

The Background to Paul's Insistence on Financial Transparency in His Collection Enterprise for the Saints in Jerusalem

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RESUMEN En tres ocasiones en sus cartas, Pablo describe detalladamente sus intenciones para con los cristianos judíos empobrecidos de Jerusalén (1 Co 16,1-4; 2 Co 8-9; Rm 15,25-31). Al llamar a los cristianos de Corinto y Acaya a participar de todo corazón y generosamente (1-2 Co), Pablo asegura a los lectores, de un modo reiterado y enfático, sobre su confiabilidad cuando se trata de asuntos financieros. Pablo garantiza la transparencia en la recolección del dinero, su trasvase a Jerusalén y su entrega final. La transparencia se logra aplicando las mismas reglas a todos los donantes, involucrando a varias personas además de a Pablo, nombrando a los donantes de sus propios delegados, etc. El énfasis en la transparencia en este primer proyecto "ecuménico" verdadero debe entenderse en el contexto de las controversias de Pablo con algunos cristianos en Corinto y la presencia de sus opositores, que habrían aprovechado todas las oportunidades para ir contra él. Además, la recolecta de dinero para Jerusalén por parte de los judíos era un asunto políticamente sensible, como lo indican varios incidentes de la antigüedad.

PALABRAS CLAVE Pablo (Apóstol), Colección de Pablo para los Santos, Transparencia financiera, Crítica retórica, Romanos, Corintios 1-2, Historia del cristianismo primitivo, Opositores de Pablo, Corinto, Jerusalén, Josefo.

SUMMARY *On three occasions in his letters, Paul describes his collection enterprise for impoverished Jewish Christians in Jerusalem in some detail (1 Co 16,1-4; 2 Co 8-9; Rm 15,25-31). When calling the Christians of Corinth and Achaia (some of the donors to be) to participate wholeheartedly and generously (1-2 Co), Paul repeatedly and emphatically assures the readers of his reliability when it comes to financial matters. He guarantees transparency in the actual collection of the money, its transport to Jerusalem and its eventual delivery. Transparency is achieved by applying the same rules to all donors; involving several people other than Paul; the donors' appointment of their own delegates and so forth. The emphasis on transparency in this first true "ecumenical" project must be understood against the backdrop of Paul's controversies*

with some Christians in Corinth and the presence of Paul's opponents who would have used every opportunity to vilify Paul. In addition, the collection of money for Jerusalem by Jews was a politically sensitive matter, as several incidents from antiquity indicate.

KEYWORDS *Paul (Apostle), Paul's Collection for the Saints, Financial Transparency, Rhetorical Criticism, Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, History of Early Christianity, Opponents of Paul, Corinth, Jerusalem, Josephus.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The New Testament speaks quite often and openly about money and about its use and misuse¹. While there are many references to the misuse of material wealth, there are also passages that indicate how wealth should be used. A few examples suffice: Treasures should be stored up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust could destroy them and where thieves do not break in and steal (Mt 6,20). Surprisingly, a dishonest manager becomes a positive example of using one's current financial means for securing one's future (Lk 16,1-9). A widow is praised for entrusting the little she had to God and trusting in him for future provision. The donations of members of the early Christian community in Jerusalem secure the existence and growth of the whole community (Ac 2,45; 4,34–5,11). Through their contributions to Paul's collection for the saints in Jerusalem, Gentile Christians confess their indebtedness to Israel for the Gospel (Rm 15,27) and spark thanksgiving to God on the side of the Jewish recipients (2 Co 9,13-14).

The New Testament also speaks of corruption and dishonest dealings with money. It mentions several instances of corruption/bribery: The Jewish leaders offered money to the soldiers who were guarding the tomb of Jesus so that they would spread the news of the theft of the body of Jesus by his disciples (Mt 28,12-15). The people of Tyrus and Sidon probably bribed Blasius, chamberlain for King Herod Agrippa I, to negotiate peace between them and the king (Ac 12,20)². Roman governor Antonius Felix expected a bribe

1 For surveys see C. STENSCHKE, "Kommt nur darauf an, wie man dazu kommt und was man damit macht. Die Gefahren und Chancen von Geld im Neuen Testament": *VeEc* 31 (2010) art. # 394 and "Money III. New Testament": *EBR* (in print).

2 See C. S. KEENER, *Acts. An Exegetical Commentary Vol. II 3,1–14,28* (Grand Rapids 2013) 1960 notes that while bribery "would not be surprising and is not unlikely ... Barrett notes that this meaning is not clear here".

from Paul. Paul's refusal to comply is one of the reasons for his imprisonment in Caesarea for two years (Ac 24,26)³. Judas was a thief who stole from the common moneybag of Jesus and his disciples (Jn 12,6). The manager of Jesus' parable squanders the possessions of another person which were entrusted to him to his own advantage (Lk 16,1-9).

However, there are also *positive examples* of how people gave away their money or dealt with the money entrusted to them by others. The donors in the early community in Jerusalem used to bring their gifts to the apostles' feet, rather than distributing the money themselves and creating relationships of dependence and a special status for themselves. The Jerusalem community appointed seven men to administer the relief funds for the widows in the community (Ac 6,1-6). At times, the required positive attitude to money is expressed through negation: Paul coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel (20,33). Rather, he ministered to his necessities and those of the people who were with him, with his own hands (20,34, see also 18,1-4; 19,12?). Integrity in financial matters is to be expected of Christian office bearers. They should not desire leadership positions for material gain which they might afford (see the "double honour" in 1 Tm 5,17). Deacons and overseers should not be greedy for dishonest gain (1 Tim 3,8; Tt 1,7). People should not teach for shameful gain (Tt 1,11). The same applies to shepherd-leaders (1 P 5,2).

Against this backdrop, it is noteworthy that Paul emphasises his own integrity and transparency in handling funds entrusted to him in a context where issues of material support were contested and where some people were suspicious of him⁴. This article starts with a summary of Paul's emphasis on transparency in the context of his collection enterprise for the saints in Jerusalem (II)⁵. In the main section of the article, the reasons behind Paul's emphasis on transparency we be considered (III). The other evidence for Paul's

3 See J. YODER, *Representatives of Roman Rule. Roman Provincial Governors in Luke-Acts* (BZNW 209; Berlin – Boston 2014) 297-299; B. RAPSKE, *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody* (AFCS 3; Grand Rapids – Carlisle 1994) 65-67 and C. S. KEENER, *Acts. An Exegetical Commentary Vol. IV 24,1–28,31* (Grand Rapids 2015) 3437-3442.

4 For the larger context see N. A. DAHL, "Paul and Possessions", in: N. A. DAHL, *Studies in Paul. Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis 1977) 22-40.

5 See D. J. DOWNS, *The Offering of the Gentiles. Paul's Collection for Jerusalem and Its Chronological, Cultural and Cultic Contexts* (WUNT II.248; Tübingen 2008); B.-M. KIM, *Die paulinische Kollekte* (TANZ 38; Tübingen – Basel 2002); S. MCKNIGHT, "Collection for the Saints": DPL (1993) 143-147 and R. P. MARTIN, *2Corinthians* (WBC 40; Waco 1986) 256-258.

transparency in financial matters will be briefly surveyed (IV). After a summary some implications for today's church and society will be drawn out (V).

II. PAUL'S EMPHASIS ON FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY: A SURVEY

Paul's emphasis on such transparency, particularly in 2 Corinthians 8–9, has been noted before⁶. This is not the place to analyse Paul's full argument regarding the collection in 1 Corinthians 16,1-4 and 2 Corinthians 8–9 in detail. We only focus on the emphasis on transparency and provide a brief summary before we turn to the reasons behind this emphasis. We cannot examine how Paul deals with other obstacles in the context of the collection enterprise; that is, how Paul deals with issues of inter-church solidarity, possible anti-Judaism on the side of the Gentile Christian donors, the full impact of his opponents, how he defends his own apostolic calling and status and explains and upholds his financial policy in both letters⁷.

1. 1 CORINTHIANS 16,1-4

In 1 Corinthians 16,1-4, Paul instructs the readers to follow the same instructions given to the churches of Galatia, which apparently were known in Corinth⁸. Therefore, the collection is by no means a project specifically

6 See, for instance, in the commentary of MARTIN.

7 The reference to a collection enterprise in Ga 2,10 ("Only they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing which I was eager to do") does not contribute to our quest; see R. SCHÄFER, *Paulus bis zum Apostelkonzil. Ein Beitrag zur Einleitung in den Galaterbrief, zur Geschichte der Jesus-Bewegung und zur Pauluschronologie* (WUNT II, 179; Tübingen 2004) 221-222 and S. JOUBERT, *Paul as Benefactor. Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection for the Saints* (WUNT II.124; Tübingen 2000) 73-115. Joubert argues that from an early stage onwards, the collection project provided an ideal opportunity for Paul to reclaim his own honour in the eyes of Jerusalem (116-124). In order not to jeopardise this intention, care and transparency were needed.

8 For detailed discussion of the passage, see JOUBERT, *Paul as Benefactor*, 156-164 and D. E. GARLAND, *1 Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids 2003) 750-757. On p. 751, Garland argues that with 1 Co 16,1-4 Paul is responding to another issue raised by the Corinthians in their letter to him. He had previously asked the Corinthians to participate. Now they inquire about the best way to make this collection. "Since he gives instructions only for the actual collecting of the money, they appear to have asked him how they should manage its implementation".

designed to get a hold of the Corinthians' money, but part of a larger project where the same demands and rules apply to all. Paul indicates that the Galatians were also called to contribute to a trans-local project⁹. Paul insists that, while probably not obvious for some Corinthians, trans-local responsibility for other believers is part and parcel of Christian identity.

Paul urges that *all* Corinthians must be involved (“each of you”, v. 2). Christian charity is not just a status-enhancing project for wealthy upper-class members and of no concern to other Christians¹⁰. If only a few patrons were to provide all the money, they would gain all the honour for themselves. This would cause a wider division between the rich and the poor and would reaffirm such distinctions. Money and the ability to donate it should not become a further divisive issue. If free artisans, small traders and slaves also give whatever they can contribute, then the gift will represent the entire church, not just a few wealthy donors. In doing so, Paul emphasises honesty: If this gift is to truly represent the entire Corinthian church and not just a few wealthy individuals, then all must have contributed in some way.

In order to achieve this goal, Paul demands that the collection of the funds should be well-structured and organised: “on the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn (ὃ τι ἔδαν

9 A. C. THISELTON, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids – Cambridge, UK – Carlisle 2000) 1320 emphasises solidarity: “Paul’s allusion to his directions to the churches of Galatia establishes not only the solidarity between those who give and those who receive but also the co-solidarity of the wider community of givers in their common recognition for the need for support poor the Jerusalem church”.

10 On the wider context of Paul’s expectation see R. S. SCHELLENBERG, “Subsistence, Swapping, and Paul’s Rhetoric of Generosity”: *JBL* 137 (2018) 215-234. Based on various ethnographic studies of the economic activities of the poor, Schellenberg challenges the assumption that Paul’s directives to generosity were targeted primarily at wealthier Christians:

Since there is ample evidence from numerous societies of sharing among the poor, one cannot deduce from the fact that Paul commends generosity that he is addressing those with surplus resources. Moreover, the moral rhetoric employed by Paul address just such concerns as commonly arise when the poor participate in networks of reciprocal exchange. Paul envisions and seeks to nurture local networks of Christ followers who utilize their mostly subsistence-level resources for their mutual benefit (215).

On mutuality in Pauline Christianity see also D. J. DOWNS, *Alms, Charity, Reward, and Atonement in Early Christianity* (Waco 2016); J. MEGGITT, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Studies of the New Testament and Its World; Edinburgh 1998) and D. KIMBER BUELL, “Be Not One Who Stretches Out Hands to Receive but Shuts Them When It Comes to Giving’. Envisioning Christian Charity When Both Donors and Recipients Are Poor”, in: S. R. HOLMAN (ed.), *Wealth and Poverty in Early Church and Society* (Holy Cross Studies in Patristic Theology and History; Grand Rapids 2008) 37-47.

εὐδοῶται) (16,2)¹¹. Garland identifies several principles that undergird Paul's instructions for the collection¹². The money is to be collected regularly ("on the first day of every week"), by the entire congregation ("let each of you"), systematically ("set aside", "save up")¹³ in proportion to income ("as one has been prospered"), and without pressure from outside ("so that no collections might take place when I come"). Paul insists on transparency not only on his side, but also on the side of the donors: He will only accept funds which have been properly collected from properly earned income. Only money acquired legitimately is acceptable (see his instructions in 1 Th 4,11-12 and 2 Th 3,6-13).

Regarding this stipulation, Garland observes that by taking up the collection in advance to Paul's coming, the Corinthians are completely free in how much they contribute and he will not know who contributed and what sum they contributed to the final result¹⁴. Probably he wanted to avoid being perceived as twisting arms to get money by asking in person (cf. 2 Co 9,5) or he did not want to take time from other labour to try to raise money: "Paul is seeking to avoid the unpleasant necessity of launching a fund drive when he arrives at Corinth ... The money is not for him"¹⁵.

Paul will not deliver the money or appoint the people who will do so. Rather, the Corinthians themselves are to approve the delegates who take their gift to Jerusalem together with a letter explaining the collection and its purpose: "And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem" (v. 3)¹⁶. Against possible suspicions regarding his use of funds entrusted to him, Paul guarantees full transparency: whatever is collected will never go through and eventually end up in his own pock-

11 See the detailed discussion in THISELTON, *The First Epistle*, 1323-1324. He speaks of "a planned strategy of regular giving in weekly response to God's blessing and his financial provision".

12 GARLAND, *1 Corinthians*, 753.

13 THISELTON, *The First Epistle*, 1324: "There is to be no last-minute, superficial scraping around for funds as an unplanned off-cuff gesture".

14 GARLAND, *1 Corinthians*, 754-755.

15 THISELTON, *The First Epistle*, 1324, quoting from R. B. HAYS, *First Corinthians* (Interpretation; Louisville 1997) 285. Regarding the instruction that this gathering of money should take place at home (παρ' ἑαυτῶ), "at his or her own house", Thielton notes: "Perhaps sensitivities about patrons, the wealthy, and relations with other churches suggest a quiet, non-competitive strategy on pastoral grounds".

16 GARLAND, *1 Corinthians*, 755 observes that, whilst the collection is Paul's special project, he does not infringe on the church's autonomy in choosing their representatives. Each individual decides how much to give. The church decides whom they will entrust to represent them in this enterprise.

et. Rather delegates from Corinth and approved of by the congregation will deliver the funds directly to Jerusalem. The transmission “must be by those whom the Corinthians themselves fully trust, the integrity of whom is above suspicion at Corinth. It is not enough for Paul to trust them”¹⁷. People, “tried (by the Corinthians) and true”¹⁸ will see to the delivery. Whatever they might have to take from the collected funds to finance their journey to Jerusalem, their stay there and return journey is entirely at their discretion.

In addition to witnessing the transport and delivery of the collection to its recipients, these delegates will have an opportunity to see the need in Jerusalem *themselves*. For now, the Corinthians have to take Paul's word for it, then their delegates can see for themselves and report on their return.

Paul's only contribution to all of this will be an explanatory letter to Jerusalem. However, “if it seems advisable” that he should also travel and these delegates will accompany him (v. 4; Paul does not indicate why it might become “advisable” for him to accompany them). Paul is not only making demands of others, he is also willing to bear his share of the burden. For him this would mean the delay of his own plans, a strenuous and costly journey eastward when his mind was already set elsewhere and high personal risk due to anticipated fierce Jewish opposition to his ministry (see Rm 1,13-15; 15,19-31). Acts 20,4-21,17 indicate that the option of joining the Corinthian delegation is what materialised later on.

2. 2 CORINTHIANS 8-9

Some of these themes recur in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and others emerge¹⁹. Paul first reports of the exemplary involvement of the Christians of Macedonia.

17 THISELTON, *The First Epistle*, 1324.

18 So THISELTON, *The First Epistle*, 1324 rendering of δοκιμάζω: “being tried and tested and found to be true and authentic. Paul is alluding to the trusted integrity of those who can serve on behalf of a potentially suspicious congregation in which there are already ‘splits’ and perhaps competing patrons. His directive will work without back-firing only if these representatives who carry delegated responsibility for substantial funds amidst the hazards and perils of a long journey are utterly approved as tried and true, i.e., with the application of the full force of the verb as denoting both process and result”.

19 See JOUBERT, *Paul as Benefactor*, 134-153 for the Gentile donors as beneficiaries of Jerusalem as Paul's interpretive framework for the collection, detailed treatment on pp. 166-203. In 2 Co 8-9, Paul not only expects the *involvement* of the Corinthians in the collection and assures them *full transparency* in the matter but also provides a number of *motivations* to contribute

As in 1 Corinthians 16,1, Paul emphasises that the collection is not specifically aimed at the Corinthians' wealth, but is a truly "ecumenical" project in which many congregations are involved. He indicates that other Christians already follow him in this matter and contributed to the collection. They already display an exceptional inter-church solidarity. The Corinthians should do likewise. The wealthier Corinthians should not be shamed by the generosity of the poor Macedonian Christians. Paul's praise of the Macedonians was to challenge the Corinthians and spur them on to contribute with similar commitment.

Through this reference to the involvement of other Christians, Paul also ensures that the Corinthians need not doubt his integrity. The Christians of Macedonia (where Paul ministered for extensive periods of time and where he is much appreciated, including the repeated provision of financial support for his ministry in other places, including Corinth) found Paul trustworthy and transparent in financial matters. They fully accept his apostolic authority. They wholeheartedly join this project despite the sacrifice it involved for them.

Paul then mentions several other people who are also involved in the collection. It is far from being a private project directed at the Corinthians' money. In 2 Corinthians 8,16-24, perhaps the most important passage in our quest, Paul again emphasises transparency. Paul's co-worker, Titus²⁰, shares the same eagerness for the Corinthians as Paul and is on his way to Corinth *of his own accord* (v. 16-17). Paul did not command or manipulate him²¹. Rather, Titus fully identifies with this project and is convinced of the Corinthians' readiness and generosity. He comes as an independent agent and witness in this enterprise. In more than one sense, this is not the collection of *Paul* for the saints of Jerusalem but the collection of *Paul, his co-workers and the churches they had founded*.

Some scholars have detected "in Paul's personal delay in coming to Corinth – hence this request of Titus – a strategic action on the apostle's part. Perhaps he wished to be involved as little as possible directly with the collec-

wholeheartedly. The Corinthians should know why they are expected to be involved and of the consequences of their involvement/generous contribution.

20 See H. von Lips, *Timotheus und Titus. Unterwegs für Paulus* (Biblische Gestalten 19; Leipzig 32016) 91-158.

21 See also 2 Co 8,6, see M. A. SEIFRID, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians* (PiINTC; Grand Rapids – Cambridge, UK – Nottingham 2014) 325. Indirectly Paul may imply that the divine origin of Titus' earnest care for the Corinthians (8,16: "Thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care I have for you") is also the driving force of Titus' going to Corinth of his own accord (8,17). A person with this commission should be followed.

tion. ... Paul's sensitivity to the Corinthian believers shines through here, since ... his standing at Corinth as an apostle has to be still delicately managed"²².

Titus will be accompanied by an unnamed Christian sent by Paul, who is famous among all the churches for his proclamation of the gospel²³. Apparently, Paul speaks of a proven and widely recognised Christian leader: "He has a proven reputation for faithful Christian work, as 'all the congregations' testify ... this is a person who is both known and recognized in church life"²⁴. In addition and more important in our context is the additional information that this brother "has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us whilst we are administering this generous undertaking for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our goodwill" (v. 19):

- Other churches fully participate in the collection enterprise. Elsewhere Christians trust Paul, accept his authority and join this project. Paul leaves no doubt that these Christians – be they exemplary individuals, or an entity as wide as "all the churches" – have no suspicions regarding the apostle and his financial policies.
- The churches (of Macedonia²⁵) have acted already and appointed this man as Paul's travel companion and their delegate to go to Jerusalem with Paul (8,19). "Such a man is mentioned in order to associate Paul with a wider company [of prominent Christians] as he

22 MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 274. SEIFRID, *The Second Letter*, 327 notes that "Paul's fresh and direct affirmation of his love for them is likely intended to clear away suspicions, doubts, and reserve on the part of the Corinthians. His decision not to visit them, which has contributed to the tension in their relationship, was based, he affirms, on his love for them (2,1-4)", see also 6,11; 11,11; 12,15.

23 For discussion of his identity, see MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 274-275 (including discussion of the enigmatic description "whose praise in the Gospel is throughout all the churches") and W. O. WALKER, "Apollon and Timothy as the Unnamed 'Brothers' in 2 Corinthians 8,18-24": *CBQ* 73 (2011) 318-338.

24 MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 274.

25 Most interpreters take Paul's mention of the churches in v. 19 to refer to the *churches of Macedonia*, that is to say, Paul's churches in Macedonia had appointed this famous brother to go with Paul (as their delegate?). Paul mentioned the inspiring example of these churches at the beginning of chapter 8. 2 Co 8,23 again mentions messengers of the churches (ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν). Paul probably refers to the same people and the same churches which appointed them. In this understanding, like the Corinthians, the Christians in Macedonia also got to appoint their own delegates in this project. These delegates might not only oversee the safe transport and delivery of the Macedonian contribution to the saints in Jerusalem but also Paul's activities prior to departure in Achaia and elsewhere.

administers the service of the ‘collection’²⁶. In the whole collection enterprise, this prominent Christian and the other two men, that is, Titus and the brother mentioned in v. 22, serve as independent witnesses to the Corinthians and the churches who sent them regarding the integrity of Paul during the current process of gathering the collection together, later on during the journey to Jerusalem and of the actual delivery in Jerusalem²⁷.

Paul explicitly claims to pure motivations on his side: far from being a project to repair, affirm or enhance his own personal status²⁸, the collection’s purpose is “for the glory of the Lord himself” and “to show our goodwill” (probably an inclusive plural: Paul and all the other participants, v. 19). This is not an act of benefaction designed to bring recognition and honour to the donors which would have been the purpose of ancient benefaction; it is rather for the glory of the Lord himself. Therefore, generous participation is mandatory. The gratitude of the recipients will be directed primarily to God (“but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God”, 2 Co 9,12). This has to suffice for the donors. At the same time, there is a promise far beyond what people could give in return: God will provide every blessing in return (2 Co 9,8-15).

Eventually Paul directly asserts his concern for his own integrity and emphasises full transparency: “We are taking this precaution to avoid being blamed by anyone for the way we administer this generous gift, for we aim at what is honourable, not only in the Lord’s eyes [Paul’s primary concern; the Lord cannot be fooled by people – neither by Paul nor by the Corinthians!], but also in the sight of men” (v. 20-21)²⁹. Martin observes: “Paul had organized ... the collection by taking all needful precautions so as not to have his honesty

26 MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 275, including discussion of possible complements of the phrase “to prove our readiness”.

27 There is also an element of threat in Paul’s references to “all the churches” and “the churches”: how the Corinthians respond to Paul’s request, and to these brothers is not just between them, but happens before all the churches that come to learn about this – this is where the Corinthians will receive honour or shame for their response to Paul’s demand.

28 JOUBERT, *Paul as Benefactor*, 116-128 argues that the collection enterprise clearly served to secure Paul’s role as apostle and benefactor and his honour with regard to the leading Christian in Jerusalem as his role as teacher, leader and apostle had been jeopardised in Antioch (Ga 2,11-14). For Paul this meant a serious loss of public reputation. At the same time, Paul “he carefully avoided any self-centred remarks that might have indicated that he was seeking personal satisfaction to the detriment of his churches” (217).

29 Translation according to MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 276.

come under suspicion". In particular, as Paul expected "a generous gift" from the Corinthians, there was "the need for the safeguard of appointing delegates to ensure that such a sizeable donation was not mishandled or lost through inadvertence or robbery"³⁰.

Paul endeavours to be blameless before God/Christ ("the Lord") and humans: To be blameless before *people*, friend or foe, be they Christians as donors and recipients of the collection and non-Christians, insofar they hear of the collection and are legitimately concerned with it. "In this verse he has his critics and their suspicions in his sights"³¹. This *Lord* before whom Paul acts honourably is the highest authority Paul could appeal to. His whole ministry is to honour the Lord and win his approval. As Paul's involvement in the collection has to meet the Lord's approval, nothing but the highest ethical standards suffices. The Lord sees and will see each step Paul has taken in this regard in the past, at the time of writing and will take in the future until completion. The Lord sees Paul's inner motives far more than humans and will not be fooled. During the entire collection process, Paul is under direct divine supervision and strives to win the Lord's approval³². Should there be any irregularities and even fraud on Paul's side, the Lord will see to Paul's judgement. As Paul's words and actions are before this authority and seek to win its approval, people can wholeheartedly trust Paul and follow him in all this. In view of this assertion and assurance, the Corinthians should dismiss their own reservations (and those sown by the opponents) and emphatically participate in the collection³³.

In addition to Titus and the unnamed brother, Paul will send even another Christian to Corinth ("our brother"), whom he has often tested and found eager in many matters (v. 22)³⁴. He can be fully relied on in this matter and will be as trustworthy and transparent in dealing with finances as Paul.

30 *Ibid.*, 276.

31 *Ibid.*, 276. For example, the transfer of a larger sum of money would concern Roman officials.

32 Already in 2 Co 8,16, Paul expressed his gratitude to God ("Now thanks be to God") and involved him in the whole procedure of gathering the collection.

33 Paul's assurance indirectly also applies to the donors: their response to his call and the way in which they participate is not a private matter but also need to be right before the Lord, – they also have to stand up to divine scrutiny and meet the Lord's approval – and before people – their fellow Christians in Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Jerusalem.

34 MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 277 suggests that the man has been tried "in these many matters *presumably to do with handling funds*" (italics CS). He also argues that "Paul . . . was careful to apply some tests to his would-be associates"; see Ac 15,37-

This “proven” brother is more eager than ever to be involved in preparing the collection because of his great confidence in the Corinthians (v. 22). The eagerness of both men and the confidence they have in the Corinthians, puts pressure on the Corinthians to comply³⁵. While Paul’s own relationship with the Corinthians was strained and his status disputed, this man is eager and fully confident in the Corinthians³⁶. Rather than going personally to accomplish his goals at this specific moment, Paul sends people whose relationships with the Corinthians are not strained: despite his claims to transparency, Paul may simply not be the right person at the moment³⁷.

Titus receives further warm commendation in 2 Corinthians 8,23. He is Paul’s “partner and fellow worker for the Corinthian’s benefit. “Paul looks to him as an intimate associate (κοινωνός; the word describes personal relationship, with a nuance of confidence and joy-in-service ...) and a συνεργός”³⁸.

In addition to being tested by Paul and recalling their appointment by churches to accompany Paul in v. 19, the other two men mentioned in v. 23 are “messengers for the churches, the glory of Christ”: “if there is a question of our brothers – they are the delegates of the congregations”³⁹. Far more is behind their impending visit to Corinth than merely Paul’s vision: they come as messengers of the churches. Paul emphasises that “the churches” are involved

39. Martin also discusses the identity of this man. According to SEIFRID, *The Second Letter*, 315, “those who accompany Titus not only ensure the probity of Paul’s dealings”.

35 According to SEIFRID, *The Second Letter*, 322, Paul encourages them “to complete their promised gift, and he makes considerable use of the social pressure of the witnesses to the Corinthian action, including, perhaps, some Macedonians”.

36 His assessment is probably in contrast to Paul’s. Writing two full chapters, that is, 2 Co 8–9, to spur on the Corinthians to participate and send three men to take care of the collection, suggests that Paul himself was less confident that the Corinthians would do as he requested of them.

37 See SEIFRID, *The Second Letter*, 316. Regarding Paul’s emissaries, J. MURPHY-O’CONNOR, *Paul. A Critical Life* (Oxford 1996) 315, notes that once before the Corinthians had given their assent to Paul’s request and then nothing happened. This time Paul was not prepared to rely on their words alone. He decided to send these men, whose presence would be a continuous reminder of his request and their obligation. However, even this discreet pressure might be resented by the Corinthians as interference in their internal affairs. Paul’s nervousness becomes apparent in his presentation of Titus. Paul emphasises that he is not really sending Titus, as 1 Co 8,6 might imply. Titus returns to Corinth voluntarily in response to Paul’s appeal (8,17). Paul closes with a warm recommendation of Titus: “he is my partner and co-worker in your service” (v. 22). Paul is not trying to exploit the Corinthians for his purposes, but to minister to them through these men: “in your service”.

38 For the significance of Paul’s co-workers see W.-H. OLLROG, *Paulus und seine Mitarbeiter. Untersuchungen zu Theorie und Praxis der paulinischen Mission* (WMANT 50; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1979); definitions of the concept on pp. 63-73.

39 MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 277; see p. 278 for discussion of the meaning of ἀπόστολος in this context. In 2 Co 12,16-18, Paul again refers to the people he has sent to Corinth.

in this project, they have already gathered their contribution and appointed their delegates. The Corinthians do not need to rely on Paul's word, they will see for themselves. These emissaries can confirm what Paul says. These men who enjoy the full confidence of the churches, will also be of service in Corinth and will come along to Jerusalem and see to the correct delivery of the funds. On their return, they can be questioned about the journey, the need of the Christians of Jerusalem, the proper delivery of the funds and the reaction of the saints there.

In addition, these people are not only often tested and found earnest by Paul (8,22) and approved by the churches (8,23), they are also "an honour to Christ", a designation which constitutes "a title of high honour"⁴⁰. Their character and ministry honour Christ who has the highest authority in Pauline discourse. Thus, the expression implies great recommendation and approval of these men.

In view of these visitors and witnesses and the wide ecumenical perspective they constitute, Paul admonishes the Corinthians once more: "Therefore openly before the churches, show them [the emissaries of the churches, possibly also Titus] the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you" (v. 24). Not only Paul, but also these emissaries should see and witness the proof of the Corinthians' love (that is, their generous participation in the collection)⁴¹ and the legitimacy of Paul's earlier boasting about the Corinthians.

Participation in the collection is an opportunity for the Corinthians to show their love of the Lord and their fellow Christians before a wider public⁴². This is a further motivation. The collection is not an opportunity for Paul to enhance his own status. Rather, *it is an opportunity for the donors to do so*

40 *Ibid.*, 278-279 discusses the possible meaning and function of this characterisation. Some scholars (Holmberg, Hainz, Nickle) have argued that these men are not emissaries by the churches of Macedonia (as commonly assumed) but in fact agents of the Judean churches, "commissioned to function as controllers of the collection and intended to witness the unity of the Gentile and Jewish Christian congregations" (MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 279). Against such suggestions, Martin concludes: "But these latter suggestions are most improbable, given the delicate balance of Paul's authority so recently challenged at Corinth and the uncertainty he shows concerning whether the collection would even be acceptable at Jerusalem".

41 *Ibid.*, 279 suggests that "Paul is calling for a demonstration of love to these delegates on the part of the readers".

42 According to MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 279, Paul "adds as a final thrust that the warm reception accorded these men confirms the sense of pride he has expressed to them about the Corinthians ... But a wider audience is envisaged if *eis prasoponton ekklesion*, 'before all the congregations', takes on an ecumenical sense and denotes "the universal church" ... of the day.

before the wider Christian community. The Corinthians have already received honour through him and more is in store for them. It is not (only) a question of disappointing Paul: the response of the Corinthians is a matter before all the churches: in this arena they gain or lose honour.

The need and promise of transparency not only applies to Paul, but also to others involved in the collection. Paul recommends these men, so he and they would also recommend the Corinthians in future – if they do as is expected of them. If they fail to do so, Paul and these men would also communicate their refusal⁴³. In the entire process, “all cards are on the table”.

In 2 Corinthians 9,6-14, Paul outlines the spiritual benefits that are in store for the Corinthians. What the donors forfeit in local recognition and honour, they will receive abundantly from God: “And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work” (v. 8). They have every reason to give cheerfully; the prospect of every divine blessing in abundance is far more than any human could reciprocate for benefactions received. For their generosity, they will be enriched by God in every way (v. 11). Paul is transparent about the demands made of the donors and about the tremendous benefits involved in participating in the collection⁴⁴.

3. ROMANS 15,25-28

In his last reference to the collection in Romans 15,25-28, Paul does not emphasise transparency in the *gathering* of the funds, but in its actual *delivery*. Paul assures the Roman Christians that he will deliver reliably what was entrusted to him by others: “When therefore I have completed this and have delivered to them what has been collected ...” (15,28).⁴⁵ Schnabel notes:

Das Verb ἐπιτέλω ... wird in den dokumentarischen Papyri oft für das “Erfüllen” oder “Vollenden” einer Arbeit oder Verpflichtung verwendet:

43 *Ibid.*, 280 notes that it will be “officially reported throughout Christendom”; see his astute summary of 2 Co 8,16-24 on pp. 279-280.

44 *Ibid.*, 290 suggests that “as the Achaean rise to their responsibility in making their offering, they may count on God to sustain his endeavour by granting them both the desire to share and the necessary ability to do so”.

45 See E. J. SCHNABEL, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer. Römer 6–16* (HTA; Witten, Gießen 2016) 842-843.

Paulus will die Sammlung verbindlich und ordnungsgemäß zu Ende bringen; die häufige Verwendung des Verbs in Verbindung mit dem antiken Vereinswesen im Sinn der Erfüllung einer religiösen Pflicht könnte die Sammlung und ihre Übergabe in Jerusalem als gottesdienstliche Handlung erscheinen lassen⁴⁶.

The emphasis on careful completion of the project is also apparent in the other verb which Paul uses in this context (lit. “and having sealed this fruit for them”). Again Schnabel:

Das Verb σφραγιζω ... begegnet häufig in den Papyri für das Versiegeln von Gebäuden, Schriftstücken, Lebensmittel-, Waren- oder Geldpaketen. Wenn man etwas versiegelt, will man die betreffende Sache *vor unbefugtem Zugriff schützen* oder durch Kennzeichnung einen Gegenstand (oder ein Tier) unverwechselbar zu seinem eigenen machen. *Der Gegenstand der Versiegelung soll dadurch als Habe gesichert oder vor Veränderung, Verfälschung oder Missbrauch geschützt werden*⁴⁷.

Jewett discusses several examples from ancient papyri regarding this use and concludes:

The association of σφραγιζω with preparation for delivery is illustrated by the instructions about a grain shipment on a governmental ship, including a receipt written by the shipmaster along with the command ... (“let him seal a sample”), *to guarantee that no tampering could occur in transit*. Similarly, a second century C.E. papyrus announces an imminent delivery of fruit, sealed against nibbling by transport workers: ... “I sent you a box of very excellent grapes and a basket of excellent dates under seal”⁴⁸.

46 SCHNABEL, *Römer 6–16*, 843; similarly R. JEWETT, *Romans. A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis 2007) 931. The verb was “typically used in administrative settings to refer to the completion of assigned tasks”, see Jewett’s example from P.Par 26.28 and references to other papyri.

47 SCHNABEL, *Römer 6–16*, 843 (italics CS), see also JEWETT, *Romans*, 931-932.

48 JEWETT, *Romans*, 932 (italics CS).

Against this background, Jewett concludes that “To seal the fruit of the Jerusalem offering is rather *to guarantee its delivery against theft and embezzlement*, which conforms to the arrangements Paul made in 2 Corinthians 8,20-23 to ensure that the Corinthian contribution would be securely delivered”⁴⁹. In this way, Paul guarantees the safe and reliable delivery of the collection. He can be trusted with financial matters in the present and in the future (see Rm 15,24).

In this section we have highlighted Paul’s insistence on financial transparency in his references to the collection enterprise in 1 Corinthians 16,1-4, 2 Corinthians 8-9 and Romans 15,28. In the following section we gather the reasons why Paul would have done so.

III. THE REASONS FOR PAUL’S INSISTENCE ON TRANSPARENCY

Within the wider subject of Paul and finances, the collection was a unique project in many ways. While there is evidence that Paul received gifts and other forms of material support (such as hospitality and being helped on his further journeys, see, e.g., Rm 15,24) from other Christians for his ministry (see, e.g., Phil 4,10-18, see below), this collection is the only instance where Paul systematically collected money from *a wider group of Christians* (in Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia) and *to the benefit of others*.

Paul’s most detailed references to the collection appear in his two extant letters to the Christians in Corinth; that is, in a context which gives ample evidence of Paul’s strained relationship over financial issues with at least a significant number of Christians in Corinth. This relationship included matters of granting and refusing material support and issues of dependency and independence in the context of ancient systems of benefaction. At least for Paul, the money that he had every right to demand⁵⁰ and that was offered to him came with strings attached so that he refused to accept it. Everything happened when opponents of Paul were active in Corinth. To these specific and difficult circumstances we owe, among other factors, Paul’s emphases on transparency.

49 JEWETT, *Romans*, 932 (italics CS).

50 See DAHL, “Paul and Possessions”, 33-34.

What Paul would have said and how he would have acted under different circumstances is difficult to reconstruct. His letter to the Philippians indicates that other kinds of relationships were possible, including financial issues⁵¹.

A number of factors were involved in Paul's emphasis on transparency. Some of them were peculiar to Paul and the nature of his relationship with the Christians in Corinth. Others had to do with Paul's Jewish identity, with Jerusalem as the place of the recipients or wider issues of Roman policy with regard to money. Thus, a number of potential charges were in the air against Paul.

Before we start with the strained situation in Corinth regarding finances and Paul's response to it⁵², another factor needs to be considered. The situation and discourse not only involved Paul, his co-workers and Corinthians who had come to faith through their missionary efforts, but also other people. Critical minds in the congregation Paul had founded were not the only challenge. The situation, delicate as it was, was exacerbated by the fact that people had arrived and were "on the ground" who readily attacked Paul in other matters (doctrine and ethical themes) when Paul himself was not there to defend himself. Seifrid writes with the regard to these people, commonly referred to as "opponents" of Paul:

... they are battling not only Paul but also one another for recognition in Corinth (10,12-18). ... It is possible that they have exploited the recent breach in the relationship between Paul and Corinth ...

Paul's explicit statements concerning his opponents reveal nothing of a developed theology on their part. Of course, they bring "another Jesus, another Spirit, and another Gospel" (2 Co 11,4). But Paul attacks a practical theology, one that legitimates apostolic mission (and thus Christian living) on the basis of the open display of rhetorical skill, deeds of power, and ecstatic visions. ... Paul regards the real danger that they present as lying in the implicit theology that measures God's saving work in Christ by outward marks of success. Already, before the arrival of the intruders, the Corinthians have embraced this theology. ...

51 For Paul's different approach in Ph see D. E. BRIONES, *Paul's Financial Policy. A Socio-Theological Approach* (LNTS 494; London 2013) 58-130 and P. A. HOLLOWAY, *Philippians* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis 2017).

52 In what follows, I draw on C. STENSCHKE, "Obstacles on All Sides. Paul's Collection for the Saints in Jerusalem, Part I": *EJT* 24 (2015) (19-33) 4-5.

Paul battles for the hearts and minds of the Corinthians before all else. It is the Corinthian misunderstanding of the apostle and the Gospel that is finally at the centre of the argument⁵³.

While also other people in Corinth could and probably would have raised one or more of the following issues, it is safe to assume that the different *opponents* of Paul would also have readily used the opportunity to attack his policy on financial matters and the whole idea of the collection enterprise⁵⁴. It provided opportunities far too good for them to ignore. The presence of these opponents in Corinth added to Paul's vulnerability and need to emphasise transparency as Paul's critics – be they local and from elsewhere – would readily cause doubt as to his personal integrity and the alleged need of the Christians in Jerusalem. Under these demanding circumstances, the whole enterprise could easily backfire on Paul. Now we turn to the charges that actually were or could be levelled against Paul.

1. CHARGES WITH REGARD TO PAUL'S PARTICULAR BEHAVIOUR REGARDING FINANCES IN CORINTH

During his ministry in Corinth, Paul had refused to accept money from the Corinthians although he defends his principal right to do so in 1 Corinthians 9,1-14. He insisted on meeting his needs through his own manual labour⁵⁵. Paul writes (9,12b-15b, 18):

53 SEIFRID, *The Second Letter*, xxxix.

54 P. W. BARNETT, "Opponents of Paul": *DPL* (1993) (644-653) 647 refers to them as "newcomers at Corinth". On the opponents in Corinth see J. K. M. CHOW, *Patronage and Power. A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (LNTS; Sheffield 1992); P. MARSHALL, *Social Enmity in Corinth. Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (WUNT 11.23; Tübingen 1987); MARTIN; MURPHY-O'CONNOR, *Paul*, 319; SEIFRID, *The Second Letter*, xxviii-xxix; J. L. SUMNEY, "Servants of Satan", "False Brothers" and Other Opponents of Paul (JSNT.S 188; Sheffield 1999); J. L. SUMNEY, "Studying Paul's Opponents. Advances and Challenges", in: S. E. PORTER (ed.), *Paul and His Opponents* (PAST 2; Leiden 2005) (7-58) 13-17 and N. H. TAYLOR, "Apostolic Identity and the Conflicts in Corinth and Galatia", in: S. E. PORTER (ed.), *Paul and His Opponents* (PAST 2; Leiden 2005) 99-127. One should not assume one unified group of opponents. Both letters indicate that there were different people/groups in Corinth, some from within the community, some from outside, who attacked Paul for different reasons.

55 For several reasons, this would have been embarrassing to the Corinthians; see V. P. FURNISH, *II Corinthians. Translated with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary* (AB 32A; Garden City 1984) 507. This is also the portrayal in Ac 18,1-3. Apparently

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple Service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel. But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing these things to secure any such provision. ... What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

In current research on Paul's insistence on financial independence, there are two major interpretations. We start with the consensus position. According to this understanding, in pursuing the policy mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9, Paul refused to depend on local wealthy Christian patrons whose client he would have become by accepting their support⁵⁶. The acceptance of patronage would probably also have compromised Paul's ministry, at least from his perspective⁵⁷. He would have lost the freedom to preach the gospel to all people with all the consequences that the message of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ entailed for the personal behaviour of the wealthy citizens as well. Furnish spells out the implications of this decision as follows:

In the ancient world, giving and receiving, placing someone under and being oneself placed under financial obligation were extremely important components of the social structure. Thus, within Roman society specifically – and the Corinth which Paul knew was a Roman colony – the wealthy expressed and enhanced their power by becom-

Paul also worked elsewhere for his own support (20,34-35). It is not clear whether he did so by choice or by necessity. See also DAHL, "Paul and Possessions", 33-34 and BRIONES, *Paul's Financial Policy*, 161-179.

56 For a survey of the system of patronage and its implications see J. MARSHALL, *Jesus, Patrons, and Benefactors. Roman Palestine and the Gospel of Luke* (WUNT II.259; Tübingen 2009) 24-124 and P. LAMPE, "Paul, Patrons, and Clients", in: J. P. SAMPLEY (ed.), *Paul and the Greco-Roman World. A Handbook* (Harrisburg 2003) 488-523. For discussion of research on the "tangled web of complexity" of patronage, benefaction and reciprocity see BRIONES, *Paul's Financial Policy*, 26-41; for a more specific discussion of the social exchange patterns in the Hellenistic-Roman world as the interpretive framework for the collection see JOUBERT, *Paul as Benefactor*, 17-72.

57 E. J. SCHNABEL, *Early Christian Mission: Paul and the Early Church* (Downers Grove – Leicester 2004) 1450.

ing patrons of the needy. The extent of one's philanthropies and the number of one's clients were important measures of a person's social standing and influence⁵⁸.

The recipients of such benefactions were immediately placed under an obligation of gratitude to their benefactors. This gratitude of the beneficiaries, in turn, placed the benefactors under further obligation and so forth. Therefore, the acceptance of a gift meant becoming the client of and being henceforth dependent on the more privileged person (the benefactor), even though the patron was also placed under the obligation to provide further benefaction. This kind of relationship was not motivated by friendship (although some conventions of friendship were there) but by the patron's desire for power and prestige and from the client's need of help.

In this context where friendship was based on benefaction and not the other way around, the refusal of benefactions was considered an act of social enmity⁵⁹. Extensive protocols had been developed in Paul's day for all these notions. Against this social backdrop, it is understandable why at least some Corinthians were annoyed by Paul's refusal to accept their benefactions. In doing so Paul renounced their status as patrons or a special "patron congregation" (cf. 2 Co 12,13), and in their eyes questioned or repudiated their friendship (cf. 11,11). Paul's refusal (and the consequences it implied for him) would also have been seen as a regrettable act of self-humiliation on his side.

In addition to unavoidable dependency, such relationships would have impeded Paul's further mission. According to Schnabel, these patrons might also have interfered with Paul's plans for further ministry elsewhere. Schnabel observes that Paul refused the support of a church or individuals when his acceptance could disturb or destroy his missionary work in that particular church or the gospel that he proclaims due to the agitation of opponents⁶⁰. Some Corinthians apparently insisted that Paul should have accepted their support (1 Co 9,1-18; 2 Co 2,17). Perhaps the same people also insisted that Paul should have increased his suc-

58 FURNISH, *II Corinthians*, 507-508.

59 See MARSHALL, *Enmity*.

60 *Mission*, 1450-1451.

cess by employing more brilliant rhetorical means (see 1 Co 1,17–2,5). These are perhaps the same believers who wished to influence his travel plans (2 Co 1,17). With regard to this kind of thinking and demand, Paul insisted that the content and the success of his missionary preaching, as well as the practical side of his missionary endeavours are dependent upon God alone, both with regard to rhetorical techniques or the lack thereof (and other methods, such as the use of signs and wonders; see Rm 15,19) and with regard to his travel plans and his financial independence.

So far we followed the scholarly consensus regarding Paul's relationship with some Corinthians and their intentions regarding Paul. Now we come to an alternative interpretation which keeps gaining support. In his detailed analysis of 1 Corinthians 9, A. Pereira Delgado has demonstrated that the rhetorical situations between 1 Corinthians 9 and 2 Corinthians 10–13 are different⁶¹. Therefore, the financial issues behind 2 Corinthians 10–13 should not determine the understanding of 1 Corinthians 9, although both aspects are closely related. This has also been emphasised by D. E. Briones in his study of *Paul's Financial Policy*⁶². According to Briones,

Paul refused monetary support, not because he detected the Corinthians' motive to patronise him, as many assume, but because he evaded any associations, with the monetary practices of itinerant Sophists and philosophers, who avariciously capitalised on their initial visits into cities. ... His refusal, therefore, could not have been predicated on the ulterior motives of certain wealthy members. ... Rather, his refusal was based, at least in part, on the sociological factors of the cities that he evangelised. For accepting gifts initially could potentially distort the gospel of grace, not its content but its source⁶³.

61 *De Apóstol a Esclavo. El Exemplum de Pablo en 1 Corintios 9* (AnBib 182; Rome 2010).

62 BRIONES, *Paul's Financial Policy*, 161-179.

63 *Ibid.*, 177; see the detailed analysis by PEREIRA DELGADO, 167-211.

In addition, the Corinthians apparently did not perceive *God* as the source of the gift of grace but *Paul*, who only served as its mediator⁶⁴. Some Corinthians envisioned Paul “as the source of the gospel, the source of their worth, and so longed to supply him with a return gift of money”⁶⁵. In view of these aspirations,

Paul, however, firmly refuses their gift to direct their eyes to the heavenly giver, the one from whom all gifts flow and in whom their worth is found, and to position himself as a mutual broker of divine commodity; hence, the emphatic declaration to continue preaching God’s gospel freely at Corinth (δωρεάν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον, 11,7). This combines the social and the theological, the evasion of sophistic practices on the one side and the divine exclusion from gift-giving relationships on the other. Like two sides of the same coin, they represent a single reality – Paul’s socio-theological reason for refusing financial support⁶⁶.

Like elsewhere, Paul did not accept payment during his initial ministry in Corinth. In contrast to other churches and due to the spiritual immaturity of some Corinthians⁶⁷, Paul also refused payment during later visits:

Thus, Paul’s specific policy never to accept during initial visits, a policy meant to highlight God as the source of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 9 and 1 Thessalonians 2, was lengthened into the unforeseeable future. And his refusal was meant to rebuff their clientage and to demean

64 See BRIONES, *Paul’s Financial Policy*, 297-208, in detail pp. 190-218.

65 BRIONES, *Paul’s Financial Policy*, 218.

66 *Ibid.*, 218.

67 See the examination of BRIONES, *Paul’s Financial Policy*, 137-150, 183-191 of the cultural conformity of the Corinthians’ post conversion values and Paul’s response, pp. 150-160, 191-218. According to BRIONES,

the Corinthians suffered from a skewed practical consciousness, being preoccupied with worldly status, which inculcated a misunderstanding about the relational pattern of the divine economy. This resulted in striving to become Paul’s inferior dependents, like a client to a patron or a pupil to a teacher. The second reason for refusal, logically following the first, is that this pattern of thinking reveals a spiritual immaturity on the Corinthians’ part (cf. 1 Cor 3,1-4), provoking Paul to insist on his refusal until they exhibit an appropriate degree of maturity in the faith (191).

himself still further by working a demeaning trade (ταπεινῶω, 11,7; cf. 1 Co 4,12) as he continued receiving support from others (11,8-9)⁶⁸.

Both interpretations of Paul's financial policy on the Corinthians indicate that paying and accepting money was a highly controversial issue between Paul and some Corinthians which involved – at least for Paul – an intricate and critical combination of social and theological issues. In view of this situation, all financial issues had to be handled in an exemplary manner and required full transparency. When Paul refused money with strings attached, he had to ensure that he would handle money entrusted to him for others responsibly and free from any notion of manipulation. While Paul criticised the spiritual immaturity of the Corinthians, including their use of their financial means and the underlying values and purposes of that use, he had to demonstrate his own mature use of money to them. In addition to these tensions regarding their support of Paul, some Corinthians might have accused Paul of financial irregularities or false claims to elicit their support for the collection⁶⁹. This takes us to our next point.

2. CHARGES WITH REGARD TO PAUL'S PERSONAL INTEGRITY AND CONSISTENCY

Murphy-O'Connor notes: "The importance which Paul attached to the collection for the poor of Jerusalem gave the Judaisers the opportunity to highlight his suspiciously ambiguous attitude towards money. He apparently refused money for himself, but solicited it for the poor"⁷⁰. While refusing their support for his stay and ministry in Corinth, Paul at the same time expected of the Corinthians to provide the means for his own travelling and that of his co-workers as he writes in 1 Corinthians 16: "so that you may send me on my way, wherever I go" (v. 6); "send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me" (v. 11); "I urge you to put yourselves at the service of such people, and of everyone who works and toils with them" (v. 16). Paul may also

68 *Ibid.*, 208.

69 This is not the place to examine the other criticisms which were levelled at Paul in Corinth.

70 MURPHY-O'CONNOR, *Paul*, 319.

have expected of them to support his ministry elsewhere⁷¹. Not all in Corinth would have considered such expectations to be consistent.

While refusing support from the Corinthians, Paul at the same time readily accepted gifts from other churches (see Ph 4,10-20) and – in nuanced rhetoric – ensured that the Corinthians knew about it: “I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia. So, I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening you in any way” (2 Cor 11,8-9). Dahl notes:

Paul was criticized because he refused to accept payment. When Paul speaks about the injustice he had done the church at Corinth by refusing compensation, about the lack of love he displayed by his sacrifice, the irony is obvious: “For in what were you less favoured than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!” (2 Co 12,13). Paul assures them that he will not in the future ask for any help from the congregation at Corinth or from neighbouring congregations. The reason for Paul’s attitude may well be the criticism he has received at Corinth for the way he dealt with money. Paul did receive help from the congregations in Macedonia, even when he was living in Corinth. Paul says that he “robbed” other congregations in order to spare the Corinthians. Perhaps some at Corinth accuse him of robbery because of his efforts to promote the collection for the Jerusalem church⁷².

Furnish suggests that the Corinthians were distressed with Paul’s refusal of support from them because it appeared to be inconsistent with his accepting support from other congregations⁷³. While in Thessalonica, Paul had received contributions from the Philippians at least twice (probably even on a regular basis, Ph 4,16), in addition to what he was able to earn from his craft (see 1 Th 2,9). The Philippians continued supporting Paul even after

71 See J. P. DICKSON, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities. The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission* (WUNT II.159; Tübingen 2003) 178-213.

72 DAHL, “Paul and Possessions”, 34.

73 FURNISH, *II Corinthians*, 507.

he left Macedonia (Ph 4,15). It is likely that the support which Paul received while in Corinth was provided by certain brothers who came from Macedonia (2 Co 11,9), having been sent by the Philippians. It is safe to assume that the Corinthians would have met these delegates and knew the reason for their coming. For Paul's critics, this would be further evidence of the inconstancy and inconsistency of which they had long suspected and accused him: "By harping on the fact that Paul had taken money from Philippi (2 Co 11,9), they could make a case that Paul did not love the Corinthians whose generosity he had refused"⁷⁴.

Closely related to such alleged inconsistencies is a further issue: it might have seemed to some Corinthians that – in addition to all the other quarrels between Paul and them to which both letters amply testify⁷⁵, and despite his early insistence of his independence and refusal of patronage – Paul was now trying to get at their money after all. Could he be trusted? Would the money really go to Jerusalem or was this a noble pretext for other purposes? On the question of Paul's refusal of support in Corinth and his simultaneous demand to participate in the collection, Furnish aptly observes as follows:

His promotion of this project at the same time that he was declining to let the congregation become his own patron evidently aroused the suspicion, or allowed his rivals to plant the suspicion, that the collection was but a subterfuge, a way of gaining the support from the Corinthians without obliging himself to them as their client (see 12,16). This, too, seems to be behind Paul's remarks in 11,5-15⁷⁶.

It is noteworthy that charges of embezzlement were common in the ancient world in court-cases and a standard charge in rhetorical polemics. In his study of corruption in classical Athens, Wankel notes: "Meistens ging es bei dem Korruptionsvorwurf in der *Diabole* ... um Bestechung oder Unterschlagung"⁷⁷. At times, more or less subtle questions were enough to raise doubts

74 MURPHY-O'CONNOR, *Paul*, 319.

75 See G. D. FEE, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids 1987) 4-19 and S. J. HAFEMANN, "Corinthians, Letters to the": *DPL* (1993) 164-179.

76 FURNISH, *II Corinthians*, 508.

77 H. WANKEL, "Die Korruption in der rednerischen Topik und in der Realität des klassischen Athen", in: W. SCHULLER (ed.), *Korruption im Altertum* (München – Wien 1982) (29-54) 43; see also in C. BACHHIESL – M. HANDY – P. MAURITSCH – W. PETERMANDL (eds.),

about a person's trustworthiness in financial matters: "Diese Suggestivfrage soll, wie oft, den Beweis ersetzen, den der Redner für diese angebliche Unterschlagung ... gar nicht hat"⁷⁸.

All of this happened when Paul's opponents readily accepted payments from the Corinthians⁷⁹ and would have opposed the idea of sending money to Jerusalem for these reasons alone. Whatever was contributed to the collection was no longer available to them. Hafemann notes that the opponents affirmed their claims by demanding money from the Corinthians. This was to be a sign of the value and legitimacy of their message (2 Co 2,17)⁸⁰. But in order to make these claims and demand and receive this payment, they attacked Paul and his apostolic legitimacy.

In addition, the opponents could easily question the motivation for the whole collection enterprise. Was the need of the Christians in Jerusalem only a pretext for other intentions of Paul; even if all the money eventually would get there? After all, Paul himself suggests in 2 Corinthians 9 that more might be involved in the collection than the mere relief of material need; at least to some extent⁸¹. Was the whole project in truth not designed to meet Paul's own need for recognition in Jerusalem of his disputed ministry rather than for the relief of the need? Should the Corinthians and other Christians in the churches Paul had founded be expected to pay for the affirmation (and perhaps reparation) of Paul's damaged status in Jerusalem and elsewhere? Were they

Gier, Korruption und Machtmissbrauch in der Antike (Antike Kultur und Geschichte; Münster 2019) the essays of H. GRASSL, "Geldgier im Diskurs der späten Republik und frühen Kaiserzeit" (57-70), M. PEINHOPF, "Geldgier in den Provinzen. Gedanken zur Geschichte der Verfolgung des *crimen repetundarum*" (71-97) und U. LAGGER, "Korruptions- und Bestechungsvorwürfe in griechischen Gerichtsreden" (145-172). Lager notes:

Häufig lagen hinter den Bestechungsvorwürfen persönliche und oder politische Rivalitäten. Der Vorwurf der Bestechung und der Vorwurf der *philargyria*, der Gier nach Geld, wurden als politische Waffe eingesetzt – und so verwundert es kaum, dass viele der Anschuldigungen von den politischen Erzrivalen erhoben wurden. Dabei ging es weniger darum, ob die Anschuldigungen stimmten oder nicht, sie waren ein probates Mittel, den Gegner zu diskreditieren, Feindseligkeiten ihm gegenüber aufzubauen und seine Integrität der Polis gegenüber in Frage zu stellen (168).

78 WANKEL, "Die Korruption...", 40, with reference to Demosthenes 22.69-71. In view of the high frequency of such accusations, Taylor argued that ancient Athens was not a "bribery culture", but an "accusation of bribery culture"; C. TAYLOR, "Bribery in Athenian Politics Part II: Ancient Reaction and Perceptions": *GaR* 48 (2001) (154-172) 168.

79 See BRIONES, *Paul's Financial Policy*, 198-191.

80 HAFEMANN, "Corinthians...", 175.

81 According to Rm 15,25-27, with their participation in the collection, the Gentile Christians would express their indebtedness for salvation to Israel and the Jewish missionaries who brought the gospel to them.

to pick up the bill for Paul's peace of mind as he prepared for a new phase of pioneer mission in the western Mediterranean world⁸²?

3. CHARGES WITH REGARD TO PAUL'S PRESENTATION OF THE SITUATION IN JERUSALEM

The Corinthians had met Christians in the past who were associated with Jerusalem and thus knew of the existence of a group of Christ-followers consisting of the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord and Cephas (see 1 Co 9,5). It is difficult to assess how much time had passed between these contacts and the beginning of gathering the collection funds in Corinth. In spite of these contacts and possible other trans-local links between Corinth and Jerusalem, the Corinthians probably had to take Paul's word for the current situation and need of the saints in Jerusalem⁸³. Were their fellow Christians really as needy as Paul claimed? Some opponents simply needed to question Paul's report. Murphy-O'Connor writes with regard to such questions:

Would it all really go to Jerusalem? All the Judaizers had to do, when questioned by the Corinthians about the poverty of the Jerusalem church, was to shrug their shoulders. They did not have to deny the need for the collection. All they had to do was to insinuate that the questioners were a little naive in taking Paul's statements at face value⁸⁴.

Thus, it was probably sufficient to sow doubts by not affirming the need there or to claim that they had better relations with the church in Jerusalem and/or more recent information than Paul. After all, Paul had not been in Jerusalem for a while and when he was there he only stayed for short periods of time.

82 Paul indicates that his honour was at stake because he had presented the Achaean to other congregations as a model of readiness to contribute. Now the Corinthians must do as they had pledged so as not to let down Paul (2 Co 9,1-5). "There is a recourse to shame, lest Achaean slackness should in any way reflect adversely on Paul's confidence in them or on their own self-respect", MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 286.

83 Obviously there also were other obstacles to the Corinthian donors' participation in the collection. I have surveyed these and described how Paul addressed them in STENSCHKE, "Obstacles".

84 MURPHY-O'CONNOR, *Paul*, 319.

The fierceness of Paul's engagement of his opponents in both 1–2 Corinthians indicates that these opponents were by no means harmless in his estimate. If they raised such doubts, they would or could find some willing listeners and seriously jeopardise the collection enterprise.

So far we have noted the specific challenges posed by the situation *in Corinth*, including the presence and instigations of Paul's various opponents. Before we briefly turn to other evidence regarding Paul's transparency in financial matters, we need to examine two issues beyond the confines of Corinth which may also have contributed in some or other way to Paul's insistence on transparency in gathering, transporting and delivering the collection funds.

4. THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE FULVIA INCIDENT (JOSEPHUS, ANTIQUITATES 18.3.5 § 81-83)

There is a specific event which is instructive and which may have made Paul particularly sensitive to possible accusations of chicanery levelled against him (cf. 2 Cor 8,20; 12,14-18). This precedent made any later Jewish collection enterprise for Jerusalem among Gentiles a precarious endeavour. According to Josephus (*Ant.* 18.3.5 § 81-83), an unnamed Jew from Judea⁸⁵ and three companions, "not a whit better in character than himself", induced one of their notable converts, Fulvia, an upper-class lady in Rome, to send treasures to the temple in Jerusalem. However, rather than actually delivering the goods to Jerusalem or attempting to do so, they simply disappeared with them:

and when Fulvia, a woman of high rank who had become a Jewish proselyte, began to meet with them regularly, they urged her to send purple and gold to the temple in Jerusalem. They, however, took the

85 According to the polemics of Josephus, he was "a complete scoundrel, who had fled his own country [Judea] because he was accused of transgressing certain laws and feared punishment on this account". This is notable as Paul also had to flee from Judaea and was also accused by some religious leaders there. What is said furthermore of this man also applies to Paul: "Just as this time he was resident in Rome [that is working in the Jewish Diaspora] and played the part of an interpreter of the Mosaic Law and its wisdom" (18.81). This might indicate how some Jewish opponents might have explained Paul's ministry in Jewish synagogues and elsewhere to non-Jewish audiences. Translations from Josephus according to L. H. FELDMAN, *Josephus with an English Translation in Ten Volumes. IX: Jewish Antiquities XVIII-XIX* (LCL 433; Cambridge, Mass., London 1965).

gifts and used them for their own personal expenses, for it was this that had been their intention in asking for gifts from the start⁸⁶.

When their fraud was discovered, Fulvia's husband, Saturnius, at her instigation reported the fraud to Emperor Tiberius who responded by ordering *all Jews to be banished from Rome*. The events are to be dated either to 19 AD (so Tacitus and Cassius Dio)⁸⁷ some 30-35 years before the Pauline collection, or to 30 AD (so Josephus)⁸⁸, some 20-25 years before the collection⁸⁹.

It is difficult to assess whether Paul knew of this incident; and if so, whether it was relevant for his own collection procedure. As it led to one of the banishments of Jews from Rome, it is likely that Paul was aware of it and knew of its occasion: when he wrote his letter to the Romans in Corinth, early in 56 or 57 AD, the city of Rome and a visit there had been on his horizon for a longer period of time (Rm 1,10-13). His letter to the Romans indicates that Paul was familiar with some of the challenges the Christian communities there faced with. In the epistolary frame of the letter, Rome appears as the next stepping on his way to a new phase of pioneering missionary work in the West.

In addition, Paul surely would remember a more recent banishment of Jews from Rome; that is, the banishment under Claudius in AD 49 which is mentioned in Acts 18,1-3: "After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who recently came from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome"⁹⁰. In Romans 16,3-15, Paul greets a number of Christians

86 18.82. To Gentiles, Paul's converts may also have appeared as Jewish proselytes. Paul also met with them regularly. Now he also urged them to participate in a collection for Jerusalem.

87 See E. SCHÜRER – G. VERMES – F. MILLAR – M. GOODMAN, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – 135 A.D.)*. Vol. III.1 (Edinburgh 1986) 75-76 and D. ALVAREZ-CINEIRA, *Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Claudius und die paulinische Mission* (HBS 19; Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1999) 189-192. Both volumes discuss all the relevant ancient sources.

88 On the dates see ALVAREZ-CINEIRA, *Die Religionspolitik*, 190.

89 *Ibid.*, 190 argues that this incident alone would hardly have caused the expulsion: "Der Fall der Fulvia, den Josephus . . . uns mitteilt, kann nicht allein die Ursache dafür gewesen sein, die ganze jüdische Gemeinde aus Rom zu vertreiben". He lists a number of other reasons which have been offered in research, presents his own proposal and suggests: "Ein Skandal, der eine Dame von Rang betraf, könnte ihre [Jews] Aktivitäten zusätzlich grell beleuchtet haben und der letzte Tropfen gewesen sein, der das Fass zum Überlaufen brachte. Die Geduld der Regierung war am Ende" (190).

90 See C. STENSCHKE, "Edicts in the Bible II. New Testament", in: *EBR 7 Dress – Essene Gate* (2013) 401-402; for detailed discussion see ALVAREZ-CINEIRA, *Die Religionspolitik*, 160-224 who notes: "Ein besonderer Aspekt des römischen Judentums war seine enge politische und intellektuelle Beziehung zu Jerusalem und Palästina" (193).

he met in the East and who apparently had returned to Rome when the edict of Claudius lost its validity with the death of Claudius in autumn of AD 54⁹¹.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that these incidents of Roman policy with regard to Jews (and other minorities) were on Paul's mind when he was in Corinth and while he was preparing for the actual gathering, the transport and delivery of the collection to Jerusalem. Paul would have been aware that any irregularities in transfers of larger sums of money, any charges of fraud – if reported to the authorities (Paul's opponents were on the ground and instigating against him within the Christian community – would they go so far as to go beyond its confines and accuse him before the authorities, as Paul's Jewish opponents had done in Corinth, Ac 18,12-17?) – could have far-reaching consequences for himself (his plans for his upcoming visit in Rome and beyond), his co-workers, the Christian community and even the Jewish community in Corinth. This threat required the highest level of transparency in the collection.

Although a number of other reasons can and have been offered, one may ask whether Paul's avoidance of asking the Romans to participate in the collection can also be understood against this backdrop. Could this be the reason why Paul in Romans plays down his own involvement in the collection (yes, he will go to Jerusalem, Rm 15,26; but that the whole project was due to his initiative does not become clear in Romans), even though it would have well served his purposes and self-presentation in the letter otherwise (for instance, his abiding loyalty to Israel)? Paul emphasises that *the churches* have raised the collection ("For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution ... For they were pleased to do it"; 15,26-27). His task merely was to see to its proper delivery to the recipients in Jerusalem (that is, to prevent a repetition of the Fulvia incident or the appearance of it) and to argue for its reception by the Jewish believers (15,31)⁹².

91 See ALVAREZ-CINEIRA, *Die Religionspolitik*, 217-224; R. N. LONGENECKER, *Introducing Romans. Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids – Cambridge, UK 2011) 43–91; SCHNABEL, *Römer 6–16*, 866-902; see, however, the critical discussion in M. WOLTER, *Der Brief an die Römer. Teilband 1 Römer 1–8* (EKK VI/1; Ostfildern – Neukirchen-Vluyn 2014) 30-41.

92 Does this event and concern lie behind Paul's emphasis on submission to the authorities in Rm 13,1-7?

5. THE DISPUTED LEGITIMACY OF FINANCIAL TRANSFERS TO JERUSALEM

The criminal incident under Tiberius is closely related to another critical issue in the collection enterprise, namely the drain of larger sums of money from one area – in this instance from Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia – to other areas, specifically to Jerusalem. If larger sums of money travel in the empire, they are to go to Rome, not elsewhere. A few examples suffice. In his defence speech for Lucius Valerius Flaccus (*Pro Flacco* 28.67-69) in BC 59, Cicero refers to such flows of money as his client had been charged for withdrawing from the Jews of his province their right to send the annual tribute-money to the Temple in Jerusalem and for confiscating their donations⁹³. The reference indicates that such payments were disputed⁹⁴:

As gold, under pretence of being given to the Jews, was accustomed every year to be exported out of Italy and all the provinces to Jerusalem, Flaccus issued an edict establishing a law that it should not be lawful for gold to be exported out of Asia. ... The senate had often decided, and when I was consul it came to a most solemn resolution that gold ought not to be exported. But to resist this barbarous superstition were an act of dignity, to despise the multitude of Jews, which at times was most unruly in the assemblies in defence of the interests of the republic, was an act of the greatest wisdom⁹⁵.

93 See A. J. MARSHALL, "Flaccus and the Jews of Asia (Cicero, *Pro Flacco*, 28.67-69)": *Phoenix* 29 (1975) 139-154. For the date see <https://www.wissenschaft.de/zeitpunkte/cicero-und-flaccus>.

94 Cicero is a witness to the situation during the late Roman republic. However, the sources cited by Josephus (below) and the very fact that he cites them at such length, suggest that the situation remained precarious during later periods.

95 Note the subtle, rhetorically adroit questioning whether the money would reach its destination: "under pretence of being given to the Jews". In this context, Cicero reminds the audience of Pompey's exemplary behaviour after he had conquered Jerusalem (63 BC):

But Cnaeus Pompeius, after he had taken Jerusalem, though he was a conqueror, touched nothing which was in that temple. In the first place, he acted wisely as he did in many other instances in leaving no room for his detractors to say anything against him, in a city so prone to suspicion and to evil speaking. For I do not suppose that the religion of the Jews, our enemies, was any obstacle to that most illustrious general, but that he was hindered by his own modesty. Where then is the guilt? Since you nowhere impute any theft to us, since you approve of the edict, and confess that it was passed in due form, and did not deny that the gold was openly sought for and produced the facts of the case themselves show that the business was executed by the instrumentality of men of the highest character.

Cicero goes on to describe that on Flaccus' order substantial sums of money were confiscated by Roman officials to avoid such "losses" of money. His officials allegedly dealt in exemplary manner with the confiscated sums (in contrast to how the money might have been gathered and what might have been done with it):

There was a hundredweight of gold, more or less openly seized at Apamea, and weighed out in the forum at the feet of the praetor, by Sextus Caesius, a Roman knight, a most excellent and upright man; twenty pounds weight or a little more were seized at Laodicea, by Lucius Peducaeus, who is here in court, one of our judges; some was seized also at Adramyttium, by Cnaeus Domitius, the lieutenant, and a small quantity at Pergamon. The amount of the gold is known; the gold is in the treasury; no theft is imputed to him.

Cicero's emphasis on transparency regarding the sums confiscated from Jews (what happened to the money?) and on the personal integrity of those involved (their status and character: "a Roman knight, a most excellent and upright man", exact names and designation of offices!) suggests the standard against which Paul and his co-workers might also be measured ("The amount of the gold is known; the gold is in the treasury; no theft is imputed to him") and which required the highest level of transparency in the whole endeavour.

Against this backdrop it is noteworthy that the Jews in the Diaspora had been granted some rights to transfer money to Jerusalem⁹⁶. Josephus cites "documents that indicate that civic and provincial officials sometimes tried to prevent their Jewish inhabitants from sending money (*Ant* 16.160-173)"⁹⁷

96 In this context, Cicero expresses common Roman prejudices against the Jews and their city:

Each city ... has its own peculiar religion, we have ours. While Jerusalem was flourishing, and while the Jews were in a peaceful state, still the religious ceremonies and observances of that people were very much at variance with the splendour of this empire and the dignity of our name and the institutions of our ancestors. And they are the more odious to us now because that nation has shown by arms what were its feelings towards our supremacy. How dear it was to the immortal gods is proved by its having been defeated, by its revenues having been farmed out to our contractors, by its being reduced to a state of subjection.

97 M. A. CHANCEY, "Temple Tax", in: J. J. COLLINS – D. C. HARLOW (eds.), *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids – Cambridge, UK 2010) 1294. Josephus mentions not only officials but extends confiscation of sacred monies to cities and "the Greeks" more generally.

to Jerusalem. He first quotes a decree of Augustus in favour of the Jews of Asia which includes the stipulation: "... and that their sacred monies shall be inviolable and may be sent to Jerusalem and delivered to the treasurers in Jerusalem ..." (16.163). He also refers to a letter from Caesar to Norbanus Flaccus, proconsul of Asia between 31 and 27 B.C.: "The Jews, however numerous they may be, who have been wont, according to their ancient customs, to bring sacred monies to send up to Jerusalem, may do this without interference" (16.166; see Josephus' other references to the protection of sacred monies in 16.167-172). The number of incidents and quotations by Josephus suggest that these privileges continued to be disputed.

While several theological reasons were most likely involved⁹⁸, it is possible that Paul – admittedly interpreting such privileges widely – (also) framed the collection in analogy to Jewish donations from the diaspora or in analogy to explicit temple tax payments in order to come under these privileges and to avoid confiscation of the money. This would avoid Roman interaction and legitimise the collection enterprise. This might also explain the envisaged timing of the delivery on the day of Pentecost (Ac 20,16; see below). These references indicate to what extent Paul's collection enterprise reflects the political situation and expediencies of his day⁹⁹ and required his full transparency.

IV. OTHER EVIDENCE FOR PAUL'S TRANSPARENCY IN FINANCIAL MATTERS

Paul's insistence on transparency in financial matters *in the context of the collection enterprise* also appears indirectly in the Book of Acts (1). Transparency *in financial matters more generally* also becomes apparent elsewhere in Paul's letters when he correctly acknowledges the receipt of a gift of the Philippian church (2); gives an account of the sources of his own income (3) and insists on transparency regarding the material resources of other Christians.

98 For a survey see DOWNS, *Offering* and McKNIGHT, "Collection for the Saints", 145-146.

99 See E. BÄMMEL – C. F. D. MOULE, *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* (Cambridge 1984); B. REICKE, *The New Testament Era. The World of the Bible from 500 B.C. to A.D. 100* (Philadelphia 1968); J. J. GIBSON, *Peter Between Jerusalem and Antioch. Peter, James and the Gentiles* (WUNT II.345; Tübingen 2013). This is a neglected aspect of the way in which Paul interacted with "Empire".

1. ACTS 20,4.16

Paul's emphasis on transparency also appears in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Its silence regarding the collection enterprise has been much debated¹⁰⁰. There are two references which commonly have been taken to suggest that the author was aware of the collection. One is Paul's vague reference in his defence speech before Antonius Felix to coming to Jerusalem in order to "bring alms to my people" (24,17)¹⁰¹.

The other – and much stronger – reference is the mention of a larger group of people accompanying Paul on his final journey to Jerusalem¹⁰². The people mentioned in Acts 20,4 by name and some further identified by their place or region of origin appear to be the collection delegation mentioned in 1–2 Corinthians: "Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus". These seven men appear at the beginning of the second so-called "we-passage" in Acts (20,5–21,17), in which the author claims to have been an eyewitness to the events. This probably adds another person to the group.

This list suggests that Paul not only announced that such a delegation would be gathered and used his references to it in 1–2 Corinthians as an assurance of his full transparency in financial matters. He did actually gather the delegation, set off with it and arrived with it in Jerusalem. There are no references in Acts that one or more persons left the group before its arrival¹⁰³. Unfortunately, there are no direct references to the collection and its reception in Jerusalem in Acts.

There might be another indirect pointer to the collection in Acts which has not received any attention. According to Acts 20,16, Paul travelled to Je-

100 For a survey see DOWNS, *Offering*, 28, 60-70 and D. J. DOWNS, "Paul's Collection and the Book of Acts Revisited": *NTS* 52 (2006) 50-70.

101 For a survey see KEENER, Acts IV, 3407-3412. We have noted Paul's refusal to pay a bribe to Felix (Ac 24,26-27) in the introduction.

102 See the survey in C. S. KEENER, Acts. An Exegetical Commentary Vol. III 15,1–23,35 (Grand Rapids 2014), 2953-2958. Keener notes: "Some scholars suggest that Luke mentions Paul's associates by name because they assisted him with the collection and such responsibilities required known and approved character. Certainly, Paul recruited travel companions partly to provide credibility for the offering (2 Co 8,20-21) ..." (2953).

103 This has been considered by von LIPS, *Timotheus und Titus*, 83-84 with regard to Timothy.

Jerusalem for the *Jewish festival of Pentecost*: “For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, *on the day of Pentecost*” (20,16)¹⁰⁴. This timing for the journey to Jerusalem and the delivery of the funds may also be due to Paul's his emphasis on transparency. With all the theological implications which Paul's arrival with this delegation in Jerusalem at Pentecost may have carried¹⁰⁵, he may also have chosen this time due to fiscal considerations. In his magisterial study of the Roman custom system, S. J. de Laet notes that “à l'occasion de certaines fêtes, les droits d'octroi n'étaient temporairement pas perçus”¹⁰⁶. Paul might have chosen to travel to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals because during such occasions at least some of such custom payments may have been waived¹⁰⁷. In this way, the delegation could avoid the payment of custom fees, which might have reduced the sum significantly. While he safeguarded the full sum of the collection in doing so, this decision eventually proved to be disastrous; while in Jerusalem, other Jewish pilgrims

104 See KEENER, Acts III, 2989-2992.

105 Did Paul intend to offer the collection and its delegates as “first-fruits” of his ministry among the Gentiles on the day of Pentecost? See KEENER, Acts III, 2989.

106 *Opportium*. Étude sur l'organisation douanière chez les Romains, surtout à l'époque du haut-empire (Brugge 1949), 431. De Laet refers to two Rabbinic sources regarding the situation in Judea. According to L. GOLDSCHMID, “Les impôts et droits de douane en Judée sous des Romains”: *REJ* 34 (1897) (192–217) 201 and F. M. HEICHELHEIM, “Roman Syria”, in: T. FRANK (ed.), *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome IV* (Baltimore 1938) (121-258) 240, travellers had to carry along a crown/wreath or some other religious symbol to prove the religious nature of their journey. We do not know whether Paul carried such symbols (see 2 Tm 4,13) and whether what he could provide would be accepted as such. Based on DE LAET, L. CASSON, *Reisen in der Alten Welt* (München 1976), 425 notes: “wer eine Grenze überschritt, um an einem Fest teilzunehmen, genoss Zollbefreiung – falls er religiöse Symbole bei sich hatte, die bewiesen, dass das in der Tat sein Reisezweck war”. CASSON discusses this exemption in the context of his description of the impact of Roman customs on ancient travelling. For a survey of the Roman custom system see M. ALPERS, “Das römische Steuer- und Finanzwesen im 1. Jh. n. Chr.”, in: K. ERLEMANN *et al.* (eds.), *Neues Testament und Antike Kultur II. Familie, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft* (NTAK; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2005), 178–181 and M. ALPERS, *Das nachrepublikanische Finanzsystem. Fiscus und Fiscii in der frühen Kaiserzeit* (UALG 45; Berlin – New York 1995).

107 I could not confirm DE LAET's claim for Roman practice. There is no reference to such exceptions in F. VITTINGHOFF, “Portorium”: *RE* 22.1 (1953) 346-399 nor in P. KRITZINGER *et al.* (eds.), *Studien zum römischen Zollwesen* (Geschichte 7; Duisburg 2015). There are few ancient sources and modern studies of the Roman custom system. I gladly acknowledge assistance in writing from Prof. Sven GÜNTHER of the *Institute for the History of Ancient Civilization*, at Northeast Normal University, China. Günther refers to *IGLS VII* 4028 and *IG XII.9* 189 as examples of exemptions (ἀτέλεια) in Hellenistic times during πανηγύρεις when markets and festivals were closely linked; see also L. ROBERT, “Sur des Inscriptions d'Éphèse. Fêtes, Athletes, Empereurs, Epigrammes”: *RevPhil* 41 (1967) (7-84) 62 on Ephesus and A. WILHELM, *Beiträge zur griechischen Inschriftenkunde* (Sonderchriften des österreichischen archäologischen Institutes in Wien 7; Wien 1909) 196-187 for further examples.

to the festival (from Asia) recognised Paul and instigated the crowds against him (Ac 21,27-36)¹⁰⁸. This led to his arrest and loss of freedom.

2. PHILIPPIANS 4,18

There is an interesting emphasis on transparency in financial matters in Philippians 4,18. Paul assures the Philippian readers and donors of a gift to him: "I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gift you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God". Venetz explicitly speaks of a „Quittung für die Spende der Philipper“¹⁰⁹. Holloway writes:

It was customary in Greek and Roman antiquity for the recipient of goods carried by a third party to acknowledge receipt of those goods. The principal purpose of such an acknowledgment was not to express the recipient's gratitude – although that too was expected – but to assure the sender that the goods indicated had been delivered. Paul follows this practice in Philippians, appending to his letter a note, possibly in his own hand, acknowledging the Philippians gift: ἀπέχω πάντα, "I am in receipt of all that you sent" (4,18)¹¹⁰.

Venetz concludes:

Sicher ist, dass im Zusammenhang des Hilfswerkes den Gemeindegesandten größte Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt wird, sei es, dass sie von den Gemeinden (1 Kor 16,3) oder von Paulus (2 Kor 8,22) geprüft, von den Gemeinden erwählt (2 Kor 8,19) oder von Paulus gesandt (2 Kor 8,18) wurden. Offensichtlich erheischten (schon damals) gerade finanzielle Angelegenheiten äußerste Zuverlässigkeit und Transparenz. 2 Korinther 8,20-31 bringt es negativ und positiv zum Ausdruck, neg-

¹⁰⁸ See KEENER, Acts III, 3143-3168.

¹⁰⁹ H.-J. VENETZ, "Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaikus, Epaphroditus, Epaphras, Onesimus & Co.: Die Frage nach den Gemeindevertretern und Gemeindegesandten in den paulinischen Gemeinden", in: A. KESSLER *et al.* (eds.), *Peregrina Curiositas. Eine Reise durch den orbis antiquus. FS Dirk van Damme* (NTOA 27; Freiburg, CH – Göttingen 1994) (13-28) 19.

¹¹⁰ HOLLOWAY, *Philippians*, 186.

ativ 8,20: στελλόμενοι τοῦτο, μή τις ἡμᾶς μοιμήσῃται ἐν τῇ ἀδρότῃ ταύτῃ τῇ διακονουμένῃ ὑφ' ἡμῶν; positiv 8,21: προνοοῦμεν γὰρ καλὰ οὐ μόνον ἐνώπιον κυρίου ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων¹¹¹.

Again, it is interesting to ask why Paul may have so adamantly affirmed the full reception of this gift. Paul had received the Philippians' gift through Epaphroditus (4,18)¹¹². In an earlier passage of the letter, Paul discusses in some detail what happened to Epaphroditus on his way to Paul and why Epaphroditus probably returned to Philippi earlier than expected (2,25-30). Paul emphasises that despite his severe illness ("near to death", 2,27; "risking his life", 2,30), which probably delayed his journey, Epaphroditus did not take any money for himself but delivered the *full* sum to the apostle. Paul acknowledges that Epaphroditus had been severely ill. He was not skiving and using the funds for himself. Whether such charges were actually raised and who might have done so is not clear.

Paul warmly recommends Epaphroditus' readiness to serve and highlights his personal integrity: "my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, for he has been longing for you all" (v. 26-27). The Philippians are to rejoice at seeing Epaphroditus again. He is to be received in the Lord with all joy. The Philippians are to honour a man like him (2,29). No one is to harbour suspicion against him because of his early return or for the way in which the sum entrusted to him was delivered to Paul.

3. PAUL'S TRANSPARENCY CONCERNING HIS OWN INCOME¹¹³

Paul informs his readers from where – at least some of – his own financial resources derive. First, he openly indicates where his "Christian" income comes from (for instance, he mentions gifts from churches, 2 Co 11,8-9; Ph 4,10-20). Second, Paul insists that he did not use words of flattery or as a "cloak for greed" (1 Th 2,5), rather he emphasises his own labour to secure an income:

111 VENETZ, "Stephanas...", 28.

112 On Epaphroditus see *ibid.*, 15-19.

113 For a survey see C. R. LITTLE, *Mission in the Way of Paul. Biblical Mission for the Church in the Twenty-First Century* (SBLit 80; New York, etc. 2005) 22-46.

“We worked day and night, that we might not burden any of you” (1 Th 2,9; 2 Th 3,8; see also 1 Th 1,6, 1 Co 9; 11,1)¹¹⁴.

The Lukan Paul recommends his own conduct as an example for other Christians to follow: “I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Ac 20,33-35)¹¹⁵. In addition, Dahl notes that Paul’s renunciation of financial support “removed a possible stumbling block from the path of prospective converts; they had no cause to believe that he was motivated by greed”¹¹⁶.

C. R. Little and other scholars argue that Paul must have come from a family of substantial financial means¹¹⁷. For instance, some scholars have emphasised that Paul’s educational career would have presupposed significant financial means¹¹⁸. Whether and to what extent he had access to such means after his conversion is impossible to assess. Paul mentions only money entrusted to him and money which he earned. He is silent regarding other material resources available to him – if there were any.

According to Acts 21,18-26, Paul had a considerable amount of money at his disposal on his return to Jerusalem to pay for his own purification and the sacrifices for the Nazirites¹¹⁹. Could Paul draw on his own

114 See DAHL, “Paul and Possessions”, 32-33; see also G. THEISSEN, “Legitimation und Lebensunterhalt”: *NTS* 21 (1974/1975) 192-221.

115 See KEENER, *Acts III*, 3054-3059.

116 DAHL, “*Paul and Possessions*”, 34.

117 LITTLE, *Mission in the Way of Paul*, 10, 20, 22-26; similarly DAHL, “Paul and Possessions”, 35: “There can be little doubt that Paul came from a rather well-to-do family”.

118 See, for example, LITTLE, *Mission in the Way of Paul*, 20 and DAHL, “Paul and Possessions”, 36.

119 See the discussion by LITTLE, *Mission in the Way of Paul*, 22-26 and KEENER, *Acts III*, 3136 on the costs involved: “their offerings included lambs and rams (Nb 6,14.17; m.Naz. 8-11); which, though cheaper than bulls, were not the offering most easily obtained by the poor (cf. Lk 2,24; Lv 5,7.11; 12,8)”. M. HENGEL – A. M. SCHWEMER, *Paulus zwischen Damaskus und Antiochien. Die unbekanntenen Jahre des Apostels* (WUNT II.108; Tübingen 2000) 386 are more specific: “Nach Num 6,14ff musste Paulus die Kosten für je vier einjährige männliche und weibliche Lämmer, vier Widder, vier Körbe mit Ringbroten aus Feinmehl mit Öl, ungesäuerte mit Öl bestrichene Fladen und die üblichen Speis- und Trankopfer bezahlen”.

savings from a longer period of time for this occasion¹²⁰? Could Paul draw on family funds, e.g., an inheritance, awaiting him in Jerusalem¹²¹? Could Paul use money entrusted to him by churches *apart* from the collection enterprise (perhaps funds for future mission work)? Or did Paul, after all, use money from the collection, perhaps after consulting with the representatives of the donating congregations? Keener considers this as an option: “perhaps the elders expect him to use a small part of the conciliatory collection ... on what they consider a conciliatory and particularly concrete expression of unity”¹²²; likewise Hengel and Schwemer:

Man kann daher annehmen, dass Jakobus und die Ältesten – man beachte den Plural in Apg 21,20 – vorgeschlagen haben, mit diesem Geld die vier judenchristlichen Nasiräer auszulösen und dadurch seine Gesetzestreue zu beweisen (21,24). Woher hätte auch Paulus selbst den nötigen beträchtlichen Beitrag für die Kosten, der nach Numeri 6,14-20 vorgeschriebenen Opfer aufbringen sollen?¹²³

Little rejects this option. The “suggestion that it is not impossible for Paul to have been allowed by the Jerusalem church to use part of the money from the Gentile collection to pay for these expenses is unwarranted because it would have opened him to the charge of mishandling the funds – something which he had all along tried so hard to avoid”¹²⁴.

4. PAUL'S DEMANDS FOR TRANSPARENCY CONCERNING THE INCOME OF OTHER CHRISTIANS

Paul emphasised that the Corinthians' contribution to the collection must come from money properly gathered and properly *earned* (1 Co 16,1-2, see above). The transparency which Paul displays as the organiser of the col-

120 See Ac 20,33-35; 24,17 and KEENER, *Acts III*, 3136 and *Acts IV*, 3407.

121 LITTLE, *Mission in the Way of Paul*, 25-26.

122 *Acts III*, 3136.

123 HENGEL – SCHWEMER, *Paulus*, 386.

124 LITTLE, *Mission in the Way of Paul*, 23.

lection is also expected of the participants¹²⁵. This emphasis on transparency regarding *how* money is acquired also appears elsewhere (see above, Ac 20,33-35). Christians are not to be swindlers (1 Co 5,10-11) or thieves (1 Co 6,10). Rather than being idle, they are to *work* quietly and earn their own living (2 Th 3,6-15). Christian office bearers should not be greedy for (dishonest) gain (1 Tm 3,8; Tt 1,7)¹²⁶.

We can then conclude that – at least when required by the circumstances – Paul emphasised transparency in his own dealings with finances entrusted to him or donated to him and also insisted on transparency when money came from others. Paul expects the behaviour displayed by him also of others.

V. SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Our brief survey has shown that Paul insisted on transparency in gathering, transporting and delivering the collection for the saints in Jerusalem. He did everything within his power to avoid the charge of taking advantage of the Corinthians, either in person or through the emissaries which he sent to Corinth (2 Co 12,17-18). Paul's main strategy to attain this goal was to involve other people who would oversee, accompany and testify to the collection from the beginning to the end (2 Co 8,16-24). Paul even assures churches that are not involved in the collection of his transparency and reliability in financial matters (Rm 15,28). His concern also included detailed motivation for participation in the collection.

We have surveyed the reasons for Paul's emphasis on transparency. His strained relationship with some Corinthian Christians and the presence of a variety of opponents in Corinth probably led to several charges against Paul either separately or in combination. These Paul had to deal with and consider in his concrete handling of the funds entrusted to him.

125 From his Jewish background Paul knew that not all money is acceptable, see, e.g., Dt 23,18. Such reservations may have been behind Paul's fear that the collection would not be accepted in Jerusalem, as he expresses it in Rm 15,31.

126 For a survey see DAHL. In addition, the NT contains numerous warnings against greed; see B. S. ROSNER, *Greed as Idolatry. The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* (Grand Rapids – Cambridge, UK 2007).

Most likely, there were charges with regard to Paul's particular policy on finances in Corinth, charges with regard to Paul's personal integrity and his presentation of the situation in Jerusalem. All these charges were closely linked with one another. In addition, we have considered whether and to what extent Paul's emphasis on transparency may also have been influenced by the particular political circumstances of his day and age. There was the memory and potential impact of the Fulvia incident (Jos. *Ant* 18.3.5 § 81-83) (and perhaps other similar incidents) which may have aroused official attention to charges of fraud which Paul's opponents would possibly use against him. In addition, there was the issue of the disputed legitimacy of financial transfers to Jerusalem.

Paul's emphasis on transparency in the collection enterprise is also reflected in the Book of Acts (20,5, the delegation accompanying Paul to Jerusalem; possibly also in 20,16; that is, the intended delivery on the day of Pentecost) and other Pauline statements on financial transparency in dealing with funds given to him by churches (Ph 4,18), transparency concerning his own income and Paul's demands for transparency concerning the income of Christians more generally.

In considering these charges and emphasising transparency in financial matters, Paul not only followed his own directives "not to give offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God" (1 Co 10,32) and that Christians should abstain from every form of evil (1 Th 5,22), but also the demands of Hellenistic-Roman ethical discourse. For example, in *De Officiis* 2.21.75, Cicero cautions: *ut avaritiae pellatur etiam minima suspicio* ("but the main thing in all public administration and public service is to avoid the slightest suspicion of avarice")¹²⁷. For Paul, this demand would also have applied to Christian ministry. As he viewed "the offering of the collection as both a 'salvation-historical' validation of his own ministry against his detractors and a means of 'eschatological provocation' leading to Israel's jealousy and turning to God"¹²⁸, great care was required so that not the slightest irregularity on Paul's side would jeopardise this precarious endeavour¹²⁹. Lack of transparency was not

127 Quotation according to MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 279.

128 *Ibid.*, 260; see the discussion in DOWNS, *Offering*.

129 However, Paul also expects transparency of the donors: Paul insists that the Corinthians do as they had pledged previously and keep their word (2 Co 9,1-5). "There is a recall of faithfulness in keeping one's pledge", so MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 286.

to be an obstacle for the Gentile Christian donors on the one hand and the Jewish Christian recipients in Jerusalem on the other hand. If the collection enterprise was a failure¹³⁰, it was not for lack of transparency on Paul's side.

Paul sets an example of high standards in financial matters for all Christians, in particular for office-bearers in individual congregations and larger denominations who handle money entrusted to them by others¹³¹. Paul ensured that the donors of the collection would have no reason to doubt his integrity or accuse him of misappropriation of what was entrusted to him for others. The same kind of measures, all be it under different circumstances, apply to all those who handle the "Lord's money" and need to set high standards and live up to them.

130 MARTIN, *2Corinthians*, 260 concludes that "Paul's best hopes were doomed and crushed on the anvil of Israel's continued 'hardness' and 'blindness' and his own increasing disfavour among his compatriots"; see also JOUBERT, *Paul as Benefactor*, 204-215 and K. F. NICKLE, *The Collection. A Study in Paul's Strategy* (SBT 48; London 1966) 155.

131 For an astute attempt to relate Paul's financial policy and contemporary issues, see LITTLE.