

Paul's Rhetorical Arsenal and 1 Corinthians 1-4

NILS A. ROSAEG

Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong
P. O. Box 20, Shatin, Hong Kong

Paul the Persuader and his Rhetoric to the Corinthians

In 1 Cor 2:1 Paul states that "when I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in excellence of words or in wisdom (καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας)". "I was with you in weakness (ἀσθενείᾳ¹) and in much fear and trembling (ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῶ), and my speech (λόγος) and my message (κῆρυγμά) were not in plausible words of wisdom (οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[σ] σοφίας [λόγοις]), that your faith must not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ)".

This is the picture of Paul as the apostle lacking in personal confidence and charisma, and lacking in the persuasive and rhetorical skills connected to the philosophy and wisdom of the time. *But on closer inspection that picture simply is not true:* In fact, this very passage itself is an excellent demonstration of Paul's own persuasive and rhetorical skills, and so is also its context in chapters 1-4 of the letter. The man here speaking is neither weak and fumbling nor unconvincing - quite the contrary. In fact he certainly now writes these

¹ This is very likely illness, see Gal 4:13f; 2 Cor 12:7; 13:4; 4:10; Col 1:24 etc., and cf. Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 93.

6,807 words to the Corinthians in order to be heard. Thus we have located one problem. *Why* does he present himself as so weak and unconvincing in appearance, when both his intention and his present argument are actually very far from that?

What Paul does in these verses (2:1-5) is simply to admit that he was not highly skilled in rhetoric. This is very persuasive, since it really both challenges and corrects *the false expectations of the Corinthians*. In a recent functional-rhetorical study on 1 Cor 1:18-2:16 and "the Word of the cross" Alexandra R. Brown states from J.L. Austin's "speech act" theory that Paul's aim is epistemological:

"Paul's battleground is the realm of human perception; wielding the Word of the cross he invades the perceptual landscape of his hearers, cutting across their accustomed (and, he believes, false) ways of knowing with the sharp expression of a new reality".²

As for the Corinthian *audience* and their position, we must *read them out* from between the lines of what Paul says in the letter. Since we have no independent sources providing information about the Corinthian Christians directly, we only have access to their view or ideology in this indirect manner. Other ancient sources and archaeology give only general background. So, that is the methodological limitation to our knowledge of his audience. We have to rely primarily on the indications in the text of Paul and to mirror-read from them.

Their main emphases can however be reconstructed. Obviously they made much of *eloquence*, which was connected to the "wisdom" and philosophy "'sought by the Greeks" (1:20,22 σοφία). The three main themes of the letter are found already in the introductory thanksgiving 1:4-9. Here is first mentioned *speech* (λόγος), which seems to point on to 1:10-4:21 as the first part of the letter. There we find the culturally closely connected themes of eloquence and wisdom (see σοφία λόγοις in 1:17; 2:4,13). Moreover, we find the word "wisdom" (σοφία) around 15 times up to 2:7, and the word "wise" (σοφός) 9 times in the first three chapters. Already this numerical emphasis indicates that

² "Seized by the Cross: The Death of Jesus in Paul's Transformative Discourse," *SBLSP* 32 (1993), 740-757 (740). She refers further to her dissertation "Paul's Apocalyptic Word of the Cross: Perception and Transformation in 1 Corinthians 1-2" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1990).

wisdom is a main point of contention here. Then in view of the occurrence of λόγος (word, speech) 6 times in the first four chapters also the corresponding emphasis on skill in speech and rhetoric is strong. But this is only humanly taught wisdom speech (see 2:5 and 13). As the counterpart we find the "word/speech (λόγος) of the cross" (1:18), and the wisdom of God.

The second theme from the introduction is knowledge (γνώσις), which seems to point firmly on to the later section, chapters 8-10 where it reoccurs (4 times within the passage 8:1-13, and then also four additional times, in 12:8; 13:2,8; 14:6). It is also prominent in 2 Cor (6 times), so obviously knowledge as well was an important theme to the Corinthians. And also in 2 Cor 8:7 speech/utterance (λόγος), and knowledge are united, together with faith. As the third theme we then have the spiritual gifts (cf. χαρίσματα in 1:7). This clearly points to the treatment of the πνευματικά in the section chapters 12-14 (together 7+2=9 times, and at significant places in beginning and endings, see 12:1,4ff: 12:31 and 14:1). But the concern for the "spiritual" aspect of believers is also strong in chapters 1-4 (πνευματικοῖς four times, in 2:13,14,15 and 3:1). In addition, there is also a mentioning of the true, spiritual food and drink in 10:3f and a reference to the spiritual resurrection body in 15:44,56.³

Apart from these indications, we can not here enter into a more detailed exposition of the nature of the spiritual background and of the developments in Corinth between Paul's first visit there and the present letter. On this we may also refer to the works of others.⁴ What we can say safely and consistently from the text itself is that the Corinthians seem to have a very strong attachment to "all speech and all knowledge" (1:5), to "eloquent wisdom" (1:17), to the "wise" (1:20), to "lofty (or excellent) words or wisdom" (2:1), to "plausible words of wisdom" (2:4), to "the wisdom of men" (2:5), to "words taught by wisdom" (2:13), to "wisdom speech" (12:8). This may then be connected to the strife and factions mentioned in 1:10ff as the first theme of correction

³ As for the three major themes, we can also find them in the three occurrences of "if anyone thinks to be wise" (3:18), "knowing" (8:1), "spiritual" (14:37).

⁴ Especially we find Fee *op. cit.* 4-15 helpful and balanced. I do not think that by Paul's mention of "knowledge" we need to suppose "Gnosticism" in Corinth.

by Paul, and recurring in 3:3f. Here we obviously have one of Paul's main concerns in the writing. The combination of "eloquence", "wisdom", and "knowledge" was thought to be part of true "spirituality" in Corinth. But Paul counters by saying that their perceptions of eloquence, wisdom, and knowledge are tainted by all-too-human aspects. The word of the cross and the wisdom of God are quite different (1:17ff). Actually, the Corinthian Christians are not yet spiritually mature (3:1ff). His conclusion in 4:19f is: the kingdom of God does not consist in talk (λόγον), but in power (δύναμιν). According to 1:18,24 and 2:4f earlier, this power is the power of God's word in the cross which gives salvation.

Also, it seems that in their development the Corinthians had come to share some dissatisfaction with Paul. Some of them have become "puffed up", or arrogant (4:18). We do not know too much about this, but they are apparently "sitting in judgement" on him, (4:3 and also 9:3). Here ἀνακρίνειν may imply not so much judgement as also evaluation. The context reveals this: see Paul's corresponding stress on divine "recommendation" in 4:5, as also divine "reward", not salvation, in 3:13-15. What is then the basis for this Corinthian evaluation, or discernment of Paul himself? Which are the criteria? It seems to be a spiritual evaluation. From 14:37 at least it seems to be a real possibility for challenge whether Paul is really a prophet or is spiritually gifted. There may of course be many aspects of this, based on Paul's teaching to the Corinthians, but it seems to include also the aspects of speech, wisdom, and knowledge discussed earlier. But the spiritual man is not discerned by anyone, Paul says (2:15f). And also Paul has the Spirit (2:14) and the mind of Christ (2:16b).

What then are Paul's tactics and counter-strategy to this challenge?

1) It is easy and also an elegant tactic by Paul to state bluntly in 2:1-5 that he was not the most smooth, excellent and well-polished speaker (rhetor). In this way he openly met their accusations against him, accusations which he had learned about through informants.⁵ Implicitly he charges them with expecting him to be something that he was not, which it was also unrealistic and unnecessary to expect. After all, they must know that even if he was from Tarsus and a Roman citizen, he

⁵ As for developments, in between his last letter (cf. 5:9,11; 7:) and the present Paul had got fresh information from Ephesus (cf. 16:17f and 1:11).

was certainly a Jew with Hebrew as his mother tongue; he was also trained as a scribe and as a Pharisee, not as a rhetor.⁶ In this respect he seems to differ for example, from the eloquent and combative Apollos from Alexandria (see Acts 18:24-19:1). So, the best defense is simply to state the case.

2) Besides, even in another way he puts them to shame: He also says something about their perspective and priorities, and his own by contrast: He explicitly stresses his - relative! - lack of rhetorical skills and polish in order to show that he "decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (v2), which is "not the wisdom of men but the power of God" (δυνάμει, v5). This then connects directly back to the important 1:17f earlier, and also to 1:19-31 in between (see especially v24). The power of God is his salvific power. In 1:17 he made the basic statement that "Christ sent me to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power" - or, even better: "lest it should not run into vain" (κενωθη). Paul is apparently trying to correct the spiritual developments in Corinth. Behind 1 Cor 1-4 we can study in detail the interplay between the spiritual presumptions and developments of the Corinthians, and Paul's strategic handling of them. Artificial eloquence alone empties the message. They should primarily seek the power of God and his act in Jesus Messiah (1:18,24), and not excel in the power and wisdom of men (1:19ff, see especially the combination of "the wise" with τὰ ἰσχυρά and τὰ ὄντα in v27f). They should stick to "the word of the cross" (1:17f,23), and not to the words of men and their persons (1:13f; 3:1ff).⁷ Opposed to man's logos is God's logos; opposed to men's wisdom is God's wisdom; opposed to men's power is God's power. The axiom is that God is wiser than men (1:19ff) just as later in the letter God's knowledge and love are opposed to man's knowledge (8:1ff). While

⁶ Acts 16:37; 21:37, 39, 40; 22:3, 25f, 29; 23:6, 27; 26:4f, 14, 24 etc. may still serve as a basis for a reconstruction, especially since it is supported and not contradicted by the autobiographical passages in Phil 3:6f and Gal 1:13ff. For recent discussion of the entire picture, see M. Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (London-Philadelphia: SCM and Trinity, 1991). We assume that the Corinthians got to know the main points of Paul's background during his first six-month stay there (Acts 18:1-18).

⁷ A. Brown now argues that while the Corinthian's presumptions seem to be based on some kind of wisdom terminology, Paul's language about the cross is a specific kind of apocalyptic language (*op. cit.* 748 etc).

knowledge puffs up, love builds up (8:1, cf. 13:4 and also 4:6,18f; 5:2).

1 Cor 1-2 is *the only place* where Paul addresses the issue of technical rhetoric directly, and there he rejects it explicitly and distances himself from it - even if he applies it rather extensively in the text itself. So, the problem is: Paul lies (to make an over-statement). He is *far too modest!* In any case he is wrong. He says that he is not "a debater in this world" (συζητητής, 1:20), and not one who convinces others with his own clever words (1:17; 2:1-5). But he is, and he obviously *seeks* to convince - and very effectively so. In fact, that feature permeates his entire writings. But it is paradoxically prominent in 1 Cor 1-4, where he seeks to present himself in the opposite fashion!

Of course this is not to deny that Paul himself is *sincere* in his statement in 2:1-5. He is certainly reflecting and expressing his own personal feelings and experiences in Corinth. But it seems that in depicting himself as a weak speaker Paul is also intentionally using *irony* here, and that he is aware of it. Most will agree that he is also using irony and even sarcasm elsewhere in his letter, and consciously so (see 4:8 and 10; 2:6f; 3:1-2a; 13:11; 14:20 etc.). In fact the entire apostolic existence is ironical in that they are so weak while their message and their Lord is so strong (4:9ff). They are "exhibited" as a "play" (θέατρον, a spectacle) to the world. Moreover, it is also ironical that in their wisdom the wise of the world did not find God by God's own wisdom (1:21). Instead, the "wise" in the first part of the letter appear to be "fools": The word of the cross is folly (μωρία) to them (1:18,23; 2:14).⁸ But God saves by the folly of the gospel (1:21). Thus, their wisdom is made to look foolish by God (see for example. 1:19f; 3:19). To him, their wisdom is folly. It is then also ironical that God elected mainly the unwise, the socially weak, the lowly born, and the foolish (1:26ff). God's folly is wiser than human wisdom, and his weakness is stronger than human strength (1:25). If one thinks one is wise in this age, one has to become a fool to become wise (3:18 and also 4:10).

Paul uses the rhetorics of irony. Is rhetoric then concerned with

⁸ The theme of folly (*moria, moros*) occurs 3+4=7 times within chaps.1-4. Outside these chapters this set of words is not very prominent in Paul at all (nor in the rest of the NT for that matter). This clearly testifies to the concerns of Paul in chaps.1-4, and also to the nature of the challenge which he here addresses.

persuasion, or with expression of *truth*, or with both? It is obvious from our passage that Paul himself is eager for the truth, the truth of God and the truth of salvation. His rhetoric serves that purpose. Also otherwise he rejects the notion that he is only a rhetorical "man-pleaser" (1 Thess 2:4; Gal 1:10). He is sincere. By presenting himself and his proclamation of the cross as weak in 2:1ff etc., Paul seems to be using the rhetorics of irony in an attempt to lead the Corinthians to *adjust* their own position. He dares to expose himself to them, as in a drama (4:9ff). His rhetorical aim is expressedly "that your faith might rest not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (v5). Despite the appearance of it, humans and their wisdom and words are weak, but Jesus himself and the divine "word of the cross" are strong and powerful to salvation (1:17ff, cf $\sigma\omega\sigma\alpha\iota$ in v18 and 21) - that is, to righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1:30). This is the only decisive thing for Paul(2:2).

The Origins of his Oral and Written Martial Arts

In his letters, Paul is fighting valiantly for the true understanding of the word of the cross - either against new developments in Corinth, or against Judaizers (Galatians). By background, Paul was not "an uneducated, common man", like Peter and Paul (Acts 4:13), nor was he one of "the crowd who did not know the law" (John 7:49). Based on the differences perceived from his authentic letters, it seems that the speeches Paul makes in Acts are put in his mouth by Luke.⁹ But the fact remains that Paul himself could justifiably be envisaged as making these somewhat well-constructed and articulate speeches, and in an apparently spontaneous.

In *Ephesus*, from where 1 Cor is written towards the mid-fifties A.D., Paul stayed more than two years. According to Acts 19:9 "he every day argued/debated ($\delta\iota\alpha\lambda\epsilon\gamma\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$) in the school ($\sigma\chi\omicron\lambda\eta\varsigma$) of Tyrannus'. Possibly this was a place which belonged to a rhetor or

⁹ Some of Paul's speeches are obviously in Greek, but those in Jerusalem are reported to be in Hebrew, in which case Luke must have translated them. See passages such as Acts 13:16-41; 17:22-31; 20:18-35; 22:3-21; 24:10-21; 26:2ff. Paul is said to give long speeches (Acts 20:9), and to be able to enter day-long debates with Jews (28:23f).

teacher of wisdom in the city. In addition to the social institutions of the house, the voluntary association, and the synagogue, the model of the philosophic or rhetorical school was obviously also important to the early Christian groups, and particularly the Pauline ones. At least it was one of its analogies.¹⁰ So, is it possible in Acts 19:9 that Paul either gave or undertook some rhetorical training - probably both? Yes, possible, but not necessarily so.¹¹ Still, at least he is reported to have preached his gospel also in such Gentile contexts, and not only within the synagogues. Also the report of Acts 17 on Paul in Athens supports this, whatever the direct source-value of the actual speech there reported.

When Paul was "called" by Christ, however (Gal 1:12,15f etc.), in what eventually turned out to be his "conversion", he took with him his Pharisaic Judaism. This "baggage" is seen a most astonishingly in the revolutionary way he theologially reinterpreted his past.¹² In Paul's rhetoric therefore, we may single out *three main factors*:

1) *His Jewish background.* This is most obvious and explicit by his scriptural references and in his exegetical applications, but also in many other ways.¹³ We must not fail in the first place to relate the developing internal rhetoric of Christianity to the traditions of early Judaism of which it is a part. As for 1 Cor 1:18-3:20 and the sapiential (philosophical and rhetorical) traditions of Judaism, important work has been undertaken by J.A. Davis in 1984,¹⁴ following upon R.A. Horsley's 1977-work on the relationship between wisdom and eloquence in early Judaism.¹⁵ It has even been suggested by H. Conzelmann that Paul had

¹⁰ See Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven and London: Yale, 1983), 81ff.

¹¹ The school of Tyrannus might otherwise be a guild hall of a trade association, or a meeting place of a craft association (e.g. tent-makers), or a collegium, as others have suggested.

¹² See especially Segal, AF: *Paul the Convert. The Apostolate and Apostacy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven and London: Yale, 1990), who stresses both the continuity and the discontinuity. Compare E.P.Sanders' studies on Paul.

¹³ A succinct general discussion of the role of tradition, the use of the Old Testament, and of Jewish exegesis in early Christianity is found in James Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London-Philadelphia: SCM and Trinity, 1990, 1977), 60-102.

¹⁴ *Wisdom and Spirit: An Investigation of 1Corinthians 1:18-3:20 against the Background of Jewish Sapiential Traditions in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: University Press of America, 1984). Davis discusses particularly Sirach, Philo, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

¹⁵ "Wisdom of Words and Words of Wisdom in Corinth," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

his own "wisdom school",¹⁶ (cf. again Acts 19:9). Like the sage of Sirach 39, Paul knows Torah, quotes from the prophets (1 Cor 1:19,31; 2:9), or alludes to them (1:25), and ascertains hidden meanings in God (2:7). Like wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon, he has studied the prophets created by wisdom (cf. Wis 7:28), and he uses it terms of speech (cf. Wis 8:8).¹⁷ Like Daniel in the apocryphal novel of Susanna, he courageously overcomes physical disability to speak with power (for Daniel, his "disability" is his youth; like the earlier prophets such as Jeremiah, for Paul, the exact nature of his "weakness" in 2:1-4 etc. is unknown).

2) *A possible influence from the formal rhetoric of Greek-Hellenistic (and Latin) antiquity.* This however has first to be reconstructed from writings and handbooks which are often from another social level or domain.¹⁸ Also, the rhetorical tradition is partly preserved in Latin, and often considerably later.¹⁹ More important: there is no indication that Paul knew this tradition, or that it influenced him directly; at most it had an *indirect, and general*, influence. So much at least seems to be generally agreed in the scholarly debate.²⁰ Compare especially the notable infrequency with which he quotes Greek and Latin authors, as over against the Jewish writings.²¹ Compare also the

(CBQ) 39 (1977), 225-229.

¹⁶"Paulus und die Weisheit," *New Testament Studies (NTS)* 12 (1965-66), 231-44.

¹⁷ For some of these references I am indebted to J.R. Levison *op. cit.* below (37).

¹⁸ Some brief but very sound reflections on the social differences from Early Christianity here, and on the possibility of socio-cultural penetration are given by Wayne Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 118f, 126, 131-133.

¹⁹ For example, Aristotle (Poet., Rhet., Top.), Rhetorica ad Alexandrum, Isocrates, Cicero Rhetorica ad Herennium etc., Dio Chrysostomus, Demetrius (Eloc.), Menander (Rhetorica), Quintilian; we need not mention them all. The two most important antique treatments of epistolary theory in specific seem to be *On Style*, esp. 4:223-235 (ca. first century BCE), incorrectly ascribed to Demetrius of Phalerum, and *Epistolary Styles* (fourth to sixth century CE), erroneously ascribed to Proclus or Libanius. Also important are Pseudo-Demetrius' *Epistolary Types* (first century BCE or later), and an appendix entitled "On Letter Writing" in *Rhetorical Arts* of Julius Victor (fourth century CE).

²⁰ A recent discussion is also given by Classen, "Paulus und die antike Rhetorik," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft (ZNW)* 82 (1991), 1-33.

²¹ See 1 Cor 15:33, which is merely a general maxim or proverb; Paul also gives no source for it (even if it is testified in Menander's Thais). Tit 1:12 may be from Paul, or may not; at any rate he here refers to the Greek writers as "prophets". The third example is put in his mouth in Acts (notably 17:28 with reference to "one of your poets" (Aratus), cf. also 20:35 and 26:14 - at most general allusions).

predominantly Jewish and Scriptural nature of his letters.²² In them we find a genuine combination of general Hellenistic and Jewish elements, but often so that it is hard to tell the one from the other.²³ It is one of Paul's boasts that he can move at ease in both Jewish and Hellenistic cultures (1 Cor 9:19f; Rom 1:14f; 15:16ff; 11:13f). See also the topical investigations of Davis and Horsley above.²⁴ Actually, a number of scholars have even seen a midrashic pattern to be detected behind 1 Cor 18ff, similar to some patterns found in Qumran and Philo,²⁵ even though this is hard to prove. In short: Paul never quotes Aristotle or any other authority on rhetoric, and if he applies rhetorical figures and techniques, he does not do it in an overt fashion. Apparently he is not especially aware of it nor deliberately planning it - quite the contrary he says in our text (2:1f). But perhaps for that reason his voice is more genuine and effective than schooled and artistically-planned rhetorical sophistry.

When an authority like M. Hengel in 1991 sums up the discussion of Paul's background in the Tarsus and Jerusalem and in Hellenism and

²² A very authoritative general analysis was given by Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 158-225, with ample references to the previous literature. It may be true that "early Christian letters, too, owed far more to Hellenistic than to oriental epistolary conventions" (180). But on the Jewish-Hellenistic epistolography specifically, we admittedly have far less evidence; according to Acts 9:1 at least, Paul knew the Jewish encyclical (cf. also 28:21). Anyway, "unlike its pagan counterpart, Christian rhetorics used arguments based on revealed truth" (198). So, Christian preaching and teaching and letter writing was "initially shaped by Jewish Hellenistic homiletic traditions". Only gradually were these replaced by more typically Hellenistic modes of discourse (197).

²³ This is also Meeks' briefly explained verdict (*op.cit.* 126): Paul's letters exhibit a strange, novel mix: All through them we find various elements which are typical of pagan moral rhetoric, and that have even influenced their general form to some extent. Yet there are also major elements which are typical and traditionally Jewish. Moreover, the two are often so intertwined that they can not be easily separated.

²⁴ At the same time, this concerns more indirectly even the background and nature of the situation in Corinth which Paul is confronting, see lately Goulder, "sophia in 1 Corinthians," *NTS* 37 (1991), 536-534. However, very likely this is *not* from Jewish-Hellenistic wisdom speculations (Davis, Horsley etc.) or from a recent visit by Peter (Goulder's hypothesis), but rather from developments in their *own* Greek-Roman cultural soil. After all, they were predominately former Gentiles (cf. 6:10f; 8:7; 12:2 etc.; also a prosopographical investigation reveals this). We must then discern here, and not mix the one with the other: Paul himself may well take his wisdom and rhetorics mainly from Jewish sources and from OT thinking, even if his new Corinthians converts did not do so. Rather, this difference in background, development, and criteria seems to be the very core of the conflict between Paul and them.

²⁵ Notably J.A. Davis (1984), V.P. Branick (1982), J.I.H. MacDonald (1980), W. Wuellner (1970), R. Scroggs (1967-68), E. E. Ellis (1957), E. Peterson (1951), L. Cerfaux (1931), H. St. J. Thackeray (1921).

Judaism, he states that "a clear distinction must be made between the Greek elementary school and instruction in rhetoric". Even in Tarsus, Paul's elementary school was a Jewish one, so the literature from Homer to Plato and Euripides used in regular teaching is quite alien to him. The literature he knows by heart and which is also reflected in his vocabulary is that of the Septuagint and related Jewish writings such as the Wisdom of Solomon. "In Paul it is impossible to separate Greek education from Jewish. Even in Greek garb he remains Jewish through and through". At any rate he seems to use the means of Greek rhetoric in an idiosyncratic way, in what has been called his "rhetoric of the heart". Even in Jerusalem Greek was used and there was even instruction in rhetoric, for example, in Herodian circles. But for his part Paul studied the Jewish law and attended a Jewish-Hellenistic school. This was intended for effective teaching and proclamation in the Hellenistic synagogues. As such it also had to pass on a certain basic training in rhetoric. But this rhetorical training was basically non-literary: it was focussed on speaking publicly in the synagogue. There can be no doubt that Paul's art derives from oral training. It seems most plausible to suppose that Paul learned the basic insights of his indubitable rhetorical art, which is not oriented on classical rhetorical models, through practical application in Greek-speaking synagogues in Jerusalem. In contrast to contemporary orators, therefore, for Paul external rhetorical artifices were merely incidental.²⁶

This is of course to indicate - very briefly - some points in the scholarly debate over rhetoric in Paul (and even in the NT in general).²⁷ The problem seems to be that of finding a *holistic perspective*: until now some scholars have tended to investigate only the Jewish and others only the Greek-Hellenistic-Roman aspects. Also, various scholars mean various things when they write about "rhetoric" and "rhetorical" - all from a very specific analysis according to certain technical terms and patterns to the general "concern for authorial and thematic intention and function, notably by invention, arrangement, and style". But the

²⁶ Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, particularly 2f, 17, 37f, 58f.

²⁷ A recent volume is Watson, ed., *Persuasive Artistry. Studies in NT Rhetoric in Honor of G.A. Kennedy* (JSNTSup 50, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991). See now also Puskas, *The Letters of Paul: An Introduction* (Liturgical Press, 1993) which uses only the rhetorical-critical approach. This is one-dimensional.

latter is more part of general literary criticism. Conversely, when modern scholars put rather heavy technical rhetorical language on the NT texts and "discover" any rhetorical parallels in them, it sometimes seems to be artificial, and really tells more about rhetoric itself and about their own rather fresh interest in and knowledge about rhetorics than about the basically Jewish NT texts.²⁸ In short, we call for some due critical soberness and differentiation in face of a somewhat fashionable pan-rhetorical wave.

As for the specifics of Paul's "rhetoric" the future challenge seems to be to formulate a balanced definition and approach to it which accounts for *both* its Scriptural-Jewish and its Hellenistic elements.²⁹ One has carefully formulated Paul's rhetorical position as theologically and in content rooted in Judaism, and only to a limited extent externally influenced by Greek rhetoric: "The true rhetoric to which Paul adheres is the studied rhetoric of the sage who pores over ancient wisdom and turns of phrase, and who is renowned for instructive and persuasive speech".³⁰

In our present text especially we may point out how Paul's Jewish background contributes decisively to his understanding of the power of the cross. All his argument in 1:18ff leans heavily on the Jewish Scriptures and on theological axioms in them. And all crucial terms such as "Messiah", "word of God", "scribe", "salvation", "believe", "stumbling block", "nations", "called", "according to the flesh", "election", "all flesh", "boast" etc. can only be understood against an OT background. In fact, would Greek-Hellenistic rhetoric ever mention God's (physical) "weakness" (1:25) in an exposition, God communicating through shameful suffering and death?

3) We are then, at least partly, better left with *more general, common-sense and mostly not very technical rhetorical observations*,

²⁸ A good example on the ambiguities here is found with R. Gram's "hetorical" approach to Matthew, 41-65 in the just above mentioned volume. What makes this "rhetorical"? Was Matthew a rhetor in the technical sense? Might not more general terms and descriptions be used instead, with more of substantial clarity and less of unnecessary confusion?

²⁹ A similar effort is now made in Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul in Hellenistic Context* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994).

³⁰ J. Levison in Watson ed., *op. cit.* 40.

unless we should impose technical terms or an explicit rhetorical system on Paul which he himself was not aware of nor used consciously.³¹ Truly, we could analyze how 1 Cor 1-4 are replete with figures of thought and speech: antithesis (1:17), anaphora and litotes (1:26), antistrophe (1:26-28), accumulation (2:1-5), etc. There are also enthymemes (2:10), metaphor, questions (1:20), and rhetorical terms (for example, "demonstration", ἀποδείξειν, in 2:4).³² But there is no need to repeat rhetorical work which seems already to be well accomplished by others,³³ and taken further into a more complex and integrated analysis.³⁴ The present analysis below at least will follow this more "ordinary" and modest approach, and confine itself to more direct observations of *functions* in the text itself, and to more straightforward, non-technical (and non-impressive) descriptions.

³¹ Aune (*op. cit.* 199) points out that the problem with the rhetorical classifications is that they are "a little too neat", and that the rhetorical theories are "too rigid". Actual speeches and letters "would be far more complex and eclectic than the rhetorical handbooks might suggest". Consequently, despite many recent attempts, "early Christian letters tend to resist rigid classification, either in terms of the three main types of oratory (dicanic, symbolctic, and epideictic), or in terms of the many categories listed by the epistolary theorists" (203). Most early Christian letters are multifunctional and have a "mixed" character, combining elements from two or more epistolary types. Romans is a good example (219). In short, each early Christian letter must be analyzed on its own terms. The case is also that rhetorical analyses of Paul's letters do partly disagree, especially on the application of rhetorical genres. H.D. Betz identified Galatians as an apologetic letter in the form of forensic speech, while N.A. Dahl had argued that it is an ironic rebuke letter. J.D. Hester sees it as a letter of blame. S. Stowers has stated plainly that there are no apologetic letters in the NT. Then D.E. Aune has argued that Gal with its paraenetic material is closer to deliberative speech than to forensic, and that in any case it is possible to find a mixture of types in it. A growing number of scholars have seen Gal as a hortatory letter rather than apologetic. Also, R. Jewett has called Romans an "ambassadorial" letter, which is a kind of epideictic literature, but it is not one of the types in the handbooks.

³² This NT hapax legomenon suggests more than simply "manifestation", but rather more "evidence", or "proof". In Greek rhetoric such "demonstration" was a technical term for a compelling conclusion drawn from given premises. Fee (*op. cit.* 95 n.28) refers to Quintilian 5.10.7 and Cicero Acad 2:8.

³³ Humphries, "Paul's Rhetoric of Argumentation in 1 Corinthians 1-4" (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 1979), 50-104; Lynch, "Pauline Rhetoric: 1 Cor 1:10-4:21" (MA thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1981); these works are not yet accessible to me. Also Hartman, "Some Remarks on 1 Cor 2:1-5," *Studia Evangelica* 34 (1974), 109-120 stressed that Paul is reflecting the Greek rhetorical tradition.

³⁴ See the programmatic new combination of sociological and rhetorical perspectives in Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994). Cf. lately also Pogoloff, *Logos und Sophia. The Rhetorical Situation of 1 Corinthians* (SBLDS 134 Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), and even Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (Tubingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991).

In fact, to solve - at least in part - the problem posed above, we may suggest to introduce *a new distinction*. While Paul in 1 Cor 2:1-5 emphatically distances himself from Greek-Hellenistic "rhetoric" in the technical sense, he certainly uses "*persuasion*" throughout in the text, and also proof from the Jewish Scriptures. This latter is a basic element in his rhetoric, over against that from the Greek and Roman code. Or, to put it in another way, there are at least *two* meanings of "rhetoric" - a technical and codified Greek-Roman one, and a general one, meaning *general human persuasion, including the Jewish-Hellenistic Scriptural argument*. To the latter we have access as much by common sense and ordinary exegetical observations as by imposing directly the categories and rules of the Greek-Roman rhetorical handbooks on Paul.³⁵ Actually, the perplexity of the situation is well reflected even in Aristotle's own rather general definition of rhetoric, which is "the faculty of discovering the possible means of *persuasion* in reference to any subject whatever" (Rhet 1.2.2.). This is also the kind of non-literary, practical teaching and synagogue homiletics which Hengel now envisages historically from the Jewish-Hellenistic school in Jerusalem.

An Initial List of His Weapons and Their Functions

In 1:10-4:21 Paul makes use of every weapon in his *persuasive-rhetorical* arsenal to call the Corinthians back to the gospel: reference to Christian basics, implied accusations, rhetorical questions, comparisons with himself, proofs from Scripture, use of Biblical axioms, reference to experience/reality, irony, sarcasm, threat, etc. In intention it is following the order of the letter. The point being made is not only that Paul is indeed skilful in rhetoric. By avoiding technical terms, I also explain my above point on the common nature of Paul's persuasion. Then the observations are easily communicable, without involving too many technical presuppositions:

³⁵ This is even more relevant in the gospels and in narrative. Very symptomatically, BL Mack and VK Robbins intended an SBL-project book with the provisional title "Rhetoric in the Gospels", but in the end they changed it to *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1989).

Stressing himself as an apostle called by Jesus Christ

1:1,4; note also the recurring frequency of "Jesus Christ" in the introduction (some 10 times, depending on textual emendations)

Conventional introductory praise and thanksgiving

1:2,4-9 (captatio benevolentiae = catching of their good will).

Rhetorical assumptions or accusations

1:10b-12 "There are dissensions and strife among you". This is found again in 3:3f ("For when there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not then behaving like ordinary men?"); cf. also 4:6b ("that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another"). "If anyone thinks that he is" - 3 times, in each main section: 3:18 (wise); 8:2 (knowing); 14:37 (spiritual).

Limitation of the opposition to a few, unidentified voices

See the three previous passages.

1:15 ("Lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name")

4:3,5 ("But to me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court").

4:6b ("that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another").

4:18 ("Some of you who are arrogant/puffed up").

9:3 ("Those who examine me"), and cf. 2:15; 5:12 and 10:29f.

15:12 ("How can some among you claim that there is no resurrection?").

Rhetorical questions

Firing a series of short questions:

1:13 (Is Christ divided? etc); 1:20 (Where is the wise man? etc);

"Do you not know that?" 10 times - 3:16; 6:19 etc.;

4:7 three questions;

4:21 ("What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?").

Reference to himself as example

1:14-17a (If it is like this, I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you, but Christ sent me to preach the gospel).

2:1-5 ("When I came to you, brethren, ...").

3:5-10 (both Apollos and I are only servants, workers).

4:1 ("This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God").

4:9-13 (God has exhibited us apostles as fools for Christ's sake).

11:1 ("Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ").

13:11 ("But when I became a man, I gave up my childish ways").

Reference to Christian basics

1:17b-18 (The word of the cross is power to salvation); see also 1:22-24 (But we preach Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God).

3:11 Christ as the only foundation stone.

Proof from scripture - following the argument

1:19 ("For it is written");

1:25 (no direct passage, but statement of general biblical assumption);

1:31 ("therefore, as it is written");

2:9 ("But, as it is written");

2:16 (without quotation formula);

3:6 (Biblical axiom: God gives the growth)

3:12-15 and 4:3b-5 (Biblical axiom: God will judge), etc.

Reference to God's action

1:20b-21 ("Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through his wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe").

1:27-30 ("But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the strong, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God; he is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption").

2:6-8 ("a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification, not a wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age").

Reference to experience/reality

1:26 ("For consider your call, brethren,...").

Reference to their common spirituality

2:10-16 ("God has revealed this to us through the Spirit").

Note here that he does not deny the Corinthians' possession of the Spirit (cf. v14); nevertheless, by the "we" we get the strong impression that their common spirituality is above himself and his fellow workers (v13), and the ecumenical church (cf. 1:2b and 4:17). See the "we" in 4:1. This is especially clear at the end of the passage, in v15: here we clearly have a reflection of their "sitting in judgement" on him in 4:3-5 and 9:3 (same verb used, ἀνακρίνεῖν), cf. 10:29f. Thus, in the following 3:1-4 he says that at least earlier he "could not address them as spiritual men", but "had to address them as men of the flesh". And so they "still" are: their behavior with jealousy and strife among them shows that they are merely ordinary men.

Reference to his own (and their) spirituality

2:16 ("But we have the mind of Christ").

14:37 ("If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritually gifted, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord").

Consideration, empathy

4:14 ("But I do not write to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children").

Commendation

11:2 ("I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you").

Irony, implied evaluation

2:6f ("Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, but a secret and hidden wisdom of God" - compare then the Corinthians' own insistence on wisdom and spiritual maturity).

3:1-2a ("But I brethren could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh, as babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food; for you were not ready for it; and even yet you are not ready, for you are still of the flesh").

14:20 ("Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; be babes in evil, but in thinking be mature); cf. also 13:11 ("When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up my childish ways").

Sarcasm

4:8 ("Already you are filled! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings!").

Advocation of the ecumenical perspective

1:2b ("together with all those who in every place...");

4:17 ("I send to you Timothy, to remind you of my ways as I

teach them everywhere in every church").

Turning the tables of authority

Instead of their sitting in judgement on him (4:3; 9:3; 2:15; 10:29f; 5:12), Paul judges them;

11:16 ("If any one is disposed to be contentious, we recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God");

11:22 ("What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not");

11:34 ("About the other things I will give directions when I come").

Threat/exclusion

4:18-21 ("But I will come to you soon and test the power of the some who are arrogant").

5:1-13 is a more individual case.

14:38 ("If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized").

16:22 ("If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed")

Combination of servant and father metaphor

In the situation of 1 Cor Paul has to reassert his authority in a situation where it has obviously been seriously eroded, by the lapse of time since his first visit (Acts 18:1-18), and by new spiritual developments in between. But Paul had a big problem with his own message here:³⁶ He wished to stress the servant imagery as the model of leadership in the church (see 3:5-9; 4:1-5), and rightly so, because it belongs to the bedrock of Christian tradition (Mk 10:42-45pp etc). How than was Paul to assert his own authority without at the same time destroying the perspective of that imagery? His competent efforts to that effect can be studied, especially 4:14-17 at the conclusion of the first part, with the application of the admonition motif and the father-child imagery, the

³⁶ This is very well pointed out by Fee, *op .cit.* 7.

imitation language, and the advocacy of the ecumenical perspective. Only after that basis does he threaten to come with chastening, in 4:18-21.

The list can of course be extended, but what is notable here is the long *sequence* and also the effective *interplay* of the various factors: how Paul uses his many persuasive weapons *together* in launching an attack on the wrongly developed spiritual and theological situation in Corinth. (Incidentally, I agree with Fee's viewpoint in his 1987-commentary that Paul is not primarily or only arbitrating the "factions" in Corinth (1:10ff etc.), but that the unifying theme behind the 11 disparate subjects of the letter is really the development of their spirituality and theology *behind* and connected to all these, and then connected also to their relationship to *Paul himself* as their apostle and father in Christ.³⁷)

What Paul *aimed* at is "the sophistry of this world" (1:20), "the sophistry of this age" (2:6) - the "wisdom" (σοφία) he here fights can actually be rendered like this. He rejected this since it is a "*boasting*" wisdom (cf. the key-stem *καυχ-* in 1:29,31; 3:19-21; 4:7; 5:6; 13:3v.l.). Paul rejects this kind of wisdom because of the ill-effects it has brought upon the Corinthian church. They are "puffed up", "arrogant" (4:6,18; 5:2,6). Really, it is knowledge (γνῶσις) which puffs up (8:1). But, even if his polemical situation gives the impression that he rejects wisdom, (see for example. 1:26ff), Paul does not reject wisdom in itself or any kind of wisdom or knowledge (see 2:6ff). Nor does he reject speech in itself: the passage is in fact replete with verbs of speech and proclamation (cf. v17 εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, λόγος; v18 λόγος; v21 κήρυγμα; v23 κηρύσσομεν ; 2:1 καταγγέλλων; 2:4 λόγος, κήρυγμα; on this basis and on the principle of *lectio difficilior* we may even read μυστήριον, "testimony" in 2:1; "mystery" and the hidden-revealed theme occurs at first in the next section, 2:6-13).

³⁷ (4:15), cf. *op.cit.* 4-15 on "The church and Its Apostle"; however, for my part I will not exclude the faction-problem as much as Fee seems to do in order to launch his new proposal.

Paul and the Spirit

We pointed initially to the paradoxical problem with the text of 2:1-5 and its context. G.A. Kennedy, one of the authoritative proponents of rhetorical criticism in the NT writes: "This passage may be said to reject the whole of classical philosophy and rhetoric. For Christian rhetoric can rely only on God, both to supply words and to accomplish persuasion if it is God's will".³⁸ "The Christian orator, like his Jewish predecessor, is a vehicle of God's will to whom God will supply the necessary words".³⁹ We may say that the three factors of Christian rhetoric are grace, authority, and proclamation rather than the modes of persuasion in Aristotelic rhetoric known as ethos, pathos, and logos.⁴⁰ "Christian preaching is not thus persuasion, but proclamation, and is based on authority and grace, not on proof".⁴¹ It is based in the Spirit (1 Cor 2:4,10,12-16, and also Mk 13:11).⁴²

That may be so, at one level. Nevertheless, as shown, Kennedy's new is not entirely true. Although Paul rejects sophisticated rhetoric, he uses persuasion unreservedly. Therefore, this above definition will need some refinement. J.R. Levison has undertaken very interesting work in that direction lately (1991), by application of the distinction between the Spirit as "overcomer" and as "artificer", derived from early Judaism.⁴³ For our part, we propose instead a distinction between the theological and the human level, between the human and the divine perspective. However, this is a theological distinction, shared by Paul and Christian believers. But for the general eye and ear, persuasion, proclamation, and Spirit will flow together, as it does also with Paul

³⁸ *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 132; the comment is concluding on 1 Cor 1-2, to 2:6-13.

³⁹ *Idem, New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 8.

⁴⁰ Ar. Rhet. 1.2.3.; 2.4-7; cf. Quintilian 6.2.9-12.

⁴¹ Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 127.

⁴² Kennedy's definition of early Christian rhetoric derives basically from these two passages: 1 Cor 1-2, and from Mk 13:9-13.

⁴³ See "Did The Spirit Inspire Rhetoric? An Exploration of G.A. Kennedy's Definition of Early Christian Rhetoric," 25-40 in *Persuasive Artistry*, ed. D.F. Watson mentioned earlier. Levison here builds on the studies of Davis and Horsley mentioned above.

himself in 1 Cor 1-4.⁴⁴

We will make four points: 1) Actually, with Paul himself in 1 Cor the Spirit is *not* **overcomer** (compare Mk 13:11p, in an eschatological sense, or in a context of a specific ordeal). See the emphasis on Paul's own decision in 2:2: Paul's proclamation is definitely premeditated. Although Paul did not include words of specific rhetorical eloquence in his proclamation, he still planned his discourse. We can say that Paul's external argumentation reveals a studied and prepared display of persuasive ability. In the text itself the only reference to the Spirit as "overcomer" may be found in the reference to the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" in 2:4.⁴⁵ But as mentioned, the "power" (δυνάμει) we also find in 2:5 and 1:18 and 23, and there it refers directly to God's word of the cross and to Christ himself. Therefore, the point also in 2:4 may rather be the Corinthians' acceptance of this, and not an overpowering event in Paul himself. At least such a thing is not directly mentioned.⁴⁶ So I find Levison's point largely convincing.

2) With Paul, the Spirit is *not even* **artificer**.⁴⁷ At least there is no "Spiritual rhetoric". Paul prefers to speak understandably with his mind rather than in tongues of the Spirit or to prophesy (cf. ch.14 later). Certainly Paul longs to have "the mind of Christ" (2:16), as also the Spirit; but that he can not deny the Corinthians either, see 2:10,12ff.⁴⁸ Of course we do not disagree that Paul's true opinion of his preaching is that it is "a combination of rhetoric and Spirit".⁴⁹ But does the text itself really say anything on how the Spirit came to him? In fact, isn't the point in this letter that it would directly counter his persuasive objectives to claim and insist on a specific personal revelation or

⁴⁴ Levison 28 also indicates that this is the case with the gospel of Mark. Even C.C. Black's and R. Winson's articles on Mark 13 and on the Synoptic Gospels respectively in the same volume do attest to the rhetoric - or at least persuasive - qualities of Mark, and it really is not hard to tell the pointed and aimed aspects of that narrative.

⁴⁵ So Levison *op. cit.* 39. He also appeals to 1 Thess 1:5.

⁴⁶ It really has to be read into the text. Compare also the exegesis of Fee *op. cit.* 95f.

⁴⁷ Levison (*op. cit.* 36) sees this: "Paul's self-evaluation seems indisputably to reject the early Jewish tradition of the Spirit as artificer". However, he still goes on to include the Spirit as artificer into Paul's rhetoric (39).

⁴⁸ Also 2:15 is a reference to himself, cf. same verb in 4:3f; 9:3.

⁴⁹ Levison *op. cit.* 39.

inspiration, since this was apparently exactly the path followed by the Corinthians?⁵⁰ Therefore Paul stresses more their spiritual unity (but contrast then Galatians 1:12,15f).⁵¹

3) We noted the problem of Paul rejecting persuasion and rhetoric, while at the same time applying it unreservedly in the text. Levison seeks to solve this clash between what Paul says and what he does by appealing to Paul's use of *irony*.⁵² We agree that this is probably the most acceptable suggestion (compare then also the following self-deprecations in 4:9-13, and even the biting sarcasm at the Corinthians in 4:8, as also behind 2:6-3:4; even the Corinthians had to agree that Paul's letters were weighty and strong, even if they disregarded his speech and his weak appearance, 2 Cor 10:10). But does that in itself also necessitate reading the elements of the Spirit of "overcomer" and "artificer" into the text?

4) What we see is rather that *Paul himself* uses his obvious natural abilities of persuasion and rhetoric, combined with his Jewish training informed throughout by his Jewish theological thinking. There is also some possible even with some influence from general Hellenistic rhetoric, but not to a great extent. And Paul does not apply it not with the same success as Apollos.

Paul and Apollos

The Corinthians obviously *compared* Paul and Apollos from Alexandria (1:12), and especially in regard to in wisdom, philosophy, rhetoric, strength, and eloquence (cf. Acts 18:24-19:1, and the corresponding Corinthian interest reflected in 1 Cor 1:18ff; cf also 2 Cor 10:10). Paul and Apollos were the only two they had actually met

⁵⁰ Spiritual gifts, revelations, prophecies, wisdom, and knowledge were the very reasons why they were "puffed up".

⁵¹ The term for Paul's specific apostolic calling and function seems rather to be grace (χάρις, 1 Cor 1:4; 3:10 etc).

⁵² *Op. cit.* 37ff, with reference to *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (1434a and 1441b.23), as also Quintilian 9.2.44-46.

of the four mentioned in 1:12: Christ was never in Corinth,⁵³ and to our knowledge neither was Peter, nor the brothers of the Lord, 9:5. (Besides, the authority of all these obviously rested elsewhere). Incidentally, also the later "super-apostles" seem to have boasted of their speaking skills (see 2 Cor 11:5f), and Paul was told to be "weighty and strong in his letters, but weak in bodily appearance, and of no account in speech" (2 Cor 10:9f).

So, Apollos who arrived to Corinth not long after Paul was probably *Paul's main competition* in the eyes of the Corinthians (see his reoccurrence in 1 Cor 3:4ff). Paul says directly that the Corinthians are "puffed up in favor of one against another" (4:6 and cf. again 4:17), and that they had been sitting in judgement on Paul, examining him as in a contest (*ἀνακρίνειν*, 4:3-5 and 9:3). But Paul cleverly stresses in an indirect way that there is no division between the two (3:5f; 4:6 and 16:12).

Now, in fact all the things told about Apollos in Acts 18:24ff fit equally well with Paul, though perhaps with different emphases. At least Paul can also expound the Scriptures with wisdom and quieten his opponents. But he does not do so by studied formal Hellenistic rhetoric and sophistication, nor with allegorical exegesis like Apollos' fellow-citizen Philo. Sadly then we do not possess a speech of Apollos, or even a letter, to make any comparison. If we judge from the forceful argument and persuasive tactics of Paul in 1 Cor 1-4, however, Paul was not unskilled either, even if according to the later voice of 2 Pet 3:15f "some things in his letters may be difficult to understand and easy to twist". But note that also that passage credits Paul with just this: "wisdom" (*σοφία*) - exactly the key term in 1 Cor 1-4.⁵⁴ Judging from Paul's own persuasive powers, Apollos must have been very capable, strong, and convincing.⁵⁵

⁵³ Apparently the "Christ party" in 1:12 will still have to be taken in opposition to the other tendencies to factionalism.

⁵⁴ As a key term to the first part of the letter "wisdom" and persuasion is introduced already by the word "speech", *λόγος* in 1:5-7 (cf. "knowledge", *γνώσιν* in chs.8-10 and "spiritual gifts", *χαρίσματα, πνευματικά* in chs.12-14).

⁵⁵ Some scholars think we have the opportunity to read Apollos in the letter to the Hebrews. At least this writing gives us the idea of an early Christian Greek-Hellenistic exhortational sermon, with a background in the Jewish-Hellenistic diaspora synagogues.

ABSTRACT

1 Cor 1-2 is the only place where Paul appears to address the issue of technical rhetoric directly, and there he rejects it explicitly (2:1-5). But he seems to use it extensively, and especially so in the first four chapters of 1 Cor. This raises the question of a new attempt to define his rhetorics. The proposal takes due account of the Jewish features in the letters of Paul, and distinguishes general "persuasion" from technical Greek-Roman "rhetoric". After a more brief, non-technical analysis of Paul's "persuasive arsenal" in the 4 chapters, the article concludes with an attempt to define the specifics of Paul's paradoxical rhetoric in the text, which is seen to be ironic, it also points to Apollos as his unknown counterpart.

撮要

哥林多前書一至二章是保羅唯一直接討論修辭學的經文，他在那裡明確地反對使用這種技巧（二1-5），但在哥林多前書首四章，他卻似乎廣泛地使用它，這情況叫人重新為他的修辭學下定義。本文嘗試從保羅書信的猶太特色入手，並將希羅修辭學從一般「游說術」中分辨出來，經較簡單而非技術性分析保羅在哥林多前書首四章的辯證技巧後，再替保羅那反合性的修辭學下定義。保羅的修辭學以反諷為重心，且與阿波羅，一個鮮為人知的人，持相反看法。