

Catholic Biblical Quarterly 62 (1998) pp. 140-42

Roy E. Ciampa

The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1 and 2

(WUNT 2/102; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1998). Pp. xiv+449. DM 128.

Reviewed by Mark D. Nanos

This review published with the permission of the copyright holder.

CBQ webpage at <http://cba.cua.edu>.

Roy Ciampa takes up the important subject of Paul's intertextual world in Galatians with particular focus upon the first two chapters rather than chaps. 3 and 4, where others have usually worked with this theme. In this revised version of the author's thesis done at the University of Aberdeen in 1996, C. aims to contribute a significant study in the broader pursuit of understanding Paul and his use of Scripture across the spectrum of his letters. His concern transcends mere investigation of the explicit citations to consider subtler manifestations of the presence and function of Scripture by way of allusions and echoes, even unconscious usage within units of discourse. To this end C. advances his approach as an example of methodological innovation that illuminates the "meaning-effects," the rhetorical significance of Paul's implicit use of Scripture, not just "exegetical techniques."

The methodologies employed in defining and investigating this discourse and how it functions within the larger whole of Galatians include semantic analysis informed by semantic structure analysis, and rhetorical analysis based upon observations from both classical and new rhetoric. These are set out and applied to the entire letter in an appendix. The discernment of the presence of Scripture is dependent upon the basic approach of Brian Rosner (*Paul, Scripture and Ethics: A Study of 1 Corinthians 5—7* [AGAJU; Leiden: Brill, 1994]) and Richard B. Hays (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters*

of Paul [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989]). A sophisticated approach to intertextuality informed by recent work is employed throughout. This aids C. in keeping the context of the largely Jewish discourse world of Paul in view, even when C. may have employed insights unconsciously. With the exception of the appendix, the work is generally of historical critical style.

In part 1 there is a wealth of material relating Paul's statements to Scriptural contexts. C. teases out implicit connections with Scripture throughout chapters 1 and 2, sometimes representing a particularly concise treatment, and other times an expanded one. The decision to highlight these historical literary details, postponing until the next section fuller discussion of their impact for the Galatians, provides much wood, yet ironically it seems dissociated from the rhetorical fire which Paul, in this letter, seeks to light.

In part 2 the results and implications are considered. The role of Galatians 1—2 is to establish the interpretive framework for chaps. 3 and 4, where the Scriptural allusions are made explicit. Paul is the “unparalleled authority in the interpretation of Scripture and the gospel,” and his view has been foreshadowed in his own life. The reader is predisposed to accept Paul's position as “reasonable and authoritative,” for the implicit influence of Scripture in the first two chapters has functioned “in such a way as to reinforce Paul's ethos and credibility as an authority to be reckoned with” (p. 226). Scripture is the lens not only for redescribing the audience and those influencing them but also for Paul's self-evaluation as a prophetic figure (cf. Isaiah 49), and his gospel reflects a hermeneutical perspective for which “Scripture is a source of apocalyptic-restorationist concepts, structures and theology” (p. 232). C. convincingly concludes that Paul's letter to the Galatians “is nothing if not Jewish discourse engaged in by a Jew who was firmly rooted in Jewish Scripture and interpretive traditions” (p. 292). However, C.'s acceptance of traditional views of Paul rejecting Law and of Christianity superseding Israel (e.g., pp. 238-42) seems to this reviewer to undermine C.'s own case for Paul's complete

dependence upon Scripture and appeal to it in this letter. One wonders why Paul introduces Scripture and argues from it when dealing with former pagans, since it is in Scripture that the intertextual world of Judaism that Paul supposedly rejects is perpetuated. Since C. consigns Torah for Paul to the “dispensation” of a former time and people, would it not be more effective to read Paul (with Harnack, with whom the author finds fault on this point) as someone seeking to avoid Scripture—wherein Jewish identity and observance serve as paradigms for the righteousness God seeks—rather than as someone finding Scripture implied everywhere, since this naturally creates the implicit assumptions that thereafter model the community’s self-perception?

The links made in the final part of the study of the overall scope of the letter clarify the implications of the investigation of chaps. 1 and 2: regardless of the limits that may have existed for the audience in recognizing the depth of Scripture upon which Paul depended, Paul himself was the product of a Jewish interpretive milieu. Exegetes attending to this dynamic will find much to appreciate in this work.