‘Grace no longer grace’: Participant Relationality in Early Imperial Discussions of χάρις and its Implications for Pauline Theology

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sola gratia Dei

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Abstract

Recent scholarship on Pauline χάρις has been dominated by the assumption that Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish authors of the early principate treat the concept of χάρις as a *do ut des* transaction—a foil against which Paul's discussions of divine χάρις are sharply contrasted. This thesis calls this dichotomy into question by tracing the distinction between 'instrumental' and 'participant' χάρις through the writings of both Paul and his Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish contemporaries.

Chapter 1 analyses the early imperial images of χάρις as a ballgame and a divine dance, arguing that their use as didactic devices by Seneca, Plutarch, and others encourages a participant approach to χάρις—one which locates the good of the χάρις interaction in the relationship it creates or fosters—as opposed to an instrumental perspective, which locates the good in some end external to the relationship. Chapter 2 traces the reception and development of this idea in descriptions by Philo and Josephus of various exemplary and impious human responses to the χάρις of God.

Chapters 3 and 4 investigate five clusters of participant χάρις language across the Pauline corpus. Chapter 3 underlines the significance of Paul's characteristic greeting formula, analyses the triangulation of χάρις in his prayers of thanksgiving for addressees, and explicates his exhortations to community-building generosity as a participant response to God's abundant provision of χαρίσματα. Chapter 4 highlights the many roles of Christ in Paul's vision of the ongoing divine-human χάρις relationship. Focussing in particular on his letter to the Romans and his closing χάρις benedictions, this chapter draws out the implications of Christ's incarnational role as divine gift to humanity, his exemplary role as recipient of God's participant χάρις, and his ongoing mediatory role as the risen and exalted Lord.

Introduction

'χάρις no longer χάρις': Definitions and Motivations

The Greek word χάρις has long been recognised as denoting a central concept in Pauline theology. Across his seven undisputed letters, Paul references χάρις and its cognates roughly one hundred times.[1] Despite the frequency with which he employs the term, however, and the theological weight it clearly carries for him, Paul never offers his readers a definition of χάρις.[2] The closest he comes is in the negative 'definitional gesture' of Romans 11. 6, where, as John Barclay points out, Paul limits the meaning of χάρις on the basis of its not being something else.[3] Paul writes:

> οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ λεῖμμα κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν χάριτος γέγονεν. εἰ δὲ χάριτι οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γείνεται χάρις.[4]
>
> So then, even now there has come to be a remnant according to the selection of χάρις. But if by χάρις, no longer from works, since then χάρις is no longer χάρις.

Paul has just been recounting the story of Elijah complaining to God that he is the only faithful member of God's people left. God contradicts him, assuring him that there remains a remnant (λεῖμμα) for Godself, who 'have not bowed the knee to Ba'al' (11. 4). For Paul's purposes, this scriptural story offers a parallel to his day, in the fact that some Jews have accepted Christ as the promised Messiah—Paul himself being a prime example. Then Paul adds verse six, an odd addition to the flow of the argument, but one

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[1] This gives it nowhere near the frequency of the πίστις lexicon in the Pauline *oeuvre*, but a comparable rate of recurrence with ἀγάπη/ἀγαπάω and a significant lead on δικαιοσύνη. I confine my study in this thesis to the seven letters of Paul nearly universally treated as genuine by scholars today: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

[2] It should be noted that this is not an anomaly for Paul; he is generally not interested in defining key terms in his letters.

[3] Barclay (2015) 67.

[4] Rom. 11. 5-6. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

which, as Longenecker points out, allows Paul to highlight 'a matter that he made central earlier in the letter'—namely, the χάρις vs works distinction first broached in chapter 4.[5] There, Paul argued from both biblical and economic perspectives (referencing Abraham and David on the one hand, and the reckoning of workers' wages on the other) that right-standing in God's eyes is reckoned on the basis of πίστις and in accordance with χάρις, rather than on the basis of ἔργα. In his summary statement here, however, Paul goes a step further, adding the (negative) ontological claim, 'since then (if right-standing is based on works) χάρις is no longer χάρις'.[6]

This is a claim Paul has not made before, and he immediately goes on to the next point in his argument, without stopping to offer any further explanation. Longenecker points out that both ancient and modern critics have been puzzled by Paul's treatment of this claim as axiomatic. Various manuscript traditions attest the opinion that the statement either 'could be omitted or would require certain textual emendations'.[7] The *textus receptus*, for instance, adds at the end of verse 6 the entire contrasting statement, 'And if from works, no longer is it χάρις; since then work is no longer work', εἰ δὲ ἐξ ἔργων, οὐκέτι ἐστὶ χάρις, ἐπεὶ τὸ ἔργον οὐκέτι ἐστὶν ἔργον.[8] Most critics today agree that these

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[5] Longenecker (2016) 881-882.

[6] Nearly every commentator considers Paul to use οὐκέτι in both instances in this verse in a logical, rather than temporal, sense; for the contrary opinion, however, see Wilckens (1978-1982) ii 238.

[7] Longenecker (2016) 881.

[8] Corrected Codex Sinaiticus (א²); uncial Ψ (8th or 9th c.); minuscules 33^{vid} 1175, 256, and 6 104 365 424^{c} 436 459 1241 1319 1573 1912. For this categorization of manuscripts, see Longenecker (2016) 71-81; 868-869 for textual variations among other manuscripts. For a modern edition of the *textus receptus*, see Robinson and Pierpont (2005) 401.

clauses are a later manuscript addition to the original text.[9] However, its prominence (in various forms) across the manuscript tradition and attestation by as early a church father as John Chrysostom[10] indicate a pervasive concern among Paul's early interpreters about his lack of clarification for the statement 'χάρις is no longer χάρις'.

The most important recent interpreter of Pauline χάρις is John Barclay. Barclay's 2015 monograph, *Paul and the Gift*, offers insight into the reception of Pauline χάρις in later Christian thought and presents a novel methodological tool for understanding how Paul, his Jewish and Graeco-Roman contemporaries, and his later interpreters can all speak of roughly the same referent when using the language of χάρις or 'grace', and yet at the same time, can be thinking of it in widely varying—even contradictory—terms. Barclay expresses concern that Paul's definition-by-negation in Romans 11. 6 'has encouraged Paul's interpreters to seek the essence of "grace", to define its core or proper characteristics'; whereas Barclay himself urges attention to 'the polyvalence of "grace"', which he hopes will 'clarify ambiguities that surround this subject and still bedevil analyses'.[11] Barclay pinpoints what he calls six 'perfections of grace'—characteristics often associated with the concept, but emphasised in varying degrees by one author or another. In Barclay's terms, these include superabundance, singularity, priority, incongruity, efficacy, and non-circularity.[12] While his perfections theory offers a useful tool for investigating the reception history of "grace", as he defines it, its usefulness in explicating Paul's χάρις language—the topic of my study—is more limited. Additionally,

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[9] See, for instance, Longenecker (2016) 869, 881; Moo (1996) 670, n. 2; Cranfield (1979) ii 547, n. 5; Metzger (1971) 526.

[10] *Homily 18 on Romans.*

[11] Barclay (2015) 67.

[12] Barclay (2015) 70-75, *passim.*

Barclay's eschewal of essentialist readings of the χάρις lexicon is well-founded, but his nuanced theory of perfections nevertheless obscures the essentialist assumption that undergirds his study: namely, that χάρις is best understood through the anthropological category of gift, particularly as set out by the pioneering sociologist Marcel Mauss.[13] I engage with Barclay's methodology in greater detail in the following sections of this chapter.

Paul himself never makes explicit what characteristic of χάρις makes it both incompatible with right-standing on the basis of works ('if by χάρις, no longer from works, since then χάρις is no longer χάρις', Romans 11. 6) and exclusively compatible with right-standing on the basis of πίστις ('therefore, from πίστις, in order to accord with χάρις', Romans 4. 16). It is the purpose of this project to investigate Paul's definition-by-negation in conversation with a number of his rough contemporaries—prominently Seneca and Philo, but with reference also to Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch, Josephus, and others. As I will show, Paul's definitional contrast between the transactional language of 'works' and the relational language of χάρις and πίστις bears striking similarities to the protreptic arguments about χάρις advanced by a variety of voices in his surrounding culture. This thesis offers a new approach to understanding Pauline χάρις in light of the specific concerns about χάρις being expressed by his contemporaries.[14] In the sections that follow, I outline the prominent approaches to χάρις taken by recent Pauline interpreters and present the methodology of my own study. First, however, in light of the

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[13] Mauss (1950) 145-279.

[14] I do not assume that Paul had any direct contact with the other authors mentioned in this thesis, or even with their written works. Instead, my survey of contemporary literary discussions of χάρις outlines an ongoing discussion in Paul's surrounding culture, with which his own arguments about χάρις resonate.

fact that much of this project will proceed in close conversation with that of Barclay, I should clarify where I differ from Barclay in terms of the goals of our respective projects.

In his prologue, Barclay brings out three motivating questions that drive his study and that he urges modern interpreters of Paul to take to heart. First, Barclay emphasises the importance of seeking out the connection between Paul's theological discussions of 'grace' in his letters—especially Romans and Galatians—and his practical goals of community formation amidst churches of mixed Jewish and gentile converts. For Barclay, the link rests in the 'incongruity' of divine grace for Paul, 'the Christ-gift, given without regard to worth. This theology is articulated within and for Paul's Gentile mission'.[15] While I disagree with Barclay in his emphasis on 'worth' as the key concept in Paul's discussions of χάρις, I fully agree that a historical study of Pauline χάρις must offer an account of the practical, community-building concerns ever on his mind amidst the theological discussions in his letters. In what follows I intend to problematise the assumed distinction between passages considered more theologically "dense" or "rich" than others and to offer instead a more balanced portion of attention to those much more common instances in which Paul appears "simply" to be putting the language of χάρις to a practical use (e.g., to give thanks to God or encourage generosity between churches).

Secondly, Barclay notes that scholars of the so-called New Perspective have made nearly undeniable the claim that Judaism, no less than Pauline Christianity, was a 'religion of grace'.[16] Barclay, however, calls for a more careful account of the similarities

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[15] Barclay (2015) 6.

[16] Cf. Wright (1978) 80: 'Judaism, so far from being a religion of works, is based on a clear understanding of grace'; and Dunn (2008) 193: 'grace is always prior', 'human effort is ever the response to divine initiative', and 'good works are the fruit and not the root of salvation'.

and differences between Pauline and Jewish understandings of grace. As Barclay points out, 'grace is everywhere in Second Temple Judaism but not everywhere the same'.[17] Once again, Barclay leans on the perfection of incongruity to suggest that while Paul stands in the midst of ongoing Jewish discussions about grace in his day, yet his theology does carve out a unique path as a result of his commitment to 'the Christ-event and the Gentile mission, and the relation of both to the incongruous mercy of God'.[18] I share Barclay's interest in not dismissing the possibility that there are conceptions of 'grace' in Paul's surrounding culture (both Jewish and gentile) with whom Paul is in conversation and not in direct opposition. Yet while Barclay employs the lens of incongruity to distinguish Paul from his Jewish and Graeco-Roman environment, I am in line with respondents to Barclay's work who point out slippage in the terms he uses—especially 'worth', 'value', and 'merit'—to discuss the different ways in which Paul and his contemporaries explicate the congruity or incongruity of divine χάρις.[19] Instead, I focus on the ways in which Paul's clarifying passages on the nature of χάρις mirror the concerns with instrumentalisation that are expressed by others in his surrounding culture. In the course of this exploration, I hope to offer a more coherent account of Paul's place

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[17] Barclay (2015) 6.

[18] Barclay (2015) 328.

[19] See especially Saarinen (2019) 117-119 and Fowl (2019) 124-125. In response to their critiques, Barclay (2019) 147-148 acknowledges that his language of incongruity is meant to cover all the different axes on which the differences between humans and God can be mapped: moral, physical, temporal, etc. He affirms that a certain amount of moral congruity should show up in the Pauline believer's life (as in that of Philo's virtuous student of God), but Barclay maintains that 'whatever congruity arises in [believers'] moral lives is only the product of an incongruity that continues to found their very existence in Christ'. Fowl (2019) 123, however, adeptly points out that Barclay's 'initial point that the Christ-gift undermines conventional standards of value tends to overwhelm the point that the continuing gift of the Spirit is in part designed to help followers establish new conventions of value'.

within ancient discourses on χάρις than has yet been achieved by Barclay or his predecessors.

Finally in Barclay's scheme comes the question of reception. Considering its prominence in the writings of one of early Christianity's most important leaders, Barclay asks, why has 'grace' become the subject of such intense controversy over the course of Christian history? This question is, strictly speaking, outside the bounds of the current project. Barclay's method of examining the 'perfections' of grace by various Christian thinkers brings a great deal of clarification to the question. While Paul's reception in later Christian thought is beyond the scope of my project, I will propose at least a preliminary answer to the question, why does Paul make χάρις such a prominent benchmark of his theology, and what does he offer in his understanding of divine χάρις that is uniquely Christian—or at least, uniquely christological? I hope that this fresh account of some of the popular-philosophical context surrounding Paul's discussions of divine χάρις may offer new insights for scholars of historical theology to pursue further.

New Perspectives and Old: Contextual Continuity and Discontinuity

Comparative historical studies of Pauline χάρις typically seek to put him in conversation with either Second Temple Judaism or Graeco-Roman philosophy, or both. The longest standing academic approach to Pauline χάρις is now often referred to as the 'Lutheran' perspective (though I prefer Matthew Thiessen's label, 'anti-legalistic', in light of the imprecision of the label 'Lutheran').[20] Generally attributed to Martin Luther, this approach is represented in recent decades by Rudolf Bultmann, Peter Stuhlmacher, and

[20] See Thiessen (2016) 5, n. 16 for some of the problems associated with the more common label of 'Lutheran'.

Stephen Westerholm, among others.[21] Scholars in this interpretive tradition consider Pauline χάρις to be the "free grace of God", which sharply contrasts with the layers of obligation and fear that supposedly characterise Judaism.[22] Bultmann maintains that Jewish law made life 'an intolerable burden', requiring the 'almost impossible' task of perfect adherence.[23] Proponents of this approach typically do not spend much time looking at how Jewish writers actually use the language of χάρις, but their underlying assumption is that even when a word such as χάρις is used by both a Christian author and a Jewish one, it has vastly different meanings based on contrasting theological underpinnings.

More recently, however, this method of interpreting Pauline χάρις has been challenged and largely rejected by scholars who work broadly within the New Perspective on Paul, notably N. T. Wright and James D. G. Dunn.[24] As mentioned in the previous section, scholars of the New Perspective point out that Second Temple Judaism was,

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[21] Cf. Bultmann (1952) i 259-269; Stuhlmacher (2001); Carson et al. (2004); Bell (2005); Westerholm (2004) and (2013).

[22] Schoeps (1961) 28-32, however, suggests that it was Paul's misunderstanding of Judaism, not Judaism itself, which led the apostle to attack "Jewish legalism" in his letters.

[23] Bultmann (1956) 66.

[24] Cf. especially Dunn (2008) and Wright (2013). The New Perspective reading of Paul takes its starting point especially from the work of Krister Stendahl (1976) and E. P. Sanders (1977), but as Thiessen (2016) 6 points out, Sanders' own soteriology of 'real participation' does not fit particularly well with the interpretive tradition his work inspired.

through and through, a 'religion of grace'.[25] Hence the contrast in the anti-legalistic perspective between the "free grace" of Pauline χάρις and an exclusive emphasis on merit and obligation in Jewish χάρις is untenable. If there is a clear delineating line between Pauline Christianity and its surrounding Jewish culture,[26] it is not to be found by contrasting grace-filled Pauline Christianity with graceless Judaism.

In the realm of Paul and Judaism, therefore, anti-legalistic scholars contrast Paul with his contemporaries, and the New Perspective brings them back into closer proximity. In relation to Paul and Graeco-Roman thought, two camps can similarly be distinguished, although the divide is not quite as tidy as that between anti-legalistic scholars and the New Perspective. Broadly speaking, however, as with anti-legalistic scholars, some academics who put Paul in conversation with Graeco-Roman philosophy and popular thought emphasise the distinguishing features of Pauline χάρις in contrast with his contemporaries. Most notable among these scholars is James Harrison, whose *Paul's Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context* brings a wealth of Graeco-Roman inscriptions and popular philosophical discussions about χάρις into the scholarly conversation. Harrison draws a sharp line of contrast between the unilateral nature of divine χάρις in Paul's thought and early imperial systems of patronage and beneficence. Harrison argues that Paul purposefully contrasts God's un-returnable χάρις with the

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[25] Wright declines to centre his reading of Paul on the concept of 'free' or 'unmerited' divine grace. Cf. Wright (2002) 485, 497. For Dunn, however, it is crucial; in speaking of Paul's Damascus road experience, Dunn (2008) 369 writes: 'It did not teach him of God's grace, as though for a Jew he was learning of it for the first time. It did, however, bring home to him that his own typically Jewish attitude had obscured that grace and to a serious degree perverted it'.

[26] Scholars of the 'Paul within Judaism' or 'Radical New Perspective' approach are the firmest deniers of this delineation. See especially Gager (2000); Nanos and Zetterholm (2015); Boccaccini and Segoviao (2016); Thiessen (2016); Fredriksen (2017).

pervasive systems of reciprocity and obligation that characterised his surrounding Graeco-Roman (and even Hellenised Jewish) culture.[27] With a narrower focus, David Pao's study of Pauline εὐχαριστία similarly insists that the apostle's framework for thanksgiving is dominated by a scriptural understanding of God's χάρις, despite some formal parallels with Graeco-Roman patronage.[28]

Other scholars, however, emphasise the coherence of Paul's language of χάρις within Graeco-Roman culture. Those who see more compatibility between Paul's use of language and that of his Graeco-Roman contemporaries tend to favour Seneca's *De beneficiis* as a *comparandum* for Paul, and they generally focus attention on quite small chunks of the Pauline *oeuvre.* For instance, Troels Engberg-Pedersen draws a number of parallels between Seneca's *De beneficiis* and Romans 1-8.[29] Engberg-Pedersen deems anachronistic Harrison's argument that Paul—uniquely for his time—saw divine χάρις as a 'pure gift'.[30] Engberg-Pedersen himself sees in Seneca's *De beneficiis* 'the logic of the generally practised benefaction system as reflected in the sociopolitical sources', which 'Paul may profitably be read employing' in his language of χάρις and its cognates.[31] In his essay, 'Gift-Giving and Friendship: Seneca and Paul in Romans 1-8 on the Logic of

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[27] In drawing this sharp distinction, Harrison (2003) 133 even treats Philo as impeded in his interpretation of Jewish scriptures by the lens of a 'Graeco-Roman understanding of merit', which leads him, in Harrison's words, to 'distort' an 'Old Testament understanding of covenantal grace'.

[28] Pao (2002). Similarly, DeSilva (2000) 95-156 rightly resists reading New Testament 'grace' exclusively through the lens of Graeco-Roman patronage; but his ability to see overlap between the Pauline concept of χάρις and that of the surrounding culture is limited by his identification of patron-client relationships as '*the* social context of grace' (emphasis added).

[29] Engberg-Pedersen (2008a).

[30] Engberg-Pedersen (2008a) 17-18.

[31] Engberg-Pedersen (2008a) 18.

God's Χάρις and Its Human Response', Engberg-Pedersen is broadly in line with Stephan Joubert, whose monograph, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection* considers Paul's references to his collection for the church in Jerusalem in line with a Senecan critique of the Graeco-Roman framework of benefit exchange.[32] In his conclusion, Joubert rightly points out, 'The apostle did not develop his different theological conceptualisations of this project in isolation from the formative impact of the ideological and cultural scripts from his *Umwelt*'.[33] As one further example of this contextualising approach to Paul, the older monograph of Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi: Conventions of Gift Exchange and Christian Giving* does not argue as extensively as Engberg-Pedersen for the parallelism between Paul and his Graeco-Roman contemporaries. However, Peterman does similarly explicate the confusing 'thankless thanks' of Philippians 4. 10-20 as reflective of Graeco-Roman convention—this time in relation to letters expressing friendship.[34] Peterman sees Paul referencing the scriptural idea of God's involvement in any human χάρις relationship in order to correct some Graeco-Roman ideas about reciprocity in gift-giving. The bulk of his monograph, however, is devoted to a study of the conventions of thanksgiving in papyrus letters, and

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[32] Joubert (2000).

[33] Joubert (2000) 216.

[34] Peterman (1997). Notably, when Briones (2011) critiques Peterman's thesis, he takes issue not with the overall approach of seeing Paul in parallel with Graeco-Roman conventions, but rather with the specific conventional model that Peterman prioritises in his interpretation. Briones argues that a brokerage model fits the Philippians passage even better, explaining Paul's 'thankless thanks' as 'a theological conviction (rather than a corrective) that only God occupies the position of benefactor'. For my response to the specifics of the brokerage model as an interpretive lens for Pauline χάρις, see especially Section 3.3.

he insists that Paul's 'thankless thanks' in Philippians must be understood within the context of Graeco-Roman protocols for intimate friendship.[35]

In the context of these differing approaches to Paul—which emphasise either his congruity or his incongruity with Jewish and Graeco-Roman contemporaries—Barclay seeks to carve out a middle path. Early in his work, Barclay explicitly acknowledges the New Perspective's critique of the anti-legalistic misunderstanding of Judaism.[36] He cites Engberg-Pedersen, and to a lesser extent Joubert and Peterman, positively throughout his work. In general, however, Barclay shares the contrasting instinct of the anti-legalistic scholars, Harrison, and Pao. In his own interpretive language, Barclay deems Pauline χάρις uniquely 'incongruous', in contrast with both the Judaism of his day and the obligatory reciprocity he sees in Graeco-Roman χάρις. Barclay argues that Pauline χάρις uniquely 'exclude[s] from God's reckoning not only one but any symbolic capital that might be taken to constitute a source of worth before God', because for Paul, χάρις 'signaled an incongruous gift, a gift that takes no account of worth'.[37]

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[35] For further discussions of specific Pauline passages and themes in light of their Graeco-Roman resonances—though not necessarily in relation to χάρις—cf. the collections of essays by Engberg-Pedersen (1994) and Sampley (2003). The work of Ceslas Spicq, especially (1965) 110-145, 451-461 and (1994) 500-506 summons a wealth of literary and non-literary evidence for his thesis that 'the religious meaning of NT "grace" is original, but the secular word χάρις was suited for taking on a theological meaning, and its nuances made sense to new converts'. Spicq's contrast between theological and secular meanings for χάρις is suspect, but his delineation of the overlap between the associations of the term in the Graeco-Roman world and the ways in which Paul uses it is correct.

[36] Barclay (2015) 2: 'Students of Judaism have traced grace everywhere in Second Temple literature, as the foundation of Israel's covenant relationship with God and the frame within which the Torah was observed'.

[37] Barclay (2015) 484 n. 92; 545.

Worth or Obligation: A Question of Interpretive Lenses

Barclay's explication of Pauline χάρις is dominated by this question of worth. Two other recent scholars who similarly emphasise Paul's uniqueness but with more nuance than those of the anti-legalistic camp are the Philonic interpreters Dieter Zeller and Orrey McFarland.[38] They too analyse Paul's thought on χάρις through the lens of 'worth'. Although Barclay's and McFarland's monographs were published concurrently, a logical evolution can be traced in the interpretive 'worth' framework as it is developed first by Zeller, then McFarland, and finally Barclay.[39] For Zeller, the central distinguishing feature between Philonic and Pauline χάρις is the timeframe in which each is set. For Philo, divine χάρις is part of 'die Welt als Schöpfung Gottes', and it operates according to a 'Wohltätigkeitsethik' by which God bestows his gifts of χάρις 'an die Würdigen'.[40] By contrast, Paul situates χάρις in 'die an den endgeschichtlichen Kairos des Kreuzesgeschehens', and therefore sees it offered specifically to the unworthy, to sinners.[41] McFarland's thesis helpfully nuances this disjunction. While he agrees with Zeller that Philonic recipients of divine χάρις are worthy, and Pauline ones are not, he thoughtfully points out that in Philo's view God makes his recipients worthy of his gifts to begin with. McFarland argues that for neither Paul nor Philo is human worth a *cause*

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[38] Here I engage specifically with Zeller (1990) and McFarland (2016), which is the revised and published form of (2013a).

[39] The three interpretations of human worthiness in relation to χάρις that I trace here broadly correspond to three of the four categories of interpretation outlined by Eubank (2020) 10-11 in his reflection on Barclay's work and its resonances with other, non-Protestant views of divine grace. Eubank helpfully notes that 'human worthiness', like divine grace, 'is everywhere in Judaism and Christianity, but not everywhere the same'.

[40] Zeller (1990) 197-198.

[41] Zeller (1990) 36.

for God's χάρις: 'God gives because God is a giver'.[42] For Philo, however, human worth must be a *condition* of God's giving, otherwise 'God would be irrational and morally questionable'.[43] Philo therefore predicates every act of divine χάρις on a prior one, with God continually gifting his recipients with the worth necessary to make them fit recipients of that χάρις. Paul, on the other hand, according to McFarland, shows no squeamishness at the idea that 'God reconciles sinners by giving an unfitting gift'; 'if human worth were a condition for Paul, then God could not give'.[44]

Barclay takes McFarland's analysis a step further. By means of his perfections theory, Barclay identifies incongruity as the key difference between Philonic χάρις and Pauline χάρις, while acknowledging their similarities in many other respects. Importantly for Barclay, while Paul is unique in his insistence on the incongruous χάρις of God, given without regard to recipients' worth, he shares with Philo an understanding of what Barclay calls the 'circularity' of divine χάρις: in other words, whether God expresses χάρις towards worthy or unworthy recipients, he still expects (and, for both Philo and Paul, enables) a return of χάρις from those recipients. This is an important point of contact between Philo and Paul, which I consider in greater depth in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Barclay, however, spends less time explicating the circularity of divine χάρις than some of his reviewers would like.[45] His focus on the concept of worth leads him to

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[42] McFarland (2016) 185.

[43] McFarland (2016) 185.

[44] McFarland (2016) 181, 185.

[45] Cf. the comment by Fowl (2019) 123, quoted in note 18, above. On the other hand, some reviewers find the emphasis Barclay does place on circularity to be pastorally problematic; cf. Eastman (2018).

emphasise, along with McFarland and Zeller, the ways in which Paul stands apart from Philo, rather than their similarities.

While the question of worth is a provocative one, it has by this point become ground well-trodden.[46] Moreover, as Barclay, McFarland, and Zeller demonstrate, the 'worth' lens for interpreting χάρις nearly always draws a sharp line of distinction between the way Paul uses the language of χάρις and the ways that his contemporaries do. Paul's 'χάρις no longer χάρις' is interpreted as a polemic against worth-based interpretations which are understood to dominate both Graeco-Roman and Jewish understandings of χάρις—if in various, more- or less-nuanced forms. By contrast, I begin this study of Pauline χάρις from an assumption of continuity in how language is used within a particular historical-linguistic context.[47] Rather than starting from the assumption that a term in common use acquires a radical new meaning in a particular author, I assume continuity of use as a starting point, and then seek to identify the particular ways in which

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[46] In fact, the notion that Pauline χάρις is to be defined against the unworthiness of human recipients stems all the way back to one of the earliest Pauline interpreters, Augustine. Augustine insists repeatedly throughout *De spiritu et littera* that *gratia* (his translation of χάρις) 'is given gratuitously', *gratuito datur*, and not 'because of meritorious works', *operum meritis* (13). Cf. *Spir. et litt.* 16: '*id est nullis suorum operum praecedentibus meritis—alioquin gratia iam non est gratia*'. This interpretive lens has proved persistent, but it runs the risk of obscuring the questions central to Paul's thought by reading later theological ideas and disputes onto the original text. See Barclay (2015) 85-97 on the development of Augustine's doctrine of grace in response especially to Simplicianus, the Pelagians, and finally the Massillians, the so-called 'semi-Pelagians'. Eubank (2020) draws attention to the parallels between Barclay's understanding of grace and that of medieval Augustinian interpreters, with reference especially to the *Glossa Ordinaria.* I do not argue in this thesis that Barclay is wrong in describing Pauline χάρις as an 'incongruous gift', but I do aim to show that the lens of 'obligation' as opposed to 'worth' or 'merit' offers a more coherent means of reading Paul within his historical context.

[47] Cf. Morgan (2015) 33: The 'context' of any given word under consideration 'is not limited to the passage, the work, or even the author in which a particular term occurs. It includes all the ways in which the term is already understood by the communities to which the writer and his audience(s) belong'.

individual authors signal that they are using language in unique or unusual ways. In light of Paul's missional orientation across his letter corpus, I find interpretations that argue for a radical, tacit redefinition of terms—especially terms with such popular currency as χάρις—unconvincing. The following study investigates some of the most prominent debates about χάρις present in the Graeco-Roman and Jewish communities of which Paul and his addressees were members. As noted above, my argument does not rest on Paul having had direct contact with any one of the other authors whose works I discuss. Rather, the presence of a similar set of concerns across these authors from various philosophical and religious traditions suggests that the debates in which they engage transcend the bounds of any one school of thought.

To be more specific, each author I consider explicitly seeks to correct popular-level opinions about χάρις as a means of indebting so-called friends and obligating potential benefactors. The question of debt or obligation is clearly of concern to Paul in the passage with which I began this chapter: the language of 'works' as distinct from χάρις echoes his earlier economic metaphor of the hired worker in Romans 4.4, for whom the 'wages' are calculated 'according to debt' rather than 'according to χάρις'. I examine this passage in the final chapter of this thesis. The language of debt and transaction, however, inspires a central question of my study, which will be put to each of the authors under consideration: 'To what extent can χάρις be obligated?' I hope to demonstrate in this thesis that it is this question—more than that of 'worth' or 'merit'—that is most prominent in the protreptic discussions of χάρις by Paul, Seneca, Plutarch, Philo, and others. While the question of obligation will overlap at times with the question of merit or worth in relation to God's χάρις, the two fields of inquiry are conceptually distinct. In a gift-giving situation, the worthiness of the recipient is a category ultimately to be

determined by the giver. By contrast, either the giver or the recipient can feel a sense of obligation—or seek to impose it on the other.[48] It is the issue of obligation that I argue Paul raises and addresses directly in Romans 4, and his interest in it is shared by a variety of both Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish contemporaries.

Let me be clear: with his belief in the death, resurrection, and lordship of Christ, Paul certainly has something new and extraordinary to offer in the ongoing discussions about χάρις in his day. What I will show in this thesis, however, is that his concerns about human instrumentalisation of divine χάρις (one form of which is the attempt at obligation discussed in Romans 4) echo the concerns of a number of others in his surrounding culture. Paul's protreptic passages on χάρις mirror the corrective attitudes many of his contemporaries take in relation to popular misunderstandings and misuse of gifts and gift-giving. Paul's 'χάρις no longer χάρις' is constructive, not polemical.[49]

Anthropology vs Historical Linguistics: A Question of Methodologies

Much of the methodology for this project has been developed in conversation with the monographs of Barclay and Harrison, and I attempt here to clarify where I draw on

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[48] In his response to Eubank (2020), Barclay (2020) 114 argues that Pauline χάρις is best understood as 'a dynamic, "relational ontology", in which grace is not a thing but a relation (of divine favour), and in which a person's being is best understood as "being in relation". Thus the new self is not altered in 'substance' but in relation (to God and to others), just as the self is always constituted by relation'. I believe my interpretation of 'obligation' as the foil against which Paul wishes to contrast divine χάρις maintains a stronger emphasis on relationality than does Barclay's own language of worth and 'incongruity'.

[49] Thiessen (2016) 3 draws attention to the 'seemingly coherent, albeit incorrect, accounts of Paul's thinking' that often arise when scholars attempt to read Pauline statements as 'direct responses to the teachings or beliefs of a group of people whom Paul opposes'. Barclay (1987) terms this interpretive tradition 'mirror-reading' and cites the letter to the Galatians as a prominent example of a text regularly subjected to it.

and differ from each of them. As suggested by his title, Barclay's distinctive approach to contextualising Pauline χάρις lies in his choice *not* to focus on the semantic range of χάρις and its cognates in his chosen texts for consideration. Rather, Barclay states up front that the object of his examination is the anthropological category of gift, and the intent of his study is 'a reconsideration of "grace" within the anthropology and history of gift'.[50] Although χάρις is the most prominent gift-related word that appears across the different texts that Barclay considers, he critiques the earlier studies of Wobbe and Harrison for limiting their focus almost exclusively to the χάρις lexeme.[51] In taking this historical-anthropological approach, Barclay seems to be motivated by the desire to avoid the problems often associated with so-called word studies in both New Testament and Classics circles. He particularly hopes 'to gain some analytical distance from the specific theological meanings of "grace", even where we continue to use that term'.[52]

In order to gain this distance, Barclay draws on the work of 20th century sociologist Marcel Mauss. Mauss's *Essai sur le Don* emphasises reciprocity or 'circularity' in ancient gift-giving, such that a gift is given in order to motivate a counter-gift: 'the modern antithesis between gift and recompense does not apply'.[53] I am not the

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[50] Barclay (2015) 4. In his focus on a concept rather than a word, Barclay is following in the footsteps of Eastman (1999) 10, who similarly hopes to avoid 'the perennial problems of Pauline scholarship' by looking not only at the word χάρις, but also at any passage that implies 'dependence on God'—the core of Eastman's definition of grace.

[51] Barclay (2015) 575-576, n. 1, in reference to Wobbe (1932) and Harrison (2003). Unlike Harrison's wide-ranging comparative work, Wobbe's monograph focusses exclusively on the various ways that Paul uses the language of χάρις.

[52] Barclay (2015) 3. I take Barclay's desire for 'analytical distance' a step further by avoiding the English word 'grace' as a translation for Pauline χάρις. As much as possible, I will simply use the Greek term, although as the study goes on I will suggest various possible translations for χάρις and its cognates in the context of the specific passages in which they appear.

[53] Barclay (2015) 227.

first, however, to note that a lens such as Mauss's leads to a transactional interpretation of gift-giving. Mauss himself assumes obligation to be an inherent part of a gift-giving interaction: his study is framed around the question, 'Why do people feel obligated to give back when they have received?'[54] This, however, may not be the best starting point for a discussion of the divine-human relationship, as Markus Bockmuehl points out in his review of Barclay's monograph: 'Barclay analyses Paul's deeply *theological* account of salvation through an emphatically *anthropological* account of "gift"'.[55] Bockmuehl continues:

> This move appears to favour an account of grace that is heavily *transactional* ('the Christ event' etc.) rather than primarily and overwhelmingly *personal*. Is what God gives really an 'event' or transaction rather than, above all, God's self 'for us'—'his only Son' and with him 'everything', union with him and adoption as children, his personal Triune presence in grace, love and communion?[56]

While I share Bockmuehl's concerns regarding the applicability of Maussian gift theory to Pauline χάρις in particular, Barclay's anthropological approach also does not sufficiently take into account the plurality of voices discussing χάρις in Paul's historical context. His study runs the risk of both circularity and anachronism. His selective quotations from Seneca and Philo (pointed out in the following chapters) are a case in point: rather than reading these authors broadly and listening to the sum of what they have to say about χάρις and gift-giving, Barclay selects passages that match his understanding of ancient, pre-Christian views of reciprocity and considerations of worth in gift-giving, and he appears simply to ignore passages which would run against that view. By choosing a cross-cultural 'category' instead of a set of vocabulary as the

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[54] Summarised by Sykes (2005) 2.

[55] Bockmuehl (2016) 383.

[56] Bockmuehl (2016) 383.

limiting factor on his evidence, Barclay has to some extent pre-determined the results of his comparative analysis. He defines this category as, 'a sphere of voluntary, personal relations that are characterized by goodwill in the giving of some benefit or favor and that elicit some form of reciprocal return that is both voluntary and necessary for the continuation of the relationship'.[57] Yet this definition of ancient gift-giving leaves little room for dissenting voices, including such an influential voice as that of Aristotle, who makes χάρις, 'a service for someone in need, not in return for anything (μὴ ἀντί τινος), nor for the advantage of the one doing the service, but only for the sake of the one in need'.[58] Neither this explicit denial of reciprocity in a χάρις interaction, nor its nuanced reception and development in Seneca's *De beneficiis*, fits Barclay's anthropological category; hence it does not show up in his explication of Graeco-Roman discussions of gift-giving.

In contrast to Barclay, my study returns to a more historical-linguistic approach such as that propounded by Harrison. Although, as mentioned above, I disagree with Harrison's conclusion as to the uniqueness of Paul's unilateral divine χάρις, I appreciate his thoughtful critique of the sort of social-scientific approach to New Testament scholarship employed by Barclay and others.[59] Harrison points out that when we begin a

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[57] Barclay (2015) 3.

[58] *Rh.* 2. 7. 2. Note here even the distinction between Aristotle's broader category of 'service', ὑπουργία, and Barclay's consistent focus on the reified language of 'gift'. This predominant focus on reified χάρις is particularly problematic for Barclay's interpretation of Philo, discussed at greater length in Section 2.2.

[59] Harrison (2003) 13-23. As Harrison published a decade before Barclay, his main subjects for critique include the application of Weber's sociology of authority to Paul by Schütz (1975) and Holmberg (1980); the engagement with Turner and Straussian anthropology in Petersen (1985); sectarian sociology in Watson (1986); Neyrey (1990) on anthropological discussions of purity; the sociology of patronage in Joubert (2000); and the anthropology of χάρις offered by Pitt-Rivers (1992).

study of Pauline 'grace' from a cross-cultural category such as the anthropology of the gift, 'we risk simplifying the complexity' and 'thereby underestimate the subtlety of the cultural pressures that Paul faced as a theologian of grace'.[60] My study finds its place among those of Harrison's 'ancient historians who, by immersing themselves in a wide range of social evidence (documentary, literary, numismatic, and archaeological), acquire a sense of what is typical and distinctive as regards eastern Mediterranean beneficence, and then sensitively seek to locate Paul's view of grace somewhere within that grid'.[61] In the study that follows, I am greatly benefited by the immersion process Harrison himself has undergone and the extremely broad range of 'social evidence' (especially papyri) that his project offers for the actual popular perceptions of χάρις in Paul's day. Throughout my thesis, I also reference various inscriptions from the set collated by Danker in *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field*.[62] Although Danker has been critiqued for the lack of structure and critical rigour in his analysis of the inscriptions, there are a number of insightful gems in his discussion, and the breadth of the epigraphic evidence he has amassed makes his book an extremely helpful resource in studies of popular interpretations of χάρις in Paul's day.

Instead of attempting to cover the same breadth of popular material as do Harrison and Danker, I wish to add to the picture a specific range of evidence that will nuance the conclusions they and others have drawn about the expectations of reciprocity in the Graeco-Roman world of Paul's day. Harrison repeatedly references 'the darker social realities underlying the benefaction system' and Paul's 'anguished and vitriolic'

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[60] Harrison (2003) 23.

[61] Harrison (2003) 22.

[62] Danker (1982).

arguments against them.[63] Paul 'up-ends the hellenistic ethics of beneficence', Harrison says.[64] What Harrison does not pay sufficient attention to, however, are the arguments against unethical χάρις practices proposed by Paul's Graeco-Roman and Jewish contemporaries—arguments which bear striking similarities to those of Paul himself, and which suggest that a broad-brush description of 'hellenistic ethics of beneficence' may be insufficiently nuanced. My study aims to show that Paul's 'χάρις no longer χάρις' arguments contribute to an ongoing, wide-ranging discussion in his day about what practices, assumptions, and expectations constitute "true" χάρις. In the chapters that follow, I do this by tracing a thematic discussion of the χάρις lexeme, along with certain other key terms explicitly associated with it by the authors under consideration.

Instrumental vs Participant χάρις

Throughout this thesis, I argue that Paul's 'χάρις no longer χάρις' is best understood within the context of contemporary concerns for the tension between what I refer to as 'instrumental' and 'participant' χάρις.[65] For the language of participation that I apply in this thesis to χάρις, I am indebted to the work of philosophers Peter Strawson and

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[63] Harrison (2003) 347, cf. 166.

[64] Harrison (2003) 288. The rather thin account of Graeco-Roman gift-giving by Barclay (2015) 24-51 broadly follows Harrison's negative assessment.

[65] Note that the phrase 'participant χάρις' as used in this study is *not* meant as a reference to the theological doctrine of participation in Christ. While there may prove to be some overlap between the doctrine of participation in Christ and the concept of χάρις-focussed participant relationality that I develop here, that overlap remains outside the bounds of the present study.

Richard Holton.[66] Holton's essay on the differences between trust, reliance, and belief builds on the terminology originally developed by Strawson to contrast what the latter calls, 'the attitude (or range of attitudes) of involvement or participation in a human relationship, on the one hand, and what might be called the objective attitude (or range of attitudes) to another human being, on the other'.[67] As opposed to the objective attitude, which treats the other human being in an encounter as an object upon which to be acted, the participant attitude which Strawson describes views any interaction with another person as an opportunity to participate in a human relationship, characterised by either good or ill will. For Strawson, the generalised participant attitude lies behind the variety of reactive attitudes which human beings can uniquely take on in response to each other, including 'gratitude, resentment, and forgiveness', 'reciprocated adult loves', and 'essentially *personal* antagonisms'.[68] Interactions with an object or an objectified other can include a range of emotions such as 'repulsion or fear' and certain kinds of 'pity or

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[66] See Strawson (1974) and Holton (1994). My methodological emphasis on a wide reading of texts through a historical-literary rather than an anthropological lens is not meant to suggest that there is no place for modern social or philosophical constructs in critical interpretation of ancient texts. Such models can be extremely useful both as a means of interpretation and as a sort of shorthand for summarising the results of analysis. They do not serve well, however, as the rubric by which one chooses which texts to examine, if one is seeking to construct a historically nuanced account of the thematic associations available to an author using language in a particular way, in a particular time and place. Additionally, a difference may be discerned between sociological approaches to human relationships, which tend to focus on instrumental questions such as 'What are they for?' and 'What do they achieve?', and philosophical approaches: as a rule, philosophers draw attention to the attitudes and interpretive frameworks of the participants in the relationships, focussing on the quality and characteristics of the relationships themselves, rather than what comes out of them.

[67] Strawson (1974) 9.

[68] Strawson (1974) 10. This approach might therefore be usefully applied to other Pauline concepts besides χάρις, but I do not attempt to do so within the confines of this thesis.

even love', but the participant reactive attitudes are responses to another person *qua* person, and their expression demonstrates involvement in an inter-personal relationship.[69]

Holton helpfully clarifies an ambiguity in Strawson's language by taking a step back from the particular kinds of interactions in which a participant attitude can be seen to consider what he calls the 'participant stance' which lies behind that attitude. According to Holton, the person who takes a participant stance towards another human being remains ready to interact relationally with that other, regardless of whether she sees an immediate opportunity to express that stance or not. Holton explains:

> Obviously not everyone we interact with does something to provoke a reactive attitude, whether positive or negative. Many of our dealings are neutral in this respect. Nevertheless, if the people in these dealing [sic.] were to hurt us, we would typically feel resentment; and if they were to help, we would typically feel gratitude. We are ready to take particular reactive attitudes should they act in certain ways. In having such readiness we take the participant stance toward the people concerned.[70]

Holton's language of 'readiness' to engage in relationship, of taking a 'participant stance' towards another human being, parallels Jonathan Bennett's critique of Strawson's work, which similarly draws attention to the relationships that arise *from* participant reactive attitudes, rather than simply those within which they may arise.[71] The concept of relational 'readiness' also coheres well with the early imperial, Hellenistic Jewish, and Pauline discussions of χάρις that I consider in this thesis.

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[69] Strawson (1974) 9.

[70] Holton (1994) 66-67.

[71] Bennett (2008) 14. It also echoes Seneca, whose *De beneficiis* emphasises the creative potential of generosity, both within and at the start of an interpersonal relationship. See Section 1.2.3. for discussion. Bennett's essay is one of a number critiquing and developing Strawson's (1974) argument in the collection edited by McKenna and Russell (2008). See also Korsgaard (1992), whose essay looks into individual willingness to engage in reciprocal responsibility, on the basis of Strawson's participant reactive attitudes.

The Greek, Roman, and Jewish case studies with which I begin this thesis show a strongly interpersonal, relational trend in discussions of χάρις that to this point has been underrepresented in comparative Pauline scholarship. Throughout these case studies, the authors under consideration define good or true χάρις as an act of giving for the sake of friendship: *do amicitiae gratia*. With the word friendship, I refer broadly to interpersonal relationships characterised by goodwill—including the divine-human relationship at its best. The authors examined in the following chapters all agree that only χάρις offered for the sake of friendship—χάρις motivated by a participant stance towards the relationship between the two persons involved—can truly be called χάρις. The good of the interaction is defined by the relationship that χάρις initiates or to which it contributes, rather than by an act of giving or exchange *per se.*[72]

The reason for this distinction, as these authors point out repeatedly, is that the act of offering a gift or service in itself is ambiguous: in contexts where the giver is not taking a participant stance towards her intended recipient, the purported gift may in fact turn out to be simply a commercial exchange, or a bribe, or some other kind of power play. In line with Strawson's concern for objectification in human interactions, instrumentalised χάρις limits the interaction between the two persons such that it becomes merely a means to some other end besides the relationship between them—typically some immediate benefit to the one in question. Both the acts of giving and of receiving can be engaged in from a participant or an instrumentalising stance. Regardless of whether the end in view is a personal performance of virtue, monetary gain, or some other form of

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[72] While certain authors, especially Philo and Paul, associate various emotions with a χάρις relationship (most notably joy and love), my study focusses on the relational dynamics of χάρις, as opposed to considering it as an emotion in itself. None of the authors discussed in this thesis treat χάρις as an emotion in the modern sense.

profit, if χάρις is offered or accepted merely for the sake of benefiting the self, the authors I consider agree, it should no longer be called χάρις.

When Philo, Josephus, and Paul discuss human responses to the χάρις of God, the same instrumental vs participant tension applies. For Philo and Josephus, one of the most important markers of one's piety before God is to recognise the immense generosity of the one who created and sustains all things. Moreover, when all good things in life have been properly attributed to divine χάρις, the righteous person realises the paramount importance of responding to that χάρις as a participant, rather than treating it merely as an instrument to one's personal desires. For Paul, this response is even more crucial. God has responded to humanity's pervasive ἀχαριστία with a pivotal new act of χάρις in sending Christ. God's choice to respond with such extraordinary further χάρις to humanity's blatant instrumentalisation of his χάρις in creation provides the catalyst for Paul's '*ex post facto*'[73] reasoning throughout his letters. God's χάρις in Christ cannot be obligated or limited; rather, it requires a grateful, whole-hearted, participative response. For Paul, Christ is both exemplar of the perfect human response to divine χάρις and himself the enabler of his people's participative imitation. Paul calls his addressees repeatedly to continue participating in the divine χάρις offered them in Christ, and also to reach out with the invitation to others so that they too may join that participative relationship. 'χάρις is no longer χάρις' when it is limited or obligated; rather, divine χάρις understood and embraced is the 'power of Christ dwelling upon me'—specifically for the sake of drawing ever more individuals into participation in the divine χάρις family.[74]

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[73] A phrase I borrow from Keck (2015).

[74] 2 Cor. 12. 9.

Thesis Outline

Much of this thesis is devoted to a series of case studies from Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish authors discussing popular χάρις practices of their day and popular ways of thinking about χάρις that they wish to critique. The Graeco-Roman authors I discuss in Chapter 1 introduce the idea of the importance of taking a participant stance towards χάρις—and they urge against treatments of χάρις in which one member of a χάρις relationship instrumentalises the other for some end external to their relationship. Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom point out that one of the worst forms of this instrumentalisation arises when one χάρις relationship is compromised (allegedly) for the sake of another. This is a recurring theme in Graeco-Roman sources concerned about the problems of χάρις in everyday life. When χάρις relationships appear to compete with each other, an individual can feel trapped into sacrificing one for the sake of the other, or compromising both. The Hellenistic Jews, Philo and Josephus, considered in Chapter 2, offer characteristically scripture-based solutions to these problems.[75] While divine sponsorship and enablement of human χάρις lies in the background for many Graeco-Roman authors, for Philo and Josephus, one's active participation in a χάρις relationship with God is always primary. As all human χάρις relationships are derived from that primary relationship with God, Philo and Josephus make it a priority to explain how all true χάρις relationships must in the end cohere under the just and loving χάρις of the divine. They use in particular the biblical characters of Hannah, Moses, and Korah as examples of what virtuous and impious responses to divine χάρις look like.

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[75] As evidenced by the quotation with which I opened this chapter, Paul too regularly uses Jewish scriptures to back up his discussions of what constitutes true χάρις in the life of a follower of Christ. The LXX, however, is only a source of support for his arguments: his reasoning begins, ends, and is coloured throughout with Christ.

In Chapters 3 and 4, I turn to the distinctly christological solution which Paul presents to these problems of χάρις across his various letters. Chapter 3 focusses on his letters to the Thessalonian and Corinthian churches, in which Paul not only discusses how χάρις should operate in the context of a Christian assembly, but also formatively enacts it.[76] Paul repeatedly emphasises that a participant relationship with the divine is never merely one-on-one, but that it is crucially a fluid, multi-party relationship, ever reaching out and drawing in, as God's people imitate the χάρις God has shown them so abundantly in Christ and join in his outreach to more and more of humanity. Paul specifically warns the Corinthian church to avoid an instrumental treatment of God's χάρις that refuses to pass it on. Finally, in Chapter 4, I specifically address the place(s) of Christ in Paul's understanding of God's χάρις towards humanity. I draw much of my material for this chapter from Paul's letter to the Romans, along with some of his most Christocentric discussions of χάρις in other letters. As the mediator of divine and human χάρις, both in his exemplary life and death and in his role as the risen Lord, Christ both responds to God's χάρις in perfect participation and simultaneously acts as the representative agent of God's χάρις to humanity. Christ is not only God's gift to an *acharistic* world, but he is also an active agent at every point in the divine-human χάρις relationship, inspiring and enabling his followers to avoid an ungrateful, instrumental approach to God's χάρις and instead to participate actively in spreading the news of God's abundant generosity far and wide.

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[76] In this thesis, I do not have space to weigh in on the debates surrounding the authorship of 2 Thessalonians, or for that matter the other disputed Pauline letters (Ephesians, Colossians, the pastorals, and even the letter to the Hebrews in some counts). I therefore limit my inquiry to the seven undisputed letters; cf. n. 1.

Chapter 1: Instrumental vs Participant χάρις among Greek and Roman Authors of the Early Principate

1.1. Introduction

Do Amicitiae Gratia: Greek and Roman Authors on Popular Instrumentalisation of χάρις

This chapter interprets Paul's 'χάρις no longer χάρις' in conversation with a series of case studies from other, roughly contemporary authors of the early principate—especially Seneca, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom. The next chapter will add to the mix the Hellenistic Jewish voices of Philo and Josephus. These authors have all been chosen as illuminating conversation partners for Paul because of their proximity to him in time, their explicitly didactic treatments of χάρις, and their interest in contemporary popular attitudes towards it. In a larger study, it would be feasible to consider in equal depth a wider array of sources from the full breadth of Paul's sociocultural context. For this project, I have limited my most detailed examinations to the case studies that follow; further sources are included in footnotes to exemplify the wide-ranging nature of the concerns they highlight. Together, these contemporary voices from the early principate share with Paul a way of thinking about χάρις—specifically his concern with its instrumentalisation—that has not received sustained attention to date.

Like Paul, each of the authors considered in this chapter writes from a particular philosophical or traditional perspective but also addresses his arguments regarding χάρις to an audience beyond his own school or tradition.[77] This is most obvious in the case of Dio Chrysostom, who likely addresses a representative cross-section of society in the

[77] On the explicit addressee of *De beneficiis*, Seneca's morally progressing pupil Aebutius Liberalis, see especially Griffin (2007) 110-113. For a recent consideration of Plutarch's imagined readers for both the *Vitae* and the *Moralia*, see Duff (2011).

speech under consideration[78]; but it is also true of Seneca and Plutarch, who appeal to popular notions in the midst of their more philosophically focussed arguments, and whose ethical teachings often find their echo in more popular media such as γνώμαι.[79] None of these authors' arguments is framed as applying exclusively within the context of their own schools or traditions. In this way, their pedagogical purposes parallel those of Paul, who gives no indication that his 'χάρις no longer χάρις' argument makes sense only to Christians.[80] What is more, from their protreptic standpoint, these authors explicitly describe contemporary, popular attitudes towards χάρις.[81] In the case studies I examine below, I make reference to the available evidence for the actual presence of these ideas in popular thought of the time. My central purpose in this chapter, however, is to highlight

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[78] Discourse 31, the Rhodian Oration. While there is some debate as to whether this speech was ever delivered live, the passages I discuss all come from the first half of the oration, which most interpreters do agree Dio presented in person in Rhodes. Cf. Jones (1978) 26, 28; Salmeri (2000) 82, n. 140; Atwill (2014) 456.

[79] Concerning Plutarch and Seneca, Morgan (2007) 286 writes, 'Much of their advice, of course, suits their anticipated audiences, which if not necessarily highly philosophically educated, are likely to have belonged to the leisured upper classes. Their subject matter, though, dealing as it does with common problems of social interaction, would be recognisable to a much wider range of people'. Griffin (2013) 47-49 situates Seneca's ethical idealism in *De beneficiis* alongside 'the ideals current in the society and voiced by less theoretical Roman writers' such as Ennius, Publilius Syrus, Terence, and Cornelius Nepos.

[80] Moo (1996) 678-679 notes Paul's assumption that 'the gracious character of God's activity is a *theological* axiom' (emphasis added). With the case studies that follow, I intend to prove that Paul's statement about χάρις is not only theologically axiomatic within the context of Pauline Christianity, but also that it is anthropologically and sociologically axiomatic within the context of contemporary popular-philosophic thought: works-based χάρις is 'no longer χάρις', not only in the realm of the divine-human relationship with which Paul is principally concerned, but also in the realm of inter-human relationships, the typical context for χάρις discussions with which many of his first readers would have been most familiar.

[81] Plutarch in particular, as Morgan (2007) 291 notes, has a habit of citing popular sayings in order 'to modify or even disagree with them. The effect is of a shock tactic: the reader, trustfully disposed to agree with the quotation just because it is gnomic, is startled out of his complacency and made to think afresh about the subject'.

the critiques of popular χάρις practices by Paul's Graeco-Roman contemporaries that offer a correction to the modern tendency to over-generalise 'early imperial' or 'hellenistic' attitudes to χάρις. Paul's 'χάρις no longer χάρις' fits within an ongoing protreptic dialogue across multiple generations and philosophical traditions. His problems with works-based χάρις are not a polemical outlier on the contemporary popular-philosophical scene.

As indicated in the introduction to this thesis, the shared thread running through the authors I consider is their definition of true χάρις as an act of giving for the sake of an interpersonal, participant relationship, characterised by goodwill: *do amicitiae gratia*.[82] For Seneca, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom, any particular offer or exchange of χάρις is situated either at the start or somewhere along a timeline of interaction characterised by generosity and goodwill; the act of giving denoted by χάρις is engaged in for the sake of that relationship.[83] Miriam Griffin emphasises that for Seneca the primary occasion of a *beneficium* is at the creation of a new relationship of *amicitia*.[84] As discussed at greater length below, however, a more holistic interpretation of Senecan *beneficia* recognises that, for him, each new act of generosity within a pre-existing relationship has the

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[82] Griffin (2013) 37 points out that in Roman society '*amicitia* is a more fluid relationship' than most others, one that is 'compatible' with almost any other kind of positive social relationship, but 'not reducible' to it: a patron and client may or may not consider themselves friends, as may two students of equal social status, or, particularly for the Roman Stoics, may a husband and wife. For her full discussion of the variety of social relationships that may be designated *amicitiae*, see Griffin (2013) 35-39. On the Roman Stoics' philosophical elevation of traditional relationships such as marriage, see Reydams-Schils (2005) 77-82.

[83] Cf. Harrison (2003) 187 on the Epicureans and Pythagoreans, for whom φιλία '(human and divine) is the dynamic which animates all community relations'.

[84] See Griffin (2013) 38. Section 1.2.3. considers the implications of Seneca's translation of Greek χάρις into Latin *beneficium.*

potential to take that relationship to a new level of intimacy—in that sense, every *beneficium* is an act of creation, though not necessarily a creation of a new kind of relationship. At the same time, as Theodora Jim points out in her work on religious gratitude, an offering of χάρις often looks back to a past act of generosity—*do quia dedisti*—as well as looking forward to potential new depths in the relationship.[85] Wherever χάρις falls along the timeline of interaction between two persons, the authors in this chapter all insist that only χάρις offered for the sake of friendship can truly be called χάρις.

According to Seneca, Plutarch, and Dio Chrysostom, the popular interpretations of χάρις that they critique reduce χάρις to a merely instrumental good. Some of the ends to which χάρις may be instrumentalised will appear more insidious than others, but Seneca insists firmly that χάρις is misapplied as a descriptor even for acts of giving that are performed merely for the sake of one's own virtue. An instrumentalising approach to χάρις has often been identified in scholarship by the Latin phrase *do ut des*;[86] however, it is more precisely captured by the phrase *do ut recipiam*. When an offering of χάρις is reduced to become merely a means of benefit to the self—'I give so that I may receive'—it should no longer be called χάρις. At the same time, however, as we shall see, Seneca and Plutarch in particular encourage their readers to consider that *within* the context of an ongoing relationship of goodwill, 'I give that you may give', certainly *may* but does not

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[85] Jim (2014) 81: 'First offerings cannot be adequately encapsulated in the currently accepted formulae of *do ut des* and *da ut dem*, which emphasize benefits to come instead of benefits received. Instead it is more appropriate to see in first offerings the mentality of *do quia dedisti*. Although gratitude for past favours and the hope of future benefits could coexist in any act of offering, first offerings did not normally initiate the cycle of χάρις between men and gods'.

[86] Since suggested by Tylor (1871), the phrase has become nearly ubiquitous in considerations of reciprocity and gift-giving.

necessarily entail the reduction of χάρις to a merely instrumental good as does *do ut recipiam*. If *do ut des* is understood within the context of an ongoing relationship of mutual participation, the interaction is serving its purpose and χάρις remains a relational, participant good. The ideal χάρις exchange could be more fully encapsulated as *do ut des amicitiae gratia.*

Chapter Outline

The material in this chapter is arranged into sections according to the models of χάρις considered, rather than considering each author in turn. This allows me to trace the evolution and persistence of certain models for χάρις across both generations and philosophical schools. I begin with the Chrysippan image of χάρις as a game of catch, as it is appropriated and reinterpreted by Seneca in *De beneficiis* and by Plutarch in *De genio Socratis* and *Vita Alexandri*. Seneca and Plutarch demonstrate a variety of ways in which this ballgame model for χάρις can be interpreted, and these interpretations of the metaphor manifest the same instrumental vs participant tension that characterises more and less sound *practices* of χάρις. The ballgame metaphor for χάρις suggests three particular ways in which χάρις becomes instrumental: (A) when one invests χάρις entirely in the visible exchange of objects or services rather than in the good intentions of the participants; (B) when one considers only the obligation involved in a onetime exchange, rather than the ongoing good of a relationship characterised by mutual creative acts of beneficence; and (C) when one determines the value of the interaction merely on the basis of what is fitting or honourable for one party in the relationship, at the expense of the other. Each of these misguided *foci* distracts the participants from the ongoing, relational

good of χάρις and places the emphasis instead on the immediate benefits that one party or the other is seeking from the exchange.

Section 1.3. considers what is arguably the most often cited artistic representation of χάρις: the public shrines of the Χάριτες depicting three goddesses in the middle of their dance. The discussion focusses in particular on the interpretations of the Χάριτες by Aristotle, Cornutus, Dio Chrysostom, and Seneca, who each see in the dancing goddesses an instructive model for the social and civic function of participant χάρις. The tripartite nature of the divine dance proves particularly fruitful in these writers' hands as a means of expanding both the timeline of a χάρις relationship and the number of participants in view. At the end of this section, Seneca's critique of previous interpretations of the model further emphasises the importance of active participation and not just passive observation of the χάρις relationships in which one inevitably finds him- or herself.

Finally, in Section 1.4, I present for analysis the advice of Dio Chrysostom and Plutarch for cases in which χάρις relationships break down and come into conflict with one another. In Dio's Rhodian Oration, Discourse 31, the orator soundly rebukes his audience for their instrumentalisation of χάρις with their city's benefactors, for the sake of immediate civic and political benefits. He argues that the return of χάρις in one relationship must never impede upon its return in another; otherwise both relationships will inevitably break down. Plutarch also discusses the question of conflicting χάρις in his essay *De fraterno amore*. Like Dio, Plutarch assumes a close parallel between the place of χάρις in the public realm and its role in the private sphere. Drawing an explicit parallel with the place of χάρις in good city governance, Plutarch argues for the triangulation of familial χάρις such that the relational bonds between different pairs of individuals serve to support each other, rather than creating conflict and competition within the family unit.

Plutarch sees the good of χάρις within either a family or a state as a relational one: it must take into account the ongoing good of all participant parties rather than being reduced to an instrumental good in which any one individual is involved only for the sake of what he personally can get out of it.

1.2. Plutarch and Seneca on χάρις as a Game of Catch

1.2.1. Ball-play as a Widely Accessible Model for χάρις

From its earliest mention in Homer's *Odyssey* (6. 99ff.), ball-play is a prominent theme in Greek literature and a ubiquitous pastime across Greek and Roman societies.[87] O'Sullivan comments on the game's 'low social value' due to its accessibility to every age, gender, and social status: 'the kudos of the athletic and equestrian *agones* (contests), with their elite individualism, provides a telling contrast'.[88] She further points out that ballgames as a form of play are not only 'accessible to all age groups', but also, as the example of Nausicaa and her attendants in *Odyssey* 6 suggests, carry the potential 'to be located within the realms of peacetime activity and even within a feminine sphere'.[89] Crowther similarly points out that ballgames in the Greek world 'had more of a recreational than an agonistic basis', and spectators played merely 'an incidental, not a major, part'.[90] As a literary trope, ballgames are recreational and are often linked with

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[87] Other notable literary examples include Hom. *Od.* 8. 370-384; Anac. 358; Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3. 113-150; Petron. *Sat.* 27. 3ff.; Arr. *Epict. diss.* 2. 5; Gal. *De parvae pilae exercitio*; Ath. 1. 14d-15c, 1. 18f-20e, 12. 548b.

[88] O'Sullivan (2012) 19.

[89] O'Sullivan (2012) 19, 21. On the potentially feminine and even erotic overtones of ball-play, see also Pfeijffer (2000).

[90] Crowther (1995) 131, 132. On the educational benefit of games and other forms of play, see also Kidd (2017) 104.

women and the domestic sphere. By the time of the early empire, O'Sullivan concludes, 'ball-playing seems to have been socially acceptable as a pastime among all echelons of Roman society', while at the same time retaining its 'associations with eroticism as a literary *topos*'.[91]

The ubiquity of ball-play in the ancient world makes it a particularly apt image when philosophers wish to connect their ideas with the wider world and make them accessible to audiences outside their own philosophical circles. For Stoics in particular, the ballgame stands for one of the most ordinary activities of daily life: Zeno is credited with the insistence that the wise man will engage with wisdom even in the most everyday activities, namely 'playing ball and cooking lentils'.[92] While the application of the game metaphor to χάρις is not attested beyond its use by Seneca and Plutarch, the fact that these two authors choose to deploy this particular model in their discussions of χάρις indicates the wider cultural discussion in which they envision themselves participating.[93] What is more, by being a game and in that sense an expression of a particular kind of participant relationship, the image in itself invites the kind of interpretation of χάρις that Seneca and Plutarch wish to emphasise.

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[91] O'Sullivan (2012) 32.

[92] Cited in Kechagia (2010) 151. Cf. Arr. *Epict. diss.* 2. 5, where Epictetus references the everyday games of dice and ball-play to explain the Stoic doctrine of indifferents. The pairing of dice and ballgames is also brought together in Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3. 113-150, and noted by Kidd (2019) 134 as representative of 'the common play of slaves'.

[93] Morgan (2007) 286, 290 makes note of the remarkably frequent use which Seneca and Plutarch make of popular wisdom in their writings: 'of all our sources Seneca is the most explicitly concerned with the value of proverbs and gnomai, in particular for teaching ethics'; 'Plutarch incorporates more popular sayings and stories, in every kind of essay, than any other author of the early Empire'.

That said, both Plutarch and Seneca recognise that using the ballgame model for χάρις is not uncomplicated. Their various treatments of the metaphor show that it can be interpreted more or less helpfully from their point of view by those wishing to understand how to practice χάρις virtuously in a variety of social relationships. Seneca attributes the metaphor for χάρις as a game of catch to the early Stoic Chrysippus.[94] Although Seneca writes positively of his indebtedness to Chrysippus for this metaphor, he has just critiqued his predecessor sharply for his interpretation of another popular model of social χάρις—that of the dancing Χάριτες.[95] Seneca offers his own interpretation of the χάρις ballgame at *Ben.* 2. 17, but he gives no direct indication of how closely his use of the model compares with that of Chrysippus himself. He returns to the metaphor at two additional points in his argument; but in these cases, Seneca places the reference to the ballgame model in the mouth of one of his fictive interlocutors, giving himself the occasion then to respond to these "objections" by critiquing his recipients' mistaken interpretations of the model.[96]

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[94] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 17. 3. If this attribution is accurate, we have no extant evidence for how Chrysippus himself made use of the model apart from the interpretations offered by its early imperial recipients.

[95] Sen. *Ben.* 1. 3. 2 - 4. 6. See Section 1.3. for further discussion of various ancient interpretations of this model and Section 1.3.5. for Seneca's critique of the Chrysippan interpretive tradition.

[96] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 32. 1-4; 7. 18. 1. That Seneca uses the metaphor in different ways at different points in his argument should not surprise us, for, as Morgan (2007) 18-19 points out, their multivalency is precisely what makes fables and exemplary stories and images so useful rhetorically. We should not expect an image such as the ballgame always to be used in the same way, even by a single author. In Book 7, Seneca's interlocutor is clearly the imagined combative respondent whom Griffin and Inwood (2011) 207, n. 8 insist 'should not be identified with the addressee of the work, Liberalis'. In book 2, the mention of the ballgame analogy is less pugnacious in tone and is more likely an expression of the learner Liberalis grappling with the metaphor suggested by Seneca himself earlier in the book.

In addition to its appearance at several points throughout *De beneficiis*, the game of catch model for χάρις is also attested in Plutarch's *Vita Alexandri* and *De genio Socratis*.[97] Like Seneca, Plutarch offers a variety of potential interpretations for the ballgame metaphor. His most in-depth discussion of the model comes in *De genio Socratis*, in an argument between the Pythagoreans Theanor and Epameinondas over the rejection of gifts. Theanor introduces the metaphor in an attempt to convince Epameinondas to accept the large sum of money he has brought for him. Epameinondas, however, to whom Plutarch gives the final word on the subject, argues that Theanor's interpretation of the metaphor requires correction. Unlike Seneca, Plutarch does not give a detailed account of what he considers to be the "correct" interpretation of the model. However, in his *Vita Alexandri*, Plutarch does include an anecdote in which the young ruler's faulty gift-giving practices are corrected by a game of catch. This anecdote is considered in Section 1.2.4., in conversation with Seneca's robust critique of Alexandrian generosity in his introduction of the metaphor in *De beneficiis*.[98]

For Seneca and Plutarch, interpretations and practices of χάρις may be envisioned along a spectrum. At one end, what is called an exchange of χάρις is for all practical purposes the equivalent of a commercial transaction. The parties involved are more

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[97] A further attestation to Plutarch's use of the metaphor comes from the Hesiodic scholiast's commentary on *Works and Days* 355 (Sandbach fr. 52).

[98] The connection in popular thought between Alexander and ball-play is also widely documented. Dow (1963), Hamilton (1969) 103, and O'Sullivan (2012) 23-33 all note the multiple attestations of Alexander's team of ball-players which he kept near him in his camp. Notably, Dow (1963) 92 points out that Alexander is among 'the highest-placed known ball-players of the Ancient world', and O'Sullivan (2012) 32-33 credits Alexander with contributing to the 'rise in the kudos accorded to ball games in antiquity', making them a socially acceptable pastime among the upper classes of Roman society while they retained their lower associations, particularly in literary contexts.

concerned with the objects or services exchanged than they are with each other.[99] The sole purpose of the interaction is that both parties leave having received some benefit from the exchange. There is no necessary ongoing interaction. In these cases, the supposed offering of χάρις is purely a means to some other end. At the other end of the spectrum, however, χάρις is shared as an expression or creation of a participant relationship. Rather than being subsumed to the benefit of the self, an offered object or service serves as an intentional expression of the goodwill that defines the relationship. χάρις in this context is a creative invitation into a closer degree of mutually pleasing relationship.

Interpretations of the ballgame metaphor for χάρις map neatly onto this spectrum. Section 1.2.2. of this chapter considers the more instrumental interpretations of the ball metaphor offered by Seneca's fictive interlocutors and Plutarch's generous but misguided stranger Theanor. Seneca himself and Plutarch's Socratic figure, Epameinondas, critique these interpretations as unnecessarily reductive and even harmful to one's understanding of the appropriate, virtuous practice of χάρις in social relationships. Seneca and Epameinondas urge a more relational interpretation of χάρις, since, they argue, actions characterised by χάρις are defined by the intentions of the people involved in the interaction, rather than by the exchange *per se*.[100] The intention of χάρις should always be

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[99] Cf. Sen. *Ben.* 2. 21. 5: 'They consider only what is offered, and not who is doing the offering' (*qui non aestimant mittentes, sed missa*).

[100] Cf. Sen. *Ben.* 1. 5. 1: 'A *beneficium* cannot be touched and handled; it is a thing carried on in the mind' (*non potest beneficium manu tangi; res animo geritur*). Griffin and Inwood (2011) 13 point to Seneca's treatment of generosity as a stochastic craft and his attempt across his treatise 'to distinguish financial obligation, where best efforts are not sufficient, from the obligation to repay a favor, which operates on a different level even though the language of giving and receiving, owing and repaying is so deceptively similar'.

to do the other some good, and it must be a joyful interaction on both sides: it must be *amicitiae gratia*.[101] The salient point of the philosophers' critique of the metaphor rests in how one interprets the "ball"; Epameinondas and Seneca both insist that the ball cannot merely represent the gift or service exchanged between the "players" in the interaction. On a literal level, a single object handed back and forth between two people is never said to be 'gifted' by either. The ball must then at the very least represent different gifts or actions offered by the two people to each other over the course of time. And even then, if the ball remains tied metaphorically to the literal objects people offer each other, the "game" quickly starts to look indistinguishable from some sort of bartering system in which like must be met with like. To avoid this more obvious but fundamentally instrumentalising reading of the metaphor, Seneca and Epameinondas offer instead alternative interpretations for what the ball represents that pull the model towards a more relational understanding of the good of participant χάρις.

On the one hand, then, the ballgame metaphor lends itself to more instrumentalising readings of social χάρις; at the same time, however, Seneca and Plutarch find in it a useful illustration of the ways in which one can actively nurture an ongoing relationship of participant χάρις, as opposed to thinking of it as a *quondam* transaction where the gift or even the recipient of χάρις is instrumentalised for some other end than the relationship itself. In Sections 1.2.3. and 1.2.4., I consider the pedagogical purposes to which Seneca and Plutarch put the game of catch model, as they move their readers and characters towards a more ongoing, relational interpretation of χάρις. In these iterations of the metaphor, it is the intentionality of the players that comes into focus and makes the continuance of the game beyond a single instance of exchange possible.

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[101] Cf. Sen. *Ben*. 1. 6. 1; 2. 31. 2.

1.2.2. Instrumentalising Readings of the Ballgame Model

Our first example of a problematic use of the ballgame metaphor comes from Plutarch's character Theanor. In chapter 13 of *De genio Socratis*, the Pythagorean Epameinondas introduces a young stranger, Theanor, to the group of Theban conspirators who have gathered at the house of Simmias to discuss philosophical questions such as the nature of the δαιμόνιον of Socrates.[102] Also a Pythagorean, Theanor has arrived with a large sum of money that he has been sent to give Epameinondas in thanks for the latter's support for his old tutor Lysis. Epameinondas, a renowned ascetic, has declined the reward, and as the two enter the scene, Theanor is in the middle of trying to persuade Epameinondas to change his mind:

> 'οὐκοῦν' ἔφη 'σὺ κωλύεις, ὦ Ἐπαμεινώνδα, τῶν ἔργων τὸ κάλλιστον. εἰ γὰρ εὖ ποιεῖν φίλους καλόν, οὐκ αἰσχρὸν εὖ πάσχειν ὑπὸ φίλων'.[103]
>
> 'Indeed,' he said, 'you are preventing the finest of deeds, Epameinondas. For if it is a fine thing to treat friends well, it is not a disgraceful thing to be treated well by friends'.

Theanor then proceeds to cite the ballgame metaphor for χάρις in order to convince Epameinondas that a given object cannot be refused, unless the intended recipient wishes to bring shame upon both the giver and his offered gift:

> ἡ γὰρ χάρις οὐχ ἧττον δεομένη τοῦ λαμβάνοντος ἢ τοῦ διδόντος ἐξ ἀμφοῖν τελειοῦται πρὸς τὸ καλόν: ὁ δὲ μὴ δεξάμενος ὥσπερ σφαῖραν εὖ φερομένην κατήσχυνεν ἀτελῆ πεσοῦσαν. ποίου γὰρ οὕτω σκοποῦ βάλλοντα καὶ τυχεῖν ἡδὺ καὶ διαμαρτάνειν ἀνιαρὸν ὡς ἀνδρὸς εὖ παθεῖν ἀξίου διὰ χάριτος ἐφιέμενον; ἀλλ' ἐπεῖ μὲν ὁ τοῦ σκοποῦ μένοντος ἀτυχήσας σφάλλεται δι' αὑτόν, ἐνταυθοῖ δ' ὁ

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[102] On the composition, dramatic date, and overall purpose of Plutarch's dialogue, see Riley (1977); cf. Corlu (1970) 20-22 for a more in-depth discussion of the character Theanor.

[103] Plut. *Mor.* 582e-f.

> παραιτούμενος καὶ ὑποφεύγων ἀδικεῖ τὴν χάριν, εἰς ὃ ἔσπευκε μὴ περαίνουσαν.[104]
>
> For χάρις requires a receiver no less than a giver; both are required for it to reach its fine goal. The person who refuses to accept—it is just as though he is shaming a well-directed ball, causing it to fall without reaching its goal. For what other target is so sweet to hit and so shameful to miss as a man who deserves to be treated well, at whom one aims through χάρις? But consider: on the one hand, when someone aims at a fixed target, if he misses it, it is entirely his own fault; but in this case, the one declining and shunning does injustice to the χάρις, keeping it from accomplishing that at which it was aiming.

As his interpretation of the metaphor indicates, Theanor assumes that the rejection of a gift jeopardises an interaction characterised by χάρις. If Epameinondas rejects the gift, he has also rejected the giver. Because Theanor invests χάρις entirely in the offered object, he considers Epameinondas' rejection to be an act of 'shaming' and 'doing injustice to' χάρις itself. In his response, however, Epameinondas demonstrates to his new friend that he (Theanor) is (A) instrumentalising his intended recipient and (B) misapplying the ballgame metaphor to the merely visible aspects of their interaction.[105]

Epameinondas goes to great lengths to convince Theanor that he, the intended recipient, has no need of the money offered, and that it would in fact harm him to give up his lifestyle of poverty to accept it.[106] Because of this, it is not the rejection of the unwanted gift but the insistence on the part of the giver that the gift be received that runs the risk of ruining the potential χάρις relationship between them. Theanor's concern that his intended recipient is 'doing injustice to χάρις' (ἀδικεῖ τὴν χάριν) suggests that he is both identifying the χάρις behind his own act entirely within the reified gift (Epameinondas' rejection of the thing offered equals a rejection of χάρις itself) and

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[104] Plut. *Mor*. 582e-f.

[105] On Epameinondas as the Socratic figure in the dialogue, see Corlu (1970) 19-20 and Betz (1975) 241.

[106] Plut. *Mor.* 584a-b, 584d-585d.

effectively instrumentalising his recipient for the sake of the visible perpetuation of the "game", rather than keeping the true good of the other as his foremost intention.

Further, Theanor's particular application of the ball metaphor to their present interaction indicates that it is his exclusive focus on the visible exchange between the friends that has led him both to misunderstand and to instrumentalise his intended recipient. Epameinondas insists that he is ready to receive with gratitude the intentional goodwill behind Theanor's proffered gift:

> σοῦ δ', ὦ ξένε, τὴν μὲν προθυμίαν ʽκαλὴ γὰρ καὶ φιλόσοφοσ' δέχομαι καὶ ἀγαπῶ διαφερόντως.[107]
>
> But your goodwill, my friend, I receive—'for it is fine and worthy of a philosopher'—and I am very pleased by it.

Although he is rejecting Theanor's money, Epameinondas accepts and commends the kindness that motivates the gift. He insists, paradoxically:

> ἔστιν ὅτῳ μὴ λαβόντι τὸ καλῶς διδόμενον τιμιώτερον ὑπάρχει καὶ κάλλιον.[108]
>
> There is a case in which a well-given gift becomes finer and more honourable at the hands of the one who does not accept it.

How can this be? The true honour and virtue of χάρις, Epameinondas argues, lies in the goodwill of the giver and the readiness on the part of the intended recipient to respond to that goodwill in kind. In other words, the "exchange" of χάρις to which the ball metaphor can be rightly applied is not merely the visible exchange of a gift or service but rather the invisible "exchange" of goodwill and respect. Epameinondas' freedom to reject Theanor's gift rests on his confidence in the virtue and good intentions of the giver. In fact, what he requests in place of the offered money is what he considers the greater favour of being allowed to reject Theanor's money for the sake of his growth in virtue:

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[107] Plut. *Mor.* 584a.

[108] Plut. *Mor.* 584d.

> παραιτούμεθα τὸν ξένον ἐᾶν ἡμᾶς ἱκανῶς ἐγγυμνάσασθαι τῇ πενίᾳ πρὸς τὴν ἀρετὴν ἐκείνην.[109]
>
> We beseech our friend to allow us to keep training ourselves in poverty in order that we may obtain the virtue at which we are aiming.

If the ball metaphor is to apply to Epameinondas' relationship with Theanor, the ball itself must be redefined in such a way that what they are actually "exchanging" is goodwill and respect, rather than any specific object or gift such as the money that Theanor has brought with him.[110] In that way, the two friends can indeed share χάρις with one another, regardless of whether any visible exchange takes place. By engaging with one another in goodwill and mutual respect, Theanor and Epameinondas can enjoy a participant relationship with each other without either of them experiencing harm at the hands of the other.

Seneca also presents and criticises an instrumentalising use of the ballgame model in Book 2 of *De beneficiis.* Here, his interlocutor[111] appropriates the metaphor to support the argument that a feeling or expression of gratitude is an insufficient return for a *beneficium*.[112] He insists that an actual counter-gift is necessary; otherwise the duty of return has been neglected:

> 'Qui accepit', inquit, 'beneficium, licet animo benignissimo acceperit, nondum consummavit officium suum; restat enim pars reddendi; sicut in lusu est aliquid

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[109] Plut. *Mor.* 585d.

[110] Cf. the discussion in Kidd (2019) 97-121 of the ways in which 'pleasure-objects', including balls, become invested with various meanings in the different contexts in which they appear and the different uses to which they are applied.

[111] Probably the treatise's addressee, Liberalis, though cf. n. 88, above.

[112] Seneca uses the Latin *beneficium* or *gratia* where a Greek writer would use χάρις. The implications of his selective use of these synonyms at different points in his argument is discussed below.

> pilam scite ac diligenter excipere, sed non dicitur bonus lusor, nisi qui apte et expedite remisit, quam acceperat'.[113]
>
> 'But the one who receives a *beneficium*', you say, 'no matter how graciously he has received it, has not yet completed all his duty; for it still needs to be returned; just as in the game it is something to catch the ball cleverly and carefully, but one is not considered a good player unless he can quickly and in just the right way send back the ball that he has received'.

Seneca offers two objections to this application of the ballgame model. First, he argues that the analogy does not fit, because the honour of a χάρις exchange depends on the intention (*animus*) of each player, not on the agility of their bodies as in the case of the game, nor in the actual exchange of reified *beneficia*, as this interpretation of the game metaphor implies.[114] χάρις is exchanged directly between minds, he says a few lines down.[115] The physical nature of the ballgame does not map well onto an interaction characterised by χάρις. Like Theanor, Seneca's interlocutor thinks that what matters in a χάρις exchange are the visible things given, so he insists on the necessity of a match between an initial *beneficium* and its return. While Seneca agrees that there should be a match of sorts, he argues that χάρις cannot be reduced to a material exchange.[116] Like Epameinondas, he maintains that a return of goodwill or gratitude (*gratia*) is a sufficient, matching response for the intentional goodwill of the giver.[117] In fact, to insist on the duty

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[113] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 32. 1.

[114] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 32. 2; cf. 3. 17 and Raccanelli (2010) 53-56.

[115] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 34. 1.

[116] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 33. 3; cf. 2. 34. 5.

[117] At first, this claim may appear to eliminate the need for any material exchange at all, but see Inwood (1995) 263 and Griffin (2003) 102 for the practical reasons behind what the latter calls Seneca's 'highminded advice' in this regard. As we see from Seneca's next move in the argument, it is only within the limited timeframe of a single exchange of χάρις that he can be said to see no necessary place for its visible expression.

of a visible, reified return runs the risk of instrumentalising the initial gift: *do ut recipiam.* Instead, Seneca asks:

> Qui beneficium dat, quid proponit? Prodesse ei, cui dat, et voluptati esse. Si, quod voluit, effecit pervenitque ad me animus eius ac mutuo gaudio adfecit, tulit, quod petit.[118]
>
> The one who gives a *beneficium*, what is he aiming at? To be useful and to give delight to the one to whom he gives. So if he has accomplished what he wished and his spirit has made its way to me and has effected a mutual joy in me, he has got what he sought.[119]

Thus far, then, both Theanor and Seneca's misguided interlocutors demonstrate an interpretation of the ballgame metaphor for χάρις that identifies the χάρις with the visible exchange of goods or services, but thereby tend towards an instrumentalising reading of the interaction. Seneca, however, still sees pedagogical potential in the metaphor itself, which he will demonstrate in his second objection to the way his interlocutor has just been using it.

1.2.3. The Ballgame as a Model for Participant χάρις across Time

A second way in which χάρις becomes instrumentalised is when the interaction between the two persons is reduced to a one-time transaction. In a game of catch, Seneca points out, the ability of a player is determined not by any one particular throw of the ball or by his one-time inability to return it due to circumstances beyond his control. Rather, one is called a good player based on his general ability to return the ball to his teammate

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[118] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 31. 2.

[119] Konstan (2018) 108 rightly points out that in passages like this Seneca 'eliminates entirely the role of the beneficiary'. He may go slightly too far, however, in insisting that gratitude 'is not even possible' in this account, as I attempt to show in Seneca's further development of the ballgame model in Section 1.2.3.

in normal circumstances.[120] If the ballgame metaphor is to be used, Seneca insists, the focus must not be restricted to a single exchange. For Seneca, *gratia* remains a sufficient response to a *beneficium* in any given instance, not only because the interaction is defined by the intentions of the people involved, but also because the ballgame metaphor, rightly applied, indicates ongoing interaction between the players *and future exchanges* of *beneficia*. To insist on a material return for any given *beneficium* once again draws χάρις towards an instrumental *do ut recipiam* mentality by limiting the interaction to a one-time exchange of gifts or services.

This argument complicates the picture we have seen thus far, because Seneca does suggest that over the course of time there is an important place for matching given *beneficia* with like returns. Epameinondas suggested to Theanor that the only important feature of a χάρις exchange was the "ball" of goodwill passed between the players; Seneca agrees, in the context of any single exchange. When he expands the time period under consideration, however, he admits that there is something lacking if a player is generally unable to return *beneficia* for those he has received. Seneca concedes to his interlocutor that the thing given ought to have another corresponding to it if the relationship is to continue and the game is to go on.[121]

While this looks at first like Seneca is moving towards the instrumental/ transactional end of the χάρις spectrum, in which a reified *beneficium* must be returned with an equal *beneficium* in order to keep accounts "balanced" on both sides, as Griffin

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[120] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 32. 2. Here Seneca notes the stochastic nature of good ball-play and makes χάρις a craft of the same sort. Cf. Antipater's image of the sage as an archer, who 'is considered to have practiced his craft successfully even if he misses [his target] because of some factors external to his craft', as Inwood (1986) 551 notes.

[121] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 32. 4.

has pointed out, what Seneca actually means by 'returning' a *beneficium* is not straightforward.[122] In Chapter 3 of *De beneficiis*, Seneca defines a *beneficium* as something given by someone 'who could have held it back without incurring blame'.[123] This is an important conceptual distinction for Seneca; Griffin remarks that although he does not maintain an absolute terminological distinction, 'Seneca seems to accept the view that a *beneficium* differs from an *officium*'; a *beneficium* is *not* given 'by someone fulfilling the duties of an existing relationship'.[124] A *beneficium* must, by definition for Seneca, go beyond the duties associated with any particular relationship.[125] Griffin emphasises Seneca's focus on initial *beneficia* as 'creative *of* relationships'.[126] However, as Seneca himself goes on to explain, giving a *beneficium* remains a creative act even when it is offered *within* the context of a pre-existing relationship. Not only can *beneficia* initiate new relationships, but they can also act as creative catalysts to strengthen and deepen an ongoing relationship from within. In *Ben.* 3. 18, Seneca writes that *officia* and *ministeria* refer to the duties that are associated with particular roles and relationships.

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[122] Griffin (2013) 105 n. argues that even when Seneca uses such phrases as '*beneficium referre*, *beneficium remunerari*, and *beneficium rependere*', what he generally means is '*beneficio gratiam reddere*'. Just as in the English phrase to 'repay a loan' we do not imply that 'what we give the lender is itself a "loan"', so Seneca's use of the above-quoted idioms need not imply that it is always *beneficia per se* that must be given like for like. However, Griffin does acknowledge that Seneca at times stretches the meaning of *beneficium* in order to apply it to both sides of a reciprocal exchange.

[123] Sen. *Ben.* 3. 18. 1.

[124] Griffin (2013) 105.

[125] In this sense, Seneca may be thinking of Aristotle's definition of χάρις as 'not in response to anything' (μὴ ἀντί τινος) in *Rh.* 2. 7. 2. See n. 127 and Section 1.3.2. for further discussion.

[126] Griffin (2013) 105, emphasis added. See also Griffin (2013) 45 on Seneca's view that 'giving is thus a creative process that promotes flexibility and evolution within the social system'.

Beneficia, on the other hand, can be offered by any human being to any other, in accordance with what he calls the *ius humani*.[127] The only obligation that one is under in regards to *beneficia* is to try to be the sort of human being that creates and enjoys good relationships, not least by giving *beneficia* generously and well.

Where, however, does this leave us in regards to Seneca's concession that a reified *beneficium* ought to be matched by an equal return? To return a *beneficium* for a *beneficium* is, for Seneca, *not* the same as a transactional exchange of equally valued goods or services. In the context of a commercial transaction, one is obligated to pay back like for like—it is the duty of the recipient to make a return for what he has received, such that both parties come out of the exchange without loss. Seneca, however, defines a *beneficium* as something which inherently cannot be obligated and which always creates some *new* good for both giver and receiver.[128] As we saw him argue earlier, the only obligation that a *beneficium* can create in itself is a response of *gratia*. Seneca elaborates:

> Beneficium mihi dedit; accepi non aliter, quam ipse accipi voluit: iam habet, quod petit, et quod unum petit, ergo gratus sum. Post hoc usus mei restat et aliquod ex homine grato commodum; hoc non imperfecti officii reliqua pars est, sed perfecti accessio.[129]
>
> Someone gave me a *beneficium*. I accepted it exactly as he wished for me to accept it. He has what he sought, and the only thing which he sought. Therefore I am grateful. After this, there remains some usefulness and advantage to come

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[127] Sen. *Ben.* 3. 18. 3.

[128] Cf. Sen. *Ben.* 1. 6. 1, where he identifies a *beneficium* as 'a well-intentioned action that both gives joy and gains it by giving it' (*benevola actio tribuens gaudium capiensque tribuendo*). On this passage, Konstan (2018) 108 notes: 'Here, the benefit bestowed is not the cause of joy; rather, it is joy itself that is transmitted by virtue of the favor, and since the benefactor experiences joy in the act of giving, accounts are squared at the very moment that the favor is bestowed: there is no further transaction. By this definition, benevolence is truly its own recompense'.

[129] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 33. 1.

> from me, the grateful person. But this is not the remaining part of an incomplete duty; it is rather a bonus on top of a complete duty.

For Seneca, to return a *beneficium* for a *beneficium* is to go a step beyond the duty created by the initial gift.[130] When he concedes to his interlocutor that the "game" of χάρις requires more than just good intentions, but must actually be carried on as an exchange of like for like, Seneca is not moving back to a more transactional or instrumental reading of χάρις. Rather, he is redefining the "ball" in the game metaphor even more radically than did Epameinondas. For the Pythagorean, what defines a χάρις exchange is the "ball" of mutual goodwill. For Seneca, the "ball" becomes benevolent gifts or services that *always go beyond* the immediate duties of the relationship. The good of an ongoing χάρις relationship still lies for Seneca in the goodwill of the players. In a one-time exchange, this may or may not be expressed by visible gifts or services. However, in order to sustain χάρις over time as an ongoing, participant relationship of mutual goodwill, Seneca advocates repeated, responsive offerings on both sides of *beneficia.* These *beneficia*, by definition, go beyond the requirements of one's moral duty within that particular relationship, and therefore they are not given from a sense of obligation, but rather can continue to be motivated simply by the desire to further the good of the relationship itself.

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[130] Here Seneca has used the distinctions available to him between the Latin terms *beneficium* and *gratia* to resolve the paradox inherent in the single Greek word χάρις. Although χάρις as gratitude for a favour is consistently treated across the Greek world as a moral obligation, yet Aristotle insists at *Rh.* 2. 7. 2 that χάρις is 'a service for someone in need, not in return for anything (μὴ ἀντί τινος), nor for the advantage of the one doing the service, but only for the sake of the one in need'. How χάρις can at once be both obliged and freely offered 'not in return for anything' is a tension which Seneca avoids by distinguishing consistently between what he sees as the obligation associated with *gratia* and the necessity that *beneficia* remain always freely given.

1.2.4. The Ballgame Model as a Critique of Alexander the Great's Generosity

This is the point at which Seneca and Plutarch both envision the redemption of the ballgame metaphor: when it is read as a model for an ongoing relationship of participant χάρις rather than a one-time transactional exchange, it becomes in fact a useful pedagogical tool for the cultivation of the virtue of χάρις in social relationships. Seneca introduces the metaphor in *Ben.* 2. 17 as just such a pedagogical tool. At that point in his argument, the specific problem he seeks to address with it is that of a giver who considers only 'what is fitting for me to give' and not also what is fitting for the intended recipient of his gift.[131] Seneca names Alexander the Great as his negative example of someone who takes into consideration only himself in determining what he gives and how he gives it.[132] Seneca's critique is scathing:

> Nihil enim per se quemquam decet; refert, qui det, cui, quando, quare, ubi, et cetera, sine quibus facti ratio non constabit. Tumidissimum animal! Si illum accipere hoc non decet, nec te dare.[133]
>
> Nothing is fitting in itself for anyone; it depends on who is doing the giving, who is receiving, when, why, where, and so on, without which details it is impossible to establish any rationale for the deed. Most pompous creature! If it is not fitting for the person to receive, it is not fitting for you to give.

When Alexander takes into consideration only what is 'fitting' to his personal generosity, he is ignoring the relationality that defines the good of a χάρις interaction. Generosity does little good if the gift is not fitted to the needs and preferences of the recipient. In fact, like Theanor and Seneca's fictive interlocutor, Alexander too is instrumentalising his

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[131] Cf. Sen. *Ben.* 2. 15. 3 - 17. 2.

[132] That Seneca chooses such an extraordinary figure as Alexander to illustrate his fairly ordinary point about gift-giving fits well with the trend noted by Pelling (2011a) 26: 'By the first century CE Alexander topics often preoccupied the declaimers, though interestingly their themes tend not to be those larded with the most obvious historical significance for Rome'.

[133] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 16. 1-2.

intended χάρις recipient—this time in service of his self-perception as virtuous! Previously, we saw χάρις instrumentalised by being identified with the visible object or service given in a single instance of exchange; Alexander's instrumentalisation of the other in his χάρις interaction is even more blatant, because he simply ignores the needs and desires of his recipient. He looks only to himself in determining how he will express his perceived generosity. He instrumentalises his intended recipient and the entire interaction for the sake of his perception and performance of his own generosity.

The picture of Alexander as a generous but fundamentally transactional gift-giver is also attested in Plutarch's biography of the ruler. His extravagant generosity is noted throughout the work, and Plutarch devotes several central chapters to the theme.[134] He opens his focussed discussion of the king's gift-giving with a relatively positive assessment:

> Φύσει δ' ὢν μεγαλοδωρότατος, ἔτι μᾶλλον ἐπέδωκεν εἰς τοῦτο τῶν πραγμάτων αὐξομένων· καὶ προσῆν ἡ φιλοφροσύνη, μεθ' ἧς μόνης ὡς ἀληθῶς οἱ διδόντες χαρίζονται.[135]
>
> By nature, he was the greatest of gift-givers, and he grew all the more in generosity even as his own possessions grew; and he was characterised by a friendly spirit, with which alone the giver is truly said to be acting with χάρις.

This excursion on Alexander's willing generosity to his friends comes relatively early in the biography, where Plutarch's analysis of the ruler's character is still mostly positive and more in line with what Tim Whitmarsh calls the '*post eventum* idealization' of his earlier essay on the prince's success, *De fortuna aut virtute Alexandri*.[136] As Whitmarsh

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[134] Hamilton (1969) 101 and Hammond (1993) 172ff. offer useful lists of the various points in the biography at which Plutarch highlights Alexander's well-attested generosity. Cf. Plut. *Alex*. 5. 1; 15. 3-6; 23. 9-10; 25. 6-7; 29. 4-6.

[135] Plut. *Alex.* 39. 1.

[136] Whitmarsh (2002) 179.

points out, at this juncture in the narrative, Alexander is still 'presented as particularly amenable to philosophical instruction'.[137] However, in both the earlier, more laudatory work and at this point early in the biography, Plutarch is careful to note the extravagance of Alexander's gift-giving, which is rarely tailored to the needs or wishes of his recipients, but is rather motivated by his constant drivenness 'to be superior to all'.[138] Early on in his biography, Alexander shows one instance in which he graciously allows friends to reject his extravagant gifts.[139] However, as he grows in his own wealth, his gifts repeatedly exceed the needs and desires of their recipients: such is the case, for instance, of his χάρις interactions with his tutor Leonidas,[140] the actor Athenodorus,[141] and the Paeonian commander, Ariston.[142]

Alexander's markedly self-focussed generosity begins clearly to go too far in his interaction with the Athenian Phocion. In Plutarch's *Vita Phocionis*, he notes that Alexander treated the Athenian as a close friend and kept up a regular correspondence with him.[143] In both biographies, however, Plutarch mentions an incident, which he claims is well-known, in which Alexander attempts to send Phocion a present of one

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[137] Whitmarsh (2002) 181.

[138] Plut. *Mor.* 334e.

[139] Plut. *Alex.* 15. 3-6.

[140] Plut. *Alex.* 25. 6-7; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 179e-f. The story is also mentioned by Plin. *HN.* 12. 62.

[141] Plut. *Alex.* 29. 5.

[142] Plut. *Alex.* 39. 2.

[143] Plut. *Phoc.* 17. 5-6.

hundred talents. Phocion refuses it.[144] Alexander's petulant response recalls that of Theanor to his rejection by Epameinondas:

> ὅλως δ' ἤχθετο τοῖς μὴ λαμβάνουσι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς αἰτοῦσι. καὶ Φωκίωνι μὲν ἔγραψεν ἐπιστολήν, ὡς οὐ χρησόμενος αὐτῷ φίλῳ τὸ λοιπόν, εἰ διωθοῖτο τὰς χάριτας.[145]
>
> In general, he was vexed by those who would not receive from him, rather than by those who asked him for things. So to Phocion he wrote a letter, saying that he would not consider him a friend in the future, if he rejected his χάριτας.

Like Theanor, Alexander assumes that the rejection of a gift implies the rejection of the giver. Yet, like Epameinondas, Phocion's reasons for rejecting the extravagant gift are entirely honourable. It is rather Alexander's insistence that he accept his unwanted gift that risks material damage to their χάρις relationship. Even in his friendships, the ruler is beginning to evidence what Whitmarsh calls 'the autocratic intolerance typical of a tyrant'.[146]

Seneca seems to have a similar incident in mind when he censures Alexander for pressing the gift of an entire city on a man who asked him for permission to refuse it, as it did not fit someone in his position.[147] In answer to Alexander's haughty reply that he fits his gifts only to his own character, Seneca summons to his aid the Chrysippan ball metaphor:

> Volo Chrysippi nostri uti similitudine de pilae lusu, quam cadere non est dubium aut mittentis vitio aut excipientis; tum cursum suum servat, ubi inter manus utriusque apte ab utroque et iactata et excepta versatur.[148]

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[144] The most detailed version of this story can be found at Plut. *Phoc.* 18. 1-5.

[145] Plut. *Alex*. 39. 3.

[146] Whitmarsh (2002) 181. On the wider concern in the early empire for the untrustworthiness of monarchs, cf. Morgan (2015) 85-89.

[147] Sen. *Ben*. 2. 16. 1.

[148] Sen. *Ben*. 2. 17. 3.

> I would like to make use of Chrysippus' simile concerning the game with a ball, in which the ball only falls by the fault either of the one sending it or of the one catching it; the ball only maintains its course when it passes back and forth between the hands of two people who each throw it and catch it in just the right way.

In this first appearance of the game of catch model in *De beneficiis*, Seneca highlights from the start the two-sided, participant relationality that it implies for χάρις.[149] He continues:

> Necesse est autem lusor bonus aliter illam conlusori longo, aliter brevi mittat. Eadem beneficii ratio est. Nisi utrique personae, dantis et accipientis, aptatur, nec ab hoc exibit nec ad illum perveniet, ut debet.[150]
>
> What is more, a good player knows he must send the ball in one way to a tall partner, and in a different way to a short one. So also must be the reasoning for a *beneficium*. Unless it is fitted just right to both people—both the giver and the receiver—it will neither leave the one nor reach the other as it ought.

By contrast to this positive picture in which the good player tailors his expression of χάρις to the actual needs of the recipient, Seneca criticises those 'spiteful ball-players' (*maligni lusori*) who purposefully put out their partner, making him run halfway across the field to

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[149] My reading of the game of catch model in *De beneficiis* differs from Barclay's in at least four important respects. First, his entire discussion of the metaphor extends to just two sentences, at Barclay (2015) 46. Second, he reads the game as a metaphor of 'the gift-exchange system' as a whole, rather than a one-on-one relationship. Third, Barclay does not distinguish between Seneca's positive use of the model in 2. 17 and the incorrect use Seneca attributes to his interlocutor(s) in 2. 32 and 7. 18. Finally, Barclay draws from Seneca's use of the model simply the point that 'gifts are meant to be reciprocal'. However, in the case of the positive discussion of the model under consideration here, Seneca is not primarily interested in enabling Alexander's recipients to return his extravagant gifts; his primary concern is their inability even to receive those gifts in the first place, because of Alexander's "hurling" the ball at them without any consideration of their condition or aptitude for catching his thoughtless "gifts".

[150] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 17. 3.

catch the ball because of their carelessness—or intentional attempts to humiliate him.[151] When a giver such as Alexander engages in χάρις merely for the sake of performing his own superiority, the recipient is dishonoured and the interaction loses its relational good.[152] Seneca calls such instrumentalising givers,

> superbi et imputatores. Quanto melius quantoque humanius id agere, ut illis quoque partes suae constent.
>
> proud scorekeepers who like to keep others in their debt. How much better and more humane would it be if the recipients also had a chance to play their part.[153]

Plutarch offers a final example of a χάρις interaction stunted by Alexander's inattention to the needs of a recipient. Amidst Alexander's remarkable, extravagant generosity expressed in so many of his different relationships, one interaction is an outlier:

> Σεραπίωνι δὲ τῶν ἀπὸ σφαίρας τινὶ νεανίσκων οὐδὲν ἐδίδου διὰ τὸ μηδὲν αἰτεῖν. ὡς οὖν εἰς τὸ σφαιρίζειν παραγενόμενος ὁ Σεραπίων ἄλλοις ἔβαλλε τὴν σφαῖραν,

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[151] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 17. 5. This passage challenges the conclusion of Lesses (1993) 73-74, for whom Stoic friendship 'has nothing to do with unique, personal traits', because for the Stoics, 'true friends are interchangeable'. Lesses exemplifies an instrumental view of Stoic friendship when he argues that 'what is prized in each case of a perfect friend and the basis of perfect friendship also occurs in each ideal moral agent', giving the sage 'no reason to choose one friend over any other'. Seneca's ballgame metaphor, however, urges an attentiveness to the unique qualities in our friends that ought to affect the χάριτες we offer them. If the sage considers only the friendship's immediate benefit to himself, perhaps he has little reason to choose one friend over another, as Lesses suggests; but a participant attitude recognises and honours the unique attributes of a given friend, just as a good ball-player directs his ball variously to teammates of differing heights and distances from him.

[152] It also loses its connection with justice (δικαιοσύνη), as is evidenced, for instance, in Galen's summary of the Aristonian definition of the term—'dispensing to each what accords with his worth' (*De plac. Hipp. et Plat.* 7. 2. 436. 3)—and Stobaeus' rendering of the Chrysippan account—'considering primarily what accords with each person's worth' (*SVF* 3. 280).

[153] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 17. 6.

> εἰπόντος δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐμοὶ δ’ οὐ δίδως; οὐ γὰρ αἰτεῖς εἶπε, τούτῳ μὲν δὴ γελάσας πολλὰ δέδωκε.[154]
>
> But to Serapion, one of the young men with whom he played ball, he never used to give anything because he never asked for anything. Therefore, whenever Serapion had the ball and was about to throw it, he would throw it to others; and when the king said, ‘Won’t you give it to me?’ Serapion said, ‘No, for you don’t ask for it’, at which response the king laughed and gave him many things.

Once again the ballgame is used as a metaphor for true, participant χάρις, as Serapion suggests to Alexander that persistently self-focussed generosity results in a remarkable inattentiveness to the needs of his friend. As Seneca suggested above, any human relationship offers the people involved the opportunity to show each other χάρις. In a ballgame, the players should not have to ask that the ball be sent their way. In the social relationships that Alexander finds himself in, his beneficiaries should not have to ask him to initiate the exchange of χάρις. χάρις must be offered freely and beyond the bounds of duty. Alexander seems to understand his duty to help his friends who are in need. However, instead of cultivating a readiness within himself to offer χάρις to those with whom he is already in relationship, Alexander’s tendency to instrumentalise his giving for the sake of his own superiority leads him to ignore the unstated needs of one friend while showering unwanted gifts on others. To enjoy the ongoing relationships of χάρις available to him, Alexander must learn to focus his attention on fitting his gifts to the needs and wishes of each potential recipient in his friend group.

For both Seneca and Plutarch, then, the ballgame metaphor—rightly interpreted—models how one should tailor his or her *beneficia* to the needs of the intended recipient

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[154] Plut. *Alex.* 39. 1-3. Hammond (1993) 177 remarks that this incident is ‘too trivial’ to have been original to Plutarch and was likely more widely known. The anecdote is also a prime example of what Pelling (2011a) 16 calls Plutarch’s ‘taste for “small things”’, citing the programmatic statement of *Alex.* 1. 2, in which Plutarch explicitly announces his interest in the apparently trivial incidents of a person’s life which so often determine and display character.

for the sake of the ongoing relationship between them. What we have seen over the course of this section is that a χάρις relationship becomes instrumentalised (A) when the value of the interaction is judged on the basis of a visible exchange rather than the mutual goodwill of the participants; (B) when one considers only the obligation involved in a onetime exchange, rather than the ongoing good of a participant relationship characterised by mutual creative acts of beneficence; and (C) when the value of the interaction is judged merely on the basis of what is fitting or honourable for one party in the relationship, at the expense of the other. The "ball" of χάρις falls to the ground when the relationship it is meant to express is no longer the end in view.

1.3. The Dance of the Χάριτες as a Model for χάρις

In the ballgame metaphor for χάρις, "players" represent the two members of an ongoing χάρις relationship, and the ball represents repeated expressions of goodwill that go beyond the requirements of duty and manifest a desire for increased intimacy in that relationship. A complementary illustration of the χάρις relationship is the artistic trope of the dancing Χάριτες. For Aristotle and many of his followers, the goddesses in this image stand not for individual people in the relationship it depicts, but rather for the various stages of that relationship as it proceeds through time. Like the ballgame, the dance metaphor underlines the necessity that a χάρις relationship be characterised by mutually pleasing participation. For Aristotle, the tripartite nature of the dance can be used to illustrate, first, the diachronic stages of a χάρις relationship between two people, but then also the ways in which that χάρις relationship affects those around it and can even draw in other participants. Later philosophical and cultic interpretations of the Χάριτες explore similar themes. The Peripatetic and Stoic teachings summarised by Cornutus and

Stobaeus use the metaphor of the dancing goddesses to consider the ongoing timeline of χάρις beyond a single instance of give and return. Cultic considerations of the goddesses as patrons of χάρις consider the effects of interhuman χάρις on the complex web of divine-human relationships that surround them. All of these treatments encourage participation in the relationality of χάρις by using the third goddess in the dance to complicate the instrumentalising, two-part picture of gift and return so often considered to be the heart of χάρις.[155] The final treatment of the dancing Χάριτες that I consider in this section is that of Seneca, who situates the image at the very opening of *De beneficiis*, but ironically does so while protesting its inadequacy for actually motivating participation in social χάρις.

1.3.1. Cultic Background for the Image of the Dancing Χάριτες

According to Pausanias and Strabo, the worship of the three Χάριτες was first established by the mythical king Eteocles in his city Orchomenos.[156] Pausanias notes that Homer mentions a single Χάρις, wife of Hephaestus, and a group of 'younger Χάριτες' of uncertain number.[157] It is Hesiod who gives the Χάριτες the names most commonly used by later authors (Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia),[158] and MacLachlan notes 'the

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[155] Barclay (2015) 27 mentions only the two-part process of 'gift-and-return' in his brief reference to the Aristotelian image. Cf. MacLachlan (1993) 49: 'It was gratitude and reciprocity that became the hallmark of the Charites in the minds of the philosophers of the fourth and third centuries B.C.E.'

[156] Strab. 9. 2. 40; Paus. 9. 35. 3. Cf. Pind. *Ol.* 14; Theoc. *Id.* 16. 104-109; Nonnus *Dion.* 13. 94-95, 16. 131-132, 31. 202-208, 34. 36-47, 41. 149, 41. 225-227, 42. 464-467.

[157] Paus. 9. 35. 4, referencing Hom. *Il.* 18. 382-384 and 14. 267-276.

[158] Hes. *Theog.* 907-911. Hes. *WD.* 73-74 also names the Χάριτες as playing a part in bedecking Pandora, alongside the goddesses Athena, the Hours, and Persuasion (whom Paus. 9. 35. 5 notes is named as one of the Χάριτες by the elegist Hermesianax).

dominance of the Boeotian cult', as attested by, for instance, Pindar's following the Hesiodic tradition of the Χάριτες' names and number in *Olympian* 14.[159] The Χάριτες are widely associated with love, fertility, light, joy, and persuasion. James Oliver refers to them as 'the deities of a sweet and cheerful success, with whose aid joyous results are realized'.[160] MacLachlan outlines the historical development of the Χάριτες' associated blessings, noting that they are always essentially social:

> In distributing beauty, the Charites fostered human or divine interaction through physical allurement. In cult they were worshiped first as fertility goddesses, then venerated for the blessings they brought to the social order as it developed, becoming patrons of youth, of marriage, of healing, and later of the benefits conferred by the city-state. In praise poetry they awarded the χάρις of undying fame to a successful athlete, reciprocating the glory he had brought to the community.[161]

Cornutus cites the popular etymological myth of the Χάριτες' name having been derived from χαρά, meaning joy; the text of his explanation is uncertain, but Bruck's translation is likely correct: 'By doing good cheerfully (ἱλαρῶς), they [the Χάριτες] render cheerful (ἱλαρῶς) the receivers of their good deeds as well'.[162] Plutarch points out that two of the Χάριτες' names, Euphrosyne and Thalia, fit the delight and joy that accompanies an offering of χάρις.[163] The name of the third goddess, Aglaia, echoes another popular

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[159] MacLachlan (1993) 51, n. 23. Plut. *Mor.* 778c-d also follows Hesiod. Paus. 9. 35. 1-2 remarks that it is the Spartans who still worship only two Χάριτες. The Athenians revered two Χάριτες (of different names than the Spartan ones) until they learned better from the Boeotians.

[160] Oliver (1960) 103.

[161] MacLachlan (1993) 5.

[162] Cornutus Ἐπιδρομή 15, trans. Bruck (1944) 102. Some scholars, such as Anscombe (2005) 84-85 argue that this quotation is part of a later accretion to Cornutus' original text. Whether it was initially included in Cornutus' Ἐπιδρομή or not, the etymological connection between the Χάριτες and χαρά was certainly not original to him. Erotianus *Vocum Hippocraticarum collectio* χ. 2 attributes it to Apollodorus of Athens.

[163] Plut. *Mor.* 778c-d.

conception of the Χάριτες that associates them with light and splendour. MacLachlan points out the conceptual interconnectedness of light and joy across different languages, and she puts forward a variety of passages from Greek literature which suggest that 'light marked a state of blessedness' for the Greeks and 'bound a benevolent god and a radiant mortal together'.[164] As the latter comment suggests, it is impossible to separate χάρις from its relational significance, even when what might seem to be its purely aesthetic connotations are in view.

In the second century, when Pausanias was writing, the oldest sanctuary at Orchomenos was still that dedicated to the Χάριτες.[165] It contained both aniconic aeroliths, believed to be the original forms in which the goddesses appeared on earth, and more recent artistic representations. Pausanias does not describe the latter in detail, though he does note the contemporary trend of portraying the goddesses naked, which he contrasts with a variety of earlier portrayals from Smyrna, Pergamum, and Athens, in which the goddesses are wearing loose robes.[166] Pausanias also mentions the famous

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[164] MacLachlan (1993) 52-53. The connections between χάρις and divine light will be picked up and elaborated by Philo in the following chapter, most vividly in his description of the praying Hannah (Section 3.3), and by Josephus in his portrait of Moses in the *Antiquitates* (3.4). References associating χάρις with light in the New Testament are abundant: e.g. Paul's accounts of his Christophany in Gal. 1. 15-16 and 1 Cor. 15. 8-10; John 1. 14; Eph. 5. 3-20; Col. 1. 12-13; Ja. 1. 17.

[165] Paus. 9. 38. 1.

[166] Paus. 9. 35. 6-7. Cf. Seneca's comments on the differing traditions of representing the goddesses either heavily clothed or semi-nude at *Ben.* 1. 3. 2-7.

statue of Apollo at Delos, in which the god bears three Χάριτες in his right hand.[167] Oliver notes the significance of the new cult to the Χάριτες set up in Athens when the city seceded from Macedon: 'The new emphasis was clearly on love and graciousness'.[168]

The well-known image of the goddesses dancing hand-in-hand was likely first conceived in the early fifth century B.C.;[169] it was widely recognisable by the Hellenistic period, and maintained a lasting fascination for Roman and later Renaissance artists.[170] Where the image originally came from is unclear, but MacLachlan notes the importance of dancing in the worship of the goddesses from very early on, especially at the festivals held in their honour at Orchomenos.[171] Pindar forefronts their delight in dance and song throughout *Olympian* 14,[172] and the Homeric Hymn to Apollo describes the goddesses 'holding each other's wrists' in the divine dance led by the god.[173] According to Seneca,

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[167] See Pfeiffer (1952) 21 for the probable 7th or 6th c. B.C. date of the statue and for Pseudo-Plutarch's mistaken assertion that the Χάριτες stood in Apollo's left hand (Ps-Plut. *de. Mus.* 14). Philo, *Legat.* 95 and Apollodorus of Athens (as quoted in Macrob. 1. 17. 13) both affirm that the goddesses were held in Apollo's right hand, with his bow and arrows in his left, signifying the god's preference for beneficence over punishment. The Χάριτες are regularly associated with Apollo, as for instance at Hom. *Apo.* 194-196; Pind. *Ol.* 14. 8-12; Nonnus *Dion.* 34. 36-47.

[168] Oliver (1960) 106. See MacLachlan (1993) 35-36, 45 on the longstanding literary and mythical connection between the Χάριτες and Aphrodite. Cf. Theoc. *Id.* 16. 131-132, 31. 202-208. On the Athenian creation of the new state cult to Demos and the Χάριτες, see further Mikalson (1998) 168-207.

[169] Stoll and Furtwängler (1884) coll. 880.

[170] Cf. the comprehensive study of the early modern reception of the scene in Mertens (1994), and the discussion of the specifically Senecan influence on Renaissance interpretations of the image in Wind (1967) 26-35.

[171] MacLachlan (1993) 47: 'The ritual dance served as a form of *paideia* (cultural and moral instruction) among the Greeks, informing the young through worship'.

[172] Concerning which, MacLachlan (1993) 42 notes, 'containing as it does an invocation and enumeration of the gifts of the Charites, the song resembles a cult hymn more than it does an epinician ode'.

[173] Hom. *Apo.* 194-196. Cf. Fig. 1, below.

the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus crafted an elaborate allegory for social χάρις based on the well-known image of the goddesses in their dance.[174] This image is discussed at length by Seneca himself, and the Peripatetic and Stoic discourses preserved by Cornutus and Stobaeus attest ongoing philosophical interest in the picture as a useful model for ethical instruction.

Historians interested in Pauline χάρις tend to see little significance in the iconography of the Χάριτες that had become so recognisable by the early principate. Harrison, for instance, dismisses any connection between χάρις and the Χάριτες as merely 'cultic in nature. Further, it functions more by mnemonic association than any notion of divine grace impelling human beneficence'.[175] Barclay too has little time for the goddesses, noting simply that by Aristotle's time, 'the image of the Three Graces (Χάριτες) dancing in a ring had become an image of the perpetual cycle of gift-and-return, both graceful and tightly bound'.[176] Rather than just representing reciprocity, however, the philosophical and rhetorical treatments of the dancing goddesses that I examine in the following sections illustrate additional dimensions in the early imperial discussions of χάρις that were introduced with the ballgame model in the previous section. First, the Χάριτες add an explicitly religious dimension to the instrumental vs participant tension in Graeco-Roman discussions of χάρις. Although it is not the purpose

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[174] See Schwarzenberg (1966) 67-70 for the suggestion that Chrysippus drew his inspiration specifically from a picture in the Stoa painted by Polygnotus.

[175] Harrison (2003) 188.

[176] Barclay (2015) 27. Cf. MacLachlan (1993) 49: 'It was gratitude and reciprocity that became the hallmark of the Charites in the minds of the philosophers of the fourth and third centuries B.C.E. This is particularly clear in Stoic reflections upon the iconography of the three Charites which became popular during the Hellenistic period'.

of this thesis to trace the reception of the cult of the Χάριτες in early Christianity,[177] the fact that the Χάριτες are goddesses is an important consideration to keep in mind as we examine the protreptic arguments drawn from their cultic images.[178] Secondly, when the details of the image are taken into consideration, the dance of the Χάριτες is in fact less vulnerable to an instrumentalised reading than was the ballgame metaphor. In the case of the dance, there is no material object being passed from hand to hand, as in the game of catch. Ethical interpretations of the dancing Χάριτες must focus solely on the relational interactions between the different goddesses, and need not grapple with the place of the material object being exchanged in metaphor. In addition, the third goddess in the group pulls the image away from the transactional reading to which the two-person ballgame was vulnerable (note that, grammatically, *do ut des* takes account of only two participants). Finally, as the evidence in the following subsections demonstrates, the dance of the Χάριτες has a much longer history as a metaphor for χάρις than does the game of catch. While the ballgame model is attested primarily in Seneca and Plutarch,

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[177] For this, see especially Smith (1994) 47-54, 109-140, who makes a compelling argument for the ongoing significance of the dancing Χάριτες in early Christian reception and liturgical practice. Cf. Miller (1986) 103-109.

[178] In its own right, dance as a model for and enactment of virtue is a common theme among Greek writers in particular. In the *Laws*, Plato gives dance a foundational position in his scheme of education, arguing that a well-coordinated body mirrors an orderly soul (653a-654b). Athenaeus preserves a similar understanding of dance from the school of the Athenian philosopher Damon (Ath. 14. 628c-e). In the second century A.D., Lucian offers his own defence and history of dance, citing Homer, Hesiod, Socrates, and Plato, among others, on the sweetness and holiness of the ‘mystic art in which so many gods take earnest delight’ (Luc. *Salt.* 23). Yana Zarifi (2007) 227-228, 238 argues that dance saturated the Greek understanding of the cosmos, drawing together mortals, immortals, heavenly bodies, and the natural world.

Greek writers as far apart as Aristotle and Stobaeus reference the Χάριτες as an ethical model for social χάρις.[179]

Although Paul himself never explicitly engages with the Χάριτες in his extant letters,[180] the ethical lessons his contemporaries associate with the goddesses' public depictions exemplify the nuanced conversations about divine χάρις in his surrounding culture.[181] The ballgame metaphor focusses attention on the experience of two participants in a χάρις relationship and suggests ways in which the relationship becomes instrumentalised by one participant or the other investing the good of the relationship either in the object or service exchanged or in his or her personal practice of virtue. Considerations of the dancing Χάριτες encourage a recognition of the ongoing relational nature of any individual act of χάρις and of the various other intersecting relationships which that χάρις affects. Dio and Strabo in particular draw out the divine dimension: everyone, they suggest, is already in a χάρις relationship with the divine whether he or she recognises it or not; and the best way to honour the gods' χάρις is to imitate their generosity in the context of one's relationships with other humans. As we see in Section 1.3.5., Seneca finds an emphasis on the Χάριτες' divinity ineffective for promoting virtuous social χάρις, but he nevertheless shares with other interpreters the underlying assumption that any ethical use of the Χάριτες' image must aim to further willing and

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[179] And see Wind (1967) 26-35 and Mertens (1994) for the image's colourful reception in Renaissance art and thought.

[180] Harrison (2003) 9 suggests that the popularity of the Χάριτες in 'the wider cultural tapestry of Graeco-Roman society' in Paul's time might 'partially explain why Paul avoided the plural form of χάρις'.

[181] Smith (1994) 49, n. 75 also draws attention to the connection between dancing and divine χάρις elaborated by later Christian authors such as Ambrose and Gregory of Nyssa.

joyous participation in virtuous χάρις relationships.[182] His disagreement with other ethicists working with the same tradition lies not in the goal of their discussions, but in the means by which they envision its accomplishment.

1.3.2. Aristotle on χάρις and the Χάριτες

When Aristotle defines χάρις in *Rhetoric*, he departs notably from the consistent idiom of his time in which the word refers to gratitude, or some kind of grateful response for a favour. Instead, Aristotle insists that χάρις is

> ὑπουργία τῷ δεομένῳ μὴ ἀντί τινος, μηδ' ἵνα τι αὐτῷ τῷ ὑπουργοῦντι ἀλλ' ἵνα τι ἐκείνῳ.[183]
>
> a service rendered to one who needs it, *not in return for anything*, nor for the sake of some benefit to the one rendering the service, but rather for the sake of some benefit to the recipient (emphasis added).

In his commentary on *Rhetoric*, William Grimaldi points out that χάρις as Aristotle defines it here cannot include a feeling of gratitude, despite the attempts of various previous interpreters to find a means of reconciling Aristotle's definition with the common usage of his time.[184] Aristotle's intent, Grimaldi insists, 'is an analysis of the emotion as kindliness, benevolence: helping someone in need and doing so without any

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[182] This is one of many examples in this thesis of the close association between ethics and aesthetics in ancient thought. Part of this conflation of the two spheres can be attributed to the internalisation of the viewed object in most ancient theories of vision, as discussed at length by Neis (2012) and (2013).

[183] Aristot. *Rh.* 2. 7. 2.

[184] Grimaldi (1988) 128. For a differing view, see Striker (1996b) 292, 301 n. 15, who argues for an idiomatic definition of χάριν ἔχειν as 'gratitude' in 2. 7. 1, in contrast with χάρις by itself in 2. 7. 1 ff. as 'favor'. Cf. Cooper (1993) 184-185.

expectation of a return'.[185] Although idiomatic Greek speaks of χάρις and its return interchangeably, here Aristotle insists that true χάρις must go beyond the duty of return; an act of service motivated purely by the desire to return a favour or fulfil the duty of proportionate reciprocity is not strictly an act of χάρις in Aristotle's definition. As with Seneca's differentiation of *beneficium* from *gratia*, for Aristotle too true χάρις is an act of beneficence that goes beyond the social duty of gratitude or reciprocity. χάρις is a response to the need or desire of another human being that is good in itself.[186]

This understanding of the inherent goodness of χάρις as an act of beneficence is, in the words of Brad Inwood, 'as old as Greek culture itself'.[187] Although it is attested across a number of genuine Aristotelian texts, the importance of this understanding of χάρις is clearly underlined by one of Aristotle's followers, in a letter of pseudo-Aristotle to Philip of Macedon:

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[185] Grimaldi (1988) 128. At 128-129, Grimaldi helpfully lists the various ways in which Aristotle refers to χάρις across his *oeuvre*, although he emphasises their disparity more than their continuity. He acknowledges 'a possible hint of the meaning for χάρις found in our present chapter' at Aristot. *Nic. Eth.* 5. 5. 7, which I examine below. In Grimaldi's opinion, Aristotle's focus on reciprocity in his discussion of the Χάριτες suggests that χάρις there should be understood as a concrete 'favour', rather than a πάθος as here. However, as Grimaldi himself points out, Aristotle defines χάρις in *Rhetoric* 'in terms of the actions of the person experiencing the emotion'. The distinction between χάρις as an emotion of benevolence and χάρις as an act of favour is sharper than necessary in Grimaldi's scheme. Cf. Konstan (2018) 49-50 on Aristotelian friendship: 'Love is not simply a feeling…Aristotle says nothing of the sort, but mentions instead benevolent intentions and, to the extent possible, acts in accord with those intentions'.

[186] Konstan (2018) 111 points out that 'the only other context in which Aristotle insists on disinterestedness is in his discussion of love…The coincidence of language suggests that love, or something like love, may be the reason someone would unselfishly bestow a benefit or [χάρις] upon another'. Paul explicitly brings out the connection between love and χάρις in Galatians 2. 20-21, discussed in Section 4.4.1.

[187] Inwood (1995) 241.

> χάριτος ἀμοιβὴ καὶ δόσις συνέχει τοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων βίους, τῶν μὲν διδόντων, τῶν δὲ λαμβανόντων, τῶν δ' αὖ πάλιν ἀνταποδιδόντων.[188]
>
> The giving and interchange of χάρις holds together people's lives, with some giving, some receiving, and some giving back again in return.

The letter goes on to urge upon Philip the nobility of pitying those who are undeservedly unfortunate and treating them with χάρις, regardless of whether they will be able to make an immediate return or not. Here Pseudo-Aristotle applies the participant model of χάρις to the whole of human society. As we shall see, his concern is a theme shared both by Stoics and Peripatetics. Seneca introduces his purpose in *De beneficiis* as that of 'discussing and setting in order the topic of *beneficia*, which more than anything else binds together human society', *de beneficiis dicendum est et ordinanda res, quae maxime humanam societatem alligat*.[189]

Similarly, Aristotle affirms in *Nicomachean Ethics* that 'it is in sharing that people are held together', τῇ μεταδόσει δὲ συμμένουσιν.[190] It is in light of this central cohesive purpose of social χάρις that Aristotle introduces the illustration of the dancing Χάριτες:

> διὸ καὶ Χαρίτων ἱερὸν ἐμποδὼν ποιοῦνται, ἵν' ἀνταπόδοσις ᾖ· τοῦτο γὰρ ἴδιον χάριτος· ἀνθυπηρετῆσαι γὰρ δεῖ τῷ χαρισαμένῳ, καὶ πάλιν αὐτὸν ἄρξαι χαριζόμενον.[191]
>
> And this is the reason they set up a shrine of the Χάριτες where everyone will see it, in order that there may be giving back in return; for this is a special characteristic of χάρις, for it is necessary to serve in turn the one who has offered you χάρις, and then again to initiate χάρις oneself.

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[188] Pseudo-Aristotle, Letter 4; Greek text from Plezia (1977) 31. For a full translation of the fragmentary letter, see Inwood (1995) 241-242.

[189] Sen. *Ben.* 1. 4. 2.

[190] Aristot. *Nic. Eth.* 5. 5. 6. Cf. Aristot. *Nic. Eth.* 8. 1. 4: 'It seems clear that friendship is what holds states together', ἔοικε δὲ καὶ τὰς πόλεις συνέχειν ἡ φιλία.

[191] Aristot. *Nic. Eth.* 5. 5. 7.

At first glance, this statement might appear to fit the contractual interpretations of Barclay and others: the δεῖ in Aristotle's explanation can arguably be read as a simple insistence on the necessity of reciprocity in χάρις, regardless of any consideration of its relational aspects.[192] However, the 'necessity' of reciprocity as Aristotle describes it here is contingent on his initial assertion of the inherent goodness and virtue of sharing, μετάδοσις. In order for this sharing to be possible and for it to work as a binding agent across all of human society, Aristotle argues, χάρις must have a response in kind. The stages of giving, returning, and re-initiating that Aristotle describes need not be read as an instrumentalisation of χάρις devoid of relationship. Rather, Aristotle's overriding concern is fundamentally relational: he wants people to be 'bound together by sharing'.[193] The steps or stages of χάρις that he connects to the Χάριτες serve to express and enable the ongoing participant relationship of 'sharing'. They might each be seen as a single "toss" of the *beneficium* "ball" from Section 1.2. Aristotle and those following his lead use the fact that there are (typically) three goddesses in the image of the dancers to spell out three different kinds of χάρις that can be offered in the context of a single relationship: the initial offering, service in turn, and re-initiation.

The third stage that Aristotle mentions explicitly expands the picture beyond a straightforward depiction of reciprocity. Not only does he emphasise the importance of giving and returning χάρις, but Aristotle also includes fresh initiations of χάρις as an

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[192] Indeed, even MacLachlan (1993) 5 oversimplifies her interpretation of this quotation when she writes that Aristotle 'advised the erection of a temple to the Charites in a prominent place in the city, to ensure reciprocal giving, for this, he says, is the distinguishing feature of χάρις'.

[193] I disagree with Harrison (2003) 188, in his assessment that 'the public prominence of the shrines set up to the Χαρίτες indicates that χάρις (at least for Aristotle) is a primarily civic virtue'.

integral part of the cycle. From the text quoted above, it is unclear whom Aristotle means is to be the recipient of this fresh χάρις. One option is as follows: A gives to B, B gives back to A, and then later B gives to A in order to start the process anew. This fits well with the participant model of χάρις as a ballgame that we saw in the previous section, and in particular with Seneca's insistence that the cycle of χάρις is never complete or "paid off" but must continually be renewed with ever-increasing expressions of the χάρις shared between the two people involved. In Section 1.2.3., Seneca encouraged a "reciprocity plus" understanding of *beneficia* within the context of an ongoing relationship. Aristotle's final phrase in the *Nicomachean* quotation may be interpreted likewise: 'it is necessary to serve in turn, and again to initiate χάρις towards, the one who has offered you χάρις'.

However, Aristotle may also have in mind a model of χάρις that involves not just two but rather three parties. Translators of this passage often treat Aristotle's πάλιν as pointing to other occasions and relationships of χάρις: A gives to B, B gives back to A, and then B also gives to C.[194] Although it is unclear which model Aristotle means to emphasise here, this latter interpretation accords well with the common depiction of the goddesses in his time. Later, from about the 2nd c. B.C. onward, it became standard to present the Χάριτες as three young women loosely joined in a circular dance.[195] Earlier depictions, however, present the goddesses dancing in a line, as for instance can be seen from the relief in Figure 1, which likely adorned the goddesses' sanctuary on the

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[194] The αὐτόν of Aristotle's final phrase indicates that the subject initiating the fresh χάρις must be the same as the one making the return: B gives back to A, and then B also initiates a new χάρις, either to A or to C.

[195] See Figure 2, Section 1.3.3.



Figure 1. Three Graces Relief, Athens, Acropolis Museum, no. 702.

Acropolis in Aristotle's time.[196] In this relief, the three goddesses participate in a sacred dance led by an unidentified flautist (most scholars, following Lechat, take him to be

[196] Image accessed 10 March 2021 from the Acropolis Museum website: https://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/relief-graces. The relief is dated 500-490 B.C. and was discovered in two fragments in 1888 and 1889. The larger of the two was found near the Propylaia, while the top left corner of the relief was discovered at the southwest corner of the Parthenon. For discussion, see Lechat (1889) and (1903) 443-452; Dickins (1912) 270-271; Payne and Mackworth-Young (1936) 49-50; Carpenter (1950) 324; Simon (1969) 236-237; Brouskari (1974) 58-59; Harrison (1977) 269; Mitropoulou (1977) 21-23; Shapiro (1995) 43; Gagliano (2014) 52-54. Dickins follows Lechat in naming the larger figures Hermes and the Χάριτες, though he notes that this leaves the boy at the back of the line unaccounted for. Simon suggests the child is Eros, considering the Χάριτες' long-standing association with Aphrodite. Harrison and Gagliano also decide that the identification of the female figures as the Χάριτες is the most likely. Shapiro suggests an alternative reading of the three women as the Kekropidae with their young brother, Erysichthon. Payne contradicts the majority of scholars and argues against the scene being 'anything more than a record of a festival'.

Hermes).[197] As described in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, the women are each 'holding each other's wrists',[198] but in this relief, the last goddess has also taken the hand of what appears to be a child, but is in fact just as likely to be an adult human worshiper.[199] If Aristotle had in mind an image such as this,[200] it seems likely that he would consider the goddesses' wrist-holding as representative of the cohesive nature of χάρις across human society. What is more, if each goddess represents one of the three stages of χάρις that

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[197] Lechat (1889) and (1903) 443-452. Gagliano (2014) 52 assumes that Lechat's position is the most likely; but she points out that he relies for his identification on similar reliefs of Hermes, none of which were found in Athens. On the other hand, the connection between Hermes and the Χάριτες is widely attested among philosophers; cf. Cornutus Ἐπιδρομή 16, 24; Plutarch *Mor.* 44e. Seneca criticises what he considers the arbitrary connection drawn between the divinities at *Ben.* 1. 3. 7. Cf. Zeyl (1974) 144-145 for the reasons Hermes/Mercury and the Χάριτες may have been popularly associated, and the suggestion that Seneca's objection lies in his desire to disassociate the giving of *beneficia* from 'a business venture' (Mercury being the patron of both business and thievery).

[198] Hom. *Apo.* 196. Simon (1967) 237 also draws attention to this connection.

[199] I am strongly inclined to the interpretation of Carpenter (1950) 324, that considering the large figures are all divine, 'the small final figure may be the dedicator of the relief, his diminutive stature indicating his inferior mortal status, not his lack of years'. It is surprising that so few interpreters have taken up Carpenter's suggestion and interpreted the small figure as a human worshipper of the goddesses, considering the persistent difficulties of identifying the figure as a child, regardless of one's interpretation of the other figures in the relief. On these difficulties, see Dickins (1912) 271; Payne (1936) 49; Shapiro (1995) 43. Dickins and Mitropoulou (1977) 22 critique the incorrect view of Richards (1890) that the small figure represents a local female deity. Richards' mistaken interpretation of the fifth figure as female seems to have led later scholars to ignore his acknowledgement that 'if the figure were male', as the vast majority of scholarship now agrees it is, 'the smallness of its stature would easily be understood as the natural representation of a mortal in the presence of immortals'.

[200] Webbe (1986) 6, 9-10, 20 also draws attention to the fact that Aristotle's symbolic interpretation of the goddesses precedes—and to an extent may have also influenced—the development of the later standard depiction of the Χάριτες in the nude and dancing in a circle. As discussed in Section 1.3.3., the later and better-known image of the goddesses shares many similarities with the image of them dancing in a line, as in Figure 1. Crucially for my argument, both iconographic tropes are used by philosophers to encourage not only responsive returns of χάρις but also the outward-looking response that seeks to draw yet more participants into the celebratory group.

Aristotle describes, then we can interpret the image as follows: the first goddess takes the wrist of the second in the act of χάρις that is 'giving';[201] the second takes the wrist of the third in the act of 'return'; and the third draws in yet another dancer with the act of 'initiation'. It is the wrist- and hand-holding that stands out at the front of this depiction, and it seems a reasonable assumption that Aristotle is connecting his idea of χάρις as the bonding agent of human society to the three bonds created by these goddesses taking each others' and a fourth dancer's wrists or hands.[202]

While the first two Χάριτες each clasp the wrist of the next, the third goddess is holding the hand of the smaller figure, with her elbow bent in a tighter angle than the others' and her legs in a wider stance. Her back heel is pressed into the ground as she pulls the mortal (or child) into position.[203] If this hand-clasp corresponds to Aristotle's third stage of χάρις (re-initiation), then he is not thinking exclusively of a two-person relationship of χάρις in which person B, in the third stage of the relationship, initiates a fresh χάρις to the first giver, A. Rather, like the mortal drawn into the dance of the goddesses, Aristotle's tripartite model of χάρις envisions a relationship that feeds into

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[201] Note that she also holds either a fruit, Harrison (1977) 269, or a flower, Carpenter (1950) 324, in her other hand. Either might suggest a reference to the *Horai*, but as Harrison notes, 'we are forced to recognize that Attic art gave to the Graces some of the qualities of the Seasons'. Bounty is closely linked with generosity.

[202] It is tempting when looking at this sort of image to assume that the goddesses each represent individual people in a χάρις interaction. However, Aristotle does not focus his interpretation on the people involved in the cycle of χάρις, but rather on the three actions of giving, returning, and giving again. Additionally, in later reception of Aristotle's analogy the three goddesses always represent actions associated with χάρις rather than specific people.

[203] Note that he has not got the right stance just yet: the wrong leg is in front, and he even seems to have been given a right foot on his left leg, Dickins (1912) 271. Dickins also criticises the 'quite disproportionate length' of the figures' arms, but if he is portrayed in the moment of being pulled into the divine dance, then perhaps the extended right arm emphasises the force with which he is being drawn in.

other relationships: first A gives to B, and B returns to A, and then at another point B might not only give a fresh χάρις to A, but might also give χάρις to C, adding a new member to the flexible, ongoing interaction that could presumably continue indefinitely.[204]

In the specific context of the goddesses' depiction on their shrine, Aristotle suggests that seeing χάρις illustrated as a divine dance inspires people to seek to join the Χάριτες. One does so, however, by means of inter-human expressions of χάρις:

> ἀνθυπηρετῆσαι γὰρ δεῖ τῷ χαρισαμένῳ, καὶ πάλιν αὐτὸν ἄρξαι χαριζόμενον.[205]
>
> For it is necessary to serve in turn the one who has offered you χάρις, and then again to initiate χάρις oneself.

The image of the dancing Χάριτες should, according to Aristotle, inspire people not only to return χάρις when they have received it, but also to keep on initiating it. Read in conversation with the relief sculpture of the goddesses that most likely adorned the Χάριτες' sanctuary in Aristotle's time, the fresh initiation to which Aristotle refers extends beyond the bounds of a single relationship. One relationship of χάρις ought to feed into another, like the mortal being drawn into the divine dance on the relief. χάρις relationships are not meant to be *exclusive from* one another but rather *creative of* one another.[206] In this way, the sight of the goddesses' connection in their dance works as a

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[204] This capacity for expansion and flexibility in the χάρις relationship is an aspect which the purely balanced reciprocity model fails to take into account. It is also one that Paul will foreground in his fluid expressions of thanksgiving to God, with and for his epistolary addressees, in Section 3.3.

[205] Aristot. *Nic. Eth.* 5. 5. 7.

[206] Cf. the discussion by Morgan (2007) 306 of certain Italian honorific inscriptions in which 'benefactors are credited with a number of virtuous motives for their gifts', which motives 'can be felt by the recipients of gifts as well as the givers', giving 'the impression that the good qualities on display are in fact shared by all citizens'.

metaphor for seeing or experiencing χάρις in human relationships. Both are meant to spur on further expressions and initiations of χάρις.[207]

1.3.3. Hellenistic Philosophical Interpretations of the Χάριτες Model

Aristotle's vision of the dancing Χάριτες as a metaphor for social χάρις clearly caught on with later authors and thinkers. It is attested in various forms throughout later generations of Stoics and Peripatetics. Across the different extant interpretations, the fact that there are three goddesses is repeatedly used both to acknowledge the popular, two-part understanding of a χάρις relationship as one of give and return, and then also to incorporate a third dimension that complicates the picture of a balanced, mutually reciprocal relationship. Aristotle uses the third Χάρις to extend the timeline of a two-person χάρις relationship beyond the scope offered by the balanced reciprocity model of give and return (recall the καὶ πάλιν, 'and then again', of *Nic. Eth.* 5. 5. 7). Seneca used the ongoing ballgame model in Section 1.2.3. for a similar purpose. As seen in the line-dancing representation of the Χάριτες to which Aristotle most likely refers, his model also expands the interactions under consideration in order to incorporate additional participants beyond the initial giver and receiver. This is a new dimension for social χάρις that the game of catch model did not noticeably take into account.

In the Stoic Ἐπιδρομή of Cornutus and the Peripatetic doxography preserved by Stobaeus we find attestations of the endurance and popularity of the Χάριτες model for social χάρις. We also find more religiously motivated interpretations of it in Dio

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[207] This is, of course, an idealised picture of various χάρις relationships supporting one another and human χάρις relationships flowing from observation and participation in divine ones. In Section 1.4. I consider the advice of Dio Chrysostom and Plutarch for cases in which χάρις relationships come into conflict with each another.

Chrysostom's Rhodian Oration and in Strabo.[208] The philosophical discussions of the model that I consider first focus their audiences' attention on the longer timeline of a two-person χάρις relationship as it is represented by the goddesses. The cultic interpretations to which I then turn use the tripartite model to think about the wider social and especially divine-human context of any individual relationship of χάρις. Whether they are thinking in terms of time or society, however, each of these authors is using the model of the Χάριτες to push his intended addressees away from the instrumentalised approach to χάρις that comes from seeing it merely as a balanced, reciprocal interaction of give and return between two people in a conceptual vacuum.

Griffin points out that 'in the Peripatetic doxography in Stobaeus, *charis* occurs alongside *philia* among the *pathē asteia*…for Peripatetics, the topic *peri charitōn* could still be linked to friendship, as in Aristotle'.[209] In Stobaeus' account, the three Χάριτες represent (1) a single service, (2) the exchange of services, and (3) the purposeful recollection of a past service. The doxographer's focus is solely on a two-person relationship, and he uses the third Χάρις (along with the language of memory, μνήμη) to extend that relationship through time, instead of focusing on relational outreach, as did Aristotle.

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[208] These authors' heightened awareness of divine sponsorship of χάρις brings them into alignment with the divinely focussed arguments of Philo and Josephus in Chapter 2 and of Paul in Chapters 3 and 4.

[209] Griffin (2013) 23. Stobaeus' Peripatetic doxography is generally attributed to the first century B.C. Stoic philosopher, Arius Didymus, a companion and mentor to Augustus. A number of scholars, such as Görannson (1995) 203-218, have raised objections to that attribution. For my purposes, I have no reason to question the majority opinion, but in light of the ongoing debate surrounding his identity, I refer to Stobaeus' source in this section simply as 'the doxographer'.

> Χάριν δὲ λέγεσθαι τριχῶς, τὴν μὲν ὑπουργίαν ὠφελίμου αὐτοῦ ἐκείνου ἕνεκα, τὴν δ᾽ ἄμειψιν ὑπουργίας ὠφελίμου, τὴν δὲ μνήμην ὑπουργίας τοιαύτης. Διὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ τὰς δαίμονας τρεῖς ὁ βίος κατεφήμισε.[210]
>
> The word χάρις is used in three different ways. One refers to a service for the sake of that benefit itself, another to the exchange of beneficial service, and the third to the remembrance of such a service. And it is for this very reason that the goddesses are popularly reported to be three.

Like Aristotle, in this passage, the doxographer interprets the three Χάριτες as a metaphor for social χάρις. Unlike Aristotle, however, he does not reason *from* the worship of the Χάριτες *to* their social implications. Rather, in this case, the argument is in the reverse: because χάρις can refer to three distinct acts, the worshiping public (ὁ βίος) claims that there are three goddesses of the same name.[211] This is unusual among the authors considered in this thesis. Although only Dio Chrysostom and Strabo, treated below, make explicitly pietistic arguments concerning the Χάριτες' sponsorship of human χάρις, the doxographer here presents a more skeptical and pragmatic approach to the subject of the goddesses themselves than any of the other Graeco-Roman authors we encounter.

Even more interesting for my purposes, however, is the explicitly *popular* attribution the doxographer gives to the Χάριτες model for social χάρις. In the phrase ὁ βίος κατεφήμισε, 'the common people report', the doxographer attributes the popular belief in three Χάριτες to three different ways in which people think about χάρις. Given this fact, it is important to note that only one of the three kinds of χάρις mentioned here exemplifies the balanced reciprocity model so often assumed to dominate both popular and philosophical thought in the Graeco-Roman world: the second kind of χάρις, 'an exchange (ἄμειψις) of beneficial service' can be read as a transactional, *do ut des*

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[210] Stob. *Flor.* 7. 23.

[211] Cf. the similar use of the word βίος, referring to the uneducated public, in Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 11. 49.

arrangement.[212] In Plutarch and Seneca's protreptic arguments about χάρις, there is a strong suggestion that transactional, instrumental approaches to χάρις are a commonplace in their world. Stobaeus' doxographer, however, finds it completely plausible also to attribute to popular usage the Aristotelian definition of χάρις, 'a service for the sake of that benefit itself'.[213]

The third kind of χάρις, 'the remembrance of such a service' taps into the theme of longevity that Seneca in particular brought forward in his discussion of the ongoing nature of a ballgame. The importance of remembering χάρις through time and the identification of that remembrance as an act of χάρις itself appear repeatedly across popular writing on χάρις.[214] The *Sententiae* of Menander, widely copied as elementary school exercises from the Hellenistic period to at least the time of Stobaeus, are a case in point.[215] Menander insists, 'ἀχάριστος is he, whoever forgets that he has been treated

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[212] Though it need not necessarily, as I have tried to show in Seneca's expansion of the ballgame model in 1.2.3.

[213] For the textual uncertainty regarding this phrase, see Wachsmuth (1884) ii 143. For the Aristotelian definition, see *Rh.* 2. 7. 2., discussed above, Section 1.3.2. This evidence pushes against the view propounded, for instance, by Lampe (2016) 4: 'Only a few moralists such as Aristotle opposed a widespread culture of reciprocity, which did not promote selflessness'. Lampe sees 'later Christian voices' as primarily responsible for trying to 'unhinge' the selfishness of the reciprocity system, 'echoing the *rare* voices of moralists such as Democritus, Aristotle and Cleanthes *probably without knowing it*' (emphasis added). The purpose of this chapter is to show that concerns with the instrumentalisation of χάρις were more widely spread than previous Pauline scholars have allowed.

[214] See also Morgan (2007) 252-253 on the time-sensitivity of 'relational virtues' such as gratitude and generosity.

[215] Nervegna (2005) 118-124. Cf. Easterling (1995) 158; Morgan (1998) 42, n. 140, 120-125; Cribiore (2001) 7-8, 178-179. Stobaeus cites Menander about 330 times, Nervegna (2005) 123.

well'.[216] With characteristic pessimism, he complains, 'The one who has been saved is always naturally ἀχάριστος; as soon as he has been shown pity, the χάρις has died'.[217] Similarly: 'χάρις speedily grows old after a gift has been given'.[218] Forgetting the χάρις one has experienced at the hands of another is a form of instrumentalisation that has not yet come up in this chapter, but it will continue to be a prominent theme through the rest of this thesis.[219] Misapplications of the ballgame metaphor brought to the fore the problems of an instrumentalising giver—one who gives for the sake of some benefit to himself and invests the meaning of χάρις entirely in the value of the thing offered. Forgetfulness of a χάρις one has received is the mark of a recipient who also puts no value on the relationship the gift is meant to signify. The ἀχάριστος takes the gift or service and forgets the giver. While this involves no active harm to the benefactor, it is an act of injustice because it harms the relationship. Forgetfulness weakens relationship, as remembrance strengthens it. The ἀχάριστος recipient invests the value of the gift entirely in the immediate benefit he receives from it. Rescued from a dire situation, in Menander's example, he has received the benefit he needed, and sees no further place for χάρις. Instead of entering into a participative relationship with the benefactor, the forgetful

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[216] *S.* 12: Ἀχάριστος, ὅστις εὖ παθὼν ἀμνημονεῖ. Greek text and line numeration for the *Sententiae* are taken from Jäkel (1964).

[217] *S.* 42-43: Ἀεὶ δ' ὁ σωθείς ἐστιν ἀχάριστος φύσει· / ἅμ' ἠλέηται καὶ τέθνηκεν ἡ χάρις. Such pessimism about the natural human response to a χάρις of which one was in desperate need appears prominently in Paul's letter to the Romans, discussed in Section 4.2.

[218] *S.* 477: Μετὰ τὴν δόσιν τάχιστα γηράσκει χάρις.

[219] As we will see in Chapter 4 in particular, Paul too is primarily concerned with the instrumentalisation of divine χάρις by its ἀχάριστος recipient.

recipient shames the invitation implied by the initial χάρις and takes it merely as an instrument to his own welfare.[220]

It may be tempting to conflate this form of instrumentalisation with the injustice of reneging on a transactional agreement. Ingratitude, however, is never punishable by law, and it is important to note that neither Menander nor Stobaeus' doxographer stipulates that the responsive χάρις of memory must include a return of equal value.[221] There is certainly an implication that purposeful recollection of χάρις will include further responsive acts of χάρις, just as Seneca's ball-players keep returning the ball of χάρις for the sake of continuing the game. Ongoing gifts and other expressions of χάρις are required to keep the relationship from 'growing old', as Menander suggested.[222] Yet, as Konstan puts it, 'The economy of love and gratitude is not that of reciprocity, that is, the formal or semi-contractual relations that govern relations among members of a community. The latter is the territory of commercial exchange, at whatever level of social development'.[223] χάρις is meant to form and sustain participant relationships. 'Do not count the ἀχάριστος a friend', warns Menander.[224] The problem with instrumentalisation,

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[220] Interestingly, this is precisely what the misguided Theanor accused Epameinondas of in Section 1.2.2. There, however, the accusation was prompted by the recipient's rejection of the given *res* itself, and it was misapplied because the recipient was still recognising and honouring the intention of the giver and their ongoing relationship.

[221] Seneca devotes *Ben.* 3. 6-17 to the question of why ingratitude cannot and in fact must not be placed under the jurisdiction of the law: *beneficia* are both extremely hard to quantify and lose their meaning when offered (either initially or responsively) from a sense of mere duty or requirement. Cf. the assertion of Xen. *Hiero.* 7. 6 that enforced services ought not to be considered χάριτες.

[222] *Do quia dedisti*, the phrase coined by Jim (2014) 81, is particularly relevant here.

[223] Konstan (2018) 112-113.

[224] *S.* 49: Ἀνὴρ ἀχάριστος μὴ νομιζέσθω φίλος.

whether on the part of the giver or the recipient, is that it fails—and often actively harms —the relationship.

If Stobaeus' doxographer emphasises the importance of memory in an ongoing χάρις relationship, the first century A.D. Stoic anthologist Cornutus draws his reader's attention to the importance of prospective intentionality in such a relationship. Cornutus has been accused of producing 'nothing novel, nothing original';[225] but even those least interested in uncovering his unique offerings to Stoic philosophy recognise that his Ἐπιδρομή, a handbook for schoolchildren summarising traditional Greek theology, is an invaluable resource detailing widespread religious practices and beliefs within the Graeco-Roman world. Anscombe summarises the purpose of the Ἐπιδρομή: 'It is a school text which summarizes the theological beliefs handed down by Greek tradition, and aims to encourage correct behaviour and attitude towards the Gods by the avoidance of the two extremes of atheism and superstition'.[226] Cornutus' discussion of the Χάριτες is one in a series of etymological interpretations of divine names, which, Anscombe points out, act for Cornutus as 'one kind of rational explanation' for religious practices.[227] Unlike Aristotle or Stobaeus, Cornutus helpfully makes note of several different traditions concerning the Χάριτες metaphor for social χάρις:

> λέγονται δ' ὑφ' ὧν μὲν δύο εἶναι, ὑφ' ὧν δὲ τρεῖς· δύο μέν, ἐπειδὴ τοὺς μὲν προκατάρχειν δεῖ χάριτος, τοὺς δὲ ἀμείβεσθαι· τρεῖς δέ, ἐπειδὴ καλῶς ἔχει τὸν τετευχότα ἀμοιβῆς ἑστάναι πάλιν χαριστικῶς, ἵνα ἀκαταπαύστως τοῦτο γίνηται, τοιοῦτόν τι καὶ τῆς χορείας αὐτῶν ἐμφαινούσης. ἕτεροι δ' ἔφασαν μίαν μὲν εἶναι Χάριν τὴν περὶ τὸν ὑπουργοῦντά τι ὠφελίμως, ἑτέραν δὲ τὴν περὶ τὸν δεχόμενον

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[225] Bruck (1944) 102.

[226] Anscombe (2005) 3.

[227] Anscombe (2005) 3.

> τὴν ὑπουργίαν καὶ ἐπιτηροῦντα τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἀμοιβῆς, τρίτην δὲ τὴν περὶ τὸν ἀνθυπουργοῦντά τι καθ᾽ αὑτον ἐν καιρῷ.[228]
>
> Sometimes they say there are two, sometimes three: two, since it is necessary for some to initiate χάρις and for others to return; three, since it is good for the one having accomplished the return to be prepared to behave χαριστικῶς again,[229] in order that this may be ceaseless, something like what their circular dance displays. Still others have said that one Χάρις is concerned with rendering some helpful service, another with receiving the service and looking out for the right time for a return, and the third with rendering some helpful service in return at the right time, on one's own initiative.

The first interpretation Cornutus mentions, that of two metaphorical goddesses representing give and return, is attested nowhere else.[230] His second interpretation (the first in which there are three goddesses) echoes Aristotle's. In this scenario, after A has initiated χάρις towards B, and B has responded in kind, the third stage of the χάρις relationship occurs with a fresh initiation by B. While this could indicate the outward-looking motion that I suggested Aristotle refers to in Section 1.3.2. (after returning to A, B also gives to C), here it is more likely that Cornutus is thinking primarily of the

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[228] Cornutus Ἐπιδρομή 15; Greek text from Torres (2018) 16.

[229] Translators differ significantly on the meaning of τὸν τετευχότα ἀμοιβῆς ἑστάναι πάλιν χαριστικῶς. Nesselrath (2009) 51 interprets the phrase as referring to the one who has received the returned benefit, and who must then initiate a new benefit (A gives to B, who returns to A, who then gives again to B): 'Drei, weil es sich ziemt, dass der, der eine erwiderte Wohltat empfangen hat, wechselseitig zu neuen Wohltaten bereit steht'. How this interpretation would fit the three-part, circular dance, however, is unclear. It resonates more with the two-part, back-and-forth motion exemplified by the ballgame. Anscombe (2005) 124 interprets τὸν τετευχότα ἀμοιβῆς, as I do, as referring to the one in the position of response (B). Ignoring the πάλιν, however, causes Anscombe to collapse the three-part figure into two, even more clearly than Nesselrath: 'Three, because it is good that the one that has to respond is in a position to give freely, so that the process may continue without interruption'. I agree with Anscombe concerning to whom the phrase is referring, but I argue that a new act of χάρις is in view, as per the following discussion.

[230] Pausanias 9. 35. 1-3, however, attests an old tradition, in both Athens and Sparta, of worshipping only two Χάριτες, known as Cleta and Phaenna to the Spartans, Auxo and Hegemone to the Athenians. Although Cornutus does not dwell on the various names attributed to the goddesses, his interpretation of one initiating and one returning might fit well with the Athenian names, Hegemone ('Leader') and Auxo ('Bringer of Increase').

ongoing relationship between the two persons (A gives to B, who returns to A; then B gives a new χάρις to A, who in turn returns to B; then A initiates again, etc.). Cornutus is the first of the authors quoted in this chapter to mention the dance (χορεία) of the Χάριτες as an interpretive element of the image. The word χορεία has the specific connotation of a circular dance, and indeed, by the first century A.D., the standard representation of the Χάριτες portrayed them in a circular dance, rather than the linear one exemplified in Figure 1. In the circular dance, the bodies of the Χάριτες are turned inwards to face each other, with their arms gently draped over each others' shoulders as they revolve around a central point. Cornutus seems to have this inward-facing position in mind when he writes that the circling dance of the Χάριτες portrays 'something like' the process of give and return and giving again that allows a relationship of social χάρις to continue without pause (ἀκαταπαύστως).

The iconographic type of the Χάριτες' circular dance was copied from the Hellenistic period onward in nearly every artistic medium, including mosaics, wall paintings, statuary, reliefs, lamps, coins, and gems.[231] Two examples of the motif can be seen in the early imperial sculpture of Figure 2,[232] and the reverse of the second century A.D. coin from Aphrodisias in Figure 3.[233] Jane Francis offers a fascinating sketch of the

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[231] Sichtermann (1986) offers one of the most comprehensive lists of these iterations of the image.

[232] Image accessed 17 March 2021 from the website of the Piccolomini Library: https://operaduomo.siena.it/media/images/tre_grazie.jpg. The date of this statue is debated, but I follow Sichtermann (1986) 209 in considering it a work of the first or second century A.D. For discussion, see Schmidt (1925) 105; Deonna (1930) 277; Carli (1961) 59; Webbe (1986) 278.

[233] Description and date from MacDonald (1992) 90, Type 79. Cf. Imhoof-Blumer (1909) 202, 9. Image accessed 17 March 2021 from the collector's personal website: http://www.ancientcoinage.org/three-graces-coins.html.



Figure 2. *Tre Grazie*, marble statuary group, Siena, Libreria Piccolomini, 1st/2nd c. A.D.



Figure 3. Crispina/Χάριτες, two assaria, 178-183 A.D., probably 178, Aphrodisias.

development of the standard type from the Hellenistic through the Roman Imperial period.[234] She details the persistent tension in the motif between the circular three-dimensionality it is meant to portray and the inherent two-dimensionality of most of the media on which it is reproduced. Even free-standing statuary such as that in Figure 2 consistently seek to preserve the flatness of the lost original, likely either a painting or a relief sculpture.[235] This persistent choice of limitation, however, allows for the creative positioning of the goddesses such that each has her own unique pose, thereby indicating the different steps in their dance.[236] The lack of depth in the image is also masked by the outward curves of the flanking goddesses, who bear their weight on their outer legs, giving the group a hexagonal outline when viewed from the front and a 'strong internal rhythm'.[237] As in Figures 2 and 3, the central goddess is consistently portrayed with her back to the viewer, her weight generally on her right foot and her arms loosely embracing the outer shoulders of her companions.[238] Although the statue in Figure 2 is missing her head, in other examples of the motif she is always turned to face one or the other of her companions, as can clearly be seen on the coin in Figure 3. In line with Cornutus' narrower focus on the dynamics of a single χάρις relationship, the back-facing figure in

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[234] Francis (2002).

[235] Francis (2002) 180-181.

[236] Francis (2002) 194.

[237] Francis (2002) 186-187.

[238] Voicing the majority scholarly opinion, Francis (2002) 184 argues for the primacy of the frontal viewpoint in the freestanding iterations of this type: there is 'nothing in the motif to lead the eye around the sculpture to investigate other viewpoints, and its restricted depth means that it is not particularly interesting or comprehensible in side or oblique views'. For a different opinion, however, see Robertson (1975) 550.

this motif gives the group an internal centre for their circular dance and suggests a measure of exclusivity.

At the same time, however, given that this image is meant to portray a revolving, inward-facing dance, the two figures that flank the central goddess are portrayed at surprisingly outward-facing angles. The Χάριτες on the right and left of this type look out from their dance, with their heads tilted down towards their viewer,[239] and their outer arms outstretched. While their inner arms remain loosely draped over each other's shoulders, they are consistently portrayed with either flowers or food in their outer, outstretched hands, as seen in Figure 3. This gives the image an even stronger sense of invitation than that of the earlier relief sculpture in Figure 1, as in this case two of the three goddesses reach out to the viewer with gifts symbolising generosity and hospitality.[240] This offers a strong conceptual reason for why this type retained its flattened look through hundreds of years of interpretations. A fully three-dimensional representation of an inward-facing circular dance would mean none of the Χάριτες could face the viewer, as they would all be turned inwards, facing each other. While Figure 1 showed a human worshipper being literally drawn into the dance of the goddesses by the hand, in Figures 2 and 3 both the two outer goddesses are reaching out to their viewer to invite him in, with a gentler but no less compelling gesture. Their gifts symbolise both

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[239] On their current pedestal in the Piccolomini Library, they stand well above eye-level.

[240] The specific attributes the Χάριτες hold out—Francis (2002) 183 lists 'fruit, sheaves of wheat, flowers, or branches'—are also closely associated with nature and quite basic to the needs of human life. What the Χάριτες have to offer in the realm of social relationships, the image suggests, is equally basic and life-giving. Webbe (1986) 10 sees in the attributes reminders of the Χάριτες' oldest cultic traditions, in which the goddesses are worshiped as givers of 'fertile fields, abundant crops, healthy flocks, and social harmony'.

generosity and welcome, a fitting image of the invitation to participant relationship that an outstretched gift of χάρις enacts.

How then does Cornutus' account of social χάρις map onto this standard image of the three Χάριτες? First, Cornutus remarks that the Χάριτες' dance 'displays' (ἐμφαινούσης) something of the realities of social χάρις, and in fact, the composition of this iconographic type suggests just such a purpose, as it powerfully directs and focusses the gaze of the viewer in very specific ways. The two-dimensionality of the image directs his attention to the front, and the outstretched arms of the Χάριτες on either side provide a frame that draws his eyes to the centre. At the heart of the image is, ironically, the back of the central Χάρις, which suggests a measure of inward focus and exclusivity in their dance, although as pointed out in the previous paragraph, the enclosed centre is balanced by the outward opening up of the dance by the figures on either side. The relative lack of interest offered by the central figure's back further directs the eye to her outstretched arms on either side, with which she simultaneously embraces both of her companions. It is this double embrace that the standard image focalises.

This interpretation accords with the double response of a χάρις recipient that both of Cornutus' three-part interpretations emphasise. To return to the quotation from the Ἐπιδρομή, Cornutus begins by mentioning a two-part interpretation of the goddesses as representatives of give and return in a χάρις relationship. Then he offers two alternative three-part interpretations, both of which add a second responsive act on the part of the recipient of an initial gift of χάρις. In the first interpretation, the recipient finds a way to respond in kind to the service done to him, and then also prepares himself to offer a fresh initiation of χάρις that will continue the progress of that relationship internally, through time: 'It is good for the one having accomplished the return to be prepared to behave

χαριστικῶς again, in order that this may be ceaseless, something like what their circular dance displays'. The language of self-preparation (literally 'to have taken his stand', ἑστάναι) is notable, especially in comparison with Stobaeus. While the doxographer warns against forgetfulness as a form of instrumentalisation, Cornutus' account points to intentional preparation as the participative antidote to such instrumentalisation.[241] His second interpretation of the three Χάριτες makes this even clearer: 'One Χάρις is concerned with rendering some helpful service, another with receiving the service *and looking out for the right time for a return*, and the third with rendering some helpful service in return at the right time, on one's own initiative' (emphasis added).[242] Again, Cornutus details two distinct responses from a χάρις recipient, directed towards the original giver: the grateful acceptance that immediately begins seeking an opportunity to do good in return, and the eventual enactment of that intention 'at the right time, on one's own initiative'.[243]

If Cornutus has in mind the standard image of the Χάριτες exemplified in Figures 2 and 3, then his repeated emphasis on *one* initial gift and *two* acts of response can be

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[241] As discussed at length in the introduction, Holton (1994) 67 defines the 'participant stance' as '*readiness* to take particular reactive attitudes', in this case, χάρις (emphasis added).

[242] Konstan (2018) 50 warns against the tendency among modern readers to separate an 'interior sentiment' of grateful acceptance from 'benevolent intentions and, to the extent possible, acts in accord with those intentions'. The sharp modern distinctions between emotion, intention, and act would turn Cornutus' final interpretation of the Χάριτες into at least a four-part process of give, accept, intend, and return, rather than the integrated three-part process he describes.

[243] Note that even though this final act on the part of the recipient is explicitly a 'serving in return' (ἀνθυπουργοῦντα), it is also meant to be 'on one's own initiative' (καθ' αὑτον). Although Cornutus sees a place for 'χάρις in return for χάρις', he also thinks that response should have a sense of spontaneity about it—it is still not to be motivated by obligation, but rather from a desire to participate actively in an ongoing relationship.

seen to fit the focal points of the iconographic type. If the central Χάρις is seen as the giver, her two companions can be read as two acts of response, illustrating the final interpretation Cornutus mentions, in which each goddess embodies one of the three acts: 'One Χάρις is concerned with X…another with Y…and the third with Z'. His other interpretation, however, simply focusses on one person in the relationship—the original recipient, who both 'accomplishes the return' and 'behaves χαριστικῶς again'. It is this dual response that allows the dance to continue 'without pause'. This protreptic reading of the image would invite Cornutus' addressee to identify with the backward-facing Χάρις who plays her part in the dance with her arms stretched out in a double embrace. As noted above in the discussion of Figures 2 and 3, the outer Χάριτες reach out to welcome the viewer in; the natural position one is invited to take is that of the central Χάρις who is facing the same direction as the viewer. Perhaps this is what Cornutus means when he says the Χάριτες' dance 'displays something like' the two-part role of return and reinitiation that is required of those wishing to participate in an ongoing χάρις relationship.

In Aristotle's original explanation of the Χάριτες model for social χάρις, there was both an inward-facing element of participative response, and an outward-facing one, of initiation in other social relationships. The interpretations offered by Cornutus and Stobaeus' doxographer focus more on the internal dynamics of a single χάρις relationship. At the same time, however, the very act of drawing inspiration for social χάρις from an artistic depiction of the goddesses' interactions with each other suggests that every act or relationship of χάρις carries the potential to inspire further acts of χάρις external to that particular relationship. While participating in their own dance, the outer Χάριτες continually reach out to invite new participants in, and participation in that divine dance

means not only responding directly to the goddesses themselves, but even more, for these philosophically minded authors, turning to respond participatively to the other human beings with whom one is already in relationship. As the central Χάρις leans into the dance with her companions embraced in both arms, so participant χάρις invites a wholehearted response of recollection, intention and act—both seeking to return in kind the benefits we have received and looking out for every next opportunity to extend χάρις afresh.

1.3.4. Cultic Interpretations of the Χάριτες Model for χάρις

The interpretations of the Χάριτες I have discussed thus far do not engage extensively with the divine identity of the goddesses. It has lain in the background of the discussion, but none of the philosophers considered to this point has used the fact that the Χάριτες are goddesses as a meaningful element of his protreptic interpretation.[244] The two interpreters to whom I now turn express a more explicitly cultic perspective. Both the imperial orator Dio Chrysostom and the slightly earlier geographer and historian Strabo emphasise in their discussions of the dancing Χάριτες the fact that the image portrays divinities. Liebeschuetz reminds us:

> To dedicate a temple to an abstract deity was of course to make a public affirmation of the importance of that particular quality. But if cult has any meaning[,] the worship implied that a supernatural power was interested in a particular kind of behaviour, and would help to make it prevail among its

[244] Anscombe (2005) 182, however, suggests an emendation to the discussion of the Χάριτες in the Ἐπιδρομή that would attribute to Cornutus an explicit account of the exemplarity of divine χάρις for human beings.

> worshippers. Moreover, worship of moral abstractions could not logically limit itself to ritual: respect for the deity had to be shown in behaviour also.[245]

Dio Chrysostom and Strabo both capitalise on this connection between ethics and worship, contextualising individual interactions of χάρις within a broad social web of χάρις relationships, made up of both divine and human participants.[246] In particular, Dio Chrysostom in his Rhodian Oration and Strabo in his discussion of the Χάριτες' temple at Orchomenos both connect virtuous practices of χάρις between human beings to a recognition of the χάρις already extended to humanity by the Χάριτες themselves.[247]

In Book 9 of *Geographica*, Strabo turns from his description of Attica in Chapter 1 to a discussion of the history and geography of Boeotia in Chapter 2.[248] Following the order of cities mentioned in Homer's Catalogue of Ships (with some additions),[249] Strabo eventually comes to Orchomenos, renowned as one of the richest and most powerful cities of Bronze Age Greece. As proof of the city's early prosperity, Strabo cites an

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[245] Liebeschuetz (1979) 52. In his discussion of the development of Greek religion, Parker (2011) 78 makes a similar point but in reverse: 'All the forces that are powerful within human life are in a sense divine'. Cf. the account of gods giving their own names to the gifts they provide humanity by the Stoic Balbus, reported by Cicero at *De nat. deor.* 2. 62-64.

[246] Burkert (1985) 173 lists the Χάριτες among the collective divinities (like the *Horai*, the Muses, and the *Nereides*) who are often referred to not as gods (*theoi*), but as *daimones*, *amphipoloi* (attendants), or *propoloi* (forerunners). As such, they serve a mediatory role between mortals and the Olympians.

[247] Cf. Hunger (1959) 75: The Χάριτες 'bringen Göttern und Menschen Anmut, Schönheit und Festesfreude'. Also Pindar *Ol.* 14. 5-6: 'For by your aid all pleasant and delightful things are accomplished for mortals'.

[248] For a fairly recent collection of studies introducing a variety of themes in Strabo's *Geographica*, see Dueck et al. (2005).

[249] Hom. *Il.* 2. 511. Strabo discusses notable Boeotian cities not mentioned in the Catalogue of Ships in an interlude at 9. 2. 36-39.

anecdote about Eteocles, the mythical king of Orchomenos. In line with Pausanias,[250] Strabo attributes the foundation of the cult of the Χάριτες to Eteocles,[251] and his story exemplifies the understanding that it is the χάρις of the gods that enables successful χάρις in human relationships:

> Ἐτεοκλῆς δέ, τῶν βασιλευσάντων ἐν Ὀρχομενῷ τις, Χαρίτων ἱερὸν ἱδρυσάμενος πρῶτος ἀμφότερα ἐμφαίνει, καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ δύναμιν, ὃς εἴτ᾽ ἐν τῷ λαμβάνειν χάριτας εἴτ᾽ ἐν τῷ διδόναι κατορθῶν εἴτε καὶ ἀμφότερα, τὰς θεὰς ἐτίμησε ταύτας.[252]
>
> And Eteocles, one of the kings of Orchomenos, first displayed both wealth and power and founded a shrine to the Χάριτες. He honoured these goddesses because he prospered either in receiving expressions of χάρις or in giving them, or in both.

Eteocles, Strabo explains, chose to honour the Χάριτες out of gratitude for their help in his human χάρις relationships. Strabo's account is notable primarily because of his ready assumption that what must have prompted Eteocles to build the shrine was some sort of practical success either in giving or in receiving χάρις. This *post eventum* acknowledgement of the connection between divine-human χάρις and human-to-human χάρις accords with the assumption I have traced in Aristotle and his philosophical heirs that various χάρις relationships can and should strengthen and encourage each other; and in particular, Strabo evidences here the understanding that χάρις relationships with the divine foster—and in turn are strengthened by—good χάρις practices with other humans. There is an intimate connection in this picture between the two relational planes in which humans participate, the vertical and the horizontal. Good χάρις relationships between

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[250] Paus. 9. 35. 3. Cf. Theoc. *Id.* 16. 104 ff., where the Χάριτες are referred to as 'Eteocleian goddesses'.

[251] Schachter (1981) 140-144 summarises the archaeological and literary evidence for the cult of the Χάριτες at Orchomenos.

[252] Strab. 9. 2. 40. Greek text from Meineke (1877).

people are in themselves a gift of χάρις from the Χάριτες, and one's response, like that of Eteocles, should be to return that χάρις not only to the human participants involved but also to the goddesses who enabled it in the first place.[253] Like Stobaeus' doxographer, Strabo illustrates the importance of retrospective χάρις (μνῆμα), but in this case his exemplar looks back with gratitude on the χάρις offered and enabled specifically by the gods.[254] In Eteocles' case, his μνῆμα for χάρις also takes concrete form in the shrine he sets up in honour of the Χάριτες' beneficence.[255]

Dio Chrysostom takes this conception of the divine-human χάρις "web" a step further in his Rhodian Oration (Discourse 31), arguing that virtuous χάρις involves both a backward- and a forward-looking aspect: gratitude to the gods on the one hand for successful human χάρις relationships, and also participant readiness to return the χάρις of the gods by offering χάρις to other human beings in ways that honour them. At the time of Dio's writing, the city of Rhodes has become inundated with statues to civic

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[253] The theme of returning χάρις to the divine as well as to other human beings will prove important for Paul as well, as discussed especially in Chapter 3.

[254] Note that this evidence clearly does not support the assessment of Harrison (2003) 285: 'Paul's idea that God's grace animates and impels human beneficence is *highly unusual* in Graeco-Roman religion' (emphasis added). *Contra* Harrison, see Morgan (2007) 207-211, 311-313.

[255] Notably, the remainder of 9. 2. 40, which goes on to insist that Eteocles must have been successful in *both* giving and receiving expressions of χάρις, and could not simply have been successful in one or the other, is generally considered to be an interpolation by editors; cf. the discussion in Wallace (1979) 163, who calls the digression 'philosophical twaddle'. While I sympathise with the interpolator's point that it is difficult to conceive a situation in which success in giving χάριτας is separated from success in receiving them, it is worth noting that Strabo can envision a conceptual distinction between the two. It is an option in his mind for Eteocles to be expressing gratitude to the Χάριτες simply because his generosity to another successfully hit its mark. His memorial to the goddesses' beneficence does not conceptually require that he had received any benefits in return. That would fall under the third option Strabo mentions, 'or in both' (εἴτε καὶ ἀμφότερα).

benefactors.[256] According to Dio, the Rhodian government has gotten into the habit, whenever they feel the need to erect a new statue, instead to chisel the name off an old one and reassign it as a gift (or μνῆμα) of χάρις to the latest benefactor they wish to honour.[257] Dio dedicates Oration 31, the longest of his extant discourses, to explaining why this is a foolish and impious course of action. In his oration, Dio berates his Rhodian audience (either in person or perhaps rhetorically) for the shameful way in which they are treating benefactors.[258] He equates their *acharistic* behaviour towards their heroes from of old with impiety to the Χάριτες themselves:

> τί γάρ ἐστιν ἱερώτερον τιμῆς ἢ χάριτος; οὐκ ἴστε ὅτι καὶ θεὰς νομίζουσιν οἱ πλεῖστοι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὰς Χάριτας; ἐὰν οὖν τὰ ἀγάλματα αὐτῶν περικόπτῃ τις ἢ τοὺς βωμοὺς ἀνατρέπῃ, τοῦτον ἡγεῖσθε ἀσεβεῖν· ἐὰν δὲ αὐτὸ λυμήνηται καὶ διαφθείρῃ τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ τὰς θεὰς ὠνομάσθαι συμβέβηκε, μὴ ὃν δεῖ τρόπον χαριζόμενος, ἀλλ' ἀγεννῶς καὶ ἀνελευθέρως καὶ μετὰ τέχνης τοῖς εὐεργέταις ἀχαριστῶν, αὐτὸν φρονεῖν φήσομεν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων εἶναι συνετώτερον;[259]
>
> For what is more holy than honour or χάρις? Do you not realise that the vast majority of people think of the Χάριτες as goddesses? So if anyone mutilates their statues or overturns their altars, you too would deem this man to have committed sacrilege; but if he mistreats or destroys the very thing from which these goddesses have taken their name, performing χάρις in a way that is not right, but rather ignobly, illiberally, and craftily treating benefactors with

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[256] Pliny the Elder 34. 17 puts the number of the statues at this time at 3000.

[257] Jones (1978) 32-34 explores the implications of the fact that most of the statues in question would have originally been erected in honour of ancient Rhodians themselves, whereas the contemporary benefactors to whom their statues were being reassigned would almost all have been Romans. He concludes, however, that 'the message of the *Rhodian* is not primarily political, but ethical'. Clerc (1915) 197 speculates that some of the old heroes might even have been divinised at one time, remarking, 'Si tel a été le cas, le scandale est à son comble'.

[258] Cohoon's introduction to his translation of the discourse, Cohoon and Crosby (1940) 2-5, outlines the debate as to whether Dio ever gave this speech in person. Most interpreters assume that Dio did present at least the first half of the oration to the Rhodians himself. Cf. Jones (1978) 26, 28; Salmeri (2000) 82, n. 140; Atwill (2014) 456.

[259] DioChr. *Or.* 31. 37. Greek text from Cohoon and Crosby (1940).

> ἀχαριστία, are we to say that this man is being sensible and is more intelligent than others?

Ending with this deeply ironic question, Dio implies in this passage that the Rhodians' shameful treatment of those who have offered them human χάρις is effectively an act of sacrilege against the χάρις of the Χάριτες. His logic rests on the idea that the Χάριτες have a vested interest in the social actions with which they share a name. In sharp contrast to Strabo's pious example of Eteocles, the Rhodians are erasing μνήματα of χάρις—an act Dio equates with temple desecration. Eteocles demonstrated the correct understanding of the interconnectedness between divine and human χάρις, but Dio's Rhodian audience exemplify the gross impiety that results when one does not acknowledge the gods' interest in virtuous expressions of human χάρις. For both Strabo and Dio, the virtuous human being recognises that any experience of χάρις offers an opportunity for participation not only in a single, inter-human relationship, but also in a complex web of relationships with both other human beings and the divine. Strabo's Eteocles returned χάρις to the Χάριτες as a μνῆμα for the successful interactions of human χάρις they enabled, and Dio urges the Rhodians to continue treating other humans with responsive χάρις precisely because the goddesses themselves also participate in interactions of apparently human-to-human χάρις.

1.3.5. Seneca on the Inadequacy of the Dancing Χάριτες Model

Somewhat surprisingly for a Stoic, when Seneca turns his attention to the Χάριτες at the opening of *De beneficiis*, he expresses discontent with previous ethicising interpretations of the goddesses. Jakob Zeyl compares his hesitation with that of Plato.[260]

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[260] Zeyl (1974) 108.

Ilaria Ramelli interprets Seneca as participating primarily in an internal Stoic debate about the protreptic usefulness of allegory and etymology.[261] In particular, Seneca questions the efficacy of interpretations of the Χάριτες that rely on religious motivations to inspire ethical χάρις behaviour. Seneca quotes Chrysippus as his primary example of other philosophers who attempt to motivate virtuous practices of χάρις by appealing to the divinity of the Χάριτες[262]:

> Ad hanc honestissimam contentionem beneficiis beneficia vincendi sic nos adhortatur Chrysippus, ut dicat verendum esse, ne, quia Charites Iovis filiae sunt, parum se grate gerere sacrilegium sit et tam bellis puellis fiat iniuria![263]
>
> To this most honorable competition of conquering *beneficia* with *beneficia* Chrysippus calls us: he urges us to acknowledge that, since the *Charites* are the daughters of Jupiter, insufficient expressions of *gratia* are a sacrilege and act of injury to such beautiful girls!

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[261] Ramelli (2003) 90-93. Her introduction to Cornutus' Ἐπιδρομή particularly contrasts Seneca and Cornutus, for instance in their differing opinions on the usefulness of onomastic interpretations of the gods: 'Non si possono desumere, per Seneca, i precetti morali dagli appellativi degli dèi: è ridicolo e porta ad assurdi—eppure, è proprio quello che l'allegoresi stoica faceva, dall'Antica Stoa ai contemporanei di Seneca come Cornuto: nei nomi delle divinità, come negli altri particolari del mito, credeva nascosta la verità, sia quella fisico-cosmologica sia quella etica'.

[262] Wind (1967) 34-35 speculates that the first detailed allegory of the Graces' appearance may have come not from Chrysippus, but rather from the philosopher which Carneades reportedly claimed inspired the vast majority of Chrysippus' writings: Epicurus. Diogenes Laërtius reports that 'Carneades called Chrysippus the literary parasite of Epicurus because he wrote on every subject that Epicurus had treated before him' (*Vitae* 10. 26, quoted by Wind). Wind suggests that Epicurus' lost work Περὶ δώρων καὶ χάριτος, which Diogenes Laërtius attributes to him at *Vitae* 10. 28, may have included the sort of thorough, one-to-one allegory that could have inspired Chrysippus. In support of this idea, Zeyl (1974) 112 remarks: 'If the fact that Plutarch's reference to the work of Epicurus [*Mor.* 778c] is followed by a brief discussion of the Graces, is significant, it may well be that Epicurus too allegorized the Graces'.

[263] Sen. *Ben.* 1. 4. 4. Up to this point, Seneca has referred to the goddesses by their Latin name, *Gratiae* (1. 3. 2; 1. 3. 9), but here, perhaps because he is alluding to the work of Chrysippus, he uses their Greek name.

Although Seneca cites Chrysippus for this teaching, the reference to sacrilege echoes Dio Chrysostom's argument in Section 1. 3. 4. Cornutus also draws attention to the ethical imperative implied by the traditional association of the Χάριτες with Zeus.[264] In what follows the passage quoted here, Seneca scoffs at what he considers to be such weak attempts at inspiring virtuous behaviour. He calls such reasoning *ineptiae poetis*, *levis ac fabulosus sermo*, *anilia argumenta*.[265] Seneca also bemoans the extensive treatment by Chrysippus of such questions as why there are three goddesses, why they are sisters, why they hold hands, why they smile, their age, virginity, clothing, names, etc. Chrysippus apparently found protreptic interpretations for each of these aspects of the Χάριτες' most famous depictions, and Seneca takes the time to mention some of them.[266] The goddesses hold hands in their dance, he suggests, 'because *beneficia* are passed in order from hand to hand, and yet they still return to the giver, and the whole thing is lost if there is an interruption, since it is most beautiful when the whole process coheres and maintains the alternation'.[267] The Χάριτες smile, 'just as is typical for those who give and receive *beneficia*'.[268] They are young, 'because the memory of *beneficia* should not grow old'; and they are virgins, 'because *beneficia* are pure and genuine and considered holy by

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[264] Cornutus Ἐπιδρομή 15.

[265] Sen. *Ben.* 1. 4. 5-6.

[266] At least some of the teachings about the Χάριτες that Seneca cites here seem to have come from the so-called middle Stoic, Hecato of Rhodes, cf. *Ben.* 1. 3. 9. See Zeyl (1974) 152-153 for a summary of the debate as to which treatise of Hecato Seneca might be consulting.

[267] *Ben.* 1. 3. 4.

[268] *Ben.* 1. 3. 5.

all'.[269] Seneca complains about the multiplicity of ancient onomastic traditions for the Χάριτες, citing especially the varying accounts given both by Homer and by Hesiod, and he concludes that poets make up names purely for aesthetic reasons and should not be taken seriously as a source of didactic inspiration.[270] Finally, Seneca points out that although the Χάριτες are usually portrayed very lightly clad, 'for in benefits there should be no bondage or rigidity', yet some unnamed poet 'portrays them belted and in thick Phrygian attire'.[271] Although Seneca is dismissive about the effectiveness of all these iconographic elements for the purpose of ethical instruction, he finds the traditions sufficiently interesting to outline and engage with them, at least briefly, at the start of his treatise. The reasons for his apparently tongue-in-cheek dismissal are worthy of consideration.

Of all the interpretive elements Seneca lists in *Ben.* 1. 3. 2, he spends the most time discussing the question of the Χάριτες' number. He offers two interpretive traditions in regards to this question:

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[269] *Ben.* 1. 3. 5. Cf. Philo's reference to God's 'virgin χάρις' at *Mut.* 53. Comparing Philo and Seneca, Winston (1992) 548 remarks: 'The virgin nature of the graces signifies that the benefits are undefiled by ulterior objectives'.

[270] *Ben.* 1. 3. 6-10. Zeyl (1974) 119-120 draws attention to the distinction Seneca makes between 'elements which to Seneca have no relevance (true names, and association with other deities)', and 'those aspects which Seneca allows to be somewhat relevant', but 'for someone else' to discuss. The latter category includes the visual elements of Χάριτες iconography, as opposed to the more esoteric questions of their names and genealogy.

[271] *Ben.* 1. 3. 5; 1. 3. 7. Seneca moves fluidly in this discussion between poetic, philosophical, painted, and sculpted depictions of the goddesses. There has been significant speculation among scholars as to which specific works he refers to. However, as Zeyl (1974) 143 suggests, Seneca is likely 'not thinking of a specific representation of the Graces, but in general of types of representations or descriptions'. As attested by Pausanias 9. 35. 6-7 and by the dating of extant depictions (such as Figures 1-3), portrayals of the Χάριτες fully clothed are from well before the Hellenistic period, whereas nude and semi-nude depictions were standard by the Roman era.

> Alii quidem videri volunt unam esse, quae det beneficium, alteram, quae accipiat, tertiam, quae reddat; alii tria beneficorum esse genera, promerentium, reddentium, simul accipientium reddentiumque. Sed utrumlibet ex istis iudica verum; quid ista nos scientia iuvat?[272]
>
> Some are ready to understand that one gives the *beneficium*, another receives, and the third returns; others, that the three are three kinds of benefactors, those who initiate, those who return, and those who simultaneously receive and return.[273] But judge whichever you please to be true; what good is this piece of knowledge going to do us?

Griffin points out that the entire structure of *De beneficiis* echoes the first of these two interpretations, in which the Χάριτες represent giving, receiving, and returning.[274] The second tradition that Seneca references here is not attested elsewhere in this form. It is remarkable in at least two respects: one, as it is the only extant interpretation of the goddesses that identifies them as specific people in human relationships, namely, 'three kinds of benefactors'; and two, as it places those people in distinct χάρις relationships rather than seeing them integrated in a cyclical or linear whole as do the other interpretations included in this chapter.[275] Scholars tend to stumble over the question how Seneca fits this interpretation with the most common visual representations of the

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[272] *Ben.* 1. 3. 3-4.

[273] For *promereri* as a synonym for *beneficium dare*, see Zeyl (1974) 122.

[274] Griffin (2013) 178-179. This interpretation most closely aligns with Cornutus' third interpretation of the trope, discussed in detail in Section 1.3.3.

[275] It seems odd that Barclay (2015) 46, n. 126 should note only one of the two optional interpretations Seneca offers, suggesting that Seneca's 'use of the image of the three Graces' is limited to a simple identification of the goddesses with 'the giving, the receiving, and the returning of the gift'. Perhaps it is telling that Barclay sees in this interpretation 'exactly the same three "moments" of the gift identified by Mauss'.

Χάριτες such as those in Figures 1-3.[276] Zeyl suggests that part of Seneca's point may be deliberately to confuse, as 'it would bolster his thesis that an allegory worked out in such detail is useless knowledge'.[277] Additionally, Seneca is only speaking at this point about the fact that there are typically three goddesses in the group; in these two interpretations of their number, he makes no direct reference to their visual representation.

For my purposes, it is most important to note that Seneca only mentions these two interpretations in order immediately to reject them: 'Judge whichever you please to be true; what good is this piece of knowledge going to do us?' In Seneca's choice to engage with these interpretations that he claims are so useless, Zeyl and Ramelli both see an opportunity to 'disallow the claim of poetry' and traditional religion to motivate true virtue.[278] Rather than getting bogged down in a minute scrutiny of the details of a work of art, Seneca presses his reader to move right on to practical applications and examples of what giving and receiving *beneficia* should look like in everyday life. Seneca entirely abandons the Χάριτες' image after his initial description of it in *De beneficiis* Book 1. This is particularly telling, as it seems Chrysippus' whole work on χάρις may have been focussed entirely on interpretations of the different aspects of the image.[279] Seneca's

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[276] The interpretation of Zeyl (1974) 123 does the best job of reconciling this confusing account with the standard cyclical trope. Cooper and Procopé (1995) 197 dismiss both of Seneca's interpretations as impossible to reconcile with actual artistic presentations of the goddesses. Griffin (2013) 179-180 argues that the central point of all philosophical interpretations of the Χάριτες is not 'their number and their individual appearance', but rather 'that they are indissolubly linked, as part of a continuous process'. This singular emphasis works for the majority of interpretations considered in this section, but it does not account for Seneca's second interpretation, under consideration here.

[277] Zeyl (1974) 124.

[278] Zeyl (1974) 118; Ramelli (2003) 90-92.

[279] Zeyl (1974) 151 makes the remarkable observation that there is no evidence 'that Chrysippus intended to treat the topic as an ethical one' at all, other than the fact that Seneca certainly 'expected more ethical material' from him.

concern with previous interpretations of the dancing Χάριτες lies in what he considers to be their ineffectiveness at actually inspiring virtuous participation in χάρις relationships.[280] None of Chrysippus' 'too sharply pointed wit' actually encourages men and women to engage well in social χάρις.[281] In the case of Chrysippus' allegory, the image has superseded the behaviour it is meant to represent—the instrument has become the end. Chrysippus' love of detailed allegory, Seneca insists, 'is often bent and turned back upon itself. Even when he appears to be doing something, he pricks at the problem rather than punching right through'.[282]

In the time that he does devote to discussing the Χάριτες as a model of χάρις, Seneca tacitly acknowledges that the dancing goddesses offer something of a pedagogical tool for understanding χάρις in human society. They can easily be used to connect χάρις/ *beneficia* to the themes of joy, memory, and ongoing participation in relationship—themes that reappear throughout *De beneficiis* and are echoed across numerous other treatments of χάρις, as this chapter has already mentioned. For Seneca, however, too great a concern for the precise details of the image reflects a misalignment of priorities: the image becomes more important than the relationship it is meant to inspire, and cleverness in interpretation becomes more important than χάρις itself, 'the topic which more than any other binds together human society'.[283] Instead of the observation or experience of

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[280] Batinski (1993) argues that allegorical interpretations are also problematic for Seneca because there is never just one definitive way an image can be interpreted. Poets and artists sometimes say things or create images purely for the sake of aesthetics rather than in an attempt to portray truth. Nevertheless, Seneca's objection is notable for what it indicates about the sheer variety in how people were thinking about the image of the Χάριτες in his time.

[281] Sen. *Ben.* 1. 4. 1.

[282] Sen. *Ben.* 1. 4. 1.

[283] Sen. *Ben.* 1. 4. 2.

one χάρις relationship inspiring participation in another, the Chrysippan observer of the Χάριτες is allowed to remain passive and may even be held back from active participation in relationships by the distraction of 'overly clever' aesthetic interpretations. For this reason, at the very start of his treatise, Seneca models for his reader a scepticism towards mere intellectual exercises that he will later attribute to his increasingly competent student, Liberalis.[284] Images and exercises are useful to a point, but Seneca's priority throughout his work is effective dialectic training for the sake of active, virtuous engagement in the relationships of everyday life.

For Aristotle, Seneca, and apparently many others, the image of the dancing Χάριτες offers seemingly endless fodder for discussions of what constitutes good χάρις practices. Seneca uniquely shows a concern with the potential distraction of the image as a mere intellectual curiosity. Seneca clearly has some interest in the multiplicity of ways that the trope has been or can be interpreted, but his hesitancy regarding its usefulness as a pedagogical tool manifests the same goal shared by the other ethicists considered in this chapter. Both enthusiastic and hesitant philosophical discussions of the Χάριτες' dance consistently reaffirm that the study of an aesthetic representation of χάρις should inspire ongoing participation in the web of χάρις relationships that surround each individual.

1.4. Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom on the Triangulation of χάρις

Thus far in this chapter, I have considered two models for an ongoing participant relationship of social χάρις—the ballgame and the dance of the Χάριτες. Each of these models, in its own way, pushes back against an instrumentalising reading of χάρις as merely an expression of balanced reciprocity. Rather, χάρις in these contexts looks, first,

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[284] Sen. *Ben.* 5. 12. 1-2.

both backwards and forwards along a timeline of interaction, responding to another human being with gratitude for past χάρις and anticipating ways in which one might do the other some future χάρις as a means of fostering their ongoing relationship. For more religiously minded authors, χάρις also looks upwards, to the gods who enable it in human society; pious human beings seek to honour the gods in return for their χάρις by means of virtuous interactions with other humans and respectful worship.[285] Finally, χάρις also looks both inward and outward, to consider the means by which any individual relationship might intersect with others. χάρις in one interaction should inspire it in others; the dance or ballgame is never meant to be an exclusive one-to-one relationship but is always looking outwards to invite other participants in, as time and practicalities allow.[286]

This harmonious picture of different χάρις relationships supporting and enabling one another is attractive. In everyday practice, however, χάρις relationships often prove complicated. In the remainder of this chapter, Dio Chrysostom and Plutarch engage directly with the question, how one should respond when participation in one χάρις relationship seems to require instrumentalisation in another. Dio deals with this issue in his Rhodian Oration, and Plutarch in his essay *De fraterno amore*. As explained in Section 1.3.4., Dio criticises the Rhodian practice of reassigning memorial statues of their numerous benefactors. In this case, the Rhodians' perception of the return they owe one benefactor conflicts with the return they ought to be making to another. Dio insists that, without exception, one must not take away χάρις from one benefactor in order to give it to

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[285] These two ways in which humans return the χάρις of the divine are picked up and expounded by Philo in the passages I discuss in Section 2.2.

[286] Tecmessa's beautiful line in Soph. *Aj.* 522, 'χάρις is always giving birth to χάρις', need not apply only within the context of a single relationship.

another. The Rhodians must instead find a way of harmonising their various χάρις relationships. Plutarch's essay on brotherly love also considers apparently competing claims of χάρις; like Dio, Plutarch urges his reader to recognise the strength of supportive, rather than competitive, χάρις relationships within a given social group. In both familial and civic contexts, Plutarch articulates an understanding of participant χάρις that triangulates the bonds of potentially competitive relationships. Each member of any given society is surrounded by a web of potential χάρις relationships calling for his participation. In many cases, it is tempting to see those different relational bonds as competitive with one another, and to end up instrumentalising one for the sake of participating in another whenever a conflict arises. Instead, Plutarch insists, true χάρις relationships always form supportive "triangles", such that virtuous participation in one fuels virtuous participation in another. Any apparent conflict should be able to be resolved without resorting to instrumentalisation of a χάρις partner.

In the passage I examined in Section 1.3.4., Dio Chrysostom's argument focussed on the gods' interest in virtuous human χάρις practices and the way in which the Rhodians' dishonourable treatment of benefactors shames the Χάριτες themselves. Earlier in his speech, however, Dio rebukes the Rhodians directly for the blatant ἀχαριστία they are showing to the ancient benefactors whose honorary statues they are reassigning.[287] Dio imagines the Rhodians protesting that they must return the χάρις of each of their benefactors by whatever means they have available at any given time.[288] Dio agrees, to an extent: 'It would indeed be utterly absurd to ignore those who are worthy of honour and

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[287] The Rhodians are behaving in a way that exemplifies the disregard alluded to by Menander, *S.* 533: Νικᾷ παλαιὰς χάριτας ἡ νέα χάρις, 'A new χάρις triumphs over old expressions of χάρις'.

[288] DioChr. *Or.* 31. 26.

provide them with no return for their good deeds'.[289] This very fact, however, leads him to insist that reneging on a memorial of previous χάρις is in fact a far worse act of instrumentalisation than would be running the risk of not honouring a recent benefactor in exactly the same way.[290] The Rhodians are purposefully erasing their own memory of the good deeds their earliest benefactors did them—deeds which they or their ancestors originally chose to commemorate in these honourary statues.[291] Instead of cultivating grateful μνήματα in response to the goodwill of those benefactors, the Rhodians are treating them with shame and taking their good deeds entirely for granted. Jones highlights the shocking injustice of their actions:

> The mutilation or demolition of a statue symbolized the disgrace of a ruler or a private citizen, as did the erasure of his name from public monuments; Dio infers that the Rhodians are inflicting a shame on their benefactors which more than canceled the original honor.[292]

When the Rhodians claim that the χάρις they have recently experienced requires this instrumentalisation of their previous χάρις relationship, Dio accuses them of blatant self-interest:

> καίτοι μὰ τὸν Δία καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς οὐδ' εἰ τὴν ἀνωτάτην χάριν ὑμῖν ἔξειν ἔμελλον οἱ δοκοῦντες νῦν τῶν εἰκόνων τυγχάνειν καὶ σφόδρα ἐπαινέσειν τὸν δῆμον, οὐδ' οὕτως ἐχρῆν αὐτὸ γίγνεσθαι. τὸ γὰρ μόνον ζητεῖν ἐξ ὧν ἄν τις ἀρέσαι τινὰ

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[289] DioChr. *Or.* 31. 27.

[290] DioChr. *Or.* 31. 26-31. This point seems even more self-evident in light of the fact that, as Jones (2013) 28-29 points out, 'Because statues were costly, it was polite for the honorand or his family to assume the expense, or to accept a lesser honor'. Jones sees this cultural understanding behind Dio's assurance to the Rhodians in *Or.* 31. 108-110 that their recent benefactors will be perfectly satisfied with a number of other expressions of gratitude besides honorary statues, perhaps 'presents or a generous reception, or if they are "of the better kind" with an invitation to the public table'.

[291] For a recent collection of essays representing the major subcategories of ancient memory studies, see Mawford and Ntanou (2021). At present, memory is an understudied theme in relation to χάρις.

[292] Jones (2013) 29.

> ποιήσας καὶ προσαγάγοιτο, εἰ δ’ ἄλλον ὃν οὐ προσῆκεν ἀδικήσει τοῦτο ποιῶν ἢ καθόλου τι μὴ δέον πράξει μὴ σκοπεῖν, οὔτε μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς ἐλευθέρων ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπων οὔτε μετρίων τὸ ἦθος.[293]
>
> However, by Zeus and the gods, even if those who now think they are getting statues are about to feel the highest χάρις towards you and will praise your people most zealously, not even if that is the case would it be right to do this thing. For if you simply try to do whatever will please someone and ingratiate him to yourself, and do not even consider whether you might be wronging someone else whom you oughtn’t—or whether you will be doing anything more generally that you shouldn’t—by the gods, these are not the actions of a free man or one of temperate character!

In this passage, Dio insists that no matter how much the Rhodians’ offer of a statue would mean to their latest benefactor, it is not worth the ἀχαριστία they are committing towards those whose statues they are defacing. In Section 1.2.4., we saw Seneca censure Alexander the Great for his extravagance in giving χάρις without regard to the needs or desires of his recipients. Here, Dio adds another concern one must keep in mind in determining when and how to offer gifts of χάρις: a truly virtuous act of χάρις also takes care not to harm the interests of any third parties with whom one also shares a bond of χάρις. In fact, if an act of χάρις towards one party in some way harms or dishonours another, Dio insists that this act is not one of true χάρις but rather an attempt to instrumentalise the relationship for the sake of personal gain:

> οὐδεὶς γὰρ οὐδὲ τῶν πάνυ πονηρῶν προαιρεῖταί τι φαῦλον, ὃ μὴ συμφέρειν ἑαυτῷ νομίζει πρὸς τὸ παρόν, ἀλλ’ ἔστιν αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἡ μοχθηρία τὸ κέρδους ἕνεκα καὶ χρείας μηδενὸς αἰσχροῦ μηδὲ ἀδίκου πράγματος ἐπιστρέφεσθαι μηδὲ φροντίζειν ποῖον τὸ γιγνόμενον, ἀλλὰ μόνον εἰ λυσιτελές. οὐκοῦν ὁ τὸν μὲν παρόντα θεραπεύων, ὀλιγωρῶν δὲ τοῦ θᾶττον φίλου, καὶ τῆς μὲν γεγενημένης χρείας ἐπιλελησμένος, τὴν δ’ ἐλπιζομένην ὠφέλειαν περὶ πλείστου ποιούμενος, ἆρ’ οὐκ ἴστε ἥστινος τυγχάνει προσηγορίας; οὐ κόλαξ ὁ τοιοῦτος ὀνομάζεται παρὰ πᾶσιν; οὐκ ἀγεννής, οὐκ ἄπιστος δοκεῖ;[294]

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[293] DioChr. *Or.* 31. 32.

[294] DioChr. *Or.* 31. 32-33.

> For no one, not even the wickedest, decides to commit some base act, unless he thinks that it will be of some advantage to himself in the moment; for it is the essence of depravity itself to shrink from no shameful or unjust deed, on account of profit and advantage, and to think nothing of the nature of the act, but only of whether it is profitable. Therefore whoever fawns over the person who is present and treats his former friend with contempt, having forgotten the service done him and placing the highest importance upon the hoped-for advantage—do you not know the name that he is given? Is such a man not called a parasite by all? Is he not considered ignoble, a man not to be trusted?

Dio reaffirms in this passage the crucial importance of memory in χάρις interactions. Throughout his speech, he scoffs at the idea that the ancient benefactors are long since dead and forgotten, and therefore no χάρις remains due them. On the contrary, the vast majority of the great deeds done for Rhodes in the past continue to offer ongoing blessing to the Rhodians of the present.[295] Memory is in fact the only χάρις left to the Rhodians to offer their heroes of old.[296] In Dio's estimation, the only reason one would deny χάρις to an old benefactor in favour of a new one is simple profit-seeking.[297] Current benefactors may yet be persuaded to offer further expressions of χάρις—they may find lavish returns of χάρις ingratiating and even feel obligated to show their generosity again. No one is fooled by this kind of scam, Dio warns. The Rhodians should not fool themselves. It is

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[295] Cf. DioChr. *Or.* 31. 71-78, especially 78: 'For you will never be able to prove that this city has honoured them for a longer time than their good deeds have benefited the city'.

[296] Bailey (2015) 48 comments: 'Benefactions, properly made, are lasting and continual reminders to the *polis* of the euergetist's status and generosity'. μνήματα of such benefactions should be similarly long-lasting.

[297] Note the transactional language of κέρδους, 'profit', and λυσιτελές, 'paying the bills'.

imperative that they find some other means of returning their current benefactors' χάρις—one that does not include the desecration of their previous μνήματα of χάρις.[298]

For a discussion of interpersonal χάρις relations, Dio's public oration to the Rhodians may at first appear less fitting than Plutarch's essay on family ethics. Dio, however, insists from the start of his discourse that there is an important parallel between public and private acts of χάρις, and that the guidelines for virtuous behaviour in individual χάρις relationships ought to be applied to civic χάρις practices as well.[299] Conversely, in *De fraterno amore*, Plutarch draws on the explicitly civic metaphor of the demagogue in order to illustrate the virtuous means of resolving conflicts within an individual family. Both Dio and Plutarch see a deep continuity between private and civic expressions of virtue.[300] To divorce the two spheres from one another is to miss the full picture of the encompassing χάρις web within which all of the authors discussed in this chapter see each individual human actor.[301]

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[298] Jones (2013) 34-35 identifies a somewhat politically motivated warning in this argument: 'Romans as well as Greeks wished to see the traditions of Hellenism maintained and deplored those modern Greeks who stooped to unworthy and unnecessary flattery. There is no doubt that Dio's Hellenism is sincere; but…the kind of Hellenism he preaches is one that does not conflict with Roman supremacy, but is approved by the Romans'.

[299] DioChr. *Or.* 31. 5-7. Dio's speech to the Council of Apameia includes a passage, *Or.* 41. 5-6, in which he compares his gratitude for his citizenship in Apameia to that of an adopted child towards those who are 'his parents by χάρις'.

[300] Stadter (2011) 244-246 illustrates this continuity in Plutarch's thought by tracing references to φιλονικία, 'contentiousness', across the *Moralia*. Whether it is between young children, grown men, friends, or statesmen, φιλονικία is 'uniformly negative' for Plutarch. 'It can arise in childhood from the smallest differences and grow to implacable hatred', and politicians 'should be wary especially of private quarrels, which (like the childhood quarrels of brothers) can flare up into public fights'.

[301] As Harrison (2014) 94 points out, Plutarch shares with early Christian pedagogues the conviction that education is 'primarily a process of formation of character', which will influence one's decisions in every sphere of life, 'rather than the acquiring of knowledge', compartmentalised into discrete categories.

Early in his treatise, Plutarch draws a tripartite picture of the χάρις relationships that exist within the context of a family. In many ways, his picture parallels the cultic understanding of χάρις examined in Section 1.3.4. Just as an act of χάρις towards a fellow human being may also be seen as a return of χάρις to the divine patrons of human relationships, so within a family, χάρις towards a brother is also seen by one's parents as χάρις towards themselves:

> τίς οὖν ἐστι παρὰ παίδων γονεῦσιν ἢ πρᾶξις ἢ χάρις ἢ διάθεσις μᾶλλον εὐφραίνειν δυναμένη τῆς πρὸς ἀδελφὸν εὐνοίας βεβαίου; καὶ φιλίας;[302]
>
> So then, what action or χάρις or disposition can children show their parents that is able to give more pleasure than steadfast goodwill—and friendship—towards a brother?

Plutarch draws here on the widespread assumption that children are automatically born into a χάρις relationship with their parents, in which they are simply recipients to begin with and will never be able to make an equal return.[303] In discussion of this theme as it shows up in Stobaeus' *Florilegium*, James Harrison notes the religious sensibility that undergirds it:

> Whilst the children are totally incapable of ever properly reciprocating parental benefactions, nonetheless it is a mark of their piety that they do. This emphasis on perpetuity probably stems from the status that parents have as earthly images of the heavenly gods.[304]

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[302] Plut. *Mor*. 480a.

[303] See Aristotle *Pol.* 7. 14. 2; DioChr. *Or.* 12. 42-43; Plut. *Mor*. 497b; Iamblichus *Vit. Pyth.* 38; Stob. *Flor.* 3. 52. In Plut. *Cat. Ma.* 20. 5-7, Cato the Elder extends this idea by refusing to allow his son to be educated even by a trusted slave and thereby 'owe χάρις to the slave for such a priceless thing as his education'. Instead, the statesmen takes the responsibility for the boy's training upon himself, strengthening the χάρις bond between the father and son yet further, 'as he thought right'.

[304] Harrison (2003) 181.

The χάρις of the gods invites ongoing participation via worship and virtuous living (and could never be repaid in a transactional sense). Similarly, children should never think themselves finished expressing gratitude to their parents for the gift of life they have received from them (not to mention years of care and love, ideally). For Plutarch, in particular, of all the ways in which a child might return χάρις to his parents, 'steadfast goodwill' towards a brother will give them the most pleasure.

What exactly Plutarch envisions by that phrase, 'steadfast goodwill', he explains just a few paragraphs later:

> πολλοὶ καταδημαγωγοῦσι τοὺς ἀδελφούς, εὐπρεπῆ πρόφασιν οὐ δικαίαν δὲ τῆς πλεονεξίας ταύτης ἔχοντες. τὸ γὰρ μέγιστον τῶν πατρῴων καὶ κάλλιστον ἀποστεροῦσιν αὐτούς, τὴν εὔνοιαν, ἀνελευθέρως καὶ πανούργως ὑποτρέχοντες, ἐν καιρῷ ταῖς ἐκείνων ἀσχολίαις καὶ ἀγνοίαις ἐπιτιθέμενοι καὶ μάλιστα παρέχοντες εὐτάκτους καὶ κατηκόους αὑτοὺς καὶ σώφρονας, ἐν οἷς ἐκείνους ἁμαρτάνοντας ἢ δοκοῦντας ὁρῶσι. δεῖ δὲ τοὐναντίον, ὅπου μὲν ὀργή, συνεκδέχεσθαι καὶ συνυποδύεσθαι καθάπερ τῷ συνεργεῖν ποιοῦντα κουφοτέραν, ὑπουργίαις δὲ καὶ χάρισι συνεισποιεῖν ἀμωσγέπως τὸν ἀδελφόν.[305]
>
> Many play the demagogue against their own brothers, having an apparently seemly but actually unjust excuse for this greediness; for they defraud their brothers of the greatest and best kind of inheritance, that is goodwill, by illiberal and unscrupulous interception, making their attacks just at the moments when they are busy and unaware, and most of all presenting themselves as disciplined and attentive and thoughtful in the very areas in which they see their brothers to be erring, or to be appearing to err. But what is really necessary instead is that, whenever there is wrath, one must co-receive it and co-bear it, just as if by such co-operating one makes the anger lighter, and thereby one must co-restore his brother, in some way or other, with services and expressions of χάρις.[306]

In this passage, Plutarch reflects upon two different ways in which a son might respond to the χάρις of his parents. On the one hand, if he sees parental χάρις as a finite resource, he

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[305] Plut. *Mor*. 482e-f.

[306] I have attempted to capture the striking repetition in such close succession of the συν- verbs with the awkward English equivalent, 'co-'. The same pattern is used by the writer of Ephesians 2. 5-6, and many of the themes of this passage show up in christological discussions throughout the New Testament. I reflect on the similarities between this passage and the christology of Paul in Section 4.4.

will seek to compete with his brothers and ingratiate himself with their parents at his siblings' expense.[307] This is the response of the demagogue brother. Like Dio Chrysostom's 'parasite', he excuses the harm he is doing to one who deserves his χάρις (the brother) as he seeks further expressions of χάρις from others (in this case, their parents).[308] This is yet another expression of instrumentalised χάρις, for the demagogic son is not giving any thought to what would most please his parents—that is, true χάρις towards his brothers. Instead, he is treating both his brothers and his parents as instruments to his own gain, ingratiating parents in the hope of future expressions of χάρις from them, and seeking to redirect their χάρις towards their other children to himself alone.[309]

This competitive understanding of familial χάρις relationships can be diagrammed as in Figure 4:

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[307] Betz (1978) 248 reminds us that the question of the division of inheritance lies in the background of the situation Plutarch is describing. Betz correctly asserts, however, that Plutarch is more interested in the 'psychagogic', rather than the 'legal aspects of the problem'.

[308] Josephus' Korah provides another, more explicitly political, example of the demagogic instrumentalisation of χάρις, considered in Section 2.4.3.

[309] Aasgaard (1997) characterises Plutarch's approach to ethics as 'a negative, restorative one', due to his belief in the general moral decline of his day, shared by many of his contemporaries. In regard to family ethics in particular, Aasgaard suggests Paul may have shared a similar assumption. Dixon (1992) 19 ff. refers to this notion as the 'myth of the archaic Roman family', and questions to what degree this myth reflected historical reality. See also Dixon (1991) *passim*.

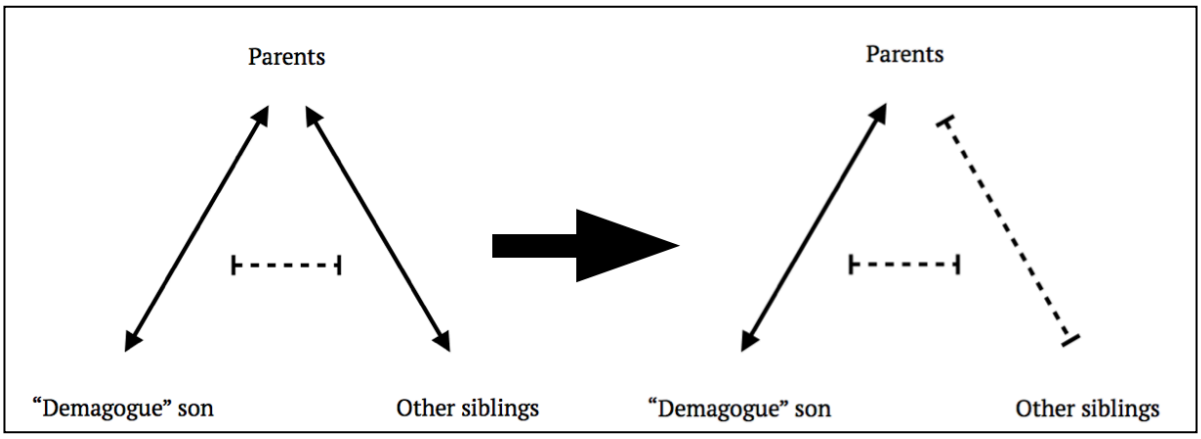


Figure 4: the demagogic instrumentalisation of χάρις

In the eyes of the demagogue son, his own paternal relationship of χάρις is fundamentally in tension with that of his other siblings (this tension is represented by the horizontal broken line in the diagram on the left). In order to strengthen his own χάρις in the eyes of the parents, the demagogue son feels he must undermine the goodwill of the parents towards his siblings (illustrated by the diagram on the right).[310] As Plutarch suggested in the earlier quotation, however, such an attitude reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of the kind of χάρις relationship a child should seek to cultivate with his parents. Instead, Plutarch insists, there can be no better act of χάρις towards a parent than to treat one's sibling with 'steadfast goodwill', εὐνοία βέβαιος.[311]

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[310] Betz (1978) 248 remarks on the similarities between Plutarch's demagogic son and the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son, Luke 15. 25-30.

[311] In his discussion of *De amore prolis*, Roskam (2011), esp. 185-186, delineates Plutarch's sharp disagreement with the Epicurean understanding of parental love. Epicurus argued that love for one's children 'is based on a *calculus* of what is useful', rather than being 'by nature': 'In short, nobody loves someone else unless for his own sake'. Plutarch's belief that there is more to human relationships than self-interested calculation clearly undergirds his argument for seeing good χάρις relationships as mutually supportive, rather than competitive.

The correct understanding of familial χάρις, however, can be diagrammed as in Figure 5:

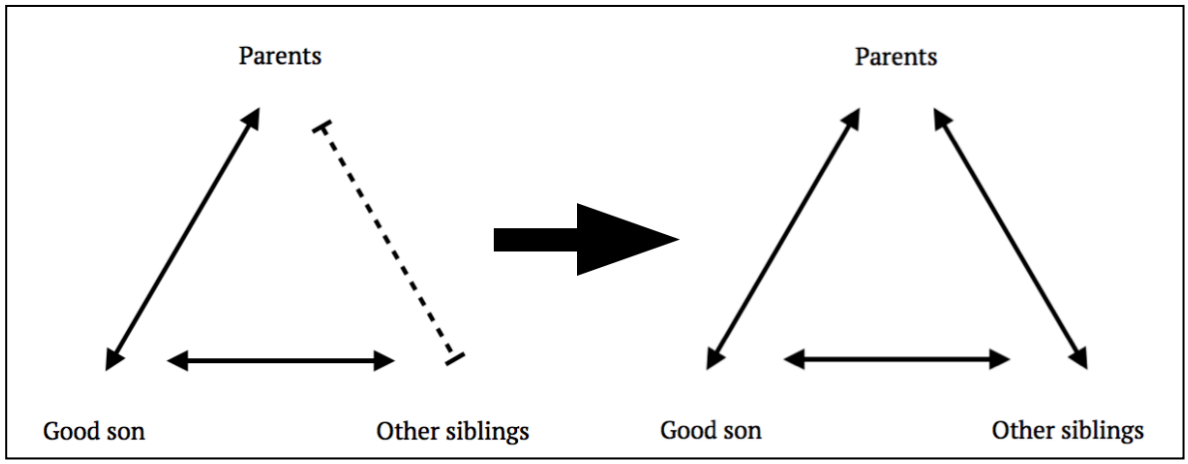


Figure 5: the triangulation of participant χάρις

In these two diagrams, there is no competition between the various relationships involved. One of the brothers in Plutarch's description has by some means fallen under the wrath (ὀργή) of the parents, and their χάρις relationship has become fractured (illustrated by the broken line in the lefthand diagram). Yet in the case of the virtuous brother, such a situation is not to be exploited for his own advantage at the expense of the estranged sibling. Rather, the virtuous son attempts to lighten his brother's experience of the paternal wrath by 'co-receiving' and 'co-bearing' it, 'co-operating' with his brother in order to redistribute the parents' ὀργή and lessen the intensity under which each one individually suffers. Thus, the first act of the virtuous sibling is a remarkable expression

of brotherly χάρις, even risking his own intact relationship with their parents in order to benefit the brother who is in need.[312]

What is more, by this gracious identification of himself with his estranged sibling, the virtuous son is actually able to share the benefits of his own paternal χάρις relationship with the brother currently 'under wrath', and he is finally able to 'co-restore' them to their own stable χάρις relationship with their parents. In other words, familial χάρις need not be seen as a finite commodity. Rather, when viewed in the appropriately non-competitive context of familial relations, χάρις turns out to be a creative, self-replicating force that is in no way diminished by being shared with others. By various services (ὑπουργίαι) and acts of χάρις, the virtuous son who has voluntarily identified himself with his estranged sibling draws his brother into his own stable relationship of χάρις with their parents, and finally reestablishes the brother in his own parental χάρις relationship through this project of 'co-restoration'. Rather than pitting one χάρις relationship against another—and instrumentalising both other parties for the sake of personal gain—the virtuous son (like the virtuous statesman) shows χάρις to both

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[312] Note that this does not entail reneging on χάρις owed to the parent in order to participate in χάρις with the sibling. Rather, the motive of the virtuous brother is to show χάρις to both the parent and the estranged brother by seeking to mend their broken relationship by whatever means necessary. Plutarch will later discuss the different courses one should take if the parents' anger is justified (472f-483b) or if the brother is falsely accused (483b-c), but at this point in his argument, this distinction does not matter. For the virtuous brother, the primary goal in both cases is to mend the broken χάρις relationship, not exploit it.

members of the broken relationship by participatively entering it himself.[313] If the estranged father and son then choose to respond to this act of χάρις participatively, all three will be able to share χάρις together in a mutually supportive "triangle" of relationships.[314]

Plutarch summarises the fundamental distinction between good and bad siblings in a final passage from his essay:

> οἱ δὲ καὶ διηγοῦνται πρὸς ἑτέρους γαυριῶντες, ὅτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν πανουργίᾳ καὶ δριμύτητι καὶ παραλογισμῷ πλέον ἔσχον ἐν τῷ νέμεσθαι, δέον ἀγάλλεσθαι καὶ μέγα φρονεῖν ἐπιεικείᾳ καὶ χάριτι καὶ ὑπείξει περιγενομένους.[315]
>
> Some even recount to others with pride how they have gotten more than their brothers in the division of inheritance by unscrupulousness and fierce determination and deception; but they ought rather to exult and think themselves great in being superior in decency and χάρις and compliance.

For Plutarch, the only kind of competition permissible between brothers is that aimed at strengthening their mutual relationships of χάρις, rather than that which might result from the differing strengths of their individual parental relationships. A competition in the realm of 'decency and χάρις and compliance' sounds rather like the χάρις ballgame recommended by Seneca in Section 1.2.3., in which each partner looks for new ways to offer *beneficia* that repeatedly surpass the mere duty of *gratia*.[316] Reider Aasgaard

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[313] Lassen (1997) 110-112 discusses just how common was the tendency in the late Republic and early imperial period to refer to the Roman political realm as 'a society of fathers and sons'. Thomas (1986) explores this theme at length. Plutarch's extension of the metaphor to include the brotherhood of political rivals is not nearly as common, though it may carry a cautionary echo of references to the Republican civil wars as 'wars between brothers', especially considering the explicit language of warfare Plutarch uses elsewhere in the treatise (e.g. *Mor.* 483d).

[314] See Section 4.4.1. for the resonances of this picture with Pauline christology.

[315] Plut. *Mor*. 483 ff.

[316] It also offers a fascinating take on superiority and inferiority, themes which Aasgaard (1997) 171-172, 179 traces throughout the treatise and whose treatment by Plutarch he contrasts with that of Paul.

helpfully draws attention to the emphasis Plutarch consistently puts on 'emotional aspects within kinship'—as opposed to 'the formal and juridical side of relationships' or 'the hierarchy or the power relationships among kin'.[317] Plutarch's primary goal in *De fraterno amore* is 'to preserve good relationships emotionally', enabling 'harmony in spite of differences'.[318] For this reason, like Dio Chrysostom, Plutarch warns against seeing χάρις relationships as fundamentally in competition with each another. True χάρις towards one relational partner does not impede one's χάρις relationship with another. Instead, virtuous χάρις relationships consistently support each other.

1.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored a number of examples of the early imperial dialogue around χάρις as a participant, rather than instrumental, good. In Section 1.2., with Seneca and Plutarch, we thought of χάρις relationships as a game of catch, in which each "player" seeks to match his throw of the ball to the needs and desires of the recipient, and in which the good of the ongoing relationship relativises the instrumental value of any particular object of exchange. In Section 1.3., Aristotle's protreptic treatment of the dance of the Χάριτες proved to be an enduring model for social χάρις, picked up by the Stobaean doxographer and the Stoic teacher Cornutus, among others. With these philosophers, we discussed the retrospective and prospective aspects of participant χάρις —both cultivating the memory of a past χάρις and actively looking out for new ways to express χάρις in any given relationship. As well, the images of the goddesses exemplified

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[317] Aasgaard (1997) 171. While I focus on χάρις as an expression of relationship rather than an emotion *per se*, some of the authors in this thesis bring out the emotional aspects of χάρις more than others.

[318] Aasgaard (1997) 171.

in Figures 1-3 inspired consideration of both the inward and outward movements of participant χάρις—the offer of a response, on the one hand, within the relationship, and on the other, an invitation to onlookers that they too might join in the ongoing, joyous dance. Strabo and Dio Chrysostom explicitly emphasised the interest in social χάρις taken by the Χάριτες in their role as benevolent divine figures, and Seneca, although questioning the efficacy of this type of didacticism, shared their practical concern with finding the best ways of motivating people to engage virtuously in χάρις relationships. His ambivalence about the usefulness of the Χάριτες' image further underscored the importance of actual, voluntary participation in χάρις—as opposed to mere intellectual discussion of it. Finally, in Section 1.4., Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom offered two examples—from both public and private spheres—of how to deal with conflict in the context of multiple χάρις relationships. Both men argued that a return of χάρις to one relational partner that actively harms or neglects another is no true expression of χάρις at all, but merely an instrumentalising attempt to bring about personal gain at the expense of both others. Virtuous χάρις triangulates the different relationships involved, such that a true expression of χάρις to one partner will not conflict with—and may even itself act as —χάρις to another as well.

This broad discussion of the differences between participant χάρις on the one hand and instrumental χάρις on the other provides the background against which I argue Paul's 'χάρις no longer χάρις' should be read. The following chapter considers two prominent Jewish voices in this wide-ranging discussion, who each pick up on many of the themes brought out in this first chapter, and who offer an illuminating *comparandum* for Paul in the ways in which they bring Jewish scriptures into conversation with the popular-philosophical discussions of χάρις in the wider Graeco-Roman world.

Chapter 2: Divine Outreach That Draws In: A Model of God's Participant χάρις from Philo and Josephus

2.1. Introduction

Hellenistic Jewish authors, especially Philo and Josephus, are regularly compared with early Christian writers like Paul in attempts either to delineate their direct or indirect influence on each other, or to contrast early Christian and Jewish modes of scriptural reception.[319] Comparative work has also been undertaken on Paul and various Greek and Latin authors, especially Seneca and Plutarch. This chapter follows a third approach, in light of the often recognised fact that the Hellenistic Jewish authors Philo and Josephus share assumptions, interests, and loyalties with both their surrounding Graeco-Roman culture and with early Jewish Christ-followers such as Paul. In what follows, I treat the voices of Philo and Josephus as an important third part in the chorus of ideas about χάρις present in the thought world of Paul's first addressees.[320] While paying careful attention

[319] On Philo and Paul, see McFarland (2012); Barclay (2008a); Watson (2004) 167-269; Zeller (1990). On Philo and the New Testament more generally, see Siegert (2009); Hurtado (2004); Nickelsburg (2004); Sterling (2004). On Josephus and the New Testament, in particular his influence on Luke, see especially Mason (1992).

[320] I have selected Philo and Josephus as my witnesses to Hellenistic Jewish ideas about χάρις partly for the range of uses they attest, partly for their direct engagement with the question of what Greek χάρις looks like in the context of a Septuagintal thought-world, and partly for their explicit dependence on that thought-world while engaging with both pagan and Hellenised Jewish audiences—a characteristic which brings them into close parallel with Paul. (I follow Niehoff [2010] and [2018] in reading Philo's later works in particular as aimed at a non-Jewish audience.) I discuss χάρις in the LXX primarily through the lens of its reception among these authors. I have two reasons for this. First, Paul himself never uses the language of χάρις in ways that echo the LXX, and second, this in turn must be due to the fact that the word χάρις in the LXX is used almost exclusively to translate Hebraic idioms and is 'never a theological word in the LXX', Conzelmann and Zimmerli (1974) 389. This thesis does not attempt to engage with Hellenistic Jewish writings in Hebrew and Aramaic, partially due to the constraints of space, and more importantly due to the fact that the Jewish side of Paul's frame of reference was predominantly Septuagintal, as was likely also true of any of his addressees literate in Jewish scripture.

to what is unique in these authors' treatments of χάρις, we should also expect to find some ways in which their thought parallels that of their Graeco-Roman contemporaries and/or their Jewish Christian peers. The ways in which Philo and Josephus introduce the God of Israel into the world of χάρις networks described thus far by Greek and Roman authors will prove particularly illuminating for my consideration of Paul's ideas about the unique qualities of divine χάρις in Chapters 3 and 4.

In the previous chapter, we observed a number of Graeco-Roman authors urging the ethical importance of a participant stance towards χάρις. I traced three images in particular by which these authors illustrate the web of χάρις relationships that envelops every individual—the game of catch, the dance of the Χάριτες, and the triangle of familial or civic χάρις. The negative approach to χάρις that these authors eschew is that in which one member of a χάρις relationship instrumentalises the other for some end external to their relationship, and one of the most blatant forms of this instrumentalisation arises when one relationship of χάρις is compromised (allegedly) for the sake of another. What Plutarch and Dio Chrysostom insist, however, is that no true act of χάρις towards one person can simultaneously break a relationship of χάρις with another. True χάρις relationships will always support and uphold one another, rather than causing a conflict of interests on the part of the person in whom they overlap.

The triangulation of virtuous χάρις relationships is relatively easy to work out in the context of a family or a well-functioning civic community. More pessimistic Graeco-Roman authors, however, are less hopeful about the strength of this model, especially in situations destabilised by political chaos and moral decline. Euripides in particular is good at pointing out the messiness that so often accompanies real-world χάρις relationships; the extreme situations in which his tragic characters often find themselves

magnify the potential problems that can vex everyday relationships of χάρις.[321] The *Sententiae* of Menander, quoted throughout the previous chapter, are marked by pessimism about the forgetfulness of beneficiaries as part of the moral decline of humanity in general.[322] Seneca sees his society on the brink of 'the most terrible of all possible events—a slate wiped of all *beneficia*'.[323] Jewish authors of the Graeco-Roman world also recognise that χάρις relationships can be confusing and apparently contradictory with one another. However, because of their commitment to the idea of one true God who sponsors all virtues, Jewish (and later, Christian) writers make it a priority to explain how all true χάρις relationships must in the end fit together under the just and loving χάρις of the divine. In the previous chapter, both Strabo and Dio suggested (1) that the gods should be recognised as the sponsors of good human χάρις relationships, and (2) that the way in which one conducts oneself in those relationships should honour and show gratitude to that enabling divine χάρις. Philo and Josephus take the significance of divine χάρις a step further. For them, all human χάρις derives from and is ancillary to the divine-

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[321] Consider the dilemma of Iolaus and Demophon in Euripides' *Heracleidae*. Demophon has promised to protect Iolaus and the children of Heracles from the wrath of Eurystheus, but he then learns that he must sacrifice a maiden to Persephone in order to preserve his people from the attack of the Argolid king (381-424). This news leaves him seemingly trapped between breaking his promise to the *Heracleidae* and abnegating the χάρις of protection which he owes to his people. Hecuba tries to place Odysseus in a similar χάρις dilemma in Euripides' play by her name (Eur. *Hec.* 251-278). In *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Orestes refers bitterly to his sister's death at their father's hand as a 'χάρις ἄχαρις' (566), an act of apparent χάρις towards the Greek forces and Artemis, but one which drastically ignored the claims of paternal χάρις.

[322] Cf. *S.* 743: Τέθνηκ' ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν πᾶσα <γὰρ> χάρις, 'χάρις has completely died out among humans'.

[323] Sen. *Ben.* 1. 4. 6: *posse rem perniciosissimam, beneficiorum novas tabulas*. Griffin and Inwood (2011) 192, n. 7 note that Seneca's reference here is to 'the greatest political and economic fear of Roman aristocrats: a revolutionary plan to cancel debts…The elimination of all awareness of benefits would be as big a moral disaster as the elimination of all debt records would be a financial disaster'.

human χάρις relationship; God is, as Josephus says, 'the beginning and the end of all things', including χάρις.[324] For Philo, God is 'the Cause of all good things' and his plurality of χάριτες to humanity 'should be acknowledged with thanksgiving, with the recognition that God is the source of every good'.[325] The case studies in this chapter exemplify the intimate engagement of God in the human world of χάρις relationships. In every situation, responding well to divine χάρις is the most important consideration for what constitutes virtuous χάρις practices.[326] When the claims of divine χάρις are rightly prioritised, one can reasonably expect to share good χάρις relationships with other likeminded, pious people. But if someone demands a response of χάρις that conflicts with how one ought to respond to God's χάρις, that human χάρις must be reckoned illegitimate.[327]

The suggestion that a human being can meaningfully engage in a participant relationship of χάρις with God may at first sound paradoxical, because of the insuperable imbalance present in such a relationship between the human person and the all-powerful divine. Considering the complete self-sufficiency of God and the absolute existential dependency of the human being, how can an individual ever think of him- or herself as

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[324] Jos. *Ant.* 8. 280; *contra Apionem* 2. 190.

[325] Barclay (2015) 310.

[326] This understanding of virtuous χάρις runs parallel to the account of forgiveness in ancient Judaism offered by Michael Morgan (2011) 138: 'The primary context for forgiveness, that is, is the divine-human relationship. To be sure, there are examples, and there is attention to interpersonal wrongdoing and forgiveness, but it occurs alongside and in relation to the primary context, which is the divine-human one, and the attitude toward such forgiveness is articulated only as interest shifts to it within the context of the divine-human relationship'.

[327] This is most clearly exemplified in Josephus' account of the rebellion of Korah in Section 2.4.3. Josephus' indictment of demagoguery as primarily an offence against the χάρις of God offers a telling contrast to Plutarch's implicit indictment of demogoguery as an offence against civic "brothers", as discussed in Section 1.4.

returning the χάρις of God? Initially, it is perhaps surprising that such versatile authors as Philo and Josephus would choose deliberately to bring together the almighty God of Israel and contemporary, popular-philosophical discussions about social χάρις. They could easily sidestep the complications associated with imbalanced χάρις relationships[328] by focussing instead on the more prominent Septuagintal language of God's mercy, ἔλεος.[329] However, when we actually look at what Philo and Josephus have to say about χάρις, we find that they are clearly aware of the potential problems that arise when one insists that a virtue like χάρις with such strong associations of mutuality must also originate from and revolve around God, and we find them engaging with that tension readily. In fact, the very value of the language of χάρις for these authors is its implication of increasing mutuality, as opposed to the suggestion of permanent imbalance encoded in ἔλεος.

This chapter begins with a consideration of Philo's engagement with the question, how the righteous person will respond to the abundant χάρις of the divine. Philo offers three ways in which the recipient of God's χάρις can respond to that χάρις in kind: first by acknowledging, paradoxically, that all χάρις originates with God himself and that the human respondent has nothing of his or her own to give, but secondly by returning wholeheartedly to God the gifts that he offers in such abundance and, thirdly, by seeking

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[328] Cf. the difficulties Alexander's beneficiaries faced (Section 1.2.4.) simply in trying to accept his vast gifts of χάρις, much less their inability to return them in anything like equal measure.

[329] Flack (1960) 144-145 puts the number of occurrences of χάρις in the LXX at 166; ἔλεος, 273. Both Flack and Harrison (2003) 108-109, however, point out that Philo, Paul, and their Jewish contemporaries show a strong and increasing preference for replacing LXX ἔλεος with χάρις. Flack speculates that for Philo, this may have had something to do with the inability of the Greek word ἔλεος to capture 'the underlying force of firmness, stedfastness, and commitment to the covenant', signified by its Hebrew counterpart, חֶסֶד.

to treat other human beings in a way that pleases him. Section 2.3. offers an in-depth look at Philo's favourite exemplar of χάρις, Hannah, the mother of Samuel. In his retelling of the scene from 1 Samuel 1, in which Hannah is mistakenly accused of drunkenness, Philo attributes to divine χάρις the ability to draw its recipient into ecstatic union with God, and he further develops the impact of that divine χάρις on third-party observers. As Hannah's participation in divine χάρις is crystallised in a timeless moment of relational joy, she inspires longing and also offers instruction as to how one can come to enjoy such a complete experience of the goodness of the divine. Section 2.4. of this chapter focusses on several incidents in the life of Moses that Josephus considers in his account through the lens of χάρις. Moses' χάρις from God is in many ways unique, and Josephus illustrates both positive and negative responses to that χάρις across the span of Moses' life. While Philo draws attention to the personal and emotional aspects of divine χάρις, Josephus emphasises its social ramifications, demonstrating across the first quarter of the *Antiquitates Iudaicae* that the specific gifts of χάρις God offers to individuals do not conflict with each other, but rather offer clear guidance as to how human χάρις relationships can be harmonised with each other. God's unique gift of the law through his chosen mediator Moses invites ongoing wonder and gratitude from its recipients.

2.2. Philo and the Creativity of Divine χάρις

2.2.1. Finding χάρις in God's Sight: The Reification of Divine χάρις and Divine-Human Friendship

Philo's intimate knowledge of Greek literature and philosophy is indisputable. Many scholars even believe he was educated in the Alexandrian gymnasium.[330] His exposition of Jewish scriptures is coloured throughout by a deep engagement with Hellenistic literary criticism, interpretive traditions associated with both the Stoicism and the Platonism of his time, legal, educational, and rhetorical theory, and even Hellenistic doxography.[331] David Lincicum's index of Philo's references to extra-biblical works in his writing indicates the breadth of Philo's engagement with and understanding of his surrounding Graeco-Roman culture.[332] Philo's discussions of χάρις are characteristically nuanced by the depth and breadth of his cultural intelligence. While the χάρις lexicon appears in many different contexts throughout the Philonic corpus,[333] I focus in this chapter on passages in which Philo explicitly engages with the question, how God can be

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[330] E.g. Alexandre (1967) 105-129; Mendelson (1982) 25-46; Collins (1997) 148-53; Friesen (2015) 47.

[331] For an overview of recent scholarship on Philo's extensive engagement with Greek culture and literature, see Friesen (2015) 47-49. On Philo's interest in doxography, see Runia (2008). See Niehoff (2011) 133-185 and (2012) 130-136 for his use of Hellenistic literary critical practices. See Zurawski (2016) 96-172 on his pedagogical theory. See Amir (1984), Lamberton (1986) 44-54, Berthelot (2012) for considerations of Philo's place within Stoic and Platonist traditions of reading Homer allegorically.

[332] Lincicum (2013).

[333] Philo even makes the occasional allusion to the Χάριτες as personifications of divine χάρις (e.g. *Post*. 32; *Migr*. 30-31; *Fug.* 141-142; *QE* 2. 61; *Mos*. 2. 7; *Leg.* 2. 80; *Abr.* 54; *Congr.* 138). This is, however, as Harrison (2003) 123-124 points out, a 'bold' move on his part, and he does not give nearly as much interpretive detail to the analogy as did its earlier interpreters. McFarland (2016) 46-47 outlines the three main theological points Philo makes across his various mentions of the goddesses. Zeller (1990) 18 correctly summarises: Philo 'liebt gelegentliche Anspielungen auf die griechische Mythologie, setzt aber die stoische Allegorese der Göttinnen voraus'.

said to engage in relationships of χάρις with individual human beings. This is a striking but also necessary move on Philo's part, because for him, the χάρις of God is no less than the beginning and end of all human morality.[334] Not only does all χάρις originate with God, but every resource available to the human person—even life itself—is an expression of the χάρις of God.[335] Therefore, the ultimate goal of the righteous person's life is to participate well in that divine χάρις relationship, "returning" the χάρις of God in some sense.[336] This will in turn dictate how one interacts with other human beings, but for Philo, good inter-human χάρις is always derivative from the central, all-important, divine-human χάρις relationship.

We begin our consideration of Philonic χάρις with an analysis of Philo's reception of the χάρις expression most often repeated in the Septuagint: 'to find χάρις before' or 'to find χάρις in the sight of' someone. Zimmerli explains that this originally Hebraic idiom describes the attractive quality of a God-given favour that causes another 'to be favorably disposed. In the *ḥēn* that God gives there is thus reflected, not the relation between giver and recipient, but the relation between the recipient and a third person'.[337] As it is most commonly used, the expression refers to instances in which something about person A is

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[334] McFarland (2012) 110, n. 14 notes that 'Philo often aligns human piety and impiety directly with the person's view of God as Cause (or not)'. Similarly, Barclay (2008a) 142: 'God's gracious causation of all that exists is of critical importance for Philo in distinguishing his philosophy from impious alternatives, and in motivating the central core of piety, gratitude to God'. Van den Hoek (1988) 73 remarks that this theme in Philo was sufficiently pronounced for Clement of Alexandria to reference it in his *Stromateis*.

[335] Cf. McFarland (2016) 38: 'Humans do not even own those things of which they consist: soul, body, mind, etc.'

[336] For two classic discussions of Philonic piety more generally, see Windisch (1909) and Völker (1938).

[337] Quotation taken from Kittel and Friedrich (1985) 1302, in Bromiley's abridgement of the article by Conzelmann and Zimmerli (1974).

pleasing to person B—the one in whose 'sight' person A stands—and the fact that person B is pleased is manifested by his responding in a pleasing or gracious way. The involvement of God in the interaction is always implied, and it is often emphasised by the unlikeliness of the scenario when considered on mere human terms and in particular by the typically low status of the person 'finding' χάρις 'in the sight of' the other. All of the occurrences of χάρις in the Septuagintal Pentateuch come as part of this idiom. The books of history translated from Hebrew follow the pattern with a few slight variations, and the books of wisdom and prophecy include further variations.[338]

The first occurrence of this phrase in the Septuagint particularly piqued Philo's interest. In Genesis 6.8, Noah is said to 'find χάρις before the Lord God'. This scenario does not fit the Zimmerli definition all that well, as God is the one here who is inclined to be favourably disposed, rather than the more typical third-party observer.[339] Philo draws attention to the striking character of the assertion: he repeatedly references the verse across his various commentaries on the Pentateuch, and he questions the meaning of it explicitly at least three times across his corpus.[340] 'Why is Noah now said to find favour with God?' he asks in *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin.*[341] Even in his brief response there, Philo is intent on dismissing the possible misunderstanding that Noah might have

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[338] Harrison (2003) 108 notes a similar pattern in his categorisation of the main uses of χάρις in the LXX.

[339] Moses is the only other Pentateuchal figure explicitly said to have found χάρις before God, Exod. 33. 13-17; 34. 9.

[340] Barclay (2015) 214 assumes Philo is 'unfamiliar with the Hebrew idiom', which may indeed be the case; but Harrison (2003) 124 points out that 'Philo refocuses the whole debate' about the meaning of the text 'by concentrating on the nature of God Himself'. While Philo's confusion may arise from a misunderstanding or ignorance of the Hebrew idiom, the emphasis of his concern is theological: the phrase must be interpreted in such a way as to avoid suggesting God's χάρις can be treated as an instrumental good.

[341] Phi. *QG* 1. 96. Translation from Marcus (1953) 63.

received some additional χάρις from God because of his unique worthiness, for, he insists, 'the entire human race in common had met with [God's] beneficence'.[342] Rather, to 'find χάρις', in this case, is to show oneself grateful: uniquely among his generation, Noah acknowledged the bountiful χάρις of God with gratitude: 'he alone appeared grateful (εὐχάριστος)'.[343] This is why, Philo says, he is praised for having 'found χάρις before God'.[344]

In the *Legum allegoriae*, Philo goes into much greater detail as to what it is about Noah's response to God's χάρις that merits the praise of Genesis 6.8. At *Quod Deus immutabilis sit* 74, Philo contrasts Noah with the ἀχάριστοι of his day; at 104 he insists that Noah received nothing more than was offered by the divine 'to all creatures, not only to those created with both body and soul, but also to those with simple, elementary natures, all deemed appropriate recipients of divine χάρις'. Philo again considers the possibility that Noah was deemed more worthy of χάρις than his contemporaries, but he also rejects this explanation, pointing out, 'Just how great must he be who is going to be judged worthy of χάρις in God's sight? For I think it would be hard even for the cosmos as a whole to achieve this, despite the fact that it is itself the first and the greatest and the

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[342] Marcus (1953) 64.

[343] Marcus (1953) 64.

[344] Here Philo seems to be taking advantage of the ambiguity inherent in the Greek word χάρις as an action nominal: technically, 'to find χάρις' could mean 'to receive a favour from another' or 'to receive gratitude from another in return for a favour' or, as Philo seems to suggest here, 'to receive favour from another for one's gratitude for a favour'. Taken on its own, there is much greater flexibility in the Greek idiom than in the Hebrew phrase it was originally meant to replicate.

most perfect of all God's works'.[345] Instead, Philo again insists that Noah's 'finding χάρις with God' is best understood as his being pleasing to the divine because of his unique εὐχαριστία: Noah 'found this truest of all things, that everything is the χάρις of God—earth, water, air, fire, sun, stars, heaven, all plants and animals together', and that God 'has given his good things without stint to the whole and its parts, not having judged anything worthy of his χάρις, but rather looking to his own ageless goodness, and deciding that doing good was appropriate to his own blessed and happy nature'.[346]

Philo is intent on avoiding any hint that a person might be able to obligate God to treat him with special favours based on his personal righteousness or worthiness.[347] The

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[345] Phi. *Deus* 106-107. Zeller (1990) 35 makes note of the Stoic tenor to Philo's expansion of 'das gnädige Walten Gottes' beyond Noah himself to 'den Kosmos und seine Anfänge'. Note the observation of McFarland (2016) 54: 'All have been considered worthy of divine grace, but none are inherently worthy of it'.

[346] Phi. *Deus* 107-108. Cf. McFarland (2016) 45, "God's giving is entirely due to his own generosity—nothing else explains it—and is immeasurably abundant'. Winston and Dillon (1983) 331 suggest that God's looking to his own beneficent nature in this passage may be 'an adaptation of the Demiurge's looking to the Paradigm, cf. *Tim.* 28A'.

[347] See Section 4.3.1. for Paul's similar concern. Because Barclay (2015), esp. 237-238, interprets Philonic χάρις through the lens of 'worth' or 'congruity', he struggles to make sense of the fact that Philo can insist *both* that Noah was no more 'worthy' of God's χάρις gifts than any other member of creation *and* that he uniquely 'found χάρις in God's sight' in terms of being more pleasing to him than the ἀχάριστοι of his generation and receiving God's mercy and blessing as a response to his εὐχαριστία. As I argue in what follows, rather than distinguishing between 'congruous' and 'incongruous' χάρις, as Barclay does, Philo is more concerned with distinguishing reified from relational χάρις: Noah did not get some additional reward from God because of his unique worth (this would suggest God's χάρις is merely a set of instrumental goods that a human being can obligate by means of personal virtue or worth); rather, Noah's appreciation for the giver behind all things enables him to participate in a unique relationship with God in which both members are mutually responding to each other's χάρις. I believe this interpretation accounts for the impasse to which Barclay arrives in his interpretation of Philo: 'God's gifts are *generally* and for good reason *congruous* with the quality of the recipient. Although *there are limits to this rule*, especially if "worth" suggests comparability with God or human causation of the gift, Philo is *not generally* concerned to perfect the *incongruity* of the gift' (emphasis added).

particular χάρις that God gives Noah, therefore, is not some additional gift or reification of χάρις; in Philo's account, all gifts of God's χάρις have already been given and are freely available to everyone. Instead, the χάρις shared between God and Noah is what Seneca would have called 'a *beneficium* not touched and handled, but carried on in the mind'.[348] This χάρις is entirely focussed on their relationship; Noah's εὐχαριστία is 'well-pleasing' to God, and Philo calls this the 'most perfect state of being and the measure of supreme happiness'.[349] Elsewhere, in his essay *De Abrahamo*, Philo defines this state as specifically one of friendship with the divine. Philo writes that while God does not turn away those who worship him for the sake of the gifts and blessings he offers, he reserves 'friendship' (φιλία) for those who honour him for his own sake—for those offering him true εὐχαριστία.[350] For Philo, because God 'cannot be harmed', those who worship him 'for their own sake' are not to be condemned.[351] 'Finding χάρις in God's sight', however, must mean something more relational than simply 'getting an additional χάρις from God';[352] in Philo's interpretation of Noah, it refers to a mutual appreciation for the motives of both giver and receiver. Noah recognises the χάρις of God behind all of creation; God responds by taking pleasure in Noah's εὐχαριστία. Noah has not tried to

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[348] Sen. *Ben.* 1. 5. 1.

[349] Phi. *Deus* 118.

[350] Phi. *Abr.* 126-130.

[351] Phi. *Abr.* 127, 128. Zeller (1990) 42 comments: 'Die Freigebigkeit Gottes ist auch der Grund dafür, daß Gott seine Güter auch dem leibverhafteten, zum Bösen geneigten Menschen mitteilt'.

[352] Zeller (1990) 34-35 slightly misses the point in his distinction between '"großen Geschenk Gottes", das jeder bei der Geburt vorfindet, der vollständigen Welt und den "speziellen Geschenken", die Gott gibt und die Menschen frei empfangen'. The difference with Noah is not simply that he receives additional χαρίσματα from God, but that he recognises and shows appreciation for the χάρις that underlies all of God's gifts to creation.

instrumentalise God's generosity by seeking some further benefit from him. Rather, each is taking pleasure in the χάρις of the other and voluntarily participating in their relationship. Philo is clear that God's choice to express his pleasure in Noah with blessing and mercy is once again dependent only on his own nature and his desire 'to mingle his saving mercy with the judgement directed towards sinners'.[353] He is no more forced to respond in kind to Noah's χάρις than Noah was to his.

Philo complicates this picture somewhat, however, in a third discussion of Genesis 6.8. In Book 3 of the *Legum allegoriae*, Philo restates the main points of his analysis already considered—in particular the content of what he calls the 'truest thing', that all creation is an expression of God's χάρις, and his assertion that it was Noah's recognition of this 'truest thing' and his consequent εὐχαριστία that caused him to 'find χάρις before God'. In this case, however, Philo includes an additional element in that highest truth:

> τὸ δὲ χάριν εὑρεῖν οὐκ ἔστι μόνον, ὡς νομίζουσί τινες, ἴσον τῷ εὐαρεστῆσαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοιοῦτον· ζητῶν ὁ δίκαιος τὴν τῶν ὄντων φύσιν ἓν τοῦτο εὑρίσκει ἄριστον εὕρημα, χάριν ὄντα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ σύμπαντα, γενέσεως δὲ οὐδὲν χάρισμα, ὅτι γε οὐδὲ κτῆμα, θεοῦ δὲ κτῆμα τὰ πάντα, διὸ καὶ μόνου τὴν χάριν οἰκεῖον.[354]
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> 'To find χάρις' is not just, as some suppose, equivalent to the expression, 'to please', but more specifically such as this: the righteous person, seeking after the root cause of the things that exist, makes this one excellent discovery, that the existence of the whole is the χάρις of God, and that there is no χάρισμα from creation, because there is nothing possessed by it, but rather everything is the possession of God, and therefore χάρις too is proper to Him alone.

Here Philo again states that creation owes its entire existence to the χάρις of God, but he then goes further, apparently arguing that because creation possesses nothing of its own apart from God, it therefore has no χάρις that it can offer in return. Here, however, we

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[353] Phi. *Deus* 74.

[354] Phi. *Leg.* 3. 78.

must pay attention to Philo's unusual word choice. Harrison claims that the word χάρισμα in this passage 'probably represents the first time in antiquity that the word was used with theological reference'.[355] It appears in no Greek literature of a confirmed earlier date and only in three textually suspect passages of Jewish authorship.[356] Philo himself uses the term only once outside of this passage, in one of the fragments of the lost second half of *De ebrietate*.[357] Most scholars assume it was used in the vernacular to mean 'gift' or 'present', but as Harrison points out, 'we do not have any access to the familiar first-century cultural codes that may have been embedded in its colloquial use'.[358] Conzelmann describes it as 'one of the favourite *koine* constructs in -μα', referring to 'the result of χάρις viewed as an action with no sharp distinction from this term: "proof of favour", "benefit", "gift"'.[359] This definition offers a way in to understanding why Philo might have selected a term so rare in literary discourse to clarify his exposition of 'finding χάρις in God's sight'. If, as a -μα construct, χάρισμα refers to the *thing* possessed and given as an expression or 'result' of χάρις, then Philo seems to be using the unusual word in order to distinguish between the different degrees of reification that can be

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[355] Harrison (2003) 279. Zeller (1992) 36, n. 21, and Banks (1980) 93-94 share the same view. See Wobbe (1932) 64 and Conzelmann and Zimmerli (1974) 403, n. 4, however, for the text-critical debate concerning the word's inclusion in *Leg.* 3. 78. On the basis of this debate, Brockhaus (1972) 128 argues that Paul's is the earliest certain use of the term.

[356] *Sirach* 7. 33 (cod. B), 38.30 (cod. S); *Sibylline Oracles* 2. 54. For discussion, see Wobbe (1932) 63-64; Banks (1980) 93-94; Harrison (2003) 279-280.

[357] See Harris (1886) 84.

[358] Harrison (2003) 280. Cf. Banks (1980) 94; Nardoni (1993) 69.

[359] Conzelmann and Zimmerli (1974) 402-403.

encompassed by the single word χάρις.[360] In light of Philo's exegesis of Noah's relationship with God in the passages above, in *Leg.* 3. 78, Philo seems purposefully to be limiting what he claims the creature can*not* offer God. He continues:

> δωρεὰ γὰρ καὶ εὐεργεσία καὶ χάρισμα θεοῦ τὰ πάντα ὅσα ἐν κόσμῳ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ κόσμος ἐστί.[361]
>
> All the things which are in the cosmos, and the cosmos itself, are the gift and benefaction and χάρισμα of God.

Creation has no 'gift' or 'benefaction' of its own that it can give to God; everything it has, it has received from him. Note that Philo does *not* say in this passage the creation can make no fitting response to God's abundant χάρις. As Noah exemplifies, enlightened gratitude (εὐχαριστία) toward God for his χάρις is the best way, in Philo's view, of pleasing him, or 'finding χάρις in his sight'. This gratitude indicates an appreciation for the giver and not just the gift, and it makes possible a real, participant relationship with God comparable to human friendship. In terms of being able to offer God an expression of χάρις that matches Aristotle's original standard of 'not in response to anything', however, the righteous person knows that this is not an option. Philo has already affirmed:

> θεοῦ δὲ κτῆμα τὰ πάντα, διὸ καὶ μόνου τὴν χάριν οἰκεῖον.[362]
>
> Everything is the possession of God, and therefore χάρις too is proper to Him alone.

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[360] This move would in some ways parallel Seneca's distancing of mental *gratia* from reified *beneficia* (Sections 1.2.2. and 1.2.3.), and Paul will do something similar as well in his discussions of χαρίσματα in 1 Corinthians and Romans (Section 3.4.1.).

[361] Phi. *Leg.* 3. 78.

[362] Phi. *Leg.* 3. 78.

All χάρις must perforce begin with God.[363]

Note also, however, Philo's choice of the word οἰκεῖον to describe the uniqueness of divine χάρις. Carlos Lévy points out that by Philo's time, the Stoic ethical doctrine of affinity or οἰκείωσις 'had become the general framework within which the philosophic doctrines of the Hellenistic schools came to be presented'.[364] Because of Philo's Platonic and Jewish commitments, he rejects the human-centred approach of Stoic οἰκείωσις but reappropriates the term as a synonym instead for ὁμοίωσις, 'becoming like [God]'.[365] Philo outlines his anthropology at *De opificio mundi* 145-146, explaining that human beings are created with an incomplete affinity to God that they must seek to cultivate, growing in their likeness to the 'blessed nature' of which they are 'an imprint, a fragment (ἀπόσπασμα), a ray'.[366] The process of growing in virtue for Philo is a process of growing in god-likeness.[367] Therefore, when he writes that 'χάρις too is οἰκεῖον to God alone', Philo is not suggesting that the ability to express χάρις is limited to God alone; rather, he is suggesting that the righteous human being's growth in divine οἰκείωσις will also mean growth in one's ability to engage virtuously in χάρις relationships—both with the divine

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[363] Lucian offers an interesting parallel in *Sac.* 2. 1-5, 3. 1-6, where he remarks on the absurdity of human beings thinking they could ever put divinity in their debt.

[364] Lévy (2009) 147.

[365] Lévy (2009) 147-148. Cf. Ramelli (2014), esp. 119-120.

[366] Note the similar language used by Epictetus at *Disc*. 2. 8. 11, 'You are the leading work of God; you are a fragment (ἀπόσπασμα) of God; you have in yourself a piece of him', as well as his understanding of the 'kinship' of humanity and God, *Disc.* 1. 9. See Tobin (1983) 92, for Philo's Platonising interpretation of the Stoic language of ἀπόσπασμα.

[367] Cf. Zeller (1990) 83: 'Tugend immer schon durch das göttliche Element im Menschen ermöglicht ist'.

and with other human beings.[368] The fact that χάρις is 'proper' to God alone means that, for God alone, χάρις is an inherent and self-generated part of his nature. God is the only being in Philo's world who can truly give something 'not in response to anything', thinking simply 'that to be beneficent was incumbent on his blessed and happy nature'.[369] But Philo is clear that God's χάρις in his creation is specifically directed towards humanity—the 'species' whom he has created with the capacity for divine οἰκείωσις:

> τοῖς γοῦν ζητοῦσι, τίς ἀρχὴ γενέσεως, ὀρθότατα ἄν τις ἀποκρίνοιτο, ὅτι ἀγαθότης καὶ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν ἐχαρίσατο τῷ μετ᾽ αὐτὸν γένει.[370]
>
> So then, to those who seek the origin of creation, one may most correctly give the answer, that it is the goodness and the χάρις of God, which he has given as an act of χάρις to the species just after him.

While he has described creation in terms of God's giving 'the cosmos to the cosmos, and its parts to themselves and to each other',[371] Philo is clear here that the primary recipients of the gift of creation are the human beings capable of responding to God's χάρις in kind —those 'just after him' or, in Septuagintal language, 'made in his likeness'.[372] Among all of God's creation, only the human being can, like Noah, recognise the giver behind the gift and respond with the εὐχαριστία that enacts a real, mutual χάρις relationship between the creature and the creator.[373]

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[368] Note the implication here that any true act of inter-human χάρις also originates with God. While Strabo and other Graeco-Roman authors speak of the gods' inspiration of good χάρις practices among people (Section 1.3.4.), the necessity and immediacy of divine involvement in human χάρις in Philo's account is strongly Jewish.

[369] Phi. *Deus* 108.

[370] Phi. *Leg.* 3. 78

[371] Phi. *Deus* 107.

[372] See Tobin (1983) 57-77 for Philo's Platonic interpretation of Gen. 1. 26-27.

[373] Zeller (1990) 72 rightly concludes: 'Erlösung besteht letztlich, könnte man sagen, in der dankbaren Anerkennung des alles bewirkenden Schöpfers'.

2.2.2. The Beggar and the Barren: Participant Responses to Divine χάρις

If Philo does indeed envision a true χάρις relationship between God and a righteous human being like Noah, what does he mean by insisting that the creature 'has no χάρισμα of its own' that it can offer the divine? If his distinction between χάρις and χάρισμα is parallel, for instance, with Seneca's differentiation between *gratia* and *beneficium*, then Philo would be suggesting that the human being cannot offer God anything beyond gratitude, and according to Seneca this would not be a true χάρις relationship. One need not assume, of course, that Philo is working according to Seneca's assessment of what constitutes a true relationship of χάρις; however, as I have already suggested, Philo's point in saying that the creature possesses no χάρισμα is not to suggest that there is no reification of χάρις he can offer to the divine and that he is limited instead only to feeling grateful. Rather, Philo's point is that any gifts a righteous person might offer to God in order to express χάρις in return must always be recognised as having been enabled by divine χάρις to begin with and as only ever being offered in return for his generosity, never as an initiatory act. As McFarland puts it, 'divine *omni*-causality is axiomatic' for Philo's understanding, both of the world as a whole and of human ethics.[374] Philo does indeed envision a variety of specific ways in which a human being ought to respond to God's χάρις and thereby grow in his οἰκείωσις to the divine. As for Seneca, because the good of a χάρις interaction is defined by the relationship between the participants, the comparative value of the things exchanged—and the participants' respective wealth and poverty—become relativised. A human being can never begin to

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[374] McFarland (2012) 118, emphasis added. Cf. Barclay (2008a) 147: 'It would be hard to find stronger expressions of the *priority* of divine grace: any hint that human activity was a prior cause of virtue or spiritual vision would suggest to Philo the grossest impiety'.

approach balanced reciprocity in his relationship with God. God, however, chooses to be pleased (to 'see' χάρις) in the εὐχαριστία, devotion, and sacrifices of his worshippers. He even chooses to call them friends when they are attempting to worship him 'for his own sake' and not merely for how they can instrumentalise his favour for personal benefit. Therefore, human beings can and should see themselves as participants in a real, mutual relationship of χάρις with God, and they should seek to enact any means that they can to express that χάρις towards him.

Elsewhere in Philo's corpus, he is very clear that simply acknowledging God's χάρις and feeling gratitude for it are insufficient for a truly virtuous response to divine beneficence. For instance, in *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit*, Philo extracts the first two words of God's speech to Abraham in Genesis 15.9 and uses them as the starting point for a reflection on how one should respond to the abundant χάρις of the divine:

> 'λάβε μοι'· βραχεῖα μὲν ἡ λέξις, πολλὴ δὲ ἡ δύναμις· ἐμφαίνει γὰρ οὐκ ὀλίγα.[375]
>
> 'Take for me'—a short phrase, but very powerful; for it signifies not a few things.

First, Philo considers the imperative 'λάβε':

> πρῶτον μέν, ἴδιον, φησίν, οὐδὲν ἔχεις ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ' ὅ τι ἂν νομίσῃς ἔχειν, ἕτερος παρέσχηκεν. ἐξ οὗ συνάγεται ὅτι θεοῦ τοῦ διδόντος κτήματα πάντα, ἀλλ' οὐ τῆς μεταίτου καὶ τὰς χεῖρας εἰς τὸ λαβεῖν προτεινούσης γενέσεως.[376]

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[375] Phi. *Her.* 102-103.

[376] Phi. *Her*. 103-104. Ryu (2015) 91-92 points out that the specific gifts of God Philo is considering here are the three ἐνεργεῖαι of soul, speech, and sensation. Philo contrasts the virtuous response of seeing 'all epistemic capacities as gifts from God' with that of the family of Cain, who 'consider such things as dependent entirely on the human self'. Philo's goal in this passage, according to Ryu, is 'to express the idea that the conferral of gifts of knowledge is a vital part of God's activity of implanting or impregnating the human soul with virtues'. Niehoff (2010) 42 notes that Philo's 'overriding emphasis on divine impregnation, which replaces human epistemology, distinguishes Philo among Alexandrian Platonists'.

> First, says [God], you have no good thing of your own, but whatever you suppose you have, another has given it to you. From which it follows that all things are the possession of God who gives them, and not of the beggarly creation who stretches out his hands to take them.

So far, we essentially have the same point that we have seen Philo make above. Here God affirms that he wants his creation actively to accept his gifts, to keep stretching out their hands in an acknowledgement of their otherwise beggarly status.[377] Then, however, he continues his instruction, elaborating on the dative of interest, 'μοι':

> δεύτερον δέ, κἂν λάβῃς, λάβε μὴ σεαυτῷ, δάνειον δὲ ἢ παρακαταθήκην νομίσας τὸ δοθὲν τῷ παρακαταθεμένῳ καὶ συμβαλόντι ἀπόδος, πρεσβυτέραν χάριν χάριτι νεωτέρᾳ, προκατάρχουσαν ἀντεκτινούσῃ δικαίως καὶ προσηκόντως ἀμειψάμενος.[378]
>
> And secondly, if you do take, don't take for yourself, but think of the thing given as a loan or a trust, and give it back to the one who entrusted it to you and helped you out with it, returning χάρις for χάρις—a younger for the older, one requiting for the one initiating—as is just and suitable.

Philo's language here evokes the Deuteronomic calls to generosity in the Septuagint.[379] But here, instead of commanding his people to be generous, as in Deuteronomy 15, God is setting the example of how one responds to 'the poor and needy' among his people. Having just reminded Abraham that his status before God is that of a beggar with outstretched hands, God affirms his own abundant generosity and willingness to 'loan' his

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[377] On the necessity of divine impregnation of virtue, see also Phi. *Leg.* 3. 104, 180; *Cher.* 57; *Dei.* 60, 147; *Deus.* 5; *Mut.* 134, 144; *Somn.* 1. 200. Cf. Philo's conception of the divine midwife at *Migr.* 34-35, 139-142; *Congr.* 129-132.

[378] Phi. *Her.* 104.

[379] Especially Deut. 15. 8-11.

possessions freely and 'entrust' them into those same outstretched hands.[380] This picture shows God's generosity as one that is focussed on 'helping out' the beggar and relieving his destitution.[381]

What is more, the effectiveness of this 'loan' or 'trust' is shown precisely by what Philo's God asks his recipient then to do with his gifts. Because, as we saw with Noah, the human being can uniquely see and respond to the giver behind the gift of creation, he can also receive that gift in such a way as to participate in the relationship initiated by the giver—he can 'take' it 'for' the giver. The recipient is returning the goodwill of the giver when he receives the gift specifically as an expression of that goodwill. God's χάρις will always be the 'elder' of the two, 'the one making the first beginning'; but one of the most wonderful gifts of χάρις that he has offered to human beings is that he has created them with the ability to return his χάρις. Although any material manifestation of that χάρις (any χάρισμα) is on the one hand just a return to God of one of his own possessions, yet when that return is made from a motivation of genuine goodwill—when it is offered to him 'for

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[380] Völker (1938) 246 summarises Philo's interpretation of the celebrated faith of Abraham as follows: 'Der Glaube ist überzeugt von Gottes Existenz und Vorsehung, er sieht in Gott die letzte Ursache, die neidlos alles Gute dem Menschen schenkt'. McFarland (2012) 109-114 expands on the fertility of the Abrahamic narrative for Philo, as Philo repeatedly treats the patriarch's geographical wanderings as an allegory for his developing relationship with God.

[381] By way of comparison, Jim (2014) 75 points out in regards to Greek religion that 'unlike an economic debt, a state which debtors want to be free of and to settle completely, it is desirable to remain in a relation of mutual indebtedness with divine benefactors'. Similarly, Jim (2014) 23: 'The χάρις relation between god and man is never a straightforward matter of give-and-take, and…the idea of reciprocity provides a relevant but inadequate understanding of gift-giving in ancient Greece'.

his own sake'[382]—a new χάρις has been generated and expressed.[383] The human being now "has" something he can genuinely offer to God, matching the intent of the original *beneficium* from the divine. Philo does not say in this passage whether the human being should ever stop thinking of himself as a beggar in relation to God; but at the very least, the righteous 'friend' of God is now a beggar ennobled by the 'trust' of χάρις of which he is now executor, because of the initiatory χάρις of the divine.

Loans and trusts offer one useful metaphor for the creative, even 'impregnating' χάρις of God. At the beginning of *Quod Deus immutabilis sit*, Philo uses two examples of literal supernatural impregnations—those resulting in the births of Isaac and of Samuel—in order to show what returning χάρις to God looks like in practice. Philo opens his essay with praise for both Abraham and Hannah for their example of 'perfect virtue' in offering their sons back to God—in the case of the former, sacrificially, on the altar, and in the case of the latter, to serve in the temple. For Philo, offering these supernaturally conceived children back to the God who gave them is the perfect metaphor for virtuous

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[382] Unlike a human candidate for χάρις, God does not have any needs or desires that one might seek to meet, yet as we see from the examples considered below, the primary χαρίσματα that humans can offer to God include worship and obedience—both of which may be done either from a desire to please the divine as a friend, or, as suggested in *De Abrahamo*, from a desire simply to avoid punishment and attain blessing. This latter motivation, Philo suggests, is not repugnant to God, but it is only the former that can truly be called χάρις.

[383] Although Philo does not reference it here, his interpretation of Genesis 15. 9 fits beautifully with the prayer of King David in 1 Chronicles 29. In verse 12, David affirms, 'Wealth and glory are from you…almighty is your hand to raise up and to prevail over all things'. Then in verse 14, he expresses his wonder that God enables his people to make some return to him for his beneficence: 'Who am I, and who are my people, that we are able (ἰσχύσαμεν) to be so bold (προθυμηθῆναί) in offering you our praise? For all things are yours, and of your own have we given you'.

human χάρις towards God.[384] He apostrophises, 'Learn, if you are willing, O mind, to bear children not for yourself', but for the God whose χάρις enables the products of a virtuous mind to begin with.[385] Hannah in particular—whose name, Philo reminds us, means 'her χάρις'—returned her child to the God from whom she received him, 'deeming no good thing her own, which was not divine χάρις'.[386] In reflection on this example, Philo asks,

> τίνι γὰρ εὐχαριστητέον ἄλλῳ πλὴν θεῷ; διὰ τίνων δὲ ὅτι μὴ διὰ τῶν ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ δοθέντων; οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄλλων εὐπορῆσαι δυνατόν. χρεῖος δ᾽ οὐδενὸς ὢν κελεύει προσφέρειν αὐτῷ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ δι᾽ ὑπερβολὴν τῆς πρὸς τὸ γένος ἡμῶν εὐεργεσίας· μελετήσαντες γὰρ εὐχαριστητικῶς ἔχειν καὶ τιμητικῶς αὐτοῦ καθαρεύσομεν

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[384] Barclay (2015) 218 cites Phi. *Spec.* 1. 10 as proof that 'Philo considers it true at a literal level that every human birth has its origin not in the human parents but in the Cause of all that comes into being'. Divine begetting is especially clear, however, in the scriptural stories of barren mothers, such as Sarah and Hannah; and 'when the texts are interpreted allegorically, this principle is also applied to the "birth" of virtue, thought, or happiness within the human soul'. Cf. Zeller (1990) 79-83.

[385] Phi. *Deus* 4. For Morris (1987) 887-888, this is the major point of contrast between Philo and his contemporary Stoics: 'The Stoics referred a man to his own resources; according to Philo, man lacks the capacity to set himself free from sensuality, since he is a sensual creature; for this he requires the help of God. It is God who plants and fosters the virtues in man's soul. Only the man who honours God and surrenders himself to his influence can attain to perfection'. Cf. Ryu (2015) 92, n. 55. 'Referred to his own resources' is somewhat misleading, however. Frede and Long (2011) 85 helpfully clarify the basic Stoic position on how humans can attain virtue: 'The world down to the smallest detail is governed by a good and provident God, and…he has also arranged things in such a way that, unless we are going to enslave ourselves, no force or power in the world can force our will not to make the right choices, not even God himself'. According to Frede and Long, this is 'for the first time in history, a notion of a free will', and yet they stress the importance of balancing our understanding of this notion of human agency with a recognition of the Stoic commitment to the minute governance of divine providence over all human situations. At the same time, the Stoic position on God's involvement in human virtue is stated purely negatively (nothing 'can force our will *not* to make the right choices'), whereas Philo's account requires the direct intervention of the 'impregnating' God in order for any positive growth to be seen.

[386] Phi. *Deus* 5.

> ἀδικημάτων ἐκνιψάμενοι τὰ καταρρυπαίνοντα τὸν βίον ἔν τε λόγοις καὶ ἐννοίαις καὶ ἔργοις.[387]
>
> For to whom else besides God ought one to make an offering of responsive χάρις; and with what, except what has been given by him? For it is not possible for there to be an abundance of anything else. And without any need of them, he orders his own things to be brought to him, because of the overflow of his benefaction towards our species. For as we practice how to treat him with responsive χάρις and with respect, we will purify ourselves from acts of injustice, washing off the things which defile life in words and thoughts and deeds.

When Hannah dedicates her not-yet-conceived son to temple service in 1 Samuel 1,[388] she does so entirely on her own initiative. The Septuagint says she 'vowed a vow' (ηὔξατο εὐχήν) to the Lord: 'If you will look down and observe the humiliation of your servant and remember (μνησθῇς) me and give (δῷς) to your servant a male seed, I also will give (δώσω) him to be an offering (δοτόν) before you until the day of his death'.[389] Abraham, however, was directly commanded by God to offer up Isaac on a sacrificial altar.[390] Although God then stopped Abraham from going through with the sacrifice, Philo uses the fact that God commanded the offering in the first place to reflect on why God would command dedications, sacrifices, and thank offerings to begin with. Of course God has no need of anything his creation can offer him: all the expressions of χάρις that they can

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[387] Phi. *Deus* 7. Throughout this thesis, I regularly translate εὐχαριστέω and its cognates as 'responsive χάρις' or 'to respond to χάρις'. In this way, I hope to recapture the connection between the two Greek terms that is lost when we translate them as 'grace' and 'thanksgiving'.

[388] Discussed at greater length in Section 2.3.

[389] 1 Samuel 1. 11 (LXX).

[390] McFarland (2016) 90-91 reflects on Philo's designation of Abraham as the patriarch who '*learns* virtue' (as opposed to Jacob who 'acquires virtue by *practice*' and Isaac, who was given virtue 'from *birth*'). See especially *Abr.* 49-50, 79-80. Abraham depends for his instruction on God's direct revelation of himself, and 'as the one who achieves virtue through instruction, Abraham is the model for all proselytes'. Paul puts Abraham to a similar use in his letters to the Romans and Galatians (see especially Section 4.3.). On this theme in Philo, cf. Zeller (1990) 86-87. For a much more in-depth discussion of the role of the patriarchs in Philo's writing, see Böhm (2005).

possibly offer him are already at his disposal. Instead, Philo asserts, it is precisely because of the overflow (ὑπερβολήν) of his χάρις that God commands these acts of worship. The command itself is an extra χάρις of God towards humanity in particular: it is the overflow of his benefaction 'towards our species', πρὸς τὸ γένος ἡμῶν. From no other species does God expect χάρις or expressions of that χάρις.[391] Why would he order humans to worship him in this way? Precisely because, Philo says, learning to respond to God with χάρις and with the respect that he inherently deserves actually does something beneficial for the human being himself. For Philo, it is this very devotion and gratitude to God—worshiping him 'for his own sake'—that purifies a person and makes him fit to approach the holy deity. Philo continues by comparing this inner purification to a ritual bath before entering a temple. He points out that it is forbidden for 'the non-soul body' (τὸ σῶμα ἄψυχον) even to touch the soulless (ἀψύχων) temple stones unless it has first been cleansed and purified.[392] Can it be that an impure soul with no intention to repent (μὴ μέλλων μετανοήσειν) would dare approach the perfectly pure God? Only those who have been purified internally can approach God with joy (γεγηθώς), he concludes.[393] For this reason, God's command that humans show respect for his χάρις (τιμητικῶς) and return it by means of thank offerings (εὐχαριστητικῶς) is actually yet another expression of his overflowing χάρις towards them, as it allows them to purify themselves from the defilements of the soul which disqualify them from coming into his presence. Returning χάρις to God is not only an act of imitation, but also one of purification. A relationship of

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[391] Cf. Phi. *Leg.* 3. 78, quoted in Section 2.2.1., in which God gives creation as an expression of his χάρις 'to the species just after him', τῷ μετ' αὐτὸν γένει.

[392] Phi. *Deus* 8.

[393] Phi. *Deus* 9.

χάρις with God draws the human being into the divine presence. As the following section makes clear, God's χάρις towards the human species serves ultimately to enable their union with him.

As would any of his Graeco-Roman contemporaries (and, as I argue in the following chapters, Paul too), Philo assumes that divine χάρις necessitates some sort of response in kind from its recipients. Otherwise the human recipient would be instrumentalising the χάρις of God, squandering it without any acknowledgement or gratitude for the divine giver.[394] Philo attributes the entire created cosmos to the χάρις of God towards humankind. While it may be tempting at times to read Philo on the 'works' side of a Pauline faith/works distinction, on this issue, McFarland helpfully reminds us:

> For Philo every human action—or indeed, 'work'—must be understood within the context of divine causation and action because God is the sole cause of all things…Divine omni-causality is axiomatic, as indeed for Philo *everything* is a gift from God. Thus, to simplify something that is not simple, we cannot say 'Paul and Grace, but Philo and Works', as for Philo it is *always* God's gifting which undergirds all virtuous human activity.[395]

In light of God's gracious gifting of all things, Philo urges the importance of participating actively in the relationship God initiates with his χάρις. Like Seneca's true *beneficium*, which is always seeking to go beyond the mere duty of reciprocity (Section 1.2.3.), Philo's righteous human recipient of χάρις engages in a continual process of responding to God's χάρις with greater gratitude and respect, attempting never to take the gifts of the

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[394] Recall the importance of μνῆμα in the Stobaean doxographer's account of good χάρις practices (Section 1.3.3.) and the praise given to Strabo's Eteocles for his pious acknowledgement of the Χάριτες' role in his prosperous χάρις relationships (Section 1.3.4.).

[395] McFarland (2012) 118. Cf. Zeller (1990) 72: 'Das ist die Konsequenz der Allwirksamkeit des Schöpfers, daß jede anscheinende Tätigkeit des Menschen zum Guten in Wahrheit Tat Gottes in creatio continua ist'.

divine for granted, but instead to become increasingly pleasing to him in every way.[396] Returning God's χάρις includes acknowledging him as the source of all true χάρις, gratefully accepting the plurality of his gifts to humanity, and respectfully dedicating them to his service. Marvellously, this last act of return, instead of responding to any desire on God's part for instrumental goods humans can give him, manifests yet another of God's acts of χάρις towards humankind, for practicing respect and gratitude towards the divine leads to inner purification in Philo's scheme, enabling the soul to approach God without fear and even with joy. In the following section, I take a closer look at Philo's favourite exemplar of this divine-human χάρις, Hannah, the mother of Samuel. Hannah's mystical experience of being 'filled' with God's χάρις in the course of her vow of dedication illustrates the powerful impact of the 'overflow' of that χάρις, both on her and on third-party observers. As depictions of the Χάριτες consistently reach out to their viewers to draw in new participants to their dance, so Philo's image of the ecstatic, χάρις-filled Hannah draws his reader to follow her joyful approach to God.

2.3. Hannah, The 'Sober Drunkard': Initiatory and Responsive χάρις Collapsed in Divine Possession

Philo mentions Hannah only five times throughout his corpus.[397] As we have already seen, however, he holds her in the highest regard. Besides her association with Abraham in *Quod Deus immutabilis sit*, she is also held up as the mother of a prophet and

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[396] Phi. *Deus* 7.

[397] Phi. *Deus* 5, 10 ff.; *Ebr.* 145-153; *Mut.* 143; *Som.* 1. 254.

as a prophetess in her own right at the end of *De somniis*.[398] In *De mutatione nominum* she is identified by the meaning of her name in Hebrew, 'Hannah, that is, χάρις'; and in *De ebrietate* Philo allegorises this etymology in a startling and beautiful description of the praying Hannah from 1 Samuel 1 as 'the soul filled with divine χάρις'.[399] While Philo's main purpose in the passage is to uphold the superiority of scriptural divine possession over the popular appeal of Dionysian mysticism,[400] his allegorisation of the scene in which Hannah is falsely accused of drunkenness also allows him to reflect on the effects of divine χάρις both on the virtuous individual devoted to her God and on third party observers, such as the servant of the priest Eli who mistakes her state for one of inebriation.[401] In Philo's discussion, he simultaneously appropriates and undermines Dionysian ideas about religious ecstasy and union with the divine. The 'foolish boy' of the story attests to the powerful impression that divine χάρις leaves on those who observe it, and his 'reckless' response provides a foil for Philo's reader.[402] While Eli and his servant assume Hannah's heightened emotional state must have been induced through alcohol, Philo interprets Hannah's rebuke of the boy as a prophetic utterance resulting from what he calls 'sober inebriation'—a true ecstatic state in which the worshipper is

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[398] *Som.* 1. 254. See Sly (1990) 177 on Hannah's virtue as it is portrayed more generally throughout Philo's writings.

[399] *Mut.* 143; *Ebr.* 146. In the LXX, the only reference to χάρις in Hannah's story is her response to Eli's blessing, in which she speaks of herself in the third person: 'Your handmaid has found χάρις in your eyes', 1 Sam. 1. 18.

[400] On the popularity of mystery cults in Philo's day, see Klauck (1995) 81-152.

[401] Throughout his retelling, Philo refers to the LXX version of the story, in which it is one of Eli's servants who asks Hannah, at 1 Sam. 1. 14, 'How long are you going to be drunk? Throw away your wine, and remove yourself from the presence of the Lord'. In the Masoretic text, the speaker is Eli himself.

[402] As with his interpretations of many other events from Jewish scriptures, Philo gives this story, 'eine allgemein-menschliche Bedeutung', to use the words of Zeller (1990) 75.

filled with the love, wisdom, or in this case, the χάρις of the divine.[403] For Philo, the sight of one in this privileged state should inspire longing in its observer, not laughter.

As a whole, *De ebrietate* is concerned with the question whether the wise man ever gets drunk. In his previous essay, *De plantatione*, Philo engaged with a number of philosophical views on the topic, and now he turns to the teaching of Moses.[404] Among his scriptural exemplars of sobriety, one of the most prominent is the prophet Samuel, who, according to Hannah's vow in 1 Samuel 1. 11 (LXX), was an abstainer.[405] With his characteristic allegorising hermeneutic, Philo explains that Samuel is a type for 'the mind rejoicing only in the service and ministrations of God', 'enrolled among the ranks of the divine army which he will never leave'; his vow of sobriety, therefore, exemplifies the utter lack of interest on the part of the ideal νοῦς in all things 'profane', 'unclean', or 'done in accordance with vain and empty opinions'.[406] For Philo, Samuel represents the completely spiritualised νοῦς, which has 'abandoned the ranks of mortal things' and 'remains steadily and constantly with those which are imperishable'.[407] Such an elevated

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[403] Cf. Phi. *Somn.* 2. 232 and *Contempl.* 85 for fillings of divine love. Lewy (1929) remains the most comprehensive discussion of the theme of 'sober inebriation', which appears at Phi. *Opif.* 71; *Leg.* 3. 82; *Fug.* 166; *Praem.* 122; *Contempl.* 85; *Prob.* 13-14; *QG* 2. 68.

[404] Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 1. Friesen (2015) 50, n. 24 points out the strong Stoic resonances of Philo's arguments, most obvious in his citation of an argument of Zeno which is also quoted by Seneca in his roughly contemporary *Epistle* 83. For discussion of Seneca's letter, see Richardson-Hay (2001). For a consideration of Philo's argument within the context of Platonism and Gnosticism, see Elsas (1980) 199-202.

[405] The Masoretic Text does not include the phrase, 'wine and strong drink he shall not drink', as does the LXX and, according to Friesen (2016) 454-461, as 4QSam likely did as well. Friesen sees this textual variation as reflective of ongoing debate amongst Hebrew Bible interpreters regarding the place of alcohol in the life of the holy man and 'shifting conceptions of the interrelationship between Nazirite, prophet, and priest'.

[406] Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 143-145.

[407] Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 144.

spiritual status, however, is impossible, Philo explains, without divine χάρις.[408] This is where Hannah enters the picture. Each time Philo mentions Hannah across his *oeuvre*, he reminds his reader of the etymology of her Hebrew name, meaning 'χάρις' or 'her χάρις'; for Philo, Hannah as the mother of Samuel represents the necessity of divine χάρις to enable the νοῦς to leave behind the concerns of materiality and ascend mystically to achieve union with the divine.[409] Ironically, however, when Hannah experiences something like this mystical ascension in Philo's interpretation of 1 Samuel, she appears to those around her as 'a drunken woman', μεθύουσαν.[410] Philo attributes her misleading appearance to the fact that she is experiencing a state of prophetic possession that, due to her piety, can have nothing to do with literal intoxication.

He begins with the explanation:

> χάριτος δ' ἥτις ἂν πληρωθῇ ψυχή, γέγηθεν εὐθὺς καὶ μειδιᾷ καὶ ἀνορχεῖται· βεβάκχευται γάρ, ὡς πολλοῖς τῶν ἀνοργιάστων μεθύειν καὶ παρακινεῖν καὶ ἐξεστάναι ἂν δόξαι.[411]
>
> Whatever soul is filled with χάρις, it rejoices at once, both smiling and leaping up to dance; for it begins to act like a bacchant, so as to appear to many of the uninitiated to be drunken, and intoxicated, and ecstatic.

This passage is unusual among Philo's works for a variety of reasons, most obviously for the connection it draws between the experience of divine χάρις and behaviour typically associated with ritual intoxication. It is not an obvious connection to make, as χάρις is not

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[408] Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 145.

[409] Goodenough (1935) provides the classic treatment of Philonic mysticism, drawing numerous parallels with Orphic and Iranian mystery cults, and arguing for a complete initiatory system motivating Philo's mystical interpretations of various scriptural figures such as Hannah. More recent and somewhat less speculative studies include Winston (1982), (1996); Noack (2000).

[410] 1 Samuel 1. 13 (LXX).

[411] Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 146. Greek text from Colson and Whitaker (1930).

often mentioned in literary or inscriptional references to mystery cults.[412] With some regularity, however, Philo does associate experiences of divine 'filling' or possession more generally with ecstatic, Bacchic-like worship. In *De vita contemplativa*, Philo describes the dance of the pious Therapeutae as that of those 'having drunk the unmixed wine of divine love (θεοφιλοῦς), just as in the Bacchic rituals'.[413] Similarly, he describes the νοῦς that achieves the *visio Dei* as 'becoming possessed by a sober kind of intoxication, like those in a Corybantian ecstasy'.[414] This paradoxical 'sober intoxication' also characterises those who have 'drunk of heavenly wisdom undiluted',[415] or 'gulped deep drafts of God's unmixed beneficent power (εὐεργέτιδος δυνάμεως)'.[416] Across these various references, divine wisdom, love, and generosity all intersect.[417] 'Wisdom's guide, love' leads the νοῦς to its ecstatic vision in *De opificio mundi.*[418] Hannah too is connected

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[412] χάρις and its cognates do not even appear in the index of Greek words in Burkert (1987) 172-174.

[413] *Contempl.* 85. At *Deus* 10, Philo uses the same adjective, θεοφιλής (God-loving, loved by God), to describe Hannah.

[414] *Opif.* 71.

[415] *Fug.* 166; cf. *Prob.* 13-14.

[416] *Praem.* 122.

[417] In his discussion of *De ebrietate*, Lewy (1929) 7 draws attention to the liquid imagery by which Philo associates an ecstatic experience of divine χάρις with the specific divine gift of the prophetic πνεῦμα: 'Die Seele, die von der Gnade erfüllt wird wie von einem göttlichen berauschenden Trank, gerät in Ekstase und erhält die Kraft, prophetische Worte zu sprechen. Die Charis wird hier als ein göttliches Fluidum geschildert, das in den Sterblichen eindringt und ihn inspiriert, übernimmt also die Funktionen des Pneuma'. The same theme can be detected in Christian writings, such as Ephesians 5. 18 and Acts 2. 13-17, both of which contrast drunkenness with being 'filled' with the πνεῦμα of God.

[418] *Opif.* 70.

with each of these ideas, as in *Quod Deus immutabilis sit* she is described as 'the gift of the wisdom of God, whose name means χάρις'.[419]

As Philo's description of Hannah goes on to make clear, the 'sober' part of 'sober intoxication' refers purely to the fact that there is no alcohol involved—otherwise, there is nothing sober about this intoxicated behaviour:

> φιλεῖ γὰρ τοῖς θεοφορήτοις οὐχ ἡ ψυχὴ μόνον ἐγείρεσθαι καὶ ὥσπερ ἐξοιστρᾶν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐνερευθὲς εἶναι καὶ πεπυρωμένον τῆς ἔνδον ἀναχεούσης καὶ χλιαινούσης χαρᾶς τὸ πάθος εἰς τὸ ἔξω διαδιδούσης· ὑφ᾽ οὗ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀφρόνων ἀπατηθέντες τοὺς νήφοντας μεθύειν ὑπετόπασαν.[420]
>
> For the soul of those possessed by God is generally not only raised up, but is even as it were made wild, and also the body becomes somewhat ruddy and as if it were on fire, with the joy poured out on the inside and warming up, passing the experience of it onto the outside; by which many foolish people are deceived, and suspect sober people of being drunk.

Courtney Friesen reads this passage, along with Philo's other discussions of 'sober inebriation', as evidence of an anti-Dionysian apologetic across Philo's *oeuvre*, in which Philo intends to show his reader the superiority of the true divine possession attained by virtuous Jewish exemplars in contrast with the false, wine-induced ecstasy promised by Bacchic ritual: 'His aim was to produce pride in Jewish piety among those who might

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[419] *Deus* 5.

[420] Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 147. In *Virt.* 217, Philo similarly describes Abraham's remarkable appearance and impact on others when he is possessed by the spirit of God. The language of χάρις does not appear there, however, and the possessed human is male, which may contribute to the much more staid and respectable demeanour he is given in contrast with that of the praying Hannah. A notable, non-Jewish parallel to Philo's description of Bacchic-like ecstasy comes in Plut. *Mor.* 432e-f. Mackie (2014) 156 calls this passage a discussion of 'the psychosomatic effects of divine inspiration and spirit indwelling'. Just like Philo, Plutarch imagines prophetic inspiration as having a similar effect on the body as Bacchic drinking customs. Plutarch, in turn, cites Euripides *Bacchae* 298 for the assertion that 'there is much prophecy to be found in Bacchic revelry and a mind outside itself'.

otherwise be enamoured with Dionysiac religion and Greek symposia'.[421] Hannah's state of ecstasy is a true and real experience of divine love and generosity rather than a false religious and emotional fervour brought about purely by means of ritual drink and dancing. On the other hand, the simile of Bacchic drunkenness also offers Philo a positive means of describing the emotional and physical effects of true divine possession.[422] As Hannah is 'filled' by divine χάρις, both her soul and her body are simultaneously and mutually transformed: she begins dancing and laughing,[423] and she glows with the blush of joy (χαρά).[424] Scott Mackie points out that Philo's 'biological explanation' for Hannah's 'ruddy' complexion unites 'interiority and exteriority' in Hannah's experience

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[421] Friesen (2013) 195. Stefanut (2017) 243-248 argues that Philo is motivated by political as well as religious concerns in his anti-Dionysian apologetics. 3 Macc. 2.27-32 records the attempt by Ptolemy IV Philopator, several generations before Philo, to force Alexandrian Jews to join their local Dionysian cults. During Philo's lifetime, anti-Semitism in Alexandria led to what Gambetti (2009) 11-12 has designated history's first *pogrom* (38-41 A.D.).

[422] As Stefanut (2017) 241 explains in discussion of Phi. *Contempl.* 89, 'Philo presents an apparent resemblance in form' between scriptural and Dionysian ecstasy, 'but a superiority in essence and content. If the Greek Scriptures inform the essential character and actions of [Jewish mystics], I believe the tapestry of Greek philosophy and the language of mystery cults is used only formally to make [them] more appealing and relevant for a Jewish Hellenistic audience'.

[423] *Ebr.* 1. 146.

[424] *Ebr.* 1. 147. As discussed in Section 1.3.1., in associating χάρις with χαρά, Philo stands within a long tradition that will continue in Christian thought. Cf. John Chrysostom's discussion of 2 Corinthians 1. 15 in *Homily 3 on 2 Corinthians*: '"That you might experience a second χάρις": What is the second χάρις? "That you might experience a double χάρις, both from my letters, and from my being present with you". By "χάρις", he means "χαρά"'.

of divine χάρις: 'corporality and spirituality are seamlessly joined, as Hannah sensually enacts the ecstatic passion of her inner self'.[425]

As Hannah's passionate, emotional participation in divine χάρις so visibly affects her physical body, it also exerts a powerful force on the 'uninitiated', 'foolish' observer. Philo does not mince words in his rebuke of Eli's servant: he allegorises the boy as 'any restless novelty-seeker, always ready to mock the good',[426] and he applauds Hannah's stern response to her questioner:

> ἀποκρίνεται πρὸς τὸν νεωτεροποιὸν καὶ γέλωτα τίθεσθαι οἰόμενον τὸν σεμνὸν καὶ αὐστηρὸν αὐτῆς βίον· ὦ θαυμάσιε, 'γυνὴ ἡ σκληρὰ ἡμέρα ἐγώ εἰμι, καὶ οἶνον καὶ μέθυσμα οὐ πέπωκα, καὶ ἐκχεῶ τὴν ψυχήν μου ἐνώπιον κυρίου'· παμπόλλη γε παρρησία τῆς ψυχῆς, ἢ τῶν χαρίτων τοῦ θεοῦ πεπλήρωται.[427]
>
> She answers that reckless one, who thinks he will get a laugh out of her holy and austere life: O foolish one, 'I am a severe woman of the day,[428] and I have drunk no wine or strong drink, but I am pouring out my soul before the Lord'. Very great is the boldness of that soul which is filled with the χάριτες of God.

Hannah's bold response (παρρησία) to the servant proves her unimpeded mental acuity, which in turn confirms her ecstatic state to have been God-given, rather than alcohol-

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[425] Mackie (2014) 145-146. He continues: 'Hannah does not transcend her embodied existence in order to ascend to the vision. Rather, her sensual body cooperates perfectly with her masculine mind as she attains the *visio Dei*'. On the gendered identity of the νοῦς in Philo, see also Mattila (1996) 127.

[426] Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 146.

[427] Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 149.

[428] Consider Friesen (2015) 51-52, n. 28 for an alternative translation of this line and Philo's possible misreading of the LXX. Mackie (2014) 153 draws attention to the Stoic resonance of Hannah's assertion that she is a 'hard woman', though she has, just moments before, been 'smiling and dancing' with overwhelming joy. Cf. Sen. *Ep.* 23. 4-6: 'true joy is a stern matter…it is not cheerful'.

induced.[429] Hannah's ecstasy is a real union with the divine and a fully intelligent entrance into the noetic realm, possible only for one truly virtuous in God's sight.[430] It is important to note what Philo implies here: namely, that a Jewish servant—and one serving in the temple, no less—should have been able to recognise the signs of Hannah's divine possession.[431] Hannah's experience is not necessarily the daily or "normal" experience of participation in divine χάρις, but it is the natural culmination of it, and one that the servant should have been able to recognise and respect. Again, Philo's purpose is protreptic: Hannah's experience is not meant to be unique. She is an allegory for any soul 'filled with the χάριτες of God'. Philo's reader is to recognise this sort of ecstatic experience as available to anyone who 'completely consecrates the whole self to God'.[432]

This does not necessitate a transactional reading of the passage, however. Philo never suggests that God is "paying" Hannah for her virtue by giving her this experience of ecstatic possession. That would be absurd. Rather, for Hannah, the experience of being 'filled' with God's χάρις is simultaneous with her vow consecrating her not-yet-conceived son to God's service. It is in the process of 'pouring out her soul' that she also

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[429] Cf. Mackie (2014) 159: 'Despite her rapturous state, Hannah nevertheless maintains a sense of heightened cognitive acuity'. By contrast, Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 148, 'Those who are drunk with the drunkenness that comes from wine remain to the end as those never having tasted wisdom, even though they pine with hunger for it and are famished for the lack of it'.

[430] Friesen (2015) 62 sees Philo drawing inspiration in this passage from Hesiod's metaphor of the upward road leading toward virtue, Hes. *Op.* 287-292.

[431] Weaver (1973) 135-137 points to the Hebraic understanding of prophetic possession behind Philo's description of Hannah's experience, but helpfully clarifies that Philo is 'not as concerned with prophecy in terms of revelation and the psychology of inspiration as he is with the prophetic spirit as a means to and sustaining force of the spiritual life'.

[432] This is Philo's explanation, at *Ebr.* 1. 152, of the phrase, 'pouring out my soul before the Lord'. According to Weaver (1973) 134, Philo uses this story to draw out both 'the God-sent nature of the πνεῦμα of inspiration and the necessary moral condition of the recipient'.

experiences this mystical divine 'filling'. One could just as well say, it is only because she is filled with the χάριτες of God that she is able to make her prophetic vow to begin with. This interpretation accords with Philo's discussion of Hannah and Abraham in the previous section,[433] in which he suggested it is the overflow of God's χάρις itself that enables human beings to purify their souls, responding to his χάρις with acts of grateful consecration.[434] Hannah's participation in divine χάρις is simultaneously an active human response of εὐχαριστία, and a continual receipt of God's endless expressions of χάρις. She is continually being filled up and overflowing. Philo finishes his explanation of her 'sober intoxication' as follows:

> καίτοι γε ἐκεῖνοι μὲν τρόπον τινὰ μεθύουσιν οἱ νήφοντες τὰ ἀγαθὰ ἀθρόα ἠκρατισμένοι καὶ τὰς προπόσεις παρὰ τελείας ἀρετῆς δεξάμενοι.[435]
>
> And yet indeed these sober ones are in some sense intoxicated, having gulped down heaps of good things, and having received toasts from complete excellence.

This final application of the wine metaphor adds one last paradox to Hannah's experience. Not only is she simultaneously being 'filled up' and 'poured out' like a cup of God's boundless χάρις, but she has also been taking both huge gulps of his 'good things' and at the same time only mere 'toasts' or 'first sips' of the complete excellence that awaits her. Like Noah in Section 2.2.1., or the beggar in Section 2.2.2., the soul filled with divine χάρις has recognised all the good things in her life as expressions of the

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[433] *Deus* 5; quoted in Section 2.2.2.

[434] McFarland (2016) 60-61 seems to miss this when he argues that while no one can truly be "worthy" of God's χάρις in Philo's mind, yet God does choose to accommodate his gifts to the receptive ability of his creatures: 'God does not give according to his own infinite power but according to the capacity of the recipient'. While true, this statement does not take into account the fact that Philo attributes the 'capacity of the recipient' itself to God's χάρις.

[435] Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 148.

bountiful χάρις of God. Part of that recognition involves gulping down those expressions of χάρις like a drunkard. God wants his recipients to enjoy his gifts, and the first response of the virtuous soul is not immediately to seek to return them, but simply to gulp them down in grateful acceptance.[436] The more intoxicated one becomes, the stronger the desire for and love of the drink. For Hannah, the more she takes in of God's goodness, the more she longs for. This can be seen from her voluntary consecration of her longed-for son. If acts of devotion are themselves experiences of the 'overflow' of God's χάρις, then Hannah's vow to return the gift of her son is one more gulp of χάρις that draws her closer to an experience of 'complete excellence'. What is more, the final paradox in Philo's scheme is that every gulp of divine χάρις is also merely a 'first sip', in light of all the goodness yet to be tasted. In one sense, in her experience of 'sober inebriation', Hannah is brought to the point of highest human ecstasy, the *visio Dei*, as Philo makes clear by the end of his narrative.[437] Because of the infinity of the 'Uncreated One', however, even the fullest possible human experience of divine χάρις is still merely a first taste of the joys always yet to come.

Philo's ecstatic, 'sober inebriant', Hannah exemplifies the passionate, emotional relationality that is possible between creator and devoted creation. In Hannah's experience of divine possession, the time that might typically be understood to elapse

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[436] We might again compare Seneca's distinction between *gratia* and *beneficia*, *Ben.* 2. 33. 1, discussed in Section 1.2.3.: 'I accepted it exactly as he wished for me to accept it. He has what he sought, and the only thing which he sought. Therefore I am grateful'. For a mutual participant relationship to continue through time, some sort of return will also be necessary. But grateful acceptance must not be skipped over, and in the moment it is all that is required.

[437] Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 152. Some have suggested that Hannah's vision is not of God himself but of the mediating Logos, e.g. Winston (1986) 225. Mackie (2009) 34-36, however, argues that the adjective ἀγένητος, describing 'the Uncreated One' whom Hannah sees, almost certainly refers here to God himself.

between God's initiatory χάρις and her responsive χάρις collapses into a single, timeless moment of simultaneous gift, receipt, and return (or filling up and pouring out). This is all enabled by divine χάρις, but Hannah remains fully conscious and intentional throughout, unlike a literally inebriated bacchant. What is more, Hannah's participation in divine χάρις is so complete that it radiates from her 'poured out' soul in visible joy, which is also 'poured out', from her physical body.[438] The visibility of an individual's experience of divine χάρις, and its powerful impact on onlookers, is a theme that the following sections explore in consideration of Josephus' Moses. We should note before moving on, however, that the impact Hannah makes on her observer in this narrative is both visual and spoken. Philo's description of her experience is similarly both ekphrastic and protreptic. The joy that we, his readers, observe in Hannah, like the smiles of the Χάριτες in the previous chapter or, in coming chapters, Paul's self-depiction in his letters, inspires longing in those who understand its divine source. The servant boy who accuses her of drunkenness is harshly rebuked for his ignorance and disrespect, but his question does give Hannah the opportunity to clarify verbally what we as Philo's readers are meant to take away from her experience. Through her words, and Philo's further explanation, we understand that a true experience of divine possession cannot be induced by human methods. It will certainly never come by means of alcohol, and neither is it a "payment" God gives in return to those of outstanding virtue. Rather, God's χάρις as experienced through *eucharistic* consecration is an eternally self-generating and ever deepening experience of mutual, relational joy. It is only possible for those who intentionally participate in the

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[438] Mackie (2014) 151-152 comments on the influence of both Platonism and Stoicism on Philo's description of 'a significant aspect of Hannah's interiority, in which the felt movements of her soul are said to impel motion, both physically and metaphysically…In what probably represents a creative adaptation of Platonic metaphysical and psychological dualisms, her psychic movement transcends her embodied existence'.

divine χάρις relationship *both* by striving for virtue *and* by recognising God as that virtue's initial and ongoing source.

Philo offers the most mystical discussion of divine χάρις that I cover in this thesis. His description of Hannah highlights the emotional intensity at the peak of a divine-human χάρις relationship. Remarkably, even in this closest possible human experience of God, divine χάρις still reaches out through its recipient to draw in observers. We as Philo's readers are emotionally impacted by the sight of divine χάρις and then invited to participate in response to instruction. This pattern will persist in Josephus' narrative of the life of Moses in the following sections, and in Paul's emotional descriptions of divine χάρις in Chapters 3 and 4.

2.4. The Astonishing χάρις of Josephus' Moses

2.4.1. The Intended Audience for Josephus' Portrayal of Moses

In his series of articles on 'Josephus' Portrait of Moses', Louis Feldman points out that of all the characters in the Hebrew Bible, 'Moses was the one figure in the Jewish tradition who was well known to the pagan world'.[439] He was also a character who had come under considerable attack in anti-Jewish polemics, so for Josephus, he is one of the most important actors in the biblical story to portray in a good light for the primarily non-

[439] Feldman (1992a) 285.

Jewish audience of the *Antiquitates*.[440] Like Philo's Hannah, Josephus' Moses is a character visibly filled with the χάρις of God throughout his life. Unlike Philo, however, Josephus does not dwell on the interiority of a divine-human χάρις relationship.

Josephus' project is very different from that of Philo. In the *Legum allegoriae*, Philo writes primarily to fellow Jews in Alexandria.[441] Maren Niehoff details Philo's pioneering of 'a new path of religiously committed exegesis'[442]: 'Rejecting the critical, literary approach of his Jewish colleagues in Alexandria, Philo believed in the truth of the Biblical text and was eager to uncover hidden meanings in order to justify what would otherwise appear to be flaws'.[443] As part of his unique, allegorising hermeneutic, Philo also personalises scriptural stories, making biblical characters 'types' of the soul and often addressing his own or his reader's soul or mind directly.[444] Dieter Zeller insightfully comments: 'Dabei werden heilsgeschichtliche Themen allegorisch auf die Ebene des Einzelnen transponiert'.[445] As a result, while Philo holds up scriptural figures as uniquely

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[440] Feldman (1992a) 285: 'Because Moses had been reviled by several anti-Jewish writers, Josephus can be assumed to have felt a special need to paint a favorable picture of him'. Feldman particularly draws attention to the oft-repeated slander in anti-Jewish polemics that Moses was in fact a leper and was banished from Egypt for that reason, an attack which may influence the amount of time Josephus dedicates to praising Moses' physical appearance. See especially Feldman (1992a) 309-310. At *Mos.* 1. 1-4, Philo criticises Greek historians for having ignored Moses in their works, despite the fact that 'the glory of the laws he left behind has traveled throughout the whole inhabited world and made it even to the ends of the earth'.

[441] See especially Niehoff (2010); (2011) 134-139. My discussion of Philonic χάρις in Sections 2.2. and 2.3. focusses almost entirely on quotations from the *Legum allegoriae*.

[442] Niehoff (2011) 151.

[443] Niehoff (2010) para. 22.

[444] As in *Deus* 4, quoted in Section 2.2.2.: 'Learn, if you are willing, O mind, to bear children not for yourself'.

[445] Zeller (1990) 59.

exemplary in some respects, in his discussions of God's χάρις there is also a marked element of universalism. God showers his χάριτες on the human race as a whole, and any individual who truly seeks to honour God 'for his own sake' is welcomed as the friend of God, even as Abraham was.[446]

Josephus' presentation of divine χάρις, however, focusses more than does Philo's on specific manifestations of God's χάρις to individuals. In doing so, he presses the question, how should one respond when God grants a particular expression or gift of χάρις to one person, and not to another. This question is most important for Josephus in relation to the great lawgiver, Moses. In his narration, even before the time of Moses' birth, Josephus is at pains to show the special χάρις God intends for him: two prophecies foretell the child's birth, one reported to the Egyptian king by a sacred scribe, and one announced to Moses' father Amram in a dream.[447] Both promise that the child Moses will have 'a glory that will never be forgotten', 'a memory known to all, as long as time endures'. Josephus is not particularly concerned with why God chose Moses to be Israel's most famous leader and the one through whom the Jewish law would be given. On the one hand, it is central to his purpose in the *Antiquitates* to show that God always makes the just prosper and punishes the unjust;[448] therefore, he carefully highlights Moses' piety

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[446] Phi. *Abr.* 126-130, discussed at greater length in Section 2.2.1.

[447] Jos. *Ant.* 2. 205, 212-216. Both are additions to the biblical text.

[448] See Jos. *Ant.* 1. 14. Mason (1998) 94 identifies as one of the 'consistent themes of the narrative: God rewards virtue and punishes wickedness, always maintaining control of history to spare the righteous in spite of human designs'. Cf. Schwartz (2010) 92: 'The *Antiquities* were written to celebrate Moses, but also to show that when the Jews followed God's laws, they prospered, and when they neglected them they suffered'.

throughout his narrative.[449] On the other hand, as Josephus' account of the two prophecies makes clear, God's purpose to give Moses eternal glory 'as an expression of my χάρις' is determined well before the child's birth.[450] Although Josephus does not explicitly discuss God's initiatory χάρις as often as does Philo, his narrative makes clear that even in the case of 'the most virtuous of all people',[451] God makes the first move in the divine-human χάρις relationship.

Unlike Philo's *Legum allegoriae*, Josephus' *Antiquitates* is written primarily for a sympathetic gentile audience, a group of Roman readers who have expressed curiosity about the history and beliefs of the Jews, and are potentially open to adopting a 'closer association with Judean culture'.[452] Josephus wishes 'actively to commend Judaism' to his Roman readers, specifically as 'an option in the philosophical/constitutional

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[449] Hata (1987) 184-185 notes that Josephus conveniently "forgets" Moses' notorious murder of an Egyptian in Exodus 2. 11-15. Hata concludes that for Josephus, 'being acutely aware of the anti-Moses and anti-Jewish sentiments harbored by the anti-Semites in Alexandria at this time, this incident must have been too problematic to record'. Boesenberg (2013) 256 similarly comments on Josephus' omission of the infamous golden calf episode of Exodus 32, 'in order to maintain his image of Moses as self-controlled' and perhaps also to avoid the image of Israelite idolatry.

[450] Jos. *Ant.* 2. 216, in which God tells Amram: ἐμοῦ τοῦτο χαριζομένου σοί τε καὶ τοῖς ἐκ σοῦ γενησομένοις.

[451] Jos. *Ant.* 2. 205: ἀρετῇ τε πάντας ὑπερβαλεῖ καὶ δόξαν ἀείμνηστον κτήσεται.

[452] Thus argues Steve Mason in his persuasive chapter, Mason (1998), after surveying and critiquing the main trends in 20th century scholarship regarding Josephus' audience and motivation. Cf. Damgaard (2008) 234. Scholars who read the *Antiquitates* as an apologetic directed primarily towards hostile gentiles include Rajak (1983) 226-227; Sterling (1992) 298-308. I agree with Mason, however, that Josephus cannot have expected a hostile audience to persevere through all twenty volumes of the *Antiquitates.* Rather, Josephus' apologetic aim seems to consist in dispelling the anti-Semitic slander to which his relatively sympathetic audience has been exposed and wishes to hear him give an answer. For scholars who believe Josephus' primary audience are fellow Jews, see Lacqueur (1920) 258-261; Rasp (1924); Cohen (1979) 145; Schwartz (1990) 199-201.

marketplace'.[453] Rather than delving into the dynamics of an individual's χάρις relationship with God, Josephus presents Judaism as a whole, alternative, and in fact, 'peerless', legal and philosophical system.[454] The crucial human figure in this system is, of course, Moses. In his introduction, Josephus calls his reader to 'devote your mind to God, and examine our lawgiver; test whether he has not worthily grasped the divine nature and always attributed to him the deeds appropriate to his power'.[455] Throughout the *Antiquitates*, Josephus returns his reader's attention to this question: what do we make of Moses' relationship with God and his consequent reliability as the divinely appointed lawgiver? If Moses did have a unique χάρις from God to be the founder of the 'peerless' legal and philosophical system—and Josephus repeatedly insists that he did—then his words are to be trusted and his instructions followed. In fact, the χάρις God gave Moses consisted specifically in the privilege of passing down to his people what Josephus calls 'the greatest of the benefits God has given'—namely, the Mosaic law.[456] Recognising the

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[453] Mason (1998) 89, 87.

[454] Mason (1998) 95.

[455] Jos. *Ant*. 1. 15.

[456] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 213. On this passage, Spilsbury (1998) 186 writes, 'Josephus conceives of a special relationship between God and Israel. This is a relationship in which Israel is the beneficiary of God's good will which is expressed in the form of benefactions of various kinds. The most important of these gifts is, as we have seen, the law'.

uniqueness of Moses' χάρις from God as lawgiver means receiving with humble gratitude the χάρις God has made available to everyone through him.[457]

In the remainder of this chapter, I examine several incidents in Moses' life in which Josephus specifically uses the language of χάρις to portray the Israelite leader as one who was consistently endowed with divine favour.[458] In the passages that follow, Moses receives three different responses from people in the narrative who observe the unique χάρις he has from God—two positive responses, and one negative. Like the foolish servant in *De ebrietate*, characters within the *Antiquitates* who recognise the special gifts God has given Moses act as either positive or negative exemplars for Josephus' intended gentile reader. As a child, Moses' χάρις 'amazes' numerous onlookers, and when he grows up, his soon-to-be father-in-law also expresses 'astonishment' at the young man and exemplifies the desire to respond participatively to the divine χάρις he recognises behind Moses' virtue. Later in Moses' life, however, he faces the challenge of the rebel Korah who, like Plutarch's demagogue brother,[459] seeks to undermine Moses'

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[457] Mathews (2008) 25-31 draws attention to the delicate balance Josephus seeks to maintain in his laudatory descriptions of Moses: on the one hand, 'Josephus must portray Moses as having a connection with God that is more direct that [sic] an other individual. At the same time Josephus wanted to avoid the implication—apparently to refute rumors circulating among even Jewish circles—that Moses had become a divine figure like other Greco-Roman leaders and heroes. Thus Josephus has the contradictory task of portraying Moses as a human being with a divine nature that allows him access to God'. I argue that Josephus' use of χάρις language helps him to navigate this delicate situation and to avoid the contradiction which Mathews suggests is inevitable.

[458] This fact may be seen to mitigate what some scholars have seen as Josephus' writing-out of God from Moses' narrative. Cf. Feldman (2005) 215-216, Meeks (1976) 132, and Bloch (1955) 139-140 on the significance of Josephus' title for Moses, 'the lawgiver', which contrasts with a more conventional Jewish understanding of his role as the one by whose hand *God* gave his people the Torah. Cf. Phi. *Mos.* 1.1: 'Moses: for some, the lawgiver of the Jews, for others, the interpreter of the holy laws'.

[459] Section 1.4.

χάρις with the people in hopes of elevating himself in their eyes. He does so specifically by questioning the unique χάρις Moses has from God and claiming both God and Moses are acting with favouritism. In the narrative, this slander receives its just punishment from God and serves as a warning to any who might similarly question Moses' divinely sanctioned authority. It also presents a new variation among the ways that divine χάρις can be instrumentalised: Korah rejects the χάρις offered him by God as a follower of God's chosen leader, and instead he attempts to seize a specific manifestation of χάρις not given him by God. In stark contrast with Moses, Korah sees the divine gift of leadership as merely an instrument of personal power.

2.4.2. Moses' Childhood and Early Adulthood: Astonishment and Participation in χάρις

Even from the time of his childhood in the house of Pharaoh, Josephus' Moses is visibly marked by the χάρις God has given him. The striking effect of this χάρις on those who witness it is almost humorous in its power. Moses' passersby are literally stopped in their tracks by the attractive force of it:

> καὶ τριετεῖ μὲν αὐτῷ γεγενημένῳ θαυμαστὸν ὁ θεὸς τὸ τῆς ἡλικίας ἐξῆρεν ἀνάστημα. πρὸς δὲ κάλλος οὐδεὶς ἀφιλότιμος ἦν οὕτως, ὡς Μωυσῆν θεασάμενος μὴ ἐκπλαγῆναι τῆς εὐμορφίας, πολλοῖς τε συνέβαινε καθ' ὁδὸν φερομένῳ συντυγχάνουσιν ἐπιστρέφεσθαι μὲν ὑπὸ τῆς ὄψεως τοῦ παιδός, ἀφιέναι δὲ τὰ σπουδαζόμενα καὶ τῇ θεωρίᾳ προσευσχολεῖν αὐτοῦ· καὶ γὰρ ἡ χάρις ἡ παιδικὴ πολλὴ καὶ ἄκρατος περὶ αὐτὸν οὖσα κατεῖχε τοὺς ὁρῶντας.[460]
>
> When he was three years old, God also raised him up to an astonishing height for his age. And with respect to his beauty, there was no one so indifferent as that, upon seeing Moses, they were not struck by his good looks. And it often happened when they met him being carried along the road that the face of the child made them turn back towards him, leave off whatever they had been rushing off to do,

[460] Jos. *Ant*. 2. 230-1.

> and devote their time instead just to gazing at him. For indeed, youthful χάρις, being in his case great and undiluted, held fast those who saw it.[461]

In the Septuagint, the baby Moses is described with simply one word: ἀστεῖος, charming.[462] Additionally, in the biblical account, it is only Moses' mother who notes her child's good looks. In Acts 7. 20, Stephen repeats the description, but he refers to it as the verdict of God, not merely of the child's mother: 'At that time, Moses was born; and he was ἀστεῖος in the sight of God'. Josephus too emphasises Moses' appearance as evidence of his divine approval: 'God raised him up to an astonishing (θαυμαστόν) height for his age'. Throughout his descriptions of Moses' χάρις, Josephus repeatedly uses the language of astonishment or amazement (θαυμαστός, θαυμασίως, θαυμάζω) to underscore not merely the uniqueness but also the divine source of Moses' attractiveness. In Josephus' account here, he increases the number of witnesses to the child's 'youthful χάρις' to include not only his mother and God, who gave it to him in the first place, but also Pharaoh's daughter, and numerous others who encounter him.[463] Just before this

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[461] There are a number of linguistic parallels between this passage and Luke's description of the child Jesus in Luke 2. 40-52. The Lukan passage is bookended by references to Jesus' χάρις: in verse 40, 'the χάρις of God was upon him', and in verse 52, 'he kept advancing in χάρις both with God and with people'. On this passage, see the commentary of Danker (1982) 350-351. Several of Danker's comments on the passage in Luke apply equally well to Josephus' portrayal of the child Moses. Danker points out that Jesus is distinguished as 'specially favored by God' through Luke's references to χάρις, and he notes that 'the theme of precociousness' in the young child prepares Luke's reader 'for the next stage of his presentation' as the great 'benefactor' of humanity. Finally, Luke closes his description of Jesus' childhood with the double response of χάρις that the child receives from both God and other people, reflecting what Danker calls 'Graeco-Roman interest in two cardinal aspects of [ἀρετή]…Jesus is distinguished for his piety toward God and for uprightness in his intercourse with people'.

[462] Exo. 2. 2.

[463] Feldman (1992a) 309 points out the parallel between Josephus' account and Midrashic tradition, in which Moses, similarly, 'was so beautiful everyone wished to look upon him, and whoever saw him could not turn away from him'. See also Phi. *Mos.* 1. 2. 9; 1. 4. 15, 18.

passage, when the princess first discovers Moses floating in the basket on the Nile, Josephus writes that she was 'overcome with love' for him 'on account of his great size and beauty', μεγέθους τε ἕνεκα καὶ κάλλους.[464] Once again the response of the observer is stated in hyperbolic language. The princess is 'overcome with love' (ὑπερηγάπησε) for the baby; passersby are 'struck' (ἐκπλαγῆναι), 'turned back' (ἐπιστρέφεσθαι), and 'held fast' (κατεῖχε) in their awe of him.

Feldman notes Josephus' 'constant emphasis upon the handsomeness of his heroes', by which he is 'clearly appealing to his readers, who were aware of the importance of physical beauty'.[465] The trope of youthful beauty as a harbinger of greatness in maturity runs throughout Graeco-Roman biographical literature. A few examples include Isocrates' *Evagoras*, in which 'all who saw the boy attested to his beauty (κάλλος)', and as the child grew to manhood and increased in courage, wisdom, and justice, his good looks and physical strength 'grew with him' too.[466] Dionysius of Halicarnassus reports that as Romulus and Remus approached adulthood, they showed themselves worthy of being known as 'sons of kings and of divine family' in both

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[464] Jos. *Ant.* 2. 224.

[465] Feldman (1992a) 307. Cf. 285: 'Because the *Antiquities* is an apologetic work directed primarily to non-Jews, Josephus portrays Moses as embodying the qualities of the great heroes of the Greeks and Romans, notably the external qualities of good birth and handsome stature, precociousness in youth, and the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, as supplemented by what was, in effect, a fifth cardinal virtue, piety'.

[466] Isoc. 9. 22-23.

'appearance' (μορφή) and 'thought' (φρόνημα).[467] Plutarch's Alcibiades is famous for never having lost his early beauty (κάλλος),[468] and Alexander is praised for 'the sweetness exhaled by his skin' and 'the pleasant smell that hung about his mouth and all his flesh, so that even his clothes were filled (πληροῦσθαι) with it'.[469] In comparison with Josephus' description of Moses, however, what all these descriptions are missing is the language of χάρις. Josephus pointedly chooses to characterise Moses' youthful beauty as an expression of divine χάρις. Along with his language of astonishment and his explicit references to God's actions in the scene, Josephus uses the language of χάρις to leave his reader in no doubt of the source of Moses' physical charm.[470]

As it would in a Graeco-Roman biography, the image of the child and his admiring onlookers serves as a prophetic model of what is to come. Moses will be

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[467] *Antiquitates Romanae* 1. 79. 10. The linguistic parallels between this passage and Jos. *Ant.* 2. 232 are sufficiently marked to suggest that Josephus might be making a purposeful allusion. The princess announces to Pharaoh that she wishes to make Moses the heir to the throne, and she describes him as 'a child divine in form and noble in thought', παῖδα μορφῇ τε θεῖον καὶ φρονήματι γενναῖον. Here she not only makes a reference to the divine source of Moses' appearance (cf. Romulus and Remus as 'sons of a divine family'), but she also points to the same two aspects of the child, μορφή and φρόνημα, as does Dionysius in his description of the Roman twins.

[468] Plut. *Alc.* 1. 3.

[469] Plut. *Alex.* 4. 2.

[470] Notably, at Jos. *Ant.* 2. 232, Pharaoh's daughter tells her father that she received her child 'with amazement, from the χάρις of the river', θαυμασίως δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ παρὰ τῆς τοῦ ποταμοῦ λαβοῦσα χάριτος. In light of the divine status of the Nile in Egyptian thought, this description likely carries a hint of what Josephus will later claim, in *Contra Apionem* 1. 279: 'The Egyptians consider this man wondrous and even divine', τοῦτον δὲ τὸν ἄνδρα θαυμαστὸν μὲν Αἰγύπτιοι καὶ θεῖον νομίζουσι. Reinhartz (2012) 367 draws attention to another important aspect of God's χάρις to the child in the scene by the river, as 'the infant Moses' trip down the Nile superficially resembled exposure' on grounds of 'failure to thrive or some disability or blemish'. Josephus' repeated references to God's χάρις for the child assure a gentile audience that the baby was 'both fit to be raised, and of such beauty that an unknown, and highborn, woman would be moved to adopt him and raise him as her own'.

characterised by divine χάρις throughout his life, and in his maturity, that χάρις will be exhibited more and more clearly in his virtuous acts, not simply in his physical appearance. The awe of those who witness him and the way they are compelled to turn away from whatever else was occupying their attention makes for a lighthearted but powerful illustration of the impact of divine χάρις that reaches out through its recipient to those around him. In Section 1.3.3., I analysed the consistent representation of the dancing Χάριτες, in which the two goddesses on either side of the image reach out to their viewer as if in welcome (cf. Figures 2 and 3). The "invitation" in Josephus' picture, however, is much more forceful. Passersby are grabbed and held by the divine χάρις in Moses, in a way that perhaps more closely parallels the overpowering experience of divine possession which Philo described in Section 2.3. as 'sober inebriation'.[471] Hannah too is struck and turned by divine χάρις away from 'the empty desires of mortal life' to gaze on the Uncreated One in perfect bliss.[472] As will become increasingly clear over the course of Moses' narrative, the χάρις that people see in him is the χάρις of the divine reaching out to them as well. It calls for a response.

As an adult, Moses continues to be recognised by those around him as one uniquely characterised by χάρις, and those who understand the divine source of that χάρις also recognise the need to respond to it in kind. A few chapters later in Book 2 of the *Antiquitates*, Josephus relates the arrival of Moses as an exile in the land of Midian; there

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[471] Although Josephus does not delineate an extended metaphor of χάρις as inebriation in this passage, as does Philo in *De ebrietate*, the verbs he uses to describe the onlookers' reactions are remarkably visceral and sense-absorbing. As well, the adjective ἄκρατος, which he uses to describe Moses' χάρις at the end of the passage, carries the connotation of unmixed wine and is used by Philo repeatedly in his descriptions of the exemplary 'sober drunkards'.

[472] Phi. *Ebr.* 152.

he rescues the daughters of Raguel from the bullying shepherds who have commandeered for their own flocks the water the women have drawn for theirs.[473] The women rush to tell their father of the assistance they have been given:

> αἱ δ᾽ εὐεργετηθεῖσαι παρῆσαν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα τήν τε ὕβριν τῶν ποιμένων αὐτῷ διηγούμεναι καὶ τὴν ἐπικουρίαν τοῦ ξένου, παρεκάλουν τε μὴ ματαίαν αὐτῷ γενέσθαι τὴν εὐποιίαν μηδ᾽ ἀμοιβῆς ὑστεροῦσαν. ὁ δὲ τάς τε παῖδας ἀπεδέξατο τῆς περὶ τὸν εὐεργετηκότα σπουδῆς καὶ τὸν Μωυσῆν εἰς ὄψιν ἐκέλευεν ἄγειν αὐτῷ τευξόμενον χάριτος δικαίας. ὡς δ᾽ ἦκε, τήν τε τῶν θυγατέρων αὐτῷ ἀπεσήμαινε μαρτυρίαν ἐπὶ τῇ βοηθείᾳ καὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς αὐτὸν θαυμάζων οὐκ εἰς ἀναισθήτους εὐεργεσιῶν καταθέσθαι τὴν ἐπικουρίαν ἔλεγεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἱκανοὺς ἐκτῖσαι χάριν καὶ τῷ μεγέθει τῆς ἀμοιβῆς ὑπερβαλεῖν τὸ μέτρον τῆς εὐποιίας.[474]
>
> Having received this benefit, the women came to their father and described to him the violence of the shepherds and the help of the stranger. And they urged him not to let this good deed be done in vain or left without a return. And he welcomed the eagerness of his children in regards to their benefactor, and he ordered that Moses be brought before him so that he might meet with righteous χάρις. And when Moses arrived, he indicated to him the testimony of his daughters concerning his aid to them. And being astonished at Moses' excellence, Raguel told him that he [Moses] had not offered his assistance to those insensible of benefits, but rather to those ready and able to pay back χάρις and to exceed in the size of the return the measure of the good deed.

Raguel's response to the χάρις Moses has exhibited begins with 'astonishment' (θαυμάζων), as did that of the princess and the passersby in the previous passage. In this case, however, Moses' God-given χάρις inspires Raguel to move beyond the initial response of astonishment, to acknowledge God as the source of Moses' χάρις towards

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[473] Moses' father-in-law is referred to by the names Raguel, Jethro, and Hobab in different passages and variants of the LXX. Philo gives allegorical etymologies for the names Jethro and Raguel at *De Mutatione Nominum* 103-105. Baskin (1976) 105, n. 100 points out that 'Philo clearly identifies Hobab of Numbers 10 with Jethro', but never uses the name Hobab and, in contrast with rabbinic tradition, 'provides no etymology for it'. Josephus merely mentions the fact in passing that Raguel is also called Jethro, *Ant.* 2. 264.

[474] Jos. *Ant*. 2. 261-262.

him, and then to respond to the relational invitation of that χάρις.[475] Raguel and his daughters recognise that a 'good deed' (εὐποιίαν) like Moses' is meant to do more than simply create benefit for its recipients and then be forgotten. If it does not meet with a response in kind (ἀμοιβή), it has been done 'in vain' (ματαίαν).

As the women urge their father to give their benefactor a response, it is tempting to read their words as a straightforward exhortation to balanced reciprocity. By the end of the passage, however, that model no longer fits. In agreement with his daughters, Raguel insists that he must offer Moses a 'just' or 'righteous' χάρις. His enactment of righteous responsive χάρις, however, does not simply match the original deed with a return of equal measure, but rather attempts to 'exceed in the size of the return the measure of the good deed'. In many ways, this excessive response parallels Seneca's definition of a true *beneficium*, as discussed in Section 1.2.3. At *Ben.* 2. 33. 1, Seneca writes,

> Someone gave me a *beneficium*. I accepted…I am grateful. After this, there remains some usefulness and advantage to come from me, the grateful person. *But this is not the remaining part of an incomplete duty; it is rather a bonus on top of a complete duty*' (emphasis added).

Raguel is not as clear as Seneca, however, as to whether the additional return he offers Moses is a necessary part of righteous responsive χάρις, or, like Seneca suggests, a 'bonus on top of' it.[476] Then again, Raguel is inspired to increase the size of his return after he

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[475] Here we might compare the order of responses to divine χάρις exemplified by Philo's Hannah in Sections 2.2.2. and 2.3.: first recognising God as the source of all χάρις and gratefully accepting his gifts, then responding by dedicating those gifts to his service and seeking to interact with other human beings in ways that please him.

[476] Harrison (2003) 141, n. 234-235 compares the language of Reuel's speech to two guild decrees from the 2nd century B.C., which similarly emphasise the importance of righteous responsive χάρις and outdoing the original offer in the return.

himself has witnessed the 'astonishing' nature of Moses' 'excellence' (ἀρετή).[477] As with the other instances of 'astonishment' in Moses' narrative, this language underscores the astonished observer's recognition of the divine force operating behind and through Moses' χάρις. Josephus previously introduced Raguel as 'a priest, and one considered worthy of great honour by the local inhabitants'.[478] Although Raguel does not explicitly mention God in his response to Moses' χάρις, his astonishment at Moses' unique ἀρετή and his concern for the claims of justice in their interaction indicate that he recognises the divine source of the χάρις he has experienced at Moses' hand.

If in fact there is an infinite divine χάρις at work behind any specific human act of χάρις, there is no longer a question of whether to return in equal or excessive measure. The only just human response, as Raguel exemplifies, is to aim to exceed the specific initiatory act, as one will never be able to match the extent of divine goodwill behind that act. Raguel is inspired to enter into a participant relationship with Moses not simply out of gratitude for the good deed the young man has done him, but also because he recognises a divine invitation extended to him through that act. He is careful therefore not to take the χάρις he has been offered for granted. In Section 1.3.3., Stobaeus' doxographer brought out the particular instrumentalisation committed by the ἀχάριστος recipient, who values an act of χάρις solely as an instrument of immediate benefit to himself. Philo

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[477] Note that Philo's description of the "intoxicated" Hannah also connects the concepts of divine χάρις and ἀρετή, as she 'receives toasts from complete ἀρετή' in the process of being 'filled with the χάριτες of God', *Ebr.* 1. 148-149.

[478] Jos. *Ant.* 2. 258. Josephus is not as concerned as other biblical interpreters with either connecting Raguel to the family of Abraham or suggesting his potential conversion by Moses to worship of the one true God. Lawrence (2009) 3, n. 3 suggests that Josephus' 'political and cultural context', like that of Philo's, 'contributed to these writers' interest in personality and character and their relative lack of concern for drawing boundaries between Jethro and Israel'.

suggested this particular kind of instrumentalisation does not harm God when directed at him, but it does prevent the human recipient from engaging in a mutual participant relationship in which he could be called a friend of the divine.[479] Raguel's virtue and understanding are clearly expressed in the remarkable generosity and welcome he extends to Moses. Josephus attests that he not only 'made Moses his own son' and gave him one of his daughters in marriage, but he also appointed his new son-in-law 'manager and master' (ἐπιμελητὴν καὶ δεσπότην) over all his creatures (θρεμμάτων)—in which lay the entirety of his wealth.[480] This response itself is astonishing, and it clearly forms part of God's promised χάρις to Amram that Moses 'will be cared for in incredible ways', and his fame will be known 'not only among Hebrews but among foreigners as well'.[481] Raguel's excessive χάρις to Moses once again exemplifies the bountiful χάρις of God, extended both to Moses himself and to those around him; and it shows Raguel himself to be someone who responds to the χάρις of God, via his response to Moses.

2.4.3. Korah's Demagoguery and the Alleged Favouritism of God's χάρις

Multiple times throughout his adult life, Moses' divinely favoured status comes under attack. Dulcinea Boesenberg points out that, in comparison with the scriptural account, 'Josephus gives Moses greater opportunity to excel in leadership by exaggerating the Israelites' rebellion in the wilderness'.[482] Almost as soon as Moses has dramatically delivered his people from Egypt and Pharaoh's army, the Israelites begin to

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[479] See Section 2.2.1. and Phi. *Abr.* 126-130.

[480] Jos. *Ant.* 2. 263.

[481] Jos. *Ant.* 2. 216.

[482] Boesenberg (2013) 254.

complain about his leadership. They are ready to stone him in their anger over the meagreness of provisions at Elim, one of the first resting places on their journey.[483] When the twelve spies are later sent into Canaan and return with their terrifying report of giants and impassable rivers and mountains, the people again attempt to stone both Moses and Aaron.[484] In both cases, Moses manages to pacify the crowd by speaking to them calmly and persuasively, 'having confidence in God', 'who was present with him'.[485] At the beginning of *Antiquitates* Book 4, however, Josephus ominously asserts, 'Such a rebellion then took hold of them as, we know, has never come upon either Greeks or barbarians'.[486] The rebellion to which he refers in this case is the dramatic challenge to Moses' authority posed by his fellow Levite, Korah, in response to the appointment of Aaron as high priest.

Josephus retells the story of Korah's rebellion from the biblical narrative of Numbers 16 (LXX).[487] Unlike the scriptural account, however, Josephus frames the whole episode in terms of χάρις relationships. In Josephus' narrative, Korah's specific complaint is that Moses has unfairly favoured Aaron as his brother, offering χάρις, 'like a tyrant', to his personal favourite, rather than treating the people as a whole, and other

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[483] Jos. *Ant.* 3. 12. There is no hint of this unrest at Elim in the biblical account (Exodus 15. 27).

[484] Jos. *Ant.* 3. 306-307.

[485] Jos. *Ant.* 3. 13, 316.

[486] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 12.

[487] Some scholars believe Josephus has access not only to the Septuagint, but also to either a Hebrew or an Aramaic text, but this remains up for debate. For discussion, see Attridge (1976) 30-33.

deserving candidates for the job of high priest, with the χάρις he owes them.[488] What is more, his complaint arises out of a more widespread misunderstanding on the part of the Israelites as to why they are the recipients of divine χάρις. Josephus censures the people for challenging Moses' special status before God,

> λέγοντες τὸν θεὸν οὐχὶ Μωυσεῖ χαριζόμενον ἐπικουρεῖν αὐτοῖς ἀλλὰ καὶ κοινῇ κηδόμενον αὐτῶν τοῦ ἔθνους διὰ τοὺς προγόνους ὧν ἐπετρόπευσε καὶ διὰ τὴν αὐτῶν ἀρετὴν πρότερόν τε παρασχεῖν τὴν ἐλευθερίαν καὶ νῦν βουλομένοις πονεῖν ἀεὶ παρέσεσθαι σύμμαχον.[489]
>
> saying that God was not giving them aid as an act of χάρις to Moses, but rather that out of his care for their nation on account of their forefathers, for whom he had acted as guardian, and on account of their own excellence, he had previously given them their freedom, and that since they were now willing to labor for it, he would always be near at hand to aid them.

For Josephus, this is just arrogance on the part of the Israelites. He insists that 'even those who hate us agree' that the Israelite 'polity' was established by God 'by means of Moses and his excellence'—not because of any special excellence (ἀρετή) on the part of the Israelites themselves.[490] In fact, Josephus puts it down to the mercy of God and Moses that the people were not destroyed (ἀπολέσθαι) as a result of their rebellion in following

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[488] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 15-16. The accusation of tyrannical favouritism hearkens back to the discussion of Alexander in the previous chapter (Section 1.2.4.). Suspicions about the genuineness of tyrannical χάρις fit the common belief, articulated by Cicero at *De Amicitia* 52, that tyrants can have no true friends, for in the life of a tyrant, 'everything is suspect and a cause for anxiety; there is no place for friendship', *omnia semper suspecta atque sollicita, nullus locus amicitiae*. See also DioChr. *Or.* 2. 75; 9. 15; Juv. 7. 150-154; Tac. *Dial.* 35. 3-5.

[489] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 2.

[490] Jos. *Ant.* 3. 322.

Korah.[491] Here, the Israelites are taking for granted both God's and Moses' χάρις towards them. Even before the rebellion of Korah, they disobey Moses and go to fight the Canaanites, confident they can get God on their side in defiance of their human leader.[492] Yet as the quotation above indicates, in large part, God persists in aiding these ἀχάριστοι specifically 'as an act of χάρις to Moses'. Not only, therefore, is Moses God's gift of χάρις to the Israelites (and to all who embrace the Jewish law), but the Jews' preservation through wilderness wanderings and insurrections also reflects God's responsive χάρις to Moses, who repeatedly intercedes for them.[493] This conclusion on Josephus' part significantly complicates the argument of Spilsbury, that the relationship between God and his people is a 'conditional' and even 'transactional' one, in which, 'if the Jews enjoy a particular providence it is because they exhibit a particular piety'.[494] In the wilderness

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[491] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 12-13. In his discussion of the trope of 'blasphemy against Moses', Lierman (2004) 227-229 notes Josephus' tendency to link 'Moses and God as co-recipients of disrespect or hostility from the people', and to connect 'reverence for Moses with reverence for God' such that Moses 'in some sense is seen to stand alongside God as a focus of Jewish loyalty, and conversely as someone who is offended with God by disloyal behavior or speech'.

[492] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 1-8. They return from battle in defeat, acknowledging they have brought God's wrath upon themselves in going out against his will.

[493] In Josephus' account, the Israelites fully realise what they owe to Moses' intercession upon his death, when they all break down in repentant tears, fearing 'that God would in future be less protective of them, since Moses had been their intercessor', ἧττόν τε τοῦ θεοῦ προνοησομένου διὰ τὸ Μωυσῆν εἶναι τὸν παρακαλοῦντα, *Ant.* 4. 194. As both the object of God's χάρις to his people and an independent agent of χάρις—both towards God and towards the people—Josephus' Moses parallels Paul's description of Christ (see especially Section 4.4.2.). Spilsbury (1998) identifies the relationship between God and the Israelites as one of patron and client, with Moses in the privileged position of mediator. Spilsbury's application of this model, however, treats 'piety' and 'blessing' as instrumental goods, in a way that does not adequately take into account the personal, participative aspects of the divine-human relationships in play.

[494] Spilsbury (1998) 188-189.

wanderings, Josephus repeatedly points to God's gracious preservation of the Israelites when in fact they are not exhibiting piety.

Korah, however, refuses to acknowledge the unique χάρις God has allotted to Moses, insisting that he himself is more worthy of it than his kinsman:

> Κορῆς τις Ἑβραίων ἐν τοῖς μάλιστα καὶ γένει καὶ πλούτῳ διαφόρων ἱκανὸς δ᾽ εἰπ εῖν καὶ δήμοις ὁμιλεῖν πιθανώτατος, ὁρῶν ἐν ὑπερβαλλούσῃ τιμῇ τὸν Μωυσῆν καθεστῶτα χαλεπῶς εἶχεν ὑπὸ φθόνου, καὶ γὰρ φυλέτης ὢν ἐτύγχανεν αὐτοῦ καὶ συγγενής, ἀχθόμενος ὅτι ταύτης τῆς δόξης δικαιότερον ἂν τῷ πλουτεῖν ἐκείνου μᾶλλον μὴ χείρων ὢν κατὰ γένος αὐτὸς ἀπέλαυε.[495]
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> Korah, one of the Hebrews, who was very distinguished amongst them because of both his family and his wealth, knew how to speak and to make himself very persuasive to the people. Because of his envy, he hated to see the extraordinary honour Moses had been given (especially considering the fact that they were of the same tribe and family). But he was especially grieved because he thought it would be more just for himself to have the enjoyment of this glory, since he had more wealth than did Moses and was in no way inferior to him in birth.

Josephus introduces Korah to the reader in language redolent of the Graeco-Roman demagogue: he 'knew how to speak and to make himself very persuasive to the people'. Feldman compares Josephus' portrayal of Korah with that of Cleon and Alcibiades by Thucydides, Plato's sophists in the ship parable, and the arch-demagogue of Roman literature, Catiline: 'Korah is portrayed as a typical demagogue who, as such, wishes to make it appear by his words that he is concerned with the public welfare, whereas in reality he is but scheming to have the dignity of leadership transferred by the people from Moses to himself'.[496] In his competitive approach to God's gifts of χάρις, Korah closely

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[495] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 14.

[496] Feldman (2016a) n. 1. Cf. Feldman (2006) 480: 'For Josephus, Korah's rebellion is not so much theological or philosophical as it is political and military'. Feldman's emphasis on the political imagery in the passage is important, but we must not overlook the profoundly theological answer Josephus gives to a classic political problem, as explained in the rest of this section.

resembles Plutarch's demagogue brother, discussed in the previous chapter.[497] Like the demagogue son, Korah is attempting to pit the χάρις relationships that structure the Israelite polity against one another for the sake of his own advantage. Korah envies the particular gifts of honour (τιμή) and glory (δόξα) that God has given Moses, and in response, he begins to stir up sedition against Moses, first among his fellow Levites, and then among the people as a whole. It is important to note that the situation Korah creates is one that in a Graeco-Roman context would be almost impossible to resolve. Korah accuses Moses of acting like a tyrant, showing χάρις to whomever he chooses without regard for the law or the will of the people. Josephus makes it clear from the start, however, that Korah himself just wants to win the people's χάρις in order to take the power of Moses for himself. The Israelites are therefore trapped between conflicting χάρις claims. In the end, the competition is only resolved because God unmistakably demonstrates which man has his backing.

If Josephus had not already established Moses' unique χάρις from God, Korah's arguments might appear reasonable.[498] The gifted speaker deftly appropriates the widespread rhetoric of concern for the unjust χάρις of tyrants, accusing Moses of self-aggrandisement and nepotism under the pretence of divine ordination:

> κατεβόα δεινὸν εἶναι λέγων Μωυσῆν δόξαν αὑτῷ θηρώμενον κατασκευάσαι καὶ κακουργοῦντα κτήσασθαι ταύτην ἐπὶ προφάσει τοῦ θεοῦ περιορᾶν παρὰ τοὺς νόμους μὲν τἀδελφῷ τὴν ἱερωσύνην Ἀαρῶνι δόντα μὴ τῷ κοινῷ δόγματι τοῦ

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[497] Section 1.4. The family tie between Korah and Moses underscores the connection between public and private relations in this situation, which often holds true in Graeco-Roman politics as well.

[498] Josephus also made clear that God intended Aaron for the role of high priest as early as the prenatal prophecy to Amram: 'And he [Moses] shall also have such a brother as will himself bear my priesthood, as will his descendants through all time', ἔσται δ' αὐτῷ καὶ ὁ ἀδελφὸς τοιοῦτος, ὥστε τὴν ἐμὴν ἕξειν ἱερωσύνην αὐτόν τε καὶ τοὺς ἐγγόνους αὐτοῦ διὰ παντὸς τοῦ χρόνου, *Ant.* 2. 216.

> πλήθους ἀλλ᾽ αὐτοῦ ψηφισαμένου τυράννων δὲ τρόπῳ καταχαριζομένου τὰς τιμὰς οἷς ἂν ἐθελήσῃ.[499]
>
> He cried out, saying it would be dreadful if they overlooked the fact that Moses was hunting after and paving the way for his own glory, obtaining it by base conspiring and under the pretence of divine sanction, giving the priesthood to Aaron his brother, contrary to the laws, not by the common decree of the multitude but rather by his own single vote, handing out honours with tyrannical "χάρις" to whomsoever he pleased.

Feldman points out that this speech is greatly expanded by Josephus from the mere nineteen words given Korah in the Septuagint.[500] Many of the details Josephus has added would resonate with a Roman audience, including the accusation of Moses' defiance of the laws and tyrannical behaviour.[501] Despite Korah's self-interested motives, in a Roman context, his accusations sound pretty persuasive. If human interactions were all that we had to go on at this point, the Israelites would be stuck between two potential tyrants: the arguably nepotistic Moses and the self-interested demagogue Korah. In Moses' response to Korah's accusations, however, and in God's subsequent judgement of Korah and the other priests in rebellion with him, Josephus underlines the unique, determinative importance of God's χάρις in all human interactions. As I discussed in the introduction to this chapter, in Jewish and Christian thought, all human χάρις must cohere under the χάρις of God. Korah seeks to commandeer the people's χάρις by undermining their trust in Moses and claiming that his χάρις towards Aaron in giving him the high priesthood is unjust. If, however, it is God who has given Moses and Aaron their exalted roles as expressions of his χάρις towards them, then Korah's claims are invalidated. God's χάρις is

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[499] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 15-16.

[500] Feldman (2016) n. 7, in reference to Num. 16. 3.

[501] Feldman (2016) n. 7. The charge of nepotism is also mentioned by Philo, *De Praemiis et Poenis* 13. 78.

the standard by which all other χάρις interactions must be judged and by which the political concerns raised by Korah can be safely allayed.

Indeed, Josephus makes clear that Moses has nothing to fear from the anger of the people or the calumnies of Korah:

> τὸν ἀδελφὸν εἰδὼς κατὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ προαίρεσιν τῆς ἱερωσύνης τυχεῖν ἀλλ᾽ οὐ κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ χάριν.[502]
>
> he knew that his brother had received the priesthood not because of his own χάρις towards him, but because of the deliberate choice of God.

In his public response to Korah's accusations, Moses assures the Israelites at three different points that it was not 'from my χάρις', ἐξ ἐμῆς χάριτος, that Aaron received his appointment.[503] Rather it was out of his obedience 'to God and his laws' that Moses bestowed God's gift of the priesthood on his brother.[504] If he had not been acting in accordance with God's wishes, he insists,

> θεὸς οὐκ ἂν περιεῖδεν ἑαυτὸν καταφρονούμενον οὐδ᾽ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοοῦντας ὅτι καὶ ποιοῦντες αὐτῷ χαρίζεσθε.[505]
>
> God would not have overlooked his being disregarded in such a way nor leave you in ignorance of what you should do to restore your χάρις with him.

For Josephus, divine χάρις is necessarily incompatible with injustice and is the final arbiter on the justice of human χάρις relations. God is also perfectly trustworthy in his χάρις towards his people and would not allow a self-interested leader to manipulate χάρις bonds in such a way as to alienate God's people from him.[506] While Josephus makes

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[502] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 24.

[503] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 29, 34, 46.

[504] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 27.

[505] Jos. *Ant.* 4. 28.

[506] Amply illustrated in the fiery end met by Korah and the 250 other rebellious Levites, Jos. *Ant.* 4. 54-58.

Moses' trustworthiness as a leader abundantly clear throughout his narrative, what is even more important to him is the trustworthiness of God, who will not allow his χάρις to be mistreated by a faithless mediator or his people left without any means of continuing to participate in relationship with him. The Israelites' χάρις relationship with God is facilitated by Moses as mediator, but it is not ultimately dependent on him. His role is not to be envied or disdained; but should he, or any other of God's appointed leaders, fail in that role, God will not leave his people 'ignorant' of how they can continue to participate in χάρις with him.[507]

In sum, Josephus' description of the rebellion of Korah demonstrates the absolute preeminence of God's χάρις in human affairs. God has given Moses to his people as a unique leader, lawgiver, and mediator, and while Moses' privileged position is an expression of divine χάρις to him personally, more importantly, it also allows him to facilitate the relationship of χάρις to which God invites all his people. As Hannah offered instruction in χάρις to the 'foolish' servant in *De ebrietate*, so Moses instructs all those who followed him in the wilderness and who now read his law. The incident of Korah's rebellion illustrates the danger and confusion that ensues when one refuses to accept the specific gifts of χάρις he has been allotted and seeks to seize those God has given to another. Instead, Josephus wants to encourage his reader gratefully to accept the χάρις God has offered all people in the law and example of Moses, and to recognise all human χάρις as flowing out from the central divine-human relationship that God himself so graciously initiates and sustains.

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[507] Harrison (2003) 133-146 traces Josephus' emphasis on God's 'providential care' for the Israelites, in contrast with pagan gods who are 'sharply criticised by Josephus for their unpredictable nature'.

2.5. Conclusion

Over the course of this chapter, we have investigated the various ways that two Hellenistic Jewish authors, Philo and Josephus, draw together Graeco-Romans concerns about χάρις and the God of Jewish scriptures. In Sections 2.2. and 2.3., Philo took a markedly individualised approach, urging his reader personally to recognise the creative, cosmological χάρις of God and, like Noah, Abraham, and Hannah, to respond to that χάρις as a grateful participant, seeking inner purification by dedicating God's gifts to his service. As Hannah's experience of 'sober inebriation' exemplified, a wholehearted participation in God's χάρις enables a joyful and ever-increasing union with him, while also (secondarily) serving as an instructive example and invitation to others. Josephus, on the other hand, focusses our attention on the instructive and social ramifications of divine χάρις. His particular interest is the unique χάρις God gave Moses as his chosen mediator and lawgiver, as well as the different responses to that χάρις that characters such as Raguel and Korah exemplify for the reader. Instead of envying the χάρις God has given Moses or rejecting the χάρις he has given his people in the form of Moses' law, Josephus wants his reader to respond with wonder at the generous bounty of God as it is attested in the law of Moses, and to engage actively in participant relationships that reflect that divine generosity and cohere in deference to it. The incident of Korah's rebellion underlines the fact that divine χάρις is not to be treated as an instrument of personal power or rejected because God offers leadership to some and not to others. Neither are God's gifts to be hoarded, but, as Raguel exemplified in Section 2.4.2., they are to be shared in excess, in grateful response to the boundless divine generosity behind every true human act of χάρις.

In light of this account of the ongoing discussions about divine χάρις with which Philo and Josephus engage their gentile and Jewish audiences, the remainder of this thesis is occupied with the question, where does Paul fit? Barclay is correct to argue that Paul can neither be placed entirely within nor set up entirely against Hellenistic Judaism in regards to his understanding of χάρις.[508] The two authors discussed in this chapter already hint at the diversity of emphases available to Hellenistic Jews seeking to harmonise a Graeco-Roman understanding of participant χάρις within a Septuagintal framework of divine-human relations. The final two chapters of this thesis delve into Paul's contribution to this discussion in greater detail, but a few points regarding specific areas of overlap with Philo and Josephus are in order here. I have already noted in Section 2.4.3. that the mediatory role Josephus assigns to Moses in the *Antiquitates* in many ways parallels the role of Christ in Paul's understanding of divine-human χάρις, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. Moses and Christ both stand at the centre of a divine-human web of χάρις, and both are variously represented as the object of God's χάρις to his people, as well as agents of χάρις in their own right, responding and being responded to, both by God and by the people under their care. Josephus' grounding of Moses' authority in divine χάρις will also find an echo in Paul's repeated assertions of his apostolic authority: 'I Paul, by the χάρις given me, say to you…'.[509] Like Josephus, Paul is extremely interested in the social outworking of divine χάρις, both among the people of God and in outreach to those who have not yet heard his gospel. In his understanding of the primary divine-human χάρις relationship, however, Paul is intensely personal, emotional, and universalised, much like Philo. Notably, however, Paul democratises God's unique gifts of χάρις in a way that

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[508] See especially Barclay (2015) 321-328.

[509] Cf. Romans 1. 5, 12. 3, 15. 15; 1 Corinthians 3. 10, 15.10; Galatians 1. 15.

neither Josephus nor Philo seems to have envisioned. Philo first brought the word χάρισμα into literary discourse in order to clarify how humans should understand their responsive χάρις towards God (Section 2.2.1.). Paul, however, develops an entire theology of divine gifting around this word, which simultaneously personalises God's individual gifts of χάρις and underscores the unique authority attached to some of those gifts and not others. Not only, therefore, is God's χάρις available to all, as seen in the bounty of creation, but to each one of his people in Christ he also offers specific, personalised χαρίσματα through which he intends to bring blessing both to them and to those around them. As with Philo and Josephus, for Paul, God's participant χάρις is consistently reaching out to *and through* its recipients, inviting them and others to experience ever greater wonder, gratitude, and worship.

Chapter 3: Divine χάρις and Human χάρις in 1 Thessalonians and the Corinthian Correspondence

3.1. Introduction

For Paul, as for his Jewish and Graeco-Roman contemporaries, χάρις is crucially an expression of good relationship. Recent studies of the Pauline letters often focus on the gift-giving or patronage overtones of his χάρις language,[510] but sometimes this focus becomes too narrow in its reification of χάρις as gift or favour. Paul consistently highlights the theme of relational mutuality in his descriptions of God's χάρις. Like Philo and Josephus, Paul describes God throughout his letters as the ongoing initiator of participant χάρις with his people.[511] Like all of the authors considered thus far, it is also important to Paul that his readers learn *not* to respond to χάρις in an instrumentalising way. The crucial, distinctive catalyst in Paul's thinking about χάρις is of course Jesus Christ. Where Christ fits into a traditional Jewish relationship with God is never far from

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[510] Besides the *magnum opus* of Barclay (2015), we might compare the studies of Pauline patronage in Danker (1982); Crook (2004), esp. 151-198; Osiek (2009); Briones (2010); Lowe (2013). For critical engagement with the popular practice of applying the patronage model to letters in the New Testament, see especially Joubert (2001); Batten (2008); Downs (2009); MacGillivray (2009). For scholars who see Paul directly undermining Roman systems of patronage in his letters, cf. Chow (1992); Harrison (2003); Walton (2011).

[511] While the offering of Christ is the decisive event that grounds Paul's understanding of divine χάρις, Paul's letters are full of references to further discrete expressions of χάρις, by which God continues to bless his people. Paul often describes these divine gifts or χαρίσματα as making their way to Christians specifically 'through Christ'. The rest of this chapter analyses the variety of ongoing expressions of divine χάρις experienced by the church as a whole and by individual believers. As stated in the introduction to this thesis (see especially n. 63), my language of 'participant χάρις' in relation to Paul is not meant as a reference to the doctrine of 'participation in Christ', although I believe there may be scope for further consideration outside of this thesis that might find some useful points of contact between the two.

Paul's mind.[512] It is the fact of Christ's resurrection that, as Keck remarks, provides the starting point for Paul's *ex post facto* reasoning about the new Christ-centred way of interacting with the God of Jewish scriptures.[513] Paul's thinking about χάρις also suggests awareness of the ongoing Greek and Roman discussions about χάρις outlined in the first chapter of this thesis. This discussion is partially mediated for Paul through Hellenistic Jewish thought, but he also engages it directly, in the context of the gentile (including god-fearing gentile) circles from which he drew many of his early converts.[514]

Across the Pauline corpus of letters, I have identified five central *loci* around which Paul's references to divine χάρις cluster. These are his opening salutations, prayers of thanksgiving, exhortations to community-building generosity, explications of the divine χάρις revealed in Christ, and closing benedictions.[515] Through this chapter and the next, I analyse each of these *loci* in turn, the first three in this chapter, and the final two in

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[512] I am in full agreement with McFarland (2013a) 115: 'In distinction from Philo, Paul works from the preconception that Christ is *the gift*, the supreme manifestation of divine grace'. Cf. Barclay (2015) 170, 'The Christ-event evidences grace in a special form'.

[513] Keck (2015) 104 repeatedly emphasises that the unique resurrection of Jesus Christ is the 'generative conviction' upon which Paul bases all of his 'ex post facto soteriology'. The LXX provides the overarching framework of assumptions about the divine into which Paul seeks to fit the resurrected Christ, around whom his own theology revolves. As Lieu (2016) 54 notes, Paul also tends to presuppose some familiarity with the LXX on the part of his addressees.

[514] Lieu (2016) 54-55, however, cautions against over-estimating the number of former god-fearers amongst Paul's readers, since in all his letters, he 'seems to assume that his Gentile audience are just that, Gentile'.

[515] To date, few scholars of Pauline χάρις have shown interest in investigating the significance of Paul's greetings and closing benedictions. Barclay (2015) devotes the vast majority of his Pauline chapters to the discussions of Christ's χάρις in Romans and Galatians; Barclay mentions Paul's salutations, benedictions, and prayers of thanksgiving only in passing, and chooses to save the topic of community-building generosity for a future book (see 574). I believe, however, that excising Paul's explicitly christological χάρις discussions from other passages in which Paul connects χάρις with the divine risks not doing justice to the coherence of his thought across any individual letter or the interesting ways in which he characteristically uses χάρις language across his letters.

Chapter 4. Most appear in some form in each of the Pauline letters, but some receive greater attention in one letter than in others. In terms of his opening and closing salutations, Paul bookends each of his letters with almost identical χάρις wishes. The theme of thanksgiving, however, is most prominent in 1 Thessalonians; community-building generosity is especially important in the Corinthian correspondence; and Paul's most sustained discussions of the χάρις of Christ are in his letter to the Romans. As a result, my analysis of these five χάρις *loci* moves in roughly chronological order across Paul's *oeuvre*, from his earliest extant letter (1 Thessalonians)[516] to what was likely one of his last.[517] This approach will illuminate both continuity in Paul's χάρις language across his letters—especially in his consistent greeting and closing *formulae* and his expressions of thanksgiving—and development through time—particularly in his increasingly nuanced discussions of the role of Christ in the divine-human χάρις relationship.[518]

I begin in Section 3.2. with an analysis of Paul's distinctive greeting formula, 'χάρις to you and peace', with which he begins every letter in his corpus, with minimal variation. These salutations are not often given much time in studies of Pauline χάρις, but

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[516] Most scholars agree that 1 Thessalonians is the earliest Pauline letter in the New Testament, written in the late 40s or early 50s A.D. See Malherbe (2000) 71-74 for a summary of the dominant views. Cf. Wanamaker (2002) 131.

[517] The occasion and audience of Paul's letter to the Romans remain subjects of intense debate (discussion in Section 4.3.1.), but scholarly consensus dates the letter in the middle to late 50s. Jewett (2007) 18 helpfully lists the specific dates within this range argued for by various scholars; he concludes that A.D. 56 or 57 is the most probable date of the letter, in light of both internal and external evidence, as does Moo (1996) 3.

[518] While 1 Thessalonians contains no discussions of the χάρις of Christ outside of the greeting and closing *formulae*, Romans offers a fully developed model of christological χάρις at the centre of the divine-human χάρις relationship (see Chapter 4 for discussion). Morgan (2015) 216 observes that 1 Thessalonians may be understood to represent 'a relatively early stage in the evolution of Paul's thinking, in which he has not fully integrated his sense of the role of Christ in salvation with his inherited model of divine-human community'.

there are a number of remarkable features about them that are worth dwelling on before we delve further into Paul's detailed theological arguments about χάρις. Paul's choice to open each letter with an invitation to participant χάρις with God and Christ frames all that follows (instruction, encouragement, thanksgiving, and rebuke) within the context of the divine-human χάρις relationship. The greeting hearkens back to the Septuagintal blessing, 'mercy and peace be upon you', but it also reflects the Hellenistic Jewish understanding of God as the ongoing initiator of participant χάρις with his people.

In Section 3.3., I consider Paul's characteristic prayers of thanksgiving, which typically follow his letters' opening χάρις wishes. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul's expressions of thanks dominate the first three chapters of the letter. It provides, therefore, an especially fruitful case study for the distinctive ways in which Paul expresses gratitude for God's χάρις towards himself and his addressees. To date, 1 Thessalonians has been given little attention by scholars of Pauline χάρις, because of its relative paucity of focussed theological discussions of the term. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul uses the idioms of thanksgiving in what appear at first to be very standard ways—giving thanks to God for his bountiful χάρις, just as Philo or Josephus might, or even a religious Graeco-Roman author like Strabo or Dio Chrysostom.[519] In light of the case studies considered in this thesis thus far, however, distinctive elements in Paul's understanding of χάρις already begin to emerge in this early work. Section 3.3. investigates the reasoning behind Paul's characteristic expressions of thanks in 1 Thessalonians, which take the ideal of participative χάρις to a remarkable new level of intimacy. As Paul envisions it, the web of participant relationships centred on God is so tightly interwoven that distinctions between individual relationships become surprisingly difficult to discern. Uniquely among the

[519] Cf. Section 1.3.5.

authors surveyed thus far, Paul consistently expresses gratitude to God for benefits given not to himself but to others, and he also directs thanks to God when his readers might expect it to be directed towards them instead.[520] These tendencies have been read as evidence for Paul's lack of interest in inter-human χάρις and exclusive emphasis on the χάρις of God, but this section demonstrates the false dichotomy that underlies such an interpretation. I argue instead that for Paul, the participant relationship between God and the community of believers *as a whole* encompasses and shapes every individual relationship within the community, such that divine χάρις to one is divine χάρις to all, and one person's responsive χάρις to God is also an expression of χάρις towards his or her fellow believers.

Finally, in Section 3.4., I consider Paul's exhortations to community-building generosity in his correspondence with the Christians at Corinth. Paul develops his theology of χαρίσματα in these letters to encourage his addressees to recognise God's individual gifts to them as expressions of his χάρις to the community as a whole. He underscores this point with two images in particular, that of the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12, and that of an agricultural cycle in 2 Corinthians 9. In both cases, Paul emphasises for the Corinthians the abundant provision of God for his people, specifically through individual gifts of his χάρις, which they each are then invited to share with others, so that all can continue to respond to God's χάρις with ever increasing expressions of thanksgiving.

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[520] Josephus' virtuous characters lean in this direction when they eschew envy and instead marvel at the divine χάρις given another (Section 2.4.); but Paul's emotional investment in the good of the other adds an intimacy of interpersonal relationship absent from Josephus' Moses narrative.

3.2. 'χάρις to you and peace': An Invitation to Participant Response

In each of his seven undisputed letters, Paul greets his addressees with the salutation, 'χάρις to you and peace'. After 1 Thessalonians, the formula triples in length to include what Lutz Doering calls 'a stable theological and christological qualification specifying the source from which χάρις and εἰρήνη are extended to the addressees',[521] that is, 'χάρις to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ'.[522] Why does this distinctive salutation remain so stable across the extant Pauline corpus? One of the most popular and enduring answers to this question sees Paul combining the common Jewish peace-wish (εἰρήνη, or in Hebrew, שָׁלוֹם) with the Greek greeting χαίρειν, in the form of its nominal cognate, χάρις.[523] In light of Paul's well-known preoccupation with Jewish and Gentile integration within the Christian community, this theory has its appeal. Many have argued, however, that it is too simple. Murphy-O'Connor refers to it, rather harshly, as a 'romantic interpretation' and one 'unlikely to be correct'.[524] In particular, the idea that Paul's 'χάρις' is meant as an allusion to the Greek epistolary salutation, χαίρειν,

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[521] Doering (2012) 407.

[522] Gal. 1. 3; 1 Cor. 1. 3; Phil. 1. 2; Phlm. 3; 2 Cor. 1. 2; Rom. 1. 7. The formula is also shared by 2 Thessalonians and Ephesians; Colossians and the Pastorals have it in slightly modified form.

[523] This theory is particularly associated with Lietzmann (1933) 22, but is attested at least as early as Knopf (1912) 37-8. More recently, it can be seen in the work of Lohse (1977) 33: 'Möglicherweise ist bei der Wahl dieses Wortes von Bedeutung gewesen, daß in χάρις das im Griechischen übliche χαίρειν unverkennbar anklingt'; and Klauck (2006) 361: '"Grace to you and peace"…still recalls the χαίρειν of the standard Greek prescript, now replaced by χάρις'.

[524] Murphy-O'Connor (1995) 54.

has been vigorously challenged by scholars such as Schenk, Doering, and Lieu.[525] Doering points out that if Paul were merely synthesising a Greek salutation with a Semitic one, this would likely take the form attested in 2 Maccabees 1. 1: 'The Jewish brothers in Jerusalem and in the land of Judea, to the Jewish brothers throughout Egypt, χαίρειν; good peace (εἰρήνην ἀγαθήν)'.[526] In this case, the infinitive χαίρειν is retained within its typical semantic context ('A to B, χαίρειν'), but it is then followed by the Hellenistic Jewish noun εἰρήνην, tacked on at the end of the sentence. If Paul were simply trying to reference the formulaic greetings of the two different cultures into which he writes, it is hard to imagine a reason why he would not have left χαίρειν in its infinitive form, especially considering the precedent set for this practice by 2 Maccabees and other Hellenistic Jewish letters.[527]

Furthermore, a closer look at the Jewish tradition of epistolary salutations reveals that the simple peace-wish (εἰρήνη or שָׁלוֹם) is less common than one might expect. Judith Lieu points out that in written communication, the single word שָׁלוֹם 'is chiefly found on ostraca, where limitations of space may have enforced brevity'.[528] In both Hebrew and Aramaic, epistolary שָׁלוֹם is typically augmented, sometimes by a verb of praying or sending, by a verb or modifier indicating 'abundance' or 'excess', or by a parallel benefit

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[525] The attack of Schenk (1984) 84 is especially withering: 'Man kann selbst bezweifeln, daß griechische Leser der Paulusbriefe einen solchen Anklang empfunden haben, da die semantische Differenz [between χάρις and χαίρειν] doch zu groß war und semantische Zusammenhänge fester sind als rein morphologische. Sprachpsychologisch wäre ein solcher Anklang eher in dem Bereich des platten Witzes…möglich, doch ein solcher liegt in den paulinischen Briefpräskcripten nicht vor'. Cf. Lieu (1985); Malherbe (2000); Doering (2012) 409.

[526] Doering (2012) 409.

[527] Cf. Acts 15. 23 and Jas. 1. 1, which make exclusive use of the Greek style of address.

[528] Lieu (1985) 165.

such as ‘life’, ‘strength’, or ‘mercy’. Examples of each of these forms of augmentation can be found among the Aramaic papyri at Elephantine.[529] One of the longest of the extant salutations combines all three:

> To our Lord Bigvai, governor of Judaea, your servants Yedoniah and his colleagues, the priests who are in Yeb the fortress. May the God of heaven seek after the health [שְׁלוֹם] of your lordship exceedingly at all times, and may he give you favour before Darius the King and the princes of the palace more than now a thousand times, and may he grant you long life and may you be happy and prosperous at all times.[530]

In this example, the senders of the letter pray that ‘the God of heaven’ would give the addressee not only שְׁלוֹם, but also ‘favour’, ‘long life’, happiness, and prosperity—‘exceedingly’ and ‘at all times’. Although this greeting formulation is atypically lengthy, it offers a useful demonstration of just how far the peace-wish could be extended in order to suit the need perceived by the addressor.

Among Hellenistic Jewish letters written in Greek, there is a divide between those that preserve the augmented peace-wish of Jewish tradition and those that follow the Greek convention of a simple χαίρειν, but the latter option is more common. Besides its appearance throughout the papyri, the χαίρειν greeting is found in Jewish letters cited in 1 and 2 Maccabees, the *Letter of Aristeas*, Josephus’ *Antiquitates*, 1 Esdras, and the book of

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[529] Doering (2012) 30, for instance, cites the common documentary greeting, ‘Well-being and strength in abundance I am sending to you’.

[530] Cited and translated by Lieu (1985) 166.

Esther.[531] Against the majority practice of adopting the Greek salutation when writing letters in Greek, there are a few extant examples of Greek letters which preserve the Jewish שָׁלוֹם in translation (εἰρήνη). Letters in the Septuagint that translate Hebrew originals account for nearly half of these.[532] εἰρήνη plus some form of augmentation opens every letter of the New Testament except Hebrews, James, and 1 and 3 John. Finally, outside the canonical texts, the closest parallel to the Pauline 'χάρις and peace' formula can be found in 2 Baruch 78. 2, whose Greek text Doering and Barclay both assume to have read ἔλεος καὶ εἰρήνη, 'mercy and peace'.[533] This combined blessing is well-attested in Jewish liturgy,[534] and the New Testament letter of Jude opens with an extended 'mercy and peace' greeting: 'May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you'.[535]

In parallel, therefore, with a few other Jewish letter writers of his time—and with the Greek translations of Hebrew letters in the Septuagint—Paul chooses to substitute an

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[531] 1 Macc. 10. 18, 25; 11. 30; 12. 6; 13. 36; 14. 20; 15. 2, 16; 2 Macc. 1. 1, 10; 9. 19; 11. 16, 22, 27, 34; *Letter of Aristeas* 35, 41; Jos. *Ant*. 12. 45-56; 1 Esdras 6. 7; 8. 9; Esther 8. 12a. Among the letters associated with the bar Kochba revolt, Lieu (1985) 167 discusses two which are written in Greek and open with the Greek salutation χαίρειν. The others in the collection are written in either Hebrew or Aramaic and, not surprisingly, follow the Jewish style of greeting. While we cannot fully determine why two letters break with both the language and the convention of the Hebrew and Aramaic majority, it is clear, in the words of Lieu, that 'when writing in Greek, Greek conventions were used'.

[532] See Daniel 4. 1; 6. 26; Ezra 4. 17; 5. 7.

[533] Doering (2012) 410-412; Barclay (2015) 352 n. 4. Klauck (2006) 276-277 reconstructs the Greek original as χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη.

[534] Breytenbach (2010) 228-231 traces the theme through Numbers 6. 25-26, Sirach 50. 22-24, Tobit 7. 11, Jubilees 22. 9, 1 Enoch 1. 8, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the *Amidah*, and the *Tosefta*.

[535] Jude 1.2: ἔλεος ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ ἀγάπη πληθυνθείη.

augmented Jewish peace-wish for the standard Greek greeting, χαίρειν.[536] What makes his salutations almost entirely unique, however, is his choice to replace ἔλεος (mercy), from the traditional liturgical pair, 'mercy and peace', with χάρις. Lieu points to the 'Scriptural' feel of Paul's greetings, which lends his letters an authority 'as vehicles of his apostolic work in relation to the churches';[537] but in that case, Paul's choice to replace Septuagintal ἔλεος with his distinctive salutary χάρις is even more striking. Breytenbach suggests that ἔλεος carried 'overwhelming' negative overtones in the early imperial world:

> Paul most probably regarded the ἔλεος terminology as misleading when designating the underlying motive of God's saving action towards mankind. Its negative connotations in Greek are overwhelming and its peculiar use by the translators of the LXX would not be familiar to non-Jews. Paul thus deviated from the LXX terminology and opted for the χάρις metaphor.[538]

This argument falls short, however, in light of Paul's perfect willingness to use the language of divine ἔλεος when he deems it appropriate in context. He prominently deploys the ἔλεος/ἐλεέω lexicon in Romans 9-11, and at Romans 15. 8-9, he asserts: 'Now I say that Christ became a servant of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God, in order to confirm the promises of the fathers, and in order that the nations would glorify God because of his mercy (ἔλεος)'. For Paul, the ἔλεος of God is intimately connected with the spreading of his glory among the gentiles—a fact difficult to reconcile with Breytenbach's theory that Paul avoids drawing attention to the mercy of God in fear that his Graeco-Roman addressees would find the idea distasteful.

Rather than being motivated by a dislike of Septuagintal vocabulary, Paul's choice to front the language of χάρις in his greetings 'reflects a distinctive theological

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[536] Tertullian comments on the Jewish tenor of Paul's greeting formula at *Adversus Marcionem* 5. 5.

[537] Lieu (1985) 170.

[538] Breytenbach (2010) 233.

orientation'.[539] With his opening prayer that God give peace to his addressees, Paul situates his letters within a Septuagintal thought world. Like Philo and Josephus, Paul is committed to the idea of the God of Jewish scriptures as the source of all good. In parallel with his Hellenistic Jewish contemporaries, Paul also chooses to highlight the language of χάρις alongside the scripturally resonant εἰρήνη.[540] Uniquely, however—even explosively in a Hellenistic Jewish context—Paul adds a second source for this divine χάρις and εἰρήνη: 'our Lord Jesus Christ'.[541] Jewett rightly reads Paul's greetings as reflective of a high christology.[542] This is especially striking when we recall Philo and Josephus'

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[539] Jewett (2007) 115.

[540] See Section 2.1. for discussion of the tendency among Paul's Hellenistic Jewish contemporaries to use χάρις to describe God's relationship with humanity, despite its relatively infrequent appearance in the LXX. Why Paul emphasises χάρις, among all the qualities of God, in each of his letter greetings, is a question that has raised a significant amount of speculation among scholars, as has already been seen in this chapter. In Section 2.1., I noted the suggestion of Flack (1960) 144-145 that Philo believed χάρις to be a better equivalent of Hebrew חֶסֶד than the Septuagintal translation, ἔλεος. This suggestion draws on linguistic arguments originally put forward by Montgomery (1939), now widely accepted amongst scholars of both Hellenistic Judaism and the New Testament. This argument has rarely been applied to Paul, however, as he consistently relies on the LXX for his scriptural frame of reference. See, however, Dušek (2014). I believe it is precisely because χάρις is not a prominent theme in the LXX that Paul finds it so useful as a descriptor for the new relational initiative God has undertaken in sending Jesus Christ. As well, as demonstrated in Chapter 2 of this thesis, χάρις was a popular lens through which Paul's Jewish contemporaries engaged gentile audiences. Like Josephus, Paul is deeply concerned with the formation of sustainable communities in response to the χάρις of God. Like Philo, Paul sees in divine χάρις a means of identifying the generosity of God extended to all humanity, not simply those within the covenant. For further discussion, see Section 4.2.

[541] That Paul sees these two additions as connected with one another is underscored by the fact that he closes every letter with just them: Gal. 6. 18; 1 Cor. 16. 23; Phil. 4. 23; Phlm. 25; 2 Cor. 13. 13; Rom. 16. 20 all draw their letters to a close with some variation of 1 Thess. 5. 28, 'The χάρις of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you'. For discussion, see Section 4.4.3.

[542] Jewett (2007) 116. Cf. Godet (1883) 85: 'The conviction of Christ's divine nature can alone explain this construction, according to which His person and that of the Father are made alike dependent on one and the same preposition'.

emphasis on God's *unique* role as the initiator of χάρις toward humanity. 'χάρις is proper to God alone', writes Philo; 'there is no χάρισμα from creation'.[543] Paul's characteristic salutations, therefore, immediately establish the exalted place of Christ in the divine-human relationship. He is not merely the instrument of God's χάρις towards humanity (though in Chapter 4, we will see he is also that), but he is also the joint, divine source of that χάρις. In his letter to the Romans, Paul goes into great detail regarding the multiple roles that Christ plays in God's extension of χάρις to humanity. At the start of each of his letters, however, Paul aligns Christ with God as the joint, initiatory source of χάρις—and also εἰρήνη—for his people.[544]

Stylistically, the χάρις "frame" that begins and ends each of Paul's letters tells his addressees that what they are about to hear (or have just heard) read to them is an expression of divine χάρις to them.[545] This in turn situates both the *authority* of Paul in writing to them and the response expected from them. Across his corpus, Paul often refers

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[543] *Leg.* 3. 78. While Philo emphasises this more explicitly than the scriptures themselves do, the occasions where χάρις does show up in the Pentateuch (LXX) clearly point to God as the source of the חֵן that one finds in another's eyes. See Section 2.2.1. for discussion of this χάρις idiom in the LXX and in Philo's corpus.

[544] While the language of χάρις reflects the new invitation to participant relationship extended by God and Christ to all humanity, it is also notable that Paul attributes the scriptural blessing of peace to Christ as well, effectively writing the risen Lord back into Septuagintal theology.

[545] Collins (1984) 139-140; Malherbe (2000) 100; Jewett (2007) 115-116 all point out that, in the words of Jewett, 'insofar as the letters were read aloud in worship services' Paul's 'χάρις and peace' blessing 'certainly served a liturgical function'. Furthermore, 'the power to grant the content of the blessing' derives neither from Paul's authority, nor 'from the person uttering the words as they are read aloud in the Roman house and tenement churches, but from the source of all blessing', 'God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ'.

to ‘the χάρις of God given to me’ as the source of his apostolic authority.[546] In the following section, I consider in greater depth the kind of authority Paul envisions for himself as a recipient and representative of divine χάρις. In comparison with the similar language Josephus uses to describe the authority of Moses,[547] I will argue that the χάρις God has given Paul as one of his apostles is also an expression of God’s χάρις *through* him to those under his leadership.[548]

Finally, in line with all of the other authors discussed in this thesis, Paul uses the language of χάρις to invite a particular response from his readers. Paul’s letters are full of specific exhortations that detail how a recipient of divine χάρις can participate in an ongoing relationship with God.[549] The following sections explore Paul’s repeated framing of his instructions in the context of the divine-human χάρις relationship, as well as his

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[546] See Gal. 1. 15; 1 Cor. 3. 10; 15. 10; Rom. 1. 5; 12. 3; 15. 15. Lieu (1985) 170 notes that the ‘χάρις and peace’ greetings make it clear that Paul’s letters are ‘no casual correspondence’, and hence they must be read in light of ‘Paul’s own understanding of his apostolic authority’.

[547] See especially Section 2.4.3.

[548] This is most clear in the extended introductions of Galatians and Romans, in which Paul identifies his own experience of God’s χάρις with that of his addressees. In Gal. 1. 6, just after greeting his addressees with χάρις and peace, Paul affirms that they first experienced the ‘call’ of God in the χάρις of Christ. A few verses later, he identifies his own calling to be an apostle as having come to him ‘through χάρις’. Similarly, in Rom. 1. 5, Paul attributes his apostleship (ἀποστολήν) to the χάρις of Christ, and in verses 6-7, he extends divine χάρις to his addressees, who are also ‘God’s called ones (κλητοί)’. McFarland (2013b) explores Paul’s ‘rhetorical and theological identification’ with his addressees in Galatia. White (1983) 437 argues that ‘though Paul’s correspondence conveys his authority, both as an apostle to, and as the founding father of, [many of] the churches to which he writes, he also makes common cause with his recipients’ by expressing that ‘both sender and recipient are religiously and communally united by means of God’s grace’.

[549] Barclay (2015) 331 points out that by opening and closing his letters with χάρις wishes, Paul situates each letter’s ‘contents within a movement of grace from God (and Christ)’ such that ‘all its arguments and appeals are intended not just to inform its recipients about this grace, but to place them within its transformative dynamic’.

warnings against the instrumentalisation of divine χάρις to which human beings are particularly prone. Paul's characteristic greeting formula pointedly begins each one of his letters with a reminder to his addressees that all he has to say in the body of his letters reflects a *responsive* attitude to the χάρις and peace God has extended to his people through *Christ*. In light of God's astonishing new extension of χάρις through the life and death of Jesus Christ, the question arises, what now constitutes an appropriate participant response?

3.3. 'I give thanks for you': The Interpersonal Dynamics of Divine χάρις in 1 Thessalonians

Immediately following his characteristic greetings, Paul proceeds in most of his letters to offer a prayer of thanksgiving on behalf of his addressees.[550] 1 Thessalonians stands out, however, because in this letter, Paul's prayer of thanksgiving extends far beyond the few verses it usually takes up in others.[551] Paul offers thanks for God's χάρις at three points in the letter's opening chapters,[552] and in many ways, his expressions

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[550] See 1 Thess. 1. 2 ff.; Cor. 1. 4 ff.; Phil. 1. 3 ff.; Phlm. 4-7; Rom. 1. 8 ff. The two exceptions to this rule are Galatians and 2 Corinthians. In the first case, Paul immediately follows his greeting with rebuke (Gal. 1. 6: 'I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the χάρις of Christ'), which fits the harsh and urgent tone he takes throughout the letter. In the case of 2 Corinthians, a more veiled rebuke may be implied, but Thrall (1994) i 98-99 argues that the blessing which takes the place of Paul's usual prayer of thanksgiving is merely a formal change on his part, due possibly to the fact that what he is giving God thanks for in this case is 'his own deliverance from mortal danger'.

[551] Malherbe (2000) 104 notes that 1 Thessalonians 'differs from all other letters, including Paul's own letters, in the degree to which thanksgiving dominates' the first three chapters of the letter. He reasons that Paul's expressions of εὐχαριστία should not be 'reduced' in our interpretation 'to permutations of conventional formulas'.

[552] 1 Thess. 1. 2, 2. 13, 3. 9.

appear quite conventional. His gratitude is invariably directed towards God, and in each case, he is giving thanks for something admirable or beneficial about the Thessalonians. This accords with the assumption traced throughout this thesis thus far, that good human relationships and interactions are sponsored by the divine.[553] As the cause for his thanksgiving, Paul cites especially the joy (χαρά) that he experiences because of the Thessalonians' actions.[554] We have also repeatedly seen joy as a manifestation of divine χάρις—particularly in Graeco-Roman discussions of the Χάριτες and in Philo's account of the praying Hannah.[555] Seneca, too, spoke of the 'mutual joy' that must be present in good χάρις interactions.[556]

If we look more closely, however, at precisely *how* Paul articulates his expressions of thanks in 1 Thessalonians, his expressions of εὐχαριστία turn out to be not as typical for his time as they at first appear. First of all, in this letter, Paul thanks God profusely for things that are only of indirect benefit to himself—particularly the overwhelming *joy* he feels at the Thessalonians' perseverance and flourishing in the gospel.[557] In his opening prayer, Paul tells the Thessalonians that he thanks God 'constantly' for their perseverance

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[553] See especially the discussions of Dio Chrysostom and Strabo, Section 1.3.4., and those of Philo and Josephus in Sections 2.2.1. and 2.4.2.

[554] 1 Thess. 2. 19-20, 3. 9.

[555] See especially Sections 1.3. and 2.3. As cited in footnotes in these sections, the popular etymology connecting χάρις and χαρά is attested by authors as diverse as Apollodorus of Athens, Philo, Cornutus, Plutarch, and John Chrysostom. While not a central part of my discussion, this linguistic connection certainly would encourage Paul's Greek-speaking readers to think of joy as a natural response to divine χάρις.

[556] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 31. 2, quoted in Section 1.2.2.

[557] He uses the adjective ἀδιαλείπτως, 'constantly', in his expressions of thanks at both 1. 2 and 2. 13; and he expresses rhetorical ἀπορία in 3. 9, 'What εὐχαριστία are we even able to return to God for you, considering all the joy with which we rejoice on account of you in the presence of our God?'

in faith, love, and 'hope in our Lord Jesus Christ'.[558] In thanking God (εὐχαριστοῦμεν) for this perseverance on the part of his Thessalonian converts, Paul acknowledges the χάρις of God behind that perseverance. As the rest of the letter makes clear, he does not negate or ignore the Thessalonians' persistent effort, which actualises their continued growth in faith, hope, and love; but his first move in a letter sent to bolster that persistence is to thank the gracious God by whose χάρις that growth is enabled. We should note that the qualities Paul lists here are ones he has heard about from Timothy: Wanamaker interprets 1 Thess. 3. 6 as an indication that Paul wrote his letter to the Thessalonians 'almost immediately upon Timothy's return' from his assigned mission to check on them.[559] There is no evidence in the letter to suggest that the Thessalonians have done Paul some special favour as an expression of their acceptance and perseverance in the gospel he proclaimed to them.[560] Primarily, Paul is just delighted at the reputation the Thessalonians have earned by their faith in Jesus Christ and their 'joy in the holy spirit in

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[558] 1 Thess. 1. 2-3.

[559] Wanamaker (1990) 60.

[560] This contrasts with the situation in which Paul writes his letter to the church at Philippi. In that case, he has received a generous gift from his addressees, delivered by Epaphroditus (see especially Phil. 4. 10-20). As Briones (2011) explores, however, Paul's response to the Philippians' generosity is just as unusual as are his expressions of thanks to God in 1 Thessalonians. In his opening prayer of thanksgiving for the Philippians, he does not mention their gift, and in chapter 4, when he does discuss it, he does not thank them. As I argue in this section in relation to 1 Thessalonians, however, Paul's subtle tweaks to conventional expressions of thanks highlight the intimacy of the χάρις relationships he seeks to cultivate between himself, his addressees, and God.

the midst of much affliction' (θλῖψις).[561] Their perseverant joy (χαρά) brings similar joy to Paul,[562] and he thanks God for it.

Paul underlines his personal involvement with and concern for his Thessalonian addressees at the end of chapter two and in chapter three, when he speaks of his deep longing to be reunited with them in person. His language is emotive: he speaks of having been 'torn away' from them, 'not in heart, but in person, most eagerly desiring to see them face to face'.[563] They are his 'hope', his 'joy', his 'glory', and the 'crown of boasting', which he intends to present to the Lord at the παρουσία.[564] In chapter three, Paul rhetorically ties his very life to the Thessalonians' ongoing good relationship with God:

> ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν, ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ. τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀνταποδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ᾗ χαίρομεν δι' ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν;[565]
>
> So now we live, as long as you are standing in the Lord. For what thanksgiving are we able to return to God for you considering all the joy that we enjoy because of you before our God, as we plead with him excessively, both night and day, that we may see you face to face and may equip you with the things that your faith still lacks?

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[561] 1 Thess. 1. 6-7. Although not my focus here, the first chapter of 1 Thessalonians attests a remarkably early proto-trinitarian framework, to which Hunt (2011) 365 draws attention; she concludes, 'The pattern is apparently already well established as the distinctively and typically Christian way of speaking of God'.

[562] He attests this explicitly in 2. 19-20: 'For what is our hope or joy (χαρά) or crown of boasting except you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus in his παρουσία? For you are our glory and joy (χαρά)'.

[563] 1 Thess. 2. 17.

[564] 1 Thess. 2. 20.

[565] 1 Thess. 3. 8-10.

In this passage, Paul claims a deep, personal benefit from the Thessalonians' perseverance in the faith: 'we live, as long as you are standing in the Lord'. The overwhelming gratitude he feels towards God on their behalf is a testament to how deeply invested he is in his relationship with them—and therefore how deeply invested he is in their relationship with God as well. Paul does not simply thank God for the favour God has shown the Thessalonians; the specific reason for his gratitude is the joy that he personally feels because of their faithfulness.[566]

What is more, when Paul does speak more directly of his involvement in the Thessalonians' relationship with God—specifically his initial preaching of the gospel to them and their eager receipt of it—he consistently directs attention away from himself and back to God, both thanking God for the χάρις he experienced from his human addressees and reframing their initiatory χάρις towards him as more importantly being an act of responsive χάρις to God. The Thessalonians' perseverance in the gospel certainly began with their eager response to Paul's first announcement of it to them. Not once, however, does Paul directly thank the Thessalonians for the welcome they originally gave him. Rather, he repeatedly thanks God for their response to his message. He commends the Thessalonians for becoming 'imitators' (μιμηταί) of him in their exemplary, joyous reception of his gospel, despite the cost;[567] he thanks God in chapter two that the Thessalonians accepted his preaching 'not as a human message but as, what it is in truth, a message of God'.[568] In both of these cases, Paul's focus in his thanksgiving is not on the

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[566] Cf. 1 Thess. 3. 7: 'In our all our distress and affliction, brothers, we have been comforted because of you, on account of your faith (πίστις)'.

[567] 1 Thess. 1. 6-7.

[568] 1 Thess. 2. 13.

personal benefit he received from the Thessalonians listening to him and believing the gospel. Rather, Paul praises his recipients much more for the response they offered to the God whose gospel he proclaimed—rather than the response they offered to him as God's messenger. When he thanks God for their imitation of him in chapter one, he actually calls them imitators 'of us and of the Lord',[569] and when he praises them for 'the reception we had among you', he means the fact that they 'turned from idols to God in order to serve the God who is living and true, and to await his son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who rescues us from the coming wrath'.[570] Each time Paul mentions his own role in facilitating the Thessalonians' χάρις relationship with God, he immediately turns the focus to the Lord himself, whose initiatory χάρις towards his Thessalonian converts and towards Paul himself through the Thessalonians' welcome and perseverance is far more important in Paul's mind than is his own role as the initial representative of that χάρις. In 1 Thess. 2. 13, Paul explicitly commends the Thessalonians, not simply for receiving a message from *him*, but for recognising that message as being 'of God', and for responding with faith, love, and hope *in Christ* rather than simply allegiance to Paul.

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[569] 1 Thess. 1. 6. Malherbe (2000) 114 points out that this statement suggests Paul at least 'had some knowledge of the life of Jesus', and perhaps his readers did as well. Paul may mean, however, simply that the Thessalonians have imitated him, as he imitates Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 11. 1), rather than suggesting their direct imitation of the life of Jesus.

[570] 1 Thess. 1. 9-10. In light of verses such as these, Wanamaker (1990) 6-9 argues that, contrary to the implications of Acts 17, 'the majority of Paul's converts [in Thessalonica] came from outside the synagogue'; 'Gentiles, including pagan Gentiles, constituted a larger grouping in the church than Acts would appear to suggest'. Hurtado (2003) 104-105 points to verse 10 as an example of the 'motifs, imagery, and terms from Jewish royal-messianic traditions adapted to express boldly beliefs about Jesus' exalted place in God's purposes'.

Recent scholarship has sought to interpret Paul's letters through the lens of a particular form of patronage, in which Paul sees himself as merely the broker in an exchange of χάρις between the principal characters, God and his letter's addressees.[571] On this reading, Paul is delighted at the ongoing success of his "brokerage" in sharing the gospel with the Thessalonians, and his gratification spills out repeatedly in his expressions of thanks to the God whose χάρις he has helped his addressees to access. Paul's own role is relegated to that of intermediary, for 'only God occupies the position of benefactor. He is the one who deserves all the gratitude', while Paul serves merely to 'distribute [God's] commodity' among his people.[572] This brokerage model is also used to explain Paul's apparent choice to ignore the χάρις of his human benefactors when he has received some explicit favour from them. According to this reading, when Paul offers thanks to God for a direct benefit he has received, he effectively writes out any human givers such as the Thessalonians as simply 'brokers' for the beneficent God to whom thanks alone are due. This model does bear some attractions as a means of accounting for the distinctive aspects of Paul's χάρις language in this letter and others. However, despite the neatness with which it can be mapped onto Paul's use of language, the brokerage model does not sufficiently take into account Paul's deep and abiding concern across his letters for good inter-human relationships, as evidenced by his extensive discussions of how believers' actions and attitudes affect one another, and his various teachings emphasising the importance of social harmony within and between the assemblies of

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[571] Joubert (1995) and Briones (2010) apply the brokerage model to the Corinthian correspondence. Briones (2011) applies it to Philippians 4. To my knowledge, the brokerage model has not been applied in any concentrated fashion to 1 Thessalonians.

[572] Briones (2011) 63.

Christ followers to whom he writes.[573] When the brokerage model suggests that Paul downplays the χάρις of the "middle man" for the sake of exalting only the χάρις of God and the thanks that are his due, it quantifies χάρις in such a way as to suggest that there is only a limited amount available for Paul to share. It also ignores the significant emphasis he puts on his own χάρις in other letters and the authoritative role he claims over his addressees here and elsewhere.[574] These considerations suggest that a model for understanding Paul's χάρις language which involves downplaying the importance of inter-human χάρις (even for the sake of upholding the importance of divine χάρις above all else) is unlikely at best.[575]

Instead, I believe the best way of reading Paul's tendency (A) to recognise another's benefit as his own, (B) to thank God instead of thanking other people directly, and (C) to frame human initiatory χάρις as more importantly responsive χάρις to God, is to recognise the radical relational emphasis Paul puts on χάρις. Paul's language of thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians relativises the specific gifts given by God and opens up the position of 'recipient' to anyone currently participating in the divine-human web of

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[573] See especially the discussion of χαρίσματα and the body of Christ in Section 3.4.1.

[574] In 1 Thess. 2. 7-12, Paul identifies his relationship with the Thessalonians as one of parent and child, a relationship often associated with a particular kind of authoritative but personal χάρις, as discussed by Plutarch in Section 1.4.

[575] The paradoxical model of 'mutual brokerage' developed by Briones (2010), esp. 555 allays some of my concerns, as he seeks to emphasise that 'egalitarian terms within and concepts behind the Pauline corpus exhibit a genuine expression of interpersonal solidarity in the grace of God'. Briones rightly critiques Joubert (1995) for applying the brokerage model in such a way as to turn 'egalitarian terminology into a relational mask that conceals an authoritative reality'. If a social-scientific model for Pauline χάρις has to be adjusted as radically as Briones suggests it does ('Paul deviates from the classical model of brokerage and radically fabricates his own paradoxical version: "mutual brokerage"'), I question its usefulness as a sustained interpretive lens.

χάρις.[576] No matter to whom a particular divine gift is given, because of the intimate relationality among God's people, a divine gift to one is a divine gift to all.[577] Sometimes this is because it directly benefits all, but other times it just brings them joy. An onlooker like Paul who loves the recipient like a family member feels a sense of personal benefit in God's generosity to the other.

For Paul, inter-human χάρις is part of the divinely initiated, ongoing, relational web of χάρις. It is not to be seen in competition with it, as though thanking a human benefactor somehow diminishes the "amount" of thanks that can be reserved for God. Rather, God is behind every true human act of χάρις, and an act of thanks to him can also be an expression of true χάρις to another. Throughout this thesis thus far, we have seen each one of our authors urge their respective audiences to adopt a participant stance on χάρις, which focusses more on cultivating ongoing relationships of goodwill, rather than keeping careful track of balanced exchange.[578] Paul takes this idea to its extreme. Paul is so intensely focussed on the relationships enabled by divine χάρις that he pays little attention to the precise direction of any single χάρις exchange within that network of

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[576] Paul is not consistent in his valuation of specific χαρίσματα in the context of the divine-human χάρις relationship. 1 Corinthians 12 makes an excellent case study, for on the one hand, Paul insists throughout the chapter that no unique gift of God's χάρις to an individual is more necessary or more integral to the whole of Christ's body than is any other; but on the other hand, he closes the chapter by acknowledging that there are 'greater χαρίσματα' and by listing a hierarchy of sorts, beginning with apostles, then prophets, teachers, etc. (1 Cor. 12. 28-31). Paul does not hesitate across his letters to distinguish a hierarchy of *authority* amongst the various χαρίσματα God gives to some and not others, but he always seeks to equalise their relative *value*.

[577] Josephus' framing of Moses' divine χάρις as equally a gift to all God's people bears some similarity to this picture (Section 2.4.), as did Plutarch's equating χάρις to a brother with χάρις to a parent (Section 1.4.).

[578] Seneca, for instance, encapsulated this perspective in the statement, 'benefits are carried on between minds', *Ben.* 2. 34. 1.

relationships. Any favour from God towards the Thessalonians Paul counts as a favour to himself. Any favour from the Thessalonians to him,[579] he also attributes to the bountiful χάρις of God. As such, Paul expresses his thanks *to* the Thessalonians specifically by thanking God *for* them.

Harrison notes that Paul 'consistently associates the return of gratitude with the motif of abundance'.[580] Throughout his letter, Paul exemplifies for the Thessalonians what it means to 'rejoice always, pray constantly, and give thanks (εὐχαριστέω) in *all* circumstances'.[581] The all-encompassing nature of this instruction reflects the joyful abandon we see in Paul's own thanksgiving statements throughout the letter, the frequency of which has caused some puzzlement among scholars as to how the structure of 1 Thessalonians is best understood.[582] Gratitude should characterise each one of God's people—not just when one recognises an obvious, personal benefit to himself, but also when he sees the χάρις of God 'at work' in and for his fellow Christ followers. In Harrison's words, 'Christian gratitude spontaneously responds to the divine blessing', whether that comes in the form of 'the answered prayers of fellow Christians', 'the spiritual maturity and generosity' of other Christians, or any of the other numerous ways that God extends his participant χάρις to his people as a whole.[583]

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[579] Such as the boost to his reputation their perseverance in the gospel lends him.

[580] Harrison (2003) 271. Cf. 2 Cor. 1. 11; 4. 15; 9. 12.

[581] 1 Thess. 5. 16-18, emphasis added.

[582] Schubert (1939) 17-27, for instance, claims that Paul's introductory thanksgiving period extends in this case all the way through to 3. 13. Cf. O'Brien (1977) 141-164. Jewett (1986) 68-78 explains 1. 1-5 as the introduction to the letter and 1. 6-3. 10 as the narration of reasons for Paul's thanksgiving.

[583] Harrison (2003) 271.

In fact, Paul's thanking God for the Thessalonians in front of them throughout his letter is arguably a much greater expression of grateful χάρις towards them than would be a simple 'thank you' directed at them. Seneca is helpful here, as he argued that a feeling or verbalisation of thanks (*gratia*) is sufficient to pay off the "debt" of gratitude one owes, but in order to match the original *beneficium* with a return in kind, one must go beyond the obvious duty of saying 'thank you' to the benefactor.[584] This, it seems, is precisely what Paul is doing. By allowing the Thessalonians to "listen in" on his thanksgiving to God for the comfort they have given him, Paul is offering them a sense of comfort in return by reminding them (1) of the God who is continually working in and for them and (2) of Paul's own persistent prayers on their behalf. Even Paul's example of what it means to 'give thanks in all circumstances' can be understood as an instructive gift of χάρις to them.[585] Because God's χάρις for his people as a whole envelops and shapes every interaction of χάρις between his people, Paul exemplifies the participant stance which actively looks out for divine generosity at every turn. By thanking God for his χάρις towards Paul's addressees, as well as for the χάρις they have extended to Paul as part of their response to God's initiatory χάρις, Paul includes the Thessalonians in the all-encompassing participant relationship that God shares with his people as a whole. This offers the Thessalonians the basis for a sense of joyful belonging that would never be captured by a straightforward expression of human-to-human thanks. From many different angles, Paul's distinctive choice to thank God *for* the Thessalonians rather than

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[584] Sen. *Ben.* 2. 33. 1, quoted in Section 1.2.3.

[585] Cf. Josephus' understanding of the χάρις of God extended to his people through the law *and example* of Moses, Section 2.4.

thank them directly attests to his direct, personal interest in their own comfort and wellbeing, rather than any cold neglect of the thanks they themselves are due.

In the previous section, I argued that Paul's greeting and closing formulae frame each of his letters as an expression of God's χάρις to his addressees. Another framing technique occurs when the salutatory χάρις wishes are taken together with the expressions of εὐχαριστία that in 1 Thessalonians, and most of Paul's other letters, immediately follow. Paul's greetings declare divine initiatory χάρις, and his prayers of thanksgiving exemplify a participant response. χάρις with God, however, is not simply an individual, two-part relationship, with God pouring out his favour and the individual recipient responding with thanks. Rather, the participant relationship between God and Christ on the one hand and the church as a whole on the other draws individual members of the church together, involving them intimately in each other's personal relationship with the divine. Paul's expressions of thanks exemplify this intimate relationality, always referencing at least three parties in the divine-human χάρις relationship: his addressees, himself, and God, with Christ. Paul also indicates that any receipt of divine χάρις invites a two-part response. We might plot the three parties of the χάρις relationship as a triangle, with God and Christ at the top, and the Thessalonians and Paul each in their own corner.[586] In response to God's χάρις towards them in Christ, the Thessalonians respond both *back* (up the triangle) to God with faith and perseverance, and they have also expressed χάρις *forwards* (across to Paul), in their offerings of welcome, comfort, and joy —both to Paul and to the other churches of Macedonia and Achaia.[587] Their initiatory

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[586] In Paul's prayers of thanksgiving, as in his greetings, God and Christ are closely aligned. In the following chapter, I explore passages in which Paul differentiates their roles in relation to χάρις.

[587] 1 Thess. 1. 7.

χάρις towards Paul is simultaneously an act of responsive χάρις to the Lord. Then Paul, having received this χάρις from the Thessalonians, offers χάρις *back* (across) to them in his letter and in his prayers on their behalf, while he simultaneously *returns* χάρις *forwards* (up) to the God whose initiatory χάρις began the cycle and remains behind every subsequent act within it.[588]

For Paul, as for many of his contemporaries, divine χάρις never forms merely a bidirectional bond between God and the human recipient. It is rather continually cycling around and through the relationships that his people share with each other, as well as being returned continually back to him in the forms of thanksgiving, honour, and praise.[589] Paul's expressions of thanks are remarkable in the intimate fluidity of his language: he identifies his own benefit so closely with that of his addressees as to "jump in" on their responsive χάρις towards God, and he invites them to offer thanksgiving with him for benefits he has received at their hands. As joint recipients of divine χάρις, Paul

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[588] This picture bears some resemblance to my interpretation of the dance of the Χάριτες in Sections 1.3.2. and 1.3.3. (Figures 1-3). Both the relief image of the goddesses dancing in a line and their better-known depiction in the circular dance contain elements of both an inward-turned response to χάρις and an outward-turned invitation, or passing on, of χάρις. Similarly, in this case, Paul envisions each recipient of divine χάρις both responding with gratitude to the giver(s) and seeking to participate in the passing on of that χάρις to others.

[589] Paul explicitly describes this cyclical process in 2 Corinthians 8-9, discussed in Section 3.4.2. 2 Cor. 1. 10-11 is an additional example. Paul urges the Corinthians to 'join in praying on our behalf' that God would deliver him from his present trial. The result of these many prayers, Paul believes, will be thanks given to God 'from many people' for the χάρισμα God will give in response to 'the prayers of many on our behalf'. When different members of God's people intercede for each other's needs in prayer, they declare and enact their intimate personal interest in each other's well-being. A gracious response of God to one is therefore also a response of χάρις to the others. This suggests one further reason why Paul attests such a vested interest in the χάρις of God towards his addressees in 1 Thessalonians and other letters—namely, because he has been praying for God to manifest his χάρις towards them, and hence, God's graciousness in preserving them through trials is also an act of responsive χάρις to the prayers of Paul.

and the Thessalonians share an intimate unity. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul does not engage in the same arguments about the nature of divine χάρις that he will in his later letters, and for this reason, it is easy to miss the remarkable emphasis on participant relationality already present in his expressions of thanksgiving in this early letter.

3.4. χάρις and Community-Building Generosity in the Corinthian Correspondence

3.4.1. 1 Corinthians: χαρίσματα as Human Expressions of Divine Generosity

Paul's expressions of thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians reflect an intimacy of human relationships under God and Christ that leads Paul to feel deeply, personally involved in the relationship between God and his addressees, and to see God continually at work in Paul's own relationship with them. In 1 Corinthians, written shortly after 1 Thessalonians, Paul develops this unified picture further and gives it a markedly didactic tone. Like 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians opens with Paul's characteristic χάρις wish, followed by a prayer of thanksgiving for his addressees. Paul's prayer in 1 Corinthians 1 serves not only to contextualise the body of the letter within a divine-human web of χάρις relationships, but it also serves a formal function, indicating the main themes to be covered in the rest of the letter[590]:

> Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὅτι ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει, καθὼς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν, ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι ἀπεκδεχομένους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ· ὃς καὶ βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς ἕως τέλους ἀνεγκλήτους ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.[591]

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[590] Conzelmann (1975) 25 notes that Paul's thanksgiving prayers, while exhibiting a 'fairly constant structure', are also 'adapted to the receiver and the peculiar content of the letter'.

[591] 1 Cor 1. 4-8.

> I am always giving thanks to my God concerning you, because of the χάρις of God given to you in Christ Jesus, because in every way you have been enriched in him, in all reasoning and all knowledge, just as the testimony of Christ was established among you, so that you do not lack in any χάρισμα as you wait expectantly for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ; who also will establish you right up to the end, irreproachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's assurance that he is 'always' (πάντοτε) thanking God for the Corinthians echoes his language of incessant thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians.[592] He also carries on the language of abundance in this opening, affirming their enrichment 'in every way' (ἐν παντί), 'in *all* reasoning and *all* knowledge' (παντί, πάσῃ), without lack (μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι). As with his opening salutations, Paul aligns Christ with God as the source of the Corinthians' enriching χάρις.[593] For Paul, the Corinthians' acceptance of the 'testimony of Christ' and their allegiance to Christ both correspond to divine χάρις being given to them.[594] Paul references Christ six times across these five verses. All of the benefits of God's χάρις are experienced by the Corinthians *in Christ*, as they wait *for him*, the one *whose* testimony was established among them and who *himself* establishes them in continual readiness for *his* day. Paul's main point in this opening prayer is clearly to emphasise the *value* of the Corinthians' relationship with God through Christ. This

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[592] See also Phil. 1. 3 ff.; Rom. 1. 9.

[593] Nearly all commentators read ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ as 'through' or 'by' Christ Jesus. Cf. Conzelmann (1975) 26-27; Morgan (2020) 45. While I have no reason to dispute this majority interpretation, my translation preserves the more literal—though perhaps less clear—'*in* Christ Jesus', in order to mirror the repetition of Paul's Greek prepositions: 'Given to you *in* Christ Jesus, because *in* every way you have been enriched *in* him, *in* all reasoning and all knowledge'. Paul does not elaborate here on the relationship between God and Christ as co-sources of divine χάρις, as he will in Romans 5 in particular (see Section 4.4.).

[594] Here we might compare Philo's description of an individual's devotion to God as being an expression of the 'overflow' of divine χάρις, Phi. *Deus* 7, quoted in full in Section 2.2.2. His depiction of Hannah as well, in Section 2.3., equated responsive consecration to God with an ever increasing receipt of God's χάρις.

relationship includes numerous specific benefits for God's people, which Paul designates here as χαρίσματα ('you do not lack in any χάρισμα'). As Paul will use them throughout the rest of his Corinthian correspondence, χαρίσματα refer to the tangible expressions of God's χάρις to individuals, with which he chooses to enrich his people as a whole.[595] Here, Paul specifically draws attention to the χαρίσματα of reasoning and knowledge (λόγος, γνῶσις), highly prized and contended for in Corinth.[596] In response to the factionalism and contention within the church at Corinth, Paul develops in his letters to them a theology of χαρίσματα as specific reifications of divine χάρις, given to individuals for the sake of enriching the community as a whole. In Section 3.3., we saw that any gift of God to an individual member of his people is a cause for joy and thanksgiving among all. In his letters to the Corinthian community, Paul turns this conviction into a didactic argument: he urges the Corinthians to recognise that the gifts of God which they have been using for self-promotion have been given them not for their own enrichment, but for that of the whole church. It is good for the community as a whole that they 'do not lack in any χάρισμα'. Any individual who finds himself in possession of one of these gifts should recognise this not just as an expression of God's χάρις to him personally, but also as a means by which God has chosen to enrich his people as a whole. This theme carries throughout both 1 and 2 Corinthians, and it undergirds Paul's subsequent exhortations to community-building generosity in the face of division and competition.

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[595] Like Philo (cf. Section 2.2.1.), Paul uses the word χάρισμα to refer to a reification or specific manifestation of χάρις. Philo, however, made use of the term in his argument that creation cannot give an initiatory expression of χάρις (χάρισμα) to God. Paul uses the word εὐχαριστία, or sometimes χάρις itself, to refer to responsive human χάρις toward God. χάρισμα refers, in his use, to specific expressions of inter-human χάρις sourced from the χάρις of God.

[596] On oratory in Corinth, cf. Winter (1997) 126-144.

In the conclusion of Chapter 2, I suggested that Paul's theology of χαρίσματα democratises God's unique gifts of χάρις in a way that Philo and Josephus never seem to have envisioned. Philo, on the one hand, emphasised that God's χάρις in creation is given to all equally: at *Deus* 104 he asked, what was Noah given that was not offered by God 'to all creatures, not only to those created with both body and soul, but also to those with simple, elementary natures?'[597] Josephus, on the other hand, used the language of χάρις to draw attention to unique gifts God allots to particular people, especially the preeminent exemplar and lawgiver, Moses.[598] Paul's development of a theology of χαρίσματα in 1 Corinthians 12 results in a remarkable synthesis of the two themes of God's χάρις as both 'superabundant', in Barclay's terminology, and particular.[599]

The Corinthian church to which Paul writes is rife with disagreements and rivalries, 'characterized by boasting, arrogance, and status, particularly among the socially powerful who claim wisdom, power, and wealth'.[600] Paul reprimands his addressees for the competitive approach they have taken towards God's gifts of χάρις, reminding them that while each person has been given one or more χαρίσματα, all are given for the sake of 'the common good':

> Διαιρέσεις δὲ χαρισμάτων εἰσίν, τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα· καὶ διαιρέσεις διακονιῶν εἰσιν, καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος· καὶ διαιρέσεις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσίν, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς ὁ

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[597] For discussion, see Section 2.2.1. Cf. Barclay (2015) 237: 'The constant overflow of divine gifts, poured incessantly into the cosmos, leads him [Philo] to wax eloquent on the *superabundance* of divine generosity'.

[598] See Section 2.4.

[599] Barclay's scheme of 'perfections' does not include particularity, likely as a result of his nearly exclusive focus on χάρις language in Romans and Galatians. While Romans 12 echoes a number of the themes developed in 1 Corinthians 12, the particularity of individual χαρίσματα is less in focus.

[600] Chang (2013) 138.

> ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν. ἑκάστῳ δὲ δίδοται ἡ φανέρωσις τοῦ πνεύματος πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.[601]
>
> There are distinctions between χαρίσματα, but the same spirit; and there are distinctions between kinds of service, but the same Lord; and there are distinctions between activities, but the same God, who activates all things in everyone.[602] And to each he has given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good.

Paul goes on to list examples of these χαρίσματα, beginning with those that he mentioned in his opening prayer of thanks: to one is given a λόγος σοφίας, to another a λόγος γνώσεως; to another πίστις; to another healing gifts, etc.[603] In response to the Corinthians' elevation of some gifts of χάρις over others—in particular the gift of speaking in tongues, as chapter 14 indicates—Paul urges his addressees to recognise that all χαρίσματα are given by God: 'Everyday acts of service are now set on a par with the recognized, supernatural phenomena of the Spirit'.[604] In his later discussion of χαρίσματα in Romans, Paul explicitly sources individual χαρίσματα in the χάρις of God to his people as a whole: 'We each have different χαρίσματα, according to the χάρις given us'.[605] God

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[601] 1 Cor. 12. 4-7.

[602] While the triadic structure of this sentence is striking, Conzelmann (1975) 207 warns against reading it as proof of a fully-formed Pauline doctrine of the Trinity.

[603] 1 Cor. 12. 8-10. The list Paul gives here is certainly not meant to be exhaustive. Similar lists at 1 Cor. 12. 28-30, 2 Cor. 8. 7, and Romans 12. 6-8 overlap with the list here, but each adds some gifts and leaves out others. Fee (1987) 585-586 emphasises the fact that 'Paul's argument is entirely *ad hoc*, reflecting the Corinthian situation itself…he would almost certainly not recognize some of the schematizing that later interpreters have brought to these texts'.

[604] Conzelmann (1975) 208.

[605] Romans 12. 6. Cf. Moo (1996) 764: 'The operation of gifts was widespread, if not universal, in the early church. Believers possess different *charismata* ("gifts"); but each one is the product of God's *charis* ("grace"), which all believers have in common. Again Paul stresses the combination of diversity within unity that makes the church so rich and strong. But if the gifts are to bring these positive benefits, they must be used rightly—not for self-aggrandizement'.

has given each individual Christian specific manifestations of his χάρις, which are not meant to provoke competition, but rather are 'for the common good', πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.[606]

In order to clarify how these different χαρίσματα enable community participation in divine χάρις, Paul proceeds with a lengthy metaphor of the ἐκκλησία as the body of Christ:

> καὶ γὰρ τὸ σῶμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἓν μέλος ἀλλὰ πολλά. ἐὰν εἴπῃ ὁ πούς, Ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ χείρ, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ παρὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος; καὶ ἐὰν εἴπῃ τὸ οὖς, Ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ ὀφθαλμός, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐκ τοῦ σώματος, οὐ παρὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ σώματος; εἰ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα ὀφθαλμός, ποῦ ἡ ἀκοή; εἰ ὅλον ἀκοή, ποῦ ἡ ὄσφρησις; νυνὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ἔθετο τὰ μέλη, ἓν ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ σώματι καθὼς ἠθέλησεν. εἰ δὲ ἦν τὰ πάντα ἓν μέλος, ποῦ τὸ σῶμα; νῦν δὲ πολλὰ μὲν μέλη, ἓν δὲ σῶμα. οὐ δύναται δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς εἰπεῖν τῇ χειρί, Χρείαν σου οὐκ ἔχω, ἢ πάλιν ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῖς ποσίν, Χρείαν ὑμῶν οὐκ ἔχω· ἀλλὰ πολλῷ μᾶλλον τὰ δοκοῦντα μέλη τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενέστερα ὑπάρχειν ἀναγκαῖά ἐστιν, καὶ ἃ δοκοῦμεν ἀτιμότερα εἶναι τοῦ σώματος τούτοις τιμὴν περισσοτέραν περιτίθεμεν, καὶ τὰ ἀσχήμονα ἡμῶν εὐσχημοσύνην περισσοτέραν ἔχει, τὰ δὲ εὐσχήμονα ἡμῶν οὐ χρείαν ἔχει. ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς συνεκέρασεν τὸ σῶμα τῷ ὑστερουμένῳ περισσοτέραν δοὺς τιμήν, ἵνα μὴ ᾖ σχίσμα ἐν τῷ σώματι ἀλλὰ τὸ αὐτὸ ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων μεριμνῶσιν τὰ μέλη. καὶ εἴτε πάσχει ἓν μέλος, συμπάσχει πάντα τὰ μέλη· εἴτε δοξάζεται [ἓν] μέλος, συγχαίρει πάντα τὰ μέλη. Ὑμεῖς δέ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους.[607]
>
> For indeed, a body is not one limb but rather many. If ever the foot says, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body', it does not cease being a part of the body because of this, does it? And if ever the ear says, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body', it does not cease being a part of the body because of this, does it? If the whole body is the eye, where is the hearing? If the whole hearing, where is the smelling? But as it is, God has put the limbs in place, each one of them in the body, just as he wished. And if everything were one limb, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many limbs, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I do not need you', nor the head to the feet, 'I do not need you'. But rather, the limbs of the body which seem to be the weakest are actually extremely necessary, and those which we suppose to be less honourable we clothe with more abundant honour, and our shameful parts have more abundant beauty of form. Our beautiful parts have no need. Rather, God has

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606 Chang (2013) 135-206 traces the contrast between τὸ ἴδιον and τὸ συμφέρον as it runs throughout 1 Corinthians.

607 1 Cor. 12. 14-27. For discussion of Paul's body metaphor, see, among others, Mitchell (1991), 157–64; Sandnes (2002); Carter (2008); Fetherolf (2010); Marshall (2015).

> assembled the body in such a way as to give more abundant honour to that which lacks it, so that there may be no division in the body, but rather that the limbs may each show the same care on behalf of one another. And if one limb suffers, all the limbs suffer together; and if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice together. So you are the body of Christ, and each part a limb.

The metaphor of a community as a single body was popular in Paul's day. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Livy, Plutarch, and Dio Cassius all report the fable of Menenius Agrippa, who responded to protests against class inequality with the explanation that a body requires both more and less honoured parts in order to function as a whole.[608] The fable is also known as 'The Stomach and the Body', and the point that Menenius Agrippa makes is that all the other limbs in the body ought to submit to the stomach's taking precedence, lest the whole body die of starvation. Paul's description of all the members of the Corinthian community as 'limbs of one another', runs directly counter to previous uses of the metaphor that emphasise hierarchy within the community. While God has given each member of Christ's body unique gifts, they are not meant to be a source of competition or envy. Rather, each member of the body is equally in need of the χαρίσματα of the others, and all are to show the same 'care' for each other, contributing to the good of the others in recognition of the abundant χάρις with which God has enriched his people.

Paul's emphasis on God's care for the community as a whole, expressed through specific gifts of χάρις to individual members of that community, bears some resemblance to Josephus' insistence that the unique χάρις God gave Moses was also an expression of divine χάρις towards all who benefit from the Mosaic law.[609] Yet Paul crucially applies this understanding of God's particular χαρίσματα to every individual follower of Christ.

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[608] Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Ant. Rom.* 6. 86. 1-5; Livy 2. 32. 9-12; Plut. *Coriolanus* 6. 2-4; Dio Cassius 4. 17. 10-13. Others who describe the state as a body include Sallust *Rep.* 10. 6; Cicero *Resp.* 3. 25. 37; *Phil.* 8. 5. 15.

[609] Section 2.4.

The community is 'enriched' with God's lavish χάρις through the unique gifts that God grants each person. Rather than treating these gifts as instrumental goods (the eye priding itself on God's gift of sight, and the hand envying the eye in rejection of the particular χάρις God has given it), the Corinthians must recognise the single, divine source of their gifts and their single purpose as God's participant χάρις offered to the body as a whole. Participation in the χάρις of God means receiving his personalised gifts with responsive gratitude, and "returning them forward" by passing that χάρις on in participant relationship with other members of Christ's body. Only then can the community as a whole 'rejoice together' in gratitude to the God who has assembled it.

3.4.2. 2 Corinthians: Generosity from God's Abundant Provision

In his continuation of the Corinthian correspondence in what we now know as 2 Corinthians 8-9,[610] Paul further interweaves the themes of χάρις and divine enrichment, first mentioned together at the start of 1 Corinthians. While his metaphor of the body of Christ emphasised the importance of individual participation in God's χάρις for the good of the community as a whole, in 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul's primary aim is to encourage the Corinthian community to respond generously to his collection for the impoverished churches in Jerusalem.[611] Across these two chapters, Paul paints a picture of the

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[610] Most scholars believe chapters 8 and 9 are parts of two separate letters Paul sent to the Corinthians (and perhaps other Christians in Achaia, in the case of chapter 9) in close succession. Thrall (1994) i 3-49 thoroughly surveys the debate over the past 200 years concerning the number and order of letters contained in what is now 2 Corinthians. She concludes that chapters 1-8 are a unified whole; chapter 9 represents a letter sent shortly after the one containing chapters 1-8; and chapters 10-13 make up a third letter, sometime later. Whether chapters 8 and 9 were originally parts of one letter or two does not materially affect my argument.

[611] For a general discussion of the theological significance Paul places on the Jerusalem collection, see the essay of Malherbe (2013) 15-26, original publication (1959).

abundance of God's χάρις, which not only inspires but also enables his participant recipients to be astonishingly generous in turn towards each other. Paul begins in chapter eight by drawing the Corinthians' attention to the exemplary generosity of the Macedonian churches:

> Γνωρίζομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Μακεδονίας, ὅτι ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως ἡ περισσεία τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ κατὰ βάθους πτωχεία αὐτῶν ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἁπλότητος αὐτῶν.[612]
>
> For we want you to know, brothers, of the χάρις of God given among the churches in Macedonia, since in a time of great testing and affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty overflowed into a wealth of generosity.

While the connection between χάρις and 'joy' has been a theme throughout this thesis, here it operates paradoxically with a concept usually thought to produce the opposite of joy—poverty, πτωχεία.[613] Barclay comments, 'Paul can detect the workings of divine grace wrapped up in human acts of generosity, whose surprising, indeed deeply paradoxical, expression bears witness to its divine enablement'.[614] Paul connects the example of the Macedonians to his previous discussion of God's χαρίσματα a few verses down, when he urges the Corinthians, 'just as you overflow in everything—in trust and reasoning and knowledge and all zeal and in our love in you—make sure that you also overflow in this χάρις'.[615] The language of 'abundance' and 'overflow' (περισσεία, ἐπερίσσευσεν) in this chapter is redolent not only of Paul's earlier language of

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[612] 2 Cor. 8. 1-2.

[613] Barclay (2013) 331 comments that the mention of χαρά in 8.2 is 'clearly a play on words'.

[614] Barclay (2008b) 410.

[615] 2 Cor. 8. 7.

enrichment, but also of Philo's repeated assertions of the overflowing nature of God's χάρις.[616]

How the Macedonians' 'deep poverty' can paradoxically overflow in 'a wealth of generosity', Paul can only explain by pointing to the never-failing abundance of divine χάρις. In chapter 9, he appeals to an agricultural metaphor from the Septuagint, in order to underscore the almost miraculous level of generosity God's ever-creative χάρις enables on the part of his people:

> Δυνατεῖ δὲ ὁ θεὸς πᾶσαν χάριν περισσεῦσαι εἰς ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν παντὶ πάντοτε πᾶσαν αὐτάρκειαν ἔχοντες περισσεύητε εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν καθὼς γέγραπται· ἐσκόρπισεν, ἔδωκεν τοῖς πένησιν, ἡ δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. ὁ δὲ ἐπιχορηγῶν σπέρμα τῷ σπείροντι καὶ ἄρτον εἰς βρῶσιν χορηγήσει καὶ πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπόρον ὑμῶν καὶ αὐξήσει τὰ γενήματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν. ἐν παντὶ πλουτιζόμενοι εἰς πᾶσαν ἁπλότητα, ἥτις κατεργάζεται δι᾽ ἡμῶν εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ.[617]
>
> And God is able to make all χάρις abound to you, so that,[618] in all things and at all times, having all sufficiency, you may abound in every good deed, just as it is written, "He scattered liberally, he gave to the poor; his righteousness remains forever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your sowing and will grow the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

Here, Paul pictures God's provision for his people's acts of χάρις as the continual cycle of a farmer's sowing and reaping. First, Paul quotes Psalm 111. 9 (LXX), presenting God as the liberal 'scatterer' of χάρις and confirming this generosity as a sign of his eternal

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[616] See especially *Deus* 7, discussed in Section 2.2.2., and the overflowing joy (χαρά) of Hannah at Phi. *Ebr.* 1. 147. (Section 2.3.). Paul's paradoxical description of the Macedonians' 'overflow' from the emptiness of 'deep poverty' parallels Hannah's simultaneous 'pouring out' and 'filling up' in her astonishing state of 'sober intoxication'.

[617] 2 Cor. 9. 8-11.

[618] Barrett (1973) 237 notes that 'ἵνα is here on the boundary between final and consecutive clauses'.

righteousness (δικαιοσύνη).[619] Then, Paul interprets the psalm's language of scattering as a specifically agricultural metaphor by means of an allusion to Isaiah 55. 10.[620] Here, he places 'you', the Corinthians, in the role of sower. God as 'liberal scatterer' supplies seed to the human sower: his eternal righteousness provides what Hans Dieter Betz refers to as the 'economic basis' for his people's righteousness—in the case of the Jerusalem collection, money, which his people are then free to share with each other.[621] Just as the tiny seeds sowed by a farmer become an abundant harvest under God's watchful care, and in turn produce the seeds needed for next year's planting, so, Paul suggests, God provides whatever resources his people need in order to be able to express χάρις towards each other. In the picture that Paul has drawn, all the farmer does is plant the seeds provided for him, and then it is God who enables those seeds to 'multiply' into an abundant harvest, which in turn provides the farmer and those dependent on him both with bread to

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[619] Though as Betz (1985) 111 points out, the psalm itself refers to 'the duties of the god-fearing man'. In interpreting the psalm as a reference to God, Paul makes a similar move to that of Philo in Section 2.2.2., who described God in *Her.* 104 as the exemplar of the Deuteronomic ideal of human generosity.

[620] Betz (1985) 113 argues that Paul may be referring simply to 'a proverb current in his day: "Seed for the sower and bread for consumption"'. It seems more likely to me that Paul does have in mind the context of the phrase in Isa. 55. 10-11 (LXX), which pictures the full agricultural cycle of divine provision to which Paul alludes: 'For when the rain or the snow comes down from heaven, it does not return there, but rather it makes the earth drunk (μεθύση), and makes it bear and grow, and gives seed to the sower and bread for eating. My word will be just the same: when it goes out from my mouth, it will not return to me, but rather it will complete whatever I have desired'.

[621] Betz (1985) 114. Barrett (1973) 237, however, offers a helpful caution to this interpretation: 'Paul is certainly not so crude a thinker as to mean that the Christian is always assured of such a material standard of living that he will be able to act charitably towards others'. This was certainly not always the case in Paul's own experience; cf. 2 Cor. 11. 23-33; Phil. 4. 12. Rather, 'because the Christian is supplied not from within but by the grace of God there will always be some kind of good work that he can do'. This interpretation fits well with my argument in Section 3.4.1. that Paul's language of χαρίσματα democratises the unique gifts of χάρις God gives to *all* the members of Christ's body, 'for the common good'.

eat in the present and with seeds to plant for the coming year.[622] Human χάρις, this image suggests, does not depend on the precise material or number of resources that an individual person has to give. When one of God's people offers χάρις to others, the gift itself may be as small as a few tiny seeds. God is the one who brings a full harvest—meeting both current and future needs—from one small act of righteousness.[623]

1 Corinthians 3 provides a useful point of comparison, in which Paul again uses an agricultural metaphor in order to temper the Corinthians' view of the glory due to individual human leaders:

> ἐγὼ ἐφύτευσα, Ἀπολλὼς ἐπότισεν, ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς ηὔξανεν· ὥστε οὔτε ὁ φυτεύων ἐστίν τι οὔτε ὁ ποτίζων, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ αὐξάνων θεός·[624]
>
> I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth; therefore neither is the one planting anything nor the one watering, but the God who causes the growth.

Although he does not specifically refer to χάρις here, just three verses down Paul affirms that God's 'fellow workers' (συνεργοί) like Apollos and himself are doing their part in metaphorically planting and watering the church 'according to the χάρις of God given'

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[622] Betz (1985) 110 draws attention to the philosophical background of the language of 'sufficiency' in this passage, and contrasts Paul's use of the word with the Socratic tradition, in which 'self-sufficiency (αὐτάρκεια) was thought to be attainable by scaling down one's external needs to the point where, just like the gods, one has need of nothing'. Cf. Xen. *Mem.* 1. 6. 10; *Symp.* 4. 35; *Oec.* 2. 5 ff. Paul, by contrast, agrees with the more popular belief that 'wealth is a divine gift of blessing', meant to be shared.

[623] This is both similar and different to Seneca's insistence that it is the intention rather than the gift itself which defines a true *beneficium* (see especially *Ben.* 2. 31. 2 and 2. 34. 1, discussed in Section 1.2.2.). Paul similarly suggests with this picture that the size or amount of gift that an individual believer has to give is not nearly as important as the act itself of giving from whatever resources he has available. However, where Paul diverges from Seneca is in his firm belief that the involvement of the creator God in any inter-human act of χάρις means that the gift in some way or other will actually grow to meet the need, like seeds growing into a full harvest.

[624] 1 Cor. 3. 6-7.

them.[625] Neither is more important than the other to the good of the whole community, just as in the body metaphor, the eye cannot claim no need of the hand, nor the head of the feet. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians, Paul urges his audience to be generous in their χάρις towards one another, according to the abundant χάρις which God will continue to lavish upon them. All parties contribute from the χαρίσματα given them, for the sake of the whole community, which God is growing through them. In both passages, Paul confirms that God 'causes the growth' (αὐξήσει, 2 Cor. 9. 10; αὐξάνων, 1 Cor. 3. 7). What is the goal of all this divine and human generosity? Intermediately, the promise is that God will provide the resources needed both for present sustenance ('bread for food') and for future generosity ('seed to the sower'). Ultimately, however, this passage concludes with the same goal of human generosity that Paul returns to across his letter corpus—divinely directed thanksgiving. 'You will be enriched in every way for all generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.'[626] For Paul, inter-human χάρις is not only for the sake of meeting practical needs and forging stronger human relationships (although he is very interested in both of these things). Ultimately, the importance of generosity among God's people lies in the fact that it increases human thanksgiving to God. Participant human χάρις finds its ultimate meaning as an expression of the χάρις of God to his people—both individually and as a whole. In 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul invites the Corinthians to join him in exalting the χάρις of God at work behind every true human

[625] 1 Cor. 3. 10.

[626] 2 Cor. 9. 11.

act of χάρις, and he seeks to spur them on to further acts of generosity as a way of inviting yet more voices to join in the chorus of responsive praise.[627]

3.5. Conclusion

Over the course of this chapter, I have analysed three of the five prominent *loci* around which cluster Paul's discussions of divine χάρις in his letter corpus. In Section 3.2., I considered the ways in which Paul's characteristic greeting formula, 'χάρις to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ', frames each of his letters as an expression of initiatory divine χάρις to his addressees, as well as establishing Paul's role in relation to those addressees as an apostle and a fellow recipient of divine χάρις. In Section 3.3., I analysed the participant understanding of χάρις expressed in Paul's prayers of thanksgiving, especially in 1 Thessalonians. Paul consistently points to the χάρις of God for his people behind every human act of χάρις within the Christian community. Paul's picture of divine χάρις tightly interweaves the participant relationships initiated and sustained by God, such that God's χάρις to one is seen as an expression of χάρις to all, and all are invited to join in thanksgiving for any individual's experience of divine χάρις.

In Section 3.4.1., Paul's discussion of the χαρίσματα in 1 Corinthians levels hierarchies between believers and democratises God's unique, particularised gifts of χάρις. God's χάρις to the community as a whole is expressed through individualised gifts of χάρις to his people, such that the whole community participates in divine χάρις as one, unified body. Finally, in Section 3.4.2., Paul uses the metaphor of a farmer to describe the

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[627] Cf. also Paul's account at 2 Cor. 4. 15 of why he endures so much suffering for the sake of the gospel: 'All things are on your account, in order that χάρις increasing through even more people may abound with thanksgiving (εὐχαριστία) to the glory of God'.

abundance God provides for the sake of his people's generosity towards one another. God's provision both enables and gives meaning to the χάρις his people extend to each other. Ultimately, inter-human χάρις finds its purpose as part of the ongoing cycle of human thanksgiving to God for his bountiful χάρις that sustains his people and enables their flourishing.

Chapter 4: The χάρις of God in the χάρις of Christ

4.1. Introduction

The passages discussed in the previous chapter do not make much distinction between divine χάρις in general and the χάρις of Christ in particular. In Paul's greetings (discussed in Section 3.2.), Christ is aligned with God as the joint source of χάρις. In the Corinthian correspondence (especially 1 Cor. 1. 4-8, discussed in Section 3.4.1.), Christ surrounds and permeates the Corinthians' χάρις relationship with God; he is the one 'in whom' Paul's addressees have been enriched by God with every divine χαρίσματα. In the present chapter, I draw our attention to the passages in Paul's letters in which the χάρις of Christ himself is foregrounded and described as a unique expression of divine χάρις to humanity.

Across his extant corpus, it is in his letter to the house churches at Rome that Paul spends the most time articulating the place of Christ in the divine-human relationship of χάρις. In the course of his letter to the Romans, he also works through some of the most important implications of God's gift of Christ to humanity. While the previous chapter focussed on Paul's articulations of participant χάρις in his greetings, prayers of thanksgiving, and exhortations to community-building generosity, this chapter focusses on Paul's explication of the χάρις of Christ in his letter to the Romans. First, I consider the timeline of divine χάρις that Paul outlines in Romans 1-3 and the chronological place of Christ's mission as God's response to the persistent ἀχαριστία of humanity. Then, I discuss the implications Paul draws from the fact that Christ is sent by God as the supreme expression of his participant χάρις towards humanity. Finally, I consider passages in which Paul identifies Christ as a distinct agent of divine χάρις, both within the context of the incarnation and then also post-resurrection. Paul uses the language of χάρις

as one means of expressing the complexity of his christology. In Section 4.4.1., I discuss the incarnate Christ as the representative of God's χάρις towards humanity, and in Section 4.4.2., I argue for his role as the model human being in relation to χάρις in Romans 5. In Section 4.4.3., Paul's explicit references to the χάρις of the risen Lord in 2 Cor. 12 and his closing epistolary formula emphasise Christ's ongoing mediatory role as the agent of God's participant χάρις for his people.

4.2. Divine χάρις and Human ἀχαριστία in Romans 1-3: God's Extraordinary Move towards Participant Relationship

Paul begins his letter to the Romans with his typical wish of 'χάρις and peace' to them 'from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ', followed by a prayer of thanksgiving for his fellow participants in that divine χάρις.[628] In parallel with his prayer at the beginning of 1 Thessalonians, Paul thanks God for the χάρις of the Romans' πίστις being 'proclaimed throughout the whole cosmos'—a direct fulfilment of Paul's own χάρις-inspired mission to bring about 'the obedience of πίστις among all the nations'.[629] Following this praise-filled opening, however, Paul quickly turns in his letter to a striking passage of condemnation for those who have refused to respond as they should to the χάρις of God. The first targets of attack are unbelieving gentiles.[630] Although he does not

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[628] Rom. 1. 8.

[629] Rom. 1. 5. Unlike in the case of the Thessalonians, here Paul is clearly giving thanks for something that on the surface had nothing to do with him. He had not previously visited the Roman church and was not its founder. His personal interest in fellow members of the divine-human χάρις relationship is so great, that he gives thanks for their flourishing relationship with God as though it were a direct expression of God's generosity towards himself.

[630] On the similarities and differences between Paul's anti-polytheism polemic and those of his Jewish contemporaries, see Gaca (1999).

use the word χάρις in this section, Paul's primary accusation against the gentiles is that 'although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or respond to his χάρις (ηὐχαρίστησαν)'.[631] For Paul, it is essentially from this initial failure to respond to God's χάρις that 'all the impiety and injustice among people' stems.[632] Paul's language of εὐχαριστία in this central accusation suggests that he, like Philo, sees behind the entire created order the χάρις of God, which deserves humanity's continual gratitude and worship.[633] Paul writes that the creation of the world reveals the 'eternal power' (ἀίδιος δύναμις) and 'divinity' (θειότης) of God, which naturally demand not only honour (δόξα) but also responsive χάρις (εὐχαριστία) from human beings. For both Philo and Paul, among all the created beings on earth, humans are uniquely capable of recognising and responding to the divine χάρις that is behind creation.[634] Unlike Philo, however, Paul spends significant time in this chapter justifying God's 'wrath' (ὀργή) against the pervasive ingratitude of those to whom he has given life and to whom he has revealed himself as the giver.[635] Instead of responding participatively to the relational invitation implicit in God's gift of creation, people have 'held back' (κατεχόντων) this truth that has been revealed to them, and they have 'exchanged' it (μετήλλαξαν) for a lie.[636] Note the

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[631] Rom. 1. 21.

[632] Rom. 1. 18.

[633] Cf. the doxology of Rom. 11. 35-36: 'Who has ever given first to [God], that he should pay that one back in return? For all things are from him and through him and to him'.

[634] For Philo, see *Leg.* 3. 78, discussed above, Section 2.2.1.; note also that while creation can 'groan' according to Paul (Rom. 8. 22-23), only people can give God thanks.

[635] Barclay (2015) 219-220 and Zeller (1990) 43-48 both comment on Philo's preference for attributing divine ὀργή to one of God's powers, rather than to Godself. Paul's punitive God is more similar to that of Josephus, in his account of Korah's rebellion and harsh punishment (cf. Section 2.4.3.).

[636] Rom. 1. 18, 25.

transactional language Paul employs. Rather than recognising God's glory and generosity for what they are, people have traded out (ἤλλαξαν, 1. 23; μετήλλαξαν 1. 25) the truth about God and his glory for the falsehood of idolatry: 'having turned from the creator, they dread and minister to the created thing instead'.[637] In contrast to the joy and participant relationship that Paul consistently associates with God's χάρις and human εὐχαριστία elsewhere, here, the result of holding back the responsive χάρις due to God is dread of and servitude to creation;[638] shortchanging oneself by getting lies in exchange for honour and truth; futility, darkness, foolishness (1. 21); and consequent dishonouring of one's own body (1. 24).[639] God's response to the ἀχαριστία of the idolators 'has been revealed', Paul writes, in that he 'has given them over' (παρέδωκεν) to what they have chosen in place of him. The threefold repetition in verses 24-28 emphasises the dreadfulness of the judgement.[640] In verse 24, God has given them over to their hearts' desires for impurity, in verse 26, to passions of dishonour, and in verse 28, to the failing

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[637] Rom. 1. 25. In his undisputed letters, Paul never uses the verb σεβάζομαι, 'dread', or any of its related words (σέβομαι, σέβασμα, σεβαστός, etc.) to refer to worship of the one true God. The writer of 2 Thessalonians refers to idols as σεβάσματα (2. 4).

[638] As opposed to spiritual service to God (λατρεύειν ἐν τῷ πνεύματι, Rom. 1. 9; cf. 12. 1).

[639] χάρις is consistently associated by Paul with honour (τιμή) and glory (δόξα), and ἀχαριστία with dishonour (ἀτιμία) and refusal to glorify God (cf. Rom. 1. 21, 5. 2; 1 Cor. 10. 30-31, 12. 4-26; 2 Cor 2. 14-17, 4. 15, 8. 19, 9. 11-13; Phil 2.9-11). τιμή and ἀτιμία generally (though not exclusively) refer to inter-human honour and dishonour in Paul's undisputed letters, while δόξα is most appropriately attributed to God, though at crucial points Paul notes that God has also chosen to share that glory with his beloved people (cf. Rom 2. 7, 5. 2, 8. 18-21, 9. 4; 1 Cor. 2. 7, 11. 7; 2 Cor. 3. 7, 18, 4. 17). τιμή/δόξα are regularly paired in the Pauline letters and can be seen as roughly synonymous (cf. Rom. 2. 7, 10; 1 Cor. 6. 20, 15. 43; 2 Cor. 6. 8). One's propensity to glorify God and live honourably in the world is a clear indicator of the state of his divine χάρις relationship.

[640] It also sets up a stark contrast with Paul's later uses of the verb παραδίδωμι, in Rom. 4. 25 and 8. 32, in which Christ is the one 'given over on our behalf'—the supreme act of God's χάρις in response to human ἀχαριστία.

mind that does what is *not* appropriate (τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα).[641] All this, Paul insists, is the logical and reasonable response of a God whose abundant generosity has been so ungratefully ignored by his creatures.

However, Paul does not limit his accusations of ἀχαριστία to unbelieving gentiles. In chapters 2 and 3, he directs his charges against fellow Jews as well, concluding that 'we Jews' are no more immune to sin than any gentile neighbour.[642] Paul quotes the psalmist himself attesting that 'there is no one who is just, not even one'—even among those 'entrusted with the oracles of God'.[643] Dishonouring God by sinning against the law, Paul argues, is just as serious an act of ἀχαριστία as that of the gentiles 'who do not have the law' (Rom. 2. 14): 'you who boast of the law dishonour God by violating the

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[641] Undoubtedly a rhetorical swipe at what Paul would consider to be the hypocrisy of the Stoic ethical concept of καθήκοντα. Cf. Jewett (2007) 182-183, who points out, 'The reference to propriety suggests that God delivers the human race into a condition in which the most widely touted standards of behavior are consistently violated'.

[642] Rom. 3. 9. See Hultgren (2011) 141 for the translation 'we Jews' as the subject of προεχόμεθα, with the verb understood to mean 'at an advantage'. This interpretation is also supported by Cranfield (1979) i 189, Käsemann (1980) 85-86, Wilckens (1978-1982) i 172, Ziesler (1989) 101-102, and Lohse (2003) 120-121.

[643] Rom. 3. 2, 10. I follow Das (2012) 34 in identifying Paul's Jewish interlocutor here as likely a fictive addressee in the rhetorical tradition of a diatribe, rather than 'an *actual* member of the audience'. See Section 4.3.2 for a fuller discussion of the intended audience of Paul's letter as a whole.

law' (Rom. 2. 23).[644] In chapter 4, Paul will complicate his argument to say that even Torah observance does not automatically make one 'just' in the eyes of God. For now, though, he is painting with broader strokes, arguing that neither Jew nor gentile can claim immunity before God's judgement seat, 'so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world brought before God's judgement' (Rom. 3. 19). In Romans 1-3, Paul situates his letter and his audience at a particular point along the timeline of God's responses to human ἀχαριστία. Paul's 'now' constitutes the period between the wrath of God already revealed against debased gentile idolators and the wrath of God yet to be revealed on the day of judgement against those who hypocritically claim immunity from it, 'for there is no favouritism with God' (2. 11). In the middle of these two revelations of wrath, however, Paul inserts his 'but now' (3. 21).[645]

Verses 21-28 of Romans 3 provide the climax of this section. Here Paul succinctly describes, in sharp contrast to the wrath-deserving ἀχαριστία that pervades humanity, God's supreme expression of initiatory χάρις in the sending of his son. Despite

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[644] Here we should note that Paul's critiques of fellow Jews in Romans are always voiced from an emic perspective. Most commentators agree that Paul uses the first person plural of προεχόμεθα in 3. 9 to include himself in the rhetorical question and answer, 'Are we Jews better off? Certainly not!' (cf. n. 640). As well, Fitzmyer (1993) 333 points out that Paul is employing 'a Palestinian Jewish literary form' in Rom. 3. 10- 18, 'adopting the subform called *testimonia*' to list alongside each other a series of texts from Jewish scriptures which he insists are meant as an internal critique against those 'under the law' (3. 19) as well as those outside it. Paul's indictment of fellow Jews' ἀχαριστία arises from within the prophetic Jewish tradition and shares particular similarities with 2 Esdr. 7. 22-24, the (Cairo) Damascus Document 5. 13-17, and *Assumption of Moses* 5. 2-6. The *testimonia* of Rom. 3 may not even be original to Paul, as suggested by Fitzmeyer (1993) 334, Dibelius (1931) 228, van der Minde (1976) 57, and Keck (1977).

[645] Cranfield (1979) i 201 comments that 'the contention of some commentators that νυνί has a purely logical force here must surely be rejected, and its temporal significance firmly maintained…It is not unfair to claim that this νυνί points to the decisiveness for faith of the gospel events in their objectiveness as events which took place at a particular time in the past and are quite independent of, and distinct from, the response of men to them'.

humanity's apathy, presumption, and even downright denial of his glory and generosity, God has purposefully responded 'now', not by withdrawing or withholding his χάρις, but instead by offering an entirely new expression of it. In Romans 3. 23-24, Paul answers his opening diagnosis from 1. 21 ('they did not honour him as God or treat him with responsive χάρις') with God's response in sending Christ:

> πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.[646]
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> For all have sinned and come up short in honouring God[647] and are justified as a gift from his χάρις through the ransoming that is in Christ Jesus.

Rather than holding out on humanity until they had (hypothetically) learned to mend their ἀχαριστία and repent of their failure to honour him, God effectively reinitiated his offer of a χάρις relationship by sending his son to die for sins.[648] Paul insists that God has gone

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[646] Rom. 3. 23-24.

[647] I translate τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ 'in honouring God' because of the parallelism between the nouns δόξης and χάριτι in 3. 23-24 and the verbs ἐδόξασαν and ηὐχαρίστησαν in 1. 21. Cf. Jewett (2007) 280 on δόξα in 3. 23: 'It echoes the wording of Rom 1:18-32 in terms of refusing to grant honor to God by choosing to worship the creature rather than the Creator'. This failure to honour God is often also expressed as a failure to bear the image of the divine glory, which is the more common focus among commentators, e.g. Longenecker (2016) 417; Moo (1996) 226-227; Barrett (1991) 71.

[648] Implicitly, of course, Paul's argument here raises the notorious problem that has since pervaded Christian atonement theology, namely, how God can both be gracious and at the same time require the brutal death that Christ endured on the cross (or allow suffering in the world to begin with, for that matter). Stump (2018) 3-38 delineates the problems inherent in each of the major atonement theologies embraced by the church to date with fair and illuminating insight. Paul, however, simply asserts God's goodness and generosity in the death of Christ and does not explicitly try to reconcile the apparent contradiction. Cf. Nygren (1952) 354-357, cited below, n. 714, arguing that Paul would refuse on principle to engage in theodicy as we think of it today. At the beginning of his work on the historical development of soteriology, McIntyre (1992) 1-10 draws attention to the remarkable fact that none of the earliest Christian creeds (up through the fifth or sixth century A.D.) propounds anything like a formal theory of the atonement provided by the death of Christ; it is simply always assumed, both in worship practices and in writing, that Christ's voluntary death for human sin is the supreme manifestation of divine χάρις.

above and beyond what anyone could expect or demand of him: at the present moment, while there is yet time before the coming day of judgement, God is giving every person the opportunity for a fresh response to his χάρις; he is offering δικαιοσύνη itself as a gift, a further manifestation of his (as yet unreturned) χάρις. This fact continues to astonish Paul. He comes back to it repeatedly across his letters.[649] Even though humanity as a whole failed to honour God or respond to his χάρις as he deserved (elsewhere Paul even uses the language of hostility: 'we were his enemies [ἐχθροί]', Rom. 5. 10), nevertheless God sent Christ as his supreme gift to humankind. Seneca would have counselled against such an extravagant move of generosity towards people who have proved themselves so doggedly ungrateful.[650] And yet, as Paul seeks to demonstrate across much of the rest of his letter, this "excessive" χάρις of God proves to be the most effective means of correcting human ἀχαριστία that Paul can imagine.

In Section 2.2.2., Philo argued that the appropriate human response to the abundant χάρις of God involves 'treating him with responsive χάρις and with respect' and 'purifying ourselves from acts of injustice (ἀδικήματα)'.[651] Similarly, we might expect a Hellenistic Jew like Paul to be encouraging his readers to offer up to God the responsive

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[649] Cf. Rom. 4. 6-8, 5. 6-10; Gal. 4. 3-5; 2 Cor. 8. 9, 9. 15.

[650] Although Seneca holds up the gods as exemplary for giving without expectation of return and even after suffering neglect and misrepresentation at the hands of their recipients (*Ben.* 1. 1. 9; 4. 9. 1), he repeatedly urges his readers to be discriminating in deciding upon whom to confer their own *beneficia*. His opening diagnosis of the problems surrounding giving and receiving *beneficia* is that 'we fail to select worthy recipients' (1. 1. 2). He insists adamantly that one must never offer a *beneficium* that might bring him dishonour (2. 15. 1)—precisely what Paul argues God suffers at the hands of ἀχάριστοι. Instead, Seneca advises, choose recipients for your *beneficia* based entirely on their trustworthiness (*fides*): 'this is how *beneficia* maintain their authority and magnificence' (3. 14. 2).

[651] Phi. *Imm.* 7.

χάρις of a just life, in acknowledgement of the χάρις that he has showered on humanity from the first moments of creation.[652] Indeed, we will see Paul arguing for something like this later in the letter. In chapter 1, however, Paul has dismissed the possibility—at least rhetorically if not literally—that human beings will ever respond simply to God's χάρις in creation with the εὐχαριστία and δόξα that he deserves. Instead, in the present time at least, it is the χάρις of God revealed in Jesus Christ that makes possible redemption and reconciliation between God and humanity. It is a matter of utmost urgency for Paul that he get across to his readers and listeners the astonishing, compelling, and time-sensitive nature of this offer that God has now put forward.

4.3. 'Apart from the Law' as an Instrumental vs Participant Distinction

In Romans 4, Paul begins to unpack the implications of this new χάρις from God in Christ; this is where the instrumental vs participant distinction becomes especially useful to him. For Paul, this expression of God's χάρις to humanity is so lavish and astonishing, it demands an immediate response. As mentioned above, there is an urgency to this call for a response because of the imminence of the παρουσία, but after Romans 3, Paul focusses more on the compelling invitation to relationship that God has made in sending Christ than on the imminence of judgement as a motivation for response. Paul closes chapter 3 with the explosive claim, 'We conclude that a person is justified by trust-

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[652] This is not to suggest that Philo is the perfect representative of what typifies a Hellenised Jew, especially considering his uniquely impressive education and sophisticated social circle. Yet with the relative paucity of other extant witnesses, he is not an unreasonable comparison for Paul.

faithfulness apart from works of law' (Rom. 3. 28).[653] For Paul, because Christ has died for the forgiveness of sins 'apart from the law' (3. 21), the right-standing with God that he has enabled must also now come 'apart from the law'—making it available to both Jews who have broken the law and gentiles who never had it to follow in the first place, as we will think about more in Section 4.3.2.

This distinction is also important to Paul because of his concern for widespread ideas about how to relate to God that, if followed to their logical conclusion, instrumentalise his χάρις towards humanity. Paul's most often used example of this kind of instrumentalising approach to God is the assumption among many early Christians that Torah observance remained an essential, exception-less requirement for right-standing in God's eyes and membership among his people. As I explicate further in Section 4.3.1., Paul responds to this assumption by warning his addressees against the danger of instrumentalising the law as a means of obligating divine χάρις. Paul's strong and oft-repeated repudiation of 'works of the law' as a source of righteousness has led to hundreds of years of debate among his interpreters. As discussed in the introduction of this thesis, the majority of interpretations can be categorised under the two headings 'anti-legalistic' and New Perspective (or 'anti-ethnocentric' in Thiessen's more consistent terminology).[654] Often attributed to Luther, the first is represented more recently by

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[653] Explosive, from a Jewish perspective, not in the inclusion of πίστις as a requirement for righteousness—cf. Morgan (2015) 201: 'The idea that it is always appropriate to be *pistos* towards God is endemic throughout the Septuagint'—but rather in the dismissal of the law as playing an inherent part in a process of justification. I follow Morgan (2015) 213-214 in reading πίστις and πιστός as closely related in Pauline writings, as they are in the surrounding Graeco-Roman world.

[654] Thiessen (2016) 5, n. 16 points out a number of problems associated with the common labels of 'Lutheran' and 'New Perspective'. He also helpfully mentions German mystical and more recent participatory treatments of Pauline theology that do not strictly fit into the two dominant interpretive camps with whom I primarily engage.

Bultmann, Stuhlmacher, and Westerholm, among others.[655] Generally, scholars in this interpretive tradition see Paul attacking a "legalistic" approach to the law which he thinks is fundamental to "Judaism" as 'a legalistic religion stressing human works and divine judgement'.[656] Since the mid-twentieth century, however, the second, 'anti-ethnocentric' camp has risen to prominence in Pauline scholarship. Led by James D. G. Dunn and N. T. Wright, these interpreters emphasise the ethnocentricity of Judaism, which was defined by adherence to the law and insisted that 'gentiles could only enjoy the covenantal benefits that Jews possessed by undergoing circumcision and adoption of the Jewish law'.[657] Both of these interpretive approaches have strengths and weaknesses, and I draw from both in what follows. As a general rule, however, neither perspective pays sufficient attention to the facts that (A) Paul's concern with instrumentalising approaches to God's χάρις is far from unique to him, and (B) his arguments regarding the law provide only one example of the many ways in which human beings can instrumentalise God's χάρις in Paul's view. Let us consider each of these facts in turn.

First, as we have seen throughout this thesis, concern about instrumentalising approaches to χάρις (especially divine χάρις) is not unique to Paul. Philo repeatedly urges his readers to recall that one can never place God under obligation.[658] Although the majority of my Graeco-Roman sources focus on participant relationality in the context of inter-human gift-giving, Dio Chrysostom explicitly warns against the instrumentalisation of divine χάρις that occurs when one 'mistreats or destroys the very thing from which [the

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[655] Cf. Bultmann (1952) i 259-269; Stuhlmacher (2001); Carson et al. (2004); Bell (2005); Westerholm (2004) and (2013).

[656] Thiessen (2016) 5.

[657] Thiessen (2016) 6. Cf. especially Dunn (2008) and Wright (2013).

[658] See especially Phi. *Leg.* 3. 78 and *Her.* 103-104, discussed at length in Chapter 2.

Χάριτες] have taken their name'.[659] Theodora Jim spends significant time in her monograph explicating the recognition across Greek literature and culture that humanity remains in continual indebtedness to the gods and ought to honour and give them thanks continually as the 'first giver'.[660] This belies worth-based interpretations of 'works-righteousness', which pit Paul against supposedly explicit Jewish and Graeco-Roman attempts to merit God's χάρις—as though Paul's 'grace no longer grace' argument stems primarily from a *unique* Christian idea that God's χάρις can never be merited or obligated. Yet, as I hope by this point has become clear, this idea was shared by many of Paul's contemporaries and therefore is likely not the key polemical point he is making. Paul's application of the principle of non-instrumentalisation to his argument that δικαιοσύνη is offered 'apart from the law' is a distinctive application of that shared principle.[661] Philo, as we saw before, does not dismiss the necessity of physically obeying the law's commands (cf. *Migr.* 89-93), but he rather insists that one must keep both Torah's literal instructions (such as those surrounding ritual purity) and what he considers to be those instructions' spiritual counterparts, such as seeking to honour God with purity of mind and soul (*Imm.* 8-9, discussed above, Section 2.2.2.). Paul, on the other hand, clearly thinks that at least *some* people should not follow at least *some* Torah-based instructions: amidst the ongoing debates about the precise place of the law in Paul's mind, all commentators recognise that he explicitly argues against adult gentile Christians being

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[659] DioChr. *Or.* 31. 37.

[660] Jim (2014) 68-82.

[661] We should never interpret Paul's phrase, 'apart from the law', as meaning somehow 'contrary to' or 'contradictory of' the law. As Dunn (2008) 79 and Barclay (1988), (2010), (2013) have made abundantly clear, Paul's ethical code is at least as stringent as most others available to him from his surrounding Jewish and Greco-Roman culture.

circumcised.[662] But while this specific argument is distinct to Paul, his bigger point that God's χάρις must not be instrumentalised offers an answer—not an objection—to concerns pervasive in his wider Hellenistic Jewish and Graeco-Roman culture.

What is more, many discussions of Pauline χάρις fail to acknowledge that there is a whole series of instrumental approaches to God that Paul takes issue with in his letters. As we have already seen in Romans 1, Paul accuses unbelieving gentiles of having experienced God's χάρις in creation but nevertheless 'suppressing the truth in their injustice', 'knowing God yet not honouring him as God or responding to his χάρις with gratitude'.[663] Failing to honour (δοξάζειν) God as an expression of gratitude for his χάρις is a theme that Paul also brings up in 1 Corinthians 10. In this passage, Paul is addressing the controversy of whether it is appropriate for Christians to eat meat sacrificed to idols (an act universally forbidden by Jewish interpreters of Torah).[664] His 'strong' interlocutor —the one who thinks the meat is fine—argues, 'If I partake with χάρις, why am I slandered on account of that for which I express χάρις (εὐχαριστέω)?'[665] Paul's response, however, argues that a simple expression or feeling of thanks is insufficient as a response

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[662] Thiessen (2016) 73-101 makes the interesting, but to my mind, not entirely convincing argument that Paul actually sees himself upholding the law's version of circumcision by denouncing its performance on *adult* male proselytes. Cf. Fredriksen (2017) 65-69.

[663] Rom. 1. 18, 21.

[664] Cf. *m. 'Abod. Zar.* 2.3; 4 Macc. 5.2. Although 'in the ancient world the abhorrence of idolatry was quintessentially and distinctively Jewish', Dunn (1995) 58 cautions that this 'does not imply that all the weak were Jewish Christians or that all the strong were Gentiles'.

[665] 1 Cor. 10. 30. By interpreting 29b-30 as the retort of the 'strong' in Paul's diatribe, I follow Lietzmann (1969) 52, Wendland (1962) 83-84, Pierce (1955) 77-78, among others; cf. NEB, GNB, Montgomery, and NAB. Even with the more standard interpretation of verses 29-31 all expressing Paul's own opinions, his format is still that of a challenge raised in 29b-30 that is answered in verse 31.

to God's χάρις in giving the food.[666] If one dishonours God by blatantly ignoring the conscience of a fellow Christian and claiming the "right" to eat whatever he pleases, his thanks to God mean very little. Instead, 'whatever you do,' Paul writes, 'do everything to honour God'.[667] For Paul, a truly participative response to God's χάρις doesn't simply say 'thank you' and then proceed to dishonour God by either causing another to stumble (1 Cor. 10. 32) or keeping the truth about him from others (Rom. 1. 18). In the later chapters of Romans and in 2 Corinthians, Paul similarly argues that refusing to reconcile differences with fellow Christians equates to 'receiving the χάρις of God for nothing'.[668] In Romans 13-15, Paul repeatedly uses the language of debt (ὀφείλειν) in a positive sense to argue that the χάρις of God *does* put its human recipients under a certain kind of obligation—namely, the *relational* obligation to 'love' (Rom. 13. 8), 'bear with' (15. 1), and 'serve' each other (15. 27). Finally, in 1 Corinthians 15 Paul describes the ἀχαριστία of which he himself would have been guilty had he not 'laboured excessively' in his proclamation of the gospel in response to the call of God's χάρις: 'I am what I am by the χάρις of God, and his χάρις towards me was not for nothing, but I laboured more excessively than all of them, yet not I, but the χάρις of God with me'.[669] In short, if so-called 'works-righteousness' is to be understood as an example for Paul of an instrumentalising response to God's χάρις, it is only one of many. God's χάρις to

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[666] Cf. Sen. *Ben.* 2. 32. 4, discussed above, Section 1.2.3, in which Seneca argues that for a relationship of χάρις to be maintained through time, a recipient must go beyond an initial, obligatory response of gratitude (*gratia*) and seek to do the giver some further good (*beneficium*).

[667] 1 Cor. 10. 31.

[668] 2 Cor. 6. 1. Cf. Rom. 14. 1 - 15. 7, as well as Dio Chrysostom insisting that inter-human χάρις must be carried out in reverence for the χάρις of the gods: *Or.* 31. 37 (Section 1.3.4.).

[669] 1 Cor. 15. 10.

humanity is so marvellous, it simply must be met not only with gratitude, but also with honour and obedience and the laborious commitment to pass that χάρις on to others in gospel proclamation and inter-human reconciliation. Taking God's χάρις for granted is a failure in εὐχαριστία just as much as an attempt to "earn" it would be.[670]

4.3.1. Divine χάρις Is Not Obligated

In light of the above caveats, then, let us now turn to the first implication that Paul draws in Romans 4 from the fact that Christ has died for human sins 'apart from the law'. As we saw at the end of Romans 3, this means for Paul that a human being is now made right with God 'apart from works of the law' as well.[671] But why is this fact so important to him? In this section, I argue that Paul's primary concern is not with the law itself or with Judaism as a whole, but rather with an instrumentalising approach to the law that treats it as a means of obligating God's χάρις.[672] Such an instrumentalisation of the law can theoretically be committed by anyone, but I follow A. Andrew Das in reading gentile Christians as Paul's primary audience. A number of recent interpreters of Romans have questioned the trend in Pauline scholarship to interpret the intended audience of his letter

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[670] For Paul, since God is the primary giver of χάρις, concerns of instrumentalisation apply solely to the recipient's response. Seneca's *De Beneficiis*, on the other hand, discussed throughout Chapter 1, is addressed primarily to potential givers of *beneficia*; hence much of his focus lies in warning givers away from instrumentalising their intended recipients. Most of the other authors in this thesis direct their attention, like Paul, towards the potential problems in recipient responses.

[671] Rom. 3. 28.

[672] In what follows I agree with the first half of the following statement made by Dunn (1990) 224: Paul attacks 'a particular *attitude* to the law as such, *the law as a whole* in its social function as distinguishing Jew from Gentile'. Contrary to Dunn, I do not see Paul having any problem with 'the law as a whole', but only with the attitude towards the law that sees it as a means of obligating God's χάρις.

as primarily Jewish Christians.[673] Among others, Das helpfully distinguishes between the actual, likely mixed, audience of Jewish and gentile Christians in Rome, who would have been the first hearers of Paul's letter, and the 'encoded audience' whom Paul repeatedly targets and identifies as his primary addressees throughout the letter.[674] This encoded audience, he insists, is entirely gentile. Thiessen has recently summarised the key points in the letter where Paul references his unique apostolic authority to address gentile Christians and where he identifies his audience in specifically gentile terms.[675] The gentile-encoded audience model fits well with my participant reading of χάρις in Romans 4 and 11 in particular, as this and the following sections will clarify.

One of the most common objections to an all-gentile-encoded audience for Romans is Paul's direct address to the 'so-called Jew' in Romans 2. 17-29. Das, Thiessen, and Stanley Stowers, however, have all convincingly argued that this interlocutor should *not* be read as an actual member of Paul's original audience. While differing in who they think the interlocutor *is* meant to be, all three insist that Paul's diatribe is a pedagogical tool aimed at his Roman gentile addressees, who 'would overhear the "Jew" addressed by Paul and would be forced to revise their understanding of their relationship to the Jewish

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[673] Das (2007) is devoted to a defence of an all-gentile-encoded audience for Romans. More recently, Fredriksen (2018) 155 states, 'Paul's unambiguous address to Rome's Christ-following *ethnē* implies that the identity of the letter's "encoded" or "ideal" audience is also gentile, although (given the density of his biblical references) these are gentiles who are fairly well acquainted with Israel's scriptures'. Cf. also the collection of essays in Rodriguez and Thiessen (2016).

[674] See the concise argument of Das (2012); also Stowers (1994) 21-41.

[675] Thiessen (2016) 44-46. Cf. Rom. 1. 5-6, 1. 13-15, 6. 17, 11. 13, 15. 14-16.

faith'.[676] Among proponents of a gentile-encoded audience, however, little attention has been paid to the similar pedagogical purpose of Paul's χάρις discussion in Romans 4. Paula Fredriksen argues that Paul's primary concern is with how 'gentiles-in-Christ' can be included in the family of Abraham;[677] but she does not address Paul's use of χάρις language in the chapter. In the rest of this section, I focus on Paul's aside in Rom. 4. 4-5, where he warns against the danger of instrumentalising God's χάρις by trying to obligate it with works of the law. While such an argument could be directed against fellow Jews,[678] it fits well with a gentile-encoded audience considering (A) Paul's original claim in the letter that all humanity (and explicitly gentiles) are characterised by ἀχαριστία towards God, (B) his persistent portrayal of himself as the apostle to the gentiles, (C) his temporary rhetorical shift in these verses away from scriptural reasoning and towards contemporary economics instead, and (D) the unlikelihood that Paul would think any Jewish Christians in his audience would need such a warning from him in this form, since anyone immersed in Jewish scriptures should already understand that the χάρις of God calls for a participative, and not instrumental, response.[679] In Section 4.3.2., I consider the

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[676] Das (2012) 34. Of the three, I am most persuaded by Das's identification of the 'so-called Jew' as 'a *fictive* interlocutor' who clearly 'does not match the *Christ-believing* Jews' assumed by most scholars to be among Paul's original audience. Thiessen (2016) 54-59, whose identification I find less convincing, builds on the work of Runar Thorsteinsson (2003) and insists that the interlocutor is not Jewish at all but rather a Judaizing gentile. Stowers (1994) 150 identifies Paul's target as one of his '"missionary" opponents' and 'competitors for gentiles'. Witherington (2004) 85 and Wright (2012) follow suit.

[677] Fredriksen (2018) 158. Thiessen (2016) 159-160 evinces a similar view.

[678] Cf. Philo's emic argument, 'think of yourself as a beggar', *Her*. 103-104 (Section 2.2.2.).

[679] Note that the Jew or so-called Jew whom Paul does accuse of ἀχαριστία in Romans 2 is specifically one who does not keep the law as he should, but rather 'dishonours God by violating the law', Rom. 2. 23.

broader argument of Romans 4 in which Paul once again directly connects the χάρις of God to his gentile mission, but for now I focus on the specific tension he draws between χάρις and a transactional approach to the law in verses 4-5.

Every interpreter who assumes a gentile-encoded audience of Romans acknowledges that Paul does assume some familiarity with Jewish scriptures on the part of his addressees, and especially with the figure of Abraham, whom he uses most prominently in Romans and Galatians to justify his arguments for the unification of Jews and gentiles through the righteousness from God 'apart from the law'. At the beginning of Romans 4, Paul appeals to the fact that Abraham was 'counted righteous' in God's sight before he ever performed the 'work' of circumcision, which was later encoded in the law.[680] Paul reminds his addressees instead of Gen. 15. 6, 'Abraham trusted God, and his trust was calculated towards righteousness', and he then appeals to χάρις to contrast Abraham's approach to God (one that is 'from trust') with one 'from works':[681]

> τῷ δὲ ἐργαζομένῳ ὁ μισθὸς οὐ λογίζεται κατὰ χάριν ἀλλὰ κατὰ ὀφείλημα. τῷ δὲ μὴ ἐργαζομένῳ, πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ, λογίζεται ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ εἰς δικαιοσύνην.[682]

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[680] Rom. 4. 10.

[681] While this thesis focusses on χάρις and εὐχαριστία as participative responses to divine initiatory χάρις, they are certainly not the only responses that Paul discusses. πίστις is arguably even more important for him, and is certainly mentioned across his letters much more often. Holton (1994) 67 identifies trust as an expression of participative response: 'Trust involves something like a participant stance towards the person you are trusting. When you trust someone to do something, you rely on them to do it, and you regard that reliance in a certain way: you have a readiness to feel betrayal should it be disappointed, and gratitude should it be upheld'. The inherent connection that Holton sees between trust and gratitude fits well with Paul's insistence that χάρις and πίστις must always go together in our understanding of God and the kind of relationship he offers through Christ.

[682] Rom. 4. 4-5.

> But for the one working, the reward is calculated not according to χάρις but according to debt. But for the one not working, but trusting in the one justifying the ungodly man, his trust is calculated towards righteousness.

The contrast that Paul draws here between χάρις on the one hand and ὀφείλημα on the other is not found in the Septuagint. These verses constitute a temporary turning aside for Paul from his scriptural reasoning focussed on Abraham. The prompt for this aside can be seen from another peculiarity of Paul's language—namely, his reference to righteousness as a μισθός (meaning either 'reward' or 'payment'). Here, Paul contrasts two different kinds of μισθός as possible interpretations of the righteousness God offers: a μισθός 'calculated according to χάρις' and one calculated 'according to debt'. Paul never again refers to righteousness as a μισθός across any of his extant letters.[683] Here, however, his use of the word undoubtedly comes from his Septuagintal source for the Abrahamic example, Genesis 15. 1:

> μετὰ δὲ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα ἐγενήθη ῥῆμα κυρίου πρὸς Αβραμ ἐν ὁράματι λέγων μὴ φοβοῦ Αβραμ, ἐγὼ ὑπερασπίζω σου· ὁ μισθός σου πολὺς ἔσται σφόδρα.
>
> And after these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Do not fear, Abram, I am covering you with a shield; your reward will be exceedingly great'.

Although Paul's main focus in Romans 4 is on Abraham's πίστις and his ability to exemplify the righteousness God offers both Jews and gentiles 'apart from the law', the language of μισθός in Genesis 15 also prompts him to clarify—for gentile readers in particular who might be encountering this language for the first time—that just because one can refer to God's favour as a μισθός on the authority of the Jewish scriptures does

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[683] His only other uses of the term come in 1 Corinthians 3 and 9, where he exclusively uses it to refer to a reward for gospel labour.

not mean that one should picture the righteousness of God as a "wage" to be earned.[684] Instead, in the Septuagint itself, this μισθός is 'exceedingly great'—clearly not one that is calculated evenly, like a wage, 'according to debt', but rather, one that God offers his chosen servant in accordance with the abundance of his χάρις.[685] Even the language of 'reward' must be interpreted, in Paul's argument, from a participant stance towards God, and not from an instrumental one.

Pivoting, therefore, on the Septuagintal μισθός, Paul makes an analogy in 4. 4-5 which Jewett argues is 'drawn from the world of everyday experience in the economic realm'.[686] Jewett is correct in his point as to the universal acceptability of Paul's argument in the ancient world.[687] The verbs ἐργάζομαι and λογίζομαι and the nouns μισθός and ὀφείλημα are regularly used to refer to economic transactions elsewhere in the New

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[684] Note that throughout Romans 4, Paul refers to the calculation of righteousness in Gen. 15. 6 and the promise of worldwide descendants in 15. 5 interchangeably. Both are acts of God's χάρις towards Abraham and both support Paul's thesis that the righteousness God offers now is based on πίστις and therefore equally accessible to those physically descended from Abraham and those not.

[685] As we see below, Paul really does see this reward as 'exceedingly great', as he takes the promise of God in Genesis 15.5 that Abraham's descendants will be as numerous as the stars literally. Barclay's (2015) 484 worth-based interpretation of Paul rather misses the point: he cites Philo *Praem.* 27 to argue that from a Jewish perspective, 'it was natural to assume that a divine reward must correspond to the value of Abraham's progress' and that Paul's purpose instead is to underline that 'nothing Abraham did made him worthy of the favor of God'. Philo's point in the passage in question, however, is the *extra* reward of lasting joy that God gave Abraham *after* the patriarch chose simple trust in the Lord as the only reward for virtue he would ask. As we saw in Philo's explication of Genesis 15 in *Her.* 102-104 (Section 2.2.2.), he views Abraham as the exemplar of 'the beggarly creation' who simply 'stretches out his hands' to receive good things from God. There is no reason to think that Paul is aiming Romans 4 against a specifically Jewish idea that Abraham 'merited' or was uniquely 'worthy' of the χάρις of God.

[686] Jewett (2007) 312.

[687] By contrast, he notes that many other commentators miss this fact and assume that 4. 4 is making a specifically theological claim. See Jewett (2007) 313, *contra* Meyer (1876) i 196-197; Morris (1988) 197; Stuhlmacher (1994) 72.

Testament as well as in the wider culture.[688] However, the assumption Jewett makes that working for a μισθός is a matter of 'everyday experience' in Paul's world is not quite right. Paul's pairing of ἐργαζόμενος and μισθός actually restricts his reference to the narrow slice of the Roman labour market occupied by contract labourers. Epictetus notes three kinds of jobs for which a μισθός would be offered: 'there is always a paymaster (μισθοδότης) for the good soldier, the worker (ἐργάτης), and the craftsman [leather-worker]'.[689] Between the latter two, Cicero expresses the dominant prejudice of his day when he writes, 'Illiberal and sordid is the occupation of all hired workers (*mercennarii*), who are remunerated for their labour and not for artistic skill; in their case the wage itself (*ipsa merces*) is the contract of their servitude'.[690] Crook has shown that this prejudice against those forced to hire out their own labour was widespread throughout Roman society and that day-labourers were often despised and given much more gruelling tasks than their enslaved counterparts.[691] In this case, then, when Paul introduces the idea of the wage-earner in Romans 4, he is actually bringing into his discussion arguably the lowest role in the Roman market economy—one without even the security of a slave, and

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[688] See, for instance, 1 Thess. 2. 9; 1 Cor. 4. 12; Xenophon *Hell.* 6. 2. 16; *Anab.* 1. 2. 11, 7. 7. 14; Plutarch *Phoc.* 22. 2; see also the papyri cited by Jewett (2007) 313.

[689] *Diss.* 3. 26. 27.

[690] *De Off.* 1. 150. In his two, strongly negative uses of the noun ἐργάτης (2 Cor. 11. 13, Phil. 3. 2), Paul evinces a similar distaste to that of Cicero.

[691] Crook (1984) 192-198. Cf. Varro's recommendation that *mercennarii* be given the most tasking agricultural jobs in order to preserve the health of one's slaves (*Res Rusticae* 1. 17. 2-3). The picture of Corax, the *mercenarius*, at *Satyricon* 117. 11-12 is a telling caricature. Crook (1984) 196 comments: 'It looks as though Eumolpus and his companions could not afford a slave odd-job man; and Corax, though he would not (and legally could not) sell himself into slavery, was doing a servile job probably for less than a slave would have cost'.

certainly with nothing like a regular income.[692] This is his analogy for an instrumental approach to God's χάρις. Treating the law as an instrument by which one can obligate God's χάρις is in Paul's picture an act of self-demotion from covenant family member to hired day-labourer—an exchange of the participant relationality of πίστις and χάρις for the unstable, mere economic transaction of labour for hire.

Jewett goes on to argue for a non-theological definition of χάρις in verse four, considering how often 'the antithesis between gift and obligation' comes up in other places.[693] I agree with Jewett that the distinction does not apply solely to the theological realm, although I define the content of the antithesis as instrumental vs participant approaches to relationship rather than strictly 'gift' vs 'obligation', as he does. My reasoning comes from verse five. Here, Paul makes the shift from his wage-earner analogy to its theological equivalent in the phrase, 'but trusting in the one justifying the ungodly man' (πιστεύοντι δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ).[694] Paul lines up the 'non-

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[692] Cf. the clear contrast between the language of '*opsōnion* (salary)' and '*misthos* (wages)' in the study by Rathbone (1991) 91-92 of Roman Egypt. See also Scheidel's (1980) 41 discussion of 'those at the bottom of the scale, the day-wage labourers in the setting of the slave-estate'.

[693] For the direct contrast between χάρις and ὀφείλημα, see Thucydides *Hist*. 2. 20. 4 and Aristotle *Eth. Nic.* 1165a3.

[694] Note that at this point in his argument, Paul has not identified 'the one not working' as 'the ungodly': while ἐργαζομένῳ and πιστεύοντι are in the dative, τὸν ἀσεβῆ is an accusative. If one reads Romans 1-3 as a universal condemnation of the ἀσέβεια of every individual, as do Jewett (2007) 314 and Gathercole (2002), it is a reasonable inference that ὁ ἐργαζόμενος and ὁ ἀσεβής are one and the same. It is important to note, however, that, despite what Gathercole (2002) 243 and other proponents of the worth-based approach suggest, Paul does *not* try to argue that 'at the point of his justification, Abraham was an ungodly idolator'. This statement cannot be justified in light of the Genesis narrative to which Paul is appealing, and on whose authority, in the eyes of his readers, he relies. Cf. Bruce (1985) 106: 'Abraham was not ungodly; he was a man of outstanding piety and righteousness. But the principle on which Abraham was justified… is one that is equally available to the ungodly'.

wage-earner' with the one who trusts God. 'Trusting' speaks of an ongoing participant stance towards the relationship that God is offering.[695] It is a relationship that includes gift-giving ('justified as a gift', Rom. 3. 24), but it also encompasses more than a one-time gift-giving interaction.[696] The contrast that Paul draws here is between a participant relationship of χάρις and πίστις on the one hand and a transactional, even occasional, approach to God on the other. This is why, he argues, a right relationship with God is established 'apart from works of law'. For his newly converted, gentile-encoded, Christian audience, Paul equates seeking δικαιοσύνη through the law with the act of trying to "sell" one's labour to God.

In chapter 3, Paul explained that the law was given to the Jews as an expression of participant relationship: 'They were entrusted with the oracles of God'.[697] Christ and his πίστις-righteousness have now been given 'to all who trust'.[698] Whether Paul believes the law was once appropriately understood by faithful Jews as means of righteousness is a question open to interpretation. Since the giving of Christ, however, 'no created being will be justified in his sight by works of the law'.[699] Since God has chosen to offer δικαιοσύνη to Jews and gentiles now 'through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus', it is a misuse of the earlier gift of the law and a rejection of God's new χάρις in Christ to seek

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[695] Cf. Holton (1994) 67, quoted above, n. 676.

[696] Cf. Jewett (2007) 315, who defines this πίστις as 'the response of converts to the message that Christ died for the impious', which 'led to their joining small communities of faith in which righteousness became a social reality as the dishonored were restored to honor'.

[697] Rom. 3. 2.

[698] Rom. 3. 24.

[699] Rom. 3. 20.

justification through an instrument that God has declared unfit for that purpose.[700] In contrast to a relationship of trust in response to God's proven graciousness, a turn to 'works of law' as an instrument of right-standing with him denies God's χάρις in sending Christ 'apart from the law'—as well as his χάρις to the pre-Torah patriarch Abraham. Paul argues that working in order to "earn" God's righteousness (1) instrumentalises the law as a means of obligating God's χάρις, (2) denies God's χάρις in offering forgiveness of sins through Christ 'apart from the law', and (3) would indicate that the relationship between God and his people is simply one of debt and obligation, like that between a hired worker and his boss for the day. Paul is counting on his audience agreeing with him that the abundance of divine χάρις and the universality of human ἀχαριστία that he has already detailed fundamentally preclude such an instrumental approach to a relationship with God. As if one could ever put God in one's debt! Rather, right-standing in God's eyes must 'accord with' his abundant generosity and must therefore be approached from a participant attitude to relationship. πίστις, trusting faithfulness, is just such a relational response.[701]

It is important to underscore here that Paul's argument is *not* simply an attack on "legalistic Judaism". Paul does not suggest that he thinks most of his Jewish peers understand the law as a way of "earning" God's stamp of approval or putting God in their

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[700] Josephus' Korah is an illuminating analogue, since, in contrast to other characters in the Moses narrative, Korah rejects the specific χάρις God has given him to be a follower of Moses and tries instead to claim the χάρις of leadership that he wants for himself (see discussion in Section 2.4.3.). A participative response to divine χάρις accepts the gift offered in the present and does not seek to exchange it for one offered previously or to another recipient or for another purpose.

[701] On πίστις as a fundamentally relational and community-building concept, incorporating the reciprocity of both trust and faithfulness, see Morgan (2015) *passim*.

debt so that he is obligated to call them 'righteous'.[702] Paul praises his fellow Jews for their 'zeal for God' and bemoans the ignorance which underlies the rejection of God's πίστις-righteousness in Christ by some.[703] He also does not suggest that a belief that one can earn God's stamp of approval is an inherent part of the structure of Judaism. The problem Paul sees is not with the Jewish law itself (it is 'holy and righteous and good', Rom. 7.12), but rather with how one approaches God's χάρις (from a position of πίστις in Christ, or from an instrumentalising position, like that of the hired worker, seeking to ensure that his boss is obligated to pay what he considers his due). Paul's predominant concern is with the attraction of the law for new gentile Christians and the likelihood of their misconstruing its purpose in salvation history; his harshest critiques of the law are aimed at his predominantly gentile converts.[704] If the account of Acts 21 is to be taken as at least plausible (and the plausibility of its written claims must be taken seriously even if its historicity is in question), then Paul himself at least occasionally sacrificed at the Temple in Jerusalem when surrounded by Jewish Christians (and 1 Cor. 9. 20 attests that he 'becomes a Jew among Jews').

Finally, Paul's concern with the law in Romans 4 is one attested throughout Jewish scriptures, namely, the fear that adherence to the "code" runs the risk of commandeering any attention to a relationship of trust-faithfulness and love for God. One of the best known expressions of this concern comes from the prophet Hosea, who

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[702] Gathercole (2002) 261 does illustrate that Paul's attribution of 'Jewish confidence in vindication at the *eschaton*…based *both* on election *and* on their obedience to Torah' (ἔργα νόμου in Paul's terminology) is not simply a polemical hyperbole.

[703] Rom. 10. 2-3.

[704] On this topic, I have found Neil Martin's (2020) nuanced study of the theme of regression in Galatians to be highly illuminating.

reminds the people that the Lord desires 'steadfast love (חֶסֶד; LXX ἔλεος) and not sacrifice'.[705] The verse is referenced multiple times across the gospels of Matthew and Mark, though never directly by Paul.[706] A similar sentiment is expressed in 1 Sam. 15. 22. Paul uses the language of χάρις to translate this concern into the vernacular of his predominantly gentile (or at least Hellenised) audiences. As Seneca and Plutarch warned that the gift-giving "code" can lead to an instrumentalisation of the interaction and an objectification of the other person (Section 1.2.2.), so Paul warns his readers of the absurd transactionalisation of righteousness itself that a works-based approach to the law (according to his definition) logically entails. Jewish scholars have long taken issue with what appears to them as Paul's misreading of his contemporary Jews' approach to the law.[707] I argue, however, that Paul is knowingly using the language of χάρις vs debt as a lens for clarifying his position on the place of the law in the Christian ἐκκλησία, in order to make his scripturally-based concerns with an instrumental approach to God's χάρις accessible to both his gentile and his Hellenised Jewish audiences.

Therefore, in Rom. 4. 4-5, Paul's target of attack is not the Jewish law *per se* nor even faithful Jewish law-keepers. Rather, Paul is appealing to popular economics (in his analogy of the hired worker) and to Jewish scriptures (in his references to Abraham's μισθός) to argue that a right relationship with God must fit with a grateful, trusting response to the magnitude of his χάρις that has been demonstrated time and again throughout history and climactically in his giving of Christ. Paul's concern with the

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[705] Hos. 6. 6.

[706] Matt. 9. 13, 12. 7; cf. 23. 23; Mark 12. 33.

[707] Or at least, with traditional anti-legalistic readings of Paul which interpret his polemic in this way.

potential for human instrumentalisation of God's χάρις echoes a similar concern expressed periodically in Jewish scriptures and attested by both Philo (*Leg.* 3. 78, *Her*. 103, discussed in Section 2.2.) and Josephus (*Ant.* 4. 2, discussed in Section 2.4.3.).[708]

4.3.2. Divine χάρις Is Not Limited by Ethnicity

Thus far, then, we have seen that one of the two main functions of χάρις in Romans 4 is to exclude the *acharistic* approach to God that treats the law as an instrument to the righteousness already secured and offered to those who trust in Christ. The other main function, which we consider now, is to underscore one of the arguments closest to Paul's heart—namely, the equal inclusion of 'trusting faithful' gentiles among God's chosen people in Christ. As already stated, one of Paul's central claims in Romans 1-4 is that the righteousness God offers through Christ is a righteousness 'from trust-faithfulness' 'apart from the law'. This must be true, Paul reasons, because God is the God of both Jews and gentiles (Rom. 3. 29). Chapters 1-3 of his letter belabour the point that sin operates 'apart from the law'—both within and outside of the boundaries of

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[708] While the principle of participation instead of instrumentalisation is the same in each case, the examples from Philo, Josephus, and Paul all locate God's χάρις differently and hence, prescribe different specific expressions of recipient participation. For Philo, God's χάρις is seen in all of creation and is to be received with grateful dedication of his own gifts back into his service. For Josephus' narrative in *Antiquitates* 4, God's χάρις is seen primarily in his gracious relationship with the mediator, Moses. Hence, the participant response is faithful obedience to the law of Moses. For Paul, God's χάρις is seen in his climactic gift of Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and the only possible participant response is grateful trust in this unique act.

God's covenant people.[709] God's solution to the problem of sin must match it in extent. Therefore it is 'from πίστις', Paul writes—'from πίστις to πίστις', 'through the πίστις of Jesus Christ to all those πιστεύοντας', 'by πίστις apart from works of law'.[710]

In Romans 4, Paul argues that πίστις is the key to right-standing with God for two reasons, both connected to χάρις. First, as we have just seen, πίστις is a participant attitude towards the χάρις of God in Christ. Therefore it 'accords with χάρις' (κατὰ χάριν, Rom. 4. 4), and contrasts with approaches to God that either take his χάρις in Christ for granted or attempt to turn his χάρις in the law into a transaction. Secondly, however, πίστις is also accessible to those both within and outside the covenant of Torah. Take Abraham, again—his πίστις was 'calculated towards righteousness' before he was circumcised (Rom 4. 10) and long before the law was ever given to Moses (Rom 4. 13). Similarly, Paul argues, God deems right 'the circumcision from πίστις and the foreskin through the same πίστις'.[711] Paul notes that God's promise to Abraham was that his descendants (God's covenant people) would inherit the whole world (Rom 4. 13). Therefore his descendants cannot be limited to those who later received the law of Moses,

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[709] Cf. Wolter (2015) 357: 'Sin is neither simply transgression of the law nor even the misuse of the law and its fulfillment in order to boast about one's own achievement before God. Rather, sin is considered a supraindividual power that since Adam belongs to human essence and that ever since dominates humans…In principle, sin is independent from the law; that is, it is also present as an effective power without having the form of transgressing a commandment'.

[710] Rom. 1. 17, 3. 22, 3. 28. Morgan's (2015) 286-287 discussion of 1. 17 brings out the deliberate ambiguity of Paul's phrasing as he seeks 'to affirm the central role of *pistis* at every point in the economy of salvation', referring at once to 'the *pistis* of God, Christ, the preacher, [and] the faithful'.

[711] Rom 3. 30. See Moo (1996) 252, n. 34 on the article τῆς meaning 'the same'. All commentators recognise 'circumcision' and 'foreskin' as Paul's shorthand for Jews and gentiles.

but rather, they must include those throughout the world whose πίστις mirrors that of Abraham (Rom 4. 12, 17). Paul sums up:

> διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ πίστεως, ἵνα κατὰ χάριν, εἰς τὸ εἶναι βεβαίαν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν παντὶ τῷ σπέρματι, οὐ τῷ ἐκ τοῦ νόμου μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῷ ἐκ πίστεως Ἀβραάμ, ὅς ἐστιν πατὴρ πάντων ἡμῶν.[712]
>
> So it is 'from πίστις',[713] in order that it accords with χάρις, so that the promise may be secured for every descendent, not just for the one who is "from" the law, but also for the one who is "from" the πίστις of Abraham, who is the father of all of us.[714]

Here Paul puts a different emphasis on χάρις than he did in 4. 4. Many commentators in the worth-based tradition of interpretation read the 'it' of this verse as the whole 'divine plan of salvation';[715] 'from πίστις' as 'the acceptance of…unearned honor', coming to God 'without any virtuous preparation';[716] and 'accords with χάρις' as expressing that 'God acts in incongruous grace, and thus without regard to worth'.[717] Cranfield mentions in passing, however, that the more direct referents of the 'it' are either ἡ ἐπαγγελία from verse 13 or, even more likely, ἡ κληρονομία, understood from verse 14. Before interpreting 4. 16 as descriptive of Paul's whole understanding of the 'plan of salvation', it is worth considering first how πίστις and χάρις work for him in the immediate Abrahamic context that he is dealing with. James Harrison notes the parallel between 4.

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712 Rom. 4. 16.

713 Jewett (2007) 329 notes that although, 'as a formula, this phrase [ἐκ πίστεως] is distinctively Pauline', yet Paul draws it from Hab. 2. 4, which he quoted at the beginning of his argument in Romans (1. 17).

714 I follow Cranfield (1979) i 241 in reading διὰ τοῦτο as working with ἵνα: 'For this reason…, namely, in order that'. Cf. Moo (1996) 277.

715 Cranfield (1979) i 242.

716 Jewett (2007) 329.

717 Barclay (2015) 488.

16 and Galatians 3. 18:[718] 'If the inheritance (ἡ κληρονομία) comes "from" law, no longer is it from a promise (ἐπαγγελίας); but God gave it (κεχάρισται) to Abraham'. In Galatians, Paul explicitly identifies God's promised inheritance to Abraham as an expression of divine χάρις towards him ('God gave it to him', κεχάρισται). Few if any commentators have noted this dimension in Romans 4. 16. Paul points out in 4. 13 that God promised to make Abraham and his descendants the inheritors of the whole world.[719] This promise was given within the context of a χάρις relationship (Gal. 3. 18), and the content of that promise is a future expression of that χάρις—the gift of an inheritance. If the inheritance were only to apply to those descendants who were later given the law through Moses, it would mean Abraham was no longer the 'inheritor of the world' (4. 13) or 'the father of *many* nations' (4. 17, emphasis added), and God would not be fulfilling his promised expression of χάρις towards Abraham.

Elsewhere in his letters, Paul connects God's χάρις specifically to his faithfulness in keeping his promises. In Philippians 1. 6-7, Paul assures his readers, 'I am persuaded that he who began a good work among you will bring it to completion at the day of Christ Jesus'. And what gives Paul this confidence? 'For you are all fellow participants with me in χάρις, both in my chains and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel'.[720] The

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[718] Harrison (2003) 224.

[719] A straightforward reading of the Genesis 15 narrative would suggest that God's promise means Abraham's physical descendants will be numerous and widespread; Paul takes this a step further, however, by drawing on Gen. 17. 5 (cited at Rom. 4. 17): 'I have made you the father of many nations (πολλῶν ἐθνῶν)'. Paul argues that this must mean Abraham will inherit "descendants" (members of God's chosen people) from numerous other tribes and families around the world who are not physically related to him.

[720] In reading verse 7 as an explanation for Paul's confidence in verse 6, I follow the majority of commentators, including Weiss (1859) 54; Vincent (1897) 8; Dibelius (1937) 53. Lightfoot (1885) 84; Gnilka (1968) 48; and Collange (1973) 47 expand the referent to include the entirety of 1. 3-6; Bonnard (1950) 17 sees verse 7 as explaining only 1. 3-5.

Philippians' constant support of Paul in his imprisonment and missionary endeavours proves in Paul's mind the sure working of God in their midst and their share in the divine χάρις relationship. Paul knows that God's χάρις towards his people is neither fickle nor impotent: God is both the initiator of this relationship and the one who will see it to its end goal at the παρουσία. In Romans 6. 23, Paul identifies the content of God's χάρις towards his people as 'eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord'. Although Paul encapsulates this offer in the language of a onetime gift (χάρισμα), the content of that gift is ongoing, 'eternal' sustenance. In sharp contrast to the death that sin pays out like a salary (ὀψώνια),[721] God offers to sustain uninterrupted life for his people 'in Christ'. Finally, in Romans 11. 29, Paul states, 'God does not regret his χαρίσματα and his calling'. In its immediate context, the referent of this verse is God's continued love for ethnic Israel 'because of the forefathers (πατέρας)'.[722] For this reason, it connects well with my interpretation of Romans 4. 16. God will not revoke or regret his expressions of χάρις to the forefathers of Israel—and in particular to Abraham.[723] His promise of a worldwide Abrahamic family—defined, on Paul's reckoning, by the πίστις of Abraham rather than his physical σπέρμα or the act of circumcision which he underwent in response to God's promise—has not and indeed cannot prove void.

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[721] Again bringing in transactional language as the foil against which to contrast the χάρις of God.

[722] Rom. 11. 28.

[723] Paul's audience in Romans already knows this to be true. As we see in the following section of this thesis, we should guard against an interpretation of Romans 9-11 that sees theodicy as Paul's object. Rather, Paul is taking a "given"—God's faithfulness to his χάρις promises—and using it to back up various points of his gospel: in chapter 4, the inclusion of trusting gentiles among God's chosen people, and in chapter 11, the non-exclusion of ethnic Jews.

We should note, of course, that some Jewish Christians clearly do think there is a way for gentiles to become part of Abraham's family—namely by adopting the law. For Paul, however, as we have already seen, rejecting the righteousness God offers through Christ and seeking δικαιοσύνη through the law apart from faith instrumentalises God's χάρις, treating it like a wage to be earned rather than the fulfilment of a personal promise and an invitation into trusting relationship. What is more, if one insists on circumcision as the necessary mark of δικαιοσύνη with God, he is effectively denying the promised inheritance to its rightful inheritors—he is voiding the promise (4. 14). Abraham is the father of all who share his πίστις, both those who are under the law and those who are not. To demand that those who already mirror that πίστις then undergo circumcision in order to be counted among God's chosen people effectively denies God the chance to make good on his promise to Abraham that he would make him the father of 'many nations' (4. 17). Paul insists that the mark which identifies one as a son or daughter of Abraham must be the same πίστις for which God praised Abraham in the first place and promised him his reward (μισθός).[724] If πίστις was indeed the basis on which God counted Abraham righteous and the reason he was promised the μισθός of a worldwide family, that family is not to be identified merely by the mark of circumcision—which Abraham later underwent in obedience to God's command—but rather by the mark of

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[724] In line with the worth-based interpretation of this passage, Gathercole (2002) 244 insists that Paul 'polemicize[s] against reward here' even though 'Paul and Judaism are in agreement about the gracious way in which God deals with humanity'. However, while Paul does indeed reject the idea of God ever owing a person payment (μισθὸς κατὰ ὀφείλημα), his polemic is against the idea of debt (ὀφείλημα), not specifically against payment/reward (μισθός). In the Genesis narrative from which he takes his Abrahamic example, God promises the patriarch an 'excessively great reward' (μισθὸς πολὺς σφόδρα, Gen. 15. 1 LXX). This, for Paul, is a reward calculated in accordance with χάρις, rather than one that is calculated evenly, according to what is owed. No Jewish or Christian source ever argued that Abraham "earned" his promised worldwide family and inheritance.

Abraham's faith, which led to the promised inheritance in the first place. For Paul, the inclusion of the gentiles among God's covenant people—which, as he has already argued, can only be through the participant reactive attitude of πίστις—is the only way for God to remain faithful to the promise he made to Abraham. God promised an 'excessively great μισθός' (Gen. 15. 1) on the basis of Abraham's πίστις, and God's later gift of the law to some of Abraham's physical descendants has not changed that promise—it remains secure, βέβαιος, for *all* its intended recipients.[725] We might compare Paul's long view of χάρις here to that of Dio Chrysostom in his Rhodian Oration. There, as we saw, Dio urged his audience to remember that acts of χάρις must continue to be remembered and honoured in accordance with the lasting effects that they have through time.[726] Here, Paul is reminding his readers that God's χάρις towards Abraham is still in effect; the only way for God to remain true to his promised χάρις towards the patriarch is through the righteousness by πίστις accessible to all through Jesus Christ.

4.3.3. Divine χάρις Is Not Obligated by Ethnicity

In the middle chapters of Romans, Paul discusses further the active role of Christ in the χάρις relationship God offers to those who respond to him with trust and faithfulness. This will be the topic of the following section of this thesis. Here, however, we jump ahead in Paul's letter to chapter 11, where Paul returns to the line of argument about χάρις and the law that we have been tracing thus far. In Romans 9-11, Paul defends

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[725] Similarly, in Gal. 3. 17, Paul argues: 'The law, coming 430 years afterwards, does not annul the covenant previously confirmed by God, so as to make the promise void'.

[726] DioChr. *Or.* 31. 78, discussed in Section 1.4. Seneca and Epameinondas also sought to expand their interlocutors' reasoning about χάρις to consider not merely a onetime interaction, but rather an ongoing relationship through time (Sections 1.2.2. and 1.2.3.).

the compatibility of his gospel of righteousness based on πίστις Χριστοῦ with the promises of God to his people, and he seeks to explain how God can not only include trusting gentiles among that chosen people, but can also choose to exclude (at least temporarily) those of Jewish heritage who do not accept the πίστις-righteousness that is centred on Christ.[727] In other words, Paul insists, the benefits of a divine χάρις relationship cannot be claimed merely on the basis of ethnicity. The χάρις that God extends through Christ requires a participant response from all recipients. To claim ethnic privilege as a Jew (or even as a Christ-following gentile, Rom. 11. 18-22) would suggest yet again an instrumentalising approach to God's χάρις.

In Rom. 9-11, Paul argues against a slightly different point of view than we have yet seen him take direct issue with. In Romans 2, he denounced the ἀχαριστία of the Jew who was 'violating the law', but thought he could escape God's judgement.[728] In 4. 4, Paul urged gentiles away from the ἀχαριστία of trying to turn the law into a wage-contract in order to obligate the χάρις already freely offered them in Christ. In 4. 16, Paul criticised those urging trusting-faithful gentiles to be circumcised for their lack of trust in the faithfulness of God to fulfil his promised χάρις towards Abraham. In chapters 9-11,

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[727] Nygren (1952) 354-357 argues against readings of this passage that centre either on the doctrine of predestination on the one hand or on theodicy on the other. He rightly centres his own interpretation of 9-11 on Paul's insistence that his own 'gospel of the righteousness of faith revealed through Christ' does *not* suggest that 'God thereby takes back the promises that He had formerly given. If that were the case, it would mean a catastrophe for all of Paul's preaching'. Theodicy, Nygren insists, would be hubris for Paul: 'Against all who would call God to account, it is enough for him to recall that God is God and they are men'. Hodge (1972) 305 similarly glosses Romans 9. 6: 'Paul does not intend to say that it is impossible the promise should fail, but simply that his doctrine does not conflict with the promise'.

[728] Rom. 2. 23.

Paul addresses the concerns of both Jews and scripturally literate gentiles,[729] who would argue that Paul's gospel ignores the covenantal status of Israel throughout the scriptures and that in demanding πίστις in Christ as the marker of δικαιοσύνη, Paul is excluding some of the rightful heirs of God's χάρις promises to the genealogical descendants of Abraham—namely, those who have not been persuaded to become Christ-followers. Paul turns this argument on its head, countering that God's χάρις cannot be obligated based on ethnic privilege. Yes, God has made irrevocable promises to the forefathers of Israel (Rom. 11. 29) and yes, Paul is confident that in the end 'all Israel will be saved' (11. 26).[730] But in the meantime, it is crucial in Paul's mind that ethnic Jews *not* reject God's offered χάρις in Christ. He fears that some are simply taking for granted the χάρις of God that they have in their Jewish heritage and are ignoring the new χάρις God has offered them in Christ. They may very well be obediently following God's commands given them in the law; and in one sense, the choice *not* to apostatise might well be seen as a participative response to the χάρις of God that they have been given in their Jewish heritage ('I bear them witness, that they have a zeal for God', Rom. 10. 2). Paul argues, however, that this is not enough. Any χάρις from God must not be ignored or rejected—

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[729] I agree with Grindheim (2005) 136 that while all of Paul's letter is addressed primarily to a gentile audience, this is especially the case for Rom. 9-11, where a significant purpose of Paul's is 'to stifle the Gentiles' arrogance by instructing them in how to understand the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the church'.

[730] The vast majority of scholars agree that this statement does indeed refer to the whole of ethnic Israel eventually accepting the gospel. See Munck (1967) 131-138; Mussner (1976) 241-255; Cranfield (1979) ii 572-579; Käsemann (1980) 311-315; Sanders (1985) 194; Dunn (1988) 677-684; Hofius (1990) 19-39; Barrett (1991) 204-207; Fitzmyer (1993) 618-625; Stuhlmacher (1994) 170-173; Bell (1994) 127-145; Moo (1996) 710-729; Byrne (1996) 348-355; Esler (2003) 305-306; Witherington (2004) 273-276; Jewett (2007) 694-706. For various other interpretations of the phrase, see Jeremias (1977) 200; Ponsot (1982) 413-415; Gaston (1987) 135-150; Wright (1991) 249-251, (2001) 687-693; Stowers (1994) 285-316; Nanos (1996) 239-288; Gager (2000) 128-142; Zoccali (2008).

especially such a lavish expression of his χάρις as that of sending his son to die for human sins. Those who refuse to respond participatively to this particular χάρισμα from God are in great danger of treating divine χάρις as a whole as though it can be obligated based on ethnic privilege. But God's χάρις can no more be obligated by the claims of Jewish heritage than it can be limited by them.

Citing God's self-revelation to Moses in Exodus 33, Paul warns his readers that God 'will have mercy on whom I have mercy' and 'compassion on whom I have compassion' (9. 15). In chapters 9 and 11 of Romans, Paul traces throughout Jewish scriptures God's repeated 'selection' (ἐκλογή) among ethnic Israel of those through whom to carry on the line of promise.[731] The spiritual privilege of Abrahamic descent has never applied indiscriminately to all who can name Abraham as a genealogical ancestor. Rather, Paul points out, God has repeatedly made a selection (ἐκλογή) from among those biological descendants as to who counts as the recipients of his covenantal promises to the 'seed' of Abraham.[732] Paul uses the world ἐκλογή five times across all of his letters, four of those five times in Romans 9-11. Most interpreters agree with Cranfield in seeing ἐκλογή as a substantive referring to 'divine election' in Romans 9. 11, 11. 5, and 11. 28, but, by contrast, as a concrete substitute for ἐκλεκτοί in 11. 7.[733] Jewett, however, points

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[731] For the purposes of this thesis, I focus on the intersection of this language with that of χάρις in Romans 11. 5-6 in particular, and I seek to address only indirectly the dominant points of debate among scholars concerned with the whole of Romans 9-11. For a recent survey of arguments about the doctrine of predestination, which generally stem from this passage and from the language of ἐκλογή in particular, see Levering (2011).

[732] Byrne (1996) 291-292 uses the language of 'divine filiation' in contrast with descent 'understood in a neutral "ethnic" sense'. He notes the language of 'calling' in 9. 12 and connects 'divine filiation' to 'a special line of descent, running through Isaac and "called" into being in response to a divine promise'.

[733] Cranfield (1979) ii 478.

out that 'the phrase κατ'ἐκλογήν was so well established in military and governmental contexts to depict selections for special roles that it is likely to be understood in that sense here by a Roman audience'.[734] This phrase shows up in both 9. 11 and 11. 5, with 11. 28 only slightly expanded (κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐκλογὴν). In light of this fact, as well as the clear meaning, 'chosen people', in 11. 7, I read ἐκλογή throughout Romans 9-11 as a selected person or group of people, rather than in the abstract sense of God's faculty of choice.[735] For Paul, the ἐκλογή of God is always the select ones who do have some special status with God, but pointedly not on the basis of either ethnic or earned privilege.

In Romans 9, Paul points out that God chose Isaac, not Ishmael, as Abraham's child 'of the promise' (9. 8). In the next generation, he chose Jacob, not Esau, and he clarifies 'the children had not yet been born, neither had they done anything good or wicked', when God told Rebecca that 'the greater shall serve the lesser' (9. 11-12). Paul is keen to emphasise that God made his choice between the two children before either one could earn his favour 'from works' (9. 12) or dishonour him by their later sinful actions (9. 11).[736] In terms of being able to earn God's favour, Paul has been insisting throughout his letter that God is always the first giver in any situation; his favour can never be obligated (cf. 11. 35). Here, however, Paul focusses on the possibility of Jacob and Esau's

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[734] Jewett (2007) 578. Cf. Schrenk (1967) 176; Schlier (1977) 292. By contrast, Maier (1971) 335-338, 361 connects the phrase with Pharisaic discussions of *human* free will.

[735] This also makes better sense of the pairing of ἐκλογή with πρόθεσις in 9. 11. The latter clearly refers to the divine will, creating a redundancy if ἐκλογή is also interpreted substantively rather than concretely. 'In order that God's purpose concerning his select people might stand fast' makes much more sense than 'God's purpose concerning his own faculty of choice'.

[736] Cf. Jewett (2007) 578: 'The wording of the antithesis "anything good or worthless" is perhaps an allusion to the rather trashy quality of their later behavior, with Jacob cheating his brother and Esau selling his birthright for a bowl of soup'.

subsequent acts of lawlessness thwarting the promise of God and he insists instead, 'the purpose of God concerning his selection (ἐκλογή) remained'.[737] In this passage, Paul is expanding his explanation of God's sure promise to Abraham (βεβαίαν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν) from chapter 4. There, his point was that God kept his promise to Abraham by giving him worldwide "descendants" who would also trust God as Abraham did. Here, Paul points out that God's promise included a selection—one which distinguishes between physical descendants, 'children of the flesh' (9. 8), and children of the promise—those who are 'counted as offspring'. Not only does that selection now include some gentiles (those who respond to Christ with πίστις), but it also—for now at least—excludes some Jews. And there is no injustice in God's determination of the basis for that exclusion at any given point. This is a hard claim that many interpreters have struggled with throughout the centuries.[738] I do not attempt to defend or debunk Paul's insistence that his gospel assigns no injustice to God in reference to these selections. It is crucial for Paul that God's selection is never random or arbitrary but is always in line with his promises and with his

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[737] What this purpose consists of lies, strictly speaking, outside the bounds of this thesis. We may, however, detect an echo of the verb from Romans 3. 25, where Paul speaks of the purpose of God that Christ become the ἱλαστήριον for his people (ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον). In the more immediate context of 9. 11, Paul has just offered a list of the blessings peculiar to ethnic Israel, culminating in the fact that 'in terms of physical descent, Christ comes from them, who is God over all, blessed forever, amen' (9. 5). In Galatians 3. 16, Paul famously reinterprets the promise to Abraham's offspring as referring specifically and exclusively to Christ.

[738] Watson (1986) 168-173 insists that Paul's argument is incoherent as a whole and that it must be read as Paul "trying out" various (contradictory) angles that might work to convince Jewish Christians to abandon the local synagogue. Theissen (2002) attributes the contradictions in Paul's thought to the tension in the apostle's own psychological experience as both a Christ-follower and a Judean. Grindheim (2005) 136-139, on the other hand, sees a means of reconciling the interpretive problems of 9-11 in what he calls 'the creative function of God's judgment…The way Paul's argument runs, there is no contradiction between God's judgment and God's salvation of Israel. It is through judgment that all Israel will be saved'.

χάρις. No one can obligate God on the basis of works or ethnicity. God is only ever bound by Godself, and his χάρις towards his chosen people persists, despite all appearances to the contrary.[739]

In chapter 11, Paul recognises that the line of argument he has been pursuing might easily lead one to the horrified conclusion that God has rejected the people of his promise since so many of them have not responded to Christ with πίστις. Paul insists this is not the case. Of course God could not reject his chosen people; God never regrets or takes back any of his expressions of χάρις.[740] Instead, Paul insists, God has always used a select group in order to accomplish his promises to Israel as a whole.[741] Paul appeals to Scripture once again for backup:

> οὐκ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ὃν προέγνω. ἢ οὐκ οἴδατε ἐν Ἠλίᾳ τί λέγει ἡ γραφή, ὡς ἐντυγχάνει τῷ θεῷ κατὰ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ; Κύριε, τοὺς προφήτας σου ἀπέκτειναν, τὰ θυσιαστήριά σου κατέσκαψαν, κἀγὼ ὑπελείφθην μόνος καὶ ζητοῦσιν τὴν ψυχήν μου. ἀλλὰ τί λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ χρηματισμός; Κατέλιπον ἐμαυτῷ ἑπτακισχιλίους ἄνδρας, οἵτινες οὐκ ἔκαμψαν γόνυ τῇ Βάαλ. οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ λεῖμμα κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν χάριτος γέγονεν· εἰ δὲ χάριτι, οὐκέτι ἐξ ἔργων, ἐπεὶ ἡ χάρις οὐκέτι γίνεται χάρις.[742]
>
> God has not rejected his people, whom he knew ahead of time. Or don't you remember what the Scripture says about Elijah, how he supplicates God concerning Israel: 'Lord, they have killed your prophets; they have destroyed your altars; I alone have been left standing, and they're seeking to kill me too'. But what is the divine response to him: 'I have kept back for myself 7,000 men, who have not bowed in worship to Ba'al'. So also even now there is a remnant

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[739] Here we might compare what Zeller (1990) 36 calls the 'ontologische Gnade' of God in Phi. *Imm.* 108: 'God has given his good things in abundance to the all and its parts, not because he judged anything worthy of his χάρις, but looking to his eternal goodness, and thinking that to be beneficent was incumbent on his blessed and happy nature'.

[740] Rom. 11. 29.

[741] This is also how I read the καὶ οὕτως of 11. 26 ('and *thus* all Israel will be saved'). Most scholars today similarly interpret οὕτως in a modal, rather than a temporal, sense; but see Jewett (2007) 701 for the syntactical reasoning behind the latter interpretation.

[742] Rom. 11. 2-7.

> according to the selection of χάρις (and if it is in accordance with χάρις, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise χάρις is no longer χάρις).

Here, Paul draws a parallel between the faithful 'remnant' of Israel in the days of Elijah and the remnant of God 'even now'. There is a crucial distinction that he draws here, however, in his clarification of God's 'remnant now' as one that 'accords with the selection (ἐκλογή) of χάρις'. In his explanatory aside, Paul looks back to his discussion of works and χάρις in chapter 4, and with the word ἐκλογή he also draws the concerns of chapter 9 back into the discussion. In light of these various discussions all coming together at this point in Paul's argument, the phrase κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν χάριτος should not simply be glossed with a translation, 'chosen by grace', or even, 'according to God's gracious selection', as many interpreters offer.[743] Nowhere else in Romans does Paul refer to χάρις as an active agent of its own.[744] And this is the first and only time that Paul brings together the language of χάρις and that of ἐκλογή, so a translation such as 'God's gracious selection' glosses over the very question Paul wants his readers to ponder. What is the selection that accords with χάρις? And what defines the remnant that accords with that selection? Paul leads us to ask these questions by his parenthetical self-citation: he reminds us that the selection cannot be based on works; that would fundamentally contradict God's χάρις, as we already agreed in chapter 4, and it would also leave God's plans for blessing 'all Israel' through the select group in danger of being scuppered by the bad behaviour of that group (9. 11). Instead, Paul insists, the purpose of God remains, by the power of that same God whom Israel's forefathers knew as 'the one who calls into being the things that do not exist' (4. 17, cf. 9. 11). God's χάρις to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,

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[743] For 'chosen by grace', see ESV, NIV, Bruce (1985) 201.

[744] And across all of his undisputed letters, arguably only once, 1 Cor. 15. 10.

and now to all in Christ calls for the participative response of πίστις. The fact that some Jews—among them Paul himself—have indeed responded to Christ with πίστις is the backdrop for his claim in chapter 11 that 'even now there is a remnant'. In the days of Elijah, God's 'remnant' referred to a faithful subset of the Jewish people, identified in Paul's quotation as those who had not broken the law by worshiping Ba'al. Now, however, God's faithful Jewish 'remnant' fits into his larger group of chosen people whom Paul identifies as 'the ἐκλογή of χάρις'. God's ἐκλογή are all those—Jewish and gentile—whom God has chosen on the basis of his own determining, who respond to his χάρις towards them in Christ from the participant stance of πίστις. In line with the concrete reading of κατ᾽ ἐκλογήν suggested first by Jewett for Romans 9. 11 (though he himself does not follow through on the implications of this reading), I interpret κατ᾽ ἐκλογὴν χάριτος in 11. 5 as 'in accord with the select people of God's χάρις'.

If ἐκλογή refers to people rather than a divine faculty of choice, then the genitive χάριτος qualifies how those people are identified: the 'select people of God's χάρις' are the same group as 'the children of the promise' (9. 8), those through whom God's promised χάρις to Abraham will be accomplished.[745] In Romans 4, we saw Paul argue explicitly that the offspring God promised Abraham would include both Jews and gentiles who respond to God's χάρις with the same πίστις that their "forefather" exemplified. The present 'remnant' within Israel consists of Christ-following Jews, who fit into this larger 'selection of χάρις' on equal footing with their trusting-faithful gentile counterparts. God's selection of a chosen people in Christ is no longer limited to a subset of people within genealogical Israel. God selects 'the children of the promise' not in response to

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[745] Cf. Staples (2011) 388, 'There is a causal relation between the ingathering of the Gentiles and the salvation of "all Israel"'.

any obligation placed on him by a human being: just as he does not "owe" a "wage" to those who adopt the regulations of the law, so his χάρις to the forefathers of Israel does not mean that their physical descendants are exempt from the call to respond with πίστις to his climactic offer of χάρις in the death of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, Paul stresses throughout his letters that both the faithful 'remnant' of ethnic Jews and Christ-believing gentiles are included in God's ἐκλογή now on the basis of πίστις and in accordance with his abundant χάρις. To suggest that right-standing in God's eyes has ever been based purely on ethnic privilege would suggest that there is some partiality with God (Rom. 2. 11). Rather, God's χάρις in Christ calls for the participative response of πίστις from everyone, as it calls all to recognise with Paul, 'Who has given first to him, that he should need to repay him?'[746]

4.4. The χάρις of God in the χάρις of Christ

4.4.1. Christ as Faithful Representative of Divine χάρις

Up to this point in the chapter, we have primarily been thinking of Christ as the gift of God's χάρις towards humanity and the giving of Christ 'apart from the law' as the supreme expression of divine χάρις, to which both Jews and gentiles are called to respond with the participant reactive attitude of πίστις. In Section 4.3.3., we explored the tension between the χάρις of God's promises to genealogical Israel and the new χάρις offered in the death of Christ, and I pointed out Paul's insistence that ethnic Jews must not rely on the former as an excuse to ignore the latter. The χάρις of God in Christ calls for a response of πίστις from everyone. It does not contradict God's χάρις promises to the forefathers (Paul is at great pains to show this); rather it is their perfect fulfilment. God

[746] Romans 11. 35.

has always worked for the salvation of 'all Israel' through 'the children of the promise', and he has always intended those children to include both Jews and gentiles set apart by their πίστις in Christ.

In Chapter 3, my investigation of Paul's characteristic greeting formula brought out the equality of God and Christ as co-initiators of the ongoing divine-human χάρις relationship. In the first half of the present chapter, I focussed on passages in which Paul writes of Christ as the gift of God's χάρις to humanity. In the final sections of this chapter, I consider Paul's references to Jesus Christ as not simply the supreme χάρισμα of God to humankind, but also as an agent of χάρις in his own right—towards *both* God his father *and* humanity. Paul has made clear from the opening lines of his letter to the Romans that Christ is the one 'through whom' God's χάρις and calling come to his people, as well as all of the other blessings that result from a participant relationship of πίστις and χάρις with God. At the beginning of Romans 5, Paul sums up the state of God's people now as those who are 'at peace with God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ' and who—also *through* him—'have obtained access by faith to this χάρις in which we stand'.[747] As we see in what follows, Paul does not simply see Christ's death as the medium of God's χάρις to humanity, but rather, Christ the person acts as a faithful representative of divine χάρις. Though not as often as we might expect, Paul does occasionally refer specifically to Christ's personal χάρις and love for human beings, expressed especially in his voluntary

[747] Rom. 5. 1-2. Note that this is the closest Paul ever comes to "explaining" the theological implications of his 'grace and peace' salutations across all of his extant letters.

death on their behalf. This act, for Paul, is the ultimate announcement and enactment of God's χάρις towards humanity.[748]

It is with care that I have chosen the language of 'faithful representative' to describe the relationship between the χάρις of Christ towards humanity and that of God. Because of the recent interest in interpreting Pauline χάρις through the lens of Roman patronage, the reader might assume I am suggesting a picture in which Christ acts as the "broker" of God's χάρις towards his people.[749] Language such as "broker", however, once again shifts the conversation towards the connotations of a commercial transaction in which relationship is subjugated to individual (even if mutual) gain. Rather, as we will see, Christ's personal χάρις for his people is portrayed by Paul in just as strong, emotive language as that of God. Instead of acting as a detached agent working to accomplish the interests of two other parties, Christ is fully invested in restoring the relationship between himself and his people, and it is this direct, personal investment in that relationship which

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[748] The voluntary self-giving of Christ also goes at least some way towards mitigating the concerns I noted earlier in this chapter, as to how the χάρις of God could be compatible with an insistence on the necessity of Christ's death for human sins. Christ's voluntary death as a personal act of χάρις towards humanity is much easier to account for than God's χάρις in requiring that death, though theological reflections on the doctrine of the incarnation have suggested some promising ways to reconcile the two: see, for instance, Sykes (1997) and Stump (2018).

[749] Interpretations of Christ as a broker or agent of divine patronage tend not to focus on the Pauline letters, although Harvey (1987) 258 and Neyrey (2007) 290-291 suggest that there may be useful insights to be gleaned from such a focus. Most studies of Christ as broker or agent look at the Johannine corpus, e.g. Borgen (1968), Buchanan (1986), Neyrey (2006) and (2007); the letter to the Hebrews, e.g. de Silva (1996), Whitlark (2008); and early patristic writing, e.g. Kelhoffer (2013).

Paul insists is the perfect, faithful representation of the χάρις of God.[750] What is more, if Paul were picturing Christ as the "broker" of divine χάρις, then to complete the model, human expressions of responsive χάρις to God must also be mediated through Christ.[751] For some relational concepts in Paul, the model of Christ as mediator of human responses to God does seem to hold up. In the closing doxology of Romans, Paul gives 'glory to the only wise God forevermore *through* Jesus Christ' (16. 27). Earlier in the letter, he encourages his audience 'we rejoice (καυχώμενοι) in God *through* our Lord Jesus Christ' (5. 11); and at 2 Corinthians 3. 4, he assures his addressees, 'such is the confidence (πεποίθησιν) that we have toward God', once again, '*through* Christ'.[752] Occasionally, Paul uses such language in relation to χάρις as well. At Romans 1. 8 and 7. 25, he gives thanks to God (εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ) through Jesus Christ. Far more often, however, Paul expresses χάρις directly to God with no indication of a mediatory role for Christ in the act of thanksgiving (Rom, 6. 17, 1 Cor. 1. 4, 15. 57; 2 Cor. 2. 14, 8. 16, 9. 15;

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[750] The definition of a successful broker in Neyrey (2007) 282-283 offers an instructive foil. He writes, 'Brokers are successful for several reasons: first, they belong to the worlds of both patron and clients, and so represent fairly the interests of both; and, second, they maintain loyal and faithful relationships with both'. While both of these statements are true about Paul's presentation of Christ, the implication that he would maintain 'faithful relationships' for some end external to those relationships borders on an instrumental reading of his χάρις. Yes, God sent Christ into the world in order to enable good χάρις relationships between God and his people; but Christ's χάρις relationships with both God and human beings must not be considered subjugated to that overall end.

[751] Cf. the comment from Neyrey (2007) 290 that models of Jesus as agent must account for both his 'descending' and 'ascending' roles.

[752] However, Paul is not consistent in suggesting that human responses of glory, joy, and confidence in God are always mediated by Christ. In 2 Corinthians 9. 13 and Phil. 1. 11, glory is given directly to God for what he has done through Christ and through his trusting-faithful people. 2 Corinthians 5. 18 pictures Christ once again as the one *through* whom God reaches out to his people, but the resulting relationship is defined by direct reconciliation between 'us' and God 'himself': 'All things are from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ'.

Phil. 1. 3; 1 Thess. 1. 2, 2. 13; Phlm. 4). While God chooses to express his χάρις to humanity through Christ's self-giving love, human beings themselves respond to God's χάρις directly and have no need of an intermediary to seek further χάρις on their behalf (Rom. 8. 32). For these reasons, I find the model of Christ as "broker" of divine χάρις unhelpful and unnecessary.

Instead, when Paul speaks of Christ's χάρις in relation to the whole divine-human χάρις relationship, the model he uses is most similar to that of Plutarch's gracious older brother, or Josephus' Moses, which we considered in Sections 1.4. and 2.4., respectively. In the case of Moses, the special χάρις relationship that the lawgiver has with God is also to be seen as a specific expression of God's χάρις towards the people as a whole. Each particular instance of Moses' χάρις towards the Israelites is simultaneously motivated by and representative of the χάρις of God for them. In Plutarch's familial context, we also saw the χάρις relationships between individual family members cultivating and building on one another: χάρις towards a brother can simultaneously be seen as χάρις towards a parent, and vice versa. The mutuality and interdependence of these relationships fits Paul's understanding of χάρις relationships within the ἐκκλησία, as we saw in Chapter 3, and it most certainly fits his portrayal of the χάρις of Christ towards both God and his people much better than the more instrumentalising model of the broker. This is especially clear when we consider the close association that Paul draws between χάρις and love (ἀγάπη) in his reflections on the χάρις of God as it is expressed for humanity in the χάρις of Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 8, considered in the previous chapter, Paul exhibits his confidence in the χάρις of God as a source of abundant provision for the sake of his people's generosity. In the same chapter, Paul points specifically to Christ as the ultimate

example of self-giving χάρις, reliant on the abundance of divine provision. With Christ's example, Paul ties together the two concepts of χάρις and ἀγάπη. He reminds the Corinthians that his fundraising program for the saints in Jerusalem offers them a chance to 'prove that your love (ἀγάπη) is genuine' (8. 8). Why should they express such love for the impoverished Jerusalem church?

> γινώσκετε γὰρ τὴν χάριν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὅτι δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὤν, ἵνα ὑμεῖς τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ πλουτήσητε.[753]
>
> Because you know the χάρις of our Lord Jesus Christ, that on your account he became impoverished—being rich—in order that through his poverty you might become rich.

The χάρις of Jesus Christ in his voluntary impoverishment for the sake of his people's flourishing is Paul's ultimate example of 'genuine love'.[754] Although Paul does not explicitly mention the χάρις of God in this passage, Barclay argues convincingly that 'the grace that took form in the self-giving of Christ tells us something crucial about God'.[755] Barclay points out that the participial phrase πλούσιος ὤν, though often interpreted concessively ('*although* he was rich, he became poor'), makes much more sense as a causative. It is precisely because of Christ's wealth that his voluntary poverty can enrich his followers. The impoverishment of Christ is not to be thought of as a self-negation; rather, in the context of chapter 8 as a whole, 'richness' refers to a 'propensity to give'.[756] In Paul's understanding, Christ remains eternally rich, even while he experiences the

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[753] 2 Cor. 8. 9.

[754] Here I agree with Barclay (2013a) 334 that Paul is using 'characteristic synecdoche' and referring to 'several aspects of the Christ-event (his "being sent", his life, and his death) all at once'—rather than assuming that Paul is limiting Christ's 'impoverishment' merely to one aspect of (or event from) his life on earth.

[755] Barclay (2019) 144.

[756] Barclay (2019) 143.

temporary poverty of the incarnation and the humiliation of crucifixion. His 'richness' perfectly reflects the limitless generosity of God, and as the faithful representative of God's χάρις towards humanity, Christ loses nothing in the process of his self-offering. His χάρις towards his followers is for Christ a voluntary submission to death for the sake of drawing others into the flourishing of his eternal life.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul once again connects the love and χάρις of God as it is demonstrated for his people in the love and χάρις of Christ—specifically in his death on the cross for their sins. In Galatians 2. 20-21, Paul makes very clear the only possible human response that this χάρις deserves:

> ὃ δὲ νῦν ζῶ ἐν σαρκί, ἐν πίστει ζῶ τῇ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ. οὐκ ἀθετῶ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ· εἰ γὰρ διὰ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, ἄρα Χριστὸς δωρεὰν ἀπέθανεν.
>
> The life I now live in the flesh, I live in the πίστις of the son of God who loved me and gave himself on my behalf. I do not set aside the χάρις of God; for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

Christ's loving, self-giving death is the means by which God has chosen to right the relationship between himself and his people. Once again, Paul does not suggest that all those who obey the law are "legalistically" rejecting God's χάρις. Rather, as nearly all commentators agree, Paul is speaking to gentile Christians in Galatians, and his verb ἀθετῶ, 'set aside', implies that his addressees have previously recognised the χάρις of God offered them in Christ's loving death on their behalf, but that they are now tempted to 'set aside' that χάρις, in favour of adopting the regulations of the law as an additional or replacement means of righteousness. For Paul, the loving death of Christ is the means through which God now offers δικαιοσύνη and a participant relationship of πίστις and χάρις to his people. Turning to the regulations of the law instead as a means of δικαιοσύνη constitutes a rejection of that χάρις and the denigration of the value of

Christ's self-gift.[757] Paul's interlocutors might well argue that God gave the law to Moses from the start as an expression of his χάρις for his people. But for Paul, one cannot separate the χάρις of God in salvation history from its expression now in the self-giving death of Christ. To reject the latter is to reject the former, without exception.

In the following section, I focus our attention on the χάρις of Christ in Romans 5, and specifically his exemplary responsive χάρις to God in the context of the incarnation. Romans 5, however, also contains a well-known Pauline affirmation of the χάρις of Christ for his people, in his affirmation that 'God demonstrates his love for us in that Christ died for us, while we were still sinful' (5. 8). This is how Christ has opened up access for us 'into this χάρις in which we stand' (5. 2). For Paul, there is no possible distance between the love of God for his people and the love of Christ for them—or for the χάρις of God towards them and its expression by Christ, his faithful representative. Although it is only in 2 Corinthians 8 that Paul explicitly identifies Christ's self-giving love for his people as 'the χάρις of Christ', in Galatians, Christ's faithful representation of divine χάρις is identified as an expression of his personal love for his people ('who loved *me* and gave himself on *my* behalf', emphasis added). Finally, in Romans 5, Christ's death and mediation express and provide access to both the love and χάρις of God. In each of these cases, Christ serves not only as the gift of God's χάρις towards humanity, but also as a distinct agent of that χάρις, willingly pouring out his love upon his people in faithful representation of God's χάρις for them.

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[757] Cf. the harsh language of Gal. 5. 4, 'You have been cut off from Christ, whoever is being made right by the law, you have fallen out of χάρις'.

4.4.2. The χάρις of the Incarnate Christ towards God

As well as Christ's χάρις for his people in his self-giving death on their behalf, Romans 5 also draws attention to the place of Christ's responsive χάρις to God in the context of God's redemptive plan for humanity. Like all true human χάρις, in Paul's view, Christ's χάρις towards human beings stems from his responsive χάρις towards God, and in the scheme that Paul lays out in Romans 5, God has chosen that responsive χάρις of Christ as the means through which to extend 'the gift of righteousness' to 'the many'. Paul finds Christ at every point in the overarching pattern of divine-human χάρις. As we have already seen, he is both God's gift to humanity and also a loving self-giver. As a human being he is the responsive recipient of divine χάρις, and through that response to God he extends divine χάρις outwards to all humanity.

In Romans 5, Paul situates Jesus Christ as both agent and object of God's χάρις to humanity—both gift and giver, and perfectly situated as the faithful representative of God's χάρις towards humanity:

> δι᾽ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος, καὶ οὕτως εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διῆλθεν, ἐφ᾽ ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον…ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὡς τὸ παράπτωμα οὕτως καὶ τὸ χάρισμα. εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἑνὸς παραπτώματι οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον, πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐπερίσσευσεν. καὶ οὐχ ὡς δι᾽ ἑνὸς ἁμαρτήσαντος τὸ δώρημα· τὸ μὲν γὰρ κρίμα ἐξ ἑνὸς εἰς κατάκριμα, τὸ δὲ χάρισμα ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων εἰς δικαίωμα. Εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἑνὸς παραπτώματι ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσεν διὰ τοῦ ἑνός, πολλῷ μᾶλλον οἱ τὴν περισσείαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσιν διὰ τοῦ ἑνὸς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.[758]
>
> Through one person sin entered the world, and through sin death, and thus death made its way to all people, since all sinned…but not as the transgression, so also the χάρισμα. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more the χάρις of God and the gift that is in the χάρις of the one person Jesus Christ abounded to the many. And not as the result of the one having sinned, so also the gift; for the judgement from one transgression proceeded to condemnation, but

[758] Rom. 5. 12, 15-17.

> the χάρισμα from many transgressions to justification. For if by the transgression of the one death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of χάρις and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.

In this passage, Paul focusses our attention on the one specific expression of God's χάρις that sets the pattern for all the others we have seen him refer to throughout his letters—that is, the giving of Jesus Christ.[759] Paul references χάρις again and again in this passage, linguistically drawing attention to the 'abundance' or 'overflow' (περισσεία) of divine χάρις. Christ is the primary χάρισμα or manifestation of God's χάρις (5. 15);[760] but in line with the passages discussed in the previous section, the person who is gift is also a giver in his own right, as he passes on the specific δωρεά of righteousness (5. 17). Paul's most interesting use of χάρις language in this passage, however, comes from his specific attribution of χάρις to Christ as conceptually distinguished from the χάρις of God in verse 15: 'the χάρις of God and the gift that is in the χάρις of the one person Jesus Christ'. In calling Christ 'the one person', Paul is drawing an explicit parallel to 'the one person' of

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[759] Cf. Barclay (2019) 144: 'If Christ displays the self-giving of God, he reveals God as "the God who gives", and this giving, enacted finally and definitively in Christ, can be traced across the whole of reality'. Paul explicitly points to the pattern set by God's giving of Christ in Rom. 8. 32, when he asks, 'He who did not hold back his own son, but rather handed him over for all of us, how will he not also with him give us all things in χάρις?' Not only does God give 'all things' as a follow-up to his giving of Christ, but both father and son are involved in the continual giving.

[760] I do not see any need to read into χάρισμα the technical definition of 'charismatic gift', as does Jewett (2007) 380. In verses 15 and 16, Paul draws a grammatical parallel between χάρισμα and παράπτωμα, δώρημα, κρίμα, κατάκριμα, and δικαίωμα. Longenecker (2016) 566 suggests a rhetorical purpose, in that 'all these noun endings of μα were evidently meant to enable…his Christian addressees at Rome to feel the impact of his message and recognize its importance'.

5. 12, Adam, through whom sin and death 'came into the world'.[761] In this case, then, Paul is not distinguishing between the χάρις of God and the human-directed χάρις of Christ as God's eternal equal or faithful representative, but he is rather making a distinction between the χάρις of God towards humanity and the *responsive* χάρις of Jesus Christ in his role as the second Adam. In this particular instance, Christ's χάρις is not directly being expressed towards humanity, but it is first of all directed towards the χάρις of God as its perfect human response.[762] As the second Adam, Jesus Christ personally and perfectly undoes the ἀχαριστία that has characterised humanity since Adam.[763] At the same time, however, this perfect expression of χάρις in response to God has massive implications for the rest of humanity. The 'gift of righteousness' specifically 'abounds to the many' through the responsive, divinely directed χάρις 'of the one person Jesus Christ'; and this itself is the supreme manifestation of the χάρις of God to humanity. In this particular case, Paul does not identify the χάρις of *Christ* as redounding 'to the many'. Rather, the many receive the gift of righteousness that is offered to them through

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[761] Cf. 1 Cor. 15. 22. Jewett (2007) 374-375 comments on the lack of explanation or even speculation that Paul offers in this verse regarding the mechanism of this 'kind of "epidemic" sweeping over the world' as a result of Adam's sin. Jewett summarises the majority interpretation: 'A social theory of sin appears to be implied here in which the actions of forebears determine those of their descendants'. For a similar set of reflections, see Brandenburger (1962) 159.

[762] This interpretation of 'the χάρις of the one person Jesus Christ' fits with the common understanding of this passage as reflective of Christ's role as the model human, over against the negative foil provided by Adam. Cf. Kister's (2007) 406 point that Paul does *not* build his argument in Romans 5 around any 'ontological difference between the two men', as he does in 1 Cor. 15. 46-49. Although I have not found another scholar who reads Christ's χάρις in Rom. 5. 15 as directed specifically towards God, Cranfield (1979) i 285 warns against reading Christ's χάρις as simply the content of the gift to the many; he argues instead that ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι should be understood as 'the gift (which had come) by the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ'.

[763] See the discussion of Romans 1 in Section 4.2.

the perfect χάρις relationship between Christ and God his father. Here we might compare Philo's and Josephus' accounts of Hannah and Moses, respectively, whose experience of the generosity of God so fully possesses them that it visually 'overflows' in joy and χάρις towards other people. So here, the χάρις of the person Jesus Christ becomes the medium by which God's χάρις is passed on to human beings.[764]

In sharp contrast to the first Adam, Christ the person responded to God's characteristic χάρις as every human being ought, with full gratitude and trust. Like the older brother in Plutarch's picture of familial χάρις (Section 1.4.), Christ expresses his own χάρις towards humanity (the estranged younger brother) by welcoming them to share in his perfect χάρις relationship with his father. As Adam's sin and dishonour of God somehow negatively "infected" all humanity after him, so Christ's exemplary χάρις towards God *and* towards humanity opens a way for reconciliation and life-giving relationship. This allows us to grasp an even fuller picture of what Paul means when he writes that Christ gives access by πίστις to 'this χάρις in which we stand' (Rom. 5. 1): by the trust-faithfulness of Christ, 'the many' are welcomed into the perfect χάρις relationship shared by Christ and God. For Paul, as for his Hellenistic Jewish contemporaries, χάρις is an invitation into a mutually pleasing relationship with God. Paul has spent significant time explaining the importance of his teaching that right-standing in God's eyes is a gift of his χάρις that must be received from the participant stance of πίστις. All humanity has been infected by sin and none can claim the ability to put God in their debt: 'sin abounds' (Rom. 5. 20). And yet—Paul struggles to find the language to capture the abundance of divine χάρις as it has been shared with humanity

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[764] For Christ's experience as a recipient of the χάρις of God, we might compare Phil. 2. 9: 'God has highly exalted him and has gifted him with the χάρις (ἐχαρίσατο) of the name above every other name'.

through the person Christ—so he writes, 'χάρις hyper-abounds', to outpace sin in its far-reaching effects on humankind (5. 20).[765] Paul will speak more specifically of what this looks like in terms of ethics in chapter 6, but in chapter 5, in sum, a relationship of χάρις with God results from God's own χάρις-motivated gift of righteousness, and it is shared with humanity by Christ's χάρις towards humanity, which is itself an overflow of his own perfect χάρις relationship with God his father.

This reading of Christ's divinely-directed χάρις in 5. 15 is strengthened by the ethical implications of Paul's argument that he proceeds to outline in the rest of chapters 5 and 6. Paul speaks of Christ's righteousness and obedience (5. 18-19) as expressions of his perfect responsive relationship with God, which is uniquely unmarred by the trespasses and sins of the rest of humanity.[766] Similarly, when the divinely generated human χάρις of Christ 'hyper-abounds' to his followers (5. 20), their newly re-established χάρις relationships with God are evidenced through 'the righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord' (5. 21). In Romans 6, Paul wards off a potential misunderstanding of the picture he has just presented. He has just affirmed that 'where sin increased'—namely, among Jews as well as gentiles, as the giving of the law made clear[767]—'χάρις hyper-abounded' through Christ. Paul next anticipates the question,

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765 Paul uses the word ὑπερπερισσεύω only one other time, in 2 Corinthians 7. 4: 'I am filled with comfort; I am hyper-abounding with joy in all our distress'. Cranfield (1979) i 294 comments that in Romans 5, the word 'forms a climax to the series of terms expressive of abundance and superabundance which have been a prominent feature of this section'.

766 Exemplary figures from Jewish scriptures, such as Abraham, are also praised for their righteous responses to the χάρις of God; yet for Paul, no previous relationship of χάρις with God had sufficient power or perfection in order to overcome the sin and death that held sway through human ἀχαριστία until Christ.

767 Rom. 5. 20, 5. 13, 4. 15, 3. 19-20.

'What shall we say then? Are we to keep on in sin so that χάρις may abound?' 'Absolutely not!' is the response.[768] Throughout the rest of the chapter, Paul outlines the ethical implications of Christ's responsive χάρις towards God, which his followers should seek to imitate in every aspect of their lives. In Rom. 6. 11, he summarises 'for the death [Christ] died, he died to sin once and for all; but the life he lives he lives to God. Thus also you, consider yourselves to be dead with respect to sin, living with respect to God in Christ Jesus'. In imitation of the 'one act of righteousness' in Christ's bodily death on their behalf (5. 18), Paul instructs his addressees to 'present *your* physical limbs to God as weapons of righteousness' (6. 13, emphasis added). Imitative dedication to God is, according to Paul, the only possible response available to those who have recognised the abundance of God's χάρις towards them—crucially seen in 'the obedience of the one person', Jesus Christ (5. 19).[769]

4.4.3. The Ongoing Representative χάρις of the Risen Christ

Thus far, we have focussed our attention on the χάρις of God towards his people expressed in Christ's loving death on their behalf, which Paul also sees as the perfect example of Christ's exemplary χάρις towards God. *Through* Christ's divinely directed χάρις, God extends his own χάρις to humanity and reconciles his *acharistic* people to himself, by offering the gift of righteousness that is based on πίστις Χριστοῦ. We have already seen hints, however, that Paul does not limit his understanding of the χάρις of

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[768] Rom. 6. 1-2.

[769] Here we see parallels between Paul's ethical teaching and that of Philo. As Abraham and Hannah dedicated their divinely given children to the service of God (Section 2.2.2.), so Paul urges his addressees to devote the life they have been given in Christ to the service of their divine master.

Christ to its expression in his incarnation and self-giving death for his people. In this final section, I consider the two prominent occasions in which Paul makes explicit reference to the ongoing χάρις of the risen Christ towards his people: once in 2 Corinthians 12, and otherwise in his characteristic benediction at the close of each of his undisputed letters. In these instances, we do *not* see Paul focussing on the χάρις of Christ towards God—post resurrection and ascension, Christ is closely aligned with his father as a joint source of χάρις for humanity.[770] This accords with their parallel alignment in the greetings, as discussed in Section 3.2. Instead, Paul's language in his letter closings focusses on Christ as the ongoing, immediate source of divine χάρις in the everyday lives of his followers. The risen Christ remains the faithful representative of divine χάρις, as suggested by Paul's choice to close his letters with a specifically christological χάρις wish. Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 12. 9, Paul envisions Christ telling Paul '*my* χάρις is sufficient for you' (emphasis added). Paul's references to Christ in these instances serve to emphasise the personal, participant nature of the ongoing access God's people have to his χάρις for them in Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul begins to speak of the mysterious 'thorn in the flesh' given him 'to keep me from becoming conceited'.[771] Much ink has been spilled as scholars attempt to discern the precise nature of this troublesome 'thorn'.[772] Most agree,

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[770] This is certainly not to suggest that there is no place in Paul's proto-trinitarian thinking for χάρις within the Godhead apart from the incarnation, but simply that he does not discuss it in any of his undisputed letters.

[771] 2 Cor. 12. 7.

[772] Thrall (1994) ii 809-818 and Moss (2012) offer recent overviews of the interpretive options that have been tried.

however, that it refers to some physical limitation that carried social consequences.[773] Regardless of the exact nature of the annoyance, what I wish to note here is the response Paul gets to his pleas that the Lord would take it away from him:

> εἴρηκέν μοι· ἀρκεῖ σοι ἡ χάρις μου· ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται. ἥδιστα οὖν μᾶλλον καυχήσομαι ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις μου, ἵνα ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ᾽ ἐμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ. διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ἐν ὕβρεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ· ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ τότε δυνατός εἰμι.[774]
>
> He said to me: 'My χάρις is enough for you; for in weakness, power is completed'. Therefore, I will rather boast most gladly in my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may take up residence upon me. That is why I am pleased with weaknesses, with insults, with trials, with persecutions and difficulties, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

At first glance, Paul's experience here appears to contradict what he was just promising the Corinthians a few chapters before. As we saw in Section 3.4.2., Paul assured the Corinthians that God always supplies every resource his people need in order to pass on his abundant χάρις in their interactions with each other. In the context of Paul's collection for the Jerusalem churches, that passage seemed to point specifically to material resources, guaranteeing 'all sufficiency' for 'every good deed'.[775] Here, however, when Paul applies this promise of sufficiency to himself, he shows that his confidence in God's provision (1) is not limited to merely material resources, but (2) also does not include the assumption that God's people will experience continual physical or material prosperity. Instead, what Christ tells Paul in this story is that his χάρις itself gives Paul the sufficiency he needs to carry on in the midst of suffering and deprivation.

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[773] See Thrall (1994) ii 817-818 for the suggestion that the thorn is a recurrent migraine or fever. Moss (2012) 321 ventures, 'If Paul stammered, or had a demeanor that physiognomically suggested that he was either servile or feminine, then these characteristics certainly would have made him vulnerable to attack'.

[774] 2 Cor. 12. 9-10.

[775] 2 Cor. 9. 8.

For Paul, the χάρις of the risen Christ enables an ongoing, participant relationship with the divine.[776] Barrett refers to Christ's words as the perfect expression of God's 'movement in love' towards his servant Paul.[777] The sustenance that Christ promises Paul is the relational sustenance that is enacted in the very fact that Paul can engage him in conversation. In divine goodwill and generosity towards him, Paul has all he really needs. Sometimes, he suggests, God does not give the precise gifts that his people ask for—in this case, healing for whatever it is that is physically troubling Paul. However, the reversal of expectations that Paul cites here ('in weakness, power is completed') is a return to his repeated theme throughout the Corinthian correspondence—namely, the contrast between the wisdom and χάρις of God and the wisdom of humanity.[778] As Paul explained at the beginning of this chapter, his 'thorn' was originally 'given' him to keep him from 'becoming conceited'. Christ's appearance in response to Paul's prayer, however, explains that this situation is not meant to punish Paul for his human weakness and pride. Instead, the answer, 'My χάρις is sufficient for you', points Paul to the purpose of this troublesome reminder: Paul's thorn is meant as a daily μνῆμα of his human frailty and his consequent dependence on the powerful risen Christ, and it is therefore also meant to be a cause of joy for him as he delights in the χάρις relationship he shares with Christ, which will sustain him through every trial of life ('weaknesses, insults, trials, persecutions, and difficulties').

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[776] Cf. Thrall (1994) ii 820-821: 'The prayer-report thus turns into the report of a dialogue, underlined by the personal pronouns, and this emphasises the depth of the personal relationship with Christ which Paul felt himself to enjoy'.

[777] Barrett (1973) 316.

[778] 1 Cor. 1. 17-24, 30; 2. 1-7, 13; 3. 19; 2 Cor. 1. 12.

As we have seen throughout this chapter, every act of χάρις by Christ is also an expression of God's χάρις to his people. In nearly every passage covered thus far in this chapter, Christ's acts of χάρις express God's initiatory χάρις to his people, who then participate in the divine-human χάρις relationship by acts of responsive χάρις and πίστις. In 2 Corinthians 12, however, we are shown what we might call a sort of divine responsive χάρις—not εὐχαριστία, as we would call human responsive χάρις—but divine χάρις in response to the plea of a human being already in relationship with Christ and God. God's answers to prayers are mentioned repeatedly throughout Paul's letters,[779] but here, Christ acts as God's faithful representative and expresses God's commitment to respond to prayer even when he does not give the requested blessing.[780] The appearance of Christ in 2 Corinthians 12 is an enactment of God's ongoing responsiveness to those with whom he has established a participant χάρις relationship. From his exalted position as the risen Lord, Christ continues to act as the faithful representative of divine χάρις for God's people.

This must also be what Paul has in mind at the close of each of his letters, where he wishes his addressees, with only minimal variation, 'The χάρις of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you'.[781] The difference between this christological χάρις benediction and Paul's opening greeting formula—which reads, 'χάρις to you and peace from God our father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ' (emphasis added)—is immediately apparent. In the case

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[779] See especially the prayers of thanksgiving, covered in Section 3.3.

[780] We might recall Epameinondas, from Section 1.2.2., who refused Theanor's request that he accept the gift the latter had brought, but offered the young man instead the χάρις of goodwill and instruction, just as Christ does here for Paul.

[781] Rom. 16. 20; 1 Cor. 16. 23; 2 Cor. 13. 13; 1 Thess. 5. 28; Gal. 6. 18; Phil. 4. 23; Phlm. 25.

of the greetings, both χάρις and εἰρήνη come to the addressees from God and Christ together. At the end of his letters, on the other hand, with almost equal regularity, Paul takes his leave of his addressees by first wishing upon them some benevolent action by 'the God of peace' and then (sometimes several verses later) the continuing presence with them of 'the χάρις of Christ'.[782] Surprisingly, scholarship on Paul's closing grace and peace wishes seems almost universally uninterested in the question of why the two are consistently separated from each other at the end of his letters, in sharp distinction from his persistently combined greeting formula. Weima simply notes that 'although Paul ordinarily refers to God as the source of grace, he occasionally speaks of Christ in this fashion', including his consistent attribution of χάρις to Christ in his closing formula.[783] Weima interprets the opening formula, 'from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ' as expressing the priority of God the father as the source of both χάρις and εἰρήνη, with Jesus Christ in a 'secondary role'.[784] However, he later suggests that a 'pattern of aligning a grace benediction with Christ and a peace benediction with God follows naturally from the opening salutation, where the same two wishes are linked in chiastic fashion with the same two divine figures'.[785] While it is indisputable that Paul attributes χάρις to the father in most instances, to Christ in some, and to both of them at once in others, this does not really help us to determine why he formulates his closings as he does, or how he sees the two figures interacting with each other in their expression(s) of χάρις towards Paul's churches.

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[782] Note the discussion of Weima (1994) 83-84 on the mood of the understood verb in both the opening and closing formulae.

[783] Weima (1994) 81.

[784] Weima (1994) 81, n. 2.

[785] Weima (1994) 90.

I propose that the key to understanding Paul's singling out of 'the χάρις of Christ' in his closing benedictions is to be found in the 2 Corinthians 12 passage considered above. When Paul wants to emphasise the immediacy of the divine χάρις relationship for his addressees—as he would at the moment of his taking leave of them—he points them specifically to the ongoing χάρις available to them in their risen Lord. We have seen the close interdependency of the χάρις relationships shared by Paul and his addressees with both God and Christ, so we should not look for any qualitative difference between the χάρις of Christ in Paul's closing benedictions and the χάρις of God and Christ in his greetings. Rather, as he opens each of his various letters, one of Paul's first goals is to establish his authority as an apostle of God sent to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. In this context, his wishes of χάρις and peace to the addressees must certainly come from the one true God in whom they originate *and* from the risen Lord who has once and for all established access to them (Rom. 5. 1-2). As discussed in Section 3.2., Paul's greeting formula aligns God and Christ as co-initiators of divine χάρις. As Paul draws each letter to a close, however, he regularly turns to a more intimate, pastoral tone. In Romans and 1 Corinthians, he greets individual addressees by name. In this context, Paul seems especially anxious to remind his addressees of their personal access to divine χάρις through their ongoing participant relationship with God through Christ. The χάρις of the Lord Christ is the reason Paul's audience have continued access to the χάρις of God. It seems that of all the things Paul most wants his readers to remember, the sufficiency of Christ's χάρις for them is the final word he leaves with them. As the χάρις of the self-giving death of Christ opened up access for all to the χάρις of the God of peace, so the χάρις of the risen Christ sustains his people in that ongoing relationship, enabling them to carry on amidst all 'persecutions and difficulties' for his sake.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analysed Paul's discussions of the χάρις of Christ, primarily but not exclusively in his letter to the house churches in Rome. The chapter began by considering the place of Christ in the course of salvation history as Paul describes it in Romans 1 (Section 4.2.). Since Adam, humanity has treated God's abundant χάρις with persistent ἀχαριστία. God, however, has responded with his climactic gift of Christ as the one to deal with human sin. In light of this unique expression of divine χάρις, Paul calls his addressees to respond with the participant reactive attitude of πίστις, accepting with gratitude the gift of righteousness God offers through Christ, instead of turning to the law as an instrumental means to the same end. In Romans 4 (Section 4.3.1.), Paul explicates the meaning of Christ's death for sins 'apart from the law', insisting that those who seek δικαιοσύνη through 'works of the law' misconstrue the law's purpose and reject the χάρις God has extended to all through Christ. Torah is not to be understood as a means of obligating God's χάρις; nor can divine χάρις be limited or obligated by ethnicity (Sections. 4.3.2. and 4.3.3.). Paul argues adamantly that the χάρις of God towards the patriarch Abraham requires that gentiles be incorporated into Abraham's covenant family, and he reinterprets what it means to be a part of that family on the basis of the participant reactive attitude of πίστις.

In Section 4.4., I delved into the specific instances in which Paul attributes χάρις to Jesus Christ as a distinct, active agent. Both in the incarnation and post resurrection and ascension, Christ acts as the faithful representative of God's χάρις to humanity. He does this out of his own love for humankind and as part of his exemplary χάρις towards God, as seen in his willing obedience to the will of God, which undoes the effects of

Adamic ἀχαριστία (Romans 5). Finally, Christ's faithful representation of divine χάρις does not conclude with his time on earth. In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul pictures Christ as continually accessible to his people through prayer, and he quotes the Lord promising that his χάρις will be sufficient for all of his faithful servant's needs. What is more, in Paul's characteristic, christological χάρις benediction, this promise of personal accessibility and sustenance is extended to all of Christ's people. 'Through Christ', Paul writes in 2 Cor. 1. 5, 'our comfort abounds'.

Concluding Remarks

In this thesis, I have attempted to trace the tension between 'instrumental' and 'participant' χάρις as it is expressed not only in the letters of Paul, but also widely among his Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish contemporaries. This tension runs through Senecan and Aristotelian discussions of human friendship, as well as being evidenced occasionally in Graeco-Roman discussions of the relationship between humanity and the divine. In his ethical treatises, Philo repeatedly appeals to the ideal of participant relationality as the appropriate response to the boundless generosity of God towards his creation. Josephus highlights the far-reaching social ramifications of various individuals' responses to divine χάρις (either participative or instrumental). In the letters of Paul, many of these themes coalesce.

I began this thesis with the question, to what understanding of χάρις does Paul refer in his 'negative definitional gesture' of Romans 11. 6: 'If by χάρις, no longer from works, since then χάρις is no longer χάρις'? In light of the Graeco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish *comparanda* surveyed in Chapters 1 and 2 and the five clusters of Pauline χάρις language discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, I am now prepared to offer the following interpretive conclusions.

First, the 'χάρις no longer χάρις' to which Paul refers in Romans 11 is not a uniquely christological or even Pauline χάρις. In Romans 4, Paul clarifies that 'working' refers to a transactional approach to God which treats him like a boss, from whom one must seek to obligate a fair wage. Throughout this thesis I have referred to such an approach as the instrumentalisation of χάρις. While differing in their practical applications of such an argument, Philo, Josephus, Plutarch, and Seneca would all recognise the fundamental distinction that Paul is making. God's bountiful expressions of

χάρις call for a participant response in-kind: thanksgiving and honour in response to divine χάρις in creation (Romans 1. 21, cf. Philo *Her.* 102-104), and πίστις in response to God's χάρις in Christ. Paul can treat his Romans 11 statement as axiomatic because the idea that one should not seek to obligate God's χάρις is not his own invention.

Second, this argument carries particular weight for Paul because of the urgency he faces in determining how gentiles are to be incorporated into the Christian ἐκκλησία. Paul is adamant that his young gentile converts not be given the wrong impression about the purpose of the law in salvation history and its relevance for them. For Paul, the law was given as an expression of God's χάρις for the Israelites, but, for the purpose of δικαιοσύνη, it has been made obsolete by God's gift of Christ to all peoples. God's χάρις in Christ calls for a participant response, which includes numerous ethical implications. But 'χάρις is no longer χάρις' if one assumes God is just looking for workmen to do his bidding.

Third, because of the predominance of worth-based interpretations of Pauline χάρις throughout Christian history, scholarship on the subject has at times lost track of the multivalence of Paul's 'true χάρις' arguments. 'Works of the law' negate χάρις for many reasons:

1. 'The one working' treats divine χάρις like a transaction, rather than a relationship (Rom. 4. 4).
2. 'The one working' denies God's χάρις promise to Abraham, that he would inherit a worldwide family of both Jews and gentiles (Rom. 4. 16, 11. 29).
3. 'The one working' rejects the gift of righteousness that God extends through Christ, trying instead to appropriate God's previous gift of the law as an instrument to righteousness (Rom 3. 21-24, 5. 15-17).

4. ‘The one working’ misconstrues the purpose of God’s gift of the law (Rom. 3. 20).
5. ‘The one working’ limits the abundance of God’s χάρις to the size of whatever “wage” he thinks he can earn (Rom. 4. 4).
6. ‘The one working’ loses track of the true, participative response that God calls for from all (Rom. 10. 2).
7. ‘The one working’ forgets that God is always the first giver, the one ‘from whom and through whom and to whom are all things’ (Rom. 11. 35-36).

Finally, in Chapter 3 of this thesis in particular, I sought to remedy a tendency in Pauline χάρις scholarship, which focusses attention almost exclusively on Paul’s weighty theological discussions of χάρις, to the neglect of other prominent clusters of χάρις language across his corpus. Paul’s χάρις vs works arguments must be read within the social and relational contexts provided by his characteristic greeting and closing formulae, his emotive prayers of thanksgiving, his passionate, χάρις-filled exhortations to community generosity, and his clarifying discussions of the relationship between the χάρις of God throughout history and the χάρις of the incarnate and risen Lord Christ.

What then is χάρις for Paul? χάρις is the ongoing goodwill and generosity of God for his people, expressed uniquely and climactically through Christ, and enabling a participative response of χάρις from those people; this response is expressed both in returns of devotion and thanks to God and Christ as the joint source of the divine-human χάρις relationship, and in self-giving acts of χάρις (in imitation of Christ) towards other members of the ἐκκλησία and even towards those outside it. By contextualising Pauline χάρις within early imperial discussions of participant relationality, Paul’s didactic arguments can be read not simply as a polemic against misconstruals of divine χάρις, but also as a positive answer to one of the most persistent relational questions of his day.

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