

DRAWING AUTHORITY AND EXERTING POWER IN THE SECOND LETTER TO TIMOTHY

SOME INITIAL REMARKS AND THE EXAMPLE OF 2 TIM 3

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

It is common ground in research that all three so-called Pastoral Epistles are pseudepigraphic and post-Pauline writings¹. From a certain point of view, however, 2 Timothy is a special case among these three letters:² it is more personal than the other two; it contains more extended and detailed biographical elements; the exhortations to Timothy seem here to be more intense and pressing; most importantly perhaps, in 2 Tim “Paul” speaks from within a prison and is presented as awaiting his certain death.

It would seem that the unknown author of 2 Tim intends, among other things, to provide his writing with immense authority. For whichever reason, he prefers not to appeal to his own personal authority, but he rather claims for himself the authority of Paul by attributing his own writing to him. It is obvious that Paul is the most important apostolic figure (if not practically the

¹ See for instance the relevant argumentation in U. SCHNELLE, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, ⁸2012, pp. 405-410; N. BROX, *Die Pastoralbriefe: 1 Timotheus, 2 Timotheus, Titus* (RNT), Regensburg, Pustet, ⁵1989, mainly pp. 55-60; see however also the counterarguments in D. GUTHRIE, *New Testament Introduction*, London, Inter-Varsity, ³1970, pp. 584-622; W.D. MOUNCE, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC, 46), Nashville, TN – Dallas, TX – Mexico City – Rio de Janeiro – Beijing, Nelson, 2000, pp. lxxxiii-cxxix; L.T. JOHNSON, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AncB, 35A), New York, NY – London – Toronto – Sydney – Auckland, Doubleday, 2001, pp. 55-99.

² In this study I will not enter the discussion about the chronology of the three Pastoral Epistles and their literary and/or historical relationship to each other, which nowadays is considered to be much more complex and difficult to reconstruct, see on the matter R.E. BROWN, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (AncB Reference Library), New York, NY – London – Toronto – Sydney – Auckland, Doubleday, 1997, pp. 672-675; G. HÄFNER, *Das Corpus Pastorale als literarisches Konstrukt*, in *ThQ* 187 (2007) 258-273; J. HERZER, *Fiktion oder Täuschung? Zur Diskussion über die Pseudepigraphie der Pastoralbriefe*, in J. FREY – J. HERZER – M. JANSSEN – C. ROTHSCHILD (eds.), *Pseudepigraphie und Verfasserfiktion in frühchristlichen Briefen* (WUNT, 246), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2009, 489-536, p. 534; A. YARBRO COLLINS, *The Female Body as Social Space*, in *NTS* 57 (2011) 155-175. I will, therefore limit myself as a rule to the examination of 2 Tim as an individual literary work and not as a part of the collection of the Pastoral letters.

only one³) for the recipients of the epistle⁴, or else the author would certainly not have chosen to identify himself with him. We can therefore conclude with a great degree of certainty that the historical community addressed to in this letter is a Pauline one, in which not only the figure of Paul, but even that of Timothy, being Paul's disciple, are of the utmost importance and highly revered⁵. In this letter the imminent death of Paul makes the author's word even more crucial. Actually the letter takes the place of the last word of the apostle, and becomes the expression of his last will. It contains his worries, his fears, his vision, his expectations, his exhortations, his complaints, his wishes, the account of his achievements, although not his theology, at least not in a detailed fashion. Indeed, the author skips or at best summarizes theological discussions, while insisting upon ethical principles, exhortations and the concept of tradition, reminding us of a dying man, who utters his last words and gives his last instructions to those present around his deathbed. Such instructions coming from a person of immense authority in great distress can exert an enormous amount of power upon their receivers. It seems that the author is not only interested in drawing authority from using Paul's identity, but also in exerting the power that goes along with this identity upon the members of his community.⁶

In the first part of the present paper I will present the main literary and theological elements of 2 Tim as a pseudepigraphic writing⁷ that provide its

³ Cf. M. HARDING, *Tradition and Rhetoric in the Pastoral Epistles* (Studies in Biblical Literature, 3), New York, NY – Washington, DC – Baltimore, MD – Boston, MA – Bern – Frankfurt am Main – Berlin – Vienna – Paris, Lang, 1998, p. 103; G. HÄFNER, *Die Pastoralbriefe (1 Tim/2 Tim/Tit)*, in M. EBNER – S. SCHREIBER (eds.), *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (KStT, 6), Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 2008, 450-473, p. 468; BROX, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 1), p. 73, rightly observes that in the protopauline letters Paul always considers himself an apostle among all other apostles, even the last of the apostles, but in no case as the exclusive apostle with no reference to the other apostles whatsoever.

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-72; Schnelle, *Einleitung* (n. 1), p. 420.

⁶ Cf. the analysis of the pseudonymous author's rhetorical strategy by K. ZAMFIR, *Men and Women in the Household of God: A Contextual Approach to Roles and Ministries in the Pastoral Epistles* (NTOA, 103), Göttingen – Bristol, CT, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013, pp. 19-36.

⁷ As A. MERZ, *Amore Pauli: Das Corpus Pastorale und das Ringen um die Interpretationshoheit bezüglich des paulinischen Erbes*, in *ThQ* 187 (2007) 274-294, p. 274, rightly puts it: "Höchst zentrale Fragen der Auslegung der Pastoralbriefe unter der Voraussetzung ihrer Pseudonymität wurden zu lange nicht gestellt und werden gegenwärtig auf sehr verschiedene Weise beantwortet". This applies even more to the exegesis of the Pastoral Epistles within the Orthodox-theological context, which is generally very reluctant in accepting this presupposition mainly due to ideological or church-political, and less due to exegetical reasons, cf. among others G.A. GALITIS, *Ἡ πρὸς Τίτον Ἐπιστολή τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου: Ὁ ποιμένας καὶ οἱ αἰρετικοί* (Ermineia Kainis Diathikis, 12c),

author with authority, as well as with the means to exert power upon its recipients. In the second part I will try to demonstrate in a detailed way how these very elements are used in the 3rd chapter of 2 Tim. I will close the paper with some concluding remarks.

II. AUTHORITY AND POWER IN 2 TIM

1. Epistolary Genre and Pauline Style

2 Tim presupposes knowledge of pre-existing Pauline letters⁸. To begin with, the epistolary genre of 2 Tim is a clear indication that its author intended to embed it into Pauline tradition, to make it look like a Pauline letter amongst many, which should belong to the corpus of those Pauline letters that were probably known to him and the community he addresses⁹.

The introduction of the author as “Paul” also demonstrates that the Pauline character of the letter is essential for drawing authority and exerting power to its readership¹⁰. The author does not need to call upon other apostolic authorities in order to make his word more powerful and efficient. It suffices for him to speak as Paul. This means that the community of the readers of the letter is most probably a Pauline community either having been founded by Paul himself or by Paul’s disciples, in the narrow or broad sense of the word. In any case it is closely connected with Pauline tradition and

Athina ³1992, pp. 30-105; C.S. VOULGARIS, *Εισαγωγή εις την Καινήν Διαθήκην: Προλεγόμενα, Εὐαγγέλια, Πράξεις, Ἐπιστολαὶ Παύλου*, en Athinais, 2003, pp. 609-641; K. NIKOLAKOPOULOS, *Ἐπόψεις τῆς πανλείου ρητορικῆς στίς δύο πρός Τιμόθεον Ἐπιστολές*, in *Ἡ πνευματικὴ παρακαταθήκη τοῦ Ἀποστόλου Παύλου: Ποιμαντικὲς Ἐπιστολές*, Thessaloniki 2004, 287-303, pp. 302-303; see however also the critical position of I.D. KARAVIDOPOULOS, *Εισαγωγή στὴν Καινὴ Διαθήκη* (Bibliki Bibliothiki 1), Thessaloniki, Pournaras, ³2007, pp. 303-308.

⁸ Cf. for instance A. MERZ, *Die fiktive Selbstausslegung des Paulus: Intertextuelle Studien zur Intention und Rezeption der Pastoralbriefe* (NTOA, 52), Göttingen – Fribourg, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht – Academic Press, 2004, pp. 235-242; HÄFNER, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 3), p. 455. From the point of view of the historical recipients of the letter there is no distinction between authentic and pseudonymous Pauline letters, cf. HARDING, *Tradition* (n. 3), pp. 104-106. Therefore, when referring to the Pauline letters in this paper I also include those letters that have been proven to be pseudonymous in current research.

⁹ Cf. MERZ, *Amore Pauli* (n. 7), pp. 278-280; *Selbstausslegung* (n. 8), pp. 223-224.227.

¹⁰ On the importance of Paul’s name in the pseudepigraphic writing of 2 Tim for its recipients from the point of view of intertextuality see MERZ, *Amore Pauli* (n. 7), pp. 280-281.

esteems anything Pauline very highly¹¹. This background can explain why a letter convincingly claiming to have been written by Paul would make a great impact to the community of its actual historical recipients.

The introduction of Timothy as the fictitious recipient of the letter is a further device for raising the significance of the letter. Already at the time of the letter's writing, Timothy was definitely known as the co-sender of most Pauline letters, and as Paul's most entrusted collaborator who was being sent by his master to the most subtle and dangerous missions. Consequently, a personal letter of Paul to Timothy would be of exceptional importance because it would be expected to be confidential, and therefore revealing. Paul would namely be expected to speak to Timothy in a way that he would not speak to anybody else. Therefore, what Paul would say to Timothy would be of vital significance for Christians belonging to the Pauline tradition and living several decades after the death of their apostle¹².

In 2 Tim the author does not seem to be particularly inclined to imitate Pauline style or perhaps he even does not possess the literary ability to do so¹³. Therefore, there is no great difficulty in discerning his unique style compared to the original style of Paul by means of stylistic analysis¹⁴. On the other hand, the author of 2 Tim does use a number of characteristic Pauline semantic elements, possibly as a means of connecting his writing with Paul's letters in the minds of his readers¹⁵.

The typically Pauline *praescriptio* of the letter (1,1-2) is a very characteristic case in this regard¹⁶. The letter starts with the author stating his name as "Paul," as well as his identity by the words "apostle of Jesus Christ

¹¹ Cf. P. POKORNÝ – U. HECKEL, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament: Seine Geschichte und Theologie im Überblick*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2007, p. 666.

¹² Cf. L.R. DONELSON, *Pseudepigraphy and Ethical Argument in the Pastoral Epistles* (HUT, 22), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1986, pp. 57-59; MERZ, *Amore Pauli* (n. 7), p. 284. On the intertextual importance of Timothy as the recipient of 2 Tim see MERZ, *Selbstausslegung* (n. 8), 228-230.

¹³ Cf. DONELSON, *Pseudepigraphy* (n. 12), p. 55.

¹⁴ Cf. M. GOURGUES, *Les deux lettres à Thimothee. La lettre à Tite* (Commentaire Biblique: Nouveau Testament, 14), Paris, Cerf, 2009, pp. 48-57; see the relevant bibliography in J. HERZER, *Fiktion* (n. 2), pp. 523-528.

¹⁵ On the theoretical background of the appliance of a fictive self-interpretation of Paul in the Pastoral Epistles as a whole see MERZ, *Amore Pauli* (n. 7), pp. 282-283; *Selbstausslegung* (n. 8), pp. 230-231.

¹⁶ Cf. the relevant analysis of W.A. RICHARDS, *Difference and Distance in Post-Pauline Christianity: An Epistolary Analysis of the Pastorals* (Studies in Biblical Literature, 44), New York, NY – Washington, DC – Baltimore, MD – Bern – Frankfurt am Main – Berlin – Brussels – Vienna – Oxford: Lang, 2002, pp. 108-110.

through the will of God". It also refers to Timothy as the addressee of the letter. Even if in the known Pauline letters Timothy is never the addressee, the presence of his name in the letter's *praescriptio* clearly has the function of pointing the reader to the other Pauline letters, in which Timothy occurs in the *praescriptio* after Paul as co-sender¹⁷.

The phrase Παῦλος ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ is also used in the exact same way in the *praescriptio* of 2 Cor 1,1, in which also Timothy is mentioned. Ἐπαγγελία is a theological term used by Paul while its connection in the accusative with the preposition κατά also occurs in Paul¹⁸. Χάρις and εἰρήνη are heavily loaded theological terms that are used in every single *praescriptio* of the *corpus paulinum*. The word ἔλεος is not found in any other Pauline *praescriptiones* (with the exception of the Pastoral 1 Tim 1,2). It is, however, used in the Pauline literature as a whole.

The characterization of Timothy as ἀγαπητός is also applied to Philemon in Philem 1. The exact phrase τέκνον ἀγαπητόν applied to Timothy is also found in 1 Cor 4,17 (although not in the *praescriptio*). Furthermore, in Phil 2,22 Timothy is characterized by Paul as τέκνον.

The end of the *praescriptio* is again typically Pauline although with a slight stylistic differentiation. While in all other Pauline *praescriptiones* the pronoun ἡμῶν is connected to God, in 2 Tim it is connected to Jesus Christ.

The above short semantic comparison of the *praescriptio* of 2 Tim with the other Pauline *praescriptiones* demonstrates that the pseudonymous author of 2 Tim makes a conscious effort to imitate the way Paul introduces his epistles. The *praescriptio* is hardly distinguishable from typical Pauline style, a phenomenon that does not apply to the rest of the epistle¹⁹.

However, even in the rest of the epistle a noteworthy number of Pauline semantic features and theological terms can be found, such as χάρις (1,2.3.9; 2,1; 4,22), λατρεύειν τῷ Θεῷ, συνείδησις, μνεία (1,3), ἐπιποθῶ, πληροῦν in connection with χαρά (1,4), ἐνοικοῦν (1,5.14), χάρισμα (1,6), ἐπαισχύνεσθαι (1,8.12.16), μαρτύριον plus genitive (1,8), εὐαγγέλιον (1,8.10; 2,8), κατὰ τὰ ἔργα (1,9; 4,14), πρόθεσις (1,9; 3,10), χρόνος αἰώνιος (1,9), καταργεῖν, ἀφθαρσία (1,10), the connection of πίστις and ἀγάπη (1,22; 2,13; 3,10), σκεῦος (2,20.21), ἐπίγνωσις (2,25; 3,7)²⁰.

¹⁷ See 2 Cor 1,1; Phil 1,1; Col 1,1; 1 Thes 1,1; 2 Thes 1,1; Philem 1.

¹⁸ Gal 3,29; 4,28; cf. also Acts 13,23.

¹⁹ See the comparison between Pauline style and the style of the Pastoral Epistles in GOURGUES, *Lettres* (n. 14), pp. 48-55.

²⁰ It is very difficult to decide whether these words were used because of their Pauline background or not. This decision would demand a much more extended research on their use

On the other hand, there is a considerable amount of vocabulary that does not occur at all in the protopauline literature, and sometimes not even in the New Testament as a whole, such as the following: πρόγονος (1,3), υπόμνησις, ἀνυπόκριτος πίστις (1,5), ἀναζωπυρεῖν, ἐπίθεσις τῶν χειρῶν (1,6), πνεῦμα δειλίας, δυνάμεως, ἀγάπης and σωφροτισμοῦ (1:7), συγκακοπαθεῖν (1,8; 2,3), κλήσις ἀγία (1,9), ἐπιφάνεια (1,10; 4,1.8), φωτίζειν ζωὴν καὶ ἀφθαρσίαν (1,10), ὑποτύπωσις (1,13), ὑγιαίνειν (1,13; 4,3), παραθήκη (1,12.14), ἀναψύχειν, ἄλυσις (1,16), συγκακοπαθεῖν (1,8; 2,3), στρατιώτης (2,3), πραγματεία (2,4), κακοπαθεῖν (2,9; 4,5), κακοῦργος (2,9), ὑπομνήσκειν, λογομαχεῖν (2,14), ἀνεπαίσχυντος, ὀρθοτομεῖν (2,15), βέβηλος, κενοφωνία, περιεστάναι (2,16), γάγγραινα, νομή (2,17), ἀστοχεῖν (2,18), νεωτερικός (2,22), ζήτησις (2,23), διδακτικός, ἀνεξίκακος (2,24), ἀντιδιατιθέναι (2,25), ἀνανήφειν, ζωρεῖν (2,26), φίλαντος, φιλάργυρος, βλάσφημος, ἀχάριστος, ἀνόσιος (3,2), ἄσπονδος, ἀκρατής, ἀνήμερος, ἀφιλάγαθος (3,3), προδότης, προπετής, τυφoῦν, φιλήδονος, φιλόθεος (3,4), ἀποτρέπειν (3,5), ἐνδύνειν, γυναικάριον (3,6), ἄνοια, ἔκδηλος (3,9), παρακολουθεῖν, ἀγωγή (3,10), γόης (3,13), πιστοῦν (3,14), σοφίζειν (3,15), θεόπνευστος, ὠφέλιμος, ἐλεγμός, ἐπανόρθωσις (3,16), ἄρτιος, ἐξαορτίζειν (3,17), ἐπισωρεύειν, κνήθειν (4,3), ἐκτρέπειν (4,4), κριτής (4,8)²¹.

The above representative stylistic observations only underline what is already largely acknowledged in contemporary scholarly research, namely that the author of 2 Tim uses Pauline terminology trying to keep the connection to the Pauline tradition and to present his writing as a genuine Pauline letter, while on the other hand he unavoidably uses his own distinctive style and vocabulary too²².

It would seem that the partial adopting of Paul's style is not just a simple means for the author to disguise his pseudepigraphic writing.²³ It is perhaps

in Koine. This is even more true with regard to words such as ἀλαζών, ὑπερήφανος (3,2), ἄστοργος (3,3), μόρφωσις, δύναμις (3,5), μανθάνειν (3,7.14), αἰχμαλωτίζειν (3,6), ἐπιθυμία (2,22; 3,6; 4,3), ἀλήθεια (2,15.18.25; 3,7.8; 4,4), ἀνθιστάναι (3,8; 4,15), which may be used by Paul, but are also common in his environment.

²¹ Every argumentation about the pseudonymous character of 2 Tim should begin with its immense difference from the Pauline *homologoumena* with regard to vocabulary.

²² Even in antiquity the difference in style was an important criterion for discerning between authentic and pseudepigraphic writings, see A.D. BAUM, *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im frühen Christentum. Mit ausgewählten Quellentexten samt deutscher Übersetzung* (WUNT, 2/138), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2001, pp. 24-25.

²³ Cf. T. GLASER, *Paulus als Briefroman erzählt: Studien zum antiken Briefroman und seiner christlichen Rezeption in den Pastoralbriefen* (NTOA, 76), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck &

and foremost a way for him to draw authority and exert power upon its recipients. By using the name of Paul as the author of the epistle, as well as the name of Timothy as its addressee, by starting the letter with a typical Pauline *praescriptio* and by imitating to a certain degree Pauline style and theological terminology the author seems to be trying to provide his writing with Pauline authority in order to persuade his recipients that everything he says is utterly important and, what's more, right beyond any doubt, since it reflects the authentic will of God as it is transmitted directly by his apostle to his faithful.

2. Tradition

The author of 2 Tim makes use of the fact that a strong Pauline tradition had already been shaped in his time, not only by adopting Paul's identity and style, but also by underlining the necessity of keeping to the Apostle's tradition. In 2 Tim 1,12-14 the fictitious Paul speaks about the παραθήκη, namely about the treasure that was entrusted to Timothy and should be preserved by him.²⁴ This παραθήκη comes from Paul himself, from his "sound words" (ὕγιαίνοντες λόγοι) which should be written in a spiritual way (ὑποτύπωσις) within Timothy's very existence. This "good" παραθήκη will be kept intact by God through the Holy Spirit until the day of judgment. In fact, Paul lies in suffering because of his apostolic activity that creates and serves the παραθήκη²⁵.

If the Pauline παραθήκη is so important as such, then also the words of 2 Tim, which are supposed to be coming from Paul himself and therefore authentically representing this παραθήκη²⁶, have an enormous authority. The author of 2 Tim pleads for the preservation of the Pauline παραθήκη providing it actually with the authority of the Bible itself. Since the παραθήκη contains the total of the oral and written Pauline tradition, it would also seem to include the contents of 2 Tim, which claims to belong to

Ruprecht, 2009, pp. 306-307.

²⁴ See on the term παραθήκη among others A.Y. LAU, *Manifest in Flesh: The Epiphany Christology of the Pastoral Epistles* (WUNT 2/86), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996, pp. 26-39.

²⁵ On the notion of παραθήκη as an expression of Pauline tradition as it is authoritatively transferred by the leaders of the Pauline communities and, therefore, Paul's successors see among others E. SCHLARB, *Die gesunde Lehre: Häresie und Wahrheit im Spiegel der Pastoralbriefe* (MTSt, 28), Marburg, Elwert, 1990, pp. 230-239.

²⁶ Cf. SCHNELLE, *Einleitung* (n. 1), p. 420.

this tradition, being its last and, therefore, perhaps its most important part at that.

In 2 Tim 2,2 Timothy is exhorted to transfer to the faithful people what he himself has heard from Paul in the presence of many witnesses (2,2). The receivers of the παραθήκη should in their turn be capable of teaching others. This is the way to deal with the παραθήκη and this is how it is going to be kept secure and at the same time alive and active. Of course, the above exhortation is actually directed through Timothy towards the recipients of the letter who are knowledgeable of Paul's teaching, since they possess the Pauline παραθήκη in their oral and written community tradition.

The author only offers sparse fragments of Pauline theology in 2 Tim (see for instance 2,11-13). It does not seem important for him to present Pauline theology in a detailed fashion, but mainly to strengthen the link to Pauline tradition, which is already existent and revered, thus also reinforcing its authority²⁷.

The Pauline tradition should not be questioned (2,14). Questioning the Pauline tradition will rather lead the community to disaster. Authority is here again the main issue, an authority that should not be questioned under any circumstances having an absolute validity as it stands. Even the expression υγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία in 4,3 functions actually as a reference to Pauline tradition when being read in connection with the reference to υγιαίνοντες λόγοι in 1,13. In principle, what is spiritually sound and healthy is not necessarily Pauline. Since, however, it has been transferred by Paul, it is indeed Pauline in this sense.

By elaborating on the term παραθήκη, meaning the Pauline tradition as a whole, the author understands 2 Tim as belonging to it, since it contains the last words of Paul. In other words, he claims scriptural authority for his writing and is on this basis able to exert power upon his recipients by presenting his teaching and guiding as an authentic and essential part of the Pauline παραθήκη.

3. Exhortations

2 Tim consists of exhortations to a great extent. There are 33 verbs in the imperative in this relatively short letter²⁸. Although not all of them belong to

²⁷ Cf. DONELSON, *Pseudepigraphy* (n. 12), p. 62; POKORNÝ – HECKEL, *Einleitung* (n. 11), p. 663.

²⁸ An analysis of the letter's imperatives is offered by RICHARDS, *Difference* (n. 16), pp.

an exhortatory context²⁹, their number is indicative of the author's tendency to instruct his recipients³⁰. Some of these instructions are clearly ethical, but in most cases they actually concern their faithfulness towards the *παραθήκη* and the *ὑγιαίνουσα διδασκαλία* in a direct or an indirect way³¹. In other words, the central message of these exhortations is that Timothy should remain faithful to the Pauline tradition and teaching. Furthermore, he should transfer this teaching to other trustworthy people who in their turn will also be able to teach others. Concretely: he should remember everything Paul taught him (1,13); he should not get involved in aimless discussions (2,23), but always speak the word of truth (2,15); he should stay away from new teachings (2,16), as well as desires (2,22); he should on the contrary pursue justice, love, and peace along with those who in clear heart speak the name of the Lord (2,22); he should be informed about what will happen in the last days, namely that there will be false teachers leading the faithful astray (3,1ff). Timothy should not have anything to do with such persons. He should remain in what he has already learned, keeping Paul in mind, from whom he has learned it (3,14). He should preach the word, he should admonish, control, console, be a leader for the community (4,2); he should be in a state of awareness, ready to suffer and do the work of a preacher of the gospel (4,5).

Of course, this is not the kind of exhortations that one would expect the historical Paul to address to the historical Timothy. The instructions of Paul to his closest disciple, associate, and companion, to the man he fully trusted by assigning to him the most difficult and subtle missions, would not be just to stay away from the false teachers, but much more than that, to argue against them. After all Timothy as Paul's disciple should have learned at least the essentials of his argumentative strategy³². Paul, as he appears in his *homologoumena*, cannot tolerate disagreement on theological or ethical issues. He does not let his opponents be, but encounters them in sober dialogue or in polemic rhetoric trying to persuade them or at the very least his recipients by employing concrete rhetorical strategies and developing new theological positions and arguments. However, in 2 Tim the Pauline theological teaching is a given that has only to be preserved as it is. Since the

115-117.

²⁹ See 4,9.11.13.15.19.21.

³⁰ It is interesting to note in this regard that while the Pastoral Epistles are approximately 12% of the corpus paulinum as a whole (verses count), their imperatives are about 21,3% of the total of Pauline imperatives, i.e. 90 imperatives out of a total of 422 imperatives.

³¹ Cf. 1,8.13f; 2,1-3,7f.14-16; 3,14; 4,2.5.

³² Cf. TRUMMER, *Die Paulustradition der Pastoralbriefe* (BET, 8), Frankfurt am Main – Bern – Las Vegas, NV: Lang, 1978, pp. 76-77.

addressees are endangered by the influence of the false teachers, they should not discuss with them at all, thus securing their faithfulness to the Pauline theological tradition. Although this is hardly an exhortation that the historical Timothy would have needed, it is, it would seem, a very essential exhortation towards Christian leaders and faithful in general, who struggle to maintain their own Pauline tradition and identity over against new teachings that threaten their community. The author uses his authority alias Paul, in order to impress upon his readers the importance of keeping the Pauline teachings they have already learned and of transferring them to others, while at the same time keeping away from every non-Pauline influence.

By exhorting and instructing his recipients in the person of Timothy about how they should think, live and act, the author of 2 Tim clearly exerts power over them while drawing authority from his Pauline pseudo-identity.

4. Theology

2 Tim seems at first sight to represent a Pauline *Naherwartung*³³. Verses 3,1ff refer to the last days implying that Timothy will still be alive when they arrive. On the other hand, there are also references to the last days, which lack any temporal precision (4,3-4). In 2 Tim the second coming of Jesus is clearly a vivid anticipation, but without the intensity found in Paul's writings³⁴. The community of the Pastoral Epistles seems to be a relatively institutionalized church that has already effectively adjusted to life within its social environment³⁵. Therefore, it is probably a church with no intense eschatological expectation about the imminent future. When such a community suddenly gets to realize that it is actually living in the last days, the reaction of its members should normally include surprise, fear, awe, and even soberness and repentance, all leading to a radical change of attitude and way of thinking. Since it is Paul, who is supposedly speaking in 2 Tim, his eschatological warnings should be taken very seriously.

The author of 2 Tim indeed presents the last days as an extremely dangerous time full of treacherous and corrupt people trying to lead all Christians astray and having already made their appearance within the

³³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229; contra HÄFNER, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 3), p. 461.

³⁴ Cf. BROX, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 1), p. 50; O. KNOCH, *1. und 2. Timotheusbrief, Titusbrief* (NEB.NT, 14), Würzburg, Echter, 1988, p. 60.

³⁵ In this sense the *Naherwartung* of the Pastorals seems actually to be out of place, cf. 1 Tim 6,14-15, and among others *Ibid.*, p. 60.

community at that (3,1-9)³⁶. Speaking about the last days that are already upon the community is a clear means on the part of the author to exert power upon his readers. In view of the imminent eschatological danger described in the epistle he seems to be expecting from them to return to the well-known Pauline παραθήκη and stick to the already tried Pauline ethical values, while at the same time distancing themselves from any new ideas.

Admittedly, the eschatological teaching does not belong to the letter's foreground. This, however, may belong to the author's strategy, as a very intense eschatological expectation and teaching could have resulted in a disoriented and disorganized community, while one of the aims of the author was clearly to maintain and reinforce order and hierarchy within the community³⁷.

Apart from the above mentioned, eschatology is an indirect means of attributing the writing to Paul, since *Naherwartung* is a well recognizable Pauline theological theme.

Furthermore, a basic consonance can be observed between 2 Tim and the Pauline literature as a whole with regard to christology and soteriology. The following examples are characteristic:

Both in the Pauline literature as a whole and in 2 Tim, Jesus Christ is considered to be preexistent and divine (1,9)³⁸, to have risen from the dead and to stem from David's house³⁹, according to Paul's gospel (2,8)⁴⁰. On the other hand, in 1,9 salvation is understood as coming from God's will and grace, and definitely not from human works. Jesus Christ is called the savior (σωτήρ, 2,10). The preaching of the gospel is essential for the people's salvation (2,8). The reference to dying along with Christ in order to live with

³⁶ Cf. G.W. KNIGHT III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC), Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 1992, p. 429; H. MERKEL, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (NTD, 9/1), Göttingen – Zürich, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991, p. 71, concludes the following: Er sieht "in den letzten Tagen" schlimmste Verderbnis über die Menschen kommen... Und doch meint der Verfasser keineswegs ferne Zeiten, sondern die Gegenwart; sonst könnte Timotheus in V. 5 nicht ermahnt werden, sich "von diesen Leuten fernzuhalten"; cf. also S. DESPOTIS, *Ἡ χριστολογία τῶν Ποιμαντικῶν Ἐπιστολῶν*, in *Παρακαταθήκη* (n. 7), 131-147, p. 147.

³⁷ Cf. ZAMFIR, *Men and Women* (n. 6), 28-33.

³⁸ Cf. H. STETTLER, *Die Christologie der Pastoralbriefe* (WUNT, 2/105), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1998), pp. 173-175; RICHARDS, *Difference* (n. 16), pp. 107-108.

³⁹ K. LÄGER, *Die Christologie der Pastoralbriefe* (Hamburger Theologische Studien, 12), Münster, Lit, 1996, pp. 72-81, considers this reference to stem directly from Rom.

⁴⁰ Although the christological term ἐπιφάνεια is an unicum of the Pastoral Epistles, 2 Tim including more than half of its occurrences, see the religion-historical, semantic and theological analysis of the term in STETTLER, *Christologie* (n. 38), pp. 139-149.

him (2,11) is distinctly Pauline. Last but not least, our current life is characterized as life *in* Jesus Christ (3,12).

The above highlights of 2 Tim's theology demonstrate that its author seems to be using distinctive Pauline theological terminology and ideas intending to provide his writing with a Pauline character⁴¹. He thus draws authority from the content of his writing while at the same time making his readers more apt to accept it. Pauline theological usage is a basic component of his rhetorical strategy for exerting power upon his readers. It is evident that a detailed theological teaching does not belong to the priorities of 2 Tim. Theology has a rather complementary function, when compared for instance to exhortations, which are indeed in the foreground⁴². Nevertheless, Pauline theological teaching functions in 2 Tim as the basis of the exhortations and as a concrete example of the theological content of Pauline tradition, namely of the *παροθήκη* that should by all means be kept intact⁴³.

5. Polemic against the Opponents

In all three Pastoral letters the polemic against the opponents is a prominent theme. It is, therefore, a much discussed, although still open thematic who exactly the opponents were, what they believed and how they acted⁴⁴. However, on the literary level the opponents seem to bring together all negative features one could possibly think of, while at the same time they appear as lacking any positive qualities whatsoever. This is typical polemic rhetoric⁴⁵, which may not allow us to draw secure historical conclusions⁴⁶, but

⁴¹ Cf. POKORNÝ – HECKEL, *Einleitung* (n. 11), p. 663.

⁴² Cf. BROX, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 1), p. 50.

⁴³ Cf. LÄGER, *Christologie* (n. 39), pp. 180-181.

⁴⁴ These opponents originate from within the Christian community, cf. among others A. SCHLATTER, *Die Briefe an die Thessalonicher, Philipper, Timotheus und Titus* (GSL.NT, 8), Stuttgart, Calwer, 1964, pp. 223-224; KNIGHT, *Pastoral Epistles* (n. 36), p. 432; J. HERZER, *Juden – Christen – Gnostiker: Zur Gegnerproblematik der Pastoralbriefe*, BTZ 25 (2008) 143-168, pp. 154-156.

⁴⁵ Cf. V. HASLER, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus (Pastoralbriefe)* (ZBK, 12); Zürich, Theologischer Verlag, 1978, pp. 72-73; JOHNSON, *Letters* (n. 1), p. 392; I. BROER, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, Würzburg, Echter, 2010, p. 542; P.H. TOWNER, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT), Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge, Eerdmans, 2006, p. 553.

⁴⁶ See R.J. KARRIS, *The Background and Significance of the Polemic of the Pastoral Epistles*, in *JBL* 92 (1973), pp. 549-564. In every case we have to assume that the opponents were a real danger to the community of 2 Tim's recipients, cf. M. WOLTER, *Die*

on the other hand it is telling about the author's rhetorical strategy. Concretely:

In 2 Tim the opponents are presented as not having the truth anymore, since they teach that the resurrection has already taken place thus overturning the faith of some faithful (2,18). The mentioning of the names Hymenaios and Philetos (2,17) makes the charge against the opponents more concrete and credible. At this point the author characteristically follows his own instruction to "Timothy" (2,23) by avoiding to engage in any theological argumentation against the heretical teaching whatsoever. On the contrary, after briefly mentioning the heretics' position, he elaborates on issues exclusively concerning the faithful members of the community. Later on he refers again to the opponents accusing them of belonging to those people of the last days, who will have every possible vice (3,1-9). In this context he mentions that the opponents lead Christians, and especially women astray (3,6-7). They resist the truth, they have corrupted minds, and they are disreputable as to faith (3,8). However, their foolishness will become conspicuous to everybody, as their time is up (3,9). They are like the magicians Iannes and Iambres who resisted Moses (3,8)⁴⁷. A few verses later the author writes that evil people and swindlers will become even more evil and will deceive some of the faithful, while at the same time even deceiving themselves (3,13).

It would seem that by using such radical polemic language against his opponents the author exerts the power that he draws from his "Pauline" authority.⁴⁸ By utilizing the motif of the imminent, eschatological danger that the opponents represent for the community, the author aims at strengthening the inner bonds among its members, and invites them to turn towards the already established church authorities, namely (a) Paul himself as the example of the ideal Christian⁴⁹ (as opposed to the opponents), and the source

Pastoralbriefe als Paulustradition (FRLANT, 146), Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988, p. 263.

⁴⁷ The reference by name to the Egyptian sorcerers is actually no sufficient argument for considering the opponents of ch. 3 as non-Christian, as RICHARDS, *Difference* (n. 16), p. 125, suggests. On the contrary, there are many indications that the opponents of ch. 3 are connected with those of 2,14 and should therefore be regarded as Christians, cf. I.H. MARSHALL, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (ICC), Edinburgh, Clark, 1999, pp. 771-772; C. KARAKOLIS, "Λέγοντες την ανάστασιν ήδη γεγονέναι" (Β' Τιμ. 2,18): Έρμηνευτική, συγκριτική και θεολογική θεώρηση μίας έσχατολογικής παρεκτροπής, in *Παρακαταθήκη* (n. 7), 205-224, p. 211; see also the relevant analysis below in II 1.

⁴⁸ Cf. ZAMFIR, *Men and Women* (n. 6), 33-36.

⁴⁹ Cf. DONELSON, *Pseudepigraphy* (n. 12), pp. 61-62; GLASER, *Paulus* (n. 23), p. 268; ZAMFIR, *Men and Women* (n. 6), pp. 24-25.

of the community's theological and ethical tradition (as opposed to the opponents' heretical teaching and practice)⁵⁰, and (b) Timothy representing the current community leaders, who are the guarantors of this tradition⁵¹. According to their Pauline tradition the members of the community should abstain from any of the vices mentioned by the author at the beginning of chapter 3 and at the same time keep away from any new teachings that are not in agreement with it.

6. Biographical Information - Testamentary Elements

2 Tim is the pastoral letter that contains the most personal information about Paul and, at the same time, the only letter of the *corpus paulinum* that has conspicuous testamentary features⁵².

The letter begins with the name of Paul followed by his title "apostle of Christ Jesus" (1,1). Timothy is called "beloved child" (1,2). Biographical information about Timothy, namely that his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice were Christian (1,5)⁵³, underlines the personal character of the letter and the supposed knowledge that the fictitious Paul has about Timothy, the latter being his close and trusted companion. Timothy apparently cried when he was separated by Paul. Now Paul wishes to see him again in order to be filled with joy (1,4). Timothy was ordained by Paul and received a gift of God (1,6). Timothy has personally received Paul's παραθήκη by the apostle himself (1,12.14). Paul has been practically left alone (4,11.16). While Onesiphoros and his family did care about him in Rome for some time (1,16), Fygelos and Hermogenes have abandoned him (1,15). Onesiphoros is mentioned as having served Paul in Ephesus as well (4,19).

Entering into details from the life of Paul, the author reminds "Timothy"

⁵⁰ Cf. SCHNELLE, *Einleitung* (n. 1), p. 420; Zamfir, *Men and Women* (n. 6), pp. 24-25.

⁵¹ See on Timothy and Titus representing the leaders of the community in the Pastorals L. OBERLINNER, *Gemeindeordnung und rechte Lehre: Zur Fortschreibung der paulinischen Ekklesiologie in den Pastoralbriefen*, in *ThQ* 187 (2007) 295-308, pp. 301-304.

⁵² Cf. among others BROWN, *Introduction* (n. 2), p. 676; WOLTER, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 46), pp. 202-241; A. WEISER, *Der zweite Brief an Timotheus* (EKK, 16/1), Düsseldorf – Zürich – Neukirchen-Vluyn, Benzinger – Neukirchener, pp. 30-44; Y. REDALIÉ, *Les épîtres pastorales (1 et 2 Timothée; Tite)*, in D. MARGUERAT (ed.), *Introduction au Nouveau Testament: Son histoire, son écriture, sa théologie* (MoBi, 41), Genève, Labor et Fides, 2000, p. 312; I. SKIADARETIS, *Ἡ Β΄ πρὸς Τιμόθεον: Κύκνειο ἄσμα καὶ διαθήκη τοῦ Ἀπ. Παύλου; in Παρακαταθήκη* (n. 7), 393-411.

⁵³ Cf. G. HÄFNER, "Nützlich zur Belehrung" (2 Tim 3,16): *Die Rolle der Schrift in den Pastoralbriefen im Rahmen der Paulusrezeption* (HBSt, 25), Freiburg – Basel – Wien, Herder, 2000, p. 227.

of Paul's persecution and suffering in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra (3,11)⁵⁴. At present Paul is presented not only as being imprisoned, but what's more as being offered to God like a drink offering (σπονδή) while leaving the present life (4,6). "Paul" gives a short account of what he has achieved during his life, as is suited to someone who approaches his end: He has fought the good fight, he has fulfilled the way, he has kept the faith (4,7). Now, the only thing that is left for him to do is to receive the crown of justice, which the Lord will give him on the day of judgement, along with everyone who has loved the Lord's presence (4,8). Timothy should come and visit him as soon as possible (4,9). In this context names of persons who have abandoned Paul are mentioned: Demas went to Thessaloniki having loved the present age. Kreskes has left to Galatia and Titus to Dalmatia (4,10). Luke is the only one who has stayed with the Apostle. Timothy should take Mark and come to him, as Mark can serve him well (4,11). "Paul" himself has sent Tychikos to Ephesus (4,12). He has left his cloak in Troas, in the house of Karpos. Timothy should bring this cloak along with his books, especially the parchments (4,13). Alexander the coppersmith has done evil to Paul, therefore Timothy should take heed of him (4,14-15). Paul has already publicly defended himself all alone, as all had abandoned him (4,16). He was saved from being eaten by the lions. He was also able to preach his gospel in public (4,17). He expresses the hope that the Lord will save him from every evil work and restore him in his heavenly kingdom (4,18). Then follow personal greetings: To Prisca and Aquila, as well as to the house of Onesiphoros (4,19). Again, there is a reference to former collaborators who are in various places: Erastos in Corinth and Trophimos in Miletos (4,20). Timothy should arrive in Rome before winter⁵⁵. Greetings are conveyed through Paul by Euboulos, Poudes, Linos and Claudia, as well as by all brothers and sisters in Rome (4,21).

It is evident that the author of 2 Tim applies more importance to personal details of the current situation of Paul and his companions, than, for instance, to extensively and convincingly imitating Paul's literary style or conveying his authentic theology. He obviously deems this strategy as very effective for adding to the credibility of the letter⁵⁶. His aim, however, is not just to prove

⁵⁴ From an historical point of view the question has been asked if Timothy had been an eye-witness of Paul's visit and adventures in these three Asia Minor cities according to the narrative of Acts. This question however does not concern the the present paper.

⁵⁵ There is no reason whatsoever to assume that the fictive place of Paul's imprisonment and of the letter's composition is not Rome, cf. HÄFNER, *Corpus Pastorale* (n. 2), p. 272.

⁵⁶ Cf. F. YOUNG, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters*, Cambridge, University Press,

his letter authentic, but, as a result, to provide it with irrefutable authority. If the letter would be accepted by its readers as a genuine letter of Paul, then its content would obviously gain immensely in authority. This authority would then enable the author to exert power and influence his readers on the level of both the content of their faith and their ethical behavior⁵⁷. The unquestionable authority of Paul is further underlined by the author's references in the first person singular to the virtues of Paul, to his selfless sufferings, and to his imprisonment and imminent death (4,6).

Moreover, an important person who is about to die gains even more in importance because of this very fact. His last words and wishes become sacred and are to be respected and fulfilled at all costs. In our case Paul is not just an important person, but the most important personality with regard to the Christian identity of the letter's recipients⁵⁸. Since this letter was supposed to be practically preserving the last words of the dying apostle to his most trusted disciple and associate, in a way it was indeed meant to be understood as his testament, which should be, as such, absolutely binding on its recipients⁵⁹. Even the description of Paul's grave sufferings, as well as his being abandoned by almost all of his associates, contributes to making his instructions and exhortations sound even more significant and pressing. This effect obviously belongs to the rhetorical strategy of the author of 2 Tim. On a symbolic level the urgently requested travel of Timothy to Rome could very well stand for the urgent need of the community members to remain faithful to the endangered and perhaps even partially abandoned authority and teaching of Paul.⁶⁰ Even the narrative detail about the coming winter would add in this light to the pressing effect of Paul's requests.

7. Conclusions

According to the above mentioned, the author of 2 Tim develops a concrete rhetorical strategy in order to draw authority and exert power on the

1994, pp. 138-139. On the importance of the Pastorals' personal notes for their pseudepigraphic author see N. BROX, *Zu den persönlichen Notizen der Pastoralbriefe*, in N. BROX (ed.), *Pseudepigraphie in der heidnischen und jüdisch-christlichen Antike* (WdF, 484), Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1977, 272-294.

⁵⁷ Cf. DONELSON, *Pseudepigraphy* (n. 12), p. 57.

⁵⁸ Cf. WOLTER, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 46), p. 270.

⁵⁹ Cf. YOUNG, *Theology* (n. 56), pp. 140-142; Merz, *Amore Pauli* (n. 7), p. 285.

⁶⁰ Cf. WOLTER, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 46), pp. 267-268.

recipients of the letter. Concretely:

He chooses the epistolary genre, takes over Paul's identity and addresses the epistle to Timothy, the Apostle's closest companion, in order to convince his audience about the authenticity and authority of the letter. He partly uses Pauline vocabulary, imitates Paul's literary style, and adopts some of his basic theological terminology and ideas. He even uses the concept of tradition in order to state that everything not belonging to the Pauline teaching (παρὰθήκη) is to be considered as useless or even harmful. He exerts power by exhorting "Timothy", and through him the recipients of his letter, to remain faithful to the Pauline παρὰθήκη, as well as to convey it to others, while at the same time avoiding getting involved in an argument with the opponents. He refers to the opponents in a very severe language, thus urging the community members to strengthen their union and hold to the Pauline teaching. Lastly, he provides his readers with "auto"-biographical information and applies testamentary features to the letter in order to make it even more credible and authoritative.

The rhetorical strategy as a whole of the author of 2 Tim for drawing authority and exerting power should be clear by now. In the final part of the present paper I will try to demonstrate in a more detailed fashion how this strategy functions, by attempting an exegesis of the 3rd chapter of the epistle.

III. THE EXAMPLE OF 2 TIM 3

Chapter 3 of 2 Tim belongs to a wider unit of the epistle that starts in 2,14 and ends up in 4,5.⁶¹ The 3rd chapter itself should be divided into two main parts, namely 3,1-9, and 3,10-16.

The first part describes an occurrence of the last days, according to which people are going to be much worse in every regard. Here, as opposed to 2,16-18, the problem seems to be not of theological, but instead of moral nature. Interestingly enough, the last days are already the days of the present, so the unethical people described in ch. 3 are accordingly not to be taken apart from the heretics of the 2nd chapter. They belong together, although the author does not state this very clearly.⁶²

The second part depicts Paul as the counterexample to the opponents, and

⁶¹ Cf. for instance JOHNSON, *Letters* (n. 1), p. 324.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 393.

includes an exhortation towards Timothy to remain faithful to what he has learned and to use the scriptures in order to restore those led astray.

1. First Part: 3,1-9

In 3,1 the author uses the conjunction *δέ* in order to stress that in the last days things will be even worse than what he had mentioned at the end of the 2nd chapter. Beginning with *τοῦτο* the author underlines the importance of what will follow, urging his readers to pay special attention to what he is about to say. His reference to the last days – the word *ἔσχατος* being used only at this instance in all three Pastoral epistles – is a means to intensify the effect of his words.⁶³ The last days are what the Pauline Christians had been orientated to. In the previous Pauline writings, however, there is no reference to the moral decline of human kind during the last days. On the contrary, according to 2 Tim the eschaton will be the worst time ever from a moral point of view.⁶⁴

In 3,2-5 there is a series of characterizations of the people of the last days. All of these concern moral vices, since the theological dimension of the problem of the opponents has been already referred to in the 2nd chapter. Concretely, the vices concern selfishness (*φίλαυτοι, ἀλαζόνες, ὑπερήφανοι, τετυφωμένοι*), sinful desires (*φιλάργυροι, ἀκρατεῖς, φιλήδονοι*), bad behavior (*γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, ἀχάριστοι, ἄστοργοι, ἄσπονδοι, διάβολοι, ἀνήμεροι, ἀφιλάγαθοι, προδόται, προπετεῖς*), ungodly mentality and attitude (*βλάσφημοι, ἀνόσιοι, not φιλόθεοι*), and hypocrisy (*ἔχοντες μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας, τὴν δὲ δύναμιν αὐτῆς ἠρνημένοι*). The last category brings back in an indirect way the theological dimension of the problem of the heretics, since *εὐσέβεια* can semantically refer both to the correct worship, presupposing the correct faith, as well as to the correct moral conduct.⁶⁵ According to the above list there is almost no

⁶³ Cf. L. OBERLINNER, *Die Pastoralbriefe: Zweite Folge: Kommentar zum 2. Timotheusbrief* (HTKNT 11/2), Freiburg – Basel – Wien, 1995, p. 121; WEISER, *Brief* (n. 52), pp. 246-247.

⁶⁴ Cf. R.F. COLLINS, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary* (NTLi), Louisville, KY – London: Westminster – John Knox, 2002, p. 244.

⁶⁵ In 2 Tim, just like in Tit 1:1, the term *εὐσέβεια* is definitely open to both meanings. In this sense KNIGHT, *Pastoral Epistles* (n. 36), p. 432, rightly notes that *εὐσέβεια* here actually means Christianity as a whole; cf. also OBERLINNER, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 63), pp. 124-125; M.R. D'ANGELO, *Εὐσέβεια: Roman Imperial Family Values and the Sexual Politics of 4 Maccabees and the Pastorals*, BI 11 (2003) 139-165, p. 159. For a comparison of the term

vice that the opponents are not guilty of having. They bring together everything that is bad while they lack any positive quality whatsoever. As already noted, this annihilating way of presenting them should be understood as polemic rhetoric, and not as a precise description of the actual historical situation.⁶⁶ Moreover, the author mentions here actually all vices that his recipients should avoid, thus exhorting them in an indirect way towards a moral and godly way of life.⁶⁷

In vs. 3,6-9 the author becomes more specific as to the problem created by the opponents. Claiming that the twisted people of the last days have already made their appearance within the community of the addressees he implies that the last days are actually already upon the community.⁶⁸ Some of these corrupt people are presented as entering houses and spiritually capturing sinful women who always want to learn something new, but never actually reach the real knowledge of truth.⁶⁹ According to the description of the problem, this has nothing to do with sexual sinning.⁷⁰ The problem concerns women who are strongly interested in gaining a better understanding of the Christian truth.⁷¹ Nevertheless, being led by their desires, they tend to easily believe in new teachings spread by the debauched people of the last days.⁷² As

εὐσέβεια between 2 Tim and Titus on the one hand, and 1 Tim on the other hand see J. HERZER, "Das Geheimnis der Frömmigkeit" (1 Tim 3,16): Sprache und Stil der Pastoralbriefe im Kontext hellenistisch-römischer Popularphilosophie – eine methodische Problemanzeige, in *ThQ* 187 (2007), 309-329, pp. 317-328. For an analysis of the Graeco-Roman background of the term see A. STANDHARTINGER, *Eusebeia in den Pastoralbriefen: Ein Beitrag zum Einfluss römischen Denkens auf das entstehende Christentum*, NT 48 (2006) 51-82.

⁶⁶ Cf. JOHNSON, *Letters* (n. 1), p. 392; G. HOLTZ, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (THKNT, 13), Leipzig, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, ⁵1992, p. 180. M. DIBELIUS, *Die Pastoralbriefe* (HNT, 13), H. CONZELMANN (ed.), Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, ⁴1996, pp. 86-87, does not attribute the distance from the real historical situation to the rhetorical strategy of the author, but rather to the fact that he uses traditional material. However, using traditional material does not exclude the possibility of making it part of a particular rhetorical strategy, cf. COLLINS, *1 & 2 Timothy* (n. 64), p. 246.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 245.

⁶⁸ Contra OBERLINNER, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 63), pp. 119-122; MARSHALL, *Commentary* (n. 47), p. 769.

⁶⁹ On the ironic use of the diminutive γυναικάρια, as well as on parallels from the hellenistic literature see DIBELIUS, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 66), p. 87.

⁷⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*: "Wenn aber der Verfasser seine Gegner der Unzucht zeihen wollte, so hätte er es doch wahrscheinlich deutlicher gesagt"; TOWNER, *Letters* (n. 45), 562, sees here ascetical tendencies in place of sexual activity; contra KNOCH, *1. und 2. Timotheusbrief* (n. 35), p. 71; D'ANGELO, *Εὐσέβεια* (n. 65), p. 161.

⁷¹ Cf. ZAMFIR, *Men and Women* (n. 6), p. 190.

⁷² According to HÄFNER, *Corpus Pastorale* (n. 2), pp. 269-270, "the nature of this

previously remarked, although in 3,2-4 the characterizations of these people concern exclusively moral vices, in 3,5 the author refers indirectly to both heresy and immorality using the word εὐσέβεια. 3,5 functions as a connection between 3,2-4 and 3,6-9. The author implies in other words that the corrupt people are not only unethical after all, but also heretical, which means that they cannot be regarded separately from the heretics mentioned in 2,16-18.⁷³ Thus, the author speaks about bad, ungodly and corrupt people, who will appear in the last days, and will be amiss both in their faith and in their moral practice.

At this point it seems to be implied that the last days have already begun, but things are still going to get worse, when the last days will have advanced.⁷⁴ While in 3,2 the author uses the verb ἔσονται in the future so as to describe the opponents, in 3,6 he uses the verb εἰσὶν in the present⁷⁵ to describe some of them who have a particular interest in entering houses and leading astray sinful women. Thus, in the structural unity of 2,16-4,5 the author gives one example of a concrete heretical teaching, and one of a concrete unethical behavior. This seems to be enough for him to make his case about the evilness of the distorted people of the last days and to urge his readers to avoid every contact with them.⁷⁶ According to the author, the opponents teach and act against the truth, just like the two Egyptian sorcerers Iannes and Iambres (3,8). However, just like these two persons of the past, they will not succeed much longer in their evil designs because their foolishness will finally be revealed.⁷⁷

Summarizing the above: a) The author speaks about the last days, which

problem could be better understood if the image of women in the other two Pastoral Epistles is also taken into consideration". 2 Tim 3,6-7 is definitely not enough by itself to witness a polemic of the author against the spiritual pursuits of women in general.

⁷³ Cf. KNOCH, *1. und 2. Timotheusbrief* (n. 35), p. 60.

⁷⁴ This would be a simple solution to the problem mentioned by HOLTZ, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 66), p. 180, as "das Hauptproblem der Auslegung" in 3,1-9; cf. also the balanced approach of GOURGUES, *Lettres* (n. 14), p. 304.

⁷⁵ Cf. OBERLINNER, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 63), 120; HÄFNER, "Nützlich zur Belehrung" (n. 53), p. 183. The equivalent is the use in 2,16-18 of προκόψουσιν and ἔξει in the future tense followed by ἐστὶν and ἀνατρέπουσιν in the present, as well as by ἠστόχησαν in the aorist, referring to the heretics claiming that the resurrection has already happened.

⁷⁶ This is the meaning of the verb ἀποτρέπου in 3,5, (cf. JOHNSON, *Letters* [n. 1], p. 406), and not just to avoid their vices (cf. COLLINS, *1 & 2 Timothy* [n. 64], p. 250).

⁷⁷ The two magicians are not mentioned by name in the relevant stories of Exodus 7,11-12,22; 8,3.14-15; 9,11; cf. CD 5,17-19). On the witnesses of their names in early Jewish and in Rabbinic tradition see among others DIBELIUS, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 66), pp. 87-88, P. BILLERBECK, *Die Briefe des Neuen Testaments und die Offenbarung Johannis* (Bill., 3), München, Beck, 1926, pp. 660-664; HÄFNER, "Nützlich zur Belehrung" (n. 53), pp. 175-182.

have already begun. b) The corrupt people of the last days are already present in the community of “Timothy.” c) The list of their vices includes every possible vice and can be divided into the categories of selfishness, sinful desires, bad behavior, ungodly attitude and hypocrisy. d) The presence of these people creates problems not only on the ethical, but also on the theological level. This is why they cannot be distinguished from the heretics mentioned in 2,16-18. e) While the general list of their vices is fairly long, there are only two concrete examples, one of their problematic faith and one of their problematic behavior. f) From a semantic point of view the word εὐσέβεια in 3,5 combines in its meaning the theological and the moral side of their distortion, thus connecting 3,2-4 to 3,6-9.

2. Second Part: 3,10-17

In 3,10-11 the author writes in the first person singular, presenting himself as a counterexample to the opponents mentioned above⁷⁸ with regard to teaching and ethics.⁷⁹ Here everything is positive. Paul is presented as having all virtues that a Christian should possess. His qualities are diametrically opposed to the characteristics of the opponents: He possesses the truthful teaching (διδασκαλία) and has an analogous way of life (ἀγωγή), he has good intentions (πρόθεσις), especially with regard to fulfilling his mission,⁸⁰ he has the correct faith (πίστις), he is forbearing and forgiving (μακροθυμία), loving (ἀγάπη) and patient (ὑπομονή), he has already suffered persecution (διωγμοῖς), and afflictions (παθήμασιν) and has been saved by the Lord (ἐκ πάντων με ἐρύσατο ὁ κύριος).⁸¹

⁷⁸ And not to Timothy according to MERKEL, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 36), p. 74. The opposition is obviously between the vices of the opponents and the virtues of Paul, cf. JOHNSON, *Letters* (n.1), 417. The problem of the opponents is not that they have not been Paul's disciples, but that they represent the false teaching and they have all possible vices. Of course the motif of the imitation is here present, as also in the protopauline literature, cf. 1 Cor 4,16; 11,11; Phil 3,17; 1 Thes 1,6; see also JOHNSON, *Letters* (n. 1), p. 422.

⁷⁹ Cf. G. HÄFNER, *Schriftauslegung und “gesunde Lehre” in den Pastoralbriefen. Von der Problematik eines spannungsfreien Verhältnisses*, in U. BUSSE (ed.), *Die Bedeutung der Exegese für Theologie und Kirche* (QD, 215), Freiburg – Basel – Wien, Herder, 2005, 171-198, p. 181.

⁸⁰ Cf. KNIGHT, *Pastoral Epistles* (n. 36), p. 439.

⁸¹ SCHLATTER, *Briefe* (n. 44), p. 228; Dibelius, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 66), p. 89, is right in observing that in a genuine Pauline letter Paul would be referring at this point to the common afflictions of himself and Timothy, cf. Acts 16,17. The absence of a reference to Timothy's afflictions at this point, therefore, underlines the ideal characters of Paul as the suffering apostle and of Timothy as a relatively inexperienced disciple who has still much to learn (cf.

In 3,12 the author defines the necessary proof for living indeed in a godly way, which is to be persecuted (διωχθήσονται). Concretely, not only does he, alias Paul, claim to have been persecuted himself, but he also foretells that this is eventually going to be the case for everyone who wants to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus.⁸² On the other hand, according to 3,13 the opponents are neither being persecuted within the community nor outside of it. They will advance to the worst, deceiving others and going astray themselves. Here the author seems to combine two originally different thoughts in one sentence. The evil people will thrive as opposed to the people who live in Christ and who will be persecuted. However, their flourishing will only be to the worst since it will be based upon deceiving other people, eventually being led themselves astray as well.⁸³

Chapter 3 ends with vs. 14-17. In these verses a new exhortation is personally addressed to “Timothy.” The readers represented by the character of Timothy should remain in what they have learned and been entrusted with, knowing by whom they have learned it. Here the author implies that Paul has not been the only teacher of Timothy.⁸⁴ According to the witness of 2 Tim (1,5), Timothy’s mother, as well as his grandmother, were Christians,⁸⁵ which would imply that Timothy had already learned in his family the holy writings as a young child. These holy writings can make him wise and lead him to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Each one of these holy writings⁸⁶ is inspired by God⁸⁷ and is thus profitable for teaching, refuting of errors,

1 Tim 4,12).

⁸² Cf. MERKEL, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 36), p. 75; Young, *Theology* (n. 56), p. 126.

⁸³ As KNIGHT, *Pastoral Epistles* (n. 36), p. 442, observes, *πλανώμενοι* is here probably in the passive and not in the middle voice, in light of the devil’s capability of making people do his will in 2,26.

⁸⁴ Cf. HÄFNER, “*Nützlich zur Belehrung*” (n. 53), p. 226.

⁸⁵ There is strong opposition to the historicity of this information, especially when compared to the relevant information of Acts 16,1-3, cf. MERKEL, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 36), pp. 75-76. In any case the author of 2 Tim wants to project to Timothy the ideal of a Christian leader following the tradition he has received from his family, from Paul and of course from the Holy Scripture.

⁸⁶ We do not here have to enter the discussion about the precise meaning of *πάσα γραφή*, the alternatives being to mean either every individual book of the Old Testament canon or every Old Testament citation, see for a discussion of the issue among others A.T. HANSON, *Studies in the Pastoral Epistles*, London, SPCK, 1968, pp. 43-44. In every case Christian writings do not seem to be included in the reference to the scriptures, cf. among others SCHLARB, *Lehre* (n. 25), pp. 257-260; HÄFNER, “*Nützlich zur Belehrung*” (n. 53), p. 227; STETTLER, *Christologie* (n. 38), p. 199.

⁸⁷ The precise definition of the meaning of the word *θεόπνευστος* is not of particular

correction and instruction in justice. Timothy is held responsible by Paul to do all of this, so that every person of God is equipped and trained for every good work.⁸⁸

Summarizing the above, 3,9-17 is the answer of the author to the challenge of the evil people who are presented in 3,1-8. They behave wrongly, while, on the other hand, Paul has behaved rightly and Timothy should now to follow his mentor's example. The same schema applies also to teaching, believing, respecting tradition and the holy scriptures, suffering for the gospel, having honest intentions and so on. In 3,9-17 there are two authorities that Timothy should follow: Pauline tradition (including the moral example of Paul himself) and the scriptures. These authorities should be sufficient, if respected and maintained in faith, to help "Timothy" overcome the challenge of the opponents and keep the community, for which he is responsible, on its way to salvation.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the above, in the third chapter of 2 Tim the author is drawing authority by claiming to be identical with the apostle Paul, who foresees the approaching eschatological future, understands that the last days have already begun, has suffered for Jesus Christ, has taught Timothy (and through him the leaders and members of the community), is currently imprisoned and is expecting his death in the very near future.

Claiming for himself this enormous authority the author is in a position to exert power upon the recipients of his letter. Using the threat represented by the opponents and by the approaching last days the author reminds "Timothy" and through him his readers of Paul's teaching, life and virtues. He warns him

interest for the present study; see the relevant discussion on the term and its tradition-historical and religion-historical background among others in COLLINS, *1 & 2 Timothy* (n. 64), pp. 263-264; WEISER, *Brief* (n. 52), pp. 280-282.

⁸⁸ DIBELIUS, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 66), p. 90: "Das durch die Tradition vermittelte Verständnis der Schrift (d. h. des AT) macht den Gemeindeleiter tüchtig zum Kampf gegen die Irrlehre". In the same line HÄFNER, "*Nützlich zur Belehrung*" (n. 53), 236, rightly notes: "Mit διδασκαλία, ἐλεγμός, ἐπανάρθωσις, und παιδεία ἢ ἐν δικαιοσύνη werden nicht allgemein christliche Verhaltensweisen beschrieben; es wird vielmehr abgehoben auf die Aufgabe des verantwortlichen Vorstehers"; cf. also OBERLINNER, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 63), p. 137.

that everybody who wants to live in Christ will be persecuted, thus urging him to prefer rather to be persecuted than to betray the Pauline notion of being in Christ. He urges him to remain faithful to everything he has been taught and entrusted with. He reminds him that he has learned from several sources. He admonishes him to use the holy scriptures (τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα) and exert himself power upon the community (πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμόν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ). Possibly πάσα γραφή is different from ἱερὰ γράμματα, even including some of the Pauline letters or even the book of Acts.⁸⁹

The power that the author exerts, however, seems to have special qualities. The author expresses clearly his intention to keep the community united, in the right faith and in the right moral attitude. He remains himself anchored in the Pauline tradition of the weakness being actually strength (2 Cor 12,9). Thus, he presents himself as being weak, imprisoned, unable to aid others, abandoned by almost all his friends and companions. He actually asks Timothy to be ready and willing to be persecuted and to suffer for Jesus Christ as well. Timothy should of course teach and even exhort members of the community that go astray. However, he should teach and admonish them in the way Paul has taught him to. Power in the 3rd chapter of 2 Tim is actually the power of the weak according to the world's criteria, and the power of the strong according to the gospel's criteria. Any power that is exerted on the basis of this understanding should be inspired by Paul's virtues listed in 3,10-11 and correspond to them. The ethos of Paul, according to his presentation in 2 Tim, is the criterion of the power that is exerted by the author in the epistle and that should also be exerted by the leaders of the community to its members.⁹⁰

The last sentence of chapter 3 is the quintessence of the author's intentions in exerting his power upon the readers of his writing: "Every human being of God should be intact and equipped for every good work" (3,17). The author exerts here a power that intends to make the epistle's receivers intact and enable them to do every possible good work. The word "power" is often used to characterize social structures and practices of subordination and oppression. The author of 2 Tim seems, at least, to exert power not in order to subordinate people, but in order to make them free of the threats, the dangers and the traps that he envisages, by leading them back

⁸⁹ Cf. BROX, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 1), pp. 72-73; see, however, A. WEISER, *Brief* (n. 52), pp. 69-70, who demonstrates that the author of 2 Tim did not know the book of Acts.

⁹⁰ Cf. DONELSON, *Pseudepigraphy* (n. 12), pp. 127-128.

to the Pauline theological and ethical teaching as the source of their Christian identity⁹¹ and the guide of their faith and life.

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⁹¹ Cf. WOLTER, *Pastoralbriefe* (n. 46), pp. 267-270.