

Consolation in Philippians

Philosophical Sources and
Rhetorical Strategy

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1

THE INTEGRITY OF PHILIPPIANS

The literary integrity of Philippians is much debated and must be discussed prior to any study of the letter.¹ It is particularly relevant to our study which argues that the prayer-report of Phil. 1:9–11 is programmatic for the argument of each of the alleged letter-fragments and gives to the canonical letter both a logical and a thematic unity. In this initial chapter we shall examine the case for partitioning. We shall argue that it has not been successfully made and that, on the evidence, it is reasonable to approach Philippians as a unity.

Modern critical reconstructions of Philippians have typically understood it to be a composite of three separate letters,² the first two of which at least were written while Paul was in prison. These are, in chronological order: Letter A (4:10–20), a short thank-you

¹ The literary integrity of Philippians was questioned by scholars in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but most dismissed the question as inappropriate given Philippians' casual and letter-like quality. As the image of Paul the letter-writer changed, however, the allegedly disjointed nature of Philippians became a problem. The modern debate over the integrity of the epistle derives from four apparently independent studies published between 1957 and 1960: W. Schmithals, "Die Irrlehrer des Philipperbriefes," *ZTK* 54 (1957) 297–341; revised for *Paulus und die Gnostiker* (TF 35; Hamburg-Bergstedt: Herbert Reich, 1965) 47–87; Eng. trans., "The False Teachers of the Epistle to the Philippians," in *idem, Paul and the Gnostics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972) 65–122; J. Müller-Bardorf, "Zur Frage der literarischen Einheit des Philipperbriefes," *WZJena* 7 (1957–58) 591–604; B. D. Rahtjen, "The Three Letters of Paul to the Philippians," *NTS* (1959–60) 167–73; and F. W. Beare, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians* (London: A. & C. Black, 1959). Subsequent studies have added little to the case for partitioning. On the early debate, see the recent clarifications by David Cook, "Stephanus Le Moyne and the Dissection of Philippians," *JTS* 32 (1981) 138–42; V. Koperski, "The Early History of the Dissection of Philippians," *JTS* 44 (1993) 599–603.

² For the two-letter hypothesis, see Joachim Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief* (HTKNT 10/3; Freiburg: Herder, 1968) 7–10; G. Friedrich, *Der Brief an die Philipper* (NTD 8; 15th edn.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981) 126–8. Gnilka: Letter A: 1:1–3:1a; 4:2–7, 10–23; Letter B: 3:1b–4:1, 8–9. Friedrich: Letter A: 1:1–3:1a; 4:10–23; Letter B: 3:1b–4:9.

note sent immediately after the arrival of Epaphroditus with a gift from the Philippians; Letter B (1:1–3:1), a letter of reassurance sent upon the return of Epaphroditus; and Letter C (3:2–4:3), a polemical letter or *Kampfbrief* sent at some later date (perhaps after his release) when Paul had become more fully apprised of the theological dangers facing the Philippians. The remaining material in 4:4–9 and 4:21–3 is variously assigned, though usually 4:4–7 and 21–3 are assigned to Letter B.³ Evidence adduced in support of this hypothesis falls into three categories: (1) various pieces of external evidence suggesting either directly or indirectly that Philippians is a composite; (2) internal evidence pointing to 3:2–4:3 as the fragment of a separate letter; and (3) further internal evidence pointing to 4:10–20 as another fragment. We shall consider these in order.

External evidence that Philippians is a composite

The evidence for partitioning Philippians is primarily internal. Nevertheless, four pieces of external evidence have been adduced in support of the theory that Philippians is a composite. Three of these support the more general claim that Paul wrote more than one letter to the church at Philippi.⁴ They are: (1) the listing of Philippians twice in the *Catalogus Sinaiticus*;⁵ (2) the mention of a “first epistle to the Philippians” in the *Chronographia* of the ninth-century Byzantine historian Georgius Syncellus;⁶ and (3) a reference by Polycarp at *Ad Phil.* 3.2 to Paul’s “letters” (ἐπιστολάς) to the Philippians.⁷ Only the third of these, Polycarp’s much-discussed plural, is of any historical value.⁸ It is uncertain, however, what

³ See the table in Lukas Bormann, *Philippi. Stadt und Christengemeinde zur Zeit des Paulus* (NovTSup 78; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 110.

⁴ Rahtjen, “Three Letters,” 167–8. Rahtjen’s evidence is typically relegated to the footnotes, even by those who partition the letter: Gnlika, *Philippbrief*, 11 n. 57; Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 81 n. 59.

⁵ A. S. Lewis, ed., *Catalogue of the Syriac MSS. in the Convent of S. Catherine on Mount Sinai* (Studia Sinaitica 1; London: C. J. Clay, 1894) 4–16.

⁶ W. Dindorf, ed., *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (Bonn: Weber, 1828) XII:651 (= 420.14 Mosshammer): Τούτου [Κλήμεντος] καὶ ὁ ἀπόστολος ἐν τῇ πρὸς Φιλιππησίους μέμνηται πρώτη ἐπιστολῇ εἰπὼν, μετὰ καὶ Κλήμεντος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν συνεργῶν μου. Taken at face value this citation actually counts against the partition theory, since it assigns Phil. 4:3, Letter C according to the critical reconstruction, to ἡ πρὸς Φιλιππησίους πρώτη ἐπιστολή.

⁷ *Ad Phil.* 3.2: ὃς [Παῦλος] καὶ ἀπὸν ὑμῖν ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολάς, εἰς ἃς ἐὰν ἐγκύπτητε, δυνήθησεσθε οἰκοδομεῖσθαι εἰς τὴν δοθεῖσαν ὑμῖν πίστιν.

⁸ The double listing of Philippians in the *Catalogus*, which in its first mention is assigned the same number of stichoi (318) as Ephesians which immediately precedes

contribution, if any, such evidence can make to the debate over the integrity of Philippians, since all parties readily admit the likelihood of additional correspondence.⁹

Recently Philip Sellew has introduced a fourth piece of external evidence that speaks more directly to the issue of partitioning.¹⁰ Noting that the pseudepigraphic *Epistle to the Laodiceans*,¹¹ which draws upon Philippians for both its content and structure,¹² contains no reference either to Letter C (Phil. 3:2–4:3 + 4:7–9) or to Letter A (Phil. 4:10–20) of the critical reconstruction, he concludes that the compiler of *Laodiceans* used a version of Philippians lacking both of these fragments and thus similar to Letter B (Phil. 1:1–3:1 + 4:4–6 + 4:20–3). There are at least two major problems with Sellew's analysis.¹³

it, is an obvious case of parablepsis (note also the careless omission of 1 Timothy); B. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 221 n. 27; A. Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, rev. edn. by C. S. C. Williams (London: Duckworth, 1954) 209 n. 3. Syncellus is unreliable and late; B. S. Mackay "Further Thoughts on Philippians," *NTS* 7 (1961) 162.

⁹ Various explanations of Polycarp's plural have been offered. J. B. Lightfoot, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1889) II/3:327, 348, argues that it is a plural used idiomatically for the singular. T. Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. from 3rd German edn., 3 vols. (New York: Scribners, 1909) I:535–6, suggests that it may refer to an early collection of Paul's letters to Macedonia and thus include the Thessalonian correspondence. Walter Bauer, *Die apostolischen Väter*, vol II: *Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochien und der Polykarpbrief* (HNT 18; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1920) 287, wonders quite plausibly whether Polycarp has simply inferred the presence of additional letters on the basis of 3:1 and Paul's long-standing relationship with the Philippians. Rahtjen, "Three Letters," 167, believes that Polycarp had in his possession several letters from Paul to the Philippians, letters which he contends, on other grounds, were eventually compiled to form the canonical Philippians.

¹⁰ "Laodiceans and the Philippians Fragments Hypothesis," *HTR* 87 (1994) 17–28.

¹¹ A critical text may be found in Rudolf Anger, *Über den Laodicenerbrief. Eine biblisch-kritische Untersuchung* (Leipzig: Gebhardt & Reiland, 1843) 155–65; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (London: Macmillan, 1892) 281–91; Eng. trans. in Wilhelm Schneemelcher, "The Epistle to the Laodiceans," in *NTApoc* II.42–6 (1992). It is debated whether *Laodiceans*, which survives in Latin and several late vernaculars, was originally composed in Greek or Latin. I agree with Sellew ("Laodiceans," 22), who follows Lightfoot (*Colossians*, 289–91), that *Laodiceans* was originally composed in Greek.

¹² Anger, *Laodicenerbrief*, 155–65; Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 293–4; Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium von fremden Gott* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960; reprint of 2nd edn., 1924) Beilage 3, 140; cf. Sellew, "Laodiceans," 28.

¹³ For a more detailed discussion of these problems, see Paul A. Holloway, "The Apocryphal *Epistle to the Laodiceans* and the Partitioning of Philippians," *HTR* 91 (1998) 321–5, with response by Philip Sellew, "Laodiceans and Philippians Revisited: A Response to Paul Holloway," *HTR* 91 (1998) 327–9.

First, it seems that *Laodiceans* does in fact contain a reference to the so-called *Kampfbrief* of Phil. 3:2–4:3. The relevant text is *Laod. 13*, which reads: *Et quod [reliquum]¹⁴ est, dilectissimi, gaudete in Christo et praecavete sordidos in lucro*, “And for the rest, beloved, rejoice in Christ and beware of those who are defiled in their pursuit of gain.” A number of scholars see here a synthesis of Phil. 3:1 and 2, *gaudete . . . praecavete* repeating Paul’s troubling *χαίρετε . . . βλέπετε*.¹⁵ Lightfoot reconstructs the Greek: *καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν, ἀγαπητοί, χαίρετε ἐν Χριστῷ· βλέπετε δὲ τοὺς αἰσχροκερδεῖς*.¹⁶ Sellwé rejects this interpretation on the grounds that the Vulgate translates the *βλέπετε* of Phil. 3:2 with *videte* not *praecavete*.¹⁷ But this is beside the point, (1) because the Latin text of *Laodiceans* frequently departs from both the Vulgate and the Old Latin versions of Philippians,¹⁸ and (2) because *Laodiceans* predates the Vulgate translation.¹⁹ To the degree that the Latin translations of Philippians are relevant, a more pertinent question would have been how the Old Latin versions translate *βλέπετε*. At least one Old Latin version, Frede’s Text Type I, derivable from Victorinus’ Commentaries on Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, translates with the cognate *caveo* (*cavete a canibus*).²⁰

¹⁴ Mss: *Et quod est*. Anger, *Laodicenerbrief*, 163, supplies *reliquum*, as do Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 286, and Harnack, *Marcion*, Beilage 3, 137–8.

¹⁵ Anger, *Laodicenerbrief*, 162, calls *Laod. 13b* an “Anspielung an Phil. 3, 2, viell. mit Rücksicht auf V. 7 f”; cf. Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 291; Karl Pink, “Die pseudo-paulinischen Briefe II,” *Bib* 6 (1925) 190. This kind of synthesis is typical of *Laodiceans* (e.g., *Laod. 6* [Phil. 1:13 and 8]; *Laod. 7* [Phil. 1:19–20]; *Laod. 9* [Phil. 2:1–2]; *Laod. 15–16* [Phil. 4:8–9]).

¹⁶ *Colossians*, 294; cf. p. 291. Harnack’s reconstruction, *παραιτεῖσθε τοὺς αἰσχροκερδεῖς* (*Marcion*, Beilage 3, 139), makes no sense to me, since *praecavete* clearly does not translate *παραιτεῖσθε* (“decline” or “avoid,” typically rendered with some form of *devito* [1 Tim. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:23] or *recuso* [Acts 15:11]).

¹⁷ “*Laodiceans*,” 23 n. 17.

¹⁸ Lightfoot, *Colossians*, 291, has collected the evidence.

¹⁹ By 393 Jerome can report (*De vir. ill.* 5 [PL 23.650A]): *Legunt quidam et ad Laodicenses, sed ab omnibus exploditur*; cf. Theodore Mopsuestia, *apud* Rabanus Maurus, *In Epist. ad Col.* (PL 112.540B = H. B. Swete, *Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Epistles of Paul* [Cambridge: At the University Press, 1880] I:301): *Unde quidam falsam epistolam ad Laodicenses ex nomine beati Pauli confingendam esse existimaverunt; nec enim erat vera epistola*. Pink, “Die pseudo-paulinischen Briefe II,” 192, and Metzger, *Canon*, 183, place the *terminus a quo* at the middle of the third century. Sellwé holds a similar view: “[*Laodiceans*] was apparently translated [from Greek into Latin], along with the rest of the Corpus Paulinum, as part of a process not yet completely understood, namely, the production of the pre-Vulgate, Old Latin version or versions” (“*Laodiceans*,” 22).

²⁰ Hermann Josef Frede, *Epistulae ad Philippenses et ad Colossenses*, in *idem*, ed., *Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel* (Freiburg: Herder, 1966–71) XXIV/1:179. Cf. Victorinus, *In Epist. Pauli ad Phil.* (PL 8.1217C; Albrecht Locher, ed.,

A similar translation (*cavete canes*) is cited by Ambrose²¹ and Augustine.²²

The second problem with Sellew's analysis is that it fails to consider adequately the kinds of redactional criteria that would have led the compiler of *Laodiceans* to include some and exclude other material from *Philippians*. So, for instance, Sellew fails to observe: (1) that *Laodiceans*, like its companion *Colossians* (cf. Col. 4:16), was composed as if written from prison;²³ (2) that *Philippians* was chosen as a model for *Laodiceans* because it too was a prison letter; (3) that most of the material excerpted from *Philippians* pertains either directly or indirectly to Paul's imprisonment;²⁴ and (4) that Phil. 3:2–4:3 (Letter C of the critical reconstruction) contains nothing of Paul's imprisonment and so would naturally have been passed over.²⁵ Similarly, he fails to observe that everything specific to Paul's relationship with the *Philippians* has been omitted from *Laodiceans*. Thus the thanksgiving period of 1:3–11, which speaks of the *Philippians*' long-standing partnership in the gospel, is quickly passed over, as are Timothy's travel plans in 2:19–24 and the report on Epaphroditus in 2:25–30.²⁶ It is not surprising that the "thank-you note" of 4:10–20, which reiterates the omitted material in 1:3–11, and speaks at length of the gift carried by Epaphroditus, is also omitted on these grounds.

Marius Victorinus. *Commentarii in Epistulas Pauli ad Galatas ad Philippenses ad Ephesios* [BT; Leipzig: Teubner, 1972] 58.30–1).

²¹ *Hexameron* 5.6 (PL 14.222A; CSEL 32.1.144.10): *cavete canes, cavete malos operarios*.

²² *Ep.* 79 (PL 33.273.8; CSEL 34.2.346.12): *cavete canes*; In *psalm.* 67.32.4 (PL 36.833.18; CCSL 39.892): *cavete canes*; cf. Donatien de Bruyne, *Préfaces de la Bible Latine* (Namur: Godenne, 1920) 240: *admonet etiam ut caveant a pseudoapostolis*. Cf. I. Wordsworth and H. I. White, *Novum Testamentum Latine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913–41) II:477.

²³ We may set aside the question whether there ever was an epistle to the *Laodiceans*, which is bound up with the question of the authenticity of *Colossians*. The compiler of *Laodiceans* simply took Col. 4:16 at face value.

²⁴ Of the nineteen or so verses excerpted from *Philippians* (1:2, 3, 12[?], 13, 18–21; 2:2, 12–14; 3:1–2[?]; 4:6, 8–9; 22–3), three of which are taken up with greetings and farewells (1:2; 4:22–3), at least seven directly pertain to Paul's imprisonment (1:12–13, 18–21; 2:12), while six others treat the readers' response to Paul's imprisonment (2:2 [cf. its rendering in *Laod.* 9], 13–14; 4:6, 8–9).

²⁵ It is also possible that the compiler of *Laodiceans* might have felt that the polemic of Phil. 3 was too pointed for his composition, the purpose of which was simply to fill the gap in the *Corpus Paulinum* indicated by Col. 4:16.

²⁶ Sellew, "*Laodiceans*," 26: "The discussion of Epaphroditus's illness at the end of *Philippians* 2 presumably had no relevance for the fictional audience in *Laodicea*."

Internal evidence pointing to Phil. 3:2–4:3 as a letter-fragment

The case for partitioning Philippians rests primarily on internal evidence pointing to 3:2–4:3 as a fragment of a separate letter. This evidence may be summarized in three claims: (1) that 3:2–4:3 reflects a different set of circumstances than 1:1–3:1; (2) that an abrupt shift in tone between 3:1 and 3:2 marks a redactional seam; and (3) that various formal elements and verbal clues in 2:14–3:1 signal the end of a Pauline letter. We shall examine each of these in order.

That 3:2–4:3 reflects a different set of circumstances than 1:1–3:1

According to Robert Jewett, the claim that 1:1–3:1 and 3:2–4:3 presuppose different circumstances is the “most powerful argument yet advanced against the literary unity of Philippians.”²⁷ The claim has been formulated in two ways. Schmithals believes that the change lies with Paul, who in writing 3:2–4:3 was much better informed about the problems facing the Philippians than he had earlier been: “Paul could not so cautiously and so generally exhort [the Philippians] to maintain the unity of the faith, as he does in 1:27–2:18, if he had already available to him the information which he uses in passionate agitation in 3:2ff.”²⁸ Müller-Bardorff, on the other hand, feels that changes have also occurred at Philippi: “in Wirklichkeit handelt es sich . . . nicht nur um einen Stimmungsumbruch seitens des Paulus, sondern im Vergleich zum Vorstehenden [= Phil. 1:27–2:16] um eine total veränderte Situation auch in der Adressatengemeinde.”²⁹ In chs. 1–2 Paul is concerned about problems still in the future: a possible schism (*Spaltung*), a dangerous theological tendency (*Richtung*).³⁰ But in 3:18 the problem is well defined and present: “Das vōv V. 18 weist auf eine ganz bestimmte, gegenwärtige Situation hin.”³¹ Bornkamm and Gnlika also point

²⁷ Robert Jewett, “The Epistolary Thanksgiving and the Integrity of Philippians,” *NovT* 12 (1970) 43.

²⁸ Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 74.

²⁹ Müller-Bardorff, “Frage,” 591.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

out that in 3:2–4:3 Paul makes no mention of his imprisonment, a dominant motif in chs. 1–2.³²

Underlying both Schmithals' and Müller-Bardorff's claim that 3:2–4:3 reflects a new set of circumstances is the assumption that the "opponents" (ἀντικείμενοι) casually mentioned in 1:28 are the same as the "dogs" (κύνες) vehemently attacked in 3:2.³³ To establish this connection Schmithals characterizes the ἀντικείμενοι of 1:28 as "false teachers" who like the κύνες of 3:2 are "leading astray the community in its unity of the faith."³⁴ He adduces in support of this Paul's charge in 1:27 to stand "in one spirit, with one soul struggling together in the faith of the gospel," reasoning that because the ἀντικείμενοι are mentioned immediately after this exhortation they are therefore false teachers controverting the faith. But this inference is contradicted by 1:29–30 where Paul explicitly describes the effects of the ἀντικείμενοι on the Philippians: τὸ ὑπὲρ [Χριστοῦ] πάσχειν, τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες, οἷον εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ νῦν ἀκούετε ἐν ἐμοί.³⁵ The reference is to Paul's imprisonment, first at Philippi (where he was also beaten) and now at Rome.³⁶ The ἀντικείμενοι are not, therefore, "false teachers" posing a theological danger to the community, as the argument for partitioning

³² G. Bornkamm, "Der Philipperbrief als paulinische Briefsammlung," *Neotestamentica et Patristica: Eine Freundesgabe Herrn Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann* (NovTSup 6; Leiden: Brill, 1962) 197; Gnllka, *Philipperbrief*, 9, 13; cf. J.-F. Collange, *L'épître de Saint Paul aux Philippiens* (CNT; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1973) 30.

³³ Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 69–70; Müller-Bardorff, "Frage," 592: "Vorstehende Exegese von 3,18 aber verlangt eine akute und konkrete Gefährdung der Gemeinde, die über die latenten Gefahren von 1,27ff. weit hinausgeht"; cf. W. Marxsen, *Introduction to the New Testament: An Approach to Its Problems*, trans. G. Buswell (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968) 61; Collange, *Philippiens*, 27. It goes without saying that the argument disintegrates if the opponents of 1:28 are not the dogs of 3:2, since there is nothing at all inconsistent with Paul having two different opinions about two different groups at the same time. For the sake of completeness, however, I should mention the idiosyncratic view of Rahtjen ("Three Letters," 107) that the dogs of 3:2 may also be in view in 1:15–17 where Paul speaks of those who preach Christ διὰ φθόνου καὶ ἔριου. To my knowledge no one has followed him in this, since the rivals in 1:15–17 are obviously not at Philippi but in the city of Paul's imprisonment, and it is inconceivable that Paul could say of the dogs of 3:2: Τί γάρ; πλὴν ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ, εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ, Χριστὸς καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ χαίρω. The rivals of 1:15–17 err in their motives, but apparently not in their message.

³⁴ *Paul and the Gnostics*, 69, 74.

³⁵ So Bormann, *Philippi*, 218.

³⁶ The provenance of Philippians is not directly relevant to our study of the letter, but I see no problem with the traditional placement of Paul at Rome.

requires, but political oppressors threatening physical punishment and imprisonment.³⁷

Müller-Bardorff's further contention that the $\nu\upsilon\nu$ of 3:18 indicates the presence of a well-defined problem, and thus that what is simply a tendency in chs. 1–2 has become actual in ch. 3, also falters on an unfounded assumption: namely, that for something to be present and well-defined it must be more than a mere tendency. However, there is nothing self-contradictory in speaking of a present and well-defined tendency – though many would argue that the situation in Philippians 3 is anything but well defined. We shall say more about this later. But here we may point out that despite Paul's heightened language in 3:2, had the situation involved more than a dangerous "Richtung" among the Philippians, as it did in Galatia, that is, if the Philippians had crossed the line from a more or less unconscious tendency to a full-blown theological commitment, Paul presumably would have included them in his verbal scourging (cf. Gal. 3:1, 3). But he does not. Rather, he reserves his harsh words for the false teachers of whom the Philippians are to beware.³⁸ Furthermore, Paul continues to argue in ch. 3 by way of personal example, which presupposes that Paul's gospel is still authoritative in the church. As for Bornkamm's and Gnilka's observation that Paul may not have written 3:2–4:3 as a prisoner, this is not an argument for partitioning but a consequence of it.³⁹

³⁷ On this both Bornkamm ("Der Philipperbrief," 197–8) and Gnilka (*Philippenerbrief*, 8, 99–100), who partition Philippians on other grounds, agree; cf. 1 Thess. 2:2; Acts 16:20–1, where Paul is imprisoned as a Jew on charges of disrupting the city and proselytizing Romans: οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐκταράσσουσιν ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν, Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες, καὶ καταγγέλλουσιν ἔθνη ἃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν παραδέχεσθαι οὐδὲ ποιεῖν Ῥωμαίοις οὖσιν; cf. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (14th edn.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971) 496; Bormann, *Philippi*, 220. That imprisonment is in view is further suggested by Paul's use of σωτηρία in Phil. 1:28 (cf. 1:19) and by the fact that these opponents were "terrifying" (μὴ πτορόμενοι).

³⁸ Indeed, the Philippians are so far from crossing such a line that Paul begins his warning with an apology (3:1).

³⁹ Granted that if 3:2–4:3 is excerpted from its canonical context there is nothing that requires it to have been written from prison; but there is also nothing that requires Paul repeatedly to make explicit mention of his imprisonment. Paul's references to having lost all things in 3:8, to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings in 3:10, to the cross of Christ in 3:18, and his final eschatological appeal in 3:20–1 may all be taken to reflect in some sense his experience as a prisoner.

That an abrupt shift in tone between 3:1 and 3:2 marks a redactional seam

The second claim advanced in support of excising 3:2–4:3 is that an abrupt shift in tone between 3:1 and 3:2 indicates a redactional seam.⁴⁰ Goodspeed explains:⁴¹

In 3:1 all is serene; [the Philippians] must not mind Paul's repeating himself, for it is for their own good. But in the next verse he breaks out against the Judaizers with an intensity unsurpassed even in Galatians . . . This sharp change after 3:1 . . . raises the question whether our Philippians does not break at this point into two letters.

Attempts to smooth this break have focused on 3:2 and have sought by one means or another to qualify its “unsurpassed” intensity. They have been only marginally successful.⁴² However, as Goodspeed's lucid explanation makes plain, Paul's intensity in 3:2 is problematic only because 3:1 has already been judged “serene.”⁴³ More attention should be given to 3:1, and in particular to Paul's command in 3:1a to “rejoice in the Lord” (χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ).

Scholars have consistently underestimated the seriousness of Paul's command to rejoice in the Lord in 3:1a. To some extent this is a question of translation, for if with Goodspeed we translate χαίρετε “good bye,” then Paul's imperative is reduced to an epistolary cliché.⁴⁴ However, even those scholars who

⁴⁰ So Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 68–72; Beare, *Philippians*, 3–4; Rahtjen, “Three Letters,” 168; Müller-Bardorff, “Frage,” 592; Gnllka, *Philippenerbrief*, 7; Collange, *Philippiens*, 21.

⁴¹ *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1937) 90–1.

⁴² The intensity of Phil. 3:2 is not to be denied. I do not agree with G. D. Kilpatrick, “BLEPETE in Phil 3:2,” in M. Black and G. Fohrer, eds., *In Memoriam P. Kahle* (BZAW 103; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1968) 146–8, that βλέπετε in 3.2 is to be translated “consider” and not “beware”; cf. BDF §149. Even so, Goodspeed's claim goes beyond the evidence, for the “intensity” of Galatians most certainly surpasses that of Philippians, if for no other reason than that in Galatians Paul's harsh rhetoric is extended to include his audience (cf. Gal. 3:1, 3) which is not the case in Philippians. Furthermore, Mackay (“Further Thoughts,” 163) is correct that the intensity of 3:2, which essentially amounts to name-calling, is short-lived.

⁴³ This point, which is obvious enough, has to my knowledge been universally overlooked by commentators. I do not know how to explain this except to say that the initial formulation of the problem focused attention exclusively on 3:2. At any rate, regarding the “break” between 3:1 and 3:2, 3:1 is every bit as much a part of the equation as 3:2.

⁴⁴ E. J. Goodspeed, *Problems of New Testament Translation* (Chicago: University

correctly⁴⁵ translate χαίρετε “rejoice” typically misunderstand the substantive nature of Paul’s charge. Thus Lake asks: “Is it natural to say ‘rejoice in the Lord always [sic!]’ and then suddenly say ‘Beware of the dogs?’”⁴⁶ The answer is “Yes,” provided we take seriously the command to rejoice in the Lord. But this is not what Lake does. Rather, he trivializes Paul’s command, so much so that he inadvertently replaces it with the maxim “Rejoice in the Lord always” from 4:4! Lake’s unstated assumption is clear: Paul’s command to rejoice in the Lord in 3:1a is general parenesis and belongs with the other pieces of advice collected at the end of the letter. The list of scholars who take 3:1a with the parenesis of ch. 4 is long and includes not only those who partition the letter, but those who do not. Vincent is typical of the latter. After citing for comparison 4:4 and 10, he writes:⁴⁷

The exhortation [= 3:1a] need not be specifically referred either to what precedes or what follows . . . The summons to rejoice is general, in view of all the trials, past, present, and future, as well as the eternal consolations of the gospel.

The tendency among scholars to trivialize Paul’s command to “rejoice in the Lord” in 3:1a is symptomatic of a larger problem: namely, the tendency among scholars to trivialize Paul’s use of *χαρά* and its cognates in Philippians. Müller-Bardorff is typical in his repeated allusions to a characteristic “Grundton der Freude” in the first two chapters of Philippians which is then contrasted with the “Kampfbrief” of 3:2–21.⁴⁸ At first glance this is plausible, since there are eleven explicit references to joy in the first two chapters of

of Chicago Press, 1945) 174–5, who renders “Good bye and the Lord be with you”; cf. Beare, *Philippians*, 100, 145–6; Rahtjen, “Three Letters,” 171; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (4th edn.; London: Macmillan, 1903), 125, 159–60, wants it both ways: “neither ‘farewell’ alone, nor ‘rejoice’ alone.”

⁴⁵ Prior to 3:1 Paul has used *χαίρω* and its cognates a total of eleven times. It is only natural to continue to translate it “rejoice” here. To do otherwise requires that we have *already* decided on other grounds in favor of the partition theory.

⁴⁶ “Critical Problems of the Epistle to the Philippians,” *The Expositor* 8/7 (1914) 485.

⁴⁷ M. R. Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897) 91; cf. H. A. W. Meyer, *Kritisch-exegetisches Handbuch über die Briefe Pauli an die Philipper, Kolosser und Philemon*, 4th edn. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1874) 89: “allgemeine Aufmunterung.”

⁴⁸ “Frage,” 591–2; cf. Bornkamm, “Der Philipperbrief,” 194; Marxsen, *Introduction*, 63; Collange, *Philippiens*, 21; Rahtjen, “Three Letters,” 170, Ulrich B. Müller,

the letter (1:4, 18 [twice], 25; 2:2, 17 [twice], 18 [twice], 28, 29). But this fails to take into account the purposive way in which Paul uses “joy” in Philippians, which is not to provide the Philippians with general encouragement, but to confront them with a moral ideal and, ultimately, to scold them for not behaving in a manner “worthy of the gospel” (1:27).⁴⁹

Paul sets the standard himself by his own joyful response to hardship in 1:18 and again in 2:17–18. Like the philosopher who remains unmoved by circumstances because he has learned how to distinguish between the things that matter and the things that do not (cf. Phil. 1:10) or, as Seneca puts it, who has learned not to rejoice in unimportant things (*ne gaudeas vanis*),⁵⁰ Paul’s experience of joy remains undiminished even though he is in prison awaiting trial on capital charges. Paul here employs joy – as does Seneca – as the characteristic emotion or “εὐπάθεια” of the sage, both the means and the measure of spiritual progress (προκοπή). “He has made it to the top,” Seneca writes, “who understands what should be the object of his joy (*qui scit, quo gaudeat*), who has not placed his happiness in the power of externals.”⁵¹ Chrysostom’s comments on Phil. 1:18 are worth quoting at length:⁵²

The great and philosophic soul (τὴν μεγάλην καὶ φιλόσοφον ψυχὴν) is vexed by none of the grievous things of

Der Brief des Paulus an die Philipper (THKNT 11/1; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1993) 28, 136.

⁴⁹ P. F. Aspan, “Toward a New Reading of Paul’s Letter to the Philippians in Light of a Kuhnian Analysis of New Testament Criticism” (Ph.D. diss. Vanderbilt, 1990) 289, writes: “Philippians is not a joyful letter, as is often suggested. Rather, the ‘rhetoric of joy’ represents a manifestation of the *Vollendungen* towards which the letter is exhorting the audience.” Bengel’s familiar summary of the letter makes the same point: *Gaudeo, gaudete*, “I rejoice, now you do the same!” (*Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, 3rd edn. [Stuttgart: J. F. Steinkopf, 1860 (1773)] 766).

⁵⁰ *Ep.* 23.1: *Huius fundamentum quod sit quaeris? Ne gaudeas vanis. Fundamentum hoc esse dixit; culmen est.*

⁵¹ *Ep.* 23.2. Two sentences later Seneca exhorts Lucilius: *Hoc ante omnia fac, mi Lucili: discere gaudere*. Cf. Bengel’s summary of Philippians already noted: *Summa epistolae: gaudeo, gaudete*. For Seneca, of course, the object of joy was to be one’s own virtue (*ad verum bonum spectata et de tuo gaude*; *Ep.* 23.6), whereas for Paul it is the progress of the gospel (1:12–18a), the salvation of the minister of the gospel (1:18b–21), and ultimately, Christ himself (3:1–4:1). One of Paul’s principal concerns in Philippians is to instruct the Philippians how to rejoice in these truly important things and not in the things that do not matter.

⁵² *In Epist. ad Phil.* 3.1 (*PG* 62.197.37ff.); cf. *ibid.*, praef. 1 (*PG* 62.179.38–40): “In the beginning of his letter Paul offers the Philippians much consolation (πολλὴν παράκλησιν) regarding his imprisonment, showing [by his own example] not only that they should not be grieved, but that they should rejoice (χαίρειν).”

this life: not enmities, not accusations, not slanders, not perils or plots . . . And such was the soul of Paul . . . That blessed man had not only the emperor waging war against him, but many others attempting to grieve him in many ways, even with bitter slander. But what does he say? Not only “I am not hurt or overcome by these things,” but “I rejoice and I will rejoice!”

Seneca makes the same argument at *Ad Helv.* 4.2. Writing from exile, he consoles his mother that his deportation is really a matter of indifference and that his “joy” (*gaudium*) remains unaffected by it: “nothing bad has happened to me . . . I am happy in circumstances that usually make others miserable” (*nihil mihi mali esse . . . inter eas res beatus ero, quae miseris solent facere*).⁵³ For both Paul and Seneca joy is “a matter of the utmost importance” (*res severa*).⁵⁴

The Philippians, on the other hand, have fallen short of Paul’s example. Their joy is inexorably linked to such externals as Paul’s acquittal and release from prison (cf. 1:25: μενῶ καὶ παραμενῶ πᾶσιν ὑμῖν εἰς τὴν ὑμῶν προκοπὴν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως) and the health and safe return of Eraphroditus (cf. 2:28: σπουδαιότερως οὖν ἔπεμψα αὐτὸν, ἵνα ἰδόντες αὐτὸν πάλιν χαρῆτε). Paul would have them join him in rejoicing in more substantial things, such as the progress of the gospel (1:12–18a), or even in his own sacrificial death, if that should occur (cf. 2:17–18). As it stands, however, they are unable to look beyond present uncertainties. Ironically, this compromises Paul’s own joy, which derives in part from the steadfastness of his converts.⁵⁵ Paul is indirect, but more than once he indicates that it is not imprisonment or the possibility of death but the Philippians themselves who are constraining him.⁵⁶ Aspan is right to recognize a “rhetoric of joy” in Philippians.⁵⁷

We will discuss the philosophical and consolatory *topos* of joy in more detail in chapter 3 below. However, it should be clear at this point that we need to reassess Paul’s use of language expressing joy

⁵³ *Ad Helv.* 4.2; cf. 4.1: *nihil me pati, propter quod ipse dici possim miser*; 5.1 *Leve momentum in adventiciis rebus est et quod in neutram partem magnas vires habeat. Nec secunda sapientem evehunt nec adversa demittunt; laboravit enim semper, ut in se plurimum poneret, ut a se omne gaudium peteret.*

⁵⁴ *Ep.* 23.4: *Crede mihi, verum gaudium res severa est.*

⁵⁵ 2:1–2: εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις . . . εἴ τι παραμύθιον . . . πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν . . . , i.e., if the Philippians can be consoled Paul’s joy will be made complete, but it is currently otherwise. Cf. 4:1: χαρὰ καὶ στέφανός μου.

⁵⁶ 1:24: ἀναγκαιότερον δι’ ὑμᾶς; 2:25: ἀναγκαῖον; 2:28, κάγω ἄλυπότερος ᾶ.

⁵⁷ Aspan, “Toward a New Reading of Paul’s Letter to the Philippians,” 289.

in chs. 1–2 and that we reflect this in our understanding of his command to “rejoice in the Lord” in 3:1a, which in its context is anything but a cliché.⁵⁸ Perhaps the best way to avoid reading 3:1a as a cliché is to render it periphrastically: something like “derive your sense of joy from the Lord” or “set your desires on the Lord.” When we do this the alleged shift in tone from 3:1 to 3:2 disappears, as the following translation makes plain:

Finally, my brothers, set your desires on the Lord. You have heard me say this before, but I don’t mind repeating myself on such an important matter, and for you it is a wise precaution. Watch out for the dogs, watch out for the evil workers, watch out for the mutilation; for we are the true circumcision who worship by the spirit of God and who set great stock in our relationship with Christ . . .

On this reading 3:1a forms a natural introduction to the rest of ch. 3, where Paul develops at length τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου (3:8).⁵⁹ This position was taken by Bernhard Weiss more than a century ago and has much to commend it.⁶⁰

That various formal elements and verbal clues in 2:14–3:1 signal the end of “a Pauline Letter”

The third claim advanced in support of isolating 3:2–4:1 as a separate letter-fragment is that various formal elements and verbal

⁵⁸ Peter Wick, *Der Philipperbrief: Der formale Aufbau des Briefs als Schlüssel zum Verständnis seines Inhalts* (BWANT 7/15(=135); Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994) esp. 61–3, 82–5; cf. P. Rolland, “La structure littéraire et l’unité de l’épître aux Philippiens,” *RevSR* 64 (1990) 213–16.

⁵⁹ Cf. Phil. 3:3: καυχόμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; 3:7: διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν; 3:8b: ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω; 3:9: καὶ εὐρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ; 3:10: τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν κοινωνίαν τῶν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ; 3:14: τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἀνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; 3:18: τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ; 4:1: οὕτως στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ.

⁶⁰ *Der Philipper-Brief ausgelegt und die Geschichte seiner Auslegung kritisch dargestellt* (3rd edn.; Berlin: Hertz, 1859) 214–57; cf. Johann Christian Konrad von Hofmann, *Die Heilige Schrift des N. T. zusammenhängend untersucht*, 4.3 *Der Brief Pauli an die Philipper* (8th edn.; Nördlingen: Beck, 1872); E. Lohmeyer, *Der Brief an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an Philemon* (MeyerK 9/8; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1928–30) 123–4. Cf. Wayne A. Meeks, “The Man from Heaven in Philippians,” in Birger A. Pearson, ed., *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 332: “the section as a whole [= chapter 3] is not polemical but hortatory.”

clues in 2:14–3:1 signal the end of a Pauline letter. We have already seen that Goodspeed and others translate 3:1a as a farewell formula: “Finally, brothers, good bye and the Lord be with you.”⁶¹ But scholars have also pointed out that with the discussion of logistical matters in 2:18–30 Paul seems to be drawing his letter to a close.⁶² Robert Funk has attempted to support this observation with a detailed form-critical analysis of the body of the Pauline letter. He has concluded that the body of the characteristic Pauline letter ends with a “travelogue” prefaced by an eschatological climax.⁶³ Regarding Philippians he writes: “The travel section occurs in Philippians at 2:18–30, and is preceded, interestingly enough, by an eschatological conclusion in 2:14–18.”⁶⁴

Before turning to the details of Funk’s analysis it is important to observe that Funk brings to his investigation of the body of the Pauline letter an extreme view of form derived not from earlier Form Criticism, but from the New Hermeneutic of Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling. Indeed, the first third of Funk’s analysis, over one hundred and twenty pages, is devoted to an exposition of the philosophy of Heidegger, Fuchs, and Ebeling.⁶⁵ Funk’s erudition is impressive, but he clearly imbues Form with a salience that few NT scholars would accept.⁶⁶

Funk is himself aware of this difference and frequently includes

⁶¹ We must not make too much of τὸ λοιπὸν (“finally”) in 3:1, as though it signals the end of the letter. Paul has urged the Philippians to rejoice in the “progress” of the gospel (1:12–18a), his own assured “salvation” (1:18b–21), his possible death in the service of the gospel (2:17–18), and the return of Epaphroditus (2:28–9). He now, finally (τὸ λοιπὸν), urges them to “rejoice in the Lord.” Indeed, the use of τὸ λοιπὸν in 3:1 ties the exhortation to rejoice in the Lord in 3:1a to these earlier implicit and explicit exhortations to rejoice in the letter and is a further argument that 3:1a is not to be trivialized.

⁶² See Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 70, and the literature cited there; Beare, *Philippians*, 95.

⁶³ Robert Funk, *Language Hermeneutic and Word of God: The Problem of Language in the New Testament and Contemporary Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 248–9, 257, 263–74. Funk proposes that the eschatological climax at the end of the body of the letter is analogous to the eschatological climax at the end of the thanksgiving period described by J. T. Sanders, “The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus,” *JBL* 81 (1962) 348–62. Cf. W. G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973); T. Y. Mullins, “Visit Talk in New Testament Letters,” *CBQ* 35 (1973) 350–8.

⁶⁴ Funk, *Language*, 265.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1–122. Funk’s treatment of parable (124–222) and letter (224–305) is impossible without his philosophical commitments.

⁶⁶ Thus in distinguishing between the *how* and *what* of language, Funk writes that “the *how* is all-important” (*Language*, 125).

disclaimers in his discussion. But the result is not convincing. Thus, for example, after listing some fourteen features characteristic of the Pauline letter form, Funk writes: "It should be emphasized that these elements are subject to variation in both content and order, and that some items are optional, although the omission of any one calls for explanation." But if these elements can vary in both content and order, and if some are in fact optional, why does the omission of any one of them require explanation?⁶⁷ Elsewhere Funk warns that his Pauline letter form is not to be applied too rigidly, quoting with approval Amos Wilder's apt observation that the letter form "is almost as flexible as oral speech itself."⁶⁸ But a few pages later, commenting on Paul's request for a room in Philem. 22, Funk remarks: "Paul climaxes his appeal in verses 20f. and then turns abruptly, *as though it were inevitable*, to his anticipated visit (emphasis added)."⁶⁹ Paul's request for a room has apparently been rendered "inevitable" by some sort of hard-and-fast letter-recipe that calls for a travelogue to be added at this point.

Funk's use of evidence is also problematic. He selects for study the following "closely argued sections . . . which customarily form the body of the letter": Rom. 1:13–8:39; 1 Cor. 1:10–4:21; 2 Cor. 1:8–2:13 + 7:5–16; 2:14–7:4; 10:1–13:14; Gal. 1:6–5:26 or 6:17; Phil. 1:12–2:30; 1 Thess. 2:1–3:13; Philem. 8–22.⁷⁰ But there is much that is questionable in this list. Why, for example, does Funk end the body of Romans at 8:39? He says in a footnote that the "question of the disposition of Rom. 9–11 is left open,"⁷¹ but in fact it is left out. Ending 1 Corinthians at 4:21 is equally odd, though here Funk suggests that chs. 5–15 "be taken as an extended parenesis appended to the body of the letter."⁷² As for 1 Thessalonians, the status of chs. 2 and 3 is at best ambiguous, since on an equally compelling form-critical analysis it can be argued that Paul

⁶⁷ It is important that we understand clearly what Funk is calling for here. Interpreters are expected to explain the elements present in a text. But what Funk stipulates is that we need to explain not only what is there, but what is not there when the text is measured against some ideal form.

⁶⁸ *The Language of the Gospel: Early Christian Rhetoric* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964) 39; quoted with approval in Funk, *Language*, 248.

⁶⁹ *Language*, 265.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 264 n. 59.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 272.

extends his characteristic εὐχαριστῶ up through 3:13.⁷³ Funk's list, of course, *presupposes* the partitioning of Philippians.

But even given Funk's own selection of texts, it is difficult to see how he comes up with his proposed Pauline letter-form, and in particular how he is able to stipulate that the body of the Pauline letter concludes with an eschatological climax followed by a travelogue.⁷⁴ Both Galatians and Philemon, the only two cases in which the limits of the text are undisputed, lack eschatological climaxes,⁷⁵ as does 2 Cor. 10–13 and the so-called letter of reconciliation (2 Cor. 1:8–2:13 + 7:5–16).⁷⁶ Galatians also lacks a travelogue, though Funk identifies a “travelogue surrogate” in 4:12–20.⁷⁷ In Romans, which apparently has two eschatological climaxes (8:31–9; 11:25–36),⁷⁸ the travelogue does not occur as part of the body of the letter, but in the epistolary frame: 1:8–17 and 15:14–33.⁷⁹ In 1 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians 10–13 the travel plans are incorporated into the argument of the letter (which seems also to be the case in Philippians),⁸⁰ while in 2 Cor. 1:8–2:13 + 7:5–16 the whole letter is taken up with travel plans.⁸¹ Ironically, the only two of Paul's letters that fit Funk's ideal form are his truncated versions of 1 Corinthians and Philippians. Russell has criticized Funk for imposing “an abstract 'Pauline letter structure'” on the evidence.⁸²

Paul's inclusion of travel plans in Phil. 2:19–30, assuming the unity of Philippians, is obviously not a severe violation of form.

⁷³ Paul Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings* (BZNW 20; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1939); Peter T. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* (NovTSup 49; Leiden: Brill, 1977). But see H. Boers, “Form-Critical Study of Paul's Letters: I Thessalonians as a Case Study,” *NTS* 22 (1976) 140–58.

⁷⁴ It is also worth observing that in dismembering Philippians Funk succeeds in coming up with a letter that follows Pauline form (i.e., 1:1–3:1, etc.) only at the expense of producing two letters that do not (4:10–20 and 3:1–4:1)!

⁷⁵ Funk, *Language*, 265, 271. Funk allows that Gal. 6:7–10 may be an eschatological climax. He does not explain why it comes so far after the “travelogue surrogate” in 4:12–20.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 265.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 268, 271.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 266.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 265.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² R. Russell, “Pauline Letter Structure in Philippians,” *JETS* 25 (1982) 296; cf. 306. Russell includes in his criticism Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 29, and Boers, “Form-Critical Study of Paul's Letters,” 151–3. David Garland, “The Composition and Unity of Philippians: Some Neglected Literary Factors,” *NovT* 27 (1985) 150, agrees with Russell's assessment.

But the question may still be asked why Paul bothers to mention logistical matters in the middle of his letter. The answer lies in the fact that in 2:19–30 Paul not only explains the movements of Timothy and Epaphroditus, but cites them as additional examples in support of the parenetic material in 2:1–18.⁸³ Paul's exhortation in 2:1–18 is twofold: in verses 1–4 he exhorts the Philippians to serve one another, not looking out for their own interests (τὰ ἑαυτῶν; 4) but for the interests of others (τὰ ἑτέρων; 4); in verses 12–18 he further exhorts them to accept their current hardship without complaint and thus continue in their obedience (ὕπηκούσατε; 12) to God. Separating these exhortations is the Christ hymn (vv. 5–11), which Paul cites as an *exemplum*: in his incarnation Christ became a servant to others (μορφῆν δούλου; 7), and in his passion he obeyed God to the point of death (ὕπηκος μέχρι θανάτου; 8).⁸⁴ Timothy, a servant (ἑδούλευσεν; 22) who genuinely cares for the interests of the Philippians (τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν; 19–20 [twice]), supplements Christ's example in regard to the first exhortation, while Epaphroditus, who like Christ was obedient to the point of death (μέχρι θανάτου; 30), supplements Christ's example in regard to the second.⁸⁵

⁸³ A. Culpepper, "Co-Workers In Suffering: Philippians 2:19–30," *RevExp* 72 (1980) 353–7; Duane F. Watson, "A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians and the Implications for the Unity Question," *NovT* 30 (1988) 71–2; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 313–15.

⁸⁴ Ernst Käsemann ("Kritische Analyse von Phil. 2,5–11," in *idem, Exegetische Versuche und Besinnung* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960] I:51–95; first published *ZThK* 47 [1950] 313–60; ET "A Critical Analysis of Philippians 2:5–11," in Robert Funk, ed., *God and Christ: Existence and Providence* [New York: Harper & Row, 1968] 45–88) and Ralph Martin (*Carmen Christi: Philippians ii.5–11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* [SNTSMS 4; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967; rev. edn. [with same pagination], Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983] 290) have argued against reading the Christ hymn as an *exemplum*, but their arguments are dogmatically motivated and unconvincing, even to those who share their convictions; cf. Gerald Hawthorne, "The Imitation of Christ: Discipleship in Philippians," in Richard N. Longenecker, ed., *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 163–79. See further, Morna Hooker, "Philippians 2:6–11," in E. E. Ellis and E. Grässer, eds., *Jesus und Paulus, Festschrift für Werner Georg Kümmel zum 70. Geburtstag* (2nd edn.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 151–64; Meeks, "Man from Heaven in Philippians," 335.

⁸⁵ The mention of Timothy and Epaphroditus in Phil. 2:19–30 is also consolatory. We shall argue below that Paul's principal objective in writing to the Philippians was to console them, and that he pursues this under two headings: 1:12–2:30 and 3:1–4:1. The first heading, to which 2:19–30 forms an apt conclusion, is concerned with Paul's imprisonment and forced separation from the Philippians. Timothy, and, to a lesser degree, Epaphroditus are surrogates for Paul (cf. 2:19, 23–4). Cf. *Ad Helv.*

Internal evidence pointing to Phil. 4:10–20 as a separate thank-you note

Most scholars who identify Phil. 3:2–4:1 as a separate letter-fragment also isolate 4:10–20 as a short thank-you note.⁸⁶ The evidence for this may be expressed in two claims: (1) that Phil. 2:25–30 presupposes communications between Paul and the Philippians in which Paul must have already thanked the Philippians for their gift, making the thank you of 4:10–20 redundant in its present context,⁸⁷ and (2) that 4:10–20, which conveys Paul’s formal expression of thanks to the Philippians for their gift, comes unacceptably late in a letter specifically written to acknowledge that gift. To these points may be added a third observation, namely, that 4:10–20 is a self-contained pericope loosely tied to the rest of the letter, and may be read, if there is warrant to do so, as a separate thank-you note.⁸⁸

That Phil. 2:25–30 presupposes communications between Paul and the Philippians in which Paul must have already thanked them for their gift

Regarding the claim that 2:25–30 implies additional correspondence between Paul and the Philippians, Schmithals reconstructs the following scenario:⁸⁹ (1) Epaphroditus comes to Paul with a gift from the Philippians and begins his service (*λειτουργία*) to Paul on behalf of the church; (2) Epaphroditus falls ill and the church at Philippi is informed of this (cf. 2:26); (3) Epaphroditus recovers enough to return to Philippi; and (4) Paul sends the fully recovered Epaphroditus back to Philippi. Schmithals reasons that Paul would not have waited until Epaphroditus’ recovery and return to thank

18–19 where the exiled Seneca offers his mother a number of surrogates for his presence: *volo interim solacia tibi tua ostendere . . . meos fratres . . . nepotes . . . pronepotes . . . patrem . . . sororem tuam*. In this regard 2:19–30 makes an apt conclusion to 1:12–2:30. It might also be pointed out that 2:19–30 is an apt transition to 3:1–4:1. The Philippians will rejoice to see Epaphroditus, Timothy, and eventually Paul (2:28–9; 2:23–4, cf. 1:25). Ultimately, however, Paul wishes them to rejoice in the Lord (cf. 3:1). See further chapter 5 below.

⁸⁶ But see Gnlika, *Philippenerbrief*, 9–10; Friedrich, *An die Philipper*, 126–8.

⁸⁷ Rahtjen (“Three Letters,” 169–70) also argues that the aorists of 2:25 and 28 are historical (not epistolary) aorists; but see Mackay, “Further Thoughts,” 165–6; D. Garland, “Composition and Unity,” 150, note 34.

⁸⁸ Collange, *Philippiens*, 22.

⁸⁹ *Paul and the Gnostics*, 78.

the Philippians for their gift, especially since there had always been communications between Paul and the church (cf. 2 in the above scenario). The interval implied on this reading of 2:25–30 is not problematic, since by Paul’s own admission he has few trustworthy associates with him at this point in time (cf. 2:19–20).⁹⁰ The real difficulty lies in the supposition that correspondence had passed between Paul and the Philippians after Epaphroditus’ arrival and before the sending of the letter containing 2:25–30.

But the argument that there had been additional communication from Paul to the Philippians has not yet been successfully made. Schmithals’ citation of 1:27 begs the question, since in 1:27 Paul simply mentions the possibility of his hearing about the Philippians in the future (ἵνα εἴτε ἐλθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν ὑμᾶς εἴτε ἀπὼν ἀκούω τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν).⁹¹ Schmithals’ appeal to 2:26 also begs the question,⁹² since 2:26 says nothing of how the Philippians learned of Epaphroditus’ illness nor of how Epaphroditus knew that they had heard. The most reasonable way to read Paul’s statement that διὰ τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ μέχρι θανάτου ἤγγισεν παραβολευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ (2:30) is that in bringing the Philippians’ gift to Paul Epaphroditus became sick and, rather than stopping to recover, pressed ahead, so that Paul did not suffer from need in prison.⁹³ But this means that news could have reached Philippi even before Epaphroditus reached Paul and that Epaphroditus either knew that this had happened (e.g., he had met someone along the way who was traveling to Philippi and he knew that they would report his illness) or, along with Paul, had received a query from Philippi. Paul’s report in Phil. 2:27 that Epaphroditus “was indeed ill, even

⁹⁰ Mackay, “Further Thoughts,” 169, recalls a similar complaint by Cicero, *Ad Att.* 1.13.1: *Quibus epistulis sum equidem abs te lacessitus ad rescribendum; sed idcirco sum tardior quod non invenio fidelem tabellarium.*

⁹¹ *Paul and the Gnostics*, 78.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Schmithals, *ibid.*, assumes without explanation that Epaphroditus fell ill while with Paul. The only possible basis for this is that Epaphroditus’ λειτουργία (cf. 2:25 and 30) consisted in ministering to Paul in prison and not in the bringing of the Philippians’ gift. But this is unwarranted. At the very least it was both. More likely, however, Epaphroditus’ charge lay primarily in the bringing of the gift. In 2:25 Paul refers to him as λειτουργὸς τῆς χρείας μου, but in 4:16 χρεία clearly refers to a monetary gift (and cf. 4:19 where the metaphor is drawn from money, πλοῦτος). Elsewhere (2 Cor. 9:12) λειτουργία itself is used of a monetary gift; and similarly with the verb λειτουργέω (Rom. 15:27). These arguments are made in C. O. Buchanan, “Epaphroditus’ Sickness and the Letter to the Philippians,” *EvQ* 36 (1964) 158–60; cf. D. Garland, “Composition and Unity,” 151, note 36; F. F. Bruce, “St. Paul in Macedonia 3: The Philippian Correspondence,” *BJRL* 63 (1981) 274–7.

close to death” (καὶ γὰρ ἠσθένησεν παραπλήσιον θανάτῳ) suggests that the Philippians had in fact received some preliminary report that failed to relate the eventual seriousness of Epaphroditus’ illness.⁹⁴ At any rate, there is nothing in 2:25–30 that requires a letter from Paul to the Philippians after the arrival of Epaphroditus and prior to the canonical epistle.⁹⁵

That 4:10–20 comes unacceptably late in a letter of thanks

The second claim advanced in support of reading 4:10–20 as a separate thank-you note is that as a formal expression of thanks verses 10–20 come unacceptably late in a letter of which the primary purpose was to acknowledge the receipt of a gift.⁹⁶ This assumes, of course, that Paul’s overriding purpose in writing to the Philippians was to thank them.⁹⁷ But this is by no means obvious. On the contrary, if we accept the commonly held view that Paul communicates his primary concern in writing a given letter in his introductory prayer-report,⁹⁸ then the overriding purpose of Paul’s letter to the Philippians was to remind them of the things that matter and the things that do not (cf. 1:10; εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα) which, given their present despair over his imprisonment, they had obviously forgotten. Indeed, a major rhetorical hurdle facing Paul in corresponding with the Philippians was how to thank them for their gift while at the same time arguing that such externals do not really matter.⁹⁹ This, I would argue, more than accounts for the placement of 4:10–20 after Paul’s discussion of the things that matter in the body of the letter, as well as for Paul’s insistence on his own self-sufficiency (4:13–14) in the very act of expressing his appreciation.¹⁰⁰ It also explains Paul’s brief

⁹⁴ Bruce, “St. Paul in Macedonia 3,” 276.

⁹⁵ Mackay, “Further Thoughts,” 168–9; Buchanan, “Epaphroditus’ Sickness.”

⁹⁶ Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 77, refers to the placement of 4:10–20 as a case of “unbelievable” forgetfulness; cf. Collange, *Philippiens*, 22–3.

⁹⁷ Once we allow that to thank the Philippians was not Paul’s primary purpose, then the positioning of 4:10–20 is altogether unproblematic. Indeed, Ign., *Smyrn.* 10.1–2 provides an almost exact parallel. As in Philippians, Ignatius praises the Smyrneans for having done well (καλῶς ἐποιήσατε; the identical expression occurs in Phil. 4:14). Ignatius’ closing words also include a εὐχαριστῶ-period: οὗ καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν τῷ κυρίῳ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ὅτι “They also thank the Lord for you that” (cf. Phil. 4:10: ἐχάρην δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ μεγάλως ὅτι . . .).

⁹⁸ See chapters 2 and 5 below.

⁹⁹ See chapters 2 and 7 below.

¹⁰⁰ Paul’s so-called “dankloser Dank” (cf. Martin Dibelius, *An die Thessalonischer I–II; An die Philipper* [HNT 2/11; Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1925] 74) is difficult to