The unity of 2 Corinthians: a test case for a re-discovered and re-invented rhetoric

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ABSTRACT
The fragmentary hypothesis in the case of 2 Corinthians is founded upon a particular and problematic notion of communicative dynamics. However, rhetorical practice allows for complexity in intentionality, audiences, topos, pathos and dispositio. Consequently, a 're-discovered and re-invented rhetoric' is proposed which offers a model which can make sense of the complexity of the argumentation within the letter without having to pose a complex solution of multiple, individual sources later pieced together. Argumentational development and multiple inventional trajectories can explain the dynamics of the correspondence as a whole.

1 COMPOSITE OR COHERENCE: 2 CORINTHIANS REVISITED

With the release of Betz's volume on 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 in the Hermeneia series (Betz 1985), the question of multiple, incomplete letter sources for the epistle seems to have been resolved in favour of the fragmentary hypothesis by appeal to the rigorous application of rhetorical analysis. Rhetorical dispositio of these letter fragments appears to indicate their individual autonomy as argumentative units, hence their individual autonomy as sources.

The difficulty with this hypothesis is that it is founded upon a particular and problematic notion of communicative dynamics, namely that communicative events such as letters are concerned with restricted coherence, focused consistency and unitary intentionality and context. In other words, the fragmentation of 2 Corinthians into multiple sources is made possible only by a hermeneutic that assumes a logical, progressive development of events and circumstances. It presupposes the impossibility of communicative processes to deal with complexities, or even to take shape in a complex fashion. Instead, each step of the correspondence must be strictly coherent (without multiple argumentative topos or dispositio), consistent (in tone and...
approach within each document) and unitary (with respect to audiences and situations addressed by the rhetor).

However, rhetoric in both practice and theory, both ancient and modern, also allows for complexity in intentionality, audiences, *topoi*, pathos and *dispositio*. What for Betz is a method that helps to secure the fragmentary hypothesis can, in fact, overturn its very presuppositions and thereby throw open the question of multiple sources. Indeed, it is quite possible that rhetorical criticism can serve to secure a certain level of coherence in the letter’s canonical structure, and thereby work in ways precisely opposite those of Betz.

In this article I wish to present a model of rhetorical analysis (cf Hester 1994), drawing from the works of Perelman/Olbrechts-Tyteca and Wuellner. In aid of discourse analysis this can help to discern and describe a multitude of argumentative threads, inventional strategies, argumentative situations, modal and deictic postures, and audience constructs. This model can show argumentative coherence within the letter and explain the trajectories and differing situations taken up throughout the course of the extended argumentation. In fact, even if one assumes the validity of the fragmentary hypothesis, the model could nevertheless help to explain the coherence of the letter as it appears in our manuscript and canonical traditions, that is, the kinds of connections and themes which helped to weave the various letters into a whole.

If this model can show argumentative coherence in the letter, it becomes incumbent upon those whose wish to maintain the fragmentary hypothesis to rethink their position. All proponents of the fragmentary tradition assume a problematic communicative foundation as the basis for their research. They argue that variation of vocabulary, complexity of themes and postures, and repetition of subjects are not acceptable and are not widespread factors in complex discourses. Simplicity and consistency represent sources of tradition rather than trajectories of potentially complex argumentative situations. A rhetorical analytical approach to the letter that discerns a multiplicity of argumentative threads running throughout it, causing it to cohere into a complex argumentative whole, might force us to reconsider the conclusion of years of traditional Pauline source scholarship.

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2 A modern rhetorical approach to biblical texts is not anachronistic, but helps provide a variety of models and methods aimed at understanding argumentative dynamics and functions. To limit rhetorical criticism to synthesist models of ancient forms of supposedly rhetorical analysis is not only a category mistake of the use of rhetorical handbooks and treatises, but also an arbitrary, chronological limitation: not only were these handbooks and treatises never used for the kinds of analysis done by rhetorical critics today, but modern methods also supplement our understanding of ancient texts with additional insight into discourse analysis, argumentative situations, persuasive dynamics, audience function, *topoi*, inventional strategies, and by providing a plethora of methods and tools for their analysis and critique.

3 For a reading which considers the whole letter from a literary perspective which sees a series of three chiastic structures, see Rolland (1990).
In any case, 2 Corinthians provides an important test case for a ‘re-discovered and re-invented rhetoric’ as an alternative to Betz’s analysis of the letter’s *dispositio*. It will provide a vantage point from which to discern the advantages and limits of an approach that seeks to understand the multiplicity of contextual and inventional factors at work in the argumentation of this complex epistle.

2 THE MODEL

The following steps are offered as a model to be applied to 2 Corinthians:

1) *Rhetorical unit*: the rhetorical unit might be a literary unit, but the dominant factor in rhetorical analysis is its argumentative dimension. The unit to be considered might be very small, such as a maxim, metaphor, parable, chreia, enthymeme, hymn, commandment, or narrative. One should also note and describe the relationship of the unit to other units, which perhaps combines to form a larger argumentative structure such as an argumentative digression or perhaps a greater argumentative strategy. Additionally, one could consider the unit as a whole (e.g., 2 Cor), in relation to other wholes (the Corinthian correspondence, the Pauline corpus, the canon, even non-canonical works), and even the role of the New Testament canon and the Bible itself to other literary works.

2) *Relational posture of the rhetorical unit(s)*: One must also discern the ways in which a unit constructs a particular relationship to the audience through modalities assumed (assertive, injunctive, interrogative, optative; active or passive; affirming, negative, negation-as-affirmation; coordination and subordination), deixis used (personal, temporal, spatial, intonational) and *Aktionstyp* (continuous, repetitive, punctual). These are the means by which a relationship between the audience and the text is generated. It is also here that a certain type of intentionality can be ascribed: intentionality of text, author, audience, but also of contexts which are not limited to a specific historical moment of generation, but are generated through time and in time.

3) *Method of argumentation*: By turning to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s theory (1979) of argumentation, categories of *loxi* (quantity, quality, preferable) and strategies (associative, dissociative) are also considered within and between argumentative units.

4) *Shifts in argumentative situations*: This particular step indicates the possibility that several argumentative points might be made in any one larger rhetorical unit. Shifts in the argumentative situation take place as a result of the influence of earlier stages of the discussion which determine the selection and direction of topics, perspectives, tone, et cetera. The strategies for persuasion may change as a result of perceived or desired shifts in circumstances anticipated by or generated through the argumentation. It is important to discern these shifts not as potential evidences of distinctive sources, but instead to recognise in them the developing situational circumstances wrought as a result of multiple audiences and previously developed argumentative situations.

5) *Classification of argument—invention strategies and rhetorical situations*: Instead of a classification according to the Aristotelian genres of forensic (defense), epideictic (display)
or deliberative (debate), or perhaps according to modern classifications and their possible hybrids (cf Jamieson & Campbell 1978), the inventional strategies and rhetorical situations of the argument are considered. The reason for this emphasis is to build into the model a dynamism that recognises the multiplicity of exigencies addressed and generated by the argumentation. Rather than locating the argument within a particular setting (assembly, court, ceremony) or moment (historical exigence) and arresting the movement of the argument by appealing to abstract models of classification, focus upon inventional strategies and rhetorical situations allows the critic to consider the shifting strategies and circumstances of the argument brought about through the argument itself.

Other steps could be added. For example, one could explore the multiple contextualities of intertextual, socio-cultural, ideological textures, as well as aspects of materiality in the contexts of interpretive analysis. Limitations of space, however, require that such important aspects of the model be taken up at a later time.

3 APPLICATION TO 2 CORINTHIANS

3.1 Rhetorical units

The greater rhetorical unit is, of course, the letter of 2 Corinthians as a whole. Within this unit the following major argumentative units can be distinguished:

- 2 Cor 1:1-14 Introductory Unit
- 2 Cor 1:15-2:13 Unit 1
- 2 Cor 2:14-7:4 Unit 2
- 2 Cor 7:5-9:15 Unit 3
- 2 Cor 10:1-13:9 Unit 4
- 2 Cor 13:10-14 Concluding remarks

There are, of course, sub-units one can identify within these units. The Introductory unit begins with a letter opening in 1:1-2. This is followed by the theme of affliction in 1:3-11 which will figure throughout the letter. Included in this section is a disclosure formula in 1:8-11 (οὐ γὰρ θέλομεν ὑμᾶς ἁγνοεῖν, 'for we do not want you to be ignorant'), leading to the letter's causa or propositio in 1:12-14 (and also picked up and elaborated in 2:14-17, 6:11-13, and finally 13:10) which concerns καύχησις (boasting), εἰλικρινεία (sincerity) and ἀπλότης (frankness).

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4 For a detailed description and application of this model, see Robbins (1996).

5 I have chosen to set aside form critical identification of letter structures. I do so only in order to emphasise what I believe are rhetorical argumentative coherences which may incorporate into them various letter structures. There is, however, no reason why form and rhetorical critical analyses of letters should be methodologically exclusive of each others' contributions to understanding the Pauline (or other) epistles.

6 For a discussion of the function of boasting in Hellenistic letters, see Olson (1984) and Scott Hafemann (1990).
Unit 1, which concerns the rhetor's plans for Corinth and Achaia as they relate to the past, is a ring composition framed by a narratio in 1:15-16 and picked up in 2:12-13 concerning the rhetor's trip to Macedonia. Within this frame are two major argumentative sub-units. In 1:17-22 one finds a justification of previous actions made by appeal not to human standards, but by reference to God, Christ and Spirit. Then follows 1:23-2:11 regarding a previous visit 'with grief' and a decision, based on πεποίθησις (confidence), to write 'that I might know the results of your testing [τὴν δοκιμὴν ὑμῶν], whether you are obedient [ὑπήκουσί] in everything,' a theme developed, as we shall see, throughout the letter.

Unit 2 is concerned generally with the purpose of the ministry as related to the present. It begins with 2:14-17, which is a recap and variation of 1:12-14 (εἰληκρινεῖας [sincerity] in 2:17). It is followed by an argument in 3:1-4:6 which begins with a denial of self-commendation and shifts it rather to the notion of πεποίθησις (confidence) through Christ to God in a new covenant proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord. The argument in 4:7-6:10 then explores a dissociation of earthly weakness, with themes of πεποίθησις (confidence), οἰκοδομὴν (building up; 5:1, to be picked up several times in later Units) related to θλίψις (affliction) through the promise of salvation. The Unit concludes in 6:11-7:4 with a peroration and extension, as the object of εἰληκρινεῖας (sincerity) and καυχησίας (boasting) in θλίψις (affliction) is elaborated through an argument for separation based on the notion of righteousness in which the believer participates.

Unit 3 is concerned with working out the rhetor's plans for Corinth and Achaia in the future. The narratio of 2:12-13 is picked up again in 7:5, and 7:6-16 returns to the reception of the letter mentioned in 1:23-2:12, but also refers to θλίψις (affliction) δοκιμή (in everything you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter—7:11), καυχησίας (boasting) and πεποίθησις (confidence), the latter two being themes of Unit 2.
This πεποίησις (confidence) allows the rhetor to turn to the issue of the collection in 8:1–9:15, as 8:1–2 picks up on the narratio from 7:5 and introduces an argument from sharing and reciprocity (note the continuing themes of θλίψις [affliction] in 8:2, δοκιμάζειν [testing] in 8:8 and καύχησις [boasting] in 8:24). Then, 9:2 again picks up the narratio from 8:1 and introduces a second argument, this one from the promise of future abundance and return (note the themes δοκιμή [testing] and ύποταγή [obedience] in 9:13).

Unit 4 brings together the various threaded themes of πεποίησις (confidence), καύχησις (boasting), δοκιμή (testing) and ύποταγή (obedience) in an argument that goes 'beyond the limits'. In 10:1–18, πεποίησις (confidence) and καύχησις (boasting) are no longer in 'you', but in 'me' based on the argumentative groundwork laid in Unit 2. Note the ύποταγή (obedience) in 10:6 harkens back to 2:9 and 9:13, and the οἰκοδομή (building up) in 10:8 ties together 5:1 and 12:19. There is also a shift from πεποίησις (confidence) and καύχησις (boasting) in 'you' to 'my authority', built upon the previous argumentative foundation laid in Unit 2, namely the dissociation of human weakness and affliction from divine strength. The 'fool's speech' in 11:1–12:13 then can make the shift from "ο δὲ καυχάμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω ('let the boasting one boast in the Lord') in 10:17 to εἰ καυχάσθαι δεῖ, τὸ τῆς άσθενείας μου καυχήσομαι ('if it is necessary to boast, I will boast in my weakness') in 11:30 and 12:9. Note the narratio in 11:9 referring back to 1:15–17. Note also the appeal to experience of afflictions in 11:23–33, foreshadowed in 1:8–10, 4:8–11, and speckled throughout chapters 5 and 6. Finally, 12:14–13:4 warns of a pending visit for ύπερ τῆς ὑμῶν οἰκοδομῆς (for your building up) where the narratio of 12:18 picks up on 8:17–18, 22–23 and 9:2, 5.12

The conclusion in 13:5–13 is comprised of a closing appeal in 13:5–9 (δοκιμή [testing], πειράζειν [examination], and weak­ness-for-strength), an appeal to authority based on οἰκοδομή (building up) in 13:10, and final appeals and salutations in 13:11–13.

3.2 Relational posture
This is the theoretically most complex step in the analytical model herein presented. It is complex, because so many different aspects of the text can be noted, discussed and evaluated. Wuehlner (1987) has provided an example of such an analysis on the text of Romans, and elsewhere I have done so on the text of 1 Corinthians (1994). For the sake of brevity and utility, the relational posture of the text can be explored under two major subheadings: the text’s modality and the text’s deixis. Both modality and deixis are aspects of an argument’s generative context, the relations argumentatively created between rhetor, argument and audience. Through them the multiplicity of possible contextualities are encountered, adapted or rejected.

12 For a different division of this section on a non-rhetorical basis, see Garland (1989).
Modalities refer to the presentation of an argument, the certainty and importance of its claims (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1979:154). Modalities operate not only within the intentionalties of the text and rhetor, but also reflect the impact and strategic positioning of the audience as well. For modalities to function, there must be a set of conditions provided by background or context, this being determined by natural abilities (the rhetor's and audience's skill in communication), norms, social values and desires, as well as the communicants' beliefs and knowledge (Wuellner 1987:13, 19).

The two major modalities predominant throughout the several argumentative units can be identified as assertive and volitional. With respect to the assertive modality, it is very clear that little appeal is made to the hypothetical or conditional nature of the argumentative topoi addressed throughout. Instead, direct definitional (e.g. 1:12-14, 2:15), quasi-logical (e.g. 3:6-12) and 'factual' evidence (e.g. the narratio throughout the Unit, list of afflictions in 11:23-33, vision in 12:2-4) are the dominant modal strategies taken in these Units.

The volitional modality is carried out under the theme 'not as a command, but as a test'. This is seen explicitly in Unit 1 with respect to the one who has caused pain (2:5-11), and in Unit 3 in the collection appeal (cf 8:8 and 9:13). By the end of Unit 4, however, the volitional appeal under the implied freedom of 'not as a command' becomes shifted to an emphasis upon δοκιμάζειν (testing) as a measure of obedience. This allows for a growing presence of threatening authoritative appeal and command, and prepares the foundation for the shift in the conclusion (cf 13:5-7) 'On account of this I write these things from afar, so that arriving I might not have to be severe in the use of authority which the Lord gave me for building up [εἰς οἰκοδομήν] and not tearing down.'

Deixis orients the content of a sentence in temporal, intonational and spatial relations. Indexical expressions are used to construct contexts of utterance and reference, relating both text and audience to a cultural, social and historical context in which people interact through language reflecting their social roles, perceptions and positions. The basic function of deixis is to relate the actors and concerns referred to in an argument 'to the spatiotemporal...here-and-now of the context of utterance' (Wuellner 1987:14).

Personal deixis includes the use of personal and demonstrative pronouns, proper names, appellatives and substantives. For instance, there are profound changes in personal relationality taking place within between the various argumentative units. First person singular and plural dominates the narratio of 1:15-16; 2:1, 12-13; 7:5; 8:1; 9:2; 11:9 that tie the argumentative units together by reference to a historical series of events occasioning the relationship between rhetors and recipients. This relationship goes through multiple adaptations throughout the argumentative Units. 'We'13 (with reference to 'I' in 1:15-2:12) is set up in a positive relation to 'you' in both Units 1 and

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13 For another study on the function of the first person plural, see Carrez (1980).
2: note the appeal to the universal audience in the extension of 'we' to include all Christians (including the Corinthians and Achaiaiians) in 4:15-5:10 and 6:14-7:1. Here is an effort at personal inclusion. By Unit 3, however, the shift is to 'I' in distinction of 'you' in a personal, individual effort at persuasion concerning the collection by appeal to 'your' reputation in 'my' boasting and to 'your' future reward. But in Unit 4, 'I' (with only occasional reference to 'we' in 10:3-6, 12-18; 12:18-19) is set up over against 'they/them' (10:10, 11:12-15) in a relationship to 'you' who become the reason for 'my' excesses and the need to boast. By the conclusion, 'I' and 'you' are in a new hierarchical (and ironic) relationship, with 'we' weak and 'you' strong, but 'I' in a position to threaten to use 'my' authority with severity (13:10). Note that in every case of the first person singular it is related to the very important issues of the relationship between the audiences and the rhetor; otherwise the rhetors resort to the plural (this is an issue of ethos). In this respect, important exploration must be made of the role of the universal audience in the argument, which shifts from that construct of which the addressees are a part of, to that which judges the addressees by the end of the letter for their failure to adhere to the norms argumentatively presented in Unit 4.

Personal deixis can also be explored with respect to a number of other aspects of the argument, all of which serve to create specific relationships and contextualities within which and through which the argument is performed. Note, for example, that the readership is addressed not just as τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὐσῇ ἐν Κορίνθῳ ('the church of God in Corinth'), but to the broader (therefore multiple, and even mixed) audience of σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πάσιν τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ὥλῃ τῇ Ἀχαιᾳ ('together with all the saints in all of Achaia') in 1:2. Note also that the authorship of the letter is ascribed not only to Paul ('an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God'), but also to Timothy 'our' brother (thus a multiple, and perhaps therefore mixed, authorship). The multiplicity and complexity of argumentative intentionality and audiences thereby constructed come to be vital and important aspects of understanding the letter's multiple contextualities.

Also of interest is the function and prominence of proper names and substantives throughout the letter, for example, Timothy (1:1), Silvanus (1:19), but also, and very importantly, Titus (2:13; 7:6, 13, 14, 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18). Note also the vague reference to the ἄδελφος ('brothers and sisters'—9:3), as well as an unnamed but ἐπαινοκ (famous) brother in 8:18, whom first 'we' (8:18, 22), then 'I' (12:18) send/sent with Titus to the congregation. In addition to Christ, God, and Spirit is the occasional and argumentatively powerful presence of δ κατανάς (Satan—2:11, 11:14, 12:7). Finally, such titles and substantives as ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλοι (super apostles), ἄφων (fool), and the dissociative reconstructions of the pairs weak-strong and flesh-stone, all function in important ways to relate individuals to both rhetors and audiences to specific ideological, personal, cultural and subcultural contexts.

It is of great importance that when the spatial deixis of the letter is considered, the rhetor is always coming to 'you' (in distinction from 'going'), and in that respect only
once (1:16) are the Corinthian and Achaian communities addressed in terms of a stop-over point. In every other case, the reference to ‘you’ is spatially described as a terminus, the destination of rhetors’ travels and the object of his/their intentions. Also of prominence throughout the letter is the place of Macedonia which is referred to in relationship to the rhetors and Corinth/Achaia six times (in Units 1, 3 and 4—1:16, 2:13, 7:5, 8:1, 9:2, 11:9). It would be of great interest to consider more carefully the full contextual (cultural, geographical, reputational) implications of this location vis-à-vis Corinth, and even the missionary activity of the people around the rhetor.

Temporal deixis shifts from concern with plans for Corinth and Achaia and the missionary activity of the rhetor (but also Silvanus and Timothy) predominantly in the past (ἐβουλόμανεν ἐλθεῖν, οὐκέτι ἡλθον, ἐκρίνα, ἐγράφα) in Unit 1 (note the framing of this Unit by the narratio of past events), to their working out in the present in Unit 2 (ἀρχόμεθα, χρόμεθα, ἐχοντες, ἐγκακοῦμεν, θλιβόμενοι, παραδιδό-μεθα, λαλούμεν) and Unit 3 (the working out of past plans in the present—‘for this is to your advantage, who not only last year began to do something but even to desire to do it—now finish doing it’—8:10) where it shifts to future promise (‘the one sowing bountifully will also reap [θερίσει] bountifully’—13:6). By Unit 4 and the conclusion, both the present (with respect to καυχήσις [boasting] and οἰκοδομή [building up]) and the past (with respect to the θλίψις [affliction]) contribute to the impact of the shift to the future plans to ‘come’ to Corinth and Achaia with authority: all three aspects functioning together in the argumentative climax of 13:2 ‘I have warned and give warning to those having sinned previously and to all the rest, as when present the second time and absent now, that if I come I will not be lenient again.’

Finally, the intonational deixis is dominated by a sense of confidence, first in ‘us’ (Unit 1), ‘through Christ for God’ (Unit 2), in ‘you’ (Unit 3), and, finally, in ‘me’ (Unit 4). This is complemented by the prevalence of boasting, first in ‘us’ (Unit 1) and shifting eventually to boasting in ‘the Lord’ and ‘my weakness’ (Unit 4), which allows the shift to an intonation of authority with a hint of threat that is reached by the conclusion. The sense of affection that began in Unit 1, and is used as the basis of ‘confidence’ in the volitional appeal in Unit 3, is challenged by a threatened potential of division by the end of the letter. These shifts in tone represent integral and interrelated strategies of contextualization that make an impact upon the argumentative situational trajectory of the letter (which we will explore, below).

It is of interest to note, and would be of great interest to explore more thoroughly than is possible here, that all modal and deictic aspects of the letter show important developmental features throughout the correspondence that link together, through a complex web rather than single trajectory, the several argumentative Units into coherency. The consistent spatial orientation and the presence throughout the letter of the narratio references, as well as the dominance of the assertive modality and confidential tone of the letter, provide an important framework which the shifts in temporal and personal deictic indicators are allowed to adapt to and which shape the
argumentative contexts and intentionalities of the changing relationship between rhetors, text and audiences.

3.3 Methods of argumentation

The letter opens with multiple attestations to both its authors and its audiences: Paul and Timothy (identified as ὁδηγὸς [brother], a term used of several of the missionaries referred to throughout the letter) address not just the church that is in Corinth, but include τοῖς ἁγίοις πάσιν τοῖς δικαίοις ἐν δόξῃ τῇ Ἀχαιᾷ (‘together with all the saints in all of Achaia’—1:1). This will become an important feature of the argumentation as changes to the personal deixes will reflect important shifts in the relationship between rhetors and audience(s) for strategic reasons.

When next the declaration of praise is offered (1:3—a modified ‘thanksgiving’ section), it is with a specific definitional strategy: ‘The Father of mercies’ and ‘God of all consolation [ἡμῶν], the one consoling us in all our afflictions [ἐπ᾽ ἡμῖν τῇ θλίψει ἡμῶν].’ This theme of affliction will figure prominently through three of the four argumentative Units, and its argumentative implications are developed extensively here: through a quasi-logical connection both sufferings and consolation are causally related (1:5). Both experiences on the part of the rhetors are expressed in terms which transfer this experience directly to the addressees: our affliction is for your consolation and salvation; our consolation is also your consolation (1:4–6), so that ‘as you are partners in (our) suffering, so also in (our) consolation [ἡμῶν]’ (1:7). The experience of ἠλπίσεως (affliction) then becomes the cause for boasting, as the implication for the cause of ἠλπίσεως described in the disclosure formula of 1:8–11 becomes explicited in terms of ‘frankness [ἀπλότητι] and godly sincerity [εἰλικρινείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ], not in earthly wisdom but in the grace of God,’ (1:12). This is once again shifted to build a relationship with the Achaian communities: it is a frankness, sincerity and boasting ‘all the more towards you’ (1:12) that allows a shared reciprocity in boasting (‘we are your boast [καύχημα] just as you are ours’—1:14). Affliction, consolation, suffering, frankness and sincerity, and boasting are all argumentatively intertwined by the time we reach the letter’s causa in 1:12–14, and become important themes that resonate throughout the correspondence.

Unit 1 is a ring composition beginning and ending with the narratio of the missionary activities in the past and their relationship to the Achaian communities. In 1:15 we begin the narratio which is distributed throughout the letter, distributed in such a way that it becomes an important framework which ties together not only the various argumentative units (2:12–13, 7:5, 8:1, 9:2, and 11:9), but also allows for the persistency of some themes outlined in the introduction (ἡλπίσεως in 7:5 and 8:1, καύχημα in 9:2) and the introduction of a new theme (κατενάρκησα [burden] in 11:9, elaborated in 12:14–18). The division of the narratio is not to be seen as evidence of interpolations breaking up the narrative (for example, 11:9 is a report of events prior to the storyline beginning in 1:15, but sets up its continuation in 12:14–18 with the
sending of Titus), but as a device by which argumentation is simultaneously driven forward and integrated.

1:15-16 sets up the story: ‘And from this confidence [πεποιθησέν] I wanted first to come to you, so that you might have double grace: to come to you (on my way) to Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you and to be sent from you to Judea.’ Then comes a digressio (1:17-22) defending the rhetor’s decision not to visit them on the way to Macedonia. This sets up the reason ‘spurning you I no longer went to Corinth’ through a dissociative argument as consistent according to divine standards (1:18 ‘God is faithful’, 1:19 ‘but in Him everything is “Yes”), even if it appears inconsistent by human standards. This dissociative form of argument (Achaean communities accused of judging the ministry and the rhetor according to human ‘appearances’, whereas the divine ‘reality’ is the one by which it should be understood and judged) first introduced here will be an important strategy employed throughout the letter.

The implication of rejection by not visiting the communities on the way to Macedonia then becomes the argumentative means by which the rhetor (note the dominance of first person singular deixis) seeks to continue to secure a bond between himself and the audiences. His choice is premised on avoidance of inflicting pain. The argument is interesting, in that the pain is seen as potentially being inflicted on him, rather than on the communities (‘And I wrote as I did, so that coming I might not have pain from those who should give me joy, confident [πεποιθῶσι] about all of you that my joy is the joy of all of you’, 2:3). The object of pain should not be seen as the letter the rhetor wrote, written out of love (2:4) and confidence in ‘you’ (2:3), but the unnamed individual who is being punished by the majority and should now be forgiven and consoled. The previous letter is therefore to be seen as a test (δοκιμάζειν) of obedience [ὑπήκους] on the part of the community of Corinth (in particular; 1:23).

But note, the relationship being built here, while apparently described in terms of mutual reciprocity (‘Not that we lord it over your faith, but that we are workers for your joy, because you stand [ὑμῖν] in the faith”—1:24; ‘whom you forgive, I also”—2:10) has been surreptitiously defined in the argument in terms of a hierarchy. Both the introduction of the themes of δοκιμάζειν [testing] and ὑπήκους [obedience], but also the interesting caveat ‘for what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, (is) on account of you in the presence of Christ’ in 2:10 allows the rhetor a certain freedom in decision-making power and an authority over the communities.

The Unit is rounded off with the narratio in 2:12-13 which both picks up the story in 1:15-16 and presages the next installment in 7:5. Whereas some scholars suggest that the following argumentative Unit in fact represents an insertion of an independent source, it is better explained as an argument which allows for the description of the present ministry and the elaboration of θλίψις which is experienced by the rhetors in Macedonia. That is, while the audiences have been told about afflictions in Asia
(1:8), they have not yet been told about the experiences of affliction in Macedonia. These are argumentatively prepared for in this Unit, as the θρίσμβος (triumphal procession) in 2:14 becomes by the end of the Unit clearly understood in terms of the experiences of θλίψις (affliction) which meet with the missionaries wherever they go, including Macedonia by 7:5. This, in turn, provides important groundwork by the time the collection appeal is made, as it lends greater poignancy to the generous gift of the churches in Macedonia made in spite of the 'great trial [δοκιμή] of affliction [θλίψις]' confronting them. If this is an insertion of a separate source, it is nevertheless a strategically apt and argumentatively effective one, drawing from and anticipating important inventional moves and themes in the letter.

Unit 2, therefore, deals with the purpose and experience of the ministry in the present. Describing the ministry in terms of ὀσιό (odor—2:14) and εὐωδία (fragrance—2:15), terms of ritual and sacrifice presaging the theme of affliction, it is delivered from 'us' as persons 'of sincerity' [ἐξ εἰλικρίνειας]. This definitional argument serves two functions: Firstly, it allows 'us' not to need 'a letter from you or for you' (3:1), but rather definitionally to make 'you' be 'our' letter. Secondly, it allows a claim of confidence and boldness in the ministry as stemming from the Spirit. This sets up a series of disassociations of new covenant/old covenant, letter-death/Spirit-life, veiled/unveiled [3:4—4:6] premised on the metaphorical argument, 'For we are the aroma of Christ to God among the ones being saved and among the ones perishing, to the ones from death to death, but to the others a fragrance from life to life' (2:15). It is a ministry premised upon the refusal 'to practice cunning or to falsify the word of God, but rather commending ourselves to the conscience of everyone before God by the open statement of truth [τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἐλπιδοείας]' (4:2).

The idea that such boldness is a self-commendation, however, is rejected. Instead, what is being proclaimed is not 'ourselves', but 'Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves through Jesus.' (4:5). In a dissociative move, the 'power (which) belongs to God' is made to shine in the ministry through ἀσθενής (weakness) and θλίψις (affliction). Rather than marks of shame (which may be behind the defensive argument of Unit 4), the issues of ἀσθενής (weakness) and θλίψις (affliction) become addressed to the universal audience (from 4:16 to 5:10 the address 'we' becomes a universal address, as explicitly emphasised in the phrase πάντας ἡμῶς 'all of us'). Through them, the universal audience is defined the universal audience not only in terms of the power of God and boasting ('you' in 'us', 'so that you might have [an answer] for those boasting in appearance and not in the heart'—5:12, cf 10:12—18), but in terms of a reconstitution of reality—'the old things have passed away, see, they have become new' from God through Christ (5:17f). In other words, a certain redistribution of authority and power has taken place by dissociating worldly 'appearance' of weakness from the 'reality' that afflictions represent a 'true' measure of power. On this basis πεποίθησις (confidence) is expressed in 'we do not lose heart' (cf 4:16) in spite of afflictions. It also informs the division of 'our earthly tent' (appearance of weakness)
from ‘the building οἰκοδομήν from God’ (5:1). It explains how ‘we are beside ourselves’ for God (appearance of foolishness) but ‘in our right mind’ for ‘you’ (5:13). It also explains how we ‘in all things understand ourselves as ministers of God’ by reference to a catalogue of afflictions, hardships, calamities, et cetera (6:4-10).

Finally, this dissociative move also anticipates and provides the basis for the peroration in 6:11-7:4. The entreaty, to be reconciled to God (5:20), the urgent (προσευχή in 6:2) request, not to accept the grace of God in vain (6:1), the frankness and openness of ‘our’ affections, set as they are within convincing argumentation (meant to secure fundamental and shared values and generate the disposition to action) are now given practical and persuasive application so that these principles can be enacted. That is, a certain ethos has been presumed to be argumentatively achieved, a certain relationship established in which the rhetors have shown themselves not to be ‘self-commending’ in human standards, nor cunning or shameful, nor to be blamed for putting obstacles in anyone’s way, nor restricted in their affections: ‘We wronged no one, corrupted no one, took advantage of no one’ (7:2). From this, and on the basis of a shared status in Christ (e.g., καταλλαγής [reconciliation] in 5:18-20; but also note back at 2:16 the notion of the ministry being for some ‘from death to death’ but for others ‘from life to life’), a demand is made of the audiences: ‘do not be mismatched ἐν εἰς ἴσων’ with unbelievers’ (6:14).15 Culminating a long and complex argument concerning the nature, function and characteristics of the ministry of the rhetors to address, instruct and reinforce certain fundamental values, this appeal (pathos) calls for the audiences to enact these values, not out of an impulse to condemn them (7:3), but to χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς (‘make room for us’—7:2).

The next argumentative Unit is a two-part structure employing two distinct but related strategic approaches to persuading the Achaean communities to complete the task of collection. It is tied to the foregoing by means of picking up the thread of the narratio in 7:5, 8:1-2 and 9:2. Shifting from concerns with present experiences of the ministry, it is the relationship of the Achaean communities to the future plans of the ministry that is the driving impetus of this section. Thus, the narratio serves as the thread that brings the Units together, returning to the letter reception mentioned in 1:23-2:12, but now introducing the argumentative themes of θλίψεις (affliction experienced by both the missionaries in Macedonia in 7:5 and by the church in Macedonia in 8:1-2), καύχησις (boasting in ‘you’), πεποίθησις (confidence in ‘you’), and παρακλήσις (consolation) all of which themes have been elaborated and prepared for in the previous argumentative Units (including the introduction). This is especially the case with respect to the former three themes and their emphasis in the previous Unit.

14 For a discussion of the possibilities of ἐτεροχυγούντες, see Webb (1992).

15 Scholarly appeals for later source insertion on the basis of ‘inauthentic’ vocabulary, premised as they are upon a predetermined notion of ‘authentic’ letters, themes, vocabulary and theology, simply ignore the intentional dynamic at work in this text. Cf Johnson 1986:292.
It is in particular with respect to παρακλήσις that the transition is made (7:5–16) from the previous argumentative Unit through the narratio to the collection. It is significant that the connection made is one which suggests that the basis of the consolation is the justification of the rhetor's (first person singular) boasting about and confidence in the communities, justification on account of the obedience shown to Titus.

It is on this foundation that the following two arguments are based. In other words, the confidence the rhetor ('I' in 7:16) has in the communities because of their obedience becomes the standard against which the churches of Achaia are tested. The first argument is an appeal to consistency: 'Just as you excel in everything, in faith and word and knowledge and all eagerness and in your love of us, so also you should excel in this gift' (8:7). The collection appeal is not offered as a command, but as a test of their own reputation, in justice to 'the grace [τὴν χάριν] of our lord Jesus Christ' (8:9), of finishing what they started (8:11), and of fairness in the distribution of abundance to those in need (8:14–15). Titus, sent specifically as 'my' partner and co-worker in this task (8:23), along with the brother 'who is famous among all the churches for proclaiming the good news' (8:18) and the brothers/sisters who are ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν (apostles of the churches), is to be shown 'proof [ἐνδείξει] of your love and of our boasting [καύχησεως] about you' (8:24).

The second argument is concluded by a promise of future abundance. Using a paralepsis figure to draw once again from the narratio of 8:1–2 in 9:1–2, and drawing from the themes of καύχησις (boasting) and ζηλος (zeal) mentioned earlier, this argument is once again directed at testing, this time in order to avoid a potentially 'shameful' circumstance (of lack of preparation or willingness) being explicitly mentioned as the purpose of sending the brothers/sisters ahead to prepare for Paul and the Maccalonians' arrival. The intention of the visit (and the argument), once again explicitly stated, is to encourage the offering as a voluntary gift, not an extortion. It is a volitional, direct appeal outlining the benefits of giving cheerfully, not reluctantly, with the knowledge of the promise of a return. Through the testing of this ministry 'you' glorify God 'by your obedience [ὑποταγή] to the confession of the good news of Christ and by the sincerity [ἀπλότητι] of the partnership with them and with everyone' (9:13). In turn, 'they will pray for you while longing for you on account of the exceeding grace [χάριν] of God for you' (9:14), the implication being that this represents the first fruits of the bountiful harvest (9:6).

Why two arguments? Do they represent two separate letters? Perhaps. Nevertheless, it is possible to see them as a combined attempt by the rhetor ('I') to strengthen the commitment of the Achaian communities (remember, the audiences are multiple and complex, and the letter is addressed to them all, each with their own circumstances) to fulfill their promise to complete the collection. It is obvious from the concern to address this fulfillment in terms of δοκιμή (testing) and ὑποταγή (submission) that much is at stake. If an argument from just distribution of wealth won't work, perhaps one that promises future enrichment will. The situation is complex, the rela-
tionship vulnerable, the preparation careful, the distance great. Multiple appeals making use of previous argumentative groundwork of testing and obedience and using new modalities of volition and intonation of praise would be entirely appropriate. They would also certainly be argumentatively relevant to the situation as it has been engendered through prior argumentation.¹⁶

When the final argumentative Unit begins in 10:1, then, it is with an abruptness that seems unanticipated and quite distinct from that of the previous one. An assertive modality returns, tones of defensiveness, irony, and the issue/use of authority all enter into the discourse for the first time. Yet, while the argumentative situation has changed, and with it the intentional strategies to address it, it is not isolated from the previous argumentation. Throughout this Unit the themes of πεποίθησις (confidence), καύχησις (boasting), ὑπακοή (obedience), οἰκοδομή (building up), human versus divine standards of judging the ministry, θλῖψις (affliction), the continuation of the narratio, love (affection), even ὁ σωτάνας continue to function prominently in the appeal. The intensity of focus, the tripartite division of personal deixis ('I', 'you' and now 'they') and the diminution (but not abandonment) of the intonation of affection represent an argumentative shift, but only a shift, not a different source. Indeed, this argumentative Unit depends upon the previous argumentation for its development, even if that development is an important change of the relationship of the rhetor to the communities in Achaia through the argument (contra Hyldahl 1973).

The Unit begins in 10:1-18 with a return to πεποίθησις (confidence) and καύχησις (boasting), but now it is no longer in 'you' or 'your obedience', but rather a question of 'me' and derives from the argumentative groundwork in the Unit 2. As before, the issue is addressed through a dissociative move that shifts the foundation upon which to judge boldness and weakness from human standards to a divine one. Pleading 'through the meekness and gentleness of Christ' (10:1) not to be forced into a game whose rules he denies, the rhetor turns the table on those who judge him 'strong while absent/weak when present' (cf 10:10). He does so not only by arguing for a consistency between speech and action (10:11), but also by accusing the accusers of a faulty standard of judgment: 'But they, classifying and comparing themselves to themselves, do not show good sense' (10:12). The foundation for this proposition is laid in both 10:2-5 (not according to human standards, etc) and in the argument of Unit 2 leading to the statement, 'we do not again commend ourselves to you but, giving you an opportunity [καυχήματος] to boast about us, you might have (an answer) for those boasting in outward appearance and not in the heart' (5:12). The rhetor has taken the morally higher ground from those with whom he feels in competition.

Also note the interesting relational twist that takes place in this argument, for it is not merely a question of arguing over standards by which to judge the rhetors, but one of standing vis-à-vis Paul and the communities. The moral higher ground is linked

¹⁶ See DeSilva (1993a) for an alternative rhetorical reading of this section of the argument.
to the issue of authority over the communities. This is not new: ὑπακοή (obedience) has already been introduced into the discourse with respect to the letter reception in 2:9, 6:11 and 9:13. But it is particularly with regard to ἐκδίκησαι (punish) in 10:6 that the stakes are raised. This intensification is noted immediately; it is not denied, but is defined in as positive a fashion as possible: making use of the previous philosophical pair of 'earthly tent/building (Οἶκος ὁλοί) from God', it is an authority derived from the Lord 'for building up and not for tearing you down' (10:8). It is the particular argumentative understanding of the ministry to the Achaian churches which will become the defining argumentative context out of which and toward which the rest of this Unit is shaped (see Strecker 1992).

It is a question of authority, of standing in the communities, and the rhetor attempting to justify himself. The communities are accused of infidelity (the marital metaphor of 11:2). The rhetor is concerned to address his apparent inferiority to the so-called ἡρεμίαι ἀποστόλοι (super apostles) whose activities (and boasting!) he goes on to equate with the actions of Satan (11:14–15). An apparent misunderstanding of the rules of hospitality seems to impact upon the rhetor’s standing (11:7–11). Out of this the issue of καὐχησις (boasting) arises, and it is very interesting that it is set up within the argumentative context of the division of human/divine standards: 'I will boast as a fool according to human standards (11:16–18). And accordingly, it is with deep irony that the boasting is of 'my' weakness: Are they Hebrews? Israelites? ministers of Christ? 'I am a better one' by witness of all the afflictions 'I' have suffered (11:23–12:10). Note even how the exceptional character of the revelation is tempered by the σκόλους τῇ σαρκί (thorn in the flesh) in 12:7. The strategy is made clear: based on the proposition 'So I will boast [καὐχησομαι] all the more in my weakness [ἀσθενειας] that the power of Christ might dwell on me' (12:9), the argument drives toward the conclusion, 'for whenever I am weak, then I am strong' (12:10). On this basis it is 'clear' that 'I ought to be commended by you, for I am not inferior to these 'super-apostles', even though I am nothing' (12:11).

There is also some very interesting work going on in this argument with respect to 'the limits' of boasting. The standard is set in 10:15–17: 'We do not boast [καὐχώμενοι] beyond the limits [εἰς τα ἀμέτρα], that is in other people's works...' 'Let the one boasting boast in the Lord'. The limits, as defined here, will not be trespassed; but the boasting of the 'fool's speech' is indeed 'beyond the limits'—that is, it is a boasting in which the rhetor is perhaps best described as being 'beside himself' in the visions reported in 12:1–4 (reminiscent of being ἔξεστις ἡμῶν θεῷ [beside ourselves for God] in 5:13; note also in 11:23—παραφρονών λαλῶ [I am talking like a madman]). The limits are far beyond the limits (i.e., they are 'mad'), but are not inconsistent with the claim (i.e., they are for Christ; cf 12:10–11). This is not an unanticipated argumentative move but is given clear justification both by the groundwork laid in the affliction notices and catalogues (1:8–10, 4:8–11, and chapters 5 and 6) and in the dissociative argumentation of human/divine wisdom in Unit 2. It is also a move which was 'forced' [ἀναγκάζειν] upon the rhetor by the communities (12:11), though.
So when the rhetor reports that 'I am ready to come' in 12:14–13:4, the hierarchical metaphor of 'parent/child' can be extended not only to justify previous and current action as based out of 'love', but can also allow for resonations of authority to take shape. It is an authority which has been argumentatively tied to the power of God (13:4), and whose purpose is consistently 'for the sake of your building up [οἰκοδομῆς'] (12:19; cf 13:10). The rhetor places the responsibility for his response on the communities (10:1–2; 12:20–21; 13:2, 5–7), once again making appeal to the notion of pernavzein (testing), this time testing 'yourselves' (13:5).

By the time of the final salutation, therefore, the responsibility for katartivzein (putting things in order) has been placed into the hands of the communities by the argumentative authority of the rhetors. 'Put things in order [καταρτίζεσθε], encourage each other [παρακαλείσθε], think the same thing [τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε], live in peace [εἰρηνεύετε], and the God of love and peace will be with you' (13:11)—all these take on a certain complex resonance as a result of the argumentative situations encountered through the letter—are they commands from authority, exhortations from ἀναθεμάζων rejoicing when 'you are strong' (13:9), pleas from one on relationally tentative grounds? The argumentative contexts are too complex to predetermine the reception.

It is to understanding and appreciating the greater workings of this complexity that we must now turn.

3.4 Shifts in argumentation

Now we are in a position to locate and analyze the shifts in the trajectory of the argumentative situation, reflected by the shifts of inventional strategies encountered as the argument develops through time. While several minor shifts can be noted, particularly as each argumentative Unit is encountered, there are two significant shifts that will be noted here: The shift from assertive to volitional modality in Unit 3 in the collection appeals, and the shift back to an assertive modality carried out in a tone of irony, defense and authority and addressed to a new audience construct in Unit 4 which is carried into the conclusion.

The assertive modality dominates the tone of the first two argumentative Units. These two Units depend upon strategies of arguing that assume the acceptance of certain fundamental and shared 'facts' and 'realities' from which they can assert certain relations, offer definitions, quasi-logical conclusions, et cetera While presence of the volitional modality is still encountered in both Unit 1 (with respect to 'whoever caused pain' in 2:5–11) and Unit 2 (with respect to not being 'mismatched with unbelievers' in 6:14–7:1), it is overshadowed by the assertive modality of the rhetor.

In Unit 3, therefore, the volitional modality becomes explicitly dominant with respect to the relationship between rhetors and audiences. The volitional modality builds upon the foundational themes of πεποίθησις (confidence) in 'you' and καύχησις (boasting) about you, as well as makes reference to the theme of θλίψις (afflic-
tion, cf 8:2). This modality creates an interesting shift in the role of the audience and its relationship to the rhetors and argument. It comes after a descriptive and definitional appeal to the shared ground of participating in the καινὴ κτίσις (new creation) in Christ and a recognition of the success of the audiences when confronted with the δοκίμη (testing) of a previous letter (2:9, 7:12). The audiences are thereby argumentatively situated in another δοκίμη (testing) to live up to certain expectations (8:24) and in the face of the actions of other churches under affliction in contrast to their abundance (i.e., Macedonia, 8:1-7). Additionally, they must also live up to ‘the obedience [τὴ ὑποταγή] of your confession’ (9:13). This δοκίμη (testing), however, is different from others they have confronted or will confront, since in this Unit their relationship to the rhetors is not that of submitting to authority, but as one to whom appeals for equitable distribution of goods and promise of future abundance would allow them to recognise the self-benefit of their offering and act accordingly. In other words, particularly in Unit 3, the relationship between rhetors and audiences is one of mutual respect, and dependence.

It is therefore a rather abrupt shift in Unit 4 for the argument to turn to an assertive modality with tones of defensiveness, irony, and an argument building to the threat of use of authority. Abrupt, perhaps even risky, but not ungrounded. Indeed, its only hope for success lies in the close ties it develops with previous themes, issues, appeals and strategies found in earlier argumentative units. ἡμερομηνία (obedience), οἰκοδομή (building up) of the communities, tightened focus on relation of first person (‘I’) to the audiences (‘you’), καυχήσεις (boasting), sincerity/frankness, Macedonia-Titus—‘brother’ narratio (note the shift of ἁλληνικοῦ to ‘send’ to ‘sent’, which is not a shift in temporal deixis), catalogue of θλίψεως (afflictions) being ‘beside’ oneself/beyond the limits, loving ‘you’, ὁ σατάνας (Satan), weakness-strength dissociative redefinition: all of these figure throughout the previous argumentative units and thereby provide important preliminaries for this Unit. The threat which the so-called ὑπερλιπάν ἀποστόλοι (super apostles) pose to the rhetor’s standing in the communities is significant enough to cause him to fall back on the initial spadework of previous relational developments between rhetors (of which he is a member) and audiences shaped by earlier arguments leading to an argumentative position of power and the threatened use of authority, authority present but unused throughout the letter. While this is an argumentative risk, and it is difficult to (pre)determine its success with the communities of Achaia, it is a calculated and prepared risk. To consider this Unit as a separate source, however, would make it a foolhardy risk since it is to be taken without any previous argumentative preparation. It would make it simply a highly charged volley in a long-distance shouting match. And while this is a possibility, it is a possibility based on the presupposition that the distinctive argumentative shift in tone

and modality represents proof of a lack of connection between it and the rest of the correspondence. As we have shown, this is simply an unfounded conclusion.

3.5 Classification of arguments

The inventional strategies exhibited throughout the letter are highly complex, as changing and developing argumentative situations drive and develop the need for new rhetorical tactics, postures and loci.

The introduction and first two Units emphasise an inventional strategy that directs the force of the argumentation towards securing a connection, elaborating a shared ground, making an appeal. Consolation, avoidance of inflicting further pain, reflection upon the relationship in God through Christ between rhetors and audiences, commitment to frankness and sincerity in the ministry in spite of afflictions 'for your sake', urging reconciliation to God and cleansing 'ourselves' from every defilement of body and spirit, boasting about 'you' and 'you about us': all these topics, and the prevalence of the shared space between rhetors and audiences of the universal audience, represent an inventional strategy seeking to secure a connection, develop a relationship, lay a foundation.

This foundation allows for a transition, turning once again to consolation that now becomes the object of boasting with respect to 'your' zeal. By means of the previous Units the collection appeals have been given the necessary argumentative contexts from which they might then be made 'not as a command, but testing [δοκιμαζον] the certainty of your love by means of the earnestness [σπουδής] of others' (8:8). Boasting in 'us' (both 'us' as rhetors and 'all of us' who walk by faith) becomes boasting in 'you', grounded in the confidence 'I' have as shown in 'your' obedience.

But this obedience is in question with respect to σύνεσις ἐγὼ Παύλος (I myself, Paul) and those who oppose, that is, 'the ones assessing our activities according to the flesh' (10:2). The shared space/relationship of both the rhetor and audiences to Christ becomes the standard by which to judge both 'I'/we' and 'them', as all boasting (previous and to come) is boasting ἐν κυρίῳ. Upon this basis, prodded by the audiences, 'I' become a fool, boasting 'in my weakness' that the 'power of Christ might dwell on me' (12:9). Irony becomes thick, accusations are hurled against 'them' (ψευδαπόστολοι, ὑπερκίλαν ἀποστόλοι) and 'you' (who force 'me' to it, who submit to another gospel readily enough, who put up with being made slaves to others). But this irony, these accusations, the threatened use of authority in the 'power of God', are all premised upon the notion of οἰκοδομή (building up) and the shared space of both 'you' and 'us' belonging to Christ. As shown above, the arguments in this Unit and the conclusion are integrally related to the themes and issues addressed throughout the letter; themes and issues that like threads in fabric appear and disappear in the various arguments to be drawn together here.

All of these inventional moves strive to cohere into developing a particular relationship between rhetors (particularly, but not exclusively, Paul) and audiences, a rela-
tionship built first upon the commonality of Christ, extended to include all the churches participating in the collection to Jerusalem, and then secured under the authority of the rhetor who uses his standing vis-à-vis the ὑπερλίτον ἀποστόλων (super apostles) with respect to the churches of Achaia to outmatch their claims to authority. Throughout it all, there is an overriding concern to instruct and reinforce shared values, a prevalence of epideictic intentionalities which provide the foundational basis not only for deliberative-like collection appeals, but also the defensive argumentation (forensic) in the last unit. If one could classify the relationship and therewith identify its primary motivational dynamic, it would be to describe it in terms of ‘ministry’ to these congregations.

4 CONCLUSION

It appears that at least some of the issues and concerns addressed as we began this analysis have been partially answered. The fundamental assumptions governing partition theory and multiple source analysis can successfully be set aside in favour of an approach which takes as its model a rhetorical theory of dynamic argumentation. The advantage of such a theory appears to be at the minimum an ability to explain the developing invention strategies and argumentative moves made throughout 2 Corinthians. The result is an appreciation of the careful integration of topics, a better understanding of modalities and deictic indicators, and an appreciation of the changing argumentative situation. The argumentative significance of the themes of affliction, boasting, confidence; dissociative strategies of weak/strong; the use of narrative threads within the argumentative units; relational developments between rhetors and audiences are woven together into a complex and interactive whole in which arguments presage later developments and help provide important foundational moves to often risky argumentative ventures. Without suggesting to offer a critique of letter, that is, without endeavouring to judge the potential or actual effectiveness of the strategies employed, its analysis through the proffered model suggests a reasonability and rationality to the coherence of the canonical and manuscript traditions.

In light of these results, the burden of proof necessarily shifts upon those who would espouse the multiple-source theory. Can such a theory be maintained without recourse to a model of communication which would reject the presence of complex communicative performances? While Betz’s approach to the letter assumes the hermeneutical foundation of the multiple-source hypothesis and seeks through rhetoric to secure it, rhetorical analytics can, in fact, challenge this foundation itself. My proposal of a ‘re-discovered and re-invented rhetoric’ offers one model which can make sense of the complexity of the argumentation within the letter without having to pose a complex solution of multiple, individual sources later pieced together in what has been seen as a rather confused order. Instead, argumentational development and multiple invention trajectories can explain the dynamics of the correspondence as a whole, thus providing a less complex solution (Occam’s razor). This is the challenge...
which must be taken up by those who base their division of 2 Corinthians into multiple letter fragments on an understanding of artificially restricted coherence, focused consistency, and unitary intentionality and context.

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