Pauline pseudepigraphy continues to pose important questions for Pauline studies—even if such issues are purported to be settled in some circles. These questions include, without attempting to be exhaustive, issues regarding exegesis, interpretation, Pauline thought and practice, the Gentile mission, Pauline theology, and canon, among others. The Pastoral Epistles must be included within this larger debate, especially as several recent commentators have revivified the discussion over Pauline authorship by arguing for authenticity. The debatable issues in the Pastorals continue to revolve around a relatively fixed set of issues, which include matters of epistolary format, style, content, and theology, and usually if only briefly chronology. The epistolary format of the Pastorals is sometimes said to be significantly different from the “genuine” Pauline letters, with personal matters receding into the background as church matters emerge. This would presumably explain why 1 Timothy does not include a Thanksgiving (neither does Titus). The problem here is that, apart from the Pastorals, there is only one other perhaps genuinely personal letter in the Pauline canon for comparison, the letter to Philemon, and it is arguably on the margin of such a designation, as it is addressed to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus and the church. The matter of style continues to be highly problematic. Numerically-based studies of vocabulary continue to be indecisive, for numerous reasons regarding sample size, means of calculation, and comparison of other letters. Style proper is equally problematic, as there has been no decisive answer to the question of sample size and the issue of what is the acceptable range of stylistic deviation.

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1 A number of recent major commentaries have argued for Pauline authenticity. These include those by George W. Knight, The Pastoral Epistles (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992); William D. Mounce, Pastoral Epistles (WBC 46; Nashville: Nelson, 2000); and Luke Timothy Johnson, The First and Second Letters to Timothy (AB 35A; New York: Doubleday, 2001). This does not mean, of course, that those skeptical of Pauline authorship have not continued to promote their position, as they have. I do not attempt to survey all the work in the Pastoral Epistles in this article.
for any author. In terms of content, the Pastorals have often been characterized as reflecting early Catholicism, with their references to ostensive church offices and disputes characteristic of the second century. This formulation does not adequately address the use of similar terminology in Phil 1:1 (or Acts 14:23) or that the disputes within the Pastorals can be paralleled within the undisputed letters (especially 1 Corinthians and Galatians). Supposed theological deviance of the Pastoral Epistles that is often cited includes terminological differences from the undisputed letters, such as the use of the concepts of faith, righteousness, or love, and the characterization of what it means to be “in Christ” or that God is savior. There are also said to be ideas that are unique to the Pastorals. All of these are said to reflect later theological developments captured by the supposed Pauline pseudepigrapher. The question, however, remains—how much diversity can be found within a single author, especially when none of the ideas appear to be contradictory of established Pauline thought? Besides, if the Pastorals are so deviant, how is it that they were ever and so long thought to be genuinely Pauline? These issues continue to be debated, where they are genuinely debated.

The issue I wish to address in this paper, however, is the issue of Pauline chronology in relation to the Pastoral Epistles. One of the factors, even if a relatively minor one compared to the others, that seems to have forced the Pastorals in the direction of being considered pseudepigraphal is their unsettled state within the established Pauline chronology, especially as established by the book of Acts. It has long been asserted that the Pastoral Epistles sit uncomfortably within the established Pauline chronology. The positing of a second Roman imprisonment alleviated some of the pressure, because, even if there is minimal evidence, this provides at least a position within an extended Pauline chronology. Since the time of J. E. C. Schmidt and Friedrich Schleiermacher for 1 Timothy, followed

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2 The above synopsis of issues reflects my previous discussion in Stanley E. Porter, “Pauline Authorship and the Pastoral Epistles: Implications for Canon,” *BBR* 5 (1995): 105–23. For one of the latest discussions of these same issues, see Donald A. Hagner, *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 614–26, esp. 614–21. A similar type of discussion is found in most New Testament introductions and commentaries on one or more of the Pastoral Epistles. I do not even attempt to survey all of them or to report their discussions.

3 I phrase it this way, because I note that there is an unfortunate trend in some scholarship to believe that such issues of authenticity and pseudepigraphy of the Pauline letters, especially the Pastoral Epistles, are finally settled. For example, in Oda Wischmeyer (ed.), *Paul: Life, Setting, Work, Letters* (trans. Helen S. Heron; rev. Dieter T. Roth; London: T&T Clark, 2012), there is no debate (that I can find) of authorship for a number of Paul’s letters. They are simply labeled deutero- and trito-Pauline (see pp. 307–38).