

RE-EVALUATING PATRONAGE AND RECIPROCITY IN ANTIQUITY AND  
NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES\*

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*Introduction*

The past twenty to thirty years have been a period of intense interest across several academic fields in social-scientific studies, including ever-growing attention in New Testament studies.<sup>1</sup> The increasing awareness that some modern non-Western cultures have social constructs analogous to those pictured in ancient texts and cultures has led to various models being formed. These models intend to disclose implicit cultural dimensions and interplays that can lie dormant, hidden to the modern Western mind. Several models have emerged, including the ‘aristocratic empire’, ‘honour and shame’ and the ‘patron–client model’.<sup>2</sup> The so called ‘patron–client model’ is considered to be one of

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1. For an overview of the field, see David A. deSilva, ‘Embodying the Word: Social-Scientific Interpretation of the New Testament’, in Scot McKnight and Grant R. Osborne (eds.), *The Face of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), pp. 118-29 and Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1996), who outlines the theory and practice of a social-scientific interpretation of Biblical texts.

2. Key works in the contemporary understanding of patron–client relationships are Carl Lande, ‘The Dyadic Basis of Clientism’, in Steffen W. Schmidt (ed.), *Friends, Followers and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. xiii-xxxvii; Earnest A. Gellner and John Waterbury (eds.), *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies* (London: Duckworth, 1977); J. Boissevain and C.J. Mitchell (eds.), *Network Analysis: Studies in Human Interaction* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973); S.N. Eisenstadt and L.

the field's assured results. The model, broadly, defines patronage as a voluntary, though often exploitative, reciprocal relationship that pervaded Roman society, whereby a gift from a superior obligated an exchange, usually of intangible commodities such as political support or public laud of the patron's munificence. The client's exchange would in turn be required to restore the debt and a reciprocal cycle would ensue.

The patronage model's influence is no longer restricted to social-scientific studies but is now replete throughout New Testament and biblical studies. Almost every Gospel and epistle has been probed in the hope of discovering the idiom of patronage hidden within its pages. Introductory texts to the world of the New Testament also feature patronage heavily,<sup>3</sup> and the model's results are informing the fields of systematic theology, Pauline church government, and even the quest for the historical Jesus.<sup>4</sup> Its establishment as now truly requisite knowledge for the New Testament scholar is attested in several recent studies wherein the authors, while concentrating on patronage, assume that the model is now so widely known that their readers' cognizance with it can be taken for granted.<sup>5</sup>

### *Defining Patronage*

The development of the patronage model coincided and grew along with new-found interest in the language of benefaction in the New

Roginer (eds.), *Patrons, Clients and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

3. K.C. Hanson and D. Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus: Social Structures and Social Conflicts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg–Fortress, 1998). D.A. deSilva even includes patronage in the title of his textbook, *Honor, Patronage, Kingship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000).

4. On systematic theology, see Jerome H. Neyrey, *Render to God: New Testament Understandings of the Divine* (Minneapolis: Augsburg–Fortress, 2004). Numerous studies on church government have utilized patronage, e.g. Andrew D. Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), and on the patronage model and the historical Jesus, see William R. Herzog, II, *Prophet and Teacher: An Introduction to the Historical Jesus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), pp. 88, 204-205.

5. For example, Neyrey, *Render to God*, pp. 249-55, presents a summary of patronage in an appendix rather than in the main text of his study.

Testament<sup>6</sup> and several classical scholars' work on patronage using anthropological models.<sup>7</sup> The assumptions, definitions and parameters of study used by these scholars have laid the foundation on which subsequent study of patronage in the New Testament has been built.<sup>8</sup> One of the most notable features in the large body of material devoted to examining patronage is that there has been hardly any criticism or modification of the definition as it was initially offered. Concord on such a widely used component in New Testament studies is a remarkable achievement.<sup>9</sup>

However, this lack of criticism masks the reality that the model displays certain historical and methodological weaknesses. Addressing these issues in their totality, and offering a sufficiently robust analysis of all aspects pertinent to a classically rendered definition of patronage would require a monograph (or several) in itself.<sup>10</sup> I suggest, however, that critical and precise focus on several key premises that the model

6. Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St Louis: Clayton, 1982) provided the first extended treatment.

7. Most notably, Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) and Andrew Wallace-Hadril, *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London: Routledge, 1989).

8. See Bruce J. Malina's foundational study, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981).

9. There has been some discussion on applying anthropological models to biblical texts. See, for example, Cyril S. Rodd, 'On Applying Sociological Theory to Biblical Studies', *JSOT* (1981), pp. 95-106; David Horrell, 'Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler', *JSNT* 22 (2000), pp. 83-105; Philip Esler, 'Models in New Testament Interpretation: A Reply to David Horrell', *JSNT* 22 (2000), pp. 107-13; Alan Kirk, 'Karl Polanyi, Marshall Sahlins, and the Study of Ancient Social Relations', *JBL* 126 (2007), pp. 182-91; Zeba A. Crook, 'Reflections on Culture and Social-Scientific Models', *JBL* 124 (2004), pp. 515-20. There has hardly been any extensive examination of whether the patronage model actually describes real relations in antiquity. Most criticisms of the model and its presumptions have been unfortunately fleeting, leaving New Testament scholars unopposed in their enthusiastic adoption of the social-scientific definition of patronage; see nn. 19 and 36 below.

10. Understanding the ancient phenomenon of reciprocity is notoriously difficult. Danker, *Benefactor*, p. 42 n. 1, comments that a 'history of Graeco-Roman reciprocity phenomena, with special reference to recognition in honorific pronouncement, remains to be written, but it will require the resources of an international team of scholars'.

rests upon calls into question the fidelity of the current patronage model to the social situation in antiquity.

First to be argued in this study is that the basis of the model in cross-cultural anthropology has exerted a disproportionate level of power on the current definition of patronage and, secondly, that patronage was a distinctly Roman phenomenon that failed to make inroads into broad Greek and Jewish society.

It needs to be noted first that the cross-cultural provenance of the model has marginalized the distinctive characteristics of classical patronage, allowing the model to have as wide an application as possible.<sup>11</sup> For instance, one of the foundational texts informing scholars about patronage is Richard Saller's *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*, which defines patronage as:

First involving the reciprocal exchange of goods and services. Secondly, to distinguish it from a commercial transaction in the marketplace, the relationship must be a personal one of some duration. Thirdly, it must be asymmetrical, in the sense that the two parties are of unequal status and offer different kinds of goods and services in the exchange—a quality which sets patronage off from friendship between equals.<sup>12</sup>

‘Patronage’, rightly or wrongly, has acquired a very broad definition applied to almost every asymmetrical reciprocal exchange witnessed in a historical text.<sup>13</sup> Saller takes for an example the ‘patronage’ of the Turkish Empire to help form his definition of the classical patronage dynamic,<sup>14</sup> and includes an appendix on Chinese bureaucracy to the

11. It must be emphasized that this article is not a criticism of the use of cross-cultural studies or a negation of the potential value they have. I am instead concerned with how they have been utilized in this particular case. In most cases the results reached are valid as a high level abstraction of reciprocity in antiquity, but they do need to be freed from the misnomer ‘patronage’ and the inferences that this produces.

12. For a more exhaustive definition, see Jerome H. Neyrey, ‘God, Benefactor and Patron: The Major Cultural Model for Interpreting the Deity in Greco-Roman Antiquity’, *JSNT* 27 (2005), pp. 465-92.

13. Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Augsburg–Fortress, 1993), p. 5, state that they seek the ‘culturally common and generic. Instead of that which distinguishes the ancient Egyptian from the ancient Roman, the social scientist wants to know what they...share in common’.

14. Saller, *Personal Patronage*, p. 6.

same end.<sup>15</sup> John Davis, a New Testament social-scientist, states that he derived his definition of patronage by research ‘from the wholesale market in Athens to the desert of Western Cyrenaica, to the plains of south-eastern Portugal’.<sup>16</sup> Moreover John Elliott informs us that the social-scientist is guided by a dual concern of devotion to classical sources and cross-cultural studies. Elliott acknowledges, however, that it is the social-scientific aspect that has ‘received [the] fullest attention’.<sup>17</sup> While cross-cultural results are still heuristically schematized, the discussion of classical sources has nearly stagnated. The relentless refining of the model through cross-cultural studies, coupled with a neglect of evidence in the primary classical sources, has led to edging the model further and further away from the actual social situation in antiquity, and thus the model’s ultimate stagnation. Instead of accurately portraying patronage as subset of a far wider, complex sphere of reciprocal systems, any sign of reciprocity is now held to be a ‘patronage’ relationship.<sup>18</sup>

Claude Eilers, in the introduction to his monograph on Roman patrons of Greek cities, issues a warning to his fellow classicists that the utilization of the definition of patronage provided by Saller and Wallace-Hadrill has meant that the:

pullover [of labelling something as patronage] has been over so many heads that it has lost its shape...it is intended to describe patronage *in*

15. Saller, *Personal Patronage*, pp. 111-15. John H. D’Arms, review of *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), by Richard P. Saller, in *Classical Philology* 8 (1986), pp. 95-98 (95), also notes that Saller ‘clearly borrowed his working definition of patronage from the anthropologists’.

16. John Davis, *The People of the Mediterranean: An Essay in Comparative Social Anthropology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 146.

17. John H. Elliott, ‘Patronage and Clientage’, in Richard L. Rohrbaugh (ed.), *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), pp. 144-58 (149).

18. Danker expresses the concern that ‘It is unfortunate that the narrow term “patron–client relationship” should have entered the discussion rather than the more comprehensive term “reciprocity system”, of which patron–client more accurately describes an ancient subset’ (F.W. Danker, ‘Paul’s Debt to the Corona of Demosthenes: A Study of Rhetorical Techniques in Second Corinthians’, in D.A. Watson [ed.], *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honour of George A. Kennedy* [JSNTSup, 50; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991], pp. 262-80 [263]).

any culture...the above definition disallows almost nothing. Our pullover has been stretched into a circus tent (emphasis mine).<sup>19</sup>

In short, the term ‘patronage’ no longer carries its formalized classical meaning. It is the nomenclature of a synthesized cross-cultural model that aggregates all reciprocity under one generic term. There is a need to realize that the two forms of ‘patronage’, classical and sociological, are two different entities. The sociological framework has some overlap with classical patronage, and can help inform us about it, but it should never be expected to have the potential to fully describe classical patronage. Where this conflation occurs without challenge it depicts ancient patronage and reciprocity as an incomprehensible hybrid.

While the classical patron–client relationship can make a valid appearance in contemporary New Testament studies, more frequently the more transitory, generic definition of patron–client relationships is offered. The contemporary understanding of patronage has allowed the hypothetical householder in Mk 6.10-13 to be assigned the status of patron for a transitory period<sup>20</sup> and the centurion’s plea in Mt. 8.5-13 to be interpreted as having entered him into an implicit patronage relationship of unknown duration with Jesus.<sup>21</sup>

19. Claude Eilers, *Roman Patrons of Greek Cities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 5, 6, 9. E.A. Judge, *Rank and Status in the World of the Caesars and St Paul* (Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1982), p. 10, also comments, ‘The theories have usually been hammered out in the laboratory of a South-Seas-islands anthropologist, and then transported half-way around the world, and across two millennia, without adequate testing for applicability in a new setting.’ Mirriam Griffith, ‘Of Clients and Patrons’, review of A. Wallace-Hadrill (ed.), *Patronage in Ancient Society* (Leicester-Nottingham Studies in Ancient Society; London and New York: Routledge, 1989) in *The Classical Review* 40 (1990), pp. 399-403 (402-403), also states, about one of the foundational studies adopted by New Testament scholars, that in the ‘re-description of ancient society that emerges from their analysis, historical facts recede further and further into the background...readers of this volume can decide for themselves whether they prefer to be clients of theory or fact’. James Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace in its Graeco-Roman Context* (WUNT, 2.172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), p. 23, discarded the entire practice from the outset as ‘naïve’.

20. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Synoptic Gospels*, p. 170.

21. Benny L. Tat-Siong and T.W. Jennings, ‘Mistaken Identities but Model Faith: Re-Reading the Centurion, the Chap, and the Christ in Matthew 8:5-13’, *JBL* 123 (2004), pp. 467-94.

It remains highly doubtful if any of the above scenarios would have been recognized in the classical world as exhibiting a patron–client relationship. Such exchanges would rather arguably have imposed a general reciprocal demand upon the recipient, quite independent from the formalized strictures of patronage. Indeed the *only* form of designated patronage witnessed in classical sources is an established, prolonged, and precisely governed relationship. Juvenal, for example, portrayed the inescapable and binding consequences of entering a patronage relationship by presenting a client who pleads: ‘tell this to happier men, for I am spent if all my drudging can get me bread. [That] I might live by my own rules. Not forced to bow to swindlers or praise fools.’<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, the extended duration of clientage meant that clients became familiar in their daily salute at the patron’s home, and in their presence in the patron’s entourage. Indeed, so routine was a client’s expected presence that Quintus Cicero suggested that patrons should learn their clients’ names and faces off by heart.<sup>23</sup> The ritualized morning salute began to characterize, and even define, the patron–client relationship with clients coming to be called ‘those who salute’.<sup>24</sup>

Neither does Roman law lend itself to describing patronage in an *ad hoc*, fluid manner. People knew who was, and was not, the client of a patron, and were expected to be able to easily affirm or deny this information. The *Lex Duodecim Tabularum*, which formed the backbone of the Republic’s law, contained in its prescriptions a ruling on patron–client relationships. Table VIII protects clients from abusive patrons by regulating:

*Patronus si clienti fraudem fecerit, sacer esto*

If a Patron defrauds his client, let him be accursed<sup>25</sup>

Finally, note that Dionysius in his *Antiquities* could detail at length the formal duties expected of both patrons and clients.<sup>26</sup>

22. Juvenal, *Sat.* 9.

23. Quintus Cicero, *Commentariolum Petitionis* 35.

24. Quintus Cicero, *Commentariolum Petitionis* 35.

25. See a similar statement at *Paul. Dig.* 7.2.90, where if a theft from a patron takes place, no action is to be taken on the client other than the pronouncement of guilt.

26. E.g. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 2.10-11. See also Aulus Gellius’s comments in *Noct. att.* 5.13.4.

A systematic analysis of all purported occurrences of patronage's presence in the New Testament is largely immaterial to this study's aims. Most patronage designations are the progeny of social-scientific studies, which do not rest their veracity upon explicit references in the text. However, I would like to give one particularly acute example of how the patronage model can misinterpret a situation in antiquity.

Two pioneering social-scientists, Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, argue that the devil's temptations of Jesus in Lk. 4.5-8 should be read in light of the patronage model. The end of the passage states:

If you [Jesus] will worship me it will all be yours. Jesus then answered him, 'It is written, "Worship the Lord your God and serve him only"' (Lk. 4.7-8).

Malina and Rohrbaugh argue that the devil is attempting to coax Jesus to become his client, as well as God's (they argue that Jesus is already in a patron-client relationship to God). Jesus' refusal of this offer is interpreted as fulfilling patron-client expectation, for, they state: 'a true and honourable client would never...serve two masters at the same time'.<sup>27</sup> But this interpretation of Jesus' repudiation as being a statement against dual patronage is not just a deficient, but a distorting rendering of classical patronage. For example, dual patronage could be introduced quite insouciantly by Aemilius Macer, who stated that it made no difference in a case of adultery whether the accused in the trial was a client of two patrons.<sup>28</sup> Quintus Cicero could also complain: 'the callers (for the morning salute) are a more promiscuous crowd, and in the fashion of today visit more than one candidate'.<sup>29</sup> These, and other examples,<sup>30</sup> run directly contrary to Malina and Rohrbaugh's claims that ancient patronage had to be exclusive.

That such an inexplicably different form of patronage has been presented to the reader is perhaps understandable when one considers Malina and Rohrbaugh's bibliography. It includes, to my count, eleven cross-cultural studies, including, for instance, George Foster's analysis

27. Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Synoptic Gospels*, p. 241.

28. Aemilius Macer the jurist, *Publicis iudiciis* 1.

29. Quintus Cicero, *Commentariolum Petitionis* 34-35.

30. E.g. Virgil, as is well known, had several patrons concurrently and upon his death left various parts of his estates to his two patrons—Augustus and Maecenas.



of dyadic relationships in Mexican villages,<sup>31</sup> and two cross-cultural-dependent studies on classical patronage—Saller's *Personal Patronage* and Eisenstadt and Rongier's *Patrons, Clients and Friends*. There is a danger when such studies start to unduly influence, and in this case dominate, the understanding of classical patronage. Its distinctive characteristics can be lost in the miscellany of reciprocal relationships that have been drawn together.

The second problem addressed here is the implication that patronage was a universal phenomenon in the ancient Mediterranean. Since the social-scientific model was, from its inception, created to be applied across cultures and time, every location and culture surrounding the ancient Mediterranean basin has been considered amenable to it. Social-scientists and New Testament scholars have comfortably supposed the ubiquitous extent of patronage *a priori*—with little need for further argument.<sup>32</sup> Roman and cross-cultural sources of patronage can, on this basis, be legitimately transferred to portray non-Roman cultures' experiences of patronage. They are all supposed to be representative of the one reciprocal dynamic of the ancient Mediterranean that is unlocked by the model. Yet the question must be raised whether social-scientists have been culpable in overstating the validity of reading patronage into cultures and texts that might actually be alien to patronage's processes.

To start an initial probing of these questions, and to scrutinize further the formalized nature of the patron–client relationship, we will consider the use of reciprocal relationships in Greek and Jewish cultures respectively.

31. George M. Foster, 'The Dyadic Contract: A Model for the Social Structure of a Mexican Peasant Village', *American Anthropologist* 63 (1961), pp. 1173-92.

32. David D. Gilmore (ed.), *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 1987), p. 71, says 'Mediterranean societies are all undercapitalized agrarian civilizations...Patronage relations provide a consistent ideological support for social inequality and dependency throughout the Mediterranean area.' This statement typifies the universalizing claims made for patronage's presence. David deSilva, who has pioneered the evaluation of the book of Hebrews using social-scientific models, declares that 'the first-century Mediterranean environment...provides an intriguing set of considerations, in this regard, in the system of patronage and clientage so prevalent in that world' (D.A. deSilva, 'Exchanging Favor for Wrath: Apostasy in Hebrews and Patron–Client Relations', *JBL* 115 [1996], pp. 91-116 [91]). He proceeds on that basis to apply the patronage model to the text.

*Greek Euergetism and Roman Patronage*

One common feature of Greek and Roman cultures was their robust and innate conception of reciprocity. For example, both Greek and Latin's respective verbs 'to sell' illustrates this latent disposition. In Latin 'to sell' can be expressed by the verb *dō* (give) with *venum* (sale), or their conflation in *vendō*, and in Greek by a compound middle form (ἄποδίδωμαι) of δίδωμι—again to 'give'. The act of giving (selling) makes a reciprocal demand of some kind.

Whether a distinction can be made between Roman and Greek reciprocal relationships has been under, albeit sporadic, debate over the past few years.<sup>33</sup> In fact, the study of Greek euergetism independent of Roman patronage is still a relatively new endeavour; the neologism 'euergetism' created to describe the practice was only included in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, for example, in 1996. While the debate has remained so far at a stalemate in New Testament studies, I suggest that there are considerable reasons for the separation of euergetism from patronage, most importantly by considering both systems' orientation, duration and implicit power-dynamics.<sup>34</sup> In particular, while

33. Stephan Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor: Reciprocity, Strategy and Theological Reflection in Paul's Collection* (WUNT, 2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); and Joubert, 'One Form of Social Exchange or Two? "Euergetism", Patronage, and New Testament Studies—Roman and Greek Ideas of Patronage', *BTB* 31 (2001), pp. 17-25, offered the first extended case in New Testament studies. See also Alicia Batten, 'God in the Letter of James: Patron or Benefactor?', *NTS* 50 (2004), pp. 257-72. Zeba Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion: Patronage, Loyalty, and Conversion in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (BZNW, 130; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), pp. 61-64, has offered a critique of Joubert's arguments and, while acknowledging there are differences between the two, concludes they are qualitative rather than substantive. Classical scholars have proved less reluctant to acknowledge patronage and euergetism's separation. See, for example, Claude Eilers, *Roman Patrons*, Donald Engels, *Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 87, and Nicholas Jones, *Rural Athens under the Democracy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 70-71. Jones is confident enough to state that 'very little direct evidence for patronal institutions seems to have reached us...the consensus would seem to be that they simply did not exist in classical Athens' (p. 72).

34. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor* (*passim*, but see esp. pp. 62-98), seeks their separation by considering patronage as a form of political exploitation and differing from euergetism by an inbuilt status differential that the client-patron relationship includes.

most recent discussions of euergetism reference its corporate nature, the implications of this *vis-à-vis* the patronage system still need, I believe, to be fully drawn out.

Before any extensive treatment of the two systems is made we must note at the outset that there are no extant native Greek references to patronage or dyadic relationships that we can claim mirror the Roman practice.<sup>35</sup> This should be unnerving for the social-scientist and it leaves open to question whether Greek patronage is nothing more than a scholarly construct driven by cross-cultural presuppositions.<sup>36</sup>

I suggest, for the purposes of this study, that both patronage and euergetism should be understood as cultural vestiges, borne from the respective political systems in which their elites found themselves working. That is to say, the patron–client relationship was a construct ideally suited for the aspiring Roman elite in the republican system; gaining an extensive client base permitted one to increase political influence and promotion up the *cursus honorum*. This relationship eventually evolved into the full social construct of the patron–client dynamic.<sup>37</sup> By contrast, Greek euergetism obviated the need for the

35. On Roman patrons over Greek cities, see Eiler, *Roman Patrons*, who demonstrates the honorary rather than substantive role of city patrons. On the lack of patronic undertones sometimes attributed to the term προστάτες, see Jones, *Rural Athens*, pp. 71-72.

36. The artificial and extensive appropriation of anthropologically defined models of reciprocity has also afflicted classical studies. Daniel Ogden, review of *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), edited by Christopher Gill, Norman Postlewaite and Richard Seaford, in *The Classical Review* 49 (1999), pp. 508-10 (508-509), briefly expounds the same concerns raised here. Ogden maintains that '[while it has been established] that some "anthropological" societies have structures in accordance with a strict ethic of reciprocity, none of the papers here persuade that this was true of any part of ancient Greece...The least successful papers in the collection are accordingly those that take reciprocity seriously, and attempt to force aspects of Greek culture through the grid of its sub-categories....The best papers here begin with lip-service to the reciprocity theme before developing a subject genuinely founded in Greek language and literature.'

37. This is not to suggest that corporate benefaction was entirely absent in Roman culture, as is clearly not the case—see Pliny the Younger's comments on the value of benefaction given to cities in *Ep.* 1.8.4.13 for example. However, euergetism did not function as the primary means for political advancement as it fundamentally did in Greek society. Peter Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge

benefactor to gather an extensive client base. Worth could be attributed to a person through the collective mechanics of the *polis*.<sup>38</sup> Aspiring leaders looked to the *polis* for their progression and the supply of honour, not to establishing dyadic relationships.

That Greek communal benefaction was primarily a device for the wealthy to do good to and accrue honour from large numbers of people in the society at once is evidenced quite openly in the many epigraphical sources. The following inscription, for example, lauds the gift of a statue, which was given so that:

others will be zealous for honour among the members, knowing that they will receive thanks from the members deserving of benefaction.<sup>39</sup>

Another inscription describes a certain Soteles, who:

appearing in the council and observing that the public funds were under pressure, he undertook to meet the expenses of the statue and of its erection out of his own pocket, *desiring to please the citizens*.<sup>40</sup>

Finally, of a benefactor named Derkylos it is said that since he:

has his heart set on honour with regard to the deme of Eleusis, both generally and specifically to the education of the boys in the deme, it is determined by the Eleusinians to commend Derkylos, son of Autokles, of Hagnous, and crown him with a golden crown to the value of 500 *drachmae*.<sup>41</sup>

It should be noted that benefactors, such as the ones listed above, remained essentially detached from the ultimate recipients of their gifts.

University Press, 1993), pp. 176-77, has rightly noted that, in Rome, ‘public display of generosity was not compatible with Roman political practice...private individuals were not called upon to show generosity in the public arena in the manner that was standard among Greek cities of the Hellenistic and Roman periods’.

38. For the purposes of this article I will frame the discussion around the *polis*, although corporate giving did extend to societies, clubs, educational facilities etc. See Morgens H. Hansen, *Polis: An Introduction to the Ancient Greek City-State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), for a discussion on the defining nature of this Greek ideal. It is worthy of note that so influential was the *polis* that Thucydides could say that ‘the men are the *polis*’ (Thucydides 7.77.7).

39. *IG* II 1263. See also *IG* V, I 1208: ‘My idea is to gain immortality in making such a just and generous disposal and in entrusting it to the *polis*. I shall surely not fail in my aim.’

40. *IG* VII 190.

41. *IG* II 1187.

They were happy to procure the return of recognition from the grateful *polis*. It was the *polis* that satisfied the wealthy Greek benefactors' desire for attention and recognition. The gymnasia, the theatres, libraries, city plumbing and so on, were dedicated to the *polis* and in turn it mediated the gifts back to the benefactor. In short, while in patronage the patron mandated the entire relationship's activities, in euergetism the recipient rather uniquely did. This meant that the election of benefactors to merit inscriptions or special honours such as seating positions or crowns was a prerogative that the donors had to win.

The ultimate result of this corporate orientation meant that the recipients of the generosity were largely inconsequential to the benefactor's concern or motivation.<sup>42</sup> The extensive and fundamental dyadic relationships fostered in patronage, where one might even be expected to memorize clients' names and faces, was an utterly alien concept in euergetism. Yet we must be aware that the poor still found themselves catered for, despite the broad stance that euergetism took.<sup>43</sup> One of the most frequently found kind of donor in the extant Greek benefaction epigraphs is, for example, a donor to the state corn fund.<sup>44</sup> We even have an example of a benefactor offering funding to the

42. The lack of individual relationship is evidenced in almost all euergetic sources. For example, benefactors often specifically mandated the benefits to be shared broadly among 'the people' (*IG XII 389*) or stated that they had issued them to 'please the citizens' (*IG VII 190*). D.W. Amundsen and G.B. Ferngren 'Philanthropy in Medicine: Some Historical Perspectives', in Earl E. Schelp (ed.), *Beneficence and Healthcare* (Philosophy and Medicine, 11; London: D. Reidel, 1982), pp. 1-32 (6), note that ancient benefactions 'were for the entire community, no distinction being made between the destitute and others...Such philanthropy was civic, not personal, intended for the community and therefore limited to the citizens of the community on an equal basis.' See also n. 48.

43. Although, as Jason König, *Athletics and Literature in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 69-70, has noted, 'euergetism often benefited members of the elite, rather than the city as a whole...any proclamation of civic consensus and public approval for benefaction was always a function of the process of personal and dynastic self-promotion'.

44. E.g. Wilhelm Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* (Leipzig: Hirscl, 3rd edn, 1915), pp. 304, 495; *SEG I 366*. Bruce W. Winters, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 60, also notes that in Athens 'what was known as "public pay" or "crisis insurance" and reciprocal obligations with relatives and friends and neighbours made it possible to borrow, in time of emergency, interest-free loans'.

citizens of Ebusus to pay their tribute to the Romans, should they have found themselves in financial difficulty.<sup>45</sup>

A neglected source from the time of Augustus, issued to honour a civic benefactor from Kyme in Asia Minor, is valuable for this discussion due to its focused narration of the events surrounding the inscription's election. As with most euergetic texts, it is reflective of past events. However, this epigraph in particular highlights the possible time-lag that could exist before this level of recognition had been deemed appropriate. In the inscription the leaders of the city of Kyme declare that they have resolved to publicly extol a certain Kleanax of their city for the various benefits that he has provided throughout his lifetime, stating that:

praise has been ascribed (to him) at this time...he arranged the feast year after year; and summoning a crowd of people to the wedding of his daughter, he held a banquet. For these reasons, the people, having in mind these good deeds also, forgot none of his other activities to which they had grown accustomed. And for this reason...Kleanax is worthy of praise and honour.<sup>46</sup>

By this they intend to repay Kleanax for services that he has rendered 'year after year' to Kyme, that had, 'until this time' not been repaid or 'forgotten'. Perhaps the reason for the time lag in the requiting of Kleanax's benefits becomes apparent when we consider the cumulative nature of the considerable list of gifts that he had furnished to Kyme (the extant text runs into over 53 lines). He is honoured for generously providing banquets, distributing wine, performing ceremonies for the dead, issuing laurels and so on. There is no mention of building projects or sponsorship of clubs or organizations (which would have instinctively produced epitaphs upon their sponsorship—presuming Kleanax's munificence had also extended to such projects). Nevertheless, the catalogue of the less tangible benefits he provided over an extended time period was considered by the *polis* to be worthy of particular praise. It was this privilege of deliberation that the *polis* enjoyed, and it meant that the reciprocal exchange in euergetism operated largely reflectively, sometimes with an extended time lag before the full estimation of a benefactor's generosity was suitably repaid.

45. *CIL* II 3664.

46. Found in S.R. Llewelyn and R.A. Kearsley (eds.), *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. VII. *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1982–83* (Sydney: Macquarie University, 1994), pp. 233-36.

Moreover, this corporate, and occasionally accumulative, nature of euergetism meant that the status of benefactor did not carry the same sense of duration as the role of a patron did. While patrons and clients both operated firmly upon a continuing, daily relationship, the status of benefactor stood in relation to the immediate gift given, and might not necessarily indicate a relationship beyond it. For instance, if a community had a particularly attentive benefactor and wished to reinforce the permanency of their gratitude, they could grant the status of 'benefactor' for life.<sup>47</sup> This suggests that the title by itself did not carry with it an implicit sense of endurance. In this regard euergetism can be said to be partially analogous to the situation of a donor today to a charitable organization, whereby a gift is made via the organization to be distributed to those the organization deems fit.<sup>48</sup> The continuing involvement of the donor might be hoped for, but it is not obligatory for the donor to retain this status as such. The status of the patron, by contrast, may be more readily compared to that of a sponsor, where continuing involvement would be expected and indeed mandated by the position.

Finally, we must note that the Greek corporate orientation meant that no declaration of inequality was made upon the recipient: it was a communal gift. Patronage, however, defined and consigned itself to operate strictly according to asymmetrical acknowledgement. The client's status was a largely degrading status, a form of self-abasement probably only acceded to due to poverty.<sup>49</sup> This kind of defining and extensive client relationship that stratified so much of Roman urban society was unfelt, and unknown, in Greek society.

47. E.g. see the flexibility of the status of gymnasiarch in König, *Athletics and Literature*, p. 70.

48. The following sources perfectly illustrate the mediation of the *polis* over the gift that was given: 'I entrust this sum to you, dearest townsmen, that from the interest of five per cent there may be maintained each year 300 boys and 300 girls...townsmen and residents likewise should be chosen [by the *polis*]...if it shall seem good to you, it will be best for the *duumviri* of each year to choose' (*CIL VIII* 1.641; quoted in A.R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968], p. 185).

49. E.g. David I. Rankin, *From Clement to Origen: The Social and Historical Context of the Church Fathers* (London: Ashgate, 2006), p. 25, calls clientage 'personal humiliation which few Romans with any self respect enjoyed'. See also Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, pp. 67-68.

A helpful test case for the veracity of the above conclusions can be sought by carrying out a philological investigation. The study of reciprocity semantics has already been ably served by Cécile Panagopoulos, who identified seventy-five words related to reciprocity, many of which use the Greek εὐ root (e.g. εὐεργετέω, εὐεργεσία, εὐεργέτης). Other prominent words included χάρις (gift), φιλότιμα (love of honour), σωτήρ (saviour), and κτίστης (founder).<sup>50</sup> These and many other terms made up the amazingly rich, and considerably vast, store of words with which Greeks could extol benefaction. That such a plethora of benefaction terminology existed reveals both the scope and importance of benefaction in Greek society. More importantly, however, it is suggestive of the concept's fluidity and lack of strict uniformity. The contrast with the language of patronage is stark. The entire system revolved around the fixed terms of *patronus* and *cliens*.<sup>51</sup> Such rigidity agrees with the literary and cultural evidence in portraying patronage as a formalized, prolonged relationship.

It is also notable that when Greeks, while under Roman suzerainty, did come into contact with patronage, they found that despite their large store of words they had no semantic capacity to express it.<sup>52</sup> When required to acknowledge a patron they systematically transliterate the term *patronus* as πάτρων. For instance:

ὁ δῆμος Λύκιον Δομιτιον Ἀηνοβαρβον τὸν πάτρωνα τῆς πόλεως

The people (honoured) Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, the patron of the city.<sup>53</sup>

This is crucial in the emancipation of euergetism from the patronage model, for, if Greek culture had a corresponding reciprocal system identifiable with the patron–client relationship, the Greek vocabulary

50. C. Panagopoulos, 'Vocabulaire et mentalité dans les *Moralia* de Plutarque', *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 6 (1977), pp. 197-235.

51. The term 'patron' (*patronus*) derives, for example, from the archaic Latin for 'father'; client (*cliens*) originates from the Latin word *cluere*, to 'hear' or 'obey'. Often, however, patronage would operate under the guise and idiom of friendship.

52. Jones, *Rural Athens*, p. 72, also notes, 'The most perplexing element of this silence of the [Greek] sources concerns terminology, since no well established vocabulary, corresponding, say, to the standard Latin words for the elements of patronage, is in common use.'

53. D. Evangelides, 'Ἐπιγραφαι ἐκ Χίου', *L'Année épigraphique* 25.4 (1932), p. 6. Quoted in Eilers, *Roman Patrons*, p. 210.



for the semantic field should have had the flexibility to express it.<sup>54</sup> Equally warranting scholarly attention is the lack in the extant literary or epigraphical sources of anyone other than a Roman being called a patron (as in the above source). This on its own should be damaging to the idea of the cross-cultural nature of the patron–client relationship. Yet this also has significance beyond the apprehension that patronage was merely of foreign Roman origin. The dearth of native Greek patrons suggests that the practice was both by its inception and *praxis* a distinctly Roman phenomenon.

One objection that must be considered in separating euergetism from patronage comes from Zeba Crook, who argues that:

we find that the same person could be called patron and a benefactor but it had more to do with the nature of the offering than with exploitation, real or potential... cannot what a patron gives be called a benefaction? As a result I use the terms ‘patron’ and ‘benefactor’ carefully where the context demands it but interchangeably most of the time.<sup>55</sup>

This is a potentially important contention. In the light of Eilers’s tally of benefaction inscriptions in the province of *Africa Pro-consularis*, Crook’s argument is not as cogent as it might seem at first.<sup>56</sup> To date *Africa Proconsularis* has produced 396 benefaction inscriptions and the overlap between patronage and euergetism in them is minimal, far from providing the connection that Crook wants to see. There are only, in fact, eleven instances of conflation of the titles patron and benefactor. Eilers argues on this basis that when the dual appellation of ‘patron and benefactor’ was used it would be a mistake to conclude that patronage had come to include euergetism, but rather, the title patron, ‘like the honours it was coming to approximate was sometimes used as a reward for generosity’.<sup>57</sup> There are also, fascinatingly, ten cases where building

54. Romans also found their language was incapable of fully expressing benefaction and supplemented it with Greek benefaction terms. Cicero could, for instance, say of Verres that he was given ‘not only the (title) patron (*patronum*) of that island, but also the savior (σωτήρ) of it: what a great expression is this! So great that it cannot be expressed by any single Latin word’ (*Verr.* 2.154). Joubert, ‘One Form of Social Exchange’, p. 21, also notes this passage in this regard.

55. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, pp. 64-65.

56. See Eilers, *Roman Patrons*, pp. 98-102, 105-108. Eilers also notes that the lack of dual appellation corresponds with the terminology in the extant city benefaction inscriptions, which number over one thousand.

57. Eilers, *Roman Patrons*, pp. 107-108.

projects had been funded by others yet were dedicated by someone designated as the ‘patron’; revealing the increasingly honorary rather than substantive role of the position of patron. It is also noteworthy that the exclusive Roman character of patronage is affirmed: all eleven patrons listed in the epigraphical sources from *Africa Proconsularis* are high ranking Romans.

The posited lack of patronage in euergetism and Greek society, it must be stressed, is not tantamount to suggesting that Greeks lacked an appreciation of reciprocity between individuals—as the present conflation of reciprocity and patronage would presume.<sup>58</sup> The facts do constrain us to recognize that while the same broad principles of reciprocity and recognition applied in both cultures, they were channelled down significantly different paths.

#### *Patronage and Euergetism in Judaism: The Literary Evidence*

The second major culture of the ancient Mediterranean world to have patronage attributed to it, and, by extension, to the Christian writings that initially arose out of it, is Second Temple Judaism.<sup>59</sup> The increasingly near facile attribution of patronage to Jewish culture and literature is a dangerous phenomenon, especially as studies based on this idea become ever more established in scholarly consensus. Neyrey,

58. See Richard Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 4.3.25 expresses his ideal of reciprocity. See the discussion of the passage in Joubert, ‘One Form of Social Exchange’, p. 19, and Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, pp. 61-62.

59. The idea of a strict dichotomy between Jewish and Hellenistic culture has become, rightly, increasingly unpopular; e.g. Lee I. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999). Therefore, where I use the terms ‘Jewish’ or ‘Greco-Roman’ I should not be mistaken as portraying a sharp divide. Nevertheless I believe that certain distinctions can accurately be classed as a particularly ‘Jewish’ or ‘Greco-Roman’ ones, without denying that away from these ideological edges such distinctions could merge. Recent studies have also started to reaffirm the potency of such differences. Martin Goodman, in his seminal *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Group, 2007), details just how deep and pervasive the differences could be. See also David Goodblatt, *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

for instance, is open about the premises on which his work rests.<sup>60</sup> In his opening chapter on Mark's Gospel (a study devoted to presenting God as a divine patron), Neyrey states: 'given the prevalence and importance of patron–client relationships in antiquity, I suggest that Mark's Gospel be read in that light'.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, some rather staggering claims have been made regarding the dominance of patronage in Jewish culture. Pilch and Malina have even suggested that the Old Testament be rendered amenable to the model.<sup>62</sup> But assuming that traditional Jewish culture replicated a patron–client dynamic is even more tenuous than assuming its presence in Greek society.<sup>63</sup>

It would again be misleading to pretend that all issues pertinent to Jewish society's interaction with patronage and reciprocity can be addressed within the confines of a single study. There are however several key indicators that, when probed, bring into question any large-scale presence of patronage or euergetism in Jewish society.<sup>64</sup>

The first fact, which should again be particularly unnerving for the social-scientist, is that no native source mentions or outlines any system equivalent to patronage. As for Greek culture, Jewish patronage presently remains a scholarly construct rather than an established reality. Social-scientists, or those who are dependent upon their assumptions, are forced to seek out Roman writers such as Pliny and Cicero, transferring and extrapolating from them onto Jewish culture.

60. The only hint of skepticism I could find from a social-scientist is a brief remark by Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, p. 79, who states that the culture of the Old Testament world would have operated under a covenantal system, rather than a patronic one. However, this is an ultimate irrelevance for Crook, for he considers patronage to have been adopted in Jewish society upon its encounter with Hellenism centuries before (see n. 64). The only significant denial of patronage in Jewish society comes from Martin Goodman, who offers a brief, but highly informative, three-page analysis questioning its existence in *Rome and Jerusalem*, pp. 237-39.

61. Neyrey, *Render to God*, p. 6.

62. E.g. Bruce J. Malina and John J. Pilch, *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), p. 151.

63. See Moshe Weinfeld, 'Berit-Covenant versus Obligation', *Bib* 56 (1975), pp. 120-28.

64. One interesting field of study not dealt with here is the use of the terms of benefaction, particularly  $\epsilon\upsilon$ - and  $\chi\alpha\rho$ - root words, in Jewish literature. The use of such language in most cases reveals nothing more than a general sense of reciprocity exchange. See Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, which examines the terms without forcing them into the confines of patronage or euergetism.

This is justified by seeing Jewish culture as a subset of the one Mediterranean society.<sup>65</sup> The insights offered by Philo and Josephus, however, are invaluable in the construction of a properly understood appreciation of Jewish interaction with patronage and euergetism.<sup>66</sup>

As we will first consider a sampling of Jewish critiques of formal reciprocal relationships, it should be noted at the outset that critiques of reciprocity occasionally feature in Greco-Roman writings also.<sup>67</sup> The Greco-Roman criticism of patronage and euergetism, however, is more often than not a product of moralist philosophy's ardent devotion to the ultimate 'moral purpose'. Moralist philosophical pursuit could indeed count all typical Greco-Roman measures of success and power as things to be eschewed because they were transitory distractions. Lucian

65. The presumption that even if Jewish culture was alien by tradition to the processes of patronage, this is irrelevant due to encroaching Hellenism, leads to a lack of active analysis of the presence of patronage in Jewish culture. Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus* p. 67, for example, regard patronage as being present, justifying it by saying, 'It is Rome that had controlled Palestine's politics and political economy, by the time of Jesus' ministry, for nearly one hundred years.' Several studies argue persuasively, however, that Judea, and especially Galilee, in the Second Temple period was without any significant social influence from Greco-Roman culture, especially outside of elite circles. See discussions such as Mark A. Chancey, *The Myth of a Gentile Galilee* (SNTSM, 118; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), and his subsequent *Greco-Roman Culture and the Galilee of Jesus* (SNTSMS, 134; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). We must also be aware that while values, literature and leisure pursuits might be transmitted cross-culturally with some success, changes in social constructs were hard to supplant. The Roman Empire's success is usually credited in part to its flexibility in working with local hierarchical systems and constructs as they found them.

66. Philo's and Josephus's rejection of reciprocal relationships such as euergetism and patronage has received limited attention. Jewish historians Tessa Rajak, 'Benefactors in the Greco-Jewish Diaspora', in her *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002), pp. 305-19, and Gregg Gardner, 'Jewish Leadership and Hellenistic Civic Benefaction in the Second Century B.C.E.', *JBL* 126 (2007), pp. 327-43 (328), both comment in passing on Philo, *Dec.* 1.4 and allude to Philo's dislike of public honours. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, pp. 130-32, gives the only extended analysis of Philo's rejection of reciprocity as expressed in *Cher.* 122-123.

67. James Harrison, 'The Fading Crown: Divine Honour and the Early Christians', *JTS* 86 (1993), pp. 493-529 (519), calls the philosophical critique of honours 'sporadic'. For examples of such philosophical critique see Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. phil.* 2.93, and Dio Chrysostom, *Ven.* 89.

exemplifies this distinctive outlook when he describes an eloquent speech by the Platonist Nigrinus, who found:

[the] freedom which philosophy confers; and expressed his contempt for the vulgar error which sets a value upon wealth and renown and dominion and power, upon gold and purple, and all that dazzles the eyes of the world.<sup>68</sup>

Such philosophers offered their own idiosyncratic aims and values, which conflicted with, and separated them from, larger Greco-Roman society. The trappings of material and social success—including the ever prevalent lure of honour for benefactions—were, at least for this noblest participant of the society, spurned for a life devoted to philosophical examination.

### *Philo of Alexandria*

While the following list of Philo's critiques of reciprocity and patronage partially parallels the moralists' critiques, it displays not just a philosopher's concern or consternation, but an explicit divergence of Greco-Roman ideals from Jewish reciprocal ideology. Indeed it must be noted that the concentration of such critiques in Philo, who offers a series of remarks on the egregious nature of Greco-Roman reciprocity systems, is unparalleled in any Greco-Roman writer.<sup>69</sup>

In one of Philo's clearest attacks upon the reciprocal idiom that defined so much of Greco-Roman life, he scathingly declared:

those who are said to bestow benefits sell rather than give; and those who seem to us to receive them in truth buy. The givers are seeking commendation or honour as their return and look for their benefits to be repaid, and so under the false name of a gift, they in truth carry out a sale.<sup>70</sup>

The conflation between reciprocity and patronage does not aid us in forming the proper distinctions that Philo held. The system in view is a

68. Lucian, *Nigr.* 4.

69. Systematic treatment of Philo's extensive critiques of euergetism and public honours merits an article of its own. Those critiques discussed here are only a sketch. Others not included here are: *Conf. ling.* 65, 112; *Jos.* 70; *Fug.* 26; *Spec. leg.* 1.41-44; *Ebr.* 57-58, 74-75; *Mut. nom.* 92-93; *Agr.* 169, 171; *Somn.* 130-131.

70. Philo, *Cher.* 122-123. All English translations of Philo are taken from LCL.

firmly euergetic one,<sup>71</sup> and there are no quixotic notions about any noble and honourable nature of the venture. Instead, Philo offers the reader a stringent and unforgiving portrait of the system as a fraudulent sham, a calculated business transaction rather than an act of beneficence.

Philo is even more scathing when singling out the civic benefaction of an educational building for criticism, stating:

It is the most serious of all falls for a man to stumble and fall from the honour due to God; crowning himself rather than God...the education building which he has erected is of no advantage to him.<sup>72</sup>

Here the customary act of a benefactor, funding a civic building's erection in the pursuit of honour, is portrayed again not as a munificent donation but as a grievous, and significantly blasphemous, charade. That such unfettered criticism of a ubiquitous Greco-Roman practice came from the work of someone who was, in many respects, a Greco-Roman cultural sympathizer is surprising. We must therefore at least entertain the idea that something deep, and ultimately offensive, to Philo's Jewish heritage was being violated by normative euergetic practice.

The final example of Philo's critique of euergetism to be addressed here is found when Philo's interpolator in *De decalogo* enquires why God bestowed his laws in the barren desert rather the city. Philo responds that this was because:

cities are full of countless evils, both acts of impiety towards God and wrongdoing between man and man. For everything is debased, the genuine overpowered by the spurious, the true by the false...so too in cities there arises that most insidious of foes, pride, admired and worshipped by some who add dignity to vain ideas by means of gold crowns and purple robes and a great establishment of servants and cars.<sup>73</sup>

Though the list begins with broad terms expressing the venality and corruption that marked city life, Philo's critique again distils around

71. Note the similarity in vocabulary between *Cher.* 122-123 and standard euergetic texts such as the honorary decree from Cardamylae, *SEG* XI 948. See Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, pp. 51, 130, for a further discussion of this similarity.

72. Philo, *Agr.* 171.

73. Philo, *Dec.* 2.4.

explicating and emphasizing the degenerate public honours system.<sup>74</sup> The examples listed, aside from the entourage, are publicly elected honours<sup>75</sup>—most commonly gained and associated with civic benefaction, though military victory and athletic prowess also warranted recognition. Dio Chrysostom, for instance, lists the above-mentioned honours as those sought by benefactors, stating that they ‘give in the pursuit of crowns and precedence and purple robes’.<sup>76</sup>

Once more this normally laudable custom is classed by Philo with the vice of ‘pride’, only concealed to the outward senses by a veneer of decorum.

Having briefly sketched Philo’s criticisms of reciprocal practice, we proceed to look at those passages which explicitly represent Greco-Roman reciprocal practices as foreign to Jewish society.

In the first of these examples it appears that the Jewish abstention from benefaction protocol could extend even towards the Emperors. Philo relays that:

This great benefactor [Augustus] they [the Jews] ignored during the forty-three years in which he was sovereign of Egypt, and set up nothing in our meeting-houses in his honour... [other nations offered] temples, gateways, vestibules, porticoes.... huge and conspicuous dedicated offerings...porticoes, libraries, chambers, groves, gateways... though they had such grounds for action and could command the approval of all men everywhere they brought no violence to bear upon the meeting-houses and observed the laws in every respect.<sup>77</sup>

The implications of this passage should be quite apparent. During Augustus’s lengthy sovereignty, and despite the conspicuous example that their neighbours set, the Jews did not honour the benefactor-Emperor with public signs of recognition.<sup>78</sup> Augustus is praised by

74. The idea of the corrupt city was a common Greco-Roman topos, e.g. Juvenal, *Sat.* 3; but the inclusion of the desire for honour among corruptions, it seems, was exclusive to Philo.

75. See Danker, *Benefactor*, pp. 14-19, for a catalogue of benefaction honours.

76. Dio Chrysostom, *2 Tars.* 29.

77. Philo, *Leg. Gai.* 148, 150, 152.

78. The lack of Jewish homogeneity, as I mentioned at the start of this discussion (n. 58), can be seen here. Philo also records that during the time of the subsequent Emperor Caligula, honours such as shields and crowns were dedicated to the emperors in Alexandrian synagogues (*Leg. Gai.* 133). On *Flacc.* 48, I agree with Anders Runesson that the piety the Jews were said to show the emperors was likely to have been sacrifices and prayers, rather than public honours; see Anders

Philo for tolerating this breach of euergetic etiquette, and for realizing it was no act of sedition or an expression of disregard—unlike the present Emperor Caligula. Rather, he realized that this was a cultural abstention, a theme Philo would later return to:

In all matters in which piety is enjoined and permitted under the laws it stood not a bit behind any other, either in Asia or in Europe, in its prayers, its erection of votive offerings, its number of sacrifices, not only of those offered at general national feasts; but in the perpetual and daily rites though which is declared their piety, not so much with mouth and tongue as in intentions formed in the secrecy of the soul by those who do not tell you that they love their Caesar but love him in very truth.<sup>79</sup>

It might seem that Philo has contradicted himself. He first states that the Jews had not shown loyalty through ‘mouth and tongue’, yet most of the examples of Jewish devotion he provides are vocal: votive declarations, prayers and daily rites. In part I suggest this can be resolved by positing that those missing vocal honours are related to the conspicuous dedicatory honours catalogued as absent at *Leg. Gai.* 148-152, although for us, such honours, especially the transcribed epigraphs which we now read, seem utterly detached from vocal honours. Yet it must be realized that in the ancient world inscriptions functioned this way.<sup>80</sup> In any case, we can see that the Jews described here failed to express their gratitude and loyalty in line with standard Greco-Roman practice. Philo again therefore feels the need to clarify that, despite the scarcity of expected tangible signs of loyalty, the Jews in their muteness were rudimentarily loyal.

Understanding Jewish detachment from public reciprocal honouring is, I believe, important to properly understand the Jewish unrest that

Runesson, *The Origins of the Synagogue: A Socio-Historical Study* (ConBNT, 37; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001), p. 451. It should also be noted that seven Jewish dedicatory inscriptions to Ptolemaic emperors have been found in Egypt. See William Horbury and David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), nos. 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 117, 122.

79. Philo, *Leg. Gai.* 280.

80. Danker states: ‘An inscription is meant to be read or heard—there is always someone around to clue illiterate folk on the latest inscription’ (F.W. Danker, ‘On Stones and Benefactors’, *CurTM* 816 [1981], pp. 351-56 [352]). We should also remember that the majority of inscriptions in antiquity were written as *scriptio continua*, and as such were consciously designed to be read aloud.



Philo would later go on to describe between Palestinian Jews and the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, who:

not so much to honour Tiberius as to annoy the multitude, dedicated in Herod's palace in the holy city some shields [ἀσπίς] coated with gold. They had no image work traced on them or anything else forbidden by the law apart from the barest inscription stating two facts, the name of the person who made the dedication and of him in whose honour it was made. But when the multitude understood the matter which had by now become a subject of common talk... [they appointed four sons of the king to appeal] to Pilate to redress the infringement of their traditions caused by the shields and not to disrupt the customs which throughout all the preceding ages had been safeguarded without disturbance by kings and by emperors. He had not the courage to take down what had been dedicated nor did he wish to do anything which would please his subjects.<sup>81</sup>

Nothing in the modern catalogue of ancient Jewish distinctions, it seems, can sufficiently explain the agitation as Philo relates it.<sup>82</sup> Supplementary causes have had to be read into Philo's account. Usually it is argued that some aspect of the imperial cult accompanied the honorary shields' installation, or that there was a fear that images had been etched into them.<sup>83</sup> However, while such actions would have had the potential to ignite Jewish insurrection, they are not the reasons that Philo supplies to his readers, and often fails to harmonize sufficiently with his account. Philo laboured to make it clear to his readers that there were no images present on the shields to rouse the Jewish populace and that the offence was a concern with the shields themselves and not any ceremony that surrounded them.<sup>84</sup> Indeed, all that Philo

81. Philo, *Leg. Gai.* 299.

82. E.g. Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome AD 66–70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1987), p. 11, states, 'Philo proved unable to explain clearly how Pilate's intended actions would infringe the Jewish Law'.

83. E.g. Mary E. Smallwood, *Philonis Alexandrini Legatio ad Gaium* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), pp. 302, 305. Paul L. Maier, 'The Episode of the Golden Roman Shields at Jerusalem', *HTR* 62 (1969), pp. 109–21 (118), examined the standard reasons presented for understanding the disruption, but concluded that no satisfactory cause could explain the Jewish reaction; it was rather 'an extremely sensitive, hyper-orthodox reaction against an unpopular foreign governor'.

84. Philo's use of prepositions also carefully points us away from the dedicatory theory. He states that the shields were dedicated on behalf of (ὕπέρ) the

supplies for his readers to understand the Jewish reaction is the honorary shields themselves. Had another cause been the catalyst for the unrest, Philo's omission of it renders his account curiously lacking and ultimately misleading.

However, to validate Philo's account as adequate, and to show that Greco-Roman seeking of honours was enough to provoke Jewish contention, we shall consider the record that 2 Maccabees provides us. There the author(s) describe a concern that large numbers of Jewish priests were neglecting their hereditary duties by going to Hellenistic games; but, more importantly, that they 'cared above everything else for Hellenic honours' (2 Macc. 4.15). Reciprocal acknowledgement was, as outlined at the start, one of the foundational components of Hellenistic public honours, the honours that the Maccabean author(s) concentrate on. It must be observed that the author(s) saw the replication of the Hellenistic honour system as a conspicuously foreign incursion and that the vice of seeking such honours could raise the ire of the community represented by 2 Maccabees. This is significant for it demonstrates a reaction shared by the later Palestinian inhabitants in their distress at the public honours chronicled by Philo at *Leg. Gai.* 299. The establishment of a precedent for their hostile reaction means their antagonism should not be viewed as inexplicable, nor does the record need supplementing.

No doubt such a strong reaction to Greco-Roman honouring practices was not uniform throughout the Jewish communities of the Roman Empire. Such hostile reaction is understandably hard to quantify. Yet we might reasonably conclude that those who were especially estranged from Hellenistic culture, through circumstance or conviction, could have the propensity to react aggressively when such honours threatened to intrude. When this is appreciated it offers a radically different context for the historian to consider than any dependence upon the cross-cultural consensus would have provided.

### *Josephus*

The second main Jewish author, Josephus, furnishes us with equally intransigent reasons to suggest that a far-ranging Jewish rejection of formal Greco-Roman reciprocal systems prevailed.

Emperor, not to him. On Philo's acute awareness of this distinction, see *Leg. Gai.* 357.

We should be aware that the interaction of Josephus and his colleagues with the political Roman elite conforms with patronage as it manifested itself in elite circles: working via friendships, benefices and debts—most notably under several patron emperors. This underpins the hypothesis presented here that those engaged in political pragmatism were compliant and comfortable in operating in a patronage relationship with their Roman superiors.

However, beyond the corridors of power, the indicators of Jewish involvement in patronage return to being characteristically scarce. Goodman, for example, notes that Josephus was an affluent landowner with estates throughout Palestine, and that if he ‘had been in a similar position in Rome he would have felt himself beholden to a coterie of clients who in return would have accompanied him in public’.<sup>85</sup> Goodman also notes that, when a high priest and the predecessor whose position he had usurped collected rival crowds of retainers around them, this was perceived as intimidation rather than as a typical power play by those with a client base to deploy.<sup>86</sup>

Two passages written by Josephus echo the claims and themes of Philo’s passages listed above and are therefore germane to our discussion. This is significant for it suggests that we are witnessing a broad Jewish rejection of formal reciprocity, rather than just highlighting a particular writer’s anomalous critique.

The first passage (*Ant.* 16.140-159) is one of the most transparent statements of Jewish detachment from euergetism and is found in the account of Herod the Great’s benefits to his Jewish subjects. There Josephus declares:

[At his festival] Herod entertained them all in the public inns, and at public tables, and with perpetual feasts...as cost vast sums of money, and publicly demonstrated the generosity of his soul... (16.140)

when we have respect to his magnificence and the benefits which he bestowed on all mankind, there is no possibility for even those that had the least respect for him to deny, or not to openly confess, that he had a nature vastly beneficent (16.150)

for being a man ambitious of honour, and quite overcome by that passion, he was induced to be magnificent, wherever there appeared any

85. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, p. 237.

86. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem*, p. 237.

hopes of a future memorial (μνημεῖον), or of reputation at present (16.153)

Now for my assertion about that passion of his, we have the greatest evidence by what he did to honour Caesar and Agrippa, and his other friends; for with what honours he paid his respects to them who were his superiors, the same did he desire to be paid to himself... But now the Jewish nation is by their law a stranger to all such things, and accustomed to prefer righteousness to glory; for which reason that nation was not agreeable to him, because it was out of their power to flatter the king's ambition with statues or temples, or any such performances....[he instead gave] benefactions to foreigners and those who had no relation to him (16.157-159).<sup>87</sup>

Herod is portrayed by Josephus as the archetypal benefactor figure, proffering gifts to his people and expecting a reciprocal exchange of public recognition—as his Gentile counterparts would have received. But, Josephus recounts, Jewish culture was ‘a stranger to all such things’, and ‘not agreeable’ to requiting his gifts, especially given the iconoclasm of Judaism. Yet it was not just the prohibition of images or fears of violating monotheism that impeded the Jews from recompensing Herod's benefaction. Josephus mentions significantly that the all-important benefaction inscription was withheld from Herod.<sup>88</sup> Moreover Josephus's choice of phrasing, that the Jews ‘preferred righteousness to glory’, implies that this was not just a separation from specific types of requitals, that is, images or memorials, but a broad cultural rejection of the Greco-Roman idea of reciprocity itself. There is an implicit contrast in Josephus's mind between the Roman and Jewish mindsets. Jews, unlike their Gentile counterparts, did not know that a response was implicitly being demanded of them. Therefore Herod was left unrecompensed—just as the Emperor Augustus had been in Philo's account.

A source corroborating Josephus's account comes from a phrase in the Gospel of Luke, which declares, ‘Those in authority over them [the Gentiles] are called benefactors [εὐεργέται]’ (Lk. 22.25). Luke here marks out the appellation ‘benefactor’ as a specifically Gentile one, the

87. All English translations of Josephus are taken from William Whiston (trans.), *Josephus the Complete Works* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998).

88. Memorial (μνημεῖον) is most likely being used here in the sense of a tangible memorial—as Josephus uses it a few lines before to describe the memorial he placed for his brother Phasaelus on the tower of Pharos (*Ant.* 16.144).

inference being, unless the distinction is a clumsy construct, that the role of a benefactor-ruler was an exclusively Gentile, and not Jewish, one. Herod's benefits were being directed towards a society unfamiliar with both the custom and ideology of reciprocity that governed their neighbours so prevalently.

The conclusions drawn from the literary evidence of Herod's problem of trying to get recognition from benefaction can be substantiated further, if more corroboration is needed, by considering the epigraphical evidence. So far ten extant inscriptions dedicated to Herod have been found.<sup>89</sup> Out of these only two find their provenance within Palestine. One is dedicated by a Roman Consul<sup>90</sup> and the other by a Herodian official, an ἀγορανόμος (market overseer).<sup>91</sup> No dedications have been found from the Jewish populace over whom Herod ruled and to whom he donated so attentively. This is yet another curious privation of euergetic evidence, and one that is made all the more remarkable when extant epigraphs honouring Herod from surrounding Greco-Roman provenances are considered. For instance an inscription from the Athenian people honouring Herod states:

[this is given by] the people to King Herod friend of Romans because of his good works and good will towards the city.<sup>92</sup>

And in another says:

The people for Herod the pious King and friend of the Emperor because of his moral excellence and good works.<sup>93</sup>

This evidence offers us a rare chance to directly substantiate Josephus's historical claims and our interpretation of them, namely that Herod turned his attention away from his subjects to those in surrounding areas (*Ant.* 16.159) because of the utter lack of Jewish response.

89. Peter Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999), pp. 203-11, catalogues them.

90. H.M. Cotton and J. Geiger, *Masada II: Latin and Greek Documents* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989), p. 133.

91. Y. Meshorer, 'A Stone Weight from the Reign of Herod', *IEJ* 20 (1970) pp. 97-98.

92. *OGIS* 414.

93. *SEG* XII 15. Other examples of inscriptions to Herod include those from Athens: *SEG* XII 150; *OGIS* 427; Delos: *OGIS* 417; Ashod: in Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews*, p. 204; Sia: *OGIS* 415; and Cos: *OGIS* 416.

In our final literary example, Josephus explains to his readers that to the Jews, ‘the reward of such as live exactly according to the laws is not silver or gold; it is not a wreath of olive branches... nor any such public signs of recognition’.<sup>94</sup>

As with Lk. 22.25, a dichotomy is presented where Jewish practice is specifically contrasted with Greco-Roman benefaction. The rewards listed by Josephus as not sought by Jews were those that were primarily linked with benefaction, especially ‘public signs of recognition’. Here, and in common with Philo, Josephus finds he has to explain the difference between rewards sought by Greco-Romans and those sought by Jews, a difference engrained into the very cultural fabric of Jewish society.<sup>95</sup> Even gracious benefactors such as Herod could not overcome Jewish negative attitudes to benefaction.

It is vitally important to appreciate the nuanced and complex reality that reciprocity in classical antiquity could exhibit. It was a far more intricate and multifaceted phenomenon than the present patronage model portrays. For instance, while Philo’s writings cast a disparaging shadow upon formal reciprocity systems such as patronage, his writings can also speak naturally and favourable of reciprocal demands at a lower abstraction. He said, for example, that even though the debt a child owes to his/her parents cannot be repaid, children are still subject to ‘the law of exchange (ἀντίδοσις)’; stating that ‘the greatest indignation is justified if children, because they are unable to make a complete return, refuse to make even the slightest effort’.<sup>96</sup>

Josephus could also speak effortlessly of reciprocal demands. His narration of the Galileans’ support for him is framed with its expectations: ‘I professed I was obliged to them for their readiness to serve me; and that I would more than requite their good will to me.’<sup>97</sup>

94. Josephus, *Apion* 2.217.

95. Rajak, ‘Benefactors’, p. 373, notes that *Apion* 2.217 marks out a ‘sharpening distinction between Jews and pagans’.

96. Philo, *Dec.* 112, 115.

97. Josephus, *Life*, 103. See Josephus, *Ant.* 261-262 for a further example. Some have tried to argue that the Galileans were operating as Josephus’s clients: e.g. Michael Strangelove, ‘Patron–Client Dynamics in Flavius Josephus’ *Vita: A Cross-Disciplinary Analysis*, MA Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1992; S. Schwartz, ‘Josephus in Galilee: Rural Patronage and Social Breakdown’, in F. Parente and J. Sievers (eds.), *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith* (SPB, 41; Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 290-306. Note, however, Goodman’s critical interaction with Schwartz’s arguments. A more

The inability to accommodate the above statements within the confines of either euergetism or patronage does not remove them from the general and ubiquitous laws of reciprocity that governed the classical mindset and that still needs to be fully unpacked.

*Patronage and Euergetism in Judaism: The Cultural Evidence*

To properly understand why Jewish society seems to have largely developed without the reciprocal dynamic that most of its neighbours had, certain cultural mechanisms need to be examined. It is important to realize that both patronage and euergetism required certain parameters to exist in their respective societies, and that they were conversely vulnerable to erosion when other conditions came into play.

With regards to patronage, one practice that pre-empted it was the establishment of institutionalized and pervasive charity. It was the absence of charity, social welfare or a formalized banking system, combined with extreme penury, that meant that patronage, despite its asymmetrical demands, was a viable, workable system. David Gilmore characterizes patronage as emerging from a broad Mediterranean society of:

undercapitalized agrarian civilizations. ...There is little social mobility. Power is highly concentrated in a few hands, and the bureaucratic functions of the state are poorly developed. These conditions are of course ideal for the development of patron-client ties and dependency ideology... Patronage relationships provide a consistent ideological support for social inequality and dependency throughout the Mediterranean area.<sup>98</sup>

W.W. Tarn also states broadly that ‘philanthropy in our sense—organized aid of the poor by the rich—was almost unknown’.<sup>99</sup> It was the crowds of the poverty-stricken who formed the base of patronage,

faithful rendering of Josephus’s role is to take his relationship with the Galileans as Josephus presents it—that of a governor (στρατηγός) ruling over a populace; e.g. *Ant.* 198, 261-262; *Life* 103.

98. Gilmore, *Honor and Shame*, p. 71. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, p. 70, states that in patronage ‘an elite male might be given a high political office. But such benefactions would not serve a poor person seeking survival. This person would look for food and money.’

99. W.W. Tarn and G.T. Griffith, *Hellenistic Civilization* (London: Methuen, 3rd edn, 1961), p. 19.

and more than likely prompted the social construct from its inception. The social-scientist reasons that once these conditions have had this result in Roman (and Greek) society they must *ipso facto* have the same results in all cultures surrounding the Mediterranean basin, including the Jewish one.<sup>100</sup>

While it is true that the vast majority of the Roman world did configure itself in such a way, Jewish culture did not. Broadly speaking, Jewish culture possessed a charitable dynamic that operated throughout its society. Jewish communal charity and nationalism has received increasing attention from scholars as a stable and distinctive element of Jewish society.<sup>101</sup>

While nationalism was not, it seems, shared in the same way by other contemporary cultural and ethnic groups in the Roman Empire, the Jewish sense of a wider nationalism can be seen in near maturity.<sup>102</sup> While other ethnic and cultural groups became assimilated over several generations into the broader Roman culture, large numbers of Jews remained within their distinctive community and social structures, in some sense a culture subset within a larger host culture.

The emphasis on community giving is, of course, arguably akin to euergetism. However, this initial similarity masks several significant underlying differences. While euergetism was primarily a mechanism of political and social expediency, Jewish communal benefaction was practiced, largely, with no anticipation of reciprocity or public honour—often being carried out anonymously. Later Jewish writings still preserve the emphasis that the benefactor's identity should be kept secret so as not to shame the recipient.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, while the normal Greco-Roman attitude to the poor was generally scornful, help only being given if a client relationship could be reciprocated,<sup>104</sup> charity in

100. See, for example, Hanson and Oakman, *Palestine in the Time of Jesus*, p. 67, who outline models of patronage from cross-cultural and Roman sources, arguing and applying 'these charts [that] help to envision the structures of power operating in first-century Palestine'.

101. E.g. Gildas H. Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine: First Three Centuries C.E.* (Near Eastern Studies, 23; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

102. Goodblatt, *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism*.

103. E.g. *Ket.* 67, *Hag.* 5a, *Šeq.* v.7.

104. I am not denying that Greco-Romans could be truly benevolent, or that Jews might give for their own calculated gain. Jewish oppression of the poor by the



its modern sense was uniquely Jewish (and later also Christian).<sup>105</sup> The aiding of the poverty-stricken was a stricture of divine law impressed upon the minds and finances of all faithful Jews across the reaches of the Empire.

The author of *Ben Sira* draws these themes together, instructing his readers:

do not neglect a beggar in distress, do not turn your face away from the poor...for if in the resentment of his soul he curses you, his Creator will hear his prayer (Sir. 4.4, 6).

And:

to a poor man, however, be generous; keep him not waiting for your alms; because of the precept (Sir. 29.8).

Charity was not expected to be practiced by the wealthy alone but by all in the community. Mark 12.41-44/Lk. 20.45-47; 21.1-4, for example, taps into this in the story known as ‘the widow’s mite’: ‘a poor widow...out of her poverty has put in everything she has, all she had to live on’ (Mk 12.42, 44). Writers such as Josephus could record that Jews uniformly had ‘to offer goods to beggars and cripples, and to give decent burial to the unclaimed dead’.<sup>106</sup> Josephus’s account of Jewish burial of unclaimed dead is especially interesting, for *collegiae* were prevalent throughout the Roman Empire, formed to ensure proper burial for their members. Jews were, at least by some standards, expected to render this service to members of their community purely because they were fellow Jews. In this regard we can point to supporting epigraphical evidence, such as:

rich still existed quite apart from the patronage system—as witnessed by comments in Sir. 34.24-27.

105. Mark R. Cohen, *Poverty and Charity in the Jewish Community of Medieval Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 7, puts it, ‘when the pagan Roman world knew nothing of a concept of benevolence based on pity for the poor, Jews, out of empathy, organized communal relief efforts so that those in need would not starve, lack basic clothing, or go without shelter’. Ze’ev Safrai, *The Economy of Roman Palestine* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 50, refers to the Jewish charity system as a ‘social welfare system...[with] a great degree of social awareness and responsibility’.

106. Josephus, *Apion* 2.2.

This is the tomb of Ioulios...and of his wife Ioulia...and of their children, while living. The Jews in Ephesus are charged with care of this tomb.<sup>107</sup>

Jewish assistance to the poor was also institutionalized through regulations such as a tithe for the poor, with a supplementary second tithe every third and sixth Sabbatical cycle. Both the Mishnah and Tosefta still describe the public collection of gifts for the poor, and of the communal distribution of food and clothes. The Mishnah for example expected that a beggar should expect to receive ‘one loaf worth a *pundion* at the rate of four *se’n* (13-18 litres).<sup>108</sup>

Archaeology has furnished us with evidence that this precept was not just idealized in literature but practiced as routine.<sup>109</sup> Occasional inscriptions describe the *tamhui*, a daily distribution of food for the wayfarer, and the *quppa*, the weekly dole of bread or cash for resident local indigents.<sup>110</sup>

The comprehensive differences in scope and purpose between Jewish and Greco-Roman benefaction goes some way to explain the fervent polemic against civic benefactors that Jews could make and why Jewish culture was both alien, and on occasion hostile, to Greco-Roman practice. The two cultures’ systems and ideologies behind giving were fundamentally incompatible—despite seeming superficial similarities.

107. Cited in Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 44-45. Trebilco notes that the Jew Ioulios ‘entrusts the care of his tomb to the local Jewish community...clearly the community is seen as one group’ (p. 45).

108. See, for example, *m. Pe’ah* 8.7. Hamel, *Poverty and Charity*, p. 248, determines from this that the poor would receive on average around 900 grams of wheat, 1 litre of dried figs or substitute, 40 grams of wine and 20 grams of oil.

109. Just how many people were in a position to give any level of charity is difficult to ascertain. Steven J. Freisen, ‘Poverty in Pauline Studies: Beyond the So-called New Consensus’, *JSNT* (2004), pp. 323-61, estimates around 32% of the population to be in a position to do so. His figures have sparked some debate by their seemingly arbitrary nature. A range of around 32%-45% is a fairly reliable range for those we should consider living above subsistence level across the Roman Empire. The example of the widow in Mk 12.41-44, however, suggests that even those below the subsistence level could feel that the mandate to give applied equally to them as to their wealthier neighbours.

110. See Mark R. Cohen, ‘Feeding the Poor and Clothing the Naked: The Cairo Geniza’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35 (2005), pp. 407-21 (412).

Cultural practices such as charity are understandably hard to quantify, and, by necessity, can only be spoken of in the broadest of terms. Yet if the above schema is understood as fundamentally accurate it helps resolve why the presence of beggars in antiquity was considered to be a distinctly Jewish phenomenon.<sup>111</sup> The Roman writer Martial, for example, singled out Jewish beggars specifically as one reason for his leaving crowded Rome.<sup>112</sup> Even as late as the fourth century CE, the Emperor Julian protested that the scale of charity offered by Jews and Christians meant that they: ‘support not only their own poor but ours as well; all men see that our people lack aid from us’.<sup>113</sup> The impoverished Jew did not look to a patron, as his/her Roman counterparts did, but to the community. The inbuilt expectation of charity without structured reciprocal demands or prolonged relationship would likely mean that any attempts to engage large numbers of Jews in a patron–client relationship would have been resisted as a form of veiled exploitation. The potential of the patron–client relationship to establish itself in Jewish society was bypassed from the start. Patronage’s spread beyond the governing classes would be severely limited. Only as a tool for political expediency should we expected it would find the ground to take root—a tension confirmed in Josephus’s writings and life.

The temple offering also conformed to these idiosyncratic Jewish lines. Donations were bestowed anonymously via a communal offering box,<sup>114</sup> and it was a duty incumbent upon all observant male Jews to give. In one example from the Diaspora, Philo records that the Jews corporately sent money to the Temple by collecting from:

111. E.g. Juvenal, *Sat.* 3.14-16, Martial, *Epig.* 12.57. Goodman, *Jerusalem and Rome*, p. 235, also comments, ‘It was almost a cliché among Greek and Latin authors...that Jews stuck together in their synagogues, and that these synagogues were full of beggars’.

112. See V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2nd edn, 1999), p. 521.

113. Julian, *Epistle* 22, 430D.

114. For example the Gospel of Mark records that Jesus ‘watched the people putting money into the offering boxes. Many rich people put in large sums’ (Mk 12.41). Mikael Tellbe, ‘Temple Tax as a Pre-70 Identity Marker’, in Jostein Adna (ed.), *Formation of the Early Church* (WUNT, 183; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), pp. 22-44 (27-28), describes the public nature of the temple tax offering.

all men every year, from twenty years old and upwards, to bring their first fruits to the temple...there is in almost every city a storehouse for the sacred things in which, out of custom, people go and deposit their first fruits.<sup>115</sup>

A second useful cultural practice we can briefly touch upon to disclose the patronage dynamic at work in Greco-Roman culture was the manumission of slaves. Manumission was the ultimate act of generosity and Roman law even mandated the patronage relationship as a stipulation of freedom.<sup>116</sup> Freed slaves were obliged to enter into a patron–client relationship with their former master, continuing to work for a specified number of days in the capacity of a client each month or year. If these Roman freedmen/women failed to carry out their duties adequately, or were disrespectful towards their new patron, they were to be formally charged with ingratitude.<sup>117</sup>

However, in the Jewish sources that detail manumission, the patronage relationship that should be anticipated had there been a parallel reciprocal dynamic at work among the Jews again finds no expression. In general, Jewish slaves once freed had no further ties and certainly little expectation to be retained in the role of a client.<sup>118</sup> They were in theory completely free from any residual bonds or expectations.

115. Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.76, 78. Viviane Baesens, ‘Royal Taxation and Religious Tribute in Hellenistic Palestine’, in Peter F. Bang, M. Ikeguchi and H.G. Ziche (eds.), *Ancient Economies, Modern Methodologies: Archaeology, Comparative History, Models and Institutions* (Bari, Italy: Edipuglia, 2006), pp. 179-200 (196), rightly notes that such Jewish religious taxes had a significant ‘social aspect as a redistributive system. The considerable surpluses...served to finance the municipal institutions, and building of Jerusalem and those of the walled towns of Jewish territory. They were used to repair the roads of the country and to fill the public ritual baths and the cisterns for the pilgrims. The taxes also gave funds to charity.’

116. Examples of this relationship can be seen in Suetonius, *Aug.* 67, and Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.26-27.

117. E.g. Augustus, *Lex Aelia Sentia* and Tacitus, *Ann.* 26-27.

118. This was not always the case. E. Leigh Gibson, *The Jewish Manumission Inscriptions of the Bosphorus Kingdom* (TSAJ, 75; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), argues that the Bosphorus Jews were highly Hellenized and that their manumission practices largely confirmed to Greco-Roman norms.

*Jewish Culture, Reciprocity and Patronage: The Epigraphical Evidence*

While the literary and cultural evidence alone is sufficient to cast serious doubt on any substantial engagement in Jewish society with patronage and euergetism, any discussion must consider the epigraphical evidence, for the two are inextricably interrelated. From building dedications and contributions to corn supplies, manumission and gravestones, epigraphs were fashioned to leave a tangible mark of gratitude to benefactors and patrons. The proliferation of inscriptions, in particular encomium-styled epigraphs, found around the Mediterranean from the first and second centuries CE led Ramsay MacMullen to coin the phrase ‘the epigraphical habit’ to describe the phenomenon.<sup>119</sup>

The correlation between patronage, euergetism and epigraph production has led Zeba Crook to say:

Were it only on the basis of literary sources, such as Aristotle, Seneca, or Philo, that we were able to reconstruct ancient patronage and benefaction, one might fairly question whether and to what extent an elite literary ideal coincided with the lived reality. But non-literary sources, such as the inscriptions and papyri, among other ancient material realia, illustrate abundantly that patronage and benefaction were indeed a fact of daily life, well-known and widely practiced.<sup>120</sup>

With the required epigraphical evidence in place the social-scientist is free to continue unimpeded, and with reinforced legitimacy, on the quest of assigning patronage to the New Testament and its world.

Yet a critical caveat needs to be attached to the statements of Crook and others.<sup>121</sup> Epigraphic evidence cannot be demonstrated for Jewish society. While it is true that Jews did not always remain impervious to the epigraphical habit, especially during the later Roman Empire and early Byzantine periods, from the late republic to mid-empire hardly any extant Jewish epigraphs noting patronage or euergetism have survived.<sup>122</sup> The near dearth of Jewish encomium-styled epigraphs during

119. Ramsay MacMullen, ‘The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire’, *AJP* 103 (1982), pp. 233-46.

120. Crook, *Reconceptualising Conversion*, p. 91.

121. Elliot, ‘Patronage and Clientage’, p. 144, also mentions ‘the abundant literary and epigraphic witness to this ancient institution’ and says, ‘the sources attesting to it are both literary and epigraphical’. Yet all the examples he cites are of Roman provenance.

122. Studies dedicated to Jewish benefaction epigraph production are limited, but those that have been carried out firmly deny advocates of the patronage model

epigraphy's golden age must surely reveal a conscious abstention. The custom was too prominent and normative a Greco-Roman convention for us to conclude otherwise. Chancey, in his study on the influence of Hellenism in Galilee, is trenchant in stating:

what makes the absence of these various types of inscriptions so striking is that one would have encountered them regularly in some cities such as Gersa. The lack of euergetic inscriptions, in particular, raises the question of whether the Galileans largely rejected this aspect of Roman culture.<sup>123</sup>

This establishes an important distinction, one that means that we cannot facily assume that Jewish culture replicated Greco-Roman tendencies, no matter how prevalent they were in surrounding societies.

From 100 BCE to 100 CE, only around five Jewish encomium-styled epigraphs can now be identified.<sup>124</sup> Aside from the staggering disparity in epigraphy, what is also so revealing is that while Greco-Roman epigraphs widely conformed to the near formulaic pattern of encomium, the few Jewish honorary inscriptions we have exhibit a variety of forms in assigning honour. I will argue that this is most likely suggestive of a

their presumed epigraphical support. Rajak, 'Benefactors', pp. 388-89, provides one of the only focused studies on such Jewish benefaction epigraphs, examining their presence in the Diaspora from the first century BCE to the early third century CE. Rajak concludes, as I do that here, that 'it is hard to believe that the absence in the Jewish epigraphy of virtually all the languages in which the transaction of euergetism can be conducted can be no accident'. Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism, 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), p. 400, also concluded from the epigraphical evidence that only in late Roman and early Byzantine times had Palestinian Jews adopted the epigraphical habit and the practice of euergetism. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture*, pp. 148-50, briefly considers the practice in Galilee in the first century CE.

123. Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture*, p. 150.

124. Baruch Lifshitz, *Donateurs et Fondateurs dans les Synagogues Juives* (Paris: Gabalda, 1967), collected around 112 throughout antiquity; however, most are now assigned later dates than those he presented. See the *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis* series (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck) for an ongoing collection of ancient Jewish epigraphs. A sixth epigraph that might have been considered here is a sundial donated to Fayum by a Jew named Eleazer, a military ἡγεμῶν c. 200 BCE. It is likely that the benefaction inscription was provided by the local community or the military installation at Fayum, not from the Jewish community, though see Horbury and Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions*, pp. 198-99.

culture broadly unsure of the margins of acceptability in its assent to what had been until then a foreign practice.

Of the five Jewish benefaction inscriptions that fit within our time period, three derive from the Jewish community of Berenice (located in modern Libya)—two of which we will now examine.<sup>125</sup>

The first inscription, dated to 24-25 CE, catalogues several benefactors to the synagogue, with special mention accorded to a certain Marcus Tittius:

....since Marcus Tittius son of Sextus (from the tribe) Aemilia, a good and noble man, came to the province on affairs of government for administration, provided for their administration in a humane and noble way....providing an administration well-disposed towards the Jews of our community too, both as a body and individually, he did not neglect doing things worthy of his personal virtue. Therefore it seemed right to the archons and to the community of Jews in Berencie that he be praised and crowned by name at each Sabbath and new moon with an olive crown and a wooden fillet; and that the archons inscribe the decree on a stele of Parian marble and place it in the most conspicuous spot of the amphitheatre.<sup>126</sup>

While this is a Jewish inscription it should also be noted that its main recipient is a Roman citizen in Berenice on imperial business. The rewards are also stereotypically Roman, both by the virtue Marcus Tittius is credited with and the tangible rewards given; the public announcements of generosity, presentation of a wreath of olive branches and a wooden fillet and finally the inscription itself.<sup>127</sup>

The second inscription from Berenice, also dated to the first century CE, bears a heavy resemblance to the previous inscription by providing a near duplication of its honours. Once more the recipient is a Roman,<sup>128</sup> a certain Decimus Valerius Dionysios, who was rewarded for ‘doing whatever good he can’ and was honoured with a crown, a

125. The third inscription will be discussed below.

126. Text found in Lee I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 101.

127. Martha W. Baldwin Bowsky, ‘M. Tittius Sex.f. Aem. and the Jews of Berenice (Cyrenaica)’, *AJP* 108 (1987), pp. 495-510; she also comments that the inscription provides ‘a set of peculiarly Greek honors decreed in a quintessentially Greek structure’. Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, p. 98, also concludes that ‘together with the Greek language...the ways in which honor was bestowed—all [this] points to a community comfortably ensconced in its larger Greco-Roman milieu’.

128. See Levine, *Ancient Synagogue*, pp. 97-98

wooden fillet, public mention at each assembly and finally by the inscription itself.<sup>129</sup>

The pattern of honours and euergetic epithets presented in the Berenice inscriptions reveals a community at ease with Greco-Roman expectations that were felt upon the receipt of benefits. Such apparent ease is not replicated by any Jewish community beyond this one.

A third inscription is from the Jewish community resident in Ackmonia (modern Turkey), dated to the end of the first century BCE. The praise is subdued but is somewhat redolent of the Berenice inscriptions' structure and tone:

The meeting-place, which was built by Julia Severa, was renovated by P Tyrronius Klados, head-of-the-synagogue (archisynagōgos) for life, Lucius son of Lucious, also head-of-the-synagogue, and Publius Zotikos, archon, from their own resources and from the common deposit. They decorated the walls and ceiling, made the windows secure and took care of all the rest of the decoration. The synagogue honoured them with a golden shield because of their virtuous disposition, goodwill and diligence in relation to the synagogue.<sup>130</sup>

The initial donor of the synagogue, Julia Severa, is relatively well documented in classical sources. She and her family feature in several other inscriptions and in one we significantly learn of her role as a priestess in the Imperial cult, thereby largely dismissing previous speculation of her being a Jewess.<sup>131</sup> The contemporary benefactors' honours, however, elicit another Jewish reaction to euergetic expectations. This time only a few standard epithets of Greco-Roman virtue are accorded to the benefactors and the praise is far more muted in comparison with the Berenice inscriptions. The only tangible honours supplied are a golden shield and the inscription itself.

The final euergetic text of Jewish origin we shall consider is the so-called *Theodotos inscription*, unearthed by Raimond Weill in Jerusalem, and dated around the first century CE. The inscription states:

Theodotos, the son of Vettenos, priest and archisynagogos, son of an archisynagogos, grandson of an archisynagogos, built the synagogue for

129. Text in G.H.R. Horsley and A.L. Conolly, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. IV. *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1979* (Sydney: Macquarie University, 1987), p. 203.

130. Horsley and Conolly, *New Documents*, IV, p. 101.

131. See a discussion in Stephen G. Wilson, *Leaving the Fold: Apostates and Defectors in Antiquity* (Minneapolis: Augsburg–Fortress, 2004), p. 62.



Torah-reading and for the teaching of the commandments. Furthermore, the hostel and the chambers, and the water installation for lodging needy strangers. Its foundation stone was laid by his ancestors, the elders and Simonides.

Two anomalous features of the inscription are germane for this discussion: first, that an honorary inscription of Palestinian provenance has been found, and, secondly, the use of the *archisynagogos* office during this time period. Opinion over the office of *archisynagogos* (ἀρχισυνάγωγος) has fluctuated over the past few decades. What is incontrovertible, however, is that the term was a technical one, denoting a prominent office within the synagogue, and adopted from the Greco-Roman idiom of benefaction.<sup>132</sup> Literary sources, encompassing Jewish, Christian and Gentile writings, are in agreement in presenting the *archisynagogos* with a primarily religious/representative role in the Jewish community. The epigraphical evidence, however, tends to present the *archisynagogos* as a generous benefactor, with little apparent indications of a religious or community role. The most plausible solution to the conflict has been to combine both elements, that is, to see the *archisynagogos* as primarily a community leader, chosen as such due to his/her prominence and standing within society— both Jewish and Gentile.<sup>133</sup> Given this, the *archisynagogos* was most likely to be a person of some means, respect and position in the Jewish community, who would have been expected to make contributions to the synagogue's upkeep.<sup>134</sup> For the first century CE, most of this is an extraneous discussion. With the Theodotos inscription we are witnessing the embryonic stage of the office's nascence in Jewish culture, an office that would in future become a reasonably stable presence in Jewish communities.

The Theodotos inscription is a perfect case in point to demonstrate the *archisynagogos*'s migration from the Greco-Roman to the Jewish world. The Theodotos family name, Vettenos, most likely marks them

132. See Tessa Rajak and David Noy, 'Archisynagogoi: Office, Title and Social Status in the Greco-Jewish Synagogue', *JRS* 83 (1993), pp. 75-93, reprinted in Rajak, *Jewish Dialogue*, pp. 393-429; and Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church*, pp. 127-31.

133. See Rajak and Noy, 'Archisynagogoi'.

134. Clarke, *Serve the Community of the Church*, p. 129, says, 'We regularly see that the title of *archisynagogos* was conferred on those who were significant benefactors who had provided for the community out of their personal wealth'.

as descendants of Jews brought back to Rome by Pompey in 63 BCE. This potentially clarifies two abnormal features of the inscription. Although the title *archisynagogos* is found surprisingly early in Palestine, given the hereditary nature of the Vettonos's office, the innovation is an immigrant one established in Rome and transferred to Palestine. It does, however, reveal that Jews such as Theodotos, and those in this particular community, were starting to feel comfortable with such a role and with some of the customs surrounding it. It does corroborate the posited lack of euergetic honours in Jewish society, for beyond the inscription itself there are no honours listed as provided at all. It is completely devoid of even the most basic encomium epithets or rewards. When this is weighed against the normalized euergetic practices found everywhere throughout the Empire, we are forced to conclude this was a conscious act of detachment, or an absence born out of cultural ignorance of the practice. This lack of supplementary honours places the Theodotos inscription at the opposite end of the spectrum from the Berenice inscriptions.

The epigraphical evidence suggests several conclusions that substantiate the hypothesis of the lack of formal public Jewish reciprocity. First, that so few Jewish benefaction inscriptions should have emerged from this time period speaks of a large-scale rejection, conscious or not, of a prevailing cultural norm.<sup>135</sup> The Jewish population of the eastern Empire made up to, at the most generous account, 25% of the population. Had their reciprocal practice and expectations paralleled even faintly the Greco-Roman practice, the epigraphical evidence should be substantial. As it stands, this assembled group of benefaction inscriptions are anomalous. This provides tangible support for Josephus's remarks in *Apion* 2.217 about how the Jewish mindset towards rewards contrasted with Greco-Roman expectations of public commemoration.

Secondly, the spectrum of responses from either full acceptance of euergetic norms to rejection of them suggests that a degree of caution was aroused about exactly how far to assent to this new practice. It was a new and tentative venture, and the boundaries were still unsure.

Finally we must note that most of the benefaction inscriptions were primarily in response to benefaction by a Greco-Roman—or in the case of Theodotos, by a Roman Jewish family. It should therefore be at least

135. See again Chancey, *Greco-Roman Culture*, p. 150.

queried whether the honours delivered were carried out to conform to the expectations of these Roman benefactors, rather than organically emanating from the communities' standard practice.

That the former might be a reasonable assumption finds support from the third Berenice inscription.<sup>136</sup> This inscription, dated around 55 CE, is a brief summary of donations to the synagogue made by fifteen individuals. Unlike the other inscriptions from the Berenice Jewish community, there is only a simple list of names and the money that they contributed, with no honours being mentioned at all. This marked discrepancy in euergetic practice emanating from the same community during the same time period, can plausibly be explained by noting that there is no mention of a Roman or Greek benefactor requiring thanking but just of members and officials of the synagogue itself.<sup>137</sup> If the nature of the recipients explains the variance, this would lead us to conclude that the euergetic honours witnessed in the other two Berenice inscriptions were steps to satisfy the expectations of their primary Roman benefactors according to their own cultural mores. This was, however, not a custom required or offered to native members of the community.

Other evidence might also be considered to bolster this speculation. Hezser, for instance, in her study of Jewish donor inscriptions throughout antiquity, picked up on an intriguing pattern of linguistic choice. She notes that while large individual donations were almost entirely recorded in Greek, communal inscriptions and smaller donations were instead recorded in Hebrew:

Communal inscriptions in Hebrew [were] as low as half a denarius...[donors in the Greek inscriptions] have donated entire mosaics, founded and renovated whole parts of synagogue buildings...it is quite obvious, then, that the wealthy donors were usually commemorated in Greek... only two collective inscriptions are in Greek, whereas numerous such inscriptions, honouring a set of anonymous donors, are amongst the Aramaic/Hebrew synagogue inscriptions.<sup>138</sup>

While Hezser does not make the connection, the evidence assembled here allows us to suggest that this might be a vestige from two contrasting methods of donation—one essentially euergetic and the other

136. *CJZC* 72.

137. Ten are named as archons and one as a priest. The remaining seven are recorded without any titles.

138. Hezser, *Jewish Literacy*, p. 402.

communal. That large donations by individuals were commemorated almost exclusively in Greek likely points to the ultimate derivation of the practice that these benefactors were emulating as a Greek, euergetic, one. Meanwhile, communal donations remained to be marked in Hebrew or Aramaic. Over time these two competing sources of benefaction retained their respective linguistic distinctions and this, I believe, explains this peculiar pattern of history.

### *Conclusion*

That modern scholarship has misjudged the diversity of reciprocal practice in antiquity is undeniable.<sup>139</sup> The significance of differing reciprocal practices, such as dyadic patronage and corporate euergetism, has been obscured. In particular, over-optimism about the model's ubiquitous reach has most erred in assigning 'patronage' to Jewish culture and texts. Jewish evidence shows little of the requisite signs of patronage or euergetism. The large-scale Jewish abstention from euergetism and patronage can be witnessed from a variety of sources as diffuse in provenance as 2 Maccabees, Josephus, Philo and Luke's Gospel. The continuity of the themes and issues raised from Philo and Josephus also demonstrates how consistent and extensive was this abstention. Significantly, the evidence from literary sources about the status of 'patronage' in Jewish society is substantiated by the epigraphical evidence, which offers further evidence of a broad lack, or hesitancy towards, patronage and euergetic practice. It is this cumulative and multifaceted corroboration of evidence of Jewish abstinence from Greco-Roman reciprocal practice that makes the argument so compelling.

### *Considerations for Future Research*

While application of the current patronage model to Jewish and even Greek society needs to stop immediately, the vitality of scholarly

139. It must also be emphasized that not every application of patronage has necessarily been a wrong. For example, Andrew D. Clarke, *Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Socio-Historical and Exegetical Study of I Corinthians 1–6* (AGAJU, 18; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), pp. 93-94, presents, as far as I am concerned, a historically and exegetically reasoned designation of patronage in 1 Cor. 1.10-17.

enquiry into ancient reciprocity should remain unabated. Indeed, the study of reciprocity in antiquity should be enhanced once the stranglehold of patronage has been removed. Future research should seek to establish the range of differing reciprocal practices and their significance to their host cultures. In particular the need for Danker's proposed international project on ancient reciprocity should be considered of particular priority.<sup>140</sup>

In this regard, I believe that both the New Testament corpus and Second Temple Jewish society offer some of the most fertile fields for such endeavours. One enterprise might choose to consider whether the frequent presentation of euergetic practices outlined in the most Greco-Roman oriented Gospel, Luke (Lk. 7.2-5; 8.41; 22.25), and their absence in the most Jewish oriented Gospel, Matthew (Mt. 8.5-9; 9.18,<sup>141</sup> 20.25), is coincidence, or verification of their differing cultural contexts—and of the hypothesis argued here. It is these sorts of questions that are now allowed the freedom to emerge from the text and need to be posed and seriously considered.

140. See n. 10.

141. Matthew here uses a non-technical term to describe this leader (ἀρχων). In Lk. 8.41, however, the title ἀρχων συναγωγῆς is used; a term with strong euergetic connotations—as I noted with regards to the Theodotos inscription.

frame, but expands his study to include other facets of patronage and benefaction which influenced Christian identity.<sup>4</sup> Christians had found a way to function as benefactors and patrons within their own community. God's people, following a transformed version of patron-client relationships, live in a godly way by imitating and overturning common conceptions of patronage.<sup>31</sup> E.g., Ian Sloan, "The Greatest and the Youngest: Greco-Roman Reciprocity in the Farewell Address, Luke 22:24-30," *Studies in Religion* 22 (1993): 63-73. Lull adds some literary evidence to his discussion. They derive their understanding of patronage and benefaction from the same pool of resources from which Moxnes draws.<sup>44</sup> Neither scholar draws upon the advances in classical. Phoebe; Benefaction; Reciprocity; Patronage. Restricted Access. Get Access to Full Text. This article re-examines the meaning of the title *diakonos*, given to Phoebe in Rom 16:2 commonly understood in contemporary scholarship as presenting Phoebe as Paul's patron. This position is challenged with reference to recent studies which argue for broadening our understanding of ancient reciprocity beyond the definitions of a patron-client relationship, and also by re-evaluating the semantic range of *diakonos*. It argues that we should see Phoebe and Paul's relationship as working within a general reciprocity dynamic of benefaction, rather than within the specific relationship of the Erlend D. MacGillivray, "Re-Evaluating Patronage and Reciprocity in Antiquity and New Testament Studies." Martin M. Culy, "Double Case Constructions in Koine Greek." Mark A. Jennings, "Patronage and Rebuke in Paul's Persuasion in 2 Corinthians 8-9." David Lincicum, "The Origin of 'Alpha and Omega' (Revelation 1.8; 21.6; 22.13): A Suggestion." AWOL is the successor to Abzu, a guide to networked open access data relevant to the study and public presentation of the Ancient Near East and the Ancient Mediterranean world, founded at the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago in 1994. Together they represent the longest sustained effort to map the development of open digital scholarship in any discipline.