

(δύναμις-Terminologie im Kontext von σφζειν-Terminologie). Wenig später 266 erfolgt eine nochmalige Angabe des intendierten Erkenntnisfortschritts dieser Studie. Eine gründliche Überarbeitung vor der Publikation hätte der Studie gutgetan.

Trotz dieser Monita, deren Zusammenstellung leicht erweitert werden könnte, liegt eine sehr interessante und anregende Arbeit vor. Besonders Kap. II (Hauptkapitel dieser Studie) ist eine wahre Fundgrube und lädt zum Weiterforschen ein. Die Anwendung der dort gewonnenen Erkenntnisse im exegetischen Teil auf die ntl Schriften (Röm/1 Petr) bleibt jedoch im Rahmen des Erwartbaren. Trotz der angesprochenen Defizite liegt eine empfehlenswerte Studie vor.

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Thomas Schmeller

Der zweite Brief an die Korinther, Teilband 1: 2 Kor 1,1–7,4; Teilband 2: 2 Kor 7,5–13,13 (EKK VIII/1–2), Neukirchen-Vluyn/Ostfildern (Neukirchener Verlag/Patmos), 2010/2015, 387 S./407 S., kart. EUR 82,-; Bd. I: ISBN 978-3-7887-2434-4/ISBN 978-3-491-52007-3; Bd. II: ISBN 978-3-7887-2931-8/ISBN 978-3-8436-0690-5.

Thomas Schmeller, Professor at the Goethe-University in Frankfurt am Main, has published a comprehensive two-volume commentary on 2 Cor in the prestigious collection of *EKK* commentaries. The first volume (2 Cor 1:1–7:4) contains a concise introductory chapter (13–40), in which the author omits the presentation of the historical-religious context of the city of Corinth, and focuses on the composition and structure (13–19) and on the controversial subject of the literary unity of the letter (19–38). Although for a more detailed analysis of the unity, he refers the reader to the works of H. D. Betz and R. Bieringer; Schmeller offers an impartial discussion on the problems and proposals, recognizing, on the one hand, that a growing minority of authors defends the unity of the letter, adducing in their favor the manuscript tradition that has transmitted 2 Cor as a unitary text, while most exegetes assume that 2 Cor consists of two, three, four or more Pauline letters. On the other hand, he admits that the question of the (lack of) unity of 2 Cor cannot be resolved by the

methods of classical literary criticism. More modern approaches, such as the rhetorical and text linguistic analyzes and discussions about the conditions of writing, including a comparison with old compilations of letters (Cicero), have been used to support the unity of the letter.

Given the increase in skepticism about the complicated compilation hypotheses, this author advocates the thesis of literary unity despite the tensions between 1–9 and 10–13. The sections that present the greatest difficulties are 6:14–7:1 in their current context and the transition from chap. 9 to chap. 10; these difficulties are resolved more plausibly if we assume that 6:14–7:1 originally functioned as a bridge between chap. 9 and chap. 10, and later was moved by an editor to its current position. The caesura between chapters 9 and 10 is explained in a textual pragmatic way: Paul would have pursued different objectives. The conciliatory affirmations in 2 Cor 1–7 (esp. 7:5) and the combative affirmations in 10–13 refer to different aspects of the same conflict provoked by mutually opposing groups. The exhortation to the collection of common funds, on the other hand, is an attempt to win over the community so that it adopts a position in favor of Paul and accepts the missionary concept of the apostle. Schmeller concludes that 2 Cor was written and sent at once to the Corinthian church (37).

The introduction concludes with a brief reconstruction of the succession of Paul's letters and visits to Corinth. The news received after writing 1 Cor motivated Paul to make a brief visit to Corinth from Ephesus (intermediate visit, 2 Cor 12:14; 13:1), which led to confrontation with a community leader (2:5; 7:12). The apostle announced another reconciliation visit (2:1–4; 7:8) but replaced it, after his return to Ephesus, by the "letter of tears" entrusted with Titus. Paul met Titus later in Macedonia, who conveyed him the good news: the community had positioned itself in favor of Paul and condemned the adversaries (7:6; 2:6), though some of them continued to be active in the city. The apostle now writes our 2 Cor (with 6:14–7:1 at a different place). We do not have any more direct information about Paul's whereabouts, but he would have returned to Corinth (56 AD) for the collection of community funds. This reconstruction presupposes that the "letter of tears" is not preserved, and defends an intermediate visit, between 1 and 2 Cor based on 12:14–21; 13:1–2; 2:1.

The rationale of the comments is as follows. At the beginning of each literary unit, Schmeller provides a detailed list of secondary literature, both in German and English. He then offers his own translation of the Greek text into German. He continues with the epigraph of the *analysis* that consists of five elements: (1) concise summary of the flow of the discourse or general description, (2) delimitation of the passage based on critical-literary observations and the contextual analysis, (3) discussion about the literary genre, (4) structure

of the passage and (5) rhetoric of the passage. The verses of each literary unit then receive detailed exegetical attention. The author involves the reader in a constant dialogue with the interpretation of other scholars, especially in the footnotes, since the quotations of other scholars in the body of the text are rare. The exegetical discussion focuses systematically on the text and is fair and respectful of the opinions that the author considers unconvincing.

The section on the “history of interpretation and reception history”, a characteristic feature of EKK’s commentaries, does not appear at the end of the exegetical section, as is usual in that collection, but is inserted in the explanatory section. Interpretations of the old church and the medieval church are considered, as well as of Luther and Calvin, especially. In the second volume, instead of dealing with the history of interpretation for each passage, the author exposes only the history of the reception of some texts: 2 Cor 8:9 (poverty and wealth); 11:6 (rhetorical ignorance); 12:2–4 (heavenly journey); 12:7–9a (thorn in the flesh); 13:4 (theology of the cross). In the case of the thorn in the flesh, Schmeller interacts extensively with the views of Luther and other commentators and refers readers to H. R. Minn (1972) for detailed interpretations of the thorn through the centuries (306). Our author considers the thorn as a bodily ailment (for a dozen possible diseases [307]) and questions the interpretation of Karl Barth.

At the end of each exegetical section, he usually provides a useful summary and reflection on the most relevant ideas. In addition, the commentary includes some appendixes. Specifically two in the first volume, one dedicated to the “we” in 2 Cor (59–63) and the other on the context of 6:14–7:1 (378–382). Likewise, two appendixes in the second volume address the question of Paul’s collection of funds for Jerusalem (II, 32–40), and the Pauline adversaries in 2 Cor (II, 149–171), whose identity continues to be an enigma. The general opinion that “opponents have defended a theology of glory, power and success” (160) is deemed “very unilateral” (161). Schmeller opines that it rather tries to determine the peculiarity of the opponents “with socio-historical categories” (161). As a result, Paul and his opponents are quite similar not only in the style of the mission but also in the content of the preaching. The core of the dispute revolved around recognition, authority and influence in the community (170). Therefore, the author concludes that the Pauline image of the adversaries is a chimera (171). But if the image of the adversary was really a figment of the imagination, it remains incomprehensible why Paul fought so hard at the theological level (*D. A. Cineira*, *Los adversarios paulinos en 2 Corintios*, in: *EstAg 37* [2002] 249–274).

Not only are these themes of the introduction discussed throughout the commentary, but also the questions of anthropology, the overcoming of

suffering and eschatology, the interpretation of the death of Jesus, and the relationship between the ancient and new alliances. The theme of the first volume is focused on the Pauline conception of ministry, explained in detail in 5:11–6:10 as a service of reconciliation. Schmeller's understanding of the first person plural is convincing for the interpretation of 5:11–21. However, it is questionable that this passage does not contain soteriological elements (324.340), but only about the "greatness of the apostolic ministry" (339) and the communion with the Corinthians.

The commentary devotes ample space to the analysis of the fool's speech (2 Cor 11:16–12:13). It is difficult to answer the questions of literary and theological traits of this passage, especially in regard to its models and adaptation. Although historically correctly referred to the model of the Jewish Wisdom literature, Schmeller's commentary is dominated by the concept of "mask or role of fools" (338–343) derived from the mimicry of the Greek comedy. There are two possible explanations of the passage, although both present difficulties: a) Interpretation as a parody and b) the assumption that it is a comparison of accomplishments that qualify for the service of Christ. Schmeller rejects the widely accepted interpretation that the fool's speech is a parody of the glory of opponents and rejects the traits of irony and parody typical of a fool. On the contrary, it would be a real and serious comparison of the self-glory of the opponents opposed to Paul's own. This shows, on the one hand, equality with them regarding offspring, with which the Corinthians were obviously impressed. On the other hand, it especially proves that his commitment and effort in the service of Christ is greater than theirs. Here, the service is not measured by the successes of the mission, but by the efforts, imprisonments, beatings and the dangers of death (v. 23) that it brings with itself and that are illustrated by Paul in many details (v. 24–27).

An interesting theme in the letter is the conception of suffering ("participation in the suffering of Christ"), considered as one, but not the only place where Paul experiences the power of God (354), addressed in the *peristasis*-catalog (6:1–11). For that, the author analyzes Stoic-Cynic parallels, but not so much the Jewish traditions of the OT.

It is worth noting Schmeller's analysis of Paul's language of strength and weakness (2 Cor 13:1–4) in Luther (377–390). In fact, it is an investigation about the so-called "theology of the cross" of Paul, which Luther (re)discovered and put in a prominent place in the theology. Schmeller, in contrast, argues that what Paul and Luther were talking about is basically irreconcilable with the often-made use of their teachings in recent analyzes, both academic and

popular. Luther never says that “Paul experiences the power of the resurrection only in situations of suffering, nor that this power is indiscernible from the outside, because it consists in a certain theological interpretation of suffering” (389). Neither does Paul make that statement, although it is often interpreted as if he had affirmed it (390). The result of Schmeller’s careful research is that the generalized interpretation of strength as weakness in the Pauline theology of the cross cannot be verified in 2 Cor (389). “Some new approaches in the Pauline interpretation (even within the Protestant exegesis) are justified in distancing themselves from a *theologia crucis* in the way traditionally presupposed in many interpretations” (390).

Schmeller is very cautious when he should opt for some of the different interpretations that have been postulated in the exegesis, as it is the case of taking a decision between the interpretation of 1 Cor 1:8 as disease or imprisonment (70), or the sufferings of Christ in 1:5 (64), the idea of imitation of Paul (263). The weighting of caution is always complicated, but it is a sign of the difficulty of the interpretation, so that the reader can choose the one that he deems most persuasive. The commentary constitutes a valuable tool for the exegetical study of 2 Cor, whose positive aspects are the clear structure and the understandable language, as well as the scientific basis and the examination of other research positions. The critical questions about the particular and concrete comments do not diminish the exegetical and didactic contribution of Schmeller. The compilation of interpretive opinions is extensive and updated, collecting the main publications and some that are found in smaller journals, although there are no references to contributions in Romance languages. The commentary combines a careful analysis of the text with a reserved consideration of common interpretations. The exegetical discussion focuses systematically on the text and the fundamental issues. The commentary is easily read and is a good dialogue partner for Pauline scholars. It promises to be a standard and essential reference work for serious exegetical interaction with 2 Cor in the foreseeable future. Hopefully it will be translated into other languages.

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