

THE IDENTIFICATION OF 2 CORINTHIANS 10-13 WITH THE "LETTER OF TEARS"

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In 1897, the Irish scholar James Houghton Kennedy put forward the hypothesis that "the epistle referred to in 2 Cor. 2:4 as written ἐκ πολλῆς θλίψεως καὶ συνοχῆς καρδίας was not our 1 Corinthians but an epistle whose closing portion we possess in chapters 10-13 of 2 Corinthians."¹ Kennedy's proofs consisted of inferences from internal evidence, a series of cross-references from 2 Cor. 1-7 to 2 Cor. 10-13. The references were of two kinds: the first consisted of general descriptions in chapters 1-2 and 7 of a previous letter of Paul to Corinth, to which the writing now preserved in 2 Cor. 10-13 was seen to correspond; the second consisted of special allusions to the content of the severe epistle, which refer to specific words and phrases of 2 Cor. 10-13.²

Kennedy's arguments proved convincing to many at the beginning of the century. Moffatt rearranged the text of 2 Corinthians in accordance with the hypothesis.³ Gerald Rendall tested the theory to determine whether at any point it involved contradictions with the language or implications of the record; he concluded that the idea conferred reality on the circumstances and plausibility on the motives, to the extent that these could be reconstructed.⁴ Kirsopp Lake provided a powerful summary, condensing and

¹ J H Kennedy, "Are There Two Epistles in 2 Corinthians?" *The Expositor* 6 (1897) 233, reprinted in idem, *The Second and Third Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians* (London Methuen, 1900) xiii

² In his article in *The Expositor*, *op cit*, Kennedy first presented the proofs derived from a comparison of specific passages, pp 234-36, then examined the general marks of identification, pp 294-300. In *The Second and Third Epistles*, 63-68, 79-94, the order of presentation is reversed.

³ J Moffatt, *The Historical New Testament* (New York Scribner's, 1901) 174-91. See also his statement in support of Kennedy's hypothesis in idem, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (New York Scribner's, 1918) 119ff.

⁴ G Rendall, *The Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians* (London Macmillan, 1909) *passim*, but esp 4-6.

tightening Kennedy's arguments.⁵ The theory underlies the commentaries of Alfred Plummer and R. H. Strachan,⁶ and was the key to daring reconstructions of the history of Paul and Corinth by C. H. Dodd and T. W. Manson.⁷ By the middle of the century, it seemed that Kennedy had triumphed.⁸

Yet Kennedy's work made little impression upon contemporary German scholars.⁹ This was not because Germans were ignorant of Kennedy, as references in Windisch show,¹⁰ but rather because, some decades before, objections had been raised against a similar hypothesis put forward by Adolf Hausrath.¹¹ To many, the objections seemed to be insuperable. Objections assumed a variety of forms, but amounted, essentially, to this: despite evidence for the priority of chs. 10-13, and the appearance of verbal cross-references, the correlation is less than perfect. The "offence" which Paul mentions in 2:5 and 7:12 is not discussed in chs. 10-13; while the actual content of chs. 10-13, that is, Paul's defense of his apostleship against Judaistic opponents, is passed over in silence in what Paul says about the painful epistle in chs. 2 and 7. The discrepancy was already noted by Max Krenkel in his influential

⁵ K. Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St Paul Their Motive and Origin* (London Rivingtons, 1914) 151-60

⁶ A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh T & T Clark, 1915) esp XXII-XXVI, R H Strachan, *The Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* MNTC (New York Harper, 1935) XIVff

⁷ C H Dodd, "The Mind of Paul (I)" repr in his *New Testament Studies* (Manchester Manchester University, 1953) 80-81, T W Manson, "St Paul in Ephesus (4) The Corinthian Correspondence," *BJRL* 26 (1941-42) 327-41, repr as "The Corinthian Correspondence (2)" in his *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles*, ed M Black (Manchester Manchester University, 1962) 210-24

⁸ Of course, there were still those who maintained the unity of 2 Cor, such as A. Menzies, *The Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (London Macmillan, 1912) esp xxxiv-xlii. But see the judgment of F. Watson, "2 Cor x-xiii and Paul's Painful Letter to the Corinthians," *JTS* 35/2 (1984) 328 "one can justifiably speak of a consensus among English speaking scholars of the first half of the century in favour of the identification hypothesis"

⁹ Kennedy left no mark upon A. Julicher, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Tubingen Mohr [Siebeck], 1906), nor upon H. Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I/II*, HNT (Tubingen Mohr [Siebeck], 1909), nor even upon J. Weiss, *Das Urchristentum*, ed R. Knopf (Gottingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1917)

¹⁰ H. Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, KEK 6 (Gottingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924, repr 1970) 13 n 1

¹¹ A. Hausrath, *Der Vier-Capitel-Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (Heidelberg Bassermann, 1870)

essay of 1890.¹² His arguments were repeated with emphasis by Richard Drescher a few years later.¹³ The one thing which, on Hausrath's view, was certain to be found in the severe epistle is not contained in what is believed to be a fragment of this writing in chs. 10-13; while, what appears in the last four chapters fails to correspond to the apostle's account of the severe epistle in 2:4 and 7:8. The matter seemed to have reached an impasse.¹⁴

Critics who have sought to maintain, in the face of objections, the identification of 2 Cor. 10-13 with the "letter of tears" have typically resorted to the explanation that what we possess in the last four chapters is not the whole of the severe epistle, but only its concluding part. In the earlier portion, which has since been lost, the apostle would have dealt in detail with the case of the ἀδίκησας. Thus Hausrath allowed that none of the extant fragments provide as much information about the wrongdoer as is presupposed by statements in chs. 2 and 7, so that we must still reckon with a lost epistle, or a portion thereof.¹⁵ He conjectured that chs. 10-13 were

¹² M. Krenkel, "Der persönliche und briefliche Verkehr des Apostels mit der Gemeinde zu Korinth" in his *Beiträge zur Aufhellung der Geschichte und der Briefe des Apostels Paulus* (Braunschweig: Schwetschke, 1895) 268-73.

¹³ R. Drescher, "Der zweite Korintherbrief und die Vorgänge in Korinth seit Abfassung des ersten Korintherbriefes," *ThStKr* 70 (1897) 43-111, esp. 58ff.

¹⁴ Windisch provides an instructive example of the ambivalence of the critics and the ambiguity of the evidence. He grasped the reasons that led Hausrath and Kennedy to equate chs. 10-13 with the "letter of tears," *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 17ff., 81-82, 92-93, 425. But Krenkel's objections had made an impression which Windisch could not overcome, *ibid.*, 14, 18, 93. Thus, Windisch judged that the "letter of tears" had been lost. He proposed that chs. 10-13 were the reaction of Paul to a fresh outbreak of the crisis reported to Paul after the dispatch of chs. 1-9, *ibid.*, 17-18, 431. Windisch was aware of the speculative nature of his own hypothesis—that it required him to posit a series of events for which there was no support in the text: the return of one or more emissaries, another visit to the church, and in Corinth yet another attack by opponents of the apostle's work, *ibid.*, 431-32. He knew how unlikely it was historically that the cycle of strife and reconciliation should repeat itself in so brief a scope. Yet Windisch felt driven to this solution by the less than perfect correlation between Paul's account of his severe epistle and the content of chs. 10-13. However implausible and speculative, his hypothesis avoided contradiction with any statement of the received epistle, *ibid.*, 17-18, so already Krenkel, *Beiträge*, 306. For this reason, Windisch's theory has proven attractive to a number of scholars, among whom are Barrett, Bruce, and Furnish.

¹⁵ Hausrath, *Der Vier-Capitel-Brief*, 28. Hausrath has been criticized for suggesting that the four chapters are the whole of the severe epistle, first by Lake, *The Earlier Epistles*, 162, then by H. D. Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul*, *Hermeneia* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 13. This misconception had its origin with Kennedy, *The Second and Third Epistles*, xiv, if Kennedy had direct access to Hausrath, he misunderstood him on this point.

a Pauline addendum to a letter of the Ephesian church which dealt with the offence against Paul and the collection for the Jerusalem saints.¹⁶ Schmiedel, likewise, sought to address the incompleteness of chs. 10-13, the fact that, contrary to expectations, the ἀδικήσας is not mentioned. He found the wrongdoing hinted at in 10:6, in the παρακοή Paul was ready to avenge.¹⁷ Yet he allowed that Paul should have been more explicit, if chs. 10-13 were the "letter of tears". Thus he proposed that the section had been lost in which Paul dealt with the ἀδικήσας; it was suppressed, he believed, by the Corinthian church in an effort to conceal its shame.¹⁸ Kennedy argued that chs. 10-13 were the concluding section of an epistle of which the earlier portion had been lost, like the letter referred to in 1 Cor. 5:9.¹⁹ The intensive pronoun (αὐτός) and the copulative particle (δέ), which introduce the last four chapters (10:1), function, he argued, to continue with emphasis a discussion which had already begun. He found this confirmed by the following verses, which allude to charges against the apostle, not as if they were now introduced, but as if they had already been mentioned.²⁰

It is possible that chs. 10-13 are a fragment of a larger epistle whose initial section has been lost. The abruptness of 10:1ff. might therein find its explanation. The intensive pronoun (αὐτός) might mark a contrast between Paul and whoever (the Ephesians, Timothy) had spoken previously. Perhaps it is not without significance that Paul employs the first person singular predominately in the last four chapters. The particle, δέ, is adversative and copulative, and could thus have served to distinguish what follows from a related discussion that went before.²¹ Thus, certain characteristics of chs. 10-13, and in particular its opening words, αὐτός δέ ἐγὼ Παῦλος, lend some support to the conjecture that these chapters are but the concluding portion of what was once a larger work.

¹⁶ Hausrath, *Der Vier-Capitel-Brief*, 28

¹⁷ P. Schmiedel, *Hand-Commentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 2 *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (Freiburg Mohr [Siebeck], 1892) 61

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 62

¹⁹ Kennedy, "Are There Two Epistles in 2 Corinthians?" 288-90, *idem*, *The Second and Third Epistles*, xiv-xvi

²⁰ Kennedy, *The Second and Third Epistles*, 96-98

²¹ H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1920) §§ 2834-36

But this is not the only conclusion that the evidence warrants. The phrase, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος, may not be intended to mark a contrast between the apostle and others, or between these chapters and what preceded. Paul elsewhere uses related expressions to accentuate his own authority, e.g., ἴδε ἐγὼ Παῦλος in Gal. 5:2, αὐτὸς ἐγὼ in 2 Cor. 12:13 and Rom. 15:14, without implying such distinctions.²² Nor do chs. 10-13 give the impression of incompleteness; the argument seems self-contained.²³ Only the prescript may be lacking. 2 Cor. 10-13 would then be a work which, like Paul's letter to the Galatians, made its beginning *in medias res*, without the customary "thanksgiving" (cf. Gal. 1:6)²⁴

However one evaluates the evidence, the argument that chs. 10-13 are only part of the "letter of tears," and that the name of the ἀδικήσας and the incident he provoked have been removed by a redactor, is "ein reines *argumentum e silentio*," as Hans Dieter Betz correctly observed.²⁵ As such, it will never prove very convincing, even if it corresponds to the facts. Nor does this solution address the whole problem which critics of Hausrath and Kennedy have identified. Paul's failure to mention the object of dispute in 2 Cor. 10-13, namely, the charges of certain missionary rivals, in references to the severe epistle in chs. 1-2 and 7, still remains to be explained. Few have been convinced by Bornkamm's argument that, since the opponents were "umherziehende Wanderapostel," they had abandoned Corinth by the time that chs. 1-2 and 7 came to be written; thus Paul could devote his whole attention in the letter of reconciliation to the restoration of good relations with the community.²⁶ Other solutions must be discovered, if the identification of chs. 10-13 with the "letter of tears" is to be maintained.

²² So already Kennedy, "Are There Two Epistles in 2 Corinthians?" 288, Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 290-91, with parallels from Greek literature, R Bultmann, *Der zweite Brief an die Korinther*, KEK 6 (Göttingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976) 182

²³ H D Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus und die sokratische Tradition Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu seiner "Apologie"* 2 Kor 10-13, BhTh 45 (Tübingen Mohr [Siebeck], 1972) 13-42, cf the "Epilogue" to D Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* (Philadelphia Fortress, 1986) 336-37

²⁴ Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 291, who points to Phil 1 3 D* as a stylistic parallel

²⁵ Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus*, 6

²⁶ Bornkamm, *Vorgeschichte*, 19, criticized by Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus*, 7, and C Machelet, "Paulus und seine Gegner Eine Untersuchung zu den Korintherbriefen" in *Theokratia*, ed W Dietrich (Leiden Brill, 1973) 187-88

Francis Watson has advanced the discussion by observing that the discrepancy between chs. 10-13 and the "letter of tears" is not as great as the critics allege.²⁷ In his comments on the severe epistle in chs. 1-2 and 7, Paul does not, in fact, pass over in silence the substance of chs. 10-13, that is, the challenge to his apostolic authority. It is clear from 2:5-11 and 7:12 that a member of the Corinthian Church had committed an offence against Paul. But the way in which Paul speaks of the matter implicates the church in his act of defiance. For, prior to the severe epistle, the Corinthians had taken no action against the offender (2:5-9). It was the purpose of the severe epistle to evoke the loyalty which was not forthcoming, to reveal to the Corinthians their zeal for Paul (7:7, 12). The reprimand was directed not just at an individual, but at the entire church, to test their earnestness and obedience (2:4, 9; 7:11). That the Corinthians knew themselves to be its object is apparent from the nature of their response, which consisted in "godly grief" and "repentance" (7:7-10). All of this corresponds perfectly to the situation of chs. 10-13, where the attacks of rival missionaries have moved the church to revolt against Paul.²⁸

Watson found, moreover, a reference to the offence against Paul, and to the offender, in 2 Cor. 10-13.²⁹ Each painful word of the last four chapters makes it clear that this work is the apostle's response to a denial of his authority. At issue is Paul's legitimacy, his status as a true apostle (11:5; 12:12).³⁰ Doubts have been raised by Paul's opponents: they have questioned the mode of his existence and the authenticity of his gospel (11:1-21).³¹ But the Corinthians have let themselves be persuaded; the opponents have made prey of them (11:3-4, 19-20). They regard Paul as weak and ineffectual: by letter, he seems bold and strong; but he is humble and weak when face to face (10:1, 10-11; 11:21). The Corinthians have concluded, it seems, that Paul is powerless to punish offenders (10:1-6; 12:19-21). They suspect that the reason for his incapacity is a lack of

²⁷ Watson, "2 Cor. x-xiii," 324-46. Watson's argument for the unity of chs. 1-9 is unconvincing, but his discussion of the identification of the painful epistle marks the only real advance in this area in almost a century.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 340-42.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 342-46.

³⁰ Watson calls attention to E. Kasemann's treatment of the topic in "Die Legitimität des Apostels. Eine Untersuchung zu II Korinther 10-13," *ZNW* 41 (1942) 33-71.

³¹ Betz, *Der Apostel Paulus*, 100-137.

divine authorization (13:10). His ministry has a merely human basis (10:2); he does not live by the power of God (13:4). They will not submit to Paul's authority, unless he can provide proof of the claim that it is Christ who speaks in him (13:1-3). Thus, the offence which provoked the last four chapters is that, during Paul's second visit to Corinth, he was accused of being a false apostle by certain members of the congregation, because of his failure to manifest the authority characteristic of the apostolic office.³²

The crucial question is whether this attack upon Paul's apostolic legitimacy can be identified with the grievous offence which lies at the base of the "letter of tears". In 10:2 Paul distinguishes between the congregation and "some (τινες) who consider that we are acting according to human standards." But a few verses later, in 10:7, the plural pronoun is replaced by the singular: "If anyone (τις) is confident that he belongs to Christ, so also do we." Again, in 10:11, the apostle warns, "Let such a person (ὁ τοιοῦτος) understand that what we are in word through epistles when absent, such we are in deed when present." The unnamed person of whom Paul speaks is evidently the leader of a group which has challenged Paul's authority. This corresponds exactly to 2:5-6, where the one who caused pain, and must now be punished, is referred to as τις and ὁ τοιοῦτος. In 10:2 Paul pleads with the congregation to spare him the necessity of punishing those who challenge his authority; the church is asked, in other words, to take disciplinary measures against one of its members. In 2:5ff. one finds that the church has severely punished an offender in whose offence some have taken part. Thus 2 Cor 10-13 may be identified with the "letter of tears".³³

There can be no doubt of the importance of Watson's insights. Chs. 10-13 make discreet reference to the Corinthian offender and his offence against Paul. Chs. 1-2 and 7 reflect the Corinthians' complicity in a revolt against Paul's authority. Watson follows unconsciously in the steps of Hausrath and Schmiedel.³⁴ The latter,

³² Watson, "2 Cor x-xiii," 345. Watson views the charge of misappropriation of funds in 12:16-18 as derived and secondary.

³³ *Ibid*, 345-46.

³⁴ Watson, *ibid*, 325 n. 10, acknowledges that he was unable to obtain a copy of Hausrath's book, his knowledge of Hausrath rests upon Heinrich and Kennedy. Nor does he refer to Schmiedel's commentary. Thus he seems to be un-aware of the degree to which he recapitulates their arguments.

one recalls, had glimpsed an allusion to the offence against Paul in the language of 10:6, in the *παρακοή* Paul was ready to avenge. Like Hausrath before him, Watson suggests that doubts about Paul's authority had their origin in the apostle's failure to inflict punishment upon an offender, though Watson avoids Hausrath's mistake of identifying the wrongdoer with the incestuous man.³⁵ Closer reading of chs. 10-13 might well discover additional passages in which Paul alludes to the wrong that was done, just as closer attention to chs. 1-2 and 7 might reveal further references to the opponents and their attack upon Paul.

But even with Watson's observations, the substance of the objection against the identification hypothesis remains. For what is alleged by the critics is not merely that there is no evidence of complicity by the Corinthians in a wrong that was done to Paul, but that the substance of the challenge to the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship is passed over in silence in what Paul says about the severe epistle in chs. 1-2 and 7.³⁶ The lack must finally be acknowledged: there is no mention in the letter of reconciliation (2 Cor. 1:1-2:13; 7:5-16; 13:11-13) of Paul's weakness (11:21), of his failure to produce the *σημεῖα τοῦ ἀποστόλου* (12:11-12), of his refusal to accept support from the community, interpreted as an admission of his inferiority to the other apostles (11:5ff.; 12:13), of the craft and deceit by which he aimed to defraud the Corinthians through the collection (12:16-18). These are the charges of chs. 10-13, on the basis of which the Corinthians and Paul's opponents question the legitimacy of his apostleship.³⁷ Of all these charges, there is not one word in what Paul says about the severe epistle in 2 Cor. 2 and 7.

But perhaps it is the critics' assumption that is at fault, and not a discrepancy in the letters of Paul. It is assumed by critics of the identification hypothesis that Paul ought to have made explicit mention of the former object of dispute in the letter preserved in 2 Cor. 1:1-2:13; 7:5-16; 13:11-13. It is this assumption which has given cogency to objections against Hausrath's hypothesis. But is

³⁵ *Ibid*, 342-46

³⁶ Thus, rightly, Bornkamm, *Vorgeschichte*, 16 "der eigentliche Inhalt des letzten Briefteiles, die Abschlüttelung der Rivalen, in dem Versöhnungsbrief (2 Kor 2 und 7) mit Stillschweigen übergangen wird"

³⁷ Kasemann, "Die Legitimität des Apostels," 34-36

the assumption warranted? Only investigation of the genre of a letter such as Paul has composed in 2 Cor. 1:1-2:13; 7:5-16; 13:11-13 can provide an answer to this question.³⁸ Is reference to the cause of strife permitted by the rules of the genre? Does it lie within the constraints imposed? Such an investigation has not been undertaken, at least not with the present question in mind.³⁹

The conciliatory aim of the letter preserved in 2 Cor. 1:1-2:13; 7:5-16, 13:11-13 was recognized by scholars not long after it was determined by Johannes Weiss that these chapters once constituted an independent work.⁴⁰ Weiss was followed by A. Loisy, who referred to 2 Cor. 1:1-2:13; 7:5-16 as a "lettre de conciliation".⁴¹ It was Hans Windisch who first observed that 2 Cor. 1:1-2:13; 7:5-16 fits the description of a "conciliatory epistle" in Ps.-Libanius.⁴² The aim of the ἐπιστολὴ θεραπευτικὴ, according to Ps.-Libanius (Ἐπιστολιμαῖοι χαρακτῆρες 15), is to conciliate someone who has been caused grief; thus one avoids, insofar as possible, mention of

³⁸ The importance of genre in composition was recognized in antiquity see esp Plato *Phaedrus* 264C-D, *Gorgias* 503E-504A, 506D-E, Aristotle *Poetics* 50A-B, *Anonymous Seguerianus* 435 10-19, 436 4-12 (Spengel) It is fully appreciated by F Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh University Press, 1972) and by M Heath, *Unity in Greek Poetics* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1989) 37-38, 94-95, 150-54, Heath concludes that "the assessment of a text's appropriate construction always involves questions of content are the functions of the genre fulfilled?" (p 154)

³⁹ To be sure, there have been discussions of the genre of 2 Cor 1-7, e.g., L Belleville, "A Letter of Apologetic Self-Commendation 2 Cor 1 8-7 16," *NovT* 31/2 (1989) 142-63 What has not been discussed is the relevance of genre to the phenomenon of reference

⁴⁰ J Weiss first suggested that 2 Cor 1 1-2 13, 7 5-16 was once an independent work in his review of Halmel in *ThLZ* 19 (1894) 513-14, then in idem, *Das Urchristentum*, 245ff A growing number of scholars now regard 2 Cor 1 1-2 13, 7 5-16 as an independent work, though some append ch 8, others ch 9 The judgment of Georgi, *Opponents*, 335, is characteristic "The seams in 2 13-14 and 7 4-5 are the best examples in the entire New Testament of one large fragment secondarily inserted into another text The splits are so basic, and the connections so obvious, that the burden of proof now lies with those who defend the integrity of the canonical text"

⁴¹ A Loisy, "Les épîtres de Paul," *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses* 7 (1921) 213 Bornkamm, *Vorgeschichte*, 19, referred to 2 Cor 1 1-2 13, 7 5-16 as the "Versöhnungsbrief", he was presumably influenced in the choice of this term by Windisch This designation of the genre of 2 Cor 1 1-2 13, 7 5-16 has been widely accepted in subsequent scholarship, though a thorough investigation is still wanting

⁴² Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 8

the cause of strife.⁴³ The theorist directs that the author of a conciliatory letter write to the one who has been grieved: "But if you were upset by what was said or done, be assured, most excellent sir, that I shall most certainly no longer make mention of what was said" (εἰ δ' ἐπὶ τοῖς λεχθεῖσιν ἢ πραχθεῖσιν ἡχθέσθης, ἴσθι, κράτιστε ἀνδρῶν, ὥς οὐκέτι τῶν ῥηθέντων λόγον ὅλως ποτὲ ποιήσομαι).⁴⁴ The reason for reticence is supplied by a concluding enthymeme: "For it is my aim always to heal my friends rather than to cause them grief" (σκοπὸς γὰρ μοι θεραπεύειν αἰεὶ τοὺς φίλους ἐστὶν ἥπερ λυπεῖν).⁴⁵

Examination of extant conciliatory epistles demonstrates that the handbook of Ps.-Libanius does not merely formulate theory, but describes the actual practice of letter-writers over the years.⁴⁶ From the shrine of Poseidon in Calauria, where the orator Demosthenes found asylum, he gazed across the sea to his native Athens and composed an appeal for his restoration (*Ep.* 2).⁴⁷ Nowhere in the course of his conciliatory apology does Demosthenes mention the exact nature of the accusations against him. He argues, instead, for the probity of his conduct throughout the course of his career (*Ep.* 2.1-12). When he finally treats of the Harpalus affair, it is after he has convinced the reader of his innocence, and in a context that is strongly evocative of pity.⁴⁸ Even then, the actual charge (of bribe

⁴³ Text and translation in A. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988) 68-69. The author remarks "Some also call this the apologetic style" (ταύτην δὲ καὶ ἀπολογητικὴν τινες καλοῦσιν). On the authorship and date of this writing, see J. Sykutris, "Proclus Περὶ Ἐπιστολῶν," *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 7 (1928-29) 108-18.

⁴⁴ Malherbe, *Epistolary Theorists*, 76-77.

⁴⁵ *Op. cit.*

⁴⁶ On the relationship between the manuals and the actual practice of letter-writing, see Malherbe, *Epistolary Theorists*, 5.

⁴⁷ Text in *Demosthenes orationes*, vol. 3, ed. F. Blass (Leipzig: Teubner, 1907), *Demosthenes orationes*, vol. 4, ed. S. Butcher and W. Rennie (Oxford: Clarendon, 1931). Translation in N. W. DeWitt and N. J. DeWitt, *Demosthenes VII Funeral Speech, Erotic Essay, Exordia, and Letters* LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1949). Commentary in J. Goldstein, *The Letters of Demosthenes* (New York: Columbia University, 1968) 195-200, 235-46. The authenticity of the letter has been questioned, but is defended by Goldstein. If authentic, the letter would fall in the years 324-322 B.C., the last two years of the orator's life.

⁴⁸ In the *commiseratio* at paragraph 14. From paragraph 13 to the end of the epistle, Demosthenes appears to discuss his grievous suffering; in fact, he continues to argue for his innocence. On appeals for pity and their placement, see Isocrates 16.48, Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.14.11 1415b26-27. Demosthenes appeals for pity according to the commonplaces of "contrary to deserts" and "contrary to expectation", see Aristotle *Rhet.* 2.8.2 1385b13-14.

taking) is not mentioned; he represents himself as the victim of circumstance (*Ep.* 2.14). He might have written more in exoneration, but refrains in order to conciliate his readers (*Ep.* 2.25). Nor are his accusers (Dinarchus and Hyperides) mentioned by name; he speaks only of "certain members of the council" (τινες τῶν ἐν τῇ Βουλῇ, *Ep.* 2.2). When he speaks of himself as the object of mistreatment, he speaks not of "me", but of "such a person" (ὁ τοιοῦτος, *Ep.* 2.8). Thus he avoids a defensive posture and mitigates the harshness of blame.⁴⁹ At every point, his reticence is dictated by his purpose, by the outcome he envisions for his self-defense: "As you have rightly become reconciled to the other defendants," Demosthenes pleads, "grant also that reconciliation to me" (*Ep.* 2.16).

Cicero exhibits a similar caution in his conciliatory letter to Crassus (*Ad Fam.* 5.8).⁵⁰ A quarrel had interrupted the reconciliation effected by Pompey earlier in the year (cf. *Ad Fam.* 1.9.20). But Cicero does not explore the strife. He begins, instead, by directing attention to the good services which he had recently rendered. The debate in the senate over the allocation of funds to Crassus as governor of Syria has provided Cicero with the opportunity to become the champion of Crassus' honor. Cicero never lacked the will to contribute to Crassus' advancement; only the "many variations of circumstance" have caused him to intermit the service which has been owing to their friendship (*Ad Fam.* 5.8.1). But now the occasion has arisen for which Cicero has hoped, and he is sure that he has made it plain to the senate and people of Rome that he is Crassus' very good friend (*Ad Fam.* 5.8.2). Only after he has given Crassus assurances of friendship does he come to speak of the present dispute. Even then, the nature of the conflict is not described. He refers only to "certain infringements which have affected our relations." These differences, he asserts, are "surmised rather than real"; they are "mere figments of the imagina-

⁴⁹ See the nuanced rhetorical analysis of Goldstein, *The Letters of Demosthenes*, 157-66, who follows the *scholia minora* to Hermogenes in his understanding of these points

⁵⁰ Text in *Cicero Epistulae ad Familiares*, vol. 1, ed D R Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge Cambridge University, 1977) 86-88, with commentary, 327-29. Translation in D R Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero's Letters to His Friends* (Atlanta Scholars Press, 1988) 69-71. On the conciliatory purpose of the letter, see D F Epstein, *Personal Enmity in Roman Politics 218-43 B C* (London Croom Helm, 1987) 5

tion." Cicero exhorts: "Let them be utterly eradicated from our memories and our lives" (*Ad Fam.* 5.8.3). Cicero's treatment of the controversy is controlled by his conciliatory purpose: "Between two men such as you are and I desire to be, whose lot has fallen on the same political ground, I would hope that alliance and friendship will conduce to the credit of both" (*Ad Fam.* 5.8.3). Cicero follows the conventions of the genre, even if his real sentiments about Crassus remained negative (cf. *Ad Fam.* 4.13.2: *o hominem nequam!*).

Relations between Apollonius of Tyana and his brother Hestiaeus do not appear to have been good.⁵¹ There has been a dispute over money. In the earlier letters, there are judgments and reproaches.⁵² Hestiaeus has contributed to the shameful opinion that his brother travels abroad in search of money (*Ep.* 35). Apollonius is pained and asks his relation, "How could you judge me so harshly?" (*Ep.* 44). For his part, Apollonius believes that kinship should override such difficulties; he longs, like Odysseus, to return to his home and behold the sepulchres of his fathers (*Ep.* 44). The next letter makes clear that the overture has been accepted; a reconciliation has occurred (*Ep.* 45). Apollonius first assures Hestiaeus of the permanence of their affections: those who are convinced that they are philosophers cannot rightly be supposed to hate their brothers (*Ep.* 45). What is now uppermost in Apollonius' mind is not their "misunderstanding" (ὑποψία) about money, which was something that they tried to despise even before they became philosophers, but the suspicion and hurt feelings that may have resulted from what he wrote, and from his failure to write. It was never Apollonius' intention, he asserts, to cause his brother grief. In proof of his love, Apollonius announces, "I will return to you towards the end of spring" (*Ep.* 45).

⁵¹ Text and Latin translation in R. Hercher, *Epistolographi Graeci* (Paris: Didot, 1873) 115-16, 117, 120, 124-25, text and English translation in *Philostratus II The Life of Apollonius of Tyana: The Epistles of Apollonius*, ed. F. C. Conybeare, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1969) 432, 436-40, 448-50, 470. See also R. Penella, *The Letters of Apollonius of Tyana: A Critical Text with Prolegomena, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1979) 48-51, 54-57, 62-65, 76-79, 108-109, 113-14, 118, 128.

⁵² The collection as we have it is not arranged chronologically. There are two clusters of letters to Hestiaeus, *Epp.* 44-45 and 72-73, plus two standing alone, *Ep.* 35 and *Ep.* 55. *Ep.* 35 presupposes the charge that Apollonius travels in pursuit of financial gain, cf. *Ep.* 45, where the charge is explicitly discussed. Several remarks in Philostratus seem intended as tacit refutations of such a charge, e.g., *Vit. Soph.* 1.18, 3.33, 8.2.3.

Marcus Aurelius wrote a letter of apology to his friend and former teacher Herodes Atticus.⁵³ A quarrel between Herodes and his fellow-Athenians had come before the emperor's court (Philostratus *Vit Soph.* 2.1.550-61). The verdict in the case went against the sophist: his freedmen were punished, and Herodes himself appears to have made financial concessions.⁵⁴ From self-imposed exile at Oricum in Epirus, Herodes addressed a complaint to the emperor. Thereupon, Marcus wrote to Herodes a letter which has been partly preserved in Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*.⁵⁵ In a long first section, the emperor dwells upon his present sufferings: he describes the rigors of his winter quarters, and laments the recent death of his wife; he remarks upon his own bad health (*Vit Soph.* 2.1.562). The motive of the *commiseratio* is to account for the suspension of his correspondence, of which Herodes had complained, and to establish a basis for reconciliation in the commonality of affliction. Only then does Marcus venture to speak of what has been at issue between them. He assures Herodes of his good-will, then argues that Herodes should not regard himself as unjustly treated (μηδὲ ἡγεῖσθαι ἀδικεῖσθαι), because some of his household have been chastised with a punishment "as mild as possible" (ὥς οἶόν τε ἐπιεικεῖ). About the compensation to the Athenians that Herodes has been forced to make, the emperor says nothing at all, but allows, "If I have grieved you in anything, or am still grieving you (εἰ δέ τι λελύπηκα σε ἢ λυπῶ), demand reparation from me in the temple of Athena in your city at the time of the mysteries" (*Vit Soph.* 2.1.563).

The principle of composition is plain: one who wished to defend what was said or done in a manner that restored relations, avoided insofar as possible discussion of the source of strife. Only so much

⁵³ All of Philostratus *Vit Soph.* 2.1.559-63 should be read as background

⁵⁴ Philostratus *Vit Soph.* 2.1.561. Something more than the benefactions for which Herodes was famous seems intended by the *θεραπεία* mentioned in line 93 of the recently discovered letter of Marcus Aurelius to the Athenians, see J. Oliver, *Marcus Aurelius Aspects of Civic and Cultural Policy in the East*, Hesperia Suppl. 13 (Princeton: Princeton University, 1970) 27. Perhaps the "remedy" consisted in the payment of his father's *fidei commissa* to the people of Athens, which Herodes had earlier refused to honor.

⁵⁵ Philostratus *Vit Soph.* 2.1.562-63, text and translation in *Philostratus and Eunapius Lives of the Sophists*, ed. W. C. Wright, LCL (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1968) 174-75. Philostratus states that he extracts from the letter only that which bears upon his narrative.

is said of the cause of conflict as is necessary in order to explain that it was not the author's purpose to give offence. This simple principle is observed whenever the aim of a writing is conciliatory, whatever the rhetorical species.⁵⁶ It is the response appropriate to the situation.⁵⁷

The convention is in keeping with the understanding of reconciliation in the Greco-Roman world: reconciliation was held to consist in an act of deliberate forgetfulness. The concept was given decisive articulation in the reconciliation of 403 B.C., which ended the Athenian civil war.⁵⁸ The agreement was recorded for public consultation and was often cited in antiquity as a model of political enlightenment.⁵⁹ Plutarch gives the exact date on which Thrasyboulos and his followers marched back into Athens and claims that the event was still being celebrated in his own day (*Mor.* 349F). The famous reconciliation was negatively described as *μὴ μνησιχακεῖν*, not bearing malice, not remembering past wrongs, and positively, in later authors (e.g., Plutarch *Mor.* 814B; *Cic.* 42.2), as

⁵⁶ Thus, in counselling concord between the cities, Isocrates, *Panegyricus* 129, bows to convention and apologizes for having recalled the enmities between Athens and Sparta, "After having stated at the outset that I intended to speak on conciliation" (προειπὼν ὡς περὶ διαλλαγῶν ποιήσομαι τοὺς λόγους). In his *Letter to the Alexandrians*, the emperor Claudius refuses to make an "exact investigation" (ἀκριβῶς ἐξελέγξαι) of the cause of strife arising between Jews and Greeks, he urges, rather, the parties to cease their "destructive and mutual enmity", text and translation in *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*, vol II, ed V Tcherikover and A Fuks (Cambridge, MA Harvard University, 1960) 41, 43. Note Tcherikover's observation on these lines in the commentary, p. 48. "Claudius' refusal to hold an inquiry is due only to his firm decision to stop the hostilities at once and to impose peace on both sides." When Marcus Aurelius endeavors to reconcile the Athenians to their own Herodes, he buries the memory of their present dispute beneath the confident imperial assurance that no impediment to goodwill remains: he asks, "For what could still be lingering in the mind of anyone after the memory of the accusations has been effaced? Now that a remedy has been fully worked out, perhaps it will be possible for the Athenians to love my own Herodes and their own, since nothing else of importance still stands in the way of good-will" (τί γὰρ ἂν ἐτι ὑποκαθέζοιτο ἐν γνώμῃ τινὸς μετὰ τὸ ἀπαλειφθῆναι τὴν ἐπὶ ταῖς αἰτίαις μνήμην; τῆς θεραπείας ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἐκπεπονημένης ἰσως Ἀθηναίοις ἐξῆν τὸν ἐμὸν καὶ τὸν ἴδιον αὐτῶν Ἡρώιδην στέργειν οὐδενὸς ἔτι ἐτέρου τῇ εὐνοίᾳ μεγάλου ἀντικρούοντος), text and translation in C. P. Jones, "A New Letter of Marcus Aurelius to the Athenians," *ZPE* 8 (1971) 181-82.

⁵⁷ On social situation as a factor in generic composition, see S. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, LEC 5 (Philadelphia Westminster, 1986) 56.

⁵⁸ See T. Loening, *The Reconciliation Agreement of 403/402 B.C. Its Content and Application*, Hermes 53 (Stuttgart Steiner, 1987) 19-21.

⁵⁹ E.g., Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 39.6, Isocrates 18.3, other references are discussed in Loening, *Reconciliation Agreement*, passim.

ἀμνηστία, an act of political forgiveness.⁶⁰ Valerius Maximus equates the term with *oblivio*.⁶¹ Thus Aristotle states that the political parties “blotted out recriminations with regard to the past” (τὰς περὶ τῶν προτέρων αἰτίας ἐξήλειψαν, *Ath Pol* 40.3).⁶² And Andocides praises past generations because “they refused to revive old quarrels” (οὐκ ἤξιωσάν τινι τῶν πρότερον γενομένων μνησικαῆσαι), and urges the men of his own day to equal their ancestors in virtue by “refusing to cherish grievances” (μὴ μνησικαῆσαι, *De Mysternus* 108-109).⁶³

It is now possible to see that Paul conforms to convention in his letter of reconciliation in 2 Cor. 1:1-2:13; 7:5-16; 13:11-13: he avoids discussion of the source of strife. The challenge to his authority, which precipitated chs. 10-13, is not mentioned in 1:1-2:13; 7:5-16. The offence is there, in the commendation of the repentance and obedience of the Corinthians (2:9; 7:7-11); but revolt lies within submission, the way discord lies within harmony.⁶⁴ There is a passing reference to the collection in the χάρισμα of 1:11; but former suspicions about its purpose (12:16-18) are present only in the invitation to join in helping Paul by prayer.⁶⁵ There are lingering doubts about Paul's sincerity (1:12-14); but the subject is broached in the confidence that his actions will now be understood. Nor are the opponents explicitly mentioned. Paul's missionary rivals figure negatively, as the contra-position in relation to which the unity of Paul and the church is affirmed (1.3-7; 2:10-11).⁶⁶ But their influence is not acknowledged; Paul chooses to ignore what he disapproves. Nor is the Corinthian offender

⁶⁰ Liddell-Scott-Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1968) s.v. ἀμνηστέω, ἀμνηστία

⁶¹ Valerius Maximus 4.1, ext. 4, Nepos 3.2 also uses *oblivio*

⁶² Text and translation in Aristotle XX *The Athenian Constitution*, ed. H. Rackham, LCL (Cambridge, MA Harvard University, 1981) 112-15

⁶³ Text and translation in *Minor Attic Orators I*, ed. K. Maidment, LCL (Cambridge, MA Harvard University, 1941)

⁶⁴ Kennedy, *The Second and Third Epistles*, 99-100, cf. Watson, “2 Corinthians x-xii,” 340-42

⁶⁵ In 2 Cor. 8.1, 7 the collection is referred to as ἡ χάρις. Note the striking similarity between the language of 2 Cor. 1.10-11 and Rom. 15.30-32, where Paul asks for prayers that his “service” to the church in Jerusalem might prove acceptable to the saints. See Windisch, *Der zweite Korintherbrief*, 48-49

⁶⁶ Watson, “2 Cor. x-xiii,” 340-42. Note the growing recognition of the opponents as a factor in the letter of reconciliation in the “Epilogue” to Georgi, *Opponents*, 339-40

named: Paul speaks of "one (who) has given grief" (τις λελύπηκεν, 2:5) and, again, of "the one who did wrong" (ὁ ἀδικήσας, 7:12). But Paul withholds the offender's name, as Demosthenes omits the names of his accusers. The group which supported the attack upon Paul appears only as the "majority" which now imposes a sufficient punishment (2:6).⁶⁷ When Paul speaks of himself as the object of mistreatment, he speaks not of "me," but of "the one who was wronged" (ὁ ἀδικηθείς), and denies that he wrote on account of wrongdoing (7:12). Paul thus avoids a defensive posture and mitigates the harshness of blame. Like Apollonius of Tyana, Paul affects a deeper concern for the grief he had caused than for the original cause of strife.

The presupposition is simply untenable, that in an epistle whose aim is conciliatory, the author should refer explicitly to the former object of dispute. But this is what the critics assume, when they object that Paul's account of the "letter of tears" in 2 Cor. 2 and 7 fails to agree at crucial points with the content of chs. 10-13. Herewith is removed the final objection to the hypothesis which identifies 2 Cor. 10:1-13:10 with the "letter of tears".

⁶⁷ See already Kennedy, *The Second and Third Epistles*, 99-110 and Lake, *The Earlier Epistles*, 170.

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