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PHILIPPIANS 4:10-23 FROM A RHETORICAL PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT

This article endeavours to analyse Phil. 4:10-23 from a different perspective to approaches which tend to force ancient rhetorical categories on the letter. On the basis of a text-centred approach, this part of the letter is divided into two sectons, namely 4:10-20 and 21-23. Paul's dominant rhetorical strategy in 4:10-20 could be described as "Strengthening his special relationship with the Philippians by thanking them for their co-operation in the work of the gospel". In the second section (4:21-23) Paul instructs the church leaders to greet all God's people in Philippi. In analysing the rhetorical strategies and techniques in 4:10-23, the focus is on the manner in which Paul argues, the type of arguments he uses and the rhetorical techniques that could enhance the impact of his communication. All these strategies and techniques enable Paul to achieve his rhetorical objectives.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rhetorical analyses of Paul's letters focus on the manner in which the apostle persuaded or encouraged his audience by means of his letters. Such analyses use categories from the Roman rhetorical tradition. The first major analysis of Philippians was made by Duane Watson, "A rhetorical analysis of Philippians and its implications for the unity question", published in *Novum Testamentum* 30 of 1988. This was followed by another article in which he integrates epistolary and rhetorical analyses (1997), while Bloomquist (1993), Witherington (1994), Black (1995) and others join the debate, using a similar approach, but drawing different conclusions (see 3.1 below). The wide diversity raises serious questions regarding the theoretical justification for applying categories of classical rhetoric to Paul's letters, and compels scholars to seek other ways of describing the persuasive force of his letters.

One such way is to analyse Paul's argumentation in terms of a text-centred approach, in which the letter itself serves as a starting-point for analysis. A recent proposal in this respect is the publication *Persuading the Galatians* (2005), in which Francois Tolmie starts his analysis by constructing the rhetorical situation, that is, the broad outline of what Paul wants to achieve in the letter. He then formulates a "minimal theoretical framework", consisting of the

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dominant rhetorical strategy in each section of the letter. The strategy is iden-
tified by answering two questions: How can one describe Paul's primary rheto-
rical objective in this section? How does he attempt to achieve this objective?
Each section is then analysed by focusing on the type of arguments Paul uses
and why they are effective, or by describing the manner in which he argues
to persuade his audience. An integral part of Tolmie's proposal is the identi-
fication of the rhetorical techniques Paul uses to enhance the impact of his
communication. He concludes his analysis of Galatians by describing the
manner in which the argument of the letter as a whole has been organised.[1]

The purpose of this article is to analyse Philippians 4:10-23 in terms of
Tolmie's proposal for the rhetorical analysis of Paul's letters. I hope to prove
that Paul's rhetorical strategy in this section can be constructed fairly accu-
rately from the text itself, without forcing an external model on the letter. My
ultimate aim is to contribute towards a better understanding of the persuasive
strategies in the Letter to the Philippians and, ultimately, to the outline of a truly
Pauline rhetoric.

2. RHETORICAL CONTEXT

Two lines of thought can be distinguished regarding the rhetorical context
of the letter. First, commentators such as Hendriksen (1962:9-20), Müller (1976:
13-14) and Matter (1976:11) are convinced that the letter was a response to
the gift Paul received from the Philippians via their emissary Epaphroditus. The
gift was a clear sign of the deep personal relationship between Paul and the
church at Philippi. Marshall (1987:35-69), White (1990:210-215), Stowers (1991:
105-121) and Brown (1997:486) consider the maintenance of this friendship to
be the main motivation for the letter. Alexander (1995) also argues that the
exchange of news in order to maintain their relationship is the main topic of
the letter.

On the other hand, Silva (1988:21) draws a different conclusion. He argues
"that the Philippians were facing great adversity, had lost their sense of Christian
joy and were tempted to abandon their struggle". According to him, the believers
in Philippi were experiencing a lack of unity, and many of them had lost their
confidence in maintaining their Christian confession. Consequently, Paul responded
by encouraging and (where necessary) trying to persuade them to persevere.[2]

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1   For a detailed description of the proposal, see Tolmie (2000:122-123 and 2005:
     36-39).
2   For a detailed description of the context of the letter, see Silva (1988:1-10). O'Brien
     (1991:36-38) and Fee (1995:32) agree with this proposal.

It is clear from the onset (1:3-4, 7, 8) that the letter has undertones of friendship and close personal ties. The personal way in which Paul addresses his audience throughout as "my brothers" (1:12; 3:1, 13, 17; 4:18) and "my dear friends" (in 2:12), as well as the numerous features of "friendship letters" from the Greek and Roman world found in the letter (Fee 1995:2-15 and Fitzgerald 1996) support this view. To my mind, however, the second proposal is more convincing, since it covers various aspects of church life in Philippi. The letter must be viewed as a response not only to one, but to a variety of problems facing the Philippians, including the threat of the opponents, a lack of Christian joy, internal unrest and disunity. Even if one does not accept this construction, the broad picture remains the same: The letter is dominated by Paul's attempt to persuade and/or encourage his fellow Christians, with whom he had a deep personal relationship, to persevere in living and proclaiming the gospel despite their problems. In 1:27 Paul states explicitly that "the one thing" (μόνον) that matters to him in writing the letter is that the Philippians'

> way of life should be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether
> I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you stand firm
> in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

The remainder of this article will be devoted to an analysis of the way in which Paul tries to strengthen their co-operation for the faith of the gospel in 4:10-23.

3. ANALYSIS OF PHILIPPIANS 4:10-23

3.1   Introduction

Certain important issues need attention before analysing Paul's rhetorical strategy in this section:

- Philippians 4:10-20 has been proposed as one of the main reasons for questioning the integrity of the letter. In this section Paul is responding to the gift of the Philippians. He alluded to it in 1:5 and thanked God for them and their gift (1:3, 5). However, he discusses the matter in detail from 4:10. Some scholars interpret this delay as proof that 4:10-20 constitutes a se-parate letter of thanks sent to the Philippians prior to the letter in which this now appears. At a later stage, they assume, someone decided to compile all Paul's letters to the Philippians, including this "thank you" letter.

  There is, however, no compelling reason to doubt the integrity of the letter on this, or any other ground, as Hawthorne (1983:12-15), Silva (1988:14-16) and Osiek (2000:16-21), among others, argue convincingly. As Fee (1995: 423) points out, by placing this "thank you" note at the end of his letter,

that is, in a climactic position, Paul is emphasising his gratitude and the importance of the Philippians' gift. These final words will ring in their ears when the letter is read aloud in their midst. It "is rhetoric at its best" as Fee concludes. (*Contra* Lightfoot 1970:163 and Hawthorne 1983:196, who accept the integrity of the letter, but regard 4:10-20 as an after-thought.)

- For rhetorical purposes a second important issue is the demarcation of 4:10-23. Watson, who follows Betz in his approach to rhetorical analysis, defines 4:1-20 as the *peroratio* of the letter, with 4:1-9 the *repetitio* and 4:10-20 the *adfectus*. Using the same approach, Bloomquist (1993:72-138) reduces the *peroratio* to 4:8-20, while Witherington (1994:63) identifies 4:4-20 as the *peroratio*. For Black (1995:48) 4:10-20 is a *narratio*, following the *peroratio* in 4:1-9. As noted earlier, this wide range of divisions is one of the main reasons for identifying Paul's rhetorical strategy from the text itself, rather than using an external rhetorical model.

  Commentators (Hawthorne 1983:193-216; Silva 1988:230-242; O'Brien 1991:513-555; Fee 1995:422-462, etc.) agree that 4:10-20 contains Paul's thanks for the gifts of the Philippians, and should be demarcated accordingly, followed by final greetings in 4:21-23. This demarcation is in line with one based on rhetorical considerations. In 4:10 Paul changes his rhetorical strategy from giving a number of instructions in 4:1-9 to a narrative on the gift he received from the Philippians in 10-20. This change justifies a break between 4:9 and 4:10, while the narrative ends at 4:20. In 4:21 Paul instructs the church leaders to greet God's people in Philippi, and changes the content of 4:22-23 accordingly. The section 4:10-23 could thus be demarcated into two, namely 4:10-20 and 4:21-23.

- Thirdly, how should one describe the dominant rhetorical strategy in 4:10-20? On several occasions Paul expresses his appreciation to the Philippians for their kindness. Their gifts are evidence of his and their long-term friendship, which to Paul means a strengthening of their participation in the work of the gospel (Fee 1995:425). This is why their gift is described as "a fragrant and pleasing offering to God". The dominant rhetorical strategy in 4:10-20 could thus be described as: "Strengthening their relationship by thanking the Philippians for their co-operation in the work of the gospel". In 4:21-23 Paul instructs the church leaders to greet the Philippians, and closes with the benediction.

- Finally, in order to appreciate Paul's rhetorical strategy, one must first understand what he is saying to his audience. Thus, exegetical issues need to be discussed, especially when there is no agreement on the meaning of a specific phrase or expression. The focus, however, will be on the rhetorical impact of the exegetical issue and not on the issue as such.

3.2   Philippians 4:10-20: Strengthening their relationship by thanking them for their co-operation for the sake of the gospel

The structure of this section could be outlined as follows:

4:10   Acknowledging their gift.
4:11-13 Qualification with οὐχ ὅτι.
4:14-16 Acknowledging their gift.
4:17   Qualification with οὐχ ὅτι.
4:18-20 Focusing on God's response.

In 4:10 Paul begins by expressing his joy for the Philippians' care and concern for him: "I rejoice greatly in the Lord (Ἐχάρην δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ μεγάλως), because your thoughtful concern for me has flourished again (ὅτι ἤδη ποτὲ ἀνεθάλετε τὸ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ φρονεῖν); indeed you have always cared for me, but you have not always had the opportunity (ἐφ᾽ ᾧ καὶ ἐφρονεῖτε ἠκαιρεῖσθε δὲ)".

The particle δέ marks the transition to a new part of the letter, in which Paul describes the intensity of his joy for the Philippians' care by way of two qualifications: ἐν κυρίῳ (which signifies the reason for his joy and the One in whom it thrives), and μεγάλως (a *hapax legomenon* in the NT, separated from the verb it qualifies and thus in an emphatic position). These qualifications emphasise his thankfulness and are an indication of the deep and warm relationship between Paul and his audience.

In the final part of the verse the infinitive φρονεῖν is taken up by ἐφρονεῖτε. The imperfect tense, prefaced by καί, indicates that the Philippians had all the time been concerned about the apostle's welfare. What they had been lacking, however, was an opportunity to express this concern. The verb ἠκαιρεῖσθε is also in the imperfectum, balancing the preceding ἐφρονεῖτε and indicating a continuous action. Hawthorne (1983:197) and O'Brien (1991: 518) identify a chiastic structure in καί — ἐφρονεῖτε — ἠκαιρεῖσθε — δέ, which highlights the contrast in Paul's reasoning and offers an explanation for the unusual ending of the sentence with δέ.

The next verse (11) is linked to the preceding one by the disclaimer οὐχ ὅτι and introduces two verses which are significant from a rhetorical perspective: "Not that I am speaking from lack (οὐχ ὅτι καθ᾽ ὑστέρησιν λέγω), for I have learned to be content in whatever state I am (ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον ἐν οἷς εἰμι αὐτάρκης εἶναι). I know how to be made low, and I know how to abound

(οἶδα καὶ ταπεινοῦσθαι, οἶδα καὶ περισσεύειν). In everything and in all things I have been initiated (ἐν παντὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν μεμύημαι); to be filled and to be hungry (καὶ χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν), to abound and to fall short (καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι). I can do all things in the One empowering me (Πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με)".

The disclaimer οὐχ ὅτι signals a qualification to prevent any misunderstanding. Paul wants to assure his readers that his joy is not over their gift as such, but over their special relationship — a relationship not based on what he can secure from it (Fee 1995:431). This rhetorical technique is also used in 4:17, and was known in ancient rhetoric as *correctio* or μεταβολή. It was used to make the audience more favourable to one's point of view or to highlight the correction, thus impressing it upon the audience (Anderson 2000:71). In this instance it serves to emphasise the fact that the supply in his need is not the actual motive for his joy.

The correction is elaborated in 4:11b-13. The reason (γάρ) for not mentioning any need is that he has been content in every circumstance he finds himself. This statement is explained in 4:12, where we have to do "mit einer hervorgehobenen Prosastelle, … nicht aber mit einem 'Gedicht'". (Schenk 1984:32). The rhythmical form of 4:12 (to be discussed under rhetorical techniques below) is based on the three verbs οἶδα … οἶδα … μεμύημαι, which develop the idea expressed in ἔμαθον, while ἰσχύω in 4:13 forms part of a climactic statement, qualifying Paul's idea of self-sufficiency (Hawthorne 1983:199). Although the verbs ἔμαθον, οἶδα and μεμύημαι belong to the same semantic domain and could be regarded as stylistic variants (as Silva 1988:234 points out), commentators differ with regard to the meaning of μεμύημαι in this context. The question is whether it is to be understood in the passive sense as "I have been initiated/I have been instructed/taught" (Schenk 1984:33; Silva 1988:232; Thurston 2005:153), or as an active "I have learned" (Loh & Nida 1977:142; Louw & Nida 1988:327; O'Brien 1991: 525; Fee 1995:426). Vincent (1961:144) points out that the verb was usually interpreted in classical literature as a passive, indicating initiation into the Greek mysteries. However, the majority of translations interpret it as active in meaning: "I have learned to be ...".

Which interpretation is to be preferred? To my mind, the passive, mainly due to the climactic and summative statement in 4:13: "I can do all things in the One empowering me". The context links the passive μεμύημαι to this summative statement. The apostle had to be initiated into what he knows by someone else, and that person is the One who empowers him to do all things. If this interpretation is correct, it is an *argument based on divine in-*

volvement, aimed at assuring the Philippians of the source and guarantee of his αὐτάρκεια. Due to Christ's involvement, Paul's contentment is guaranteed in every situation mentioned in 4:12. Within this context, πάντα does not refer to all possible situations, but only to those mentioned in 4:12 (as O'Brien 1991:526 correctly points out).

Two further issues are of rhetorical significance in 4:11-13. The first is the "Ich-Stil" that characterises the description of Paul's understanding of contentment, on which Schenk (1984:34) remarks:

> Der reine Ich-Stil erweist das Segment in pragmatischer Hinsicht als primär senderorientiert. Es hat demzufolge den Charakter eines Bekenntnisses. Da es noch präziser im Singular der 1. Person formuliert ist, hat es den Charakter eines individuellen, persönlichen Bekenntnisses.

Paul's understanding of contentment is thus not based on theory, but cast in the form of a testimony, in which he outlines his own personal experience. Such an argument is always effective as it provides concrete information that can be verified. The argument is not only used to instruct the Philippians (as Fee 1995:435 and Thurston 2005:137 suggest), but rather to assure them of the authenticity of his contentment, being the reason why he did not write to them out of a sense of need. Paul could use this argument effectively, due to the Philippians' high regard for him as an apostle and the special relationship between them. Because what is described here was his very own experience, they are convinced of the authenticity of his contentment as the real reason for not lacking anything.

The second issue of rhetorical significance is the climactic statement in 4:13. Πάντα picks up the preceding ἐν παντὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν in 4:12 and is limited to the varied circumstances described in this verse, while the phrase ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με explains that the source of his contentment is not to be found in himself, but in Christ alone. By placing this statement at the end of his personal confession, that is, in a climactic position, Paul emphasises the real source of his contentment. Furthermore, the statement is another example of *an argument based on divine involvement*, aimed at guaranteeing that contentment.

In 4:14-16 there is a shift in Paul's narrative as he continues:

> Nevertheless you did well sharing my suffering (πλὴν καλῶς ἐποιήσατε συγκοινωνήσαντές μου τῇ θλίψει). And both you yourselves and I know, Philippians, (οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππήσιοι) that in the beginning of the gospel, when I went out from Macedonia, not one church shared (οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινώνησεν) in an accounting of expenditures and receipts (εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως), except

you alone (εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι). (You and I know that) also (καί) in Thessalonica, more than once (καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δὶς) you sent money to meet my needs.

The shift from verses 11-13 to 14-16 is marked by πλήν, a change from the first person singular to the second person plural, and the verb συγκοινωνέω used twice in 4:14-16. As in 4:10, Paul expresses his thanks to the Philippians for their co-operation, making it clear that the preceding verses (11-13) did not allude to any ungratefulness. They share with him in his affliction, thereby providing further evidence of their participation in the work of the gospel. By using the idiomatic expression καλῶς ἐποιήσατε, Paul praises his readers and in so doing is saying "thank you" (O'Brien 1991:527-528).

Paul's acknowledgement of their gift in 4:14-16 is characterised by the notion of sharing. This is evident not only from the two verbs συγκοινωνήσαντές and ἐκοινώνησεν, but also from οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς in verse 15. Commentators differ in their interpretation of καί. Does the combination καὶ ὑμεῖς and the vocative Φιλιππήσιοι emphasise the importance of what Paul is about to narrate ("Even you yourselves, Philippians, know")? Does it refer to other believers whom the apostle could cite ("You, as well as others, know")? Does it mark the comparison of the Philippians with Paul himself ("You, as well as I, know"?[3] Although the majority of commentators and translators prefer the first option, the last one is, to my mind, the correct one: "You yourselves, and I, know". The choice is motivated by the immediate context, namely sharing.

If correct, this reminder of *shared knowledge* has an important rhetorical function, namely to strengthen the very special relationship between Paul and the Philippians. Paul's view is that they both know that the present gift is not an isolated incident, but part of a long history of participation in the work of the gospel — a very special partnership that only exists between himself and the church in Philippi, for which he is truly grateful.

This partnership is described in financial terms (εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως) which, in connection with ἐκοινώνησεν, denote financial sharing. Commentators (Marshall 1987:163; O'Brien 1991:534; Osiek 2000:121-2 and Thurston 2005:154) agree that the phrase should not only be interpreted in the literal sense of financial support, but is also a metaphorical expression indicating friendship:

> It reflects a warm and lasting relationship. He not only receives the gift gladly as a sign of their continuing concern, but also recalls the

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3   See Vincent (1961:147) and Fee (1995:439) for the discussion.

mutual exchange of services and affection which they have shared
in the past (Marshall 1987:163-4).

This relationship is strengthened by the fact that Paul accepted support
from the Philippians alone and not from other churches (a fact mentioned
twice in 4:15: first by οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία, and then by εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι,
placed at the end for emphasis).

Their special relationship is further illustrated by the statement in 4:16,
"that also (καί) in Thessalonica, more than once, you sent to my need". The
statement is a subtle indication that his friendship with the Philippians is
different from that with the church in Thessalonica. In Thessalonica, the con-
tribution came not from them, but from the Philippians (Thurston 2005:154).
Even (καί) then, in Thessalonica, so soon after their own beginning as a
church, the Philippians started supporting the apostle (Hawthorne 1983:205).
They did this more than once (καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δὶς, a Greek idiom meaning
"an indefinite low number", Louw & Nida 1988:609). These reminders are
the apostle's way of thanking them for their participation in the work of the
gospel, thereby strengthening their special relationship.

The progress of the gospel — and not any gift that supplies his personal
need — is at the core of Paul's gratitude in 4:10-20 and in 4:17: "Not that I
want the gift (οὐχ ὅτι ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα), but I do want the fruit that increases
into your account (ἀλλὰ ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον
ὑμῶν)". In order to prevent any misunderstanding, as though his thank you
note might be taken as a request for more help, Paul uses the same
rhetorical technique as in 4:11, namely *correctio*. Schenk (1984:44-45) points
to various similarities between 4:11-13 and 4:17, such as the use of the first
person singular (λέγω and ἐπιζητῶ); the similar content of each denial (Paul
does not speak out of need, nor does he seek the Philippians' gifts); the po-
sitive correctives following each denial (introduced by γάρ and ἀλλά, respect-
ively), and the fact "dass beide Erläuterungspassagen mit einer Partizipial-
wendung enden, die offenbar auch inhaltlich als Höhepunkt auf einen Gottesbezug
hinausläuft: ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμουντί με, τόν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν".

The rhetorical function of the *correctio* in 4:17 is important for the pur-
poses of this article. As in 4:11, it is used to highlight a statement, thereby
impressing it upon the audience. It serves to emphasise that Paul's real
concern is not for the Philippians' gifts, but for their progress in the faith, for
the "accrual of interest against their divine account" (as Fee 1995:447 puts
it). The gift which the apostle received is evidence that the Philippians' rela-
tionship with Christ is growing, and that is the real source of his thanksgiving.

The climactic participial construction at the end of 4:17, as pointed out by Schenk, is also important. Its function is to focus on God's gracious activity, and constitutes another *argument from divine involvement*: "It is God who increases the fruit, i.e., multiplies the compound interest to the Philippians' account" (O'Brien 1991:537).

In 4:18-20 Paul concludes the narrative begun in 4:10:

> I have received full payment and even more (ἀπέχω δὲ πάντα καὶ περισσεύω); I am amply supplied (πεπλήρωμαι), now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering (ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας), an acceptable sacrifice (θυσίαν δεκτήν), pleasing to God (εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ). And my God will, through Christ Jesus, meet all your needs in a glorious way, according to his riches (ὁ δὲ θεός μου πληρώσει πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). To our God and Father (τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν) be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Ἀπέχω δὲ πάντα is a technical expression meaning "paid in full" (Vincent 1961:150; Lightfoot 1970:110-112; Hawthorne 1983:206 and Silva 1988:238). The two verbs that follow, namely περισσεύω and πεπλήρωμαι, intensify the πάντα and indicate that Paul has all that he needs and more, now that he has received from Epaphroditus the gifts the Philippians sent. The ultimate recipient of these gifts, however, is not Paul, but God himself. By likening their gifts to him with sacrifice to God, he is offering them the highest thanks.

The placement of the three descriptions at the end of verse 18 is important from a rhetorical point of view. By placing these in a climactic position, and by using the well-known rhetorical technique of *asyndeton*, Paul is emphasising the spiritual significance of the Philippians' gifts. They are presented to God in order to promote his cause, the cause of the gospel.

Paul assures the Philippians that, as a consequence of their generosity, God will supply their very need (4:19). The relations between the phrases in this verse are not clear, mainly due to the three consecutive prepositional phrases at the end. Translators usually link these phrases as they appear in the Greek text ("according to his riches in glory through Christ Jesus"), thereby giving no account for the relations between them, or between them and any other phrases in the sentence. As a result, nearly all translations link ἐν δόξῃ with πλοῦτος and ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, both interpreted as descriptions or qualifications of God's wealth. Schenk (1984:49) clarifies this issue somewhat by identifying a "konzentrischen Ringskomposition" in 4:19:

A ὁ δὲ θεός μου
B πληρώσει
C πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν
C κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ
B ἐν δόξῃ
A ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

This chiastic pattern renders the translation: "My God will, through Christ Jesus, gloriously meet/meet in a glorious way all your needs, according to his riches". By construing ἐν δόξῃ with πληρώσει, the mode or manner of fulfilment is highlighted. (So also Vincent 1961:151 and Müller 1976:152.) The frequent use of chiasm in this letter (as in Paul's other letters) justifies Schenk's proposal. By expressing (important) ideas so neatly, the attention of the audience is focused more directly on their content.

Two further issues in 4:19 deserve attention from a rhetorical perspective:

- The choice between the text variants πληρώσει (a future indicative, informing the Philippians what God will do) and πληρώσαι (an aorist optative with good manuscript support, expressing a wish or prayer to God) is a difficult one. Exegetes such as Fee (1995:449) and Thurston (2005: 156) prefer the indicative, whereas Hawthorne (1983:208) and O'Brien (1991:545-6) argue that even if it is an indicative, the form of the verse is such that it should be translated as a wish-prayer. Schenk (1984:51-2) states unequivocally that it is a prayer and motivates: "Das einleitende Syntagma ὁ θεός μου verwendet Paulus nur in Gebeten und Gebetsberichten (Phlm 4; 1 Kor 1,4; Phil 1,3; Röm 1,8)."

  Which option is to be preferred? To my mind the first one, mainly due to the rhetorical function of 4:19 in this specific context, namely friendship and reciprocity. In 4:15-16, 18 Paul thanks the Philippians for what he has received from them. In 4:19 the focus shifts to God's response to their gifts. In order to assure them in the most effective way that his God will — in response to their gifts — supply their very need, Paul uses the future indicative πληρώσει.

- The pronoun μου in the expression ὁ δὲ θεός μου draws a clear distinction between Paul's and the Philippians' needs: "You have supplied all my wants (vv. 16, 18), God on my behalf shall supply yours" (Lightfoot 1970:167). This once more emphasises the reciprocal relationship between the two parties.

The latter distinction is dissolved by the shift from ὁ δὲ θεός μου to τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν in the doxology (4:20). Whether the pronoun ἡμῶν is taken with πατρί only (as Hawthorne 1983:209 and Thurston 2005:156 propose), or with both θεῷ and πατρί (as suggested by Vincent 1961:152, Loh and Nida 1977:150, and O'Brien 1991:549) is not that important. What is important for our purpose is that the shift to inclusive ("we") language has the rhetorical effect of bringing the apostle and his audience on the same footing, of engaging the Philippians in the doxology. With this united song of praise, resulting from the assurance of God's abundant care for his children, Paul brings his narrative to an apt conclusion.

In addition to the chiasms in 4:10 and 4:19, the following rhetorical techniques enhance Paul's communication in 4:10-20:

- The placement of ἐγώ at the beginning of 4:11b (ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔμαθον), gives it more emphasis in the sense of: "I, from my point of view; as far as I am concerned".

- Repetition of ε-sounds (alliteration) in 4:11b, without any special meaningful relationship attached to the lexical units (Nida *et al.* 1983:24-25). As such their function is merely artistic.

- The two parts of the contrast in 12a (οἶδα καὶ ταπεινοῦσθαι, οἶδα καὶ περισσεύειν) display the same length in successive clauses, with different meanings (*isocolon*), as well as the same sentence structure (*parison*) (Nida *et al.* 1983:180). Both techniques highlight the contrast between the two clauses. (Could these two antithetic parallel clauses also indicate that Paul does not favour the one state over the other, that they are completely immaterial to him — in the light of the climactic statement in 4:13?)

- *Paranomasia* is also used in this sub-section with its rhythmic form (4: 11-12). Examples are ὑστέρησιν (verse 11), ὑστερεῖσθαι (verse 12), and ἐν παντὶ καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν (verse 12). By repeating words Paul creates links between important key words, thereby effectively highlighting them.

- The antithetic parallel clauses καὶ χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν, καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι explain and emphasise what Paul has been initiated into. The multiple use of καί (*polysyndeton*) suggests that the list could be extended.

- The pronoun ὑμεῖς and the direct address Φιλιππήσιοι in 4:15 add dramatic effect (Thurston 2005:154) and are an indication of great affection.

- In 4:15 a parenthesis (ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας) is used to define the start of their co-operation in the gospel. The technique is used to enhance the effect of the statement.

- The repetition of ἐπιζητῶ in 4:17, describing the *correctio*, and ἀλλά, emphasising the contrast in the description, is highly effective: "I do not want the gift, I do want the fruit etc." (Lightfoot 1970:166).

- *Asyndeton* at the end of verse 18 (ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας, θυσίαν δεκτήν, εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ) could be an indication that Paul is shifting to a new thought (Tolmie 2005:157). It introduces what follows in the sense that the focus shifts to God's response to their gifts. That God is the prominent figure in 4:18-20 is emphasised by the repetition of τῷ θεῷ at the end of verse 18 and ὁ δὲ θεός at the beginning of verse 19 — a technique known as *anastrophe* (Nida *et al.* 1983:176).

To summarise: Paul's rhetorical strategy in 4:10-20 can be described as "Strengthening the relationship with the Philippians by thanking them for their co-operation in the work of the gospel". His joy for their concern is emphasised by the qualifications ἐν κυρίῳ and μεγάλως, while the chiasm at the end of verse 10 highlights the contrast between their lack of concern and their lack of opportunity.

The technique of *correctio* (in 4:11) is used to emphasise the fact that the supply in his need is not the motive for his joy. Within context, μεμύημαι is to be understood as a passive and — linked to 4:13 — it constitutes *an argument based on divine involvement*, aimed at assuring the Philippians of the source and guarantee of the apostle's contentment.

In 4:11b-12 Paul uses *an argument from own experience* to assure his audience of the authenticity of his contentment, while the source thereof is disclosed by the climactic statement in 4:13.

Various reminders are used to thank the Philippians for their co-operation in the work of the gospel (4:14-16). The fact that Paul and his audience share this knowledge strengthens their friendship — a friendship described metaphorically by εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήμψεως.

In 4:17 Paul again uses *correctio* as a rhetorical technique to highlight the fact that his real concern is for the Philippians' progress in the faith. As in the case of the first *correctio* in 4:11 the statement is concluded by a climactic participial expression, indicating God's activity. These *arguments based on divine involvement* are used to indicate the source and guarantee of human activity.

By way of another climax Paul emphasises the spiritual significance of the Philippians' gifts at the end of 4:18. *Asyndeton* is used to introduce God's response to their gifts. In 4:19 the chiasm elucidates the relations between the prepositional phrases and justifies the interpretation of ἐν δόξῃ as qualifying the mode of fulfilment. This technique focuses the attention of the Philippians more directly on the content of this important verse. Since the letter is one of friendship and reciprocity, the verb in 4:19 should be a future indicative, aimed at assuring the Philippians in an effective way that his God will, in response to their gifts, supply their very need. The pronoun μου emphasises the reciprocal relationship and paves the way for the inclusive "we" in 4:20, which has the rhetorical effect of engaging the Philippians in the doxology.

Rhetorical techniques enhancing Paul's communication in 4:10-20 include alliteration, *isocolon*, *paranomasia*, *polysyndeton*, *asyndeton* and *anastrophe*.

3.3   Philippians 4:21-23: Instructing the church leaders to greet the Philippians

In 4:21 Paul changes his strategy from narrative to instruction as he concludes his letter:

> Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send you their greetings. All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Only two issues are important for the purposes of this article. The first is that not one person in Philippi is greeted by name. This is noteworthy, since Philippians is the most intimate of Paul's letters and he often mentions people by name at the end of his letters (cf. Rom 16). The reason for omitting all names and referring to the recipients as "every saint in Christ Jesus" is most probably to avoid the impression of partiality (O'Brien 1991:552-3). As stated in the discussion on the rhetorical context of the letter (2 above), one of the aims of the letter was to urge the Philippians to be united (1:27; 2:1-4; 4:3). Since 4:21-23 is the conclusion of the letter as a whole, and not just of the immediately preceding 4:10-20, this reason seems justified.

The second issue relates to the "members of Caesar's household", who are singled out as one group among all the saints who send greetings to the Philippians. Why are they singled out? One possible answer is to furnish evidence of the progress of the gospel — even into the ranks of the imperial civil service, the heart of the Roman empire. In this way the Philippians are

assured that their co-operation in the work of the gospel is not in vain (as Hendriksen 1961:212-3; Müller 1976:155 and O'Brien 1991:55 have pointed out). Another possible answer is to encourage the Philippians to persevere in the midst of their struggle (as Fee 1995:460 proposes). The gospel which they proclaim has already penetrated Caesar's household and they could take courage that they have fellow Christians at that level, who are on their side and send them greetings. Both possible answers are supported by the rhetorical context that called forth the letter.

4. CONCLUSION

The aim of this article was to prove that Paul's rhetorical strategy in 4:10-23 can be reconstructed from the text itself, without forcing rhetorical categories on the letter.

This part of the letter is demarcated by rhetorical considerations and consists of two sections, namely 4:10-20 and 4:21-23. The dominant rhetorical strategy in the first section could be described as: "Strengthening their relationship by thanking them for their co-operation in the work of the gospel". In 4:21-23 Paul instructs the church leaders to greet the Philippians. In analysing his strategy, the focus was on the way in which Paul argues, on the types of arguments he uses and on rhetorical techniques that could enhance the impact of his communication. He uses the rhetorical techniques of climax, *correctio* and chiasm to good effect. Examples of *arguments based on divine involvement*, *own experience* and *shared knowledge* have been identified, while supportive techniques such as direct address, *isocolon*, *paranomasia*, *polysyndeton*, *asyndeton*, *anastrophe* and the emphatic placement of words and phrases all contribute to the impact of his communication, enabling the apostle to achieve his rhetorical objectives in this final part of the letter.

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