

MASTERARBEIT | MASTER'S THESIS

Titel | Title

Co-Authorship of the Pauline letters

verfasst von | submitted by

Justin Michael Langbroek BTh

angestrebter akademischer Grad | in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Theology (MTh)

Wien | Vienna, 2026

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt |
Degree programme code as it appears on the
student record sheet:

UA 066 790

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt | Degree
programme as it appears on the student
record sheet:

Masterstudium Evangelische Fachtheologie

Betreut von | Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Markus Öhler

Content

Contents.....	1
1 Abstract	5
2 Introduction	6
3 Bible texts - Co-Authors of the Pauline letters	8
3.1 Prescripts	8
3.1.1 Gal 1,1–2: All brothers with him.....	8
3.1.2 1Thess 1,1: Silvanus and Timothy	9
3.1.3 1Cor 1,1: Sosthenes.....	9
3.1.4 2.Cor 1,1: Timothy	10
3.1.5 Phil 1,1: Timothy.....	11
3.1.6 Kol 1,1: Timothy	11
3.1.7 Phlm 1: Timothy.....	12
3.2 Postscripts.....	12
3.2.1 Rom 16,22: Tertius	12
3.2.2 Gal 6,11: Writing with his own hand	13
3.2.3 2Thess 3,17: Writing with his own hand.....	13
3.2.4 Col 4,18: Writing with his own hand	14
3.2.5 Phlm 19: Writing with his own hand.....	14
3.3 “We”-Passages.....	15
3.3.1 Rom 8	15
3.3.2 Gal 4	19
3.3.3 1Cor 15.....	21
3.3.4 2Cor 4.....	23
3.3.5 1Thess 2.....	26
3.3.6 Phil 3	28

4	Ancient prescripts.....	31
4.1	Ancient letters.....	31
4.1.1	Multiple authors	31
4.1.2	First-person singular.....	34
4.1.3	Readers	34
4.1.4	Structure	36
4.2	“Written by my own hand”.....	45
4.2.1	Paul.....	45
4.2.2	Timothy	46
4.2.3	Sosthenes	46
4.2.4	Tertius	47
5	Writers and Slave Writers.....	48
5.1	Scribes	48
5.1.1	Slave scribes	48
5.2	Female Scribes	50
5.3	Writing materials	51
5.4	Styles of writing	52
5.5	Copying	53
5.6	Drafting	53
5.7	Fabrication of letters.....	54
5.8	Tabellarius	56
5.9	Amanuensis hypothesis	57
5.10	Autonomy or Heteronomy.....	58
5.10.1	Heteronomy	58
5.10.2	Autonomy	58
5.10.3	Cicero and Tiro	59
6	Reevaluating “Pauline” Letters	60
6.1	Romans.....	60

6.2	Galatians.....	62
6.3	1.Corinthians	64
6.4	2.Corinthians	65
6.5	Colossians.....	66
6.6	1.Thessalonians	68
6.7	2.Thessalonians	69
6.8	Philippians.....	70
6.9	Philemon.....	71
7	Authorship of the Pauline letters	73
8	Summary	75
9	Literature	76
10	Statement of Authorship.....	78

1 Abstract

Diese Masterarbeit befasst sich mit der Mitautorenschaft der paulinischen Briefe. Da Paulus nicht als einziger Autor genannt wird, stellt sich die Frage, inwiefern die Mitautoren Anteil am Schreibprozess hatten. Dafür wurden die biblisch relevanten Stellen text- und literarkritisch untersucht, der antike Kontext des Briefeschreibens rekonstruiert und die Struktur und Stile des Antiken Briefes anhand von Sekundärliteratur betrachtet. Hierdurch wurde aufgezeigt, dass viele der vorliegenden paulinischen Briefe vermutlich mit (Sklaven-)Schreibern verfasst wurden. Der Anteil der Mitautoren bleibt ungewiss, bei zwei Briefen (1Thess und 2Kor) ist aufgrund der textlichen Evidenz eine Mitautorenschaft festzustellen. Der Römerbrief, Galaterbrief, Kolosserbrief, 2.Thessalonicherbrief und Philemonbrief können als Produkte eines Sekretärs eingestuft werden. Paulus hat vermutlich den 1.Korintherbrief und den Philipperbrief allein geschrieben. Sekretäre waren aber nicht die Einzigen die Einfluss auf die Briefe nehmen konnten. Änderungen von Briefträgern müssen auch mitgedacht werden - dies würde nur für zwei Briefe in Frage kommen: beim Kolosser- und Philemonbrief, da die angegebenen Briefträger ein Motiv hätten, sich aus der Sklaverei rauszuschreiben. Für die paulinischen Briefe bedeutet dies, dass sie unter einer neuen Lupe betrachtet werden und somit auch die Sekretäre hinter den Briefen mitgedacht werden müssen, da es nicht alleine ausreichend ist, einen Stil als "paulinisch" anzunehmen. Dies sorgt auch für eine Neuevaluation der Frage nach den Pseudepigraphien, die aufgrund von Stilunterschieden kategorisch abgelehnt werden.

2 Introduction

Imagine writing a letter. The process is easy: You sit down at your desk. You take out your pen and write down the letter on a sheet of paper. Of course, you can read and write. You have completed your basic education. Once you have finished writing the letter, you fold it in half and put it in an envelope. Then you get up and go to the post office to post it. It probably only costs a small amount of money, and the letter will arrive in a couple of days. Alternatively, you can type an e-mail on your computer. After a couple of minutes, you can send a 500-word e-mail to someone across the world, which only takes a couple of seconds.

Now imagine an ancient world, where this is not possible. Only a few people could read and write. Paper had not yet been invented, and writing materials are hard to come by and expensive. You would most often write on papyrus and when you sat down to write, you would be in an uncomfortable position. Each letter takes time to write, so you can expect to spend a couple of hours on it, maybe longer, if you are not that experienced. The writing process is long and harrowing and then you also need to send the letter. A letter carrier would then take it across hills and valleys to the addressee. This could take days, weeks or even months. When the letter finally arrives, the same process starts again for a reply.

The world was slower and different to what we are used to nowadays. Most people write their own letters and e-mails. CEOs and high-ranking officials have secretaries to answer e-mails for them. Only important letters get through to them. Occasionally, one might write a letter together. I remember my mother writing letters of well-wishing or birthday letters for family members, which we would sign at the end. This is a modern example of something that happened regularly in ancient times: Writing a letter for someone else.

This leads us to the question addressed in this thesis: Who wrote the Pauline letters? To what extent could other authors have influenced the letters?

For this question, the biblical evidence will be analysed. The Pauline letters with more than one author will be selected and examined in terms of the opening of the letters, the chosen formulation and the narrative spun by what the letters reveal. The same analysis will be applied to selected “we”-passages, as these reveal the author(s)’ understanding when talking about themselves and others. The absolute

or relative statistical occurrence of the first-person plural will be investigated. To gain a full understanding of the letters, the postscripts will be examined, too: Letter endings often provide clues about shifts in authorship or other stylistic formulas relevant to the question of authorship.

In a second step, the form of Ancient letters will be investigated. The structure, style and form of the letter and its different parts will be discussed focussing on the relevant parts for the question of co-authorship.

Next, the practice of ancient letter writing will be examined in relation to this discussion. By examining the common practices of that time, we can derive information to help categorise the Pauline letters. This will also reveal aspects of slavery and the work of secretaries whose dynamic is relevant for the authorship of the Pauline letters.

The entire thought process involved in these three steps will lead to conclusions about individual Pauline letters, whether co-authors were involved in the writing process and the extent to which this participation can be substantiated.

3 Bible texts - Co-Authors of the Pauline letters

This chapter presents the translation of relevant bible texts, together with textual and literary criticism, focussing on co-authorship first-person plural constructions, and interesting formulas in the letter endings.

3.1 Prescripts

The prescripts are an important indicator of the letter's textual composition. They provide clues as to who may have written the letters, so it is necessary to examine all passages in the Pauline letters, where more than one author is mentioned.

3.1.1 Gal 1,1–2: All brothers with him

	Greek text	Translation
	Παῦλος ἀπόστολος, οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου ἀλλὰ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ οἱ σὺν ἐμοὶ πάντες ἀδελφοί, ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τῆς Γαλατίας.	Paul, an apostle, not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God Father, who having raised him out from (the) dead, and all brothers with me, to the congregation of Galatia.

3.1.1.1 Textual criticism

No relevant textual criticism was found.

3.1.1.2 Literary criticism

In these verses Paul introduces himself as the author of the text in an unusual way. His titles are expanded by a more elaborate explanation of his identity as an apostle. He inserts a formulation that mimics a short gospel. He adds “all brothers” who are with him as co-authors. There is no further elaboration on who these brothers are or who they might include. It is possible that he is referencing another congregation, from which he or his co-workers are writing from.

3.1.2 1Thess 1,1: Silvanus and Timothy

	Greek text	Translation
	Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη.	Paul and Silvanus and Timothy to the congregation of the Thessalonians in God [the] Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

3.1.2.1 Textual criticism

This verse contains a text variant that adds ὑμῶν after πατρὶ. This addition allows for two interpretations of the word “our”. It can either be interpreted as the collective authorship, the collective, or the authors and the addressed. Additionally, an entire section is added at the end of the verse in relevant sources, such as Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus and in parts in Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis. The phrase is as follows: ”απο θεου πατρος ημων και κυριου Ιησου Χριστου.“ (“from God, our Father, and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.”) Due to the overwhelming textual evidence using this phrase, it can be included in the translation. This phrase is also used later in 2Thess which again suggests an early documentation of this variant. Nevertheless, the question of who is meant by “our” remains, even without the initial addition.

3.1.2.2 Literary criticism

This text shows Paul, Silvanus and Timothy as being closely connected, as their names are all linked by coordinating conjunctions. It is remarkable that in this constellation no titles or any secondary names are mentioned. The “our”, which was identified in the textual criticism, can be seen as a collective term for this group of these three men. However, this cannot be said with certainty and the possibility that the collective “our” is meant for the addressed congregation cannot be excluded.

3.1.3 1Cor 1,1: Sosthenes

	LXX	Translation
	Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, καὶ Σωσθένης ὁ ἀδελφός.	Paul, called an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes, the brother.

3.1.3.1 Textual criticism

In this verse we find that the word κλητὸς is omitted in several sources such as the Codex Alexandrinus, the Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis, Minuscule 81 and most likely also in Papyrus 61. This suggests that in an early version of the text, Paul is stated as directly being an apostle of Jesus Christ. Though this does not affect who wrote the epistle, it does change how Paul has been perceived and thus his authority in the creation of the text changes.

3.1.3.2 Literary criticism

This text begins with an introduction of Paul. He is further described as “an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God” reflecting his own understanding of himself. However, due to textual criticism this understanding of Paul would shift into a different understanding: not just being called an apostle but actually being *the* apostle. This gives him authority.

The verse continues with the word “καὶ” introducing the second writer of the epistle, Sosthenes. Sosthenes is given an additional title and is called “the brother”. This title gives rise to two possible interpretations: It can either be understood as a unique title that shows a status or position in the context of the organisation of the early Christian congregations, or it can convey a relational status between Paul and Sosthenes. The question that remains is, whether Sosthenes is Paul’s brother or the brother of the congregation. This is relevant to the authorship of the letter: If Sosthenes is understood to be Paul’s brother, it implies that Paul is the main protagonist. Otherwise, Sosthenes, as a brother of the congregation, has a similar yet lesser title than Paul. In this case, his participation in the letter may be greater than expected.

3.1.4 2.Cor 1,1: Timothy

	Greek text	Translation
	Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν Κορίνθῳ, σὺν τοῖς ἁγίοις πᾶσιν τοῖς οὔσιν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ.	Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy, the brother, to the congregation of God in Corinth with all the saints (that are) in all of Achaia.

3.1.4.1 Textual criticism

No textual criticism was found.

3.1.4.2 Literary criticism

In this verse we can analyse the introduction of the authors of the following text: Paul and Timothy. Paul is again introduced as an apostle of Jesus Christ *by the will of God*. Timothy, on the other hand, is referred to as a brother. This again raises questions about the meaning of the title “ὁ ἀδελφός” as discussed in literary criticism of 1Cor.

3.1.5 Phil 1,1: Timothy

	Greek text	Translation
	Παῦλος καὶ Τιμόθεος δούλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνους·	Paul and Timothy, slaves of Jesus Christ to all saints in Jesus Christ that are in Philippi with the overseers and deacons.

3.1.5.1 Textual criticism

No relevant criticism was found.

3.1.5.2 Literary criticism

In the Letter to the Philippians, we see a change in pace: Paul and Timothy are introduced together as “Παῦλος καὶ Τιμόθεος”. They are both also described as “slaves of Jesus Christ.” Neither Paul nor Timothy is given a special title. This unique introduction suggests that the addressees already know Paul and Timothy, and that further introduction is not required. It is also relevant that Paul is mentioned first. This may indicate an inner hierarchy.

3.1.6 Kol 1,1: Timothy

	Greek text	Translation
	Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός.	Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy, the brother.

3.1.6.1 Textual criticism

No textual criticism was found.

3.1.6.2 *Literary criticism*

Paul introduces himself in the now common way as an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. Timothy is also referred to as “ὁ ἀδελφός”. This seems to be a classic formal introduction of Paul and Timothy.

3.1.7 Phlm 1: Timothy

	Greek text	Translation
	Παῦλος δέσμιος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφός Φιλήμονι τῷ ἀγαπητῷ καὶ συνεργῷ ἡμῶν.	Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ and Timothy, the brother, to Philemon, the beloved and our fellow worker.

3.1.7.1 *Textual criticism*

There are different variations of Paul’s title in this verse. Three versions differ from the textual variant: Αποστολος, Αποστολος δεσμιος and δουλος. These versions only appear in a few manuscripts which do not influence the textual construction and can thus be deemed irrelevant.

3.1.7.2 *Literary criticism*

Paul is introduced in a unique way: He is described as a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Timothy is introduced again as “the brother”.

3.2 Postscripts

The postscripts in the Pauline letters provide interesting insights into secondary greetings and signatures. The most important of these will be investigated here.

3.2.1 Rom 16,22: Tertius

	Greek text	Translation
	ἀσπάζομαι ὑμᾶς ἐγὼ Τέρτιος ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν ἐν κυρίῳ.	I, Tertius, greet you, the writer of the letter, in (the) Lord.

3.2.1.1 *Textual criticism*

No textual criticism was found.

3.2.1.2 *Literary criticism*

In this verse Tertius greets the people of Rome. He refers to himself as the writer of the letter, and due to the first-person singular preposition and the fact, that

“Ἀσπάζομαι” is also formulated in the first-person singular, it can be assumed that he is indeed the person writing that text. The entire section leaves no doubt as to whether Tertius was indeed the writer of the epistle.

3.2.2 Gal 6,11: Writing with his own hand

	Greek text	Translation
	Ἴδετε πηλίκους ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρί.	See in how large letters I have written to you with my own hand.

3.2.2.1 Textual criticism

No relevant textual criticism was found.

3.2.2.2 Literary criticism

This passage is interesting for two different reasons: Firstly, Paul’s mention of writing in “large letters” does not clarify the extent of this practice. Secondly, we now know that Paul was literate enough to write his own letters.

Firstly, it seems that Paul writes this verse with his own hand. The question that can now be asked is, whether the entire letter is written in large letters, or just this short text. Although this cannot be confirmed, it is still relevant to consider, though I will refrain from speculation.

Secondly, Paul clearly states that he is writing in large letters with his own hand. These “large letters” could imply the following possibilities:

- One option is, that Paul is not used to writing, in which case his large letters would be an unusual phenomenon for him.
- Alternatively, he may have written this part in particularly large letters, which may have differed from the rest of the text.

However, these possibilities still do not provide a clear answer regarding the authorship of the text.

3.2.3 2Thess 3,17: Writing with his own hand

	Greek text	Translation
	Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου, ὃ ἐστὶν σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ· οὕτως γράφω.	The greeting [is written] in my own hand, Paul, which is a sign in every letter, I write this.

3.2.3.1 Textual criticism

No textual criticism was found.

3.2.3.2 Literary criticism

Paul mentions again how he writes in his own hand. He also mentions that he does not just write the greeting in his own hand sometimes – he does it for every letter!

3.2.4 Col 4,18: Writing with his own hand

	Greek text	Translation
	Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου. μνημονεύετε μου τῶν δεσμῶν. ἡ χάρις μεθ' ὑμῶν.	The greeting [is written] with my own hand, Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

3.2.4.1 Textual criticism

No relevant textual criticism was found.

3.2.4.2 Literary criticism

Paul mentions writing with his own hand again here.

3.2.5 Phlm 19: Writing with his own hand

Although it is debatable whether this passage is already a *subscriptio*, given the brevity of the letter, it at least fits into the context of a handwritten correspondence.

	Greek text	Translation
	ἐγὼ Παῦλος ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ, ἐγὼ ἀποτίσω· ἵνα μὴ λέγω σοι ὅτι καὶ σεαυτὸν μοι προσοφείλεις.	I, Paul, have written with my own hand, I will repay, so that I might not have to say to you, that you even owe yourself to me.

3.2.5.1 Textual criticism

No relevant textual criticism was found.

3.2.5.2 Literary criticism

We can see Paul stating here himself that he has written with his own hand. It is unclear whether he means the entire letter or just this short passage about repayment. Furthermore, the argument follows Paul's thought process, that he will repay any debt owed to Philemon so that Onesimus, a slave, can be welcomed back as a brother. Paul argues that Philemon owes him everything, but Paul does not want

to use this argument against Philemon. However, by mentioning this, he is putting pressure on Philemon and make the decision that Paul believes to be right.

3.3 “We”-Passages

The “we”-passages are relevant to the understanding of co-authorship. Often the first-person plural is seen as equivalent to a first-person singular. It has commonly been thought that Paul was simply writing from his own perspective, wanting to include the readership or adopt a more authoritative writing style. For this reason, I will examine selected “we”-passages from individual chapters of the letters. This can only be a broad overview, as analysing all “we”-passages would be too extensive and would not help the further analysis of the topic of co-authorship. An overview should suffice.¹ To create this overview, I will examine the chapters in which the first-person plural construction is used more frequently. Only passages of Pauline letters with prescripts of multiple authors will be investigated. In all passages, Paul often switches between the first-person singular and plural. This will not be represented in this section, as it would take up too much space. However, this phenomenon will be addressed in a later chapter about multiple authors in ancient letters, and will be taken into consideration for the final summary, as long as it remains relevant.

3.3.1 Rom 8

	Greek text	Translation
Rom 8,12	Ἄρα οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ὀφειλέται ἐσμέν, οὐ τῇ σαρκὶ τοῦ κατὰ σάρκα ζῆν·	Then so, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to flesh.
Rom 8,15–18	οὐ γὰρ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα δουλείας πάλιν εἰς φόβον, ἀλλὰ ἐλάβετε πνεῦμα υἰοθεσίας, ἐν ᾧ κρᾶζομεν, Ἀββα ὁ πατήρ· αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα συμμαρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν ὅτι ἐσμέν τέκνα	For you have not again received a spirit of bondage to fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption by whom we cry: Abba, Father! The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are

¹ For an exact overview of the „we”-passages I would advise a look into Otto Rollers work „Das Formular der Paulinischen Briefe”. Pages 179–183, in which he provides tables showing the exact number of mentions of first-person plural constructions in the Pauline letters. The only issue is that he already categorises the meaning of „we”, which should be considered separately.

	θεοῦ. εἰ δὲ τέκνα, καὶ κληρονόμοι· κληρονόμοι μὲν θεοῦ, συγκληρονόμοι δὲ Χριστοῦ, εἴπερ συμπάσχομεν ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν. Λογίζομαι γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ ἄξια τὰ παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς.	children of God. But if children, then also heirs, indeed heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ, if indeed we suffer with him, so that we may also be glorified together. For I reckon, that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared to the coming glory, that will be revealed to us
Rom 8,22–26	οἶδαμεν γὰρ ὅτι πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν· οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τοῦ πνεύματος ἔχοντες ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν υἰοθεσίαν ἀπεκδεχόμενοι, τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν. τῇ γὰρ ἐλπίδι ἐσώθημεν· ἐλπίς δὲ βλεπομένη οὐκ ἔστιν ἐλπίς· ὁ γὰρ βλέπει τίς ἐλπίζει; εἰ δὲ ὁ οὐ βλέπομεν ἐλπίζομεν, δι' ὑπομονῆς ἀπεκδεχόμεθα. Ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν· τὸ γὰρ τί προσευξώμεθα καθὼς δεῖ οὐκ οἶδαμεν, ἀλλὰ αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα ὑπερεντυγχάνει στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις·	For we know that the creation groans together and travails together until now. For not only so, but also ourselves, having the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also groan in ourselves, awaiting adoption, the redemption of our body. For in the hope we were saved, but hope that is being seen, is not hope. For who hopes for something he has already seen? However, if we hope for what we do not see, through patience we await. For likewise the Spirit also joins to help our weakness. For we know not, what we should pray for, but the Spirit itself makes intercessions, with inexpressible groanings.
Rom 8,28	οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὓσιν.	For we know that those who love God all things work together for good, to those who are called according to His purpose.
Rom 31–32	Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν πρὸς ταῦτα; εἰ ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, τίς καθ' ἡμῶν;	Then what will we say to these things? If God (is) for us, who (is)

	ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο, ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ἡμῖν χαρίσεται;	against us? Indeed, He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?
Rom 8,34–37	τίς ὁ κατακρινῶν; Χριστὸς [Ἰησοῦς] ὁ ἀποθανών, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐγερθεὶς, ὃς καὶ ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν. τίς ἡμᾶς χωρίσει ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ Χριστοῦ; θλίψις ἢ στενοχωρία ἢ διωγμὸς ἢ λιμὸς ἢ γυμνότης ἢ κίνδυνος ἢ μάχαιρα; καθὼς γέγραπται ὅτι Ὑνεκεν σοῦ θανατούμεθα ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν, ἐλογίσθημεν ὡς πρόβατα σφαγῆς. ἀλλ' ἐν τούτοις πᾶσιν ὑπερνικῶμεν διὰ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντος ἡμᾶς.	Who is the one condemning? Jesus Christ, the one who died, but rather having been raised up, who is also at the right hand of God, who is also interceding for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As has been written: For the sake of you we face death all day, we were regarded as sheep for slaughter. But in all these things we more than conquer through the one who has loved us.
Rom 8,39	οὔτε ὕψωμα οὔτε βάθος οὔτε τις κτίσις ἑτέρα δυνήσεται ἡμᾶς χωρίσαι ἀπὸ τῆς ἀγάπης τοῦ θεοῦ τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν.	Nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

3.3.1.1 Textual criticism

Verse 23 contains different sources of relevance. The phrase “καὶ αὐτοὶ” is extended to an “καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ” in Codex Bezae, Codex Fludensis, Codex Gigas, the old Latin texts and the Vulgate. Another version found in Minuscule 630 and 104 adds a “οὐ” at the end of the phrase. Papyrus 46, however, omits the phrase entirely. While these changes seem to improve reading comprehension, they are not hold significant enough to be considered original writing.

A similar situation can be seen later in the verse: “ἡμεῖς καὶ αὐτοὶ”. Codex Bobbiensis, Codex Leningradensis, Codex Guelferbytanus, Minuscule 33 and other texts create a different word order: καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ. “καὶ αὐτοὶ” can be discovered in Codex Vaticanus, Minuscule 104 and in a few Old Latin texts or Vulgate and Methodius’ texts. “ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ” is used in Codex Athous Laurensis, and other texts. Another variation with just “αὐτοὶ” can be found in Codex Bezae, Codex Fludensis, Codex Gigas and several different Vulgate manuscripts. The variant of the given text corresponds to sources such as Papyrus 46, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Ephraemi and several minuscules. Due to the weight of these sources and the complexity of the reading order, the given text will be retained.

Verse 26 adds *ὑπερ ἡμῶν* after *ὑπερεντυγχάνει*. This is supported by Codex Sinaiticus (Edition 2), Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus, Codex Athous Laurensi, Minuscule 33, the majority text, Old Latin texts, the Vulgate as well and the Syrian and Coptic texts. However, the given text is also found in Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Vaticanus, Codex Bezae, Codex Fludensis, Codex Gigas, Minuscule 6, 81, 945, 1506, 1739 and 1881.

3.3.1.2 Literary criticism

Verse 12 begins with a conclusion of the previous paragraph. The author tells his readers, “the brothers, that they are, including the author, debtors not to live according to the flesh.”

Verse 15 makes an interesting use of the second-person plural construction “ἐλάβετε”, confirming that the others have received the Spirit of adoption. It then switches to a first-person plural to emphasise on this new connection by crying out to the Father like a child. So, as the author includes the recipients into the spirit he changes the form, when talking about what is generally possible for those having received the spirit. This does not imply that the author has not received this spirit but raise the question of why *ἐλάβετε* is written in this form.

Verse 16 clarifies that this spirit is a different spirit to one a person has. This spirit bears witness to the human spirit, which the author expects all readers to have, saying that it is “τῷ πνεύματι ἡμῶν”. Verses 16–17 contain several verbs in the first-person plural. “συνπάσχομεν”, “συνδοξασθῶμεν” and “ἔσμεν” again show a close connection to the topic of salvation and dying and rising again with Christ.

At the beginning of verse 18 “Λογίζομαι” switches to the first-person singular, where the author now speaks in the first person, only to end the verse with “ἡμᾶς”.

In verses 22–28, the first-person plural constructions accumulate: With eight notable mentions, this passage seems to be the densest where these formulations occur. Additionally, forms of “ἡμεῖς” can be found in verse 23 and 26, which promote the idea of commonality between the author and the readers on this topic. These verses focus on the themes of the spirit, adoption and becoming heirs of God. On the topic of pneumatology, the author seems to find a common ground.

These verb forms can be analysed further in verses 31 and 36–37: “ἐροῦμεν“, “ἐλογίσθημεν“, “ὑπερνικῶμεν“. Mentions of ἡμεῖς occur frequently in verses 31–39. Verse 31 again starts with a rhetorical question and concludes the passage: “Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν πρὸς ταῦτα;” The topic then evolves into a discussion about the salvation of the individual, the answer to which is found in the death and resurrection of Christ. They will be judged by no one other than Jesus himself, but they can be sure of God’s love, which no one or nothing can separate them from! It seems that the author addresses the topics of salvation and the death and resurrection of Christ by ensuring that they are addressed to a specific audience: namely, Paul and the congregation of Rome.

3.3.2 Gal 4

	Greek text	Translation
Gal 4,3	οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὅτε ἦμεν νήπιοι, ὑπὸ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου ἡμεθα δεδουλωμένοι·	And so, we, when we were children, were under the basic principle of the world held in bondage.
Gal 4,5–6	ἵνα τοὺς ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τὴν υἱοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν. ⁶ Ὅτι δέ ἐστε υἱοί, ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν, κρᾶζον, Ἀββὰ ὁ πατήρ.	That he might redeem those under the law, so that we might receive the adoption. But because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father!

Gal 4,26	ἡ δὲ ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐλευθέρα ἐστίν, ἣτις ἐστὶν μήτηρ ἡμῶν·	And the heavenly Jerusalem is free, who is our mother.
Gal 4,31	διό, ἀδελφοί, οὐκ ἐσμὲν παιδίσκης τέκνα ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐλευθέρας.	So then, brothers, we are not children of a slave woman, but of the free.

3.3.2.1 Textual criticism

Verse 6 provides an alternate option of how “ἡμῶν” can be read as “ὁμῶν”. This would change the meaning significantly, as it would imply that only the Galatians were recipients of the Spirit. This version is found in Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis, Codex Bobbiensis, Codex Leningradensis, Codex Athous Laurensis and other minuscules. In contrast to the other sources that stand against this version, it has no influence on the current text.

3.3.2.2 Literary criticism

Chapter 4 begins by discussing the adoption that the Galatians have received, now, that they believe in God. In verse 3, the heirship is described as being held in bondage until the young child has grown up. Therefore, the Galatians as well as Paul and his co-authors were children. The first-person plural seems to include everyone in this group of children. Perhaps this is so as not to affront the recipients, given that Paul has already confronted them in the rest of the letter. It seems unlikely that Paul intended to call the Galatians children.

Verses 5–6 continue the theme of heirship, referring to a received sonship. Paul and his co-authors are also recipients of this sonship.

Verse 26 is set in a sequence about the lineage of Hagar and Sarah. In this verse Sarah represents Jerusalem, and this free Jerusalem represents the lineage to which Paul and his co-authors as well as the Galatians belong.

Verse 31 acknowledges this concept of “we” by stating “brothers, *we* are not”. Therefore, Paul, probably his co-authors and without doubt also the recipients are all considered part of the collective free lineage.

3.3.3 1Cor 15

	Greek text	Translation
1Cor 15,3	παρέδωκα γὰρ ὑμῖν ἐν πρώτοις, ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, ὅτι Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν κατὰ τὰς γραφάς	But in the foremost I delivered to you, what I received as well, that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures.
1Cor 15,14– 15	εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν, εὐρισκόμεθα δὲ καὶ ψευδομάρτυρες τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι ἐμαρτυρήσαμεν κατὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι ἡγείρεν τὸν Χριστόν, ὃν οὐκ ἡγείρεν εἴπερ ἄρα νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται.	But if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is [also] void, your faith is also void. But we are also found as false witness of God, because we have testified about God, that he raised up Christ, whom he has not raised, if then (the) dead are not raised.
1Cor 15,19	εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἡλπιότες ἐσμὲν μόνον, ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμὲν.	If in this life we have only hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable.
1Cor 15,30– 32	τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν; καθ' ἡμέραν ἀποθνήσκω, νῆ τὴν ὑμετέραν καύχησιν, [ἀδελφοί,] ἣν ἔχω ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν. εἰ κατὰ ἄνθρωπον ἐθριομάχησα ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, Φάγωμεν καὶ πίωμεν, αὖριον γὰρ ἀποθνήσκομεν.	Are we in danger every hour? Every day I die, by boasting in you, brothers, which I have in Jesus Christ, our Lord. If according to man, I fought wild beasts in Ephesus, what is my profit? If (the) dead are not raised, we should eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.
1Cor 15,49	καὶ καθὼς ἐφορέσαμεν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χοϊκοῦ, φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου.	And as we have born the image of the one of the earth, we shall also bear the image of the one in heaven.

1Cor 15,51– 52	ἰδοὺ μυστήριον ὑμῖν λέγω· πάντες οὐ κοιμηθησόμεθα, πάντες δὲ ἀλλαγησόμεθα, ἐν ἀτόμῳ, ἐν ῥιπῇ ὀφθαλμοῦ, ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ σάλπιγγι· σαλπίζει γάρ, καὶ οἱ νεκροὶ ἐγερθήσονται ἄφθαρτοι, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀλλαγησόμεθα.	Behold, I will tell you a mystery: Not all of us will fall asleep; however, all of us will be changed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, for he will sound the trumpet, and the dead will be raised imperishably, and we will be changed.
1Cor 15,57	τῷ δὲ θεῷ χάρις τῷ διδόντι ἡμῖν τὸ νῖκος διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.	But to God be thanks, the one giving us the victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

3.3.3.1 Textual criticism

Verse 14 presents a distinct textual critical problem that is relevant to the topic being discussed. Another way in which “ὑμῶν” is depicted is used at the end. In Codex Vaticanus, Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis, and some manuscripts, the word “ἡμῶν” is used instead. In the perspective of the wording, this would represent a significant change, reflecting, that Paul shares the same faith as the addressees. However, due to the lack of earlier codices, we must consider this possibility as irrelevant.

3.3.3.2 Literary criticism

In verse 3 Paul reflects on his history with the congregation in Corinth. He apparently delivered the gospel to them. In his description of the gospel, he talks about “our” sins: τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. Paul’s use of the first-person plural could mean that he is taking his own salvation into account, and recognises that his sins, as well as those of the addressees, have been forgiven. However, it could also imply the possibility of the salvation of just him and his co-author Sosthenes.

Verses 14 and 15 continue the argument about the essentials of salvation, which, from Paul’s perspective, is connected to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Verse 14 makes it clear that the preaching referred to is that of Paul and Sosthenes. It is unlikely, but possible that the preaching is focused on a collective Christian preaching. However, the idea of a united Christianity which is preaching the gospel is not yet thinkable for Paul and Sosthenes in their circumstances. Only Paul and Sosthenes are the preachers of the gospel. Verse 15 continues the idea of Paul and Sosthenes preaching the gospel, but that their preaching is not genuine, but rather

lies and deceit. If the preaching in verse 14 is focused on Paul and Sosthenes, then the following verse is also focused on the two preachers.

The same argumentation can be seen in verse 19. If the gospel is not real, then Paul and Sosthenes' message would be wrong, and their putting their faith in a fake message would be pitiful in its essence.

Verses 30–32 ask whether it is still worth the cost of living according to the “Christian” way if the resurrection of the dead is annulled. This fear is expressed first-person plural constructions. It seems that the author is addressing both themselves and the recipients. It is a fear that they both share in their faith, as it would make their beliefs invalid. By addressing them as *brothers who he has gained through Jesus Christ, their Lord*, it becomes clear, that the “we” addressed by the author becomes a collective „we”, through which he tries to communicate with all believers.

Verse 49 continues with the same intention, using the first-person plural in this passage about Adam and Jesus as the first persons in their respective lineages.

Verses 51–52 seem refer to an eschatology and mystery, as it is written, that not everyone will die when the “last trumpet” sounds. This symbolises the coming of the Kingdom of God. The first-person plural constructions tell of a moment of collective belief, as do the verses before.

Verse 57 sees the collectivisation of the Lord Jesus Christ, as someone both the author and the recipient know as their own.

3.3.4 2Cor 4

	Greek text	Translation
2Cor 4,1–2	Διὰ τοῦτο, ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην, καθὼς ἡλεήθημεν, οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης, μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ τῇ φανερώσει τῆς	Because of this, having this ministry, as we received mercy, we may not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor falsifying the word of God, but by manifestation of the truth,

	ἀληθείας συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.	commending ourselves to every conscience of men before God.
2Cor 4,5–7	οὐ γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν ἀλλὰ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν κύριον, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦν. ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπών, Ἐκ σκότους φῶς λάμψει, ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν προσώπῳ [Ἰησοῦ] Χριστοῦ. Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς δυνάμεως ᾗ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν.	For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Jesus Christ, Lord, but ourselves, we are your slaves through Jesus. For God, who spoke: Light shines in the darkness, who shone in our hearts for the radiancy of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power might be of God and not from us.
2Cor 4,10–14	πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι περιφέροντες, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ. ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν. ὥστε ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἡ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν. ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν, εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν	We always carry the death of Jesus in the body, so that the life of Jesus should also be manifested in our body. But always, we the living, are being delivered to death on account of Jesus, that the life of Jesus might also appear in our mortal flesh. So then, death works in us, but life in you. But having the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, I believed, therefore I have spoken, we also believe therefore we also speak, knowing that He has raised up the Lord Jesus, will also raise us up

	κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν.	with Jesus, and will represent with you.
2Cor 4,16–17	Διὸ οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν, ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ ὁ ἔξω ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος διαφθείρεται, ἀλλ' ὁ ἔσω ἡμῶν ἀνακαινοῦται ἡμέρα καὶ ἡμέρα. τὸ γὰρ παραυτίκα ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης κατεργάζεται ἡμῖν	Therefore, we do not lose heart, but if our outward man is indeed being brought to decay, still our inner self is being renewed day by day. But the momentary lightness of our tribulation which works for us more and more for an eternal weight of glory.

3.3.4.1 Textual criticism

Verse 17 holds one piece of relevant textual criticism. Some text variants omit the word “ἡμῶν”. These include Papyrus 46, Codex Vaticanus and the Peshitta. Of this only Papyrus 46 has authority to exclude this word from the translation as it is one of the oldest papyri. However, given the large number of other sources that show the given version, I have decided to keep the version found in the translation.

3.3.4.2 Literary criticism

Verses 1–2 describe how Paul and Sosthenes convey the gospel. It is important for them to clarify, that it is a path of truth and honesty, not deceit and lies. They attempt to clarify this in these verses, and the first-person plural is most likely intended for both authors. Verses 5–7 also continue this idea that both proclaim Jesus Christ.

Verses 10–14 bring this message to its peak, as they describe the hardships they endured, finally proclaiming that they do not fear, because they know that their resurrection is secured by Jesus Christ.

Verses 16–17 describe the final part of their story: Even if the two authors were to die while doing their work, they would gain so much more in the eternal life to come. In this chapter, it seems that both authors continuously wrote about their story, and the first-person plural construction only refers to the authors.

3.3.5 1Thess 2

	Greek text	Translation
1.Thess 2,2–5	ἀλλὰ προπαθόντες καὶ ὕβρισθέντες καθὼς οἴδατε ἐν Φιλίπποις ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλῆσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἁγῶνι. ἡ γὰρ παράκλησις ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης οὐδὲ ἐξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλῳ, ἀλλὰ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον οὕτως λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν. οὔτε γάρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἴδατε, οὔτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεὸς μάρτυς	But having suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had boldness in our God, to speak the gospel of God to you in much conflict. For our exhortation is not of error, nor of impurity, nor in deception, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak: not as pleasing men, but God, who tests our hearts. For neither were we at any time found using words of flattery, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness. God is witness.
1.Thess 2,7–10	δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι, ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν νήπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν. ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἑαυτῆς τέκνα, οὕτως ὁμειρόμενοι ὑμῶν εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς, διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε. μνημονεύετε γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον·	We were able to be in authority as apostles of Christ, but we were children in your midst, as a nursing mother would cherish her own children. So yearning over you, we were pleased to have imparted to you, not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you have become beloved to us. But remember, brothers, our labour and toil, night and day working, in order to not burden any of you, we

	νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τίνα ὑμῶν ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός, ὡς ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐγενήθημεν	proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You and God are witnesses how holy and righteously and blamelessly we were toward you, the believers.
1.Thess 2,13	Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως, ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν.	And because of this, we also give thanks to God unceasingly, that having received the heard word of God from us, you accepted not word of men, but it is truly as the word of God, which also works in you, the believers.
1.Thess 2,15–20	τῶν καὶ τὸν κύριον ἀποκτεινάντων Ἰησοῦν καὶ τοὺς προφήτας, καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων, καὶ θεῷ μὴ ἀρεσκόντων, καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων, κωλύόντων ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἔθνεσιν λαλῆσαι ἵνα σωθῶσιν, εἰς τὸ ἀναπληρῶσαι αὐτῶν τὰς ἀμαρτίας πάντοτε. ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος. Ἡμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ' ὑμῶν πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας, προσώπων οὐ καρδία, περισσοτέρως ἐσπουδάσαμεν τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ.	Who have both killed the Lord, Jesus and their prophets and have driven us out and do not please God and all men set against, forbidding us to speak to the gentiles, that they might be saved, to always fill up their sins. But the wrath has come to its goal upon them. However, we, brothers, having been bereaved of you, for the time of an hour, in face, not in heart, we were more abundantly eager to see your face with great desire. Therefore, we wanted to come to you. Indeed I, Paul, not once, but twice (tried), and Satan hindered us. But who is our hope, or joy, or crown of boasting?

	διότι ἠθελήσαμεν ἐλθεῖν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δῖς, καὶ ἐνέκοψεν ἡμᾶς ὁ Σατανᾶς. τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπὶς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ; ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐστε ἡ δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ χαρά.	Or are not even you before our Lord, Jesus, at his coming? But you are our glory and joy.
--	--	--

3.3.5.1 Textual criticism

No relevant textual criticism found.

3.3.5.2 Literary criticism

Chapter 2 discusses the ministry of Paul, Timothy and Silvanus. The first-person plural construction is consistently used to discuss the ministry that three of them share. The only irritating part of this chapter is Paul's switch in verse 18, where he inserts "ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος". This change can be explained in two ways: Either Paul wrote the letter and included this as an emotional outcry indicating his eagerness to come to them. Or, as the leader of the group, Paul wants to express exactly that. He should have come to them, but he was hindered. Which interpretation makes the most sense is to be discussed.

3.3.6 Phil 3

	Greek text	Translation
Phil 3,3	ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐσμεν ἡ περιτομή, οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐν σαρκὶ πεποιθότες	But we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.
Phil 3,15–17	Ὅσοι οὖν τέλειοι, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν· καὶ εἴ τι ἑτέρως φρονεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν ἀποκαλύψει· πλὴν εἰς ὃ ἐφθάσαμεν, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν.	Let us therefore, as many as are mature, think this way. If in anything you think otherwise, God will also reveal that to you. Nevertheless, to the extent that we

	Συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί, καὶ σκοπεῖτε τοὺς οὕτω περιπατοῦντας καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς.	have already attained, let us walk by the same rule. Be imitators of me, brothers, and note those who walk this way, just as you have us for an example.
Phil 3,20–21	ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτῆρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ὃς μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα.	But our citizenship exists in heaven from where we are also awaiting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humiliation and be conformed to his body of the glory, according to the working by which he is able even to subject all things to himself.

3.3.6.1 Textual criticism

Papyrus 16 seems to contain a version where “ἐφθάσαμεν” is replaced with “ἐφθάσατε”, as do some Sahidic Coptic manuscripts. This would imply a in person. However, the basis for this is unclear, and as other versions do not contain this change, it seems unlikely, that this was the original version.

3.3.6.2 Literary criticism

Paul warns against false circumcision, and in verse 3, explains that “we” are the circumcision. As this may sound arbitrary, he clarifies, that this is a different kind of circumcision, to that of the flesh. As he continues to talk about his background and his Hebrew heritage, it seems likely that Paul is referring to himself and the recipients here.

Verses 15–17 talk about endurance, stating that everyone should hold this mindset. Paul makes this request in the first-person plural to motivate the recipients to do as he does. However, the meaning of “ἡμᾶς” in verse 17 appears to change. This “us” seems to include both authors.

Verses 20–21 at the end of the chapter seem to suggest that both the authors and recipients hold citizenship in heaven. This can be explained by verse 21, where Paul

talks about “our body of humiliation”. As this is a negative expression, it would be unwise to refer only to the Philippians as bodies of humiliation. Including the authors in this description neutralises this confrontational formulation. This body of humiliation is something the authors and the recipients have in common. This is necessary so that they can all be part of the transformation of this body.

4 Ancient prescripts

Modern letters are written in a structural way. They typically consist of a greeting, an opening paragraph, the main body of the letter, a closing paragraph and a complimentary close and signature. Ancient letters also have a structure, though their form and style differ from those of modern letters. The style is relevant to the question of this thesis and will be analysed in this chapter. The ancient practice of letter writing can also provide some interesting insights into the habits of the ancient world.

4.1 Ancient letters

To gain a better understanding of the ancient prescripts, we must first the context in which the letters were written. These circumstances demonstrate common practices and can therefore provide insight into how the prescripts functioned and their purpose. This section will attempt to identify the essential components of letter composition, such as literacy and the customary use of different styles. Classical Hellenistic letters were particularly identified by their openings and closings. These also reveal the most information about the author of a letter. This is why pre- and postscripts will be closely looked into.²

4.1.1 Multiple authors

It is very common to use multiple authors when writing letters about family matters. For example, a letter to a father could often begin with greetings of a brother and a sister. While not unique, other uses of this style of greeting were always a special circumstance.³

This raises the interesting question addressed in this paper: who is mainly writing the letter, and which author takes the lead in the composition? This discussion becomes especially complex when the author starts using first-person plural constructions. This seems to be a common occurrence in everyday ancient literature:

² Cf. Loveday, Alexander: Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians. In: JSNT/12,37. Sheffield, 1989. p.88.

³ Cf. Arzt-Grabner, Peter: Letters and letter writing. In: PNT/2. Paderborn, 2023. p.50.

“If we look at the other examples, a tendency becomes apparent: many we-passages in letters with multiple senders are limited to the formulaic parts at the opening and closing of the letter. The more specific the concerns raised in the letter body are, the more likely we will find singular forms there which refer to only one responsible letter sender or author, although in many cases we will not be able to determine exactly who it is.”⁴

This way of writing is common in ancient letters, especially in formulaic parts. However, we encounter many different uses of these constructions in the Pauline letters. Ancient letters also feature the switch between singular and plural constructions by a few authors.⁵

Modern research has accepted the “Schriftstellerischer Plural” as a plural form used as a stylistic method instrumentalized by Paul.⁶ However, the issue of the use of “we” seems to be more complex than merely a stylistic choice. We therefore need alternative approaches to analyse the function of a first-person plural.

There are various approaches to categorising this plural:

1. The plural is always used as a plural and the singular as a singular. Therefore, when multiple authors are writing, the plural form implies all authors.⁷
2. In contrast to this approach, a psychological approach could be identified, where Paul uses the plural to show humility and sympathy towards the recipients. (*Pluralis modestiae*)⁸
3. This could also be perceived as a tool to elevate himself to the status of a king or elite figure. By using the plural, he adopts a form commonly used by elites and kings in ancient contexts of the polis. (*Pluralis maiestatis*)⁹

So which method should be used? The use of the plural in the Pauline letters is complex. Sometimes it seems to be clear that Paul and his co-authors are implied; in other cases this is more difficult to distinguish. Why do the Pauline letters use

⁴ Cf. Ibid. p.52.

⁵ Cf. Wolff, Dominik: Beispiels-weise. Selbstdarstellung und autobiographisches Schreiben im ersten Korintherbrief. In: BZNW/224. Berlin, 2017. p.91.

⁶ Cf. Ibid. p.94.

⁷ Cf. Ibid. p.93.

⁸ Cf. Ibid. p.93.

⁹ Cf. Ibid. p.100.

this complex set of plurals? This question seems to lead to the answer. Paul does not use letters as simple writing tools. His use of the plural is strategic. By using the plural, he either presents himself as superior or subordinate to his recipients, depending on his perception of them. This seems to align with the concept of the letters' functionality. Paul uses the plural to demonstrate his intentions as a writer.¹⁰

We can now ask how the plural should be approached. First, we need to consider whether there is another author presented in the narrative of the letter. In the letter to the Romans, for example, Paul is the only author that the letter's recipients know of. The intention is to create the impression that Paul wrote everything himself. It is only at the end that we realise the letter was written by Tertius. Thus, in the narrative of the letter, the recipients believed until the very end that Paul had written these words to them. This was Paul's intention in writing the letter. If we now move on to the plural form: If only one author is known, the plural could be understood as follows:

1. Paul uses this first-person plural as a way to identify himself with the addressees.
2. Paul wants to impose an authoritative stance on the recipients.
3. Paul wants to humble himself, by removing himself from the narrative and merging into a collective narrative.
4. Alternatively, Paul may use the plural to create a sense of closeness to and presence with the readership.

When choosing one of these options, the context, content and goals of Paul should be considered.

If Paul is not the sole author of the letter the following approach should be considered. The following questions can help as a guide:

1. Does it make sense to refer to both authors as "we"? This may be logical if, for example, there is a biographical narration.
2. Is it clear who is meant by a first-person singular construction? Does one person write the letter, or is the content and the narrative open to multiple authors?

¹⁰ Cf. Ibid. p.115.

3. Are there any reasons to mention a certain person in the context of a congregation?
4. Are there any other motives? (e.g. *pluralis maiestatis aut modestiae*)

These we-passages are often found in the Pauline letters, and each one needs to be individually analysed to determine who wrote what. This has partly already been done in the earlier analysis of the we-passages in the chapters of the Pauline letters with the most occurrences of first-person plural constructions. These sections will be discussed in detail in a later chapter. The differentiation discussed in this chapter will also be taken into account there.

4.1.2 First-person singular

Paul often writes about himself. He mentions his own name in combination with the first-person singular. These mentions of himself are linguistically impossible to view as the work of someone else: Paul makes it clear that he is writing this himself or dictating it directly to his scribe (e.g. 1Cor, 1,12–14; Phil 9;19) These verses reveal Paul's very personal nature as he addresses the readers directly. However, in literary styles such as diatribe a fictional "I" can be created to illustrate a lesson that needs to be learned. In this case it becomes unclear who is meant by the first-person plural. To gain clarity on this topic, one should first attribute authorship to the apostle, and only consider an alternative interpretation if significant difficulties arise in the interpretation. The text's context should provide clues as to how the first-person singular should be understood.¹¹

4.1.3 Readers

When writing a letter, the authorship is not the only important factor. In ancient times, letters were seen as one half of a conversation. They were seen as a replacement for physical presence and intimacy. It was often more important to keep the conversation going, to maintain the presence, than to talk about something important.¹² This style of senseless writing was common among aristocrats and wealthy people, as the cost of maintaining a constant flow of letters was high.

¹¹ Cf. Ibid. p.115f.

¹² Cf. Londa, Christopher J.: Letters. In: Coogan, Jeremiah (ed.): Writing, Enslavement, and Power in the Roman Mediterranean, 100 BCE-300 CE. New York, 2025. p.252.

It is also important to consider the reality that a letter may take a long time to arrive. Letters often took a long time to travel. This means that a letter may have been written months ago and only just arrived. Therefore, it was important for the author to convey a sense of immediacy, importance, and proximity.¹³

4.1.3.1 *Literacy*

The matter of literacy is relevant to the question of who letters could be addressed to. For a long time, literacy was seen as rare in ancient times. It was expected that aristocrats or specialised writers would be able to read letters. As education was not available to the general population, literacy was therefore only expected to be only found among the wealthy. However, this is not the case. There are many written documents covering themes such as business and personal matters, as well as graffiti. This variety of apparently different types of education makes us wonder whether education would be limited only to the wealthy. While we cannot expect the average person to be able to write a letter as sophisticated as Paul's, we can still expect certain professional groups to have basic literacy skills. Merchants, carpenters and other middle-class professionals are required to have some knowledge of writing, reading and mathematics. Therefore, we should expect some level of education. This education could be formal, involving the employment a teacher, slave or freedman, or informal, through family, friends or a wealthy benefactor. This could be for the benefit of the employer or out of their own interest, in order to educate their employees or simplify their interactions.¹⁴

In summary, although literacy levels were rather low, it was not an uncommon trait, and communication through written mediums was essential to the ancient world and could thus be found everywhere.¹⁵

4.1.3.2 *Lebenssitz*

The "Lebenssitz"¹⁶ of an epistle should be its own topic. After travelling for a long time, the letter finally arrives at its destination, where the addressee opens it and starts reading. But not for himself. No, letters were usually written to be read aloud.

¹³ Cf. Ibid. p.253.

¹⁴ Cf. Robertson, Paul M.: Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature. Theorizing a New Taxonomy. In: NovTSup/167. Leiden, 2016. p.196ff.

¹⁵ Cf. Arzt-Grabner, Peter; Kloppenborg, John S.; Kreinecker, Christina M.: More Light from the Ancient East. Understanding the New Testament through Papyri. In: PNT/1. Paderborn, 2023. p.75.

¹⁶ „Lebenssitz“ is a german term, describing the context of an original situation. In this case it is used to describe the original situation of how the letter was received.

In the case of the elite, it would be read to them; in the case of the Pauline letters, they would be read in the congregation. The style is therefore focused on unity, vocalisation and large groups of people.¹⁷

4.1.4 Structure

The structure of ancient letters is of great importance in this discussion. Different types of letters relate to the different situations. The opening of a letter reveals the author's intent and therefore needs to be analysed in terms of its typical form. The style of the letter also influences how it is perceived.

Adding to the topic of structure, we can consider socio-literary spheres. Different social groups try to achieve different goals through their writing. Cicero, for example, would always try to astonish his readers with his excellent, complex style. This means that he intended to convey the brilliance of his work to others who would read his letters and realise the brilliance he had put into them. This suggests that his work was not intended for the general public, but for an educated elite. When discussing socio-literary spheres, it is important to consider how social groups are reflected in the style, complexity, and intent of writing. For example, best friends would write to each other in a different style and use different language than aristocrats who have never met before. This must be considered when examining the "typical" structure of an ancient letter.

Nevertheless, letters can be divided into three main sections: The opening, the body and the closing.¹⁸ This structure is almost always followed. For the purposes of this research, the focus will be on the opening and closing of the letter, as these sections reveal important information about the relationship between the writer(s) and the reader(s). It is a matter of addressing oneself and others appropriately.¹⁹

When discussing the form and structure of letters, it is important to realise that letter openings and closings have been closely examined and may have been

¹⁷ Cf. Exler, Francis Xavier J.: *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter of the Epistolary Papyri*. Washington, 1923. p.18.

¹⁸ Cf. Tite, Philip L.: *How to begin, and why. Diverse Functions of the Pauline Prescript within a Greco-Roman Context*. In: Porter, Stanley E.; Sean A. Adams (ed.): *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form*. Leiden, 2010. p.57.

¹⁹ Cf. Adams, Sean A.: *Paul's Letter Opening and Greek Epistolography: A Matter of Relationship*. In: Porter, Stanley E.; Sean A. Adams (ed.): *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form*. Leiden, 2010. p.34.

overanalysed. Newer studies now show that letters can be viewed as a single unit, with structural and thematic links spanning from beginning to end.²⁰

4.1.4.1 Letter Types

The epistle was a special form in antiquity. Many papyri have been found that could be categorised as epistles. However, it is not possible to give an official definition of an epistle, as it is not stated as a clear form in any known ancient document. We can only analyse the papyri and categorise them as letters based on their structure. The formulaic composition of an epistle is therefore not fixed and can be discussed. Considering this broad concept, it is necessary to narrow the literature down to certain elements. The opening and closing formulas are useful markers.²¹

By these markers, letters can be divided into different categories. The most prominent division is, whether the letter is a personal or an official correspondence.²²

4.1.4.2 Letter opening

The letter opening is a very important part. It starts the sets the tone and indicates the purpose of the letter, as well as the level of formality.²³

Structure

The opening of a letter can be divided into three sections: Superscriptio, adscriptio, and a greeting or salutation.²⁴

Greetings

The classic greeting used in ancient letters was as follows: “From A (=sender) to B (=recipient), Greetings.”²⁵ This greeting formula only changes when the intentions changes, for example in the case of a petition, a complaint or application. The formula can change to: “To B from A, Greetings”. However, this is very uncommon and not found in the Pauline letters.²⁶

²⁰ Cf. Loveday, Alexander: Letter-forms. p.88f.

²¹ Cf. Exler, Francis Xavier J.: Form. p.13.

²² Cf. Adams, Sean A.: Letter. p.35.

²³ White, John L.: Introductory Formulae in the Body of the Pauline Letter. In: JBL/90,1. Pennsylvania 1971. p.97.

²⁴ Cf. Tite, Philip L.: Functions. p.62.

²⁵ Ibid. p.60.

²⁶ Cf. Exler, Francis Xavier J.: Form. p.23.

Deviations from the standard greeting in a letter were not unusual. In fact, Paul's own deviations can be examined. It is important to first establish what was common:

While in the course of time the infinitive *χαίρειν* became a simple phrase, the extensions with terms expressing well-being or health show that—at least in certain situations—it retained its specific function and meaning, albeit in a weakened form.”²⁷

Although the common greeting formula changed in the early Christian era, this formulation was never widely adopted and is not relevant to the Pauline letters. However, Paul does not simply use the ancient greeting formula. He modifies it to suit his own needs. For example, he adds the following phrase to his greetings: “Grace to you and peace”. It is possible that Paul wanted his greeting to stand out yet not go too far, showing that he was a skilled rhetorician while still sounding like the original language – from *χαίρειν* to *χαρίς*.²⁸

According to Philip L. Tite, the salutatio in this form is infused with a Christological nuance.²⁹ He already sees this greeting as a theological statement by Paul. However, it is a bold assumption to conclude this. Although grace and peace could be attributed to Christian thought and theology, they could also simply convey good wishes to the recipients and not have any theological meaning. The context in which it is set in provides a focus on the divine; grace and peace are derived from God and Jesus Christ. Assuming a primary christological interpretation of this phrase would be incorrect.

The deviations that Paul uses convey a more detailed and personal note to the addressees, as they highlight the connection between Paul and the recipients. Paul can further personalise these additional connotations further by adding a personal title.³⁰

Titles

In ancient time, it was a standard praxis to add titles to greetings in letters if the relevant authority was given. Paul uses titles often in his letters. He also uses often titles for his co-authors. Using a title is not just a simple way of explaining who is writing to whom; it also signals the author's power and authority, showing the

²⁷ Arzt-Grabner, Peter: Letters. p.76.

²⁸ Cf. Ibid. p.77.

²⁹ Cf. Tite, Philip L.: Functions. p.74.

³⁰ Cf. Ibid. p.84.

reader that the words written are important. One could argue that, in this instance, Paul does not have the power or authority to back up his claims to these titles. The titles he uses are: δοῦλος, ἀπόστολος and δέσμιος. He often provides an explanation as to why he sees himself as an ἀπόστολος: “ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ”. By using this phrase, he demonstrates that his authority and power do not come from himself or any other self-created authority. He sees the will of God as his authority to write to the congregations and correct their behaviour if necessary. The theological implications should not be taken too seriously; rather, the rhetorical intent should be considered. By using this title in this way, Paul makes a universal, authoritative claim. That is why it appears in almost all of his letters.³¹

Yet we can see three exceptions to this rule in the Pauline letters. The letter to the Philippians is the most obvious example and is significant in relation to Paul’s history with the Philippians.

“The letter to the Philippians is one of the three places Paul does not use ἀπόστολος, but rather δοῦλος. This modification is possibly explained by his prior relationship with the people in Philippi. In Acts 16, Luke recounts the story of Paul and Silas being followed by a possessed girl who prophesies that these two men were the δοῦλοι of the most high God. Although this story ends with Paul and Silas in some trouble, it is not unrealistic that Paul would have utilized this remarkable story in order to remind the Philippians of his prior visit and to solidify that relationship.”³²

For the Pauline letters, this means that his titles are related to his relationship with the congregations he wants to address. They seemingly draw on the nature of the relationship with the addressees (in the case of the letters to the Romans, whether the relationship is positive or negative). This raises the question of whether the titles of the co-authors were also considered in this tactical way. It can be expected that the titles of his co-authors were configured in a similar way to the relationship with the addressees.³³

Paul uses the title “the brother” rather frequently for his co-authors. In a commentary on Colossians and Philemon, Eduard Lohse postulates that Timothy is only mentioned in this way to give him the same authority as Paul. This implies that Paul used the title in a theological way. If Timothy was not known in Colossae or to Philemon, this would be the first time these people had heard of Timothy other than in personal notes from Paul. Therefore, either Timothy was a brother to Paul,

³¹ Cf. Adams, Sean A.: Letter. p.49ff.

³² Cf. Ibid. p.53.

³³ Cf. Ibid. p.54.

or he was a Christian brother to Paul and the recipients. The question then arises as to why Timothy is mentioned at all. There must be some personal connection to these people; otherwise, there would be no point in writing Timothy's name on the letter, which would then be solely written by Paul. This quickly dismisses the possibility of co-authorship in any way.³⁴

However, that would be too easy. The title "the brother" should also be considered as a personal title from Timothy, describing his relationship with the congregations around him. As will be discussed in a later chapter, Timothy was well connected with the congregations on the Greek peninsula and certain regions of Asia Minor. This would be reason enough to suggest, that Timothy knew these people and that there would be no need for any new introductions. The remaining question is whether Paul and Timothy had the opportunity to meet Philemon and the Colossians before the letter was written. This question will be addressed in the chapter about the Philemon and Colossian letters.

Paul seems to at least use very long titles in comparison to similar ancient letters. When the letter was read, this would probably have caused the readership some irritation.³⁵

4.1.4.3 Letter closing

The letter closing was as important as the letter opening. Every *superscriptio* needs its *subscriptio*.³⁶

Structure

The closing of a letter can be divided into different structural points: Secondary greetings, the signature, the name greeting, and the illiteracy formula. The date Formula is also usually found in papyrus letters.

Secondary Greetings

In the *subscriptio*, the secondary greetings form an essential part of the concluding formula. These secondary greetings can be added by someone who knows the letter

³⁴ Cf. Lohse, Eduard: Colossians and Philemon. A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. In: KEK/9,2. Göttingen, 1968. p.6.

³⁵ Cf. Roller, Otto: Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe. Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom antiken Briefe. In: BWANT/58. Stuttgart, 1933. p.57ff.

³⁶ Cf. Ibid. p.158.

is going somewhere where they also know the people. They can include people who are probably not even there when the letter is received. However, the recipients should know the people being greeted. For the author of a letter, it can be important to include greetings of certain people, as these can be seen as recommendations, connecting people more closely.³⁷

The length of these greetings should not be underestimated: “A sizeable proportion of these short letters is taken up with the exchange of greetings between various third parties at the writer's or the recipients' place of residence.”³⁸

This length can be explained by the fact that there were often many different people who write in their own hand. It was common practice for the final greeting of a letter to be written by the author themselves.³⁹

Signature

The signature forms part of the letter's closing. It often occurs in two forms: The first is a short expression of final greetings, showing the reader that the author is interested in writing to the addressee on a personal level. The second form is simply mentioning the name as a signature.⁴⁰

In the first case, it is written in the author's own handwriting. Interestingly, the first person mentioned does not have to be the same person who made the signature. In the Pauline letters, especially in Romans, we can see different people wanting to contribute and greet known friends and colleagues. However, this “chipping in” from a different person may have been intentional. By using the greetings of a mutual friend, this person could act as an advocate for the group, representing Paul and/or his co-authors.⁴¹

The second type of signature, which is what we also understand as a signature in modern times, could again be written by someone else entirely. For example, Person A might write the entire letter, Person B might contribute greeting to a few people they know, and then Person C might sign the letter.⁴²

³⁷ Cf. Arzt-Grabner, Peter: Letters. p.166.

³⁸ Loveday, Alexander: Letter-Forms. p.93.

³⁹ Cf. Roller, Otto: Formular. p.78.

⁴⁰ Cf. Ibid. p.153ff.

⁴¹ Cf. Ibid. p.154.

⁴² Cf. Ibid. p.155.

Clarity in this area is essential for a clear analysis of the original texts, which we lack in the case of the Pauline letters. However, we can examine the structure of the text to see if there are multiple end greetings or name signatures. This at least could help us to determine the authority or co-authorship of the letter.

We know of three mentions of the *subscriptio* written by Paul himself. This can already give us an indication of how much Paul wrote in his own letters.⁴³

The Illiteracy Formula

The Illiteracy Formula is a set phrase used at the end of a letter to indicate that a scribe was used. This practice was primarily used for formal letters. It was required as it signalled possible alterations. This was not necessary for private letters.⁴⁴

Date formula

Most letters contain a date formula stating when the letter was sent. This date formula was either not been of the Pauline letters, or it has been removed from the surviving copies.⁴⁵

4.1.4.4 Style

The Pauline letters reveal a variety of styles employed in his writing. These approaches to style are best analysed separately, as they pose an excursion from the main topic. Nevertheless, they are worth mentioning for further analysis.

Theological or non-theological

Paul's writing style is set in a certain native habitat. His letters have their own function and form.⁴⁶ This is important because the letters always serve a purpose. They are not intended to be read as some theological masterpiece with hidden symbolism behind every single phrase or word. Rather, the intent of the letter depends on the situation, time, space, and the problems faced by the congregations or people. So, rather than reading Pauline letters mainly in a theological way and interpreting every word as heaving theological significance, Paul's letters should be viewed with a sense of apathy.⁴⁷ Without a theological goal, Paul's theology can

⁴³ Cf. Ibid. p.187.

⁴⁴ Cf. Exler, Francis Xavier J.: Form. p.126.

⁴⁵ Cf. Ibid. p.98.

⁴⁶ Schubert, Paul: Form and Function of the Pauline Letters. In: JRel/19,4. Chicago, 1939. p.367.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ibid. p.370.

develop naturally. Therefore, Paul's letters can only be described as non-theological creations. Paul has intentions and goals in his letters that are not of theological matter. This gives us the room to interpret the names in the greetings or co-authors as a means of influencing readers towards this goal.⁴⁸

Irritation

Paul is prone to irritation. This can frequently be seen in his letters. For example, when he is concerned that a congregation is not living as they should: "Foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?" (Gal 3,1). This outcry demonstrates how Paul reacts to undesirable behaviour, especially when it comes to the understanding of the cross and how salvation can be achieved. It highlights the importance of the topic. It is also a way of making readers think outside the box and expect something completely new. It shows the differentness of the new position. This irritation could be a unique style of Paul's personal letters and his way of expressing his frustration.

A more neutral form of this style can be seen in 1. Cor 15, where the author addresses fools. Irritation only arises when the reader disagrees with Paul's view of the dogmatic issue he addresses in the preceding and following verses.

Diatribes

Paul seems to use an ancient style called diatribe in his letters. This style is used to instruct and improve the morals of others through a set of literary tools, such as dialogue or formal argument. This style can be identified in the works of various ancient writers and is not unique to Paul.⁴⁹

Questions

Paul often uses questions in "we" passages. These questions are not usually rhetorical because he answers them himself. Why, then, does Paul use this technique? Perhaps he is answering questions from the group he is writing to or from his own train of thought. If the latter is the case, then Paul's "theological" thinking is used to create a sense of community.⁵⁰

Letters instead of Epics

⁴⁸ Cf. Ibid. p.374.

⁴⁹ Robertson, Paul M: Letters. p.49f.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ibid. p.140.

A lot of ancient literature talks about the divine or a god. Interestingly enough, these stories are often written as epics. The divine is represented within a broader narrative. Yet Paul chooses not to write in this style, instead conveying his messages about the Christian God through letters.⁵¹ This can have different meanings:

- Paul may have tried to convey the earnestness of his message. It would not be taken seriously enough in the form of an epos.
- He does not seek to convey a deeper reality or meaning, but rather a reality that already exists among his audience. They have already received the epic, the gospel, and thus do not need the broader narrative again. What is important is that they understand the changes they will now have to go through because the new narrative their lives are built around demands it.
- The letters do not convey a theology, but rather Paul's own beliefs and experiences of faith. Therefore, it is not a *Theologica Secunda*, but a *Theologica Prima*. These letters are written from a place of lived belief. This could be analysed by looking at the more transactional and economical expressions that Paul uses when talking to his recipients.
- The letter does not convey a thought belief, but an experienced belief.

This could explain why Paul chose to express himself through letters rather than epos.

Mission partner dynamic

In his book about the Pauline Formula, Otto Roller addresses the interesting topic of a dynamic transformation that can be observed in the letters. When Paul begins his work as an apostle, he presents himself and his co-workers as equals. In 1. Thessalonians, Paul, Silvanus and Timothy are introduced as a unified group, with no significant differences between them. The uses of "we" also indicates a unity of shared experience. All of the co-writers appear as authors of the letter. However, as we move towards a later period in Paul's life, this changes to a more authoritative understanding. As the people of the congregations got to know Paul as an apostle, he also started to introduce himself as such, and his co-authors seemed to become merely "brothers". Either the dynamic with the congregations or the dynamic

⁵¹ Cf. Koskeniemi, Heikki; Jäkel Siegfried; Pyykkö, Vappu: Literatur und Philosophie in der Antike. In: OIPLUT/8. Turku, 1986. p.20f.

between his co-workers has changed during his travels. It should be noted that this dynamic is based on the assumption that 1. Thessalonians was one of the first letters written, and that 2. Thessalonians is a pseudepigraphic composition.⁵²

4.2 “Written by my own hand”

This chapter should cover the authors backgrounds and how these could influence the writing and style of the individual text. It should also explain reasons for why they are mentioned as co-authors and why they are important in terms of authorship. It is also important to evaluate whether these individuals were literate enough to write these letters, and whether their professions or backgrounds suggest some level of education.

4.2.1 Paul

Information about Paul can be gathered by investigating Acts and the Pauline letters. The historicity of these narratives about Paul will not be looked at. It should be noted that the Pauline letters are more credible than the story of Acts, due to the credibility of Paul writing his own letters. However, since this is the question posed, this possibility must be overlooked.

What can thus be analysed about the life of Paul? He was Judean by birth, affiliation and religious practice. He received a solid education, learning to read and write and became a Pharisee under the discipleship of Gamaliel. However, there is no indication that he was born into an aristocratic family. As a Pharisee, he persecuted Christians. Later in his life he had his Damascus moment, which changed his view of the Christian belief. It is important to note, that this did not change his relationship with his Judean heritage. He still saw himself as belonging to the Judean people and as living according to the law. According to Acts he also possessed the Roman citizenship, which saved him from some precarious situations with the local authorities during his travels. He earned his keep by acting as a craftsman, specifically by creating tents.⁵³

Paul’s education could be categorised as either rhetorical or epistolographical. There is an ongoing debate about whether Paul’s writings should be interpreted

⁵² Cf. Roller, Otto: *Formular*. p.101f.

⁵³ Cf. Robertson, Paul M: *Letters*. p.83f.

through a rhetorical lens. He received a formal education, and some of his letters would suggest a rhetorical expertise. However, this could also be explained by his use of a scribe or exemplary handbooks on rhetoric. His epistolography does not automatically imply that he was schooled in a rhetoric, but it does not exclude the possibility either.⁵⁴

What can be said about his education is that he has received at least the minimum level of education. He has learned rhetoric by using rhetorical books, at least. A higher level of education is also possible, as low status does not automatically imply a low level of education.⁵⁵

4.2.2 Timothy

To gain insight into Timothy's background we can analyse the biblical footprint he left in the Pauline letters, as well as in Luke's Acts. In Acts 16, we learn about Paul and Timothy's first meeting. As Paul entered Derbe and Lystra, he met Timothy. Timothy lived in the province of Asia and was known in Lystra and Iconium. He was of Jewish background as his mother was a devout woman. His father was Greek. He joined Paul on his missionary journey, for which Paul circumcised him. According to the letters, Paul regarded Timothy both as a spiritual son and a trusted representative. At one point, Timothy and Paul went their separate ways, with Timothy staying behind in Ephesus while Paul continued to Macedonia. If the testimony of the Second Letter to Timothy is to be trusted, Timothy was also a faithful friend of Paul's, even when he thought he was going to die.

The letters reveal Timothy's close relationship of Timothy with the various congregations. This may explain why he is mentioned as a co-author in many Pauline letters.⁵⁶

4.2.3 Sosthenes

In terms of biblical references, there are only two concrete mentions of Sosthenes. The first is in the greeting of the First Letter to the Corinthians. The second mention occurs in Acts. Here, Sosthenes is described as the synagogue leader who was attacked by an angry mob of Jewish people. The mob was enraged because Paul

⁵⁴ Cf. Ibid. p.47.

⁵⁵ Cf. Ibid. p.48.

⁵⁶ Cf. Tite, Philip L.: Functions. p.67.

had preached in Corinth, and Gallio, the Roman governor, had dismissed the accusations. If the Sosthenes mentioned in the letter is the same person as the Sosthenes mentioned in the Acts story, it would mean that Sosthenes had already become a follower of Paul's teachings by allowing Paul to preach.

4.2.4 Tertius

In the Bible, Tertius is only mentioned once as the author of the Letter to the Romans. The formula he uses is a typical of an illiterate writer, although it seems that Tertius was trying to write down Paul's instructions, which were unclear to him. This could be his way of expressing his confusion and offering excuses if something was unclear.⁵⁷ How likely was it that a scribe would write down something he was confused about? Would Tertius really want to put his name to a letter he did not fully understand? In my opinion, it is unlikely that Tertius was confused about what Paul was trying to write. The mention of Tertius actually shows the formality with which Paul writes to the Roman congregation.

Tertius is assumed to be part of Phoebe's household, so he was either an enslaved worker or a volunteer who offered his services to Paul.⁵⁸

Of course, there is much more that could be said about the authors of the letters, but this should suffice for now. Anything relevant to a particular letter will be added then.

⁵⁷ Cf. Moss, Candida R.: *The Secretary. Enslaved workers, Stenography, and the Production of early Christian Literature.* In: JTS/74,1. Oxford, 2023. p.26.

⁵⁸ Cf. Ibid. p.27.

5 Writers and Slave Writers

In ancient times, the composition of letters was a significant activity. It can be assumed that a segment of the economic market encompassed activities such as letter writing, transportation and copying. In view of the economic expense of this endeavour, elites opted to employ slaves as scribes, messengers or in an alternative capacity within this industry. This chapter will elucidate the work of a scribe, the methods by which letters were written, and the influence slavery had on this market and the Roman world. The focus of this study will be directed towards the power and influence which these slave writers held.

5.1 Scribes

In order to establish the identity of the writers of these letters, it is necessary to consider the world of the scribes. Scribes could differ in several ways. Professional writers were hard to come by, and they required a formal education, during which they would learn to write in a similar manner as their employer.

5.1.1 Slave scribes

At a certain letter capacity, slaves came into consideration as their maintenance was cheaper than that of an employed scribe. As the letter apparatus of a household would become more substantial, slavery would secure these work posts.

It was customary to employ enslaved or formerly enslaved individuals as secretaries. It is fathomable, that Paul had an enslaved scribe that supported his cause, because their master had instructed them to.⁵⁹

It is evident that for ancient elites the use of slaves as writers was acceptable, but there was always the question of dependency: In the absence of the ability to write or compose one's own letters, it became a critical endeavour to simulate this skill. It is not welcomed if a slave is capable of performing the work of an elite. The repercussion to the status and standing of the elite in society would be severe.⁶⁰

The slave writers were kept as tools. This was imperative for the elite's status. They were meant as a prosthetic extension of the slaveholder's body. The slave was not

⁵⁹ Cf. Ibid. p.24.

⁶⁰ Cf. Ibid. p.34.

meant to take over the thinking process or even worse the household, finance and other essential components of the elites' life.

On the topic of responsibility, the faults of writing were seen as the elites' and not the slaves'. The author had to take full responsibility for what was written in his name. This gives slaves a remarkable degree of influence, as they possess the capacity to write letters, unnoticed or overlooked by their master, that could destroy the master's reputation. The position of the slave derives leverage through this dynamic.⁶¹

Should the scribe be granted the liberty to fabricate or write letters without the need of supervision it indicates great trust. This dynamic is particularly salient when the skill of the slave surpasses that of their master. This is not an unlikely occurrence. Candida R. Moss describes this as follows:

“Readers, secretaries, notaries, and copyists were generally more competent literary agents than those who had pressed them into service. They could quickly navigate book rolls, read fluently, perform numerical calculations, act as research assistants, edit texts, and polish writing. As many of these skills were culturally coded as elite, slaveholders had to manage the perception of this work.”⁶²

It is evident that the extensive use of slaves could lead to problematic dynamics for the elites. Even in Cicero's inner circle there are references to slaves becoming self-sufficient and autonomous.⁶³

Following a period of reflection on the ways in which slavery can be seen to exploit and to present possibilities for writing, it is necessary to confront Paul. Did Paul use a slave scribe? We need to look into the “sub-elite” class, as Paul cannot be put in the same category as an elite.⁶⁴ Paul's wealth and status is not profound enough, as Paul states himself: “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.” (Phil 4,12) Paul shows the ambivalence of his living situation, and it would not suit an elite to need. In such a scenario, the individual concerned would no longer be considered as elite.

Nevertheless, this does not stop Paul from becoming a slave user. It is evident that Onesimus was a member of Paul's coworkers. The discourse surrounding his

⁶¹ Cf. Ibid. p.38.

⁶² Ibid. p.39.

⁶³ Cf. Ibid. p.43.

⁶⁴ Cf. Ibid. p.44.

emancipation from slavery reveals the status Onesimus held in Philemon's household. It is evident that Paul had at least one point of contact with enslaved individuals. But did Paul use slaves as slaves? Onesimus, as discussed in the Letter to Philemon, can be associated with a higher status enslaved worker. Should Paul be granted a slave from Philemon or Phoebe, it could be deduced that Paul was in possession of said slave. Paul would only be borrowing them from their master's for the use of writing letters to congregations. In the case of Onesimus it is evident that he came to Paul voluntarily, and seems to have converted to Christianity, as Paul returns Onesimus back to Philemon as a brother. Onesimus is an example of the attractive nature of Christianity for slaves. However, it is important to note that Paul never explicitly condemns slavery.

5.2 Female Scribes

An important question must be asked: Did women ever write letters? There is scarce evidence of educated and literate women. So, the question should rather be, whether women were authors and whether they were used as scribes.⁶⁵

With regard to the question of authorship, an interesting phenomenon is observed whereby male authors wrote pseudepigraphic works and presented them as works of a female author. These works were constructed as mechanisms of suppressing women into their social category and guiding them to remain within it. It was socially not accepted, that a woman would practice philosophy or create literary works of importance. Therefore, when encountering literature authored by a woman, it is imperative to consider whether it is a work of a male author.⁶⁶

In this regard it is noteworthy to consider women trying to use the same approach: By putting a male name on a literary work, women can empower themselves and create literature that could disrupt social norms. It is thus necessary to consider the possibility of female pseudepigraphic authorship.

The conventional workplace for women, particularly enslaved women, was in the house, whilst male slaves worked outside. Despite the fact that this category would

⁶⁵ Cf. Deslauriers, Marguerite: Women, Education, and Philosophy. In: James, Sharon L.; Dillon, Sheila (ed.): *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*. West Sussex, 2012. p.343.

⁶⁶ Cf. Ibid. p.344f.

imply women to become scribes, this is not the case. Due to the lack of literacy among women, this job was not assigned to them. At least not officially:

“Women worked primarily in „service” jobs (especially food preparation, hospitality, personal care, and prostitution), the sale of foodstuffs, and the manufacture of clothing, jewelry, and perfume. Female slaves in particular appear as weavers, seamstresses, midwives, wet nurses, caregivers for young children, and personal attendants/secretaries for women.”⁶⁷

The majority of these roles did not require literacy, yet there were tendencies towards emancipation. For instance, finances or the management of a job could be assigned to the work of a female slave.⁶⁸

A significant factor that must be considered is the reproductive capabilities of a slave woman. The female slave was a valuable asset, as she could birth children who in turn would be enslaved and trained for various tasks within the household. It is important to consider that enslaved women would endeavour to secure important employment for their children, to gain influence over the households e.g. a slave scribe.⁶⁹

In the case of the Pauline epistles, it remains unconfirmed whether a female scribe was employed in the composition of any of these letters. The only scribes or authors mentioned were male. However, an exception must be noted, in the form of Phoebe as the interpreter of the letter of the Romans. In this instance, Phoebe acquires a significant degree of influence over the interpretation of the letter and could twist the meaning of his letter.

5.3 Writing materials

The following discussion will focus on the material aspect of letter writing. Ancient letters could be written on different materials. Papyrus was common. Other resources were also used: leather parchment, potsherds and wax, wooden and metal tablets. More uncommon materials such as ivory, bones, textiles, bark and bast were used for special occasions.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Perry, Matthew J.: *Gender, Manumission, and the Roman Freedwoman*. Cambridge, 2013. p.46.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ibid.* p.46f.

⁶⁹ Cf. *Ibid.* p.50.

⁷⁰ Cf. Arzt-Grabner, Peter et al.: *Light*. p.49.

5.4 Styles of writing

In addition to the use of certain writing materials there were different styles of writing a letter. The term “styles of writing” is employed to denote the manner in which a letter is composed. Nowadays, everyone would expect to write a letter by their own hand or to write it using a computer. However, the modern era has made letters obsolete, because we have digital messaging, phone calls and faster and more efficient ways of communication. However, on occasion, writing a letter is a swift endeavour of brief consideration of the content prior to its composition. Nevertheless, in ancient times this process was not as brief as it was today. Texts could only be written down slowly and the act of sitting down to write and maintaining the ancient writing posture could become a strenuous process for the writer. New methods of writing were established for people with above-average incomes.

One possible method of producing a written record would be to have a letter dictated. This process of writing was not a spontaneous action. The act of dictation required the dictating person to articulate every syllable, allowing sufficient time for the scribe to pen it down. In this process the scribe would be restricted from incorporating own ideas, and the text would be a controlled production of the dictating person.⁷¹ This style of letter composition would require a significant degree of cognitive effort from the dictator, as the entire letter should already be planned prior to its composition. The act of dictating a letter was not an impulsive undertaking; rather, it was the result of thorough and careful planning.

Should the author not have considered the matter of the letter to be of sufficient importance, the text could also be documented by means of tachygraphy. The scribe was able to formulate the letter independently by writing down the contents in a rapid stenographic manner. This approach would grant the scribe the liberty to fashion an elegant form of the letter at a later point. The process is significantly more comfortable for the author.⁷²

The use of *nomina sacra* may provide evidence that this form was employed for specific letters. This is due to the fact that it reduces well-known words to a smaller

⁷¹ Cf. Roller, Otto: Formular. p.16.

⁷² Cf. Ibid. p.17.

number of letters and thus simplifies the work of the scribe. This could have been incorporated into the Christian tradition of writing.⁷³

A third possibility is that the author of the text will instruct the scribe or a colleague to compose an entire letter. It is possible that this will be accompanied by clear instructions; alternatively, it may be presented without any instructions whatsoever. The secretary hypothesis is not an implausible proposition; there are some accusations in ancient correspondences about whether a letter or text is genuinely written by the signed author. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the scribe assimilates the style of the author.⁷⁴

It is evident that the utilisation of these methodologies did not necessarily imply an absence of personal correspondence among authors. This was a prevalent possibility during this period.

5.5 Copying

In the event of requiring a copy of a document, nowadays one simply walks to the copier, puts the document in and prints as many versions as needed. In antiquity, this was not as straightforward a process. The process of duplicating the letters, arranging these copies into categories, and ensuring their preservation for future reference by an elite was a time-consuming endeavour.⁷⁵

This is not the sole reason a letter may be duplicated. When an individual is aware of their own skill level, they may consider the composition to be good enough to become famous. In this case copies would be created and transferred to elites and other locations, with the intention of being read aloud.⁷⁶

5.6 Drafting

It is also noteworthy that scribes frequently forged drafts for letters. Drafts can be discerned by corrections, markings and additions. This text provides a visual representation of the process of letter writing. Drafts were frequently held brief, which does not necessarily imply that the final product would be of a similar length.

⁷³ Cf. Bonati, Isabella: *Digging into lives. Christians and Christianity in the Greek Papyri from Egypt*. In: IDS/57,1. Cape Town, 2023. p.2.

⁷⁴ Cf. Roller, Otto: *Formular*: p.19f.

⁷⁵ Cf. Londa, Christopher J.: *Letters*. p.255.

⁷⁶ Cf. Exler, Francis Xavier J.: *Form*. p.17.

The creation of a draft serves to demonstrate the compositional freedom that scribes possessed.⁷⁷

5.7 Fabrication of letters

To circumscribe the tasks of a scribe to mere writing would be to greatly diminish their significance. Scribes' roles extended beyond mere transcription of correspondence; some were responsible for the composition, duplication, revision of letters, and the compilation of catalogues. All of these tasks could be undertaken by a scribe.⁷⁸

When considering the various tasks of a scribe, it is important to recognise that not all of these were carried out under the direct observation of the elites or masters who commissioned the letter. For an individual of high standing, this operative function would be more substantial and would encompass the involvement of multiple scribes.

The fabrication of letters was well known in the ancient world. This practice was widespread practice among the elites and could also be found among the general public. In the context of ancient practices, this was not considered to be prohibited or to be viewed with disapproval. The practice of composing letters on behalf of another individual was not an uncommon occurrence. Nonetheless, it was imperative that the letter be executed to a high standard. In the creation of the letter, it was imperative that the reader be unable to decipher whether the author had written the letter themselves or if it had been transcribed by a scribe. It is evident that the fabrication of a written piece of literature was acceptable in ancient times, and, if done well, not seen as fraudulent.⁷⁹

When analysing the single tasks of the fabrication of documents a distinction in authorial and non-authorial tasks is revealed. Practices such as hammering, ornamenting, gluing and stitching were not seen as authorial.⁸⁰ This prompts the following question: at what point did non-authorial elements become authorial:

⁷⁷ Cf. Arzt-Grabner, Peter: Letters. p.53ff.

⁷⁸ Cf. Coogan, Jeremiah; Moss, Candida R.; Howley, Joseph A.: The Socioeconomics of Fabrication. Textuality, Authenticity, and Social Status in the Roman Mediterranean. In: *Arethusa*/57,2. Baltimore, 2024. p.243.

⁷⁹ Cf. Ibid. p.230.

⁸⁰ Cf. Ibid. p.234.

“The lines between authorship and manufacture are sometimes uncomfortably close.”⁸¹

It is noteworthy that, in certain instances, this has the potential to modify the content of a document. For example, in an ancient treatise Galen complains, that he has been misunderstood by the readers, because some scribes have added inappropriate titles to his works. The act of bestowing a title upon a work of literature can be considered a significant endeavour, with the potential to profoundly alter the interpretation of any work. This is a significant piece of information, as it demonstrates the considerable influence that scribes held within society.⁸²

It can thus be realized that this particular type of bookwork is not necessarily conducted under the scrutiny of the elites and is not checked after completion. This means that between the first draft of a text and publishing there is a veil of the unknown. This “black box” is created by the freedom and creativity of the scribes. This has the potential to result in unsanctioned fabrication by scribes, which may entail unforeseen consequences for the status and livelihood of the author.⁸³

This is not the sole method by which unwanted fabrication may be created. The readers could also be found guilty of fabrication: “Roman elites also depicted bad reading as illicit fabrication: an inappropriate or improper making of meaning out of text.”⁸⁴

What conclusion can be drawn from this analysis with regard to the process of fabrication? The various practices that fall into the category of fabrication, or could which have the potential to result in fabrications constitute a significant element of the process of creating letters. However, given the prevalence of this practice, it is necessary to introduce three distinct categories: authorial composition, readerly discernment and the artisanal skills of bookmaking. In the past these skillsets had much more overlap and gave way for the fabrication of letters.⁸⁵

This fabrication needs to be thought through as a possibility for Paul’s letters. Pauline letters could have been fabricated. It is evident that fabrication has to

⁸¹ Ibid. p.234.

⁸² Cf. Ibid. p.235.

⁸³ Cf. Ibid. p.236.

⁸⁴ Ibid. p.241

⁸⁵ Cf. Ibid. p.243.

considered for certain contexts: In the Epistle to the Romans, the scribe Tertius makes a direct assertion regarding his authorship of the letter. This finding suggests the presence of a fabrication process. In this instance, the letter would appear to deviate from the original conception or manner of expression employed by Paul. However, it seems that this did not result in a change in the interpretation of the Pauline letter. In the part of Romans, this will be discussed further.

The term “πεπαιδευμένος” is employed when discussing fabrication. In the case of unwanted fabrication, it is imperative that an individual is assigned to the task of checking the text and determining whether the composition is attributable to the given author. The responsibility of this task lies with the *πεπαιδευμένος*, who due to their education possess the ability to discern, whether a letter is from the correct author. The extent to which pseudepigraphic writing could be easily detected, particularly in instances where a slave had been instructed to write in a manner similar to that of their master, remains uncertain. Nevertheless, it is significant, that the work of an authenticator was already known in ancient times.⁸⁶

5.8 Tabellarius

Merely discussing the processes of writing and fabrication is insufficient. Furthermore, it is imperative to consider the manner in which these letters travelled within the context of the ancient world. The communication was not a simple email, transmitted instantaneously and replied to after a brief period. Indeed, correspondence frequently required several months to traverse the distances involved. It is noteworthy that it was possible that letters were misplaced during the delivery process. The question that needs to be asked is by what means the letters traversed. One option would be to ask friends or family members traveling in the right direction to take the letter with them. For elites the *tabellarius*, a courier, would come into question. In view of the considerable time and effort involved, an elite frequently dispatched numerous couriers simultaneously, and on occasion, even assigning them the same route, to ascertaining whether the courier made any unnecessary long stops or breaks. This was to ensure that the letter was not susceptible to being duplicated, modified or otherwise significantly altered. As the letter travels to its destination, it was under no surveillance. Therefore, to grant that

⁸⁶ Cf. Ibid. p.250.

the letter would not be opened a stamp or a signet ring would be used. However, a signet or stamp could also pose certain risks. This is because it is undeniable that a stamp is from the sender. Consequently, if a communication containing unfavourable content were to be intercepted by an opponent, this would result in adverse consequences for the sender. That Paul had these *tabellarii* is unlikely, although elites, sympathetic to his cause, could have lend him their *tabellarius*. It is conceivable that alterations to the letters may have occurred during this process. If Paul or his co-authors found their letters important enough to be marked with a signet ring or a stamp remains uncertain.⁸⁷

This prompts the following question: Who were the letter carriers for the Pauline letters, and what would be their motive for altering or rewriting the letters? This issue will be addressed in the chapter devoted to the individual letters.

5.9 Amanuensis hypothesis

The amanuensis hypothesis posits that the authors of the biblical texts utilised skilled scribes to transcribe their works. The thesis is widely accepted in the field of study of the gospels. However, this is not the case in the Pauline epistles. Despite the prevalence of scribes in the ancient world, most literature assumes that Paul authored his letters independently. While it is plausible that Paul possessed the necessary education to compose such epistles, this fact does not necessarily imply that he was the author. There is a high probability that scribes also wrote Pauline letters. For the Epistle to the Romans this is a fact.⁸⁸

However, if scribes were a common practice, it is likely that the style of writing would vary from letter to letter. While it is conceivable that some letters may have been penned by the same scribe, definitive confirmation of this remains elusive. It is reasonable to hypothesise that Paul would rely on a stenographic version of his letters in order to ensure that his secretaries did not have too much discretion and that the citations from the Bible were accurate.⁸⁹

This possibility of scribal use still allows for the discussion of the hypothesis that certain letters, due to their differing style, were initially regarded as

⁸⁷ Cf. Londa, Christopher J.: Letters: p.257ff.

⁸⁸ Cf. Williams, Travis B.: Secretaries in Ancient Letter Writing. Influences on the Composition of New Testament Epistles. In: PKNT. Göttingen, 2026. p.21f.

⁸⁹ Cf. Ibid. p.23f.

pseudepigraphic Pauline letters, and thus should be included in the composition of the authentic Pauline letters. Nevertheless, the intricacies inherent in the evolution of the contents remain unexplained within this hypothesis.⁹⁰

5.10 Autonomy or Heteronomy

The elites of antiquity appear to control the literate world of their era. At least that is what they wanted to display: a system of control and of no error. However, this system was not without flaws. However, it is important to consider the arguments that can be found for an autonomy of this sort, and the arguments that would be presented in favour of heteronomy.

5.10.1 Heteronomy

The authors of Greek letters were acutely aware of the significant influence wielded by scribes. Constraints posed regarding the time, the final composition or any section of the writing process could secure controlled writing. It was anticipated that members of the elite would possess the ability to write in their own hand. This was necessary to ensure the integrity of the most significant letters, which were to be inscribed without the influence of a scribe. The path taken by the *tabellarii* could not be controlled; nevertheless, trust could be cultivated by regulating travel time and documenting the time and date of the arrival of correspondence and the day of its dispatch. In order to further secure the letter's content, one could seal it with a stamp. These small controlling mechanisms would give the elites a sense of security, that the letters could not be altered and that they would reach the recipient as intended.

5.10.2 Autonomy

However, what freedom do these scribes hold? The answer is: more than expected. Especially, when it comes to less important letters. It is evident that an elite would not have the resources to surveil all correspondence. Elites frequently engaged multiple scribes to write their correspondence. Letters of less importance could not all be written in a controlled manner. Consequently, the author's role becomes largely symbolic within the composition. However, this was meant to *keep the conversation going*. The production of these letters was dependent on the expertise

⁹⁰ Cf. Ibid. p.28.

of the scribes. It is imperative that the scribe has mastered their skill to conceal that the author is not personally composing the letter, but a secretary in his stead. In order to ensure that the scribe writes in the correct style, it was customary for a slave to be instructed in the art of writing from childhood onwards. It is evident that this would not be the case for the *ingenui*,⁹¹ however, given the sufficient quantity of letters that could be written, the *ingenui* would still be able to find employment and competently mimic the style of their recruiter.⁹²

Furthermore, it should be noted that in the context of dictation or transcription, opportunities for change and expression on the part of the scribe arise. Notwithstanding the stringent dictation, the scribe retains the authority to exercise their judgement in the use of the pen. In instances of visual impairment or total blindness, the role of the scribe in facilitating communication on behalf of the author, grants significant influence over the authors life.

5.10.3 Cicero and Tiro

To illustrate this point, one may consider the case of a slave employed in the household of a renowned author: Marcus Tullius Tiro, a scribe under Cicero's care. Tiro was praised as a talented secretary, and he seemed well versed in transcribing dictation. Cicero even acknowledged the collaborative nature of the composition of literature by himself and Tiro. The scope of this collaboration was confined to literary works, with the exclusion of personal correspondence. The extent to which Tiro contributed to the composition of Cicero's epistolary works remains a subject of speculation.⁹³ According to Cicero, Tiro was the cause for his works not being silent.⁹⁴ The example of Cicero demonstrates the significant influence that a slave or former slave could exert on the life of an elite individual. The influence of enslaved individuals on the development of writing is an irrefutable fact. The question of whether these factors influenced letter writing specifically remains to be investigated. A comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon would necessitate an examination of literary and linguistic nuances.

⁹¹ This term is a juristic description of a person, who was born free in ancient Rome. Another term for these free born people was *libertini*. Cf. Londa, Christopher J.: Letters. p.254.

⁹² Cf. Ibid. p.254ff.

⁹³ Cf. Williams, Travis B.: Secretaries. p.175f.

⁹⁴ Moss, Candida R.: Secretary. p.37.

6 Reevaluating “Pauline” Letters

The foundational framework for the subsequent chapter has been established. In this re-evaluation, it is imperative to recognise that the individual letters will be examined independently, as the context in which they were composed holds significant importance.

6.1 Romans

With regard to the Letter of the Romans, an interesting situation is observed: The letter is written in the name of Paul. The author is identified as the sole contributor in the letter's opening. The letter begins its formulation with the intention of conveying the impression that the author is the sole individual responsible for its composition.

However, a closer inspection of the letter reveals numerous instances of the use of “we”-passages. In Chapter 8 the author elaborates on the topic of salvation, adoption and the death and subsequent resurrection of Christ. In this section, Paul makes reference to the common ground he shares with the Roman congregation. However, in the narrative of the letter Paul is the sole narrator. In the context of the *Lebenssitz*, the letter was intended to be read aloud. Therefore, with regard to the congregation of Rome, Paul would be the sole author of the letter until the final chapter. It is evident, that prior to this point the congregation would listen under the assumption, that the first-person plural constructions would encompass them. The text conveys the communality shared in the salvation in Jesus Christ. This understanding stems from a dogmatic approach.

As stated in the previous chapter, the reader is informed, that a scribe was utilised in the composition of the letter. For the contemporary reader, this phenomenon was nothing out of the ordinary. The composition of letters were frequently undertaken by scribes. Nevertheless, in the context of the 21st century, the question of the influence of the scribe must be posed.

Tertius appears to be a professional scribe. If he was a slave, it is conceivable that he could have originated from the household of Phoebe or some other elite patronage. It is noteworthy that the provision of such services could have been undertaken by the patron or by the slaves themselves. Alternatively, Tertius may

have been a freelance scribe offering his services to Paul. Depending on the dynamic between Paul and Tertius, this could have resulted in alterations to the text.

1. In the event that Paul and Tertius' interaction was based on mutual interest, it could be hypothesised that Tertius was privy to the contents that Paul wished to disclose to the congregation of Rome. In this case, under the assumption that Tertius also converted to the Christian belief system, it is conceivable that Paul granted Tertius a greater degree of latitude in the fabrication of the letter.
2. If the relationship between Paul and Tertius was modelled on a slave-author relationship or on an insider-outsider relationship, it could imply that Paul wished for the letter to be transcribed syllable by syllable. It can thus be deduced, that Paul exercised direct authority over the final product, with Tertius merely serving as an extension of his body. It can thus be concluded that the Illiteracy formula is intended to convey the notion that Paul is not the writer of the text, and that the text is considered an official letter. This attention to detail indicates a high level of craftsmanship, derivable from Tertius' skills. Depending on the extent of Tertius' knowledge, this formulation could indicate, that he did not understand the contents of Paul's dictation, and expresses his apology through these words. It is evident that, given the intricacy of the subject matter and the coherence of the argument, the probability of this occurrence is minimal, unless a comprehensive draft has been formulated, thereby affording Tertius the opportunity to exert a greater degree of influence over the text.
3. In the absence of any trust on Paul's part towards Tertius, it is to be expected that the text would be constructed as a dictated version, thereby placing Paul in a position of undisputed authority over the written content.

It is evident that the epistle has been written by a secretary and that Paul's own hand was employed solely for the composition of the secondary greeting and the signature appended to the letter, as this was customary in ancient practice.⁹⁵

The probability of the use of a scribe is increased by the similarity of the content to Galatians. In the epistle to the Galatians, Paul employs a comparable structure and

⁹⁵ Cf. Ibid. p.24f.

subjects, which would suggest that the letter to the Galatians has been duplicated and utilised as a preliminary draft. It is conceivable that Paul merely utilised the draft and included his remarks to the existent letter.

It is also pertinent to mention is also the probable letter carrier of this epistle: Phoebe. Phoebe is mentioned in Rom 16,1–2 as a benefactor of the Christian cause. It appears that she is the letter carrier because Paul could only know that Phoebe would arrive in Rome, if she also got the letter to the congregation. And if she had travelled later than the letter, the written message would be confusing. Furthermore, Paul would have had to pay significant shipping expenses. Therefore, it can be assumed that Phoebe travelled to the congregation of Rome and handed them the letter, and that she would also provide an interpretation of the letter, in the event that any questions were to arise. Given her status as a benefactor of the Christian cause, it appears improbable that she would make any alterations to the letter of Paul, particularly if she were to be the individual tasked with interpreting the work for the Roman congregation.

Therefore, with regard to the authorship of the letter, it can be deduced that Tertius, in his capacity as a scribe, may have exerted a degree of influence on its composition. This influence is seen in proper formulas and stylistic features. It is highly improbable that Phoebe would have been inclined to make any amendments to or additions to the letter, given that she is the designated interpreter. It is evident that Paul is regarded as the primary author for the majority of the letter, with the exception of the final section, which is attributed to Tertius. In light of this, it can be posited that the letter in question has been authorised by Paul, although it was a creation of Tertius, who was operating under the instructions of Paul.

6.2 Galatians

It is evident that Paul composed the epistles to the Galatians in a state of considerable emotional distress. It appears that Paul utilised the occasion to compose his epistle to the Galatians without expressing gratitude, due to his indignation at the conduct of the congregations in Galatia. However, Paul is not the sole writer referenced in the correspondence. Additionally, the collective authorship of the brothers with Paul is mentioned. This already establishes Paul as the primary

author of the text. The group of authors to which Paul refers could be composed of his colleagues or simply a congregation he is attending at the present time.

In consideration of the present location of Paul at the time of composing this epistle, two options are available to us. The first of these is located in Ephesus, while the second is situated on his journey through Macedonia.⁹⁶ It is conceivable that the composition of the text may be influenced by individuals from these regions, albeit without attribution.

It is probable that Paul's letter was copied and sent to the different congregations across Galatia depending on the number of congregations addressed.⁹⁷ This could also provide an explanation as to why Paul would still possess a copy when composing the Letter to the Romans. In this light, the draft theory would be reasonable.

In this passage, Paul employs a style of writing that is intended to provoke a strong emotional response in his audience, namely irritation and diatribe. The purpose of this technique is to correct the people and encourage them to adhere to the correct moral beliefs. However, this use does not necessarily imply the involvement of a scribe other than Paul. This could be the natural style that Paul employs.

Given that Paul does not utilise all the formulas present in this letter, it can be deduced that the letter is intended to be stern and personal. With the Thanksgiving and secondary greetings excluded, the tone that Paul attempts to convey to the congregations is outlined.⁹⁸ This phenomenon can be interpreted as a stylistic device employed by Paul, utilising the structural elements of a classical letter to convey his message. In employing the letter form in this manner, Paul distinguishes himself from his contemporaries in the ancient world.

The composition of this letter is further complicated by the presence of a passage in which Paul writes about him in his own hand. This is a formulation generally

⁹⁶ Cf. Schnelle, Udo: *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*. Göttingen, 2011. p.111.

⁹⁷ In the present discourse surrounding the epistle to Galatia, the matter of the intended recipients remains a subject of considerable discussion. There are arguments both for and against the location of the Galatians in the geographic land of Galatia. An alternative hypothesis is that they are located within the Roman province. This is pertinent to the question of authorship, as it determines whether the author was writing to a group with which they were well-acquainted, or not. The close relationship with the recipients conveyed by this letter is not an uncommon occurrence. In the context of this research, a definitive resolution to this debate will not be provided, and both sides will be given due consideration. (Cf. Schnelle, Udo: *Einleitung*. p.113ff.)

⁹⁸ Cf. Arzt-Grabner, Peter: *Letters*. p.166.

employed for the purpose of appending a signature to a letter, thereby indicating the author's authorship. In this instance, however, Paul demonstrates that the remainder of the letter was not composed by him directly, but rather by a scribe.⁹⁹

However, the “we”-passages do not provide any indication of the use of a scribe or any other individual. It is evident, that the first-person plural constructions in Galatians 3 are indicative of a dogmatic use. This does not further contribute to our analysis.

The letter carrier is unknown for this letter.

The Epistle to the Galatians is focused on Paul as the author, and through stylistic analysis, we can identify Paul's personal attachment to the congregation. Nevertheless, there are a few indications that Paul was not the one writing it down, but rather a secretary who was in his company and may count to “the brothers with him”. However, Paul was the dictator and the author of the letter.

6.3 1. Corinthians

In the letter opening of the First Epistle to the Corinthians the authorship of the text is attributed to Paul and Sosthenes. In this passage, Paul is once more introduced as an apostle, and Sosthenes is referred to as “the brother”. It is reasonable to hypothesise that this Sosthenes is the same individual as Sosthenes mentioned in Acts. He is the Synagogue leader and is held accountable for the preaching of Paul in Corinth. Sosthenes appears to have become a colleague of Paul, working alongside him. Sosthenes, in his capacity as the former leader of the synagogue, is the optimal co-author for this epistle, given his presence in Corinth. Therefore, it can be assumed that Paul would have a high interest in including Sosthenes in his letter, as this would serve to signal authority and endearment. However, it is conceivable that Paul added Sosthenes as a co-author without incorporating him into the writing process.

But who is “we”? It is evident that Paul employs first-person plural constructions in a dogmatic manner. This phenomenon is indicative of the universality of his statements. This is the case, at least with regard to chapter 15. In the remainder of the letter, Paul frequently employs the first-person singular perspective. The self-

⁹⁹ Cf. Moss, Candida R.: Secretary. p.24f.

illustration of Paul is an intriguing factor, as it clearly indicates a personal note of Paul in this letter. It is therefore reasonable to hypothesise that Paul played a significant role in the composition of this letter, in contrast to other, more formal letters. In this instance, the use of the first-person singular is not employed for the purpose of creating a fictional reflection in the form of a diatribe.¹⁰⁰

In this epistle, Paul employs a diatribe as a primary stylistic device to instruct the Corinthians on the optimal way of life, according to his understanding of the gospel. The utilisation of irritation appears to be built on a close relationship between the author and the recipient, thereby enabling the author to provoke anger in the recipient if it serves to reinforce his argument. The diatribe aspect constitutes a significant element of the letter, as it is stylistically important to the question of how Paul addressed his recipients. By employing this style, he taught “them”. The first-person plural was used to express dogmatic truths; the rest were information and advice directed at them. In this manner, the distinction between the author and the addressee is evident.

The letter carrier is unknown.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians is attributed to Paul, and the style and manner of writing clearly show no interest in portraying it any other way. The reference to Sosthenes appears to be of a programmatic nature, serving the purpose of maintaining positive relations with the congregation.

6.4 2. Corinthians

In the opening passages of the epistle Paul and Timothy are depicted as the authors of the letter. It is evident that Paul’s extensive title is once again highlighted, while Timothy is addressed solely as “brother”. In consideration of the issue of co-authorship, Timothy’s involvement is significant to this congregation at this point in time. It is highly probable that he would be a well-known figure. Timothy is one of Paul’s most trusted and faithful co-workers and thus always a good choice for a co-author. However, the question arises of the circumstances surrounding Sosthenes and his status within the team as he is no longer mentioned. Nonetheless, the content of the letter speaks of two authors: Paul and Timothy.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Wolff, Dominik: Selbstdarstellung, p.115f.

In the “we”-passages an interesting occurrence is evident: Paul and Timothy appear to be collaborating in the composition of the written text. It is as if they are genuinely discussing their collective experiences of preaching and the benefits they have derived from their Christian faith. In this instance, the letter is distinctive in nature, yet it appears to have been composed in a sense of unity. The author of 2Cor 4 has one consistent thought process, following a coherent argumentation. According to the letter's own narrative, the letter was composed by two authors working in collaboration.

As is characteristic of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, this letter also comprises a diatribe. It is evident that the utilisation of this method by Paul and Timothy serves to teach the recipients an important lesson. Paul and Timothy are exempt from this teaching, as they are the ones knowing the correct way. It is reasonable to hypothesise that Paul or Timothy would not incorporate the addressees into the teaching sections when employing a first-person plural construction.

Furthermore, the absence of anyone writing in their own hand suggests that this issue has not been a source of concern to the letter writers.

The letter carrier is unknown.

With regard to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, both Paul and Timothy are recognised as the authors of this letter. It is not possible to ascertain whether alterations have been made by another person, nor to identify any scribe.

6.5 Colossians

The Epistle to the Colossians commences with an introduction of Paul and Timothy as the authors of the text. Paul is introduced as an apostle. Timothy as the brother. The question that arises is what the significance of Timothy is for the people of Colossae: Timothy is native to Lystra in Lycaonia.¹⁰¹

Lystra is located in relatively close proximity to Colossae, and it is conceivable that Timothy was acquainted with a number of individuals in Colossae. Paul gains more credibility with the Colossians by attributing Timothy as a co-author. In this case Paul's letter would gain more relevance to the recipients. The reference to Laodicea

¹⁰¹ Cf. Bruce, F.F.: The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians. In: NICNT/10–12. Grand Rapids, 1984. p.37.

in the fourth chapter lends further support to this assertion. However, this motive would also provide Timothy with a greater incentive to write to the Colossians. Consequently, this approach does not contribute to the identification of the true author(s).

Despite the lack of “we”-passages in Colossians, it is nevertheless worthwhile to examine the instances in which they are employed and the occurrences of first-person singular formulations. The passages are predominantly concerned with underscoring the unity of the Lord Jesus Christ and with dogmatic purposes, to elucidate the universal significance of the statement. This does not, however, imply any co-authorship. In Col 4,3 Paul requests that the congregation should pray for them. This is formulated with “ἡμῶν”. However, throughout this verse it changes into a first-person singular construction.

This is relevant to the question of whose hand wrote the letter. In verse 18, the only end greeting is Paul’s. The absence of a second salutation does not necessarily indicate that Timothy was not writing with Paul. However, this salutation may offer insight when the author employs a first-person singular construction in the letter. In Col 4,17, Paul’s use of the first-person singular pronoun “I” suggests that he is the author of the passage. The presence of “I” in other passages of the letter indicates that Paul is also the author of those sections. Even if the “we”-passages imply Timothy, Paul would remain the main author of the letter. According to the mention of writing in his own hand, Paul has used a scribe for the remainder of the text.

Paul cites two letter carriers who he dispatched to interpret the letter: Tychicus and Onesimus. He makes mention of both and discusses their commitment to the cause. It appears that Paul does not appear to be concerned about a potential misinterpretation of either. In the event of placing one’s trust in the text, any alterations made to it are not a cause for concern. However, it is also conceivable that this could be a deliberate tactic on the part of Tychicus and/or Onesimus to introduce their own interpretation.

In the case of the epistle to the Colossians, it appears that Paul may have written the letter with the assistance of a scribe, although the identity of this scribe remains unknown. Nevertheless, an examination of the letter’s contents suggests that Paul is

the sole author, with Timothy serving merely as a means to an end. It is imperative that the alterations effected by Tychicus or Onesimus are given consideration.

6.6 1.Thessalonians

In 1Thess the opening is stylised in a traditional ancient manner.¹⁰² There are no titles, no irritation or change in the introduction in any way. This appears odd for Paul. It seems as if the status of apostle has not yet been established or the letter is in a very familiar form, where no titles are needed.

As is evident in the initial three chapters of the epistle, a close relationship is discernible between Sosthenes and Timothy on the one hand, and the ecclesiastical community of Thessaloniki on the other.¹⁰³ The existence of these close relationships may provide a rationale for Paul, in his capacity as the author of the letter, to include Sosthenes and Timothy, for whom titles are not required.

With regard to the the “we”-passages in 1Thess an interesting occurrence is evident. It appears that Paul, Timothy and Sosthenes recount their shared experience, travelling and preaching the gospel. No individual is excluded or elevated beyond their peers. This could be indicative of two things: firstly, that Paul has not yet been officially recognised as an apostle; alternatively, it could be that he has not yet established a strong reputation within this congregation. In either case, this would provide Paul with the opportunity to address the congregation in a more effective manner. This observation suggests that Paul may not be the primary author of the epistle. However, a minor exception to this occurs when Paul writes himself as the sole author of the long sequence about their shared story by adding “ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος”. This is an intriguing occurrence, which leads to the hypothesis that Paul is the author of the letter. However, it is conceivable that, in an emotional reaction, Paul appended these words when composing the letter for all three of them. Nonetheless, Paul exerts significant influence on the composition of the letter, to the extent of becoming the sole author.

The letter has no known letter carrier. Given the documented evidence of Timothy's travels to the specified location, it is conceivable that he may have transported the item in question to the congregation. In this particular instance, Paul and Sosthenes

¹⁰² Cf. Adams, Sean A.: Letter. p.53.

¹⁰³ Cf. Tite, Philip L.: Functions. p.67.

emerge as the primary authors, as it appears illogical for an individual to compose a letter, which they are meeting. Consequently, it is not reasonable to assume that Timothy was employed as a letter courier.

The authorship of the letter is attributed to Timothy, Sosthenes and Paul and the letter does not explicitly state the individual with the most authority. It is possible to provide an explanation for this phenomenon, in the sense that Paul and his co-workers have already achieved a certain level of renown among the Thessalonians. Nevertheless, for other congregations, Paul was always willing to reiterate his status on an occasion. As one of the earliest epistles attributed to Paul, it is conceivable that his status had not yet attained this apostolic renown. The “we”-passages seem to be unison until Paul articulates his business in a first-person singular construction. This may be indicative of the authority Paul holds, or that he was the primary author of the letter. However, it would be premature to conclude that this is the case, as the remainder of the letter appears to be the result of a collective process.

6.7 2.Thessalonians

2Thess also has a traditional ancient letter opening.¹⁰⁴ It appears that the letter opening has been designed with this particular congregation in mind, or that the author had access to a copy of the first letter. It is evident that the authorship of this epistle is attributed once more to Paul, Timothy and Silvanus.

The term “we” is only sparsely utilised in this epistle. The focus is on a collective “we” of the authors, invoking the first-person plural to appeal to the collective Lord Jesus Christ. In this particular instance, the letter is rather consistent. For the discussion who wrote the second letter to the Thessalonians the part of the signature is relevant. Paul again mentions to be writing in his own hand, marking him as the main author.

The letter carrier is unknown.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this evidence is as follows: It appears that Paul is the primary author, yet his writing is presented in a collective manner, with Timothy and Sosthenes being designated as “co-authors” in a symbolic sense. The

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Adams, Sean A.: Letter. p.53.

form of the text is strikingly similar to the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. It can be hypothesised that the product may be a fabrication, as it could be derived from copies of the first letter. It is reasonable to conclude that Paul signed the letter and marked it as his own, since there is no other reason to believe otherwise. This would suggest that he is the main author, who probably had a scribe write the letter for him and was well versed in proper letter etiquette.

6.8 Philippians

The titles presented in the letter opening describe Paul and Timothy as slaves of Jesus Christ. In this introduction, it is notable that the Pauline letters present a singular instance in which both Paul and a co-worker are addressed with the same title. This represents a substantial shift from the customary writing style of Paul.

In the majority of the letter, Paul adopts the first-person singular perspective in this letter. It is evident that the vast majority of instances of the pronoun “we” employed in this context are part of a dogmatic explanation of the salvation that is believed to be brought by Christ. The use of the first-person singular perspective implies a sole authorship of Paul. It is abundantly evident when discussing his colleagues. In Phil 2,19–23 Paul discusses the sending of Timothy to the recipients. It is evident that Timothy is not a genuine author, and his mention is suggestive of a symbolic nature.¹⁰⁵

The letter carrier is also mentioned in the following passage of the letter: Epaphroditus. It appears that Epaphroditus, in his capacity as a letter carrier, had no significant incentive to make any alterations to the letter, particularly given the high regard in which he was held by Paul. It is conceivable that Epaphroditus revised or incorporated this section during his travels in order to ensure favourable reception. However, there is an absence of substantial textual evidence that would substantiate this assertion.

This epistle, characterised by the expressed joy and gratitude, is attributed to Paul, as there is no extra mention of anything he wrote down with his own hand. Paul has exerted a substantial influence on this text, and it appears that Timothy, being present during Paul's epistolary composition, has been utilised as an author of this correspondence, despite the absence of any explicit necessity for the letter's

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Roller, Otto: *Formular*: p.153.

creation. It appears that Timothy's participation was intended to complement Paul's expression of gratitude.

6.9 Philemon

The epistle addressed to Philemon is a fascinating subject from an academic perspective. The nature of the document is evidently that of a personal letter, despite the fact that its content pertains to business matters. Paul and Timothy write imploring Philemon to take Onesimus back as a brother, and not as a slave, and to send Onesimus back to Paul, so that he may be of use to him.

This altercation has interesting aspects in regard of the utilisation of the first-person plural: "The only exception is Phlm, where Paul uses singular forms throughout; Timothy is mentioned as a co-sender, but does not re-appear afterwards, and Paul thus clearly presents himself as the only responsible author of the letter."¹⁰⁶ If Peter Arzt-Grabner's assertion is indeed as unambiguous as he suggests, a comparison with the remaining evidence in the case is imperative.

The letter opening tells a different story: It has been ascertained that the authorship of the letter in question is attributed to Paul and Timothy. It appears that Paul is being held in a location, with Timothy paying him a visit. This situation bears a striking resemblance to the circumstances in which Paul found himself when he composed the epistle addressed to the Colossians. If this is true, the authenticity of this letter would affirm the authenticity of the other, and vice versa.¹⁰⁷ This does not imply that Timothy was also involved in the authorship of Philemon, given his association with the letter to the Colossians. However, given that Timothy's involvement in the letter to the Colossians is minimal, it can be deduced that he was not a contributor to the letter's composition.

The extent to which Timothy was acquainted with Philemon. If we accept the premise, that Philemon lived in Colossae, it is likely that Timothy was acquainted with Philemon. The question of whether Paul was acquainted with Philemon remains unresolved as the style of the letter shifts between personal and formal styles. It is therefore necessary to consider the possibility that Paul had not yet become well-acquainted with Philemon, and that the reference to Timothy was an

¹⁰⁶ Arzt-Grabner, Peter: Letters: p.52f.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Bruce, F. F.: Epistles. p.191f.

attempt to utilise a personal relationship in order to increase the effectiveness of his persuasion of Philemon.¹⁰⁸

The thematic emphasis of the letter carrier is of particular significance. The motivation behind Paul's epistle to Philemon is attributed to Onesimus. The enslaved Onesimus is the property of Philemon. He is also the bearer of this letter. He fled from Philemon. And he fears what might happen to him, if he is caught or if he returns to his master. Consequently, he flees to Paul, so that he might persuade Onesimus' master to embrace Onesimus as a brother. For Onesimus is now a believer of the gospel.

The significance of Onesimus as a letter carrier is a matter of interest. It is conceivable that Onesimus could have been a slave scribe. In the event of Philemon lending him for other epistles, such as Colossians, it can be deduced that he is acquainted with Paul's literary style and may even have possessed copies of his letters. If he knows some information on the whereabouts of Paul, he would be able to fabricate a letter of Paul. Onesimus could recreate the letter to fit his situation and be accepted as a slave or even be set free as a Christian brother.

However, it must be noted that this thesis is not without its flaws. In verse 19 Paul writes, that he will repay any debt owed to Philemon - in his own hand! Paul, by writing this, saves Onesimus from any allegations of composing the letter himself. Philemon should be able to discern that the information being conveyed to him is attributable to Paul. If Onesimus could copy Paul's handwriting he must have been a very talented scribe. However, it seems implausible that he could have been taught Paul's handwriting in such a short time and on such an occasional basis.

The author of the Letter to Philemon is thus identified as Paul, although it is possible that the letter was written by an assistant, given the apparent change in the scribe's handwriting evident in the section describing the repayment. The significance of Timothy in this context is limited to a potential relationship with Philemon. It is important to consider the possibility that Onesimus may have been a fabricator of the letter.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Schnelle, Udo: *Einleitung*. p.167.

7 Authorship of the Pauline letters

It is evident that Paul's authority as a sole author and writer has been compromised. The question that must now be posed is as follows: What does this mean for the authority of the Pauline letters? Is there any reason to still call them Pauline letters, if Paul has only written two letters by himself, and the rest at least with other authors or scribes?

The authorship of the letters appears to be the primary consideration of this endeavour; however, the question remains: How does one go about these letters, if Paul is not the only one in the writing process? While it is widely acknowledged that Paul played a significant role in the development of Christendom, it is important to note that he was not necessarily the primary author of all the texts that mention him. He has no interest in assuming the role of writer for these letters, as it was a hard, sometimes gruesome, long and exhausting process. The prospect of composing a letter in one's own handwriting for an extended period is likely to be unappealing to most individuals. Consequently, Paul would hand these tasks over to people who are educated and more professional than him.

Acts provides evidence that slaves from elites can become secretaries for Paul. Tertius or Onesimus serve as compelling examples of this phenomenon. This would not be an uncommon practice. However, does Paul, as an early Christian, have anything against slavery? It appears that Paul does not object to the institution of slavery. However, he advocates for a shift in the manner in which slaves are to be treated, particularly in instances where a Christian master has a Christian slave (cf. Philemon). Nevertheless, the practice of scribedom does not contradict the ethical principles of Pauline thought.¹⁰⁹ For Paul, the utilisation of scribes or slaves would not be in opposition to his belief of authority, authenticity, or Christian values.

Therefore, irrespective of the handwriting of the letters attributed to Paul, they must still be considered as Pauline. This is because his name is written down as an author. This is also applicable for Timothy and Sosthenes. In the event of progressing to the question of pseudepigraphy, this would constitute a wholly separate topic. This is due to the fact that it would be a letter written in the name of an individual who

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Coogan, J.; Moss, C. R.; Howley, J. A.: *The Socioeconomics of Fabrication*. p.230.

may not have given their consent. This constitutes the second theoretical framework, which has been comprehensively described in numerous publications. However, it does not address the subject matter of this thesis.

It is imperative that we accept Paul's letters ascribed to other authors as epistles composed by multiple individuals, exhibiting varied styles and circumstances, notwithstanding the absence of overt indications to the contrary. The issue of detailed differentiation is one that is best addressed by a specialist in the field of linguistics.

8 Summary

How can the Pauline letters now be summarized? Are they always a product of secretaries or slaves? Well, our evidence has led us to the following conclusion:

1. Thessalonians and 2. Corinthians has been a product of co-authorship, as there are no indicators telling us otherwise and the majority of the letter talks about a shared experience of a group. This leads to believe, that at least some parts were written by multiple authors.

For Romans, Galatians, Colossians, 2. Thessalonians and Philemon this is not the case, but they were probably written by a secretary. For Romans and Galatians this is guaranteed, as Romans mentions the secretary Tertius and Galatians seems to be the draft for Romans. A copy must have been made from Galatians and the hand shift mentioned in Galatians helps this argument. For Colossians, 2. Thessalonians and Philemon a secretary can only be assumed by the mention of Paul writing in his own hand.

Paul writes 1. Corinthians and the letter to the Philippians alone. Or at least it seems that way, as far as the evidence of the letter construed.

Changes in the letter made by letter carriers need to be considered for the letters to the Colossians and Philemon as Onesimus holds motive to change the letter's content to follow his interest to become a free slave. Though this can only be speculated and the textual evidence needs to be looked at by a linguist expert.

9 Literature

Adams, Sean A.: Paul's Letter Opening and Greek Epistolography: A Matter of Relationship. In: Porter, Stanley E.; Sean A. Adams (ed.): Paul and the Ancient Letter Form. Leiden, 2010. p.33–55.

Arzt-Grabner, Peter: Letters and letter writing. In: PNT/2. Paderborn, 2023.

Arzt-Grabner, Peter; Kloppenborg, John S.; Kreinecker, Christina M.: More Light from the Ancient East. Understanding the New Testament through Papyri. In: PNT/1. Paderborn, 2023.

Bonati, Isabella: Digging into lives. Christians and Christianity in the Greek Papyri from Egypt. In: IDS/57,1. Cape Town, 2023.

Bruce, F.F.: The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians. In: NICNT/10–12. Grand Rapids, 1984.

Coogan, Jeremiah; Moss, Candida R.; Howley, Joseph A.: The Socioeconomics of Fabrication. Textuality, Authenticity, and Social Status in the Roman Mediterranean. In: Arethusa/57,2. Baltimore, 2024. p.227–253.

Deslauriers, Marguerite: Women, Education, and Philosophy. In: James, Sharon L.; Dillon, Sheila (ed.): A Companion to Women in the Ancient World. West Sussex, 2012. p.343–353.

Exler, Francis Xavier J.: The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter of the Epistolary Papyri. Washington, 1923.

Koskeniemi, Heikki; Jäkel Siegfried; Pyykkö, Vappu: Literatur und Philosophie in der Antike. In: OIPLUT/8. Turku, 1986.

Lohse, Eduard: Colossians and Philemon. A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. In: KEK/9,2. Göttingen, 1968.

Londa, Christopher J.: Letters. In: Coogan, Jeremiah (ed.): Writing, Enslavement, and Power in the Roman Mediterranean, 100 BCE-300 CE. New York, 2025. p.252–267

Loveday, Alexander: Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians. In: JSNT/12,37. Sheffield, 1989. p.87–101.

Moss, Candida R.: The Secretary. Enslaved workers, Stenography, and the Production of early Christian Literature. In: JTS/74,1. Oxford, 2023. p.20–56.

Perry, Matthew J.: Gender, Manumission, and the Roman Freedwoman. Cambridge, 2013.

Philip L.: How to begin, and why. Diverse Functions of the Pauline Prescript within a Greco-Roman Context. In: Porter, Stanley E.; Sean A. Adams (ed.): Paul and the Ancient Letter Form. Leiden, 2010. p.57–99.

Roller, Otto: Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe. Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom antiken Briefe. In: BWANT/58. Stuttgart, 1933.

Robertson, Paul M.: Paul's Letters and Contemporary Greco-Roman Literature. Theorizing a New Taxonomy. In: NovTSup/167. Leiden, 2016.

Schnelle, Udo: Einleitung in das Neue Testament. Göttingen, 2011.

Schubert, Paul: Form and Function of the Pauline Letters. In: JRel/19,4. Chicago, 1939. p.365–377.

Williams, Travis B.: Secretaries in Ancient Letter Writing. Influences on the Composition of New Testament Epistles. In: PKNT. Göttingen, 2026.

White, John L.: Introductory Formulae in the Body of the Pauline Letter. In: JBL/90,1. Pennsylvania 1971. p.91–97.

White, John Lee: The Body of the Greek Letter. A study of the Letter-Body in the non-literary Papyri and in Paul the Apostle. In: SBLDS/72,2. Missouri (DC), 1972.

Wolff, Dominik: Beispiels-weise. Selbstdarstellung und autobiographisches Schreiben im ersten Korintherbrief. In: BZNW/224. Berlin, 2017.

10 Statement of Authorship

I hereby declare that I have written this thesis independently and without outside help and have not used any tools other than those specified. In particular, I declare that I have marked all direct and indirect references from other works as such. I also declare that I have used the tool DeepL for translation purposes, and that all automatically generated content has been checked, revised if necessary and correctly cited.