

Tertius in the Margins: A Critical Appraisal of the Secretary Hypothesis

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Much has been made in recent years about the role of the secretary in the construction of Paul's letters, most notably by Randolph Richards and Ian Elmer. This article focuses on the most famous secretary – Tertius. Through an analysis of what can be learned of Tertius' identity and his relationship to Paul and to ancient authorial practices in households, it argues that Tertius was probably a slave in the household of one of the Corinthian Christ-followers, whose role was simply to inscribe the letter. His inability to use Paul's signature phrase *ἐν κυρίῳ* in a Pauline fashion highlights his lack of authorial input. Tertius' self-initiated greeting in Rom 16.22 probably began life as a marginal comment that was moved early into the letter body.

Keywords: Tertius, Rom 16.22, ancient secretaries, *versiculus transversus*, scribal practices

In recent years the role of the secretary in the construction of Paul's letters has become privileged. The enhancement of the secretary has had both an apologetic consequence, seeking to elide at least the stylistic element from debates over pseudepigraphy, and a communal hermeneutic, establishing the Pauline letters as community productions. The most famous secretary is Tertius in Romans 16. This article seeks to problematise the role of Tertius in four ways: by exploring his identity, function and ability; by comparing secretarial and other intrusions at the end of letters in the papyri (which may offer some insight into the uneven structure of Romans 16); by raising doubts as to the relationship between Tertius and Paul; and by returning to the methods employed by a near-contemporary of Paul for a written composition. The article raises serious questions about the accent on secretaries and prompts an alternative perspective to the communal dimension of the letter to the Romans, one which recognises that production is as much about performance as it is about writing.

1. An Overview of the Secretary Hypothesis

Randolph Richards' 1991 monograph renewed a debate over the role of the secretary in Paul's letters.¹ Particular attention was paid to the issue of an author's writing in his/her own hand;² this became a means of demonstrating Paul's consistent use of a secretary (Gal 6.11; 1 Cor 16.21; Phlm 19, cf. 2 Thess 3.17; Col 4.18).³ The input of a secretary varied along a spectrum: transcriber, contributor and composer.⁴ Richards' primary informant into the mechanics of composition was Cicero.⁵

The key accent has been the secretary's contribution to, not merely the transcription of, the letter. Others, such as the co-named senders mentioned at the beginning of some letters (Sosthenes, Silas, Timothy), have joined the secretary (or have become the secretary), in a community of authorship.⁶ This explains variations, even jarring interruptions,⁷ in vocabulary and style. It is claimed that such factors lose validity when assessing the authenticity of Pauline letters⁸ and in adjudicating interpolations into those letters.⁹ Richards therefore operates with a thirteen-letter corpus of Paul's authentic letters,¹⁰ making, in Philip Towner's words, 'the amanuensis hypothesis the default explanation'.¹¹

- 1 E. R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991) 199–200. For earlier studies, see O. Roller, *Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe: Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom antiken Briefe* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933); R. N. Longenecker, 'Ancient Amanuenses and the Pauline Epistles', *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* (ed. R. N. Longenecker and M. C. Tenney; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974) 281–97.
- 2 Richards, *The Secretary*, 31, 45, 61–76, 123. Compare Cicero, *Att.* 6.9, 8.1, 8.13.1, 12.32.1, 13.28.
- 3 See B. Witherington, *The Paul Quest: The Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998) 99–109.
- 4 Richards, *The Secretary*, 77, cf. 24–52, 97–111; *idem*, *Paul and First-century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004) 80.
- 5 Richards, *The Secretary*, 3 *et passim*. Pliny's letters are sidelined as 'rather artificial', as if Cicero's *published* collections do not also offend in this way.
- 6 Richards, *First-century*, 103; D. B. Capes, R. Reeves and E. R. Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to his World, Letters and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010) 68.
- 7 Such as Phil 3.2; 1 Cor 14.33; see Richards, *First-century*, 108–9. On multiple letters, fragments and interpolations, see L. L. Welborn, 'The Corinthian Correspondence', *All Things to All Cultures: Paul among Jews, Greeks and Romans* (ed. M. Harding and A. Nobbs; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015) 205–42.
- 8 Richards, *First-century*, 155, 232 n. 1 (the 'collapsing camel' of deuterio-Pauline theories!). See also Capes, Reeves and Richards, *Rediscovering Paul*, 18–19, 72.
- 9 Richards, *The Secretary*, 168–9 (cf. 107, 121 n. 40) is particularly dismissive of the arguments of W. O. Walker, 'The Burden of Proof in Identifying Interpolations in the Pauline Letters', *NTS* 33 (1987) 610–18.
- 10 Richards, *First-century*, 35, 93, 152, 165. In his earlier work, he had allowed the questioning of the authenticity of the Pastorals (*The Secretary*, 182–93). Hebrews, though included in the Pauline corpus, remains barred.
- 11 P. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) 86–7.

Richards' thesis has proved highly influential and has been applied beyond the Pauline corpus.¹² Objections are rare.¹³ The elements are basically repeated by Ian Elmer, although he allows for a greater impact of the Pauline community in the assemblage, shaping and content of Paul's letters for the collection after the apostle's death.¹⁴ The personification of this 'communification' of the Pauline epistolary enterprise is Tertius. Rom 16.22 has assumed a landmark importance in the Pauline critical enterprise.

It is argued that, unlike most available secretaries, Tertius was not hired from the marketplace.¹⁵ He was after all 'in the Lord' (ἐν κυρίῳ),¹⁶ even if a member of Gaius' household or the imperial bureaucracy.¹⁷ He shaped Paul's thoughts into a

- 12 H.-J. Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006) 58–60; J. Moon, *Mark as Contributive Amanuensis of 1 Peter?* (Berlin: LIT, 2009); R. E. Ciampa and B. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010); S. McKnight, *The Letter of James* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011). A more measured appreciation of Richards' research is found in J. A. D. Weima, *Paul the Ancient Letter Writer: An Introduction to Epistolary Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016).
- 13 See B. Ehrman, *Forgery and Counter-forgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 218–22. The arguments in this article address quite different issues from those raised by Ehrman.
- 14 I. Elmer, 'I, Tertius: Secretary or Co-author of Romans', *ABR* 56 (2008) 45–60; *idem*, 'Setting the Record Straight at Galatia', *Religious Conflict from Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam* (ed. W. Mayer and B. Neil; Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2013) 21–37, at 25–8; *idem*, 'The Pauline Letters as Community Documents', *Collecting Early Christian Letters: From the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity* (ed. B. Neil and P. Allen; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 37–53.
- 15 Richards, *Rediscovering Paul*, 73; R. F. Hull, *The Story of the New Testament Text: Movers, Materials, Motives, Methods and Models* (Atlanta: SBL, 2010) 10.
- 16 Elmer, 'I, Tertius', 54; see however C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979) II.806 for the difficulties of the prepositional phrase; also G. J. Bahr, 'Paul and Letter Writing in the Fifth Century', *CBQ* 28.4 (1966) 465–77, at 465–6.
- 17 Hull, *Story of the New Testament Text*, 10 suggests Gaius; cf. J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 268. Elmer equivocates: 'I, Tertius', 54. Gerd Theissen places Tertius in Gaius' house but stalls over whether he was a 'Schreibsklave' or an employee in the provincial government (G. Theissen, *Studien zur Soziologie des Urchristentums* (WUNT 19; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1979) 227, 253–4). Possible also is that Tertius may have been a slave-stenographer within Phoebe's household at Cenchreae, given her 'benefaction' (16.2). Nevertheless, this should not be inflated. Steven Friesen places both her and Gaius only at Level 4–5 and 4 respectively in his poverty scale, that is, either just above subsistence level or enjoying a moderate surplus. He finds no clear evidence that 'any of the members of Paul's assemblies were rich' (S. Friesen, 'Prospects for a Demography of the Pauline Mission: Corinth among the Churches', *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth. Interdisciplinary Approaches* (ed. D. N. Schowalter and S. J. Friesen; HTS 53; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005) 351–70, at 364–8). All such suggestions on the provision of Gaius are posited on a reading of ξένοϛ in Rom 16.23 as 'host'. The evidence however is clearly in favour of a translation as 'guest'. See R. Last, *The Pauline Church and the Corinthian Ekklesia: Greco-Roman Associations in Comparative Context* (SNTSMS 164; Cambridge/

consistent letter, though late additions produced some unevenness, especially in chapter 16.¹⁸ Not only was Tertius responsible for inserting non-Pauline interpolations – such as Septuagint quotations and pre-formed traditions – where Paul had indicated,¹⁹ but he contributed the long greetings list.²⁰ This latter initiative was understandable because Tertius was on a trip from Rome, knew more of the membership of the churches there and so was better placed to do the unusual – provide a distinguishing feature of Romans.²¹ It is assumed that Tertius had freedom of movement, carrying his tools of trade with him.²² He therefore becomes a ‘professional secretary’,²³ apparently permitted to make, and self-financing, the journey. Tertius formulated the recommendation for Phoebe that opens chapter 16, working in credentials that Paul suggested.²⁴ Tertius supplied crucial information about the state of the churches in Rome that helped to guide the letter’s arguments.²⁵ Accordingly, he may even have been part of Paul’s team,²⁶ though, apparently, not significant enough to gain mention elsewhere.

A complex of issues arises: Tertius’ identity, his relationship to Paul, the method and purpose in the construction of ancient writings (whether literary or quasi-literary), and, perhaps most importantly, whether our own concentration has become misplaced in the assessment of the personnel key to the realisation of Paul’s intent in Romans.

2. The Identity of Tertius

Speculation about the identity of Tertius has been complicated by the designation ‘professional secretary’, a ‘skilled amanuensis’. Such classifications

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015) 62–71. Further, this resolves any difficulties in understanding the phrase ὁ ξένος καὶ ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας – both Paul and the Corinthian church have welcomed Gaius as guest, implying that he was a visitor from Rome, not a resident of Corinth. See J. S. Kloppenborg, ‘Gaius the Roman Guest’, *NTS* 63 (2017) 534–49.

18 Richards, *First-century*, 108, 151.

19 Richards, *First-century*, 109; *idem*, *Rediscovering Paul*, 74; Elmer, ‘I Tertius’, 58.

20 Compare G. J. Bahr, ‘The Subscriptions in the Pauline Letters’, *JBL* 87 (1968) 27–41.

21 Richards, *First-century*, 152.

22 Elmer, ‘I, Tertius’, 51.

23 Richards, *The Secretary* 170–2; *idem*, *First-century*, 77; Elmer, ‘I, Tertius’, 51, 54; *idem*, ‘Setting the Record Straight’, 26.

24 Richards, *The Secretary*, 171; *idem*, *First-century*, 77.

25 Elmer, ‘I, Tertius’, 56.

26 Elmer, ‘I, Tertius’, 54, citing B. Byrne, *Romans* (Sacra Pagina 6; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996) 459; J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* (WBC 38B; Dallas, TX: Word, 1988) 909–10; B. Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 399.

create an anachronistic impression of a secretary to a company chair, a free agent providing his expertise, or a fanciful status elevation of Tertius almost to that of a royal or civic γραμματεύς. Such an elite position is targeted by Paul in 1 Cor 1.20.²⁷ Even allowing that here in the Corinthian correspondence Paul adopts a heightened rhetorical flourish, the antipathy still sits awkwardly with the construction of an elevated standing for Tertius such as to draw him into the company of a co-worker or co-sender, even a co-author (even though nowhere so described by Paul). No rhetorical possibility is entertained that the naming of co-senders in a letter is about raising the profile of the co-named 'as a fully approved emissary'.²⁸ As will be seen, Tertius is probably considerably lower among secretarial types than the interpretation of γραμματεύς as 'professional' conveys. As will be seen, the office of γραμματεύς varies considerably in status and position, much as 'town clerk' in modern local government is a position far removed from a 'clerk' in an accountant's office.

Tertius' name and greeting are entirely self-initiated and without parallel in the morphology of greetings: not even Paul uses the form ἀσπάζομαι.²⁹ The argument that an author stood behind the final product is special pleading,³⁰ somehow to imply Paul's knowledge and approval before the letter was sent. In any case, this initiative subverts the argument about Tertius' co-authorship (more on this below), especially given that the other supposed secretary references in the Pauline letters (Gal 6.11; 1 Cor 16.21; 2 Thess 3.17; Col 4.18; Phlm 19) are quite different from that provided here in Romans 16, precisely because the initiative is Paul's.

27 A. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 164. Thiselton's translation is 'professional'. Contra Richard, *The Secretary*, 3. I follow Winter in arguing that 1 Cor 1.20 is not referring to an expert in religious law apparent in the gospels: F. Winter, 'Exkurs: Schreiber, Sekretäre, Schriftgelehrte', *1. Korinther* (ed. P. Arzt-Grabner, R. Elisabeth Kritzer, A. Papatomas and F. Winter; PKNT 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006) 88–9.

28 M. Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (BMTC; London: A & C Black, 1998) 86. Bockmuehl considers that a co-sender does not mean a co-author. Similarly, Cranfield, *Romans*, 1.4; Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, 910; Byrne, *Romans*, 460; R. F. Collins, *Letters That Paul Did Not Write: The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Pauline Pseudepigrapha* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1988) 74–5. Conversely, Elmer now holds that it no longer needs argumentation ('Collecting Early Christian Letters', 47).

29 This alone makes it improbable that Tertius was responsible for putting chapter 16 together (contra Richards, *First-century*, 152). The unusual descriptors added to many of those greeted hardly befits the secretary's invention – note especially the first-person possessives in vv. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 21. See, generally, S. Mathew, *Women in the Greetings of Romans 16.1–16: A Study of Mutuality and Women's Ministry in the Letter to the Romans* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) 21–45.

30 Richards, *The Secretary*, 55; Elmer, 'I, Tertius', 52–3. The assertion goes back to Ambrosiaster: H. J. Vogels, ed., *Ambrosiastri qui dicitur Commentarius in epistulas Paulinas* (CSEL 81; Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1966) 491.

The reliance on Cicero's letters for the assessment of Paul's letters generates the impression that Tertius is another Tiro,³¹ as adept as his master in the requisite grammar, syntax and vocabulary of a communication.³² The accent on ability overlooks two crucial aspects. The first is that Cicero had a team of secretarial assistants. Tiro was certainly his particular assistant – indeed one of his posthumous editors.³³ But when the calligraphic aesthetics of the final product were required,³⁴ Tiro was *not* the chosen,³⁵ nor, it seems, was Philotimus, one of Cicero's copyists (*librarii*).³⁶ Cicero esteemed beautiful writing,³⁷ as did his public: 'ancients valued beautiful handwriting'.³⁸ Tertius may therefore have been simply the writer of beautiful letters (καλλιγράφος).³⁹ The second aspect is that Tiro was a slave (a *verna*, manumitted in 53 BCE), as were all Cicero's secretaries. This status is crucial for the assessment of the role of a secretary in the claim – and acknowledgement of the claim – upon authorship.

This is where Tertius' name becomes important. Elmer had ventured, on the one hand, that '[h]is name is Latin, rather than Greek, and is common amongst slaves and freedmen of the period.' On the other hand, he can assert, 'the name Tertius is not a Latin name often attested'.⁴⁰ With 695 hits for the nominative form 'Tertius' in the *Clauss-Slaby Epigraphik-Datenbank*,⁴¹ the first option

31 Elmer, 'I, Tertius', 52; Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, 272.

32 The 'rule of my writings' in Cicero, *Fam.* 16.17.1 is taken as a literal recognition of Tiro's abilities, rather than the rhetorical hyperbole from which Cicero was rarely immune (cf. *Att.* 7.5); see Richards, *The Secretary*, 47–9; Elmer, 'I, Tertius', 51–2.

33 See P. White, *Cicero in Letters: Epistolary Relations of the Late Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 31–61. Note however that he credits Tiro with a limited impact on the result.

34 This is a neglected factor in the study of ancient letters, though it enters the descriptions of 'hands' that scholars observe in papyri and other media: H. C. Youtie and J. G. Winter, eds., *Papyri and Ostraca from Karanis*, vol. VIII (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1951) 74.

35 Cicero's concern that his work, the *Academica*, be well attested by Varro, a powerful leader in Roman society, drove the copy to Rome to receive the finest treatment – from the paper quality to, presumably, the calligraphy – with an accompanying letter dictated *syllabatim* to another specifically skilled secretary, Spintharus (Cicero, *Att.* 13.25). Compare Richards, *The Secretary*, 99.

36 Cicero, *Att.* 13.33.

37 Cicero, *Att.* 6.9.

38 Richards, *Rediscovering Paul*, 69. The absence of grace in the hand is taken as an indication of poor literacy and/or a poorly trained secretary: Longenecker, 'Ancient Amanuenses', 286.

39 Diocletian's Price Edict (s. 7) provides two grades of calligraphic scribe (§§41, 42) and a notary's fee (§43); it also recognises (§§70, 71) apprentice-training in writing documents and copying manuscripts, including palaeography (*librarius sive antiquarius*).

40 Elmer, 'I, Tertius', 55, this time citing J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 749. Fitzmyer also relies on secondary authorities for a single citation of Tertius and of Tertia, the feminine form.

41 Including all cases yields a far higher number. Iiro Kajanto found 1,042 instances of Tertius used as a cognomen. (He included Tertia.) Tertius therefore ranks as one of the eighteen

should be followed. Elmer also suggested that Tertius and Quartus might be ranking names, perhaps in the household of Gaius.⁴² He does not want to expunge servility; but the number-naming of slaves is rare.⁴³ The greater frequency of such number-naming, whether as praenomina or cognomina,⁴⁴ occurs for citizens.⁴⁵ The cognomen is particularly common.⁴⁶ Quartus as ‘the (not *our*) brother’ might indicate a lineage (free) or legal (servile) designation.⁴⁷ It may even turn the whole of v. 23 into an extension of Tertius’ insertion begun in v. 22.⁴⁸ Tertius can also be used as a praenomen, not just a cognomen,⁴⁹ which would sway the interpretation towards citizenship, provided the *tria nomina* were known. When occurring in isolation, the pendulum swings towards servility. Either way, there is nothing in the name that requires a Roman provenance.⁵⁰ This leaves us then with weighing the probabilities.

Edwin Judge has provided a series of analyses of the names of those around Paul, with the intent of establishing the social profile of Pauline connections in early Christianity.⁵¹ He takes Tertius as a cognomen. Although the cognomen would ‘mostly imply citizenship’, in the case of Tertius (but not Quartus) he reckons that the name might as easily suggest Greek ethnicity and/or servility⁵² – that is, the praenomen of the master becoming the cognomen, indeed the only

most common cognomina. I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1965) 30, 74.

42 The names can occur together – *CIL* III.5086, III.5387, V.7463; *RIS* 278 – but in each case, they are unrelated. Neither name has been found in inscriptions from Corinth.

43 Perhaps *CIL* VI.22993 = X.2776? *AE* 1999, 741 = *AE* 2001, 1073 is suggestive but incapable of resolution.

44 See O. Salomies, *Die römischen Vornamen* (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1987) 115.

45 See for example *CIL* V.480, V.6862, VI.6360, VI.36204, XI.786. Kajanto decides against the sequential number-naming of slaves (*The Latin Cognomina*, 77).

46 Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, 73–5.

47 Steven Friesen takes the peculiar designation of Quartus as ὁ ἀδελφός as a contrastive from the previously named Erastus, arguing that Erastus was ‘not a participant in the churches’ but Quartus was his (Christian) slave (S. Friesen, ‘The Wrong Erastus: Ideology, Archaeology, and Exegesis’, *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society* (ed. S. J. Friesen, D. N. Schowalter and J. C. Walters; Leiden: Brill, 2010) 231–56, at 251–3).

48 The suggestion is Roller’s: *Das Formular*, 22.

49 As in *CIL* V.3554.

50 Note Theissen, *Studien*, 261, 305. Latin names show the influence of *Romanitas*: B. W. Winter, *After Paul left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 14–15.

51 E. A. Judge, ‘Greek Names of Latin Origin’, *NDIEC* 2 (1982) 106–8; *idem*, *Rank and Status in the World of the Caesars and St Paul* (Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1982) 11–14; *idem*, ‘Latin Names around a Counter-cultural Paul’, *The Bible and the Business of Life* (ed. S. Holt and G. Preece; ATF Series 12; Adelaide: ATF, 2004) 68–84.

52 Judge, ‘Greek Names’, 81–2.

name, of the individual.⁵³ Judge wanted to explore the adoption of Latin names into Greek environments. Τέρτιος scores highly in this regard. The name is found in servile or servile-origin cases in Achaia and surrounding regions.⁵⁴ More generally, Iiro Kajanto finds that numbering cognomina, though no longer indicating birth sequence, were frequently given to slaves.⁵⁵

The probabilities look evenly balanced even though virtually all secondary commentators lean strongly towards servility.⁵⁶ Certainly, if Tertius is a slave, then Quartus is most unlikely to be his fellow name-numbered slave and certainly not his familial relative. The situation might be different however if Tertius is a Roman citizen. The decision therefore cannot be made simply on the basis of onomastics.

The key lies with the implied occupation of Tertius, that is, secretary. This general category actually masks a range of occupations that were usually quite distinct in a household of reasonable wealth, and it obscures the range of functions possible in the designation of γραμματεύς. A γραμματεύς in Corinth might refer to a leading citizen who held high office, a position of considerable prestige, one responsible, *inter alia*, for key functions of the city gymnasium.⁵⁷ But the term might indicate lesser standing, often with a qualifying epithet of those whom the γραμματεύς specifically serves – an association, a village, the military. One unnamed γραμματεύς from Hellenistic Corinth was the (free) clerk to the δικασταί.⁵⁸ Γραμματεύς can cover multiple yet separate writing functions, from the recording of land registrations to the preparation of letters.⁵⁹ S/he may supervise a scribal staff, often servile, who had quite narrow functions.⁶⁰ A γραμματεύς might also be among a band of slaves responsible for secretarial duties in a household. In *P.Oxy.* XLIV.3197, dated 111 CE, the testamentary division of slave property designates some slaves by secretarial task: one is a γραμματεύς, two are προχειροφόροι (amanuenses),⁶¹ five are

53 This occurs in 39 per cent of cognomina: Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, 29.

54 See, for example, *IG* II².7091, IV.602; *I.Thesp* 179.

55 Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, 76–7.

56 Theissen problematised servile status: *Studien*, 254.

57 See R. S. Dutch, *The Educated Elite in 1 Corinthians: Education and Community Conflict in Graeco-Roman Context* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2005) 280–92.

58 J. H. Kent, *Corinth VIII.3: The Inscriptions 1926–1950* (Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1966) 14–15 §46; cf. *SEG* XLIII.210, LI.1526.

59 In the Ptolemaic period, the *basilikos grammateus* had a quite extensive list of functions: see J. F. Oates, *The Ptolemaic Basilikos Grammateus* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995) 86–94.

60 See T. Kruse, *Der Königliche Schreiber und die Gauverwaltung*, vol. II (Leipzig/Munich: K. G. Saur, 2002) 773–82.

61 The term is uncommon and can be used for an important royal official as also for a slave; see *P.Flor.* 1.50. Accordingly, the meaning ‘amanuensis’ (so LSJ s.v.) requires refinement.

νωτόριοι.⁶² The terminology is significant as an indication of the highly specific breakdown of tasks to slaves.⁶³ But the proportions are also telling. The ratio of νωτόριοι to γραμματεὺς suggests that the latter was probably the one responsible for the final writing up or approval of whatever document had been dictated, even if this were not the only input on the production line that a document might receive. Indeed, the actual papyrus document indicates that considerable ability ('competent professional cursive') went into its execution (up to l. 19).⁶⁴ The hands of the three beneficiaries by contrast are noticeably inferior (ll. 20–2).⁶⁵ One of the slave notaries probably wrote up the document; the finish suggests that it was formally executed from a draft. All, however, are slaves, even if, as frequently, there is a hierarchy.⁶⁶ Some form of hierarchy in secretarial positions is also evident even where servility is unclear.⁶⁷ One of the responsibilities for these fellow-secretaries may have been to witness as well as execute documents.⁶⁸ This suggests that when we look to the various secretarial functions, the default position is that they will be executed by slaves, whether public, private or even for hire,⁶⁹ and that hierarchical layering governs the dispersal and execution of their functions. Tertius is to be located in this context.

Whatever function we may want to confer on Tertius from this evidence, he designates himself the writer of the letter (ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολὴν (ἐν κυρίῳ)), that is, putting himself at the end of the production line, *not* in the prior stages. This increases the probability of Tertius being a slave, in part because there is evidence that his creative ability in relation to expression, as

62 Greg Horsley tentatively suggests these are shorthand writers (ταχυγράφοι): *NDIEC* 1.70, following David Thomas, the editor of the papyrus. This is also the understanding of *notarius* in Diocletian's Price Edict s. 7 §70.

63 Compare *P.Mich.* v.326 (dated 48 CE), where, of eighteen slaves, one is mentioned as a muleteer and another as a barber.

64 J. D. Thomas, *P.Oxy.* XLIV.3197, p. 169.

65 See *P.Oxy.* XLIV.3197, Plate VIII.

66 In *P.Petaus* 34 (184 CE) there is payment to an unnamed προχειροφόρος, in service to the *komogrammateus*, Petaus (l. 24). It is unclear, though likely, that this clerk is a slave. Payment is made to slaves (πετάρια for παιδάρια) of the *basilikos grammateus* (l. 26). Here the *komogrammateus* and *basilikos grammateus*, as holders of significant civic positions, are free, but in their service is an array of slaves, many with specialised skills. See Kruse, *Der Königliche Schreiber*, 775.

67 *P.Oxy.* XLII.3062. The hierarchy ascends from a συγγραμματεὺς to γραμματεὺς to εἰσαγωγεὺς. A συγγραμματεὺς is also found in *BGU* II.451.14, cf. *P.Oxy.* XI.1427; see also *IG* I³.71 – suggesting that a συγγραμματεὺς was a rank (that is, in a pool of junior clerks), not a fraternal expression.

68 As in *P. Vind. Worp* 22. Peter Arzt-Grabner considers the phrase ὑπέγραψα χειρὶ ἐμῇ to be a quasi-legal formula capable of attracting judicial recognition (private communication). I am grateful to Professor Arzt-Grabner for a number of suggestions.

69 See K. Haines-Eitzen, "Girls Trained in Beautiful Writing": Female Scribes in Roman Antiquity and Early Christianity', *JECs* 6 (1998) 629–46, at 635–6 for evidence of servile, female scribes.

distinct from letter-forming, is limited – the ambiguity caused by the syntactical placement of ἐν κυρίῳ does not inspire confidence that Tertius was responsible for chapter 16 or any other part of the letter.⁷⁰ Further, and this is a point not acknowledged by those who emphasise his servility, it is most unlikely that he would be a traveller from Rome. Without further, and explicit, qualification we would find ourselves thrust on the horns of the Onesimus dilemma, confronting Paul and/or a householder with a fugitive slave. More likely, Tertius resided in Corinth or perhaps nearby Cenchreae, as a slave in the household of Stephanas, Chloe, Phoebe or some other.

3. The Presence of Tertius in the Text

In ancient manuscripts and print editions of Romans, Tertius is part of the text along with every other person in the greetings. That is, what we now designate v. 22, follows immediately upon the end of v. 21 and precedes v. 23, seamlessly included in the lines of Romans that yield the stichoi enumeration. On this basis, Tertius was always there, *in* the body of Paul's letter. The presence of variants to the text of v. 22, as early as P^{46} ,⁷¹ demonstrates that the verse was included in the main body from an early period – at least from the late second century – and subject to familiar scribal activity.

The most cited example of the intrusion of a third person into a text is Alexis, as reported by Cicero.⁷² This is different from the recognition of a second or third hand, especially since suchlike is usually the author adding his/her recognisable writing to the end of the letter (as in Gal 6.11; Phlm 19; 1 Cor 16.21).⁷³ Often, the verso reveals a different hand(s) providing the sender, and recipient's name and address.⁷⁴

All commentators have approached v. 22 as belonging to the main text, even when Paul is given the credit for writing one or other subscript,⁷⁵ or the whole of

70 See above, n. 16 and the argument developed below regarding Tertius' ability.

71 P^{46} inserts a definite article before Τέρτιος; see K. Junack *et al.*, eds., *Das Neue Testament auf Papyrus*, vol. II: *Die paulinischen Briefe Teil 1. Röm., 1. Kor., 2. Kor.* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1989) 148.

72 Cicero, *Att.* 5.20.

73 Commonly the farewell formula, ἐπιρῶσθαί σε εὐχομαι, is added: *O.Did.* 435; *O.Claud.* II.258; *P.Brem.* 10; *P.Herm.* 6; *P.Heid.* II.212; *P.Kell.* I.64; *P.NYU* 1.25; see generally Mathew, *Women in the Greetings*, 22–4.

74 *P.Brem.* 51, 52.

75 Byrne, *Romans*, 455–8 considers vv. 17–20 inauthentic; by contrast Longenecker, 'Ancient Amanuenses' adds vv. 25–7 as from Paul. See the discussion in E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (trans. G. W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 422–8. The addition of a brief summary or further thought introduced by παρακαλῶ is attested in letters in the papyri *P.Giss.Apoll.* 18; *P.Lond.* II.144; *P.Sarap.* 92, cf. *P.Iand.* VI.96.

chapter 16.⁷⁶ The problem generated when v. 23(-4) is taken as coming from Paul rather than tied to Tertius' salutation is that Paul's greetings appear to be interrupted. One might expect the ἀσπάζεταιται of v. 21 and v. 23 to flow without hiatus, without disruption by Tertius' first-person ἀσπάζομαι. The move between the first and third person forms is common enough,⁷⁷ especially when there is an opening greeting,⁷⁸ but not with a change of hand. One third-century letter moves from ἀπάσσασθε to ἀσπάζεταιται in the original hand and is then followed by another hand, writing ἀσπάζου Ἰσιδώραν καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς before the farewell formula.⁷⁹ Another letter, dated to 118 CE, has the author taking up the pen to write the formulaic farewell (and date) and a third hand joining his greetings – Ἱερακίων ἀσπάζομαί σε, γλυκύτετε – at the foot of the page after the letter ending.⁸⁰ Sometimes the first person is used of someone other than the author, but apparently at the same time as the letter was being written by a scribe.⁸¹ Clearly, there is no single way in which the addition might have been crafted. But what is also clear is that, even when different hands are noticeable in the body of papyrus letters, a self-identified scribe, different from the author, is not among them.

The structure of chapter 16 is uneven and, towards the end, uncertain. Verses 25-7 are vagrant in the manuscript tradition.⁸² While the end of chapter 16 is their usual fixed address, they have been known to turn up after 14.23, 15.33. Sometimes duplicated, split,⁸³ shortened, the verses have attracted their own variant readings or been dropped altogether. Stability is not the most notable feature of chapter 16's text.

4. A Para-textual Tertius?

On the basis of the arrangement of greetings and conclusions found in ancient letters, neatness is not always *their* most compelling feature either, even when a cultivated hand has produced the substance of the letter. It is only the

76 C. H. Dodd sees Paul's own scribble in vv. 17-20 (psychological shift notwithstanding) with the pen returned to Tertius at v. 21 (C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932) 241-2).

77 *BGU* II.601; *P.Brem.* 61; *P.Ifao.* II.39; *P.KölnGr.* II.109, cf. *Chrest.Wilck.* 483; *P.Giss.Poll.* 18; *BGU* I.261, which has three instances of ἀσπάζεταιται interrupted by one ἀσπαζόμεθα.

78 As, for example, in *BGU* III.821; *O.Claud.* II.258; *P.Köln* II.108.

79 *PSI* XII.1247.

80 *P.Brem.* 48; cf. *P.Mert.* I.28 (on verso).

81 *P.Giss.Apoll.* 18. See also *P.Oxy.* XLIX.3505 ll. 2425 ἀσπάσο|μέ [read ἀσπάζομαί] σε Διονύσιος; *P.Oxy.* XLII.3057 ll. 28-9 ὑποφέρει Λεωνῶς ἀσπάζομαι σε might be another example (if the stop is placed after ὑποφέρει), though the editor (Peter Parsons) acknowledges the problems in punctuation and even capitalisation. Λεωνῶς (lion) may even be a self-characterisation by (or second name of) the author of the letter, given its content about overcoming adversity.

82 H. Gamble, *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 25-9, 101-14, 121-4, 129-32; Käsemann, *Commentary*, 422-8.

83 In minuscule 457, Rom 16.25-6 follows 14.23 (fol. 147r) and 16.26-7 follows 15.6 (fol. 147v)!

reproduction of these texts, in the aftermath of the final form of a letter, that provides the orderly arrangement. This raises the question of whether the greeting from Tertius, now our v. 22, was as neatly contained in the original letter as our modern texts and ancient manuscripts construct.

We know from numerous instances in the New Testament how material in the margin, often dubbed a ‘scribal gloss’, can find its way into the text in the course of transmission.⁸⁴ Marginal material can originate in different ways. Codex Claromontanus (D^p), given that there was space on the line after the existing text of Rom 8.1, simply made an addition to the text in smaller letters. Most scribal glosses began life as a small-lettered horizontal comment adjacent to the relevant section of the main text. It was an ancient practice.⁸⁵

Here the phenomenon observed by Margit Homann is particularly relevant. Following a ‘literary’ mention in a letter of Cicero,⁸⁶ she has called it *versiculus transversus*, that is, writing perpendicular and marginal to the main text, executed by turning the papyrus 90°. The 221 Latin and Greek papyri and ostraca that she has found displaying the feature span the first to fifth centuries (most frequently in the second to fourth centuries), with provenances from Oxyrhynchus to the Wadi Fawakhir. All but five use the left-hand margin.⁸⁷ A majority (98) have only one line of writing; 75 have two rows; 1 example provides seven lines. There is no apparent restriction on the content in the margin. Homann has found continuations of the substance of the main text, signatures, prayers, addresses, return addresses, thanksgivings, invitations, general closing formulae and, most important for this study, greetings, sometimes in continuation of greetings begun in the main column of writing.⁸⁸ As variable as is the range of material contained in the *versiculus transversus* so also are the types of letters to which it is attached.

A good example – curiously missing from Homann’s list⁸⁹ – is the papyrus *BGU* II.423, a letter from a new army recruit, Apion, to his father Epimachos. The conclusion follows the usual pattern, containing final greetings (ll. 18–20) and a few

84 For example, Codex A in Rom 8.1 adds (from v. 4) μή κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦσιν; Codex 3 adds ἐν πολλοῖς τῶν ἀντιγράφων οὕτως εὔρηται (!) το δέξασθαι ἡμᾶς, a phrase itself added previously (6, 945). On the mechanics of the incorporation of scribal glosses, see P. Arzt-Grabner, ‘1 Cor. 4.6 – a Scribal Gloss?’, *Biblische Notizen* 130 (2006) 59–78.

85 For example, *P.Princ.* II.19 (160–150 BCE); see W. Clarysse, ‘The Archive of Euphron. Avec résumé en anglais’, *AncSoc* 35 (2005) 129–34; compare *P.Princ.* II.72 (third century CE).

86 Cicero, *Att.* 5.1.

87 For transverse writing in the right-hand margin, see *P.Turner* 18 (dated 84–96 CE).

88 M. Homann, ‘Eine Randerscheinung des Papyrusbriefes: Der *versiculus transversus*’, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 58 (2012) 67–80.

89 To be added to Homann’s list: *BGU* III.814, III.845, *O.Claud.* II.278, *P.Giss.* 1.23 (= *P.Giss.Apoll.* 5), *P.Kell.* 1.66 [?] (postscripts); *O.Claud.* II.259 (personal greeting and a formulaic farewell prayer); *P.Alex.* 28 (continuation of the text with added greetings); *P.Haun* II.18 (continuation of the text? with added greetings and postscript); *P.Herm.* 9 (Christian; prayer/exhortation); *P.Mich.* VIII.504 (fragmentary); *P.Abinn.* 30, included in her list, also contains greetings and

additional matters by way of postscript (ll. 21–4) – all written in the usual horizontal fashion across the recto. But then, there is an additional greeting in the same hand written vertically along the left margin: ἀσπάζεταιί σε Σερήνος ὁ τοῦ Ἀγαθοῦ [Δα]ίμωνος [καὶ ...]ς ὁ τοῦ [...]ροῦ καὶ Τοῦρβων ὁ τοῦ Γαλλονίου καὶ Δ [...]νῶς ὁ τ[οῦ ...]σεν[...][...].[...].[-ca.?-], ‘Serenos the son of Agathodaimon greets you and [...], and Tourbon the son of Gallonios, and D [...]nas the s[on of][...].’ The greeting clearly comes as an afterthought and, with space gone from the horizontal lines, was added vertically. The mode of greeting shifts from the second person singular imperative, ἄσπασαι, in the vertical text body – that is, a greeting coming from the writer of the letter through the recipient. In the margin, it becomes the third person singular indicative, ἀσπάζεται (‘[Serenos] greets’) – that is, a greeting that the author of the letter is passing on from another.⁹⁰ This letter does not have the first person, ἀσπάζομαι, as in Rom 16.22, but this is common in other letters, with or without inclusions of other forms, including the usual one of chapter 16, ἀσπάσασθε.⁹¹ Of course, the number of lines that could be written transverse varies according to the size of the lettering and width of the margin, whether of a single-sheet letter or the last column of a larger sheet glued with previous sheets to form a scroll (as would, most likely, have been the case for Romans).

Tertius’ greeting is ten words long – forty-nine letters⁹² – easily accommodated vertically into a one-centimetre margin. One second-century letter, *PSI* VIII.943, contains a greeting of seven words, thirty-one letters, written into one transverse

the farewell formula; *P.Giss.* 103 adds a postscript to the greetings; *P.Kell.* 1.74 has a postscript and farewell formula. For *P.Oxy.* xvii, read *P.Oxy.* xvii.2151.

⁹⁰ See F. Krebs, ed., *Ägyptische Urkunden aus den königlichen [staatlichen] Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden*, vol. II (Berlin: Weidmann, 1898) §§423, 632; J. L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Foundations & Facets; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 159–60 (§103). For an image, see the online *Berliner Papyrusdatenbank* P. 7950.

⁹¹ See, as a mere handful of examples, dated between the first and fourth centuries: *BGU* 1.335, II.384, *Chrest. Wilck.* 21 (ἀσπάζομαι alone, though sometimes multiply repeated: *P.Abinn.* 25; *P.Ammon* 1.3 col. 6; *P.Mil.* II.81; *P.Paris* 18); *BGU* 1.247, *P.Lond.* III.951 v. 483, *P.Neph.* 18 (ἀσπάζομαι; ἀσπάζεται); *BGU* III.923, *P.Oxy.* xxxi.2593 (ἀσπάζομαι; ἀσπαζόμεθα); *O.Claud.* 1.152 (ἀσπάζομαι; ἀσπάζεσθε); *O.Claud.* II.279 (ἀσπάζομαι; ἀσπαζε; ἀσπάζεται); *O.Did.* 352, *P.Iand.* VI.96 (ἀσπάζομαι; ἀσπάζεται; ἀσπάσου); *P.Mert.* II.81, *P.Oxy.* XIV.1677 (ἀσπάζομαι; ἄσπασαι); *P.Mert.* II.82 (ἀσπάζομαι; ἄσπασαι; ἀσπάζεται); *P.Mert.* II.85 (ἀσπάζεται; ἀσπάζονται; ἀσπάζομαι); *P.Mich.* III.208 (ἀσπάζομαι; ἀσπάζετε); *P.Oslo* II.52, *P.Rein.* II.118 (ἀσπάζομαι; ἀσπάζονται); *P.Kell.* 1.66 (ἀσπάζομαι; ἀσπάσασθε); *P.Oxy.* III.533 (ἀσπάσασθε; ἀσπάζονται). There is nothing special in the variety of forms in Romans 16, despite the suggestion of Richards, *First-century*, 152 n. 42.

⁹² The number of letters is based on the modern critical editions; whether Tertius used or copied iota adscripts (such as in *P.Turner* 18, l.2) and/or was content with variant morphology such as ἀσπάσομε (as in *P.Oxy.* XLIX.3505 l. 24) cannot be known.

line of a one-centimetre left margin: ἀσπάζονται σε πάντες οἱ ἐν οἴκῳ πολλὰ. A third-century letter's margins easily accommodated two lines of text (*P.Oxy.* vi.937), the first line having ten words (fifty letters) with a second line dispensing the farewell, ἐρρῶσθαί σε εὐχόμεαι. If, for some reason, these original letters came to be copied, as happened with Romans, one can readily understand how the marginal greeting could enter the body of the letter, probably inserted into the other greetings at some point if they were present. Of course, this assumes that in such a copying, care would be taken to reserve space for reassignment into the body of the letter.

We have very few examples of secretaries adding their greetings to a letter from another. (The list, to my knowledge, is Cicero, *Att.* 5.20, *P.Giss.Apoll.* 18, *P.Oxy.* XLIX.3505 and perhaps *P.Oxy.* XLII.3057.) The crux is *where* such an entry might have been made. No manuscripts give any indication that Tertius was originally in the margins, but New Testament manuscripts with material now adjudged to come from marginal glosses usually provide no indication as to the original placement of the material so incorporated. Given the notice from Cicero in the mid-first century BCE and the witness provided by papyri from the first or first-to-second centuries CE onwards,⁹³ the *versiculus transversus* was a practice employed by secretaries around the time of the writing of Romans. My argument is that a reasonable case can be made that the margin was the place in the original letter to the Romans where Tertius wrote his greeting. An early copyist working from the original pulled Tertius into the main body of greetings either without much thought as to the relative placement or to ensure that Paul's own words held the final place in the letter (that is v. 23, perhaps with a benediction (v. 24)).⁹⁴

5. Tertius' Relationship to Paul

Apart from v. 22, no other information is available that might fill out the question of Tertius' relationship to Paul. Some suggest that this unique intrusion 'must ... signal a close relationship to Paul and a significant contribution to the writing of this letter'.⁹⁵ One wonders, if this was the case, why there was no

93 Homann's list contains eight papyri dated to the first century and six dated to the first-to-second centuries. A further forty, including ostraca, are dated to the second century (without specifying those that have provided dates). See Homann, 'Der *versiculus transversus*', 74–80.

94 As Kloppenborg has intimated, the recommendation for hospitable reception of Phoebe in 16.1–2 is balanced (at the end of the greetings list) by a demonstration of hospitality extended to one known to the Christ-followers in Rome (Kloppenborg, 'Gaius the Roman Guest', 549).

95 Elmer, 'I, Tertius', 54; Richards, *The Secretary*, 171; J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer: His World, his Options, his Skills* (GNS 51; Collegetown: Liturgical Press, 1995) 6. Gordon Bahr even suggests that there is an implicit addition of μου after ἐν κυρίῳ, indicating,

corporate greeting, ἀσπαζόμεθα, as we find in some papyri even in the context of an individual's letter.⁹⁶

One phrase in Tertius' interruption to the text stands out: ἐν κυρίῳ.⁹⁷ Scholars have selected two key aspects of the wording. On the one hand, the phrase, in isolation, is placed in tandem with identical occurrences throughout chapter 16 (that is, at vv. 2, 8, 11, 12 (bis), 13). James Dunn asserts that Tertius is following Paul's pattern;⁹⁸ if Paul himself handwrote the greetings of chapter 16, that would make Paul's pattern very clear.⁹⁹ Richards, on the other hand, argues, on the basis of the brevity of the greetings in other letters of Paul, that 'Paul instructed Tertius to greet the leaders of the church in Rome'.¹⁰⁰ He appears to suggest that not merely the naming but the general *pattern* of naming was Tertius' contribution. I have already argued that the use of the first-person singular possessive pronoun countermands this argument. But what is also neglected at both poles of these discussions is that the phrase is almost uniquely Pauline in the New Testament (in its discrete form occurring forty-two times; elsewhere only in Rev 14.13). Given that no one credits Tertius with being the secretary for Paul's other letters, it is clear that the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ is Paul's own expression.

But this raises the second issue. It is sometimes acknowledged that the meaning of the phrase for Tertius' whole greeting is ambiguous.¹⁰¹ It might be taken, from its proximity to ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολήν, to modify the manner of Tertius' writing, marking Tertius' contribution as Christian service. Alternately, it might be taken as an adverbial phrase qualifying ἀσπαζομαι. This is the preference of most,¹⁰² even though, on closer investigation, this is *not* its usage in previous verses. The pronounced syntactical awkwardness in v. 22 therefore undercuts any suggestion that Tertius was responsible for the refinement of Paul's language through the letter, let alone becoming a contributor to the argument. But it also implies that Tertius is imitating a Pauline catchphrase, even if somewhat crude in execution or an afterthought tacked on to his own main intent, namely, salutation. Further, the general lack of ambiguity in the previous instances of chapter 16 strengthens the notion that Paul did not see Tertius'

uniquely, the address of Paul as 'master' (Bahr, 'Paul and Letter Writing', 465). Richards offers a substantial critique of such a reading (Richards, *The Secretary*, 172 n. 202).

96 In addition to the above, see *P.Mich.* viii.504; *P.Princ.* ii.73; *SB* xxiv.16267.

97 An interruption or interpolation is the usual designation of his authored appearance in v. 22.

This assumes of course that v. 23 is not an extension of Tertius' own interests but rather a continuation of Paul's own letter.

98 Dunn, *Romans* 9–16, 910.

99 Dodd, *Paul to the Romans*, 244.

100 Richards, *First-century*, 152; *The Secretary*, 171.

101 Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 749; Cranfield, *Romans*, 806.

102 See Byrne, *Romans*, 460.

intrusion. Given the repeated accent on corrections that are made to drafts, especially of important writings (whether letter or other genre), Paul's knowing retention seems less likely.

The effort to reconstruct Tertius' relationship to Paul is constrained by the limited evidence. However, efforts to bring Tertius into a contributing (as distinct from copying) role in Paul's letter to the Romans, or at least the greetings list of the letter, falter on two scores. First, the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ is distinctly Paul's language – an evocation of common interest and relationship¹⁰³ – which seems to be somewhat ineptly imitated in Tertius' addition. Secondly, and consequentially, the possibility should be entertained that Paul (like Cicero's friend, Atticus) did not know of, and therefore had no occasion to approve of or correct, Tertius' self-revealing supplement. This demands consideration of the construction of the letter to the Romans.

6. The Construction of Ancient Writings

The presenting difficulty is that the 'non-literary naiveté' of thousands of Egyptian letters do not match the sustained argumentation of Paul of Tarsus.¹⁰⁴ There are some exceptions – *P.Ammon* 1.3, for example, approximately matches the length of Galatians.¹⁰⁵ Paul's letters are demandingly long, with Romans leading the burden of concentration, all 7,111 words. The emperor Claudius' rescript to the Alexandrians (*P.Lond.* vi.1912) contracts to 784 words. When Pliny the Younger half-apologised to his correspondent Quadratus for the length of a letter, the number of words came to 983. Normally, Pliny recommended brief letters (and poems) – to avoid irritation – though he allowed that friendship demanded longer correspondence, as also the importance of a subject.¹⁰⁶

Such comparisons invite consideration of the mechanics of construction. Most Pauline commentators assume a simple direct transaction between Paul and an increasingly able Tertius, now often equipped with shorthand.¹⁰⁷ Pliny fortunately provides a number of insights into the composing process – his own and that of

103 So Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 731; Dunn, *Romans* 9–16, 887.

104 Richards, *First-century*, 231.

105 See P. Arzt-Grabner, 'Papyrologie und Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft: Einige Beispiele aus neueren Papyruseditionen', *Light from the East. Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament* (ed. P. Arzt-Grabner and C. M. Kreinecker; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010) 11–26, at 17.

106 Pliny, *Ep.* 4.5, 7.2, 9.2, 9.13.

107 Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life*, 268; Dunn, *Romans* 9–16, 910 (though allowing the possibility of slow dictation). Richards however provides a much more complex process (*First-Century*, 230–2).

others.¹⁰⁸ He regarded himself as a lesser light than the more prolix and witty Cicero,¹⁰⁹ but for all that, his contributions may be the more pertinent.¹¹⁰ His compositions may be letters, but may also include other works, even poetry. A tight genre-restriction that confines us only to letter composition fails to recognise that, for the ancients, while there is a recognition of genre distinctions, this does not overly vary the mechanics of composition of a writing of some length. Pliny admits as much in his famous letter on the eruption of Vesuvius.¹¹¹ A model extracted from Pliny will not provide the exact method behind the construction of Romans because of the variables but it will provide at least a sense of the probabilities and afford us a better means of assessing the contribution of Tertius.

There were a number of steps between the initial conception and the final product released for an audience. Multiple wax tablets are frequently mentioned. They were Pliny's regular companions at a hunt. He also sought out 'paper' (*charta*) to use.¹¹² So it seems that at least for a member of the elite, access to the requisite materials for writing, even at a preliminary level, was not the problem (cf. 2 Tim 4.13).

This immediacy of tactile contact was not Pliny's preferred method, at least when he was not mundanely scribbling off 'unliterary productions' (*scribo plurimas sed inlitteratissimas litteras*).¹¹³ Rather, he preferred the shuttered dark of his room, where the exactitude of every word could be weighed – 'I read every detail so that I might correct everything.'¹¹⁴ When ready, he summoned a *notarius* (perhaps skilled in tachygraphy, but this is not clear) for dictation. He then returned to his room and repeated the whole procedure for his next writing assignment.¹¹⁵

The foundation begun, Pliny seems often to have worked on drafts, including, sometimes, of his letters. This usually involved additions as well as refinements, often informed by interactions with established literature by incorporation or

108 Compare H. N. Parker, 'Books and Reading Latin Poetry', *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (ed. W. A. Johnson and H. N. Parker; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 186–229, at 208–9, 215–17.

109 Pliny, *Ep.* 9.2.

110 Given Richards and Elmer's reliance on Cicero, another ancient voice may augment the picture.

111 Pliny, *Ep.* 6.16: *tu potissima excerptes; aliud est enim epistolam aliud historiam, aliud amico aliud omnium omnibus scribere*. The letter, from which selection was to be made according to genre and audience, has 717 words, a span that escaped an apology for length! Compare the recommended use of history and poetic excerpts within letters: *Ep.* 7.9, cf. philosophical exercises: *Ep.* 9.2.

112 Pliny, *Ep.* 1.6, 7.27, 9.36, cf. 8.15, 8.9, 9.6.

113 Pliny, *Ep.* 1.10.

114 Pliny *Ep.* 8.21: *lego enim omnia ut omnia emendem*.

115 See I. Marchesi, *The Art of Pliny's Letters: A Poetics of Allusion in the Private Correspondence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 128.

adaptation.¹¹⁶ But crucial to the process was engagement with friends: ‘This is my practice, that before I convey my work to the public, I submit it to the judgement of my friends.’¹¹⁷

There is no mention of secretaries to whom Pliny turns for critical assessment. Rather secretaries serve the process. In one letter Pliny speaks of gathering a group of friends together for the appraisal of one of his drafts. Secretaries supplied copies of the writing on which friends were to add their notes (*adnotanda*) as the work was read.¹¹⁸ The process might be repeated.¹¹⁹ Ultimately, he retained the authority of his own judgement¹²⁰ just as he was wary of overrevising.¹²¹ Whatever the involvement of others, there is no doubt that just as style was a key element in recognising an individual author¹²² – whether Cicero, Demosthenes or whomever – Pliny also wanted to ensure his own future reputation by claiming sole authorship of a well-crafted piece of writing. Quality inscribed the person, not merely the text (cf. 2 Cor 10.10).¹²³

This introduces an aspect of the production line that is frequently overlooked, namely, the crucial importance of the work passing oral muster. Without a reading of the work, it is clear that Pliny felt that the revision was incomplete – historians, tragedians and poets did the same.¹²⁴ Sometimes, he sought out one who had a reputation as a good reader for the performance (even a freedman of his own household)¹²⁵ hovering over a copy to make corrections.¹²⁶ Some masters kept a lector in the household,¹²⁷ not merely to hear the latest letter or literary purchase, but to listen to their own writing.¹²⁸ Again, a reader, like a secretary, was

116 Pliny, *Ep.* 7.9, 7.17, 7.30, 9.28, cf. 7.13.

117 Pliny, *Ep.* 8.19: *est autem mihi moris, quod sum daturus in manus hominum, ante amicorum iudicio examinare*. For such *amici*, see *Ep.* 1.1, 6.33, 7.2, 8.7.

118 Pliny, *Ep.* 8.21.

119 Pliny, *Ep.* 7.17; see also 9.26.

120 Pliny, *Ep.* 9.26.

121 Pliny, *Ep.* 9.35, cf. 8.21.

122 Seneca, *Ep.* 40; Galen, *In Hipp. De nat. hominis* 1.42. This was a principle of textual criticism going back at least to the third-century (BCE) Zenodotus of Ephesos, first librarian of Alexandria.

123 See A. H. Cadwallader, ‘Paul Speaks Like a Girl: When Phoebe Reads Romans’, *Sexuality, Ideology and the Bible: Queer Readings from the Antipodes* (ed. R. J. Myles and C. Blyth; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2015) 69–94, at 72–6, 82, 85, 88.

124 Pliny, *Ep.* 7.17. Compare Ovid, *Pont.* 2.4.13–18, 4.2.35–8; *Trist.* 3.14.37–52.

125 Pliny, *Ep.* 9.34. There are occasions when Pliny would read the work himself: *Ep.* 8.21, 9.28. Compare the use of the slave Salvius as reader by Cicero (*Att.* 16.2), again preparatory to a final version released to the public. See Parker, ‘Books and Reading’, 209.

126 Pliny, *Ep.* 7.17, cf. 5.3.

127 Compare Pliny, *Ep.* 3.5, of his uncle’s lector. Cornelius Nepos commented on the inclusion of lectors on Atticus’ staff: *Att.* 13.3–4.

128 Parker, ‘Books and Reading’, 199, 200.

not conferred co-authorship. But he could alert a writer to oral infelicities as well as brilliance.

Conclusion

There are enough hints in Pliny's own correspondence, as well as corroboration of the elements of literary production found in other texts, to confirm that here is a skeleton model of how writers operated in the ancient world. All the contributors that Richards and Elmer want to claim as co-authors of Paul's letters are here: the secretaries (albeit often divided up into specialised functions), the friends and colleagues. The interaction with other noteworthy writings, whether it be Demosthenes and Homer for Pliny or the Septuagint (and the occasional poet)¹²⁹ for Paul, is mentioned as well, including the ability to adjust the language of the parent text. But all is in the hands of the author, not a delegate.¹³⁰ The final version was unquestionably Paul's alone. And it is this (alone?) that lay under the hand of Tertius whether as copyist (notary) or possessor of a beautiful style (calligrapher). It is this hand that provides an addition probably written transverse in the left margin.

Clearly also, considerable value was attached to the reading of such a composition (whether letter or other genre), both in its formative stages and its final delivery. In the fictional *Letters of Paul and Seneca*, Seneca does not consider it sufficient to be bearer of a copy of Paul's writings to the emperor. He takes it upon himself to read out the text in the emperor's hearing.¹³¹ This raises the speculative question of who in Corinth and its surrounds might have been suitable to perform this task. One person is prominent – and is so in chapter 16: Phoebe. If her delivery of the letter was oral, not merely as Paul's mule, her contribution becomes crucial to the production of the 'Epistle to the Romans' ... and to a greeting from a marginal secretary.¹³²

129 See 1 Cor 15.33, citing Menander's *Thaïs*.

130 Pliny, *Ep.* 7.9.

131 *Ep. Paul Sen.* §7.

132 For Richards, Phoebe is the letter-bearer but is totally dependent on Tertius for the construction of a letter of recommendation (Richards, *The Secretary* 170, 171). She is not significant enough for an index entry.