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The Intimacy of Paul to the Thessalonians in 1Thess. 2: 7b-12

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Abstract: In one of the earliest documents of Christianity, in a highly patriarchal society, when addressing Gentile Christians, Paul did not hesitate to liken himself not only to a father, but also to a woman who cares for her *own* children. In contrast to itinerant philosophers, he did not only preach, but by the example of his life showed love for them, even to the point of sacrificing his being. The metaphor of the mother relates among other things with the admonition to avoid prostitution and the *koinonia* of all during and after the Last Judgment.

In the oldest document of Christianity, Paul speaks to Christians of all nations and does not stop, in a upmost Patriarchal society, trying to assimilate himself with the image of a woman in the way she nurtures and cares for her *own* children. He does not simply preach, but unlike the wandering philosophers, he has such calmness, compassion and love for them in which he gives his soul, his being. Simultaneously, he is a father, since with his example and sayings, he teaches everyone, individually, to stay away from iniquity and prays unceasingly. The presentation of the sender as a mother and father of the recipients, brothers of the newborn Church of Thessaloniki, relates to the call to stay away from harlotry and that everybody will coexist during and after the Second Coming of our Lord.

Translation by: Nikolaos Georgantonis

Streszczenie: W jednym z najstarszych dokumentów chrześcijaństwa, w bardzo patriarchalnym społeczeństwie, apostoł Paweł zwracając się do Chrześcijan z pogan, nie waha się upodobnić nie tylko do ojca, ale także kobiety, która jako niania dba o własne dzieci. W przeciwieństwie do wędrownych filozofów, apostoł Paweł nie tylko nauczał słowem, lecz i przykładem swojego życia ukazywał łagodność, dobroczynność i miłość, ofiarowując swoją duszę i życie. Metafora matki związana jest między innymi z upomnieniem, aby unikać prostytucji i tworzyć wspólnotę wszystkich w trakcie życia doczesnego i po Sądzie Ostatecznym.

W najstarszym dokumencie chrześcijaństwa, Paweł mówi do chrześcijan wszystkich narodów, nie zatrzymuje się na społeczeństwie patriarchalnym, lecz stara się zasymilować z obrazem kobiety - piastunki, i tak jak ona karmi i troszczyć się o własne dzieci. On nie tylko głosił, ale w przeciwieństwie do wędrujących filozofów, miał taki spokój, współczucie i miłość do tych ludzi, dla których oddawał swoją duszę i całe swoje istnienie. Jednocześnie, ukazuje się w postaci ojca, ponieważ jego przykład i słowa, uczyły wszystkich, indywidualnie, pozostawiania z dala od nieprawości i nieustannej modlitwy. Prezentacja autora listu jako matki i ojca odbiorców, braci rodzącego się Kościoła w Salonikach, związane jest w związane było z wezwaniem do pozostawiania z dala od nierządu, i skłonienia adresatów do zgodnego współistnienia we wspólnocie zarówno przed, jaki i po drugim przyjściu naszego Pana.

Keywords: beneficent nurse, intimacy, benevolence, metaphor

Słowa kluczowe: dobroczynny opiekun, intymność, życzliwość, metafora

Introduction

On the parent-child metaphors/εικόνας¹ in 1 Thess. with which Paul seeks to bind his “children” to himself in a special way, focus two studies: (a) T.J. Burke in his *A Socio-Historical Study of Kinship Metaphors in 1 Thessalonians*, London 2003 investigates the role of the parents in the graeco-roman literature and accordingly in the oldest

epistle of Paul². (b) Christine Gerber in her *Paulus und seine ‚Kinder‘. Studien zur Beziehungsmetaphorik der paulinischen Briefe* (2005³) dedicates the chapter 6 to *Paulus*

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¹ According to Aristoteles *ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ἡ εἰκὼν μεταφορά· διαφέρει γὰρ μικρόν· ὅταν μὲν γὰρ εἴπῃ «[τὸν Ἀχιλλέα] ὡς δὲ λέων ἐπόρουσεν», εἰκὼν ἔστιν, ὅταν δὲ «λέων ἐπόρουσε», μεταφορά· διὰ γὰρ τὸ ἄμφω ἀνδρείους εἶναι, προσηγόρουσεν μετενέγκας λέοντα τὸν Ἀχιλλέα. χρήσιμον δὲ ἡ εἰκὼν καὶ ἐν λόγῳ, ὀλιγάκις δὲ ποιητικὸν γάρ. (Rhet 1406b.20-26 comp.Poet. 21). One of the examples refers to the nurse: *καὶ ὡς Δημοκράτης εἰκασεν τοὺς ῥήτορας ταῖς τίθαις αἰ τὸ ψῶμιμα καταπίνουσαι τῷ σιάλω τὰ παιδία παραλείφουσι* (1407a.8-10).*

² As Burke states, the father-son relationship obeys to the hierarchy-pyramid reason which portrays the first as the object of obedience and imitation by the second. The father offered love and teaching although there was a distinction between the tenderness of the nurse and fatherly love. See also Paul's Role as 'Father' to his Corinthian 'Children' in *Socio-Historical Context* (1 Cor. 4:14-21). *Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall*. Supplements to *Novum Testamentum*, (ed. Trevor J. Burke and J. Keith Elliott). Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003 95-113 - *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor*. *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 22. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006.-Adopted as Sons: The Missing Piece in Pauline Soteriology.

³ Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft - BZNW 136 Berlin-New York: Walter de Gruyter. The history of exegesis possibly starts with F. Zimmer, *I Thess. 2, 3-8 erklärt*. *Theologische Studien Herrn ... Professor D. Bernard Weiss zu seinem 70. Geburtstag dargebracht*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897, 248-273. In the greek bibliography see N. Louvaris, *Το Θεσσαλονικέων Α' 2,1-16 (Ερμηνευτικὸν Ὑπόμνημα)*, *Γρ. Παλ 9* (1925) 72-84. 97-110. 395-406. E. Adamitzoglou, *Η περιεκτική γλώσσα και οι συμβολισμοί του αποστολικού έργου. Μια γυναικεία ερμηνευτική θεώρηση των στίχ. Α' Θεσ 2, 8.11.17, Καϊρός. Τόμος*

als Vater und Mutter einer neuen Familie (1 Thes. 2, 7-12. 17-20). Die Bedeutung der Missionare für die Gemeinde von Thessalinoch in der Konstruktion des Briefes⁴.

In this exposition I will examine (1) the structure of the Section 2:7b-13 and the rhetoric strategy of Paul, (2) the meaning and the purpose of the comparison of the apostle with nurse and father, (3) the behavior of the itinerant philosophers in the graeco-roman world, (4) his intimacy with Thessalonians in the Makrotext of the epistle and (5) the reasons for this behavior.

1. Section 2:7b-13

The first part of the 1 Thes. (ch. 1-3)⁵ is divided into two sections: in the first the crucial time of the election (1:8) is recalled, in which the receivers were initiated into Christianity from Paul and his associates (1:4-2:13)⁶ and in the second what has happened from the past to the present (2:14-3:13)⁷. Paul uses domestic pictures like that of the nurse and the father in the third subunit of the first section, which (section) has the following structure:

- 1: 4-8: God's election and dynamic influence of the Pauline word. **The audience's ethos** (captatio benevolentiae⁸).
- 1: 9-10: **Content of the Gospel** (Return to the living and true God + Second Coming of his Son whom He raised from the dead - Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath).
- 2: 1-13: **Preacher's ethos**. In this subunit Paul follows the chiasmic structure:

A. 2:1 THE MOMENT OF THE CONVERSION *Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅτι οὐ*

τιμητικός στον ομότιμο καθηγητή Δ. Δοῖκο, *Α', ΕΕΘΣΘ* 4 (1994) 43-59. M. Koutita-Kaimaki, Οι όροι συγγένειας στις επιστολές του Αποστόλου Παύλου. *Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου. Η Οικογένεια: Παύλεια Θεολογία και Σύγχρονη Θεώρηση* (Βέροια 25-28 Ιουνίου), Βeroia 2009 167-188. For Paul as instructor-paidagogos see A. Bitaskis, *Η Διαπαιδαγώγηση του Ανθρώπου κατά τον Απόστολο Παύλο*, Diss. Athens 2005.

⁴ From the history of exegesis (p. 36-8) it is distinguished B.R. Gaventa, *Apostles as Babes and Nurses in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, Faith and History* (FS P.W. Meyer) J.T. Carol ... (ed.), Atlanta 1990 193-207.

⁵ The second part is exhortation and is divided in sections which start with *Περί-But concerning* (4:9.13; 5:1).

⁶ Reminding the former-beginning status of the audience is a standard practice in Pauline epistles so as to correct their beliefs and practices and also to remind them of his apostolic stature. Oddly enough it is not mentioned the baptism as happens with the eucharist too.

⁷ This succession of the time is combined with *motion* in the field of the space: *ἑαυτοὶ γὰρ περὶ ἡμῶν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὅποιαν εἴσοδον ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων, δουλεύειν Θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ⁹ καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ [τῶν] νεκρῶν* (1:9-10). The result of this *ἐπιστροφή* and the equivalent *περίπατος* (4:1) are described in the precedent vers: *ἄφ' ὑμῶν γὰρ ἐξήχηται ὁ λόγος τοῦ Κυρίου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ [ἐν τῇ] Ἀχαΐᾳ, ἀλλ' ἐν παντί τόπῳ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν, ὥστε μὴ χρειᾶν ἔχειν ἡμᾶς λαλεῖν τι* (1:8). In the chap. 3 the motion refers to the effort of the apostle to bridge the distance between him and the Thessalonians.

⁸ From the 3:10 we conclude that the pistis of the receivers wasn't so perfect as it supposed in the 1:3.

κενή γέγονεν, ²ἀλλὰ **προπαθόντες καὶ ὕβρισθέντες**, καθὼς οἶδατε ἐν Φιλίπποις, ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλήσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἀγῶνι.

B. "VERBAL TRANSMISSION" – CHARACTERISTICS OF PARACLESIS ³Ἡ γὰρ **παράκλησις ἡμῶν** οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης οὐδὲ ἐξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλῳ,

C. BEHAVIOR OF THE APOSTLES ⁴ ἀλλὰ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, οὕτως λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ Θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν. ⁵Οὔτε γὰρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἶδατε, οὔτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, Θεὸς μάρτυς, ⁶οὔτε ζητοῦντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν οὔτε ἀφ' ὑμῶν οὔτε ἀπ' ἄλλων, ⁷**δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι**.

D. TRANSMISSION OF LIFE Ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν (ν)ήπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν, ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἑαυτῆς τέκνα. ⁸Οὕτως ὁμιροῦμενοι ὑμῶν, εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς, διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε.

C'. BEHAVIOR OF THE APOSTLES ⁹Μνημονεύετε γὰρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον· νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τινα ὑμῶν ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ.

B'. "VERBAL TRANSMISSION" – CHARACTERISTICS OF PARACLESIS ¹⁰Ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ Θεός, ὡς ὀσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐγενήθημεν, ¹¹καθάπερ οἶδατε, ὡς ἕνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν ὡς πατὴρ τέκνα ἑαυτοῦ ¹²παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς καὶ παραμυθούμενοι καὶ μαρτυρούμενοι εἰς τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν.

A'. THE MOMENT OF THE CONVERSION ¹³Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ Θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως, ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀληθὺς λόγον Θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν⁹.

The first conclusion is that the image of the *nurse who cares for her own children* constitutes **the heart** of the third subunit which is as well located **in the core** of the first section of the entire epistle. This part, distinguished for its well-done chiasmic structure, exposes the status and personal ethos of the apostles towards the Thessalonians from the beginning until that time. The question is *why* Paul projects by this way his ethos and the one of the Gospel. The answer is essential to decode the meaning and the intention of the metaphors. From the epilogue of the first section and principally of the one of the entire epistle, we

⁹ With A' he recalls simultaneously the initial praise of his work (1:2) in which he mentions the *work of faith through love* (τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης) vgl. Gal. 5:6) followed by its dispersal. Now in this second mention he speaks of the *work of God's word* within the audience, as they *received God's word from us* (Paul and associates)- *παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ*. The word of God works within those who continue to believe (not just those who believed) to which the writer refers in plural (*in you*).

conclude that one of the main targets of the 1 Thes. is the following: **all**¹⁰ the brothers and sisters Thessalonians to be wholly sanctified and their spirit (higher mental functions), soul (lower mental functions)¹¹ **and body** preserved blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. This goal however presupposes trust in the *word* of Paul and fides/fidelity to his person and his motives. The confidence by the Thessalonians in him and his word is according to 3:6 high. For some *ὀλιγοψύχους* (*feeble-minded* 5:14) however the trust must had been shaken through the afflictions, his bodily absence, the delay of the Parousia, the death of some brothers etc. For this reason it is important for him to strengthen **first** the bond between him and his **entire** audience and **then** to start the exhorting part with **Λοιπὸν οὖν, ἀδελφοί, ἐρωτῶμεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα καθὼς παρελάβετε παρ' ἡμῶν τὸ πὼς δεῖ ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καὶ ἀρέσκειν Θεῶ, καθὼς καὶ περιπατεῖτε, ἵνα περισσεύητε μᾶλλον** (4:1)¹². This is why Paul follows the strategy of deliberative rhetoric¹³ with elements of the epideictic one. He (1) uses captatio benevolentiae, (2) reminds the Gospel and its *energy* and (3) emphasizes the ethos of him (the sender) and his Gospel using as core the Verses v. 7b-8 where he proclaims his maternal feelings!

The abovementioned conclusions are strengthened by the linguistic-syntactic analysis of the entire first section (1:4-2:13):

1. The emphasis to the drastic action (power and energy) of the verbal message of the apostles *despite the θλίψεις* is proved by the frequent use of the following words: (i) the *gospel/εὐαγγέλιον* (2:4) solely/ *ἡμῶν-our* (1:4)/ *τοῦ Θεοῦ-of God* (2:2) which is object of *λαλεῖν/κηρύττειν* and the consequence of *παρρησιάζεσθαι ἐν τῷ Θεῶ*, (ii) the *word - λόγος* sole-

ly (1:6)/of the Lord (2:8) and (iii) *Παράκλησις* (2:3) as *comfort* (apparently because it rescues from the wrath) and *exhortation*¹⁴. If the meaning of the Gospel is so important, the question¹⁵ is why then Paul in v. 7b-8 desires to transmit not only this but also his psyche to the recipients. Is the Gospel not sufficient to strengthen the brothers and sisters at Thessaloniki in the present? The core of Paul's argumentation about his ethos, however, refers not only to the past **but to the present and the future as well**¹⁶. The same verb *μεταδοῦναι* is used by him in Rom. 1:11 where he expresses the same wish for communication face to face. The object, however, is the *χάρισμα* because the receivers aren't familiar with him. Therefore by the verses 1 Thes. 2:7b-8 he doesn't relativize the value of his Gospel but (a) he expresses his extreme love which isn't limited in the orally teaching (which suits to an apostle of a Kyrios who has died for us 5:10) and (b) he prepares his audience for the following section of his epistle which expresses his desire for personal communication. In any case the inhalt both of the pauline Gospel and the psyche was the same: Jesus Christ and his Spirit.

2. Frequent is also the use of the lexemes *οἴδατε-know*¹⁷ and *γίνεσθαι* (1:5-7 [3X]; 2:1.5.7.8.10.14) in the past tense. The first verb has as subject the *ὑμεῖς/you* and the second apart from four times (1:6-7; 2:8.14)¹⁸ the apostles and the characteristics of their preaching as they appeared during their first entry (*εἰσοδος* 2X) in the city. Therefore as witnesses to testify the allegations of Paul are mentioned not only God (v. 2:5b.10) but also the epistle receivers themselves, who are named already in 1:4 as *ἀδελφοί ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ [τοῦ] Θεοῦ!* (see also 2:1.9.14)¹⁹. This means that the author probably defends himself and his word against derogatory comments and/or accusations which are emanated not from insiders but rather from outsiders: either from the compatriots of Thessalonians (2:14) or generally

¹⁰ As the Apostle emphatically states at the end of the epistle, this letter must be read to all the holy brethren.

¹¹ F.F. Bruce: *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (electronic ed.). *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 45*: Logos Library System; Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, ad loc.

¹² We should underline that a lot of the subjects that Paul ascribes to himself are later advised in the exhorting section: action not out of uncleanness, work and pray night and day, love of the brothers, dearly praying without ceasing and rejoicing in spite of the persecutions.

¹³ From the abovementioned I believe that the main scopos of the epistle is paraenetic and refers to the future (Second Parousia), elements which are the characteristics of deliberative genus. According to Aristoteles in this genus the Orator must defend his ethos which also happens with Paul in 1 Thes.: *κρίσεως ἐστὶν ἡ ῥητορική (καὶ γὰρ τὰς συμβουλὰς κρίνουσι καὶ ἡ δικὴ κρίσις ἐστὶν), ἀνάγκη μὴ μόνον πρὸς τὸν λόγον ὄραν, ὅπως ἀποδεικτικὸς ἔσται καὶ πιστός, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸν ποιόν τινα καὶ τὸν κριτὴν κατασκευάζειν: πολλὴ γὰρ διαφέρει πρὸς πίστιν, μάλιστα μὲν ἐν ταῖς συμβουλαῖς, εἴτα καὶ ἐν ταῖς δίκαις, τὸ τε ποιόν τινα φαίνεσθαι τὸν λέγοντα καὶ τὸ πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὑπολαμβάνειν πὼς διακείσθαι αὐτόν, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις ἔαν καὶ αὐτοὶ διακείμενοί πὼς τυγχάνωσιν. τὸ μὲν οὖν ποιόν τινα φαίνεσθαι τὸν λέγοντα χρησιμώτερον εἰς τὰς συμβουλὰς ἐστὶν, τὸ δὲ διακείσθαι πὼς τὸν ἀκροατὴν εἰς τὰς δίκαις: οὐ γὰρ ταῦτ' ἀφαιρῶνται φιλοῦσι καὶ μισοῦσιν, οὐδ' ὀργιζόμενοι καὶ πρᾶως ἔχουσιν, ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ παράπαν ἕτερα ἢ κατὰ μέγεθος ἕτερα: τῷ μὲν γὰρ φιλοῦντι περὶ οὐ ποιεῖται τὴν κρίσιν ἢ οὐκ ἀδικεῖν ἢ μικρὰ δοκεῖ ἀδικεῖν, τῷ δὲ μισοῦντι τούναντιον· καὶ τῷ μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦντι καὶ εὐέλπιδι ὄντι, ἔαν ἢ τὸ ἐσόμενον ἡδύ, καὶ ἔσσεσθαι καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἔσσεσθαι φαίνεται, τῷ δ' ἀπαθεῖ ἢ καὶ δυσχεραίνοντι τούναντιον* (Rhet 1377b.21 -1378a.5).

¹⁴ This is transcribed in 2:11-12 like this: *as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God.* The same kind of words he uses at the beginning of the exhortation: *Λοιπὸν [...]* We should note that *the Gospel- εὐαγγέλιον* is not used as terminus technicus, but he uses it literally as the use of the verb *εὐαγγελισασθαι-bring good news/ evangelize* (3:6) proves.

¹⁵ See Gerber, *Paulus und seine 'Kinder'* 277.

¹⁶ The members of the chiasmus, which refer to the past, run supplementally: B and C express negatively what B' and C' declare positively.

¹⁷ M. Crüsemann, *Die pseudepigraphen Briefe an die Gemeinde in Thessaloniki: Studien zu ihrer Abfassung und zur jüdisch-christlichen Sozialgeschichte*, Stuttgart 2010, 130-137.

¹⁸ The subject in these verses is the Thessalonians and the main motif is the mimesis.

¹⁹ Paul doesn't hesitate to boost the Thessalonians' self-confidence in 4:9 also with: *But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another and αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς οἴδατε-For you yourselves know perfectly* (5:2). By this way the apostle shows that he faces the recipients not as immature children but reliable witnesses who remember and know. Maybe Paul feels that their self-confidence is a way of resistance to the disgrace of their environment.

from the Greek environment where Paul declares the gospel of God²⁰. At any case through the *reminding* of these *πίστεις* (proofs/convictions) of the past, he does strengthen the confidence of these insiders who need encouragement and *identity markers*. For this reason he reminds also in the next section that *καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἤμεν, προελέγομεν ὑμῖν ὅτι μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι, καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἴδατε* (3:4). The fulfillment of a prophecy was a *pistis* with high importance in ancient rhetoric²¹.

3. The *πίστεις* are strengthened by using negative cause + (ἀλλά/but)+ thesis + καθὼς/as:
- 1:5: For our *gospel did not come* to you in word only, **but also i) in power**, and **ii) in the Holy Spirit and iii) in much πληροφορία**²², as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake
 - 2:1-2: our coming to you **was not in vain**. ²**But... we were bold in our God** to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict
 - 2:3-8: For our exhortation **did not come from i) error or ii) uncleanness**, nor was it **iii) in deceit**. ⁴**But as** we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

⁵ For neither at any time did we i) use flattering words, as you know, nor ii) with a pretext for greed— God is witness. ⁶Nor did we iii) seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. ⁸So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

The use of negative cause differentiate the apostles and their message against the teaching of the various itinerant philosophers who were passing from Thessaloniki self-promoted as *doctors of the souls*²³: the Gospel of the apostles

didn't *come in word only* (1:5), the entry of them wasn't vain (2:1: *κενή*²⁴; comp. 3:5) while the *Paraclesis* of theirs didn't come from **i) error ii) uncleanness iii) in deceit**. In 2:10 Paul expresses the same things positively: *ὡς ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐγενήθημεν*. With *πλάνη/error* and *ἀκαθαρσία/uncleanness* Paul probably means failure in dogma (doctrine about God) for the first and the interactive failure in ethical conduct for the second²⁵. With *ἐν δόλῳ /In deceit*²⁶ he refers to the motive of preaching, that is why it is presented with *ἐν/in*. *Δόλος*²⁷/*Deceit* is linked with the use of **i) flattering words ii) greediness and iii) seeking glory from men** (2:5-6). While *λόγος κολακείας*²⁸/*flattering words* is linked to the previous v.4b through *γὰρ/But*, the absence of *πλεονεξία* (something that God is called upon to testify!)²⁹ and of *the the desire of glory* are connected with the following phrase: *δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει*³⁰ εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι³¹. *Βάρος* can mean the financial charge (comp. *ἐπιβαρῆσαι* of v. 2:9; 2Thes. 3:8) and/or having honor (2 Cor. 4:17). Both of them were acclaimed not only by the supposedly philosophers but also by the legati of Caesar who used also *the theme of Angaria* (compulsory service). The agents of the Arisen from Hades, who comes as the True Kyrios from Heaven introducing his own Kingdom-Imperium and glory, could not only be supported by other Christians (as stated in 1 Cor. 9; 2 Cor. 11-12 and Luk. 10:7) but they could also acclaim honor/δόξα.

2. Paul as a beneficent nurse and father

Paul culminates his argumentation with *ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν (ν)ήπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν* to support that he selected the completely opposite style of *ἐν βάρει εἶναι* (which presupposes something/someone that is *above us*)!³² The problems with this phrase are the following: a) did the original text have *ἡπιος or νήπιος-child* according to Nestle Aland's text and b) *ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα*

²⁰ About the "enemies" of Paul in Thessaloniki see J. Galanis, *Η Πρώτη Επιστολή του Απ. Παύλου προς Θεσσαλονικείς*, Thessaloniki 1996, 174-175. The Question of the Exegesis remains the following: *The discussion has revolved in part around the question whether vss- 1-12 are to be understood as an apology directed to a concrete situation in Thessalonica in the face of which Paul had to defend himself; or whether the language that seems to support such a view can be understood in another way. A major statement in favor of the latter option had been made by VON DOBSCHÜTZ, who claimed that the "apology" reflects the mood of Paul at the time of writing rather than a strained relationship with the Thessalonians* (A.J. Malherbe 'Gentle as a Nurse': The Stoic Background to 1 Thess. II. *NovT* 12 (1970) 203-217. 203).

²¹ W. Kurz, *Hellenistic Rhetoric in the Christological Proof of Luke-Acts*, *CBQ* 42 (1980) 171-195, 187-188.

²² I believe that this doesn't mean only the assurance (Heb. 10:22) but has also the meaning of the abundance of the fruits of the Holy Spirit which brings χαρά despite the sorrows. It has to do with the *work of faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ* (1:3). By this way *the message of God works effectively in you believers* (2:1).

²³ The expression comes from Leveque: «Un médecin de l'âme chez les Grecs», *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1867, 725.

²⁴ About the meaning of κενός see Gerber, *Paulus und seine 'Kinder'* 271 Anm. 81

²⁵ As it is showed in Rom. 1-2 (also see Sap. 13-15) for him these two are interacted.

²⁶ At this point in the Greek text the writer might be engaging in a wordplay between *λόγος* and *δόλος κολακείας*.

²⁷ < indogerm. del= intent

²⁸ It is related with κηλέω =bewitch, fascinate / κέλλω=motivate, encourage.

²⁹ < προφαίνω = bring in the light, appear, obvious motiv.

³⁰ The consonants δ and β transmit also soundly the elements of δύναμις, βoή, βία. See Stamos Karamouzis, *To θείον και ιερὸν Αλφάβητον*, Athens 2001 264. 282.

³¹ The term *βάρος/burden* connected to *demands as apostles of Christ* can refer to glory but also to the financial burden of their support. V.9 states clearly that the term *βάρος-demands* in *δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι-* we might have made demands as apostles of Christ mean the burden of their financial support.

³² We have already seen that v. 2:7b-8 constitute the heart of the argumentation in the entire 2:1-13.

should be connected with v. 7b³³ or v. 8³⁴ as Nestle Aland's text suggests contrary to its own previous edition?

Child-νήπιος³⁵ means *ἀνώριμος-immature*, *ἄφρων³⁶⁻imbecile* while *ἡπιος* (< ancient Hindu *api*-friend) is the meek, the content and the good willed³⁷. The form *νήπιος*³⁸

³³ Ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν νήπιον ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα. Vulgata: *sed facti sumus lenes in medio vestrum tamquam si nutrix foveat filios suos*. MGI (=Peschita Translation by Janet Magiera 2006): *But we were meek among you, and as a nurse who loves her children*. Luther 45: *sondern wir sind mütterlich gewesen bei euch, gleichwie eine Amme ihrer Kinder pflleget*. The translations come from Bibleworks 7. EBE (= Ελληνική Βιβλική Εταιρεία/Greek Bible Society 1997): *Πατὴρ δε σας κολακῆσαμε ποτέ, ὅπως ξέρετε, οὐτε ἤρθαμε με προσήματα για να κερδίσουμε κάτι -μαρτυράς μας ο Θεός. Ἐε ζητήσαμε ανθρώπινη δόξα οὐτε ἀπὸ σας οὐτε ἀπὸ ἄλλους, ἂν και μπορούσαμε να σας επιβαρύνουμε ως ἀπόστολοι του Χριστοῦ. Ἀπεναντίας ἡμασταν στοργικοί σαν τη μητέρα που φροντίζει τα παιδιά της. Ἐκαι ἤταν τόση η ἔγνοια μας για σας, ὡστε ἡμασταν ἔτοιμοι να σας δώσουμε ὄχι μόνο το ευαγγέλιο του Θεοῦ, ἀλλά και την ἰδια μας τη ζωή, επειδὴ σας αγαπήσαμε.*

³⁴ Ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα, ὁὐτως ὁμερόμενοι ὑμῶν εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἐαυτῶν ψυχάς, διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε..

³⁵ According to G. Babiniotis (Λεξικό της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας, Athens ²2005, 1193) the etymology of Hesychius νε-ἔπιος < νε+-ἔπος = who can't speak normally (νηπίτιος) but also the connection with ἠπύω= call, isn't supported by strong arguments. Clement of Alexandria, *Παιδαγωγός* 1.5.19 makes a false etymology too, possibly in his struggle against those who mocked Christians as foolish: *Ἐνταῦθα ἐπιστήσαι δίκαιον τῇ προσηγορίᾳ τοῦ νηπίου, ὅτι οὐκ ἐπὶ ἀφρόνων τάττεται τὸ νηπιον-νηπίτιος μὲν γὰρ οὗτος, νηπιος δὲ ὁ νεήπιος, ὡς ἡπιος ὁ ἀπαλόφρων, οἷον ἡπιος νεωστὶ καὶ πρῶος τῷ τρόπῳ γενόμενος. Τοῦτό τοι σαφέστατα ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος ὑπεσημίνατο εἰπὼν «δυναμένοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστὸς ἀπόστολοι ἐγενήθημεν ἡπιον ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν, ὡς ἂν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα». Ἦπιος οὖν ὁ νήπιος καὶ ταύτη μάλλον ἀταλός, ἀπαλός καὶ ἀπλοῦς καὶ ἄδολος καὶ ἀνυπόκριτος, ἰθὺς τὴν γνώμην καὶ ὀρθός· τὸ δὲ ἔστιν ἀπλότητος καὶ ἀληθείας ὑπόστασις. «Ἐπὶ τίνα γὰρ, φησὶν, ἐπιβλέψω ἢ ἐπὶ τὸν πρῶον καὶ ἡσύχιον;» (Jes. 66:2). Τοιοῦτος γὰρ ὁ παρθένιος λόγος, ἀπαλός καὶ ἄπλαστος· διὸ καὶ τὴν παρθένον ἀταλήν νύμφην καὶ τὸν παῖδα ἀταλάφρονα κεκληθῆναι ἔθος, ἀταλοι δὲ ἡμεῖς οἱ ἀπαλοι πρὸς πειθῶ καὶ εὐέργαστοι πρὸς ἀγαθωσύνην ἄχολοι τε καὶ ἀνεπίμκτοι κακοφροσύνη καὶ σκολιότητι. Also the etymology is unknown.*

³⁶ As we see in Luke. 10:21 child-νήπιος is used opposite to *wise/intelligent*, while in Rom. 2:10 the word is used for proselytes. In Gal. 4: 1-3 and Eph. 4: 14 the author calls the receivers *juveniles* and the Corinthians (1 Cor. 3:1 see also Heb. 5:12-14) as well during their early days as Christians especially since they were quarreling: *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; or you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? Even to this day the young Christian is a juvenile in mind by standards of faith: When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things (1 Cor. 13:11). Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature (1 Cor. 14: 20). In any occasion the word *child* is connected to the lack of knowledge.*

³⁷ See Henry George Liddell - Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0057,adloc>.

³⁸ There is a strongly attested variant *νήπιον* ("infants") read by P⁶⁵ & B C D' F G I Ψ^c pc lat^{vet.vv} cop^{sa.cod.bo} Clem.Al. The reading *ἡπιον* ("gentle") is attested by & A C² D² Ψ^c Byz lat^{vg.st} cop^{sa.codd}. The variation is due either to haplography or dittography of ν. It is the sense that is decisive for *ἡπιον*, although *νήπιον* is preferred by Nestle-Aland²⁶. Crawford retains *νήπιον* but construes it as vocative, addressed to the Thessalonian Christians. C. Crawford, "The 'Tiny' Problem of 1 Thessalonians 2, 7: The case of the curious vocative." *Bib* 54 (1973) 69–72. See the critic of F.F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* Logos Library System; Word Biblical Commentary (1998). Vol. 45. Dallas: Word, Incorporated. (electronic ed.).

is the oldest one yet not the most difficult as we will explain further. Maybe the reason for its establishment is not just Dittography but also the following influence of the synoptic tradition which is visible also in 5:2-3³⁹:

1. The child version in conjunction with the demand for glory, recalls to the copyists the answer of Jesus in Mark 9:33-37 (= Mt. 18:1-5; Lk. 9:46-48; John 3:3.5; 13:20) on the way to Passion: ³³*Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"* ³⁴*But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.* ³⁵*And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."* ³⁶*Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them,* ³⁷*"Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me. »* A child is presented as the model for the apostles, one being that by society standards and Jewish Law, is meaningless, immature and imbecile. Paul did the same with his own disciples⁴⁰.

2. The seventy apostles in Luke 10:21(Q=Mt. 11:25-27) cause rejoice to Jesus who thanks the Father because contrary to the wise and intelligent they are like infants who receive divine revelations: *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babies. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.* Here we have rejoice, thankfulness and revelation, elements that we also meet in 1 Thess.

Besides, as Paul presents the figure of the father and son (which seems to be implied through the use of *ἄπορφανισθέντες*⁴¹ - *we were made orphans by being separated from you*) intertwining to one another, so it is possible for some copyists that the milk giving nurse/mother⁴² and child figure also coexist. Then however before *νήπιος-child*

³⁹ See Holtzt, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, 215-219.

⁴⁰ Origenes (*Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei* lib. 12–17) in his comment on Mt. 18:10 writes: Ἄλλος δ' ἂν λέγοι μικρὸν ἐν τοῦτοις λέγεσθαι τὸν τέλειον συγχρώμενος τῷ «ὁ γὰρ μικρότερος ἐν πᾶσιν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχων, οὗτός ἐστι μέγας», καὶ φήσει ὅτι ὁ ταπεινῶν ἐαυτὸν καὶ <γινόμενος μιμητὴς τοῦ ἐαυτὸν ταπεινώσαντος ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων σωτηρίας καί> γινόμενος *νήπιος* ἐν μέσῳ πάντων <τῶν> πιστευόντων (κἂν ἀπόστολος, κἂν ἐπίσκοπος ἢ) καὶ γινόμενος τοιοῦτος «ὡς ἂν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα», οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ δεικνύμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ μικρός, καὶ ἄξιόν γε τοῦ τοιοῦτου ἄγγελου εἶναι βλέποντα τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ θεοῦ. τὸ γὰρ μικρὸς λέγειν ἐνταῦθα τοὺς τελείους κατὰ τὸ «ὁ γὰρ μικρότερος ἐν πᾶσιν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχων, οὗτός ἐστι μέγας» καὶ ὡς ὁ Παῦλος εἶπεν τὸ «ἐμοὶ τῷ ἐλαχιστοτέρῳ πάντων ἀγίων ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις αὐτῆ» δόξει μὴ συναδεῖν τῷ «ὅς ἂν σκανδαλίσῃ ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων» καὶ τῷ οὕτως οὐκ ἔστι θέλημα ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς. See also his comment on 15:7: καὶ Παῦλος δὲ ὡς ἐπιστάμενος τὸ τῶν γὰρ τοιοῦτων ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, δυναμένοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ» ἀπόστολος, ἐγένετο *νήπιος* καὶ παραπλήσιος τροφῷ θαλλοῦση τὸ ἐαυ- τῆς παιδίον καὶ λαλοῦση λόγους ὡς παιδίον διὰ τὸ παιδίον. In his comment on 16:8 he uses the variant *ἡπιος*. See Galanis, *Η Πρώτη Επιστολή του Απ. Παύλου προς Θεσσαλονικεῖς* 157.

⁴¹ ὄρφος= *deprived, later blind*.

⁴² A nurse so eager to sacrifice her own life proves that this nurse is also a mother. The same occurred with the Son, the coming Judge, who died for us according to 5:10.

there should have been *ώς-like*, as there is with the nurse and father figure. Moreover as Caragounis⁴³ proves, the greek *ἀπορφανισθέντες*- *made orphans* may not only refer to the loss of parents but also to that of children.

For the reasons above, we prefer the word *ἥπιος* which also appears in 2 Tim. 2:24-25 as opposite to *quarrelsome*, referring to Christian leaders: *And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth*⁴⁴. But the term *ἥπιος* does not have the aforementioned meaning in our passage since it is used against ambition and greediness⁴⁵. For this reason I don't agree as well with A.J. Malherbe⁴⁶ who suggests that the *ἡπιότης* to which the writer appeals here, forms a designed contrast to the harshness (*σκληρότης*) characteristic of one type of itinerant Cynic, who could not distinguish scurrilous reproach (*ὄνειδισμός*) from admonition (*νουθεσία*) and had recourse to the former when the latter was required (Dio, *Oratio* 32).

To understand the complete meaning of term *ἥπιος* we must investigate its use in Homer where it refers to the ideal Leader and the effect-history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of this phrase on the following literature. *Odyssey* states: *χαίρετον, ὦ κούρω, καὶ Νέστορι εἰπεῖν. ἥ γὰρ ἐμοί γε πατὴρ ὡς ἥπιος ἦεν, εἶος ἐνὶ Τροίῃ πολεμίζομεν νῆες Ἀχαιῶν*" (= *Greetings to you, lads, and tell king Nestor this: he was like a gentle father to me for as long as we Achaioi-Greeks were fighting in Troy*; 15 [ο].151 – 153; see Il. 24.770; Od. 2.47. 234; 5.12). *Sthenidas* (3 B.C./A.D. 2) in his *Περὶ βασιλείας* notes about the ideal king: *διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ που μάλιστα καὶ νενομήχθαι τὸν πρῶτον θεὸν πατέρα μὲν θεῶν, πατέρα δὲ ἀνθρώπων ἤμεν, ὅτι ἥπιος πρὸς πάντα τὰ ὑπ' αὐτῷ γενόμενα ἐστὶ, καὶ ἀμελούμενος τὰς προστασίας οὐδέποκα νοέεται, οὐδὲ ἤρκεσται τῷ ποιητὰς μόνον πάντων γεγονέναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τροφεὺς διδάσκαλός τε τῶν καλῶν πάντων καὶ νομοθέτας πέφυκε πᾶσιν ἐπίσας* (Stob. 4.7.63)⁴⁷. *Ephstathius* of Thessaloniki (c. 1115 – 1195/6) notes in his *Υπόμνημα-Commentary* to the *Odyssey*: *Σημειῶσαι δὲ εἰς τὸ, «πατὴρ ὡς ἥπιος ἦν», καὶ τὸ τοῦ Ἡροδότου, τὸ, «Καμβύσης μὲν δεσπότης, Κύρος δὲ, πατὴρ»*⁴⁸. ὁ μὲν, ὅτι χαλεπὸς ἦν καὶ ὀλίγωρος (= littlecaring, careless). ὁ δὲ, ὅτι ἥπιος καὶ ἀγαθὰ σφίσι ἐμηχανίσαστο, ἦτοι τοῖς Πέρσας (1.81-82; See *Procopius, De*

aedificiis 1.1.27-2 1.1.14; Themistius, *Περὶ Φιλανθρωπίας* 16.a.6 -17.a.7).

From the aforementioned quotes we conclude that *ἥπιος* stands not only for having or showing a mild, kind, or tender temperament or character but (as betrays its etymology too) **has the connotation of εὐεργετικός-beneficent** (as antonym to *πλεονέκτης/εν βάρει εἶναι*)⁴⁹ too. Possibly this phrase of *Odyssey*, which along with *Iliad* was the most popular reading in Greco-roman society, had become some kind of motto for the fundamental virtue of the leader: acting like a benevolent and beneficent father. *Clement of Rome* remarks: *Ὁ οἰκτίρμων κατὰ πάντα καὶ εὐεργετικός Πατὴρ ἔχει σπλάγχνα ἐπὶ τοὺς φοβούμενους αὐτὸν ἡπίως τε καὶ προσηνῶς τὰς χάριτας αὐτοῦ ἀποδιδὼ τοῖς προσερχομένοις αὐτῷ ἀπλή διανοίᾳ* (I Cl. 23.1; see *Dio-ogn.* 7.4).

Paul, the founder and the 'leader' of the Thessalonian church, in his most ancient document does not refer directly to the scriptures (Old Testament) at all but uses familiar to the audience's ears terms drawing upon the greek literature such as *θάλλω* or *στέγω* (3:1.5) or *σαίνεσθαι* (3:3). Having knowledge of the aforementioned motto, he uses it because it also corresponds to the distinctive Old Testament virtue of the Sheppard, *πραότητα*⁵⁰. This virtue (*meekness-Πραῦτης* *אַנְוָה* *anvah*) which both *Moses* (Num. 12:3) and *David* (Ps. 131:1 Lxx) possessed, doesn't only signify courteousness in manners but also humility **and** charity. *Jesus* himself fulfilled *Zechariah's* prophecy (9:9; Mt.21:5; John 12:15) about the entrance of the meek king to Jerusalem and blessed the meek as well⁵¹. In the Lxx the term *meek* stands for the Jewish term *Anawim* which defines the *poor people of God* that many Jewish sects had as model⁵².

Obviously, Paul associates himself to the Lord as a father figure and feels that he embodies the virtue of *πραῦτης* which however 'translates' for his greek audience with the word *ἥπιος*. Yet in this context he portrays himself as a nurse, not as a father because he wants to present by a unique way in the ancient literature his extreme love and care in contrast to those who use *flattering speech* or had *greedy motives* or *seek glory from people*. Instead of using the above motto *πατὴρ ὡς ἥπιος ἦεν-a gentle father he was*, he creates a new metaphor: *ἥπιος ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλλη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα- just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children*. He surpasses *Moses* who says: *μὴ ἐγὼ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔλαβον πάντα τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον ἢ ἐγὼ ἔτεκον αὐτοῦς*

⁴³ Chrys Caragounis, *Did Paul Behave as an Infant or Imbecile, or as a Gentle Nurse?* <http://www.chrys-caragounis.com/Studies/Did%20Paul%20Behave.pdf>, 17-18.

⁴⁴ See also Philo, Dec 1:67; Mos. 1:72. Pseudo-Phocylides *Gnom., Sententiae* 208: *Παισὶν μὴ χαλεπανε τεοῖσ', ἀλλ' ἥπιος εἶης.*

⁴⁵ *Πλεονεξία* in 1 Thes. doesn't declare only the gain derived from financial abuse but from sexual too: *τὸ μὴ υπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν ἐν τῷ πράγματι τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ* (4:6).

⁴⁶ 'Gentle as a Nurse': The Stoic Background to 1 Thess. II. *NovT* 12 (1970) 203-217. By contrast *Crates* ἐπετίμα οὐ μετὰ πικρίας ἀλλὰ μετὰ χάριτος (Plutarch, *Quaestiones Conviviales* 632E).

⁴⁷ See also *Aelius Aristides, Πρὸς Πλάτωνα περὶ ῥητορικῆς* 45.17: *κορυφαῖος χοροῦ, ναυτῶν κυβερνήτης, στρατιωτῶν στρατηγός, δήμου ῥήτωρ ἡγεῖται. πάντες μὲν οὖν ἄρχοντες φύσει κρείττους τῶν ὑφ' αὐτοῖς· εἰ δὲ τις μετ' ἐξουσίας καὶ χαρίζεται, πείθων, οὐκ ἀναγκάζων, καὶ πρὸς τῷ σώζειν τὴν ἐαυτοῦ τάξινοστοχάζεται καὶ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας τῶν ὑφ' αὐτῷ, οὗτος ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ὁ τῷ ὄντι πολιτικός καὶ ὄν' Ὀμηρος ἔφη πατέρα ὡς ἥπιον εἶναι.*

⁴⁸ Herod. 3.89

⁴⁹ See also *Jos. Ap* 1:186. Philo, *Sac.* 1:27. According to *Dio, Or.* 32, 10.5-9 *εἰ δ' ὡς φιλόσοφοι ταῦτα πράττουσι κέρδους ἔνεκεν καὶ δόξης τῆς ἐαυτῶν, οὐ τῆς ὑμετέρας ὠφελείας, τοῦτο δ' ἦδη δεινόν. ὅμοιον γὰρ ὡςπερ εἰ τις ἰατρὸς ἐπὶ κάμνον τας ἀνθρώπους εἰσιῶν τῆς μὲν σωτηρίας αὐτῶν καὶ τῆς θεραπείας ἀμελήσει, στεφάνους δὲ καὶ ἐταίρας καὶ μύρον αὐτοῖς εἰσφέρει.*

⁵⁰ In *Esther* the two terms interchange: *ἐβουλήθη μὴ τῷ θράσει τῆς ἐξουσίας ἐπαυρόμενος, ἐπεικέστερον δὲ καὶ μετὰ ἡπιότητος (πραότητος S³) αἰεὶ διεξάγων τοὺς τῶν ὑποτεταγμένων ἀκυμάτους διὰ παντὸς καταστήσαι βίους* (3:13) *καὶ μετέβαλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς πραῖτητα καὶ ἀγωνιάσας ἀνεπήδησεν ἀπὸ τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνέλαβεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τὰς ἀγκάλας αὐτοῦ* (5:1 Lxx).

⁵¹ "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (Matt. 5: 5 *Psalm* 36 [37]: 11). See also *Matt.* 11: 29-30.

⁵² Num.12:3; Is. 26:6.; Jo. 4:11; Soph. 3:12; Zach. 9:9; *πραῦθυμος* *Prov.* 14:30; 16:19; *Πραῦτης* *Ps.* 44:5; 89:10 131:1; *Est.* 5:1; *Sir.* 1:27.

ὅτι λέγεις μοι «Λαβὲ αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν κόλπον σου ὡσεὶ ἄραι τιθηνός (= nurse⁵³; see Is. 49:23) τὸν θηλάζοντα εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ὠμοσας τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν»- *Did I conceive this entire people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child, to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors?'* (Num. 11:12⁵⁴). At the same time he imitates God, who in Isaiah 49:14-16 (a chapter that has deeply affected Paul's psychology Gal. 1:15) presents himself as a nursing woman who **doesn't forget her child** and saves Israel with her compassion.

What is strange is the fact that Paul feels nursing love not for the chosen people of Israel (who accuses with hard words in the next paragraph) but for the Gentiles who now populate the Church and are carried by the Apostle to the Imperium of God **the** Father. He acts as a *τροφός*-nurse who *θάλλει*-cares especially for her **own** children⁵⁵. I believe that he uses the word *τροφός*⁵⁶ and not *μητέρα*⁵⁷ because the emphasis in this context is not on the birth⁵⁸ but on the Gospel which didn't come *ἐν λόγῳ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ*

⁵³ In 2 Kgs 10:1 *τιθηνός* is the foster-father.

⁵⁴ Comp. Ex. 34:6.

⁵⁵ J. Chrysostom comments: Ὡς ἐὰν τροφός, φησὶ, θάλλη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα. Οὕτω δὲ τὸν διδάσκαλον εἶναι. Μὴ ἢ τροφός κολακεύει, ἵνα δόξης τύχη; μὴ χρήματα αἰτεῖ παρὰ τῶν παιδῶν τῶν μικρῶν; μὴ βαρεῖα αὐτοῖς ἐστὶ καὶ φορτικὴ; οὐχὶ μᾶλλον τῶν μητέρων εἰσὶ προσηνεῖς; Ἐνταῦθα τὴν φιλοστοργίαν δείκνυσιν (PG. 62.402). According to Gerber, *die Phrase εἰς τὸν κόλπον θάλλη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα* ist wörtlich bestens zu übersetzen: „wie eine Amme ihre leiblichen Kinder hegt“. Der Absender vergleicht sich mit einer Amme, die sich als Mutter um ihre leiblichen Kinder kümmert ohne dafür Geld zu nehmen. Die argumentative Valenz des Vergleichs liegt darin, den Unterhaltsverzicht der Missionare bei ihrem Aufenthalt in Thessalonica durchsichtig zu machen auf die sich in ihm ausdrückende „mütterliche“ Hingabe an die Gemeinde (Paulus und seine ‚Kinder‘ 277). From the metaphor *καὶ ὡς Δημοκράτης εἰκάσεν τοὺς ῥήτορας ταῖς τίτθαις αἰ τὸ ψόμιμα καταπίνοσαι τῷ σιάλω τὰ παιδία παραλείφουσιν* (Arist., *Rhet.* 1407a.8-10) but also from the urging of the Pseudo-Plutarch to the mothers to feed themselves their own babies (see next footnote), we conclude that the main characteristic of the behavior of the nurse to the 'other' children was that they showed *ὑποβολιμαίαν καὶ παρέγγραπτον εὐνοίαν*. They problem also wasn't only that they became salary for their services, but didn't show real love, which in contrast is the characteristic of Paul, who continues with the phrase *οὕτως ὁμιρόμενοι...*

⁵⁶ From the *Patristic Lexicon of Lambe* results that not only the rabbis but also the church Fathers avoid to characterize themselves as *τροφός*.

⁵⁷ Pseudo-Plutarch in *Περὶ Παιδῶν Ἀγωγῆς* notes: *Περὶ δὲ τροφῆς ἐχόμενον ἂν εἶη λέγειν. δεῖ δὲ, ὡς ἐγὼ ἂν φαίην, αὐτὰς τὰς μητέρας τὰ τέκνα τρέφειν καὶ τούτοις τοὺς μαστοὺς ὑπέχειν· συμπαιθερόν τε γὰρ θρέψουσι καὶ διὰ πλείονος ἐπιμελείας, ὡς ἂν ἐνδοθεν καὶ τὸ δὴ λεγόμενον ἐξ ὀνύχων ἀγαπῶσαι τὰ τέκνα. αἰ τίτθαι δὲ καὶ αἰ τροφοὶ τὴν εὐνοίαν ὑποβολιμαίαν καὶ παρέγγραπτον ἔχουσιν, ἅτε μισθοῦ φιλοῦσαι. δηλοῖ δὲ καὶ ἡ φύσις ὅτι δεῖ τὰς μητέρας ἃ γεννηθήσασιν αὐτὰς τιτθεῖν καὶ τρέφειν· διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο παντὶ ζῳῷ τεκόντι τὴν ἐκ τοῦ γάλακτος τροφήν ἐχορήγησε. σοφὸν δ' ἄρα καὶ ἡ πρόνοια· διττοὺς ἐνέθηκε ταῖς γυναιξὶ τοὺς μαστοὺς, ἵνα, κὰν εἰ διδύμα τέκονεν, διττὰς ἔχοιεν τὰς τῆς τροφῆς πηγὰς. χωρὶς δὲ τούτων ἐνούστεραι τοῖς τέκνοις γίγνουντ' ἂν καὶ φιλητικώτεραι. καὶ μὰ Δ' οὐκ ἀπεκότως· ἢ συντροφία γὰρ ὡσπερ ἐπιτόνιον ἐστὶ τῆς εὐνοίας. καὶ γὰρ τὰ θηρία τῶν συντροφόμενων ἀποσπώμενα ταῦτα ποθοῦντα φαίνεται. μάλιστα μὲν οὖν ὅπερ ἔφην αὐτὰς πειρατέον τὰ τέκνα τρέφειν τὰς μητέρας· εἰ δ' ἄρ' ἀδυνάτως ἔχοιεν ἢ διὰ σώματος ἀσθένειαν (γένοιτο γὰρ ἂν τι καὶ τοιοῦτον) ἢ πρὸς ἑτέρων τέκνων σπεύδουσαι γένεσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰς γε τίτθας καὶ τροφούς οὐ τὰς τυχοῦσας ἀλλ' ὡς ἐνὶ μάλιστα σπουδαίας δοκιμαστέον ἐστὶ. In the PLond 951 we read: τὸ βρέφος ἐχέτω τροφόν. ἐγὼ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω τῇ θυγατρὶ μου θηλάζειν.*

⁵⁸ Paul as father/mother isn't contrasted with other instructors in Christ as in 1Co 4:15; Gal. 4:19.

*ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ καὶ ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ*⁵⁹ (1:5). Also it functioned as *ἡ τροφή*⁶⁰ - the milk to the newborn. With *θάλλω* (which originally means to heat)⁶¹ possibly is implied the transmission especially of the Holy Spirit which in 5:19 is pictured as fire⁶². At the same time just like a mother he longs his own children and *can't bear* being apart from them: *So being affectionately desirous of you, we will to impart unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear unto us* (2:8). In the direct future he wants (*εὐδοκεῖ*) not only to feed them with the Gospel but also to offer his psyche/existence⁶³ which is a characteristic particularly of the mother as Plutarch proves in his *Περὶ τῆς εἰς τὰ ἔγγονα φιλοστοργίας* (*De amore pro-lis*)⁶⁴. In this sense he differentiates himself absolutely from the itinerant philosophers and functions *κατ' εἰκόνα* of his Lord who *died for us* (5:10)⁶⁵.

Based on what has been said, we interpret 2:7b-8 as follows: **Ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν ἥπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν ὡς ἐὰν τροφός θάλλη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα.** ⁸*Οὕτως ὁμιρόμενοι ὑμῶν⁶⁶, εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἐαυτῶν ψυχὰς, διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε⁶⁷.* - **But we were gentle and beneficent among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to offer to you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.**

⁵⁹ Perhaps the *πληροφορία πολλή* (!) is connected with τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐμπροσθεν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ πατρός ἡμῶν (1:3).

⁶⁰ See Dt. 22:6: ἐὰν δὲ συναντήσῃ νοσοῦσα ὀρνέων πρὸ προσώπου σου ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἢ ἐπὶ παντὶ δένδρῳ ἢ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς νεοσοῦσι ἢ ψοῖς καὶ ἡ μήτηρ θάλλη ἐπὶ τῶν νεοσσῶν ἢ ἐπὶ τῶν ὠῶν οὐ λήμψη τὴν μητέρα μετὰ τῶν τέκνων.

⁶¹ About the modern translation of this verb in 2:7c see Gerber, *Paulus und seine 'Kinder'* 285 Anm. 142. See also her critic to K.P. Dornfried (The Cults of Thessalonica and the Thessalonian Correspondence, NTS 31 (1985) 336-356) who relates this verse with the cult of Dionysos and the Nyphs who functioned as nurses (p. 293).

⁶² *θάλλω* = *to be or become warm* (so it is used by Philo), *to hatch, to cherish, comfort, consulate* (Eph 5:29). According to Babiniotis, *Λεξικό* 740 etymologically it is connected with the adj. *θαλυκρός θερμός, φλέγων*.

⁶³ The *διδόναι τὴν ψυχὴν* is used in Sir.7:20 for the service of the slaves. See also Jos., *Ant.* 2.144 (*to sustain our lives by grain*).

⁶⁴ 496.D-496E: ἀλλὰ τὸ φύσει φιλόστοργον ἔκαμπε καὶ ἦγεν· ἔτι θερμῇ καὶ διαλγῆς καὶ κραδανομένη τοῖς πόνοις οὐχ ὑπερέβη τὸ νήπιον οὐδ' ἔφυγεν, ἀλλ' ἐπεστράφη καὶ προσμεΐδισε καὶ ἀνείλετο καὶ ἠσπάσατο, μηδὲν ἠδὲ καρπομένη μηδὲ χρησίμων ἀλλ' ἐπιπόνως καὶ ταλαιπώρως ἀναδεχομένη, τῶν σπαργάνων ἐρείπιος θάλλουσα καὶ ψήχουσα, καὶ πόνω πόνον ἐκ νυκτὸς ὄν μεθ' ἡμέραν (*Tr. adesp.* 7). Comp. *Παραμυθητικὸς* 609F [6]: Τὰς δὲ πολλὰς ὀρῶμεν μητέρας, ὅταν ὑπ' ἄλλων τὰ παιδία καθαρθῇ καὶ γανωθῇ, καθάπερ παίγνια λαμβανούσας εἰς χεῖρας, εἰτ' ἀποθανόντων ἐκχεομένης εἰς κενὸν καὶ ἀχάριστον πένθος, οὐχ ὑπ' εὐνοίας (εὐλόγιστον γὰρ εὐνοία καὶ καλόν), ἀλλὰ μικρῷ τῷ φυσικῷ πάθει πολὺν συγκεραννύμενον τὸ πρὸς κενὴν δόξαν ἀγρία ποιεῖ καὶ μανικὰ καὶ δυσεξίλαστα <τὰ> πένθη.

⁶⁵ It comes as a surprise that even at this point he does not refer to the Cross at all, the climax of sacrificing love. Is it possible because it was an abomination for the enemies of the Thessalonians' Church? Did he hesitate to link faith to scandal in his first epistle? It is well known that in the future he will emphasize the significance of the Cross, mocking human wisdom and logic with it.

⁶⁶ For *ὁμιρόμενοι* ("ardently desiring") a number of minuscules read the classical *ἰμειρόμενοι*, which has the same meaning. See Ps. 62:2 (Symm.) Job 3:21 (Lxx).

⁶⁷ Ψ. Byz.: γεγέννησθε.

The following two things are impressive: a) while past tenses dominate in this context, here the present tense is used⁶⁸. The *οὕτως όμειρόμενοι ύμών εύδοκούμεν μεταδούναί* is linguistish and stylistish parallel to 2:17-18 which prefaces the second subunit (2:14-3:13) and describes the efforts of Paul personally (2:18: *έγώ ό Παύλος*) to bridge the local gab between him and his audience from the past to the present, expressing the wish to meet face to face with them in Thessaloniki in the near future: *ήμεις δέ, άδελφοί, άπορφανισθέντες άφ' ύμών πρός καιρόν ώρας, προσώπω ου καρδιά, περισσοτέρως έσπουδάσαμεν τό πρόσωπον ύμών ιδείν έν πολλή έπιθυμία [...] τίς γάρ ήμών έλπίς ή χαρά ή στέφανος καυχήσεως- ή ουχι και ύμεις- έμπροσθεν του Κυρίου ήμών Ιησού έν τή αυτου Παρουσία; Υμεις γάρ έστε ή δόξα ήμών και ή χαρά (2:17.19-20; comp. Phil. 4:1)⁶⁹. J. Chrysostom, who has studied rhetoric by Libanius, doesn't hesitate to characterize the language of Paul in this passage as erotic and maternal: *Έρώμενος γάρ ήν μανικός τις και άκάθεκτος, και άκαρτέρητος εις φιλίαν. «Διό ήθελησαμεν έλθειν πρός ύμάς». Όπερ έστιν άγάπη. Καίτοι γε ένταύθα ουδεμίαν έτέραν χρείαν φησιν, άλλ' ίνα ιδωμεν ύμάς. [...] Τίς γάρ έστιν ήμιν, φησιν, έλπίς, ή χαρά, ή στέφανος καυχήσεως; Άρα έπιγινώσκετε τά ρήματα γυναικών όντα πάνν διαθερμαινομένων τοίς σπλάγγχνοις, και πρός παιδία μικρά διαλεγομένων; «Και στέφανος, φησι, καυχήσεως». Ου γάρ ήρκει τό στέφανος όνομα δείξαι τήν λαμπρότητα, άλλά προσέθηκε και, «Καυχήσεως». Πόσης πυρώσεως τουτο; Ουκ άν ποτε μήτηρ, ουδέ πατήρ, ει' γε όμοου συνήλθον, και τον έαυτων άνεμίξαντο πόθον, ήδυνήθησαν δείξαι ισόρροπον όντα τώ Παύλω τον έαυτων πόθον (PG. 62.409). That means that the expression of the maternal feelings of Paul isn't limited in v. 7b-8 but it is extended in v. 17-18⁷⁰.**

b) The reason why Paul desires to impart his life to the Thessalonians is not because *he has begotten them through the gospel* (1 Kor. 4:13) but *because they have become very dear to the apostles*. Using *you have become*, he turns back to the most crucial moment in the past *and stresses their* (the Thessalonian's) contribution to his abundant sacrificing love. The *beloved children of God* became Paul's dear children, apparently by the way they responded to his preaching.

Finally in v. 10-12, where the ethos of the apostles is positively portrayed (that is without the negative pronouns of 2:3), Paul presents himself not as a mother who is responsible particularly for the first years of the human existence but as a father⁷¹ who undertakes according to Plutarch's *De*

amore prolis the *άνατροφή* (= upbringing)⁷²: *You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly (referring to faith in God) and justly (referring to the relationship with other people) and blamelessly (refers to the way they conducted) we behaved ourselves among you who believe; ¹¹as you know how we (i) exhorted, and (ii) comforted, and (iii) charged every one of you (παρακαλούντες ύμάς και παραμυθούμενοι και μαρτυρούμενοι), as a father does his own children, ¹²that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory⁷³. According to Gerber the ethical exhortation of the children was a Jewish custom par excellence⁷⁴. I believe that the instruction was as well a custom for the Greek low classes (to which belong the recipients of the epistle) who didn't have the financial opportunity (the *tyche* according to Pseudo-Plutarch, *Περί Παιδών Άγωγής* 8e) to employ a paidagogos. According to Burke in this verse *Paul is employing a metaphor of unambiguous superiority⁷⁵*. The meaning however of a metaphor is also given from the context: Paul focuses here on his **personal** relationship with *each one of his receivers* while he emphasizes that his exhortation and encouragement didn't aim to **his own glory** but that is worthy of **God's** call to His Kingdom-Imperium and **His Kabod/Glory⁷⁶**. The verb *παρακαλούντες ύμάς* in combination with *και παραμυθούμενοι* (which in 5:14 refers to *όλιγοψύχους*)⁷⁷, which are used also in the paraenetic section of 1 Thes.⁷⁸ (and by this verse the audience is prepared for this), don't declare the superiority (as it happens with *παραγγέλομεν* 2 Thes. 3:6) but according to Chrysostom the *άτρυφον* of the apostle⁷⁹ and his love and his care for people who need con-*

⁷² See Gerber, *Paulus und seine 'Kinder'* 307.

⁷³ καθάπερ οίδατε, ως ένα έκαστον ύμών ως πατήρ τέκνα έαυτου παρακαλούντες ύμάς και παραμυθούμενοι και μαρτυρούμενοι εις τό περιπατείν ύμάς άξίως του Θεου του καλούντος ύμάς εις την έαυτου βασιλειαν και δόξαν.

⁷⁴ *Paulus und seine 'Kinder'* 304.

⁷⁵ A Socio-Historical Study of Kinship Metaphors in 1 Thessalonians 67.

⁷⁶ J. Chrysostomus comments: Άνωτέρω τό τής άναστροφής ειπών, ένταύθα τό τής άγάπης φησιν- ό και μάλλον ήν ή τής προστασίας. Και του άτύφου τό ειρημένον (PG 62.407). See also Hesychius Lexicogr., Lexicon (Π—Ω). (A.D. 5/6) (894.) πα ρ η γ ο ρ ε ι · παρακαλει, παραμυθει(ται). Lexicon Vindobonense, (A.D. 14) παρακαλώ άντι του καθεκτηεω. Λ ι β ά ν ι ο ς · και Μενέλεως παρακαλών άπήλθεν άπρακτος, και αλλαχού ό α υ τ ο ς · τό μεν πρώτον παρεκάλουν αυτην τικτειν ήσυχή, και παρακαλώ άντι του καθέλκω. Λ ο υ κ ι α ν ο ς · παρακαλομαι σε τραύματος εις Άρειον πάγον. και Ε υ ρ ι π ι δ η ς · παρακαλει δ' εκειθεν αυ λυπη τις αλλη, και παρακαλώ τό παραμυθούμαι.

⁷⁷ Together with *μαρτυρούμενοι* they build a climactic trias. *Μαρτυρούμενοι* is used to underline the fact that the Kerygma which rescues us from the coming wrath is not a simple consolation but it has the characteristics of *μαρτυρία*- certification.

⁷⁸ Λοιπόν ούν, άδελφοί, έρωτώμεν ύμάς και παρακαλούμεν έν κυρίω Ιησού, ίνα καθως παρελάβετε παρ' ήμών τό πώς δεί ύμάς περιπατείν και άρσκειν θεώ, καθως και περιπατείτε, ίνα περισσεύητε μάλλον. (4:1) ⁴Παρακαλούμεν δε ύμάς, άδελφοί, νουθετείτε τους άτάκτους, παραμυθείσθε τους όλιγοψύχους, άντέχεσθε των άσθενών, μακροθυμείτε πρός πάντας. (5:14). See the comments of the Fathers to this verse: Ένταύθα πρός τους άρχοντας διαλέγεται- μη άπ' έξουσίας, φησι, μηδė αυθαδειάς επιπλήττετε, άλλά μετá νουθεσίας- ό γάρ αυστηρός και άπεγνωκώς έαυτον, θρασύτερος γίνεται καταφρονών και επιπληττόμενος, διά τουτο τή νουθεσία χρή ήδύ κατασκευάζειν τό φάρμακον. *Catena in epistulam i ad Thessalonicenses (tyrus Parisinus) (e cod. Coislín. 204)*.

⁷⁹ PG. 62.406.6-407.9: Άνωτέρω τό τής άναστροφής ειπών, ένταύθα τό τής άγάπης φησιν- ό και μάλλον ήν ή τής προστασίας. Και του άτύφου τό ειρημένον. «Ως πατήρ τέκνα έαυτου...». «Ότε ειπε, «Και διαμαρτυρούμενοι»,

⁶⁸ In some manuscripts the tense is "corrected", that is turned back to past tense.

⁶⁹ Έν πολλή έπιθυμία is synonym with *όμειρόμενοι ύμών*. The phrase *τίς γάρ ήμών έλπίς ή χαρά ή στέφανος καυχήσεως- [...] ύμεις γάρ έστε ή δόξα ήμών και ή χαρά* corresponds to *διότι άγαπητοι ήμιν έγενήθητε*. According to Plutarch 480.C.2-5 *οϋτε γάρ φιλόλογος πατήρ οϋτως οϋτε φιλότιμος οϋτε φιλοχρήματος γέγονεν ως φιλότεκνος*.

⁷⁰ About the modern exegetes who consider that the Parents-Children metaphor continues in 2:17-20 see Gerber, *Paulus und seine 'Kinder'* 314 Anm. 287.

⁷¹ He has already done so by stating himself as an example to them in 1:6.

solution before the coming of the Οργή and instruction how they must περιπατεῖν and ἀγιαξέειν themselves so as to be eternally with Kyrios in his own Kingdom (5:14). We have also seen that the maternal element dominates in the the periscopes which frame this vers.

It is clear that in the passage of 1 Thes. dominant is the authority of God while in the second the one of the sender. Paul's word in 1Thes.2 was not accepted because the receivers have recognized in the word of Paul the logos of God who in the passage 2:1-13 is mentioned 12 times!: Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ Θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως, ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἔστιν ἀληθῶς λόγον Θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν (2:13). Note that at the beginning of the exhortation the apostle will remark: οἴδατε γὰρ τίνας παραγγελίας ἐδώκαμεν ὑμῖν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ (4:2) [...] τοιγαροῦν ὁ ἀθετῶν οὐκ ἄνθρωπον ἀθετεῖ ἀλλὰ τὸν Θεὸν τὸν [καὶ] διδόντα τὸ Πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ τὸ Ἅγιον εἰς ὑμᾶς (4:8).⁸⁰

We conclude that the image of the mother/nurse and her beneficency-love (which stand in the core of the chiasmus in 2:1-12 but also in the prologue of the section 2:13-3:13) is called upon to show that Paul and his own assistants constantly yearn to impart the Thessalonians their own lives (and not only verbal admonitions), while the image of the father is used especially for the personal teaching in the past and comforting facing the Parousia of Jesus. Both express the opposite of seeking glory and profit and simultaneously the unique ethos of Paul and his Paraclete which aims at being sanctified *entirely*; and may your spirit and soul *and body* be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (5:23).

3. Paul's intimacy with the audience in Context

Here we will show how Paul presents himself as father in 1 Thess. context: A. The author does not accompany his name neither with ἀπόστολος-apostle nor with δοῦλος-servant. Apparently he wants them to feel comfortable with him (through avoiding the agitation that accompanies heavy duty titles) and his close attendants that accompanied him in his first travel to the West. He experiences the same afflictions with them and in the epilogue he requests for their prayers (5:25). At this point paradoxically are lacking the personal greetings of Paul and his associates.

B. He and his companions address τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν Θεῷ Πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη⁸¹. God is called *Father*⁸² and Jesus

Christ, the *Lord* perhaps in opposition to Zeus and the emperor (τὸν πατέρα πατρίδος καὶ κύριο Res Gestae Divi Augusti 37). *The living and true God* (1:9) is Father par excellence because he has Son who has died for us (5:10) but God has raised him from the dead (1:10). As it is underlined in the Praise which introduces and concludes the first part of the epistle (1:3; 3:13), God is Father of all the Christians (ἡμῶν) so as Jesus is the Lord of us, because of the election⁸³. Furthermore he has a special relationship with Paul and the other apostles of Jesus Christ (3:11) who are called *συνεργοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ* (3:2) since they have been approved and are tested (2:8)⁸⁴. This God will rescue us who await patiently His Second Coming from the *coming wrath* (1:10). All the believers, the *beloved of this Father*, who have been *orphans away from their compatriots and their families* (2:14-17), although they are likely coming from the lower classes of the society, constitute the *Ecclesia of the Thessalonians* (1:1) with a different *πολίτευμα* from the equivalent politico-religious institution in the same city⁸⁵. They are *Ecclesia in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ* which (phrase) Paul does not typical-

epithet pater is closely paralleled by Roman Iu-piter and Indian Dyaus pitar: his role as father must be already IE, not in a theologial or anthropogonical sense (regardless of the frequent epic formula "Zeus, father of men and gods"), but as the Homeric variant Zeus anax, "Lord Zeus", proves, as having (he power of a father in a patriarchal system. This role, which implies unrestricted power as well as its control by father-like benignity, continues as the fundamental role of Zeus in all antiquity and finds expression also in the standard iconography of a bearded but powerful man (934). In the biblical tradition in spite of the popularity of the epithet 'Father' in personal names, the epithet is not common in the texts. God can be addressed as 'My/Our Father' (Jer 3:4.19; Isa 63:16; 64:7[8]) and can be characterized as a father/creator, with Israel as his son/children (Exod 4:22; Deut 14:1; 32:6.18; Hos 2:1 [1:10]; 11:1; Isa 1:2; 45:10-12; Jer 31:9; Mai 1:6; 2:10; cf. Mum 11:12; Ps 68:6[5]). Another illustration is Jeremiah's accusation that some people address a piece of wood with "You are my father", or a bit of stone with "You gave birth to me" (Jer 2:27), using language that should be reserved for God only. In the texts, God is also identified as 'like a father' (Ps 103:13; Prov 3:12), and, in keeping with the parental model, even as a -mother (Isa 42:14; 45:10; 49:15; 66:13), but various other metaphors are more frequently used. As 'father', the emphasis is on God as protective and compassionate, Israel was reluctant to describe God as a physical father, except in an ultimate sense. In particular, God is described as father of the Davidic king (2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chr 28:6; Pss 2:7; 89:27-28(26-27); Isa 9:5[6]), who in turn may have the title 'Eternal Father' (Isa 9:5[6]). The emphasis, however, is on sonship via adoption: "This day have I given birth to you" (Ps 2:7). [...] In the NT the conception remains basically the same, but with well over 200 occurrences—more than 120 in the Johannine corpus alone—the epithet 'Father' virtually explodes in popularity. While remaining primarily an epithet, 'Father' is also used in direct address to God. The use of this title in the Aramaic-speaking circles of the early Christian community is retained in the double invocation "Abba. Father" in a Gethsemane prayer by Jesus (Mark 14:36) and in the Spirit cry, cited by Paul (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). See H.B. Huffmon, Father, DDD 236-238.

⁸³ 1:3-4: ἐμπροσθεν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, εἰδότες, ἀδελφοὶ ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ [τοῦ] Θεοῦ, τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν. They exercise the three virtues (faith, love, hope) with work, labor and patience (1: 3). Of course given that Paul refers to what is lacking in their faith (3:10) while he devotes a whole section of the epistle's exhorting part to *brotherly love* (4: 9.10), one might say that what is said in 1 Thess.1:3 is used within a captatio benevolentiae framework.

⁸⁴ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, οὕτως λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν (2:4)

⁸⁵ They aren't a voluntary association (a thiasos of one God or a collegiums) with cultic, professional or funeral purposes.

τότε πατέρων μέμνηται, δεικνύς ὅτι εἰ καὶ διεμαρτυρόμεθα, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο οὐ σφοδρῶς, ἀλλ' ὡς πατέρες.

⁸⁰ He is not referred to as Father while the following imitation does not refer to Paul but the churches in Judea.

⁸¹ In 2:14 he speaks of *the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus*. Luke simply calls them Ἑλληνες/Ἑλληνίδες-Greeks (Act. 18:4)

⁸² According to F. Graf (Zeus DDD 934-936) *the Homeric and later*

ly use for the opening of an epistle⁸⁶. This (*in...*) could be linked to **the church** (1:1b) but also to **Grace to you**⁸⁷ and **peace-shalom**⁸⁸. The Christians of Thessaloniki (who are not called in this epistle *saints*) constitute a **Church**, like the Hebrew Qahal and the Greek Ecclesia, because of the two Divine Personae's initiative (εκλογή v.4 Κλήση v. 12b) to offer **Grace** (*forgiveness of sins-amnestie*) and **Peace**, one of different quality from that of **Pax Romana** whose peace is fragile and susceptible to an end as he proclaims in 5:1. *Ev-in* could not only mean the medium, but also the place where the Church is existing and functioning as an **entity-a family** (comp. 2:14), especially since Paul already experiences being in the presence of God through prayer (1:3; 3:9). Through the final coming of Jesus and the raising of the dead, all Christian will be always *σὺν Κυρίῳ* (4:17; 5:9-10: *ὅτι οὐκ ἔθετο ἡμᾶς ὁ Θεὸς εἰς ὄργην ἀλλὰ εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορῶμεν εἴτε καθυδύωμεν ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ ζήσωμεν*). For this reason we must care for our sanctification (4:3) *διότι ἔκδικος Κύριος* (4:6).

C. At the introductory *Praise*, the part that responds to *Grace* and covers three chapters⁸⁹, the words *always and without ceasing* about the Eucharist (thanksgiving) refer to *all the holy brethren* in the church⁹⁰ and this is emphasized in the epilogue too: *Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren*⁹¹ (5:27). What is also obvious is Paul's aim to maintain the feeling of connection between *ἡμεῖς-we* and all the *ὑμεῖς-you* by and large. For now this connection is accomplished through the **mention in prayer**, *the Thessalonians and their work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope* (1:2.3)⁹².

D. In this frame, Paul, who in v. 2:18 through *ἐγὼ* dis-

tinguishes himself from his associates, devotes the second half of the first part of his epistle to underline his attempts from the past to present to maintain personal - bodily communion with the Thessalonians. Satan⁹³ however blocked his way. *Μηκέτι στέγων* (< *στέγω* = *no longer endure it* [= *the fact that he had not communion with the Thess.*]⁹⁴) as he states twice, he did not hesitate to *be left alone*, sending his brother, Timothy⁹⁵. Paul considers the return of Timothy who brings news of the faith and love of the Thessalonians as well as the fact that they remember and long to see **him**, as a **Gospel**: *But now that Timothy has now come to us from you, and brought us good news of your i) faith and ii) love, and that iii) you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you* (3:6). These good news that Timothy brings soothes Paul and gives him life. At the end of the first part of his epistle, Paul continues to wish: *now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you* (3:11) so that three goals may be accomplished: a) restoring whatever is lacking in their faith, b) the increase and abound in love for one another and for all c) the establishing of their hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints (3: 12.13). Given what is said apart from the faith in God it is also the faith-trust (*fides*) in Paul that is being verified because, among others, his prophecies are fulfilled.

E. In the second part of the Epistle (ch. 4-5) it is clear that Paul wants to differentiate the Church (whose members are the *sons of light and sons of the day*-5:4.5) through its ethos-ethic from the *others who have no hope* (4:13) and *those who sleep and get drunk at night* (5: 6.7). They are the *Ἔθνη who do not know God* and live with *lustful passion* (4:5), *destined for wrath and not to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ* (5:9). All church members are *brothers* who make up a family-community that is different from the Gentile *Ecclesia* which worships Caesar as Lord and Father of the empire and the world. The Church of Jesus Christ is brought together through i) *recognition* (for) *those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ii) be(ing) at peace among yourselves, warn(ing) those who are unruly, comfort(ing) the fainthearted, uphold(ing) the weak and iii) be(ing) patient with all* (5:12-14). This *Koinonia* will be perfected in the future, for we will always be with the Lord.

It is clear of the aforementioned that particularly in the first section of his oldest epistle, Paul underlines the *vertical* communion of the audience, their relationship with the Living/True God who is Father to his Son *who died for us* (5: 10) and was resurrected from the dead. He comes back and save us *from the coming wrath*. Yet the Father is a father to us all. In fact he calls them **beloved by God and brothers**. That is very important for an audience which had been ostracized from their family and social circle because of their faith in Jesus. Apart from having a new Fa-

⁸⁶ Comp. 2:14: *ὑμεῖς γὰρ μιμηταὶ ἐγενήθητε, ἀδελφοί, τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ; 1Co 1:2-3: τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῇ οὐσῇ ἐν Κορίνθῳ [...]. Χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.*

⁸⁷ Instead of the usual Hebrew *ἔλεος-mercy* (Gal. 6: 16) and *χαίρειν-Greetings* (James 1: 1). The two last elements (grace and peace) are usually found in other epistles as coming from *God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*. 5:28: *Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν.*

⁸⁸ The same problem does exist in 1 Thes. with *καθὼς οἴδατε οἷοι ἐγενήθημεν [ἐν] ὑμῖν δι' ὑμᾶς* (1:5c) which can be read with the previous but also the following vers. According to Aristoteles *ὄλως δὲ δεῖ εὐανάγνωστον εἶναι τὸ γεγραμμένον καὶ εὐφραστον. ἔστιν δὲ τὸ αὐτό- ὅπερ οἱ πολλοὶ σύνδεσμοι οὐκ ἔχουσιν, οὐδ' ἂ μὴ ῥάδιον διαστίζαι, ὥσπερ τὰ Ἡρακλείτου. τὰ γὰρ Ἡρακλείτου διαστίζαι ἔργον διὰ τὸ ἄδηλον εἶναι πότερῳ προσκεῖται, τῷ ὕστερον ἢ τῷ πρότερον, ὅσον ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ αὐτῆ τοῦ συγγράμματος* (1407b16). Comp. Byz.: *Χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.*

⁸⁹ Comp. 5: 17: *ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε/ ἐν παντὶ εὐχαριστεῖτε.*

⁹⁰ 1:2: *Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ Θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν.*

⁹¹ Reidar Aasgaard, 'My Beloved Brothers and Sisters'. *Christian Siblingship in Paul*. T&T Clark International. London-New York 2004. Ph. Harland, Familial Dimensions of Group Identity: 'Brothers' (ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ) in Associations of the Greek East, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124 (2005) 491-513. -'Familial Dimensions of Group Identity (II): 'Mothers' and 'Fathers' in Associations and Synagogues of the Greek World,' *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 38 (2007) 57-79. <http://www.philipharland.com/publications.html>.

⁹² At closure he will ask of them: *Brethren, pray for us* (5:25).

⁹³ Satan seems to act as a dividing agent in general, not only in Paul's case.

⁹⁴ *στέγω* = 1. < (s)teg- cover, pass over in silence (1 Cor 13:7), 2. bear, stand, endure (1 Cor 9:12; perh. 13:7).

⁹⁵ 3:2-3.

ther they have a new Lord, not Caesar but Jesus Christ who was also persecuted and died for us. It is **His** Coming that will change-save the world and that is the Christian hope. Meanwhile he tries to strengthen the horizontal bond between him and his audience because, as the epilogical vers 3:12-13 indicates, this love functions as model in the relations of the members of the Church and as the main factor *εις τὸ στηριξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιοσύνη ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ Πατρὸς ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ Παρουσίᾳ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ.*

4. The reasons for the Paul's intimacy

In his next letters to the Churches, where he faces enemies inside the Ecclesia, Paul will demonstrate himself particularly as pater familiae. The example of 1 Cor. where Paul tells that he fed the Corinthians with *milk* and *not with solid food* as to *carnal*, as to *babes in Christ* (3:14) is quite distinctive. At the end of the epistle's first part (ch. 1-4), Paul separates himself from the instructors in Christ and instead projects the image of the father (also as an invitation for imitation) threatening them with the rod. In this context Timothy is also mentioned and is presented as beloved (the Corinthians too) and faithful: ¹⁴ **I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.** ¹⁵ **For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.** ¹⁶ **Therefore I urge you, to imitate me.** ¹⁷ **For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.** ¹⁸ **Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.** ¹⁹ **But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power.** ²⁰ **For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.** ²¹ **What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?** (1 Cor. 4:10-21).

In the Epistle to Galatians, which is according to Dunn⁹⁶ also written from Corinth during his first visit, Paul uses the strong language of the advising father. Only after he forcefully accuses them as fools for falling prey to Judeo-Christian false brothers, he says: *My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20 I wish I were present with you now and could change my tone, for I am perplexed about you* (Gal 4:18-20)⁹⁷.

⁹⁶ J.D.G. Dunn, *Beginnings from Jerusalem*, Michigan: Eedermans 2009, 720.

⁹⁷ According to Joh. Chrysostomus (*Comm. Titum*) the ethos of Paul in this epistle is erotic: *Ei δὲ καὶ ὀλόκληρον τὸ ἔθνος ὑβρίζει, μὴ θαυμάσης· καὶ ἐπὶ Γαλατῶν γὰρ αὐτὸ ποιεῖ, λέγων· Ὡ ἀνόητοι Γαλάται. Οὐχ ὑβριστικοῦ δὲ τοῦτο ἦθος, ἀλλ' ἔρωτικῶν.* (PG. 62.664). About the criterion of familiarity see K.I. Belezos, *Χρυσόστομος καὶ Απόστολος Παῦλος. Χρονολογικὴ Ταξινόμηση Ἐπιστολῶν καὶ χρυσστομικὴ Ἑρμηνεία*. Athens 2008, 38. 130-131.

While in every other epistle Paul presents himself as *pater familias*, it is in 1 Thess. that a loving mother ready to share her life and yearning for contact in person is being projected. We have seen that the fact that motherly love surpasses fatherly harshness can be verified through viewing 1 Thess. and 2 Thess. in parallel since in the later Paul acts rather fatherly dealing with problems inside of the Church.

Motherly elements are being shown in his private letter to *Philemon*. Self-presented as aged (since he was probably near his life's end) Paul writes a warmhearted letter to Philemon for he believes that Onesimus has become a child of his during his imprisonment: *yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ—¹⁰I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten while in my chains,¹¹ who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me¹² I am sending him back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own heart,¹³ whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel.*

Why Paul shows such intimacy in the 1 Thes.? From what has been said and from the Data of the Acts (despite the fact that the book was written about 30 years later), we draw the following conclusions:

1. The book of Acts shows that during his stay in the city of Athens (17:18-33) Paul felt strongly the hands of loneliness upon him and the disappointment of the rejection of the Stoics and the Epicurians although he had adjusted his word and his strategy to the city's mental climate. When he arrived in Corinth he confessed that he came *in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling* (1 Cor.2:3). Luke marks that Paul was filled by the Spirit by the return of his associates from Thessaloniki: *After Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit* (Acts 18:5). In 1 Thes. 3:7-8 he points out: *διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί, ἐφ' ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν Κυρίῳ.* The faith (*fides*) of the Thessalonians towards Paul, his message and the way it was expressed, confirmed that Paul's preaching *was not in vein* but had *πληροφορία πολλή*. This had consequences for his self-estimation since it must have rejuvenated Paul who bursts out in thanksgiving which is common in Psalter after a trial. Moreover it must have given him the feeling of spiritual fatherhood and motherhood forging special bonds of friendship. With this psychology he lashes out on (i) the supposedly Greek philosophers (who appeared themselves as doctors of souls) and (ii) intensely on his compatriots, adopting the usual anti-Semitic views of the Greco-roman world, since in Corinth according to Acts he experienced a sundering with the Synagogue (18:4-6). The joy of the apostle was even more because the Thessalonians church with its position was of great importance for the distribution of his preaching since the city not only stood in the midst of *via Egnatia*, the road that united the West with the

East but the city also linked the North with the South. By this way the Gospel is preached to every part of the empire, a main presupposition for the coming of the Parousia (Rom. 10:18=Ps.19:4; Mk. 13:10; Mt.24:14): ἀφ' ὑμῶν γὰρ ἐξήχηται ὁ λόγος τοῦ Κυρίου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ [ἐν τῇ] Ἀχαΐᾳ, ἀλλ' ἐν παντί τόπῳ ἢ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἐξελέλυθεν, ὥστε μὴ χρεῖαν ἔχειν ἡμᾶς λαλεῖν τι (1:8).

2. The Thessalonian church faces sorrows (θλίψεις), which come from outsiders and not from insiders as it will happen in the other epistles (Judeans or 'wise'). The receivers of the epistle are excommunicated from their family-social circle which in the graeco-roman pyramid was the most important institution after the religion. So, as underlines Gerber⁹⁸, in the frame of the *alternative* Ecclesia where it is experienced the principle of the *reverse/ inverted pyramid* (Mk.10:42-45) they need to feel love/tenderly care and not an authority which impose his own will. Paul had to conduct according to the image of God the Father and the Lord who was persecuted and dies for us. On the other hand some of the outsiders enemies obviously compared Paul with the itinerant philosophers who through traveling and initiating authorities of the past gained gold and glamour from their preaching taking advantage of the hopes and fears of the people. For these reasons Paul, who during his days as a *rabbi* he must have been called *father and teacher* (Mt. 23:10)⁹⁹, let his carefully cultivated father figure not to be distorted into the image of a patriarch¹⁰⁰ even when he faces the problem of πορνεία. Yet we have seen from the very beginning he does not accompany his name with *servant or apostle* of Jesus. He speaks in plural form, not using *I*, while in the epilogue of the epistle he does not refer to any important members of the church. He admits to the worthiness of his audience and rejuvenates their self-esteem using *you know* repeatedly and the well-known captatio benevolentiae of 1:3 but also saying to them that *you have no need so that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another* (4:9). The audience themselves have become an example for all the world, as Paul and his associates have become for them (1:6-7). All in all the imitation process revolves around the *living and true* God, who is called Father and Jesus the Lord who has died for us: *And you became followers of us and of the Lord* (1:6). Timothy is not characterized as his child but as their *brother and minister of God* (3:2). That an ostracized people of God doesn't need a new patriarch but a loving family is also seen in the last book of N.T., the Gospel of John where the authority of Peter is called in question. Van der Watt has proved in his *Family of the*

King: dynamics of metaphor in the Gospel according to John (Leiden 2000) how the metaphor of family (with the elements of love, knowing each other, solicitude, protection) is the constitutive and the most essential imagery in a Gospel which is addressed to Christians expelled from the Synagogue and their families (John 9. 16).

3. Paul's feelings of paternal love and the unique bond he shares with the Thessalonians could be understood according to the fact that they were the **firstborn** among his children in Christ like the first chosen (by the Apostle himself) associate Timothy who is called *his child* in 1 Cor. (4:17). We should also remember that according to Acts (16:6-8) before Paul's transition to Macedonia, the Holy Spirit had averted him from preaching in certain parts of Asia Minor and he had already crossed something like 600 miles without any impressive success. We also should not forget that during his visit in Philippi, the first stop he made in European ground, very few believed his word and most of those few were women. Yet with his repeated visits to the city, this Little Rome (probably with Luke's aid who is connected to city of Philippi), he managed to form the Church that would later receive the epistle which is also characterized as a loving-tender one¹⁰¹. Paul however doesn't characterize the recipients as ἀπαρχή in his first epistle as it happens in 2 Thes. 2:13¹⁰². So this fact is doubtful.
4. On the contrary, Paul seems to be feeling heavily upon him that **the coming of the Lord is at hand** unlike the false prophets of Pax Romana (see Virgil, *IV Eclogue*) which in various ways advertised Roma as aeterna and its system as the bearer of peace and security (5:3; comp. Rev. 13). In the light of the Coming of the resurrected Jesus, Paul, who was entrusted to preach to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:16), wants to present all the Christians who *returned* by his εἰσόδος not only ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγνοσίῳ (3:13)/ ὀλοτελεῖς but also united as a family. So he wants that his letter be read to **all** the brothers, even those who might not want to really listen. He also invites everybody to kiss each other although he is not giving his own¹⁰³ and in addition he neglects to mention anyone of the προϊσταμένων in particular. Through φιλαδελφία (whose visual sign was ἀσπασμός) and the public reading of his epistle which maybe substitutes his holy kiss, they will experience the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. Note that it was the coming Caesar that was greeted in a triumphant manner by the crowned members of the local Ecclesia (Greek) often accompa-

⁹⁸ Paulus und seine 'Kinder' 338-343.

⁹⁹ Apparently these three names were quite loved by the Pharisees of the time.

¹⁰⁰ As the problem of fornication is dealt with rather harshly in various Judaic texts (see *Testaments of the XII Patr.*), one could expect Paul to project the similar guiding authority of the father.

¹⁰¹ J. Karavidopoulos, *Αποστόλου Παύλου Επιστολές προς Εφεσίους, Φιλιππησίους, Κολοσσαείς, Φιλήμονα*. Thessaloniki 1981, 244.

¹⁰² Ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ Θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοὶ ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ Κυρίου, ὅτι εἰλατο ὑμᾶς ὁ Θεὸς ἀπαρχὴν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἐν ἀγιασμῷ πνεύματος καὶ πίστει ἀληθείας.

¹⁰³ The fact that all Christians regardless of ethnicity, gender or status are all brothers sealed with a ritual kiss at the end of the epistle's hearing (probably before the Eucharist where they experienced the union in one body), was a crucial element setting them apart from the other religious parties and Judaism where the term *brother* also appears but not nearly as vividly as in the Christian Church.

nied by the whole house (oikos) or school¹⁰⁴. In this frame Paul asks: *τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἔλλπις ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως- ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς- ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ Παρουσίᾳ;* (2:19). Maybe Paul also wanted to shout with Isaiah (8:18): *Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me!*¹⁰⁵

5. Because of the sentiment that **the coming of the Lord is at hand**, the epistle itself pictures an apocalyptic and also dualistic way of thought which also requires a **powerful family bond** so that the battle of the sons of light against the Temper-Satan and his organs can be fought¹⁰⁶. Characteristic of this apocalyptic way of thought is the coexistence in chap. 2 of passages where it is expressed the extreme love of Paul for his own children with other where he expresses his extreme wrath for his compatriots who persecute him¹⁰⁷. In this apocalyptic frame Paul aches to make the ostracized Thessalonians understand that they are really his beloved ones. He is also deeply concerned about the sanctification especially of the bodies, an issue which he directly links with the brothers and sisters since πορνεία (fornication and adultery) means taking advantage and defrauding one another. Based on archaeological evidence¹⁰⁸ the cults of Dionysus and Cabe-

rus (both worshiped with orgy ceremonies) were quite famous in Thessaloniki at the time. The Thessalonians had *returned* from the false gods to the one true God and this action probably cost them dearly on their immediate and professional environments¹⁰⁹. The risk of returning again to their old habits of sin must have been present daily since their isolation of their environment could be “unbearable”. To outweigh the *traditional* abuse of the sexual instinct and the passions of the flesh, Paul feels that he has not only to preach i) the sanctification through abstaining from πορνεία and ii) loving one another (something most crucial in order to escape the coming wrath), but also to be bodily near to them, feeling in any case his love/koinonia in practice. Note that (1) at the epilogue 3:12-13 *τὸ στηρίζαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἀγιοσύνη ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ Θεοῦ* (who is named as **Πατὴρ ἡμῶν**) depends on *ὑμᾶς δὲ ὁ Κύριος πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους καὶ εἰς πάντας καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς ὑμᾶς* (2) the exhortation against πορνεία is escorted by the parainesis about the *φιλαδελφία*. Paul knows that sexual abuses and the Hagiasmos especially of the body (which in second section attracts his concern) cannot be faced with prohibitions but when his brothers and sisters feel really beloved by a maternal way in the frame of their new family. This is why the apostle desires and prays without ceasing to have face to face communication with them and he presents himself not only as father who teaches with his word and example, but also as the mother who actually when ἀπορφανίζεται, ομείρεται to see her children to transmit them her life. This intimacy and this familiarity will be perfect by the Parousia. This fact for the others means wrath, for the Christians however that they will be altogether (dead and live), ὀλοτελεῖς (with body also) eternally *σὺν Κυρίῳ* as Paul four times stresses in ch. 4-5 (4:14,17; 5:10). This fact differentiates the Pauline eschatology from the other and this must be foreshadowed in the Ecclesia which lives *Ἐν Θεῷ Πατρὶ καὶ Κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ*.

¹⁰⁴ H.S. Versnel, *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and meaning of the Roman Triumph*, Leiden: Brill 1970.

¹⁰⁵ In the next epistles it feels that the Coming delays, his Churches must be organized and he must defend himself against the false brothers/ tutors. So he appears himself as an authoritative pater familiae.

¹⁰⁶ The main prayer of the Christian community, the one that sets it apart from the Synagogue, begins with the word *Father* and ends with *lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil* (Matt 6:13; Luk 11:4).

¹⁰⁷ The second subunit of the first part of I Thes. starts with the contrast ¹⁴ *ὑμεῖς γὰρ μιμηταὶ ἐγενήθητε, ἀδελφοί, τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὅτι τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπάθετε καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλετῶν καθὼς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων [...] ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς ἡ ὄργη εἰς τέλος. ἡμεῖς δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ’ ὑμῶν πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας* (2: 13-17). Jesus Himself used the image of the mourning nurse in light of Jerusalem’s desolation: “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!*” (Lk. 13:34).

¹⁰⁸ See Christoph von Brocke, *Thessaloniki – Stadt des Kassander und Gemeinde des Paulus. Eine frühe christliche Gemeinde in ihrer heidnischen Umwelt*, WUNT 2- 125; Tübingen 2001. Christopher Steimle, *Religion im römischen Thessaloniki, (Studien u. Texte zu Antike und Christentum 47)*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2008.

¹⁰⁹ With the exception of Musonius Rufus (XII.1-5), the other moralists thought of fornication as not a shameful act.

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