

Gaius the Roman Guest

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The usual understanding of Gaius in Rom 16.23 as a ‘host’ of the Corinthian Christ group (or the host of travellers to Corinth) is fraught with several difficulties: it implausibly renders ξένοϛ as ‘host’ rather than the much more common ‘guest’; it fails to explain why a ‘host’ would have been named so far down Paul’s list of those sending greetings; and it fails to explain why Paul refers to this person by his *praenomen* instead of the more common *cognomen*. Gaius is not a Corinthian ‘host’, but a Roman ‘guest’ of the Christ group in Corinth. This also implies that Gaius is not a wealthy patron of the Christ group at Corinth.

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1. Gaius as ‘Host’

Ever since Origen’s commentary on Romans, it has been usual to assume that 1 Cor 1.14 and Rom 16.23 refer to the same person, Gaius, that Gaius was resident in Corinth, and that he was a figure of relatively high social standing. Origen, commenting on Rom 16.23 but with an eye to 1 Corinthians, explains:

intelligitur Gaius hic est de quo ad Corinthos scribens commemorat, dicens, ‘gratias ago deo quoniam neminem vestrum baptizavi nisi Crispum et Gaium.’ videtur ergo indicare de eo quod vir fuerit hospitalis, qui non solum Paulum ac singulos quoque adventantes Corinthum hospitio receperit, sed Ecclesiae universae in domo sua conventiculum ipse praebuerit. fertur sane traditione maiorum quod hic Gaius primus episcopus fuerit Thessalonicensis ecclesiae.

This Gaius is understood to be the person concerning whom, writing to the Corinthians, [Paul] says, ‘I thank God that I baptised none of you except Crispus and Gaius.’ It seems therefore that he is indicating that he was a hospitable man who not only had received hospitably Paul and other persons who came to Corinth but also offered the entire church his house as a meeting place. It is at any rate related in the tradition of the elders that this Gaius was the first bishop of the church of Thessalonica.¹

1 The Latin text is Rufinus’ translation of *Commentariorum in epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos libri tres* 10.41 (PG 14.1289C); the translation is mine.

Origen's view of Gaius – that he lived in Corinth and that he was Paul's host – has been echoed by multiple commentators and can be taken as the *sensus communis*.² Most also follow Origen in identifying the Gaius of Rom 16.23 with the Gaius named in 1 Cor 1.14 as one of the three Corinthians that Paul baptised on his first visit there. Although there is some debate about the interpretation of ὁ ξένος ... ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας, there is unanimity that Gaius was important in Corinth. If Gaius was able to host the entire group, he was undoubtedly prosperous³ – whether a Roman citizen⁴ or a freedman who had gained wealth⁵ – and evidently a powerful ally of Paul's at least by the time that Paul penned Romans.

- 2 M. J. Lagrange, *Saint Paul: Épître aux Romains* (Études Bibliques; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1916) 376; J. Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief* (Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910⁹) 21; T. Zahn, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1910) 614; C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Moffatt New Testament Commentary; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932) 244; H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1933⁴) 129; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London: A & C Black, 1962) 286; H. Schlier, *Der Römerbrief* (HTKNT 6; Freiburg/Basel/Vienna: Herder, 1977) 451; E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 421; J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans* (WBC 38A–B; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988) 910; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 33; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993) 749; R. Jewett, *Romans* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007) 980–1.
- 3 G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (trans. J. H. Schütz; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982) 89, 94; *idem*, 'The Social Structure of Pauline Communities: Some Critical Remarks on J. J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*', *JSNT* 84 (2001) 65–84, at 83: 'We can say that the house of Gaius must have been larger than average houses' in order to accommodate *ca.* 30–50 members; W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983) 57: 'evidently a man of some wealth'; J. Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Good News Studies 6; Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983) 156; E. W. Stegemann and W. Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of its First Century* (trans. O. C. Dean; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999) 295: 'relatively prosperous' because he 'owns a house that was apparently large enough to serve as a place of assembly for all the confessors of Christ in Corinth'; S. J. Friesen, 'Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-Called New Consensus', *JSNT* 26 (2004) 323–61, at 356; 'perhaps the wealthiest person we know of from Paul's assemblies'; Jewett, *Romans*, 980; L. L. Welborn, *An End to Enmity: Paul and the 'Wrongdoer' of Second Corinthians* (BZNW 185; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2011) 247: 'among the wealthiest individuals in the Corinthian church'.
- 4 Stegemann and Stegemann, *Jesus Movement*, 295: 'if he was a citizen of the Roman colony of Corinth ... then membership in the local Corinthian upper stratum (without official function) is certainly a possibility'; E. A. Judge, 'The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community', *JRH* 1 (1960–1) 4–15, 125–37, at 130; *idem*, 'The Roman Base of Paul's Mission', *TynBul* 56.1 (2005) 103–17, at 112.
- 5 J. Gillman, 'Gaius', *ABD* 2 (1992) 869; Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 299: Gaius 'may have been a descendant of the Italian settlers; a Greek immigrant to the city from the time when Greek immigration became more frequent; or a freedman who gained wealth and a name following his manumission; or a freedman now enjoying Roman citizenship or a freeborn citizen of

Since Adolf Deissmann Gaius has consistently figured as one of the most prominent members of the Corinthian group.⁶ Deissmann placed Gaius in the 'middle strata' of Corinthian society, which was as high as he was prepared to place any continuing members of the group;⁷ in the latter part of the twentieth century, Gaius is routinely placed at the apex of the Christ group, at least in socio-economic terms. In their economic scales, Friesen and Longenecker rank Gaius highly on the grounds that he is described as a 'host (ξένος) of the entire *ekklesia*' and hence must have owned a house of sufficient size to accommodate the entire group.⁸ Chow does not hesitate to call Gaius a 'patron to the church'.⁹

There have been a few efforts to identify Gaius more precisely. Edgar J. Goodspeed famously mooted the suggestion that Gaius should be identified with the Titius Iustus of Acts 18.7. Goodspeed drew this conclusion by conflating Rom 16.23 with Acts' report, according to which Paul on his first visit to Corinth decamped from the synagogue and began to preach in the house of Titius Iustus (Acts 18.7). He added that Titius was a *nomen*, 'suggesting a formal connection at least with the well known Titian gens, Sextus Titius, etc., familiar from Cicero and Horace'. Thus, Goodspeed conjectured, his full *tria nomina* was Gaius Titius Iustus.¹⁰

While this view has achieved a modest following,¹¹ Larry L. Welborn rightly dismisses this identification as 'groundless', pointing out that the *nomen* 'Titius'

higher rank'. Earlier, W. M. Ramsay ('A Historical Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians', *Expositor*, 6th series, 1 (1900) 19–31, 91–111, 203–17, 273–89, 380–87, at 101) argues that the use of the *praenomen* rather than a *cognomen* was a mark of a freedman, proud of his manumission: 'Gaius of Corinth ... was probably a rich freedman, to whom the honourable duty of entertaining the guests of the Church was assigned (Rom. xvi. 23). In his Pagan days he would have aimed at the honourable position of a *Sevir Augustalis*.'

6 Theissen, 'Social Structure of Pauline Communities', 79: 'Gaius must also have been a Christian with a central position in the congregation'.

7 A. Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (trans. L. R. Strachan; New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912) 216. Deissmann (217) suggested that the elite women mentioned in Acts 17.4 soon abandoned the group.

8 Friesen, 'Poverty in Pauline Studies', 356–7 (not 'higher than category 4 on the poverty scale' – i.e. those with a 'moderate surplus' and positioned immediately below 'municipal elites'); B. W. Longenecker (*Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011) 239) places Gaius along with Phoebe and Erastos 'conservatively' in the middle of 'ES4' even though he argues that if Gaius' house was 'suitable and welcoming to a gathering of at least 45 people' he could be put at the top of ES4.

9 J. K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 90.

10 E. J. Goodspeed, 'Gaius Titius Justus', *JBL* 69 (1950) 382–3.

11 F. F. Bruce, *The Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 265–6; Dunn, *Romans*, 910 (fits with the little information); Gillman, 'Gaius'; Jewett, *Romans*, 980; hesitantly, Judge,

is poorly attested¹² and the original name may simply have been Iustus, which offers no purchase for an identification with any distinguished family.¹³ More importantly, on any sensible reading of Acts 18.1–11, Paul was living with his fellow artisans, Prisca and Aquila (18.2–3) throughout the entire period. His departure from the synagogue to (Titius) Iustus' house was not a change of domicile, but a change of the venue for his teaching and preaching.¹⁴ If this is so, the connection with Gaius the 'host' vanishes.

Welborn, however, has offered a brilliant elaboration of the Gaius-as-wealthy-host thesis. One of the few scholars to comment on the fact that Gaius is a *praenomen* – indeed one of the most common of Latin *praenomina* – Welborn conjectures that Paul preferred to call Gaius by his *praenomen* 'in order to avoid using a *cognomen* which would have had unmistakable aristocratic connotations to his readers, in keeping with the new Christian emphasis on humility'.¹⁵ However, if Gaius were a freedman as Welborn supposes, his *cognomen* would hardly be aristocratic,¹⁶ but would more likely have been an obviously servile *cognomen* such as Felix, Onesimus or Fortunatus. And since the *cognomen* was the normal individual name of Roman citizens, the bare use of a *praenomen* would have drawn attention to the fact that Gaius had recently acquired citizenship through manumission.¹⁷ Again, hardly aristocratic.

Notwithstanding this problem, Welborn scours epigraphical sources for a Gaius datable to the mid-first century CE with indications of wealth comparable to that imagined for the Gaius of Rom 16.23. He arrives at C. Iulius Spartiacus.¹⁸ Spartiacus had acquired a series of distinguished offices and honours: *procurator Augusti* in charge of the imperial domain in Greece; military tribune; equestrian status; and twice elected a *duovir quinquennalis* of Corinth.

'Scholastic Community', 130; Longenecker, *Remember the Poor*, 239 n. 66 ('cannot be confirmed').

12 ΤΙΤΟΥ Ν Ε 453 945 1175 1739 1891 2818 sy^p co; omit A B² D* L *Ψ 33 323614 1241 1505 M; ΤΙΤΙΟΥ Β* D¹ sy^h.

13 Iustus is one of the most frequent Roman *cognomina* and commonly attested of both elite and *ingenui* (I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina* (Societas Scientiarum Fennica. Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 36/2; Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1965) 133, 252). By itself it is not an indication of a distinguished family.

14 Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 299–300; see also A. J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977) 74 n. 30.

15 Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 299.

16 Kajanto (*The Latin Cognomina*, 133) points out that *cognomina* such as Honoratus, Iustus, Magnus, Maximus and Verus that were common among the senatorial nobility (and which might underscore an aristocratic identity) were very rare among freedmen.

17 Judge, 'Roman Base', 111.

18 Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 309–20 and the sources cited there. Earlier, Chow (*Patronage and Power*, 48–51) had commented on the careers of Spartiacus and his grandfather Eurycles.

Spartiaticus' grandfather Eurycles of Sparta had gained citizenship under Octavian even though his father Lachares had been executed on a charge of piracy. Welborn points out that Eurycles had a relationship with Herod the Great, from whom he received generous gifts. Although Eurycles eventually died in exile, his son Laco and grandson Spartiaticus were rehabilitated under Caligula, owing perhaps to the family's connections with the Herodian family, and had moved from Sparta to Corinth, where they attained high public offices.

Welborn then moves quickly: Spartiaticus was 'attracted to Judaism as a God-fearer'¹⁹ and may well have developed a friendship with Crispus the *archisynagogos* of Acts 18.8.²⁰ He would have 'responded with excitement to the message that the Messiah had appeared in the person of Jesus'.²¹

Welborn's interest in Spartiaticus resides in a symmetry he sees between Spartiaticus and the Gaius of 1 Cor 1.14 and Rom 16.23. He suggests from a close reading of the Corinthian correspondence and Romans 16 that Paul's relationship with Gaius, whom he initially befriended and baptised (1 Cor 1.14), became tense, owing perhaps to Paul's refusal of Gaius' patronage (1 Cor 9), Gaius' involvement in factions, and his open criticism of Paul. This tension underlies Paul's ironic comments that he 'thanks God' that he only baptised Crispus and Gaius (1 Cor 1.14). According to Welborn, in the various letter fragments that now comprise 2 Corinthians there are allusions to Gaius and his criticisms, always anonymised in order to protect an important relationship, for Paul evidently did not lump Gaius in with the 'super apostles', hoping instead for reconciliation. 2 Cor 7.5–12 suggest that this reconciliation

19 Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 316.

20 Although it is common to import Acts' description of Crispus as an *archisynagogos* into discussions of the Crispus in 1 Cor 1.14, it is noteworthy that 1 Cor 1.14 gives no hint of either his role in a Judaeian assembly or even that he was Judaeian. For this reason R. Pervo (*Dating Acts: Between the Evangelist and the Apologists* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 2006), 103) believes that in composing Acts 18 Luke was dependent upon 1 Cor 1.14–16, which has Paul *baptising* Crispus (v. 14) and the *household* of Stephanas (v. 16). In the process of conflating these two portions of 1 Corinthians, Luke has Crispus' entire household being baptised, Stephanas disappears, and Crispus is made into a Judaeian and 'promoted ... to a prominent place in the synagogue'. Puzzlingly, Crispus' conversion in Acts 18.8 comes only *after* Paul left the synagogue, when he declared that he was now turning to the Gentiles (Acts 18.6) and moved his preaching venue next door (18.7). It could be added that Crispus is not commonly attested as a Judaeian name. It appears only in a funerary inscription from Cyrenaica: *CJZC* 12 (imperial period): Ἰωσῆς Κρίσπου (ἐτῶν) δ', 'Yoses son of Crispus, aged 4 years'. The feminine form *Crisp(e)ina* is found in *JJWE* 281, 282 (Rome, 3rd–4th cent. CE). There are no instances of the name in *CIIP* I–III or *IJO* I–III. Josephus three times refers to a Crispus (*Vita* 33, 388, 393), evidently a Judaeian. G. Lüdemann (*Early Christianity according to the Traditions of Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 203–4) takes the material regarding Crispus in Acts as probably historical, as do most interpreters of 1 Corinthians, who read the Acts account into 1 Cor 1.14.

21 Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 317.

eventually occurred. Welborn then takes the naming of Gaius in Rom 16.23 as Paul's signal that reconciliation with Gaius was complete with the public announcement that Paul had accepted Gaius' hospitality.²² He sees in Spartiaticus a similar character: a God-fearer, a friend of the *archisynagogos* and a wealthy aristocrat who 'could only have looked down upon his contemporaries from a position of inherited wealth and eminence ... as the wrongdoer [also] evaluated Paul's literary performance by terms which reflect the aesthetic preferences of the Roman upper class'.²³

Of course, Welborn is cautious not to insist on the identification of the Gaius of Rom 16.23 with Spartiaticus; he only argues that it is not beyond the realm of the imaginable that the Gaius of Rom 16.23 was someone with a public career and wealth that became a Christ-follower and eventually became the 'host of the whole *ekklēsia*'.

2. 'Host' or 'Guest'

There are three flies in the ointment.

(1) First and perhaps least important is the observation, raised by several commentators, that the wording of Rom 16.23, ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Γάϊος ὁ ξένος μου καὶ ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας, appears to employ the term 'host' in two different senses. M. J. Lagrange noted a century ago that apropos of Paul ξένος refers to Gaius' hospitality to Paul as a traveller:

But in what sense was he the host of the entire church? According to some ... because his home served for the meetings of all of the faithful in Corinth, which changes the sense of ξένος ... It would be better to say that Gaius provided hospitality not only to Paul, whom he knew personally, but to every Christian who asked him as they passed through Corinth.²⁴

This view – that Gaius was a 'host' to travelling Christians – follows Chrysostom's rendering of ξένος as ὁ ξενοδόχος, 'one who offers hospitality to strangers'²⁵ and

²² Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 241–50.

²³ Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 317–18.

²⁴ Lagrange, *Saint Paul: Épître aux Romains*, 376–7 (my translation).

²⁵ Chrysostom, *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Romanos* 32 (PG 60.677B), alluding to Matt 10.11 and the admonition to receive only those who are 'worthy': ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Γάϊος ὁ ξένος μου καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ὅλης. εἶδες οἷον αὐτῷ στέφανον ἔπλεξε, τοσαύτην φιλοξενίαν μαρτυρήσας, καὶ ὀλόκληρον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν συναγαγὼν τὴν ἐκεῖνου; τὸν γὰρ ξένον ἐνταῦθα τὸν ξενοδόχον φησίν. ὅταν δὲ ἀκούσης, ὅτι Παύλου ξενοδόχος ἦν, μὴ τῆς φιλοτιμίας αὐτὸν θαύμαζε μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀκριβείας· εἰ μὴ γὰρ ἦν ἄξιος τῆς ἀρετῆς τῆς ἐκεῖνου, οὐδ' ἂν ἐκεῖνο; ἐκεῖ κατήχθη. ὁ γὰρ πολλὰ τῶν ἐπιταγμάτων τοῦ Χριστοῦ σπουδάζων ὑπερβαίνειν, οὐκ ἂν τοῦτον παρέβη τὸν νόμον τὸν κελεύοντα περιεργάζεσθαι τοὺς ὑποδεχομένους, καὶ παρὰ ἀξίους κατάργεσθαι.

has been accepted by a number of commentators.²⁶ It rejects, implicitly or explicitly, the notion that Gaius was the host to the entire Corinthian group. Robert Jewett, for example, assumes that the Corinthian Christ group was far too large to be accommodated in a single house and instead prefers Chrysostom's understanding.²⁷ Edward Adams points out that ξένος is never used elsewhere to refer to 'someone acting as a patron of a *collegium* or a group in his home' and if Gaius is Paul's host in the sense of one who provides housing and food to a traveller, then ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας should be interpreted in parallel. Paul's statement is thus entirely hyperbolic.²⁸

It should be conceded, however, that neither Origen's exposition of ξένος ... ὅλης ἐκκλησίας as *ac singulos quoque adventantes Corinthum hospitio receperit* nor Chrysostom's glossing of ξένος as ξενοδόχος arises from straightforward readings of Rom 16.23, but rests (in part) on the assumption that Paul could not have used ξένος in so ambiguous a manner. The Vulgate seems also to reflect an uneasiness with Paul's usage, since it renders the verse as *salutat vos Cajus hospes meus, et universa ecclesia*, 'Gaius my host greets you, and the entire *ecclesia* (greets you)' rather than *salutat vos Caius hospes meus et universae ecclesiae*, as pre-Vulgate translations have it.²⁹ The cost of this reading is the rather peculiar view that Paul characterises occasional travellers through Corinth as representing ὅλη ἡ ἐκκλησία – surely more than Paul's normal hyperbole, especially since it seems doubtful that Paul would characterise the 'super apostles' so generously as occasional travellers who represented the entire *ekklēsia*.

The alternative is to insist that ξένος ... ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας characterises Gaius as the host of the entire Christ group *at Corinth*. J. D. G. Dunn points out that ἐκκλησία in the undisputed letters never refers to the universal church, but only to assemblies in particular cities or areas, in this case Corinth.³⁰ That the entire Christ group could meet in Gaius' home is entirely feasible if the group had 30–40 members.³¹

26 Zahn, *An die Römer*, 614 n. 78: 'Der Ausdruck verbietet die Deutung des Orig[en], daß Gaius der Korinth. Gemeinde sein Haus als Versammlungslokal zur Verfügung stellte. Dafür gebraucht Pl andere Worte ... Dagegen weist ξένος (Chrys deutet es durch ξενοδόχος) auf Übung der φιλοξενία, gastliche Aufnahme zureisender Fremder ...' Similarly, Lietzmann, *An die Römer*, 129: 'für alle durchreisenden Christen'; Schlier, *Der Römerbrief*, 451 n. 2; Käsemann, *Romans*, 421; Jewett, *Romans*, 980–1; and others.

27 Jewett, *Romans*, 980.

28 E. Adams, *The Earliest Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?* (Library of New Testament Studies; London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013) 28.

29 J. E. Belsheim, *Epistolae paulinae ante Hieronymum latine translatae ex codice sangermanensi graeco-latino* (Kristiania: Cammermeier, 1885) 16.

30 Dunn, *Romans*, 910.

31 Dunn, *Romans*, 911. Likewise, Theissen, 'Social Structure of Pauline Communities', 83: 'Other clubs in antiquity provide valid comparative figures. They rarely have more than 100 or less than 10 members; most of them comprise 20 to 50 members. These figures coincide roughly with the figures reached by archaeological research: on the basis of an analysis of

Welborn even suggests a group of one hundred,³² which then leads him to suggest that Gaius' house was very large and that Gaius was a 'Roman provincial of considerable wealth and social status'.³³

It becomes clear quickly that this is not a simple issue of lexicography or grammar, but a matter of entangled assumptions about the size of the Corinthian group, whether an available house could or could not accommodate the group, the scale of wealth that can be imagined for Gaius, and whether Paul used words univocally or not. None of these assumptions is amenable to empirical testing, and so the problem remains.

(2) Second, there is a rhetorical issue that is seldom noticed. Theodor Zahn rightly characterises Paul's description of Gaius as 'effusive' ('überschwänglich').³⁴ Both Dunn and Jewett seize on this but to opposite effects, Dunn arguing that 'to speak of Gaius as host of the universal church [i.e. as a host of all travelling Christians who came through Corinth] ... would set Gaius' hospitality far beyond the hospitality of such as Phoebe and Prisca and Aquila, in a wholly invidious (and indeed unpauline) manner', while Jewett urges that Paul's effusive description of Gaius as a grandee and local benefactor 'would overshadow the patronage of Phoebe and Prisca and Aquila in a shameful manner that is highly unlikely here'.³⁵

The problem is even deeper. If Gaius had offered hospitality to all those who passed through Corinth, or were the host of the entire Corinthian Christ group (irrespective of its size), Paul's praise of him would not only strike against Phoebe, Prisca and Aquila, and Stephanas (who in 1 Cor 16 seems to have been a major figure in the group); it would also be curiously backhanded, since Gaius is named only long after Phoebe (Paul's patron), Prisca and Aquila (Paul's *συνεργοί*, who 'risked their necks' for him), Timothy, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater and Tertius the scribe. Gaius appears third last in the list, not in a prominent position as would be expected if he were indeed of the stature that Welborn suggests, or even the major figure of Dunn or Jewett.

(3) The most glaring problem with the standard reading of Rom 16.23, although frequently passed over by commentators with a simple footnote to LSJ

archaeological ground plans we can assume that c. 30 to 40 could meet in a private house. The Corinthian congregation was rather large (cf. Acts 18.10) and probably met in different house circles (or house churches). Gaius, however, was able to assemble the "whole congregation" in his house. We can say that the house of Gaius must have been larger than average houses. In the flat of an insula there would not have been enough space for the "whole congregation".

32 Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 324. Similarly, C. S. de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts: The Relationships of the Thessalonian [sic], Corinthian, and Philippian Churches with their Wider Civic Communities* (SBLDS 168; Atlanta: Scholars, 1999) 204 n. 98.

33 Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 328–79, at 378.

34 Zahn, *An die Römer*, 614.

35 Dunn, *Romans*, 910; Jewett, *Romans*, 980.

or BDAG, concerns the rendering of ξένος as ‘host’. It is beyond doubt that the normal meaning of ξένος is ‘alien’ as an adjective, and ‘stranger’ or ‘guest’ as a noun. These are overwhelmingly the meanings cited by LSJ s.v. Lampe’s *Patristic Lexicon* does not list a single incidence of ξένος as ‘host’; nor does T. Muraoka’s *A Greek–English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, which only cites οἱ ξένοι in 1 Kgd 9.13, where οἱ κεκλημένοι in the parallel account makes it plain that ‘guests’ is meant (9.22).

A few instances are routinely cited of ξένος meaning ‘host’: LSJ 1189 cites *Il.* 15.532–4, ξεῖνος γάρ οἱ ἔδωκεν ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Εὐφύητης | ἐς πόλεμον φορέειν διητῶν ἀνδρῶν ἀλεωρήν· | ὅς οἱ καὶ τότε παιδὸς ἀπὸ χροὸς ἦρκες ὄλεθρον, referring to Euphetes’ gift of a corselet to Meges’ father Phyleus, which saved Meges’ life at Troy. In modern Homeric translations ξεῖνος is variously rendered ‘host’ or ‘guest-friend’ because the relationship between Phyleus and Euphetes is far from clear; they may in fact have been brothers. A more straightforward instance is Apollonios Rhodios, *Argon.* 1.208–11, ἐκ δ’ ἄρα Φωκίων κίεν Ἴφιτος, Ὀρτυτίδαο | Ναυβόλου ἐκγεγαῶς· ξεῖνος δέ οἱ ἔσκε πάροιθεν, | ἦμος ἔβη Πυθῶδε θεοπροπίας ἐρεείνων | ναυτιλίας, ‘From the Phocians came Iphitus, sprung from Naubolus son of Ornytus; once he had been his host when Jason went to Pytho to ask for a response concerning his voyage.’ Likewise, Dio uses ξένος to mean ‘host’ once in his oration on the hunter (7.68) even though ξένος appears in that oration more commonly with the meaning of ‘stranger’ or ‘guest’ and the latter part of the discourse is concerned with hospitality to strangers and treating them as guests (ξένοι).³⁶ The second-century CE lexicographer Pollux states, καλεῖται δὲ ὁ ὑποδεχόμενος καὶ ὁ ὑποδειχθεὶς ξένος, ‘the one who receives and the one who is received is called *xenos*’, but then adds by way of clarification, ἰδίως δὲ ὁ ὑποδεχόμενος ξενοδόχος, ‘the one who receives is especially called *xenodochos* (he who receives strangers)’.³⁷ Hence, while the translation of ξένος as ‘host’ is possible, this rendering must be authorised by clear signals in the context that this is what is meant. Otherwise, the normal translation of ‘guest’ should be preferred.

³⁶ Dio Chrysostom 7.5, 10, 37, 39, 71, 78, 82, 88, 91, 92, 93, 94, 97, 141.

³⁷ Pollux, *Onomasticon* 1.74. BDAG 684.2.c cites *Il.* 15.532, Melito of Sardis and Xenophon as instances of ξένος meaning ‘host’. But this is hardly obvious in the case of Melito, *Peri Pascha* 51 (375): καὶ γὰρ πατὴρ ἐπὶ υἱὸν ξίφος ἐπηνέγκατο, καὶ υἱὸς πατρὶ χεῖρας προσήνεγκεν, καὶ μαστοὺς τιθηνοὺς ἀσεβῆς ἐτύπτισεν, καὶ ἀδελφὸς ἀδελφὸν ἀπέκτεινεν, καὶ ξένος ξένον ἠδίκησεν, καὶ φίλος φίλον ἐφόνευσεν, ‘for even a father lifted a dagger against his son; and a son used his hands against his father; and an impious man struck the breasts that nourished him; and brother killed brother; and *xenos* wronged a *xenos*; and friend murdered friend’. It is far from clear that the first ξένος means ‘host’ and the second ‘guest’. Likewise in Xenophon, *Anab.* 2.4.15: Μένωνα δὲ οὐκ ἐζήτει, καὶ ταῦτα παρ’ Ἀριαίου ὦν τοῦ Μένωνος ξένου, ξένος appears to mean ‘friend’: ‘he did not ask for Menon, despite the fact that he came from Ariaeus, Menon’s friend’.

Richard Last has recently re-examined the translation of ξένος at Rom 16.23, and with convincing results.³⁸ He points out that in the records of private associations, a host is identified with the terms ἐστιάτωρ or πατήρ³⁹ or with verbal formulations that use ἐστιάω or ὑποδέχομαι to indicate the host's role.⁴⁰ As Last remarks, the best that Gustav Stählin can do to make a case that ξένος means 'host' at Rom 16.23 is to state that Paul earlier lists φιλοξενία as a virtue (Rom 12.13; cf. Heb 13.2), which then makes one who exercises this virtue a host, citing Rom 16.23 in parentheses.⁴¹ This amounts to a philological sleight of hand.

Last's important case begins with S. G. Stock's observation that although ξένος and *hospes* probably come from the same root, in order to distinguish between the host and the guest, Greeks 'expressed the entertainer by the word ξενοδόχος leaving ξένος for the person entertained'.⁴² He then examines the use of ξένος in first-century sources. His findings bear repeating:

Ten instances [in the NT] mean 'strange, stranger' and three mean 'foreign, foreigner'. The fourteenth is Rom 16.23 ... [T]he noun and masculine adjective, ξένος, in all its declensions, appear in eleven first-century papyri from the Duke database of documentary papyri. Here, it never means 'host' but, rather, it denotes a foreign(er), strange(r), or guest. In other words, the ξένοι of first-century papyri are people who are not at home.⁴³

Last shows how common it was for associations to have guests. The account-books of private associations record expenses and contributions at their meals and record the names of persons who were present. Many indicate that guests (ξένοι) attended the meal (and contributed to the cost of the meal).⁴⁴ And several of these accounts identify persons who were 'guests', sometimes of the entire group, and at other times of specific members.⁴⁵ That is, the study of association accounts makes it very clear not only that associations often invited guests

38 R. Last, *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklesia: Greco-Roman Associations in Comparative Context* (SNTSMS 164; Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015) 62–71.

39 ἐστιάτωρ: *Agora* XVI.161.12, 24 = *GRA* 1.14 (early 3rd cent. BCE); πατήρ: *IJO* I Mac 1.4 = *GRA* 1.73 (2nd–3rd cent. CE).

40 ἐστιάω: *IG* II².1343.26 = *GRA* 1.48 (Athens; 37/36 or 36/35 BCE); ὑποδέχομαι: *I Eph* 3080 (Ionia, Asia Minor; 167 CE); *I Eph* 951 (Ephesos, Asia Minor; unknown date).

41 G. Stählin, 'ξένος, ξενία, ξενίζω, ξενοδοχέω, φιλοξενία, φιλιξενος', *TDNT* V (1968) 1–36, at 20.

42 S. G. Stock, 'Hospitality (Greek and Roman)', *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* VI (1914) 808–12, at 808.

43 Last, *Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklesia*, 66.

44 Last, *Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklesia*, 67–8.

45 Last's lists, supplemented with additional examples: guests *simpliciter*: *SB* III.7182, fr. 1.2.12–26; fr. 2.39; *PTebt*. 1.118.4, 12; 1.224 recto.3; III/2.894, fr. 2 recto.1.5, 12; fr. 2 recto.2.37; fr. 5 verso.2.16; guests of members: *PTebt* III/2.894, fr. 4 recto.1.8: ξένοι Ἡρακλείδ[ου]; and fr. 5

to meals but that they could and did distinguish between general invitees and the invitees of individuals.

One suspects – though no commentator admits this – that in considering possible translations of Rom 16.23 commentators preferred ‘host’, notwithstanding the unconventional meaning it assigns to ξένοϛ, because it seemed to them counterintuitive to think of Gaius as a ‘guest of Paul and of the entire *ekklēsia*’. But what an examination of association accounts indicates is that there is nothing odd or illogical about a person being designated either as the guest of the group or the guest of a specific member, or both.

It is likely that associations used guest invitations as a recruitment strategy. In the association represented by *SB* III.7182 (Philadelphia, late 2nd cent. BCE), a certain Thribon appears as a guest at the second meeting but as a full member at a subsequent meeting. Thus Last suggests:

Identifying Gaius as a guest of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* signified that he was a potential recruit, and also that the Corinthian group was successful in expanding. Finally, describing Gaius as Paul’s guest made Paul look valuable to the Roman hearers of his letter. It highlighted Paul’s ability as a recruiter and demonstrated that he held financial value to Roman Christ groups with whom he planned to meet soon.⁴⁶

While I find Last’s case for rendering ξένοϛ as ‘guest’ compelling, it is unclear why, if Gaius were a Corinthian, it would at all interest the recipients of Paul’s letter whether he was Paul’s guest or the guest of the entire group or both since, as I will argue below, there is no reason to suppose that his addressees would know who this Gaius was. As I will suggest, Paul’s emphasis on his own role in the invitation (ὁ ξένοϛ μου) rather than simply the *ekklēsia*’s role highlights *his* hospitality to a *Roman visitor*, probably because he seeks reciprocation for both Phoebe (16.1–2) and for himself.

Last is right that a guest invitation to Gaius might have been a recruitment strategy, especially if Gaius were a Corinthian. But why would the Romans need or want to know this? In any case, Last has shown effectively that ‘guest’ is both the plausible and the appropriate translation of ξένοϛ. It can be added that this rendering eliminates the problem identified by Lagrange, of the two genitives connected with ξένοϛ implying different meanings of the term, one as the host of a traveller (Paul), and the other the host of an entire community. Last’s proposal means that ξένοϛ has precisely the same sense in relation to both genitives.

verso.2.16, which indicates ξένοι θ’ (9 guests) and then itemises those guests by the member who invited each one. Only one name is still legible (Καγῶϛ ἀ(νὰ) ξ’).

⁴⁶ Last, *Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklesia*, 71.

3. Gaius the Roman Guest

The final puzzle in Rom 16.23 has to do with the name 'Gaius'. As a few commentators note, this is a *praenomen* and thus the *least* distinctive way to refer to anyone who bore a Latin name, the *cognomen* serving as the more usual name.⁴⁷ There are several other Gaii mentioned in early Christian literature: Gaius, a Macedonian and companion of Paul (Acts 19.29), Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20.4), who was among those accompanying Paul to Jerusalem, and the addressee of 3 John.⁴⁸ In each of these instances, there is sufficient information provided in the context to identify *which* Gaius is meant. Of course, in Paul's mention of Gaius in 1 Cor 1.14 the Corinthians would be in no doubt as to Gaius' full identity, whether or not he is identical with the Gaius of Rom 16.23.

Romans 16 presents a special case, since Paul has not yet visited Rome. Paul knows the names of a large number of his addressees – twenty-six names in all – and adds various epithets and affectionate descriptions to some of them: 'fellow workers', 'beloved', 'approved', 'chosen', and so forth. These philophroneitic

47 The question naturally arises as to whether 'Gaius' is a *praenomen* or a *cognomen*, especially in Greek-speaking areas and in the early Imperial period. Judge (reported by Welborn, *An End to Enmity*, 291 n. 18) suggested that Gaius might be a *cognomen*, since Lucius and Marcus also occur as *cognomina* (or as single Greek names, see below, n. 48). Welborn (*ibid.*) rightly regards 'Gaius' in Rom 16.23 as a *praenomen*. According to O. Salomies (*Die römischen Vornamen: Studien zur römischen Namengebung* (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 82; Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1987) 164–5), using *praenomina* as *cognomina* 'ist jedoch nie besonders üblich gewesen und scheint vor der Mitte des 2. Jh. kaum belegt zu sein' (164). These occur mainly in the lightly romanised areas: 'man wenigstens in Italien und in den romanisierten Westprovinzen bis in diese Zeit [3 Jh.] zumindest eine Ahnung davon gehabt haben muss, was ein Pränomen war, und wie es sich von einem Cognomen unterschied' (165). Since Corinth was a thoroughly romanised city, it is likely that at least in the first century CE the distinction between a *praenomen* and a *cognomen* was still observed. H. Solin ('Latin Cognomina in the Greek East', *The Greek East in the Roman Context: Proceedings of a Colloquium Organised by the Finnish Institute at Athens, May 21 and 22, 1999* (ed. O. Salomies; Helsinki: Suomen Ateenan-instituutin säätiö, 2001) 189–202, at 195–6) notes that *Greeks* adopted Latin *praenomina* as personal names beginning in the second century BCE, with the bulk of occurrences in the first and second centuries CE. Solin's data, however, all comes from Athens. For Corinthia, however, there is only one possible example, which is too late: A. D. Rizakis and S. Zoumbaki (*Roman Peloponnese*, vol. 1 (Athens: Kentron Hellēnikēs kai Rōmaikēs Archaioitētos, 2001) 275, no. 116) adduce Γ(αῖος) Αλέξανδρος ΓΟ[3-4]ΟΔΟ[- -] (= *ICorinth.Meritt* 15.58 = *SEG* XI.62), dated to the 'latter part of the second century AD'. Rizakis and Zoumbaki I.401, no. 661: C(AIUS) [- - -] is probably not an instance of a *praenomen* as a name since it is a dedicatory inscription to an agonothete who undoubtedly bore a *tria nomina*. Rizakis and Zoumbaki I.405, no. 685: ΓΑῖΟ[Σ] dates from the second century CE.

48 Ramsay ('A Historical Commentary', 101 n. 2) observes that in Asia Minor name like Gaius or Lucius were assumed by provincials as a single name (like a Greek name), which in those cases does not imply Roman citizenship. He notes that this was not common in Greece at this time, 'but belonged rather to the less educated cities'. See also n. 47.

epithets do not function for the purposes of identification, since there is no reason to suppose that his addressees would be otherwise unable to identify the persons Paul had in mind. That is, Paul's designation of Rufus as 'elect' (16.13) does not function grammatically to distinguish him from some other Rufus; it is purely philophroneitic.

The situation is different with those who are with Paul in Corinth,⁴⁹ which suggests that he cannot take for granted that his addressees know who his Corinthian associates are. Hence, he identifies each, not with philophroneitic epithets, but with relational and functional descriptions: Phoebe is a deacon of the *ekklēsia* at Cenchreae and patron of Paul and many others; Timothy is Paul's co-worker; Lucius,⁵⁰ Jason and Sosipater are his 'relatives'; Tertius is the scribe; Erastos is the *oikonomos* of the city; and Quartus, probably the least important of the entourage, is simply a 'brother'.

49 One of the referees rightly points out that if the Gaius of 1 Cor 1.14 is not necessarily the same Gaius as that in Rom 16.23, and if there is no reason to connect Erastos of Rom 16.23 with the aedile Erastos of *I.Corinth.Kent* 232, then the link between the latter Gaius and Corinth is severed, and Romans might have been penned in some other location. S. Friesen ('The Wrong Erastos: Ideology, Archaeology, and Exegesis', *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society* (ed. S. J. Friesen, D. N. Schowalter and J. C. Walters; NovTSup 134; Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010) 231–56) has indeed shown that Erastos of Rom 16.23 is not the Erastos of the Corinthian inscription, notwithstanding the special pleading of T. A. Brookins, 'The (In)Frequency of the Name "Erastos" in Antiquity: A Literary, Papyrological, and Epigraphical Catalog', *NTS* 59 (2013) 496–516. Dunn's claim (*Romans*, xlv) that there is 'scarcely any dispute' about a Corinthian provenance for Romans is too strong. Nevertheless, the fact that Phoebe of Cenchreae is named at the head of Romans 16 as the bearer of a letter of introduction and greetings, and that Rom 15.25 indicates that the Achaian collection is now complete and that Paul is on his way to Jerusalem makes Corinth or Cenchreae the most likely location for the writing of Romans. Yet even if Romans were penned in some other location, it must be assumed that, wherever it was, the Christ group there had welcomed Gaius, whom the Romans must know, as its guest.

50 Lucius (Λούκιος) is obviously another Latin *praenomen*, but is sometimes treated as a single Greek name: Judge ('Roman Base', 112) notes that whether it is treated as a Latin or a Greek name in Rom 16.21 hangs on the meaning of 'relative'. From Corinthia, the clearest examples of Lucius as a Greek name (not a Latin *praenomen*) are from the second century CE: Rizakis and Zoumbaki, *Roman Peloponnese*, 1.345, nos. 379, 382 = *ICorinth.Meritt* 95 (2nd/3rd cent. CE): Λούκι[ι]ος – – – Λουκίου [ι]ός; 1.345, no. 380 (2nd/3rd cent. CE): Luciu[s] [et] Cratinus; 1.281, no. 140 = *ICorinth.Kent* 353 (early Imperial period): ΛΟΥΚΙΟΣ ΚΑΝ[Ι]ΟΣ, which might also be read as ΛΟΥΚΙΟΣ ΛΑΝ[Ι]ΟΣ, 'Lucius *lanius*', i.e. the butcher, but H. Solin and O. Salomies (*Repertorium nominum gentilium et cognominum Latinorum* (Hildesheim: Olms/Weidmann, 1988)) report *Lanius* as a *gentilicum*, in which case Lucius is a *praenomen*; 1.406, no. 692 (1st cent. CE): LUCI(US), on the base ring of a small lamp; 1.406–7, no. 693.1–7 (2nd cent. CE): ΛΟΥΚΙΟΥ, on the reverse of seven oil lamps, probably potter's marks. As a *praenomen*: *ICorinth.Kent* 276.5 (250–300 CE): [- -]οι Λευκίου ἀπελ[ε]υθέρωι Δηλμ - - -; uncertain: *SEG* XI.61.24 (Corinth, 3rd cent. CE) ... c. 6... Λεύκιος [c. 3.] ρα[τ]ε - - -.

What is curious about Gaius is the fact that he is identified with a *praenomen* and indeed one of the most common *praenomina*. Benet Salway observes that 99 per cent of Romans in the Republican period shared one of only seventeen *praenomina*,⁵¹ Gaius of course being one of those seventeen. At Corinth, the most popular *praenomina* appear to have been Gnaeus, Marcus, Lucius, Gaius, Publius, Tiberius, Titus and Quintus.⁵² It is difficult to estimate how many Gaii there would have been in Corinth because the epigraphical evidence from Corinth is often quite fragmentary and, where names are present, the *praenomina* (or the customary abbreviations, C[aius], L[ucius], M[arcus], Q[uintus], T[itus] etc.) and other parts of the name are in lacuna. Olli Salomies, however, estimates that 20 per cent of Roman males had Gaius as a *praenomen*.⁵³ If the same proportion obtained for Roman Corinth, a Roman colony, we could expect one in five male *ingenui* and *liberti* to have had this name. This statistic would make extremely odd the fact that Paul refers to a *Corinthian* Gaius by so common a name, evidently expecting his addressees to find this a meaningful identification. Paul's greeting would be rather like me writing from Toronto to a correspondent in London (which I had never visited) and saying, 'William says hello' – except that English has hundreds of given names, while only seventeen were common for Romans. That is, 'Gaius' is a far *less* specific identifier, because there would be proportionally so many more Corinthian Gaii than, say, Williams in Toronto.

If Gaius had been a native Corinthian, there is little reason to suppose that anyone in Rome would know who 'Gaius' was or which one of the several hundreds or even thousands of Corinthian Gaii was sending his greetings.⁵⁴ To explain that Gaius was Paul's guest and the guest of the entire *ekklesia* would not make his identity any clearer to the Roman recipients, any more than would my telling a correspondent in London that William is staying at my house in Toronto. Rom 16.23 only makes sense if Gaius was a member of the *Roman* group who had recently come to Corinth. In effect, Rom 16.23 means, 'Your Gaius, who is my guest and the entire church's guest, sends his greetings.'

51 B. Salway, 'What's in a Name? A Survey of Roman Onomastic Practice from c. 700 BC to AD 700', *JRS* 84 (1994) 124–45, at 125. These are Aulus, Appius, Gaius, Gnaeus, Decimus, Lucius, Manius, Marcus, Numerius, Publius, Quintus, Servius, Sextus, Spurius, Titus, Tiberius and Vibius.

52 The PHI database of Greek inscriptions attested 'Gaius' in the Peloponnese 211 times in 154 inscriptions. The Corinthia section in Rizakis and Zoumbaki, *Roman Peloponnese* lists 70 Gaii, almost all part of *tria nomina*.

53 Salomies, *Die römischen Vornamen*, 29.

54 Assuming a population of Corinth at 87,000 (D. W. Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 82), two thirds of the population adult, with half of the population represented by slaves and freeborn Greeks (neither of whom had a *praenomen*), one might expect that of the approximately 14,350 male *ingenui* and *liberti*, about 2,900 would have the name 'Gaius'.

Of course, there were numerically far more Gaii in Rome than there were in Corinth: estimating the Roman population at one million, and the adult male population of *ingenui* and *liberti* (who would also bear a *tria nomina*) at perhaps one third, the number of Gaii could be as high as 44,000.⁵⁵ Paul, however, was not addressing the population of Rome but only the Roman Christ group, and *they* would have had no difficulty in identifying the particular Gaius who had come from Rome to Corinth. Even if, for example, three or four free or freed male members were named Gaius – assuming 50 adult members, two thirds of whom were free or freed – it would immediately be obvious which Gaius had gone to Corinth and was sending his greetings.⁵⁶

55 I assume for the sake of argument that one third of the adult Roman population were slaves (and hence with no *praenomina*), and the remaining two thirds (with men being somewhat more numerous than women) included *ingenui* and *liberti* (who would bear a *tria nomina*).

56 R. S. Ascough ('Implications of Association Meeting Places for Imagining the Size of Pauline Christ Groups', unpublished paper presented at the 2014 Annual meeting of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, Szeged Hungary (2014), 7) has suggested that the 'Roman group' was comprised of five separate groups who may not ever have met together as a whole. This led him to ask (*per litt.*) whether we could assume that all of the Roman Christ-followers would know which Gaius was meant by Rom 16.23. Yet however many sub-groups in Rome there might be, Paul evidently assumes that his greetings will be conveyed to each. Whether the Gaius in question is known to each sub-group, it will be obvious to the group of which he was a member which Gaius had gone to Corinth, and it will be obvious to each of the others that Paul is conveying the greetings of a Roman Gaius now in Corinth, whether they know this Gaius personally or not. Recently, S. Stowers ('The Social Formations of Paul and his Romans: Synagogues, Churches, and Ockham's Razor', *A Most Reliable Witness: Essays in Honor of Ross Shepard Kraemer* (ed. S. A. Harvey *et al.*; Brown Judaic Studies 358; Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies, 2015) 77–87) has challenged the entire idea of Paul sending a letter to the 'Roman church', suggesting instead that Romans, because of its specialised and learned nature, cannot have been addressed to a 'general Christian or Jewish population', but is directed to a highly educated, specialised and apparently very small audience. It is unclear from Stowers' account what he thinks the relationship is between those greeted in Romans 16 and the actual addressees. He cites T. Mullins ('Greeting as a New Testament Form', *JBL* 87 (1968) 418–26, at 420): 'In this way [*viz.*, by using a second-person greeting: 'Greet NN'], the writer of the letter becomes the principal and the addressee becomes his agent in establishing a communication with a third party who is not intended to be among the immediate readership of the letter.' But for Mullins, these greeting formulae, as well as the third-person formula ('NN greets you'), 'informs us chiefly of relationships which exist beyond the writer-reader dialogue and beyond the specific occasion of the letter' (422). While this might imply that those greeted are not intended as the primary recipients of the letter, it does at least mean that they belong to the network of the letter recipient. And it implies that those offering the third-person greetings *do* belong to the immediate network of the recipient. Hence we should expect the immediate addressees to know the identity of Gaius. (I thank Richard Last for directing me to Stowers' essay.)

4. Conclusion

The consequences of this argument are several. First and most important for reconstructing the social history of the Christ group at Corinth, there is no reason for thinking that Gaius was a person of especially high social standing, still less a magnificently wealthy householder in whose villa the entire Corinthian group met. He may simply have been a merchant who travelled to Corinth on business or an artisan like Prisca and Aquila who found work there. Because of his connection with the Christ group in Rome he was able to obtain a welcome in Corinth. Paul expects precisely the same hospitality to apply in the case of Phoebe of Cenchreae and, later, to himself, and it is for this reason that he stresses his own role as a host to Gaius the guest.

The second consequence is to throw doubt on the standard assumption that the Gaius of 1 Cor 1.14 is the same as the Gaius named in Rom 16.23. Even on the conventional identification of reading of Gaius as a host, commentators are hard-pressed to explain why Paul says nothing of Gaius' euergetic role in 1 Corinthians – even in 1 Corinthians 16, where he commends Stephanas – and have to resort to speculations that Gaius opened his house to the *ekklēsia* at some point after the writing of 1 Corinthians. Other commentators are at least appropriately hesitant about a hasty identification of the two, precisely because Gaius is so common a *praenomen*.

The suggestion of this paper also solves the three problems that have plagued the interpretation of Rom 16.23. First, translating ξένοϛ as 'guest' avoids the strained efforts at rendering the term in a way that is at the very least unusual and fails to cohere with other first-century occurrences of ξένοϛ. Second, to see Gaius as a guest of both Paul and the entire Corinthian Christ group avoids the problem that Lagrange signalled, of the genitives connected to ξένοϛ being used in two different ways; if ξένοϛ means 'guest', the two genitives, Paul and the entire *ekklēsia*, have precisely the same function. And finally, the rendering of ξένοϛ as 'guest' alleviates the rhetorical problem identified by Dunn and Jewett since Paul's mention of him as a guest of the group would not have shamed or demeaned the contributions of Phoebe or Stephanas; indeed Paul's description of Gaius is not at all effusive nor is his reference to the entire *ekklēsia* wildly hyperbolic. This also means that Paul's belated naming of Gaius at the end of a long list of those who sent greetings is not a slight against an eminent benefactor, since Gaius was not a benefactor, only a Roman visitor.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ The research for this paper was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and a working group on Greco-Roman associations, including (then) doctoral students, Callie Callon, Richard Last and Sarah Rollens, now all having completed and defended their respective dissertations. I would like to thank Richard Ascough, Phil Harland, Edwin Judge, Richard Last and Mariana Mastagar for reading versions of this paper and sparing me from various errors and omissions. Finally, I thank the anonymous referees for *NTS* for suggestions for improvement.