

Troubling Presence

. . . the more they show your presence among us, in some sort, the more they make it impossible for us to bear your absence.¹

WRITING AND CHRISTOLOGY

Despite the different topics this book explores, in effect only one question is pursued throughout its pages: might the momentous sentence “Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil 2:11) mean something other than what most interpreters take it to mean—that the world is under Jesus’ control and at his disposal? Although “Lord” is widely thought to be the final word on Jesus’ identity, a different way of reading cannot be excluded: Jesus is the last word on what a lord is. If words are not privileged beings like kings in palaces kept safe from subjects or like masters ruling slaves, perhaps even a mighty word like “Lord” is vulnerable to invasion by “Jesus Christ.” What if “Lord” was defined by “Jesus Christ” as much as or even more than “Jesus Christ” is by “Lord”?

There is a good reason to pursue this question about the semantic stability of “Lord.” In Phil 2:6–11, narration of Jesus’ character precedes confession of his title. Verses 6–8 tell a story with Jesus as the sole actor; his actions give rise to responses in vv. 9–11. This suggests that Jesus can lay claim to an enduring character, and it is the title “Lord” that is enhanced by the narration. Jesus’ story elicits a naming response from God, mortals, and other tongues whose common judgment is that the one known through this story is the very definition of a lord. Paul (or a hymn that he quotes) brilliantly set a scene of voices agreeing with God’s praise of Jesus and repeating God’s own naming of Jesus as *kyrios*. In fact, if one reads v. 11 out loud, at least three groups of confessors speak in

agreement with God's calling Jesus "Lord." Those who first uttered the words are held in memory, while living readers repeat the words in anticipation of the day when every tongue will pronounce them. But what is this universal agreement about? The story that builds up to the confession resists attempts to subsume Jesus under the category of those who wield absolute power like Caesar, Zeus, Hades, Eros, or even God, as if Jesus bested them at their own game of sovereignty. That would be out of character for the Christ Jesus of 2:6-8. The narrated Jesus infects the title Lord with the life he lived or, more precisely, with the death he died.

These brief remarks on Jesus' lordship foreshadow the aversion to sovereign power that readers will detect in the following pages and anticipate my claim that, at least within the limits of the letter to the Philippians, longing—not control—is the chief characteristic of Pauline Christology, apostolic ministry, and ecclesiology. The story of Jesus that shapes lordship in Phil 2:6-11 is repeated in Paul's desire for the church confessed in 1:8: "For God is my witness, how I long for you all in the innards of Christ Jesus." Explorations of Paul's Christology customarily do not reckon with the apostle's confession concerning his interior life, nor do they begin with an investigation of his letter writing. As I hope to show, however, what we say about Paul's letters shapes what we look for in him, and what we say about Paul shapes what we look for in Christ. This principle holds whether it is sovereignty or longing that we wish to project onto Christ. If, for example, when Paul's letters are regarded as instruments of control, then it is quite likely we will picture the apostle directing, educating, and disciplining congregations while defending his authority against opponents' attacks.² And if this is the Paul we invent on the basis of Philippians, then Christ likely will be the supreme model of humble submission to God's will. His obedience to the Father earns him, somewhat inconsistently, the title "Lord," and his model obedience stabilizes the community's obedience. Paul's letter creates his directing, educating, and disciplining presence in the community even as he is far distant from it. Controlling letters yield an authoritarian Paul who promotes an exemplary Christ submissive to patriarchal divinity.

I have no objection to a flow of influence. Whether Pauline interpreters admit it or not, we all follow *some* stream of motifs circulating from the letter in question, through Paul, to Christ and back to the letter again. Christology is indeed tuned to epistolography via Pauline biography. My concern is that motifs of control have been so exaggerated in Pauline studies that longing desire has not been given a chance to organize our knowledge of the letters, Paul's writing about himself, or his Christology. If, as it is argued below, Philippians

is a complex symbol that delivers Paul's presence and in so doing also takes it away, we are likely to orient our picture of Paul around his confession of longing for the community, an emotion he shares with Christ (Phil 1:8). And if Philippians both opens space for readers to long for Paul and marks Paul by his desire for communion with an absent community, then a Christ who longs for communion with humanity is plausible. Christ's suffering the absence of his beloved stabilizes (if this is possible) Paul's desire for the church and the church's for Paul. Thus, our understanding of letter writing is crucial for appreciating Pauline Christology.

But what do we understand a Pauline epistle to be? Ancient epistolary theory encouraged readers to imagine themselves in the writer's presence hearing his or her voice and thus through the letter gaining access to ideas. As this chapter argues, letter writers in antiquity in fact had a far more nuanced view, since they doubted the stability of presence and voice that their theory promised. Many modern interpreters, however, have taken ancient theory at its word and regard a Pauline letter as a substitute for his presence and voice through which his ideas about Jesus can be ascertained. This approach to reading Philippians has gone hand in hand with a focus on Paul's authority and Christ's obedience to God. That Paul's emotion of *pothos* could invade sovereignty and obedience appears as wrongheaded as the proposition that the meaning of "Lord" in Phil 2:11 depends on the history of Jesus.

Yet, when epistolary presence is shown to be an illusion and thus fragile, and again I want to stress that ancient letters themselves sadly admit writing's failure to guarantee presence, we are left with a letter stubbornly refusing to let us see through it to the author. It instead reminds us of the distance between writer and reader. Writing returns us again and again to Paul's absence and Christ's. Consequently, neither Paul, nor Christ, nor the original readers of the letter are present to assure us that we have settled on the right meanings. But this is a good thing. Without clear ideas to guide the way, we get distracted from our search for concepts about power and control and concentrate more and more on Paul's passion (Phil 1:8), a longing for communion that will not go away even if his ideas could be possessed securely. This is, of course, a body blow to Pauline Christology normally conceived, since Christian teachings, such as "Jesus is Lord," ought not be susceptible to the instability of desire.³

This, then, is the danger of beginning a book on Pauline Christology with a consideration of his letter writing: getting sidetracked in emotion. For this reason, if letters must be considered at all, a more conventional approach would have us wait until Paul's ideas about Jesus have first been clarified. At that point, letters may be analyzed as delivery systems for those ideas. Then investigators

are free to show how Paul fit his ideas about Jesus both to available language (theology) and to his audience (rhetoric). Paul's letters express his ideas and persuade audiences to believe them, but the mood they create in hearers and the impression they give of the writer's emotions—these are data not directly relevant to the *logos* of Christ. Now it becomes clear why ancient epistolary theory is more attractive to modern scholars than ancient letter writing itself. Theory encourages us to move through and past Paul's writing to the apostle's Christology. The heart of this theory is that a letter substitutes for the writer's presence and speech. A letter is not really writing but oral communication literally accomplished.⁴

This was a stock motif in ancient letters of friendship. For example, Julian's letter to Maximus claims that a letter substitutes for the writer's presence and speech:

I sleep with your letters as though they were healing drugs of some sort, and I do not cease to read them constantly as though they were newly written and had only just come into my hands. Therefore if you are willing to furnish me with intercourse (ὁμιλίαν) by means of letters, as a semblance of your own society (εἰκόνα τῆν σῆς παρουσίας), write, and do not cease to do so continually.⁵

Or, on August 23, 133 c.e., a man wrote to his brother: "And do not hesitate to write letters, since I rejoiced exceedingly, as if you had come. From the day that you sent me the letter I have been saved."⁶ A papyrus letter later in the century makes the same point: "As soon as I reached Antinoöpolis, I received your letter, through which I got the feeling of seeing you (δι' ὧν ἔδοξα σε θεωρεῖν). I therefore beseech you to do the same constantly, for in this way our love will be increased (οὕτως γὰρ ἀύξηθήσεται ἡμῶν ἡ φιλία)."⁷

Letter writers imitated the craft of painters.⁸ Words paint a portrait of the sender to create an illusion of presence.⁹ The Roman philosopher Seneca wrote,

I thank you for writing to me so often; for you are revealing your real self to me in the only way you can. I never receive a letter from you without being in your company forthwith. If the pictures of our absent friends are pleasing to us, though they only refresh the memory and lighten our longing (*desiderium*) by a solace that is unreal and unsubstantial, how much more pleasant is a letter, which brings us real traces, real evidences, of an absent friend! For that

which is sweetest when we meet face to face is afforded by the impress of a friend's hand upon his letter,—recognition.¹⁰

Not only painting, but the art of the miniature is mentioned as a suitable comparison to help make this power of representation known. Julian wrote to George, a revenue official: “in your letters I have already seen you and the image of your noble soul, and have received the impression thereof as of an imposing device on a small seal. For it is possible for much to be revealed in a little.”¹¹ In another letter, Julian writes to the high priest Theodorus, “I was filled with serenity and felicity and welcomed the letter as though I beheld in it an image (εἰκόνα), so to speak, of your disposition.”¹²

In addition to creating presence, a letter is the voice of the absent friend saying what would have been said had distance not separated writer and recipient. An epigram made the point wistfully: “Nature, loving the duties of friendship, invented instruments by which absent friends can converse, pens, paper, ink, handwriting, tokens of the heart that mourns afar off.”¹³ One of Ovid's letters written during his exile took theory's promise of a living voice to an extreme. After a few perplexing moments, present-day readers discover that the letter has its own voice and speaks on behalf of Ovid:

But thee—O, if thou believest me in anything, dearer than all to him—thee he holds constantly in his whole heart. Thee he calls his Menoetiades, thee his Orestes' comrade, thee his Aegides, or his Euryalus. He longs (*desiderat*) not more for his country and the many things with his country whose absence he feels, than for thy face and eyes, O thou who art sweeter than the honey stored in the wax by the Attic bee.¹⁴

Ovid's overly literal realization of epistolary theory makes a simple point: letters talk. Synesius speaks of the “letter's power to be a solace for unhappy loves, affording as it does in bodily absence the illusion of actual presence, for this missive seems itself to converse, thus fulfilling the soul's desire.”¹⁵ But there is trouble; absence comes around the corner just as presence and voice seem established.

THE FRAGILITY OF EPISTOLARY PRESENCE

Paul's striking confession in Phil 1:8 (“For God is my witness, how I long for you all in the innards of Christ”), in which Paul is more pining lover

than authoritative guide, has largely gone unobserved in the modern period. Accordingly, his letters have been conceptualized as instruments of admonition, teaching, and self-defense. There are, however, exceptions to this emphasis on apostolic authority among scholars today. Stanley Stowers called attention to 1:7–8 as a possible example of the motif of yearning for the loved one, a commonplace that he correctly observed could be easily documented in letters of friendship.¹⁶ Some years later, he summarized the work of a number of classicists on ancient epistolography and brought their findings to bear on Philippians: “Expressions of affection and longing to be with one’s friends were considered appropriate for letters of friendship and manifest themselves in commonplace phraseology and *topoi*.”¹⁷ The significance of Stowers’s insight grows when placed in its historical context. In the early 1990s a challenge arose to a widely held view that Paul organized the letter of Philippians around the problem of his authority; friendship, according to a number of scholars, was instead both the letter’s topic and the point of its composition.¹⁸ The letter was not simply an instrument of control but a means of preserving and intensifying the shared lives of separated friends. Paul wrote in the language of friendship to increase friendship.¹⁹ Yet, while the categorization of Philippians as a letter of friendship is, I believe, a real advance because it both recognizes philophroneic motifs and paints a less authoritarian picture of Paul, it nevertheless accepts as unproblematic the notion of the letter as a bearer of the writer’s presence. So, while affirming Philippians as a friendly letter, I want to challenge the idea that letters delivered presence purely and simply.

Letters are indeed substitutes for the writer’s physical presence, but even in that moment when they create an illusion of presence they also remind readers of the author’s absence. Letters of friendship simultaneously give comfort and refresh the wounds of separation, and this double effect was even more the case when letter writers enhanced friendly feelings with allusions to *erōs* and *pothos*. Greek letters, beginning in the fourth century, provide numerous examples of eroticized friendship. John Chrysostom, for example, charged his letters with erotic terminology, often characterizing himself as a lover (*ἔραστής*) both vehement (*σφοδρὸς*) and warm (*θερμὸς*).²⁰ In Chrysostom’s letters friends are connected by bonds of love and longing.²¹ Erotic love furthermore explains the insatiate desire that he and the recipients of his letters have for more and longer epistles.²² In Philippians, Paul anticipates the epistolary habits of the fourth century and pushes past the limits of friendship into *erōs* by telling his own story and Jesus’ in terms of longing desire, but in so doing he problematized the very presence and voice his letter created.

Interpreters have overlooked the shaky hold readers have on the writer's presence, especially when the relationship has been cast in erotic terms. They need to pay greater attention to writers' own admissions of failure to deliver their presence and voice. Basil's letters frequently incorporated erotic motifs, and in the following letter to Theodorus he faces up to the eroticism of his own epistolary practice and hints at the fragility of presence.²³ He writes,

Some say that those who are seized with the passion of love (τοὺς ἐαλωκότας τῷ πάθει τοῦ ἔρωτος), whenever through some unusually urgent necessity they are parted from the object of their desire (τῶν προθυμίων), if they can look upon the semblance of the beloved form in a picture, can check the violence of their passion through the pleasure they derive from the sight.²⁴

Basil draws a parallel between portraits and letters. Both simulate presence and overcome longing, but equally important is what he fails to say explicitly: the very same literary object that calms longing also reinvigorates it.²⁵ He does hint at the problem, however, since the letter can only "check the violence of their passion," not eradicate it. Basil has left the door open just a crack.

When separation is the defining moment of a letter, as it was in Philippians as in all friendly letters, and longing the underlying mood, a letter's significance rests on the *illusion* of presence it creates.²⁶ Reports of lonely lovers kissing letters before, after, and in the middle of reading bring out the illusory character of letters. Note the "as if" or "as though" quality of epistolary presence, which Julian seems to fear could evaporate at any moment:

. . . how often I held the letter to my lips, as mothers embrace their children, how often I kissed it with those lips as though I were embracing my dearest sweetheart, how often I invoked and kissed and held to my eyes even the superscription which had been signed by your own hand as though by a clear cut seal, and how I clung to the imprint of the letters as I should to the fingers of that sacred right hand of yours!²⁷

The novelist Chariton describes a similar mode of reception:

Dionysius went back to his quarters and shut himself in. When he recognized Callirhoe's handwriting, he first kissed the letter, then opened it and clasped it to his breast as if it were Callirhoe present in the flesh. He held it there for a long time, unable to read it for crying.

After copious tears he began to read it, with difficulty; and the first thing he did was to kiss the name “Callirhoe.”²⁸

Letters are illusory and insubstantial because the writer’s presence and voice are creatures of the *recipient’s* fantasy. It is less the skill of the writer and more the *pothos* of the recipient that turns a letter into an image. Longing is creative.²⁹ Letters stimulate readers’ existing capacity for fantasy.³⁰ More than any writer in antiquity, John Chrysostom emphasized that the eyes of love empowered by longing perceive the absent beloved in the letter itself.³¹

Correspondence between Pliny the Younger and his wife, Calpurnia, reflects the vulnerability of epistolary presence. Since husbands in antiquity rarely, as far as we know, wrote to their wives in amatory terms, quoted in its entirety the following letter surprisingly transforms husband and wife into lover and beloved. It does so with the aid of well-known motifs from Latin poetry:

You cannot believe how much I miss you (*desiderio tui tener*). I love you so much, and we are not used to separations. So I stay awake most of the night thinking of you, and by day I find my feet carrying me (a true word, carrying) to your room at the times I usually visited you; then finding it empty I depart, as sick and sorrowful as a lover locked out. The only time I am free from this misery is when I am in court and wearing myself out with my friends’ lawsuits. You can judge then what a life I am leading, when I find my rest in work and a distraction in troubles and anxiety.³²

Absence, sleeplessness, lovesickness, the excluded lover, torment of the soul, remedy of love, and comfort for love—Pliny orders all seven erotic motifs to his purpose of confessing his *desiderium*, a task that any letter of longing must take on, and that includes Paul’s letter to the Philippians. Pliny’s epistle is an early example of hundreds of longing letters in the following centuries that seek to intensify the emotional bond between the writer and recipient by describing their relationship in erotic terms. But that enhancement is two-edged. *Erōs* opens the door to a more intense experience of the beloved’s absence in the very literary medium in which love promised to give greater presence. Pliny found this out:

I in turn keep reading your letters, repeatedly fingering them as if they had newly arrived. But this fires my longing (*desiderium*) all the more, for when someone’s letter contains such charm, what

sweetness there is in conversing face to face! Be sure to write as often as you can, even though the delight your letters give me causes me such torture. Farewell.³³

While Pliny's tactile reception of letters endured well into the tenth century, so did his experience of simultaneous delight and torture.

Perhaps training in longing desire prepared Pliny to understand Calpurnia's rather curious way of receiving his letters. She might well have been the first to put into action what a papyrus letter several decades earlier had encouraged another lonely recipient simply to imagine: "Think that I am near you."³⁴ Pliny writes,

You write that my being absent from you causes you no little sadness, and that your one consolation (*solacium*) is to grasp my writings as a substitute for my person, and that you often place them where I lie next to you (*in vestigio meo collocas*). I am happy that you are missing me, and that my books console you as you rest.³⁵

Placed in his imprint (*vestigium*) on their bed, the letters stood in for his body and provided comfort. Pliny approves her ingenuity. She had improved upon the widespread practice of lovers keeping close at hand portraits, figurines, and other traces of traveling or deceased loved ones. These physical reminders/reminders were comforting substitutes, but they also kept open the wounds of separation.³⁶ Everyday phenomena in antiquity such as the shadow, footprints, hair clippings, and traces of the body on bedclothes were experienced with fascination because of their contradictory effects. Absence and presence of the beloved existed in a single object. And Calpurnia doubled the effects by combing two complex symbols, letters and wrinkled sheets.

Before he became emperor, Marcus Aurelius was a master at eroticizing his friendship with his teacher and confidant Marcus Cornelius Fronto.³⁷ Famous lovers from the past exemplify his feelings for Fronto: "if he was ever away from Socrates, Socrates never felt for Phaedrus a more passionate longing (*desiderium*) than I for the sight of you all these days."³⁸ Nuptial imagery works its way into his discourse. Writing in 146 c.e. from Naples, Marcus bored with local amusements writes:

. . . we have passed whole days more or less in the same occupation: the same theatre, the same dislike of it, the same longing (*desiderium*) for you—the same, do I say? nay, one that is daily renewed and

increases and, as Laberius, after his own manner and in his own peculiar style, says of love, “Your love (*amor*) as fast as any onion grows, as firm as any palm.” This then is what he says of love (*de amore*), I apply to my longing (*desiderium*) for you.³⁹

Laberius likely meant his lines for the praise of bride and groom.⁴⁰ Marcus’s redeployment of them amplified his friendship with *amor* and transfigured the teacher and friend into his longed-for Fronto.⁴¹

Fronto, however, took a cooler approach toward Marcus. He used letters to increase friendship to be sure, as epistolary theory required, but he did so without the eroticism of poetic allusion. Preferring philosophy to poetry and reason to emotion, Fronto creates a better *friend*, a figure less romantic than the parted lover Marcus had invented for Fronto.

I have received your letter, most charmingly expressed, in which you say that the intermission in my letters has caused a longing for them to arise in you. Socrates was right, then, in his opinion that “pleasures are generally linked to pains,” when in his imprisonment he held that pain caused by the tightness of his chains was made up for by the pleasure of their removal. Precisely so in our case the fondness which absence stimulates brings as much comfort as the absence itself causes affliction. For fond longing comes from love. Therefore, absence makes the heart grow fonder, and this is far the best thing in friendship.⁴²

From Fronto’s perspective, then, what the epistolary situation of their separation calls for is philosophic theory about balanced pleasure and pain, not poetically expressed *erōs*.⁴³ Yet, in their early correspondence, Fronto was swimming against the strong current of Marcus’s longing.

Marcus’s use of Laberius indicates how important poetry was for the introduction of *erōs* into letters of friendship. While Laberius was a minor player, Sappho’s influence on longing letters was immense. The pseudonymous letter of Julian to Iamblichus opens with two Sapphic quotations. The first nicely states the letter’s promise of presence: “‘Thou hast come! well hast thou done!’ You have indeed come, even though absent, by means of your letter. . . .” In the second we see once again the double effect of the letter to comfort and to reinvigorate longing: “And I was yearning for thee, and thou didst set ablaze my heart, already aflame with longing (καιομένην πρόθῳ) for thee.”⁴⁴ Sappho helped Julian create an amatory narrative within the letter for himself

and Iamblichus.⁴⁵ Julian takes on Sappho's identity and her plight. Iamblichus in turn becomes the beloved of Sappho's poem, and longing becomes the dominant mood.

Up to this point, only the vulnerability of epistolary presence has been considered. Letters also carry on conversation, it was said, which in partnership with bodily presence constitutes the joy of friendship. But voice also is an epistolary illusion. In a letter to Trebonius, Cicero locates the pain of separation in loss of conversation:

It was a pleasure to read your letter, and a great pleasure to read your book. But there was a touch of pain too, for, having inflamed my eagerness to increase our intercourse (our *affection* admitted of no addition), you then go away. . . . Missing you as sorely as I do (*meque tanto desiderio adficis*), you leave me only one consolation—that long, frequent letters will mitigate the sense of loss (*desiderium*) we both feel in each other's absence.⁴⁶

The remedy he suggests, more letters, will actually cause more pain if what he has just said about their power to inflame is true. The remedy is the problem, and there is no breaking free from this vicious circle. The question now is whether Paul wrote Philippians in such a way as to mask the circularity of presence and absence thus promoting his authority and Christ's unreconstructed lordship or whether he exploited epistolary conventions that drove home his and Christ's longing for communion. There is much evidence to suggest the latter.

PAUL IN THE COMPANY OF THE PARTED

There comes a point in every extant longing letter—and there were hundreds from the thousand years following Paul's letter to the Philippians—when the emotions of the writer surface, sometimes breathlessly. Various methods of declaring an aching mind and desire for communion were available, from Pliny's shock and disbelief in *Ep.* 7.5 examined above ("You cannot believe how much I miss you") to Synesius's saucy mix of erotic cliché and calendar checking: "Longing and necessity draw me to you. I should like to know, then, whether you will await me if I come to you."⁴⁷ Some avowals are downright gushy. In a pseudonymous letter, Julian confesses his feelings for Iamblichus: "Nay, I admit that I am your lover (ἀλλ' ἐραστής μὲν εἶναι σὸς ὁμολογῶ). . . . For even though someone should say that I am unworthy, not even so shall he deprive me of my longing (τοῦ ποθεῖν)."⁴⁸ Cicero took the direct approach

writing to an ailing friend, “Missing you brings home to us how useful and pleasant it is to have you. But though I long to see you with my every thought”⁴⁹ Or, finally, he wrote to his brother Quintus, “Can I put you out of my mind sometimes, or even think of you without tears? When I miss you (*te desidero*), I do not miss you as a brother only, but as a delightful brother almost of my own age, a son in deference, a father in wisdom. What pleasure did I ever take apart from you or you apart from me?”⁵⁰ In Phil 1:8, Paul announces that he has joined the ranks of the lonely: “I long for you all in the innards of Christ Jesus.”

Papyri letters declare their writers’ longing by echoing Paul’s straightforward style, though with varied terminology. There is Paul’s term that he shared with hundreds of letter writers: ἐπιποθῶ or simply ποθῶ. It is surprisingly rare in the papyri, an accident of preservation perhaps. In a letter dated 212–217 c.e. a writer declares, “we who are longing (οἱ ποθοῦντες) pray that we enjoy you with our eyes and no longer by means of letters.”⁵¹ More often than ποθῶ, papyri letters employ ἐπιθυμεῖν or ἐπιζητεῖν, both of which occur in Philippians (1:23; 4:17). Desiring to see the recipient in the flesh was a popular motif, as this letter of Theanous from the second or third century c.e. to her mother illustrates: “I greet you, mother, wishing to catch sight of you already (ἐπιθυμοῦσα ἤδη θεάσασθαι) through this letter.”⁵² In the second century a son wrote to his father Herakleides, “Know that we miss you (ἐπιζητοῦμεν σε) daily.”⁵³

Paul seals his confession with an oath: “For God is my witness” (1:8). Letter writers in the first thousand years of the common era, regardless of religious conviction, spoke as if they had the same god when they confessed their longing. This god was the hope of parted lovers and separated friends.⁵⁴ The divine name had a reputation for making communion.⁵⁵ By the tenth century, this divinity bore the epithet “who makes into one.”⁵⁶ This god made the impossibility of communion between parted friends possible through written text: a letter was a “gift of Fate.”⁵⁷ For Christians, a “gift of God.”⁵⁸ For Julian, a “manifest saving presence.”⁵⁹ Not only did they pray to this god but they also called on it as a witness to their longing. Echoing the witness motif of Phil 1:8, Basil writes to Meletius, bishop of Antioch: “The good God, by affording us opportunities of addressing your Honor, assuages the intensity of our longing (τὸ σφοδρὸν τοῦ πόθου παραμυθεῖται). For He Himself is a witness of the desire (μάρτυς γὰρ αὐτὸς τῆς ἐπιθυμίας) which we have to behold your countenance and to enjoy your good and soul-profitting instruction.”⁶⁰

As in Phil 1:8 (cf. Rom 1:11–12), a god was invoked to verify the unseen desire of the heart.⁶¹ Greek letters in the first three centuries of the common

era employ the motif. One example is the letter of Chairemon to Apollonius dated between 70 and 80 c.e. in which friendship and desire are verified with an oath: [Ἵ]ομνυμι δέ σοι κατὰ Δ[ι]ο[σ]κ[ο]ύρων . . .⁶² Another is found in one of the *Socratic Epistles* in which Phaedrus, having fallen in love with philosophy, dreads Plato's departure: "You wrote to me that since you did not wish to cause me grief, you concealed that you are about to move farther away, but by Zeus the Olympian, I am beginning to miss you (καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ ἄρχομαι ποθεῖν σε νῆ τὸν Δία τὸν Ὀλύμπιον)."⁶³ Finally, Julian wrote to Hermogenes, "For, by the gods, I have long desired to see you (θεάσασθαι γὰρ σε πάλαι τε εὐχομαι νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς), and, now that I have learned to my great joy that you are safe and sound, I bid you come." Swearing upon the other's eyes or upon one's own soul served the same rhetorical purpose.⁶⁴

It is not entirely accurate to say, as I said above, that longing was a secret of the heart that required divine testimony for confirmation. Longing had obvious physical effects; it was a disease heating the body, liquefying its solid parts, and in the end draining it entirely. Its effects were palpable. As I will assert in chapters 2 and 3, this is the story of Christ's body in Phil 2:6-8 into which Paul writes himself in Phil 1:8 (" . . . in the innards of Christ Jesus"). Epaphroditus also longed for the church and "for that reason you heard that he fell ill" (Phil 2:26). Just as a god was called upon to witness the truth of the writer's emotion, the body itself gave indisputable evidence. Marcus wrote as follows to Fronto, whose own illness, incidentally, was not of the erotic variety: "So while you are down in bed, my spirits will be down too (*et mihi animus supinus erit*); and when by God's grace you stand on your feet, my spirits also will stand fast, that are now fevered with the most burning longing for you (*qui nunc torretur ardentissimo desiderio tuo*)."⁶⁵ Marcus prays to the gods "that in every journey of mine you may be with me, and I be not worn out with so constant, so consuming a desire for you (*desiderio fatiger*)."⁶⁶ He tells Fronto about his nightly letter writing routine: "before I turn over and snore, I get my task done and give my dearest of masters an account of the day's doings, and if I could miss (*desiderare*) him more, I would not grudge wasting away a little more."⁶⁷ Bodily proof of desire was a malleable enough theme to cover nonsexual relations. Marcus recalls burning for his mother as he reiterates his longing for Fronto:

Now, if never before, I find what a task it is to round and shape three or five lines and to take time over writing. Farewell, breath of my life. Should I not burn with love of you (*Ego non ardeam tuo amore*), who have written to me as you have! What shall I do? I cannot

refrain. Last year it befell me in this very place, and at this very time, to be consumed with a passionate longing (*desiderio peruri*) for my mother. This year you inflame that my longing (*Id desiderium hoc anno tu mihi accendis*). My Lady greets you.⁶⁸

Marcus's epistolary persona, the wasting away lover, was a one of the most popular motifs in Greek and Latin love poetry and in the romantic novel.⁶⁹ Longing for the community in Philippi, Paul and Epaphroditus thus were in good company.

Julian took quite seriously the deadly effects of longing.⁷⁰ To Libanius he wrote, "I assure you, in these three days you have worn me out, if indeed the Sicilian poet speaks the truth when he says, 'those who long (ποθοῦντες) grow old in a day.' And if this is true, as in fact it is, you have trebled my age, my good friend."⁷¹ Not only did longing advance the process of aging; it also felt like dying. To another friend he wrote, "While you are away I cannot be said to be alive." And again, "But I might say that I do not exist at all among men so long as I am not with Iamblichus."⁷² Papyri letters also emphasized physical suffering as evidence for longing. Writers agonize over the separation and the uncertainties distance creates.⁷³ Appetite disappears: "I take no pleasure in food and drink. . . . I lay without eating on New Year's Day but my father came and forced me to eat."⁷⁴ Thirst never ends: "Or don't you know that we are thirsting for your letters?"⁷⁵ Day after day goes by with no sunshine.⁷⁶ In short, missing a friend felt just like grief over his or her death.⁷⁷ Separation is a kind of dying, as Epaphroditus experienced (Phil 2:26-27) and as this letter from Taus to Apollonius (107 C.E.) shows:

I beg you, my lord, if it please you, to send for me; else I die because I do not behold you daily. Would that I were able to fly and come to you and make obeisance to you; for it distresses me not to behold you. So be friends with me and send for me.⁷⁸

Or, another:

Serenus to his beloved sister Isidora, many greetings. Before all else I pray for your health, and every day and evening I perform the act of veneration on your behalf to Thöeris who loves you. I assure that ever since you left me I have been in mourning, weeping by night and lamenting by day.⁷⁹

Only lament of the dead seemed an appropriate response to the loved one's absence.

Direct declaration was one method of revealing *pathos*, and it was Paul's choice in Phil 1:8. Epithets did the same work. The "I long for you" of a letter's opening often became "my longed-for one" at its close. Again, this was Paul's choice. In Phil 4:1 we read, "My beloved and longed-for brothers and sisters." Communicating *pathos* through terms of affection was an early, widespread epistolary practice. The Roman military camp of Vindolanda near Hadrian's Wall in northern England is the site of letters discovered in the 1980s written on wooden tablets. Preserved today at the British Museum, they originated around 100 C.E. One of them, a letter of Claudia Severa to Sulpicia Lepidina, displays what one scholar has called "erotically tinged language."⁸⁰ Claudia brought her letter to a close, "Farewell my sister, my dearest and most longed-for soul (*karissima et anima ma desideratissima*)."⁸¹

Affectionate forms of address abound in the correspondence of Marcus and Fronto. Marcus sprinkled pet names liberally at letter endings. As he transformed his friend Fronto into a beloved, his "chief joy," the simple act of saying goodbye was elevated to an art form.⁸² "Farewell, breath of my life (*Vale, spiritus meus*)."⁸³ "Farewell, my greatest treasure beneath the sky, my glory (*Vale mihi maxima res sub caelo, gloria mea*)."⁸⁴ "Farewell, my Fronto, most beloved and most loving of friends (*Vale mi Fronto carissime et amicissime*)."⁸⁵ "Farewell, my Fronto, dearest and beyond all things sweetest to me (*Vale mi Fronto carissime et supra omnes res dulcissime*)"; and "Fare ever well, my sweetest soul (*Valeas semper anima suavissima*)."⁸⁶ Marcus even turns longing itself into a pet name: "Farewell, my—what shall I say when whatever I say is inadequate?—farewell my longing, my light, my delight (*vale, meum desiderium, mea lux, mea voluptas*)."⁸⁷ Fronto responds a little less enthusiastically: "Dearly do I love you, my Lord, the glory of our age, my chiefest solace (*solacium*)."⁸⁸

Affectionate forms of address close a number of Julian's letters. *Epistle* 52 ends in a typical fourth-century fashion: "Farewell, brother, most dear (ποθεινότετε) and beloved!" Very similar is the closing of *Ep.* 7: "May you continue in health and happiness as long as possible, my well-beloved and most dear brother (ἀδελφε ποθεινότετε καὶ φιλικώτατε)." John Chrysostom's readers are addressed as "longed-for ones," though not as often as one might expect.⁸⁹ Letter recipients are lovingly addressed as "much longed-for ones" in the salutation of two epistles from Kellis in the early and middle fourth century C.E.: "To my lords sons who are most longed-for (ποθεινοτάτο[ι]ς) and most beloved (ἐρασιμιωτάτοι[ς]) by us Pausanius and Pisistratos";⁹⁰ and

“To his most honoured and truly longed-for lord brother (ἀληθῶς π[οθ]εινοτάτῳ ἀδελφῶι) Psais, Pamouris sends greetings in God. . . .”⁹¹ The superlative form of ποθεινός did yeoman’s work from the fourth century on. Even to be called “thrice longed for” was not unusual.⁹² Synesius wrote to Asclepiodotus, “The evil spirit whose business it is to hurt me arranged beforehand also that you, always so dear to me, should not be present. Oh best, thrice dear (τριπόθητε) and most loyal of friends, may you yet come!”⁹³ Finally, Augustine plays with the motif of tripled longing calling Christinus “much desired brother” three times in one short letter.⁹⁴

The final epistolary motif, which both affirms and challenges epistolary presence, is that of holding the absent one in memory or in the heart.⁹⁵ Remembrance, it should be stressed, is by no means a simple comfort, although letters often speak as if this were the case. Memory and longing are in reality a single desire differentiated only with respect to past and future; this means that the ache of longing and grief of remembering contradict the reports of joy when the absent one is imagined to be present. Pain is hidden in the metaphors. The imagery of remembering alludes to injury: inscribing the surface of the soul, stamping or molding it, or the soul’s bearing of the absent other as if it were a heavy load.⁹⁶

Having mentioned memory (μνεία) in Phil 1:3, Paul goes on to justify his emotional connection to the community: “because I have you in my heart.” Since this sentence might also been translated “because you have me in your heart,” Paul’s meaning is ambiguous, perhaps intentionally so, and suggests a relationship of mutual ecstasy and shared joy and grief.⁹⁷ Longing drove the heart out to abide within the beloved; Cato was thought to have “declared that the soul of the lover is ever present in that of the beloved.”⁹⁸ Conversely, the absent one dwelt within the lover’s heart.⁹⁹ Ovid was perhaps the first to employ this poetic motif in a letter. His unusual talking epistle mentioned above addresses the recipient: “But thee—O, if thou believest me in anything, dearer than all to him—thee he holds constantly in his whole heart (*in toto pectore semper habet*).”¹⁰⁰ Yet, instead of pure consolation, the heart’s reception of the other created pain as well as joy:

. . . my fatherland is far away, far my dearest wife, and all that after these two was once sweet to me. Yet these things are so present that, though I cannot touch them, all are visible to my mind. Before my eyes flit my home, the city, the outline of places, the events too that happened in each place. Before my eyes is the image of my wife as though she were present. She makes my woes heavier, she makes

them lighter—heavier by her absence, lighter by her gift of love and her steadfast bearing of the burden laid upon her. You too are fast in my heart, my friends . . . know that I am removed from you by vast space, you are ever present to my heart.¹⁰¹

The heart alternates roles changing from host to visitant and back again: “All things steal into my mind, yet above all, you, my wife, and you hold more than half my heart (*et plus in nostro pectore parte tenes*). You I address though you are absent, you alone my voice names; no night comes to me without you, no day.”¹⁰² But this alternation does not cure the circularity of absence and presence.

It goes to the point of this chapter that the very same spiritual capacity that in Ovid allowed for the interior presence of his wife also made her “heavier” and sparked renewed longing.¹⁰³ This dynamic, which I am claiming is true also of Philippians, does not occur in the philosophically shaped soul. Take Seneca, for example. He manages to banish absence from his mind. Seneca makes the paradoxical claim that the most pleasurable conversations are actually to be had when friends are parted. Leave it to a philosopher to strike out the experience of grief etched within the joyful remembrance of the absent other. Amnesia of this sort allows him to claim that the best conversation takes place purely through the mind.

You may hold converse with your friends when they are absent, and indeed as often as you wish and for as long as you wish. For we enjoy this, the greatest of pleasures, all the more when we are absent from one another. . . . A friend should be retained in the spirit (*animo*); such a friend can never be absent. He can see every day whomsoever he desires to see. I would therefore have you share your studies with me, your meals, and your walks. . . . I see you, my dear Lucilius, and at this very moment I hear you; I am with you to such an extent that I hesitate whether I should not begin to write you notes instead of letters. Farewell.¹⁰⁴

We can easily imagine Seneca’s reaction to Calpurnia’s use of Pliny’s letters, since, if he conceived of a note as an improvement upon a letter and even favored the eradication of writing itself in favor of spiritual communication, he would also have been dumfounded at the irrationality of Calpurnia’s placing Pliny’s letters in the place where he had slept. Calpurnia’s artifice kept Pliny safe from being turned into an idea. Even though he was absent to Calpurnia—or

precisely because he was absent and the letters would not allow her to forget it—Pliny’s body was longed for. Seneca, preferring ideas to bodies, provided his dear Lucilius no such protection. And Paul, sticking with letters to house his Christology, reminds his readers of his absence (Phil 1:12) and confesses *pothos*. He will not let Christ or the believers in Philippi suffer Lucilius’s fate.

READING THROUGH POTHOS

In this chapter I have wondered about the difference longing makes for the reading of Philippians. Hundreds of letters written in the first thousand years of the common era raise intriguing questions, such as the relative value of emotion and reason in our understanding of Pauline Christology. My purpose in reviewing this literature, however, is not to argue that Philippians reflects an established epistolary form called “the letter of longing”; the handbooks do not mention such a type, and categorization for its own sake is uninteresting. Rather, in preparation for the next chapter I wanted to place Paul in the company of those who deepened friendship by confessing *pothos*, who verified this desire with an oath, characterized readers as “longed-for ones,” and acknowledged the heart as host, visitant, scripted surface, and space for carrying about the absent beloved. Enhanced friendship came at a cost: when *erōs* is in play separation hurts all the more. Letters bring both delight and torture. How then do we think about Christology when the Jesus we have available for examination and logical exposition is delivered in such an emotionally conflicted medium?

Letters are usually thought simply to convey information. They re-present the writer and simulate his or her voice. It has not been my intention in this chapter to call into question the veracity of either of these two claims, only their completeness, since letters are also objects like photographs or locks of hair that bring loved ones into presence only then to reiterate their absence. In the ancient world, letters were reread, wept over, kissed, and placed in bed in order to soothe the longing desire they never failed to rekindle. Modern scholars, however, have approached Philippians as if the letter were only Paul’s παρουσία and ὁμιλία, and they read his writing as only the expression of his ideas or the contents of his commands. This is insufficient, because the very persons some of us want to know (Paul, Euodia, Jesus, Syntyche, Timothy, Epaphoditus, and the Philippian community) are entangled in Philippians’ vicious circle of comfort and affliction, in the letter’s delivering the writer and abducting this fictive presence.

Notes

1. Augustine, *Ep.* 27. Translation is from *Saint Augustine: Letters*, trans. Sister Wilfrid Parsons, FC (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1951), 88.

2. M. Luther Stirewalt Jr. (*Paul the Letter Writer* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 81) believes that Philippians “like Paul’s other letters, is officially apostolic, and not personal.” He finds the categorization of Philippians as a friendly letter unconvincing. It is puzzling, then, when he writes, “For Antiochus goodwill (*eunoia*) is secondary, intended for clothing an authoritative decree. For Paul authority is secondary, even incidental, to the expression of affection (*agape*), the major purpose of his writing” (p. 82). John Reumann (“Philippians, Especially Chapter 4, as a ‘Letter of Friendship’: Observations on a Checkered History of Scholarship,” in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World*, ed. John T. Fitzgerald, NovTSup 82 [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 83–106) doubts that Philippians is a letter of friendship: (1) he is not convinced that a collection of *topoi* is enough to decide about a letter’s form; (2) he wonders whether the handbook definitions may have been “schoolboy exercises” illustrating a classification scheme seldom used and bearing little resemblance to Philippians; and (3) Paul does not use the word *φιλία*, indicating his discomfort with a human relationship that is too anthropocentric, exclusive, and thus incapable of forming the backbone of his ecclesiology.

3. I am attempting in this chapter a critique of the shared phonocentrism of ancient epistolary theory and modern approaches to Paul’s letters. For Jacques Derrida’s challenge to the devaluation of writing and the elevation of the voice in Western philosophy, see Jonathan D. Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 89–110. For another application of Derrida’s philosophy to Paul’s letters, see Stephen Curkpatrick, “Apostrophic Desire and Parousia in the Apostle Paul’s Epistles: A Derridean Proposal for Textual Interpretation,” *Biblitu* 10 (2002): 175–93. He writes, “Paul’s apparent desire is to overcome absence with presence, which he seeks to do with either letter or emissary. This parousia to his congregations is inseparable from a desire to be their father,” p. 180. This is precisely the point I am arguing against.

4. On this point I am heavily indebted to the following two studies, whose influence reaches deeply into this chapter: Heikki Koskeniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.*, *Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemia*n toimituksia B, 102.2 (Helsinki: n.p., 1956); and Klaus Thraede, *Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Briefepitk*, *Zetemata* 48 (Munich: Beck, 1970); see also Nikolaos Tōmadakēs, *BYZANTINĒ EPISTOLOΓΡΑΦΙΑ* (Thessaloniki, 1993), 113–16. The idea that visual image and written word had the power to create the presence of an absent one was powerful in antiquity. Graves are very much like letters in this regard. Four brothers set up a stele for their dead sister longing once again to see her face; see *Steinepigramme* 14/3/3.

5. Julian, *Ep.* 12.

6. *P. Mich.* 8.482. See *Michigan Papyri*, vol. 8: *Papyri and Ostraca from Karanis*, ed. Herbert C. Youtie and John Garrett Winter (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1951), 76. Cf. Procopius, *Ep.* 27; Dionysius, *Ep.* 68; Leon, *Ep.* 52 (Jean Darrouzès, *Épistoliers Byzantins du Xe Siècle*, *Archives de l’orient chrétien* 6 [Paris: Institut français d’études byzantines, 1960], 204); Anonymous, *Epp.* 19, 20 (Darrouzès, 357–58).

7. *P. Mich.* 241. See Herbert C. Youtie, “P. Mich. Inv. 241: ΕΔΟΞΑ ΣΕ ΘΕΩΡΕΙΝ,” *ZPE* 22 (1976): 49–52. Cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 6: “I, too, long to have the joy of seeing you. . . . But as it is not possible to share in this joy together, I am sending this letter in my stead to be heard by your ears, to be seen by your eyes.” Translation is from *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, trans. G. W. Clarke, ACW 43 (New York: Newman, 1984), 63.

8. Procopius, *Ep.* 80.

9. John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 178.

10. Seneca, *Ep.* 40.1.

11. Julian, *Ep.* 67.

12. Julian, *Ep.* 16. Cf. Procopius, *Ep.* 148. See Gustav Karlsson, *Idéologie et cérémonial dans l'épistolographie byzantine: Textes du Xe siècle analysés et commentés*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Graeca Upsaliensia 3 (Uppsala; Almqvist & Wiksell, 1959), 94–96.

13. *Greek Anthology*, 9.401. Cf. Synesius, *Ep.* 138. See Karlsson, *Idéologie et cérémonial*, 24–33, 51–66.

14. Ovid, *Tristia* 5.4.23–30. See Thraede, *Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Brieftopik*, 47–52.

15. Synesius, *Ep.* 138.

16. Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, LEC 5 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 60.

17. Stanley K. Stowers, “Friends and Enemies in the Politics of Heaven: Reading Theology in Philippians,” in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 1: *Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon*, ed. Jouette M. Bassler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 109.

18. Loveday Alexander (“Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians,” *JSNT* 37 [1989]: 93) offers a compatible characterization of Philippians as a “Verbindungsbrief” (a term she finds in Koskeniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie*, 107), in which the “exchange of news and reassurance . . . is initially, at least, the letter’s real business.”

19. L. Michael White, “Morality between Two Worlds: A Paradigm of Friendship in Philippians,” in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe*, ed. David L. Balch, Everett Ferguson, and Wayne A. Meeks (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 201–15; John T. Fitzgerald, “Philippians in the Light of Some Ancient Discussions of Friendship,” in idem, *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech*, 141–60; and, in the same volume, Ken Berry, “The Function of Friendship Language in Philippians 4:10–20,” 107–24; and Abraham J. Malherbe, “Paul’s Self-Sufficiency (Philippians 4:11),” 125–39.

20. σοφοδρός: John Chrysostom, *Epp.* 50, 55, 56, 80, 82, 172, 175, 223, 225. θερμός: *Ep.* 218. Cf. Procopius, *Ep.* 26; Dionysius, *Ep.* 1.

21. John Chrysostom, *Epp.* 164, 218. See Karlsson, *Idéologie et cérémonial*, 62–78.

22. John Chrysostom, *Epp.* 22, 96, 222, 223.

23. What holds Basil back from enthusiastic agreement with the theory he articulated so well? Perhaps he is aware of the danger that amplification of friendship by *erōs* posed. For the intricacies of accommodating *erōs* to Christian friendship, see Jostein Børtnes, “Eros Transformed: Same-Sex Love and Divine Desire,” in *Greek Biography and Panegyric in Late Antiquity*, ed. Tomas Hägg and Philip Rousseau, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 31 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 180–93.

24. Basil, *Ep.* 124. It is noteworthy that Basil goes on to say that the letter carrier is the image of the sender. Confusion of letter and letter carrier in re-presenting the writer was not uncommon and deserves further study.

25. Basil knew this; see, for example, *Ep.* 342: “nature has caused those delicate thorns to grow upon this flower that they might serve, as do the sundry ticklings which lovers use, to incite gently to a greater desire (μειζονα πόθον) by their pleasant prickings of their stings (εὐπλήκτους κέντροις).”

26. See Anna De Pretis, “‘Insincerity,’ ‘Facts,’ and ‘Epistolarity’: Approaches to Pliny’s *Epistles* to Calpurnia,” *Arethusa* 36 (2003): 127–46.

27. Julian, *Ep.* 77. See also *Ep.* 78: “And when I received it I kissed it and held it to my eyes and kept tight hold of it as though I were afraid that while I was in the act of reading your letter the phantom of your image might elude me and fly away.” See Theodoros of Kyzikos, *Ep.* 2.

28. Chariton, *Chaer.* 8.5.13. Translation is from *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, ed. B. P. Reardon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 119. Braulio of Saragossa (590–651) was encouraged by his bishop, Isidore of Seville, to receive letters from friends in a physical way: “When you receive a letter of a friend, dearest son, you should not delay to embrace it as a friend. For it is a fine consolation among the absent that if one who is loved is not present, a letter may be

embraced instead.” Translation is from *The Letters of St. Isidore of Seville*, trans. Gordon B. Ford Jr., 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1970), 19.

29. Procopius, *Ep.* 152.

30. John Chrysostom, *Ep.* 108, 222.

31. John Chrysostom, *Epp.* 23, 34, 56, 154, 229. Cf. Julian, *Ep.* 62: “Nay, when did you ever leave me, so that I need to write, or when do I not behold you with the eyes of the soul as though you were here with me? For not only do I seem to be with you continually and to converse with you, but” For later examples, see Nicolaus, *Ep.* 33 (*PG* 111:220); Nikephoros Ouranos, *Ep.* 7 (Darrouzès, *Épistoliers Byzantins*, 221).

32. Pliny, *Ep.* 7.5. Antonio Ramírez de Verger remarks that the letter is “one whole series of familiar amatory motifs.” See his “Erotic Language in Pliny, *Ep.* VII 5,” *Glotta* 74 (1999): 114–16. A. N. Sherwin-White (*The Letters of Pliny: A Historical and Social Commentary* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1968], 407) notes that this is the first time in European literature that the roles of lover and husband are fused. Sabine Grebe (“Marriage and Exile: Cicero’s Letters to Terentia,” *Helios* 30 [2003]: 143) finds an earlier example in Cicero, *Fam.* 14.2.2.

33. Pliny, *Ep.* 6.7.

34. *Columbia Papyri* 8.215. Translation is from Roger S. Bagnall and Raffaella Cribiore, *Women’s Letters from Ancient Egypt: 300 BC–AD 800* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 261.

35. Pliny, *Ep.* 6.7. Translation is from *Pliny the Younger: Complete Letters*, trans. P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 137–38. See also Julian, *Ep.* 12; and Peter Damian (*Ep.* 87): “Indeed, I keep it [a letter] always with me in my cell. I often converse with it, and in it I clearly behold the very likeness of your face and the image of your inner self.” Translation is from *The Letters of Peter Damian: Letters 61–90*, trans. Owen J. Blum, FC: Medieval Continuation 3 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 299.

36. Maurizio Bettini, *The Portrait of the Lover*, trans. Laura Gibbs (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 4–54. Bettini does not explore letters, perfect illustration of the phenomenon he describes, since they consist of parchment impressed by the beloved’s hand and pen (“contact”) and pictures of his or her face painted by words (“similarity”). Theodore the Studite (*Ep.* 28 [*PG* 99:1196]) anticipated the kind of reference Bettini calls “contact”: “you have connected (συνῆψας) yourself to us through the letter.” For other occurrences of συνάπτω in letters, see Karlsson, *Idéologie et cérémonial*, 25.

37. For a new appreciation of the eroticism in these letters, see Amy Richlin, “Fronto Marcus: Love, Friendship, Letters,” in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. Mathew Kuefler (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2006), 111–29.

38. Fronto, *Ep. Gr.* 7.

39. Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 2.6.

40. For vegetal imagery in nuptial contexts, see J. C. B. Petropoulos, *Eroticism in Ancient and Medieval Greek Poetry* (London: Duckworth, 2003), 32–36, 61–73.

41. See also Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 2.2.

42. Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 4.9; see also 3.6.

43. Fronto’s treatise on love (*Ep. Gr.* 8) shows him the doting teacher and not the ἐραστής, but Marcus wasn’t buying it (*Ep. Gr.* 7).

44. Julian, *Ep.* 77.

45. Synesius (*Epp.* 123, 158) sought examples in Homer.

46. Cicero, *Fam.* 207.

47. Pliny, *Ep.* 7.5; for the disbelief motif, see also Cicero, *Fam.* 120. Synesius, *Ep.* 39; for ἔλκειν and the compulsion of love, see Theocritus, *Id.* 1.130; 2:17; *Greek Anthology* 5.25, 64, 205.

48. Julian, *Ep.* 79.

49. Cicero, *Fam.* 147; cf. 207.

50. Cicero, *Quint. frat.* 3. For the poetic origins of Cicero's blurring of familial lines, see G. O. Hutchinson, *Cicero's Correspondence: A Literary Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 42–43.

51. *PS.I.* 1261. Cited in Karlsson, *Idéologie et cérémonie*, 49.

52. *P. Oxy.* 6.963. Translation is from Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 261, 333. For further examples, see Karlsson, *Idéologie et cérémonie*, 48–49.

53. *P. Yale* 1240. Text and translation are from George M. Parássoglou, “Five Private Letters from Roman Egypt,” *Hellenica* 26 (1973): 277–79. See further *Ep.* 9 in the collection entitled *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, trans. S. D. Goitein (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 63: “I am writing to you out of strong longing.” See also *ibid.*, 198.

54. Basil, *Epp.* 1, 145; *P. Giss.* 22 (Michael Kortus, *Briefe des Apollonius-Archives aus der Sammlung Papyri Gissenses: Edition, Übersetzung und Kommentar*, Berichte und Arbeiten aus der Universitätsbibliothek und dem Universitätsarchiv Giessen 49 (Giessen: Universitätsbibliothek, 1999), 72–75; Bärbel Kramer, John C. Shelton, Gerald M. Browne, *Das Archiv des Nephros und verwandte Texte*, 2 vols. in 1, *Aegyptiaca Treverensia* 4 (Mainz am Rhein: P. von Zabern, 1987), 65–69; Theodoret, *Ep.* 58; Theodoros of Kyzikos, *Ep.* 3; Symeon Logothetes, *Ep.* 9 (Darrouzès, *Épistoliers Byzantins*, 104); Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 3.9; Augustine, *Epp.* 31, 109; Paulinus of Nola, *Epp.* 6.3; 21.6; Braulio of Saragossa, *Epp.* 2, 8.

55. Julian, *Epp.* 12; Theodoret, *Ep.* 24; Synesius, *Epp.* 139, 140; Paulinus of Nola, *Epp.* 19.1; 23.2; 37.1; Ruricius, *Epp.* 2.9, 17, 19, 34, 36, 52; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Ep.* 115.

56. Nikephoros Ouranos, *Ep.* 26 (Darrouzès, *Épistoliers Byzantins*, 229): τῶ ἐνοπιῶν θεῶ; Nicolaus, *Ep.* 63 (*PG* 111:262); Goitein, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, 53, 63, 113, 139, 187, 198, 203, 209.

57. Dionysius, *Ep.* 35.

58. Ruricius, *Epp.* 1.2; 2.10.

59. Julian, *Ep.* 77.

60. Basil, *Ep.* 89. Cf. Theodoros of Kyzikos, *Ep.* 7; Synesius, *Ep.* 123: “I call God to witness, whom philosophy reveres, that I carry with me the image of your sweet and pious nature in my very heart.” See also Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 4.8; Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 6; Augustine, *Ep.* 31.

61. This was also a poetic theme; see Ovid, *Her.* 2.31–44.

62. *BGU I* 248. Bror Olsson, *Papyrusbriefe aus der frühesten Römerzeit* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1925), 120–25. Cf. *P. Yale* 1239 (George M. Parássoglou, *AJP* 92 [1971]: 653–54): “The god knows how I love and honor you in my soul like a brother (ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν πῶς σε κατὰ ψυχὴν φιλῶ καὶ τιμῶ ὡς ἀδελφόν μου).”

63. *Socratic Epistles* 25. Text and translation are from *The Cynic Epistles*, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe, trans. Stanley Stowers, SBLSPS 12 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1977), 278–79.

64. Julian, *Ep.* 13. Cf. *Greek Anthology* 5.9; Cicero, *Fam.* 182.

65. Fronto *Ad M. Caes.* 3.19; see also 4.4 (in which Marcus plays on Cicero, *Tusc.* 2.24.59): “if you do miss me and do love me (*si me desideras atque si me amas*), you will write to me often to console me and cheer me up (*quod mihi 'solacium atque fomentum' sit*). . . . Farewell to the most affectionate, most delightful, most eloquent of men, master most sweet. When you see the fermenting in the cask, let it remind you that my longing (*desiderium*) for you swells up thus and overflows and foams in my breast.”

66. Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 3.9.

67. *Ibid.*, 4.6.

68. Fronto, *Ep. Gr.* 6.

69. See chapter 3. The motif runs through Ovid's epistolary poems. Dido, for example, in *Her.* 7.23–26 describes her burning and melting for Aeneas: “I am ablaze with love, like torches of wax tipped with sulphur, like pious incense placed on smoking altar-fires. Aeneas my eyes cling to through all my waking hours; Aeneas is in my heart throughout the stillness of the night.”

70. Julian, *Epp.* 12, 76.

71. Julian, *Ep.* 52. The “Sicilian” is Theophrastus (see ch. 3 n. 5), whose exaggeration about the aging effect of *pothos* was repeated also by Procopius (*Ep.* 26, 90); cf. Symeon Logothetes, *Ep.* 7: πτόθῳ τῷ περὶ σὲ κάμνουσαν (PG 114:233).

72. Julian, *Ep.* 79.

73. John Lee White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter: A Study of the Letter-Body in the Non-Literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle*, SBLDS 2 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1972), 16–18, 20–22.

74. *P. Giss.* 19 in Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 151.

75. *P. Kellis* 57.B in *Greek Papyri from Kellis: I (P. Kell. G.) Nos. 1–90* (ed. K. A. Worp; Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1995), 184–86. Cf. Symeon Logothetes, *Ep.* 16 (Darrouzès, *Épistoliers Byzantins*, 109).

76. See *P. Oxy.* 3059: “Didyme to Apollonius her brother and sun. You must know that I do not view the sun, because you are out of view; for I have no sun but you” (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Volume 42* [ed. P. J. Parsons; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974], 148); for a discussion of this letter, see Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 275.

77. *P. Oxy.* 1676: “I was deeply distressed (ἐλυπήθην) because I did not see you” (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Part 14*, ed. Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt [London: London Exploration Society, 1920], 134–35). See also *P. Oxy.* 1680 (*ibid.*, 140–41); *P. Gron.* 17 (*Papyri Groninganae: griechische Papyri der Universitätsbibliothek zu Groningen*, ed. A. G. Roos [Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers-Maatschappij, 1933], 44–45); *P. Mich.* 487 (second century c.e.). Cf. Synesius, *Ep.* 123.

78. *P. Giess.* 17 in *Select Papyri*, 310–11. See also the comments by Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 149.

79. *P. Oxy.* 528 (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume 3*, ed. Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt [London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1903], 263–65).

80. Judith P. Hallett, “The Vindolanda Letters from Claudia Severa,” in *Women Writing Latin: From Roman Antiquity to Early Modern Europe*, ed. Laurie J. Churchill, Phyllis R. Brown, and Jane E. Jeffrey, 3 vols., *Women Writers of the World* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 1:95.

81. *Tabula Vindolanda* 2.292. See Alan K. Bowman, *Life and Letters on the Roman Frontier: Vindolanda and Its People* (London: British Museum, 1994), 128. For another instance in correspondence between women, see *P. Bour.* 25 in Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 260.

82. Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 5.59; see also 1.5.

83. Fronto, *Ep. Gr.* 6.

84. *Ibid.*, 7.

85. Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 3.2.

86. *Ibid.*, 4.2.

87. *Ibid.*, 4.7

88. *Ibid.*, 1.3.

89. John Chrysostom, *Epp.* 100, 101.

90. *P. Kellis* 87 (Worp, *Greek Papyri from Kellis*, 167–68).

91. *P. Kellis* 57.B (Worp, *Greek Papyri from Kellis*, 184–88).

92. See, for example, Synesius, *Epp.* 86, 138. For earlier examples of the term, see Bion, *Epitaphius Adonis* 58; Moschus, *Epitaphius Bionis* 51. This form of address lasted at least until the tenth century; see Metropolitan of Chone, *Ep.* 6 (Darrouzès, *Épistoliers Byzantins*, 350).

93. Synesius *Ep.* 126. See *The Letters of Synesius of Cyrene* (trans. Augustine FitzGerald; London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 216.

94. Augustine, *Ep.* 256; cf. *Ep.* 258.

95. For unproblematic remembering similar to Phil 1:3, see *P. Lond.* 42 (*Select Papyri*, I, 283); *P. Antinoopolis* 44 (*The Antinoopolis Papyri, Part I* [ed. C. H. Roberts; London: London Exploration Society, 1950], 101–2).

96. A favorite theme of John Chrysostom; see *Epp.* 23, 25, 31, 34, 39, 42, 66, 74, 83, 89, 91, 99, 100, 101, 138, 143, 146, 187, 189, 196, 215, 216, 218. Chrysostom (*Ep.* 93) justifies his use of this motif by pointing to Phil 1:7 and 1 Thess 2:17. Cf. Symeon Logothetes, *Ep.* 13 (Darrouzès, *Épistoliers Byzantins*, 107); Leon, *Ep.* 52 (Darrouzès, 204); Metropolitan of Chone, *Ep.* 37 (Darrouzès, 371); Theodoros of Kyzikos, *Ep.* 9. See *P. Oxy.* 1664 (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Volume 14*, p. 119 “not only we but also our ancestral gods themselves hold you in memory (μηνίμεθά σου) is clear to all; for our whole youth carries you in their hearts (ἐν τοῖς στέρνοις σε περιφέρει).” For inscribing the heart, see John Chrysostom, *Epp.* 31, 39, 42, 66, 74, 100, 101, 138, 187, 196. Cf. Theodore the Studite, *Ep.* 2.97 (PG 99:1349).

97. Even though the poets knew that the heart was the seat of emotions, seldom would they keep it from flying away. For the heart as the seat of the emotions, see the early instance of Sappho, *Fr.* 31; see Joel B. Lidov, “The Second Stanza of Sappho 31: Another Look,” *AJP* 114 (1993): 525–28; *Greek Anthology* 5.160; *Anacreontea* 25; Musaeus, *Hero et Leander* 86–99, on which see the texts collected in Karlheinz Kost, *Musaios, Hero und Leander: Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung, und Kommentar* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1971), 281, 290. For Latin and Greek sources, see Keith Preston, *Studies in the Diction of the Sermo Amatorius in Roman Comedy* (Menasha, WI: George Banta, 1916), 48–49.

98. Plutarch, *Amat.* 759C. Cf. *Greek Anthology* 5.212: “stamp (τύπος) on my heart”; 5.274: “The image of me that Love stamped in the hot depths of thy heart, thou dost now, alas! as I never dreamt, disown; but I have the picture of thy beauty engraved on my soul.” See further *Greek Anthology* 12.57, 130. See also Patricia Rosenmeyer, *The Poetics of Imitation: Anacreon and the Anacreontic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 182.

99. Meleager raised the profile of the heart in love epigram; see Daniel H. Garrison, *Mild Frenzy: A Reading of the Hellenistic Love Epigram*, *Hermes Einzelschriften* 41 (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978), 75. For later sources, see Kost, *Musaios*, 253, 351–52. For Latin examples, see Propertius 2.12.13–16, on which see Rosenmeyer, *Poetics of Imitation*, 205–6; Tibullus 3.1.20; Virgil, *Aen.* 4:1–5. The soul on occasion stood in for the heart: Achilles Tatius, *Leuc. Clit.* 1.6; 5.13; Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesiaca* 1.5.

100. Ovid, *Tristia* 5.4.23–30.

101. *Ibid.*, 3.4.53–74; cf. 1.5.9; 3.3.15–16; 3.5.20; *Ex Ponto* 2.4.6–7. See also Patricia Rosenmeyer, “Love Letters in Callimachus, Ovid, and Aristaenetos, or, The Sad Fate of a Mailorder Bride,” *MD* 36 (1996): 15.

102. Ovid, *Tristia* 3.3.15–18. For the heart as host and visitant outside of letters, see John Barsby, “Love in Terence,” in *Amor, Roma: Love & Latin Literature*, ed. Susanna Morton Braund and Roland Mayer (Cambridge: Cambridge Philosophical Society, 1999), 9–11. See also Catullus 45.20: “heart in heart they live (*mutuis animis amant amantia*).”

103. Ruricius, *Ep.* 2.9. Very interesting is 2.10, where it looks as if Ruricius agrees with Seneca (about no presence being necessary) and then makes a plea for the letter recipient to come. *Ep.* 2.52 is much more like Seneca.

104. Seneca, *Ep.* 55.9–11.