

Article

# Rhetorical Approach to the Periautology of Philippians 3:2–16

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**Abstract:** This article examines why Paul uses self-praise, or periautology, in Phil 3:2–14 to respond to Christians who boasted of their Jewish origin. It shows the importance and relevance of this type of rhetoric, clarifies its purpose, and examines the way Paul uses it. Paul does not only use periautology in Phil 3, but it is in this passage that it has the most force and originality. As, until now, very few monographs and articles have shown the existence of periautology in the Pauline letters, this article invites exegetes to be more sensitive to the existence of literary models and their importance for better interpreting the apostle’s thought.

**Keywords:** Philippians 3; epidictic genre; praise; invective; self-praise; periautology; synkrisis; Judaizers; circumcision; Phil 3:4–14; 2 Cor 10–13; 1 Cor 13; Gal -2

## 1. Introduction

As works on John Calvin<sup>1</sup> and, much more recently, Bultmann’s essay on the use of diatribe in the Pauline letters show (Bultmann 1910), the study of the rhetoric of the Pauline letters did not begin at the end of the 20th century. It was undoubtedly with H.D. Betz’s famous article (Betz 1975) that the rhetorical approach to Paul’s letters developed systematically and scientifically. From then on, essays on the composition of all the letters and on their rhetorical genre—judicial, epidictic or deliberative—proliferated. On several occasions, I have shown that the study of composition has gradually become more refined and that exegetes have come to recognize the diversity of Paul’s arrangements and arguments<sup>2</sup>. In the following sections, I propose to move in the same direction and show the originality and relevance of the argumentation of Phil 3:2–16.

## 2. The Arrangement of Ph 3:2–16

### 2.1. An Exhortative Unit

Commentators have often found it difficult to identify the boundaries between rhetorical units and have thought that Phil 3:2–4,1 comprised a single unit. However, the passage is made up of two parallel units:

A	<i>exhortation</i>	3:2	3:17
B	<i>reasons (examples)</i>	3:3/4–14 γάρ v.3	3:18–19 and 20–21 γάρ v.18
A'	<i>resumption of the exhortation</i>	3:15–16 οὖν v.15	4:1 ὥστε

### 2.2. The Invective of v.2 and the Purpose of Ph 3:2–16

Phil 3:2–16 form a rhetorical unit in which v.2 indicates that the exhortation, with its motivations, has a polemical function, that of calling Philippi’s believers to distrust the Judaizers, who were probably Jewish-Christians and had come from Jerusalem to urge Philippi’s believers to be circumcised.

Most recent commentaries note that v.2 has all the features of an invective (*vituperatio*), a Greco-Roman oratory technique aimed at denigrating opponents and opposed to praise (*laus*, ἐγκώμιον), which the author of the Rhetoric to Herennius classifies in the epidictic



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genre. Indeed, the words that illustrate it are all pejorative: “dogs” (κύνες), “bad workers” (κακοὶ ἐργάται), and “mutilation” (κατατομή), which derisively refers to circumcision.

### 2.3. Reasons to Justify the Invective

Paul justifies his invective with a double praise, first that of the group constituted by Paul and the Philippian believers, in “We”, and then that of Paul himself, qualified as self-praise or periautology:

(i) A first praise (v.3), that of Paul and the Philippians, defined as (true) circumcision or, in other words, as περιτομή, opposed to the κατατομή that the Judaizers are. This is true circumcision—that of the heart obviously—which derives its glory from Christ Jesus and not from a carnal mutilation.

(ii) A second praise (v.4–14), that of Paul, which, as we will show, effectively demolishes the claims of the Judaizers.

It is thus possible to present the composition of Ph 3.2–16 more precisely:

A = v.2	exhortation (invective)
B = vv.3 + 4–14	reasons to justify A (the opposite of the invective of v.2)
A' = vv.15–16	(i) v.3 = praise of Paul and the Philippians (in 'WE')
	(ii) v.4–14 = self-praise (periautology) of Paul (in 'I')
	resumption of the exhortation

## 3. The Use of Periautology in Paul's Letters

If commentators perceived that v.4–14 comprised examples, as are often found in the epideictic genre, it took time for these examples to be qualified as praise and self-praise. Actually, decades ago, in an article commenting on Plutarch's treatise on self-praise, Betz clearly saw that Paul was praising himself in 2 Cor 11:1–12,13 and that the reasons for this should be determined, since, according to Plutarch, self-praise was to be avoided as far as possible (Betz 1978). But Phil 3:4–14 had not yet attracted the attention of exegetes. It was not until F. Bianchini's doctoral thesis on this passage that we had a serious study of how and why Paul uses this rhetorical technique (Bianchini 2006). In my commentary on Philippians published in 2005, I analyzed this periautology myself (Aletti 2005), though at less length than Bianchini, whose thesis I had had access to since I had been its director and it had been defended before the publication of my own commentary.

These books inspired two other doctoral students, D. Chaaya (Chaaya 2010) and M. Kowalski (Kowalski 2013)—now chairpersons in their respective faculties of theology—to examine Paul's self-praise in 2 Cor 10–13. As a result, the periautology of these passages was the subject of an exhaustive analysis, the non-entirely compatible results of which should inspire others to revisit these chapters of 2 Corinthians. But there are other passages where Paul praises himself, for example, in Galatians 1–2, whose periautology was presented and commented in a doctoral thesis defended at the Gregorian University of Rome in more or less the same years (Puca 2011). Since then, few articles—and, it seems, no monographs—have appeared on these periautological passages. The only ones I have been able to find are Gerber's on 2 Cor 12:1 and Smit's on Phil 3:2–21<sup>3</sup>. We can only hope that other researchers will be interested in Pauline periautology.

## 4. The Arrangement of the Periautology in Ph 3:4–14

### 4.1. The Overall Unfolding

This passage, which is an exemplum, has already been presented by Bianchini and myself, so I will just briefly recall its composition. It is broadly divided into two parts, of which v.4 and 7 form the inaugural statements that will be illustrated by v.5–6 and v.8–14, respectively:

vv.4–6 privileges and values ἐν σαρκί	v.4 opening statement	in time past, without Christ
	vv.5–6 illustrated by various traits	
vv.7–14 radical change; new values in Christ	v.7 opening statement	in these times, with Christ
	vv.8–14 illustrated by various traits	

Vv.7–14, which are essentially Christological, can also be divided into two parts:

Vv.7 + 8–11 = change of judgment or value and rejection of the first values for three purposes: righteousness through faith in Christ, knowledge of Christ, and the same itinerary as his.

Vv.12–14 = double correctio to not only avoid misinterpretations but also explain the goal pursued and the progress already made.

#### 4.2. The Arrangement of vv.5–6

In these verses, the exemplum clearly follows the model of praise. Indeed, in the textbooks of the time<sup>4</sup>, praise (in Greek, ἐγκώμιον or ἔπαινος) was part of the narratives that schoolchildren had to write during the *progymnasmata* and included the same arrangement:

(i) γένος or origin: country, nation, homeland, ancestors, parents, and birth;

(ii) παιδεία or education: customs and principles of conduct, school, and culture;

(iii) πράξεις or actions, the most important and most developed part, themselves divided into three: those of the body (physical performance), those of the mind (judgment, courage, prudence, great undertakings, etc.), and those attributed to fate (power, wealth, friends, honors, and glorious death, as well as their opposites of hardships, exiles, betrayals, persecutions, and ignominious death);

(iv) at each stage, use of comparison or σύγκρισις (between the personage being praised and others—in terms of origin, education and respective actions—to emphasize differences or similarities, superiority or inferiority<sup>5</sup>). The reader can see that vv.5–6 follow this pattern:

topoi of praise	Ph 3:5–6
origin	circumcision on the eight day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, Hebrew, son of Hebrews,
education, qualification	with regard to the Law, Pharisee,
actions	with regard to zeal, persecutor of the Church, with regard to the justice found in the Law, irreproachable.

The repetition of the traits concerning origin shows that Paul insists on what the Judaizers themselves were certainly emphasizing and thus indirectly underlines that, in this respect, he is in no way inferior to them.

#### 4.3. The Arrangement of vv.7–14

V.7, expanded upon v.8, states the total change of point of view. If Paul spoke only of himself in vv.5–6, indirectly indicating that he remained centered on himself, in vv.7–14, it is Jesus who becomes the point of reference, and it is in relation to him that Paul describes himself, being henceforth totally decentered from himself.

- The opening statement of v.7 is well developed and specified in v.8:

v.7	v.8
but (ἀλλά)	but much more (ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καί)
whatever, that (ἅτινα ταῦτα)	everything (πάντα 2x)
gain (κέρδη)	in order to gain (ἵνα κερδήσω)
I counted (ἥγημαι)	I count (ἥγοῦμαι 2x)
as loss (ζημίαν)	to be a loss (ζημίαν εἶναι)
	I suffered a loss (ἐζημιώθη)
	refuse (σκόβαλα)
because of (διὰ)	because of the surpassing worth (διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον)
Christ (τὸν Χριστόν)	knowing (τῆς γνώσεως)
	Christ Jesus my Lord (C. I. K.)
	because of him (δι' ὅν)

- Vv.9–11 set out the new features of Paul's journey.

These verses, in which Paul describes his experience in Christ as incomparably superior to that under the Law, are excellently presented and analyzed by the monographs and commentaries, so I will not repeat what they say<sup>6</sup>. I retain here only the end of v.11 ("if in some way I will attain the resurrection from the dead"), where one can think that Paul is not sure of reaching the final goal of the journey, namely, the resurrection and the final glorification with Christ: would therefore the path that he describes as supereminent not lead to the desired result and the periautology fail? Suffice it here to recall that in other letters (1 Thess 4:13–18; 1 Cor 15:20; 2 Cor 5:1), Paul has no doubt that he and the believers will live definitively with the risen Lord. He reaffirms this assurance not only at the beginning of the same letter to the Philippians, in 1:23, but also just after the periautology we are talking about, in 3:21. If he does not doubt the final resurrection of believers, how should we interpret Phil 3:11? Simply by not forgetting that this formulation is due to the periautological genre, since the last statement of v.11 announces the corrections of vv.12–14. What he is experiencing now is already a strong communion with Christ, but the resurrection is a blessing yet to come, and Paul does not want us to believe that he has already obtained it.

#### 4.4. The Correctiones of vv.12–14

How can we situate the correctiones of vv.12–14 in relation to vv.7–11? The progression of this rhetorical unit can be described as follows:

Vv.7–11 = the itinerary Paul wanted to follow and the goal he wished to reach;

Vv.12–14 = the itinerary no longer desired but in the process of being achieved.

Let us note first that the correctiones are not about Christ, i.e., that he could not totally satisfy or fulfill the believer's desire, but only about where Paul is at:

v.12	<i>a</i>	not that I have already obtained or have already become perfect	<i>b</i>	but I press on to grasp because I myself have been grasped
v.13	<i>a'</i>	I do not think I have already grasped	<i>b'</i>	[but] I press on towards the goal

If these correctiones are intended to avoid a misinterpretation of Paul's praise of himself, it is important to see that they do not function like those in 2 Cor 12, where Paul, after saying that he had the greatest graces and visions, adds that he came to glory in his weaknesses, God having declared that his grace was sufficient for him. The apostle even concludes: "for when I am weak, then I am strong" (v.10). Thus, in 2 Cor 12:10, the correctio consists in emphasizing the opposite of what is previously said about the eminent visions

and graces mentioned (2 Cor 11:17–18 and 12:1–5). On the other hand, in Phil 3:12–14, Paul does not mention his weaknesses but rather describes an unfinished journey with Christ: the correctiones in no way detract from the superiority of being with Christ, as they merely point out that this superiority, already real and effective, still needs to grow.

Before asking whether Paul was right to proceed with self-praise in these verses, it is important to underline the paradox of this rhetorical unit, for if vv5–6 are a real self-praise, vv7–14 reverse it by declaring that it is no longer worthwhile and transform it into a praise of Christ. For what reason? Because being-with-Christ leads to a superiority that can in no way be accused of vainglory and vanity.

## 5. This Periautology, Relevant or Not?

Once we have established that Paul's argument in Phil 3:4–14 follows the rhetorical model of self-praise, it is important to see why he takes it up and modifies it to the point of turning it upside down. It is moreover necessary to see if his periautology holds.

### 5.1. When Is Self-Praise Permissible?

Addressing his friend Heculanus, at the very beginning of his brief treatise on periautology, Plutarch reports a majority opinion at the time: "There is no one who does not agree that nothing is more intolerable and more odious than to speak favorably of oneself and to boast of one's qualities and talents" (539a)<sup>7</sup>. And L. Pernot sums up the ancient moralist's judgment as follows: "Plutarch subscribes to the common observation that self-praise is unpleasant and reprehensible. Insofar as it is inspired by glory, this conduct falls under the criticism that ancient morality tirelessly addressed to vanity and the untimely love of honor and glory" (Pernot 1998).

But, again according to Plutarch, self-praise is permissible

- (a) when we are unjustly accused or slandered (540c);
- (b) when it is stated that our qualities and good deeds are due to (the goddess) Tychè (542f);
- (c) when we mix our own praise with that of others thanks to whom we have been able to act well and be what we are (542b);
- (d) when we declare that our own qualities have been useful to others and have reinforced their own choices and actions (545f);
- (e) when, to make our own praise less odious, we temper it by admitting to some ignorance, poverty or inexperience (544ab).

### 5.2. Do Ph 3:4–14 Respect the Conditions of Self-Praise?

It is easy to verify that Paul's self-praise complies with the conditions set out by Plutarch and the moralists of his time by following the order in which I have listed them above:

(a) As the invective of Phil 3:2 shows, the context is polemical. It was because Judaizers, probably from Jerusalem, wanted the believers in Philippi to be circumcised such that Paul reacted. And it is because they themselves were probably accused of not yet being circumcised and Paul himself was accused of being responsible for this situation that Paul finds himself obliged to show the excellence of the choice he and the Philippians have made.

(b) If, in the first part of the periautology (v.5–6), Paul puts himself forward and can provoke jealousy and resentment, in the second part (v.7–11), what he says about himself is entirely due to Christ, to whom he is practically assimilated without any merit or self-glorification.

(c) Before praising himself, Paul associates the believers in Philippi with the dignity he shares with them, that of being the (true) circumcision (v.3). We might even say that the superiority he declares to be his in v.11–12 is already that of the believers, since in v.15 he declares to them: "we who are perfect". Paul does not claim to be the only one who wants to share Christ's itinerary, and if, in these verses, he speaks in the first-person singular, in "I" and not "we", it is for reasons we will have to explain further.

(d) Paul does not praise himself in order to show off, but, as the exhortative nature of the rhetorical unit shows, to keep the Philippian believers on the same track as he was: the periautology is not intended to glorify Paul but to comfort the Philippians in the choice they made, that of radically adhering to Christ.

(e) Thanks to the two *correctiones*, this periautology finds further justification, for the apostle finishes clearly by declaring that the journey with Christ already taken is far from over: “not that I have already become perfect (τετελείωμαι)” (v.12), he says. He thus shows that the superiority he is talking about is Christ’s, not his own. One might object that Paul does not mean what he says and that the correctio could be pure hypocrisy, since in v.15 he will declare, as we noted above, that he and the Philippian believers are perfect (τέλειοι). But we must not forget that the statement in v.12 alludes to that in v.6: “with regard to the justice found in the Law, (I was) blameless”. The correctio is intended to underline the decentering that Paul is now undergoing: it is no longer his blamelessness or perfection that matters but his attachment to Christ, an attachment that fully satisfies him.

These few remarks show that Paul’s self-praise respects the requirements formulated by Plutarch and his contemporaries. But the fact that it is a valid periautology does not imply that it constitutes a sound argument. Should not Paul have argued, as he did in Galatians or Romans, that circumcision was of no use in obtaining salvation? Before answering this question, let us look at some other objections that could ruin his argument.

### 5.3. Some Objections to the Validity of the Periautology of Phil 3:4–14

Indeed, three statements in the passage seem to contradict those of other letters on justification and obedience to the Law<sup>8</sup>:

(a) As we saw above, in v.6 he declares: “with regard to the justice found in the Law, (I was) blameless”. However, in the letters to the Galatians and Romans, he shows at length that one cannot become righteous through obedience to the Law (Rom 3:21) and that the Law itself has never been an instrument of justification (Rom 7:7–25). How then can he say here “with regard to the justice found in the Law” if this Law, although good and holy, cannot lead to justice? This is why some commentators have said that the apostle contradicts himself. It is true that the statements in Galatians/Romans and Philippians are materially incompatible, but we must not forget that in the first part of the periautology Paul takes over the point of view of the Jew and Pharisee he was then: he reasons as he used to reason at that time.

(b) The same applies to the statement “I was blameless”. Certainly, in Romans 7:14–23, Paul affirms that the subject of the Law may at best wish to obey the commandments but cannot do the good he wishes to do. In short, for the Paul of Galatians and Romans, blamelessness may be desired, but it remains an unattainable dream. Thus, the contradiction between Phil 3:6 and the assertions of the other letters is real, but it needs to be seen in the perspective Paul adopts here, that of the Jew he was, convinced that he was perfectly obedient to the Law.

(c) For centuries, the phrase in v.9 “μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου” had been translated as follows: “not having a righteousness of my own” (RSV) or “not having my own righteousness” (KJV), a translation which meant that in Christ the believer remained without righteousness of his own, a statement which was interpreted as saying that he was still a sinner but declared forensically righteous! The consequence of this would be that the condition of Christ’s disciple would be inferior to that of the Jew subject to the Law because he no longer had any righteousness at all. Whatever be the relevance of the adage *simul peccator et justus*, it must be remembered that the translation mentioned above is a misinterpretation of the Greek double accusative, of which we know that the part without an article is necessarily a predicate and not a direct object complement. This is why it should be translated as follows: “not having *as* my righteousness (=predicate) that (=righteousness) which comes from the Law (=direct object complement)”. In this verse, Paul is only saying that his righteousness (for he has one) does not come from the

Law but from his being in Christ. On this point, therefore, Paul cannot yet be accused of contradiction.

#### 5.4. *Are vv.5–6 Essential to the Argumentation?*

Assuming that periautology is the right argument, one may nevertheless wonder whether Paul would not have done better to avoid the ambiguity of v.6 pointed out above in passing directly from v.3 to v.8 and developing the praise in the first-person plural, as follows:

“[It is] we indeed the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, who put our pride in Christ Jesus and do not place our trust in the flesh, . . .<sup>8</sup> we who consider everything to be a loss because of that surpassing good which is the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, . . . who regard [everything] as garbage in order in order to gain Christ<sup>9</sup> and be found in him\*, not having as our righteousness that [coming] from the Law, but that [coming] through faith in Christ, the righteousness [coming] from God [and relying] on faith, etc.”

The praise would then have been that of Paul and the non-Jewish Christians of Philippi. Yes, but the whole unit in its composition—(i) exhortation, (ii) reasons, and (iii) resumption of the exhortation—would have been changed, because in this unit what Paul wants is, by offering himself as a model, to confirm and consolidate the Philippians’ choice. Having renounced all previous privileges, he himself had shown that faith in Christ was infinitely more fulfilling and that it was worth following his example.

It is understandable that in 2 Cor11–12, Paul chose to respond to the criticism of the other missionaries with a periautology, for it was he who was targeted and criticized. But in Philippians, it seems that it was not only he but also the uncircumcised Philippians who were the object of criticism. The Judaizers (i) boasted that they were Jews, circumcised, sure to share in the blessings promised to Abraham (Gen 17:10–14) and (ii) invited the non-Jewish Christians of Philippi to be circumcised. If Paul responds in their place, offering himself as an example, it is to set out the features that fully justify their choice to resist the Judaizers’ request.

#### 5.5. *Why a Self-Praise and Not an Argumentation as in Galatians/Romans?*

Finally, one may wonder why Paul preferred to respond to the Judaizers’ requests with self-praise and not by taking up an argument similar to those of Galatians/Romans, showing that believers could not obtain justification and salvation by submitting to the Law and that, far from being proud of being circumcised, Jews should, on the contrary, lament not being able to do the good they want to do (cf. Romans 7:7–25). Did the Philippians already know this evidence? Had they also heard or even read the letters to the Galatians and Romans? Although several historians doubt that Paul sent each of his letters to all the churches, the faithful did not need to read Galatians and Romans to know what Paul thought about the issue, for the controversy over circumcision was the major problem the first Christian generation had to face. In my commentary, I have also shown that many words, phrases and sentences in Phil 3:2–14 allude to this problem and that if Paul does not dwell on it, it is because the Christians of Philippi knew it well.

It is also likely that, since the Judaizers had failed to convince the Philippians to be circumcised, Paul did not have to develop an argumentation. And it is no doubt because the Judaizers had insisted that, by not being circumcised, the Philippians would remain second-rate Christians that Paul wanted to show a *contrario*, by means of a periautology, that their pride was in fact an illusion. What Paul is making clear to the Philippians is that, if the Judaizers are proud, they, and he, have far better reasons to be prouder. In short, it is the question of *καύχησις*, in those days so prevalent, that best explains the use of periautology in Ph 3:2–14: the epidictic genre was somehow necessary.

A final reason also accounts for periautology and, more generally, the exemplum of Phil 3:3–14. It must not be forgotten that if Paul sets himself as an example, it is in conformity with that of Christ Jesus in Phil 2:6–11. Bianchini and I have shown that Paul is

reproducing Christ's journey in his own way and that he has also asked the Philippians to have the sentiments that were in Christ Jesus. In short, the exemplum of Phil 3 refers back to that of Phil 2.

May the preceding reflections have shown why, unlike the argumentations of Galatians and Romans, Paul preferred in Ph 3 to choose the epideictic genre of praise, so widely used to exhort and encourage.

### 5.6. Praise and Self-Praise in the Pauline Letters

Let us conclude by pointing out that in the Pauline letters, praise is used much more than one might think. I take advantage of this essay on Phil 3 to say that a passage like 1 Cor 13, for example, is a praise. In fact, it repeats the praise of the virtues as presented in the ancient textbooks translated by G. Kennedy. The praise of a virtue has three parts: (i) It shows that the virtue is morally very useful, even necessary; (ii) it says what it consists of by its action; (iii) it compares it with the other virtues—comparison (in Greek, *synkriris*) being a technique that was then in vogue—to indicate whether it is superior or inferior to them. Taking up this model, in 1 Cor 13, Paul begins by declaring that charity (*ἀγάπη*) is essential (v.1–3), then shows what it consists in through its actions (v.4–7), and ends by declaring that it is superior to the other two theological virtues, faith and hope (v.8–13). But identifying a model and showing how it is used is not enough. It is also and above all important to see in what way and to what extent it is essential to the idea developed.

## 6. Conclusions

The exegetes who have written on this periautology since the publication of my commentary and Bianchini's monograph have been more concerned with making known the periautology genre, its requirements, and its aims, with the help of ancient authors (Plutarch and Co.), than with analyzing Paul's text to confront its difficulties and issues. It was at the very least appropriate to go back to the various passages in which the apostle speaks of himself, in particular the self-praise of 2 Cor 10–13 and Phil 3:4–14 (difficult if ever there was one), to assess their relevance. In short, the exegesis of the Pauline letters can no longer be merely descriptive; it must also assess the relevance of the evidence and genres used. The exegesis of the Pauline letters still has a lot of work to do.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Substantial information can be found in Q. BREEN's the article (Breen 1957).
- <sup>2</sup> See among other articles, (Aletti 2011).
- <sup>3</sup> (Gerber 2015). (on Philippians, pp. 238–42); (Smit 2014). These authors lay more stress on the features of periautology in general than they give a detailed presentation of that of Phil 3:4–14.
- <sup>4</sup> (Kennedy 2003; see also Martin 2008); (with regard to praise, pp. 36–41).
- <sup>5</sup> It is because they are more interested today in the models used by the NT writings that exegetes have proposed praise as a model for the composition of the gospels, particularly the third one, in its three parts: (i) origin (Lk 1:5–2,21) and (ii) education (Lk 2:22–52), (iii $\alpha$ ) actions, first those relating Jesus' competence for mission with baptism and victory over temptations (Lk 3:1 to 4:13), (iii $\beta$ ) and then those of spirit and body, due to Jesus' initiative (Lk 4–21), (iii $\gamma$ ) finally those coming from fate (Lk 22–24). This is one of the reasons why, according to J. Neyrey, Luke's narrative is a praise of Jesus. See his monograph (Neyrey 2020).
- <sup>6</sup> The commentaries ask whether the Paul who became a disciple of Jesus Christ is still a Jew or not. This is a good question to which an entire article should be devoted, as it involves a careful exegesis of a number of passages in Paul's letters. Unfortunately, this essay, focusing on periautology, cannot deal with this question.



<sup>7</sup> PLUTARQUE, Περὶ τοῦ ἑαυτὸν ἐπαινεῖν ἀνεπίφθονος (539a-547f).

<sup>8</sup> For an analysis of vv.6 and 9, consult the commentaries, in particular mine on Philippians, and Bianchini's monograph.

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