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International Aid in the First Century

The Jerusalem Collection and Its Lessons

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This study sets the collection for Jerusalem in the broader context of aid across boundaries. It asks what can be learned from the Jerusalem offering in regard to contemporary aid or relief for the poor in international or cross-cultural settings. Despite similarities with other forms of aid within the Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts, as several scholars have noted, this article argues that the Jerusalem collection should be seen as a distinct international aid project with countercultural aspects, rooted in Paul's messianic and missional worldview.

Introduction

This study sets the collection for Jerusalem in the broader context of other international or extra-local economic assistance and aid, aid across boundaries. It asks what can be learned from the Jerusalem offering in regard to contemporary aid or relief for the poor, in international or cross-cultural settings. Scholars debate the uniqueness of the Pauline Jerusalem collection within its Greco-Roman and Jewish settings. Some argue that the Gentile churches' help for the poor in the church in Jerusalem has close economic analogies in political and civic benefactions or patronage; in the charitable practices of cults, guilds, and associations; in special collections for civic projects; or in the various forms of aid practiced in Jewish communities. Despite various overlaps and similarities, the Jerusalem collection should be seen as a distinct international aid project with countercultural aspects, rooted in Paul's messianic and missional worldview.

It is important to recognize that our knowledge of the Jerusalem collection is limited in a number of ways. First, our information comes only from three Pauline letters: Romans, 1 Corinthians, and 2 Corinthians. Some also see a reference to the collection in Galatians 2:10, though the evidence is slim. In addition, it is possible that it is alluded to in Acts 24:17, when Paul, in his defense before Felix, says "And after many years I came bringing alms to my people, and to present offerings."[1] Second, there is little detail of the needs that Paul aims to address, except that the collection is "for the poor among the holy people"—*hagioi*, "saints"—"in Jerusalem" (Rom. 15:26), and that they are in a condition of lack or need (2 Cor. 8:14). How many people are in need? What would qualify someone as a recipient? Is there a specific emergency that is being addressed? It is interesting that Paul does not focus on detailing the needs nor stirring up pity for them. Third, there is no information about the proposed method of distribution. How would the offering be divided up for those in need? Would there be a one-time distribution, or would the offering create a fund that could be used in cases of need? Who would distribute the offering? Lastly, we have no knowledge of the outcome of the collection. Was it well received? Did it help the people it was intended to help? Paul does ask for prayer that the offering would be accepted by the saints, and that he would be delivered from unbelievers in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:30–31).[2] All this means that we cannot draw on the Jerusalem offering for answers to some questions about international aid, such as the precise method of distribution, or the observed economic benefit of the process, whether long or short-term. We can, however, learn from the process, motives, and methods of the fund-raising, and the efforts to guarantee accountability.

Distinctive Aspects of the Collection

International Aid for the Poor in the First Century

One of the major distinctive features of the early church was its international or translocal nature, as is attested frequently in the New Testament. Much the same can be said of Jewish communities in the diaspora, which had clear international connections, especially to Jerusalem, Judea, and the temple. Several other movements of the period were also to be found in multiple cities and nations, including philosophical groups such as the Stoics, Epicureans, and Cynics.[3] Various pagan cults also spread, some by immigration,[4] such as Artemis worship,[5] or mystery religions,[6] and some with political ties, such as the imperial cult.[7] However, it is uncertain that there was much international connection between the scattered versions of these groups. Most Greco-Roman voluntary associations and guilds were locally based, though translocal links existed among some.[8] One com-

monly cited example is the "Guilds of the Artists devoted to Dionysus,"[9] whose members were travelling performers who appeared at festivals and games, and attracted patronage from authorities.[10] Occasionally they even helped negotiate treaties or agreements because they travelled so widely.[11] There were at least four locally-based editions of this guild, who were frequently in competition with each other, up until the time of Claudius, when they seem to have organized a "world-wide" association.[12]

What is less clear is that significant *financial* links existed between the various Greco-Roman movements and associations, outside Judaism and the early church. One example often cited is the case of a group of merchant immigrants from Tyre to Puteoli in Italy. They asked the city council back in Tyre for annual funds of 250 *denarii*, to cover the rent for the *statio*, the space they used as a base in Puteoli for their trade and for their ancestral Tyrian civic cult activities.[13] The council agreed to their request. However, the resulting contributions were to come from tax or tariff revenues, by order of the city of Tyre, and thus hardly comparable to the Jerusalem collection.[14]

One possible parallel, often brought up in relation to the Jerusalem collection, lies in the practice of the ἐπίδοσις (*epidosis*), voluntary public subscriptions. They were organized to meet a range of projects or needs, such as the building of a temple, or a customs house,[15] fortifying a harbor,[16] the purchase of grain in time of need, the purchase of land for a cemetery,[17] and commonly for supporting religious festivals, athletic games, the ransom of prisoners, repairs of buildings, and especially strengthening city defenses.[18] Kloppenborg points out that some ἐπίδοσις appeals asked for donations from foreigners as well as citizens.[19] However, the foreigners to which such inscriptions appeal are of course foreigners who are presently in the cities where the inscriptions are written. Otherwise, they would not know of the appeal. The *epidosis* inscriptions seek funds for the city or community where the appeal is made, with no evidence to my knowledge of anyone asking for help for needs in other places.[20] So while Paul's collection would fit the cultural pattern of asking for donations for needs, its translocal nature is distinct.

The Greco-Roman tradition of benefaction, also called *euergetism*, sometimes happened at an international level, usually through official action. Examples include a ruler granting tax or legal privileges to a city in his or her realm;[21] the building of temples, aqueducts, roads, and bridges; and the funding of athletic competitions.[22] Mostly, however, benefaction, like the *epidosis*, happened at a local level, and especially in cities. This was because that is where the wealthy often resided, and where their beneficence could receive appropriate honor. It was rare for public benefaction to help the poorest people, who were unlikely

to be able to return the kind of public honors that benefactors wanted. For example, the grain dole, in Rome and some other cities, was given regardless of the poverty or wealth of the recipient but was still restricted to the minority of residents who were citizens. A second-century Roman historian wrote that the Emperor Trajan found popularity not simply by handing out grain, but through providing public entertainments; gifts of food only helped the plebs who were on the corn-register, whereas the whole populace was kept happy by public spectacles and shows.[23] In any event, according to Paul Erdkamp, "neither food crises nor poverty were at the basis of the Roman corn dole,"[24] and being on the list of recipients was something of a status symbol. Even the praetorian guard did not receive this handout until the reign of Nero.[25] Gregg Gardner comments, "Judeo-Christian charity is directed at 'the poor'—that is, those in material need. Greco-Roman giving, by contrast, was directed at cities and their citizens. Some benefits might trickle down to those who happen to be poor, but the benefaction itself is not intended for poor people *per se*."[26]

There is evidence of Jewish translocal support for the poor. The poor tithe was collected in the third and sixth year of a seven-year cycle (Deut. 26:12). Josephus interpreted this as an extra tithe on top of the two tithes he reckoned were payable every year: "you are to bring every third year a third tithe to be distributed to those that want; to women also that are widows, and to children that are orphans."[27] There is some evidence that Jewish tithes were collected from the diaspora, not just in Judea and Galilee. A letter from Gamaliel the elder, who was Paul's teacher, informs provincial Jews of calendar changes necessary to reconcile the lunar calendar to the solar year, so that they will be ready to tithe.[28] However, not all of the tithe money would have been transported internationally. Some at least of the poor tithes were kept in various places, and available for those in need.[29] However, the tithes were taxes required by Jewish (biblical) law, not voluntary contributions.

A well-known example of translocal Jewish benefaction occurred when a famine caused starvation for many in Jerusalem. The royal family of Adiabene, recently converted to Judaism, bought figs and grain from Alexandria and Cyprus, and had them brought to Jerusalem, and sent money in addition (Josephus, *Ant.* 20). An example of translocal voluntary Jewish giving is mentioned in the Jerusalem Talmud (*y. Hor.* 3.4). Some rabbis of the Tannaic generation (late first century to early second century), including the well-known Akiba,[30] were collecting near the city of Antioch, for a "collection for the sages" (*migbat ḥakāmim*) back in Israel.[31]

Early Christians supported the poor at the local level, as is evident from the New Testament (Matt. 19:21; Luke 14:13, 19:8; Acts 2:44–45; James 2:15–16). Christian translocal support for the poor appears once the church starts to expand

from Jerusalem, beginning with the famine relief offering sent from Antioch to Judea (Acts 11:28–30). The translocal and trans-ethnic nature of the Pauline Jerusalem collection, when believers in several areas helped the poor believers in Judea, reflected the international nature of the early church itself. Money was collected from at least three regions: Macedonia, Achaia and Galatia.[32] Ascough thinks that the strength of Paul's rhetoric to the Corinthians about the offering for Jerusalem means that the Corinthian church did not see themselves as having a translocal obligation.[33] However, Paul certainly does see an obligation, and so do the Macedonian believers, though it is an obligation of love (2 Cor. 9:1–4). However, according to Paul, the Corinthians, rather than being reluctant, were ready and zealous for the offering (2 Cor. 9:2).

Voluntary Contributions

Voluntary help for the poor was generally of high value in Jewish communities. The activities of well-known beggars in the New Testament (Mark 10:46; John 9:8; Acts 3:2) indicate that Jews were giving alms to the poor. The Book of Tobit records the uprightness of its title character, demonstrated in his almsgiving, particularly for his fellow Jews (Tob. 1:3, 16). The Book of Sirach urges almsgiving, or charity (Sir. 7:10; 12:3; 29:12). The evidence is not so clear that there was much *organized* charity for the poor before the second century.[34] *Mishnah Shekalim* 5.6 describes a "chamber of secrets" in the temple, into which devout worshippers secretly would put money, which would be used for the relief of "well-born poor," meaning people born into wealth who had since become poor. The money, secretly given and secretly handed out, would help them avoid the shame of their recent impoverishment.[35] Other well-known Jewish institutions helping the poor, such as the *tamhuy* (the daily distribution of food) and the *quppa* (the weekly distribution of money) may have roots in the Second Temple period, but the earliest evidence for these practices comes from later Rabbinic texts.[36]

Mishnah Demai 3.1 records a rabbinic discussion between the house of Shammai and that of Hillel (represented by Rabban Gamaliel), and thus possibly dating to the first century, which mentions the role of a charity collector (*gabbā'ê tzedāqāh*) in distributing food, but in this case the food collected seems to be the poor tithe. There are key differences between the Jewish poor tithe and the Jerusalem collection. The poor tithe was regular and repeated. The Jerusalem collection, though it took months or perhaps even years to complete, was a one-time event. In addition, as mentioned above, the poor tithe was a tax required by the Mosaic law, not a voluntary offering.[37] According to Josephus, it came

from the *politeia* or form of government Moses wrote down,[38] which consisted of laws (*nomoi*) and a constitution (*diataxis*).

The Jerusalem apostles urged Paul and Barnabas to "remember the poor" in their ministry to the nations (Gal. 2:10). Apparently, this was the one important thing they had left out in their description of their gospel. It is frequently thought the apostles were requiring Paul and Barnabas to collect money from Gentile churches and send it to the Jerusalem church, and that this was the basis of the Jerusalem collection.[39] Holl argued that the offering was in fact a tax, at least as the Jerusalem church understood it, because the Jerusalem church had the "right to tax the whole church."[40] This reads too much into the phrase "remember the poor" (Gal. 2:10). Plus, there is nothing in Galatians that suggests that "the poor" means the Jerusalem church in particular. It is more likely that Cephas, James, and John were making sure that Paul and Barnabas had the same concern for the poor that they also had.[41]

In First Corinthians, Paul may speak of the collection as a command: "Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I instructed the churches of Galatia, so you also should do. On the first day of every week, let each of you put something aside from his own resources, and store it up, as he may prosper, so that when I come there will be no collections [*logeiai*]" (1 Cor. 16:1–2).[42] The term *logeia*, used for the "collection," is sometimes used in papyri or ostraca for tax collections, but is a general term for monetary collections of any kind, whether compelled or not.[43] The word translated "instructed" here (*diatassō*) can be used for arranging, organizing, or setting things in order, but also for directing or commanding. There are two imperative verbs, the plural *poiēsate* ("you [all] should do"), and the singular permissive imperative *tithetō* ("let him/her put aside"). Probably Paul sees the church's participation as obligatory, but the individual's participation as voluntary.

In Second Corinthians, however, perhaps to clarify what he said in the first letter, Paul emphasizes the voluntary nature of the collection. It is not a command but a free gift: "But just as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all zeal, and in our love for you—see that you abound also in this gift. I am not saying this as a command, but testing by the zeal of others the genuineness of your love" (8:7–8).[44] Their generous response will show their love. Nevertheless, "Each one should do just as he has decided in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (9:7). Further, also perhaps for clarity, on this occasion he refers to the gift not as a *logeia*, or collection, but as "participation in service" (*koinōnian tēs diakonias*, 8:4), or just "service" (9:1).[45]

The Poor Supporting the Poor

Another key distinctive of the Jerusalem collection was that through it the poor were supporting the poor. There was, of course, at least a temporary difference between the Corinthians and the Judeans: the former's abundance compared to the latter's lack. And Paul envisaged a future when the Judean believers might be better off than the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8:14). Paul did not single out the poor to participate in the offering; rather, it is simply that most of the Corinthian believers, despite their present situation relative to the Judean believers, were of the poorer classes.[46] Paul saw all believers, poor or rich, as having the responsibility of love to care for one another, and even for those beyond the church (Gal. 6:10; 1 Thess. 5:14–15).[47] For this to happen in an organized and yet voluntary way, even at a local level, was unusual in the first century, and even more so internationally. The Macedonians even gave while in the depths of poverty, though apparently they had to persuade Paul to let them participate (2 Cor. 8:1–4). The poor in the Mediterranean world were not expected to act as benefactors in the way that the rich were. Paul, on the other hand, according to S. Ryan Schellenberg, saw "the poor as active moral and economic agents."[48]

We might think, therefore, of Paul's gift economy as universalizing benefaction. Joubert argues that Paul modified the standard reciprocal exchange relationship that the culture of benefaction upheld, to make the collection "a three-way reciprocal relationship between God, the Pauline communities and Jerusalem," and that Paul wanted to "secure his own role as apostle and benefactor in the eyes of Jerusalem."[49] Joubert is correct to emphasize the three-way relationality of the gift process. On the other hand, on the basis that a gift created an obligation to reciprocate in some way, the Greco-Roman culture of benefaction was oriented to accumulate public honor to the benefactor,[50] and Paul makes no such promise of reciprocal honor to the Corinthians from the Judeans, nor does he himself expect honors.[51] The honor will accumulate to God, not to Paul or the Corinthians, and God will repay the Corinthians with blessings, enabling them to continue being generous (2 Cor. 9:11–15). Harrison argues that Paul transforms benefaction ideology by releasing the Corinthians from the "burdensome demands" of reciprocity.[52] This is actually to acknowledge that the collection does not fit properly into the first-century traditions of benefaction.

We might also think of the Jerusalem collection as universalizing patronage, so that the Gentile churches function as patrons to the poor Jewish believers. Once again, however, Paul's discussion of the offering does not fit well into the patron-client culture that was prominent in the Roman Empire. The patron-client

relationship was invariably an unequal one, between a superior and a dependent inferior, but Paul emphasizes the equality of Jews and Gentiles (2 Cor. 8:14–15).[53]

Emphasis on Integrity

One final important element to the Pauline collection was his emphasis on the integrity and security of the gift itself. There is evidence of care, and even the use of auditors, in the disposition of funds raised and managed by Greco-Roman associations.[54] It was normal in the first century for the transport of money to be accompanied by at least two or, more likely, three guards or trustworthy people, and travel was always safer with a group.[55] For Paul, the Jerusalem collection is "for the glory of God," and so "no one should find fault" in it (2 Cor. 8:20). Paul had told the Corinthians that they could accredit their own representatives to help bring the gift, and he himself was willing to accompany the Corinthians' offering if that would help (1 Cor. 16:3–4).[56] The decision was made that the offering would be collected by Paul and Titus, and accompanied to Jerusalem by believers of known character and commitment, one appointed by the churches, and another appointed by Paul and his team (2 Cor. 8:16–24).

Interpreting the Collection: Politics or Theology?

Political readings of Paul have increased in the last hundred years, and especially since the turn of the century with the spread of post-colonial hermeneutics and counter-imperial readings of the New Testament.[57] A number of scholars have interpreted Paul in the light of Marxist theory, which explains economic and political life in terms of a class struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed. In this view, the rich become or stay rich by oppressing the poor and extracting value from their labor.[58] Certainly, the Roman elite, and others in the ancient world, became wealthy in large part because of military conquest and burdensome taxation, and used the institution of slavery to maximize their profits. However, the idea that the wealth of some is always dependent on the poverty of others is of course the economics of the zero-sum game, which is inadequate to explain the economic growth and overall rise in the standard of living that occurred from the accession of Octavian (31 B.C.) for about two hundred years.[59] All this has had an effect on interpretation of the Jerusalem collection. Paul, it has been claimed, was trying to transform the unequal Greco-Roman society.[60] Welborn argues that Paul was attempting "to establish a relationship between persons of different social classes, the goal of which was to achieve equality."[61] Equality

was both the basis and the goal of the collection.[62] Vassiliadis thinks that Paul's goal is "the equal distribution and permanent sharing of material wealth."[63]

The historian Edwin Judge recognized the significant political implications of the Pauline gospel: "Paul conducted a head-on personal assault on the status system which supplied the ideology of the established order. For the first time in history, moreover, Paul spelled out what may in a sense be called a structural model of social relations."[64] Judge recognized that there are certain affinities between Paul and Marx, such as the hope for the transformation of humanity, by contrast with the maintenance of the status quo typically supported by Greco-Roman religion.[65] However, Judge also saw major differences between Pauline and Marxist thought. Paul, unlike Marx, did not think so much in institutional as in personal terms. Paul would not have classified his project as a species of "religion."[66] Judge ultimately resisted Marxist readings of Paul.[67]

There are fundamental problems with Marxist and post-colonial analyses of Paul and his collection. Their anachronism reads nineteenth- or twentieth-century theory into first-century life, and their reductionism produces the tendency to explain everything in economic and political terms. We should recognize, of course, that there was no hard dividing line in the ancient world between politics and religion. Paul's focus is christological, and messianism, of course, has a political dimension. We should not imagine that Paul's gospel, or the collection, were without eventual political consequences or implications. That is not the same, however, as reducing everything to politics. Paul does use the language of equality in regard to the collection: "For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but, from equality, your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be equality" (2 Cor. 8:13–14). However, this equality was not imposed from above but was to be worked out over time through mutual and voluntary acts of generosity in imitation of Christ (2 Cor. 8:9).[68]

Paul's appeal was at its heart theological, on the basis of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus is the prime example of sacrificial service to the poor (2 Cor. 8:9). The Corinthians' obedient generosity starts with their "confession of the gospel of Christ" (2 Cor. 9:13). Gentiles have an obligation to help the Jewish believers materially, because they have shared in their spiritual blessings (Rom. 15:27). The Macedonians' generosity derives from their having given themselves first to God (2 Cor. 8:5). The ultimate source of the collected money is God himself (2 Cor. 9:8), and the collection is for the glory of God (2 Cor. 8:19; 9:13).

Interpreting the Collection: Issues in International Aid

So what does Paul's discussion of the Jerusalem collection have to offer contemporary debate and practice in international help for the poor? There are at least five issues which we can fruitfully mention, deriving from the first-century distinctives of the collection.

First, and most obviously, the collection was translocal. The Jerusalem collection, as a pioneering and scriptural example of translocal help for the poor (and organized by a missionary), helped establish a pattern of missional sharing of resources internationally for the sake of the poor, with a genuine interest in the people concerned. Historically this has happened largely through Christian missions, as is acknowledged frequently in the secular literature on aid.[69]

Second, the collection was voluntary. Most international aid is government to government and is therefore funded by compulsory taxation. This leads to resentment and resistance to funding aid, especially when donor-nation economies are struggling, or when donor-nation tax rates are perceived to be high. This is quite apart from problems associated with government aid at the recipient end. Such aid is of course primarily a tool of government policy and the agendas of donor nations, and comes often with many conditions,[70] such as aid-tying, where aid is given subject to the recipient nation promising to import goods from the donor nation.[71] Ironically, government-funded aid is sometimes characterized as "voluntary" state contributions.[72] For Paul, the value in the collection lay not only in its help for the poor believers, but in the willing generosity which enabled it. The voluntary nature of the collection, deriving from moral rather than legal obligation, meant that no one was being forcibly burdened. This was essential to Paul's vision of equality, which does not include imposing a burden on some for the relief of others (2 Cor. 8:13).[73]

Third, in the collection the poor were supporting the poor. Paul did not reserve generosity to the affluent. There was no permanent one-way flow of funds, and so it was not a repeat of the usual benefactor-recipient or patron-client relationships which characterized the Roman world. These created unequal relationships of dependence, were oriented particularly to enhance the prestige and power of the benefactors, and rarely addressed the needs of the poor directly. Unhealthy dependence on the benefaction of the wealthy can hurt the economies of developing countries.[74] Some studies show that modern donors compete with one another for recognition by recipient countries.[75] Recognition, or love of honor, what the Greeks called *philotimia*, is a well-known factor in charity fundraising, and the prospect of recognition enhances receipts.[76] Paul honors giving which is from

genuine love and sacrifice (2 Cor. 8:8, 21, 24), but gives no special recognition to any particular givers.

Fourth, the collection process was designed to practice and demonstrate integrity. Corruption and bribery frequently consumes a huge proportion of aid budgets.[77] Indeed, "foreign aid can fuel corruption without reducing poverty."[78]

Fifth, the collection was not first of all political, but inherently theological. For Paul, meeting the needs of the poor was not only motivated by theological presuppositions; it was intended to bring glory to God, and the open confession of the gospel was at its heart (2 Cor. 9:13). Christian charities and missions are often under pressure to downplay the gospel message and focus only on economic help. The collection was countercultural and therefore had potential to speak to the political world, but this was merely the product of its intention to meet the needs of the poor in the name of Christ.

Notes

1. In support of an allusion to the collection: F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3rd rev. and enl. ed., New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 480; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 736; Craig S. Keener, *Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 564. Against, suggesting that Luke is simply presenting Paul as a faithful Jew: David J. Downs, *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts*, WUNT 2, Reihe 248 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 62–63; G. W. Lampe, *St Luke and the Church of Jerusalem* (London: Athlone Press, 1969), 24. It is perhaps surprising that the collection plays no prominent part in the narrative of Acts, given Luke's interest in description of the relief sent by the disciples at Antioch to the believers in Judea, and carried by Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:27–30).

2. Apparently, those prayers were needed, though our information is from Acts 22:30–34, not Paul. When Paul came to Jerusalem he was seized by a mob who wanted to kill him, and then was arrested and imprisoned for several years. At least he was delivered from death—by the intervention of the Roman officer who arrested him.

3. See Yonder Moynihan Gillihan, *Civic Ideology, Organization, and Law in the Rule Scrolls: A Comparative Study of the Covenanters' Sect and Contemporary Voluntary Associations in Political Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 100–116.

4. For example, immigrants from Kition in Cyprus to Piraeus near Athens obtained permission from the city council in Athens to lease property for a temple to Aphrodite, who was popular in Cyprus, on the basis that Egyptians had already been allowed to build a temple to Isis (*IG*, 112, 337). John S. Kloppenborg and Richard S. Ascough, *Greco-Roman Associations: Texts, Translations, and Commentary, Volume One: Attica, Central Greece, Macedonia, Thrace* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 26–32. Likewise, Thracians had been allowed to build a sanctuary dedicated to their moon goddess Bendis. Josiah D. Hall, "Translocal Relationships among Associations and Christ Groups, Revisited," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 113, no. 2 (2022): 231–60.

5. Artemis worship was based in Ephesus but had spread to many other places, such as Athens, and even Córdoba in Spain. H. W. Pleket, R. S. Stroud, and J. H. M. Strubbe, eds., *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1995), 42:15, 282; Michael Immendörfer, *Ephesians and Artemis: The Cult of the Great Goddess of Ephesus as the Epistle's Context*, WUNT 2, Reihe 436 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 144–45.

6. See Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 81–152.

7. Jörg Rüpke, "Urban Religion and Imperial Expansion: Priesthoods in the Lex Ursonensis," in *The Impact of Imperial Rome on Religions, Ritual, and Religious Life in the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Fifth International Network, Münster, June 30–July 4, 2004*, ed. Lukas de Blois, Peter Funke, and Johannes Hahn (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

8. Richard S. Ascough, "Translocal Relationships among Voluntary Associations and Early Christianity," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 5, no. 2 (1997): 223–41; Richard S. Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations: The Social Context of Philippians and 1 Thessalonians*, WUNT 2, Reihe 161 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 91–100; John S. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations: Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 71–78.

9. See Sophia Aneziri, "World Travellers: The Associations of Artists of Dionysus," in *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture: Travel, Locality and Pan-Hellenism*, ed. Richard Hunter and Ian Rutherford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

10. Aneziri, "World Travellers," 230.

11. Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations*, 98–99.

12. Arthur Wallace Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 281–313.

13. *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* 3.5853. The inscription is from the later second century AD. See Ascough, "Translocal Relationships," 230; Downs, *Offering of the Gentiles*, 115; John S. Kloppenborg, "Fiscal Aspects of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem," *Early Christianity* 8, no. 2 (2017): 180; Joshua D. Sosin, "Tyrian *Stationarii* at Puteoli," *Tyche* 14 (1999): 275–84.

14. John W. Taylor, "Poverty and Economic Justice in Second Corinthians," *Journal of Language, Culture and Religion* 3, no. 1 (2022): 101n24.

15. Jennifer Quigley and Laura Nasrallah, "Cost and Abundance in Roman Philippi: The Letter to the Philippians in Its Context," in *Philippi, from Colonia Augusta to Communitas Christiana: Religion and Society in Transition*, ed. Steven J. Friesen, Michalis Lychounas, and Daniel N. Schowalter, Supplements to Novum Testamentum (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 221–27.

16. G. J. Oliver, *War, Food, and Politics in Early Hellenistic Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 198

17. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations*, 251.

18. Angelos Chaniotis, "Public Subscriptions and Loans as Social Capital in the Hellenistic City: Reciprocity, Performance, Commemoration," in *Epigraphical Approaches to the Post-classical Polis: Fourth Century BC to Second Century AD*, ed. Paraskevi

Martzavou and Nikolaos Papazarkadas, Oxford Studies in Ancient Documents (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 90; Kloppenborg, "Fiscal Aspects," 181.

19. Kloppenborg, "Fiscal Aspects," 185.

20. See Kloppenborg, "Fiscal Aspects," 191.

21. Suetonius, *Aug*. 47.5: "Some cities in alliance with Rome, but which by their great licentiousness were hastening to ruin, he deprived of their independence. Others, which were much in debt, he relieved, and rebuilt such as had been destroyed by earthquakes;" and from *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* 41.1003, I (a late 3rd century BC inscription from Ionia honoring the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III the Great): "He has resolved to become the common benefactor of all the Greek cities and especially of ours … he went into the assembly and personally granted that the city and the territory be sacred and inviolate and free from tribute."

22. Carlos Noreña, "Benefactors and the Polis under Rome," in *Benefactors and the Polis: The Public Gift in the Greek Cities from the Homeric World to Late Antiquity*, ed. Arjan Zuiderhoek and Marc Domingo Gygax (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 208.

23. Charles Reginald Haines, ed., *The Correspondence of Marcus Cornelius Fronto, with Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, Lucius Verus, Antoninus Pius, and Various Friends*, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1929), 2:217. See also C. R. Whittaker, "The Poor," in *The Romans*, ed. Andrea Giardina (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

24. Paul Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire: A Social, Political and Economic Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 257.

25. Suetonius, *Nero* 10.1.

26. Gregg Gardner, "Care for the Poor and the Origins of Charity in Early Rabbinic Literature," in *Wealth and Poverty in Jewish Tradition*, ed. Leonard J. Greenspoon, Studies in Jewish Civilization (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2015), 22.

27. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.240, in *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Hartford, CT: The S. S. Scranton Co., 1905), 140.

28. *T. San* 2.6. See David Instone-Brewer, *Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 1:357.

29. Some was used regionally for helping the Levites and the poor. If Jews were travelling and found themselves in need, they could use the poor man's tithe (m.Pea. 5.4). This mishnah may not be from pre-70 AD, being attributed to Rabbi Eliezer (Instone-Brewer, *Traditions of the Rabbis*, 1:143), but may still reflect first-century practice. The Rabbis debated whether a travelling person of property who was temporarily in need should repay this tithe money upon returning home.

30. Rabbi Akiba (c. AD 50–132) "filled the office of an overseer of the poor." Jacob Neusner, ed., *Dictionary of Ancient Rabbis: Selections from the Jewish Encyclopaedia* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 56.

31. A man named Abba Jehudah is recorded here as performing this religious duty (*mitswāh*) generously (*beʿayin*, lit. "with the eye"), and his donation was recorded at the top of an honor list. The Hebrew *tîmôs* here is likely a loan word from the Greek *timē* ("honor"), though it has been suggested that it comes from the Greek *tomos*, and signifies a register or list. Ze'ev Safrai and Peter J. Tomson, "Paul's 'Collection for the Saints' (2 Cor. 8–9) and Financial Support of Leaders in Early Christianity and Judaism," in *Second Corinthians in the Perspective of Late Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Reimund Bieringer et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 208. If it does derive from *tomos*, however, it most likely simply means a papyrus roll, or scroll (LSJ, s.v. τόμος [*tomos*]). It has been argued that this collection was "for the poor of their generation," but if it was, the benefit seems restricted to poor rabbis, as the ensuing discussion in the Talmud shows, unlike the Pauline collection, which was limited to believers, but not to a sub-group such as teachers (Safrai and Tomson, "Collection," 208).

32. Rom. 16:26; 1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Cor. 9:2. Paul does not mention Ephesus or Asia's involvement in the collection, even though he was in Ephesus when he first asked the Corinthians for the offering (1 Cor. 16:8, 19). Some have argued on this basis that Asia was not involved. Others point to Acts 20:4 as testimony to Asian participation, because of the mention of two Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus, who accompanied Paul from Greece to Jerusalem on the journey that brought the collection to Judea. The evidence is inconclusive.

33. Ascough, "Translocal Relationships," 237.

34. Yael Wilfand, *Poverty, Charity and the Image of the Poor in Rabbinic Texts from the Land of Israel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2014), 168.

35. See Wilfand, *Poverty*, 160.

36. See the discussion in Gregg E. Gardner, *The Origins of Organized Charity in Rabbinic Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 10–26. Gardner argues that there was no organized charity in Jewish life before the Tannaitic period. However, he restricts the notion of charity to what the Rabbis called *tzedāqāh*, meaning support given only to the poor, and with no expectation of anything required in return, such as public honors. Thus, he excludes the common practice of benefaction, which expected honor in return.

37. A third-century tradition in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Yevamot* 47b) lists the obligation to pay the poor tithe as one of several commandments about which Gentile proselytes need to be informed before their conversion to Judaism.

38. See Josephus, *Ant.* 4.194–6.

39. F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 126–127; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 33A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 224–25; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 131.

40. "Besteuerungsrecht über die ganze Kirche," translation mine. Karl Holl, "Der Kirchenbegriff des Paulus in seinem Verhältnis zu dem der Urgemeinde," *Sitzungsberichte Der Preussischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften*, no. Zweiter Halbband (Juli bis Dezember 1921):941. Holl suggested, on the other hand, that Paul himself did *not* regard it as a tax.

41. This concern is found in the letters of James and John (James 2:1–18; 1 John 3:17–18). See Bruce W. Longenecker, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 157–206.

42. The masculine pronouns are used here in translation to represent the singular forms of the underlying Greek.

43. LSJ, s.v. λογεία (*logeia*). James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, Illustrated From the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914), s.v. λογεία (*logeia*).

44. "Gift" here translates *charis*, which means "gift," or, often in Paul, "grace."

45. See J. Brian Tucker, "The Jerusalem Collection, Economic Inequality, and Human Flourishing: Is Paul's Concern the Redistribution of Wealth, or a Relationship of Mutuality (or Both)?" *Canadian Theological Review* 3, no. 2 (2014): 61.

46. The debate over the economic status of the early church is ongoing, but most estimate that the majority of church members lived only marginally above or near to subsistence, though hard data is scarce. See John M. G. Barclay, "Poverty in Pauline Studies: A Response to Steven Friesen," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26, no. 3 (2004): 363–66; and John W. Taylor, "Paul, Poverty, and Economic Justice," in *Human Flourishing: Economic Wisdom for a Fruitful Christian Vision of the Good Life*, ed. Greg Forster and Anthony R. Cross (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2020), 135–36.

47. Justin Meggitt called this approach "mutualism." Justin J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, Studies of the New Testament and its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 155–64.

48. Ryan S. Schellenberg, "Subsistence, Swapping, and Paul's Rhetoric of Generosity," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137, no. 1 (2018): 217. There is some evidence that rural poor helped one another, particularly their own families, as might be expected,

but for obvious reasons the poor left few written records. Peter Garnsey and Greg Woolf, "Patronage of the Rural Poor in the Roman World," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (London: Routledge, 1989), 155–58.

49. Stephan Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection*, WUNT 2, Reihe 124 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 216–17.

50. John M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 24–37.

51. Paul does aim to do what is good "not only before the Lord, but also before people" (2 Cor. 8:21), but in context this is simply an affirmation of the project's visible integrity.

52. James R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context*, WUNT 2, Reihe 172 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 323.

53. See John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth*, The Library of New Testament Studies (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 185–86. If there is a social tradition under which the collection could be categorized, apart from Jewish and early Christian care for the poor, it would more likely fit within the conventions of friendship. Ruth Whiteford, "Friendship and Gift in 2 Corinthians 8–9: Social Relations and Conventions in the Jerusalem Collection" (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, 2018), 175–79.

54. Kloppenborg, "Fiscal Aspects," 166–68; Richard Last and Philip A. Harland, *Group Survival in the Ancient Mediterranean: Rethinking Material Conditions in the Landscape of Jews and Christians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2020), 127–28.

55. Deborah Elaine Watson, "Paul's Collection in Light of Motivations and Mechanisms for Aid to the Poor in the First-Century World" (PhD diss., Durham University, 2006), 141–42.

56. Welborn suggests that *apenegkein* in 1 Cor. 16:3 carries a reciprocal sense; to pay back or recompense, as if the Corinthians were repaying the Judeans for a spiritual benefit, because sometimes *apopherō* has that sense in economic contexts. L. L. Welborn, "The Materiality of Grace: Paul's Collection for the Poor," in *God's Grace Inscribed on the Human Heart: Essays in Honour of James R. Harrison*, ed. Peter G. Bolt and Sehyun Kim, Early Christian Studies (Sydney: SCD Press, 2022), 245–46. But this is to read Romans 15:26–27 into the passage. The other uses of *apopherō* in the New Testament have the meaning of carrying something away, not paying something back (Mark 15:1; Luke 16:2; Acts 19:12; Rev. 17:3, 21:10). The same can be said about the term in the LXX, including its use in economic contexts (1 Esdr. 1:51; 2 Macc. 5:21).

57. Julien M. Ogereau, "The Jerusalem Collection as Κοινωνία: Paul's Global Politics of Socio-Economic Equality and Solidarity," *New Testament Studies* 58, no. 3 (2012): 377.

58. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (London: Duckworth, 1981), xv–xviii; Karl Kautsky, *Foundations of Christianity: A Study in Christian Origins* (London: Routledge, 2014), 367–69, 423–24; Dimitris J. Kyrtatas, *The Social Structure of the Early Christian Communities* (London: Verso, 1987), 71–80; Neil Elliott, "The Anti-Imperial Message of the Cross," in *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 181; Christina Petterson, *Apostles of Revolution? Marxism and Biblical Studies*, Brill Research Perspectives in Biblical Interpretation (Leiden: Brill, 2020). In addition, three chapters from the same edited volume, *Class Struggle in the New Testament*, ed. Robert J. Myles (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2019): Robert J. Myles, "Class Struggle in the New Testament!" (1–14); idem, "Fishing for Entrepreneurs in the Sea of Galilee? Unmasking Neoliberal Ideology in Biblical Interpretation" (115–38); and Taylor Weaver, "Rethinking Pauline Gift and Social Functions: Class Struggle in Early Christianity?" (191–208).

59. Ian Morris and J. G. Manning, "The Economic Sociology of the Ancient Mediterranean World," in *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, ed. Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 137.

60. Ogereau, "Jerusalem Collection," 362.

61. See L. L. Welborn, "Paul's Place in a First-Century Revival of the Discourse of 'Equality,'" *Harvard Theological Review* 110, no. 4 (2017): 561.

62. See Welborn, "Discourse," 555–57.

63. Peter Vassiladis, "Equality and Justice in Classical Antiquity and in Paul: The Social Implications of the Pauline Collection," *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 36, no. 1–2 (1992): 57.

64. Edwin A. Judge, "Cultural Conformity and Innovation in Paul: Some Clues from Contemporary Documents," *Tyndale Bulletin* 35 (1984): 5.

65. Judge, "Conformity and Innovation," 8–9.

66. Judge, "Conformity and Innovation," 5–6.

67. "Given a belief in the class struggle, it is easy to take a group of Galilean peasants, add the community of goods, Paul 'working with his hands,' and the 'not many wise … not many mighty, not many noble' at Corinth, and thus discover a movement of protest among the working classes." Edwin A. Judge, *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays*, ed. David M. Scholer (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 36–37.

68. See Taylor, "Economic Justice in Second Corinthians," 97–100.

69. Gilles Carbonnier, *Humanitarian Economics: War, Disaster and the Global Aid Market* (London: Hurst & Company, 2015), 65; Karl Borgin and Kathleen Corbett, *The Destruction of a Continent: Africa and International Aid*, 1st ed. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982), 16; Bertin Martens, "Why Do Aid Agencies Exist?" in *Reinventing Foreign Aid*, ed. William R. Easterly (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), 293; Roger C. Riddell, *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 25–26.

70. Martens, "Why Do Aid Agencies Exist?," 295.

71. See the discussion in I. M. D. Little and J. M. Clifford, *International Aid* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1966), 160–80.

72. Little and Clifford, *International Aid*, 45–46.

73. Taylor, "Economic Justice in Second Corinthians," 88–89.

74. Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*, 1st American ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 56–58.

75. Rachael Calleja and Dane Rowlands, "Donor Competition for Influence in Recipient Countries," in *Handbook on the Economics of Foreign Aid*, ed. B. Mak Arvin and Byron Lew (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015).

76. René Bakkers and Pamala Wiepking, "Who Gives? A Literature Review of Predictors of Charitable Giving, Part One: Religion, Education, Age and Socialisation," *Voluntary Sector Review* 2, no. 3 (2011): 343.

77. Borgin and Corbett, *Destruction of a Continent*, 95–97; Graham Hancock, *Lords of Poverty: The Power, Prestige, and Corruption of the International Aid Bisiness* (London: Macmillan London, 1989), 171–183.

78. Alessia Isopi, "Aid and Corruption: An Incentive Problem," in *Handbook on the Economics of Foreign Aid*, ed. B. Mak Arvin and Byron Lew (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015), 311.