5.

⁷⁸ibid. Betz (*Apostel*, 33, 41, 132) uses the term γόης ("swindler, cheat"; BAGD, 164), which he notes is a synonym for ἀλαζών.

⁷⁹cf. above p. 39.

⁸⁰Translations of John Chrysostom are from *NPNF*, vol. 12.

PG 61.543). Thus, when Paul says he will boast and “not be ashamed of it” (10:8), he means “I shall not be proved a liar or a boaster [ἀλαζονεύομενος]” (*Hom. on 2 Cor.* 22.1; PG 61.548). Rather, Paul argues that it is his opponents who are actually the “boasters” in the Corinthian congregation (*Hom. on 2 Cor.* 22.2).

Although the charges of flattery and boasting are not stated explicitly in the text, the portrayal of Paul’s self-presentation as variable and unstable is consistent with these standard character types. Thus, it is plausible that the concerns about Paul’s financial dealings and his lowly public demeanour were accompanied by accusations about the integrity of his character and the truthfulness of his self-presentation.

2. Earlier Evidence from the Corinthian Correspondence

a) 2 Cor 1-9

While 2 Cor 10-13 appears to reflect a period of heightened opposition to Paul in the Corinthian congregation,⁸¹ chapters 1-9 also suggest the presence of antagonism toward Paul. At several places, Paul makes explicit statements in reference to opponents in Corinth (cf. 2:17; 3:1; 5:12). These individuals have presented “letters of recommendation” (3:1); furthermore, their boastful self-presentation has included criticisms of Paul’s credentials of leadership (cf. 5:12-13). Moreover, they have apparently “peddled” (καπηλεύειν) the word of God for profit (2:17).⁸² These various elements are consistent with the portrayal of Paul’s opponents in chapters 10-13.⁸³ These similarities support the view that chapters 1-9 and 10-13 refer to the same group of opponents;⁸⁴ thus, the opponents of chapters 10-13 were already present in the Corinthian context when chapters 1-9 were written.

Various statements in chapters 1-9 suggest that Paul is responding to criticism; as with chapters 10-13, the complaints against Paul focus on his character and ministry. For instance, the body of the letter (1:12) opens with Paul’s “boast” (καύχησις) in the rectitude of his ministry; he has not conducted his affairs according to “worldly wisdom” (σοφία σαρκικῆ; 1:13).⁸⁵ In the context of his self-defence in 1:12-2:13, Paul’s “boast” precedes a discussion of the changes he had previously made in his travel plans (1:15-17). Paul responds with an emphasis on the faithfulness of God as the theological basis for his own integrity (1:18-22); God is “faithful” (1:18) and is the one who makes Paul faithful in Christ. At 1:23, Paul returns to the subject of his altered itinerary; he argues that after his “painful visit” (2:1), he did not visit the church in person in order to spare the Corinthians added sadness (1:23). Furthermore, Paul explains his motivation and purpose in writing the “sorrowful” letter (2:3-11). Paul’s defence of his actions suggests that he has been charged with being inconsistent and unreliable;⁸⁶ against these concerns, Paul contends that he has conducted himself in “uprightness” (ἀπλότητι)⁸⁷ and “sincerity” (εἰλικρινεία; 1:12).

⁸¹cf. above p. 108.

⁸²Noting the use of καπηλεύειν in criticisms of sophistic rhetoric, Scott Hafemann (*Suffering*, 124-25, 163) concludes that in this context καπηλεύειν implies a negative critique of the “selling” of one’s teaching; he also notes that this criticism “anticipates Paul’s criticism of his opponents in II Cor. 11 and 12.”

⁸³cf. 10:12-18; 11:18, 20; 12:11-12.

⁸⁴cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 51; Sumney, *Opponents*, 183; cf. also, Georgi, *Opponents*, 229-30.

⁸⁵Bultmann (*Second Letter*, 34) defines σοφία σαρκικῆ as “the ‘wisdom’ of egoism”; cf. the use of κατὰ σάρκα at 1:17; 10:2.

⁸⁶Sumney (*Opponents*, 131-32) argues that 1:12 and 1:17 contain allusions to the charges against Paul made by his opponents; Marshall (*Enmity*, 318-20) states that the reference to Paul as one who says both “yes” and “no” (1:17) is consistent with the standard portrayal of the flatterer (cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 135).

⁸⁷BAGD, 85. Some (e.g., Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 130-33) prefer the reading ἀγιότητι, which does have signifi-

In 2 Cor 1-7, references to commendation⁸⁸ and boasting⁸⁹ underscore the tension between Paul and his opponents; central in this discussion is Paul's desire to authenticate the trustworthy nature of his leadership.⁹⁰ At various points in this section, Paul denies that he has acted in an inappropriate manner. Several of these passages combine self-commendation with denials concerning unprincipled ministerial practice;⁹¹ in 2 Cor 1-7, these passages provide the strongest evidence of accusations that have been levelled against Paul in the Corinthian context. For example, in 4:2 he denies that his missionary activities have involved "secret and shameful ways"; he has not used "deception" (πανουργία; cf. 11:3) or engaged in "distorting" (δολοῦντες)⁹² the word of God. As with 2:17, Paul's repudiation of allegations of misconduct is followed by the assertion that he has acted appropriately "before God".⁹³ Similarly, in 6:3 Paul claims that his behaviour has not discredited his ministry; rather, through his actions he has "commended" (συνιστάνοντες) himself as a minister of God (6:4). This statement is followed by a *peristasis* catalogue (6:4-10);⁹⁴ throughout 2 Corinthians, Paul refers to his hardships and sufferings as evidence of the character and veracity of his ministry (cf. 4:7-9; 11:23-29; 12:10).

The highly structured nature of this list⁹⁵ does not inhibit the likelihood that it has an apologetic objective.⁹⁶ Although this material is stylised, it does suggest Paul's awareness of criticisms addressed against him. Thus, in the fourth stanza (6:8b-10), Paul argues that while he is "truthful" (ἀληθεῖς), he has been perceived as being "deceitful" (πλάνοι).⁹⁷ He denies that he has acted in a deceptive manner (cf. 4:2, 7:2), and asserts his integrity in response to those who view him with suspicion and distrust. In vv. 8b-10, he also depicts ways in which his self-presentation may have been viewed as weak and inadequate.⁹⁸ Similarly, Fitzgerald describes the final triad of v. 5⁹⁹ as "Paul's *occupational hardships*"; in view of his

cant external support; for a defence of ἀπλότητι as the preferred reading, cf. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 507.

⁸⁸συνίστημι: 3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4.

⁸⁹καυχάομαι: 5:12; καύχημα: 1:14; 5:12; καύχησις: 1:12; 7:4; 7:14.

⁹⁰Karl Kleinknecht (*Der leidende Gerechtfertigte*, 268) describes 2:16b (καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τις ἰκανός;) as the "Themenfrage" of Paul's apology.

⁹¹1:12; 2:17-3:1; 4:2; 5:12-13; 6:3-4; cf. Belleville, "Self-Commendation", 153; Sumney, *Opponents*, 127-38.

⁹²Similar terminology occurs in 12:16 when Paul sarcastically states: "[y]et, crafty [πανουργός] fellow that I am, I caught you by trickery [δόλω]!" In view of this lexical link with 12:16, Barnett (*Second Epistle*, 213n17) suggests that 4:2 may refer to Paul's "guile" in not receiving direct payment for his ministry (11:7-9), while also raising money through his envoys (12:16-18; cf. above p. 115).

⁹³κατέναντι θεοῦ, 2:17; ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ, 4:2.

⁹⁴on the nature of *peristasis* catalogues, cf. Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, 33-46; Hodgson, "Paul", 59-80; Ebner, *Leidenslisten, passim*.

⁹⁵The passage consists of four stanzas (4b-5; 6-7a; 7b-8a; 8b-10; cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 161-64; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 453-54). Both Jewish and Stoic parallels have been suggested for this section (cf. Kleinknecht, *Der leidende Gerechtfertigte*, 263-68; Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, 184-201).

⁹⁶cf. Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 163; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 160; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 357.

⁹⁷Taking πλάνος as an adjective rather than a substantive, cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 464n1931. Marshall (*Enmity*, 322) interprets this passage in terms of accusations of flattery.

⁹⁸v. 9: ἀγνοούμενοι ("unknown"), ἀποθήσκοντες, ("dying"), παιδεύόμενοι ("chastened"); v. 10: λυπούμενοι ("sorrowing"); πτωχοί ("poor").

⁹⁹"ἐν κόποις, ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις, ἐν νηστεύαις" ("in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger"); the same terms occur in 11:27.

unwillingness to accept support, Paul has experienced toil, hunger and a lack of sleep.¹⁰⁰ Nonetheless, his lack of social standing did not invalidate his activity. As with 4:7-12, Paul argues that the hardships and difficulties he has encountered actually serve as credentials that underscore the integrity of his ministry. Consequently, Paul asserts that the criteria by which his critics have evaluated him are false. Likewise, in 5:12, Paul implies that his critics have judged him by inappropriate standards; he describes them as “those who boast” (καυχωμένους) in “external things” (πρόσωπο)¹⁰¹ rather than “what is in the heart.” In contrast to the actions of these individuals, Paul will not evaluate others based on popular standards of status (κατὰ σάρκα; 5:16).¹⁰²

b) 1 Cor 4, 9

In addition to the evidence in 2 Corinthians, parts of 1 Corinthians also reflect criticism of Paul’s self-presentation in Corinth. In 1:10, Paul introduces the problem of factionalism (σχίσμα) within the Corinthian congregation; this theme is central to 1:10-4:21. In his response to the church’s problems, Paul makes reference to his own ministry in 4:1-18. Although some argue that these comments are hortatory rather than defensive,¹⁰³ Paul’s statements about being judged by the Corinthians (4:1-5; cf. 2:14-16) suggest that an apologetic element may also be in view.¹⁰⁴

In 4:18, Paul acknowledges that “some” (τινες) within the congregation have become “arrogant” (ἐφουσιώθησαν); most likely, these are those to whom Paul’s defence of his ministry is particularly addressed.¹⁰⁵ Throughout 1 Cor 1-4, Paul contrasts prevalent Hellenistic standards and values with those of God;¹⁰⁶ in doing so, he stresses God’s association with those lacking social standing (cf. 1:18-31). This discussion of God’s evaluation of popular norms of social rank follows a section concerning division within the church (1:10-17). Gerd Theissen argues that the leaders of the various parties within the Corinthian congregation were individuals of social prominence;¹⁰⁷ noting the transition in chapter one from vv. 10-17 to vv. 18-31, he concludes that the competitive pursuit of position within the church has resulted in *schismata*. Against this backdrop of competitive arrogance (cf. 3:3, 21; 4:7, 18-19), Paul’s lowly self-presentation was vulnerable to criticism. Thus, Marshall notes that the contrasts between notions of honour and shame present in these chapters refer primarily to social status “and indicate the attitudes and behaviour of certain upper class Christians toward Paul and toward Corinthians of lowly status.”¹⁰⁸

In 4:8-13, Paul contrasts his activity with prevalent values of wealth, power and status. The Corinthians are described as those who are satisfied, rich and living as kings

¹⁰⁰Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, 193.

¹⁰¹BAGD, 721.

¹⁰²On this adverbial understanding of κατὰ σάρκα in 5:16, cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 412-15; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 312-13; Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 122-23.

¹⁰³e.g., Mitchell, *Paul*, 55; Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 52.

¹⁰⁴Dahl, “I Corinthians I-4”, 313-35; Fee, *First Epistle*, 158-64; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 318, 331; cf. Berger, *Formgeschichte*, 361.

¹⁰⁵Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 121.

¹⁰⁶cf. the references cited in Clarke, *Leadership*, 102-3.

¹⁰⁷Theissen, *Social Setting*, 55-57; cf. Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 64-68; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 115-16; on the social composition of the Corinthian church, cf. below pp. 124-27.

¹⁰⁸Marshall, *Enmity*, 181.

(4:8); they are “wise” (φρόνιμοι), “strong” (ἰσχυροί) and “honoured” (ἔνδοξοι; 4:10).¹⁰⁹ By contrast, Paul depicts himself as “foolish” (μωροί), “weak” (ἀσθενεῖς) and “dishonoured” (ἄτιμοι; 4:10). To some extent, this self-portrait parallels his argument that God has chosen the “foolish” (μωρά),¹¹⁰ the “weak” (ἀσθενῆ) and those who are “insignificant” and despised (1:28). In this self-portrait, Paul utilises terms that underscore a lack of honour and social status.¹¹¹ Consistent with this sketch of Paul’s unimpressive self-presentation is his description of his preaching ministry. He did not come to the Corinthians with powerful eloquence (2:4; cf. 1:17);¹¹² rather, he came to the Corinthians in “weakness” (ἀσθενεία), “fear and much trembling” (φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ; 2:3). Thus, as with his self-presentation in general, his public proclamation was consistent with a lack of social standing.¹¹³

A list of hardships (4:11-12) follows Paul’s comparison of himself to the Corinthians in chapter four. Included in this list is a reference to manual labour (4:12). Noting that this reference seems different from the other “hardships” mentioned, Fee states that the other difficulties (e.g., hunger) may be partly related to Paul’s refusal of support and are thus associated with the issue of manual labour.¹¹⁴ Coupled with other terms of low social status, Paul’s engagement in manual labour stood in conflict with the arrogant self-presentation of some within the Corinthian community.

In 1 Cor 9-11, Paul addresses the issue of idol food. In warning the Corinthians that their “right” (ἐξουσία) to eat this food might become a hindrance to the “weak”, Paul discusses his own willingness to surrender his rights (cf. 9:12) for the sake of the gospel.¹¹⁵ As with 4:8-13, some scholars argue that Paul’s autobiographical comments in 1 Cor 9 function specifically as an example for the Corinthians to emulate;¹¹⁶ others argue that this text is Paul’s defence against specific charges.¹¹⁷ Most likely, both elements are present in this passage.¹¹⁸ On the one hand, this autobiographical section has a paradigmatic function within a larger literary unit (8:1-11:1); Paul’s willingness to forgo his right to support in service of the gospel provides a model for others to follow (cf. 11:1). On the other hand, Paul is aware that his humble self-presentation has been criticised by others; thus, he states:

¹⁰⁹The triad of σοφοί, δυνατοί and εὐγενεῖς occurs in 1:26; Munck (*Paul and the Salvation*, 162n2) provides evidence of the association of these themes of status with the sophistic movement. Similarly, Winter (*Philo and Paul*, 198) notes parallels between Paul’s depiction of the Corinthians in 4:10 and Philo’s description of sophists in *Det.* 33-34 (cf. above p. 97). Concerning 1 Cor 4:7-13, Fitzgerald, (*Cracks*, 132-48) concludes that Paul uses language associated with the Stoic sage in an ironic depiction of the Corinthians as *sophoi*; by contrast, Paul’s self-description reflects Hellenistic traditions concerning the suffering “sage”.

¹¹⁰for the foolish/wise contrast, cf. 1:18-31; 3:18-21.

¹¹¹cf. Marshall, *Enmity*, 210; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 200-4; Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, 132-44; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 208-11; Sängler, “1 Kor 1,26”, 285-91.

¹¹²Winter (*Philo and Paul*, 155-62) argues that 2:1-5 contrasts Paul’s behaviour with sophistic conventions; cf. Litfin, *Proclamation*, 204-9.

¹¹³Plutarch (*Mor.* 485A) expresses that view that “weakness of speech” (ἀσθενῆ περὶ λόγον) is a defining element of those lacking social status; he also states that these individuals are “dishonoured” (ἄτιμον) and “unlearned” (ἀμαθῆ).

¹¹⁴Fee, *First Epistle*, 179n72.

¹¹⁵On the relationship of 1 Cor 9 to the argument of 1 Cor 8-11, cf. Gardner, *Gifts*, 69-72; Gooch, *Dangerous Food*, 49-51; Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 314-16.

¹¹⁶e.g., Mitchell, *Paul*, 243-46; Gardner, *Gifts*, 76; Willis, “Apostolic Apologia?”, 33-48.

¹¹⁷e.g., Fee, *First Epistle*, 393; Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 163.

¹¹⁸cf. Hock, *Social Context*, 60-61; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 204-5; Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 316-22.

“[t]his is my defence [ἀπολογία] to those who sit in judgment [ἀνακρίνουσιν]¹¹⁹ of me” (v. 3).

Having established his “right” (ἐξουσία; 9:4, 5, 6, 12)¹²⁰ to financial support (9:1-14), Paul explains that he has not exercised this prerogative (9:15-23). Rather, he has preached the gospel without charge (9:15) in order to avoid causing a “hindrance” (ἐγκοπὴν) to the gospel message (9:12). In describing his actions, Paul argues that he has relinquished these rights because he is a slave of Christ (9:16-18).¹²¹ Moreover, in his refusal of support and his engagement in manual labour, he has engaged in social humiliation (cf. 2 Cor 11:7); while he is “free” (ἐλεύθερος; 9:1, 19), he has made himself a slave (ἐδούλωσα) to all (9:19). Ultimately, he has experienced “weakness” in order to “win the weak” (9:22). As stated above,¹²² Paul’s refusal to accept support and his commitment to manual labour made him susceptible to criticism. His approach to financial matters involved a humble and demeaning self-presentation deemed inappropriate by some in the Corinthian congregation.

3. The Charges Against Paul and the Social Constituency of the Corinthian Church

An understanding of the charges levelled at Paul in Corinth can be enhanced by evaluating the social constituency of the Corinthian church. Concerning the ethnic and religious background of the congregation, the Corinthian letters suggest that the church included Gentiles as well as Jews. On the one hand, references to the audience’s pagan background imply that the church was predominately Gentile in composition.¹²³ After surveying various problems in the church, Engels concludes that “[t]he Corinthian church, perhaps to a greater extent than Paul’s other foundations, was a gentile church, and its members retained their traditional values even after they were converted.”¹²⁴ On the other hand, certain texts suggest the presence of at least some Jewish converts within the church. For instance, Paul makes reference to circumcised believers at 1 Cor 7:18; moreover, his reference to experiencing synagogue floggings (2 Cor 11:24; cf. Deut 25:1-3) lends credence to the importance of synagogue preaching found in Acts (cf. Acts 18:4).¹²⁵ Similarly, according to Luke’s account of Paul’s Corinthian ministry, Crispus, a synagogue leader (ἀρχισυνάγωγος), converted to Christianity along with his household (18:8; cf. 1 Cor 1:14). Luke also notes Paul’s Corinthian association with Aquila and Priscilla, Jews who had left Rome because of the expulsion ordered by Claudius in A.D. 49/50 (18:2-3; cf. 1 Cor 16:19).¹²⁶ Thus, the Corinthian congregation was not composed exclusively of Gentiles.

¹¹⁹cf. ἀνακρίνω in 4:3.

¹²⁰9:6 refers to a “right not to work”; thus, Paul’s apostolic “right” of support includes freedom from manual labour.

¹²¹The contrast between ἐκὼν (“willingly”) and ἄκων (“not of one’s freewill”) as well as references to οἰκονομίαν (“stewardship”; 4:17) and ἀνάγκη (“necessity”) implies that the image of a slave is in view (cf. Fee, *First Epistle*, 419n32).

¹²²cf. pp. 115-17.

¹²³cf. 1 Cor 12:2; 6:10-11; 8:7; Fee, *First Epistle*, 4; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, xxix.

¹²⁴Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 110; he refers specifically to the themes of individualism, sexual laxity, and the independence of women. Other issues such as participation in idol feasts (1 Cor 10) also provide evidence of converts from a pagan background (cf. Witherington, *Conflict*, 28).

¹²⁵cf. Stowers, “Social Status”, 64-65.

¹²⁶James Wiseman (“Corinth”, 503) suggests that it is likely that many Jews went to Corinth after Claudius’ edict because of its commercial success and the presence of an established Jewish community; cf. Murphy-O’Connor, *Corinth*, 77-80.

Just as the church was diverse in terms of religious and ethnic background, the social status of its constituents was also varied. While Adolf Deissmann's view that the early Christian movement was a product of the "lower class (Matt. xi. 25f; 1 Cor. i. 26-31)"¹²⁷ has been influential,¹²⁸ Abraham Malherbe describes a "new consensus" emerging in recent scholarship "that the social status of early Christians may be higher than Deissmann had supposed."¹²⁹ Several arguments indicate that some individuals of prominent social status¹³⁰ were part of the Corinthian congregation.¹³¹ First, Paul's assertion that "not many" (οὐ πολλοί) of the church were wise, powerful or of noble birth (1 Cor 1:26) suggests that at least some from these categories¹³² were included in the congregation. Second, references to specific individuals and their households may imply a high social standing among certain Corinthian converts.¹³³ For instance, Paul's reference to the Corinthian believers meeting in Gaius' house (Rom 16:23; cf. 1 Cor 1:14) may suggest that Gaius had a large home; if that were the case, then Gaius would have been a wealthy individual.¹³⁴ Similarly, Theissen notes that Paul's "household" language can imply the presence of slaves (cf. Phil 4:22) and suggests that Stephanas' household may have included slaves (1 Cor 1:16; 16:15).¹³⁵ Third, Paul's reference to Erastus as "ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως" (Rom 16:23) may suggest that this individual was a prominent member of the Corinthian community. The exact nature of this title is debated. However, due to the relative rarity of the cognomen "Erastus", the possibility exists that this individual is the same Erastus described in a pavement inscription as one who became an aedile, or magistrate, of the city.¹³⁶ Fourth, other passages in the Corinthian correspondence imply the presence of those with higher social status. For example, the obstacles to the process of litigation suggest that the parties described in 1 Cor 6:1-6 were individuals of wealth and status.¹³⁷ Likewise, as Paul describes some who feasted at the Lord's Supper and "humiliated" (καταισχύνετε) others who were impoverished (τοὺς μὴ ἔχοντας; 1 Cor 11:22), he is most likely depicting individuals of financial means.¹³⁸

At the same time, the Corinthian letters also underscore the reality that many in the congregation were in the lower echelons of society.¹³⁹ Apparently, some converts were

¹²⁷Deissmann, *Light*, 144.

¹²⁸cf. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 31-35.

¹²⁹ibid., 31. However, this "new consensus" is not without its critics, cf. Meggitt, *Paul*, 100-54; Schöllgen, "die Sozialstruktur", 71-82; cf. also Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 70, 114-16.

¹³⁰Judge (*Rank and Status*, 9, 16) defines "status" as "positions of influence that may not correspond to the official pattern of the social order" (i.e., "rank"); important factors contributing to one's status include one's family, wealth, and education. Wayne Meeks (*Urban Christians*, 54) argues that social stratification concerns "multidimensional phenomena" involving such variables as power, wealth, occupational prestige, educations, etc.; "[t]he generalized status of a person is a composite of his or her ranks in all the relevant dimensions."

¹³¹cf. Gill, "Social Élite", 323-37.

¹³²For the sociological nature of these terms, cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 70-73; Clarke, *Leadership*, 41-45; cf. also n109 above.

¹³³cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 83-87; Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 55-63; Chow, *Patronage*, 88-93.

¹³⁴Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 57; Chow, *Patronage*, 90.

¹³⁵Theissen, *Social Setting*, 87.

¹³⁶cf. Clarke, *Leadership*, 46-56; Gill, "Erastus", 293-300; Theissen, *Social Setting*, 83; against this view cf. Meggitt, *Paul*, 135-41.

¹³⁷cf. Clarke, *Leadership*, 59-69; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 109-12.

¹³⁸cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 145-74.

¹³⁹cf. Meggitt, *Paul*, 97-100.

slaves (1 Cor 7:21-23), and the problems surrounding the Lord's Supper imply the presence of those who were poor and lacking social status (1 Cor 11). Similarly, Theissen argues that the individuals from Chloe's household (1 Cor 1:11) were probably not family members but "slaves or dependent workers."¹⁴⁰ Thus, while the evidence needed to provide a detailed sketch of the social constituency of the Corinthian church is lacking, the available information reveals a mixed congregation. "The majority of the members, who come from the lower classes, stand in contrast to a few influential members who come from the upper classes."¹⁴¹

In some ways, the social stratification of the church provides a backdrop for understanding the charges that have arisen against Paul. Specifically, some of the elite within the church may have been a major source of these criticisms. The presence of socially prominent members meant that the church included individuals who could function in a patronal capacity.¹⁴² For example, these individuals could also serve as patrons to travelling teachers such as Paul. Private homes were popular places for philosophers and rhetoricians to hold their classes;¹⁴³ and entering into the household of a patron was a common way for such teachers to gain material support.¹⁴⁴ Thus, for Paul, an invitation to teach in someone's house could "give his preaching activity a kind of stability and security which the explosive situation of the synagogue or the competition of public speaking could not offer."¹⁴⁵ As stated above,¹⁴⁶ the financial support that Paul declined may have involved an offer of patronage from a wealthy individual or group within the church. However, in refusing such an offer, Paul made himself vulnerable to enmity and criticism. In fact, Marshall argues that the false teachers who arrived in Corinth aligned themselves with those whom Paul had offended.¹⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, Paul's self-defence in 1 Cor 4 and 9 seems to be particularly directed toward individuals of significant status within the church.¹⁴⁸

More generally, the criticisms made against Paul are related to matters of social standing and reflect the humble status of Paul's lifestyle and self-presentation. They are the types of charges that those of high social standing might level against those of a lower station in life. For instance, in engaging in manual labour, Paul supported himself in a way that was viewed negatively by the social elite.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, Paul's humble demeanour and

¹⁴⁰Theissen, *Social Setting*, 93.

¹⁴¹ibid., 69; Meeks (*Urban Christians*, 73) concludes that Malherbe's 'emerging consensus' seems to be valid in that "a Pauline congregation generally reflected a fair cross-section of urban society."

¹⁴²For instance, in Rom 16:2, Paul describes Phoebe, who lived in Corinth's port city of Cenchrea, as a *προστάτις*; this term most likely means "patroness"; cf. Horsley, *New Documents 4*, 242-44; Whelan, "Amica Pauli", 67-85. Chow (*Patronage*, 110, cf. 68-75) suggests that "through letting the church meet in his house, a householder functioned as a patron to that church."

¹⁴³cf. Stowers, "Social Status", 66-68.

¹⁴⁴cf. Hock, *Social Context*, 53-55.

¹⁴⁵Stowers, "Social Status", 66.

¹⁴⁶cf. p. 114.

¹⁴⁷ibid., 276-77; cf. Forbes, "Self-Praise", 15.

¹⁴⁸cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 54-57; Martin, *Slavery*, 122-23; Chow, *Patronage*, 172-73. Concerning 1 Cor 4 and 9, Horrell (*Social Ethos*, 209) notes that "[t]he (only) two clear calls to imitation in 1 Corinthians [4:16; 11:1] follow these two passages, each of which is directed particularly to the socially strong in the community and in which Paul speaks of his own social self-lowering and renunciation of privileges."

¹⁴⁹cf. above p. 114.

unimpressive rhetorical presentation indicated low social status. Formal rhetorical education usually began after work with the *grammaticus* had ended,¹⁵⁰ consequently, rhetorical skill was associated with high social standing.¹⁵¹ Similarly, charges that Paul was a flatterer and boaster may have had a status component; flattery was associated with a servile state,¹⁵² and the common perception of a “boaster” frequently comprised an individual who made fraudulent claims on the prerogatives of high social status and achievement.¹⁵³

The status dimension of these charges underscores the likelihood that they originated among those within the congregation who were “wise”, “powerful”, and “of noble birth” (1 Cor 1:26). However, would these individuals have been the only ones to make such accusations? Concerning 2 Cor 10-13, is Paul’s defence directed specifically to those of privilege within the church? On the issue of finances and manual labour, several authors suggest that those of lower social status would not have viewed Paul’s position negatively. Both Savage and Martin note extensive inscriptional evidence that reveals individuals of lower status who took pride in their work.¹⁵⁴ However, the fact that some manual labourers valued their work does not eliminate the possibility that they would have disapproved of teachers and philosophers who engaged in such activity.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, for those in the congregation who were dependents in the households of the church’s wealthy patrons,¹⁵⁶ certain pressure would exist to endorse the positions of one’s patron.¹⁵⁷ More generally, Paul’s depiction of the Corinthian congregation in 2 Corinthians does not reveal the internal factionalism that is present in 1 Corinthians. The tension that is evident concerns the competition between Paul and his opponents for the congregation’s allegiance.¹⁵⁸ In addressing the church in 2 Cor 10-13, Paul’s comments do not indicate that the acceptance of his opponents has been limited to a particular group (cf. 2 Cor 11:4, 19-20).¹⁵⁹ Consequently, it is quite possible that by the writing of 2 Cor 10-13, criticisms of Paul were present at various levels of social standing within the church.

In summary, within the context of 2 Cor 10-13, several charges made against Paul are apparent. He has been accused of an inadequate public presentation; his refusal of financial support has been criticised, and the consistency of his character has been questioned. In different ways, these charges reflect Paul’s humble self-presentation. Particularly to some of

¹⁵⁰cf. *OCD*, 508-10; Quint. *Inst.* 2.4.1-3.

¹⁵¹Noting that “Greco-Roman education was rhetorical education”, Martin (*Corinthian Body*, 50) concludes that “some rhetorical ability and education was necessary for any man who aspired to respectability”; cf. Gleason, *Making Men*, xxi-xxiv; Judge, “Boasting”, 44; cf. also n13 above.

¹⁵²cf. Aris. *EN* 4.3.29; Luc. *Apol.* 9; Marshall, *Enmity*, 73-78.

¹⁵³cf. above pp. 39-40.

¹⁵⁴cf. Savage, *Power Through Weakness*, 84-88; Martin, *Slavery*, 45-48; cf. also Reden, “Arbeit”, 967.

¹⁵⁵cf. Gardner, *Gifts*, 83; Savage does argue that the Corinthians might have rejected the idea of a leader who was humble and impoverished.

¹⁵⁶Judge (*Social Pattern*, 60) argues that the early Christian communities would have “drawn on a broad constituency, probably representing the household dependents of the leading members”.

¹⁵⁷For example, most likely, the incestuous man of 1 Cor 5:1 was a prominent member of the congregation (cf. Chow, *Patronage*, 130-41). Concerning the church’s lack of response to this situation, Clarke (*Leadership*, 87) states that it may not have been “expedient to risk damaging the high status of someone in the community of such standing, maybe a benefactor.”

¹⁵⁸cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 57.

¹⁵⁹By contrast, note Paul’s reference to “some” (τινες) in 1 Cor 4:18; cf. above p. 119.

high social standing, he has been viewed as inadequate for leadership. By contrast, his opponents have acted in a manner that reflected a high degree of status. In satisfying popular expectations of leadership, they have gained a following within the Corinthian church and undermined Paul's authority. In reply to this situation, Paul pens 2 Cor 10-13, and it is to the themes of boasting and self-presentation in this response that we must now turn our attention.

IV. THE PRACTICE AND EVALUATION OF BOASTING IN 2 COR 10-13

Chapters 10-13 of 2 Corinthians are written in response to a situation in which Paul's character and credibility as a minister have been questioned within the Corinthian context. In the rivalry between Paul and certain false teachers for leadership and authority within the Corinthian congregation, self-praise and self-presentation are important factors at work. Not only are the themes of boasting and appropriate self-presentation integral to the charges that have been levelled against Paul, but these topics are also pivotal in his response to these charges. For example, in making his defence, he utilises Jeremiah's assessment (Jer 9:22-23) of appropriate boasting (2 Cor 10:17). On a lexical level, the prominence of the issue of boasting is evident in the recurrent use of terms for boasting and self-commendation.¹

In evaluating the issue of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13, divergent evidence emerges. On the one hand, Paul does admit to "boasting" in his authority (10:8; cf. 11:10). Similarly, his denials of boasting "beyond measure" (οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα; 10:13, 15) suggest that boasting may be legitimate under certain conditions. Furthermore, he does refer positively to boasting in the Lord (10:17) and boasting in "weakness" (ἀσθένεια).² On the other hand, he describes his boasting in the so-called "fool's discourse" (11:21b-12:10)³ as irrational activity (11:23) that is κατὰ σάρκα (11:18).

These diverse views encourage several important questions. First, for Paul, what is the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate boasting? Second, can legitimate boasting include boasting in one's own activity? Forbes argues that "[f]or Paul *self-praise* is never legitimate"; thus, the only legitimate boasting is that which focuses on the activity of God.⁴ Third, how does Paul's practice and evaluation of boasting relate to the viewpoints about boasting found in Graeco-Roman and Jewish literature? In addressing these questions, this chapter will begin with an overview of 2 Cor 10; central to this survey will be an analysis of Paul's use of the boasting saying of Jer 9 at 10:17. The next section will focus on 2 Cor 11-12 and the "fool's discourse"; this will include an analysis of Paul's use of the foolishness theme and his critique of his opponents. With this general study of 2 Cor 10-12 in view, the final section will provide a synthesis of Paul's treatment of boasting in these chapters.

A. 2 COR 10 AND PAUL'S "BOAST IN THE LORD"

1. Overview of 2 Cor 10:1-16

a) vv. 1-11

Chapter 10 opens with Paul's personal appeal to the Corinthian church; he appeals to them according to the "meekness and gentleness of Christ" (v. 1). In defending himself against charges that his character and self-presentation are inadequate, Paul aligns himself with Christ.⁵ Similarly, the juxtaposition of the work of Christ with that of Paul occurs again at 13:4,⁶ which is located within a passage (13:1-10) that has certain thematic links with

¹καυχᾶσθαι: 10:8, 13, 15, 16, 17; 11:12, 16, 18, 30; 12:1, 5, 6, 9; καύχησις: 11:10, 17; συνίστημι: 10:12, 18; 12:11.

²2 Cor 11:30; 12:5, 9.

³The extent of the "fool's discourse" is debated; while the theme of "foolishness" is introduced at 11:1, Paul actually begins to boast at 11:21b (cf. Zmijewski, *Stil*, 231).

⁴Forbes, "Self-Praise", 20. A similar view is held by Heckel who note that καυχᾶσθαι can be used positively in reference to praise of God and negatively in terms of self-praise (*Kraft*, 191-93; "Jer 9.22f.", 215).

⁵cf. Holland, "Speaking Like a Fool", 252.

⁶Likewise, Paul's reference to his self-humiliation at 11:7 has some correspondence to his reference to Christ's humiliation in 8:9--both passages depict an individual demeaning himself for the exaltation of others (cf. 6:10).

10:1-18.⁷ Thus, Paul's association with Christ provides the basis by which he appeals to the Corinthians to respond appropriately to his message (10:2, 6).

In aligning himself with Christ, to what does Paul refer with the phrase διὰ τῆς πραύτητος καὶ ἐπιεικείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ? In analysing this phrase, Ragnar Leivestad argues that πραύτητος καὶ ἐπιεικείας functions as a hendiadys⁸ that describes “a gentle, humble and modest attitude”.⁹ Moreover, he argues that the phrase alludes to the Incarnation and not to the humility evident in Christ's earthly ministry; “[t]he point is the humble state more than the humble behaviour.”¹⁰ In defending this view, Leivestad notes a reference to the mission of Christ in *Diogn.* 7:3-4, which uses the phrase ἐν ἐπιεικείᾳ <καὶ> πραύτητι.¹¹ In reference to 2 Cor 10:1, an emphasis on the humility of the Incarnation is appropriate to the nature of Paul's self-defence. In responding to criticism that his self-presentation is weak and humble (cf. 2 Cor 10:1, 10; 11:7), Paul appeals to the humility evident in the work of Christ. Just as Christ humbled himself in the service of others (cf. 2 Cor 8:9), so Paul has humbled himself in the service of the Corinthians. However, this does not eliminate the possibility that Paul may also have been referring to the humility evident in the earthly ministry and lifestyle of Jesus.¹² “Both Christ's incarnation and his character were foundational as setting up a paradigm for Christian behavior.”¹³

As he associates himself with Christ, Paul lays the groundwork for a fundamental element of his argument in 2 Cor 10-13--the legitimate association of Paul's leadership claims with his humble self-presentation. In responding to the situation in the Corinthian church, Paul is addressing a situation in which his authority has been questioned. Specifically, his self-presentation has generated uncertainty about his credentials for leadership. How can one who lacks social status and acts in a servile manner be qualified for ministry?¹⁴ For Paul, the ministry of Christ provided evidence that Paul's claims to apostolic ministry were not invalidated by his humble demeanour.

From the perspective of Paul's critics, his actions can be described as κατὰ σάρκα (vv. 2, 3). While Paul acknowledges that he lives “in the ordinary circumstances of human existence” (ἐν σαρκί; v. 3), he denies that he operates in a “worldly” (κατὰ σάρκα) manner (cf. *Diogn.* 5.8). To those who view Paul as deficient, he argues that he “wages war” (στρατευόμεθα; v.4) with weapons that are powerful “for God”.¹⁵ Most likely, as Paul

⁷absent/present theme: 10:1, 11/13:2,10; authority for “building up” and not for “tearing down”: 10:8/13:10; δοκιμάζω/δοκιμος/δοκιμή: 10:18/13:3, 5, 7.

⁸cf. Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 182n2.

⁹Leivestad, “Meekness”, 159, 160. In Christian literature, other examples of these terms occurring together include Titus 3:2; *1 Clem.* 21:7, 30:8; *Diogn.* 7:4.

¹⁰ibid. 161.

¹¹Leivestad, “Meekness”, 160-61; similarly, he notes certain Christian interpolations in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* that highlight the humble state of the Incarnation (cf. *T. Dan.* 5:13; *T. Benj.* 9:5; 10:7).

¹²pace Leivestad, “Meekness”, 163; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 460.

¹³Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 302; cf. Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 459; Witherington, *Conflict*, 437. 2 Cor 10:1 is reminiscent of Matt 11:29: “I am gentle [πραύς] and humble [ταπεινός] of heart” (cf. Matt 21:5 = Zech 9:9); on the possible relationship between these texts and the more general question of Paul's knowledge of traditions concerning the life of Jesus, cf. Wenham, *Paul*, 355, 338-72.

¹⁴On the dimension of social status evident in the charges against Paul, cf. above pp 127-28. Martin (*Slavery*, 142) notes that in the Corinthian context Paul challenged “the traditional linkage between high-status indicators and leadership within the church.”

¹⁵Taking τῷ θεῷ as a dative of advantage; cf. Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 185; Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 251.

describes his ministry in terms of “pulling down” (καθαίρεσιν) arguments and every pretension opposed to the knowledge of God (vv. 4-5), the target of his attack is the activity of his opponents.¹⁶ In appealing to the Corinthians, Paul desires that they respond positively so that he might not need to exhibit his authority (v. 2). He concludes the letter by stating that he has written them so that he might not need to be “harsh” (ἀποτόμως) with the Corinthians when he returns (13:10).¹⁷ However, his humble demeanour and status should not be interpreted as a lack of authority. If necessary, he can act with “boldness” (v. 2); he does have the “weapons” necessary to exercise discipline (vv. 4-5). Moreover, he is prepared to punish the disobedience of his opponents when the obedience of the congregation has been established (v. 6).¹⁸

Paul continues his argument by telling the church to “look at the obvious facts”¹⁹ (Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον²⁰ βλέπετε). While βλέπετε can be either indicative or imperative, Paul consistently uses this verb form in the imperative mood.²¹ Confronted by a situation in which his self-presentation has been used as a criticism of his ministry, he wants the Corinthians to review the evidence. This exhortation could imply that the Corinthians are to look at the existence of the church as proof of his ministerial legitimacy.²² More generally, v. 7a could reflect Paul’s desire that the Corinthians examine the grounds by which Paul has been judged to be inadequate. In defending himself, Paul faces the difficulty of justifying his position as a leader while simultaneously affirming his weakness and humble status.²³ Consequently, it is important for the Corinthians to understand that Paul’s lowly social standing is not incompatible with his ministerial authority. Paul’s challenge that the Corinthians re-evaluate their situation reflects the fact that the church, as well as Paul’s opponents, are targets of his criticism in 2 Cor 10-13; this becomes more pronounced in chapters 11-12, when Paul argues that the Corinthians’ openness to Paul’s opponents has forced him to boast in a foolish manner (cf. 11:16-21; 12:11).

The first occurrence of καυχάομαι in 2 Cor 10-13 appears in v. 8.²⁴ “For if I make a further boast [περισσότερόν τι καυχῆσομαι] about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up, and not for pulling you down, I shall not be put to shame [αἰσχυνθήσομαι]” (v. 8).²⁵ While περισσότερόν τι can be translated idiomatically as “somewhat freely” (NIV) or “a little too much” (NRSV), the phrase may imply that a comparison is view.²⁶ Barrett

¹⁶Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 252; cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 306.

¹⁷cf. 12:21; 13:2; 1 Cor 4:21.

¹⁸As stated above (cf. p. 110), Paul’s rivals for leadership were most likely outsiders who arrived in Corinth and gained a level of influence within the Corinthian congregation. While much of 2 Cor 10-13 contains criticism of these leaders, Paul’s audience is the Corinthian congregation. Thus, in 10:6, it is plausible that πᾶσαν παρακοήν refers to Paul’s opponents, while ἁμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή refers to Paul’s desired response from the congregation (cf. Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 253; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 464).

¹⁹NIVmg.

²⁰“what is in front of you”; Turner, *Syntax*, 15, 268.

²¹1 Cor 1:26 (cf. Fee, *First Epistle*, 79); 8:9; 10:18; 16:10; Gal 5:15; Phil 3:2 (3x); cf. Eph 5:15; Col 2:8; cf. Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 256; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 465; Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 200.

²²Lars Hartman (*Studies*, 245) argues that v. 7a focuses on the fact that “Paul reached Corinth as an apostle” and anticipates the argument of vv. 12-18 (cf. Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 470; 2 Cor 3:2-3).

²³cf. Hafemann, “Self-Commendation”, 75.

²⁴cf. 10:13, 15, 16, 17; 11:12, 16, 18, 30; 12:1, 5, 6, 9.

²⁵translation from Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 258.

²⁶“something more or further” (BAGD, 651; cf. Luke 12:4).

argues that *περισσότερος/περισσοτέρως* in Paul's usage suggests "a real comparison".²⁷ With a comparison in view, some contend that the conditional statement of v. 8 augments the assertion of v. 7; accordingly, Paul is saying that if he "boasts" further about his "belonging to Christ", he will not be ashamed.²⁸ However, links with vv. 12-18 suggest that v. 8 may be a statement that anticipates Paul's subsequent boasting. Noting that both v. 8 and vv. 12-18 include reference to boasting, commendation and Paul's apostolic authority, Lambrecht observes the following parallels:

<u>v. 8</u>	<u>vv. 12-18</u>
περισσότερόν τι	οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα (vv. 13, 15)
καυχῆσώμαι	καυχήσόμεθα (v. 13)
ἐξουσία	μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος (v. 13; cf v. 15)
ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος	ἐμέρισεν...ὁ θεός (v. 13)
the building up	the evangelization (vv. 14-16)
οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι	ὄν (=Paul) ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν (v. 18) ²⁹

Having been accused of being boastful in his letters, Paul is vulnerable to the charge that his self-presentation in 2 Cor 10-13 is simply another example of his "boldness" when he is away. Thus, before describing the nature of his boasting (vv. 12-18), Paul assures the Corinthians that he can boast in his authority without being ashamed.

An important issue in interpreting v. 8 concerns the meaning *αἰσχυνθήσομαι*. In what way might Paul be "ashamed"? Furnish argues that Paul "is indicating both that he would be ashamed to boast under normal circumstances and that the present circumstances are not normal: they require some boasting."³⁰ Thus, having been forced to boast, Paul can do so and not be ashamed. However, other references to shame and boasting in the Pauline corpus suggest that the presence or absence of shame is related to the validity of Paul's boast.³¹ For instance, in recounting Titus' positive report from Corinth, Paul notes that "if I have been somewhat boastful [*κεκαύχημαι*] about you to him, I was not disgraced [*κατησχύνθη*]" ; Paul has not been dishonoured because his "boasting" (*καύχησις*) has been shown to be "true" (*ἀλήθεια*; 2 Cor 7:14 NRSV). Similarly, at 2 Cor 9:3, Paul speaks of the forthcoming collection of relief support in Corinth; he notes that he is sending certain Macedonian "brothers" in order that "our boasting [*καύχημα*] about you in this matter should not prove hollow [*κενωθῆ*]" ; however, if the Corinthians were unprepared to give, Paul's assertions of confidence would be empty and he would be "ashamed" (*κατασχυνθῶμεν*; 9:4). Thus, Paul's references³² to shame and boasting imply that his boasting about authority will be shameful if his claims prove to be exaggerated.

On one level, in the context of 10:1-11, Paul may simply be asserting that the authority he exercises when he returns to Corinth will be consistent with the claims he has

²⁷Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 258; cf. 1 Cor 12:23, 24; 15:10; 2 Cor 1:12; 2:4; 7:13, 15; 11:23; 12:15; Gal 1:14; Phil 1:14; 1 Thess 2:17.

²⁸cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 466.

²⁹Lambrecht, "Dangerous Boasting", 330.

³⁰Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 478.

³¹As this study has shown (cf. above pp. 39-46), a significant criterion in the evaluation of self-praise in Graeco-Roman literature was the truthfulness of one's boast. Consequently, shame can be associated with a boast that proves to be false (cf. Aris. *Rh.* 2.6.11).

³²cf. also Rom 5:3-5; 1 Cor 1:27-31.

made in his letters; his actions will invalidate the charge that he is a “boaster” and he will not be “ashamed” (v. 8). At the same time, however, Paul’s statement may be more than an assertion of the truthfulness of his boasting; his statement may specifically reflect a broad Jewish theological tradition concerning the relationship between the righteous and God. As he expresses confidence³³ in his authority, he may be asserting that he will not be “shamed” by God (cf. Phil 1:20).³⁴ In the Old Testament, particularly in the psalms of lament, the theme of “shame” is often associated with the actions of God. In certain lament psalms, the speaker, who is a righteous individual, expresses confidence that he will not be “shamed” by God.³⁵ The suggested links between v. 8 and vv. 12-18 give credence to understanding this Jewish background to “shame” in v. 8; if the activity of God is in view in v. 8, this reference to shame may be related to Paul’s subsequent comment that God is the one who “commends” (συνίστησιν) individuals and judges their work to be “approved” (δόκιμος; v. 18). More generally, as this chapter will show, Paul’s self-presentation in 2 Cor 10-13 appears to be related to the triadic pattern of relationships between the righteous, the wicked, and God that we observed in Jewish literature. Reference to God not “shaming” Paul is consistent with this pattern.

A further exegetical issue concerning v. 8 concerns the relationship of this verse with v. 9. The nature of the transition between these verses is debated. Some suggest that an implied ellipsis is at work in this passage. For example, Barrett makes this addition to the beginning of v. 9: “I forbear to do this”.³⁶ According to this view, Paul is saying that while he could boast legitimately (v. 8), he avoids it so that he might not appear to be frightening the Corinthians through his letters (v. 9). Two factors weigh against this view. First, if Paul intended to deny the boasting mentioned in v. 8, it is surprising that he does not make this clear.³⁷ In 12:6, which is syntactically similar to 10:8,³⁸ Paul states that he could boast in his religious experiences but chooses not to do so; here, however, the denial of boasting is stated explicitly (φείδομαι δέ). Second, the immediate context of vv. 8-9 argues against the interpretation that Paul is denying that he will boast. This section (vv. 1-11) implies that Paul has been accused of making exaggerated claims concerning his authority (e.g., in the painful letter); his self-presentation has led to the charge that he is nothing more than a boaster and a flatterer.³⁹ However, in vv. 2-6 and 11, he does not answer his accusers by denying the claims made in his letters; rather, he responds by arguing that his self-presentation will be consistent with the assertions that he has made. In view of these factors, an ellipsis between vv. 8 and 9 is not warranted.

Others argue that v. 9 should be interpreted as an imperative: “[Do not think] that I am trying to frighten you with my letters.”⁴⁰ While this is a plausible translation, “the

³³The use of *καυχάομαι* in 10:8 is similar to the use of *πέιθω* in 10:7.

³⁴Lambrecht (“Paul’s Appeal”, 409) notes the possibility that *καυχῆσθωμαι* is a divine passive (cf. Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 473).

³⁵cf. Ps 22:5; 25:2-3; 31:1, 17; 34:5; 69:6; 74:21; cf. 36:19 LXX; 119:6, 31, 46, 80, 116; cf. also the use of Isa 26:16 in Rom 9:33 and 10:11.

³⁶Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 259; cf. Carson, *Triumphalism*, 68.

³⁷cf. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 305.

³⁸Both verses contain conditional statements with *ἐάν* in the protasis and a future tense verb in the apodosis.

³⁹cf. above pp. 117-19.

⁴⁰Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 309; cf. Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 474n37; BDR §387(4). On the imperatival use of *ἵνα*, cf. BDF §387(3); Moule, *Idiom Book*, 144-6.

subjunctive is rarely used after ἵνα with the force of a *command*.”⁴¹ A more straightforward reading of the ἵνα construction is the translation of ἵνα μὴ δόξω (v. 9) as “lest I should seem”.⁴² This interpretation is consistent with Paul’s insistence on the truthfulness of his boasting evident in v. 8. According to this view, Paul asserts that he can boast in the authority that God has given him for the benefit of the Corinthians with the confidence that his claims are true (v. 8). He can make this boast and not be ashamed, so that⁴³ no one can think that he wishes⁴⁴ to frighten the Corinthians with his letters (v. 9). In other words, the legitimacy of his claims undermines the grounds on which others have accused him of boasting. He is confident that his actions in the Corinthian context will be consistent with the assertions of authority that he has made. Therefore, accusations that he has been inconsistent and deceptive are baseless.

b) vv. 12-16

The references to “self-commendation” in vv. 12 and 18 suggest that vv. 12-18 should be treated as a unit; however, the specific relationship between vv. 1-11 and vv. 12-18 is ambiguous. The γάρ of v. 12 could simply function as a loose connective similar to δέ.⁴⁵ Some, however, argue that this γάρ links vv. 12-18 with v. 8.⁴⁶ While the syntax does not demand this type of specific connection, as suggested above,⁴⁷ certain links are evident between vv. 12-18 and v. 8. Having argued that he can boast in his authority and not be ashamed (v. 8), Paul now explains the criterion by which that boast is made. In the process, he not only defends the legitimacy of his own boasting but also undermines the validity of the claims of his opponents.

In v. 12, Paul asserts that he does not dare to “classify or compare” (ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι) himself with some who “commend themselves” (ἑαυτοὺς συνιστανόντων). On the one hand, this statement is ironic.⁴⁸ Paul has already implied a comparison with his critics in v. 7, and a contrast between Paul and his opponents is at work in vv. 12-18. Moreover, this σύγκρισις becomes explicit in 11:21-29.⁴⁹ On the other hand, v. 12a does reflect Paul’s refusal to engage in comparison with his critics according to their criteria; unlike them, he will boast according to the “measure” established by God (v. 13). As stated above, σύγκρισις was a standard rhetorical tool of encomium that was often used in self-praise;⁵⁰ in other words, individuals often boasted by delineating their superiority to others. Paul’s statement of refusal indicates that his opponents had engaged in comparing

⁴¹Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 476.

⁴²Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 467; “I do not want to seem...” (NRSV). Similar to 2 Cor 10:9, 1 Cor 8:13 contains a conditional statement in which the apodosis is followed by a clause beginning with ἵνα μὴ.

⁴³Concerning the use of ἵνα in a group of passages including 2 Cor 10:9, Moule (*Idiom Book*, 145) states: “all these can plausibly be explained by an antecedent verb, stated or implied, of saying, wishing, etc., and therefore permit the ἵνα to be more or less consciously *final*.”

⁴⁴Concerning the ὡς ἄν, BAGD (49) translates this clause: “I would not want it to appear as if I were frightening you” (cf. Moule, *Idiom Book*, 152).

⁴⁵so BAGD, 152.

⁴⁶cf. Krämer, “2K 10, V. 9 und 12”, 97; cf. also Lambrecht, “Dangerous Boasting”, 329-30.

⁴⁷cf. above p. 133.

⁴⁸cf. Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 192; Witherington, *Conflict*, 439n44.

⁴⁹Thus, the οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν of 10:12 is replaced by the τολμῶ καὶ γὰρ of 11:21.

⁵⁰cf. above p. 51.

themselves to Paul in this manner. Most likely, as they alleged deficiencies in Paul's life and ministry, these opponents also contended that they lacked such defects.⁵¹

The rationale for Paul's avoidance of σύγκρισις is stated in v. 12b: when they "measure themselves by themselves" (ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες) and "compare themselves with themselves" (συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς), they are "not wise" (οὐ συνιᾶσιν).⁵² In criticising his opponents, Paul states that they are acting in a manner that lacks understanding. Some argue that this is a reference to self-understanding.⁵³ However, the context suggests that the lack of self-knowledge is not the primary focus of Paul's critique. In v. 12b he introduces the topic of "measurement" (μετροῦντες), which appears throughout vv. 13-16. In contrast to his opponents' practice of evaluation through comparison with others, Paul's "boast" reflects the standard of measurement established by God (v. 13). Moreover, when Paul eventually does boast in the manner of his opponents (cf. 11:18), he argues that he is speaking "as a fool" and not "according to the Lord" (11:17). Thus, the lack of knowledge described in v. 12b seems to imply a rejection of divine standards.⁵⁴

In contrast to the activity of his opponents, Paul states that he will "not boast [καυχῆσόμεθα] beyond proper limits [εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα]" (v. 13). Some argue for a qualitative translation of εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα, so that it is interpreted as "inappropriately" or "immoderately".⁵⁵ In endorsing this interpretation, Marshall notes Aristotle's reference to the "great-souled man" who observes "due measure" (μετρίως ἔξει) in respect to wealth, power and fortune (*EN* 4.3.18); this individual stands in contrast to the vain who are "foolish" (ἡλίθιοι) and lacking in self-knowledge (ἑαυτοὺς ἀγνοοῦντες; *EN* 4.3.36).⁵⁶ However, contextual factors suggest that this phrase focuses primarily on the content rather than the quality of one's boast. In v. 13, εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα stands in contrast to boasting that is according to the "measure" (μέτρον)⁵⁷ established by God; in v. 15, boasting in the work of others is described as boasting that is εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα. These occurrences of εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα are found in two of the five negative clauses in vv. 12-16;⁵⁸ in different ways, these clauses distinguish

⁵¹cf. Merritt, *Word and Deed*, 154.

⁵²The words "οὐ συνιᾶσιν. ἡμεῖς δέ" are missing from several witnesses of the Western Text (D*, F, G, etc.), and this reading is followed by certain scholars (e.g., Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 192-93; Käsemann, "Legitimität", 56-57; BDF §416[2]). Metzger (*Textual Commentary*, 514), however, concludes that this absence is "doubtless the result of an accident in transcription, when the eye of a copyist passed from οὐ to οὐκ and omitted the intervening words." For a defence of the longer reading, which is attested by p⁴⁶, κ¹, etc., cf. Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 263-64; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 315; K. Wong, "Boasting", 121-27.

⁵³cf. Turner, *Syntax*, 160; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 480; Marshall, *Enmity*, 352.

⁵⁴Wolff (*Der zweite Brief*, 205) argues that οὐ συνιᾶσιν shows that the opponents lack a knowledge of God. On the possible link between v. 12b and Jer 9, cf. below p. 146.

⁵⁵Betz (*Apostel*, 131) states that εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα concerns the *topos* of moderation and reflects the maxim, μηδὲν ἄγαν (cf. Aris. *Rh.* 2.12.14). Similarly, concerning 2 Cor 10:12-13, Marshall (*Enmity*, 201-2) argues that "Paul is drawing upon the conventional language of moderation to commend his own apostolic behaviour, and of immoderation to discredit his enemies."

⁵⁶Marshall, *Enmity*, 201.

⁵⁷On the lexical possibilities of this term, cf. Cranfield, "METPON", 346.

⁵⁸Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων (v. 12); ἡμεῖς δε οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχῆσόμεθα... (v. 13); οὐ γὰρ ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς ὑπερεκτείνομεν (v. 14); οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις (v. 15); οὐκ ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχῆσασθαι (v. 16).

Paul's actions from those of his opponents. Thus, as Paul contrasts himself with his opponents, he states that his assertions are not "beyond proper limits"; he will not boast in that which is outside his ministerial responsibility.⁵⁹ Rather, he will confine his boasting to τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρον (v. 13).

While the significance of terms of measurement⁶⁰ in v. 13 is widely acknowledged, the specific meaning of τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος is difficult to determine. The term μέτρον can refer to a "standard of measurement" as well as "what is measured as the result of measuring"; K. Deissner argues that the later interpretation is to be preferred based on the use of μέτρον elsewhere in Pauline literature (cf. Rom 12:3; Eph 4:7, 13, 16).⁶¹ If μέτρον is understood as something measured, then κανὼν is generally understood as the "normal concrete meaning" of "standard of judgment" or "norm" (cf. Gal 6:14).⁶² However, two factors suggest that κανὼν in this passage may also have the nuance of "sphere of action".⁶³ First, κανὼν can be used in contexts that have geographical or regional overtones.⁶⁴ Second, in 2 Cor 10:13-16, this term occurs within a context that speaks of one's area of activity. Furnish is helpful in suggesting that both meanings of κανὼν are possibly at work in this passage. "[O]n the one hand it [κανὼν] is a reference to the apostolic authority given to Paul (v. 8); on the other, a reference to the authority *to reach out even as far as* Corinth (vv. 13-15) and beyond (v. 16)."⁶⁵ Thus, he translates τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος as "*the measure of the jurisdiction*".⁶⁶

Instead of boasting beyond limits, Paul will boast according to the standard measured out by God (v. 13).⁶⁷ According to Paul, his boasting is not εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα because his jurisdiction extends even to the Corinthians (ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν; v. 13). This point is underscored by the repetition of ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν in v. 14b, with which Paul reminds his readers that he brought the gospel to Corinth. The term "φθάνω" (v. 14) can mean "come before" or "precede".⁶⁸ This meaning may be intended in v. 14;⁶⁹ if so, it amplifies Paul's ministerial standing vis-a-vis his opponents. It was he and not they who introduced the Corinthians to the gospel.

At the beginning of v. 14, Paul states that he is not "overextending" (ὑπερεκτείνωμεν)⁷⁰ himself. To what does this refer? In discussing ὑπερεκτείνωμεν, Bultmann argues that it "cannot refer to boastful speech"; rather, it refers to the figure of

⁵⁹cf. Wong, "2 Corinthians 10:17", 249; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 471.

⁶⁰ἄμετρα...μέτρον...κανόνος...ἐμέρισεν...μέτρον.

⁶¹Deissner, "μέτρον", 633; cf. Beyer, "κανὼν", 599n12.

⁶²e.g., Hafemann, "Self-Commendation", 78; cf. Beyer, "κανὼν," 599; Sand, "κανὼν", 249.

⁶³BAGD, 403; cf. *1 Clem.* 1:3; 41:1.

⁶⁴For example, in the Edict of Sotidius (first century A.D.), κανὼν occurs within a context that marks out territorial limits for transportation services (cf. Horsley, *New Documents*, 36-45).

⁶⁵Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 471; cf. Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 287-88. Barrett (*Second Epistle*, 264-65) argues that Paul may be referring here to his role as missionary to the Gentiles.

⁶⁶Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 471.

⁶⁷Wong ("Boasting", 174) connects "measured by God" with Paul's experience on the road to Damascus.

⁶⁸BAGD, 856; cf. *1 Thess* 4:15.

⁶⁹Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 488; Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 266-67. Even if φθάνω does not imply priority, the context (ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ; v. 14) suggests an emphasis on Paul's role as founder of the church.

⁷⁰"stretch out beyond measure" (LSJ, 1862).

“measure” and means that Paul did not exceed the measure allocated to him in coming to Corinth.⁷¹ However, the flow of vv. 12-16 indicates that ὑπερεκτείνομεν refers to Paul’s claims about his sphere of ministry (v. 13). Throughout this section, Paul’s negative statements are associated with matters of speech.⁷² Moreover, the ὡς clause⁷³ implies that the point Paul is making concerns the validity of his claims; he has not “overextended” himself in boasting of his ministerial authority as he would be doing if he had not already arrived in Corinth.⁷⁴ This point is then bolstered by the assertion that Paul had brought the gospel to the city (v. 14). Thus, having argued that he will boast only according to the standard established by God, Paul underscores the validity of his assertions of ministerial authority by referring to his previous ministerial activity.

With v. 15, Paul’s argument turns from the past to the future. Once again, he stresses that he will not boast “beyond limits”; specifically, he will not boast in the work of others (v. 15a). Furthermore, he expresses hope in the ongoing expansion of his proclamation of the Gospel. Specifically, he has hope (ἐλπίδα ἔχοντες) that with the growth of the faith⁷⁵ of the Corinthians he might be greatly magnified among them⁷⁶ according to his sphere of responsibility (κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν; v. 15). Some argue that this occurrence of μεγαλυνθῆναι means “increase”.⁷⁷ Thus, v. 15b refers to Paul’s desire that his ministry might expand among the Corinthians. However, μεγαλυνθῆναι in this passage may have the meaning of “exalt” or “praise”, so that it would be referring to the perception of Paul’s ministry among the Corinthians. According to this reading, Paul’s desire is that, as the faith of the Corinthians grows, his ministerial achievements might be recognised by his readers.⁷⁸ The concept of Paul being “magnified”⁷⁹ is not incoherent in this context. Subsequently, Paul states that if the Corinthians “pass the test”, they should also recognise that Paul is not “disqualified” (ἀδόκιμοι; 13:5-6). Thus, the growth of Christianity within Corinth underscores the legitimacy of Paul’s ministry. As the community acknowledges Paul’s proclamation of the apostolic message, this recognition serves as an endorsement of Paul’s ministry and an encouragement for his ongoing work.⁸⁰

Two infinitives occur in v. 16 and may, along with μεγαλυνθῆναι, be loosely construed with ἐλπίδα ἔχοντες in v. 15. Thus, Paul’s “hope” also includes the ambition to

⁷¹Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 195.

⁷²cf. above n58.

⁷³ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς (v. 14).

⁷⁴cf. Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 288; Hafemann, “Self-Commendation”, 80.

⁷⁵ἀχανομένης τῆς πίστεως ἡμῶν may be related to Paul’s previous reference to the obedience of the Corinthians (v. 6; cf. Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 196; above n18).

⁷⁶This interpretation associates ἐν ὑμῖν with μεγαλυνθῆναι rather than with ἀχανομένης τῆς πίστεως (v. 15; *pace* Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 196); it is tautologous to associate ἐν ὑμῖν with the genitive absolute (cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 473).

⁷⁷e.g., BAGD, 497.

⁷⁸cf. Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 267; Grundmann, “μεγαλύνω”, 543; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 473. Although Bultmann argues that ἐν ὑμῖν goes with the genitive absolute rather than μεγαλυνθῆναι, he states that if it were connected with μεγαλυνθῆναι the translation would be: “to achieve greatness or esteem among you, in your estimation” (*Second Letter*, 196).

⁷⁹This is the meaning of μεγαλύνω in the only other Pauline occurrence, Phil 1:20. In the LXX, particularly in the Psalms, μεγαλύνω is frequently used in reference to praise of God (e.g., 33:3; 34:27; 39:16; 56:10; 69:4).

⁸⁰cf. Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 206.

proclaim the Gospel in regions beyond Corinth. Related to this goal of reaching new mission territory is his desire not to boast in what has already been done in another's sphere of responsibility (v. 16b). The section (vv. 12-18) concludes with a reference (v. 17) and application (v. 18) of the boasting saying of Jer 9.

Before examining the background and function of the citation in v. 17, several comments about the theme of boasting in vv. 12-16 are in order. First, throughout this section, the contrast between Paul and his opponents is not between one party that boasts and another that does not. Instead, the issue of debate is this: whose boasts are legitimate? Concerning his own self-presentation, Paul argues that his boasting is in accordance with the sphere of ministry that God has given him; he is not boasting "beyond measure" (vv. 13, 15). His assertion of the legitimacy of his boasting is bolstered by the existence of the Corinthian church. Thus, the presence of this church as a result of his ministry provides powerful ammunition against the charges of inconsistency that led to the accusation that he was a boaster. Those demanding proof that Christ is speaking through Paul (13:3) need to look no further than at the reality of the Christian community in Corinth. In contrast to Paul's defence of the legitimacy of his own boasting stands the allegation that his opponents are guilty of *ἀλαζονεία*.⁸¹ In the first negative clause of the paragraph (v. 12), Paul states that he does not commend himself in the manner of his opponents; the basis for his refusal is the belief that their standard of evaluation is improper (v. 12b). In subsequent negative statements, Paul disclaims boasting beyond limits or in the work done by others. Since these denials (vv. 13-16) follow Paul's reference to the behaviour of his opponents (v. 12), it is likely that here he also has the actions of his opponents in view. Thus, in judging Paul by their own standards, Paul's critics had apparently deemed him an unsatisfactory leader of the Corinthian congregation. By contrast, in arguing that his ministry reflects the standards given by God, Paul proclaims his opponents to be the true impostors in the Corinthian context.

2. Paul's Use of Jer 9:22-23/1 Sam 2:10 (LXX)

a) 1 Cor 1:31

(1) *Links with the Old Testament Passages*

As Paul concludes the argument of 2 Cor 10:12-18, he states that one who boasts should "boast in the Lord" (v. 17). This is actually the second time that Paul uses this phrase in addressing the Corinthian church; the same wording (*ὁ καυχόμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω*) also occurs in 1 Cor 1:31. Since Paul has previously employed this statement in his Corinthian correspondence, an examination of 1 Cor 1:31 is relevant to an understanding of 2 Cor 10:17-18.

In 1 Cor 1:31, Paul introduces this citation with *ἵνα καθὼς γέγραπται*,⁸² however, the difference between this quotation and either Jer 9:22-23 or 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) has led some to argue that Paul is not citing an Old Testament text. For example, Dietrich-Alex Koch

⁸¹cf. Forbes, "Self-Commendation", 16. Forbes argues that the defining elements of *ἀλαζονεία* are immoderate boasting and imposture; "[i]t is to precisely these two points that Paul directs his counter-attack: immoderate boasting and false claims to apostleship" (ibid., 28n78; on *ἀλαζονεία* in Graeco-Roman literature, cf. above pp. 39-40).

⁸²Elsewhere in Pauline literature, *καθὼς γέγραπται* occurs as an introduction formula to a citation at Rom 1:17; 2:24; 3:4; 3:10; 4:17; 8:36; 9:13, 33; 10:15; 11:8, 26; 15:3, 9, 21; 1 Cor 2:9; 2 Cor 8:15; 9:9.

concludes that this saying is not an abbreviation of either of these Old Testament passages but is an example of pre-Pauline Jewish or Christian paraenesis.⁸³ However, against Koch's view is the lack of evidence of this saying in this form in other Jewish or Christian literature.⁸⁴ While ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω does occur at *1 Clem.* 13:1, in that context the phrase is part of a longer citation that clearly alludes to Jer 9:22-23/1 Sam 2:10 (LXX).⁸⁵ Furthermore, part of Koch's argument concerns the significance of the theme of wisdom in 1 Cor 1:17-31. Koch contends that if Paul were utilising Jer 9, he would not have avoided this opportunity to cite the first part of the Jeremiah passage, which refers to boasting in wisdom.⁸⁶ However, upon closer examination, strong links are evident between 1 Cor 1 and various themes associated with the Jeremiah boasting saying. These connections endorse the view that Paul's statement is a "shorthand form of reference"⁸⁷ to the biblical material rather than a citation of a pre-Pauline text.⁸⁸

In examining this citation, several links between 1 Cor 1 and Jer 9 can be observed. After noting the contrast between the cross of Christ and human wisdom (1:17), Paul continues this theme in 1:18-25. The next paragraph (1:26-31) develops this contrast by pointing to the Corinthians themselves as an example of the contrast between the gospel message and objects of popular boasting. In referring to the status of the Corinthians when they were "called",⁸⁹ Paul notes that "not many" were σοφοί, δυνατοί, or εὐγενεῖς (1:26). In other words, the social standing of many within the church was not impressive from the perspective of prevalent cultural standards. The triad mentioned in v. 26 is similar to Jeremiah's warning against the boasting of the "wise", "strong", and "rich." Paul highlights the wise/powerful/noble birth triad by repeating these motifs⁹⁰ in vv. 27-28⁹¹ and contrasting them with their opposites. While Paul does not specifically prohibit boasting in these areas, his references to these categories are made with boasting in view. God has chosen those who are foolish, weak, and lowly (vv. 27-28) "so that no one may boast [καυχῆσθαι] before him" (v. 29). Thus, like Jer 9:22-23, 1 Cor 1:26-31 uses the same term to describe both positive and negative boasting (καυχάομαι; 1:29, 31). Furthermore, in the context of reference to

⁸³Koch, *Schrift*, 36; cf. Holtz, "Selbstverständnis", 326; Wolff, *Jeremia*, 138.

⁸⁴cf. Stanley, *Language of Scripture*, 187.

⁸⁵cf. below p. 142; Kutsch ("Weisheitsspruch", 178) contends that both 1 Cor 1:31 and *1 Clem.* 13:1 are citing an independent source; however, Kutsch also argues that Paul had the entire Jeremiah passage in view in the composition of 1 Cor 1. According to Donald Hagner, "[i]t is possible that both Paul and Clement derived the words from a different version of Jeremiah (or 1 Reigns), but more probably Clement has derived the words from 1 Corinthians, an epistle with which he was certainly acquainted.... The supposition of an unknown source and direct literary dependence upon that source, although possible, is both difficult and unnecessary" (*Clement*, 60).

⁸⁶Koch, *Schrift*, 36. On a more general level, Timothy Lim (*Holy Scripture*, 143) notes that Koch's work does not allow for the diversity within the textual traditions of the MT and LXX; on the textual situation of the MT and LXX traditions during the Second Temple period, cf. Lim, *Holy Scripture*, 19-27.

⁸⁷Lim, *Holy Scripture*, 174; cf. 164-68 concerning Paul's use of abbreviated references.

⁸⁸cf. Stanley, *Language of Scripture*, 187.

⁸⁹On the social constituency of the Corinthian church, cf. above pp. 124-27.

⁹⁰In the repetition of these themes, ισχυρός (v. 27) replaces δυνατός (v. 26).

⁹¹However, the repetition of these themes does not imply that they refer to the same groups of individuals. While the σοφός, δυνατός and εὐγενής of v. 26 refer to members of the church, the σοφοί, ισχυρά and ὄντα of vv. 27-28 refer to individuals who are contrasted with the congregation *as a whole* (cf. Meggitt, *Paul*, 105n148).

boasting in the Lord, both Jer 9 and 1 Cor 1 make reference to divine attributes; Jer 9:23 refers to God's kindness, justice and righteousness, while 1 Cor 1:30 speaks of Christ in terms of righteousness, holiness and redemption. Not surprisingly, therefore, some scholars highlight the intertextual links between 1 Cor 1:26-31 and Jer 9:22-23. For instance, O'Day states: "Jeremiah's critique of wisdom, power, and wealth as false sources of identity that violate the covenant are re-imaged by Paul as a critique of wisdom, power, and wealth that impede God's saving acts in Jesus Christ."⁹²

However, in evaluating the links between 1 Cor 1 and the boasting saying of Jer 9, similarities between Paul's argument and 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) should not be overlooked.⁹³ As we have seen,⁹⁴ the addition found in 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX), which is very similar to Jer 9:22-23, associates the boasting saying of Jer 9 with certain boasting themes that are prominently attested in wisdom literature. For example, in noting the speaker's victory over arrogant opposition, the Song implies that ultimately the boasting of the wicked will be in vain because of the judgment of God.⁹⁵ Along similar lines, the hymn highlights the theme of status reversal--God humbles the haughty and exalts the humble.

To some extent, each of these themes is evident in 1 Cor 1:18-31. Concerning the wise, powerful and nobly born, Paul says that they are "shamed" (καταισχύνη; v. 27) and "made ineffective" (καταργήση; v. 28) by God. As noted earlier, the issue of shame occurs in certain Psalms that express the speaker's confidence that the righteous will be vindicated and the wicked punished.⁹⁶ In view of the reference to boasting in v. 29, this passage suggests that the boasts of those opposed to God will be nullified by divine judgment.⁹⁷ Elsewhere in 1 Corinthians, καταργέω is used within eschatological contexts.⁹⁸ This suggests that Paul's depiction of God's activity against the wise, powerful and nobly born is eschatological in orientation; "in choosing the Corinthians God has already begun the final vindication over his enemies."⁹⁹

Closely related to this theme of judgment is the concept of reversal of status. The association of reversal of status with boasting in the Lord occurs in both 1 Sam 2 (LXX) and 1 Cor 1:31.¹⁰⁰ In the Song of Hannah, as in certain Psalms,¹⁰¹ this reversal is related to the triad of relationships involving the righteous, the wicked, and God. According to this pattern, the wicked serve as antagonists to the righteous, and God intervenes so that the righteous are vindicated, while the wicked are judged. Thus, Hannah "boasts" over her

⁹²O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23", 266; cf. Stanley, *Language of Scripture*, 186-88.

⁹³Neither Lim, O'Day nor Stanley make reference to the version of the Jeremiah boasting saying found in 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX).

⁹⁴cf. above pp. 82-83.

⁹⁵As argued in ch. 2, a recurrent criticism of boasting in Jewish literature is the argument that the boasting of the wicked will be rendered invalid by the activity of God.

⁹⁶e.g., "Let me not be put to shame [καταισχυνθῆην], O Lord, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame [αἰσχυνθῆισαν] and lie silent in the grave" (Ps 31:17/30:18 [LXX]); for other references, cf. above n35.

⁹⁷This reference to divine judgment that produces shame stands in contrast to Paul's confidence that he can boast and not be ashamed (2 Cor 10:8); on 2 Cor 10:8, cf. above p. 133.

⁹⁸cf. 2:6; 6:13; 13:8 (2x), 10, 11; 15:24, 26.

⁹⁹Fee, *First Epistle*, 83; cf. Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 211.

¹⁰⁰cf. Hays, *First Corinthians*, 34-5; Wagner, "A Call to Boast", 284; Wolff, *Der Zweite Brief*, 207.

¹⁰¹cf. above pp. 66-72.

enemies (1 Sam 2:1). Similarly, in 1 Cor 1:26-31 Paul notes a reversal of status and values. God chooses the foolish, weak and lowly while humiliating the wise, powerful and nobly born. Although those whom God “shames” are not described explicitly as enemies of the righteous, there is a sense in which they are opposed to those lacking high social status; for by boasting in their wisdom, power or nobility, they are differentiating themselves from those who lack these traits. “‘Boasting’ in one’s own status or achievements is the means by which the wise distinguish themselves from the foolish and the powerful from the weak”; “‘boasting’ always occurs at the expense of others.”¹⁰² Significantly, while this theme of reversal of status is present in 1 Sam 2 and 1 Cor 1, it is not prominent in the immediate context of Jer 9. Although it is possible that Paul’s association of the theme of boasting in the Lord with the reversal of status reflects his own theological reflection,¹⁰³ it is more likely that Paul is using and developing themes already joined together in such texts as 1 Sam 2 (LXX).¹⁰⁴

In evaluating the relationship between 1 Cor 1:31 and Jer 9:22-23/1 Sam 2:10 (LXX), lexical usage suggests connections between Paul’s argument and both versions of this Old Testament boasting saying.¹⁰⁵ Paul’s references to the wise, powerful and nobly born includes vocabulary that is distinctive to the occurrence of the boasting saying in Jeremiah¹⁰⁶ as well as the one in 1 Samuel.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, “there is no evidence that would decisively exclude either text as a source for Paul’s citation.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, it is possible that Paul conflates these two texts in 1 Cor 1:26-31.¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, the reference to this boasting saying in *1 Clem.* 13:1¹¹⁰ can be understood as a conflation of Jer 9:22-23, 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) and 1 Cor 1:31. In its use of σοφός and ισχυρός at the beginning of the citation, the *1 Clement* passage reflects wording that is distinctive of Jer 9:22. By contrast, the phrase ποιεῖν κρίμα καὶ δικαιοσύνην reflects the wording of 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX), with its omission of ἔλεος and its attribution of justice and righteousness to the individual boasting rather than to God. Finally, the phrase ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω probably reflects Clement’s dependence on 1 Cor 1:31;¹¹¹ 1 Corinthians is the best attested New Testament book in *1 Clement* (cf. *1 Clem.* 47:1).¹¹² Thus, both 1 Cor 1:31 and *1 Clem.* 13:1 seem to suggest a close linkage between

¹⁰²Watson, “1 Corinthians 1.18-31”, 146, 146n26; on the significance of comparison in boasting, cf. above pp. 50-51.

¹⁰³Lim (*Holy Scripture*, 175) suggests that the divine revelation of “strength in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9) enabled Paul to bridge “the exegetical gap between Jeremiah 9 and the theology of the cross.” However, in evaluating Paul’s use of Jer 9, Lim does not discuss 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX).

¹⁰⁴In early Christian tradition, the themes of boasting in the Lord and the reversal of status also occur together in Luke 1:46-55, a hymn that has close links with the song of Hannah (cf. Cook, “Hannah’s Later Songs”, 256-61).

¹⁰⁵For the differences between the two versions of this passage, cf. above pp. 80-81.

¹⁰⁶σοφός (vv. 26, 27), ισχυρός (v. 27); 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) has φρόνιμος, δυνατός.

¹⁰⁷δυνατός (v. 26); Jer 9:22 has ισχυρός.

¹⁰⁸Wagner, “A Call to Boast”, 284.

¹⁰⁹cf. *ibid.*; Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 205; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 34-35; Robertson and Plummer, *First Epistle*, 28; Lightfoot, *Notes*, 168-69.

¹¹⁰λέγει γὰρ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον· Μὴ καυχάσθω ὁ σοφός ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ αὐτοῦ, μηδὲ ὁ ισχυρός ἐν τῇ ἰσχύϊ αὐτοῦ, μηδὲ ὁ πλούσιος ἐν τῷ πλούτῳ αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ’ ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω, τοῦ ἐκζητεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ ποιεῖν κρίμα καὶ δικαιοσύνην.

¹¹¹cf. Hagner, *Clement*, 60, 204.

¹¹²cf. *ibid.*, 195-209.

Jer 9:22-23 and 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX). As a result of these factors, it is difficult to argue that Paul is *exclusively* dependent on either Jer 9:22-23 or the Song of Hannah. Consequently, it may be more appropriate to speak of Paul's use of the boasting saying of Jer 9, without eliminating either version of this saying as a possible source of influence.

(2) *The Participatory Dimension of 1 Cor 1:31*

In evaluating Paul's references to boasting in 1 Cor 1:29-31, some scholars stress that Paul's soteriological focus eliminates all elements of self-praise. For instance, Schrage states that "aller Selbstruhm töricht und gottlos ist".¹¹³ Thus, one's "boast in the Lord" focuses explicitly on God's salvific activity in Christ.¹¹⁴ However, does this text exclude the possibility that appropriate boasting may have a participatory, or self-referential, dimension? In other words, can the object of "boasting in the Lord" include God's provision of salvation as well as one's response to that action? Both the boasting saying of Jer 9 and the context in which Paul uses this saying provide clues to these questions.

In its attribution of "justice" and "righteousness" to the individual who "boasts in the Lord", 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) has a clear participatory component.¹¹⁵ In arguing that this dimension is absent from 1 Cor 1:31, Heckel states that Paul's citation is specifically dependent on Jeremiah 9:22-23.¹¹⁶ Against this view, two points can be made. First, Heckel's argument overlooks the strong links that are evident between 1 Cor 1:26-31 and the Song of Hannah. Second, even if the background of Paul's quotation is restricted to Jeremiah, the prospect of boasting in one's personal involvement in God's activity is not eliminated. As we observed in the earlier examination of Jer 9:22-23,¹¹⁷ the broader context of this saying suggests that a participatory dimension may be in view. In view of the close links between "knowledge of God" and covenantal obedience in Jeremiah, the concept of boasting in one's knowledge of God (Jer 9:23) seems to entail one's participation in the object of that boast.

More generally, 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) and Jer 9:22-23 imply that boasting in God's activity can be coupled with expectations of obedience. These themes are also joined in two other texts that may be relevant to interpreting 1 Cor 1:31. First, a text that appears to be dependent on Jer 9:22-23 is the homily on wisdom found in Bar 3:9-4:4. While this passage does not specifically refer to boasting, it does, like the boasting saying of Jer 9, criticise those who may be classified as *πλούσιος*, *σοφός*, and *ισχυρός*.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, in emphasising God as the source of true wisdom, Baruch's sermon stresses the importance of obedience to Torah; "all who hold her [Torah] fast will live, and those who forsake her will die" (Bar 4:1). Interestingly, several scholars have suggested that the Baruch passage influenced Paul's composition of 1 Cor 1:18-31.¹¹⁹ For example, Hans Hübner notes the importance of true wisdom in both passages, and he also suggests a link between *ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός* in Bar 3:27 and the three occurrences of this phrase in 1 Cor 1:27-28.¹²⁰ A second important passage,

¹¹³Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 213.

¹¹⁴cf. O'Day, "Jeremiah 9:22-23", 266-67; Fee, *First Epistle*, 87; Heckel, *Kraft*, 175-77.

¹¹⁵cf. above p. 81.

¹¹⁶Heckel, *Kraft*, 172n164; Heckel, "Jer 9.22f.", 207n3; cf. Schreiner, "Jeremia 9,22.23", 541.

¹¹⁷cf. above pp. 77-80.

¹¹⁸cf. Thackeray, *Septuagint*, 97.

¹¹⁹cf. *ibid.*; Peterson, "1 Kor 1,18f", 100; Barrett, *First Epistle*, 51.

¹²⁰Hübner, "Baruch", 161-73.

which has already been mentioned, is *1 Clem.* 13:1.¹²¹ While this passage does not necessarily provide insight into Paul's use of the boasting passage of Jer 9, it does show that the first citation of 1 Cor 1:31 in subsequent Christian literature was coupled with the participatory emphasis found in 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX). Thus, in Jer 9:22-23/1 Sam 2:10 (LXX), as well as other significant texts associated with this boasting passage, the themes of boasting in God and expectations of obedience are closely connected.

A further line of inquiry concerns the broader context in which Paul uses the boasting saying of Jer 9. After all, it could be the case that Paul's christological interpretation of this passage does not utilise the saying's participatory dimension. Concerning the use of 1 Cor 1:31 within the larger setting of 1 Cor 1-4, two important links can be noticed. First, like 1:26-31, 2:1-5 can be understood to amplify and illustrate the argument of 1:18-25.¹²² In 1:18-25, Paul argues that the Cross contradicts standards of human wisdom; this point is then developed by reference to the status of those within the Corinthian congregation (1:26-31). Furthermore, this argument is also illustrated by Paul's own missionary work in Corinth (2:1-5). Highlighting the paratactic function of *καὶ γὰρ* (2:1), Schrage argues that 2:1-5 shows the conformity of the apostle to what is stated explicitly in 1:17b-25 and what is illustrated in the community in 1:26-31.¹²³ Similar to 1:26-31, 2:1-5 highlights God's calling of those who are deemed unacceptable by common social standards. In 2:1-5, Paul notes that his public presentation has not been characterized by powerful eloquence but by "weakness and fear, and with much trembling" (2:4).¹²⁴ Thus, Paul's preaching ministry (2:1-5), like the existence of the Corinthian church (1:26-31), highlights the manner in which God's activity overturns popular expectations and standards. However, in 2:1-5 this emphasis on "God's power" (*δυνάμει θεοῦ*; 2:5) also involves Paul's own activity, because the power described here operates within the context of Paul's preaching ministry. Thus, as 2:1-5 provides further evidence of the work of the Cross, it does so in the context of Paul's obedient response to the gospel through his proclamation of the Christian message.

A second passage relevant to questions about the participatory dimension of 1:31 is 4:6-13. This section has strong lexical and thematic links with 1:26-31. In this passage, Paul describes the Corinthians as those who are "wise" (*φρόνιμοι*), "strong" (*ισχυροί*), and "honoured" (*ἐνδοξοί*; 4:10); by contrast, he depicts himself as "foolish" (*μωροί*), "weak" (*ἀσθενεῖς*), and "dishonoured" (*ἄτιμοι*; 4:10). These two triads echo the negative and positive triads that occur in 1:26-31. Thus, in describing himself in terms that accentuate a lack of honour and social status, Paul is identifying himself with those who "boast in the Lord."

The link with 1:26-31 may also be at work in the quotation in 4:6: "Do not go beyond what is written" (*Μὴ ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται*). The specific referent of *ἃ γέγραπται* is highly debated.¹²⁵ Some argue that this statement refers to the Old Testament texts

¹²¹cf. above p. 142.

¹²²Schrage (*Der erste Brief*, 204, 223) states that 2:1-5 functions as an *exemplum* in relation to 1:17-25, in a manner similar to 1:18-26 (cf. Fee, *First Epistle*, 89, Litfin, *Proclamation*, 204). Common themes evident in 1:18-25 and 2:1-5 include: (1) reference to Christ crucified (1:23; 2:2), (2) "weakness" (1:25; 2:3), and (3) "power of God" (1:24; 2:5).

¹²³Schrage, *Der erste Brief*, 223.

¹²⁴On criticisms of Paul's public presentation, cf. above pp. 111-15.

¹²⁵For a recent survey of scholarship, cf. Hanges, "1 Corinthians 4:6", 275-85.

previously cited in 1 Corinthians.¹²⁶ More specifically, Wagner persuasively argues that 4:6 refers to the citation in 1:31. In addition to the similarities between the positive and negative triads in 1:26-31 and 4:6-13, Wagner notes that Paul states this quotation in order that (ἵνα) the Corinthians might not be “puffed up” (φουσιοῦσθε) on behalf of one person against another (4:6). This purpose clause has verbal and thematic links with 3:21, which states: “let no one boast [καυχᾶσθω] about human leaders” (NRSV). In turn, 3:21 “echoes Paul’s immediately previous use of καυχᾶσθαι in the positive admonition of 1.31”.¹²⁷ Thus, 3:21 provides a direct link between 1:31 and 4:6; thematically, this is a plausible connection because Paul’s stress on boasting in the Lord provides an antidote to the factionalism that is being addressed in 4:6-7 (cf. 3:21). Regardless of the specific referent of the saying in 4:6, the similarities between the self-depiction of Paul in 4:6-13 and the categories of those God has chosen in 1:26-31 suggest that Paul has associated himself with those who should boast in the Lord. Moreover, as in 2:1-5, while Paul’s self-portrait highlights divine agency (cf. 4:9), it also acknowledges Paul’s obedient exercise of his responsibility. He has faithfully encountered various hardships that have been a result of his commitment to Christ (4:11-12).

Thus, Paul’s use of the boasting saying of Jer 9 at 1 Cor 1:31 occurs within a context that depicts God’s wisdom overturning human standards and expectations. Similar to certain themes associated with this boasting saying, Paul states that the boasting of the wise, powerful and nobly born will be rendered invalid, as God humbles the self-sufficient and exalts those who lack social standing. Moreover, Paul’s christological interpretation of this saying does not necessarily eliminate the possibility that a self-referential dimension may be present.¹²⁸ Paul’s depictions of his own ministry in 2:1-5 and 4:6-13 present both the activity of God as well as Paul’s participation in that activity. Consequently, to the extent that Paul’s ministry models one who boasts in the Lord, his statements reflect a confidence in God and a confidence that his participation in God’s saving work will not be in vain (cf. 2:4-5; 4:19-20).

b) 2 Cor 10:17-18

(1) Links with Jer 9 and the Ministry of Jeremiah

As the previous analysis has shown,¹²⁹ throughout 2 Cor 10:12-16, Paul argues that his boasting reflects the sphere of ministry that has been given to him by God. By contrast, he implies that his opponents are guilty of ἀλαζονεία. In vv. 12-16, Paul’s description of his own legitimate boasting is contrasted with five negative clauses¹³⁰ that describe improper boasting. Paul concludes this paragraph by repeating the citation he used in 1 Cor 1:31: ὁ δὲ

¹²⁶cf. Hooker, “1 Cor iv. 6”, 127-32; Fee, *First Epistle*, 169; Hays, *First Corinthians*, 69; Ellis, *Prophecy*, 61, 214.

¹²⁷Wagner, “A Call to Boast”, 283.

¹²⁸Concerning δικαιοσύνη, ἁγιασμός, and ἀπολύτρωσις in 1:30, Hays states: “All three of these words reconnect the significance of Jesus with the story of God’s redemption of Israel to be a holy people in covenant with him. There is no such thing as wisdom apart from covenant relationship with God (righteousness) that leads to holy living (sanctification) made possible by God’s act of delivering us from slavery (redemption) through the cross. Those who are in Christ participate in this covenantal reality” (*First Corinthians*, 33).

¹²⁹cf. above pp. 137-42.

¹³⁰cf. above n58.

καυχόμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω (v. 17).¹³¹ The quotation is followed by an explanatory comment: “[f]or it is not the man who commends himself who is approved, but the man whom the Lord commends” (v. 18). Although this summarising comment is stated in the third person, two factors suggest that it is stated with the contrast between Paul and his opponents in view.¹³² First, throughout this paragraph, Paul uses negative statements to disassociate himself from the actions of his opponents; these assertions are followed by descriptions of Paul’s own behaviour. The negative and positive contrast in v. 18 fits into this pattern. Second, the theme of “approval” (δόκιμος) occurs again in 13:3-7, in specific reference to the Corinthians’ desire for “proof” (13:4; δοκιμήν) of Paul’s ministerial authority.

In evaluating Paul’s citation in v. 17, certain links can be noted between 2 Cor 10 and Jer 9. In criticising his opponents, Paul states that their actions reveal that they “lack understanding” (οὐ συνίᾳσιν; v. 12).¹³³ Elsewhere in the uncontested Pauline letters, συνίημι only occurs in two quotations from the Septuagint (Rom 3:11; 15:21).¹³⁴ In evaluating Paul’s use of συνίημι in 2 Cor 10:12, Wong notes that Paul’s argument is similar to the use of συνίημι in the Septuagint;¹³⁵ “[i]n both writings, ‘understanding’ displays a theological nuance, and the lack of understanding is a fault and must be punished.” Consequently, Wong suggests that Paul’s use of συνίημι in v. 12 has been influenced by the use of this term in Jer 9:22-23 (LXX).¹³⁶ Thus, it is possible that in criticising his opponents, Paul is echoing the argument of Jer 9, which states that legitimate boasting entails one’s knowledge and understanding of God. Furthermore, in the context of 2 Cor 10-13 Paul’s critique of his opponents includes the expectation of their judgment by God.¹³⁷ Similarly, Jer 9:22-23 occurs within a context that presents God as an impartial judge (Jer 9:24-25).

More generally, the argument of 2 Cor 10:1-18 suggests certain links between Paul and the prophet Jeremiah. In v. 8 (cf. 13:10) Paul states that God has given him authority for “building up” (εἰς οἰκοδομήν) the Corinthians and not for “tearing them down” (εἰς καθάρεισιν). This image of building up and tearing down occurs in Jeremiah’s call as a prophet (Jer 1:10) as well as at other places in the book (Jer 18:7-9; 24:6; 31[38]:28; 42[49]:10; 45:4 [51:34]). While many see Paul’s statement as an echo of these images in Jeremiah,¹³⁸ others deny that Paul is alluding to Jeremiah’s ministry. For example, Wolff notes that Paul’s affirmation denies the destructive aspect of “tearing down”, while this element is affirmed in Jeremiah’s call.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the subject of the action is different;

¹³¹The only difference between the use of this citation in 1 Cor 1:31 and in v. 17 is the insertion of δέ (“but rather”; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 324), which marks a transition from Paul’s denial of boasting in the work of others at the end of v. 16. Unlike 1 Cor 1:31, 2 Cor 10:17 lacks an introductory citation formula (cf. Stanley, *Language of Scripture*, 234n178; cf. also the use of Hab 2:4 in Rom 1:17 and Gal 3:11).

¹³²cf. Lambrecht, “Dangerous Boasting”, 333; Heckel, *Kraft*, 193.

¹³³On the textual problem in this verse, cf. above n52.

¹³⁴Similarly, Paul’s only use of συνετός occurs in a quotation from Isa 34:14 at 1 Cor 1:19.

¹³⁵cf. Conzelmann, “συνίημι”, 890-92.

¹³⁶Wong, “2 Corinthians 10:17”, 248; cf. Heckel, *Kraft*, 193; on 2 Cor 10:12 cf. above p. 136.

¹³⁷ὧν τὸ τέλος ἔσται κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν (11:15). In the LXX, κατὰ τὰ ἔργα occurs in reference to divine judgment at Ps 27:4; 61:13; Prov 24:12; Is 3:11; Jer 27:29; Lam 3:64; Sir 16:12, 14; *Pss. Sol.* 2:16, 34; 17:8.

¹³⁸e.g., Vielhauer, *Oikodome*; Helga Rusche, “Zum ‘jeremianischen’ Hintergrund”, 118; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 467.

¹³⁹Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 201.

in the passages where both οἰκοδομέω and καθαιρέω occur (31[38]:28; 42[49]:10; 45:4 [51:34]),¹⁴⁰ God, not Jeremiah, is the subject of the action. Thus, Wolff concludes that Paul's reference to "building up" and "tearing down" is not dependent on Jeremiah but simply reflects Paul's use of imagery common to Jewish literature (cf. Isa 49:17; Sir 34:23; 1 Macc 9:62).¹⁴¹

Although Wolff's comments are helpful reminders that one must be cautious in suggesting parallels between Paul and Jeremiah, several factors suggest that such comparisons are warranted. First, the influence of Jeremiah on Paul's ministerial identity is evident elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. For example, in 1 Cor 9:16, Paul speaks of his preaching ministry in terms of divine compulsion (cf. Phil 3:12); a similar sense of divine obligation is evident in the prophetic ministry of Jeremiah (1:4-10; 20:7-9) and other prophets (e.g., Amos 3:8; 7:14-15). More specifically, in Gal 1:15-16, Paul states that God "set me apart [ἀφορίσας] from my mother's womb [ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου] and called [καλέσας] me by his grace ... so that I might preach him among the Gentiles". In describing his ministerial vocation, Paul uses language reminiscent of Jer 1:5¹⁴² and the Servant of the Lord tradition in Isa 49.¹⁴³ While some argue that Paul's imagery is drawn exclusively from Isa 49,¹⁴⁴ the similarities with Jeremiah should not be overlooked.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, in 1 Thess 2:4, Paul states: "we speak as men approved [δεδοκιμάσμεθα] by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts [τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν]." In the laments of Jeremiah, the prophet addresses God in this manner: "O Lord Almighty, you who judge righteously [δίκαια δοκιμάζων] and test the heart and mind [δοκιμάζων νεφροῦς καὶ καρδίας] ..." (Jer 11:20). The possibility that Paul, like Jeremiah,¹⁴⁶ may be responding to opposition to his teaching ministry suggests a connection between these passages.¹⁴⁷ Thus, possible associations between Paul and Jeremiah are evident in both Gal 1 and 1 Thess 2.¹⁴⁸

A second reason for linking Paul's self-description in 2 Cor 10:8 with the ministry of Jeremiah concerns the negative element within Jeremiah's vocation. On one level, this component actually expresses a difference between Paul and Jeremiah--Jeremiah's calling entails the authority to "tear down", while Paul explicitly denies this element in his

¹⁴⁰In Jer 24:6, ἀνοικοδομέω and καθαιρέω occur together with God as the subject.

¹⁴¹Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 202; cf. Prümm, *Diakonia*, 2/2.101.

¹⁴²"Before I formed you in the womb [ἐν κοιλίᾳ] I knew you, before you were born [καὶ πρὸ τοῦ σε ἐξελεθῆν ἐκ μήτρας] I set you apart [ἠγάκα]; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jer 1:5).

¹⁴³"Before I was born [ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός] the Lord called [ἐκάλεσεν] me" (Isa 49:1); "And now the Lord says-- he who formed me in the womb [ἐκ κοιλίας] to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself..." (Isa 49:5). On Paul's use of Servant of Yahweh imagery, cf. Stanley, "Servant of Yahweh", 385-425.

¹⁴⁴e.g., Wolff, *Jeremia*, 139-40; Holtz, "Selbstverständnis", 326.

¹⁴⁵cf. Sandnes, *Paul*, 63-64.

¹⁴⁶Jeremiah's opponents threatened to take his life if he did not cease prophesying (Jer 11:21).

¹⁴⁷For the view that 1 Thess 2 involves Paul's response to a charge of false prophecy, cf. Horbury, "1 Thessalonians ii.3", 492-507; Sandnes, *Paul*, 201-23. George Lyons (*Pauline Autobiography*) argues that Paul's autobiographical statements in Galatians and 1 Thessalonians are not apologetic in nature. For a response to Lyons, cf. (on Galatians) Sandnes, *Paul*, 48-56; (on 1 Thessalonians) Jeffrey Weima, "Apologetic Function", 73-99.

¹⁴⁸Additionally, the influence of Jeremiah's language of "planting" and "building" (Jer 1:10) may be evident in 1 Cor 3:6-15; cf. Rusche, "Zum 'jeremianischen' Hintergrund", 118; Jones, "Apostle Paul", 221.

relationship with the Corinthians. However, several factors suggest that this difference does not nullify the connection between Paul and Jeremiah. First, while Paul denies the presence of *καθαίρεσις* in his relationship with the Corinthians, that motif is not totally absent from his ministry. In response to questions concerning his authority, he does assert his ability to exercise *καθαίρεσις* in reference to the arguments of his opponents (2 Cor 10:4).¹⁴⁹ Moreover, he does warn the Corinthians that he can be “harsh” in his use of authority if necessary (13:10). Furthermore, the prophecies of Jeremiah anticipate a time when God will “build” and not “tear down”; this is evident in three of the passages in Jeremiah that utilise *καθαίρω* with *οικοδομέω* (or *ἀνοικοδομέω*). In Jer 24:6 and 42[49]:10, God speaks of “building up” and not “tearing down”. Furthermore, in Jer 31[38]:28, which precedes reference to the “new covenant” (v. 31), God declares: “Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down [*καθαίρειν*], and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build [*οικοδομεῖν*] and to plant” (cf. 24:6; 45:4 [51:34]).

The imagery of the “new covenant” is associated with Paul’s ministerial self-description in 2 Corinthians.¹⁵⁰ In 2 Cor 3:3-6, Paul states that God “has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant [*διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης*]”¹⁵¹ (v. 6a).¹⁵² This imagery continues in 2 Cor 3:7-18 as Paul speaks of the *δόξα* of new covenant ministry. Throughout this section, the *δόξα* of the Mosaic covenant is compared with the surpassing *δόξα* of the new covenant in an *a fortiori* form of argumentation. In addition to 2 Cor 3, the relationship between Paul’s ministry and new covenant motifs occurs elsewhere in the letter. For example, various links are evident between 2 Cor 3:1-18 and Paul’s description of his ministry of reconciliation (5:11-21).¹⁵³ These various examples of Paul’s use of new covenant motifs support the association of Paul’s description of his ministry in 2 Cor 10:8 (cf. 13:10) with Jeremiah’s new covenant imagery. Thus, “Paul understood his task as the eschatological ministry of establishing the New Covenant, an act of God prophesied through Jeremiah and achieved through Paul as the servant of the covenant.”¹⁵⁴

In addition to the prophetic imagery of 2 Cor 10:8, Paul’s use of the boasting saying of Jer 9 suggests an additional link between the ministries of the apostle and the prophet. In the discussion of 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX),¹⁵⁵ it has been observed that this verse associates the boasting passage of Jer 9 with a triad of relationships common in psalms of lament and hymns of praise; these relationships involve the righteous, the wicked, and God—who humbles the righteous and punishes the wicked. Evidence of this basic pattern has been noted concerning Paul’s reference to boasting in 1 Cor 1:26-31.¹⁵⁶ Similar elements are also at work in the broader context of 2 Cor 10:17. In this context, Paul is contending with individuals who oppose the knowledge of God (10:5) and attack Paul’s credibility (10:10);

¹⁴⁹cf. above p. 131.

¹⁵⁰On the relationship between Paul’s ministerial identity and the new covenant, cf. Bammel, “Paulus”, 399-408.

¹⁵¹Paul’s reference to “tablets of human hearts” (v. 3) also echoes new covenant texts (cf. Jer 31[38]:33; Ezek 11:19; 36:26-27).

¹⁵²Recent treatments of 2 Cor 3 include: Belleville, *Reflections of Glory*; Hafemann, *Paul, Moses*; Stockhausen, *Moses’ Veil*.

¹⁵³cf. Webb, *Returning Home*, 114-15.

¹⁵⁴Lane, “Covenant”, 10; cf. Munck, *Paul*, 25-27.

¹⁵⁵cf. above pp. 82-83.

¹⁵⁶cf. above pp. 144-45.

furthermore, they boast inappropriately. By contrast, Paul argues that he is engaged in the activity of God (10:8; 13:8-10). Moreover, as observed in the Psalms, the righteous are frequently depicted as needy and impoverished in comparison to the wicked.¹⁵⁷ In a related manner, the humble status of Paul's behaviour and self-presentation was apparently a common thread running through the charges levelled against him by his opponents.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, while Paul is confident that he will be approved by God and not ashamed (10:8, 17), he anticipates God's judgment of his opponents (11:15). On one level, these themes suggest a link between 2 Cor 10 and 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) that is not present between 2 Cor 10 and Jer 9:22-23. Like 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX), 2 Cor 10 involves an individual "boasting in the Lord" within the context of wicked opposition. By contrast, Jer 9 presents a prophetic oracle concerning boasting, not an example of an individual "boasting in the Lord." Thus, as with 1 Cor 1:31, links can be established between Paul's citation in 2 Cor 10:17 and both versions of the Jeremiah boasting maxim.

However, while this type of connection cannot be made between Jer 9 and 2 Cor 10, it can be made between 2 Cor 10 and the prophet Jeremiah. The triad of the righteous, the wicked and God appears within the laments of Jeremiah.¹⁵⁹ In opposing Jeremiah, his critics question the legitimacy of his prophetic ministry. "They keep saying to me, 'Where is the word of the Lord? Let it now be fulfilled!'" (Jer 17:15; cf. 20:10). In a similar manner, Paul notes that his critics have doubted that God is speaking through him (2 Cor 13:3). Other associations can also be noted between Paul's self-presentation in 2 Cor 10 and the laments of Jeremiah. Most significantly, in the context of external criticism, Jeremiah asserts that God is his "boast" (Jer 17:14).¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, as he appeals to God, Jeremiah contends that he has faithfully exercised his ministerial responsibilities; "I have not run away from being your shepherd" (Jer 17:16).¹⁶¹ Likewise, having made reference to the authority given to him by God (2 Cor 10:8), Paul argues that he has acted appropriately within that sphere of authority (2 Cor 10:12-18);¹⁶² in fact, the existence of the Corinthian church testifies to his ministerial legitimacy (2 Cor 10:13-14). An additional theme present in Jeremiah's laments concerns divine testing and approval. Although Jeremiah is criticised by his detractors, he argues that it is God who "tests" (δοκιμάζω) the heart and thoughts of an individual.¹⁶³ In a related manner, Paul argues that true commendation entails being "approved" (δοκιμος) by God (2 Cor 10:18; cf. 13:5-7).¹⁶⁴ Finally, in expressing his desire for vindication, Jeremiah

¹⁵⁷On the theme of the poverty of the righteous in the Psalms, cf. above pp. 66-68.

¹⁵⁸On the criticisms of Paul within the Corinthian context, cf. above pp. 111-19; on the status dimension of these charges, cf. above pp. 127-28.

¹⁵⁹Jer 11:18-12:6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23; 20:7-18.

¹⁶⁰MT: "you are the one I praise" (יְהוָה יְהַלְלֵנִי כִּי); LXX: "for you are my boast" (ὅτι καύχημά μου σὺ εἶ).

¹⁶¹cf. Jer 11:19; 12:3; 18:30; 20:7.

¹⁶²Concerning Jeremiah's defence of his ministry in 17:15-16 (LXX), Young and Ford (*Meaning*, 74) comment: "[t]his seems to be precisely what Paul is claiming about himself. Others demand proof that Christ speaks in him, but he knows that God is his 'boast', and his conscience is 'open' to God to whom ultimately he is answerable."

¹⁶³cf. Jer 11:20; 12:3; 17:10; 20:12. The theme of "divine testing" is also common in certain lament psalms, cf. 17:3; 26:2; 66:10; 139:1, 23.

¹⁶⁴For the view that κύριος in 2 Cor 10:17-18 refers to God rather than Jesus, cf. Wong, "2 Corinthians 10:17", 243-53; Foerster, "κύριος", 1087; Fitzmyer, "κύριος", 330.

prays that he might be kept from “shame” (καταισχύνω; 17:18).¹⁶⁵ The theme of “shame” (αἰσχύνομαι) also occurs in Paul’s confidence concerning the validity of his boasting (2 Cor 10:8). Thus, in facing opposition, both Jeremiah and Paul describe God as their “boast” and acknowledge him to be the one who approves the righteous and delivers them from shame. While these similarities do not prove that Paul was directly dependent on the laments of Jeremiah, they do suggest recurring themes in the response of these two individuals to the criticism of their activities. More generally, in evaluating the context of 2 Cor 10:17-18, certain links can be established with Jer 9 as well as with the ministry of Jeremiah and his anticipation of a new covenant.

(2) *The Participatory Dimension of 2 Cor 10:17*

An important question in the analysis of Paul’s use of the boasting saying of Jer 9 in 2 Cor 10:17-18 concerns the object of Paul’s boasting. Does this text have a participatory dimension? In other words, does this reference to “boasting in the Lord” involve participation in the object of one’s boast? In response to this question, it is important to note that the focus of Paul’s criticism is not boasting *per se* but inappropriate boasting. As the previous discussion has shown, the apparent contradiction between Paul’s claims of leadership and his humble status has made him vulnerable to charges of ἀλαζονεία.¹⁶⁶ A major element of his response in 2 Cor 10:1-11 is his assertion that his actions in Corinth will be consistent with the claims that he has made;¹⁶⁷ he can boast and not be “ashamed” (v. 8). In 2 Cor 10:12-16, he continues his argument by differentiating between his boasting and the boasting of his opponents. His boasting is “according to measure”, and his claims are buttressed by the existence of the Corinthian church.¹⁶⁸ By contrast, Paul contends that in boasting in the work of others, it is actually his opponents who are guilty of ἀλαζονεία. Thus, the point of debate between Paul and his critics is not whether or not one should boast, but whose boast is legitimate; vv. 17-18 are “the last assertions in Paul’s argument in 10.12-18 in support of his ability and willingness to ‘boast’ concerning his own authority (cf. 10.8), not, as is often argued, for why one ought not to boast or recommend oneself at all!”¹⁶⁹

While Paul may be understood to be boasting, what is his relationship with the object of his boast? For some, Paul’s “boast in the Lord” is equated with praise of God and excludes reference to Paul’s own actions. Thus, in reference to his ministerial achievements “Paul makes it quite clear that anything that has been achieved has been only through the Lord, not by Paul his servant.”¹⁷⁰ Similarly, Heckel stresses that in 2 Cor 10:17-18 Paul reflects the positive and negative use of καυχάομαι found in Jer 9 (LXX); this involves the antithesis between the self-praise of Paul’s opponents and his praise of the Lord, who has given him his apostolic authority and sphere of ministry.¹⁷¹ Accordingly, the distinction between inappropriate and appropriate boasting is a contrast between “Selbstruhm” and

¹⁶⁵cf. Jer 17:13; 20:11 (αἰσχύνομαι).

¹⁶⁶cf. above pp. 118-19; for the standard portrayal of the ἀλαζών in Graeco-Roman literature, cf. above pp. 39-40.

¹⁶⁷cf. above p. 135.

¹⁶⁸cf. above p. 139.

¹⁶⁹Hafemann, “Self-Commendation”, 74; cf. Lambrecht, “Dangerous Boasting”, 327.

¹⁷⁰Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 492; cf. Barrett, “Boasting”, 367.

¹⁷¹Heckel, “Jer 9,22f.”, 207-8. Central to Heckel’s understanding of 2 Cor 10:17-18 is the way in which καυχάομαι can refer to “self-praise” as well as “praise of God” (cf. Kraft, 183-93).

“Gotteslob”.¹⁷² Heckel is correct in stressing the theocentric focus of Paul’s boasting. Throughout 2 Cor 10:1-18 Paul insists that his authority and sphere of ministry operations have been given to him by God. However, does this emphasis mean that Paul’s boast focuses only on God’s activity in his ministry? The boasting passage Paul cites as well as the context of 2 Cor 10:17-18 provide assistance in answering this question.

On Paul’s use of the boasting maxim of Jer 9, several points can be noted. First, as has been argued above, a participatory dimension appears to be evident in Jer 9:22-23 as well as 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX);¹⁷³ thus, Paul is utilising a passage in which “boasting in the Lord” can include reference to one’s own participation in the object of the boast. Furthermore, 2 Cor 10:17-18 places Paul’s reference to boasting within a context that entails the triadic relationship between the righteous, the “wicked”, and God. In such contexts, boasting in God may involve participation in the object of the boast. In the lament psalms, as we saw earlier, praise of God can be coupled with declarations of innocence and requests for vindication.¹⁷⁴ In the context of the oppression of the wicked, one’s boast in God is an expression of one’s confidence in God and one’s confidence in God’s ability to deliver and vindicate his people. More significant for 2 Cor 10:17-18, these themes are coupled in Jeremiah’s laments. While Jeremiah states that God is his “boast” (Jer 17:14), he can also state his innocence (Jer 17:16) and request divine vengeance on his enemies (Jer 17:18).¹⁷⁵

Although this evidence does not prove that Paul’s citation has a self-referential facet, it does show that such a dimension was present in the boasting passage he used and in the boasting of Jeremiah, a prophet whose ministry appears to be related to Paul’s self-presentation in 2 Cor 10. Moreover, the broader contexts of 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17 suggest that Paul’s depiction of “boasting in the Lord” may include reference to the activity of the one boasting. It has already been suggested that Paul’s use of this saying in 1 Cor 1:31 does not disallow the possibility of a participatory element at work.¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, 2 Cor 10:12-18 may also reflect the self-referential dimension to proper boasting evident in Jeremiah. In Jer 9:22-23, the participatory element is evident in the concept of boasting in one’s knowledge of God; in Jeremiah, to know God is to respond in obedience to God. Similarly, in 2 Cor 10:12, Paul states that the boasting of his opponents reflects a lack of knowledge of God. In view of the ongoing contrast in this passage between Paul and his opponents, Paul’s reference to “boasting in the Lord” may entail the assertion that Paul does have authentic knowledge of God.¹⁷⁷

Further evidence for a participatory dimension in 2 Cor 10:17 concerns the relationship between Paul’s boasting and divine commendation. For some, Paul’s boast in the Lord is simply a boast in what God has achieved through the apostle. “To ‘boast in the Lord’ means, therefore, to be able to point to what the Lord himself has done in or through one’s ministry or life to substantiate the particular claim being made.”¹⁷⁸ Thus, Paul’s “boast

¹⁷²Heckel, *Kraft*, 167.

¹⁷³cf. above pp. 77-81.

¹⁷⁴cf. above p. 72.

¹⁷⁵In the laments of Jeremiah, declarations of innocence are also found at 11:19; 12:3; 15:16-18; 18:20 and 20:7; in addition to 17:18, requests for vengeance are found at 11:20; 12:3-4; 15:15; 18:21-22 and 20:11-12.

¹⁷⁶cf. above pp. 146-49.

¹⁷⁷This assertion of Paul’s knowledge of God becomes explicit at 11:6; on this passage, cf. above pp. 114-15.

¹⁷⁸Hafemann, “‘Self-Commendation’”, 83; cf. Wong, “Boasting”, 229; Callan, “Boasting”, 145.

in the Lord” provides evidence of the legitimacy of Paul’s ministerial claims.¹⁷⁹ To some extent, in equating the content of Paul’s boast with divine commendation, the self-referential aspect of boasting is minimised. What is the relationship between Paul’s boasting and his commendation by God?

Several factors suggest that appropriate boasting and divine commendation cannot simply be equated in Paul’s argument. As stated above,¹⁸⁰ Paul has probably been accused of improper boasting by his critics; they have asserted that his ministerial claims are false. Paul responds by affirming that his boasting is legitimate and truthful, while the boasting of his opponents is not. In both Graeco-Roman and Jewish sources, truthfulness is a central component in the evaluation of boasting. In Graeco-Roman sources, illegitimate boasting made one vulnerable to charges of *ἀλαζονεία*;¹⁸¹ in Jewish texts, improper boasting is associated with those whose opposition to God leads to divine judgment.¹⁸² From Paul’s perspective, his boasting has been consistent with divine standards; by contrast, his opponents have simply boasted by comparing themselves to each other. To bolster the legitimacy of his claims he notes the existence of the Corinthian church; the presence of a church in Corinth verifies Paul’s apostolic authority. This same type of argument occurs in vv. 17-18. In these verses, Paul describes two types of boasting--improper boasting and “boasting in the Lord”; one type of boasting receives divine approval, the other does not. The contrast between these types of boasting suggests that divine commendation follows the “boast in the Lord” rather than being the subject of that boast.

Additionally, the notion of divine commendation may involve an eschatological perspective. This suggests that Paul’s boasting and his commendation should not be equated. In reference to his opponents, Paul anticipates a future judgment when they will receive the just reward of their actions (11:15).¹⁸³ Along similar lines, while Paul acknowledges that his boasts have been vindicated by the establishment of the Corinthian church, his “boasting in the Lord” may also anticipate an act of final commendation and vindication when he will boast “in the day of the Lord Jesus” (2 Cor 1:14). Furthermore, although he can boast with the confidence that he will not be “shamed” by God (11:8),¹⁸⁴ he acknowledges that in the immediate future he may experience divine humiliation (12:21); this statement implies that divine commendation may be delayed. Consequently, both the passage that Paul quotes and the broader context in which this citation is used suggest that a participatory dimension may be at work in 2 Cor 10:17-18. As he boasts in the Lord, Paul expresses confidence in God and confidence that his participation in God’s activity will receive divine approval.

In his response to his critics, Paul’s argument in 2 Cor 10 does show that the apostle engages in boasting. Underlying this chapter is the debate between Paul and his opponents concerning legitimate boasting. As he contrasts his boasting with that of his opponents, he states that he boasts according to divine standards, while they boast by comparing themselves to others. Consequently, he argues that his opponents are engaged in *ἀλαζονεία* because their

¹⁷⁹“Self-commendation and recommendation by God here coincide” (Lambrecht, “Dangerous Boasting”, 334).

¹⁸⁰cf. pp. 118-19.

¹⁸¹cf. above pp. 39-40.

¹⁸²cf. above pp. 61-62, 106.

¹⁸³On this verse, cf. above n137.

¹⁸⁴On this interpretation of 11:8, cf. above p. 134.

standards are inappropriate. As proof of his case, he reminds his readers that he is the founder of the Corinthian church. In developing his argument, Paul appeals to the boasting saying of Jer 9. The use of this saying in both 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17 suggests links with the triadic relationship between the righteous, the wicked and God evident in Jewish literature. Thus, in using this saying, he expresses his confidence in God and his confidence that his work is not in vain, despite the opposition of his critics.

B. 2 COR 11-12 AND THE “FOOL’S DISCOURSE”

1. Overview of 2 Cor 11:1-12:10

a) 11:1-21a

With the beginning of 2 Cor 11, the theme of foolishness becomes prominent in Paul’s self-presentation. While he makes reference to being received as a “fool” in 11:1, he does not actually enter into “fool’s” boasting until 11:21b; the introduction to the “fool’s discourse” can be divided into three sections: 11:1-6, 11:7-15 and 11:16-21a. As the prologue begins, Paul expresses his unfulfilled wish (ὄφελον)¹⁸⁵ that the Corinthians would put up with his foolishness (11:1a). Generally, this clause is understood to be a reference to Paul’s subsequent foolish boasting; however, Christfried Böttrich argues that it refers to Paul’s actions that have been interpreted as foolish by his critics.¹⁸⁶ According to this view, since some have criticised Paul’s self-presentation as “foolish” (v. 1a), Paul will now boast according to the standards of his critics--an action that he in turn considers to be foolish (v. 1b). Although this view presumes subtle distinctions between the clauses of this verse, it is consistent with Paul’s assertion that he and his opponents are using different criteria to evaluate self-praise (cf. 10:12). Consistent with this view is the interpretation of ἀνέχεσθε (v. 1b) as an imperative rather than an indicative; thus, Paul is commanding the Corinthians to accept him as a fool.¹⁸⁷ In making reference to his reception as a fool,¹⁸⁸ Paul could be arguing that since the Corinthians accept the foolishness of his opponents, they should also accept him as he plays the fool. In favour of this view are vv. 2-6, which explain why the Corinthians should be receptive of Paul.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, this interpretation is consistent with the comparison between Paul and his opponents that is at work throughout this passage. Regardless of the specific meaning of this verse, in referring to “foolishness” and his reception by the Corinthian church, Paul begins to prepare his audience for the foolish boasting that will follow.¹⁹⁰

The γάρ of v. 2 links this statement with Paul’s desire to be received by the Corinthian congregation (v. 1). In making his appeal to the church, Paul provides several lines of argument.¹⁹¹ First, he speaks of a “divine jealousy” (θεοῦ ζήλω) that he has for the congregation. With this assertion Paul is claiming to be genuinely concerned for the

¹⁸⁵BDF (§359[1]) notes that the ὄφελον functions in this clause to “express an unattainable wish” (cf. 1 Cor 4:8; Gal 5:12); BDR §359(1) translates ὄφελον ἀνείχεσθε with “möchtet ihr doch ertragen”.

¹⁸⁶Böttrich, “2 Kor 11,1”, 139.

¹⁸⁷Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 485; Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 271; RSV, NRSV.

¹⁸⁸Zmijewski (*Stil*, 78) identifies v. 1 as a sylleptic construction in which the concept of ἀφοροσύνη is understood to apply to both clauses.

¹⁸⁹cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 485-86.

¹⁹⁰BDF §495(3) suggests that v. 1 is an example of *prodiorthosis*, in which Paul begs his readers in advance to indulge him in the boasting that will follow (cf. Prümm, *Diakonia*, 2/2.127).

¹⁹¹cf. Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 199.

Corinthians. Having been accused of deceptive self-presentation, his devotion to the Corinthians has probably been called into question (cf. v. 11). Moreover, in describing his concern as “divine jealousy”, Paul is placing his affection for the Corinthians within the context of his service to God. Paul has “betrothed” (ἡρμοσάμην) the congregation to Christ¹⁹² and it is his desire to present the church as a pure bride to her husband. However, he fears that the church may be deceived just as the serpent deceived Eve; thus, in some sense, Paul is contrasting his actions (v. 2) with the “craftiness” (πανουργία)¹⁹³ of his opponents (v. 3). In view of this situation, a further motivation for the appeal of v. 1 is the church’s susceptibility to false teachers (v. 4).¹⁹⁴ Additionally, Paul’s appeal is based on his assertion that he is not inferior to his critics (v. 5), even if his public presentation may be unimpressive (v. 6).

Having stated that he is not deficient in his knowledge of God and the gospel (v. 6), Paul makes reference to his financial status.¹⁹⁵ Apparently, some had questioned his “self-humiliation” (ἐμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν; v. 7) in refusing support and participating in manual labour; furthermore, in accepting support from other churches, he was also vulnerable to the charge that he had not treated the Corinthian church like he treated other churches. Nonetheless, Paul states that his “boasting” (καύχησις) will not be “silenced” (φραγήσεται; cf. Rom 3:19) in the districts of Achaia (v. 10). This assertion is stated in the form of an oath that underscores his claim of truthfulness.¹⁹⁶ While Paul’s “fool’s discourse” includes self-praise that he deems inappropriate, this does not seem to be the case with v. 10. This statement is not one of ironic parody. Rather, as in 10:8, it expresses Paul’s confidence that his boasting will not be stopped, despite the perception by some that his self-presentation lacks the status necessary to exercise leadership.

Since this statement is closely preceded and followed by Paul’s promise to continue in his refusal of support (vv. 9, 12), the content of this “boasting” may involve his commitment to proclaim the gospel free of charge (cf. 1 Cor 9:15). If this is the case, Paul is not boasting in the way God has confirmed his ministry; rather, Paul is boasting in his participation in the proclamation of the gospel—participation that entails vulnerability and humiliation. Paul argues that he will maintain his financial policy in order to “do away with any opportunity...for them to boast” (v. 12).¹⁹⁷ If these opponents accepted financial support from the Corinthians, then Paul’s acceptance of similar assistance would give them grounds to claim equality with him. Just as Paul asserts that his boasting will not be silenced (v. 10), he also states that he will prevent his critics from having a basis on which to boast in a corresponding manner.

¹⁹²Richard Batey (*Nuptial Imagery*, 12, 16-17) states that Paul is “[a]ssuming the role of a father’s agent who has been delegated to betroth the father’s Son” (cf. *m. Qidd.* 2.1). Batey compares this image with the rabbinic concept of the agent who negotiated the covenant marriage of Israel to God at Sinai (cf. *Ex. Rab.* 41:5 [on Ex 31:18]; *Ex. Rab.* 46:1 [on Ex 34:1]).

¹⁹³In 4:2 Paul denies that his actions entail πανουργία.

¹⁹⁴Furnish, (*II Corinthians*, 488) connects the γάρ of v. 4 with the appeal of v. 1.

¹⁹⁵On the issue of Paul’s financial support, cf. above pp. 115-17.

¹⁹⁶ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐμοί; for other oath formulas in 2 Cor, cf. 1:18, 23; 2:10; 11:11, 31 (Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 493).

¹⁹⁷Louw and Nida, *Lexicon*, 160.

The *πάλιν λέγω* as well as the *μικρόν τι* of v. 16 resume the request of v. 1.¹⁹⁸ In addition to preparing the reader for the boasting that is to follow, vv. 16-21a also provide grounds for Paul's utilisation of this form of self-presentation. Paul's foolish boasting is done in response to the welcome that certain false teachers have received within the Corinthian congregation.¹⁹⁹ Since they have welcomed those who are "foolish" (*ἄφρωνων*; v. 19), they should also "welcome" (*δέξασθε*; v. 16) Paul as he plays the role of a fool.²⁰⁰ Similarly, in the epilogue of this discourse, Paul repeats that he has assumed this form of self-presentation in response to the actions of the Corinthians (12:11). Thus, implicit in the argument of vv. 16-21 is a criticism of those within the Corinthian congregation who have welcomed Paul's opponents. The Corinthians, whom Paul ironically describes as being "wise" (*φρόνιμοι*; v. 19),²⁰¹ have accepted these teachers and allowed them some degree of influence within the church (vv. 19-20); by contrast, Paul describes these opponents as fools (v. 19).

b) 11:21b-12:10

Having prepared his audience for his boasting as a fool, Paul now begins to boast.²⁰² Central to this boasting is Paul's comparison of himself with his opponents. He begins with three rhetorical questions concerning the identity of his opponents as "Hebrews" (*Εβραῖοι*),²⁰³ "Israelites" (*Ἰσραηλῖται*) and "Abraham's descendants" (*σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ*; v. 22);²⁰⁴ with each question, Paul asserts that he is equally qualified (*κἀγώ*). However, when Paul asks if his opponents are "servants of Christ" (*διάκονοι Χριστοῦ*; v. 23),²⁰⁵ he does not maintain equality but superiority (*ὑπὲρ*²⁰⁶ *ἐγώ*). Marshall notes that in this shift from equality to superiority, Paul places himself ahead of his critics "in the thing which really matters."²⁰⁷ Paul develops this claim of superiority in terms of his hardships, which are listed in a *peristasis* catalogue.²⁰⁸ Included in this list are various obstacles and dangers he has encountered in ministry, such as the threat from "false brothers" (*ψευδαδέλφοις*; v. 26). Most likely, this term refers to Paul's opponents in Corinth, and its presence at the end of this list emphasises the serious nature of this opposition.²⁰⁹ V. 27 contains themes also present in

¹⁹⁸cf. Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 225.

¹⁹⁹*ἀνέχεσθε*: 11:1, 4, 19, 20. In describing the Corinthians' receptivity of these teachers, vv. 19-20 look back to v. 4 (cf. Zmijewski, *Stil*, 205; Prümm, *Diakonia*, 1:634).

²⁰⁰Zmijewski (*Stil*, 205) notes that v. 19 continues the thought of v. 16, by supplying grounds for the imperative of v. 16 (cf. Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 211).

²⁰¹Similarly, in 1 Cor 4:10, Paul ironically labels the Corinthians as *φρόνιμοι*, within the context of their criticism of him.

²⁰²Concerning the structure of 11:21-29; cf. the diagram in Kleinknecht, *Der leidende Gerechtfertigte*, 288.

²⁰³Martin Hengel (*Pre-Christian Paul*, 25) states that this term refers to a Jew "who in origin and education had extremely close connections with the mother country and who therefore also understood Hebrew."

²⁰⁴Concerning the identity of Paul's opponents, cf. above p. 110.

²⁰⁵Hans-Georg Sundermann (*Der schwache Apostel*, 133) notes that *διάκονοι Χριστοῦ* functions as a central term uniting the various examples listed in vv. 23-29.

²⁰⁶This a rare adverbial use of *ὑπὲρ*; BAGD (839) translates *διάκονοι Χριστοῦ εἰσιν; ὑπὲρ ἐγώ* as: "are they servants of Christ? I am so even more (than they)". On this use of *ὑπὲρ*, cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 373-74. Zmijewski (*Stil*, 242) argues that *ὑπὲρ ἐγώ* functions as a superlative; however, the comparative nature of the context weighs against this view.

²⁰⁷Marshall, *Enmity*, 351.

²⁰⁸Concerning *peristasis* catalogues, cf. above p. 121.

²⁰⁹cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 537; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 379; Zmijewski, *Stil*, 259.

Paul's list of hardships in 1 Cor 4:11-12²¹⁰ and 2 Cor 6:4-10.²¹¹ Similar to the patterns of 1 Cor 4 and 2 Cor 6,²¹² the items listed include factors associated with his participation in manual labour.²¹³ Thus, in some sense, they are difficulties related to Paul's refusal of support from the Corinthians and his humble self-presentation within the Corinthian context.

Not only does Paul highlight his own humble status, he also notes his concern and involvement with those of low social standing. Paul underscores his "anxiety" (μέριμνα; v. 28) for the churches under his leadership with two questions: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?" (v. 29; NRSV). While some argue that the first question refers to those weak in faith,²¹⁴ certain contextual factors suggest that this may refer to those who are vulnerable because they are powerless and lack social standing.²¹⁵ Elsewhere in 2 Cor 10-13, the theme of weakness is associated with Paul's unimpressive self-presentation (cf. 10:10; 13:3-4); similarly, in v. 30 Paul boasts in his weaknesses. Thus, Forbes paraphrases v. 29a in this manner: "who among Christians finds themselves in a state of humiliation, and I do not share their experience?"²¹⁶ If Paul is speaking of those who are weak in terms of social standing, then this verse underscores his desire to identify with those of humble status.²¹⁷ Consistent with his assertion that he has been "too weak" (ἡσθενήκαμεν) to deal with the Corinthians in the same heavy-handed manner as his opponents (vv. 20-21),²¹⁸ Paul stresses his affiliation with the weak.

In v. 30, Paul states that if he must boast, he will boast of those things that show his "weaknesses" (ἀσθενείας). Lambrecht argues that this statement reveals Paul's hesitancy in boasting.²¹⁹ However, Paul may simply be acknowledging the reality that he is in a situation where it is necessary for him to boast. According to Graeco-Roman rhetorical conventions, since Paul had been accused of being an impostor, his situation provided legitimate grounds for self-praise.²²⁰ Even Plutarch, who is critical of flamboyant self-presentation, acknowledges that "self-praise goes unresented if you are defending your good name or answering a charge" (*Mor.* 540C; cf. 541C).²²¹ Self-praise was acceptable in such circumstances because one's reputation and honour had been challenged. In view of the

²¹⁰cf. κοπιάω (1 Cor 4:12)/κόπος (2 Cor 11:27); γυμνιεύω (1 Cor 4:11)/γυμνότης (2 Cor 11:27); πεινάω (1 Cor 4:11)/λιμός (2 Cor 11:27); διψάω (1 Cor 4:11)/δίψος (2 Cor 11:27; cf. Ebner, *Leidenslisten*, 141).

²¹¹κόπος, ἀγρυπνία, and νηστεία occur in both 2 Cor 6:5 and 2 Cor 11:27.

²¹²cf. above p. 121.

²¹³The terms "labour" and "toil" (κόπω και μόχθος; 11:27) also occur together in 1 Thess 2:9 and 2 Thess 3:8, where they refer explicitly to Paul's involvement in manual labour.

²¹⁴cf. Zmijewski, *Stil*, 273; Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 217; Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 236.

²¹⁵cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 382; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 550.

²¹⁶Forbes, "Self-Praise", 20. Scott Andrews ("2 Cor 11.23b-33", 270) states that the "apostle uses ἀσθενέω to mark himself as one of low social status who is able to sympathize with others who find themselves in a slavish and powerless position." For a discussion of the status implications of ἀσθενεία in 1 Cor 8-10, cf. Theissen, *Social Setting*, 121-43.

²¹⁷cf. 1 Cor 9:22; Martin, *Slavery*, 117-35. This desire may have contributed to his refusal of financial support from the Corinthians (cf. 11:7).

²¹⁸Scott Andrews ("Paul's Opponents", 472-77) argues that Paul draws upon the ancient *topos* on tyranny in describing his opponents in 2 Cor 11:19-20.

²¹⁹Lambrecht, "Dangerous Boasting", 337.

²²⁰A variety of rhetorical handbooks note the acceptability of self-praise in response to the charges of an opponent, cf. above pp. 47 (n152), 49.

²²¹On Plutarch's discussion of the use of self-praise in situations of self-defence, cf. above p. 48-52.

common expectation that one's achievements were to be acknowledged,²²² an attack on one's social standing created a situation in which boasting was expected. Failure to respond in such a situation simply added credence to the attacks of one's opposition. As a result, self-praise was generally deemed acceptable when it was done as a matter of "necessity". Consequently, *καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ* may be Paul's recognition that his circumstances demand that he engage in boasting. If he does not reply to the charges of his opponents, he might appear to be conceding that their claims about his character are true. The reference to the necessity of boasting echoes his earlier statements that he is boasting in response to the self-presentation of his opponents (11:18-21).²²³

In some sense, 11:30 provides a summary statement to Paul's *peristasis* catalogue, and it suggests that the diverse obstacles enumerated in vv. 23-29 can be summarised under the heading of "weakness".²²⁴ Furnish notes that this reference to "weakness" would include the adversities listed in vv. 23-29 as well as the personal characteristics²²⁵ and behaviour²²⁶ which at least some in Corinth had regarded as inappropriate for leadership.²²⁷ Consistent with his boasting in weakness, Paul makes reference to his escape from Damascus via a window in the city wall (vv. 32-3). This recounting of Paul's undistinguished exit down a wall may be intended as an intentional reversal of the Roman *corona muralis*, which was a military award given to the first soldier to go over the wall of an enemy city.²²⁸ If this is the case, Paul's descent stands as a humble and weak contrast to the bravery characteristic of a decorated soldier.²²⁹

At 12:1, the topic of Paul's discussions shifts to "visions and revelations" (*ὄπτασιας καὶ ἀποκαλύψεις*). While once again asserting that it is necessary for him to boast (*καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ*), Paul avows that this activity is not beneficial (*οὐ συμφέρον*). This reference to the necessity of boasting combined with a negative assessment of its benefit suggests a link with the argument of 11:18-21. Like 11:18-21, 12:1 provides a disclaimer for the boasting that follows. Since Paul associates his "fool's discourse" with the competitive boasting of his opponents (cf. 11:18; 12:11), he may be responding to boasts that they have made concerning supernatural experiences.²³⁰

In vv. 2-4, Paul recounts a visionary experience that occurred fourteen years earlier; in describing this incident, he uses third person singular forms. A variety of explanations

²²²On the close link between achievement and recognition in Graeco-Roman thought, cf. above pp. 15-21.

²²³Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 521.

²²⁴cf. Zmijewski, *Stil*, 278-79; Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 217.

²²⁵e.g., Paul's self-presentation, cf. 10:1, 10.

²²⁶e.g., Paul's financial activities, cf. 11:7.

²²⁷Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 539. Heckel (*Kraft*, 33) argues that this use of *ἀσθενεία* (as well as the occurrences in 12: 5, 9, and 10) describes an inclusive general concept ("umfassenden Oberbegriff").

²²⁸cf. Livy *History* 6.20.8; 10.66.3; 26.48.5.

²²⁹cf. Judge, "Conflict", 44-45; Forbes, "Self-Praise", 20-21; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 538; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 227.

²³⁰Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 51, 543; Sumney, *Opponents*, 167-68; Georgi, *Opponents*, 281-83.

have been offered concerning the significance of the use of the third person.²³¹ For example, it is possible that use of the third person reflects Paul's desire to downplay his supernatural experiences as a basis for boasting. However, it may be the case that Paul's use of the third person is related to the use of pseudonymity in Jewish apocalyptic literature. "Although there is no question of pseudonymity here, the distancing of oneself from a visionary experience, by speaking about it in the name of another, is the literary style of Jewish apocalyptic."²³² Concerning this experience, Paul states that he will not boast (v. 5). However, he argues that if he did "choose" (θελήσω) to do so, he would not be guilty of ἀλαζονεία, because he would be speaking the truth (v. 6). Forbes notes that this Paul's assertion provides a deliberate contrast with Paul's opponents. "They, in their ἀλαζονεία, boast of qualities which they do not have. Paul will not even boast of those which he does possess."²³³

Consistent with his boasting in weakness, Paul refers to a "thorn in the flesh" (σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί) that he had received. Although he does not state the specific nature of this difficulty,²³⁴ he does stress that the purpose of this obstacle was to prevent him from becoming arrogant. His reference to the σκόλοψ τῆ σαρκί is both preceded and followed by the same purpose clause: ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι (v. 7). The use of ὑπεραίρω, a compounded verb involving the preposition ὑπέρ, may involve an allusion to the competitive boastfulness of Paul's opponents,²³⁵ whom Paul elsewhere describes as "superior apostles" (ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων; 11:5; 12:11).²³⁶ Thus, their arrogant claims of superior leadership stand in contrast to Paul's focus on humility and weakness.

While Paul prayed that this problem might be removed (v. 8), God's answer to this request did not include removal of this obstacle. However, God's reply did provide the foundation for Paul's boasting in weakness: ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται (v. 9). Consequently, Paul will rather boast in his weaknesses (ἥδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχῆσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου; v. 9). Most likely μᾶλλον does not modify ἥδιστα but maintains its comparative force;²³⁷ thus, some form of comparison is present. In view of the discussion of visions and revelations earlier in the chapter, Paul may be saying that he would rather boast in his weaknesses than in his supernatural experiences;²³⁸ he would rather boast in his weaknesses because the power of Christ is manifested in weakness (v. 9).

²³¹ cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 543-44. Horrell (*Social Ethos*, 227, 227n152) suggests that the use of the third person is actually an "ingenious approach" that enables Paul to relate an experience worthy of boasting, while he denies that he is boasting in it. Horrell suggests a parallel with Plutarch's recommendation that self-praise can be achieved by praising others whose aims and deeds are like one's own (*Mor.* 542E-543A). However, the parallels with Plutarch are not exact (cf. Dillon, "Response", 17); Plutarch does not state that orators should speak of their experiences as if they were the experiences of others.

²³² Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 385; cf. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 543.

²³³ Forbes, "Self-Praise", 21.

²³⁴ For a summary of interpretations, cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 413-16.

²³⁵ cf. Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 568; Louw and Nida (*Lexicon*, 1.765) state that ὑπεραίρωμαι means "to become puffed up with pride, with the probable implication of being disparaging toward others".

²³⁶ On the identity of the "superior apostles", cf. above p. 110 (n13).

²³⁷ cf. BDF §246; Robertson, *Grammar*, 664; Lambrecht, "Dangerous Boasting", 337n26.

²³⁸ Black, *Paul*, 152; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 575; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 421.

In v. 10, Paul states that he will delight in “weaknesses” (ἀσθενείας), “insults” (ὑβρεσιν),²³⁹ “hardships” (ἀνάγκαις), “persecutions” (διωγμοῖς), and “distresses” (στενοχωρίαίς); in this context, “‘weaknesses’ is most likely a general term, incorporating within it the following four groups which may be considered evidences or manifestations of the infirmities of the apostle.”²⁴⁰ Thus, Paul’s weaknesses include physical hardships as well as the actions and criticisms of his opponents; his weaknesses involve situations that reveal his vulnerability and powerlessness. Paul willingly boasts in his weaknesses, because when he is “weak” (ἀσθενῶ), then he is “strong” (δυνατός; v. 10).²⁴¹ In highlighting the theme of strength in weakness, Paul is aligning himself with the ministry of Christ, who was “crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God” (13:4).²⁴² Thus, against criticism that he lacks the social status necessary for leadership, Paul argues that his weaknesses provide the setting in which God’s power is operative. Consequently, he contends that his humble self-presentation is actually an authenticating sign of his leadership rather than evidence against its validity.

2. Paul and the Boasting of His Opponents

a) The Theme of “Foolishness”

With the survey of 11:1-12:10 in view, closer attention can now be directed at Paul’s critique of his opponents’ boasting in the “fool’s discourse.” Central to these chapters is the theme of “foolishness” (ἄφροσύνη).²⁴³ Generally, Paul’s self-presentation as a “fool” is associated with the use irony in these chapters.²⁴⁴ In his references to foolishness, Paul underscores his criticism of his opponents. He argues that the behaviour of these detractors reveals a lack of understanding (10:12); furthermore, the Corinthians have acted foolishly in receiving these individuals (11:19). In examining these chapters, what is the nature of the “foolishness” which Paul describes? From Paul’s perspective, what does it mean to be a “fool”?

In Graeco-Roman literature, the theme of “foolishness” can be associated with ἀλαζονεία.²⁴⁵ For example, in his discussion of self-praise, Aristides states that “we call him a humbug [ἀλαζόνα], a fool [βλαῦκα], and a man of unsound character, who, I think, cloaks himself in an ostentation beyond his resources” (*Or.* 28.12). Thus, foolishness can be associated with those who make false claims about their status and social standing. Similarly, as Plutarch addresses the topic of inoffensive self-praise, he notes that the one who boasts in the achievements of another is a “fool”; “[f]or the proverb makes of him who sets

²³⁹Concerning Paul’s opponents, Marshall (*Enmity*, 202) notes that their “invidious comparisons ... can properly be described as *hybris*. It is possible that Paul alludes to this arrogant maltreatment of him by his use of ἐν ὑβρεσιν in 12:10.”

²⁴⁰Black, *Paul*, 158; cf. Ebner, *Leidenslisten*, 193.

²⁴¹On the theme of “strength in weakness”, cf. below p. 166.

²⁴²For similarities between 2 Cor 12:7-10 and the ministry of Jesus Christ, cf. McCant, “Paul’s Thorn”, 571; cf. also Güttemanns, *Der leidende Apostel*, 154-70; Wolff, “Humility”, 154-59.

²⁴³ἄφροσύνη: 11:1, 17, 21; ἄφρων: 11:16 (2x), 19; 12:6, 11. For an exhaustive survey of secondary literature on the theme of foolishness in 2 Cor 10-13, cf. Wong, “Boasting”, 6-48.

²⁴⁴On the use of irony in 2 Cor 10-13, cf. Spencer, “Wise Fool”, 349-60; Loubser, “2 Corinthians 10-13”, 507-21; Zmijewski, *Stil, passim*; Heckel, *Kraft*, 20-22; Forbes, “Self-Praise”, 10-13, 16-18; cf. also Plank, *Irony, passim*.

²⁴⁵cf. Betz, *Apostel*, 74-75.

foot in another's chorus a meddler and a fool [γελοῖον]" (*Mor.* 540B).²⁴⁶ Since foolishness can be closely linked with boasting, the theme of foolishness is relevant to Paul's situation in the Corinthian context. Paul himself acknowledges the relationship between ἀλαζονεία and foolishness when he affirms that he could "boast" (καυχήσασθαι) about his experiences without being a "fool" (ἄφρων) because he would be speaking the "truth" (ἀλήθειαν; 12:6). Having been accused of ἀλαζονεία,²⁴⁷ Paul may have been described as a "fool" by his opponents.²⁴⁸

In addressing this theme, Marshall notes that "foolishness" is also associated with a lack of self-knowledge. "[T]he fool is the person who has lost the awareness of his own limitations and indulges in shameful self-praise and excessive forms of behaviour."²⁴⁹ For example, Aristotle notes that the "vain" (χαῦνοι) are "foolish persons [ἡλίθοι] who are deficient in self-knowledge [ἐαυτοὺς ἀγνοοῦντες]" (*EN* 4.3.36). Aristotle's statement is consistent with the Delphi maxim, "know thyself" (γινῶναι ἐαυτόν). Consistent with this maxim, a variety of Graeco-Roman sources depict self-knowledge as a foundational element of wisdom and ethics.²⁵⁰ For instance, in a discourse on kingship, Dio Chrysostom depicts Diogenes warning Alexander the Great that "no foolish [ἀφρόνων] and evil man knows himself; else Apollo would not have given as the first commandment, 'Know thyself!' regarding it as the most difficult thing for every man" (*Or.* 4.57).

A theme closely related to self-knowledge is moderation. Noting that self-knowledge is "an important component" of "moderation" (σωφροσύνη),²⁵¹ Marshall argues that Paul's use of the "foolish" motif accentuates the immoderate boasting of his enemies; by contrast, Paul reflects the "conventional language of moderation to commend his own apostolic behaviour" (e.g., use of μέτρον in 2 Cor 10).²⁵² Consistent with this link between foolishness and immoderate behaviour, various scholars observe that the antonym of ἀφροσύνη is σωφροσύνη.²⁵³ Furnish notes that in 1 Cor 1-4, the "foolish" motif is expressed by μωρία (1:18, 21, 23; 2:14; 3:19) and τὸ μωρόν (1:25; 4:10) rather than ἀφροσύνη and its related terms; he states that the former terms are contrasted with σοφός, while the opposite of ἀφροσύνη is σωφροσύνη.²⁵⁴ Although foolishness is associated with deficient self-knowledge and immoderate behaviour, some note that the character of the "fool" can also be an intentional form of self-presentation. Thus, suggesting links between Socrates and Paul, Betz argues that Paul's "fool's discourse" is an intentional parody on the boasting of his opponents, in which he assumes the theatrical "role of the 'fool'--a literary role which goes back to the old Greek Mimos."²⁵⁵

²⁴⁶cf. *Mor.* 673D; Aris. *EN* 4.7.10; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 4.125-26; cf. also Leutsch and Schneidewin, *Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum*, 2:690.

²⁴⁷cf. above pp. 118-19.

²⁴⁸cf. Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 529; Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 291; Betz, "Rhetoric", 41.

²⁴⁹Marshall, *Enmity*, 352; cf. Betz, *Apostel*, 74-75.

²⁵⁰For citations of this maxim in Graeco-Roman literature, cf. Wilkins, "Know Thyself", 100-4.

²⁵¹Marshall, *Enmity*, 192; on "moderation" in Graeco-Roman literature, cf. Helen North, *Sophrosyne*.

²⁵²Marshall, *Enmity*, 193-94, 200-1; on the issue of moderation in 2 Cor 10:12-16, cf. above p. 136.

²⁵³cf. Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 200; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 497n12.

²⁵⁴Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 485.

²⁵⁵Betz, "Apology", 9; cf. Betz, *Apostel*, 79-89; Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 316; Wolff, *Der zweite Brief*, 208-9; Georgi, *Opponents*, 337. On Betz's approach to 2 Cor 10-13 and the theme of the suffering sage, cf. below pp. 172-73.

While “foolishness” is contrasted with moderation and self-knowledge in Graeco-Roman literature, do these themes adequately explain Paul’s use of the motif of the fool? As he depicts foolishness, does Paul simply focus on deficient self-knowledge that results in immoderate behaviour? Several factors suggest that other elements, which are associated with the theme of foolishness in Jewish literature, may also be present. First, Paul’s use of ἄφρων and ἀφροσύνη rather than μωρία and τὸ μωρὸν does not prove that a deficiency in self-knowledge is the emphasis of the “foolishness” theme in 2 Cor 11-12;²⁵⁶ the lexical distinctions between ἀφροσύνη and μωρία are not absolute. For example, while 1 Cor 1-4 and 2 Cor 11-12 use different terms in reference to foolishness, in both passages foolishness is contrasted with φρόνιμος.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, the context of 2 Cor 10-13 suggests that the theme of foolishness has theological overtones. In 10:12, Paul argues that the boastful actions of his opponents reveal a lack of understanding; in contrast to their behaviour, he will boast according to the standards established by God (10:13-16). As suggested above, the lack of knowledge depicted in 10:12 is a deficiency in one’s understanding of God.²⁵⁸ In some sense, 10:12 anticipates the foolish boasting of 2 Cor 11. As Paul critiques his opponents, he states that he will not engage in their boastful activities that manifest a lack of knowledge (10:12); thus, when he does eventually engage in competitive boasting, he does so as a “fool.” Reference to proper understanding also occurs in 11:2-6. In v. 3 Paul fears that the Corinthians have been “deceived” (ἐξαπατάω) by false teachers, who have led the Corinthians away from proper devotion to Christ; subsequently, these teachers are described as “fools” (11:19). By contrast, Paul does have knowledge of God and the gospel (11:6).²⁵⁹ Thus, in his depiction of the “foolishness” of his critics, Paul implies that theological factors are at work; he argues that these individuals lack an understanding of God. Furthermore, as Paul introduces his foolish boasting, he notes that he is speaking οὐ κατὰ κύριον ... ἀλλ’ ὡς ἐν ἀφροσύνη (11:17); in making this distinction, Paul is not associating foolishness with a lack of self-knowledge but with behaviour that is contrary to the will of God.

This theological dimension of the motif of foolishness is consistent with Paul’s use of the boasting passage of Jer 9 in 2 Cor 10. In his warnings to Israel, Jeremiah records the divine oracle that “[m]y people are fools; they do not know me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding” (Jer 4:22; cf. 5:21).²⁶⁰ In Jer 8-10, a recurrent theme is a negative assessment of those who claim to be wise.²⁶¹ While the religious leaders claim to be “wise”, their actions reveal the emptiness of their claims (Jer 8:8-9); ultimately they will be “put to shame” (Jer 8:9). This oracle also notes that the “people do not know the requirements of the Lord” (Jer 8:7). Thus, Jeremiah’s admonition to boast in one’s knowledge and understanding of God occurs within a broader context that highlights the failure of the nation in this area. Although the people of Israel claim to be wise, Jeremiah argues that their lack of authentic knowledge of God reveals their true foolishness (cf. Jer 17:11). More generally, in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, the theme of

²⁵⁶ ἄφρων is a standard term used in the LXX for “fool”.

²⁵⁷ μωροί/φρόνιμοι (1 Cor 4:10); ἀφρόνων/φρόνιμοι (2 Cor 11:19).

²⁵⁸ cf. above p. 136.

²⁵⁹ For this understanding of γνώσει in 11:6, cf. above pp. 114-15.

²⁶⁰ “For the princes of my people have not known me, they are foolish [ἄφρονες] and unwise [οὐ συνετοί]” (Jer 4:22 LXX).

²⁶¹ cf. above pp. 75-77.

foolishness is frequently associated with an individual's refusal to acknowledge dependence on God. This theological understanding of the "fool" can be expressed by such terms as נָבִיל,²⁶² כְּסִיל,²⁶³ אָיִל,²⁶⁴ and סָקֵל.²⁶⁵ Significantly, these terms are usually translated by ἄφρων in the Septuagint, the term for "fool" that Paul uses in 2 Cor 11-12. Thus, the immediate context of 2 Cor 10-13 as well as the context of the boasting passage of Jer 9 suggest that Paul's use of "foolishness" has theological overtones. This usage is also consistent with the theological dimension often present in references to foolishness in the Old Testament.

Similarly, this theological understanding of foolishness is also evident in certain extra-biblical Jewish works, particularly wisdom texts. For example, in the Qumran material, consistent with the "Two Ways" motif that contrasts the behaviour of the righteous with that of the wicked,²⁶⁶ the one who remains outside the community is considered a fool (CD 15:15), while wisdom is associated with knowledge of divine activity.²⁶⁷ Moreover, in 4Q184, foolishness is personified as a seductive woman who leads individuals into sin and corruption;²⁶⁸ by contrast, the pursuit of God's wisdom is associated with divine blessing (cf. 4Q185).²⁶⁹ In Sirach, a "fool" (ἄφρων; 16:23) is described as someone who says: "I shall be hidden from the Lord, and who from on high will remember me?" (16:27).²⁷⁰ Likewise, in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, the wicked who oppress the righteous and oppose God can be described as "foolish" (3:2; 12; 5:4); foolishness is also linked with unrighteousness (12:24) and idolatry (14:11). Thus, the theological component to foolishness is evident in both biblical and extra-biblical Jewish texts.

Since a theological emphasis is fundamental to in Paul's use of the foolishness motif, this theme cannot be explained merely in terms of a deficiency in self-knowledge. Furthermore, the theological nature of foolishness calls into question the view that Paul's "fool's discourse" simply reflects his dependence on a literary tradition that utilises the mask of the "fool" for the sake of parody and critique. While Paul is using this image to criticise his opposition, theological concerns are central to his conception of foolishness. "Für Paulus selber stehen beim Begriff der Torheit nicht die Assoziationen an die Theaterbühne im Vordergrund, sondern der *Gegensatz zum Herrn*."²⁷¹ Quite possibly, in the Corinthian context, the theme of foolishness functions on two levels. On the one hand, having questioned the compatibility between Paul's claims of authority and his humble self-presentation, his opponents portrayed him as an ἀλαζών and perhaps also as a fool. By contrast, Paul asserts that the standards of judgment used by his critics are wrong; in making

²⁶²e.g., Ps 14:1; 53:1; Jer 17:11. Concerning the Hebrew terms for foolishness, J. Goetzmann states that: "[t]he instances based on *nābal* are quite unequivocal in insisting that foolishness is not lack of knowledge but rebellion against God. Hence, the term fool gains the associated sense of one who denies God, blasphemous" ("Wisdom", 1025).

²⁶³e.g., Ps 92:6; 94:8; Prov 3:35; Eccl 5:1.

²⁶⁴e.g., Ps 107:17; Prov 1:7; 10:21; 14:9.

²⁶⁵e.g., Eccl 2:19; 7:17; 10:14; cf. Jer 4:22; 5:21.

²⁶⁶cf. above p. 93.

²⁶⁷e.g., 1QH^a 10:13-18; 1QS 4:20-22; 4Q299; 4Q300; 4Q525, frag. 4; cf. Harrington, "Wisdom at Qumran", 137-52.

²⁶⁸cf. Prov 2; 5; 7; 9.

²⁶⁹cf. Harrington, *Wisdom Texts*, 31-39.

²⁷⁰cf. Sir 19:20-23; 22:12; 27:11.

²⁷¹Heckel, *Kraft*, 194.

this criticism, he claims that they lack knowledge of God. Thus, it is they who are actually the true fools in this situation; moreover, the Corinthian congregation has been foolish in allowing these false teachers to gain influence.

b) Paul's Self-Presentation

In 2 Cor 11-12, although Paul speaks of boasting in terms of foolishness, he also speaks of his hardships and difficulties in ministry and asserts positively that he will boast in his “weaknesses” (11:30; 12:5, 9-10). How does this emphasis on his “weaknesses” contribute to Paul’s critique of his opponents? What is the nature of his self-presentation in these chapters?

As stated in the discussion of Graeco-Roman literature, a significant factor in some criticisms of boasting was the issue of “self-sufficiency” (αὐτάρκεια).²⁷² For instance, philosophers and moralists did criticize sophists as arrogant boasters, whose ambition caused them to pursue popular approval.²⁷³ Central to this type of criticism was the argument that the use of self-praise to gain the approval of the masses reflected a deficiency of ἀρετή. In some treatments of 2 Cor 10-13, Paul’s self-presentation is associated with Hellenistic philosophical traditions. To what extent is Paul’s criticism of his opponents’ boasting similar to the criticisms of boasting found in these philosophical traditions?

In interpreting 2 Cor 10-13, Betz argues that Paul’s response to criticism of his apostleship falls within the Socratic tradition evident in Plato’s *Apology*. In this tradition, Socrates actually “rejects the idea of defending himself in court.”²⁷⁴ According to Betz, Paul’s critique of his opponents reflects the longstanding tension between philosophers and sophists. Betz argues that Paul broadly reflects Cynic traditions in presenting himself according to the σχῆμα of a Cynic philosopher, whose external appearance is ταπεινός.²⁷⁵ Along these lines, Betz states that Paul’s *peristasis* catalogue is consistent with Cynic boasting about the hardships of poverty.²⁷⁶ After noting the importance of the themes of αὐτάρκεια and ἀπάθεια in Cynic treatments of hardships, Betz concludes that Paul’s thought “steht dem kynischen Denken nahe”.²⁷⁷ Accordingly, Paul’s critique of the boasting of his opponents falls within a broad philosophical tradition that stresses self-sufficiency and minimises the importance of external appearance.

On one level, Paul’s lack of social status and apparent refusal of support from the Corinthian church has certain affinities with the type of self-presentation encouraged in Cynic sources. In fact, it may be the case that Paul was interpreted as a Cynic by some who encountered him.²⁷⁸ However, upon closer examination, certain distinctions are evident between Paul and the philosophical traditions Betz suggests. From a literary perspective, Fitzgerald notes that, unlike Socrates, Paul is not refusing to defend himself; thus, “2

²⁷²On the relationship of αὐτάρκεια to criticisms of boasting, cf. above pp. 27-31.

²⁷³cf. above pp. 24-27.

²⁷⁴Betz, “Apology”, 2.

²⁷⁵Betz, *Apostel*, 44-57; “Apology”, 5-7; for a survey of recent studies suggesting links between Paul and Cynicism, cf. F. Gerald Downing, *Cynics, Paul*, 27-32.

²⁷⁶Betz’s (*Apostel*, 98n383) examples of Cynic references to hardships include Dio Chrys. *Or.* 8.15ff., Luc. *Peregr.* 18, and the fragment of a diatribe by Teles (Περὶ περιστάσεων). For an overview of the depiction of Cynicism in Cynic sources, cf. Margarethe Billerbeck, “Ideal Cynic”, 205-21.

²⁷⁷Betz, *Apostel*, 99; cf. Betz, “De laude”, 388.

²⁷⁸cf. Downing, *Cynics, Paul*, 307.

Corinthians 10-13 is more broadly apologetic than Betz's thesis suggests."²⁷⁹ Similarly, Judge questions Betz's suggested links between Socrates and Paul; "[i]n the mingled riches of Hellenistic literature how does one detect the lines of connection and interaction when the allusions are not clear?"²⁸⁰ Specifically, Judge questions the association of Paul with the Cynic concept of ἀπάθεια.²⁸¹ Furthermore, Paul's defence of his humble self-presentation reflects a motivation distinct from that found in Cynic sources.²⁸² In Cynic sources, the rejection of wealth and symbols of social status reflected a desire to live "according to nature";²⁸³ similarly, the rejection of wealth was a part of the rejection of social structures deemed artificial and unnatural. Thus, the training necessary to live in accordance with nature involved humble self-presentation.²⁸⁴ "The Cynic must learn *not to need the world*, and to be willing and able to dispense with what the world offers, such as possessions, wealth, honors, positions, pleasures (which produce the illusion of happiness), and even knowledge."²⁸⁵ For Paul, however, his humble self-presentation was associated with his service to others (11:7) and his association with the ministry of Christ (10:1; 13:3-4). In defending his humble status, Paul's argument is not associated with a desire to attain personal virtue; rather it is linked with the theological expectation that the actions of the righteous will be vindicated by God. Thus, various distinctions between Paul and Cynic traditions argue against Betz's proposal.

Besides Betz's association of Paul with Cynic traditions, other links between 2 Cor 11-12 and Hellenistic philosophical traditions have also been proposed. Specifically, scholars have suggested a variety of parallels to Paul's *peristasis* catalogue;²⁸⁶ included in those proposals have been Stoic parallels.²⁸⁷ For instance, although not discussing 2 Cor 11-12 in detail, Fitzgerald concludes that "Paul in 1 and 2 Corinthians frequently depicts himself in terms typically used to describe the ideal philosopher, and his use of *peristasis* catalogues is an integral part of this *Selbstdarstellung*. His catalogues, moreover, have many of the same literary functions as those of the sage."²⁸⁸ Furthermore, Fitzgerald argues that Paul's opponents also boasted in their hardships.²⁸⁹ Along similar lines, others have suggested that the Stoic sage motif provides a backdrop to Paul's self-presentation in 2 Cor 11-12.²⁹⁰

While Paul shares certain similarities with Stoic sources concerning one's hardships, he does not interpret his adversities in a Stoic fashion. In response to adverse circumstances, Stoicism fostered an inner attitude of impassivity,²⁹¹ stressing that such situations were

²⁷⁹Fitzgerald, "Paul", 197-98; cf. Dillion, "Response", 19; Witherington, *Conflict*, 436n23.

²⁸⁰Judge, "Socrates", 107.

²⁸¹Judge, "Classical Society", 35.

²⁸²On distinctions between Christian and Cynic views of humility, cf. Martin, *By Philosophy*, 143-48.

²⁸³cf. Downing, *Christian Origins*, 30-32.

²⁸⁴cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 6.8-11; 13.3; Sen. *Ep.* 14.18; 17.3-7.

²⁸⁵Luis Navia, *Cynicism*, 69.

²⁸⁶cf. Hodgson, "Paul", 67-80.

²⁸⁷Standard treatments of Paul's relationship to Stoicism include Max Pohlenz, "Paulus", 69-104; Sevenster, *Paul and Seneca*.

²⁸⁸Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, 204; cf. 59-70 for his discussion of αὐτάρκεια and ἀπάθεια in the lifestyle of a sage.

²⁸⁹ibid., 25n95.

²⁹⁰cf. Bultmann, *Stil*, 71-72; Witherington, *Conflict*, 450; Ebner, *Leidenslisten*, 192-94, 387.

²⁹¹cf. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 206-7.

beyond one's control.²⁹² For instance, Epictetus advises those in difficult situations to “do nothing as one burdened, or afflicted, or thinking that he is in a wretched plight; for no one forces [ἀναγκάζει] you to do this” (*Diss.* 1.25.17; cf. *Sen. Ep.* 71.26). Paul, however, describes himself as one who is affected by the difficulties he faces; for instance, he does experience daily “pressure” (ἐπίστασις) and “anxiety” (μέριμνα) concerning the churches with whom he ministers (11:28).²⁹³ A further distinction concerns the source of one's power and endurance. For the Stoic sage,

power comes from within and involves training primarily in the restriction of desire and aversion to things which lie within the domain of an individual's moral choice and over which one has control. The victory over improper perception of externals or indifferents is a personal achievement, even if it is one that is made possible only by the teaching of philosophy. For Paul, it is Christ, not philosophy, that enables indifference to the vicissitudes of life.²⁹⁴

The origin of Paul's strength is not internal but external; in his sufferings and weaknesses he experiences the power of God (12:9-10). Similarly, Bultmann notes that for Paul, δύναμις is associated with χάρις; by contrast, in Stoicism, power and endurance results from the development of one's natural faculties.²⁹⁵ These differences suggest that Paul's critique of his opponents' actions cannot be equated with certain criticisms of boasting found in philosophical and moral literature. He is not claiming to have attained a level of self-sufficiency that his opponents have failed to reach. Ultimately, his critique is not that his opponents are deficient in ἀρετή; rather, in accusing them of foolishness, he is stating that they lack knowledge of God.²⁹⁶

As has been seen in the examination of boasting in Jewish literature, as well as the discussion of Paul's usage of Jeremiah's boasting passage, the theme of boasting could be associated with the triadic relationships between the righteous, the wicked and God--a relationship often evident in psalms of lament and hymns of praise.²⁹⁷ As noted in the discussion of 2 Cor 10, certain similarities exist between this general pattern of relationships and Paul's self-presentation in 2 Cor 10-13.²⁹⁸ Certain parallels between this pattern and Paul's boasting in 2 Cor 11-12 can now be observed.

One similarity concerns a link between hardships and opposition. A standard predicament of the righteous in these Jewish texts is the experience of oppression and taunting by the wicked.²⁹⁹ For instance, in the literary setting of the Song of Hannah, Hannah has been taunted because of her barrenness by Peninnah (cf. 2 Sam 1:6-7 MT); thus,

²⁹²A. A. Long (*Stoic Studies*, 196) notes that central to the Stoic understanding of *eudaimonia* was the concept of freedom, which was associated with individuals free use of their minds (“thoughts, judgements, desires and outlook on the world”). From this perspective, everything that “falls outside the mind's domain” can be viewed “as an enabling, not disabling, condition for its exercise.”

²⁹³cf. Heckel, *Kraft*, 281.

²⁹⁴Jaquette, *Adiaphora Topos*, 107; cf. A. Fridrichsen, “2 Cor 11,23ff.,” 29; Hodgson, “Paul”, 68.

²⁹⁵Bultmann, *Second Letter*, 229-30.

²⁹⁶On the theological nature of foolishness in 2 Cor 11-12, cf. above pp. 167-71.

²⁹⁷Several scholars have suggested links between Paul's self-presentation in 2 Cor 11-12 and the theme of the righteous sufferer in Jewish literature, cf. Kleinknecht, *Der leidende Gerechtfertigte*, 289-302; Heckel, *Kraft*, 98-99, 284-88; Michael Barré, “Qumran”, 216-27; cf. also, Thrall, *II Corinthians*, 329-31.

²⁹⁸cf. above pp. 153-55.

²⁹⁹On the theme of the wicked in the Psalms, cf. above pp. 65-66.

when God answers her prayer, she “boasts” over her enemies (2 Sam 2:2). Similarly, in the laments of Jeremiah, the prophet acknowledges the harassment of his opponents (e.g., 17:15).³⁰⁰ Along these same lines, Paul’s self-presentation as a fool results from the competitive boasting of his opponents, who have apparently belittled him and questioned his legitimacy as an apostle. Moreover, as Paul lists his hardships in 11:21-29 and 12:10, certain details imply the presence of opposition. He has experienced “imprisonments” (φυλακαῖς) and “floggings” (πληγαῖς; 11:23) and been pressured by “false brothers” (ψευδαδέλφοις; 11:26). His reference to his “weaknesses” in 12:10 includes “insults” (ὕβρεσιν), “hardships” (ἀνάγκαις), and “persecutions” (διωγμοῖς; 12:10). The theme of opposition in 2 Cor 11-12 becomes more pronounced if, as some argue, the “thorn in the flesh” refers to Paul’s opposition rather than a physical element.³⁰¹

An additional resemblance between Paul’s self-presentation and this pattern of triadic relationships evident in Jewish literature concerns the righteous individual’s dependence on God.³⁰² For instance, in Ps 6:2 the psalmist states: “Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am faint”.³⁰³ In acknowledging weakness and seeking divine intervention, the righteous individual recognises God as the true source of strength and deliverance. Thus, Ps 34:17 affirms that “[t]he righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.” Underlying this type of statement is the assertion that God’s strength is sufficient to address the adversities that the righteous encounter. In a related manner, Paul expresses this same conviction, acknowledging that God’s power is sufficient for the weaknesses he experiences as an apostle (12:7-10).³⁰⁴ Kleinknecht suggests that Paul’s discussion of strength in weakness is similar to contrasts evident in the Psalms between terms for weakness (e.g., ἀσθένεια, θλιψις) and terms describing God’s deliverance (e.g., ἔλεος, χάρις, δύναμις, δικαιοσύνη, σωτηρία).³⁰⁵ The concept of the righteous experiencing God’s strength also occurs in the Hymns of Qumran. For instance, in 1QH^a 10:24-25, the speaker states to God: “you will make yourself great through me [וְהַגְבִּיחַ בִּי] before the sons of man because through your compassion [בְּחַסְדְּךָ]”³⁰⁶ I do subsist” (cf. 12:8, 22-3; 13:15). Moreover, in 1 Sam 2:1-10 (LXX), in acknowledging God’s elevation of the righteous, the psalmist notes that the “weak” (ἀσθενοῦντες) have been clothed with “strength” (δυνάμιν; v. 4).

However, should Paul’s portrait of strength in weakness be so closely aligned with this pattern evident in Jewish texts? Schrage argues that Paul’s presentation of God’s power at work precisely *in* weakness is a paradoxical antithesis, which is distinct from the Jewish description of deliverance from hardships.³⁰⁷ Similarly, Furnish argues that, unlike Hannah’s

³⁰⁰For similarities between the ministries of Jeremiah and Paul, cf. above pp. 150-55.

³⁰¹For evidence favouring this view, cf. Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 569-70; Barré, “Qumran”, 216-27.

³⁰²Concerning God’s deliverance of the righteous in the Psalms, cf. above pp. 66-71. Kleinknecht (*Der leidende Gerechtfertigte*, 370) concludes that Paul’s confidence in God’s compassionate deliverance in the midst of hardships is a significant motif that Paul utilises from the Jewish traditions concerning the suffering righteous.

³⁰³Ἐλέησόν με Κύριε, ὅτι ἀσθενής εἰμι (LXX); other psalms stressing the helplessness of the speaker include 22:14-21; 38:10-16; 88:9; 107:11-12; 109:21-26.

³⁰⁴For similarities between 2 Cor 12:7-9 and Jewish psalms, cf. Heckel, *Kraft*, 284-88.

³⁰⁵Kleinknecht, *Der Leidende Gerechtfertigte*, 299n184; cf. Ps 31:1-22.

³⁰⁶Barré (“Qumran”, 222-23) states that דַּסָּח in this passage should be translated as “grace” and suggests a parallel with Paul’s use of χάρις in 2 Cor 12:9.

³⁰⁷Schrage, “Leid”, 146. Güttgemanns (*Der leidende Apostel*, 169-70) argues that 2 Cor 12:9-10, as well as other passages, show that Paul’s weakness is the paradoxical form of the manifestation of Christ’s power. For a response to Güttgemanns, cf. Lambrecht, “Nekrōsis”, 120-43.

song, 2 Cor 12:9-10 does not mean that Paul “lives in the confidence that the weak will themselves be clothed with power, displacing the mighty from their seats”.³⁰⁸ While Paul does describe divine power experienced in weakness, this does not mean that he is paradoxically equating power with weakness. To speak of power in weakness “is not to say that power *is* weakness, so that there is no perceptible difference between, for example, the real experience of persecution and the equally real experience of powerful divine assistance within this situation.”³⁰⁹ Central to Paul’s argument of 2 Cor 10-13 is his assertion that his unimpressive self-presentation, which is perceived as weakness, is not incompatible with God’s power at work through his apostolic ministry.³¹⁰ “Paul and others who are weak in terms of the dominant value system nevertheless do powerful things--for example, they survive despite the most extraordinary pressures and afflictions--and therefore this power must be not their own, but God’s.”³¹¹ Thus, in 13:3-4,³¹² as he compares himself to Christ, who was crucified in “weakness” (ἀσθενείας) but lives by “God’s power” (δυνάμειος θεοῦ; v. 4), Paul asserts that he will act with divine power when he returns to Corinth.³¹³

c) Paul’s Critique of His Opponents’ Boasting

This association between Paul and the pattern of relationships between the righteous, the wicked and God provides some insight into Paul’s critique of his opponents. Just as the righteous were often depicted as individuals who were of inferior social status to that of their opponents, so Paul is criticised by his opponents for his humble social standing. Furthermore, just as the righteous trusted in God while arguing that their opponents were opponents of God, so Paul contends that his opponents lack genuine knowledge of God. Related to this parallel is the fact that the concept of “foolishness” in 2 Cor 10-13 has theological overtones.³¹⁴

Consistent with this background to Paul’s self-presentation is the view that Paul is inverting the standards and values admired by his opponents. In both of the major sections of 11:21-12:10, Paul apparently begins his self-presentation with attributes valued by his critics. In 11:22 he speaks of his Jewish credentials; in 12:1-4 he recounts a dramatic supernatural experience. Yet in each case, these topics are followed both by a discussion of issues that underscore Paul’s humble status social and by Paul’s assertions that he will boast in his weaknesses. Moreover, in each case, the initial topic is accompanied by statements that are critical of boasting, while the material on boasting in weakness is not.

This shift in these sections implies that part of Paul’s critique of his opponents’ boasting concerns their evaluation criteria. In response to the criticisms of his opponents, Paul claims that the criteria by which he has been evaluated are wrong (cf. 10:12-18).³¹⁵ While they have boasted by comparing themselves to others, Paul boasts in reference to

³⁰⁸Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 552.

³⁰⁹Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 331.

³¹⁰cf. Savage, *Power Through Weakness*, 164-86.

³¹¹Meeks, *Urban Christians*, 183.

³¹²On this passage, cf. Lambrecht, “2 Corinthians 13,4”, 261-69.

³¹³Heckel (*Kraft*, 138) argues that Paul’s reference to living in God’s power (ἀλλὰ ζήσομεν σὺν αὐτῷ ἐκ δυνάμειος θεοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς; 13:4) alludes both to Paul’s forthcoming visit to Corinth and to the promise of life after death.

³¹⁴On the theme of foolishness, cf. above pp. 167-71.

³¹⁵cf. Hafemann, “‘Self-Commendation’”, 76-77.

standards set by God. Similarly, in 11:17, as he embarks on boasting in the manner of his opponents, he warns the Corinthians in advance that what he is about to say (ὁ λαλῶ) is foolishness. In view of his critique of their evaluation criteria, Paul does not deny his weaknesses and humble status--he underscores them. “So far is Paul removing himself from the conventional attitudes of his opponents that, when ‘forced’ to boast, he will do so only ironically, in order to satirise precisely those kinds of achievements of which his opponents were most proud.”³¹⁶

In examining Paul’s response to his opponents in 2 Cor 11, it is important to note that despite his earlier denial, he is engaged in comparison (σύγκρισις).³¹⁷ Since Paul’s public speech has been criticised,³¹⁸ it is quite likely that his opponents were more rhetorically proficient than Paul. Furthermore, if they had followed standard rhetorical practices in comparing themselves to Paul,³¹⁹ then his catalogue of hardships may actually be a parody of their self-presentation.³²⁰ In terms of rhetorical practice, in comparing an individual with others, general topics of praise could include such items as an individual’s family, physical appearance, education, character and achievements.³²¹ Arguing that Paul is parodying the self-praise of his opponents, Forbes states that “while holding to the traditional forms of encomium,” Paul “radically inverts the content”; “where one would expect magistracies and honours, or some equivalent, Paul brings forward beatings and dangers on all sides -- humiliation, disgrace and hardship.”³²²

However, some contend that Paul’s opponents have also boasted in their hardships; accordingly, Paul’s argument is simply that he has experienced greater difficulties in exercising his ministerial tasks than they have.³²³ Andrews notes that hardships could be used as a topic of praise if an individual responded appropriately;³²⁴ thus, Plutarch notes that those who have undergone hardships can boast (*Mor.* 541A-C). While it is possible that Paul’s opponents have boasted in this manner, several factors suggest that Paul’s references to hardships are distinct from the self-presentation of his rivals. First, his tribulation list includes items related to his manual labour (e.g., 11:27);³²⁵ in highlighting his manual labour he is focusing on an area that distinguished him from his opponents, who apparently accepted

³¹⁶Forbes, “Self-Praise”, 20.

³¹⁷On the tension between Paul’s critique of σύγκρισις (10:12) and his participation in such activity, cf. below p. 171.

³¹⁸cf. above pp. 111-15.

³¹⁹On the practice of σύγκρισις, cf. above pp. 50-51.

³²⁰cf. Travis, “Boasting”, 531; Horrell, *Social Ethos*, 226. Judge (“Conflict”, 44-5) describes Paul’s self-praise as a “deliberate parody of the Hellenic practice”; however, Judge (“Boasting”, 47) subsequently states that “[t]he difficulty I now see with this [view], however, is that Paul takes his ‘foolish’ boasting with too much anguish for us to assume it was merely a mockery, unless of course the interjections are themselves part of the irony.” Marshall (*Enmity*, 360) concludes that in highlighting his hardships, Paul is “ridiculing himself rather than parodying his opponents’ self-glorying.”

³²¹cf. Lausberg, *Handbook* §245; Quintillian notes that “what most pleases an audience is the celebration of deeds which our hero was the first or only man to perform or at any rate one of the very few to perform” (*Inst.* 3.7.16; for topics of praise, cf. 3.7.10-25).

³²²Forbes, “Self-Praise”, 19.

³²³cf. Fitzgerald, *Cracks*, 29n95; Holland, “Speaking Like a Fool”, 259; Andrews, “2 Cor 11.23b-33”, 274.

³²⁴Andrews, “2 Cor 11.23b-33”, 266-67; cf. also Fitzgerald’s discussion of the hardships of the sage (*Cracks*, 47-116).

³²⁵On 11:27, cf. above p. 155.

financial support. Second, although Paul is not unique among Hellenistic sources in enumerating his hardships, the emphasis of his boasting is not indicative of standard rhetorical practice. Plutarch compares the individual who boasts in hardships to a boxer “when he stands upright in fighting posture” and uses “self-glorification to pass from a humbled [ταπεινοῦ] and piteous state to an attitude of triumph and pride” (*Mor.* 541B). Paul, by contrast, focuses not on his mastery of difficult circumstances but on the hardships themselves; if he must boast, he will boast in his weaknesses. More generally, in characterising his hardships as “weaknesses” (11:30), Paul is using terminology associated with his perceived deficiency in self-presentation (cf. 10:10; 11:7). Apparently, this perception was not associated with his opponents, whose self-praise included reference to their claims of achievement (10:12-16), background (11:22-23), and spiritual experiences (12:1-4). Thus, by boasting in his weaknesses, Paul is criticising the criteria by which his opponents have evaluated him and the content of their boasting.

By criticising the content of his opponents’ self-praise, Paul ultimately undermines the process of competitive boasting itself. This is evident in several ways. First, in 2 Cor 10:12, Paul states that his opponents’ practice of competitive boasting reflects their lack of wisdom. Thus, in a reference that anticipates Paul’s “fool’s discourse”, Paul associates his opponents’ σύγκρισις with foolishness. Second, the link between foolishness and comparison is also evident in 11:23. As Paul begins his “fool’s discourse”, he notes that he is speaking as a fool (11:21); moreover, as he asserts his superiority as a servant of Christ (διάκονοι Χριστοῦ), he notes that he is “talking like a madman” (NRSV; παραφρονῶν λαλῶ; v. 23). This is followed by three comparative statements that make reference to Paul’s “work” (κόποις), “imprisonments” (φυλακαῖς), and “floggings” (πληγαῖς). The same three terms occur together in 2 Cor 6:5, as Paul speaks of the way he has commended himself (συνιστάντες ἑαυτοῦς) as a servant of God (θεοῦ διάκονοι; 6:4). Thus, both passages include reference to Paul boasting in these particular items as a servant of God. However, one statement is considered to be foolish, while the other is not. What is the difference? The distinctive element in 11:23 is the comparative context in which it occurs.³²⁶ Consistent with this view, Sundermann notes that the background to the parenthetical clause in v. 23, παραφρονῶν λαλῶ, is the comparative³²⁷ phrase that precedes it (ὑπὲρ ἐγώ).³²⁸

As we observed earlier, in Graeco-Roman practice, boasting was closely associated with the pursuit of honour.³²⁹ Furthermore, the pursuit of honour was a competitive enterprise because honour was limited.³³⁰ Consequently, a standard way to engage in self-praise was to present one’s superiority over others; through σύγκρισις, individuals established their claims to appropriate social status. In the Corinthian context, through the actions of his opponents, Paul is “plunged into a strictly personal competition for status.”³³¹ However, in contrast, to his opponents, who boast by comparing themselves to others, Paul

³²⁶“It is not the sufferings themselves that are to be taken lightly, but the invidious comparisons. He speaks like an utter idiot precisely when he claims to be a *better* servant of Christ than the opponents; and one must agree that on any measure, such a comparison is childish” (Hamerton-Kelly, “Girardian Interpretation”, 76).

³²⁷On the comparative nature of ὑπὲρ ἐγώ, cf. above n206.

³²⁸Sundermann, *Der schwache Apostel*, 132.

³²⁹cf. above pp. 13-15.

³³⁰cf. above pp. 22-24.

³³¹Judge, “Conflict”, 38; cf. Dewey, “Honor”, 211.

boasts by comparing himself to the standards set by God. Thus, in his criticism of his opponents' boasting, Paul argues that in comparing themselves to others they are using improper standards of evaluation. Their boasting is foolish because it betrays a lack of an authentic knowledge of God. By contrast, Paul's boasting in weakness is consistent with the traditions of the suffering righteous--traditions that acknowledge God as the ultimate source of deliverance and commendation.

C. 2 COR 10-13 AND PAUL'S EVALUATION OF BOASTING

Having evaluated various texts associated with boasting in 2 Cor 10-13, this section will provide a synthesis of Paul's discussion of this topic. This synthesis will be organised according to the following three questions, which were raised in the introduction to this chapter: (1) For Paul, what is the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate boasting? (2) Can legitimate boasting include boasting in one's own activity? (3) How does Paul's practice and evaluation of boasting relate to the viewpoints about boasting found in Graeco-Roman and Jewish literature?

1. Legitimate and Illegitimate Boasting

To address the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate boasting presupposes that valid and appropriate boasting is possible. However, some question the validity of this assumption. In examining the theme of boasting in 2 Cor 10-12, Lambrecht concludes that "all boasting, whether of status and accomplishment or of poor condition, is foolish and not without danger."³³² In defending this view, he argues that Paul's reference to being a fool in 12:11 concerns Paul's self-presentation throughout chapters 10-12; moreover, he notes Paul's hesitancy in boasting in 10:8 and reference to the necessity of boasting in 11:30.³³³ Nonetheless, must all boasting be viewed as "dangerous"? As suggested above, Paul's reference to shame in 10:8 does not refer to the *act* of boasting but to the *content* of the boast. Paul will not be "ashamed" because of the truthfulness of his boast.³³⁴ Similarly, Paul's use of *καυχᾶσθαι δεῖ* (11:30; 12:1) does not necessarily imply that Paul is hesitant about boasting; rather, it may be an acknowledgement that if he does not reply to the charges against him, he is conceding their validity. More generally, as the above examination of chapters 10-12 has indicated, Paul can boast without any suggestion that his actions are foolish (e.g., 10:8, 11:10); thus it is difficult to sustain the view that the reference to foolishness in 12:11 applies to all of Paul's boasting statements. Consequently, it can be argued that Paul does describe both legitimate and illegitimate boasting in these chapters.

An important factor in understanding the distinction between these types of boasting is Paul's self-presentation. At various points, it has been noted that Paul's self-presentation is linked with the triad of relationships involving the righteous, the wicked and God found in Jewish literature. Typically, in these relationships, the righteous are portrayed as lacking in social standing and vulnerable to the oppression of the wicked; however, through the intervention of God, the righteous are delivered and the wicked are punished. This pattern of relationships is associated with the boasting passage of Jer 9, a saying that Paul utilises in 2 Cor 10:17. Moreover, particularly in 2 Cor 10, Paul's self-presentation has notable links

³³²Lambrecht, "Dangerous Boasting", 338; cf. Forbes, "Self-Praise", 20; Bultmann, "*καυχᾶσθαι*", 652.

³³³Lambrecht, "Dangerous Boasting", 337.

³³⁴cf. above pp. 133-36.

with the prophetic ministry of Jeremiah--a ministry that also includes the threats of the wicked and the confidence of the righteous in God's deliverance and vindication. Furthermore, especially in 2 Cor 11-12, the theological nature of the "foolish" theme follows a standard pattern of describing the wicked; likewise, the "weakness" motif includes reference to Paul's humble social status as well as hardships caused by opponents, both of which are established characteristics of the righteous. Significantly, in this triadic pattern, one's boast does not occur in isolation but in contrast to the boast of another. Similarly, Paul's boasting and self-presentation does not occur in isolation but in contrast to that of his opponents.

Consistent with this background, for Paul, the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate boasting turns on one's relationship with God. In Jeremiah's boasting passage, appropriate boasting is linked with knowledge of God--a knowledge that entails obedience. By contrast, those who boast inappropriately boast in a manner that expresses self-confidence and an absence of dependence on God. Related to this pattern, Paul claims to know God (11:6) and to be the recipient of divine commendation (10:18); thus, he can boast and not be ashamed. On the other hand, Paul describes his opponents' self-presentation as "foolish". As he calls them fools, he implies that their activity reflects their lack of a knowledge of God; thus, they are without understanding (10:12).

Related to one's knowledge of God is the focus of one's boast. On the one hand, Paul states that his boasting reflects the sphere of ministry given to him by God; he will only boast according to divine standards. By contrast, in comparing themselves to others (10:12), Paul's opponents are using unsuitable criteria. Thus, when Paul does engage in "foolish" boasting concerning his Jewish credentials and his supernatural experiences, he shifts the topic to focus on his hardships and weaknesses. In the process of condemning the content of his opponents' boasting, Paul ultimately disparages the process of competitive boasting itself.

As Paul criticises the competitive boasting of his opponents, is he inconsistent?³³⁵ On the one hand, he is critical of competitive boasting; on the other hand, his boasting in 10:12-18, which he does not consider to be foolish, implies a comparison between his assertions and the statements of his opponents. However, the arguments of 10:12-18 and 11:21-12:10 suggest that two different comparisons are at work. In 10:12-18, the comparison reflects different standards of evaluation. In other words, Paul is not asserting that he and his opponents are using the same criteria and that according to these criteria he is a superior apostle. Rather, he is asserting that he boasts according to divine standards, while his opponents do not. Not surprisingly, he refers to these individuals as "false apostles" and servants of Satan (11:13-14). When Paul does finally compare himself to his opponents in a competitive manner, he asserts that such boasting is foolish. In his description of his opponents, Paul does not simply contend that they are inferior--he asserts that they are opposed to God. Thus, reminiscent of the depiction of the righteous, the wicked and God in Jewish literature, Paul claims that his opponents are also the enemies of God.

The comparison Paul sketches between himself and his opponents suggests one other difference between legitimate and illegitimate boasting--the result. Paul argues that his boasting is approved by God, while that of his opponents is not. In their boasting, Paul's

³³⁵For the view that Paul does use rhetoric that is ambiguous and deceptive, cf. Given, "True Rhetoric", 526-50.

opponents attempted to establish their authority by identifying their superiority to Paul. In Graeco-Roman texts, comparison (σύγκρισις) is an important part of boasting because boasting is related to the maintenance of one's honour. Since honour is limited, one could establish or maintain honour by showing one's superiority to others. However, in criticising their competitive comparisons, Paul argues that the legitimacy of one's boast does not hinge on one's superiority to others but on one's relationship to God. Paul's hesitancy to compare himself to others according to the same criteria is evident in 1 Cor 1-4. In response to the factionalism in the Corinthian congregation concerning different leaders, Paul states that both he and Apollos are God's servants, who have been given specific tasks (1 Cor 3:5). As leaders, their commendation is not dependent on their superiority to others but on their faithful exercise of their particular responsibilities (1 Cor 3:8).³³⁶

According to Paul, while the boasting of his opponents may have been effective within the Corinthian congregation, these opponents will be judged by God; "their end will be what their actions deserve" (11:15). By contrast, Paul states that he can boast and not be ashamed, for the one who "boasts in the Lord" is the one who is commended by God. In identifying himself with the righteous who suffer, Paul argues that he will be vindicated while his opponents will be judged. Thus, in Paul's depiction of legitimate and illegitimate boasting a central factor of differentiation is one's knowledge of God, which is closely related to the focus and result of one's boast.

2. The Participatory Dimension of Boasting

Frequently, in discussions describing Paul's distinction between legitimate and illegitimate boasting, the former is associated with praise of God while the latter is associated with self-praise. However, this thesis has suggested that Paul's "boasting in the Lord" may also have a participatory dimension; in other words, Paul's boasting expresses his confidence in God and his confidence that his participation in God's saving work will not be in vain. Several factors have provided support for this view. First, a participatory dimension has been observed in both Jer 9:22-23 and 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX). This dimension is also evident within the laments of Jeremiah. Significantly, both the boasting passage of Jer 9 and the ministry of the prophet Jeremiah are related to Paul's self-presentation in 2 Cor 10-13. Furthermore, it has been argued that this participatory dimension is compatible with Paul's citation of the boasting saying of Jer 9 at 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17.

Additional evidence for the presence of this participatory element in Paul's boasting in 2 Cor 10-13 can also be presented. First, Paul's boast in 11:10 appears to be focused on his unwillingness to accept financial support from the Corinthians; while this assertion occurs within the context of Paul's foolish boasting, Paul does not consider this particular statement to be foolish. Interestingly, this boast highlights Paul's personal commitment to the task of ministry rather than God's involvement in that ministry. Second, Paul's boasting in weakness suggests the presence of a participatory dimension in his boasting. As noted above,³³⁷ included in Paul's lists of hardships are factors that resulted from his commitment to support himself in the Corinthian context. Thus, some of his weaknesses emerged from his attempt to exercise his apostolic responsibility appropriately. Furthermore, the reality of

³³⁶Quite possibly, in addressing the factionalism at Corinth, Paul alludes to the boasting tradition of Jer 9 in reference to himself and Apollos at 1 Cor 4:6; cf. above p. 145.

³³⁷cf. above p. 156.

Paul's diverse hardships testifies to the depth of his commitment to his ministry. Concerning these hardships, Lambrecht argues that Paul's positive reaction to these difficulties is implicitly present in the text; "Paul is filled with endurance, courage and fortitude in the midst of tribulations, of all kinds of difficulties, labour and persecution."³³⁸

Third, the nature of the charges against Paul supports the view that a participatory element is present in Paul's boasting. Central to the charges against Paul is the assumption that Paul's leadership claims are incompatible with his lowly social status and humble demeanour; his self-presentation has resulted in charges that he is a boaster and a fraud. Consequently, in responding to this situation, it is important for Paul to argue that his humble self-presentation has been vindicated by God's activity. When a participatory element is not included in Paul's boasting, the link between Paul's humble behaviour and God's commendation may be diminished. For instance, in comparing Paul's boasting in 10:17 to Paul's boasting in weakness, Wong concludes that Paul's "boast in the Lord" is a boast in his ministerial achievements that is distinct from his subsequent boasting in "weakness" (cf. 11:30; 12:9-10).³³⁹ However, this view neglects the important link between Paul's perceived "weaknesses" and his ministerial achievements. Furthermore, while the weakness theme is not prominent in 2 Cor 10, it is nonetheless present. In defending himself against criticism of his humble social standing, Paul appeals to the person of Christ³⁴⁰ and argues that his status is not incompatible with his apostolic authority. Thus, Paul does not simply boast in God's achievements through his ministry, his boast involves the reality that these achievements have occurred in the context of humility and unimpressive social status. Significantly, in the triad of relationships between the righteous, the wicked and God, the humble demeanour of the obedient righteous can be linked with God's deliverance and vindication.

3. 2 Cor 10-13 in Relation to Graeco-Roman and Jewish Boasting Practices

In evaluating the theme of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13, certain links can be drawn with both Graeco-Roman and Jewish practices of boasting. For instance, Graeco-Roman conventions of self-praise provide insight into the boasting of Paul's opponents. Apparently, in order to establish their influence within the Corinthian context, these individuals engaged in comparison with Paul, noting their superior credentials and experiences. Not only was σύγκρισις a standard form of self-praise, it was also a characteristic of those who engaged in popular oratory. Since these individuals criticised Paul's rhetorical ability, they may have been influenced by sophistic practices.³⁴¹ In the process of comparing themselves to Paul, they questioned his self-presentation and accused him of inconsistency. In arguing that Paul's claims of leadership were inconsistent with his self-presentation, they were portraying Paul as an ἀλαζών--the negative stereotype of the boaster in Graeco-Roman literature.

Similarly, in some ways, Paul's response to this situation gives evidence of Graeco-Roman boasting conventions. According to these conventions, when one's honour had been questioned, one was expected to boast. In fact, to avoid boasting in this type of situation would actually bolster the charges of one's opponents. Thus, Graeco-Roman rhetorical texts speak of situations in which it is necessary for one to boast; ideally, these situations provided

³³⁸Lambrecht, "Strength", 288.

³³⁹Wong, "2 Corinthians 10:17", 252; cf. Wong, "Boasting", 228-29.

³⁴⁰On Paul's appeal to Christ (2 Cor 10:1), cf. above pp. 131-32.

³⁴¹For the view that Paul is opposed by "Christian sophists", cf. Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 203-30.

the opportunity to engage in self-praise without offending one's audience. Paul appears to be cognizant of the expectations of his particular situation when he stresses that he must boast (11:30; 12:1), and when he states that his actions are in response to the behaviour of the Corinthians (cf. 11:16-21; 12:11). While he is critical of competitive boasting, he does not avoid it entirely. Thus, he does acquiesce to the expectations associated with his circumstances and compare himself with his opponents; however, in doing so he describes his actions as foolish. More generally, Paul's situation allows for boasting because of Paul's desire to be of service to the Corinthians; Plutarch notes that boasting as commendation was permissible when it contributed to an orator's exhortation to action.³⁴²

In evaluating Paul's use of boasting conventions, Dillon notes possible similarities between Paul's self-presentation in 2 Cor 10-13 and Plutarch's discussion of self-praise. Included in his list are the following examples:

- 1) self-praise is acceptable in self-defence (*Mor.* 540C-541E; cf. 2 Cor 11:30; 12:1)
- 2) self-praise is acceptable when one boasts concerning that for which he is criticised (*Mor.* 541E; cf. 2 Cor 11:7)
- 3) self-praise is acceptable when it is intermingled with praise of one's audience (*Mor.* 542B; cf. 2 Cor 11:19)³⁴³
- 4) self-praise is acceptable when the speaker praises someone else, who is similar to the speaker (*Mor.* 542C; cf. 12:1-10)³⁴⁴
- 5) self-praise is acceptable as one mixes in reference to one's shortcomings with one's praise (*Mor.* 543F; cf. reference to Paul's "weaknesses")
- 6) self-praise is acceptable when one boasts of one's concern for others (*Mor.* 544C; cf. 2 Cor 11:28-29)
- 7) self-praise is acceptable when it is done for the benefit of the audience (*Mor.* 545D; cf. 2 Cor 12:19)³⁴⁵

Not surprisingly, Betz argues that Paul "at no point gets into conflict with the rules and provisions" of self-praise (περιαντολογία) that are discussed by Plutarch and Quintilian.³⁴⁶ Similarly, after summarising Plutarch's essay on self-praise, Marshall states that "Paul appears to abide by a number of these recommendations."³⁴⁷ However, while similarities can be noted between Paul's self-presentation and Graeco-Roman rhetorical conventions, what is the significance of these similarities? After listing possible parallels between Paul and Plutarch, Dillon observes that they could involve "complete coincidence"; he notes that "[t]hese prescriptions are after all obvious--they are what any gifted natural orator would do".³⁴⁸ Concerning the more general relationship between Paul and Graeco-Roman rhetoric, Litfin concludes that "the rules of rhetoric were in many ways merely descriptive of what gifted communicators did anyway";³⁴⁹ consequently, similarities between Paul and the

³⁴²On the pedagogical function of self-praise, cf. above pp. 52-54.

³⁴³Dillon ("Response", 17) acknowledges that 2 Cor 11:19 may be too sarcastic to be an example of this convention.

³⁴⁴"One is tempted to think of the passage 12:1-10, but the parallel is not exact" (Dillon, *ibid.*; cf. above n231).

³⁴⁵Dillon, "Response", 17-18; cf. Betz, "De laude", 377-93.

³⁴⁶Betz, "Apology", 9; cf. *Apostel*, 74-79, 95.

³⁴⁷Marshall, *Enmity*, 345.

³⁴⁸Dillon, "Response", 18; cf. McCant, "Paul's Thorn", 560; Barnett, *Second Epistle*, 494n1.

³⁴⁹cf. Quint. *Inst.* 5.10.120.

rhetorical handbooks “is by no means an automatic indication that the Apostle had embraced Greco-Roman rhetoric as such.”³⁵⁰

In evaluating the theme of boasting in Graeco-Roman and Jewish literature, this thesis has sought to examine the concepts and factors that contributed to the activity and limitation of self-praise. In Graeco-Roman literature, boasting is closely related to the pursuit of honour. In a competitive environment where honour was limited, boasting provided a useful tool in maintaining one’s social status. However, the rhetorical handbooks note that certain factors made boasting dangerous; for instance, it could generate envy or make one vulnerable to the charge of being an ἀλαζών. Thus, the rhetorical conventions of self-praise provided a means to boast, while attempting to avoid the potential hazards that might accompany this type of speech.

Significantly, when Paul’s boasting is compared to the broader factors influencing Graeco-Roman rhetorical conventions of self-praise, divergence emerges between these conventions and Paul’s self-presentation. Underlying these practices is a concern for the proper response of one’s audience. However, Paul’s self-presentation views the involvement of the audience from a different perspective. While he does want to defend himself in the Corinthian context, he argues that the ultimate judge of his self-presentation is not the Corinthian church but God. This point is evident in several ways. First, Paul’s reference to boasting without shame (10:8) appears to imply that he will be vindicated by God. Similarly, he implies that he is the recipient of divine commendation (10:13-18); while his opponents may have been warmly received with the Corinthian community, they have not been approved by God. Furthermore, at the conclusion of the “fool’s discourse”, he states: “Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending [ἀπολογούμεθα] ourselves to you? We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ” (12:19; cf. 4:2). Thus, while Graeco-Roman conventions focus on the social implications of one’s boast, Paul views boasting in terms of one’s relationship to God.

In its analysis of 2 Cor 10-12, this thesis has argued that the triad of relationships in Jewish literature involving the righteous, the wicked and God provides a backdrop to Paul’s self-presentation. Paul’s emphasis on divine deliverance and vindication is consistent with this background. Consequently, caution must be exercised in comparing Paul to Graeco-Roman conventions of self-praise. While a certain overlap may exist between Paul’s self-presentation and these rhetorical conventions, ultimately Paul’s view of self-praise is shaped by a different perspective--a perspective focused on the saving work of God and one’s participation in that work.

³⁵⁰Litfin, *Proclamation*, 256; cf. Norden, *Kunstprosa*, 2:493-94; Classen, “Paulus”, 1-33.

CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

After a brief typology of previous research, the Introduction presented three methodological commitments that have been integral to this examination of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13. First, unlike those studies that focus on the usage of the *καυχ*- word group,¹ our study has not been confined to an investigation of lexical terms. While being attentive to the use of particular words and rhetorical conventions, this thesis has sought to evaluate boasting at a conceptual level. Second, recognising the drawbacks of concentrating only on Graeco-Roman conventions of self-presentation to illuminate the analysis of 2 Cor 10-13,² we have endeavoured to investigate the theme of boasting in *both* Graeco-Roman and Jewish literature. Third, in addressing the relationship between Paul's boasting and various rhetorical conventions, this study has sought to proceed beyond a parallel analysis of formal similarities to an understanding of the rhetorical and cultural functions of boasting within the literature examined. Consequently, it has explored the concepts and conventions that supervised and restrained the practice of self-praise.

Working from these methodological commitments, Chapter One surveyed the theme of boasting in Graeco-Roman literature. In this literature, a theme closely aligned with boasting is the concept of honour; boasting was associated with the pursuit of honour. Significant for the pursuit of honour was the assumption that achievement and honour were related; honour was presumed to be the appropriate response to virtuous character and actions. Similarly, in discussions of benefaction relationships, clients were expected to honour their patrons in return for the beneficence they received. In view of this link between accomplishment and honour, self-praise was deemed appropriate when one's achievements did not receive their proper recognition. Thus, boasting was associated with securing and maintaining one's honour.

While the pursuit of honour was a motivation for boasting, this pursuit was not without its critics. According to many philosophers and moralists, the pursuit of public recognition could entail the loss of "self-sufficiency" (*αὐτάρκεια*). In fact, a recurrent criticism of sophists and public speakers was the accusation that they had relinquished control of their "happiness" (*εὐδαιμονία*) to the whims of public opinion. Just as an emphasis on self-sufficiency involved criticism of inappropriate ambition, it also implied reservations about boasting. If one's happiness were dependent on internal factors alone, then boasting in pursuit of honour could be viewed as an indication of one's deficiency in virtue and a lack of control over one's emotions. Consequently, the possibility that self-praise could be interpreted as evidence of one's lack of *ἀρετή* encouraged the limitation of boasting.

A further element restraining the practice of boasting was the danger of envy, which was widely regarded as one of the worst emotions. Ideally, one's reference to personal achievement should generate the desire of emulation among one's listeners; however, since one's boasting might take place in the presence of those who were deficient in character, envy could be an unintended result of self-praise. Consequently, various rhetorical treatises note that speakers must be aware of the ways their self-presentation affects the emotions and thought processes of those listening. Not surprisingly, modesty in self-presentation was a recognised tool for generating goodwill within an audience.

¹e.g., the word studies by Bosch, Dowdy and Bultmann.

²e.g., the studies by Betz, Judge, Marshall, Forbes and Winter.

The importance of truthful self-presentation also influenced the practice of self-praise. While truthful self-presentation was encouraged, excessiveness or deficiency in this area was viewed negatively. Concerning excessive self-presentation, the standard image of a “boaster” in Graeco-Roman literature is the *ἀλαζών*, an impostor who makes presumptuous claims that are false. Thus, a potential danger of self-praise was the charge that one was engaged in *ἀλαζονεία*. By contrast, the practice of underrating one’s abilities and achievements was also vulnerable to criticism, particularly since a humble self-presentation could be associated with low social status.

To some extent, the rhetorical conventions of self-praise provided guidelines by which a speaker could be sensitive to these various concerns. Moreover, these conventions indicated that the relationship between speaker and listener was an important criterion for the evaluation of boasting. For example, Plutarch notes that certain boasting conventions result from the need to communicate to those who might be prone to envy (*Mor.* 543A). Thus, limitations on self-praise did not necessarily imply that boasting was intrinsically improper; rather, they could simply reflect a speaker’s attempt to refrain from offending those in the audience.

In Chapter Two we turned our attention to boasting in Jewish literature. In beginning with an examination of this theme in the Old Testament, we observed that boasting is often appraised within a theological context. Consequently, boasting affects not only one’s relationship with others but also one’s relationship with God. Consistent with this theological dimension, the content of boasting can involve the source of one’s confidence and faith.

In the Psalms, boasting can be associated with the presentation of the triad of relationships involving the righteous, the wicked and God. According to this pattern, the speech of the wicked can involve scornful rebuke of the righteous as well as arrogant boasting that reflects rebellion against God. By contrast, the righteous, who are often portrayed as poor and humble, express confidence in God’s ability to save and deliver those faithful to him. Thus, to some extent, the wicked and the righteous display different objects of trust--while the wicked “boast” in themselves, the righteous “boast” in God. Frequently, the theme of status reversal is associated with this triadic pattern of relationships: God punishes the wicked and rescues the righteous. This deliverance of the righteous reflects God’s association with those who are humbly dependent on him. In contrast to many Graeco-Roman sources, the Old Testament, along with other Jewish sources, portrays humility favourably. In fact, while humility can be closely linked with lowly social status, it can also be described as an attitude appropriate for those in positions of power and influence.

Important for the study of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13 is the reference to positive and negative boasting in Jer 9:22-23. In a setting that warns of God’s impending judgment on Israel’s spiritual laxity, Jeremiah condemns boasting that is done in a self-centred manner; rather, one should boast in one’s knowledge of God. Significantly, in the context of Jeremiah, the notion of “knowing God” involves responding to God in obedience. Thus, I have argued that the positive boasting of Jer 9 may have a self-referential, or “participatory”, dimension. That is to say, boasting in the Lord may express not only confidence in God’s saving work but also the conviction that one’s personal stake in that work will not be in vain. This participatory dimension is present in two other relevant texts. In the Septuagint, the boasting maxim of Jer 9 also occurs at 1 Sam 2:10, where the boaster’s personal obedience to

God is explicitly stated. Similarly, in the laments of Jeremiah, as the prophet boasts in God, he also declares his faithfulness in exercising his prophetic responsibilities (Jer 17:14-16). In both the Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2) and Jer 17, boasting in the Lord occurs within a context that reflects the triadic pattern of relationships between the righteous, the wicked and God observed in the Psalms. The comments of Hannah and Jeremiah occur in settings where each of these individuals has experienced opposition; despite this opposition, they acknowledge God as the source of deliverance and salvation.

Certain Old Testament motifs associated with boasting are also evident in non-biblical Jewish literature. For instance, the triadic pattern of relationships detected in the Psalms also appears in the hymns of Qumran. Furthermore, the narrative and historical literature of Second Temple Judaism can associate arrogant boasting with the oppressors of Israel in a way similar to Old Testament examples. Moreover, as in the Old Testament, the boasting of the wicked stands in contrast to the humble dependence of the righteous on God. An emphasis on humility is evident in texts including the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Sirach, the Qumran corpus, Philo and various Rabbinic sources.

Thus, in general terms, we have seen that divergent tendencies are evident in the criteria governing the practice and evaluation of boasting in Graeco-Roman and Jewish sources respectively. In Graeco-Roman sources, the relationship between the speaker and the listener is often a significant factor in determining the appropriate use of self-praise. Jewish sources, by contrast, usually view boasting within a theological context stressing the relationship between the speaker and God. These tendencies do not imply that the evaluation criteria for boasting in Graeco-Roman and Jewish sources are mutually exclusive; for example, certain similarities can be observed between discussions of boasting in Graeco-Roman sources and references to self-presentation in Josephus and Philo. Nonetheless, on the whole, the theological emphasis that permeates Jewish treatments of boasting is uncommon in Graeco-Roman discussions.

With the Graeco-Roman and Jewish background in view, Chapter Three examined the literary and historical background of 2 Cor 10-13. In evaluating the historical setting of this passage, the issue of self-presentation emerges as a recurrent theme in criticisms levelled against Paul within the Corinthian context. The motif of presence and absence in 2 Cor 10:1-11 implies that Paul's public presentation was a source of complaint. While he could be bold in his letters, his personal presence was perceived as weak and unimpressive. A further line of criticism concerned Paul's refusal of financial support; quite possibly this refusal involved the apostle's deliberate rejection of a relationship with the Corinthian congregation that could have been construed as one of patronage. Moreover, associated with his rejection of support was his participation in manual labour, which was an activity not generally associated with those in positions of leadership. Thus, from the Corinthians' perspective, both Paul's personal appearance and his financial activities were indicative of an individual of humble social status. Ultimately, the apparent inconsistency between Paul's claims of leadership and his lowly self-presentation made him vulnerable to the charge that he was a boaster, whose assertions of apostolic status were false; as stated earlier, the prevalent stereotype of a boaster in Hellenistic sources included the element of imposture. Consequently, in responding to these charges, it was important for Paul to argue that his self-presentation was not incompatible with his claims of ministerial responsibility.

Having explored the historical setting of 2 Cor 10-13, Chapter Four studied Paul's discussion of boasting in this passage. As he responds to the situation in Corinth, Paul

argues that he can boast and not be “ashamed” (10:8). This assertion anticipates 10:12-18, in which he states that he boasts according to divine standards; by contrast, he implies that in the Corinthian context, it is actually his opponents who are guilty of ἀλαζονεία. In developing this argument, Paul states that the one who boasts should “boast in the Lord” (v. 17). This same clause also occurs in Paul’s previous correspondence to the Corinthians at 1 Cor 1:31; consequently, the reference in 1 Corinthians is relevant to the study of 2 Cor 10:17.

The reference to boasting in the Lord at 1 Cor 1:31 has certain lexical and thematic links with Jer 9:22-23. However, connections are also present between this passage and 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX). For example, the theme of reversal of status, which is prominent in 1 Sam 2 but not in Jer 9, is also evident in 1 Cor 1. Consequently, it is difficult to argue that 1 Cor 1:31 is exclusively dependent on either Jer 9:22-23 or 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX). As with 1 Cor 1, Paul’s reference to boasting in the Lord at 2 Cor 10:17 shares particular links with Jer 9. For instance, Paul’s contention that his opponents’ competitive boasting reveals a lack of understanding (10:12) appears to echo the argument of Jer 9, which states that appropriate boasting involves one’s knowledge of God. Furthermore, connections can also be drawn between Paul’s self-presentation in 2 Cor 10 and the ministry of Jeremiah the prophet. For example, Paul’s description of his ministry in terms of “building up” and “tearing down” (10:8; cf. 13:10) is reminiscent of Jeremiah’s call as a prophet.³ Moreover, Paul’s boast in the Lord is similar to Jeremiah’s boast in God (Jer 17:14); in each case, an individual claiming a divine commission expresses confidence in God despite the presence of criticism and opposition.

In evaluating these two references to boasting in the Lord (1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17), I have argued that this type of boasting may have a self-referential component. In other words, while boasting in the Lord involves praise of God, it can also express confidence that one’s own participation in God’s work will not be in vain. In defending this view, we built upon the previous observation of the participatory element present in the contexts of Jer 9:22-23, 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX), and in the boasting of the prophet Jeremiah, an individual whose ministry appears to be relevant for Paul’s self-presentation in 2 Cor 10. Moreover, certain evidence in the contexts of 1 Cor 1-4 and 2 Cor 10-13 also suggests that this component may be present in these citations. For example, a central issue in 2 Cor 10:12-18 is the truthfulness of one’s boast; Paul contends that his boasting is legitimate while that of his opponents is not. To buttress his point he refers to the existence of the Corinthian church as evidence of the veracity of his ministerial claims. This same type of argument occurs in vv. 17-18, where Paul maintains that the ultimate evidence of the legitimacy of one’s boast involves divine commendation. Thus, Paul is confident that his personal identification with God’s saving work will be vindicated.

With the beginning of 2 Cor 11, the theme of foolishness becomes prominent in Paul’s argument. In preparing the Corinthians for his inappropriate boasting, Paul argues that his opponents have boasted in a foolish manner. Some have suggested that Paul’s description of foolishness implies that his opponents lacked self-knowledge; the maxim “know thyself” was a recurrent theme in Graeco-Roman sources. However, we have seen that Paul’s use of “foolishness” ultimately implies a lack of knowledge of God; this theological emphasis is consistent with Paul’s use of Jer 9 in 2 Cor 10; in a divine oracle,

³Jer 1:10; cf. 18:7-9; 24:6; 31[38]:28; 42[49]:10; 45:4 [51:34].

Jeremiah describes the people of Israel as “fools” because they have no understanding of God (Jer 4:22). Moreover, this theological dimension to foolishness is also present elsewhere in the Old Testament and in extra-biblical Jewish literature. Thus, Paul’s critique of the self-presentation of his opponents reflects a theological focus.

After warning his audience that he disavows the “foolish” boasting of his opponents, Paul states that he has been forced to engage in this type of self-praise. Thus, apparently in response to the competitive statements of his opponents, Paul boasts in his credentials and his religious experiences. Yet, in addressing each topic, Paul shifts his focus to highlight his vulnerability and lack of social status. He argues that if he must boast, he will boast in his “weaknesses”; for it is through his weakness that he experiences God’s power. In evaluating Paul’s references to his hardships, some have suggested parallels with similar discussions in Hellenistic philosophical literature. However, unlike certain philosophical treatments of adversity, Paul does not claim to have reached a level of self-sufficiency (*αὐτάρκεια*); rather, he argues that he experiences the power of God in his sufferings. Thus, his self-presentation is consistent with the standard presentation in Jewish literature of the righteous who, despite opposition and suffering, maintain confidence in the saving activity of God.

With this perspective in view, Paul’s critique of his opponents gains clarity. Just as the suffering righteous are often depicted as inferior in social status to their opponents, so Paul has been berated by his critics for his humble social standing. Consistent with this background to Paul’s self-presentation is his inversion of the standards esteemed by his opponents. In 11:21-12:10, Paul’s foolish boasting apparently reflects qualities valued by his opponents; however, while acknowledging these traits, Paul highlights his weaknesses and humble status. Thus, he rejects the criteria his opponents have used in evaluating his ministry. Besides criticising his opponents’ evaluation criteria, Paul ultimately critiques the process of competitive boasting itself. In contrast to his opponents who boast by comparing themselves to others, Paul boasts by comparing himself to the standards set by God. In so doing, Paul’s boasting is consistent with traditions of the suffering righteous, who confess God as the ultimate source of salvation and commendation.

B. Contributions

In several ways, this thesis has furthered the ongoing discussion of the theme of boasting in 2 Cor 10-13. One such contribution concerns the relationship between Paul’s boasting and Graeco-Roman views on this subject. As others have noted, Graeco-Roman conventions of self-praise and self-presentation are relevant to the historical setting and argument of 2 Cor 10-13. For instance, we have seen that the charges levelled against Paul included the accusation that he was a “boaster” (*ἀλαζών*), which was a standard character type in Graeco-Roman literature. Moreover, Paul’s depiction of his opponents implies that their boasting involved “comparison” (*σύγκρισις*). This was not only an established mode of self-praise but also a convention commonly used by orators and sophists.

To some extent, Graeco-Roman boasting conventions may also illuminate Paul’s response to his critics in Corinth. For instance, his reference to boasting out of necessity may reflect his awareness that a person in his situation was expected to boast because his reputation had been attacked. More generally, scholars such as Betz and Marshall have argued that Paul’s self-presentation is consistent with rhetorical boasting conventions. Others have observed similarities between Paul’s criticism of his opponents self-praise and unfavourable perceptions of boasting found in certain Graeco-Roman sources. For example,

Heckel speaks of a “Grundkonsens” between Greek, Jewish and Christian sources concerning a negative assessment of self-praise.⁴

In addressing the relationship between Paul and Graeco-Roman patterns of boasting, we have sought to evaluate the concepts and conventions that regulated the practice of self-praise. As a result of this investigation, we have observed differences between Paul’s boasting and Graeco-Roman views and practices of boasting. Two specific examples can be noted. First, in discussions of boasting in Graeco-Roman literature, a significant factor affecting the use of self-praise is the relationship between the speaker and the audience; Graeco-Roman boasting conventions provided a speaker with ways to use self-praise without offending those listening. Paul, however, perceives the role of the audience from a different vantage point. While he does desire to commend himself to the Corinthians, he argues that the ultimate judge of his self-presentation is not his Corinthian audience but God. Thus, while Graeco-Roman rhetorical conventions highlight the social ramifications of one’s boasts, Paul views boasting in terms of one’s relationship to God. Second, in evaluating reasons for the limitation of boasting, we observed that concern for “self-sufficiency” (*αὐτάρκεια*) was often fundamental to criticisms of self-praise in Graeco-Roman philosophical literature. Paul, however, does not argue that his opponents are deficient in *self*-sufficiency or *self*-knowledge; rather, he contends that they lack knowledge of God. Thus, in seeking to understand the concepts and conventions that governed self-praise, this thesis has shown that formal resemblances between Paul’s treatment of boasting and Graeco-Roman discussions do not necessarily imply similarity of function and motivation.

Further contributions of this work concern the relationship between Paul’s understanding of boasting and boasting themes found in Jewish literature. On the one hand, like many others (e.g., Schreiner, Heckel, Wong), we have noted the considerable influence of Jer 9:22-23 on Paul’s use of the boasting theme in 2 Cor 10-13. In Jer 9, the distinction between proper and improper boasting turns on one’s knowledge of God; according to Paul, that same issue distinguishes his boasting from that of his opponents. This thesis, however, has also argued that the boasting saying of Jer 9 is closely aligned with the triadic pattern of relationships found in Jewish literature involving the righteous, the wicked and God. According to this pattern, the wicked, who oppress the righteous, express confidence in their own resources and abilities. By contrast, the righteous, who are often of low social standing, voice their confidence in God. Related to this pattern is the theme of reversal of status; in responding to these individuals, God humbles the wicked and exalts the righteous.

As we have seen, this pattern provides a conceptual setting for Paul’s self-presentation in 2 Cor 10-13. In this passage, Paul portrays his opponents as the wicked who have attacked him unfairly and boasted improperly. On the other hand, despite his humble social status, he expresses confidence in God and anticipates divine vindication of his ongoing ministry. The presence of this triadic pattern of relationships in 2 Cor 10-13 highlights several elements of Paul’s boasting. First, this pattern shows that the distinction Paul draws between his boasting and that of his opponents is not simply one of *content*. He is saying more than his boasts are true while those of his opponents are not. His additional claim is that these boasts also differ in terms of *outcome*; his boasts will be vindicated by God, while the boasts of his opponents will be rendered invalid through divine judgment.

⁴Heckel, *Kraft*, 159.

Second, this pattern highlights the underlying coherence of Paul's own boasting in this passage. In evaluating Paul's boasting, Wong concludes that Paul's "boast in the Lord", which focuses on his ministerial achievements, is distinct from his boasting in weaknesses.⁵ This distinction, however, is not required. Like the suffering righteous, Paul's boasting reflects both a humble social status and the reality of God's deliverance and power. In fact, the compatibility of weakness and power evident in the standard portrayal of the suffering righteous supports Paul's contention that his leadership claims are not invalidated by his humble status and self-presentation.

In examining Paul's self-presentation, this study has suggested that Paul's "boast in the Lord" may have a self-referential dimension. Many scholars argue that appropriate boasting focuses steadfastly on God's activity. For instance, Travis states that Paul's boasting "is the complete antithesis of boasting in one's own achievements."⁶ Thus, improper boasting focuses on one's own resources while proper boasting involves praise of God. However, in various ways, we have seen that acceptable boasting does not necessarily exclude reference to the one boasting. This participatory dimension to one's boasting is evident in the context of Jer 9,⁷ 1 Sam 2:10 (LXX) and the laments of Jeremiah. More generally, it can appear as part of the triadic pattern of relationships between the righteous, the wicked and God; in these situations, the righteous express confidence that their actions will be vindicated by God. Furthermore, we have seen evidence that a self-referential aspect is compatible with Paul's references to "boasting in the Lord" in 1 Cor 1:31 and 2 Cor 10:17. According to this view, Paul's boasting is an expression of confidence in God and confidence that his participation in God's saving work will not be in vain.

Having proposed a conceptual framework with which to understand Paul's boasting, this may also evoke questions for further research. Specifically, is there a relationship between this conceptual structure and other occurrences of boasting language in the Pauline corpus? For instance, in focusing on 2 Cor 10-13, we have not evaluated the boasting theme in Romans. In many ways, the historical background of the Corinthians letters is quite different from that of Romans. In 2 Cor 10-13 Paul is addressing a congregation that knows him personally and a congregation in which he has been insulted; this is not the case with Romans. Nonetheless, does the triadic pattern of relationships influence Paul's references to boasting in the argument of Romans? Moreover, does the participatory dimension of proper boasting inform Paul's references to boasting in Romans? In arguing for a participatory dimension to the Jeremiah boasting saying, I noted certain links between Jer 9 and Deut 10:12-22; both passages depict God as the proper object of boasting, and both passages use the image of "circumcision of the heart". The Deuteronomy passage provides evidence for a participatory dimension of boasting because it refers to God as Israel's boast within a context that stresses covenantal obedience. Interestingly, these themes of boasting in God and "circumcision of the heart" also occur together in Romans 2:17-29. Thus, the conceptual background evident in Paul's self-presentation in 2 Cor 10-13 may be significant for understanding references in other parts of the Pauline corpus.

⁵Wong, "2 Corinthians 10:17", 252; cf. "Boasting", 228-29.

⁶Travis, "Boasting", 527.

⁷*pace* Heckel, Schreiner.

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