

THE INTEGRITY OF 2 CORINTHIANS: 1980-2000

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The integrity of 2 Corinthians is a notoriously difficult issue. Thus, C. K. Barrett plainly states concerning this issue, “In all probability, the questions never will be finally settled.”¹ Such pessimism perhaps stems from both the almost overwhelming variety of previous conclusions and the lack of any significant progress since the earliest theories.² The discussion, started more than two hundred years ago by Johann Salamo Semler,³ carries on and still produces a steady stream of publications.

During the last two decades, scholars have continued to publish articles on the issue of integrity at various points in 2 Corinthians.⁴ In

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¹C. K. Barrett, “Titus,” in *Essays on Paul* (London: SPCK, 1982), 118. Similarly, H.D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 35, writes, “The history of research on 2 Cor 8 and 9 inspires little confidence in its results.”

²Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 35, interestingly notes that much of scholarship of the 1980s had returned to the earliest theories, Betz himself following a version of Semler’s original hypothesis. He remarks of Semler’s hypothesis, “Despite two hundred years of scholarly debate, it still awaits confirmation or refutation.”

³For the history of scholarship in this area, see Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 3-36.

⁴For all or most of 2 Corinthians, and for 2 Corinthians 10-13 especially, see F. B. Watson, “2 Cor. 10-13 and Paul’s Painful Letter to the Corinthians,” *JTS* ns 35 (1984): 324-346; J. M. Gilchrist, “Paul and the Corinthians: The Sequence of Letters and Visits,” *JSNT* 34 (1988): 47-69; N. H. Taylor, “The Composition and Chronology of Second Corinthians,” *JSNT* 44 (1991): 67-87; D. A. deSilva, “Measuring Penultimate against Ultimate Reality: An Investigation of the Integrity and Argumentation of 2 Corinthians,” *JSNT* 52 (1993): 41-70; R. Bieringer, “Plädoyer für die Einheitlichkeit des 2. Korintherbriefes: Literarkritische und inhaltliche Argumente,” in *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, BETL 112, ed. R. Bieringer and J. Lambrecht (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 131-179; L. L. Welborn, “The Identification of 2 Corinthians 10-13 with the ‘Letter of Tears,’” *NovT* 37 (1995): 138-153; W. S. Kurz, “2 Corinthians: Implied Readers and Canonical Implications,” *JSNT* 62 (1996): 43-63; A. Stewart-Sykes, “Ancient Editors and Copyists and Modern Partition Theories: The Case of the Corinthian Correspondence,” *JSNT* 61 (1996): 53-64; J. D. H. Amador, “Revisiting 2 Corinthians: Rhetoric and the Case for Unity,” *NTS* 46 (2000): 92-111.

For 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, see S. K. Stowers, “*Peri men gar* and the Integrity of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9,” *NovT* 32 (1990): 340-348; J. Lambrecht, “Paul’s Boasting about the Corinthians: A Study of 2 Cor. 8:24-9:5,” *NovT* 40 (1998): 352-368.

the interest of organization,⁵ the various theories have been classified into three categories in table form below:⁶ (A) 2 Corinthians as a composite of more than two letters, or fragments of letters, (B) 2 Corinthians as a composite of two letters, and (C) 2 Corinthians as a unity. Of the second classification, there are those who contend that 2 Corinthians 10-13 should be seen as earlier than 2 Corinthians 1-9.

Scholarly opinion is still far from a consensus, even after some two hundred years of debate. The place of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 continues to be challenged, although the general trend has been to view 2 Corinthians 1-9 as a unity.⁷ For those who maintain that 2 Corinthians is essentially two letters, 2 Corinthians 1-9 and 2 Corinthians 10-13, the contentious issue has been whether 2 Corinthians 10-13 was written *before*, and so should be identified with the intermediate “painful letter,”⁸ or *after* 2 Corinthians 1-9. The various partition theories will be treated under three headings, following the major sections of 2

For 2 Cor 2:14-7:4, see J. Murphy-O'Connor, “Paul and Macedonia: The Connection Between 2 Corinthians 2:13 and 2:14,” *JSNT* 25 (1985): 99-103; D. Patte, “A Structural Exegesis of 2 Corinthians 2.14-7.4 with Special Attention on 2.14-3.6 and 6.11-7.4,” in *SBLSP* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 40-49; F. W. Hughes, “The Rhetoric of Reconciliation: 2 Corinthians 1.1-2.13 and 7.5-8.24,” in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy*, JSNTSS 50, ed. D.F. Watson (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 246-261; P. B. Duff, “2 Corinthians 1-7: Sidestepping the Division Hypothesis Dilemma,” *BTB* 24 (1994): 16-26; D. A. deSilva, “Meeting the Exigency of a Complex Rhetorical Situation: Paul’s Strategy in 2 Corinthians 1 through 7,” *AUSS* 34 (1995): 5-22; L. L. Welborn, “Like Broken Pieces of a Ring: 2 Cor 1.1-2.13; 7.5-16 and Ancient Theories of Literary Unity,” *NTS* 42 (1996): 559-583.

For 2 Cor 6:14-7:1, see G. K. Beale, “The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5-7 and its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 550-581; D. A. deSilva, “Recasting the Moment of Decision: 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 in its Literary Context,” *AUSS* 31 (1993): 3-16; P. B. Duff, “The Mind of the Redactor: 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 in its Secondary Context,” *NovT* 35 (1993): 160-180; M. Goulder, “2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 as an Integral Part of 2 Corinthians,” *NovT* 36 (1994): 47-57.

⁵Many regard 2 Cor 6:14-7:2 as a non-Pauline interpolation, even though they may hold to the essential integrity of 2 Corinthians 1-9. The partition chart below does not necessarily account for this section, merely for simplicity’s sake. However, Taylor, 70, considers this section to be critical, supposing that if this section was a later interpolation, further redaction is also likely.

⁶For a more detailed table that covers scholarship since Semler to the early 1990’s, see R. Bieringer, “Teilungshypothesen zum 2. Korintherbrief. Ein Forschungsüberblick,” in *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, BETL 112, ed. R. Bieringer, and J. Lambrecht (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 96-97. Only sources cited in the main body of this present article appear in the “Works Cited” section. Otherwise, the readers should refer to Bieringer’s article for the full bibliographic information of sources in the table.

⁷This category would include those in the last three columns on the above table.

⁸The intermediate letter is referred to in 2 Cor 2:3-4. Cf. D. G. Horrell, *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), Appendix 1.

Corinthians: 2 Corinthians 1-7, 2 Corinthians 8-9 and 2 Corinthians 10-13.

2 Corinthians Scholars and Partition Theories: 1980-2000

<i>(A) 3-6 letters Several Partitions</i>	<i>(B) Two Distinct Letters</i>		<i>(C) Unity 2 Cor sent at once</i>
	<i>10-13 before 1-9</i>	<i>10-13 after 1-9</i>	
H.D.Betz (1985)	F.Watson (1984)	M.E.Thrall ? (1982)	E.E.Ellis (1982)
R.Hamerton-Kelly (1985)	G.A.Kennedy (1984)	V.P.Furnish (1984)	A.B.Spencer (1984)
E.Gräßer (1987)	H.-J.Klauck (1986)	R.P.Martin (1986)	P.Marshall (1987)
R.Pesch (1987)	F.Lang ? (1986)	C.Kruse (1987-88)	F.Young/D.Ford (1987)
J.Becker (1989)	G.Dautzenberg (1987)	J.M.Gilchrist (1988)	C.Wolf (1989)
J.A.Crafton (1991)	C.H.Talbert (1987)	J.L.Sumney (1990)	F.Danker (1989)
N.H.Taylor (1991)	P.Rolland (1990)	J.Murphy-O' Connor (1990-91)	R.Bieringer (1994)
F.W.Hughes (1991)	K.Quast (1994)	D.A.deSilva (1993)	B.Witherington (1995)
F.Zeilinger (1992)	D.G.Horrell (1996)	N.Watson (1993)	L.L.Belleville (1996)
M.E.Thrall (1994)		T.B.Savage (1996)	P.Barnett (1997)
L.L.Welborn (1995-96)			D.A.deSilva ? (1998)
			J.W.McCant (1999)
			J.D.H.Amador (2000)

2 CORINTHIANS 1-7

In 2 Corinthians 1-7, Paul largely focuses on his apostolic ministry. In 2 Corinthians 1:8-2:13, he begins with the affliction experience in Asia, and gives an explanation of his actions, particularly his revised itinerary. The brunt of his theological discourse is found in 2 Corinthians 2:14 to 6:13. His ministry is that of a new covenant,⁹

⁹2 Cor 2:14-3:18.

having extraordinary responsibilities.¹⁰ It must be carried out in light of Christ's judgment of the believer's works¹¹ and is characterized by hardship and suffering.¹² A particularly problematic section of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 encourages separation and cleansing. Finally, in 2 Corinthians 7:2-16, Paul's ministry culminates in the joy of meeting Titus in Macedonia with favorable news. The two disputed sections in 2 Corinthians 1-7 are first the large block from 2 Corinthians 2:14 to 7:4 and second a smaller one from 2 Corinthians 6:14 to 7:1.

2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4 as a "Letter of Defense"

The original argument of J. Weiss remains the centerpiece for proponents who suggest that 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4 was a later interpolation. About a hundred years ago, Weiss observed that 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4 breaks the natural flow of the narrative, from 2 Corinthians 2:12-13 to 7:5, outlining Paul's travel plans.¹³ The defensive tone of 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4 does not fit within the context of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 1-2 and 7. As a result, it is argued that 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4 forms either a part of the "severe letter"¹⁴ or possibly a part of another intermediate letter, a "letter of defense."¹⁵ The segment, 2 Corinthians 1:1-2:13+7:5-16, then, forms the "letter of reconciliation."¹⁶

Many doubt the viability of Weiss's theory, however. Francis Watson suggests that Paul in the section of 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4 is

¹⁰2 Cor 4:1-15.

¹¹2 Cor 4:16-6:2.

¹²2 Cor 6:3-13.

¹³The influence of Weiss's theory is widespread. See M. E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, I-VII, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 21-22.

¹⁴Later, Bornkamm and Vielhauer both placed 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 (with the exception of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1) with the intermediate letter or the "painful letter."

¹⁵See Watson, 335, who notes that this letter is "a lengthy fragment of a letter sent by Paul to the Corinthians between 1 Corinthians and the severe letter." Cf. V. P. Furnish, *II Corinthians*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 35, who points out that another "letter of defense" has no reference in the canonical epistles, however.

¹⁶Assuming this to be correct, Hughes, 246-261, performs a rhetorical analysis of 1:1-2:13+7:5-8:24 as a complete letter. He concludes, "Since there is a clear thematic unity which is matched by a demonstrable unity of rhetorical structure, it is likely that 1.1-2.13 and 7.5-8.24 are an integral letter." (260)

reflecting on the “theological significance of his ‘failure’” as described in 2 Corinthians 2:12-13 —that is his failure to capitalize on the “open door” in Troas because of his distress over missing Titus there.¹⁷ Paul’s simultaneous preoccupation with his weakness and with God’s greatness reveals the depth of Paul’s theological reflection. Watson concludes, “The link between 2.12f and 2.14 is not the work of a later editor, but reaches to the heart of Paul’s theology.”¹⁸ Moreover, others have suggested that the thanksgiving of 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 is the natural result of realizing that the “painful letter” had achieved its goal. Either the mention of Titus¹⁹ or the recollection of the Macedonians²⁰ prompted this realization.

At the opposite end, Kümmel points out that the “for” (γα/ρ) in 2 Corinthians 7:5 is awkward if the narrative followed from 2 Corinthians 2:13. Furthermore, semantic similarities between 2 Corinthians 7:4 and 7:5-16 are numerous. *paraklh/sei* (comfort, encouragement) of 2 Corinthians 7:4 is mirrored in *parakalwvn* and *paraka/lesen* (to comfort) of 2 Corinthians 7:6 and *paraklh/sei* of 2 Corinthians 7:7. Similar connections are found with *kau/chsiß* (boasting), *carav^* (joy) and *qli/yei* (affliction) of 2 Corinthians 7:4 and the rest of 2 Corinthians 7.²¹ These arguments have led many scholars to believe either that Paul was engaged in a theological digression in 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4,²² or that he was using the travel narrative as a frame for his theological reflection.²³

¹⁷Watson, 336-337, sees the same sort of thing in 2 Cor 1:8f, where Paul goes into a theological reflection over his severe affliction in Asia, yet “does nothing to dispel his readers’ ignorance of the concrete circumstances of his affliction.”

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 337-338, sees a further connection between 2 Cor 1:12-14 and 2 Cor 5:12.

¹⁹A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1915), 67; W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 291.

²⁰E. B. Allo, *Saint Paul: seconde épi tre aux Corinthiens* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1956), 45. Cf. Thrall, 22-23, who suggests that it may simply be an introduction to the discussion about his apostolic ministry with little intended connection with the preceding section.

²¹H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Corinthians* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), 179-180; Plummer, 67; Watson, 338.

²²So, Plummer, 67; Allo, 45; Kümmel, 291; C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC 8 (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1973), 97.

²³So, Watson, 337-338.

Reacting to this notion of digression and influenced by Weiss' s theory, L. Welborn contends, based on Greek literary theories of unity, for the literary singularity of 2 Corinthians 1:1-2:13+7:5-16 as an independent letter.²⁴ Repetition, he argues, such as the one found in 2 Corinthians 2:13—ε̅ xhvlqon ei β̅ Makedoni÷an (I went on into Macedonia) and 2 Corinthians 7:5—ε̅ lqo/ntwn hJmw n ei β̅ Makedoni÷an (after we came into Macedonia), is commonplace in Greek prose, and lends coherence to the whole²⁵ rather than functioning to end a digression. A similar thing is happening in 2 Corinthians 1 where Paul frequently repeats words such as para/klhsiβ̅ (comfort, encouragement), q̅li/yiβ̅ (affliction), and pa/q̅hma (suffering). In addition, Welborn suggests that “a resumption after a long digression should have been handled differently; the return to the abandoned subject should have been clearer and more direct.”²⁶ Because 2 Corinthians 7:5 displays “none of the characteristics of digression and return in Greek literature,” Paul was not engaged in a digression. Rather Paul has written a continuous account from 2 Corinthians 2:13 to 7:5, only with a subtle “metonymic shift” in thought.²⁷ The parallel structure of the sentences in 2 Corinthians 2:12-13 and 7:5 is evidence of their contiguity, where Paul had the words of 2 Corinthians 2:12-13 “exactly in his mind” when he wrote 2 Corinthians 7:5.²⁸

Although Welborn' s argument on the significance of “repetition” is creative, his central argument is not new, and thus remains

²⁴Welborn, “Like Broken Pieces,” op. cit., considers the “order, symmetry, and completeness of the whole,” assessing the “continuity, completeness and connectedness” of the hypothetical epistle. A similar case based on rhetorical analysis has been made by Hughes, “Rhetoric of Reconciliation,” op. cit. for 2 Cor 1:1-2:13+7:5-8:24.

²⁵That is 2 Cor 1:1-2:13+7:5-16.

²⁶Welborn, “Like Broken Pieces,” 566, argues that shorter digressions were normally ended with an adversative conjunction such as ajlla/ or de/ (but). When a digression is longer, it is climaxed by an “apology,” the return being marked by ejpa/neimi/ejpane/rcomai (go back, return).

²⁷It is not entirely clear what Welborn means by “metonymic shift.” Perhaps he is pointing to the shift (metonymy or metaphor?) from pneuμα (spirit) in 2 Cor 2:13 to σα/rx (flesh) in 2 Cor 7:5.

²⁸Welborn, “Like Broken Pieces,” 569. One wonders how potent such arguments are since Paul could just as easily have read what he had previously written, and therefore, have them “exactly in his mind.”

unconvincing. Like Weiss's, it is based on the continuity of the narrative from 2 Corinthians 2:12-13 and 7:5. He, too, observes that at 2 Corinthians 2:13, "the narrative suddenly breaks off. One has to wait until 7.6 to learn what happened."²⁹ He agrees with Weiss that a "single story of Paul's desire has been pulled apart by a redactor, and that at the moment of greatest suspense."³⁰

Clearly, Welborn's argument does not consider the delicate balance between a flawless author on the one hand and a hopelessly incompetent editor on the other. Two methodological points expose the weakness of this theory. First, one might ask why an editor would separate 2 Corinthians 1:1-2:13+7:5-16 if these pieces fit so well together. He confidently concludes that 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4 has "no point of departure in what precedes" and "makes no connection with what follows."³¹ How one reconciles such a statement with the *role* of a later redactor or editor in the first place is questionable.³² Second, Welborn's assumption that Paul strictly followed Greek literary conventions is not plausible. Modern research has shown that a Christian author such as Paul was *both* influenced by Greek literary conventions *and* not wholly bound by such conventions.³³

²⁹Ibid., 576.

³⁰Ibid., 569.

³¹Ibid., 583. Similarly, on page 577, he states, "There is no exegetical art capable of discovering in the opening chapters of 2 Corinthians a train of thought which makes the insertion of 2.14-7.4 at this point in the canonical text understandable, or even bearable." One is then forced to ask why an interpolator would insert this piece here.

³²Duff, 21, makes a similar point: "To put it simply, any suggestion that proposes a credible rationale for a redactor's putting several letters together in a particular way also eliminates the need for a redactor."

³³E.g. J. L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 158-182; D. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, LEC 8 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 158-225; S. K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, LEC 5 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986). The sheer variety of letter-types including Greco-Roman, Greco-Egyptian Papyri, and Aramaic/Jewish letters, and the flexibility of the letterform, make the strict application of Greek literary conventions on the Pauline letters a dubious exercise. Aune, *op. cit.*, 203, writes, "Early Christian letters tend to resist rigid classification, either in terms of the three main types of oratory or in terms of the many categories listed by the epistolary theorists. Most early Christian letters are multifunctional and have a 'mixed' character, combining elements from two or more epistolary types. In short, each early Christian letter must be analyzed on its own terms." In addition, Stowers, *op. cit.*, 21, writes, "Research on New Testament letters, especially the letters of Paul, has focused on showing how these Christian authors modified and adapted the typical opening and closing formulas for their own purposes. These modifications set the earliest Christian letters apart as products of a unique religious community." See also S. K. Stowers,

Welborn, like Weiss, assumes that Paul wanted and needed to give an account of his plans in continuous fashion as if the Corinthians were hearing this for the first time. On the contrary, it is likely that Paul's itinerary was already well known to the Corinthians.³⁴ The actual result of his "painful letter" and how they had received Titus would not have been important to the Corinthians since this was already firsthand information. Rather, they were more concerned with Titus and Paul's interpretation of the situation at Corinth,³⁵ namely that Titus and Paul both viewed the Corinthians in favorable light. Paul, then, was simply using the travel narrative as a framework for his theological discourse—an opportunity to explain the significance of his apostolic ministry and defend his motivation, especially in light of the continued threat from outsiders. Thus, it is best to consider 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4 as a theological reflection rather than a separate "letter of defense."

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 as a "Non-Pauline Fragment"

More problematic is the section of 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, which many scholars consider to be a non-Pauline interpolation.³⁶ At least five points are given in support. First, the section seems to interrupt the flow of thought from 2 Corinthians 6:13 to 7:2.³⁷ Second, this section contains no less than six *hapax legomena*, uncharacteristic of Paul in such a short section. Third, the theological content on separation is not found in other Pauline writings. Fourth, there are striking thematic parallels with Qumran and Essene teaching.³⁸ Fifth, the string of Old

"Social Typification and the Classification of Ancient Letters," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism: Essays in tribute to Howard Clark Kee*, ed. J. Neusner, et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 78-90.

³⁴R. Bieringer, "2 Corinthians 1-7 in Narrative-Critical Perspective" (New Orleans: Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, 1996, photocopied), 3, writes, "From the very beginning the letter presupposes that Titus had met Paul at Macedonia and informed him of the effect of the painful letter."

³⁵Furnish, 391, sees a new paragraph with 2 Cor 7:4 rather than 2 Cor 7:5, where 2 Cor 7:4 sets out the topic for what follows. Significantly, Furnish sees 2 Cor 7:4-16 as reinforcing the preceding appeals in 2 Cor 6:11-7:3 by reemphasizing Paul's affection for the Corinthians.

³⁶It is generally believed that 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is a non-Pauline fragment that was later interpolated into the larger "letter of defense." See Kümmel, 287-289; Thrall, 25-36.

³⁷N. A. Dahl, "A Fragment and Its Context: 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1," in *Studies in Paul* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977), 62.

³⁸See J. Gniska, "2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 in the Light of the Qumran Texts and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," in *Paul and Qumran*, ed. J. Murphy-O'Connor (Chicago: Priory, 1968), 46-68; J. A. Fitzmyer, "Qumran and the Interpolated Paragraph in 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1," *CBQ* 23 (1961):

Testament quotations is uncharacteristic. The text is so uncharacteristic that Betz contends, “The conclusion is unavoidable that the *theology* of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is not only non-Pauline, but anti-Pauline,” similar to the theology of Paul’s opponents in Galatians.³⁹

The Essene similarities and the apparent lack of connection between this section and the immediate context are indeed striking. If this is an adaptation of Essene material, it is difficult to know whether this is a pre-Pauline Christian adaptation, a Pauline reworking, or a post-Pauline interpolation.⁴⁰ In addition, the apparent senselessness of this arrangement is difficult to explain for either an interpolator or Paul himself.⁴¹

However, some scholars suggest connections with the surrounding literary context. For example, N. Dahl may be correct in connecting ἀπίστοι/ (unbelievers) in this section with that of 2 Corinthians 4:3-4. He also suggests that the contrast between light and darkness parallels the contrast between life and death in 2 Corinthians 4.⁴² Dahl, consequently, has suggested that the text be read as is, setting the integrity issue aside.⁴³

Moreover, J. Lambrecht argues for Pauline authenticity, not convinced by evidence to the contrary. He argues that 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:2 is a piece of “common parenthesis” which could be meant for any group of Christians struggling in a Gentile world. The required purity is not ritual, but moral.⁴⁴ He does not find the theological content

271-280.

³⁹H. D. Betz, “2 Cor 6:14-7:1: An Anti-Pauline Fragment?,” *JBL* 92 (1973): 88-108.

⁴⁰Dahl, 64; Furnish, 376-383, sees this as Paul’s own editorial work.

⁴¹Interestingly, Kümmel, 288, sees this as an argument against theories of interpolation, since the editorial tendency would be to smooth over such roughness.

⁴²Dahl, 66.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 65, concludes, “Obviously the fragment was not originally written to serve this function, but it is equally obvious that read this way it makes good sense in the context.” Cf. Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 194.

⁴⁴J. Lambrecht, “The Fragment of 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1: A Plea for Its Authenticity,” in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica II*, NovTSup 48, ed. T. Baarda, et al. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), 158-159, (reprinted in *Studies on 2 Corinthians*, BETL 112, ed. R. Bieringer, and J. Lambrecht (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 531-549). He writes, “The antithetical way of speaking is decidedly paradoxical and should not be taken as literal speech demanding a strict and ‘bodily’ separation.”

Some suggest that pagan worship and sexual immorality were on-going problems in Corinth. Thus, Thrall, 26-27, speaks of the Corinthian complaint that Paul was too restrictive. P. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 28, speculates

problem insurmountable, the language of the passage being “thoroughly that of Paul.”⁴⁵ In addition, G. Beale sees a consistency in Old Testament quotations in this passage based on the Old Testament background of Israel’s restoration, and the reconciliation found in Christ.⁴⁶ In this theological context, “do not be mismatched with unbelievers” and other pleas for purity become thoroughly appropriate.

There are signs furthermore that Paul may be engaged in another digression. In 2 Corinthians 7:2, he essentially repeats, and perhaps reinforces, the thought of 2 Corinthians 6:13, exhorting the Corinthians to keep an openness toward him.⁴⁷ In light of Paul’s plea for the Corinthians to open their hearts to him, he states the foundation for such devotion; namely that he and the Corinthians shared much common ground while unbelievers have nothing in common with the Corinthian Christians if they truly belong to Christ. Thus, a good case can be made to support a reading of the text as it stands, especially in light of the fact that a sensible editorial motive is lacking. In light of the above considerations, the two sections, 2 Corinthians 2:14-7:4 and 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1, are best viewed as theological reflections rather than later editorial interpolations.

2 CORINTHIANS 8-9

2 Corinthians 8-9 is dedicated to the waning collection. Paul’s appeal is the strongest in 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 while in 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5, he appears to give a continuous explanation of his action in sending Titus and the brothers. He finishes this section with a final appeal in homiletic style in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

that this section may be a repeat of a similar admonition made during the second visit that still had not been heeded. However, this section seems to make more sense in the light of either intruding rivals who were threatening the congregation’s loyalty to Paul or a system of patronage, which competed for the loyalties of some Christians as clients.

⁴⁵Ibid., 156-157. One could find parallels in Paul’s thought to at least some of the content: *nao/ß qeouv* (temple of God) 2 Cor 6:16//1 Cor 3:16-17, *dikaïosu/h- ajnomi/a* (righteousness-lawlessness) 2 Cor 6:14b//Rom 6:19, *fwvß-sko/toß* (light-darkness) 2 Cor 6:14c//Rom 2:19; 13:12; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 5:8, *ajkaqa/ rtoß* (unclean) in context of parent-children relationship 2 Cor 6:17-18//1 Cor 7:14, *fo/boß qeouv* (fear of God) 2 Cor 7:1//quotation of Ps 35:2 in Rom 3:18.

⁴⁶Beale, 556-578.

⁴⁷Thrall, 26; Lambrecht, “Fragment,” 145-147, argues that 2 Cor 6:11-13 and 2 Cor 7:2-4 are closely related to one another.

Betz argues for the dislocation of both 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 from the rest of canonical 2 Corinthians and from each other.⁴⁸ Modern theories of separation stem from Hans Windisch who suggested on literary grounds that 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 were separate “business letters,”⁴⁹ written roughly about the same time to two distinct audiences. He observes that the two collection chapters did not have much in common with the other parts of 2 Corinthians and too much in common with one another. Others, most notably Dieter Georgi, follow a similar theory.⁵⁰

2 Corinthians 8 as a “Letter of Recommendation”

In the early twentieth century, Windisch argued that 2 Corinthians 8 had all the characteristics of a “letter of recommendation.”⁵¹ Betz seeks to validate Windisch’s partition theory on rhetorical grounds, suggesting that 2 Corinthians 8 contains distinct elements of deliberative oratory. Like Windisch and Georgi, he sees 2 Corinthians 8 as an independent, self-contained commendation letter for Titus, apart from the missing introductory and concluding sections.⁵² However, Betz himself admits that there are no strict rules that the ancient rhetoricians followed.⁵³ B. Witherington, furthermore, points out that discovering the major parts of rhetorical speech is no proof that the documents were originally separate. He points out that letters are not entirely

⁴⁸Betz’s position differs little from Semler’s original hypothesis by his own admission, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 36. Semler interpolated Romans 16 between the two chapters. The Dutch scholar, J. Michelsen, later suggested that 2 Cor 8 belongs with 2 Cor 10-13, because of its abrasive tone as compared to 2 Cor 9. Others followed and proposed that 2 Cor 1-7 and 2 Cor 9 belonged together as a single letter. H. Hagge succeeded in revitalizing Semler’s hypothesis that 2 Cor 8 and 9 did not fit well together.

⁴⁹H. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, Meyers Kommentar 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924), 243: “Geschäftsbrief”

⁵⁰D. Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul’s Collection for Jerusalem*, English trans. with a preface and an afterword (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 75-79. See also D. Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians*, tr. H. Attridge (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 9-14; K. Nickle, *The Collection: A Study in Paul’s Strategy*, SBT 48 (London: SCM, 1966), 16-22 who also follows a similar hypothesis.

⁵¹Windisch, 103-104, 260-261: “Empfehlungsbrief.” Similarly, see G. Bornkamm, “The History of the Origin of the So-Called Second Letter to the Corinthians,” *NIS* 8 (1962): 258-264.

⁵²Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 18, 21, 25-27, 35.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 60.

comparable to speeches.⁵⁴ In addition, Witherington argues that there are several arguments in both 1 and 2 Corinthians that similarly have such elements of rhetorical speech, but which clearly should not be separated from the surrounding context.⁵⁵ Therefore, an argument based on elements of rhetorical speech does not seem as conclusive as Betz would suggest.⁵⁶

In addition, Georgi argues that a contradiction exists between 2 Corinthians 7:5 and 8:1-2 because of a lapse in time implied between the two passages. For Georgi, this apparent contradiction is reason enough to separate the two chapters.⁵⁷ However, Georgi's hypothesis is built upon a certain unlikely understanding of what the Corinthians actually knew about Titus and his mission(s) during the writing of those two chapters.⁵⁸ It is improbable that Titus' s and Paul' s movements as recorded in 2 Corinthians 7 and 8 were unknown to the Corinthian congregation. *Contra* Georgi, Furnish argues persuasively for the integrity of 2 Corinthians 7 and 8, and deliberately includes 2 Corinthians 7:4-16 in his comment on the collection chapters. For Furnish, 2 Corinthians 7:4-16 is a "preliminary assurance of confidence" on which the appeal to the collection is based.⁵⁹ Furnish notes some important connections between 2 Corinthians 7 and 8.

For example, Paul' s use of *spoudh*/ (earnestness) gives cohesion to 2 Corinthians 7 and 8.⁶⁰ It is interesting to note the connection of the verbal form, *spouda* / *zw* (to do one' s best), to "remembering the

⁵⁴B. Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 413 n. 7. Also Stowers, "Social Typification," 79-80.

⁵⁵Witherington, 413 n. 7, gives the example of 1 Corinthians 15. Cf. pp. 291-312. Cf. also V. D. Verbrugge, "The Collection and Paul' s Leadership of the Church in Corinth" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1988), 80-103, 295-296.

⁵⁶Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 36, writes, "Semler' s hypothesis can be regarded as proven if our analysis in chapters 2 and 3 [literary analysis of the hypothetical letter fragments] yields positive results, if the literary genre and function can be identified, and if the letters thus reconstructed can be made understandable within the context of Paul' s dealings with the Corinthian church."

⁵⁷Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 76.

⁵⁸Thus, his theory is based on arguments from silence. He suggests that Titus' s reconciliation mission should have been more prominent in 2 Cor 8.

⁵⁹Furnish, 384. Also Barrett, *Second Epistle*, 218.

⁶⁰Spicq, *TLNT*, 3:281; Harder, "*spouda* / *zw* κτλ.," in *TDNT*, 7:566; *BAGD*, 763d-764a. *Spoudh* / expresses haste, zeal, eagerness or earnestness.

poor” in Galatians 2:10, where the quality of Paul’s zeal was revealed in his eagerness (*spouda/zw*) to remember the poor. In 2 Corinthians 7:11-12, Paul affirms a similar *spoudh/* in the Corinthians, the foundation of Paul’s comfort expressed in 2 Corinthians 7:13. This test was the aim of the “painful letter.” In 2 Corinthians 7:12, Paul writes, “So although I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong, nor on account of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your zeal for us (*spoudh\ n uJmwvn th\ n uJpe\r hJmwvn*) might be revealed to you in the sight of God.” The nature and quality of the manifest *spoudh/* is explained in the parallel terms found in 2 Corinthians 7:11: defense (*ajpologi/a*), indignation (*ajgana/kthsiß*), fear (*fo/boß*), longing (*eJpipi/po/qhsiß*), zeal (*zhvlloß*), and vengeance (*eJkdi/khsiß*). Paul’s call to repentance had been heeded in the discipline of the offender. At every point, the Corinthians had proved their innocence in this matter by exhibiting a grief “according to God” (*kata\ qeo/n*). This affirmation of the Corinthians’ *spoudh/* seems to be in mind as Paul writes 2 Corinthians 8.

This same *spoudh/* that took the form of repentance in the Corinthians led the Macedonians to contribute to the collection in exemplary fashion. The *spoudh/* of the Macedonians had produced generosity even in a state of extreme poverty.⁶¹ Where the Corinthians still lacked, the Macedonians had got it right. In 2 Corinthians 8:7, however, Paul affirms the Corinthians’ *spoudh/* which was evident in other forms: “Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in all earnestness (*paçshø spoudhøv*), and in your love for us—see that you excel in this gracious work also.” The Corinthians had proven themselves not only in their godly repentance, but also in every form of *spoudh/*, except in the area of generosity. Paul’s continued strategy in the section from 2 Corinthians 7:5 to 8:8 is summed up in 2 Corinthians 8:8—“I say this not as a command, but to prove by the *spoudh/* of others that your love also is genuine.”⁶²

⁶¹2 Cor 8:2-3.

⁶²Paul seems to say exactly what Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 76, suggests Paul is not saying: “Paul could easily have written something like, ‘Now, that you have come forth with such

Without 2 Corinthians 7:5-16, the appeal in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 would certainly be less effective, if not groundless.

Furthermore, there is another verbal connection in the use of *kau/chsiß* (boasting). Paul boasts about the Corinthians, and again seems to prepare in 2 Corinthians 7 for the appeal in 2 Corinthians 8. In 2 Corinthians 7:4, his *kau/chsiß* is great on behalf of the Corinthians while in 2 Corinthians 7:14, Paul boasts to Titus. In 2 Corinthians 7:14, Paul affirms the truth of his boasting, which has been proven by the Corinthians' sincere repentance. In 2 Corinthians 8:24, the Corinthians are challenged to exhibit (*ejndei/knumi*) the proof of Paul's boast to those he was sending (*th\ n ejndeixin . . . hJmwvn kauch/sewß uJpe\r uJmwvn eijß aujtou/ß*), and to the churches (*eijß pro/swpon twvn ejkklhsiwvn*).

The confidence and boasting expressed in 2 Corinthians 7 are the ideal foundation for the penetrating appeal in 2 Corinthians 8, as Furnish rightly contends. Such expression of confidence in the Corinthians is essential if they are to endure a comparison with the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians 8.⁶³ 2 Corinthians 8 is then best read with 2 Corinthians 1-7.

2 Corinthians 9 as a "Business Letter to the Achaians"

Here again, Betz argues that 2 Corinthians 9 exhibits elements of rhetorical speech and therefore, 2 Corinthians 9 must have originally been a self-contained letter, circulated to the churches of Achaia.⁶⁴ Most arguments for separating 2 Corinthians 9 from 2 Corinthians 8 again seem to refer back to Windisch and argue from two categories: similarities and differences. On the basis of similarity, it is argued that

clear evidence of your love, give that love and affection material proof by bringing the collection to completion!"

⁶³Paul appears socially manipulative in 2 Cor 8:1-5 and 9:1-5, comparing the Corinthians with the Macedonians. However, it must be pointed out that the competition is not about amounts, but about the quality of the gift. Furthermore, the comparison is not between individuals, but between groups. Finally, it seems to be tempered by Paul's consistent affirmation of the Corinthians in 2 Cor 7: 8:7, 10, and the concern for giving according to means.

⁶⁴See Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 88-89, for his proposed literary and rhetorical structure of 2 Corinthians 9. Again he seems to be following the argument and basic theory of Windisch, 268-269 and of Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 76-79.

2 Corinthians 8 and 9 must be “doublets.”⁶⁵ However, often the same scholars argue for separation, on the basis of dissimilarity. These arguments on the whole seem to be highly selective in the use of evidence. It is entirely possible to turn the argumentation on its head, so to speak, where similarities support the unity of the situations of both chapters and where differences may be attributed to stylistic or other subtle variations.

Windisch pointed out that the structures of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 are remarkably similar.⁶⁶ The reference to the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 is repeated in 2 Corinthians 9:1-2. The full phrase, *thvß diakoni÷aß thvß ei ß tou\ß a gi÷ouß* (this service for the saints), in 2 Corinthians 8:4 is repeated verbatim in 2 Corinthians 9:1. It is argued that the repetition of the entire phrase is redundant if the chapters originally appeared together. Furthermore, the reference in 2 Corinthians 9:1 is not qualified by the demonstrative pronoun *tau/thß*, whereas in 2 Corinthians 8, after its initial mention in 2 Corinthians 8:4, every subsequent reference seems to be qualified by the demonstrative pronoun.⁶⁷ In addition, it is argued that the introductory formula in 2 Corinthians 9:1, *peri\ me\n ga/r* is inappropriate if the subject matter is identical to the previous section. Betz follows Windisch in arguing that *ga/r* “need not refer to anything preceding” since *me/n* points forward to the *de/* of 2 Corinthians 9:3.⁶⁸ Finally, in 2 Corinthians 9:3, Paul redundantly writes about “sending the brothers” which he has already mentioned twice in 2 Corinthians 8:18 and 8:22. Therefore, it is argued that 2 Corinthians 9 originally stood as a separate letter.

From a grammatical standpoint, the first pertinent question is whether the phrase *peri« me«n ga/r* in 2 Corinthians 9:1 constitutes an introduction to the body of a separate letter or whether the phrase merely signals a new section with direct connection to what precedes. Betz seems unnaturally to override the force of *ga/r* using

⁶⁵See Bieringer, “Teilungshypothesen,” 98-105.

⁶⁶Windisch, 286-287.

⁶⁷This is apparently an original argument of A. Halmel. These pronouns are found in 2 Cor 8:6, 7, 19 and 20. 2 Cor 9 contains similar uses of *tau/thß* (this) in verses 5, 12 and 13.

⁶⁸Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 90; Windisch, 269.

me/n. The ga/r could easily retain its force and point back to Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 8:24. In an important article, S. K. Stowers⁶⁹ has shown that the formula, peri« me«n ga/r, does not as a rule introduce new letters. In Acts 28:22, the only other NT reference, the phrase comes at the end of the episode, where Paul meets with the Jewish leaders in Rome, and clearly connects with what precedes. This usage is typical according to Stowers. An examination of the phrase in ninety other instances from Hellenistic literature of the period reveals that none "introduces the body of a document or even comes near its beginning."⁷⁰ Furthermore, Stowers observes that peri\ me\n gar/ frequently "serves to introduce a reason, warrant, or explanation for what was just said."⁷¹ There is no convincing reason to maintain that its usage in 2 Corinthians 9:1 deviates from the norm.

The phrase, thvß diakoni÷aß thvß ei ß tou\ß a gi÷ouß, in 2 Corinthians 9:1 is best viewed as emphatic in purpose. On the one hand, it is significant that ou toß is missing precisely where the full phrase appears, but not in 2 Corinthians 9:12, 13 where diakoni/a stands without thvß ei ß tou\ß a gi÷ouß.⁷² On the other hand, the repetition of the entire phrase, thvß diakoni÷aß thvß ei ß tou\ß a gi÷ouß, attests to the need for emphasis in view of the significant distance between 2 Corinthians 8:4 and 9:1.⁷³

It is interesting that Paul plainly speaks of excessiveness (perisso/ß) in 2 Corinthians 9:1, as if he has no need to go on since his point has been made. This is scarcely intelligible if the letter was in

⁶⁹Stowers, "Peri men gar," op. cit., 340-348.

⁷⁰Ibid., 341.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²In 2 Cor 9:12, ou toß (this) does not qualify diakoni/a (service), but rather leitourgi+a (service). The use of tau/thß in 2 Cor 8:6, 7, and 19 qualify ca/riß (a gracious work), and in 2 Cor 8:20, aJdoth/ß (abundant gift). Diakoni/a, however, does not appear without qualification in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, and perhaps attests to the unity of these chapters with the rest of 2 Corinthians, where diakoni/a is defined by death (2 Cor 3:7), spirit (2 Cor 3:8), condemnation and righteousness (2 Cor 3:9), gospel generally (2 Cor 4:1), reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18), Paul's opposition (2 Cor 6:3; 11:8). Diakoni/a in the collection chapters are distinctively "for the saints" and a joint venture of Paul and his gentile churches.

⁷³E.g., Furnish, 429, 432.

fact independent.⁷⁴ The importance of the collection forces Paul to add further to the potent appeal of 2 Corinthians 8. Moreover, the *gra/fein* (to write) in 2 Corinthians 9:1 is articular and suggests a connection to what was previously written.⁷⁵ His continued petition is not only superfluous because he had just written 2 Corinthians 8, but also because Paul was sending the brothers.⁷⁶ Paul's admission of redundancy, then, makes more sense in light of 2 Corinthians 8.

The proponents of separation argue simultaneously with the above "doublet" arguments that there are many striking differences between the two chapters, which finally amount to contradictions.⁷⁷ For example, Georgi points to different use of the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians 9:1-2 as an audience to impress rather than an example to follow. Furthermore, the Macedonians were previously impressed by the Corinthian effort in 2 Corinthians 9:2, while they are held up as models for the Corinthians to follow in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5.⁷⁸ In addition, the Macedonian effort is said to be spontaneous in 2 Corinthians 8:3-4 while in 2 Corinthians 9:2 it was the Corinthian zeal, which encouraged their participation.⁷⁹

Firstly, a distinction should to be made between *ejpitele/w* (to complete) in 2 Corinthians 8:11 and *proqumi÷a* (willingness) in 2 Corinthians 9:2. In 2 Corinthians 8:11, Paul affirms the Corinthians' *proqumi÷a* for the collection, but urges them to complete (*ejpitele/w*) or follow through on the *proqumi÷a*.⁸⁰ In 2

⁷⁴Thus, some commentators are forced to suggest a particular historical reconstruction, namely that the Corinthians were tired of hearing about the collection. Redundancy is explained in this manner by Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 90; R. Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, tr. R. A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 256; J. Héring, *The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*, tr. A.W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock (London: Epworth, 1967), 65.

⁷⁵This anaphoric use of the article is suggested by Furnish, 426 and by R. P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC 40 (Waco: Word, 1986), 249.

⁷⁶Cf. 2 Cor 9:3; 8:18, 22.

⁷⁷Windisch, 287.

⁷⁸Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 77.

⁷⁹Windisch, 270.

⁸⁰A similar distinction lies between *poie/w* (to do) and *qe/lw* (to will) in 2 Cor 8:10-11. Furthermore, the difficulty of *αὐπο\ pe÷rusi* (since a year ago) in 2 Cor 8:10 with 2 Cor 9:2 is solved by this distinction. The Corinthians had been prepared (*paraskeua/zw*), i.e. pledged to give, a year ago, and were first to begin (*proena/rcomai*) the process of collection at that

Corinthians 9:2, it was this προϋμι÷α that spurred on most of the Macedonians to pledge a donation. Meanwhile, the Macedonians had brought to completion their pledge, which the Corinthian example first encouraged. At the time of Paul's writing, it was the example of the Macedonians' completion⁸¹ that was explicitly the basis of appeal in 2 Corinthians 9:1-2 for the Corinthians to complete what they had pledged. Thus, the references to the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 and 2 Corinthians 9:1-2 are complementary.

Secondly, the spontaneity of the Macedonians does not necessarily rule out what is described in 2 Corinthians 9:2. What Paul is suggesting in 2 Corinthians 8:3-4 is that the Macedonians did not need to be reminded of their pledge as the Corinthians had to be. The limited role of the Apostle determines the quality of αὐτῶν (on one's own accord) displayed by the Macedonians.⁸² Paul is in effect saying that he himself had no part in the Macedonian contribution, not that the Corinthians could not influence them.⁸³ The Corinthians, on the contrary, had to be reminded of their initial enthusiasm and pledge, even though Paul really should not have had to do so.

Proponents of disunity contend a third problem. Paul's reference to Achaia, rather than Corinth, in 2 Corinthians 9:2 suggests difference audiences. However, in light of 2 Corinthians 1:1, there is no need to distinguish sharply between Corinthians and Achaians. Since Corinth was the provincial capital, Corinthians could also be known as Achaians, many of the population of the smaller towns and countryside being drawn to the capital.⁸⁴ Long ago, Plummer suggested that Paul is here trying to avoid exaggeration where most area churches had completed their collection, but where the Corinthians were slightly lagging.⁸⁵ Whether or not Plummer's suggestion is accurate, he does rightly point to the fact that churches outside the city proper likely

point (cf. 1 Cor 16:1-4). In the meantime, while the Corinthian collection hits rough times, Paul himself had completed the Macedonian collection, probably as he wrote these chapters.

⁸¹Cf. 2 Cor 8:11.

⁸²Cf. 2 Cor 8:2.

⁸³The use of hyperbole by Paul, or his endorsement of a social convention, should not be ruled out, although this does not give the full explanation.

⁸⁴S. Alcock, *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 160-164.

⁸⁵Plummer, 254.

contributed to the collection.⁸⁶ Furthermore, Paul uses “Achaia” in the context of boasting before the Macedonians. Thus, it is more appropriate to speak of Achaia as the provincial counterpart of Macedonia in the imperial landscape rather than Corinth and Philippi as provincial capitals.⁸⁷ This view is confirmed by Romans 15:26 where there is no mention of Corinth, only Achaia.

The final argument against unity is the alleged discrepancy in the description and mission of Titus and the brothers. According to 2 Corinthians 8:20, the brothers are sent in order that the administration of the collection might be above reproach. In 2 Corinthians 9:3-5, however, the brothers are sent to prepare the Corinthians for the arrival of Paul and his Macedonian companions.⁸⁸ Furthermore, in 2 Corinthians 8:17, Titus went “on his own initiative” while in 2 Corinthians 9:3-5, they are sent by Paul and at his urging.⁸⁹ Here again, the two accounts as stated in 2 Corinthians 8:20 and 9:3-5 are not incompatible, but complementary. Strictly speaking, 2 Corinthians 8:20 is not a reason for sending, but it explains why Titus is not alone, and why the churches had chosen the brothers to accompany the collection project.⁹⁰ This explains the more detailed personal descriptions in 2 Corinthians 8:17-23. Furthermore, the distinction between *sumpe* / *mpw* (to send with) in 2 Corinthians 8:18, 22 and *pe* / *mpw* (to send) in 2 Corinthians 9:3 suggests that 2 Corinthians 9:3-5 is in fact a summary of their *collective mission* for Paul. In addition, unity is supported by the articular *του* \β *αδελφου* / \β (the brothers) in 2 Corinthians 9:3 which is unqualified and is less certain if Paul did not earlier identify them in 2 Corinthians 8:18-23 as Titus and his two companions.⁹¹

⁸⁶E.g., Phoebe’s congregation at nearby Cenchreae (Rom 16:1).

⁸⁷Philippi, according to Acts 16:12, was a Roman colony, like Corinth, and “the leading city in the Macedonian district.” In Macedonia, Paul visited many cities—the island of Samothrace, Neopolis (Acts 16:11), Philippi (Acts 16:12), Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica (Acts 17:1), and Berea (Acts 17:10)—before arriving at Athens (Acts 17:16) and Corinth (Acts 18:1) in the Roman province of Achaia.

⁸⁸C. H. Talbert, *Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 182.

⁸⁹Cf. 2 Cor 8:6.

⁹⁰Cf. 2 Cor 8:19.

⁹¹Two other possibilities do exist, however. These “brothers” could have been well known to the Corinthians, or they could be the ones carrying the letter, in which cases their precise

These points suggest that 2 Corinthians 9 is best read with 2 Corinthians 8. In light of the above evidence, it is reasonable to read 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 with 2 Corinthians 1-7. Thus, 2 Corinthians 1-9, read as one letter, simultaneously acknowledges reconciliation, reflects on the significance of the apostolic ministry, and seeks to revive the waning collection. However, it is not certain how the difficult section of 2 Corinthians 10-13 relates to 2 Corinthians 1-9.

2 CORINTHIANS 10-13

The final section, 2 Corinthians 10-13, is a fiery defense and an attack on the intruding opponents. Paul defends against doubts about his personal credentials in 2 Corinthians 10:1-18. He then answers charges of inferiority in 2 Corinthians 11:1-15; 12:11-13, which forces him to boast about himself in 2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10. The conclusion has two elements. First, Paul plans a visit in 2 Corinthians 12:14-13:10, but anticipates some misgivings and hopes that he will not have to be severe. In closing, his tone again changes to offer a final appeal and blessing in 2 Corinthians 13:11-14.

The differences between 2 Corinthians 1-9 and 2 Corinthians 10-13 exist at several levels. First and most strikingly, the tone of the letter abruptly changes from reconciliation and joy to reproach and threats. Second, it is noted that the object of boasting changes from the Corinthians to Paul himself. Third, Paul speaks in the first person plural in 2 Corinthians 1-9 while he prefers the singular in 2 Corinthians 10-13. Fourth, in 2 Corinthians 7:7-16, Paul compliments the Corinthians for being committed to the gospel that Paul had preached to them. However, in 2 Corinthians 10:1-11 and 11:4, the Corinthians seem to be supporting Paul's opponents, and following "another Jesus" and a "different gospel." Fifth, while Paul's reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 7 is a good foundation for the delicate matter of the collection, it is difficult to see how the cautious tone of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 could be an appropriate precursor to 2 Corinthians 10-13. Sixth, it is further argued from the phrase, *ei ß ta\ uJpere+keina uJmw n* (in the regions beyond you), in 2 Corinthians 10:16 that Paul wrote 2 Corinthians 10-13 from Asia Minor, probably Ephesus, while 2

Corinthians 1-9 was written from Macedonia.⁹²

Because of these serious contrasts, 2 Corinthians 10-13 has been historically the most disputed partition. It is, furthermore, safe to say that nearly all scholars who do not hold to the unity of canonical 2 Corinthians separate 2 Corinthians 10-13 from 2 Corinthians 9.⁹³ Since the connection or disconnection of 2 Corinthians 10-13 is important to this study, especially in describing the opposition to Paul and his criticism over financial practices, the arguments for and against separation will be discussed in greater detail.

Before or After 2 Corinthians 1-9

Apart from the more radical division hypotheses, the separation of 2 Corinthians 10-13 from 1-9 seems to take two lines. Firstly, 2 Corinthians 10-13 should be identified with the intermediate “painful letter”⁹⁴ and was written before 2 Corinthians 1-9. Secondly, 2 Corinthians 10-13 was written after 2 Corinthians 1-9, but the evidence warrants a division so that the section was an entirely separate letter. In both theories, an early interpolator has placed 2 Corinthians 10-13 at the end of 2 Corinthians 1-9 minus the prescript and the postscript.⁹⁵

Most modern adherents to the theory that 2 Corinthians 10-13 should be identified with the intermediate “painful letter” rely on the original arguments of J. H. Kennedy and A. Hausrath.⁹⁶ Their reasoning

⁹²For a summary of the arguments for the separation of 2 Corinthians 10-13, see Thrall, 5-14.

⁹³Virtually no partition theory leaves 2 Cor 9 with 2 Cor 10-13 as it stands in the canonical order. Bultmann, 16-18, appears to be an exception. However, it is not certain from his commentary whether he places 10-13 before or after 2 Cor 9. Some have argued that 2 Cor 8 belongs with 2 Cor 10-13, however. See Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 15.

⁹⁴The subtle difference in terminology is endemic of the problem. A “letter of tear” or “tearful letter” is more fitting of the description in 2 Cor 2:4: *dia» pollw n dakru/wn* (through many tears). However, a “severe letter” seems to be a more appropriate description of 2 Cor 10-13. Cf. Furnish, 37, who notes that the one seems to have been written in sorrow, the other in anger. “Painful letter,” preferred in this present study, is perhaps a sufficiently ambiguous term to cover both senses.

⁹⁵The interpolation must have necessarily occurred before our extant manuscript evidence which does not warrant any partitioning in 2 Cor. Few, however, bother to offer any explanation of how the canonical form came to be. Fortunately, some, such as Furnish, 38-41, have not overlooked this responsibility of every partition theory. See the earlier, more complex attempt by G. Bornkamm, “Die Vorgeschichte des sogenannten zweiten Korintherbriefes,” in *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, vol. 4 (Munich: Kaiser, 1971), 162-194. Cf. Bornkamm, “History of the Origin,” *op. cit.*

⁹⁶Hausrath’s original was the so-called “Vierkapitelbrief-Hypothese,” and stems from his

was that the situation reflected in 2 Corinthians 10-13 is best seen as earlier than that of 2 Corinthians 1-9.⁹⁷ In an influential article published in 1984, Watson further refined this thesis.⁹⁸ While Watson saw six points of contact between 2 Corinthians 1-9 and 10-13 where Paul in 1-9 seems to be referring back to what he said *in the past* in 2 Corinthians 10-13,⁹⁹ he further enhanced Kennedy and Hausrath's argument by attempting to answer two of the most serious objections with the "identification hypothesis." The first objection is that the "painful letter" is concerned with an individual member of the Corinthian congregation whereas 2 Corinthians 10-13 seems to be dealing with opponents from outside the congregation. The second objection is that the personal offence against Paul, a prominent feature of the "painful letter" as described in 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 and 7:12, does not appear in 2 Corinthians 10-13.¹⁰⁰ Several scholars have more recently defended this view.¹⁰¹

Against the above view, others conclude that the section of 2 Corinthians 10-13 is best placed after 2 Corinthians 1-9, but still as a separate letter. Although the idea that 2 Corinthians 10-13 ought to be identified with the "painful letter" is rejected, this view shares the

emphasis on 2 Cor 10-13 as the solution to the partition problem in 2 Cor. Watson, 324, however, prefers the label, "Identification Hypothesis," identifying 2 Cor 10-13 as the "severe" intermediate letter. Bieringer, "Teilungshypothesen," 73-80, calls this the "Hausrath-Kennedy" hypothesis.

⁹⁷According to this view, the prevailing theme of reconciliation found in 2 Cor 1-9 is only appropriate if 2 Cor 10-13 was the intermediate letter written from Ephesus. For example, the suspicion of Paul's financial activities in 2 Cor 12:16-18 is the most appropriate background to 2 Cor 8, the ideal reconciliation of such suspicion. See the critique of this position by Furnish, 37-38, however.

⁹⁸Watson, "2 Cor. 10-13," op. cit. Professor Watson has expressed to me personally in February 2001 that after review he continues to endorse the view of his 1984 article, his first academic publication.

⁹⁹Watson, 326-327, points out two discrepancies in addition. First, the negative and positive uses of $\alpha\alpha\rho\rho\omega\nu$ (to be courageous) and $\rho\epsilon\pi\omega\iota/\alpha\eta\sigma\iota\beta\alpha$ (confidence) in 2 Cor 10:2 and in 2 Cor 7:16 and 2 Cor 1:15. Second, 2 Cor 1-9 seems to have been written from Macedonia while 2 Cor 10-13 from Ephesus (2 Cor 10:16). All of these eight points are buttressed by a ninth: "All these arguments are supported above all by the remarkable change of mood at 10.1, which upholders of the unity of the Epistle are unable adequately to explain."

¹⁰⁰Furnish, 37-38, argues that the reconciliatory comments in 2 Corinthians 7 completely ignore the Corinthians' rejection of the "false apostles," the most prominent concern of 2 Corinthians 10-13.

¹⁰¹Cf. Horrell, Appendix 1; Welborn, "Identification," 138-153. Welborn's attempt, however, is not as compelling as that of Watson since Welborn does not include the defensive section of 2 Cor 2:14-7:1 with the "letter of reconciliation." This connection that Watson makes with 2 Cor 10-13 is then lost.

conviction that the change in tone is too abrupt to consider the two sections a unity. Furnish argues in addition to the two serious objections above that there is no mention of Paul's change in itinerary, which he contends should have been present in the "painful letter." Furthermore, the "painful letter" seems to have been written in place of a visit,¹⁰² but 2 Corinthians 10-13 is written in light of an impending visit.¹⁰³ Therefore, Furnish and others¹⁰⁴ argue that the period of ministry and the occasion of 2 Corinthians 10-13 should be viewed as sometime after that of 2 Corinthians 1-9.

The case for placing 2 Corinthians 10-13 either between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 1-9 or after 2 Corinthians 1-9 as a separate letter is not finally convincing in light of the two very different interpretations of the same evidence. These two theories are ultimately driven by the significant change in tone between 2 Corinthians 9 and 10.

2 Corinthians 10-13 with 2 Corinthians 1-9

Others argue, however, that 2 Corinthians 10-13 is best left in its canonical place.¹⁰⁵ Proponents of unity offer several plausible historical explanations for the significant change in tone between 2 Corinthians 9 and 10.¹⁰⁶ The first is an extended pause in dictation with the possible combination of personal factors. It must be admitted that Paul and his amanuensis certainly did not write his longer letters in one sitting. Rather, an epistle probably took weeks to compose. If so, there must be an allowance for irregularities such as those found in earlier sections of canonical 2 Corinthians.¹⁰⁷ A second explanation is that there were two

¹⁰²Cf. 2 Cor 1:23-2:4.

¹⁰³Cf. 2 Cor 10:2; 12:14, 20-21; 13:1-2, 10. See Furnish, 37-38. However, Thrall, 14, interprets the evidence differently and gives three examples. 1) A visit (presumably the sorrowful one) is spoken of in the past in 2 Cor 2:3 while in 2 Cor 13:10, it substitutes the painful letter. 2) While 2 Cor 13:2 speaks of a proposed visit, it is abandoned in 2 Cor 1:23. 3) Paul is dissatisfied with the Corinthians' measure of obedience in 2 Cor 10:6 while he is satisfied in 2 Cor 2:9.

¹⁰⁴Cf. the similar conclusion by Martin, xlviii-li; T. B. Savage, *Power Through Weakness: Paul's Understanding of the Christian Ministry in 2 Corinthians*, SNTSMS 86 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 191-192.

¹⁰⁵Cf. Kümmel, 287-293.

¹⁰⁶Some explanations are clearly implausible or even frivolous. See the criticism of Lietzmann and his "sleepless night" theory in Horrell, 297.

¹⁰⁷The rough transitions in earlier parts of the letter have been noted: 2:13-2:14, section 6:14-7:1, 7:4-7:5, and 7:16-8:1. J. W. McCant, *2 Corinthians*, Readings: A New Biblical Commentary

distinct groups in the Corinthian community: the majority, generally inclined to follow Paul, and a marginal group, composed of the rival missionaries and a few anti-Pauline members of the congregation. The two sections, therefore, were addressed to two different groups simultaneously within the same letter. The distinction between $\text{u}\text{J}\text{mav}\beta$ (you pl.) and tina/β (a certain one) in 2 Corinthians 10:1-2 could lend support to this view.¹⁰⁸ A third explanation is a specific historical situation which demanded such a response. Paul is much more personal and defensive in 2 Corinthians 10-13 suggesting that the attack was defamatory. Given the conflict situations reflected in 1 Corinthians and in 2 Corinthians 1-9, it is not entirely implausible that a dire situation had arisen during the writing of 2 Corinthians to which Paul felt compelled to respond.¹⁰⁹ Paul was certainly forced to react in the way he did by external circumstances in other aspects of 2 Corinthians 10-13.¹¹⁰

In addition, proponents of unity argue that the suggestion that Paul was in Asia Minor when he wrote 2 Corinthians 10-13 wrongly assumes that he would have spoken in terms of straight geographical lines in the words, $\text{ei } \beta \text{ ta} \gg \text{u}\text{J}\text{pere}\div\text{keina } \text{u}\text{J}\text{mw } \text{n}$ in 2 Corinthians 10:16. Rather Paul would have thought in terms of travel routes.¹¹¹ With this consideration, both Asia Minor and Macedonia are equal possibilities. Moreover, Paul's travel plans are closely associated with both the "painful letter" and 2 Corinthians 1-7. In 2 Corinthians 1:23, he defends his decision not to come to Corinth and says he stayed away in order to "spare" ($\text{fei}\div\text{domai}$) the Corinthians. In 2

(Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 22-23, notes that "Paul's tone changes much more sharply between 10:18 and 11:1 than it does between 9:15 and 10:1." "At 11:1," he continues, "the tone shifts dramatically for the 'Fool's Speech,' but scholars have not found sufficient reasoning to separate 11:1-12:18 from ch. 10." McCant suggests that several transitions in Paul's other letters exhibit a similar roughness: Rom 12:1, 1 Thes 4:1. W. H. Bates, "The Integrity of 2 Corinthians," *NIS* 12 (1965-66): 50-69, previously noted a similarity between 2 Cor 10-13 and Gal 5-6.

¹⁰⁸Thrall, 7, however sees this as an argument against the idea that Paul has two audiences in mind.

¹⁰⁹F. Danker, *II Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 147, suggests that Paul received news that the Corinthian situation had taken a turn for the worse during his writing of 2 Cor 1-9.

¹¹⁰This is primarily seen in his reasons for boasting in 2 Cor 11:10 and 2 Cor 12:1. Paul clearly found this to be distasteful.

¹¹¹For travel and trade routes, see B. M. Raspe, "Acts, Travel and Shipwreck," in *The Book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman Setting*, The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting 2, ed. D. W. J. Gill and C. Gempf (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 1-47.

Corinthians 13:2, he threatens them with an impending visit using the same language. The purpose of the “painful letter,” if it is to be identified with 2 Corinthians 10-13, is inconsistent with Paul’s reason for staying away as expressed in 2 Corinthians 1.

Although most scholars separate 2 Corinthians 10-13 from 2 Corinthians 1-9, there are some who suggest that the change in tone can be explained historically. While this is not immediately verifiable, the suggestion does deserve some attention, given that no extant copy of 2 Corinthians circulated without 2 Corinthians 10-13, and that there seems to be no convincing explanation as to why a later interpolator would attach this section at the end of 2 Corinthians 1-9. In light of these points, several scholars prefer to read 2 Corinthians as a unity.

READING 2 CORINTHIANS AS A UNITY

The exegetical evidence seems to favor the unity of 2 Corinthians, but not conclusively so, and not with equal credibility at all points. The evidence given above is not a fresh solution to an old problem, nor does it *prove* unity by any means. However, the evidence does sufficiently justify attempting a unified reading of 2 Corinthians as a single literary unit. Fortunately, several scholars have offered compelling unified readings of 2 Corinthians. Below, three separate attempts by F. Young and D. Ford, by A. E. Harvey and most recently by J. D. H. Amador, will be summarized.

Young and Ford

Frances Young and David Ford have jointly written an important monograph entitled, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians*.¹¹² Their approach to the text of 2 Corinthians is comprehensive and hermeneutically sensitive. Young and Ford discern the thrust of the text as involving two closely related themes: the glory of God and the reputation of Paul. This explains the prolonged discourse on $\delta\omicron/\chi\alpha$ (glory) as well as Paul’s personal defensiveness. Young and Ford see a close connection between $\delta\omicron/\chi\alpha$ and $\kappa\alpha\upsilon/\chi\sigma\iota\varsigma$, which taken

¹¹²F. Young and D. Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians*, BFT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

together distribute evenly throughout the letter.¹¹³ On the whole, they observe that there is “a coherence of theme and vocabulary, of circumstances presumed, of fundamental aim that demands to be taken seriously,” even in the last four chapters.¹¹⁴

Young and Ford persuasively draw out these two themes in each of the major sections of 2 Corinthians. From the outset in 2 Corinthians 1:18-22, Paul suggests that his actions are only intelligible in light of the will of God. Paul’s main point is that “total confidence be put in God, and self-confidence abandoned.”¹¹⁵ This explains the alleged rough transition in 2 Corinthians 2:14 as “a celebration of the fundamental point Paul tried to make in the previous chapter, namely that he is the prisoner of God and not responsible for his own actions.”¹¹⁶ Paul unpacks the interplay between the two themes in 2 Corinthians 3 to 6. The later shift from dire warning in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 to gentle encouragement again in 2 Corinthians 7:5ff is anticipated and is explained by the sensitivity of the collection topic, the aim of which is the “ascription of glory to God through the thanksgiving and mutual support of the churches.”¹¹⁷ In 2 Corinthians 10-13, “disloyalty to Paul is coupled with disloyalty to Christ,” thereby indissolubly linking once again the glory of God and the reputation of Paul. The ironical connection between these two themes reaches its climax in Paul’s boasting in his weakness, in which God’s power is perfected.¹¹⁸

From the rhetorical perspective, Young and Ford suggest that a proper genre of 2 Corinthians is a “speech for the defence” or an *apologia in absentia*.¹¹⁹ They suggest that a close analogy is found in Demosthenes, whose “apologetic letter” for his own restoration from exile bears a “striking resemblance” to 2 Corinthians.¹²⁰ Such “forensic speech” letters begin with an “exordium” which is designed to remove prejudice and ensure attention for what is to come. The “narrative”

¹¹³Ibid., 12-15.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 17.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 19.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 23. Cf. 2 Cor 9:10-15.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 25. Cf. 2 Cor 12:7-10.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 27.

¹²⁰Ibid., 37-38. Demosthenes *Letters* 2.

accounts for the events leading to the court case and introduces witnesses. The “proofs” are regarded as the meat of the speech, containing refutations and supporting evidence or witnesses. Digressions may come into play, especially where the case is weak. The final section, the “peroration,” is “always contrasted with the exordium in emotional tone,” usually involving the invocation of the gods, entreaties, tears, and passion.¹²¹ It is not difficult to see how 2 Corinthians might fit this rhetorical strategy: exordium in 2 Corinthians 1-2, narrative in 2 Corinthians 2 and 7, proofs in 2 Corinthians 3-6, and peroration in 2 Corinthians 10-13.¹²²

Young and Ford’s study is a valuable effort at seeing a unified theme and rhetorical strategy within the complexity of 2 Corinthians. Their reading joins the personal authority of Paul so prevalent in 2 Corinthians with the heart of the theological strategy of the letter as a whole. Some scholars have found their arguments convincing.¹²³

Harvey

A. E. Harvey, in his monograph entitled, *Renewal through Suffering*,¹²⁴ proposes that 2 Corinthians is thematically consistent throughout based on the *qlivyiß* (affliction) experience Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 1:3-9. Harvey considers this *qlivyiß* experience as “a key to much of the dense and impassioned argumentation of 2 Corinthians.”¹²⁵ He notes two interesting qualities about Paul’s *qlivyiß*. First, there is considerable ambiguity in Paul’s description of this *qlivyiß* in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, and also his “thorn in the flesh” in 2 Corinthians 12:7. For Harvey, this ambiguity is endemic of the ancients’ preoccupation with illness rather than disease.¹²⁶ He explains Paul’s unwillingness to disclose specifics by this

¹²¹Ibid., 39.

¹²²Determining where 2 Cor 8 and 9 fit into the form of an apologetic letter is difficult. That Paul probably did not strictly apply such rhetorical rules may explain this anomaly. See note 33.

¹²³E.g., Witherington, 333-338. Cf. S. E. Wheeler, *Wealth as Peril and Obligation: The New Testament on Possessions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 79-80.

¹²⁴A. E. Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering: A Study of 2 Corinthians*, SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996).

¹²⁵Ibid., 9.

¹²⁶Ibid., 11-12. Disease is “simply a malfunctioning of the body” which can be treated

convention. Second, the significance of the $\alpha\lambda\iota\nu\upsilon\iota\varsigma$ here is that it is not in the usual context of “comparison” or “defense” as it is, for example, in 2 Corinthians 12:7.

For Harvey, Paul’s $\alpha\lambda\iota\nu\upsilon\iota\varsigma$, most likely a near-death experience, could have been the result of persecution, or some sort of severe physical ailment, or a combination of both, with economic and social consequences attached.¹²⁷ He writes, “For the first time in his extant letters, and possibly for the first time in the entire philosophical and religious literature of the West, we find the experience of involuntary and innocent suffering invested with positive value and meaning *in itself*.”¹²⁸ Harvey argues that such an experience could have caused the crisis over his apostolic credibility. Then Paul was not criticized for changing his plans, but rather for what lay behind his severe $\alpha\lambda\iota\nu\upsilon\iota\varsigma$, perhaps financial misconduct or imprudence.¹²⁹ Harvey suggests that this explains Paul’s prolonged and cautious theological reflection, and indeed, his defensiveness in 2 Corinthians 2-7. Moreover, his suffering brought about a positive experience. There is renewal and joy in the midst of $\alpha\lambda\iota\nu\upsilon\iota\varsigma$.¹³⁰ The collection chapters, too, begin with $\alpha\lambda\iota\nu\upsilon\iota\varsigma$, but this time, it is that of the Macedonians.¹³¹ Here, however, there is the similar pattern of joy in affliction, but this pattern is slightly changed. In 2 Corinthians 8:2 and 8:9, there are riches and generosity in poverty. Finally, Harvey observes that 2 Corinthians 10-13 shows thematic coherence with the rest of 2 Corinthians in that hardships surface again in Paul’s defensive strategy in 2 Corinthians 11:23-30; 12:7-10. The pattern of renewal in suffering re-emerges in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, but this time as strength in weakness. And here again, there is the vexing charge of shameful behavior in a financial setting, i.e. the charge of embezzlement in 2 Corinthians 12:16-17. “Of all the charges made against Paul this appears to be the most damaging,” writes Harvey, “he and his associates had actually been

medically. Illness is a wider term, giving social significance to the disease, bordering on moral consequence. Harvey writes, “The basic assumption was the illness is the consequence of sin.” (24)

¹²⁷Ibid., 20-22.

¹²⁸Ibid., 31. [italics his]

¹²⁹Harvey, 39-41, suggests a strong economic element in the opponents’ criticism of Paul.

¹³⁰Cf. $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$ (to renew) in 2 Cor 4:16 and $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$ (joy) in 2 Cor 7:4.

¹³¹Harvey, 81-82, compares 2 Cor 1:8 with 2 Cor 8:1.

dishonest in their administration of the money.”¹³²

Harvey demonstrates that Paul’s *κλιῆσις* experience gives at least some coherence to the message of 2 Corinthians as a whole. Although thematic coherence is no guarantee that 2 Corinthians was originally one letter,¹³³ it does make the case for unity more credible, and further opens the “composite letter” hypotheses to serious objections. Indeed, Harvey, although not intending to defend unity by any means, suggests in his conclusion, “[If] by taking these chapters as they come, I have been able to show some consistency of thought and argument, then this may itself be a reason to accept their traditional place in Paul’s correspondence.”¹³⁴

Amador

Recently, J. D. H. Amador published an article arguing for the unity of 2 Corinthians from the perspective of rhetoric coherence.¹³⁵ Amador’s case for unity depends on the coherence of 2 Corinthians as a single “act of persuasion.” His major contention that traditional historical-critical reconstruction is wrongly based on a “restricted coherence, focused consistency, and unitary intentionality” has already won adherents.¹³⁶ Amador stresses the complexity of “argumentative and persuasive dynamics” and of “intentionalities, audiences, *topoi*, *pathos* and argumentative arrangement,” all of which have been overlooked by historical criticism.¹³⁷

From this hermeneutical framework, Amador first tackles the separation of 2 Corinthians 10-13 from 1-9. He argues three points. First, he contends that 2 Corinthians 10-13 and the “painful letter” as reported in 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:11 and 7:5-13 assumes distinctive “argumentative situations.”¹³⁸ Second, he contends that the

¹³²Ibid., 106.

¹³³The caution of Furnish, 37, is noteworthy. He writes, “The basic thematic coherence of these two sections is no guarantee of their literary unity.”

¹³⁴Ibid., 115.

¹³⁵Amador, “Revisiting 2 Corinthians,” op. cit.

¹³⁶See McCant, 21.

¹³⁷Amador, 94.

¹³⁸Amador, 97, writes, “In the former [2 Cor 10-13], Paul is defending (*apologia*) his *ethos* in the community as a result of a perceived threat by “outsiders.” In the latter [painful letter], Paul’s *ethos* is not under question. Instead, it is with respect to the *ethos* of someone in the community as

“argumentative situations” are not only distinctive, but also that 2 Corinthians 10-13 presupposes the argumentation in 2 Corinthians 1-9.¹³⁹ Third, he argues that the *narratio* is consistent throughout the whole of 2 Corinthians.¹⁴⁰ He summarizes this section saying:

... not only is it a misnomer to identify chapters 10-13 as the so-called “tearful/painful letter,” but these chapters must narratively (i.e. with respect to the chronology of events outlined in the *narratio* of the letter) and argumentatively (i.e. with respect to the argumentative presumptions and their development) follow chapters 1-9 if they are to make any rhetorical sense at all.¹⁴¹

Amador similarly handles the other proposed interpolations of 2 Corinthians. He suggests that much of it may be explained by the use of “framing structures as a means of organizing and developing [Paul’s] argumentation.”¹⁴² He sees similar framing in 1 Corinthians 6:12-11:1, in Romans 5-8, and especially Galatians 5:2-12 within the larger section of Galatians 5:1-15. 2 Corinthians 8-9 exhibits a consistent rhetorical strategy, where the apparent redundancy is an instance of *paralepsis*.¹⁴³ This has the effect of “argumentative accumulation,” adding considerable rhetorical force to Paul’s effort at reviving the collection. Amador makes a compelling argument from the perspective of rhetorical criticism, and has made rhetorical sense out of the proposed literary difficulties of 2 Corinthians.

CONCLUSION

While the integrity of 2 Corinthians continues to be debated, the trend is to see greater unity in 2 Corinthians, especially in chapters one

a result of Paul’s previous deliberative advice that he is concerned.”

¹³⁹Amador, 98-100, writes, “While chapters 10-13 reflect a rhetorical strategy that is certainly risky, the argument as it develops in 10-13 is not at all unanticipated given the argumentation in chapters 1-9. . . . to understand the function of chapters 10-13 it is necessary to read it as part of an argument that extends throughout 2 Corinthians. Only in that way does its success, as a risky venture, make any rhetorical sense.” The argument of 10-13 “draws extensively and frequently from the previous argumentative groundwork laid in chapters 1-9.” (98-100)

¹⁴⁰Amador, 97-98, deduces this from the narrative that is held together by a string of aorist verbs with only a few perfect tense verbs (2 Cor 1:8-9; 2:13; 7:5), one imperfect (2 Cor 1:15) and one present (2 Cor 8:1). This, Amador contends, produces a “whole, straightforward and complete” *narratio* .

¹⁴¹Ibid., 100.

¹⁴²Ibid., 101-102.

¹⁴³Amador, 107-108, writes, “A *paralepsis* figure purports to decline mention of a topic, but in doing so, mentions the topic.”

through nine. Furthermore, much of the evidence for partitioning 2 Corinthians does not seem as weighty, or as conclusive, as some scholars suggest. The arguments for dividing 2 Corinthians are inconclusive at best. Even in the most disputed section, 2 Corinthians 10-13, the evidence for separating 10-13, as either the intermediate “painful letter” or a separate defensive letter, is less than entirely persuasive. There is therefore more than ample justification for attempting a unified reading of 2 Corinthians in its canonical form, especially in light of the studies by Young and Ford, by Harvey and by Amador. The unified readings of 2 Corinthians by these scholars show that 2 Corinthians as a letter is rhetorically and thematically consistent. Such readings, cumulatively considered, further support the case for regarding 2 Corinthians as a unity. Moreover, the evidence justifies giving initial priority, tentative though it may be, to the canonical form of the text, consistently allowing the unified text to reconstruct the events surrounding its creation, rather than selectively playing reconstruction against text, as many have done in the past two hundred years. 2 Corinthians ought to be taken seriously as a letter sent at one time with a unified message to the church of first-century Corinth.

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See our disclaimer. The Integrity Of 2 Corinthians And Paul' Is 2 Corinthians a single letter, or a composite of fragments? Does it have a single setting, or do its parts address successive stages in a developing crisis? This is perennial set of questions about this Pauline letter. In this provocative study, Christ. Specifications. Publisher. Sheffield Phoenix Press Ltd. Book Format. Hardcover. Second Corinthians offers a real-life window on a strained relationship between a church leader and the people whom he loves.Â The letter of 2 Corinthians as we have it is probably a patchwork of multiple letters. Even so, no consensus exists either about how many letters may be represented or where precisely the one fragment ends and another begins. â€¢ "Letter of Tears." In 2 Corinthians 2:4, Paul refers to a letter he wrote "out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you." This letter, which was likely written between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians and after a visit from Paul, is lost to us.