

## Roman Crete and the Letter to Titus

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Crete is rarely taken seriously as a plausible actual destination for the NT letter to Titus. Investigation of Roman Crete, however, yields intriguing points of contact with puzzling features of the letter. Patterns of social organisation on the island correlate closely to the structure of behavioural instruction in Titus 2.1–10, suggesting that it might have been shaped specifically to that environment. Unusual elements of the major theological statements in Titus correspond to aspects of Cretan religion in ways that could represent intentional engagement. There are implications for identifying the letter's provenance and interpreting it as a missionary document.

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The implied destination of the letter to Titus has long puzzled scholars. 'Why Crete is chosen here', Houlden confesses, 'is a mystery to us'.<sup>1</sup> Dibelius and Conzelmann speculate that 'a known situation—in this case Acts 20.3—was used as a point of departure by the Pastorals' author'.<sup>2</sup> For Quinn the churches on Crete, like the Ephesian church envisaged in the letters to Timothy, have a typological function,<sup>3</sup> and readers should recognise in them 'the more archaic, Jewish-Christian congregations of the Christian movement being updated according to a Pauline model'.<sup>4</sup> Oberlinner asks whether the purpose of locating the addressee on Crete might be to indicate the geographical spread of Pauline influence.<sup>5</sup> In any event, if, as is generally held, 'the artificiality of the occasion for the letter is obvious',<sup>6</sup> an investigation of actual conditions on the island of

1 J. L. Houlden, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Handsworth: Penguin, 1976; repr. London: SCM, 1983) 142.

2 M. Dibelius and H. Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972) 153.

3 J. D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus* (AB 35; New York: Doubleday, 1990) 17.

4 Quinn, *Titus*, 16.

5 L. Oberlinner, *Titusbriefe, Die Pastoralbriefe* 2.3 (HTK 11.2; Freiburg: Herder, 1996) 21–2.

338 6 Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 153.

Crete could hardly be expected to contribute much to an understanding of the letter's content.

There are, however, a number of features of the letter to Titus that have proved difficult to explain. These include the description of God as ἀψευδής (1.2), the association of saving with the training effect of grace (ἐπεφόνη γὰρ ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ σωτήριος...παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς, 2.11–12), and the specifying of the 'washing of rebirth' as the means of God's saving (ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως, 3.5), all unique within the NT literature. The form of the domestic instruction given in 2.1–10, where subjects are categorised according to age and sex rather than in the more standard pairs of domestic relationships, is another peculiarity.

At the same time historians of Crete stress that island's distinctive character within the Mediterranean world. Speaking of 'the idiosyncratic nature of its development', archaeologist M. Prent comments, 'Whereas the later history of the island is broadly comparable to that of other regions in the Aegean, it also displays distinct peculiarities. In addition to the relative strength of Bronze Age traditions, these concern certain aspects of Cretan socio-political organisation and the continuity of contact with the Near East'.<sup>7</sup> Recent archaeological studies seem to confirm that this distinctiveness continued well into the Roman period. Whereas the Roman geographer Strabo (63/64 BCE–24 CE) remarks that some of Crete's traditional political institutions had been superseded by Roman administration (Strabo, *Geogr.* 10.4, 22), L. Vance Watrous and Despoina Hadzi-Vallianou conclude from their archaeological survey of the Mesara region that, 'Dorian social practices, concerning male initiation, marriage, and kinship relations, seem to have continued longer in Early Roman Crete, at least into the third century AD'.<sup>8</sup> Is it possible that some of the unusual features of the letter to Titus could correspond to any of those 'distinct peculiarities' of the letter's stated destination, the island of Crete?

The exploration of such questions is assisted by advances in archaeological and historical studies of Roman Crete. Long neglected in favour of its glorious Mycenaean and Minoan predecessors, '[t]he Roman period on Crete has received

7 M. Prent, *Cretan Sanctuaries and Cults: Continuity and Change from Late Minoan IIIc to the Archaic Period* (Religion in the Graeco-Roman World 154; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2005) 613.

8 L. Vance Watrous and Despoina Hadzi-Vallianou, 'Mesara Romana (150BC–AD400)', 351–8 in L. Vance Watrous, Despoina Hadzi-Vallianou and Harriet Blitzer, *The Plain of Phaistos: Cycles of Social Complexity in the Mesara Region of Crete* (Monumenta Archaeologica 23; Cotsen Institute of Archaeology: University of California, 2004) 357. In interpreting Strabo his universalising and, hence, romanising tendency has to be taken into account (see Katherine Clarke's illuminating discussion of Strabo, along with Polybius and Posidonius, in *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* [Oxford Classical Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University, 1999], 341, where she describes their 'concern to express the unity of the Roman world').

increased academic attention in recent years'.<sup>9</sup> Of special interest is the city of Gortyn, which local tradition identifies as the site of the first Christian mission on Crete and the ministry of Titus.<sup>10</sup> Set in the plain of Mesara in southern central Crete, and with access to the sea via the port of Lebena, Gortyn became the capital of the Roman province of Crete and Cyrenaica after the Roman occupation of 67 BCE. The odeon containing the famous Law Code of Gortyn has received significant attention,<sup>11</sup> but work on the praetorium is still in progress,<sup>12</sup> and by far the greater part of the Roman city remains to be excavated. It is becoming more possible, however, to describe features of life on Crete in Roman times and ask whether aspects of the letter to Titus might be particularly appropriate to a Cretan environment. We shall proceed to consider some possible connections.

### 1. Cretan Society and the Ethical Distinctives of Titus

Almost a century ago Martin Dibelius proposed that Stoic tables of duties for the various members of Hellenistic households lay behind apparently similar material in Colossians.<sup>13</sup> While the extent of literary dependence on Greco-Roman models has been questioned,<sup>14</sup> it has become standard

- 9 J. Francis and G. W. M. Harrison, 'Review Article: Gortyn: First City of Roman Crete', *American Journal of Archaeology* 107.3 (2003) 487–92 (487), referring particularly to work over the past two decades of the Archaeological School of Athens and the Italian Archaeological Mission under the direction of Professor A. Di Vita, published in *Gortina Vols. 2, 3, 4, 5* (Monografie della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente 7, 8, 10, 12; Padua: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1997–2001). See also the brief description of recent work by A. Bingham, 'Crete's Roman Past', *History Today* 45 (1999) 45. Work is also underway on Roman Knossos, led by Dr Ken Wardle of Birmingham University (reports of current work are available at <http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aha/kaw/Knossos/job11.htm> – accessed 2.4.09). Susan E. Alcock discusses aspects of Hellenistic and Roman Crete and their relationship to earlier Cretan periods in 'Cretan Inventions', Chapter 3 of *Archaeologies of the Greek Past: Landscape, Monuments, and Memories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002) 99–131; see references to other work on Roman Crete on p. 105 n. 10.
- 10 Results of the on-going excavations of Gortyn are being made more widely accessible by Cretan archaeologist Dr. Antoni Vasilakis in a series of both technical and popular publications, e.g. *Gortyn* (Iraklio: V. Kouvadis – V. Manouras, n.d).
- 11 See R. F. Willetts, ed., *The Law Code of Gortyn* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967); and more recently A. S. Vasilakis, *The Great Inscription of the Law Code of Gortyn* (Heraklion: Mystis, n.d.), with bibliography.
- 12 One find that recently gained wide media coverage was archaeologist Anna Micheli's discovery of marble statues of the goddesses Athena and Hera dating from the Roman period, lying in the theatre where they had fallen during an earthquake that destroyed much of the city in 367 CE. See newspaper report by Kate Roberts, 'Important Find at Gortyn', *Crete Gazette*, December 2005, 4–5 (<http://www.cretegazette.com/pdf/news2005dec.pdf> – accessed 2.4.09).
- 13 Martin Dibelius, *An die Kolosser, an die Epheser, an Philemon* (HNT; Tübingen: Mohr, 1913).
- 14 See, e.g., W. Schrage, 'Zur Ethik der neutestamentlichen Haustafeln', *NTS* 21 (1974) 1–22; D. Lührmann, 'Neutestamentliche Haustafeln und Antike Ökonomie', *NTS* 27 (1981) 83–97.

practice to speak of NT *Haustafeln*, or household codes (Eph 5.21–6.9; Col 3.18–4.1; 1 Pet 2.18–3.7; 1 Tim 2.1–15; 5.1–2; 6.1–2, 17–19; Titus 2.1–3.8).<sup>15</sup> Although Titus 2.1–10 is commonly listed along with those other examples, it differs from most of them in interesting ways. Comparable instructions in Col 3.18–4.1 and Eph 5.21–6.9 are set out in pairs of relationships that would be appropriate to a standard household (i.e. wives–husbands, children–parents, slaves–masters), and assume a degree of reciprocity within each pair, but ‘[i]t is a characteristic feature of the “household rules” in Titus that the congregation is divided by age and sex, not by family relationships’.<sup>16</sup> There are instructions for older men (πρεσβύτεροι, 2.2), older women (πρεσβυτίδες, 2.3–4), younger women (νέαι, 2.4–5), younger men (νεώτεροι, 2.6), Titus himself (2.7–8), and slaves (δοῦλοι, 2.9–10), before instructions are provided for the whole Christian community (3.1–2).<sup>17</sup>

A range of explanations has been offered for the differences. Some have discerned within the NT a process of ‘adaptation of the household code to the household of God. The household code format, a kind of convention in moral discourse, has already been Christianised within the Pauline tradition and used for codifying ethical norms (Colossians, Ephesians); now further development produces the earliest “church order”’.<sup>18</sup> From this perspective, the self-understanding of the church as ‘God’s household’<sup>19</sup> has suggested the adoption of standard household norms governing relationships and behaviour to regulate life within the Christian community. There are considerable difficulties, however, in tracing a line of development from the supposedly earlier Christian *Haustafeln* in Colossians and Ephesians to later church-oriented adaptations in Titus 2.1–3.2 and 1 Pet 2.13–3.7. Such is the divergence in form and content between the instructions in Titus and 1 Peter and those in Colossians and Ephesians that H. von Lips

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Ben Witherington III objects that, ‘while discussion of household management was a standing topic in antiquity, both before and after the New Testament era, I can find no direct evidence of a household table and certainly nothing like what we find in the New Testament with reciprocal pairs that are commanded directly’. *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990) 147.

15 Useful surveys are provided by David C. Verner, ‘The *Haustafeln* in Previous Research’, *The Household of God: The Social World of the Pastoral Epistles* (SBLDS 71; Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983), 16–23; David L. Balch, ‘Household Codes’, in *Greco-Roman Literature and the New Testament* (ed. David E. Aune; SBLBS 21; Atlanta: Scholars, 1988) 25–50; I. Howard Marshall, Excursus 7: ‘Household Codes and Station Codes’, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999) 231–6.

16 C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles* (NCB; Oxford: Clarendon, 1963) 134.

17 The members of this community are described as ‘those who have come to believe in God’ (οἱ πεπιστευκότες θεῷ, 3:8).

18 F. Young, *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994) 22.

19 1 Tim 3.15; cf. the depiction of the church leader as God’s οἰκονόμος in Titus 1.7.

concludes that, '[m]an kann dies aber nicht als Weiterentwicklung oder gar Auflösungserscheinung interpretieren, sondern muß darin eine Paralleltradition sehen'.<sup>20</sup> To account for the codes in Titus 2.1–3.2 and 1 Pet 2.13–3.7 he finds it necessary to posit a separate Station Code tradition dealing with the duties of various classes of people within society.

The material in Titus, however, differs even from that in 1 Peter, both in its form and in the theological and ethical grounding of the instructions.<sup>21</sup> Even if it were possible, then, to identify some Station Code source, that in itself would not be sufficient to explain the particular shape of the instructions to the Christian community envisaged in Titus. As Verner argues, the variety in form of the NT codes 'strongly suggests that they address real, concrete, and in some cases persistent social needs within the church'.<sup>22</sup> Could those 'real, concrete... social needs' be found in specific conditions on the island of Crete?

Throughout its history Crete has both shared aspects of culture with the Greek mainland and exhibited its own distinctive characteristics. Notable among the latter are the practices of male communal dining in ἀνδρεία (men's halls) and the separation of children into age groups for education and eventual initiation into adult society.<sup>23</sup> Prent gives the following account:

20 H. von Lips, 'Die Haustafel als "Topos" im Rahmen der urchristlichen Paränese: Beobachtungen anhand des 1. Petrusbriefes und des Titusbriefes', *NTS* 40 (1994) 261–80 (277).

21 See Marshall's analysis (*Pastoral Epistles*, 235).

22 Verner, *Household*, 91. Pertinent is A. T. Lincoln's complaint in relation to Colossians, that 'while considerable attention has been paid to the origins of the household code, very little has been given to the function of the code' ('The Household Code and Wisdom Mode of Colossians', *JSNT* 74 [1999] 93–112, 93).

23 The literary sources for these practices are Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 4.142–43 (citing Dosiades, an earlier historian of Crete, and an otherwise unknown work by Pyrgion, *Cretan Customs*), Strabo 10.4, 20–22 (citing the fourth-century BCE historian Ephorus), and Aristotle *Pol.* 2.10 (fourth century BCE). On Strabo see n. 8 above. There are complex issues regarding the use of Athenaeus as an historical source. Writing in Rome in the late second or early third century CE (and therefore after the NT period) his 'dinner-table discussions' preserve fragments of several hundred earlier works (mostly before the NT period). Students of earlier periods for whom Athenaeus's fragments comprise their primary literary sources have to assess the accuracy with which Athenaeus has preserved them. The results are mixed. On the one hand it has been claimed that 'his use of notes, and the potential accuracy that suggests, is evident from identical fragments separated by many books' (Liv Mariah Yarrow, *Historiography at the End of the Republic: Provincial Perspectives on Roman Rule* [Oxford Classical Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University, 2006], 108). Christopher Pelling, however, offers examples of Athenaeus 'recasting his materials in substantial ways' ('Fun with Fragments: Athenaeus and the Historians', *Athenaeus and his World* [ed. David Braund and John Wilkins; Exeter: University of Exeter, 2000], 171–90 [188]). Similarly Robert J. Gorman and Vanessa Gorman, 'The *Tryphê* of the Sybarites: A Historiographical Problem in Athenaeus', *JHS* 127 (2007) 38–60, conclude that to the accounts of the fall of Sybaris in his sources Athenaeus (or an intermediary) has added a moralising explanation of that demise as a consequence of enervating luxury. For the purposes of the present investigation,

a basic and recurring characteristic in the education of both boys and girls is the organisation into different age groups or choruses, probably from the age of six or seven. In these choruses, children were instructed in the traditions, history, norms and values of their communities. They engaged in music, song, dance and physical exercise, they learnt various practical skills and were familiarized with sexuality, often involving homo-eroticism.<sup>24</sup>

Among males *παῖδες* (children), *νεώτεροι* (young men), and *πρεσβύτεροι* (older men) are distinguished. This pattern recalls the Spartan model whose goal had been to nurture the fighting qualities that it was felt the community's warriors would need.<sup>25</sup> Those were still prized on Crete. Plutarch lists Cretans among 'the most warlike of peoples' (*Mor.* 9.761d). Cretan armour was highly developed, suggesting 'an interest in martial arts which the Cretans must have practised mainly on each other'.<sup>26</sup> Cretan mercenaries featured in many conflicts,<sup>27</sup> and their role against Roman forces, together with accusations of Cretan involvement in piracy,<sup>28</sup> gave Rome the pretext to impose governors in the first century BCE.<sup>29</sup>

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however, the issue is less the accuracy of Athenaeus's reproduction of older sources than the extent to which Athenaeus's descriptions reveal realities of life in the Mediterranean during the Roman period nearer to his own time. Born in Naucratis, Egypt, a student in Alexandria and writing in Rome, Athenaeus was well placed to acquire current knowledge of the Mediterranean world. It is quite likely that he might even have called in on Crete which was a regular stopping point on the shipping lane from Egypt to Greece and Rome (see Paul Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire: A Social, Political, and Economic Study* [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005], 188). Recent archaeological studies add credibility to the view that distinctive features of Cretan life as represented by Athenaeus continued to pertain during the Roman period relevant to the present investigation (see n. 8 above).

24 Prent, *Cretan Sanctuaries*, 634–5. Cretan maturation rites, specifically the *ἀρπαγή* with its apparent institutionalisation of paedophile rape, were notorious in the ancient Mediterranean world. See A. Bowie, 'Religion and Politics in Aeschylus' *ΟΡΕΣΤΕΙΑ*', *CQ* NS 43 (1993) 10–31; cf. J. Bremner, 'Paederasty', *Arethusa* 13 (1980) 279–98.

25 George Forrest describes military training in archaic Sparta, where a child was 'completely robbed of home and family between the ages of five and thirty and even thereafter compelled to devote his days to military training and his evenings to the company of his messmates'. He notes that 'in Crete...many close similarities to Spartan customs can be seen'. ('Greece: The History of the Archaic Period', *The Oxford History of the Classical World* [ed. John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray; Oxford: Oxford University, 1986], 19–49 [27]).

26 R. F. Willetts, *The Cambridge Ancient History* 3.3 (ed. J. Boardman and N. G. L. Hammond; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2nd ed. 1982) 227.

27 E.g. Josephus *Ant.* 13.86, 129.

28 S. V. Spyridakis writes, 'Crete was one of the leading centers of piracy and the slave trade in the Eastern Mediterranean throughout the Hellenistic Age'. He supplies evidence for Jewish slaves, possibly prisoners of war, on Crete in the second century BCE ('Notes on the Jews of Gortyna and Crete', *ZPE* 73 [1988] 171–5 [172–3 n. 16]).

29 See Appian *Bell. civ.* 5.6.1.

In this martial environment the primary role models for νεώτεροι were the seasoned fighters. At the all-male communal meals described by Athenaeus, the πρεσβύτεροι received the largest portions of food and if they wanted to they had the right to consume greater quantities of wine (*Deipn.* 4.143d). Read against this background the exhortation in Titus 2.2 that older men should be νηφάλιοι, σέμνοι, and σώφρονες perhaps assumes a sharper profile. After dinner tales of exemplary courage were told to urge the younger men toward manly virtues (προτρεπόμενοι τοὺς νεωτέρους εἰς ἀνδραγαθίαν, *Deipn.* 4.143d). Titus for his part is to serve as a τύπος καλῶν ἔργων for the νεώτεροι of his communities (2.7).

With the men's halls serving as the focus for male community life, women's lives revolved around the household. This is the setting for the instructions concerning women in Titus 2.3–5. These are characterised again by a distinction in age categories between older women (πρεσβύτιδες, 2.3) and younger women (νέαι, 2.4). Upon the former group are urged responsibilities relating to exemplary behaviour and the training of the latter group. Carolyn Osiek and Margaret MacDonald comment, 'Every cultural and religious tradition that practices any kind of gender separation develops distinctive teaching traditions for men and women', and in these instructions in Titus 2.3–5 they find evidence of 'a continuing custom of whose content we know very little: older women are to form character in younger women while male teachers do the same for young men'.<sup>30</sup> There is of course nothing specifically Cretan about older women passing on guidance to younger women in a domestic context.<sup>31</sup> What is unusual, however, is 'terminology practically unexampled in this correspondence or in biblical Greek' in 2.3–4a,<sup>32</sup> which depicts the role of the senior women in almost priestly terms (ἱεροπρεπείς, 2.3). Interestingly, votive offerings found in the temple of Athena in Gortyn include representations of 'young females in the confinement of some kind of structure', which Prent suggests may refer to 'a period of temple service for the girls' that might have formed part of their education.<sup>33</sup> Is Titus 2.3–4 hinting at an analogy to service performed by women in the temples, indicating that the behaviour of Christian women in their households could have the character of service offered to God?

30 Carolyn Osiek and Margaret Y. MacDonald with Janet H. Tulloch, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006) 13.

31 See the discussion of age categories in the Greco-Roman environment and in a range of NT documents in John M. G. Barclay, 'There is Neither Old Nor Young? Early Christianity and Ancient Ideologies of Age', *NTS* 53.2 (2007) 225–41. Barclay comments that 'Titus 2.1–5 represents many of the classical assumptions about age'. This pertains to the instructions both to the older men and to older women. The older women, however, though urged to 'control their tongues and their appetites for drink', also 'have a crucial role to play in socialising the younger generation of wives (αἱ νέαι) into the proper family ethos, to ensure that they are domestic, motherly, and obedient to their husbands' (237).

32 Quinn, *Titus*, 134.

33 Prent, *Cretan Sanctuaries*, 636.

## 2. Cretan Religion and the Theological Distinctives of Titus

### a. *Zeus the Deceiver and the ἀψευδῆς θεός (1.2)*

The great god of the Cretans was Zeus. From ancient times they had claimed to be guardians of both his birthplace on Mt. Ida and his tomb. Archaeological finds at the Idaian cave and elsewhere attest to a continuation or even intensification of the worship of Zeus in the Roman period, and symbols of Zeus Cretagenes appear consistently on coins of the Roman province of Crete.<sup>34</sup>

It was specifically the Cretan claim to possess the tomb of Zeus that provoked the accusation in Callimachus's Hymn to Zeus that Κρηῆτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται.<sup>35</sup> The characterisation, however, extended far beyond that single instance.<sup>36</sup> Polybius describes the breaking of a treaty and subsequent massacre as a prime example of the Cretans' 'habitual ferocity' (Polybius 28.14). The currency of such terms as κρητιζέειν, to lie, κρητισμός, falsehood,<sup>37</sup> and the expression, πρὸς Κρήτα κρητιζέειν, 'to meet craft with craft',<sup>38</sup> suggest a widespread perception.<sup>39</sup> Moreover this was not considered altogether a disgrace. 'The Greeks...admired people who, like Odysseus, could prevaricate their ways out of danger', so 'we may take the reputation of the Cretans as oblique, amused praise'.<sup>40</sup> Writers commented on not only the ability of Cretans to deceive but also their proclivity to be deceived. Josephus tells of Crete's Jewish community being hoodwinked by a pretender to Herod's throne (*Ant.* 17.327; cf. *B.J.* 2.103). Dishonesty in public life continued under Roman rule; in fact, their conquest owed something to deception. (Appian *Bell. civ.* 6.1–2). Mark Antony later attempted to wrest Crete from Rome with a forged document, and between 20 and 70 CE no less than five

34 See Alcock, *Archaeologies of the Greek Past*, 124–8. She argues that Zeus traditions, along with those of the other iconic Cretan figures, Minos, and the Trojan War heroes, 'became more emphasized, evidently at the expense of other, less widely compelling memories, in the early Roman era' (128, Alcock's emphasis).

35 Κρηῆτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται · καὶ γὰρ τάφον, ὃ ἄνα σεῖο κρηῆτες ἐτεκτίναντο σὺ δὲ οὐ θάνας ἐσσι γὰρ ἄα. Callimachus *Hymn. Jov.* 1.8–9. See S. Heyworth, 'Deceitful Crete: Aeneid 3.84 and the Hymns of Callimachus', *Classical Review* NS 43 (1993) 255–7; N. Hopkinson, 'Callimachus's Hymn to Zeus', *CQ* 34 (1984) 139–48. See Reiner Faber, ' "Evil Beasts, Lazy Gluttons": A Neglected Theme in the Epistle to Titus', *WIJ* 67 (2005) 135–45 (136).

36 See Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 136–7 for references and discussion; Quinn comments that 'the mendacious character of the Cretans was a byword in the Greek language' (*Titus*, 108).

37 E.g. Plutarch *Aem.* 26.

38 E.g. Aesop *Fab.* 193; Polybius 8.19; Plutarch *Aem.* 23.10; *Lys.* 20.2.

39 E. K. Simpson, *The Pastoral Epistles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (London: Tyndale, 1954) 100; cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles: I & II Timothy and Titus* (BNTC; London: A. & C. Black, 1963) 234.

40 F. Will, 'Notes from Crete', *Arion* 1 (1962) 74–83 (77–8).



governors were recalled to Rome to face corruption charges.<sup>41</sup> In reiterating the Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται reproach in Titus 1.12, then, the author was accurately reflecting ancient perceptions of Crete and its inhabitants.<sup>42</sup>

Not only the Cretans, however, but Zeus himself, was notorious for deception and trickery. The Iliad furnishes several examples.<sup>43</sup> His wife Hera accuses Zeus of being crafty-minded (δολομήτης, 1.540) and demands an assurance that he will not cheat her by failing to do what he has promised (ψευστήσεις οὐ δ' αὖτε τέλος μύθῳ ἐπιθήσεις, 19.108). Nestor waits to see whether or not Zeus's promise will prove false (εἰ τε ψεῦδος ὑπόσχεσις εἰ τε καὶ οὐκί, 2.348–9). Agamemnon fears that Zeus has decided to play a cruel trick on him (νῦν δὲ κακὴν ἀπάτην βουλεύσατο, 2.114) and is at a loss for what to do because 'Zeus has changed again' (Διὸς ἐτράπετο φρήν, 10.45; cf. δὴ γὰρ νόος ἐτράπετ' αὐτοῦ, 17.546). Asios complains, 'Father Zeus, you really are a lover of lies' (φιλοψευδής, 12.163). In his philosophical discussion of the perfection of the gods (*Resp.* 2.382–85) Plato took issue with Homer, objecting that gods should not be represented as lying, since 'there is no falsehood at all in the realm of the spiritual and the divine' (πάντη ἄρα ἀψευδὲς τὸ δαιμόνιον τε καὶ τὸ θεῖον, *Resp.* 2.382), but the old legends continued to hold the popular imagination.<sup>44</sup>

In 1.2 God is described as ἀψευδής. While the idea of God's truthfulness and dependability is pervasive in the biblical literature,<sup>45</sup> the term ἀψευδής is a biblical hapax. Against the background of endemically deceitful Crete the

41 On this and other background see I. F. Sanders, *Roman Crete: An Archaeological Survey and Gazetteer of Late Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine Crete* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1982).

42 It is certainly not necessary to argue as E. F. Scott does that a real Cretan destination should be ruled out on the grounds that a missionary 'would not have gone to work by insulting their country, as he does here'. *The Pastoral Epistles* (MNTC; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936) 157. Cf. Quinn, *Titus*, 109: 'The bitter hyperbole of the argument at this point makes it difficult to believe that the author of Titus seriously envisioned the persuasion and conversion of Cretan opponents to the Pauline mission'.

43 The works of Philo and Josephus illustrate the currency of Homer in the Hellenistic Jewish environment. Philo calls Homer 'the most illustrious of all the Greek poets' (*Mut.* 179) or simply 'the poet' (*Migr.* 156; *Q.G.* III.16), and quotes often from the Iliad (*Conf.* 170; *Migr.* 156; *Contemp.* 17; *Aet.* 132; *Prov.* 2.7) and the Odyssey (*Migr.* 194; *Mut.* 179; *Contemp.* 40; *Aet.* 37; *Legat.* 80; *QG* 3.3, 16); cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 7.67; *C. Ap.* 1.12; 2.14, 155, 256.

44 On the notable success of Zeus Hypsistos in Greece and Asia Minor in Roman times see Elena Muñoz Grijalvo, 'Elites and Religious Change in Roman Athens', *Numen* 52.2 (2005) 255–82.

45 In the OT Balaam confesses, 'God is not a human being, that he should lie' (Num 23.19) and Ps 89.35 (LXX 88.36) has God declare, 'Once and for all I have sworn in my holiness; I will not lie to David!' (εἰ τῷ Δαυιδ ψεύσομαι). In the NT, Heb 6.18 cites God's promise and oath as two things in which 'it is impossible that God would prove false' (ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι [τὸν] θεόν). In both Hebrews and Titus the considerations that buttressed OT faith in God's promises now support a faith that interprets them in Christian terms (Titus 3.6; Heb 6.11–12, 17).

introduction of ὁ ἄψευδὴς θεός (1.2) could be heard as a contrast with lying humans, whether the Cretans in general (1.12) or specifically the envisaged opponents (1.14),<sup>46</sup> but there may also be a polemical contrast with the Cretans' god.<sup>47</sup> Another encounter between Christian missionaries and worshippers of Zeus is illustrated in the account in the book of Acts of the experience of Barnabas and Paul in Lystra (Acts 14.8–18). In the speech attributed to the missionaries in Acts 14.15–17, C. Breytenbach finds an 'Anti-Zeus-Tendenz', presenting the 'living God' in terms that directly challenge claims made on Zeus's behalf in Asia Minor in the first century CE.<sup>48</sup> In a missionary approach to Crete, jealous of its association with Zeus, the declaration of ὁ ἄψευδὴς θεός, the God who does not lie, would be a plausible strategy, in this instance not claiming for God activities and qualities for which Zeus had been given credit, but suggesting a contrast between a deceitful and capricious deity and the truthful and dependable God of Christian missionary proclamation.

### b. *Potnia Thērōn and the Taming of 'Wild Beasts'*

The saying cited in Titus 1.12 characterises Crete's population as not only 'always liars' (ἀεὶ ψεῦδοι) but also 'wild beasts' (κακὰ θηρία). Ironically, Crete enjoyed the reputation of being free of wild animals,<sup>49</sup> but the implication here is that the beastly characteristics were exhibited by its human inhabitants.<sup>50</sup> The organisation of young men into ἀγέλαι (herds) for training is suggestive. As

46 As suggested by Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 126. Faber ('"Evil Beasts, Lazy Gluttons"', 135–45) develops the argument that in citing Callimachus's accusation the author of Titus is implying that just as Cretans held heterodox views in relation to traditional beliefs about Zeus, now 'the false teachers hold theological convictions that are opposed to the truth' (138).

47 R. M. Kidd refers to traditions of Zeus's deception, concluding, 'And that Titus's biblically unique reference to the Christian God as being "unlying" stands in self-conscious contradistinction to a chief deity whom Titus' Paul would consider to be an immoral liar I consider to be altogether likely' ('Titus as *Apologia*: Grace for Liars, Beasts, and Bellies', *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 21 [1999] 185–209 [198]). Cf. P. H. Towner's suggestion that the reference to a God who does not lie 'could well lampoon the character of the Zeus of Cretan tales, who in fact did lie to have sexual relations with a human woman' (*The Letters to Timothy and Titus* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006], 670).

48 C. Breytenbach, 'Zeus und der lebendige Gott: Anmerkungen zu Apostelgeschichte 14.11–17', *NTS* 39.3 (1993) 396–413. He writes, 'Paulus und Barnabas verkündigen nun, daß der lebendige Gott "vom Himmel her...durch Regen fruchtbare Zeiten (gab)". Der lebendigen Gott ist ὁ ἀγαθουργῶν, nicht Ζεὺς Καλακαγαθίος. Er ist der wetterbestimmende Himmelsgott, der durch Regen fruchtragende Zeiten gibt (διδούς...καιροὺς καρποφόρους) und eben nicht Zeus, der auch Phrygien, Pisidien, Isauria und Lykaonien als Wettergott verehrt wurde und für den in Ostphrygien die Namen Καρποδότης, Ἐπικάρπιος, Εὐκαρπος und sogar Καρποφόρος belegt sind' (408). 'Es ist eine berechnete Frage, ob die Rede in Apg 14 nicht von einer Anti-Zeus-Tendenz her gestaltet wurde' (409).

49 See Pliny *Nat.* 8.83; Plutarch *Inim. util.* 86c.

50 Quinn, *Titus*, 108; Kidd, 'Titus as *Apologia*', 190; Towner, *Timothy and Titus*, 701.

Prent explains, ‘The taming of animals as a simile for the education of the young was popular in the ancient Greek world... In Crete, this concept is exemplified by the term *agela*, which puts the Cretan male adolescents on a par with herds of horses or cattle’.<sup>51</sup>

How were those ‘wild beasts’ to be tamed? Archaeological findings at Gortyn are interesting in this connection. On the acropolis above the city, worship was offered to a protector goddess. Although the shrine is to Pallas Athena, associated in Classical times with Artemis the hunter goddess, some continuity with the Mycenaean Cretan goddess Britomartis is evident in the iconography at the site, depicting the goddess with an animal in each hand, under control. This is *Potnia Thērōn*, the ‘Mistress of beasts’, or tamer of wild animals. Clay figures of adolescent males in armour are among the votive offerings,<sup>52</sup> seeming to indicate that the help of *Potnia Thērōn* was invoked at a significant transition point in the process whereby youths were prepared for and initiated into adult roles. According to Prent,

The presence of Potnia Theron at the EIA sanctuary of Gortyn does not simply constitute a relic of earlier times, nor was there unselective borrowing from the Near East. Both manifestations of the deity can be related specifically to the initiatory functions of the deity. The martial aspects of the Palladion, apart from indicating broader functions as protector of the community, gave the young male initiands a means of identifying with the deity. Her representation as Potnia Theron, or a goddess reigning over wild nature, assumed a more specific meaning in connection with the idea of a ‘taming of the young and uncivilised’ that took place in her sanctuary.<sup>53</sup>

In Titus 2.12, ‘[t]he grace of God is pictured in a somewhat unusual way as a teacher who guides people into a new way of life’.<sup>54</sup> To tame the passions was of course a general aspiration espoused by most Hellenistic philosophers,<sup>55</sup> so the claim of Christian missionaries to offer a means of actually realising that ideal need not be specific to Crete. It would certainly be appropriate, however, in a Cretan context. Kidd argues that the three-fold virtuous outcome described in Titus 2.12, ‘lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly’ (σωφρόνως καὶ δικαίως καὶ εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν), corresponds in a programmatic way to the three-fold disparagement of the Cretan character in 1.12.<sup>56</sup> While the point by

51 Prent, *Cretan Sanctuaries*, 636.

52 Prent, *Cretan Sanctuaries*, 635.

53 Prent, *Cretan Sanctuaries*, 638.

54 Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 268–9.

55 For an extended treatment see M. C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Martin Classical Lectures NS 2; Princeton: Princeton University, 1994).

56 ‘In the context of the letter to Titus these two clusters are mutually defining: the whole saying at 1:12 about Cretans being “liars, beasts, and bellies” sets up the sweeping theological statement at 2:12 about grace coming to teach us to live “soberly” (i.e. not as bellies), “justly” (i.e. not as beasts), and “piously” (i.e. not as liars)’ (Kidd, ‘Titus as *Apologia*’, 186).

point correspondence he proposes may be difficult to sustain, it is quite plausible that in an environment where the help of a deity is sought in relation to training and character development, a missionary approach might include a presentation of the character-shaping effect of the divine gift of grace (2.11–12) appropriated by those who put their hope in ‘our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ’ (2.13).

### c. *Isis and Salvation Through Washing (3.4–7)*

A third unusual theological statement occurs in the reference in Titus 3.5–6 to salvation ‘through the washing of rebirth and renewal through the Holy Spirit whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour’ (διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου, οὗ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς πλουσίως διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν). Mention of ‘the washing of rebirth and renewal’ (3.5) has naturally suggested the image of baptism and possible associations with the mystery religions, though the exact nature of any relationship is difficult to establish.<sup>57</sup>

Prominent in the praetorium of Roman Gortyn is a temple to Isis and Serapis,<sup>58</sup> consistent with the well-attested popularity of Isis around the Mediterranean during the Roman period.<sup>59</sup> The clearest literary evidence for Isiac rites is in the well-known *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, the story of Lucius, who, having been changed into the shape of a donkey as a penalty for meddling in magic, seeks a saving transformation back into human form. Finally arriving through many labours and trials at the ‘harbour of quietness and the altar of mercy’ (XI.15),<sup>60</sup> Lucius is ‘reborn’ (*renatus*, XI.16, 21), not only recovering his

57 For discussion see, e.g., the excursus, ‘Rebirth’, Dibelius and Conzelmann, *Pastoral Epistles*, 148–50; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 316–22; Oberlinner, *Titusbrieft*, 173–5; Quinn, *Titus*, 218–26; B. W. R. Pearson, ‘Baptism and Initiation in the Cult of Isis and Serapis’, in *Baptism, the New Testament and the Church: Historical and Contemporary Studies in Honour of R. E. O. White* (ed. S. E. Porter and A. R. Cross; JSNTSS 171; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999) 42–62.

58 Details are given in Vasilakis, *Gortyn*, 95–8. Another temple in the praetorium, formerly assumed to be devoted to Augustus, has recently been reinterpreted as a second temple to an Egyptian goddess, possibly Isis (Vasilakis, *The Great Inscription of the Law Code of Gortyn*, 29–30).

59 ‘By the middle of the 2nd century B.C.E., the cult of Isis had become universal and had spread throughout the Hellenistic Roman world’ (A. Tripolitis, *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 29). See also F. Solmsen, *Isis among the Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1979); R. Salditt-Trappmann, *Tempel der ägyptischen Götter in Griechenland und an der westküste Kleinasiens* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), reporting studies of over fifty temples spread over a wide geographical area. An account of the popularity of Isis worship and discussion of points of contact with the NT is provided by Elizabeth A. McCabe, *An Examination of the Isis Cult with Preliminary Exploration into New Testament Studies* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2008).

60 *Multis et variis exanclatis laboribus magnisque Fortunae tempestatibus et maximis actus procellis ad portum Quietis et aram Misericordiae tandem, Luci, venisti.*

human form but entering into a life of service of the goddess Isis,<sup>61</sup> who is described as ‘eternal saviour of the human race’ (*humani generis sosipatrix perpetua*, XI.25).

Titus 3.3–8 also describes a transformation from beastly behaviour (3.3) to devotion to doing good (3.8), brought about by a saviour God (3.4) on the basis of his mercy (3.5), and involving a rebirth and renewal of life (3.5). As in the story of Lucius, the rebirth in Titus 3.5 is closely associated with a washing. Water played a significant role in the Isis cult, reflecting the importance of the River Nile in its foundation myth and practices.<sup>62</sup> An Isis temple typically included a ‘nilometer’, a cistern-type installation incorporating a large basin fed by a water pipe entering the structure at a higher level. R. A. Wild explains:

there must have been certain times when water coursed through the large main and splashed down into the basin to cause it (probably) to overflow. Worshippers at this sanctuary very likely looked upon such moments as a symbolic renewal of the Nile flood, a visible manifestation of the power of their god over the forces of life.<sup>63</sup>

It is interesting that Titus 3.5–6 employs the image of water poured out (ἐκχέω) rather than the plunging or immersing in water that might be suggested by the verb βαπτίζω.<sup>64</sup> The use of the verb ἐκχέω may echo the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, interpreted as a fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel 2.28–32 (Acts 2.17, 18, 33),<sup>65</sup> but it would also be an appropriate image in relation to Isiac rites. Wild’s study of the water installations in the temples of Isis leads him to conclude that ‘a ritual pouring or sprinkling of water over the heads of those to be purified was widespread in Isis-Serapis worship’.<sup>66</sup> Against such a background, the claim in Titus 3.1–8 to transformation through the pouring out of the Spirit effecting a washing of rebirth could be heard as a

61 See the description in McCabe, *Examination of the Isis Cult*, 7–13.

62 See R. A. Wild’s full-length study, *Water in the Cultic Worship of Isis and Serapis* (Leiden: Brill, 1981).

63 Wild, *Water in the Cultic Worship of Isis and Serapis*, 43–4. See p. 134 for a plan of the Gortyn temple (following Salditt-Trappmann) identifying the Nile water crypt.

64 On βαπτίζω as an intensive of βάπτω with the sense of ‘to immerse’, see A. Oepke, ‘βάπτω, κτλ’, *TDNT* 1.529–46 (530).

65 See Quinn, *Titus*, 225–6; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 320–3; also my discussion in *The Significance of Salvation: A Study of Salvation Language in the Pastoral Epistles* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006) 229–32.

66 Wild, *Water in the Cultic Worship of Isis and Serapis*, 146. While the association with the Nile and renewal of life is distinctive to Isis, ritual washing is of course a feature of many religions and cults. Another local example is found in Lebena, Gortyn’s port, whose Asklepeion drew supplicants from around the Mediterranean world in quest of healing through bathing and epiphany (see Vasilakis, *Gortyn*, 95–7, 133–9).

counter claim to the hope of renewal of life through a drenching in water in the rites of Isis.

It is striking that peculiarities discovered in each of the three theological statements in Titus, the ἀψευδῆς God (1.2), the training operation of grace (παιδεύουσα ἡμᾶς, 2.12), and a saving transformation through the pouring out of the Spirit to effect a washing of rebirth and renewal (διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου, οὗ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, 3.5–6), can all be matched to particular features of the religious life of Roman Crete. This is not of course to suggest that these correspondences could only have been made on Crete. Zeus was universally worshipped, the cult of Isis had spread widely, and ideals of *paideia* were pervasive in the Greco-Roman world. In each case, however, it is at least plausible that a missionary approach to the people of Crete might have included the shaping of aspects of the Christian message in conscious engagement with the features of Crete's religious life that have been described.

### 3. Incidental Glimpses of Crete in Titus

Alongside the letter's ethical instruction, corresponding to the structure of Cretan society, and its theological statements, relating to aspects of Cretan religious life, there are a number of other features and details of the letter to Titus that might be considered particularly appropriate to Crete.

#### a. ἐπιδιορθῶ (1.5)

The use of the verb ἐπιδιορθῶ to describe Titus's task is worthy of note (1.5). Not only is this a NT hapax but it is also extremely rare in pre-Christian Greek literature. The solitary recorded occurrence is in Crete, in a second-century BCE inscription from Hierapytna, referring to the activity of a regional administrator.<sup>67</sup> Evidently this rare term had some currency in Crete in the context of political organisation. Might its appearance in Titus 1.5 reflect familiarity with that sort of usage?<sup>68</sup>

67 CIG 2555.9 = *Inscriptiones Creticae* 3, 49–52. Quinn, *Titus*, 77–8, notes the reference but makes no comment on its Cretan location.

68 A comparison may be made with the issue of local terms in the book of Acts. See Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (WUNT 49; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989) particularly Chapter 4. 'Types of Knowledge Displayed in Acts' (101–58); Chapter 5, 'The Evidence of Historical Details in Acts' (159–220); and the excursus, 'Names and Titles in Acts' (221–43).

**b. κατὰ πόλιν (1.5)**

With settlements strung along its unusually extensive coastline, Crete was known in antiquity as ‘the island of a hundred towns’.<sup>69</sup> The instruction that elders be appointed ‘town by town’ (κατὰ πόλιν, 1.5) could of course make good sense in many locations, but it is at least compatible with an island setting such as Crete, where a missionary movement would see opportunity in a series of centres of population connected easily by sea as well as by overland routes.

**c. οἱ ἐκ τῆς περιτομῆς (1.10)**

In comparison with the letters to Timothy, Titus seems to accent the confrontation between a Gentile Pauline leader and Judaizing opposition. Only here do the opponents specifically include οἱ ἐκ τῆς περιτομῆς (1.10). In the same expression in Gal 2.12 Dunn discerns ‘an identity determined by or focused in the act and fact of circumcision—hence the metonymy “the circumcision”, not “the circumcised”’, indicating a specific faction within Judaism.<sup>70</sup> In Titus 1.10 the adverb μάλιστα seems to specify οἱ ἐκ τῆς περιτομῆς as a particular group among the many ἀνυπότακτοι, ματαιολόγοι καὶ φρεναπάται who threaten the church.<sup>71</sup> Titus also encounters Ἰουδαῖκοι μύθοι (1.14) rather than the general μύθοι in 1 and 2 Timothy (1 Tim 1.4; 4.7; 2 Tim 4.4), and is warned against ‘quarrels about the law’ (3.14). ‘False teachers are indeed in evidence’, Fee writes, ‘but the letter as a whole is not dominated by their presence’.<sup>72</sup>

Josephus and Philo attest the presence of a significant Jewish population on Crete.<sup>73</sup> Stylianos Spyridakis, historian of Crete, locates the principal Jewish population in Gortyn, the administrative capital for the Roman province of Crete and Cyrenia. In view of the links between Ptolemaic Egypt and Crete he suggests that, ‘it is very likely that the Jews of Gortyn came from the city of Alexandria’.<sup>74</sup> Gortyn is traditionally held to be Crete’s first ecclesiastical

69 Homer, *Iliad* 2.649. D. W. J. Gill summarises information about the πόλις of Roman Crete in ‘A Saviour of the Cities of Crete: The Roman Background to the Epistle to Titus’, *The New Testament in its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B. W. Winter on his 65th Birthday* (ed. P. J. Williams; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 220–30 (222–7).

70 J. D. G. Dunn, ‘Echoes of Intra-Jewish Polemic in Paul’s Letter to the Galatians’, *JBL* 112 (1993) 459–77 (461).

71 On μάλιστα see R. A. Campbell, ‘ΚΑΙ ΜΑΛΙΣΤΑ ΟΙΚΕΙΩΝ—A New Look at 1 Timothy 5.8’, *NTS* 41 (1995) 157–60; and T. C. Skeat, ‘Especially the Parchments: A Note on 2 Timothy 4.13’, *JTS* NS 30 (1979) 173–7.

72 G. D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus* (NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988) 11. G. A. Couser suggests that the approach is preventative rather than corrective (‘God and Christian Existence in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus’ [PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 1992], 134).

73 Josephus *A.J.* 17.327; *B.J.* 2.103; *Vita* 76 (describing his third wife as a Jew from a notable Cretan family); Philo *Legat.* 282. See also 1 Macc 15.23 and Acts 2.11.

74 S. V. Spyridakis, *Ptolemaic Itanos and Hellenistic Crete* (University of California Publications in History 82; Berkeley: University of California, 1970) 102 n. 169. The suggestion is developed

centre,<sup>75</sup> and it would not be surprising if a Christian mission located itself in such a leading town, nor that both recruits and opposition to the Christian movement should come from the Jewish community already established there.

#### d. *Apollos* (3.13)

It was not only Alexandrians who might be predisposed to 'stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law' (3.9), but if the sort of Hellenistic Judaism that flourished in Alexandria furnished part of the environment envisaged by the author, who better to help than Apollos (3.13), the learned Alexandrian Jew encountered in Acts 18.24–28; 1 Cor 3.4–6, and so on?

#### e. *Zenas the Lawyer* (3.13)

What of 'Zenas the lawyer' (3.13)? Otherwise unknown in the NT, he has been variously identified as an expert in Jewish law, or, as his pagan name might suggest, a Roman lawyer.<sup>76</sup> In fact it was common for lawyers to visit Crete in Roman times. The famous stone panels on which were inscribed the Law Code of Gortyn dated from c. 450 BCE but had been restored under Roman rule and were prominently displayed to facilitate study. Crete became 'a centre of pilgrimage for legal inspiration'.<sup>77</sup>

### 4. Conclusions and Implications

It has been argued here that several unique features of the content of the letter to Titus correspond to specific social and cultural realities on Roman Crete. This suggests that a Cretan provenance for the letter may not be so implausible as is often assumed. If Crete is not the actual destination, then it may only be concluded that the author has gone to great lengths to construct the implied destination with remarkable verisimilitude. In the light of this series of correspondences to aspects of Cretan society, culture, and religious life, readings that assume that the letter is interested only in the internal ordering of the Christian community are insufficient.<sup>78</sup>

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and further evidence adduced in the same writer's 'Notes on the Jews of Gortyna and Crete', *ZPE* 73 (1988): 171–5.

75 Θ. Β. Τζεδάκης, 'Συνομοιος ιστορια της ἐπισκοπης Κνωσου', *Κρητικα Χρονικα* ΚΑ (1969) 333–50 (334).

76 See brief discussions in, e.g., W. A. Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1924) 158; Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 343; Oberlinner, *Titusbrieife*, 197–8; W. D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles* (WBC; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000) 458.

77 Willetts, *CAH* 3.3: 237.

78 Bonny Thurston represents this approach when she affirms that, '[t]he writer of Titus is primarily concerned with church order' ('The Theology of Titus', *HBT* 21.2 [1999] 171–84 [183]). Cf. Verner, *Household*, 92–107; Quinn, *Titus*, 128; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 408.



An adequate appreciation of the letter must also take into account its concern for the integrity of the church's witness in the men's halls, women's quarters, and households where the ideal of grace-trained living put forward in this letter was to be lived out in concrete behaviour (2.11-14; 3.1-5), and for effective communication of the content of Christian faith in terms that would have resonated with religious beliefs, aspirations, and practices current on Crete in the Roman period. The letter to Titus is understood most satisfactorily as a product of early Christian mission and an intriguing example of creative missionary engagement with a specific environment.<sup>79</sup>

79 Chiaoek Ho argues for a missionary orientation of all three Pastoral Epistles in his PhD dissertation, 'Do the Work of an Evangelist: The Missionary Outlook of the Pastorals' (University of Aberdeen, 2000), and in his chapter in *Entrusted With the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles* (ed. A. J. Köstenberger and T. L. Wilder; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, forthcoming).