

CULTURAL CONFORMITY AND INNOVATION IN PAUL:
SOME CLUES FROM CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTS*

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I

The social attitudes of the first believers in Christ pose a dilemma for Marxism. Marx took over from Feuerbach the explanation of religion as an ideological projection of man's alienation. It offered an imaginary resolution of the social contradictions experienced in practice. Adopting a conceit from the poets of German romanticism, Marx spoke of religion as the opium of the people. But he later sharpened this slogan to specify that it was opium for the people. It was a device by which property-owners might induce those they exploited not to do anything about it.¹

But how did one then explain the first believers in Christ? Since Marxist theory took them all to be 'proletarians' practising 'communism', why should they have resorted to the illusion that would then be used to reassert the established order over them? Engels eventually saved the theory by abandoning the search for explanation altogether. Jesus had not even existed (nor

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1. Not that true and false consciousness are set in total opposition to each other. Marxists do not necessarily condemn everything about religion, and admit that Marxism too can be penetrated by ideology. They expect a constant struggle to distinguish science from ideology. For these and other corrections I am grateful to Dr. M. C. Hartwig.

the primitive 'communism'). The gospel was a development from Hellenistic thought in the second century.²

It fell however to Karl Kautsky, who had once been Engels' secretary, to produce (in 1908) the classic Marxist analysis of the problem. In terms of production the first believers were no true proletarians after all. They were rather consumers, and their 'communism' meant sharing in other people's bounty. You could not therefore expect them to have led the revolution. The practice of charity only created the dictatorship of the benefactors it had raised up as masters within the community.³

The problem of the 'communism' of the primitive apostolic community has consequently been discounted by G. E. M. de Ste Croix.⁴ He claims that his new work is the first in English, or in any other language that he can read, 'which begins by explaining the central features of Marx's historical method and defining the concepts and categories involved, and then proceeds to demonstrate how these instruments of analysis may be used in practice to explain the main events, processes, institutions and ideas that prevailed at various times over a long period of history'. He approaches Christianity through 'the transfer of a whole system of ideas from the world of the *chora* to that of the *polis*'

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2. 'Christianity, Origins of', in *Marxism, Communism and Western Society: A Comparative Encyclopedia* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972) 409-422; D. Lyon, *Karl Marx: A Christian Appreciation of his Life and Thought* (London: Lion, 1979) 38; K. Bockmuehl, *The Challenge of Marxism: A Christian Response* (Leicester: IVP, 1980) 55-58.
 3. K. Kautsky, *Foundations of Christianity* (ET 1925 from 13th German edition, New York and London: Monthly Review, 1972) 323, 331, 345, 347, 415-417, 422, 464, 467.
 4. *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World from the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (London: Duckworth, 1981); reviewed by P. A. Brunt, 'A Marxist view of Roman History', *Journal of Roman Studies* 72 (1982) 158-163; Oswyn Murray, 'Reasons for Decline', *New Statesman* (7 January, 1983) 24-25; W. Schuller, 'Klassenkampf und Alte Geschichte', *Historische Zeitschrift* 236.2 (April, 1983) 403-413.

and holds that it is in this process of transfer ('necessarily involving the most profound changes in that system of ideas') that 'the most serious problems of "Christian origins" arise'. But unfortunately this leads him simply to assert that the difference between the teaching of Jesus and that of Paul is the direct effect of the class struggle, without giving any detailed attention to the ideas of Paul at all, or even establishing what the difference is, if there is one.

Paul wrote 'a blank cheque' for 'the powers that be', says de Ste Croix, and he would no doubt be happy to extend this to the whole of what I call the ranking order of society, adding servile, sexual and ethnic rankings to those arising from government. He has not told us, however, that it was a crossed cheque, only to be credited to an account, nor that it was not negotiable, being available only to the order of the appointed parties. Then de Ste Croix also fails to tell us that Paul conducted a head-on personal assault on the status system which supplied the ideology of the established order. For the first time in history, moreover, Paul spelled out what may in a sense be called a structural model of social relations. It does not, however, address itself to what we call structures, which lie rather on the ranking side of the distinction I am developing between rank and status, but it belongs to the latter side, that is to the way people use their rank to assert superiority over each other. Status tends to convert itself into rank, as in the case of the rich Greeks who liked to be granted Roman citizenship, but Paul does not advocate this solution. Conversely rank may seek to escape back into status, as for example in the increasing dislike of the liturgical system the more compulsory it became and the corresponding development of financial corruption. Paul's endorsement of rank is a barrier against this.⁵

But like most ancient observers, Paul does not analyse human affairs in institutional terms. His thinking rather attacks the problems at a personal level. It turns the prevailing status system inside out. What one witnesses here is neither the projection of

5. E. A. Judge, *Rank and Status in the World of the Caesars and St Paul* (Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1982).

unfulfilled desires nor the use of religion to defend property, but something much more drastic: the deliberate abandonment of status so as to open the way to a new spirit of human cooperation through mutual service. Both as a principle and in practice it would have appealed greatly to Marx's passionate desire to see man remake himself - though the means would have surprised him. It did not grapple with the question of modes of production and class struggle, but then such issues did not confront people in the way they did in the nineteenth century. The issues it did face, however, arise in all societies. They are the ones to which Marxism for its part has often not found the answer where it has been put to the test of practice in our century.

It would have come as a surprise to Paul, in turn, to find his cause classified by Marxists under 'religion'. Paul would have found much more in common with the restless, argumentative and single-minded apostle of revolution - like him a son of Israel turned to the Gentiles, and committed to showing the whole world its true destiny - than he would with those who cultivated what Greeks and Romans called religion. Nor would they have expected to find anything to do with religion in Paul's churches. His only use of a technical term of worship in connection with the church-meeting is to describe the reaction of the hypothetical unbeliever who is stunned to discover, contrary to what would have seemed obvious, that God was actually present there (1 Cor. 14:25). In that scene of lively social intercourse there was neither solitude nor mystery, no shrine, no statue, no cult, no ceremony, no offering to ensure that all was well between gods and men. Instead there was talk and argument, disturbing questions about belief and behaviour (two matters of little or no concern to religion in antiquity), conscious changes to accepted ways, and the expectation of a more drastic transformation soon to come. The purpose of classical religion was to secure what was already there against just such an upheaval.⁶

So a worshipper of Isis, delivered from his private suffering, calls upon her to appear to him again to listen while he praises her as the universal guarantor

6. R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1981) 57-59.

of the established order.⁷ This new aretalogy, from Maroneia, is the earliest extant, and differs from the four found previously in being more systematic in content and more classical in its Greek. G. H. R. Horsley suggests that it reflects an early stage in the cult of Isis, before quasi-credal conformity was required to the text on the stele at Memphis (ℓ.3). In spite of the differences in form, the same view of the world emerges. It may be described as naturalistic. The gods derive from the earth (Γῆ, ℓℓ.15-16) and in turn endorse the existing state of affairs. Equality is justified because, by nature, death makes us all equal (ℓ.25). Even grace is improved by its corresponding to what nature in any case requires (ℓℓ.33,34). In the standard version, e.g. at Kyme, aesthetic discrimination is also grounded in nature.⁸

The marriage of Isis and Sarapis (Maroneia, ℓ.17) provides for the cosmic order. On earth Isis is credited with all the variety of good things, from human love, to physical generation, to social order. The atmosphere is harmonious and optimistic, even progressive. Political stability depends on the non-violent rule of law (ℓℓ.30-31), reflecting the overthrow of tyranny (Kyme, ℓℓ.26-27), and on an effective and merciful legal system (ℓℓ.34-39). There is even a hint of liberation theology (ℓ.45).

But Marx would surely not have been satisfied. It does not go far enough, and too much is taken for granted. Even though the author of the Maroneia text is only trying to offer a kaleidoscopic overview of life, which scarcely leaves room for hard questions, that very

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7. Y. Grandjean, *Une nouvelle arétalogie d'Isis à Maronée* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), reproduced with English translation and full discussion by G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents illustrating Early Christianity*, Vol. 1, *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri published in 1976* (North Ryde, N.S.W.: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1981), no. 2, ℓℓ.6-7.
 8. H. Engelmann, *Die Inschriften von Kyme* (Bonn: Habelt, 1976), no. 41, reproduced in *New Documents 1976*, no. 2, pp. 18-19, ℓℓ.32-3. See also V. F. Vanderlip, *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis* (*American Studies in Papyrology*, Vol. 12) (Toronto: Hakkert, 1972) for other treatments.

fact betrays his commitment to the security of established position (which is what εὐσταθῆσαν means in ℓ.30 - it is the tranquillity of good order). Certainly he has embraced multi-culturalism rather than Greek chauvinism (ℓ.26), but amongst so thoroughly Greek a set of ideals that amounts to little more than a sentimental projection of culture-consciousness. It does not face the problems of culture-conflict. The conflict of the sexes is glossed over with a neat ambiguity: 'I compelled women to be loved by men' (Kyrie, ℓ.28) - we still cannot tell to which party the compulsion is applied.⁹ The issue of slavery and freedom, the third of St Paul's great ranking distinctions (Gal. 3:28), is probably not even on the horizon. Nor are Marx's fundamental questions about man as worker, and how he is to make himself by winning the value of his productive labour.

The cult of Isis after all only offers reassurance to those whose way of life is already secure. But in a strange new glossary Isis is registered as ἡ μεγάλη [ἐ]λπὺς, the first time this title has been attested for her.¹⁰ One may note also Heliodorus, *Aethiopica* 2.25.1-6, for a priest of Isis who exiled himself for unchaste thoughts, which shows that soul-searching went on. But the general pragmatism of Isis remains. She gathers into one the multifarious functions of the ten thousand cults of locality, occupation or life-cycle by which classical antiquity clung to its cultural heritage. Graeco-Roman religion is not typically either a projection of frustrated desires nor an instrument of class oppression. It arises from a basically unproblematic love of life as it is, and the dread of an unknown future.

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9. F. Solmsen, *Isis among the Greeks and Romans* (Martin Classical Lectures, vol. 25) (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University, 1979) 42.
 10. A. K. Bowman et al., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. 45 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1977), no. 3239, col. 2, ℓ.21, cited by G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents illustrating Early Christianity*, Vol. 2, *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri published in 1977* (North Ryde, N.S.W.: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1982), no. 30.

Where does this leave the Pauline churches? For them the question of the future had been decisively solved. But life as it was could never be the same again. The new orientation threw up an array of problems within the existing order, and exposed moral issues in human culture that had not been seen in the same way before. Hardly anything was taken for granted, or simply accepted on the old terms (though occasionally the conventional wisdom may have been thrown into the argument by way of pleonasm, as when 'nature herself' teaches us that long hair degrades a man, 1 Cor. 11:14). Paul grappled with the use of three great ranking distinctions of his era. None arises by nature, as Greek analysis had maintained. All are set aside in Christ (Gal. 3:28). Yet each has its purpose for the time being, derived from different phases of God's rule over the world - male and female stemming from the physical creation (1 Cor. 11:7-10) and Jew and Gentile from the old covenant, while slave and free are best taken as a facet of the socio-political order by which God provides for mankind's temporary well-being (1 Cor. 7:17-22; Eph. 6:5-8; 1 Tim. 6:1-6). No blank cheques are offered to those with priority of rank; but different commitments are asked of the different parties. The ranking principle is endorsed between men and women (Eph. 5:22-24) but its status concomitant rejected (v. 25); God deals with the Jew first (Rom. 2:9-11) but Jews are not better off (3:9) nor for that matter worse off (11:1) - it does not matter whether one is Jew or Greek (1 Cor. 7:18-20); slaves similarly should accept their rank even if offered manumission, but change the spirit in which they serve (1 Cor. 7: 20-24; Eph. 6:6-9).

It is the same with the powers that be. Paul is not endorsing such demonic social powers as may oppress mankind any more than Jesus had sold himself to Caesar in conceding the tax-money. Nor is he referring to Caesar in particular. What are the ἐξουσίαι ὑπερεχούσαι of Romans 13:1? Notice that the ἀρχαί which often go with them in Paul are not mentioned. 'Principalities and powers' only just catches the difference of nuance between the terms. The ancient terminology of power was more developed than ours. I take ἀρχαί to refer to rulers in the sense of their being fountains of power, while ἐξουσίαι refers rather to those who are empowered to administer that authority: the principals and their delegates. If that is correct,

the choice of ἐξουσία here on their own points downward in the power-structure to the level at which it was imposed in practice on the individual citizen. Even provincial governors are above that level.¹¹

A prefect of Egypt (Vergilius Capito) contemporary with Paul has left his edict (7 December A.D.48) on the pylon of the temple of Hibis in the Great Oasis.¹² Capito complains of his subordinates who extravagantly and shamelessly abuse their ἐξουσία: their authorities, that is, delegated through him. He lists the ones he has in mind: soldiers, cavalrymen, orderlies, centurions, military tribunes. He demands that reports on their expense accounts be forwarded by the local secretaries to the state accountants in Alexandria. The edict of Ti. Julius Alexander, preserved at the same spot from twenty years later, complains in turn about the excessive ἐξουσία of the state accountants.¹³ They were impoverishing Egypt by entering many people's dues on the basis of analogy alone.

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11. I reached this conclusion, which tends in the opposite direction from that of many commentators on the passage, before reading A. Strobil, *ZNW* 47 (1956) 67-93; 55 (1960) 58-62, or E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (E.T. from the 4th German edition) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 353-354. Their case is rejected by K. Aland, 'Das Verhältnis von Kirche und Staat in der Frühzeit', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.23.1 (1979) 184, on the grounds that in Rome of all places it would be Caesar himself who was in view. But Paul's horizon is surely that of Corinth, not Rome. W. Carr (*Angels and Principalities: The Background, Meaning and Development of the Pauline Phrase* hai archai kai hai exousiai [Cambridge: CUP, 1981] 121) establishes the case against the angelological interpretation of Rom. 13.1, but does not deal with the question of which level of human authority is referred to.
 12. W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graecae Inscriptiones Selectae*, no. 665 = E. M. Smallwood, *Documents illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* (Cambridge: CUP, 1967), no. 382, l.17.
 13. *OGIS* 669 = Smallwood, *Documents*, no. 391, l.51.

There has recently been found for the first time a systematic regulation of the transport service designed to curb its exploitation through the *πλεονεξία* of Roman magnates, whether military or businessmen. Coming from Pisidia in A.D.18/19, it represents what we may suppose Paul and his colleagues could have read on any Roman road.¹⁴ The frustrations of the provincial governor are very apparent. He is caught between the vested interest of travelling Romans in exploiting the system, and the displeasure of Caesar to whom a stream of petitions flowed from aggrieved individuals and states all over the empire.¹⁵ In a lecture last year at the conference of the Australian Historical Association, R. MacMullen of Yale proposed that official and private corruption was the fatal weakness that sapped the Roman empire's capacity to resist invasion in later centuries. The general public clung to a belief in the integrity of the law, but it was always threatened by influence, and there is more than a hint in Paul's treatment that believers too needed to be shocked out of the easy assumption that they could manipulate the service for private advantage. A letter to a slave of Caesar in the time of Augustus appeals to him to prevent profiteering.¹⁶ Faced with a corrupt authority Paul would presumably have brought to bear the sanctions implied in God's appointment, as the writer of Acts suggests he did with Felix (Acts 24:25).

But the fact remains that subject to such qualifications Paul did require believers to accept the duly constituted authorities as the responsible agents of God's government of the world as it was. With that goes by implication a similarly defined acceptance of

14. S. Mitchell, *JRS* 66 (1976) 106-131, redated by E. A. Judge, *New Documents* 1976, no. 9.

15. F. G. B. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (31 B.C.-A.D.337) (London: Duckworth, 1977) 213-228, 240-252. It was not till the second century that petitions to local authorities in Egypt show a collapse of confidence in justice (R. L. B. Morris, in R. S. Bagnall et al., *Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Congress of Papyrology* [Chico: Scholars, 1981] 363-370); for examples, see J. L. White, *The Form and Structure of the Official Petition* (Missoula: Society of Biblical Literature, 1972).

16. *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976), no.3208, reproduced in *New Documents* 1976, no. 14.

the formal ranking and class distinctions (normally based on property assessment) that provided the basis for government in classical antiquity. He would presumably come close to the principle of relative righteousness, as Sir Ernest Barker has formulated it in the case of St Augustine.¹⁷ The ἐξουσίαι are delegated powers, and have value because of their origin and purpose under God; their utility may be distinguished from the use to which individual incumbents may put them. Paul must therefore be set firmly in opposition to Marx in that he does not hold the formal structure of society in his day to be systematically oppressive and hostile to man's best hopes, and does not in any way suggest or imply that its violent overthrow could as a matter of principle be in the positive interest of mankind or part of a believer's duty to God. Nor does he deal with how it might be reformed, which presumably is embraced in the system as endorsed. But that by no means brings our question to an end.

II

If Paul seems to modern eyes surprisingly detached over the question of conformity to the ranking order of community life, what are we to make of his passionate reaction to certain socio-cultural expectations people had of him at a more personal level? My proposition is that while accepting rank he repudiates the status conventions which permitted people to exploit the system to private advantage. I refer in particular to two fault-lines that run through the Corinthian correspondence, and throw up repeated shocks in his relations with his own converts at Corinth.

The first may be called 'cultural' in the more aesthetic sense. They did not like the way he spoke or presented himself in public: 'his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account' (2 Cor. 10:10). It was unprofessional. He spoke like an amateur (2 Cor. 11:6). The technical term ἰδιώτης which they applied to

17. Introduction to the Everyman edition of J. Healey's translation of *The City of God* (London: Dent, 1945) xviii; the 'righteousness' (*justitia*) of the civil order stems from the fact that God ordained it, but since this was done as a remedy for sin, the 'righteousness' is 'relative' to that. I am grateful to the paper of H. Elias read at Tyndale House on 1 July, 1983, for drawing my attention to this formulation.

him, and which was to be thrown up against his reputation even centuries later, means that he was not qualified for the career which he might be thought to have assumed, that of a public lecturer.¹⁸ This would have required university-level training under a recognised sophist (or 'professor'), and would have been instantly recognisable in his mastery of the complex arts of platform rhetoric. Whether Paul might have had such training at Jerusalem is not clear. But it is certain that he refused absolutely to practise it if he did.

One can sympathise with the Corinthians, who felt embarrassed for him, and let down on their own account. There were other lecturers available to them who knew how to display their talents properly - to compare themselves with each other, as Paul puts it (2 Cor. 10:12). A letter home from a first-century university student at Alexandria makes clear what was at stake.¹⁹ The unsuccessful Didymus is despised for aspiring to the competition (it is the cognate of Paul's word, σὺγκρισις, 1.28), but to reject the very aspiration, as Paul did, was to be a catastrophic and bewildering failure. It leads Paul into the strange paroxysm of his boasting 'as a fool' (2 Cor. 11:21-29), in which he parodies the proud conventions of self-display by parading his own weaknesses.²⁰ That this is not itself just a clever literary conceit on Paul's part is clear from the personal anguish it causes him (2 Cor. 12:11). For his listeners it would have been intensely shocking. It is a repudiation of one of the fundamental principles upon which the Greek status-system rested, the belief

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18. *New Documents* 1977, no. 106, offers a translation of the *P. Bodmer* 20 text of 'The apology of Phileas' as revised by A. Pietersma for his forthcoming re-edition of it along with the new *P. Chester Beatty* 15 text. Col. 10, 11.11ff. read: 'Was he not an untrained individual (*idiotes*)? Surely he was not in the category of Plato?'
19. C. H. Roberts, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Vol. 18 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1941), no. 2190.
20. C. B. Forbes (Macquarie University), 'Comparison, self-praise and irony: Hellenistic rhetoric and the boasting of Paul', *New Testament Studies* (forthcoming).

that fine form is congruent with truth. Cultivation in the literary and artistic sense was thus a means of legitimising the status of those who could afford it. And precisely because it made a conspicuous difference to a person's public appearance it became the means by which the social inferiority of the uncultivated was imposed on them as a felt distinction.

As a convert to the persecuted Jesus, paradoxically discovered from the very depths of that humiliation to be anointed as Israel's Messiah (Acts 2:36), Paul consciously sought the reversal of his own socio-cultural expectations. It was the expression of his identification with Christ in weakness, and he expected his own converts to follow him in it. I believe you will not find anywhere in the Pauline literature any aesthetic canons of approval. The terms that sometimes sound like this in our translations turn out to refer to moral criteria. So I should translate προσφιλῆ (Philippians 4:8) not as 'lovely' (RSV) but, as in the epitaphs, 'loveable', and the following term εὐφημία not as 'gracious' (RSV) but 'honourable' (Good News Bible), both terms implying a moral judgement.

A recent study of the eulogistic terminology of Greek public inscriptions of the Roman empire in relation to the moral vocabulary of Plutarch provides a useful measure of Paul's vocabulary.²¹ Of 75 terms examined, fewer than half are found anywhere in the NT, and then often as *hapax legomena* and mostly in Acts, Hebrews or the Pastorals (notably Titus). The Pauline *homologoumena* have relatively little in common with the eulogistic tradition. Noticeably lacking are the array of compounds in εὖ- and φιλ- which give expression to the prevailing nexus between aesthetic and moral approval (e.g. εὐκοσμία, εὐνομία, εὐταξία, φιλοδοξία, φιλοκαλία). Some of the alpha-privative terms that connote irreproachability do however go over (ἄμεμπτος, ἀνέγκλητος, ἀνεπλήπτος). This presumably deliberate and certainly heartfelt reaction against any kind of status based upon cultivation also helps to make sense of Paul's dilemmas over the ideal of wisdom (σοφία was one of the ideals of the eulogistic tradition to which

21. C. Panagopoulos, *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 5 (1977) 197-235, reviewed by E. A. Judge, *New Documents* 1977, no. 83.

Paul did wish to stake a claim, but on his own terms). It was a cultural revolution which still carries us all in its wake - if only in the convention of self-deprecation.²²

The second conflict-point between Paul and the Corinthians lies in the field of cultural anthropology. It was over money. For reasons which modern Western minds have often found difficult to grasp, they objected to him because he would *not* accept their support, but insisted on paying his own way by physical labour. This again confronts a basic convention of status. In the non-productive cities of the Graeco-Roman world, deriving their wealth basically from the labour of peasants on estates belonging to city magnates, social power was not exercised by taking profit from one's dependents (who often did little work anyway), but by passing money down to them to keep up their subordinate dignity. The niceties of this system were preserved by the conventions of what was called friendship. This is a status conferred by the greater on the lesser. It implied full conformity with the wishes of the initiator - as Jesus stated when he formulated the terms upon which the disciples would be counted as his friends ('if you do what I command you', Jn. 15:14). It also carried the dangerous risk of renunciation, as Pilate was once warned ('If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend', Jn. 19:12). And if you refused an offer of friendship by not taking someone's money you openly declared yourself his enemy. Enmity also entails a painful and exhausting ritual of confrontation. P. Marshall has defined from classical sources the social conventions governing the conduct of friendship and enmity, and used them as a framework for explaining the upheaval over Paul's refusal of support. Here is another point at which Paul deliberately rejected the established system of status.²³

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22. E. A. Judge, *The Conversion of Rome: Ancient Sources of Modern Social Tensions* (North Ryde, N.S.W.: Macquarie Ancient History Association, 1980).
23. P. Marshall, *Enmity and other Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians* (Ph.D. dissertation, Macquarie University 1980, to appear in the series *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*).

The friendship-enmity system operates amongst those who are of equal rank in class terms, providing them with a hierarchical principle of collaboration or defining the terms of conflict if that is refused. Between people of different social ranks, status relations are best understood in terms of the Roman patron-client system; at Rome one may be promoted from clientship to friendship if one's property ranking permits, and the rules of *clientela* set the moral tone for the system of *amicitia*. My use of the Roman institution of patronage to explain the sponsorship of New Testament communities has been called in question.²⁴ Did Roman practice have effect in Greek states? From the legal point of view, no doubt, only if they were also Roman colonies, as several New Testament cities were. But Roman citizens were found in slowly increasing numbers almost everywhere else as well. The Pauline connection shows a frequency of Latin names ten times greater than the public inscriptions of the Eastern cities of the time (excluding the names of Greeks which explicitly identify them as possessing Roman citizenship). The only comparable frequency I have noticed is with the recently published set of manufacturers' signatures on Corinthian lamps.²⁵ I am inclined to explain this on the hypothesis that Paul was appealing to certain categories of Greeks who did in fact hold Roman citizenship, but acquired by the inferior processes of manumission or service in the auxiliary forces. The list of Pauline cognomina tallies quite well with that of the imperial soldiers' cognomina.²⁶ Such men must often have returned to

24. A. Cameron, 'Neither Male nor Female', *Greece and Rome* 27 (1980) 62.

25. E. A. Judge, *New Documents* 1977, no. 84.

26. Relating the figures recorded by L. R. Dean (*A Study of the Cognomina of Soldiers in the Roman Legions* [Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1916]) to those for the city of Rome derived from L. Vidman (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Vol. 6. 6.2. *Index Cognominum* [Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1980]), we may rate the 17 Pauline cognomina in order of likelihood of their being of military origin, as follows: *Crispus*, *Quartus*, *Silvanus*, *Pudens*, *Aquila*, *Rufus*, *Secundus*, *Niger*, *Clement*, *Urbanus*, *Crescens*, *Paul*, *Tertius*, *Justus*, *Fortunatus*, *Amplius*, *Achaicus*. Those italicised

settle in their home towns, but though now superior in civil rank they would have lacked the social status of the well-established Greeks who were still not commonly admitted to Roman citizenship.

The documentary evidence shows on the one hand that the Roman law of patronage was sufficiently distinctive to introduce into Greek the technical loan-word *πάτρων* instead of being covered by its approximate equivalent in Greek, *προσδάτης*. On the other hand it became sufficiently familiar to acquire the Greek pattern of inflexions and derivatives and to be attested in Egyptian papyri and inscriptions at about 70 per cent of the frequency of *προσδάτης*, with cases arising as early as the first century B.C.²⁷ The typical instance relates of course to the patronage of Roman citizens over their freedmen. *προσδάτης* did not cover this, the original sense of *patronus*, since Greek law did not transmit citizenship by manumission. A Greek freedman passed under the protection of a god or magistrate, whereas at Rome the *patronus* assumed legal and moral guardianship over the new freedman-citizen. This was one of the sources of the growing

are attested as soldiers' names in the East in the first century A.D. Achaicus is not listed in Dean and is presumably of servile origin, as is Ampliatus, which is rare as a soldier's name. If we take Dean's tallies as a percentage of Vidman's the range is otherwise from 56 per cent (Crispus) to 13 per cent (Fortunatus).

27. F. Preisigke/E. Kiessling, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden* (Heidelberg, Berlin: Preisigke, 1924-1944; Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1969); S. Daris, *Spoglio lessicale papirologico* (Milan: Istituto Papirologico dell' Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1968); *idem*, *Il lessico latino nel greco d'Egitto* (Barcelona: Papyrologica Castroctaviana, 1971); H. J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974).

authoritarianism of Roman politics.²⁸ προστάτης was used to translate other Latin words (*praeses*, *princeps*) as well as having its pre-contact meanings, so that the need for the loan-word πάτριων is clear. But as late as A.D. 133-137 the translation of an unusual prefect's edict which lists cases to be referred to the higher court identifies complaints by patrons against their freedmen by using the participle ἐλευθερώσαντες instead of employing either noun.²⁹ By the third century, when everyone was Roman, there was a vogue for displacing πάτριων with προστάτης, and by the fourth century πάτριων is available as a general title of respect.

Yet the earlier letter to Sarapion, a πάτριων, gives no indication of Roman citizenship, though equally that cannot be excluded.³⁰ Could the later generalisation of the term already be in force? A clearer case is a second-century letter where the recipient is called πάτριων in the address, πατήρ in the prescript.³¹ J. R. Rea has not discussed the coupling of πάτριων in CPR 5.19 with τροφεύς, which should also have a technical meaning. The τροφεύς, I take it, is the one who rears a foundling (ῥεπτός), handing it to a nurse (τροφός) for suckling. It is interesting that Paul likens himself to the female τροφός rather than to the paternal τροφεύς (1 Thes. 2:7). As the previous verse shows, he is consciously stepping down in status. We possess a number of papyrus nursing contracts, all from the period

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28. J. W. Jones, *Law and Legal Theory of the Greeks* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956) 284-285; D. M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978) 82-83. R. P. Saller (*Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* [Cambridge: CUP, 1982]) demonstrates that it cannot be assumed that the ideology of patronage was displaced by principles of seniority and merit as the basis of the political career during our period.
 29. F. Preisigke/F. Bilabel/E. Kiessling/H.-A. Rupprecht, *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten* 12.1 (1976) 10929 = *New Documents* 1976, p. 50, l.15.
 30. J. R. Rea, *Corpus Papyrorum Raineri* 5 (Vienna, 1976), no. 19 = *New Documents* 1976, no. 16, l.18, dated I/II A.D.
 31. F. Bilabel, *Veröffentlichungen aus den badischen Papyrus-Sammlungen* 2 (Heidelberg, 1923), no. 42, referred to by Rea.

I B.C.-A.D.II.³² Not surprisingly such an arrangement is attested only from Egypt. But it would have been general in the Greek East. The status of ἄρεπτος was not however familiar to Romans, to judge from Pliny's query to Trajan on the point.³³ Pliny coyly uses the Greek word, and all the precedents cited relate to Roman administration of Greek states. Trajan declares in reply that people reared in this way are entitled to assert the liberty they were born with. But τροφεύς first appears in the documents as a metaphor in court life under the Ptolemies. An inscription of II B.C. honours Apollodorus as the relative, the τροφεύς and the foster-father of the king's son.³⁴ No foundling status or slavery is involved here. Similarly we have an Apollophanes who is τροφεύς to a Ptolemaic priest with named father.³⁵ In Roman times, the coins and inscriptions of Asia Minor show the word now coupled with εὐεργέτης for the benefactor of a city (had it displaced πατέρων in this respect?). L. Robert argues that it specifically recognises alimentary benefits.³⁶ But if so, not just in time of famine. Synnada honours an Aurelius Theodorus as hereditary τροφεύς and εὐεργέτης.³⁷ Where do we stand with CPR 5.19? Literally it implies that Sarapion has in the Greek manner taken up the writer as a foundling into slavery and then as a Roman citizen manumitted him into *clientela*. But nothing else about the letter requires or even suggests this. Since legalities are hardly in place in such a studiously vague letter, we may build rather on παρ' ἑκάστα in §.9 and ask whether ἐμνήσθης is correctly translated 'make mention of us'. Was Sarapion perhaps sending regular money, in return for which the writer prays for his health?

32. The latest is *Sammelbuch* 12.2 (1977), no. 11248 = *New Documents* 1977, no. 1.

33. *Ep.* 10.65, with commentary by A. N. Sherwin-White (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966).

34. *Sammelbuch* 1 (1915), no. 1568, §.1.

35. *Sammelbuch* 4 (1931), no. 7426, §.5.

36. L. Robert, *Monnaies grecques* (Geneva/Paris: Droz, 1967) 66-67.

37. W. H. Buckler/W. M. Calder, *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, Vol. 6 *Monuments and Documents from Phrygia and Caria* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1939), no. 375.

My suggestion in any case is that we can assume a prevailing familiarity with Roman patronal practice and ideals, which were transposed also to international relations, so that they may be taken as a realistic guide to the ethical character of such other conventions of personal dependency as will have existed in the various Greek states. As early as 166 B.C. an inscription of Abdera describes the Roman noblemen who undertook the city's interests at Rome as *πάτρωνας τῆς πατρίδος*, and by the first century we have inscriptions honouring a Roman general as *πάτρωνα καὶ εὐεργέτην*, which neatly combines the Roman and the Greek styles of diplomacy.³⁸ By the beginning of I A.D. this usage is applied to private benefactors in Cyprus without any indication of Roman rank.³⁹

The old-established Greek term *προσώτης* is used particularly of the sponsor of a private association. We may safely look to it also as a guide to the way social protection may have been provided for the Pauline churches. A tantalising textual deviation has always clouded the reference to Phoebe, *διδάκμονος* of the church at Cenchreae (Rom. 16:1). Paul asks the addressees of the letter 'to receive her worthily of the saints' and to 'stand by her in whatever she requires of you'. This pulls both ways. 'Receiving' (*αὐτὴν προσδέξασθε*) might be taken to imply her social inferiority, but 'standing by her' (*παρὰσθῆτε αὐτῇ*) implies that she will be looked up to. Wanting perhaps to make all things equal, two ninth-century MSS (F & G) read the following statement as saying that 'she has been the assistant (*παρὰστώτης*) of many and of me myself', and that might be held to correspond to the

38. L. Robert, *Bulletin épigraphique* (1972), no. 622a (P. Clodius Pulcher, cos. 92); (1970), no. 441 (Lucullus).

39. *Bulletin épigraphique* (1962), no. 342, reporting T. B. Mitford, *American Journal of Archaeology* 65 (1961), no. 38, inscription erected by three Cypriot women whom Mitford assumes to be freedwomen of a Roman citizen. On giving and receiving, see F. W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St Louis: Clayton, 1982) and S. C. Mott, 'The power of giving and receiving: reciprocity in Hellenistic benevolence', in G. F. Hawthorne (ed.), *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 160s-72.

activities of a δούκονος, as indeed the Vulgate had taken it. Hence no doubt the RSV translation 'helper'. The better attested reading προστάτις ('protectress') suffered from appearing to assign Phoebe a much higher social status than might have been anticipated, and from the fact that no other individual woman could be found referred to by this term anywhere in ancient Greek. Its common use was for a patron-goddess.

The missing link has now appeared on a still not fully published papyrus held in Milan dating from 142 B.C.⁴⁰ A woman is said in a legal document to be the προστάτις of her fatherless son. It perhaps means that she has the formal responsibility of being his guardian (ἐκπύροπος), but that the broader term has been used because of the anomaly of a woman's being in this position. Whatever the explanation, the fact that the feminine form of προστάτης is now firmly attested for an individual confirms the judgement of C. K. Barrett and others that Paul is acknowledging his social dependence upon Phoebe.⁴¹ We may safely add her to the array of honoured and therefore rich women who appear frequently in the documents.

A recent case is Apollonis of Cyzicus whose statue was to preside for ever over the marriage registry of the city.⁴² Although the official citation (ℓ.55) attributes this distinction to her ancestors' and her husband's merit (ἀρετή), while she is veiled in the more discreetly feminine quality of σωπρόσῳνη (ℓ.56), we can hardly doubt that in practice she had been in her own

40. *P.Med. Bar.* 1, ℓ.4, discussed by O. Montevecchi, *Aegyptus* 61 (1981) 103-115.

41. C. K. Barrett, 'a protectress of many, and of me myself' (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [London: Black, 1957] 283; C. E. B. Cranfield, 'Phoebe was possessed of some social position, wealth and independence' (*The Epistle to the Romans*, II [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979] 783); E. Käsemann, 'the idea is that of the personal care which Paul and others have received at the hands of the deaconess' (*Commentary on Romans* [London: SCM, 1980] 411).

42. E. Schwertheim, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 29 (1978) 213-216, ℓ.69.

right a figure of social influence in the city.⁴³ Nor were all eminent ladies backward in coming forward. At Tlos in Lycia in I A.D. the council and people bore witness to the skill of Antiochis in medical science, which she records in a statue put up by herself.⁴⁴ In the same city in the next century the city clamoured for its priest of the Augusti to move that Lalla be called 'mother of the city'.⁴⁵ In an inscription of II/III A.D. from Tomis, a widow Epiphania is made by her second husband to say that she was born among the Muses and shared in wisdom. 'And to friends abandoned (sc. widowed?) as woman to women I provided much with a view to piety.'⁴⁶ Her father and (first?) husband had been shipowners, and she claims to have seen many a land and sailed every sea. A long-published document of Assos attests the formalisation of such status as 'first of women', a phrase perhaps echoed in Acts 17:4 of the women who protected Paul at Thessalonica.⁴⁷

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43. J. Pircher, *Das Lob der Frau im vorchristlichen Grabepigramm der Griechen* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1979), no. 3, quotes H. North, *Sophrosyne: Self-knowledge and Self-restraint in Greek Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1956) 253, n.10, 'the primary virtue of women in Greek inscriptions', often mentioned as the sole virtue. In Pircher, no. 3, it supplies 'immortal glory'.
 44. A. Wilhelm, *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen archäologischen Instituts* 27 (1932) 83-84 = G. Pfohl (ed.), *Inschriften der Griechen: Epigraphische Quellen zur Geschichte der antiken Medizin* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977) 109-110 = *New Documents* 1977, no. 2, p. 17, where a number of other women doctors are listed.
 45. C. Naour, *ZPE* 24 (1977), no. 1, reported in *New Documents* 1977, no. 60.
 46. A. Slabotsky, *Studii Clasice* 17 (1977) 117-138 = *New Documents* 1977, no.16.
 47. J. R. S. Sterrett, *Papers of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens* 1 (1882-3) no. 16 = R. Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Assos* (Bonn: Habelt, 1976) = *New Documents* 1976, no. 25 bis.

III

You will have noticed that we now seem to have got Paul firmly back inside the securities of the patronal system, which I have proposed he was to reject at Corinth. One may envisage the following historic development.⁴⁸ After the severe mistreatment he suffered in the Roman colonies of the Anatolian plateau on his first journey, when the social establishment was clearly worked against him, Paul adopted a different position, which we first notice at Philippi. He invokes his Roman citizenship and (as later in Romans) insists upon the integrity of Roman control. He also accepts the protection of socially well-placed households, and conspicuously of eminent women. But the Thessalonian letters, with their demand that people work to support themselves, at once show how he reacted against the parasitic aspects of the system. The Corinthian letters show him in a head-on confrontation with the mechanisms by which it imposed social power defined as moral superiority. His positive response to this collision was to build a remarkable new construction of social realities that both lay within the fabric of the old ranking system and yet transformed it by a revolution in social values.

The building terminology is used deliberately. Paul's notion of edification, which we have now reduced to a pale ideal of inward-looking personal development, is in his usage a graphic and innovatory formulation of how people were to manage their relations with each other. The very word οἰκοδομή is a solecism by Attic standards, but widely used in Paul's day as the ordinary term for the process of construction on a building site. Its extensive metaphorical development in Paul seems to be largely his own inspiration, going well beyond certain Old Testament anticipations.⁴⁹ In the earliest Pauline letters (1 Thes. 5:11; Gal. 2:18) the idea is also not extensively developed, but it is the great encounters in

48. E. A. Judge, 'The social identity of the first Christians: a question of method in religious history', *Journal of Religious History* 11.2 (1980) 201-217, reviews twenty years of discussion of these matters.

49. H. Pohlmann, 'Erbauung', *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 5 (1962) 1043-1070.

the church at Corinth which stimulate his reflection on constructive as opposed to destructive relations. The constructive spirit is that of love, by which each contributes to the others' good, as distinct from the 'puffed-up' spirit which pulls down the building (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10). In Romans the idea is largely neglected in the theological development of the parallel figure of the body, which must also be taken as an attempt to formulate the new principle of social relations (Rom. 12:3-8). In Colossians (2:7) and especially Ephesians (4:12-16) the two figures are however elaborately drawn together. Ephesians 2:19-22 shows the most remarkable development of the idea. Here he moves from a starting-point in a metaphor drawn from the terminology of political alienation through progressive degrees of political and domestic assimilation to the figure of a new structure in which Christ is the cornerstone and all are built in to a harmonious growth.

This is Paul's answer to the deep-seated problem of human exploitation which Marxism in our age has construed as alienation from the product of our labour. Paul's solution is the reverse of Marx's. Man is not merely to be restored to self-fulfilment and the possession of what he himself produces. Paul's estimate of man's capacity is more radical in that it caters both for the socially destructive forces of self-assertion in us which reformism and even revolution cannot master, and for the need for a fresh endowment of spiritual resources from beyond ourselves if those better endowed by nature or education are not to assert themselves over us. The notion of the gifts of the Spirit opens to everyone, however limited in genetic endowment or social opportunity, the promise of being able to contribute to the upbuilding of a new structure of human relations. Such a mode of tackling the problems of oppression in human culture and society is an historical innovation of the first order. It may perhaps be called the first structural approach to human relations.