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JENS HERZER

The Pastoral Epistles and the Legacy of Paul

Published by JAN
QUENSTEDT

*Scientific research on the New
Testament*
476

Mohr Siebeck

Scientific research on the New Testament

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476



Jens Herzer

The Pastoral Epistles and the Legacy of Paul

Studies on the letters to
Timothy and Titus

Published by
Jan Quenstedt

Mohr Siebeck

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ISBN 978-3-16-154313-5 / eISBN 978-3-16-161153-7

DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-161153-7

ISSN 0512-1604 / eISSN 2568-7476

(Scientific Studies on the New Testament)

The German National Library lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

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The book was typeset from the Minion by eplene, printed by Gulde Druck in Tübingen on age-resistant works printing paper, and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

Foreword

The studies collected here have emerged from the work on a commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, which has turned out to be considerably more complex than originally assumed. With the conceptual compilation in this volume, the contributions document, as it were, an interim balance of my research on the Pastoral Epistles to date, which is to culminate in the completion of the commentary.

A large part of the essays was significantly and gratefully made possible by an Opus Magnum grant from the Volkswagen Foundation in 2011/12. Sincere thanks are due at this point especially to Dr. Jan Quenstedt, who edited this volume with some effort and careful patience. I am also grateful for many stimulating conversations and intensive debates with students, who have shown an astonishing interest in the Pastoral Epistles again and again in exercises and seminars, and above all with the staff at my chair and at the Institute in Leipzig over the many years in which the contributions collected here have been produced. I would like to mention as representatives those two who have themselves successfully and fruitfully embarked on the adventure of the Pastoral Epistles in their dissertations, Dr. Michaela Veit-Engelmann and Dr. Joram Luttenberger; I have learned a great deal from both of them.

I would also like to thank my secretary, Mrs. Sylvia Kolbe, who in her proven way has rendered outstanding services in the preparation of the manuscripts and the corrections with great care and patience, as well as Mrs. Anna Berting, who assisted in the preparation of the indexes. Jörg Frey, the editor of the series "Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament" (Scientific Studies on the New Testament), has more than once given me friendly encouragement for this volume and dispelled doubts, for which I am as grateful to him as I am to the publishing house Mohr Siebeck for its patient and professional supervision of the project.

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Preface of the publisher

I have heard a question in this or a similar form many times from students in the New Testament Repetitorium: "And what does Mr. Herzer say about this?" Especially often this question was asked in relation to the Pastoral Epistles, often narrowed down to the so-called introductory questions. This question is usually connected with the perception of a supposed deficit: The Pastoral Epistles appear at best marginally in the neutestamential curriculum, and the variety of perspectives in research is not always easy to keep track of, not only for students, but also in research itself. A glance at the introductory literature alone cannot reveal the range of theological and literary-critical problem areas of the Pastoral Epistles. Their consideration seems to be too brief and sometimes general. For many, this is an indication that the Epistle to 1.Timothy². and the Epistle to Titus are still predominantly considered marginal phenomena in the *Corpus Paulinum* - unjustly, as the present volume shows.

Behind the student question, however, can be seen a serious interest in the supposedly "inseparable triplets" (Holtzmann), which is not satisfied with simple answers. This interest is supported by the present anthology with its various perspectives on the Pastoral Epistles. Quite a few of the studies documented in this volume were developed in continuous exchange with the students in Leipzig. The volume as a whole thus documents a research focus at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Leipzig, which has had a decisive influence on the work at the Institute for New Testament Studies for several years now. Against this background, it invites the reader to engage intensively with the Pastoral Epistles, to critically examine his or her personal view of this group of New Testament writings, and to engage with the positions developed here on the basis of his or her own questions. This is connected with my wish as editor that this collection of essays may stimulate a lively discussion - in lectures, seminars, but above all at the desks of those who do research on the Pastoral Epistles. Or, in other words: in these and all other places where theology is practiced in a lively way in the discussion of the New Testament writings.

To stimulate the research discourse, this volume formulates challenging answers to questions raised not only by the Pastoral Epistles themselves, but also by research on these letters. These answers open up sometimes surprising perspectives, seek dialogue on their part, and at the same time bear witness to the author's many years of reflection on the Epistle to 1.Timothy². and the Epistle to Titus in their theological-historical context. Thereby shows

VIII

This is not least due to the lasting topicality of these three New Testament writings, which is not limited to introductory knowledge. Rather, the Pastoral Epistles themselves are testimonies of a theological reflection that also offers valuable impulses and impulses for the present.

"And what do you say to this?" The reversal of the question of the students noted at the beginning as a question *to the* students and to all who deal academically with the Pastoral Epistles is essential for a theological positional assessment with regard to this group of writings. In the serious study of the biblical writings, it is ultimately the step from one's own question to one's own reasoned point of view which is far more important than any mere knowledge of a preconceived opinion. In the triad of perception - question - positioning, exegetical-theological judgment is formed, well aware that "the last word of wisdom" must often remain open. The present volume thus offers a substantial basis for an examination of the Pastoral Epistles, which demands its own determination of the relationship between their authorship, their position in the corpus of early Christian literature, and their theological dignity. Ultimately, it is a matter of doing justice to these writings in critical discourse - entirely in the sense of an innovative preservation and hermeneutical transformation of what is entrusted to theology and the church (cf. Tim 23:14-17).

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Abbreviations

The abbreviations are according to Siegfried M. Schwertner (ed.), *IATG3 - Internationales Abkürzungsverzeichnis für Theologie und Grenzgebiete*, Berlin/Boston³2014, and additionally according to *Abkürzungen Theologie und Religionswissenschaft nach RGG*⁴, Tübingen 2007. The abbreviations and sigla of the papyri are according to the *Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis* (<http://www.papyri.info/browse/hgv/>).

The Pastoral Letters and the legacy of Paul

An introduction

When more than 20 years ago I was asked to edit the Pastoral Epistles for the Handbook of Theology, I did not realize what an exciting adventure in research history I was about to embark on. At that time, I had not yet written a single line on the Pastoral Epistles, and my understanding of these rather marginal writings of the New Testament did not go significantly beyond the usual exam knowledge.

It was all the more astonishing to perceive the abundance of recent commentaries and monographs on the Pastoral Epistles already available at that time on the one hand, and at the same time the great discrepancy in the fundamental perspectives on these letters on the other hand, which could hardly be reconciled in their disparity. At that time, I was impressed not least by the sheer volume of the newer commentaries, which were often conceived in several volumes and, as a rule, with considerably more than up to 500 more than pages 1000, stood in what for me was an astonishing proportion to the comparatively modest size of the Pastoral Epistles themselves. It quickly became clear that the enormous interpretive effort was not only related to the fact that increasingly complex research discourses had to be mastered.¹ Rather, the increasing complexity of research in this field was also an indication that the historical and literary preconditions for understanding the Pastoral Epistles, as well as the methodological approaches to their interpretation, were by no means self-evidently capable of consensus. Thus the "The "lateral entrants" into these discourses, also with regard to current research, impressively confirm Adolf von Harnack's judgment, now almost 100 years old: "No one has yet really solved the riddle that hovers over these letters, and it is unsolvable even with our historical tools:

¹ An informative, balanced, and readable history of research in the sense of a problem history is offered by Michaela Engelmann, *Unzertrennliche Drillinge? Motivsemantische Untersuchungen zum literarischen Verhältnis der Pastoralbriefe* (BZNW 192), Berlin 10-117.2012,

² Adolf von Harnack, *Die Briefsammlung des Apostels Paulus und die anderen vorkonstantinischen christlichen Briefsammlungen. Six Lectures in the History of Early Church Literature*, Leipzig, 1926, 14.

The contributions collected here also echo this theme again and again.

Even if this insight has not changed much in view of the variety and contradictoriness of the interpretations of the Pastoral Epistles, it is obvious that research has not been discouraged by this. The essence of unsolved riddles is ultimately the constant stimulation of new attempts to solve them. In the best case, aspects can be gained even from false trails that do not lead to a satisfactory solution, which, when turned in other directions, lead further and broaden the perspectives of knowledge. In the end, Harnack will be right: The omnipresent limitations of historical research will not allow us to reach a secure and consensual judgment about what the Pastoral Epistles are, how and why they came into being, and how they relate to what else we know of that apostle to whom they are attributed. There will always be open questions, there will always be different ways of judging and interpreting details, depending on the conditions under which one looks at things. But this is ultimately no more than a historical truism. It is exciting, however, to get involved in the posed riddle, which in the meantime rather resembles a jigsaw puzzle with still too many only weakly contoured areas - and to try to draw out the contours in dialogue with as many innovative approaches as possible (completely this has become impossible in the meantime) and to put together the individual parts to a conclusive overall picture.

A basic prerequisite for any commentary is therefore to work through important texts, themes and theses in individual studies and - to remain in the metaphor - to put together those pieces of the puzzle that constitute the framework of the overall picture and thus represent the prerequisite for the continuous filling in of other, still unclear and unordered areas. It is in this light that the studies of the past years of my work with and on the Pastoral Epistles have emerged, and the most important of them are collected in this volume. The intention is not only to make the scattered contributions, some of which have appeared in less than prominent places, more easily accessible. Rather, it is also the intention to reflect the development of my perspective on the pastoral letters in the compilation of the contributions and thus perhaps to make them more plausible. In doing so, it is especially important for me to perceive the tension between Paul's legacy and what is described in research with the elusive term "Pauline tradition" and to understand the Pastoral Epistles as testimonies to this tension. The goal must always be to open the way to an understanding of these three letters that does them as much justice as possible. It cannot be a question of distinguishing between the theological "flights of fancy" of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans and the "baloney" of the Pastoral Epistles as an expression of a "significantly lower level of the whole way of thinking" - as Heinrich Julius Holtzmann, who was influential in the study of the Pastoral Epistles in the nineteenth century¹⁹, put it.

The current tendencies in any case have become much more differentiated and allow for a new approach in the critical discourse. In any case, the current tendencies of research have become much more differentiated in the meantime and allow for a new approach in the critical discourse.

In my view, a decisive methodological prerequisite for an adequate view of the pastoral letters is to dissolve their all too close "kinship" (Holtzmann had spoken of "inseparable dillings"⁴) and to perceive the letters in their respective individual profiles. This has become a decisive perspective of the contributions collected here and is thematized in different ways in the separate evaluation and profiling of each of the three letters. It has been shown that fundamental problems of the theory of a literary *corpus pastorale*, which has become classical, dissolve when the Epistle to Timothy¹ no longer represents the norm in terms of content and form, on the basis of which the other two letters are also to be interpreted.⁵

Furthermore, under these conditions, the option of a new reflection on the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to Timothy² and the Epistle to Titus has opened up, because decisive problem constellations that arise primarily from the Epistle¹ to Timothy are omitted. This presupposes or implies that the assertion of authenticity as well as pseudonymity is not to be found in an as it were "dogmatic" way must apply equally to all three documents in each case,

³ Cf. Heinrich J. Holtzmann, *Die Pastoralbriefe, kritisch und exegetisch behandelt*, Leipzig 1880, 60. (for the complete quotation see below f48.).

⁴ Op. cit, 7.

⁵ The problem of this differentiation had already influenced research in the century¹⁹. (see 31-50 below); cf. the assessment in Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe des Apostels Paulus aufs neue kritisch untersucht*, Stuttgart/Tübingen 1835, 4. (in discussion with Schleiermacher's study of Tintin¹), which is worth quoting in some detail at this point: "With this, then, is automatically connected what is still to be considered here about the relationship of the first of these two letters to the other two. Although it is indisputable that these three letters are very similar and related in content and form, although some of the critical remarks that Schleiermacher asserted against the first can of themselves be applied to the other two, it cannot be denied that the first of these letters is, on the whole, different from the other two from a critical point of view, and the negative proof that Schleiermacher gave with respect to the first cannot be given in the same way with respect to the other two. If, therefore, more recent critics believe that they must claim the authenticity of these epistles as well, and thereby proceed from the view that the three epistles, as they belong together in the canon and have so much in common with one another in regard to content and form, must also stand and fall with one another in a critical respect, everything depends on how far they present us with relationships that we do not know how to reconcile with the time of the apostle as it is known to us from his other recognized authentic epistles. The first letter must give the safest point of view for this investigation. The more the basis of its apostolic authority is shaken, the greater must be the weight of any further evidence against its apostolic origin. If, however, in this letter we once see characteristics of a time that cannot be considered apostolic, then the other two letters, as far as we encounter the same characteristics in them, must also be placed under the same critical point of view."

but with the possibility that they can be assigned to different situations of origin. In this new perspective of an individual consideration - which in some aspects is not so new - and the accompanying possibility of differentiation with regard to authorship as well as literary-historical assessment, the 1st Epistle to Timothy not only clearly moves away from Paul himself, but also from the other two pastoral letters and can be quite plausibly placed in the anti-gnostic discourses of the 2nd century. The three pastoral letters as a whole have often been placed in this context, but in the end this could never be made convincingly plausible in this form. In contrast, the Epistles to Titus and Timothy² can be placed in the late phase of Paul's effectiveness, not as fictional and literarily coherent constructions, but as naturally incomplete excerpts from a time in the apostle's life when his conflict with the opposing forces against his missionary work in Jerusalem had escalated and ultimately led to his death in Roman captivity. Against this background, the Letter to Titus proves to be a mandate that legitimizes the Pauline co-worker with a concrete and temporary task in the context of the Rome journey out of a situational necessity. In a corresponding way, the

2. The Epistle to the Second Timothy is to be understood not only literarily, but also in reality as a legacy of the apostle. In contrast to the completely different, linguistic-pseudepigraphical "legacy" in the form of the Epistle to the Ephesians⁶, this Epistle remains underdetermined in its content of Pauline theology. But in a quite different way, in keeping with the genre, it takes Paul's disciple Timothy-and through him communicates to other people of his and subsequent generations-the duty to faithfully preserve and boldly proclaim Paul's gospel (2 Tim 2:8: "according to *my* gospel"; cf. Rom 2:16) as "tradition" (παράθηκη, 1:14) in view of the apostle's death. It is obvious that this commission includes a reception and cultivation of Paul's proclamation that is "in keeping with the Gospel", as Paul had reflected on it in detail not too long before, for example in the Letter to the Romans, and which becomes all the more important in view of his current situation in the conflict with Jerusalem.

For the letter to 1 Timothy, on the other hand, the concept of "delivery" gains a different, derived meaning under changed historical conditions. Paul's "legacy" is now concentrated here in the confession of the "church of God" (3:15 f.) and its organizational structures, which have the specific function of preserving this confession in the face of its questioning by "heterodox teachers" (ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, 1:3; cf. 6:3). In light of Paul's legacy to his confidant in the 2nd Epistle to Timothy, the 1st Epistle to Timothy, in its fictional address to this same disciple, represents a consistent and, in the apostle's sense, legitimate form

⁶ Cf. for example Michael Gese, *Das Vermächtnis des Apostels. The Reception of Pauline Theology in the Letter to the Ephesians* (WUNT II/99), Tübingen. 1997.

of Paul's reception in view of the new challenges, also and especially in what he (supposedly or actually) distances himself from the "original" Paul. Hermeneutically as well as developmentally, this is a necessity within a Pauline group in Ephesus⁷ that can presumably be quite clearly demarcated in terms of sociology of religion, and which Paul himself would not have avoided.

The title of this short introduction as well as the title of the volume are therefore deliberately formulated: "The Pastoral Epistles *and* the Legacy of Paul. To understand them *as the* or a legacy of the apostle,⁸ would not be appropriate because of the necessary differentiations. The legacy of the apostle is manifold, both in terms of himself and the reception of his writings and his theological ideas. The pastoral letters, each with their own profile, already represent different dimensions of this legacy. They stand in a different relationship to Paul and therefore also in a certain relationship to each other; it is important to do justice to this in the interpretation and in the overall understanding.

At this point, a conceptual aspect needs to be reflected and clarified. Due to the necessary differentiations and the questioning of a coherent literary conception of the pastoral letters, it has occasionally been problematized whether the term "pastoral letters" is still suitable as a designation for the three letters. The question is quite justified, and the cautious formulation of the "so-called pastoral letters" in the title of an appendix, for example, goes back to corresponding reservations of an editor. It must be kept in mind, however, that the term does not originate in connection with the *corpus pastorale theory*, but is derived from the pastoral characteristic of the apostle's personal letters to his co-workers.⁹ The *pastoral profile* is neither dependent on literary theories nor on authorship attributions, but emphasizes a functional determination of the letters. Since the contributions of this volume are more often concerned with a relational determination of the three "pastoral" letters, the term "pastoral letters" is used in this functional way when referring to all three writings.

⁷ Cf. Paul Trebilco, *The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius* (WUNT 166), Tübingen 2004, esp. 197-236, who assumes "that there may have been in Ephesus, from sometime between 80-100 CE for at least some period of time, a separate identifiable group which had its roots in the Pauline tradition, but which developed new dimensions of belief and behavior" (235).

⁸ Cf. e.g. Eduard Lohse, *Das apostolische Vermächtnis - Zum paulinischen Charakter der Pastoralbriefe*, in: Wolfgang Schrage (ed.), *Studien zum Text und zur Ethik des Neuen Testaments*. FS H. Greeven (BZNW 47), Berlin u. a. 1986, 266-281; Lorenz Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*. Erste Folge, *Kommentar zum ersten Timotheusbrief* (HThK XI/2), Freiburg i. Br. u. a. XXVIII1994.

⁹ Cf. Hermann von Lips, *Von den "Pastoralbriefen" zum "Corpus Pastorale"*. Eine Hallische Sprachschöpfung und ihr modernes Pendant als Funktionsbestimmung dreier neutestamentlicher Briefe, in: Udo Schnelle (ed.), *Reformation und Neuzeit*. 300 Jahre Theologie in Halle, Berlin/New York 49-711994.

The concept of the anthology in the compilation of the selected studies results from the outlined overall perspective on the Pastoral Epistles. Each contribution, of course, reflects the respective discourse situation, so that a certain path of the development of my work on the Pastoral Epistles also remains traceable. The principle of order, however, is not a simple chronological sequence of the contributions in the order in which they were written. Rather, they are arranged in four thematic headings under factual logical aspects.

A first section is devoted to "Perspectives of Research" and begins with that article in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* which questioned the consensus of research on the basis of some recent commentaries, a contribution which was quite widely received in different ways. The discussion of the complex research situation on the Pastoral Epistles very soon had to revolve around the question of pseudepigraphy, which is discussed in detail in the second contribution and against the background of classical and more recent contributions on the subject. A differentiated view of this question has proven to be an essential basic prerequisite for the evaluation of the Pastoral Epistles - a problem area that has rightly become the subject of critical discourse again in more recent times. The third study already represents an advanced state of work and programmatically presents my own perspective on the Pastoral Epistles as individual writings to be distinguished from one another, which - as already indicated above - enables a differentiated position on the question of authenticity beyond the usual alternatives. In this context, the essay offers at the same time some highlight-like interpretations of certain authoritative thematic fields that illustrate this perspective and that will be treated in more detail in separate studies. In this context, a contribution is added that exemplifies the importance of documentary papyri as evidence of ancient everyday culture for the interpretation of the Pastoral Epistles in particular. In terms of research history, this specific perspective is not only informative for the discussion of the genre question of the Pastoral Epistles, but also materially fruitful for a differentiated semantic determination of formative concepts (e.g. πίστις) and disputed terms (e.g. διπλή τιμή). Finally, the first part concludes with a critical discussion of the commentaries on the Pastoral Epistles in the CEC series-a chapter from the history of research that is as exciting as it is largely unknown. Exciting because the widely forgotten commentaries by Johannes Eduard Huther (1807-1880) and Karl Philipp Bernhard Weiß (1827-1918) were written in a period marked by the first attempts of critical research to interpret the Pastoral Epistles as pseudonymous writings, while Huther and Weiß themselves adhered to their authenticity and critically engaged with the pseudepigraphical perspectives at a high level.

The second section deals with the relationship between "Pauline history and Pauline reception" in the sense described above. In two contributions the attempt is made to trace the last phase of Paul's history, as it is

The relationship to the Lucan account in the Acts of the Apostles is at the same time under scrutiny. It is especially interesting to note that this construction of history must remain plausible even under pseudepigraphical conditions, an insight that has begun to play a greater role in recent research.¹⁰ The 1st Epistle to Timothy, however, does not offer any further material in this regard and will therefore be examined primarily from the perspective of Paul's reception.

The third part of the volume "Gemeinde zwischen Anspruch und Wirklichkeit" (congregation between claim and reality) gathers studies on ecclesiological topics which, on the one hand, fundamentally concern the understanding of congregation and, on the other hand, analyze and present in a special way the profile of or the handling of deviant teachings and "heterodox teachers" (1 Tim 1:3) as well as the corresponding ecclesiological implications. This area includes questions of the understanding of Scripture as well as the historical connections to the Hellenistic-Roman world, Judaism and Gnosticism, which have repeatedly occupied research in various ways.

Finally, in the fourth part, aspects of faith and piety are thematized in five contributions from an ethical perspective. Here, the connections of the Pastoral Epistles to ancient moral philosophy play a special role, whereby the Epistle to Timothy¹ also clearly stands out in this respect. The volume concludes with a contribution which, in the area of tension between "ethics", "ethos" and "truth", once again takes a look at the question of the individual profile of the three letters.

It is in the nature of such a conception that some topics and their development in detail sometimes overlap and that some of what was originally written in different contexts is also repeated, since the contributions must remain individually readable and receivable. For the purpose of republication, however, they have been formally standardized, linguistically improved, their content made more precise, and sometimes - albeit very sparingly - supplemented or updated by bibliographical references; and, of course, errors have been corrected. Cross-references between the contributions have also been inserted in a reception-oriented manner, where it seemed sensible to do so in order to make thematic links and additions more recognizable and tangible. A complete list of literature has been omitted; instead, each contribution is accompanied by its own bibliography of the literature used therein, which facilitates the separate reception of each study, especially in electronic format. A compilation of English abstracts for the contributions is intended to facilitate orientation in terms of content, especially for non-German-speaking readers.

¹⁰ Cf. the in many respects stimulating study by Timo Glaser, *Paulus als Brief-roman erzählt. Studies on the Ancient Epistolary Novel and its Christian Reception in the Pastoral Epistles* (NTOA/StUNT 76), Göttingen. 2009.

I Prospects for research

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