EJT (2012) 21:1, 4–16 0960–2720

Revisiting the Pastoral Epistles – Part I

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RÉSUMÉ

La date et l'auteur des trois épîtres dites pastorales sont des questions très controversées. Même des spécialistes conservateurs, comme Howard Marshall (dans son commentaire de 1999), peuvent parvenir à la conclusion que certaines d'entre elles, sinon les trois, sont pseudo-pauliniennes et qu'elles ont été rédigées peu après la mort de l'apôtre. Nous proposons une reconstruction possible des événements de la vie de Paul avant sa comparution devant Néron. Nous suggérons qu'on peut situer de manière plausible la rédaction de chacune de ces lettres dans des circonstances qui appartiennent à cette période de sa vie.

Dans la première partie, nous apportons une critique de la position courante qui loge la rédaction de ces épîtres au milieu des années 60, quelque temps après la comparution de Paul devant Néron, en considérant la première épître à Timothée et l'épître à Tite. La rédaction de ces deux épîtres peut être située dans la période au cours de laquelle Paul quitte Éphèse et traverse la Macédoine et l'Illyrie avant de passer l'hiver à Corinthe, soit de septembre 55 à janvier 57 (Ac 20.1-3 ; Rm 15.19). L'examen complémentaire, à la fois de la localisation géographique du ministère de l'apôtre et du contenu de ces lettres, apporte des éléments qui corroborent cette datation. Aucune des questions que Paul y aborde ne requiert que les Églises concernées aient existé depuis plus de six ans. Dans la seconde partie, nous traitons des problèmes bien différents que pose la seconde épître à Timothée.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Sowohl Datierung als auch Verfasserschaft der so genannten drei 'Pastoralbriefe' (1. und 2. Timotheusbrief und Titusbrief) sind heiß umstritten. Selbst konservative Theologen, wie Howard Marshall (in seinem Kommentar aus dem Jahr 1999), können zu der Schlussfolgerung kommen, dass einige oder alle Pastoralbriefe pseudopaulinisch sind und erst einige Zeit nach Paulus' Tod geschrieben wurden. Wir werden eine mögliche Rekonstruktion der Ereignisse im Leben des Paulus darlegen, bevor jener vor Nero erschien. Und wir legen nahe, dass Datum und Kontext für jeden dieser drei Briefe sehr wohl innerhalb dieses früheren Zeitfensters plausibel sind.

Nach einer kritischen Analyse des Datums, das häufig für alle Pastoralbriefe vorgeschlagen wird (in der Mitte der 60er Jahre n. Chr., einige Zeit nach der Verhandlung von Paulus vor Nero), wollen wir hier im Teil I unser Augenmerk auf 1. Timotheus und Titus richten. Diese beiden Briefe können innerhalb des Zeitabschnitt von September 55 n. Chr. bis Januar 57 n. Chr. entstanden sein, als Paulus Ephesus verließ und durch Mazedonien und Illyrien zog, bevor er den Winter in Korinth verbrachte. Weitere Überprüfung sowohl der Geographie des Dienstes von Paulus als auch des Wortlautes beider Briefe liefert genug schlüssige Beweiskraft für diese frühere Datierung. Schließlich verlangt keines der Anliegen, die Paulus anspricht, dass die Gemeinde damals bereits mehr als sechs Jahre existiert hat. In Teil II werden wir uns mit den grundverschiedenen Themen im 2. Timotheusbrief befassen.

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SUMMARY

Both the dating and authorship of the three so-called 'Pastoral Epistles' (1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus) are hotly contested. Even conservative scholars, such as Howard Marshall in his 1999 commentary, can conclude that some or all of them are pseudo-Pauline and written some time after Paul's death. We will offer a possible reconstruction of events within Paul's life prior to his appearing before Nero. We will suggest that a date and setting for each of these three letters can very plausibly be found within this earlier time-frame.

In Part I, after a critical review of the date often suggested for all three Pastoral Epistles (in the mid 60s AD some time after Paul's trial before Nero), our focus will be on 1 Timothy and Titus. These two letters can be located in the period between September AD 55 and January AD 57 when Paul left Ephesus and went across

into Macedonia and Illyricum before wintering in Corinth (Acts 20:1-3; Rom 15:19). Further examination both of the geography of Paul's ministry and of the actual wording of these letters will provide corroborative evidence for this early dating. Finally, none of the issues raised by Paul require the congregation to have existed for more than six years. In Part II we will look at the quite different issues associated with 2 Timothy.

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1. Dating the Pastoral Epistles: the three options[1]

There are essentially three main options for the dating of the three Pastoral Epistles (hereafter 'PE'):

A. All were written by Paul at some point during the narrative recounted in Acts, including his period of house arrest in Rome, thus between AD 52 and AD 62-63.

B. All were written by Paul at some point *after* the narrative recounted in Acts, when Paul was released from Rome and able to travel again around the Aegean, thus between AD 62 and AD 66-67.

C. All were written by an unknown author after Paul's own death as a work of pseudepigraphy, thus between AD 64 and, say, AD 100.[2]

It will be argued here that the case for Option B is weaker than has often been supposed and that a new case can be made for Option A. Admittedly, only a handful of scholars have pursued this line of reasoning, and between them there are some quite significant variations.[3] This means that the precise setting proposed here for each of the three letters has probably never been advanced before in quite this form – though in the case of 1 Timothy it will prove to be taking further an idea raised but not developed by Luke Timothy Johnson in his commentary.[4]

To pursue Option A is, of course, to enter into the minefield of such issues as Pauline chronology, the reliability of Acts, the possibility of integrating the Acts narrative with Paul's letters, etc. It also runs against the tide of those who see the PE as indicative of 'late' Pauline thought, whether under Option B or C. Rather than start with those issues, however, we will begin by showing some of the weaknesses inherent in Option B and then examine the key texts within the PE – those which explicitly touch on issues of dating and venue – in order to build a fresh case for Option A.

2. Re-examining Option B: did Paul ever leave Rome alive?

Option B depends on Paul appearing before Nero and being released so that he could pursue further ministry. There are at least three areas in which this reconstruction can be questioned.

a) The non-climax of Acts

First, there is the question of why Luke does not mention Paul's trial in Acts. After all the narrative suspense built up within the book, it is strange that there is no reference at all to Paul's trial before the emperor, for this would have been the natural climax for that narrative. Instead we are given the 'open-ended' conclusion of Acts 28:30-31, which then leaves several unanswered questions:

- Was Acts published in AD 62? Or did Luke die before he could add the necessary climax/postscript about Paul's trial?
- Or, if the early date for Acts is questioned on other grounds, was there some other reason for Luke's omission of this key point?

To the extent that we dismiss the first option, to that extent we have to come up with a good reason for Luke's omission. If so, the most likely explanation for his overlooking this key event is that *what happened was in reality deeply anti-climactic* – that Paul's case was never being given a proper and fair hearing, and/or that Paul was summarily executed.

b) The likelihood of Nero's acquittal

Secondly, there is the key question as to how likely it is that Paul successfully stood before Nero (AD 54-68) and gained an acquittal. The five good years of Nero's reign (described by Suetonius as a 'golden age of good government') had now come to an end, with the young emperor becoming increasingly unpredictable and irascible.[5] So we should be asking:

- Would Paul receive any of the clemency which Suetonius says was a mark of Nero's earlier trials?
- Would Nero have the patience to deal with

the backlog of cases thus building-up or would he keep defendants in a pending tray (on 'death-row') for years? Or would he instead shorten the list without giving them anything like a proper hearing – dismissing them 'un-tried' to their execution?

- And how would he react to Paul's proclamation of a worldwide faith, no longer merely Jewish, focused on a crucified Messiah whom Paul confessed as the true ruler of the world (unlike Nero)?

Moreover, given that on July 18th AD 64 Nero savagely scapegoated Christians for the great fire of Rome,[6] we also have to ask how Nero first heard of this new sect of the 'Christians'. And if this was Nero's savage response to them in July 64, how likely is it that he gave a benign and generous response to Paul at some point in the previous two years?

For all these reasons, the probability of Paul being released from captivity must rank under 20% at best – possibly much less. Probably Paul's greatest hope of success was that his case would be dismissed without a proper trial – though that was not what Paul himself seems to have desired.

Instead the sober truth may well be that Paul indeed stood before Nero, as he hoped, but that his brave witness only irritated the emperor, leading not only to his own execution but also to Nero's incipient hostility to this new movement. Paul's boldness in standing before the emperor thus may well have been the decisive moment in bringing this new Christian movement to Nero's worried attention – in due course triggering a savage bout of persecution. If so, we suddenly have some very good reasons why the author of Acts might not have included the expected climax to his story: things took a savage turn for the worst after those first 'two years' of Paul being in Rome.[7]

c) The witness of the Early Church

Thirdly, if Option B is sometimes bolstered by appealing to the witness of the Early Church, we need to ask just how strong the early church's testimony for Paul's acquittal is. Here the testimony of 1 Clement proves to be vital. Writing in c. AD 96, Clement lists examples of Christian heroes persecuted because of 'jealousy':

> Let us come to those who were athletes in the days nearest to our own. Through jealousy and envy the greatest and most righteous pillars of the church were persecuted.…
>
> Peter… made his ways to his allotted place of glory. Paul, on account of jealousy and strife, showed the way to the prize of endurance; seven times he wore fetters, he was exiled, he was stoned, he was a herald both in the east and in the west… and, having reached the limit [*terma*] of the west, he bore testimony before the rulers, and so departed from the world and was taken up into the holy place – the greatest example of endurance…
>
> To these men of holy life was gathered together a great multitude of the elect, who through their endurance amid many indignities and tortures because of jealousy presented to us a noble example.[8]

This last sentence seems to be a gentle, discreet way of referring to the 'indignities' of the Neronian persecution. If so, then Clement's order suggests that Peter and Paul were *precisely in the vanguard* of that significant persecution – some of the very first Christians to arouse Nero's anger. They went first and, tragically, 'a great multitude of the elect' soon had to follow. No doubt Nero was learning about this new sect from other quarters too, but leading figures like Peter and Paul may have attracted his attention more than most. Thus 1 Clement strongly suggests the Peter and Paul were martyred *before* the great fire of Rome, not afterwards.

Secondly, Clement's reference to 'the limit of the west', though it is often seen as a reference to Paul's achieving his ambition of preaching Christ in Spain (cf. Rom 15:24), reads in its own context far more naturally as a reference to Rome. For Clement's wording implies that this *terma* was identical with the place where Paul 'bore testimony before the rulers and departed this world' – which was clearly in Rome. So *terma* might better be translated as Paul's 'goal'. If so, Clement's evidence suggests Paul never again left Rome. He had reached his 'goal'.

Once Clement's reference is seen in this light, the evidence in the other ancient sources for Paul's successfully leaving Rome begins to look quite insecure. The Muratorian Canon, with its reference to Paul's travels to Spain, may well be misreading this reference in Clement; and the testimony of Eusebius in the later third century can well have been inspired by precisely the same motivation as motivates those today who are trying to find a location for the PE.[9] It is not based on any independent evidence, only on speculation as to

when Paul might have written these three letters.

The testimony of the Early Church as to what happened to Paul after AD 62 is beginning to sound rather 'circular'. Moreover, the fact that Eusebius himself thought the great fire was in AD 67 only weakens his testimony even more.[10] Eusebius presumed that the Neronian persecution only got going at the *very end* of Nero's reign and that therefore there was a long season of Nero's being benign, during which Paul could have been acquitted – even if eventually he returned to Rome and was martyred. But if the great fire was indeed in AD 64, this window of opportunity is reduced almost to nil. Was there really a 'honeymoon' period of Neronian favour throughout AD 62-64, or was that instead (as is far more likely) the period during which Nero first discovered this pestilential threat to his empire?

Those who favour Option B thus have some significant questions to answer.[11] Obviously it will remain popular with those who are wary of Option C, and is naturally the preferred option of the vast majority of conservative commentators who seek to defend traditional Pauline authorship of the Pastorals. Yet one does wonder if this is not a case of 'special pleading', postulating a convenient unknown period into which the Pastorals' references to Paul's continued ministry around the Aegean can be placed. For, as we have seen, there is no firm independent evidence for that ministry. On the contrary, there is a strong likelihood that Paul never left Nero's Rome alive.

3. Reappraising Option A

This situation should then at the very least encourage us to reconsider the viability of Option A. We will highlight the thirteen key texts in the PE which are in some way indicative of either time or place and which are listed in the endnote.[12] These texts are more likely to yield reliable information about the *Sitz im Leben* of the letters than hypothetical reconstructions 1900 years after the event. From their exegesis we can in fact gain some solid evidence on which to reconstruct the historical situation.

a) The different setting of 2 Timothy

The first point to emerge from focusing on these texts is that 2 Timothy stands out from the other two letters in several respects. Not only does it contain more of these 'historical-sounding' texts, but also it is only in 2 Timothy that we find explicit evidence that Paul is in prison. Also, only in 2 Timothy does Paul ponder his own uncertain future or 'departure'. Once we notice this, we begin to sense how 1 Timothy and Titus have a different atmosphere to 2 Timothy. In these other two letters

- Paul is a free man, and little preoccupied with his own state of affairs;
- he makes virtually no reference to those present with him at the time of writing, except in Tit 3:15, 'all who are with me send greetings';
- and his focus is on the recipients and the challenges facing them, unlike 2 Timothy where Paul is more self-absorbed.

All this suggests that Prior and Murphy O'Connor were correct to separate 2 Timothy from the other Pastorals.[13] Indeed, on further thought, it is intrinsically unlikely that two letters addressed to the same individual would have been written close in time to one another and it is more likely that they are written in different seasons, occasioned by different circumstances. We will return to 2 Timothy in Part II and for now we focus on 1 Timothy and Titus.

b) Paul's journey west: from Macedonia to Corinth *via* Illyricum

Titus 1:5 suggests that that Titus is in Crete; 1 Timothy 1:3 that Timothy is in Ephesus. Both men have been given important assignments by Paul. Titus 3:12-15 and 1 Timothy 3:14 clearly indicate that Paul is travelling freely. (These are not 'prison epistles' but have about them something of the 'joy of the open road'.) In 1 Timothy Paul is still considering returning to Ephesus in the near future, whereas in Titus his future itinerary has become more fixed, with his decision to winter in Nicopolis (see further below). This might indicate that, of the two, 1 Timothy was the first to be written – not long after Paul left Ephesus.

But where exactly is Paul at the time of writing? Titus 1:5 suggests he has set out on a journey from Ephesus going north-westwards into 'Macedonia'; it implies that he met Timothy at some point in Macedonia which is when he instructed him, effectively, to take his place in Ephesus. Thus Paul, himself coming from Ephesus, had met Timothy in Macedonia and despatched him back to where he, Paul, had just come from.

This matches well with the account in Acts 19 and 20. In Acts 19:22 the author speaks of

Paul beginning to make his travel plans from Ephesus via Macedonia and Achaia en route to Jerusalem, but first sending 'Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia' ahead of him. A little later, after the riot in Ephesus, Paul himself sets out 'for Macedonia'. 1 Timothy 1:3 would then suggest that they indeed met up in Macedonia (perhaps in Philippi or Thessalonica) and that Paul thought it best to deploy Timothy back in Ephesus. (This may or may not have been Paul's original intention, when first sending Timothy ahead into Macedonia.)

So there is a *prima facie* case that 1 Timothy was written on what we now know as Paul's 'third missionary journey', at some point on his journey from Ephesus via Macedonia to Greece. In Acts this part of Paul's journey is described in unusually vague terms:

> After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia. When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece, where he stayed three months (Acts 20:1-3).

It is as though the author either does not know the full details of Paul's itinerary or else is in something of a hurry to skip over this section in order to describe the more significant journey up to Jerusalem (already given as the goal of the journey in 19:22). The effect of this is, of course, to truncate in the mind of the reader the actual length of time that Paul was in 'those regions'. One is tempted to presume that Paul kept moving at a steady pace, eager to get to Jerusalem. But the chronology adopted by Bruce and Witherington, and developed in more detail by Riesner, suggests that this 'unknown' period of Paul's travels may in fact have lasted some 15 to 18 months.[14] These scholars have Paul leaving Ephesus some time in the autumn of AD 55 and not arriving in Corinth until December AD 56 or January AD 57. Paul then spends his 'three months' in Corinth, writing Romans, before attempting to set sail for Jerusalem from Cenchrea (presumably soon after the start of the sailing season in March AD 57).

This gap in our knowledge of Paul's travels should not worry us. It is clear that the author of Acts has skipped over much material and that the chronology of the events he describes speeds up and slows down considerably in different parts of his account. Nor is this apparent delay in Paul's going up to Jerusalem with the collection unreasonable. After all, it was essential that Paul would not go up to Jerusalem with the church in Corinth in disarray. So he may have judged that he himself must visit Corinth first, spending more than a passing visit; moreover, that a rushed visit to Jerusalem during the sailing months of AD 56 was strategically more risky than waiting for the following year – by which time the situation in Corinth should hopefully have settled down. This delay also gave Paul time to engage afresh in what he seems to have enjoyed most – 'cutting-edge' mission, pushing across new frontiers rather than endlessly sorting out the tiresome 'management issues' of young churches.

Paul was, in this sense, more an 'itinerant pioneer' than a 'settled pastor'. This pioneering spirit can be seen in Romans 15:17-29 where he speaks of his desire to 'preach the gospel where Christ was not known' and illustrates this by referring to his missionary work 'from Jerusalem all the way round to Illyricum'. At this point in his ministry, Paul sees Illyricum as the furthest west he has gone – the place furthest removed from Jerusalem in the east. And when we then ask how or when Paul had got to Illyricum, the answer is reasonably clear – presumably the previous year (AD 56), on his way round from Macedonia to Corinth.

In order to visit Illyricum, Paul would have had to travel westwards along the Via Egnatia, not turning off via Berea, as in Acts 17 on his second missionary journey.[15] On that occasion he had been fleeing in haste from Thessalonica, so Berea was an ideal place off the main road (described by Cicero precisely in such terms as 'off the beaten track').[16] This time Paul was able to choose his own route, which gave him the first opportunity in nearly four years (since his arrival in Ephesus) to preach in unchartered territory.

Whether he reached the port of Dyrrachium from where there were regular boats across to Brundisium and to Rome, we will never know. Certainly, however, he would have met many people on the *Via Egnatia* who were travelling to and from Rome. This would then be a season in which Paul's desire to visit Rome would have intensified and crystallised (as hinted in Romans 1:13 and 15:23). Yet because of the urgent situation in Corinth and his commitment to the Jerusalem collection, he would have had to turn his gaze away from the western horizon and turn south.

From Illyricum Paul's obvious route down to Corinth was not via the eastern seaboard, but

rather by its *western* coast. So the many maps of Paul's travels that suggest he travelled down the Aegean coast are probably in error at this point. To repeat, Paul liked to cut new ground, rarely travelling the same way twice. Confirmation that Paul travelled down the Adriatic coast is found in an intriguing place, namely Titus 3:12. For in this verse Paul indicates how he wants Titus to rendezvous with him in Nicopolis. There were several cities of this name in the ancient world, but recent commentaries agree that the only contender for this reference in Titus is the Nicopolis in 'Epirus' (the later home of Epictetus).[17] This turns out to be roughly half way down the western coastline of Greece, not far from modern Corfu.

On this reconstruction, then, Paul writes Titus either from western Macedonia or (more likely) from Illyricum and suggests to Titus that they meet at a point which is en route between himself and Corinth. If so, Titus may well have had the greater distance to travel, though much of it was by sea, yet this was not an outrageous request. In practice, however, Paul seems to have got to Nicopolis ahead of his own schedule and thus decided to press on down the coast towards Corinth, where he seems to have wintered instead (according to Acts 20:3).[18]

c) Paul himself: recently in Crete?

One of the chief reasons, however, why this dating for Titus is overlooked by advocates of Options B and C has to do with Titus 1:5: 'this is why I left (*apelipon*) you in Crete'. This is almost invariably interpreted to mean that *Paul himself had been in Crete* and was thus 'waving goodbye' to Titus as he left the island. This then leads to much questioning as to how such a visit by Paul can be squared, if at all, with Acts.[19] Many presume that a missionary offensive to Crete would surely have been mentioned by Luke in his account of Paul's travels, so it cannot have taken place at any point covered during his narrative. They also have their doubts (unnecessarily) about how Paul might have squeezed in a visit to Crete during the period of his Ephesian ministry (AD 52-55; Acts 19).[20] As a result, they discard Option A on the assumption that the only time Paul could have got to Crete is after his release from Rome (i.e. as in Option B).

All such questions, however, are beside the point if the Greek word *apelipon* does not entail those who do the 'leaving' *actually having to be there themselves*. Marshall in his commentary highlights that the verb might be translated 'despatched', 'deployed' or 'assigned'; some go further and see the word as having the notion of appointing an official deputy in one's stead.[21] So the focus of the word may be more on the *authority* of the one giving the instructions, not so much on their precise geographical *location* at the time of issuing those instructions. In other words, an absentee manager could require a subordinate *to go somewhere* on his behalf or *to remain somewhere* for a further period of work. This reading of the verb was developed by Robinson:

> It is assumed that 'I left' (*apelipon*) must imply that Paul himself was present. … But Paul is speaking in these letters very much as the director of operations with 'responsibility' for … 'all the congregations' (cf. 2 Cor. 11:28). He is like a general reporting on the movements of his commanders in the field (cf. 2 Tim. 2:4) or the head of a missionary society giving news of his staff.[22]

Thus the verse in Titus is better rendered, 'the reason I assigned you to Crete' or (more probably) 'the reason I asked you to stay on a bit longer in Crete'.[23] On this reading Paul is not writing after a visit of his to Crete but is simply wanting to bring the congregations planted there into good order through the agency of Titus; and he is issuing orders from the position of the one who is overseeing the whole Gospel operation around the Aegean, deploying his 'Pauline mission team' in the ways he thinks best.

d) Conclusion

These five texts from 1 Timothy and Titus thus offer us a credible *Sitz im Leben* for 1 Timothy and Titus: Paul is on his third missionary journey, travelling round from Ephesus to Corinth *via* Macedonia and Illyricum. 1 Timothy is written first, while Paul is still unsure of his precise travel plans (1 Tim 3:14); Titus a little later, when he knows he is now coming to Corinth along the Adriatic coast (Tit 3:12).

4. Further clues: Timothy's age and Crete's location

Both letters also contain some extra clues, peculiar to that particular letter, which would suggest an early date – at some point during the 50s AD. In 1 Timothy the clue comes from reflecting on Timothy's age, in Titus from reflecting on the geography of Crete.

a) Timothy's age and vulnerability

In 1 Timothy 4:12 Timothy is described as 'young'. If Timothy was in his late teens when he first joined Paul and Silas back in AD 50 (Acts 16:1-4), then in AD 56 he would be no more than 25, perhaps less. Under Option B (if 1 Timothy were written in AD 63), he would have turned 30. By our modern standards we might still think of that as 'young', but in the first century, when anyone over 40 could be considered 'old', the adjective might not have been appropriate.

Moreover, if Timothy was indeed in his mid-twenties, we can understand better why Paul would feel the need to bolster his assistant's position with an extended letter in the form of *mandata principis* – instructions from the absent leader. Timothy has been a believer for seven or eight years and had started working for Paul some six year before, whereas by AD 63, all these periods of time have doubled. When we consider the many favourable things Paul writes about Timothy in Philippians (2:19-24), and the fact that Timothy co-authors both Colossians and Philemon (Col 1:1; Philem 1:1), one would assume that by the year AD 63 Timothy would not need the level of support which he is offered here in 1 Timothy.

Further confirmation of this point can also be found in the greater length of 1 Timothy when compared with Titus. Why does Paul give Timothy almost double the amount of advice that he gives to Titus? Yes, this might perhaps be because Paul has himself only recently come from Ephesus and knows some of the difficulties there 'at first hand'. However, it is more likely that Paul recognises that Timothy is particularly vulnerable in Ephesus and knows that he needs much moral support.

This would then chime in well with what we can glean from Paul's letters to Corinth which suggest that Timothy's visit was probably not nearly as successful as Titus' (see 1 Cor 16:10-11 and 2 Cor 7:7). If Timothy has had a painful experience in Corinth at some point in the previous two years, it would make perfect sense for Paul to write a lengthy letter such as 1 Timothy to his young protégé in order to help him with the daunting assignment in Ephesus. Timothy might well have been in fear and trembling at this new responsibility. Paul's care makes compelling sense.

Moreover, Timothy's visit to Corinth may have been intentionally short; this assignment to Ephesus is more open-ended and could last for some time if Paul is not able to get back as soon as he currently intends (1 Tim: 3:14). In which case 1 Timothy reads very naturally as a letter of encouragement to someone who is about to take on his first extended 'pastoral charge'. Ten years later Timothy would be far more experienced as a leading pastor, rendering Paul's comparatively simple advice less necessary.

b) The Island of Crete: a Pauline priority

In the case of Titus the distinctive pointer towards an early date comes from looking at a map of the Mediterranean and reflecting on Crete's distinctive geographical location. The book of Acts and Paul's other letters (especially Romans 1 and 15, written from Corinth in early AD 57) clearly show how Paul was pursuing a chosen programme of evangelism in a westward direction: from Antioch to Cyprus, to Galatia, to the Aegean, to Illyricum, Rome and (so he hoped) Spain. He also saw it as his particular calling as a pioneer missionary to preach the Gospel in areas where it had not yet been heard (Rom 15:20).

Thus, when Paul arrived in Ephesus in late AD 52 (Acts 18:19-21), his goal would have been more than simply to establish a Christian presence in Ephesus. Yes, this was a vitally important city in its own right and, yes, if the Gospel spread out from here into the province of Asia (as it did through people like Epaphras when he returned to Colosse; see Col 1:7 and Acts 19:20), this would fill in the geographical gap caused by the Spirit's prompting two years earlier (Acts 16:7). Yet there was another lacuna that had to be filled in this westward progression: Crete.

As a large island in the Mediterranean, Crete was similar to Cyprus. Cyprus, however, had been evangelised by Paul six years before (Acts 13) and was now safely under the oversight of Barnabas and Mark (Acts 15:39). Crete, by contrast, was 'unreached' and was an obvious target for Paul's missionary strategy. If he was a lover of frontiers and 'pushing the boundaries', then it would be unwise to leave it unvisited for long. Admittedly Crete was further from the mainland than Cyprus, but it was not a risky destination for travellers. Indeed, according to Hemer's careful analysis, vessels returning to Italy from Asia Minor (sailing into the prevailing westerly breezes) used Crete as a stepping-stone because it was safe and convenient.[24] All this suggests that, during his time in Ephesus, Paul and his team would have discussed the importance – once the sailing season opened in March – of setting out for some summer-time

mission in Crete.

Paul's Ephesian ministry lasted three years (Acts 19:1 – 20:1; from late AD 52 to autumn 55), so there are three possible years for this visit to Crete: the summers of 53, 54 and 55. We cannot tell which of these was the occasion for Paul's first visit, but there is no reason why he might not have taken the first opportunity (i.e. 53), encouraging his colleagues to make return visits in the subsequent summers. The fact that Luke does not mention Paul ever leaving Ephesus during this time is no problem. Luke clearly omits numerous details in his broad overview treatment; for example, we know that Paul sailed across to Corinth during this period, probably in AD 54 or 55 (see 2 Cor 2:1). On the contrary, there is every likelihood that, whilst keeping Ephesus as his winter headquarters, Paul used each of those summers to be involved in fresh missionary activity or to revisit churches in the Aegean region. Crete and Corinth would be the two most obvious candidates, but some of the smaller islands in the Aegean might also have been in his sights.

By the time Paul writes Romans in AD 57, he clearly sees the Aegean – and indeed Illyricum to the north – as effectively 'covered'; his sights are now yet further westwards, towards Rome and Spain (Rom 15:23-24). In the light of this, it is hard to imagine that the Pauline missionary team had not yet visited Crete – leaving it as a project for later or for other *non*-Pauline teams to visit instead. So the idea that Paul did not make his first visit to Crete until the mid-60s, an idea commonly held by those who favour Option B, is unlikely. This mistaken idea is based, on the one hand, on the silence of Acts, and, on the other, on ignoring both the travel 'map' of the Mediterranean in the first century and Paul's own clearly-stated missionary strategy.

c) Written before or after leaving Ephesus in autumn AD 55?

Returning to the letter to Titus, therefore, we can say that there is no problem about its being written in the AD 50s because Paul and Titus had probably visited it. The argument instead needs to take a different focus. If Crete was indeed visited by Paul and his team at some point(s) during AD 53 to 55, the question becomes: should the letter's dating also be connected to those same years? In other words, did Paul write to Titus from Ephesus? For example, was it written when Paul himself had returned to Ephesus from a mission to Crete after which he left Titus behind on the island for the winter? Or was it written from Ephesus in AD 54 or 55, when Titus had gone back (without Paul) for a further visit?

These options for Paul having written Titus whilst in Ephesus are both attractive; especially the former, since it allows the understanding of *apelipon* which some, as we saw, find preferable. However, one key text speaks strongly against this 'Ephesian' origin of the letter, namely Titus 3:12. Here Paul expressly talks about planning to 'winter' in Nicopolis on the west coast of the Greek mainland. This would be a strange suggestion if Paul was still in Ephesus when he wrote these words. They would require a level of assured planning in his travels that was quite impossible in the first century.[25] If he was in Ephesus at the time of writing, Paul would more probably have suggested Corinth as a rendezvous point. Instead the suggestion of Nicopolis makes more sense (as argued above) if Paul is in Macedonia or Illyricum, such that Nicopolis represents a suitable 'midway-point' between Paul's location at the time of writing and Titus in Crete.

So we contend that Titus was indeed written by Paul *after* he had left Ephesus, between late AD 55 and the summer of 56; moreover, that this made eminent sense, since Paul's team would already have been at work in Crete in the summers since Paul's own first visit one or two years previous.

d) More precise dating: the limited summer sailing season (AD 56)

In fact, once this is granted, we are able to be even more precise about the timing. First, there is the evidence of 2 Corinthians (7:6-16), which indicates that Paul (coming from Ephesus) successfully met up with Titus (coming from Corinth) in Macedonia in the autumn of AD 55. Titus was then sent back by Paul to Corinth (2 Cor 8:17-18), almost certainly with instructions to proceed, if circumstances permitted, on to Crete the following spring or summer.[26] Because of the sailing season, we can be sure that Titus cannot have reached Crete until the end of March AD 56 at the earliest.

So Titus has been given a summer assignment in Crete, but he will need to know for sure whether Paul wants him to stay on the island through the winter of AD 56/57. This could well be one of the brute necessities causing Paul to write his letter: Titus is stranded on an island and needs to be told what to do next! So Titus 3:12 is an absolutely

vital piece of information for Titus. Note, however, that he is not requested to leave Crete *as soon as he receives the letter*. Paul (himself now in western Macedonia or Illyricum) intends to send Artemas or Tychichus down to Crete; when they arrive, *that* will be the signal for Titus to leave the island before the winter.[27] Indeed the letter would, paradoxically, become fairly useless if Titus was supposed to abandon Crete immediately: all Paul's instructions about the important work that Titus himself still needs to do in Crete would be too late! So this implies that the letter was safely received several months before the end of the sailing season (i.e. presumably no later than July).

Meanwhile, the letter itself could not have reached the island of Crete till the spring; and it indeed probably arrived some little time after Titus himself had got there. After all, if there had been some necessity in Paul contacting Titus *before* he left from Corinth for Crete, the letter would have been sent to Corinth. Instead Paul writes without real urgency on the assumption that Titus has, as planned, successfully reached Crete and begun the task.

Conceivably, of course, Paul might have received oral confirmation of this (that Titus got in a boat to go to Corinth) before he put pen to paper; conceivably too he had heard some report of how things were going for him in Crete. If so, the letter would have been received somewhat later during Titus' stay on Crete. Yet both of these are quite problematic given that Paul was 'on the move', pursuing an itinerant ministry in Illyricum. Neither of them is strictly necessary for Paul's comments about problems in the Cretan congregations are quite generic and may reflect knowledge of earlier visits by Paul himself or others in his circle. So, more probably, the letter was received in the first few months after Titus' arrival during the early summer of AD 56 (April to June). This would also make eminent sense since, as noted above, the value of the letter (in reminding Titus about his ask in Crete) would progressively depreciate the nearer it got to Titus' necessary departure in the autumn.

e) 'The reason I left you…'

If the above scenario and dating are correct, we can reflect in more detail on Paul's opening words in Titus 1:5. Titus is now on Crete because of a conversation he had with Paul the previous autumn. Clearly their oral conversation needed to envisage several scenarios. Yet in one of these Paul may have expressed his preference that Titus should make more than a passing visit (just two weeks?) to Crete but that he stay there for a reasonable length of time (three to six months). He was indeed giving him (as we have just seen) an assignment that lasted the whole summer. This preference could then be precisely what Paul is alluding to in Titus 1:5: 'the reason I left you in Crete….' The force of this might therefore be rendered as: 'as we discussed, the reason I gave you this assignment to stay for several months in Crete….'

So one of the reasons Paul uses the language of 'leaving' (rather than, say, 'sending') is simply that he underlines that this is not a quick-fire operation but will require time: Titus has not just been 'sent' to Crete, he has been 'left' there for the whole summer. And when the couriers arrived with the letter, they would have confirmed orally that Paul had indeed not changed his mind, suddenly requiring him to drop everything and leave. So, when reading these words, Titus would also have heard Paul saying: 'The reason I am asking you to stay on a little bit longer…' Or, as we might say, 'As we agreed, you have got important work to do!'

5. The issues faced by new congregations

a) The evidence in Titus

The above reconstruction suggests that Paul was writing to an experienced Christian (Titus had been a believer since at least AD 46; see Gal 2:1) who was in charge of a number of church congregations on Crete, the oldest of which would have been in existence for a *maximum of three years*. Are there any further indications in the letter that this is correct? Here we are beginning to move from solid historical pointers within the letter to our own reconstruction of what was possible in the life of the early church; the best we should hope for is that there are no clear contrary indications.

There is a paradox here. Those who pursue Option B and insist that Paul is writing to Titus *immediately* after he, Paul, has left Crete after his *first* visit to the island are thereby committed to saying that there are no congregations in Crete which are more than six months old (the maximum length of any visit Paul would make to an island).[28] This might be possible, but it does not allow any time for some of the problems to which Paul refers (in quite strident terms) to have developed in his absence. An interval of two or three years, during which time some Cretans had

manifested some deceitful behaviour and caused divisions in the congregations, would help to give Paul's comments some foundation and justification (see Tit 1:10-16; 3:9-11). Without this, they might appear like a general 'side-swipe', not sufficiently based on concrete evidence.

Moreover, the reference in 1:3 to appointing elders 'in every town', though it could refer to what had to be done at the end of a successful summer campaign of evangelism, reads more naturally as a sign that during the last few years, whilst Paul and Titus have been away, the Gospel has continued to spread around the island. Congregations have grown in numerous places, but there was no member of Paul's team on the island to appoint local church leaders. We know that for Paul this was a vital task and he had risked his life going back through Galatia in AD 48 in order to appoint such elders (see Acts 14:23). From that earlier episode we sense that Paul would not by choice have left behind a congregation without an appointed leadership team; so his asking Titus to perform this vital role now strongly suggests that there has been some significant but unsupervised growth since they were last on Crete. Some time has elapsed.

So Titus now has the joyful and important task of travelling round the island, spending time with the congregations and then making wise appointments. Once again we note that the Christian congregations on Crete, living on an island cut off by miles of sea for five months of the year, are vulnerable: they will not have the benefit of contact with Paul and the wider Christian church throughout the winter months.[29]

So a time lapse of two or three years between the Gospel's first arrival in Crete and the time of Paul's writing, rather than only four to six months, makes eminent sense. Meanwhile those who favour Option C, arguing for a post-Pauline date for the PE, will normally work on the assumption that the congregations have been in existence for considerably longer – perhaps ten to twenty years. They will search the text for indications of 'second generation Christianity' – either in the author or in the recipients.[30] Yet, with regard to the recipients, there is nothing in the life of the Cretan congregations that requires such a lengthy time lapse. All of the following can emerge in the first few years of young, inexperienced congregations:

1. Leaders being motivated by dishonest gain (1:7; cf. Acts 5:1-2)
2. Deceivers from the 'circumcision group' causing division and arousing controversy (1:10-16; 3:9-11; cf. Gal 3-5; Acts 15:1)
3. The presence of 'older' men and women in the congregation (2:1-3)
4. Young wives being tempted not to be 'busy at home' (2:5; cf. 1 Thess 5:14; 2 Thess 3:6-12)
5. Christian slaves wanting to be emancipated from their masters (2:9-10; cf. Col 3:22-25; 1 Cor 21-22)
6. People wondering if the doctrine of grace might encourage immorality (2:11-12; cf. Rom 6:15)
7. Christians wondering if they need to obey their rulers (3:1; cf. Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-17).

Once we recognise that none of the recipients of 1 Corinthians had been believers for more than four years, we should find ourselves being cautious in stating categorically that any particular issues are signs of late development. With so many young believers together, almost anything is conceivable!

In fact the reference to the 'circumcision group' (1:10) is a strong indication of a problem frequently encountered *very early* in a congregation's life. This is the only 'doctrinal' (as opposed to 'moral') issue raised by Paul here. Yet we know from Acts and Galatians that this was often the *first* major problem that beset Pauline congregations. In a situation where people from Jewish and Gentile backgrounds simultaneously came into the Christian church, it was almost inevitable that the former would assert their greater knowledge of the Old Testament and assume some spiritual priority over the latter. Their confusing 'whole households' with their teaching (1:11), their focus on 'Jewish myths' and laws laid down by non-Christian Jews (1:14), their focus on 'genealogies' and quarrels about the law' (3:9) – these are all precisely what one might expect from some Jewish Christians in those first few, confusing years. There is thus nothing in Titus which positively demands a later date. On the contrary, the problems in the church are typical for young congregations.

b) The evidence in 1 Timothy

Finally, let us ask the same question of 1 Timothy: are there any issues within the congregation in Ephesus that demand a date later than the 50's AD? Is there anything which unambiguously smacks of 'second generation Christianity'?

Here are some of the features of church life in Ephesus we can detect from 1 Timothy:

1. As in Crete, there are Jewish believers who are focused on the 'law', who teach 'false doctrines' and are 'promoting controversies' through being 'devoted to myths and endless genealogies' (1:3-10; 4:7; 6:3-5); the result is 'godless chatter' and false claims to 'knowledge' (6:20-21).
2. Some individuals have 'ship-wrecked' their faith, by 'blaspheming' and abandoning a 'good conscience' (1:18-20).
3. There may have been a lack of decorum in congregational meetings – with some men getting angry and some women dressing inappropriately or assuming more of a teaching role than Paul thought appropriate (2:1-15).
4. As in Crete, there needs to be greater clarity about the moral qualities required in those offering to be church leaders so that people know how to 'conduct themselves in God's household' (3:11-15); there are several references to 'elders' (5:17, 19) and one reference to the 'laying on of hands', which appears to be an act of commissioning for those chosen to be such elders (5:22).
5. There may already be some 'deceivers' who are forbidding marriage or the eating of 'certain foods'; but note how Paul expressly speaks of this as a potential *future* threat 'in later times', so it may not yet be in evidence (4:1-5).
6. As in Crete, the congregation contains 'older' men and women, some aged over sixty (5:9), and there has been some dispute about which widows should be entitled to receive support from central church funds, being placed on the 'list of widows'; some younger widows have become idle 'busybodies' (5:1-16).
7. As in Crete, some slaves may be being tempted not to respect their human masters (6:1-2).
8. There is a danger of some believers acquiring a 'love of money', so they are commanded to be generous (6:6-10; 17-19).

Reviewing this list we can see that effectively all the issues mentioned in Titus also appear here in some shape or form. However, in this longer document (probably written a few months earlier) many occupy more space. Some moral dangers are spelt out more explicitly (items 2 and 8); there is greater detail about points of congregational management (items 3, 4 and 6); in terms of false teaching, there is the danger of some asceticism (item 5) but otherwise it appears to be essentially the same problem (i.e. Jewish Christians' interpretation of the Old Testament and Jewish traditions) that was found in Crete (item 1).

For many readers today the one controversial point of dating is item 3. That some Christian women were using their newfound freedom in Christ to play a more active role in congregational meetings than in the Jewish synagogue is no surprise – and this could easily have occurred within the first few years (or indeed months) of a congregation's life. What is more difficult for us to accept is that already they were trespassing beyond what *Paul* thought acceptable. For the commonly preferred reconstruction of Paul's thought on this issue is that – at least from the time of writing Galatians (3:28) in AD 48, if not long before – he had a fully egalitarian approach. The stern and restrictive words in 1 Tim 2:11-15 sit uneasily with this reconstruction, so it is assumed that they cannot have been written by Paul in the mid-50s AD and were probably penned by a different author later in the first century.

In Part II we shall return to this issue, when we examine other texts that have been argued to come from an *author* (Paul or otherwise) who wrote at a later date. Here, however, we focus on the *recipients* of these letters. Our contention is that not one of the above eight issues, which describe the Ephesian congregation as found in 1 Timothy, provides clear evidence that the congregation had been in existence for more than four or five years. *All* these issues could have occurred at any point since Paul, Aquila and Priscilla arrived there in spring AD 52 (Acts 18:18).

In particular, the problem of the congregation's duty towards poor widows is something which elsewhere in the New Testament was clearly faced almost immediately (see Acts 6).[31] Moreover, the instructions about 'elders' and 'deacons', far from reflecting some very advanced system of ('proto-catholic') church order, are very rudimentary. It would not take many months before it was obvious that new Christian congregations needed people to adopt agreed roles and functions for the benefit of all concerned; equality in Christ did not obviate this basic fact of 'group dynamics'. Paul, as we have seen, saw this as vital for congregational health 'from the word go' (Acts 14:23; Tit 1:3) and, almost certainly, he simply adapted some of the models known to him from the Jewish synagogue.

6. Conclusion

From the above we conclude that later dates given to both 1 Timothy and Titus may be without foundation. Once we give proper attention to those texts within these letters which hint at their historical setting (the only hard evidence we have, compared with modern retrospective conjecture), some credible dates emerge. We suggest that 1 Timothy was written a few months after Paul had left Ephesus in the autumn of AD 55, thus perhaps around January AD 56. The letter to Titus was written a little later, when Paul's travel plans for the forthcoming year were clearer, and was received by Titus on the island of Crete a few months after he had arrived there at the start of the sailing season, thus perhaps in April – May 56. Both letters were therefore written when the local congregations were still very young, in the first three to six years of their existence.

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Notes

1 An earlier version of this paper was presented to the British New Testament Society in September 2009. The argument expands on ideas mentioned briefly in my *In the Steps of Saint Paul* (Oxford: LionHudson, 2008), which has since been translated into eight European languages; this is a sequel to *In the Steps of Jesus* (Oxford: LionHudson, 2007).

2 There are some variants within these chiefly because 2 Timothy is seen by many as slightly different to 1 Timothy and Titus; see further below section 3. So some scholars would argue that 2 Timothy comes under Option A or B, but the other two letters are pseudonymous (Option C), e.g. J. Murphy O'Connor, '2 Timothy contrasted with 1 Timothy and Titus', *Revue Biblique* 98 (1991) 403-418.

3 E.g. B. Reicke, 'Caesarea, Rome and the Captivity Epistles', in W.W. Gasque and R.P. Martin (eds.), *Apostolic History and the Gospel. Festschrift F.F. Bruce* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970) 277-286; also his 'Chronologie der Pastoralbriefe', *Theologische Literatur Zeitung* 101 (1976) 81-94; J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976); S. de Lestapis, *L'Enigme des Pastorales de Saint Paul* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1976); J. van Bruggen, *Die geschichtliche Einordnung der Pastoralbriefe* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1981). For an initial critique of this view, see I.H. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999) 71-72; and W.D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC; Nashville: Nelson, 2000) lxxxv-vi.

4 L.T. Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1996). My conclusions on all three letters are perhaps closest to Van Bruggen's.

5 Suetonius, *Life of Nero*, 14.6.

6 Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44:3-8.

7 The fear amongst local Roman *Gentile* Christians that Paul's trial before Nero as the self-confessed 'apostle to the Gentiles' would reveal that the Christian faith was now no longer primarily Jewish (and therefore safe as a *religio licita*) may well explain some of the less than warm reception given to Paul in Rome (as sensed in Phil 1:15-18 and perhaps in 2 Tim 4:16).

8 1 Clement 5:1-7; 6:1.

9 Eusebius, *Historia Eccl.*, 2.22.

10 Eusebius, *Chronicon, ad loc*, as noted in J.N.D. Kelley, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

11 There is the additional anomaly, noted in e.g. P.H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy and Titus* (IVP Commentary; Leicester: IVP, 1994), that Paul's own stated ambition was to head *westwards* to Spain (and this is how Clement's *terma* is being interpreted on this reading), when in fact all geographical references in the Pastorals are to the *east*. Was Paul really able to achieve both an eastward and a westward mission in this short period?

12 There are two in Titus (1:5; 3:12-15) and three in 1 Timothy (1:3; 3:14; 4:12). The eight texts in 2 Timothy will be discussed in Part II. Some texts refer back to the time of Jesus, but there is little to indicate whether this is 25 or 50 years ago: see 1 Tim 2:5; 3:16; 6:13. The 'last days' (1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 3:1) *could* be a reference to a later period of apostolic ministry (as opposed to the 'first days') but it more likely refers to the 'last days' inaugurated since Pentecost (Acts 2:17; Heb 1:1; cf. 1 Cor 10:11); see e.g. G.W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) or W.L. Liefeld, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999).

13 See M. Prior, *Paul the Letter-Writer and the Second Letter to Timothy* (JSNT 23, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989) and Murphy O'Connor, '2 Timothy contrasted'.

14 See the comments on this passage in F.F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, rev. ed. 1987), B. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans / Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997) and the fuller argumentation in R. Riesner, *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy, Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

15 See R.J.A. Talbert (ed.), *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Simply by staying on the *Via Egnatia en route* to Dyrrachium Paul would have been able to claim he had been in Illyricum.

16 Cicero, *Against Piso*, 36.89.
17 Known as 'Actia Nicopolis', founded in 31 BC by Augustus after the battle of Actium, it was 200 miles northwest from Athens; by sea it was 200 miles across to Brundisium. There was also a Nicopolis in Thrace (north of Philippi) and in Cilicia; see Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 341 and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 457.
18 Paul had made a similar rendezvous with Titus (coming the opposite way) the previous autumn when Titus had missed the last boat across to Troas; they must have met somewhere on the *Via Egnatia* along the coast of southern Macedonia (2 Cor 1-2, 7-8).
19 See e.g. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*. Paul's brief landing on Crete *en route* to Rome in October AD 59 (Acts 27:8) is irrelevant at this point, since this can hardly be counted as a mission which brought a Christian church into being (nor was Titus travelling with him).
20 These doubts are unnecessary since we know Paul managed to make a 'painful visit' to Corinth during this same time-frame (2 Cor 2:1); see further below and the good arguments in Van Bruggen, *Geschichtliche Einordnung*.
21 Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 150, who cites in support 1 Macc. 10:79; 2 Macc. 4:29; Josephus, *Ap.* 1.77; *War* 1.259 and *Ant.* 14.346.
22 Robinson, *Redating*, 76; see also de Lestapis, *L'enigme*, 52-54.
23 See further below 4(e).
24 C.J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1990) 140-141. The only alternatives were to go via Corinth (requiring, for all but the smallest ships, a change of vessel) or round the treacherous southern tip of the Peloponnese. Indeed the more frequented route may have been along its *southern* shore. The ancient Phoenicians evidently used this southern shore – hence their building the harbour of Phoenix (Acts 27:12).
25 Compare Paul's change of travel plans, which he describes in 2 Corinthians 1-2.
26 This means Titus cannot have, for example, gone to Crete in the summer of AD 55 and been told by Paul at that time to stay on the island for the winter of AD 55/56. This then rules out any possibility that *apelipon* implies Paul 'left' Titus on Crete (whilst he, Paul, sailed away). It also rules out the possibility that Titus was 'left' on Crete for an entire winter.
27 It is not clear whether these two men would be asked to stay the winter in Crete (replacing Titus) or to accompany him back to the mainland to meet up with Paul.
28 This was his policy on Cyprus back in AD 46 (Acts 13:13).
29 Paul encourages Titus to 'help Zenas and Apollos on their way' (3:13) – in other words, they too are not to stay on the island for the winter. Paul may have sensed that the resources of his wider team would be too stretched if these two men were stranded on Crete for five months.
30 The supposed 'lateness' detected in the terminology and response of the *author* will de discussed in Part II.
31 According to reports from missionaries today, this same problem can occur in the first few months after the founding of a new church, e.g. in the Muslim republics of the former USSR.