Some Analytical Possibilities for 2 Corinthians

2 Cor contains a number of conspicuous discontinuities. There is a dramatic and often noticed change of tone at 10:1, when a straightforward letter turns defensive and angry. The following also invite attention:

- **6:14-7:1**, forbidding marriage to unbelievers, now separates 6:13 “In return – I speak as to children – widen your hearts also” and 7:2: “Open your hearts to us; we have wronged no one.”
- **2:12** “When I came to Troas to preach the Gospel of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord, but my mind could not rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia” joins perfectly with 7:5 “For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn – fighting without and fear within. [4] But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus . . .” The intervening **2:13-7:4** is itself interpolated by 6:14-7:1. This implies an editorial process with more than one stage.

Such considerations led Strachan (1935) to arrange his 2 Cor commentary this way:

- **6:14-7:1**. “A Fragment of an Earlier Letter”

The last of Strachan’s segments refers to a previous letter of self-justification, the “severe letter.” On this view, everything in 2 Cor is by Paul, but at least three letters were rearranged by Paul’s editors. The motive is obvious: fewer letters are easier to read, and the negative effect of a harsh letter is mitigated if it is placed at the end.

Another aspect of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is that its advice on mixed marriage seems to differ from that of 1 Cor 7:12. For 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 as *anti*-Pauline, see Betz 1973.

Another conflation proposal for 2 Cor is in Arthur J Dewey et al, The Authentic Letters of Paul (2010):

- **2:14-6:13** 7:2-4. “A Defense of Paul’s Credibility”
- **10-13** entire. “A Parody of A Fool’s Speech”
- **8** entire. “Collection Appeal to Corinth”
- **9** entire. “Collection Appeal to Achaia”

On the last two letters, see also Hans Dieter Betz’s Hermeneia commentary on 2 Cor 8 and 9.