# THE POLITICS OF THE TERM γραφή IN THE PASTORAL EPISTLES[1]

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## Abstract

*The understanding of the term Scripture in early Christianity is best described as an evolving concept that can be categorised into various stages. This can best be seen in the most popular Greek term the NT uses in designating Scripture, γραφή and its cognates.  Γραφή was used 50 times in the NT to represent Scripture, and in each of these instances, it refers to more than just a mere writing which is what the term originally meant in Greek prior to the NT's consistent use of it as a technical term for sacred writing.*

*This study attempts to reflect briefly on (part of) the evolution γραφή underwent on the pages of the NT especially within the Pastoral Epistles (PE) - a product of the early second century CE. This study bears in mind that the recognition of books as Scripture is not a series of clearly defined steps, but rather a long and complicated process involving creativity and powerplay. This study therefore serves to enhance a more accurate understanding of the transition the concept of Scripture in the PE, most especially pertaining to the use of the term γραφή.*

*The question regarding the scope of the term γραφή in the NT and especially in the PE is open to debate – especially the use of the two different words, ἱερὰ γράμματα and γραφή for Scripture in 2 Tim. 3:15–16. So is the reference to Jesus' words as Scripture in 1 Tim. 5:18. These have raised questions of a possible shift in the PE' understanding of γραφή.*

*Findings from this research include the extensive use of  γραφή in the PE to accommodate more than just the Jewish Scripture, as it has evolved to include emerging earlier writings of the NT; the author of the PE was creative in adopting and adapting to a new understanding of sacred writings which serves the context of his time.*

*This unveils the influence a community exerts on recognition of authoritative Scripture while teasing out the politics intertwined in the recognition of Scripture and the identity of a people, as this later became the path to canonicity of Scripture.*

**Keywords:** γραφή; Scripture; Pastoral Epistles

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## Introduction

Notwithstanding the much attention given to and the intense debates on the metamorphosis of the concept of Scripture[2] in difference eras, the transition in the concept of Scripture that took place within the pages of the New Testament (NT) itself has not received much attention. Although much has been written on the post-NT canonisation of Scripture, however more attention ought to be given to the changes that occur within the NT itself in the understanding of what is reckoned as Scripture. Therefore, further work is required on the three anomalies in the use of the term γραφή in the NT (1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; and 2 Peter 3:16).

This article therefore aims to renew discussions on the understanding of the concept and scope of Scripture in the Pastoral Epistles using the word γραφή as a feeler.

## What is Scripture?

The idea of scripture has in recent times become complex, slippery and very elusive as different definitions and factors play significant roles in the comprehensive definition of the concept. The conceptual definition of scripture has been taken for granted for so long, as efforts were often directed to the interpretation of what a selected text of Scripture means rather than attempting a conceptual, phenomenological understanding of scripture. Γραφή in Koine Greek could mean writings or a written document (Combrink, 1996:107). Liddell and Scott (1940) defined γραφή as a "representation with the means of lines". It could therefore mean a drawing or delineation, as this refers to some of its earlier usages in Herodotus (Hdt 4:36) and by Plato (Pl. Plt. 277c). Later, it was understood as a writing or an inscription. This understanding has evolved over the centuries of its existence to mean something transcendental. Some scholars, for example A.A. Bouquet (1954:20), were several decades ago in favour of attaching divinity or sacredness to any form of writing in the bid to explain how γραφή obtained its transcendental value. This could be considered to be true on the grounds that people who could read or decode a written document at the time were rare, but this reasoning is to be rejected as there is no evidence from antiquity that this was so. However, the Christian understanding of Scripture is that it is the written word of God. The Jews were said to have shared this same perspective as they used "holy Scripture(s)" to "denote an established body of writings of divine origin, possessing authority for the people of God as well as for the individual" (Schnabel 2004:34).

Scripture in general has been broadly defined and classified metaphysically as God's word – authoritative religious texts originating in God and reflecting his will (McDonald, 2017:39). Scripture has also been understood as an icon. This is a concept from Ancient Near Eastern mythology, where scripture is seen as an earthly representation of a set of writings that have a heavenly prototype containing an outline of human destiny (Parmenter 2009:299–300). In the recent past, a sociological understanding that perceives scripture as a bilateral term has emerged. It defines scripture as involving a kind of relationship that certain communities share with an existing text, which is eventually successfully transmitted to the next generation of the same community (Smith 1993:17; Levering 1982:1–2). Smith (1993:ix) therefore argued that "being scripture is

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[2]   Scripture is only used with a title case in this paper to denote it as a proper noun, for example, Christian Scripture or Jewish Scripture and so forth. In every other instance, a lower case is used for it as a common noun unless the word is used at the beginning of a sentence.

not a quality inherent in a given text or type of text so much as an interactive relation between that text and a community of persons". This latter approach precipitates the dichotomy currently visible in the responses of different communities to different texts, as this created the possibility of the different sacred claims that different communities laid on different texts. This observation posits that the distinguishing characteristics of whatever text is known as scripture might not be limited to the text alone but also include the different communities which uphold such texts as scripture.

The most common designation for Scripture in the NT is the word γραφή and its cognates as this was employed fifty (50) times in the NT (Smith 2010:97) with a new strand of meaning attributed to γραφή and its cognates by different NT authors, which is noticeably different from its familiar usage in the OT books. Recent investigations suggest that γραφή and its cognates appeared to have successively changed in its meaning, scope, and usage during different eras. These changes, with a specific reference to the Pastoral Epistles (PE), are the subject of this article.

**The idea of γραφή in the Old Testament**
There was a time when the term γραφή connoted a basic and different meaning in comparison to what it later came to mean in the NT and subsequently throughout Christian history until today. In OT books, γραφή simply meant a writing or a written document void of the notion of sacredness presently attached to it. The period in which the technical definition of Scripture was excluded from the term γραφή and its cognates is the period that James Barr (1983:1) referred to as the time of scripture itself. This references the time when the Scripture was being formed, a period when several of the contemporarily known biblical stories were taking place historically. This period leaves one to ponder on what standards people in this era live by as there was no scripture to guide and dictate lifestyle and practices.

Although it is difficult to claim that this time before scripture is synonymous in its entirety to the time of the OT, it is apparent that a significant portion of the period is covered in the OT. This suggests that there is an overlap between the period when there was no Scripture and the period covered as times of the OT. Apart from several occurrences of the term γραφή in the NT, the LXX also has well over 50 occurrences of γραφή and its cognates. Thirty-five of these occur in the canonical books of the OT, and the remaining occurrences are found in the Apocryphal books (Pantelia, Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, 2019). Γραφή and its cognates in the LXX have a range of meanings and uses such as a document writing about a king, a document detailing a prophet's life, a reference to the tablets on which the Decalogue was written, and so forth. In only two instances does the understanding of γραφή include the technical definition of a collection sacred writings as it would later be used in the NT. These two instances are from two late Apocryphal books – 2 Esdras 6:18 and 4 Maccabees 18:14. The former was a reference to the "Scripture of the book of Moses" (a likely reference to the Torah), while the latter reference was a quote from Isaiah 43 which the author of 4 Maccabees referred to as Scripture. It is therefore possible that, at the time of the writing of these two Apocryphal books, portions of the OT writings were already recognised as Scripture, as the elevation and reverence of Isaiah 43 text as sacred writing in 4 Maccabees shows. It can also be asserted from the aforementioned that the concept of γραφή as sacred Scripture, although common in the NT, was not found in the OT writings, as all instances

of the term γραφή in the canonised books of the OT were never used to reference sacred Scripture. The use of γραφή for sacred Scripture therefore suggests a period later than that of the canonized OT.

The rational explanation for this can be found in the fact that the collection of writings presently referred to as OT took a long time to be compiled and named Scripture, as agreement on which books to recognise as Scripture took a while. The support for the earliest recognition of a completed canon for the OT as early as 1st century CE was anchored by Josephus in his work "*Against Apion*" (Dempster 2016:326-7). This position that the OT canon was completed in the 1st century CE has been refuted by a number of scholars, such as John Barton (2007:58-59), Lee Martin McDonald (2007:154), and Timothy McLay (2007:176), who all argued that a great deal of evidence suggests the opposite of Josephus' claim.

## Γραφή in the NT Writings

Steve Moyise (2008:3) illustrated the dynamic function and use of language as changing over time; for example, he used the word "gay", which now has a different meaning to the one it had in the 20th century to exemplify this. In the present century "gay" is used to denote one's sexuality, while in the early 20th century it was used to refer to one's mood and emotional state. So also γραφή, which meant "writing" in the Scriptures of Israel, has been used in the NT to designate something quite different from mere writings, namely sacred Scripture, a reference to the Jewish Scripture (McDonald, 2017:64). An investigation into every other instance where the term γραφή is employed in the NT shows that γραφή is always used as a reference to sacred, authoritative Scripture, except in three instances: 1 Timothy 5:18, 2 Timothy 3:16, and 2 Peter 3:16.

The use of γραφή and its cognates in the NT was limited to not only the noun version of the word but also the verb. The verb perfect tense in the passive voice γέγραπται (it is written) appeared 65 times referring to Scripture or at times used to cite a known scriptural quotation (McDonald 2017:64). References to Scripture in the NT are frequently introduced with a variant of formulae such as, "it is written", "the Scripture says", "the Scriptures say" and "according to the Scripture". Certain quotations – located mostly in the Pauline corpus and Jude – are found also in the NT from sources not documented nor canonised in the contemporary OT. An example of this is the quotation from the Book of Enoch found in Jude 9, 14 (Barr, 1984:43). These quotations further complicate the question on what the NT writers had in mind or recognised as Scripture.

These constant references to the Jewish Scripture unveil Christianity as inheriting a large portion of its Scripture from Judaism (Gamble 1985:38). However, what was left uncertain was if there existed a boundary to what is referenced as Scripture during the NT times. In other words, at the time of the NT, there seems to be no known scope of what is referred to as sacred Scripture. The NT never at any point gives a list of books recognised as sacred Scripture. While this may seem to be an argument from absence, it is not, as the writers of the NT tended to refer to their Scripture as "The Law and the Prophets". These represent only two out of the three sections of the OT. In several instances, Jesus opts to refer to Scripture with these terms instead of γραφή; in all those times he limits it to "the Law and the Prophets". In only one instance did he include a third section, which he referred to as "Psalms" in Luke 24 (Dempster 2016:340). Psalms is just one book out of the section designated as "Writings". This may suggest that the

Writings may not have had the same level of recognition or authority as the Law and the Prophets in the time of Jesus. The timing of the ascription of authority and scriptural value to each of the books differs. Some received such authority early (for example, the Pentateuch), while for others it took a while as some of these books were first passed around and were only given scriptural status later (Weissenberg, Pakkala, and Marttila 2011:6). In the NT, Jesus and other NT writers in numerous instances referred to the term γραφή as sacred Scripture– a description of a set of writings from which they quoted authoritatively (Silver 1990:28). Γραφή is recognised as a designation for Scripture at the time of Jesus and the NT writers, as the several occurrences of the term in the NT reveal (all its occurrences point to an authoritative writing); its composition, however, remains doubtful. Several debates have occurred on the topic of the timeframe in which each of these components was recognised and seen as authoritative (McDonald 2012:58; Burkett 2019:32), but this is not the focus of this article.

## Γραφή in the Pastoral Epistles

The PE have traditionally been classified as letters written by Paul, but this article aligns itself with the consensus position that the PE were written in the early 2nd century CE, not by Paul but by a pro-Pauline author and possibly from fragmentary notes written by Paul.[3] The absence of the PE in Codex Vaticanus, Codex P[46] and Marcion canon (Perkins 2017:xviii) further lends support to this position.

### Features of the Pastoral Epistles

One of the main characteristics of the PE in modern scholarship is the manner in which it is embroiled in several controversies, ranging from debates on its authorship to its dating to its content to its anti-Marcion claims and so forth. The place, understanding and role of the term γραφή is one of these contentious issues and has been closely linked to its position on Marcionism. Charles M. Nielsen (1980:5–6) argued that the PE are pro-Marcion as he noted that the author of the PE resisted quoting frequently from the OT as most NT writers tend to do; instead, he simply made few allusions to the OT, and several of these allusions have a semblance even to some of the NT writings.[4] In Nielsen's words (1980:6), "There is no indication in the Pastorals of a lively interest in the Old Testament (far from it), and thus on this issue they can hardly be interpreted as anti-Marcionite. The implications of this point for an understanding of what the Pastorals mean by Scripture are enormous.". The second outstanding feature Nielsen (1980:6–8) identified in the PE is the author's stress on Paul to the detriment, or rather absence, of mention of the other 12 apostles. He therefore concluded that these reflected the condition of the church then

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[3] The reason for this is the enormity of evidence in favour of a non-Pauline authorship and also unresolved issues surrounding some of the contents of the books; for example, inconsistent vocabulary with other genuine Pauline letters was used, there is a high frequency of *hapax legomena* (an estimate of 175 new words never used anywhere else are present in the PE and some of these words have been found to be common in the 2nd century AD), and there is an advanced and complex ecclesiastical structure in the books. These reasons, coupled with the evidence from the codices, make plausible and very likely a non-Pauline authorship dated around early 2nd century AD (Towner 2006:16–17; Walker 2012:128).

[4] This absence of the PE from Marcion's canonical collection has generated debates suggesting that the PE's contradictory stance especially to Marcion's form of asceticism is the key factor responsible for its neglect in Marcion canon (Hendricksen, 1964:4). However, later studies carried out by Nielsen (1980) and subsequently Wolfe (1989) both attempted to evaluate the PE based on its purported disposition to this Marcion theory. In other words, both authors attempted to view the PE either as pro-Marcion or anti-Marcion.

and their closeness to Marcion in their thinking and doctrine. Meanwhile Paul Wolfe (1989:5–7) combated this strand of thought as he criticised the pattern of reasoning which led to Nielsen's conclusion as invalid and merely arguments made either from silence or from absence. However, they both agreed on one point: there is something relatively unique about the PE's understanding and scope of what is considered authoritative Scripture.

A survey and read-through of the PE reveal that the PE is akin to an instruction manual – a list of instructions for the recipients to follow. Also, there are more instances of the use of the term πιστὸς ὁ λόγος (1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Titus 3:8) than the term γέγραπται in the entire Pastoral Epistles. The statements that this term precede appear to carry more value with the author of the PE than Scripture itself. These "faithful sayings", Zehr (2010:45) notes, are found only in the PE and nowhere else in the NT. They are known either to follow or precede a citation that is likely catechetical as a received tradition. I.H. Marshall (1999:397) viewed them as indicators to what has been said which "rests on a firm basis of ethical teaching and is in line with it".

### Instances of γραφή in the Pastoral Epistles

As earlier mentioned, while there are only a few quotations from the OT in the PE, γραφή and its cognates appeared twice in these three books – 1 Timothy 5:18 and 2 Timothy 3:16.

> λέγει γὰρ *ἡ γραφή*, Βοῦν ἀλοῶντα οὐ φιμώσεις: καί, Ἄξιος ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ
> (1 Timothy 5:18)
>
> καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ βρέφους *[τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα* οἶδας, τὰ δυνάμενά σε σοφίσαι εἰς σωτη ρίαν διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. πᾶσα *γραφὴ* θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος π ρὸς διδασκαλίαν,
> πρὸς ἐλεγμόν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνη
> (2 Timothy 3:15–16).

Rather coincidentally, the only direct quotation (not allusion) from the OT is found in one of these two passages – the former. A careful understanding of the context of both occasions is necessary for understanding the unique concept and scope of γραφή in the PE. Both texts featured γραφή in a way that γραφή is seen as sacred and authoritative, but unknown in its defined boundaries and make-up.

### First Timothy 5:18

Although the PE contain only a few references and allusions to the OT, these few quotations and allusions are found to be texts from the OT already quoted or represented in some Pauline letters (Nielsen 1980:5). 1 Timothy 5:18 is one of such passages. The quotation in this text is primarily from Deuteronomy 25:4; However, prior to its quotation in the PE, it had also been cited in 1 Corinthians 9:9 and in a similar context of discussion. Accepting the late dating of the PE, one is left to ponder on whether this is a direct quotation from the primary source, Deuteronomy 25:4, or a secondary rendering in 1 Corinthians 9:9. The latter may signify that the author of the PE has access

only to the Pauline writings and not to the Jewish Scripture. Also, Barrett (1963:79) argued that the allusion in 1 Timothy 5:19 is more likely to have come from 2 Corinthians 13:1 than Deuteronomy 19:15. There is, however, a possibility that it is from neither, but rather an allusion from Jesus' statement in Matthew 18:16.

The significant observation from this citation about γραφή in the 1 Timothy 5:18 text is the combination of two quotations (one from the OT or its reference in 1 Corinthians 9:9 and the other from Jesus in Luke 10:7). The author of the PE referred to both as quotations from Scripture. Walter Lock (1978:63) deduced that this "would be the earliest instance of the Lord's words being quoted as 'Scripture'". If this is true, it radically changes the understanding of the term γραφή in the PE from the understanding of the term in other NT books, except perhaps for 2 Peter. 2 Peter 3:16, where the author equates Paul's letters to γραφή, depicts a new level of creativity, comparable only to the use of γραφή in the PE. This may imply that the scope of Scripture herein is broader than what was the norm for other NT writings, as Scripture is no longer limited to the Jewish Scripture.

*Second Timothy 3:15–16*
This passage presents a different kind of problem. The two verses gave two different Greek terms as references for Scripture – [τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα and γραφή. The intention of the author in using these two different Greek terms is not clear and understanding their meaning has become contentious and controversial. Some scholars have taken these different usages to suggest a play on words (Guthrie 1969; Lock 1978; Smith 2010; and Perkins 2017). However, on a contrary note, Hendricksen (1976:30) has argued that the author of the PE made these distinctions intentionally as he attempts to differentiate between the two terms. He proposes that by ἱερὰ γράμματα the author referred to the Jewish Scripture, whereas γραφή is a reference to every other writing thought to be divinely inspired. In other words, according to Hendricksen, "all Scripture", (πᾶσα γραφὴ) as distinguished from "sacred writings" (ἱερὰ γράμματα – the Jewish Scripture), means everything recognised by the church as canonical and authoritative by the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

The [τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα in the passage is in many manuscripts anarthrous, as the definite article was a later addition. However, the use of the rare adjective ἱερὸς is of greater consequence than the addition of the definite article. This is because ἱερὸς has the history of being cautiously employed, or rather avoided, in the LXX and even in the NT. It is a word seldom used except in a compound form, as the only other instance in which it was substantively used in the NT was in 1 Corinthians 9:13. Kittel and Bromiley (1965:223) attributed the rarity of the use of ἱερὸς in both LXX and NT to its common usage as a sacral and cultic term in the Greek world. The LXX translators probably considered it more pagan and cultic to be used and therefore use ἅγιος in the place of ἱερὸς. Yet its link to γράμματα here, although foreign to the NT as a reference for Scripture, is common and frequently employed in the works of Josephus and Philo when referring to Jewish Scripture (Towner 2006:582).

Its use alongside γράμματα in this passage forms one of the numerous *hapax legomena* identified in the PE, because neither γράμματα nor its combination with ἱερὸς has previously been used as a reference for authoritative Scripture in the NT. Consequently, as this is a singular occurrence in the entirety of the NT, interpreters and

biblical scholars tend to confer on it the meaning associated with it in the works of Josephus and Philo – namely the Jewish Scripture.[5]

If [τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα is a reference to the Jewish Scripture in the PE and the use of γραφή is not a play on words as suggested by some, and thereby not a synonym of ἱερὰ γράμματα, then what does γραφή, which is used extensively and exclusively as a term for Scripture in its other NT occurrences, represent in the PE? Hendricksen (1970:300) and G.W. Knight (1992:448) argued against the idea that γραφή is a synonym of ἱερὰ γράμματα. However, Knight slightly differed from Hendricksen in his conclusion, as he opined that γραφή in this text encompasses all other writings to be later included and canonised as Scripture. This made his reference to γραφή in 2 Timothy 3:16 prophetic at the time of the writing.

I am of the position that the meaning, scope and use of γραφή in the PE is different, broader and unique when compared to its use in other NT writings except 2 Peter 3:16, where Pauline letters were already thought to be Scripture. Four considerations are important in this argument.

One is the implication of the presence of θεόπνευστος in the text. Kevin Smith (2010:97) and Kern Trembath (1987:6) are of the opinion that the adjective θεόπνευστος is unnecessary in the grammatical rendering of the text. The sentence has a complete and comprehensive meaning with a possibility of no less robust meaning even with the removal of the adjective θεόπνευστος. The *hapax legomenon* θεόπνευστος is not an interpolation, as text critical studies have shown. As Smith has written, "regardless of how the relationship between γραφή and θεόπνευστος is interpreted, γραφή alone refers to sacred, inspired writings". Trembath argued that every Jew or Christian takes scripture by default as writings coming from God, and there is therefore no need for the addition of an adjective such as θεόπνευστος to γραφή to facilitate such a meaning. This has also been the standard for about 50 occurrences of the term in the NT. As a result, the presence or absence of θεόπνευστος in the text does not jeopardise the overall meaning. Therefore, θεόπνευστος could have been used by the author to show the distinction and to validate and convey authority on the unique way γραφή has been deployed here.

Secondly, the broader and unique scope attributed to the understanding of γραφή in the PE is further demonstrated in the other occurrence of γραφή in 1 Timothy 5:18 as it is made to cover even the words of Jesus and not only the Jewish Scripture.

The third factor is the disinterest in the Jewish Scripture noticed in the PE, buttressed by the seeming coincidences where citations and allusions from the Jewish Scripture found in the PE are also found elsewhere in other books of the NT. A case could be made from these for the devotion of the author of the PE to the Pauline writings.

Fourth, the featuring of both ἱερὰ γράμματα and γραφή in the same pericope made a different interpretation plausible even though such joint featuring might be easily interpreted as a synonym or a play on words. The 2nd-century-AD date for the PE, however, make it possible that the writer could have been influenced to use the same vocabulary for Scripture as used by Josephus and Philo. His use of ἱερὸς could therefore be interpreted as deliberate and not accidental, as he strove to distinguish between ἱερὰ γράμματα and γραφή as two forms of Scripture. This therefore indicates that the

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[5]    This also serves to strengthen the argument for a 2nd century AD dating for the PE.

author of the PE either believed that Scripture is no longer limited to the Jewish Scripture or lived at a time when such belief was rife.

## Politics of the Use of the term γραφή

One of the numerous understandings of politics in the Webster Dictionary is the outworking of activities aimed at improving or increasing someone's or something's status or power within an organisation. This was what the author of the PE attempted with his broader representation of γραφή within the PE as he uses the concept to help forge the new identity early Christianity needed through his use of γραφή. According to Wolfgang Stengmann (2007:114), the modern western understanding of religion; in which a religion is understood as personal belief devoid of politics, law, economic activities and ethnicity; is quite different from what people in antiquity believed. Religion, politics, and ethnicity in antiquity are inseparable. The Jewish High Priest rules the nation while the Roman emperor governs, and the sacred writings served as the laws of the Judean nation. This is further stressed by Brent Nongbri (2013:2-3) as he reflects on "religion" as a modern name given to the integral activities of a group of people – a phenomenon already in existence in antiquity but not so named. He noted that, in the ancient world, the deities were involved in every aspect of the lives of the people, and this excludes the modern dichotomy created between religiosity and secularity. Religion was therefore a part of how people in the ancient world identified themselves.

In this environment, incipient Christianity had to negotiate its own identity as it emerged from Judaism. This negotiated identity comprised of a socially-constructed definition, a shared self-understanding about its origins, practices, values, and shared goals of the group (Stengmann 2007:117). Since sacred Scripture formed a fundamental part of the religion from which it came, early Christianity would naturally have been expected to update, upgrade and make relevant to its emerging identity its Scripture as it forms a separate existence from Judaism, especially after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70CE. It did this as it sought validation and self-understanding. As a result of this quest, a unique understanding as seen in the PE is predictable and expected. Therefore, the author of the PE either served as a facilitator in enabling the later acceptance and recognition of the NT writings as Scripture by his uncommon usage of the term γραφή, using it as one of the instruments in propagating the Christian identity, or he lived at a time when the identity of early Christianity had been comfortably accepted and formulated to sustain his understanding of Scripture. Whichever line of action the author of the PE took, the words of Hanne von Weissberg, Juha Pakkala, and Marko Mattila (2011:5) still come true that the status of these books was "dependent on a community accepting the claim for (their) authority."

## Conclusion

The focus of this article was not on presenting new evidence, but rather the reinterpretation of existing information about the PE, which it suggests was seeking to validate the uniqueness of the concept of Scripture when compared to other NT writings. It advocates the creativity of the author of the PE in the use of the term, γραφή. The author was complicit in the efforts and politics of creating an identity for a church which had separated and distanced itself from the umbrella of Judaism. As at the time of the writing of the PE (early 2nd century CE), there are no known contentions of canonicity

similar to those that occurred in the 3ʳᵈ century CE, and, even if there were arguments on what should be considered Scripture, such arguments were not yet so advanced as to have initiated such creativity. This author, however, in conjunction with his time, consciously and shrewdly broadened the horizon of the church's understanding of Scripture, possibly as a response to include writings which related to the message of the church.

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