Knowing Pieter Willem van der Horst and his outstanding scholarship for many years, one of the most interesting things to learn from him is that there is no topic or area in antiquity which is not worth of earnest consideration or reconsideration. This encourages me to contribute to his Festschrift a fresh look or—using the now common terminology in New Testament research—a new perspective on the Pastoral Epistles, which historically and theologically appear to be rather marginal compared to other writings of the Corpus Paulinum. Admittedly, the expression ‘new perspective’ should rather be read as ‘new old perspective’, since it in fact considers anew older views on the Pastoral Epistles, particularly on their relationship to each other challenging the actual communis opinio about them. Focusing on an exemplary analysis of the ecclesiological terminology of the letters, I will question the common ‘dogma’\(^1\) of the compositional unity of the Pastoral Epistles, which is broadly accepted at least in German scholarship, whereas English speaking research always acknowledged different approaches. Thus, in this article I propose a more differentiated perception of these letters which points to an alternative perspective on their relationship.\(^2\)

\[\text{The Thesis of the Literary Unity of the Pastoral Epistles in Scholarship}\]

Despite their rather marginal standing, it is impressive to see what huge commentaries have been written on the Pastoral Epistles over the last

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\(^1\) For this term see L.T. Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 35A), Garden City 2001, 52.

\(^2\) The thesis of this article has been first presented at the 2005 SBL Annual Meeting in Philadelphia and is part of a commentary project on the Pastoral Epistles. It might be mentioned that I consider this a ‘Problemanzeige’ and not a comprehensive attempt to solve a question which has been neglected in scholarship for a long time. Some considerations presented here have already been made in J. Herzer, ‘Abschied vom Konsens? Die Pseudepigraphie der Pastoralbriefe als Herausforderung an die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft’, *ThL*\(^2\) 129 (2004), 1267–82.
two decades. Given this comprehensive research, we actually should know everything about them, and many scholars think that we do have a broad consensus about their interpretation. The most important element of this consensus is the assumption that the so-called *Corpus pastorale* forms a literary unity. The idea of a corpus has initially been brought up in German scholarship of the early nineteenth century by Ferdinand C. Baur in his dispute with Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher. After Johann E.C. Schmidt (1804), Schleiermacher was the first critical scholar who argued extensively that the language and content of 1 Tim differs from the Pauline letters (including 2 Tim and Tit!) to such a high degree that it has to be identified as a pseudepigraphical writing which depends on Tit and 2 Tim. Following Schleiermacher’s view on 1 Tim, Johann G. Eichhorn claimed in 1812 that all three letters have to be treated the same way, mainly because of their similarity in style.

For Baur, too, Schleiermacher’s argument referring only to 1 Tim was of no ‘Haltpunkt’, because of the specific relationship between the three letters. Considering only 1 Tim and separating it from 2 Tim

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8 Baur, *Die sogenannten Pastoralbriefe*, 3.