

# Marcin Kowalski

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J. Paul Sampley and Peter Lampe, eds., *Paul and Rhetoric* (T&T Clark Biblical Studies; New York: T&T Clark, 2010). Pp. xvii + 260. Hardcover. \$130,00. ISBN 978-0-56-702704-7

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As we come to know from brief Preface, *Paul and Rhetoric* by John Paul Sampley and Peter Lampe is a selection of papers offered at various conferences of SNTS Seminar “Paul and Rhetoric” and a set of texts already published by their authors in languages different than English or to be published in upcoming monographs. The book covers the whole range of topics like the relationship between “New” and “Old” Rhetoric, the use of classical rhetorical categories, correlation between rhetoric epistolography, theology, and psychology, to finish with the analysis of specific Pauline letters. The authors are specialists in the field of rhetoric known from their previous publications on the issue. The book consists of Foreword and four parts entitled respectively: “Setting the Stage” (Part 1), “The State of the Art” (Part 2), “Relation of Rhetoric to Other Disciplines” (Part 3), and “Studies of Specific Pauline Texts” (Part 4). They are followed by the index of names and index of passages quoted from the Bible and ancient authors. A selected bibliography is given by the contributors in the footnotes of each article.

In Foreword J.P. Sampley touches upon a couple of interesting issues connected with the rhetorical analysis of Paul. The first one is the commonly recognized phenomenon of Paul’s letters functioning both as written documents and as speeches. Taking into consideration the fact that every authentic Pauline letter seeks to move the congregation, Sampley claims that each and every of them has fundamentally a deliberative function. Secondly, the author cautions the readers not to build hastily historical reconstructions on the data excavated from the Pauline correspondence. The text case is 1 Cor 1 – 4 where the four mentioned fractions, “Paul”, “Apollos”, “Cephas”, and “Christ” (1,12), are, according to Sampley, a figure of speech, pretended divisions, so that the Corinthians could learn to live in peace, to cooperate,

and to engage in the proper care of one another. Third, the author stresses the power of rhetorical maxims in shaping Paul's theology. The fourth and final point made by Sampley focuses on the role the letters played in the Pauline persuasive strategy. The Corinthian correspondence suggests that Paul preferred them to the personal presence, because writing at times was more effective.

Part 1, "Setting the Stage", consists of just one paper by Peter Lampe entitled "Rhetorical Analysis of Pauline Texts – Quo Vadis" (Chapter 1). Its ambitious and difficult project is to give a critical overview of various approaches to rhetoric since late antiquity to the modern times, and to pose some questions for the future research. Lampe accentuates the groundbreaking role of researches carried by H.D. Betz and G.A. Kennedy, which, however, have been under fire from three different directions. The first one is New Rhetoric, according to which *verba* does not represent reality, but create it. The second is the relationship between rhetoric and ancient narratological beginnings (to what extent the ancient material functioned as speeches or narrations). The third one is the critique of Betz and Kennedy raised because of their exclusive focus on ancient rhetorical handbooks and virtually no attention paid to the distinction between the speech and epistolographical analysis. The latter objection is presented more in detail by Lampe who concludes that the impasse between the two approaches can be solved by combining both of them in the analysis of Pauline letters. Subsequently, the author stresses manifold tendencies within ancient rhetoric, which should be kept in mind, and the need for comparative study of the Jewish art of speaking. The paper finishes with the question of existence of the so-called "Christian rhetoric", and whether, given the notion of "intentional fallacy", we can still talk about the intentions of the author, or we should replace it with reader-response criticism.

Part 2 of the book, "The State of Art", starts with the article by Duane F. Watson "The Three Species of Rhetoric and the Study of the Pauline Epistles" (Chapter 2). The author gives a brief overview of the three species of Greco-Roman rhetoric and surveys the works where they were employed to analyze Paul's epistles. Subsequently, Watson accentuates the problems arising at the use of the above mentioned taxonomy and connected with the nature of parenesis, the relationship between epistolary and rhetorical theory, the newness of Christian preaching, and the varied rhetorical situations of Paul's audience. In conclusion, Watson names six pitfalls of the rhetorical categorization, explains how to avoid them by paying more attention to the invention and arrangement of Paul's argument, and calls to define his letters as rhetorical species unto themselves. The second essay by Troy W. Martin

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(“Invention and Arrangement in Recent Pauline Rhetorical Studies. A Survey of the Practices and the Problems”, Chapter 3) is a long survey of studies on the invention and arrangement of Pauline epistles. The essay is limited to works investigating on the undisputed letters of Paul, which also employ classical Greco-Roman rhetoric. Besides explaining the function of *exordium*, *narratio*, *probatio*, and *peroratio*, the author presents the readers with a variety of approaches to identifying the parts of a speech. Next, invention is examined, with its intricate issues of *causa* and *stasis*, to finish with the means of argumentation divided into the four categories: logical, ethical, pathetic, and topical. The last paper of Part 2, “The Role of Style in the Pauline Epistles. From Ornamentation to Argumentative Strategies” (Chapter 4) by Duane F. Watson deals with the issue of underestimated potential of style analysis in Paul. The author first shows its employment in recent literature and then points to the links between style and invention, rhetorical strategy, and amplification. The suggestions the author gives for further research are centered around the following questions: what was the impact of Paul’s style on the creation of Christian communities, what are the implications between the style and Paul’s education, and what is the position of the apostle between Jewish and Greco-Roman rhetoric of the first century.

Part 3 of the book, “Relation of Rhetoric to Other Disciplines” consists of three articles. The first one, “Ancient Rhetoric and Ancient Letters. Models for Reading Paul, and Their Limits” (Chapter 5) by Christopher Forbes is in fact a critique of rhetorical criticism as the model disregarding the epistolary features of Pauline writings. The author, by proving that communal letters were remarkably rare in antiquity, points at Paul’s innovative character. The two letter types which, according to Forbes, provide a parallel for the Pauline correspondence are official letters and letters of philosophers directed to their disciples. Ultimately, the author calls for a more nuanced approach in which both epistolographic and rhetorical models may be fruitfully employed, the latter one limited to identifying particular rhetorical techniques on a smaller scale. The second paper by Johan S. Vos, “Rhetoric and Theology in the Letters of Paul” (Chapter 6) seeks to identify various models relating theology and rhetoric in Paul. Starting with theology that makes no use of rhetoric, the author passes through theology and rhetoric treated as separate chapters, and rhetoric restricted to polemical issues, to finish with rhetoric as a contingent interpretation of the Gospel and construction of symbolic or ethically opposed universes. Each approach is illustrated by giving names and references to particular scholars and by trying to uncover their underlying platonic or neo-sophistic positions. The last essay by Peter Lampe, “Quintilians Psychological Insights in his *Institutio Oratoria*” (Chapter 7) focuses

on Quintilian's techniques that render a speech persuasive: the authenticity of the speaker (morally good, modest, emotionally and intellectually engaged), authenticity of the speech (visualization), the use of pathos, and the appeal to creativity of the audience. After applying some of them to Paul's letters, the author moves on to ponder on creativity of the orator, training methods, and memory activity during delivery of the speech.

Finally, Part 4, "Studies of Specific Pauline Texts", comprises two articles. The first one by Michael Winger, "Death and Life as Metaphors" (Chapter 8) deals with the figure of life and death in 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans. Instead of looking for coherence of Paul's rationale, the author proposes to read his metaphors as a poetic language characterized by the lack of clarity, open-ended meaning, and suspension in which the newly born ideas and images are held. The figure of life and death is a vehicle of Paul's paradoxes and stresses the difference between those who are being saved and those who perish. The last essay, "Can Words Be Violent or Do They Only Sound That Way? Second Corinthians: Verbal Warfare from Afar as a Complement to a Placid Personal Presence" examines Paul's "aggressive" language in 2 Corinthians. First, drawing on Quintilian and Cicero, the author presents the instances when invective was used in antiquity, and, consequently, indicates the conventional characteristics of vilification found in the Corinthian correspondence. Next, the difference between sarcastic and non-sarcastic shaming of the Corinthians is shown. Subsequently, the author ponders on the understanding of verbal violence in antiquity, which was a mean of ostracizing and social exclusion. It also functioned as an exorcism of the Corinthian congregation which needed to be cleansed from demonic elements. Finally, Paul's aggressive language is presented as a reaction to hurting insults he endured, as a constructive but rare tool in the hands of the apostle, and as a frank speech with which he addresses his friends calling for their conversion when other means prove to be insufficient.

How can we assess the content and the project of *Paul and Rhetoric*? It is doubtlessly an impressive effort to sum up in one publication the most important questions of the contemporary research on Paul and rhetoric. The authors intentionally limit themselves to the undisputed Pauline letters and are able to present the investigated matters only by broad brush strokes. It does not have to be necessarily regarded as a weakness of the book. At the times when an avalanche of detailed studies on Paul and rhetoric descends upon us every year, the comprehensive synthetic studies are much in demand. The great merit of the present publication consists in the ability to present the main focal points of the scholarly debate without getting lost in details, and to give a balanced bibliography on the issue. The surveys carried by

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the authors do not lack the critical nerve, what makes the reading all the more interesting. The categorizations probed by them are clear and carefully elaborated. The contributors show a good knowledge of both ancient and contemporary authors. One of the small faults of the book is its repetitiveness. The issue of relationship between rhetoric and epistolography is discussed in three different places by Lampe (pp. 12-17), Watson (pp. 41-42), and Martin (pp. 51-62). Another fault is a somehow modest character of orientations for the future research given at the end of each chapter. One may wonder to what extent the complicated rhetorical studies can advance our understanding of Paul's letters. All in all, *Paul and Rhetoric* is by all means worth recommending both to the scholars and the students trying to employ rhetoric to read Paul.