

# ‘The Lord is Near’ (Phil. 4:5): Imminent Parousia or Divine Presence?

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## ABSTRACT

**Paul’s statement in Philippians 4, ‘the Lord is near’, is ambiguous. It could refer to Christ’s spatial proximity to believers, or it could reflect a belief in the imminent parousia. For a long time, the great majority of scholars have understood the statement as meaning that the Lord’s coming is near. The present article seeks to show that the most natural sense of a person’s nearness, the immediate literary context, the Old Testament background, and several other factors, point strongly towards a sense of the Lord’s spatial proximity.**

Χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε· πάλιν ἐρῶ, χαίρετε.<sup>5</sup> τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς.<sup>6</sup> μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, ἀλλ’ ἐν παντί τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει μετὰ εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν.<sup>7</sup> καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ ὑπερέχουσα πάντα νοῦν φρουρήσει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. (Phil. 4:4–7)<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of Philippians, Paul makes the pithy statement: ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς, ‘the Lord is near’ (Phil. 4:5b). Given the ambiguity of nearness, there are three main scholarly options for how to understand the statement. First, the nearness could be eschatological: the Lord’s *coming* is near, his return is imminent. Secondly, the nearness could instead be spatial:

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<sup>1</sup> Greek biblical text is taken from NA28 for the New Testament and Rahlfs-Hanhart for the Septuagint; English translations are my own.

the Lord is near to or close by believers in the present. Thirdly, several commentators aver that Paul is or could be implying both of these at the same time.

Amidst these options, the first, the eschatological interpretation, is by far the majority view. Already in 1886, Chambers remarked: ‘Most commentators, beginning with Chrysostom and Theodoret, and including Bengel, Storr, De Wette, Alford, Meyer, Ellicott, Eadie, Wiesinger, Lightfoot, Lumby, Barry &c., take the phrase as referring to the advent’.<sup>2</sup> Dodd in 1934 noted that the words ‘are often taken’ this way.<sup>3</sup> For Caird in 1976 a reference to the parousia was ‘the commonly accepted understanding’.<sup>4</sup> By 1992 this view was, according to Chapple, an ‘overwhelming consensus’.<sup>5</sup> Such statements could be multiplied. Perhaps the commentator who has the fullest coverage of secondary literature is Reumann, who in 2008 noted that the reference to the second coming of Christ was the view of ‘most exegetes’.<sup>6</sup> Nor is this view tentatively held. To take a sample from English-language, German and Francophone scholarship, Phil. 4:5b is ‘certainly to be taken in this temporal sense’, it is ‘inspirée sans doute de l’araméen Maranatha’, and is ‘zweifellos im zeitlichen Sinne gemeint’.<sup>7</sup> Such levels of certainty are also reflected in the two most substantial recent commentaries, of Holloway and Standhartinger, who do not note any view other than the eschatological.<sup>8</sup>

Despite this current *status quaestionis*, the present article will argue that there are in fact a number of cracks in the eschatological interpretation, and various points in favour of the spatial reading. Some of these have been pointed out before, but this study will develop the existing arguments and extend them with some fresh observations in favour of the spatial meaning and in response to arguments for the eschatological reading. The article will be divided into four sections. The [first section](#) covers the weaknesses of the eschatological interpretation of nearness, the [second](#) the strengths of the spatial interpretation. [Section 3](#) addresses the hybrid view of Phil. 4:5b, according to which the statement is both spatial and eschatological. Finally, [Section 4](#) examines some of the implications for spatiality in Paul.

<sup>2</sup> T. W. Chambers, ‘ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς, Philip.iv.5’, *Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis* 6.2 (1886), pp. 108–10 (108–109).

<sup>3</sup> C. H. Dodd, ‘The Mind of Paul: Change and Development’, *BJRL* 18 (1934), pp. 69–110, at 96.

<sup>4</sup> G. B. Caird, *Paul’s Letters from Prison: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> Allan Chapple, “‘The Lord Is Near’ (Philippians 4:5b)”, in D. Peterson and J. Pryor (eds.), *In the Fullness of Time: Biblical Studies in Honour of Archbishop Donald Robinson* (Homebush West: Lancer, 1992), pp. 149–65, at 149.

<sup>6</sup> John Reumann, *Philippians* (Anchor; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 613.

<sup>7</sup> Francis W. Beare, *Philippians* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1959), p. 146; Jean-François Collange, *L’Épître de Saint Paul aux Philippiens* (CNT; Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1973), p. 126; Gerhard Barth, *Der Brief an die Philipper* (ZBk; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1979), p. 73.

<sup>8</sup> Paul A. Holloway, *Philippians* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), p. 183; Angela Standhartinger, *Der Philipperbrief* (HNT; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021), p. 274. Similarly, e.g. Florentinus Ogara, ‘Dominus prope est’, *Verbum Domini* 16 (1936), pp. 353–9, at 357; Joseph Plevnik, *Paul and the Parousia* (Peabody: Hendricksen, 1997), pp. 159, 227, 275, 279. For a fuller list of those taking the eschatological view, see Heinz Giesen, ‘Eschatology in Philippians’, in Stanley Porter (ed.), *Paul and his Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 217–82, at 268 n. 402. More recently, see Paula Fredriksen, *Paul: The Pagans’ Apostle* (New Haven: Yale, 2017), p. 131.

## 1. PROBLEMS WITH THE ESCHATOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

### 1.1. Ἐγγύς in temporal contexts

As is well known, ἔγγυς can mean ‘near’ in either a spatial or a temporal sense, and the eschatological interpretation of Phil. 4:5b evidently depends on the latter. As we will see both here and in [Section 2.1](#), however, the distribution of the usages of ἔγγυς is by no means even, and so the choice is not a 50/50 decision in the way that is sometimes suggested.<sup>9</sup>

I have adopted as samples the usage of ἔγγυς in (1) the Septuagint, (2) the New Testament, (3) the Apostolic Fathers, (4) the Greek Pseudepigrapha, (5) Philo, (6) Josephus, and (7) Plutarch’s *Lives*. (1)–(6) include the comparatives ἐγγύτερος/ἐγγίω and superlatives ἐγγύτατος/ἐγγιστα, as well as ἐγγύθεν; for Plutarch, only the positive ἔγγυς is included, to make the sample of a more manageable size.<sup>10</sup> The full statistics and references are provided in the [Appendix](#).

There are two points to make here, of which the second is the more significant. First, the numbers of instances of ἔγγυς in a temporal sense are as follows:

#### *Total cases of ἔγγυς*

- (1) LXX: Temporal usages 13/63
- (2) NT: Temporal usages 16/30
- (3) Ap. Fathers: Temporal usages 4/21
- (4) Philo: Temporal usages 1 (+ 3?)/78
- (5) Josephus: Temporal usages 1/53
- (6) Gk Pseud.: Temporal usages 7/22
- (7) Plutarch: Temporal usages 5/119

The first point to observe is that the Septuagint and New Testament are relatively unusual in having quite a high proportion of temporal usages of ἔγγυς.

The second point is more interesting for our purposes. That is, these temporal usages can be subdivided between (i) those instances which have personal subjects and refer to persons being near, and (ii) those instances which have impersonal subjects and refer to events and other actions being near. We will focus here on the numbers for personal subjects of ἔγγυς in its temporal sense:

#### *Temporal usages of ἔγγυς*

- (1) LXX: Personal = 1/13 (out of a total of 63)
- (2) NT: Personal = 0–2?/16 (out of a total of 30)
- (3) Ap. Fathers: Personal = 2/4 (out of a total of 21)
- (4) Philo: Personal = 0–1?/1 + 3? (out of a total of 78)
- (5) Josephus: Personal = 0/1 (out of a total of 53)
- (6) Gk Pseud.: Personal = 1/7 (out of a total of 22)
- (7) Plutarch: Personal = 0/5 (out of a total of 119)

We can see here that instances where a person is described as ἔγγυς in the sense of being *near in time* are thin on the ground across all these corpora/works. In the Septuagint, which has a relatively large number of temporal uses of ἔγγυς, a large proportion of these refer to the nearness of the day of the Lord, or a similar moment of judgment or salvation. The only case

<sup>9</sup> This is perhaps especially implied by those who take the ‘both-and’ interpretation, on which see [Section 3](#) below.

<sup>10</sup> There are also five instances of σύνεγγυς in the Septuagint, all of which are spatial.

where there is a high proportion is the Apostolic Fathers, but the numbers are too small to be statistically significant. Section 2.1 below presents the data in a different manner, where the results are even more striking.

Highlighting the 16 temporal instances of ἐγγύς in the New Testament, some, namely those in John's Gospel, are quotidian examples of a festival coming soon.<sup>11</sup> One, in Matthew, refers to the nearness of Jesus' 'time', i.e. his death (Matt. 26:18). There are also New Testament references to the nearness of final salvation and the eschatological καιρός, as in the Septuagint.<sup>12</sup> No instance clearly refers to persons being near to arriving. The only possible exceptions are Mark 13:29, and its parallel at Matt. 24:33:

Mark 13:29: οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ὅταν ἴδῃτε ταῦτα γινόμενα, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἐπὶ θύραις.

Matt. 24:33: οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς, ὅταν ἴδῃτε πάντα ταῦτα, γινώσκετε ὅτι ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἐπὶ θύραις.

The question is of who or what is ἐγγύς in these cases, and whether the subject is personal or impersonal. This is debated because there is no subject specified. In the preceding parable, it is τὸ θέρος which is near (Matt. 24:32; Mark 13:28; Luke 21:30). In the application of the parable, Luke interprets his source(s) as referring to the nearness of the kingdom of God (Luke 21:31). In Matthew and Mark, the subject could be the Son of Man, in which case these would be personal-temporal applications of ἐγγύς (hence '2?' above); alternatively, the subject could be an event corresponding to τὸ θέρος in the parable, whether that is understood to refer to the eschaton or to an event to do with the fall of the Jerusalem temple (hence '0–2?').<sup>13</sup> The matter is further complicated by the fact that the nearness is expressed through a metaphor: 'know that he/it is near, at the door/gates'. The reference to the doorway does not necessitate a personal subject, because the door is obviously metaphorical: we can see the same idiom in Philo's supposition of war being at hand, at the door (ὁ πόλεμος ἐγγύς καὶ ἐπὶ θύραις ὦν, *Agr.* 148).<sup>14</sup> Here the subject, war, is personified as having come on a journey.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, perhaps both temporal and spatial dimensions are in view.

To summarize the key conclusion here, in cases where we are dealing with temporal nearness, it is most commonly a *time* or an *event* which is near, not a person.<sup>16</sup> The same is true for the verb ἐγγίζω, which in its 188 usages in the Septuagint and New Testament is almost always spatial.<sup>17</sup> The verb is also used in eschatological contexts, but in those

<sup>11</sup> John 2:13; 6:4; 7:2; 11:55.

<sup>12</sup> Rom. 13:11; Rev. 1:3; 22:10.

<sup>13</sup> For the purposes of this article, I am leaving the question open. On Mark 13:29, compare the different views of e.g. R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p. 538, and Warren Carter, *Mark* (Wisdom Commentary; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2019), p. 367.

<sup>14</sup> I glossed over this too quickly in my initial survey of the Philonic evidence, and am grateful to the anonymous *JTS* reader for bringing it to my attention. Similar is Philo, *Agr.* 161: there is a kind of ignorance which is 'near and next-door neighbour' (ἐγγύς καὶ ἀρχιθύρον) to knowledge.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Philo, *Mos.* 1.275, which is categorized as either spatial or personal in the Appendix.

<sup>16</sup> Chambers, 'ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς', *Philip.iv.5'*, p. 110; Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison*, p. 150; Ben Witherington III, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994), p. 112; Allan Chapple, 'The Fantasy of the Frantic Apostle: Paul and the Parousia', *Themelios* 47 (2022), pp. 288–302.

<sup>17</sup> The only instance of a personal subject with a temporal reference to ἐγγίζω that I can see in the Septuagint is Isa. 26:17: 'And as a woman in travail is about to give birth (ὡς ἡ ὠδίνουσα ἐγγίξει τεκεῖν) and cries out in her pangs, so were we to your beloved because of the fear of you, O Lord'. Of course, here the woman is not

cases the subject is never a person.<sup>18</sup> As we have seen, it is not impossible for a person to be near in time, but it is *a priori* unlikely. There is only one clear case of a person being temporally ἐγγύς among the 93 instances in total of ἐγγύς in the Septuagint and New Testament, two in the Apostolic Fathers, one in the Greek Pseudepigrapha, and none in Philo, Josephus or Plutarch.

## 1.2. The immediately adjacent literary context of Phil. 4:5b

Scholars have linked an eschatological sense of ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς with other elements in Phil. 4:4–6.

*Verse 4.* First, a number have seen the imminent coming of Christ as a motivation for the joy previously mentioned in verse 4: χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε· πάλιν ἐρῶ, χαίρετε. Von Soden states that the near return of Christ is a source of joy, and is followed in this by various commentators, including Karl Barth.<sup>19</sup> Of course there is nothing objectionable in the possibility that the prospect of the second advent should occasion joy, but there is nothing in Philippians 4 particularly in its favour either. Against it is the fact that between verse 4 and 5b comes verse 5a (τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις), which would rather interrupt the logic.

*Verse 5a.* The text immediately following, ('Let your gentle kindness be known to all people'), is therefore a more plausible candidate.<sup>20</sup> The difficulty with the logic of 'τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις because ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς', however, lies in the problem of what τὸ ἐπιεικὲς means. Dictionaries like LSJ give wide semantic ranges both for the adjective ἐπιεικής, covering capacity (*able, capable*), morality (*reasonable, fair, good*), legality (*fair, equitable, not according to the letter of the law*) and for the noun ἐπιεικεία (*reasonableness, equity, fairness, goodness, virtuousness, clemency*). The main division for our purposes is whether τὸ ἐπιεικὲς here refers to 'patient forbearance' (thus Lightfoot) or a 'gracious spirit' (Holloway).<sup>21</sup>

The glosses 'patient forbearance' (Lightfoot) or 'patient steadfastness' (Reumann) are not obvious, not being noted in the standard dictionaries. The problem with 'forbearance' is that

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'near' in an eschatological sense, or in the sense of her advent; this is an instance of an idiom which is found elsewhere: for the examples in Plutarch, see n. 115 below.

<sup>18</sup> In the New Testament, the subjects of ἐγγίζω in eschatological contexts are: ἡ βασιλεία (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9, 11)—though references to the nearness of the kingdom may be spatial; ὁ καιρὸς (Luke 21:8); ἡ ἀπολύτρωσις (Luke 21:28); ἡ ἡμέρα (Rom. 13:12; Heb. 10:25); ἡ παρουσία (James 5:8); and τὸ τέλος (1 Pet. 4:7).

<sup>19</sup> Hermann von Soden, *Der Brief des Apostels Paulus an die Philipper* (Freiburg: Mohr Siebeck, 1889), p. 86; Jacobus J. Müller, *The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), p. 141; Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (London: SCM, 1962), p. 121; Joachim Gnilka, *Der Philipperbrief* (HtKNT, 4<sup>th</sup> edn.; Freiburg: Herder, 1968), p. 169; U. B. Müller, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Philipper* (THNT, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2002), p. 30; Gerald Hawthorne, *Philippians* (WBC, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.; Waco: Word, 2004), p. 245.

<sup>20</sup> E.g., in addition to those noted below, Standhartinger, *Philipperbrief*, p. 274. Peter O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 489–90 sees it going backwards and forwards.

<sup>21</sup> We leave aside here the other question, less to do with semantics, of whether ἐπιεικεία concerns the attitude of a social superior to an inferior, which is not at issue in Phil. 4:5. See Ragnar Leivestad, "The Meekness and Gentleness of Christ" II Cor. X. 1', *NTS* 13 (1965), pp. 156–64 on this question.

it has at least two senses in English: ‘patient endurance under provocation’ and ‘abstinence from enforcing what is due’.<sup>22</sup> Ἐπιείκεια corresponds to the latter but not really to the former; it is possible that some English-speaking scholarship has confused the two by thinking in terms of this ambiguous gloss ‘forbearance’.<sup>23</sup> In Paul’s day, the most common senses appear to be of gentleness and kindness.

In relation to gentleness, one very common pairing is ἐπιείκεια with πραΰτης.<sup>24</sup> Ἐπιείκεια can be contrasted with ‘by force of spear’;<sup>25</sup> *Diognetus* contrasts ‘by tyranny, fear and terror’ with ἐπιείκεια καὶ πραΰτης.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, LXX Esther: ‘not presumptuous and confident in my authority, but quite ἐπιεικής and with gentleness’.<sup>27</sup> Or again, in *1 Clement*, ‘audacity and wilfulness and recklessness belong to those cursed by God; ἐπιείκεια and humility and meekness to those blessed by him’.<sup>28</sup> *1 Clement* is fond of the pairing ἐπιείκεια καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνη.<sup>29</sup>

In relation to kindness, ἐπιεικής and ἐπιείκεια in the Septuagint are coupled twice with χρηστός and twice with φιλανθρωπία/φιλάνθρωπος.<sup>30</sup> The quality of ‘mercy’ is quite close to ἐπιείκεια, since mercy entails not only kindness but also the restraint from what in a strict sense might be required. Hence ἐπιεικής and ἐπιείκεια can be paired with sparing (φειδώ) or showing pity (οἰκτιρμός), compassion (εὐσπλαγχνος), and mercy (ἔλεος).<sup>31</sup>

To return to Phil. 4:5, then, scholars who take ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς as eschatological and accept this sense of τὸ ἐπιεικές (‘gentle kindness’) see the logic as follows: ‘the readers will be gracious since the Lord is coming to vindicate their cause’.<sup>32</sup> Or, ‘The second consolatory exhortation looks to the promise of vindication in the near future as grounds for maintaining a “gracious spirit” now... . The nearness of the end promises that any self-sacrifice will be brief’.<sup>33</sup> This logic makes sense, but it is a rationalization of an exegetical decision already taken rather than contributory evidence.

*Verse 6a.* For other scholars, the logic runs from imminent eschatology to the very beginning of verse 6: from ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς to μηδὲν μεριμνάτε. ‘Because “the Lord is near”, Christians are

<sup>22</sup> OED s.v. §2 and §3a.

<sup>23</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1869), p. 158: ‘The Lord is at hand. The nearness of the Lord’s advent is assigned as a reason for patient forbearance’. Cf. Alfred Plummer, *A Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians* (London: R. Scott, 1919), p. 93: ‘The Lord is at hand. Therefore be peaceful and patient’.

<sup>24</sup> 2 Cor. 10:1; *1 Clem.* 30.8; *Diog.* 7.3–4; Plutarch, *Vit. Caes.* 57.3; *Vit. Pyrrh.* 23; *Vit. Per.* 39.

<sup>25</sup> *3 Macc.* 3.15: ἡγήσάμεθα μὴ βία δόρατος, ἐπιεικεία δὲ καὶ πολλή φιλανθρωπία τίθησασθαι τὰ κατοικοῦντα Κοίλην Συρίαν καὶ Φοινίκην ἔθνη, εὖ ποιήσαι τε ἀσμένως.

<sup>26</sup> *Diog.* 7.3: ἐπὶ τυραννίδι καὶ φόβῳ καὶ καταπλήξει vs ἐν ἐπιεικείᾳ καὶ πραΰτητι.

<sup>27</sup> Esth. 13:2 (B2): μὴ τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐπαιρόμενος ἐπιεικέστερον δὲ καὶ μετὰ ἠπιότητος.

<sup>28</sup> *1 Clem.* 30.8: θράσος καὶ αὐθάδεια καὶ τόλμα τοῖς καταπραμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἐπιείκεια καὶ ταπεινοφροσύνη καὶ πραΰτης παρὰ τοῖς ἠλόγημένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

<sup>29</sup> *1 Clem.* 30.8; 56.1; 58.2: ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ μετ’ ἐκτενοῦς ἐπιεικείας.

<sup>30</sup> Ps. 85:5; Ps. Sol. 5.12/14 (χρηστός); *2 Macc.* 9.27; *3 Macc.* 3.15 (φιλανθρώπ-).

<sup>31</sup> Wis. 12.18 (ἐπιείκεια + φειδώ); *Bar.* 2.27 (ἐπιείκεια + οἰκτιρμός); Dan. 3:42 (ἐπιείκεια + ἔλεος); *1 Clem.* 29.1 (ἐπιεικής + εὐσπλαγχνος).

<sup>32</sup> Ralph Martin, *Philippians* (NCB, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.; London: Oliphants, 1980), p. 155.

<sup>33</sup> Holloway, *Philippians*, p. 183.

liberated from worry'.<sup>34</sup> Again, this is a perfectly reasonable conclusion, but it does not rise above the level of the possible.

In sum, there are various ways in which it might be *plausible* to understand the imminence of the parousia as an ethical motivation—for joy (4:4), for gracious kindness (4:5a) or for freedom from anxiety (4:6a). However, because of Paul's staccato syntax in verses 4–6, with not a γάρ or οὖν in sight, it is hard to conclude that there is any such logic at work in the absence of further evidence beyond that of consistency.<sup>35</sup>

### 1.3. The near literary context

Relatedly, one can make a brief point about the paragraph as a whole (Phil. 4:1–9). In this section there is no other hint at eschatology which might be thought to reinforce the idea that verse 5 refers to the parousia. The evidence in fact points in the other direction: verses 4–5a and 6 refer to the present, and verse 7 to the quotidian future. Of course, one can appeal to the wider context of Philippians, but Philippians is not unusually eschatological for a Pauline letter. As Osiek comments: 'while there have been eschatological statements in Philippians (1:10; 3:20–21), the apocalyptic perspective has not been dominant'.<sup>36</sup>

### 1.4. The weakness of the argument from general consistency

One of the disappointing features of the arguments made for the eschatological sense of ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς is that, rather than commentators offering positive arguments, the case is too often based on the general consistency of a reference to the parousia in Phil. 4:5 with Paul's thought more broadly, as well as with early Christian *Naherwartung* in general. Dibelius sees Phil. 4:5 as equivalent to 1 Cor. 16:22 and Rev. 22:20.<sup>37</sup> More recently, Cousar's formulation is fairly typical: 'In light of the eschatological emphasis of the New Testament community, the stress seems to fall more likely on the second advent of the Lord (cf. 1 Cor 16.22 and, in particular, Phil 3.20)'.<sup>38</sup> Gnllka justifies the eschatological interpretation on the grounds that 'begegnet der Ausblick auf die Parusie doch auch in anderen Briefausleitungen'.<sup>39</sup> Similarly Reumann: 'The parousia sense ... fits Paul's eschatology and references in Phil to "the Day of Christ"'.<sup>40</sup>

As already suggested by these references to 1 Cor. 16:22, scholars often compare Phil. 4:5b to the cry of *Maranatha*.<sup>41</sup> This is an especially strained parallel, because it can hardly be

<sup>34</sup> Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1998), p. 246. Similarly, Marvin Vincent, *Philippians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), p. 134: 'Be not anxious. The Lord is at hand'.

<sup>35</sup> Jörg Baumgarten, *Paulus und die Apokalypitik* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1975), p. 207.

<sup>36</sup> Carolyn Osiek, *Philippians, Philemon* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), p. 116. Pace e.g. Charles Cousar, *Philippians and Philemon* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), p. 85, appealing to Phil. 3:20 as a parallel. Similarly, K. Barth, *Philippians*, p. 121. Reumann, *Philippians*, p. 635 adduces Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16.

<sup>37</sup> Martin Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher I & II, An die Philipper* (HNT, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1937), p. 94.

<sup>38</sup> Cousar, *Philippians*, p. 85.

<sup>39</sup> Gnllka, *Philippenerbrief*, p. 169.

<sup>40</sup> Reumann, *Philippians*, p. 635.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 158; A.T. Robertson, *Paul's Joy in Christ: Studies in Philippians* (New York: Revel, 1917), p. 234; Beare, *Philippians*, p. 146; Joachim Gnllka (et al.), *The Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians and Ephesians* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1978), p. 65; Martin, *Philippians*, p. 155; O'Brien, *Philippians*, p. 489.

maintained that ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς and *Maranatha* are simply synonymous.<sup>42</sup> Even Lightfoot (*quandocumque bonus dormitat Homerus*) takes them as equivalent: “The expression “The Lord is at hand” is the Apostle’s watchword. In I Cor. xvi. 22 an Aramaic equivalent is given, *Maran Atha*, whence we may infer that it was a familiar form of mutual recognition and warning in the early Church”.<sup>43</sup> As noted already in the introduction, Collange sees Paul’s formulation in Phil. 4:5 as inspired by the *Maranatha* cry.<sup>44</sup> Most recently, Standhartinger considers that ‘the Lord is near’ belongs to the earliest Christian confessions, adding the parallel of *Maranatha*.<sup>45</sup> If Rev. 22:20 (ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ) is a helpful guide, *Maranatha* is an invocation of the Lord, a prayer for the parousia to happen, whereas ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς in Phil. 4:5b is a verbless statement with no reference to coming.<sup>46</sup> To supply a verb with the aid of *Maranatha* is precisely to beg the question.

### 1.5. Reception

For Lightfoot, a decisive parallel to Phil. 4:5 is *Barn. 22.3*: ‘Near is the day, on which everything will be destroyed with the Evil One. The Lord is near, as is his reward’ (ἐγγύς ἡ ἡμέρα ἐν ἣ συναπολείται πάντα τῷ πονηρῷ. ἐγγύς ὁ Κύριος καὶ ὁ μισθός αὐτοῦ).<sup>47</sup> This shows that it is of course not impossible to use the phrase ἐγγύς ὁ Κύριος/ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς in an eschatological sense. *Barnabas* here, however, is dependent upon Rev. 22:12 (Ἴδού ἔρχομαι ταχύ, καὶ ὁ μισθός μου μετ’ ἐμοῦ), as well as perhaps on Phil. 4:5. On the other hand, however, the other close parallel in the ‘Apostolic Fathers’ has a spatial sense. In the *Shepherd*, Hermas cites from the book of Eldad and Modat: ‘The Lord is near to those who turn to him’ (ἐγγύς κύριος τοῖς ἐπιστρεφόμενοις).<sup>48</sup> Therefore the reception of language of the Lord’s nearness is not decisive one way or the other.<sup>49</sup>

### 1.6. Conclusion

In sum, despite the huge popularity of the eschatological reading of Phil. 4:5, scholars who take this line pay insufficient attention to the serious problems with it.

<sup>42</sup> Baumgarten, *Paulus und die Apokalypitik*, p. 205.

<sup>43</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 158.

<sup>44</sup> Collange, *Philippiens*, p. 126.

<sup>45</sup> Standhartinger, *Philippenerbrief*, p. 274.

<sup>46</sup> Also *Did.* 10.5–6, where verse 5 provides the eschatological context, and verse 6 the invocation *Maranatha*.

<sup>47</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 158.

<sup>48</sup> Hermas, *Shep.* 7.4; cf. also *1 Clem.* 21.3: ‘Let us realize how near he is (ἰδωμεν πῶς ἐγγύς ἐστίν), and that nothing escapes him, either of our thoughts or of the plans that we make’.

<sup>49</sup> Hereafter, the early reception of Phil. 4:5b is limited. There is a peculiar reference to it in Clement, *Protr.* 9: ὁ κύριος ἤγγικεν, λέγων, εὐλαβείσθε μὴ καταληφθῶμεν κενοί. Here the context is both eschatological nearness (ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν) and spatial nearness (ἐπιστρέφει τοὺς ἀνθρώπους πλησιάζοντας τῷ φόβῳ). After that the next reference, in Athanasius’ *Festal Letter* 1 (329 CE), is also a very loose reference, quoting Paul as writing: *Ad omnia parati, nihil solliciti simus; Dominus prope est* (PG 26.1365C; the Syriac reads differently: *The Festal Epistles of S. Athanasius* [Oxford: Parker, 1854], p. 12). After this, according to BiblIndex, there is no exegesis of Phil. 4:5b before the late fourth century: see e.g. Ambrosiaster, on Phil. 2:5–7, in G. Bray, tr. *Ambrosiaster: Commentaries on Galatians—Philemon* (ACCS; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009), p. 78, and John Chrysostom, *Virg.* 73. The Fathers almost invariably read and/or cite ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε as an isolated unit, and understand a reference to the parousia.

## 2. ADVANTAGES OF THE SPATIAL INTERPRETATION

By contrast, the spatial interpretation, which is so often dismissed or even ignored, has a number of advantages and no substantial weaknesses.<sup>50</sup>

### 2.1. Ἐγγύς in personal–spatial contexts

Rather than repeat the discussion of Ἐγγύς in temporal contexts above (Section 1.1), we can simply note briefly the proportions from the other angle. (Again, full statistics and references are supplied in the Appendix.) We can highlight the point that in cases where—as in Phil. 4:5—a person is Ἐγγύς, in the great majority of cases, the sense is spatial:

*Personal usages of Ἐγγύς*

- (1) LXX: Spatial = 24/25 (out of a total of 63)
- (2) NT: Spatial = 4 + 0–2?/6 (out of a total of 30)
- (3) Ap. Fathers: Spatial = 11/13 (out of a total of 21)
- (4) Philo: Spatial = 24 + 0–1?/24–25 (out of a total of 78)
- (5) Josephus: Spatial = 32/32 (out of a total of 53)
- (6) Gk Pseud.: Spatial = 13/14 (out of a total of 22)
- (7) Plutarch: Spatial = 79/79 (out of a total of 119)

It is clear here, then, that in coming to a case where a personal subject is Ἐγγύς, the reader would be primed to assume a local, spatial nearness, rather than a temporal one.<sup>51</sup>

### 2.2. The Old Testament background and literary context of Phil. 4:5b

The main objection noted above to the construal of the logical relations of Phil. 4:5b (in Section 1.2) was that they were all plausible, but nothing more than that, having no positive arguments in their favour. On the other hand, in the case of a spatial meaning for ὁ κύριος Ἐγγύς, we have a literary context that is not only consistent with the spatial reading, but also provides further evidence for it.

The fit with the literary context is the connection between ὁ κύριος Ἐγγύς and verse 6—not only the very beginning of the verse, but the whole sentence: ‘The Lord is near: do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation let your requests be known to God in prayer and petition, with thanksgiving’ (ὁ κύριος Ἐγγύς· μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε, ἀλλ’ ἐν παντὶ τῇ προσευχῇ καὶ τῇ δεήσει μετ’ εὐχαριστίας τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν). There is a

<sup>50</sup> Advocates of the spatial reading of Phil. 4:5b include John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1851), p. 118; Chambers, ‘ὁ κύριος Ἐγγύς, Phil. iv.5’; H. C. G. Moule, *Thoughts on the Spiritual Life* (London: Seeley, 1887), pp. 55–6; J. Moffatt, ‘The History of Joy: A Brief Exposition of Phil. IV.4–7 (R.V.)’, *ExpTim* 9.7 (April 1898), pp. 334–6, at 335; U. Holzmeister, ‘“Gaudete in Domino semper” (Phil 4, 4–9)’, *Verbum Domini* 4 (1924), pp. 358–62, at 360; C. H. Dodd, ‘The Mind of Paul: Change and Development’, *BJRL* 18 (1934), pp. 69–110, at 96; G. Klein, ‘Apokalyptische Naherwartung bei Paulus’, in O. Betz and L. Schottroff (eds.), *Neues Testament und christliche Existenz* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973), pp. 241–62, at 259; Caird, *Paul’s Letters from Prison*, pp. 150–1; C. B. Bugg, ‘Philippians 4:4–13’, *RevExp* 88 (1991), pp. 253–7, at 254; Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi*, p. 112; Chapple, ‘“The Lord Is Near” (Philippians 4:5b)’; Chapple, ‘The Fantasy of the Frantic Apostle’; Osiek, *Philippians*, p. 116; Giesen, ‘Eschatology in Philippians’, pp. 267–8; Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, ‘Eschatology in Philippians’, in Jan van der Watt (ed.), *Eschatology of the New Testament and Some Related Documents* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), pp. 269–82, at 278–9.

<sup>51</sup> Pace Moisés Silva, *Philippians* (WEC; Chicago: Moody Press, 1988), p. 227.

clear logical plausibility here: one can pray to God *because the Lord is near*. Either Paul is blurring God and Christ here, or thinking of Christ as mediator or co-recipient of prayer.<sup>52</sup>

The positive evidence for this reading consists of the various Old Testament passages which make precisely the same connection. Already in his commentary on Philippians, Calvin adduced Psalm 145, and later scholars added Psalms 34 and 119.<sup>53</sup>

The Lord is near (ἐγγύς Κύριος) to all who call upon him,  
to all who call upon him in truth.  
He will fulfil the desires of those who fear him,  
and will hear their petitions (τῆς δεήσεως αὐτῶν) and save them.  
(Ps. 144:18–19 LXX [Heb. 145])

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,  
and his ears are attentive to their petition (εἰς δεήσιν αὐτῶν).  
But the Lord's face is against evildoers,  
to destroy remembrance of them from the earth.  
The righteous cried, and the Lord listened to them,  
he rescued them from all their afflictions.  
The Lord is near (ἐγγύς Κύριος) to the broken-hearted,  
and will save those humble in spirit.  
(Ps. 33:16–19 LXX [Heb. 34:15–18])

Hear my voice, O Lord, according to your mercy;  
by your judgment quicken me.  
Those who persecute me with lawlessness drew near,  
but they were put far from your law.  
You are near, O Lord (ἐγγύς εἶ, Κύριε), and all your ways are truth.  
(Ps. 118:149–151 LXX [Heb. 119])

Notably, in all these passages (1) God is called ‘the Lord’, (2) he is described as ‘near’, and (3) this nearness means that the righteous can pray to him.<sup>54</sup> One might add that (4) in the first two cases above, the relevant phrases are—like Phil. 4:5b—verbless third-person examples. Furthermore, one might point to (5) the lexical link that *δέησις* appears in Phil. 4:6 and in those first two cases.

In addition to these widely quoted passages from the Psalms, there are numerous other places with the same collocation of the Lord's nearness to those who pray:

What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? (Deut. 4:7, quoted in e.g. Philo, *Migr.* 56)

The Lord is far from the wicked,  
but he hears the prayer of the righteous. (Prov. 15:29)

<sup>52</sup> Cf. e.g. Rom. 1:8; Phil. 4:23; 1 Thess. 3:11–13; 5:28; 2 Thess. 2:16–17; Phlm 25.

<sup>53</sup> Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul*, 118; see e.g. O'Brien, *Philippians*, p. 489, for one example of a scholar who notes all three. For a full survey of parallels, esp. in the Psalms, see Chapple, ‘The Lord is Near’.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. C. B. Bugg, ‘Philippians 4:4–13’, *RevExp* 88 (1991), pp. 253–7, at 254; Chapple, ‘The Lord is Near’, p. 158; Osiek, *Philippians*, p. 116.

Seek the Lord, and call upon him while he may be found,  
when he comes near to you. (Isa. 55:6 LXX)<sup>55</sup>

You came near [LXX + to help me on the day] when I called you,  
and you said, ‘Do not fear’. (Lam. 3:57)

And she bore a son for him and he called him Nebaioth because, she said, ‘The Lord was near  
to me when I called to him’. (*Jub.* 17.14)

This class of men lives not far from God, keeping always before its eyes the beautiful things  
of heaven, and being guided in all its ways by heavenly love; so that if anyone were to in-  
quire of what character a great nation is, one might very properly answer—it is a nation  
whose most sacred prayers God hears, and to whose invocations, proceeding as they do  
from a pure conscience, he gladly draws near. (Philo, *Praem.* 84)

Apart from this general theme, the similarity between Phil. 4:5b–6 and the three Psalms ini-  
tially cited (especially the first two) is striking. As a result, in addition to the logical connec-  
tion between 4:5b and 4:6 which makes a link between the Lord’s nearness and prayer  
plausible, there is the positive evidence that this connection is made in very similar language  
in the Psalms, a fact of which Paul was no doubt aware.<sup>56</sup>

### 2.3. Requests in the presence of God (verse 6)

A further point in favour of understanding ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς as referring to divine nearness is the  
phrase τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν in the following verse. This is naturally put into  
English as ‘let your requests be known to God’, as I have put it above. But such a translation  
may well miss the force of the phrase. Although the standard English translations may seem  
natural enough, there is—as far as I can see—no attestation of γνωρίζω (pass.) + πρὸς + acc. in  
the sense of ‘be known to’.<sup>57</sup> The normal ways of saying that X is known to Y, i.e. Y is ac-  
quainted with X, are as follows:<sup>58</sup>

γνωρίζω (pass.) + πρὸς + gen.

οὐκέτι οὐδὲ **γνωρίζομαι πρὸς αὐτῶν** οὐδὲ προσβλέπουσιν οἱ τέως ὑποπτῆσοντες καὶ προσκυνούντες καὶ  
τοῦ ἐμοῦ νεύματος ἀπηρτημένοι.

I am no longer **recognized by them**, nor do those, who formerly covered and bowed before  
me and depended on my nod, even look at me. (Lucian, *Tim.* 5)

γνωρίζω (pass.) + dat.

ἢ τί δὴ ποτε **τοῖς πάλαι προσδεχομένοις** οὐ **γνωρίζεται**;

<sup>55</sup> Rabbinic discussion of the Hebrew text of this verse notes the paradox of God’s invariable nearness to  
Israel in Deuteronomy 4, in contrast to the apparent conditionality of it in Isaiah 55. One explanation given  
is that God is always near to Israel as a nation, but his nearness to individuals is conditional (*b. RH* 18a; *b.*  
*Yeb.* 49b).

<sup>56</sup> Further on the literary context, as Klein notes, the whole passage concerns the present: see Klein,  
‘Apokalyptische Naherwartung bei Paulus’, p. 259. See also Section 1.3 above.

<sup>57</sup> Based on TLG searches of (ε)γνωρι- and πρὸς within 10 words of each other, up to the end of the second  
century.

<sup>58</sup> The first two are noted in LSJ.

Or, what god is ever not **recognized by those who have been long expecting him?**  
(Celsus, ap. Origen, *Cels.* 2.75)

γνωρίζω (*pass.*) + ὑπό + *gen.*

παρήγεν αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν Λάβανον, καὶ **γνωρισθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ μήτρως** αὐτὸς τε ἀδεῆς ἦν.

Rebecca brought Jacob to Laban, and since **he was recognized by his uncle** he feared nothing. (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.293)

Given these common ways of expressing ‘X is known to Y’, it is surprising that Paul should use none of them.<sup>59</sup>

Paul’s meaning, then, may well be something a little different from the standard translation. Another common meaning of *πρὸς* + *acc.* is ‘in the presence of’, with *πρὸς τὸν θεόν* therefore meaning something like ‘before God’.<sup>60</sup> In another case, Paul writes in 2 Cor. 3:4: ‘such confidence we have through Christ before God (*πρὸς τὸν θεόν*)’. The Paul of Acts states: ‘I strive to keep my conscience clear before God and man (*πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους*) always’ (Acts 24:16). Or similarly in 1 John 3:21: ‘Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God (*πρὸς τὸν θεόν*)’. Given the lack of evidence that *γνωρίζω* (*pass.*) + *πρὸς* + *acc.* means ‘to be known to’, then, the *coram deo* sense is more likely.

It would of course not be unknown for Paul to use quirky Greek. If he means what he says, however, then the logic of verses 5–6 is stronger still: since the Lord is near, your prayers can be recognized *in the presence of* God.<sup>61</sup>

## 2.4. The imperial lens

An interesting further argument is made by Popkes.<sup>62</sup> He argues on Phil. 4:5 that, if one prioritizes the context of early Christian expectation, then one might incline towards the eschatological sense of the Lord (and his coming) being near. On the other hand, against the background of the political situation in Philippi, then one should take into account that the Roman empire was, as Keith Hopkins put it, ‘a world full of gods’. Or as Popkes remarks: ‘Through statues, coins, decrees and institutions of various kinds, the emperor was constantly “near”, omnipresent’.<sup>63</sup> He concludes that the brevity of Paul’s formulation and its placement in this context make the political background probable, and that against this background the emphasis lies on the constantly accessible nearness of the true Lord, over against the lord ruling in Rome.<sup>64</sup> In my view, the brevity and the immediate literary context are not convincing evidence, but Popkes’s overall argument for the spatial meaning of nearness may be relevant in a letter to *Colonia Augusta Iulia Philippensis*.

<sup>59</sup> Indeed, in Eph. 3:3 (as in the Celsus example above), one finds the simple dative: *κατὰ ἀποκάλυψιν ἐγνωρίσθη μοι τὸ μυστήριον...*

<sup>60</sup> As noted, for instance, by O’Brien, *Philippians*, p. 493.

<sup>61</sup> Nearness and presence in the Bible are not very far apart, as may be illustrated by Deut. 30:14: ‘the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it’.

<sup>62</sup> Similarly Támez in Elsa Támez, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, Alicia Batten & Claire Miller Colombo, *Philippians – Colossians – Philemon* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016), p. 189, but emphasizing the *absence* of the emperor from most of his people.

<sup>63</sup> W. Popkes, ‘Philipper 4.4–7: Aussage und situativer Hintergrund’, *NTS* 50 (2004), pp. 246–56: ‘Durch Statuen, Münzen, Dekrete und Institutionen verschiedener Art war der Kaiser ständig “nahe”, omnipräsent’ (p. 251).

<sup>64</sup> Popkes, ‘Philipper 4.4–7’, p. 251.

## 2.5. The weakness of objections to the spatial interpretation

As noted, such is the level of certainty about the eschatological interpretation that scholars hardly ever feel the need to argue against the spatial reading of Phil. 4:5. Two sets of objections have arisen, however. First, Lightfoot commented that—in contrast to the sense of eschatological nearness—the Lord being spatially near ‘is neither so natural nor so appropriate here’.<sup>65</sup> I am not entirely clear what he means by this, but probably by ‘natural’ he means linguistically natural, and by ‘appropriate’ he means how verse 5b fits with the literary context. As noted, however, the spatial interpretation is probably more natural (Sections 1.1 and 2.1 above), and the literary fit is rather better as well (Sections 1.2–3 and 2.2–3 above).

Secondly, Reumann suggests that the spatial interpretation is guilty by association. In one case, ‘C. H. Dodd’s support for “reminiscence” here of Ps 145:18, in a context he termed “not eschatological” ... fits his downplaying “futurist eschatology”’.<sup>66</sup> In another place, he associates the non-eschatological reading with Baumgarten’s view that Philippians 4 ‘demythologizes’ or ‘de-apocalypticizes’ the imminent eschatology of earlier Christian positions.<sup>67</sup> However, the spatial interpretation is hardly wedded to such modern scholarly theories, given that older scholars such as Calvin in the sixteenth century or Daillé in the seventeenth also espouse it.<sup>68</sup>

## 3. THE ‘BOTH-AND’ INTERPRETATION

As noted initially, there are some scholars who take the position that Paul leaves the statement *ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς* ambiguous or more intentionally means both spatial and eschatological proximity.<sup>69</sup> Támez argues, for example, that both make sense in the context:

The phrase can be interpreted temporally, that is, the suffering will end soon because the end time is not far away ... But the phrase may also be interpreted regarding spatial proximity, since the Spirit of the risen Christ is nearby, accompanying them ... Because both spatial and temporal proximity may be present, both prisoners and the persecuted can affirm that they feel close to the Divine and simultaneously place their hope in the resurrection from the dead, which will occur with the coming of the Lord.<sup>70</sup>

Támez’s argument here, however, is merely that both are consistent with the context, and is in any case expressed as a possibility in the subjunctive (*‘can ... may ... may ...’*). Bockmuehl makes the different argument that, for the New Testament writers, spatial nearness and

<sup>65</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 158.

<sup>66</sup> Reumann, *Philippians*, p. 613.

<sup>67</sup> Reumann, *Philippians*, p. 635.

<sup>68</sup> Jean Daillé, *Exposition sur la divine épître de l’apôtre S. Paul Aux Filippiens, en vingt-neuf sermons* (Geneva: Pierre Chouët, 1659), p. 410. For Calvin, see Section 2.2 above.

<sup>69</sup> E.g. Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an Philemon* (KEKNT, 14<sup>th</sup> edn.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1964), pp. 168–9, especially in the context of his martyrological interpretation; O’Brien, *Philippians*, pp. 489–90; A.H. Snyman, ‘Philippians 4: 1–9 from a rhetorical perspective’, *Verbum et Ecclesia* (2007), pp. 234–5; Roji Thomas George, *Philippians: A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary* (ABCS; Carlisle: Langham, 2019), p. 147; Michael Bird & Nijay Gupta, *Philippians* (NCBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 176; Jeannine Brown, *Philippians: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC; Leicester: IVP, 2022), p. 62.

<sup>70</sup> Támez, *Philippians*, p. 189.

temporal nearness mutually imply one another.<sup>71</sup> This is a stronger case, but still not compelling. Spatial nearness can be expressed without immediate reference to imminent eschatology (e.g. Eph. 2:13, 17), and vice versa (e.g. 1 Cor. 15:51–52); alternatively, in 1 Thess. 4:13–18, temporal nearness *leads to* spatial nearness: the Lord himself coming down from heaven (v. 16) is a first event of which the ultimate result will be that ‘we will be with the Lord forever’ (v. 17); they are not, however, two sides of the same coin. It is of course true that ‘the Lord’s nearness to believers is a nearness of the one who is coming to save; and vice versa, his imminent parousia assures believers that he is close at hand’,<sup>72</sup> but not all references to one of these themes automatically have the other in view. Finally, moreover, the objections to the eschatological view still stand and apply to the hybrid view as much as to the exclusively eschatological position.

#### 4. CHRIST AND ‘SPACE’ IN PHILIPPIANS 4:5–6

If, then, there is a reference to Christ’s spatial nearness in Philippians, this is striking, because the emphasis thus far in the letter has been on the physical absence of Jesus. The unmediated presence of Jesus in the world is a past reality (Phil. 2:6–8); he could only be directly accessible now via departure, τὸ ἀναλῦσαι, from this world (1:23). There will be a time when he will apparently be present again in an unmediated manner: ‘on the day of Christ (Jesus)’ (1:6, 10; 2:16). Then he will act upon the bodily conditions of believers (3:21).

Paul could merely have left it at that. After all, God (and Christ) can hear prayers from heaven. In 1 Kings 18:36 LXX, for example, ‘Elijah cried out to heaven (ἀνεβόησεν Ἡλίου εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν) and said, “Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, hearken to me o Lord, hearken to me today”’. (And the Lord did.) In Nehemiah 9’s address to God, ‘when the Israelites were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion you gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the hand of their enemies’ (Neh. 9:27). Several other biblical passages operate on this sort of geography, where the distance between God and humans is very great, but can nevertheless be bridged.<sup>73</sup>

In Philippians 4, however, where ‘the Lord is near’, Paul accesses a different sort of geography of divine-human distance. As the geographer David Harvey has remarked in another context, ‘there are multiple geometries from which to choose’.<sup>74</sup> By comparison with the model noted in the previous paragraph, here in Philippians 4 Paul closes, or at least drastically reduces, any putative gap between the Philippians and the divine realm. This spatial nearness

<sup>71</sup> Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, p. 246: ‘Whether one eventually opts for a primarily spatial or a primarily temporal interpretation, for the New Testament writers each one in any case implies the other: the Lord’s nearness to believers is a nearness of the one who is coming to save; and vice versa, his imminent parousia assures believers that he is close at hand. This makes it theologically pointless to choose between these two interpretations (cf. O’Brien). For Christians, the nearness of the Lord who is the giver of joy inevitably anticipates the joy of heaven; Irenaeus writes on 1 Pet. 1:8, “Our face shall see the face of God, and shall rejoice with joy unspeakable — that is to say, when it shall see its own Delight” (*Haer.* 5.7.2). In that sense Paul’s affirmation that the Lord is near, both spatially and temporally, is the assurance that underpins the exhortations in 4:4–6 to joy and gentleness, to prayer and freedom from worry (cf. also Jas. 5:7–8)’. See further Markus Bockmuehl, ‘The Personal Presence of Jesus in the Writings of Paul’, *SJT* 70 (2017), pp. 39–60, at 55.

<sup>72</sup> Bockmuehl, *Philippians*, p. 246.

<sup>73</sup> See also Neh. 9:28; 1 Chr. 21:26; 2 Chr. 32:20; 1 Macc. 3.50; 4.10, 40.

<sup>74</sup> David Harvey, *Spaces of Global Capitalism: A Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (London/New York: Verso, 2006), pp. 121–2, quoted in Patrick Schreiner, ‘Space, Place and Biblical Studies: A Survey of Recent Research in Light of Developing Trends’, *CBR* 14.3 (2016), pp. 340–71, at 347.

of Christ has an important effect for Paul's addressees, an effect which can be fruitfully considered in the light of the recent theorizing of space.<sup>75</sup> It is now common to distinguish between three kinds of space: (1) physical, measurable and mappable space; (2) space as conceived and represented, and (3) the lived experience of space, within which other possibilities can be imagined.<sup>76</sup> This last element is sometimes referred to as 'thirdspace'.<sup>77</sup>

Paul's assertion of Christ's spatial nearness has the potential to affect the lived experience of the Philippians. They are not merely strangers in a strange land, 'in Philippi' (1:1), waiting for Christ who is currently in heaven (2:9; 3:20). Rather Paul invites them to inhabit a thirdspace to which Christ is always adjacent, and on which Christ exerts a positive pressure. Negatively, this nearness has the potential to relieve anxiety, because those concerns can be brought to the nearby Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 5:7); in that respect, Christ's nearness brings confidence (cf. Phil. 1:14) and limits fearful imagination. Positively, Paul seeks to impress powerfully upon the Philippians the impact of Christ's nearness for how they conceive their 'location'. Paul does this through both his universalizing language and his profusion of vocabulary: in any circumstance in which they live (ἐν παντί), they are enabled through Christ's proximity to make requests (τὰ αἰτήματα) in the form of prayers (τῇ προσευχῇ) and petitions (τῇ δεήσει) with thanksgiving (μετὰ εὐχαριστίας). Paul's addressees are exhorted to experience this 'thirdspace' near to Christ, which consists in these abundant possibilities which await enactment by the Philippians when they reappraise their location (ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς).<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Already in 1994, Doreen Massey had commented that "space" is very much on the agenda these days' (*Space, Place, and Gender* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994], p. 249). For surveys of Critical Spatial Theory (CST) and its application to biblical studies, see e.g. Eric C. Stewart, 'New Testament Space/Spatiality', *BTB* 42.3 (2012), pp. 139–50; Schreiner, 'Space, Place and Biblical Studies', as well as—also allowing for the corrective function of biblical studies and theology to CST—Matthew Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), and Matthew Sleeman, 'Critical Spatial Theory 2.0', in G. Prinsloo and C. Maier (eds.), *Constructions of Space V: Place, Space and Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (New York/London: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2013), pp. 49–66. I am not concerned here with architectural or material space *per se*, on which there are helpful discussions in Jorunn Økland, 'Paul and Sacred Space', in Matthew V. Novenson and R. Barry Matlock (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Pauline Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 562–79, and Laura S. Nasrallah, 'Spatial Perspectives: Space and Archaeology in Roman Philippi', in Joseph A. Marchal (ed.), *Studying Paul's Letters: Contemporary Perspectives and Methods* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 2012), pp. 53–74, and Laura S. Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Century Church amid the Spaces of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>76</sup> See the helpful grid in Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative*, p. 43. Edward Soja, for example, comments that what he calls 'firstspace' consists in the 'concrete and mappable geographies of our lifeworlds' (*Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* [Malden: Blackwell, 1996], p. 74). By contrast, 'secondspace' refers to 'discursively devised representations of space' (*Thirdspace*, p. 79).

<sup>77</sup> A term coined and developed in the work of Soja noted above.

<sup>78</sup> Sleeman, *Geography and the Ascension Narrative*, p. 45 refers to 'thirdspace as Other', which is 'filled with meaning and struggle', and 'resides in visionary vistas that imagine new means or possibilities for shaping spatial practices'. Cf. the reading of Phil. 4:5 above with the ways in which Moxnes and Wenell ascribe similar functions to the kingdom of God/heaven in the Gospels: Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in his Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003); Karen Wenell, 'Contested Temple Space and Visionary Kingdom Space in Mark 11–12', *BibInt* 15 (2007), pp. 323–37.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It remains to summarize the results and draw out some implications for our understanding of Paul's theology. To recap the main points, the absence of much evidence in the comparative material for ἔγγυς being applied to persons being temporally near means that there is a good *prima facie* case for spatial nearness in Phil. 4:5, especially given that references to persons being near in location are so well attested (Section 2.1). Phil. 4:5 may of course be an exceptional case, but the logical connection between the nearness of the Lord and the resulting viability of prayer appears not only here in Paul but also (in very similar language) in the Psalms, as well as (thematically) elsewhere in the Old Testament and early Jewish literature (Section 2.2). Since the Lord is near, such prayers can enter the presence of God (Section 2.3). More speculatively, Paul may suggest a contrast here between the accessibility of the true Lord and Caesar who is everywhere yet absent (Section 2.4). The objections to the spatial interpretation of ὁ κύριος ἔγγυς, when made at all, are weak (Section 2.5). The eschatological interpretation may be a classic example of scholarly inertia and repetition. Indeed, those who take greater account of space in general frequently note that space is often marginalized, and even denigrated as 'static' and uninteresting, in contrast to 'dynamic' time.<sup>79</sup> The most likely meaning of ὁ κύριος ἔγγυς in Phil. 4:5b is that the Lord is near in a spatial sense. Because he is near, the Philippians' requests can be made known to God, or probably more precisely, be brought into his presence: τὰ αἰτήματα ὑμῶν γνωρίζεσθω πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

This has some significant implications for Paul's christology, and principally for Christ's location. There is not room for a full discussion here, but some outlines can be drawn. The point in Phil. 4:5 is not Christ's omnipresence in general, or even a nearness to all human beings (as in Acts 17:27). Rather, the point is Christ's spatial extension towards believers, with the result that believers' spatial life is transfigured.<sup>80</sup> This is a point not sufficiently acknowledged in discussions of Paul's christology.<sup>81</sup> Notably, we have here Christ's nearness as 'Lord' rather than *qua* Christ or Son. The point here cannot, therefore, be to draw attention to Christ's presence by the Spirit (though that is not ruled out), but to Christ's *own* divine proximity to the Philippians. The allusion to Isaiah 45 in Phil. 2:9–11 strongly implies that Christ's extension towards believers in Phil. 4:5 is his *divine* nearness (cf. Rom. 14:11). It is as 'Lord of all' (Rom. 10:12), the one Lord through whom all things came (1 Cor. 8:6), and the supremely exalted Lord (Phil. 2:9), that he is both accessible in prayer but also sovereignly able to answer any request, prayer or petition.

<sup>79</sup> Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, p. 259; Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in his Place*, p. 110; Stewart, 'New Testament Space/Spatiality', p. 147; Økland, 'Paul and Sacred Space', p. 564.

<sup>80</sup> Peter Orr, *Christ Absent and Present: A Study in Pauline Christology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), p. 58, rightly notes that 'near' is not the same as 'here', but nearness is not a mild sort of absence in Phil. 4:5, given the sequel in verse 6.

<sup>81</sup> As noted by Bockmuehl, 'Personal Presence', p. 40.

## APPENDIX: ἔγγυς IN THE SEPTUAGINT, NEW TESTAMENT, PHILO, JOSEPHUS, THE PSEUDEPIGRAPHA, AND PLUTARCH'S LIVES

These tables cover the usages of ἔγγυς in these various works, distinguishing between temporal and spatial on one axis, and personal and impersonal on the other axis. The additional category of ‘personal-relational’ is a sort of subset of the personal-spatial, but refers to kinship or friendship, rather than being spatial in a literal sense. In these tables, ‘?’ denotes an uncertain case, and X/Y denotes X cases out of a total Y.<sup>82</sup>

### (1) The usage of ἔγγυς in the Septuagint

The Accordance software provides 63 instances of ἔγγυς and its forms in the Septuagint (including comparatives, superlatives, and adverbial forms).

	Personal	Personal-relational	Impersonal
Temporal ἔγγυς	1/13 <sup>83</sup>	n/a	12/13 <sup>84</sup>
Spatial ἔγγυς	24/50 <sup>85</sup>	13/50 <sup>86</sup>	13/50 <sup>87</sup>

### (2) The usage of ἔγγυς in the New Testament

There are 31 instances of ἔγγυς and its forms in the New Testament. One of these instances is Phil. 4:5, which will be excluded from the data here.

	Personal	Personal-relational	Impersonal
Temporal ἔγγυς	0 + 2?/16 <sup>88</sup>	n/a	14 + 2?/16 <sup>89</sup>
Spatial ἔγγυς	4/14 <sup>90</sup>	0	10/14 <sup>91</sup>

<sup>82</sup> References for (1) to (6) come from Accordance.

<sup>83</sup> Job 13:18.

<sup>84</sup> Deut. 32:35; Ps. 84:10; Isa. 13:6; Jer. 31:16; Ezek. 30:3; Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14 (4:14); Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:7, 14 (*bis*).

<sup>85</sup> Gen. 45:10; Deut. 2:19, 37; Josh. 6:13; 9:22; Jdg. 3:20; Ps. 33:19; 118:151; 144:18; Prov. 27:10; Eccl. 4:17; Esth. 1:14; 9:20; Isa. 57:19; Jer. 12:2; 32:12 (25:26); Ezek. 6:12; 7:5; 23:12; Dan. 9:7; *1 Macc.* 4.18; 8.12; *Wis.* 6.19/20; *Sir.* 38.28/29.

<sup>86</sup> Exod. 32:27; Lev. 21:2; 25:25; Num. 27:11; Ruth 3:12; Neh. 13:4; Ps. 14:3; 37:12; Job 6:15; 19:14; *Jdt.* 16.24/29 (*bis*); *Tob.* 3.15.

<sup>87</sup> Gen. 19:20; Exod. 13:17; Deut. 4:46; 30:14; 34:6; 1 Kgs 8:46; 20:2; 2 Chr. 6:36; Job 17:12; Ps. 21:11/12; Jer. 31:24; 42:4 (probably τὸ παστοφόριον, despite the grammatical disagreement); *Sir.* 51.26.

<sup>88</sup> Mark 13:29 (?); Matt. 24:33 (?).

<sup>89</sup> Matt. 24:32; 26:18; Mark 13:28; Luke 21:30, 31; John 2:13; 6:4; 7:2; 11:55; Rom. 13:11; Rev. 1:3; 22:10; Heb. 6:8; 8:13 + Matt. 24:33 (?) and Mark 13:29 (?).

<sup>90</sup> Luke 19:11; John 6:19; Eph. 2:13, 17.

<sup>91</sup> John 3:23; 6:23; 11:18, 54; 19:20, 42; Ac. 1:12; 9:38; 27:8; Rom. 10:8.

**(3) The Apostolic Fathers**

There are 21 instances of ἐγγύς and its forms in the Apostolic Fathers.

	Personal	Personal-relational	Impersonal
Temporal ἐγγύς	2/4 <sup>92</sup>	n/a	2/4 <sup>93</sup>
Spatial ἐγγύς	11/17 <sup>94</sup>	0	6/17 <sup>95</sup>

**(4) Philo’s usage of ἐγγύς**

There are 78 instances of ἐγγύς (including comparative, superlative and adverbial forms) in Philo. Of these 78, three cases are counted twice below because it is not clear whether they are temporal or spatial.

	Personal (and animal)	Personal-relational	Impersonal
Temporal ἐγγύς	0 + 1?/1 + 3? <sup>96</sup>	n/a	1 + 2?/1 + 3? <sup>97</sup>
Spatial ἐγγύς	24 + 1?/70 + 3? <sup>98</sup>	19/70 + 3? <sup>99</sup>	27 + 2?/70 + 3? <sup>100</sup>
Other	4 <sup>101</sup>		

<sup>92</sup> 1 Clem. 5.1; Barn. 21.3b.

<sup>93</sup> Barn. 21.3a; Hermas, *Shep.* 87.2.

<sup>94</sup> 1 Clem. 21.3; 2 Clem. 7.3; 18.2; Ignatius, *Rom.* 10.2; *Philad.* 10.2; *Smyr.* 4.2 (bis); Hermas, *Shep.* 7.4; 22.9; 72.5; 83.2.

<sup>95</sup> 1 Clem. 27.3; Ignatius, *Eph.* 15.3; Hermas, *Shep.* 10.9; 15.3; 75.4; 83.6.

<sup>96</sup> Philo, *Mos.* 1.275 could be temporal or spatial.

<sup>97</sup> Philo, *Agr.* 148 is a clear case; *Mos.* 1.198 and 2.251 could be spatial or temporal.

<sup>98</sup> Philo, *Cher.* 19b; *Post.* 20; *Gig.* 44; 46; 47; *Ebr.* 174 (animal); *Migr.* 57; *Her.* 83; 202; *Mut.* 217; *Somn.* 2.129; *Abr.* 121a; *Jos.* 116; 117; 238; *Mos.* 2.122; 2.169; 2.249; *Decal.* 33; 120; 148; *Spec.* 1.116; *Flacc.* 124; *Legat.* 228. As noted above, *Mos.* 1.275 could be temporal or spatial.

<sup>99</sup> Philo, *Det.* 25; *Post.* 109; *Ebr.* 67; 70 (bis); 71; *Fug.* 90 (bis); 92; *Mos.* 2.8; 2.245; *Spec.* 2.114; 2.127; 3.157; 3.164; 3.192; *Virt.* 80; 132; *Legat.* 29.

<sup>100</sup> Philo, *Cher.* 19a; *Post.* 27; 84 (bis); 152; *Agr.* 25; 161; *Conf.* 124; 157; *Fug.* 101; *Mut.* 237 (bis); *Somn.* 1.32; 1.54; 2.180; *Abr.* 26; 121b; *Mos.* 1.263; *Decal.* 59; *Spec.* 2.216; 4.139; *Virt.* 183; *Praem.* 80; *Contempl.* 23; 24; *Flacc.* 151; *QG* 2.64a. *Mos.* 1.198 and 2.251 could be spatial or temporal.

<sup>101</sup> Philo, *Gig.* 41; *Conf.* 9; *Decal.* 15; *Legat.* 183.

### (5) Josephus' usage

There are 53 instances of ἐγγύς (including comparative, superlative and adverbial forms) in Josephus.

	Personal	Personal-relational	Impersonal
Temporal ἐγγύς	0/1	n/a	1/1 <sup>102</sup>
Spatial ἐγγύς	32/49 <sup>103</sup>	5/49 <sup>104</sup>	12/49 <sup>105</sup>
Other	3 <sup>106</sup>		

### (6) The Greek Pseudepigrapha

There are 22 instances of ἐγγύς in the Pseudepigrapha<sup>107</sup> in the same forms as those noted above.

	Personal	Personal-relational	Impersonal
Temporal ἐγγύς	1/7 <sup>108</sup>	n/a	6/7 <sup>109</sup>
Spatial ἐγγύς	13/15 <sup>110</sup>	0	2/15 <sup>111</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 14.193.

<sup>103</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 1.335; 4.323; 5.49; 5.315; 6.223; 7.218; 7.249; 7.284; 8.108; 8.228; 8.274; 8.340; 8.414; 9.76; 9.102; 9.114; 10.137; 11.342; 14.85; 14.345; 14.392; 14.465; 19.217; *War* 1.289; 1.380; 2.138; 2.170; 2.636; 4.108; 5.106; 5.261; 7.30.

<sup>104</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 1.289; 4.246; 4.254; 5.331; *War* 1.361.

<sup>105</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* 5.159; 6.195; 6.265; 6.327; 11.177; 13.8; 14.416; *War* 2.189; 3.219; 4.617; 5.276; 7.278.

<sup>106</sup> In Josephus, *Ant.* 15.324 and *Apion* 1.104, ἐγγύς has virtually the sense of 'almost'; in *Apion* 224 it means something like 'similar'.

<sup>107</sup> Accordance's 'Greek Pseudepigrapha' database is the body of material translated in Charlesworth which survives in Greek.

<sup>108</sup> *Sib.* 3.348.

<sup>109</sup> *Sib.* 2.165; 8.91; 12.224; 14.356; Greek *Ap.* *Ezra* 3.13; *T. Abr.* A 13.7.

<sup>110</sup> *Ezek. Apocr.* 3.9; *T. Levi* 2.10; *T. Dan* 6.10; *T. Naph.* 4.5; *T. Jos.* 20.3; *T. Benj.* 12.1; *T. Job* 2.2; *T. Abr.* B 5:4; 13.6; *Adam Eve* 7.2; *Hist. Rechab.* 1.5; 6.4; *Eldad Modad* 1.

<sup>111</sup> *T. Levi* 6.1; *T. Abr.* A 2.1.

(7) **Plutarch's *Vitae***

Plutarch's *Lives* were selected as a work or series of works roughly contemporaneous with the New Testament. (Lucian was also considered, but his works surprisingly provide only six instances of ἐγγύς.<sup>112</sup>) For the sake of making the sample manageable, the analysis of Plutarch was restricted to the positive ἐγγύς (i.e. excluding comparatives and superlatives). This still yields a sample of over 100.

	Personal (and animal)	Personal-relational	Impersonal
Temporal ἐγγύς	0	n/a	5 <sup>113</sup>
Spatial ἐγγύς	79 <sup>114</sup>	0	29 <sup>115</sup>
Other	6 <sup>116</sup>		

<sup>112</sup> According to TLG.

<sup>113</sup> Plutarch, *Ages*. 17.1; 25.2. *Cic.* 15.1; *Phil.* 17.2; *Pomp.* 70.1.

<sup>114</sup> Plutarch, *Aem.* 15.1; *Alc.* 36.5; *Alex.* 25.7; *Ant.* 18.1–2; 34.3; 41.4; 45.3; 49.1; 76.1; *Arat.* 21.2; 42.1; *Brut.* 25.4; 26.3; 44.1; 50.5; *Caes.* 43.1; 66.1; *Mar.* 15.1; 18.2 (*bis*); 22.3; 23.4; 44.1; *Cam.* 10.2; 15.2; 18.3; 22.5; 23.4; 25.1; *Cat. Min.* 13.2; 24.2; *Cic.* 29.2; *Cim.* 12.6; *Cleom.* 8.1; *Crass.* 4.3; 23.6; 26.4; *Demetr.* 27.5; 28.3; 44.5; 49.1; 53.2; *Dem.* 26.3; *Dion* 25.5; *Luc.* 12.1 (animal); 25.4; 35.1; *Lys.* 29.2; *Marc.* 30.7; *Cat. Mai.* 10.1; *Otho* 12.1; 13.4; 17.4; *Pel.* 11.1; 17.4; 27.3; *Phil.* 6.1; 10.1; 12.3; *Phoc.* 9.5; 30.6; 34.1; *Pomp.* 8.1; 22.5; *Pyrrh.* 2.3; 16.4; 17.3 (animals); 32.2; *Rom.* 8.5; *Sert.* 19.6; 20.3 (animal); *Sol.* 8.6; 30.1; *Sull.* 21.1; 28.3; *Them.* 30.3; *Ti. Gracch.* 6.2; 17.2; *Tim.* 18.6.

<sup>115</sup> Plutarch, *Ages*. 39.2; *Cleom.* 31.2; *Ant.* 48.4; *Arist.* 11.7; *Artax.* 12.3; *Brut.* 31.8; *Crass.* 30.4; *Demetr.* 34.1; *Dion* 45.8; 46.6; 48.2; *Eum.* 9.5; *Luc.* 6.1; 14.5; *Lys.* 28.5; *Mar.* 38.5; *Pel.* 2.3; 16.4; *Phoc.* 16.3; 17.1; *Pomp.* 24.6; 34.3; 66.3; *Publ.* 32.5; *Pyrrh.* 14.4; 22.3; *Rom.* 3.4; *Sert.* 11.1; *Sull.* 32.2.

<sup>116</sup> See Plutarch, *Cor.* 18.3 ('virtually'/'almost'); 39.4 ('close' to achieving something); similarly, *Cic.* 20.4; *Luc.* 33.1; *Sert.* 19.4; *Sull.* 29.1.