

## AN EARLY PARALLEL OF αὔθεντεῖν IN 1 TIM 2:12

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### I. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

There has been considerable scholarly discussion since the 1980s about the meaning of the verb αὔθεντέω, which occurs in the controversial text 1 Tim 2:12: διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω οὐδὲ αὔθεντεῖν ἀνδρός.<sup>2</sup> A difficulty in establishing the meaning of the verb in this context is that αὔθεντέω is quite rare in extant Greek literature before the fourth century AD. Apart from its one occurrence in the New Testament, recent studies have been able to identify only seven other possible examples of αὔθεντέω before the time of Constantine the Great, although it becomes more common thereafter.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, of these seven, three involve debatable readings of fragmentary papyri, while a fourth depends on a conjectural emendation.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the meaning that is usually assigned to the verb in 1 Tim 2:12 (“have authority over”) is based primarily on the verb’s later usage, on the meaning of its cognates, and on the ancient versions of this biblical verse.<sup>5</sup> Although the lexical sense of αὔθεντέω can be fairly securely established in this way, there is still some debate on whether the verb would have had a pejorative sense (e.g. “domineer”)

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<sup>2</sup> See especially George W. Knight III, “Αὔθεντέω in Reference to Women in 1 Timothy 2.12,” *NTS* 30 (1984) 143–157; Leland Edward Wilshire, “The TLG Computer and Further Reference to αὔθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2.12,” *NTS* 34 (1988) 120–34; H. Scott Baldwin, “Appendix 2: αὔθεντέω in Ancient Greek Literature,” in *Women in the Church. A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15* (ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995) 269–304; A. Wolters, “A Semantic Study of αὔθεντης and its Derivatives,” *JGRChJ* 1 (2000) 145–75; and Philip B. Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ. An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul’s Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 361–97.

<sup>3</sup> See the list in Wolters, “Semantic Study” 156–60.

<sup>4</sup> The three papyri in question are *P.Herc.* 220, *BGU* 1208, and *P.Tebt.* 276. The fourth text is Moeris Atticista, *Lexicon Atticum*, s.v. αὐτοδίκην. See the discussion of these texts in Wolters, “Semantic Study,” 156–59.

<sup>5</sup> On the ancient versions, see A. Wolters, “AYΘENTHΣ and its Cognates in Biblical Greek,” *JETS* 52 (2009) 719–29 (here 724–27).

or an ingressive sense (e.g. “assume authority”) in NT times.<sup>6</sup> It is a pity that there are not more attestations of ἀθηντέω from around the turn of the era.<sup>7</sup>

It is the thesis of the present article that one such attestation has not received the attention it deserves, mainly because it has been misdated by more than a millennium. The example I have in mind is found in the last sentence of the astrological text known as the *Methodus mystica*. In what follows I will first discuss the dating of this work, and then take a closer look at the specific passage containing the verb ἀθηντέω. Finally, I will briefly compare the use of ἀθηντέω in this astrological text with the way both this verb and its cognates are used in other early astrological writings.

## II. THE DATE OF THE METHODUS MYSTICA

The *Methodus mystica* was first published by Franz Cumont in 1929.<sup>8</sup> He argued that this work must have been written before Constantine’s abolition of crucifixion, which took place sometime after 320 AD, because one of its predictions is that a person will be crucified.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Cumont claims that the text must predate the time of Constantine by a considerable margin, because it does not use any vocabulary characteristic of later popular Greek.<sup>10</sup> His opinion is echoed by A.-J. Festugière and H.-W. Kuhn.<sup>11</sup> No doubt it is also because of Cumont’s dating that Walter Bauer included a reference to the *Methodus mystica* in the entry on ἀθηντέω in his well-known dictionary of

<sup>6</sup> A pejorative sense is defended, for example, by Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows. The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 116–19. An ingressive sense (“assume authority”) is defended by Payne, *Man and Woman*, 361–97. “Assume authority” has been adopted in the recent revision of the NIV (2011).

<sup>7</sup> I leave aside the suggestion made by Payne, *Man and Woman* 362, that the scholion on Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 42 (one of the *scholia vetera* of manuscript M, in which ἀθηντέω occurs in the otherwise unattested sense “murder”) goes back to Didymus Chalcenterus in the first century BC. There is in fact no evidence that Didymus wrote scholia on Aeschylus, while the *scholia vetera* in question include some that are much later than Didymus. See Eleanor Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship: A Guide to Finding, Reading and Understanding Scholia, Commentaries, Lexica, and Grammatical Treatises* (Oxford: American Philological Association, 2007) 36.

<sup>8</sup> See *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum. Vol. 8.1* (ed. F. Cumont; Brussels: Lamertin, 1929) 172–77. The full title is Ἐρμού τοῦ Τρισημέστου μέθοδος μυστικῆ εἰς πᾶσαν καταρχὴν ἐπιτήδειος, “A Mystical Method of Hermes Trismegistus Useful for Every Inception.”

<sup>9</sup> On the date of Constantine’s abolition of crucifixion, see Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, “Die Kreuzesstrafe während der frühen Kaiserzeit. Ihre Wirklichkeit und Wertung in der Umwelt des Christentums,” in *ANRW* 25.1 (1982) 168.

<sup>10</sup> *CCAG* 8.1, 127: “Ad tempus huius opusculi definiendum terminum *ante quem* praebere videtur p. 176, v. 16 ἀνασταυρούμενον. Nam crucis supplicium Constantinum Magnum sustulisse notum est (Mommsen, *Strafrecht*, p. 921). Multo antiquiora haec esse crediderim, quia nullum verbum e vulgari recentiorum Graecorum sermone petatum continent. . .” (“For purposes of dating this work the word ἀνασταυρούμενον on page 176, line 16, appears to provide a *terminus ante quem*. For it is well-known that Constantine the Great abolished crucifixion (Mommsen, *Strafrecht*, page 921). I am inclined to believe that these statements are much older than this, because they do not contain any word drawn from the popular speech of the later Greeks. . .”).

<sup>11</sup> See A. J. Festugière, *La révélation d’Hermès Trismégiste. I. L’astrologie et les sciences occultes* (Paris: Gabalda, 1950) 111 (“Certainement antérieur à Constantin, l’ouvrage [i.e. *Methodus mystica*] doit être beaucoup plus ancien, car il ne comporte aucun des vulgarismes du grec tardif”) and Kuhn, “Kreuzesstrafe” 732, note 506.

NT Greek.<sup>12</sup> Osburn also cites Cumont, but mistakenly assumes that he had fixed the date as the second century AD.<sup>13</sup>

David Pingree accepts the *terminus ante quem* posited by Cumont, but in addition posits a *terminus post quem* around 100 BC. He argues this on the basis of some of the technical astrological techniques that it adopts. “Certain of its methods,” he writes, “such as the elaborate extension of the κλήρος τῆς τύχης, the advanced method of determining the length of life, and especially the injunction to use the rising-times of the κλίμα in which the native is born, point to a date later than the second century BC.”<sup>14</sup> On this basis Pingree rejected the very early dating (third or second century BC) tentatively proposed by Wolfgang Hübner in 1982.<sup>15</sup> Pingree’s *terminus post quem* is adopted by Susanne Bennedik.<sup>16</sup>

The most widely accepted range of dates for the *Methodus mystica* is thus broadly from 100 BC (Pingree, Bennedik) to a time well before Constantine (Cumont, Festugière, Kuhn). However, since this astrological treatise belongs to a distinct group of related astrological writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, it may be possible to narrow this range still further, at least if we accept the judgment of Robert Hand that these Hermetic writings “undoubtedly contain very early astrology, and were surely sources for later writers such as Dorotheus and Valens.”<sup>17</sup> The last sentence is of special interest, since Dorotheus of Sidon and Vettius Valens were astrological writers of the first and second centuries AD, respectively. More precisely, according to Pingree Dorotheus flourished in the middle of the first century, between the years 25 and 75 AD.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, if the *Methodus mystica* comes before Dorotheus, but after the second century BC, its likely date would be between 100 BC and about 50 AD, and would thus predate the writings of the NT.

If the text is so early, why has it not played a more prominent role in recent discussions of Αὔθεντέω in 1 Tim 2:12? The answer to this question is found in the 1984 article on Αὔθεντέω by George W. Knight III.<sup>19</sup> In this article Knight examined one by one the references to extra-biblical occurrences given

<sup>12</sup> Walter Bauer, *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur. Fünfte, verbesserte und stark vermehrte Auflage* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1958) s.v. Αὔθεντέω.

<sup>13</sup> Carroll D. Osburn, “ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ (1 Timothy 2:12),” *Restoration Quarterly* 25 (1982) 1–12 (here 6).

<sup>14</sup> David Pingree, *The Yavanajātaka of Sphujidhva* (2 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978) 2.431.

<sup>15</sup> Wolfgang Hübner, *Die Eigenschaften der Tierkreiszeichen in der Antike. Ihre Darstellung und Verwendung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Manilius* (Sudhoffs Archiv, Beiheft 22; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982) 15 (“3.-2. Jh.?”). For Pingree’s critique of this dating, see his review in *Gnomon* 54 (1982) 620–23 (here 621).

<sup>16</sup> Susanne Bennedik, *Die Siebenplanetenwoche in Indien* (Inaugural-Dissertation, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelm Universität, Bonn, 2007), 191. Accessed on the Internet at <http://hss.ulb.uni-bonn.de/2007/1115/1115.pdf> on July 6, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Hand, “Introduction to First Fragment” in *The Astrological Record of the Early Sages in Greek* (trans. Robert Schmidt; ed. Robert Hand; Berkeley Springs, WV: The Golden Hind Press, 1995) 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Dorothei Sidonii Carmen Astrologicum* (ed. David Pingree; Leipzig: Teubner 1976) x.

<sup>19</sup> Knight, “Αὔθεντέω in 1 Timothy” 143–57.

in the entry on ἀθηντέω in BAGD (the second edition of the English version of Bauer's lexicon), which includes a reference to "Cat. Cod. Astr. VIII 1 p. 177, 7"—that is, to our passage in the *Methodus mystica*. In his treatment of this text, he does not take into account the earlier scholarly discussion of its date by Cumont, Hübner, and Pingree, but instead assigns it to a much later period, namely the fifteenth century AD.<sup>20</sup> A closer look at his argument reveals that he comes to this conclusion by equating the date of the Codex Parisinus graecus 2419, one of the three manuscripts in which the *Methodus mystica* has been preserved, with the date of the work itself.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, this error has gone largely undetected, with the result that subsequent biblical scholars who have dealt with the *Methodus mystica* in connection with their investigations of ἀθηντέω have simply copied Knight's mistake, thus dating the work some 1500 years too late.<sup>22</sup> In my own earlier work on ἀθηντέω I was also misled by Knight's dating, and therefore did not include the *Methodus mystica* among the pre-Constantinian texts which attest the verb.<sup>23</sup>

Ironically, therefore, a work which Knight and his followers have treated as containing the chronologically latest attestation of ἀθηντέω turns out instead to contain one of the earliest, perhaps the very first.<sup>24</sup> Instead of being of marginal interest for the issue of the meaning of ἀθηντέω in the NT, this treatise in fact proves to be of special interest, since it is one of the very few texts containing the verb that is roughly contemporaneous with the NT. Moreover, it illustrates the rare usage of the verb with a genitive, as in 1 Tim 2:12.

### III. THE PASSAGE CONTAINING ἀθηντέω

Having identified a plausible time period to which the *Methodus mystica* can be assigned, I now turn to the passage in question. It is part of a treatise which provides answers to specific inquiries, in this case questions about the future prospects of an unborn child.<sup>25</sup> Wilhelm and Hans Georg Gundel, in their study of astrology in antiquity, summarize the content of the treatise as follows.

It contains directions on how to answer questions about whether a human being, an animal, or a monster, a boy or a girl is coming into the world, whether a child is viable, whether it will be estranged from its family, whether a person will become king, how long they will live, and whether a child will be exposed or enslaved. Also inquiries about its future occupation, its character and education

<sup>20</sup> Knight, "Αθηντέω in 1 Timothy" 147 and 150.

<sup>21</sup> Knight, "Αθηντέω in 1 Timothy" 156, n. 31. On the date of the manuscript in question, see CCAG 8.1, 20 (Knight mistakenly gives the page number as 120 rather than 20).

<sup>22</sup> See Wilshire, "The TLG Computer" 128, and Baldwin, "Appendix 2" 304.

<sup>23</sup> See Wolters, "Semantic Study" 156–59. Recently Payne has assigned it to the third century, perhaps partly because he mistakenly identifies the *Methodus mystica* with another astrological text, *P.Tebt.* 276 (see below). See Payne, *Man and Woman* 386.

<sup>24</sup> Of the 84 attestations of ἀθηντέω in ancient Greek which Baldwin surveys, its occurrence in the *Methodus mystica* is treated as the latest. See Baldwin, "Appendix 2" 305. However, if it belongs to the first century BC instead, it may well precede its occurrence in BGU 1208 (27/26 BC), as well as its doubtful occurrence in *P.Herc.* 220 (mid-first century BC).

<sup>25</sup> See CCAG 8.1, 172.13 τὸ γεννηθὸσόμενον, and 173.20 τὸ τεχθὸσόμενον.

find an answer here, with the help of a method of calculation based on the positions of the sun and moon. The judgment rendered in each case is determined especially by the position of the planets in the vicinity of the relevant place on the zodiac. In addition, great significance is attached to planetary terms and their influence on characterology and typology.<sup>26</sup>

Within this overall context the very last section of the *Methodus mystica* deals with the significance of the position of the planet Mercury (Hermes in Greek) relative to the future social status of the individual who is the subject of the inquiry. It reads as follows in the Greek text published by Cumont:

Ἑρμῆς ἀγαθοποιῶν ἐπέχων ὄρια καὶ ὧν ἐπίκεντρος ἡγεμόνα καὶ ἄρχοντα σημαίνει. Ἑρμῆς μετὰ Σελήνης βασιλικὸν ἄνδρα σημαίνει. εἰ Σελήνη τετραγωνίζουσα τὸν Ἑρμῆν ὑπὸ ἀγαθοποιῶν μαρτυρεῖται, εἰ καὶ ἐν κακοποιῶν ὁρίοις ἐστίν, ὅμως μέγαν ἄνδρα δηλοῖ. Ἑρμῆς εἰς ἐπαναφορὰν τοῦ τόπου τῆς ἐφόδου ὑπάρχων χειροτέχνην, βάνασσον σημαίνει· ἐὰν δὲ ἐν ὁρίοις Ἀρεως, σημαίνει ἀπὸ πυρός ἢ σιδήρου ἐργαζόμενον· ἐὰν δὲ ἐν ὁρίοις Κρόνου, ἀπὸ κλοπῆς ἢ παρύγων φροντιστήν, ἀγαθοποιῶν δὲ τετραγωνιζόντων, τὸν πάντων αὐθεντοῦντα ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ καὶ μηδὲν κτώμενον.<sup>27</sup>

In the translation of Robert Schmidt this passage reads as follows:

And if Hermes occupies the bounds of a benefic and is upon a pivot, it signifies a leader and ruler; Hermes with the Moon signifies a royal man; if the Moon should be witnessed by a benefic while squaring Hermes, and if it is also in the bounds of a malefic, it nevertheless signifies a great man. Hermes in the post-ascension of the place of access signifies an artisan, a handicraftsman; and if it is in the bounds of Ares, it signifies one who works with fire or iron; and if in the bounds of Kronos, a fence or one who takes care of seaside business; but when benefics are squaring, one who has full command [αὐθεντοῦντα] of everything in an art but gains nothing.<sup>28</sup>

For our purposes, it is not necessary to go into the details of the technical astrological terminology in this passage. It is enough to know that the future social status of the subject of the inquiry is described as one of seven possibilities, depending on the position of the planet Hermes—that is, Mercury—relative to the zodiac and the other planets at the time of the inquiry. The assumption of ancient astrology, as Barton points out, is that “Mercury is the planet which determines occupations.”<sup>29</sup> Planetary positions in the heavens

<sup>26</sup> My translation from Wilhelm Gundel and Hans Georg Gundel, *Astrologumena. Die astrologische Literatur in der Antike und ihre Geschichte* (Sudhoffs Archiv, Heft 6; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1966) 22–23 (“Sie enthält Anleitungen über die Beantwortung von Fragen danach, ob ein Mensch, ein Tier oder ein Monstrum, ein Knabe oder ein Mädchen zur Welt kommt, ob ein Kindlebensfähig ist, ob es seiner Familie entfremdet wird, ob einer König wird, wie lange man lebt und ob ein Kind ausgesetzt und versklavt wird. Auch Anfragen nach dem künftigen Beruf, nach dem Charakter und der Erziehung werden hier beantwortet mit Hilfe eines Rechenverfahrens, das von dem Sonnen- und Mondstand ausgeht. Das jeweilige Urteil wird vor allem durch den Stand der Planeten im Umkreis der betreffenden Tierkreisstelle bestimmt. Ferner kommt den planetarischen Bezirken und ihrem Einfluß auf Charakterologie und Typologie eine große Bedeutung zu.”)

<sup>27</sup> CCAG 8.1, 176.24 to 177.8.

<sup>28</sup> See *Astrological Record* 11.

<sup>29</sup> Tamsyn Barton, *Ancient Astrology* (New York: Routledge, 1994) 119. See also Wolfgang Hübner, “Manilius als Astrologe und Dichter,” *ANRW II* 32.1 (1984) 265: “Mercur gilt nämlich als Patron der Berufe und Tätigkeiten.”

correspond to social positions on earth.<sup>30</sup> Using the terminology of Schmidt's translation (in italics), we can outline this passage schematically as follows.

- (1) Mercury in position A indicates a *leader and ruler*.
- (2) Mercury in position B indicates a *royal man*.
- (3) Mercury in position C indicates a *great man*.
- (4) Mercury in position D indicates an *artisan, a handicraftsman*.
- (5) Mercury in position E indicates *one who works with fire or iron*.
- (6) Mercury in position F indicates a *fence*<sup>31</sup> or *one who takes care of seaside business*.
- (7) Mercury in position G<sup>32</sup> indicates *one who has full command of everything in an art but gains nothing*.

In terms of social status or station in life, numbers (1) to (3) in this list clearly describe positions that are high in the social hierarchy of the ancient world. By contrast, numbers (4) to (6) clearly describe positions that are much lower in that hierarchy, while number (7) designates the lowest of them all.<sup>33</sup>

That the first three represent members of the ruling class is evident from the terms that are used: a *leader and ruler* (ἡγεμόνα καὶ ἄρχοντα), a *royal man* (βασιλικὸν ἄνδρα), and a *great man* (μέγαν ἄνδρα). By contrast, the second group of three describes especially artisans or tradespeople, a social group which occupied a low position in the social hierarchy of the time. Here Schmidt's translation needs to be adjusted somewhat. The first item should be read as the single designation χειροτέχνην βάνασσον (without the comma which Cumont inserted between the two words) and may be translated as "a common laborer." The adjective βάνασσος is an "epith[et] of the class of handicraftsmen or artisans," with a distinctly pejorative connotation, sometimes to be translated "vulgar, in bad taste."<sup>34</sup> The description of the second tradesman is ἀπὸ πυρὸς ἢ σιδήρου ἐργαζόμενον, literally "one working (making a living) from fire or iron."<sup>35</sup> This is presumably a generic term for an ironworker or blacksmith. The third designation is ἀπὸ κλοπῆς ἢ παρύργρων φροντιστήν, in which the participle ἐργαζόμενον must be mentally supplied from the previous designation, thus yielding the translation "a manager (making a living) from theft or waterside trades."<sup>36</sup> We know that a φροντιστής was an official

<sup>30</sup> See Barton, *Ancient Astrology* 162–63.

<sup>31</sup> Here Schmidt has the following note: "*phrontistēs apo klopēs*. This is a guess from context." (He is clearly using "fence" here in the sense of "receiver of stolen goods.")

<sup>32</sup> Literally "if the benefics are squared" (ἀγαθοποιῶν τετραγωνιζόντων). The ἀγαθοποιοί refer to the four "planets" which are supposed to exert a beneficent influence, namely Jupiter, Venus, the Moon, and sometimes Mercury. If they are "squared" (i.e. "in quartile aspect") it means that Mercury is at a 90° angle with respect to the other "benefics" in the zodiac.

<sup>33</sup> A useful diagram summarizing the social stratification of a traditional agrarian society, like that of the first-century Roman Empire, is found in Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege. A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966) 284.

<sup>34</sup> LSJ s.v., II.2. See also the *Revised Supplement* s.v.: "rude, coarse-mannered."

<sup>35</sup> On the construction with ἀπό, see LSJ s.v. ἐργάζομαι, II.6 *ad finem*.

<sup>36</sup> Compare the expression πάργυρα πρόσσοντες in *Vettii Valentis Antiocheni Anthologiarum libri novem* (ed. David Pingree; Leipzig: Teubner, 1986) 1.1.7 (p. 2,4) = 2.6 (Kroll), which LSJ (s.v. πάργυρος) translates "plying waterside trades."

or administrator of some kind.<sup>37</sup> The mention of “theft” indicates that the person in question is also engaged in criminal activities.

With the foregoing as background we turn to the seventh and final social role description of the series. Here Cumont’s Greek text reads as follows: τὸν πάντων ἀϋθεντοῦντα ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ καὶ μηδὲν κτώμενον. As we have seen, Schmidt translates this as “one who has full command of everything in an art, but gains nothing.” He is clearly understanding πάντων as the genitive of the neuter plural πάντα, “everything.” Another translation was offered by John R. Werner, namely “the one who exercises authority over all [others who are] in the trade and pays no consequences (or, acquires nothing).”<sup>38</sup> Werner clearly takes πάντων to be the genitive of the masculine plural πάντες, “all [others].”<sup>39</sup>

What both Schmidt and Werner fail to point out, however, is that πάντων is a conjectural emendation introduced into the text by Cumont; the manuscripts actually have τούτων at this point.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Cumont was probably mistaken in introducing this emendation, since the manuscript reading τούτων makes perfectly good sense in the context. I would submit that the phrase in question should be rendered as follows: “the one who is superior to these [that is, the foregoing workers] in his occupation, and yet earns nothing.” The text is describing someone who in a given occupation or trade (τέχνη) surpasses, is superior to, the tradesmen just listed. But despite his professional superiority, he has no income.<sup>41</sup> The reference is no doubt to a slave, who may be more skilled in various vocational accomplishments than many free men, but who nevertheless receives no wages.<sup>42</sup>

This conclusion is supported by the following considerations. The seven role designations in our passage follow a generally descending line, and slaves were at the bottom of the social scale in antiquity.<sup>43</sup> Although they had no legal right to any kind of remuneration, slaves were proficient in a wide range of skilled occupations.<sup>44</sup> In fact, there is considerable epigraphic evidence that many slaves looked upon their specific occupation as a significant part of their

<sup>37</sup> On φροντιστής see Friedrich Preisigke, *Fachwörter des öffentlichen Verwaltungsdienstes Ägyptens* (1915; repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1975) s.v. The word was also used for an official in the synagogue (see DBAG s.v.) and in the church (*PGL* s.v., 2). It was sometimes used as the equivalent of the Latin *procurator* (LSJ and its *Revised Supplement* s.v.). Note that LSJ and Schmidt mistakenly take παρόγρον in our passage to be dependent on φροντιστήν rather than on ἀπό.

<sup>38</sup> As cited in Knight, “Ἀϋθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2:12” 148. See also Baldwin, “Appendix 2” 305. It is unclear to me how Werner arrives at the translation “pays no consequences.”

<sup>39</sup> Another attempted rendering is that of Osburn, who clearly misunderstands our text altogether when he writes that it “uses the participial form ἀϋθεντοῦντα with respect to the sign [*sic*] of Saturn which results in one ‘becoming masterful or dominant in cunning and theft.’” See Osburn, “ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ” 6. Among other things, he appears to confuse πάρυγρα with πανουργία, “cunning.”

<sup>40</sup> See Cumont’s critical apparatus at *CCAG* 8.1, 177.

<sup>41</sup> Κτάομαι and its cognates (e.g. κτήσις, περίκτησις, κτήμα) frequently occur in astrological predictions to refer to a person’s financial position.

<sup>42</sup> I owe this insight to Wolfgang Hübner (private communication, May 21, 2010).

<sup>43</sup> Keith Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Key Themes in Ancient History; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 142, 149.

<sup>44</sup> Bradley, *Slavery and Society* 27, 49 (no remuneration) 57–80 (variety of occupations).

identity.<sup>45</sup> In many cases they were no doubt better at their trade than their free counterparts.<sup>46</sup>

It will be observed that there is nothing in this passage which suggests that ἀθηντέω has either a pejorative or an ingressive connotation. It simply refers to the way a person is superior, in terms of professional expertise in a given τέχνη, to others in the same business. There is no suggestion that the former is thereby abusing the latter, or doing them an injustice. Nor is there any hint that ἀθηντεύοντα here, parallel to the other present participles ἐργαζόμενον and κτώμενον, has an ingressive meaning, as in “gain mastery” or “assume authority.”

#### IV. Αἰθηντέω AND ITS COGNATES IN OTHER EARLY ASTROLOGICAL LITERATURE

The preceding concludes our discussion of the *Methodus mystica*, and its use of the verb ἀθηντέω. In order to situate that use in the broader context of roughly contemporaneous astrological literature, I turn now to a brief consideration of a number of other early astrological texts which contain either the verb ἀθηντέω or one of its cognates. There is good reason to do this, because it turns out that a significant cluster of the earliest attestations of this word family is found in astrological texts, and manifests a consistent semantic pattern.

As regards the verb ἀθηντέω, it is a remarkable fact that among the handful of pre-Constantinian attestations, three are found in astrological contexts, referring either to the rulership of one planet over another, or to the superior social position enjoyed by those born under favorable astrological conditions. Aside from the *Methodus mystica*, the texts in question are Ptolemy's *Apothelesmatika* (*Tetrabiblos*) (second century AD) and *P. Tebt.* 276 (second/third century AD).

The relevant sentence in Ptolemy reads as follows:

ὁ μὲν οὖν τοῦ Κρόνου ἀστὴρ μόνος τὴν οἰκοδεσποτείαν τῆς ψυχῆς λαβὼν καὶ ἀθηντήσας τοῦ τε Ἑρμοῦ καὶ τῆς σελήνης . . . ποιεῖ φιλοσωμάτων.<sup>47</sup> “If Saturn alone is ruler of the soul and *dominates* Mercury and the moon . . . he makes his subjects lovers of the body” (my emphasis).<sup>48</sup>

The translation here given is that of F. E. Robbins in the Loeb edition.<sup>48</sup> In a note on this passage Robbins adds: “Planets would ‘dominate’ the governors

<sup>45</sup> See Sandra R. Joshel, *Work, Identity and Legal Status at Rome: A Study of the Occupational Inscriptions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

<sup>46</sup> Joshel, *Work, Identity* 58 cites the Latin epitaph of a former slave which ends as follows: “Hic artem caelatura Clodiana evicit omnes” (“As to skill, he conquered all in the Clodian style of engraving”).

<sup>47</sup> *Claudii Ptolemaei opera quae exstant omnia. Volumen III 1: ΑΠΟΤΕΛΕΣΜΑΤΙΚΑ* (Post F. Boll et Æ. Boer secundis curis edidit Wolfgang Hübner; Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1998) 3.14.10. Note that this passage is numbered 3.13.10 in the 1940 Loeb edition published by F. E. Robbins (under the title *Tetrabiblos*).

<sup>48</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetr.* 3.13.10 (Robbins, LCL) 339. The recent French translation by Charvet translates the verb here as “exerce son autorité sur.” See Pascal Charvet, *Le livre unique de l'astrologie. Le Tétrabible de Ptolémée: astrologie universelle et thèmes individuels* (Paris: NiL éditions, 2000) 179.

of the soul (Mercury and the moon) by exercising rulership (οἰκοδεσποτίαν) over the portion of the zodiac occupied by the governors.”<sup>49</sup> As is customary in astrological parlance, planets are spoken of in anthropomorphic terms. Just as they are elsewhere said to “rejoice,” to “regard,” and to “witness,” so they are here said to “rule.”<sup>50</sup> The meaning of αὔθεντέω is elucidated by the later *Paraphrasis* of the *Apotelesmatika* attributed to Proclus, which here substitutes the verb κατακρατέω, “predominate.”<sup>51</sup>

It is clear that αὔθεντήσας does have an ingressive nuance in this context, so that it could also be translated “gain mastery” or “assume authority (over).” It describes how Saturn enters into a position of dominance over Mercury and the moon in the course of its celestial movements (compare also the parallel expression οἰκοδεσποτείαν . . . λαβών). However, this ingressive connotation is a function, not of the lexical content of the verb αὔθεντέω itself, but of its aorist tense. An ingressive sense of the aorist is found in many denominative verbs, especially those which denote some kind of ruling.<sup>52</sup>

The third astrological text illustrating the verb is *P. Tebt.* 276, which is unfortunately damaged at the point which interests us. As restored by Grenfell and Hunt, the relevant lines (26–29) read as follow:

[ἐάν δὲ] ὁ τοῦ Ἄρεως τρίγωνος τούτῳ φανῆ [καὶ τῷ τ]οῦ Κρόνου εὐδαιμονίαν με[γά]λην [ἀποτελεῖ] καὶ περι[ί]κτησιν ἔξει καὶ [α]ὔθεντή[σει]?. . . .]εἰ ἀσχολίαν.<sup>53</sup> “If Mars appears in triangular relation to the latter [Jupiter] and to Saturn, this causes great happiness, and he will make acquisitions and *rule*. . . .an occupation.”<sup>54</sup>

If this restoration is correct, then αὔθεντήσει would appear to describe a person’s future good fortune, which has to do with authority or dominance of some

<sup>49</sup> Ptolemy, *Tetr.* 3.13.10 (Robbins, LCL) 339, n. 1. Οἰκοδεσποτίαν is a textual variant of οἰκοδεποτείαν.

<sup>50</sup> On the anthropomorphic language describing planets in ancient astrology, see P. Monat, *Firminus Maternus. Mathesis. Tome I, Livres I–II* (Collection Budé; Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1992) 42, and Barton, *Ancient Astrology* 113.

<sup>51</sup> See *Procli Paraphrasis in quatuor Ptolemaei libros De siderum effectionibus* (Basileae, apud Ioannem Oporinum, 1554) 197, and LSJ s.v. κατακρατέω I.2. Compare Wolters, “Semantic Study” 158.

<sup>52</sup> See A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 834, particularly n. 4: “These ingressive aorists are often denominative verbs.” A common example of a denominative verb of ruling with an ingressive aorist is βασιλεύω (from βασιλεύς), which in the aorist means “become king” (see LSJ s.v., BDAG s.v., BDF §318 (p. 166), W. W. Goodwin and C. B. Gulick, *Greek Grammar* [Boston: Ginn and Co., 1930] §1262). Other examples are ἐπιστάτεω (from ἐπιστάτης), ἡγεμονεύω (from ἡγεμών), and τυραννεύω (from τύραννος). See the relevant entries in LSJ.

<sup>53</sup> See *The Tebtunis Papyri. Part II* (ed. Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt; London: Henry Frowde, 1907) 29–30 (here 31).

<sup>54</sup> The translation is a slightly modified version of that given by Grenfell and Hunt, p. 31, who leave αὔθεντήσει and ἀσχολίαν untranslated. The Italian authority on ancient astrology, Simonetta Feraboli, does translate these words in her rendering of the papyrus: “consentirà di fruire di ricche proprietà, di *poteri assoluti* \*\*\* attività” (“will allow [him] to enjoy abundant possessions, *absolute powers* \*\*\* activity”) (my emphases). See Georg Luck, *Arcana mundi. Magia e occulto nel mondo greco e romano* (2 vols.; trans. Claudio Tartaglini; Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1997–1999) 2.223. The translation of *P. Tebt.* 276 is attributed to Feraboli in the notes (2.363).

kind related to his occupation. Unfortunately the fragmentary text does not allow us to be more specific.<sup>55</sup>

Both the passage in the *Methodus mystica* and these two additional early astrological texts illustrate the linguistic status of ἀθηντέω as a denominative verb based on ἀθέντης in the sense “master.”<sup>56</sup> The verb essentially means “to be master,” to be superior to another in prestige, authority, or skill. It is therefore also significant that one of the earliest attestations of ἀθέντης “master” is also found in an early astrological text.

I am referring to an astrological anthology which, although compiled by Rhetorius Aegyptius in the early seventh century AD, contains much earlier material. The relevant passage occurs in a section entitled “The Twelve Places of the Zodiac,” which is again attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. According to Cumont and Kroll, this section was mediated to Rhetorius through Thrasyllus, an astrologer of the early first century AD.<sup>57</sup> If this is correct, then its date precedes the turn of the era.<sup>58</sup> The passage in question falls under the discussion of the “tenth place” of the twelve-place zodiac, and reads as follows:

εἰ δὲ ὁ τοῦ Κρόνου συμπάρῃ ἢ μαρτυρήσῃ κατὰ τὸν ὑποδεδειγμένον τρόπον, ἐπιγούσους ποιεῖ καὶ ἐν ταῖς δόξαις οὐκ ἀθέντας ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ ἑτέροις πράξαντας ἢ καὶ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἑτέροις ἐμπιστεύοντας.<sup>59</sup> “But if Saturn shares its place, or is in aspect with it according to the manner indicated, it makes people reprehensible, and in their honorary offices<sup>60</sup> makes them not *masters*, but subordinates of others, or else people who entrust their own affairs to others.”<sup>61</sup>

<sup>55</sup> It is tempting to restore πάνποτε or the like in the lacuna after ἀθηντέσει and to translate “and will [always] master (his) occupation.” In that case, this text would offer a striking parallel to the use of ἀθηντέω in the *Methodus mystica*, which also speaks of excelling at an occupation. That a verb of ruling should take the accusative rather than the genitive is not unusual; see BDF §177. For ἀθηντέω with the accusative, see *BGU* 103.3 and Leontius, Presbyter of Constantinople, *In Mesopentecosten* 141, published in *Leontii Presbyteri Constantinopolitani Homiliae* (CCSG 17; ed. Cornelis Datema and Pauline Allen; Brepols-Turnhout: Leuven University Press, 1987) 320.

<sup>56</sup> On the denominative nature of ἀθηντέω see J. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, II (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1929), 278 and P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque: Histoire des mots. I. A-Δ* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968) 138.

<sup>57</sup> See F. Cumont, “Écrits hermétiques I. Sur les douze lieux de la sphère,” *Revue de philologie* 42 (1918) 63–79 (here 69, 79), idem, *CCAG* 8.4, 117, idem, *L'Égypte des astrologues* (Brussels, 1937; repr. Puiseaux: Pardès, 1990) 19–20; Wilhelm Kroll, “Kulturhistorisches aus astrologischen Texten,” *Klio* 18 (1923) 213–25. An edition of Rhetorius by David Pingree and Stephan Heilen, to be entitled *Compendium astrologicum*, is forthcoming.

<sup>58</sup> Cumont dated this source to the second century BC (*CCAG* 8.4, 117). Kroll (“Kulturhistorisches” 216, n. 3) dated it between the mid-second century BC and the time of Thrasyllus. Similarly Wilhem Gundel, *Neue astrologische Texte des Hermes Trismegistos. Funde und Forschungen auf dem Gebiet der antiken Astronomie und Astrologie* (ABAW 12; Munich: Beck, 1936) 309. This use of ἀθέντης, “master,” may therefore be the earliest example of this meaning apart from its disputed occurrence in Euripides, *Suppliants* 442. See Wolters, “Semantic Study” 148 and 172, where this place and that in the paraphrase of Dorotheus (see below) should be added to the list of examples given.

<sup>59</sup> *CCAG* 8.4 (1921) 169.

<sup>60</sup> Note the use of δόξαι here as referring to honorary offices in Greco-Roman society (Latin *honores*). On this meaning of δόξα, see *DBAG* s.v., 4. It is found frequently in astrological texts, for example *CCAG* 8.4, 176.18–19: μείζονας τὰς εὐτυχίας καὶ τὰς δόξας καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἡγεμονίας παρέχεται, “it makes greater the lucky breaks, the honorary offices, the positions of authority, and the leadership roles.” See also the above mentioned P. Tebt. 276 (line 36), and *CCAG* 8.4, 136.6, 143.1, 185.5.

<sup>61</sup> See *LSJ* s.v. συμπάρεμι (εἰμί *sum*) 1 and μαρτυρέω II for the technical astrological meanings of these verbs. There is a Latin echo of this passage in Firmicus Maternus, *Mathesis* 3.6.21.

We find another example of ἀθέντης “master” in a prose paraphrase of the *Carmen Astrologicum* of the above-mentioned Dorotheus of Sidon (first century AD), where we read the following:

εἰ δέ ἐστιν ἡ Σελήνη ἀφαιρετικὴ οὐκ αὐτοὺς ἀθέντας ποιεῖ ἀλλὰ τοιοῦτοις προσώποις ὑπηρετούμενους, “if the Moon is waning it does not make them *masters*, but servants of such persons [that is, of masters].”<sup>62</sup>

Although the date of this paraphrase cannot be fixed with certainty, it is not improbable that ἀθέντης here reflects the use of the same word in the original poetic version of Dorotheus’s work.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, we mention two further cognates of ἀθηντέω which are found in early astrological texts. These are the noun ἀθέντησις, a *hapax legomenon* meaning something like “governorship” or “foremanship,” found in the astrological treatise of Vettius Valens (second century AD),<sup>64</sup> and the adjective ἀθηντικός, “authoritative,” which occurs five times in Ptolemy’s *Apotelesmatika* (*Tetrabiblos*) to indicate authority or dominance of some kind.<sup>65</sup> Like the other astrological texts which we have mentioned, these from Vettius Valens and Ptolemy are dated no later than the second century of the common era.<sup>66</sup> There is also a text attributed to Vettius Valens, which uses ἀθηντικός in a context much like that of the just-quoted paraphrase of Dorotheus:

εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἀξίφωτῆ ἡ Σελήνη, ἀθηντικὸὶ στρατιῶτα ἔσονται, εἰ δὲ λειψίφωτῆ, ὑπρέτα ἔσονται τῶν ἡγεμόνων. “For if the Moon waxes, they will be *high-ranking* officers; if it wanes, they will be servants of the leaders.”<sup>67</sup>

## V. CONCLUSION

The foregoing survey of early astrological texts, almost all of them roughly contemporaneous with the NT documents, demonstrates that the use of ἀθηντέω in the *Methodus mystica* is not unusual. In fact, it is consistent with the way both the verb and its cognates are generally used in astrological texts before about 200 AD. The ἀθέντης word family seems to be used throughout to refer to authority or dominance of some kind. Given the relative paucity of ἀθέντης “master” and its cognates in this time period, it is their use in these

<sup>62</sup> See Dorotheus, *Carmen Astrologicum* 346. The use of ὑπηρετέω in the middle is common in later Greek (see LSJ and PGL s.v.).

<sup>63</sup> For nuancing my formulations on this matter I am indebted to Stephan Heilen (private communication, August 15, 2010).

<sup>64</sup> *Vettii Valentis Antiocheni Anthologiarum libri novem* 1.1.40 (p. 4, line 24 Pingree). In Wolters, “Semantic Study” 162, I suggested the translation “exercise of authority.” I am now inclined to favor a translation closer to that given by Dihle, “Αθέντης,” *Glotta* 39 (1960) 80 (“die Berufsstellung des selbständigen Unternehmers”).

<sup>65</sup> See Ptolemy, *Apotelesmatika* 4.3.6, 4.4.11, 4.7.5, 4.7.10, and 4.10.9. The meaning “authoritative” is given in LSJ s.v., 2. The *Paraphrasis* attributed to Proclus (see n. 51) substitutes another Greek word in the first four of these occurrences, namely ἐξουσιαστικός (*bis*), δυνατός, and κύριος. See Wolters, “Semantic Study” 167 (where I failed to recognize that the word ἀστικώτερα of the *editio princeps* is the result of misreading ἐξουσιαστικώτερα).

<sup>66</sup> A possible exception is *P. Tebt.* 276, which is dated to the late second or the third century.

<sup>67</sup> *Vettii Valentis Anthologiae*, 381.21. This is part of what Pingree prints as Appendix I of his edition of the *Anthologiae*. As he explains in his Praefatio (p. XV), it is drawn from a Byzantine compilation (ca. 1000 AD) of earlier astrological material.

astrological texts which is particularly relevant for understanding ἀθηντεύειν in 1 Tim 2:12.

Our excursion into these early astrological texts also sheds some light on the disputed question whether ἀθηντεύω has a pejorative or an ingressive nuance in NT times. It would seem that the texts we have surveyed do not lend support to either of these proposals. The three contexts in which the verb is found neither require nor suggest that ἀθηντεύω has a pejorative meaning like “domineer” or “lord it over.” As for the cognates of ἀθηντεύω, these do not appear to have negative connotations either. The ἀθέντης from which the verb is derived does not designate a despot or a tyrant, but simply a superior or person in authority. As for the proposed ingressive meaning of the verb, we have seen that this is a possible semantic nuance of the verb in the aorist, but not of the verb itself.