

# Protokolle zur Bibel

Im Auftrag der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der AssistentInnen an  
bibelwissenschaftlichen Instituten in Österreich  
hg.v. Konrad Huber, Johannes Schiller und Agnethe Siquans

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# Protokolle zur Bibel – PzB

Herausgegeben im Auftrag der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der AssistentInnen  
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# THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE PAULINES SHOULD NOT BE ASSUMED<sup>1</sup>

*Eduard Verhoef, Maartensdijk*

**Abstract:** Verteidiger der Authentizität der „Paulusbriefe“ beschränken sich oft auf das Widerlegen der Argumente ihrer Opponenten. Aber selbst wenn sie Recht haben, ist damit die Authentizität noch nicht gesichert. Ich möchte eine Methode vorstellen, die helfen kann die (In)-Authentizität dieser Briefe wahrscheinlich zu machen. Mit Hilfe dieser Methode finden wir verbindende Elemente zwischen den Briefen. Starke Verbindungen zwischen Briefen weisen auf einen gemeinsamen Autor hin, schwächere Verbindungen auf verschiedene Autoren.

## 1. Introduction

In studies about the Pauline Epistles hardly anything has been said about their authenticity.<sup>2</sup> It is illustrative that the SBL Annual Meeting has a program unit called *Pauline Epistles* and a unit called *Disputed Paulines*, suggesting that the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles can be taken for granted. But in this way the authenticity of these epistles is accepted too easily without any in-depth discussion.

The situation is different for the disputed Paulines. Scholars who defend the inauthenticity of the Pastorals sum up a series of arguments that should support their opinion,<sup>3</sup> whereas scholars who defend the authenticity of the same epistles constrain themselves to refuting these arguments.<sup>4</sup> But even if these arguments can be invalidated, the authenticity is not yet proved.

In a session at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the SBL in Washington DC Jens Herzer and Wayne Brindle both spoke about the Pastorals. Herzer mentioned „the consensus in their pseudonymity“ whereas Brindle argued: „The arguments that have been advanced against the genuine Pauline authorship of the

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Mrs. Dr. J. W. van Arethals for her critical remarks on this text.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Heinrich Schlier, *Der Römerbrief* (HThK 6), Freiburg/Br. u.a. <sup>2</sup>1979, 1; Moisés Silva, *Philippians* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids 1992, 2. Cf. Harold W. Hoehner, *Did Paul Write Galatians?*, in: Sang-Won Son (Ed.), *History and Exegesis. New Testament Essays in Honor of Dr. E. Earle Ellis for His 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, New York/London 2006, 150-169: 150.

<sup>3</sup> See Jürgen Roloff, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus* (EKK 15), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1988, 23–39.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas D. Lea/Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus* (The New American Commentary 34), Nashville 1992, 23–40.

PE are faulty.<sup>5</sup> In the same year Harold Hoehner argued: „If the criteria used to demonstrate non-Pauline authorship of the disputed Pauline letters were applied to the letter to the Galatians, many issues would arise that would indicate that Galatians should be considered as one of the disputed letters.“<sup>6</sup> Such statements show that scholars talk at cross-purposes. In this way these scholars will never reach a consensus.

So far scholarship has failed to reach an agreement on a singular methodology that can help us to determine which letters are authentic and which are not. I will present a methodology that can be used to make probable the authenticity or inauthenticity of all the epistles that purport to have been written by the same person: a certain Paul.

## 2. Towards a Methodology

We have thirteen epistles in the New Testament that claim to have been written by the apostle Paul. Apart from these letters there are other epistles that purport to have been written by him. There are six epistles to Seneca, the epistle to the Laodiceans and the so-called third epistle to the Corinthians, consequently 21 letters in total. We also know of the Apocalypse of Paul<sup>7</sup> and of a coptic, gnostic Apocalypse of Paul from Nag Hammadi.<sup>8</sup> These two documents can be interpreted as late elaborations on 2Cor 12,2–4.

We can eliminate the third epistle to the Corinthians, because it was proved spurious soon after it became known. The real author was identified and as a consequence he lost his office in the church (Tertullianus, *De Baptismo* 17). So we have twenty epistles that are supposed to have Paul as the author. A complicating factor is that eight of these epistles are said to have been written by two or even three authors. We do not have certainty about the contribution of the co-authors, but it seems probable that there was just one real author and that the co-authors agreed with the content of the epistles. Paul and Sosthenes are mentioned as the authors of 1 Corinthians. Paul and Timothy are supposed to be the authors of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. And Paul, Sosthenes and Timothy are the alleged authors of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

<sup>5</sup> See: Society of Biblical Literature, Annual Meeting, Abstracts, Washington DC 2006, 429.

<sup>6</sup> Hoehner, Paul (Anm. 2) 153.

<sup>7</sup> See Hugo Duensing/Aurelio de Santos Otero, *Apokalypse des Paulus*, in: Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Hg.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, 2. Apostolisches, Apokalypsen und Verwandtes, Tübingen <sup>5</sup>1989, 644–675.

<sup>8</sup> See Wolf-Peter Funk, *Koptisch-gnostische Apokalypse des Paulus*, in: Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Hg.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, 2. Apostolisches, Apokalypsen und Verwandtes, Tübingen <sup>5</sup>1989, 628–633.

The epistles that purport to have been written by Paul only are: Romans, Galatians,<sup>9</sup> 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Laodiceans and the epistles to Seneca.

Within the scope of this article it is impossible to discuss these twenty epistles. I will constrain myself to the epistle to the Romans, 1 Corinthians, Philippians, 1–2 Thessalonians and the six epistles to Seneca. These eleven epistles form an adequate quantity to show how a solid methodology works out.

### 3. My Point of Departure: The Epistle to the Romans

Of all the *Paulines* the epistle to the Romans is the longer one with more than 7000 words. Roller<sup>10</sup> counted 7101 words, whereas Morgenthaler<sup>11</sup> counted 7094 words.<sup>12</sup> I take the epistle to the Romans as my point of departure for two reasons. First, it has no co-authors<sup>13</sup> and secondly, this rather long epistle gives us a more elaborate picture of the author, his theology and his style and vocabulary.

Actually any epistle could be taken as my point of departure. The outcome will be the same: a web that shows many connecting threads between these epistles. Some of these connections will be very strong and point to the same author of the epistles involved, whereas other connections will reveal a very weak relation, suggesting that different authors wrote these epistles.

The epistle to the Romans gives us a picture of the author which we can compare with other epistles. Concrete data, the author's theology, his vocabulary and style are all eligible for a comparison. In making a comparison we have to take into account the fact that other circumstances may influence the vocabulary, that the author may have changed his opinion and that a letter that answers questions is different from a letter of recommendation. After having compared epistles the question arises whether it is probable that they have been written by the same author. It is impossible to achieve conclusive evidence because we always have to reckon with the possibility of an imitator who used the name of a respected author for his writings.

#### 3.1 *The First Step: Phrases that May Help us Identify the Author*

The epistle to the Romans is a rather long document and is therefore well suited to tell us something about the author. This epistle must have had an author.

<sup>9</sup> The *brothers* mentioned in Gal 1,2 did presumably not have the role of co-authors.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Otto Roller, *Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe. Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom antiken Briefe* (BWANT 58), Stuttgart 1933, 38.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Robert Morgenthaler, *Statistik des neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes*, Zürich u.a. 1958, 168.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Corinthians, sent by Paul and Sosthenes, is the second one with about 6800 words.

<sup>13</sup> But see Ian J. Elmer, I, Tertius: Secretary or Co-Author of Romans, *ABR* 56 (2008) 45–60: 59–60.

I do not know who he is. I call him Paul only because the epistle mentions a certain Paul as its author. There is no reason why we should give the author another name.

Reading this epistle we find more data. In Rom 1,1 this Paul describes himself as a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle (κλητὸς ἀπόστολος), set apart for the gospel of God (cf. 15,15). He says that he is longing to see the beloved people of God in Rome (1,11.13.15). He has never been there before (1,13; 15,22). In 15,16 the author refers to himself as „a minister of Jesus Christ to the gentiles“. In 15,19 he makes clear that he preached the gospel „from Jerusalem and all the way round to Illyricum“. And he was the first person to preach the gospel in these areas (15,20). He intends to go to Rome and from Rome to Spain (15,23–24). In Rom 15,25–26 the author writes that he is now on his way to Jerusalem with a contribution (κοινωνία) from the people of Macedonia and Achaia for the „poor saints“ there. He calls himself an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin (11,1). A certain Timothy is mentioned as a colleague in Rom 16,21.

There is another point that may help us form a picture of the man who wrote this epistle. The author shows that he knows the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scripture. Several quotations from the Jewish Scriptures are in agreement with the Greek translation, even when the Greek translation differs from the Hebrew text.<sup>14</sup> In this regard Rom 4,3 is instructive. In this passage, which quotes Gen 15,6, we find the name of Abraham in accordance with the Septuagint, whereas Abraham's name is not mentioned in the Hebrew text of Gen 15,6. The tetragrammaton יהוה is translated with θεός just as in the Septuagint here, whereas the usual translation of the tetragrammaton is κύριος.<sup>15</sup> Another conspicuous example of the use of the Septuagint can be found in Rom 4,7–8. Ps 31,1–2 LXX is quoted here. This quotation differs at several points from the Hebrew text (Ps 32,1–2), for example the use of the plural in Rom 4,7 in accordance with the Septuagint, instead of the singular. In Rom 10,21 the text of Isa 65,2 is partly quoted. Striking is λαὸν ... ἀντιλέγοντα, obstinate people, in agreement with the Septuagint. But in the Hebrew we read: ׀ם ׀הֶלְכִים ... הַדֶּרֶךְ לֹא־טוֹב, people who walk in the way that is not good. This is all the more striking because the author knew and used the Greek verb περιπατέω (Rom 6,4; 8,4), which is nearly always the Septuagint translation of a form of הלך.

On the basis of these data we get a picture of an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin. His name was Paul. He preached the gospel in Asia Minor and in

<sup>14</sup> Cf. E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, Edinburgh 1957, 150f.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Eduard Verhoef, *Er staat geschreven. De Oud-Testamentische Citaten in de Brief aan de Galaten*, Amsterdam 1979, 50f.

Greece in the time that the gospel was not yet preached there. His specific goal was to preach the gospel to the gentiles. Apparently he managed to convert people in Macedonia and Achaia. He had such a good relation with these people that they gave him money in order to sustain the „poor saints“ in Jerusalem. He was acquainted with the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scripture.

### *3.2 The Second Step: the Theology of the Author*

Most people are impressed by the theology that is taught in the epistle to the Romans. The author had never visited Rome before. He can postulate his doctrines as a more or less complete whole. With respect to this epistle James D.G. Dunn speaks about „the most sustained and reflective statement of Paul’s own theology.“<sup>16</sup> The theme of his theology may be found in Rom 1,16–17, „the gospel is God’s power unto salvation for everyone who believes; for the Jew first, and also for the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.“<sup>17</sup> Robert Jewett argued: „The theological center of Romans, integrally related to the missional purpose of the letter is to be found in the thesis statement of 1:16–17. That this passage contains the main theme of Romans, is almost universally accepted among commentators.“<sup>18</sup>

More subjects can be mentioned. It is said time and again that „God raised Jesus Christ from the dead“ or that „Jesus was raised from the dead“; see Rom 4,24.25; 6,4.9; 10,9. We can state that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was a part of the author’s faith.

Another issue discussed thoroughly in this epistle is the role of the Jewish people; see Rom 9–11. The author concludes that in spite of a temporary rejection all of Israel will be saved (Rom 11,11–27).

Of course much more can be said, for example, about the attitude towards the authorities, but for the scope of this paper it is sufficient to state that the main topic for the author of the epistle to the Romans is that righteousness is revealed by God to people who believe. The very frequent occurrence of words as πίστις, faith, and δικαιοσύνη, righteousness, in this letter confirms that this statement can be seen as the center of the author’s theology. Morgenthaler

<sup>16</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, Grand Rapids 1998, 25.

<sup>17</sup> See also Rom 3,21–26 and cf. Johan C. Beker, *Paul the Apostle. The Triumph of God in Life and Thought*, Philadelphia <sup>2</sup>1982, 92; Dunn, *Theology* (Anm. 16) 340; Robert D. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (CBET 18), Leuven 1999, 208.242; Udo Schnelle, *Paulus. Leben und Denken* (GLB), Berlin u.a. 2003, 340.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Jewett, *Ecumenical Theology for the Sake of Mission. Romans 1.1–17 + 15.14–16.24*, in: David M. Hay/E. Elizabeth Johnson (Ed.), *Pauline Theology*, 3. Romans, Minneapolis 1995, 89–108: 104.

counted the noun πίστις in the epistle to the Romans 40 times out of 142 in all the New Testament Paulines and of 243 in the whole New Testament;<sup>19</sup> the noun δικαιοσύνη occurs even 33 times out of 57 occurrences in all the New Testament Paulines and out of 91 in the whole New Testament.<sup>20</sup>

It is evident that this is the wording of the author's theology in the time he wrote the epistle to the Romans. He may have changed his mind after he wrote it and it is also possible that his opinions were different some years before. But for the moment it is enough to state that this epistle gives an idea of his theology at the moment of writing.

### 3.3 Third Step: The Vocabulary and Style of the Author

An epistle with approximately 7000 words gives us an idea of the author's vocabulary and his style and that makes a comparison with other epistles possible. But the statistical scientist Yule argued that for a comparison of vocabulary and style of different documents we should take „a sample of something like 10,000 words, more or less.“ Only in this case can we reach „fairly trustworthy results“<sup>21</sup>. We have significantly less than 10,000 words in the epistle to the Romans, and the other relevant epistles are even shorter. Consequently we need to be very cautious with this criterion. And there are more problems. It could be asked if a difference in vocabulary necessarily points to a different author. Other circumstances may have required a different wording. Another question is if a *similar* vocabulary really must indicate the same author. As mentioned above, it is possible that a good imitator wrote a document in the style of the epistle to the Romans. And what may have been the influence of Tertius, the secretary? This scribe mentions himself in Rom 16,22. Did he alter sentences? Did he correct grammatical mistakes or stylistic lapses? Though we cannot be certain, I do not think so. Elsewhere I argued that the influence of a scribe in the *Paulines* must have been very small.<sup>22</sup> But nevertheless the use of a secretary is a complicating factor.

Though the criterion of the vocabulary and the style has only a cumulative value it is still useful used next to the other options mentioned above. We can state that of the total of 1068 different words in the epistle to the Romans<sup>23</sup> words as πίστις and δικαιοσύνη as well as other words from the same roots

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Morgenthaler, Statistik (Anm. 11) 132.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Morgenthaler, Statistik (Anm. 11) 89.

<sup>21</sup> George U. Yule, *The Statistical Study of Literary Vocabulary*, Cambridge 1944, 281.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Eduard Verhoef, Numerus, Sekretär und Authentizität der paulinischen Briefe, in: PzB 4 (1995) 48–58: 57.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Morgenthaler, Statistik (Anm. 11) 164.



belong to the much-used vocabulary of the author (see above). And the patriarch Abraham is apparently an important figure for Paul, as he is mentioned nine times in this epistle. Other words that occur relatively often are for example ἀκροβυστία, uncircumcision (11 times), κατεργάζεσθαι, to commit (11 times), λογίζεσθαι, to count unto (19 times), νόμος, law (72 times), παράπτωμα, offence (9 times).<sup>24</sup> A conspicuous clause in the epistle to the Romans is τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν, what then shall we say, in Rom 4,1; 6,1; 7,7; 8,31; 9,14.30 (cf. 3,5). This formula may show that the author was acquainted with Hellenistic rhetoric and especially with the use of the diatribe.<sup>25</sup> Consequently this Paul must have been a more or less educated man who had read more than the Jewish scriptures and who was able to write an epistle according to the standards of his time.<sup>26</sup>

#### 4. The First Epistle to the Corinthians

In the prescript of 1Cor two senders are mentioned: Paul and Sosthenes. The first person singular is mostly used even though there are two senders.<sup>27</sup> Who is the person behind the first person singular? Is he the same Paul who mentions himself as the author of the epistle to the Romans? Or is it Sosthenes or someone else who used these names? Other data may be helpful to answer this question.

##### 4.1 Phrases that May Help us Identify the Author

In 1Cor 1,1 this Paul mentions himself as κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, called to be an apostle, as in Rom 1,1; cf. 1Cor 9,1. Sosthenes, the brother, seems to have a lower position. I assume that it is this Paul who is the man behind the first person singular in 1,4 and elsewhere. He visited Corinth and he baptised Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanas (1Cor 1,14–16). He says, apparently with respect to the young church in Corinth, that he planted it (1Cor 3,6) and that he laid the foundation (1Cor 3,10). The Corinthians sent him an epistle with some questions (1Cor 7,1). The author mentions himself in 9,6 next to a certain Barnabas. They have the right to be free from labour but he himself did

<sup>24</sup> For a detailed list of the occurrences of New Testament words in Romans see Morgenthaler, Statistik (Anm. 11) 67–157.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Schlier, Römerbrief (Anm. 2) 221; Stanley E. Porter, Paul of Tarsus and His Letters, in: ders. (Ed.), Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C.–A.D. 400, Leiden u.a. 1997, 533–585: 575.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Carl J. Classen, Rhetorical Criticism on the New Testament (WUNT 128), Tübingen 2000, 43f.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Verhoef, Numerus (Anm. 22) 51.

not make use of this right (9,15). In 1Cor 10,1 the author includes himself in the Jewish people and in the following verses he shows his acquaintance with the Jewish traditions. The author's remark in verse 4 that the rock in the desert was Christ shows knowledge of the rabbinic exegesis in which the rock in the desert can be interpreted in different ways. In 11,1 the author calls himself a follower of Christ. He speaks about himself as the least of the apostles because he persecuted the church of God (1Cor 15,9). He gave orders to the churches of Galatia concerning a collection (λογεΐα) for the saints (1Cor 16,1) and asked the Corinthians to do the same. He planned to visit the Corinthians again after a trip through Macedonia (1Cor 16,5). At the time of writing he lived in Ephesus where he intended to stay until Pentecost (1Cor 16,8; cf. verse 19). The Corinthians and the author had several mutual acquaintances such as Timothy, Apollos, Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus, Aquila and Prisca (1Cor 16,10–19). Timothy was mentioned earlier as an envoy (4,17).

Texts such as 1Cor 2,16; 6,16 show that the author knew the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scripture and that he used it. The author's use of Deut 25,4 in 1Cor 9,9 reveals that he mastered the rabbinic explanation rule *Kal-wachomer, a minore ad maius*.<sup>28</sup>

In my opinion these data do not contradict the information found in the epistle to the Romans. On the contrary, several facts are in agreement with statements in the epistle to the Romans. The author makes himself known as an Israelite (Rom 11,1; 1Cor 10,1). He describes himself as called to be an apostle (Rom 1,1; 1Cor 1,1). In 1Cor 3,6.10 it is implied that he was the first person who preached the gospel in Corinth. This is consistent with Rom 15,20, where it says that the author would like to preach the gospel where Christ was not yet known. In both epistles the author shows that he is acquainted with the Septuagint; see Rom 4,3; 10,21 and 1Cor 2,16; 6,16. So, if no serious objections arise, we can tentatively conclude that this letter was written by the same author as the epistle to the Romans.

#### 4.2 *The Theology of the Author of 1 Corinthians*

In contrast to the epistle to the Romans, 1 Corinthians does not explain the author's theology in a systematic way. Rather it is a document that can be seen as a response to the circumstances in Corinth. In 1 Corinthians the author answers several ethical questions posed to him by the community of Corinth; see for example 1Cor 7,1. In other passages it says that the author heard of difficulties and abuses in this church; see 1Cor 1,11; 5,1; 11,18. Even in passages

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Moses Mielziner, *Introduction to the Talmud*, New York 1968, 123.

where this is not explicitly said we get the impression that specific problems in this community are discussed (1Cor 11,3; 14). „Durchgängig bestimmen die Situation in Korinth und die vorausgegangene Kommunikation zwischen Apostel und Gemeinde die paulinische Argumentation.“<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless several theological statements can be found that seem to be of vital importance for the author. For example in 1Cor 1,23–24 we read: „we preach Christ crucified ..., the power of God and the wisdom of God“; cf. 1Cor 1,18; 2,2. In 1Cor 15,3 it says that „Christ died for our sins“ (cf. 1Cor 8,11 and Rom 14,15). In 1Cor 1,30 Christ is mentioned as wisdom for us, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. The resurrection of Christ is thoroughly discussed in 1Cor 15. Apparently the resurrection of the dead is denied by some members of the Christian community in Corinth. The author mentions the resurrection of Christ as an argument that there is a resurrection of the dead as well (1Cor 15,13). The people of Christ shall be made alive at the coming of Christ (1Cor 15,23).

We can conclude that this letter does not give a survey of the author's theology as in the epistle to the Romans, but what is said does not contradict the suggestion of the prescripts that both epistles were written by the same author. On the contrary, the theological statements in this epistle fit very well the theology expressed in Romans. Consequently the theology of this epistle confirms the tentative conclusion drawn above that 1 Corinthians was written by the same author as the epistle to the Romans.

#### *4.3 Vocabulary and Style of the Author*

We need documents of at least 10,000 words in order to make a reliable comparison. Consequently the first epistle to the Corinthians, of about 6800 words,<sup>30</sup> is too short to make such a comparison. But we can examine whether vocabulary and style in this letter contradict the pretension that it is written by the same author as the epistle to the Romans. As far as I can see this is not the case. Words as πίστις and δικαιοσύνη and other words from the same roots are much less frequent in 1 Corinthians than in Romans, but this may be explained by the fact that the vocabulary of 1 Corinthians will be determined by the occasional character of this letter. It differs from the epistle to the Romans in that it is thoroughly influenced by the situation in the Corinthian church and by the questions asked by the Corinthians. Romans on the other hand is written with the purpose to introduce the author to the Romans and to ask for support on his journey to Spain.

<sup>29</sup> Schnelle, Paulus (Anm. 17) 203.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Morgenthaler, Statistik (Anm. 11) 164.

Though it is not a conspicuous formula, it should be noted that the phrase οὐ θέλω ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, I do not want you to be ignorant, is used in Rom 1,13; 11,25 and in 1Cor 10,1; 12,1 (cf. 2Cor 1,8; 1Thess 4,13). As in the epistle to the Romans the use of rhetoric in 1 Corinthians is evident. The author was acquainted with the rhetorical tools that were supposed to help convince the opponents.<sup>31</sup>

Clearly there are similarities between the epistle to the Romans and the first epistle to the Corinthians. But we have to stress here that the criterion of vocabulary and style has only a cumulative value. The data with respect to the author and the theology are much more important in order to reach reliable conclusions. Nevertheless these data can be used as confirmation of our conclusion that 1 Corinthians and Romans were probably written by the same author.

## 5. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians

The second epistle to the Corinthians is usually considered a compilation of two or more epistles. Margaret Mitchell divided 2 Corinthians into fragments that would form five different letters, written in the following order: (a) 8,1–24; (b) 2,14–7,4 (minus 6,14–7,1); (c) 10,1–13,10; (d) 1,1–2,13 + 7,5–16 + 13,11–13; (e) 9,1–15.<sup>32</sup> This makes it rather difficult to discuss this epistle with respect to the problem of authenticity, as we should discuss the separate epistles that were used to compose this document. But this is impossible, because up to now no certainty has been reached with respect to the beginnings and the endings of these epistles. It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the exact size of these epistles. The only possibility here is to treat this epistle as if it were a single letter.

### 5.1 Phrases that May Help us Identify the Author

In 2Cor 1,1 the author, named Paul, calls himself an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. Nearly the same formula was used in 1Cor 1,1. In Rom 1,1 the author also used the title „apostle“ for himself. A certain Timothy the brother is mentioned besides the apostle Paul; see also verse 19. In 1,8–9 it says that they suffered serious troubles in Asia Minor. In 1,19 a third person is mentioned, Silvanus, who also preached the gospel in Corinth. Nevertheless the sin-

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Johan S. Vos, *Die Kunst der Argumentation bei Paulus. Studien zur antiken Rhetorik* (WUNT 149), Tübingen 2002, 62–64.158–172.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Margaret M. Mitchell, *The Corinthian Correspondence and the Birth of Pauline Hermeneutics*, in: Trevor J. Burke/J. Keith Elliott (Ed.), *Paul and the Corinthians. Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (NT.S 109), Leiden/Boston 2003, 17–53: 21.

gular is used very often and in 2Cor 10,1 the author identifies himself as Paul. We may assume that this Paul is the person behind the first person singular in this letter. He had planned to travel to Corinth, to Macedonia and back again to Corinth with the purpose of leaving for Judea with the help of the Corinthians, but he has not yet fulfilled his goals; see 2Cor 1,15–16.23. In 2,3 we read that Paul had written to the Corinthians before. It is impossible to identify this earlier letter with certainty. It may be included in 2 Corinthians. In 2,12 the author tells his readers that he arrived in Troas expecting to meet Titus there. He left for Macedonia and there he found Titus, who brought good tidings with respect to the Corinthians; see 7,5–7. In 2Cor 3 the author shows his acquaintance with the Jewish scriptures. Moses is mentioned several times and in 3,16 it is stated that the tradition given by Moses is only interpreted in the right way by people who have turned to the Lord. In 2Cor 5,20 it says: „we are ambassadors for Christ“. Again it is evident that the author sees himself as a special envoy of Christ; cf. 1,1. In 2Cor 6,4–5 we read that the author experienced troubles, hardships, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, riots and so on; see also 11,23–27. He must have had a turbulent life. In 2Cor 7,5–9 the author is said to have met Titus in Macedonia, who brought him good news about the Corinthians. 2Cor 8–9 speak of ministering to the faithful people in Jerusalem. The churches in Macedonia and the churches in Achaia are both involved in this service. The author shows his good relationship with these churches; cf. 2Cor 11,9. Again it is Titus who played an important role in this service. In 2Cor 11,22–23 the author describes himself as a Hebrew, an Israelite, seed of Abraham and a minister of Christ. In 2Cor 11,32–33 we read that the author was threatened in Damascus by the ethnarch of king Aretas, but he managed to escape. In 2Cor 12,14; 13,1 it says that the author is going to visit Corinth for the third time.

These data are to a large extent in accordance with the data found in Romans and with the data found in 1 Corinthians. They seem to confirm the suggestion in the prescript that these epistles are written by one and the same person. The author, named Paul, calls himself an apostle, as in Rom 1,1 and in 1Cor 1,1, and he makes himself known as an Israelite as in Rom 11,1; 1Cor 10,1. His repeated visits to Corinth and to Macedonia agree with Rom 15,19. 25–26. In these last verses a contribution (κοινωνία) is mentioned from the people of Macedonia and from Achaia for the „poor saints“ in Jerusalem. This seems to be the same event that is discussed in 2Cor 8–9. The colleague Timothy is mentioned in Rom 16,21; 1Cor 4,17; 16,10 and in this epistle in 1,1.19. In Rom 11,1 and in 2Cor 11,22 the author calls himself „seed of Abraham“. The author shows his acquaintance with the Jewish tradition in all of these

epistles. New data are added in 2 Corinthians, but these data do not contradict the pretension in the prescript that this epistle was written by the same author as Romans and 1 Corinthians.

### *5.2 The Theology of the Author of 2 Corinthians*

As is the case with respect to 1 Corinthians this epistle does not present the author's theology in a systematic way. This epistle is a response to the reports that reached the author about the Corinthians. Even more than in the case of 1 Corinthians the author discusses certain incidents that occurred in Corinth. And yet it is clear that even in these reactions statements about the author's theology can be found. Jesus Christ is mentioned as the Son of God in 2Cor 1,19. It says in 2Cor 5,15 that Jesus died for all people and was raised again; cf. verse 19. In the benediction, 2Cor 13,13, Jesus Christ, God and the Holy Spirit are mentioned next to each other. This is of course not a theological statement, but nevertheless this formula shows that the author mentions Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit next to God. In 2Cor 8,9 Jesus' pre-existence is implied. The eschatology is discussed in 2Cor 5,1–10. The author argues that when „the earthly house of this tabernacle“ is dissolved, the believers will have a house, not made with hands. In spite of the difficulty of these words it is clear that the author means that in one way or another the mortal body will be supplanted by a heavenly body. This seems to occur immediately after death.

Most of these statements mentioned above seem to match with sayings found in Romans and in 1 Corinthians. But there is much discussion with respect to the statements in 2Cor 5 where the transformation of the body is said to begin after death. Do they show a different opinion from that in 1Cor 15,22–23, where the transformation of people is dated at the parousia? It is impossible to discuss these texts exhaustively here. What is important is the question whether any differences between the statements in these texts point to a difference in theology and consequently to a different author. With respect to these questions I am inclined to join the points of view expressed by Margaret Thrall.<sup>33</sup> She says that „Paul's view ... has developed somewhat“<sup>34</sup> and she mentions „Paul's change of outlook“<sup>35</sup>. Decades earlier Philipp Vielhauer wrote in the same sense with respect to this problem and said that Paul „später seine

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1. Introduction and Commentary on II Corinthians I–VII (ICC), Edinburgh 1994, 356–373.397–400.

<sup>34</sup> Thrall, *Corinthians I* (Anm. 33) 397.

<sup>35</sup> Thrall, *Corinthians I* (Anm. 33) 399.

Meinung stillschweigend korrigiert (2Kor 5,1ff).<sup>36</sup> If this is correct, this difference of opinion does not need to make us suspicious of the pretension written in the prescripts of 1 and 2 Corinthians that these two epistles were written by the same author. Paul Woodbridge argues differently, as he states „that the alleged inconsistency ... is best resolved by an alternative exegesis of 2Cor. 5:1–10 which interprets these verses in terms of the resurrection body being bestowed at the Parousia, not at the moment of death.“<sup>37</sup> If Woodbridge were right, there would be no problem at all with regard to differences in the theology presented in 1 and in 2 Corinthians. In any case the difference does not necessarily lead us to conclude that these epistles have different authors.

### 5.3 *Vocabulary and Style of the Author*

Though an epistle with only about 4450 words<sup>38</sup> is too small to reach reliable conclusions comparing it with other epistles, we can check if there are prohibitive objections to the suggestion in the prescript that this epistle stems from the same author as the two epistles discussed above. This is not the case. The vocabulary does not show any striking differences compared to the vocabulary in Romans and in 1 Corinthians, and as elsewhere we can find in this letter an affinity with Jewish traditions, for example in 2Cor 3,7; 8,15; 13,1. In these texts a striking exegesis of Old Testament texts is used in order to sustain the argument. We can find comparable exegesis of such texts in the rabbinic writings. The use of rhetoric can be identified, for example in 2Cor 10–13, though a formal rhetorical training is thought unlikely by some scholars.<sup>39</sup> These data confirm that it is probable that this letter was written by the same author, who wrote the epistle to the Romans and the first epistle to the Corinthians.

## 6. The Epistle to the Philippians

The epistle to the Philippians claims to have been written by Paul and Timothy. As is the case in 1 Corinthians, the first person singular is used much more than the first person plural. The first person singular is found in 1,3.7–8.12;

<sup>36</sup> Philipp Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur. Einleitung in das Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die Apostolischen Väter* (GLB), Berlin u.a. 1975, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Woodbridge, *Time of Receipt of the Resurrection Body. A Pauline Inconsistency*, in: Trevor J. Burke/J. Keith Elliott (Ed.), *Paul and the Corinthians. Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall* (NT.S 109), Leiden/Boston 2003, 241–258: 258.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Morgenthaler, *Statistik* (Anm. 11) 164.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 2. Commentary on II Corinthians VIII–XIII* (ICC), Edinburgh 2000, 922–925; Anderson, *Theory* (Anm. 17) 277.

2,2.19; 3,1; 4,1–3 and so on, the first person plural for example in 1,2; 3,17. 20–21. We get the impression that this epistle was written by one person and that the role of any co-author is rather small. Moreover it is remarkable that a certain Timothy is mentioned in 2,19. We may assume that this is the same person as in 1,1, in which case Timothy can be excluded as an author and we are left with an author called Paul. The question is whether this Paul is the same person as the author of the epistle to the Romans and of 1 and 2 Corinthians.

### *6.1 Phrases that May Help us Identify the Author*

In 1,7 the author says that he has been in chains and that he has defended the gospel. He is longing to see the Philippians; see 1,8. His chains served to advance the gospel, and the whole praetorium knows now that he is in chains because of Christ; 1,12–13. In 2,19.23 the author says that he is hoping to send a certain Timothy to the Philippians as soon as he knows his status as a prisoner. And he is confident that he himself will be able to make the trip to the Philippians. From 2,25–30 we can deduct that the Philippians had sent Epaphroditus in order to assist the author; cf. 4,18. Apparently Epaphroditus had fallen seriously ill. But the author writes that he will send him back now.

In chapter 3 the author writes that he was circumcised on the eighth day, that he is an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, that he is a Hebrew and a Pharisee and that he persecuted the church; see 3,5–6. But he does not attach any value to these things anymore. Unlike in Rom 11,1 he does not claim to be of the seed of Abraham.

Chapter 4 shows that he has acquaintances in Philippi. The author speaks in verse 3 to a co-worker who is not mentioned by name, and a certain Clement is said to have worked together with the author. In verse 15 the inhabitants of Philippi are addressed by the Latin name for Philippians. The author says that no other church communicated with him concerning giving and receiving. The Philippians sent him help more than once (Phil 4,16).

In my view these data do not contradict the data we found in the epistle to the Romans and in 1 Corinthians, though the situation appears to be very different. While writing this epistle the author was in chains, whereas the other epistles were written when the author was free. The way a certain Timothy is mentioned in Phil 2,19.23, in Rom 16,21 and in 1Cor 4,17; 16,10 suggests that the same person is meant in these texts. The author of these epistles is apparently someone superior to this Timothy. As in Rom 11,1 the author states that he is an Israelite. This is implied in 1Cor 10,1. Consequently, the suggestion in the prescript that this epistle was written by the same author as Romans and



1 Corinthians is confirmed by some passages, while the remaining passages do not contradict this assumption.

### 6.2 *The Theology of the Author of Philippians*

In the epistle to the Philippians one can easily discover the reason why this epistle was written: a certain Epaphroditus returns to Philippi. Epaphroditus is a messenger sent by the Philippians, but due to an illness he was probably unable to fulfil his task. The author of this epistle thinks it important to write this letter so that the Philippians should make Epaphroditus very welcome; Phil 2,29. Besides this the author promises to send Timothy as soon as possible; Phil 2,23. The author speaks about his own situation (Phil 1,12–14) and he urges the Philippians to live according to the gospel of Christ (Phil 1,27). All this means that the theology does not play such a significant role in this epistle as it does for example in Romans, but some statements can be found.

In Phil 2 the author cites a hymn or a poem in which the humiliation and the exaltation of Christ are mentioned. It is impossible to discuss this famous passage within the scope of this paper, but we may assume that it generally expresses theological ideas that the author of this epistle agrees with.<sup>40</sup> It says that Christ, in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant and humbled himself, for which God exalted him to the highest place. The pre-existence of Christ is implied in these words. We may refer to texts such as Rom 8,3; 10,6 and 1Cor 10,4, but these texts are allusive rather than explicit. In any case, the ideas expressed in Phil 2,6–11 are expressed in someone else's wording, which may be different from the wording of the author himself.

In Phil 3 the author repudiates in sharp words „confidence in the flesh“ and „righteousness which is in the law“ (Phil 3,3–6). The author's aim is to achieve righteousness through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil 3,9). These words remind us of Rom 1,17; 3,21–26. We registered that words as *righteousness* and *faith* were used very frequently in the epistle to the Romans and that these words apparently serve to express key issues of the author's theology. In the epistle to the Philippians the words δικαιοσύνη and πίστις and their cognates each occur six times. These numbers are not as striking as the frequent occurrences in Romans, but nonetheless these words are set rather often in this small epistle.

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. Dunn, *Theology* (Anm. 16) 281: the author „presumably made use of it as an appropriate expression of his own theology“.

### 6.3 *Vocabulary and Style of the Author*

The small epistle to the Philippians is unsuitable for drawing conclusions with respect to vocabulary and style. This epistle contains a little over 1600 words, falling well short of the 10,000 words required to make a statistical comparison with other documents.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless some remarks can be made. The rather frequent use of words such as δικαιοσύνη and πίστις and their cognates (see above) may point to the author who wrote the epistle to the Romans. On the other hand some words that are not or seldom used in Romans or in 1 Corinthians are found rather frequently in Philippians, for example φρονέω (ten times), ἠγέομαι (six occurrences) and χαίρω and χαρά (fourteen times in all). But the frequency of these words is not so essential that it makes a convincing argument for an author different from the author of the epistle to the Romans or from the author of 1 or 2 Corinthians. The use of these words is determined by the specific situation in the church of Philippi.<sup>42</sup> And words such as πολίτευμα, citizenship in Phil 3,20 and the verb πολιτεύεσθαι in Phil 1,27, that do not occur elsewhere in the Paulines, may be used with respect to the Roman character of Philippi where the tribus, citizen tribe, Voltinia made its presence strongly felt. And the many words related to war and to games will have been used by the presence of many Roman veterans. We conclude that we can state differences in vocabulary, but these differences are to do with the specific situation in Philippi.<sup>43</sup> Consequently there is no reason to assume that this epistle was not written by the same author as the epistles discussed above.

## 7. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians

In spite of the partition theories defended by some scholars,<sup>44</sup> I consider 1 Thessalonians as one coherent epistle.<sup>45</sup> In the prescript of 1 Thessalonians three persons are mentioned as senders of the epistle: Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. As Timothy is mentioned in the third person in 1Thess 3,2.6 he can be excluded as the author of this epistle. The first person singular is used in 1Thess

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Morgenthaler, Statistik (Anm. 11) 164.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Silva, Philippians (Anm. 2) 12.20–21.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Eduard Verhoef, Filippi. Hoe het christendom in Europa begon. Een gids door de opgravingen, Almere 2009, 37–39.

<sup>44</sup> See for example Earl J. Richard, First and Second Thessalonians (Sacra Pagina Series 11), Collegeville 1995, 11–19; Abraham J. Malherbe, The Letters to the Thessalonians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AncB 32B), New York u.a. 2000, 78–81.

<sup>45</sup> See Eduard Verhoef, De brieven aan de Tessalonicenzen, Kampen 1998, 28–33; Simon Légasse, Les épîtres de Paul aux Thessaloniens. Introduction et commentaire (LeDiv 7), Paris 1999, 44–48.

2,18; 3,5; 5,27. This means that this epistle has actually been written by a single author, as is the case with Philippians. In 1Thess 2,18 the first person singular is identified as Paul. The question is whether we can decide if this epistle was written by the same author as the epistles discussed above.

### *7.1 Phrases that May Help us Identify the Author*

From 1Thess 1,8–9 we can deduce that the author had visited Thessaloniki and that he had travelled to Achaia afterwards. Before his stay in Thessaloniki he was in Philippi (1Thess 2,2), where he was treated badly. In 1Thess 2,18 it says that „I Paul“ wanted to visit the Thessalonians several times. The author stayed in Athens while he sent Timothy to the Thessalonians in order to strengthen them and to hear about their circumstances. After the return of Timothy the author is consoled by the good news about the Thessalonians. In 1Thess 4,17 it is implied that the author believes that the parousia will take place during his lifetime.

In this epistle the statements about the author's stay in Macedonia are very clear. We saw that the epistle to the Philippians also mentioned that the author was in Macedonia more than once. The mention of Timothy as a colleague or as a very good friend fits in with Phil 2,19.23; Rom 16,21; 1Cor 4,17; 16,10 and 2Cor 1,1.19. As far as I can see there is nothing that speaks against the assumption that these epistles all stem from the same author.

### *7.2 The Theology of the Author of 1 Thessalonians*

As this letter is very short it is evident that it cannot provide an exhaustive explanation of the author's theology. This epistle is a reaction to the reports given by Timothy. There is the usual passage with thanksgivings in 1Thess 1,2–10 and some biographical remarks in 1Thess 2–3. The most important section offering an insight in the author's theology is 1Thess 4,13–5,11 as in these verses the parousia is discussed. At least three statements have been made:<sup>46</sup>

1. The future life with the Lord is for both the „dead in Christ“ and the faithful who are still alive at the parousia (1Thess 4,16–17).
  2. The parousia will not be long in coming (this is implied in 1Thess 4,17).
  3. We do not know when exactly the day of the Lord will dawn (1Thess 5,2).
- These sayings are in agreement with statements in 1Cor 15,13.23. In Romans and in Philippians the eschatology is not discussed thoroughly, but of course this absence of similar statements does not necessarily lead us to conclude that there are different authors.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Verhoef, *Brieven* (Anm. 45) 40.

### *7.3 Vocabulary and Style of the Author*

This short epistle of about 1475 words<sup>47</sup> is not suited for a comparison with longer epistles as Romans and 1 or 2 Corinthians. Nevertheless we can state that the vocabulary and style do not strikingly differ from those letters. Next to the points mentioned above this makes it probable that the author of the epistles discussed above wrote 1 Thessalonians as well.

## **8. The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians**

The second epistle to the Thessalonians mentions three senders in its prescript, as is the case in 1 Thessalonians: Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. The first person plural is often used, apparently pointing to these three persons. The first person singular is used in 2Thess 2,5. The author makes himself known as Paul in 2Thess 3,17. This suggests that it was this Paul who wrote this epistle and that Silvanus and Timothy were his co-workers.

### *8.1 Phrases that May Help us Identify the Author*

Not many definite facts are mentioned in the first chapter, but it shows that there is a good relation between the Thessalonians and the senders; cf. 2Thess 2,13–15. In 2,5 it says that the author (singular!) was in Thessaloniki and that he taught them about the parousia. In 2Thess 2,14–15 the authors' preaching of the gospel in Thessaloniki is mentioned and it is said that they had written an epistle earlier that contained their instructions; cf. 2Thess 3,6. In 2Thess 3,8 it says that the senders worked for their living and did not receive their food without paying for it; cf. 1Thess 2,9; 1Cor 4,12.

These phrases fit in with statements found in the epistles discussed above. I see no objection so far to ascribe this epistle to the author who is mentioned in the prescript of these epistles.

### *8.2 The Theology of the Author of 2 Thessalonians*

As in the first epistle to the Thessalonians no theological programme is given here. The author is thankful for the faith and the perseverance of the Thessalonians and for their obedience to his teaching. In chapter 2 the author is much more specific when he discusses one theological item. He writes that it will take some time before the parousia will arrive. A whole programme will have to be completed before the day of the Lord will come. The faithful can check the course of this programme if they are alert on the signs (2Thess 2,3–8).

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Morgenthaler, Statistik (Anm. 11) 164.

The difference between these statements and the opinions in 1 Thessalonians is striking. Whereas it is stated in 1 Thessalonians that some of the addressees will still be alive at the parousia, it is clear in 2 Thess 2 that it will take a rather long time before the parousia will arrive. The author of 2 Thessalonians argues that the faithful will be able to see how far the programme has progressed, which differs from the opinion written down in 1 Thess 5.

Do these theological differences point to different authors? Or did the author change his opinion? How much time is required for such a change in the author's point of view? The argument of the theological differences itself is not conclusive for any decision; see the differences between 1 Cor 15,22–23 and 2 Cor 5,1. Nevertheless this different opinion regarding the parousia is striking.

### *8.3 Vocabulary and Style of the Author*

We need many more words than 2 Thessalonians contains for a comparison with respect to vocabulary and style. Morgenthaler counted 824 words in this letter.<sup>48</sup> More importantly, the style and the vocabulary of this letter looks so very much like 1 Thessalonians that for this reason many authors think 2 Thessalonians to be literary dependent on 1 Thessalonians.<sup>49</sup> This would mean that 2 Thessalonians must have been written shortly after 1 Thessalonians. In itself this would not pose a serious objection against the assumption that the same author wrote these two epistles, if the theological differences did not make it difficult to suppose that these epistles were written within a very short period of time.<sup>50</sup>

Concluding we can state that none of the arguments used against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is conclusive, but in combination they offer serious problems for the acceptance of the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians.<sup>51</sup> I consider it extremely difficult to defend the thesis that the author of the epistles discussed above wrote 2 Thessalonians as well.

## **9. The Epistles to Seneca**

Fourteen epistles are known as the correspondence between Paul and Seneca. Six of them mention Paul as their author, eight epistles would have been

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Morgenthaler, *Statistik* (Anm. 11) 164.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Maarten J.J. Menken, *2 Thessalonians* (New Testament Readings), London 1994, 36–40.

<sup>50</sup> See especially the exhaustive study by Wolfgang Trilling, *Untersuchungen zum zweiten Thessalonicherbrief* (EThS 27), Leipzig 1972. The authenticity of 2 Thessalonians is defended for example by Malherbe, *Thessalonians* (Anm. 44) 349–375.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Richard, *Thessalonians* (Anm. 44) 19–25; Verhoef, *Brieven* (Anm. 45) 33–35; Légasse, *Thessaloniciens* (Anm. 45) 347–353.

written by Seneca. Most scholars regard these epistles as pseudepigraphic,<sup>52</sup> whereas for example Paul Berry thinks these epistles to be authentic.<sup>53</sup> It should be mentioned here that these epistles were quoted for the first time by Hieronymus and by Augustinus in the fourth century. Before then nobody seems to have known of these epistles. It is striking that Tertullianus mentions Seneca as „saepe noster“, often our own, in the second century. Lactantius wrote at the end of the third century and he indicated that Seneca sometimes argued in a way that hardly differed from the Christian reasonings.<sup>54</sup> But both authors seem unaware of epistles written by Paul to Seneca and vice versa.

The six epistles to Seneca purport to have been written by the same author who wrote the epistle to the Romans. The author, a certain Paul, is supposed to be the great apostle mentioned many times in the New Testament. Time and again Seneca says he holds this Paul in great esteem. Berry dates these epistles between 61 and 65 A.D.,<sup>55</sup> whereas Fürst dates them in the fourth century.<sup>56</sup> We will have a look at data found in these epistles, at the theology and at vocabulary and style. This item will present us some peculiar problems, because these epistles were written in Latin and not in Greek like the other supposed Pauline epistles. Sometimes we will take into consideration the epistles from Seneca to Paul as well because both groups of epistles were written as letters in a correspondence.

### *9.1 Phrases that May Help us Identify the Author*

These epistles, especially epistle 4, show that their authors, Seneca and Paul, are acquaintances. Seneca's friend Lucillus was involved as well; see epistle 6. In epistle 7 the addressees are Paul and Theophilus. Theophilus is a well known acquaintance of Luke. In the so-called epistle of the Corinthians to Paul a certain Theophilus is one of the persons who send their regards to this Paul.<sup>57</sup> In the eighth epistle, supposedly written by Paul, Seneca is admonished not to make Nero aware of the gospel in order not to offend Nero's wife, Poppaea Sabina, known for her whims. In the small tenth epistle this Paul speaks only

<sup>52</sup> See Alfons Fürst (Hg.), *Der apokryphe Briefwechsel zwischen Seneca und Paulus* (SAPERE 11), Tübingen 2006, 4–5.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Paul Berry, *Correspondence between Paul and Seneca A.D. 61–65*, Lewiston/New York 1999, 2.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Fürst (Hg.), *Briefwechsel* (Anm. 52) 19.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Berry, *Correspondence* (Anm. 52) 2.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Fürst (Hg.), *Briefwechsel* (Anm. 52) 4–6.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Schneemelcher/Rodolphe Kasser, *Paulusakten*, in: Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Hg.), *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung*, 2. Apostolisches, Apokalypsen und Verwandtes, Tübingen 1989, 193–243: 231.

about the place of his signature. He argues that his name should be written at the end of the epistle in order to show his respect for Seneca, a senator.

The rather scarce data found in these letters do not contradict the possibility of authorship by the same author as the epistle to the Romans. It must be noted, however, that these epistles were written in Latin, whereas the epistles mentioned above were written in Greek. It might be possible of course that the same person was able to write epistles in both Greek and Latin. It must be mentioned that these letters are much shorter than even the shortest Pauline letter.

### *9.2 The Theology of the Author of the Epistles to Seneca*

Little or nothing is said in these epistles to explain the theology of the author. It is striking that these epistles are of little substance, whereas we saw that in the epistle to the Romans, in 1 Corinthians and even in the short epistle to the Philippians the theology of the author is thoroughly discussed. This is all the more striking as we realize that for example in the so-called first letter Seneca said that he read some epistles by Paul and that he was impressed. But Seneca does not say anything about the content of Paul's letters. The same is the case with Paul's answer. The only purpose of this so-called second letter seems to be exchanging courtesies. The same can be said with respect to the fourth and the sixth epistles. In the eighth epistle the author makes a remark regarding the preaching to the emperor, but he does not say anything with respect to the content of the preaching. A remark concerning the Israelites in the fourteenth epistle is striking. „Ethnicorum Israelitarumque observationes“, the rites of the gentiles and the Israelites, are mentioned there in a negative sense. In Romans and in 1 Corinthians the word Ἰσραήλ is used several times, in Philippians we find it only in 3,5. In these passages this word probably has a positive connotation, or at least it does not have any negative connotation, nor is it used next to a word for „gentile“. What we do find next to „gentile“ – and also next to „Greek“ – in these letters is the word Ἰουδαῖος, Jew; see Rom 3,9; 9,24; 10,12; 1Cor 1,23.24; 10,32. We get the impression that the word *Israelite* and *Israel* is used in Romans and in 1 Corinthians in a positive sense, whereas the Latin translation for it is used in a negative sense in this fourteenth epistle to Seneca.

I conclude that these epistles are of little substance. The only explicit theological statement, about Israel, seems to contradict statements in Romans, 1 Corinthians and Philippians.

### *9.3 The Vocabulary and Style*

It is nearly impossible to draw any conclusions with respect to the vocabulary of these epistles. I think it defensible to consider them as one whole, but even

then they do not consist of more than some hundreds of words. As the usual words at the beginning and at the end of the epistles are most often identical, the number of different words used here is even much smaller. Moreover we must realize that these epistles have been written in a different language. The use of Latin makes it unlikely, though not impossible, that these epistles were written by the author(s) who wrote the Greek epistles discussed above.

## 10. Conclusion

On the basis of the data mentioned above I propose as my conclusion that the epistle written to the Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, the epistle to the Philippians and 1 Thessalonians were written by one and the same author, named Paul, that he was an Israelite trained in the methods of the Jewish exegesis and that he joined the followers of Jesus Christ. His theology centered on the righteousness through the faith in Christ (Rom 1,17; Phil 3,9). The epistles to Seneca do not fit in with these theological statements. Uncharacteristically, the exchange of courtesies seems to be the most important item for the author of these Latin letters. It would be out of character if these epistles were written by the same author as Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Philippians and 1 Thessalonians. I take the epistles to Seneca to be pseudepigraphic. The fact that these epistles were never mentioned before the end of the fourth century can be seen as a confirmation of this conclusion. With respect to 2 Thessalonians I would like to state that its dependence on 1 Thessalonians in spite of the different theological opinions point to another author who lived decades later and who used an older epistle in order to propagate his own theological perceptions.

With the help of the epistles that we consider as writings written by one and the same person, a certain Paul, I believe it possible to make a tentative chronology of his life.

The epistles mention Paul preaching the gospel in the area between Jerusalem and Illyricum (Rom 15,19), where the name of Christ has not yet been heard. The same idea is expressed in 1Cor 3,6.10. This must mean that this Paul preached the gospel in the very beginning of Christianity, around the middle of the first century. He apparently succeeded in founding churches in Corinth, Thessaloniki and in Philippi. He had a position of authority. His ambitious plans (Rom 15,24–29) make it improbable that he was an old man at the time of writing the epistle to the Romans.

The methodology used in this paper can be applied to all the Pauline epistles. I do not know if the result will differ very much from the statements found in some handbooks. But the result is not important to me. I consider it impor-



tant that we agree about a reliable methodology to prove or at least to make probable the authenticity or inauthenticity of the epistles involved.

Only after we have studied all the Pauline epistles can we use the book of Acts. I have reservations with respect to the information given in Acts, but in spite of several differing details, the picture given in Acts concurs roughly with the one given above. It is clear that the person described in the second part of the book of Acts must be the same person as the author of Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians and Philippians. This could be helpful to acquire a more complete picture of the life of this author.