Did Paul Behave as an Infant or Imbecil, or as a Gentle Nurse?  
The Interpretation of 1 Thessalonians 2:7

There are several links between the eminent Honoree of this volume and the above pauline letter: for many years he has served the Aristoteles University of the city of Thessaloniki – which was the original recipient of this letter – as Professor of New Testament exegesis; he is one of the editors of the latest editions of The Greek New Testament and of the Novum Testamentum Graece, both of which, by adopting the variant νήπιος, have brought the problem under discussion to the surface; and he has himself touched upon this text – even if briefly – in his discussion of the significance of the Athos MSS for the text of the Thessalonian epistles.¹

The present study is occasioned by an increasing trend in interpreting this passage in a way that seems to me to be based on an inadequate examination of the evidence. This interpretation figures in the current text of the NT, in translations and in exegetical work (including that of the symposium volume, The Thessalonians Debate)². The present investigation will address the text-critical and the exegetical issues by discussing the philological evidence that is so crucial for correct exegetical decisions, and by critically assessing the grounds on which this recent turn of emphasis has been based. In the process there will also be a critical assessment of my esteemed friend, Jeffrey Weima’s attempt in NTS 2000,³ to consolidate this view.

1. The Text-critical Problem

The MSS are divided between the readings νήπιοι and ηπιοι. The N-A gives:

³ J. Weima, “‘But We Became Infants Among You’: The Case for ΝΗΠΙΟΙ in 1 Thess 2.7”, NTS 46 (2000), 547-564. Incidentally, the page heading of this article uses ΝΗΠΙΟΙ instead of ΝΗΠΙΟΙ, a result of the Erasmian pronunciation. Weima’s study represents a number of positions held by various contributors to the The Thessalonians Debate, which was based on the work of the SNTS seminar on the “Thessalonian Correspondence”, of which the present author was a member.
Other factors need to be taken into consideration. Is, the important thing is, that the reading that was, accordingly, corrected to \( \text{\( \epsilon \)} \text{\( \eta \)\pi\iota\o\iota} \). It is impossible to know when exactly this happened, but it was usual for the scribe or for a corrector to go through the MS as soon as it was finished and to correct it before it was published. This implies that the correction may be almost as old as the reading of the *prima manus*. Moreover, almost the entire Byzantine textual tradition, with the important minuscules 33 and 1739, support \( \text{\( \epsilon \)} \text{\( \eta \)\pi\iota\o\iota} \). It ought to be pointed out here that although a corrector’s touch is later than the first hand, it does not follow that the corrector was wrong and that the first hand is necessarily correct. The first hand is, of course, older, but that is not tantamount to representing the correct reading. Other factors need to be taken into consideration.

The above presentation does not offer a complete coverage of the witnesses, since there are more Greek authors who support the reading \( \text{\( \epsilon \)} \text{\( \eta \)\pi\iota\o\iota} \): e.g. Klemes Alexandreus, \textit{Catenae NT} (on 1 Corinthians), \textit{Catenae NT} (on 1 Thessalonians), Theodoretos, and Ioannes Damaskenos.

The reading \( \text{\( \nu \)\pi\iota\o\iota} \) is found in manuscripts and Christian authors of the third and fourth centuries, whereas the reading \( \text{\( \epsilon \)} \text{\( \eta \)\pi\iota\o\iota} \) has its earliest manuscript representatives in the fourth century, but is also witnessed by Christian authors of the third century. Moreover, Sinaiticus, Ephraemi, Claromontanus and Athous Lavrensis, the first three of which are considered to belong to the most important uncials, were all perceived by their correctors or users to be mistaken in having the reading \( \text{\( \nu \)\pi\iota\o\iota} \), which was, accordingly, corrected to \( \text{\( \epsilon \)} \text{\( \eta \)\pi\iota\o\iota} \). Theodoretos, \textit{Intrpretatio in XIV epistulas sancti Pauli} [Migne] Vol. 82, 636. Johannes Damaskenos, \textit{Commentarii in epistulas Pauli} [Migne] Vol. 95, 402, 90.

\begin{itemize}
  \item Klemes Alexandreus, \textit{Paedagogos}, I, 5; \textit{Stromateis}, I.
  \item \textit{Catena on 1 Thessalonians} (typus Parisinus) e cod. Coisl. 204 ed. J. A. Cramer) Vol. 6, 350.
  \item Theodoretos, \textit{Intrpretatio in XIV epistulas sancti Pauli} [Migne] Vol. 82, 636.
  \item Johannes Damaskenos, \textit{Commentarii in epistulas Pauli} [Migne] Vol. 95, 402, 90.
\end{itemize}
the first word (ΕΓΕΝΗΘΩΜΕ) end one line and the second word (赧πιοι) begin the next line, with a stroke placed above the final Ε of ΕΓΕΝΗΘΩΜΕ to indicate that at the end of the line – as was often the custom – the final Ν was omitted, thus:

ΑΑΑΑ ΕΓΕΝΗΘΩΜΕ

赧πιοι ΕΝ ΜΕΣΩ

This could, of course, have led copyists using Sinaiticus to overlook the stroke and to copy

ΕΓΕΝΗΘΩΜΕΝ ΖΗΠΙΟΙ

thus giving rise to this reading. On the other hand, a careless copyist such as the scribe of Sinaiticus, who in this brief letter perpetrated no fewer than 29 orthographical errors and who, a few verses further down from our text, was found guilty of gross dittography, writing 25 words twice (in vv. 13-14), could very well have fallen victim to such oversight in vs.7, too, especially since in the previous line he had written expressly only the form ΕΓΕΝΗΘΩΜΕ without the final Ν,\(^\text{11}\) thinking that starting the new line with a Ν he was simply writing the last letter of the previous word. But all this is mere speculation.

From the above it is obvious that the external evidence is incapable of supplying a viable solution.\(^\text{12}\) Transcriptional probabilities could have gone either way. Hort’s favorite MSS, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, which have largely preserved their supremacy over the other MSS ever since and the continued neglect of the Byzantine tradition especially following K. Aland’s death,\(^\text{13}\) ought to be matters for reassessment.\(^\text{14}\) This implies that we cannot unproblematically speak of superior MS evidence supporting the reading νῆπιοι.\(^\text{15}\)

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\(^\text{10}\) The pdf file did not accept the stroke above the final Ε, but should be read.

\(^\text{11}\) Codex Sinaiticus has committed for the Gospel of John alone no fewer than 470 orthographical errors, see Caragounis, The Development of Greek, p. 497. Cf. Eustathios, the Byzantine commentator of Homeros (Commentarii ad Homerii Iliadem, II, 753, also Commentarii in Odysseam, I, 354), who demanded an ύποδιαστολή, a pause or comma in uttering the two words πέμπει νῆπιον, so that no one might join the ν with the verb and understand πέμπεν ἦπιον.

\(^\text{12}\) Although it is true that according to the current rules of Textual Criticism, the reading νῆπιοι is better supported in the MSS, Weima’s view of the indisputable superiority of this reading (NTS 46 (2000) 548 f.) is an exaggeration.

\(^\text{13}\) Cf. for example how the material on the value of the Byzantine MSS in the introduction of the 26th edition (1979) has been removed from the corrected 27th edition (1998).

\(^\text{14}\) Cf. Caragounis, The Development of Greek, pp. 475-84.

\(^\text{15}\) As, e.g. O. Merk, “1 Thessalonians 2:1-12: An Exegetical-Theological Study”, in The Thessalonians Debate, p. 106 f.; Weima (op. cit.), and others.
2. In Vindication of the Reading νήπιοι

Weima tries to refute four arguments set forth by various scholars for the reading ἦπιοι. It is true that some of these arguments ought never to have been used, but unfortunately, Dr Weima falls into the same trap himself offering arguments that lack cogency.

1. Weima thinks that since both dittography and haplography were in themselves possible, and moreover, since he is of the opinion that “there is no scribal tendency toward committing one error more than the other”\(^\text{16}\), this issue is indecisive and should not be pursued any further. We ought to follow the best-supported reading. But the matter is not quite so simple. In this case, we do know, for example, that the scribe of Sinaiticus pleads guilty to gross dittography!\(^\text{17}\)

2. Rebutting the argument that “scribes, either intentionally or by accident, replaced the rare term ἦπιοι by the more common νήπιοι”,\(^\text{18}\) he, along with S. Fowl, refers to the statistics of these words in Paul. He also makes reference to T. Sailors’ statistics based on the TLG, that “νῆπιος occurs 42 times in the first centuries BCE and CE compared to 274 occurrences of νήπιος in its nominal, adjectival and verbal forms”.


\(^{17}\) The situation is as follows. Codex Sinaiticus omits the following words which are included in the *N-A* and *GNT* editions: 1:5: [ἐν] (bis); 1:8: γὰρ; 2:13: ἁληθῶς; 2:19: ἦ; 2:20: ἦ; 4:1: ἵνα; 4:10: [τούς]; 5:8: καὶ ἀγάπης; 5:15: [καὶ]; 5:21: δὲ; and 5:25: [καὶ]. Leaving aside the five words within square brackets, whose inclusion in the editions is uncertain, we may say that Codex S omits 8 words that are accepted by *N-A* and *GNT*. The additions of this MS are, however, far more serious: 1:1: ἀπὸ Θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 1:4: τοῦ Θεοῦ; 2:13-14: ἡδὲ εξεσάθη οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἄλλα καθὼς ἐστὶν λόγον Θεοῦ ὅς καὶ ἐνεργήτησα ἐν ἡμῖν τοῖς πιστεύονσιν ὑμεῖς γὰρ μιμήθητε ἐγενήθητε ἀδελφοί τῶν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Θεοῦ; 3:6: ὑμῶν; 4:4: ἐν; 40:10: ὑμῶν; 5:1: τού; 5:13: καί. This means that if Codex Sinaiticus has omitted 8 words from the text, it has added no fewer than 40 words to the text! This implies that at least in this letter, the scribe of Sinaiticus has a longer text. Not only that, but in the long *dittography* this scribe has spelled two words wrongly while in his first attempt at copying he had spelled them correctly: ἐνεργήται (in place of ἐνεργεῖται) and μιμήθητε (in place of μιμηταί). Moreover, Codex Sinaiticus has fourteen more readings for which the editions use equivalents: 1:7: τύπους (for τύπον); 2:9: υἱὸν (for εἰς υἱόν); 2:10: καλέσαντος (for καλοῦντος); 3:2: διάκονον (for συνεργόν); 3:3: θλίψει (for θλιππείν); 3:9: κυρίου (for Θεοῦ); 4:2: δεδοκάμεν (for ἐδοκάμεν); 4:14: ἐπιστευόμεν (for πιστεύομεν); 5:1: γράφατοι υἱῶν (for υἱῶν γράφεσθαι); 5:3: the altogether wrong unaspirate form ἐπίσταται (for the aspirate ἐφίσταται); 5:10: περί (for ὑπέρ); 5:13: αὐτοῖς (for ἐστιν ἐστι); 5:27: ἐφκλήσῳ (for ἐφορκίσθα), and 5:27: the Attic πᾶσι (for the Koine πᾶσιν). In the face of these facts it is not possible to overlook the unreliability of this MS as Weima and others are inclined to do.

\(^{18}\) Weima, *NTS* 46 (2000), 550, used e.g. by I. H. Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (NCBC), 70.
These remarks and statistics lack a proper linguistic perspective. It must not be forgotten that the NT constitutes only a tiny fraction of the lexical treasure of the Greek language, with a vocabulary of 4900 words out of the hundreds of thousands of words in use at that time. Any statistics as to the frequency or rarity of words will have to address the larger picture.\(^{19}\)

3. Weima attacks the argument that νήπτιοι is always used with pejorative sense\(^{20}\) by arguing, among other things, that “that Paul uses νήπτιοι in 2.7 with a positive sense receives further support from the use of this term by other biblical and non-biblical writers”\(^{21}\) and refers to Diodoros Sikeliotes, Philon, and Josephos. This time, apparently, we are prompted to take account of the larger picture. However, the attempt is to no avail, since the ‘positive’ meaning for νήπτιος in these texts does not reside in the word itself, but in the context. If this positive sense will hold good for 1 Thessalonians as well, it must be shown from the context of this letter. It is no good saying that “Furthermore, the term νήπτιοι was used with a positive sense by both biblical and non-biblical writers. It thus remains entirely possible that Paul in 1 Thess 2.7 employed the infant metaphor in a positive manner and that such a usage by no means ought to be judged non-Pauline”. This is altogether too loose a ground on which to base the desired conclusion.

4. The fourth argument, that νήπτιοι creates a mixed metaphor, and that this reading is not merely “the lectio difficilior but the lectio impossibilis”,\(^{22}\) is solved by Weima through proposing a different punctuation. According to this, the full stop needs to be removed from ὀπόστολοι (7a) and to be placed instead after ἐν μεσο ύμων, thus reading 7b ἀλλα ἐγενήθημεν νήπτιοι as correlative with the οὐτε … οὐτε of verses 5-6, and beginning a new sentence with 7c ὃς ἐὰν τροφοῖς … which has its correlative in οὕτως ὁμειρόμενοι (vs. 8).\(^{23}\) The improbability of this punctuation will be discussed below.

3. The Philological Examination of νήπτιοι and ἰπτιοί.

In my recent investigation, The Development of Greek and the New Testament, I have shown that in linguistic and philological inquiry it is necessary to address the evidence of the entire history of Greek. This is so, because the NT belongs to a

\(^{19}\) On the vocabulary of the Greek language, see Caragounis, The Development of Greek, 60-63, 123.

\(^{20}\) This argument has been used e.g. by J. Delobel, “One Letter too Many i Paul’s First Letter? A Study of (ν)ήπτιοι in 1 Thess 2.7”, Louvain Studies 20 (1995), 127.

\(^{21}\) Weima, NTS 46 (2000), 552.

\(^{22}\) Weima, NTS 46 (2000), 554.

\(^{23}\) Weima, NTS 46 (2000), 555-56.
period during which Greek makes the transition from classical Greek to Neohellenic. This period is characterized by new developments in morphology, vocabulary and syntax, which implies that later Greek literature casts important light on the NT; further, as a safeguard against making confident assertions about linguistic matters which later Greek shows to be uninformed; and thirdly, because, for instance, since later Greek has preserved many NT words and constructions, the way a particular element of the NT is felt or perceived in later Greek (up to Neohellenic) must be of considerable significance for its correct interpretation. It is thus obvious, that in linguistic investigations pertaining to the NT, confining oneself to the NT evidence alone or even to that of the LXX and the papyri, will inevitably often lead to misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the facts. The holistic approach to the language is the only feasible way.

The words νήπιος and ἤπιος occur as ordinary words with the main meanings attached to them all the way from Homeros to the present day. Today they are the ordinary words for expressing these meanings for both forms of Neohellenic, i.e. Katharevousa and Demotic. Therefore, since these words have never ceased to be used in the living language, if we inquire into statistics, we need to take account not merely of the centuries around NT times or of the papyri, but of the entire spectrum of the language.

According to the TLG (covering the period from Homeros to [in some cases] the XVIth century A.D.), the word νήπιος / νήπιον in the masculine and neuter occurs almost 1400 times in the singular and about 1360 times in the plural. By contrast the masculine ἤπιος occurs only 319 times in the singular and 62 times in the plural. However, the fact that νήπιος occurs far more often than ἤπιος, does not make the latter word “rare.” ἤπιος was and is the ordinary Greek word for “mild”, “gentle”, “kind”, “meek”, “soothing”, etc. It occurred everyday – as it does today – and it must have been used by Paul times without number in his ordinary transactions from day to day. The word νήπιος, on the other hand, bore two main meanings, the basic meaning of “infant”, “baby”, “child” and a metaphorical one

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24 The above figures include also the neuter instances, since the masculine genitive, dative, and accusative correspond in form with all five cases of the neuter. Accordingly, the purely masculine forms must be lowered considerably. Thus: Nominative: c. 600 x; Genitive (including the neuter): 210 x; Dative (including the neuter): 66 x; Accusative (including the neuter): 469 x, and Vocative 48 X.

25 Again the plural neuter forms for genitive and dative correspond with those of the masculine, hence the purely masculine forms are considerably lower. Thus: Nominative: 275 x; Genitive (including the neuter): 573 x; Dative (including the neuter): 338 x; Accusative: 168 x, and Vocative: 4 x.

26 I.e. Nominative: 205 x; Genitive: 17 x; Dative: 9 x; Accusative: 88 x, and Vocative: 0 x.

27 I.e. Nominative: 24 x; Genitive: 4 X; Dative: 20 x; Accusative: 14 x, and Vocative: 0 x.
derived from this, namely “childish”, “fool(ish)”, “senseless”, “silly”. It is quite natural, therefore, that there were far more daily circumstances in real life for people to use νήπιος, both in its primary and in its metaphorical senses than ἕπιος. It should, therefore, cause no surprise that in the NT νήπιος occurs 13 times, while ἕπιος only twice. But no conclusions can be drawn from this NT circumstance as to the rarity of ἕπιος and hence (as the argument goes) its substitution by the ‘more common’ νήπιος.

In order to give some indication of the semantic range of the two words, the following brief specimens of their respective uses will be presented.

1. ἕπιος. In Homerōs’ Ἰλιας and Ὀδυσσεία this term occurs sixteen times, always in the singular. The basic meaning of “gentle”, “mild” “tender”, “meek”, “kind” comes through in Ἰλιας XXIV. 770, where Helen, speaking to prince Hektor of the gentleness of his father (her father-in-law), King Priamos, towards her, says: ἐκυρός δὲ πατὴρ ὃς ἕπιος εἶη “thy father / my father-in-law was always gentle to me as if he had been my own father”, a phrase that becomes almost proverbial, being repeated in the epics28, and still more often in Homerōs’ mediaeval commentator, Bishop Eustathios of Thessaloniki29 as well as in other authors.30 ἕπιος is often used in combination with other adjectives, which thus reveal the scope of its meaning (space allows only a few examples): πρόφρων, ἄγαν ὁ καὶ ἕπιος “willing, kind, and gentle”31; σώφρων τε καὶ ἕπιος “prudent and gentle”;32 νημερὴς τε καὶ ἕπιος “trustworthy and gentle”; ἕπιος ὁ ἀπαλόφρων “gentle is one who is soft-hearted”;33 ἕπιος εἶναι καὶ πρᾶσος “to be gentle and meek”;34 ἕπιος

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28 Homerōs (VIII B.C.), Ὀδυσσεία, II. 47, 234; V. 12; XV. 152.
29 Eustathios (XII A.D.), Commentarii ad Homerī Ἰliadem, I.419.19; I. 630.1; II. 303.7; ad Ὀδυσσεία I.77. 40; I. 81. 29, 45; I. 94.1, 19; I. 188.17; II. 95.2; De capta Thessalonica 52. 34.
30 E.g. Euripides (V B.C.), Fragmenta, 950. 1; Themistios (IV A.D.), Ἑρὴ φιλανθρωπίας, 17. a. 6; Eusebios (IV A.D.), Evangelike Proparaskeue, 10. 3. 22 (ed. ΒΕΠΕΣ 25, p. 368), and Scholia in Hesiodum: Scholia in Theogoniam (scholia vetera), 86. 5.
32 Athenaios (II-III A.D.), Deipnosophistai, X. 32.
καὶ προσηνής “gentle and mild”; 35 χρηστός τε καὶ ἡπίος ὠν “being kind and gentle”; 36 ὁσίος λογικός ἡπίος ἀνήρ “a holy, reasonable, gentle man”; 37 ἡπίος: πραῦς, ἴσως εὐθείου ἢ ἡπίος: meek, quiet, tranquil”; 38 ἡπίον δὲ μᾶλλον εἴναι καὶ μετάλγην “but to be even more gentle and tender”; 39 ἡπίον καὶ ταπεινόν “gentle and humble”; 40 ἡπίον καὶ χαρίειν “gentle and graceful”. 41 The Etymologicum Magnum, at 434. 20, defined it as: ἡπίος γὰρ σημαίνει τὸν λογισμὸν “ἡπίος signifies the reasoning (faculty)”. Of interest is also the explanation in Scholia In Homerum: Scholia in Odysseam (scholia vetera), II. 47: οἱ ἄρχαὶ τὴν βασιλείαν ἔμερησον εἰς τρία ἐπίθετα, τὸν μὲν πρῶιν βασιλέα ὀνομαζέων πατέρα, τὸν ἄπνης καὶ θυμωδή, δεσπότην τὸν φειδωλὸν καὶ φιλόχρυσον κάπηλον “the ancients distinguished kings by three epithets: the gentle king they called ‘Father’, the hard and wrathful ‘Master’, and the niggard and gold-loving ‘Huckster’”.

In addition to its use of men’s character and disposition, ἡπίος is used as a characterization of a large number of entities, qualities, or things (again space allows only a few examples): e.g. ἡπίος ὑπνος “gentle / sweet sleep”, 42 ἡπίος ... ὑγρότης “the mild moistur [of water], 43 ἡπίος ἵχθυς “gentle fish”, 44 ἡπίον πῦρ “gentle fire”, 45 ἡπίον ... σέλας “gentle light”, 46 ἡπίον πνεύμα “gentle wind”, 47 ἡπίῳ σῦρῃ “gentle breeze”, 48 ἡπίῳ μεγαλοπνεύχια “gentle magnanimity”, 49 ἡπίος

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35 Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos (X A.D.), De virtutibus et vitiis, I. 185. 17. Cf. the neuter form of this expression in Plotinos (III A.D.), Enneades, V. 5. 12. 33 and Basilios, Epistles, 257. 1. 7.
36 Ioannes Antiocheus (VII A.D.), Fragments, 115. 8.
37 Concilia Oecumenica: Synodus Constantinopolitanus et Hierosolymitana anno 536 (uncertain date), III. 97. 31.
38 Scholia in Opianum: Scholia et glossae in Halieutica (scholia vetera et recentiora) (uncertain date), III. 58.
39 Plutarchos (I A.D.), Peri filadelphiæs, 491 E. Similarly Hesiodos, Theogonia, 407.
40 Markos Diakonos (V A.D.), Vita Porphyrii episcopi Gazensis, VIII. 16.
41 Scholia in Aristophanem; Scholia in Plutum (scholia vetera et fort. …) (uncertain date), sch. plut.1022. 1.
42 Plutarchos, Marius, 20. 1. 6; Posidonios, Fragments, 201. 46.
43 Plutarchos, De tuenda sanitate praecepta, 132 E.
44 Oppianos (II A.D.), Halieutica, III. 519.
45 Parmenides (V B.C.), Fragments, VIII. 57; Dion Chrysostomos (I A.D.), Orations, XX XVI. 56. 6. Cf. also Chrysippos (III B.C.), Fragments, 622. 11 and Fragmenta Alchemica (II A.D.), 75. 5.
46 Paulus Silentiarius (VI A.D.), Descriptio Sanctae Sophiae, 1002.
47 Plutarchos, De amore prolis, 496 A.
48 Anthologia Graeca, X. 17. 1.
49 Eusebios, Constantini imperatoris oratio ad coetum sanctorum, XI. 16. 8
λόγος “mild word”, 50 μῦθον ... ἕπιον “a gentle word”, 51 ἕπιος ἐπαγγελίας “gentle promises”, 52 ἕπιον νοῦν “gentle mind”, 53 ἕπιον τρόπον “gentle / meek behavior / way”, 54 ἡθός ἕπιον “mild / gentle ethos”, 55 ἕπιον δίκην “mild judgment”, 56 ἕπιον γέλωτα “gentle / mild laughter”, 57 ἕπιον ἴμαρ “propitious / favorable day”, 58 ἕπιον ὤμος “moderate height” 59 ἕπιον φάρμακον “mild medicine”, 60 and finally as epithets of Asklepios, 61 Zeus, 62 and even Poseidon. 63

This evidence for the use of ἕπιος is wholly in line with how this word is used and understood in Neohellenic. The word ἕπιος is a perfectly natural characteristic of a τροφός, “nurse”, so that no objection to such a combination would ever arise for a Greek.

2. Νήπιος. In the Homeric writings this term occurs some 40 times in the singular and 12 in the plural. Like ἕπιος, the word νήπιος has been the ordinary Greek word for “infant” in all periods of the language. 64 Not seldom it occurs with

50 E.g. Eusebios, Fragments, I. 47 and Ioannes Stobaios, Anthologion, III. 1. 103. 44; Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos, De legationibus, 226. 17; Georgios Synkellos, Eclogue chronographike, 328. 13.
51 Homeros, Odyssea, XX. 327.
52 Eusebios, Evangelike Proparaskeue, X. 2. 11. 4.
53 Loukianos (II A.D.), Podagra, 179.
54 Sopatros (IV A.D.), Διαιρέσεις ζητημάτων, VIII. 59. 23; Theodoretos, De providentia orationes decem, 83. 689. 48.
55 Markos Diakonos, Vita Porphyrior episcopi Gazensis, 88. 6.
56 Eustathios, Commentarior ad Homerii Odysseam, I. 81. 4.
57 Anna Komenne (XI-XII A.D.), Alexias, VIII. 2. 3. 16.
58 Hesiodos (VII-VIII B.C.), Works and Days, 787.
59 Ploutarchos, Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur, 63 D. See also Sextus Empeirikos, Adversus mathematicos, IX. 10. 5; Athenagoras, Legatio sive Supplicatio pro Christianis, XXII. 2. 5.
60 Aristophanes Gramm. (III-II B.C.), Aristophanis historiae animalium epitome subjunctis Aeliani Timothei aliorumque, II. 514; Appianos (I-II A.D.), Bellum civile, II. 3. 20; Eustathios, Commentarior ad Homerii Illiadem, III. 338. 23. Also ἕπιον ἀκεσιμάτων “of mild medicaments” Aeschylos (V B.C.), Prometheus Bound, 482;
61 Ploutarchos, Vitae decem oratorum, 845 C; Eustathios, Commentarior ad Homerii Odysseam, I. 100. 20.
62 Eustathios, Commentarior ad Homerum Illiadem, II. 521.
63 Ploutarchos, De sollertia animalium, 985 A.
64 E.g. Homeros, Ilias, XXII. 484: παῖς δ’ ἔτι νήπιος “a child that is still an infant”; Euripides (V B.C.), Iphigenia Aulidensis, 466; Aristoteles (IV B.C.), Problemeta, 901 b; Theokritos (IV-III B.C.), Epigrammata, VII.1; Diodoros Sikeliotes (I B.C.), Bibliothek, VII. 6.1; Philon, De decalogo, 69. 3; Ploutarchos (I A.D.), Consolatio ad Apollonium, 110 F; Arrianos (I-II A.D.), Alexandri anabasis, II. 11. 9; Cassios Dion (II-III A.D.), Historiae Romana, 72. 7. 2; Ἡρακλῆς ἕτι νήπιος “while Herakles was still an infant”; Porphyrios (III A.D.), Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων, VIII.
the sense of “baby”, and even the more general sense of “a little child”. However, in a large number of instances νήπιος bears the metaphorical sense of “childish”, “fool(ish)”, “imbecil”, “silly”, “senseless”, “stupid”. This

114; Constitutiones apostolorum (IV A.D.), IV. 11. 15; Nonnos (V A.D.), Paraphrasis sancti evangelii Ioanpei, XI. 108; Ioannes Damaskenos (VII-VIII A.D.), Sacra parallela, 96. 298. 42; Georgios Monachos (IX A.D.), Chronikon, 110. 1032.7; Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos (X A.D.), De legationibus, 338. 7; Michael Psellos (XI A.D.), Poemata, VIII. 725; Etymologicum Gudianum (XI A.D.), Ny: 408.48; Ioannes Zonaras (XI-XII A.D.), Epitome historiarum, 128. 2; Eustathios (XII A.D.), Commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem, II. 833. 14; Ioannes VI Kantakouzenos (XIV A.D.), Historia, I. 526. 2; Michael Apostolios (XV A.D.), Collectio paroemiarum, XIV. 94.5; Pseudo-Sphrantzes (XV-XVI A.D.), Chronikon, 270. 29.

65 E.g. Homerov, Odysseia, XI. 449: παίς δὲ οὖν ἐν ηὐπιστος “a child was at her breast / sucking, an infant”; Plutarchos (I A.D.), De amore proles, 496 a: εὐμενεῖς τῶν νήπιοι στόματι “pleasant [i.e. is the breast] to the mouth of the babe”; Chrysostomos (IV-V A.D.), De patientia (Migne) 60. 726. 34: διὰ σὲ νήπιος γεγονέν ἐν φάτνη “for your sake he became a babe in the manger”; Ioannes Theologos (VIII A.D.), Adversus iconoclastas (Migne) 96. 1360. 25: ὡς νήπιος ἐβαστάζετο “He [Christ] was borne as a babe”. Cf. also Anonymi in Hermogenes (uncertain date), Commentarius in librum Peri eirēseas, sch. 131b. 1: νήπιος: παίς ὁ μὴ δυνάμενος εἰπεῖν “νήπιος: a child that cannot speak”.

66 E.g. Homerov, Odysseia, XVIII. 229: πάρος δ’ ἐτι νήπιος ἦν “untill now I have been but a child”; Aristoteles (IV V.C.), Fragmenta varia, I. 11. 76. 18: ἐτι νήπιος ὄν Ὀμηρος ἐφι “while a child, Homerov said”; Basilios (IV V.A.D.), Homilia in principium proverborum (Migne) 31. 396. 48: ὅταν σὲ παιδίων νήπιον λοίδορήσῃ “When a child, an infant reviles you”. In his Λεξικὸ τῆς νέας Ἑλληνικῆς Γλώσσας, Μπαμπινιώτης, defines νήπιο as covering the age from 1 to 6 years old, that is, following the age of βρέφος, i.e. the first months after its birth. The Triandafyllides Foundation Λεξικὸ τῆς Κοινῆς Νεοελληνικῆς, on the other hand, defines νήπιο as covering the age of 2 to 5 years of age, following the age of βρέφος, i.e. from the second to the twelfth month of its life, cf. Theokritos (IV-III V.C.), Epigrammata, 16. 4: εἰ κοσάμηνον ἄδελθόν νήπιον “a brother twenty months old, an infant”.

67 The definition was easy. An infant (< Lat insans = ‘that cannot speak’ = Gr νήπιος; usually explained as νηπίς ‘not’ + ἔπος ‘speech’, i.e. “one that cannot speak”) is a child that cannot articulate speech. Thus, the Grammarian Philoxenos (I A.D.), Fragmenta, 552. 3, explains it as: νήπιος: παρὰ νη στερητικῶν κατὰ στέρησιν τοῦ εἰπεῖν καὶ λαλεῖν, οἶνον ... ὦ λέγειν μὴ δυνάμενος “νήπιος: with privativum, of one deprived of speech, that is to say, ... he who cannot speak”. Cf. Etymologicum Magnum (XII A.D.), 604. 19: νήπιος, καὶ κατὰ συνκοπην νήπιος, ὁ μὴ δυνάμενος λέγειν “νήπιος and by syncope νήπιος is he who cannot speak”. Similarly Orion Grammatikos (V A.D.), Etymologikon, Ny: 108. 11: 180. 26: 615. 32; Etymologicum Gudianum (XI A.D.), Ny: 408. 48. Hence it is used times without number of adults who are inarticulate, backward, or who, although advanced in years, are childish, senseless, foolish. Cf. Scholia in Odysseam (uncertain date), IV. 371. 1: νήπιος εἰς. ὃ ξείνει ἀντί τοῦ ἀμαθῆς, ἔτι παιδών φρονον “are you νήπιος, stranger’ is used instead of ignorant, of one who thinks like a child”; Chrysostomos, In Epistulam ad Galatas commentarius (Migne) 61. 657. 10: νήπιος: ενταῦθα ὅ τιν ἡλικίαν φησίν, ἀλλὰ τῇ γνώμῃ “by νήπιος here he does not refer to age, but to understanding”; Scholia ad Aristophanem (uncertain date), Scholia in Nubes, sch.
metaphorical meaning is applied first by Homeros and continues to obtain ever since. \(^{68}\) The frequency of this meaning may be gauged by the fact that in Homeros the word occurs 22 times with the sense of “infant”, “babe”, “child”, \(^{69}\) and 30 times with the sense of “fool”, “senseless”, “imbecil”, etc. \(^{70}\) Though this high frequency is not sustained throughout the centuries, the meaning, however, is quite rife. \(^{71}\) Accordingly, one can still say in Neohellenic: “he is νήπιος(ζ)”, i.e. “he is an imbecil” \(^{72}\)

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\(^{69}\) E.g. Homeros, *Ilias*, XXIV. 726; *Odyssey*, II. 313: ἐγὼ δ’ ἐτι νήπιος ἦν “I was still a child”; IV. 818; in VI. 301 princess Nausica gives Odysseus directions to her father’s house, assuring him that it is easy to find: even a little child could lead him to it: καὶ ἄν παῖς ἐγίνετο τῷ νήπιῳ; XI. 449: πάις δὲ ἦν ἐπὶ μαζὼ νήπιος “and a child was at her breast, a babe”; XVIII. 229; XIX. 19, 530; XX. 310; XLI. 95, etc.

\(^{70}\) A few examples are: Homeros, *Ilias*, II. 38; 873; V. 406; XII. 113; XVI. 833; XVIII. 295; XXI. 99; XXII. 333; *Odyssey*, III. 146; IV. 31; IX. 442; Aischylos (V B.C.), *Prometheus Bound*, 443: ὡς σάφες νήπιοις ὄντες τὰ πρὶν ἔννοις ἔθηκα καὶ φρενῶν ἐπιβόλους “who once were fools, I made them thinking, and gave them wits”.

\(^{71}\) For example, all of the 48 instances in the singular vocative have the sense of ‘fool(ish)’.

\(^{72}\) Cf. also Δημιτράκου, *Λεξικόν*, s.v. νήπιος, which cites Zerboς († 1944), *Τραγούδια τοῦ καλοῦ καριού*, 19: σώπας, ἔρωτα σπανέ, τού γελάς μόνο τά νήπια “shut up, you unbearded Eros, who can deceive only fools”.

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4. What Could Paul have Written?

If νήπιος is the original reading, then Paul must have meant that he had behaved among the Thessalonians either as an infant, a babe, a small child or as an imbecil, a senseless, foolish person. These are the two basic meanings that we find in the use of this word throughout the centuries. Now, no advocate of νήπιος would contemplate the sense of “imbecil” or “fool” for Paul, on account of its absurdity, though this is the primary meaning of the word, when used of an adult.

The advocates of νήπιος are, of course, aware that this is a ‘difficult’ or ‘impossible’ reading, but its very difficulty becomes a reason for accepting it. The abruptness in the change of metaphor which this reading introduces is explained by reference to Gal 4:19, where, it is claimed, Paul uses an even more abrupt metaphor. This claim can be controverted. In τέκνα μου, οὗς πάλιν ὤδινω μέχρις αὐτοῦ μορφοθη̣ Χριστός ἐν ύμιν there is no transition in imagery with regard to Paul. He is the ‘mother’ throughout the imagery. It is the Galatians who are first addressed as τέκνα, i.e. already born, sc. in Christ, but are so immature as to be in need of Christ taking form within them afresh, in other words, they are still an embryo in development. Thus, the change of imagery is accounted for. In the Thessalonians imagery, on the other hand, Paul, according to the theory, presents himself first as an infant among them and in the same breath he goes on to tell them that he has cared for them as a nurse cares for her children. This is sheer confusion of mutually excluding images, which no amount of rationalizing can dispel.

To alleviate the difficulty, it has been claimed that νήπιος is used both in the Bible and outside it with positive sense. As Biblical evidence is given: 1 Cor 14:20, ὅδελφοί, μὴ παιδία γίνεσθε ταῖς φρεσίν ἀλλὰ τῇ κακίᾳ νηπιάζετε where, however, the verb νηπιάζω rather than the adjective νήπιος is used. Nevertheless, the sense is that the Corinthians should behave not like small children, i.e. like fools, but with reference to evil, they should behave innocently like babies. The word νηπιάζω, therefore, does not in itself carry the sense or the connotation of innocence, but it is the context that gives it that meaning, for in a different context the same verb could have been used to carry the sense of “acting childishly”.

Hence, it is a logical mistake to assume – as Dr Weima appears to do, – that the

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73 Hippokrates, Epistulae, 17. 25, makes Demokritos say: ἔγω δὲ ἔνα γελῶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀνοίης μὲν γέμοντα, κενεὸν δὲ πρεμιμάτων ὁρθῶν, πᾶσησιν ἐπιβουλῆσι νηπιάζοντα “I for one laugh at mankind because it is full of folly, empty of right things, and acts childishly in all its schemes”. Cf. also the phrase: ἕρχατόγηρος νηπιάζων “a very old man acting childishly”.

74 Weima, NTS 46 (2000), 552 f.
word sometimes has a negative sense and sometimes a positive sense.\textsuperscript{75} This is the result of confusing semantics with contextual meaning. The word νήπιος as such is not negative. When referring to babies or infants, it is a purely neutral term denoting their age as a perfectly natural stage in human growth and development. But when the word refers to adults absolutely, it treats them as immature, undeveloped, senseless, or foolish. In no instance that I have examined, have I found that adults are called νήπιοι as a positive characterization absolutely, i.e. in order to extol some positive quality in them.\textsuperscript{76} Nevertheless, there are certain passages in Christian authors, – which Dr Weima does not cite – that do use νήπιος in a positive context. It appears that such biblical passages as ὃς ἀν μὴ δέξηται τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὥς παιδίον ὑπὲρ τῆς εἰς αὐτὴν (Mk 10:15), ὃς θύμι ἄν παραιτήσαι ἑαυτὸν ὡς τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο (Mt 18:3), τῇ κακίᾳ νηπίαξετε (1 Cor 14:20), τὰ μορά τού κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ Θεός (1 Cor 1:27), led Christian authors, in their polemic against Greek wisdom and philosophy, to use the image of the child, and particularly of the infant, as a model of humility, simplicity, innocence and absence of worldly wisdom. The earliest writer is probably Klemes Alexandreus. In his Paidagogos, I. 5. 19, he makes the absurd claim that οὐκ ἐπὶ ἁφρόνοιν τάττεται τὸ νηπίον· νηπύτιος μὲν γὰρ οὔτος “the word νήπιος is not used of fools, such is the meaning of νηπύτιος” (dim. of νήπιος), when from the time of Homeros on we have countless examples of νήπιος.

\textsuperscript{75} Weima, NTS 46 (2000), 553: “the positive sense that νήπιοι has in many LXX texts”. One should rather say that a writer can use it in a negative or positive context. On the LXX evidence see below.

\textsuperscript{76} In Mt 11:25 (= Lk 10: 21) the νήπια are set over against the σοφοί and σωτεροί of this world. This is not to underline any positive qualities in the disciples, but merely the fact that their understanding is not their own, but comes from God. The same goes for Mt 21:16. Similarly (LXX) Ps 18:8; 114: 6; 118:130; and Wisdom 10: 21. In all these cases the word signifies those who lack wisdom and are given it by God (cf. the apposite saying in Jas 1:5: ει δὲ τις υμῶν λειτεῖται σοφίας, αἰτεῖ τῷ παρὰ τοῦ διδόντος Θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἂπλῶς καὶ μη ὄνειδιζόντος) but no particular merit attaches to an adult who is νήπιος. As non-biblical evidence, Weima further quotes Diodoros Sikeliotes, Biblical (sic) History (read: Roman History), 20. 72. 2. I must confess that I do not understand how a passage that speaks of the execution of a number of people among whom also of νηπίους παιδας ἐν ἀγκάλαις φερομένους “infant children borne in the arms [of their mothers]” can be quoted here as proving the positive sense of νήπιος for an adult. Is the mere fact that these are small children or infants enough to qualify for positive sense? The same is the case with each one of the non-biblical texts that he quotes: Philon, Flaccus, 68; JosepHos, Antiquities, VI. 133, according to which Samuel commands Saul to kill all the Amalekites, beginning with the infants; 136; 138: ὁ ... Θεὸς οὔτως ἐμίσησεν τὸ τῶν Ἀμαλκητῶν ἔθνως ὡς μηδὲ νηπίων φεῖοσθαι “God so hated the nation of the Amalekites that he did not even spare the infants”. Similarly, VI. 260; XIV. 480; War, I. 352; II. 307; 496; IV. 82. One may rightly wonder whether Dr Weima has actually examined the above passages.
with the sense of ‘fool’, the Lexicographers assure us that νήπιος means ἄφρων, and this meaning still obtains in Neohellenic. Then, Klemes goes on to give us his mistaken etymology: νήπιος δὲ ὁ νεήπιος, ὡς ἦπιος ὁ ἀπαλόφρων, οὖν ἦπιος νεωστί καὶ πράος τῷ τρόπῳ “but νήπιος means νεήπιος, as ἦπιος ‘soft-hearted’, that is to say, newly ἦπιος and meek in his manner”. Obviously Klemes derived νήπιος from νέος + ἦπιος, and gave νήπιος the basic sense of ἦπιος. This understanding seems to be accepted by Klemes’ pupil, Origenes, who in his Commentary on Luke, 163. 9, collocates ταπεινόφρων with νήπιος; in his Philokalia, 18. 15.7, he approves of anyone who is ἀμαθής, ἀνόητος, ἀπαιδευτος, νήπιος “unlearned, foolish, without education, and infant(ile)”, and in his Commentary on Matthew, 15. 7. 152, he paraphrases 1 Th 2:7: ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολος, ἐγένετο νήπιος καὶ παραπλήσιος τροφὸς θαλποῦση τὸ ἐαυτῆς παιδίον, “he became νήπιος and close / similar to a nurse who cares for her child”. We can now understand that it was the connotations of humility, innocence, etc. that these authors read into νήπιος (= νε + ἦπιος) that led them to adopt this reading in 1 Th 2:7.

The punctuation that Dr Weima proposes, putting a comma after ἀπόστολοι and a full stop after ἐν μέσῳ ὡμόν, gives a rather un-Greek syntax. Thus, a sentence such as ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλατη τὰ ἐαυτῆς τέκνα, οὔτως ὁμετρόμενοι ὑμῶν εὐδοκοῦμεν ..., with two unrelated verbs (and hence unrelated clauses) that are being compared, is inelegant Greek. The ideas here brought together do not sound harmoniously. In the rare NT cases where ὡς is collocated with οὔτως and precedes it, the same verb does service for both clauses, i.e. Eph 5:24: ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ, οὔτως καὶ αἱ γυναικεῖς [ὑποτασσόμεθα] τοῖς ἀνδράσιν. Rather, the comparative ὡς-clause is more naturally understood as exemplifying the meaning of ἦπιος, i.e. “we were gentle among you, as when a nurse (or simply: like a nurse who) tenderly cares for her children”.

77 E.g. Pseudo-Zonaras, Lexicon, Ny: 1397. 11: νήπιος: ἄφρων “νήπιος: one who is senseless”.
78 Similar examples occur in Klemes Alex., Paidagogos, 1. 5. 17; 1. 6. 32; 1. 7. 58; Didymos Caecus (IV A.D.), Fragmenta in Psalms, 48. 25; Asterios (IV A.D.), 15. 20; 16. 14; Gregorios Naz. (IV A.D.), In sanctum baptismæ, 36. 380. 44; Kyrillos (IV-V A.D.), De adoratione, 68. 1053. 53; Chrysostomos, Commentary on Psalms, 15. 20; In Matthaeum, 57. 429. 54.
79 It is not possible to split up vs. 7 into 7a, 7b, and 7c, and to read 7a-b with vv. 5-6 and 7c with vs. 8. It is also a mistake to think that because 7c begins with ὡς it must necessarily have its correlate in the οὕτως of vs. 8 (Weima, NTS 46 (2000), 556; also Merk, in The Thessalonians Debate, 105-107). In vs. 4 καθὼς is used, not ὡς (!), which makes a perfectly normal comparison in Greek, as also Mt 24:27: ὁσπέρ ἡ ἀστραπή ... οὔτως ... Though the usual order is οὕτως ... ὡς, as e.g Mk 4:26: οὕτως ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, ὡς ...
80 Similarly, 1 Cor 7: 14: ἀλλὰ ὡς πάντα ἐν ἀλληθείᾳ ἐκλαλήθημεν ὑμῖν, οὕτως καὶ ἡ καύχησις ἡμῶν ... ἐν ἀλληθείᾳ ἐγενήθη. Both word and deed were true.
The conclusion from the above examination of νήπιος is that this term does not in itself convey positive qualities, and could not have been used by the apostle Paul of himself in order to emphasize his supposed humility and child-mindedness.

5. What is the Meaning of ἐν βάρει εἶναι?

The next problem for discussion is the expression δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι. This has been understood as suggesting that Paul and his friends could, as apostles of Christ, have exercised their authority or demanded privileges and honors. It appears more probable, however, that this is another form for the later expression βάρος εἶναι or γίνεσθαι (to be / become a burden on someone) which is equivalent to the verbs ἐπιβαρῶ and the later ἐπιβαρύνω.

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82 The expression βάρος εἶμαι or γίνομαι is late, but has its antecedents both in various uses of βάρος (see LSJ and Λημνηράκου, Λεξικόν) or equivalent as well as in the verbs ἐπιβαρῶ and ἐπιβαρύνω. The idea occurs first in Homeros, Odyssea, XX, 379, where one of the woers in reference to beggar-clad Odysseus says to Telemachos that his guest is “a burden on the earth” (ἅρθος ἀροῦρης), a phrase that has become proverbial till Neohellenic times (see Δημητράκου), said of a lazy, useless person, or one who is a burden along with the more modern phrase βάρος τῆς γῆς or βάρος on someone. Similarly Sophocles (V B.C.), Elektra, 1241: περισσὸν ἅρθος “a greater burden”. Ioannes Malalas (V-VI A.D.), Chronographia, 75 quotes Orpheus’ saying ἄρθεα γῆς and rephrases it with τὸ βάρος τῆς γῆς. P Oxy 1451 (III A.D.) Πτολεμαίος μέτριος ἐστιν καὶ οὐ δύναται τὸ βάρος ὑποφέρειν presumably speaks of a financial burden (cf. Ptolemaios’ own words: μέτριος εἰμι, παρὰ πατρὶ τρέφομαι[1] “I am of modest means, being provided for by my father”). Similarly OGIS I-II (Egypt), 194 (42 B.C.),19: εὕγενος μόνος ὑποστάς τὸ βάρος πάλιν … τὸν γὰρ ἐαυτοῦ βίον ὀλοσχερῶς ἀνέθετο τοῖς χρήσθαι βουλομένοις. “nobly he again bore alone the burden … putting his whole substance at the disposal of those who wished to use it”. The Epistle to Diogonetos (II A.D.) 501, speaks of ἀλλ’ ὁστις τὸ τοῦ πλησίου ἀναδέχεται βάρος “he who takes on himself the burden of his neighbour”. 
This sense suits the context of 1 Thessalonians admirably. The meaning of ‘authority’, ‘honor’, etc. for βάρος has been derived from δόξα in vs. 6. However, it has been overlooked that Paul’s whole sentence includes vs. 5, which speaks of κολακεία and πλεονεξία, the first of which aims at financial gain and the latter actually denotes greed. In saying that he did not use flattery and was not motivated by greed, Paul insinuates that he, as an apostle of Christ, had the right to live by the Gospel, but did not make use of it to achieve personal gain. In contrast to such behavior – that characterized sophists and itinerant rhetors – Paul served the Thessalonians like a loving nurse and was pleased to impart to them not only the free Gospel, but also his own life. This gives him occasion to remind them of his previous conduct. Thus, vv. 9-12 correspond to vv-1 7a (-8). In vv. 1-7a Paul dwells mainly on the negative things that did not characterize his conduct, while in vv. 9-12 he dwells on the positive things that did characterize his conduct. Vv. 7b-8 is the positive dénouement of the first part and prepares the transition to the detailed second part. That vv. 9-12 are an expansion of the thought contained in a nutshell in vv. 7-8 becomes clear from the similar ideas expressed in 1 and 2 Thessalonians:

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<tr>
<th>1 Th 2:3-12</th>
<th>2 Th 3:6-10</th>
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<tr>
<td>5 Οὔτε γὰρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἴδατε, ὦτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, Θεοῦ μᾶρτυς, ὦτε ἐπηοῦντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν ὦτε ἀφ' ὑμῶν ὦτε ἀπ' ἄλλων,</td>
<td>6 Παραγγέλλομεν ... στέλλεσθαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ παντὸς ἀδελφοῦ ἀτάκτως περιπατοῦντος καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν ... 7 αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε πάς δεὶ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς, ὦτε ὦκ ητακτήσαμεν ἐν ὑμῖν</td>
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<td>(7 δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι), ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν ἡπειρεῖ ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν, ὡς ἐὰν τρόφος ἄλλης τὰ ἐστώτα τέκνα.</td>
<td>8 οὔδε διορθαί ἄρτον εἴογαμον παρὰ τίνος,</td>
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<td>8 Οὔτος ὦμπροερόμενοι ὑμᾶν εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦνε</td>
<td>(9 οὔχ ἢ οὔχ ἠαμεν εἴοσιαν, ἀλλὰ ἴνα ἑαυτούς τύπον δόμεν ὑμῖν εἰς τὸ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Μνημονεύτε ... τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον-</td>
<td>9-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τινὰ ὑμῶν</td>
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83 Cf. e.g. P Oxy 1481 (II A.D.), where Theonas, writing to his mother who had heard that he had been sick, urges her twice μὴ ὀχλοῦ ἔρχετε τι ἡμῖν “do not trouble yourself about sending us anything” and μὴ ἐπιβαροῦ σέ τι ἡμῖν “do not burden yourself with sending us anything”.

84 The idea of being a burden on someone is expressed in Neohellenic in many different ways and all of them are essentially based on ancient uses: εἶμαι βάρος (τοῦ ἐξω πάρος “he is a burden on him”); γίνομαι βάρος (τοῦ ἐγίνε βάρος “he became a burden on him”); ἐπιβαρόνω (δὲν θέλω νὰ σάς ἐπιβαρόνω “I do not wish to be a burden on you”), εἶμαι / γίνομαι φορτίον(ν) “I am / become a burden”; εἶμαι / γίνομαι φόρτωμα “I am / become a burden / burdensome / annoying”; φορτόνομαι (< φορτίον) (τοῦ ἐφορτώθη / φορτώθηκε “he became a burden on him”).
The two texts reveal an analogous conception in thought, which sometimes has even exact verbal parallels. The emphasis that Paul places on his right to remuneration or free maintenance – of which he did not take advantage, but instead worked night and day in order not to burden them – leaves no doubt that ἐν βάρει εἶναι refers to financial burden, and not to any other kind of ‘authority’ or ‘honor’.  

6. Can only Children or also Parents Be Orphaned?

Finally, the verb ἀποροφανίζω. In order to strengthen the case for the originality of νήπιος, it has been urged that Paul presents himself not only as an infant, but also as an orphan (1 Th 2:17). It is, thus, confidently asserted that

This verb [ἀποροφανίζω] occurs … one [time] in classical Greek, two in Philo, one in the NT (1 Thess 2:17) and 28 in the patristic literature. An analysis of these occurrences in their respective contexts gives a clear and consistent picture of how the verb ἀποροφανίζω was used: it never refers to parents who are orphaned from their children but consistently refers to children who are orphaned from their parents. … Paul presents himself and his co-workers as children whose forced departure from Thessalonica has meant that they are orphaned from the believers in that city.  

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85 This is, indeed, a matter to which he often returns, e.g. 1 Cor 9: 4-18, a passage that has many identical thoughts and even much of the wording of 1 Th 2:3-12 and 2 Th 3:6-10. See also my study “ΟΨΩΝΙΟΝ: A Reconsideration of its Meaning”, NovT 16 (1974), 35-57. The expression is so understood also by Donfried, “The Epistolary and Rhetorical Context of 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12” in The Thessalonian Debate, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, 52; W. Stegemann, “Anlaß und Hintergrund der Abfassung von 1 Th 2, 1-12” in Theologische Brosamen für L. Steiger, zu seinem fünfzigten Geburtstag (ed. G. Freund-E. Stegemann), Heidelberg: Selbstverlag 1985, 397-416, p. 408, and others.

86 Weima, NTS 46 (2000), 558. Actually the TLG gives 56 instances, but there are more. See Κριαρᾶς, Λεξικόν s.v. and Ἰστορικὸν Λεξικόν, s.v.
These claims are simply uninformed, being based on a fragmentary review of the evidence – a mere 32 instances – which, moreover, has not always been interpreted correctly.

Actually, in a semantic discussion, a broad range of the cognate terms should be considered in order to show the breadth of semasiological reference. The most important of these are: ὀρφανός (1356 times), ὀρφανεύω (8 times), ὀρφανίζω, (41 times), and ἀπορφανίζω (56 times) not to speak of ἐξορφανίζω, ὀρφανίζω, ὀρφανικός, etc. These words occur about 2000 times in the extant literature, while in the inscriptions and the papyri the letter sequence ὀρφαν- occurs 305 times. Since the limits imposed on the present study leave no room for a detailed presentation of all the data that I have examined, I will content myself with a brief treatment of how a few of these words are applied.

The word-group ὀρφανός etc. basically means “bereaved”, 87 and it is applied to children without parents or to parents bereft of their children. 88 Thus, Euripides, Hekabe 148 f., can say of Hekabe: σε ... ὀρφανὸν εἶναι παῖδος “that you be orphaned of your child”. Pindaros, Olympian Odes, IX. 61 has Zeus bring Opus’s daughter to Lokros, so that the latter might not be ὀρφανὸν γενεᾶς “orphaned of issue (i.e. without a child).” 89 "This meaning is upheld by the lexicographers. 90

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88 The word-group is also used generally of the idea of being deprived or devoid of something: e.g. Anthologia Graeca, XVI. 186: ὀρφανὸς (sc. χειρῶν καὶ ἀποδά) ἰστάμενος “standing orphan (i.e. without arms and legs)”, said of a statue. Scholia In Sophoclem (various dates), Scholia in Sophoclis Ajacem (scholia vetera), 512a. 5: ὀρφανὸς ὁ ὄρον ἔχων τὸ μὴ φαίνεσθαι, ὁ ἄσιμος καὶ μηκέτι ἐμφανις ὄν “ὁρφανὸς ὁ λίμιτος not to be seen, he who is obscure, and no longer manifest / significant”; Philostratos, Heroikos, 664. 3: τοὺς δ’ ἄλλους ἄγρους ἀφείλοντο με οἱ δυνατοὶ κομιδῆ ὀρφανὸν “the powerful took away from me my other fields leaving me altogether an orphan [i.e. without anything]”; Pindaros, Pythonian Odes, IV. 283: ὀρφανίζει μὲν κακὰν γλῶσσαν φανερὰς ὑπός “he orphaned (i.e. deprived) malicious tongue of her clear voice” (see also Berenbradtke, Λεξικόν Ἐρμηνευτικόν, Ι, 808); Theokritos, Epigrammata in Anthologia Graeca, IX. 433: Πάνα τὸν αἰγιβάταν ὀρφανίσώμες ὑπνο “Let us deprive Pan, the goat-mounter, of sleep”; of a boat that is deprived of its anchor and drifts in the sea (Nikephoros Gregoras, Historia Romana, III. 556. 9: ἐπειδὰν σφητερῶν ὄργυρων ὀρφανίσεια ναυὸς ἐξοσῆθη πρὸς πέλαγος). The Sibylline Oracles (II B.C. – IV A.D.), II. 270, speak of ὀρφανικοὺς χήρας “orphaned widows”, so, too, II. 76, while Asia Minor MAMA I. IV-VII, VIII, IX-X. 8 121 speaks of χήρων ὀρφανῶν “orphan widows”.

89 See also Scholia in Pindarum (sch. vetera), Olympian Odes, IX. 92 b: ὀρφανὸν γενεᾶς ἀνεκνον “orphan of issue: without children”.

90 See e.g. Hesychios, Lexicon, O: 1355: ὀρφανος· ὁ γονεῶν ἐστεριμένος καὶ (ἡ) τέκνων ὀρφανός is one who is deprived of parents and (or) children”. Similarly Lexicon Vindobonense (XIV A.D.), O: 30: ὀρφανὸς λέγεται καὶ πατὴρ ἐπὶ παιδί ... καὶ γυνὴ ἐπ’ ἀνδρί “ὁρφανός is
The substantive ὀρφανία (-εία) occurs in Is (LXX) 47:8: οὐ καθιῶν χήρα οὐδὲ γνώσσομαι ὀρφανείαν (NIV: “... or suffer loss of children”). The adjective ὀρφανίων may be illustrated by an epigram of Leonidas of Tarentum (III B.C.) in Anthologia Graeca, IX. 466: ὡκτωκαιδέτης δὲ ἄπωλεο, τέκνον ἐγὼ ὑ ὀρφανίων κλαῖω γῆρας ὀδυρομένη “you were eighteen years old when you perished, my child; and I mourn weeping for my orphaned [i.e. bereaved] old age”. The verb ὀρφανιζόμαι may be illustrated by Gorgias (V-IV B.C.), Helen’s Enkomion, 11. 46, in which, defending Helen for her abduction, he says: ἡ δὲ ... τῆς πατρίδος στερηθείσα καὶ τῶν φίλων ὀρφανιθείσα “but she ... deprived of her country and orphaned from her friends”. Scholia in Pindarum (sch. vetera), Olympian Odes IX. 90 c. 2: ἕνα μὴ ἄτεκνος τελευτήσῃ, δεδώκεν αὐτῷ μὴ ὀρφανεύσῃ τοῦ γένους “that he might not die without children. He gave [her] to him that he might not be orphaned of issue”.

Finally, a few instances of the use of the verb ἀπορφανίζομαι. In his Ekklesiastike Historia, VII. 11. 23, Eusebios relates of certain Christians exiled to Libya, three of whom were orphaned (i.e. separated) from the others: ἐγὼ δὲ νῦν καὶ Γαίτος καὶ Πέτρος μόνοι, τῶν ἄλλων ἀδελφῶν ἀπορφανιζόμεντες “I, Gaius, and Petros alone, having been orphaned from the other brethren”. There is no difference in the structure and circumstances between this text and 1 Th 2:7; the two are identical. In his Commentary on Job, 59. 2, Julianus (IV A.D.) makes Job say to his friends: ὀρφάντες με ἑκάπαντον ἀπορφανισθέντα “You see me orphaned [i.e. deprived] of everything”. Ephraim Syros, Interrogationes et responsiones, 92. 9 speaks of those who, having seen the eternal blessings, reject them, as ἀποσχοινιζόμενοι καὶ ἀπορφανιζόμενοι πάντων τῶν δικαίων καὶ φίλων καὶ γνωρίμων “they exclude and orphan themselves [i.e. separate themselves] from all also a father who has lost his son ... and a woman who has lost her husband”. It illustrates the first by Euripides, Hekabe, 148 f: σε ... ὀρφανόν εἶναι παῖδος ‘that you be orphaned of your child’, and the second by Euripides, Orestes 1136: νῦμψας τ’ ἐδηκαὶ ὀρφανάς ἀναίορον ‘he made nymphs orphans of their consorts’; Ionia: Smyrna 246. 4: κάλλιπες αἰσχτὸν σὸς τοκεύον γόνον, Ἐρμιόνην λυγρόν δ’ ὀι μὲν λίβωσι κατ’ ὅσον δάκρυ σὸν ὀρφανής πότμον ὀδυρόμενοι “you left a mournful wailing to your parents, Hermione, who pour forth lamenting tears mourning your death that left them orphans (i.e. childless)”; Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum XXX. 252 (III A.D?). 7: ὀρφανόν ὡστε μένουσαν ἐνὶ μεγάρους γυναῖκα μύρεσθαι, παῖδον ἄμφω ἀποφθημέναν “so that you remain an orphan woman within the palace wailing your children, both destroyed”;

91 This is cited and commented upon by e.g. Didymos Caecus, Commentarii ad Zacchariam, I. 59. 3. See also Scholia in Pindarum (sch. vetera), 18. 14a. 2: μὴ ἐν ὀρφανίᾳ πέσωμεν στεφάνων “Let us not be deprived of (our) crowns”.

92 See also Anthologia Graeca, VII. 540: τοῦτο φαίνει, ὡς ὑμῖν τῶν δόλων κλαίομεν ἄμμι μόρον, ... ἀλλὰ τὸ κείνου γῆρας ἐν ἀργαλείᾳ κείμενον ὀρφανίη “say this, that we do not lament our treacherous murder ... but his old age left in evil bereavement”.

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the just, friends, and acquaintances”. The meaning is that “they deprive themselves of the company of …” Theodoros Studites (VIII-IX A.D.), Epistolai, 265. 8 speaks of one who had given up everything as ἀπορφανισθὲσαν τέλεον καὶ μηδεμίαν ἐν τῷ βίῳ παραμυθίαν κεκτημένην “completely orphaned [i.e. deprived of everything] and having no comfort in life”. The poet Manuel Philes (XIII-XIV A.D.), Carmina, III. 58. 148, bemoans the state of the stranger as ἀπορφανισθείς φυλῆς καὶ πατρίδος “bereft / deprived of people and fatherland”. Ionia: Teos (pre-Christian times), 144. 4: οἰκτράν Εἰράναν ἀβρᾶς παίδος ἀπορφανίσας “He orphaned pitiful Eirene of her graceful daughter”.

This meaning for (ἀ)πορφανίζω continues to obtain in mediaeval and modern times. Κριαρᾶς in his Λεξικόν, Vol. 14, p. 92, cites Μ. Φαλίέρο (XV-XVI A.D.), θρήνος, 92: Ὁλες ὀρφανισθήκαμεν κἀγὼ περίσσιο ἡ μάννα “All of us [mothers] became orphaned, and I am a superfluous mother” [i.e. ‘we all lost our children, and I am no longer really a mother’ (sc. since I have no child)]. According to the Historical Lexicon of the Academy of Athens, this meaning is still found in the Pontic dialect: ἥπεθοαν ἡ θυγατέρα μου τὸ ἐίναι φαινιστημένη, γιατ’ ἡφησε τὴν μάννα τῆς τοῦ ἐίναι ἀπορφανισμένη “my daughter died and is happy that she left her mother orphaned” [i.e. ‘alone’, ‘bereft’]. MM quote Abbott, Songs, p. 226, No. 50, “where a lover mourns that his mistress is going away and leaving him friendless” [i.e. “an orphan”]: καὶ μ’ ἀφίνει όρφανό. 94

7. Conclusion

The above linguistic and philological examination of ἦπιος, νήπιος, ἐν βάρει εἶναι, and the ὀρφανός - (ἀ)πορφανίζω-group as well as the parallelism between 1 Th 2 and 2 Th 3 and other contextual considerations, leave no doubt that the case for νήπιος has been based on an inadequate investigation and a misinterpretation of the evidence. This, together with the contextual evidence, leave no doubt that the original reading or, at any rate, the originally intended reading was ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν ἦπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ύμων ως ἐὰν τροφός θάλπη τὰ ἑαυτῆς τέκνα. 95 A

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93 See Ἱστορικὸν Λεξικόν τῆς νέας ἐλληνικῆς. Ἐν Ἀθηναίς: Ἐστία: 1939, Vol. II, s.v. ἀπορφανιζόμαι.
semantic display, showing the structure and punctuation of 1 Th 2:5-8, would look like this:

| oúte γάρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κοιλακείας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἴδατε, | We never used flattery as you know, nor a pretext for greed, God is our witness, nor did we seek praise from men: neither from you nor from any others (although we could have been a burden as Chr.’s ap), but we were gentle in your midst, like a nurse who cares for her children. |
| oúte ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεός μάρτυς, | Thus, in our longing for you we were willing to impart to you not only the gospel of God but even our own lives, because you were dear to us |
| oúte ξηπούντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν oúte ἀφ’ ὑμῶν oúte ἀπ᾽ ἄλλων | | |
| (δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστ. ἀπόστολοι), ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν ἢμιτο ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν, ὡς εάν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ εαυτῆς τέκνα. | Oútw, ὀμετρόμενοι ὑμῖν εὐδοκήμενον μεταδόντες υμῖν σὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχὰς, διότι ἁγαπητοὶ ἢμῖν ἐγενήθητε. |

The long list of oúte-clauses has its dénouement in “although we could have been a burden as apostles of Christ”. Indeed, it is this God-given right that sets the oúte-clauses in sharp relief. These clauses are balanced by the antithetical clause, which positively describes how Paul conducted himself: gentle like a nurse. Finally, he concludes (oútw = ‘Thus’) his argument by summarising his devotion to them which made him willing to impart to them even his own life. This is a fitting characterization of a nurse’s love and devotion to her children.96

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96 Contrary to what is often believed, e.g. by certain contributors to the Thessalonians Debate, the term τροφός can actually be used also of mothers, see e.g. Sophokles, Aias, 849: ἄγγειλον ἀτοὺς τὰς ἑμᾶς ... γέροντι πατρί τῇ τε δυστίτινῳ τροφῷ “tell of my madness to my old man and my poor mother”; Cf. also Xenophon, Oikonomikos, V. 17: δὲ ἔφη τὴν γεωργίαν μητέρα καὶ τροφὸν εἶναι “Who said that husbandry was mother and nurse”. Cf. Neohellenic ἐκείνη ποῦ μὲ ἔθρεψε / ἀνέθρεψε (< τρέφω, τροφὸς) “she who fed me / brought me up” [said of one’s mother]. Galanis, Πρώτη πρὸς Θεσσαλονικεῖσ, 158, makes the interesting observation that τροφός refers to the sucking mother (θηλάζουσα μητέρα).