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## **Grace And Favour in the Thought of Paul: Hearing 2 Corinthians 8:9 in Its First-Century Benefaction Context**

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### **1. Introduction**

The dependence of city-states and their citizens upon the generosity of local or imperial benefactors was a commonplace of the honorific inscriptions in the first century AD. The Graeco-Roman honour system ensured that the moral and social status of the benefactor was deeply entrenched. The suppliant position of the beneficiaries was reinforced by conventions of reciprocity. Reciprocity — or the return of favour for acts of generosity by benefactors — created networks of obligation that ensured the dominance of the benefactor over his beneficiaries.

The decree from Cardamylae (Extract 1:1) best represents orthodox first-century belief about reciprocity. For five centuries prior to the Christian era, acts of beneficence by heads of state, public officials and private individuals had been celebrated in the stereotyped language of generosity and gratitude on the inscriptions. The key word of the inscriptions which sums up the ethos of reciprocity is *charis* (that is, 'grace' in the NT). In its meaning, the word was ideally suited for hellenistic reciprocity rituals. *Charis* designated the 'favour', 'grace' or 'good will' conferred by the benefactor on the beneficiary. It could also refer to the return of 'favour' or 'thanks' by the beneficiary to the benefactor, whether human or divine. Let's look at how reciprocity operates in this important inscription:

... it was resolved by the people and the city and the ephors to praise Poseidippos (the son) of Attalos on account of the aforesaid kindnesses and also to bring never-ending gratitude in recompense of (his bestowal) of benefits; and also to give to him both the front seats at the theatre and the first place in a procession and (the privilege of) eating in the public festivals which are celebrated amongst us and [we] offering willingly all (the) honour given to a good and fine man in return for the many [kindnesses] which he provided, while giving a share of the lesser favour, (nevertheless) offering thankfulness to the benefactors of ourselves as an incentive to the others, so that choosing the same favour some of them may win (the same) honours. And (it was resolved) to set up this decree on a stone slab in the most conspicuous place in the gymnasium, while the ephors make the solemn procession to the building without hindrance, in order that those who confer benefits may receive favour in return for love of honour, and that those who have been benefited, returning honours, may have a reputation for thankfulness before all people, never coming too late for the sake of recompense for those who wish to do kindly (acts).

Here we see a tabulation of the reciprocal benefits for the benefactor (Poseidippos) and his beneficiaries (the citizens of Cardamylae). Poseidippos receives 'favours' (public honours) in return for his 'love of honour' (his civic benefactions). Cardamylae receives the coveted reputation of gratitude in its return of honour to Poseidippos. The ethos of reciprocity, as formulated in the Cardamylae decree, is striking for its calculation of the benefits to both parties. Cardamylae is said to return 'the lesser favour' to Poseidippos.

This significant admission on the part of Cardamylae points to the social superiority of the benefactor.

The hostilities and social humiliation implicit in the benefaction system are disguised by the universally positive tone of the honorific inscriptions. However, the evidence of the epistolary theorists, the papyri, and the popular philosophers usher us past the polished rhetoric of the inscriptions into a complex and threatening web of benefaction relationships. Here the raw nerve of ancient benefaction rituals lies exposed for all to see. The New Testament is sensitive to these issues. Paul's refusal of support as the founding apostle of the Corinthian church (1 Cor 9:1-18) — preferring instead to provide his own finances (1 Cor 9:16, 12, 15, 18; 2 Cor 11:7-8) — created ongoing difficulties in that relationship (2 Cor 11:9-9; 12:14-18) and was probably interpreted by some Corinthians as a declaration of personal enmity (2 Cor 12:15).

In the first half of the paper, I will look at the darker social realities underlying the Graeco-Roman benefaction system. In the second half of the paper, I will focus on what the Apostle Paul says about the reason for beneficence in 2 Corinthians 8:9. There it will be argued that Paul sponsors a new model of beneficence which up-ends Graeco-Roman conventions of patronal power, without diminishing the social importance of traditional benefaction ethics and its rewards.

## **2. The Down-side of the Benefaction System**

In antiquity, the collisions that occurred now and then between benefactors and their beneficiaries are usually commented on from the perspective of the benefactor. First, ingratitude towards benefactors was regarded as a cardinal sin. The ancients feared that the social fabric was exposed to real danger when benefactors were not rendered appropriate honour. As Pseudo-Libanius comments in Extract 2.1, 'by insulting your benefactors you provided an example of evil to others'. Again, Pseudo-Libanius in Extract 2.4, attributes the failure of a beneficiary to return favours to the meanness of his birth, and hints at the outbreak of social evil:

So-and-so, who has a very bad character, has caused me much harm. For, after having acted as though he were my friend, and having received many favours from me when he was not able to repay me measure for measure because he possessed no noble qualities, he brought the greatest evils down upon me. Be on your guard, therefore, against this man, lest you, too, experience terrible trials at his hands.

Second, the reciprocation of favour was a matter of honour. But if the return of honour was omitted, delayed, or poorly handled, the inevitable result was social shame and hostility. The cardinal sin of ingratitude violated the convention of reciprocity where the benefactor was publicly recompensed with honours. This negligence on the part of the beneficiary — seen in Pseudo-Libanius (Extract 2.3) — was an act of enmity because it deprived the benefactor of his prized status as a man of merit:

You have received many favours from us, and I am exceedingly amazed that you remember none of them but speak badly of us. That is characteristic of a person with an ungrateful disposition. For the ungrateful forget noble men, and in addition ill-treat their benefactors as though they were enemies.

According to Pseudo-Demetrius (Extract 2.2), the benefactor ought to avoid such situations. The benefactor should be conciliatory. He should construe the ingratitude of his beneficiary as simply a case of slowness in reciprocating gratitude. Even the public vilification of the benefactor by his beneficiary, although blameworthy, is relativised.

Perhaps the benefactor has to accept some responsibility as a bad judge of character: ‘We do, then, blame you for having such a character, and we blame ourselves for not knowing you were such a man’.

Third, the social humiliation underlying benefaction rituals was feared by benefactor and beneficiary. In Extract 2.5 Dio Chrysostom speaks of the unspoken obligation that weighs upon benefactors who have not promptly kept their promises to their communities. In Extract 2.6 Ben Sira exposes the hostility aroused by the grudging hospitality of benefactors and by the ingratitude of their beneficiaries.

Fourth, the rarity of critiques of the benefaction system in antiquity illustrates how dependent people were on benefactors. In Extract 3:1 Philo probes each side of the benefaction ritual, exposing (what he perceives to be) the mercenary nature of the relationship between benefactors and their beneficiaries:

Look round you and you shall find that those who are said to bestow benefits sell rather than give, and those who seem to us to receive them in truth buy. The givers are seeking praise or honour as their exchange and look for the repayment of the benefit, and thus, under the specious name of gift, they in real truth carry out a sale; for the seller’s way is to take something for what he offers. The receivers of the gift, too, study to make some return, and do so as opportunity offers, and thus they act as buyers. For buyers know well that receiving and paying go hand in hand. But God is no salesman, hawking his goods in the market, but a free giver of all things, pouring forth fountains of free bounties, and seeking no return. For He has no needs Himself and no created being is able to repay His gift.

In the view of Philo, benefaction is at heart a financial transaction. Benefactors ‘sell’ their benefits in exchange for praise and honour. Conversely, the beneficiaries ‘buy’ their benefits, with gratitude and public honours to the benefactor being the currency of trade. The Cardamylae inscription (Extract 1:1) bears a strong resemblance to Philo’s portrait of the benefaction system and best represents the view that Philo is caricaturing. Undoubtedly, Philo would have seen inscriptions similar to the Cardamylae decree at Alexandria, his native city.

An implicit critique of the ancient benefaction system is found in Extract 5:2. This letter of friendship is remarkable for the dismissive attitude it takes towards the expression of gratitude. Here the expression of ‘warm affection’ amongst friends modifies two axiomatic expectations built into the benefaction system. No longer is gratitude to the benefactor the first obligatory installment on a debt. Nor is it obligatory (or even necessarily desirable) to outdo the original benefit of the benefactor.

In sum, the positive tone of the honorific inscriptions masks the strained relationship which might exist between benefactor and beneficiary. Overall, the beneficiary had little (if any) redress in a system which accorded the benefactor superior social status because of his economic power. How, then, does the Apostle Paul redefine patronal power? We now turn to the second half of our paper.

### **3. Christ the Impoverished Benefactor: 2 Corinthians 8:9**

In encouraging the Corinthian house-churches to contribute their part of the collection to the impoverished Jewish Christians at Jerusalem, Paul sets forth the grace of Christ as the reason for all Christian generosity. He reminds them in 2 Corinthians 8:9 (Extract 4.1) that they

know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

Paul's portrait of Christ as an impoverished benefactor may be his counterpart to the inscriptional portraits of civic benefactors such as Poseidippos at Cardamylae. More importantly, the text functions at three levels: the combination of christology, ethics and benefaction perspectives adds to its overall moral force.

First, traditionally interpreted, 2 Corinthians 8:9 focuses on the divine Christ who abandoned His heavenly pre-existence for his earthly incarnation. His self-abandonment has provided for the salvation enrichment of spiritually impoverished humanity. In reminding the Corinthians of their new status in front of God, Paul is encouraging the Corinthians — in view of Christ's beneficence (*charis*) and as an expression of their new identity in Him — to act with generosity towards the poor. However, since the christological aspect of 2 Corinthians 8:9 has been discussed elsewhere, we will concentrate on its ethical and benefaction dimension.

Second, the impoverishment of Christ functions as an ethical paradigm. Paul has already commented on the grace of God operating in the impoverished Macedonian churches, pointing out how it welled up in rich generosity towards their Jewish brethren at Jerusalem (2 Cor 8:1-2). Subsequently, he reminds the Corinthians that they will be made rich in God's righteousness, in order that they can be generous on every occasion (2 Cor 9:11). Elsewhere, in answer to critics of his ministry, Paul highlights the impoverishment of his own apostleship which, contrary to its discreditable appearance, makes many spiritually rich (2 Cor 6:10). Thus the poverty-riches paradigm, grounded in Christ's self-abandonment, is echoed in various ethical contexts. Although the paradigm is qualified in the force of its application — equality of resources among believers is Paul's preferred option (2 Cor 9:13-15) — the analogy drawn between the results of Christ's generosity and that of the Christian churches is made clear.

However, the question whether Christ's freely embraced poverty is literal in its reference requires attention. What difference is brought to our understanding of the Pauline text if it is interpreted in its benefaction context? At the most basic level, Paul's image is one of an impoverished benefactor.

The motif of 'the impoverished benefactor' — absent from the honorific inscriptions — makes its appearance in the philosophical literature. Here we are interested in a highly unusual feature of benefaction culture in the ancient world: namely, the excessive divestiture of wealth by a benefactor which imperils his status and resources. The evidence is sparse, but tantalising. Dio Chrysostom provides us with this striking vignette of the mythical hero, Heracles (Extract 4.2):

he went unclothed and unarmed except for a lion's skin and a club, and they add that he did not set great store by gold or silver or fine raiment, but considered all such things nothing save to be given away and bestowed upon others. At any rate he made presents to many men, not only of money without limit and lands and herds of horses and cattle, but also of whole kingdoms and cities. For he fully believed that everything belonged to him exclusively and that gifts bestowed would call out the goodwill of the recipients.

Dio Chrysostom himself lets fall a revealing snippet concerning his pet project of embellishing Prusa, his native city. He comments that 'I have grown much thinner than I was when I came in' (Or., 47.20). The thrust of his comment is fully appreciated when one remembers his continuing financial hardship after his return from exile in AD 96, and what had been for him the genuine risk of poverty prior to that (Or., 47.21; 40.2). Notwithstanding, Dio Chrysostom gives himself unstintingly to his efforts on behalf of

his citizens.

The Roman collector of moral exempla, Valerius Maximus, nominates Fabius Maximus as a case of such liberality. The Senate had refused to honour the contract he had secured with Hannibal for the release of Roman captives. Instead he sent his son to Rome, sold the only farm he possessed, and paid Hannibal. Valerius in Extract 4.3 provides a homily on the actions of Fabius Maximus:

If we consider the sum, (it is) but small, as being the price but of seven acres of land, and those lying in Pupinia; but considering the soul of the giver, (it is) a most large sum, and far exceeding the money. For he would rather himself to be destitute in patrimony, than that his country should be poor in credit. So (his act is) much more to be commended, as it is a more certain sign of favourable study, to stretch beyond ability, rather than to do the same act out of superfluity. For the one can do what he performs, the other more than he is able.

Another example of the impoverished benefactor motif is found in Lucian's portrait of Timon (Timon 5), the semi-legendary misanthrope of Periclean Athens. Timon rails against the social misfortune that befalls benefactors like himself who sacrifice everything for their beneficiaries. Now reduced to farm labouring and wearing animal skins, Timon sums up his fate in terminology reminiscent of 2 Corinthians 8:9:

After raising so many Athenians to high station and making them rich when they were wretchedly poor before and helping all who were in want, nay more, pouring out my wealth in floods to benefit my friends, now that I have become poor thereby I am no longer recognised or even looked at by the men who formerly cringed and kowtowed and hung on my nod.

Last, the generosity of the liberator of Syracuse, Dion, exhausted his personal resources as he distributed favours to his friends and rewards to his allies (Plutarch, *Life of Dion* 52.1).

In light of the above examples, flashes of cultural recognition may well have been aroused by Paul's presentation of the impoverishment of Jesus, the infinitely rich benefactor, who in his self-emptying became the model for all Christian beneficence.

The impoverished benefactor imagery of 2 Corinthians 8:9 gains force when viewed against the background of the honorific inscriptions. F.W. Danker, in his commentary on 2 Corinthians (2 Corinthians, p.126), has correctly observed that 'Graeco-Roman benefactors could generally rely on reserves'. Indeed, to prevent benefactors exhausting their funds, communities often designated their civic luminaries *aleitourgetos* ('free from public services': Michel 475, 998; ID IV 1520, 1521). No such exemptions were demanded by Christ: he literally impoverished himself in a life of unremitting benefaction.

Further, the humiliation which Christ's impoverishment occasioned is intriguing in its benefaction context. Valerius Maximus was well aware of the social humiliation involved in benefaction rituals. The reversal of status which the consul, Metellus Pius, accepted as a patron is a case in point. Although he was the sponsor of praetorship of Calidius, Metellus assumed a position of social inferiority towards his client. This sprang from his gratitude for the part that Calidius played in the recall of his father, Metellus Numidicus, from exile. Valerius Maximus (*Noteworthy Doings and Sayings*, 5.2.7) sums up the affair in this way:

Afterwards (Metellus) always called (Calidius) also the patron of his house and family ... it was not lowness of his spirit, but the gratefulness of his mind, which made him submit his extraordinary dignity of the greatest merit to a greatly inferior person.

Another telling example of the humiliated and impoverished benefactor is found in Plutarch's *Life of Solon* 2.1. There Plutarch links the impoverishment of Pericles' family estate — caused by his father's lavish beneficence — to Pericles' subsequent social humiliation as a young man. As Plutarch comments, 'Pericles was ashamed to take from others, since he had belonged to a family which had always helped others'.

Correspondingly, the social humiliation of Jesus originates in his own decision to become both a slave (Phil 2:6-8) and poor (2 Cor 8:9). This was not motivated by any obligation to return gratitude, as was the case with Metellus. Christ accepted his impoverishment voluntarily and did not struggle against its imposition, as did Pericles. This selfless example of Christ afforded Paul the opportunity, in the face of Corinthian recalcitrance, to observe that genuine Christian beneficence is not rendered under compulsion (2 Cor 9:7). Furthermore, Christ's experience of dishonour through His impoverishment became the paradigm for the apostles (2 Cor 6:8-9), and for any Christian who suffered loss of social status.

Concomitant with the social humiliation of Christ is the reversal in status for his beneficiaries. By means of the impoverishment of Christ (2 Cor 8:9a), Christians are endowed with the status which — in the ideology of the inscriptions — typified the benefactor: that is, the possession of wealth (8:9b) and the requisite merit for its disposal (2 Cor 5:21). Further, as a series of ethnically and socially diverse communities, the Christians are encouraged to adopt the role of benefactors themselves. This stripped the Christian communities of the suppliant position — if the inscriptions are representative — that traditionally characterised eastern Mediterranean city-states in front of their benefactors. The return of honour is also redirected. The praise accorded benefactors within early Christian house churches now redounds to God as the Supreme Benefactor (2 Cor 9:11-15).

To conclude: what would Graeco-Roman auditors familiar with the honorific inscriptions have made of this? In my view, it would have been puzzling.

First, benefactors, as we have seen, were cushioned against exhausting their reserves. But, according to Paul, Christ as Benefactor was exposed to ridicule (1 Cor 1.18a, 21b, 23, 25a; Gal 5.11b), weakness (1 Cor 1.25b; 2 Cor 13.4a), the desolation of divine judgement (Gal 3.13), and an ignominious death (1 Cor 2.8; Phil 2.8). Moreover, the very idea of an impoverished deity was a matter of ridicule in antiquity. Plutarch (*Moralia* 235E), preserves this revealing jest:

A Spartan, seeing a man taking up a collection for the gods, said that he did not think much of gods who were poorer than himself.

Second, benefactors were expected to exercise wisdom in their choice of beneficiaries, so that their good-will would be reciprocated. This is well illustrated in Lucian's *Timon* (*ibid.*, 8), a work we have already referred to. There the god Hermes criticises Timon because the Athenian benefactor did not show sufficient discrimination regarding the character of his recipients. As the god elaborates with disbelief:

... (Timon) was ruined by kind-heartedness and philanthropy and compassion on all those who were in want; but in reality it was senselessness and folly and lack of discrimination in regard to his friends. He did not perceive that he was showing kindness to ravens and wolves.

However, the grace of Christ — in contrast to traditional benefaction ideology — did not discriminate regarding the worthiness of His recipients. In Romans 5:6-8 Paul

reinforces this point with a bold inversion of benefaction ideology. Whereas ordinary people might, under exceptional circumstances, risk death for 'the good man' — probably the benefactor of honorific inscriptions (Rom 5:7b) — Christ died for his enemies (Rom 5:6, 8).

Third, the entire Christian community was called to beneficence, not just a select circle of wealthy citizens enticed by the promise of civic honours. By contrast, the only ethical responsibility demanded of a hellenistic city-state was to return honours commensurate with the original benefactions, and thereby maintain a reputation of gratitude before their contemporaries and posterity. Other aspirants, it was believed, would step in and fill the breach in civic munificence.

Fourth, the superior moral status accorded benefactors in the honorific inscriptions was no longer their exclusive domain. Merit had been democratized because the entire Christian community now participated in the merit of Christ. Every member of Christ's community was to be honoured (Rom 12:10) — especially the weak and the powerless (1 Cor 12:22-26) — and this in turn was to be redirected towards God.

In this radical redefinition of patronal power, we are witnessing the up-ending of conventions of honour which up till then had been the preserve of the benefactor. Above all, Paul's novel understanding of grace challenged the conventions of the hellenistic reciprocity system. Grace did not discriminate regarding the worth of its recipients. Nor did it demand or expect the customary return of favour. Instead, grace demanded the abandonment of social status and a radical dying to self on the part of the early Christians. This inevitably led to the establishment of local beneficent communities that offered a new type of citizenship to their members.

## **Appendix: Ancient Source Extracts**

In the following ancient source extracts, 'grace' language (*charis* and its cognates) in the original Greek is variously translated in the English. The original Greek used may be checked in Dr Harrison's book.

### **1. The Graeco-Roman benefaction system: first-century orthodoxy**

1.1. *SEG* Vol. XI 948. 1 cent. A.D. Decree in honour of Poseidippos. Provenance: Cardamylae.

... it was resolved by the people and the city and the ephors to praise Poseidippos (the son) of Attalos on account of the aforesaid kindnesses and also to bring never-ending gratitude in recompense of (his bestowal) of benefits; and also to give to him both the front seats at the theatre and the first place in a procession and (the privilege of) eating in the public festivals which are celebrated amongst us and to offer willingly all (the) honour given to a good and fine man in return for the many [kindnesses] which he provided, while giving a share of the lesser favour, (nevertheless) offering of thankfulness to the benefactors of ourselves as an incentive to the others, so that choosing the same favour some of them may win (the same) honours. And (it was resolved) to set up this decree on a stone slab in the most conspicuous place in the gymnasium, while the ephors make the solemn procession to the building without hindrance, in order that those who confer benefits may receive favour in return for love

of honour, and that those who have been benefited, returning honours, may have a reputation for thankfulness before all people, never coming too late for the sake of recompense for those who wish to do kindly (acts).

## 2. The down-side of the Graeco-Roman benefaction system

2.1. Pseudo-Libanius, *Epistolary Styles*, 53. IV-VI AD. The 'reproachful' letter-type.

You did not act well when you wronged those who do good to you. For by insulting your benefactors you provided an example of evil to others.

2.2. Pseudo-Demetrius, *Epistolary Types*, 3. II BC-III AD. The 'blaming' letter-type.

Since you have not yet had time to express your thanks for the favours you have received, for that reason I thought it well not to mention what you have received. And yet you are annoyed with us, and impute words (to us). We do, then, blame you for having such a character, and we blame ourselves for not knowing that you were such a man.

2.3. Pseudo-Libanius, *Epistolary Styles*, 64. IV-VI A.D. The 'reproachful' letter-type.

You have received many favours from us, and I am exceedingly amazed that you remember none of them but speak badly of us. That is characteristic of a person with an ungrateful disposition. For the ungrateful forget noble men, and in addition ill-treat their benefactors as though they were enemies.

2.4. Pseudo-Libanius, *Epistolary Styles*, 80. IV-VI A.D. The 'maligning' letter-type.

So-and-so, who has a very bad character, has caused me much harm. For, after having acted as though he were my friend, and having received many favours from me when he was not able to repay me measure for measure because he possessed no noble qualities, he brought the greatest evils down upon me. Be on your guard, therefore, against this man, lest you, too, experience terrible trials at his hands.

2.5. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.*, 40.3. AD 40-after 112.

For there is nothing more weighty, no debt bearing higher interest, than a favour promised. Moreover, this is the shameful and bitter kind of loan, when, as one might say, because of tardy payment the favour turns into an obligation, an obligation the settlement of which those who keep silent demand altogether more sternly than those who cry aloud.

2.6. *Ben-Sirach* 29.21-28.

The chief thing for life is water, and bread, and clothing, and a house to cover shame. Better is the life of a poor man in a mean cottage, than delicate fare in another man's house. Be it little or much, hold yourself contented, for it is a miserable life to go from house to house: for where you are a stranger, you dare not open your mouth. You shall entertain, and feast, and have no thanks: moreover you shall hear bitter words: Come, stranger, and furnish a table, and feed me of that you have ready. Give place, stranger, to an honourable man; my brother comes to be lodged, and I have need of my house. These things are grievous to a man of understanding; the upbraiding of houseroom, and the reproaching of the lender.

### 3. The critique of reciprocity in antiquity

3.1. Philo, *On the Cherubim*, 122-123. c. 30 B.C.-A.D. 45.

Look round you and you shall find that those who are said to bestow benefits sell rather than give, and those who seem to us to receive benefits in truth buy. The givers are seeking praise or honour as their exchange and look for the repayment of the benefit, and thus, under the specious name of gift, they in real truth carry out a sale; for the seller's way is to take something for what he offers. The receivers of the gift, too, study to make some return, and do so as opportunity offers, and thus they act as buyers. For buyers know well that receiving and paying go hand in hand. But God is no salesman, hawking his goods in the market, but a free giver of all things, pouring forth fountains of free bounties, and seeking no return. For He has no needs Himself and no created being is able to repay His gift.

3.2. *P. Mert.* I. 12. 29 August A.D. 58.

Chairas to his dearest Dionysios many greetings and continual good health. When I received your letter, I was exceedingly joyous as if I had actually been in my own native place; for without (the joy of) that there is nothing. And I can disregard writing to you with great gratitude, for it is (only) required that one express thankfulness with words to those who are not friends. I am confident that I can persevere with sufficient tranquillity, and if not able to render something equivalent, I will be able to render some humble return for your warm affection toward me.

### 4. The Apostle Paul and the impoverished benefactor motif

4.1. The Apostle Paul, 2 Corinthians 8:9. I cent. AD.

For you know the grace (*ten charin*) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich (*plousios*), yet for your sakes He became poor (*eptocheusen*), so that you through His poverty (*te ekeinou ptocheia*) might become rich (*ploutesete*).

4.2. Dio Chrysostom, *Or.*, 1.61-63. AD 40-after 112.

... he went unclothed and unarmed except for a lion's skin and a club, and they add that he did not set great store by gold or silver or fine raiment, but considered all such things nothing save to be given away and bestowed upon others. At any rate he made presents to many men, not only of money without limit and lands and herds of horses and cattle, but also of whole kingdoms and cities. For he fully believed that everything belonged to him exclusively and that gifts bestowed would call out the goodwill of the recipients.

4.3. Valerius Maximus, *Noteworthy Doings and Sayings*, 4.8.1. I cent AD.

If we consider the sum, (it is) but small, as being the price but of seven acres of land, and those lying in Pupinia; but considering the soul of the giver, (it is) a most large sum, and far exceeding the money. For he would rather himself to be destitute in patrimony, than that his country should be poor in credit. So (his act is) much more to be commended, as it is a more certain sign of favourable study, to stretch beyond ability, rather than to do the same act out of superfluity. For the one can do what he performs, the other more than he is able.

4.4. Lucian, *Timon* 5. 120 AD.

After raising so many Athenians to high station and making them rich when they were wretchedly poor before and helping all who were in want, nay more, pouring out my wealth in floods to benefit my friends, now that I have become poor thereby I am no longer recognised or even looked at by the men who formerly cringed and kowtowed and hung on my nod.

4.5. Plutarch, *Moralia* 235E. 50-c.120 AD.

A Spartan, seeing a man taking up a collection for the gods, said that he did not think much of gods who were poorer than himself.

4.6. Lucian, *Timon* 5. 120 AD.

... (Timon) was ruined by kind-heartedness and philanthropy and compassion on all those who were in want; but in reality it was senselessness and folly and lack of discrimination in regard to his friends. He did not perceive that he was showing kindness to ravens and wolves