


## Paul's Heart as Spatial Metaphor in 2 Corinthians

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**ABSTRACT:** In 2 Cor 6:11–13, Paul states that his heart has been enlarged to welcome the Corinthians and urges them to reciprocate—although an insightful article by Christopher Land in ZNW has recently questioned this standard exegesis, which we will discuss. In 2 Cor 6:11–7:4, which functions as a *peroratio* of the preceding argumentation, Paul associates terms of body language (στόμα, καρδιά, σπλάγχνα) with verbs of spatial meaning (πλατύνω, στενοχωρέω, χωρέω). Paul's heart also appears in the letter as a spatial metaphor for his relationship with God (1:22; 3:2–3; 4:6). In our research, we will examine whether there could be a correlation between the horizontal dimension of the metaphor (Paul's heart as a welcoming space for the Corinthians) and the vertical one (Paul's heart as a place of encounter with God). Additionally, the heart serves Paul to establish the map of relationships in which his opponents are excluded because they boast *ἐν προσώπῳ* and not *ἐν καρδίᾳ* (5:12). In conclusion, drawing on the cognitive analysis of metaphors, we will try to highlight the semantic and pragmatic possibilities of Paul's heart as a spatial metaphor in 2 Corinthians.

**KEYWORDS:** 2 Corinthians, heart, Paul's ministry, cognitive metaphor, spatial metaphor

Not only the [Paul's] mouth, but also the dust of that heart I would wish to see, which one would not do wrong to call the heart of the world (*καρδίαν τῆς οἰκουμένης*), fountain of countless blessings, and source and element of our life. For the spirit of life was provided for all, and it was given to the members of Christ, not sent forth through an artery, but through freely chosen good deeds. This heart was so large (*πλατεία*), as to take in entire cities, peoples, and nations. *For my heart—he says—is enlarged* (*πεπλατύνται*, 2 Cor 6:11). [...] The heart higher than the heavens, wider than the world (*εὐρύτεραν τῆς οἰκουμένης*), brighter than a sunbeam, hotter than fire, harder than steel, the heart which released rivers [... This heart] lived the new life, not this of ours, for *I live—he says—yet not I, but Christ lives in me* (Gal 2:20), so his [Christ's] heart was Paul's heart, a tablet of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:3) and a book of grace.<sup>1</sup>

In his series on Romans, John Chrysostom's last sermon eloquently depicts the body of St Paul. The preacher would like to contemplate the dust falling from Paul's corpse, revived by his word, so that the eyes of his audience could again behold the apostle in action

<sup>1</sup> John Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom.* 32,3 (PG 60, 679–680). See the fragmentary translation and commentary by M.M. Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet. John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* (HUT 40; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2002) 126–128. See also John Chrysostom, *Hom. 2 Cor.* 13,1 (PG 61, 491).

and, in consequence, be encouraged to imitate him. Chrysostom devotes his paragraphs to the different parts of Paul's body: mouth, heart, hands, eyes, feet, and the rest of his limbs. Above, we quoted a specific paragraph on the encomiastic portrait of his heart. Here, the preacher develops different possibilities for the heart as a spatial metaphor. Paul's heart is the heart of the world (*καρδιαν τῆς οἰκουμένης*), the central organ of the circulatory system that pumps the Spirit of Life to all the members of the Church. Its wideness (*πλατεία*) is such that entire cities (*πόλεις ὀλοκλήρους*), peoples (*δῆμους*), and nations (*ἔθνη*) fit into it. With these expressions, John Chrysostom transfers the geography of Paul's travels to the apostle's inner self and imagines the cartography of a missionary heart in which all peoples and nations have room. Moreover, he enlarges the boundaries of Paul's heart so much that he describes it as "higher than the heavens" and "wider than the world." Finally, he concludes that the dimensions of Paul's heart are so broad because Christ lives in him, so that the two hearts—Paul's and Christ's—have, in fact, become one.

Chrysostom's homily is splendid, but the amplifying dynamic of his statements reaches limits that the apostle would never have accepted three hundred years earlier. The Archbishop of Constantinople, however, strived to continuously ground his discourse in the texts of the letters. Above all, he based the spatial metaphor of the apostle's heart on the hypotext of 2 Cor 6:11–13, a passage in which Paul had also made his heart a metaphorical place widened to give shelter to the Corinthians.

Although this passage has received limited attention from scholars,<sup>2</sup> it will serve as a starting point in our examination of the various occurrences of Paul's *καρδία* as a spatial metaphor in 2 Corinthians, hence the topic of our essay. Before we start, we will establish certain methodological clarifications.

## 1. Preliminary Methodological Considerations

According to N.T. Wright, "There is a question still on the table about just how much the *καρδία* in Paul is a metaphor and how much it is, in passages like this [2 Cor 4:6], intended as the concrete reality."<sup>3</sup> With our research, we will attempt to shed some light on this question.

2 Nonetheless, R. Bieringer, "Die Liebe des Paulus zur Gemeinde in Korinth. Eine Interpretation von 2 Korinther 6,11," *SNTU. Serie A 23* (1998) 193–213, has shown the relevance of 2 Cor 6:11–13 for elucidating the overall purpose of the letter. We must also cite C.D. Land, "The Benefits Outweigh the Costs: Divine Benefaction and Human Obedience in 2Cor 6,1–7,2," *ZNW* 112 (2021) 69–88, whose proposals we will discuss in the body of the essay. I am very grateful to the author for kindly sending me his article.

3 N.T. Wright, "Mind, Spirit, Soul, and Body: All for One and One for All — Reflections on Paul's Anthropology in His Complex Context," *Pauline Perspectives. Essays on Paul, 1978–2013* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2013) 468.

Scholars rightly point out that Paul conceives *καρδία* not only as one bodily organ among others but as the centre of personal life, the seat of understanding, emotions and decisions, and the place of encounter with God.<sup>4</sup> Although we might identify slightly differential nuances in the use of the Septuagint and the NT concerning other Greek authors of the time, Paul was writing to Greek-speaking communities who fully understood the meanings he assigned to *καρδία*.<sup>5</sup>

It is evident that the connotations of the heart in Paul's time were not the same as they are today. Therefore, care must be taken not to transpose the modern meanings of the heart to the Pauline use of *καρδία*. Likewise, we should be aware that we are dealing with ancient texts in which the modern dualism of mind/body has not yet been developed.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, we should avoid a clear separation between the literal-physiological sense of *καρδία* and its supposed figurative value in the Pauline texts. Indeed, some meanings of the heart that are metaphorical for us today may not have been so for the ancient authors.<sup>7</sup> As we

4 The sense of *καρδία* in the Septuagint and in the NT is a well-studied topic and the consensus on its meaning is well established. See F. Baumgärtel – J. Behm, “*καρδία*, κτλ.,” *TDNT* III, 605–614; A. Sand, “*καρδία*,” *EDNT* II, 249–251, etc. In the physiological sense, *καρδία* referred to the bodily organ that pumped blood to the rest of the organism. Due to this decisive function, the heart was also regarded as the “centre and source of the whole inner life, with its thinking, feeling, and volition” (BDAG, 508). While some texts opposed the heart to other organs or dimensions of the person (e.g. *πρόσωπον* vs *καρδία*, i.e. exteriority and appearance vs interiority and authenticity: LXX 1 Kgs 16:7; 2 Cor 5:12; 1 Thess 2:17), the heart had often been regarded as a metonymy for the whole person. Hence, R. Jewett, *Paul's Anthropological Terms. A Study of Their Use in Conflict Settings* (AGJU 10; Leiden: Brill 1971) 313, concludes that “Paul seems to use the word to depict the whole person in such a way that his Hebraic assumption of a psycho-somatic unity of man in thinking, willing, emoting, acting and responding to God and fellowman is clearly evident.” Contrary to this consensus, Teun Tielmann (“Head and Heart: The Pauline Corpus Considered against the Medical and Philosophical Backdrop,” *R&T* 21 [2014] 86–106) has questioned the identification of the heart as the seat of intelligence and will at that time, since in some of Galen's texts, the brain was already considered to be the centre of perception and cognition. However, the Pauline texts reflect the common usage of the Septuagint. For example, in 2 Cor 3:14–15, *νοήματα* and *καρδία* are clear synonyms.

5 A comparison between the uses of *καρδία* in Greco-Roman literature, on the one hand, and the uses in the Septuagint and the NT, on the other, would require further consideration. We note only two phenomena relevant to our research. The biblical tradition and Christian literature have a predilection for the term *καρδία*. Thus, P. Artz-Grabner *et al.*, *1. Korinther* (PKNT 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2006) 126; and P. Artz-Grabner, *2. Korinther* (PKNT 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2014) 230, comments that almost all attestations of *καρδία* in papyri come from Christian texts. Moreover, although I do not have statistical data to confirm this, I note that *καρδία* in the Judeo-Christian tradition was often used metaphorically rather than merely being referred to as a physical organ, which was the more typical usage in the rest of Greek literature.

6 George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (*Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* [New York: Basic Books 1999]) have challenged the dualism of mind/body in Western philosophy. Regarding Paul, see the commentaries on this topic in D.B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1995) 3–6.

7 See D.H. Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities. Metaphor, Semantics and Divine Imagery* (Leiden: Brill 2002) 119–120. The phrase “the heart understands” was probably not a metaphor for 1st-century Jews. See M.S. Smith, “The Heart and Innards in Israelite Emotional Expressions: Notes from Anthropology and Psychobiology,” *JBL* 117 (1998) 427–436.

shall see, when Paul speaks of his heart as a place where God acts and where the Corinthians can find a large space, he not only creates a metaphor that embellishes his discourse but communicates an essential (and embodied) truth about his identity in relation to God and to the Corinthians.

Nevertheless, certain uses of *καρδία* in 2 Corinthians are undoubtedly conscious rhetorical elaborations. This is, for example, evident in 2 Cor 3:2–3, when Paul presents his ministerial heart as the material on which the imagined letter of the Corinthians is written. Even so, we will not examine the metaphor of Paul's heart only as a rhetorical figure of *ornatus* in the realm of the *ars rhetorica*, but we will also consider the findings of cognitive linguistics on metaphors in our research. According to this discipline, the human way of thinking is a metaphorical process itself. Conceptual metaphors, generated from everyday experiences, allow us to understand reality and construct it conceptually.<sup>8</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have argued that human beings produce knowledge schemas from their primary experiences in early childhood and, consequently, create constellations of metaphors that enable them to understand reality. In this sense, bodily experiences are crucial in the production of metaphors. In fact, primary metaphors always arise, despite temporal and cultural differences, from our embodied condition.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the body—and the heart as its vital core—is not to be understood as a source domain of metaphors among other possible realms but rather has a primary and foundational character.<sup>10</sup> We will thus intend to grasp the depth of meaning within the relationship between Paul, the Corinthians, and God through the bodily metaphor of the heart.

Lakoff and Johnson have developed a helpful taxonomy of conceptual metaphors, which, of course, has been criticised but still may function as an useful heuristic tool. On the one hand, when Paul said that his heart was wide open to the Corinthians (2 Cor 6:11), his metaphorical statement could be classified as an “ontological metaphor.” In what sense? Lakoff and Johnson observe that one of our basic bodily experiences is that we experience ourselves as composed of inside and outside.<sup>11</sup> In this sense, the heart is imagined as a “container” where the Corinthians have a place. On the other hand, the opposition “wide” vs “narrow” is categorised as an “orientational metaphor” by Lakoff and Johnson, a type of conceptual metaphor that situates the persons in their respective

8 On the cognitive identity of metaphor, see the classic study by G. Lakoff – M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 1980; 2 ed. 2003), and the critiques by J. Stern, *Metaphor in Context* (Cambridge, MA: MIT 2000) 176–187. See also W. Croft – D.A. Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004) 193–221.

9 See Lakoff – Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 45–59.

10 The body is the “Ursymbol” in the biblical literature, according to R. Bieringer, “Body and Bible: Biblical Revelation as a Symbolic Event,” *Provoked to Speech. Biblical Hermeneutics as Conversation* (eds. R. Bieringer et al.) (Leuven: Peeters 2014) 315–342.

11 See Lakoff – Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 29–32. Moreover, this Pauline statement functions metonymically as a synecdoche, the part (the heart) for the whole (Paul). See *ibidem*, 36–38.

environment and places them in relation to others.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, when Paul says that his heart is widened for the Corinthians, and he expects them to make room for him as well, he resorts to the metaphor of the heart to establish his system of relationships. Anyway, we prefer to use the simpler label of “spatial” to refer to these Pauline metaphors because it includes both categories (the “ontological” and the “orientational”). We will not consider all uses of *καρδία* in 2 Corinthians, but only those in which the term functions as a “spatial” metaphor.

## 2. Paul's Heart as a Space of Encounter between Him and the Corinthians (2 Cor 6:11–13; 7:2–3)

We will begin by examining 2 Cor 6:11–7:4 since this is the passage in which the use of the heart as a spatial metaphor is most evident.

Paul states in 2 Cor 6:11 that “our heart is wide open to you,” and he takes up the idea in 7:3 by recalling, “I said before that you are in our heart.” It is relevant to our research that 2 Cor 6:11–7:4 functions as the *peroratio* of the preceding argumentation.<sup>13</sup> The spatial metaphor of the heart is thus highlighted at the end of the argument and serves to recall the earlier occurrences of that metaphor throughout 2 Cor 1–7.

<sup>12</sup> See Lakoff – Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 18.

<sup>13</sup> Thus T. Schmeller, *Der Zweite Brief an die Korinther* (EKKNT 8/1; Neukirchen-Vluyn – Ostfildern: Neukirchener Theologie – Patmos 2010) 363. Several reasons show that this is a *peroratio*, which concludes 2:14–7:4 (or the entire first part of the letter). The opening formula (“our mouth has spoken freely to you,” 6:11a) refers to the preceding discourse, and the vocative (“O Corinthians”) arouses *pathos*. In addition, Paul takes up many motifs in 6:11–7:4 that have been appearing in the preceding argumentation: the frank speech (3:12; 6:11; 7:4), his boasting on their behalf (1:14; 5:12; 7:4), the polarity between tribulations and consolation (1:3–7; 2:7–8; 4:17; 6:4; 7:4). Even more important than the recurrence of motifs is Paul's vehement exhortation for reciprocity (6:12–13; 7:2), which recapitulates the *propositio* of 1:12–14, and flows through all the preceding argumentation about reconciliation between the apostle and the community. Additionally, we cannot enter into the debate about the epistolary integrity of 6:14–7:1. See R. Bieringer, “2 Korinther 6,14–7,1 im Kontext des 2. Korintherbriefes: Forschungsüberblick und Versuch eines eigenen Zugangs,” *Studies on 2 Corinthians* (eds. R. Bieringer – J. Lambrecht) (BETL 112; Leuven: Peeters 1994) 551–570; and E. Nathan, “Fragmented Theology in 2 Corinthians. The Unsolved Puzzle of 6:14–7:1,” *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict* (eds. R. Bieringer et al.) (BTS 16; Leuven: Peeters 2013) 211–228, among others. In my opinion, 2 Cor 6:16–7:2 belongs to the original redaction of the letter. These verses are somehow suitable for the *peroratio*; without them, the conclusion would lose consistency, that is, just as Paul insists on intimacy between himself and the Corinthians (6:11–13; 7:2–4), he also demands that they distance themselves from impure unbelievers (6:14–7:1), double entendre referring to his opponents. Thus, V. Rabens, “Paul's Rhetoric of Demarcation: Separation from ‘Unbelievers’ (2 Cor 6:14–7:1) in the Corinthian Conflict,” *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict* (eds. R. Bieringer et al.) (BTS 16; Leuven: Peeters 2013) 229–254. In fact, the *vituperatio* of the adversaries is another typical device of the *perorationes* (e.g. Gal 6:11–18).

In 6:11a, Paul tells the Corinthians wholeheartedly that his<sup>14</sup> mouth has been open to them. In other words, he has spoken earnestly to them throughout his discourse,<sup>15</sup> like a good friend or master trying to heal the wrongdoings of his friends or disciples.<sup>16</sup>

In 6:11b, Paul takes a step forward, moving from the mouth to the heart, from outward speech to inward affections and thoughts. Note the amplification; if his mouth has been open (*ἀνοιγω*) for them, his heart has been wide open (*πλατύνω*). The required correspondence between mouth and heart was proverbial at the time (Matt 12:34, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”). The reference to the Corinthians (*πρὸς ὑμᾶς*) in the first part of the verse is implied in the second.<sup>17</sup> Considering the meaning of *καρδία* in the Septuagint and NT noted above, the image of Paul’s heart in relation to the Corinthians expressed not only emotional affection but also their presence in his thoughts.

Let us examine the meaning of *πλατύνω*. In the Septuagint, the post-classical coinage *πλατύνω* indicated the spatial widening of geographical boundaries (LXX Gen 28:14; Exod 28:18; 34:14; Deut 12:20; 19:8; Amos 1:13; 1 Macc 14:6; Josephus, *Ant.* 9.10.1, etc.), of constructions (the wall of Babylon, LXX Jer 51:58; the tent space, Isa 54:2), or of mere objects (such as the enlarged phylacteries, Matt 23:5). The term was also used figuratively in connection with *καρδία*, both positively and negatively. One worshipper gratefully acknowledged that God had widened his heart (*ἐπλατύννας τὴν καρδίαν μου*, LXX Ps 118:32). Another lamented that the anxieties of his heart had been dilated (*αἱ θλίψεις τῆς καρδίας μου ἐπλατύνθησαν*: LXX Ps 25:17).<sup>18</sup> This figurative use of the verb is not the odd outcome of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. In an honorific inscription in the agora of Mantinea, not far from Corinth, Euphrosynos Titous is praised as a man who “has broadened

14 It is disputed whether, in 2 Corinthians, Paul employs a literary plural (said “I” when it is written “we”) or a genuine “we” that included Timothy and his co-workers. See M.E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark 1994) I, 105–107, and S. Byrskog, “Co-Senders, Co-Authors and Paul’s Use of First Person Plural,” *ZNW* 87 (1996) 230–250. Some plurals in the letter are true plurals that include Timothy, co-sender of the letter (1:1), and the other members of the missionary team (1:19–20). However, others are clearly literary plurals (10:2; 11:6; 12, 21, etc.). In my opinion, considering that each plural must be discerned in its context, Paul writes the letter as the leader of an apostolic group; thereby, his words are always personal but also representative of his team. Hence, his mouth and heart are genuinely his own, but they also include those of his co-workers (see the plural “hearts” in 7:3).

15 According to Margaret E. Thrall (*2 Corinthians*, I, 468), the phrase of 6:11a summarises the discourse from 2:14. I prefer the position of Bieringer (“Die Liebe des Paulus zur Gemeinde,” 200–201), for whom the expression goes back to the moment when Paul began to write his letter, recapitulating what was written in it up to this point.

16 See Philodemus, *Lib.*, fr. 20, 36; Philo, *Her.* 21; Plutarchus, *Adul. amic* (*Mor.* 51c); and more quotations in M. D’Amore, “Parresia amicale in 2Cor 6,11–7,4,” *Bib* 103 (2022) 431–433. The expression “open mouth” perhaps also likens the apostle to the prophets: God opens the mouths of Moses and Aaron (LXX Exod 4:12, 15), of Ezekiel (LXX Ezek 3:27; 29:21; 33:22), of Daniel (LXX Dan 10:16) and even of Balaam’s prophetic donkey (LXX Num 22:28)!

17 This is an ellipsis *in praesentia*, according to D’Amore, “Parresia amicale,” 437.

18 “Widen the heart” has a clearly negative sense in LXX Deut 6:12 (Codex Alexandrinus; self-complacency) and Deut 11:16 (idolatry). Although, at first glance, this negative usage is contrary to the positive value of the Pauline expression, “widen the heart” in Deut 11:16 (i.e. making room for other gods), one again means making place in someone’s heart for someone else, even if they are the wrong “inhabitants.”

his soul” to become gentler than his outward appearance (τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν εὐγενεστέραν τῆς φύσεως πλατύννας).<sup>19</sup> In short, Paul elaborates a metaphorical statement by using a term with a spatial meaning (“to enlarge,” “to open wide”) to refer to the large dimensions of his heart in which the Corinthians can find a place. In this sense, Reimund Bieringer is correct when he qualifies the meaning of the metaphor and says that it does not express the image of openness (in connection with 6:11a) but rather of breadth (in connection with 6:12), as an illustration of Paul’s love for the community.<sup>20</sup>

In 6:12, Paul continues to use spatial vocabulary. If he has just spoken of the opening of the mouth and the enlargement of the heart, he now describes the constriction of the entrails, twice utilising the verb στενοχωρέω (“to confine or restrict to a narrow space”<sup>21</sup>). Like πλατύνω, this term also expresses a spatial meaning. For example, the sons of Joseph demanded more land from Joshua during its division. Joshua responded by suggesting that they clear the forest out themselves if the Ephraim mountain was narrow for them (στενοχωρεῖ, LXX Josh 17:15), or a crowd could block (lit. “make narrow”) the gates of a theatre (Chariton, *Call.* 5.3). In P.Petr. II 12 (1),13 (242 BC), a strategist realises the urgency of doing something about the lack of accommodation for officials in transit (ἐπεὶ στενοχωροῦμεν σταθμοῖς, “because we have no room in the barracks”).<sup>22</sup> The verb was also used to describe the distress (*angustus*, “narrow”) of a human being. Thus, Delilah had hemmed Samson in to reveal to him the secret of his strength (ἐστενοχώρησεν αὐτόν, LXX Judg 16:16); or, in LXX Isa 28:20, the distressed situation of the rulers of Zion was evoked. Paul used the term in this sense to refer to their ministerial troubles (ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ’ οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι, 2 Cor 4:8).<sup>23</sup>

It is noteworthy for our research that the term στενοχωρέω was commonly used in treatises on medicine and physiology in antiquity. For example, it appears to explain the function of the breasts in the Hippocratic Corpus. In *De glandulis* 16, it is explained that women produce milk because the foetus “compresses” (στενοχωροῦμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐμβρύου) the epiploon, which is a fold of the peritoneum. The text goes on to mention

19 *IG* V.2 268, lin. 11–12 (slightly after 27 a.C.). See D. Papanikolaou, “*IG* V.2 268 (= *SIG* 783) as a Monument of Hellenistic Prose,” *ZPE* 182 (2012) 137–156. See also τὰς ψυχὰς αὐξήσεις in Epictetus, *Fragment* 60 Sto-baeus (Schenkl, 491).

20 “Der Gedanke des Raum-Habens bzw. Raum-Gebens (der Weite des Herzens/des Ichs) ist ein Bild der Liebe, der Mangel an Raum (die Enge) ein Bild fehlender Liebe” (Bieringer, “Die Liebe des Paulus zur Gemeinde,” 208).

21 See BDAG, 942. According to Thomas of Aquinas, 2 Cor 6:12 is a *contrarium exemplum* of Paul’s openness. “Here it should be noted that to be straightened (*angustiari*) is the same as to be enclosed in something (*includi in aliquo*), from which no exit appears.” (Thomas of Aquinas, *Com. 2 Cor.* § 231; trans. F.R. Larcher).

22 See Artz-Grabner, 2. *Korinther*, 304, who comments that this verb has a stronger meaning than θλιβῶ (2 Cor 4:8), for it expresses a situation that can no longer be endured.

23 According to J.T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel. An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence* (SBLDS 99; Atlanta, GA: SBL 1988) 174–175, by virtue of its contrast with στενοχωρέω, the verb θλιβῶ, which usually has the purely metaphorical meaning of “to afflict, to oppress,” trades in 4:7 with its literal meaning of “to press.” Therefore, even though Paul is “pressed hard,” he is not pressed to the point of having little (στενός) or no room (χώρος) to breathe.

the “compactness” (ἡ στενοχωρία) of the male body, which contributes to the smallness of his glands. Paul utilises a similar expression in 2 Cor 6:12, claiming that there is no lack of room for the Corinthians in him (οὐ στενοχωρεῖσθε ἐν ἡμῖν), but that there is a lack of room for him in their entrails (στενοχωρεῖσθε δὲ ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις ὑμῶν). Here, the σπλάγχνα of the Corinthians are in continuity with the heart of Paul, mentioned in the preceding verse, and, together with the mouth, complete a triad of bodily organs that comprises the somatic imagery. In summary, the Corinthians are not boxed in a narrow area of Paul’s body, as he has enlarged his heart for them. Therefore, he expects the Corinthians to make room for him in their entrails. This verse, in conclusion, is an urgent and passionate appeal for reciprocity.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, Christopher Land has recently challenged this standard interpretation with compelling arguments that will be briefly discussed because our interpretation would be refuted if his exegesis is correct.<sup>25</sup> According to Land, 2 Cor 6:12 must be understood in connection with the call to purity in 6:14–7:1. He proposes that Paul’s purity policy would be a relevant factor in the criticism brought against him in Corinth. Some members of that church could think that Paul’s purity regulations would be overly restrictive, and they would “feel constrained” by them. In Land’s view, Paul’s widened heart would not be a place of welcome for the Corinthians but instead would refer to the relief that the apostle himself experienced after the good news brought to him by Titus.<sup>26</sup> Subsequently, Paul would tell the Corinthians they were not experiencing the full emotional benefits of trusting God amidst difficulty. Land thus translates 6:12, “You are not experiencing a constricting pressure imposed by us, you are experiencing a constricting pressure (i.e. a clenching) in your guts.”<sup>27</sup>

His interpretation hinges on three main arguments. First, on the semantic plane, στενοχωρέω should be interpreted in continuity with the preceding catalogue of tribulations (ἐν θλίψεσιν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις, ἐν στενοχωρίαις, 6:4). It would express the uncomfortable constrictions that the Corinthians were facing, however, not imposed by Paul but rather by themselves due to their anxiety caused by the social consequences of obedience to Paul’s preaching. Accordingly, the phrase would not express the small space that Paul would occupy within the Corinthians but the anguish they would experience in their pagan milieu. Second, on the syntactical plane, the majority of scholars explain the first part of 6:12 as a reference to Paul’s inner self, where there was no lack of room for them, and the second part of the verse would be addressed to the Corinthians, whereby Paul would exhort them

24 This is the most common interpretation of 2 Cor 6:11–13. See J. Lambrecht, “The Fragment 2 Corinthians 6,14–7,1: A Plea for Its Authenticity,” *Studies on 2 Corinthians* (eds. R. Bieringer – J. Lambrecht) (BETL 112; Leuven: Peeters 1994) 533–534; V.P. Furnish, *II Corinthians* (AYB 32A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1984) 360–361, 367–369; Bieringer, “Die Liebe des Paulus zur Gemeinde,” 193–213; Thrall, *2 Corinthians*, I, 469–471; M.J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI – Milton Keynes: Eerdmans – Paternoster 2005) 487–492; Schmeller, *2. Korinther*, I, 362, 364–366.

25 See Land, “The Benefits Outweigh the Costs,” 69–88.

26 See Land, “The Benefits Outweigh the Costs,” 81–83.

27 Land, “The Benefits Outweigh the Costs,” 76.



to make room for him within themselves. Conversely, in Land's view, the contrast would be between two experiences that both affect the Corinthians, "the first phrase construes a specific force pressing in [i.e. Paul's pressure], whereas the second construes a domain in which pressure can be experienced."<sup>28</sup> Third, considering the context, Paul would warn the Corinthians to stop being anxious in 6:11–7:1. The metaphorical dialectic of amplitude/constriction would not relate to the reciprocal relations between apostle/community but to the situation of distension/tension that Paul was experiencing (concerning his relationship with the Corinthians) and that he wanted the Corinthians to adopt (concerning their pagan context and their way of living the norms of purity). Consequently, the imperative of 6:13 (πλατύνθητε καὶ ὑμεῖς) should be read in continuity with 6:14, "Stretch yourselves out! Stop bearing the yoke of being awkwardly joined with unbelievers!"<sup>29</sup> In conclusion, this is how he paraphrases 6:11–14,

We have spoken openly to you, Corinthians; we have felt our emotional tensions relax. You are not experiencing a constricting pressure imposed by us; you are experiencing a constricting pressure in your guts. What I am saying is that you, my children, can in the same way exchange your tension for relief: Stretch yourselves out! Stop bearing the yoke of being uncomfortably joined with unbelievers!<sup>30</sup>

Even though Land's proposal is very consistent, I prefer the more common interpretation. Certainly, the syntax of 6:12 is confusing and can be interpreted in different ways, and the verb στενοχωρέω may be read in continuity with the tribulations of 6:3–10. Nevertheless, apart from the alleged Corinthian criticism of Pauline norms of purity, which is quite hypothetical and could not have been understood by the hearers of the letter until 6:14, there is other evidence that Christopher Land has not considered and is decisive in support of the standard interpretation. This scholar proposes that the second part of the phrase (6:12b) would not be a demand for reciprocity but refer to the distress the Corinthians suffered in their pagan environment. However, the passage constantly alternates between the first person, referring to Paul, and the second, referring to the Corinthians (6:11–13, "Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart has been wide open. You are not restrained in us, but you are restrained in your own entrails. In return—I speak as to children—you too, open wide"). This alternation puts the focus on the apostle-community relationship and is consistent with the clear semantic opposition between πλατύνω (6:11), στενοχωρέω (6:12), and again πλατύνω (6:13).<sup>31</sup> From the alternation of the pronouns, a reasoning follows: Paul's heart, like his mouth, is enlarged (πεπλατύνται) for them; there is no lack of room for them in him (στενοχωρεῖσθε ἐν ἡμῖν); instead, there is lacking room for him in the entrails of the Corinthians (στενοχωρεῖσθε δὲ ἐν τοῖς σπλάγχνοις

<sup>28</sup> Land, "The Benefits Outweigh the Costs," 76, n.18.

<sup>29</sup> Land, "The Benefits Outweigh the Costs," 77.

<sup>30</sup> Land, "The Benefits Outweigh the Costs," 85.

<sup>31</sup> In his first invective against Julian, Gregory Nazianzen reflects on the paradoxical condition of Christians who receive glory amid persecution. He then contrasts the two verbs, καὶ ἡνῖκα ἐπλατύνθημεν, ἐστενοχωρήθημεν ("when we had spread ourselves out, we were pressed close," *Contra Julianum* 4,32,4; PG 35, 560).

ὑμῶν). Note the contrast of persons between the two prepositional syntagms (ἐν ἡμῖν vs ἐν τοῖς σπλάγγχοις ὑμῶν).<sup>32</sup> Therefore, Paul urges them to enlarge their inner selves for him (πλατύνθητε καὶ<sup>33</sup> ὑμεῖς) in return (τὴν δὲ αὐτὴν ἀντιμισθίαν).<sup>34</sup>

This interpretation is confirmed by the recapitulation of 7:2–3, where Paul invites them again to make room for him (χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς, “make room for us [in your hearts]”)<sup>35</sup> because he has not wronged any of them, and he assures them anew that they are in his heart (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἔστε).<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the patristic reception of these verses also supports the standard interpretation. Land has proposed patristic texts that supposedly confirm his exegesis. However, these two unclear passages do not comment on the Pauline text but rather quote it to communicate other contents.<sup>37</sup> Instead, the early commentators of the letter clearly interpreted 2 Cor 6:11–13 as a Pauline exhortation to the Corinthians to reciprocate. Thus, John Chrysostom began his homily to 6:11–7:1 by saying that “he (Paul) purposes now also to rebuke them as not being too well minded *towards himself* (ἐπιτιμᾶν ὡς σφόδρα περὶ αὐτὸν διακειμένοις).”<sup>38</sup> For Chrysostom, the open mouth and the widened heart are signs of Paul’s love for them. However, the apostle does not feel reciprocated by the Corinthians. For this reason, he rebukes them in 6:12 with forbearance. As John Chrysostom states, Paul “said not ‘you do not receive us’ (οὐ δέχεσθε ἡμᾶς), but ‘you are straitened’ (στενοχωρεῖσθε), implying indeed the same thing but with forbearance and without touching them too deeply.”<sup>39</sup> Many other comments and expressions in this homily confirm that the Archbishop of

32 The double occurrence of the preposition ἐν possesses here “a (metaphorical) local force,” according to Thrall, *2 Corinthians*, I, 470, n. 1983.

33 Christopher Land does not sufficiently consider the value of this adverbial καὶ, which demands reciprocity on the part of the Corinthians; as Paul has enlarged his heart for the Corinthians, so must they also.

34 “With the same widening as recompense” (Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 361); “Paul is asking for repayment in the same coin, namely complete candor and warm love” (Harris, *2 Corinthians*, 491).

35 Christopher Land (“The Benefits Outweigh the Costs,” 85–86) translates χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς as meaning “accept us by accepting the things we say,” based on the supposed parallel of Matt 19:11–19. However, the most obvious translation of 2 Cor 7:2 is that χωρήσατε recapitulates the two στενοχωρεῖσθε of 6:12, with which the verb shares the lexical root. In this sense, χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς would be Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthians to make room for him within themselves. Thus Bieringer, “Die Liebe des Paulus zur Gemeinde,” 205–206.

36 Realizing the strength of this argument, Land retorts that 2 Cor 7:2 “is too far separated from 6:12 to play any significant role in clarifying Paul’s meaning in the earlier wording” (“The Benefits Outweigh the Costs,” 73, n. 10). However, the concentric pattern (A 6:11–13, B 6:14–7:1, A’ 7:2–4) holds together 6:11–13 and 7:2.

37 Nilus Ancyranus, *Epistulae* 2,80,1 (PG 79, 236), and Severianus, *Fragmenta in epistolam II ad Corinthios* [in catenis], in K. Staab (ed.), *Pauluskommentar aus der griechischen Kirche. Aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben* (Münster: Aschendorff 1933) 294, lines 14–16; in Land, “The Benefits Outweigh the Costs,” 66, n. 43.

38 John Chrysostom, *Hom. 2 Cor* 13,1 (PG 61, 490; NPNF<sup>1</sup> 12, 342).

39 John Chrysostom, *Hom. 2 Cor* 13,2 (PG 61, 492; NPNF<sup>1</sup> 12, 343). See also John Chrysostom, *Laud. Paul.* 1,11 (Sch 300, 128–131), where he compares Paul to Job. As Job opened his house to the poor, Paul opened his heart wide to the Corinthians and to all Gentiles.

Constantinople interpreted these verses as referring to the relationship between the apostle and the Corinthians.<sup>40</sup>

In summary, Paul begins the *peroratio* of 2 Cor 2:14–7:4 by expanding his discourse to seal the relationship of reconciliation and mutual affection between himself and the Corinthians. For this purpose, he chooses the anthropological language of bodily organs (mouth, heart, entrails) and the spatial polarity of verbs expressing breadth and narrowness (open, enlarge, constrict). The internal organs (the heart and the entrails) function as metonymies of Paul and the Corinthians (note that the reference to Paul's *καρδία* in 6:11 is taken up with a simple *ἐν ἡμῖν* in 6:12a). Therefore, the apostle evokes respective inner spaces destined to host the other with affection—the Corinthians in Paul's heart, Paul in the entrails of the Corinthians. We will return to the implications of this spatial metaphor in the conclusion. Let us now examine how preceding texts may have prepared this metaphor.

### 3. The Heart as a Space of Encounter with God (2 Cor 1:22; 3:2–3; 4:6)

In 2 Cor 6:11–13 and 7:3, Paul portrays his heart as an inner space of encounter between himself and the community. He had already used the heart as a spatial metaphor throughout the letter to refer to his relationship with God. Could there be some kind of relationship between the horizontal (the heart as a place of relationship between Paul and the Corinthians) and vertical (the heart as a place of encounter with God) use of the metaphor? Let us examine the texts closely.

In 2 Cor 1:21–22, Paul states that “it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first instalment (*δοὺς τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν*).” This sentence concludes a brief argument in which Paul has defended the consistency of his travel plans (1:15–17) with theological proof (1:18–22). He argues that, just as God has been reliable in fulfilling his promises in Christ, so he, Silvanus, and Timothy are trustworthy. Paul appeals to the eschatological gift of the Spirit to demonstrate this (1:21–22). The reliability of his ministerial word is based on the fact that God has confirmed him and his co-workers in Christ, having anointed, sealed, and given them the first instalment of the Spirit. To doubt this is to doubt God. Concerning our question, it is noteworthy that Paul ends the argument by saying that God has given the Spirit as the first instalment “in our hearts.”<sup>41</sup> He could have

<sup>40</sup> Theodoret of Cyrus also clearly interprets 2 Cor 6:11–13 as referring to the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians (*Comm. 2 Cor.* 320–321; PG 82, 415–416). Christopher Land himself (“The Benefits Outweigh the Costs,” 74, n. 12) acknowledges another ancient text which points in the opposite direction to his exegesis, see Pseudo-Oecumenius, *Catena in epistolam II ad Corinthios*, in J.A. Cramer (ed.), *Catena Graecorum patrum in Novum Testamentum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1841; reprint Hildesheim: Olms 1967) V, 391–392.

<sup>41</sup> The first-person plural (“in our hearts”) includes not only Paul and his collaborators but also the Corinthians. By adducing this inclusive plural, he suggests that “the eschatological gift of the Spirit which I share with you confirms the consistency of my deeds and words.”

simply stated that God had given them the Spirit as the first instalment, as indeed he will do later in 5:5 (ὁ δὸς ἡμῖν τὸν ἀρραβῶνα τοῦ πνεύματος). In fact, 2 Cor 1:22 and 5:5 are equivalent phrases. Yet, the spatial metaphor of the heart is useful in this passage for a particular purpose.<sup>42</sup> In several NT texts, the heart is referred to as “the centre of spiritual life, and so is spoken of as the part of a person where they encounter God or are encountered by God, in either a positive or a negative sense.”<sup>43</sup> The heart is thereby the meeting point where God interacts with the believer. Consequently, Paul’s heart in 2 Cor 1:22 appears as the inner space where God deposits his most precious commodity, the first instalment of the new creation, the Holy Spirit. Following the proposals of Johnson and Lakoff mentioned in the methodological considerations above, we noted that the heart could be pictured as a “container” in Paul’s text. In 6:11–12 and 7:3, it contained the Corinthians; now, in 1:22, it contains the Spirit of God. Would it be possible to relate this gift of the Spirit in Paul’s heart (1:22; 5:5) and his “widened heart” open to the Corinthians (6:11–12; 7:3)? In other words, could we consider that God’s intervention in the apostle’s heart *enabled* him to receive the Corinthians into it? Indeed, the passive valence of *πεπλάτυνται* (6:11) could refer to God’s action in Paul’s heart. The gift from on high had enabled him to exercise “the ministry of the Spirit” (3:8), and consequently, the Spirit would have made room within him to receive the Corinthians. Even if there are no clear textual markers of the connection between 1:22 and 6:11–12, the following occurrences of Paul’s heart as a spatial metaphor (3:2–3; 4:6) point in this same direction. We will further examine these texts.

In 2 Cor 3:2–3, the apostle develops a well-known epistolary analogy. Even though other preachers—probably a reference to his rivals—presented their commendatory letters to the believers in Achaia, Paul stated that he did not need them, for Christ had already written a letter commending him at Corinth, namely, the new life of the believers in that church was his best letter of recommendation, “written on our hearts” (ἐγγεγραμμένη ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν<sup>44</sup>). With this formulation, Paul metaphorises the writing material of the letter.

42 Paul again employs the same language of 2 Cor 1:22 in Rom 5:5 (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκέχνηται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἀγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν) and, similarly, in Gal 4:6.

43 P. Trebilco, “The Human Heart, the Center of a Person, and the Holy Spirit (Galatians 4:6; Romans 5:5; and 2 Corinthians 1:22),” *God’s Grace Inscribed on the Human Heart. Essays in Honour of James R. Harrison* (eds. P.G. Bolt – S. Kim) (Early Christian Studies 23; Sydney: SCD Press 2022) 160. Paul Trebilco supports his point by quoting Acts 8:21, Rom 6:17, 1 Cor 14:25, Heb 3:12. Likewise, the Shepherd of Hermas mentions that the Lord is in the hearts of believers (*Mand.* 12,4,3, *Sim.* 5,4,3). Of course, this idea does not only appear in Jewish and Christian literature. In the *Greek Magical Papyrus* 1:1–42, after performing some rituals, it is promised that “there will be something divine in your heart (ἐνθεον ἐν τῇ σῆ καρδίᾳ).” (*PGM* 1, 21; Betz, I, 3).

44 The Codex Sinaiticus (ⲛ 01), the authorised manuscript 14 of Paris (33) and some other minuscules (88 436 1175 1881) change the first person for the second person in plural (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν). Thrall prefers this variant (2 *Corinthians*, I, 223–224). More valuable, however, are the manuscripts attesting to the other variant (Ⲛ<sup>46</sup> A B C D G K P Ψ 614 1739 Byzantine, and the Latin, Syriac, and Coptic versions). See B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2 ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1994) 509. Thomas Schmeller (2. *Korintherbrief*, I, 175–176) explains that if the letter recommending Paul has been written to be read “by all human beings,” then it is logical that he himself carried it because a letter of recommendation is usually carried by the person who was recommended.

If ordinary letters would typically be written on papyrus or other materials, the community letter was inscribed (ἐγγεγραμμένη, lit. “engraved”) in the centre of his inner life, his own heart. As we have already seen, he takes up the idea in 6:11–12 and 7:3 (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν ἔσται). Paul thus underlines the bonds of intimacy that unite him and the community. He does not carry the letter of the Corinthians in his hand, but it is engraved on his heart.

Moreover, the epistolary imagery of the Corinthian letter written in Paul's heart possesses an intertextual depth that renders it a fulfilment of divine prophecies. The apostle declares in 2 Cor 3:3 that he speaks of a letter written not “on tablets of stone but on tablets of fleshly hearts (ἐν πλαξίν λιθίναις ἀλλ’ ἐν πλαξίν καρδίαις σαρκίνοις).” These “hearts of flesh,” in contrast to the “tables of stone,” evoke LXX Ezek 11:16, 36:26, and the writing on the hearts of the ministers alludes to Jeremiah's prophecy of a new covenant written on the hearts of believers (LXX Jer 38:33; TM 31:33). The scriptural echo is confirmed later when Paul claims to exercise the “ministry of the new covenant” (2 Cor 3:6). Christ has thus acted in the Corinthians through the Spirit of God, giving them a new existence. This saving intervention, which fulfils the prophetic promises of the renewal and interiorisation of the covenant, has remained engraved on Paul's heart and has become his best letter of recommendation. In brief, this new reference to his ministerial heart—in this case, imagined as material for the writing of a letter—confirms that Paul's heart is a privileged space of the relationship between God (here mediated by the action of the Messiah and his Spirit), the apostle and the Corinthians (and indirectly with “all men” who know and read this letter).

In 2 Cor 4:6, Paul declares that “it is the God who said, ‘Let light shall shine out of darkness,’ who has shone *in our hearts* (ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν) to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” This new reference to Paul's heart is closely related to that of 3:2–3, opening and closing the argument of 3:1–4:6, thus creating an inclusion.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, Paul evokes the divine illumination by which he received the knowledge of the glory of God, beheld in the face of Jesus. Again, his heart functions as a spatial metaphor in this passage, like a dark room flooded with light. The tenor of this metaphor may be his vocational experience of encountering Christ, the so-called Damascus experience, the origin of his apostolic mission.<sup>46</sup> It was a common idea in ancient times that the enlightened one was responsible for sharing the light received.<sup>47</sup> However, this reference to the heart is strange in principle, as light is usually received in the eyes, not in an internal organ. Nevertheless, by explicitly mentioning his heart as the receptacle of enlightenment,

<sup>45</sup> See F. De Rycke, *Gespiegeltes Licht. Die Theologie der Herrlichkeit Gottes in den paulinischen Apologien* (Studia Theologica Internationalia 1; Kraków: Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II 2019) 482.

<sup>46</sup> Thus S. Kim, *The Origin of Paul's Gospel*, 2 ed. (WUNT II/4; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1984) 5–13; Thrall, *2 Corinthians*, I, 316–318; A. Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation. Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology* (WUNT 207; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2007) 86–87, among others.

<sup>47</sup> See Harris, *2 Corinthians*, 334. In the priestly blessing of 1QS II 2–10, it is stated, “May he illuminate your heart (וְיִאָר לְבַבְךָ) with the discernment of life and grace you with knowledge of eternal things (3b). We find another interesting Qumran parallel in 1QH<sup>a</sup> XII 28b, where the enlightenment received serves to enlighten others (“through me you have enlightened the face of the many [וְיִבְרַח פְּנֵי רַבִּים].”) I follow the translation by F. García Martínez – E.J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill 1999) I–II.

Paul underlines that God has entered the vital centre of his thoughts, emotions, and decisions, where the most authentic meeting point between the Creator and his creature is to be found. It makes sense, therefore, that it is in his heart that he has been enlightened with the knowledge of Christ so that he, too, can enlighten others. The action of the Creator God in his heart enables him to develop his ministry, by which he preaches Jesus Christ as Lord and serves the Corinthians as their slave (4:5).

In summary, in Paul’s heart, the Spirit has been given, confirming him in Christ and uniting him with the Corinthians, also gifted with the same eschatological grace (1:22); in his ministerial heart has been written the letter of Christ which is the Corinthians, and which all can read (3:2–3); and in Paul’s heart has shone the divine light which brightens in the proclamation of the gospel (4:6). Due to these correlations connecting the divine action in Paul’s heart and his ministerial mission, it is plausible to deduce from these passages that there is a relationship of continuity between God’s action in Paul’s heart and the widened room the Corinthians find in his ministerial heart.

#### 4. Paul’s Heart and His Rivals (2 Cor 5:12)

We have previously mentioned the divine illumination in Paul’s heart (4:6). This statement appears in a passage, 2 Cor 4:1–6, in which he defends his ministry in contrast to that of those missionaries who practised cunning and falsified the word of God. In this text, Paul associates the hidden and shameful work (τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης: 4:2) of his rivals with that of the god of this world, who has blinded the minds of unbelievers (4:4). These connections reveal the apocalyptic battle between the Creator God who enlightens and the god of this world who blinds, both with their respective representatives, Paul who has received the divine light and spreads it by his ministry, and the other ministers who act in shameful secrecy.<sup>48</sup>

A subsequent text clarifies the role of the heart in this antagonism between Paul and his rivals.<sup>49</sup> It is 2 Cor 5:12, where he states that with his letter, he is “giving you

48 The oppositions of the two semantic fields and their respective associations are relevant:

The hidden and shadowy	The manifest and luminous
v.2: the shameful things that one hides	
v.2: to falsify God’s word	v.2: in the manifestation of the truth
v.3: even if our gospel is veiled	
v.4: the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers	v.4: to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God
v.6: “out of darkness...	v.6: “...let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

49 According to Thrall (2 *Corinthians*, I, 402–403, 405), Paul would not speak in 2 Cor 5:11–12 of his rival missionaries but of non-Christian Jews who compared Paul to Moses and prided themselves on the radiance of his countenance. However, the numerous connections of this passage with 2 Cor 10:1–18 corroborate that he is referring here to his opponents. Thus Harris, 2 *Corinthians*, 416.

[the Corinthians] an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance (πρὸς τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους) and not in the heart (μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ).” Therefore, Paul hoped that the Corinthians, recognising his ministerial labour on their behalf, would find strong reasons to be proud of him and to respond to those rival missionaries who criticised his ministerial legitimacy. He thus contrasts two grounds for pride: the legitimate boasting of the Corinthians about their apostle and the illegitimate boasting of their opponents. The difference lies in the fact that his opponents boasted ἐν προσώπῳ and not ἐν καρδίᾳ; namely, they boasted about superficial and apparent motives, but which had nothing to do with the vital centre of the person. This contrast between the face, as a metonymy for the apparent and superficial, and the heart, as a metonymy for the authentic and true, is both new and conventional in the Pauline letters. It is conventional due to its origin from the Septuagint. Concerning David’s election, it was written, “The Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not look on his appearance (τὴν ὄψιν αὐτοῦ) or on the posture of his size, because I have rejected him, for God will not look as a mortal will see, for a mortal will see into a face (ὄψεται εἰς πρόσωπον), but God will see into a heart (εἰς καρδίαν)’ (LXX 1 Kgs 16:7, trans. NETS).”<sup>50</sup> Likewise, such a comparison is new because Paul usually chooses different terms to express the contrast between legitimate and illegitimate boasting:

	legitimate boasting	illegitimate boasting
1 Cor 1:31; 3:21	ἐν κυρίῳ	ἐν ἀνθρώποις
2 Cor 10:15–17	ἐν κυρίῳ	ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις
Phil 3:3	ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ	ἐν σαρκί
2 Cor 11:18, 30; 12:5, 9	ἐν ταῖς ἀσθενείαις	κατὰ σάρκα
Gal 6:13–14	ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ	ἐν τῇ ὑμετέρᾳ σαρκί

In 2 Cor 5:12, however, he uses the two new elements of this comparison (ἐν καρδίᾳ / ἐν προσώπῳ) for the first time. In my opinion, such ad hoc development of the two types of boasting is due to the continued use of the heart metaphor in the first part of the letter. If we apply Lakoff and Johnson’s cognitive model to this formulation, the opposition between the face and the heart can be labelled an “orientational metaphor.” By distinguishing the outward and visible from the inward and invisible, Paul “orients” his hearers to what is not apparent but more authentic, to the inner space of the heart. In doing so, he establishes a new map of relationships between God, his adversaries, the Corinthians, and himself.

50 Paul also uses this contrast in 1 Thess 2:17, “As for us, brothers when, for a short time, we were made orphans by being separated from you—in person, not in heart [προσώπῳ οὐ καρδίᾳ]—we longed with great eagerness to see you face to face [τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν]” and in Rom 2:28–29.

While his rivals remain outside the boundaries, “in the face,” God, the Corinthians, and Paul meet in the inner (and wide) regions of the heart.<sup>51</sup>

## Conclusions

Paul the Apostle used various spatial metaphors in the Corinthian correspondence to achieve his persuasive purposes. When the ecclesial concord was in crisis, he pictured the Corinthians as a temple in which the Spirit dwelt and whose sacredness was to be respected (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16)<sup>52</sup> or as a body composed of many members in which all were to live in unity and diversity (1 Cor 12:12–27). Later, when his relationship with the community was in danger, he turned to his own heart as a spatial metaphor (2 Cor 6:11–13; 7:2–3). Nothing more intimate and vital could serve this purpose.<sup>53</sup> His heart was the centre of his being, the place of his encounter with God, where God had manifested Jesus Christ to him as Lord and where God had deposited the eschatological gift of the Spirit as the first instalment of the new creation. Thus, the metaphor of the community as a temple or a body gave way to the metaphor of the apostle’s heart. The Corinthians were right there, not because of Paul’s great merits, but because God had widened Paul’s heart to make room for them. Accordingly, he exhorted them in the *peroratio* of 6:11–7:4 to reciprocate by opening their hearts wide to him (6:13) and making room for him (7:2). This appeal to mutuality is a constant in the letter. He expected them to reciprocate in boasting (1:14; 5:12) and love (12:15; cf. 8:7–8).<sup>54</sup> The Corinthians had the same ability as Paul to open their hearts wide to him. They, too, had received the divine Spirit into their hearts (1:22; 5:5). Consequently, this intimacy between Paul and the community must have inevitably meant that the Corinthians would distance themselves from their opponents. In order to boast about Paul (5:12a), they had to counter his rivals, who “boasted in outward appearance (*ἐν προσώπῳ*) and not in the heart (*ἐν καρδίᾳ*)” (5:12b). Paul turned again to the language

51 Paul uses the term *καρδία* four more times in 2 Corinthians (2:4; 3:15; 8:16; 9:7). We have not considered these verses because they either refer to the subjects other than Paul (the hearts of the Israelites over whom veil is laid in 3:15; the heart of Titus on whom God has laid great solicitude in 8:16; the hearts of the Corinthians in their decision to contribute to the collection in 8:16), or to their function as an intensifier of the affliction and anguish “of heart” that Paul experienced when he wrote the letter amid many tears (2:4).

52 Origen of Alexandria related the Pauline spatial metaphors of the heart (2 Cor 6:11–13) with the ecclesial temple (6:16) in his commentary on Rom 2:5. “God says concerning his saints, whom he has known to be enlarged and who have spacious and broad rooms in the dwelling place (*domicilium spatia longe lateque*) of their hearts, ‘I shall dwell in them and I shall walk about’” (2 Cor 6:16, quoting Lev 26:12). Based on this quote, Origen came to assert, “God not only dwells in this breadth of heart of his saints (*sanctorum cordis latitudine*), he walks about in it” (*Comm. Rom.* 2,6,6; PG 14, 885; FC 104, 112).

53 In 2 Cor 6:11–12 and 7:2–4, Paul “emphasizes that from his side the relation between him and his readers is as intimate as possible” (Lambrecht, “The Fragment 2 Corinthians 6,14–7,1,” 535).

54 These and other expressions of mutuality (joy, consolation, zeal) in the letter were identified by R. Bieringer, “Paul’s Divine Jealousy: The Apostle and His Communities in Relationship,” *Studies on 2 Corinthians* (eds. R. Bieringer – J. Lambrecht) (BETL 112; Leuven: Peeters 1994) 249–250.



of the heart to reorder the map of the Corinthians' relationships. In Paul's heart, they could dwell and find the light of divine glory manifested in the face of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Spirit they shared with their apostle. Their opponents, instead, remained outside this enclosure because they only looked "in the face" to the outside, so they could not cross "the boundaries of the heart."<sup>55</sup>

The Pauline metaphor of the heart also conveys an epistemological meaning. In biblical literature, the heart was often described as a reserved space very difficult for human beings to access. Only God had direct access to it. For example, Jeremiah said that "the heart is deep above all else, and so is man, and who shall understand him? I, the Lord, am one who tests hearts and examines kidneys, to give to each according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings" (LXX Jer 17:9–10, trans. NETS). Likewise, Paul also pointed out that "the secrets of the heart" remained hidden unless the divine Spirit revealed them (1 Cor 14:25). Apocalyptic Judaism radicalised this idea. In the present age, the power of sin has caused the senseless hearts of people to be darkened (σκοτίσθη ἢ ἀσύνητος αὐτῶν καρδία, Rom 1:21). However, the Creator God had acted decisively in Christ, inaugurating the age to come, and had put his light in Paul's heart so that he could enlighten others with his gospel (2 Cor 4:6).<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the Corinthians should not focus on the outer self, on what is seen, on what is transient (4:16–18), to know according to the flesh (5:16), but on the inner self, on what is unseen, on what is eternal (4:16–18), on the spaces of the heart.

Finally, in the initial methodological considerations, we indicated that the dualism of mind/body had not yet developed in Paul's time. Therefore, we should not draw a clear distinction between the literal meaning of καρδία and its supposed metaphorical meanings. Hence, the analogical use of καρδία must be understood in the semiotic arc drawn between metaphor and metonymy.<sup>57</sup> On the one hand, Paul certainly creates a metaphor when he presents his heart as an imaginary space in which things happen (the giving of the Spirit as the first instalment, the writing of a letter, divine illumination for the knowledge of Christ) and people meet (God, Paul, and the Corinthians). Yet, on the other hand, καρδία also functions as metonymy: Paul's heart is Paul recognising himself as totally graced by God (to the deepest core of his being) and giving himself up totally to the Corinthians (from his innermost vital core). When Paul claims that he always carries in his body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible (φανερωθῆ) in his body (4:10), no exegete interprets his σῶμα as a metaphor. Accordingly, when Paul suggests that his heart, inhabited

<sup>55</sup> I take the expression of Harris, *2 Corinthians*, 517.

<sup>56</sup> "The human ability to recognize the truth has been restored through God's saving act of enlightening the human heart": H.D. Betz, "The Concept of the 'Inner Human Being' (ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος) in the Anthropology of Paul," *NTS* 46 (2000) 332. See also S. Harding, *Paul's Eschatological Anthropology. The Dynamics of Human Transformation* (Emerging Scholars; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2015) 156.

<sup>57</sup> Metaphor and metonymy are primarily two different concepts. If metaphor projects a source domain onto a different target domain, producing semantic impertinences that create new meanings, metonymy operates within the same domain due to a relationship of contiguity. However, this distinction needs to be qualified (see Croft – Cruse, *Cognitive Linguistics*, 216–220) because the two concepts have points in common. Anyway, the distinction will serve as a heuristic tool.

by Christ and the Spirit, is a space that God offers the Corinthians to meet him, he somewhat defines himself as a person and a minister, two sides of the same coin.

We began this essay with an example from reception history, Paul's heart as a spatial metaphor in a homily of St John Chrysostom. At the end of our investigation, we could perhaps suggest that, albeit in very amplifying tones, John Chrysostom was not quite far from the Pauline thought when he claimed that "his [Christ's] heart was Paul's heart, a tablet of the Holy Spirit, a book of grace."

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