

HANS DIETER BETZ

Studies in Paul's Letter
to the Philippians

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament*

343

Mohr Siebeck

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament

Herausgeber / Editor

Jörg Frey (Zürich)

Mitherausgeber / Associate Editors

Markus Bockmuehl (Oxford) · James A. Kelhoffer (Uppsala)
Hans-Josef Klauck (Chicago, IL) · Tobias Nicklas (Regensburg)
J. Ross Wagner (Durham, NC)

343



Hans Dieter Betz

Studies in Paul's Letter
to the Philippians

Mohr Siebeck

HANS DIETER BETZ, born 1931, student of Protestant theology at Bethel and Mainz (Germany), and Westminster College, Cambridge (England); 1957 Dr. theol.; 1966 Habilitation at Mainz; 2007 Dr. theol. h.c. Erlangen-Nürnberg; 1963–1978 Professor of New Testament at Claremont, California; 1978–2000 Shailer Mathews Professor of New Testament, University of Chicago (emeritus since 2000); 2014 Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

e-ISBN PDF 978-3-16-153500-0

ISBN 978-3-16-153119-4

ISSN 0512-1604 (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament)

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2015 by Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, Germany. www.mohr.de

This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form (beyond that permitted by copyright law) without the publisher's written permission. This applies particularly to reproductions, translations, microfilms and storage and processing in electronic systems.

The book was typeset by Martin Fischer in Tübingen using Bembo typeface, printed by Gulde-Druck in Tübingen on non-aging paper and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες
Word of Life, – hold it fast
(Phil 2:16)

Preface

Throughout the history of New Testament research, students of Paul's letters have regarded his letter to the Philippians as the most difficult to interpret. As a matter of fact, this letter contains numerous problems which commonly accepted translations have too often left untouched. It is, however, not enough simply to find plausible language to clarify what the Greek text may mean. In addition, existing commentaries have a wealth of hypothetical proposals to offer, but agreements among them are few, mainly because of different methodological presuppositions and approaches. What then is the relationship of the present Studies in Paul's Letter to the Philippians to the commentary literature? The following seven chapters are not presenting another full commentary on the letter, but concern themselves with a number of hitherto unresolved problems. To existing commentaries the Studies are supplemental, or, regarding future commentaries, they are preparatory. As to the investigations, they start from the basic literary condition of the Greek text. They are, therefore, concentrating on issues of literary analysis of five crucial text segments, which taken together will also determine the composition of the letter as a whole. These text segments involve exegetical analyses of their literary structure and cultural background. The methods applied are, therefore, philological and historical. The results of these applications show that Philippians is a literary composition done finally by a secondary redactor who integrated Paul's original main letter by inserting two attachments into it. All sections were authored by Paul himself who speaks in the first person singular. As author he was joined by Timothy as co-sender, which means that the latter also approved of the content. It should be realized that among the Pauline letters, Philippians occupies a special place. I have become convinced on the basis of all the exegetical investigations I and others have undertaken that this letter contains Paul's last words written not long before his death, and that it emerged from his imprisonment in Rome. Whoever reads letters written from prison should be prepared not only for a special perspective and expressions as signs for high intensity and mental agitation that may have caused gaps and haste because of lack of time. Under these circumstances an author like Paul states concisely and to the point what he thinks he should

tell the Philippian Christians and all the churches he had founded. Since the Philippians had asked him to explain his circumstances (1:12) he does so by stating the facts as he sees them and their probable consequences, so that the focus is on the issues of the Christian faith. This includes Paul's last reckoning with his own "faith, hope, and love," and the dire consequences for that faith.

The most likely date of origin of the letter is the time after 62 CE, when Nero replaced Afranius Burrus, the deceased *praefectus praetorio*, with the rogue Ofonius Tigellinus. This man also became Nero's main advisor, after Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the philosopher, had resigned from this office. During Tigellinus' regime the jurisdictional administration eventually collapsed, when a wave of illicit murders of suspected enemies of Nero swept through the city. As a result, Paul's trial was never completed, but he most likely became a victim of rampant thugs murdering countless presumed enemies of Nero and Tigellinus. According to Philippians, Paul faced the situation prior to the pronouncement of his verdict, when he did not know what the verdict was going to be, dismissal or condemnation, – dismissal because of procedural failure, or death because of political turmoil.

Among the matters of Paul's consideration was his avoidance of any comments that could be read by his prison-guards and censors as hostility to the emperor. This self-censorship, as we would call it, must also have been the reason why he omitted any concrete references to his own opponents and the Jewish-Christian community in Rome. Apart from these matters, however, his report is clear enough, even concerning his own biography and positions on Christian theology.

Concerning his biography, in Phil 3:1b–21 he reminds his readers of how he began his church activities as a member of the Pharisaic movement sharing their principles regarding the eschatological status of "righteousness" and, consequently, their opposition to the teachings of Jesus and his followers. Fighting the latter as "heretics" Paul had gone to the extremes of persecution of the "church of God" (Phil 3:6; cf. Gal 1:13, 23; 1 Cor 15:9). As a result of learning more about the theology of the Jesus movement he then became convinced that the Pharisaic point of view was wrong and that the followers of Jesus were right (Phil 3:6–10). Therefore, Paul quit Pharisaism, joined the Jesus movement, and became the leader of the early Christian mission to the Gentiles, later even calling himself by the name "apostle of the Gentiles" (Rom 11:13; cf. 15:16). Thus, in Philippians he can treat this change as simply a shift among parties due to theological arguments (see below, Chapter III).

Since the letter to the Philippians had been written under the pressure of time, Epaphroditus, the messenger from Philippi, was anxious to leave Rome as soon as possible. As already mentioned, the "mailings" he was to take back

to Philippi contained, besides the main letter, two separate *attachments*, documents by nature, one being a copied *memorandum* (3:1b–21), and the other a *receipt* (4:10–20). These three parts together formed the *one mailing* which Epaphroditus took back to Philippi.

The investigations which are now before the reader point to a rich cultural context in Hellenistic and Roman literature of the time. This context also provides applicable literary genres, and also traditions of religious and philosophical language and thought. Analyzing these matters requires entering into the complexities in their Hellenistic cultural background. In addition, investigations are to be guided by modern literary concepts, some of which are clarified in the Introduction (Chapter I). Besides the analyses of the two attachments (Chapters III: “An Autobiographical Memorandum” and VI: “The Cost of Mission: a Look at Paul’s Finances”), Paul engaged in the working out of *gnomic sententiae*, an art form popular at the time. As sayings compositions they deal with ethical issues of significance for the practical life of the Christians. These issues are covered in Chapters II (“A Statement of Principle”), IV (“On Being a Paulinist”), and V (“On Self-sufficiency”). The final Chapter VII (“On the Question of the Literary Genre”) deals with the letter as a whole.

Moving now to the present age, acknowledgements and expressions of gratitude are due. In all fairness, among the many who deserve recognition, the Apostle and his staff should be named first. His co-sender Timothy and Epaphroditus, the delegate from Philippi, expended all their energy in disregard of the risks involved to get the “mailings” ready, passed through the controls, and delivered to Philippi. Next come all those who assisted the author of the present book by comments, criticism as well as encouragement, and technical expertise. The Dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School, Margaret M. Mitchell, did all she could to further the project. Justin Howell and Klaus Hermannstädter spent many hours checking references and improving the language. As to the final phase, thanks are due to Dr. h.c. Georg Siebeck, a publisher comparable to T. Pomponius Atticus; the editors of the series “Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament” and the staff of Mohr Siebeck, especially Dr. Henning Ziebritzki and Matthias Spitzner for their pleasant and efficient cooperation.

Chicago, May 2014

Hans Dieter Betz

Table of Contents

Preface	V
Abbreviations	XI
I. Introduction	1
II. A Statement of Principle (Phil 1:21–26)	19
III. An Autobiographical Memorandum (Phil 3:1b–21)	47
IV. On Being a Paulinist (Phil 4:8–9)	69
V. On Self-Sufficiency (Phil 4:10–13)	91
VI. The Cost of Mission: A Look at Paul’s Finances (Phil 4:10–20)	113
VII. On the Question of the Literary Genre	133
Bibliography	155
1. Ancient Greek and Latin Sources	155
2. Commentaries on Philippians and Philemon	159
3. Further Commentaries and Scholarly Literature	161
Indices	
1. Greek Literature	175
2. Latin Literature	177
3. Old Testament (LXX) and Hellenistic Judaism	178
4. New Testament and Apocrypha	179
5. Patristic Literature	188
6. Modern Authors	188

Abbreviations

<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
AKG	Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
ANTF	Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung
ASAW.PH	Abhandlungen der sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philologisch-historische Klasse
<i>BDAG</i>	Walter Bauer, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (32000)
<i>BDF</i>	Friedrich Blass & Albert Debrunner, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament</i> , ed. Robert W. Funk
BHTh	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BKAW	Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften
BKP	Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie
<i>BN</i>	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BSGRNT	Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
BT	Bibliotheca Teubneriana
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BzA	Beiträge zur Altertumskunde
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CNT	Commentaires du Nouveau Testament
CR	Corpus Reformatorum
<i>D.-K.</i>	Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> (61951/52)
<i>DLZ</i>	<i>Deutsche Literaturzeitung</i>
DTV	Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag
EHS.T	Europäische Hochschulschriften Reihe 23: Theologie
<i>EC</i>	<i>Early Christianity</i>
ed. (eds.)	editor (editors)
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ET	English translation
EtB	Etudes bibliques
fzb	Forschungen zur Bibel
<i>FGrHist</i>	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , ed. F. Jacoby
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments

GThF	Greifswalder Theologische Forschungen
HA	Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HThKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUTH	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
<i>HWPh</i>	<i>Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie</i>
<i>HWRh</i>	<i>Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik</i>
Hyp	Hypomnemata
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JbAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
JSNT.S	Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neuen Testament
KPS	Klassisch-philologische Studien
LCL	The Loeb Classical Library
<i>LSJ</i>	Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stewart Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i>
MBPF	Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte
Mn.S	Mnemosyne Supplementum
NewDocs	New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity
NF	Neue Folge
NHC	Nag Hammadi Codices
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NKZ</i>	<i>Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift</i>
<i>NRSV</i>	<i>New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (1989)</i>
<i>NT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NT.S	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NTA	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTSMS	New Testament Studies Monograph Series
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts
ÖTBK	Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar
PG	Patrologia Graeca
<i>PGL</i>	<i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> , ed. G. W. H. Lampe
<i>Ph.</i>	<i>Philologus</i>
PhAnt	Philosophia Antiqua
PKNT	Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament
PL	Patrologia Latina
QSP	Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie
<i>RAC</i>	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>REB</i>	<i>The Revised English Bible (1989)</i>

RGG	<i>Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i>
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
RPP	<i>Religion Past and Present</i>
RVV	Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten
SAPERE	Scripta Antiquitatis Posterioris ad Ethicam Religionemque Pertinentia
SB	Preisigke, Friedrich; Bilabel, Friedrich; Kiessling, Emil, <i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten</i> , (1913–1967)
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature, Monograph Series
SBL SBS	Society of Biblical Literature, Sources for Biblical Study
SCBO	Scriptorium Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis
SCHNT	Studia ad Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti
SGV	Sammlung gemeinverständlicher Vorträge und Schriften aus dem Gebiet der Theologie und Religionsgeschichte
SHAW.PH	Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse
SNTSMS	Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas, Monograph Series
SQAW	Schriften und Quellen der Alten Welt
STA	Studia et Testimonia Antiqua
STAC	Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum
SVF	<i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i>
TBAW	Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
ThHK	Theologischer Handkommentar
TWNT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
UALG	Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WS	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZB	<i>Zürcher Bibel (2007)</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
ZStH	<i>Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie</i>
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

I. Introduction

At the beginning of a work, readers expect to be informed what it is about. In other words, what does the title of the book announce? The title *Studies in Paul's Letter to the Philippians* indicates that it is not a full commentary running through this letter line by line, but it contains chapters dealing with individual problems or questions that are or ought to be under discussion. Generally, the difference is that while a commentary's task is to explain a given document in its entirety,¹ "studies" present further investigations regarding specific passages or problems yet unresolved or even undiscovered. Such studies not only presuppose but also challenge existing commentaries, to which they intend to make additional contributions, challenging their authors to rethink and revise issues in future editions. In the case of Philippians there exist numerous commentaries from different periods in history; in addition there is a vast literature of critical reviews, chapters in thematic books, essays, miscellaneous comments, and references of all sorts.²

Biblical commentaries, in particular, can be of very different kinds.³ Most of them claim to be based on the existing biblical texts, but they differ about what these claims involve. They may focus on the so-called *Urtext* (original wording in Greek),⁴ on the reconstruction of the best text as preserved by the best manuscripts,⁵ or on authoritative standard translations or a new translation, on a selection of translations favored by particular communities,

¹ The "commentary" as a literary genre has a long tradition, with biblical commentaries having developed as a genre by itself. See Ulrich Püschel, "Kommentar," *HWRh* 4 (1998) 1179–1187; Robert A. Kaster, "Commentary," *Brill's New Pauly* 3 (2003) 630–631.

² See Hans Weder, "Biblical Scholarship, II. New Testament," *RPP* 2 (2007) 78–83 ["Bibelwissenschaft, II. Neues Testament," *RGG* 1 (41998) 1529–1538].

³ Udo Schnelle et al., "Biblical Criticism, II. Methods of Biblical Criticism applied to the New Testament," *RPP* 2 (2007) 61–64 ["Bibelkritik, II. Methoden der Bibelkritik im Neuen Testament," *RGG* 1 (41998) 1480–1486].

⁴ See Lars Rydbeck, "Bible, III.3: The language of the New Testament," *RPP* 2 (2007) 12–13 ["Bibel III.3: Die Sprache des Neuen Testaments," *RGG* 1 (41998) 1424–1426].

⁵ See Michael Welte and Beate Köster, "Biblical Manuscripts, II. New Testament," *RPP* 2 (2007) 67–70 ["Bibelhandschriften, II. Neues Testament," *RGG* 1 (41998) 1459–1464].

or on especially preferred commentaries.⁶ Whatever category a given commentary may represent, the implication is always a degree of finality. Even if the need for corrections of errors and imperfections is generally admitted by the author, the commentary implies the recommendation to the readers that it is worthy of their confidence. Commentaries also imply the claim that without them, the texts remain nearly incomprehensible for untrained readers. Therefore, some types of commentaries replace the texts themselves by supplying a new paraphrase instead of a translation.⁷ Taking advantage of the general problems with translating texts from one language into another,⁸ some commentaries in fact create new texts, abandoning the old as outdated. Others attempt to attract readers by titles dressed up by deceptive rhetoric such as, e. g., “new translation.”

Whatever these basic assumptions may be, readers of any translated text deserve to be clearly informed about its general presuppositions. Thereby, readers ought to get a sense of how complicated and difficult a task it is to “translate” (i. e. transpose) any document from the past into the present. Among the fundamental presuppositions to be explained are the following.

1. The text

Any written document, whether ancient or modern, poses the question of the nature of the text.⁹ One ought to keep always in mind that we are not able to lay our eyes and hands today on the “original text” (*Urtext*) as written by any author in the past. Except in rare cases, we can be glad if we have at all access to extant copies of *Vorlagen*.¹⁰ This is true even for inscriptions in stone which the stonemasons have copied from their *Vorlagen*, and these can be of various sorts.¹¹ Such *Vorlagen* may have been complete or fragmented,

⁶ See Cécile Dogniez et al., “Bible Translations,” *RPP* 2 (2007) 39–57 [“Bibelübersetzungen,” *RGG* 1 (41998) 1487–1515].

⁷ On this literary category see Jörg Kilian, “Paraphrase,” *HWRh* 6 (2003) 556–562.

⁸ On the scientific study of the problems of translation see Jörn Albrecht, “Übersetzung,” *HWRh* 9 (2009) 870–886 (with bibl.).

⁹ See Gerd Antos, “Text,” *HWRh* 9 (2009) 489–509 (with bibl.); Bernd Auerochs, Werner G. Jeanrond, Christoph Hartmeier, “Text,” *RPP* 12 (2012) 572–574 [*RGG* 8 (42005) 196–199].

¹⁰ The term has no English equivalent; see the definition in *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. Lesley Brown (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), vol. 2, 3602, s. v. *vorlage*, 2: “An original version of a manuscript from which a copy is produced.”

¹¹ How complicated things can get has been demonstrated by the famous case of the Abercius inscription, according to Margaret M. Mitchell, “Looking for Abercius: Reima-

existing in one or several versions, copied accurately or flawed, the lettering being of high or poor quality. Copyists can generally be assumed to be people doing the best they can to produce good work, but they can also work more like editors, amending the *Vorlage* when they see the need for it. Scribes may go about their work honestly, but they may also do so naively. As in the case of Paul's letters, authors may authenticate the work of copyists by adding a reference by their own hand, but these authentications then become part of the copyist's work and can therefore be authentic or not.¹² Other complications need to be examined. While most copyists are professionals who are convinced of the solidity of their work, they do need checking by correctors; also, different copyists, although using the same *Vorlage* can still end up with different copies. As a result, we do not have any of Paul's original letters because all of them have been copied from *Vorlagen*.

What then about the "original texts" that the Apostle Paul himself wrote or authorized? Historically, as said before, we do not have any "originals" to lay our eyes or hands on but only copies of copies. It is the undeniable truth that all textual material extant from the past is in this condition. However, the fact that we have this extant material at all is not a reason for despair. Once we realize that most of the vast literature that once existed is lost forever, we should appreciate even more what is left, though only as manuscript copies.

It is for this reason that historians, philologists, and librarians are obsessively engaged with the preservation of every scrap of literature that has so far survived the small or great onslaughts of destruction that characterize both past and present history.

It should also be realized that such destruction happens not merely by erosion or bad accident, but "book burnings" have occurred and still occur. By will and purpose, they are usually encouraged and ideologically justified by governments as well as mass movements or revolutionary uprisings. Other losses have happened because authors who had read or excerpted from sources then failed to preserve these sources. As a result, the treasures of our great research libraries, whether as manuscript copies or originals, exist to collect

gining Contexts of Interpretation of the 'Earliest Christian Inscription,'" in: Laurie Brink and Deborah Green, eds., *Commemorating the Dead: Texts and Artifacts in Context; Studies in Roman, Jewish, and Christian Burials* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2008), 303–335; Eadem, "The Poetics and Politics of Christian Baptism in the Abercius Monument," in: David Hellholm et al., eds., *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity* (BZNV 176/2; Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011), vol. 2, 1743–1782.

¹² See Gal 6:11; 1 Cor 16:21; Phlm 19; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17.

and protect what has so far escaped from natural disasters as well as from epidemics of human foolishness, carelessness, or willful destruction.

Realizing these historical facts, there is always also room for surprising wonders. Unexpected discoveries of ancient and modern manuscripts have been part of life since antiquity as well. Manuscript discoveries of single documents and even whole libraries, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi library, are known nearly to everybody alive, thanks to the public media which have been eager to report numerous discoveries resulting from archaeological excavations, from unexamined holdings in libraries, or from collections in private possession.

Given these facts, it is not impossible that literary *Vorlagen*, when their copies agree verbatim, may contain original texts which authors wrote by their own hand or dictated to their secretaries, but this remains a matter of possibility. In the case of Paul's letters, the sheer possibility, unlikely as it is, should be admitted that *Vorlagen* of copies, which we may be able to reconstruct from manuscripts, in fact represent what Paul (and his co-authors) wrote and authorized. This possibility, however, although it may not be provable by evidence, still provides the scholars with energy and excitement in their continuing study of these documents.

There is one more complication regarding the matter of the text. True, the text is what authors have written down and authorized. However, this text is the result of the process of letter-writing. This process of text creation is complex and begins at an oral stage, when the authors, in the case of Philippians Paul and his co-sender Timothy, get ready to reply to the Philippians' request for information, which was transmitted by their delegate Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25–30). Probably, their discussions, possibly including Epaphroditus, led to a draft which after going through an editorial stage, resulted in the final draft of the letter. The text to be sent to Philippi could have involved a secretarial scribe, but in this case there was probably no time for it because of the urgent departure of Epaphroditus. Probably also, Paul kept a copy for himself, perhaps in a copy-book.

At any rate, the first readers of the final letter text were Paul as author and Timothy as co-sender. As has been pointed out, the concept of the "reader" is anything but simple.¹³ The first reading of the letter is special because it completes the role of authorship and final approval. Notably, the text of the "mailing" which Epaphroditus took back to Philippi also contained attach-

¹³ See Isabel-Dorothea Otto, "Leser," *HWRh* 5 (2001) 170–84; Pierre Bayard, *How to Talk about Books You haven't read*. Trans. from the French by Jeffrey Mehlman (New York: Bloomsbury, 2007).

ments now included in manuscript texts printed in Nestle-Aland. When the Philippians received the letter together with the attachments, they were supposedly read aloud in the church of Philippi, thereby returning to the oral stage.¹⁴ Possibly, the written materials were then kept in the church's archive, from which copies were made to distribute to other churches. Due to the later redactor of Philippians, the attachments were not thrown away as incidentals but were made part of the letter that we now have.

2. The manuscripts

Since the extant manuscripts of Paul's letters do not directly represent their "original text" (*Urtext*),¹⁵ they are part of their reception history. The vast reception history of Paul's letter-writing is not extant in its entirety, but only as far as manuscripts have preserved it. To investigate the extant manuscripts critically is the task of the scholarly discipline called "text criticism."¹⁶ Compiling innumerable manuscript findings, text criticism has resulted in the critical editions of the New Testament. These editions have emerged as part of the history of text criticism, and thus they are themselves historical. This means that as historical entities they may change with every new manuscript discovery, and therefore their scientific status remains "hypothetical." Those readers who find this status of hypothesis disappointingly low should realize that nearly all critical scholarship leads to hypothetical results. To be sure, "hypotheses" must be established and substantiated by evidential data. The term "hypothesis" is a scientific category and should not be confused with off-the-cuff ideas, fanciful intuitions, or guesswork often called "thesis."¹⁷ In general, the human traits of biblical texts should be seen in light of the statement of John's Gospel (1:14) that "the Word became flesh" (ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο).

Therefore, manuscripts of Paul's letters are evidence of extant texts, handwritten by scribes on papyrus, parchment, vellum, ostraka or other materials, between the time of their origin and the invention of the printing press in the 15th/16th century.¹⁸ Texts handwritten later are suspect of being forger-

¹⁴ Cf. Jutta Sandstede, "Lesung," *HWRh* 5 (2001) 184–93.

¹⁵ The problem is related to that of "original language," see Richard Baum, "Ursprache," *HWRh* 9 (2009) 941–957 (bibl.).

¹⁶ See Barbara Aland, "Text Criticism of the Bible, II. New Testament," *RPP* 12 (2012) 575–578 (bibl.) ["Textkritik der Bibel, II. Neues Testament," *RGG* 8 (42005) 201–207].

¹⁷ For definitions see Walter Veit, "These, Hypothese," *HWRh* 9 (2009) 541–565.

¹⁸ See Gottfried Hammann, "Printing and Publishing," *RPP* 10 (2011) 390–392; Herbert Hunger et al., eds. *Geschichte der Textüberlieferung der antiken und mittelalterlichen Literatur*

ies.¹⁹ The discipline of text criticism is charged with clarifying the nature of manuscripts, their dates and provenance, their accurate wording, and their relationships with other manuscripts. As endlessly painstaking as this work is, it enables scholars to identify the relatively oldest and best-attested manuscripts and to establish their probably oldest wording. This emerging wording then supports the readings making up the established text of the critical editions.²⁰ As a rule, this process takes us to the versions closest to what the author had written down first. To be sure, these text-critical procedures should be the same for all documents from antiquity and even modernity. Their careful application is the only feasible protection we have against accidental or intentional falsification of the texts on which all subsequent interpretations depend.

3. Critical-historical commentaries

Modern scholarly commentaries to the New Testament, in particular on Paul's letters, are based on the early critical editions, among which the Nestle-Aland is recognized by most scholars as outstanding and authoritative.²¹ The honor of having presented the first such critical commentaries on Paul's Letter to the Philippians goes to two 19th-century scholars: Joseph Barber Lightfoot (1828–1889)²² and Bernhard Weiss (1827–1918).²³ Among the

(2 vols.; Zürich: Atlantis-Verlag, 1961–1964); Hermann Harrauer, *Handbuch der griechischen Paläographie* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2010); Roger Bagnall, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁹ E. g. the discovery of “Chicago’s Archaic Mark (ms 2427)” as being a modern forgery; see Margaret M. Mitchell, Joseph G. Barabe and Abigail B. Quandt, “Chicago’s ‘Archaic Mark’ (ms 2427) II: Microscopic, Chemical and Codicological Analyses Confirm Modern Production” (unpublished); Margaret M. Mitchell and Patricia Duncan, “Chicago’s ‘Archaic Mark’ (Ms 2427): Reintroduction to its Enigmas and a Fresh Collation of its Readings,” *NT* 48 (2006) 1–35.

²⁰ See Klaus Junack et al., eds. *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus*, vols. 2/1–2: *Die paulinischen Briefe* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1989–1994). For Philippians, see vol. 2/2, 92–126.

²¹ *Novum Testamentum Graece*, eds. Barbara and Kurt Aland et al. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, ²⁸2012). See also Bruce M. Metzger, ed., *The Greek New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, ⁴1993); Id., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; New York: United Bible Societies, ²2000).

²² Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1868; ⁴1881; repr. Lynn, MA: Hendrickson, 1981). The 1st ed. was dedicated to B. F. Westcott.

²³ Bernhard Weiss, *Der Philipperbrief ausgelegt und die Geschichte seiner Auslegung kritisch dargelegt* (Berlin: Hertz, 1859). Dedicated to his teacher, I. A. Dorner.