



UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA PRESS
JOURNALS + DIGITAL PUBLISHING

St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric

Author(s): C. Joachim Classen

Source: *Rhetorica*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Autumn, 1992), pp. 319-344

Published by: University of California Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20135342>

Accessed: 03/02/2010 07:13

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=ucal>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



University of California Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Rhetorica*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

C. JOACHIM CLASSEN

St. Paul's Epistles and Ancient Greek and Roman Rhetoric

At the 29th General Meeting of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas at Sigtuna (Sweden) in August 1974 Professor H. D. Betz, a New Testament scholar who was trained in Germany, but who teaches in the United States of America, gave a lecture on "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians" which seems to have initiated a new era in Biblical Studies or at least in New Testament Studies in the United States and, to a lesser degree, elsewhere. In 1979 Professor Betz published "Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia" in which he repeated the claims he had made in his paper and applied in detail the method which he had outlined five years before. And in 1988 a German translation of his commentary appeared in which he reproduced the original text without noticeable changes;¹ only in the intro-

¹H. D. Betz, "The Literary Composition and Function of Paul's Letter to the Galatians," *New Testament Studies* 21 (1975):353-379; H. D. Betz, ed., *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia, 1979, ²1984); H. D. Betz, ed., *Der Galaterbrief: Ein Kommentar zum Brief des Apostels Paulus an die Gemeinden in Galatien* (München, 1988); see also H. D. Betz, ed., *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Philadelphia, 1985).

duction Professor Betz seems to show some awareness of the criticism and doubts some reviewers have expressed.²

However, on the whole the reaction to the commentary was favorable. Most reviewers concentrated on the designation of the letter to the Galatians as apologetic and welcomed Betz's approach as leading to results which appeared to them not only new, but well founded. Indeed, some hailed Betz's work as marking the beginning of a new era in New Testament scholarship. Today, numerous scholars in this field, especially in the United States, try to employ the same method as Betz, and the terms "rhetorical" and "rhetoric" frequently figure in the titles of their papers.³ The new element which Betz introduced or rather claimed to have introduced into New Testament Studies is the use of the categories of ancient Greek and Roman, that is, classical rhetoric and epistolography for the exegesis of St. Paul's letters.

This alone would explain and justify the interest of a classicist in this development; not surprisingly, therefore, one of the leading experts in this field, Professor George A. Kennedy, took his stand in his book "New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism," approving of this type of exegesis in general and applying it to various texts from the New Testament, but modifying Betz's results with regard to the letter to the Galatians.⁴

²Reviews: J.-N. Aletti, *Recherches de science religieuse* 69 (1981):601-602; W. D. Davies, P. W. Meyer, and D. E. Aune, *Religious Studies Review* 7 (1981):310-328; W. A. Meeks, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 (1981):304-307; J. Swetnam, *Biblica* 62 (1981):594-597; H. Hübner, *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 109 (1984):241-250.

³See e.g. M. Bünker, *Briefformular und rhetorische Disposition im 1. Korintherbrief* (Göttingen, 1984); R. Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Millenarian Piety* (Philadelphia, 1986); important on pages 61-87—and more convincing than his pupil—F. W. Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric and 2 Thessalonians* (Sheffield, 1989); more critical and discerning W. G. Übelacker, *Der Hebräerbrief als Appell. I: Untersuchungen zu exordium, narratio and postscriptum* (Hebr. 1-2 und 13: 22-25) (Stockholm, 1989); W. Wuellner's pupil, L. Thurén (see n. 5); and especially B. C. Johanson, *To All the Brethren: A Text-linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to I Thessalonians* (Stockholm, 1987), whose analyses are more convincing as these authors avail themselves also of the insights of modern rhetoric (see also below n. 76). Any recent volume of *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *New Testament Studies*, *Novum Testamentum*, *Theologische Zeitschrift* or *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* will furnish examples of articles on biblical "rhetoric." Interestingly some scholars seem to remain totally unaffected by this new approach, see e.g. W. S. Schutter, *Hermeneutic and Composition in I Peter* (Tübingen, 1989).

⁴G. A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill and London, 1984), on Galatians: 144-152; reviews: e.g. R. M. Fowler,

However, because the enthusiasm for this new instrument for the interpretation of biblical texts is not shared in all quarters, and some scholars prefer simply to ignore it or to suspend judgment, while others, clearly, feel uneasy about their uncertainty or even ask for advice or assistance from classicists,⁵ a new assessment seems to be called for.

In his commentary, Professor Betz claims: "Paul's letter to the Galatians can be analyzed according to Greco-Roman rhetoric and epistolography. This possibility raises the whole question of Paul's relationship to the rhetorical and literary disciplines and culture, a question which has not as yet been adequately discussed" and he adds in a footnote to the first sentence: "This fact was apparently not recognized before."⁶ Then, however, Betz rather oddly gives a couple of references to Luther and Melancthon as well as to J. B. Lightfoot, thus admitting that he did have predecessors. This raises a number of questions: (1) Are rhetoric and epistolography meant to be taken together as one art or discipline, or are they regarded as two separate ones, each of them separately being of service to the interpretation of the New Testament? (2) Is Professor Betz referring to the theory of rhetoric and epistolography or to their practical application? (3) What exactly is the aim of applying the ancient categories? (a) Is it only to demonstrate to what extent Saint Paul was familiar with them, with rhetoric and/or epistolography, theory and/or practice (as the second sentence seems to indicate), or (b) is it in order to arrive at a more thorough understanding of the letter(s)? (4) If this is the aim, the question arises whether one should restrict oneself to applying

Journal of Biblical Literature 105 (1986):328–330; V. K. Robbins, *Rhetorica* 3 (1985):145–149; J. H. Patton, *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71 (1985):247–249.

⁵This paper grew out of a talk given at the request of the group of Roman Catholic and Protestant Commentators on the New Testament on March 26, 1990 in Einsiedeln (Switzerland) and was published as "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 82 (1991):1–33. The English version, written afresh, was first presented at the University of Helsinki on May 8, 1991. I am most grateful to my Finnish hosts and to Dr. L. Thurén for a copy of his *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter* (Åbo, 1990) and references to other recent publications.

⁶*Galatians* 14 (*Galater* 54); more recently Betz seems to have become more aware of his predecessors, see his *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, 129, n. 2 and his "The Problem of Rhetoric and Theology According to the Apostle Paul," in A. Vanhoye, ed., *L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, style et conception du ministère* (Leuven, 1986), 16–48, esp. 16–21.

the categories and insights of ancient rhetoric only, or whether one may also employ whatever new aspects have been added since antiquity. (5) If, however, the aim is a more adequate appreciation of Saint Paul himself, at least three further groups of problems come up: (a) when, where and how is Saint Paul likely to have become familiar with ancient rhetoric and epistolography; (b) exactly which form or which aspect of rhetoric and epistolography and at which phase of their history is meant (provided it is possible to distinguish clearly several phases of the development); (c) did he deliberately draw on such knowledge of rhetorical theory and employ its categories consciously or not? (6) Finally, as Professor Betz stresses the novelty of his method, it seems obvious to ask: why was it not discovered and used before; or, as he mentions Luther, Melanchthon and Lightfoot in a footnote, were they the first and what did they do?

In view of these questions some general observations seem to be called for. When one turns to the categories of rhetoric as tools for a more adequate and thorough appreciation of texts, their general structure and their details, one should not hesitate to use the most developed and sophisticated form, as it will offer more help than any other.⁷ For there is no good reason to assume that a text could and should be examined only according to categories known (or possibly known) to the author concerned. For rhetoric provides a system for the interpretation of all texts (as well as of oral utterances and even of other forms of communication), irrespective of time and circumstances (except, of course, for the fact that some rules of rhetoric immediately concern the external circumstances).⁸

When one turns to the categories of rhetoric in order to appreciate more fully an author, his background and his manner of writing, one should examine what is known about his education and other factors that influenced him. When, however, lack of independent sources render this impossible and one has nothing but a text or a group of texts, one has to bear in mind that in any speech or any piece of writing, elements or features occur which

⁷On this problem see W. Wuellner, "Where Is Rhetorical Criticism Taking Us?" *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 49 (1987):448-463. Some examples are listed above in n. 3 and below in n. 76.

⁸See my paper cited above in n. 5 and my contribution "Die Rhetorik im öffentlichen Leben unserer Zeit," in C. J. Classen and H.-J. Müllenbrock, eds., *Die Macht des Wortes* (Marburg, 1992), 247-267.

we know from handbooks of rhetoric and which we are inclined to classify and designate accordingly. They may originate from four sources: from rhetorical theory (and its deliberate application); from a successful imitation of written or spoken practice; from unconscious borrowing from the practice of others; or from a natural gift for effective speaking or writing.

In application to Saint Paul's letters, this means that one may collect the external evidence regarding the conditions under which he grew up and the experience of interpreting the Bible which he gained later. I shall not attempt to do this, as I am not competent;⁹ but I should like to make two observations: (a) anyone who could write Greek as effectively as Saint Paul did must have read a good deal of works written in Greek, thus imbibing applied rhetoric from others, even if he never heard of any rules of rhetorical theory; so even if one could prove that Saint Paul was not familiar with the rhetorical theory of the Greeks, it can hardly be denied that he knew it in its applied form; and (b) anyone who studied the Old Testament as carefully as Saint Paul undoubtedly did must have noticed the rhetorical qualities displayed there and must have given some thought to the best way of expressing himself.

In turning to Saint Paul's letters now, we have to emphasize a point to which Professor Betz does not seem to have paid enough attention—the difference between rhetoric and epistolography. Most ancient handbooks of rhetoric do not deal with letters, and where they do, they are content with a few remarks mostly on matters of style.¹⁰ Manuals on letter-writing on the other hand differ substantially from handbooks on rhetoric:¹¹ instead of dealing with either the *officia oratoris* or the *partes orationis*, they list a large number of types of letters and give some advice on stylistic problems. Obviously, a fundamental difference be-

⁹The literature on St. Paul is too vast to be referred to here, see K. H. Schelkle, *Paulus: Leben, Briefe, Theologie* (Darmstadt, 1981) and O. Merk, "Paulus-Forschung 1936–1983," *Theologische Rundschau* 53 (1988):1–81; see most recently J. Becker, *Paulus: Der Apostel der Völker* (Tübingen, 1990).

¹⁰See the two best known examples: Ps.-Demetrius, *De elocutione*, 223–235; C. Iulius Victor, *Ars rhetorica*, 105–106 (Giomini-Celentano).

¹¹See *Demetrii et Libanii qui feruntur ΤΥΠΟΙ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΙ et ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΙ ΧΑΡΑΚΤΗΡΕΣ*, ed. V. Weichert (Leipzig, 1910); for other texts on ancient epistolary theory see R. Hercher, ed., *Epistolographi Graeci* (Paris, 1873), 6–13, and 14–16; and A. J. Malherbe, ed., *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (Atlanta, 1988).

tween a speech or even a poem or another type of composition on the one hand and a letter on the other was felt, and while for example brevity, clarity or appropriateness are recommended for letters (as for other pieces of writing or speaking¹²), as regards the structure of letters, no particular rule or advice seems to be given.

I could now enter upon a detailed examination of Betz's method, the new arguments which he formulates with the aid of rhetorical theory and the insights he thus gains, or I could offer a rhetorical analysis of St. Paul's letter to the Galatians or at least some comments on its elements and features, the function of which one would explain with the help of rhetorical categories in any work of ancient literature. Instead, I turn to the last question raised above: what use was made of rhetoric for the interpretation of the Bible before 1974. I cannot, of course, deal here with the history of the exegesis of the Bible in general.¹³ But even a brief glance at some arbitrarily selected examples shows very quickly that this method is by no means new. It was practiced in antiquity and it was not totally neglected in the Middle Ages; it was frequently employed with great skill during the Renaissance, and it has never been forgotten ever since in some quarters, while others preferred to ignore it;¹⁴ and it was revived after the Second World War first by such Old Testament scholars as J. Muilenberg,¹⁵ before Professor Betz brought it back to New Testament Studies so effectively.

In this long and varied history, few have done more for the study of ancient rhetoric, for its development and its application

¹²See the references on page 13 of A. J. Malherbe (n. 11 above); for these qualities in general, see H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (Stuttgart, ³1990) and J. Martin, *Antike Rhetorik* (München, 1974) s.v. "brevis/brevitas," "dilucidus," "decorum," etc.

¹³For the earliest stages see the bibliography in H. Graf Reventlow, *Epochen der Bibelauslegung: I. Vom Alten Testament bis Origenes* (München, 1990), 205–211: for the Church fathers, H. J. Sieben, *Exegesis Patrum: Saggio bibliografico sull'exegesi biblica dei Padri della Chiesa* (Roma, 1983); for the Middle Ages, cf. H. de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale I–II* (Paris, 1959–1964); B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1941, ³1985); for the humanists and the Renaissance, see J. H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1983); and the bibliographical references given by T. J. Wengert, *Philip Melancthon's "Annotationes in Johannem" in Relation to its Predecessors and Contemporaries* (Genève, 1987), 265–273. The large number of special studies cannot be listed here, but see below n. 68.

¹⁴See pages 332–333 and n. 43 below.

¹⁵"Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969):1–18.

to the needs and requirements of his own time and for its use for the interpretation of the Bible than Philipp Melanchthon;¹⁶ and yet, few have experienced a more complete neglect later. Betz refers to him in a footnote, but not in the bibliography where Erasmus and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, Luther, Calvin and Bullinger are listed with their commentaries; G. A. Kennedy does not mention him at all.¹⁷ Some modern scholars seem to ignore him, because they disagree with his theological position, others because he wrote in Latin (or an old fashioned type of German).

How does he proceed? How does Melanchthon practice rhetorical criticism? To what extent does he anticipate Professor Betz? What, if anything, can the modern scholar learn from him and his method? It may not be superfluous at this stage to mention the fact that Melanchthon wrote three rhetorical handbooks himself: "De Rhetorica libri tres," Wittenberg, 1519; "Institutiones Rhetoricae," Hagenau, 1521; and "Elementorum rhetorices libri duo," Wittenberg, 1531. He also wrote three works on dialectic, the art of defining words and objects, of dividing genera and of finding and using arguments; "Compendiaria Dialectices," Leipzig, 1520; "Dialectices libri quatuor," Hagenau, 1528; and "Erotemata dialectices," Wittenberg, 1547. More important, of course, is the large number of his commentaries on books of the Old and New Testament, which cannot all be listed here.¹⁸ To give some information on Melanchthon's earliest works is sufficient. In 1519, at the age of 22, he wrote "Theologica Institutio in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos" with a summary (summa). In the following year he edited the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, in 1521 the

¹⁶His works: C. G. Bretschneider and H. E. Bindseil, eds., *Philippi Melancthonis Opera I-XXVIII* (Halle, 1834-1860) with his commentaries on books of the Bible in 13:761-1472, 14 and 15 (= *Corpus Reformatorum*, 13-15); see also R. Stupperich, et al., eds., *Melancthon's Werke in Auswahl I-VII* (Gütersloh, 1951-1975) and E. Bizer, ed., *Texte aus der Anfangszeit Melancthon's* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1966). Biography: K. Hartfelder, *Philipp Melancthon als Praeceptor Germaniae* (Berlin, 1889) with detailed lists of Melancthon's publications and lectures (577-620 and 555-566); W. Maurer, *Der junge Melancthon zwischen Humanismus und Reformation I-II* (Göttingen, 1967-1969). Bibliography: W. Hammer, *Die Melancthonforschung im Wandel der Jahrhunderte I-III* (Gütersloh, 1967-1981).

¹⁷H. D. Betz, *Galatians* 14 n. 97; 337; (*Galater* 54 n. 97; 556-557); G. A. Kennedy op. cit. (see above n. 4). N. Elliot, *The Rhetoric of Romans* (Sheffield, 1990), too, grants him no more than a footnote (22 n. 1).

¹⁸See K. Hartfelder's list, 577-620; not all of them have been reprinted in the *Opera*, but before each text a (nearly) complete list of the various editions is given.

first and the second Epistle to the Corinthians and again the Epistle to the Romans, each with marginal notes. "Annotationes in Epistolas Pauli Ad Romanos Et Corinthios," obviously taken during his lectures, were published in Nürnberg in 1522 by Luther without Melanchthon's consent (a German version was published in Augsburg in 1523). Similarly, his "Annotationes in Evangelium Matthaei" were published by others in Basel in 1523. In the same year his "In Evangelium Ioannis Annotationes" were published by himself in Basel and elsewhere and were printed thirteen times in the year of publication. Although the demand was great, Melanchthon was reluctant to regard his work as finished and ready for the printer or the public. Thus, it was not until 1529 that he himself published his "Dispositio orationis in Epistola Pauli ad Romanos" (Hagenau), which was followed by "Commentarii in epistolam Pauli ad Romanos" (Wittenberg, 1532; in revised form, Strasbourg, 1540) and "Epistolae Pauli scriptae ad Romanos, Enarratio" (Wittenberg, 1556), to list only the works on one epistle by Saint Paul in order to illustrate that Melanchthon returned to the same work again and again. In addition, notes which students took from Melanchthon's early lectures in 1520 and 1521 on the Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans have been preserved and printed.¹⁹ What do they contain? What do they teach us?

Though the notes on the Epistle to the Galatians are rather elementary, it seems appropriate to characterize them briefly here, as Professor Betz applied his new method in a commentary on this letter. In accordance with the practice in such lectures, as we learn from the lecture notes on Ciceronian speeches from several scholars,²⁰ Melanchthon first determines the *genus* to which he thinks the work should be assigned and gives a summary of the content. Rather surprisingly, he regards it as belonging to the *genus didacticum*, a new *genus*, which he himself had added to the traditional canon of three (*iudiciale, demonstrativum, deliberativum*), as we know from his manual of rhetoric in which he explains and

¹⁹In his *Texte aus der Anfangszeit*, E. Bizer prints the "Artifitium Epistolae Pauli ad Romanos" (20–30), the "Exegesis in Epistolam Pauli pros tous Galatas" (34–37), the ΠΑΨΟΔΙΑΙ ΕΝ ΠΙΑΥΛΟΥ ΑΔ ΡΟΜΑΝΟΣ" (45–85) and the "Theologica Institutio . . . in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos" (90–99).

²⁰For such notes, see e.g., *In omnes M. Tullii Ciceronis orationes, quot quidem extant, doctissimorum virorum enarrationes* (Basel, 1553).

justifies this innovation.²¹ Clearly, while Melanchthon is thoroughly familiar with the rhetorical tradition, he feels free to modify it and to introduce a new element where he considers it incomplete or inadequate.

He characterizes the first two verses by an unusual but appropriate term (*ἐπιγραφή*) and a brief description of their content and the third merely by a Latin term, *salutatio*, again not commonly used in handbooks of rhetoric from antiquity, though familiar from contemporary works on epistolography.²² The section from 1:6 to 2:21 he regards as *exordium*, dominated by the *affectus indignationis*, and he adds approvingly: "Sicuti alias optima exordia sunt ab affectibus."²³ Perhaps he has such precepts in mind as that given by Quintilian in the fourth book of his "Institutio oratoria" (1:33) that the audience may be made attentive by stirring its emotions. Being also aware of Quintilian's warning that such appeals to emotions should be used sparingly in proems (book 4 1:14), he interprets St. Paul's next sentence appreciatively as "mitigatio . . . indignationis" (1:7), perhaps because usually *indignatio* is shown with reference to the adversary (in the courts of law), not to the recipient of a letter. Next Melanchthon explains the inferences Saint Paul draws or the arguments he proposes in the following verses, sometimes expressly stating the *summa*, that is the matter in question, sometimes pointing to particular parts of an argumentation.²⁴ On 3:1 (*O stulti Galatae*) he remarks: "status seu

²¹*Texte 34*; for the new *genus didacticum* see *De Rhetorica* 13; *Institutiones Rhetoricae* AII^r (*dialecticum*) and *Elementa Rhetorices* A8^v-B1^r (I quote from the 1536 edition). The fourfold division may have been suggested to Melanchthon by the four qualities which Maximus of Tyre expects the philosophically trained orator to display in the four areas of his activity (or. 25, 6 p. 304 Hobein).

²²For the *salutatio*, see e.g., Erasmus' "De conscribendis epistolis" (*Opera Omnia* I 2, ed. J.-C. Margolin [Amsterdam, 1971], 205-579, esp. 276-295). Melanchthon's remarks should be set against the rich discussion of his time on the rules of letter-writing, see e.g. J. R. Henderson, "Erasmus on the Art of Letter-Writing," in J. J. Murphy, ed., *Renaissance Eloquence* (Berkeley, 1983), 331-355 (with references to further literature).

²³*Texte 34*: "As elsewhere the best proems start from passions."

²⁴*Texte 34-35*: on *Gal.* 2:6: "Etiam probat alia coniectura: nimirum ita neque cum apud eos essem aliquid ab eis dididici" [sic!]; on *Gal.* 2:11: "summa: reprehendi Petrum; ideo nihil ab eo didici, sed per revelationem, cui subiungit rationem sue reprehensionis"; on *Gal.* 2:15: "summa: Judaei indigent iustificatione; ergo operibus non sunt iustificati"; on *Gal.* 2:17: "summa: Si iustificati in Christo Ad huc

propositio per obiurgationem."²⁵ He takes this verse to contain the point at issue, and by adding a little later "Idque probat esse Argumentis," he marks the beginning of the argumentation (*confirmatio*).²⁶

There is no need to give further details of the manner in which Melanchthon comments on the syllogisms or of the terms he employs himself. However, terms occur more than once which are not common in traditional rhetorical theory: *declaratio per similia* (for *locus e similibus*); *inversio* (for a piece of evidence brought forward against one side when turned in favor of that side); *occupatio* instead of *anteoccupatio*; and *parenesis* for *exhortatio*.²⁷

Thus we see that Melanchthon seems interested in the general structure of the letter and the arguments and he distinguishes introduction, proposition of the subject matter, argumentation and peroration (*epilogus*). He analyses a number of syllogisms and gives labels from the manuals of rhetoric where they seem appropriate, and he adds new ones whenever the traditional system seems defective to him and he feels the need to supplement it. Thereby he assists the reader in understanding the intention of the letter as a whole, the general line of the argumentation and the structure of particular arguments. While doing so he falls back upon the tools provided by ancient rhetoric, and he demonstrates that this system—even after centuries—renders useful service in interpreting a text such as an epistle by Saint Paul. But as he introduces new categories and new terms also, he indicates, by implication, that he sees no reason why the modern reader or scholar should limit himself to what tradition has to offer; rather, he encourages him to apply rhetoric in its most advanced form or even to develop it further when and where need be.

Tempting though it may be at this point to consider the various stages of Melanchthon's work on the Epistle to the Romans, a very few remarks will have to suffice. In the "Summa" which he

habemus opus ulteriore iustificatione per opera—ergo Christus est peccati minister"; on *Gal. 2:21*: "si per opera iustificantur ergo Christus nihil confert."

²⁵"State of affairs or statement of facts by means of rebuke."

²⁶"And this he proves to be so by means of arguments."

²⁷On *declaratio per similia*, see his *De Rhetorica*, 45; on *inversio*, 100–101 and *Institutiones Rhetoricae*, B3^v: "inversio qua docemus signum, quod contra nos producit, pro nobis facere"; on *occupatio* (instead of *anteoccupatio*), see *Elementa Rhetorices*, K1^v, on *parenesis* (*παραινέσις*), see what Melanchthon says on *exhortatio*: *De Rhetorica*, 34–35 and *Elementa Rhetorices*, D8^v.

wrote together with the "Theologica Institutio" in 1520²⁸ Melanchthon again gives the *status causae*, assigns the work to one of the traditional genera (*iudiciale*) and describes the parts, as if he was analyzing a Ciceronian speech. Yet again one meets with unexpected features. Melanchthon notes the *inscriptio* at the beginning before the *exordium*, thus implying that it is a letter, not a speech. He also enumerates the *axiomata* in the *narratio* which thus turns out—at least in his view—to be not an account of events but a list of the arguments Saint Paul intends to prove later.²⁹ Moreover, Melanchthon registers two digressions (2:1–16 and 3:1–9) which he advises the reader not to overlook in the *narratio*, because otherwise the reader would not grasp the thread of the discussion.³⁰ As for the rest, he begins with a list of the arguments in chapter four, points to the *amplificatio* at its end and to the *exhortatio* at the beginning of the following chapter, analyzes the next section (5:12–7:14) and labels it as *locus didacticus* ("quo quid et unde peccatum, gratia et lex sit, docet"³¹) in which he marks a digression

²⁸Texte 97–99; 97: "Status causae: Iustitia ex fide sine operibus, id est nullum opus potest affectum immutare, sed sola fides impetrat iustitiam, hoc est innovationem nostri. ORATIO est generis iudicialis, habet exordium, narrationem, confirmationem, apte composita." Zur *Summa* und zur *Theologica Institutio* s. W. Maurer, "Melanchthons Loci communes von 1521 als wissenschaftliche Programmschrift," *Luther-Jahrbuch* 27 (1960):1–50, esp. 2–6; see also A. Schirmer, *Das Paulusverständnis Melanchthons 1518–1522* (Wiesbaden, 1967).

²⁹Texte 97: "inscriptio"; 98: "Summa vero Narrationis constat his axiomatis: 1. Gentes habere legem naturae. 2. Gentes etsi legem naturae habuerint, tamen peccaverunt. 3. Iudaei habuerunt legem divinam. 4. Iudaei, etsi legem divinam habuerint, tamen peccaverunt. 5. Omnes itaque peccaverunt, id est et gentes et Iudaei, nec sunt adiuti lege, quominus peccarent. 6. Iustitia vero est per Christum, nec ullis comparatur operibus."

³⁰Texte 98: "Hanc narrationem Paulus extendit ad caput usque quartum, et miscet ei aliquot digressiones, quas nisi quis observet, non facile putem adsecuturum disputationis filum."

³¹Texte 98: "Confirmatio quae in capite quarto est, argumenta habet sex. 1. Abraham fide iustificatus est, non operibus; igitur nec nos iustificamur nisi fide, nempe filii Abrahae. 2. David dicit beatitudinem per non imputationem peccati esse; ergo non est ex operibus. 3. Abraham iustificatus est ante circumcisionem; ergo iustificatio non est ex operibus. 4. Per legem non est promissio, id est: iustificatio fuit ante legem Mosaicam; ergo iustificatio non est ex legis operibus. 5. Si ex lege haereditas est, id est: si sufficit lex ad iustificationem, frustra est (scripsi pro: et) promissio *χριστοῦ*, id est: si ex nobis est, non egemus Christo. 6. Lex iram operatur, ergo non conciliat; lex facit odium Dei, ergo non amorem."

Texte 99: "locus didacticus": "by means of which he teaches what and wherefrom sin, grace and law are."

again (6:1–7:7) containing a *moralis disputatio*. “Et is locus arbitrii libertatem tollit,”³² he adds, thereby emphasizing his theological concern. After a short summary of the content of 7:14–8:12 Melanchthon characterizes the rest up to chapter nine as exhortatory and consolatory, indicates the content of chapters 9, 10 and 11 with very brief remarks and ends with *reliqua moralia sunt* for the last five chapters.³³ Obviously, he is primarily interested in the first chapters of the epistle and the theological problems they raise, in the arguments advanced there and their validity, but not in the sections devoted to admonition, encouragement or consolation and not in the structure of the whole or terminological details. He uses *oratio* and *narratio* both in a rather unusual manner: *oratio* although this is a letter (and he is aware of this, as he points to the *inscriptio*) and *narratio*³⁴ although even he does not suggest that this section performs the function assigned to a *narratio* by tradition. Indeed, in the “Artificium Epistolae Pauli ad Romanos,” another set of lecture notes taken down by a student, the two terms do not occur, although *narratio* is used in the “Annotationes” published in 1522,³⁵ and, in a different context, in the “Dispositio” of 1529. In his later works, the two editions of the “Commentarii” of 1532 and 1540 and the “Enarratio” of 1556, Melanchthon seems to do without them.

Though it would be fascinating and rewarding now to enter upon a detailed comparison between Melanchthon’s various explanatory works on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, lack of space forbids me to do so. Only a brief remark seems called for on

³²“And this point eliminates the freedom of decision.”

³³Texte 99: “Reliqua usque ad IX. Cap. adhortatoria sunt et consolationes quaedam. Caput IX. praedestinationem et vocationem gentium continet. Caput X. comparationem iustitiae fidei et iustitiae pharisaicae. Caput XI. adhortationem. Reliqua moralia sunt.”

³⁴Texte 97 as quoted above n. 28.

³⁵For the *Artificium* [sic!] see Texte 20–30; *Annotationes Philippi Melanchthonis in Epistolas Pauli Ad Romanos Et Corinthios* (Nürnberg, 1522, not reprinted in the *Opera*), B2^v; *Epistola S. Pauli ad Titum, iam recens per Iohannem Agricolum Scholijis novis illustrata, ac multis in locis locupletata. Item Dispositio orationis, in Epistola Pauli ad Romanos, in qua totius disputationis series breviter ostenditur. Philippo Melanchthone Authore* (Hagenau, 1530 = *Opera XV*, 443–493) I3^v (= XV 466) at the end of chapter 7, but not on 1:18; for the *Commentarii: Melanchthons Werke V*, ed. R. Stupperich, (Gütersloh, 1965, 21983) and for the second edition: *Commentarii in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos hoc anno MDXL recogniti et locupletati* (Strasbourg, 1540 = *Opera XV*, 495–796); finally: *Epistolae Pauli scriptae ad Romanos, Enarratio edita a Philippo Melanchthone* (Wittenberg, 1556 = *Opera XV*, 797–1052).

that aspect to which the ancient theory of epistolography paid special attention—all matters of diction and style. They are largely, though not entirely, absent from the works mentioned so far³⁶—obviously not because Melanchthon neglected them completely, but because he seems to have excluded them from some types of lectures and not from others, as we also know from different sets of notes published on Ciceronian speeches. On the Epistle to the Romans “ΠΑΨΟΔΙΑΙ ΕΝ ΠΑΥΛΟΥ ΑΔ ΡΟΜΑΝΟΣ” have been preserved and printed³⁷ which, in addition to an “Argumentum,” give Melanchthon's comments on the meaning of words as well as on points of style, rhetorical figures and the like. Thus we read for example: “Est mirabilis quedam Simplicitas in Paulus, coniuncta cum maiestate, Sicut etiam in Homero. Paulus si ineruditus homo fuisset, non potuisset tam ornatum contexere exordium, in quo magna verborum Emphasis utitur.”³⁸ Again I cannot mention further details, except for one remark which seems worth quoting: “Essemus magni profecto theologi, si proprium scripturae sermonem intelligeremus.”³⁹

Anyone who tries to understand the Bible, and Saint Paul's letters in particular, will be well advised to study Melanchthon's observations carefully: a few observations concerning the structure of whole works, more on the validity of particular arguments or stylistic devices. I might add that any reader of the works of Hesiod or Aristotle, Cicero, Virgil or Ovid will also benefit greatly from Melanchthon's commentaries on these authors,⁴⁰ and there are more which I have not mentioned.

However, as I am concerned here with Saint Paul's epistles, I should add that Melanchthon was, of course, by no means the

³⁶Cf. *Annotationes* (1522, see n. 35) G2^r on 8:6: “quibus quid clarius, quid magis proprie, contra libertatem voluntatis dici potuit” (also with regard to the content); *ibid.* on 8:12: “Est enim in verbo debitorum Emphasis.” For *figurae* see *Dispositio* (1530, see n. 35) H3^v (= XV 457) on chapter 5: “rhetorica gradatio”; G3^r (= XV 447) on chapter 1: “amplificat ab effectibus, nam impietatis fructus, postea per congeriem recensentur.”

³⁷*Texte* 45–85.

³⁸*Texte* 50: “There is some remarkable plainness in Paulus (i.e. in Paulus' style) combined with dignity, such as also in Homer. If Paul had been an uneducated man, he would not have been able to weave together so richly embellished an exordium, in which he employs great emphasis in his diction.”

³⁹*Texte* 51: “We would, indeed, be great theologians if we understood the specific language (idiom) of the Bible.”

⁴⁰They are all listed by K. Hartfelder, see n. 16.

only scholar of his time to write commentaries on these letters or other parts of the Bible. Lorenzo Valla seems to have been the first to avail himself of the newly discovered resources from pagan antiquity for the interpretation of the New Testament; but both he and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Erasmus were primarily interested in the explanation of factual details or textual criticism.⁴¹ Of Melanchthon's contemporaries Luther and Zwingli, Bucer and Brenz, Bullinger and Calvin deserve more than a place in the bibliography;⁴² their works offer valuable insights and are worth studying. However, apart from the fact that they cannot all be presented here and discussed at length with their respective methods and merits, it seems fair to say that no one contributed more to the development of rhetorical criticism than Melanchthon. It is all the more surprising that later generations allowed his observations and his achievements to be virtually forgotten. Conscientious study of the history of biblical exegesis shows that the application of rhetorical categories never ceased entirely.

In a lecture "Histoire de 'l'analyse rhétorique' en exégèse biblique," delivered at the seventh congress of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric in Göttingen in 1989 and published in 1990, Father R. Meynet described a number of scholars and their methods from the middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century and added a specimen of his

⁴¹Cf. *Laurentii Vallensis . . . in Latinam Novi testamenti interpretationem . . . Adnotationes apprime utiles* (Paris, 1505, written 1453–1457; the earlier version (*Collatio*) was not published till 1970, *Collatio novi testamenti*, ed. A. Perosa [Firenze, 1970]); see J. H. Bentley (see n. 13), 32–69, also on Erasmus, 112–193; *Epistole divi Pauli apostoli cum commentariis preclarissimi viri Jacobi Fabri Stapulensis* (Paris, 1512), cf. on this and his other works G. Bedouelle, *Lefèvre d'Étaples et l'intelligence des Écritures* (Genève, 1976); *Novum instrumentum omne, diligenter ab Erasmo Rotterodamo recognitum et emendatum* (Basel, 1516) bbb1^r–bbb5^v; *Methodus* and after the text 231–675: *Adnotationes* (often reprinted); *In Epistolam Pauli Apostoli ad Romanos paraphrasis, per Des. Erasmum Roterodamum* (Basel, 1518); *Erasmus' Annotations on the New Testament: Acts, Romans, I and II Corinthians*, ed. A. Reeve and M.A. Screech (Leiden, 1990), cf. E. Rummel, *Erasmus' Annotations on the New Testament* (Toronto, 1986); also F. Krüger, *Humanistische Evangelienauslegung: Desiderius Erasmus von Rotterdam als Ausleger der Evangelien in seinen Paraphrasen* (Tübingen, 1986).

⁴²H. D. Betz, *Galatians 337 = Galater 556–557* (Luther, Calvin, Bullinger); in the Commentary on 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 they do not even figure in the bibliography. For detailed references see my article cited above (n. 5), 24–25 n. 83; add T. H. L. Parker, *Commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans 1532–1542* (Edinburgh, 1986); particularly important, S. Hausammann, *Römerbriefauslegung zwischen Humanismus und Reformation* (Zürich and Stuttgart, 1970).

own manner of interpretation which shows that rhetorical analysis is still practiced today by Jesuits as it always has been since the foundation of the order.⁴³ The "Introductio hermeneutica in Sacros Novi Testamenti Libros," published in Vienna 1777 by the Benedictine St. Hayd, Professor of Greek and New Testament Hermeneutics at Freiburg, shows that members of other orders also practiced rhetorical criticism of the Bible; in this case the author pays special attention to tropes and figures of style, but also to the structure of the argumentation.⁴⁴

Before trying to assess the contribution of rhetorical criticism to the understanding of biblical texts, or rather the contribution made by individual scholars and the possibilities as well as the limits of such a procedure in general, I may be permitted briefly to indicate how I think the categories of ancient rhetoric and of ancient literary theory and criticism can be exploited with profit today.

Anyone attempting to understand and appreciate a speech or a written composition will first determine in a very general way the nature of the piece, literary, non-literary or sub-literary, casual or serious, personal or general, with emphasis on content or form, poetry or prose, and so forth. In the case of a letter it seems advisable to take into consideration (if possible) the following facts: the writer's education and experiences, the education and experience of the addressee(s) (one should remember that a letter may be directed to an individual or a group,⁴⁵ but also, as in the form of a literary letter, to future generations), the circumstances of the writer, the circumstances of the addressee or again addressees, present or future ("circumstances" meaning time, place and events which have just happened or are imminent). Moreover, one should consider the relationship between writer and addressee(s)—such as personal knowledge, earlier correspondence, views and experiences shared or not shared, opposing views—and, finally, the intention of the writer—whether he wishes to communicate information on actual facts, on events of

⁴³"Histoire de 'l'analyse rhétorique' en exégèse biblique" *Rhetorica* 8 (1990):291–320.

⁴⁴Sectio II, Caput VII.: "Tropi et figurae," 166–259; arguments are analyzed in Sectio III: "Institutiones analytico-hermeneuticae in singulos Novi Testamenti libros speciales," 282–416.

⁴⁵In antiquity this means that it will not only be read aloud by an individual, but may be read aloud to a group.

the past or expected developments in the future, on personal feelings or on general views, or whether he hopes to give advice or encouragement, consolation or warning, to express praise or disappointment and so forth.

After these general reflections I turn to Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.⁴⁶ In his first sentence the apostle makes it abundantly clear that he is writing a letter by using a formula by which letters generally were introduced;⁴⁷ but he enlarges this formula, and by making additions he draws attention right from the start to what he considers important: οὐκ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι' ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλὰ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ πατρός. One could register a polyptoton here and an antitheton.⁴⁸ However, what matters is not these terms, but the function of the figures thus labelled. They are part of the *ornatus*, chosen to give special emphasis to what the writer is saying. As in this case the two figures stress the same point, it gains considerable momentum, especially as the two members of the antitheton each consist of a twofold expression: the first of a polyptoton, the second of the two nouns Ἰησοῦς Χριστός and θεὸς πατήρ, connected by a participle (τοῦ ἐγείραντος αὐτόν⁴⁹) which describes the unique act which God performed for Jesus and at the same time his resurrection, that is, his divinity.

The salutation "grace and peace," also found elsewhere,⁵⁰ is enlarged by the reference to God and Jesus Christ; this repetition serves to relegate the apostle, though being the writer of the letter, to the background. It is God the father and Jesus Christ who are acting here, and while in the first sentence (1:1–2) God's activity (with respect to his son) was described by a participle, in a corresponding construction Jesus Christ is characterized now (with respect to mankind)—and this is even further elaborated in

⁴⁶Text: *Novum Testamentum Graece*, post E. et E. Nestle, ed. K. Aland, et al. (Stuttgart, 1979), 493–503; there are too many commentaries to be listed here, and I have refrained from consulting them except for general observations on the structure of the letter.

⁴⁷Cf. F. Schnider and W. Stenger, *Studien zum Neutestamentlichen Briefformular* (Leiden, 1987), 3–25 (with references to earlier literature).

⁴⁸On polyptoton and antitheton in general, see H. Lausberg (see n. 12), 325–329 and 389–398; on St. Paul, see N. Schneider, *Die rhetorische Eigenart der paulinischen Antithese* (Tübingen, 1970), very useful.

⁴⁹"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)."

⁵⁰Gal. 1:3–5, cf. F. Schnider and W. Stenger, 25–41.

a subclause which repeats for the third time *θεὸς (καὶ) πατήρ* adding *ἡμῶν* now⁵¹ and resorting to another polyptoton (with three members) in order to contrast the present world from which men will be saved (notice the parallel to Christ being resurrected) with God's eternity. Attentive reading reveals that by means of several additions, carefully constructed sentences and equally well-chosen words the apostle most impressively conveys what he wants his readers to feel: that they are being addressed not so much by him, but in the name of God and together with him of Jesus Christ. The scholar familiar with the rules and categories of rhetoric who observes these details—whether he applies technical terms to them or not—cannot but register that an author is at work here who knows to select and to present his ideas and to employ the tools of language in the most effective manner possible.

Having thus used the introductory formula of greeting to manifest his own position, the apostle turns to the addressees, first expressing surprise about their change of mind, adding a clarification: It is not that they have chosen to give preference to another *εὐαγγέλιον* instead of the one he had preached to them. There is no other, and it is merely some people who confuse them, trying to invert the gospel of Christ, and this he emphasizes with a curse which he repeats, placing it twice at the end of a sentence. Here again one notices the repetition of several words: *εὐαγγέλιον* twice; forms of *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι* three times; *ἀνάθεμα ἔστω* twice.⁵² One notices also a correction with respect to one of these words—*εὐαγγέλιον*. Rhetorical theory warns not to appeal to passions in a proem; the theory of epistolography does not give precepts for the parts of a letter. Are we coming to the end of rhetorical criticism, at least when applied to letters? It is certainly advisable at this stage to remember that Saint Paul is not making a speech, and that rules for speeches and other types of compo-

⁵¹“ . . . that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

⁵²*Gal.* 1:6–9: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any other man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

sitions cannot be expected always to be easily applicable to letters, especially as ancient theorists seem to have been aware of the very particular nature of letters. It is no less important to remember that exceptional circumstances require exceptional means, both from a speaker and from a writer of letters. Our stylistic observations and the fact that there is no parallel for such an introduction in Saint Paul's letters warrant the conclusion that he regards the situation as a very unusual one and that he is—at least here—particularly concerned about the true nature of the *εὐαγγέλιον Χριστοῦ* and the right understanding of his own position. Is he thereby preparing for and pointing to the central issue(s) of the letter?

In the next three verses (1:10–12) Saint Paul continues to stress his concern for the correct understanding of the message he is preaching by contrasting men and God, pleasing men and serving Christ, a gospel received from men (which his is not) and a gospel revealed by Christ. Again one notices several forms of antitheton, no less than the elaborate expression *τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τὸ εὐαγγελισθέν*, echoing the repeated forms from verses 1:7–9, and the polyptoton *κατὰ ἄνθρωπον . . . παρὰ ἀνθρώπου*,⁵³ taking up the same figure from verse 1:1. Once more the apostle makes the claim by which he opened his letter, a claim concerning himself, but as mouthpiece of God and Christ. When Saint Paul devotes the following verses to his own past,⁵⁴ he indicates that he is still uncertain whether the addressees are willing to accept him, to listen to him, whether the claim he has so far merely stated will be honored. A long discourse follows in which the apostle gives an account, first, briefly, of his zeal in persecuting the Christians and of the revelation of Christ through the grace of God in order that he may preach the gospel, next, a little more fully, of his journeys and activities in Arabia, in Jerusalem (first visit, contact

⁵³*Gal.* 1:10–12: “For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

⁵⁴*Gal.* 1:13–2:14 or 2:21; experts disagree whether this section ends at 2:14 or should be extended to 2:21, i.e. whether the last seven verses are a summary of what he said in Antiocheia (see H. D. Betz, *Galatians* 113–114 with n. 6 = *Galater* 212–213 with n. 1). What matters, to my mind, is that St. Paul adopts a different style for these verses and uses them to move from the report of his past to the message he wants to preach to the Galatians.

with Cephas), Syria, Cilicia, Judaea and again in Jerusalem. Here the tone changes; Saint Paul no longer simply reports, he explains, he mentions details, he justifies, he emphasizes differences and distinctions, and in the same manner he describes his conflict with Saint Peter in Antiocheia, culminating in a direct question which he asked Peter: "How do you force the gentiles to live the Jewish way of life?" (2:14), before he outlines at some length and with obvious emotions his own position. While at the beginning of his account he prefers a matter-of-fact kind of style—once colored by a quotation from the prophets (1:15: Ier. 1:5; Ies. 49:1)—and underlines the intention thus indicated by expressly assuring the trustworthiness of his words (1:20), gradually he changes his tone, not only employing words he had used before in describing his own conversion, his present activity and the revelation as factor behind it,⁵⁵ but also resorting to both polemical expressions (2:4; 2:6) and words with emotional appeal (2:4—*ἐλευθερία*, 2:5—*ἀλήθεια τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*)⁵⁶ in order to stress his own steadfastness and the reputation he enjoyed with James, Peter and John. For the controversy with Peter he chooses mostly a factual style again, while in the final section emotion gains more and more ground: antitheta, polyptota and suchlike figures, metaphorical and paradoxical expressions abound.⁵⁷

Before one determines the function of this section either with the help of a rhetorical classification or on the basis of stylistic observations or otherwise, one should look at the rest of the letter and examine how what has been said so far serves as preparation for the following chapters, how it is related to what follows, if at all. The first words of the next chapter may cause astonishment: Saint Paul rebukes the Galatians (3:10). However, such a move is not entirely uncommon in letters (or even in speeches), when a particular effect is intended,⁵⁸ and this is obviously the case here. After indicating at the beginning that the Galatians had been turned away by certain people from the true gospel (i.e. that

⁵⁵"I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it" (1:13; cf. 1:23); "that I might preach him/the gospel" (1:16, cf. 1:23; 2:2); "revelation" (1:12; cf. 1:16; 2:1).

⁵⁶*Gal.* 2:4: "liberty"; 2:5: "the truth of the gospel."

⁵⁷Antitheta: *Gal.* 2:15, 16, 20; polyptota: 2:16–17, 19, 20–21; metaphorical and paradoxical expressions: 2:18, 19, 20.

⁵⁸Even the theory knows the "blaming", "reproachful", "censorious", "vituperative" and "accusing" type, cf. *Ps.-Dem. form. epist., praef.*, 3, 4, 6, 9, and 17 (p. 2, 4–6, 9, Weichert).

which he had preached to them), he now addresses them directly in order to lead them back to the right path. Once more, the tone changes. Saint Paul begins with a number of questions to shake them up, to make them consider and reconsider what they are doing, what had been preached to them, what is being offered to them and by whom and from what: works of the law or hearing of the faith (3:1–5). The contrast between *ἔργα νόμου* and *ἀκοή πίστεως*, pointedly repeated,⁵⁹ cannot easily be overheard. This is the subject matter of the following example: Abraham as testimony, but also as someone whose blessing even the gentiles will receive through Jesus Christ (3:6–14). “Works of the law” and “faith” continue to dominate the next section, first the example of the last will (3:15–18), to illustrate the validity of God’s promises, next the discussion of the Jewish law which had but a temporary function until the coming of the faith (3:23; that is Christ: 3:24); and to this argument he adds several lines of promise and encouragement to the Galatians, thus emphasizing the immediate relevance for them of the preceding arguments.

In an even more immediate manner Saint Paul combines promise and argument at the beginning of chapter four, where he pronounces rather than proves that through Jesus Christ, God freed those subjected to the law, applying this both to himself and the Galatians by using “we” and “you”;⁶⁰ and in the same vein he continues with questions and requests, expressing more than once his great concern for the Galatians. Thus, he adds yet another example from the Old Testament to illustrate once more the difference between slavery and freedom—and these are the key terms for a long series of admonitions and warnings—before Saint Paul ends with an unusually long postscript in his own hand and the blessing.⁶¹

Space forbids to give a more detailed account of this letter. The brief analysis and the few remarks on Saint Paul’s style have, I trust, shown what the apostle is aiming at here. Faced with reports on activities of some people who spread some teaching different from his own in Galatia, he seeks first briefly to establish his position as apostle and to draw a clear line between the

⁵⁹“Works of the law”: 3:2, 10; “law”: 3:10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, and 24; “hearing of faith”: 3:2; “faith”: 3:7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26.

⁶⁰“We”: 4:3, 5, 6; “you”: 4:6, 8–21.

⁶¹*Gal.* 6:11–18, see F. Schnider and W. Stenger, 135–167, esp. 145–151.

εὐαγγέλιον he preaches and the message of the others, before he speaks of his past activities, obviously in view of and in response to accusations which had been levelled against him; and only after clearly stating his own views (as he had maintained them even in opposition to Peter), he turns to the relationship between law and faith, the function of the law in the past, the liberation through Christ, and the meaning of both freedom and faith and their vital importance for people's lives.

Anyone attempting to explain this work with the help of ancient, that is Greek and/or Roman rhetoric and/or epistolography will soon discover that the function of numerous particular features in the area of *elocutio* can be explained in terms of traditional rhetoric, and also numerous arguments can be analyzed in this manner (and this was realized centuries ago and never quite forgotten). But he will also find that the structure of the whole differs fundamentally from the "ideal" structure of the *logos* of rhetorical theory. The address is followed by what one might call an *exordium*; but its unusual elements must be taken as a warning that what follows is not one of the three traditional types of *logos* known to rhetorical theory, and indeed neither a judicial nor a deliberative nor a demonstrative type of speech seems appropriate here, as Saint Paul is neither addressing a court of law from which he expects a verdict at the end, nor an assembly which will pass a resolution, let alone praising an individual.

Indeed, it is not surprising that the categories of rhetoric fail us with respect to the structure of this epistle, because it is an epistle, and they were not made nor meant to fit such kinds of composition. Instead, one should turn to such types of letters as are listed by Pseudo-Demetrios and Pseudo-Libanios. However, whether their numerous types offer much help seems another matter. For even when one decides—not without hesitation—in favor of *τύπος νοουθητητικός* or *διδασκαλικός*,⁶² such a term alone does not really assist us in understanding the letter's intention or any of its details.

However, Professor Betz is more optimistic, as was indicated above, with regard to the application of the categories of ancient rhetoric, and we have to look briefly at his methods and results. Both in his early article and in his commentary on the letter to the

⁶²Cf. Ps.-Dem. *form. epist.* 7 (p. 6, Weichert); Ps.-Lib. *char. epist.* 27; 72 (p. 18; 29–30; 47–48, Weichert)

Galatians he states that rhetoric and epistolography help to understand Saint Paul's epistles, and he states that certain sections are to be given particular labels.⁶³ He does not seem to offer any arguments, even though he himself complains that "despite an extensive search, I have not been able to find any consideration given to possible criteria and methods for determining such an outline" (of the epistle as often given in commentaries).⁶⁴ Moreover, Professor Betz states as his thesis that Saint Paul's letter to the Galatians is an example of the apologetic letter genre which, as he informs us with reference to several publications of the distinguished ancient historian A. Momigliano, arose in the fourth century B.C. and presupposes the "letter" form, as well as the genres of "autobiography" and "apologetic speech." He then shows that, apart from such features which are typical for an epistle as prescript and postscript, the traditional *partes orationis* follow, first the *exordium* in which the reasons are stated why the letter was written.⁶⁵

Any piece of writing has a beginning, as does any kind of orderly speech, so that agreements and similarities are to be expected; they cannot be used to prove that Saint Paul gave the whole letter the structure of a *logos*. But the rules for *exordia* may, as was shown above, be used to appreciate particular features, especially when the writer does not follow the recommendations of the theory. The section 1:12–2:14 is understood by Professor Betz as *narratio*.⁶⁶ Professor G. A. Kennedy has said what needs to be said to show this to be erroneous:⁶⁷ The narrative of the first and second chapters of Galatians is "not an account of facts at

⁶³H. D. Betz, "The Literary Composition," 359–375; *Galatians* 16–22 et saepius (= *Galater* 57–66).

⁶⁴H. D. Betz, "The Literary Composition," 353.

⁶⁵H. D. Betz, "The Literary Composition," 354–362; *Galatians* 14–15, 44–46 (= *Galater* 54–56, 98–102). I fail to see how Momigliano's works on Greek biography support Betz's thesis; see also n. 72 below.

⁶⁶"The Literary Composition," 362–367; *Galatians* 16–18, 57–62 (= *Galater* 58–60, 112–128).

⁶⁷*New Testament Interpretation*, 144–146. However, his view that the epistle to the Galatians belongs to the deliberative genre (145) is not convincing either (even though it has been accepted by J. Smit, "The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: a Deliberative Speech," *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989):1–26, and F. Vouga, "Zur rhetorischen Gattung des Galaterbriefes," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 79 (1988):291–292, for the addressees are not called upon to take a decision as a group as e.g. the Athenian assembly or the Roman senate.

issue." Their real function was seen and explained by an expert on ancient rhetoric more than fifteen centuries ago, by Marius Victorinus who, in summarizing this section, says "confirmata igitur auctoritate."⁶⁸ The apostle is anxious first of all to establish or reestablish his own authority before discussing any details. Parallels for this can easily be found in speeches delivered in the courts of law,⁶⁹ and insofar one can certainly learn a good deal from oratorical practice for the interpretation of epistles.

What about the other parts of this "apologetic letter"? Professor Betz finds 2:15–21 conforming to the form, function and requirements of the *propositio*; he claims that this passage is a summary of the doctrine of justification by faith.⁷⁰ Even if one does not regard these verses as a summary of Saint Paul's speech at Antiocheia, they are clearly formulated in a very personal way in the first person singular or plural, and this is not the way he talks later in the third and fourth chapter after turning to the Galatians. The difficulties Professor Betz has in discovering the traditional pattern of a *logos* in Saint Paul's letter become even more obvious in the second half, as he is forced to add a long section called "exhortatio" (5:1–6:10)⁷¹ which has a place in letters, not in an apologetic *logos*. This alone should have warned Professor Betz not to apply too rashly categories to this letter which were developed for another genre and are, therefore, not applicable except for selected aspects and features. The fact that one element of the traditional ("ideal") structure seems to occur in a composition (or possibly two) does not warrant the inference that the other parts must be discoverable there as well or that the composition as a

⁶⁸Marii Victorini Afri Commentarii in Epistulas Pauli ad Galatas ad Philippenses ad Ephesios, ed. A. Locher (Leipzig, 1972) 1 = *Marii Victorini Opera. Pars posterior. Opera exegetica*, ed. F. Gori (CSEL 82, 2, Wien, 1986), 96; on his commentaries see A. Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (Oxford, 1927), 8–38 (also on 'Ambrosiaster': 39–95; Jerome: 96–138; Augustine: 139–204 and Pelagius: 205–230) and W. Erdt, *Marius Victorinus Afer, der erste lateinische Pauluskomentator* (Frankfurt, 1980; Diss. theol. Hamburg, 1979).

⁶⁹Cf. Cicero *Mur.* 2–10; *Sull.* 3–10; 17–20; 21–29; *dom.* 3–32, also *Rab. perd.* 10–17; *Sest.* 36–52.

⁷⁰"The Literary Composition," 367–368; *Galatians* 18–19, 113–114 (= *Galater* 60–61, 212–215); on the controversy with regard to this section see above n. 54.

⁷¹See "The Literary Composition," 375–377 (Paraenesis; *Galatians* 22–23, 253–311) (*Exhortatio*; = *Galater* 66–68, 433–528). The corresponding type of letter is called *παρανευτική*; *Ps.-Lib. char. epist. praef.*, 1; see also examples: 1:90, 91 (p. 14, 15, 21–22, 56–57).

whole conforms to such a pattern. In the Epistle to the Galatians the main body is not concerned with Saint Paul's defense, and there is no reason, therefore, to regard it as an "apologetic letter," even less so, because the examples Professor Betz cites are quite different, and the model of an "apologetic letter" as it is found in Pseudo-Demetrios shows no resemblance either.⁷²

This takes us back to the original questions asked at the beginning, and I shall try now to combine the answers to them with an assessment of the possibilities and merits of rhetorical criticism of the epistles of the New Testament, of its limits and its dangers. It has become clear in the course of this paper, I hope, that rhetoric (oratory) and epistolography were regarded as two different fields in antiquity, and it seems advisable, therefore, not only to keep them apart, but to ask also how and why they differed so substantially in the elaboration and presentation of their respective theory. The writers of manuals on rhetoric,⁷³ though aware of the great variety of speeches required by the realities of life, nevertheless did venture to construe a standard structure, content, in addition, to allow for flexibility in its application and to give advice on particular forms. Those trying to formulate general rules for the writing of letters, on the other hand, aware of the even greater variety of letters actually written by people, did not propose an ideal structure or perhaps two—at least we have no knowledge of anything like that—they merely listed types together with recommendations for the appropriate style in each case. Thus the theory of epistolography will be of use with regard to matters of style, while the large number of actual letters in their

⁷²"The Literary Composition," 354; *Galatians* 14–15 (= *Galater* 54–56). For the 'apologetic letter' see Ps.-Dem. *form. epist. praef.*, 18 (p. 2; 9–10 Weichert, see also Ps.-Lib. *char. epist.* 15, p. 16–17 Weichert), for some examples, cf. St. K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 1986), 167–170.

⁷³Cf. *Aristotelis ars rhetorica*, ed. R. Kassel (Berlin, 1976); *Anaximenis ars rhetorica*, ed. M. Fuhrmann (Leipzig, 1966); *Incerti auctoris de ratione dicendi ad C. Herennium libri IV*, ed. F. Marx (Leipzig, 1923); *M. Tulli Ciceronis rhetorici libri duo*, ed. E. Stroebel (Leipzig, 1915); *M. Tulli Ciceronis de oratore*, ed. K. Kumaniecki (Leipzig, 1969); *M. Tulli Ciceronis orator*, ed. R. Westman (Leipzig, 1980); *M. Fabi Quintiliani institutionis oratoriae libri duodecim I–II*, ed. M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1970). For the need of flexibility in applying the rules, see e.g. *Auctor ad Herennium* III, 17: "est autem alia dispositio, quae cum ab ordine artificioso recedendum est, oratoris iudicio ad tempus adcommo-datur."

manifoldness will provide material for comparison.⁷⁴ The theory of rhetoric on the other hand, though developed for another area, together with practical oratory will also render service, but again within limits, that is in the areas of *inventio* (argumentation) and *elocutio* (where there is overlapping with the theory of epistolography). On *dispositio* rhetorical theory may be consulted, but extreme caution is called for, as has been pointed out. Perhaps the most useful aspect which practical oratory can illustrate is that the best orator disguises his knowledge of the theory,⁷⁵ that he alters accepted patterns and adjusts them to the particular case and his special intention. Thus, not what conforms to the rules, but what seems at variance with them often proves most instructive for the interpretation. Correspondingly, in trying to understand a particular composition, one should always look not primarily for what is in accordance with the rules or with general practice, but for the contrary.

Secondly, as the example of Melanchthon has shown, there is no reason why one should restrict oneself to the rhetoric of the ancients in interpreting texts from antiquity, and not avail oneself of the discoveries and achievements of more recent times.⁷⁶

⁷⁴See above n. 11 for the theoretical works. Recently much comparative material has been collected and analyzed, see e.g. W. G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1973); J. L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia, 1986); St. K. Stowers (n. 72) and the works listed in their bibliographies (White: 221–224; Stowers: 177–179). To my mind it is more promising and fruitful to set St. Paul's epistles against the whole range of Hellenistic literature with its variety of genres (see e.g. K. Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," in W. Haase, ed., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II* 25, 2 [Berlin, 1984], 1031–1432 and 1831–1885), and also, of course, against the Jewish (Rabbinic) tradition.

⁷⁵On the *dissimulatio artis*, see Ch. Neumeister, *Grundsätze der forensischen Rhetorik gezeigt an Gerichtsreden Ciceros* (München, 1965), 130–155.

⁷⁶See W. Wuellner's general considerations (cited above n. 7) and his numerous articles (listed e.g. by L. Thurén, 204). Most successful in applying modern rhetoric, F. Siegert, *Argumentation bei Paulus gezeigt an Röm 9–11* (Tübingen, 1985); also with special emphasis on sociological aspects, V. K. Robbins, *Jesus the Teacher: A Socio-rhetorical Interpretation of Mark* (Philadelphia, 1984); and even more so, N. R. Petersen, *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World* (Philadelphia, 1985); see further F. Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles, a Sociological Approach* (Cambridge, 1986); misguided, on the other hand, J. L. Kinneavey, *Greek Rhetorical Origins of Christian Faith: An Inquiry* (New York and Oxford, 1987), because the parallels which he points out do not prove what they are supposed to prove.

Thirdly, with regard to the problems raised about the person of Saint Paul himself, his education and the form of rhetoric with which he may have been familiar, and the question whether he employed the tools of rhetoric deliberately, it is not my intention to deal with them here, as I am not competent. I would merely like to add one or two observations⁷⁷: (a) that Saint Paul must have read a good deal of Greek literature and thus have come into contact with rhetoric applied, and (b) that he must have been familiar with the Rabbinic tradition of interpreting the Old Testament and thus have been sensitive to the possibilities inherent in language. As regards the stage in the development of rhetoric he may or may not have known, it should be remembered that the essential insights, classifications and rules, once formulated, remained virtually unchanged for centuries. Furthermore, one should not forget that the occurrence of rhetorical figures does not allow the inference that an author employed them because he was familiar with a theory, for they recommended themselves in practice long before any theory was ever developed (Quint. *Inst. Or.* book 2, 17:5–9), and they are found in authors who were never exposed to any such theory in any form.

However, it does not follow that rhetorical theory cannot render useful service in such cases. Whether a writer or a speaker had knowledge of such a theory or not, whether he was familiar with literature written under the influence of such a theory, for the interpretation of texts from any period rhetorical theory offers a most useful set of instruments which have to be used, however, with the greatest care possible.

⁷⁷It should not be overlooked that St. Paul at least once uses a technical term (2 Cor. 3:1): *συστατικαὶ ἐπιστολαί*, cf. Ps.-Dem. *form. epist., praef.*, 2 (p. 2–3 Weichert); Ps.-Lib. *char. epist., praef.*, 4, 95 (p. 14, 16, 22, 58 Weichert).