

THE PARALLELS BETWEEN 1 AND
2 THESSALONIANS AGAINST THE
BACKGROUND OF ANCIENT PARALLEL
LETTERS AND SPEECHES

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David Wenham has demonstrated convincingly that memory and oral tradition were key components behind the formation of the Gospels.¹ This important insight is relevant for the interpretation, not only of the many parallels between the Synoptic Gospels but also of the parallels between some of the Pauline letters.

More than a hundred years ago, William Wrede wrote a book on the origin of 2 Thessalonians that is still influential, as evidenced by the fact that it was recently translated into English. He regarded the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians as the “primary argument” against the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians.² Scholars who defend the authenticity of 2 Thessalonians agree that the parallels are the most important argument.³

In this essay, I would like to apply a somewhat new approach to the striking parallels of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. I will start with a review of these parallels (section 1). In a second step, I will give an overview of the different interpretations of these parallels in the most important scholarly literature (section 2).

1. D. Wenham, *From Good News to Gospels: What Did the First Christians Say about Jesus?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018).

2. W. Wrede, *The Authenticity of the Second Letter to the Thessalonians*, trans. R. Rhea (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017), 2; trans. of *Die Echtheit des Zweiten Thessalonicherbriefes* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903); so also W. Trilling, *Untersuchungen zum 2. Thessalonicherbrief*, ETS 27 (Leipzig: St. Benno, 1972), 157; cf. most recently R. Hoppe, *Der zweite Thessalonikerbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 2019), 33–35; and T. Nicklas, *Der zweite Thessalonikerbrief*, KEK 10/2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2019), 26–29, 42–45.

3. For instance, J. Graafen, *Die Echtheit des zweiten Briefes an die Thessalonicher*, NTAbh 14.5 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1930), 35; so also A. J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, AnCB 32B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 365; cf. the recent overview by N. K. Gupta, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, ZCINT 13 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019).

Then, I will draw on some neglected historical evidence—namely, parallel letters and parallel speeches in ancient literature (sections 3 and 4). Finally, I will draw some conclusions (section 5).

1. The Parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians

Different Kinds of Agreement

Between 1 and 2 Thessalonians, there are topical, structural, and verbal similarities (and differences). First, there are some topical agreements between 1 and 2 Thessalonians: both letters deal with eschatological (1 Thess 4:13–18; 5:1–3; 2 Thess 2:1–12) and ethical (1 Thess 4:1–8, 9–12; 5:4–11, 12–13, 14–22; 2 Thess 3:6–15) questions.

Second, both letters agree to a certain extent in their structures: the letters contain similar letter openings (1 Thess 1:1 par 2 Thess 1:1–2), thanksgivings (1:2ff. par 1:3ff.; 2:13ff. par 2:13f.; 3:11–13 par 2:16–17), and letter closings (5:23–28 par 3:1–5, 16–18).

Third, there are verbal agreements. As Wrede already observed, extensive verbal agreements between 1 and 2 Thessalonians are rare.⁴ A comparatively high level of verbal agreement can be found in several sections of the two letters (which have been printed in bold in table 1):

1 Thess	2 Thess	
1:1	1:1–2	Letter opening:
1:1a	1:1a	- Senders
1:1b	1:1b	- Addressees
1:1c	1:2	- Greeting
1:2–10	1:3–12	Thanksgiving for the congregation
2:1–12		Review of previous activities
	2:1–12	Teaching about signs of the parousia (eschatology)
2:13–16	2:13–14	Thanksgiving for the reception of the gospel
2:17–20		Paul's longing for the congregation
3:1–8		Timothy's report about the congregation
	2:15	Exhortation to stability

4. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 13; cf. the comprehensive overview by R. Reuter, *Kolossier-, Epheser-, II. Thessalonicherbrief*, vol. 1 of *Synopse zu den Briefen des Neuen Testaments*, *Arbeiten zur Religion und Geschichte des Urchristentums* 5 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1997), 621–739.

1 Thess	2 Thess	
3:9–10		Prayer report
3:11–13	2:16–17	Prayer for the congregation
4:1–8		Exhortation to sanctification (ethics)
4:9–12		Exhortation to brotherly love (ethics)
4:13–18		Teaching about the resurrection (eschatology)
5:1–3		Teaching about times and points of time (eschatol.)
5:4–11		Exhortation to watchfulness (ethics)
5:12–13		Exhortation to the recognition of leaders (ethics)
5:14–22		Various exhortations (ethics)
	3:6–15	Exhortation on behavior against nonworkers (ethics)
5:23–28	3:16–18	Letter closing:
5:23	3:16	- Blessings
5:24	3:3	- Encouragement
5:25	3:1–2	- Request for intercession
	3:4	- Expression of confidence
	3:5	- Blessing
5:26	3:17	- Final greeting
5:27		- Command to read the letter publicly
5:28	3:18	- Blessing

Table 1: Structural Agreements between 1 and 2 Thessalonians

Verbal Agreement in the Letter Openings

First, similarities in wording can be found in the letter openings (1 Thess 1:1–2 par 2 Thess 1:1). The verbal agreements in the letter openings are particularly extensive (nineteen words are identical in form):

1 Thess 1:1: Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy (Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος), To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ): Grace to you and peace (χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη).

2 Thess 1:1–2: Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy (Παῦλος καὶ Σιλουανὸς καὶ Τιμόθεος), To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ): Grace to you and peace (χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη) . . .

Table 2: Verbal Agreement in the Letter Openings

Verbal Agreement in the Prayers

Second, verbal agreements can be found in the prayers of the two letters (1 Thess 1:2ff. par 2 Thess 1:3ff.; 2:13ff. par 2:13ff.; 3:11–13 par 2:16–17):

1 Thess 1:2–4: We always give thanks to God for all of you (**εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν**) and mention you in our prayers,

2 Thess 1:3: We must always give thanks to God for you (**εὐχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν**), brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing.

constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith (**τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως**) and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thess 1:11: “To this end we always pray for you, asking that our God will make you worthy of his call and will fulfill by his power every good resolve and work of faith (**ἔργον πίστεως**) . . .

For we know, brothers beloved by God (**ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ** [τοῦ] θεοῦ) that he has chosen you . . .

2 Thess 2:13: But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord (**ἀδελφοὶ ἠγαπημένοι ὑπὸ κυρίου**), because God chose you . . .

Table 3: Verbal Agreement at the Beginning of the Thanksgivings for the Congregation

1 Thess 2:13: We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that (**καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως, ὅτι**) when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God’s word, which is also at work in you believers.

2 Thess 2:13: But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because (**ἡμεῖς δὲ ὀφείλομεν εὐχαριστεῖν τῷ θεῷ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν . . . ὅτι**) God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Table 4: Verbal Agreement at the Beginning of the Thanksgivings for the Reception of the Gospel

1 Thess 3:11–13: Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus **(αὐτός δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς)** direct our way to you.

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another **(πλεονάσαι καὶ περισσεύσαι τῇ ἀγάπῃ εἰς ἀλλήλους)** and for all, just as we abound in love for you.

And may he so strengthen your hearts **(εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας)** in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints (cf. 3:2).

2 Thess 2:16–17: Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father **(αὐτός δὲ ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς καὶ [ὁ] θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ἡμῶν)** who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope . . .

2 Thess 1:3: . . . your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing **(πλεονάζει ἡ ἀγάπη ἑνὸς ἐκάστου πάντων ὑμῶν εἰς ἀλλήλους)**.

2 Thess 2:17: May he comfort your hearts and strengthen them **(παρακαλέσαι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας καὶ στηρίξαι)** in every good word and work.

Table 5: Verbal Agreement in the Prayers for the Congregation

Scattered Verbal Agreement in the Letter Bodies

Third, there are some scattered instances of textual agreement in the main bodies of the letters. Most extensive is the agreement in 1 Thess 2:9 par 2 Thess 3:8 (ten identical words). “Nowhere in any of Paul’s authentic letters (except for example the phrases and keywords as found in 1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9) can such literal and exact agreement and correspondence at all be documented between two texts of Paul’s.”⁵ The other verbal agreements are much more limited.

In these verbal agreements in the letter body, 2 Thessalonians rarely follows the sequence of 1 Thessalonians. The most important verbal agreements are the following:

1 Thess 2:1: You yourselves know **(αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε)** . . . (cf. 3:3; 4:2; 5:2)

1 Thess 2:9: You remember our labor and toil, brothers; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you **(τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον· νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τίνα ὑμῶν)** . . .

2 Thess 3:7–8: For you yourselves know **(αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε)** . . .

. . . with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you **(ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τίνα ὑμῶν)** . . .

5. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 26.

1 Thess 2:19: . . . before our Lord Jesus at his coming (ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ) (cf. 3:13; 4:15; 5:23).	2 Thess 2:1: As to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (ὕπερ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) . . . (cf. 2:8).
1 Thess 3:4: In fact, when we were with you (καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἦμεν), we told you beforehand . . .	2 Thess 3:10–14: For even when we were with you (καὶ γὰρ ὅτε ἦμεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς), we gave you this command . . .
1 Thess 4:1: Finally, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus (ὁμᾶς καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ) . . .	Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ (καὶ παρακαλοῦμεν ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ) . . .
1 Thess 5:9: . . . for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) for obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (εἰς περιποίησιν δόξης τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) . . .
1 Thess 5:12–14: But we appeal to you, brothers (ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί) . . .	2 Thess 2:1: We beg you, brothers (ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί) . . .
And we urge you, brothers (παρακαλοῦμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί), to admonish the idlers (τοὺς ἀτάκτους) . . . (cf. 4:1)	2 Thess 3:6: Now we command you, brothers (παραγγέλλομεν δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί) . . ., to keep away from believers who are living in idleness (ἀτάκτως) . . .

Table 6: Scattered Verbal Agreement in the Letter Bodies

Verbal Agreement in the Letter Closings

Fourth, similarities in wording can be found in the letter closings (5:23–28 par 3:1–5, 16–18). The verbal agreements at the end of the letter are much more limited than the agreements in the letter openings:

1 Thess 5:23–25: May the God of peace himself (αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης) sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.	2 Thess 3:16: Now may the Lord of peace himself (αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης) give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with all of you.
The one who calls you is faithful (πιστός), and he will do this.	2 Thess 3:3: But the Lord is faithful (πιστός) . . .

Brothers, pray for us (**ἀδελφοί, προσεύχεσθε** [καί] **περὶ ἡμῶν**).

1 Thess 5:28: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you (**ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν**).

2 Thess 3:1: Finally, brothers, pray for us (Τὸ λοιπὸν **προσεύχεσθε, ἀδελφοί, περὶ ἡμῶν**), so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere, just as it is among you . . .

2 Thess 3:18: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you (**ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν**).

Table 7: Verbal agreement in the letter closings

The Same Words with Different Meanings

One final point may be made here: According to Wrede, the author of 2 Thessalonians used words from 1 Thessalonians with different meanings.⁶ In 1 Thess 3:11 par 2 Thess 3:5, for instance, the optative *κατευθύναι* has two different objects: While the first letter says “may our God . . . direct our way [τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν] to you,” the second letter says “may the Lord direct your hearts [ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας] to the love of God.”

2. Interpretations of the Parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians

Most of the very different explanations for these parallels were already discussed in much detail over a hundred years ago and have since then been repeated many times, as we will see in the following.

Literary Dependence

PAUL USED 1 THESSALONIANS

Theodor Zahn mentioned in passing the possibility that when Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians, he was able to reproduce from memory what he had written in 1 Thessalonians (see “Memory for a Recent Letter” below). Zahn, however, put more emphasis on his suggestion that Paul sent a clean copy of 1 Thessalonians to the addressees, while he kept the draft copy for some time. Therefore, “nothing was more natural in the circumstances than for him to read over again the original copy of 1 Thess[alonians], if he still had it, before dictating 2 Thess[alonians].”⁷

6. Cf. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 9–10.

7. Th. Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. J. M. Trout et al. (Edinburgh: Clark, 1909), 1:250n6.

One major objection has been raised against this suggestion: It is implausible that Paul “for the same community . . . again and again uses the same words and expressions at the exact same place in the text.”⁸ In such a case, “an entire half of the letter must be attributed to Paul’s own plagiarism”⁹ (i.e., self-plagiarism).

SOMEONE ELSE USED 1 THESSALONIANS

Although William Wrede was convinced that Paul could not have written 2 Thessalonians, he agreed that the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians speak in favor of literary dependency.¹⁰ “Only this assumption explains all aspects of the relatedness.”¹¹ According to Wrede, the kind of relationship between the two letters does not convey the impression that the first letter was simply copied.¹² Yet, the author of 2 Thessalonians had 1 Thessalonians “in front of him” and looked “into the actual letter during the writing of the second letter.”¹³

Others have objected that “the parallels do not occur in the same order and extend only to about one third of the letter, so that nothing compels us to assume literary dependence.”¹⁴

Memory for a Recent Letter

According to Josef Graafen, the author of 2 Thessalonians “must have known 1 Thessalonians almost by heart so that he could employ useful expressions and phrases without searching. That is why the dependence became so obscure.”¹⁵ Graafen regarded it as possible that Paul wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians on the same day.¹⁶

The major objection against this interpretation of the evidence concerns the limited capacity of human memory. According to Wrede, the suggestion that Paul called to mind what he had written in 1 Thessalonians can explain only a few of the similarities between the two letters:

For most of all the related passages and the remarkable pages of exact relationships and wording it could only have been a matter of pure coincidence

8. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 31.

9. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 32.

10. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 13.

11. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 30.

12. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 13.

13. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 30; Trilling, *Untersuchungen*, 156–57, agreed with this interpretation of the evidence.

14. W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), 230.

15. Graafen, *Echtheit*, 35–52 (42, my trans.); see also Kümmel, *Introduction*, 231–32.

16. Graafen, *Echtheit*, 47.

which brought this about. . . . There is no such coincidence. . . . This is the decisive and crucial fact which to me appears to provide indirectly yet the strongest and most compelling argument.¹⁷

Memory for Preformed Elements from Oral Preaching

In his classical commentary, Wilhelm Bornemann offered two related explanations for the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians. He suggested that after Paul's departure from Thessaloniki, he was occupied day after day with his thoughts, which he then wrote down in 1 Thessalonians. His first letter was therefore not the result of one hour but rather the outcome of several weeks of reflection. According to Bornemann,

It is a frequent and comprehensible phenomenon that we gradually and more or less unconsciously develop very specific lines of thought and phrases for objects and people with whom we are deeply concerned. Every time our attention is drawn to these objects or people, the same thoughts and phrases reappear in a very similar way. . . . This experience is very common in letters we write for similar occasions.¹⁸

Further:

Once someone has appropriated a text very thoroughly and vividly for a sermon and has to preach about that same or a similar text again, he will unintentionally, unknowingly and without remembering the disposition and the details of this sermon involuntarily approximate the wording, the thoughts and the arrangement of that first sermon.¹⁹

According to Bornemann, these psychological mechanisms can explain the parallels to 1 Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians.

Béda Rigaux was also convinced that the complex relationship between 1 and 2 Thessalonians requires an equally complex explanation. He pointed out that anyone who repeatedly talks in public about the same topics will inevitably use the same thoughts and expressions again and again. The source of the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians may therefore have been Paul's preaching activity. In both letters, the apostle drew on his kerygma about Jesus and on his apostolic parenthesis.²⁰

17. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 27–28.

18. W. Bornemann, *Die Thessalonicherbriefe*, KEK 10, 5th/6th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1894), 477–86 (484–85, my trans.).

19. Bornemann, *Die Thessalonicherbriefe* (my trans.).

20. B. Rigaux, *Les Épîtres aux Thessaloniens* (Paris: Gabalda, 1956), 146–52 (151–52).

The main objection against this suggestion pertains once again to the limited capacity of human memory. According to Wrede, the appeal to memory cannot explain the many specific congruencies between the parallel sections:²¹

Should we . . . believe that he [i.e., Paul] concerned himself with such colorless and dreary wishes and admonitions found in 1 Thess 3:11–4:2 and likewise already formed them in his intellect before the composition and thereafter carried them in his memory for a long time?²²

The Search for Historical Analogies

William Wrede presented in detail the main argument in favor of literary dependence and against alternative interpretations: An appeal to human memory cannot explain the many verbal agreements between 1 and 2 Thessalonians. The main argument against Pauline authorship of 2 Thessalonians was also brought forward by Wrede: Paul would not have practiced self-plagiarism, at least not in two letters that were addressed to the same congregation.

Many recent scholarly explanations of the historical origin of 1 and 2 Thessalonians have repeated or rejected Wrede's classical arguments. *To my knowledge so far, however, New Testament scholars have not presented historical evidence demonstrating that ancient letter writers actually wrote in the ways assumed by modern biblical scholarship.* Wrede, for instance, mentioned only in passing that “many other letter writers” (before and after Paul) “relied on the structure and thoughts of a letter” they had sent to another addressee.²³ This, however, is all Wrede had to say about historical analogies, and even for this small point he did not refer to any historical evidence to support his claim. Therefore, I would like to continue my investigation by drawing on ancient analogies to the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians. I will begin with several analogies from ancient letters.

3. Parallel Letters in Antiquity

Some of the available parallel letters from antiquity were probably the result of literary dependence, while others were composed by means of memory as seen below.²⁴

21. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 29; cf. 30.

22. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 29; cf. 30.

23. Wrede, *Authenticity*, 31.

24. On the use of memory in ancient literature, see J. P. Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Memory and Literacy in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1997), 181–88 and *passim*.

Literary Dependence

During excavations in Boğazköi, the ancient capital of the Hittite Kingdom, numerous cuneiform texts were discovered. About twenty of these texts are letters belonging to an Egyptian-Hittite correspondence from the thirteenth century BCE.²⁵ Among them are several pairs of letters the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II addressed to the Hittite Great King Hattusili III and his wife, the Great Queen Puduhepa, to whom he referred as brother and sister. The fact that Ramses wrote not only to the Great King but at the same time also to the Great Queen was probably due to the special constitutional position of the Hittite queen, who stood on an equal footing with the king.²⁶

One can assume that the parallel letters were sent simultaneously and with the same messengers. Even a modern (German) translation of the Akkadian texts demonstrates the large correspondence in wording between the parallel letters. An example can illustrate this.²⁷

Ramses II of Egypt to Hattusili III of Hatti

So (sagt) Wašmuaria šat[epnaria, der Großkönig des Landes Äg]y[pten], der Sohn der Sonne, Riamašeša mai-[amana, der Großkönig, der König des Landes Äg]ypten:

Zu Hattušili, dem [Groß]könig, [dem König des Landes Hatti, meinem Bruder, spr]ich:

[Nun, dem] Riamašeša mai-a[mana, dem Großkönig, dem König des Landes Ägypten], deinem Bruder, [geht es gut], meinen Häusern, meinen Frauen, mein[en] Söhnen, [meinen Truppen, meinen Pferden],

Ramses II of Egypt to Puduhepa of Hatti

[S]o (sagt) Wašmuaria šatepnaria, der Großkönig, der König des Landes Ägypten, [der So]hn der Sonne, Riamašeša mai-amana, der Großkönig, der König des Landes Ägypten:

Zu Puduhepa, der Großkönigin des Landes Hatti, meiner Schwester, sprich:

Nun, dem Riamašeša mai-amana, dem Großkönig, dem König von Ägypten, deinem Bruder, geht es gut, seinen Häusern geht es gut, seinen Truppen, seinen Pferden, seinen Wagen und inmitt[en aller seiner

25. Cf. S. Košak, *Die Textfunde der Grabungen in Boğazköy 1906–1912*, vol. 1 of *Konkordanz der hethitischen Keilschrifttafeln* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), XXI.

26. E. Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz aus Boghazköi in babylonischer und hethitischer Sprache*, Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaftlichen 77.2 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), 2:19–21.

27. Quoted from Edel, *Die ägyptisch-hethitische Korrespondenz*, 1:101, 107; for an English translation of the letter of Ramses to Puduhepa, see G. M. Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, SBL Writings from the Ancient World Series 7 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 129–31.

meinen [Wa]gen u[nd] innerhalb aller Länder geht es s[ehr], sehr gut; . . .
meiner Länder geht es se[hr], sehr gut; . . .

So (sprich) zu meinem Bruder:
Nun[mehr ist Tilitešub, der Bote] meines [Br]uders, zu mir gelangt mit R[i]amašja, dem Boten meines Bruders, m[it Pi[r]ihnawa, meinem Boten, mit Zinapa (und) m[it Man]ja, meinen Boten, und sie haben mir vom Wohlergehen meines Bruders berichtet, und sie haben mir vom Wohlergeh[en der Groß]königin berichtet . . .

So (sprich) zu meiner Schwester:
[N]unmehr ist Tilitešub, der Bote meiner Schwester, zu mir gelangt mit Riamašja, dem Boten meiner Schwester, mit Piriħnawa, meinem Boten, mit Zinapa (und) mit Manja, meinen Boten, und sie haben mir berichtet vom [Wohlergeh]en meiner Schwester, und haben mir berichtet vom Wo[hle]rgehen des [Groß]königs . . .

Table 8: (Approximate) Verbal Agreement between Two Parallel Letters by Ramses II

The verbal agreements between these parallel letters are much more extensive than the agreements between 1 and 2 Thessalonians. The best explanation for the large amount of verbal agreement between the Akkadian letters is some kind of literary dependence. The writer likely had the earlier letter in front of him when he wrote the second letter.

Memory for Recent Letters

PARTIAL SELF-REPETITION IN TWO PARALLEL LETTERS OF PLINY THE YOUNGER

A different analogy comes from one of the most famous ancient letter collections—the letters of Pliny the Younger (first/second century CE). Pliny sent two similar letters to different addressees, Saturninus and Priscus.

Pliny, Epistles 7.7

Gaius Plinius to his Saturninus, greeting (*C. Plinius Saturnino suo s[alutem]*).

¹ I thanked (*gratias egi*) our friend Priscus only the other day, but I was very glad to do so again at your bidding.

Pliny, Epistles 7.8

Gaius Plinius to his Priscus, greeting (*C. Plinius Prisco suo s[alutem]*).

¹ Words cannot express how much pleasure it is to me that (*quam iucundum sit mihi quod*) I receive letter after letter from our friend

It is a great pleasure to me that (*est enim mihi periucundum quod*) splendid men (*virī optimi*) like yourselves, both friends of mine, should be so devoted and conscious of your mutual attachment.

² Priscus also declares that he gets a special happiness from his friendship with you (*praecipuam se voluptatem ex amicitia tua capere*) and vies with you in this best of rivalries, a reciprocated affection which will increase as time (*tempus*) goes on . . .

Farewell (*Vale*).²⁸

Saturninus, in which he expresses his warmest thanks (*gratias . . . agit*) to you.

² Go on as you have begun, love this splendid man (*virumque optimum*) as much as you can.

You will receive much happiness from his friendship (*magnam voluptatem ex amicitia eius percepturus*), not only for a short time (*tempus*),³ for he is endowed with all the virtues, especially (*praecipue*) the unflinching constancy in his love.

Farewell (*Vale*).²⁹

Table 9: Verbal Agreement between Two Parallel Letters by Pliny the Younger

In these parallel letters, there is much less verbal agreement than in the Hittite letters. Further, Pliny did not always use the same words in the same order, nor did he always use the same words in exactly the same sense. To mention just two examples: In his letter to Saturninus, Pliny said that he thanked (*gratias egi*) Priscus; while in his letter to Priscus, he said that Saturninus thanked (*gratias . . . agit*) Priscus. The same verb has two different subjects. In his letter to Saturninus, Pliny said that the mutual affection of his friends was a pleasure to him (*est . . . mihi periucundum*); while in the letter to Priscus, he said that the letters of Saturninus were a pleasure to him (*iucundum sit mihi*). Again, a very similar phrase takes different objects, just as in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. This kind of verbal agreement suggests that Pliny composed the two letters at the same time and reproduced some ideas, phrases, and words from memory.

PARTIAL SELF-REPETITION IN THREE PARALLEL LETTERS OF CICERO

In 51 BCE, the Roman politician Gaius Claudius Marcellus was appointed consul for the following year. For this reason, Cicero (first century BCE) wrote three related letters, most probably on the same day: one letter to the new consul Gaius Marcellus (*Fam.* 15.7); one to the new consul's father who had

28. Radice, LCL (with modifications).

29. Radice, LCL (with modifications).

the same name, Gaius Marcellus (*Fam.* 15.8); and one to Marcus Marcellus, the cousin of the new consul, who was consul one year before him (*Fam.* 15.9):

**Cicero,
*To His Friends 15.7***

Marcus Tullius Cicero, proconsul, sends many greetings (*M. T. C. proco[n]s[ul] s[alutem p[lurima] d[icit]*) to Gaius Marcellus, consul elect.

Between Iconium and Cybistra, from the founding of the city 703 (*Inter Iconium et Cybistra, a. u. c. 703*).

I was extremely delighted to hear that you had been made consul (*te consulem factum esse*), and I pray that heaven may prosper your office, and that you may administer it in accordance with your own and your father's honorable position.

For not only have I always loved and esteemed you (*Nam cum te semper amavi dilexique*),

**Cicero,
*To His Friends 15.8***

Marcus Tullius Cicero, proconsul, sends many greetings (*M. T. C. proco[n]s[ul] s[alutem p[lurima] d[icit]*) to Gaius Marcellus, his colleague.

Between Iconium and Cybistra, from the founding of the city 703 (*Inter Iconium et Cybistra, a. u. c. 703*).

That your son Marcellus has been made consul (*Marcellum tuum consulem factum . . . esse*), and that you have felt the thrill of joy for which you most devoutly prayed, is an inexpressible pleasure to me (*gaudeo*),

and that not only on his own account, but because I consider that you also richly deserve all that the happiest fortune can bestow.

**Cicero,
*To His Friends 15.9***

Marcus Tullius Cicero, proconsul, sends many greetings (*M. T. C. proco[n]s[ul] s[alutem p[lurima] d[icit]*) to Marcus Marcellus, consul.

Between Iconium and Cybistra, from the founding of the city (*Inter Iconium et Cybistra, a. u. c. 703*).

I am highly delighted (*gaudeo*) that by the election of Gaius Marcellus to the consulship (*C. Marcello consule facto*)

you have gathered the fruit of your affection for your family, of your devotion to the commonwealth, and of your own most illustrious and admirable consulship . . .

For while I have had a particular affection for you from my boyhood (*Nam cum te a pueritia tua unice dilexerim*),

but I have also found you sincerely devoted to myself through all the vicissitudes of my fortunes.

Moreover, because of the repeated good services of your father, when he either defended me in the days of my gloom or honored me in the days of my glory,

I am, and I am bound to be, heart and soul at the disposal of all of you, especially as I am fully conscious of the energetic support (more than should have been demanded of any woman) given to my welfare and position by that most sterling and excellent lady (*gravissimae atque optimae feminae*), your (*tuae*) mother.

And that is my justification for entreating you (*a te peto*) with special earnestness to show your esteem for me by defending me in my absence (*ut me absentem diligas atque defendas*).³⁰

For I have had convincing proof of your incomparable goodness of heart toward me whether in my trouble or in my triumphs;

in short I have found your whole family most enthusiastic and eager in their support of my civil standing or official distinction (call it what you will).

For that reason you will do me a kindness if you pass on my congratulations to that most sterling and excellent lady (*gravissimae atque optimae feminae*), your (*tuae*) wife Junia.

I beg of you (*a te . . . peto*) to do what you always have done, to show your regard for me and defend me in my absence (*me absentem diligas atque defendas*).³¹

and you have desired, and indeed deemed me to possess the widest influence in every direction . . .

Take care of your health, and show your regard for me and defend me in my absence (*et me absentem diligas atque defendas*) . . .³²

Table 10: Verbal Agreement between Three Parallel Letters by Cicero

30. Williams, LCL (with modifications).

31. Williams, LCL (with modifications).

32. Williams, LCL (with modifications).

There are not only considerable differences, but also considerable similarities in content and wording between two or even three of these parallel letters. For instance, Cicero expressed his joy twice (in 15.8 and 9) with the verb *gaudeo* and once without this verb (15.7). In addition, it is noticeable that the verbal agreements in the letter headings (including the date) and in the final greetings are considerably greater than in the rest of the letter, just as in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. It is most likely that when Cicero wrote the second and third letter, he had the content and wording of the first and the second letter fresh in mind.

BROADENING THE SEARCH FOR HISTORICAL ANALOGIES

The verbal agreements between 1 and 2 Thessalonians are not nearly as extensive as the verbal agreements between ancient parallel letters that were clearly the result of literary dependence. The parallels between the Thessalonian letters are similar to the parallels between both two of Pliny's letters and three of Cicero's letters. Both authors wrote their parallel letters on the same topics at the same time. In both cases, the verbal agreement is overall more limited, but it is particularly strong in the letter openings and closings, and identical words can appear in different order and in different statements.

These analogies speak in favor of the thesis that Paul himself may have written 1 and 2 Thessalonians on similar topics within a limited time frame. However, the verbal agreements between the parallel letters of Pliny and Cicero are not as extensive as the verbal agreements between some of Paul's letters. Therefore, the analogies used so far can only partially explain the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

At this point, it is important to remember that "in the ancient world written letters and oral discourse (. . . speeches) were closely related. . . . Paul too used letters to communicate what he might have preferred to say, preach or teach in person."³³ Moreover, much of what we find in Paul's letters reflects his oral preaching activity. Paul was not in the first place a letter writer, but a preacher and teacher who conveyed his theology predominantly orally. Like other preachers and orators, Paul would have repeated portions of his teaching many times. For this reason, I regard it as methodologically justified to broaden the focus of my search for ancient analogies and to include parallel speeches. In the next and final section, I will quote a number of ancient testimonies on parallel speeches and present a few examples.³⁴

33. D. E. Aune, *The New Testament and Its Literary Environment* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1987), 197.

34. Cf. E. Stemplinger, *Das Plagiat in der griechischen Literatur* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1912), 185–93 ("Selbstzitate") and 253–57 ("Selbstwiederholungen").

4. Parallel Speeches in Antiquity

The Acceptance of Self-repetition in Ancient Oratory

In his *Speech to Philip*, the Attic orator Isocrates (fifth/fourth century BCE) explained in what kind of speeches he avoided verbatim repetitions of formulations from earlier speeches, and in what kind of speeches he regarded verbatim self-repetition as legitimate. It was a question of genre:

It is true that if I were making an epideictic speech I should try to avoid scrupulously all such repetitions; but now that I am urging my views upon you, I should have been foolish if I had spent more time on the style than on the subject matter, and if, furthermore, seeing that the other orators make free with my writings, I alone had abstained from what I have said in the past.³⁵

Clearly, in ancient Greek oratory self-repetition was not generally regarded as improper, though it was to be avoided in epideictic speeches. This distinction speaks against Wrede's reasoning that Paul's partial self-repetition in 2 Thesalonians would have been regarded as illegitimate self-plagiarism.

The Use of Earlier Speeches

Just as in ancient parallel letters, the parallels between ancient speeches were in some cases due to literary dependence and in other cases due to memory. It is not always possible to determine how the verbal agreement came about.

SELF-PARAPHRASE BY DEMOSTHENES

The Alexandrian sophist Aelius Theon (first/second century CE) informed his readers that Demosthenes (fourth century BCE) repeated the same thoughts in different speeches with different formulations:

Demosthenes often paraphrases himself [πολλάκις ἑαυτὸν παραφράζει], not only transferring things he said in one speech to another, but even in a single speech the same things are constantly repeated, but this escapes the notice of the hearers because of the variation of the style.³⁶

According to this testimony, Demosthenes practiced self-paraphrase but avoided verbal self-repetition.

35. Isocrates, *Ad Philippum* 93–94 (Norlin, LCL).

36. Theon, *Progymnasmata* 1 (2:63–64 Spengel); trans. G. A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata. Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 7.

SELF-PARAPHRASE BY LIBANIUS

Something similar can be observed in the writings of the orator Libanius (fourth century CE). His writings are one of the most extensive oeuvres of a pagan Greek author that has survived (only the works of Plutarch and Galen are more extensive). The oeuvre of Libanius consists of letters, rhetorical writings, and speeches.³⁷ Among his speeches, there are several pairs that he composed about the same time on the same topic: speeches 27 and 28 from the year 384 CE, speeches 48 and 49 from the year 388 CE, and speeches 51 and 52, also from the year 388 CE.

As we can see below, the two speeches 51 and 52, addressed to Emperor Theodosius the Great, have a parallel structure:³⁸

Libanius, <u>Speech 51</u>	Libanius, <u>Speech 52</u>	
51.1–3	52.1–3	Introduction
51.4–5, 9–11	52.5–7	Visit to the governors
51.13–17	51.13, 29–31	Intrigues of the professors
51.12, 20, 33–35	52.9–18, 27–28, 31–36	Arguments concerning the dangers
51.22–28	52.19–28, 37–38	Rebuttal of objections
51.29–32	52.39–45	Explanations for previous behavior
51.18–21, 33–35	52.17–18, 45, 47.50	Necessity of a law

Table 11: Parallels between Two Speeches of Libanius

A synoptic comparison of the Greek texts³⁹ shows that, despite their parallels in content and structure, the two speeches have virtually no similarities in wording. In his second speech on the same topic, Libanius gave his thoughts a completely new linguistic garb.

PARTIAL VERBAL SELF-REPETITION BY ISOCRATE

In contrast, Isocrates felt free to repeat not only his own thoughts but also some of his own words. In his autobiographic speech *Antidosis* (354/3 BCE), he pointed out that at times he felt free to repeat parts of his earlier speeches:

37. H.-G. Nesselrath, *Libanios: Zeuge einer schwindenden Zeit*, Standorte in Antike und Christentum 4 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2012), 37.

38. P. Petit, “Untersuchungen über die Veröffentlichung und Verbreitung der Reden des Libanios” (1956), in *Libanios*, eds. G. Fatouros and T. Krischer; Wege der Forschung 621 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983), 82–128 (90–91).

39. Cf. S. Kauffmann, “Discours 45, 50, 51 et 52 de Libanios. Édition, traduction, commentaire” (PhD diss., Université Paris Nanterre, 2006).

I am not going to refrain from quoting, at any rate briefly, from my earlier writings, but shall use whatever I may think appropriate to the present occasion [εἴποιμ' ἄν εἴ τί μοι δόξει πρέπον εἶναι τῷ παρόντι καιρῷ]. For it would be absurd, when I see other men making use of my words, if I alone should refrain from using what I have written in former days, especially now when I have chosen to repeat to you not merely small parts but whole divisions of my speeches. I shall, therefore, act in this matter as occasion may suggest.⁴⁰

In his above-quoted *Speech to Philip* (346 BCE), Isocrates expressed this conviction again:

Let no one suppose that I desire to conceal the fact that I have in some instances expressed myself in the same manner as upon a former occasion [ὅτι τούτων ἔνια πέφρακα τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ὄν περ πρότερον]. For, coming to the same thoughts, I have preferred not to go through the effort of striving to phrase differently what has already been well expressed. . . . So, then, I may perhaps be allowed to use what is my own [τοῖς μὲν οὖν οικείοις τυχὸν ἄν χρησαίμην], if at any time I am greatly pressed and find it suitable, although I would not now any more than in times past appropriate anything from the writings of other men.⁴¹

This remark of Isocrates referred to the immediately preceding section of his *Speech to Philip*, which shows similarities not only in content but also in wording to his much earlier *Panegyric Speech* (380 BCE):

**Isocrates,
*Panegyric Speech 147***

The Persians were so inferior to these men that the King (ὁ βασιλεὺς), finding himself in difficult straits and despising his own forces (καταφροσῆσας τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν δυνάμεως),

did not scruple to seize (συλλαβεῖν) the captains of the auxiliaries in violation of the truce, hoping by this lawless act to throw their army into confusion,

**Isocrates,
*Speech to Philip 91***

Notwithstanding that his foes had suffered so severe a loss, the King so thoroughly despised his own forces (κατεφρόνησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν δυνάμεως)

that he invited Clearchus and the other captains to a parley, promising to give them great gifts and to pay their soldiers their wages in full and to give them safe convoy home; then, having lured them by such prospects,

40. Isocrates, *Antidosis* 74 (Norlin, LCL).

41. Isocrates, *Ad Philippum* 93–94 (Norlin, LCL).

and preferring to offend against the gods (καὶ μᾶλλον εἶλετο περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔξαμαρτεῖν) rather than join issue openly with these soldiers.⁴²

and having assured them by the most solemn pledges known to the Persians, he seized them (συλλαβῶν) and put them to death,

preferring to offend against the gods (καὶ μᾶλλον εἶλετο περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔξαμαρτεῖν) rather than risk a clash with our soldiers, bereft though they now were of Cyrus's aid.⁴³

Table 12: Verbal Agreement between Two Speeches of Isocrates

This partial verbal agreement is similar to the verbal agreement in the letter bodies of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. The most likely explanation for these agreements is that when Isocrates composed his *Speech to Philip*, he used a copy of his *Panegyric Speech* that he had written more than three decades before. He would perhaps not have had to consult a written copy of a speech that he composed only recently.

Memory for Preformed Passages

In some cases, the evidence demonstrates that parallels between speeches can be accounted for by human memory. The Roman rhetorician Quintilian (first century CE) reported that some well-known orators worked out and memorized text modules for various situations so that they could introduce them by heart whenever necessary:

[That certain topics] are part and parcel of actual forensic pleading is so obvious that certain speakers, men too who have held civil office with no small distinction, have written out passages dealing with such themes, committed them to memory and kept them ready for immediate use, with a view to employ them when occasion arose as a species of ornament to be inserted into their extempore speeches.⁴⁴

Quintilian rejected this practice, because it prevents flexible responses to very different situations and because it bores the audience with what they already know:

42. Norlin, LCL (with modifications).

43. Norlin, LCL (with modifications).

44. Quintilian 2.4.27 (Butler, LCL).

When they produce the same passage in a number of different cases (*cum eadem iudiciis pluribus dicunt*), they must come to loathe it like food that has grown cold and stale, and they can hardly avoid a feeling of shame at displaying this miserable piece of furniture to an audience whose memory must have detected it so many times already: like the furniture of the ostentatious poor, it is sure to shew signs of wear through being used for such a variety of different purposes.⁴⁵

There is no evidence that Paul was afraid of repeating himself and boring his readers (cf. Phil 3:1). It is therefore quite possible that he integrated preformed material drawn from earlier discourse. However, the many parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians go beyond what can be explained by this analogy from Roman oratory.

Memory for Speeches

EXTENSIVE VERBAL SELF-REPETITION BY HORTENSIVS

Another piece of ancient evidence comes from Cicero who reported that the Roman senator, consul, and orator Hortensius (second/first century BCE) was able to remember and repeat his own speeches word-for-word:

First of all he possessed a memory of such accuracy as I can testify never to have known in anyone. What he had prepared in private he could reproduce without memorandum in the very words (*verbis eisdem*) of his original thought. This great natural gift he used so well that he was able without the aid of prompting to recall not only his own words, whether merely thought out or written down, but also all that was said by the other side.⁴⁶

Cicero described Hortensius's memory as extraordinary, even according to ancient standards, and Paul's letters do not contain parallel passages with so much verbal agreement. We therefore have to look elsewhere for a closer analogy.

EXTENSIVE SELF-REPETITION BY JEREMIAH

Some Old Testament texts imply that the prophets essentially knew their teachings by heart. The report on the historical context of the book of Jeremiah is illuminating. It says that in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim's reign (about 600 BCE), the prophet Jeremiah received the divine command to write all the

45. Quintilian 2.4.29 (Butler, LCL).

46. Cicero, *Brutus* 301 (Hendrickson, LCL); cf. 303.

words on a scroll, which God had spoken to him since his calling decades ago (Jer 36:1–2; 45:1; cf. 30:2; 51:60; and Isa 30:8). After Jeremiah had dictated them to his secretary Baruch (Jer 36:4, 17–18), King Jehoiakim burned the scroll (Jer 36:21–23). Jeremiah dictated the content of the burned scroll a second time (Jer 36:27–28, 32). This description presupposes that the prophet was able to reproduce his messages from memory.⁴⁷ This would certainly include their contents and likely parts of their wording.

The apostle Paul was not just a letter writer. Like Jeremiah (and other Jewish prophets), he was also a preacher, and he probably would have repeated his messages many times. If he was able to reproduce them from memory, he might also have been able to adjust them to the different purposes of his sermons and his letters. It would therefore have been quite natural if letters with similar purposes contained some parallel passages, which had their common origin in Paul's oral preaching activity.

Implications from a Broadened Perspective

Since in the ancient world, written letters were closely related to oral discourse, these observations from ancient oratory are also relevant for the Pauline letter. According to ancient rhetorical standards, the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians did not count as illegitimate self-plagiarism.

Some ancient orators such as Isocrates reused their own earlier speeches, not only by paraphrasing them but also by repeating parts of them word-for-word. In light of such analogies, it is historically quite plausible that Paul paraphrased material from his earlier letters both completely and partially. Just as in the speeches of some Roman orators, some of the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians may have been due to preformed elements that Paul inserted by heart, not only in different sermons but also in his parallel letters.

Beyond that, as a letter writer, Paul would have drawn on the content and vocabulary of his long-term preaching activity. It is quite likely that, just like the Old Testament prophets, Paul knew much of his oral preaching by heart and could therefore easily introduce relatively fixed elements in more than one letter.

47. Cf. H.-P. Rügner, "Oral Tradition in the Old Testament," in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition*, ed. H. Wansbrough, JSNTSup 64 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 107–20 (115–19).

5. Final Conclusion

The strongest case in favor of literary dependence between 1 and 2 Thessalonians was made more than a hundred years ago by William Wrede (whose influential book was published in an English translation in 2017). Even today, his work is discussed; many accept his arguments, while others reject them. To my knowledge, however, no one has yet drawn at any length on ancient analogies to the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

As the available ancient analogies demonstrate, it is not correct to say that the parallels between 1 and 2 Thessalonians must have been the result of literary dependence and cannot have been produced by one and the same author. Just as in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, in the parallel letters written by Pliny and Cicero topical, structural, and verbal agreements were a common phenomenon. Moreover, just as in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, in Pliny's and Cicero's parallel letters, the verbal agreement was particularly strong in the letter headings and in the letter closings.

Beyond that, like some Roman orators, Paul may have worked with preformed elements that he used on different occasions. Moreover, just like the Old Testament prophets Paul, may have drawn on the content and vocabulary of his long-term preaching activity. *In light of the available ancient analogies, it is historically quite plausible that Paul himself produced the parallels to 1 Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians, and that they are not the result of literary dependence but of human memory.*

Finally, if even the famous orator Isocrates felt free to repeat the wording of earlier speeches, it is improbable that someone such as the apostle Paul, whose style was much more quotidian, would have regarded the repetition of his own words as illegitimate self-plagiarism.