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ABSTRACT

HOSPITALITY VERSUS PATRONAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF  
SOCIAL DYNAMICS IN THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

by

Igor Lorencin

Adviser: Robert M. Johnston

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: HOSPITALITY VERSUS PATRONAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF SOCIAL DYNAMICS IN THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

Name of researcher: Igor Lorencin

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Date completed: July 2007

### Problem

This investigation focuses on social dynamics in the third epistle of John. In the context of 3 John hospitality and patronage seem to be opposed as two non-compatible models of behavior. In what sense they are different and what makes them non-compatible in a church setting is the main focus of this research.

### Method

A social approach is utilized in this investigation for the purpose of understanding the social system, values, and circumstances that shaped the events of 3 John. I first collect evidence to explain the ancient customs of hospitality and patronage in order to

create a model for each. In the final step I contrast the two models. This exercise helps to visualize the differences and non-compatibility between the two models.

### Results

Hospitality is a host-guest relationship between non-kin individuals who differentially alternate their roles by practicing balanced reciprocity, which brings them into a state of equality. On the other hand, patronage is a reciprocal patron-client relationship based on social inequality of the parties involved, where the patron uses his power to benefit his client as well as to benefit himself through that relationship, and the client looks for ways to satisfy his own needs, while being of use to his patron. Traditional ancient hospitality included an element of subordination of the host to the guest, as well as deference of the parties to each other. Patronage, however, selfishly exploits another person for the purpose of domination.

### Conclusion

In 3 John, Gaius has modeled hospitality and is encouraged to continue doing so. On the other hand, Diotrephes has followed patronage and his actions are condemned. The Elder wants to help avoid all the conflicts and power issues that result from the inequality inherent in patronal relationships. That is why he recommends traditional hospitality as a relationship of equality which increases networking, cultivates deference of the parties involved, and produces a healthy local church. In that sense 3 John presents the model of hospitality versus the model of patronage.



Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

HOSPITALITY VERSUS PATRONAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF  
SOCIAL DYNAMICS IN THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by  
Igor Lorencin  
July 2007

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HOSPITALITY VERSUS PATRONAGE: AN INVESTIGATION OF  
SOCIAL DYNAMICS IN THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

A dissertation  
presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

by

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To my parents:  
Julijana,  
who started teaching me  
Bible stories at an early age,  
and Miroslav,  
who was an example  
for me to follow.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed. Chicago, 1999
LS	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, and R. McKenzie. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , 9 <sup>th</sup> ed.
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley
<i>TLG</i>	<i>Treasury Lingua Graecae</i>
WB	Walter Bauer, <i>Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> , 5 <sup>th</sup> ed.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Description of Issues**

This investigation focuses on social dynamics<sup>1</sup> in the third epistle of John. Issues of hospitality seem to be the main interest of the author. This epistle is written by the Elder to a person named Gaius, encouraging him to show hospitality. Yet there is also a person called Diotrephes who denies hospitality, forbids willing members to show it, and throws people out of the church. Socially speaking, Diotrephes exhibits patronal behavior exercising power. His deeds have brought this local church into a conflict situation, which the Elder hopes to solve with his advice. The Elder praises the hospitable behavior of Gaius, while condemning the patronal dealings of Diotrephes. Hospitality and patronage, as two behavioral models discussed in 3 John, are the focus of this investigation.

#### **Problem**

In the context of the third epistle of John, hospitality and patronage seem to be opposed as two non-compatible models of behavior. The main question of this

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to my major professor, Dr. Robert M. Johnston, for introducing the term “social dynamics” into this investigation at the very beginning of my research.

investigation into the social dynamics of 3 John is in what sense these models are different and what makes them non-compatible in a church setting.

### **Procedure and Outline**

Since this is an investigation of social dynamics, it seems appropriate to devote the second part of this introductory chapter to briefly describing the various approaches of social studies in the area of New Testament today. I end the chapter with a description of the method I am using for the investigation of social dynamics in 3 John.

In chapter 2 I review published literature on 3 John. I present a chronological review of three major approaches that scholars have taken in investigating that epistle: ecclesiological, theological, and social. I end with some conclusions to the previous research on 3 John.

Chapter 3 deals with my own investigation of the text of 3 John and the role of persons introduced in that epistle. This leads to a discussion of the two major issues determining social dynamics in 3 John: hospitality and patronage.

Chapter 4 considers issues influencing and defining ancient hospitality. My aim is to add to our understanding of issues surrounding the custom of hospitality relevant to 3 John. I deal with the origin and development of hospitality, its definition and description, procedures in a hospitality encounter, as well as benefits and violations of hospitality. Then I explore three different Greek words used for hospitality in the context of 3 John. The chapter ends with a model of hospitality relevant for the context of 3 John.

An understanding of ancient patronage is the focus of chapter 5. In order to explore issues involved in the custom of patronage, I address its origin and development, its definition and description, as well as benefits and violations of patronal relationships.

Then I analyze patronage in the third epistle of John. The chapter ends with a model of patronage relevant to the circumstances of 3 John.

Finally, in chapter 6 the models of hospitality and patronage are contrasted. This concluding step enables us to see the differences in the models and to understand why they are non-compatible in a church setting, as well as why the Elder elevates one and condemns the other. I end with an application of the models to 3 John, as well as with some application for today.

### **Introduction to the Social Approach**

In considering the social dynamics of 3 John, a social approach<sup>1</sup> to New Testament studies is utilized. Such an approach seeks to understand the social system that surrounded a given New Testament community. Scholars interested in social issues believe that social systems shape and influence communities. Malina expresses it in the following terms:

Meaning inevitably derives from the general social system of the speakers of a language. What one says and what one means to say can thus often be quite different, especially for persons not sharing the same social system. . . . Any adequate understanding of the Bible requires some understanding of the social system embodied in the words that make up our sacred scripture.<sup>2</sup>

Elliott describes the goals of his social approach by noting that it “studies the text as both a reflection of and a response to the social and cultural settings in which the text was produced. Its aim is the determination of the meaning(s) explicit and implicit in the

---

<sup>1</sup> I am intentionally using the generic term “social approach” since I am willing to incorporate into it diverse directions that I will explain in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 1-2.

text, the meanings made possible and shaped by the social and cultural systems inhabited by both authors and intended audiences.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, an understanding of New Testament communities in their totality requires familiarity with their social system. The social approach allows readers to enter their social system and get a feel for the world in which they lived. Such information leads to a deeper understanding of the New Testament texts shaped by them.

Cultural anthropology can be added to the tools utilized by the social approach to New Testament studies. Van der Jagt is one of the scholars who attempts to apply anthropology to biblical studies. So he claims: “An anthropological approach to the Bible relates to the culture of the society that has produced the ancient texts. Anthropologists treat the Biblical text as a cultural system. Scholars who study an ancient Biblical text find themselves interpreting a cultural system that is quite distant from their own culture.”<sup>2</sup> Bridging the gap between cultural systems and seeking to understand the differences is the aim of an anthropological approach. Van der Jagt further explains how humans create cultural systems:

Humans cannot live without knowledge of the world they live in. They develop models of reality, which serve to describe and understand the world around them and guide their perception. Models are specific symbolic structures. . . . The human being can only know and be known within and through his symbolic universe. An anthropological approach to the Bible therefore aims at an understanding of the symbolic universe of the ancient writers of the Biblical texts. It attempts to bridge the gap between the ancient writer and modern man.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Krijn Van der Jagt, *Anthropological Approaches to the Interpretation of the Bible* (New York: United Bible Societies, 2002), 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

According to Van der Jagt, cultures use symbols in order to describe the reality around them.<sup>1</sup> Malina suggests the same idea with his definition of culture: “Culture is an organized system of symbols by which persons, things, and events are endowed with rather specific and socially shared meaning, feeling, and values. Cultures are said to ‘create’ patterns of shared meaning and feeling that combine to shape the social experience of a given group.”<sup>2</sup>

Van der Jagt further argues for the need to interpret symbols in order to understand a given culture: “The interpretation of cultural systems largely depends on the analysis of the meaning of symbols. The same applies to the interpretation of a text. A text is a specific symbolic structure, a unit of meaning that is part of a larger web of symbolic representation.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, if our goal is to understand the meaning of an ancient text, then symbols that are used to represent reality need to be decoded in the context of a given culture in which the text has been produced.

The social approach differs from other approaches to the New Testament studies in that it concentrates on the study of information gained from a social system. It is not intended to replace other approaches, but adds to them for the purpose of gaining a more complete understanding of the issues involved. Elliott sees his social approach as complementing “these other modes of critical analysis, all of which are designed to

---

<sup>1</sup> This view reflects a symbolic approach to cultural anthropology. It is one of several approaches to that field. My aim here is not to review the whole field of cultural anthropology with all its variations, but only those scholars who have tried to apply it to the area of biblical studies.

<sup>2</sup> Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Van der Jagt, *Anthropological Approaches to the Interpretation of the Bible*, 5.

analyze specific features of the biblical text.”<sup>1</sup> Scroggs’s elaboration on the same point is enlightening:

Interest in the sociology of early Christianity is no attempt to limit reductionistically the reality of Christianity to social dynamics; rather it should be seen as an effort to guard against a reductionism from the other extreme, a limitation of the reality of Christianity to an inner-spiritual, or objective cognitive system. In short, sociology of early Christianity wants to put body and soul together again.<sup>2</sup>

Malina emphasizes the same point, discussing his use of cultural anthropology for the purpose of enlightening the social world of the New Testament:

Models from cultural anthropology do not offer an alternative explanation of the Bible, nor do they do away with literary critical, historical, and theological study. Rather, they add a dimension not available from other approaches, along with a way to check on the hunches of interpreters when it comes to questions of what any given author said and meant to say.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in supplementing other existing approaches, the social approach enriches, broadens, and deepens our understanding of New Testament communities and their texts.

### **Developments in the Social Approach**

In the last thirty years we have seen an explosion of interest in social questions. That is not to say that there were no social concerns among theologians before the 1970s; but interest erupted at that time and started to shape a new approach. In Germany, Gerd Theissen is one of the initiators of interest in social issues and probably the most

---

<sup>1</sup> Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* , 7.

<sup>2</sup> Robin Scroggs, “The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament: The Present State of Research,” in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman K. Gottwald (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 339.

<sup>3</sup> Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, xi.

prominent representative.<sup>1</sup> In the United States in 1973, a working group sponsored by the American Academy of Religion and Society of Biblical Literature was formed for the purpose of exploring the social world of early Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Since then we have seen many contributions from the followers of the social approach to the New Testament.

The social approach has never been one with clearly defined rules and methods. Thomas F. Best, in his article “Sociological Study of the New Testament,” addresses this issue:

Of course there is no single methodology proper to NT sociology. In this it is quite different from older approaches, particularly form-criticism, which sprang virtually full grown at birth from one book, Bultmann’s *History of the Synoptic Tradition*. It is this systematic review of the corpus from a consistent theoretical and methodological perspective which is still lacking in NT sociology.<sup>3</sup>

Ten years later, Elliott expressed a similar opinion in his major work on what he calls the social-scientific approach, claiming that “there is as yet no universal consensus regarding presuppositions, procedures, or even nomenclature.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, in 1993 there was still no consensus regarding proper methodology, and such circumstances still prevail. In the 1970s researchers, relying on their own skills and intuition, started experimenting

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<sup>1</sup> By 1977 the German edition of Theissen’s book was already translated into English and published in the United States: Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). His first publication on social issues is: Gerd Theissen, “Wanderradikalismus: Literatursoziologische Aspekte der Überlieferung von Worten Jesu im Urchristentum,” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 70, no. 3 (1973).

<sup>2</sup> R. Susan Garrett, “Sociology of Early Christianity,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 90.

<sup>3</sup> F. Thomas Best, “The Sociological Study of the New Testament: Promise and Peril of a New Discipline,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36 (1983): 187.

<sup>4</sup> Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?*, 18.

with the approach. By the 1980s it was possible to distinguish the contours of the two sides of the social approach, with proponents of each side criticizing the other. One side is designated as the socio-historical<sup>1</sup> approach, while the other is called the social-scientific<sup>2</sup> approach.<sup>3</sup>

The socio-historical approach seeks to describe the first century A.D. through immersion into its culture,<sup>4</sup> while the social-scientific approach applies modern sociological models and theories to the society of the first century.<sup>5</sup> The discussion between the two sides of the social approach can be observed in book reviews of their major publications.<sup>6</sup> Some of that discussion will be seen in the example of 3 John with

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the proponents of the socio-historical approach are Abraham J. Malherbe, Wayne A. Meeks, David E. Fredrickson, Susan R. Garrett, and David G. Horrell.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the proponents of the social-scientific approach are Bruce J. Malina, John H. Elliott, and Philip F. Esler.

<sup>3</sup> Horrell is one of the most recent scholars to use the same terms for the description of the division in the social approach. He refers to the "firm division between two groups who have come to be referred to as 'the social historians' and 'the social scientists.'" G. David Horrell, "Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 78 (2000): 84.

<sup>4</sup> Fredrickson especially emphasizes exploration of ancient literature, archeology, and inscriptions. David E. Fredrickson, "Review of *The Social World of the First Christians: Essays in Honor of Wayne A. Meeks*," *Word & Word* 17 (1997): 450.

<sup>5</sup> Malina emphasizes application of modern theories and models. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 17-24.

<sup>6</sup> R. Susan Garrett, "Review of *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation*, by Bruce J. Malina," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988): 532-534; Bruce J. Malina, "Review of *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, by Wayne A. Meeks," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104 (1985): 346-349. The division is obvious in annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature as well, where it is possible to visit separate meetings of both sides to the social approach.



the contributions of Malherbe and Malina.<sup>1</sup> This discussion continues in the writings of Horrell and Esler.<sup>2</sup>

The dividing line between these two sides is the use of models. The socio-historical approach insists that models drawn from today's sociological investigations cannot be applied to ancient texts, since they were created in entirely different social circumstances. Garrett expresses the point:

It may be concluded, then, that investigative procedures that systematically compare early Christianity with models based on culturally-distant social groups will encounter the problem of incommensurability in heightened form: in order to make such comparisons work, both early Christianity and the movement (or "model") to which it is being compared must be treated at a high level of abstraction, which increases the risk that distortion of meaning will occur.<sup>3</sup>

Horrell further notes the danger "that a model-based approach can result in the evidence being fitted into a particular mold that insufficiently allows for variations across space and change over time."<sup>4</sup> Thus, instead of using models, social-historians focus rather on a social description of the first century A.D. produced by an immersion into ancient society. On the other hand, the social-scientific approach posits that every

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<sup>1</sup> Abraham J. Malherbe, "Inhospitability of Diotrephes," in *God's Christ and His People* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 222-232; Bruce J. Malina, "The Received View and What It Cannot Do: 3 John and Hospitality," *Semeia* (1986): 171-194.

<sup>2</sup> F. Philip Esler, "Models in New Testament Interpretation: A Reply to David Horrell," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 78 (2000): 107-113; Horrell, "Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler," 83-105.

<sup>3</sup> Garrett, "Sociology of Early Christianity," 93.

<sup>4</sup> G. David Horrell, "Social Sciences Studying Formative Christian Phenomena: A Creative Movement," in *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches*, ed. Anthony J. Blasi, Paul-André Turcotte, and Jean Duhaime (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002), 18.

researcher works with models, even though not every researcher is aware of models driving him or her. Thus, social-scientists believe that it is necessary to reveal and expose models when beginning research so that objectivity may be achieved and results later tested by readers.

Both sides of the social approach accuse their opponents of generalizations and ethnocentrism. Proponents of the social-scientific approach heavily criticize their opponents. For example, Malina criticized Meeks for generalizations, anachronism, and ethnocentrism.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, proponents of social history believe that twentieth-century models create generalizations and ethnocentrism when applied to first-century communities. Three years after Malina criticized Meeks, Garrett reviewed Malina's major book and criticized him for generalizations and ethnocentrism.<sup>2</sup> Thus, both sides use the word "generalization" to criticize their opponents.

A general purpose of social research is to point to typical features of a social system. Interestingly, this purpose is emphasized by the proponents of both sides of the social approach, even though both criticize their opponents for having such a goal. Malina, for example, says that "social science models seek out generalities, typicalities, and sameness within human groups."<sup>3</sup> Discussing the task of New Testament sociology,

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<sup>1</sup> Malina, "Review of *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, by Wayne A. Meeks," 347-349.

<sup>2</sup> Garrett, "Review of *Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation*, by Bruce J. Malina," 534.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce J. Malina, "The Social Sciences and Biblical Interpretation," in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, ed. Norman K. Gottwald (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 20.

Holmberg says “that it is not so interested in the individual case as in what is typical, repeated, and general, and that it looks for structural relations that are valid for several situations, rather than analyzing the singular and unique circumstances of a particular situation.”<sup>1</sup> Meeks seeks “to glimpse their [early Christians] lives through the typical occasions mirrored in the texts.”<sup>2</sup> The meaning of “typical” in this statement should be synonymous with “general.” Thus, it is interesting that though both sides of the social approach criticize their opponents for making generalizations, both produce them, since one aim of social investigation is to describe general or typical social circumstances. The purpose of studying general findings about the time of the first century A.D. is to apply them to the specifics of New Testament texts and come to a deeper understanding of the specific issues involved in the texts.<sup>3</sup>

### Use of Models

Since the main issue discussed by socio-historical and social scientific sides is the use of models, it must be determined whether models are necessary. Malina provides this definition: “A model is an abstract, simplified representation of some real world object, event, or interaction, constructed for the purpose of understanding, control, or

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<sup>1</sup> Bengt Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 2.

<sup>3</sup> “I think it would be a fault in method to claim distinctiveness before commonalities have been duly discerned and accounted for.” Malina, “The Social Sciences and Biblical Interpretation,” 20.

prediction.”<sup>1</sup> As one purpose of a model is to simplify reality so as to understand it, it seems that all human thinking and writing are based on models or theories. Holmberg expresses this view in the following words:

No description of phenomena of social life can be made without some idea about what to look for and how to structure phenomena or, in other words, some theoretical frame. This may have not been made explicit by all historical scholars, but that should not lead us into thinking that any fact-finding or historical description can be made serious without the help of models and theories.<sup>2</sup>

It seems that we cannot avoid models. Elliott emphasizes the same point: “A basic fact about models is that there is no choice as to whether or not we use them. ‘Our choice,’ notes Carney, ‘rather lies in deciding whether to use them consciously or unconsciously’ (1975:5).”<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Holmberg is very careful with his recommendation of models:

The sociological model must not become a die that shapes the ancient materials or filter that highlights or obliterates textual data in a predetermined way. The non-absolute character of sociological models should also alert the historian to realize that a model that is helpful in one case may not work in another.<sup>4</sup>

After an exploration of the use of models during the 1970s and 1980s, Holmberg makes the following conclusion:

A general methodological conclusion from the discussion presented above is that an inductive method (assembling the data, then finding the best theoretical interpretation of them) seems more appropriate and fruitful than a deductive one

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 14. Malina takes this definition from Thomas F. Carney, *The Shape of the Past: Models and Antiquity* (Lawrence: Coronado Press, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal*, 6.

<sup>3</sup> John H. Elliott, “Social-Scientific Criticism of the New Testament: More on Methods and Models,” *Semeia* 35 (1986): 6.

<sup>4</sup> Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal*, 13.

(where you start with a sociological theory and apply it to the data, or use it as a fact-finding instrument).<sup>1</sup>

Thus, we can conclude that models are not avoidable, as both Elliott and Holmberg would agree. On the other hand, we do not want to start our research with a model.<sup>2</sup> It is better for models to be products of our research, as Holmberg suggests. Collecting evidence first and developing a model as a result of our research is a superior method to starting our research with a model into which our evidence must then be made to fit.

### **Method in This Dissertation**

The end products of this dissertation are models of hospitality and patronage. From the social-scientific approach I am taking the concept that models are necessary.<sup>3</sup> From the socio-historical approach I take the idea that models from modern times cannot be imposed on ancient texts.<sup>4</sup> Thus, I aim to collect the evidence, and then use that evidence to create a contextual model of hospitality and a contextual model of patronage. In my social approach, evidence shapes models, and not the other way around.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 73. Holmberg would not have anything against using models as heuristic tools from the very outset of research, but his investigation of how models have been used in the social approach to New Testament studies forces him to make the above conclusion.

<sup>2</sup> Elliott and Malina, as the main representatives of the social-scientific approach, advocate starting research with a model.

<sup>3</sup> This is emphasized by Elliott and Malina.

<sup>4</sup> This is emphasized by Garrett and Horrell.

<sup>5</sup> Since in this study I incorporate suggestions from both the social-scientific and the socio-historical approaches, I employ the generic expression “social approach,” while having in mind both sides of the approaches to New Testament studies.

I am first looking for evidence that can explain the ancient custom of hospitality. While exploring this, I am primarily interested in the time and place of 3 John, which seem to be the first century A.D. in Asia Minor.<sup>1</sup> I am also bringing in anthropological and social research from other areas and times, which should enlighten some issues. I do not rely exclusively on modern anthropological and social examples, but add them to the ancient evidence. I only use modern examples in which ancient values seem to have been preserved. In the preface to his major work, Malina argues for “continuity between the Mediterranean world of today and that of the first-century A.D.”<sup>2</sup> Because of much enduring cultural continuity, modern examples may legitimately be adduced to illuminate the world of the first century A.D. Thus, both ancient and modern examples should help advance our knowledge of their circumstances, and sharpen our understanding of the hospitality issues relevant for 3 John. The purpose of collecting the evidence is to develop a model of ancient hospitality applicable to the circumstances of 3 John.

Evidence for patronal issues in the ancient world is then sought in the same fashion. The purpose is again to create a model of patronage in the ancient world relevant

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<sup>1</sup> I say more about the time and place of 3 John in chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, xii. Even though there are some significant discontinuities and changes caused by industrialization, globalization, and other modern trends, I can personally testify about various cultural continuities and connections of my home country (Croatia) to the ancient Mediterranean world, which are not present in the mainstream culture of the United States. One of the main social values in my home country is emphasis on personal honor, which, according to Malina, is the pivotal social value of ancient Mediterranean culture. *Ibid.*, 33. Emphasis on honor leads to various types of personal disputes and fights not easily understandable to people sharing different cultural backgrounds. I believe that coming from a country of today’s Mediterranean area equips me to see some relevant issues for this research that might be missed by a person not having such a background.

for the circumstances of 3 John. Finally, the two models, hospitality and patronage, are contrasted. The purpose of this exercise is to see the differences and non-compatibility of the two models in a church setting. Realizing the non-compatibility of the two models enables us to understand why the Elder elevates the one and condemns the other. That further enables us to find proper application of the message of 3 John for today.

Before I devote myself to the issues of hospitality and patronage, I provide in chapter 2 a review of literature about 3 John. In chapter 3 I offer my own investigation of that epistle, which introduces my study of hospitality and patronage in the chapters to follow.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON 3 JOHN

#### **Introductory Remarks**

The third epistle of John never appears to have been discussed as much as in the last hundred years. Its small size and private character may have led to its neglect throughout the centuries.<sup>1</sup> It is the shortest written work in the New Testament and the only one which does not directly mention Christ. In the last hundred years since the rise of the modern interest in ecclesiological questions, 3 John has come to the center of discussion. In this review of literature I give an overview of the developments in the interpretation of 3 John in the last hundred years starting with Adolf von Harnack's publication in 1897. I begin with him since he seems to have influenced almost all subsequent interpreters.

#### **Three Approaches**

The history of interpretation of the third epistle of John in the last hundred years exhibits three basic approaches: ecclesiological, theological, and social.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Strecker observes a similar fate for the Letter to Philemon. Georg Strecker, *Die Johannesbriefe*, vol. 14 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 18.

<sup>2</sup> The choice to focus on these three approaches does not suggest that no other approaches exist. There are devotional, homiletical, and other more practical approaches that, according to my assessment, do not seem to have made lasting contributions to the interpretation of the text of the third epistle of John.



The ecclesiological approach has been the most dominant approach in the interpretation of 3 John in the last hundred years. It deals with the question of various church offices of the characters introduced in 3 John, as well as with their authority in the context of the epistle.

The theological approach usually sees a clear connection between all three Johannine epistles. Consequently, theological issues dominant in the first and second epistles are used to better enlighten the situation of the third epistle. The issue of Gnosticism is seen as determining the circumstances of all three epistles.

The social approach is the youngest approach. It deals with the social circumstances of 3 John by exploring the social system of the first century A.D. An understanding of the practice of hospitality is seen as one of the most important issues. Other social factors relevant to 3 John are examined as well.

For each approach I will now present, in chronological order, the authors who have published the results of their investigations. Thus, the reader is introduced to the major concerns and developments of each approach over the years.

### **Ecclesiological Approach**

Adolf von Harnack (1897)<sup>1</sup>

With his publication *Über den dritten Johannesbrief*, Adolf von Harnack might be considered as the initiator of the ecclesiological approach to the interpretation of 3 John.

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<sup>1</sup> The year of the first publication of material related to 3 John is indicated in parentheses next to each of the authors.

Subsequent followers of that approach point to him for their discussion of ecclesiological issues.

In his publication, Harnack argued for Diotrephes being the first Christian monarchical bishop whose name we know.<sup>1</sup> According to Harnack, 3 John gives us “insight into the historical development of the church organization.”<sup>2</sup> Harnack explores church offices in 3 John in order to reach his conclusions about developments at the turn of the first century A.D. The development of the early church organization is represented in the first stage with the Elder who leads a network of churches.<sup>3</sup> “The Elder” is not viewed as the apostle John, but as John the elder from the fragment of Papias, as reported by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.39.4.<sup>4</sup> In the second stage, monarchical episcopacy is developing in the church of Diotrephes and the Elder has no more access to the church. Thus, the church of Diotrephes becomes independent and stands up against the Elder’s overseeing power. It is a fight of the strengthened local church against the old patriarchal and provincial missionary organization. The monarchical episcopacy intends to strengthen and close the local church to outside influences.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adolf von Harnack, *Über den Dritten Johannesbrief* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1897), 21.

<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Einblick in die Bildungsgeschichte der kirchlichen Organisation.” Ibid., 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 4, 17-18.

<sup>5</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Es ist der Kampf der alten patriarchalischen und provinziellen Missionsorganisation gegen die sich konsolidierende Einzelgemeinde, die zum Zweck ihrer Konsolidierung und strengen Abschließung nach außen den monarchischen Episkopat aus ihrer Mitte hervorbringt.” Ibid., 21.

Harnack seeks to prove this development mainly by pointing to the letters of Ignatius, which seem to support the existence of a monarchical episcopacy in the churches of Asia just fifteen to twenty years after the writing of 3 John.<sup>1</sup> He believes that the same development might be observed in *Shepherd of Hermas* and *Didache*.<sup>2</sup> By pointing to the development that led to the establishment of a monarchical episcopacy, Harnack introduced the ecclesiological approach to the interpretation of 3 John.

Later, Harnack decided to present a full overview of the development of early Christianity in his book *The Constitution & Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries* (1910). There he contrasted the words “Spirit” and “office” and used them to describe the development.<sup>3</sup> According to Harnack, in 3 John the man of Spirit is the Elder, while Diotrephes is the one who relies on his office. Thus 3 John presents a collision between Spirit and office.<sup>4</sup> “The whole constitutional history of the Church can also be represented with the conflict between Spirit and office as its framework.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>3</sup> “There is, secondly, the tension between ‘Spirit’ and office, charisma and legislative regulation, the tension between the inspired man and officials, those pre-eminent for personal religion on the one hand, and its professional representatives on the other. The former might be spiritual men, prophets, ascetics, monks, even teachers and theologians, and were so named; the latter presbyters, bishops, superintendents, popes.” Adolf von Harnack, *The Constitution & Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries* (New York: Willians & Norgate, 1910), 42.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 43.

It seems that Harnack relies here on the Hegelian dialectic logic of thesis + antithesis = synthesis. In that model, the men of Spirit are the thesis, while the office bearers are the antithesis. The synthesis seems to be found later in the bishop's office, which unites in itself the teaching role of the men of Spirit and the office of the men of office. Thus, Hegelian dialectic logic seems to be used to describe the developments of early Christianity.

We can conclude that Harnack is interested in the development of authority structures in the early church. For that purpose he deals with various offices and their roles. That procedure later became typical for the ecclesiological approach. His results portray the major shift in the development of the early church structure: from Spirit-led oversight over several churches by a single elder to the single-headed authority in the local churches represented by monarchical bishops.

#### Theodor Zahn (1906)

Theodor Zahn is considered to be a less radical follower of the ecclesiological approach than is Harnack, and the one who is often quoted by more conservative scholars. It seems that he would see the author of 3 John as the apostle John himself.<sup>1</sup> In the third edition of his New Testament introduction, Zahn considered Harnack's position regarding 3 John and sought to moderate it.

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<sup>1</sup> Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1953), 380.

The main question Zahn addresses in the context of 3 John is that of offices. He believes that “there is no hint” that Gaius had any office in the local congregation.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, he believes that Diotrephes had a recognized church office: “He occupies an official position, formally recognized even by those who do not agree with him, and one which even the author is bound to consider, and which enables him successfully to play the autocrat.”<sup>2</sup> Later in the text, Zahn calls Diotrephes “the presiding officer.”<sup>3</sup> That seems to stress once again that there is nobody above Diotrephes in that congregation, though Zahn does not call him “the first monarchical bishop” as Harnack does.

Further, Zahn deals with the question of authority. Diotrephes is the one who “does not recognize the authority of the author and of the other disciples of Jesus.”<sup>4</sup> He obviously has some other ideas of how the church should be led. “Diotrephes, consequently, possesses great power in the local Church, and exercises it in a direction hostile to the author, and directly opposed to the measures which he recommends.”<sup>5</sup> Zahn even argues for enmity between the Elder and Diotrephes: “The leader of this congregation is an enemy of the author and of his companions.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 375. Zahn published his *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* in 1897 and its third edition appeared in 1906, which is the basis of the English translation of 1953 that I use for this review.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 376.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 378.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 375.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 376.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 377.

Zahn sees connections to 1 and 2 John, but he does not use them to explain the situation of 3 John. He argues in a typical way for the ecclesiological approach, standing up against the presence of theological issues in the conflict between the Elder and Diotrephes. In speaking of Diotrephes he says: "It by no means follows that he was on this account a declared false teacher. The false teachers of 1 John were expelled from their congregations; not one of them could have been the leader of a local Church."<sup>1</sup> Thus, Zahn argues against the possibility that the issue in the conflict is the heresy described in 1 and 2 John.

We can conclude that Zahn included the major elements of the ecclesiological approach in his interpretation of 3 John. He does not follow Harnack in his most radical theses, but with the questions of offices and authority, as well as the denial of theological issues in the conflict in 3 John, Zahn is a representative of the ecclesiological approach.

#### Alan E. Brooke (1912)

With Alan E. Brooke we encounter a very balanced ecclesiological approach to 3 John. He is not eager to assign particular church offices to various characters in the epistle. When it comes to Diotrephes, he says that the description of his actions in 3 John is insufficient for drawing any final decision about his position in the church community.<sup>2</sup>

Like other interpreters with the same approach, Brooke cannot avoid Harnack and his thesis, but he does not share many of Harnack's conclusions. Brooke argues with

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Alan England Brooke, *Johannine Epistles* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1948), 190. The first edition of his commentary was published in 1912.

Harnack in identifying the writer of 3 John, according to the fragment of Papias's preface preserved in Eusebius, as "a pupil of John the Apostle, and in some sense a disciple of the Lord."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, when it comes to the question of whether the elder or Diotrephes won the battle, Brooke has a very different view, which contradicts Harnack:

The passages which Harnack quotes to show the connection of the Elder with the "Bishops" of Asia certainly do not point to his having fought a losing battle against the new movement. The tradition which these passages embody has doubtless been modified in the light of later views about Episcopacy. But while this is almost certainly the case, it is going in the face of such evidence as we possess to represent the Elder as opposed to a movement with which he is always represented as being in close connection.<sup>2</sup>

Brooke claims to have found evidence for the elder having a positive relationship with the monarchical episcopacy movement. His best example is found in Clement of Alexandria:

The passage from the well-known story of the Robber which Clement tells in the *Quis Dives* proves that at a comparatively early date the name of the Elder was connected with the development of Church organization in Asia which resulted in the monarchical Episcopacy. . . . The evidence of tradition which represents him as in thorough sympathy with the movement is too strong to ignore, when it is in no way contradicted by the evidence of the Johannine Epistles in themselves. . . . And on the whole it is better suited to the evidence of Ignatius, and his attitude towards the monarchical Episcopate.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Brooke opposes Harnack's Hegelian logic in which the struggle between thesis and antithesis leads to the creation of synthesis. Texts that Brooke quotes do not indicate any conflict or adversity between the elder and the movement of monarchical episcopacy. Brooke undermines the main point of Harnack's view of historical

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., lxxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., lxxxix.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., xc.

development by noting that there is no evidence of a conflict, which the application of the Hegelian model to the early church developments would require. Thus, Brooke offers an alternative to Harnack in dealing with ecclesiological questions.

#### Friedrich Büchsel (1933)

Friedrich Büchsel seems to follow Harnack's ecclesiological approach.<sup>1</sup>

Influenced by Harnack, he asks ecclesiological questions that were introduced by Harnack. Thus, he deals with the question of offices and does not assign any theological issue to the context of 3 John.

Büchsel tries to interpret the term "Elder" in 3 John. Examining Papias's quote from Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.39.4), he believes that presbyters are "the bearers of the tradition about Jesus – primarily the apostles."<sup>2</sup> Thus, he concludes that the writer of 3 John was a personal disciple of Jesus whose name was John, son of Zebedee.<sup>3</sup> John lived so long "that he experienced the transition of the church from apostolic and post-apostolic time to the beginning of the early Catholic time."<sup>4</sup> Büchsel writes these words in his conclusion, but in the main body of his publication he does not go into detail about this transition from the apostolic to the early Catholic period. Having such a conclusion

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Büchsel, *Die Johannesbriefe* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1933).

<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: "... die Träger der Überlieferung von Jesus, vor allem die Apostel." Ibid., 91.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 91, 99.

<sup>4</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: "... dass er den Übergang der Kirche von ihrer apostolisch-nachapostolischen zu ihrer frühkatholischen Zeit in seinen Anfängen noch miterlebt hat." Ibid., 99.



brings him into a close relationship with Harnack's thesis, which introduced that development.

Büchsel disagrees with Harnack on two points. First, as we have seen, he assigns the authorship of the letter to John the apostle, instead of to an unknown disciple of the apostle John. Second, he does not assign any particular office to Diotrephes, even though he believes that Diotrephes had some church office.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Büchsel does not go so far as to call Diotrephes "the first monarchical bishop," as Harnack did. We can conclude that Büchsel's ecclesiological approach is a reduced version of Harnack's thesis.

#### C. H. Dodd (1953)

With C. H. Dodd we encounter Harnack's thesis polished and slightly improved. The main question that Dodd explores with his ecclesiological approach is that of authority in the context of 3 John. "The conflict, to all appearance, does not turn upon doctrine, but upon the question of authority."<sup>2</sup> He believes that 3 John provides insight into the "process through which the Church passed out of the 'missionary' phase . . . to the phase of local episcopacy."<sup>3</sup> In the missionary phase, the authority of the apostles and their successors was not in question as it was in the phase of the local episcopacy.

Dodd describes the elder as "one of the 'elders' and 'presbyters' who in the sub-apostolic age carried on the tradition of apostolic authority."<sup>4</sup> He believes that it is

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>2</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, 3rd ed. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1953), lx.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., lxiv.

unlikely that the presbyter was John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee.<sup>1</sup> His suggestion for the usage of the term “elder” in the province of Asia is basically the same as Harnack’s: “Christians of this province seem to have spoken of ‘the Elders’ (Presbyters) in referring to a group of teachers who formed a link between the apostles and the next generation (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 39:3-4).”<sup>2</sup> Thus, Dodd sees in the Elder and the writer of 3 John a disciple of the apostles, who is a bearer of the apostolic tradition.

When it comes to Diotrophes, Dodd says that the evidence of 3 John suggests that Diotrophes “acted in the capacity of a bishop, as understood from the second century onwards.”<sup>3</sup> That role does not differ from the role of “the first monarchical bishop,” which Harnack assigns to Diotrophes. Yet, Dodd goes a step further in the scenario by suggesting “that Diotrophes is a symptom of the disease which the quasi-apostolic ministry of monarchical bishops was designed to relieve.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, according to that scenario, the case of Diotrophes brought monarchical episcopacy into existence as a corrective measure to prevent similar cases in the future.

Dodd concludes that 3 John is about the transitory stage in which the authority of the apostles was transferred to the local bishop.<sup>5</sup> The suggestion of a transitory period between apostolic authority and the bishop’s authority is reminiscent of the clash between

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., lxix.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

the Spirit and office, which Harnack was the first to introduce. In that context Dodd asks Brooke's question: "Did the Elder succeed or not?" Dodd suggests that he did succeed, since his letter is preserved, but the problem "was ultimately solved by the development of the catholic episcopate."<sup>1</sup> Thus, Dodd bases his argument on Harnack's implementation of Hegelian logic into the development of early Christian history. In his basic argument Dodd is not going beyond Harnack, though he introduces some additional elements into the discussion, such as the role of wandering preachers and the role of the letters of recommendation in antiquity. With these topics he shows some interest in social issues as well.

#### Rudolf Schnackenburg (1953)

Rudolf Schnackenburg published an article on 3 John as well as a commentary on the Johannine epistles.<sup>2</sup> He is a Catholic theologian who recognizes the apostolic authorship of the third epistle of John. Thus, he believes that the tradition is correct in ascribing 3 John to the apostle John. He points to Irenaeus in *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.4 where he said that the apostle John lived and worked in Ephesus till the days of Trajan.<sup>3</sup> Since

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Schnackenburg, "Der Streit zwischen dem Verfasser von 3 Joh und Diotrophes und seine verfassungsgeschichtliche Bedeutung," *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 4 (1953): 18-26; idem, *Die Johannesbriefe* (Freiburg: Herder, 1953). The last work is translated into English: idem, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> "Auch die Gemeinde von Ephesus, die von Paulus gegründet worden ist und in der Johannes bis in die Tage Trajans gelebt hat, ist eine treue Zeugin der apostolischen Überlieferung." Schnackenburg, "Der Streit zwischen dem Verfasser von 3 Joh und Diotrophes und seine verfassungsgeschichtliche Bedeutung," 18. See also Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 416.

emperor Trajan reigned from A.D. 98-117, the apostle John was active in Ephesus at least until the end of the first century A.D. according to this source. Schnackenburg also notes that there is no mention of a presbyter John outside of the Papias fragment in Eusebius's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which is Eusebius's own exegesis of Papias.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Schnackenburg has no hesitation in identifying "the Elder" of 3 John as the apostle John himself.

In the behavior of Diotrephes, Schnackenburg observes signs of monarchical episcopacy.<sup>2</sup> Thus, he questions how it is possible that Diotrephes would stand up against the authority of the apostle John and how the apostle John would take such weak measures against Diotrephes. Liberal Protestant theologians use the weak reaction of the Elder as proof that he was not an apostle. Schnackenburg believes that Diotrephes might not have been appointed to his ministry by John and that they might not have had a previous relationship. John's exile to the island of Patmos leaves a time period for Diotrephes to have been introduced into his leadership position in his local church without John inducting him into that ministry.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Schnackenburg, "Der Streit zwischen dem Verfasser von 3 Joh und Diotrephes und seine verfassungsgeschichtliche Bedeutung," 22.

<sup>2</sup> Schnackenburg sees in 3 John the following development: "We are in the process of transition; the monarchical episcopate, as we know it from the letters of Ignatius, is in the process of being established." Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary*, 299.

<sup>3</sup> "Wenn der Apostel nach der Tradition längere Zeit in der Verbannung auf Patmos abwesend war, mussten ja auch in zwischen, um modern zu sprechen, die vakant werdenden Stellen besetzt werden. In einem näheren persönlichen Verhältnis braucht also der Presbyter zu Diotrephes nicht gestanden zu haben." Schnackenburg, "Der Streit zwischen dem Verfasser von 3 Joh und Diotrephes und seine verfassungsgeschichtliche Bedeutung," 25. A similar sociological argument for a change of church structures during the absence of some church members is found in Peter Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen*

The Elder is entering the situation with great caution, since he does not want to work against the legitimately chosen local church authorities. His general approach is rather to strengthen local church authorities. The question is how he can strengthen Diotrephes and his position despite his inappropriate behavior. Thus, the reaction of the Elder appears to be weak.<sup>1</sup>

In his commentary, Schnackenburg argues against the artificial division of Spirit and office, which Harnack first introduced and which was carried on by the ecclesiological approach. "In the light of 1. John 2:27 it can be hardly claimed that the presbyter has attributed the anointing of the Spirit to every Christian believer, whereas early Catholicism ties the Spirit to office and tradition. Tradition and the operation of the Spirit in the individual believer are not necessarily opposed to each other in early catholicism."<sup>2</sup> Thus, Schnackenburg rejects the basic presupposition on which the ecclesiological approach is based. Yet his approach remains within the boundaries of the ecclesiological approach, since his major concern is the level of church organization which he recognizes in the early stage of development of the monarchical episcopate.<sup>3</sup>

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*Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987).

<sup>1</sup> "Wenn aber ein Bischof in der Leitung der Gemeinde einmal falsche Wege einschlug, dann musste es schwierig sein, seine Autorität zu schonen und doch seine falschen Maßnahmen zu beseitigen. Eine solche Situation liegt offenbar in 3. Joh vor. Der engstirnige Diotrephes verabsolutiert das Gemeindeprinzip und hat keinen Sinn für das große überörtliche Missionsanliegen. . . . In dieser Situation einzugreifen, verlangt von dem „Alten“ in Ephesus außerordentliche Klugheit." Schnackenburg, "Der Streit zwischen dem Verfasser von 3 Joh und Diotrephes und seine verfassungsgeschichtliche Bedeutung," 26.

<sup>2</sup> Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary*, 272.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 299.

Yet, as seen above, the development itself is presented in very different terms from those used by Harnack.

Günter Bornkamm (1959)

Günter Bornkamm made lexicographical observations on the term πρεσβύτες. He sees the writer of 3 John not as an apostle, but as a pupil of an apostle who is a bearer of the apostolic tradition.<sup>1</sup> Like other proponents of the ecclesiological approach, Bornkamm does not see any theological issues in 3 John: “Since there are no references to dogmatic differences . . . one is forced to describe this as a constitutional struggle.”<sup>2</sup> Bornkamm sees in 3 John an “open conflict between the holder of a congregational office viewed in terms of monarchical episcopacy and the representative of a free authority not restricted to any locality.”<sup>3</sup> Like Harnack, he also uses the term “monarchical episcopacy” to describe Diotrephes’s office. Here we again encounter Harnack’s distinction between office and Spirit. In Bornkamm’s description, Diotrephes is representative of the office, while the Elder is representative of the Spirit. “Johannine

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<sup>1</sup> “The elder with his wishes and works is outside any ecclesiastical constitution. He is to be regarded, not as an office-bearer, but as a specially valued teacher, or as a prophet of the older period, and his title is to be understood in the sense in which Papias and some later fathers use it for pupils of the apostles and guarantors of the tradition which goes back to them.” Günter Bornkamm, “Πρεσβύτες,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 671. (The original German edition was published in 1959.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 670.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Christianity, representing and defending an older type of community which had since been discredited, was forced into conventicles.”<sup>1</sup>

It seems that Bornkamm, as with Harnack, presents the history of early Christianity using the Hegelian dialectic model of thesis + antithesis = synthesis. The thesis is represented with the bearers of the tradition, particularly the Elder in the case of 3 John. The antithesis is represented in the office bearers of the local church, particularly in the person of Diotrephes who is the first monarchical bishop. The synthesis happened in the bishop’s office, which united in one person the teachings of the past and the power of office. In this historical description of Bornkamm, Hegelian dialectic logic is evident.

Ernst Haenchen (1960)

Ernst Haenchen gives a historical overview of the scholarship on 3 John with five different interpretations of the term “the Elder.”<sup>2</sup> These five interpretations could be summarized under two approaches: ecclesiological and theological. Haenchen himself follows the ecclesiological approach.

Haenchen claims that there is no evidence of heresy in 3 John and that neither Diotrephes nor the Presbyter are accused of heresy.<sup>3</sup> In addressing the phrase “wandering

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 672.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Haenchen, *Die Bible und Wir* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1968). In his book I am dealing with the chapter titled “Neuere Literatur zu den Johannesbriefen,” which was previously published in two parts: idem, “Neuere Literatur zu den Johannesbriefen,” *Theologische Rundschau* 26, no. 3 (1960); idem, “Neuere Literatur zu den Johannesbriefen,” *Theologische Rundschau* 26, no. 1 (1960).

<sup>3</sup> “Von Irrlehre ist im ganzen Brief nicht die Rede . . . Weder Diotrephes noch der Presbyter geraten in den Verdacht der Irrlehre.” Haenchen, *Die Bible und Wir*, 304.

in the truth,” which appears in the epistle, Haenchen asserts that the truth in 3 John is expressed in practical deeds of hospitality toward traveling missionaries.<sup>1</sup>

Haenchen considers the question of organization in the early church. He identifies the Elder with a church leader who argues in 3 John for a Gentile mission on the territory of a neighboring church, which leads him to a conflict with Diotrephes.<sup>2</sup> Discussing Bornkamm’s view that “der Presbyter noch diesseits jeder kirchlichen Verfassung steht,” Haenchen allows for the possibility that here the two meanings of the word “Elder” are combined: Elder as church office and Elder as a bearer of tradition.<sup>3</sup>

Haenchen is a strong proponent of the ecclesiological approach. Yet, he criticizes Harnack for the thesis of monarchical episcopacy, as well as for the idea of the extension of the mission network in which the Elder works among the churches.<sup>4</sup> Haenchen does not believe that the Elder led a network of churches. He also does not speak of a clash between the Spirit and office, as does Harnack. Thus, he steers away from Harnack’s argument, but still remains within the boundaries of the ecclesiological approach.

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<sup>1</sup> “Daß Gaius ‘in der Wahrheit wandelt’, besagt nicht, dass er eine besondere Lehrform vertritt, sondern nur, daß er seine Christenpflicht gegenüber den Wanderprediger erfüllt.” Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> “Er ist ein Gemeindeleiter, der sich in 3. Joh. für die Heidenmission auch auf dem Gebiet einer Nachbargemeinde einsetzt und dabei mit deren Leiter Diotrephes in Konflikt gerät.” Ibid., 308.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 310.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 288.



## Rudolf Bultmann (1967)

Rudolf Bultmann, contrary to expectations (because of his interest in Gnosticism),<sup>1</sup> takes an ecclesiological approach to 3 John rather than a theological one. He claims that “3 John does not speak to the topic of correct doctrine.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, he does not find traces of Gnosticism in 3 John.

Bultmann believes the Elder to be one of the presbyters designated by Papias (in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.39.3f.) as the bearer of the apostolic tradition.<sup>3</sup> Bultmann does not oppose the idea that the Elder might be the apostle John, but he feels more comfortable identifying him as an extraordinary personality from the Johannine circle, a disciple of the apostle John, who carries on the apostolic tradition.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding the theme of the epistle, Bultmann follows Harnack in pointing to the “question of church organization,” since “Diotrephes was not accused of being a heretic.”<sup>5</sup> There is an opposition between the missionary movement of the Presbyter and

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<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Karl Bultmann, “Γινώσκω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964).

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Karl Bultmann, *Die drei Johannesbriefe*, 7th ed. (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 100. German original: “In 3 Joh ist vom Thema der rechten lehre keine Rede.”

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>5</sup> “Da der Diotrephes nicht etwa beschuldigt wird, ein Irrlehrer zu sein, handelt es sich in dem Streit zwischen ihm und dem Verfasser offenbar um die Frage der Gemeinde-Organisation, wie einst Harnack richtig gesehen hat.” Ibid., 99.

the local church leadership.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Bultmann's approach is strictly ecclesiological and he places his emphasis on Harnack's theory.

Hans Campenhausen (1969)

Hans Campenhausen dealt with a grand overview of the historical development of the early church.<sup>2</sup> He believes that the Elder "is not representing himself as a member of a local 'presbytery,'" and neither is he "affected by any form of ecclesiastical constitution."<sup>3</sup> Further, he says that the Elder works "as a prophet or teacher of the earlier type, one of these 'elders' and fathers to whose testimony Papias and Irenaeus later appealed."<sup>4</sup> Here Campenhausen settles for Harnack's solution of seeing the elder John, and not the apostle John, as the writer of the epistle. He describes the conflict this way:

The man of the Spirit, subject to no organization and to no local authoritative body, clashes with the leader of the organized single congregation, who, it would seem, is already claiming monarchical rights for himself. . . . Here then we come across an example of the exercise of that particular kind of Episcopal authority which was to be of decisive importance in the wider development of spiritual office.<sup>5</sup>

Campenhausen adopts Harnack's thesis of the clash between the Spirit and the office without any question. He determines that Diotrephes exercises the authority of a

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969). I will be quoting from the 1997 printing.

<sup>3</sup> Hans Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 121.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 122, 123.

monarchical bishop. He is not yet a monarchical bishop but is on the way to establishing such an office. It can be determined that Campenhausen, with his ecclesiological approach to 3 John, follows Harnack only with minor modifications.

Karl P. Donfried (1977)

Karl P. Donfried explores the ecclesiastical role of the presbyter.<sup>1</sup> His thesis is that “ὁ πρεσβύτερος as used in the Johannine epistles represents an ecclesiastical office.”<sup>2</sup> He further elaborates on the Elder:

Our thesis is that 2 and 3 John, as well as 1 John, were written by the presbyter, who was not only an ecclesiastical officer, but the most important presbyter in a regional network of churches; and, further, that he directed and controlled the missionary activities in his region. . . . Diotrephes refuses to acknowledge the presbyter and tries to pull off a *coup d'etat*. We evidence here a political power struggle between two emerging authority figures as the early church enters upon a new stage in its organizational development.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear that Donfried's approach is ecclesiological, since he is interested in offices and church organization. He follows Harnack in his thesis that the presbyter leads a regional network of churches in which he is the most important figure. Yet Donfried avoids using the term “monarchical bishop” for Diotrephes, and does not discuss the clash of Spirit and office, which is typical for Harnack and his followers.

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<sup>1</sup> Karl P. Donfried, “Ecclesiastical Authority in 2-3 John,” in *Évangile de Jean* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 325.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 328.

## I. Howard Marshall (1978)

I. Howard Marshall argues that 3 John “deals with ecclesiastical rather than theological problems. Its background appears to lie in the growth of a new type of church organization.”<sup>1</sup> On several points Marshall emphasizes that there are no theological issues in the epistle. At the same time, he criticizes Bauer and Käsemann for their theological approach. With his ecclesiological approach Marshall observes the development of early church organization. In that development Diotrophes “was seeking autonomy for his own church by trying to get rid of the influence of John and John’s emissaries, and he was claiming authority for himself within the church.”<sup>2</sup>

Quoting von Campenhausen, Marshall expresses strong sympathies for the scenario of a clash between Spirit and office. He ends with these words: “We thus in effect return to a milder form of Harnack’s basic point.”<sup>3</sup> With this statement it is clear that Marshall is fully aware that he is following in the footsteps of Harnack.

## Raymond E. Brown (1982)

Raymond E. Brown suggests that 3 John “may be the NT key to a major development in Christian church structure, i.e., the emergence of a local-church leader over against the influence of the second generation disciples (the disciples of the disciples

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<sup>1</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

of Jesus).”<sup>1</sup> With this statement Brown identifies who he believes the major players in 3 John to be. Accordingly, the Elder is a disciple of the apostle John, while Diotrephes is a new emerging leader of his local church. These two seem to be in conflict over authority issues.

It is apparent that Brown is following the ecclesiological approach, but at the same time he presents how the theological issues of 1 and 2 John have contributed to the ecclesiological situation of 3 John:

Now the secession and secessionist missionaries have complicated the Johannine scene. The Presbyter thinks it can be shown who is on the right side by testing the Spirits (1 John 4:1) and by asking for professions of christological faith (4:2; 2 John 7), but such appeals may not have been enough to halt the secessionist movement (1 John 4:5). Indeed, in 2 John 10-11 the Presbyter becomes practical by telling those faithful to him to refuse hospitality to secessionist missionaries by not even talking to them. Diotrephes seems to have pursued that policy farther by refusing hospitality to all would-be missionaries, thus saving the church from possible contamination by having to listen to missionaries and discovering only too late their dangerous teaching.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, according to Brown, secessionists from 1 and 2 John are responsible for the situation described in 3 John, and Diotrephes is trying to save his church. “He [the Presbyter] never indicates that Diotrephes is guilty personally of a secessionist distortion of the gospel, but de facto Diotrephes’ obstruction is helping the secessionist movement.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, there are no indications that Diotrephes was a heretic, but by hindering the cause of the Elder he is helping the enemies of the Gospel.

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Edward Brown, *The Epistles of John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1982), 727. This commentary is based on his previous work: *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 738.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 746.

Brown argues for the following results, which were produced by Diotrephes's refusal to show hospitality to the Elder's emissaries:

In doing this Diotrephes is (implicitly, at least) making himself the teacher of the church and moving away from the pure Johannine tradition of the sole Preacher-teacher so dear to the Presbyter. It is not surprising then that the Presbyter criticizes him for liking "to be first among them" – Diotrephes is on his way to become a presbyter-bishop in the style of Pastorals, or even the sole bishop in the style of Ignatius. In his brutal practicality Diotrephes may have been more effective than the Presbyter in preserving the Johannine tradition against secessionist contamination.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Brown does not argue for Diotrephes being "the first monarchical bishop," as Harnack would say, but as being on the way to becoming one. Interestingly, according to Brown's scenario, both the Elder and Diotrephes are acting in the name of orthodoxy in order to preserve what must be preserved.<sup>2</sup> Thus, both of them are described in positive terms.

In conclusion, Brown follows the ecclesiological approach with his exploration of the authority issues involved in the development of the early Christian church structures. At the same time, he is able to incorporate into his interpretation of 3 John theological issues present in 1 and 2 John.

#### Alan Culpepper (1985)

Alan Culpepper vividly describes the problem of 3 John as "passing the baton from the members of one generation to those of another."<sup>3</sup> A question is presented: What happens when two runners reach for the same baton or when heirs battle for the same

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 738.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 748.

<sup>3</sup> Alan R. Culpepper, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John* (Atlanta: J. Knox Press, 1985), 1.

inheritance? The epistle of 3 John is our window into an episode of that early church battle.

Culpepper sees 3 John as being “not concerned with the doctrinal threats alluded to in the other two letters.”<sup>1</sup> According to him, “this short letter offers a tantalizing insight into the problems and developing organization of the early church.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, Culpepper is following the ecclesiological approach in his interpretation of 3 John.

Regarding the relationship between the Elder and Diotrephes and their differences, Culpepper says:

The restraint of 3 John, moreover, and the notable absence of strident language of 1 and 2 John suggests that the differences between the elder and Diotrephes were not doctrinal. Diotrephes is not one of the antichrists, false prophets, or deceivers who had gone out from the community. He had asserted himself as the leader of the church, however, and had severed relations with the elder.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Diotrephes assumed a leadership position and broke his relationship with the Elder. Culpepper points to 3 John 9, which seems to suggest “that Diotrephes did not hold an appointed or elected office but simply assumed authority within one of the Johannine churches.”<sup>4</sup> 3 John 10 shows “that Diotrephes does not merely want to ‘put himself first.’ He has already done so and effectively controls the church.”<sup>5</sup> With his investigation Culpepper does not go as far as Harnack, but in general follows the footsteps of the ecclesiological approach.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 134.

Hans-Josef Klauck (1992)

Hans-Josef Klauck believes that Diotrephes is a homeowner in whose house the church of that town meets. Regarding Diotrephes's office, Klauck believes that it was natural for Diotrephes to become the leader of the church, since church gatherings were held in his house.<sup>1</sup> That he is a leader is seen in his actions of preventing access to his church to the wandering missionaries, as well as in expelling from the church those who were not obedient to his leadership.<sup>2</sup>

To justify the behavior of Diotrephes, Klauck uses the situation of 2 John. In trying to prevent heretics from coming into his church, Diotrephes follows the recommendation of 2 John.<sup>3</sup> Thus, Klauck uses the situation of 2 John for the purpose of explaining Diotrephes's behavior in 3 John. We have observed a similar explanation by Brown.

Klauck accepts Harnack's model of a clash between Spirit and office, but he expands on that in the context of 3 John. He believes that Diotrephes sees the division as a product of the deficiency of Johannine theology in the area of church offices. The Elder relies on the Spirit, which is opposed to the offices that came into existence at the end of the first century A.D. Since that emphasis of the Elder was not enough to keep churches secure from wandering heretics, Diotrephes introduced his office with the purpose of

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<sup>1</sup> "Vom Hausvorsteher zum Gemeindevorsteher ist es unter diesen Umständen nur noch ein kleiner Schritt." Hans-Josef Klauck, *Der Zweite und Dritte Johannesbrief* (Zürich: Benzinger Verlag, 1992), 104.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 109.



fighting against heretics.<sup>1</sup> Thus, both the Elder and Diotrephes are presented as fighting for a good cause, from their point of view.<sup>2</sup>

The conflict between the Elder and Diotrephes as a clash between Spirit and office is a scenario that Harnack first introduced in explaining the developments of the early church. So Klauck is following Harnack with his ecclesiological approach, even though he is not calling Diotrephes “the first monarchical bishop.” Additionally, Klauck introduces overviews of some social issues as well. Thus he deals extensively with the question of hospitality, traveling missionaries, and letters of recommendations but his major interest is ecclesiological in nature.

Melvin R. Storm (1993)

Melvin R. Storm is interested in authority issues in the conflict between the Elder and Diotrephes, which points to the ecclesiological approach. As far as theology is concerned, Storm believes that “there is no evidence that theology was the source of the

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<sup>1</sup> “Diotrephes neigt dazu, das Schisma als bedauerliche, aber unausweichliche Folge der johanneischen Theologie mit ihrem Defizit im Bereich der Amtsfrage zu interpretieren. Der Briefautor hatte in 1Joh 2,20-24 als Bollwerk zum Schutz des Bekenntnisses gegen die Irrlehre die Geistbegabung aller Glaubenden und die Traditionen des Anfangs eingebracht, nicht aber die Autorität des Amtes. Der Geist bleibt der einziger Lehrer (2,27), Jesus ist der einzige Hirte seiner Schafe. Das ist um diese Zeit, gegen Ende des 1. Jahrhunderts, keine Selbstverständlichkeit mehr, sondern ein bewusster Kontrapunkt zu den sich festigenden Amtsstrukturen, für deren Ausbildung die Abwehr der Irrlehre ein Hauptgrund war.” Ibid., 110.

<sup>2</sup> Brown also believes that the Elder and Diotrephes were both fighting for a good cause.

conflict.”<sup>1</sup> He believes that “the conflict between Diotrephes and the Elder was over the question of authority in this local congregation.”<sup>2</sup> He goes on to determine the nature of authority in question and makes the following claim: “The Elder functioned only as a moral and spiritual authority within the church. His teachings were regarded as emerging from Spirit, and his authority was exercised in a similar way to that of the early missionary apostles with the exception of the lack of authority to discipline.”<sup>3</sup>

This interpretation of the Elder’s authority is reminiscent of the distinction between Spirit and office introduced by Harnack. After exploring previous scholarship for various opinions on Diotrephes, Storm concludes:

Diotrephes’ slander of the Elder may have been his severe criticism of the latter’s failure to hold the association together and to repel and discipline the secessionists. In contrast to the Elder, Diotrephes believed that for his church to survive, it must assert its independence and be strictly controlled by local leadership. Thus, while Diotrephes was probably not a church official, he was well on his way to becoming one.<sup>4</sup>

Storm is arguing for the power of the local church office, which was on its way to becoming more important than the authority of an outside overseer who relied on the Spirit. This scenario is typical for the ecclesiological approach and finds its origin in Harnack. The major difference is that Storm does not ascribe monarchical episcopacy to Diotrephes, but believes that he is in the process of becoming “a church official.”

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<sup>1</sup> Melvin R. Storm, “Diotrephes: A Study of Rivalry in the Apostolic Church,” *Restoration Quarterly* 35 (1993): 196.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 199-200.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 201.

## Werner Vogler (1993)

Werner Vogler concentrates on the conflict between the Elder and Diotrephes. In that conflict Diotrephes is not wrong in the area of dogmatics, but in the area of ethics, since he does not show brotherly love.<sup>1</sup> Though Vogler does not see a dogmatic conflict, he offers an ecclesiological explanation in which 1 and 2 John have led to the conflict of 3 John.

According to this scenario, the Elder was warning churches in his area against the heretics with 1 and 2 John. Diotrephes, as a local church leader and Bishop of his church, did not appreciate the Elder's intervention. He understood it as a proposal to control his church from the outside. Thus he closed his church against any outside influences.<sup>2</sup> Vogler concludes that 3 John is a testimony that the Elder, even though he was protecting Johannian churches against the heresy, came into conflict not only with the heretics, but also with such church leaders as Diotrephes, who saw his intervention as an invasion into their sovereignty as bishops.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Vogler believes that 3 John includes a conflict between an overseeing authority from outside and the established local church bishop's authority. Viewing it as

<sup>1</sup> Werner Vogler, *Die Briefe des Johannes* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1993), 205.

<sup>2</sup> We have previously seen a similar argument by Brown and Klauck.

<sup>3</sup> "Trifft diese Annahme zu, dann ist der 3 Johannesbrief ein Zeugnis dafür, dass der Presbyter bei seinen Bestreben, die johanneischen Gemeinden vor dem Abfall zu Irrglauben zu schützen, sich nicht nur die Gegnerschaft der Heterodoxen zugezogen hat, sondern auch solcher Gemeindeleiter, die – wie Diotrephes – dessen oberhirtliche Seelsorge aus der Ferne als Eingriff in ihre Souveränität als Oberbischof ansahen." Vogler, *Die Briefe des Johannes*, 204.

an authority conflict is the premise of the ecclesiological approach. Thus, Vogler is to be counted among the representatives of that approach.

### Conclusion to the Ecclesiological Approach

All of the authors presented above rely on Harnack for their basic conclusions or are influenced by him in their reasoning. Thus, Harnack has had an enormous influence on the interpretation of 3 John in the last century.

In summary, the ecclesiological approach deals with church offices of the characters in 3 John. Closely related to that is the question of their authority. The following features indicate that the ecclesiological approach has been applied to the interpretation of 3 John:

1. Dealing with the issues of authority (e.g., authority conflict between the Elder and Diotrephes)
2. Assigning church offices to the characters named in 3 John (e.g., Diotrephes being the first monarchical bishop)
3. Dealing with issues of early church organization (e.g., application of Hegelian dialectic model in the form of “Spirit” + “office” = early Catholicism)
4. Generally not finding theological issues in the context of 3 John.

When an interpreter displays two or more of these features, it can be assumed that we are encountering the ecclesiological approach.

### Theological Approach

In this section I describe the developments in the theological approach to the interpretation of 3 John. Representative authors will be presented in chronological order as they have published their research.

## Hans H. Wendt (1925)

Hans H. Wendt initiated the theological approach to 3 John. He believes that there is a close relationship between 1 and 2 John and that 2 John was written before 1 John.<sup>1</sup> He further believes that all three Johannine epistles address the same situation and were directed to the same church.<sup>2</sup>

Later in his presentation Wendt once again emphasizes that we are dealing with the same church: "This epistle [3 John] is written to a member of the same church to whom 2 John was directed. It is probably written soon after 2 John and it refers to 2 John in 3 John 9."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the crucial ingredient of the theological approach, as we see from Wendt, is to regard all three epistles as related. The same dogmatic situation of 1 and 2 John is present in 3 John as well.

Wendt believes that the writer of 3 John has already alluded to Diotrephes in 2 John 9.<sup>4</sup> Thus Wendt applies the situation of 2 John to 3 John and sees Diotrephes as a Gnostic heretic: "Diotrephes must have belonged to those inclined toward Gnostics novelties, which were condemned by the author of the epistle as 'heretics and antichrists'

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<sup>1</sup> Hans Hinrich Wendt, *Die Johannesbriefe und das johanneische Christentum* (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waiserhauses, 1925), 5.

<sup>2</sup> "Diese christliche Einzelgemeinde [3 John] ist offenbar die selbe, von den gleichen Schwierigkeiten und Spannungen bewegte, an welche die beiden anderen Schriftstücke desselben Autors gerichtet sind." Ibid., 6.

<sup>3</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: "Dieser Brief [3 John] ist an ein einzelnes Glied derselben Gemeinde gerichtet, der unser zweites Brief galt. Wahrscheinlich ist er bald nach diesem geschrieben und nimmt er in V. 9 auf eben diesen Brief Bezug." Ibid., 23.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 26.

(2 John 7).”<sup>1</sup> If that is correct, then 3 John is not the first Johannine writing that deals with Diotrephes.

Wendt believes that the background of 3 John includes a question of doctrine as well.<sup>2</sup> It is the same question that we find in 2 John, and thus 3 John has the same Gnostic background as 2 John. That theological background is believed to influence everything that is happening in 3 John.

In summary, Wendt’s theological approach to the interpretation of 3 John emphasizes the connection of all three Johannine epistles. His theological approach is a genuine one without ecclesiological additives, since he does not introduce questions of authority or church offices.

#### Walter Bauer (1934)

Walter Bauer’s book was written with the purpose of presenting overall developments in early Christianity.<sup>3</sup> His thesis is that what later became known as heresy was at first known as a regular confession of Christian faith in certain regions. Historically speaking, the Christianity that won out was not necessarily theologically better, but it was politically stronger at the crucial moment in history and therefore

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<sup>1</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Diotrephes muß zu der Richtung der gnostischen Neuerer gehört haben, welche der Briefschreiber in seinem an die Gemeinde gesandten Schriftstück als ‘Ireführer und Antichrist’ verurteilt hatte (2 John 7).” Ibid., 27.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Bauer, *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1934). I will be quoting from the English translation: Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

prevailed. With this background, Bauer views the developments of 3 John and suggests a reading through the lens of docetic/gnostic heresy described in 1 and 2 John.<sup>1</sup> He describes the heretics as people “boasting of their possession of the spirit” and denying “the identity of the man Jesus with Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

Bauer does not seem hesitant to discuss the clash of the Spirit and office, an idea first introduced by Harnack in his ecclesiological approach. Seeing heretics as people who possess the Spirit might have later led Käsemann to argue for the Elder being a heretic himself, since the Elder emphasizes Spirit as well. Bauer does not go that far and sees 3 John “as an attempt of the ‘elder’ to carry forward the offensive - an offensive, however, that runs aground on the resistance of the heretical leader Diotrephes.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, Bauer believes that the Elder is orthodox, while Diotrephes is a heretic.

Even though Bauer says that “3 John does not contain an explicit warning against false teachers,” he believes that repeated insistence on the “truth” in the epistle and its “close connection to 2 John” are sufficient indications of its thrust.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Bauer follows the theological approach in explaining the issues in 3 John.

Bauer concludes his exploration of the epistle with these words: “Third John thus becomes especially valuable and instructive for us in that it represents the attempt of an ecclesiastical leader to gain influence in other communities in order to give assistance to

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<sup>1</sup> Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, 92-93.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

likeminded persons within those communities, and if possible, to gain the upper hand.”<sup>1</sup> So Bauer fits 3 John into the early Christian fight between orthodoxy and heresy. That is why his approach should be designated as theological, though he presents some ecclesiological arguments as well.<sup>2</sup>

Ernst Käsemann (1951)

Ernst Käsemann reverses Bauer’s explanation of the situation in 3 John. In his view, the Elder is a Gnostic heretic, while Diotrephes is an orthodox church leader who tries to prevent the invasion of Gnosticism into his church.<sup>3</sup> Since Käsemann uses Gnosticism in his argument, his interpretation is to be regarded as theological. On the other hand, he follows Harnack in a number of ways, while sticking to his theological approach. Thus, Käsemann’s interpretation is a mixture of the theological and ecclesiological approaches. That combination is apparent in his thesis about the development of episcopacy in the early church: “Today it would be almost no more possible to say that the episcopacy came about ‘as an expression of the sovereignty of a local church as opposed to the patriarchal leadership from outside and in opposition to the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Bauer’s ecclesiological orientation will be especially noted when we come to the exploration of Margaret Mitchell’s critique on his entry for the word *ἐπιδεχομαι* in his Greek dictionary: Margaret M. Mitchell, “‘Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us’: The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 (1998): 299-320.

<sup>3</sup> Ernst Käsemann, “Ketzer und Zeuge: Zum johanneischen Verfasserproblem,” *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 48 (1951): 298.



wandering missionaries.’ This office came about in the opposition to Gnosis, in order to build the threatened church into a center of power.”<sup>1</sup>

Käsemann is here discussing the historical development of monarchical episcopacy. He agrees with Harnack that Diotrephes was a monarchical bishop, but sees the development of that office in different terms. Käsemann argues for a theological cause in the development of monarchical episcopacy. In his view, that office came into existence for the purpose of fighting against the Gnosis and not merely because the local churches sought to become independent.

Käsemann does not identify the Elder as an apostle<sup>2</sup> and believes that the Elder has been excommunicated by Diotrephes because of his Gnostic heresy. In 3 John the Elder complained to his friend Gaius about the situation. Thus, we are not dealing with an apostle, but with a church leader who has a battle on two different fronts – against the docetic Gnosticism and against orthodox Christianity.<sup>3</sup> The Elder represents the middle line between the two fronts, according to Käsemann. As such he is rejected by both sides.

<sup>1</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Schließlich wird man heute kaum mehr sagen, der Episkopat sei ‘als Ausdruck der Souveränität der Einzelgemeinde in Gegensatz zu patriarchalischer Leitung von außen und im Gegensatz zu wandernden Virtuosen, die nichts zur Ruhe kommen ließen (Harnack),’ entstanden. Denn dieses Amt erwuchs in der Abwehr der Gnosis, als es die bedrohte Gemeinde durch eine Zentralinstanz zu bilden galt.” Ibid., 296.

<sup>2</sup> “Es hat keinen Sinn, wenn man ihn noch immer mit dem Apostolat des Herrenjüngers auszugleichen bemüht ist.” Ibid., 299.

<sup>3</sup> “Von der Orthodoxie ausgestoßen, hat er (Elder) zugleich den schärfsten Kampf gegen die doketische Gnosis führen müssen. Was ihn von dieser scheidet, sagt sein Motto: ‘Das Wort ward Fleisch.’” Ibid., 302.

At the end of his article Käsemann shows how Harnack's distinction between the Spirit and office fits into the scenario he developed. The fight between the Spirit and office is here presented as thesis and antithesis, which produced a synthesis in early Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Käsemann's theological approach is able to incorporate Harnack's Hegelian model. He even takes it further and pronounces his judgment for all the Johannine writings: "The Johannine writings have to be understood as the antithesis to the early Catholicism which was coming into existence."<sup>2</sup> Käsemann comes to this conclusion because of his belief that these writings emphasize Spirit as opposed to office. Such an emphasis might have been seen as heretical by the standards of early Catholicism, but could not have been designated as bad in itself.

Käsemann adopted major elements of Harnack's argument, and added to it the Gnosticism described in 1 and 2 John. His outcome is compatible with Bauer's general thesis that certain varieties of Christianity, which were later designated as heretical, were not necessarily illegitimate. Since Käsemann introduced Gnosticism into his argument, his approach is theological, but he skillfully incorporated major elements of the ecclesiological approach as well.

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<sup>1</sup> "In der Auseinandersetzung mit der Gnosis hatte der Fröhkatholizismus es ja gerade mit einer Anschauung zu tun, welche sich auf den persönlichen Geistbesitz berief, in dessen Autorität jede kirchliche Ordnung zerbrach, an die Stelle kirchlicher Lehre wilde Spekulationen setzte und die Gemeinde zur Stätte des Individualismus und Enthusiasmus machte. Aus solcher Gefährdung rettete man sich, indem man den Geist an Amt und Tradition band. Wer nun erneut jedem Christen den Geist zusprach und darauf das ganze Christentum gründete, zerstöre die von der Rechtgläubigkeit so mühevoll aufgerichtete Dämme der Gnosis gegenüber und gab den Bestand der Kirche preis." Ibid., 310.

<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: "Die johanneischen Schriften müssen aus der Antithese zum beginnenden Fröhkatholizismus verstanden werden." Ibid., 306.

Gerd Schunack (1982)

Gerd Schunack follows Käsemann in his interpretation of 3 John, but reduces his argument a bit. He does not believe, as Käsemann does, that the Elder was excommunicated by Diotrophes, since the Elder would not have later been able to confront Diotrophes in front of the church if he had been previously excommunicated.<sup>1</sup>

For the identification of the Elder, Schunack rather agrees with Bornkamm and identifies the Elder as a disciple of the Apostles.<sup>2</sup> In considering the role of Diotrophes, Schunack is much like Harnack, arguing that the direction which Diotrophes took would finally end up in monarchical episcopacy.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, later in his commentary Schunack argues that Diotrophes is already Bishop of his church.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Schunack adopts some of the major arguments of the ecclesiological approach.

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<sup>1</sup> “Die Hypothese, der Verfasser sei ein von Diotrophes exkommunizierter Presbyter ‘und darum notgedrungen ein Einzelgänger’ (E. Käsemann), könnte einleuchtend sein, wenn nicht die Schwierigkeit entstünde, dass der Verfasser dann kaum erwarten könnte, in der Gemeinde des Diotrophes deren Leiter zur Rede stellen zu können.” Gerd Schunack, *Die Briefe des Johannes* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1982), 109.

<sup>2</sup> “So wird man ‘den Ältesten . . . als einen besondere Hochschätzung genießenden Lehrer . . . oder Propheten der ältern Zeit zu denken haben und seinen Titel im Sinne der Alten verstanden müssen, die Papias und einige der späteren Kirchenväter . . . als Schüler der Apostel und Garanten der auf sich zurückgehenden Tradition bezeichnen’ (G. Bornakmm). Als Träger speziell johanneischer Tradition war er im Kreis johanneischer Gemeinden offenbar unverwechselbar der ‘Älteste.’” Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> “Wenn er nicht ‘der erste monarchische Bischof war, dessen Namen wir kennen’ (von Harnack), so nahm er zumindest eine Position ein, die zum monarchischen Bischofsamt tendierte.” Ibid., 110.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 121.

Schunack does not use the ecclesiological approach in his analysis of the conflict between the Elder and Diotrephes. He refuses to interpret the conflict as an “organizational conflict between independent churches and traveling missionaries - between episcopal church organization and Johannine church structure.”<sup>1</sup> Schunack’s thesis, rather, is that “the conflict has a dogmatic background.”<sup>2</sup>

On this point Schunack returns to Käsemann’s argument. He accepts most of that argument, but rejects the idea that the Elder was already excommunicated by the time of 3 John. He believes that Diotrephes saw the Elder in the light of Gnostic division among the Johannian churches. Diotrephes reacted with some measures, while the Elder believed that he could remove the suspicion with his visit. Thus, the Elder fought on two frontlines: against the Gnosis and against the suspicion of the orthodox faith.<sup>3</sup>

Schunack’s approach, like Käsemann’s, is a mixture of the ecclesiological and theological approaches. Because of his emphasis on heresy, his approach should be categorized as mainly theological.

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<sup>1</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “. . . organisatorischen Konflikt zwischen autonomer Einzelgemeinde und Wandermissionaren, zwischen bischöflicher Gemeindeorganisation und einer spezifisch johanneischen Gemeindestruktur.” Ibid., 110.

<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Der Konflikt hat daher einen ‘dogmatischen’ Hintergrund.” Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> “Diotrephes sah offenbar den ‘Ältesten’ und seinen Kreis im Zweilicht der gnostischen Abspaltung innerhalb johanneischer Gemeinden und reagierte mit disziplinarischen Mitteln, während der ‘Älteste’ bei seinem Besuch diesen Verdacht der Ketzerei als haltlose Schmähung zurückzuweisen zu können glaubte. So wird es zutreffen, dass der ‘Älteste’ sich gewissermaßen an zwei Fronten zu stellen hatte: in der Abgrenzung gegen die Irrlehre und gegenüber dem Vorwurf der Ketzerei seitens der kirchlichen ‘Rechtgläubigkeit’, der sich in organisatorischen und kirchenrechtlichen Maßnahmen dokumentierte.” Ibid.

Stephen S. Smalley (1984)

Stephen S. Smalley believes that all Johannine writings are related to each other and that they were written in the order in which they appear in the NT.<sup>1</sup> He believes that the heart of the problem of Johannine Christianity is understanding the person of Jesus: “The fourth evangelist was addressing some Johannine Christians who thought of Jesus as less than God, to remind them of his divinity; and he was writing for the sake of other members of his community who thought of Jesus as less than man, to assure them of his humanity.”<sup>2</sup>

The same struggle to understand the person of Jesus is seen in the Johannine letters as well. Thus, Smalley argues for the theological approach in the interpretation of 3 John. He believes that the epistle “reflects a crucial stage in the history (and, indeed, in the disintegration) of the Johannine community.”<sup>3</sup> He goes on to explain the connection of 3 John to the other two epistles:

In 1 John the writer set out doctrinal and ethical teaching which was designed to correct unbalanced Christological views and encourage obedience to the love command. But the disintegration of the community had already begun (cf. 1 John 2:18-19); and in 2 and 3 John we find a hardening of the heretical lines (cf. 2 John 7), together with increasing division expressed by a denial of friendship, as well as by secession (cf. 2 John 10-11; 3 John 9-10).<sup>4</sup>

Thus, Smalley places 3 John at the end of a development in the Johannine writings. Like other Johannine writings, 3 John has background “doctrinal concerns,”

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John* (Dallas: Word, 1984), xxii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 343.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

though “the situation presupposed in 3 John is chiefly practical and organizational.”<sup>1</sup>

Smalley states that “3 John is so brief, and its contents are so allusive, that it is difficult to speak about the situation from which it arose with any certainty.”<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, he believes that the prominence of the themes of “love” and “truth” must be “understood and amplified in the light of the teaching which is provided by 1 John and 2 John.”<sup>3</sup> He emphasizes this view further:

Throughout the correspondence the writer’s concern has been for the truth of the Christian gospel to be maintained, and for that truth to be expressed (above all by love) in the lives of Christian believers. Thus although practical issues are in the forefront of 3 John, the question of doctrine is by no means overlooked. In any community of faith, belief and behavior are inseparable.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, Smalley believes that there is a concrete doctrinal background in 3 John. The Elder “was ready to identify himself as a bearer and deliverer of the apostolic tradition, against the heretical inroads which were threatening his community. . . . He might be identified as a member of the Johannine circle which was responsible for the Gospel and all the letters of John.”<sup>5</sup> Smalley criticizes those identifying the Elder with the “Elder John” from Papias’s fragment, but he does not show how his interpretation differs from theirs. Regarding Diotrephes, Smalley says: “We have noted that Diotrephes appears to have been a strong personality without necessarily being a charismatic leader

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 364.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 365.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 317.

or monepiscopal bishop (as Dodd [164] points out, Diotrephes is better understood as a symptom of the disease which the ministry of monarchical bishops was designed to cure).”<sup>1</sup>

Here Smalley does not follow Harnack in assigning Diotrephes monarchical episcopacy, but he agrees with Dodd, who uses the ecclesiological approach as Harnack does. Thus, even though Smalley uses the theological approach, he cannot avoid mixing it with some ecclesiological elements and terminology: “Personal rivalry with the presbyter resulted, such as might easily have occurred in the transitional period when the authority of the apostles was declining and patterns of (episcopal) autonomy in early church polity were emerging.”<sup>2</sup> This reflects Harnack’s understanding of the clash of the Spirit and office, even though Smalley does not use these terms. Finally, Smalley does not believe that Diotrephes was a heretic from the beginning. He explains his conclusion regarding 3 John in these words: “What began as political strife ended in doctrinal division.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, Smalley allows for ecclesiological issues as the beginning of the conflict, but the culmination rested on the question of doctrine.

In conclusion, we can say that Smalley has typical elements of the theological approach in his interpretation of 3 John. He sees a clear connection between all three Johannine epistles, with doctrinal background being the determining factor for 3 John,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 356.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

though he also recognizes practical and organizational issues. Thus, even though Smalley considers some ecclesiological elements, his approach is mainly theological in nature.

Robert M. Price (1989)

Robert M. Price offered a new reconstruction of the events surrounding 3 John. He states that the three Johannine epistles were written in reverse order from the way in which they appear in the NT,<sup>1</sup> thus requiring 3 John to be the first epistle written.

Price's reconstruction starts with docetic revelation, which some Johannian itinerant prophets proclaimed secretly on their journeys without the knowledge of the Elder. As they reach the church of Diotrephes, he throws them out and concludes that the Elder himself must be a heretic, since he sends such preachers. Those preachers continue their travel and upon returning to the Elder do not report any troubles. Eventually more itinerant preachers start on their way. When they reach the church of Diotrephes, they are expelled and find shelter with Gaius. When they return home, they give a full report to the Elder. The Elder writes a letter to the church of Diotrephes complaining about such treatment, but the letter is destroyed by Diotrephes. The Elder sends another letter (3 John) carried by Demetrius to Gaius. Finally, the Elder comes to the church of Diotrephes and confronts him. They both realize that the group of itinerant preachers caused all the problems and are reconciled. In this scenario, both the Elder and Diotrephes are presented in a positive light. The Elder agrees with the strategy of Diotrephes. Upon returning home he expels the docetic preachers and writes the epistle of 2 John to warn a particular

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<sup>1</sup> Robert M. Price, "The *Sitz-im-Leben* of Third John: A New Reconstruction," *Evangelical Quarterly* 61 (1989): 114.



church of the danger. Finally, he decides to write a circular letter for all Johannine churches in which he warns of the danger of docetic heresy.<sup>1</sup>

Price's approach to the explanation of 3 John is theological, since he blames it on docetism. He partially agrees with Käsemann in his theological approach: "Like Käsemann, I think that Diotrephes regarded the Elder as a heretic, though only erroneously and temporarily, while simultaneously the Elder must have (also erroneously and temporarily) regarded Diotrephes as an arrogant and autocrat trying to consolidate his power at the Elder's expense."<sup>2</sup>

Unlike Käsemann, Price believes that Diotrephes's accusation of the Elder as a heretic was only temporary until they both realized that itinerant preachers were working behind their backs. Price sees the Elder as a supervisor of satellite churches over a wide area.<sup>3</sup> That is Harnack's thesis, for which he has been criticized over the years. Price describes Diotrephes as "the local head" of his church.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Price adopts elements of the ecclesiological approach as well. He ends his article with the following words: "It will be seen that I believe most of the previous theories have caught some aspects of the complex *Sitz-im-Leben* presupposed by 3 John, but none has grasped the entirety of the situation."<sup>5</sup> Thus, Price is not hesitant about integrating various other theories and

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 114-119.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 119.

approaches into his reconstruction; but the main thrust of his approach remains theological, since he bases it on docetic heresy.

#### Georg Strecker (1989)

Georg Strecker should be designated as a proponent of the theological approach, even though he views the conflict between Diotrephes and the Elder in the following terms: “The conflict between Diotrephes and the Presbyter is not merely an episode occurring at the margins of the church’s history. It is representative of a fundamental controversy in the earliest period of the church, corresponding to the struggle between Spirit and office, church order and independent charismatic life.”<sup>1</sup> We first encountered this thesis with Harnack. Thus, Strecker mixes some elements of Harnack’s ecclesiological approach into his theological approach. Yet, Strecker denies that Diotrephes is described in 3 John as a monarchical bishop, as Harnack claims.<sup>2</sup>

When Strecker insists on a close relationship between 2 and 3 John, his theological approach becomes evident.<sup>3</sup> He notes similarities and connections between the two letters and draws this conclusion about the background of 3 John: “On the basis of the common authorship of the two smaller Johannine letters, the sequence 2 John → 3 John, and the statement in 2 John 7 that, as a result, must be seen as a fundamental

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<sup>1</sup> Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 261. The original German publication was published in 1989: *Die Johannesbriefe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 253.

principle for both letters, a dogmatic background seems probable.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, Strecker argues for a possibility of a dogmatic background in 3 John. He presents both Bauer’s and Käsemann’s dogmatic argument and draws the following conclusion: “The thesis that the presbyter appears as ‘Gnostic’ in his struggle with Diotrephes cannot really be derived from these letters. It is more likely that his opponents represent Gnosticizing or spiritualizing tendencies contrary to the presbyter’s apocalyptic teaching about Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

It can be concluded that Strecker is ready to allow for Gnosticizing tendencies in 3 John. Thus, Strecker’s argument, though including some ecclesiological arguments, is theological in nature.

#### Conclusion to the Theological Approach

The exploration of various interpreters who use the theological approach concludes that only Wendt, as the first proponent of the theological approach to the interpretation of 3 John, stays exclusively within the boundaries of that approach. All other proponents are influenced by Harnack, his followers, and their ecclesiological approach. They integrate the arguments of the ecclesiological approach into their theological approach. Thus, the theological approach is not free from the enormous influence that advocates of the ecclesiological approach have had since Harnack.

The distinguishing feature of the theological approach is its acceptance of the theological background as being the decisive factor for the situation of 3 John. In order to find that theological background, the interpreters turn to 1 and 2 John. Thus, all

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 263.

proponents of the theological approach argue for a close relationship among the three Johannine epistles.

The following features indicate that the theological approach has been applied to the interpretation of 3 John:

1. Seeing all three Johannine epistles as related
2. Using the theological background from 1 and 2 John as the main background for the interpretation of 3 John.

When both of these features are present in an interpretation, it can be assumed that we are encountering the theological approach.

### **Social Approach**

The social approach adds to the ecclesiological and theological approaches. In interpreting 3 John, it does not focus on questions of offices, nor on the theological background of 3 John, but on social customs, values, and cultural understandings of the first century A.D. The authors who have used the social approach for the interpretation of 3 John will be presented here in chronological order as they have published their research.

Abraham J. Malherbe (1977)

Abraham Malherbe is the first to use the social approach for the purpose of interpreting the third epistle of John. He belongs to the socio-historical direction, which concentrates on describing the society of the first century A.D.

Malherbe's social approach is significant in that he avoids assigning offices to the characters in 3 John and criticizes those who do.<sup>1</sup> Regarding Diotrephes he says: "In the absence of unambiguous information that can serve as a control, the temptation is always to fit Diotrephes into a preconceived scheme, and none of previous interpreters successfully resist it."<sup>2</sup> Here Malherbe criticizes the ecclesiological approach, which tries to fit the characters from 3 John into a certain scheme. Thus, he avoids any possibility of confusing his approach with the ecclesiological approach. Similarly, he denies the possibility of a doctrinal background in the context of 3 John. He simply says: "There is nothing in 3 John to suggest that the issue between the Elder and himself was a doctrinal one."<sup>3</sup> Thus he avoids the theological approach as well.

For Malherbe, following the social approach means understanding the social factors which are described in 3 John. "I suggest that we attempt to understand Diotrephes in the light of the main subject of 3 John, which is the extension of hospitality to fellow Christians."<sup>4</sup> Thus, understanding the practice of hospitality becomes crucial for the interpretation of the epistle. Similarly, the role of the letters of recommendation in ancient society is investigated. The basic presupposition of the social approach is that a piece of writing cannot be understood without understanding its social circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> Malherbe, "Inhospitability of Diotrephes," 228.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 223.

Malherbe explores various ancient writings, including the NT, to learn about the custom of hospitality. The Pauline writings clearly show that the mobility of Paul and his coworkers would have been impossible without the practice of hospitality. In addition, house churches would not have existed without the hospitality of their hosts. Malherbe explores the role of the hosts of the house churches: “Exactly what status in the congregational meetings in their houses this service conferred on them is not totally clear.”<sup>1</sup> One problem with interpreting 3 John is the lack of knowledge about the role of a host. Malherbe only scratches the surface of the question of hosts, since his article-length treatment does not allow for an investigation of all the important aspects of that question. He suggests that in the Pauline letters the host of a house church does not carry an office.<sup>2</sup> After seeking to determine whether bishops had any authority because they provided hospitality, he concludes that “the Pastorals do not provide evidence that the bishops derived authority from providing hospitality to the church.”<sup>3</sup> It seems that Malherbe needs such a conclusion in order to argue silently that the focus of the ecclesiological approach on the question of offices and authority is fruitless.

Malherbe goes on to discuss letters of recommendation. Since the practice of hospitality was open to abuses, such letters were used to regulate the practice. That custom was widespread in the first century. Malherbe sees 3 John as a letter of recommendation to Gaius on behalf of Demetrius.<sup>4</sup> In the epistle, Malherbe recognizes

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 223-224.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 224.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 227.

two groups: the group of Gaius and the group of Diotrephes. “The relationship between the two groups is not spelled out. . . . There is no hint of a confrontation between Gaius and Diotrephes or of tension between them.”<sup>1</sup> Malherbe’s conviction is that all the groups in any particular locality “thought of themselves as together constituting the church in that location.”<sup>2</sup>

A question arises: Why did the Elder write only to Gaius and not to the entire church? The issue is “Diotrephes’ refusal to receive the letter of recommendation that had been written” previously (3 John 9).<sup>3</sup> Malherbe explains the refusal of Diotrephes as a question of power: “The Elder seems to think that Diotrephes had seen in the letter a threat to his own pre-eminence in the church, and that he had therefore rejected the letter as well as its bearer.”<sup>4</sup> Here the issues are presented from the perspective of the Elder, who sees in Diotrephes’s behavior the desire to maintain control over the church. “It is not necessary to make him a monarchical bishop to explain his actions. . . . The picture we get is of one man exercising his power.”<sup>5</sup> Malherbe is here criticizing the ecclesiological approach for reading too much into the text by making Diotrephes a monarchical bishop.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 228.

Consequently, Malherbe does not speak about authority as related to an office, but simply about the exercise of power. He emphasizes that point with the following words: “The situation reflected is one in which power rather than ecclesiastical authority is exercised.”<sup>1</sup> The question that remains unanswered is the type of power we are dealing with here and how it is expressed. I unpack the question of the host and of power in my own investigation in chapters 4 and 5.

#### Frederick W. Danker (1982)

Frederick W. Danker did a very extensive scholarly study of the term “benefactor” in antiquity. Observing how benefactors worked elsewhere, he believes that 3 John deals with benefactors as well. “The brief letter called Third John capitalizes on the dramatic conflict of benefactor (Demetrios) versus anti-benefactor (the inhospitable Diotrophes). Such terms as attestation (martyreo) and beneficent performance (agathourgo) are part of the benefactor semantic field that comes to expression in this document.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, 3 John is seen here as a conflict between two benefactors. Interestingly, Demetrius, who is usually seen as a traveling teacher visiting the church of Diotrophes, is here seen as a member in the church of Diotrophes and as his direct opponent. We can say that it is a clash of two dominant personalities in that local church.

With his explanation of the circumstances in 3 John, Danker is to be counted among the representatives of the social approach, since the role of benefactors assigned to

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1982), 491.



Diotrephes and Demetrius is clearly a social explanation. I follow this track in later chapters.

#### Bruce J. Malina (1986)

Bruce J. Malina belongs to the social-scientific direction, which works with models derived from the social sciences. He calls Malherbe's approach described above a "received view," which represents the popular old way of looking at things.<sup>1</sup> Malina is actually fighting Malherbe's socio-historical approach, which is concerned with a description of the social environment of the first century A.D., as opposed to his social-scientific approach, which bases its research on theoretical modeling. Thus, Malina believes that a description is not enough without a clearly stated theoretical model that can be tested by others.<sup>2</sup>

Malina argues for exploring the meaning of a biblical text within the social system of the writer and the recipients: "Meanings, past and present, that are realized in language, are in fact ultimately rooted in a social system (see Halliday, 1978). This being the case, to interpret a text and set forth its historical meaning(s) requires some significant appreciation of the social system(s) in which the texts were produced."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Malina, "The Received View and What It Cannot Do: 3 John and Hospitality," 171.

<sup>2</sup> For more clarity on the issues involved, see my "Introduction to the Social Approach" in chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup> Malina, "The Received View and What It Cannot Do: 3 John and Hospitality," 172.

In order to accomplish its task, the social-scientific approach deals first with the text. Malina says: “I am committed to the sociolinguistic view that a text is a meaningful configuration of language intended to communicate.”<sup>1</sup> He is very much against isolating bits and pieces of texts from their context. “It would seem the better part of wisdom, then, to refuse to deal with text-segments apart from their texts. While words and sentences do, in fact, need to be understood, interpretation requires fitting the whole text into some larger frame of reference.”<sup>2</sup> Malina finds that larger frame in the world of writers and their original audience: “If we are seeking historical meaning, and meaning derives from and constitutes the social system, then this larger frame for New Testament texts is first century Mediterranean society in general, and a given, concrete audience in particular.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, understanding a writer’s audience, in particular, and the first-century Mediterranean world, in general, is a prerequisite for interpreting NT texts.

After explaining his approach in general terms, Malina presents his interpretation of 3 John. He reflects on Malherbe’s article to show how his treatment differs from the “received view.” Malina intends to go back to “the original audience” of 3 John “by means of the social system scenarios within which the original communication took place.”<sup>4</sup> To accomplish this, he proposes quite explicit “social science theories and models.”<sup>5</sup> Malina first argues for 3 John being a letter of recommendation, which is

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

intended to recommend Demetrius to Gaius.<sup>1</sup> That reflects the mobility of the first-century Mediterranean world, since letters of recommendation would contribute to it. Malina criticizes Malherbe for his generalizations in the use of the term “mobility” and for the lack of theoretical modeling. In order to define “mobility,” Malina suggests four dimensions for consideration:

1. The vertical dimension (high/low, up/down), the natural symbol of social power.
2. The dimension of size or mass (bigger/smaller relating to land holdings, slaveholdings, income, or some other measurable quantity deemed socially significant).
3. The dimension of depth assessment (surface to deep, relating to influence, perspicuity, and the like).
4. The dimension of horizontal classification (first/last, relating to commitment, loyalty, precedence, and prestige).<sup>2</sup>

Malina also criticizes Malherbe’s use of the term “hospitality,” “as though the meaning of the term were quite apparent to contemporary U.S. persons who use the term largely to refer to the entertaining of relatives and friends.”<sup>3</sup> Malherbe is accused of using the term “hospitality” in an anachronistic way.

Malina defines hospitality “as the process by means of which an outsider’s status is changed from stranger to guest (for the definition and what follows see Pitt-Rivers,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 177.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

1977:94-112).<sup>1</sup> The outsider is 'received' and socially transformed from stranger to guest."<sup>2</sup> Malina goes on to define the three stages of hospitality:

1. Evaluating the stranger (usually with some test about whether guest status is possible).
2. The stranger as a guest – the liminal phase.
3. From guest to transformed stranger (at times with another test).<sup>3</sup>

Malina believes that a stranger is considered a threat. That is why "s/he must be tested as to whether s/he will subscribe to the norms of the community into which s/he comes."<sup>4</sup> A crucial role for the person needing hospitality is played by the patron.<sup>5</sup>

In the ancient (and Mediterranean) world a stranger possessed no standing in law or custom within the visited group; hence it is necessary for him to have a patron in order to gain the protection of the local laws and gods (see Lande, 1977). To offend the protégé or client is to offend the protector/patron. The protégé/client is embedded in the social space of the patron. Thus the stranger is incorporated only through a personal bond with an established community member.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Julian Pitt-Rivers, "The Law of Hospitality," in *The Fate of Shechem: Or, The Politics of Sex: Essays in the Anthropology of the Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 94-112.

<sup>2</sup> Malina, "The Received View and What It Cannot Do: 3 John and Hospitality," 181.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The role of the host in extending hospitality was previously explored by Malherbe; but as I have concluded above, he did not complete that task in his short article.

<sup>6</sup> Malina, "The Received View and What It Cannot Do: 3 John and Hospitality," 182-183.

Patrons play a crucial role by integrating a stranger into the community. They help the stranger become a guest. “The status of guest, thus, stands midway between that of hostile stranger and community member.”<sup>1</sup> So, in Malina’s view, a testing process is required in which the patron plays a crucial role.<sup>2</sup>

Malina suggests three types of strangers who can be identified after testing:

1. One who is recognized as better than the best challenger in the community: there is no problem with his precedence in the community.
2. One who is vanquished by the local riposter and thus owes his life/continued presence to his local patron; he is thus attached to the community by the intermediary of his victor.
3. One who has no friends/kin within the community, who is simply ignored (given barbarian status), hence treated as an outlaw who could be despoiled or destroyed with impunity, simply because of his potential hostility.<sup>3</sup>

I question whether traditional hospitality would ever test a stranger before extending hospitality. If 3 John is about receiving friends of a friend, the Elder’s friends, then it probably does not involve challenging or combating strangers. But if the possibility of a dogmatic background and heresy is involved, as is the case in 2 John, then the testing of strangers might become an issue.

Malina concludes his section about testing a stranger with these words: “The test, when given, attempts to assign an acceptable but temporary social location to the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>2</sup> I question whether traditional ancient hospitality can ever be expressed in patronal terms and categories. In this dissertation I am actually arguing for separating hospitality and patronage as two opposed concepts.

<sup>3</sup> Malina, “The Received View and What It Cannot Do: 3 John and Hospitality,” 184.

stranger.”<sup>1</sup> It seems that Malina is arguing that a test is not always given. Yet why does he emphasize a test when it is not always a standard procedure? In the case of Old Testament events, when Abraham (Gen 18:1-8) and Lot (Gen 19:1-11) showed hospitality to the angels, they did not perform any tests before extending their hospitality. In the case of 3 John, the letter of recommendation, which Malina argues for, should remove the need for a test.

After discussing “mobility” and “hospitality,” Malina goes on to discuss the role of letters of recommendation:

The purpose of the letter is to help divest the stranger of his strangeness, to make him at least only a partial stranger, if not an immediate guest. The person writing a recommendation attests to the stranger bearing it on the basis of the word of honor of the attestor. To reject the recommended stranger is, of course, a challenge to the honor of the recommender. It spurns his honor, and requires an attempt at satisfaction on his part, under pain of being shamed.<sup>2</sup>

This is an important observation, since 3 John might be classified as a letter of recommendation. Significant in Malina’s exposition is the connection between the letter of recommendation and honor. He explains that connection with the following words: “III John is a letter of recommendation sent in a world whose paramount values were honor and shame. Honor cannot be achieved or lost without an audience, a public that ascribes or withholds it. This is why those ‘private’ letters of recommendation in the New Testament are not exactly private.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Malina goes on to explain the role of honor in the third epistle of John. He envisions the following situation in the conflict of 3 John:

In III John the Elder puts his honor on the line against the recommended Demetrius and any others he might send to Gaius. In the process he seeks satisfaction for the dishonor he suffered at the hands of Diotrephes. III John is the Elder's culturally required attempt to satisfaction. If he kept quiet about Diotrephes' rejection of his previous recommendation, he would lose his honor. By attempting satisfaction, he retains his honor, but at some cost. The cost in question is the publicity and consequent honor Diotrephes gains by being a discriminating host and patron with power.<sup>1</sup>

The above quotation points out the importance of honor for the understanding of 3 John in the context of the first-century world. Further, while Malina acknowledges that all human societies offer hospitality, he emphasizes that "the quality and type of the reception as well as the social definition of 'guest' evidence specific difference."<sup>2</sup> So he concludes his article by comparing today's hospitality with first-century Mediterranean hospitality:

In the U.S., hospitality normally refers to entertaining relatives, friends and acquaintances, frequently with the presumption of individual reciprocity in the future; first century Mediterranean hospitality normally refers to hosting a stranger, with the presumption of community reciprocity in the future. These specific differences derive from differences in cultural arrangements and social structure. . . . In other words, a full, comprehensive description of hospitality in the U.S. and the first century Mediterranean world entails a description of the salient features of each social system. One reason for this is that hospitality, just as any other discrete piece of socially meaningful behavior, will replicate the core values and value objects of the society in question.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Thus, Malina argues for understanding cultural arrangements and social structures, as well as prominent features of the social system and core values of the original writer and audience. He has made a contribution in that direction for 3 John, but that task cannot be completed in a single article. This dissertation will follow some of his suggestions in order to encourage a deeper appreciation for the first-century world. This, in turn, should lead to a better understanding of the social dynamics of 3 John.

In conclusion, one can say that Malina is a clear representative of the social approach. He would actually call his approach a social-scientific approach, as opposed to Malherbe's socio-historical approach. With his approach Malina has no interest in offices or issues of dogmatics. His contribution is in pointing to the importance of the social system in which a text has been written.

#### Margaret M. Mitchell (1998)

Margaret Mitchell deals with the meaning of the verb ἐπιδέχεσθαι.<sup>1</sup> That verb occurs twice in two consecutive verses in 3 John 9 and 10. Current English Bible translations treat the two occurrences of that same word in two different ways, while Jerome's Vulgate and translations from the Middle Ages translate the verb in the same way in both instances. Thus Mitchell explores why current translations assign two different meanings to the same word.

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell, "Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us': The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10," 299-320.



Mitchell traces the two different translations to Walter Bauer's entry for that word in his dictionary.<sup>1</sup> She explains that Bauer

attributed quite distinct meanings to the word in two adjacent verses, the only two places ἐπιδέχεσθαι appears in the New Testament: "receive as a guest" in v. 10, but "recognize someone's authority" in v. 9. The authority of Bauer has made this a translation to contend with, one with tremendous implications for exegesis and historical analysis of the letter, since the effect of the latter translation is to go a long way toward resolving any ambiguity about the historical situation behind the letter in favor of a reading stressing ecclesiastical conflict.<sup>2</sup>

Bauer's reading is dominant among NT scholars and Bible translators. That indicates how strong and widely spread the ecclesiological approach has become.<sup>3</sup> Mitchell's purpose is "to demonstrate the unreliability of Bauer's entry for the verb ἐπιδέχεσθαι and therefore to cast doubt on translations that have followed it unquestioningly."<sup>4</sup>

Mitchell performs a comparative lexicographical survey of the term ἐπιδέχεσθαι and draws a preliminary conclusion:

In fact, there is no lexicon of the Greek language outside of the NT, including the comprehensive work ΜΕΓΑ ΛΕΞΙΚΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΓΛΩΣΣΗΣ, which cites a meaning for the term ἐπιδέχεσθαι as "to recognize someone's authority," or anything

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Bauer, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*, 5th ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971), 577.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, "'Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us': The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10," 301.

<sup>3</sup> This is especially interesting, since Bauer's own interpretation of the circumstances in 3 John should be classified more as theological for its reference to heresy. Here we observe again the strong influence of the ecclesiological approach, even among theologians who do not follow it strictly.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell, "'Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us': The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10," 302.

close to it. This includes also lexica of the Septuagint, on the one hand, and of patristic writings, on the other, the literature that frames the NT and in many ways stands in a lexical continuum with it. The complete lack of corroboration for the meaning of ἐπιδέχεσθαι as “to recognize someone’s authority” in any other Greek lexicon gives us reason to be suspicious about this proposed translation in 3 John 9.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Mitchell invites a critique on Bauer’s entry for the term ἐπιδέχεσθαι. Bauer has two different entries “as though there were unambiguous external lexical evidence for each.”<sup>2</sup> Mitchell is strongly convinced that the texts which Bauer lists for the support of rendering “recognize someone’s authority” do not support it, because they do not deal with authority issues. That is seen even in the most frequently cited parallel in 1 Maccabees 10:1 and 46.

The word ἐπιδέχεσθαι appears twice in Maccabees 10 and it is claimed that it has two different meanings. In vs. 1 it is about welcoming a person, while in vs. 46 it is about not welcoming words of a written letter. Mitchell points out that welcoming in that passage “signals a normal diplomatic reception.”<sup>3</sup> We are dealing here with “welcoming” and “rejecting.” It is claimed that vs. 46 represents a parallel to 3 John 9 and that ἐπιδέχεσθαι in 3 John 9 can be translated as “not recognizing someone’s authority.” But rejecting a letter is not the same as “not recognizing someone’s authority.” To discuss authority and its recognition is to consider its motives for rejection, which are not spelled

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 305.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 305, 306.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 310.

out in the text.<sup>1</sup> “The verb ἐπιδέχασθαι in and of itself does not tell us of the motivation for that acceptance or rejection.”<sup>2</sup>

Mitchell goes on to quote a couple of passages from Polybius<sup>3</sup> that use the term ἐπιδέχασθαι. She believes that “these passages are of key importance in identifying social conventions about reception of envoys that are depicted with our verb.”<sup>4</sup> She suggests that these passages, as well as the passages from Maccabees, are found in the context of diplomatic relations and “refer to the proper reception or rejection of the words/messages of those who have been sent.”<sup>5</sup>

After her explorations of the evidence outside of the NT, Mitchell suggests the following for 3 John:

In this case the simplest translation is also the most accurate: “Diotrephes does not receive us . . . he does not himself receive the brothers.” The verb ἐπιδέχασθαι should be translated the same way in both 3 John 9 and 10, although no current translation of the NT into English does so. This translation preserves the literal connection in the Greek and does not pretend to know more than the words themselves tell us about the source of the conflict being depicted.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 311.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>3</sup> Polybius, *Histories*, trans. W. R. Paton (Loeb Classical Library), 32.9.3, 13.1-2, 23.3.1-3.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell, “‘Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us’: The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10,” 313.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 317.

When it comes to the social function of 3 John, Mitchell believes that it is a letter of recommendation, as Abraham Malherbe has pointed out.<sup>1</sup> But to further his argument, she enlarges “the frame of reference beyond private letters of recommendation to the larger sphere of diplomatic relations in the Greco-Roman world, which is inclusive of letters of recommendation.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, proper or improper diplomatic reception is the salient background for understanding 3 John.<sup>3</sup>

In not receiving the envoys and letter of the elder, Diotrephes was choosing not to receive the elder himself who had sent them. . . . We cannot ascertain from this the motive for Diotrephes’ rejection – personal, theological or political. The act of rejection in itself may imply rejection of the sender’s authority, but it need not, nor is there anything inherent in the word ἐπιδέχασθαι that favors that possible motivation over the other plausible suggestions.<sup>4</sup>

Mitchell refuses to recognize authority issues related to the term ἐπιδέχασθαι, refuting thus the possibility of an ecclesiological reading of the text of 3 John. She prefers the social approach and for that purpose explores the custom of receiving envoys in the first century A.D. She finds the salient background of 3 John in the diplomatic reception of the Greco-Roman world. She believes that having this background in our minds while reading 3 John will significantly enhance our understanding of the circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 319.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 319-320.

Alistair R. Campbell (1998)

Alistair R. Campbell explores the use of the term “elder” in earliest Christianity. Since 3 John is written by the Elder, Campbell’s investigation is of interest to this review of literature. He argues for a flexible use of that title: “When we remember the flexible nature of the term ‘elder,’ which could often refer to those who held other offices or were known by more precise titles, it seems to me that there is no problem of an overseer calling himself an elder.”<sup>1</sup> So, this title could signify a specific office known to those to whom the Elder writes.

Campbell suggests that in the context of 3 John “it seems quite possible that the writer is indeed the ‘monoepiskopos.’”<sup>2</sup> Thus, Campbell sees the Elder, not Diotrephes, as the monoeiskopos, as is usually claimed by the ecclesiological approach. He also suggests that “perhaps Diotrephes, and even Gaius and Demetrius, are household leaders” involved in the life of the same church.<sup>3</sup> If that is correct, then all three of them are probably patrons managing their households. Campbell’s attempt to find a social role for Diotrephes, Gaius, and Demetrius places him among the scholars dealing with social questions, even though he deals with ecclesiological questions as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Alastair R. Campbell, *The Elder: Seniority within Earliest Christianity* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 207.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 208.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

J. C. O'Neill (1998)

J. C. O'Neill explores possible traces of monasticism in the New Testament and touches on the issues in 3 John. In this context, he presents a thesis for the background of 3 John: The community to which the third epistle of John is directed was actually a monastic community.<sup>1</sup> His strongest support for that thesis is found in the word φιλοπρωτεύων. That word is found only once in all Greek literature used by Nilus of Ancyra in his discussion of monastic life.<sup>2</sup> That fact encourages O'Neill to place 3 John into a monastic setting. He seems to interpret the entire Johannine corpus as coming from "monastic communities."<sup>3</sup>

O'Neill's thesis belongs within the social approach, since it explains the background of 3 John through the social circumstances of a monastic community. In addition, O'Neill denies "doctrinal matters" in 3 John and seems to have little sympathy for ecclesiological concerns.<sup>4</sup>

Ruth B. Edwards (2000)

Ruth B. Edwards discusses the form, style, and content of 3 John. Regarding form, she concludes that "of all the writings in the New Testament, 3 John conforms most closely to the pattern of a private letter . . . . It may well have been conveyed to Gaius by

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<sup>1</sup> "The relations as here set out fit far better a monastic community than a local congregation." J. C. O'Neill, "New Testament Monasteries," in *Common Life in the Early Church* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 132.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

the Demetrius who is so warmly commended.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, she understands 3 John to be a private letter of recommendation.

Edwards agrees with Malherbe in seeing the main business of the letter as being hospitality.<sup>2</sup> The Elder commends Gaius for his hospitality, but he “complains that Diotrephes ‘is hungry for power.’”<sup>3</sup> Thus, she argues for hospitality and power being the two main subjects of the epistle.

Further, Edwards notes that in the past there was much debate about Diotrephes’s ecclesiastical role. She directs our attention to Harnack’s influential thesis that Diotrephes was a monarchical bishop, either orthodox or heretical. She asks: “Is there not a danger of reading into this text later forms of church government?”<sup>4</sup> With that query she is questioning the ecclesiological approach. Further, she argues against the existence of authority issues in 3 John.<sup>5</sup> Thus, she seems to be refusing to view the conflict in 3 John in ecclesiological terms.

Edwards discusses the nature of the Elder’s dispute with Diotrephes and she concludes: “There seems no reason to view it as a doctrinal [dispute]: no doctrinal issues are mentioned.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, she questions the theological approach to 3 John as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth B. Edwards, “2 and 3 John: Form, Style and Content,” in *The Johannine Literature*, ed. Barnabas Lindars, Ruth B. Edwards, and John M. Court (Sheffield: Academic Press, 2000), 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

Edwards believes that the dispute “seems to be about church hospitality rather than doctrine or authority. We are dealing with a pastoral and moral, rather than ecclesiastical issue.”<sup>1</sup> By placing the issue of hospitality back into the main focus, Edwards seems to be arguing for the social approach. That assumption is strengthened by her claim: “In all this 3 John follows a common pattern of rhetoric designated to earn goodwill, assign praise and blame, and affect the behavior of others.”<sup>2</sup> The issues of praise and blame belong in the context of honor and shame, which are some of the most important values discussed by the scholars conducting social studies of the first-century world.

We can conclude that Edwards seems to be arguing for the social approach to the interpretation of 3 John. She has presented hospitality and power as the two main issues in the context of 3 John. I will follow that track in this dissertation.

#### Allen Dwight Callahan (2005)

This is the most recent author I was able to include in this review of literature. It seems that current authors are not as interested in ecclesiological and theological issues discussed by previous generations of scholars. In other words, there has been a lack of ecclesiological and theological contributions to 3 John during the last decade.

Callahan does not mention any offices in connection to 3 John, except for the Elder. The closest he gets to discussing theological issues is his interesting conclusion to two short sentences comprising 3 John 11. “The two sentences are askew. The second

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 125.



sentence would better jibe with the first if the second read, ‘the one who does evil is from the devil,’ or at least ‘the one who does evil is not from God.’ The Elder stops short of leveling a thorough condemnation of Diotrephes.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, Callahan does not see Diotrephes as a heretic. Despite everything “he is a brother.”<sup>2</sup> So, Diotrephes does not experience the level of condemnation designated for heretics of 1 and 2 John.

For Callahan, truth in 3 John is practical in nature. “In this letter the assembly is the forum ‘for the brothers and the strangers who testify to your love,’ in which truth is arbitrated by practice.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, the truth in 3 John is seen in practical deeds of hospitality. Callahan does not deal in depth with social issues. In that regard he is not really utilizing the social approach, but he is included in the social section for his lack of attention to ecclesiological and theological issues.

#### Conclusion to the Social Approach

There are a number of authors who have used the social approach in the interpretation of 3 John. Abraham Malherbe seems to have been the first, and his attempt at interpretation is designated as the socio-historical approach. He applied an entire series of social questions to the text of 3 John. In my view it was a successful beginning and we

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<sup>1</sup> Allen Dwight Callahan, *A Love Supreme: A History of Johannine Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 7.

are still indebted to him for his accomplishments. He points to hospitality and power as being the main subjects of 3 John.<sup>1</sup>

Malina disagrees with Malherbe's socio-historical approach to NT studies, arguing instead for a social-scientific approach, which involves the application of social-science models to the realities of the first century A.D. in order to discover certain social laws. Malina designates Malherbe's approach as a socio-historical description, criticizing him for trying to immerse himself in the culture for the purpose of description rather than working with modern social-scientific models. As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, both approaches are criticized. On the one hand, there is the question of whether it is justifiable to apply modern social-scientific models to the society of the first century A.D. On the other hand, everybody has a model of some kind in mind by approaching certain subjects, but not everybody is aware of the models driving him or her. Thus, both sides of the social approach criticize each other for ethnocentrism and unwarranted generalizations.<sup>2</sup>

I believe that each side has some truth. Rather than impose our modern models on the first century A.D., models we work with should be products of our research of the ancient world. Thus, a social description by immersion into the culture of a given NT text seems to be a necessary step, which should lead to a creation of contextual models that

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<sup>1</sup> In 1998, Margaret Mitchell still finds Malherbe's questions and some of his solutions extremely valuable. Mitchell, "'Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us': The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10," 318.

<sup>2</sup> Modern discussion by the proponents of the two approaches to the social investigation of the NT can be found in: Esler, "Models in New Testament Interpretation: A Reply to David Horrell"; Horrell, "Models and Methods in Social-Scientific Interpretation: A Response to Philip Esler."

explain the first century A.D. in general terms. Such models should be used to enlighten specific circumstances of NT texts. I believe that such an approach may provide fruitful results.<sup>1</sup>

The following features indicate that a social approach has been applied to the interpretation of 3 John:

1. Description of social circumstances by immersion into the culture dealt with in the text
2. Application of modern social science theories and models to the text
3. Avoidance of ecclesiological issues (no offices or authority issues)
4. Avoidance of theological issues (no Gnosticism or other heresies).

When three or more of the above features are present in an interpretation, we can presume that we are encountering the social approach.<sup>2</sup>

### **Conclusion of the Review of Literature**

This review of literature has included contributions to the interpretation of 3 John from the ecclesiological, theological, and social approaches. These three approaches were presented separately in chronological order within each approach, allowing the reader to observe the developments over the years.

This review focuses on the twentieth century, but moves beyond these limits when necessary. I have started with Harnack's influential publication, since he has

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<sup>1</sup> See "Method in This Dissertation" discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of Campbell only two features from this list may apply, since he mixes ecclesiological issues into his social explanation as well. In the case of Callahan only the last two features apply.

influenced almost all subsequent interpreters. His ecclesiological approach has even influenced all authors following the theological approach, except Wendt, and has forced followers of the social approach to consider it as well. Followers of the ecclesiological and theological approaches have also dealt with some social issues.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the approaches are interrelated and together might contribute to a full picture of the issues in 3 John. The separation of these three approaches in this dissertation is for the purpose of classification only, with no intention to judge. All of the approaches have made contributions and might conceivably reinforce each other.

My aim is to explore the social dynamics of 3 John in this dissertation. So I am building mostly on the results of the social approach. With my research I intend to add missing elements to the existing contributions. Before I enter into the specifics of social dynamics and try to create a model of hospitality (chapter 4) and a model of patronage (chapter 5), in the next chapter (chapter 3) I perform my own investigation of the third epistle of John.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., the role of letters of recommendation, the role of traveling missionaries, and the role of hospitality in the early church.

## CHAPTER 3

### INVESTIGATION OF 3 JOHN

#### **Introductory Remarks**

The purpose of this investigation of 3 John is to capture a context for my study of social dynamics. Here 3 John will be considered a self-contained unit as I try to interpret it in its own context. I first present parallels originally inherent in the text of the epistle.

#### **Introduction to Chiasm**

The structure of 3 John is a chiasm. The word “chiasm” is taken from the name for the Greek letter X (chi), since a chiastic structure has the form of the letter X. It is a structure in which A at the beginning parallels A’ at the end of the structure. A chiasm builds toward the middle of the structure as its culmination, and then it moves back where it originally started. Welch defines a chiasm as an “inverted parallelism.”<sup>1</sup> Groves defines it in a similar way:

Most simply, it is the “mirrored” repetition of certain features of a narrative discourse. Expanding upon this, we might say that repetition is the lifeblood of chiasm. And if repetition is its lifeblood, then the mirroring, or inverted order, of repetition is its body. Thus, for a particular text to be chiastically structured, certain

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981), 9.

features of the first half of the text must be repeated in the second half in an order that is the reverse of the order of the first half.<sup>1</sup>

The middle point in a chiasm contains the most important message of the structure. Thus, the value of recognizing a chiastic structure is in identifying an author's main point. Additionally, there is great value in recognizing parallels, since A and A' would have a similar topic.

In his article, Ronald E. Man explains the importance of recognizing chiastic structures:

Two characteristics of chiasm help interpreters understand the meaning of biblical passages: (1) the presence of either a single central or of two complementary elements in the structure, which generally highlight the major thrust of the passage encompassed by the chiasm; and (2) the presence of complementary pairs of elements, in which each member of a pair can elucidate the other member and together form a composite meaning.<sup>2</sup>

The complementary pairs in a text structure are parallel to each other in the sense that they present equivalents or contrasts. "The elements paired off with each other in a chiastic structure may be parallel either in a synonymous or an antithetical way, and the placing of such elements opposite each other in the structure serves to strengthen the comparison or the contrast."<sup>3</sup>

In the case of 3 John, we are dealing more with topical parallels than with verbal parallels. When we encounter verbal parallels, we can be almost certain that they are intentional. Though topical parallels may be intentional, they can also be unintentional,

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<sup>1</sup> Alan J. Groves, "Chiasmus as a Structuring Device in Old Testament Narrative," (M.Th. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1983), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald E. Man, "The Value of Chiasm for New Testament Interpretation," *Bibliotheca sacra* 141 (1984): 147-148.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

simply reflecting the way ancient people thought. John Breck argues for an unintentional use of chiasmic structures:

With chiasmic structures, in other words, we are dealing less with consciously crafted examples of literary artistry than with an intuited movement, a complex and flexible flow of thought, by which meaning is expressed through the use of parallel couplets which converge on the author's center of concern, and thereby reveal what we term the "literal sense" of the text.<sup>1</sup>

Today people reason that  $A + B = C$ . In such a structure, everything builds toward the culmination at the end. We think this way unintentionally. Thus, it is unusual to find the main message in the middle of the structure, expressed as  $A-B-A'$ . But the ancient people, whether Greek or Hebrew, it was normal to think in a chiasmic way.

In exploring the Gospel of Mark, Augustine Stock argues for chiasmic structures in the following way: "A strong case can be made for the contention that it was perfectly natural for a person of Mark's background to use chiasmus and that most literate persons of his time would recognize its presence and appreciate it to a high degree. . . . If moderns have lost their appreciation for chiasmus it is because they have been educated in a vastly different way."<sup>2</sup>

Stock believes that education in antiquity encouraged chiasmic organization in writing. He pointed to the fact that students in Roman times not only learned the alphabet from beginning to end, but backwards as well. The culmination was to learn it in a

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<sup>1</sup> John Breck, "Chiasmus as a Key to Biblical Interpretation," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 43, nos. 3-4 (1999): 266.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine Stock, "Chiasmic Awareness and Education in Antiquity," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 14 (1984): 23.

chiastic way – alpha-omega, beta-psi, and so on. Such exercises increased chiastic awareness in antiquity.<sup>1</sup>

Stock further explains the need for chiastic structures and the value of such structures for people in antiquity: “Chiasmus afforded a seriously needed element of internal organization in ancient writings, which did not make use of paragraphs, punctuation, capitalization and other such synthetic devices to communicate the conclusion of one idea and the commencement of the next. And the structure of chiastic writing facilitated alternate recitation, as by the opposite divisions of a choir.”<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, in an oral culture, as antique culture was, it was important to organize writings in a way that would make it easier for people to memorize texts. Chiastic organization assisted learners, since the first part of the text would parallel the second part in an inverted manner. Thus, after learning the first part, the second part could be learned more easily.

Joachim Jeremias believes that entire letters can follow a chiastic structure: “The flow of thought in entire paragraphs, and as I believe in entire letters, can be transparent only when we recognize that some topic is carried out in chiastic form.”<sup>3</sup> Jeremias believes that recognizing chiastic structures can help us to better understand the intention

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>3</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Die Gedankenführung ganzer Abschnitte, ja, wie ich glaube, eines ganzen Briefes, erst durchsichtig wird, wenn man erkennt, dass ein vorausgestelltes Thema in chiastischer Gedankenfolge ausgeführt wird.” Joachim Jeremias, “Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 49, nos. 3-4 (1958): 145.



of the author and his message. It is good to keep this in mind as we proceed to the text of 3 John.

### **Text of 3 John as Concentric Chiasm**

I now present the Greek text of 3 John in the form of a *concentric chiasm* (see Table 1 on the next page).<sup>1</sup> An explanation of the chiasm's parallels follows.

Section A is a typical ancient introduction to a letter with the sender in the nominative (Ὁ πρεσβύτερος) and the receiver in the dative (Γαίῳ τῷ ἀγαπητῷ), followed by wishes for good health.<sup>2</sup> At the end of A' the writer expresses a hope to see Gaius soon and sends greetings to him and other friends. It is a typical way an author would end a letter in ancient times.<sup>3</sup>

B and B' are connected with several verbal parallels. The first one is the word μαρτυρέω, which deals with a witness or testimony in both sections. So, B contains a positive witness about Gaius, which the writer has received, while B' is about a positive

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<sup>1</sup> The concentric chiasm is a chiasm with one unparalleled unit in the middle of the structure. The term is coined from the term "concentric ABCDC'B'A' pattern" used by Fiorenza to describe the chiastic structure of the book of Revelation in Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Composition and Structure of the Book of Revelation," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 39 (1977): 364. A similar term, "concentric symmetry," is previously used by Charles H. Lohr, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 23 (1961): 424-427.

<sup>2</sup> E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 128-129; Stanley Kent Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 20.

<sup>3</sup> Chan-Hie Kim, "Form and Structure of the Familiar Greek Letter of Recommendation," (Thesis, published by the Society of Biblical Literature for the Seminar on Paul, Vanderbilt University, 1970, 1972), 25; Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, 20.

Table 1. Chiastic Structure of 3 John

Order	Greek Text
A	1 Ὁ πρεσβύτερος Γαΐῳ τῷ ἀγαπητῷ, ὃν ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ.
	2 Ἀγαπητέ, περὶ πάντων εὐχομαί σε εὐδοῦσθαι καὶ ὑγιαίνειν, καθὼς εὐδοῦταί σου ἡ ψυχὴ.
B	3 Ἐχάρην γὰρ λίαν ἐρχομένων ἀδελφῶν καὶ μαρτυρούντων σου τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, καθὼς σὺ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ περιπατεῖς.
C	4 μειζότεραν τούτων οὐκ ἔχω χαράν, ἵνα ἀκούω τὰ ἐμὰ τέκνα ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ περιπατοῦντα.
D	5 Ἀγαπητέ, πιστὸν ποιεῖς ὃ ἐὰν ἐργάσῃ εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τοῦτο ξένους, 6 οἳ ἐμαρτύρησάν σου τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐνώπιον ἐκκλησίας, οὓς καλῶς ποιήσεις προπέμψας ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ.
E	7 ὑπὲρ γὰρ τοῦ ὀνόματος ἐξῆλθον μηδὲν λαμβάνοντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνικῶν.
F	8 ἡμεῖς οὖν ὀφείλομεν ὑπολαμβάνειν τοὺς τοιούτους, ἵνα συνεργοὶ γινώμεθα τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.
E'	9 Ἐγραψά τι τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ· ἀλλ' ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν Διοτρέφης οὐκ ἐπιδέχεται ἡμᾶς.
D'	10 διὰ τοῦτο, ἐὰν ἔλθω, ὑπομνήσω αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα ἃ ποιεῖ λόγοις πονηροῖς φλυαρῶν ἡμᾶς, καὶ μὴ ἀρκούμενος ἐπὶ τούτοις οὔτε αὐτὸς ἐπιδέχεται τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τοὺς βουλομένους κωλύει καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐκβάλλει.
C'	11 Ἀγαπητέ, μὴ μιμοῦ τὸ κακὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀγαθόν. ὁ ἀγαθοποιῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν· ὁ κακοποιῶν οὐχ ἐώρακεν τὸν θεόν.
B'	12 Δημητρίῳ μεμαρτύρηται ὑπὸ πάντων καὶ ὑπὸ αὐτῆς τῆς ἀληθείας· καὶ ἡμεῖς δὲ μαρτυροῦμεν, καὶ οἶδας ὅτι ἡ μαρτυρία ἡμῶν ἀληθὴς ἐστίν.
A'	13 Πολλὰ εἶχον γράψαι σοι ἀλλ' οὐ θέλω διὰ μέλανος καὶ καλάμου σοι γράφειν. 14 ἐλπίζω δὲ εὐθέως σε ἰδεῖν, καὶ στόμα πρὸς στόμα λαλήσομεν. 15 Εἰρήνη σοι. ἀσπάζονται σε οἱ φίλοι. ἀσπάζου τοὺς φίλους κατ' ὄνομα.

witness on behalf of Demetrius, which Gaius needs to receive. In B the writer praises Gaius for his good behavior, while in B' he praises Demetrius. The second verbal parallel is found in the word ἀληθεία. It occurs twice in B and twice in B'. Thus, these sections are about a positive witness or testimony for the truth of Gaius and Demetrius.

Both C and C' encourage the way of truth and goodness. In C the writer encourages Gaius by telling him that there is no greater joy than to hear that people like him are walking in the truth. In C' Gaius is encouraged to imitate good and not evil. Thus, encouragement connects both sections.

D and D' present real life examples that are opposed to each other. In D the positive example of Gaius is praised by the writer<sup>1</sup> and by the brothers who have testified about Gaius's love in front of the church.<sup>2</sup> In that context, Gaius again receives encouragement. He is assured that he faithfully does whatever he may do for the brothers. He is also encouraged to send the brothers on their way in the future (ποιήσεις) in a manner worthy of God.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, D' provides a negative example of Diotrephes who spreads evil accusations against the Elder and his coworkers, does not receive brothers, hinders those who are willing to receive them, and expels them from the

<sup>1</sup> 3 John 5.

<sup>2</sup> In 3 John 6 it seems that they have testified in the local church of the Elder.

<sup>3</sup> C 04 (Codex Ephraemi) from the fifth century, as well as Vulgata Clementina, has aorist here instead of future, saying, "You did well sending them in the manner worthy of God." According to this source, we are not dealing here with an encouragement for a future behavior, but with praise for the good behavior of Gaius in the past. The praise for the past actions started in the first part of vs. 6 and continued till the end of the verse. Thus, according to these sources, all of vs. 6 concerns positive past actions of Gaius. It seems important, in the context of 3 John, to be able to determine whether Gaius's actions are past, present, or future. I will discuss this later.

church. Diotrophes does not receive any encouragement, nor is his example presented in a positive way. The behaviors of Gaius and Diotrophes are intentionally placed in the structure of the text so that the contrast is obvious to the reader.

E and E' have the same topic. In both instances, brothers are not received. In E brothers are not received by the pagans. In E' Diotrophes does not receive the Elder and his coworkers. The message might be that in his non-hospitable behavior Diotrophes is not better than the pagans.<sup>1</sup>

F is the center of this concentric chiasm. It brings a recommendation or even a command, which goes in the same direction as the previous encouragements given to Gaius. This time the intended recipient of the recommendation is not only Gaius, but Christians in general, including the writer himself. For that purpose he uses the pronoun "we." The recommendation is as follows: "ἡμεῖς οὖν ὀφείλομεν ὑπολαμβάνειν τοὺς τοιούτους."<sup>2</sup> We are encountering a progressive present indicating continuous action.<sup>3</sup> It is a recommendation to continually receive brothers<sup>4</sup> who seem to be itinerant missionaries. Thus, one can conclude that the concentric chiasm indicates that the main

<sup>1</sup> In the next chapter dealing with hospitality I will discuss the two different words for hospitality in E and E', as well as the third word in F.

<sup>2</sup> "We therefore ought to support such as these."

<sup>3</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 518.

<sup>4</sup> 3 John 5, 10.

message of the epistle is a recommendation for hospitality to the itinerant missionaries.<sup>1</sup>

Gaius, as the recipient of the letter, is encouraged to practice hospitality with them.

### Gaius

Who is Gaius? He seems to have been previously known to the Elder, since he refers to him several times with the intimate expression 'Αγαπητέ.<sup>2</sup> In vs. 4 he counts him among his children, probably a reference to spiritual children. Thus, Gaius might have been one of the converts for whose conversion the Elder was personally responsible, or at least the Elder spent some time introducing him to Christianity.

As we have seen above, in the context of 3 John, Gaius is encouraged to show hospitality. One of the most significant questions raised is whether Gaius had previously shown hospitality to the itinerant missionaries. Verse 5 may help to provide an answer to that question. Here it says in the present tense: 'Αγαπητέ, πιστὸν ποιεῖς ὃ ἐὰν ἐργάσῃ εἰς τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τοῦτο ξένους.<sup>3</sup> The present indicative ποιεῖς seems to indicate that we are dealing with something that Gaius is already doing.

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<sup>1</sup> Without recognizing the concentric chiasm, Holtzmann argued in 1891 that “der Zweck des 3. Briefes liegt nach 5-8 in der Empfehlung der Gastfreundschaft gegen wandernde Glaubensboten.” Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, *Evangelium, Briefe, und Offenbarung des Johannes* (Freiburg: J.C.B. Mohr, 1891), 243. That emphasis on hospitality seems to have been lost in the post-Harnack age, which instead concentrated on the offices and authority issues.

<sup>2</sup> 3 John 1, 2, 5, 11.

<sup>3</sup> “Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you might do for the brothers, even though they are strangers” (3 John 5).

Further information about the hospitality of Gaius is found in vs. 6 where he is encouraged with a future indicative to οὕτως καλῶς ποιήσεις προπέμψας ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ.<sup>1</sup> It seems to refer to supplying the brothers with all the necessities for their journey until they reach their next destination.<sup>2</sup> The author uses the indicative future active (ποιήσεις) to express an action needed in the future. We have here a progressive future emphasizing continuous action.<sup>3</sup> Since the Elder uses the future tense to encourage Gaius as opposed to the present tense in vs. 5, it seems that it is something that he has not done in the past. Thus, the action recommended in vs. 6 is a future continuous action.<sup>4</sup>

Another way of determining the time of Gaius's actions is to make use of the parallels in the concentric chiasm described above. In that chiastic structure, the future indicative ποιήσεις in D corresponds to the future indicative ὑπομνήσω in D'. So, the chiasm confirms that in verse 6 there would need to be a future as well, and we have it in ποιήσεις. Verse 5 appears to incorporate Gaius's past actions: Gaius is doing well, was

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<sup>1</sup> "You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God" (3 John 6).

<sup>2</sup> *Didache* 11:6 also speaks of equipping travelers for the journey, but the recommendation is much more sparing: "And when the apostle leaves, he is to take nothing except bread until he finds his next night's lodging. But if he asks for money, he is a false prophet."

<sup>3</sup> James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1988), 96.

<sup>4</sup> Bernhard Weiss in his book published in 1899 deals very carefully with the Greek text of 3 John. He argues that vs. 5 deals with the past actions of Gaius, while vs. 6 is future oriented. Bernhard Weiss, *Die drei Briefe des Apostel Johannes*, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1899), 188. On the other hand, John Ebrard believes that vs. 6 had in the original an aorist instead of future. He believes that our present text of vs. 6 is a result of an "error or misunderstanding." J. H. A. Ebrard, *Commentary on the Epistles of St. John* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1860), 400-401.

doing well, and will do well in whatever he might do for the brothers. On the other side of the chiasm stands Diotrephes who does evil, was doing evil, and is probably expected to do such evil in the future. Thus, according to vs. 5, it seems that Gaius had already practiced some form of hospitality in the past, but he is encouraged in vs. 6 to do more in the future (ποιήσεις) and to extend the full measure of his hospitality toward the itinerant missionaries.

Why had Gaius not extended the full measure of his hospitality in the past? His financial situation was probably not the problem, since the Elder would not ask him to practice hospitality if he was materially unable. Gaius might have been a home owner with some wealth at his disposal; otherwise the Elder would not ask him to go beyond his capacity and do so much for the brothers. He was probably one of the patrons in the church described in 3 John.

If we assume that Gaius was financially in a position to extend the full measure of hospitality to the itinerant missionaries, why didn't he do so? Gaius seems to have belonged to the same church as Diotrephes.<sup>1</sup> The actions of Diotrephes in his local church apparently prevented Gaius from doing what he knew to be his responsibility. Since Diotrephes took control of the church, Gaius had to adapt to the new situation and follow the command of Diotrephes in order to remain a member in that local church. So it seems that Gaius showed some hospitality, but did not extend all that he could in order to avoid direct conflict with Diotrephes.

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<sup>1</sup> Though I argue for this option, I will also discuss the other option in detail, namely that he was a member of a different church.

The Elder's encouragement in vs. 11 supports the above interpretation. After presenting the negative example of Diotrephes, the Elder encourages Gaius in vs. 11 not to follow it: Ἀγαπητέ, μὴ μιμοῦ τὸ κακὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀγαθόν. ὁ ἀγαθοποιῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν· ὁ κακοποιῶν οὐχ ἑώρακεν τὸν θεόν.<sup>1</sup> It seems that Gaius was in danger of following evil by submitting to Diotrephes's leadership and approving his deeds. The Elder informs Gaius that the works of Diotrephes are evil and encourages him not to follow his example. Thus, with his encouragement of hospitality the Elder puts Gaius into danger of being expelled from the church by Diotrephes.

It can be questioned whether Diotrephes was expelling itinerant missionaries or those who showed hospitality to them. Verse 10 notes that Diotrephes "prevents those willing to show hospitality," immediately stating that "he expels." Grammatically speaking, it would seem that he should expel those who are previously mentioned, namely those who show hospitality. Thus, if Gaius openly shows the full measure of his hospitality, then he may be expelled as well and would become a castoff. Here is the significance of Demetrius's recommendation in vs. 12. He might have been one of those already expelled and in need of company. Thus, the Elder might have been actually encouraging Gaius to draw close to the expelled Demetrius.<sup>2</sup>

What about the assertions that Gaius and Diotrephes were members of different churches? Some textual evidence would be required to support this stance. Interpreters

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<sup>1</sup> "Beloved, do not imitate evil, but good; the one doing good is from God; the one doing evil has not seen God" (3 John 11). Klauck observes an A, B, B', A' structure in this verse and calls it "eine doppelte Antithese." Klauck, *Der Zweite und Dritte Johannesbrief*, 111.

<sup>2</sup> I will discuss the case of Demetrius in more detail later.



give several reasons to argue that Gaius and Diotrephes were members of different house churches.<sup>1</sup> First, the text of 3 John seems to indicate that Gaius needs to be informed about the circumstances in the church of Diotrephes. If he was a member of the same church, he would have had first-hand information and would not have needed the Elder's description of the circumstances.<sup>2</sup> But the information regarding Diotrephes, which Gaius receives in vss. 9 and 10, may not be unknown to Gaius. The purpose of these verses is not necessarily to inform, but to identify the named works of Diotrephes as evil.

Second, since Diotrephes expelled people from the church for showing hospitality to itinerant missionaries,<sup>3</sup> he would have been able to exercise his power over Gaius for his practice of hospitality had Gaius been a member of the same church. Since the text of 3 John does not imply that Diotrephes had power over Gaius, it would seem that they were members of two different house churches in the area. Brown expresses this point well with this question: "And how does the Presbyter expect Gaius to avoid expulsion in the future if he follows the advice in the letter (v. 8) to offer the very support that Diotrephes has forbidden?"<sup>4</sup> I argue that Gaius will be in danger of being expelled from the church if he follows the recommendation of the Elder.

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<sup>1</sup> The following authors argue for Gaius and Diotrephes being members of different churches: Raymond Edward Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 729-731; Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, 161; Klauck, *Der Zweite und Dritte Johannesbrief*, 100; Price, "The Sitz-im-Leben of Third John: A New Reconstruction," 118; Storm, "Diotrephes: A Study of Rivalry in the Apostolic Church," 196; Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John*, 256.

<sup>2</sup> For an elaboration on that point, see Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 729; Klauck, *Der Zweite und Dritte Johannesbrief*, 120.

<sup>3</sup> 3 John 10.

<sup>4</sup> Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 730.

Third, Klauck has made a textual observation about vs. 9, according to which Diotrephes is the one who “nach 9b ‘der Erste von *ihnen* sein will’ (nicht: der Erste *unter euch*; vgl. Mk 10:44), was Gaius auszuschließen scheint.”<sup>1</sup> If Klauck’s translation is correct, then it would seem that Gaius is not included among those who are in competition with Diotrephes in his church. That leads Klauck to conclude that Gaius is a member of a different church. But, it could be that Gaius is not a leader of the church. Marshall suggests that “αὐτῶν (v. 9) simply refers back to τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ and is masculine plural *ad sensum*; it may refer particularly to those members of the church who accepted Diotrephes’ authority.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, Gaius might have been a modest member of the church of Diotrephes, having no interest in leadership positions or church politics.

Gaius and Diotrephes are probably members of the same church.<sup>3</sup> Gaius will be in danger of being expelled from the church by Diotrephes if he follows the recommendation of the Elder.<sup>4</sup> He will be in need of a company of believers, and that is

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<sup>1</sup> Klauck, *Der Zweite und Dritte Johannesbrief*, 100. Vogler argues against the interpretation presented by Klauck, opting for the translation *bei euch* instead of *von ihnen*. Vogler, *Die Briefe des Johannes*, 201\*.

<sup>2</sup> Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 89.

<sup>3</sup> The following authors argue that Gaius and Diotrephes were members of the same church: Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 187; Büchsel, *Die Johannesbriefe*, 99; Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary*, 299; Schunack, *Die Briefe des Johannes*, 121-122; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 354; Jens W. Taeger, “Der konservative Rebell: zum Widerstand des Diotrephes gegen den Presbyter,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 78 (1987): 274; Wilhelm Thüsing, *The Three Epistles of St. John* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1971), 113.

<sup>4</sup> Callahan emphasizes the same point. Callahan, *A Love Supreme: A History of Johannine Tradition*, 10.

why Demetrius is recommended to him. Gaius is actually encouraged to join forces with Demetrius.

We may conclude that Gaius is in need of encouragement to continue with his acts of hospitality. The actions of Diotrephes in his local church might have forced him to hesitate in extending his hospitality, since he is now afraid of being expelled from the church by Diotrephes. That would argue for Gaius and Diotrephes being members of the same church, with Gaius being a hostage of the situation created by Diotrephes. Gaius might have already seen how Demetrius was expelled from the church because of his practice of hospitality, leading him to be confused about whether he should continue with his practice of hospitality and thus enter into direct conflict with Diotrephes. If that is the situation, then the Elder was actually encouraging Gaius to confront Diotrephes, as he would also be confronting him when he came.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the Elder seems to be creating opposition against Diotrephes and preparing a group of believers to stand on his side when he comes and confronts Diotrephes.

### **Demetrius**

Demetrius is specifically recommended to Gaius by the Elder. Many commentators assume that Demetrius was an itinerant missionary in need of hospitality.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 3 John 10.

<sup>2</sup> These commentators support the view that Demetrius was an itinerant missionary: Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 192; Brown, *The Epistles of John*, 748; Bultmann, *Die drei Johannesbriefe*, 101; Culpepper, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, 136; Edwards, "2 and 3 John: Form, Style and Content," 123; Haenchen, *Die Bible und Wir*, 302; Klauck, *Der Zweite und Dritte Johannesbrief*, 119; Malherbe, "Inhospitability of Diotrephes," 227; Malina, "The Received View and What It Cannot Do: 3 John and Hospitality," 187; Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 93; Price, "The *Sitz-im-Leben* of Third John: A New Reconstruction," 117; Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles*:

These commentators argue for Demetrius traveling to the area where Gaius lived. They believe that the writer of the third epistle of John encourages Gaius to receive itinerant missionaries and specifically Demetrius. The general recommendation for them in vs. 8 may suggest that Demetrius did not come alone, but with a group of itinerant missionaries. Demetrius might have been the leader of the group, and that would justify the mention of his name in vs. 12. It is assumed that Demetrius personally brought 3 John to Gaius as a letter of recommendation for itinerant missionaries and specifically for himself.<sup>1</sup>

I am not dismissing this interpretation, since it is plausible and has many supporters. I am just presenting another option which also has a number of supporters. According to some scholars, it seems possible that Demetrius was a member of the church of Diotrephes.<sup>2</sup> 3 John 10 says that Diotrephes expelled people from the church. If Demetrius was among those expelled, then he is recommended to Gaius as somebody

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*Introduction and Commentary*, 300; Schunack, *Die Briefe des Johannes*, 122; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 360-361; Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John*, 265; Thüsing, *The Three Epistles of St. John*, 110; Vogler, *Die Briefe des Johannes*, 207.

<sup>1</sup> That Demetrius brought 3 John to Gaius seems to be an assumption argued for by the majority of those who believe that Demetrius was an itinerant missionary.

<sup>2</sup> The following authors argue for the view that Demetrius was a member of the church of Gaius and Diotrephes: Campbell, *The Elder: Seniority within Earliest Christianity*, 208; Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field*, 491; Ebrard, *Commentary on the Epistles of St. John*, 404; Harnack, *Über den Dritten Johannesbrief*, 12; Holtzmann, *Evangelium, Briefe, und Offenbarung des Johannes*, 245; Ignace de La Potterie, *La vérité dans saint Jean* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1977), 900\*; O'Neill, "New Testament Monasteries," 130-132; Weiss, *Die drei Briefe des Apostel Johannes*, 193.

who is in the same business of showing hospitality to itinerant missionaries, like Gaius.<sup>1</sup> Demetrius might have been one of those willing to receive people, and Diotrephes expelled him for not obeying his commands.<sup>2</sup>

The chiastic structure of 3 John also suggests that Demetrius and Gaius may have been members of the same church and in the same business of showing hospitality to the itinerant missionaries. Demetrius is referred to in B' (vs. 12). The parallel to B' is found in B, which is vs. 3. B and B' are the strongest parallels in the entire chiasm since they include multiple verbal parallels as well. The B parallel in vs. 3 praises Gaius. Later we learn that he is actually praised for his works of hospitality. What does the parallel in B' praise Demetrius for? It is not clear, except that he is recommended as a trustworthy person. The parallel with Gaius in B might suggest that Demetrius was also praised for works of hospitality.<sup>3</sup>

If Demetrius was a member of the church of Diotrephes, then we are dealing in 3 John with a power struggle between two members of the same local church. Diotrephes

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<sup>1</sup> Holtzmann argues for Demetrius as "leuchtendem Beispiel edler Gastfreundschaft." Holtzmann, *Evangelium, Briefe, und Offenbarung des Johannes*, 245. Ebrard may be the first one to suggest that Demetrius was probably expelled from the church by Diotrephes: Ebrard, *Commentary on the Epistles of St. John*, 405.

<sup>2</sup> If Demetrius is not actually a member of the church of Gaius, but an itinerant missionary, that would not significantly influence the main argument of this dissertation presented in the next chapters.

<sup>3</sup> By observing the textual parallels between vss. 3 and 12, La Potterie also concludes that Demetrius was a member of the same local church to which Gaius and Diotrephes belonged. He does not recognize a concentric chiasm, but in observing the same parallels, he comes to the same conclusion that "il est donc assez vraisemblable que Demetrius était un chrétien fervent de cette église, ayant eu particulièrement à souffrir de la part du chef de la communauté." La Potterie, *La vérité dans saint Jean*, 900\*.

was trying to establish himself as a power-figure in that church, but Demetrius opposed him by not following his commands. Thus, one of them had to go, and in this case Diotrephes won the power-battle.

It seems that Demetrius may have been a homeowner and patron with some resources at his disposal, which enabled him to practice hospitality with itinerant missionaries. He was probably a member of the same church as Diotrephes, came into conflict with him because of his practice of hospitality, and was prevented from future involvement in the gatherings of that particular church. Now he was in need of companionship, and thus was recommended to Gaius as a trustworthy coworker.<sup>1</sup>

### **Diotrephes**

The identity of Diotrephes is the most disputed issue among those adhering to the ecclesiological and theological approaches. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the ecclesiological approach would generally argue for Diotrephes being the first monarchical bishop or on the way to becoming one. The followers of the theological approach would concentrate on the question of whether he was orthodox or heretic, but they would not neglect the question of offices either. The text of 3 John does not seem to precisely answer the question of Diotrephes's orthodoxy, nor the question of his office.

Since this dissertation has social dynamics in focus, I would like to probe a social explanation of Diotrephes's behavior. Diotrephes could have been a rich homeowner and

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting that Harnack is also among those who see Demetrius as an important member in the church of Diotrephes, but Harnack's followers were not as impressed with that interpretation as they were with his ecclesiological contributions. Harnack, *Über den Dritten Johannesbrief*, 12.

patron in whose house the church of that area met.<sup>1</sup> Being in the position of a rich patron, he might have been too controlling. He might have barred entrance into his house to the people who did not agree with him. Such behavior would not be too strange for a wealthy patron. Seeing Diotrephes as a patron of the church of 3 John is the simplest social explanation for the acts of expelling he performed (vs. 10).<sup>2</sup>

Seen from the social perspective, if the church was meeting in his home, Diotrephes would be in a position to command even if he was not the bishop of that church.<sup>3</sup> Even if the church was meeting somewhere else, if he was a wealthy and influential patron, then he could easily start behaving in the church as he would have in his business area. Wealthy patrons and homeowners would be slave owners as well, so they would often have to use despotic methods to keep their possessions secure. Thus, it would not be unusual for such a person to act in the church setting as he would in his business area.<sup>4</sup> How would a local church survive the clash of its various influential personalities? It would probably suffer a conflict similar to the one described in 3 John.

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<sup>1</sup> Klauck argues in his extensive commentary for Diotrephes being the host of the church of 3 John. Klauck, *Der Zweite und Dritte Johannesbrief*, 104.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell argues very strongly that house patrons were first leaders of their house churches, and I will say more about the role of patrons in early churches at the beginning of chapter 5 when I start the discussion of patronage: Campbell, *The Elder: Seniority within Earliest Christianity*, 126.

<sup>3</sup> “Die Gastgeber spielten für die Hausgemeinden stets eine herausgehobene Rolle, auch wenn ihre Stellung im Inneren der Hausgemeinden von den Presbytern und Diakonen übertroffen worden sein mag.” Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte*, 316.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Gerd Theissen’s investigation of the church conflict described in 1 Cor 11:17-34. He argues for the cause of the conflict being a clash between the rich and poor church members. Gerd Theissen, “Soziale Integration und sakramentales Handeln; Eine Analyse von 1 Cor 11:17-34,” in *Studien zur Soziologie des*

In 3 John 9, Diotrephes is described with the term ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων. It is a participle present active meaning “the one who desires to be first.” It is the only appearance of that term in the NT. It suggests that Diotrephes was known by the Elder as a person who desired the first place in his church. That description of Diotrephes is congruent with the claim that he was a mighty patron.

Further, in vs. 9 the Elder states that he wrote something to Diotrephes’s church, but Diotrephes is not receiving them.<sup>1</sup> Diotrephes seems to have been in disagreement with the Elder on some issues, and expresses his disgust by not accepting the Elder’s letters. Most interpreters see the situation as being a refusal to accept the Elder’s authority, but Margaret Mitchell shows convincingly that it would be the only instance in which the word ἐπιδέχεται is used that way in antiquity.<sup>2</sup> Authority is not in question here, as the ecclesiological approach asserts, but hospitality to itinerant missionaries, as seen from vs. 10 where the same word is used again. It does not seem probable that the word means “authority” in vs. 9, whereas in vs. 10 it suddenly changes its meaning to “hospitality,” especially in light of the fact that it is not used in antiquity to designate “authority.”

The content of the letter mentioned in vs. 9 is unknown. It has been lost, perhaps because of Diotrephes’s rejection of it. It may have concerned hospitality to itinerant

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*Urchristentums – Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1979).

<sup>1</sup> The plural in the Greek text is meant collectively, as with the beginning of vs. 8. Diotrephes does not receive anybody who follows the recommendations of the Elder.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, “‘Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us’: The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10,” 317. See also the review of her article above in chapter 2.



missionaries, as discussed by the Elder in vs. 10.<sup>1</sup> It possibly could have been a letter of recommendation to an itinerant missionary or to a group of itinerant missionaries.

Diotrephes rejected the letter and refused hospitality to itinerant missionaries for some reason that is not evident.

Further actions of Diotrephes are described in vs. 10:

1. He accuses the Elder and his coworkers with evil words.
2. He does not receive brothers.
3. He forbids those willing to receive brothers.
4. He expels from the church.

It seems that Diotrephes has taken control. He does not only “desire to be first,” but with his actions seems to have already taken over the power in his church. The text does not seem to give reasons for his motives. Interpreters have offered various options. The ecclesiological approach suggests that Diotrephes does not want to have anybody overseeing him, not even the Elder, and that by his actions he has promoted himself to the first monarchical bishop. The theological approach asserts that Diotrephes is closing his church against Gnostic heresy and does not want any influence from outside. There are many variations of these two basic theses. All of them are possible, but none of them receives exclusive support by the text of 3 John, since the text does not deal with the question of motives. Thus, the question of Diotrephes’s motives is better left open.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The following authors make that suggestion: Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles*, 161; Malherbe, “Inhospitability of Diotrephes,” 226; Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary*, 296.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, “‘Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us’: The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10,” 320. She argues very strongly against the attempts to read the motives of Diotrephes into the text of 3 John.

We may say with a certain level of confidence that Diotrephes had some personal reason for his accusations against the Elder. Because of his dispute with the Elder, he does not want to have anything to do with the itinerant missionaries recommended by the Elder. So he forbids those in his church who are willing to receive the missionaries and expels them from the church. Verse 10 notes that Diotrephes “prevents those willing to show hospitality,” immediately stating that “he expels.” Grammatically speaking, it would seem that he should expel those who are previously mentioned, namely those who show hospitality. Thus, it seems that Diotrephes has decided to take control of his church and expel even his fellow members who were willing to associate themselves with the Elder.<sup>1</sup>

The Elder concludes his description of the actions of Diotrephes with the designation “evil” in vs. 11. These evil acts should not be imitated by others, and Gaius is discouraged from following them. Even if Diotrephes had some holy motives, the Elder obviously had no appreciation at all for his deeds. Thus, we can say in conclusion that Diotrephes seems to have been a wealthy patron who started behaving in his church as he did in his everyday business. Profane and sacred mixed together and trouble arose.

### **Brothers**

Who are the brothers mentioned in vss. 3, 5-8, and 10? According to vs. 5 they are strangers to Gaius. Thus, these brothers are not members of the local church that Gaius attends. They seem to be members of Christian churches in other localities.

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<sup>1</sup> I am dealing with the details of Diotrephes’s behavior described in vss. 9 and 10 in chapter 5, where I concentrate on patronage in 3 John.

The Elder calls for hospitality for these Christian brothers.<sup>1</sup> It seems that he is establishing hospitality as a duty for Christians.<sup>2</sup> The brothers are to be received hospitably and to be “sent away in a manner worthy of God.”<sup>3</sup> I have previously argued that this phrase indicates that they were to be equipped for the journey to reach their next destination. It seems that they were not staying for long periods of time. It is reasonable to assume that the brothers were itinerant missionaries.<sup>4</sup> They would come, serve the local church for a short while, and then continue on their way.

There is some significant literature in modern scholarship on itinerant missionaries in early Christian churches. Theissen brought them into focus by describing Christianity as a movement of wandering charismatics called into being by Jesus.<sup>5</sup> Thus, according to Theissen’s influential thesis, Jesus did not found local communities, but a movement of wandering preachers. Theissen further describes the relationship of

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<sup>1</sup> As in *Didache* 12:1-2.

<sup>2</sup> 3 John 8.

<sup>3</sup> 3 John 6.

<sup>4</sup> Interpreters generally agree that these were itinerant missionaries sent out by the Elder. I am not aware of any interpreter who would argue for a different interpretation, even though interpreters use various terms to designate them. “Traveling Missionaries,” Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, lxxxi; “Itinerant Prophets,” Price, “The *Sitz-im-Leben* of Third John: A New Reconstruction,” 115; “Envoys of the Presbyter,” Harnack, *The Constitution & Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries*, 65; “Traveling Teachers,” F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles of John* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1970); “Emissaries of the Elder,” Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, 93. In this dissertation I am using Schnackenburg’s expression “itinerant missionaries,” appearing in the English translation of his commentary, which is used as a translation of the German expression “Wandermissionare.” Schnackenburg, *The Johannine Epistles: Introduction and Commentary*, 290.

<sup>5</sup> Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*, 8.

wandering charismatics and local communities: “Wandering charismatics were the decisive spiritual authorities in the local communities, and local communities were the indispensable social and material basis for the wandering charismatics.”<sup>1</sup> So, there is a relationship between them. But Theissen believes that itinerant missionaries had a certain level of authority that set them above any authority in local communities. A number of scholars have adopted this thesis and built on it.

Koenig connects Theissen’s thesis with his exploration of Lukan writings. He concludes that “Luke’s composition is aimed at building up local leadership so that it can strengthen the whole church for partnership with the wandering prophets.”<sup>2</sup> Why does the church need to be strengthened for welcoming itinerant missionaries? Because it is believed that itinerants, being “decisive authorities,” came into conflict with residential believers, who did not want to submit to their leadership. So, Koenig believes that Luke’s aim is a mutual welcoming between itinerant and residential Christians for the purpose of exchanging their roles and working together. He expresses it in the following words: “If itinerants must serve at tables, then by implication, residents may become missionaries and leaders. Neither group can claim superiority over the other.”<sup>3</sup> The whole purpose of Luke is described as a mutual welcoming and cooperation between itinerant and

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>2</sup> John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 98.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 103.

residential believers. So Koenig concludes: “Both wanderers and residents, who may be estranged from one another, can join forces to advance the gospel.”<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, in critiquing Theissen’s thesis about the “decisive authority” of the itinerants, Stegemann says: “But it is very doubtful whether they were the ‘decisive authorities’ of the Christian movement. Even Paul himself does not exercise an unchallenged authority.”<sup>2</sup> Stegemann further criticizes Theissen for his reading of Q texts for the purpose of claiming that itinerant missionaries renounced homes, families, and all possessions. Stegemann’s reading of Q texts brings him to the following conclusion: “They reflect not an ascetical ethos but the radicality of a life situation in which poverty, hunger, and violence are the dominant factors. The Q-prophets counter the radical suffering of the majority of the Palestinian population with their own radical trust in God.”<sup>3</sup> So, the renunciation of possessions does not happen because it was desired or required, but because there was no other option in their social circumstances.

We see that Theissen’s major thesis, that itinerants were “decisive authorities,” is not appreciated by all scholars. I would tend to agree with Stegemann, especially on the background of Pauline epistles, where even apostolic authority was not unquestioned. How can we expect the authority of unknown itinerants to be unquestioned, when even

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Wolfgang Stegemann, “Vagabond Radicalism in Early Christianity? Historical and Theoretical Discussion of a Thesis Proposed by Gerd Theissen,” in *God of the Lowly: Socio-Historical Interpretations of the Bible*, ed. W. Schottroff and W. Stegemann (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984), 155. Stegemann published this same article for the first time in German in 1979.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 163-164.

famous names preceding them were questioned? In 3 John we see that for some reason itinerants were not welcome in the church of Diotrephes, which would suggest that their authority was not respected.

Itinerant brothers of 3 John seem to have been under jurisdiction of the Elder. Verses 3 and 6 indicate that the brothers report back to the Elder about their experiences in the churches. It might be reasonable to assume that the Elder sent them out as itinerant missionaries to serve churches. They would probably travel from church to church and later return to the Elder and report about their travels. The Elder takes care of them by promoting the practice of hospitality. In vs. 7 he reveals that “They went out for the sake of the Name receiving nothing from the pagans.” The name in question is Christ’s name. They were not looking for help from the pagans, since it was expected that Christians would help them. The Elder writes 3 John to encourage Gaius to extend the full measure of his hospitality to the itinerant missionaries. The third epistle of John, with its main message in vs. 8, establishes hospitality as a general practice recommended in Christian churches.

### **The Elder**

The Elder seems to have been a person of authority in the early church, since he assumes that his letters should be accepted by the churches and individuals.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, he was probably a well-known personality in the early church, since he does not need to mention his name. The designation as “the Elder” is enough to identify

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<sup>1</sup> 3 John 9.

him. Even for Diotrephes, the Elder must have been a person of authority, since he is planning to confront him when he comes.<sup>1</sup>

In vs. 4, the phrase “my children are walking in the truth” seems to point to Gaius as being one of the Elder’s converts, thus suggesting that they had some previous relationship. Also, the use of the title “the Elder” without a name leads us to the assumption that Gaius knew the Elder very well.

Traditionally this epistle is ascribed to the apostle John. Why would an apostle call himself the Elder? Is there any other place in the New Testament where the term “elder” is used for an apostle? The same adjective is used for the author of 1 Peter 5:1, while the beginning of the epistle (1 Pet 1:1) identifies the author as the apostle Peter. Paul uses the noun πρεσβύτης while referring to himself in Philemon 9. It seems that it was not unusual for apostles of the first century A.D. to be referred to as elders. Thus, some textual evidence from the New Testament supports the traditional authorship.

Does any internal evidence in 3 John point to the apostle John as the author? Verse 11 seems to resemble typical Johannine language found elsewhere (e.g., 1 John 3:6). John 19:35 and 21:24 seem to be echoed in 3 John 12.<sup>2</sup> 3 John also has textual connections with 2 John. In that epistle the author calls himself “the Elder” as well. The expression “walking in the truth,” which appears several times in 3 John, is also used in 2 John 1:4. The writer ends 2 John in vs. 12 with almost the same wording as in 3 John 13-14. Further, 2 John has many intertextual connections to 1 John, as well as to the Gospel

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<sup>1</sup> 3 John 10.

<sup>2</sup> La Potterie, *La vérité dans saint Jean*, 579.

of John.<sup>1</sup> After observing some of the intertextual connections, it seems probable that the same person authored all of the Johannine writings.<sup>2</sup>

Nothing prevents the apostle John from being that person. Yet we have seen in the review of literature, many scholars would argue instead for a disciple of the apostle John, who was known as John the Elder. Their major support for that identification is the quote of Papias. Schnackenburg criticizes the followers of that view, noting that there is no mention of the Presbyter John outside of Papias's quote, and that quote itself is open to differing interpretations.<sup>3</sup> Thus Schnackenburg follows the traditional interpretation, accepting the writer as the apostle John.

Evidence indicates that the apostle John was active in the area of Ephesus till the reign of Trajan. Schnackenburg points to Irenaeus of Lyon in order to prove that point:<sup>4</sup> "The Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them

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<sup>1</sup> A quick look at the intertextual apparatus of Nestle-Aland for 2 John should be enough to prove this point.

<sup>2</sup> My interpretation of 3 John would not be affected if different authors are responsible for each of the Johannine writings, since I am studying 3 John as a self-sustaining unit.

<sup>3</sup> "Eine Bezeugung des „Presbyters Johannes“ außerhalb des Papiasfragments gibt es nicht. Die Auffassung des Eusebius und Hieronymus, die eine besondere Persönlichkeit neben dem Zebedaiden herauslesen, beruht auf ihrer Exegese des Papiaszitates in Verbindung mit einer Angabe des Dionysius von Alex., dass es in Ephesus zwei Gräber für „Johannes“ geben soll. Die Exegese der Papiasstelle ist aber durchaus nicht sicher, und die gegenteilige Auffassung, die namentlich Th. Zahn eingehend entwickelt hat, und die auch heute vielfach vertreten wird, ist ebenso gut begründet." Schnackenburg, "Der Streit zwischen dem Verfasser von 3 Joh und Diotrophes und seine verfassungsgeschichtliche Bedeutung," 22.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 18.



permanently until the times of Trajan, is true witness of the tradition of the apostles.”<sup>1</sup> Since Trajan reigned from A.D. 98-117, it would seem that the apostle John worked in Ephesus at least until the turn of the century. So he could have written his letters sometime during the 90s in the area of Ephesus, as traditionally assumed. Thus, the Greek environment of Asia Minor in the first century A.D. is of primary importance for my study of social dynamics in 3 John, even though I am using social and anthropological research of other areas and times in order to enlighten some important aspects.

The questions of authorship and date are usually regarded as very important. I do not believe that it is of great importance for my investigation of social dynamics in 3 John to exactly determine the writer or the decade in which he wrote. I deal with social circumstances, which should have been similar in both A.D. 50 and A.D. 150. Thus, even though I argue that the epistle was written by the apostle John in the 90s in the area of Ephesus, that should not greatly influence my social investigation, since social circumstances would have been similar throughout the Mediterranean region.<sup>2</sup> That would also suggest that the implications of my work should not be limited only to the time and place of 3 John.

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<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.3.4.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981). See also Malina who argues for cultural continuity of Mediterranean area. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, xii.

### The Issue of Truth

The word ἀλήθεια appears six times in this short epistle.<sup>1</sup> Since it appears so often, does it mean that the question of truth is determining for 3 John? If so, what kind of truth does the Elder have in mind? We usually understand the truth in a theoretical way as holding the right belief. Such a concept of truth is present in 2 John 2. There the Elder talks about “καὶ πάντες οἱ ἐγνωκότες τὴν ἀλήθειαν.”<sup>2</sup> That very same truth remains in people, according to 2 John 2. This introduction sets us up for a theoretical understanding of truth in 2 John, the one which concerns right belief. On the other hand, 2 John 4 contains the expression “περιπατοῦντας ἐν ἀληθείᾳ,”<sup>3</sup> which sounds like right practice. It seems that in 2 John we have a mixture of theoretical and practical aspects of truth.

We cannot easily determine what kind of truth the Elder has in mind in 3 John 1. He is simply saying “ὃν ἐγὼ ἀγαπῶ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ.”<sup>4</sup> How do you love somebody in the truth? Does it mean loving somebody in your mind only, or is it love which is practically shown as well? Our search for the understanding of the truth in 3 John is made easier with the statement in vs. 3. Here the Elder praises Gaius for the good testimony he has received from some brothers about his τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. Fortunately, the Elder does not leave us with that information only, but defines the truth he is talking about in the following

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<sup>1</sup> Additionally, it appears once as an adjective in vs. 12 (ἀληθής).

<sup>2</sup> “All those who know the truth.” The same concept appears in 1 John 2:20, 21. See also John 8:32.

<sup>3</sup> “Walking in the truth.”

<sup>4</sup> “Whom I love in the truth.”

words: “καθὼς σὺ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ περιπατεῖς.”<sup>1</sup> Truth here is not a state of mind, but it is action or movement.<sup>2</sup> The type of truth which the Elder refers to is seen in Gaius’s life by simple observance and it is practical. The Elder reinforces that practical understanding of truth in 3 John 4 as well, where he again uses the phrase “walking in the truth.”

What has this practical understanding of truth to do with hospitality as the main subject of this epistle? The word ἀλήθεια is used again in the center of the epistle, in the sentence which represents the middle of the concentric chiasm, as well as the main message of the epistle. After saying that “ἡμεῖς οὖν ὀφείλομεν ὑπολαμβάνειν τοὺς τοιούτους”<sup>3</sup> the Elder adds “ἵνα συνεργοὶ γινώμεθα τῇ ἀληθείᾳ.”<sup>4</sup> How do you become a coworker with the truth? By holding a right belief in your mind? The truth here seems to be practical again and is expressed by right action.<sup>5</sup> By showing practical deeds of hospitality, Christians become coworkers with the truth.

The last reference to truth is found in vs. 12. It is not clear what aspect of truth we are dealing with here. It is simply stated that “truth testifies about him.” If Demetrius was

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<sup>1</sup> “As you walk in the truth.” Haenchen believes this expression to be strictly practical and applies it to the deeds of hospitality: “Daß Gajus ‘in der Wahrheit wandelt’ besagt nicht, daß er eine besondere Lehrform vertritt, sonder nur, daß er seine Christenpflicht gegenüber den Wanderpredigern erfüllt.” Haenchen, *Die Bible und Wir*, 304.

<sup>2</sup> Practical aspect of truth is also found in 1 John 1:6 “καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν” — it is about doing or not doing the truth. See also John 3:21.

<sup>3</sup> “We ought to support such as these.”

<sup>4</sup> “In order to become coworkers with the truth.”

<sup>5</sup> Callahan believes that according to vs. 8, “truth is arbitrated by practice.” Callahan, *A Love Supreme: A History of Johannine Tradition*, 7.

expelled from the church because he showed hospitality, then his practical deeds of hospitality (truth) might be testifying about him. Thus, we could be dealing with the same practical aspect of truth that has been described above. That would be in the spirit of the rest of 3 John. But, if he is an itinerant missionary needing accommodation and was recommended by the Elder to Gaius, then his truth might be of a theoretical kind like the one described in 2 John 1.

In conclusion we can say that the main body of 3 John presents truth as a practical concept. In the beginning it is twice introduced as “walking in the truth” and in the center of the epistle it is introduced as deeds of hospitality which enable Christians to become “coworkers with the truth.” In 3 John the emphasis seems to be on the practical expression of truth, and hospitality is the main expression of that practical truth.

### **Conclusions**

In concentrating on the text of 3 John, I have determined that the entire epistle builds a concentric chiasm. We have seen that the chiasmic way of thinking seems to have been natural to the people in antiquity and thus the chiasm in 3 John may not have been intentional, but could have evolved from the author’s way of thinking. The value of recognizing such structures is in pointing to the main message of the writer in the middle of the structure, as well as in recognizing parallels that can enlighten each other and thus help us to understand the epistle in its entirety.

The middle point in the concentric chiasm of 3 John is found in vs. 8: “Therefore, we ought to support such as these.” Thus, the main message of the epistle is a general

recommendation of hospitality.<sup>1</sup> Using the progressive present, the Elder calls for continuous extension of hospitality in Christian churches.<sup>2</sup>

In the investigation above, we have seen that it is highly probable that Gaius, Diotrephes, and even Demetrius were all members of the same church. It seems that all three were wealthy homeowners and patrons. Diotrephes took control of their local church and imposed his power over it. Gaius seems to have seen how Demetrius was expelled from the church by Diotrephes because of his practice of hospitality toward itinerant missionaries, and thus is hesitant to extend the full measure of his hospitality toward them. Gaius is a hostage of the situation created by Diotrephes and is in need of encouragement.

The Elder encourages Gaius to continue with his works of hospitality and to expand on them. If Gaius follows the advice of the Elder, he will enter into direct conflict with Diotrephes and be expelled from the church in the same way Demetrius was. Gaius seems to be indirectly encouraged to enter, with his works of hospitality, into a confrontation with Diotrephes and to join forces with Demetrius, who is recommended as a trustworthy coworker. In that way, the Elder builds opposition against Diotrephes and prepares a group of people ahead of time to stand by his side when he comes to confront Diotrephes personally.

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<sup>1</sup> “Support” in vs. 8 is surrounded with clear references to hospitality in vss. 7 and 9, thus making it clear that “support” in vs. 8 refers to hospitality as well. I am dealing with the Greek word for “support” in my next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Hospitality as a way of managing the life of a local church has its limitations when heresies arise. Thus, in 2 John the Elder needs to limit hospitality in order to save the church from heresies. In the context of 3 John hospitality is uplifted as an ideal way to establish healthy Christian communities.

Thus, we seem to be dealing with a church-power conflict in which three patrons, or three members of the same church, are involved. The main issue is hospitality, which impacts power and inclusion in the church of 3 John. Chapter 4 of this dissertation deals with understanding the custom of hospitality among ancients and uses that knowledge to form a model of hospitality relevant for the circumstances of 3 John. Chapter 5 deals with the custom of patronage as the main expression of power in the context of 3 John and ends with a model of patronage relevant for the issues in 3 John. Chapter 6 contrasts the two models, hospitality and patronage, and draws final conclusions.

## CHAPTER 4

### HOSPITALITY

The main purpose of this chapter is to present what ancient hospitality entailed. I am primarily interested in social circumstances of the first-century A.D. in Asia Minor, but I also introduce anthropological and social research from other areas and times which should enlighten some issues surrounding ancient hospitality. Modern examples are only adding to the ancient evidence. In selecting modern examples I choose ones that seem to have preserved ancient values and there are people and cultures in the Mediterranean area that still treasure them. In the preface to his major work, Malina argues for “continuity between the Mediterranean world of today and that of the first-century A.D.”<sup>1</sup> Thus both ancient and modern examples should help illuminate our understanding of circumstances in the first century A.D. and sharpen our understanding of the hospitality issues relevant for 3 John.

The question may arise: why not concentrate exclusively on primary Greco-Roman sources for information on hospitality? First of all, I believe that this investigation of social dynamics of 3 John is greatly enriched with today’s anthropological and social research, highlighting some insights that might have otherwise been missed. Secondly, there is a great variety of expressions for hospitality used by ancient Greeks which can

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<sup>1</sup> Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, xii.

easily lead to terminological confusion. Table 2 provides all of the expressions that I was able to gather.

Table 2. Greek Verbs for Hospitality Used in the Greco-Roman World

Greek Verbs	English Meanings
δέχομαι	<i>Receive, accept, welcome, receive a burden, entertain, take</i>
ἐπιδέχομαι	<i>Receive as a guest, welcome a guest, take on oneself, accept</i>
καταλύω	<i>Intransitive meaning: be someone's guest, find lodging</i>
λαμβάνω	<i>Receive, receive hospitably, take, obtain, grasp, seize</i>
ξενίζω	<i>Receive or entertain as a guest, present with hospitable gifts</i>
ξενοδοχέω	<i>Show hospitality, entertainment of strangers</i>
ξενόω	<i>Enter into a treaty of hospitality with</i>
προσλαμβάνομαι	<i>Welcome, accept, receive, take</i>
προξενέω	<i>Be one's protector or patron, manage or effect, recommend</i>
συνάγω	<i>Welcome, receive as a guest or stranger, give hospitality, gather</i>
ὑποδέχομαι	<i>Receive or welcome as a guest, admit as a friend, take up a burden</i>
ὑπολαμβάνω	<i>Receive as a guest, support, take on one's back, protect, catch up</i>
φιλοξενέω	<i>Entertain hospitably, love foreign fashions</i>
φιλοφρονέομαι	<i>Treat kindly, greet, embrace, salute</i>

*Note:* Most of the references come from the following two sources: Walter Bauer, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur*, 5th ed. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971); Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, and Roderick McKenzie, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (New York/Oxford: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1996).



In addition to these verbs, various nouns, adjectives, and adverbs also express diverse aspects of hospitality. Most of them are related to the verbs above, but some of them do not depend on the roots presented above.<sup>1</sup>

It would be an enormous task to analyze this great variety of expressions used by ancient Greeks for expressing hospitable behavior, tracking them throughout the sources relevant to the time of writing of 3 John. I have decided to limit myself to a discussion of the three Greek verbs used for hospitality in the context of 3 John. But before discussing them I will first consult scholarly literature for a general understanding of the ancient custom of hospitality.

### **Understanding Ancient Hospitality**

I begin below with the question of the origin and development of ancient hospitality. This is followed by the definition and characteristics of hospitality, typical procedures in hospitality encounters, benefits of hospitality for guests and hosts, violation of hospitality, and summary and conclusions about the ancient view of hospitality. This review of scholarly literature dealing with ancient hospitality is the starting position as I try to address hospitality issues in 3 John in the second part of this chapter.

#### **Origin and Development of Hospitality**

The question of the origin of ancient hospitality has occupied biblical scholars and historians. Some leading scholars, who will be discussed below, believe that hospitality originated from fear and xenophobia. I disagree with that view of hospitality and believe

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., κηδεμών – *one in charge, protector, patron* (by Essenes); ξεναγέτης – *one in charge of guests, the hospitable*; ξενόστασις – *lodging*; πανδοκείον – *inn*.

that we need to review the question of its origin before we explore the question of its definition and characteristics. The results of this investigation will be helpful in determining whether today's understanding of hospitality is a culmination of the custom, or whether it is a degradation compared to that of the ancient world. Understanding where we are today in the process of the development of hospitality is helpful while studying ancient concepts of hospitality.

Hans Conrad Peyer explains the problem of the historical development of hospitality in the following words: "Over and over again there were attempts to differentiate stages of development of hospitality and to bring them in connection with cultural stages, e.g., the guest as enemy in primitive cultures, the guest as friend in high cultures, and the guest as object in modern culture of money economy."<sup>1</sup> Different authors argue for various stages, but most argue for a development from a general attitude of hostility toward strangers in primitive cultures to an attitude of hospitality in developed cultures.

Gustav Stählin has explored the concept of ξένος, explaining how people originally dealt with strangers and what stimulated hospitality. He believes that fear "is the first and basic mood associated with ξένος."<sup>2</sup> Mutual fear has led people to show

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<sup>1</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: "Man hat immer wieder versucht, verschiedene Entwicklungsstadien der Gastlichkeit zu unterscheiden und mit Kulturstadien in Zusammenhang zu bringen, zum Beispiel den Gast als Feind mit primitiven Kulturen, den Gast als Freund mit Hochkulturen und den Gast als Objekt mit modernen, von Geld- und Kreditwirtschaft durchdrungenen Kulturen." Hans Conrad Peyer, *Von der Gastfreundschaft zum Gasthaus: Studien zur Gastlichkeit im Mittelalter* (Hannover: Hahnsche, 1987), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Gustav Stählin, "Ξένος," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 3.

hostility and avoid each other. How did the development from fear to hospitality happen?

Stählin offers this reply:

Eventually men found a new, better and surprising way to master the hostile alien, namely, the way of friendship. In fact, animistic fear seems in many cases to have provided the first impulse for the noble custom of hospitality found among many primitive peoples. . . . All peoples knew the wretchedness of being in an alien country. Hence the stranger came to be granted the fellowship of table and protection, and instead of being an outlaw he became a ward of law and religion.<sup>1</sup>

Stählin's thesis explains the development of hospitality in evolutionistic terms. He presents hostility as the original human attitude, asserting that animistic fear led to the custom of hospitality. People were afraid of strangers and decided to make them friends. Thus, hospitality is believed to have developed out of an egoistic need for security.

Otto Hiltbrunner has a similar view on the development of hospitality: "Law standards and ethical behavioral rules are valid only inside of a certain social group. A stranger has no rights. . . . In the primitive cultures he is seen as potential bearer of unknown and mysterious powers. His arrival can mean maculation, death or contamination, and damage of all sorts. The first reaction of a magic-religiously thinking person, created out of this fear, is defense and hostility."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: "Rechtsnormen und sittliche Verhaltensregeln gelten grundsätzlich nur innerhalb der eigenen sozialen Gruppe. Ein Fremde ist rechtlos. . . . Zugleich aber gilt er gerade in primitiven Kulturen als potentieller Träger unbekannter und unheimlicher Kräfte. Seine Ankunft kann Befleckung, Tod oder Verseuchung, Unheil aller Art bedeuten. Die erste in magisch-religiösem Denken sich ergebende Reaktion aus dieser Angst ist Abwehr und Feindseligkeit." O. Hiltbrunner, D. Gorce, and H. Wehr, "Gastfreundschaft," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1972), 1061.

Thus, Hiltbrunner believes that originally people were afraid of strangers and hostile to them. Fear of the unknown was preventing hospitality. The easiest way to deal with the stranger was to kill him. What does Hiltbrunner believe to be the initializing factor for hospitality? Since people were not sure what kind of mighty powers and spirits strangers brought with them, they decided that it was better to make strangers into friends, in order to prevent harm that might possibly come from them.<sup>1</sup> “That is why it is better to make him favorable and to make him harmless in that way. So, hospitality in its origin is based on religious fear; in it religious fear is shown as the factor which guards the primitive people from mutual extermination.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, fear is here presented as the main factor, which led to the development of hospitality. This model is based on the same evolutionistic premises as Stählin’s.

Hiltbrunner also discusses the origin of reciprocity in hospitality encounters. He believes that trade has led to the principle of reciprocity, since trade brings agreements and contracts.<sup>3</sup> Further, Hiltbrunner believes that reciprocity in hospitality relations is expressed with the Greek word *xenos*, which means both *guest* and *host*.<sup>4</sup> Thus, his

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 1061-1062.

<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Es ist deshalb besser, ihn günstig zu stimmen und auf solche Weise unschädlich zu machen. Die Gastfreundschaft ist somit von ihrem Ursprung her in religiöser Scheu begründet; in ihr erweist sich religiöse Scheu als der Faktor, der die primitive Menschheit vor gegenseitiger Ausrottung bewahrt.” Ibid., 1062.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1065. Previously Ihering proposed the trade hypothesis, saying that the original state of hostility between people came to an end because of egoistic wishes for trade. Rudolph Ihering, “Die Gastfreundschaft im Altertum,” *Deutsche Rundschau* 51 (1887): 395.

<sup>4</sup> Hiltbrunner, Gorce, and Wehr, “Gastfreundschaft,” 1065.

hypothesis presents trade as the main factor for the establishment of reciprocal obligations in hospitality encounters.

Ladislaus J. Bolchazy wrote on hospitality in early Rome. A major part of his book deals with the origins of hospitality and its gradual historical development. His thesis is that “characteristic of many primitive peoples is xenophobia.”<sup>1</sup> He justifies it by his belief that “a primitive man coming into face-to-face contact with a stranger for the first time fears him because he believes that a stranger can be harmful.”<sup>2</sup> He is not disturbed by the fact that today’s primitive people are not xenophobic.<sup>3</sup> Bolchazy offers a model for the development of hospitality in seven stages: (1) Avoidance or mistreatment of strangers; (2) Apotropaic hospitality; (3) Medea category of hospitality; (4) Theoxenic hospitality; (5) *Ius hospitii*; (6) Contractual hospitality; and (7) Altruistic hospitality.<sup>4</sup>

This model presents a gradual development from hostility to hospitality in an evolutionistic fashion. Since “hospitality originated from xenophobia,”<sup>5</sup> the first four stages in Bolchazy’s model are xenophobic in nature and they culminate with altruism at the seventh stage. This model seems to suggest that today’s hospitality in our modern and

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<sup>1</sup> Ladislaus J. Bolchazy, *Hospitality in Early Rome: Livy’s Concept of Its Humanizing Force* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1977), i.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ii.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., iii. Arterbury is not convinced with the examples that Bolchazy uses to support his categories. Andrew E. Arterbury, “The Custom of Hospitality in Antiquity and Its Importance for Interpreting Acts 9:43-11:18” (Ph.D. dissertation, Baylor University, 2003), 38.

<sup>5</sup> Bolchazy, *Hospitality in Early Rome: Livy’s Concept of Its Humanizing Force*, 62.

urbanized world is at the peak of its development, since hospitality is “a barometer of civilization,”<sup>1</sup> according to Bolchazy. But, if we compare our hospitality today in the United States with the hospitality of the Homeric society<sup>2</sup> or even with today’s Bedouins in Jordan,<sup>3</sup> we can conclude that the levels of modernization and urbanization in a society do not improve the hospitality of its people. Actually, it is seen below in my review of Gabriel Herman’s work on ritualized friendship that urbanization in the ancient Greek city-states has brought degradation of hospitality, when compared to the Homeric society.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Shryock has shown that modernization and urbanization in today’s Jordan have led to the degradation of hospitality of the Jordanian people.<sup>5</sup>

Bolchazy bases his explanation on xenophobia, while Stählin and Hiltbrunner similarly emphasize fear as the major factor in the development of hospitality.

Xenophobia is an English word created from the Greek words ξένος and φόβος.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., i.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 2. Bolchazy has trouble explaining the high level of hospitality in Homeric society. Further, he is confused by the fact that all of his seven stages of hospitality might be identified in Homer on various occasions. He solves that problem by saying that “Homer represents at least four different cultures.” Ibid., 14.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Shryock, “The New Jordanian Hospitality: House, Host, and Guest in the Culture of Public Display,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (2004): 35-62.

<sup>4</sup> Gabriel Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

<sup>5</sup> Shryock shows how the modern-day market economy and the financial benefits that follow are destroying traditional Jordanian hospitality. His results are totally opposed to Ihering’s hypothesis that trade initiated and helped hospitality to develop, since economic interests seem to destroy traditional hospitality rather than to increase it. Shryock, “The New Jordanian Hospitality: House, Host, and Guest in the Culture of Public Display,” 35-62.

Unfortunately, *xenophobia* as a term is not attested in Greek literature of antiquity and seems to be a modern invention.<sup>1</sup> It seems to be a modern assumption that primitive people are necessarily xenophobic. The majority of modern-day authors are influenced by that assumption and argue consciously or unconsciously for an evolutionistic view of the development of hospitality. There does not seem to be a way to prove Bolchazy's thesis that the "hospitable treatment of strangers is a distinguishing mark of civilization."<sup>2</sup> That would indicate an extremely high level of hospitality in our own days, which cannot be confirmed. What if we would turn Bolchazy's, Hiltbrunner's, and Stählin's model upside down and view primitive people as hospitable and hospitality as degrading throughout the ages? Below we will see how social and historical forces have resulted in the steady degradation of hospitality.

Austin S. Ashley dealt with hospitality in ancient Greece. He tries to trace the origin of human hospitality by pointing to various theories. Most of the authors he reviews seem to subscribe to evolutionistic ideas about hospitality, claiming that originally people were hostile and afraid of each other, but later they transitioned from hostility to hospitality. Ashley, on the other hand, seems to argue for degradation of hospitality over time. He observes that the indiscriminate hospitality of the heroic age of Greece began to lessen in the time of the Greek city-states: "Undoubtedly *xenia*, as private hospitality, was beginning to become less important in the scheme of things as the

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<sup>1</sup> My search in TLG found no results for *xenophobia* or any of its possible derivatives. Interestingly, *philoxenia* (love for strangers) is a regular Greek word that appears occasionally.

<sup>2</sup> Bolchazy, *Hospitality in Early Rome: Livy's Concept of Its Humanizing Force*, 13-14.

state began to eclipse the family and its bonds with more far-reaching ties of a political nature.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, it seems that private hospitality in the Greek city-states was on a lower level than previously in the era of the heroic age.

Gabriel Herman dealt with the concept of ritualized friendship. His major intention is to explain the change of social obligations in *xenia* relationships between the heroic age and the later age of the Greek city-states. He believes that in the time of the *polis* “civic obligations had come to take priority even over guest-friendship. . . . For, unlike the obligations of guest-friendship, which arose only from morality, civic obligations were legally enforceable.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, the citizen’s first responsibility was a patriotic obligation toward his city, and only after he had satisfied that obligation could he think about the interests of his guest-friends of other cities in need of hospitality.

It is obvious in Herman’s exposition that citizens could easily face conflict between civic obligation and obligations of guest-friendship, as for example in the state of war between his city and his guest-friend’s city. On such occasions a citizen would have to compromise between these two obligations. “The archaic morality of guest-friendship could not be reconciled with communal justice.”<sup>3</sup> That is why Herman concludes that hospitality of the heroic age was more welcoming than hospitality of later Greek city-states, since in the former stage there was no pressure by external entities like

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<sup>1</sup> Austin S. Ashley, “Xenia: A Study of Hospitality in Ancient Greece,” (Senior thesis, Harvard University, 1940), 28. Ashley got this idea from Mahaffy, and Herman adopted it later from Ashley.

<sup>2</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.



*polis*. “The transition from one world to the other was effected by a radical change in social organisation and the concentration of power.”<sup>1</sup> The world of Greek city-states was less friendly to the custom of private hospitality.

Arterbury discusses changes in hospitality between the Homeric and Roman periods. He observes degradation of the custom by saying that “during the Roman period, hosts were more selective when they were deciding whether or not to extend hospitality to a traveler (e.g. Virgil, *Aen.* 8.145-171).”<sup>2</sup> Leonhard Schmitz also suggests that “hospitality was at Rome never exercised in that indiscriminate manner as in the heroic age of Greece.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, it seems that for the period between Homeric and Roman times, further degradation of hospitality can be observed.

Leopold Hellmuth dealt with the difference in hospitality between ancient societies and the modern world. “Correspondingly with the development of culture in general and especially with the resulting strengthening of public affairs, the functions of hospitality have been increasingly taken over from public and private establishments and hospitality in a real sense was limited to only a few areas.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, it seems that with the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>2</sup> Arterbury, “The Custom of Hospitality in Antiquity and Its Importance for Interpreting Acts 9:43-11:18,” 65; Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>3</sup> Leonhard Schmitz, “Hospitum,” in *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, ed. William Smith (London: Walton and Maberly; John Murray, 1848), 621.

<sup>4</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Parallel zur Entwicklung der Kultur im allgemeinen und der daraus resultierenden Festigung der Gemeinwesen im besonderen wurden die Funktionen der Gastfreundschaft in zunehmendem Maße von öffentlichen und privaten Einrichtungen übernommen und Gastfreundschaft im eigentlichen Sinn auf einige wenige Bereiche beschränkt.” Leopold Hellmuth, *Gastfreundschaft und Gastrecht*

development of states and governments, hospitality becomes less needed, since states take over some of the responsibilities that were previously in the hands of simple people and private homes.<sup>1</sup>

Peyer similarly describes hospitality in Europe:

Particularly there was hospitality alone [no taverns or inns] on the European periphery, such as Iceland, until the 13<sup>th</sup> century and Montenegro, Albania, and Greece until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These were areas in which tribes and blood revenge were dominant, structures of state power were underdeveloped and trade did not play any role. Hospitality was essentially offered to everyone. . . . While the north German hosts decided individually about the reception or rejection of a stranger, in south-east [Europe] hosts have tended to the necessary reception of every stranger in the sense of the institutional hospitality of the Near East.<sup>2</sup>

Peyer shows here that underdeveloped rural areas of the European continent had continued to offer envying hospitality to strangers until even as late as the nineteenth century. This suggests that cultural development tends to destroy hospitality as a custom

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*bei den Germanen* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984), 24.

<sup>1</sup> One way modern states deal with strangers is the whole issue of visas. Those not fulfilling all the criteria set up by the government are denied entrance. One visual example of such issues is the movie "Terminal" by Steven Spielberg with Tom Hanks as the main actor. That movie is a current statement on hospitality in the United States and it seems to have been intentionally produced to make us aware of some problems with hospitality for strangers in this country.

<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: "Vor allem in europäischen Randgebieten, wie in Island bis über das 13. Jh. hinaus und in Montenegro, Albanien und Griechenland bis ins 19. Jahrhundert, gab es praktisch allein die Gastfreundschaft [keine Taverne oder Gasthäuser]. Es waren Gebiete, wo Sippenverbände und Blutrache vorherrschten, herrschaftlich-staatliche Strukturen extrem gering entwickelt waren und der Handel eine kleine Rolle spielte. Gastfreundschaft bot grundsätzlich jedermann. . . . Während die Nordgermanen als Gastgeber individuell über die Aufnahme oder Abweisung eines Fremden entschieden, scheint der Südosten eher der unbedingten Aufnahme jedes Fremden im Sinne der institutionellen Gastfreundschaft des vorderen Orients zugeneigt zu haben." Peyer, *Von der Gastfreundschaft zum Gasthaus: Studien zur Gastlichkeit im Mittelalter*, 278.

offered to any outsider. Thus, hospitality cannot be a mark of civilization, as Bolchazy would like us to believe.

Peyer explains further that “the increase of travelers and the gradual takeover of the protection and control of strangers by the state since the 12<sup>th</sup> century . . . have led to gradual cancellation of the obligations between hosts and guests. The blood revenge and the obligation of the host to accommodate the guest were lost as first.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, again we see that when the state takes on obligations that were originally resting on individuals, hospitality becomes obsolete.

In that transition Peyer sees hospitality moving from private houses to inns, where it is offered for money. This happened throughout most of Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Thus, “hospitality flowed into the inn and continued to coexist with it only peripherally.”<sup>2</sup> Peyer observes a similar development in the United States between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>3</sup> In northern areas, inns were created from the very beginning for the accommodation of strangers. In southern parts there were no inns, but travelers were given free accommodations on farms. After 1850 with the gold rush, inns were established on major roads headed west, and thus obligations for

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<sup>1</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Die Zunahme der Reisenden und die schrittweise Übernahme des Schutzes und der Kontrolle der Fremden durch den Staat seit dem 12. Jahrhundert . . . führte zur allmählichen Auflösung der engen Bindungen zwischen Gastgeber und Gast. Die Blutrachepflicht und das Recht des Gastgebers, den Gast zu beerbern, fielen als erste dahin.” Ibid., 279.

<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Sie [die Gastfreundschaft] mündeten in das Gasthaus aus und lebte neben ihm nur noch als Randerscheinung weiter.” Ibid., 282.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 283.

private hospitality were obsolete. So, again we may conclude that a higher level of urbanization and economy lessens private hospitality.

Andrew Shryock discusses degradation of hospitality in the modern-day state of Jordan. It is valuable to look at the issue of hospitality in Jordan, since hospitality practiced by its tribal peoples seems to be untouched by developments over the centuries. Their hospitality probably resembles the way that institution looked in ancient times. While discussing the issues with local people, Shryock was told that the best hospitality today “is diminished or corrupt.”<sup>1</sup> They see Western values of market economy influencing their traditional values in a negative way and leading people to extend hospitality for money. They argue for real hospitality being about gifts of security and respect, while being distanced from market relations.<sup>2</sup>

Firebaugh and Lindsay in their exploration of ancient Greece also mention profit in hospitality issues. “In the early heroic age there were no special establishments designed to profit from the necessities of strangers. An arrangement nobler and more beautiful served as a substitute, and a general hospitality, founded upon religion, custom, and obligation, was practiced.”<sup>3</sup> Originally hospitality was not intended to be offered for profit or financial gain. Thus, extending hospitality for profit is perverting and violating

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<sup>1</sup> Shryock, “The New Jordanian Hospitality: House, Host, and Guest in the Culture of Public Display,” 58.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> W. C. Firebaugh and Norman Lindsay, *The Inns of Greece & Rome and a History of Hospitality from the Dawn of Time to the Middle Ages* (Chicago: F.M. Morris, 1923), 4.

the original intention of the custom and seems to be one of the major factors that led to its degradation.

Schmitz culminates his findings on the practice of hospitality with the following statement:

Hospitality is one of the characteristic features of almost all nations previous to their attaining a certain degree of civilization. In civilized countries the necessity of general hospitality is not so much felt; but at a time when the state or the laws of nations afforded scarcely any security, and when the traveler on his journey did not meet with any places destined for his reception and accommodation, the exercise of hospitality was absolutely necessary.<sup>1</sup>

Instead of claiming that hospitality is a mark of civilization, as Bolchazy would do, Schmitz turns things upside down and asserts that hospitality was extremely necessary and practiced in abundance before there was civilization. Actually, civilization, Schmitz believes, destroys the need for hospitality. Thus, it would seem that hospitality lessens with the development of civilization.

That observation should make us cautious as we try to approach the custom of hospitality in antiquity and as we study hospitality issues in 3 John. Since there seems to be degradation of hospitality throughout the centuries, there should be a difference between the understanding of what hospitality was for the people of that time and our modern understanding in industrialized countries of today.<sup>2</sup> Thus, we should not try to impose our cultural understandings on them, but should seek to understand their world from their perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> Schmitz, "Hospitum," 619.

<sup>2</sup> Despite all cultural discontinuities there are still people and cultures today that preserve and treasure ancient values.

### Definition and Characteristics of Hospitality

After this review of what scholars say about the origin and development of hospitality, we will now proceed with a review of scholarly definitions of ancient hospitality. Amy G. Oden describes hospitality as a “welcoming of the stranger” which “responds to the physical, social, and spiritual needs of the stranger.”<sup>1</sup> She further adds: “Hospitality is characterized by a particular moral stance in the world that can best be described as readiness . . . ready to welcome, ready to enter another’s world, ready to be vulnerable. . . . Such readiness takes courage, gratitude, and radical openness.”<sup>2</sup>

Peyer defines hospitality simply as “receiving a stranger in order to feed him, provide accommodation overnight, and protect him.”<sup>3</sup> Here we find three major elements of hospitality: Food, bed, and protection.

John Koenig views hospitality as “a matter of human exchanges that restore the spirit.”<sup>4</sup> It is “a place that is not our home but nevertheless enables us to feel at home . . . offering us a refuge from real or imagined dangers.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, according to Koenig, hospitality is about restoration and protection. Further, he says “that hospitality, as

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<sup>1</sup> Amy G. Oden, *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>3</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Die Gastlichkeit, das heißt die Aufnahme eines Fremden, um ihn zu speisen, zu nächtigen und zu schützen.” Peyer, *Von der Gastfreundschaft zum Gasthaus: Studien zur Gastlichkeit im Mittelalter*, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

understood in the New Testament writings, presumes a reciprocity between God's abundance and human act of sacrifice," which he calls "dialectic of sacrifice and abundance."<sup>1</sup> Thus, human involvement in the service of hospitality allows others to participate in God's abundance. God becomes real and tangible through human hospitality. Maybe that is why ancients felt a moral as well as a religious obligation to show hospitality.

Oscar E. Nybakken argues for the "extra-legal" character of private hospitality: "It depended, therefore, for its effectiveness almost entirely on the element of moral appeal; that is, on an element of obligation derived from deeply rooted and widely accepted principles of divine and natural law. Very briefly stated, the one indispensable condition upon which *hospitum* was established and maintained was *fides*; i.e., faith in man's word."<sup>2</sup> Thus, there was no state law requiring hospitality, nor official laws that would discipline the violators of the custom. It was rooted in general human moral obligation to each other.

Malina is the major representative of the social-scientific approach to New Testament studies who dealt with the concept of ancient hospitality. He defines hospitality as "the process of 'receiving' outsiders and changing them from strangers to guests . . . . In the world of the Bible, hospitality is never about entertaining family and friends. Hospitality always is about dealing with strangers."<sup>3</sup> Hospitality is a value that

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 130-131.

<sup>2</sup> Oscar E. Nybakken, "The Moral Basis of *Hospitum Privatum*," *Classical Journal* 41 (1945/46): 249.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce J. Malina, "Hospitality," in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, ed. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 115.

“serves as a means for attaining and preserving honor, the core cultural value.”<sup>1</sup> Further, Malina believes that a stranger needs to be tested, since he or she is potentially a threat for the community.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Malina designates only occasions dealing with strangers as real times of hospitality and sees a test as a necessary element that determines the extension of hospitality.

On the other hand, Ekkehard and Wolfgang Stegemann believe that there are two types of hospitality. The first one belongs under “balanced reciprocity” and is extended to neighbors and friends.<sup>3</sup> The other one belongs under “negative reciprocity” and is extended exclusively to strangers, who, the Stegemanns believe, would never reciprocate hospitality or obligate themselves to any type of reciprocity.<sup>4</sup> Bringing reciprocity into the picture with hospitality is a great contribution, but is it required to distinguish between two different types of hospitality? I address this question below.

Terminologically, it is advisable with ancient Greeks to distinguish between *xenia*, which is private hospitality, and *proxenia*, which is public or state hospitality. In this investigation I am more interested in private hospitality, since it is the subject of

3 John. Ashley defines *xenia* as “a reciprocal, relatively permanent, often hereditary, relationship of hospitality between individuals called *xenoi*.”<sup>5</sup> He is not disturbed by the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> “Ausgeglichene Reziprozität.” W. Ekkehard Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *Urchristliche Sozialgeschichte: Die Anfänge im Judentum und die Christusgemeinden in der mediterranen Welt* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1995), 43.

<sup>4</sup> “Negative Reziprozität.” Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ashley, “Xenia: A Study of Hospitality in Ancient Greece,” 4.



fact that *xenos* was a term used for guests, as well as for enemies. He believes that “all these connotations can be reconciled with a single underlying notion of ‘man-not-on-the-home-territory.’”<sup>1</sup> So, the same term can be applied to either guest or enemy, since both of them come from other localities.

In addition, the term *xenos* can be applied to both parties in a relationship of *xenia*.<sup>2</sup> Thus, both guest and host can be called *xenos* because of the reciprocal nature of *xenia*, since one day the host might be a guest of a person who is presently a guest in his house.<sup>3</sup> In such a situation the host will be out of his territory. The interchange of roles points to reciprocity in the *xenia* relationship.

Arterbury explores the usage of the term *ξένος* and discusses why it was used for different and, in my view, sometimes opposing concepts:

The Greeks often used the term *ξένος* quite freely to refer to any of the parties involved in this social interaction. For instance, *ξένος* was used to refer to complete strangers (e.g., Homer, *Od.* 3.34; Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.114-115), established guests (e.g., Homer, *Od.* 3.350), and even hosts (e.g., Homer, *Od.* 1.214; Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.114-115). Thus the ancient Greeks seldom found it necessary to distinguish between the various roles in a hospitality interaction. . . . By failing to demarcate the roles of the host and guest semantically, we can see the degree to which the Greeks (and Romans) considered this social convention to be based upon a fluid and reciprocal relationship.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>3</sup> Hellmuth believes that neither old German nor any other Germanic language has anything like the Greek *xenos* or Latin *hospes*, which aim at a long-term reciprocal relationship. Hellmuth, *Gastfreundschaft und Gastrecht bei den Germanen*, 269.

<sup>4</sup> Arterbury, “The Custom of Hospitality in Antiquity and Its Importance for Interpreting Acts 9:43-11:18,” 35-36.

Thus, strangers, guests, and hosts could be designated with the same term. For Arterbury, it is a clear sign of reciprocity in hospitality relations.

Gabriel Herman believes that “*xenia* can be located within the wider category of social relations known to anthropologists as ‘ritualized personal relations.’”<sup>1</sup> He defines ritualized friendship as “a bond of solidarity manifesting itself in an exchange of goods and services between individuals (*xenoi*) originating from separate social units.”<sup>2</sup> He further says that “it existed between non-kin — indeed, complete strangers — and . . . it was structured by a system of ideas mimicking kinship relations.”<sup>3</sup> He is arguing for longevity and reciprocity of such friendship relations.<sup>4</sup>

When Andrew Shryock asked his Balgawi hosts in modern-day Jordan to explain hospitality (Arabic *karam*), “they stressed concepts of security, protection and respect.”<sup>5</sup> Humound, one of Shryock’s friends, explained that “*karam* is ‘innate’ (*fitri*) and rooted in a concern for the reputation of one’s group. If there is a distinctively *Arab* hospitality, Humound suggested, it can be seen in the desire — the ‘burning in the skin’ — that drives a poor man to show generosity even when it brings suffering and depravation to his family. . . . To count as *karam*, hospitality must be given freely, without design of

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<sup>1</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 39, 91, 121.

<sup>5</sup> Shryock, 36.

calculation (*bidun ghaya*).”<sup>1</sup> That suggests the unselfish nature of hospitality, which is ready to give even when it results in financial damage to the host.

John Bells Mathews adds to the picture:

The whole act of hospitality bears witness to the difference and respect, if not at times the reverence, with which the guest was treated. One might even say that the stranger became the master or lord of the house into which he was received as guest, and indeed just such a view appears to have been prevalent among the Semitic people. Thus the host is found referred to as the “servant” or “slave” of the guest (Gen 18.3; 19.2), and an ancient Arabic proverb runs: “The guest while in the house is its lord.”<sup>2</sup>

An attitude of service and subordination is suggested here as an integral part of hospitality. The host serves his guest.

Arterbury describes hospitality (ξενία) in an ancient Mediterranean context as “the act of assisting one or more travelers for a limited amount of time.”<sup>3</sup> Hospitality is about provision and protection, and it does not deal with strangers only. He criticizes Koenig who “makes ‘strangers’ the only object of hospitality,” since that “restriction neglects the long-term, reciprocal nature of hospitality that is associated with ancient friendships and extended families.”<sup>4</sup>

As seen above in the diverse examples, there clearly is an element of reciprocity between host and guest in ancient hospitality, and one needs to question those who limit

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>2</sup> John B. Mathews, “Hospitality and the New Testament Church,” (Th.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1964), 45.

<sup>3</sup> Arterbury, “The Custom of Hospitality in Antiquity and Its Importance for Interpreting Acts 9:43-11:18,” 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 10.

hospitality only to strangers. When an unknown stranger is received a second time by the same host, is he or she still a stranger or by then a known friend?<sup>1</sup> Or, when a stranger receives his former host, is he or she considered a stranger? After sharing a meal together in the intimate atmosphere of the host's home the stranger becomes a friend for life. Steve Reece believes that an ancient "host expects the guest to remember him, and as a purely practical consideration, to reciprocate with an equally valuable gift sometime in the future."<sup>2</sup> There is a hope of future encounters of hospitality, and I believe that it applies to initial strangers as well. So, I would suggest that hospitality is generally extended to non-kin individuals, and not necessarily limited only to strangers.

Stegemann and Stegemann's distinction between the two types of hospitality, based on balanced reciprocity for insiders and negative reciprocity for strangers, is another item we need to deal with before we conclude the section on definitions of hospitality. As seen above, they say that balanced reciprocity would not be offered to strangers.<sup>3</sup> But if a relationship of hospitality ends up with negative reciprocity, then the relationship will either become one of patronage or hostility.<sup>4</sup> Hospitality calls for balanced reciprocity; if there is none, then we cannot call it hospitality. In regards to

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<sup>1</sup> Malina seems to agree that a stranger does not stay a stranger after an encounter with the host: "The stranger-guest will leave the host as either friend or enemy." Malina, "Hospitality," 117.

<sup>2</sup> Steve Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 35.

<sup>3</sup> "So wird etwa die Form der ausgeglichenen Reziprozität . . . nicht den Fremden gewährt." Stegemann and Stegemann, 43.

<sup>4</sup> I will say more about that issue under the subtitle "Violations of Hospitality" below.

reciprocity, there is only one possible type of hospitality, and it always requires balanced reciprocity, even though some guests never get the chance to reciprocate. Strangers obligate themselves to balanced reciprocity when they enter into a relationship of hospitality with previously unknown hosts. The cumulative evidence of this chapter is testifying that there is only one possible form of reciprocity in hospitality encounters, and that is balanced reciprocity.

We can say that hospitality deals with non-kin individuals. Such people are not always strangers to the host. By entering into a relationship of hospitality, both parties obligate themselves to future balanced reciprocity, since balanced reciprocity is one of the main characteristics of hospitality.

In conclusion to this exploration of scholarly definitions of hospitality, I am probing my own definition. Since there are many varied views, as well as diverse aspects of hospitality relationships, it is difficult to summarize all of them in one simple definition. The definition which follows is based on my investigation presented in this chapter and emphasizes aspects I have found to be of prime importance in any hospitality encounter that preserves traditional ancient values: Hospitality is a host–guest relationship between non-kin individuals, who differentially alternate their roles by practicing balanced reciprocity, which brings them into a state of equality.

#### Procedure of Hospitality

Now we address the question of proper hospitality procedure. Arterbury names the following elements typically included in the Greco-Roman hospitality context: The host's initial reception of the guest, the seating of the guest inside the dwelling, a feast, overnight lodging, the questioning of the guest about the guest's identity, a bath and gifts for the guest, and an escort to the guest's next destination (e.g., Homer, *Odyssey* 3.4-485;

15.193-214; 5.382-13.187).<sup>1</sup> Some authors may argue for different or additional elements in hospitality customs. The elements depend on what sources, areas, and times they have observed, since elements of hospitality might vary for time, place, and occasion. Nevertheless, the above elements seem to be a standard procedure in the heroic age of Greece, and continued to be valued as ideal in the first century A.D. In accordance with their own abilities and their guest's needs, the hosts would try to mimic this standard procedure.

Who was responsible for showing hospitality? That was the responsibility of the lord of the house – *pater familias*.<sup>2</sup> As the representative of his household, it was his privilege and obligation to extend hospitality. In him hospitality and power are embodied. Playing the role of a hospitable host in a proper way brings honor to him and to his entire family.

Dickson explores the role of the shaikh among his own people, which might be applied to the role of the host in hospitality encounters:

To maintain his influence in the piping times of peace, the shaikh must prove himself literally the “father of his people.” He must . . . keep an open house. No name has a more unworthy meaning, or leaves a nastier taste in the mouth of the Badawin than the epithet *bakhil*, or “stingy one.” Once this name *bakhil* sticks to a chief, his influence is at an end. Hence a successful shaikh must always have coffee going to his tent.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arterbury, “The Custom of Hospitality in Antiquity and Its Importance for Interpreting Acts 9:43-11:18,” 12; Homer, *Odyssey*, trans. George E. Dimock (Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>2</sup> I am obligated to Dr. Bernhard Oestreich, from Theologische Hochschule Friedensau (Germany), for initially pointing my attention to this fact.

<sup>3</sup> H. R. P. Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert: A Glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Sau'di Arabia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949), 53.

As we see here, showing hospitality is one of the main duties of a shaikh if he wants to uphold his honor and influence.

What was the proper time for showing hospitality? John Thorburn says that “the relationship between host and guest, *xenia* (‘guest-friendship’), is one of the most hallowed in Greek culture.”<sup>1</sup> He continues: “Even if a Greek was approached by a stranger at an inconvenient moment, turning him away was considered disgraceful.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, ancient Greeks seem to have felt the obligation to offer hospitality at any time.

Who is eligible for hospitality? Ashley says: “The custom of the time enjoined upon the householder the obligation of granting hospitality to the stranger at the gate, regardless of who or what he was.”<sup>3</sup> “Any needy person was eligible to be a *xenos*, and class lines were ordinarily ignored in *xenia*.”<sup>4</sup> A host would be thought not to have good manners if he asked a guest for his name and origin before providing food and drink.<sup>5</sup> Thus, there was no discrimination with the custom of hospitality – everybody was welcome and nobody would be denied hospitality because of name or origin.

Josephus reports on the Essenes who provide hospitality to their members from other places. This description seems to have some parallels to Christian hospitality:

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<sup>1</sup> John Thorburn, “Hospitality,” in *Encyclopedia of Greece and the Hellenic Tradition*, ed. Graham Speake (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2000), 775.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 776.

<sup>3</sup> Ashley, “*Xenia*: A Study of Hospitality in Ancient Greece,” 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 23. He refers to Homer, *Odyssey*, 3.69-70. See also Stählin, “Ξενος,” 18. Stählin quotes, in addition, *Odyssey*, 4.60ff and *Eumaios* 14.45ff.

They occupy no one city, but settle in large numbers in every town. On the arrival of any of the sect from elsewhere, all the resources of the community are put at their disposal, just as if they were their own; and they enter the house of men whom they have never seen before as though they were their most intimate friends. Consequently, they carry nothing whatever with them on their journeys, except arms as a protection against brigands. In every city there is one of the order expressly appointed to attend to strangers, who provides them with raiment and other necessities.<sup>1</sup>

Josephus reports here about service of hospitality among the Essenes. This might have been a model for early Christians to follow. It is interesting to observe *Regula Magistri*, which deals with the proper procedure for welcoming guests into Christian monasteries. Peyer writes: "Guests are welcomed by monks of the monastery with blessing and prayer, kneeling down, bending down, and with a kiss of freedom."<sup>2</sup> The element of subordination is emphasized in this custom of welcoming, as monks are serving their guests.

Arterbury explores patron-client relations in antiquity and concludes that "the dependant person in a patron-client relationship serves and defers to the patron, but the dependant guest in a hospitality relationship is served by the host."<sup>3</sup> There is a well-known Arab couplet expressing a similar idea: "O Guest of ours, though you have come, though you have visited us, and though you have honoured our dwellings: We verily are

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Jewish War*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray (Loeb Classical Library), 2.124-126.

<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: "Gäste werden von den Mönchen des gastlichen Klosters mit Segen und Gebet, Niederkniend, Neigung des Hauptes und Friedenskuß empfangen." Peyer, *Von der Gastfreundschaft zum Gasthaus: Studien zur Gastlichkeit im Mittelalter*, 120.

<sup>3</sup> Arterbury, "The Custom of Hospitality in Antiquity and Its Importance for Interpreting Acts 9:43-11:18," 66.



the real guests, and you are the Lord of this house.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, we can clearly observe here the element of subordination while serving in a hospitality encounter. This element is reciprocal in hospitality encounters. Guests and hosts may exchange their roles on future occasions, while there is no exchange of roles in patron-client relations.<sup>2</sup>

Shryock deals with the place that is assigned to guests in the host's home:

They are seated in special areas of the house – on mattresses or overstuffed couches reserved for guests – and things are brought to them. Guests do not move around the house, nor are they expected to serve themselves. They are privileged audience. Ideal representations are played out for them, and things that suggest inadequacy are sheltered from their view. When released, guests spread news of the house; they praise and criticize it in a larger world.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, guests are supposed to experience the best of their host's house, including the best seats, best food, best beds, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

Hiltbrunner explores old Arabic Bedouin tribes and notes that hospitality among them belonged to the main virtues of an honorable man: “It is a question of honor how

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<sup>1</sup> Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert: A Glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Sau'di Arabia*, 118.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Roth believes that the closest parallel to hospitality in antiquity was marriage, as opposed to the patron-client relationship, “for marriage and *xenia* were parallel social institutions. The basic function of each was to bring an outsider into the kin-group, and both forms of relationship entailed the exchanging of gifts and the formation of a hereditary bond imposing mutual obligations.” Paul Roth, “The Theme of Corrupted *Xenia* in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*,” *Mnemosyne* 46 (1993): 3.

<sup>3</sup> Shryock, “The New Jordanian Hospitality: House, Host, and Guest in the Culture of Public Display,” 37.

<sup>4</sup> I can testify from my own experience as a guest of people from the Mediterranean area that I was treated as the most important person in the house. The culmination would be in the evening when my host and his wife would clean their own bed and let me sleep in it, while they would prepare some provisional beds for themselves.

one deals with his guest.”<sup>1</sup> The obligation of good hospitality was so strong that hosts did not even fear financial bankruptcy in providing their generosity to their guest.<sup>2</sup> Dickson says that “Badawin excels as a host, and will slay his last camel or sheep to do honour to his guest.”<sup>3</sup> Bedouins of the desert would not permit any stranger to leave their tents hungry or thirsty.

St. George Stock explores questioning of a guest for his name and origin in the heroic age of Greece. “The politeness of an Homeric host required that he should feed his guest before he asked who he was.”<sup>4</sup> It was considered to be rude to ask for a name before providing a meal, since that could account for selectiveness in extending hospitality. Reece also emphasizes the same element: “A proper host requests his guest’s name and inquires into his business only after providing him a meal; the stranger is to remain anonymous throughout the meal.”<sup>5</sup> Further, “the host makes it plain that his kindness has no respect of persons; and . . . if it should be an enemy that he is entertaining, he will find it more difficult to hate him after doing so.”<sup>6</sup> As we have

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<sup>1</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: “Es ist eine Frage der Ehre, wie man seinen Gast behandelt.” Hiltbrunner, Gorce, and Wehr, “Gastfreundschaft,” 1074.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1075.

<sup>3</sup> Dickson, *The Arab of the Desert: A Glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Sau’di Arabia*, 55.

<sup>4</sup> St. George Stock, “Hospitality,” in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (New York: Scribner’s, 1917-1927), 810.

<sup>5</sup> Reece, *The Stranger’s Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene*, 26.

<sup>6</sup> Stock, “Hospitality,” 810.

already seen with other authors, hospitality was offered to everybody without discrimination.

Julian Pitt-Rivers explores the law of hospitality. He believes that “the entry of an outsider into any group is commonly the occasion for an ‘ordeal’ of some sort.”<sup>1</sup> He is aware that “the character of the ordeal as a test of worthiness is less important than its character as an initiation rite” and together with van Gennep calls all such ordeals “rites of incorporation.”<sup>2</sup> It is a way of obtaining a new status.

Further, Pitt-Rivers explores the question of testing a stranger and the implications of testing. He deals with the question of when a test is necessary:

An “ordeal” implies permanence since its significance is essentially that it marks an irreversible passage: the element of hostility in the character of the stranger is destroyed and he is able to emerge from it in a more acceptable status. . . . Where an elaborate code of hospitality applies to the stranger and he is made a guest by the mere fact of his appearance without any “ordeal,” an impermanent relationship is implied. His hostile character is not destroyed, but inverted through the avoidance of disrespect. A limit is frequently set upon the time such a guest is expected to stay and, even when this is not so, it is always recognized that it is an abuse to outstay one’s welcome. Thus, while the mode of permanent incorporation solidifies in time, the status of guest evaporates. The one faces a potential assimilation, the other an eventual departure.<sup>3</sup>

According to Pitt-Rivers, testing a stranger is only necessary for permanent settlement in a community. Some authors emphasize the need for tokens, which would prove a guest’s previous relationship with the host or the host’s ancestors. Nybakken does not believe that to be a generally accepted practice, for “that requirement seems to

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<sup>1</sup> Pitt-Rivers, “The Law of Hospitality,” 96.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 111.

contradict the statement that the custom rested on faith in man's word."<sup>1</sup> He believes that there is only limited evidence in literary and inscriptional sources that tokens were used for private hospitality. "The very limited evidence found in those sources for the use of tokens stands in sharp contrast to the numerous references in the same sources to the practice of guest-friendship."<sup>2</sup> Nybakken concludes: "For *fides* meant not merely 'keeping one's word,' but 'to act as honest person do, to keep faith fairly and in accordance with custom'. . . . The traditional form of *hospitum* was spontaneous and voluntary, simple and informal, and the use of tokens was looked upon as something foreign and artificial which tended to weaken the very foundation of *fides* upon which the practice of private guest-friendship was built."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, it does not seem convincing that tokens were used in private hospitality, since that would contradict the nature of the custom itself. The same is true for testing the stranger before extending hospitality, since a test would contradict the nature of the custom. We have seen above that in ancient hospitality the host would not even dare to ask for the name of the guest before the guest had eaten and drunk, which means that any personal questioning of the guest and his background came long after hospitality was already in place. Testing the guest for the purpose of extending hospitality does not seem to belong to the regular hospitality procedure, and as Pitt-Rivers says above, it might be practiced by permanent settlement only.

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<sup>1</sup> Nybakken, "The Moral Basis of *Hospitum Privatum*," 250.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

Arterbury explores the role of gifts, which a host offered to a guest at the end of an occasion for hospitality. He points to both W. Dolan and L. J. Bolchazy who argue that gifts mark a transition to more formal guest-friendship. But he goes a step further and says that “Gift exchange within a hospitality interaction inaugurated a permanent, reciprocal relationship.”<sup>1</sup> It seems that gifts added to the notion of permanency and reciprocity in hospitality relationships. With the acceptance of a gift the guest enters into an obligation of a permanent hospitality relationship with the host, which obligates him to accept the role of host if needed in the future.

We have observed typical elements in hospitality encounters. According to their own abilities and their guest’s needs, the hosts would try to uphold all the elements of traditional hospitality. Hospitality brings certain benefits, and I am now going to concentrate on the benefits of hospitality exchanges.

#### Benefits for the Guest and Host

What are the benefits for the parties involved in a hospitality encounter? The major benefits for guests might be summarized as food, accommodation, and protection. Pitt-Rivers explores the idea of a home being a sanctuary that is supposed to offer protection. We know that in ancient times sanctuaries were places of protection. Thus, in the Old Testament people could flee to the sanctuary where their lives were supposed to be protected (1 Kgs 1:50-53; 2:28-34; Matt 23:35). Pitt-Rivers applies the sanctuary concept to a home in the following way:

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<sup>1</sup> Arterbury, “The Custom of Hospitality in Antiquity and Its Importance for Interpreting Acts 9:43-11:18,” 33. He quotes examples from Homer’s *Odyssey* 1.311-318; 15.536-538; 17.163-165; 19.309-311.

So powerful is the idea that every home becomes a sanctuary guarded by the honour of the owner who is in duty bound to receive any fugitive who asks for refuge. Even his own enemy can demand sanctuary of him, and rest assured of protection against himself, since his obligation to respect the sanctity of his own home takes precedence over his right and desire of vengeance.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, a host is obligated to offer protection of his own home. An example of such behavior is seen in the Old Testament when Lot feels more obligated to protect guests in his home than to protect his own daughters (Gen 19:1-10). When forced to choose, protecting guests took priority. So, protection of guests seems to have been one of the highest moral obligations in the ancient world and was one of the benefits which guests were receiving.

Shryock also talks about the sacredness of the home: "Throughout the Arab world, houses are marked by a strong desire to receive visitors and, at the same time, to safeguard their own interiority, which is often described as *hurma*, as 'sacredness' or 'inviolability.'"<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, Shryock goes a step further by saying that it is actually the guest who becomes sacred: "Hospitality creates a moral space in which outsiders can be treated as provisional members of the house, as aspects of its *hurma*."<sup>3</sup>

Protection is the major benefit for a guest. What benefits can we observe for the host? Øystein S. LaBianca explores seven indigenous hardness structures that have helped local Jordanian tribes survive foreign occupation over the centuries. Among the seven institutions is hospitality. LaBianca notes the following benefits of hospitality:

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<sup>1</sup> Pitt-Rivers, "The Law of Hospitality," 100, n. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Shryock, "The New Jordanian Hospitality: House, Host, and Guest in the Culture of Public Display," 36.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Dickson also talks about guests being sacred. Dickson, 118.

By means of this institution, vital information is shared between members of tribes and outsiders. Hospitality also facilitates “story-telling” by means of which members of tribes have been reminded by traveling “story tellers” of their common values; informed of new opportunities by traveling merchants; and warned of threats to their security and way of life by distant members of their tribe or visiting strangers. The institution, therefore, played a crucial practical role in maintaining solidarity between members of the tribe and in facilitating the transmission of information vital to groups solidarity and survival.<sup>1</sup>

LaBianca sees story telling, information about new opportunities, and warnings about threats to security as major benefits of hospitality.<sup>2</sup> These benefits have contributed to the survival of tribal peoples and their identity (little traditions) despite centuries of occupation of their territory in Jordan by foreign powers (great traditions).<sup>3</sup>

Shryock explains in more detail the benefits of hospitality found by his Balgawi Bedouin friends: “The host must fear the guest. . . . When he sits [and shares your food], he is company. When he stands [and leaves your house], he is a poet.”<sup>4</sup> The guest is to leave the house of his host and spread the news about his hospitality. The honor of the

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<sup>1</sup> Øystein S. LaBianca, “Indigenous Hardiness Structure and State Formation in Jordan: Towards a History of Jordan’s Resident Arab Population,” in *Ethnic Encounter and Culture Change*, ed. M’hammed Sabour and Knut S. Vikør (Bergen: Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies, 1995), 153-154.

<sup>2</sup> Ashley also emphasizes story telling and news as benefits: “In an age which lacked means of easy communication, which men lived relatively isolated from one another, it was only natural that when strangers were around, current news should become the chief topic of conversation. *Xenoi* came, in fact, to be looked upon as the regular bearers, if not the fabricators of news.” Ashley, “Xenia: A Study of Hospitality in Ancient Greece,” 40.

<sup>3</sup> Øystein S. LaBianca, “Thinking Globally and Also Locally: Anthropology, History and Archeology in the Study of Jordan’s Past,” in *Crossing Jordan: North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan*, ed. Thomas E. Levy (London: Equinox Publishing, 2007), 6.

<sup>4</sup> Shryock, “The New Jordanian Hospitality: House, Host, and Guest in the Culture of Public Display,” 36.

house might be increased or decreased, depending on what the guest shares about his experience. Shryock continues: “Reputations are at stake.”<sup>1</sup> The reputation of the house depends upon the word of the guest about his positive experiences with hospitality. Thus, good words of a guest about the hospitality of his host belong also to the benefits for the hosts.

Shryock offers further testimonies of Balgawi Bedouins regarding their hospitality: “Hospitality is the Arab madness! . . . We do *karam* to excess. We waste food and spend all our wages to impress guests with meat, and sometimes we don’t even have enough money to clothe our children and send them to good schools.”<sup>2</sup> In certain cultures it seems to be more important that honor be increased through sowing hospitality than that a host accumulates financial gain. “Equally well-developed is the idea that *karam* enables powerful hosts to silence criticism and shame people into agreement: ‘Feed the mouth, and the eye will show respect.’”<sup>3</sup> Here we see that in some cultures hospitality might be used to make friends and allies who will possibly promote the interests of their hosts.

Ashley discusses gifts that a host gives to departing guests. In Homer all the hospitality scenes involve gift making.<sup>4</sup> The purpose is to seal the friendship and to obligate the guest to receive his host in the future if he ever needs hospitality. Ashley

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ashley, 45.



continues: “In order to maintain his prestige, the host gave his guest as much as he could reasonably afford. . . . The element of prestige was of no slight importance in *xenia*. The dutiful guest was expected to spread far and wide the fame of his host. Generosity thus had its own compensation.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, reciprocity is not only shown in the future when the host would need hospitality, but also in the immediate spread of a good word by the guest. In doing so a guest contributes to the honor and fame of his host.

Pitt-Rivers explains further honor which might be gained through hospitality: “In both the Arab and the Greek world, by dispensing hospitality honour was acquired within the community and allies outside it and considerations of personal advantage are thereby added to the general utility of the association between the stranger and the sacred.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, the major benefit for the host seems to have been honor, which he would gain as a host who is able to extend hospitality to the needy. There is an additional honor involved if the guest is a person of high status: “A person of high status honours the whole community by his presence and must be made a guest by a leading member.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, a host gains honor in his own community by offering hospitality to such an honorable guest. Ashley further shows how important honor was in ancient times:

It must not be forgotten that men of the aristocratic age lived not on their wealth alone, but also on their prestige. Personal reputation was probably valued only slightly less than great riches. By adhering to the *dike* of *xenia* a man could reasonably hope to see his fame increase, whereas if he neglected his duties as host he

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt-Rivers, “The Law of Hospitality,” 100.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 106.

could expect only a loss of face in the community which would make life all but unbearable for him.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting that honor itself is reciprocal, even within the context of a single occasion: “The custom of hospitality invokes the sacred and involves the exchange of honour. Host and guest must pay each other honour. The host requests the honour of the guest’s company – (and this is not merely a self-effacing formula: he gains honour through the number and quality of his guests). The guest is honoured by the invitation.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, honor is reciprocal in hospitality encounters, even though nothing changes with the fixed roles of guest and host for that particular occasion of hospitality.

An interesting honor-building practice of hospitality is found among Northwestern tribes of American Indians:<sup>3</sup> “The Potlatch, found among nearly all the peoples of the Northwest coastal regions, is a public social event in which the sponsor presents a considerable amount of property and food to the invited guests. Later on, the guests usually reciprocate by hosting a feast of their own. This continuous giving of large gifts not only contributes to economic redistribution but also serves to establish and confirm status.”<sup>4</sup> The institution of potlatch<sup>5</sup> serves in their society to establish status and

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<sup>1</sup> Ashley, 77-78.

<sup>2</sup> Pitt-Rivers, “The Law of Hospitality,” 107.

<sup>3</sup> I am presenting this example, even though it does not belong to the Mediterranean area, because it parallels the Mediterranean examples with similar cultural values and it might add to the picture.

<sup>4</sup> Jerry H. Gill, *Native American Worldviews* (New York: Humanity Books, 2002), 130.

<sup>5</sup> I was pointed to this institution by my professor Dr. Øystein S. LaBianca.

rank. In his exploration of rank among the Haida Indian tribes, Murdock gives us some more details:

Status depends . . . solely upon the number and quality of the potlatches given by one's parents. Persons whose parents have given a housebuilding or totem pole potlatch enjoy preferred seats at feasts, have the right to speak first at all public gatherings, are alone eligible to inherit a chiefship, associate little with those of lower status, and can insult the latter with impunity. They feel called upon to defend their exalted status and prestige against any infringement, and they do so through the instrumentality of face-saving and vengeance potlatches.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, showing hospitality publicly to non-kin tribe members increases the status, rank, and prestige of the one showing it, and especially of his children. House chiefs and clan chiefs use potlatches as their primary way of establishing themselves and their posterity as people of status and rank in their society. What we learn here is that hospitality might be used to establish honor or rank, even though that seems not to be the main purpose of traditional hospitality.

John K. Campbell believes that not only the social status of the guest, but also the number of guests is of importance: "The more visitors a family entertains the more its prestige increases."<sup>2</sup> Campbell actually studies Sarakatsani, an isolated shepherd community in the Greek mountains of Zagori. He continues his exploration of the benefits of hospitality with an interesting paragraph:

Indeed, the number of visitors that a family receives is generally a reliable index of its reputation. It is always known in the neighbourhood when a family has had guests (μουσαφιρηδες); their quality, relationship, and the possible reasons for their visit are debated in detail by the other families. Comment is often caustic, but the

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<sup>1</sup> George Peter Murdock, *Rank and Potlatch among the Haida* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1970), 18.

<sup>2</sup> John K. Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 115.

very interest which is aroused is a recognition of the importance of the event. If a family of numbers and wealth entertains a patron from the town, this is a triumph which it enjoys to the full. Meat is killed and wine is bought. Largesse is demanded of the family which entertains many guests. And in some mysterious way neighbouring families discover the measure of generosity, of meanness, which a host has shown to his visitors; and criticism, encouraged by envy, will not spare him. In hospitality (φιλοξενία), a virtue in which the Sarakatsani believe they are naturally pre-eminent, there is always a strong element of competition.<sup>1</sup>

In that isolated shepherd community visitors from the town are a sign of prestige. Shepherds need a mighty patron in town, and not many have one. Thus, entertaining such a patron in their own house is a sign of victory which needs to be celebrated. Significant in Campbell's exploration is the assigning of a competitive element to hospitality. There is competition between Sarakatsani families regarding the issue of who has entertained a more noble guest in their home. It is beneficial to entertain an influential and noble guest, since such a guest increases with his presence the honor of the family receiving him.

Beate Wagner-Hasel writes against the illusion of a purely altruistic character of hospitality. She argues that "already in an early stage there was the perception that political and economical interests are pursued through hospitality. In that regard it would be pointed to a reciprocal or contractual character of hospitality, as well as to its peace-making role in trade and in political alliances."<sup>2</sup> Thus, it seems that people could pursue selfishly political and economic interests with hospitality. Every good thing can be perverted.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 299-300.

<sup>2</sup> Translation mine. Original German reads: "Andererseits setzte sich schon früh die Auffassung durch, daß mit der Gastfreundschaft politische und ökonomische Interessen verfolgt wurden. Dabei wurde auf den reziproken, d.h. kontraktuellen (vertraglichen) Charakter der Gastfreundschaft verwiesen und ihr eine friedenssichernde Rolle im Handelsverkehr sowie eine politische Bündnisfunktion zugeschrieben." Beate Wagner-Hasel, "Gastfreundschaft," in *Der neue Pauly: Enzyklopaedie der Antike*, ed. Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1998), 794.

Firebaugh and Lindsay explore why inns were unpopular in the ancient world and why innkeepers were looked down upon with contempt:

For the sake of trade, a man opens lodgings in a lonely place, a long way from anywhere. He receives bewildered travelers in barely tolerable quarters, or affords warmth, quiet, and rest in his close rooms to people driven in by angry storms. And then, after receiving them as friends, he does not provide them with hospitable entertainment according to that reception but holds them to ransom like captive enemies whom he has got into his clutches, on the most exorbitant, unjust, rascally terms. It is these offences and others like them, shamefully common in all such callings, which have brought discredit upon all ministration to men's need.<sup>1</sup>

So, it seems that the unpopularity of innkeepers rested on the fact that they would offer hospitality for money and look for economic interest. To do such a thing was considered to be a disgrace. People who participated in such business were commonly thought of as having lost "all sense of honor."<sup>2</sup> Even though it was economically beneficial for the innkeeper, it was not viewed positively by the society.

Oden explores the role of Christian *xenones* and *xenodocheion*, which were administered by *xenodochoi*. By the fifth century, Christian writers started writing against exploiting that office for financial gain. Oden says: "The office of *xenodochos* carried weighty financial responsibilities as well as prestige as *xenodochoi* frequently became bishops."<sup>3</sup> Thus, there were economic benefits related to such an office, as well as prestige that could lead to the highest ranking church office. That could be considered as a political benefit.

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<sup>1</sup> Firebaugh and Lindsay, 65.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>3</sup> Oden, 241.

I would like to conclude this survey of benefits related to hospitality with Shryock's final observations on the hospitality customs of Jordanian Bedouins. He observes "that the serving of coffee is a ritual that creates security for guests and hosts, that defines a set of obligations."<sup>1</sup> The major obligation that the guest takes with him from an encounter of hospitality is reciprocity. Guest is obligated to return the favor on the same or higher level. The problem Shryock deals with is that traditional benefits of hospitality are now replaced with financial benefits.<sup>2</sup> He culminates his exposition by presenting attempts to involve Bedouin girls in selling coffee to tourists and notes that "trading coffee for tourist dollars, would no longer be *karam*. . . . It would be a disgrace."<sup>3</sup> Shryock further explains it:

The "inherent hospitality of Jordanian people," rhetorically situated in homes, is now the target of government and private sector investment. Hospitality is a priceless virtue, yet it pervades the marketplace, where *karam* has been successfully translated into (or symbolically equated with) goods for sale – most of which are related to coffee preparation – just as "the house" has been transformed into one of several sites wherein such buying and selling can take place.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, hospitality that was originally extended for free to everybody is now sold for money, which is a perversion of hospitality in the eyes of local inhabitants. Economic

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<sup>1</sup> Shryock, 47.

<sup>2</sup> My experience in a traditional Moroccan community in Summer 2003 is relevant here. With a group of students from the United States I was brought to a carpet shop where we were first seated and served a cup of tea. After that we heard a speech on Moroccan hospitality and the quality of their carpets. Finally we were supposed to return the favor by purchasing their carpets and thus taking home the best products that Morocco can offer. A cup of tea was intended to obligate us to buy carpets. Here hospitality is commercialized and extended for financial gain.

<sup>3</sup> Shryock, 48.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 38.

interests have changed the way locals practice hospitality. The benefit is money, but traditional values are lost. When money is received for hospitality there is no more reciprocity, since the guest has already reciprocated with money. The guest is not obligated to show hospitality and thus there will be no alteration of host-guest roles. The question is whether hospitality offered for money can still be called hospitality at all, since major elements of traditional hospitality are missing.

Shryock concludes: “Those unprepared to function in zones of display filled with heritage commodities and modernizing agendas (located in houses that are no longer houses) will find themselves banished from one of the only growth sectors in the national economy. More ominous still, they will become obstacles to development that must be removed.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, those holding traditional values of hospitality become obstacles to the modern market economy. Here we have begun to touch upon violations of hospitality. It is good to realize how far removed our modern Western society is from the ancient traditional value of hospitality. Recognizing our distance is the first step in attempting to understand things that might determine hospitality issues in the first century A.D.

Traditional hospitality is not focused on personal gain. Thus, the whole concept of benefits is not the main interest for individuals practicing hospitality. It seems to be even less important for people who practice hospitality with an attitude of subordination observed above in some examples. I would dare to say that only perverted hospitality focuses on personal benefits. Those who concentrate only on benefits can easily violate the custom, especially if they are not satisfied with what they are getting out of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 45.

relationship. Relationships of equality can thus easily become relationships of inequality and slide into patronage or even hostility. I am now going to concentrate on clear examples of violations of hospitality.

### Violations of the Custom of Hospitality

What happens when one side violates obligations resulting from a hospitality relationship? The opposite of hospitality is hostility. Violation of hospitality obligations results in hostility and war. Probably the best example of a violation of hospitality in antiquity is the Trojan War. Ashley says the following in that regard: “There is little doubt that Homer, and possibly a majority of the ethical thinkers of antiquity, looked upon the origins of the conflict simply in terms of a desecration of a sacred band of mutual friendship.”<sup>1</sup>

Thorburn goes in the same direction: “The Trojan War, the backdrop for the *Iliad*, arises out of a violation of guest-friendship as the Trojan Paris abducts Helen, the wife of the Greek Menelaus.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, the Trojan War broke out because of the violation of hospitality obligations. Paris used the hospitality of his host Menelaus for his own purposes. The sacredness of hospitality by Greeks was, among other things, expressed through religious ideas, since Zeus was believed to pour out his wrath upon the transgressors (Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 699-714; 744-749).<sup>3</sup> Thus, people in antiquity

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<sup>1</sup> Ashley, 68.

<sup>2</sup> Thorburn, 776.

<sup>3</sup> Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, trans. Herbert Weir Smyth (Loeb Classical Library); Ashley, 68.



seem to have had a deep sense of obligation toward those with whom they had once entered into a hospitality relationship. Koenig adds that there is

a tradition inherited from the ancient Greek and near-Eastern peoples (and well represented in the Hebrew Bible) concerning a sacred bond between guests and hosts. According to this tradition, which has virtually disappeared from contemporary Western culture, hospitality is seen as one of the pillars of morality upon which the universe stands. When guests or hosts violate their obligations to each other, the whole world shakes and retribution follows.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, if there is a violation of hospitality, hosts and guests enter an unbalanced state, which results in hostility and war.

Gifts play a very important role in the context of violations of hospitality. Not reciprocating for received gifts is a serious violation of the custom. Herman deals with the role of gifts in ritualized friendship relationships, emphasizing that they create a long-term expectancy. "Gifts beg counter-gifts, and fulfill at one and the same time a number of purposes: they repay past services, incur new obligations, and act as continuous reminders of the validity of the bond. Non-reciprocation is in this context frequently interpreted as a relapse into hostility."<sup>2</sup> Zeba A. Crook discusses further the role that gifts play in antiquity:

Gift exchange involves the exchange of goods that are of equal or greater value to the initial gift. . . . If a gift is made, but the receiver is unable to reciprocate with something of equal or greater value, the recipient becomes a client, and the giver becomes a patron, and status difference is either created by the imbalance or inscribed; conversely, if the receiver is able to repay with something of equal or

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<sup>1</sup> Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission*, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 80.

greater value, the status symmetry is inscribed, and the exchange remains that of a gift.<sup>1</sup>

By reciprocating a gift, the guest, when in the role of a host, needs to respond with a gift of greater or equal value. If he does not respond with a gift or if he responds with a gift of lesser value, then they are no longer host and guest, but patron and client.

Further, Herman explains the role of reciprocal gift exchange in aristocratic *xenia* relationships:

The goods acted as a catalyst for the consolidation of the bond. For each one of the partners, being differently situated in the social structure and commanding access to different types of resources, was in a position to supply what the other needed. Thus, modest gifts gave way to large-scale co-operation, and the value of the shared resources became an expression of the degree of confidence between the two men. The outcome was the conversion of an initially moral relationship into an economic partnership in which both parties had a vested interest.<sup>2</sup>

Here we see the importance of reciprocity in aristocratic *xenia* relations.

Exchanges made in that context “were marked by exceedingly long-term credit.”<sup>3</sup>

Herman further explains reciprocity:

Expectations of reciprocity – whether immediate or delayed, whether in goods or in services – were built into almost every single utterance or gesture connected with the institution. . . . In this world favors accepted generated a strong sense of indebtedness, and had to be repaid with even more pressing urgency than monetary debts. There was thus a constant oscillation between giving and receiving, helping and being helped – an oscillation that made for the perpetuation of the bond.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Zeba Crook, “Reflections on Culture and Social-Scientific Models,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, no. 3 (2005): 519.

<sup>2</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 84.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

Thus, this reciprocal relationship was intended to benefit both parties equally. It is easy to imagine how quickly hostility can develop between the parties if one of the parties does not reciprocate as expected.

Herman also discusses *xenoi* being obligated to join their ritualized friends in war activities against their enemies. Providing troops that are ready for battle is one of the modes of gift exchanges. That is why Herman claims: “The attempt to overthrow the Persian throne appears therefore as just another episode in the course of the exchange of benefits between *xenoi*.”<sup>1</sup> Cyrus was able to win the throne since he had enough powerful *xenoi* on his side. Others did not keep their thrones, because they either did not have enough *xenoi* or some of their *xenoi* did not fulfill their obligations.

That which is applicable to relationships between states and battles for the dominion over their territories is also applicable to smaller social units. If, for example, a Christian church at the end of the first century A.D. consisted of two distinguishable groups of *xenoi*, both of which felt obligated to work for the benefit of their group, then a conflict could easily break out when one of the groups entered the domain of interest of the other group.<sup>2</sup>

Pitt-Rivers also explores the importance of reciprocity in hospitality relationships. He believes that hospitality is opposed to hostility and shows how easily hospitality can result in hostility if the law of hospitality regarding reciprocity is not followed.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>2</sup> With that background in mind, the conflict in 3 John can be seen as just another conflict between two opposing groups of *xenoi*. One group could have been gathered around Diotrephes, and another around Gaius whom the Elder chooses as his strategic partner, while expressing his discomfort with Diotrephes.

While the behaviour enjoined by the relationship [between host and guest] is essentially reciprocal, just as gifts are, there is a difference between reciprocal hostility and reciprocal hospitality: the first is simultaneous, the second can never be. Host and guest can at no point *within the context of a single occasion* be allowed to be equal, since equality invites rivalry. Therefore their reciprocity resides, not in an identity, but in an alteration of roles.<sup>1</sup>

Reciprocity happens when a host and guest alter their roles – that is to say, when a host visits his guest's home, and the former guest thus becomes the host. If the guest tries to become equal with his host within a single occasion of hospitality, that invites rivalry and calls for hostility. It is a way of violating the law of hospitality. Pitt-Rivers concludes: "From the moment it loses its character as suppliance, it invites hostility."<sup>2</sup>

The equality of host and guest resides in their alteration of roles. But how can equality switch to inequality and what are the results? Herman tells us that relative status might be altered in the

course of the interaction. If initially it had been a relationship of equality, in the course of time it could have shaded off into a relationship in which one partner attained a position of strength, the other a position of weakness. In other words, a horizontal tie linking together social equals may have been transformed into a vertical patron-client bond. Goods then would tend to be repaid by services, protection by loyalty, and willing co-operation turned into coercive dependence.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, inequality or unbalanced reciprocity in hospitality exchanges is damaging for the relationship of host and guest and leads into a patron-client relation of dependency.

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<sup>1</sup> Pitt-Rivers, "The Law of Hospitality," 102.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 39.

Pitt-Rivers further explores the ways in which the law of hospitality, which derives from sociological necessity, can be broken by a guest and by a host. A guest can infringe upon the law of hospitality in various ways:<sup>1</sup>

1. If he insults his host or by any show of hostility or rivalry - he must honour his host.
2. If he usurps the role of the host – he cannot demand.
3. If he refuses what is offered – failure to know what should be taken for granted can amount to insult.

The host can also infringe upon the law of hospitality in different ways:<sup>2</sup>

1. If he insults his guest or by any show of hostility or rivalry – he must honour the guest.
2. If he fails to protect his guest or the honour of his guest.
3. If he fails to attend to his guest – failure to offer the best is to denigrate the guest.

As we can see, hospitality may result in hostility if a guest fails to stay within his role, but the same can happen if a host fails to fulfill his role. Both must stay within the boundaries of their roles and fulfill the obligations, as well as the expectations, required by their roles. Otherwise hostility is the outcome.

Any infringement of the code of hospitality destroys the structure of roles, since it implies an incorporation which has not in fact taken place; failure to return honour or avoid disrespect entitles the person slighted in this way to relinquish his role and revert to the hostility which it suppressed. Once they are no longer host and guest

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<sup>1</sup> Pitt-Rivers, "The Law of Hospitality," 109.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 110.

they are enemies, not strangers. Enemies *do* compete and it requires at least a tacit test of strength to determine which is the better man who will remain in possession of the field while the other takes his distance.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of hostility, a guest is no longer a stranger, but an enemy. There is no middle position. A stranger can become either a close friend or a hated enemy. If he is an enemy, then he must be dealt with in a hostile way, be removed from the community, and if necessary even be killed.

Peter Walcot deals with the law of reciprocity. He believes that “when insulted or injured the man of honour must retaliate in at least equal measure if his personal prestige is to be upheld.”<sup>2</sup> It is important to guard one’s own honor. Walcot explores Hesiod’s writings, in order to explain how retaliation works in regard to honor:

Two wrongs definitely add up to a “right” if the rules of the honour code are observed. Honour, moreover, is reckoned to be a “commodity” and measurable; it is in short supply; and if someone else has honour, it is at your expense and you resent it and try to cut that person down to size by the application of different ranking criteria: if he is powerful or wealthy, then you attack his family background or accuse him of being morally suspect.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, honor is guarded and defended by any means. If somebody’s honor is damaged, that is considered to be a hostile act, which calls for a response in order to protect honor. Obviously, in that case, hostility is developed instead of hospitality, which can even result in murder, depending on the weight of the insult.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Walcot, “Honour and Shame – Ancient,” in *Encyclopedia of Greece and the Hellenic Tradition*, ed. Graham Speake (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2000), 773.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Gabriel Herman explores Aristotle's writings in order to determine why friends often sharply disagree, as opposed to *xenoi*, who usually do not engage in sharp discussions:

When Aristotle suggested that friendship between aliens, *xenia*, was the firmest of *philiai*, it was this aspect of separateness that seemed to him to be critical. In an attempt to rationalize what probably circulated as a popular proverb, he observed that *xenoi*, unlike *philoï*, have no common object for which they dispute with one another. Friends, on the other hand, who are at the same time each other's fellow-citizens, compete for superiority and engage in violent dispute. As a result, he adds gloomily, they cease to be friends.<sup>1</sup>

Thus physical distance, or separateness, contributes to the long-lasting friendship between *xenoi*. Since they live in different social units, they are not each other's contestants. Thus, they do not have a common thing to combat for and their friendship is not burdened with a spirit of competition. *Xenoi* could not appeal to civic authorities in order to bring social pressure on one another. "Operating outside of the framework of social order which fettered the citizen, ritualised friends could not rely on appeals to external authority."<sup>2</sup> Thus all they had to rely on was moral obligation, which guarantees that *xenoi* would act as expected. That moral obligation could easily be violated.

Shryock explores what violations can occur when hospitality leaves the boundaries of a private house and becomes nationalized and public:

The stagecraft of *karam* [hospitality], to be convincing, must create spaces in which acceptance is bestowed in a context of vulnerability. The house, the guest, the host: all have limits that can be transgressed. Their sanctity is insured by the threat of violation. If damage (and honor) can be done to hosts by "poets" who eagerly report on the quality of hospitality they received, then we should expect problems of

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<sup>1</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 30. See Aristotle's *Magna Moralia* 2.1211a.46.

<sup>2</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 31.

welcome and trespass to provoke new forms of anxiety when hospitality is nationalized and rendered public in unprecedented ways.<sup>1</sup>

Shryock is here exploring developments in the modern state of Jordan, where hospitality has become an attraction that brings tourists. The local Jordanians see it as breaking into the sacredness of the house, which was never supposed to be publicly displayed. For them, it is a violation of hospitality, since selling hospitality for money violates basic principles on which their society is set up. Shryock further explains the issues involved: “The guests cannot pay for hospitality shown in these ‘normal’ settings; it is a gift of the Maussian sort, and it is properly repaid in kind. If one gives cash for it – as tourists in Wadi Rum pay their Bedouin hosts to escort, feed, sing, and dance for them – this is business, not hospitality, and these exchanges are spoken of, by all tribespeople with whom I have discussed them, as dirty work akin to prostitution.”<sup>2</sup>

What we see here is degradation of hospitality to the level which is embarrassing for tribespeople. Even though extending hospitality for money is common in our western culture, Jordanians do not see money-making hospitality as hospitality in its original sense. Shryock believes that Jordanian hospitality “has been systematically reconfigured as ‘part of Jordan’s past’ and translated into a commercial inventory of ‘duty free,’ ‘non-binding’ signs: objects that circulate in exchange for money without creating, as rites of hospitality are meant to do, obligations of mutual defense and respect.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, new Jordanian hospitality, which is imported from the Western world, does not create any

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<sup>1</sup> Shryock, 37.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 43.



lasting obligations between guests and hosts and is not based on future reciprocity. It seems that hospitality in a Western sense lacks some of the major elements of ancient hospitality.<sup>1</sup> Among Jordanian tribespeople we see hospitality in its original sense as is found in ancient Greek sources. It seems that our Western ideas of hospitality are too far removed from the concepts of hospitality followed by the people of the first century A.D. They would probably see our understanding of hospitality as a serious violation and abuse of the custom.

Finally, Herzfeld has done some research on the issue of hospitality in modern-day Greece. He observes that Greek people today are oriented toward offering Western tourists hospitality for money rather than showing them ancient hospitality. So, he asks whether hospitality is possible under the conditions of commercialization. He concludes: "Greek hospitality, with its echoes of antiquity, has become a commodity."<sup>2</sup> Thus, modern Greeks of today seem to have lost the ideal hospitality of the heroic age. It is a major degradation and violation of the ancient custom of hospitality.

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<sup>1</sup> In the Mediterranean country of Croatia, my home country, private hospitality is extended for free. I remember a German friend of mine who came with his wife down south to visit my family in a small town on the Adriatic coast in Croatia. After spending a night in our house he asked me how much he owed us for the accommodation. It would be embarrassing for the locals to accept money for private hospitality. It would be a violation of the customs of hospitality. On the other hand, some locals in the same town have transformed their homes into apartments for renting out and earn money from tourists who seek accommodations. It is a collision between traditional values and new market economy values imported from the Western world, shaking the foundations of local society.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Herzfeld, "'As in Your Own House': Hospitality, Ethnography, and the Stereotype of Mediterranean Society," in *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, ed. D. David Gilmore (Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 1987), 83.

In conclusion we can say that there are many different ways to violate the traditional ancient custom of hospitality. The simplest way to do so is for parties to look exclusively for their own benefits. Related to that is not reciprocating on a similar level for benefits received earlier. Such an attitude leads to hostility and war. Further, it is possible to convert hospitality into a money-making business, which is again a major violation of the custom, because it does not involve an obligation to balanced reciprocity and the alternation of host-guest roles. Emphasis on personal gain in the context of hospitality usually leads to violation.

### Summary and Conclusions to Ancient Hospitality

This review of scholarly literature dealing with the concept of ancient hospitality first discussed the origin and development of the custom. We have seen that many authors dealing with the topic subscribe consciously or unconsciously to an evolutionistic view of hospitality, which sees its origin in human fear or xenophobia.<sup>1</sup> That hypothesis asserts that people were first hostile to each other, while in later stages of development they started being hospitable because of personal interests of various kinds. Bolchazy proposed seven stages of hospitality, starting with xenophobia, which lessens throughout the stages, while hospitality increases. He believes that hospitality is the decisive mark of civilization.

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<sup>1</sup> A strong proponent of that theory among NT theologians is Stählin. Since he has written an article on that issue in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, he has influenced the majority of subsequent New Testament theologians, who seem to have uncritically adopted his views.

However, I have identified a number of social and historical issues that point to an opposite development. Most authors would agree that the heroic age of Greece testifies of an envying hospitality. After the heroic age we have observed a degradation of hospitality in the time of the Greek city-states.<sup>1</sup> In Roman times hospitality lessened even more, and it seems that modern trends such as globalization, industrialization, and market economy are able to destroy the last remnants of the noble custom of ancient hospitality.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it seems that the evolutionistic view of hospitality with its xenophobic roots in the past and culmination of hospitable behavior in modern cultures needs to be replaced with an opposite view, which would account for constant degradation of the custom, with a culmination of that degradation in our own days. It seems that our own culture is not devoid of xenophobia and that xenophobic behavior is intensified in our age. Finally, the very word *xenophobia* seems to be a modern invention, which did not exist in ancient vocabulary.

I continued with an overview of definitions of hospitality. We have seen in various examples that hospitality always requires balanced reciprocity. That is why I am hesitant to agree that hospitality exclusively deals with strangers. While strangers are necessarily a significant part of ancient hospitality, there is obligation to balanced reciprocity and alteration of host-guest roles in the future. The very term *xenos* points to a reciprocal relationship, since it can be used for both host and guest. To limit hospitality

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<sup>1</sup> That point was especially emphasized by Gabriel Herman with his work on “Ritualised Friendship” in Greek cities.

<sup>2</sup> This point is especially emphasized by Andrew Shryock in his work on modern-day Jordanian hospitality.

only to strangers would mean to neglect its reciprocal nature with all the obligations that result from the initial encounter of strangers. There are diverse aspects of hospitality and it would be difficult to fit them all into a short and simple definition of hospitality. The following definition contains aspects which are in my view indispensable for a traditional hospitality encounter: Hospitality is a host-guest relationship between non-kin individuals, who differentially alternate their roles by practicing balanced reciprocity, which brings them into a state of equality.

I next dealt with a procedure in an encounter of hospitality. There are typical elements of ancient hospitality: Welcoming of the guest, seating of the guest inside the dwelling, a feast, questioning of the guest about his identity and business, a bath, overnight lodging, gifts for the guest, and a possible escort to the guest's next destination. The guest was supposed to receive the best place in the dwelling, the best food, and an entirely pleasant experience. Upon his departure the guest would receive gifts from the host. These gifts were intended to seal their friendship and to obligate the guest for future reciprocal hospitality.

The benefits of hospitality were also discussed. A guest receives food, accommodation, and protection in a community that is not his own. A host, on the other hand, benefits from the reciprocal nature of hospitality, since he will one day enjoy the hospitality of his guest when he enters his territory. Additionally, the host's honor is increased by the guest's positive reports about his gracious hospitality. These reports reach back to the host's own community and contribute to his own honor.

Originally ancient hospitality seems to have been unselfish in nature, but we observe in its development some political, financial, and personal benefits, which were aspired by the parties involved. Traditional hospitality does not focus on personal gain. I

would dare to say that only perverted hospitality focuses exclusively on benefits. Those who concentrate on benefits can easily violate the custom, especially if they are not satisfied with what they receive from the relationship.

Since benefits and violations are so closely related in hospitality encounters, I next focused on violations of the custom. Violation happens whenever parties involved pursue only their own personal gain through the relationships. Not reciprocating on a similar or higher level for the gifts and services received leads the two parties into hostility and war. They are no longer friends, but enemies to be destroyed.

We have observed a further violation of the custom of hospitality when modern market economy encounters traditional societies, which start selling their hospitality as a commodity for money. Ancient hospitality was originally given out deferentially for free. Receiving money for hospitality cancels the obligation to balanced reciprocity and the alteration of host-guest roles in the future. Trying to sell hospitality for money is a major violation of the custom, though it has become a regularity in modern western societies. In this dissertation I seek to identify the violations of the custom of hospitality which happened in the context of 3 John.

### **Words for Hospitality in 3 John**

After this exploration of hospitality in antiquity we are ready to unpack the issue of hospitality in 3 John. The third epistle of John introduces three different verbs for hospitality used at the center of the letter's chiasm. Verse 7 uses the verb λαμβάνω, which is a very general way of referring to a hospitable behavior. Verse 8 introduces the verb ὑπολαμβάνω, which is the only appearance of that word in the context of hospitality in the

NT.<sup>1</sup> Verses 9 and 10 include the only two occurrences of the verb ἐπιδέχομαι in the NT. The fact that the first word is so general, while the other two words are so specific that they represent their only occurrences in the NT, is not very helpful in our attempts to understand the author's usage of these words. In what follows I am differentiating between the nuances in the meaning of the three words. I deal first with λαμβάνω, then with ὑπολαμβάνω, and finally with ἐπιδέχομαι.

### Λαμβάνω

The verb λαμβάνω has various meanings and a wide usage. In 3 John 7 it is used to describe the non-welcoming attitude of the pagans towards the itinerant missionaries. The verse might be translated as follows: "For they went out for the sake of the Name, receiving nothing from the pagans." What kind of "receiving" does the writer have in mind here? If it is in reference to the preceding verse (vs. 6), then it could be about not receiving the material goods necessary to equip them for their continuing journey. If it alludes to the verses that follow, then it would incorporate hospitality in the home. It is probably a general reference to "receiving," which could go both ways and refers in general terms to hospitable behavior.

Use of the verb λαμβάνω in the context of hospitality is found elsewhere in the Johannine writings: John 1:12; 5:43; 6:21; 13:20; 19:27; 2 John 10. The last two examples explicitly involve receiving somebody into a house. It seems that in Johannine

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<sup>1</sup> The other four appearances of the verb ὑπολαμβάνω in the NT appear in different contexts. In Luke 7:43 and 10:30, and in Acts 2:15, it means "suppose" or "think," while in Acts 1:9 it means "take away."

writing, the verb λαμβάνω is used on a number of occasions to express hospitable behavior.

Ὑπολαμβάνω

Verse 8 of 3 John introduces the next verb for hospitable behavior. It consists of the preposition ὑπό and the verb λαμβάνω. BDAG translates the word ὑπολαμβάνω as “to take someone under one’s care,” “receive as a guest,” or “support.”<sup>1</sup> In the context of hospitality recommended in vs. 8, the simplest translation of ὑπολαμβάνω seems to be “support.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, vs. 8 might be translated as: “Therefore, we ought to support such people, so that we might become coworkers with the truth.” What kind of support is this? The general sense of “receiving,” which the word λαμβάνω suggests, might be implied. Yet, what quality does the preposition ὑπό bring to the verb λαμβάνω?

Moule believes that “prepositions compounded with verbs tend to retain their original adverbial nature.”<sup>3</sup> The preposition ὑπό means “by” with the genitive, and “under” with the accusative, denoting the agent of an action.<sup>4</sup> The translation “under” has

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Bauer and others, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 1038. Hereafter cited as BDAG.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the translations offered by Liddell and Scott are to “take up by getting under,” “bear up,” “support,” and “receive.” Henry George Liddell and others, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (New York/Oxford: Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1996), 1886-1887. Hereafter cited as LS.

<sup>3</sup> C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 87.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

in view a linear motion to being beneath (e.g., “put it under”).<sup>1</sup> Wallace believes that ὑπὸ with the accusative may be understood spatially, expressing the idea of subordination.<sup>2</sup> With that information in mind, we might wonder what support for the itinerant missionaries should look like when combined with the idea of subordination. Is the host supposed to subordinate the travelers under him as patrons would do, or is he, as the host, supposed to put himself into a subordinate position to the travelers? Even though hosts are in a position regularly occupied by patrons in antiquity, they are called by the verb ὑπολαμβάνω to subordinate themselves “under” their visitors, in order to serve their needs. Examples of ὑπολαμβάνω in ancient Greek literature should help to explain this view.

Herodotus speaks of a dolphin which “took Arion on his back.”<sup>3</sup> The dolphin “takes on his back” or “receives on his back” and is thus in a subordinate position. In 3 John, Gaius is supposed to “receive the itinerants on his back,” to “bear them up,” to serve and support them.

In his *Against Apion*, Josephus refers to an Egyptian ruler king who went with his army to his Ethiopian vassal king in order to find support. “The latter made him welcome and maintained the whole multitude.”<sup>4</sup> Here we find a vassal king “taking on his back” or

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Wallace, 389.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, *Herodotus*, trans. A. D. Godley (Loeb Classical Library), 1.24. He uses the participle ὑπολαμβάνοντα. A similar example is found in Plato, *Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey (Loeb Classical Library), 5.453D. He uses the infinitive form ὑπολαβεῖν.

<sup>4</sup> Josephus, *Against Apion*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray (Loeb Classical Library), 1.247. He uses the form ὑπολαβών.



“supporting” the entire army of Egypt. His support is offered with an attitude of subordination, since that is what is expected from a vassal king. In 3 John, Gaius is not a vassal to anybody, but is still called to show a Christian attitude of subordination. Thus, it seems that ὑπολαμβάνω may carry with it the idea of service done with an attitude of subordination.

Another example involving an element of subordination is found in the book of Wisdom 12:24. “For they went far astray on the paths of error, accepting as gods those animals that even their enemies despised; they were deceived like foolish infants.” For the English word “accepting,” the Greek originally uses a present participle of ὑπολαμβάνω.<sup>1</sup> They have accepted those gods, or they have subordinated themselves “under” them. Here the idea of subordination is also present.

In 3 John hospitality with an attitude of subordination is expected from Gaius in regard to the itinerants. All of 3 John is a call to service toward itinerant missionaries. Gaius is praised for his works of service in the past, and he is encouraged to continue them in the future. In that sense, ὑπολαμβάνω not only expresses “support” for itinerant missionaries, but also the host’s subordination while extending hospitality to the itinerants. Thus, the host is “taking his guests on his back” or “bearing them up” while serving them. That does not mean that he is socially inferior to his guests, but that he is ready to show a Christian attitude of subordination while serving. Since the verb ὑπολαμβάνω stands in the chiastic center of the epistle, the idea of subordination while serving should have a bearing on the entire letter.

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<sup>1</sup> The form used is ὑπολαμβάνοντες.

## Ἐπιδέχομαι

3 John 9 and 10 introduce the third verb for hospitality: ἐπιδέχομαι. That verb appears in the NT exclusively in 3 John, even though it is attested throughout antiquity. Some of the meanings suggested for ἐπιδέχομαι by LS are “admit in addition,” “receive besides,” “welcome,” and “take on oneself.”<sup>1</sup> BDAG translates ἐπιδέχομαι as “to receive into one’s presence in a friendly manner.”<sup>2</sup>

This verb again expresses hospitable behavior. The verb ἐπιδέχομαι is a compound of the preposition ἐπὶ and the verb δέχομαι. What is expressed with the preposition ἐπὶ? Moule believes that ἐπὶ combined with verbs tends “to retain some trace of its prepositional, directional sense.”<sup>3</sup> With the genitive it primarily designates position (Mark 2:10; 4:26) – “on” or “upon.”<sup>4</sup> Wallace argues that, with all three cases in which ἐπὶ occurs – genitive, dative, and accusative – it always has a spatial meaning.<sup>5</sup> The most frequent spatial or directional meaning in all three cases is “on” or “upon.”<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, the verb δέχομαι by itself can be used to express hospitable behavior. BDAG translates it as “to be receptive of someone,” or to “receive as a guest.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> LS, 630.

<sup>2</sup> BDAG, 370.

<sup>3</sup> Moule, 88.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>5</sup> Wallace, 376.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 221. Some of the meanings for δέχομαι suggested by LS are “welcome,” “admit,” “entertain,” “receive,” and “take upon oneself.” LS, 382.

Kittel's TDNT presents an entire series of LXX passages in which "δέχομαι and its composites have the sense of 'accepting a burden.'" <sup>1</sup> Could it be that the writer of 3 John was influenced by the LXX's usage of δέχομαι?

What quality would ἐπὶ bring to δέχομαι if we work with the meaning "accepting a burden," as widely used in LXX? In this case, it would seem that ἐπιδέχομαι concerns "somebody's acceptance of a burden on himself." <sup>2</sup> That is very close in meaning to LS's translation for ἐπιδέχομαι, presented above as "take on oneself." That would express the idea of service. The host assumes a serving position by "taking guests on himself."

A number of ancient sources support this understanding of ἐπιδέχομαι. In *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* mention is made of a service that some stone cutters from Oxyrhynchus took on themselves. "We undertake to cut the squared building stones." <sup>3</sup> They are "undertaking" or "taking upon themselves" that service and produce stones for certain wages that are described in the text.

In 2 Macc 2:26 the writer speaks of "undertaking" the toil of abbreviating the written history of Judas Maccabeus. <sup>4</sup> It is a service "taken upon themselves" so that the future generations may have a condensed historical work in their hands. Similarly,

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Grundmann, "Δεχομαι," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 50-51. Some of the examples quoted are Zeph 3:7; Jer 2:30; 5:3; 9:20; Deut 33:3.

<sup>2</sup> TDNT states that composites of δέχομαι also have the sense of "accepting a burden." The example of that meaning given for ἐπιδέχομαι is found in Sir 51:26. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, trans. Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt (London: Egypt Exploration Fund), 498.6. The form used in the text is ἐπιδεχόμεθα.

<sup>4</sup> The form used in the text is ἐπιδεδεγμένοις – participle perfect middle.

Polybius points to Messenians who would not “undertake” a war under current circumstances.<sup>1</sup> They are not “taking upon themselves the burden of war” and “do not want to serve in war.” Thus, the word ἐπιδέχομαι includes the idea of service, which is done by “taking it upon oneself.”<sup>2</sup>

The examples above are about “accepting” things,<sup>3</sup> but there are examples of “accepting” people, as can be seen in the next couple of examples from 1 Maccabees. Alexander Epiphanes, who occupied Ptolemais in the year 160 B.C., is introduced in 1 Macc 10:1: “They welcomed him and there he began to reign.”<sup>4</sup> In this example it is apparent that the welcome of the citizens of Ptolemais included their service done in subordination to the ruler king.<sup>5</sup>

In 1 Macc 10:46, the high priest Jonathan and his people receive words from their former ruler king, Demetrius. The verse says, “They did not believe or accept them,” indicating that they refused to be subordinate again to the rule of Demetrius. Non-acceptance is here understood in the sense of non-subordination.

<sup>1</sup> Polybius, *Histories*, 4.31.1. The form used is ἐπιδέξαντο.

<sup>2</sup> A similar idea is expressed in 3 Macc 6:26. Mitchell, “‘Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us’: The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10,” 312\*.

<sup>3</sup> Mitchell distinguishes between receiving a person and receiving a thing. Ibid., 303. I am not sure why she argues for such a sharp distinction, since the sense of meaning implied in a specific term for a thing may also be implied when using the same term for people. Translating it in the same sense in either instance would be in agreement with Mitchell’s insistence on translating both occurrences of ἐπιδέχομαι in 3 John 9 (for the letter) and 10 (for the people) in the same way. Ibid., 317.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Macc 10:1 uses the form ἐπεδέξαντο. All the examples from 1 Macc 10 and 12 use that form.

<sup>5</sup> A similar idea is expressed in 2 Macc 12:4. The form used there is ἐπιδεξαμένων.

In 1 Macc 12:6-18 we encounter the letter written by the high priest Jonathan to the Spartans. He is looking for allies to strengthen the position of the Jews. In vs. 8 he writes that they have “welcomed the envoys” of the Spartans with honor. The relationship between the Jews and the Spartans might be described as one between a vassal king and the ruler king, since Jews seek to be rescued. Thus, “welcoming” here also carries the idea of subordination.<sup>1</sup>

In 1 Macc 12:43 the reception that the high priest Jonathan experienced from Trypho is mentioned: “So he received him with honor and commended him to all his friends, and he gave him gifts and commanded his friends and his troops to obey him as they would himself.” From the previous verses we learn that Trypho had planned to kill Jonathan in order not to feel threatened by him. But Jonathan arrived with a big army. So Trypho is compelled to be friendly and to subordinate himself in a sense to Jonathan. Trypho offers Jonathan gifts and gives him command over his army. It seems that all these examples of ἐπιδέχομαι from 1 Maccabees include the idea of service through subordination.

Two more examples of ἐπιδέχομαι appear in Sirach. In Sirach 50:21, the author speaks of bowing down in order to receive the blessing of the Most High. The position of subordination is explicitly stated as the only way to receive the blessing. For the word “receive” we have the infinitive aorist of ἐπιδέχομαι. Sirach 51:26 says, “Put your neck under her yoke, and let your souls receive instruction.” Again, a position of subordination is commanded and it is intensified with the picture of a yoke.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A similar idea is present in 1 Macc 14:23. The form used there is ἐπιδέξασθαι.

<sup>2</sup> The form used in the text is ἐπιδεξάσθω (imperative aorist).

Finally, Mitchell offers a couple of examples from Polybius.<sup>1</sup> The most striking one involves the people of Dalmatia, who are not accepting the delegates of the Roman senate.<sup>2</sup> The Dalmatians are here refusing to “accept” and be “subordinate” to the Romans.<sup>3</sup> Yet, there are examples of the word ἐπιδέχομαι that do not seem to involve the element of subordination. Mitchell presents such an example from Polybius in which the Roman senate “receives” the word from the envoys of Philip.<sup>4</sup> In this case, the senate is probably not subordinating itself in any way in order to serve. The senate is there to serve the needs of the people, but we would assume that their service is not expected to be offered with a subordinate spirit.<sup>5</sup> Thus, ἐπιδέχομαι, while involving the element of service, does not always put an emphasis on the element of subordination.

In the context of 3 John, ἐπιδέχομαι means “taking the itinerant missionaries on oneself” in order to provide a service of hospitality.<sup>6</sup> Diotrephes does not want to extend such a service of hospitality, and he prevents those who are willing to serve. The idea of “service” in vss. 9 and 10 may include an element of subordination. We have already

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell, “‘Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us’: The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10,” 313. References to the majority of the examples presented above are from Liddell-Scott’s lexicon, and some are from Walter Bauer’s fifth edition of his lexicon. A couple of examples I have found myself with the help of TLG.

<sup>2</sup> Polybius, *Histories*, 32.13.1-2.

<sup>3</sup> The form used in the text is ἐπιδέχονται.

<sup>4</sup> Polybius, *Histories*, 23.3.1-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.18.2-3.

<sup>6</sup> That translation is closest to the LS’s translation for ἐπιδέχομαι, “taking on oneself.” LS, 630.

observed that element in vs. 8 while discussing the meaning of ὑπολαμβάνω. It would not be strange to find the same element present in the following verses and expressed with ἐπιδέχομαι, since the above examples allow for such a meaning.

### **Summary and Conclusion to Hospitality in 3 John**

The three verbs used for hospitality in 3 John have been investigated. The verb λαμβάνω points in a general sense toward hospitable behavior. The central expression, ὑπολαμβάνω, involves the idea of subordination while extending the service of hospitality. The centrality of ὑπολαμβάνω in vs. 8 is emphasized by what surrounds it in vss. 7, 9, and 10. The surrounding verbs expressing hospitality are actually references to non-receiving. Thus, ὑπολαμβάνω is the only positive verb used for hospitality in the epistle, and its place in the middle of the chiasm helps to point to its centrality. Finally, ἐπιδέχομαι points to the idea of service by “taking on oneself” and may involve an element of subordination as well.

The central idea of 3 John seems to be found in the idea of hospitality as a service of subordination toward itinerant missionaries. Subordination in this context does not mean that a person is inferior or of a socially lower status; on the contrary, even if he is of a socially equal or higher status than the guest, the host accepts a position of subordination in order to serve the guest.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The writer of the Gospel of John emphasizes the same message in the context of footwashing (John 13:12-17). Further, the author of First Clement is praising the submissive behavior of the Corinthians in 1. Clement 2:1 with following words: “Moreover, you were all humble and free from arrogance, submitting rather than demanding submission, more glad to give than to receive, and content with provisions which God supplies.” The Corinthians are also praised for “the magnificent character of your hospitality” (1. Clement 1:2). The word used here for hospitality is φιλοξενία, and the word for submission is ὑποτάσσω. It is interesting that these two concepts appear

In 3 John it is a service of subordination while extending hospitality that is expected from Gaius in regard to the itinerants. Diotrephes was probably expected to offer such a service of subordination to the itinerants, but instead he exercised power, expelled them and their hosts from the church, and prevented others who were willing to serve them. It is a major violation of the custom of hospitality. The writer of 3 John praises Gaius for his hospitable service of subordination in the past (verse 5) and encourages him to continue even more so in the future (verse 6).<sup>1</sup>

### Model of Hospitality in 3 John

After having presented the concept of hospitality in the ancient world, and after exploring issues of hospitality in 3 John, I am now concluding with a model of hospitality relevant to the circumstances of 3 John:<sup>2</sup>

1. Hospitality is a **host-guest** relationship.<sup>3</sup>
2. Hospitality presupposes host-guest **role reversals** by future encounters.
3. Hospitality is a reciprocal relationship providing **similar benefits and obligations** for both parties.
4. Hospitality is a balanced type of exchange relationship, in which two parties become **equal**, even if they do not belong exactly to the same social stratum.

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together in this early Christian writing. In NT Paul advises submission in the context of local churches in 1 Cor 16:16 and Eph 5:21.

<sup>1</sup> See my discussion on Gaius above in chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> For an updated model of hospitality after the final conclusions of this dissertation, see Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek language uses the term ξένος for both host and guest.



5. Hospitality is based on ethical and religious motivation – 3 John presents it as a **service of subordination** to others.

6. Hospitality puts an emphasis on **deference** toward the other person.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Øystein S. LaBianca for pointing my attention to “deference” as the best term for what I am trying to say here.

## CHAPTER 5

### PATRONAGE

This chapter deals with patronage<sup>1</sup> as the main expression of power in the context of the third epistle of John. Consequently, I am dealing with power which is expressed in social relations. Pilch defines power as “the ability to exercise control over the behavior of others.”<sup>2</sup> Diotrephes seems to have been exercising a certain amount of power in the community of 3 John.<sup>3</sup> According to vs. 9, he does not receive the Elder and those sent by him. He also prevents those who are willing to receive them and throws them out of the church (vs. 10). Who but a powerful patron could socially be in a position to do such things in the first-century world?<sup>4</sup> Campbell explains the role of patrons in the early church:

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<sup>1</sup> I need to thank my former professor from Theologische Hochschule Friedensau (Germany), Dr. Bernhard Oestreich, for being the first person to point my attention to the role of patrons, long before I became convinced that patronage is an important subject in the context of 3 John.

<sup>2</sup> John J. Pilch, “Power,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, ed. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 158.

<sup>3</sup> Malherbe, “Inhospitability of Diotrephes,” 228.

<sup>4</sup> Nancy Vyhmeister assumes a general presence of patrons in early Christian communities, and proves it with the example of the Epistle of James. Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, “The Rich Man in James 2: Does Ancient Patronage Illuminate the Text?,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 33, no. 2 (1995): 272-273.

So long as the local church was confined to one household, the household provided the leadership of the church. The church in the house came with its leadership so to speak “built-in”. The church that met in someone’s house met under that person’s presidency. The householder was *ex hypothesi* a person of standing, a patron of others, and the space where the church met was his space, in which he was accustomed to the obedience of slaves and the deference of his wife and children. Those who came into it will have been to a large extent constrained by the norms of hospitality to treat the host as master of ceremonies, especially if he was a person of greater social standing or age than themselves. The table moreover was his table, and if any prayers were to be said, or bread or wine offered, the part was naturally his to play.<sup>1</sup>

If Diotrephes was a wealthy patron in whose house the church of 3 John was meeting, then he could have had enough power to prevent access to the church by whomever he disliked.<sup>2</sup> This is probably the simplest social explanation for all the expelling he did. Even if the church was not meeting in his house, as a known patron in that area he could have had some influence on other households and might have been an important spokesperson at the place where that local church was meeting.

It seems that patronage is the major expression of power relevant to 3 John.<sup>3</sup> Thus, if we want to know more about social dynamics and expressions of social power in the community of 3 John, we need to understand the concept of ancient patronage as thoroughly as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, *The Elder: Seniority within Earliest Christianity*, 126. Similar ideas are expressed by Ernst Dassmann, “Hausgemeinde und Bischofsamt,” in *Vivarium: Festschrift Theodor Klauser zum 90. Geburtstag*, ed. Theodor Klauser (Münster: Aschendorff, 1984), 90. Lampe similarly describes the role of the hosts in early Christian house churches. Lampe, 316-317.

<sup>2</sup> Klauck argues for Diotrephes being a home owner in whose house the church described in 3 John would meet. Klauck, *Der Zweite und Dritte Johannesbrief*, 104.

<sup>3</sup> Campbell believes that “Diotrephes, and even Gaius and Demetrius, are household leaders” or patrons. Campbell, *The Elder: Seniority within Earliest Christianity*, 208.

Just as in the chapter dealing with hospitality, I am here primarily interested in social circumstances of the first century A.D. in Asia Minor, but I also introduce anthropological and social research from other areas and times. Modern examples only add to the ancient evidence and provide insights that might otherwise have been missed.<sup>1</sup> I am only using such examples that seem to have preserved ancient values, and there are people and cultures in the Mediterranean area that still treasure them. This chapter first concentrates on understanding ancient patronage, then applies the findings to 3 John, and finally ends with a model of patronage relevant for the third epistle of John.

### **Understanding Ancient Patronage**

I begin my exploration of patronage with the question of its origin and development. This is followed by the definition and description of patronage, benefits of patronage for the patron and client, violation of patronage, and summary and conclusions about ancient patronage. This review of scholarly literature dealing with patronage is the starting position as I address patronal issues in 3 John in the second part of this chapter.

### **Origin and Development of Patronage**

Just as with the chapter on hospitality, before exploring definitions of patronage I first present a survey of its origin and development. Historically speaking, patronal relations developed as soon as somebody needed to depend on somebody else for certain goods or services without being able to reciprocate on the same or a similar level for the

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<sup>1</sup> In the preface to his major work, Malina argues for “continuity between the Mediterranean world of today and that of the first-century A.D.” Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, xii.

received benefits. Blau argues that social exchange “tends to give rise to differentiation of status and power.”<sup>1</sup> He further explains: “A person who commands services others need, and who is independent of any at their command, attains power over others by making the satisfaction of their need contingent on their compliance.”<sup>2</sup> So, social power is concentrated in services needed by others.

I have argued in the previous chapter that hospitality is the first and original human attitude, with fear and estrangement developing at later stages. If that is correct, then hospitality precedes patronage. Crook describes the process by which friendship turns into patronage: “If a gift is made, but the receiver is unable to reciprocate with something of equal or greater value, the recipient becomes a client, and the giver becomes a patron, and status difference is either created by the imbalance or inscribed.”<sup>3</sup> Joubert similarly describes the unbalanced exchange process: “In the *agonistic contest of gift-giving*, which often characterise social interaction in clan-based societies, the person who cannot match the gifts bestowed upon him/her, becomes obligated to the giver, thus losing his/her own prestige, rank, authority, and privileges to his/her benefactor.”<sup>4</sup>

Wolf also describes the process by which friendship turns into patronage: “When instrumental friendship reaches a maximum point of imbalance so that one partner is clearly superior to the other in his capacity to grant goods and services, we approach the

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<sup>1</sup> M. Peter Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>3</sup> Crook, 519.

<sup>4</sup> Stephan J. Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 22.

critical point where friendships give way to the patron-client tie.”<sup>1</sup> Herman presents the same process:

However, relative status might alter in the course of the interaction. If initially it had been a relationship of equality, in the course of time it could have shaded off into a relationship in which one partner attained a position of strength, the other a position of weakness. In other words, a horizontal tie linking together social equals may have been transformed into a vertical patron-client bond. Goods then would tend to be repaid by services, protection by loyalty, and willing co-operation turned into coercive dependence.<sup>2</sup>

Seen that way, patronal relations should have developed early in human history as soon as imbalance in exchange occurred. Such relations must have existed throughout human history and they are present today as well, as we will see later.

The term “patronage” is derived from the Greek and Latin terms for “father” (Gr. πατήρ; La. pater). Paul Millet reports that “the Greek material is almost entirely devoid of a terminology of patronage.”<sup>3</sup> He refers to Gabriel Herman who claims that “the Greek language did not give rise to a pair of hierarchical status designations analogous to the Roman *patronus-clients*.”<sup>4</sup> Herman further says that the Greek writer “Polybius, trying to interpret for his Greek public what the Romans would have called *patroni* or *clientes*, could not find a more suitable term than *philoï*.”<sup>5</sup> Calling both patrons and clients simply

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<sup>1</sup> Eric R. Wolf, “Kinship, Friendship, and Patron-Client Relations in Complex Societies,” in *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies*, ed. M. Banton (London: A. S. A. Monographs, 1966), 16.

<sup>2</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 39.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Millet, “Patronage and Its Avoidance in Classical Athens,” in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 15.

<sup>4</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 38.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

friends seems to have been the easiest way for Polybius to deal with the lack of terminology in the Greek language. Thus, it seems that with patronage we are using Roman/Latin terminology and concepts.

Greeks would use the term “euergetism” (εὐεργεσία) to refer to a benefactor-beneficiary relationship. Joubert explores patronage and benefaction, asking whether these are one or two forms of social exchange:

There are a number of differences between patronage and “euergetism” in terms of their nature, structure and content which merit understanding them as two distinct forms of social exchange. This does not imply that there was no overlapping of functions between them, or that certain forms of social interchange could not have been interpreted in terms of both benefaction and patronage by various parties involved.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Greek benefaction should be differentiated from patronage, even though in practice they could have been used to designate either relationship. While exploring terminology for benefaction and patronage in ancient Thessalonica, Holland Hendrix comes to a similar conclusion: “Distinction cannot always be made on the basis of terminology. Thessalonican ‘clients’ used the language of benefactor-beneficiary relations in speaking and writing publicly about their patrons.”<sup>2</sup> Here we learn two things: (1) Patronage was practiced among Greeks and it was familiar to them, even though terminology for it was absent; and (2) Trying to learn about patronage in the Greek environment of the first century A.D. only by studying Greek terms and their usage will not get us very far since there is no distinct terminology – terms apply to various types of

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<sup>1</sup> Stephan J. Joubert, “One Form of Social Exchange or Two? ‘Euergetism,’ Patronage, and the Testament Studies,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 31 (2001): 23.

<sup>2</sup> Hendrix Holland, “Benefactor/Patron Networks in the Urban Environment: Evidence from Thessalonica,” *Semeia*, no. 56 (1992): 40.

relationships. Thus, in studying ancient patronage we need to take a broad approach and include other areas and times as well, which is a valid approach in anthropological studies.

Even though the Greeks did not have terminology for patronage, Wallace-Hadrill believes that patronage was an everyday reality among ancient Greeks: “If there is an objective exchange of goods and services whereby political support is given in exchange for material benefits, one can properly speak of patronage even if the Greeks didn’t have a word for it.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly Paul Millet says about the Greeks that “the absence of an explicit, stable terminology does not necessarily mean that patron-client relationships are not taking place.”<sup>2</sup> Millet explores the fact that the concept of patronage was avoided in Classical Athens. Their idea of democracy and equality of all citizens was opposed to patronage. In Millet’s words, “the democratic ideology, with its emphasis on political equality, was hostile to the idea of personal patronage, which depended on the exploitation of inequalities in wealth and status.”<sup>3</sup> Aristotle wrote: “Democracy arose from men’s thinking that if they are equal in any respect they are equal absolutely (for they suppose that because they are all alike free they are equal absolutely).”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London: Routledge, 1989), 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> Millet, 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Politica*, trans. H. Rackham (Loeb Classical Library), 1301a.30-34.



The fact that most of our Greek sources come from Athens explains the absence of references to patronage. The political system of their city made patronage illegal,<sup>1</sup> but that does not mean that there were no patronal relations in Athens, or throughout Greece. Millet goes on to show that despite all of the Athenian efforts, patronage was not entirely eliminated: “What should have emerged from the sequence of texts cited above is the conclusion that patronage in Athens was a minor social phenomenon, with minimal political and economic implications.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, while the Greeks did not use specific terminology to denote patronal relationships, even in the democratic city of Athens patronage was not entirely absent. It is to be expected that other Greek cities with a lower level of equality for all citizens and with less democratic circumstances would display a higher level of patronal relations. Rural areas should have experienced even a stronger presence of patronal relations, as we will see below in some examples.

John K. Chow examined the structure of relationships in Corinth in the Roman period. He questioned whether patronage was an important means by which social relationships in Corinth were organized. His aim was to show that “social relationships in Roman Corinth, from emperor to freedmen, may be seen as networks of patron-client ties through which power, honours and favours were exchanged, and that patronage can be

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<sup>1</sup> Something similar is claimed by Gabriel Herman when he says that Greek city-states discouraged building *xenia* relationships with those living outside of the community. It was discouragd because if a citizen was a client to somebody outside of the city, that particular relationship could negatively influence the city, since a powerful patron from outside could influence the city’s politics. Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Millet, 36.

found at work in different levels of the society.”<sup>1</sup> So, patronal relationships were present in Corinth during the Roman period. Some would say that was due to strong Roman influence in that city. If so, then all the cities where Romans were present could testify to strong patronal relations, and the Romans were actually present almost everywhere at that time.

It is assumed that Johannine writings have some connection to Ephesus and its vicinity.<sup>2</sup> What can we say about Roman presence in Ephesus in the first century A.D.? The *Anchor Bible Dictionary* presents the following facts about Ephesus: “Beginning immediately with Augustus’ ascendancy, Ephesus entered into an era of prominence and prosperity. It served as the capital of the Roman province of Asia and received the coveted title ‘First and Greatest Metropolis of Asia.’”<sup>3</sup> As the Roman political capital of Asia, Ephesus must have experienced strong Roman presence. Roman patronal social setup should have influenced the city in all areas of its life. It is to be expected that surrounding areas were influenced by the life and circumstances of the city.

The Roman world was all about patron-client relations. As we have seen above, the terms we use in English to designate such relationships come from the Latin language. The entire Roman system of government was set up as a patronal network. At the top of the pyramid was the emperor himself. He was the highest patron. His

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<sup>1</sup> John K. Chow, *Patronage and Power: A Study of Social Networks in Corinth* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1992), 83.

<sup>2</sup> See my discussion in chapter 3 under the heading “The Elder.”

<sup>3</sup> Richard E. Oster Jr., “Ephesus,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 543.

governors were his clients, but at the same time they were patrons to people below them. Horsley says that “patron-client relations supply part of the answer to how such a large empire was governed by so small an administration.”<sup>1</sup> Romans exported this patronal system of government throughout the empire. Eisenstadt and Roniger write about it in their seminal work:

From the fourth century B.C., Rome claimed and successfully exercised the right to extend its alliance to free states situated beyond Latium, on the fringes of its area of influence, and to protect them against their enemies, even when an attack on them preceded the alliance. The relationship between those *civitates liberae* and the Roman state has been described as a case of “extralegal dependence of the weak on a strong protector, founded on gratitude, piety, reverence and all the sacred emotions and patron’s power to enforce them.”<sup>2</sup>

Above we have seen evidence from Roman Thessalonica, as well as from Corinth, for the presence of Roman patronal relations in these cities. The Roman patronal network was spread everywhere and patron-client relationships were the rule of the day in the first century A.D.

Are there any patronal relations in modern times that could give us additional insight into how such relationships work? Elliott addresses this issue: “Though patronage in modern industrial democratic societies indeed still operates *covertly*, from ‘Old Boy networks’ to political patronage to the Sicilian mafiosi, *overtly and ideally* it is seen to conflict with and undermine the principle of equality fundamental to modern democratic

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<sup>1</sup> Richard A. Horsley, *Paul and the Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 88.

<sup>2</sup> S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 62-63.

theory.”<sup>1</sup> Here we have a leading scholar on the social approach to New Testament studies arguing for cultural continuity between our world and the ancient Mediterranean. So, patronage is still present in our society, even though it is not encouraged by our democratic societal setup.

Anton Blok explored the mafia network relations of a Sicilian village during the period from 1890 to 1960. He found that *Mafiosi* function “in their role as political middlemen.”<sup>2</sup> “They exploit the gaps in communication between the peasant village and the larger society.”<sup>3</sup> The most important asset in Sicily is land. Mafiosi are capable of mediating between landlords living in cities and peasants needing land in villages. So, Mafiosi work as clients of the landlords, but at the same time they are patrons to the needy peasants. It is an example of a patronal social setup.

Interestingly, even though the Latin language has patronal terminology,<sup>4</sup> “in western Sicily no specific terms exist to denote patrons and clients; both are referred to as ‘friends’ (*amici*). It is from the context that one learns about this differentiation.”<sup>5</sup> We have seen something similar with ancient Greece, where specific terms for patronage were missing, but the essence of patronal relations is present. Even in modern-day

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<sup>1</sup> John H. Elliott, “Patronage and Clientelism in Early Christian Society: A Short Reading Guide,” *Forum* 3 D (1987): 40.

<sup>2</sup> Anton Blok, *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village 1890-1960: Study of Violent Peasant Entrepreneurs* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1974), 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>4</sup> The modern-day Italian language is a further development of the Latin language.

<sup>5</sup> Blok, *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village 1890-1960: Study of Violent Peasant Entrepreneurs*, 151, n. 9.

Greece, the term “friend” is used in patronal relations: “When a Sarakatsanos says ‘I have him as a friend’, he generally means that he has established a relation of mutual advantage with a person outside the community who in most cases is in the superordinate position of patron.”<sup>1</sup>

How is it possible that Mafiosi have such power? Sicily is on the periphery of the Italian state and located on an island. Thus, the state does not have enough power to reach all distant peasant areas of this island. Blok describes the power of the Mafia in the following words: “When the State is unable to control and integrate peripheral areas, there is room for political middlemen or brokers, who are able to bridge the gaps in communication.”<sup>2</sup>

There are two ways to change this situation and dispose of patronal relations altogether. One is for the state to increase its power and services in these remote areas, and the other is for the land to lose its significance for the local people. Both of these things have happened in Sicily in the last sixty years. The presence of the state and its services are stronger in remote rural areas, and people do not depend on land for their bare survival anymore. Local people move to the industrial North in search of well-paying jobs, and send home money in order to support their families.<sup>3</sup> Even though patronal relations have not disappeared altogether, mafia networks have lost their importance.

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community*, 231.

<sup>2</sup> Blok, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 218.

When Italians immigrate to the United States, we often hear of the Mafia. How is it possible that in such a developed country, where there are so many freely accessible opportunities for everyone, Mafia networks are existent and needed?<sup>1</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger present the situation in the following terms:

The U.S.A. developed as the first fully modern polity based on premises of political equality, participation and equal access of the citizens – or at least of those granted the franchise – to the centres of power, and on the supervision of those centres by the citizenry and its elected representatives through the construction of institutional balances in the exercise of power and office holding. The basic ideology and these institutional premises were in principle inimical to the development of patron-client relations.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the United States has managed to create an environment where patron-client relationships are unneeded. But such relationships exist anyway. Eisenstadt and Roniger further say: “Clientelistic relations did emerge in the United States. They were found especially in those areas in which economic inequality was more marked, and particularly . . . among such social groups as immigrants not fully integrated into the mainstream of American society.”<sup>3</sup>

Immigrants usually stick close to people of their nationality.<sup>4</sup> Language barriers and their national heritage keep them together. In such closed immigrant communities,

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<sup>1</sup> The movie serial “Godfather” by Francis Ford Coppola, based on Mario Puzo’s novel, gives an example of mafia patronal relations in the United States. Malina refers to the same movie. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, 155.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>4</sup> I know of such issues from my personal experiences while pastoring an ethnic church in the suburbs of Chicago.

people do not depend on governmental services to resolve their problems. If there is a dispute, it is resolved locally by the mafia boss who functions as the highest patron in the network. He establishes himself through the assets he can provide for his people. He controls various services and provides access to various jobs. Thus, even in the most developed country of the world we can find well-developed patronal networks. When people learn English, finish college, and become more integrated into local culture, the power of a patronal network over them lessens. But they might be obligated to continue supporting the network because of the services they have received in the past. Second- or third-generation immigrants might be more successfully integrated into local culture. State and governmental services for immigrants might be a way of neutralizing patronal networks, even though it is not easy for the state to break the language and cultural barriers of the immigrants.

In general, wherever the state is not able to secure needed services, patronal networks will naturally develop and provide services to the people. In some cases patrons might be so successful and powerful that the government cooperates with them. Such is the case in Mexico, where the local patron is known as the *cacique*.<sup>1</sup>

In both urban and rural contexts, the *cacique* is recognized by both the residents of the community in which he operates and supra-local authorities of the government and the official party as being the most powerful person in the local political arena. Public officials invariably deal with him to the exclusion of other potential leaders in all matters affecting the community. The *cacique* also possesses de facto authority to make decisions binding upon the community under his control, as well as informal police powers and powers of taxation (usually described as “taking up a collection” to finance a given project, service, or activity). Thus in some respect the traditional *cacicazgo* represents a sort of informal government-within-a-government, controlled

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<sup>1</sup> This example does not belong to the Mediterranean area, but in the context of Mediterranean examples presented in this chapter it adds to the picture.

by a single dominant individual who is not *formally* accountable either to those residing in the community under his control or to external political and government authorities . . . (Here there is no law but me).<sup>1</sup>

We see here the local strong man exercising patronage and being recognized by the government as a legal authority in the local area. In order to remove him from power, the government would need to organize better services to the community than the *cacique* is able to organize. Since it is too much trouble for weak governments, they often prefer to work with the *cacique* and save themselves the effort of organizing local communities and providing needed services.

Both urban and rural areas can be affected by patronage, as seen above. Ernst Gellner emphasizes that “it is the incompletely centralised state, the defective market or the defective bureaucracy which would seem to favour it.”<sup>2</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger have spent a significant amount of time discussing the issue of the persistence of such relationships in economically developed areas. They say the following regarding the issue:

It was often assumed in the earlier literature on patron-client relations that it is, above all, economic and political underdevelopment or a low level of political modernisation that accounts for the evolvment and persistence of such relations. With advances in research, however, it became clearer that this was not the case. Indeed, the illustrations presented above attest the fact that in many societies – above all, Mediterranean, Latin American and southeast Asian – in which such clientelistic relations constituted part of the central mode of institutional arrangements, they

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<sup>1</sup> A. Wayne Cornelius, “Leaders, Followers, and Official Patrons in Urban Mexico,” in *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism*, ed. Steffen W. Schmidt, James C. Scott, Carl H. Lande, and Laura Guasti (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 338.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest Gellner, “Patrons and Clients,” in *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*, ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury (London: Duckworth, 1977), 4.



persisted despite changes in levels of economic development, in the structure of political organisation and in their own concrete organizational form.<sup>1</sup>

They further say that “patron-client relations can be found, as we have seen, in a great variety of societies at diverse levels of development or modernisation.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, the conclusion of Eisenstadt and Roniger’s research is that higher development of a country does not mean total disappearance of patronal relations. In higher developed countries, the influence of patronal relations will be lessened, since the state would take over some of the services previously offered by patronal networks, but patronal relations would not entirely disappear from the scene. We have seen a similar development above for the democratic environment of ancient Athens, where patronage did not entirely disappear despite democratic circumstances.

In conclusion, we can say that patron-client relations of inequality seem to be unavoidable in any society. In some societies they form the central and most important institution that runs the entire society, while in others, government services might push them to become side appearances. Either way, for clients who participate in patronal networks and obtain needed services through them, they are the most important asset used for their survival. Patronal relations historically developed as soon as somebody needed to depend on somebody else for certain goods and services without being able to reciprocate on the same or similar level for the received benefits. That has resulted in a relationship of unequals and in a social dependence of a client on his patron.

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<sup>1</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, 203-204.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 220.

### Definition and Description of Patronage

There are many different aspects of patronage. Under this subheading I explore them by reviewing how different authors have viewed and defined patronage. There are two short definitions that describe major aspects of patronage: (1) Patronage is a patron-client relationship; and (2) Patronage is a relationship of two unequal individuals. These two short definitions belong to the basics of patronage and we will build on them.

In his article in the *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, Malina defines patronage in the following terms: “The patron-client relationship is a social, institutional arrangement by means of which economic, political, or religious institutional relationships are outfitted with an overarching quality of kinship or family feeling.”<sup>1</sup> The idea of kinship is emphasized by this definition. The word for “patron” comes from the word for “father,” which endows patronage with kinship terminology. It is not about biological fathers, but about someone having a socially higher status than the client and serving as a father figure. Malina insists that in the world of the Bible God was understood as a patron.<sup>2</sup> Thus, he believes that patronage is not only an economic and political institution, but a religious one as well.

John H. Elliott defines patronage in the following terms: “It is a personal relation of some duration entered into voluntarily by two or more persons of unequal status based on differences in social roles and access to power, and involves the reciprocal exchanges

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce J. Malina, “Patronage,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, ed. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 151. See also idem, “Patron and Client: The Analogy Behind Synoptic Theology,” *Forum* 4 (1988): 8.

<sup>2</sup> Malina, “Patronage,” 151.

of different kinds of 'goods and services' of value to each partner."<sup>1</sup> In this definition unequal status and social exchange stand out.

Richard Saller stresses three features that made up the ancient patronal relationship:

First, it involves the reciprocal exchange of goods and services. Secondly, to distinguish it from commercial 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>2</sup>

Saller emphasizes reciprocal exchange, personal relationships, and unequal status. To these three elements Andrew Wallace-Hadrill adds a fourth one based on Garnsey and Woolf, "namely that it is voluntary, not legally enforceable."<sup>3</sup> Paul Millet adds another element to the three mentioned by Saller, "namely, that the relationship was conducted along lines largely determined by the party of superior status."<sup>4</sup> This element notes that a patron is superior in a patronal relation, while his client is inferior. Thus, the patron has the power to determine the terms of their relationship.

John K. Chow did a study of patronage in Roman Corinth. He defines patronage as an exchange relationship between unequals based on mutual interests.<sup>5</sup> Joubert defines

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<sup>1</sup> Elliott, "Patronage and Clientelism in Early Christian Society: A Short Reading Guide," 42.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Saller, "Patronage and Friendship in Early Imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction," in *Patronage in Ancient Society*, ed. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (New York: Routledge, 1989), 49.

<sup>3</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Millet, 16.

<sup>5</sup> "A patron-client tie is basically an asymmetrical exchange relationship. The parties on both ends of such a tie are unequal in the control of resources, and so differ in

it in similar terms, adding that it is a voluntary type of relationship.<sup>1</sup> Silverman explored patronal relations in central Italy and emphasizes an informal contractual element.<sup>2</sup> Carl H. Lande understands patronage as a form of dyadic relationship. Such relationships are represented by the interaction of two individuals. He defines a dyadic relationship as “a voluntary agreement between two individuals to exchange favors and to come to each other’s aid in time of need.”<sup>3</sup> Such relationships obviously endure because of the usefulness of favor exchange for both parties.<sup>4</sup>

Ernest Gellner understands patronage as a form of power.<sup>5</sup> He defines patronage as “unsymmetrical, involving inequality of power; it tends to form an extended system; to

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terms of power and status. They are bound together mainly because their tie can serve their mutual interests through the exchange of resources.” John K. Chow, “Patronage in Roman Corinth,” in *Paul and the Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, ed. Richard A. Horsley (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 105.

<sup>1</sup> “Patronage can be described as a pervasive, voluntary form of interaction between socially disproportionate individuals, as well as between socially disproportionate individuals and groups involved in a reciprocal exchange of material goods and services.” Joubert, “One Form of Social Exchange or Two? ‘Euergetism,’ Patronage, and the Testament Studies,” 19.

<sup>2</sup> “Patronage as a cross-cultural pattern may be defined as an informal contractual relationship between persons of unequal status and power, which imposes reciprocal obligations of a different kind on each of the parties.” Sydel F. Silverman, “Patronage and Community-Nation Relationship in Central Italy,” in *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism*, ed. James C. Scott Steffen W. Schmidt, Carl H. Lande, and Laura Guasti (Berkeley: University Press of California, 1977), 295-296.

<sup>3</sup> Carl H. Lande, “The Dyadic Basis of Clientelism,” in *Friends, Followers, and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism*, ed. James C. Scott Steffen W. Schmidt, Carl H. Lande and Laura Guasti (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), xiv.

<sup>4</sup> Lande further defines the patron-client relationship as “a vertical dyadic alliance, i.e., an alliance between two persons of unequal status, power or resources each of whom finds it useful to have as an ally someone superior or inferior to himself.” *Ibid.*, xx.

<sup>5</sup> Gellner, 1.

be long-term, or at least not restricted to a single isolated transaction; to possess a distinctive ethos; and, whilst not always illegal or immoral, to stand outside the officially proclaimed formal morality of the society in question.”<sup>1</sup> The patron has power over the client and thus determines their relationship.

Jeremy Boissevain conducted a study of a decline of patronal relations in Malta. He defined patronage as being “conceived of as an asymmetrical, quasi-moral relation between a person (*the patron*) who directly provides protection and assistance (*patronage*), and/or who influences persons who can provide these services (*brokerage*), to persons (*clients*) who depend on him for such assistance.”<sup>2</sup> Patronage is described here in terms of protection and assistance that patrons extend to those who depend on them. Alex Weingrod bases his view of patronage on Boissevain’s research. He sees patronage as a means to achieving various ends.<sup>3</sup> A patron is a valuable contact person for a client and as such the patron is helpful for achieving certain goals. On the other hand, the patron needs his client for achieving some different goals. Both parties need each other and depend on each other.

Amal Rassam describes patronage among Arabs in Northern Iraq in the following terms: “Patron-client relations represent a special kind of personal exchange, one where

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Boissevain, “When the Saints Go Marching Out: Reflections on the Decline of Patronage in Malta,” in *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*, ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury (London: Duckworth, 1977), 81.

<sup>3</sup> “Patronage consists of mobilising various contacts in order to gain one’s ends: clients search after a patron who agrees to press their particular interest.” Alex Weingrod, “Patronage and Power,” in *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*, ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury (London: Duckworth, 1977), 46.

two individuals of different socio-economic status enter into a relationship in which the individual of higher status uses his influence and resources to provide protection and benefits for the person of lower status, the latter reciprocating by offering his personal services, loyalty and general support.”<sup>1</sup> Such relations are about protection and benefits on one side and loyalty and support on the other.

John Campbell defines patronal relations in a Greek mountain community among Saraktsani in the following way: “The role of the patron is to give benefits; that of the client is to honour the patron by accepting dependence. . . . The dependence of the client draws attention to the power of his patron, while the protection of the patron suggests that the client is a man of some standing and respectability in his own community.”<sup>2</sup> Again, we encounter a description of dependency in which parties are unequal to each other.

A very interesting view on patronage is offered by Michael Kenny: “I see patronage acting as a control, a check, a balance, and, indeed, an insurance against the misuse of official institutionalised power.”<sup>3</sup> Kenny seems to believe that official state institutions may exercise too much power in a society, but private patronage is there to balance such power usurpations of the state. Thus, patronage keeps official state institutions in their place by providing alternative means of securing goods and services.

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<sup>1</sup> Amal Rassam, “Power, Patronage and Marginal Groups in Northern Iraq,” in *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*, ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury (London: Duckworth, 1977), 158.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community*, 259.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Kenny, “Two Case Studies of Marketing and Patronage in Greece,” in *Contributions to Mediterranean Society*, ed. J. G. Peristiany (Paris: Mouton & Co, 1968), 158-159.

Eisenstadt and Roniger bring together nine basic characteristics of patron-client relations. Since they have conducted the most thorough investigation of patronage in today's scholarship, I present all of their conclusions below:

(a) Patron-client relations are usually particularistic and diffuse.

(b) The interaction on which these relations are based is characterised by the simultaneous exchange of different types of resources – above all, instrumental and economic as well as political ones (support, loyalty, votes, protection) on the one hand, and promises of reciprocity, solidarity and loyalty on the other.

(c) The exchange of these resources is usually arranged in some sort of “package-deal” – i.e. none of these resources can be exchanged separately, but only in some combination which includes each type.

(d) Ideally, a strong element of unconditionality and of long-range credit is built into these relations.

(e) Closely related to the preceding is the strong element of interpersonal obligation that is prevalent in these relations – an element often couched in terms of personal loyalty or reciprocity and attachment between patrons and clients – even if these relations are often very ambivalent. . . .

(f) At the same time, relations established between patron and clients are not fully legal or contractual; they are often opposed to the official laws of the country and they are based much more on “informal” – although very strongly binding – understandings.

(g) Despite their seemingly binding, long-range, almost (in their ideal portrayal) life-long, endurance, patron-client relations are entered into, at least in principle, voluntarily, and can, officially at least, be abandoned voluntarily.

(h) These relations are undertaken between individual or networks of individuals in a vertical fashion (the simplest manifestation of which is a strong dyadic one) rather than between organised corporate groups; and they seem to undermine the horizontal group organisation and solidarity of clients and patrons alike – but especially of the clients.

(i) Last and not least patron-client relations are based on a very strong element of inequality and of differences in power between patrons and clients. . . . The most crucial element of this inequality is the monopolisation, by the patrons, of certain positions which are of crucial importance for the clients – above all, as we shall see in

greater detail later, of the access to the means of production, major markets and centers of the society.<sup>1</sup>

The major elements that we encounter in this description of patron-client relations by Eisenstadt and Roniger could be summarized this way: particular, reciprocal exchange, unconditional, loyal, extralegal, voluntary, vertical, and unequal. This list is probably the most exhaustive list of features presented in one work.

After exploring the definitions of other authors, it is obvious that there is no one-sentence definition that could include all possible aspects of patronal relations. I endeavor here to provide a simple and usable definition of patronage, based on the evidence presented in this chapter and emphasizing elements that seem to be indispensable in any patron-client relationship: Patronage is a reciprocal patron-client relationship based on social inequality of the parties involved, where the patron uses his power to benefit his client as well as to benefit himself through that relationship, and the client looks for ways to satisfy his own needs, while being of use to his patron. It would seem that a strong element of selfishness is involved by both parties in a patron-client relationship.

#### Benefits for Patrons and Clients

Above we have noted the element of human selfishness. In exchange relationships, such as patron-client relationships, people look for ways to benefit themselves. Blau expresses it in the following terms:

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<sup>1</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, 48-49. They have discussed these characteristics of hospitality first in an article: S. N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, "Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (1980).



An apparent “altruism” pervades social life; people are anxious to benefit one another and to reciprocate for the benefits they receive. But beneath this seemingly selflessness an underlying “egoism” can be discovered; the tendency to help others is frequently motivated by the expectation that doing so will bring social rewards. Beyond this self-interested concern with profiting from social associations, however, there is again an “altruistic” element or, at least, one that removes social transactions from simple egoism or psychological hedonism. A basic reward people seek in their associations is social approval, and selfish disregard for others makes it impossible to obtain this important reward.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, while looking for benefits in social exchange relations, selfishness for the sake of social approval needs to be addressed. Social approval is one of the major benefits people long for and it is connected to honor in the first-century Mediterranean world. Blau also explains the role of gifts and benefits in social exchanges:

A person who gives other valuable gifts or renders them important services makes a claim for superior status by obligating them to himself. If they return benefits that adequately discharge their obligations, they deny his claim to superiority, and if their returns are excessive, they make a counterclaim to superiority over him. If they fail to reciprocate with benefits that are at least as important to him as his are to them, they validate his claim to superior status.<sup>2</sup>

Social approval, as well as superior status, seems to be a major benefit longed for in social exchanges. Blau summarizes this by saying that “overwhelming others with benefactions serves to achieve superiority over them.”<sup>3</sup> Or in different words: “Providing needed benefits others cannot easily do without is undoubtedly the most prevalent way of attaining power.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Blau, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 118.

Because of their difference in status, patrons and clients will also have different benefits. They both might seek social approval, honor, or increase in status, but their roles in the patron-client relationship determine what kind of benefits are received. Lande discusses it in the following words: “The usefulness of patron and client to each other stems not so much from the fact that their needs occur at different points in time, but from the fact that each at almost any time can supply the other with benefits that the latter can never obtain by himself, or can obtain by himself only on rare occasions.”<sup>1</sup> Both patron and client have different types of resources at their disposal that are needed by the other party.

Elliott says the following about the benefits in patronal relations: “In this relationship of binding and long-range character designed to advance the interest of both partners, a ‘patron’ is one who uses his/her influence to protect and assist some other person who becomes his/her ‘client,’ who in turn provides to this patron certain valued services.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, we see again that both parties advance their interests through a patronal relationship.

Elliott lists a whole range of services that clients can receive from their patrons:

The influence of the patron can be enlisted to secure for the client a diversity of “goods” including food, financial aid, physical protection, career advancement and administrative posts, citizenship, equality in or freedom from taxation, the inviolability of person and property, support in legal cases, immunity from expenses of public service, help from the gods, and in the case of provincials, the status of *socius* or “friend of Rome” (*proxenia*).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lande, xx.

<sup>2</sup> Elliott, “Patronage and Clientelism in Early Christian Society: A Short Reading Guide,” 42.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

On the other hand, the patron is provided with various services by his client:

The client, in return, is obligated to enhance the prestige, reputation and honor of his patron in public and private life, favor him with daily early-morning salutations, support his political campaigns, supply him information, refuse to testify against him in the courts, and give constant public attestation and memorials of his patron's benefactions, generosity, and virtue.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the relationship between a patron and a client is reciprocal. Campbell also describes some specific benefits for the clients: "To protect himself, therefore, the villager searches for a patron among the elite of the professional class in the provincial capital who through his friendships with senior civil servants is able to act as an intermediary and protector."<sup>2</sup> Somewhere else Campbell says: "For without friends a man loses all power, influence, and social prestige."<sup>3</sup> Thus, having a patron is a great social benefit for a client.

Campbell further describes how both client and patron benefit from the relationship: "When the protection is effective, both patron and client gain prestige from the relationship. The colleagues of the patron envy him the power which his control of a body of clients assures him, other families in the client's community envy him his cleverness in winning powerful patrons."<sup>4</sup> It is interesting that patrons also gain prestige through such relationships. "To be acknowledged as a generous and effective patron is

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>2</sup> John K. Campbell, "Two Case Studies of Marketing and Patronage in Greece," in *Contributions to Mediterranean Sociology*, ed. J. G. Peristiany (Paris: Mouton & Co, 1968), 143.

<sup>3</sup> Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community*, 238.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 260.

itself a claim to prestige.”<sup>1</sup> Campbell further says: “These relations, once established, imply diffuse moral obligations for both the patron and his client: the former ought to support the client over the whole range of his affairs to the best of his ability: the latter should freely own his general dependence which is social as well as political.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, both of the parties benefit through the patron-client exchange relationship.

Gabriel Herman talks about benefiting others with gifts in exchange relationships:<sup>3</sup> “Gifts beg counter-gifts, and fulfill at one and the same time a number of purposes: they repay past services, incur new obligations, and act as continuous reminders of the validity of the bond. Non-reciprocation is in this context frequently interpreted as a relapse into hostility.”<sup>4</sup> He further describes the usefulness of exchange relationships:

The goods acted as a catalyst for the consolidation of the bond. For each one of the partners, being differently situated in the social structure and commanding access to different types of resources, was in a position to supply what the other needed. Thus, modest gifts gave way to large-scale co-operation, and the value of the shared resources became an expression of the degree of confidence between the two men. The outcome was the conversion of an initially moral relationship into an economic partnership in which both parties had a vested interest.<sup>5</sup>

Mauss similarly describes the role of gifts: “The obligation attached to a gift itself is not inert. Even when abandoned by the giver, it still forms a part of him. Through it he

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, “Two Case Studies of Marketing and Patronage in Greece,” 143.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 143-144.

<sup>3</sup> He is discussing *xenia* and *proxenia* relationships, but gifts function in a similar way in patron-client relations.

<sup>4</sup> Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City*, 80.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 84.

has a hold over the recipient, just as he had, while its owner.”<sup>1</sup> Mauss further says: “Hence it follows that to give something is to give a part of oneself.”<sup>2</sup>

Joubert also discusses the role of gifts: “Gift exchange creates an unequal relationship of domination between the parties involved. In this regard, the giver attains some superiority. His/her basic aim is not to maximise net income, but rather net giving; in other words, to acquire a large following of people (‘gift debtors’), outside his family circle who are obligated to him.”<sup>3</sup> Further, he speaks about patrons and their gifts in the following terms: “The nobles, who, because of their birth and wealth controlled access to all essential services, were expected to provide various services to their cities in exchange for the public bestowal of honor from the inhabitants.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, patrons were honored by their clients because of their benefits provided to them. “Within the agonistic Graeco-Roman culture with its competition between benefactors and beneficiaries to permanently place each other in debt through huge gifts that could not be reciprocated, benefits were not bestowed out of humanitarian concerns, but rather to increase the benefactors’ honour.”<sup>5</sup> We can again observe here some selfish motives.

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<sup>1</sup> Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Function of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (London: Coehn & West, 1954), 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>3</sup> Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Joubert, “One Form of Social Exchange or Two? ‘Euergetism,’ Patronage, and the Testament Studies,” 18. Aristotle emphasizes the need for such benefaction. Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, trans. John Henry Freese (Loeb Classical Library), 1361a28-43.

<sup>5</sup> Joubert, *Paul as Benefactor*, 58.

In his exploration of the Hellenistic world, Jean-Louis Ferrary found that “both Romans and Greeks accepted the principle that, even in the absence of any legal or formal commitment such as a treaty, receiving a benefit implied in exchange a dutiful gratitude that could infringe heavily upon real liberty.”<sup>1</sup> The client was supposed to express gratitude for the benefits received by his patron and that gratitude would bind him.

Mott explored Hellenistic exchange relationships and found that “the act of benefitting set up a chain of obligations. The beneficiary had an obligation to respond to the gift with gratitude; his expression of gratitude then placed the original benefactor under obligation to do something further.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, gratitude obligates the giver to more giving. He further says: “Receiving a benefit thus was a source of power, not only from the boon of the initial gift, but also because it gave the recipient the fortunate opportunity of placing a person from a more advantageous position in society under obligation to himself.”<sup>3</sup> With his gratitude a client secures of his patron.

Eisenstadt and Roniger discuss obligations of clients during Roman times: “Clients were expected to come in the morning for the daily *salutio* and/or to appear on the Forum. By the time of Cicero, the ratio of followings grew and patrons began,

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Louis Ferrary, “The Hellenistic World and Roman Political Patronage,” in *Hellenistic Constructs: Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 115.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Charles Mott, “The Power of Giving and Receiving: Reciprocity in Hellenistic Benevolence,” in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, ed. Gerhard F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 60.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

according to Gelzer's evaluation of Qunitus' letters to Cicero, to divide their friends and clients into classes: those of the first were admitted to the house singly, those of the second class in groups and those of the third *en masse*."<sup>1</sup> Obligations of the clients were at the same time benefits for the patrons. On the other hand, the clients' daily *salutios* placed patrons under obligation to benefit their clients.

Roman state patronage to client communities resembles private patronage in its benefits and obligations:

In the case of ties between distinguished Romans and client communities, the patron provided mediation, facilitated diplomatic contacts; maintained relations of hospitality (*hospitum*) with envoys, entertaining them at Rome and introducing them to the Senate; he would support pleas and would use his influence to obtain a favourable settlement; he would arbitrate internal problems in the foreign community (his arbitration could not be rejected); he informed the community about decrees and laws that could affect it. As can be seen, a patron's resources were mainly political representation, support, and protection from extortion or oppression; communities as well as leading families of foreign chieftains, kings, etc., had to rely on Roman patrons. Thus, the decisive source of bargaining power for a patron was his full citizen rights and his access to the political center, evinced in his connections at Rome.<sup>2</sup>

Support, protection, and mediation for the client were part of Roman political patronage. These issues were present in private patronage as well. At the same time, there were also benefits for the Roman patron: "In return, the Roman patron got support in his private difficulties, protection from his Roman enemies, a place of refuge and assistance if condemned or in adversity, the provision of the necessary means for capturing popular favour in Rome (by paying for circus exhibitions, the distribution of cheap crops, etc.). A

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<sup>1</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, 58. Tacitus describes a similar procedure with the morning *salutio* in his *Ann.* 3.55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

noble's foreign *clientelae* gave him *dignitas*, leading to concrete advantages in his political advancement."<sup>1</sup> Support, protection, and honor are benefits that a Roman patron could expect from his client community.

Blok explored Mafia relations of the Sicilian village, which are set up as patron-client relations: "Mafiosi were denoted as 'honorable,' 'respected,' or 'qualified' persons. They were men able to 'look after their own affairs' and to 'make themselves respected.' At issue is a code of behavior that is neatly summed up by the term '*omerta*' (from *omu*, man). According to it, a person makes himself respected by keeping silent over 'crimes' witnessed, suffered, or committed."<sup>2</sup> Respect and honor are the benefits which patrons gain from a relationship with their clients. Eisenstadt and Roniger say something similar about Sicilian Mafiosi: "Under conditions of environmental insecurity and abuse, a man who was able to settle affairs and resolve problems by a glance, a word or a gesture, i.e. by show of 'authority', had prestige, honour and justification in his actions."<sup>3</sup>

Discussing patronage in Southern Italy, Eisenstadt and Roniger say that "patrons needed the submission and obedience of clients in their struggles with peers over land and influence and as a means to outdo outside interference."<sup>4</sup> Thus, it appears that submission and obedience were the benefits most patrons were seeking. On the other hand, Silverman reports a very kind attitude of patrons toward their clients in central

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Blok, 211-212.

<sup>3</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, 70.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 65.



Italy: "The patron interpreted the law to his client and offered advice. If there were trouble with the authorities, the patron would intervene. . . . If a client had to go out of the community for any purpose, the patron would recommend him to some acquaintance at the destination. In fact, all dealings with institutions or persons outside the local system required personal recommendations from a mediator."<sup>1</sup> Here we see again how important a patron is for the survival of simple people. Patrons are not always and only oppressive, but they may under certain circumstances be a real help as well.

Describing benefits that clients were hoping to obtain from their patrons in Spain, Eisenstadt and Roniger say the following:

To be able to count on the friendship, assistance, influence and benevolence of these persons could be of great importance in case of need or difficulty. Through the establishment of such particularistic links, clients hoped to obtain instrumental resources such as employment, assistance, protection, loans or other benefits from the state organs, a means of contacting outside powers in an 'honourable way,' by means of letters of recommendation, the testimonial of the patron being essential for this purpose.<sup>2</sup>

Patrons are crucial in obtaining all kinds of assistance and services. Cornelius describes patrons (*caciques*) and their roles in communities in Mexico:<sup>3</sup>

The strongly instrumental nature of the ties which bind the *cacique* to his followers requires him to be a highly visible actor in the community. His house must be a center of constant movement and activity. He must be present at the scene of any major misfortune or community development project. In a broader sense he must actively seek to be identified personally with any and all public works, services, and

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<sup>1</sup> Silverman, 298.

<sup>2</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, 74.

<sup>3</sup> As I previously said, I am presenting examples from Mexico which do not belong to the Mediterranean area, but they seem to have preserved ancient values and add to the picture.

other improvements introduced into the area under his control – whether or not he himself was actually responsible in some way for securing these benefits.<sup>1</sup>

In Turkey the role of patrons was taken over by *aghas*, who were leaders of “great families.” They provided various services and benefits for people:

Within their power domains, *aghas* performed a wide variety of services for the villagers, such as interceding on their behalf with the administration, protecting them from police harassment, lending them sums of money to be repaid in kind or in seeds, giving them oxen, flour or tools, allowing them credit facilities in their shops in the neighbouring towns, and acting as guarantors for them when they were granted agricultural credits, etc.<sup>2</sup>

But there were benefits for *aghas* as well: “In return, the *aghas* benefited by instrumental and political gains, mainly through using the clientelistic support of kith and kin to increase their holdings at the expense of opposing networks.”<sup>3</sup>

People of Jordan call their patrons *wastah* (go-between). These are important people for obtaining “benefits and services as not to be cheated in the market place, locating or securing a job, resolving conflicts and legal litigations, winning a lawsuit, speeding up administrative decisions and bureaucratic procedures, finding a bride, etc.”<sup>4</sup> In Northern Iraq patrons are called *wujaha* (socially visible). Such a patron is one “who confers social recognition and visibility on the faceless and socially insignificant client. Patrons can perform such mediation since, at the weekly *majlis* (open house), they

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<sup>1</sup> Cornelius, 343.

<sup>2</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, 85.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 87.

exchange information, gossip and solve with other notables, merchants, friends, followers, etc., problems of common interest.”<sup>1</sup>

Amal Rassam also explored the role of patrons in Northern Iraq:

Informants agreed that the two major functions of the patron were protection and mediation, *himaya* and *wisata* respectively. In the first case, the patron acts as a buffer between the agents of the State, or any other potential exploiter, and the client. In the second case, the patron provides the link, in his capacity as an intermediary, between his client and a second party (usually of higher status) to whom the client has no direct access.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, protection and mediation are two major benefits which a client can expect from a patron. Rassam further describes the benefits to the client with the following words: “When a Shabak peasant came to the city to sell his grain, see a doctor or buy provisions, he stayed at the house of his landlord who saw to it that his client was not cheated by the shopkeeper nor ignored by the doctor.”<sup>3</sup> Without a patron most of these services would not be accessible to peasants.

In Morocco the King is the source of various types of benefits. “The King manipulated rewards such as governmental positions, export-import licences, exemptions from custom duties, sources of credit, spoils and real estate acquisitions and non-competitive contracts, and distributed them to the elite factions attempting to win his favour.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, in different cultures patrons have the same role – granting benefits to their clients.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>2</sup> Rassam, 159.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>4</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, 98.

Johnson explored the political role of patrons (*za'im* / *zu'ama*) in Lebanon. He says that "*Zu'ama* are not elected on the basis of a programme, but on their ability to provide their clientele with services."<sup>1</sup> He further explains the benefits conferred by *Zu'ama* to the clients: "The *za'im* maintains his support in two important ways: first, by being regularly returned to office, so that he can influence the administration and continuously provide his clients with governmental services; and secondly, by being a successful businessman, so that he can use his commercial and financial contacts to give his clients employment, contracts and capital."<sup>2</sup> Thus, politically involved patrons offer some extraordinary benefits to their clients. The obligation of the clients is to vote for the *zu'ama*, since that enables them to offer benefits to the clients. Johnson says further:

All *zu'ama* have a moral core of lieutenants, who over time have received so many transactional benefits from their patron that the relationship has acquired a degree of permanency. Members of the core remain loyal to the *za'im* not simply because of the expectation of future services. They also have a debt of gratitude for past services. This debt has changed the character of the *za'im* – *qabaday* dyad from a patron-client exchange to a leader-follower relationship, which is often further transformed into a condition of friendship.<sup>3</sup>

We have seen here diverse benefits for patrons and clients in various settings. This anthropological overview of patronage in various cultures should broaden our horizon for diversity found in patronal relations. In some cases patron-client relations are non-exploitive in nature. But in many cases patrons are exploiting poor clients who have no

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Johnson, "Political Bosses and Their Gangs: *Zu'ama* and *Qabadayat* in the Sunni Muslim Quarters of Beirut," in *Patrons and Clients in Mediterranean Societies*, ed. Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury (London: Duckworth, 1977), 210.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 217.

other choice than to stick to their abusive patrons. When Malina talks about patron-client relations, he designates them as “highly exploitive in nature.”<sup>1</sup> Even though patronage is expressed in kinship terms, and even though it is reciprocal in nature, patrons might be using their clients in order to exclusively benefit themselves. Under certain circumstances clients could do the same, but such instances are rare, since power is on the side of the patron, while the client can only submit to the will of the patron. So, under the next subheading I will explore various violations of patronage that often occur.

### Violations of the Custom of Patronage

Patron-client relations are open to different types of violations. Since these relations are extralegal, there is no place where one of the parties could go for legal protection. Because of that, violations of patronage are not exceptions, but regular occurrences. Power in such relations “resides implicitly in the other’s dependency.”<sup>2</sup> The dependent party is usually the client.

Eisenstadt and Roniger describe the abusive relationship of a mighty patron with his clients during Roman times: “In early times, the patron was entitled to reassume property over his client, to reduce him in emergency to the state of slavery, and even to inflict capital punishment on him. . . . But even when cruelty occurred, the freedman could not leave one patron for another; the established attachment was in principle

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<sup>1</sup> Malina, “Patronage,” 152.

<sup>2</sup> Richard M. Emerson, “Power-Dependence Relations,” *American Sociological Review* 27 (1962): 32.

unseverable and was transmitted in the *gens* of the *patronus* from father to son.”<sup>1</sup> The relationship was based on mutual trust and was personal as well as extralegal. In the case of problems, the patron could enforce his power over the client, while the client usually did not have anything to enforce upon the patron in order to gain restitution.

Eisenstadt and Roniger have observed levels of tensions or contradictions that exist in patron-client relations. These tensions can lead to different types of violations:

The most important contradictions are first, a peculiar combination of inequality and asymmetry in power with seeming mutual solidarity expressed in terms of personal identity and interpersonal sentiments and obligations; second, a combination of potential coercion and exploitation with voluntary relations and compelling mutual obligations; third, a combination of the emphasis on these obligations and solidarity with the somewhat illegal or semi-legal aspect of these relations.<sup>2</sup>

What we have here are sets of opposites: Inequality versus interpersonal sentiment, coercion versus voluntarism, and obligations versus illegality. When these opposites meet, violations of patronage will eventually occur.

In addition to these tensions, it seems that behind all violations in patronal relations, as well as in other types of relations, is the concept of limited good. Neyrey defines the limited-good concept as “the perception that all the good things of this world – beauty, health, wealth, land, and every reputation – existed in very limited supply.”<sup>3</sup> That suggests that only those who are fortunate enough possess some limited resources,

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<sup>1</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, Clients, and Friends: Interpersonal Relations and the Structure of Trust in Society*, 54.

<sup>2</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, “Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange,” 50-51.

<sup>3</sup> Jerome H. Neyrey, “Limited Good,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values*, ed. John J. Pilch and Bruce J. Malina (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 123.

while others are left without any. “If the supply of good things is radically limited, the gain by one person must come through loss by another.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, the field is open for jealousy, competition, and fighting. Campbell describes the concept of limited good among Sarakatsani in a Greek mountain community in the following terms:

It is believed that there are not enough resources and wealth to satisfy the needs of everybody, and that therefore the success and prosperity of other families is necessarily a threat to the very existence of one's own. It follows that a man must rejoice when another suffers misfortune and ‘falls in the mud’. . . . If one family goes up in the world the others must necessarily come down.<sup>2</sup>

The limited-good concept introduces competition into human interaction, which easily leads to various types of violations in interactions. If there is competition, then deceiving others in order to get ahead of them is perceived as a more valid method. Where deception rules, all kinds of violations are possible.<sup>3</sup>

Boissevain starts his discussion in *Friends of Friends — Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* by saying that man is “an entrepreneur who tries to manipulate norms and relationships for his own social and psychological benefit.”<sup>4</sup> He continues: “In a situation of conflict persons will attempt to define the situation and align themselves in such a way

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community*, 204.

<sup>3</sup> I know of such issues from personal experience, since I have spent the majority of my life in societies which uphold the limited-good view.

<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Boissevain, *Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators and Coalitions* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), 7.

that the least possible damage is done to their basic values and to their important personal relations.”<sup>1</sup> Here again the limited-good concept comes to light. Boissevain further says:

Everywhere people compete with each other and search for allies to help them achieve their goals. People everywhere are thus engaged in politics, for they compete directly, via friends and friends-of-friends for valued scarce resources, for prizes which form the important goals of their lives. . . . Man, in order to emancipate himself from the constraints of his social, cultural and physical environment, attempts to bring about changes in the balance of power. Other persons, who benefit from the status quo, try to prevent such changes. Change and resistance to it are thus inherently related.<sup>2</sup>

Competition for available resources seems an important characteristic of humans. Boissevain further talks about rivalry: “It is clear that rivalry is basic to the existence of a faction, for a faction supports a person engaged in a hostile competition for honour or resources. The conflict is thus political. The prizes for which they compete may also include access to the ‘truth’ (a form of power) and hence be ideological, as in a religious group or church which is then converted into a political arena.”<sup>3</sup> The whole issue of rivalry exists because of the limited-good concept. People fight for their part of limited resources.

Describing the Mafia of a Sicilian village, Blok says that Mafiosi base their actions on violence and fear. “The capacity to generate fear was a necessary qualification of young *mafiosi*. They had to build up a reputation for violence to assume the

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 232-233.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 194-195.



intermediate position of broker between landlord and peasant.”<sup>1</sup> Since they are seeking to gain limited resources, violent behavior is practiced.

Amal Rassam, in researching relations in Northern Iraq, shows how social changes can affect patron-client relations: “The spread of Communist, egalitarian principles helped to undermine the ‘premise of inequality’, with the result that many came to see the ‘protection’ offered them by landlords as exploitation. . . . ‘As the clients became Communists, protection became oppression.’”<sup>2</sup> Thus, patronage may often be seen as domination and oppression.

In Lebanon local strong men (brokers) are called *qabadayat*. “The *qabadayat*’s main interest was to assert their position of power vis-à-vis the other local bosses and aspirants. Due to their tendency to use force and coercion, to their ability to influence the electorate, and to their intimate knowledge of local solidarities, they were sought by *zu’ama* [patrons] to serve as their political brokers. As such, they recruited supporters and organized armed bands of youngsters (*shabab*) to impose *za’im*’s will.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, patrons in Lebanon used brokers to impose their power on people. But clients may change their *zu’ama* (patrons), even in situations when they are grateful for services received: “The grateful clients might eventually be bought off by rival *zu’ama*, with offers of promotion for the judge and another contract for the businessman. Such changing allegiances are not uncommon, and lower down the social hierarchy, large-scale defections from the

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<sup>1</sup> Blok, 181.

<sup>2</sup> Rassam, “Power, Patronage and Marginal Groups in Northern Iraq,” 165.

<sup>3</sup> Eisenstadt and Roniger, 93.

clientele take place when a *za'im* fails to deliver the goods.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, a patron who offers better benefits will have more clients.

Campbell discusses the needed attitude of a man who received benefits:

When a Sarakatsanos receives a favour from another, he must show gratitude. “One good turn deserves another.” Even if only between the acceptance of some service and its later repayment, gratitude must for a while act as a makeweight in the balance. Not to show gratitude for help, which has been freely given, is behaviour open to severe public reproach. But to be grateful is to be “obligated” (υποχρεωμενος); and this is an admission of inequality and even weakness.<sup>2</sup>

Gratitude is the basic attitude required in patronage. Danker in his discussion of benefactors also emphasizes gratitude: “Ingratitude is the cardinal social and political sin in the Graeco-Roman world, and failure to memorialize benefactions conferred by generous people is its flipside.”<sup>3</sup> Seneca expressed the same view, discussing the obligation to show gratitude by returning favors.<sup>4</sup> Thus, ingratitude leads to some violations.

Campbell further explores situations in which self-regard is insulted by others. It seems that self-regard or honor is also considered to be a limited good:

A man’s self-regard is typically molested where he is insulted or defamed or believes to be so treated. When another person suggests by even indirect allusion that a man is dishonourable or weak he molests his self-regard. . . . In such circumstances

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson, 210.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community*, 95.

<sup>3</sup> Danker, 436.

<sup>4</sup> Seneca, “On Benefits,” in *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales* (Loeb Classical Library), 1.10.

the core of a man's social personality is touched, his manliness and prepotence are questioned. Then, the only remedy is to attack his detractors with knife or stick.<sup>1</sup>

Such insults require action. An honorable man must fight for his honor. If he is not successful he might lose it. In many cases clients would not even fight for their honor if insulted by the patrons on whom they depend for their survival. Thus, there are various violations in the custom of patronage. Because of his limited power, the client is usually the one who is in danger of being taken advantage of.

### Summary and Conclusions to Ancient Patronage

I have first discussed the origin and development of ancient patronage. Patronage appears to have developed as soon as there was an imbalance in interpersonal exchanges, or as soon as somebody needed to depend on somebody else for certain goods or services. Social power is concentrated in dependency of others. Consequently, when one party in an exchange relationship is not able to reciprocate on the same or similar level for the received benefits, a way is opened for the establishment of a patronal relationship. Something like that could have happened early in human history. Thus, patronage could be one of the oldest types of inter-human relationships. Nevertheless, I believe that hospitality preceded patronage. Traditional hospitality is the first and original human state of being. Imbalanced hospitality, or the inability to reciprocate on the same or similar level, led to the establishment of the first patronal relations.

The term "patronage" is derived from Greek and Latin terms for "father" (Gr. πατήρ; Lat. *pater*). We have seen that the Roman world was entirely determined by

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell, *Honour, Family, and Patronage: A Study of Institutions and Moral Values in a Greek Mountain Community*, 308.

patronage and had terminology for it. Romans ruled their provinces with the help of patronage. The Roman emperor was the highest patron in the network with his governors as his clients, while governors were patrons to those below them. Thus, the entire Roman world was set up as a patronal society.

The Greek language is lacking exact terminology for patronage.<sup>1</sup> Yet Greeks practiced patronage, even though there were some efforts to minimize it, especially in the democratic city of Athens. We have seen evidence for the presence of patronal relations in such cities as Thessalonica and Corinth, and we can assume that it existed in Ephesus as well, since it was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. As the result of our anthropological investigation we have seen that patronage is usually very strong in rural areas where the local state cannot penetrate with all its services.<sup>2</sup> Having already established some evidence for the presence of patronage in ancient Greek cities, we can also assume it was present in the Greek rural areas. Simply said, patronage should have existed wherever there were reciprocal relationships of inequality among people.

I continued presenting two simple definitions for patronage which guide this discussion: (1) Patronage is a patron-client relationship; and (2) Patronage is a relationship of two unequal individuals. There are many different aspects of patronage and it would be difficult to summarize all of them in one simple definition. Nevertheless,

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<sup>1</sup> We have seen above that the modern-day Italian language in Sicily does not have patronal terminology either, even though the Italian language is a further development of Latin, which has a rich terminology for patronage. Sicilians use the word “amici” (friends) to describe both patrons and clients.

<sup>2</sup> This was seen in the example of Sicily, as well as other rural areas like Mexico, Sarakatsani’s Greek mountain community, and certain Arabian countries.

I have devised my own definition of patronage, based on what I have observed about that custom and emphasizing some aspects that in my view build the basis of patron-client relationships: Patronage is a reciprocal patron-client relationship based on social inequality of the parties involved, where the patron uses his power to benefit his client as well as to benefit himself through that relationship, and the client looks for ways to satisfy his own needs, while being of use to his patron. This definition has led me to conclude that patronage involves selfishness.

I dealt next with benefits in patronal relations. Both clients and patrons might seek social approval, honor, or increase in status. Because of their different social status and needs, each party is also seeking specific benefits. Thus, clients are looking for support, protection, and mediation when needed. On the other hand, patrons receive gratitude, support at elections, and submission, while their general attitude is usually exploitive in nature.

Since patronal relations regularly have an exploitive element mixed with the selfishness observed above, various violations of the custom are possible. Tensions inherent in the patronal relations lead to all kinds of violations. The limited-good concept, or the belief that all goods in the world are present in limited supply, leads to jealousy, competition, and fighting, since it is believed that gain by one person comes only through loss by others. Patrons can use coercion or generate fear. They can often use force and violence. When a client feels that his self-regard is molested or insulted, he can change his allegiance and try to look for a different patron, even though in the first-century world this was not easily done. All these negative outcomes were considered above as violations of patronage.

### Patronage in 3 John

I now turn to the text of 3 John in search of evidence for patronal behavior. My thesis is that the description of Diotrephes in vss. 9 and 10 is a description of typical patronal behavior. There are five statements used to describe him:

1. ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων αὐτῶν Διοτρέφης οὐκ ἐπιδέχεται ἡμᾶς
2. τὰ ἔργα ἃ ποιεῖ λόγοις πονηροῖς φλυαρῶν ἡμᾶς
3. καὶ . . . οὔτε αὐτὸς ἐπιδέχεται τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς
4. καὶ τοὺς βουλομένους κωλύει
5. καὶ ἐκ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐκβάλλει

The first of these statements can be translated as “Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not receive us.” Diotrephes’s love for being first is expressed with the participle present active ὁ φιλοπρωτεύων. This is the only occurrence of this word in the New Testament. A search in TLG gives only forty-six entries. Plutarch used it four times. On one occasion he explains that Alcibiades exhibited “love of rivalry and the love of preeminence.”<sup>1</sup> He further used the same expression to explain tranquillity of mind: “And self-love is chiefly to blame, which makes men eager to be first and to be victorious in everything and insatiably desirous of engaging in everything.”<sup>2</sup> Artemidorus uses it twice for a wife who is “fond of being first.”<sup>3</sup> Julian uses the word φιλοπρωτία when he

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<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Alcibiades*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Loeb Classical Library), 2.1.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *On Tranquillity of Mind*, trans. W. C. Helmbold (Loeb Classical Library), 471D.

<sup>3</sup> Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica*, trans. Robert J. White (Park Ridge: Noyes Press, 1975), 111.

writes about “Caesar’s passion for being first.”<sup>1</sup> So, that expression seems to refer to the human desire to have the top position in certain groups. Diotrophes not only desired it, but he used his power to assure his first place in his house church.

Further, 3 John uses the word ἐπιδέχεται for receiving. I discussed the meaning and usage of that word when dealing with hospitality in chapter 4. After reviewing different Greek texts for the usage of that word, I concluded that the best way to translate ἐπιδέχομαι is as “somebody’s acceptance of a burden on himself.” A similar meaning is found in LS: “take on oneself.” I have concluded that ἐπιδέχομαι expresses the idea of service. The host assumes a serving position by “taking guests on himself.” In the context of 3 John, ἐπιδέχομαι would mean “taking the itinerant missionaries on oneself” in order to provide a service of hospitality.

But the text actually says that Diotrophes denies that service to the elder and his itinerant missionaries. Thus he violates the custom of hospitality. In the first-century world, who would be in a position to violate that custom without experiencing some drastic personal consequences? It seems to me that only a mighty patron could have done such a thing without being worried about losing his honor. A mighty patron was in a position to choose whom he wanted to support and whom he did not. Too many people were competing for the support of such mighty people, so they were daily in a position of choosing their clients.

My thesis is that Diotrophes had started doing in a church context what he was accustomed to doing in his everyday dealings with his clients. Thus, he started treating

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<sup>1</sup> Julianus, *The Caesars*, trans. Wilmer Cave Wright (Loeb Classical Library), 319D.

itinerants as he would treat his regular clients. Everyday business realities started determining the business of the church. Sacred and profane were mixed together.

The second phrase describing Diotrephes's behavior could be translated as "the works which he does accusing us with evil words." It may simply mean gossip, but it could also mean charges against the elder and his emissaries. If these evil words were a marginal appearance, then they would not deserve mention. If these words were uttered by an average church member, then they would not have enough weight. But weight is added to these evil words if they come from some influential church member who supports and finances the church and its operations.

Since Diotrephes was previously described as a person who was expected to show hospitality to the elder and his itinerants, we can assume that he was a person of significant means. He seems to have been one of the most important patrons of the church and thus his evil words have significant weight in that church community. People believed him, and even if they did not they still supported him since he was one of the major supporters of the church and without him the church might struggle for its survival.

The third phrase could be translated as "he neither receives the brothers." The same word for "receiving" was already used in vs. 9. There Diotrephes does not receive "us" — the Elder and his emissaries. Here it is reduced to the brothers — itinerant preachers sent by the elder to local churches. We see here again Diotrephes's patronal behavior: He is in a position in which he can pick and choose whom he wants to receive.

The word used here for "receiving" may include an element of subordination. Obviously, Diotrephes is not ready to serve or to subordinate himself under the itinerants who came empowered with the authority of the Elder. He is not accustomed to showing subordination, and that is why "receiving," with everything that this word might imply, is



not something he is ready to offer. As a mighty patron he cannot and does not want to show any type of subordination. His attitude is simply described as “one who loves to be first.”

The fourth phrase describing Diotrephes might be translated as “prevents those who are willing.” It concerns the willingness of other church members to receive itinerants. Obviously, in his church there were people who wanted to show hospitality to them. As they try to offer their support, they are prevented by Diotrephes. If Diotrephes was just another church member, he would not have the power to make others obey his commands. But he obviously has power, since he is able to prevent them, as the text says. Being able to prevent others from doing what they wish to do is within the realm of patronal relations. A patron has power to command and require obedience from his clients.

Finally, the fifth phrase says “and he throws out of the church.” It does not specifically say who is thrown out. We have discussed that issue in chapter 3 already. The last group of people mentioned in the text are those who are willing to show hospitality to the itinerants. Thus, it seems that Diotrephes is throwing other church members out of that same church. By doing so, he certainly refuses the itinerants as well. So, by his actions, both willing members and itinerants are thrown out of the church.

Diotrephes shows here a significant amount of power. Pilch defines power as “the ability to exercise control over the behavior of others.”<sup>1</sup> With his actions Diotrephes obviously controls the behavior of others. He first prevents, and then expels from the

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<sup>1</sup> Pilch, 158.

church, those who do not obey him. Some physical power might be involved, but more importantly there is patronal power backing him up. People need him as a patron, so they have to obey his commands and support his actions.

Peterman makes an interesting observation regarding Lucian: “Lucian stresses repeatedly that once one enters the household one gives up all freedom (8, 13, 24). The one who enters a wealthy household has sold himself into slavery.”<sup>1</sup> The church has no other meeting place than in the households of its wealthy patrons. By meeting in their space, the church has to submit to their house rules. The church as a collection of people gives its own deciding power to the patron to lead them any direction he wants. Different types of abuse are possible in such situations, and we have one such instance in 3 John.

The majority of the church members probably support Diotrephes, so the Elder cannot send his letter directly to the church, but writes to an individual called Gaius. The Elder says that Diotrephes “does not receive us” and rejects the written communication sent to the church (see vs. 9). Some force might be involved in preventing written communication of the Elder from reaching the church. Diotrephes seems to be transferring his everyday patronal business attitude into the realm of his local church, thus mixing profane and sacred and causing problems in the church community of 3 John.

What is the role of Gaius? I believe that the Elder chose to write to Gaius because he was among those who were willing to offer their hospitality to the itinerants. As is

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<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *De Mercede*, trans. A. M. Harmon (Loeb Classical Library); W. G. Peterman, *Paul's Gift from Philippi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 210.

argued in chapter 3, in vs. 5 of 3 John the Elder praises the good deeds of hospitality by Gaius, and in verse 6 he is called to continue even more so. It seems that Gaius needed to be encouraged to continue with his acts of hospitality toward itinerants, as well as to show the full measure of his hospitality. If he was doing it already, why did he need to be encouraged to continue? Probably because he became hesitant to offer it to the full extent or was hesitant to offer it at all after he saw what Diotrephes had done to those who were willing. He did not want to be thrown out of the church like the others.

Gaius seems to have been a patron as well. The hospitality that he offered indicates that he was a person of some means. He might have been dependent on Diotrephes, and his opinion or approval seems to have mattered to him. So, he needed the encouragement from the Elder in order to continue with his good acts.

### **Summary and Conclusion to Patronage in 3 John**

Issues of patronage in 3 John center in the person of Diotrephes. As a mighty patron in his local community, and probably as the main supporter of his local church, he had taken full control of it. He refused to receive the Elder and his emissaries, he accused the Elder with evil words, he prevented those who were willing to receive the itinerant brothers, and he threw out of the church those who received the itinerants, as well as the itinerants themselves. What we have here is patronage determining the life of a local church. Everyday business realities have been transferred into the realm of the church, profane and sacred are mixed together, and the church is in trouble.

Traditional hospitality with an attitude of subordination has been expected from Diotrephes. Gaius seems to have been practicing such hospitality (3 John 5), but was

hesitant to extend it to its full measure, since the Elder needed to encourage him in vs. 6 to extend it to its full measure in the future.<sup>1</sup> He was probably afraid of being thrown out of the church as well. So, the Elder writes to Gaius to assure him that he was doing the right thing, as well as to secure his support in the current situation and for the time when he would personally come to confront Diotrephes before the church (3 John 10).

### **Model of Patronage in 3 John**

After presenting patronage in the ancient world and explaining its major characteristics, as well as observing patronal issues in 3 John, I now conclude with a model of patronage relevant for the circumstances of 3 John:<sup>2</sup>

1. Patronage is a **patron-client** relationship.
2. Patronage presupposes **fixed** and never-changing patron-client **roles**.
3. Patronage is a **reciprocal** relationship of dependence with **different types of benefits and obligations** for patron and client.
4. Patronage is an unbalanced type of exchange relationship, in which two individuals will always be **unequal**, despite their continual exchanges.
5. Patronage is selfishly **exploiting** a person for personal profit.
6. Patronage puts an emphasis on **domination**.
7. Patronage belongs to the **limited-good view**.

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<sup>1</sup> See my discussion on Gaius in chapter 3 above.

<sup>2</sup> For an updated model of patronage after the final conclusions of this dissertation are drawn see Appendix A.

## CHAPTER 6

### HOSPITALITY VERSUS PATRONAGE

#### **Two Models Opposed**

Hospitality and patronage have been studied in the previous chapters and a model for each has been developed. Now the two models need to be contrasted. That procedure will enable us to see the differences between the models, as well as to draw some final conclusions.

First of all, hospitality is a host-guest relationship, while patronage is a patron-client relationship. There is a role reversal in future host-guest encounters, while roles are fixed and never changing in patron-client relationships. Both types of relationships require reciprocity for the relationship to continue. Reciprocity in hospitality relationships happens by future host-guest role reversals, which assures similar benefits for both parties. Reciprocity in patronal relations does not include role reversals, but fixed roles with a different type of benefits for the parties involved. A client always gets a socially lower level of benefits, while being equally obligated to the relationship as the patron.

Further, reciprocal hospitality exchanges bring host and guest into a state of equality, even when they do not belong to exactly the same social stratum. On the other hand, patronage is a relationship of inequality, in which despite their continual exchange, patron and client can never reach a state of equality. A relationship of equals is usually an enjoyable relationship, while relationships of unequals can easily become a burden.

Additionally, hospitality includes an element of subordination of the host to his guest. On the other hand, the patron does not need to subordinate himself to his client, but subordinates his client to himself for the purpose of exploiting him. While hospitality puts an emphasis on deference toward the other person, patronage puts an emphasis on domination.

The final difference between the models is found in the limited-good view which is typical for the ancient world, as well as for some less developed areas today.<sup>1</sup> This view is described above as a belief that gain by one person automatically means loss by others. Such a belief introduces selfishness, jealousy, competition, and fighting in local communities, since those who do not have are jealous of those who have. Patronage belongs under the limited-good view where selfishness rules, since as many goods as possible need to be acquired by both patron and client. Hospitality, on the other hand, belongs to the unlimited-good view, where care for others is the focus.

I do not pretend that my list of features and differences between the models is exhaustive. Hospitality can indeed be perverted, while patronage can be offered unselfishly. But hospitality cannot be abused if the element of subordination is not devoid of it. The description of hospitality and patronage in this investigation is based on my research above, which is interested in a general understanding of the ancient customs. Table 3 presents major features of the two opposing models that have been developed in this investigation.

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<sup>1</sup> The limited-good view is typical for the countries of the Balkans and I can confirm it for Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Even the latest economic development of some of these countries is not able to change the thinking of the people from a limited- to an unlimited-good view.

Table 3. Hospitality and Patronage Opposed<sup>1</sup>

<b>Hospitality</b>	<b>Patronage</b>
Host-Guest	Patron-Client
Role reversal in future encounters	Fixed and never-changing roles
Reciprocity—similar benefits	Reciprocity—different benefits
Equality	Inequality
Subordination	Exploitation
Deference	Domination
Unlimited-Good View	Limited-Good View

### Application to 3 John

In 3 John the Elder discusses two models of behavior: hospitality and patronage. Hospitality is the model that is supported by the Elder. Gaius has followed that model and needs to continue that way. On the other hand, Diotrephes has practiced patronage. The Elder criticizes patronage in the church context and argues for hospitality as the model that needs to be followed. In that sense 3 John presents the model of hospitality versus the model of patronage.

How is Gaius modeling hospitality? The epistle of 3 John reports that Gaius shows hospitality to the itinerants (vss. 5 and 6a). Gaius is praised for his deeds of hospitality (vss. 3 and 4) and he is encouraged to continue with them (vs. 6b). Further in vs. 8 the need for hospitality in Christian churches is emphasized with a progressive

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<sup>1</sup> For the final list of features of the two opposing models, consult Appendix B.

present: “We ought to support such as these, in order that we might become coworkers with the truth.” This statement is placed in the middle of a concentric chiasm and represents the main message of 3 John. It emphasizes that hospitality must not be neglected in a Christian church, and Gaius needs to continue modeling hospitality with his deeds.

How is Diotrephes modeling patronage? 3 John presents Diotrephes and his patronal behavior in vss. 9 and 10. He wants to be first, he spreads evil words about the Elder and his representatives, he does not receive them, he forbids those who are willing to receive them, and he throws them out of the church. This behavior resembles typical patronal behavior in antiquity. The Elder condemns the works of Diotrephes in vs. 11 and advises Gaius not to follow them. Thus, the two models, hospitality and patronage, are opposed in the context of 3 John. Hospitality is lifted up as good and beneficial for a church community, while patronage is designated as destructive and damaging.

What is the major difference between the two models? Hospitality is a relationship of equality, while patronage is a relationship of inequality. In patronage, the patron is above his client (Diotrephes wants to be first, according to vs. 9), and intends to dominate (Diotrephes throws people out of the church, according to vs. 10). In hospitality the two parties are equal, with the host always being ready to serve his guest (Gaius serves the itinerants, according to vss. 5 and 6). In the host’s service even an attitude of subordination is present in his behavior (see the verb ὑπολαμβάνειν in vs. 8). The patron is ready to rule, while the host is ready to serve. In that sense these two models are entirely opposed. Patronage might be described as hospitality out of balance. It can even be described as a perverted version of the traditional hospitality recommended to



Christians in 3 John. Thus, 3 John presents a clash between the concepts of patronage and traditional hospitality.<sup>1</sup>

Even though hospitality in 3 John is discussed primarily in the relationship of the local church to the itinerants coming from other localities, my impression is that the author implies that the model of hospitality should be used for structuring relationships among the local church members as well. I am taking that impression from vs. 11 where Gaius is advised not to imitate the evil works of Diotrephes, which are practiced toward itinerants as well as toward church members who are expelled (vs. 10), but to practice good. To whom should Gaius extend good works? Probably toward both groups — itinerants as well as locals. This impression is reinforced with vs. 12, if Demetrius is an expelled member of the church of Diotrephes whom Gaius needs to accept.<sup>2</sup>

But members of a church are not all social equals. How should this model of hospitality work among unequals? If hospitality is practiced in a community of unequals, that is actually a statement about their equality. Hospitality assumes that goods are unlimited. With such a belief, competition is senseless and brothers and sisters in Christ are no longer competitors but have become equals, since hospitality is a relationship of equals. Traditional hospitality with an attitude of subordination is shown to them, and they show the same to other members, regardless of what social status they have outside of the church community. Traditional hospitality cancels inequality.

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<sup>1</sup> It is a different type of clash than the one described by the ecclesiological approach as the clash between Spirit and office.

<sup>2</sup> See my discussion of Demetrius and possible options in chapter 3 above.

On the other hand, the limited-good view is characteristic of patronage. The belief that all goods are limited, or that one loses if somebody else gains, results in selfishness, jealousy, competition, and fighting within local communities. The Elder has a certain level of honor that enables him to write to local churches, but Diotrephes fights for the same honor. With his emphasis on traditional hospitality the Elder actually argues for a change in perspective: Christians need to live according to the unlimited-good view and Gaius needs to do whatever he can to support the itinerants (vss. 5, 6 and 8). There are no limits to the positive attitude and deeds that Christians can practice in order to bless those around them. Everyone has honor and needs to show honor to others. Deference toward others is emphasized by hospitality. Goods and services do not need to be counted, but should be given freely without calculations. Such an attitude practiced in a community revives it, and the giver regularly gets back even more than he originally gave, since reciprocity is the major characteristic of hospitality.

In conclusion: Why is hospitality a better model of behavior in the context of Christian churches? The element of subordination inherent in hospitality will bring a positive spirit into the everyday life of the church. On the other hand, patronage brings exploitation, selfishness, and power struggles to the church. 3 John redefines for its readers what a successful Christian community looks like. The Elder wants to avoid all the negative issues that come with patronage and recommends traditional hospitality as an ideal way for managing local church life.

### Hospitality Contributing to Networking and Social Capital<sup>1</sup>

Before I conclude with present-day applications, I would like to introduce the notion of social capital. Social capital is “capital captured through social relations.”<sup>2</sup> It “focuses on the resources embedded in one’s social network and how access to and use of such resources benefit the individual’s actions.”<sup>3</sup> It “is seen as a social asset by virtue of actors’ connections and access to resources in the network or group of which they are members.”<sup>4</sup> People naturally tend to belong to various types of groups, depending on their affinities. One major benefit of group involvement for the members is access to the social capital of their group.

My thesis here is that hospitality increases social capital, while patronage damages and decreases the social capital of a given group.<sup>5</sup> Coleman believes that “churches, especially local congregations, are major sites for the generation of social capital.”<sup>6</sup> A similar idea is expressed by Wuthnow: “If social capital consists of interpersonal networks that help people attain their goals, then religious involvement may

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<sup>1</sup> I was pointed to the importance of social capital in a private conversation with Dr. Bruce J. Malina in November 2005 in Philadelphia, PA.

<sup>2</sup> Nan Lin, *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 19.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 19. Lin further defines social capital as “resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions.” Ibid., 29.

<sup>5</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Øystein S. LaBianca for this observation, which he expressed in a private conversation while reviewing my work.

<sup>6</sup> A. John Coleman, “Religious Social Capital: Its Nature, Social Location, and Limits,” in *Religion as Social Capital*, ed. Crown Smidt (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2003), 36.

be one source of such networks.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, church communities are seen as social networks where significant amounts of social capital can be concentrated.

If we apply the above findings to 3 John, then Diotrephes’s patronal dealings seem to be damaging for the social capital of the church community. His actions bring conflict, division, and power struggles to the community. In such a situation, the social capital of a community decreases, since only a few can access it and those with access do not have the full network at their disposal. On the other hand, the involvement of Gaius as well as the writings of the Elder are intended to increase social capital and improve the networking of the community. Practicing hospitality with an attitude of subordination brings a spirit of equality, deference, and limitless goods to a local community.

The model of hospitality when applied to a local community supports networking among group members, since it can be practiced among all members of a given group. On the other hand, patronal dealings are damaging to networking, because they limit interaction to the patron-client relationship. If a client changes his patron, he immediately runs into a bad relationship or even hostility with his previous patron, as was seen in some examples in chapter 5. With the model of hospitality the number of hosts is not limited, and everyone can be both a host and a guest. Thus, the model of hospitality, which is promoted by the Elder, encourages networking and increases the social capital of the local church community. The same results should be expected in any church community in which members are dedicated to hospitality with an attitude of subordination.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Wuthnow, “Religious Involvement and Status-Bridging Social Capital,” *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion* 40, no. 4 (2002): 669.

### **Application to Today**

Church power issues are an everyday reality in today's churches. The question of who has the deciding power divides many churches, since there is usually more than one party pushing for its own interests. Awareness of such issues has partially contributed to my initial interest in the topic of this dissertation. Pastors are helplessly struggling as they observe their churches being involved in endless circles of power struggles. Does the Bible have anything to say about church power issues?

I believe that 3 John is a powerful statement on conflict management. This dissertation should make us sensitive to our own use and misuse of power in a church context. The patronal attitude, which concentrates power within the hands of a single or couple of church members, needs to be given up. Instead, an attitude of serving the needs of others in the spirit of hospitality should be adopted. If all members would be involved in serving others, then there would be no power struggles and the church would be a peaceful environment, safe for those who want to encounter God and learn more about Him. 3 John is a powerful call to serve others by showing hospitality with an attitude of subordination.

How can church members be moved to show traditional hospitality? Jesus left us the greatest example of a service of hospitality done with an attitude of subordination (John 13:4-20). Patrons, rich and powerful among us, as well as lowly and powerless ones are called to the same attitude (e.g., Mark 10:42-45). If all of us would follow that call, the church would serve God's purpose and be a powerful tool for God in today's world. There is no greater statement for the power of the Gospel than when rich and poor, great and lowly, powerful and powerless position themselves on the same level and together serve each other and their community. Such a church becomes an appealing

place that cannot leave its environment indifferent. The Gospel still has power to touch people around us, if it is seen in our lives.

### **Further Study**

The question arises: What are the implications of this study for the ecclesiological, theological, and social approaches presented in my review of literature in chapter 2? The three approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Together they form a bigger picture and might conceivably reinforce each other.

The ecclesiological approach mainly deals with church offices and the authority related to offices. This study ties power discussed in 3 John primarily to the social role of the patron or household leader in whose house the local church was meeting. A patron could have used his patronal power to promote himself to a church office which would secure him authority and thus increase his power. In that sense, Diotrephes might have promoted himself to a church office which would solidify his authority and add to his patronal power. Thus, in a further study results of my investigation of social dynamics might be combined with the results of the ecclesiological approach.

In regard to the theological approach, if 3 John is topically closely related to 1 and 2 John dealing with Gnostic heresy, it would be interesting to see how religious beliefs might have influenced social circumstances in 3 John. It is believed that Gnostics did not care about love for others and ethics in general.<sup>1</sup> 1 and 2 John especially emphasize love for others (1 John 3:11, 3:18, 3:23; 4:7, 4:11, 4:20-21; 2 John 5) in the context of Gnosticism (1 John 2:22; 4:2-3; 5:1; 2 John 7). A patron of a house church could have

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<sup>1</sup> Larry W. Richards, *1 Corinthians* (Nampa: Pacific Press, 1997), 108.

used his position of power for the purpose of promoting his ideology, or preventing unwelcome ideologies from entering his house church. In a further study it could be explored how customs of hospitality and patronage were influenced by Gnostic heresy, and what implications such influence might have for 3 John.

Regarding the social approach, this study did not concentrate on the power of the Elder. Epistolary theory might be used to further explore the meaning of personal presence from a distance in the context of 3 John. The Elder seems to have been using the third epistle of John to maintain a relationship from a distance and to exercise his own power by the means of his writing. The Elder might be seen as a patron who is trying to impose his own will and power over the church. For further study it could be explored how the epistolary theory adds to the power issues described in 3 John.<sup>1</sup>

The task of interpreting 3 John is not over with my contribution. The ecclesiological, theological, and social approaches are interrelated and might conceivably add to each other. I hope that my investigation has been able to broaden the horizon at least a little bit.

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<sup>1</sup> In this regard Mitchell's work might be enlightening. Mitchell, "'Diotrephes Does Not Receive Us': The Lexicographical and Social Context of 3 John 9-10."

## APPENDIX A

### MODELS OF HOSPITALITY AND PATRONAGE

#### Model of hospitality:

1. Hospitality is a **host-guest** relationship.
2. Hospitality presupposes host-guest **role reversals** by future encounters.
3. Hospitality is a reciprocal relationship providing **similar of benefits and obligations** for both parties.
4. Hospitality is a balanced type of exchange relationship, in which two parties become **equal**, even if they do not belong exactly to the same social stratum.
5. Hospitality is based on ethical and religious motivation – 3 John presents it as a **service of subordination** to others.
6. Hospitality puts an emphasis on **deference** toward the other person.
7. Hospitality belongs to the **unlimited-good view**.
8. Hospitality **increases networking and social capital**.

#### Model of patronage:

1. Patronage is a **patron-client** relationship.
2. Patronage presupposes **fixed** and never changing patron-client **roles**.
3. Patronage is a **reciprocal** relationship of dependence with **different types of benefits and obligations** for patron and client.
4. Patronage is an unbalanced type of exchange relationship, in which two individuals will always be **unequal**, despite their continual exchanges.
5. Patronage is selfishly **exploiting** a person for personal profit.
6. Patronage puts an emphasis on **domination**.
7. Patronage belongs to the **limited-good view**.
8. Patronage **decreases networking and social capital**.



## APPENDIX B

### HOSPITALITY AND PATRONAGE CONTRASTED

Table 4. Hospitality and Patronage Opposed

<b>Hospitality</b>	<b>Patronage</b>
Host-Guest	Patron-Client
Role reversal in future encounters	Fixed and never changing roles
Reciprocity—similar benefits	Reciprocity—different benefits
Equality	Inequality
Subordination	Exploitation
Deference	Domination
Unlimited-Good View	Limited-Good View
Increased Networking and Social Capital	Decreased Networking and Social Capital

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