A Note on Early Christian Associations and the Development of Offices in Early Christianity[*]

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Abstract
The question of the development of ministry in early Christian communities, especially with regard to the developmental model implied by the notion of "early catholicism", brings about a number of items that can be retained. The ministries of leadership, the coexistence of "institutional" and "charismatic" ministries, the comparability of early Christian communities with Greco-Roman voluntary associations (including synagogues) organized by means of a system of offices, the development of ecclesial organization in the second half of the first century, are to be seen in the light offered by the Pauline literature.

Keywords
Christianity, early community, bishop, Church`s unity, the offices in the Church.

1. Introduction

One influential model in the history of earliest Christianity is the idea of a development of charismatically organized kind of Christianity, with characterized by loose ad-hoc structures and informal and spontaneous

exercise of authority on the basis of workings of the Spirit in the community, that, in the course of a few decades, developed into a much more institutionally organized Christianity, characterized by clear and permanent structures, clear hierarchies and an emphasis on offices and their holders rather than on the Spirit.[1] The latter form of Christianity is seen to be reflected in the later writings of the New Testament, especially the deutero-Pauline and pastoral epistles, as well as in Luke-Acts, and, depending on a scholar's point of view, is either regarded as a perversion of authentic Christianity (the witness to which has, unfortunately, somehow become part of the New Testament canon),[2] or as the natural development towards an episcopally organized church.[3] A key term around

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[1] * This paper contains initial thoughts on the development of early Christian ministry; it was presented to the faculty of the ProtestánsTeológiai Intézet in Koloszvár, Transsylvania (Romania) at the invitation of the dean, Dr. AdorjániZoltán, and at the conference of Corpus Christi, Oradéa, at the invitation of the president, Rev. Norbert Nagy. The author is grateful for the hospitality of both organisations and for the feedback that he received during the discussions. I also thank the Rev. Sarah Fossati Carver, Midland, MI (USA) for proofreading the English text.

For an overview of this debate, cf. e.g. Benjamin L. Merkle, *The Elder and the Overseer. One Office in the Early Church* Studies in Biblical Literature 57, New York, Lang, 2003, p. 67-90.

[2] Cf. for a critical perspective: François Vouga, 'Urchristentum,' TRE XX (200), p. 411-436, esp. p. 433. A good example of this attitude is David L. Bartlett, *Ministry in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1993). Bartlett's analysis is furthermore seriously hampered by his agenda to falsify modern-day church statements on the ministry, for example, he is adamant to find evidence for "ordained" ministers presiding over the Eucharist in the NT writings (and does not find it). This approach, however, is seriously misguided, as it builds up on projecting contemporary ministerial structures back into the New Testament. However, if one would want to answer Bartlett's question, and if one were to take into account the historical circumstances, one must ask, who would be the most likely figure to preside over a communal meal, to which the answer is: the most senior person present, either the senior officer of an early Christian community or, indeed, an honored guest.

[3] See for example Jürgen Roloff, *Die Kirche im Neuen Testament* NTD.E 10, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1993, p. 81-82: 'Der mitcharismatischer Autorität begabte Jakobus als geistlicher Leiter einer Ortskirche, umgeben von einem die administrativ-technische Belangewahrnehmenden Gremium von Ältesten: diese Bild der Jerusalemer Gemeindeordnung des Jahrzehntszwischen 50 und 60 könnte in mancher Hinsicht als Vorwegnahme des wenigen Jahrzehnte später sich allgemeindurchsetzenden Modells des Monepiskopats gelten.' See also Markus Tiwald, 'Die vielfältigen Entwicklungslinien kirchlichen Ames im Corpus Paulinum und ihre Relevanz für heutige Theologie,' in: Thomas Schmeller/Martin Ebner/Rudolf Hoppe (eds.), *Neutesta-*

which much of the discussion about the development of early Christian structures of authority and ministry has revolved is "early Catholicism" ("Frühkatholizismus"), a concept ultimately stemming from 19th century intra- and inter-confessional polemic.[4] Even if critical studies have indicated that the concept is outdated, the developmental model that lies behind it is, oftentimes, still in place in many publications, both by protestant and catholic scholars.[5] At this background, this study will formulate some challenges to the notion of a substantial, or even distorting, development in structures of authority from a more "charismatic" and egalitarian[6] kind to a more "institutional" and "hierarchical kind" in the New Testament

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mentliche Ämtermodelle im Kontext Quaestiones Disputatae 239, Freiburg, Herder, 2010, p. 101-128, 118.

[4] Cf. esp. Norbert Nagler, *Frühkatholizismus: zurMethodologie einer kritischen Debatte* Regensburger Studienzur Theologie 43, Bern, Lang, 1994, esp. p. 17-50. See also Idem, *op. cit.*, p. 7-17 for an overview of what has been subsumed under this term, including the following: 'Generell läßt sich die Entwicklung in den christlichen Gemeinden als eine Entwicklung von einer charismatisch orientierten zu einer zunehmend hierarchischorientierten Gemeindeorganisation beschreiben. Die urchristliche Vielfalt an charismatischen Ämtern - von Aposteln, (Wander-)Propheten und Lehrern über Episkopen, Presbyter und Diakone bis zu den Lektoren, Akolythen und Ostiariern, Bekennern und Exorzisten, Witwen und Jungfrauen - ging verloren oder wurde zugunsten der nun etablierten sakramentalen Ämtern von Bischof, Presbyter und Diakonumgedeutet.' (9) See also: .Gunther Wenz, *Der Kulturprotestant: Adolf von Harnack als Christentumstheoretiker und Kontroverstheologe*, München, Utz, 2001, p. 71-72, Ferdinand Hahn, 'Das Problem des Frühkatholizismus,' in: *EvTh* 38 (1978), p. 340-357, see also Franz Mußner, 'Frühkatholizismus,'*TThZ*68 (1959), p. 237-245, and Heinz Schürmann, 'Auf der Suche nach dem "Evangelisch-Katholischen" - Zum Thema "Frühkatholizismus",' in C. Möller/W. Stenger (eds.), *Kontinuität und Einheit* FS Franz Mußner; Freiburg, Herder 1981, p. 340-375. For an overview see also Stefan Alkier, 'Frühkatholizismus,' in: Wibilex (http://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/nc/wibilex/das-bibellexikon/details/quelle/WIBI/zeichen/f/referenz/48877/, accessed 10 January, 2011) and the literature referred to there.

[5] Cf. for a Roman Catholic example e.g. J.F. O'Grady, 'Ministry in the New Testament: Foundation for Christian Ministry Today,' in J. Z. Skira/M.S. Attridge (eds.), *In God's hands. Essays on the Church and Ecumenism in Honour of Michael A Fahey, S.J.*, Leuven, Peeters, 2006, p. 1-17; see also Bartlett, *Ministry*.

[6] The idea of fully egalitarian communities has been successfully challenged by Thomas Schmeller, *Hierarchie und Egalität. Eine sozialgeschichtliche Unterschung paulinischer Gemeinden und griechisch-römischer Vereine* SBS 162, Stuttgart, Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995, who argues that, whereas the composition of early Christian communities was egalitarian (i.e. membership was drawn from all strata of society), the internal organization was not.

by looking at three sets of writings that, oftentimes, are taken to reflect precisely such a development, namely the authentic Pauline letters, the deutero-Paulines and the pastoral epistles. This, limited, set of texts also has the advantage of dealing with texts that claim to stand in the same, namely Pauline, tradition. The challenging of a development from a "charismatic" kind of ministry to a much more "institutional" ministry with regard to these letters builds up on the following core considerations that will be unpacked further subsequently.

First, the remarks about ministries of leadership as the can be found in the Pauline epistles, the deutero-Pauline and the pastoral letters point into the direction of the coexistence of "institutional" and "charismatic" ministries. An opposition between "charismatic" and "institutional" ministries was not in place in early Christianity, neither was a structural suppression of the one by the other.

Second, the comparability of early Christian communities with Greco-Roman voluntary associations (including synagogues) leads to suspect that both "Pauline" and "Deutero-Pauline" communities as well as the communities addressed by the "pastoral epistles" (and the like) were organized by means of a system of offices.

Third, with regard to the development of ecclesial organization in the second half of the first century, it seems that the increased prominence of, or at least the increased attention for ministries of leadership in early Christian writings dating from the end of the first and the beginning of the second century has less to do with an increased emphasis on church order as such, but rather on the circumstance that the scale on which early Christianity was operating was increasing, which led to particular attention for ministries of leadership, with at the background a clear sense that it was necessary to provide structures that facilitated communion.

2. Early Christian Communities and Voluntary Associations

In the last decades, the study of Greco-Roman voluntary associations, especially those existing in and around Asia Minor,[7] has regained its

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[7] Cf. e.g. the following publications: Onno M. van Nijf, *The Civic World of Professional Associations in the Roman East* Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology, Amsterdam, Gieben, 1997, Stefan Sommer, *Rom und die Vereinigungen im südwestlichen Kleinasien (133 v. Chr. - 284 n. Chr.)* Pietas 1 (Hennef: Clauss, 2006), the contributions in: Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser/Alfred Schäfer (eds.) *Religiöse Vereine*

importance for the study of the organization of early Christian communities.[8] In fact, this period in the history of research that disregards the importance of these associations[9] partially overlaps with the period in the history of research, in which the notion of "early catholicism" was the most popular.[10] Today, there is a growing consensus that these associations, as a common and broadly accepted phenomenon of the world of the early Empire,[11] to which, to a certain extent, also (Diaspora) synagogues may be counted,[12]

in der römischen Antike, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 13, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2002, Jinyu Liu, *Collegia Centonariorum: The Guilds of Textile Dealers in the Roman West*, Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 34, Leiden, Brill, 2009, Imogen Dittmann-Schöne, *Die Berufsvereine in den Städten des kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasiens* Theorie und Forschung 690 (Regensburg: Roderer, 2001), for a brief overview, see also: Richard S. Ascough, 'Greco-Roman Philosophic, Religious, and Voluntary Associations,' in Richard N. Longenecker (ed.) *Community Formation in the Early Church and the Church Today*, Peabody, Hendrickson, 2002, p. 3-19.

8   Cf. e.g. the encompassing study by Philip A. Harland, *Associations, Synagogue, and Congregations*, Minneapolis, Fortress, 2003.

9   Cf. e.g. Thomas Schmeller, 'Zum exegetischen Interesse an antiken Vereinen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert,' and Dietrich-Alex Koch/Dirk Schinkel, 'Die Frage nach den Vereinen in der Geistes- und Theologiegeschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des zeitgenössischen Vereinswesens und der "Wende" in der protestantischen Theologie nach 1918,' both in: Andreas Gutsfeld/Dietrich-Alex Koch (eds.), *Vereine, Synagogen und Gemeinden im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien*, Studien und TextezuAntike und Christentum 25, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2006, p. 1-20.129-148.

10 For the history of research, cf. Nagler, *Frühkatholizismus*.

11 Cf. e.g. A. J. BoudewijnSirks, 'Die Vereine in der kaiserlichenGesetzgebung,' in Gutsfeld/Koch (eds.), *Vereine*, p. 21-40; as is well-known, associations were oftentimes associated with civil unrest as well, on which cf. e.g. Stefan Sommer, 'Religion und Vereinigungsunruhen in der Kaiserzeit,' in: Gutsfeld/Koch (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 77-9.

12 Cf. e.g. John M. G. Barclay, 'Money and Meetings: Group Formation among Diaspora Jews and Early Christians,' in: Gutsfeld/Koch (eds.), *Vereine*, p. 113-127, Peter Richardson, 'Early Synagogues as Collegia in the Diaspora and Palestine,' in Kloppenborg/Wilson (eds.), *Associations*, p. 90-109. James Tunstead Burtchaell, *From Synagogue to Church. Public Services and Offices in the Earliest Christian Communities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University, 1992, while rightly underlining the institutional character of even the earliest Christian communities (esp. 272-357), overemphasizes the importance of the synagogue, giving the impression that early Christian simply adopted this specific form of organization, while ignoring the importance of voluntary associations. For a critical comparison of Jewish "sects" in Palestine and Greco-Roman voluntary organizations, cf. Albert Baumgarten, 'Graeco-Roman Voluntary Associations and Ancient Jewish Sects,' in Martin Goodman (ed.), *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1998, p. 93-112.

are a very useful background[13] to consider early Christian communities against in order to understand their forms of organization.[14] Various studies have argued this for virtually all strata of earliest Christianity, ranging from the meal fellowship as it emerged around Jesus[15] and continued among the disciples after Easter, by way of the Pauline communities and onwards.[16] Voluntary societies seem to be an especially interesting background to read the structure of early Christian communities against,[17] not only because of striking similarities, but also because of the role of voluntary society with regard to providing groups a place to organize themselves along their own worldviews and, in the context of the Roman Empire, in this way provided, to some extent, a space for the enactment of an alternative social order.

One characteristic of these voluntary associations was precisely that they had officers, which is of obvious relevance for the argument presented here. As surviving statutes of voluntary associations indicate,[18] their general structure consisted of someone functioning as president, typically with assistants, and further officers responsible for financial matters and,

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[13] Even if not the only one, cf. E. W. Stegemann / Wolfgang Stegemann, *UrchristlicheSozialgeschichte*, Stuttgart, Kohlhammer, 1997², p. 247-248, for emphasis on the understanding of the ἐκκλησία as a (fictional) political entity and an organization based on (fictive) kinship; on the background in Roman administration, see also however Werner Eck, 'Ämter und Verwaltungsstrukturen in Selbstverwaltungseinheiten der frühenrömischen Kaiserzeit,' in Schmeller/Ebner/ Hoppe (eds.), *Ämtermodelle*, p. 9-33.

[14] See e.g. the overview provided by Wayne O. McCready, '*Ekklēsia*and Voluntary Associations,' in John S. Kloppenborg/Stephen G. Wilson (eds.), *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 59-73.

[15] Cf. e.g. Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, Minneapolis, Fortress, 2003, p. 87-131.

[16] Cf. for the state of research and a discussion of objections e.g. Richard S. Ascough, 'Voluntary Associations and the Formation of Pauline Christian Communities: Overcoming the Objections,' in Gutsfeld/Koch (eds.), *Vereine*, p. 149-183. See for further studies e.g. Eva Ebel, *Die Attraktivität früher christlicher Gemeinden* WUNT 2.178, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2004, and also Richard S. Ascough, *Paul's Macedonian Associations: The Social Context of Philippians and 1 Thessalonians* WUNT 2.161, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2003, as well as idem, 'The Thessalonian Christian Community as a Professional Voluntary Association,' *JBL*119 (2000), p. 311-328. See for a study that underlines the coexistence of (functional) hierarchy and (theological) equality in the Pauline communities *qua* societies: Schmeller, *Hierarchie*. See further also the contributions in Markus Öhler (ed.), *Aposteldekret und antikesVereinswesen: Gemeinschaft und ihre Ordnung*, Tübingen, Mohr, 2010.

[17] Even if also public offices should be taken into account, cf. Eck, 'Ämter.'

[18] Cf. for examples, e.g. Smith, *Symposium*, 126-131.

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often, some that were in charge of maintaining order in the association, especially at its banquets. Some system of admitting members, including regulations about membership fees and obligations (including penalties for not fulfilling them), was part of the bylaws of a typical association as well. Of course, such associations varied in size and their exact organization and the nomenclature used for it varied from area to area and association to association. Still, they seem to have formed a relatively stable form of organization that existed for a considerable amount of time, mainly for cultic, professional and funerary purposes.[19]

Thus, association provides a good background against which to view the organisation of early Christian communities. This also applies to the offices and officers in place in these communities. In fact, most of the terms that are used to refer to officers of early Christian communities are also used in statutes and other documents left behind by Greco-Roman voluntary associations or can be well understood in relation to offices that existed in these organizations.[20] This situations, begs the question of how much development there has been with regard to the "institutionalization" of the ministry of leadership in these early Christian communities. In order to do this, the available evidence will be reviewed briefly now.

3. Offices in the Pauline Literature

With regard to the Pauline literature, on the one hand the office or ministry of Paul must be addressed and on the other hand the other office-bearers that appear scattered throughout what remains us of the Pauline correspondence, i.e. parts of one half of it.[21]

3.1 Paul the Apostle

The ministry of Paul, resp. his office of "apostle," deserves some attention here for two reasons. First, as an apostle and missionary (at least

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[19] Cf. e.g. the associations considered by Van Nijf, *World.*

[20] Cf. e.g. Ascough, 'Associations,' esp. 14-16, Dietrich-Alex Koch, 'Die Einmaligkeit des Anfangs und die Fortdauer der Institution. NeutestamentlicheBeobachtungenzum Problem der Gemeindeleitung,' in Idem, *Hellenistisches Christentum. Schriftverstän-dnis-Ekklesiologie-Geschichte* NTOA 6, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008, p. 197-210, esp. p. 201-209. With special emphasis on synagogal forms of organization and appertaining offices, cf. Burtchaell, *Synagogue*, p. 272-329.

[21] Cf. in general e.g. Roloff, *Kirche*, p. 132-143.

initially of the Church of Antioch where he also learned this trade)[22] Paul fulfilled a distinctive ministry in early Christianity. Quite apart from his specific vocation to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles, in terms of ministry of leadership, the two elements that stand out are that he (co-)founded new communities and exercised an enduring, supra local ministry of oversight over them (or at least claimed this). Second, this office of "apostle" seems to have disappeared in the generation following Paul; this kind of ministry was looked back upon as belonging to a golden age,[23] but it left a vacuum in terms of oversight.

3.2 Offices in "Pauline Christianity"[24]

In Paul's letters a number of officers appear either because they are mentioned in greetings in which Paul uses titles, or because Paul says something about the inner organization of a community, or because people act as officers and are described as doing so.

A central text is in this respect 1 Cor. 12:28, where Paul offers a brief and catalogue of offices: Καὶ οὓς μὲν ἔθετο ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρῶτον ἀποστόλους, δεύτερον προφήτας, τρίτον διδασκάλους, ἔπειτα δυνάμεις, ἔπειτα χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων, ἀντιλήμψεις, κυβερνήσεις, γένη γλωσσῶν. When taking one's starting point here, a distinction can be made between offices that offices that are most directly related to proclamation (prophets, teachers, for the latter, cf. also Gal. 6:6, Rom. 12:7), while others are more related to leadership in general and others, that fulfill different functions within the community (those doing deeds of power, healing, speaking in tongues). The offices of leadership that are mentioned include apostles, a missionary office exercised by Paul and other men and women,[25] and further, unspecified, offices of leadership.

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[22] Cf. e.g. Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, *Paul the Missionary* CBETh 34, Leuven, Peeters, 2003, esp. p. 177-202.

[23] Cf. e.g. Dietrich-Alex Koch, 'Die Entwicklung der Ämter in frühchristlichen Gemeinden Kleinasiens,' in: Schmeller/Ebner/Hoppe (eds.), *Ämtermodelle*, 166-206, esp. p. 174-177.

[24] Even if caution is in place when it comes to putting all of these letters and appertaining communities into the same category, see David Horrell, 'Pauline Churches or Early Christian Churches,' in Anatoly A. Alexeev/Christos Karakolis/Ulrich Luz (with Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr) (eds.), *Einheit der Kirche im Neuen Testament* WUNT I.218, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2008, p. 185-206.

[25] Cf. e.g. Tiwald, 'Entwicklungslinien,' p. 124-128, see also Marlis Gielen, 'Die Wah-

All these offices are seen by Paul as a self-explanatory part of the life of the Corinthian community. To a large extent, they are also part of Paul's own experience as a Christian;[26] in fact, it may be argued that Paul exercised most, if not all, of the ministries mentioned here. Therefore, one may assume some overlap between these various offices and ministries. All the same, Paul is adamant about the grounding of all these offices in the community and their orientation towards the community (cf. 1. Cor. 12-14). This brings one to a further point.

Apart from notes on officers in greetings, the main reason why Paul addresses the question of offices in his letters is because of issues concerning the coherence of the communities that he addresses. Paul does not seem to be concerned with introducing new offices, but rather presupposes them (cf. e.g. 1 Cor. 12:28, Phil. 1:1, and also in 1 Thess. 5:12, Rom. 12:6-8, 16:1-2) and comments on their functioning and their relationship to the community as a whole. This circumstance makes it difficult to establish with some precision what sort of "job description" came with any of the offices mentioned by Paul.[27]This is of significance for the topic at stake here, since, even if Paul typically views structures of ministry and authority as a gift of the spirit (cf. e.g. 1 Cor. 12, comp. 4:7, Rom. 12:3-8),[28] it becomes hard to say, for example, what the relationship

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rnehmung gemeindlicher Leitungsfunktionen durch Frauen im Spiegel der Paulus-briefe,' in Schmeller/Ebner/Hoppe (eds.), *Ämtermodelle*, p. 129-165, esp. p. 137-139.

[26] Cf. e.g. Roloff, *Kirche*, 140, see also Ulrich Luz, 'Paulus als Charismatiker und Mys-tiker,' in Traugott Holz, *Exegetische und theologische Studien*, Leipzig, Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2010, p. 75-93, esp. p. 75-79.84-88.

[27] When it comes to general characteristics of these offices and ministries, it may be re-tained with Roloff that four aspects are of importance. First, a linking back to the life of Jesus as a servant (see e.g. the tradition preserved in Mk 10:44) is of importance for the shape of ministry (cf. with reference to his apostolate e.g. 2 Cor. 3:7-9, 4:1, 5:18, 6:3, see also Rom. 11:13, for other ministries characterized as "diakonia" see e.g. 1 Cor. 12:5, 16:15, Rom. 12:7), which has both an aspect of imitation (cf. e.g. 1 Cor. 11:1, cf. 4:16, see further 1 Thess. 1:6) and a representation of (this aspect of) Christ vis-à-vis of the congregation (cf. e.g. Phil. 3:17, comp. 4:8-9). Second, the orienta-tion towards the Gospel as (justifying) event is of importance (cf. e.g. Rom. 1:1, see also the references to Paul's Christophany in 1 Cor. 15:9-11, comp. Phil. 3). Third, as already indicated, the orientation towards building up the community is of the essence of the ministry (cf. esp. 1 Cor. 14, see also chs. 12-13). Fourth, in Pauline ecclesiol-ogy, the ministry of leadership is, just as all other sorts of ministry, a gift of the Spirit (cf. e.g. 1 Cor. 12, comp. 4:7, Rom. 12:3-8). Cf. Roloff, *Kirche*, p. 132-139.

[28] Cf. Roloff, *Kirche*, p. 139.

is between the κυβερνήσεις of 1 Cor. 12:28 and, say, the ἐπίσκοποι mentioned in Phil. 1:1, or, when moving beyond the authentic Pauline letters, the ποιμένες of Eph. 4:11, and the πρεσβύτεροι of the pastoral epistles. It should be stressed, that when it comes to analyzing these concepts and offices, there is the danger of semantic fallacies, especially when etymology is used to get to the meaning of a concept in the setting of an early Christian community. Restraint should also be exercised with regard to the emphasis (or lack of it) that an author places on offices/officers; given that the letters that are the focus of this study are occasional writings, it might be too hasty a conclusion, for example, that an author that mentions fewer charismatic offices has a lesser interest in them; it may well be that they did not constitute an issue to write about (cf. e.g. the absence of charismatic offices in Phil.), i.e. the particular perspective and concerns of a writing should be taken into account.

Given Paul's main concern with regard to offices and ministries, however, namely their relation to the broader community, and even when allowing for overlap between offices as well as for the fact that one person might exercise more than one of them, it may be clear that a distinction can be made between offices that involve care for community leadership (such as those mentioned in the previous paragraph) and such that are concerned with things that happen within the community and build it up, such as healing, speaking in tongues and teaching. With this in mind, it may not be a stretch to consider that the framework of the community within which the more "charismatic" offices as well as the offices of teaching (incl. prophesy) is provided by the offices of leadership. In any case, the way in which Paul refers to the offices of teaching, prophesying and speaking in tongues seems to imply that they take place in meetings over which those exercising these ministries do not necessarily preside. Even though there has probably been overlap between "charismatic" and "institutional" ministries, there is some merit in suggesting that whereas prophets, visionaries, glossolalists and teachers provided the interpretation of tradition, those fulfilling "institutional" ministries provided the communal framework for this.[29]

Thus, the Pauline letters give one a picture of various kinds of ministry, some more "charismatic" in nature, and others more institutional. Paul presupposes both of these kinds of ministry, without telling much about

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[29] Burtchaell, *Synagogue*, p. 335-340.

the precise "job descriptions" that they involve, but outlining that both are gifts of the Spirit and that both need to fit into the fabric of the community and should further its unity and life. At the background of the offices as they existed in Greco-Roman voluntary associations, it is plausible to assume that the variety of offices of leadership that is mentioned by Paul was related to the same thing as the offices in these associations were for: to ensure the functioning and the coherence of early Christian communities, probably simply by providing the necessary structures and initiatives for this.

4. Officers and Offices in the Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Letters

In the Deutero-Pauline letters, officers and their offices take a considerable amount of place. They will be considered here now (given the paucity of pertinent utterances in 2 Thess., this letter will not be considered in-dependently here).

4.2. Colossians and Ephesians

In Col. and Eph.,[30] Paul appears as the (suffering and imprisoned) apostle to the nations, sharing with other apostles and prophets the insight that the inheritance of God's people is now also accessible to the Gentiles (Col. 1:24-29, Eph. 3:1-12). The unity and order of the community remain also in these later letters of central importance (cf. the general exhortations in Col. 3:1-17, Eph. 4:1-6 and the more specific one sin Col. 3:18-4:1, Eph. 5:21-6:9), albeit that often more the social order of a community is at the forefront - but cf. e.g. 1 Cor. 11:17-34 (!)) - than, for example, the ordering of charisms. The main exception to this rule is Eph. 4:7-16, where a kind of ecclesiological blueprint is given; strikingly ministerial structures are not mentioned elsewhere in Eph. and Col., only people that may assumed to fulfill a ministry of some kind (e.g. those mentioned in Col. 4:7-18, Eph. 6:21-24). The "ecclesiological blueprint" that was just mentioned, Eph. 4:7-18, builds up on the "charismatic" notion of ministry already found in Paul's letters, i.e. the character of ministry as a charism

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[30] Cf. in general e.g. Roloff, *Kirche*, p. 222-249, as well as Tiwald, 'Entwicklungslinien,' p. 114-120, Koch, 'Entwicklung,' p. 188-193.

and, probably more emphatically here than in the authentic Pauline letters, the orientation of the ministry towards the church and their function with regard to the unity of the church. Especially Eph. 4:11-12 is of relevance: 'The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (…).' (NRSV) The first two ministries, apostles and prophets, may well belong to the past already (cf. Eph. 2:20).[31] However, job descriptions are not given, except for the general point of the ministry "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ." Hence, again the impression remains that one has to do here with ministries that are seen as divine gifts and that are tied closely to the life of the community. It may well be that charismatic ministries (healing, speaking in tongues, prophecy) have moved into the background here, but there is no indication that the author of Eph. seeks to push them back actively.

4.3. The Pastoral Epistles

In the Pastoral Epistles,[32] ministry occurs in a number of ways that are relevant for our purposes, which results largely from the fact that they are cast as letters to leaders of local communities that "Paul" oversees. Though it is likely that the historical Paul did provide the communities that he founded with leadership, the way in which "Paul" addressed Timothy and Titus in the pastorals has a different ring to it than the way Paul addresses communities and their leaders in the authentic Pauline letters. Besides being letters to an individual leader (who is assumed to have a position of senior leadership in his community), "Paul" also "talks down" more to Timothy and Titus than he did in the authentic letters, notwithstanding his oftentimes harsh tone. Especially in 1 Tim. and in Tit., "Paul" dwells at length on the order of the community and the leadership that is involved.

In 1 Tim. to begin with, "Paul" presents first a section on the appropriate way for men and women to order their lives (2:8-15), on which a section on the community's leadership follows, specifically on the "bishop" and on "deacons" (3:1-13) does not mention the purpose of the ministry explicitly here, however, but mainly outlines qualities that leaders need to show. The

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[31] Cf. e.g. Tiwald, 'Entwikcklungslinien,' p. 113.
[32] Cf. in general e.g. Roloff, *Kirche*, p. 250-267.

"bishop's" role, as can be deduced from their qualities, is that of one that oversees and leads the entire household of God. Personal qualities and appropriate behavior is also mentioned in the exhortations that Timothy receives (4:12-5:2), even though his ("ordained," cf. 14) ministry seems to be one of teaching and exhortation mainly (v. 13). Equally, the rulings concerning widows (5:3-16) contains prescriptions and only to a limited extent indications of what these widows were supposed to be doing. The "elders" that are mentioned in 5:17-22 are only discussed from the perspective of their remuneration and the way disagreements with them should be handled. They may have a leading role in teaching, though (v. 18). With regard to the other ministers mentioned in 1 Tim., it may well be that that the elders constitute a group of senior leaders, of which both the ἐπίσκοπος and the διάκονος are specific variants.

In 2 Tim., "Paul" dwells at some length on the apostleship, noting his role as apostle and teacher (1:11) and Timothy's role as, presumably, a senior "ordained" (1:6) minister, whose ministry is mainly described in terms of witnessing to the Lord (1:8, see also 2:15) and faithfulness to Paul (idem), which is in substance repeated in 4:1-8. Besides leading people to salvation in general, neither the goal of the ministry nor its precise shape are defined here, however.

In Tit., "Paul" addresses structures of organization more directly than in 2 Tim. The tone is very similar to 1 Tim., Titus appears as Paul's authorized agent on Crete, where he is to concern himself with the organisation of churches and their leadership in various churches in the cities on the island. In the texts that describe senior ministers, i.e. "elders," resp. "bishops" - the words appear in a way that strongly suggest that they are largely synonymous[33] - and the office of a bishop (probably a

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[33] For detailed terminological considerations, which lead to conclusions akin to those drawn here, e.g. Joseph Ysebaert, *Die Amtsterminologie im Neuen Testament und in der alten Kirche*, Breda, Eureia, 1994, p. 60-123, esp. p. 122-123. Arguments such as that of Merkle, *Elder*, p. 23-65.157-161, claiming that we neither know what 'ἐπίσκοποι' did nor where they came from and also that 'presbyteros' and 'epis-kopos' denoted exactly the same office do not really answer the historical question of leadership structures (is one the imagine meetings without any leadership?) and it especially fails to address the question why, if these two offices were so clearly the same, two different terms are being used. Merkle, of course, gives away his own biases in his section on 'Implications for today', there presenting the mistaken alternative of a group of elders leading the church (presumably without any internal structure, leadership or presidency) and a single leader with sole authority.

supervising or presiding "elder") is again described as the one involves the management of the household of the Lord. The appropriate order for various groups in the communities on Crete is addressed as well in 2:1-10 and 3:1-8.

Thus, the Pastoral Epistles are concerned with questions of leadership and ministry, while the ministry of leadership is characterized by ordering the household of God, specifically through proclamation and also by a faithful relationship with Paul. A number of ministries of leadership ("bishops,""elders,""deacons") is mentioned, among which that of "elders" is striking, given that it is absent from the authentic Pauline epistles. The relationship between the three terms is not entirely clear; it seems likely, however, that a bishop is a senior, supervising, or presiding elder. Personal qualities of senior ministers are emphasized and the point of ministry in general seems to be the building up of the household of God. Ministerial gifts, at least as bestowed upon Titus and Timothy, are seen as charisms, though now the laying on of hands plays a role of importance as well.

5. Continuities and Discontinuities

When turning to the question of the development of ministry in early Christian communities, especially with regard to the developmental model implied by the notion of "early catholicism" a number of items can be retained.

First, one reason to be cautious with regard to any claims concerning the development of ministries of leadership in early Christian communities from Paul onwards, is that Paul or any of the other authors concerned provide hardly any clear job description of the officers that he mentions. This, of course, impacts claims to continuity as well, given that the starting point is not very clear.

Second, it should be taken into account that the Pauline, the Deutero-Pauline and the Pastoral Epistles address different situations and have different theological interests. This warns against expecting the same sort of information or even the same sort of perspective on questions of church leadership. I.e. it is well possible that all of these letters are talking about something very similar (viz. when it comes to structures of ministry of leadership), but from very distinct angles. It makes a difference, whether someone is concerned with the way, in which all gifts of the spirit are

integrated into the life of the community, the structures and offices of which are presupposed and largely regarded as unproblematic, as Paul does,[34] or whether one is concerned with the unity of the church and its maintenance, probably in the face of persecution, as is the case in the Deutero-Paulines, or whether one, as Paul, instructs "Timothy" (esp. in 1 Tim.) and "Titus" to organize the communities for which they have responsibility, probably in the face of threats of disunity. The information that they receive is oriented strongly towards the selection of candidates suitable for the offices involved. This is explicit in Tit. and seems to be implied by 1 Tim.

Third, the question of charisms must be addressed. As has become clear throughout the discussion of the Pauline, Deutero-Pauline and pastoral letters, there is little reason to view an opposition between charisms and ministries of leadership. In all three groups of texts, ministry of leadership is viewed as a particular kind of charism and, at least in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline letters, it is mentioned in the same breath as more "charismatic" ministries; given the particular focus of the pastoral letters, i.e. the "institutional" organization of communities, the absence of these ministries from these letters may well have to do with their focus (e.g. in Phil. also no "charismatic" ministries are mentioned either). In none of the letters considered, a clear stop is put to any kind of ministry. In fact, when looking at the broader picture, works like the Apocalypse of John show that more "charismatic" ministries did continue,[35] probably alongside or in the context of communities structured by more institutional kinds of leadership.

Fourth, with regard to the factual development in the ministry of leadership, when taking into account the different communicative situations and the complimentarily of "charismatic" and "hierarchical" ministries, one may note, on the basis of the available evidence, much continuity from

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[34] This goes against notions of a "sehr geringe Institutionalisierungsgrad" (by whose standards?) as Koch, 'Einmaligkeit,' p. 197, presupposes for Pauline (and related) communities. Even if the level of institutionalization may be relatively small compared to the burocracy of contemporary churches, it still seems to fit into the mold of first-century associations. Cf. also e.g. Merkle, *Elder*, p. 90. See for earlier considerations and a broader perspective e.g. Ulrich Luz, 'Charisma und Institution in neutestamentlicher Sicht,' *EvTh* 49 (1989), p. 76-94.

[35] For the development of early Christian prophecy, cf. e.g. Ulrich Luz, 'Stages of Early Christian Prophetism,' *Sacra Scripta* 5 (2007), p. 45-62.

the Pauline letters to the pastoral epistles. Two remarks may clarify this. A) When reviewing the available evidence from the Pauline, Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles, a fairly consistent pattern emerges, consisting at the level of the local congregation of group of leaders with various responsibilities and charisms, presumably with one minister presiding over the all of them,[36] combined, with, at least from the perspective of Paul and the authors of the Deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles, a kind of supra-local ministry of supervision. At the level of the local congregation, (a) senior leader (s) seems to fulfill a role that approximates that of the leader of a household, quite literally at the level of early Christian house-churches, and even quite explicitly in the pastoral letters. B) The remarks about the ministry of leadership that appear in the texts considered here can without much problems be related to contemporary structures of leadership as they existed in Greco-Roman voluntary societies, including synagogues, in the first century and afterwards without letting them stand out as particularly hierarchical. At this background, there is little reason to see a clear "catholization" or "institutionalization" of the early Christian understanding of ministry. It should also be underlined that according to the sources considered here, both "charismatic" and "institutional" ministries were in need of authentification, i.e. prophecy and speaking in tongue was subjected to a process of evaluation as was the person that exercised (or was to exercise) an "institutional" ministry.[37] In fact, one may well agree with Tiwald:

> 'Historisch gesehen gibt es hier also weder das völlig freie Cha-
> risma noch eine rein starre Institution, während umgekehrt auch
> die Institution immer weiter noch im Fließen und im Werden
> begriffen ist. Das bedeutet: Charisma und Institution stehen
> nicht in einem einander ausschließenden Spannungsverhältnis,

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[36] Both from a sociological point of view and given the context of common forms of group organization in the first century, it may well be speculated at the background of the structure of Greco-Roman voluntary associations (including synagogues) that a circle of leaders would have an internal leader as well Cf. for e.g. Burtchaell, *Synagogue*, p. 306-312. Comp. also Koch, 'Einmaligkeit.'

[37] The general rule established by Söding, *Jesus*, 272, holds true for all kinds of ministry: 'Auch heute gilt die Erfahrung, die in der Antike gewonnen ist: dass angesichts konkurrierender Religionen und Weltanschauungen nicht die Behauptung formaler, sondern allein die Demonstration materialer, überprüfter und bewährter Autorität zählt. Das heißt im Falle der Kirche: die Autorität dessen, auf den sie sich beruft.'

> sondern in einer polaren Aufeinander-Bezogenheit: sie sind die beiden Brennpunkte, in deren elliptischen Schwerefeld sich ur-kirchliches Leben bewegt.'[38]

Fifth, there seems to be one significant discontinuity between especially the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline and the Pastoral Epistles. This difference concerns not so much the structure of the ministry per se, but rather the scale at which ministry of leadership is organized. The pastoral letters seem to be concerned with the organization of ministries of leadership at a regional level in a way that neither the Pauline nor the Deutero-Pauline letters are. To be sure, the ministry of Paul as it is described in these two sets of letters also has a "supra-local" character, but it does not give the impression of setting up structures at a regional level the way "Paul" instructs Titus to do in Tit. 1:5-16. The reason for setting up these structures is perspicuous: maintaining and furthering coherence within and among the various Christian communities involved; apparently both the scale of the communities and the desires to remain in close contact with each other gave rise to such developments. There is little indication of other factors in play. Such coherence and its furthering were anything but unusual among voluntary associations in the Mediterranean world. In particular, one may point to other cultic associations.[39] Read at this background, it seems that development that one can see in terms of the ministry of leadership in the Pauline, deutero-Pauline and Pastoral Epistles has to do with difference in scale and the importance of supra-local coherence. A consequence of this development, as it can be seen in the Pastoral Epistles, is that an emphasis on similarity in ministerial structures and even their regional coordination comes into being.[40]

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[38] Tiwald, 'Entwicklungslinien,' p. 109.

[39] Two stand out as examples here. First, early Jewish synagogues showed a common orientation towards Jerusalem and a relatively standardized form of self-organization. That there was communication and exchange between synagogues as such and es-pecially between these and the religious centre of Jerusalem is well-known. Another example would be Mithraic associations, which had, in as far as this may be deduced from archaeological finds, also a high degree of organizational coherence and unifor-mity, while contact between the various associations involved may well be assumed. Cf. Roger Beck, 'The Mysteries of Mithras,' in Kloppenborg/Wilson (eds.), *Associa-tions*, p. 176-185.

[40] With Koch, 'Einmaligkeit,' p. 210, one may surmise the following: 'War das Apos-telamt das charakteristische Merkmal der Gründungsphase des frühen Christentums, so ist die Ausbildung des Amtes des *episkopos* die Antwort der dritten Generation auf

As Burtchaell has it 'it was the need of the churches, and the turn of the events, rather than the pedigree or charism of the office, which provoked the change. The new overseers were made by the church, rather than the other way around.'[41]

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die Probleme, mit denen sie konfrontiert war: Dieses Episkopenamt bringt die Einheit der Gemeinde nicht nur zum Ausdruck, sondern soll sie aller erst sichern.'

[41] Burtchaell, *Synagogue*, 312.