

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *European Journal of Theology* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_european-journal-theology_01.php

Revisiting the Pastoral Epistles – Part II

Peter Walker

SUMMARY

Both the dating and authorship of the three so-called ‘Pastoral Epistles’ (1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus) are hotly contested. In Part I of this article we focused on 1 Timothy and Titus,¹ arguing that a plausible date for these two letters can be found in the period between September AD 55 and January AD 57 after Paul’s departure from Ephesus (Acts 20:1-3; Rom 15:19). Here in Part II we will look at the quite different issues associated with 2 Timothy.

Again our starting-point are those verses in the text

* * * * * * * *

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Sowohl Datierung als auch Autorenschaft der drei sogenannten ‘Pastoralbriefe’ (1. und 2. Timotheusbrief und Titusbrief) sind heiß umstritten. Im Teil I lag der Schwerpunkt auf dem 1. Timotheusbrief und dem Titusbrief. Unser Argument vertrat bei diesen beiden Briefen einen plausiblen Zeitrahmen zwischen September 55 AD und Januar 57 AD nach der Abreise von Paulus aus Ephesus (siehe Apg 20:1-3; Röm 15:19). Hier in Teil II kommen die ganz andere Anliegen zur Sprache, die in Zusammenhang mit dem 2. Timotheusbrief stehen.

Wiederum liegt unser Ansatzpunkt bei jenen Versen im Text, dessen spezielle Information eine

* * * * * * * *

RÉSUMÉ

La date et l’authenticité des trois épîtres dites pastorales sont contestées. Dans la première partie de cet article parue dans le précédent numéro de ce périodique, nous avons considéré la première épître à Timothée et l’épître à Tite et nous avons plaidé qu’une date plausible pour la rédaction de ces deux lettres se situe entre septembre 55 et janvier 57, après le départ de Paul d’Éphèse (Ac 20.1-3 ; Rm 15.19). Dans cette seconde partie, nous abordons les questions très différentes qui se posent pour la seconde épître à Timothée.

Notre point de départ est ici à nouveau ces versets de

* * * * * * * *

which give information relevant to reconstructing the historical setting of the letter. These, we argue, suggest that 2 Timothy was not the *last* thing Paul wrote before his death but instead the *first* thing he wrote after arriving in Rome in March AD 60 (Acts 28:14). Corroborative evidence is then found from noting the consequences of thus placing 2 Timothy before Paul’s other ‘prison epistles’, Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon and Philippians. Finally, we note some of the fresh ways in which we may need to approach all three Pastoral Epistles if these earlier dates are accepted.

Rekonstruktion des historischen Sitzes im Leben ermöglicht. Diese Verse legen die Annahme nahe, dass der 2. Timotheusbrief nicht das Letzte war, was Paulus vor seinem Tod schrieb, sondern vielmehr das Erste, was er nach seiner Ankunft in Rom im März des Jahres 60 AD schrieb (Apg 28:14). Unterstützende Beweiskraft ergibt sich aus den Konsequenzen einer derartigen Platzierung des 2. Timotheusbriefes vor den übrigen ‘Gefangenschafts-briefen’ von Paulus (Kolosser, Epheser, Philemon und Philipper). Abschließend weisen wir auf einige der neuen Wege hin, auf denen wir uns allen drei Pastoralbriefen nähern sollten, wenn diese Frühdatierung Anerkennung findet.

l’épître qui fournissent des indications pertinentes pour la reconstruction de son contexte historique. J’essaie de montrer qu’elles suggèrent que 2 Timothée n’est pas le dernier écrit de Paul avant sa mort, mais, au contraire, le premier qu’il a rédigé après son arrivée à Rome en mars 60 (Ac 28.14). On peut alors avancer d’autres arguments corroborant cette thèse et on peut tirer de l’examen des conséquences qu’elle entraîne en situant la rédaction de 2 Timothée avant les autres épîtres de captivité de Paul (Colossiens, Éphésiens, Philémon et Philippiens). Nous concluons notre étude en considérant les implications de notre datation haute pour la manière d’aborder les trois épîtres pastorales.

1. Introduction

The aim of these two articles is to cast a new light on the dating and setting of Paul's Pastoral Epistles. In Part I we focused on 1 Timothy and Titus; here in Part II we turn our attention to 2 Timothy.

Here the issues are slightly different. It stands to reason that two letters written by the same author to the same individual are going to come from different time-periods. So, although 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy are naturally bracketed together in the collection of Paul's letters, they should not be bracketed together in terms of their date and setting.² On the contrary, we must probably look for a different setting – an occasion which would have provided sufficient cause for Paul to go to the trouble of penning a second letter to the same individual. This point is readily conceded by the majority of modern readers, but there can still be a tendency in some quarters to treat the 'Pastoral Epistles' as a monochrome entity, encouraging scholars to search for a single solution to issues of dating. This needs to be resisted, hence the writing of two separate articles.

What follows here is a focused attempt to reconstruct the setting of 2 Timothy. A quite different set of arguments will be used; so it is quite feasible that readers will find themselves convinced by the arguments in either Part I or Part II but not necessarily by both – precisely because these arguments do not depend on each other for their validity. They stand alone. At the end, however, we will review the arguments of both parts to see the cumulative effect of our overall study on the scholarly issues surrounding the Pastoral Epistles today.

2. Initial impressions from the key texts

As with our study of 1 Timothy and Titus, we begin by noting those sections in 2 Timothy which seem to give us clues about the date and setting of this epistle. In addition to the three verses which reveal that Paul is a 'prisoner' in 'chains' (1:8, 16; 2:8-9), the key texts are as follows:

- A. 1:15-18: Onesiphorus has come from Ephesus in the province of Asia to visit Paul in Rome.
- B. 3:10-11: Paul describes his persecutions in South Galatia (cf. Acts 13-14).
- C. 4:6-8: Paul says the time of his 'departure' has 'come'.
- D. 4:9-21: In his closing personal remarks and greetings Paul mentions the location of various

Christian colleagues; he remarks on the hostility of Alexander the coppersmith; he refers to his facing his 'first defence' without support from local believers; and he urges Timothy to 'come soon' – 'before winter', if possible – as well as to bring some of Paul's belongings with him from Troas.

A plain reading of these texts suggests the following initial ideas for the setting of this epistle:

- Paul seems evidently to be in Rome (text A).
- His precise location there, however, seems not to have been widely known, because Onesiphorus has had to do some significant investigative work before finding Paul (text A).
- Onesiphorus has come from Asia and brought disturbing news about how some of Paul's key supporters in that province have 'deserted' him (text A).³
- Paul reminds Timothy of the persecutions he experienced in South Galatia (text B). Quite possibly this was because these persecutions will have been among the first things that Timothy as a teenager had noticed about Paul; and they may have played a part in his conversion to Christ.⁴
- Various points emerge from text D. First, Paul's request to Timothy to join him is made twice (in 4:9 and 4:21). In asking him to 'do his best' to come 'before winter', Paul signals that he is writing at some point earlier in the summer. This may also signal, however, as we shall see, that Paul is not expecting to be dead by the time winter starts. If matters were that urgent, he would presumably have told Timothy to come 'immediately' and 'without delay'.
- Secondly, Paul wants his cloak and parchments brought back from Troas. Again this suggests that Paul is hoping to be able to use these in Rome – he is not expecting to face Nero's judgment immediately.
- Thirdly, Paul has been through some form of legal interrogation process, which he describes as his 'first defence' (4:16).
- Finally, in his 'personal news' section Paul mentions some local believers (Eubulus, Pudens, Linus and Claudia) but primarily focuses on those of his own wider team – the team which Timothy knew and was part of. In respect to *this* team, 'only Luke is with him'; others have gone elsewhere.
- Of these team members the first three he mentions (Demas, Crescens and Titus) might

themselves have been in Rome – for whatever reason – *before* they left to go elsewhere. This would explain Paul’s saying that ‘only Luke’ is still with him in Rome: the others, who had for a short time been present with him in Rome, have now left. Conceivably, however, this may only have been true of Demas (whose departure has hurt Paul personally in some way).⁵

- By contrast, Paul’s references to the other members of his itinerant team (Tychichus, Erastus and Trophimus) do not imply that they have been dispatched *from Rome* by Paul to their present locations. Instead he is simply reporting ‘at a distance’ on how he has deployed them for this particular season. After all, it was not feasible for all his team ‘out in the field’ to visit him every year to receive their new orders; inevitably sometimes – indeed perhaps in the majority of cases – Paul had to send his instructions by courier.⁶

Overall the tone of the letter is quite sombre, with Paul giving signals of loneliness; hence his comments about ‘only Luke’ being with him and his evident keenness for Timothy to join him. There is also a sense of his being ‘deserted’, both by friends abroad (in Asia) and in Rome, hence his comments both about Demas’ departure and about local believers not coming forward to help him at his ‘first defence’.

Significantly, however, Paul does not *explicitly* refer to the issue of his ‘death’, as he does in Philippians 1:20-23. Instead, he speaks in more general terms of his ‘departure’ (4:6). Taking the long nostalgic view back over the last 30 years as a believer, he recognises as a matter of brute realism that (in comparison with *that* length of time) the time of his departure cannot be too far away – within the next couple of years at most. This present period of prison confinement has made it evident to Paul that the process which will lead towards his ‘departure’ has indeed begun – ‘I am already being poured out as a drink offering’ (4:6). But the fact that his instructions to Timothy are not charged with urgency suggests that he does not regard his death to be imminent – that is, within the next few months. On the contrary, he appears to be ‘settling down’ and looking ahead to life in Rome during the following winter.

This opens up for us the key argument to be explored now. Among those who see 2 Timothy as genuinely Pauline, there has always been an easy solution as to when this letter was written – namely

as the *last thing* that he wrote during his Roman imprisonment. On this view it does not matter much whether Paul was martyred in AD 67 (after a period of further ministry away from Rome) or back in AD 63 (with him never leaving Rome as a free man). However, what if this assumption is wrong? What if 2 Timothy was not written at the *very end* of Paul’s imprisonment, as the last thing before his death, but rather quite soon after his arrival in the imperial capital?

If this hypothesis is correct, there may be some interesting ways in which this text might connect with the account in Acts of that arrival in Rome. We may also gain some new insights into the order of Paul’s final letters (e.g. what if Paul writes the personal greetings of 2 Timothy 4 *before* those in Colossians 4)? We may even be able to reconstruct his last years in Rome more accurately. Some interesting possibilities open up as soon as we let go of the assumption that 2 Timothy is Paul’s last letter, written shortly before his imminent death.

This is the contention of this article: an earlier date for 2 Timothy is worth considering. Admittedly, this hypothesis runs against our normal psychological reconstruction of the letter, which goes back at least to the compelling portrait of this letter in the commentary of Handley Moule, in which Paul is waiting for the jailer to open the door and lead him off for execution.⁷ This has always been an attractive reconstruction, but we may need to let go of it in order to gain a truer insight into the apostle’s final years.

3. Three arguments for an earlier date

3.1 Paul’s belongings at Troas

There are three main reasons why we should consider seriously this earlier dating for 2 Timothy. First, Paul’s reference to Troas (4:13) is intriguing. From Acts 20:6-12 we know that Troas was where Paul’s team finally set out on their visit to Jerusalem. It was a poignant moment. Paul was aware of the dangers of the forthcoming journey and sought some solitude on the headland road, walking on his own round to Assos – indeed his last walk on his own as a free man. Moreover, one of the uncertainties as they joined a public vessel was whether they would be able to meet up with local believers in any harbours where they docked (this was quite unlikely – at least until Caesarea). So it made sense for Paul to decide to leave his precious parchments with the Christian community in Troas.⁸

Similarly with his winter coat. It was early in May and it would only be getting hotter as they went south to Jerusalem for Pentecost (May 25th, AD 57). As it turned out, Paul would spend the next two years in the warm climate of Caesarea and then on a ship towards Rome. So, if we ask, when is the next opportunity for Paul to arrange for the collection of his coat and parchments from Troas, the answer is *at some point in AD 60* – once he has reached Rome. The first winter for which he can retrieve his coat is that of AD 60-61. This tiny piece of (otherwise unimportant) detail suggests that Paul is writing during the summer of AD 60.

Those who believe that 2 Timothy is late and pseudonymous can see this biographical detail as one of the most unnecessary verses included by the pseudonymous writer. Those who date 2 Timothy late in Paul's life have to reconstruct a whole Pauline itinerary in AD 63-65 which has Paul going through Troas again – but on the basis of no independent evidence. Yet what evidence we do have, here in Acts 20, gives us a reasonable portrait which leads to this simpler and more elegant solution: Paul is requesting his goods be brought to him *now that he has just arrived in Rome and knows he is going to be based there throughout the coming winter*.

The important point to note, then, is that, although Paul could be writing 2 Timothy at the *start* of his 'house arrest' in Rome or at its *end*, the issue of Paul's Troas-request leads us to the earlier of these two dates. On this reading 2 Timothy was written at the *start* of Paul's two years in Rome, not at the very end. Why wait for several winters in Rome before asking for your coat and other personal effects?

3.2 Paul's companions

We can ask a similar question concerning Paul's request that Timothy himself should join him in Rome. Why would he have waited several years before inviting his special colleague, Timothy, to join him? It is more likely that he summoned Timothy at the *first* reasonable opportunity. From Paul's other references to Timothy it is evident that there was some emotional rapport between them; Timothy's presence was often a comfort to Paul (Phil 2:19-24). No wonder that Paul does not want to face a winter in Rome without Timothy. Again this suggests 2 Timothy is written during Paul's first summer in Rome.

This observation tallies exactly with Paul's

express statement that (of his 'inner circle' of assistants) 'only Luke is with me'. For, from the narrative in Acts 28, this is precisely what we would expect at just this point. Probably none of Paul's team had *any idea where Paul was* in the spring of AD 60; and indeed they most likely feared he was dead. After all, the last they had heard of him was that he set out in wintry seas from Myra in Asia Minor (Acts 27:5-7). So it is questionable that any of them would have turned up in Rome *in advance* to greet him there. Conceivably, however, this is what Demas, Crescens and Titus had succeeded in doing (text D), getting themselves to Rome in time (they hoped) to greet Paul if ever he succeeded in reaching Rome.⁹ Everyone else, however, would have carried on doing what they were doing and would simply have had to wait until they heard further news. Then, all of a sudden, the news breaks out that Paul – quite 'miraculously' – has indeed survived his sea voyage and turned up in Rome! At this point in March AD 60, suddenly the Christian 'holy internet' (to use Mike Thompson's happy phrase) starts buzzing with the news.¹⁰ Right now, however, in those early months, few, if any, of Paul's trusted inner circle have got there. Hence Paul writes 2 Timothy: of all his wider team, *this* is the absent friend whom he longs to see again.

Some confirmation of this suggestion comes from comparing the list of Paul's companions in 2 Timothy 4 with those in Colossians 4. By the time Paul writes Colossians, at least two of the people he requested to join him in Rome (in 2 Tim 4:9, 11) have duly arrived: Timothy himself (who co-authors Colossians, Col 1:1) and John Mark (Col 4:10). If, by contrast, we date 2 Timothy to some time *after* Colossians (as is normally done), then we have to imagine that Timothy and Mark have both been in Rome, but *in the meantime they have both gone away again and now are being requested to come back once more!* This sounds very complicated. A simpler solution is to see 2 Timothy as *precisely the letter of invitation* that brings Timothy and Mark from the Aegean – with Colossians as the unambiguous evidence that they indeed accepted the invitation.¹¹

A final point to note from observing the movement of Paul's companions is that Onesiphorus is described as having had some difficulty in locating Paul's whereabouts once he got to Rome. This could, of course, be for any reason, yet it can simply be taken as a further sign of an early date for 2 Timothy. Only in the early months after Paul's

arrival in Rome the Christian community was not sure where Paul had been placed under guard. Once the arrangements for his ‘house arrest’ had been agreed and Paul was in that location for two years, one presumes that finding his street address would have become easy. So Onesiphorus may well have arrived in those first few weeks, when the arrangements were still being finalised, and the local Christian community as yet had no straightforward access to the apostle in prison.

3.3 Paul’s ‘first *apologia*’

One of the reasons why this earlier dating for 2 Timothy has not been noted is Paul’s reference to his ‘first defence’ (4:16). Once it is assumed that Paul is facing imminent death, this expression is seen as a reference to the first instalment of the *actual legal proceedings* which will necessarily be completed within a few months. Paul’s final trial, it is assumed, has begun, and Nero’s sentence is imminent. Yet a real weakness of this common reconstruction is that, as we have seen, Paul still thinks he has got time to summon Timothy from Asia – and that he does so without an obvious sense of urgency. He wants him to come soon, but he does not tell him to ‘drop everything and come immediately’.

It is likely, then, that this ‘first defence’ is not the beginning of the actual ‘trial’ as such, but rather some kind of *preliminary registration process*. At some point in the first weeks after arrival presumably there would have to be some formal procedure whereby Paul’s case was ‘logged’ on the imperial system.¹² If so, he would have to appear in person before the court *administrators* (not so much before the *lawyers*) to give some account of the charges against him. This would not be a ‘trial’ as such, but an initial ‘hearing’ – not least because Paul’s formal accusers (the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem) may not have yet sent a formal delegation to press their case. Paul may have arrived in advance of the ‘paperwork’!

In such circumstances, there is a strong likelihood that Paul was told that his case would not be heard any time soon. Instead it was put in the ‘pending tray’. After all, it depended on two ‘unknowns’: the Sanhedrin’s tactics and Nero’s unpredictable schedule. So began a long ‘waiting game’ which seems to have lasted at least two years (Acts 28:30-31). And it may precisely be this realisation that he was ‘in for the long haul’ and that he would not see Nero imminently, that triggered the writing of 2 Timothy. For Paul now needed to

make plans for a prolonged stay in Rome. It was time to request Timothy’s company – and time to get that winter coat and his precious parchments!

That Paul went through some such preliminary registration process is probable. One can hardly imagine that he would have been in Rome for two years without ever seeing *anybody* in the Roman imperial system. After all, if nothing else, a decision had to be made as to his accommodation: did this prisoner need to be kept in solitary confinement or could the more lenient arrangement of ‘house-arrest’ be implemented without fear of his escaping? So some such ‘initial hearing’ had to be undergone – to assess the nature of the case, not to adjudicate for or against the prisoner. The ‘first defence’ (4:16) was not part of Paul’s ‘trial’. Even so, he had to give *some* account of himself in response to the charges raised. So he could understandably and correctly describe this as his ‘first *apologia*’.

3.4 Conclusion

Paul was indeed slightly upset that local believers had not rallied round to his support, though we may ask what they could have done to help him. Yet, overall, his tone suggests that he *is not perturbed by the thought of an imminent trial*. On the contrary, he now recognises that the actual ‘trial’ may be considerably delayed. At the same time he is probably also acutely aware that Nero is going to be a difficult emperor to persuade.¹³ So the percentage chances of his getting a fair trial before the increasingly unpredictable Nero have indeed ‘taken a turn for the worse’. This means, paradoxically, that *his execution is now more likely than before, even though its date has been postponed*. In other words, he is ‘on death row’ but he will be on it for some time.

This scenario fits well with the muted tone of 2 Timothy 4. Paul is freshly aware of the dangers but also of the ‘waiting’ which he will have to endure; and sometimes, as we know, waiting is the hardest part. So naturally he is in a reflective, even nostalgic, mood. He looks back on his life and talks about having ‘fought the fight’; he can see his period of extended captivity (going back now, effectively, over three long years to AD May 57) as ‘already being poured out like a drink offering’ (4:6); and he can understandably speak of the time ‘having come for his departure’ – all this without necessarily thinking that he will be *dead before the end of the month*. Right now Paul’s execution

before Nero is statistically more likely, but chronologically less imminent.

One of the unacknowledged reasons for readers preferring the traditional dating of 2 Timothy (as the last thing Paul wrote before his *imminent* death) is that they may think that the dark and slightly ‘depressive’ tone of 2 Timothy is not quite appropriate in the apostle – unless he is indeed facing the executioner’s axe very soon. Only in *such* circumstances, it is subtly implied, is he allowed to have an ‘off day’. Yet not only is this rather unfair; it also fails to note that there were a host of other reasons why Paul might have been in a sombre mood in the summer of AD 60. It was not simply, as just noted, that waiting on ‘death row’ can almost be worse than actually going out to one’s execution; we also have to factor in the following considerations: his having survived an awful shipwreck the previous November; his beginning to sense some of his ‘old age’ (cf. Philem 9); his sense of loneliness in Rome (‘only Luke...’, 2 Tim 4:11); his fear that his work in Asia had been unfruitful (2 Tim 1:15); and also perhaps the dawning awareness that not every believer in Rome straightforwardly welcomed his arrival and his intended brave stance before Nero – hence his feeling abandoned by local believers at his ‘first defence’ (4:16).¹⁴

Thus, when we read 2 Timothy as a whole, we can sense that Paul has more than his martyrdom on his mind. There are other issues too, each of which on its own was enough to weigh him down. So this positing of an earlier date for 2 Timothy, even though it downplays the imminence of Paul’s death, actually opens up a more holistic account of his situation. It also reveals more of the apostle’s raw humanity in the face of adverse circumstances. In arriving in the imperial capital, Paul indeed felt like a ‘small fish in a large pond’.

4. Evidence from what happened next

So our contention is that Paul’s second letter to Timothy was composed at some point in early or mid-summer of the year AD 60, a few months after his arrival in Rome in March. During those first few months he has had to appear before some legal officials to explain the nature of his case; he has only made minimal contact with local believers, but has reconnected with some of his inner team of key supporters. Even so, one key person is missing, the man whom elsewhere Paul describes

as his ‘son’ (Phil 2:22). So Paul now writes to Timothy urging him to come before winter.

4.1 Four later ‘Prison Epistles’

If correct, this hypothesis may cast some light on what happens next. The majority of scholars locate four further letters of Paul to this period of imprisonment in Rome: Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians and Philippians.¹⁵ What are the implications for our understanding of these letters if 2 Timothy is now located before them rather than afterwards? Does examining these letters in this new light serve to confirm and strengthen our hypothesis?

In both Colossians and Philemon, Paul names Timothy as his co-author (Col 1:1; Philem 1). If these letters were indeed composed in Rome, they become clear evidence that Timothy did indeed come to join Paul in Rome. Yet when we ask why Timothy came to Rome, the most obvious answer (as noted above) is that Paul expressly invited him to do so – by writing 2 Timothy! Colossians and Philemon thus become evidence that Timothy indeed accepted the invitation.

Secondly, in both Colossians and Philemon Paul refers to his own imprisonment (Col 4:10; Philem 1, 9, 23) but these references do not have the sorrowful and sombre air which we saw in 2 Timothy. Instead the tone of both these letters is quite ‘up-beat’ by comparison. If he had been lonely and despondent, he seems now to have come out the other side; and once again, the human cause of this may well have been the encouraging arrival of Timothy. We know from Paul’s other letters how his mood could be dramatically affected by the arrival of his companions (1 Thess 3:6-10; 2 Cor 7:7). The same could well have been true here. Timothy’s arrival lifted his spirits and played a part in unleashing a new spate of apostolic creativity.

However, the news which Timothy brought to Rome may not have been totally positive. Paul had already learnt that there were problems with his team in the province of Asia (2 Tim 1:15) – problems which may have affected the church congregations too. If Timothy had come from that region, he may have been able to give Paul an update about these problems and their precise nature. This then might well explain the distinctive style of Paul’s writing in his third ‘prison epistle’, Ephesians. Those who accept the Pauline authorship of Ephesians readily note the clear similarities between this letter and Colossians; they also note that it is written on a more universal canvas,

without references to specific issues in the particular church to which Paul is writing.¹⁶ Indeed, the phrase ‘in Ephesus’ (Eph 1:1) is not in some manuscripts, suggesting that this letter may have been intended more as a ‘circular’ letter which would be read by several churches in the Ephesus region and in the wider province of Asia. If so, Paul’s reference in Colossians (4:16) to another Pauline letter, which he has sent to nearby Laodicea, may well be a reference to what we now know as ‘Ephesians’. Our ‘Ephesians’ may thus have been a general letter which Paul wished to send round the major cities of Asia, starting with Laodicea and ending in Ephesus. This would be the same tactic as that used by the author of Revelation (Rev 2-3) – only on this occasion the direction of the courier’s travel was anti-clockwise rather than clockwise.

There is much dispute about this. However, for our purposes, the key point to note is that Paul’s tactic of sending a ‘general’ letter (whether to Ephesus alone or to all the churches in Asia) may have been *his response to the news brought by Timothy*. If there were some particular problems in the region, Timothy may have advised Paul not to focus on those issues but rather to keep his discourse at a higher, more general level. Moreover, if there were some individuals or congregations in the area who were now less enthusiastic about Paul’s ministry – and especially if there was indeed more widespread ‘desertion’ away from Paul in Asia (2 Tim 1:15) – then Timothy’s advice may have been that Paul should ‘set out his stall’ and re-establish his credentials in this potentially hostile situation.

If so, this explains the way Paul in Ephesians 3:1-13 breaks into a ‘defence’ and explanation of his ministry. He wants his readers – even if others are trying to persuade them otherwise – to be convinced that he is indeed God’s appointed apostle working for the Gentiles. Moreover, he wants his gentile readers in Asia to sense that his suffering in Rome is truly on *their* behalf. At this point there is a sub-text too: that, for the apostle facing trial in Rome, a little bit of gratitude would be welcome! It would be quite painful to face martyrdom in Rome as the ‘apostle to the gentiles’ but not to be appreciated as such by his gentile converts.

On this reconstruction, Timothy reaches Rome in the autumn of AD 60. His presence encourages and guides Paul in the composition of three letters, which are despatched with Tychichus (Eph 6:21; Col 4:7) either during the winter months of AD 60/61 or – more likely – when the sailing

season opened in the spring of AD 61.¹⁷

As for the fourth letter, Philippians, there are hints in its final chapter that Paul has been surprised that he had not heard from this church earlier (Phil 4:10-11). This would suggest that the Philippians were not in touch with Paul during the first year of his Roman imprisonment (AD 60) but only during the summer of AD 61 at the earliest. Regardless of the precise date, it would seem clear, then, that this letter was written *after* the other three. If our hypothesis about an earlier date for 2 Timothy were accepted, this would mean that Philippians would be our last extant letter from Paul. Some confirmation of this can be found in that it is here in Philippians that Paul at last speaks about his death explicitly. This extended discussion about his possible death suggests that he now recognises that the end of his life is indeed imminent – more so, at least, than it was at the time of writing 2 Timothy.

We discover in Philippians a far more ‘composed’ and sanguine tone (‘for me to live is Christ, to die is gain’, 1:21); there is a calmness and acceptance (‘I have learned to be content in all circumstances’, 4:11). Paul’s tone is less self-absorbed and more outward-looking. Of course, this may be because he is writing a more public letter designed to be read aloud to a gathered congregation – not, as in 2 Timothy, a personal note to his best friend, in which perhaps he can ‘let down his guard’ a bit more. Yet it does suggest that some of the ‘dark night of the soul’ – if that was ever truly present behind 2 Timothy – has now passed. And we can also sense the forthright, ‘up-beat’ tone of the apostle as he struggles to find the best ‘last word’ which he wants the Philippians to remember him by. Repeatedly he bequeaths to them his famous watchword: ‘rejoice in the Lord’ (3:1; 4:4, 10).

This new approach to Philippians then means that, even if we lose some of the poignancy of 2 Timothy being written just before the executioner arrives, we gain instead a sense in Philippians of the apostle’s resolute faith and joy in his last days, calmly facing his imminent death with confidence in Christ.

Looking at these four other ‘prison epistles’ thus does not provide any evidence against our hypothesis for an early dating of 2 Timothy. On the contrary, it may serve to explain some of their otherwise puzzling features. These helpful repercussions of our hypothesis do not, of course, constitute hard evidence for its being correct.

However, at the least they give a measure of plausible corroboration. The jig-saw is beginning to fit together.

4.2 Comparing the greetings

One key point must still be investigated from these later letters. In both 2 Timothy 4 and Colossians 4 Paul's closing remarks describe the movements of some of his companions. When we look at these closely in parallel, are there any problems in seeing 2 Timothy as written nine to twelve months *before* Colossians? We noted above that one key merit of our hypothesis is that Timothy who is absent from Rome in 2 Timothy has evidently arrived in Rome by the time Paul writes Colossians (cf. 2 Tim 4:9 with Col 1:1; Philem 1). What are its implications for the other people who are mentioned?

Mark

What is true for Timothy is also true for Mark. He is clearly absent from Rome in 2 Timothy but has arrived there by the time Paul writes Colossians (2 Tim 4:11; Col 4:10). As noted above, there are severe logistical complications for Mark's movements if instead 2 Timothy is written later.¹⁸ We must also factor in the strong early church tradition which associates Mark with Peter in Rome.¹⁹ If our hypothesis is correct, Mark is invited to Rome by Paul and indeed is included by Paul in his list of companions (Col 4:10), but then presumably meets up with Peter in Rome around this time and becomes his literary agent, working on Mark's Gospel.

There are some pleasing aspects to this reconstruction. First, Paul does not wait till the very end of his life to invite Mark back into his circle of companions but summons him as soon as he arrives in Rome, thus bringing to an end any rift between them which had begun ten years earlier at the time of Paul's setting out on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:37-38). Secondly, there is a hint of the likely harmony between Paul and Peter, as they both take Mark into their service: for it is entirely possible that Paul gladly commended Mark to Peter and encouraged Mark to write down Peter's memories; and he could do this, knowing that he, Paul, had already got an equally capable author amongst his own companions, namely Luke!²⁰

Luke

If Colossians is written in AD 61, around a year after 2 Timothy, then Luke the 'beloved physi-

cian' is still there (Col 4:14). This makes sense because there is a strong likelihood that Luke himself was in Rome for the 'two years' which he refers to at the end of Acts (28:30). If, however, 2 Timothy was written later (in AD 63 or even AD 67), we might question why Luke had come back to Rome so many years later; and if he had, why he had closed his narrative in Acts in a seemingly arbitrary way after those first 'two years'. For the story about Paul in Acts now comes across as a story very much in need of an ending. If Luke was in Rome into the mid-60s, why did he not tell us what happened next? He must have known! However, if both 2 Timothy and Colossians are instead placed within the first 18 months of Paul's imprisonment, then the field is open for some more innocuous reasons for the surprising ending of Acts: for example, Luke's needing to complete the project for Theophilus before he himself returned home to Philippi.²¹

Demas

A pleasant corollary of seeing 2 Timothy as before Colossians is that Demas has evidently returned by the time Paul writes Colossians (4:14; Philem 24). This means that his departure, which Paul interpreted so negatively in 2 Timothy, turns out not to be not so final after all. Thus, when Paul describes Demas as having deserted him because he was in 'love with this world' (2 Tim 4:10), this may well not refer to some great act of apostasy by Demas. Conceivably his going to Thessalonica was for quite natural reasons, e.g. to be with family members; but Paul, feeling deserted in Rome, detects an inner or secret motivation which is more 'worldly'. Demas' return would then prove that he 'came good in the end' and that, even if his motivations the year before had been slightly 'mixed', he has not ultimately deserted either Paul or his Christian faith.

Aristarchus

This person is not mentioned in 2 Timothy, but, by the time of Colossians, is now sharing Paul's house arrest as a 'fellow-prisoner' (Col 4:10; cf. Philem 24). If this is the same Aristarchus who travelled with Luke and Paul from Caesarea (Acts 27:2), he has now been arrested for some reason but allowed to share Paul's accommodation.²²

Crescens and Titus

In 2 Timothy Crescens and Titus have recently gone to Galatia and Dalmatia respectively. Not

surprisingly they are not mentioned in Colossians nine months later, since they would presumably have been detained with this important ministry work. We may note here that our early dating for 2 Timothy, which means that Crescens and Titus went to these two regions so soon after Paul reached Rome, makes perfect sense. Paul had visited the region of Illyricum and Dalmatia in AD 56 (en route to Corinth, see Rom 15:19);²³ this had been the last opportunity he had had to do some pioneering evangelism. Now that he was in Rome he would be keen to find out as soon as possible if that work had borne any fruit. As for Galatia, it was historically a major area of Paul's early ministry (Acts 13-14), so again Paul would be eager to maintain his connection with the believers there; meanwhile other, slightly nearer, areas (around the Aegean) were satisfactorily covered by other workers such as Erastus in Corinth and Trophimus in Miletus (2 Tim 4:20). So in sending Crescens and Titus to these two different regions – at the western and eastern ends, respectively, of Paul's mission field – Paul was evidently ensuring that his whole area of operations was being duly supervised. It speaks volumes for his strategic thinking and his determination that, even as a prisoner in Rome, he was still serving the congregations which he had helped bring into being.

Tychicus

Tychicus is perhaps the most mobile of all of Paul's companions. In 2 Timothy we read that Paul has sent him to Ephesus (4:12). This might well mean that he was the courier who delivered 2 Timothy to Timothy (who was in the Ephesus region) and who would take over Timothy's responsibilities once Timothy headed off to join Paul in Rome. Tychicus is then mentioned in both Ephesians (6:21) and Colossians (4:7), being the specified courier of each letter. If this was indeed his primary role in Paul's team, then it is not surprising that he is mentioned both in AD 60 (as the courier for 2 Timothy) and in AD 61 (as the courier for the next three letters). This was the one person whom we might expect to be committed to returning to Paul for the intervening winter.²⁴ He was the vital link in the communication between Paul and his now dispersed congregations.

Others

By the time of Colossians some new people have visited Paul in Rome. Again this makes sense: the longer Paul is known to be in Rome, the more

visitors he is going to receive, especially people coming from a long distance. They include a Jewish believer called Jesus/Justus (4:11), as well as Epaphras (1:7; 4:13) and Onesimus (Philem 10). The latter two have both come from Colossae (travelling together?). Onesimus is now returning to Colossae but Epaphras, mysteriously, is now described as Paul's 'fellow-prisoner' (Philem 23) – though conceivably this may describe their having shared a previous period of confinement together, presumably in Ephesus.

Looking back over these different individuals and their movements, we see that there is no major difficulty in placing 2 Timothy before Colossians. Admittedly, in the case of Demas, there is an element of strain in interpreting Paul's words in 2 Timothy in a more positive sense. Yet this may have its merits and, in all other cases, there is evidently no problem whatsoever in postulating an early date for 2 Timothy. Indeed this reading often produces a historical scenario that is more compelling than when the texts are dated the other way round. This result adds some weight to our argument. It makes eminent sense, we conclude, to see 2 Timothy, not as the last thing Paul wrote before he died, but rather as the first thing he wrote after arriving in Rome.

5. Conclusion regarding the Pastoral Epistles

In both parts of this article we have argued for an earlier date for each of the three Pastoral Epistles. At the outset we outlined three main options for dating and authorship of these epistles:

- A. written by Paul at some point during the narrative recounted in Acts (before AD 62).
- B. written by Paul at some point *after* the narrative recounted in Acts, when Paul was released from Rome (between AD 62 and 67).
- C. written by an unknown author after Paul's own death.

We have argued that option A should be given further attention. Those who agree with our assessment of some of the weaknesses of option B may be tempted thereby to go towards what seems to be the only viable alternative, namely option C. I hope to have shown that option A is not just viable but has much to commend it, making good sense of the historical data presented in the Pastoral Epistles and opening up further credible historical reconstructions when set in the wider context of

Paul's ministry.

Our argument has been based on a fairly plain reading of the key texts and involves only three exegetical choices which are open to question:

- opting that Nicopolis (Tit 3:12) refers to Nicopolis in Epirus;
- allowing Paul's verbs of deployment (e.g. 'sending', 'leaving' in Tit 1:5; 2 Tim 4:12, 20) to mean he is operating as an *absentee* 'director of operations';
- allowing Paul's 'first *apologia*' (2 Tim 4:16) to be part of a preliminary registration process rather than a first phase in the trial proper, i.e. to be essentially administrative rather than strictly legal.

We suggest that these do not require great exegetical contortions but are in fact quite sensible and natural interpretations of what the relevant words meant in their first-century context. Option A therefore has a certain historical and exegetical simplicity about it; by comparison the other two options look complex and over-subtle.

The chief objections, however, against option A will probably not have to do with these exegetical interpretations of the 'historical' key texts. Rather they will stem from concerns over the epistles' distinctive linguistic style and/or theological ideas. These two issues have fuelled most of the debate over the Pastoral Epistles for the last two generations or so. So, by way of conclusion, some very brief comments on both those issues are in order.

5.1 Language and style

There has been much discussion over the apparently different language and terminology in the Pastorals compared to Paul's other writings. Of the 902 words used in the Pastorals, 306 are not found in the ten other Pauline letters; of these, 175 do not appear anywhere else in the New Testament.²⁵ Much of this can presumably be explained by the different contexts in which these letters were composed: they are personal notes, written to trusted colleagues not congregations; they were written without an explicit *amanuensis* or co-author; and they were focused primarily on practical issues, not on theology *per se*.

Our discussion here further highlights the fact that these are personal 'management memos' between individuals – and these individuals have been working together for years and therefore know each other very well. Business communication between trusted colleagues can be quite terse

and, even between Christians, can contain little theology. Moreover, Paul does not need to tread carefully for fear of offence, nor does he need to 'set out his stall' theologically but instead can 'cut to the chase'.²⁶

To these commonly-made observations the following points may be added, which have emerged in our discussion above:

- There is also variation *within* the Pastoral Epistles, with 2 Timothy being written in a different context (later, in prison) than 1 Timothy and Titus.
- 1 Timothy and Titus are unique within the Pauline corpus inasmuch as they were written when Paul was 'on the road' and not settled in an established Christian community. His other letters were written from Antioch, Corinth and Ephesus, or once his 'house-arrest' had been established in Rome; all those contexts therefore have elements of stability about them, with Paul having personnel, equipment and unhurried time. While writing 1 Timothy and Titus, however, Paul may have been much more on his own, with no more than a couple of companions, and he may have been rushed into writing them through wanting to take advantage of an imminently-departing courier. The only other letter that may have been written in somewhat analogous circumstances is 2 Corinthians, although it could be suggested that chapters 1-9 of this letter were written whilst 'settled' in Philippi and it is only chapters 10-13 that were written 'on the road'.²⁷
- Similarly 2 Timothy would come from a time in Rome when Paul's 'support structures' were not yet in place – it was written (on this reconstruction) in the first few months, before he had properly settled into the routine of his 'house-arrest'.
- Another factor, which might particularly apply to Titus (on this reconstruction), is that, at the time of writing, Paul is moving westward, leaving behind the familiarity of the Greek cities around the Mediterranean/Aegean, to an area where Latin was the primary language. This too may have had some effect on his style of language.²⁸

5.2 Theological ideas

Pursuing option A also, of course, requires a significant 're-imagining' of the way Paul's theology is supposed to have 'developed'.²⁹ On this topic,

just a few brief comments can be made here. First, it is often supposed that we are looking for a linear development, e.g. from ‘primitive’ Galatians through ‘matured’ Romans to ‘ecclesial’ Ephesians and, finally, onto the ‘bureaucratic’ Pastorals. The graph is a straight line, going up a gradient, set at a reasonably steep angle. But what if the truly exponential development in Paul’s thinking took place principally *before* he wrote Galatians? If, as argued by Bauckham, the most important developments in Christology took place in the first decade of the Church’s existence, the same may be true for Paul.³⁰ If so, it is those early years in Arabia, Tarsus, Antioch and on the first ‘missionary journey’ which should be seen as the formative period for Paul’s theological development. What we receive in *all* his letters, then, may be construed as *various applications of a deep, established body of personal theology*. The graph may be seen *in the shape of a fan*, as Paul dispensed his accumulated wisdom on a wide range of matters to individuals and churches. Moreover, his recipients were themselves at different points of ‘development’ and maturity. Human development and human communications are thus far more complex and multifaceted than can be shown on a two-dimensional, straight-line graph.

In terms of chronology, if Paul was converted in his mid-to-late twenties, then his first extant letter – probably Galatians – was written when he was already in his mid-40s. It would then make good psychological sense to see his subsequent writings (written between the ages of 45 and 60) as the outworking of his already established thinking, not so much as *de novo* compositions in which he is taken into entirely new (to him) modes of thought. Yes, his audience’s situations were all distinctive and needed fresh applications, but an experienced pastor-teacher (like the scribe of Mat 13:52) is normally drawing out ‘old things as well as new’ from a treasury of wisdom accumulated over a lifetime. This might be particularly true for someone like Paul who, as an itinerant preacher and evangelist, will have spoken hundreds of thousands of words about Christ *before* he ever wrote his comparatively short letters.

Secondly, many features in the Pastoral Epistles that are deemed to be evidence of theological ‘lateness’ are arguably features of church life that crop up very early in the life of a congregation.³¹ And when we look closely at the management structures being outlined in the Pastorals, they prove to be rudimentary in the extreme: there is nothing

that could not have been applied to congregations in the first five years of their existence.³² So perhaps our criteria for establishing what is ‘late’ in Paul’s letters might better be established through drawing on the experience of contemporary ‘young churches’ (in their first ten years of life), which are the nearest modern equivalent to what we find in the epistles. Through such comparisons we might better be able to gauge what features are truly indicative of ‘second generation Christianity’.

There is obviously much more to be said here. In particular, the features in Paul’s theology (not the situation of his audience) which have been deemed to be signs of lateness need to be reviewed. Are there fewer references to the Holy Spirit? Does his use of the word *eusebeia* (‘piety’) signal a greater emphasis on morality, rather than on God’s free grace in Jesus? Does he describe the work of Christ in slightly more remote and ‘distant’ ways? Such claims are regularly made, but one really does have to ask if these short letters can reliably be taken as a sufficient sample on which to base such elaborate reconstructions.³³ No, there is a real danger here of constructing supposed ‘trajectories’ of development on the basis of minimal evidence or faulty criteria. And this then leads to our going round in endless further circles, as we begin to cite a supposedly ‘late’ piece of theology as firm evidence of the document being itself ‘late’ – when, in fact, the evidence is not firm at all.

Over against this, we must assert that the only sure grounds for assessing the date and setting of a document are *those texts within it that overtly allude to issues of time and place*. It is preferable to let those texts take their proper place and then let the theology and linguistic arguments take a new shape as a result.

Our argument here is that, when we concentrate in a focused way on *those* key texts in the Pastoral Epistles, we are indeed on much firmer historical ground; that a consistent and coherent picture emerges of their varied settings; and that it is *then and only then* that we can begin to use our imaginative faculties to reconstruct both the likely historical scenarios surrounding the text and the theological issues.

Option A, we have argued, enables a plausible reconstruction which indeed integrates the historical ‘evidences’ that we have been given. Options B and C, by contrast, see these ‘historical’ texts as quite problematic – as needing to be explained away. However, it is far better to have a hypothesis that runs *with* the grain of the historical evi-

dences than one that goes against them. Perhaps, after all, these ‘historical’ texts are not obstructive problems to be ‘explained away’ but – quite the reverse – vital historical clues that have been waiting patiently for almost 2000 years to point us in the right direction!

Dr Peter Walker is Tutor in New Testament Studies, Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford, UK.

Notes

- 1 Part I appeared in *EJT* 21.1(2012) 4-16.
- 2 On the contrasts between 2 Timothy when compared with 1 Timothy and Titus, see e.g. J. Murphy O'Connor, ‘2 Timothy contrasted with 1 Timothy and Titus’, *Revue Biblique* 98 (1991) 403-418.
- 3 His referring to ‘all in Asia’ is not necessarily describing the vast mass of Christian believers in the province but rather the majority of Paul’s key supporters who have deserted him (in some unspecified way), without deserting Christ.
- 4 In my *In the Steps of Saint Paul* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2008) 86, I speculate what the young Timothy might have thought if he had been there to see Paul being stoned outside Lystra and left for dead on the ground (as in Acts 14:19). Perhaps he asked what this strange Jewish Rabbi was doing so far from Jerusalem – risking his life for others.
- 5 See further below (4.2) on Demas, Titus and Crescens.
- 6 This is a parallel case of what we noticed in Part I (focused on Tit 1:3), namely, that some of Paul’s instructions do not imply that he himself was present to deliver those instructions in person; rather he had to communicate them in writing. So this text about Trophimus is best explained as an instruction to a colleague whom Paul has decided to leave in his present location, rather than to deploy elsewhere. J.A.T. Robinson thus translates: ‘Trophimus I have had to leave ill at Miletus’; see his *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976) 77.
- 7 H.C.G. Moule, *The Second Epistle to Timothy: Short Devotional Studies on the Dying Letter of St. Paul* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1905).
- 8 There is much debate about what these parchments were: classical or Hebrew texts, portions of the Old Testament or (quite possibly) the ‘back-up’ copies of his own writings. It was normal for letter-writers like Cicero to keep the original copy or ‘autograph’ of a letter; see E. R. Richards, *Paul and First-century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004). If this could be true of casual letters, how much more might someone like Paul see the importance of preserving these careful statements of apostolic teaching?

- 9 Onesiphorus too may have thought along similar lines, arriving a little later – though he may have been travelling to Rome for other reasons. See above (section 2) for the perception that these three men were perhaps in Rome in the early days after Paul’s arrival. Of course, at this distance in time, we cannot establish whether they had come to Rome for other reasons, not because they hoped to meet Paul there.
- 10 M.B. Thompson in R.J. Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1998) chapter 3.
- 11 See further below (4.1).
- 12 W.D. Mounce in his commentary on the Pastoral Epistles (Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 2000) 595, helpfully sees this ‘first defence’ as the ‘*prima actio*’ within the Roman legal system, which was a ‘public, preliminary hearing designed to gather information, which, if necessary, would be followed by a trial’.
- 13 There has been a debate over the exact meaning of the Emperor Trajan’s reference to a good ‘five years’ in Nero’s reign (quoted in Tacitus *Annals* XX). If this refers, as is likely, to Nero’s first five years in office (AD 54-59), then his behaviour and policies will have become worse just around the time Paul arrives in Rome in spring of AD 60.
- 14 The point that Roman believers may have been anxious about Paul’s arrival is developed in my *In the Steps of Saint Paul*, 189-195; see also E. Judge, ‘The origin of the church in Rome: a new solution’, *RTR* 25 (1966) 95.
- 15 Although these ‘prison epistles’ could have been written from Ephesus in AD 55-57 or from Caesarea Maritima in AD 57-59, the majority of commentators favour a Roman provenance: see e.g. discussion in P.T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (Word Biblical Commentary; Waco: Word, 1982) xlix-lxiii. Arguments also abound over Ephesians and whether it should be seen as ‘deutero-Pauline’, seen in e.g. A.T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word, 1990) lix- lxxii. The arguments developed in this article can be construed as further evidence, even if quite small in itself, in favour of this being genuinely a letter written by Paul.
- 16 The idea of Ephesians being a circular letter is alluded to in almost all commentaries which accept its Pauline authorship, see e.g. Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters* (London: SPCK, 2002) 4-5. Intriguingly there is evidence from the second century (albeit from the heretic Marcion) for seeing Ephesians as the ‘letter to the Laodiceans’.
- 17 Although the Via Egnatia (linking Philippi to Dyrrachium) remained open during winter months, it could be treacherous; more particularly, the sea-crossing from Dyrrachium to Brundisium would be unpredictable and risky until the opening of the

- sailing season in mid-March.
- 18 See 3.2 above.
- 19 This is the strong implication of 1 Peter 5:13 where Peter and Mark are together in 'Babylon'. The majority of commentaries on Mark discuss the probable Roman provenance of Mark and the issue of Mark writing down the oral memories of Peter, as first mentioned in the second century by Papias (quoted in Eusebius, *Church History* 3. 39:15).
- 20 This potential cooperation between Peter and Paul may thus have resulted in the writing down of two different but complementary accounts of the life of Jesus. Many aspects of the so-called 'synoptic problem' might look very different if scholars would allow for this possibility of Mark and Luke working in Rome on their Gospels *simultaneously and in parallel*. Both authors may have been aware of the other's outline and agreed in advance that there was no competition between them nor any need to conflate their works, but instead an urgent necessity to write down their respective traditions as soon as possible in Nero's Rome. There may also have been some 'cross-fertilization' between them as they discussed their projects. In this case the old question 'which Gospel was written first?' becomes strictly unanswerable: both Gospels would have come out around the same time, with both being slightly influenced by the other.
- 21 Since Luke was probably a native of Philippi, it is possible that he was one of the couriers who carried Paul's letter back to the Philippians. If that letter was written in late AD 61 or early 62 (see above), then we have an entirely plausible reason as to why Acts finishes with this open reference to Paul's 'two years' in Rome: Luke was now leaving Rome. Luke's departure would then explain Paul's reticence to send Timothy too (Phil 2:19-24). For an alternative possibility, namely that Luke had just died before the writing of Philippians, see my *In the Steps of Saint Paul*, 192 (based on a possible reading of Phil 2:27).
- 22 The impression gained from Acts is that he travelled as a free man, but conceivably he was also bound to stand trial in Rome. For some other options – whether Aristarchus disembarked at Myra (Acts 27:5-6) or travelled all the way to Rome, effectively as Paul's personal 'servant' – see F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 501.
- 23 See Part I and *In the Steps of Saint Paul*, 12.
- 24 This might well suggest that 2 Timothy was written quite *early* in the summer of AD 60, thus allowing Tychicus sufficient time to spend some months working in the church in Ephesus before returning to Rome before the winter.
- 25 See E.F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 337. Confusingly the seminal work which used these linguistic differences to argue against Pauline authorship was by someone with the same name: P.N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: OUP, 1921), who noted that 112 particles, pronouns and prepositions, which occur in other Pauline epistles, are absent from the Pastorals. There are rebuttals to these arguments in e.g. J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963) 24-25 and D. Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles and the Mind of Paul* (London: Tyndale, 1956).
- 26 Anyone who publishes books knows that emails to work colleagues on e.g. points of internal college administration are completely different – even though written within minutes of each other. Any stylistic analysis of our writings, which tried to trace some chronological 'development', would quickly be dismissed as ridiculous.
- 27 On these practical issues of ancient writing and their effect on Paul's writing, see Richards, *Paul and First-century Letter Writing*.
- 28 This influence of a majority Latin culture is briefly noted (but not developed) by Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 25.
- 29 On the methodologies involved in this debate, see the useful article by P.H. Towner, 'Pauline theology or Pauline tradition in the Pastoral Epistles: the question of method', *Tyndale Bulletin* 46.2 (1995) 287-314.
- 30 See R.J. Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).
- 31 See Part I, section 5.
- 32 Many factors have influenced us here, not least an 'anti-institutional' bias, perhaps reacting against what is seen as later 'Catholic' church order. Moreover, one sometimes gets the impression that these early Christian congregations are supposed to have existed for 10 to 15 years in a 'honeymoon' state of charismatic bliss, only then to discover that they needed leaders and some church order. Yet the experience of modern church 'plants' suggests that such honeymoons (all Spirit, no need for structure) do not last very long. Appointing leaders becomes necessary within weeks (not years) of a congregation being planted. For the priority which Paul gave to ordaining good local leadership, see Acts 14:21-23 and Part I, section 5a.
- 33 See e.g. A.T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982) 38-42, who argues that the author 'does not have any doctrine of his own' but resorts to quoting 'liturgical and confessional formulae'.