

UNITY, MYSTERY, AND TRANSFORMATION: READING EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS IN DIALOGUE WITH HANS KLEIN'S BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

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Abstract. This study examines the evolution of Pauline theology in the transition from the first Christian generation (Homologoumena) to the second (Deuteropauline), focusing on the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians. Employing the methodological framework proposed by Hans Klein in *Entwicklungslinien im Corpus Paulinum*, the study analyzes how the apostolic Tradition was reshaped by the Situation of ecclesiological consolidation and the delay of the Parousia.

The study identifies three major lines of development (Entwicklungslinien). First, in Soteriology, it demonstrates a shift from the Pauline concept of “new life” as an ethical possibility to be realized, to a vision of salvation as a sacramentally present reality (“seated in the heavenly places”), where the terminology of “Justification” is replaced by that of “Salvation” (Soteria) as a fact accomplished by grace. Second, in Christology and Ecclesiology, the analysis reveals a transition from a functional Christology to a cosmic one, in which Christ is the Head who rules over the universal powers, and the Church becomes His “Fullness” (Pleroma), integrating social structures (Haustafeln) to ensure historical stability. Third, the concept of Kerygma evolves from “dynamic power” to “doctrine” and “truth,” with faith becoming loyalty to a deposit of teaching (fides quae creditur).

Methodologically, the study validates these observations through an analysis of the alternation of personal pronouns (Wir / Ihr), demonstrating that the Deuteropauline authors use the “We” style to mark the objective confession of salvation history and the “You” style for its parenetic application. The study concludes that these transformations do not represent a distortion, but rather a necessary adaptation of Pauline theology to ensure the survival and unity of the Church as a universal historical entity.

Keywords: Hans Klein, Deuteropauline, Tradition and Situation, Soteriology, Pleroma, Haustafeln, Wir-Stil/Ihr-Stil.

1. Introduction

1.1. Methodological Premises: Tradition and Situation in Biblical Theology

The present study aims to examine the theological mutations that occurred in the transition from the first Christian generation (represented by the Pauline *Homologoumena*) to the second generation (represented by the *Deuteropauline* or *Antilegomena*, specifically the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians).¹

The methodological foundation of this work is based on the central thesis of the exegete Hans Klein, according to which any Christian theology rests on two essential pillars: *Tradition* and *Situation*.² Klein argues that, while tradition focuses on faith in God and on the fundamental experience of the resurrection of Jesus, it is the historical and communal situation that reshapes this tradition. If in times of stability tradition predominates, in periods of major historical change, the situation demands a re-adaptation of the theological message.

The Apostle Paul, as a missionary, adapted the received tradition for each specific situation, thus varying the message in his authentic epistles. However, Klein observes that in the following generation, that of the *Deuteropauline* letters, the lines of development (*Entwicklungslinien*) become much more evident: a consolidation of the Church occurs, and the Pauline tradition begins to crystallize

¹ The present study operates with the standard methodological distinction between *Homologoumena* and *Antilegomena* (*Deuteropauline*), following the framework proposed by Hans Klein. It should be noted, however, that the question of Pauline authenticity of the Epistle to the Colossians remains open in current scholarship. While in Western critical exegesis the majority position favors pseudepigraphy (represented by authors such as E. Lohse, E. Schweizer, A. Lindemann), there are also voices that argue for Pauline authenticity, such as James D.G. Dunn in his commentary in the NIGTC series (*The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 1996). In the Romanian Orthodox academic sphere, the school of New Testament exegesis at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Cluj-Napoca, represented by Rev. Prof. Dr. Stelian Tofană, Professor Emeritus, Archd. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nicolae Olimpiu Benea, and Lect. Dr. Ovidiu Neacșu, maintains the Pauline authenticity of Colossians, considering that the theological and stylistic differences can be explained by the evolution of the apostle's thought and by the specific nature of the situation addressed. The present analysis of "lines of development" does not necessarily presuppose pseudepigraphy, but can also be read as a mapping of the internal evolution of Pauline theology in different missionary contexts.

² H. KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien im Corpus Paulinum und weitere Studien zu Paulustexten* (FRLANT 265), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 2016, 5 (Vorwort). In the preface to the volume, the author establishes the hermeneutical premise of his studies, affirming that theology rests on two fundamental pillars: tradition and situation ("Die beiden Säulen jedweder Theologie sind Tradition und Situation"). Klein argues that theology is not a static entity, but a dynamic process in which the historical context actively intervenes upon the religious heritage, reshaping it: "The situation transformed the Tradition" ("Die Situation prägte die Tradition um"). Thus, Christian theology must be adapted in each generation to remain relevant to new historical realities ("angesichts jeder neuen Situation adaptiert wird und werden muss").

into “sound teaching” (*gesunde Lehre*), a new fixed tradition that permits variations only within certain limits.³

1.2. The Objective of the Study: Mapping the Lines of Development

The objective of this research is to trace these lines of development in the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians, demonstrating how the situation of ecclesiological consolidation and the delay of the Parousia transformed Pauline theology along three major axes, defined in the title of the work:⁴

1. *Transformation* (Soteriology and Anthropology): We will analyze the transition from the Pauline concept of “new life” as a possibility to be realized through obedience, to the Deuteropauline vision of new life as a reality already present through Baptism.⁵ Klein demonstrates that, while for Paul salvation is an

³ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 6. Continuing the analysis of the relationship between tradition and situation, Klein notes that the lines of theological development are visible already in the authentic Pauline writings (*unumstrittenen Schriften*). However, in the following generation, marked by the necessity of consolidating the Church, the fluidity of Pauline theology undergoes a mutation: in the Pastoral Epistles, the Pauline tradition is already crystallized in the form of “sound teaching” (“zur ‚gesunden Lehre‘ gefestigt”), becoming a new rigid tradition that permits variations only within restricted limits (“nur noch innerhalb gewisser Grenzen variiert werden kann”).

⁴ The order of the three objectives in this section (Transformation, Unity, Mystery) is reversed compared to the title (Unity, Mystery, and Transformation). This inversion reflects the methodological logic of the study: while the title follows a rhetorical and synthetic order – moving from the visible ecclesial reality (Unity) through its theological foundation (Mystery) to its soteriological effect (Transformation) – the analytical exposition proceeds genetically, beginning with the anthropological-soteriological transformation of the individual believer, then moving to the ecclesiological and Christological structures that frame this transformation, and finally arriving at the kerygmatic and doctrinal consolidation that transmits and preserves the Mystery. In other words, the title presents the theological telos, while the exposition traces the historical and conceptual genesis.

⁵ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 41–43. Analyzing Deuteropauline theology (Sections 1.2.2 and 1.2.3), Klein differentiates the eschatological nuances between the two epistles. In the case of Colossians, new life is a present reality inaugurated through baptism (“Das neue Leben ist für den Kol bereits mit der Taufe gekommen und ist damit Gegenwart”), although full salvation remains a “hoped-for good” (*Hoffnungsgut*), hidden with Christ in God. In Ephesians, the perspective becomes even more radical, with believers being described as already spiritually raised and spatially transferred into the heavenly sphere (“mit Christus geistlich auferstanden, ja sogar in die Himmelshöhen entrückt sind”). Orthodox theology of Baptism offers a complementary interpretive framework. Dumitru Stăniloae emphasizes that Baptism is not a mere “symbolization” of death and resurrection, but a real participation in the paschal event: through immersion in water, the catechumen effectively dies to the old self and is born to a new, ontologically transformed life. This “realized eschatology” in Colossians and Ephesians thus corresponds to the Orthodox liturgical intuition, in which Baptism is the “personal Pascha” of each believer (D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă* [Orthodox Dogmatic Theology], vol. 3, EIBMO, Bucharest, 1997, 45–55). This perspective explains why the Deuteropauline authors can affirm that believers are “already raised”: this is not a metaphor, but a sacramental reality. However, in an earlier study I have shown that the Apostle Paul does not define

eschatological hope, for Ephesians Christians are already “raised and seated in the heavenly places,” and the concept of “Justification” (*Rechtfertigung*) is gradually replaced by that of “Salvation” (*Heil/Rettung*).⁶

2. *Unity* (Ecclesiology and Christology): The study will explore how Paul's functional Christology evolves into a cosmic Christology in Colossians and Ephesians. Christ becomes the Head of the Body (the Church), which is His “fullness” (*Pleroma*).⁷ This cosmic unity is reflected in the social structure of the

these future goods already present as fully realized: believers still need humility, forbearance, and forgiveness (Col 3:12–14), and the exhortation to vigilance in Col 4:2 (“keeping alert”) evokes the logion about the Parousia in Mark 13:37. We can thus speak of an “eschatology that makes us live in humility and vigilance” (N. O. BENEĂ, *Epistola către Coloseni. Isagogie, comentariu și teologie* [The Epistle to the Colossians: Isagogy, Commentary and Theology], Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2018, 429–431).

⁶ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 177–179. A fundamental terminological and theological mutation emerges in the Deuteropauline letters (Section 6.3): the specifically Pauline concept of *Gerechtigkeit* (righteousness/justification) disappears or changes its meaning, being replaced by *Heil/Rettung* (Salvation). Klein emphasizes that Colossians mentions “neither the righteousness of God, nor the righteousness from faith” (“redet weder von der δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ noch von der δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως”), while in Ephesians, the emphasis falls on salvation as a reality already present through grace (“aus Gnaden seid ihr gerettet”), experienced as a spiritual good within the community. This observation must be nuanced through the “New Perspective on Paul.” J.D.G. Dunn argues that in Colossians we do not witness an abandonment of Pauline soteriology, but a recontextualization of it: the image of the “circumcision of Christ” (Col 2:11) and “stripping off the body of the flesh” take over the soteriological function of justification, shifting the emphasis from the forensic category to the participatory one (DUNN, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 152–157). In an earlier analysis I emphasized that “the dispute with the Colossian ‘philosophy’ provides the occasion for revealing an original affirmation of Pauline Christology. The Epistle to the Colossians did not adopt the dogmatic argument of justification expressed in the epistles to the Galatians and Romans, but focused on the spatial and participatory aspect of the thought of the Holy Apostle Paul,” the preposition ἐν αὐτῷ being found 15 times in the epistle, and σῶμα eight times (BENEĂ, *Epistola către Coloseni*, 416). From an Orthodox perspective, this mutation can be interpreted not as a loss, but as a deepening: the transition from the juridical register (δικαιοσύνη) to the ontological-participatory one (σωτηρία) corresponds to the logic of deification (θέωσις), in which salvation is not merely declarative forgiveness, but real transformation of human nature through union with Christ (cf. D. STĂNILĂOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă* [Orthodox Dogmatic Theology], vol. 2, EIBMO, Bucharest, 1997, 234–240). This perspective is confirmed by Klein’s own broader understanding of righteousness as relational behavior rather than abstract status. In his study “Dreptate și comportament” [Righteousness and Behavior], Klein affirms: “By ‘righteousness,’ in the linguistic world of the Bible, is meant a behavior, that is, one which corresponds to the expectations of people who await help and salvation from God. The righteousness of God is always saving action, because man expects help and salvation from God” (H. KLEIN, “Dreptate și comportament,” in *Dreptate și comportament. Cercetări biblice*, ed. I. BRIE, C. OANCEA, Astra Museum, Sibiu, 2015, 9–20).

⁷ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 102; 104. The Christological analysis of the Deuteropauline letters (Section 3.3) reveals the way in which the author of Colossians adopts and comments on the hymn in 1:15–20. Klein emphasizes that the decisive intervention consists in the ecclesiological specification in verse 18: “As a remarkable addition, in v. 18 the addition of ‘the Church’ to

Church, which integrates the domestic hierarchies (*Haustafeln*) into the order of salvation.

3. *Mystery* (Kerygma and Faith): We will investigate the mutation of the concept of Gospel from “dynamic power” (*Kraft*) to “truth” and “doctrine” (*Lehre*).⁸ The “Mystery” (*Mysterion*) is no longer a hidden apocalyptic plan, but the content of revelation accessible in the Church, and faith becomes an objective quantity that must be preserved (*fides quae creditur*).⁹

‘Head’ proves [significant]” (“Als herausragende Ergänzung erweist sich in V. 18 die Hinzufügung von ‚die Gemeinde‘ (Kirche) zu ‚Haupt‘”). Regarding Ephesians (p. 104), Klein cites the definition in 1:23, describing the Church as “his body, the fullness (*πλήρωμα*) of him who fills all in all” (“Sie ist sein Leib, die Fülle (*πλήρωμα*) dessen, der alles in allem erfüllt”). R. Schnackenburg, in the Excursus dedicated to *πλήρωμα*, distinguishes three possible interpretations: (a) the Church as passive receptacle of divine fullness; (b) the Church as active agent that “completes” Christ; (c) *πλήρωμα* as a designation of Christ Himself, Who fills the Church. Schnackenburg opts for the first variant, emphasizing that the Church is permeated by Christ’s presence, not that it ontologically completes Him (R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Der Brief an die Epheser*, EKK X, Benziger–Neukirchener, Zürich–Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1982, 78–80). In an earlier analysis I showed that through the repetition of τὰ πάντα (1:15, 16a, 16f, 17a, 17b, 18c, 19, 20a) in the Christological hymn, the Holy Apostle Paul “understands that the entire creation must be seen and conceived as the Body of Christ, which is His Church, understood as an expression of the indissoluble unity between creature and Creator,” the constitution of the world being thus ecclesial (BENEA, *Epistola către Coloseni*, 414). St. Maximus the Confessor confirms this perspective, affirming that “the Holy Church is an icon of God [...] as one that accomplishes the same union as God between the faithful,” and “the totality of things brought into existence by God through creation [...] is like another church of God, not made by hands” (St. Maximus the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, PG 91, 657–718, trans. D. STĂNILOAE, EIBMBOR, Bucharest, 2000, 7–8). From the perspective of Orthodox theology, *πλήρωμα* resonates with Eucharistic ecclesiology: the Church is the “fullness” of Christ insofar as, through the Eucharist, it becomes His real, not metaphoric, Body, participating in the life of the Trinity (cf. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, 2, 18–25). J. Behr offers a patristic reading of this concept, connecting it with the theme of “recapitulation” (*ἀνακεφαλαίωσις*) in Irenaeus of Lyon: Christ, as Head, recapitulates in Himself all humanity and the entire cosmos, and the Church is the place where this recapitulation becomes visible and operative. *Πλήρωμα* is thus not a static category, but the dynamic by which creation is reintegrated into God through Christ (J. BEHR, *The Mystery of Christ: Life in Death*, St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 2006, 95–102).

⁸ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 130. A fundamental mutation appears in the concept of Gospel in Colossians (Section 4.2.2) compared to the authentic Pauline epistles: a transition is observed from the understanding of the Gospel as dynamic power (*Machtcharakter*) toward its didactic and content aspect (“Verschiebung vom Machtcharakter auf die Lehre, seinen Inhalt”). The Gospel is defined objectively as “the word of truth” (*Wort der Wahrheit*), becoming a fixed doctrinal entity that must be “heard,” “learned,” and “known” (*ἐπιγινώσκειν*), not merely a power that saves through its simple proclamation.

⁹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 151–152. The concept of faith undergoes a significant mutation in the Deuteropauline letters (Sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3). Klein notes that in Colossians the verb “to believe” (*πιστεύειν*) is completely absent, faith being transformed into a state of stability in what has been taught; the Gospel accepted thus becomes a “fixed confession or already a doctrine”

1.3. Exegetical Instrumentation: The Analysis of Personal Pronouns (Wir / Ihr)

To validate these hypotheses, the study will apply a specific instrument from Klein's methodology: the analysis of the alternation of personal pronouns (first person plural – “We” and second person plural – “You”). This stylistic technique is not random in the *Corpus Paulinum*, but marks a fundamental theological distinction between *Confession* (*Bekennntnis* – expressed through “We,” referring to the objective facts of salvation) and *Promise/Application* (*Zusage* – expressed through “You,” referring to the concrete situation of the readers).¹⁰ This distinction will allow us to separate the pre-existing liturgical tradition from the specific theological interpretation of the Deuteropauline authors.

Through this endeavor, the work aims to offer a coherent perspective on how Pauline theology was received, transformed, and stabilized to ensure the survival and unity of the Church in a world where the imminent end was no longer the only horizon of expectation.

2. Transformation: From Possibility to Spiritual Reality

2.1. The Dynamics of “New Life” in the *Homologoumena*: The Tension between Indicative and Imperative

To understand the theological mutation in the *Deuteropauline* letters, it is imperative to establish the starting point in authentic Pauline theology (*Homologoumena*). Hans Klein demonstrates that for the Apostle Paul, “new life” (*neues Leben*) is not a static possession automatically guaranteed through ritual, but a “*Voraus-Manifestation*” (pre-manifestation) of the future *καινή κτίσις* (new creation),¹¹ an eschatological possibility opened by God that must be continually realized in the believer's existence.

(“zum festen Bekenntnis oder bereits zur Lehre geworden”). Similarly, in Ephesians, faith is no longer merely the subjective act of trust, but is described as a “fixed quantity” (“eine feststehende Größe”), an objective entity that unites the community.

¹⁰ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 298. The theological function of personal pronouns is systematized in the conclusions of Section 12.3: the “we” style (*Wir-Stil*) is used when the apostle describes the saving act (*Heilstat*) of God in favor of Christians, thus transforming the message into confession (“Dann wird die Botschaft zum Bekenntnis”). Statements in the second person plural (“you,” *Ihr-Aussagen*) always derive from proclamation (*Verkündigung*), taking the form of a promise (*Zuspruch*) or a parenthesis (*Ermahnung*). This functional structure summarizes the earlier analyses of Deuteropauline texts, such as Col 1:12–14 and Eph 2:1–10.

¹¹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 23. Opening the analysis on the presence of new life in Pauline theology, Klein adopts a formulation from H. BINDER (*Der Glaube bei Paulus*). The death of Christ on the cross inaugurated a new cosmic situation (“neue Weltsituation”), which allows believers an “anticipated manifestation of the future *καινή κτίσις* [new creation]” (“eine Voraus-Manifestation

The grammatical analysis of the text in Romans 6:1–14 reveals a clear distinction between the destiny of Christ and that of the believer. While it is affirmed in the present tense that Christ “lives” (Rom 6:10), the statements about the life of believers are in the future tense: “we will also live with him” (Rom 6:8).¹² The present reality of the believer is defined by “knowing,” “considering,” and “believing.” This knowledge is not mere information, but an interior processing of the reality of death to sin, which must be translated into the concrete act of “walking in newness of life” (*in der Neuheit des Lebens wandeln*, Rom 6:4), which means “living for God.”¹³

Thus, for Paul, “new life” is a possibility offered by God: the only factual reality for the believer is the state of being dead to sin.¹⁴ This liberation becomes factual reality only insofar as the believer places oneself at God’s disposal, in the fulfillment of the concrete Christian deed.¹⁵ Although in 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul

der zukünftigen καινή κρίσις”). This “new situation” constitutes the premise for understanding how future life becomes present in Christian existence.

¹² KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 24. The exegetical analysis of Romans 6 identifies a fundamental temporal distinction in Pauline soteriology. For the Christian, only death is attested as a *factum* already accomplished, expressed through past tenses (“Dem Christen hingegen wird nur der Tod als Faktum bescheinigt”). In contrast, statements regarding participation in new life are consistently formulated in the future tense (“Hingegen erfolgen die Aussagen über das neue Leben der Christen in der Futurform”). This grammatical structure underscores that the believer finds himself in an intermediate state, characterized by “knowing,” “recognizing,” and “believing” in the eschatological reality toward which he is heading, in contrast to Christ, who already possesses new life as a present reality.

¹³ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 25. Interpreting the Pauline imperative in Romans 6, Klein defines the expression “to walk in newness of life” (*in der Neuheit des Lebens wandeln*) as equivalent to “living for God” (“für Gott leben,” v. 11). The author highlights an essential distinction between Christ and the believer: while Christ is already fully in the new life (“Christus ist bereits im neuen Leben”), the Christian does not yet possess this eschatological reality, but is called to walk toward it (“der Christ aber in diesem neuen Leben noch nicht ist, wohl aber gerufen wurde ‚in der Neuheit des Lebens‘ zu wandeln”). Thus, the present reality of the Christian consists in considering oneself dead to sin and placing oneself at God’s disposal, living “as if” one were alive from the dead.

¹⁴ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 25. A fundamental distinction in Pauline soteriology emerges: while Christ already possesses new life, for the believer the only fact already accomplished and certified is death to sin (“Tatsache für den Christen ist nur sein Gestorbensein von der Sünde”). This reality opens a new perspective, yet new life remains an eschatological goal. The Christian imperative is to move toward this future through behavior: “But he must walk toward this new future” (“Aber er muss auf diese neue Zukunft noch zugehen (wandeln)”). “To walk in newness of life” means living for God, behaving as if one were alive from the dead, although the fullness of life is still awaited.

¹⁵ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 26. Continuing the exegesis on chapter 6 of Romans, Klein nuances the reality of “new life.” The author affirms that, although new life is inaugurated through baptism—in the sense that the believer has died to sin and has been liberated from its power—it does not constitute a static reality of which one can dispose at will (“nicht eine Realität, die man

proclaims that “if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation,” Klein emphasizes the conditional, cautiously formulated character of this statement.¹⁶ “To be in Christ” means to enter into His sphere of salvation and to remain under His lordship.¹⁷ The transformation is tangible only negatively, as a death of the old self.¹⁸

2.2. Colossians: Sacramental Realism and Life as “Hoped-for Good” (*Hoffnungsgut*)

The transition to the Epistle to the Colossians marks a paradigm shift caused by the stabilization of the church and the diminution of imminent eschatological tension. Klein observes that the exact Pauline expression “new life” is absent from all the *Deuteropauline* letters,¹⁹ being replaced by an ontology of salvation already accomplished through Baptism.

in die eigene Hand nehmen kann”). This new life becomes a state of fact (*Tatsache*) only insofar as it is actualized through behavior: “It becomes a fact only in the fulfillment of the practical Christian deed, in Christian conduct” (“Es wird aber zur Tatsache erst im Vollzug der praktischen christlichen Tat, im christlichen Wandel”). Thus, new life is defined dynamically, as a passage from the possibility offered by God to the reality lived through obedience.

- ¹⁶ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 31. An important nuance appears in the proclamation of the “new creation” in 2 Cor 5:17. Paul does not use a direct and unconditional formulation (such as “you are new people”), but introduces the phrase with a conjunction (“dass der Satz mit einer Konjunktion eingeleitet wird”). The statement thus becomes cautious and conditional: “Cautiously it is stated: He is a new creation who is in Christ” (“Vorsichtig wird ausgesagt: Der ist eine neue Schöpfung, der in Christus ist”). This theological caution highlights that the new creation is a reality only insofar as the believer finds himself and remains in the sphere of Christ’s influence.
- ¹⁷ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 32. The exegesis of 2 Cor 5:14–17 offers a synthetic definition of the Pauline formula “to be in Christ” (*in Christus sein*). This expression encompasses two inseparable dimensions: one sacramental, connected to baptism (cf. Gal 3:27), and one ethical, connected to service (cf. 2 Cor 5:15). Klein defines: “‘To be in Christ’ means to enter into His sphere of salvation and to remain under His lordship” (“In Christus sein”, bedeutet, in seinen Heilsbereich eintreten und unter seiner Herrschaft bleiben”). The new creation becomes a concrete reality only insofar as the believer remains in Christ’s sphere of influence and lives in His service.
- ¹⁸ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 38. The theological synthesis regarding the relationship between presence and future of new life (Section 1.1.5) formulates an essential conclusion about the paradoxical character of Christian existence in Paul. Although new life is a real possibility opened by God and sustained by the Spirit’s presence, it is not a reality of which the Christian can assure himself in a visible way: “Tangible is the new life therefore always only negatively, as a dying of the old self” (“Greifbar ist das neue Leben darum immer nur negativ als ein Sterben des alten Menschen”). This negative tangibility manifests through the refusal of the desires of the flesh, through co-crucifixion with Christ, and through an existence lived in weakness, while the positive fullness of life remains an eschatological good toward which the believer continually reaches.
- ¹⁹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 40. Introducing the analysis of the Deuteropauline epistles (Section 1.2), Klein observes a terminological and theological discontinuity compared to the authentic epistles. The author notes that “in all the Deuteropauline letters the expression ‘new life’ is

In Colossians, transformation is conceived as already present in principle (*im Ansatz da*) from the moment of Baptism. However, the author maintains an eschatological reserve: the fullness of salvation is a “hoped-for good” (*Hoffnungsgut*) toward which believers still reach.²⁰ This is based on the fact that, through faith, Christians have been raised together with Him in baptism.²¹

The Deuteropauline author modifies the Pauline syntax: if Paul used the ethical imperative (“put on Christ,” Rom 13:14), Colossians employs the aorist participle to affirm an accomplished fact: believers “have stripped off” the old self and “have clothed” themselves with the new.²² This new life is, for Colossians, already arrived with Baptism and is thus present.²³

absent, but also ‘new creation’” (“So fehlt in allen Deuteropaulinen der Ausdruck ‚neues Leben‘, aber auch ‚neue Schöpfung’”), as well as the concept of “newness of the Spirit.” This absence signals a paradigm shift in the second Christian generation: the Pauline tension of “daily renewal of the inner person” (2 Cor 4:16) disappears, and Christian life is redefined either through the lens of awaiting the parousia, or as a spiritual reality already present (spiritual resurrection in Col 2:12; Eph 2:6), or as a life lived in piety (*Frömmigkeit*).

- ²⁰ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 41. The eschatological tension specific to Colossians emerges clearly: although recipients have accepted the Gospel and are characterized by faith and love, full salvation is not yet a complete earthly possession, but an object of hope: “They still reach toward the hoped-for good, which is prepared in the heavens” (“sie strecken sich noch dem Hoffnungsgut entgegen, das in den Himmeln bereitliegt”). This “hope stored in the heavens” (cf. Col 1:5) constitutes the motivation and direction of present Christian life.
- ²¹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 41. The section on the salvation event (*Das Heilsgeschehen*) in Colossians identifies an accentuated shift toward realized eschatology: “With Him [Christ] Christians have risen in baptism through faith (2:12) [...] dead to the ‘elements of the world’” (“Mit ihm sind die Christen in der Taufe auferstanden im Glauben (2,12) [...] den ‚Elementen der Welt‘ abgestorben”). This resurrection through baptism is no longer presented merely as a possibility (as in Romans 6), but as a factual reality (*Tatsache*), from which the imperative to seek “the things that are above” (Col 3:1) follows.
- ²² KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 42. The parenthetic section in Col 3:5–17 reveals a significant stylistic and theological change: “it is stated in participial style in the aorist that the Colossians have stripped off the old self and have put on the new” (“ist hier im Partizipialstil im Aorist ausgesagt, dass die Kolosser den alten Menschen ausgezogen und den neuen angezogen haben”). This grammatical formulation indicates that ontological transformation is not merely an ethical imperative, but a reality already constituted in baptism, where the “new self” was created according to the image of the Creator (cf. Col 3:10), although this must be continually renewed toward knowledge.
- ²³ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 43. The conclusion of the analysis of Colossians synthesizes the specificity of its soteriology through the affirmation of the present character of salvation: “It can be said in summary: New life has already come for Colossians with baptism and is thus present” (“Das neue Leben ist für den Kol bereits mit der Taufe gekommen und ist damit Gegenwart”). Klein nuances this, emphasizing that new life remains at the same time a “hoped-for good” (*Hoffnungsgut*), embodied in Christ, which will manifest fully at His coming. Until that eschatological moment, Christian existence consists in the continual process of stripping off the “old self” and putting on the “new.”

2.3. Ephesians: The Radicalization of the Present Heavenly Reality

The Epistle to the Ephesians carries the lines of development (*Entwicklungslinien*) identified in Colossians to a radical conclusion. Here, sacramental realism reaches its apex: new life is no longer merely a possibility (Paul) or a hidden hoped-for good (Colossians), but a present and operative spiritual reality.

Klein emphasizes that the author of Ephesians affirms not only the spiritual resurrection of believers, but the fact that they are already “seated together in the heavenly places” (*in den Himmelshöhen*) with Christ.²⁴ The temporal contrast between “once” (*einst*) and “now” (*jetzt*) fundamentally structures the ecclesiology of the epistle.

In Ephesians, transformation has an accentuated corporate dimension. In this way a “new humanity” was created, the community formed from Gentiles and Jews.²⁵ The Christian’s struggle is no longer with the “flesh” in the Pauline sense (the interior struggle of the will), but a cosmic struggle; the fact that this “spiritual” life is not yet fully attained is shown by the instructions regarding putting on the armor of God.²⁶

²⁴ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 43. Turning to Ephesians, Klein notes an intensification of the concept of “presence of new life” compared to Colossians, especially in its spiritual aspect. Taking up and varying Pauline thought about death to sin (cf. Rom 6:3–8), the epistle’s author introduces an element of absolute novelty: recipients are reminded not only that they were dead in their sins, but that now they are “spiritually raised with Christ, indeed even transferred into the heavenly heights” (“mit Christus geistlich auferstanden, ja sogar in die Himmelshöhen entrückt sind”). This present exaltation (cf. Eph 2:5–6) defines the current status of the Christian.

²⁵ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 43. A corporate dimension of the concept of “new humanity” appears in Ephesian ecclesiology: through Christ’s work, “a ‘new humanity’ was created, the community from Gentiles and Jews (2:15)” (“Auf diese Weise wurde ein ‘neuer Mensch’, die Gemeinde aus Heiden und Juden (2,15) geschaffen”). This creation, which terminologically recalls 2 Cor 5:17, is defined as the Church that embodies Christ (“die Christus verkörpert”). The “new humanity” is not merely an individual anthropological category, but the fundamental structure of the Church’s unity, toward which believers must grow until they reach “the measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13).

²⁶ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 44 (Section 1.2.3.2). Klein nuances the concept of “new life” presented as heavenly reality in Ephesians: “How much this ‘spiritual’ life is not yet perfectly attained is shown by the instructions for putting on the armor of God” (“Wie sehr dieses ‚geistliche‘ Leben aber noch nicht vollkommen erreicht ist, zeigen die Anweisungen zum Anziehen der Waffenrüstung Gottes”). Although believers are presented as already raised with Christ, the necessity of armor (Eph 6:11, 14) and of a “hard spiritual conflict” indicates that perfect life is present *sub contrario aspectu*, being a reality that must be actively maintained against adverse powers.

2.4. The Soteriological Mutation: From Δικαιοσύνη to Σωτηρία (Salvation by Grace)

A central line of development identified by Klein is the disappearance of Pauline “justification” terminology in favor of the concept of “Salvation.” Righteousness (Justification) and Salvation are the central themes of soteriology in the *Corpus Paulinum*.²⁷ However, the discourse about the righteousness of God and justification by faith is found in this concentration only in Paul.²⁸

In Colossians, the terms specific to Pauline theology of the cross are absent: the author speaks neither of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ nor of δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως.²⁹

²⁷ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 158. Opening the chapter on Pauline soteriology, Klein establishes its fundamental coordinates: “Righteousness (Justification) and Salvation are the central themes of soteriology in the Corpus Paulinum” (“Gerechtigkeit (Rechtfertigung) und Heil sind die zentralen Themen der Soteriologie im Corpus Paulinum”). The interdependence of these concepts in Paul’s missionary theology is explained: the offer of salvation reveals God’s righteousness, and the acceptance of this message through faith confers upon the believer the status of one “justified” before God. This soteriological perspective undergoes evolution in the Deuteropauline writings, where the present experience of salvation in ecclesial life modifies the emphasis placed on the eschatological dimension of justification.

²⁸ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 158. The uniqueness of the Pauline theological profile is highlighted: “The discourse about the righteousness of God and about justification from faith are statements that are found in this concentration only in Paul” (“Die Rede von der Gerechtigkeit Gottes und von der Rechtfertigung aus Glauben sind Aussagen, die sich in dieser Konzentration nur bei Paulus finden”). This observation justifies the necessity of examining how these terms were understood in the Old Testament, Jewish, and Hellenistic milieu, in order to delimit the specificity of the novelty brought by Pauline theology.

²⁹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 178. The complete absence of classical Pauline terminology regarding justification characterizes Colossians (Section 6.3.2): “Colossians speaks neither of δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ [the righteousness of God], nor of δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως [righteousness from faith]” (“Der Kol redet weder von der δικαιοσύνη τοῦ θεοῦ noch von der δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως”). In place of the forensic concept of justification, salvation is presented spatially and participatively: “Christians are in Christ in the space of salvation” (“Die Christen sind in Christus im Raum des Heils”), being raised together with Him (Col 2:12; 3:1), a perspective that surpasses the Pauline rhetoric of Romans 6. J.D.G. Dunn nuances this absence, arguing that the soteriological function of justification is taken over by the image of the “circumcision of Christ” (Col 2:11): just as circumcision marked entry into the covenant, “stripping off the body of the flesh” marks entry into the new covenant through death and resurrection with Christ. The terminology changes, but the soteriological structure remains Pauline (DUNN, *Colossians*, 153–156). N.T. Wright goes further, suggesting that in Colossians we witness a “cosmicization” of justification: what in Romans was described in forensic terms becomes in Colossians a cosmic victory over the powers, and believers participate in this victory through baptism (N.T. WRIGHT, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2013, 1029–1035). In an earlier study I emphasized that Colossians “focused on the spatial and participatory aspect of the thought of the Holy Apostle Paul,” the preposition ἐν αὐτῷ being found 15 times in the epistle (BENEA, *Epistola cātre*

In Ephesians, the concept of salvation becomes dominant and is viewed retrospectively as an accomplished fact. Klein draws attention to the repeated formula: “by grace you have been saved” (χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι, Eph 2:5, 8), where the term χάρις appears.³⁰ This signals that salvation is a reality already experienced as a spiritual good within the community.

This line of development continues in the Pastoral Epistles. In the stylized text of Titus 3:4–7, the adoption and modification of the Pauline heritage can be easily identified.³¹ What is new here is the designation of God as “Savior” (*Retter*).³²

3. Unity: The Cosmic Christ and the Universal Church

3.1. Christ – Κεφαλή and Παντοκράτωρ: The Re-signification of the Hymn

In the Christological analysis, Hans Klein demonstrates how the *Deuteropauline* letters adopt the Pauline tradition but modify it to respond to a new ecclesiological and cosmological situation. If in the *Homologoumena* the emphasis fell on the

Coloseni, 416). This change of register does not represent an abandonment of Pauline soteriology, but a contextual adaptation to the challenge of the Colossian heresy.

³⁰ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 179. Ephesian soteriology (Section 6.3.3) reveals that the author does not use the term “righteousness” (*Gerechtigkeit*), specific to Paul. Instead, we encounter the doubly repeated slogan: “by grace you have been saved” (“aus Gnaden seid ihr gerettet,” Eph 2:5, 8), in which χάρις (grace) appears similarly to Rom 3:24, and σωτηρία (salvation) similarly to Rom 1:16. Continuity with Pauline theology appears through the emphasis on the gift of grace, with the mention “this is not from you” (Eph 2:8), taking up the fundamental Pauline idea: “not from works” (“nimmt einen paulinischen Gedanken auf: ‚nicht aus Werken“). What Paul designated by “justified,” the author of Ephesians expresses with other words, placing emphasis on salvation already accomplished through grace.

³¹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 180. The soteriology of the Pastoral Epistles (Section 6.3.4) is analyzed through Titus 3:4–7: “In the formulaically marked text of Titus 3:4–7, the adoption and modification of the Pauline heritage can be easily ascertained” (“In dem formelhaft geprägten Text Tit 3,4–7 lässt sich Übernahme und Veränderung des paulinischen Erbes leicht feststellen”). Continuity with Paul is visible in the connection between baptism (“the washing of regeneration”), the Holy Spirit, and justification through grace (cf. 1 Cor 6:11; Gal 4:6). However, change intervenes in the contrast with works: justification through faith is no longer opposed to “works of the Law” (as in Paul), but to “works of righteousness” (*Gerechtigkeitswerke*) proper to man, a concept betraying a Hellenistic understanding of righteousness as moral virtue.

³² KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 180. A significant terminological innovation characterizes the Pastoral Epistles: “New is the designation of God as ‘Savior’” (“Neu ist die Bezeichnung Gottes als ‘Retter’”). This title marks God as “Author of salvation” (“Gott wird als Urheber der Rettung [...] gekennzeichnet”), a conception which, although it has Old Testament resonances, seems more directly influenced by the Hellenistic language of the cult of sovereigns. God is the initiator who saves through “the washing of regeneration,” and salvation is concretely realized through Jesus Christ, through calling, and through baptism.

soteriology of the cross and the parousia, in Colossians and Ephesians a Christology of exaltation and present cosmic lordship develops.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, the author takes up a pre-existing Christological hymn (Col 1:15–20), which celebrated Christ as the “*Ebenbild*” (Image) of God and Mediator of creation. Klein observes a crucial editorial intervention by the epistle’s author: he completes the hymn by adding the specification that Christ is “the head of the body, the church” (Col 1:18).³³ This clarification changes the direction of the hymn: Christ is not only the head of the cosmos, but exercises His lordship over the cosmic powers (*Mächte und Gewalten*) through the Church. Thus a clear spatial distinction is established that was absent in Paul: the Head is in Heaven, and the Body (the Church) is on Earth, Christ being “the hope of glory” (Col 1:27).³⁴

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, this vision is amplified through the concept of *Pleroma* (Fullness). The Church is defined as “his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all” (Eph 1:23). Klein interprets this to mean that the Church participates in Christ’s fullness and is permeated by it.³⁵ Christology becomes the function of

³³ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 41. The soteriological foundations in Colossians reveal the way the epistle’s author adopts and adapts hymnographic tradition. Referring to the Christological hymn in Colossians 1, Klein notes: “This is said to the readers in the language of a preformed hymn, which the author completes with the note that Christ is ‘the Head of the body, the Church’ (1:18)” (“...den der Verfasser mit dem Vermerk ergänzt, dass Christus das ‚Haupt des Leibes, der Gemeinde‘ ist”). While the original hymn celebrated Christ as Head of the body in a cosmic sense (the Cosmos), the addition of “the Church” restricts and concretizes this lordship over the community of believers. This interpretation is reprised on p. 102, where the “body” of which Christ is Head is no longer the Cosmos, but the Church. Zs. Geréb confirms this interpretation, analyzing the hymn from the perspective of creation and redemption, emphasizing that the epistle author’s intervention upon the preformed hymn aims at anchoring cosmic Christology in concrete ecclesial reality (Zs. GERÉB, “Schöpfung und Erlösung im Christus-Hymnus des Kolosserbriefes (Kol 1,15–20),” in *Neutestamentliche Studien*, Cluj-Napoca: Az Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület Igazgatótanácsa, 2014, 104–122; previously published in *Sacra Scripta* 2010/1, 132–146).

³⁴ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 103; cf. 131. The Christology of Colossians is dominated by “the Christology of the Exalted One” (“Die Christologie des Erhöhten dominiert diese gesamte Schrift,” p. 103). The “mystery” of God, once hidden, is now revealed and defined as “Christ, the hope of glory” (“Christus, die Hoffnung der Herrlichkeit,” Col 1:27; p. 131). This hope is anchored in Christ’s presence in the Church as its Head (Col 1:18), and believers, whose life is now hidden in Him, have the certainty that they will be revealed together with Him “in glory” (Col 3:4; p. 103). Christ thus constitutes for the community the guarantee and content of eschatological hope.

³⁵ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 104. The Christology of Ephesians (Section 3.3.3) reveals how the epistle’s author synthesizes Pauline and Colossian motifs. Referring to Eph 1:23, Klein states: “It [the Church] is his body, the fullness (πλήρωμα) of him who fills all in all” (“Sie ist sein Leib, die Fülle (πλήρωμα) dessen, der alles in allem erfüllt”). This formulation, realized in hymnic language, takes up the concept of “fullness” from Colossians (1:19; 2:9), applying it ecclesialogically to designate the Church as the space in which Christ exercises His lordship and full presence. I have

ecclesiology: Christ was given by God as “head over all things” *for* the Church (Eph 1:22). Because Christ fills the entire cosmos (Eph 4:10), the Church is seen as an entity in becoming, growing toward the One who is the Head, in a process of organic maturation toward “the perfect man.”³⁶

3.2. Ecclesiology: From the Local Community to the *Gesamtkirche*

The theological development traced by Klein shows the transition from *Ekklesia* as a local assembly (in Paul) to the Universal Church (*Gesamtkirche*) in Ephesians and Colossians.

In Colossians, the term *Ekklesia* designates the Church in its totality, the mystical body of Christ, even though the author addresses a local community. Here, the Church is the space where “the peace of Christ” must rule in hearts (Col 3:15).³⁷

In Ephesians, unity becomes the central theme, but with a specific nuance: the reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles. Christ is “our peace,” the one who has broken down “the dividing wall” (Eph 2:14) and has abolished the Law with its

argued previously that in Col 2:9, the affirmation “in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (the divine *πλήρωμα* is now “somatic”) transforms the mystery of God into Christ: “Jesus Christ is not the occasion in which the mystery is revealed, but its authentic content” (BENEÀ, *Epistola către Coloseni*, 436). J. Behr offers a patristic reading of this concept, connecting it with “recapitulation” (*ἀνακεφαλαίωσις*) in Irenaeus of Lyon: Christ, as Head, recapitulates in Himself all humanity and the entire cosmos, and the Church is the place where this recapitulation becomes visible and operative. *Πλήρωμα* is not a static category, but the dynamic by which creation is reintegrated into God through Christ (J. BEHR, *The Mystery of Christ: Life in Death*, St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, Crestwood, NY, 2006, 95–102). This patristic perspective complements Klein’s analysis, emphasizing that *πλήρωμα* ecclesiology is not merely an adaptation to the delay of the Parousia, but expresses the fundamental theological intuition of Eastern Christianity: salvation as ontological participation in divine life.

³⁶ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 193. The dynamic character of the Church in Ephesian ecclesiology (Section 7.2.2) is highlighted: although defined ontologically as the “Fullness” (*πλήρωμα*) of Christ (Eph 1:23), in historical reality it finds itself in a process of becoming: “It moves toward what it actually is, it grows with its members ‘in everything into him who is the Head, Christ’ (4:15)” (“Sie bewegt sich auf das zu, was sie eigentlich ist, sie wächst mit ihren Gliedern ,in allem auf den hin, der das Haupt ist, Christus”). Ephesian ecclesiology combines the already-accomplished status of the Church in the divine plan with the necessity of organic growth and maturation in history (cf. p. 195).

³⁷ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 190. The metaphor of the body of Christ in Colossian ecclesiology (Section 7.2.1) is discussed through Col 3:15, which comes closest to the paraclitic usage of “one body” from the authentic Pauline epistles. The unity of the community is defined through the lordship of Christ’s peace: Christians are called to let “the peace of Christ” rule in their hearts, being called to this “in one body” (“...wo die Christen aufgefordert werden, sich vom Frieden Christi regieren zu lassen, zu dem sie berufen sind ,in einem Leibe”). This indicates an already consolidated community, in which the emphasis shifts from the diversity of members to cohesion ensured by the Head (Christ) through “ligaments and sinews” (Col 2:19).

commandments, creating in Himself “one new humanity” (*einen neuen Menschen*).³⁸ This unity is both ontological and historical. The Church is described as a sacred edifice, a holy Temple in the Lord, built on “the foundation of the apostles and prophets,” with Christ as the “cornerstone” (*Eckstein*) or “capstone.”³⁹

Klein underscores an essential temporal detail: the mention of the apostles and prophets as the foundation indicates that they are viewed as figures of the past, an “institution of the beginnings” (*Institution des Anfangs*), in contrast to Paul who saw apostleship as a current and dynamic function. The Deuteropauline Church looks retrospectively to the founding era.⁴⁰

³⁸ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 43–44. The ecclesiology of Ephesians (Section 1.2.3) discusses the effects of Christ’s work of uniting what was separated: “In this way a ‘new humanity’ was created, the Church [formed] from Gentiles and Jews (2:15)” (“Auf diese Weise wurde ein ‚neuer Mensch‘, die Gemeinde aus Heiden und Juden (2,15) geschaffen”). Although the term recalls the “new creation” from 2 Cor 5:17, in Ephesians the emphasis falls on the collective dimension: this “new humanity” is the community that embodies Christ and that must grow toward Him (Eph 4:15).

³⁹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 349. A paradigm shift compared to 1 Cor 3:11 characterizes Eph 2:20 (Section 15.2.2): “Christ is not seen as foundation, but as the decisive stone” (“Christus wird nicht als Fundament, sondern als der entscheidende Stein gesehen”). The foundation is historically constituted by the Apostles and Prophets, while Christ is the element that sustains and holds together the entire construction. Insofar as He bears the whole, He is the “cornerstone” (*Eckstein*), but inasmuch as the Church grows “in Him,” the image also approaches that of a “capstone” (*Schlussstein*). R. Schnackenburg discusses in detail the ambiguity of ἀκρογωνίατος, which can designate either the stone at the base (cornerstone), or the stone at the top (keystone). He opts for the first interpretation, arguing that the image in Eph 2:20–22 is that of a temple under construction, where Christ is the stone determining the alignment of the entire structure. The apostles and prophets constitute the “foundation” in a functional-historical sense, but Christ remains the principle of ontological coherence (R. SCHNACKENBURG, *Epheser*, 124–127). This confirms Klein’s observation about the change in ecclesiological perspective: the Church is no longer merely the community gathered around the living apostle, but a sacred edifice in which successive generations are organically integrated.

⁴⁰ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 349; cf. 352. A change in ecclesiological perspective characterizes Eph 2:20: “The Epistle to the Ephesians thus presupposes that in its time there are no longer any apostles or prophets. They belong to the time of the beginning” (“Der Epheserbrief setzt damit voraus, dass es in seiner Zeit weder Apostel noch Propheten gibt. Sie gehören der Anfangszeit an”). They are viewed as the historical foundation of the Church, having the unrepeatable role of having founded the communities and of having revealed the “mystery of Christ” (Eph 3:5), while the present of the church is managed by pastors and teachers (Eph 4:11) who build upon this foundation.

3.3. Social Integration: *Haustafeln* and the Limits of Equality (Gal 3:28 vs. Col 3:11)

A neuralgic point in Klein's analysis is the way in which the eschatological equality proclaimed by Paul undergoes a mutation in the social organization of the Deuteropauline Church. The baptismal formula from Galatians 3:28 ("There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female") is restricted.

In Colossians 3:11, although it is affirmed that "there is no longer Greek and Jew... enslaved and free," Klein observes that the pair "male and female" is absent from the enumeration, being replaced by cultural distinctions such as "barbarian, Scythian."⁴¹ Moreover, spiritual equality ("Christ is all and in all") does not lead to the abolition of social hierarchies. Through the introduction of the **Household Codes** (*Haustafeln* – Col 3:18–4:1), relationships of subordination are reconfirmed: wives are subject to husbands, children to parents, and slaves to masters. The Christian novelty consists only in the Christological motivation of behavior ("as is fitting in the Lord"), not in changing the social structure.⁴²

⁴¹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 220. A significant modification of the Pauline tradition from Gal 3:28 appears in Col 3:11 (Section 8.3.2): "This results in Col 3:11 in a series of four, where the pair male-female is missing" ("Das ergibt in Kol 3,11 eine Vierer-Reihe, wo das Paar Mann-Frau fehlt"). Although ethnic distinctions are extended through the addition of "Barbarian/Scythian," the omission of the gender distinction suggests that the epistle's author, in view of the household codes (*Haustafeln*) and family order, no longer considers the difference between male and female as being suspended in the same manner as in Galatians, reflecting a reaction to enthusiasm in early Pauline communities. M.Y. MacDonald interprets this omission in the sociological context of second-generation Pauline communities. She argues that the *Haustafeln* do not represent a simple "retreat" from Pauline egalitarianism, but a survival strategy in a hostile environment: by adopting Greco-Roman domestic codes, Christian communities reduced their social visibility and avoided accusations of subversion. This "patriarchalization" was the price of social integration, not a betrayal of the Gospel (M.Y. MACDONALD, *Colossians and Ephesians*, Sacra Pagina 17, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 2000, 158–163). MacDonald's perspective complements Klein's analysis, offering a sociological framework explaining why precisely the gender distinction is sacrificed, while ethnic distinctions are even amplified.

⁴² KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 220. The Household Codes (*Haustafeln*, Col 3:18–4:1) reveal a paradigm shift compared to the egalitarianism of Gal 3:28: in extended Christian families, traditional social structures are maintained. Klein states: "In the house which is now Christian in its totality, the orders of this world are included" ("Im Haus, das nun in seiner Gesamtheit christlich ist, werden die Ordnungen dieser Welt einbezogen"). Belonging to Christ no longer leads to a suspension of social roles (wives subordinate to husbands, slaves subordinate to masters), but to their regulation within the Christian community. M.Y. MacDonald nonetheless observes a subtle innovation in the Christian *Haustafeln* compared to Hellenistic models: while Greco-Roman codes were addressed exclusively to the *pater familias*, the codes in Colossians and Ephesians address directly also those who are subordinate (wives, children, slaves), thus recognizing their moral agency and status as persons responsible before God. This "asymmetric reciprocity"–subordination, but with dignity–

In Ephesians, this tendency toward institutional stabilization continues. The relationship between husband and wife is profoundly theologized, becoming an image of the mystery between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32). Although the sacrificial love of Christ is the model for the husband, the structure of authority (head-body) remains intact.⁴³ Klein concludes that, in the face of the delay of the Parousia, the Church had to organize itself as a durable entity in history, integrating the structures of the ancient “*oikos*” into the life of the community, transforming the initial enthusiasm into an ethic of stability.⁴⁴

4. Mystery (*Mysterion*): From Power to Doctrine

4.1. The Metamorphosis of the Gospel: From Δύναμις to Ἀλήθεια

Hans Klein identifies a fundamental mutation in the kerygma of the early Church in the transition from Paul to his disciples. If for the Apostle Paul the Gospel was defined functionally as “the power of God” (*Kraft Gottes*, Rom 1:16)

represents an internal transformation of structures, even if not an abolition of them (MACDONALD, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 164–167).

⁴³ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 110; cf. 196–197. The Christology of Ephesians provides a model for Christian marriage: “The relationship of Christ to His Church, in the sense of a communion of love, is for him [the author] the model of the loving communion in marriage” (“Das Verhältnis Christi zu seiner Gemeinde im Sinne einer Liebesgemeinschaft ist für ihn Vorbild der liebenden Gemeinschaft in der Ehe,” p. 110). This idea is developed in the ecclesiological analysis of Eph 5:22–32 (pp. 196–197), where the epistle’s author transforms the relationship between Christ and the Church into an archetype for spouses. In contrast to 1 Cor 7, where emphasis fell on the individual, here a theological foundation for Christian marriage is offered, based on Christ’s act of loving the Church and giving Himself for her.

⁴⁴ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 221. The conclusion of the analysis of social ethics in Colossians (Section 8.3.2) synthesizes the epistle author’s attitude toward contemporary social structures (slavery, family relationships): “The status quo is presupposed, behavior in the spirit of Christ is regulated” (“Der status quo wird vorausgesetzt, das Verhalten im Geiste Christi wird geregelt”). In contrast to the egalitarian impulse of Gal 3:28, Colossians does not pursue a change in the external order of society, but an interior transformation of relationships through love, obedience, and justice, motivated by belonging to the Lord (cf. p. 220). In an earlier analysis I emphasized that “the Epistle to the Colossians does not restrict the problematic of the moral life of Christians to what is called in the academic sphere ‘Haustafel’ (3:18–4:1), but analyzes it in function of the entire presentation of the person and work of the Savior.” The moral context derives from the manner in which the Savior Christ is described: “he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:17). To invoke the name of Jesus Christ in a moral context presupposes remembering the One through whom τὰ πάντα are moved, the One in whom it has its foundation and its τέλος (BENEA, *Epistola către Coloseni*, 435–436). M.Y. MACDONALD nuances the sociological perspective, arguing that the *Haustafeln* do not represent a simple “retreat” from Pauline egalitarianism, but a survival strategy in a hostile environment (MACDONALD, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 158–163).

which creates salvation and evokes faith, in the *Deuteropauline* letters a clear shift is observed from the “character of power” toward “teaching” (*Lehre*) and objective content.⁴⁵

In the Epistle to the Colossians, this change is marked terminologically. The Gospel is defined as “the word of the truth” (Col 1:5). The emphasis shifts from the dynamic act of proclamation to the validity of its content. The Gospel is viewed as “the word of God” which has reached the readers and bears fruit, but it is treated as a fixed quantity, a deposit of truth that must be preserved.⁴⁶ Klein emphasizes that the author of Colossians sees in the Pauline message the “Mystery” (*Geheimnis*) hidden for ages but now revealed to the saints, thus transforming dynamic missionary preaching into a stable tradition.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the tendency toward objectification continues. The Gospel is called “the gospel of your salvation” (Eph 1:13). Klein observes an important nuance: the phrase “the word of truth” precedes “the gospel of your salvation,” which suggests that the aspect of objective truth takes precedence. The Gospel becomes “the objective quantity of truth” (*objektive Größe der Wahrheit*), a fixed doctrine that guarantees salvation, rather than a direct existential appeal.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 130. Examining the theology of Colossians (Section 4.2.2), Klein identifies a fundamental shift in the understanding of the Gospel compared to the authentic Pauline epistles: “Compared to the authentic Pauline epistles, a shift from the character of power to that of doctrine can be perceived” (“Gegenüber den echten Paulusbriefen kann eine Verschiebung vom Machtcharakter auf die Lehre... wahrgenommen werden”). The Gospel is no longer described primarily as a dynamic power of salvation, but as a content of teaching (*Lehre*), characterized by terms such as “to teach,” “knowledge,” “wisdom,” and “truth,” being identified with the “mystery of Christ” in which the treasures of knowledge are hidden.

⁴⁶ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 129. The author emphasizes a concentration on the objective nature of the Gospel in Colossians: “The most important event intended and directed by God is the proclamation of the ‘word of truth of the Gospel’ (Col 1:5)... which ‘is the Word of God’ (1:25)” (“Das wichtigste von Gott beabsichtigte und geleitete Ereignis ist aber die Verkündigung des ‘Wortes der Wahrheit des Evangeliums’ (Kol 1,5)... das ‘Gottes Wort ist’ (1,25)”). This Word makes known “the mystery hidden for ages” (Col 1:26), thus shifting the emphasis from the act of reception (as in 1 Thessalonians) to the content of truth and revelation of the message (cf. p. 130).

⁴⁷ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 131. Discussing the definition of the Gospel as “the word of truth” (Eph 1:13), Klein notes a significant shift in emphasis: “The address or promise is less important than the objective statement in the sense of truth” (“Der Zuspruch oder die Zusage ist weniger wichtig, als die objektive Aussage im Sinne der Wahrheit”). Through this objectification, the Gospel becomes primarily a doctrine about salvation (“nicht mehr Botschaft von Christus, sondern vom Heil”), partially losing the character of direct personal appeal specific to early Pauline mission.

4.2. The Redefinition of the Mystery (*Mysterion*): Christ and the Divine Plan

The concept of *Mysterion* undergoes an ecclesiological and Christological re-signification. If in Paul the “mystery” often referred to God’s eschatological plan (e.g., 1 Cor 15:51; Rom 11:25), in the *Deuteropauline* letters it becomes the content of faith accessible to the church.

In Colossians, the Mystery is identified Christologically. The “mystery” is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27).⁴⁸ This mystery is no longer an apocalyptic secret reserved for the future, but is the “Mystery of Christ” (*Christusgeheimnis*), which was hidden for ages and generations but “has now been revealed to his saints.”⁴⁹ Klein notes that, for the author of Colossians, the Gospel

⁴⁸ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 130. On the identification of the Gospel with the “mystery of Christ” (Col 4:3), Klein writes: “The content of this mystery is Christ, the hope of glory (1:27)” (“Inhalt dieses Geheimnisses ist Christus, die Hoffnung der Herrlichkeit (1,27)”). The “mystery” no longer represents apocalyptic prophetic knowledge (as in Paul), but the Gospel itself preached by Paul, which has Christ as its content and the eschatological hope connected to Him. I have shown in an earlier study that in Col 2:2, “the mystery of God is Christ”: “Jesus Christ is not the occasion in which the mystery is revealed, but its authentic content.” This represents “the central point of the theology of the Holy Apostle Paul,” a fact confirmed also by the multitude of critical variants of this text—15 different expressions in manuscripts—variants that underline not only its importance but also the desire of the hagiographers to harmonize it with Pauline theology from the other epistles (BENEA, *Epistola către Coloseni*, 399–400). John Behr offers a patristic reading of the concept of *Mysterion*, showing that in the Eastern tradition “the mystery” is never reduced to “doctrine” in a cognitive sense. *Mysterion* designates the reality of Christ Himself, present and active in Scripture, in the liturgy, and in the life of the Church. Thus, the “objectification” of the kerygma in the Deuteropaulines, identified by Klein, can be interpreted not as a loss of dynamism, but as an anchoring of it in the sacramental presence of Christ in the community (BEHR, *The Mystery of Christ*, 35–42).

⁴⁹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 131. The concept of *Christusgeheimnis* is identified with the Word of God, described as “the mystery... which was hidden for ages and generations, but has now been revealed to his saints” (“Das Christusgeheimnis... das seit Äonen und Geschlechtern verborgen war, jetzt aber seinen Heiligen offenbar gemacht wurde”). Klein notes a semantic shift from the authentic Pauline epistles: the mystery no longer represents apocalyptic knowledge about the future (as in 1 Cor 15:51), but the Gospel itself preached, now a revealed doctrine about Christ. Andrew Louth enriches this interpretation, emphasizing that for the Church Fathers, *Mysterion* designates simultaneously the event of the Incarnation, the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, and the liturgical celebration. The three dimensions are inseparable: Christ is “the mystery” who reveals Himself in the reading of Scripture and becomes actualized in the Eucharist. Thus, the “fixing” of the mystery in teaching, which Klein identifies in the Deuteropaulines, is in fact the premise for its liturgical transmission across generations (A. LOUTH, *Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983, 96–110). Geréb develops this perspective, analyzing the role of the apostle Paul as servant of the revealed mystery in Col 1:21–2:5, emphasizing that the presentation of the Pauline mission in this section constitutes an ecclesiological application of the Christological hymn (Zs. GERÉB, “Paulus als Diener der Kirche.

itself has become this revealed mystery, a divine wisdom in which are hidden all the treasures of knowledge (Col 2:3), thus opposing the “philosophical” speculations of the heretics.

In Ephesians, the perspective broadens ecclesiologicaly. The mystery of Christ (Eph 3:4) is explained as God's plan to unite Jews and Gentiles in one body, the Church. Klein underscores the mediatorial role of ecclesial functions: this mystery was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed “to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph 3:5).⁵⁰ Thus, the “Mystery” becomes a doctrine revealed in the founding past of the Church, administered by Apostles and Prophets, and transmitted to believers as the foundation of faith.

4.3. The Objectification of Faith: From Act to Deposit

Parallel with the crystallization of the Gospel into doctrine, the concept of faith (*Pistis*) evolves from an existential act of trust to “the faith that is believed” (*fides quae creditur*), a body of doctrine that must be maintained.

Klein identifies an essential philological detail for Colossians: the verb “to believe” (πιστεύειν) is completely absent from the epistle.⁵¹ Faith is no longer described as a dynamic process of entrusting, but as a static state. Believers are exhorted to be “established in the faith” (τεθεμελιωμένοι) and “firm in faith” (στερεοί), as they were taught (Col 2:7). The Gospel accepted through faith has become a “fixed confession” (*festes Bekenntnis*) or already a “teaching” (*Lehre*).⁵²

Die Vorstellung des Apostels in Kolosser 1,21–2,5,” in *Neutestamentliche Studien*, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, 123–144; previously published in P. MÜLLER [ed.], *Kolosser-Studien*, BThSt 103, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2009, 33–54).

⁵⁰ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 350. Concerning the role of apostles and prophets in Ephesians, Klein states: “First of all, the ‘apostles and prophets’ are those who made known the ‘mystery of Christ’ (Eph 3:5)” (“Zunächst sind die ‘Apostel und Propheten’ jene, die das ‘Geheimnis Christi’ (Eph 3,5) kundgetan haben”). This mystery represents God’s plan of salvation including Jews and Gentiles in one Church. Apostles and prophets are seen retrospectively as figures of the beginning who realized this plan: apostles through the transmission of the Gospel, prophets through legitimizing the entry of the Gentiles into the community. The distinction between the two offices becomes blurred, both being described as “saints” and bearers of revelation “in the Spirit.”

⁵¹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 151. A fundamental difference emerges in the Deuteropauline concept of faith: “The verb πιστεύειν is completely absent in Colossians” (“Das Verbum πιστεύειν fehlt im Kol ganz”). This absence signals the disappearance of the emphasis on the activity of faith (cf. 1 Thess 1:3); instead, the emphasis falls on stability, on “remaining grounded in faith” (Col 1:23) and in the teaching received. Faith thus becomes a fixed doctrine (*Lehre*) or a confession, reflecting the perspective of a teacher who consolidates the community, not of a missionary who calls to conversion.

⁵² KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 152. Klein observes an objectification of the content of faith in Colossians: “The Gospel accepted through faith has become a fixed confession or already a

In Ephesians, faith is treated as a “fixed quantity” (*feststehende Größe*) that the community possesses. The expression “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph 4:5) places faith among the objective elements that constitute the unity of the Church.⁵³ Although faith remains the means by which Christ dwells in hearts (Eph 3:17), the emphasis falls on doctrinal unity (“the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God,” Eph 4:13) toward which the Church must grow.⁵⁴

This line of development finds its culmination in the Pastoral Epistles, where faith becomes synonymous with “sound teaching” (*gesunde Lehre*). Here, faith is no longer the risky act of trust in the Word, but loyalty to the authorized and developed “apostolic tradition.”⁵⁵

5. Methodological Analysis: The Change of Personal Pronoun (Wir / Ihr) – Between Confession and Promise

5.1. The Theological Function of Stylistic Alternation

A distinctive methodological instrument applied by Hans Klein in the exegesis of the *Corpus Paulinum* is the analysis of the alternation of personal

doctrine” (“Das im Glauben angenommene Evangelium ist zum festen Bekenntnis oder bereits zur Lehre geworden”). Unlike the authentic Pauline epistles, the emphasis is placed on stability in the teaching received (Col 2:7) and on a “faith in Christ” understood as inner certainty and loyalty to the apostolic tradition, reflecting a situation in which the author writes not as a missionary, but as a teacher.

- ⁵³ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 152; cf. 150. The objectification of faith in Ephesians is evident: “How much faith is already a fixed entity, thus already solidified ‘Gospel,’ and is understood as doctrine, is shown by the speaking about the unity of faith (Eph 4:13)...” (“Wie sehr aber der Glaube bereits eine feststehende Größe, also bereits erstarrtes ‘Evangelium’ ist und als Lehre verstanden wird...”, p. 152). Faith has become an objective entity (*fides quae*), a doctrine or a fixed tradition that must be preserved, unlike faith as a charism “that one possesses” (“den man... hat,” p. 150) or as a dynamic act of receiving the message (cf. p. 151).
- ⁵⁴ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 152–153; cf. 194. The expression “unity of faith” (“die Einheit des Glaubens,” Eph 4:13), along with “one faith” (Eph 4:5), demonstrates that faith in Ephesians has become a “fixed entity” (*feststehende Größe*), an objective doctrine (*Lehre*) that defines and unites the Church. This objectification serves as the foundation for ecclesiological unity, representing the goal of the community’s growth toward “the fullness of Christ” (cf. p. 194).
- ⁵⁵ J. ROLOFF, *Der erste Brief an Timotheus* (EKK XV), Benziger–Neukirchener, Zürich–Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1988, 79, apud KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 137; cf. 342. Klein defines “sound teaching” (*gesunde Lehre*) by quoting Roloff: “‘Sound teaching’ is ‘the form of the Gospel authorized by the apostle, transmitted as tradition and developed’” (“Die ‘gesunde Lehre’ ist ‘die durch den Apostel autorisierte, als Tradition weitergegebene und entfaltete Gestalt des Evangeliums,’” p. 137). The Gospel has become a fixed tradition (*parathēkē*) and a doctrine meant to ensure the stability of the community and the correctness of Christian life (*eusebeia*), with the Apostle Paul being the guarantor of this normative tradition (cf. pp. 333, 1028).

pronouns in the first person plural (“We” / *Wir*) and the second person plural (“You” / *Ihr*). Klein demonstrates that this stylistic change is not random, but reflects an intentional theological structure, marking the transition from the objective description of salvation history to its subjective application.

In the Pauline epistles, the shift from “You” to “We” or vice versa signals a change of register:

1. The “We” Style (*Wir-Stil*) as Confession (*Bekennntnis*): When the author uses “We,” he speaks about the saving act (*Heilstat*) of God in favor of Christians. In this case, the message becomes a common confession of faith, integrating the author and readers into the objective reality of salvation.⁵⁶

2. The “You” Style (*Ihr-Stil*) as Promise and Application (*Zusage*): The shift to “You” marks the concrete application of this reality upon the readers. Statements in the second person always derive from the kerygma, either in the form of a promise (*Zuspruch*) or in the form of a parenthesis (exhortation).⁵⁷

5.2. Analysis of the Text in Colossians: From Thanksgiving to Confession

In the Epistle to the Colossians, Klein identifies two key passages where this alternation clarifies the soteriological structure of the text.

In Colossians 1:12–14, the text begins with an exhortation to give thanks to the Father, “who has enabled you (ἰκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς) to share in the inheritance of the saints.” Immediately, however, the author changes the person: “He has rescued us (ἐπρόσωτο ἡμᾶς)... in whom we have (ἔχομεν) redemption.” Klein explains this stylistic rupture as follows: the *Zusage* (promise) connected to God’s concrete work upon the readers (enabling/qualifying) refers to the moment of their becoming Christians. In contrast, the statement in the “We” style celebrates the objective work of Christ’s salvation (redemption through His death) in the form of a hymn or confession.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 298. The theological function of the “We-style” (*Wir-Stil*) is defined thus: “If the apostle writes in the ‘We’ style, then he can speak about God’s act of salvation in favor of Christians... Then the message becomes a confession” (“Dann wird die Botschaft zum Bekenntnis”). This form of expression transforms the objective account of salvation into a common creed (analogous to 1 Cor 15:3–5), unlike the “You-style,” used to indicate the practical consequences of salvation or to offer a specific assurance (*Zusage*) to the addressees.

⁵⁷ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 298. On the function of direct address, Klein writes: “The ‘You’ statements always result from proclamation, either in the form of an assurance (promise), or as exhortation” (“Die Ihr-Aussagen ergeben sich immer aus der Verkündigung, sei es in Form eines Zuspruches oder als Ermahnung”). While the “We-style” expresses the common confession of the act of salvation, the switch to the “You-style” signals the application of this act, drawing attention to consequences or offering a specific assurance to the readers.

⁵⁸ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 295. Regarding Col 1:12–14, Klein explains: “The promise (assurance), in the sense of an address linked to proclamation about God’s concrete work..., has in view the becoming Christian. The statement in the ‘We’ style celebrates the objective work of salvation of

An even more complex case is Colossians 2:13, where the change of pronoun occurs in the very middle of the sentence: “And when you were dead... God made you alive together with him, having forgiven us (χαρισάμενος ἡμῖν) all our trespasses.” This abrupt shift from “You” to “We” in the second half of the verse is explained by Klein through the distinction between baptismal tradition and the confession of faith. The description of the readers' past state and the event of Baptism (“made you alive”) are in the “You” style, functioning as a “remembrance of Baptism” (*Taufe*). At the moment when the objective act of the forgiveness of sins at the cross is mentioned (“the erasing of the record of debts”), the author shifts to the “We” style, integrating the event into the common treasury of the Church's faith.⁵⁹

Klein observes here a difference from authentic Pauline theology (for example, Romans 6:3–4), where the event of Baptism was also described in the first person plural (“all of us who have been baptized...”). In the *Deuteropauline* letters, the subjective experience of Baptism becomes the content of preaching addressed to “You,” while the saving act of God remains an objective confession of “Ours.”⁶⁰

5.3. Analysis of the Text in Ephesians: Liturgy and Parenthesis

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the *Wir/Ihr* structure is used to delimit the hymnic sections from the applicative ones.

Christ... in the form of a confession” (“Die Zusage... hat das Christ-Werden im Blick. Die Aussage im Wir-Stil feiert das objektive Heilswerk Christi... in Form eines Bekenntnisses”). The “You-style” (v. 12) refers to the application of salvation to the readers (being made worthy), while the “We-style” (v. 13) expresses the objective reality of redemption—a subtle distinction that some scribes later eliminated through harmonization of the text.

⁵⁹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 295–296. The syntactic break in Col 2:13 reveals an abrupt transition from direct address to common confession: “The change of the personal pronoun in v. 13b... is difficult... But God’s act of salvation on the cross, in the sense of forgiveness, is further expressed in the ‘We’ style and, therefore, as a confession” (“Der Wechsel des Personalpronomens in V. 13b... Die Heilstat Gottes aber am Kreuz... wird weiterhin im Wir-Stil und damit als Bekenntnis ausgesprochen,” pp. 295, 296). The description of the past and of the vivification of the readers (v. 13a) belongs to the “You” style (proclamation/address), while the forgiveness of sins (v. 13b), as an objective reality of the cross, is formulated as a liturgical creed of the community.

⁶⁰ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 296. Comparing Col 2:13 with Rom 6:3, Klein identifies a major theological difference. While in Romans 6 baptism is described in the “We-style” as a reality lived and internalized (“Darstellung eines am Christen selbst erfolgten und von ihm verinnerlichten Geschehens”), in Col 2:13a it is presented in the “You-style.” The event of salvation “has become the content of proclamation in the sense of a reminder of baptism” (“Sie ist Verkündigungsinhalt im Sinne einer Erinnerung an die Taufe geworden”), functioning as an external kerygmatic address, not as a confession of common experience (which appears only in v. 13b regarding forgiveness).

In Ephesians 1:11–14, the great opening hymn is dominated by the “We” style, describing the plan of salvation and election from eternity. However, in verse 13, the author shifts to “You”: “In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth... were marked with the seal.” Klein interprets this as a direct address: the message to the hearers is conveyed in the “You” style, while salvation obtained as an accomplished fact is reported in the “We” style.⁶¹

A similar, but inverted, structure appears in Ephesians 2:1–10. The text begins with a description of the readers' past state in the “You” style (vv. 1–2), but the author quickly includes himself in this description of universal sin using “We” (v. 3). There follows the praise of God's saving deeds in the “We” style (vv. 4–7), interrupted, however, by a formula of *Zusage* (Promise/Confirmation) in the “You” style: “for by grace you have been saved” (χαρίτι ἐστε σεσωσμένοι, vv. 5 and 8). Klein argues that by inserting this “You” in the middle of the objective description, the author actualizes the event of salvation for the readers in a very concrete manner.⁶²

5.4. The Consolidation of Identity through Language

The analysis of the change of personal pronoun reveals a line of development (*Entwicklungslinie*) in Deuteropauline theology. If in Paul “We” and “You” often alternated according to rhetorical argumentation, in Colossians and Ephesians the distribution becomes structural:

1. “We” becomes the liturgical and confessional pronoun, which preserves and transmits the *fides quae creditur* (the faith that is believed) – the objective truth of the Gospel and of Christ's work.
2. “You” becomes the catechetical and parenetic pronoun, through which this truth is applied to the specific situation of the community, reminding them of Baptism and of their new identity.

⁶¹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 296. Turning to the hymn in Eph 1:3–14, Klein explains the pronoun alternation in vv. 12–14: “The message to the hearers is transmitted in the ‘You’ style, the salvation obtained is reported as fact in the ‘We’ style” (“Die Botschaft an die Hörerinnen und Hörer wird im Ihr-Stil weitergegeben, das erworbene Heil als Tatsache im Wir-Stil berichtet”). While the hymn celebrates objective salvation in the “We-style,” the switch to the “You-style” in v. 13 serves as a concrete address, reminding readers that they participate in this salvation through accepting the Gospel (“the word of truth”) in faith.

⁶² KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 297. The parenthetical insertion in Eph 2:5c and 8 (“by grace you have been saved”) serves a specific function: “Through the promise (assurance) inserted in the ‘You-style’ in v. 5c and v. 8, he [the author] actualizes the event of salvation for the readers in a very concrete way” (“Durch den im ‘Ihr-Stil’ eingefügten Zuspruch in V. 5c. und V. 8 aktualisiert er das Heilsgeschehen für die Leser in ganz konkreter Weise”). Although the praise of God's salvific acts is formulated in the “We-style” (vv. 4–7), the switch to direct address serves the personal application of grace, transforming the historical account into a *Zuspruch* (promise/direct address) that links objective salvation to the subjective experience of the addressees.

This distinction underscores the process of stabilization of the Church: the dynamic experience of the Spirit is framed by a doctrinal structure (“We” confess) that grounds the life of the community (“You” live).

6. Conclusions: From Missionary Dynamism to Ecclesiological Stability

6.1. The Dialectic of Tradition – Situation as the Engine of Theology

The present study has demonstrated, following Hans Klein's methodology, that theology is not a static system, but a living process of adapting Tradition to Situation. If the Apostle Paul, as a missionary, varied the received tradition to respond to the specific crises of communities (Galatia, Corinth), the following generation – the Deuteropauline authors – had to respond to a new historical situation: the consolidation of the Church in history and the necessity of defending Christian identity in the face of heresies and the delay of the Parousia.⁶³

Hans Klein argues that the lines of development (*Entwicklungslinien*) identified do not represent a “decline” from pure Pauline theology, but a necessary “adaptation” (*Adaption*). In order for Christian theology to maintain its relevance, it must respond to the challenges of each generation; in the *Pastoralbriefe*, for example, the Pauline tradition had already crystallized into “sound teaching,” a new tradition that permits variations only within strict limits.⁶⁴

6.2. Synthesis of the Theological Mutations

The comparative analysis of the *Homologoumena* and *Antilegomena* has revealed three major directions of transformation:

⁶³ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 5–6. Klein's hermeneutical foundation rests on two pillars: “The two pillars of any theology are tradition and situation... The situation reshaped the tradition” (“Die beiden Säulen jedweder Theologie sind Tradition und Situation... Die Situation prägte die Tradition um”). Paul, as a missionary, adapted the kerygmatic tradition to the specific situations of the communities, thus generating the diversity of his epistles. With the change of the situation toward the need for consolidation of the Church in the following generation, the dynamic Pauline tradition solidified, becoming in the Pastoral Epistles fixed “sound teaching” (*gesunde Lehre*).

⁶⁴ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 10. The evolution from Paul to his disciples reflects a fundamental change caused by “Church consolidation”: “In the Pastoral Epistles, the Pauline tradition is already consolidated into ‘sound teaching,’ a new tradition, which can only be varied within certain limits” (“In den Pastoralbriefen ist die paulinische Tradition bereits zur ‘gesunden Lehre’ gefestigt, eine neue Tradition, die nur noch innerhalb gewisser Grenzen variiert werden kann”). The hermeneutical principle “the situation reshapes the tradition” (*Die Situation prägte die Tradition um*) explains the movement from Paul's flexible missionary adaptation to the doctrinal fixation necessary for communal stability in the following generation.

1. *Soteriology: The Ontologization of Salvation.* In Paul, “new life” was an eschatological possibility that had to be realized through obedience and struggle with the “flesh.”⁶⁵ In Colossians and Ephesians, the perspective changes radically. Salvation is viewed retrospectively as a fact accomplished through Baptism. In Colossians, believers are already “raised with Christ,” although their life remains “hidden” as a hoped-for good.⁶⁶ In Ephesians, the vision reaches its apex: Christians are already “seated in the heavenly places,” and the distinction between “once” (death) and “now” (life) becomes structural.⁶⁷ The dialectical tension of justification (*simul iustus et peccator*) is replaced by the certainty of salvation by grace (“by grace you have been saved”), where the emphasis falls on the objective gift of God.⁶⁸

2. *Christology and Ecclesiology: The Cosmic Dimension.* Paul’s functional Christology (Christ for us) evolves toward a cosmic Christology. In Colossians, Christ is no longer merely the Head of the body (metaphorically), but the Head

⁶⁵ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 38 (Passage 107). On the paradoxical character of Christian existence in Paul, Klein writes: “The new life is therefore always only tangible negatively, as a dying of the old man... as a possibility” (“Greifbar ist das neue Leben darum immer nur negativ als ein Sterben des alten Menschen [...] als Möglichkeit”). For Paul, the new life is not a directly verifiable earthly reality, but a possibility opened by God, concretized in the struggle against sin, in “the refusal of lusts,” and in “living in weakness” (participation in the cross), remaining fundamentally an eschatological good toward which the believer continuously reaches.

⁶⁶ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 43. The soteriology of Colossians is defined through the tension between the already and the not-yet: “In summary, it can be said: The new life has already come for Colossians with baptism and is thus a present reality. But it still remains a good of hope” (“Das neue Leben ist für den Kol bereits mit der Taufe gekommen und ist damit Gegenwart. Aber es bleibt doch Hoffnungsgut”). Unlike Pauline theology where resurrection with Christ is predominantly future, in Colossians baptism marks a spiritual resurrection already realized (Col 2:12; 3:1), yet this life remains “hidden with Christ in God” (Col 3:3), a reality that must be continually actualized through “putting on the new man” until the final parousia.

⁶⁷ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 43–44 (Passage 121). A fundamental temporal structure pervades Eph 2: “The antithesis between ‘once’ (2:1–3.11ff.) and ‘now’ (2:13, cf. v. 19: no longer) pervades the entire chapter” (“Der Gegensatz von ‘einst’... und ‘jetzt’... durchzieht das gesamte Kapitel”). This structure emphasizes the radical presence of salvation: the believers, who were once dead in sins and strangers, are now not only spiritually raised but also “seated in the heavenly places” (2:6) and integrated into the household of God – a perspective that emphasizes the present realization of the new life more strongly than in other Pauline writings.

⁶⁸ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 179 (Section 6.3.3). The author of Ephesians abandons the Pauline term of “justification” (*Rechtfertigung*): “In the recurring key phrase: ‘by grace you are saved’ (Eph 2:5.8)... grace (*charis*) is encountered as in Rom 3:24... What Paul calls being justified... Ephesians says with other words” (“In dem doppelt wiederkehrenden Schlagwort: ‘aus Gnaden seid ihr gerettet’ [...] begegnet *χάρις*... Was Paulus mit ‘rechtfertigt’... meint, sagt der Eph mit anderen Worten”). This change of language transforms salvation into a fact accomplished for believers, which is why Ephesians, unlike Paul, no longer thematizes the final judgment (*Endgericht*), considering the Church already “saved” and seated in the heavenly sphere.

who rules over the cosmic powers and holds the Universe together, and the Church is the place where this fullness dwells.⁶⁹ In Ephesians, the Church becomes the “Fullness” (*Pleroma*) of Him who fills all in all, having an active role in God’s cosmic plan.⁷⁰ This theological stability is reflected socially in the adoption of the household codes (*Haustafeln*), which integrate the order of the world into the life of the community to ensure historical survival.⁷¹

3. *Kerygma: From Event to Doctrine.* The Gospel, which for Paul was “the power of God” active in preaching, becomes in the *Deuteropauline* letters “the word of truth” and the revealed “*Mysterion*.” Faith is no longer merely the existential act of trust, but becomes loyalty to a doctrinal content (“the truth”) and

⁶⁹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 103 (Passage 307). Christ’s absolute supremacy over both the Church and the cosmos is emphasized: “Because Christ is the center of the community, its Head (1:18.20) and, at the same time, Lord of all powers (2:10), the community must orient itself exclusively to Him” (“Da Christus der Mittelpunkt der Gemeinde... hat sich die Gemeinde allein auf ihn auszurichten”). This Christological concentration combats the heretical “philosophy” that placed emphasis on cosmic powers; since in Christ dwells “all the fullness” (1:19; 2:9) and He has triumphed over the rulers (2:15), the life of the Church must be entirely determined by the relationship with Him, the Head, from whom the body receives its growth (2:19).

⁷⁰ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 193. The definition of the Church in Eph 1:23 attributes to it a cosmic dimension: “It is His body, the fullness (*Pleroma*) of the One who fills all in all” (“Sie ist sein Leib, die Fülle (πλήρωμα) dessen, der alles in allem erfüllt”). While Christ, as Head, penetrates the universe with His fullness (cf. Eph 4:10), the Church, as His Body, participates directly in this “fullness” (*Pleroma*), being permeated by it, although the full realization of this reality in the lives of believers is a process of growth (Eph 4:13) toward “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13).

⁷¹ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 221 (Passage 661). Regarding the Household Codes (*Haustafeln*) in Col 3:18–4:1, Klein states: “The status quo is presupposed, behavior in the spirit of Christ is regulated” (“Der status quo wird vorausgesetzt, das Verhalten im Geiste Christi wird geregelt”). Unlike the social transformative potential in early Pauline theology, in Colossians “there is no longer a door to change in the social domain”; hierarchical structures (slavery, patriarchal family) are accepted as such, yet relationships within them are ethically transformed through the requirement to act “in the Lord,” with love and justice, without however dissolving the social status differences. Geréb offers a complementary analysis, examining the actuality of the theme of family in the post-1989 context of Central and Eastern Europe. He emphasizes that, according to the biblical perspective, family belongs to the order of creation (Gen 2:24), being supported both by Jesus and by Paul, and constitutes “the smallest nucleus” both of the people of God and of the Church and of society. Geréb observes the contemporary transformations of the institution of family—prolonged celibacy, frequent divorces, economic migration that separates parents from children—and reveals how the Pauline exhortation from Col 3:18–4:1 remains pertinent for regulating family relationships in the spirit of Christ (Zs. GERÉB, “Familie und Verwandtschaft,” in *Neutestamentliche Studien*, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, 145–161; previously published in G. DEN HERTOEG / J. ROSKOVEC [ed.], *Familie: Verwandtschaft, die den Unterschied macht // Family: Kinship that matters*, BÖR 92, Leipzig, 2012, 67–82).

to the apostolic tradition.⁷² The “Mystery” is no longer an eschatological secret, but the plan of salvation (including the union of Jews and Gentiles) which was revealed to the holy apostles and prophets, figures who now already belong to the founding past of the Church.⁷³

6.3. Methodological and Practical Consequences

The stylistic analysis of the alternation of personal pronouns (*Wir / Ihr*) has confirmed that Deuteropauline theology structures the life of the church on two pillars:

1. *Confession (Wir)*: The objective truth of salvation accomplished by God, celebrated liturgically.

2. *Application (Ihr)*: The actualization of this truth in the concrete life of believers through parenthesis.⁷⁴

In conclusion, the study shows that the Epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians (and subsequently the Pastorals) succeeded in transforming the eschatological impulse of the first generation into a durable ecclesiological structure. If in Paul the emphasis fell on the imminent coming of the Lord, in the *Deuteropauline* letters the emphasis falls on the presence of the Lord in the Church and on the growth of His Body in history. This “line of development” (*Entwicklungslinie*) was essential for the Church not to remain an apocalyptic sect,

⁷² KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 131 (Passage 387). A paradigm shift is evident in Colossians: “Compared to the authentic Pauline epistles, a shift from the character of power to doctrine can be perceived” (“Gegenüber den echten Paulusbriefen kann eine Verschiebung vom Machtcharakter auf die Lehre [...] wahrgenommen werden”). While for Paul the Gospel is a dynamic power of salvation (Rom 1:16), in Colossians it becomes “the word of truth” which must be “learned” (Col 1:7) and “known” (1:6), transforming into a wisdom (2:3) and a fixed doctrine about “the Mystery of Christ” which must be preserved and in which believers must be “rooted.”

⁷³ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 350 (Passage 1051). On Eph 2:20, Klein defines the historical status of apostles and prophets: “The Epistle to the Ephesians thus presupposes that in its time there are no longer any apostles or prophets. They belong to the time of beginning” (“Der Epheserbrief setzt damit voraus, dass es in seiner Zeit weder Apostel noch Propheten gibt. Sie gehören der Anfangszeit an”). Unlike Pauline theology where the apostle is an active worker who lays the foundation, in Ephesians they themselves have become “the foundation” already laid of the Church, their role being concluded with the initial revelation of “the mystery of Christ” (Eph 3:5), with the Church now being in a phase of growth on this stable foundation.

⁷⁴ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 298–299 (Passage 892). Klein synthesizes the theological function of direct address: “The ‘You’ statements always result from proclamation, either in the form of a promise (*Zuspruch*), or as exhortation (*Ermahnung*)” (“Die Ihr-Aussagen ergeben sich immer aus der Verkündigung, sei es in Form eines Zuspruches oder als Ermahnung”). The “We” style (*Wir-Stil*) is used to formulate the confession of faith and to objectively describe God’s saving act (*Heilstat*), while the transition to “You” marks the application of this truth to the lives of the addressees, indicating the ethical consequences or offering the certainty of salvation.

but to become a universal historical reality, capable of integrating “all the fullness of God.”⁷⁵

Tribute Note

This study is dedicated to Professor Hans Klein, a landmark of biblical exegesis in the Romanian and European academic sphere. I add two personal memories that have marked my formation as a New Testament scholar.

The first dates back more than two decades, when, as a master's student, I attended a lecture delivered by Professor Klein at the Center for Biblical Studies of “Babeş-Bolyai” University in Cluj-Napoca, on the Gospel of Mark. I was profoundly impressed by the fact that Professor Klein used exclusively the Greek text of the New Testament (*Novum Testamentum Graece*, Nestle-Aland) throughout his presentation, without resorting to translations – a lesson about the rigor that must accompany any exegetical endeavor.

The second memory is a piece of advice that Professor Klein offered to young New Testament researchers: to begin by producing a personal translation of the entire Greek text, an intensive work in which they should rely on acquired knowledge and the dictionary. What matters is the process – the daily steps toward a deepening in the text, toward an intimacy with the apostolic language and thought. This advice fundamentally changed the way I read and research Scripture.

Ad multos annos, Herr Professor!

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⁷⁵ KLEIN, *Entwicklungslinien*, 46–47 (Passage 131–133). Klein traces the theological trajectory from Paul to his disciples: “The next generation could not transmit unchanged this understanding of the new life... Colossians sees the new life as being present in principle through baptism... The Epistle to the Ephesians [affirms] that Christians are transported ‘to the heavenly heights’” (“Die nächste Generation konnte dieses Verständnis... nicht unverändert weitergeben... Der Kol sieht das neue Leben durch die Taufe im Ansatz da... Der Epheserbrief... dass die Christen ‘in die Himmelshöhen’ entrückt sind”). While for Paul the new life was an eschatological “possibility” that had to be continually actualized, the Deuteropaulines transform this concept: 2 Thessalonians responds to the delay of the Parousia through work ethics, Colossians and Ephesians emphasize the presence of salvation and the exaltation of the believer (spatialization of eschatology), while the Pastorals focus on the “renewed” life lived in piety and under the power of the Spirit.

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