

PREFACE

On 13 and 14 March 2006 twenty-three scholars gathered at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa, for a conference on the rhetorical analysis of the Letter to the Galatians. At that stage thirty years had passed since Hans Dieter Betz published his well-known article "The literary composition and function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians". History shows that this article (and his commentary published shortly thereafter) led to an explosion of interest in the rhetorical analysis of this letter. Thirty years later the interest in this issue has not diminished! Over the past few years a number of rhetorical studies of Galatians have been published in which new approaches to the rhetorical analysis of Galatians are proposed. All of this indicated that a conference on this issue could be worthwhile. In the light of recent developments the conference focused, in particular, on new approaches to the rhetorical analysis of Galatians.

In this volume seven of the papers read at the conference are presented. One of these served as an introductory paper while the others focused on different rhetorical approaches. It is hoped that this volume will be used by other scholars, who, like us, are fascinated by the rhetorical analysis of this letter, thereby stimulating fruitful discussion, and maybe leading to newer approaches.

The aim of the first paper was to set the stage for the conference. *Francois Tolmie's* paper, "The rhetorical analysis of the Letter to the Galatians: 1995-2005" presents a systematic overview of rhetorical analyses of Galatians published during this period. They are presented consecutively from 1995 to 2005 in order to point out the diversity of approaches that were followed. The paper concludes with a brief section in which Tolmie highlights five characteristics which he regards as an apt summary of the most important trends in the rhetorical analysis of Galatians during this period.

The other papers focused on specific issues and on different approaches that can be followed in the rhetorical analysis of Galatians.

The theme of *Johan Vos'* paper is "Paul and sophistic rhetoric: A perspective on his argumentation in the Letter to the Galatians." As the title indicates, the approach chosen by Vos is one based on the notion of sophistic rhetoric. In the first section Vos discusses the meaning of the term "sophistic." To that end, an attempt is made to reconstruct the view of a contemporary critical reader who did not share Paul's presuppositions and who was well acquainted with the discussions in the philosophical and rhetorical schools concerning acceptable and non-acceptable rhetorical methods. This approach is compared with other approaches that analyse Paul's argumentation. The second section of his paper investigates in more detail what it means when

“sophistic rhetoric” is used as a key to analysing Paul’s theology. To that end, some models, which start from a “Platonic” view of rhetoric are compared with a model that combines a “(neo)-sophistic” or constructionist view with a “rhetoric of power”.

In his paper “A structure of persuasion in Galatians: Epistolary and rhetorical appeal in an aural setting”, *Dieter Mitternacht* ponders the reception of Galatians in an aural setting, and considers questions such as “How did the first recipients react to the letter?”, “What can we expect them to have remembered after having listened to the letter?”, and “Are there structural elements in the letter that would have aided the aural reception of the letter?”. In four readings, Mitternacht’s investigation traces textual indicators of interaction and emotion, compares their locations with epistolary and rhetorical structure-analysis and identifies a structure of persuasion. Mitternacht argues that the readings reveal a structure of persuasion with a realistic prospect of succeeding as a mnemonic device in an aural setting on a macro-structural level. Situational passages (1:6-10; 3:1-5; 4:8-20; 5:2-12 and 6:12-13) and recurring affirmations of Christ and Paul as embodiments of faithfulness and commitment in suffering imprinted on the aural memory of the first listeners a concern for an *imitatio Christi crucifixi*.

In his paper “The argumentation in Galatians”, *Mika Hietanen* focuses on yet another perspective, namely how insights from modern methods of argumentation analysis could be utilised in the rhetorical analysis of the letter. In this regard he points out that, so far, the use of insights from modern argumentation theory has been modest and that no full-fledged argumentation analysis of Paul’s argumentation has yet been attempted. He sets out to do so in his paper. He discusses the pragma-dialectical model of argumentation analysis and then illustrates how this approach can be used for Galatians. Using Galatians 3:6-9 as an example, he shows how such an approach can help one to gain a more accurate understanding of Paul’s argumentation.

Sam Tsang takes the New Rhetoric of Perelman and Obrechts-Tyteca as his point of departure. As the title of his paper indicates (“‘Abba’ revisited: Merging the horizons of history and rhetoric through the new rhetoric structure for metaphors”), he illustrates the usefulness of this approach by focusing on a specific metaphor used by Paul in Galatians 4:6. In this recipient-orientated reading, Tsang shows that Paul used the metaphor to exhort with great urgency those on the fringe to return to the fold. This illustrates that, by using the approach of the New Rhetoric to describe a metaphor, an interpreter can raise questions on the understandings of both the author and readers, as part of the communication process.

Pieter Verster focuses on a well-known feature of Paul's rhetoric, namely his use of rhetorical questions. As the title of his paper indicates ("The implications of non-authentic questions in Galatians"), he bases his approach on speech act theory. The aim of his paper is to show that one can use speech act theory to develop a more accurate classification for describing the function fulfilled by "rhetorical questions" — or "non-authentic questions" as he prefers to call them — as part of Paul's rhetorical strategy. This is illustrated by a classification of such questions in Galatians in terms of this model.

In the last paper "Reconstructing rhetorical strategies from the text of Galatians — syntax-based discourse analysis as a monitoring device", *Gerhard Swart* focuses on the area overlapping a linguistic and a rhetorical analysis of Galatians. He raises the question whether and to what extent conclusions drawn from a text-immanent linguistic approach, on the one hand, and those drawn from rhetorical analysis, on the other, are compatible and mutually supportive. Using Galatians as sample text, Swart compares three different approaches, thus illustrating the value of a syntactically based method of discourse analysis for verifying conclusions regarding rhetorical strategies.

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