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Article:

Heath, M. (2004) John Chrysostom, rhetoric and Galatians. *Biblical Interpretation*, 12 (4). pp. 369-400. ISSN 0927-2569

<https://doi.org/10.1163/1568515042418578>

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John Chrysostom, rhetoric and Galatians

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the influence of contemporary rhetoric on John Chrysostom's commentary on Galatians (with some reference to other exegetical works). Because ancient rhetoric developed over time, the primary points of reference are works on rhetorical theory, commentaries on Demosthenes and rhetorical exercises dating to the second century AD and later. It is argued that modern attempts to classify the letter under the three standard classes of oratory are misconceived in terms of ancient theory, but that this is not an obstacle to rhetorical analysis. John's use of rhetorical concepts in analysing the structure of the letter is illustrated, as is his use of the pattern of counterposition (an objection attributed to an opponent) and solution, both as a compositional device and as an exegetical tool. In his interpretation of Gal. 2.1-10, John argues Paul is unable to deal fully with counterpositions because of the constraints entailed by a covert strategy agreed by the apostles at the Jerusalem consultation. John's interpretation of the confrontation with Peter at Antioch, according to which Peter pretended to give way to Paul's opponents in order to give him an opportunity to respond, is shown to be based on the rhetorical concept of figured speech. John's attention to Paul's management of the relationship with his addressees is examined. The admiration which John expresses for this and other aspects of Paul's rhetorical technique is shown to echo, in content and phrasing, similar expressions of admiration in commentaries on Demosthenes originating in contemporary rhetorical schools.

The influence of John Chrysostom's training in rhetoric on his techniques of composition and exegesis has attracted increasing, and increasingly sophisticated, attention in recent years.¹ This paper is concerned primarily, though not exclusively, with John's commentary on Galatians. A number of scholars have examined the rhetorical aspects of this commentary;² it is an index of the depth of John's debt to contemporary rhetorical culture that there remains scope for further progress.

1. Rhetoric in late antiquity

Rhetoric in antiquity had a history, and to speak in an undifferentiated way of 'ancient rhetoric' involves a dangerous abstraction. It is unfortunate, therefore, that standard modern surveys are organised on a systematic rather than a historical basis.³ The salience of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in modern scholarship compounds the

¹ The work of Margaret M. Mitchell (see bibliography) is particularly important. A more general perspective in Young 1989, 1997.

² See especially Fairweather 1994, 2-22, Mitchell 2001a and Thurén 2001 (all henceforth cited by author's name alone); these important studies have made it possible for me to be selective in the range of topics cover here. The present paper is part of an extended research project on rhetorical theory, rhetorical commentary and the teaching of rhetoric in late antiquity (for an interim report see Heath 2002a). The support of a British Academy Research Readership is gratefully acknowledged.

³ E.g. Lausberg 1960 (ET 1998); Martin 1974. Volkmann 1885 has a better sense of historical perspective.

problem: there is a constant temptation to fall back on a text which, though familiar to us, was not representative even in the fourth century BC and never had currency in later times as a teaching text or an authoritative guide to theory. For the state of technical rhetoric in the late Hellenistic and early imperial periods we may turn to the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Cicero *On Invention* and Quintilian. But these texts, although they draw on Greek sources, are all in Latin. There is almost no extant rhetorical technography in Greek that can be dated confidently before the second century AD. The reason is simple: earlier technical literature was rendered obsolete by changes in rhetorical theory initiated in the second century and elaborated in subsequent centuries. Consequently, if we wish to understand the rhetorical culture of a fourth-century Greek writer such as John our attention must in the first instance be directed towards the rhetoric taught in the abundant (though not always easily accessible) later Greek technical literature.⁴

The historicity of rhetoric poses an obvious question about the value of later rhetorical Pauline exegesis. If Paul was rhetorically trained at all, he was not trained in the same technical system as John; so the more deeply John's exegesis proves to be rooted in the rhetorical culture of the fourth century, the more it is exposed to the suspicion of anachronism and irrelevance. The present paper will not attempt to determine how justified that suspicion might be; my purpose is to elucidate John's exegesis, rather than to assess its historical value. But it may help us to understand John's enterprise if we ask how he might himself have responded to the challenge. Contemporary rhetoricians were certainly aware that the subject had a history. Sopater, writing towards the end of the fourth century, notes in the introduction to his commentary on Hermogenes that the system of thirteen issues (one of the fundamentals of late ancient rhetorical theory) was not articulated until the second century AD.⁵ But he still thought that the practice of the classical orators was consistent with the theory, even though it had not yet been explicitly formulated in their day; the theory follows their practice and correctly articulates the principles which implicitly informed it. If the function of rhetorical theory is to make explicit the principles of which gifted speakers have an implicit grasp, whether innate or acquired through experience, then the historical development of theory will not be thought to compromise its application to texts composed before its explicit articulation. On the contrary, as theory improves it will become *more* applicable to earlier texts, if their authors were gifted speakers—an uncontroversial premise in the case of the great classical orators.⁶ By analogous

⁴ Since there were continuities as well as discontinuities in rhetorical theory, earlier texts will not always be misleading. But we need to start from the later literature, and be alert to the possibility of anachronism when drawing on earlier material.

⁵ Sopater *RG* 5.8.21f. Walz. This passage (text and translation in Heath 2002b, 3-5, 23-5, commentary in Heath 2003b151f.) may derive from Porphyry. On the thirteen issues see text to nn.20-21 below.

⁶ Hence the classical orators are the standard by which theory is to be judged: this principle is clearly stated in sch. Dem 19.101 (227 Dilts), probably derived from the late third-century commentator Menander (Heath 2002a, 426-30, and more fully in Heath 2004, Chapter 6.3, with a source analysis of the scholia in Chapter 5). Cf. Longinus' observation (fr.50.5 Patillon-Brisson) that 'Demosthenes does not always adhere to theory (τέχνη), but himself often *becomes* theory—as also Aristides'.

reasoning John could have denied any inconsistency between his assumption that Paul had received no formal rhetorical training and his discovery of evidence of conformity to theory in Paul's text.⁷ If Paul was a gifted speaker (and since his gifts were God-given, how could he not be?), then one would expect his rhetorical practice to be congruent with theory, to the extent that the theory is assumed to give a good account of what gifted speakers do.

Late ancient technography is (by a very large margin) predominantly concerned with judicial and deliberative oratory, and there is no doubt that rhetorical teaching in this period was predominantly judicial and deliberative in its focus. Some have seen this as evidence of academic rhetoric's detachment from contemporary reality. It is assumed that opportunities for oratory in late antiquity were primarily epideictic, and that the techniques of judicial and deliberative rhetoric were now largely exercised in the artificial context of declamation (either as school exercise or as sophistic display). That assumption is in my view untenable; in any event, the judicial and deliberative focus of rhetorical training is a fact of which we must take account. It might be thought that it has little relevance to an author who, like John, was not engaged in composing judicial or deliberative speeches. Thurén comments:

Despite his own rhetorical training, he, unlike Tertullian, is averse to seeing theology through judicial rhetoric. Perhaps this aversion derives from the school of Libanius, which offered a wider training. Chrysostom was able to find more subtle nuances in Pauline persuasion.⁸

But many of Libanius' pupils had careers as advocates,⁹ and the judicial rhetoric taught in the rhetorical schools of late antiquity was far from lacking in subtlety. We shall see that John's exegesis draws on techniques learned in that context.

2. Classification

Modern attempts to read Galatians with the aid of 'ancient rhetoric' are almost obsessively concerned with classifying it in terms of the three classes of oratory.¹⁰ John does not discuss this at all. He refers to the text as a letter, and apparently feels no need of any further classification. What should we make of his omission?

Late ancient rhetoricians did think it worth arguing about the classification of some texts. There was, for example, a prolonged debate in the fourth and fifth centuries about Aelius Aristides *On the Four*.¹¹ No one thought it was deliberative. Some thought it was judicial (it is a thoroughly argumentative

⁷ See Mitchell 2000, 241-5, 278-91, who however finds a 'rather direct contradiction' (279) in John's belief that Paul was an *ιδιώτης* (in the sense of lacking formal training) but nevertheless an exceptional rhetorician.

⁸ Thurén 2001, 195.

⁹ The basic prosopographical study is Petit 1956. On the career-relevance of the judicial and deliberative focus of rhetorical training see Heath 2002a, 431-7, to be developed further in Heath 2004, Chapter 9.

¹⁰ Cf. Thurén 2001, 192-5; Kern 1998, 120-66.

¹¹ For a more detailed, and fully documented, reconstruction of the debate see Heath 2003c, 151-8. The main primary sources are Sopater's prolegomena to Aristides (late fourth century), Nicolaus' *Progymnasmata* (fifth century), and the hypothesis to *On the Four* (late fifth century?).

defence of rhetoric against Plato's criticisms); but opponents pointed out that there were no judges and no punishable offence. Others thought it was epideictic (having eliminated judicial and deliberative, nothing else is left); but opponents objected that its argumentative slant is not at home in epideictic, the function of which is to amplify an acknowledged fact rather than to establish a contested one. The opponents in each case were of course not pointing out facts which the proponents had overlooked. Rather, there was a difference of opinion about whether these deviations from the norm were sufficient to place the text definitively outside the class in question. Theory used multiple criteria to define the central instances of each class, but did not rule definitively on non-standard instances. Not surprisingly, there were attempts to find a way out of the impasse. Someone suggested classifying the text as a refutation (ἀνασκευή); but the text is so obviously a fully realised speech that a suggestion which equated it with a preliminary exercise (προγύμνασμα) was generally dismissed. An alternative suggestion classified it as a 'counter-speech' (ἀντίρρησις); but that simply raised the question of how this category related to the three standard classes. Some were willing to recognise counter-speech as an additional class; others thought it was a form of epideictic; others settled for an inevitably unstable compromise.

Attempts to extend the standard three-class theory are attested by Quintilian in the first century (3.4) and Nicolaus in the fifth (54.22-57.8 Felten). Neither accepted the extension, but the fact that they had to argue against it shows that applying the theory to non-standard cases persistently gave rise to classification problems. However, no one imagined that the standard three-class theory applied to all discourse, and the idea that we are obliged to classify a letter within the standard scheme would have seemed puzzling. This does not mean that discourse which falls outside the standard scheme necessarily falls outside the scope of rhetoric.¹² Rhetoric is by definition concerned with the argument, structure and style of persuasive discourse concerned with 'political' matters (matters that concern us as members of a civic community, as distinct from those which fall within a specialist field of expertise such as medicine or mathematics).¹³ This means that the texts with which rhetoric is centrally concerned will normally be classifiable under the three-class scheme. But argument, structure and style are also of concern to those who compose other kinds of text. So, provided that allowance is made for generic differences, there is scope for mutually illuminating comparison of techniques used in speeches and other forms of discourse. For example, Plato's brilliance as a stylist made him a valuable (though in some respects dangerous) stylistic model for an orator, and the techniques of variation and interlude which epic poets and historians used to sustain an audience's interest in extended narrative had analogies in oratory.

Nicolaus' solution to the problem of *On the Four* rests on the premise that a speech which belongs to one class can include 'matter' (ὕλη) appropriate to

¹² Kern 1998, 181: 'Chrysostom did not argue that Galatians is modelled on a Graeco-Roman oration or that it can be analysed with the help of rhetoric.' It is important to realise that the first part of this statement (which is true) does not entail the second.

¹³ E.g. Hermogenes 28.25-29.6 Rabe; Zeno in Sulpicius Victor *RLM* 313.13-15 Halm; Sopater *RG* 5.9.16f., 15.17f., 16.17-20, 17.4-24.

another; for example, Isocrates' deliberative *Panegyric* and Demosthenes' judicial *On the Crown* make use of encomiastic material to support their argument (48.4-18, 56.16-57.8). One might take a similar approach to Galatians. John's classification of the text as a letter is consistent with a recognition that some aspects of its content and technique can be illuminated using concepts developed to analyse speeches falling under the standard classes of rhetorical discourse. Most obviously, the letter has elements that are analogous to what occurs in judicial speeches; so John's commentary has many references to charges, accusation and defence, and on 1.20 (632.44-6) he makes a direct analogy: 'he takes his defence as seriously as if he were engaged in a case in court and was about to undergo judicial scrutiny.' But it also has elements that are analogous to what occurs in deliberative speeches; so John refers to exhortation and advice (παράινεσις).¹⁴

Mitchell has argued for the dominance of the apologetic element in John's interpretation of the speech. That element is certainly important, and I have no quarrel with the claim that apologia 'a consistent goal for the argumentation of the epistle'.¹⁵ I am less happy when the indefinite article becomes definite, as in references to 'the rhetorical species of the letter',¹⁶ 'the genre or purpose of the whole epistle'.¹⁷ That neglects other dimensions recognised by John—not just the paraenetic element, and allusions to Paul bringing charges against his addressees (e.g. 620.1-7), but also and more importantly the doctrinal and ethical discourses that constitute the largest-scale structural divisions identified by John in this and other Pauline letters (669.35-43, cf. §3 below). If apologia is 'the genre or purpose of the whole epistle', is the doctrinal and ethical content subordinated to that? It seems more likely that the elements of defence and accusation are subordinated to the letter's doctrinal and ethical purposes. In fact, there is no theoretical necessity to specify the subordination of the elements of a text to *any* single purpose. For the principle that a text may have multiple functions simultaneously Fairweather¹⁸ aptly cites the anonymous essays on 'figured speech' (cf. §5) that were transmitted among the works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but which probably date to the early second century.¹⁹ One could also mention, for example, the introduction to the *Fourth Philippic* in the Demosthenes scholia, which is content to identify a string of aims without trying to subordinate them to a single over-arching aim (sch. Dem. 10.1 (1, p.144.1-7): σκοπὸς δὲ Δημοσθένει... σκοπὸς δὲ καὶ...

¹⁴ Kern 1998, 133: 'the rhetorical handbooks are *not at all* concerned with paraenesis' (cf. 139). The over-simplification becomes clear if one looks beyond the 'handbooks': παραίνει is widely used in connection with deliberative oratory (e.g. sch. Dem. 14.1 (1) Δημοσθένει παραίνει βοηθεῖν τῷ δήμῳ Ῥοδίων). For the instability of the terminology see Mitchell 1991, 50-3; to her references one might add sch. Dem. 1.24 (164b).

¹⁵ Mitchell 2000, 349.

¹⁶ Mitchell 2000, 336.

¹⁷ Mitchell 2000, 353.

¹⁸ Fairweather 1994, 6-10.

¹⁹ For an analysis of these texts and a discussion of their date see Heath 2003a.

σκοπός δὲ καὶ...)²⁰ The doctrinal and ethical components are of course not easily classified in terms of any of the three classes of speech; but since Galatians is not a speech, there is no reason why that should disconcert us. The question about the rhetorical class is therefore, in my view, wrongly framed. But that is not to deny the importance of the apologetic element which Mitchell highlights, and certainly not to deny that we may expect to find rhetorical analysis in John of this (and other) elements.

3. Structure

John notes at the beginning of Galatians 3 that Paul 'here next makes the transition to another head' (ἐνταῦθα λοιπὸν ἐφ' ἕτερον μεταβαίνει κεφάλαιον 647.29). Such transitional formulae are very common (with many variants in wording) in late antique commentaries, including rhetorical commentaries. Here the term 'head', although not exclusively rhetorical, is suggestive of a rhetorical background, and the closest parallels to this formulation are in fact to be found in rhetorical commentaries.²¹ To understand this properly, we need to say something about the approach to the analysis of a speech's structure characteristic of late ancient rhetoric.

It may be helpful to start with the relatively simple structure of an epideictic speech. Within an outer frame provided by the prologue (προοίμιον or προοίμια)²² and epilogue, the central core of the speech is a series of heads under which the subject's qualities are displayed in an orderly fashion. To find an appropriate sequence of heads for a given kind of speech (for example, when welcoming a visiting dignitary or celebrating a wedding) one might turn to a textbook such as the treatise on epideictic composed by Menander towards the end of the third century.²³ Speaking technically, Menander 'divides' each kind of epideictic subject into its constituent heads.

A judicial speech is more complex. First, it may need to include an exposition of the events that are in dispute; hence after the prologue there may be a narrative section, the statement (κατάστασις).²⁴ Secondly, whereas an epideictic speech amplifies an acknowledged fact, a judicial speech tries to establish a contested one; so the core of the speech is the part which contains the arguments (ἀγῶνες). Hence the division into heads is determined, not by the occasion or subject-matter,

²⁰ The idea that a text should have a *single* σκοπός is associated with philosophical rather than rhetorical exegesis: see Heath 1989, 90-101, 124-36. Young 1997, 21-7 draws attention to some interesting complications that call for further research.

²¹ E.g. hypothesis to Aristides *On the Four*, 176.4 Lenz: 'here he makes the transition to the head concerned with the orators'; sch. Dem. 7.14 (20): 'he makes the transition to another head'; sch. Dem. 14.3 (3) 'he makes the transition next to feasibility itself, as such' ('feasibility' is one of the standard heads of argument in deliberative oratory).

²² The prologue was seen as constructed from a series of smaller units: hence the plural. See Heath 1997, 103-5.

²³ Text, translation and commentary in Russell and Wilson 1981. I have in mind especially Treatise II; Treatise I (by a different author) has a slightly different methodology.

²⁴ κατάστασις (rather than the more inclusive διήγησις) was the generally favoured technical term in this period. See Heath 1995, 84.

but by the nature of the underlying dispute. Issue (στάσις) enables the prospective speaker to identify the underlying structure of a dispute (e.g. is it about a matter of fact, or about the definition or evaluation of an agreed fact?). The version of issue-theory that was canonical in late antiquity distinguished thirteen kinds of dispute ('issues'), and each issue was 'divided' into an ordered sequence of heads that specified a model strategy for conducting the argument in each kind of dispute.²⁵ For example, the division of the conjectural issue (where the question is one of fact: did he do it?) begins by testing the non-technical evidence (such as witnesses), assesses the motive and capacity of the alleged perpetrator, examines the sequence of events that is supposed to be indicative of his guilt, and so on. By the fourth century the standard basic textbook on the heads of argument was Hermogenes *On Issues* (composed in the late second or early third century).²⁶

Prologue, statement, arguments and epilogue are the four parts of the standard structure of a judicial speech recognised by most Greek theorists of the second century and later.²⁷ But this structure is flexible. A statement will be unnecessary where the facts are familiar, and there are circumstances in which a prologue too is unnecessary (for example, when one is the second speaker in a team of advocates, and the case has already been opened by a colleague).²⁸ Only the argumentative core is indispensable; but here, too, the standard division of an issue into heads was open to variation in the light of the requirements of a given case. The standard order (τάξις) will often give way to an adaptation in the light of particular circumstances (οικονομία).²⁹ Rhetorical theory did not seek to lay down binding rules. It tried to articulate principles that would provide a serviceable default in a wide range of circumstances; but the concrete situations in which these principles are applied are infinitely variable, and in complex or untypical situations a variation on the default may be needed to achieve an optimal result.

Two corollaries should be noted. First, it is not sufficient to rely on basic handbooks for an understanding of rhetoric. The handbooks cannot (and do not attempt to) provide a full account of the skills exercised by a mature practitioner. So we need to enrich our understanding from other sources: advanced technical works, such as the commentaries on Hermogenes; rhetorical exegesis, such as the

²⁵ The identification of thirteen issues, and the division of each issue into an ordered sequence of heads, were both second-century innovations (see Sopater, n.5 above). None of the theories surveyed by Quintilian (3.6) identified more than eight issues, and he explicitly denied the possibility of defining a standard order of heads (7.10.4-9).

²⁶ Translation and commentary in Heath 1995. Heath 1997 uses a worked example to illustrate the processes of rhetorical invention taught in this and other handbooks.

²⁷ Contrast the five-part structure favoured by Hellenistic theorists (Cic. *Inv.* 1.19; *Rhet. ad Her.* 1.4; Quint. 3.9.1, 5), who treated proof and refutation separately. Other parts of a speech discussed by the later theorists, such as preliminary confirmation (προκατασκευή), preliminary statement (προκατάστασις) and digression (παρέκβασις), may be seen as specialised tools rather than parts of the standard structure.

²⁸ Speaking second: sch. Dem. 20.1 (1). Omission of prologue, narrative and epilogue: Anon. Seg. 21-36, 114-23, 201f. Omission of narrative in deliberative: [D.H.] 369.20-370.12; sch. Dem. 3.4 (32b), 24.11 (27c). See Heath 1997, 106f.

²⁹ E.g. Sopater *RG* 5.119.1-8; Athanasius, in *PS* 176.4-12 Rabe (also late fourth century). In older sources see e.g. Quint. 7.10.11-13.

commentaries on Demosthenes partially preserved in the scholia; applications of theory, both in exercises such as declamations and elsewhere. Secondly, in using rhetoric exegetically it is not enough simply to apply a set of labels out of a theoretical handbook, still less to coerce the text to fit a fixed schema. The point is to give an account of the rationale of the compositional choices which the author has made. Theory provides a varied and adaptable set of analytical tools for identifying significant choices, but cannot fully interpret them.

Since Galatians is not a speech in any of the standard classes, no model division into heads, such as one could find in Hermogenes or Menander, was available; Paul had to devise a structure *ad hoc*.³⁰ But the concept still provides a convenient tool for analysing the text's large-scale structure. As we have seen, John marks the second (ἕτερον, not ἄλλο) head—the second major section of the core of Paul's text—at 3.1. Another head is marked at 4.21: 'he embarks again on the contests, positing a more important head' (661.25f.). Then a new section begins at 5.13: 'here next he seems to embark on the ethical discourse' (669.35f.). Such comments make it possible to infer John's overall structural analysis of the letter.³¹

The prologue (John uses προοίμιον and προοίμια indifferently) is contained in 1.1-5. The appearance of 'amen' (1.5) early in the letter, a departure from Paul's normal practice, is seen as marking the formal closure of this unit of the text in a way that draws attention to its containing a sufficient and complete accusation (κατηγορία) of the addressees (620.1-7): 'for obvious charges (ἐγκλήματα) do not need much confirmation (κατασκευή).'

The first head begins at 1.6 and continues to the end of chapter 2.³² The parallel between the overt criticism of the addressees at 1.6 ('I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting...') and 3.1 ('Stupid Galatians!') provides a structural marker. The bluntness of the expression in 3.1 reflects what Paul has achieved in the first head (647.30-7):

In what precedes he has shown that he was not an apostle of humans or through humans, and did not need instruction from the apostles. Here next, having established that he is a trustworthy teacher, he speaks with greater authority,

³⁰ Before the new turn which issue-theory took in the second century (n.20) this was necessary even in the standard classes. The 'divisions' in Seneca's *Controversiae* derive a structure of arguments by analysing the particular case, rather than applying a scheme appropriate to a category of cases.

³¹ The survey of modern analyses in Kern 1998, 90-119 makes for instructive comparison.

³² Much of this material is taken up with an exposition of past facts: that makes it narrative in the broad sense, but not necessarily in the narrower sense of a standard part of a speech (a statement, in the terminology probably familiar to John: n.24). The exposition is here absorbed into the argument. If John had wanted to express this point in technical language, he could have borrowed the idea of a 'head introduced narratively' (κεφάλαιον διηγηματικῶς εἰσηγμένον) from sch. Dem. 18.18 (55d), cf. 3.4 (31a-c). That is not a standard term out of a handbook; it illustrates the flexibility of theory, which provides resources to analyse the indefinite variety of things that speakers can do, rather than a fixed set of ingredients. The three commentators preserved in sch. Dem. 18.18 (55b-d) all agree (though using different terminology) that the passage in question is not a narrative/statement; but they also mention that 'some' think it is—a reminder that the application of rhetorical analysis will not necessarily lead to an agreed solution.

making a comparison between faith and law. Hence he says at the beginning, 'I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting...', and here 'Stupid Galatians!' Then he was in labour with his indignation; but now that he has made his defence with regard to the charges against himself, he bursts out with it openly and produces it after his demonstration.

So the first head is concerned primarily with establishing Paul's authority, the second head compares faith and law.³³

The third head begins at 4.21. When John says that Paul 'again' enters the contests (ἀγῶνες, the technical term for the argumentative section of a speech), this reflects the fact that in the immediately preceding verses the focus has shifted from argument to exhortation (661.17-26):

Since he has rebuked them sharply and put them to shame, then in turn soothed them, and then lamented (the lamentation is not only a rebuke, but also conciliation: it does not exasperate like rebuke, nor relax like soothing, but is a compound remedy, and has great force by way of exhortation)—since, then, he has lamented, and softened their attitudes, and given powerful inducements, he embarks again on the contests...

Throughout the commentary John gives careful attention to Paul's management of the relationship with his addressees (see §6). Here he goes on to summarise the main thrust of this third head: that the law entails its own abrogation (661.26-33):

... positing a more important head, proving that the law itself does not want itself to be kept. Before, he produced the example based on Abraham, but now he introduces the law itself exhorting us not to keep it, but to withdraw, which was a stronger point. So if you want to obey the law, he says, you must abandon it; for this is what the law itself wants.

The argument which John sees underlying this head might be compared with the kind of 'forceful' (βίαιος) argument, especially associated with Demosthenes and much admired, which turns the opposition's strong points back on themselves.³⁴

At 5.13, as we have seen, there is a further and more significant transition. The three heads so far comprise the doctrinal section of the letter; here Paul moves from doctrinal to ethical discourse (τὸν ἠθικὸν... λόγον).³⁵ But in this letter, unlike his others, Paul blurs the distinction by including material with doctrinal implications in the ethical section (669.35-43). The reason for locating

³³ Mitchell 351 n.39 notes that this passage raises a question about her argument that the whole of Galatians is apologia, but suggests (rather obscurely) that John 'sees Paul here not moving on to a different proof, but to a different rhetorical head within the same proof': but since this head is concerned with faith and law, and the next (at 4.21) with the law, they are surely not proving the same thing as the first head.

³⁴ Heath 1997, 112f. See e.g. sch. Dem. 2.15 (108a), 19.38 (105), 47 (121), 21.103 (352), (401), 24.79 (169). John also (644.51-6) admires the way in which Paul reverses the argument at 2.18 (εἰς τοῦναντίον περιέτρεψε τὸν λόγον 644.53f.) by showing that it is observance (rather than non-observance) of the law that transgresses the law (cf. Theodoret *ad loc.*, PG 82.473.42-6). See also 650.59-651.5 (on 3.7), 651.32-41 (on 3.10), and §7 below.

³⁵ Theodoret agrees (82.496.23f.). He too treats 1.1-5 as a unit (464.21-6), but he sees 1.6-10 as ἐγκλήματα (464.26), with a new section at 1.11 (465.24-7). However, a complete analysis cannot be reconstructed from his commentary.

the transition to the ethical discourse at 5.13 is not stated, but John is presumably observing the framing effect of the apostrophe to observers of the law at the beginning of the third head (4.21) and the abuse of them at the end (5.12). Moreover, at 5.13 Paul moves away from the focus on circumcision which has been sustained throughout the previous section. Hence a final section-marker comes with the return to circumcision at 6.11: 'So the blessed Paul, after saying a little about ethics, returns again to his former subject, which was what was disturbing his mind most' (677.63-678.4).

4. Counterposition and solution

In Galatians 3.21 Paul formulates an objection to his position: 'Is the law then against the promises of God?' John asks 'How, then, does he solve the counterposition?' (πῶς οὖν λύει τὴν ἀντίθεσιν; 655.14f.). The technical terminology here is worth exploring further.

Judicial and deliberative speeches contain arguments used positively to establish the speaker's case, and arguments designed to pre-empt or disarm the arguments advanced on the other side. These are sometimes described as leading (προηγούμενα) and necessary (ἀναγκαῖα) heads respectively, since the latter are forced on us by the opposition. Leading heads may be put forward directly: 'I deserve the reward for tyrannicide, because I brought about the tyrant's death.' Necessary heads may be introduced with a statement of the opponent's position, followed by a reply—in technical terminology, a counterposition (ἀντίθεσις) followed by a solution (λύσις): 'He says that he deserves the reward for tyrannicide, because he brought about the tyrant's death; but he did not kill the tyrant himself, which is the thing for which the law prescribes a reward.' Thus leading heads are sometimes contrasted with those introduced by counterposition (ἐξ ἀντιθέσεως).³⁶

To illustrate the use of the pattern of counterposition and solution in a (fictive) judicial context, we may turn to the fourth-century rhetor Libanius. In *Declamation* 44 a general is defending himself on a charge of complicity in the establishment of a short-lived tyranny. Shortly before the tyrant's *coup d'état* a foreigner had illegally entered the assembly, and the general had summarily (but legally) executed him; as he died, the foreigner claimed that he had come to reveal some secret, and the suspicion arises that the general had acted deliberately to prevent the disclosure of a conspiracy to which he was party. In mounting his defence the general makes free use of counterpositions to add vigour to the presentation:³⁷

What, then, is the proof of my complicity? "Someone else," he says, "came to expose the tyranny, and a foreigner at that; you said nothing." It was not possible, sir, to proclaim what I did not foresee... "A foreigner came to speak." Naturally. If someone is plotting against a city he does not make his preparations

³⁶ For this paragraph see Heath 2002c, 663-6; on the history of the terminology, Heath 1998, 106f. The example is based on Lucian's *Tyrannicide* (the claimant killed the tyrant's son, and the tyrant committed suicide on finding the body), translated with notes in Heath 1995, 175-94.

³⁷ The passages quoted are from *Decl.* 44.50, 55, 57; translated with notes in Heath 1995, 156-75.

for seizing power in that city; that would be suicide, not the act of someone aspiring at tyranny... "You killed the foreigner," he says, "although he was bringing us a secret." Add that the law required it.

The pattern of counterposition and solution is not native to epideictic, which (as the amplification of an acknowledged fact) does not need to engage with an opponent's arguments. But it does get transplanted, in part because the exclusion of argument from epideictic was not absolute,³⁸ but also because of its usefulness as a presentational device. John Chrysostom's homilies in praise of Paul provide examples. The first presents Paul as combining the virtues of many different prophets and patriarchs; it proceeds by a series of comparisons, most of which are introduced by a 'But...', as if an imagined objector were citing a counter-example:³⁹

But Noah was just, perfect in his generation, and the only one of all who was like that... But everyone marvels at Abraham because... he left his homeland and house and friends and relatives, and all he had was the command of God... But Scripture marvels at his [Isaac's] son, for his constancy... But Joseph was chaste... But Job's hospitality and care for those in need was great... But the worms and the wounds produced terrible and unendurable pains for Job...

In homily 6 John takes a more striking approach, using as his starting-points 'the things which some people think provide a "wrestling hold" against him' (1). A series of counterpositions follows (for example, "But," he says, "he sometimes feared death, too" (4)). This might suggest that John is composing a defence of Paul against critics, but at the end he denies this: 'I have not said all these things to make a defence on Paul's behalf' (14). He is right: he does not rebut the claims about Paul, but uses them and the *prima facie* weaknesses which they identify as the starting-point for each stage of his exposition—a remarkable technique for amplifying praise.

The presentational advantage of allowing an imagined objector to interrupt in one's own speech is extended in the commentary on Galatians. Apostrophising Paul with an objection to something he has said, or to the way he has said it, provides a convenient and lively way for the commentator to formulate questions about the text to which he can go on to provide answers. The pattern of question (ζήτημα) and solution (λύσις) is a common format in ancient scholarship, and in commentaries one often finds notes introduced by 'it is asked...' or 'one must ask...' (ζητεῖται, ζητητέον).⁴⁰ The apostrophe to the author dramatises this. So, for example, in 1.1 the phrase 'who raised him from the dead' prompts the question, 'What are you doing, Paul?', followed by a survey of things that Paul could have said here but did not (615.25-41). The vividness of the apostrophe helps John convey to the reader why he thinks that Paul's actual choice of words is interesting and significant, and this prepares the ground for his explanation of it (615.41-616.2).

³⁸ See Pernot 1993, 682-9.

³⁹ The passages quoted are from 1.5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12. I have adapted the translations of the homilies in Mitchell 2000, 440-87. She (following the editor of the Greek text) punctuates these passages as questions; that is possible, but not syntactically necessary.

⁴⁰ E.g. sch. Dem. 1.1 (1f), 26 (178).

John's commentary also identifies and comments on passages in which Paul himself makes use of the counterposition-solution schema, such as our starting-point in 3.21. There are of course many examples in other letters;⁴¹ here I shall examine the most rhetorically interesting example in Galatians, which explores the rhetorical consequences of the outcome of the consultation in Jerusalem reported in 2.1-10. In his interpretation of this passage John emphasises the unanimity of Paul and the leaders of the church in Jerusalem. In particular, there was agreement on the status of the law: observance was not required, although it was conceded as an accommodation (συγκατάβασις) to Jewish weakness. John compares the way in which Paul concedes marital intercourse without commanding it in 1 Cor. 7.6 (634.51-635.46).⁴² But in the present instance the concession was a kind of strategic device (οἰκονομία 635.16f.), adopted with the long-term aim of gradually extricating the observers of the law from their 'slavery' (635.57f.).

This strategy puts Paul in a difficult rhetorical position. If the apostles' agreement to observance is urged as an objection against him, he cannot make use of the true and decisive solution to this counterposition, since revealing the covert intent of the accommodation would undermine the strategy (61.636.20-32):

Then, since the conduct of the apostles was an immediate point against him (εὐθέως ἀντέπιπτεν)⁴³ and it was likely that some would say, 'How is it, then, that they prescribe these things?', observe how cleverly he solves the counterposition. He does not give the real reason, i.e. that the apostles were doing this by way of accommodation and as a strategic device; that would have harmed his audience. The reason for a strategic device has to be unknown to those who are going to derive some benefit from it; if the explanation for what is going on becomes apparent, everything is lost. For this reason the person implementing it should know the cause of what is going on, but those who are going to benefit from it should remain in ignorance.

So Paul has to adopt a different tactic (636.54-637.4):

For this reason, here too he does not specify the explanation for the device, but uses a different approach (ἑτέρως μεθοδεύει) to his discourse. He says: 'But from those reputed to be something—whatever they were makes no difference to me: God is not a respecter of persons.'

John continues by explaining that, since Paul cannot defend the apostles he takes a hard line with them, in order to help the weak (presumably, those liable to be swayed by status or reputation): *even if* the apostles prescribe circumcision, their status will have no influence with God, to whom they are answerable (637.4-22). Although he is guarded in the way he formulates this (not clearly, John says, but rather solemnly: cf. §7), there still is a risk that his failure to defend the apostles will be misunderstood as attacking them, so Paul immediately goes on to correct this impression (637.23-8):

⁴¹ See (e.g.) the commentary on Rom. 1.32 (60.423.6-14), 6.1 (60.479.35-45), 6.15 (60.488.32-84), 7.7 (60.499.31-500.8), 11.1-4 (60.577.28-578.11).

⁴² John sees something similar ('not legislating... but accommodating himself') in Paul's comment on boasting at Gal. 6.4 (675.38-60).

⁴³ A very common technical term: e.g. sch. Dem. 1.3 (26d), 4.1 (1d), 5.20 (34), 13.1 (1, p.165.8f.).

He did not say this because he was in doubt or ignorant of their situation, but (as I said before) because he thought that it would be advantageous to use this approach to (οὕτω... μεθοδεύσαι) his discourse. Then, so that he should not seem to be taking the opposite side and to be accusing them, and thus create a suspicion of conflict, he immediately adds the correction (διόρθωσις).

Paul does this by exhibiting, in 2.7-10, evidence of the apostles' agreement and approval from their behaviour towards him.

But this is not the end of Paul's difficulties (637.51-638.7). He has to reckon with another potential counterposition: if the apostles approved, why did they not abolish circumcision? To say that they did would be 'unduly shameless' and introduce 'an obvious conflict with the acknowledged facts'. But to acknowledge the apostles' concession to circumcision would lead inevitably to another counterposition: if they approved your teaching and yet enjoined circumcision, the apostles were inconsistent. The only solution would be to reveal the strategic accommodation; but that is precisely what Paul cannot do without subverting it. So 'he does not say that, but leaves the point unresolved in mid-air (ἐν ἀπορίᾳ καὶ μετέωρον), saying: "But from those reputed to be something—whatever they were makes no difference to me: God is not a respecter of persons"' (638.6-8). This provides Paul with as much of a solution to the potential counterpositions as he can give within the constraints of apostolic strategy; he proceeds to the demonstration of agreement and approval without eliminating the potential objections.⁴⁴

5. Figured speech

John continues to maintain that the apostles were in full agreement when he discusses Paul's account of his confrontation with Peter in Antioch. Peter's non-observance of the law in Antioch was consistent with the apostolic strategy: observance was a concession to the views of some in the Jerusalem church, but was not binding in principle, so there was no reason for him to maintain it when not in Jerusalem. But when Jerusalem Christians who were not party to the strategy visited Antioch they would assume that Peter's non-observance was a capitulation to pressure from Paul, and condemn his easy-going attitude. Paul would probably not have got far if he had tried to reason directly with the newcomers; it would be more effective if they saw their supposed leader being openly rebuked by Paul, and having nothing to say in reply. So Peter went along with Paul's opponents solely to give Paul an opportunity to criticise him (640.45-641.21).

This is not an interpretation likely to gain much modern support. Thurén comments disapprovingly:⁴⁵

Here one can suspect that rhetoric is in fact misused, for the explanations appear artificial. No corresponding ideas or support can be found in ancient handbooks or in modern research.

⁴⁴ Theodoret gives a similar, but less elaborate, account of the passage (82.469.56-472.10).

⁴⁵ Thurén 2001, 204.

John of course recognises that what he is proposing is not what the text seems, on the face of it, to say: 'many of those who read this passage of the letter naively (ἀπλῶς) suppose that Paul accuses Peter of hypocrisy' (640.3-5). So his response to the charge of artificiality might be to describe the modern scholars who 'prefer a more natural reaction'⁴⁶ as superficial or unsophisticated. When one is trying to make sense of ancient commentators, it is methodologically unhelpful to move precipitously to the evaluation of their interpretations. The more artificial and implausible an interpretation seems to us, the more urgent the need to examine carefully what made it seem plausible to John and how he goes about making it seem plausible to his audience. These questions are not identical, since making something plausible to an audience involves rhetorical presentation; but they are related, since the grounds on which an interpretation may be presented as plausible are also grounds on which it may be *found* plausible. Rhetoric's tools of persuasion were also, for the rhetorically trained, heuristic tools.

It is important to distinguish the question of what made the interpretation seem plausible to John from the question of what made it *attractive*. The apologetic motive for John's interpretation is obvious; indeed, he emphasises it in his sermon on Galatians 2.11 (*PG* 51.371-388).⁴⁷ But apologetic convenience would equally have been served by the theory (which goes back to Clement: Eusebius *HE* 1.12.2) that Paul was referring to a different Peter. John rejects that suggestion in the sermon on the grounds that it does not fit the text (383.49-384.30); presumably, then, he was satisfied that the interpretation he adopted did fit the text. Nor is it clear that the apologetic motive necessitated any such approach. Some interpreters found that they could live with the implications of the *prima facie* reading; why should we suppose that John lacked the resourcefulness to make the best of it, had he been unable to find an alternative reading that satisfied his sense of what fitted the text plausibly? After all, apologetic must be plausible to succeed. An advocate might like to claim that his client's character is unblemished, but if the client has a lengthy criminal record which cannot plausibly be explained away, the advocate would be well-advised to pursue a different line. Moreover, John's interpretation did not originate with him: it was advanced by Origen (Jerome *Ep.* 112.4, 6), and accepted by Jerome, Theodoret and many others.⁴⁸ Augustine famously disagreed; but that was not on grounds of its artificiality or implausibility, but because it made scripture say something untrue (that is, his motives were unequivocally apologetic).⁴⁹ There must, then, have been factors which made this interpretation seem more plausible to readers in late antiquity than it does to us.

⁴⁶ Thurén 2001, 208.

⁴⁷ The sermon, which has some impressive examples of John's own rhetorical technique and artistry, gives the same account of the Antioch incident, but in the form of a solution to a question (n.40) rather than consecutive commentary. Its greater expansiveness sometimes throws light on the more compressed exposition in the commentary.

⁴⁸ Theodoret's commentary is lacunose at the crucial point, but 82.472.22-43 points to this conclusion (and see n.44 above); cf. his commentary on Ezekiel 48.35 (81.1249-16-21): '... Peter, figuring (σχηματισσάμενον) the keeping of the law because of the weakness of his followers.'

⁴⁹ Augustine's exchange with Jerome on Gal. 2.11-14 is analysed in Plumer 2002, 31-3, 44-53, 91-5.

John's understanding of the Antioch incident is closely integrated with his understanding of the Jerusalem consultation. Paul maintains (2.7-10) that he met with agreement and approval from the leadership of the Jerusalem church; but the Jerusalem leadership continued to observe the law, and (an obviously related point) the idea persisted that Paul and the Jerusalem leadership were at odds. This apparent contradiction has to be reconciled somehow, and John's hypothesis does that. Continued observance of the law is covered by the distinction between a requirement and a concession (for which, as John notes, there is a Pauline parallel); but there would be good reason not to make the underlying rationale of the concession explicit (to avoid alienating those who believed the law was still binding), so the covert strategy follows naturally and provides an explanation of the persisting illusion of conflict between Paul and the Jerusalem leadership. If the hypothesis of a covert strategy is adopted, then one must take account of the constraints it places on those who are party to it. John does this in his analysis of Paul's rhetorical manoeuvres, and also in his account of the Antioch confrontation: the covert strategy creates the problem (because it entails a group that is not party to the secret), and limits the options open to Peter and Paul. Thus John's interpretation is not a series of *ad hoc* devices, but has a systematic structure.

More generally, the understanding of the Antioch incident is integrated with a more extensive network of interpretations. The assumption of consensus among the apostles is not simply a theological postulate, but also (John would claim) has extensive exegetical support: Acts and 2 Peter 3.15 support Paul's account of the Jerusalem consultation. So from John's point of view, the price for accepting the *prima facie* reading of Paul's account of the Antioch incident would be having to abandon the *prima facie* reading of other passages. John has no reason to pay that price, since (as we shall see) he believes he had grounds for dismissing the *prima facie* reading of the Antioch confrontation as positively implausible.

If we look next for parallels that might help to explain this interpretation's plausibility, Plutarch provides an interesting case. In his *Precepts on politics* (*Mor.* 813a-c) he recommends that if a city is faced with a decision of critical importance the political elite should suspend normal political rivalry and agree among themselves on the correct course of action; but since popular assemblies are potentially refractory, that collusion should be concealed by a stage-managed disagreement ending with one party backing down by prearrangement. Plutarch recognises that in reality political conflict is typically unrestrained (814d-5c, 824d-5a), but he thinks that such collusion would be preferable in principle. John himself did not have to go so far to find a parallel. Some social background is needed to appreciate the scenario he envisages.⁵⁰ The collection of imperial taxes was devolved to municipal authorities, and a member of a city's curial class made responsible for extracting money from other members of the small social elite of his own city (including, perhaps, men of superior standing and influence) had a difficult and delicate task. So in the sermon on 2.11 (385.12-24) John compares a situation in which individuals responsible for collecting tax, embarrassed at

⁵⁰ E.g. Liebeschuetz 1972, 161-6.

having to pressurise those in arrears, arrange for higher ranking officials to make a show of putting pressure on them; it will then seem that they are acting under compulsion, 'and other people's violence constitutes their defence towards those who are accountable to them'.

Let us now consider how John prepares the way for his interpretation. He notes that Paul's claim in 1.17, that he did not go to Jerusalem to consult the apostles, might seem arrogant; but he sees many signs of humility in the context. This, too, has been criticised as 'artificial': 'Paul's main goal is to prove his independence of the apostles'.⁵¹ But John knew perfectly well that Paul is emphasising his independence in order to establish his authority (he identifies that as the main point of the letter's first head). His contention is that Paul takes care to assert his authority while maintaining a posture of humility, and to assert his independence while maintaining respect and goodwill towards Peter.⁵² So in 1.8 Paul includes himself in the anathema to show that the point is not self-promotion (624.9-11, 629.25-8). In 1.13-16 he stresses his persecution of the church in order to emphasise the unmerited grace of his calling (628.7-9). In 1.17 he mentions his time in Arabia and his return to Damascus without dwelling on his achievements—which must have been considerable, since there was a plot against his life (630.43-631.26). There is, indeed, a striking contrast between the emphatic detail in which he dwells on his pre-conversion career and the way he passes quickly over what he subsequently achieved (633.1-634.2); and in 1.24 he does not say that people admired or praised him, but that they gave glory to God (634.6-11). The fact that he made a point of visiting Peter (1.18) *despite* there being nothing which he needed to learn shows the respect in which he held him (631.28-49); and he singled Peter out for this mark of respect (632.14f.). Paul draws attention to this to correct in advance (προδιορθούμενος)⁵³ any false impression that might arise from the account of the Antioch incident (632.18-22).

John could have rested content with this accumulation of evidence against Pauline arrogance, but he also includes an extended passage on the principle that one should look beyond the words to their intent (628.54-629.25). This seems to go beyond the needs of the immediate context, but I suspect that it is John's own advance preparation, since the principle stated here will be tacitly assumed in the subsequent interpretations of the Jerusalem consultation and the Antioch incident. That oblique preparation of the reader for what will follow shows rhetorical sophistication on John's part, and his rhetorical training also informs the content of the passage. He says that one should not focus on the bare words or what is said on its own, but pay attention to the author's intent (διάνοια) or the speaker's intention (γνώμη). The principle enunciated here is one that was applied in various rhetorical contexts. Most obvious is the issue of letter and intent. For example, an alien heroically beats off an enemy assault on a city's walls, but it is illegal for an alien to go on the city walls; the defendant will argue that the strict application of the letter of the law goes against its intent (which is to safeguard the

⁵¹ Thurén 2001, 204f.

⁵² For a larger perspective on John's perception of Pauline self-praise see Mitchell 2001b.

⁵³ E.g. sch. Dem. 19.4 (25c).

city's security).⁵⁴ But in conjectural cases, too, if the charge is based on something the defendant has said, the best defence may be to try to give the apparently incriminating words an innocent intent.⁵⁵ The argument that one must attend to the intention behind the act is a key part of the standard division of the issue called counterstatement (ἀντίστασις), in which an action that would normally be criminal (for example, a general acting beyond his mandate) is defended on the basis of its beneficial consequences.⁵⁶ When Sopater⁵⁷ demonstrates the technique in his *Division of Questions* (RG 8.191.27-192.20 Walz) he suggests rounding the argument off with an example, and the example he gives—a doctor using surgery or cauterisation (192.17-20)—is parallel to one of John's examples (629.11-14).

We must now consider how John expounds the interpretation itself. After rejecting the *prima facie* reading he says that as a preliminary it is necessary to discuss Peter's outspokenness (παρρησία), and accumulates examples of Peter's intense commitment and courage (640.8-30).⁵⁸ The point is that the *prima facie* reading attributes to Peter a motive—fear of the Judaizing Christians—that is inconsistent with his personality; the account given by the *prima facie* reading is therefore implausible. The parallel discussion in the sermon (375.26-377.57) explicitly concludes that the charge against Peter is not plausible (πιθανή 377.30f.). Demonstrating the implausibility or incoherence of a story is something that was practised by students in the preliminary exercise of refutation (ἀνασκευή). The same techniques were applied at a more advanced level in the head of conjecture known as 'sequence of events' (τὰ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἄχρι τέλους, literally 'things from beginning to end'), in which the defence unpicks the incriminating construction which the prosecution has placed on events. The elements of circumstance (who? what? where? how? when? why?) could be used to identify weak points in the sequence of events.⁵⁹ John does this very effectively in the passage with which the discussion culminates (640.30-41):

He who was scourged and bound and did not choose to compromise his outspokenness at all, and that at the beginning of the proclamation, in the heart of the metropolis, where the danger was so great—how, so much later, in Antioch, where there was no danger, and he had become so much more distinguished because he had the testimony of his actions, could he have been afraid of the believing Jews? He who did not fear the Jews themselves at the

⁵⁴ Hermogenes 82.4-83.18, with Heath 1995, 141-5.

⁵⁵ Hermogenes 49.7-50, with Heath 1995, 87-9. Hermogenes' suggestion that the defence in such cases is *always* based on letter and intent was rejected by other theorists. In sch. Dem 19.101 (227) Menander (see n.6 above) uses a criticism of Hermogenes on this point rather subtly to prepare the way for a more controversial departure from textbook doctrine a little later—an instructive example of a rhetorical commentator exploiting rhetorical techniques in his own exposition.

⁵⁶ Hermogenes 72.18-73.2, with Heath 1995, 125.

⁵⁷ Not, in my view, the Sopater who wrote a commentary on Hermogenes (n.5), though also dating to the late fourth century.

⁵⁸ The denial is not mentioned: contrast Augustine, who uses it to make Peter's instability plausible. But the homilies on the gospel accounts of the denial show that John does not feel under any pressure to mitigate Peter's fault; on the contrary, the commentary on Mt 26.69-75 (PG 58.758.32-46) is a skilful piece of rhetorical amplification.

⁵⁹ Hermogenes 47.8-11, with Heath 1995, 84f. (and the correction in 2003b, 158 n.64). On the argumentative use of the elements of circumstance see also [Hermogenes] *Inv.* 140.10-147.15.

beginning, in the metropolis, how so much later in a foreign land could he have feared those who had been converted?

The conclusion of the parallel discussion in the sermon brings out clearly the technical use of the elements of circumstances that lies behind this argument: 'So neither the occasion, nor the place, nor the quality of the persons permits us to believe what is said as it was said, and condemn Peter's cowardice' (377.54-7).

Having exposed a weakness in the *prima facie* reading John presents his alternative reconstruction (640.45-641.21), and then suggests that close attention to Paul's careful phrasing will enable the shrewd readers (τοῖς συνετοῖς) to see what is going on (641.21-4).⁶⁰ Paul says that Peter was condemned—but not that Paul himself condemned him, although there was no reason to conceal this if it was true (641.24-8). Peter was condemned by the Gentile Christians in Antioch, who did not understand (as Paul did) the reason for his behaviour. When Paul describes Peter as 'fearing' the Judaizing Christians he does not mean that he was afraid of them, but that he was afraid that they would abandon Christianity if they found him openly rejecting observance of the law (641.34-46); John compares 'I fear for you, lest perhaps my labour has been in vain' (4.11). One might object that the parallel is syntactically unconvincing, but I suspect that this would miss John's point. What Paul can say explicitly in the letter is constrained by the need to preserve the covert strategy; that is why he speaks of 'hypocrisy' in 2.13 (641.46-50). So he cannot openly reveal Peter's true motive. But he can conceal the true motive in terms which the astute reader will see through; once we have recognised the implausibility of the suggestion that Peter was afraid, Paul's choice of word helps us to infer the true motive for ourselves. So John is not denying that Paul *says* that Peter was afraid; the suggestion is that in saying this he is *hinting* at something different.

The technical term for divergence between what is said and what is meant is 'figure' (σχημα).⁶¹ John has already used the term in this context: 'And "I opposed him to his face" was a figure' (641.28f.). But here he is looking beyond 'figures of speech' to the concept of figured speech—that is, a discourse that as a whole has a purpose in addition to, or even opposed to, its explicit content. There is an extensive discussion of figured speech in the essays falsely attributed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentioned earlier (§2). When they were written early in the second century the concept of figured speech was still controversial (the essays offer a reply to those who deny its possibility), but by the third century rhetoricians had come to take it for granted. We have discussions in pseudo-Hermogenes *On Invention* and in the partially preserved treatise on figured speech attributed (falsely) to Apsines, both probably dating to the first half of the third century.⁶² In John's view, what Paul said openly in Antioch was a figured speech

⁶⁰ The sermon (382.60-383.48, 384.50-388.34) gives a more extensive and in some points clearer exposition of John's understanding of the situation and the apostles' response to it.

⁶¹ E.g. Tiberius *Fig. Dem.* 1.3-5 Ballaira (59.5-9 Spengel): 'A figure is that which does not express the sense naturally (κατὰ φύσιν) or directly (ἐπ' εὐθείας), but varies or alters the intent by the form of expression, for purposes of ornamentation or practical need.'

⁶² For my doubts about the authorship of the works attributed to Apsines see Heath 1998: confusingly, it is possible that the real Apsines was pseudo-Hermogenes.

in this sense. An exhortation directly addressed to Paul's opponents exhorting them to abandon observance of the law would have had no effect; indeed, it would have antagonised them (641.55-7, 641.21-3, 642.31f.). So the exhortation was delivered obliquely, and disguised as a rebuke addressed to Peter: 'what was said was an exhortation, but the figure of a reproof was applied to it, on account of the Judaisers' (642.49-51).

John believes that he can offer evidence to support this interpretation. The very fact that Paul confronted Peter in public is significant: if he had really thought that Peter was at fault, he should have corrected him privately to avoid public scandal (641.29-31, 642.6-9). John also argues in the sermon that on the *prima facie* reading Paul handles the situation extraordinarily badly (374.26-375.15) and acts contrary to character (378.11-379.7); in this, too, he finds the *prima facie* reading implausible. Moreover, inconcinnities in Paul's reported speech provide further pointers. Why does Paul accuse Peter of compelling Gentiles to live like Jews, when he had done nothing of the kind, and why does Paul address Peter alone, and not the others (642.9-51)? Why is this addressed to Peter, the last person to need instruction on these matters (643.40-9, referring to Acts 11.1-18)? And John maintains that Paul adopts an oblique approach elsewhere. In Romans 15.25-7 he is not simply reporting his planned visit to Jerusalem (if that was all he was doing, he could have done it much more briefly); in reality, the way he reports his plans is designed to give his readers obliquely a stimulus to emulation in charitable giving (642.52-643.9).⁶³

John's description of this technique is significant: 'seeming to say one thing, he establishes something else' (δοκῶν... ἕτερον λέγειν, ἄλλο κατασκευάζει 642.52f.), 'establishing one thing through another' (ἄλλο δι' ἄλλου κατασκευάζων 643.11). The phrasing is exactly parallel to standard ways of describing figured speech in the rhetorical literature. Compare pseudo-Dionysius: 'another kind of figure is that which obliquely says one thing but effects something else' (πλαγίως ἕτερα μὲν λέγον, ἕτερα δὲ ἐργαζόμενον 296.2f. Usener-Radermacher); 'those who say one thing, but want something else' (ἕτερα μὲν λέγοντες, ἕτερα δὲ βουλόμενοι 296.14f.); 'speech which says one thing while contriving another' (ἕτερα λέγων καὶ ἕτερα διοικούμενος 324.23). Demosthenes in *On the False Embassy* 'in putting forward one thing establishes another' (ἄλλα προτείνων ἄλλα κατασκευάζει 299.12f., cf. 303.5, 10). Similar observations are found in the scholia to Demosthenes. For example, 17.1 (2, p.196.25-7): 'this is characteristic of speeches figured by inversion, establishing the opposite of what they seem to say'; 21.112 (396): 'he establishes one thing by means of another: he seems to be speaking straightforwardly about the rich and the poor, but in fact he is showing that...'.⁶⁴

Hence I disagree with Thurén's claim that 'no corresponding ideas... can be found in ancient handbooks'. John is working with a concept that was completely familiar in contemporary rhetoric. This, I suspect, is why the consideration that

⁶³ This interpretation is developed at greater length in the commentary *ad loc.*, PG 60.661.14-48; see §7 below.

⁶⁴ See also sch. Dem. 2.1 (1a), 27 (181b, 184), on the figured epilogue of the *Second Olynthiac*.

Augustine thought decisive against this interpretation did not disturb him. Equating a standard technical resource with a 'lie' might have seemed a very crude misconception. What would a ban on figured speech mean for parables?⁶⁵ And if figures are lies, what of tropes? The mountains did not really skip like rams, nor the hills like lambs.⁶⁶

6. Paul and his addressees

Although the first two heads both begin with a rebuke to Paul's addressees, there is an increase in intensity between 1.6 ('I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting...') and 3.1 ('Stupid Galatians!'). As John observes, the intensification of the rebuke at the beginning of the second head reflects the fact that Paul has established his authority in the first (647.30-7, cf. §3): it is as if the rebuke is administered, not by Paul himself, but by the evidence and proofs he has adduced (647.51-9).

John thinks that Paul's initial rebuke is carefully phrased to offer reassurance as well. He would not have said 'I am amazed' unless they had given reason for confidence (620.51-621.7):

When he says, 'I am amazed', he says this not only to shame them... but also simultaneously to show the kind of opinion he has of them—that his opinion was an exalted and serious one. If he had supposed that they belonged among ordinary people who are easily deceived, he would not have been amazed by what had happened.

The use of the present tense, 'you are deserting', rather than the aorist, indicates an unwillingness to believe that the deception is complete or irrecoverable (621.9-12). But even in the more intense rebuke of the second head, John sees a careful balance. He notes a nuance in Paul's choice of words in 3.1 (647.59-648.32):

Note how he at once compromises the rebuke; he did not say 'Who has deceived you? who has mistreated you? who has tricked you with fallacies?' but 'Who has put the evil eye on you?'—giving a rebuke that is not completely divorced from encomium. For this implies that their previous behaviour had merited envy.

When Paul says that Christ's crucifixion was publicly portrayed 'before the eyes' of the Galatians, he indicates that they saw it with the eyes of faith more clearly than many of those who were present to watch it, and this tribute to their faith balances the criticism of their defection (649.7-17). In 3.4 he suggests that their experience has been in vain, but the addition 'if in fact it is in vain' points to the possibility of recovery (650.12-16). He changes his form of address in 3.15: 'above he called them "stupid", but now he calls them "brothers", simultaneously applying an astringent and encouraging them' (654.2f.). So, too, in 4.12 (658.47-56):

⁶⁵ For parable as figure see John on Mt. 20.1-6 (58.613.15-20): 'For what purpose, then, has he figured (ἔσχημάτισε) the discourse in this way?'

⁶⁶ See John on Ps. 114.4-6 (PG 55.307.13-52), Rom. 8.19-22 (60.529.29-55).

Note how he again addresses them by a title of honour; and this was also a reminder of grace. Having given them a serious rebuke... he gives way again and soothes them, using gentler words.

We have already seen how the second head is brought to a close with conciliation. Likewise towards the end of the third head, in 5.10 (667.2-11):⁶⁷

He does not say, 'you have no other thought', but, 'you will have no other thought'; that is, you will be put right. How does he know this? He says not 'I know', but 'I trust'. 'I trust' in God,' he says, 'and invoke his assistance in your correction with confidence'... Everywhere he weaves his accusations together with encomia; it is as if he had said, 'I know my disciples, I know your readiness to be put right'.

And at the end of this head, in 5.12, Paul switches his target (668.15-21):

Note how bitter he is here against the deceivers. At the outset he directed his accusation against those who were deceived, calling them 'stupid', once and again. Now that he has sufficiently educated and corrected them, he turns his attention next to the deceivers.

The combination of rebuke and encouragement recalls a comment on deliberative oratory in pseudo-Hermogenes *On Method* (454.1-4 Rabe):⁶⁸

The speech to the assembly (δημηγορία) contains reproof and encouragement. The reproof corrects and educates the audience's opinions, and the encouragement removes the hurtfulness from the reproof. All the *Philippics*... exemplify this combination.

The Demosthenes scholia provide parallels. For example, 4.2 (13b): 'he has entered first on feasibility, producing encouragement mingled with the correction'; 19.24 (82a): 'he soothes the people after the reproof.' A parallel for the delicate balancing of rebuke and encouragement which John traces in Paul can be found in the scholia to the *First Olynthiac*. Demosthenes needs to alert the Athenians to the threat posed by Philip, in order to incite them to take action (sch. 14d), but he is careful not to make Philip seem *too* formidable (sch. 22, 26d, 60a), and also offers encouragement (sch. 19, 37, 70); in fact, he manages to make Philip's unscrupulous character a source simultaneously of fear and encouragement.

7. Paul's rhetorical genius

The technique by which Demosthenes combines intimidation and encouragement is one of the many things which elicit admiration and astonishment (θαυμάζειν implies both) from the commentators whose work is excerpted in the scholia (prol. 7.17-23). Expressions of admiration for the author are to be expected in a commentary, but they are particularly insistent—and have a particularly insistent rhetorical focus—in the scholia to Demosthenes. That is

⁶⁷ Compare the discussion of this passage in the commentary on 1 Cor. 15.1 (61.323.11-27).

⁶⁸ Uncertain date. There is a connection between this text and the pseudo-Dionysian essays cited above (n.19), but the direction of the dependence has not been determined. 'Philippics' here includes the speeches now known as *Olynthiacs*.

not surprising, since the commentaries from which they derive originated in the schools of rhetoric, in which teachers aimed both to highlight and explain Demosthenes' rhetorical techniques and to encourage students to imitate and emulate them.⁶⁹ It is interesting, therefore, that John often highlights and explains the rhetorical techniques which he discerns in Paul. has documented this phenomenon in the commentary on Galatians;⁷⁰ in this brief concluding section I shall show that other, even more striking expressions of admiration for Paul's rhetorical ability can be found sporadically in other commentaries. The influence of John's rhetorical training is reflected, not only in his use of rhetorical theory as a tool for understanding Paul, but also in an exegetical style in which appreciative comment on the author's rhetorical genius comes naturally.

The ability to achieve apparently opposed effects simultaneously, which Demosthenes' commentators admire, is also one of the things which John admires in Paul. Consider, for example, his comments on Rom. 1.26 (60.417.34-46):⁷¹

Here too Paul's penetration (σύνεσις) deserves admiration: facing two opposite needs he achieves both with complete precision. He wanted both to speak solemnly, and also to sting the hearer. These things were not both possible, but each interfered with the other. If you speak solemnly, you will not be able to have much effect on the hearer; and if you wish to criticise intensely, you will have to lay bare what you are saying with some clarity. But his penetrating and holy soul was able to do both with precision, amplifying the accusation by naming nature, and also using this as a sort of veil, to ensure the solemnity of his narration.

The distinction between clarity (σαφήνεια) and solemnity (σεμνότης) has already appeared in John's observations on Gal. 2.6: 'he did not speak clearly, but guardedly... he seems to criticise them rather solemnly' (637.10-15, see §4).⁷² It would be easy to overlook the technical overtones in this. The concepts belong to the theory of stylistic types (ιδέαι) that was developed from the second century onwards. Here, unfortunately, we are relatively ill-informed. The most important extant text is Hermogenes *On Types of Styles*; but unlike *On Issues*, this did not rapidly become a standard text, and although we know of other treatments of the theory in this period we know almost nothing about them. It is clear, however, that the reference to God and the cryptic allusiveness of Paul's expression in Gal. 2.6 are features that would be seen as contributing to solemnity.⁷³ In Rom. 1.26f. the

⁶⁹ Strictly speaking, this insistence is most marked in the material derived from one of the three main sources of the scholia—Menander, if my analysis of the sources of the scholia is correct (see n.6). But the prominence of Menander's commentary in the tradition probable reflects its resonance with the priorities of teachers in the rhetorical classroom.

⁷⁰ Thurén 2001, 188-91.

⁷¹ Also in 1 Cor. 7.25: see *On Virginity* 42, equally admiring of Paul's σύνεσις. For the praise of Paul's rhetorical skill in this treatise see Mitchell 2000, 281, and more generally 326-53 for Paul's ability to embrace opposites.

⁷² In the commentary on 1 Cor. 14.40 John concludes a discussion of sexual lust by saying that he should not be criticised for speaking clearly rather than solemnly (61.320.32-5). Cf. Theodoret on Saul relieving himself in 1 Sam. 24.3 (80.580.11-14): the Septuagint's translation (παρασκευάσασθαι) is solemn, Aquila's (ἀποκενώσαι) clear.

⁷³ Hermogenes 242.22-243.22, 246.23-247.3. Translation: Wooten 1987.

allusive 'natural' and 'against nature' spare the necessity of naming disagreeable things openly, and contribute to solemnity in much the same way as references to the divine;⁷⁴ and this solemnity adds weight to the criticism.

We have seen (§5) that John reads Romans 15.25-7 as a figured encouragement to charitable giving; in that case, too, John comments admiringly on the tactful technique (60.661.25-30):⁷⁵

For this reason above all one has to admire his wisdom, because he devised this way of giving the advice. They were more likely to bear it in this way than if he had said it in the form of exhortation. In fact, they would have thought they were being insulted if, with a view to inciting them, he had brought the Corinthians and Macedonians into the open.

Another kind of tactful discretion in the management of the argument is singled out for admiration in Rom. 2.15f. (60.428.60-429.13):

What is most to be admired in the apostle's penetration (σύνεσις) is worth mentioning now. Having shown by the confirmation that the Greek is greater than the Jew, in the drawing together and conclusion of his reasoning he does not specify that, to avoid exasperating the Jew. To make what I have said clearer, I will give the apostle's actual words. When he said 'it is not the hearers of the law, but the doers of the law, who will be justified', the consequential thing to say was, 'for when the gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature what the law requires, they are much better than those who are instructed by the law'. But he does not say this; he stops with the encomium of the Greeks and does not at this point carry the argument forward by means of a comparison, so that in this way the Jew should be receptive to what is said.

The argument that leads up to this conclusion (2.11-15) is an example of the technique of reversing the opponent's strong points (60.428.25-33, 44-50):

You see the abundant expertise he uses to turn the argument round in the opposite direction? If it is by the law you claim to be saved, he says, in this respect the Greek will stand before you, if he is seen to be a doer of what is written. And how is it possible (he says) for someone who is not a hearer to be a doer? Not only this, he says, is possible, but also what is much more than this. Not only is it possible to be a doer without hearing, but also with hearing not to be so... He shows that others are better than they, and what is more, better for this reason, that they have not received the law and do not have that in respect of which the Jews believe they have an advantage over them. The reason they are to be admired, he says, is that they did not need a law, and exhibited everything the law required, because the works, not the letters, were inscribed in their minds.

We met this technique in Galatians.⁷⁶ When it appears in 1 Cor. 6.12 John describes it as something 'amazing and paradoxical' that Paul is 'accustomed to do frequently' (61.139.16-40); in 1 Cor. 1.17 it is his 'customary principle' (61.409.2-7). 'Principle' (θεώρημα) is one of the words standardly used in the

⁷⁴ Cf. Syrianus 1.38.3-5 Rabe.

⁷⁵ Tactful indirectness: see also on 1 Cor. 4.10 (61.107.45-108.11).

⁷⁶ See n.34; compare Rom. 5.3 (60.469.35-44); 1 Cor. 14.20 (61.309.21-31); Phil. 1.7 (62.186.42-6).

Demosthenes scholia to pick out aspects of rhetorical technique to be observed in the great orator.⁷⁷ Similarly Sopater, in his prolegomena to Aristides, says 'this principle is Demosthenic—putting counterpositions opposed to us into reverse by technical means' (123.6f. Lenz). Here, then, both in the substantive point of rhetorical technique that is remarked and in the exegetical vocabulary used to highlight it, we can see with particular clarity the imprint of the time which John spent in the school of rhetoric.

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⁷⁷ E.g. sch. 19.39 (106), 237 (455a), 20.1 (5c); see further Heath 2004, Chapter 6.2.

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