Mutual Brokers of Grace: A Study in 2 Corinthians 1.3-11*

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The brokerage relationship has been applied as a model to various passages in the NT. Surprisingly, only a few scholars have applied it to the Pauline corpus. Among them is Stephan Joubert, who uses the model to paint a very hierarchical portrait of Paul's apostleship in the Corinthian Correspondence. Against Joubert, this essay will demonstrate that, when the brokerage model is applied to 2 Cor 1.3-11, a characteristic relational pattern in the economy of grace emerges, one which is marked by interpersonal solidarity and a mutual channelling of χάρις. This discovery, however, only appears when the 'unfitting' nature of the model is acknowledged.

Keywords: Paul, 2 Corinthians 1, patronage, brokerage, mutuality, apostleship, grace

1. Introduction

Systems of reciprocity, such as Roman patronage (*patrocinium*) and Greek benefaction (euergetism),[1] not only dominated the Mediterranean world but also

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1 Since this essay focuses on a relationship (brokerage) which is to be found within the system of Roman patronage, it need not provide a detailed analysis of whether Roman patronage and Greek benefaction are two separate or identical entities. Although some NT scholars affirm the divide between the two (e.g., S. Joubert, 'One Form of Social Exchange or Two? "Euergetism," Patronage, and New Testament Studies—Roman and Greek Ideas of Patronage', *BTB* 31 [2001] 17–25), most classicists are reluctant to separate patronage and benefaction (cf. C. Eilers, *Roman Patrons of Greek Cities* [Oxford: Oxford University, 2002] 1–18; N. Jones, *Rural Athens under the Democracy* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004] 70–1; J. Nicols, 'Pliny and the Patronage of Communities', *Hermes* 108 [1980] 365–85 at 380–2). For a critical engagement with the differing perspectives among NT scholars, see J. Marshall, *Jesus, Patrons, and Benefactors: Roman Palestine and the Gospel of Luke* (WUNT 259; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009) 26 nn. 6, 7; 32–52; E. D. MacGillivray, 'Re-evaluating Patronage and Reciprocity in Antiquity and New Testament Studies', *JGRChJ* 6 (2009) 37–81

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currently pervade the world of NT studies, from the Gospels,[2] throughout the Epistles,[3] and reaching to the early church fathers.[4] But this should come as no surprise. For several decades, scholars have used systems of reciprocity as interpretive frameworks to analyse and explain gift-exchange relationships embedded within particular social structures, norms, and values.[5] However, specifically residing under the rubric of Roman patronage is a lesser-known relationship, one which has been largely overlooked by Pauline scholars.[6] Broadly speaking, it introduces a third party into the patron–client alliance, an intermediary who distributes the goods of the patron to the client and likewise mediates the reciprocating return of the client back to the patron. It is called *brokerage*, and it is this model which will be the focus of this study.

Although many have deployed this cultural model in the attempt to elucidate the writings of the NT,[7] the only *concentrated*[8] application of brokerage in Pauline

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at 37–45; C. Osiek, 'The Politics of Patronage and the Politics of Kinship: The Meeting of the Ways', *BTB* 39 (2009) 143–52, esp. 146.

2 See n. 7 below.

3 A. Batten, 'God in the Letter of James: Patron or Benefactor?', *The Social World of the New Testament* (ed. J.H. Neyrey and E. Steward; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008) 47–61; J. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (JSNTSup 75; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992); J. H. Neyrey, 'God, Benefactor and Patron', *JSNT* 27 (2005) 465–92; J. Whitlark, *Enabling Fidelity to God: Perseverance in Hebrews in Light of Reciprocity Systems in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008).

4 R. Williams, 'Charismatic Patronage and Brokerage: Episcopal Leadership in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch' (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 1997); Williams, 'Bishops as Brokers of Heavenly Goods: Ignatius *to the Ephesians*', *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East* (ed. R. Averbeck et al.; Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2003) 389–98.

5 J. Elliot, 'Patronage and Clientage', *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. R. Rohrbaugh; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996) 144–56 at 150. For objections raised against the current use of patronage as a model, especially among prominent social-scientific interpreters, see MacGillivray, 'Re-evaluating Patronage', 37–45; D. J. Downs, 'Is God Paul's Patron? The Economy of Patronage in Pauline Theology', *Engaging Economics: New Testament Scenarios and Early Christian Reception* (ed. B. W. Longenecker and K. D. Liebengood; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009) 129–56.

6 Worth noting is an insightful remark made by Richard Saller, that the patron–broker–client relationship has been considered to be most relevant for the study of Mediterranean society during the Roman Empire (*Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1982] 4).

7 The majority focus on Johannine literature (e.g., B. Malina, *The Social World of Jesus and the Gospels* [London: Routledge, 1996] 143–75; T. G. Brown, *Spirit in the Writings of John* [JSNTSS 253; London: T&T Clark, 2003]; R. Piper, 'Glory, Honour and Patronage in the Fourth Gospel: Understanding the *Doxa* Given to Disciples in John 17', *Social Scientific Models for Interpreting the Bible: Essays by the Context Group in Honour of Bruce J. Malina* [ed. J. Pilch; Leiden: Brill, 2001] 281–309; Neyrey, *Glory*, 198–205; Neyrey, 'Worship in the Fourth Gospel: A Cultural Interpretation of John 14–17', *BTB* 36 [2006] 107–17; Neyrey, '"I Am the Door" [John 10.7,

studies—to the best of my knowledge—is a short essay written by Stephan Joubert.[9] In this essay, Joubert contends that Paul's apostolic authority in the Corinthian Correspondence contains two aspects. On the one hand, he is the authoritative *paterfamilias* of the Corinthian household and, on the other, a relational, earthly broker of heavenly patrons (i.e., God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit). This two-sided apostolic construct creates a single, authoritative sphere in which he oscillates between 'hierarchical and intimate aspects of his patriarchal role', depending, of course, on the state of his relationship with the community.[10] If chastisement was needed, he enforces his hierarchical authority; if encouragement, then he emphasizes his interpersonal solidarity. Nevertheless, any appearance of egalitarian terminology in 1 and 2 Corinthians, such as 'brothers' or 'partners and fellow workers', must not be understood as signifying a reality. For Joubert, this terminology only 'masked a relationship other than the one they implied, since these persons were in fact not his equals. They were socially inferior to him, *because he had the authority to command their obedience*'.[11] But does the ability to command necessarily imply that Paul, as Joubert insists, '*at all times*, claimed the superordinate position for himself',[12] or that expressions of mutuality functioned solely as beguiling disguises?

In contrast to this use of the brokerage model to arrive at a solely hierarchical conclusion on Paul's apostleship, this essay will probe 2 Cor 1.3-11 with the same heuristic tool, only in a completely different manner from Joubert. I will apply the model loosely, allowing Paul to speak within it and yet permitting him to break out

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9]: Jesus the Broker in the Fourth Gospel', *CBQ* 69 [2007] 271–91). But some apply the model to Luke–Acts (e.g., Moxnes, 'Patron–Client Relations') and Hebrews (e.g., D. de Silva, 'Exchanging Favor for Wrath: Apostasy in Hebrews and Patron–Client Relationships', *JBL* 115 [1996] 91–116; Whitlark, *Enabling Fidelity to God*).

8 Various works that briefly allude to the practice of brokerage include: Z. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW 130; New York: W. de Gruyter, 2004) 72–4; idem, 'The Divine Benefactions of Paul the Client', *JGRChJ* 2 (2001–5) 9–26 at 25; S. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection* (WUNT 124; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000) 28–9; B. Malina and J. H. Neyrey, *Portraits of Paul: An Archaeology of Ancient Personality* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996) 210; Neyrey, 'God, Benefactor and Patron', 475–76; M. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians* (SP 17; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000) 187.

9 S. Joubert, 'Managing the Household: Paul as *Paterfamilias* of the Christian Household Group in Corinth', *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-Scientific Studies of the New Testament in Its Context* (ed. P. Esler; London: Routledge, 1995) 213–23.

10 Joubert, 'Managing the Household', 222.

11 Joubert, 'Managing the Household', 217. My italics.

12 Joubert, 'Managing the Household', 222. My italics.

from it.[13] For had Joubert noted the ways in which the brokerage model fails to 'fit' this passage—a passage precisely within the Corinthian Correspondence—he would have arrived at a different conclusion.

Nevertheless, to say that this model does not exactly 'fit' the text does not therefore render it useless. On the contrary, I intend to demonstrate how it indeed fits the intricate relationship between God, Paul, and the Corinthians, *to some degree*. However, I will also argue that from the 'unfitting' parts of this text emerges the uniquely Pauline articulation of relationships 'in Christ'. To meet this end, I will first describe the relational dynamics of the patron–broker–client alliance, before applying the model to 2 Cor 1.3-11. I will then draw out the 'fitting' and 'unfitting' parts of the text and pinpoint three misshapen pieces which together convey a characteristic relational pattern within the economy of χάρις.

2. The Brokerage Model under the Rubric of Roman Patronage

2.1. *Roman Patronage*

Patronage[14] is truly a complicated web of affairs that lends itself to limitless variations and distinctions, largely because it 'shares characteristics with other categories of relations into which it merges'.[15] This makes it nearly impossible to pin

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13 This methodology seeks to avoid the prevalent tendency of model-based approaches, where one's conclusions are predetermined or confined by the constraints of the model. In this regard, David Horrell warns NT scholars of the 'serious weaknesses and dangers' of such an approach, particularly 'in its tendency to impose the model upon the evidence'. To this, Horrell candidly states that 'a merely pragmatic assertion that the model "works" cannot obviate these deeper problems' ('Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler', *JSNT* 78 [2000] 93–4; cf. also Horrell, 'Whither Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation? Reflections on Contested Methodologies and the Future', *After the First Urban Christians: The Social-Scientific Study of Pauline Christianity Twenty-Five Years Later* [ed. T. D. Still and D. G. Horrell; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2009] 6–20).

14 For significant works on Roman *patrocinium*, consult Eilers, *Roman Patrons*; G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, '*Suffragium*: From Vote to Patronage', *BJS* 5 (1954) 33–48; Marshall, *Jesus*; J. Touloumakos, 'Zum römischen Gemeindepatronat im griechischen Osten', *Hermes* 116 (1988) 304–24; K. Verboven, *The Economy of Friends: Economic Aspects of* Amicitia *and Patronage in the Late Republic* (Brussels: Latomus, 2002); T. Mommsen, 'Das römische Gastrecht und die römische Clientel', *Römische Forschungen* (2 vols.; Berlin, 1864–79) 1.355–90; Nicols, 'Pliny and the Patronage'. Helpful studies on socio-historical patronage include: S. W. Schmidt et al., eds., *Friends, Followers and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1977); Saller, *Personal Patronage*; S. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1984); A. Wallace-Hadrill, ed., *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London: Routledge, 1989); E. Gellner and J. Waterbury, eds., *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies* (London: Duckworth, 1977).

15 Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 1.

down one definition of patronage,[16] as attested to by the perennial debate between social historians and classicists.[17] Although differing opinions abound on this matter, a detailed analysis of the discussion cannot be recapitulated here, especially since an agreed upon definition of patronage is still pending.[18] What is necessary to mention, before describing the brokerage model, are some general characteristics of a patron–client relationship which classicists and social historians equally affirm:

(a)   Patron–client relationships are comprised of individuals possessing unequal social statuses and degrees of power.[19] The patron held the dominant position over the client, possessing the tangible means to express his influence by meeting the needs of the less fortunate. In exchange, the client, though unable to reciprocate in kind, provided the patron with any help he might require.

(b)   Patron–client relationships entail an exchange of different types of resources. The patron provides what the client *needs* (social, economic, and political resources); while the client returns what the patron *desires* (honour, loyalty, political allegiance, and public gratitude).[20] As such, each participant supplies the other from their own resources.

16   Nicols, 'Pliny and Patronage', 365: 'Few historians would disagree with the statement that patronage is one of the most important, and yet elusive bonds in Roman society... [I]t is not easy to define what patronage is'.

17   At the heart of the issue is the source for scholars' varying definitions. Classicists develop their definition of Roman *patrocinium* from ancient sources, while social historians propose a trans-cultural definition of patronage. The most notable, yet highly criticized, socio-historical definition is that of Richard Saller. He contends that a patron–client relationship is (1) reciprocal; (2) asymmetrical; and (3) long-term (Saller, *Personal Patronage*). This threefold definition became wide-spread, even commonplace, among NT scholars through the influential works of Wallace-Hadrill and S. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger (see, e.g., John Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* [JSNTS 75; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992] 31–33; Crook, *Reconceptualizing Conversion*, 68–9). Classicist Claude Eilers, while acknowledging the value of his analysis, challenges Saller's popular definition, insisting that it erroneously permits any relationship that meets this threefold criterion to be labelled 'patronage', even relationships such as *suffragium* and literary patronage, which were not recognized by the Roman world as *patrocinium*. It robs patronage of its specificity and lacks correct knowledge of the Roman world, which is necessary to develop a general definition of patronage (*Roman Patrons*, 1–18; cf. also Marshall, *Jesus*, 43–4). Still, Eilers's work, significant as it may be, has not escaped scholarly assail, which leaves the definition of patronage open for discussion (cf. K. Verboven, 'Review of Claude Eilers, *Roman Patrons of Greek Cities*', *BMCR* 6.19 [2003] http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2003/2003-06-19.html (accessed 02/01/2010)). Because multiple kinds of patronal relationships exist, I will only present certain characteristics avowed by both classicists and social historians.

18   Marshall, *Jesus*, 44.

19   Marshall, *Jesus*, 44–5; Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons*, 55; A. Blok, 'Variations in Patronage', *Sociologische Gids* 16 (1969) 366.

20   Eilers, *Roman Patrons*, 15–16; Marshall, *Jesus*, 45–6; E. Wolf, 'Kinship, Friendship, and Patron–Client Relations in Complex Societies', *Friends, Followers, and Factions* (ed. Schmidt et al.) 167–77 at 174.

(c) Patron–client relationships are bound by 'social obligation and the inner force of honour',[21] which may have been viewed as an exploitative transaction couched in terms of personal loyalty or reciprocity.[22] In any case, it was incumbent upon recipients to express their gratitude, so as not to be considered ignoble and so as to enhance the social prestige and reputation of the patron. Failure to do so was deemed a disgraceful insult and resulted in public opprobrium, as Seneca attests: 'Not to return gratitude for benefits is a disgrace, and the whole world counts it as such' (*De Ben* 3.1.1; cf. 4.18.1). In theory, even the patron 'was obligated to fulfil his responsibilities to his clients and promote their well-being'.[23]

Other characteristics could certainly be added. Sufficient for present purposes, however, are the specific relational components of asymmetry, reciprocity, exchange of disparate resources, and mutual obligation that a patron–client relationship entailed; and yet, when the broker is factored into this relational equation, patronage takes on a different shape.

2.2. *Brokerage*

To speak at a fairly high level of abstraction, the broker provides a profitable link between two parties or segments of society. Jeremy Boissevain likens the job of the broker to that of a telegrapher who transmits messages between two persons.[24] The transmission from the patron to the client is primarily one of material goods and services, whereas the return transmission from the client to the patron is one of gratitude or even acts of loyalty.[25] Behind these transmissions, the broker has, as Jerome Neyrey points out, 'a foot in both worlds', appreciating the interests of both parties and striving to bridge them effectively.[26]

As a 'telegrapher' connecting higher- and lower-ranking people or groups, the broker facilitates access to an otherwise unattainable resource, one which Boissevain labels a 'second order resource'. 'First order resources' refer to tangible goods such as land, jobs, and protection, which the patron directly possesses. But 'second order resources' pertain to 'strategic contacts with other people who

21 Marshall, *Jesus*, 45.

22 Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988) 58.

23 Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1990) 87; cf. Nicols, 'Pliny and Patronage', 377, 385, who distinguishes between 'patronage in theory and patronage in practice'.

24 Boissevain, *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (Pavilion; Oxford: Blackwell, 1974) 148, 153.

25 Wolf, 'Kinship, Friendship, and Patron–Client Relations', 174.

26 Neyrey, 'God, Benefactor and Patron', 476; cf. Blok, 'Variations', 370; Sydel Silverman, 'Patronage and Community–Nation Relationships in Central Italy', *Friends, Followers, and Factions* (ed. Schmidt et al.) 294, 297.

control such resources directly or have access to such persons'.[27] '[T]hose who dispense second order resources', Boissevain concludes, 'are brokers'.[28] By possessing strategic contact with the wealthy, the broker bridges the social chasm between patron and client in a way that is profitable for both parties.

Various examples[29] from the letters of the younger Pliny helpfully illustrate this intermediary practice, especially since he enjoyed an analogous relationship with the emperor Trajan as well as others.[30] *Epistles* 2.13, for instance, captures Pliny's right to solicit the 'patronage' (*fortuna*) of Priscus on behalf of Voconius Romanus, whose character is worthy to gain entrance into the patron's valuable 'friendship' (*amicitia*). Pliny's access to emperor Trajan's patronage is further projected in *Ep* 10.4, where Pliny entreats Trajan to grant a senatorial office to Romanus, of which Pliny, by virtue of his connection with the emperor, confidently awaits Trajan's 'favourable judgment', not only for himself but also for Romanus, the client. In another letter, Pliny brokers a Praetorship for his friend, Accius Sura, whose high view of Trajan 'prompts him to hope [that] he may experience [receiving a Praetorship] in this instance' (*Ep* 10.12). Viewed together, these examples of unwavering certainty in receiving what has been petitioned, by the client and Pliny alike, and of Pliny's right to make requests of opulent members of society, demonstrate the broker's privileged access to the rich storehouse of patrons on behalf of clients.

Given that the broker has access to the goods of the wealthy and manages the transaction of these goods to the client in the patron's stead, one could easily see how the client could mistake the broker for the patron.[31] This misperception is caused by the fact that the broker assumed the role of a patron for clients residing within distant locations.[32] Indeed, Pliny, although clearly brokering a benefit, sounds more like a patron when describing how Tranquillus, upon receiving a favour *from* Baebius Hispanus, will incur an obligation *to* Pliny (*Ep* 1.24).[33] At times, Pliny even refers to himself as a 'patron' (*patronus*),[34] but this occurs only when corresponding with certain communities who have officially conferred

27 Boissevain, *Friends*, 147–8.

28 Boissevain, *Friends*, 148.

29 See Pliny *Ep* 6.32; 2.4, 18; 3.2, 8, 11; 10.11, 21, 23, 26, 33, 37, 51, 58, 85, 86a and b, 87, 93, 94, 95, 96, 104, 106; also Fronto *Ad Amicos* 1.5; 2.8.

30 See Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 75–7.

31 James Scott notes that 'it is quite possible for a single individual to act both as a broker and a patron' ('Patron–Client Politics', 127; cf. H. Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke's Gospel* [OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988] 44).

32 Blok, 'Variations', 369–70.

33 Although he recognizes that he will also remain under obligation to Baebius: 'I mention these particulars, to let you see how much he will be obliged to me, *as I shall to you*, if you can help him to the purchase of this little *box*, so agreeable to his taste…' (*Ep*. 1.24; first italics mine).

34 Nicols, 'Pliny and Patronage', 368; cf. A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny the Younger: A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966) 375.

the title upon him,[35] not when mediating favours to individuals.[36] With regard to mediating benefactions to individuals, it is not surprising that, with the broker's task of procuring for and, perhaps, physically delivering necessary goods to clients, the broker would have been misrecognized as the patron in the eyes of the client.

In the eyes of the patron, however, the broker (though euphemistically called a 'friend'[37]) is primarily regarded as a sort of privileged client.[38] On one occasion, Pliny performs the role of an obsequious supplicant, overly flattering and honouring Trajan after granting Roman and Alexandrian citizenship to Harpocras at his request (*Ep* 10.5-6). He expresses his deep gratitude to the emperor by noting that this favour, a favour given to Harpocras, places Pliny himself under further obligation. Elsewhere, Pliny begins one letter more like a subservient client than a privileged broker. After explaining how Priscus gladly embraces 'every opportunity of obliging [him]', he servilely exclaims, 'so there is no man to whom I had rather lay myself under an obligation' (*Ep* 2.13). This prefaces an appeal to Priscus to admit one of Pliny's friends into Priscus's 'friendship' (i.e., patronage). Emerging from these examples is the complex pyramidal structure of brokerage networks, in which the broker is obliged to the patron and the client obliged to the broker (in addition to the already-established obligation of patrons and clients).

Having outlined broadly the broker's role in this enmeshed web of relations, as one who possesses and manipulates access to 'second order resources' and channels goods between two persons or groups, we can now see how well this intermediary practice 'fits' the reciprocal relationship of 2 Cor 1.3-11.

3. The 'Fitting' Qualities of the Text

Assessing the shape of the text necessitates a close examination of the three participants in the pattern of exchange within 2 Cor 1.3-11: God, Paul, and the

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35 Nicols, 'Pliny and Patronage', 380, 384.

36 To the best of my knowledge, each instance where Pliny mediates a favour is accompanied by recognizing the source, whether by name or by the title *patronus*.

37 In the Roman Empire, the language of 'friendship' became proper etiquette. The emperor appointed senators as brokers, whom he considered 'friends', in order to distribute his *beneficia* throughout the land (Saller, *Personal Patronage*, 75). Similarly, clients were also called 'friends' so as not to degrade them, but this courtesy 'did not produce any levelling effect or egalitarian ideology in the hierarchical Roman society' (p. 11). Friendship, therefore, contained the appearance and language of equality, since it originally aimed to be based on mutual affection, but, in actuality, consisted of *unequal* partners contributing *unequal* goods and services in profitable exchange (p. 11).

38 'With respect to the central authority', Blok notes, 'they [i.e., brokers] can be regarded as clients' ('Variations', 370).

Corinthians.[39] To discern whether this tripartite relationship 'fits' harmoniously within the contours of the brokerage model, the role of each individual participant, along with how they relate to one another, must be compared to the relational dynamics of the patron–broker–client alliance. Situating these gift-exchange participants into their respective patron, broker, or client roles will provide the necessary evidence to uncover the fitting qualities of 2 Cor 1.3-11. This text, however, contains two vantage points on a single, reciprocal relationship, so an investigation of vv. 3-7 will be carried out before turning to vv. 8-11.

That God performs the role of the patron in vv. 3-7 appears in three distinct ways. First, an asymmetrical relationship is revealed in the title, 'the Father of mercies' (1.3). God occupies the superior position as 'Father', while Paul and the Corinthians share the inferior position as ἀδελφοί (1.8). Secondly, the 'Father', as 'the God of all comfort [παράκλησις]' (1.3), possesses a 'first order resource', direct access to the commodity of παράκλησις; or, we could say, χάρις. For, in this context, χάρις appears synonymously with παράκλησις, provided that the 'deliverance' in v. 10 can be likened to a demonstration of God's παράκλησις in a time of utter distress (cf. 1.8), a divine act of 'comfort' which Paul calls a 'gift' (χάρισμα) in v. 11. In this sense, just as χάρις manifests itself in the form of 'deliverance' in vv. 10-11, so, in vv. 3-7, χάρις manifests itself in the form of παράκλησις. God, therefore, as the benevolent patron, imparts the commodity of παράκλησις/χάρις to Paul (1.4). The last distinct way God acts as patron is that he receives recognition in exchange for granting the resource of grace. Whereas God provides Paul what he *needs* in time of 'affliction', Paul reciprocates what God *desires* in return for his beneficence; that is, gratitude (Εὐλογητὸς ὁ θεός [1.3]),[40] the thankful and appropriate response to the generous patron who possesses 'all comfort'.

Paul,[41] conversely, bridges the gap between God the patron and the Corinthians as clients, thereby assuming the role of the broker. This, too, is seen in three distinct ways.

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39   Since Jesus' role in this relationship is multifaceted and complex, operating as the source of the gift (1.2), the gift itself (1.5, 9a), and the sphere in which the gift is received (1.5), I have purposely integrated Jesus' role into God's role as patron to avoid clouding the brokerage model and the argument of this essay. The intricacy of Christ's role is too varied to be developed within the confines of this work, but I recognize its importance and hope to explore his unique role in a later work.

40   For a discussion on whether this introductory formula should be regarded as a wish or a statement, see P. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* (NovTSup; Leiden: Brill, 1977) 233–57. O'Brien rightly maintains that εὐλογητός does not rule out any thought of personal gratitude and should therefore be interpreted as a wish with an implicit nuance of thanksgiving (p. 239).

41   For the sake of simplicity, I will use the name 'Paul' in this essay and translate the plurals in 1.4 with the pronouns 'he' and 'his', but the plural in vv. 3-7 may certainly include Timothy, at the least. Although many disagree with this interpretation and champion the notion that the

In the first instance, he possesses strategic contact with the patron and thus access to 'second order resources'. This privileged access is supported by the fact that 'all comfort' is provided by God alone (1.3, 4a)—Paul does not directly possess this supply.

Next, his intermediary role is indicated by the purpose statement of v. 4: God distributes his comfort to Paul 'in all [his] afflictions *in order that [he] may be able* [εἰς τὸ δύνασθαι ἡμᾶς] to comfort those in any affliction through the comfort with which [he] himself [is] comforted by God'.[42] Only the God of 'all' (πᾶς) comfort is able to provide for those in 'any' (πᾶς) affliction; and yet, he chooses to do so by way of mediation. As God's commodity of παράκλησις reaches and imbues Paul in the midst of all his hardships, it powerfully enables this frail, suffering mediator to align himself with the trajectory of grace aimed at meeting the needs of others; in this case, the Corinthians. Comfort or grace, then, flows through Paul's 'corpse-like condition of Christ' (cf. 1.5)[43] and cascades into a community of affliction, showering the Corinthians with an overflowing surplus of divine grace.

Finally, the earnest commitment on Paul's part to pass on this benefit to the Corinthians, and therefore to meet the interests of both parties, is captured by

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Corinthians should also be incorporated into the plural 'we', I would argue that Paul intentionally demarcates himself and Timothy from the community. Helpful in this regard is Samuel Byrskog's fourfold category of the plural in the Pauline corpus: (1) the 'pluralis sociativus', in which the sender associates him- or herself with the recipients; (2) also the 'pluralis sociativus', in which the sender associates him- or herself with a specific group among the recipients; (3) the sender incorporates fellow-workers who may or may not be co-senders; and (4) the sender speaks solely of him- or herself ('Co-Senders, Co-Authors and Paul's Use of the First Person Plural', *ZNW* 87 [1996] 230–50 at 232). Based on this categorization, I would argue that the plural 'we' or 'us' in vv. 3-11 ought to be subsumed under category 3 and considered real plurals, with Paul (the sender) and Timothy (co-sender and co-author) specifically in view. This partly aligns with Byrskog's conclusion on the plural in 2 Corinthians; he asserts that '1,1-14 is composed throughout in the first person plural, sometimes apparently including the addressees, but sometimes, most evidently from 1,6 and onwards, not including them' (p. 246). However, I would go further and assert that the article τούς in v. 4, the passive recipients of 'comfort', comprises the same group identified by ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν in v. 6 (i.e., the Corinthian community), which clearly delineates the sender from the recipient, so that the plural evidently excludes addressees from v. 4 onwards rather than from just v. 6. For more on the first person plural in Paul and 2 Corinthians, see K. Dick, *Der Schriftstellerische Plural bei Paulus* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1900); T. Zahn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1924) 150; O. Roller, *Das Formular der Paulinischen Briefe; ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom Antike Briefe* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933) 169–87; E. von Dobschütz, 'Wir und Ich bei Paulus', *ZST* 10 (1993) 251–77; M. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh & T. Clark, 1994) 1.105–7.

42 See the previous note for a defence of the literary plural and a disclaimer for the translation of 1.4.

43 A. E. Harvey, *Renewal through Suffering: A Study of 2 Corinthians* (SNTW; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989) 31; cf. 2 Cor 4.10-12.

the key phrase ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν. This phrase signifies a selfless, other-oriented *modus operandi*, alluded to in v. 4 but amplified in vv. 6-7:

> But if we are afflicted it is on behalf of your comfort and salvation [ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως καὶ σωτηρίας]; or if we are comforted, it is in behalf of your comfort [ὑπὲρ τῆς ὑμῶν παρακλήσεως], which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer. And our hope on behalf of you [ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν] is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also [you will be sharers][44] of comfort.[45]

Here, Paul's resolve as broker to provide for the needs of the community, despite any grievous condition he may encounter, comes to the fore. And yet, this mediating role, replete with external and internal suffering,[46] takes on a more theological character. He becomes an embodiment of the sacrificial life of Christ to the community. This is why he considers 'Christ's sufferings' (1.5) to be his own,[47]

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44 In the verbless clause of v. 7c, the future verb ἔσεσθε ought to be supplied instead of ἐστε, although the ὡς...οὕτως καί formulation leads many commentators to insert ἐστε (e.g., I. Vegge, *2 Corinthians—A Letter about Reconciliation* [WUNT 239; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008] 157). They nevertheless neglect the future-oriented perspective of ἐλπίς here and in v. 10 (ῥύσεται εἰς ὃν ἠλπίκαμεν), and they also disregard the fact that the Corinthians already experience a present working (τῆς ἐνεργουμένης) of 'comfort' (1.6). The point being communicated in v. 7c is that if they participate in Paul's sufferings, and thus the 'sufferings of Christ' (1.5), they *will* enter eschatological 'comfort' (cf. Rom 8.17 for the same line of argument). They must, then, reaffirm their relationship by becoming 'fellow-sharers' (κοινωνοί) of his sufferings in order to share in a common, future hope.

45 My translation.

46 The 'sufferings of Christ' in Paul contain a physical (2 Cor 4.8-9; 6.4-5; 11.24-27) as well as emotional dimension (2 Cor 7.5; 11.28).

47 Numerous suggestions have been posited as to the specific nature of 'the sufferings of Christ'. Some associate them with the Jewish 'woes of the Messiah' in which the community, rather than the Messiah, experiences the birth-pangs as a prelude to the messianic age (Isa 26.17; 66.8; Jer 22.23; Hos 13.13; Mic 4.9-10; cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [BNTC; London: A&C Black, 1973] 62). Yet, the LXX employs the terms ὠδίν or ὠδίνω for 'birth-pangs', not πάθημα, and attestation in first-century sources is difficult to maintain. According to J. C. Beker, the concept of the messianic woes is 'not documented in Jewish literature until 135 C.E.' (*Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980] 146). Conversely, some consider these sufferings as Paul's endeavor to imitate Christ (cf. 1 Thess 1.6), but even though Paul is hailed as a model to imitate (e.g., 1 Cor 4.16), the imitation motif is completely absent from 2 Corinthians. Still others affirm a realistic union with the sufferings of the historical Jesus, having been enacted through participation in the σωμᾶ Χριστοῦ and operating as an extension of Christ's work (C. Proudfoot, 'Imitation or Realistic Participation? A Study of Paul's Concept of Suffering with Christ', *Int* 17 [1963] 140–60 at 147). But it is uncertain as to whether Paul shares this realistic interpretation of σωμᾶ Χριστοῦ (cf. Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1.109). Instead, a more convincing position recognizes a real, but not completely literal, union with Christ occurring through baptism (Rom 6.3-4), inwardly conforming believers into his character, suffering, and death (R. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline*

which, contrary to expectation, produces 'comfort' and 'life' in others (cf. 4.12).[48] Building upon this, the inclusion of 'salvation' (σωτηρία), most likely a synonym for 'comfort', adds soteriological weight to the παράκλησις he provides. It expands the meaning of 'comfort', from solely representing a present experience to including an eschatological hope (i.e., final salvation),[49] and thereby heightens the necessity to be in close relationship with their apostle. For without his inter-mediary function on their behalf, the Corinthians may seem to experience 'comfort' in the present time but never attain the eschatological 'comfort' of God.[50] Consequently, living ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, as it were, is anything but an optional practice. It is an essential means to the ultimate salvation of the Corinthians.[51]

In short, vv. 3-7 portray a unidirectional relationship, a 'one-way street', as Scott Hafemann puts it,[52] with God the patron working through Paul the broker in order solely to benefit the Corinthians as clients. This relationship, along with the route of grace, may be diagrammed as follows:
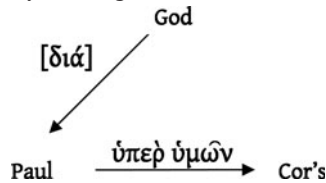

Figure 1a

Theology [BZNW 32; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1967] 91). In addition to this inward conformity, there is also an outward embodiment. As John Schütz succinctly puts it, 'Paul does not *repeat* what Christ has done. He *reflects* what Christ has done. In him the account of that action is made manifest' (*Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* [SNTSMS 26; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1975] 206; emphasis original). On suffering in 2 Corinthians specifically, see Harvey, *Renewal through Suffering,* 1–31.

48 Just as Christ 'became poor' (πτωχεύω) to make others 'rich' (πλούσιος) (2 Cor 8.9), so, too, Paul describes himself 'as poor [πτωχοί], yet making many rich [πλουτίζοντες]' (2 Cor 6.10).

49 The term σωτηρία expresses the eschatological motif of the Messiah bringing an end to misery and imbuing God's people with comfort, an interpretation most prominently found in the Psalms and Deutero-Isaiah (Proudfoot, 'Imitation or Realistic Participation?', 143; cf. Luke 2.25).

50 This demonstrates the necessity for the Corinthians to become fellow-sharers with Paul in suffering now, so that they may experience future 'comfort'. As Morna Hooker states, 'Just as Christ's death leads to life for Christians, so Paul's affliction leads to comfort and salvation for the Corinthians. Just as Christ's resurrection brings resurrection and glory (to those who are prepared to suffer with him), so Paul's experience of comfort brings comfort to the Corinthians (provided they share his suffer-ings)' (*From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1990] 49).

51 Not in any absolute sense, as if Paul's ministry contained 'atoning efficacy' (contra A. Hanson, *The Paradox of the Cross in the Thought of St Paul* [JSNTSup 17; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1987] 141), but in the sense that that his ministry serves to realign them with the grace of God in Christ.

52 S. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) 63.

In turning to the second half of the pericope, an interesting shift occurs. Until now, Paul has recounted his sacrificial role in the economy of χάρις as one who brokers a divine supply for the afflicted community (God comforts Paul, so that Paul may comfort the Corinthians). But, in vv. 8-11, Paul does something that the Corinthians may not have expected. He begins by narrating his unique story of suffering—a story that, although vague and cursory,[53] not only relates the tremendous effects engendered by the tumultuous affliction in Asia (both negative [1.8-9a] and positive [1.9b-10]) but also, and more importantly, contains an attempt to draw the Corinthians into a right understanding of the economy of χάρις. Paul presents himself, not as a tyrannical despot who solely inflicts 'pain' (as they had erroneously concluded [2.1-4]) but as a fellow-sufferer 'in Christ'.[54] He, too, like them, is well acquainted with affliction and depends greatly upon divine consolation. Indeed, he notifies them of how 'the God who raises the dead' (1.9), the one who 'calls into being that which does not exist' (Rom 4.17), had previously delivered him from 'so great a death' (1.10). And it is this past deliverance which moves him to express a steadfast hope in God's ultimate 'deliverance' from future peril. But the question becomes: how will Paul experience this future deliverance?

In this regard, the note of future 'deliverance' at the end of v. 10 becomes a timely segue into v. 11, in which Paul explains exactly how this deliverance will come about: the Corinthians must become mediators of God's grace to him. Or, to apply patronage terminology, they must become brokers of God (the patron) and mediate divine resources to Paul (the dependent client). This is a radical modification of the one-way relationship in the previous section, particularly because Paul, in v. 11, anticipates an interchange of roles wherein the Corinthians contribute to the ultimate fate of their apostle as brokers of divine grace. To discern the development of and reason for this interchange, three important shifts must be uncovered.

The first shift relates to privileged rights. Paul formerly had direct access to the patron, but now the Corinthians have the privilege of unmediated access to God. The impenetrable barrier once separating them as mere clients has been eradicated. Now, within this close partnership, the community may 'co-work'

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53 According to A. E. Harvey, the vagueness of this formidable event can be attributed to Paul's interest in answering the more important question of 'what the sufferer "felt" like—guilty or angry, hopeful or despairing', rather than what exactly he endured (*Renewal*, 11). The rationale behind this is 'to prove a point, to mount a defense, to disarm criticism', which typifies the 'well-known techniques of persuasion' in the ancient world' (pp. 13–14; on the rhetoric employed in this passage, see L. Welborn, 'Paul's Appeal to the Emotions in 2 Corinthians 1.1–2.13; 7.5-16', *JSNT* 82 [2001] 31–60 at 40, 47).

54 Welborn, 'Paul's Appeal', 47: 'Nothing serves to make clear the commonality of affliction better than an account of the suffering of the one who has caused sorrow'. This commonality is also faintly alluded to in 1.4.

(συνυπουργούντων)[55] with God through their prayers (1.11a), with the supply of the patron now readily accessible.

The second shift is directional. Whereas 'comfort' previously flowed through Paul (1.4), the Corinthians now have the opportunity to allow a χάρισμα[56] to flow 'through' them. The mediating role of the apostle was

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55 Two grammatical queries arise from Paul's use of συνυπουργούντων: (a) how should the participle be interpreted, and (b) with whom exactly does Paul want them to 'co-work'? First, συνυπουργούντων could be interpreted temporally ('while you cooperate'; e.g., P. Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962] 22; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1.122 n. 300), conditionally ('if you join in'; e.g., Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 67; V. Furnish, *II Corinthians* [AB 32A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1984] 115), or imperatively ('you must work together'; e.g., R. Bultmann, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985] 20). Still, the conditional interpretation is the preferable option, primarily because it follows the conventional pattern of other prayer requests in the Pauline corpus (Phil 1.19; Phlm 22). Second, as to with whom the Corinthians were to 'co-work', three viable options have been proffered: Paul, God, or among themselves. Those in favor of identifying Paul as the implied partner of συνυπουργούντων appeal to συναγωνίζομαι in Rom 15.30 (Bultmann, *Corinthians*, 29; cf. also M. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005] 160). There, however, the context obviously identifies Paul as the cooperating partner, while the co-worker conveyed in 2 Cor 1.11 is not overtly evident. Also, the adverb 'also' (καί), preceding the appeal to cooperate in prayer, may suggest that Paul wants them to reciprocate an action he himself has done on their behalf. For this reason, Paul cannot be their co-worker. Rather, just as he worked in conjunction with God for the Corinthians (vv. 3-7), they are now to cooperate with God through prayer for their apostle, not as equals with God but as dependent beings presenting their request to 'the God of all comfort'. As Adolf Schlatter affirms, 'Das σύν meint schwerlich, daß ihr Gebet mit des Paulus zusammen wirke; σύν wird auf Gottes Wirken bezogen sein, an dem sie durch ihr Gebet dienenden Anteil haben' (*Paulus der Bote Jesu: Eine Deutung seiner Briefe an die Korinther* [Stuttgart: Calwer, 1969] 468). Arguably, the same idea may be present in 1 Cor 3.9: θεοῦ γάρ ἐσμεν συνεργοί. Furnish strongly disagrees. He admits that the question of whether this verse should be translated 'co-workers with God' or 'co-workers who belong to God' is 'virtually unanswerable' on lexical and grammatical grounds. But he nevertheless insists that, on contextual grounds, the latter is preferable ('Fellow Workers in God's Service' *JBL* 80 [1961] 364–70 at 365). Still, it is possible to affirm the former without viewing the apostles as somehow equal with God. Donald Ker claims that 'the language of "service" (διακονία) is as likely to imply partnership as subservience', and that Paul wishes to stress the 'God-given authenticity' of their apostolic work in 1 Cor 1-4 ('Paul and Apollos—Colleagues or Rivals?' *JSNT* 77 [2000] 75–97 at 87). That said, the apostles, like the Corinthians, co-work 'with' God while remaining 'under' God.

56 Opinions vary as to what the χάρισμα entails, from Paul's apostolic vocation (J. E. Osiander, *Commentar über den zweiten Brief Pauli an die Korinthier* [Stuttgart: Rudolf Besser, 1858] 43) to the bestowal of grace or equipping of the spirit (H. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924] 51). The majority of commentators, though, accurately interpret χάρισμα as deliverance from a future peril (A. Plummer, *The Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1915] 21; H. Lietzmann,

implicitly expressed in the purpose clause of v. 4. But for the Corinthians, the office of the broker is explicitly disclosed by the preposition διά. The χάρισμα of the patron will be transmitted 'through many' (διὰ πολλῶν)—presumably the Corinthians—to Paul. The flow of grace has now altered its course and destination.

The last shift is based on need. Important in this regard is the switch from ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν in vv. 3-7 to ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν in v. 11, a verse which has certainly prompted much scholarly frustration and interpretive bemusement. It has been labelled 'a perplexing sentence',[57] considered 'a complicated manner of expression' (*die umständliche Redeweise*),[58] and bluntly called 'confused'.[59] To help mitigate some of the ambiguity, I have created a table of the three major interpretive options.

	Three Options for Verse 11b
Greek Text:	ἵνα ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς χάρισμα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστηθῇ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν
1. Translation:[60] a. *Interpretive Decisions* b. *Problems*	'that for the gift bestowed upon us through many people, thanks may be given from many persons on our behalf' (1) ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων modifies εὐχαριστηθῇ (2) διὰ πολλῶν modifies χάρισμα (3) προσώπων is translated 'people', 'persons', or 'faces'[61] Strict grammar requires the article τό before διὰ πολλῶν for this translation.[62] Moreover, the space between ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων and εὐχαριστηθῇ is too large a gap for one to modify the other.

An die Korinther I–II (HNT 9; Tübingen: Mohr, 1949) 101; Bultmann, *Corinthians*, 34-5; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 115; Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 67; cf. Rom 5.15-16 'where χάρισμα is almost a summary term for God's gracious intervention through Christ' (Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1.123).

57 Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 21.

58 Windisch, *Korintherbrief*, 49.

59 J. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1975) 206.

60 E.g., Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 67-8; Hughes, *Corinthians*, 22-4; R. Martin, *2 Corinthians* (WBC 40; Waco: Word Books, 1986) 12; J. Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* (SP 8; Collegeville, MI: Liturgical, 1999) 21; Thrall, *Second Epistle*, 1.122-7; Harris, *Second Epistle*, 160-3; F. Young and D. Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987) 262.

61 Commentators fluctuate on their translations of προσώπων, so it is not necessary, for instance, to translate the word 'persons' in order to subscribe to option 1. This also applies to the other two options.

62 C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1953) 108.

2. *Translation:* [63]	'that the gift may be granted to us through the prayer of intercession on our behalf from many persons'
a. *Interpretive Decisions*	(1) ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων and διὰ πολλῶν both modify χάρισμα (2) εὐχαριστηθῇ is translated 'granted' (3) διὰ πολλῶν is understood as a neuter—translated 'through many prayers of intercession'
b. *Problems*	If ἐκ πολλῶν modifies χάρισμα, the Corinthians are distinguished as the absolute source of the 'gift' (i.e., deliverance). Moreover, even though διὰ πολλῶν in the neuter mitigates the superfluous appearance of πολλῶν, the rendering of εὐχαριστῶ as 'to grant' nowhere appears in Paul's letters in the active voice with a direct object in the accusative and can hardly be supported by Judith 8.25. [64]
3. *Translation:* [65]	'that from many mouths, for the gift bestowed upon us, thanks may be given through many people on our behalf'
a. *Interpretive Decisions*	(1) ἐκ πολλῶν and διὰ πολλῶν both modify εὐχαριστηθῇ (2) God is the implied source of χάρισμα (3) προσώπων is translated 'mouths'
b. *Problems*	διὰ πολλῶν is redundant. [66]

Of the three, the first appears to be the most convincing. For even though strict grammar requires τό before διὰ πολλῶν, A. T. Robertson cites passages where a prepositional phrase, modifying a preceding articular noun, is lacking the article.[67] But more significantly, pairing ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων with εὐχαριστηθῇ and διὰ πολλῶν with χάρισμα alleviates the unnecessary tension of perceiving the Corinthians as the absolute source (ἐκ) of the gift. God is the one who imparts the 'gift' (χάρισμα) 'through' (διά) the agency of 'many' (πολλῶν) 'on behalf of' (ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν) the apostle. Although Paul once looked after their interests by acting on behalf of their salvation (1.6), the Corinthians now have the opportunity to comprise 'the many' who act on his behalf through prayer for his ultimate deliverance (i.e., salvation).[68] By beseeching

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63 E.g., J. Héring, *The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Epworth, 1967) 6.

64 Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 68.

65 E.g., Plummer, *Second Epistle*, 22; Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 108, 115.

66 Moule, *Idiom*, 108.

67 *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 783; e.g., Rom 15.31; 16.10; 1 Cor 10.18; 2 Cor 9.13.

68 An analogous thought occurs in Phil 1.19, where Paul is dependent upon the Philippians' prayers in cooperation with the Spirit to actualize a near future and eschatological deliverance

God to deliver a χάρισμα to Paul, they place a foot in his world and esteem his interests greater than their own.

The picture painted in vv. 8-11, therefore, resembles that of vv. 3-7, except now the 'one-way street' runs in the opposite direction, with God the patron working through the community as the broker in order solely to benefit Paul, the client.
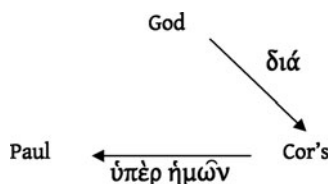

Figure 1b

What then can be said concerning the 'fittingness' of the brokerage model in these separate sections? It has hopefully become apparent that these texts share multiple affinities with the patron–broker–client alliance: God the patron who possesses direct access to '*first* order resources'; the mediating roles of Paul and the Corinthians (indicated by διά in the case of the latter but implied in the former); their access to '*second* order resources'; and their desire to satisfy the interests of the other party, implied by ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν and ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, all closely resonate with the brokerage model. Nevertheless, when the separate sections of vv. 3-7 and 8-11 are conjoined as one reciprocal relationship, the pattern of exchange that emerges is quite paradoxical and even antithetical to the model itself.

4. The 'Unfitting' Qualities of the Text

Certain pieces of this text do not 'fit' the brokerage model. Identifying these awkwardly shaped pieces and attempting to explain why they are unfitting will enable better perception of the kind of gift-giving relationship Paul hopes to enjoy with the Corinthian community.[69]

(σωτηρία); cf. M. Silva, *Philippians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 69–71. Other verbal parallels may be discerned between 2 Cor 1 and Philippians (χάρις [Phil 1.7], πάθημα [Phil 3.10], θλῖψις [Phil 1.17; 4.14], κοινωνία [Phil 1.5; 3.10], παράκλησις [Phil 2.1], θάνατος [Phil 1.20; 2.8]), which, together, may demonstrate that the Philippian community, as fellow-sharers of the 'same struggle' as Paul (1.30), exhibited a mutually dependent relationship with their apostle rather than one of domination and subordination.

69 The relationship sought after is future-oriented rather than presently experienced.

The first odd-shaped piece is that 'grace' is the only available commodity. Whereas patronal relations in Greco-Roman society involved an unequal exchange of various goods, God's economy of grace forbids such a thing to occur. Instead, it promotes a system of balanced reciprocity in which the sole resource of χάρις remains in God's hands and is granted, not for *one's own* possession or for advancing *one's own* influence and power, but to 'pay it forward' abundantly to fellow-sufferers in this network of grace. Within this divine network, there is, as it were, a re-cycling of χάρις, springing from God's fount of generosity, flowing through, among, and for Christ-followers, and finally returning to its owner as εὐχαριστία.

The second misshapen piece, one which strikes at the very heart of the brokerage model, is that both Paul and the Corinthians operate interchangeably as brokers of one another. Strictly speaking, for the brokerage model to 'fit' precisely the reciprocal relationship of 2 Cor 1.3-11, there cannot be two brokers with direct access to the patron. In a *single* patron–broker–client relationship, if someone is a broker, then the other has to be a client. To be sure, as mentioned earlier, the broker could have functioned like a client to the patron or a patron to the client. But here we have the broker functioning like a client to the former client, and the client functioning like a broker to the former broker. Paradoxically, what the text unveils is a 'mutual brokerage' relationship, a relational pattern that follows suit with other Pauline articulations of those who reside in the divine economy.

Consider one instance where Paul states, ' … through love serve one another' (Gal 5.13). How can there be two servants in one relationship? If one is a servant, then is not the other a master? Consider also Rom 12.10b, 'Outdo one another in showing honour'. The cultural principle at the time was to strive after *one's own* honour and outdo others to improve *one's own* social standing.[70] But for Paul, the complete opposite is true. Christ-followers are to strive after *another's* honour and improve *another's* social standing by outdoing them in dishonour (since one cannot honour another without somehow dishonouring oneself).

What is being described in these culture-defying examples, as in 2 Cor 1, is the establishment of a mutuality that has a levelling effect, one that is marked as much by solidarity as by difference;[71] that creates a community of alternating disequilibrium, having been 'bound together by webs of need and of gift',[72] which

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70 See R. Jewett, 'Paul, Shame, and Honour', *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. P. Sampley; London: Trinity Press International, 2003) 551-7.

71 To borrow the words of David Horrell's book *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of Paul's Ethics* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

72 J. Barclay, 'Manna and the Circulation of Grace: A Study of 2 Corinthians 8.1-15', *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honour of Richard B. Hays* (ed. R. Wagner et al.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008) 409-26 at 425.

distributes divine commodity to those in need (cf. 2 Cor. 8:13-15), eradicates self-sufficiency, and renders every inhabitant equally dependent on God through the agency of others; and that promotes a counter-cultural lifestyle that lives by the way of the cross rather than the way of this world, by the path of other-regarding shame rather than self-gratifying honour.

Still, one of the most noteworthy outcomes of the 'mutual brokerage' relationship in 2 Cor 1.3-11 is that each participant in this economy depends upon the other to receive grace from God. The absence of either Paul or the Corinthians in this mediatory form of exchange would render it impossible for the divine surplus of grace to reach its intended destination. It must be mediated. So, far from eliciting individualism, this relational pattern requires the critical, social dynamic of mutual engagement.

This brings us to the third and final disproportionate piece. If receiving χάρις from God lies in the mediation of the other, as I have just sought to establish, it necessarily follows that properly returning εὐχαριστία also lies in the initiative of the other. They must therefore acknowledge their mutual dependency in receiving χάρις in order properly to return εὐχαριστία. This is the reason why the Corinthians obtain 'comfort', but Paul returns 'thanks' (albeit implicitly) on their behalf in v. 3, 'Blessed be God'.[73] And, conversely, Paul obtains a χάρισμα, but the Corinthians return 'thanks on his behalf' in v. 11.[74] This demonstrates the corporate nature of completing the circle of χάρις, wherein each participant depends upon the other to avoid the most atrocious disgrace—the vice of ingratitude. This relational pattern may be diagrammed as follows:
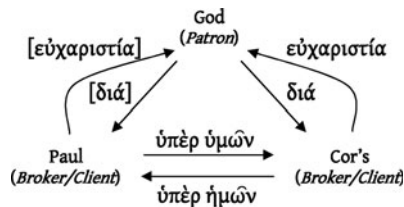

Figure 1c[75]

73 While ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν is found in v. 11, ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν is lacking in v. 3. But the picture of παράκλησις streaming through Paul to the Corinthians (1.4-6) suggests that the wish/thanksgiving (cf. n. 40) can be construed as being on their behalf.

74 This is not to say that either party renders thanks vicariously for the other, but that Paul's initial act of giving thanks is representative of what he desires the Corinthians to reciprocate as a result of witnessing the surpassing χάρις of God. There are certain instances where a broker vicariously renders thanks to the patron for the client (e.g., Pliny *Ep* 10.6), but the parallel passages of 2 Cor 4.15 and 9.11-15 prohibit such a view.

75 Brackets indicate that these acts, though absent from the text, are implied conceptually.

5. Conclusion: Mutual Brokerage

Identifying these 'unfitting' qualities of the text, that of a single commodity, the interchange of brokerage roles, and the mutual dependence on the other to receive from and give back to God, has hopefully substantiated the claim that Paul deviates from the classical model of brokerage and radically fabricates his own paradoxical version: 'mutual brokerage'.

Since the absence of such a relationship contains devastating results for both parties, Paul needs the Corinthians just as much as the Corinthians need him. They need one another, as I have argued, to be in a giving and receiving relationship with God, that is to say, to be in fellowship with God. Mutuality or κοινωνία ἐν Χριστῷ must characterize the lives of those who reside within this economy of other-regard; for, within this sphere of grace, κοινωνία with God is predicated upon κοινωνία with one another. For Paul, this is of more than merely personal significance. The stakes are high, and so he writes this earnest appeal to cultivate a mutual mindset among the Corinthians. Larry Welborn perceptively identifies the problem in Corinth as 'a persistent and distressing symptom of the failure of mutual understanding, which is the eschatological goal of the Christian community (1.13-14)'.[76] Paul's 'firm hope' is that they will concede to his earnest appeal for mutuality, and embrace the mysterious nature of χάρις which extends through a nexus of weakness and suffering, so that, together, they may share in God's eschatological salvation.

Paul's insistence on this interdependent relationship certainly prohibits any view, such as Stephan Joubert's, that erroneously turns egalitarian terminology into a relational mask that conceals an authoritative reality. Rather than a pretense of affection, egalitarian terms within and concepts behind the Pauline corpus exhibit a genuine expression of interpersonal solidarity in the grace of God. This is not to deny Paul's apostolic authority, especially when he is, in many ways, superior to the Corinthians. After all, he is the founding father (1 Cor 4.15; 2 Cor 11.2),[77] apostle (2 Cor 1.1), and teacher (1 Cor 4.17) of the community. But his mutual dependency on the Corinthians should challenge any view that considers his *authority over* and *mutuality with* his churches as an either–or option. The two are undeniably inseparable; one just needs to be understood in light of the other.[78]

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76 Welborn, 'Paul's Appeal', 60; cf. J. Barclay, '2 Corinthians', *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (ed. J. D. G. Dunn and J. W. Rogerson; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003) 1353–73 at 1364–5.

77 Though, a less hierarchical appraisal of Paul's fatherhood has been proposed by S. Bartchy, 'Who Should be Called Father? Paul of Tarsus between the Jesus Tradition and *Patria Potestas*', *BTB* 33 (2003) 135–47.

78 Worth considering is David Horrell's attempt to rebalance the scales; he perceptively defines 'the irony of power' as an appeal for equality 'made from a position of presumed authority' (*Solidarity*, 124). Cf. Kathy Ehrensperger who allows equality and hierarchy to complement one another rather than cancel each other out, such that she moves beyond the domination

At any rate, conflicting voices on the nature of Paul's apostolic authority certainly deserve a fair hearing in this ongoing discussion. But, of course, this essay has sought only to contribute by turning the brokerage model against Joubert in order to expose his two-sided apostolic construct as a heavily one-sided (and thus untenable) argument. More significantly, though, this essay underscores the essential component of mutuality that Paul strives to nurture with the Corinthian community, a hybrid relationship which only appears once the 'unfitting' qualities of the text are acknowledged.

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structure of command–obedience to a 'response-ability' paradigm, a paradigm which empowers the other to act in concert with their apostle and replaces hierarchical positions with mutual empowerment (*Paul and the Dynamics of Power: Communication and Interaction in the Early Christ-Movement* [LNTS; London: T&T Clark, 2007] 33, 155; cf. also R. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996] 32–6).