Chapter Two

The Rhetorical and Social Background of Roman Corinth

In the previous chapter, I investigated scholarly arguments about the problems addressed in 1 Corinthians 1-4, particularly by considering Paul’s Corinthian ‘opponents’ and their understandings of *sophia*. I will now examine carefully the rhetorical and social environment of Roman Corinth in the time of Paul. I pay special attention in my reconstruction of the rhetorical situation of Roman Corinth to Cicero, a giant of rhetoric and great Roman orator, to his rhetorical handbooks, his understandings of wisdom (*sapientia*) and eloquence (*eloquentia*), and his probable influence on Corinthian mentality and behaviour. I then examine the social and cultural significance of patronal networks and social hierarchies in Roman Corinth in the mid-first century CE – as the social expression of Greco-Roman wisdom – and attempt to profile the ethnic and social composition of the Corinthian Christian community. Finally, I will explore the *ekklēsia* of the Christians as reflected in 1 Corinthians 1-4 within that wider context.

2.1 Rhetoric, Wisdom, Eloquence in Roman Corinth

The application of rhetorical and social approaches to understanding the background of Roman Corinth in the time of Paul enables a plausible description of the Corinthians’ social and cultural understandings of wisdom and eloquence and their social manifestations. In this section, I intend to explore the meanings of the Greek
words *sophia* and *sophia logou* or *logos sophias* as used in 1 Corinthians 1-4.¹ Here Paul frequently uses rhetorical terminology such as *sophia* and its equivalent *sophos*, which occur 26 times in chapters 1-4 (28 times in 1 Cor as a whole), and *logos* which appears 9 times (occurring 17 times in 1 Cor).²

Furthermore, I will argue that the Corinthian wisdom and eloquence which Paul sharply criticised in the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians, were rooted in Greco-Roman rhetorical traditions. I contend that the wisdom and eloquence that enthralled Corinth were particularly related to understandings of wisdom (Latin, *sapientia*) and eloquence (*eloquentia*) as exemplified in Cicero’s rhetorical handbooks. Wisdom and eloquence in the first century CE were hallmarks of education and high social status. On the basis of this rhetorical and cultural conception of wisdom and eloquence, the Corinthian ‘opponents’ opposed Paul, because to them Paul did not display adequately the gifts of *sophia* and the rhetorical skills of eloquence (*logos*) in a way that compared favourably to those of his contemporaries (2 Cor 10:10; 11:6). I will argue that Paul’s ‘opponents’ supported Apollos because they understood that Apollos was well trained in rhetoric, and that he had both *sophia* and persuasive speech (*logos*) (e.g. 1 Cor 3:4-6; cf. Acts 18:24).³

Within this environment, conflicts and tensions arose between Paul and his Corinthian...

¹Paul begins these chapters with greetings to the saints in Corinth and thanksgiving to God (1 Cor 1-9), just as in his other letters (Rom 1:1-8; Gal 1:1-5). Right after this greeting Paul turns to the crucial issue of schisms in the Corinthian congregation (1:10-13), and the urgency of the issue is apparent. Soon after raising the issue of schisms, surprisingly, he is drawing the audience to the issue of baptism (*baptisma*) (1:13c-17a), and then he suddenly turns to the issue of the proclamation of the gospel (*euaggelizo*). Paul unexpectedly connects the gospel message with the phrase *sophia logou*, that seems to be so significant and meaningful to the Corinthians in their civic society that it merits their full attention. Meanwhile, he brings out another phrase *ho stauros tou christou* which is the most essential summary of his gospel message (v. 17b). Thereafter, he frequently uses the phrase *sophia logou*, its equivalents, and the words *sophia* and *logos* individually in chapters 1-4 (see below). In these chapters he deals with such words in close relation to the matter of schisms.

²In these chapters Paul also employs distinctive phrases which are closely related to the idea of rhetoric, such as *sophia tou kosmou* (1:20, 21: 3:19), *sophia aînos* (2:6), *sophia logou* (1:17), *logos sophias* (2:4; cf. 12:8), *anthrōpinē sophia* (2:13), and *hē sophia anthrōpōn* (2:5; cf. *sophia sarkikos* in 2 Cor 1:12).

‘opponents’, eventually resulting in schismata among the Corinthians. I will contend that the Corinthian Christian community was split into two major factions, namely Paul’s group and Apollos’ group (1 Cor 3:4-6; 4:6). In my view, the Corinthian schismata were fundamentally aligned according to the degree of cultural influence from the Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions penetrating the Christian gatherings at that time. I now turn to an investigation of the influence of Cicero’s rhetorical legacy in the wider civic communities of Roman Corinth in the mid-first century CE.

2.1.1 Cicero’s Rhetoric, Wisdom and Eloquence

Rhetoric

Cicero was “the greatest Roman orator and the most important Latin writer on rhetoric.” The name of Cicero itself represents rhetoric and eloquence in Rome. Plutarch regards him as “the best orator,” and Quintilian (c. 35-95 CE) views him as “the best producer and teacher of eloquence” amongst the Romans. No Roman can be compared with him in terms of his influence on Roman mentality and culture and his contribution to the development of rhetoric in the Roman world.

Cicero was amongst the very first group of Romans who regarded rhetoric itself as useful and honourable and who “devoted themselves to it as a defence and for glory.” Tacitus (c. 55-120 CE) acknowledged Cicero’s initial commitment to the development of rhetoric and oratory in the Roman world. He states, “Cicero was “the

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5Plutarch, Cicero, 2.4; Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, 10.3.1.
6Suetonius (c. 75-140 CE), De Rhetoribus, 1.
first to give its proper finish to oratorical style…(and) the first to adopt a method of selection in the use of word, and to cultivate artistic arrangement.”\(^7\)

Cicero put an equal emphasis on the importance of rhetoric and eloquence, and on philosophy. He devoted himself to the study of philosophy and the practice of eloquence at the same time, considering these essential in his life. He thus confesses in his *De Officiis* that he spent his life aspiring to “the orator’s peculiar ability to speak with propriety, clearness, and elegance.”\(^8\)

Before Cicero’s beliefs and contribution were embraced by Rome, rhetorical conventions had not been previously popularised amongst the Romans. Rhetoric had only been regarded as a Greek cultural heritage. The study of rhetoric had been first introduced to Rome decades before Cicero’s birth (in 106 BCE), yet the actual practice and study of rhetoric did not consistently take place at Rome because of a decree by the senate in 161 BCE and an edict of the censors in 92 BCE.\(^9\) Because of these reasons, wealthy young Romans travelled to Greece and Athens to study philosophy and rhetoric in the time of Cicero, who was also one of these young Romans.\(^10\) In his teenage years, Cicero studied at the school of Philon of Larissa the

\(^7\)Tacitus, *Dialogue de Oratoribus*, 22.2-3.

\(^8\)Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.1.2.

\(^9\)In 161 BCE, the senate declared that philosophers and rhetoricians were not permitted to reside in Rome at all. In 92 BCE, the censors made an edict that Latin rhetoricians were prohibited from opening and running schools at Rome, and students were not permitted to attend their schools (see Suetonius, *De Rhetoribus*, 1).

academic, in Rome. Cicero admired Philon for his eloquence and character, and afterwards travelled to Greece and Athens to study philosophy and rhetoric.

While in Greece and Athens, Cicero was inspired and influenced by Greek philosophers and rhetoricians: Socrates (469-399 BCE), Isocrates (436-338 BCE), Plato (429-347 BCE), Demosthenes (384-322 BCE), and Aristotle (384-322 BCE). This is clearly supported by Quintilian’s comments: “Cicero, who devoted himself heart and soul to the imitation of the Greeks, succeeded in reproducing the force of Demosthenes, the copious flow of Plato, and the charm of Isocrates.”

Nonetheless, Isocrates and Aristotle influenced Cicero more than the other intellectual masters did. These two Greeks strongly influenced Cicero’s conviction that philosophy and rhetoric should be seen as closely related sciences, not as separated ones. They also affected the formation of his theory of rhetoric, and

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11Plutarch, Cicero, 3.2. Cicero seems to have been bilingual and to speak both Latin and Greek with versatility. When he was young, he was already familiar with Greek culture and language (see Anthony Gerveritt, Cicero: the Life and Times of Rome’s Greatest Politician [NY: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003], 164). Thus, he managed to speak Greek and used Greek words frequently in his writings (see Cicero, De Oratore, 1.2.9; 3.28.110; Epistulae ad Familiare, 13.15.1-2; De Fato, 1.1). He translated Plato’s Protagoras and Timaeus into Latin in 45 BCE (Michael Grant [trans and intro], Cicero and the Good Life [London: Penguin Books 1971], 356). Plutarch states that Cicero “made it his business to compose and translate (Greek) philosophical dialogues, and to render into Latin the several terms of dialectics and natural philosophy” (Plutarch, Cicero, 40.1).

12Cicero describes the importance of Greece and Athens for his study of rhetoric. He says, “Greece, which has ever claimed the leading part in eloquence, and of Athens, that discoverer of all learning…” (Cicero, De Oratore, 1.4.13). In addition, Ferguson claims that “in Athens on a foreign tour he attended the lectures of Antiochus of Ascalon (an Academic) and Zeno of Sidon (an Epicurean), and in Rhodes he became intimate with Posidonius (a Stoic)” (Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity, 357). Cicero includes their names in his Academica 1.10.38; 2.6.16-20; 2.24.75.

13Cicero “betook himself to a retired and contemplative life, associated with Greek scholars, and pursued his studies” (Plutarch, Cicero, 3.3).

14Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, 10.1.108. Even Cicero describes himself as a follower of Socrates and Plato (De Officiis, 1.2.2). A description of Aristotle’s influence on him will be given below.

15Cicero was also inspired so much by the other Greek masters. Yet this inspiration was limited to either philosophical aspects or that of oratory and eloquence: Socrates and Plato would have mostly influenced Cicero’s philosophical thought (see Cicero, Academica, 1.4.16-9), while Demosthenes would have mainly influenced his skills of oratory and eloquence. Quintilian and Plutarch alike compare Cicero’s eloquence with that of Demosthenes (see Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, 10.1.108-110; Plutarch, Demosthenes, 3.1-4; Plutach, Demosthenes and Cicero, 1.1-3.7). In spite of this, Cicero critiqued both Plato for his lack of willingness to engage in oratory, and Demosthenes for his discontinuation of philosophical studies: “if Plato had been willing to devote himself to forensic oratory, he could have spoken with the greatest eloquence and power: and … if Demosthenes had continued the studies he pursued with Plato and had wished to expound his views, he could have done so with elegance and brilliancy” (Cicero, De Officiis, 1.1.4).

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improved his skills of oratory and eloquence. Consequently, Cicero adapted the theories of both Isocrates and Aristotle, and fused them together in his rhetorical handbooks.\textsuperscript{16} H.M. Hubbell supports this and observes that Cicero “definitely announces his work, \textit{De Oratore}, as an adaptation of the theories of the greatest two ancient masters, Isocrates and Aristotle.”\textsuperscript{17} Therefore, Cicero was, as it were, an Isocrates and Aristotle in Rome.

Yet Cicero acknowledged that the older Greek masters up to Socrates, had combined “with their theory of rhetoric the whole of the study and the science of everything that concerns morals and conduct and ethics and politics.”\textsuperscript{18} In this acknowledgment, Cicero desired to restore the former connection of philosophy with rhetoric, following the ancient masters’ approach, and wished to combine the study of philosophy with the practice of oratory, relating one to the other.\textsuperscript{19} This is indicated in Cicero’s \textit{De Officiis} that he wrote for his son, “(I (Cicero) have always combined Greek and Latin studies – and I have done this not only in the study of philosophy but

\textsuperscript{16}Cicero, \textit{De Inventione}, 2.2.8. Cicero acknowledges that as contemporaries, Isocrates and Aristotle opposed each other. He comments that Isocrates and Aristotle, “each of whom, engrossed in his own profession, undervalued that of the other” (Cicero, \textit{De Officiis}, 1.1.4).

\textsuperscript{17}Harry Mortimer Hubbell, \textit{The Influences of Isocrates on Cicero, Dionysius and Aristides} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1913), 16. “(Aristotle was) busy with philosophy, but devoting some attention to the art of rhetoric as well, the other (Isocrates)…devoted to the study and teaching of oratory…”(Cicero, \textit{De Inventione}, 2.2.8).

Their approach, however, was very different from Socrates and Plato, who refused to relate and connect philosophy to rhetoric. Cicero states: “Socrates…in his discussions separated the science of wise thinking from that of elegant speaking…The compositions of Plato…from which has sprang the undoubtedly absurd and unprofitable and reprehensible severance between the tongue and the brain, leading to our having one set of professors to teach us to think and another to teach us to speak” (Cicero, \textit{De Oratore}, 3.16.60-1). Nonetheless, Cicero recognises that Socrates initially considered valuable the study of oratory. Yet he did not like to use oratory and eloquence in the context of politics and public life. Afterwards, Plato used Socrates’ idea to defend that philosophy had to be separated from rhetoric (see Cicero, \textit{De Oratore}, 3.16.59-60).

\textsuperscript{19}Cicero, \textit{De Oratore}, 3.19.72.

\textsuperscript{18}See Hubbell, \textit{Influences of Socrates on Cicero}, 22; also Cicero, \textit{De Oratore}, 3.16.60. In addition, Hubbell states that “Isocrates opposed those who rejected rhetoric altogether and substituted other pursuits, hence he emphasised the value of \textit{legein}; while Cicero opposed the rhetors who refused to admit that philosophy had any relation to rhetoric, hence he emphasised…the necessity of a wide knowledge if one would attain success as an orator” (Hubbell, \textit{Influences of Isocrates on Cicero}, 23). As such, Isocrates and Cicero alike laid an emphasis upon the necessity and importance of philosophy and rhetoric.
also in the practice of oratory." Cicero further states, “My dear Cicero, I cordially recommend you to read carefully not only my orations but also these books of mine on philosophy...I have attempted...both.”

Cicero admired Isocrates for his rhetorical ability and especially his excellence in eloquence. He considered Isocrates as one of those ancient masters who were professional orators and teachers of oratory, and who were equipped with philosophy, wisdom and the talent of oratory. Cicero also describes Isocrates as “the Master of all rhetoricians,” “a great orator, and ideal teacher,” and “a great and famous teacher of oratory.” These descriptions indicate that Cicero derived from Isocrates in particular, his idea of oratory, the ideal model of an orator, and the high value of eloquence. This attitude was certainly different from that of philosophers in the Platonic and Socratic tradition. Adopting Isocrates’ attitude, Cicero comments, “Socrates...all the Socratic schools, and the philosophers looked down on eloquence and the orators of wisdom, and never touched anything from the side of the other study” – namely rhetoric. Due to Isocrates’ strong influence, Cicero aimed to become a good orator and was devoted to improving his ability in oratory and eloquence. As a result, Greek and Latin writers in the first and second century CE

20 Cicero, De Officiis, 1.1.1.
21 Cicero, De Officiis, 1.1.3.
22 Cicero, De Oratore, 3.16. 59.
23 Cicero, De Oratore, 2.3.10; 2.22.94; Brutus, 8.32; De Inventione, 2.2.7.
24 See Cicero, De Oratore, 1.5.17; 1.8.31-4; 3.19.72; 3.20.76; also Hubbell, Influences of Isocrates on Cicero, 16-20; for his idea of eloquence see below.
25 Plato disliked rhetoric and saw it as a means of persuasion (see Plat, Gorgias, 453-4). He certainly distinguished philosophers from sophists. He identified himself with the philosophers and disliked sophists such as Isocrates (Litfin, Paul's Theology of Proclamation, 46-7). Clearly, in the dialogue between Socrates, Gorgias and others, Plato identifies himself with Socrates as a philosopher who is a pure lover of knowledge and learning, and of knowing the truth, and at the same time Plato distinguishes himself from Gorgias who is described as a rhetorician or sophist (Plato, Gorgias, 449, 453, 436).
26 Cicero, De Oratore, 3.19.72; see also De oratore, 3.16.59-60.
27 See Cicero, De Officiis, 1.1.2.
depicted him as the best orator and best producer of eloquence (eloquentia) amongst the Romans.  

Aristotle also had a strong influence on Cicero, particularly on the formation of his concept of rhetoric. Cicero referred to Aristotle’s rhetorical handbook to understand the definition of rhetorical genres, and developed his idea of rhetoric based on Aristotle’s writings. In his late teenage years, Cicero wrote De Inventione, some of which seems to have been quoted directly from Aristotle’s theory of rhetoric in his Rhetoric (technē rhētorikē or peri rhētorikēs), because there are similarities in the definition of rhetorical genres between these two writings. It is clear that Cicero developed his idea of rhetoric based on Aristotle’s Rhetoric.

In summary, Cicero was of great significance in Greco-Roman rhetoric. He was a person who introduced Greek/Hellenistic) rhetoric to the Romans and contextualised it in the Roman setting. Cicero adapted the rhetorical theories of Greek/Hellenistic masters such as Aristotle and Isocrates and fused them together in his rhetorical handbooks such as De Inventione. Moreover, he played an important role in Greco-Roman rhetoric.

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28Plutarch, Cicero, 2.4; Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, 10.3.1.
29For a brief description of Aristotle’s rhetorical genres see Appendix 1 further below.
30The idea of Cicero’s rhetorical genres are found in his De Inventione (see Appendix 1). The De Inventione was written by Cicero in c. 89 BCE (Kennedy, Classic Rhetoric, 101). Some of the material in Aristotle’s Rhetoric derived from his lectures at Athens in the mid-fourth century BCE and from Plato’s principles of rhetoric in the Phaedrus (Menahen Stern [trans.], Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism: From Herodotus to Plutarch: vol. 1 [Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1976], 6; Litfin, Paul’s Theology of Proclamation, 75).
31Aristotle’s attitude towards rhetoric differed from that of Plato. Aristotle insisted on the usefulness of rhetoric, though, similar to Plato, he defines rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever” and “a counterpart of dialectic” (Aristotle, Art of Rhetoric, 1.1.1; 1.1.14; also Rhetoric, 1: 1 1355a21; 1355b8-10; 1:2: 1355b27-28). According to Aristotle, there are three modes of proof or three methods of effecting persuasion: the first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker (ethos); the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind (pathos); the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself (logos) (Aristotle, Rhetoric 1.2: 1358a1-21; see also Litfin, Paul’s Theology of Proclamation, 80). Cicero includes these three modes in his rhetorical handbooks (see Orator, 21.71; De Oratore, 1.5; De Inventione, 1.14.20, 1.50.92-3; see also DiCicco, Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in 2 Corinthians, 41-50).
32I have not been able to establish clearly that Paul uses all these three modes in 1 Corinthians 1-4. DiCicco, however, employs these three modes of proof in examining 2 Corinthians from a rhetorical perspective and in justifying it as rhetorically structured (see DiCicco, Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in 2 Corinthians, 10-13).
role in developing rhetoric in the Roman world and became the best orator amongst the Romans. These points lead me to argue for the great importance of Cicero for rhetoric in the Roman world. I now turn to investigate briefly Cicero’s understandings of wisdom.

Wisdom

Wisdom (sapientia) was what Cicero most desired to possess. He asserted that people must seek wisdom.32 The high value he placed on wisdom is revealed clearly in his rhetorical handbooks. In his De Officiis, De Re Publica, De Legibus, and De Inventione Cicero employs the word sapientia frequently. Cicero’s perception of wisdom was influenced strongly by Plato and Aristotle’s understandings of wisdom.33

Cicero views wisdom as “the foremost of all virtues”: wisdom (sapientia), justice (iustitia), courage (fortitudo), and temperance (temperantia). Because of this, the duty carried out by a person who possesses wisdom is the most important and highest duty in his/her civic society.34 Cicero also sees wisdom as “the knowledge (scientia) of things human (humanarum) and divine (divinarum), which is concerned with the bonds of union between gods and humans and the relations of person to person.”35 Cicero describes wisdom as the highest knowledge and the truest knowledge because by wisdom people are able to know all things, divine or human,

32See Cicero, De Inventione, 1.36.65.
33Wisdom – what the Greeks call sophia” (Cicero, De Officiis, 1.43.153).
34This viewpoint is similar to Plato claiming wisdom as the noblest of the virtues (see Plato’s The Republic, 4: 428, 433; Protagoras, 329-30).
35Cicero, De Officiis, 1.43.153. Similarly, Strom quotes from Cicero, “we see that wisdom and intelligence also have been derived by (human beings) from the gods” (Cicero, On the Nature of the Gods, 2.31.78-79) (Strom, Reframing Paul, 117-8). Strom acknowledges that Cicero understood wisdom in close relation to human and divine beings.
because by wisdom people know the primary and the highest principles and causes which regulate and control those things.\footnote{Cicero, \textit{De Officiis}, 2.2.5. This is similar to Aristotle describing wisdom as “the highest degree universal knowledge” and “the most divine science” (Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics} A.1. 982a23; \textit{Metaphysics} A.1. 983a5). Aristotles maintains that wisdom deals with “the first causes and principles of things” (\textit{Metaphysics} A.1. 981b29-982a1).}

Cicero describes wisdom as “the knowledge of what is good, what is bad, and what is neither good nor bad.”\footnote{Cicero, \textit{De Inventione}, 2.52.160. This description is similar to T’oegye’s idea of wisdom (\textit{jeehyel sulgi}) (see Appendix 2 further below).} This wisdom comprises three faculties: memory (\textit{memoria}), intelligence (\textit{intellegentia}), and foresight (\textit{providentia}). Memory is the faculty through which the mind remembers what has occurred.\footnote{This is similar to Aristotle arguing that a human being produces experience from memory (see Aristotle, \textit{Metaphysics} A.1. 980a28-981a12. In his \textit{Metaphysics}, Aristotle refers to wisdom (\textit{sophia}) often and relates it to the words gn\textit{o}sis, \textit{philosophia} or \textit{philosophos}, and prot\textit{e} \textit{philosophia} (\textit{Metaphysics} A.1. 981a27; 981b10, 28; A.2.982a1, 2, 6, 16, 17, 20; A.9. 992a24; A.2. 982b11, 18, 20; A.3.983b2, 6, 21; A.6.987a29, 31; 988a16; A.9.992a33; 10.993a16; B.1.995b12; 2.996b9; K.1.1059a18, 21, 32; 2.1060a10; see also Giovanni Reale, \textit{The Concept of First Philosophy and the Unity of the Metaphysics of Aristotle}, John R. Catan (trans), [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980], 46).} Intelligence is the faculty by which it makes sure of what is now. Foresight is the faculty by which the mind foresees what is going to happen before it happens.\footnote{Cicero, \textit{De Officiis}, 2.53.160.}

Cicero regards wisdom as the noblest part of philosophy. He argues that philosophy is nothing other than the pursuit of wisdom. Cicero defines a philosopher as “the lover of wisdom” and as a person who searches for wisdom itself.\footnote{Cicero, \textit{De Officiis}, 2.2.5. This is accord with Plato defining philosophy as the love of wisdom and the love of knowledge (see Plato, \textit{Phaedrus}, 278; \textit{Cratylius}, 391.)}

Because of this, Cicero emphasises both the study of philosophy and the pursuit of wisdom. He states, “If one ought to desire wisdom, it is proper to study philosophy.”\footnote{Cicero, \textit{De Inventione}, 1.36.65. In addition, Cicero says, “If the person would belittle the study of philosophy, I quite fail to see what in the world he would see fit to praise” (\textit{De Officiis}, 2.2.5).} This makes clear that for Cicero the study of philosophy and the possession of wisdom should come together. It is not that to study philosophy is one discipline; to pursue wisdom is another, but that the two occur at the same time.
Cicero insists on the necessity and significance of wisdom in public affairs. In his *De Re Publica* Cicero asserts that it is the noblest function and the highest duty of wisdom that it makes a person who possesses it useful to his State. Cicero maintains that wisdom and eloquence are alike needed for people who handle public affairs for the good and benefit of the State. Yet the role of wisdom is more important than that of eloquence because “from eloquence the state receives many benefits, provided only it is accompanied by wisdom, the guide of all human affairs.” In other words, a person who is involved in public affairs has to combine the study of philosophy and the pursuit of wisdom with the possession of eloquence. Cicero thus contends that a person who lacks either wisdom or eloquence should not be allowed to handle public affairs.

Cicero also asserts that wisdom is of importance in private affairs and social life. Under the guidance of wisdom a person knows and discerns between what is good and bad. He gives the example that Lucius Brutus, who was a pre-eminent man of wisdom “freed his fellow citizens from the unjust yoke of cruel servitude.” As the guidance for all human affairs, wisdom provides people benefits in their private affairs. Cicero states, “wisdom urges us to increase our resources, to multiply our wealth, to extend our boundaries. Wisdom urges us also to rule over as many subjects as possible, to enjoy pleasures, to become rich, to be rulers and masters.” Cicero also believes that wisdom is intimately related to sociability. Guided by wisdom

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42 Cicero, *De Re Publica*, 1.20.33.
43 Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.4.5.
44 Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.3.4. Clearly, such ideas were taken from Plato’s writings. Plato states that wisdom is the most important and necessary element of the things that a ruler or king of State must have and that the peaceful and orderly nature of the State depends on whether or not there are people who possess wisdom (see Plato, *Statesman*, 294, 309). Plato goes on that a person who wishes to become a good and noble guardian of the State should study philosophy and seek wisdom and true knowledge. This person can become a good counsellor for the people (see Plato, *The Republic*, 2: 376; 4: 428, 433; *Protagoras*, 329-30).
45 Cicero, *De Re Publica*, 2.25.46.
defined as the knowledge of all things human and divine, a person knows how to build good social relationships with others and how to keep good fellowship with a god.\textsuperscript{48} Wisdom, therefore, is part of the most necessary and important elements a person should possess in order to shape a good personality and sociality, become wealthier, and be a ruler.

Aware of the necessity and importance of wisdom in private and public affairs, Cicero asserts that “if wisdom is to be sought above all things, then folly is to be avoided above all things.”\textsuperscript{49} He thus devoted himself to the study of philosophy and the pursuit of wisdom. He believed firmly that wisdom made him all he was. Furthermore, Cicero encouraged and motivated Romans to devote themselves to studying philosophy and seeking wisdom, for this was their duty.\textsuperscript{50}

To sum up, wisdom is the most desirable one of all virtues that Cicero wished to possess. As a politician and orator Cicero gave high value to the importance of wisdom in public affairs and social life as well as private affairs. He especially encouraged his people to attain wisdom for in his belief this wisdom would provide them benefits and social securities such as wealth and high social status. These elements in Cicero’s understandings of wisdom help me to draw analogies between the way Cicero gave high value to wisdom and the way some of the Corinthian Christians regarded worldly/human wisdom more highly than Christ the wisdom of God as indicated in 1 Corinthians 1-4 (1:18-2:16).\textsuperscript{51} We now move on to an examination of Cicero’s idea of eloquence.

\textsuperscript{48}Cicero, \textit{De Officiis}, 1.43.153.
\textsuperscript{49}Cicero, \textit{De Inventione}, 1.37.66.
\textsuperscript{50}Cicero, \textit{De Legibus}, 1.24.63.
\textsuperscript{51}I will develop this in 3.1 further below.
Eloquence

Cicero was an icon of Roman eloquence (eloquentia). The name Cicero itself represents Roman eloquence, of which it is impossible to speak without dealing with Cicero’s legacy. Plutarch claims that Cicero was the only Roman who made the Romans know “how much eloquence does grace and beautify that which is honest.”

It is no exaggeration to claim that Cicero devoted his adulthood to possessing and practising eloquence. After finishing his boyhood studies Cicero went to Greece and Athens to learn Greek oratory and eloquence. In Cicero’s day, Greece was the centre of eloquence, and Athens was the place where “the supreme power of oratory (or eloquence) was both invented and perfected.” There, Cicero was inspired by the reputed eloquence of Greek orators: Isocrates and Demosthenes. He esteemed Isocrates’ eloquence most highly and referred to him as an “eminent father of eloquence.” Cicero was influenced by Aristotle and Plato’s ideas of eloquence as well. These Greek philosophers spoke of eloquence at length in their philosophical and rhetorical handbooks.

Similarly, Cicero insists that oratory has great power. He states, “The power of oratory (or eloquence) in the attainment of propriety is great.” Cicero maintains that this oratory is employed in “pleadings in court” and in “popular assemblies and in the

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52Plutarch, “Cicero,” 77.
53See Cicero, De Officiis, 1.1.2.
54Cicero, De Oratore, 1.4.13.
55Cicero, De Officiis, 1.1.4; also De Oratore, 1.5.17; 1.8.31-4; 2.3.10; 2.22.94; 3.19.72; 3.20.76; Brutus, 8.32; De Inventione, 2.2.7; also Hubbell, The Influences of Isocrates on Cicero, 16-20.
56Plato acknowledges the importance of eloquence in rhetoric and its power in public meetings. He sees rhetoric as the art of eloquent speech itself (see Plato, Phaedrus 268, 270). Aristotle’s insistence on eloquence is evidenced in his Rhetoric and Rhetoric to Alexander. Aristotle sees eloquence as the most important topic in rhetoric and explains how to make an eloquent speech (Rhetoric 1:2 1358a36-3 1359a29; 2:18 1391b1-1392a8; 3:1 1403b5-7; Rh. Al. 1420a8; 1 1421b9; 1420a 13-14; 22 1434a33-39; 1434b28-29).
57Cicero, De Officiis, 1.37.132, where ‘eloquence’ and ‘oratory’ are used interchangeably in this literary context.
In his *De Optimo Genere Oratorum* Cicero speaks of the power of eloquence in private affairs. For instance, eloquence is used to defend a person at trial in court and to plead a private case before referees. In his *De Inventione* Cicero further claims that eloquence is of importance in public life: assemblies and in the senate. He acknowledged that a person who desired to succeed in public and political life had to possess eloquence. Plutarch supports this in his *Demosthenes and Cicero*. He states, “It is necessary, indeed, that a political leader should prevail by reason of his eloquence.”

The Romans in Cicero’s day also believed that a person’s eloquence could provide benefits, interests, and protection to the country and community where that person belonged. This is clearly evidenced in Cicero’s language, “the man who equips himself with the weapons of eloquence…defends the welfare of his country…He will be a citizen most helpful and most devoted to… interests of his community.” Cicero further states, “from eloquence the state receive many benefits…from eloquence those who have acquired it obtain glory and honour and high esteem. From eloquence comes the surest and safest protection for one’s friends.”

It is evident that Cicero’s political success was related, to some extent, to his eloquence. Cicero’s eloquence gave good impression to the Romans of his time, and his Roman contemporaries acknowledged Cicero’s excellent eloquence. Apparently,

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58 Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.37.132.
59 See Cicero, *De Oratorum*, 4.10.
60 Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.4.5.
61 Plutarch, *Demosthenes and Cicero*, 2.1. Plutarch here talks about Cicero’s speeches and his boasting and self-praise of his eloquence. On the other hand, Plutarch argues against Cicero and claims that it is “ignoble for him to admire and crave the fame that springs from his eloquence (logos)” (*Demosthenes and Cicero*, 2.1).
62 See Cicero, *De Officiis*, 1.21.70, 73; 1.37.132.
63 Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.1.1. Cicero describes eloquence as an art and a gift of nature. This eloquence arise from “most honourable causes and continues on its way from the best of reasons” (*De Inventione*, 1.1.2).
64 Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.4.5.
“crowds used to gather to hear the eloquence of Cicero,” as F.R. Cowell says.\textsuperscript{65} Plutarch informs us that even Julius Caesar “praised Cicero’s eloquence.”\textsuperscript{66} Furthermore, Dio Cassius (c. 150-c. 235 CE) describes an incident that demonstrates a relation between Cicero’s eloquence and his political success. At the time Julius Caesar was assassinated (44 BCE), Rome was in political chaos. The senate was divided into factions. Cicero, by his excellent eloquence, persuaded the senators to be united. The senators valued and followed all Cicero’s advice. He thus protected the senate from factionalism.\textsuperscript{67} Afterwards, Cicero took control of the senate. At this time, his power reached its greatest height in the city of Rome, so that even young (Octavianus) Caesar feared his power.\textsuperscript{68} Clearly, Cicero’s eloquence was intimately connected to his political success. It is no wonder that Cicero obtained fame, glory, and high esteem in Rome where the people valued his eloquence highly.

Cicero insisted on the importance and necessity of eloquence for the welfare of Rome and urged the Romans to study eloquence carefully. He states, “persons ought…to devote themselves to the study of eloquence although some misuse it both in private and public affairs.”\textsuperscript{69} Cicero further claims that the Romans “should study eloquence the more earnestly in order that evil men may not obtain great power to the detriment of good citizens and the common disaster of the community.”\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{65}Cowell, Cicero and the Roman Republic, xiv.
\textsuperscript{66}Plutarch, Cicero, 39.5. Here is an example of the effect of his eloquence: “Caesar said to his friends: “what is to prevent our hearing a speech from Cicero after all this while, since Legarius has long been adjudged a villain and an enemy? But when Cicero had begun to speak and moving his hearers beyond measure, and his speech, as it proceeded, showed varying paths and amazing grace, Caesar’s face often changed colour and it was manifest that all the emotions of his very soul stirred; and at last, when the orator touched upon the struggle at Pharsalus, he was so greatly affected that his body shook and he dropped from his hand some of his documents” (Plutarch, Cicero, 39.7).
\textsuperscript{67}“Cicero by the foregoing speech persuaded the senate to vote that no one should bear malice against any one else. While this was being done, the assassins also promised the soldiers that they would not undo any of Caesar’s acts” (Dio Cassius, Roman History, 44.34).
\textsuperscript{68}See Plutarch, Cicero, 45.4-6.
\textsuperscript{69}Cicero, De Inventione, 1.4.5.
\textsuperscript{70}Cicero, De Inventione, 1.4.5; De Officiis 1:156. Seneca the elder (c. 54 BCE-c.39 CE) encouraged Romans to study eloquence as well. He states, “Do study eloquence. You can easily pass from this art to all others; it equips even those whom it does not train for its own ends (Seneca the elder,
Finally, Cicero contends that a person should equip himself with both eloquence and wisdom and keep them in balance for the benefit and advantage of State. He believes that “wisdom without eloquence does too little for the good of states, but eloquence without wisdom is generally highly disadvantageous and is never helpful.” Cicero argues that a person must practise eloquence in combination with the study of philosophy and moral conduct, so that they can then provide beneficial and useful contributions to the country. If he “neglects the study of philosophy and moral conduct, which is the highest and most honourable of pursuits and devotes his whole energy to the practice of oratory, his civic life is nurtured into something useless to himself and harmful to his country.” Cicero’s legacy of eloquence had a great influence on the Romans of the succeeding generations.

Furthermore, Seneca the Younger (c. 4 BCE-65 CE), a first-century rhetorician and philosopher in Rome, was inspired by Cicero and his legacy of eloquence. He confesses, “I have simply been following the practice of Cicero.” Seneca referred to Cicero as “the greatest master of eloquence” and called him “the eloquent Cicero.” He thus recommended his Roman readers to read and study Cicero’s rhetorical handbooks. Seneca states, “Read Cicero; his style has unity.”

Controversies 2. Preface 3, in the Elder Seneca, which is taken from Peterson’s *Eloquence and Proclamation*, 60).

1Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.1.1. This emphasis on eloquence and wisdom in Cicero’s mind is similar to the conduct of some of the Corinthian Christians as addressed in 1 Corinthians 1-4 (see 3.1 below).

2Cicero, *De Inventione*, 1.1.1. This equal importance of eloquence and wisdom in Cicero’s idea of rhetoric is in accordance with the Corinthian conception of rhetoric as addressed in 1 Corinthians 1-4 (see 3.1 below).

3For an example see Plutarch, Cicero, 49.5.

4Seneca, *Epistulae*, cv 2.10. In addition, Seneca says, “I shall quote Cicero’s actual words,” and “The word which Cicero used seems to me most suitable” (*Epistulae*, xc 7.3; cx 1.2).

5Seneca, *Epistulae*, c 9; cv 2.10; cx 8.1.

scholars, and followers of philosophy in Rome of Seneca’s time and the mid-first century CE.\textsuperscript{77} 

Quintilian, a first-century teacher of rhetoric and oratory in Rome, also acknowledged Cicero’s eloquence. Quintilian claims “the name of Cicero was not regarded as the name of a man, but as the name of eloquence itself.”\textsuperscript{78} Cicero was “the best producer and teacher of eloquence” amongst the Romans.\textsuperscript{79} Quintilian goes on that it was Cicero “who shed the greatest light not only on the practice but on the theory of oratory; for he stands alone among Romans as combining the gift of actual eloquence with that of teaching the art.”\textsuperscript{80}

Due to these reasons, Quintilian regarded Cicero as the pride of Roman eloquence and oratory in comparison with Greek eloquence. In his \textit{Institutio Oratoria} Quintilian compares Cicero proudly to Demosthenes (384-322 BCE).\textsuperscript{81} Quintilian depicts Demosthenes as “by far the most perfect of Greek orators,” while he describes Cicero as “the perfect orator.”\textsuperscript{82} Hence, Quintilian referred to Cicero as the perfect model of eloquence and of “oratorical excellence.”\textsuperscript{83} Quintilian highly recommended that all Romans should learn from Cicero and admire him for his eloquence. Quintilian said to his students, “Cicero, in my opinion, provides pleasant reading for beginners and is sufficiently easy to understand: it is possible not only to learn much from him, but to come to love him.”\textsuperscript{84} He further states, “Let us… fix our eyes on

\textsuperscript{77}“When Cicero’s book \textit{On the State} is opened by a philologist, a scholar, or a follower of philosophy, each man pursues his investigation in his own way” (Seneca, \textit{Epistulae}, cv 8.30).

\textsuperscript{78}Quintilian, \textit{Institutio Oratoria}, 10.1.112.

\textsuperscript{79}Quintilian, \textit{Institutio Oratoria}, 10.3.1.

\textsuperscript{80}Quintilian, \textit{Institutio Oratoria}, 3.1.20.

\textsuperscript{81}“It is our orators, above all, who enable us to match our Roman eloquence against that of Greece for I would set Cicero against any one of their orators without fear of refutation” (Quintilian, \textit{Institutio Oratoria}, 10.1.105).

\textsuperscript{82}Quintilian, \textit{Institutio Oratoria}, 10.2.24, 28.

\textsuperscript{83}Quintilian, \textit{Institutio Oratoria}, 10.2.24, 28.

\textsuperscript{84}Quintilian, \textit{Institutio Oratoria}, 2.5.20.
him, take him as our pattern, and let the student realise that he has made real progress if he is a passionate admirer of Cicero."

Cicero’s eloquence was highly esteemed by the Romans of the next generations through to the first century CE. Plutarch shows that Cicero’s fame for eloquence abided to his time of the late first century and early second century CE. As such, it is clear that Cicero was an icon of Roman eloquence and that many Romans were inspired by his eloquence not only in his time and the first century BCE but also in the first century CE.

In summary, Cicero was regarded as a great master of eloquence in the Roman world. The Romans acknowledged and admired his excellent eloquence. Cicero insisted on the great importance of eloquence in public and private affairs. He believed that people who possessed eloquence were beneficial not only for their country but also for themselves and that eloquence was a weapon to defend the welfare of the State and to bring fame and glory to individuals. That’s why he urged his people to devote themselves to the study of eloquence and equip themselves with it. Moreover, Cicero’s ideas of eloquence were highly favoured by the Romans in succeeding generations. They took Cicero’s eloquence as their pattern and followed his practice of it. These Romans included Seneca the Younger (4 BCE-65 CE), Quintilian (c. 35-95 CE) and Tacitus (c. 55-120 CE) who were contemporaries of the Christians in the first century CE.

Seneca the Younger especially lived in the same era as Paul and the Corinthian Christians in the mid-first century, and was a significant figure in Roman eloquence at that time. Plutarch states, “Seneca proved that his eloquence profited others more than..."
himself."

The Romans praised eloquence and believed that a person could “rescue him/herself from mortality by the composition of glorious works of eloquence.”

This notion helps understand better the mentality and behaviour of some of the Corinthian Christians who were connected to some extent to the rhetorical situation of mid-first century Rome. Of the Corinthian Christians we know that Priscilla and Aquila lived in Rome and moved to Corinth. Phoebe took Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians (Rom 16:1-2). It seems plausible that Priscilla and Aquila would have heard about Cicero’s legacy of rhetoric and eloquence in Rome from Roman rhetoricians and orators like Seneca the Younger who was inspired by Cicero (see above). So we turn now to an examination of Cicero’s legacy in Corinth in Paul’s day.

2.1.2 Cicero’s Legacy in Roman Corinth

Roman Corinth in the mid-first century was “a significant Greco-Roman city which partook in an ordinary way of the features of Greco-Roman culture.” These features included patronal networks, social stratification, the imperial cult, and the influence of rhetorical systems. They all had a role to play in shaping the social and cultural milieu of mid-first century Corinth where Paul established the Corinthian congregations addressed in 1 Corinthians.

In particular, I argue, rhetorical conventions played an integral part in shaping the life of Corinthian civic society and had a continuing impact on the Corinthians’

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89 Seneca the Younger, De Consolatione, 2.6.
90 Litfin, Paul’s Theology of Proclamation, 143. Scholars have already argued that rhetorical conventions were widespread at Roman Corinth in the mid-first century (see 1.5 above). It is not my purpose here to repeat this scholarly argument but to argue specifically for the special significance of Cicero’s legacy of rhetoric and eloquence in Roman Corinth in the mid-first century.
91 These features will be examined carefully to understand the social and cultural situation of Roman Corinth in the mid-first century (see further below).
mentality and social behaviour. Furthermore, I argue that these rhetorical conventions were to some extent shaped by and related to Cicero’s rhetorical ideas as described in his handbooks such as De Officiis, De Oratore, and De Inventione. In other words, Cicero and his rhetorical handbooks are the best examples we have of the thinking that influenced, to some extent, the social behaviour and mentality of the Corinthians in the mid-first century Greco-Roman world, though he lived in the Roman Republic of the first century BCE. It is neither possible nor necessary to argue a direct connection between Cicero and the Corinthians, nor between Cicero and Paul, but merely to show the continuing legacy of Cicero’s thought in the wider Roman Empire.  

I would argue that Cicero and his rhetorical handbooks would have influenced the Corinthians through three different channels after Corinth was rebuilt in 44 BCE. First, the first generation of Roman colonists may well have brought Cicero’s handbooks from Rome when they came to Corinth following the orders of Julius Caesar, but probably his influence would have arrived with them. 

92 Cicero travelled to Roman colonial cities such as Athens, Ephesus, Galatia, and Tarsus (see William Alfred Quayle, “Cicero and Paul,” Methodist Review 89 [1907] 709-19, esp. 709). He never visited Corinth for Cicero lived between the periods of the destruction and rebuilding of Corinth. Greek Corinth was destroyed by Roman forces in 146 BCE, several decades before his birth (106 BCE). The city was then rebuilt as a Roman colony in 44 BCE (the year in which Julius Caesar was assassinated), one year before Cicero’s death (43 BCE) (see Dio Cassius, Roman History, 50.3-5). Cicero saw the re-founding of Corinth, but he did not visit the city. Cicero does briefly mention Corinth in his writings: “I wish they had not destroyed Corinth” (Cicero, De Officiis, 1.11.35). “I have got his works on the constitutions of Corinth and Athens at Rome” (Cicero, Epistularum ad Atticum, 2.1). 

93 G. Tomlin argues that when the Rome colonists came into Corinth they brought Epicureanism from Rome, since “it was the Epicurean philosophy which held the field in Italy…Seneca…gives grudging testimony to the widespread popularity of Epicurean teaching in the mid-first century. In 45 BCE Cicero…admitted that it was the most popular philosophy in Rome at the time” (Tomlin, “Christians and Epicureans,” 54). Tomlin argues that the Corinthian Christians were influenced by the teachings of Epicurus (341-270 BCE) and his follower Lucretius (90s to 55 BCE). In my view, however, Tomlin overlooks that Seneca and Cicero acknowledged that the Stoics were also regarded as a popular philosophical school at Rome (see Cicero, De Inventione; Seneca, De Constantia Sapientis, 15. 4; cf. Torkki argues for Stoic [not Epicurean] influence on Paul and particularly in his Areopagus speech [Acts 17:16-34], and states, “Paul is well at home in the Stoic tradition, while Epicureanism is foreign to him” [Dramatic Account of Paul’s Encounter with Philosophy, 141]. Similarly, M.V. Lee claims the influence of Stoicism on Paul and his use of body language in 1 Corinthians 12 [see Michelle V. Lee, Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ (SNTSMS 137; NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chs 3-5]). It seems likely that the Epicureans and the Stoics were alike philosophical schools under the
years of its re-founding, Roman Corinth was repopulated by Roman colonists. These colonists comprised a diversity of people groups: freed-people, urban poor, Caesar’s army veterans, and other Romans who possessed full Roman citizenship. Many of these Roman colonists may well have known of Cicero’s eloquence and have read his rhetorical handbooks. Some would have received Cicero’s teaching on rhetoric and eloquence while they resided in Rome. These Roman colonists would have been inspired and influenced by Cicero and his rhetorical legacy because, as I have indicated, in the mid-first century BCE Cicero was the most influential man in Rome in terms of his contribution to the development of rhetoric and eloquence, and his Romanisation of Greek rhetoric.

Second, what we know of the re-building of Corinth and its culture supports the widespread use of rhetorical conventions in the civic society of first century Corinth and the influence of Cicero’s rhetorical handbooks. Roman Corinth was one of the most Romanised cities within the entire Roman Empire. According to the Roman policy of colonisation, Corinth took on a Roman look not only in its architecture but also in its social, cultural, and political systems, when it was rebuilt (see below). This is supported by Augustus’ homogeneous policy during his reign (31 BCE- 14 CE), whereby the entire Roman Empire had an increasingly homogeneous influence of rhetorical conventions at Rome. Furthermore, Tomlin finds similarities between Epicurean teachings and the problems of the Corinthian Christian community (1 Cor). Nonetheless, he fails to provide a plausible description of the nature of Corinthian wisdom as addressed in 1 Corinthians 1-4 in relation to the Epicurean idea of sophia. Tomlin simply states that in Epicurean texts there was an idea of sophia. He does not demonstrate how the Epicurean idea of sophia had impact on the Pauline ‘opponents’ at Corinth and why they esteemed wisdom more highly than Christ as the wisdom of God and how this caused the problem of divisions in the Corinthian congregation. In spite of this, I agree with his argument that “‘wisdom’ can be explained within a more pure Greek Gentile context, rendering the Jewish background…unnecessary” (Tomlin, “Christians and Epicureans,” 67). It would be better to substitute the words “Greek Gentile context” by the phrase ‘Greco-Roman culture’. This is because Corinthian wisdom as addressed in 1 Corinthians 1-4 should be investigated in terms of the influence of Greco-Roman culture in which rhetorical conventions were so characteristic.

94This is supported by Cowell claiming that Roman crowds gathered to hear Cicero’s eloquence (see F.R. Cowell, Cicero and the Roman Republic [Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962], xiv). Quintilian also describes Cicero’s teaching in Rome (see Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, 10.3.1).

95See 2.1.1 above.
culture regardless of regions. The empire was envisioned as having no cultural
differences between Rome the capital of the Roman Empire and its colonies. Rome
and its colonial cities were encouraged to develop the same social and cultural
systems, such as the imperial cult, patronage, social hierarchies, and rhetorical
conventions.96

Due to this Roman propaganda, I first investigate the rhetorical situation of
Rome in the first century, in order to grasp, to some degree, the similar culture of first
century Roman Corinth. First century Rome had become a leading centre of rhetoric
within the Greco-Roman world. Rhetorical conventions were such a significant part of
the civic life of the Romans that Rome had a number of rhetorical schools in the first
century CE.97 In first century Rome, Seneca the Younger (c. 4 BCE-65 CE),
Quintilian (c. 35-95 CE), and Tacitus (c. 55-120 CE) were distinguished rhetoricians
and orators.98 They were alike inspired by Cicero, and Seneca and Quintilian in
particular acknowledged Cicero’s excellent eloquence. They encouraged their
students to admire Cicero for his eloquence and read his rhetorical handbooks as their
rhetorical pattern.99 So although Seneca and Quintilian were both respected and
admired for their rhetorical abilities by the Romans in the first century CE, they
themselves encouraged the Romans to learn rhetorical patterns from Cicero and his
rhetorical handbooks.100

96See S.A. Cook, et al. (eds), *The Cambridge Ancient History: the Augustan Empire, 44
97See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 10.1.112. In the time of Cicero, Athens had been the centre of
oratory and eloquence in the Mediterranean world (see Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.4.13).
98In 71, Quintilian became the first man called to a chair in rhetoric at Rome. Tacitus was one of the
most admired orators in Rome in the first century (George A. Kennedy, *Classic Rhetoric and its
Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* [2nd ed] [Chapel Hill; London: the
University of North Carolina Press, 1999], 118).
99See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 2.5.20; 10.1.112.
As a wealthy, prosperous, and luxurious city, Roman Corinth would not only have been inhabited by a large number of people and a diversity of people groups, but would also have been influenced by rhetoricians and orators who came from Rome and admired Cicero for his excellent eloquence. As stated earlier, Seneca the Younger was a contemporary of the Corinthians addressed in 1 Corinthians. It is worth noting that Gallio, proconsul of Corinth in Paul’s time, was the elder brother of Seneca. So there is no doubt that the Corinthians in the mid-first century would also have been influenced by Cicero and his rhetorical ideals, though they may not have had a direct connection with him or with Seneca the Younger.

Most educated Romans spoke Greek fluently and even preferred Greek cultural traditions to their own Latin ones. Thus, in their literature and art they preferred to use Greek instead of Latin. This phenomenon was evident in the colonial cities like Corinth even more distinctively than in Rome. Given that Cicero had made Greek philosophy so popular in Rome and thereby “had a great influence on intellectual life” and was “a prime source for Greek thought and the status of philosophy at the close of the Roman Republic,” we would expect this influence to be strong in Roman Corinth also.

It can also be argued that the influence of Cicero’s legacy reached out to people of other origins such as Jews and Greeks in the Greco-Roman world of the first and second century CE. Plutarch (c. 45-120 CE), a Greek writer, confirms that

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101 For the demographic composition of Corinth see further below.
102 Seneca, Epistulae Morales, 104.
104 E. Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity, 359; see also Cicero, De Officiis, 1.1.1-3.
Cicero’s fame for eloquence abided to the day of Plutarch.\textsuperscript{105} Pogoloff also indicates the extent to which a rhetorical education had become the norm throughout the people groups of the empire:

In the Greco-Roman schools education was almost exclusively education in rhetoric, which the ancients considered an adequate preparation for the life of free men…the concept of rhetoric dominated the schooling of the time in Greek and Roman education, and it was conspicuous in Jewish schools also.\textsuperscript{106}

As such, I would argue that, as rhetorical conventions penetrated the civic life of the Corinthians in the mid-first century CE, so Cicero and his legacy of rhetoric and eloquence affected, to some extent, the mentality and social behaviour of the Corinthians. Furthermore, I will give evidence that Cicero and his rhetorical handbooks seem to have influenced, to some degree, the conduct of some of the Corinthian Christians and Paul’s Corinthian ‘opponents’ as indicated in 1 Corinthians 1-4, although he lived in the Roman Republic of the first century BCE. Consequently, I will use Cicero’s rhetorical handbooks as the principal guide for my rhetorical analysis of 1 Corinthians 1-4 and to help classify the type of rhetorical discourse in the Pauline text.

\subsection*{2.1.3 Implications for the Study of 1 Corinthians 1-4}

I will compare Cicero’s rhetorical handbooks and especially \textit{De Inventione} with the Pauline text of 1 Corinthians 1-4, a text that comprises a diversity of rhetorical elements as analysed earlier. This involves considering which type of rhetorical genre this biblical text is, deliberative, epideictic or forensic.\textsuperscript{107} Furthermore, for a better understanding of the rhetorical situation of the Pauline text, I will attempt to find out

\textsuperscript{105} Plutarch, 	extit{Cicero}, 2.5.
\textsuperscript{106} Pogoloff, 	extit{Logos and Sophia}, 49, 49n.54.
\textsuperscript{107} For more details on Cicero’s description of rhetorical genres see Appendix 1.
the influence of Cicero’s rhetorical legacy on the conduct of some of the Corinthian Christians, which we can glimpse in positive and negative ways in Paul’s use of rhetorical language.

Before doing so, I will examine briefly several indications of the general influence of Cicero’s rhetorical legacy in the wider New Testament. First, Paul uses in 2 Corinthians the three moods of proof, ethos, pathos, and logos that Cicero popularised in Roman culture through his Oratore, De Oratore, and De Inventione. He employs these three modes in 2 Corinthians 10-13 in particular. Secondly, Paul employs theories of rhetorical genre in his epistles that are thoroughly consistent with those outlined by Cicero. For example, the atmosphere of forensic rhetoric is abundantly evident in Galatians. In other words, Galatians is an apologetic letter, where Paul views the addressees as the jury, Paul as the defendant, and his Galatian opponents as the accusers. Thirdly, Paul certainly uses the functions of the exordium (beginning) and peroratio (end or conclusion) in Romans, which Cicero describes in his De Inventione and popularises for a Roman context. Romans 1:1-13, 15 functions as exordium, and 15:14-16-27 serves as peroratio. Lastly, there is a

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108 Of course this legacy is not specifically Cicero’s alone, but belongs to the wider Hellenistic rhetorical traditions. It may well be that Paul was shaped more by the latter, and the Corinthians by the former. But Cicero can not be, and must not be, removed from the equation altogether.

109 See DiCicco, Ethos, Pathos, and Logos in 2 Corinthians, 77-268; Cicero, Orator, 21.71; De Oratore, 1.5; De Inventione, 1.14.20; 1.50.92-3.


111 See Kim, God, Israel, and Gentiles, 58-89; Cicero, De Inventione, 1.15.20-21, 24; 1.52.98-100. Douglas A. Campbell also claims that the influence of Cicero’s rhetorical theories is glimpsed in Romans 3:21-26 (see D.A. Campbell, The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26 [JSNTS 65; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992], 80-99).
striking similarity between the description of Jesus in Hebrew 3:1 (“fix [katanoeō] your thoughts on Jesus”) and that of Cicero in Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria*, 10.1.112 (“Let us fix our eye on him [Cicero], take him as our pattern”).

Furthermore, and more specifically, 1 Corinthians 1-4 is clearly a rhetorical unit for it comprises several rhetorical elements, such as *inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, and pronuntiatio*, that Cicero describes in his *De Inventione*.\(^{112}\) Paul employs the function of *inventio* (discovering valid arguments) in the following passages: 1:10-13a, in which the issue of *schismata* is tackled, and 1:13b-25 and 2:1-5, where the issues of wisdom (*sophia*) and eloquence (*logos* or *sophia logou*) are addressed. These are the issues Paul mostly raises in 1 Corinthians 1-4 to argue against his Corinthian ‘opponents’ who caused the problem of divisions in the Corinthian Christian community. Paul puts these issues in proper arrangement and order (*dispositio*), when he addresses concretely the causes of *schismata* (1:26-31; 3:1-17; 4:1-21) and the differences between worldly (or human) wisdom and the wisdom of God (2:6-16; 3:18-23). Such is evidence that the function of *dispositio* (arrangement) occurs in 1 Corinthians 1-4.

Paul includes the function of *elocutio* (expression) in his letter where he quotes the slogans of some of the Corinthian Christians: “I belong to Paul,” “I belong to Apollos” (1:12; 3:4), “wise,” “powerful,” “noble birth” (1:26), “wisdom,” and “eloquent speech” (2:1-5).\(^{113}\) For the function of *memoria* (recalling shared memories), 4:1-12 is an example. Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians of the ministry to which he devoted himself, while he stayed in Corinth. Lastly, with regard to the function of *pronuntiatio* (delivery or tone of voice – implied only, in a letter, but

\(^{112}\)For more details see Appendix I.

\(^{113}\)Many scholars point to Paul’s comments in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 as evidence of his self-styled rhetoric, wherein he deliberatively eschews his rhetorical skills in order to advance the gospel” (Lee A. Johnson, “Paul’s Epistolary Presence in Corinth: A New Look at Robert W. Funk’s *Apostolic Parousia*,” *CBQ* 68 (2006) 481-501, esp. 500 n. 49).
already intended by Paul; see 1 Cor 5:3-4) I take as an example that in 1 Corinthians 1-4 Paul describes the Corinthian correspondents differently depending on the tone appropriate for each issue. He refers to them as *adelpoi* (1:10, 26; 2:1; 3:1; 4:6), as *sarkinois* (3:1), as *nēpiois en christō* (3:1), and as *tekna mou agapēta* (4:14). In using such different expressions, Paul seems to encourage the Corinthian audience to pay more attention to what he is saying and to respond emotionally to each label as given.

For instance, in describing them as his beloved children in 4:14, Paul as their father commends them to stop factionalism and urges them to imitate him (4:14-16). This is clear evidence that 1 Corinthians 1-4 as a whole contains these distinctive rhetorical elements.

Cicero’s rhetorical theories suggest that the Pauline text of 1 Corinthians 1-4 comprises characteristics of both deliberative and epideictic rhetorical genres, although in recent Pauline scholarship on 1 Corinthians most scholars define 1 Corinthians 1-4 as either deliberative or epideictic. The Pauline text is partly epideictic because Paul deals with the present situation and the problem of schisms the Corinthian Christians had when he wrote 1 Corinthians 1-4. In these chapters, Paul addresses the ongoing problems of factions (1:12; 3:3; cf. 11:18-19). These were

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Some scholars don’t mention either position: Pogoloff (*Logos and Sophia*), Anderson (*Ancient Rhetorical Theory*, 245-76), Litfin (*Paul’s Theology of Proclamation*), Wire (*Corinthian Women Prophets*), and Winter (*After Paul left; Philo and Paul*).

J. Corley, however, argues that it is not easy to regard clearly 1 Corinthians as either an example of deliberative or epideictic rhetoric, because it comprises characteristics of both. Hence, it is better to view 1 Corinthians as a piece of both deliberative and epideictic rhetoric than of either of the two (see Jeremy Corley, “The Pauline Authorship of 1 Corinthians 13” *CBQ* 66 [2004] 256-274, esp. 258).
caused by some of the Corinthian Christians’ misuse of rhetorical conventions (1:17; 2:1-4), and by them giving a higher value to worldly understandings of wisdom and eloquence than to the wisdom of God and the gospel message (1:18-25), and by continuing expressions of high social status, wealth, and patronal hierarchies within the Christian community (1:26-29; cf. 11:22). These Corinthian Christians syncretised their ‘secular’ social cultural practices, particularly their dependence on rhetorical conventions and patronal networks, with the practices of their Christian community, and thereby discriminated against other Christians of lower social status. Paul also tackles explicitly the associated social issues of Corinthian wisdom (3:18-20), wealth, noble birth, and power (1:26; 4:8-13). In response, he wishes to describe the Corinthian Christian community as a whole as one body (σῶμα) and the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-31). These are some of the issues the Corinthian Christians faced when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians and censured them, denouncing some of their worldly-wisdom-oriented behaviour (3:1-3). This clearly demonstrates some of the characteristics of an epideictic discourse as Cicero, amongst others, describes in his rhetorical handbooks.

Nonetheless, 1 Corinthians 1-4 also comprises some elements of deliberative oratory. The Pauline text implicitly includes the underlying themes of benefit and advantage, and the need for future-oriented decisions. These features are consistent with the characteristics of deliberative discourse as Cicero suggests in his De Inventione.115 Paul refers to Apollos and himself as examples of servants of God. He then insists that both are God’s fellow workers and of equal importance (3:5-8) and that between God’s servants there should not be jealousy or boasting or conflict (4:1-7). He challenges the Corinthians to have the attitude of humility and sacrifice for the

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115See Cicero, De Inventione, 2.4.13; 2.5.18; 2.51.156; 2.52.157; 2.55.166.
sake of Christ, as both he and Apollos have, rather than the spirit of rivalry and competition (4:8-9).\(^{116}\)

Furthermore, Paul appeals to the Corinthians that if the leaders would have such a humble attitude, they would stop the quarreling and boasting which caused the problem of divisions (1:28-31). He then reclaims the Corinthian congregation from the grips of factionalism and urges them to be united in Christ. Moreover, he appeals that they love one another as brothers and sisters in the household of God (e.g. 13:1-13), just as he, as their spiritual father, loves them as his children (4:1-21). In doing this, Paul challenges some of the Corinthian Christians to stop assuming that they can take control of the Christian community by continuing to express their high social standing, wealth and patronal hierarchies and by humiliating and discriminating against other Christians of low social position (1:18-25; 3:8). Paul does this by challenging them to stop valuing the social and cultural understandings of wisdom and eloquence more highly than Christ crucified as the wisdom of God who is the

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\(^{116}\)The elements of forensic rhetoric are not so clearly found in 1 Corinthians 1-4. They can be absorbed or collapsed into those of epideictic and deliberative orations. In spite of this, the mood of defence and apology which fits forensic rhetoric is glimpsed in 1 and 2 Corinthians as a whole. Paul uses the Greek word *apologia* once in each letter (1 Cor 9:3; 2 Cor 7:11). Paul exhibits explicitly that he uses 1 and 2 Corinthians as apologetic letters to defend himself. He says, “This is my defence (*apologia*) to those who would examine me” (1 Cor 9:3). This clearly accord with Cicero suggesting that the defendant defends himself by using a letter or written form of apology “so as to support his/her own case and develop from the written word something that is not expressed” (Cicero, *De Inventione*, 2.48.142-3). Furthermore, Paul appears to have been aware of the frequent use of forensic rhetoric in the wider Corinthian civic society of his time. This is reflected in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 where Paul addresses the issue of the Corinthian believers going to law courts against their fellow believers before unbelieving juries. We can understand 1 and 2 Corinthians this way: Paul is the defendant, some of the Corinthian Christians and his Corinthian ‘opponents’ are the accusers (1 Cor 1:26; 4:8-10, 18; 8:7-12; 2 Cor 10:1-13:10), and the rest of the Corinthian Christians are the jury. By using 1 and 2 Corinthians as his self apology delivered in written form rather than in person, Paul defends himself. This is because Paul had better rhetorical skills in written form than in speech (“His letters are weighty and strong, but...his speech [is] of no account” [2 Cor 10:10]; “I am unskilled in speaking” [2 Cor 11:6]). Paul defends his own case by explaining why he didn’t adapt to the social and cultural conventions that prevailed in the wider civic society of Roman Corinth in the first century CE: Paul didn’t use his rhetorical skills in the proclamation of the gospel because he might have distorted the essence of the gospel message (1 Cor 1:17; 2:1-5; 2 Cor 10:1-11:33). He didn’t build patronal relationships or accept financial support in order that he might preach the gospel free of charge (1 Cor 9:1-23; 2 Cor 11:7-11; 12:11-14). He didn’t boast about his wisdom, rhetorical skills, and high social status, because he boasted only of Christ Crucified as the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:29-31; 4:6-13; 2 Cor 1:12; 10:13-18).
foundation of the Corinthian Christian community and the essence of the gospel message (1:18-25; 2:1-4). Paul then encourages and motivates them to make a decision to stop such worldly-wisdom-rooted conduct for the future benefit and advantage of the whole congregation. He says, “What do you wish (ti thelete)? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?” (4:21). Such descriptions include all the deliberative rhetorical categories of “appealing to benefit,” “future response,” “proof by example,” and “subjects of factionalism and concord.”

Therefore, 1 Corinthians 1-4 demonstrates characteristics of deliberative as well as epideictic rhetoric.

Finally, for a proper understanding of 1 Corinthians 1-4 it is important to note that there are more specific similarities between the language of Cicero in his rhetorical handbooks and the Pauline language of 1 Corinthians 1-4. These parallels are evident in their usage of the word, ‘boast’ (Latin, gloriatu; Greek, kauchaomai). Cicero employs the word ‘boast’ frequently in his rhetorical handbooks when he boasts about himself and the glorious traditions of Greek rhetoric. Paul seems to play on this use of ‘boasting’ and glory in 1 and 2 Corinthians when he reflects on the behaviour of his Corinthian ‘opponents’ boasting about social and rhetorical understandings of wisdom rather than the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:29; 3:21). I would argue, therefore, that in order to grasp the background to the issue of boasting in 1 Corinthians 1-4, we should examine carefully Cicero’s idea of boasting and glory within his Greco-Roman world.

In Cicero’s 31 writings the Latin word gloriatu and its equivalents occur 151

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118 Its equivalents are ‘gloria’ and ‘glorior’ meaning ‘boasting’, ‘praise’, ‘glory’, ‘fame’, and ‘distinction’. In addition, the Greek word kauchaomai is translated as gloriatu in the Vulgate or Latin Bible.
119 See Cicero, Epistulae ad Familiares, 4.8.2; De Officiis, 2.17.59.
times. In these occurrences, Cicero describes how boasting was a social phenomenon of the Roman society of his time. He states, “The professors and masters of rhetoric…boasted (gloriatus) before an audience…(about) their knowledge of literature and poetry, and the doctrines of natural science.” Cicero gives further examples: “For all the world like C. Caesar, as he himself often boasts.” “Asellus was boasting (or bragging, gloriaretur) that his military service had taken him over every province.” “I (Cicero) have often heard my own father and my wife’s father say that our people…desired to win high distinction (gloria) in philosophy.”

Consistent with this social phenomenon, Cicero encouraged Romans to seek and pursue fame and glory. He says, “in the rest of my life, I admit that I eagerly pursued whatever might be a source of true glory (gloria).” “Bear in mind that we are now striving after a gloria that remains to be won … but fighting for a gloria already ours – a gloria which it was not so much our object in the past.” “Do your utmost to surpass yourself in enhancing your own glory (gloria).” “Each man is a partaker in the good. Is he also deserving of boasting (gloriari)…or does anybody boast about (gloriando)…his success in getting pleasure? You actually make a habit of boasting (gloriari) that you did so.” “My dear Plancus, apply yourself with all your energy to the decisive completion of war…(and) the culmination of your popularity and glory (gloria).”

Cicero boasted about his oratory, political success, fame and reputation in

120For example, it appears 13 times in De Oratore, 20 times in Epistulae ad Familiares, 13 times in Epistularum ad Atticum, 26 times in Pro T. Annio Milone Oratio, 7 times in Epistulae ad Brutum, 15 times in Pro Publio Quinticio, and 18 times in Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino.
121Cicero, De Oratore, 3.32.127.
122Cicero, Epistulae ad Familiares, 10.32.2.
123Cicero, De Oratore, 2.44.258.
124Cicero, De Oratore, 3.33.133.
125Cicero, Epistulae ad Familiares, 15.6.13.
126Cicero, Epistulae ad Quintium Fratrem, 1.1.43.
127Cicero, Epistulae ad Familiares, 12.7.2.
128Cicero, Paradoxa Stoicorum, 1.1.15; 1:4:32.
129Cicero, Epistulae ad Familiares, 10.19.2.
Roman society. This is evidenced in his language: “If anyone violently accuses me…for the very thing which is the boast and triumph of speech…that is not my fault…”¹³⁰ “In the very city in which I (Cicero) was richly blessed in popularity, influence, and fame (gloria).”¹³¹ “I (Cicero) may boast (gloriatur) about myself…for in comparison with the eminence of the offices to which I was unanimously elected at the earliest legal age…the outlay in my aedileship was very inconsiderable.”¹³² He goes on to claim that “I should be returning in three days’ time with the greatest glory (summa cum gloria).”¹³³ Moreover, Plutarch confirms that

Cicero’s immoderate boasting of himself in his speech (logos) proves that he had an intemperate desire for fame…at last he praised not only his deeds and actions, but also his speeches (logos), both those which he delivered himself and those which he committed to writing, as if he were impetuously vying with Isocrates and Anaximenes the sophists, instead of claiming the right to lead and instruct the Roman people.”¹³⁴

As evidenced above, glory and boasting were a prominent part of the culture and mentality of Romans in the first century BCE. Cicero desired gloria and boasted about his eloquence, his influence and fame in his Roman society. He further encouraged the Romans to seek fame and glory. I would argue, therefore, that Cicero’s ideas of glory and boasting may well have affected, to some degree, the mentality and social behaviour of the Corinthians in the mid-first century CE. As they imitated Cicero and his wisdom and eloquence, and the way he had boasted (gloriatur) and glorified himself, they were simply following the way Cicero had urged the Romans of his time to imitate his ancestors.

In his rhetorical handbooks, Cicero employs the Latin word imitator and its equivalents often. For example, “Messalla is an excellent consul…for me (Cicero) he expresses admiration and respect, and shows it by imitating (imitator) me.”¹³⁵

¹³⁰Cicero, In Catilinam, 2.3.
¹³¹Cicero, Epistulae ad Familiares, 4.8.2.
¹³²Cicero, De Officiis, 2.17.59.
¹³³Cicero, Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem, 1.4.4.
¹³⁴Plutarch, Demosthenes and Cicero, 2.1.
Let this then be my first counsel, that we show the students whom to imitate (imitetur) and to imitate (imitabitur) in such a way as to strive with all possible care to attain the most excellent qualities of his model. Next let practice be added, whereby in imitating (imitando) he may produce the pattern of his choice and not portray him as time and again I have known many imitators (imitatores) do, who in imitating (imitando) hunt after such characteristics as are easily imitated or even abnormal and possibly faulty. For nothing is easier than to imitate (imitari) a man's style of dress, pose, or gait.  

Cicero insisted that to serve the State the Romans should imitate the way their ancestors lived. He states, “Truly a citizen born to serve the State, mindful of the name he bears, and an imitator (imitatoremque) of the ancestors! For our ancestors’ longing for liberty…was not so great as ours should be to retain it now.”

Paul is not opposed to the idea of mimesis (imitation) as such, but he wishes to offer a different ‘role-model’: not the wealthy and eloquent, but Christ himself. Paul uses the word mimētēs twice in 1 Corinthians (4:16; 11:1): “be imitators of me” (4:16), and “be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (11:1). In this way Paul subverts the imitation of the Roman ideal of glory, and offers instead the ‘glory’ of the crucified Christ and his suffering followers (1 Cor 4:8-13).

It is not difficult to see parallels between the way Cicero had boasted (gloriatur) and the way the Pauline ‘opponents’ boasted, and to see how this is inversely related to Paul’s ironic ‘boasting’ (e.g. 1 Cor 1:28; 5:6; 9:15, 16; 15:31; cf. 2 Cor 11:18, 21; 12:1). Possibly, as other Corinthians in the broader civic society imitated Cicero and others, so these Pauline ‘opponents’ took them as their model rather than the way of Christ and Paul, and imitated Cicero and Seneca in the way they had encouraged the Romans to imitate their ancestors (e.g. 1 Cor 4:1, 16). These approaches were in turn subverted explicitly by Paul in 1 Corinthians 1-4. This is evident in his frequent use of the Greek word kauchaomai and the word mimētēs in 1 and 2 Corinthians.

135Cicero, Epistularum ad Atticum, 1.14.6.
136Cicero, De Oratore, 3.22.90, 92.
137Cicero, Philippica, 3.4.8.
Paul employs the word *kauchaomai* and its equivalents frequently in his writings, just as Cicero did in his rhetorical handbooks. These words occur 39 times in 1 and 2 Corinthians (10 times in 1 Corinthians [1:29, 31 {twice}; 3:21; 4:7; 5:6; 9:15, 16; 13:3; 15:31], and 29 times in 2 Corinthians) out of the 59 times in the entire New Testament.

These occurrences indicate that by the time Paul wrote 1 and 2 Corinthians, boasting was one of the critical issues which was causing factions (*schismata*) in the Corinthian Christian community. Some of the Corinthians and the Pauline ‘opponents’ probably imitated (*mimēomai*) the way Cicero had boasted (*gloriatur*) of himself and his eloquence and political success, and urged his Romans to imitate (*imitator*) their ancestors. These Corinthians then boasted (*kauchaomai*) of themselves in their wisdom, eloquence, and high social status rather than of Christ as the wisdom of God and the gospel message (e.g. 1:29-31; 3:21). In this thesis, such arguments will be part of the major investigation which follows.

In summary, the Pauline text of 1 Corinthians 1-4 demonstrates many rhetorical features according to Cicero’s theories of rhetoric. Clearly, it comprises the characteristics of both deliberative and epideictic rhetorical genres. Moreover, there are more specific similarities between Cicero’s rhetorical handbooks and Paul’s language of 1 Corinthians 1-4 in terms of their use of the words, ‘boasting’ and ‘imitator’. It is a major task in this thesis to find out backgrounds of these words and of Corinthian wisdom in general, and their relation to *schismata* in the Corinthian congregation as recorded in 1 Corinthians 1-4. I now turn to a careful examination of social and patronal networks in Roman Corinth.
2.2 Social and Patronal Networks in Roman Corinth

I will now examine carefully the patronal and social milieu of Roman Corinth in the time of Paul. In particular, I will focus on the ethnic and social composition of the wider Corinthian community and its patronal networks, and then explore the *ekklēsia* of the Corinthian Christians in that context, as reflected particularly in 1 Corinthians 1-4.

2.2.1 Patronage

In order to understand better the problem of schisms as described in 1 Corinthians 1-4, it is helpful to investigate the social systems of patronal networks in the wider Corinthian civic society and their influence on the Christian community at Corinth. Patronage was an integral part of the Roman social system in the Greco-Roman world of the first century CE. At the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, the patronage system was foundational in shaping and maintaining Roman Corinth’s civic life. D. Flemming states that patronal networks were “essential to the fabric of life in Roman Corinth.”

The initial form of patronage emerged in Roman society in the early Roman Republic (509-31 BCE), but it extended out to the Roman colonial provinces by the late Republic and more significantly in early imperial times. The patronage of this

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138 These patron-client relations could also be seen in terms of a political system in the Roman Empire, especially between the ruling class or nobility and the ruled – the mass of the people. Through these relations the ruling elites maintained their dominance over the people and kept them subjected. Such relations were based on *fides* and personal connections or links of dependence and obligation (Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “Patronage in Roman Society: from Republic to Empire” in A. Wallace-Hadrill [ed.], *Patronage in Ancient Society* [London; NY: Routledge, 1989], 63-87, esp. 68).
time is glimpsed in Cicero’s books and letters such as *Epistularum Ad Atticum* and *Epistulae Ad Familiares*. As L.L. Welborn argues, “Cicero’s speeches and letters provide ample documentation of the way aristocrats used patronage to garner political support.”

In the Roman Empire, patronal networks appear to have existed at two different levels. Initially, patronage involved formal and legal bonds. In early Roman law patron-client relations were clearly referred to as the “ex-master-libertus relationship.” By these patronal systems, a governor and the city, or a former master and his freed persons, were interconnected as patrons and clients. But patronage also developed as informal and quite subtle ties arose between the emperor and his officials and between wealthy patrons and their literary friends. In these relationships, patrons and clients exchanged simultaneously different kinds of resources. R. Saller describes the nature of this kind of patronage:

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

It is clear that patronal relationships contained three essential elements: first, patron-client relations were personal relationships similar to friendships, but vertical, asymmetrical or hierarchical “friendships”. They existed between social unequals: between a patron of wealth and higher social status and poorer, lower-status clients. It must be stressed, therefore, that there were distinct social divisions between patrons

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140 Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric*, 25. Welborn further takes an example from one of Cicero’s letters: “In his defence of Murena against a charge of electoral corruption, Cicero states without compunction that ‘men of slender means have only one way of earning favour or of repaying benefits to men of our order, and that is by helping us and escorting us about when we are candidates for office’ (*Pro Murena* 70; see also Quintus Cicero *Comm Pet* 34-38)” (Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric*, 25).

141 When Herennius invoked his patronage duty in his refusal to testify against Marius in the late second century BCE, the (patron-client) relationship still had some legal content…” (Richard Saller, “Patronage and Friendship in Early imperial Rome: Drawing the Distinction” in A. Wallace-Hadrill [ed.], *Patronage in Ancient Society* [London; NY: Routledge, 1989], 49-62, esp. 50).

142 Chow, *Patronage*, 81.

143 Saller, “Patronage and Friendship,” 49.
and their clients within the patronal structures of the Roman imperial era. A patron could be called rex (‘king’) by the clients,\textsuperscript{144} so that the relationship between a patron and client was something like the relationship between a ruler and the ruled. It was a strictly hierarchical relationship. Nonetheless, this patronal relationship was established on a voluntary basis. A patron and his/her clients build voluntary relationships for mutual help and benefit.\textsuperscript{145}

Second, patronal systems included the reciprocal or simultaneous exchange of goods and services between a patron and his or her clients. The patron who has wealth, political power, and social influence provides scarce resources that are not easily accessible to the clients, such as financial support, protection, favour, and benefit. The clients, in return, offer political support, honour, “promises and expressions of solidarity and loyalty,” and personal service and assistance.\textsuperscript{146}

Thirdly, patronal networks may be metaphorically described as symbiotic relationships,\textsuperscript{147} because they provide a strategy for survival and livelihood for clients, and a means of exercising and practising power and influence in society for the patrons.\textsuperscript{148} For example:

Clients could contribute to their patron’s social status by forming crowds at his door for morning salutatio (Tacitus, Annals. 3.55) or by accompanying him on his rounds of public business during the day and applauding his speeches in court. In return, (clients were due one meal a day and) could expect handouts of food or sportulae (small sums of money,

\textsuperscript{144}\textsuperscript{Martin, Corinthian Body, 66.}


\textsuperscript{147}\textsuperscript{These relationships are evident in the world of wild animals and plants between two different classes such as peonies and ants, and butterfly larvae and ants. Such relationships are mutually beneficial, but unequal (http://flyaqis.mov.vic.gov.au/cgi-bin/texthtml?form=bio_entot; cf. http://gardenpower.com/projects/bugs/00061.htm; http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/fish/printouts/Clownfishprintout.shtml, accessed on 23/03/2004).}

customarily about six sesterces in Martial’s day) and sometimes an invitation to dinner…

(but) Martial warns that the sportulae were not enough to live on. They must have been just one of the possible supplements to the grain dole (Martial, Epigrams, 3.7 and 8.42)…(Humiliation of clients was frequent and little recourse was available. Patrons who provided more were considered gracious)...Martial’s verses and other evidence...leave no doubt that the salutatio and other patronal customs continued to characterise life in Rome throughout the Principate.149

Clearly, patronal relationships widely and deeply influenced a society that comprised a majority of poor and lower social-status clients and a minority of wealthy and higher-status patrons. So in considering the social composition of Roman Corinth, a Romanised colony, it is apparent that such patronage networks existed in the city, and interconnected high social-class persons (patrons) and lower-status persons (clients). People of these extreme social classes lived together having reciprocal exchanges and relationships to meet mutual needs.150

Patron-client structures also had an effect on the mobility between social classes in the Roman world. Regardless of social status, many people strove to rise to higher positions, especially those of the lower classes such as slaves, who sought manumission. This manumission was “normally the reward for years of loyalty and obedience.”151 Such opportunities for a rise in status depended heavily on favourable

149 Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture (London: Duckworth, 1987), 151; see also “Patronal Power Relations” in Richard A. Horsley (ed.), Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 96-103, esp. 99-100; Malina and Rohrbaugh, Synoptic Gospels, 75. Additionally, Jeffers says that “a client might be invited to a patron’s banquet table simply to witness the latter’s wealth and power, not out of genuine friendship. In such cases the client could expect to be the butt of jokes and to receive food and wine far inferior to that of honoured guests, as Juvenal laments (Satires 5)” (James S. Jeffers, The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity [Downers Grove: InterVarity Press, 1999], 192). It is obvious that by means of patronal relationships patrons showed off their social status such as economic wealth and social power, whereas clients were inevitably involved in these relations in order to survive in the Roman society in which reciprocal exchange friendships were so popular that they became a social convention.


151 Craig S. de V os, “Once a Slave, Always a Slave? Slavery, Manumission and Relational Patterns in Paul’s Letter to Philemon,” JSNT 82 (2001) 89-105, esp. 98. de V os further comments, “In most cases freed slaves continued to work for their former masters in conditions and circumstances similar to what they had known as slaves...former masters still had the right to take legal action to control the behaviour of their freed slaves” (de V os, “Once a Slave, Always a Slave?” 99).
patronal networks. For promotion in social standing and the eventual successful acquisition of Roman citizenship, clients of lower-status positions were advised to have a good friendship and patronal relationship with patrons of higher status, who undertook the role of mediation for their lower-status clients. These sorts of patronal relationships appeared at nearly every level of social standing, not only in the upper classes but also in the lower ones. The patron-client bonds that enabled some social mobility were found between the emperor and prosperous provincial governors, between local governors and local aristocracies, between local aristocracies and wealthy freed-people, and between former masters and their manumitted slaves.

Almost every case of a rise in status or promotion to higher social standing generally came about by means of recommendation and appointment by patrons. For instance, when a prosperous person aspired to the local aristocracy in the civic community of Corinth, he would make the acquaintance of a patron who was in authority and possessed a socially influential position, and establish a patronal relationship. At the request of the client, the patron undertook sponsorship and wrote a letter of recommendation to the emperor or governor on behalf of his client, and then the emperor or governor appointed the candidate to the local council in agreement with the patron’s recommendation.

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152 Of course, “the most common and also the most dramatic rise in status came about in the manumission of slaves. Roman citizens set their slaves free in remarkably large numbers, and each manumitted slave became…a libertus (‘freedman’) or liberta (‘freed woman’)…(Some freed-people) earned a comfortable living by working hard at a craft or trade…(and) became very rich” (Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 115). Due to this sort of manumission, a majority of the population in cities like Roman Corinth in the first century CE comprised the social class of freedmen and freedwomen, though slaves occupied a great number of the population of the major cities. Witherington states, “at least a third, if not a half, of the population of Rome was slaves” (Ben Witherington III, New Testament History: A Narrative Account [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001], 321). Thus we could expect that many Christians in the Roman Empire including Roman Corinth belonged to these social classes (see further below).

153 So argue Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 114-5.

154 See Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 114.

155 See Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 114-5.
Furthermore, patronal networks were essential for the integration of the vast Roman Empire. All the colonial provinces were interconnected and interrelated to the capital of the Roman Empire by patronal systems. By means of this imperial patronage, the emperor was able to reign and maintain his authority and domination over the Roman Empire. He was directly related not only to major officials in Rome but also to his appointed rulers of various ranks in the Roman colonies. In doing this, the emperor acted as the supreme and universal patron, and the imperial officials were his clients.\(^{156}\)

In the case of those provinces where the authority and power of the emperor did not directly reach due to distance, he sent imperial officials (such as proconsuls, imperators, and delegates) to act on his behalf. These imperial officials were seen as representatives of imperial power in these regions where they acted as imperial patrons on behalf of the emperor. The provincial rulers and citizens were their clients. When imperial patronage was embraced enthusiastically by local people, the Roman officials and proconsuls were no longer regarded as foreign conquerors but as friends and benefactors.\(^{157}\) For example, Cicero was a proconsul of Cilicia in 51-50 BCE. During his proconsulate, he was the imperial patron of the province,\(^{158}\) and provided for the Cilician people certain benefits. In return, they offered their loyalty to the

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Many examples of imperial patronage are evident in the writings of Cicero: “As for Gabinius, Cicero…could count on him absolutely as an adherent…and especially Piso, because of…his kinship with Caesar” (Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, 38.16.1). So also in the letters of Pliny. Pliny had a close relationship with Trajan the emperor. He petitioned the emperor to grant full Roman citizenship to his three slaves. His letter reads: “Caius Pliny to the emperor Trajan. Valerius Paulinus, sir, has left a will which passes over his son Paulinus and names me a patron of his Latin freedmen. On this occasion I pray you to grant full Roman citizenship to three of them only: it would be reasonable, I fear, to petition you to favour all alike, and I must be all the more careful not to abuse your generosity when I have enjoyed it on so many previous occasions (Pliny, *Epistles* 10.104)” (Elliott, “Patronage and Clientage,” 144). This is a typical example of how imperial patronage operated between the emperor and his client.


Romans. Cicero writes, “those who had had clear proof of my clemency and probity, had now become more friendly to the Roman people; and that Cilicia, moreover, would be confirmed in its loyalty if allowed to share the fruits of my equitable administration.”

Further, in this system of imperial patronage imperial officials often took on the role of patronal mediators between the emperor and the provincials. In this way, these provincials became both the imperial officials’ clients and the emperor’s clients. They were all under the ruling power of the emperor, and his influence and benefaction. In fact, the emperor extended his patronal relationships from major imperial officials through local elites and notables down to the populace and even slaves. They were potentially the recipients from the emperor of a wide range of benefits, such as official positions, financial assistance, full Roman citizenship, and “the right of tapping the water supply.” They, in return, offered to the emperor as their supreme patron, deference, reverence, respect, and loyalty. As an expression of such reverence the local people honoured the emperor and members of the imperial family with the titles “patron,” “benefactor,” “saviour,” “lord,” and “son of a god,” suggesting their “greatly superior status.” This imperial patronage was reinforced by imperial cults. In Roman imperial times, the populace was increasingly compelled to participate in the imperial cult and emperor worship.

Imperial patronage also appeared in the procedure whereby imperial officials were recruited. In Roman imperialism, “patronal support was essential in the

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159 Cicero, *Epistulae Ad Familiares*, 15.1.3.
160 Garnsey and Saller, *The Roman Empire*, 148-52; see also Chow, “Patronage in Roman Corinth,” 105; Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Synoptic Gospels*, 75.
161 Examples of this include the title of ‘patron’ given to Marcus Agrippa and Lucius Caesar, son of Augustus; of ‘benefactor’ to Marcus Agrippa, Augustus, and Tiberius; of ‘Saviour’ to Marcus Agrippa, Augustus, Gytheum, and Tiberius; of ‘son of a god’ or ‘god’ to Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius (Chow, “Patronage in Roman Corinth,” 105, 105 n.5; see also Winter, *After Paul Left*, 285).
recruitment of the imperial elite, because no bureaucratic mechanisms were developed to supply the next generation of aristocratic officials."  

So, in order to recruit his officials, the emperor had to rely largely on letters of recommendation written by his imperial officials. These imperial officials acted as meditators between the emperor as recipient and the candidates as recommended. In doing this, the recommender acted as the emperor’s client and a patron of the recommended at the same time.  

As stated above, patron-client structures initially emerged in Roman society in the early Roman Republic, but by the late Republican and more distinctively early imperial times they extended out to the provinces. During this period, Roman culture and social systems rapidly dominated the Roman colonies, and consequently, Roman patron-client relationships and patronal networks were firmly embedded in the wider Mediterranean social structures. In other words, rather than other earlier social systems, patronal relationships became more powerful and influential in the social fabric of the Roman colonies, including first century Corinth, and they then played a vital role in increasing Roman domination in such colonies.  

That is why it is said that patron-client relationships were “a distinctive and central element in Roman culture and ideology” and that they “represented a vital part of conscious Roman culture and ideology.”  

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163 Garnsey and Saller, The Roman Empire, 153.  
164 The letters were “a form of introduction,” “to publicly acclaim a citizen,” “a testimony to the character of a person on trial,” and “to recommend favoured athletics by the emperor or Roman of high status” (Marshall, Enmity, 92, 96, 92 n.10).  
165 See Marshall, Enmity, 91-129, esp. 115, 120, 123. Here is an example of a similar recommendation: “I recommend to you M. Ferdius, a Roman knight, the son of a friend of mine, a worthy and hard-working young man, who has come to Cilicia on business. I ask you to treat him as one of your friends. He wants you to grant him the favour of freeing from tax certain lands which pay rent to the cities – a thing which you may easily and honourably do and which will put some grateful and sound men under an obligation to you (as Familiares 8.9.4)” (Braund, “ Patronage in Roman Imperialism,” 141).  
166 The Greco-Roman custom of recommendation is also evident in the Pauline communities. Paul recommended Phoebe to the Roman Christians (Rom 16:1-3). The phrase “letters of recommendation” occurs in 2 Cor 3:1-2. Paul recommended Onesimus to Philemon for his forgiveness and acceptance (Philemon vv. 1-21).  
167 Holland Hendrix, “Benefactor/Patron Networks in the Urban Environment: Evidence from Thessalonica,” Semeia 56 (1991) 39-58, esp. 40; Garnsey and Saller, The Roman Empire, 151; see also Horsley, Paul and Empire, 91, 93.
ideology, of their own image of how their world both was and ought to be.”¹⁶⁷ In this regard it is apparent that such patron-client relations as an expression of Roman culture and ideology played an especially significant role in shaping and maintaining the civic society of Roman Corinth, because it was a Romanised colony since its re-establishment in 44 BCE. Moreover, such patronal networks may well have influenced the conduct of the Corinthian Christians as addressed in 1 Corinthians. I will show that these social understandings form an important part of the background to divisions in the Christian gatherings at Corinth (e.g. 1 Cor 1:10-13; 3:1-4; 11:18-19).

2.2.2 The Social Situation of Roman Corinth

Paul arrived at Corinth from Athens (Acts 18:1). There he established the Corinthian Christian ekklēsia while staying for a year and six months (Acts 18:11).¹⁶⁸ He then went to Ephesus where he wrote the first letter to the Corinthian Christian congregation in the mid fifties (1 Cor 16:8).¹⁶⁹ By this time, Roman Corinth was the

¹⁶⁸There is disagreement in recent Pauline scholarship about the year of Paul’s arrival at Corinth. Some scholars argue that Paul arrived at Corinth in late 49 CE (J. Murphy-O’Connor, St. Paul’s Corinth: Texts and Archaeology [3rd ed.] [Collegeville: the Liturgical Press, 2002], 159; Donald Engels, Roman Corinth: An Alternative Model for the Classical City [Chicago; London: the University of Chicago Press, 1990], 107), while others support early 50 CE (Thiselton, First Corinthians, 18; Witherington, Conflict, 5). The precise date of Paul’s arrival at Corinth need not bother us too much here. Most scholars concur that Paul stayed in Corinth for 18 months (Horsley, 1 Corinthians, 29).
¹⁶⁹The exact date is still debated by scholars. Witherington suggests “early in 53 or 54” (Witherington, Conflict, 73). Hays agrees with Fee on 53-55 (Hays, First Corinthians, 5; Fee, First Corinthians, 4-5). Barrett argues for “the early months of 54, or possibly towards the end of 54” (Barrett, First Corinthians, 5). Thiselton concurs with Murphy-O’Connor, arguing for “May” or “the early part of 54” (Murphy-O’Connor, Paul’s Corinth, 173; Thiselton, First Corinthians, 31). Bruce, Robertson and Plummer prefer 55 CE, the last year of Paul’s residence in Ephesus (Bruce, I & II Corinthians, 25; Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, The First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. ICC [2nd ed.], [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958], xxxi). Conzelmann goes for the Spring of 55 (Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, 12-3; Thiselton, First Corinthians, 32). Talbert argues that the year is probably around the first half of the fifties (Talbert, Reading Corinthians, xviii). Morris “the mid fifties” (Leon Morris, 1 Corinthians. TNTC [2nd ed.], 31). The Gallio inscription is often used to help date the writing of 1 Corinthians (cf. Acts 18:12-17) (for details see Thiselton, First
largest and most prosperous city in Roman Greece,\textsuperscript{170} with a population of approximately 100,000-130,000 in the years the Christian community was founded.\textsuperscript{171} There were several factors why Roman Corinth increased its population up to such a number in the Roman era. First century Corinth enjoyed great economic prosperity. It was one of the most successful cities in the Roman Empire in terms of economic achievement, and was a wealthy, prosperous, and luxurious city. It is interesting that Murphy-O’Connor parallels Corinth to “San Francisco in the days of the gold rush.”\textsuperscript{172} Donald Engels claims that Roman Corinth was crowded with a large number of inhabitants and a diversity of people groups such as merchants, traders, ship workers, artisans, travellers, pilgrims, philosophers, rhetoricians and orators, envoys, veterans, and government officials.\textsuperscript{173} Of these groups, the merchants played the most important role in Corinth’s economic prosperity, making money through trade for the city of Corinth. As a result, they became wealthy and, at the same time, a major factor in causing the complex social strata in Corinth. They possessed high social status, because their wealth ranked them highly in the social pyramid. It was commonly accepted in the Roman world that the wealthy people could gain status through using their money.\textsuperscript{174}

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\textsuperscript{170}Greek Corinth was destroyed by Roman forces in 146 BCE. But Julius Caesar ordered it to be rebuilt as a Roman colony in 44 BCE (Strabo, Geography, 8.6.23; Pausanias, Guide to Greece: Central Greece, 2.2; Dio Cassius, Roman History, 50.3-5; Cook, Cambridge Ancient History, 206). Later it became the capital of the Roman province of Achaia which was formed in 27 BCE by Augustus Caesar (Horrell, Ethos, 65; Engels, Roman Corinth, 19).\textsuperscript{171} de Vos, Church and Community Conflicts, 185. Engels proposes that it was about 100,000, consisting of the urban areas and 20,000 in the rural areas (Engels, Roman Corinth, 84; cf. Murphy-O’Connor, Paul’s Corinth, 31).\textsuperscript{172} Murphy-O’Connor, “The Corinth that Saint Paul saw,” BA 47 (1984) 147-59, esp. 147.\textsuperscript{173} Engels, Roman Corinth, 50-51. Dio Chrysostom (c. 40-c. 120 CE) includes some of these people groups (Discourse, 37.8).\textsuperscript{174} In addition, de Vos states that “a substantial part of Corinth’s wealth appears to derive from its
From all over the Roman world a variety of people groups immigrated into Roman Corinth, because the city was able to provide them with many opportunities for business and trade, running schools, and goods for luxurious living. It is not surprising then, that Paul visited Corinth with his personal interest in proclaiming the gospel (Acts 18:1, 4, 5, 11).

The city of Corinth’s economic prosperity deeply influenced the life of all Corinthians, Christian and non-Christian, and especially in the area of social status. Wealth would be a major factor causing serious social stratification between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, in the broader civic communities. We shouldn’t expect the Christian community at Corinth to be an exception from these social phenomena. In the Christian ekklēsia, just as in the other communities to which the Christians belonged for social relationships as well, there were certainly factions or divisions (schismata) between the wealthy and the poor, the upper classes and the lower classes. This is attested in 1 Corinthians in 1:10, 26-28; 3:3 and, moreover, in Paul’s discussion of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor 11:17-34) where it is written, “there are divisions (schismata)… factions (eris) among you…when you meet together…(at) the Lord’s Supper…one is hungry and another is drunk…do you despise the ekklēsia of God and humiliate those who have nothing (tous mē echontas)?” (vv.18-22).

Another reason for the growth in Corinth’s population was its geographical location, which drew travellers and tourists, and merchants and traders. In the days of extensive manufacturing industries, e.g. Corinthian bronze, dyeing, marble-carving, pottery, and it may have been the main center for the slave-trade in the region” (de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 186; cf. Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 10, 35-8, 42). Particularly noteworthy was the contribution of the bronze sculpture industry to the economic development of Corinth. They were exported to Rome at a high price (Cook, *Cambridge Ancient History*, 403). This is evidenced further by Seneca the Younger (c. 4 BCE-65 CE) recognising the good quality of Corinthian bronzes (see Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, 9.5).

Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 44-5, 82.

Paul a large number of travellers and tourists visited the city of Corinth because it was regarded as a central and significant transit point from east to west or from Asia to Rome. This is because, as Strabo (63 or 64 BCE to ca. 24 CE) notes,

> It is located on the Isthmus and is master of two harbours, one of which leads straight to Asia, and the other to Italy; and it makes easy the exchange of merchandise from both countries that are so far distant from each other. At any rate, to land their cargoes here was a welcome alternative to the voyage to Maleae for merchants from both Italy and Asia. And also the duties on what was exported by land from the Peloponnese (which was one of the great crossroads of the ancient world) as well as on what was imported into it belonged those who held the keys. And to later times this remained ever so.

Such a good location was certainly attractive to those merchants and traders who played the most significant part in Corinth’s commercial prosperity. For the traders who were involved in the transit trade between Italy and Asia, Corinth was the most crucial stopover point, because ships unloaded their cargoes, goods, and passengers at one end of the Isthmus, the port of Cenchreae, transhipped across the Isthmus, and reloaded at the opposite end, at the port of Lechaeum, or vice versa. In doing so, the merchants and sailors could minimise time and financial loss, avoiding the risk of “the long voyage round the rocky, storm-tossed capes at the south of the Peloponnese.”

By virtue of these geographical merits, Roman Corinth in the first century was well known as a crossroad for ideas, trade, commerce, and traffic in the eastern Mediterranean world. For these reasons the population of Roman Corinth increased dramatically during the first century of the Common Era.

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177 E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 64. This is apparently evident in the *Discourse of Dio Chrysostom* an eyewitness of Roman Corinth and Paul’s contemporary. Dio Chrysostom says that “…upon my second visit to Corinth…you did your best to get me to stay with you…you accorded me this honour, not as to one of the many who each year put in at Cenchreae as traders or pilgrims or envoys or passing travellers, but as to a cherished friend…” (Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse*, 37.8; also Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul’s Corinth*, 102).


Furthermore, it is likely that for Paul as a tentmaker or leather-worker (the same trade as Aquila and Priscilla, Acts 18:3), Roman Corinth should become an attractive and interesting city because of its commercial and geographical importance for his tent-making business in particular. It also makes sense that a number of the Corinthians in Paul’s time would be merchants and traders engaged in the trading business rather than agriculture (Acts 18:3; Rom 16:1; 1 Cor 1:11, 16; 16:15). Some thus became wealthy (cf. 1 Cor 1:26). Importantly, Engels points out that their income possibly made a substantial contribution to the prosperous economy of Corinth.\(^{182}\) No doubt any in the Christian community who were wealthy would play a significant part as patrons who supported Paul’s mission and provided their houses for congregational gatherings. This idea is supported by Luke in Acts where he tells of Aquilla and his wife Priscilla (Acts 18:2; cf. Rom 16:3), and also it is attested in Romans and 1 Corinthians where Paul speaks of Phoebe, Gaius, Erastus, Chloe, and Stephanas (Rom. 16:1, 23; 1 Cor 1:11, 16).

The city of Corinth was also seen as “a major centre of entertainment” and “a major tourist attraction in itself.”\(^{183}\) The Isthmian Games played a substantial role in attracting a large number of tourists to Corinth.\(^{184}\) The theatres of Corinth were also considered important centres for entertainment and religious festivals during the Roman era.\(^{185}\)

The Isthmian games were dedicated to Poseidon, the god of the sea, and were regarded as one of the three most important religious and athletic festivals in Greece. The Games were held biennially under the supervision of the city of Corinth, while

\(^{182}\)Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 51.


\(^{184}\)Dio Chrysostom clearly mentions the popularity of the Isthmian games. He says that “when the time for the Isthmian games arrived, and everybody was at the Isthmus…” (Dio Chrysostom, *Discourse* 8.6; also Murphy O’Connor, *Paul’s Corinth*, 100).

the Caesarean Games and the imperial Contests were held every four years. Every two years, due to the Isthmian games, Corinth played host to a multitude of pilgrims, visitors, athletes and delegates, though they were actually held nearby at Isthmia, where the temple of Poseidon was located. In the time of Paul, particularly in the fifties, the Isthmian games became more and more famous and attracted a large number of participants and even dignitaries like Nero, who himself, in later years, visited the games and actually took part in the contests. Furthermore, the Isthmian games reflected and reinforced the importance of social status in Roman Corinth, because the person elected as the president of the games was guaranteed to possess great wealth and honour. During the games the president provided luxurious dinner feasts to which those of higher social standing among the privileged elite of Corinth and its Roman citizens were invited.

Interestingly, these Isthmian games clearly influenced Paul’s ideas in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 where words closely related to athletic contests appear, such as stadion, trechō, brabeion, stephavos, and agōnizomai. It is probable that Paul, like many of his contemporaries, visited and attended in person the famous athletic

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190 Murphy-O’Connor, “Saint Paul,” 149; Broneer, “Isthmian Games,” 17; Stambaugh and Balch, *Social Environment*, 158. Additionally, in order to help us understand the meaning of the words phthartos stephanos (‘perishable wreath’) and aphthartos (‘imperishable’) in v. 25, we note that in the Isthmian games of Paul’s days at the middle of the first century, the Isthmian crown that was made of wild celery which grew in abundance in surrounding areas of Corinth, was awarded to the victors. The wreath of celery didn’t stay fresh for several days, but it withered quickly. When he wrote verse 25 Paul would keep such an idea in mind. In illustrating the withered crown Paul intended to emphasise “the contrast between the perishable wreath (phthartos stephanos) of the athletes with the imperishable (aphthartos) prize awarded to those who, like the Apostle, persevered in the exercise of Christian virtues” (Oscar Broneer, “Paul and the Pagan Cults at Isthmia,” *HTR* 64 [1971] 169-87, esp. 186). Thereby, it is likely that Paul was present among the crowd who viewed the Isthmian games, and such an experience inspired him to present the Christian life in terms relevant to Corinthian social circumstances. This idea is more certainly evident in his arguments against the problems of divisions and wisdom in the Corinthian congregation as addressed in 1 Corinthians 1-4.
festivals and made it a good opportunity to carry on his mission.\textsuperscript{191} Oscar Broneer even asserts that for Paul the Isthmian games played “a contributing, if not decisive, role in his choice of Corinth as the chief base of his missionary work.”\textsuperscript{192} It is plausible, therefore, to imagine that Paul shared the message of the gospel with his neighbouring viewers in the crowd during the Isthmian games, just as he did in the synagogue every Sabbath (Acts 18:4).

Roman Corinth was also well known as a city of diverse cults and religions including Judaism and Christianity. In the time of Paul, Corinth had numerous temples, shrines, and ritual sites, numbering at least twenty-six.\textsuperscript{193} Craig S. de Vos lists some of the major deities as follows:

The gods and cults adopted or revived by the Corinthians included Apollo, Aphrodite/Venus, Asclepius, Athena, Athena Chalinitis, Demeter and Kore, Dionysus, Ephesian Artemis, Hera Acraea, Hermes/Mercury, Jupiter Capitolius, Poseidon/Neptune, Tyche/Fortuna and Zeus.\textsuperscript{194}

This list indicates the overlapping between Roman gods and Greek ones, or at least in the names used. It also shows that the people of Roman Corinth in general did not worship predominantly a single god or cult. Instead, their religious belief was complex and intricately mixed up with a diversity of gods and cults. Thus it is difficult to determine which were the most important gods or cults accepted by them.\textsuperscript{195} although de Vos has suggested helpfully, that

According to the number of temples, shrines and statues, and the number of images on coins, the two most important and popular gods were Poseidon/Neptune and Aphrodite/Venus.\textsuperscript{196}

\textsuperscript{191}Stambaugh and Balch, \textit{Social Environment}, 158.
\textsuperscript{192}Broneer, “Paul and Pagan Cults”, 169, 187.
\textsuperscript{193}Hafemann, “Corinthians,” 172-3. For more details on religions in Roman Corinth see Daniel N. Schowalter and Steven J. Friesen (eds), \textit{Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).
\textsuperscript{194}de Vos, \textit{Church and Community Conflicts}, 192; see also E. Ferguson, \textit{Backgrounds of Early Christianity}, 143.
\textsuperscript{195}Engels, \textit{Roman Corinth}, 95.
\textsuperscript{196}de Vos, \textit{Church and Community Conflicts}, 192
Of the temples in Corinth, that of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, beauty and fertility, located on summit of the mountain at Acrocorinth was the most famous. That is why a large number of religious pilgrims from all over the Mediterranean world visited the temple, which directly affected the growth of the economy of the city of Corinth.197 Moreover, the worship of Poseidon, the god of the sea, was of special importance because it was associated with the Isthmian games which also played a decisive role in Corinth’s economic prosperity.198 The importance of this worship for the wider culture is attested in the complex of buildings surrounding the sanctuary of Poseidon. Engels describes it as follows:

   The sanctuary itself consisted of the large Doric temple of Poseidon, a theatre, and a stadium where the literary and athletic contests were held. There were also numerous auxiliary buildings: a bath, stoa, smaller shrines, and a hotel for visiting athletes.199

It is apparent that the identification of the Corinthians with the god of Poseidon and the goddess of Aphrodite was of importance for their religious needs and entertainment as well as for Corinth’s economic and commercial prosperity.

The imperial cult also played a substantial role in the economy of Roman Corinth as well as in increasing its population. The imperial cult or emperor worship was firmly established by the time the early Christian ekklēsia was beginning. The

197Witherington, Conflict, 12. Many scholars have noted that Strabo claimed that in Corinth there were 1000 sacred prostitutes practicing at the temple of Aphrodite. Most scholars agree that it is doubtful whether or not such sacred prostitution took place at the temple of Aphrodite in Roman times (Strabo, Geography, 8.6.20; Witherington, Conflict, 13; de Vos, Church and Community Conflicts, 192-3; Murphy-O’Connor, “Saint Paul,” 152; Engels, Roman Corinth, 226n.17). Regardless of the lack of agreement over these details amongst scholars, they are unanimous that in Roman Corinth sexual liberty played a part both in some religious festivals and in temple precincts (Witherington, Conflict, 13; Murphy-O’Connor, “Saint Paul,” 152). Such sexual licentiousness in the wider civic community would no doubt influence the conduct of some of the Corinthian Christians. That is why Paul addresses the problems of sexual immorality in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and of marriage in 1 Cor 7:1-40 (For details see Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, “Corinthian Slogan in 1 Cor 6:12-20,” CBQ 40 [1978] 391-6; Winter, After Paul Left, 215-68; Brad Ronnell Braxton, The Tyranny of Resolution: 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 [SBLDS. 181; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000], 9-34; Will Deming, Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004]; Nigel M. Watson, “Book Reviews on Will Deming’s Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7,” Pacifica 19 [2006] 97-99). These problems caused trouble and divisions between the members in the Corinthian Christian community. To justify their indecent sexual conduct some Corinthians claimed, “all things are lawful for me” (1 Cor 6:12).

198Engels, Roman Corinth, 96.

199Engels, Roman Corinth, 96.
imperial cult had already existed in some form in the Roman Empire since the reign of Augustus Caesar, decades before the founding of the Corinthian Christian community. In the imperial era, emperors such as Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Claudius (who died in 54 CE) were given divine honours and apotheosised or portrayed as deities. Particularly Augustus “was transferred among the celestial gods by apotheosis” on his death in 14 CE and “by official act” the senate included him in “the list of Roman deities.” Later, temples were dedicated to Augustus during the reign of Tiberius (d. 37 CE) and of Caligula (d. 41 CE). These temples were ordinarily placed at the centre of the provincial capitals where the assembly gathered, such as Roman Corinth, the capital of Achaia. Moreover, in the imperial cult the emperors including the reigning and the dead were increasingly adored and honoured as deities, and the imperial family elevated to a divine status. Diverse divinities were related to the emperors as their “protectors and helpers.” It is clear, therefore, that in the imperial cult the Corinthians worshipped or venerated not only deceased emperors but also the reigning one, and even living members of the imperial family. This cult was closely connected to the Isthmian games, because it was expressed in the form of an annual event taking place on the birthday of the reigning emperor, while the games were combined with this event every second year.

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200 David Shotter, *Augustus Caesar* (London; NY: Routledge, 1991), 60; Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 197. In the reign of Augustus (31 BCE-14 CE) this Imperial cult was closely linked to the policy of Romanisation and homogeneous culture between Rome and the colonial cities including Roman Corinth (For details see 2.1.1 above).

201 Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 195-7. In addition, Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus argued that “Augustus” was both a more original and more honourable title, since sanctuaries and all places consecrated by the augurs are known as “august” – the word being “an enlarged form of auctus, implying the ‘increase’ of dignity thus given such places…” (Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *The Twelve Caesars* [Robert Graves, trans. and Michael Grant, intro.] [London: Penguin Books, 1979], 48).


203 Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 197. In addition, the giving of divine honours to the emperor is important for a proper understanding of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, especially the words “gods” and “lords” in v. 5. I will develop this further later.

Clearly then, the Isthmian games and the imperial cult played an important role in the life of the Corinthians, because they were closely linked to their economic well-being and social status. Only the socially privileged were allowed to participate in this cultic festival, because the imperial cult “was conducted by the same officials as were responsible for local government.” The imperial cult, furthermore, was intimately related to patron-client relations because this cult was strengthened and popularised by “a large number of private associations that took as their patron the emperor,” and because in order to celebrate and fully participate in the cultic festival a large financial contribution was demanded. This contribution was made by patrons of the city. For example, Gaius Iulius Spartiaticus was a major patron of Roman Corinth and a president of the Isthmian games. He was also Achaia’s first high priest who conducted the imperial cult in Roman Corinth. As such, the imperial cult embodied the ideals of the life of the upper-social classes and of patron-client networks in Roman Corinth.

So it is that cults and religious festivals, such as the worship of Poseidon and Aphrodite and the imperial cult, were closely related to the economic prosperity and social stratification of Roman Corinth in the first century. The Corinthians worshipped many different Roman and Greek deities. That is why the city of Roman Corinth consisted of numerous temples and ritual sites. Consequently, the Corinthians didn’t seem to have a clear preference for a particular deity. In other words, in their mentality there was a plurality of deities and a syncretistic polytheism. This sort of Corinthian attitude toward the deities may have continued to be practised by some of the Corinthian Christians in the Christian community and to influence

205 Shotter, Augustus Caesar, 61.
206 Ferguson, Backgrounds of Early Christianity, 198. These were an important social institution in the first century Greco-Roman world (for a detailed explanation see below).
207 Winter, After Paul Left, 274-5. Interestingly, the high priest was “granted permission by the emperor to wear a crown and the purple in procession” (Winter, After Paul Left, 275).
208 See above.
their disability to distinguish between God the Creator and Greek and Roman gods. The prevalence of a syncretistic polytheism is apparently reflected in Paul’s language in 1 Corinthians 8:4-5, where he says, “‘an idol has no real existence’…‘there is no God but one’…many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’…” (RSV). In reaction to such Corinthian attitudes toward polytheism, Paul puts a strong emphasis on Christ crucified and the wisdom of God and the power of God (1 Cor. 1:18-25).  

To summarise our overview of the social situation in Roman Corinth, by the time Paul founded the Corinthian Christian community a wide range of people groups such as travellers, merchants, Christians, philosophers, rhetoricians, religious pilgrims, Jews, Greeks and Romans inhabited the city of Corinth from all over the Roman Empire. As a result, a diversity of cultures, social systems, philosophies, cults and religions were interwoven and intermingled in the social fabric. Accordingly, it is not unreasonable to expect that the Christian ekklēsia at Corinth would be composed of a diversity of people groups and social classes. Such a conclusion is suggested, to some extent, by 1 Corinthians 12:13, “Jews or Greek, slave or free.” We should read the text with an awareness that in the Christian community at Corinth there were issues reflecting social stratification among the members, such as the upper class and the lower class, the wealthy and the poor, the elite and the uneducated, the powerful and the powerless, the free and the enslaved, even though it was a relatively small-sized community. Similarly, there would be a diversity of problems within the Christian community, such as social stratification, conflicting wisdom traditions, complex patron-client bonds, internal conflicts, schisms and the resulting tensions.

\[\text{In this thesis it is important for me to re-interpret the Corinthian attitude towards Greek and Roman gods and the imperial cult from my own Korean-Confucian Christian context. I will develop this further later.}\]

\[\text{Most scholars agree that the Christian ekklēsia at this time had approximately forty to fifty people (de Vos, Church and Community Conflicts, 203; Murphy-O’Connor, Paul’s Corinth, 182; Hays, First Corinthians, 6)}\]
between Paul and his ‘opponents’ over these issues as addressed in 1 Corinthians 1-4 in particular. The Corinthian correspondence must be read in the light of the complex social situation of the Corinthian community. The ethnic and social dimensions of this context will be examined further below.

2.2.3 The Ethnic and Social Makeup of Roman Corinth and the Corinthian Christian ekklēśia

Paul’s letters to Corinth confirm that the Christian ekklēśia at Corinth was a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic community,\(^{211}\) reflecting, to some extent, the wider civic community of Roman Corinth in the first century. In the time of Paul there was a diversity of ethnic migrant communities at Corinth including Romans, Jews and Greeks who came from all over the Roman world.\(^ {212}\) So the Corinthian Christian gatherings would no doubt reflect, to some extent, the ethnic composition of the wider civic community at Corinth (e.g. Acts 18:1-28; Rom 16 1-3, 23; 1 Cor 1:11, 22, 23; 12:12; 16:12-19).

Nonetheless, the members from Greek and Jewish origins were the majority groups in the Christian community at Corinth. This is the reason Paul speaks of these ethnic groups specifically and gives special attention to them in 1 Corinthians 1:22 and 24.\(^ {213}\) In these verses the word Hellēnes appears twice, and the word Ioudaiois occurs three times (including v. 23): “for Jews (Ioudaioi) demand signs and Greeks

\(^{211}\) Cf. de Vos, Church and Community Conflicts, 197.

\(^{212}\) Others would have included Anatolians, Phoenicians, Syrians, Egyptians, Gauls, and citizens from Asia Minor (Engels, Roman Corinth, 70; de Vos, Church and Community Conflicts, 187).

\(^{213}\) See also 1 Corinthians 10:32 (Ioudaioi...Hellēsin...tē ekklēśia tou theou) and 12:13 (eite Ioudaioi eite Hellēnes...).
(Hellēnes) seek wisdom...a stumbling block to Jews (Ioudaiois)...but to those who are called, both Jews (Ioudaiois) and Greeks (Hellēnes)..."(RSV).²¹⁴

It is also clear that the re-established Roman colony at Corinth consisted of a diversity of social classes. This social makeup is apparent in the Pauline language of 1 Corinthians 1:26-28 and 12:13. In 1 Corinthians 1:26-28 in particular Paul talks about upper or higher classes in the social pyramid such as the “wise,” the “powerful,” and those who are of “noble birth” (v. 26). In verses 27-28 he speaks of lower classes such as the “foolish,” the “weak,” and the “low.” Such a social composition within the Corinthian congregation is clearly representative of the broader civic community of Corinth. In the imperial world there existed a diversity of social classes. Moreover, there was a strong social hierarchical structure or social stratification in all civic communities including first century Corinth. Such a social hierarchy deeply affected the lives of the Christian communities in the New Testament times and especially the Corinthian congregation Paul founded.²¹⁵ For these reasons, in this section I will outline the ethnic and social diversity of Roman Corinth in the first century and investigate a detailed profile of the ekklēsia itself using to some extent the evidence of 1 and 2 Corinthians. Prior to this, it is helpful to outline briefly the social hierarchical structure of the wider Roman Empire.

In the wider Roman Empire there existed a strong social hierarchical system,

²¹⁴It is noteworthy that in v. 23, rather than the word Hellēn (‘Greek’), Paul employs the plural form of the word ethnos (‘Gentile’) to describe the ethnic groups that are distinguished from Jews (Ioudaiois). The question here is do we interpret it as ‘Gentiles’ referring to all other ethnic groups or do we understand it as simply a different expression for Greeks? The former is more appropriate than the latter. The word ethnos occurs 4 times in 1 Corinthians (1:23; 5:1; 10:20; 12:2) and once in 2 Corinthians (11:26). Can it possibly be understood only in 1:23 as an alternative description of Greeks? In the other occurrences, it is referring to ethnic groups other than Jews in the Christian community at Corinth (see Clint Tibbs, Religious Experience of the Pneuma [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007], 159 n 60). This understanding is attested in 10:20 where Paul uses the word as referring to Gentiles or pagans who offered sacrifices to demons. No only Greeks but also people of other ethnic groups, such as Romans, participated in cults and cultic feasts. Therefore, it is right that we interpret the word as referring to people of other ethnic groups at Corinth including Greeks. In addition to the two major ethnic groups of Jews and Greeks, Paul indicates implicitly that the Corinthian congregation comprised other minor ethnic groups such as Romans.

²¹⁵Cf. Theissen, Social Setting, 70.
with the emperor at the pinnacle of the social pyramid. On the next level were the senators, numbering about six hundred throughout the whole Roman Empire, who “commanded the armies, administered some of the provinces, contributed to social and cultural projects, and fulfilled ceremonial priesthhoods.” They too exercised great wealth and power.

Below the senators, there was a large group of “equestrians” or “knights” who were wealthy and rich Roman citizens and landowners able “to ride to battle on horseback,” and in the imperial era “the order of the knights became an intermediate elite, with certain status symbols and with responsibility for certain duties in the government of city and empire.” It was possible, but unusual, for a man of this rank to rise to become Emperor, as did Vespasian.

On a lower level than the knights there was a group of local aristocrats in the provinces and cities. They obtained wealth and influence through inheritance, business, or appointment (and) exercised political authority by serving as decuriones – members of the local council – in cities and towns throughout the Empire…Their civic duties included collecting taxes, supervising harbours and markets, and undertaking embassies to governors and kings.

These members of the upper strata were conspicuous, so that they dominated and controlled the social, economic, and political power of the Empire, though they were relatively few in number. In the New Testament itself, there are very few mentioned from the upper classes, the highest (apart from the named Emperors) being proconsuls like Sergius Paulus in Cyprus (Acts 13: 4, 7) and Gallio in Achaia (Acts 18:12), and local aristocrats like Erastus in Roman Corinth (Rom 16:23) and Dionysius the

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216 Stambaugh and Balch (Social Environment ) give a very helpful description of social classes in Greco-Roman culture. They observe that there were two main categories, the upper classes and the lower classes in the social pyramid in general, although MacMullen argues that in the Roman Empire between the top and the bottom there was a middle class, “a range of intermediate wealth made up the aristocracy of small cities” (MacMullen, Roman Society Relations, 89). I incorporate the proposals of Stambaugh and Balch with that of MacMullen in the following description.

217 Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 111.

218 Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 111.

219 Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 111.
Areopagite in Athens (Acts 17:34).\textsuperscript{220}

On the other hand, the lower social classes included “small landowners, craftsmen, merchants, and shopkeepers and also the middle and lower ranks of Roman citizens in the army, from centurions down to ordinary legionary soldiers and veterans.”\textsuperscript{221} They were people of some moderate means. Some Corinthian Christians like Priscilla and Aquila seem to have belonged to this group.\textsuperscript{222}

Below them there were extremely poor people who did not own any property but worked on farms, in construction sites, and at the docks to sustain their living. If such day labourers in Rome possessed Roman citizenship, “they could claim their portion of the monthly grain dole, and there were special provisions made to feed the poor in some other cities.”\textsuperscript{223} Otherwise, the only hope for the masses was to align themselves in some way with a wealthier patron.

Finally, the lowest legal status of the social pyramid were the slaves. To Greek philosophers they were seen as “less than human,” and in Roman law they were treated as “a piece of property.”\textsuperscript{224} Thousands of slaves were regarded as “nothing but a commodity.”\textsuperscript{225} They “worked as chattel gangs on ships, farms, road construction, mining.”\textsuperscript{226} So they were extremely poor. In contrast to these slaves, there was another category of slaves in Greco-Roman society, who took “administrative and managerial positions” and were “active in the world of business and commerce as agents, or as managers of enterprises in which they themselves participated as bankers, shopkeepers, traders or craftspeople.”\textsuperscript{227} These slaves were hired by wealthy, socially

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\textsuperscript{220} Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 112.
\textsuperscript{221} Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 112.
\textsuperscript{222} Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 112.
\textsuperscript{223} Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 112.
\textsuperscript{224} Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 113.
\textsuperscript{225} Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 113.
\textsuperscript{226} Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 113.
\end{flushleft}
powerful and influential families and enjoyed great privileges. Moreover, they were often considered quite influential people within the local civic communities because their masters’ social power and influence extended to them also.\textsuperscript{228} For the servile class Onesimus is an example in the New Testament (Philemon vv. 1-16).

I would argue that in the Corinthian Christian gatherings, as in the wider society, there were far greater numbers from the lower classes than the upper classes. 1 Corinthians 12:13 suggests that there were, in general, two different categories of social status in the Corinthian congregation: the enslaved (\textit{douloi}), and the free (\textit{eleutheroi}). 1 Corinthians 1:26-28 also suggests that the majority of the Corinthian congregation was not from the higher classes. Paul says, “not many of you were wise...not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth” (1 Cor 1:26). Yet the very mention of this implies that there were some who were wise, powerful, and of noble birth (as indicated by Rom 16:23).

This argument is supported, to a certain degree, by Theissen. He provides good parallel information which sheds light on the possible social composition of the Corinthian congregation. He compares two different types of clubs in antiquity, professional clubs and religious clubs. The professional clubs were comprised of 1.18 per cent senators, 0.60 per cent knights, 0.47 per cent decurions, 32.75 per cent free people, 64.95 per cent freed persons, and 0.05 per cent salves. On the other hand, the religious clubs, Jewish and Christian communities included,\textsuperscript{229} had no senators or knights, 0.47 per cent decurions, 17.25 per cent free people, 63.60 per cent freed

\textsuperscript{228}Martin, \textit{Slavery as Salvation}, 17.
\textsuperscript{229}I am aware that some scholars such as Strom and Judge claim that it is anachronistic to consider the first-century Christian community as a separate religious group. To their contemporaries it appeared that the Christian group was the same as the Jewish one and that the legal exemption granted to Jews was applied to the Christians as well (Strom, \textit{Reframing Paul}, 134). The people outside the Jewish and Christian communities regarded the Jewish group irreligious because Judaism was accepted as “a legal cult (\textit{religio licita})” and because Jews were exempted from obligation to the imperial cult (Strom, \textit{Reframing Paul}, 134).
persons, and 18.68 percent salves. The professional clubs had some very high-ranked people like senators and knights, whereas the religious clubs didn’t include such high-ranked people, but only decurions. Both types of clubs comprised the class of freed persons (*liberti*) as the majority group, contributing about two-thirds of the total members. In the former there was a substantially higher percent of free persons but scarcely any slaves, whereas in the latter there was a small number of free persons, but rather a large number of slaves. These figures suggest that the majority of the Corinthian congregation was likely to comprise those who were poor and of lower social classes such as slaves and freed persons, though some of the freed persons possessed wealth and higher social status. Slaves and ex-slaves together would have contributed more than 80 percent of the whole congregation.\(^\text{230}\) Having understood this, we now turn to an examination of the diversity of ethnic groups in the broader society of Roman Corinth and the Corinthian Christian community including Jews, Greeks and Romans, beginning with a description of the Jews in the city.

**Jews**

A sizeable Jewish community had already existed in Roman Corinth long before Paul arrived and established the Christian community. de Vos argues that:

> It is likely that there were Jews among the colonists (in 44 BCE) since Pompey had taken a large number of Jews back to Rome as slaves in 61 BCE, many of whom would have been

\(^{230}\)Theissen, “Social Structure of Pauline Communities,” 76-7; also Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*, 41-180. However, such scholars as R.J. Banks doubt that the majority of members of the Pauline communities including the Corinthian congregation belonged to lower social classes. Banks claims that 1 Cor 1:26 indicates that “a significant number of people in the (Corinthian Christian community) came from the more respected levels of society,” in other words, the class of “social and political prestige” (Robert J. Banks, *Paul’s Idea of Community: the Early House Churches in their Cultural Setting* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994, rev. ed.], 116). At a glance 1 Cor 1:26 appears to indicate that there were a few members such as Erastus and Gaius who came from this class (cf. Rom 16:23). Yet this doesn’t seem to support the conclusion that a significant number of Corinthian Christians belonged to this level of high social class but rather that the majority of the Corinthian Christians belonged to lower social status.
"liberti" ('freed-persons) at the time the colonists were chosen (44 BCE),... during the civil war between Caesar and Pompey the Jews probably supported Caesar. Thus... in reward for this loyalty Caesar designated some as colonists...(and) there was a strong Jewish community at Corinth in the first century CE. The Jewish community may have been well integrated and on good terms with the wider community since there is no record of any conflict.\textsuperscript{233}

On this basis it is likely that in the mid first century CE there was a substantial Jewish community at Corinth. This idea is supported by Philo’s writing in the early forties, where he refers to a Jewish colony in many places including Corinth.\textsuperscript{232} It is also evident in the discovery of a Greek inscription reading “synagogue of the Hebrews” at Roman Corinth, probably dating to post-first century CE.\textsuperscript{233}

Witherington argues further:

As many as two thirds of all Jews in Paul’s day lived outside Palestine. About seven percent of the Empire’s population appears to have been Jewish. They ranged from very sectarian and separatist to very Hellenised, and also from rather wealthy to slaves, though there appear to have been fewer Jewish slaves than slaves of any other ethnic group. The Jewish community of Corinth probably included a few Roman citizens, ship-owners, ship-workers, artisans, merchants, and slaves...Jewish religion in the Diaspora (was)... somewhat more liberalised than in Palestine...(for instance) women had prominent roles in Diaspora synagogues.\textsuperscript{234}

Consequently, there is no doubt that there existed a substantial Jewish community at Roman Corinth in the days of Paul.

As observed above, in this Jewish ethnic community at Roman Corinth there was also a wide range of social classes. Some possessed Roman citizenship, wealth, and power in the wider civic society, so they were ranked high in the social pyramid. Others were ranked fairly low on the social scale, such as the artisans, slaves and urban poor.\textsuperscript{235} Due to such social stratification, there would have been tensions, divisions, and potentially discrimination and humiliation within the Jewish community itself. Whether the Jews of socially higher classes humiliated and despised

\textsuperscript{231}de Vos, Church and Community Conflicts, 187-8.
\textsuperscript{232}Philo, De Virtutibus Prima Pars, Quod Est De Legatione Ad Gaium, 281.
\textsuperscript{233}Witherington, Conflict, 25-6; Richardson, “Judaism and Christianity,” 52. cf. Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 159.
\textsuperscript{234}Witherington, Conflict, 27. Cf. Meeks, who claims that in the first century “some five to six million Jews” lived in the Diaspora. “There was a substantial Jewish population in virtually every town of any size in the lands bordering the Mediterranean.” So Meeks argues for an even higher percentage (about 10-15 %) of Jews in the wider Empire (Meeks, First Urban Christians, 34).
\textsuperscript{235}See Witherington, Conflict, 27.
lower-status ones, just as happened in the Christian community at Corinth (1 Cor 11:17-22), is not clear, since the evidence of the dinner parties in 1 Corinthians 11 suggests a thoroughly Hellenised setting for at least some of the divisions.

My investigations of the Jewish community at Corinth in the time of Paul convince me that the Jews (or the members of Jewish origin) in the Corinthian congregation did not comprise the majority of Paul’s ‘opponents’. This is because Paul didn’t make many converts amongst the Jews, particularly the wealthy and those of high social classes in the wider Corinthian civic society, because of their hostile attitude towards his evangelism (Acts 18:5-6).

In spite of this, 1 Corinthians 1:22-25 and 12:13 appears to indicate that there were Jewish members in the Corinthian congregation. This idea is attested in 1 Corinthians 7:18-19 where Paul refers to “circumcised believers” in the Corinthian Christian community, and is explicitly evident in Acts 18 where Luke clearly speaks of Jewish members in the Christian community at Corinth, such as Aquila and Priscilla (v. 2; cf. Rom 16:3), Titus Iustus, a God-fearer who lived next door to the synagogue (v. 7), and Crispus the ruler of the synagogue (v. 8; cf. 1 Cor 1:14; cf. Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue [v. 17; 1 Cor 1:1]). From this evidence, there is no doubt that there were members of Jewish origin in the Corinthian congregation (1 Cor 1:22, 24; 12:13; cf. Acts 18:4). Moreover, some of them were patrons who hosted and supported the Christian ekklēsia (e.g. 1 Cor 1:14; 16:19; cf. Rom 16:1-3).

Of those members of Jewish origin, Crispus was one of the first attracted to the ‘Christian faith’ in Corinth, and seems to have been wealthy and of high social standing. He was possibly respected in the wider civic community because of his

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235Witherington, Conflict, 24.
237Engels, Roman Corinth, 107.
238I agree with A. Myrou in arguing that Sosthenes and Crispus in Acts 18 and 1 Cor 1 were the same person, the head of the Synagogue at Corinth. Crispus changed his name on his conversion, just like Paul (Augustine Myrou, “Sosthenes: The Former Crispus[?].” GOTR 44 [1999] 207-12).
former career as a ruler of the synagogue.\textsuperscript{239} After conversion he continued to influence other Corinthians and have a good and respectful reputation in the wider Corinthian civic society (cf. Acts 18:8). He may have helped Paul make converts among the Corinthians, especially the Jews with whom Crispus had a good relationship. So Crispus more likely belonged to the group of higher status members than that of lower class members in the Corinthian congregation. Accordingly, his conversion was of great importance and encouragement for Paul’s mission at Corinth.\textsuperscript{240}

In addition, Aquila and Priscilla were patrons of Paul (Acts 18:2; Rom 16:3-5; 1 Cor 16:19), and probably Apollos (cf. Acts 18:26). They were possibly freed persons of Jewish origin who came from Rome in 49 CE (cf. Acts 18:1-3).\textsuperscript{241} They were co-workers with Paul for the Messianic or Christ-oriented mission to Corinth and beyond, as well as in the tent-making business (\textit{skēnopoioi}) (Acts 18:3), as artisans, and probably leatherworkers. Because of their occupation they were probably ranked fairly low in the wider social pyramid, but they, in fact, were not so.\textsuperscript{242} Rather, they were relatively wealthy because they most likely employed workers and slaves to make tents and leatherwork. This is explicitly indicated in the fact that they offered accommodation to Paul, frequently travelled from one place to another, and were patrons of the Christian communities at Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome (Acts, 18: 2, 26; Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19). It seems plausible, hence, that in spite of their lowly occupation as \textit{skēnopoioi} they were relatively well-off (or “well-to-do”), whereas a

\textsuperscript{239}Thiselton supports this view and argues that “…Crispus was ‘ruler of the synagogue’ (Acts 18:8), this ‘was an honorific title awarded by a community in gratitude for a donation to their place of prayer’. Such a one ‘was not a poor man’” (Thiselton, \textit{First Corinthians}, 141).
\textsuperscript{240}Pogoloff, \textit{Logos and Sophia}, 190; de Vos, \textit{Church and Community Conflicts}, 198; Theissen, \textit{Social Setting}, 75.
\textsuperscript{241}At this time the emperor Claudius closed down the Jewish synagogues in Rome, then he ordered the Jews out of Rome, because “they were out of favour with the imperium” (Thiselton, \textit{First Corinthians}, 1343; Witherington \textit{New Testament History}, 261.
\textsuperscript{242}Horrell, \textit{Ethos}, 99.
great number of artisans would have been among the urban poor at the time they stayed at Corinth.\footnote{Fee, First Corinthians, 835-6; Witherington, Conflict, 322. Interestingly, it is said that “the fact that Priscilla’s name is mentioned before her husband’s name once by Paul (Rom 16:3) and (twice) out of three times in Acts (e.g. Acts 18:26) suggests that she has higher status than her husband” (Horrell, Ethos, 99; cf. Thiselton, First Corinthians, 1344; Meeks, First Urban Christians, 59), or at least in the church she does. As Lampe argues, “Apparently Priscilla was even more outstanding in her work for the church than was Aquila” (Peter Lampe, “The Roman Christians of Romans 16” in Karl P. Donfried (2nd ed.), The Roman Debate [Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997 [1991]], 216-30, esp. 223).}

Paul would normally have made contact with many Jews in religious, political, social, and economic gatherings.\footnote{Stambaugh and Balch, Social Environment, 159.} But in the Jewish community at Corinth Paul was not highly successful in attracting many to the way of Jesus, although such influential and wealthy Jews as Crispus did join him in the ekklēsia. This apparently was because the Jewish community as a whole was hostile to him and his message (Acts 18:5-6).\footnote{Engels, Roman Corinth, 108} This is understandable as we realise that there were serious tensions and conflicts between Christ-believers and Jewish believers, because Paul’s Messianic or Christ-oriented mission particularly to Gentiles, lured into the Christian community especially those God-fearers and proselytes to Judaism who were often patrons of the synagogues.\footnote{Theissen, Social Setting, 104. In a very similar sense, Witherington says that “synagogue attending Gentiles” were converted to the new Christian faith in Corinth (Witherington, Conflict, 25).}

In Roman Corinth, according to Peter Richardson’s proposal, there was “a variant form” of Judaism such that Egyptian (or Alexandrian) Judaism had a heavy impact upon some of the Corinthian Christians.\footnote{Richardson, “Judaism and Christianity,” 53; for more details see ‘Hellenistic-Jewish Wisdom Traditions’ in 1.3 above. Interestingly, Richardson points out that at Corinth in the first century onwards there were similarities between Judaism and Christianity, in that just as Judaism began with house-synagogues, so Christianity began with one or several house-communities (Richardson, “Judaism and Christianity,” 53).} That this Egyptian Judaism existed in Corinth is evident in the use of the name of ‘Apollos’.\footnote{The name ‘Apollos’ was a peculiarly Egyptian abbreviation (found rarely outside Egypt) of the name ‘Apollonius’” (Richardson, “Judaism and Christianity,” 53).} In Acts Luke describes how Apollos, an Alexandrian, came to Corinth and influenced some of the Corinthian...
Christians after Paul had left the city (cf. Acts 18:24-28; 19:1; 1 Cor 1:12; 4:6). Before conversion, Apollos (Acts 18:24) was possibly influenced by “the Egyptian Therapeutae,” and after becoming converted to Christianity might have consciously or unconsciously brought such influences into the Christian communities in Ephesus as well as Corinth (e.g. Acts 18:24-19:1).

Nonetheless, this knowledge about specific Jewish members in the Corinthian congregation suggests that the majority of Paul’s ‘opponents’ in the Corinthian congregation were not members of Jewish origin who possessed wealth and ranked highly in the social pyramid. This small group rather seems to have supported Paul. Nor were the Jewish members of low social standing who might have opposed Paul in some aspects the key ‘opponents’. They neither possessed wealth nor were ranked socially high enough to agitate and instigate many of the Corinthian congregation to oppose Paul.

In the Corinthian congregation, however, there would no doubt have been Jewish members who argued against Paul because of the influence of other non-Christian Jews who lived in the wider Jewish community. As seen earlier (Acts 18:5-7), at Corinth there were conflicts between Paul and some in the Jewish community because of Paul’s Gentile mission and its attraction for proselytes. Furthermore, the possible existence of Jewish opposition to Paul in the Corinthian congregation can be seen in terms of patron-client structures. I would argue that some Jewish members of socially low status would have been influenced by their wealthy patrons. If their patrons had expressed hostile attitudes towards Paul’s ministry in Corinth, these Jewish Christians would certainly have joined the party to which their patrons belonged.249 Yet they wouldn’t have played a leadership role in such a group because

249 See above for patronal networks.
of for their low social status, nor would have created the atmosphere of opposition to Paul into the Corinthian congregation. According to Pogoloff and Theissen, these Jewish members were of socially lower classes than the other Jewish members who were hospitable to Paul (cf. 1 Cor 4:10-13).250 Having said this, we now move on to an investigation of the Greeks in Roman Corinth and of Greek members in the Corinthian Christian community.

**Greeks**

The Greeks comprised the largest portion of the population in the broader civic community of Corinth by the time Paul founded the Corinthian congregation. These Greeks were descendents of the original indigenous Corinthian inhabitants who were largely destroyed by Roman forces, particular Mummius in 146 BCE. Interestingly, however, they weren’t then completely eliminated. Some of them escaped from the enslavement of Mummius’ forces and continued to remain in the destroyed city of Corinth during its ecliptic period (146-44 BCE), until the mid first century CE. Nevertheless, these indigenous Corinthians were ranked low in the social pyramid. Their numbers were supplemented in the first years of the colony by a large number of descendents of those Greeks who had scattered all over the Roman Empire, especially the Mediterranean regions such as Achaia and Greece since 146 BCE, who then returned to Roman Corinth because of its rapid commercial development. These people and their descendents inhabited the city by the time the Christian community

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was founded. Most of these people were poor and ranked lowest in the social hierarchy.\footnote{Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 70; de Vos, *Church and Community Conflicts*, 186; Witherington, *Conflict*, 6. In addition, first century Corinth was a bilingual city where the common language was Greek which was spoken in marketplaces and streets, but Latin was used as the official language (see Theissen, *Social Setting*, 79). It is not surprising that Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in Greek rather than Latin, because the majority of the Corinthian congregation was comprised of those Greeks who were ranked fairly lowly on the social scale (see Theissen, *Social Setting*, 70-3, 102; also Barclay, “Thessalonica and Corinth,” 57; Thielson, *First Corinthians*, 181; Fee, *First Corinthians*, 82; Pickett, *Cross in Corinth*, 45; Witherington, *Conflict*, 22).}

Nonetheless, I argue that Paul would have made more converts to the Christian faith amongst these people than any other ethnic group and that they became the majority group in number, but most of them were poor and of socially low class.\footnote{For a detailed explanation of this see below.} This is certainly indicated in Paul’s description of the social makeup of the Christian gatherings at Corinth (1 Cor 1:26-28). Due to this they were discriminated against (e.g. 1 Cor 4:10-13; the Lord’s Supper, 1 Cor 11:20-22). But I argue that amongst the Corinthian Christians of Greek origin, there were also some who possessed wealth and high social positions. These Christians assumed they could be (benevolent) patrons of Paul and the Corinthian Christian community. I will argue that the majority of Christians of Greek origin didn’t actively oppose Paul at Corinth, however, but belonged to Paul’s party. Nevertheless, it may be that some of these Christians were associated with the party that opposed Paul because in terms of patron-client bonds they had to belong to the party to which their patrons belonged, but they were not the leaders of such a group.

Furthermore, the Pauline language in Romans and 1 Corinthians certainly supports the existence of Greek members in the Corinthian congregation. Paul names Greeks such as Chloe,\footnote{In 1 Cor 1:11 Paul names Chloe once, so we do not have much information about her. It is presumed, however, that she was wealthy and a prominent member of the Pauline community at Corinth.} Phoebe, Stephanas, and Erastus (Rom 16:1, 23; 1 Cor 1:11, 16). Paul speaks of Phoebe in Romans 16:1-2, and informs us that she was a *diakonos*...
(wrongly translated as “deaconess” [RSV]). 254 The word *diakonos* refers to her leadership role in the Christian *ekklésia* at Cenchreae (just as it is applied to Paul and Apollos [1 Cor 3:5]), which was one of the two most important harbours for Corinth’s commercial and economic prosperity in the first century. 255 She is also described as a *prostatis* (wrongly translated as “helper” [RSV]) 256 whose Latin equivalent, *patronus* technically means ‘patron’ for Paul and the Christian community at Corinth. 257 She

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254 Some scholars interpret the Greek *diakonos* here as ‘servant’, ‘helper’ or especially ‘deaconess’. These scholars seem to oppose to the idea of women’s active leadership role in the Pauline communities. They instead claim that women simply helped and assisted male leaders or missionaries. These women were allowed to do only limited pastoral work. They thus see Phoebe as pastoral assistant helping Paul in his mission and giving hospitality to other women and visiting the sick and the poor in the Corinthian Christian community rather than view her as an active leader. (C.K Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [NY: Harper and Row, 1962], 282; Donald F. Thomas, *The Deacon in a Changing Church* [Valley Forge: the Judson Press, 1969], 111; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*. Geoffrey W. Bromiley [trans]. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 411). This interpretation should be criticised at two points: Firstly, the Greek word *diakonos* is here used in a masculine form rather than feminine (see also Ben Witherington III with Darlene Hyatt, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004], 382; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*. BECNT. [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998], 787). It thus should be translated as ‘deacon’ rather than ‘deaconess’. Secondly, ‘deaconess’ is a later invention (Schreiner, *Romans*, 787). E.S. Fiorenza claims that some scholars interpret the word *diakonos* as ‘deaconess’ “in terms of the later institution of deaconess” (Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Missionaries, Apostles, Co-workers: Romans 16 and the Reconstruction of Women’s Early Christian History” in Ann Loades [ed.], *Feminist Theology: A Reader* [London: SPCK, 1990], 57-71, esp. 62, 71). It is noteworthy that the feminine form of *diakonos* occurs nowhere in the NT: the masculine form appears 29 times. This means that women workers were not called ‘deaconess’ as such in Christian communities in the first century. The office of deaconess was institutionalised in the “early post-apostolic centuries” (Thomas, *Deacon in a Changing Church*, 112). That is why it is not appropriate to translate the word *diakonos* anywhere in the NT as ‘deaconess’, even where it is used in reference to women. Therefore, it is unlikely that men leaders were named as deacons and women as deaconesses and that only men took on leadership roles with women as their assistants. Accordingly, it is anachronistic to translate *diakonos* in Rom 16:1 as ‘deaconess’. The word should instead be interpreted as ‘deacon’, describing Phoebe’s leadership role in the Pauline community at Cenchreae. This argument is supported by Fiorenza (“Missionaries,” 71), Byrne (*Romans*, 447), Dunn (*Romans*, 888), Witherington (*Romans*, 382), Charles H. Talbert (*Romans* [Macon: Smith and Helwys, 2002], 333), Schreiner (*Romans*, 787), and Ronnie Aitchison (*The Ministry of A Deacon* [Peterborough: Epworth, 2003], 88).

This interpretation challenges Korean churches that are heavily influenced by Confucian conceptions of social hierarchical structure. Korean Christians, whether men or women, tend to devalue the leadership capacity of women in the church and exclude them from leadership positions and decision-making groups. Women are not entitled to be elders (*jangro* in Korean) but only assistants and helpers (*kwonsa*) who support the pastors and elders in the church (for more details about offices in a Koran church see Chapter Four).


256 Cranfield claims that “it is doubtful whether Phoebe, as a woman, would have been able to fulfil the legal functions involved. However, it is possible that the word is here used in its most general sense of ‘helper’” (C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*: vol. 2 [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979], 783). I disagree with his argument (see below).

257 It is a remarkable point that Paul nowhere uses the Greek word *prostatis* except here in Romans 16:2 where Paul recommends Phoebe to the Roman Christians, though in first century Greco-Roman society patronage was one of the most significant social phenomena (for a detailed explanation see 2.2.1 above).
must have been an economically independent and a relatively high-status person if she was to be the letter-bearer to Rome and commended to the Roman Christian community. The word *prostatis* in reference to Phoebe doesn’t merely mean ‘helper’ or protector’ but ‘patron’. This is because in the Roman world “women could assume the legal role of *prostates,*” and they actually acted as patrons or “benefactors.”

Interestingly, “one-tenth of the patrons, protectors, or donors to *collegia*” or clubs were women.

As stated above, in 1 Corinthians and Romans Paul names many prominent members who accommodate and host the whole congregation in Corinth. Of them, only Phoebe is identified as a *prostatis.* From my perspective, this suggests two points: firstly, in the Christian gatherings at Corinth, Phoebe, as a woman, took on a substantial and active leadership role in the Corinthian Christian community. This is supported by Fiorenza. She claims that her leadership was “equal to men and sometimes even superior to men.” Secondly, Paul draws attention to her role as patron because it provides a model of Christian patronage that critiques the dominant form practised by the male elite. As mentioned above, women (most likely widows with sons – thus retaining their husband’s wealth) comprised up to 10% of the whole population of patrons or benefactors for social associations or clubs in the Roman world. Paul has no problem with this.

In his description of Phoebe as a *prostatis,* Paul may have been gently critiquing the Christian *ekklēsia* at Corinth and other social clubs, associations and cults where men dominated and there were strong patriarchal structures between

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258 Witherington, *Conflict,* 34.
260 Fiorenza argues that Paul uses the word *prostatis* in terms of “the technical-legal sense of the Greco-Roman patronage system” that refers to patron-client relations” (Fiorenza, “Missionaries,” 64).
patrons and clients. Here, Paul seems to highlight that in the Christian community at Corinth there should be a different relationship between patrons and clients. All were one in Christ (hen eisin, e.g. 1 Cor 3:8). Phoebe was relatively wealthy (or at least independent) and ranked highly on the social scale. She was also a patron of Paul and the whole congregation. Unlike some of the patrons in the collegia, she mustn’t have patronised him and the other members in the Christian community at Corinth in an arrogant and elitist way. In Roman 16:2, therefore, Paul explicitly names and commends her to the Roman Christian community as a model of Christian patronage and encourages and urges the Roman believers to imitate her patronage, and thus not to adopt the patronage which was normally practised in collegia or clubs within Roman civic society.

Second, as regards Erastus, Paul mentions his name with his social position as the treasurer of the city of Corinth (ho oikonomos tēs poleōs) in Romans 16:23 (cf. Acts 19:22 and 2 Tim 4:20, where it is evident that he stayed in Corinth). It is plausible that the Erastus referred to in these three references is the same prominent

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262 Fiorenza, “Missionaries,” 65; for a detailed explanation of patronage see above.
263 His social status is controversial among scholars, because of his position, ho oikonomos tēs poleōs. The Greek word oikonomos could refer to the same office as the Latin aedilis in the Roman world. This is a high financial officer, although it is not clear how high it was ranked in the administrative hierarchy. But it is suggested that the office is equivalent to that of quaestor. This position could probably be taken by slaves and freed-people. That is why scholars dispute Erastus’ social status. But most of these scholars claim that he was a freed man or a descendent of the colonist freed-people rather than slave. The aedile’s main tasks were to maintain public streets, buildings, and marketplaces, to collect revenues for business in such places, and he could be a judge in the local games in other places than Corinth. But the aedile was an important officer, especially in wealthy cities like Corinth. By virtue of his office an aedile could obtain considerable wealth and property. On this basis, it is suggested that Erastus would have been ranked highly in the social pyramid of the Corinthian civic society in particular (Theissen, Social Setting, 83; de Vos, Church and Community Conflicts, 199-201; Witherington, Conflict, 33-4; Dunn, Romans, 911; Horrell, Ethos, 97). In addition, Stambaugh and Balch say that “in 1929 and 1947, different pieces of a Latin inscription were discovered. They name an Erastus as donor of the paving east of the theatre in Corinth; he offers his pavement ‘in return for the office of aedile’” (Social Environment, 160). In agreement with such scholars as Stambaugh, Balch, Witherington, de Vos, and Horrell, I support the suggestion that the Erastus, who took the office of aedile and is named in the inscription at Corinth, was the same person as the Christian of whom Paul mentions in Rom 16:23. Nevertheless, I am aware that scholars such as D.W.J. Gill and A.D. Clarke claim uncertainty about “the link between the two Erasti” (David W.J. Gill, “Erastus the Aedile,” TynBul 40 [1989], 293-301, esp. 300; also Andrew D. Clarke, “Another Corinthian Erastus Inscription,” TynBul 42 [1991], 146-151). I agree with Witherington’s arguments against their position (see Witherington, Conflict, 33).
person who stayed in Corinth and assisted Paul. He was probably a freedman of Greek origin, although he possibly held Roman citizenship (that is why he had a Romanised name) that was granted to him because of his high public office of aedile.\textsuperscript{264} This office suggests he was a major magistrate in the local government. Such descriptions mean that he was socially powerful and ranked highly in the social pyramid of Roman Corinth in particular.\textsuperscript{265} Consequently, he would have been wealthy, and seen as being a potential patron of Paul and the Corinthian congregation, after he was converted to the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{266} Moreover, the descriptions describe him as a trustful Christian and co-worker to Paul, and associate him with Timothy. Paul sent this man Erastus with Timothy to Macedonia (e.g. Acts 19:22) and the tradition always mentions Erastus in close relation to Timothy (e.g. Rom 16:23; Acts 19:22; 2 Tim 4:20). Clearly, Erastus was a prominent member who supported Paul in the Christian community at Corinth. Yet Paul never explicitly acknowledges this support in terms of the language of patronage.

Paul also mentions Stephanas of Achaia in 1 Corinthians 1:14-17. In this passage where he tackles the issue of baptism, Paul names Stephanas with Crispus and Gaius.\textsuperscript{267} It appears that in verse 16 Paul almost forgot to name Stephanas with

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\item\textsuperscript{264}So argues Dunn, “the possibility remains (we can put it no more strongly) that Erastus was a Roman citizen...of some wealth and notable social status” (Dunn, Romans, 911). Theissen further claims Erastus had “a Greek name” and was “a successful man who rose in the ranks of the local notables, most of whom were of Latin origin” (Social Setting, 83).
\item\textsuperscript{265}So Talbert, Romans, 339; Theissen, Social Setting, 83; de Vos, Church and Community Conflicts, 199-201; Witherington, Conflict, 33-4; Dunn, Romans, 911; Byrne, Romans, 460.
\item\textsuperscript{266}He “was probably converted by Paul through contact in the marketplace when Paul was making tents and had to pay fees to Erastus” (Witherington, Romans, 400). Yet it is remarkable that Paul never acknowledges Erastus as his patron (prostatis) as he does Phoebe (for more details see 3.2.2 below).
\item\textsuperscript{267}I would argue that Paul mentions these three important persons as representatives of each ethnic group: Jews, Romans, and Greeks, while he discusses division and baptism (1 Cor 1:13-17). The reason for this is because there were in the Corinthian congregation divisions or factions among these different ethnic groups. In order to reclaim the Christian community from the grips of factionalism and unite the Christians, Paul emphasises his authority over the whole congregation regardless of different ethnic origins, by reminding the Corinthians that he himself baptised Crispus, Gaius and Stephanas. In doing so, Paul claims that though the Corinthian congregation comprises different ethnic groups and social classes, it should be united as the body of Christ (hēmeis este soma christou) (1 Cor 12:12-31, esp. v. 27) unlike the secular clubs and associations at Corinth. Therefore, I argue that in this particular context
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the other two, and only as an afterthought came to remember himself baptising Stephanas and his household as well (“I did baptise also the household of Stephanas” \[ebaptisa de kai ton Stephana oikon\]). Due to this, the Corinthian audience may well have thought Paul regarded Stephanas as a less important leader than Crispus and Gaius, as the letter was being read publicly to them. This is Paul’s rhetorical strategy. It is more likely that Paul intentionally named Stephanas later than Crispus and Gaius, or pretended to forget his name in his letter, because he knew that more of the Corinthian Christians of high social status followed Crispus and Gaius as leaders than the lower ranked Stephanas. Paul, however, subtly acknowledges and draws attention to his devotion and dedication to the Corinthian congregation. The function of Stephanas as role model is then clearly and explicitly revealed in 1 Corinthians 16:15-18.\footnote{So it is likely that Paul names Stephanas twice in chapter 16:15-18 not because he encourages the Corinthian Christians “to show a little more respect for…Stephanas,” as Meeks argues (\textit{First Urban Christians}, 78), but because Paul intended a rhetorical effect on the Corinthian Christians, that they should see Stephanas (and his household) as the best example of \textit{ekklēsia}.}

In verse 16:15 Paul mentions the name of Stephanas together with his household. In this verse it is said that at Corinth the household of Stephanas were the first converts to Christianity and that they have committed themselves to serving fellow Christians. From this verse two things are known. One is that Stephanas and his household must have been the first Christians Paul baptised at Corinth (cf. 1 Cor 1:16). The other is that they were seen by Paul as role models for the Corinthian Christian community. Paul says, “I urge you to be subject to such men (the household of Stephanas) and to every fellow worker and labourer (\textit{kopiaō})” (16:16).\footnote{Paul uses the Greek words \textit{kopos} and \textit{kopiaō} often in 1 Corinthians, as he refers to Christian workers who laboured for the ministry of Jesus (see 15:10, 58; 16:16; cf. 2 Cor 11:23).} This idea is also affirmed in 1 Corinthians 16:17 where Paul speaks of Stephanas with
Fortunatus and Achaicus. Here Paul exhibits his excitement because of their visit to
the place where he is, where it seems that they all helped support the Pauline mission.
That is why in verses 17-18 Paul says that “they supplied what was lacking on your
part...they refreshed my spirit and yours; therefore acknowledge such men.” In this
expression Paul appears to insist on the spiritual/moral leadership of Stephanas rather
than affirming that Stephanas was ranked highly on the social scale and wealthy.
Furthermore, it is apparent that Stephanas was considered a leader for the Christians
of Greek origin, who formed the numerical majority in the Christian *ekklēsia* in
Corinth.\(^{270}\) Having argued this, we now turn to an investigation of Corinthian citizens
of Roman origin in first century Roman Corinth and members of Roman origin in the
Corinthians Christian community.

**Romans**

Romans had inhabited Corinth about a century before Paul came to the city. As
mentioned earlier, Corinth had been destroyed and desolated by Roman forces around
146 BCE, but was resurrected as a Roman colony in 44 BCE according to Julius
Caesar’s orders.\(^{271}\) Thereafter the city was repopulated by colonists who came
substantially from Rome. Engels claims that “we do not know their numbers, but in
all likelihood there were not many, perhaps only 3,000.”\(^{272}\) Of them, the majority

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\(^ {270}\)It shouldn’t be overlooked that there were many other individuals in the Corinthian congregation
whom we don’t mention for we don’t have much information about them and so we can’t classify their
ethnic origins.

\(^ {271}\)Stambaugh and Balch, *Social Environment*, 157; Litfin, *Paul’s Theology of Proclamation*, 141; Colin
why Caesar rebuilt Corinth is that “by removing part of these politically disaffected and volatile groups
from Rome, (Caesar) probably earned the gratitude of many in the capital. Since the land was not taken
from Italian landowners, no doubt they were also appeased. In choosing a site where they have an
excellent chance to prosper, he would increase the loyalty and devotion of these groups, and especially
his veterans, to himself” (Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 16-7).

were freed-people, while a small number were Caesar’s army veterans and urban poor. As I have argued earlier, these Roman colonists most likely had experienced the influence of Cicero’s rhetoric and eloquence on the Romans of his time, and his political power in the Roman world of the first century BCE. They would have brought Cicero’s theories of rhetoric and eloquence with his rhetorical handbooks into the Romanised city of Corinth, when they came from Rome.

Due to such colonising policies, Corinth no longer remained a traditional Hellenistic city, but became more of a Romanised city not only in its social, administrative, and political systems, but also in its architecture. It became more like Rome, the centre of the Roman Empire. Moreover, Latin became the official language in the city of Corinth rather than Greek. This is a significant argument in support of the influence of Cicero’s rhetorical legacy on the civic life of the Corinthians in the first century CE. His rhetorical handbooks, which were written in Latin, were considered as a model of rhetoric, wisdom, and eloquence in Greco-Roman educational contexts. As a result, the older Hellenistic cultural heritage was fading, and the original population of the area would have been replaced rapidly by the migrants who came from Rome as well as other Mediterranean cities in the Roman Empire.

The citizens (Latin, *cives*) of Roman Corinth comprised two significant groups. One was the Roman colonists and their descendents, and the other was the *incolae*, non-Roman citizens including native Corinthians. The latter were not allowed to hold office, though the former and some of the latter were granted the right to vote. In addition, “full citizenship in the (city) could be acquired through birth, adoption, or manumission by a Corinthian citizen, or through a gift of the Emperor or the local senate (*decurio, Greek boule*)” (Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 17). By the time the colonists came to Corinth, in other Roman colonies it

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274 Witherington, *Conflict*, 7.
275 See 2.1 above.
276 In addition, “full citizenship in the (city) could be acquired through birth, adoption, or manumission by a Corinthian citizen, or through a gift of the Emperor or the local senate (*decurio, Greek boule*)” (Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 17). By the time the colonists came to Corinth, in other Roman colonies it
this regard, I would argue that during the colonising period and onward, in the city of Corinth the Roman colonists and their descendents, especially the freed-people class, would have gained socially higher positions than the *incolae*. For instance, during the reign of Augustus in particular, this freed-people class held a number of important posts in the administration of the city. This is because the freed-people played the most substantial role as merchants and traders in establishing Corinth’s commercial and manufacturing foundation and in making money for the city’s economic prosperity. In doing so, they became wealthier and more influential, being elevated in social status through using their wealth and money. In contrast, the *incolae* still remained poor and were employed by the freed-people as artisans, workers, and slaves.

Furthermore, according to Julius Caesar’s order, the freed-people were granted the exceptional right to hold politically influential positions such as magistrates and senators (*curiales* or *decuriones*) in Roman Corinth, unlike other Roman colonies. This is because of their wealth and substantial contribution to the economic and commercial prosperity of Corinth and the need to re-establish the colony quickly. Augustus, however, revoked their privilege during his reign (31 BCE – 14 CE). Because of this, the freed-people were then legally banned from holding such socially and politically privileged positions and even civic office. Thus, as in other Roman

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279 This is because wealth was considered highly important for entering the ruling elite in particular, although such qualifications as “birth, legal status (possession of Roman citizenship) and place of origin” were also important (Horrell, *Ethos*, 65).
280 So then ‘full Roman citizens’ took Corinthian magistracies just as was the case in other colonies. Nonetheless, the freedmen could hope that “a civic career would be open to their sons” (Engels, *Roman Corinth*, 67-8).
colonies, at Corinth in the days of Paul the freed people were no longer permitted to belong to such a politically and socially powerful group, although they were still wealthy and of high social standing.

So a significant question remains unsolved for us. Who were Corinth’s most politically powerful and socially influential citizens in the mid first century? Who belonged to the group with the highest social status in the entire Corinthian civic society by the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians? These people were certainly descendents of the full Roman citizens who had migrated to Corinth when the Roman colonists occupied the city in 44 BCE. In the first years of the colony the full Roman citizens dominated Corinthian civic society politically and socially. Consequently, by the mid first century their descendents dominated the civic community of Corinth when the Corinthian Christian community was founded.

They would have gained control of the civil life of Corinth, including its social, economic, and political systems, and even its religious festivals. Winter supports this argument stating that “the cultural milieu which impacted life in the city of Corinth was Romanitas…the dominant and transforming cultural influence was Roman.”

For example, this group were the great benefactors and patrons of the city of Corinth who served the city as unpaid municipal officials, who donated to the city a

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281 In the time of Paul, Roman citizenship accorded with wealth, high social status and social security and carried high esteem in the Roman Empire since only about five million of the population of over fifty million were full Roman citizens. The full Roman citizens were granted many privileges; they were “entitled to special protection by the Roman government from the accusations of non-citizens and from the more extreme forms of punishment. Citizens were held in higher honour than non-citizens, even if they were of slave origin…Roman citizenship also exempted one from many taxes. Roman citizens in the provinces typically did not pay the standard taxes sent as tribute to Rome” (Jeffers, Greco-Roman World, 198).

The privilege of Roman citizens is evident in Acts 22:25-29. A tribune (or commander) paid “a big price” or “a large sum” to get his Roman citizenship (v. 28). That people of Roman citizenship were better protected by Roman law is affirmed in Paul’s words, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen?” (Acts 22:25). Paul was accused by Jews, but according to Acts he did not hesitate to claim his right as a Roman citizen because he recognised that his Roman citizenship would secure him a better defence.

282 See Horrell, Ethos, 65.
283 Winter, After Paul Left, 22.
great amount of money for their elections, and constructed many public buildings at their own expense. Moreover, this network made a large contribution to the Isthmian and Caesarean Games and the imperial cult, undertook the administration of these religious festivals and held luxurious banquets. Consequently, the Roman citizens and their descendents were amongst the wealthiest and of the highest social standing, and the most powerful and influential citizens in the Corinthian civic society by the time the Corinthian Christian community was established. Furthermore, this group of Corinthians in particular would have considered Cicero as a model of patronage and eloquence, and have imitated the way Cicero had behaved politically and socially in Rome. They would undoubtedly have been influenced by the growing legacy of Cicero’s theories of rhetoric and eloquence in their civic community.

Further, the group of the freed-people class, who came from Rome as colonists, was granted high standing by virtue of their wealth in the Corinthian social community. In a commercial and economic sense, together with the group of full Roman citizens, this freed-people group was important. By trade they became wealthy and made money for Corinth’s economic prosperity, and used their money for the elevation of their social status. So they too were potentially ranked highly on the social scale. These freed-people would have passed their wealth and social status down to their descendents until the mid first century CE. By the time of Paul, Roman Corinth enjoyed great commercial and economic prosperity. It was one of the most prosperous and luxurious cities in the Roman Empire. To such economic prosperity,

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284 Shotter states that “the wealthy members of society took on administrative roles; the absence of salaries for such tasks meant that it was only such people who could undertake them. Local officials were usually elected or chosen by the wealthy from their own number” (Shotter, Augustus Caesar, 60).
285 Engels, Roman Corinth, 18, 68. Senators and equites took “the high offices in the administration of the empire and were in the command of the military, while the administration of the civic communities was reserved for the local elites gathered in the ordines decurionum (‘the orders of decurions’)” (Horrell, Ethos, 65).
286 See above.
traders and merchants made a substantial contribution. These people were
descendants of the freed-people group who moved from Rome to Corinth in the first
years of the colony.287

Nonetheless, at Roman Corinth there were people of Roman and Italian origins
who belonged to the group of low social status and working-class citizens like
artisans. This is attested by archaeologists examining Roman Corinth. They have
discovered “the lamps and terra sigillata” on which Roman and Italian workers left
their Latin names, and “the early Ionic and Corinthian column bases and moldings”
which reflected Italian architectural traditions. These were not found in any other
cities of Roman Greece. Thus, it is possible that they were of Italian origin.289

1 Corinthians also appears to indicate that Paul made several converts amongst
the Corinthians of these ethnic origins. Of course, most of them were of freed-people
classes, and we have no reliable scholarly evidence for the presence of Christians of
full Roman citizenship at Corinth. Nevertheless, for the existence of Christians of the
freed-people class at Corinth, we have the evidence that Paul mentions several Latin
names in Romans and 1 Corinthians, such as Tertius (who was the writer of the letter
to the Romans, Rom 16:22), Gaius, Quartus, Crispus,290 Fortunatus, Achaicus (Rom
16: 22-23; 1 Cor 1:14; 16:17). Of them, Gaius was of some means and a prominent
member in the Christian community at Corinth, so that he was potentially a patron of
Paul and the whole Christian gathering by way of offering accommodation.291

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287 See above.
288 Engels, Roman Corinth, 69; cf. for a discovery of a Corinthian lamp see Oded Borowski, “A
289 Engels, Roman Corinth, 69.
290 As seen earlier, Crispus was clearly a Jew and the ruler of the synagogue. But I argue that he had a
good friendship with and a similar social status to Gaius from Paul’s point of view, because Paul names
them together in speaking of a few he baptised in Corinth (1 Cor 1:14-16). In this regard it may be that
Gaius possessed a similar social standing to that which Crispus had within the civic community of
Corinth.
291 Gaius was a Corinthian citizen of Roman origin. He had a good relation to the Christian community
in Rome, because Paul names him in Romans 16:23 as well as 1 Corinthians 1:14. This means that to
However, there is no evidence that there were many members of Roman and Latin origins in the Corinthian Christian community, because in the Pauline language Greeks and Jews only are explicitly mentioned (1 Cor 1:22, 24).292

Those amongst the Corinthian Christians who were of higher social status would have been in contact at banquets and social clubs with the Corinthian elite and the people who possessed full Roman citizenship and were the most politically powerful and socially influential group in the Corinthian civic community in the first

both Christian communities Gaius was well-known. He was a wealthy Christian (“Gaius…is host to me and to the whole church” [Rom 16:23, RSV]). Hence, because of his wealth he would have been ranked highly in the social pyramid. To some extent, he must have had a good influence on or had a good reputation to the Christian community in Rome.

Further, it is important to note that Paul names him alongside Erastus the city treasurer (Rom 16:23), unlike Phoebe and Priscilla and Aquila. In naming these three Paul might have in mind more pastoral concerns, because Paul mentions their ecclesial offices in a specific fashion, such as “deacon” and “workers in Christ Jesus” (Rom 16:1,3). But Paul doesn’t need to explain to the Romans something about their social status and careers, because Phoebe would be appearing in person bringing with her his letter to them, and Priscilla and Aquila had been known to them since they stayed with them at Rome (cf. Rom 16:1-3; Acts 18:2).

Interestingly, however, in speaking of Erastus Paul specifies his civil profession as ho oikonomos tês poleís which was “a significant civic office” (although it could be held by a slave or freedman) (Brendan Byrne, Romans. SPS: vol. 6. [Collegeville: the Liturgical Press, 1996], 460; for more discussion see Theissen, Social Setting, 75-9; Witherington, Conflict, 33; de Vos, Church and Community Conflicts, 199; Horrell, Ethos, 97; J.D.G. Dunn, Roman 9-16. WBC: vol. 38B. [Dallas: Word Books, 1988], 911). This is because the Romans must have known nothing about him. So Paul introduces him to them by mentioning his profession, and acknowledging his high social standing. Therefore, I argue that Erastus was a person of high social status because of his career as the city treasurer at Roman Corinth (for a more detailed explanation of Erastus see further below).

Gaius would have possessed a social status similar to Erastus. Both were wealthy and had high social positions. Because of their similar social classes they may well have had a good relationship with each other. It seems that in Paul’s mind and later tradition, these two people were close friends due to their social status and their support of Paul’s mission (Rom 16:23; Acts 19:22; 2 Tim 4:20). Furthermore, Gaius belonged to the class of Roman freed-persons whose forefathers had come to Corinth as colonists and had possessed wealth from merchandising and trading. This is supported by scholars such as Fee (First Corinthians, 62), and is to some extent argued by Bruce and Witherington. These scholars suggest that Gaius in the Pauline epistles be identified with Titus Justus Gaius in Acts 18:7 (Bruce, I & II Corinthians, 34; Witherington, Conflict, 102; cf. Meeks, First Urban Christians, 57).

Finally, Gaius was quite wealthy inasmuch as he owned a house large enough to accommodate the whole Corinthian congregation (laos polus; Acts 18:10; Rom 16:23). As such, he would be regarded as a patron who supported and possibly housed Paul at Corinth, just as did Crispus the ruler of the synagogue (Acts 18:8; 1 Cor 1:14). It is natural that he would be regarded as a major patron of Paul and his Corinthian congregation because, just like Crispus, he was baptised by Paul, but we should note that Paul never names Gaius as a patron (see above).

295Yet I don’t think that there would have been only members of Greek and Jewish origin in the Corinthian congregation. The reason Paul speaks of these two ethnic origins here is that they were the majority groups in number. Interestingly, Paul employs the Greek word ‘ethnos’ instead of the word ‘Hellēnis’ alongside the word ‘Ioudaioi’ in v. 23. I argue that in this passage the word ‘ethnos’ is interpreted as referring to all ethnic groups except Jews. So this word certainly includes Greeks as well as Romans (see Witherington, Conflict, 113).
century CE. These Christians would have been influenced, to some extent, by the mentality and social behaviour of the Corinthian elite and by the pattern of politics, patronage, and rhetorical conventions Cicero suggested in his rhetorical handbooks.

It is also plausible to suggest that they would have brought social-conventions-oriented behaviour into the Christian community at Corinth (e.g. 1 Cor 3:18-23; 6:1-10; 8:6-13; 11:17-19, 22). It is possible, therefore, that these Christians played a major part in the opposition to Paul in the Corinthian congregation.

When Paul stayed at Corinth, this group of Corinthian Christians appears to have offered to support Paul financially following the social fashion of patron-client bonds in the Greco-Roman world, just as their contemporaries did. But Paul appears to have rejected such offers (cf. 2 Cor 11:7-9). Understandably, this would raise in their minds a sense of opposition to him. Later, this could have developed into tensions between these Christians and Paul (1 Cor 3:3; cf. 2 Cor 12:20). Thus, in my argument, these higher status members seem to be closely related to the problems Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians, especially the Corinthian slogans, *panta moi exestin* (“all things are lawful for me” [RSV] in 6:12; cf. 10:23) and *pantes gnōsin echomen* (“all of us possess knowledge” [RSV] in 8:1). Consequently, their behaviour could have played a critical role in causing the problems of schisms as described in 1 Corinthians 1-4.

Thus, as argued above, the people of Roman origin took politically and socially important positions in the Corinthian civic society by the time Paul founded the Christian *ekklēsia* at Corinth. Of them, the group possessing full Roman citizenship was the most powerful and influential group in the civic society of Roman Corinth. These people were ranked the highest in the social pyramid. Of course, they possessed

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293 Barclay argues similarly (“Thessalonica and Corinth,” 58), but he doesn’t refer specifically to Cicero’s influence on them.

much higher social status than other ethnic groups such as the Jews and the Greeks, and most of the political power in the Corinthian social community was concentrated on these full Roman citizens. In my argument, if any amongst these Corinthians had been converted to the Christian faith, they would have been closely related to the group Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 1:26 (“wise,” “powerful,” and “noble birth” [RSV]). It is probable that such persons would have argued against Paul on the issue of *sophia* (1 Cor 1-4), because the person understood him/herself as possessing *sophia* which represented the characteristics of people of education and high social status in the first century Greco-Roman world. Such persons may well have opposed and criticised Paul for his challenge to the importance of rhetorical abilities and conventions, and patronal systems (cf. 2 Cor 10:3-4, 9-10; 11:6).

In summary, we have investigated the ethnic composition of the Corinthian congregation and suggested that there were three major ethnic groups: Romans, Greeks and Jews. I have argued that the members of Greek origin were the largest group in number, and that those of Jewish origin were the second largest. The majority in these two groups were poor and of the socially lower classes, although there were a few wealthy and higher social status members. By contrast, the members of Roman origin were the minority group in number, but many of them possessed wealth and higher social positions. Furthermore, because of their social status and the strong influence of patronal systems, these Roman members influenced other Corinthians not only in the Christian gatherings but also in the social clubs and

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295 But I haven’t found any scholarly arguments or evidence to support the presence of full Roman citizens amongst the Corinthian Christians as addressed in 1 Corinthians, although Erastus was possibly a Roman citizen (see below). Yet he is not named in 1 Corinthians but in Romans 16:23. I argue, therefore, that he was converted to the Christian faith some time later than the time when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Furthermore, I note that Paul possessed Roman citizenship according to Acts 22:25-29; 3:27). This helps us grasp the background of why Paul describes himself as the father (*patēr*) of the Corinthian Christians in 1 Corinthians 4:15. In so doing, he may be gently reminding the Christians that in some respects he possesses higher social status than many of them (for details see above).

associations of the wider Corinthian civic community. In this there was the danger that they influenced some of the other Christians to misuse patronal and rhetorical conventions within the Christian community, particularly because of the strong culture of of ‘imitation’ and ‘boasting’ as argued above. Such persons would be in danger of esteeming *sophia* and rhetorical skills, particularly eloquent speech, more than the gospel message Paul preached (1 Cor 1:18-3:22), and of using their patronage in unhelpful ways (1 Cor 6; 8; 9; 10; 11). This would play a major and critical factor in causing the Corinthian congregation to be divided into factions (1 Cor 1:10-4:21; cf. 11:18-19). Against such divisive influences, Paul subtly emphasises the better model of the gathering of Stephanas as that which the Corinthians should follow.

Furthermore, I suggest that the influence of the social pyramid in the wider Corinthian civic community strongly affected leadership roles in the Christian community. This is because the Corinthian Christians who possessed high social status in the broader civic society could easily have dominated leadership roles and assumed that they had the position of patrons of Paul and the congregation. This is attested in the fact that many Corinthian Christians named in Romans 16 and 1 Corinthians such as Crispus, Erastus, Aquila, Priscilla, (and perhaps also Phoebe and Chloe), possessed some economic wealth and belonged to higher classes in the social pyramid. These Christians were prominent members as well as key leaders in the Christian community, although they were the minority group in number (see Rom 16:1-3, 23; 1 Cor 1:11, 14-16). Nonetheless, the majority of the Corinthian Christians were extremely poor and of lower social standing, and may well have been isolated from the mainstream of church life and excluded from leadership positions. This is because their social class may have prevented them from becoming leaders in the Christian community where rather than the gospel message and Christian teaching,
social positions and social hierarchies were regarded as more important due to the strong influence of cultural and social systems such as patron-client relations and rhetorical skills (1 Cor 1:26-28; 2:1-5). I would argue that this is a reason why in 1 Corinthians Paul is careful about naming these poor and low social-class Christians although he consciously identified himself with them especially in terms of social status (e.g. 1 Cor 4:10-13, “we hunger…we labour, working with our own hands”).

Moreover, social stratification seems to have had a significant impact on the behaviour of the Corinthian Christians, particularly their attitudes towards economically poor and socially low-ranked fellow Christians. Just as people of high standing ill-treated the poor and low-class people in the wider civic society, so they seem to have discriminated against and humiliated those fellow believers of poverty and low social status in the Christian community (e.g. 1 Cor 11:21-22). Surprisingly, this discrimination and humiliation even took place in relation to the matter of hospitality and the love-feasts in the Christian gatherings. As Murphy-O’Connor describes:

The mere fact that all the believers could not be accommodated in the triclinium (‘dining room’) meant that there had to be an overflowing in the atrium (‘courtyard’). It became imperative for the host to divide his guests into two categories: the first-class believers were invited into the triclinium while the rest stayed outside. Even a slight knowledge of human nature indicates the criterion used. The host must have been a wealthy member of the community, so he invited into the triclinium his closest friends among the believers, who would have been of the same social class and from whom he might expect the same courtesy on a future occasion. The rest could take their places in the atrium, where conditions were greatly inferior…Moreover, the triclinium could be heated, but the hole in the roof of the atrium exposed those sitting there to the cold air coming down from Mount Parnassos…which is snow-covered for nine months of the year.297

From this description it seems that there was not much difference between the Christian community and the broader civic community at Corinth in the treatment of the poor and lower-ranked members of society. In the civic community, social status was absolute for all aspects of human life. For instance, according to one’s social

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297 Murphy-O’Connor, Paul’s Corinth, 183-4.
position, each person learns to expect whether to be respected and honoured or despised and humiliated. The importance and value of social standing in the wider civic society seems to have remained unchallenged in the Corinthian Christian community.²⁹⁸ Thus it may have been that some Christians of wealth and high standing were ill-treating those lower classes in the Christian gatherings, just as they did in social clubs or associations and in their patronal relationships (1 Cor 11:21, 22). It would not be surprising that their behaviour was, to a large extent, influenced by the social phenomenon of social stratification and social hierarchy that was widespread in the life of the Corinthian civic society in the day of Paul. In the next chapter, therefore, I will provide a detailed explanation of the problems of factionalism in the ekklēsia in the light of Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions and patron-client systems.

2.2.4 Implications for the Study of 1 Corinthians 1-4

1 Corinthians 1-4 comprises not only a diversity of rhetorical elements but also a variety of social indicators that reflect the social and cultural environment of Roman Corinth in the mid-first century CE. This Pauline text is thus a reflection of the civic, social, and cultural life of the Corinthians at the time Paul engaged in discussions with them. There are several significant social indicators alluded to in the text: patronal networks and hierarchies, social stratification (1:26-28; 11:17-22), imperial cults (8:1-13; 10:1-22), athletic games (9:24-27), economic prosperity (4:8), and a diversity of people groups and ethnic origins (12:13).

These social indicators shed light, in a broader sense, on the social environment of the Corinthian civic society of the mid-first century. Patronal networks and social hierarchies were especially significant in shaping the social and cultural milieu of Roman Corinth, as were the rhetorical conventions of the day. These social networks reinforced the power of the sophisticated elite in the wider Corinthian society. In a narrower sense, such social indicators show how deeply the mentality and behaviour of the Corinthian Christians was influenced by the wider Greco-Roman culture. Such social and cultural conventions were naturally a part of the life of the Corinthian Christian community, but if followed uncritically, could then cause serious problems, as addressed in 1 Corinthians and 1-4. Some of these conventions appear to have had a profound hold on some of the Corinthian Christians of wealth and high social status, so that they took advantage of their social privilege and humiliated other Christians of lower social status (1:26; 11:17-22). This social-conventions-oriented behaviour was a major contributor to the conflict and factionalism in the Corinthian Christian community (1:10-13; 3:1-4). 299

Furthermore, imperial patronage and imperial and Greco-Roman cults also affected deeply the mentality and conduct of some of the Christians and contributed to the schisms in the Corinthian Christian community. These issues are more explicitly revealed in 1 Corinthians 8:1-10:22 and lie behind the problem of food offered to idols at Corinth. It is my contention that Paul can only tackle these specific issues after he has laid the foundation for a critique of the ‘wisdom of this world’ in 1 Corinthians 1-4. The underlying problem is the relationship of the Gospel (the

299 Just as there were strong hierarchies among social classes in Roman Corinth by the time Paul founded the Christian community there, so in Korean society there is social stratification due to the strong influence of Confucianism. This deeply affects the life of Koreans. I will develop this in Chapter Four further below.
‘wisdom of God’) to the ‘wisdom of the world’ as manifested in the cultural assumptions and practices of the day.