

Paul as Storyteller? Conclusion

Christoph Heilig

Translated by
Wayne Coppins¹

1. On the Contemporary Skepticism toward the Characterization of Paul “as Storyteller”

Talk of “narrative” structures in the Letters of Paul has significantly shaped the exegetical discussion in the Anglophone sphere for some time. The “narrative approach,” which was especially inspired by Richard B. Hays and N. T. Wright, faces, however, a skeptical attitude in large parts of scholarship. Critics of the approach have regarded narrativity and epistolarity as aspects that stand in tension with each other. The reasons for this reserve were presented in section 2.2 of Chapter 1:

1. Within the canonical framework, the epistolary literature represents a corpus that stands in quite clear continuity to the narrative works (Gospels and Acts), which, in turn, *clearly* exhibit a narrative character.
2. In exegetical scholarship, a methodological division of labor corresponds to this rough division of the subject area into two entities. While “narrative analysis” has established itself as an important approach for narrative works, “rhetorical criticism” apparently provides a methodological counterpart for the adequate description of the structure and effects of the epistolary literature. Moreover, in this context, the aspect of narrativity appears to be accounted for already through the ancient rhetorical category of *narrationes*, through which the application of modern narratological categories to the Pauline letters moves even further away.
3. The different varieties of genre criticism also reinforce this disparate relationship between narrative works (such as the Gospels) and letters (such as those of Paul). Starting from the original interest in oral preliminary stages of the text, scholarship initially focused on the structural characteristics of the individual “forms” from which a text was compiled. Here, the discussion concentrated especially

¹For the German version of this work, see C. Heilig, *Paulus als Erzähler? Eine narratologische Perspektive auf die Paulusbriefe*, BZNW 237 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020), 991–1015 [https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110670691]. Cf. now also C. Heilig, *Paul the Storyteller: A Narratological Approach* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2024).

on the subunits of the Gospels, i.e., it had a rather narrowly focused perspective in which the relationship between narrativity and epistolarity could hardly play a role. A broadening of the perspective, which has especially emerged in the English-speaking world, led to a development in which former genres (such as parables) came to be designated as forms and the notion of genre came to be set at a higher level. However, this concept of genre also usually took its orientation from the canonical subdivision of the New Testament, i.e., it usually differentiated between Gospels, Acts, letters, and Revelation. Within this framework, scholarship has scarcely focused on the relationship of these (super-)genres to one another but rather on their relationships to comparable literary categories from the environment (i.e., Gospels *as* Bios, etc.).

2. A Text-Linguistic Perspective on Narrative Textualizations in the Pauline Letters

All three factors contribute to the fact that in scholarship the New Testament letters stand over against a “text type narration” as “non-narrative texts.” However, as presented in detail in section 3 of Chapter 2, such a dichotomy is untenable from the perspective of *text linguistics*. Within the framework of an “integrative” text understanding – which takes account of structural, semantic, and also *pragmatic* factors of textuality – a hierarchical classification of different text types is instead made with the aid of different “areas of communication.” Against this background, the Pauline letters can be understood as examples of a text type, which play a specific function in the framework of the broader communication system “early Christianity.” The Gospels, too, are analogously embedded in this system. Narrativity (or also epistolarity as a parameter of the medium) plays no role at all in this hierarchical classification of early Christian writings.

The category of narration is, however, significant for the interaction with text types. For narrative can be understood as one of several possible “strategies” with which a theme can be developed in a text. In addition to hierarchical text classification according to spheres of communication, early Christian text sorts can correspondingly also be organized according to whichever “strategy of textualization” (description, explication, argumentation, or narration) is dominant in the respective text type. In such a “typologization” – which runs horizontal to the hierarchical classification – the Pauline letters and the Gospels do, in fact, come into a discontinuous relationship.

It by no means follows from this, however, that the narrative textualization pattern would be insignificant for the text sort to which the Pauline letters belong. Two important points must be noted here.

1. In exegetical scholarship, a “paraenetic” text that aims at a change of behavior is often connected to the category of argumentation. However, vis-à-vis the kind of textualization, the “text-function” (the impact that the author intends through the communication) constitutes a *separate* linguistic criterion, according to which a typologization can likewise be made (i.e., as an *alternative* to taking one’s orientation from the strategy of textualization). Thus, the question of whether narrativity is significant for the text sort Pauline letter must be pursued

independently of the circumstance that the text function does not correspond to the informational-declarative (or else aesthetic) communicative intent that is typical for narrative works.

2. The assignment of a text to a text sort presupposes that the investigated text follows the “pattern” that constitutes this text sort (or, more specifically, that it varies it, in which case we speak of “text sort variant”). In this context, however, it is not only the “dominant” textualization strategy on the level of the global text structure that plays an important role. For a precise description of the text type also presupposes the careful clarification of the question of how *different textualization strategies are related to and intertwined with one another*. Even if narration occurs in a text sort primarily in a supporting function for the argumentative strategy of textualization, it can nevertheless present an important aspect of the underlying pattern. From a text-linguistic perspective, the question of which role narrative textualizations play in the Pauline letters is therefore of elementary significance for the text-linguistically central task of describing the text sort that is co-constituted through the Pauline letters.

3. The Lack of Clear Definitions in the “Narrative Approach”

Since the quest for “narratives” in the Pauline letters presupposes a precise understanding of the subject matter that is to be identified, a solid definitional foundation for exegetical work is very important. A survey of the literature shows, however, that in the framework of the narrative approach scarcely any attention has been given thus far to this theoretical foundation (Chapter 2). While Richard B. Hays and N. T. Wright do indeed attempt to support their undertaking text-theoretically, they do not provide a clear definition of what constitutes a ‘story’ from their perspective.²

The discussion that has followed upon Hays and Wright scarcely goes beyond the reflections of the two pioneers of the paradigm. The intertextual turn in Pauline scholarship, which was likewise co-established by Hays, has instead led to a situation in which the theoretical discussion is primarily restricted to the question of how a subtle connection to another narrative can be identified in the text – but without addressing the question of what constitutes a narrative in the first place. The concentration on the questions of *where* the postulated narratives are to be localized and what *content* they possess has had an analogous effect.

However, the aspect of localization in particular points to the basic problem of the “narrative approach,” which remains pre-theoretical over large stretches. If there is no clarification of what a narrative is, then it is also not possible to make a statement about its relationship to the aspect of textuality. Discussion about whether narratives can be identified “under” or “behind” the non-narrative text are fruitless against this background.

² Translator’s note: When referencing concepts, such as the concept of ‘story’ or the concept of ‘narrative,’ Heilig uses single quotation marks.

4. Explicit Narratives in the Framework of Narratology

Against that background, Chapter 3 attempts to work out a definitional framework for the analysis of the Pauline letters from the perspective of *narratology*. There is, on the one hand, the possibility of working with a definition that starts from a “prototype” of the category ‘narrative’ and from the view that narrativity can be present in different degrees. The advantages of prototypical definitions can, however, also be realized in the framework of the traditional equivalence definition (which specifies necessary and sufficient conditions for a classification) by setting up definitions that differ in the extent to which they are rich in content, i.e., that summarize a different number of elements as ‘narrative.’

A minimalistic definition (which thus presupposes a very broad understanding of narrativity, i.e., which classifies a lot of entities as ‘narrative’) presupposes that (1) a *text* is concerned with (2) *at least two events* (3) that are spoken of as actually having occurred (or as presently occurring) and that (4) are temporally connected and (5) meaningfully joined in at least one other way.

This definition builds on a proposal of the narratologists Tilmann Köppe and Tom Kindt, who advocate for a rather traditional understanding with respect to the scope and task of narratology. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that even the broadly conceived minimal conditions presuppose that the entity in question is a *text*. If one instead starts from a prototypical definition, as, for example, it is proposed by the narratologist Marie-Laure Ryan (Chapter 3, section 3.3), then it is much more unproblematic to speak of (a certain degree of) narrativity also in cases in which there is no linguistic act of narration present.

For the analysis of the Pauline letters, it is nevertheless advisable to presuppose initially the conservative framework of Köppe and Kindt as a foundation, in order to increase the significance of a potential positive result. If *even* on this basis it is possible to speak meaningfully of Paul as storyteller, then this presents a significant confirmation of the validity of a narratological perspective on the Pauline letters.

5. The Analysis of Explicit Narratives as a Starting Point for a Transfer of the “Narrative Approach” into a Narratological Perspective

This concentration on *explicit narratives* stands, of course, in contrast to the emphases of Richard B. Hays and N. T. Wright, who point to the importance of implicit narrative structures (Chapter 2, sections 2 and 3), i.e., wish to speak of “narratives” precisely where the text does not follow a clearly discernable narrative strategy of textualization. The two authors’ polemic against explicit narratives can be explained, however, primarily as the result of an apologetic motivation. Since the talk of Paul as “storyteller” can be attacked in light of the apparent fact that he does not tell stories explicitly or scarcely does so, the two exegetes distance themselves from explicit narration in an exaggerated manner.

The arguments that they present for this, however, are by no means compelling (cf.

Chapter 2, section 4). Precisely if one is interested in the question of whether there is something like “non-narrated narratives” in the Pauline letters, one must first clarify *how* Paul communicates narratively in the narratively textualized sections. The Pauline style of narration can be reliably ascertained only in places where narratives in the text can be clearly identified and described. For the quest for “implicit narratives” to be regarded as having an empirical basis, it must arise from the analysis of the actual narratives.

In following such a procedure, we must not, of course, rule out the possibility that the results of this analysis may bring to light phenomena that are close to the category of narrativity, even though they do not fulfill the conditions of an explicit narrative. Against such a background, it would *then* be possible to pursue the question of how, from a narratological perspective, we can speak meaningfully about text sections that are textualized in a non-narrative manner. The presented minimalist equivalence definition thus represents a promising *starting point* that enables one to pursue the line of inquiry of Hays and Wright from a methodologically less controversial standpoint and on the basis of engagement with the text itself.

6. A Text-Grammatical Approach to Narrative Textualizations

The difficulty in reaching an agreement about *whether* or *to what extent* Paul tells stories must, on the one hand, be traced back to different – usually unconsciously presupposed – definitions (cf. Chapter 2, sections 2 and 3, and Chapter 3, section 1), and, on the other hand, is also connected to the fact that a systematic examination of the Pauline letters against the background of this line of questioning has not previously been undertaken. Moreover, between definitional foundation and empirical evaluation lies the task of explicating the narratological conditions in such a way that they are practicable for the analysis of the reconstructed Greek text. It is therefore necessary to clarify the following two questions: (1) What does the structure of a text that is to be classified as a narrative look like? (2) What different possibilities are there for the implementation of this structure, i.e., how can the individual narratives be described by us?

For the clarification of these questions, Chapter 4 draws upon the text grammar presented by Heinrich von Siebenthal. Just as questions on the syntax of Koine Greek are pursued as a matter of course on the basis of scholarly studies on the grammar of the sentence, so the scholarly aspiration of New Testament research demands that we draw upon the current text-grammatical state of knowledge for the investigation of the structure above the level of the sentence. Accordingly, even though the presentation of the text structure with the aid of the categories that Heinrich von Siebenthal applies to Koine Greek is currently still rather uncommon in the exegetical discourse, this approach nevertheless remains the best possible framework for identifying and describing narratives in Paul.

Narratology has a descriptive orientation. It thus has a primarily classificatory interest, which can, however, also refer to levels of meaning. Accordingly, the application of narratological categories may presuppose interpretation. In the framework of

the present work, which views the Pauline letters as artefacts of historical processes of communication, an intentionalist concept of meaning is presupposed. The text-grammatical approach provides the method with which the semantics of the text can be investigated within this framework (cf. Chapter 3, section 6.3). In parallel to the analysis undertaken here, theories of interpretation that, for example, locate meaning on the level of reception can likewise make use of the narratological “tool kit.” The text-grammatical integration of the conceptions is also probably not insignificant for such interpretations, even though different decisions will necessarily be made in individual cases.

7. Pauline Narration and Temporal Order

In the framework of this text-grammatical perspective, a narration will be recognizable through the fact that both the expression-side (or “grammar”-side) and the content-side of the text structure will exhibit specific characteristics (cf., for the content-side, Chapter 5, and for the expression-side, Chapter 6). Current research on grammatical aspect and lexical situation type (*Aktionsart*) potential in Koine, as it is summarized here, offer especially great potential for a language-specific narratological analysis of New Testament narratives. The fact that the reader correctly reconstructs the semantic propositional structure of the text, i.e., the hierarchical structure from pairs of propositions (“connections”), is ensured on the expression-side of the text structure above all through connectors (e.g., conjunctions, adverbs, and prepositions).

A quite specific profile of Pauline narration already emerges from the examination of the linguistic options of the expression-side of narrative textualizations (Chapter 6). This is worked out with even more precision through a detailed investigation of the factor of “temporal order” – one of the constitutive factors of narrative – in the Pauline letters (Chapter 7). On the one hand, the explicit temporal connections are investigated here, i.e., the anterior (Chapter 7, section 2), posterior (Chapter 7, section 3), and simultaneous (Chapter 7, section 4) relations between two propositions. They can each appear with a multitude of different emphases. On the other hand, the temporal order in non-temporally focused connections is also discussed (Chapter 7, section 5).

Here, it not only becomes clear that Paul does, in fact, tell stories in numerous places, but also *how* he does so (cf. also Chapter 8, section 2). Thus, it is, for example, very conspicuous that Paul is very reserved with respect to the “classic” anterior narration, in which the presentation of a (chronologically) earlier event is followed by a communicatively equally important subsequent situation, which (on the level of grammar) is usually indicated through an adverb such as τότε, ἔπειτα, or εἶτα in the clause that expresses the subsequent event, which occurs in the text in the second place. The Pauline style of narration differs markedly in this regard from, for example, the Gospel of Matthew, where τότε is very frequently used in this function (i.e., “X. Then Y.”) This circumstance probably also explains the impression that Paul “does not tell stories.” One must, by contrast, say more precisely that Paul scarcely ever tells stories *in a certain way*, i.e., that he is “a different kind” of storyteller.

Viewed positively, we can say that (a) the very extensive development of simultaneous connections is conspicuous. This can be explained on the basis of the narration type that is often found in Paul. Paul often uses the narrative strategy of textualization when he thematizes situations that occur at the time of writing. Thus, he narrates simultaneously (i.e., not in retrospect) what is now taking place and how different events relate to one another in the present.

A second positive conclusion that we can draw is that while (b) temporal sequence is also present at many points, it is usually expressed through connections that do not exhibit a temporal focus but are based on logical relationships. Here, we see the concision of the Pauline style of narration. Against this background, more extensive narrative textualizations, such as Gal 1.13–2.21, are especially conspicuous. Here, we can indeed speak of narratives that fulfill the definition that is richer in terms of content (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.4).

8. Pauline Narration and Pragmatics

8.1 *Relief of the Expression-Side of the Text Structure*

Since Heinrich von Siebenthal's text grammar presupposes the integrative text model (see section 2 above), it is also necessary to investigate how the Pauline narratives are embedded in the specific *communicative* (text-internal and text-external) situation of the letter. Here, it is, on the one hand, conspicuous that the pragmatics on the expression-side of the text structure often leads to a relief of the syntax (Chapter 8, section 2). In place of a "strict" narration, in which events are presented through indicative forms of the augment tenses as (1) having actually occurred and (2) as being located in the past, we find infinitive and participial constructions that merely express the situation that is expressed by the verb itself but do not encode the relationship to reality grammatically. Still, the reader can infer that the concern is with events that occurred in the past. However, it only emerges from the prior knowledge that is shared by the storyteller and recipient.

8.2 *Relief of the Content-Side of the Text Structure*

Analogously, on the content side, we can observe the phenomenon of elliptical narration, i.e., the phenomenon that situations as a whole are omitted but must be inferred (Chapter 8, section 3). For the question of implicit narratives, this observation is extremely relevant, for it points to the fact that Paul's narration in his letters often presupposes *other narratives* – or at least shared experiences that both Paul and the addressees *could narrate*.

Interestingly this phenomenon extends not only to the undisputed Pauline letters (cf., e.g., Col 1.21–22; Eph 6.21). Independent of the judgments that are made regarding authenticity in each case, it can thus be stated that the disputed Pauline letters also prompt acts of lively imagination. There, the focus does not seem to be merely on what is recounted in the narrative but also, due to the peculiarity of the narration, on the

“historical” relationship between addressees and storyteller. Accordingly, even though the question of the relationship of pseudepigraphic letters to Pauline *Vorlagen*, which dominates in many commentaries, is certainly important, it must not be overlooked in this context that material is not simply “processed” here. Rather, through the narration (1) an occurrence that precedes the text and (2) communicative events are implied, which both influence the reading experience.

8.3 Text Function/Communicative Intention

The pragmatic dimension of Pauline narration also points to the special *function* of the narrative textualizations (Chapter 8, section 4; cf. also above, Chapter 1, section 3.5 on text function as a linguistic criterion of the typologization of text sorts into text types; on this, cf. section 2 above). With explicit narratives in letters, one would normally expect the sender to narrate something here that informs the recipient about events. The text function of the Pauline narratives, however, often appears to be *evaluative* rather than assertive. A section that is narrated like Gal 3.23–25 not only presupposes that other narratives about this nexus of events can be assumed as knowledge (cf. the previous observations on the pragmatic relief of the narrative text structure), but also that the intention of the storyteller does not consist primarily in having the reader believe a certain sequence of events but rather in moving them to adopt a certain evaluation of specific episodes of the plot. If one investigates the global text structure of whole writings, it also becomes clear that some narratives in Paul should not be assigned to the “intention type” that targets the level of beliefs at all but rather aim at a transformation of the *volition* and thereby encourage an action (cf., for example, Gal 1.13–3.21 against the background of Gal 4.12).

8.4 Narration-Specific Tasks

The text function can be discerned, on the one hand, via the analysis of the speech acts in the text. For example, in Gal 4.12 we find a “request.” What Paul requests the readers to do here is very important for the intention that stands behind the letter as a whole. Other important insights can be gained if we grasp precisely how Paul as storyteller needs to carry out the “narration-specific tasks” that confront him. What is meant by this is that the storyteller must make known *in* the communication *that* (and *why*) he tells stories. From the way in which Paul transitions to narratives within the discourse and returns again to non-narrative textualizations, important conclusions about the text function can be derived. On the one hand, an analysis of these aspects confirms again that Paul rarely appears as a “typical” storyteller (who would narratively thematize previously unknown material in an assertive-informing way in the discourse). On the other hand, it also becomes impressively clear here how consciously and diversely Paul employs narrative textualizations in order to carry out his communicative intention.

8.5 *Borders of Narrative Textualizations*

The investigation of the embedding of narrative textualizations in the communicative context also leads to a perception of the complex interplay with other (descriptive and argumentative) textualizations. In the analysis of these phenomena, one repeatedly encounters difficulties of demarcation. Thus, one can, for example, consider whether in the case of some descriptions the story world that previously found expression in the narrative may still be presupposed (e.g., Gal 3.28). Likewise, it is conspicuous that Paul sometimes places the event of his own narration (esp. 2 Cor 12.1–6) so strongly at the center that the act of narration itself appears as a kind of – more or less explicitly narrated – framework narrative. All these phenomena (see Chapter 8, section 3.5) point to the fact that narrative considerations can be applied in a heuristically fruitful manner for the Pauline letters also in places where the apostle does not narrate explicitly (let alone in the “strict” sense).

8.6 *Embedded Narration Type*

While the aspects of the text function encountered in Paul (and, thus, concomitantly, the carrying out of the narration-specific tasks) are probably rather uncommon for epistolary text sorts, other peculiarities of the Pauline narration are unusual in comparison to literary narrative works but occur quite frequently in private letters (cf. Chapter 8, section 7). While some epistolary text sorts (e.g., love letters) primarily display communication (so-called “internal”) events (such as affirmations of love), most letters nevertheless refer to events in the experienced world. Here, the so-called “*embedded*” *narration type* is typical, which is also characteristic, for example, for diaries. In such narratives, the perspectives of the narrated and narrating “I” overlap, since the narrated events are still experienced as “directly” present at the time of narration. The reference to the present – which is typical for embedded narration – in the middle of statements that refer to the past can also be found in Paul through other means, namely when he comments on his own narration in a meta-narrative manner (e.g., Gal 1.20).

8.7 *Looking Forward: Aspects that are Suggestive of Implicit Narratives*

The analysis of explicit narratives in Paul thus points time and again to narratives “behind” the text, i.e., to narratives in the communicative prehistory that do, in fact, influence the configuration of the text structure. To this we can add (cf. Chapter 7, section 6) the fact that in the analysis of temporal order in the Pauline letters phenomena became visible time and again that do not fulfill the conditions of a narrative but come very close in a different respect.

Thus, in light of the reserved use of the sequential-anterior narration, it is conspicuous how often Paul uses the connection type that expresses this temporal relationship to join *future events* with one another. Since future events are merely possible, they cannot be “narrated” in the sense that we have established as a basis here. How close this phenomenon comes to narration already becomes clear, however, through the fact that

Genette speaks here of “predictive narration.” *Negated events* represent a similar phenomenon, i.e., events that are talked about – sometimes in great detail – in the texts, but the occurrence of which is precisely not asserted. Thus, also in the case of these breaches of the narrative textualization pattern, the analysis of explicit narratives repeatedly brings into view aspects that underscore the demand for a deeper examination of the question of “implicit” narratives.

9. Implicit Narratives as Mentally Simulated Proto-Narratives that Become Visible in Narrative Fragments

Chapter 9 investigates the question of what role implicit narratives could play from a narratological perspective. Although “non-narrated narratives” initially appears to present a contradiction in itself, it is shown with the aid of the category of the dream that the concept of a mental narrative does indeed have an intuitive validity (Chapter 9, section 2). With the help of Fisher’s comprehensive narrative paradigm of communication (Chapter 9, section 3.2), which has been overlooked in the “narrative approach to Paul,” I then show how a comprehensive understanding of narrativity would enable the analysis of every communication with the aid of narrative categories. However, it also becomes clear, in light of the criticism of Fisher’s approach, that, such an understanding would, on the other hand, lead to a neglect of the “narrative” aspects in the stricter sense. Precisely against the background of the analysis undertaken in Part II (Chapters 3 to 8), such an approach would be a step in the wrong direction. It must therefore be considered whether it is not possible to speak of implicit, mental narratives also in the framework of a stricter conception of narrativity.

At first glance, the conception of Ryan (Chapter 9, section 3.3) appears to offer a promising approach here. Since she defines narration above all semantically, one could apply the definition also to mental entities. However, upon closer examination of her approach it becomes clear that also with respect to the mental level it is ultimately necessary to distinguish between the “story” as a semantic entity and an underlying “narrative discourse.” When someone observes a battle and reflects on how they will narrate this to their family at home, then it is necessary to differentiate between the plot of this mental narrative and the concretely imagined narrative realization (in the course of which, for example, another ordering of the events can be made).

A good understanding of this constellation can be obtained in the framework of simulation theory (Chapter 9, section 3.4). The mental narration arises also from an act of narration – even though it is only a *simulated* one. With Köppe and Kindt such non-verbalized/non-written narratives can be called “proto-narratives.” The process that leads to this proto-narrative can be understood as a multi-staged process, so that “narrativization” can be present in different stages (i.e., the battle can be made present mentally in its basic contours or imagined as a narrative that is fleshed out even to the level of the word choice).

For the *text* analysis, *mental* proto-narratives can indeed be relevant when they penetrate to the surface of the text as “narrative fragments” (Chapter 9, section 4). With

reference to the example of Gal 4.3–12, I show that a proto-narrative can be discerned that underlies the whole section (Chapter 9, section 5). It not only connects the two narrative textualizations, but it also integrates the events to which v. 11 and v. 12 refer. In v. 11 a fear clause is used to call into question an event in the past, i.e., to indicate that it might not have happened. In v. 12 an imperative is used to address an event that refers to the future, whose realization is still pending. In both cases, there is a clearly recognizable reference to an implicit narrative. Should the fear prove to be accurate, the explicit narration in vv. 3–6 would thereby show itself to be false in retrospect (i.e., the narration would prove to be “unreliable,” to use narratological terminology). By contrast, if the Galatians comply with the exhortation, then they thereby guarantee that they can claim this narrative for themselves, also for the future.

10. Disnarrated Events as Narrative Fragments of Proto-Narratives

The phenomenon of calling into question or even denying the occurrence of past events is very frequent in Paul. Precisely in connection with affirmative statements about the past, i.e., with actual narratives, the relevance of these portions of text for a narratological perspective becomes especially clear. Through the fact that the episodes are emphatically *not* narrated, they point to the excluded option of this narration. These “anti-narratives” thus exclude whole classes of explicit narratives – namely, all those that would exhibit the disnarrated event as their plot. This phenomenon of “disnarration” (Chapter 10) is attested in very different shades in Paul (Chapter 12). It becomes clear that Paul does indeed exhibit an extensive and – as regards the situations’ relationship to reality – nuanced use of this category of references to events.

11. Future Events as Narrative Fragments of Proto-Narratives

Future events (Chapter 11) can also frequently be understood as narrative fragments of implicit proto-narratives. This often becomes clear precisely when references to the future are connected to explicit narratives. For example, it can be shown with reference to Rom 15 (Chapter 11, section 8) that the future references are very skillfully connected to events of the past and present. There arises in this way a network of actual and possible events, within which Paul attempts to navigate the reader. The prayer to which he exhorts the Romans is assigned an important role here. It ensures that the events develop in such a way that the momentarily only *potential* narrative can one day actually be narrated explicitly in retrospect.

In dialogue with categories of the narratologists Lämmert and Genette (Chapter 11, section 3), I highlight with respect to Paul above all the significance of those events which contain “foreshadowings” of his own future (Lämmert), where Paul “predictively narrates” (Genette). An analysis of the future forms in Romans shows that Paul uses these forms only in a small minority of their occurrences for “certain foreshadowings” (*zukunftsgevisen Vorausdeutungen*), i.e., to create *narrative fixed points* for narratives that cannot yet be narrated at the present point in time (Chapter 13).

By contrast, the “uncertain foreshadowings” (*zukunftsungewissen Vorausdeutungen*), with which Paul points out *possible developments of the plot*, are very frequent and extremely multiform (Chapter 14). Here, Paul has at his disposal, in addition to the modal future in declarative clauses or an adverbial weakening of the same, also a multitude of other linguistic means (e.g., interrogative clauses and desiderative clauses or purpose-oriented connections), with which he can configure potential storylines in respectively very specific ways and modulate them in their relation to reality.

For example, within the conditional connections (Chapter 14, section 5.2), it is possible to differentiate between the use of indefinite and prospective conditional constructions, which make quite distinct contributions to the configuration of a potential plot thread. In the framework of an exegetical approach that does not place such narrative dynamics at the center, this specific contribution (e.g., in 2 Cor 12.6) is often not adequately recognized. In Chapter 14 it was not possible in all cases to pursue in detail how events with reference to the future are embedded in larger proto-narratives. However, individual in-depth analyses, such as the examination of the purpose clause in Gal 1.14 (Chapter 14, section 5.3.2.6) demonstrated that Paul ably puts the linguistic means at his disposal in a very intentional manner into the service of the text-function of the respective overall letter.

12. Explicit and Implicit Narratives as Elements of the Text Sort Pattern

The analysis of narrative textualizations in the Pauline letters provide initial building blocks for the description of the text sort(s) to which they are to be assigned. It is initially conspicuous that Paul narrates explicitly only in isolated cases with purely *informing-assertive* intention. In context, such narrative textualizations sometimes support argumentation that is meant to lead to a new *evaluation* of a situation by the addressees; this is especially noticeable in 2 Corinthians.

More frequently, explicit narratives are invoked in a reminding way, in order to serve as a point of reference for anticipations and disnarrations. The network of events that is set forth in this way then usually has an *appellative* text-function; this is especially clearly recognizable with respect to Galatians. It is more the normal case rather than the exception that the addressees are (meant to be) stimulated by the text to form mental proto-narratives. In the course of this narrativization, in which the recipients of the letter must usually then integrate themselves as narrative figures, it is also necessary to make decisions pertaining to the “action,” which then also have direct effects upon their “actions” in the real world (e.g., Rom 15.24). Sometimes Paul intentionally leaves gaps in what is narrated (e.g., Gal 1.4) or even hypothetically calls into question the coherence and thus reliability of the narrative (e.g., Gal 4.1–12). Moreover, at least in Rom 6, we even seem to be dealing with intentional ambiguity, which allows for different receptions, with the text exhibiting different text-functions depending on the circumstances of the respective readers/hearers.

Precisely the consideration of disnarrated and future events underscores the observation that also the disputed Pauline letters “tell stories” in a manner that is indeed com-

plex. Sections that are often classified as incoherent in the secondary literature, especially in German-language scholarship, can sometimes be adequately explained against the background of a proto-narrative, which can often be reconstructed with good reasons. It remains to be seen to what extent this observation can contribute to the debates about authenticity, which are still conducted in a lively manner on an international level (especially with respect to Colossians and 2 Thessalonians). (In fact, one could evaluate some observations on “Pauline” narration as a counterargument to the significance of the secretary hypothesis, which is often put forth as an alternative to pseudepigraphy – cf. Chapter 4, section 2). It is, however, in any case, at least necessary to perceive the fiction that is created through the aforementioned narrative fragments: the narration itself and thus the figure of the narrating Paul is part of the imagination that the letters encourage. The narration of Paul – and his diverse mental pondering of different sequences of events – thus constitutes the frame narrative, which must not be overlooked.

With regard to the differentiation between authentic and pseudepigraphic Pauline letters in different text sorts, no consistent differences in the underlying text sort pattern have become apparent, at least with regard to narrative textualizations and implicit proto-narratives. The hypothesis lies close to hand that a demarcation of different text sorts here would have to take place above all on the level of pragmatics, i.e., with a view to the different functions that the writings most certainly had for the communication sphere of early Christianity. (If a late date is assigned to a pseudepigraphical letter, then one must, of course, take into account the change in the social system as well as the continuing influence of the older letters in a secondary reception context.)

13. The Conceptions of Hays and Wright and Proto-Narratives

After the category of implicit narrative was made plausible narratologically (Chapter 9) and it was demonstrated through concrete text-analysis that “narrative fragments” can be identified in the whole *corpus Paulinum* (Chapters 10–14), the conceptions of Hays and Wright could be discussed in conclusion.

A careful comparative analysis of the two authors (Chapter 15) shows the diverse roles that narrative aspects play in the two conceptions. The aspects that have to do with the intersection of Pauline thinking and text-production are especially significant for exegesis.

A rough distinction can be made between two different conceptions (Chapter 15, section 4.5), which can be differentiated with reference to their differently oriented lines of questioning. Wright is interested in a “larger implicit narrative” that *can be construed from the letters*, while Hays’ talk of “narrative substructures” has the primary objective of illuminating *the structure of individual passages*.

If the two conceptions are related to the category of the mental proto-narrative, then it becomes evident how the two approaches can, in fact, be used in a narratologically justified way in the text-analysis (Chapter 15, section 5). Hays’ narrative substructure can be understood as a proto-narrative that has influenced the configuration of a

non-narrative or – though Hays does not focus on this option – narrative section.

Insofar as this proto-narrative has the content postulated by Wright, the two conceptions overlap at this point. The proto-narrative reconstructed by Wright then becomes the source of the narrative substructures. From the opposite perspective, the substructure that is derived from the concrete text can be viewed as a narrative fragment of the more comprehensive implicit narrative of Wright. Proto-narratives that are not part of the Wrightian version of the comprehensive Pauline proto-narrative can, of course, also influence the discourse. The conceptions that are respectively brought into focus by these two authors deserve their own examination.

14. Narrative Substructures according to Richard B. Hays

The category of narrative substructures, which Hays introduced into the exegetical discussion, should continue to play an important role in Pauline exegesis. It proves to be an extremely promising heuristic tool – both with respect to the analysis of non-narrative textualizations (Chapter 16, section 2) and with regard to the configuration of explicit narratives with different content (Chapter 16, section 3).

In practice, however, it is always necessary to pay attention to the “explanatory potentials” of this assumption and to that of the competing hypotheses (Chapter 15, section 4): Thus, with reference to the example of 2 Cor 2.14, I illustrate both the promise of the category and the danger of postulating narrative substructures because elements of the text would “make sense” against this background, even though the text as a whole does *not* correspond to what one would *expect* in the case of the assumed proto-narrative. It is also always necessary, of course, to give equal (!) consideration to the (respective estimation of the) background plausibility of the substructure hypothesis. Provided that these guiding principles are observed, a careful application also of this category of “implicit” narrative to the Pauline letters is indeed desirable and promises numerous new insights in the engagement with individual problems relating to the interpretation of specific texts.

15. The Comprehensive Worldview Narrative of Paul according to N. T. Wright

The approach of Wright is characterized by the fact that he proceeds from the assumption that a *single, coherent “implicit narrative”* can be derived from the Pauline letters. As a theoretical basis, Wright points to a study of Petersen on Philemon. Peterson had compiled and chronologically ordered all the events that are contained or also only implied (thus, e.g., the reception of the writing) in the letter (Chapter 17, section 2). Upon closer examination, however, the narrative that is obtained in this way proves to be the *narrative of the exegete*. While such an approach may have a justified place (e.g., in the framework of a “narrative history”), it stands in sharp contrast to Petersen’s and Wright’s claim to identify “the story of Paul.” This claim makes an understanding of the implicit narrative as *proto-narrative*, i.e., as a nexus of events that is narratively connected *through Paul’s mental activity*. The fact that Paul could potentially have identi-

fied with our construct is not sufficient to turn the narrative into “his” narrative. If we accept the idea that Wright’s larger implicit narrative needs to be understood as a proto-narrative, it follows, in turn, that Wright cannot appeal to Petersen for his methodology.

This criticism, however, does not apply only to Wright’s comprehensive conception but also to much more cautious reconstructions, which are also found among critics of the “narrative approach,” for example, when scholars reconstruct a narrative of Paul with the aid of a certain “topic” or with a focus on a certain “figure” – without providing evidence that this connection has not been first established by them (see Chapter 17, section 3).

Such an approach is fundamentally problematic because it cannot simply be assumed that scattered statements on an entity in the text are part of the same storyline of a proto-narrative. As is also the case with explicit narratives, the same figure can appear with quite *different* functions in *different* narratives or in different threads of the proto-narrative. Instead of the common concentration on individual figures as crystallization points of proto-narratives, it is therefore necessary, for methodological reasons, to recommend an analysis of the text that follows the order of the text (Chapter 17, section 4.1). It is only in this way that proto-narratives, which initially appear disparate, actually belong together (cf., for example, the analysis of Gal 4). The quest for different storylines that follow individual narrative figures belongs in the *aftermath* of such a reconstruction, since this is an act of describing interpretations, which presuppose a text that is to be interpreted in the first place.

For the combination of several proto-narratives into a single, more comprehensive narrative, one must, in addition to taking one’s orientation from the order of the text, also consider the fact that very different constellations are possible here (Chapter 17, section 4.2). For example, in two *independent mental acts of narration*, reference can be made to events that, though they follow upon each other chronologically in the real world, do not, in fact, belong to the same proto-narrative, so that it would not be appropriate to synthesize them here.

Thus, Wright’s thesis must be problematized from a methodological perspective, and yet it simultaneously presents an attractive research program. Scholarship still needs to show whether and to what extent the different proto-narratives that we can reconstruct on the basis of the Pauline letters can also *be synthesized*. The overview in Chapter 14 of the different possibilities of establishing future references (with different degrees of certainty) and thus of creating narrative fragments may provide especially helpful categories and pointers for this analysis.

For this evaluation of the thesis of the comprehensive “larger implicit narrative” of Wright, which still remains to be done, it is necessary, of course, to be able to adequately grasp its exact form. For this reason, the present work also seeks to flesh out Wright’s conception in narratological terms (Chapter 17, section 5). A precise reproduction in narratological categories is made difficult at times by the fact that Wright’s terminology is sometimes polyvalent and his illustrations are sometimes misleading. In the narratological categories used here, Wright’s conception may be sketched out as follows:

1. One could assume that in the wake of the Damascus experience, Paul meditates upon the proto-narrative, which is primarily taken from the Holy Scriptures, and reformulates it in such a way that the crucified Messiah could be integrated into it (Chapter 17, section 5.6). One can speak here of a mental “leading act of narration,” which gave rise to a comprehensive proto-narrative.
2. Since this narrative grounds the Pauline self-understanding, one might postulate that it finds expression in fragmentary form time and again. One could therefore assume that isolated references to events, miniature narratives, and narrative substructures respectively represent narrative fragments of this narrative, which Paul has mentally present in the moment of writing. These fragments would thus give insight into different sections of the proto-narrative and could be synthesized into a comprehensive proto-narrative, with it being especially necessary to pay attention to the thematic and temporal connections that the text itself signals.
3. If the attempt to reconstruct this narrative succeeds, then its overall plot can be established, which may involve a chronological rearrangement of the events as they allegedly occur in the proto-narrative. Subsequently, one could attempt to describe it by way of abstraction as consisting of *three plots/storylines* (Chapter 17, section 5.7). For this task, it is important to keep in mind that a plot is not simply “part” of a narrative, but it presupposes interpretation. The question of whether this interpretation is plausible is connected not least to the question of *how* a narrative is narrated. Thus, the task is not simply to identify references to events. Instead, it is also necessary to examine whether specific matters are connected within the narrative fragments *in the particular way that one would expect* in the case of the postulated narrative. For example, it must be clarified whether the Pauline letters contain narrative fragments in which Israel is indeed related to humanity in the role that Wright assumes (and analogously whether the Messiah is integrated into the history of his people as “true Israelite,” etc.).
4. A potential critique of Wright in light of the last consideration reckons with the possibility, however, that exegetes are not the only ones who can interpretively evaluate the proto-narrative of Paul. Paul himself might have identified individual storylines *as such* out of the entirety of the events contained in his proto-narrative (Chapter 17, section 5.8). Just as Wright can paraphrase these plot threads sequentially as three narratives (cf. Chapter 17, section 5.4), it is also possible for Paul to draw on the storylines as bases for new acts of narration. In that case, one could, for example, explain the fact that in Gal 1.4 only the “story of humanity” finds expression and the Israel components – which present another, supporting plot thread in the main narrative – are “lacking.”
5. Wright could make the case that these “shortened” narratives can be understood adequately only when one correctly grasps that they arise for Paul out of the interpretation of his own guiding narrative, which thus never completely fades

into the background, even though Paul, in the meantime, tells stories at times with a wider and at times with a narrower focus.

The individual assumptions are not without difficulties and in any case not without alternatives (cf., e.g., Chapter 17, section 5.6.2 for Hays' different understanding of the "main act of narration" as a process that accompanied the Pauline mission). On the other hand, with its emphasis on the implicit narrative in the Pauline letters, the conception takes up an aspect that does indeed appear to be underdeveloped in previous scholarship. Even though Wright's sketch – both in detail and with respect to the overall contours – still requires extensive scrutiny with reference to the text and even though the paradigm in its absoluteness, as a more or less monocausal explanation of all the phenomena of the text, probably will not gain (broad) acceptance, it is thus at least necessary to acknowledge this important push in the right direction. The precise understanding of what it means to speak of Paul "as storyteller" and the clarification of the question of the extent to which this manner of speaking about the apostle is appropriate is and remains an important task of Pauline scholarship.

16. Looking Forward

The present work had the goal of critically taking up the impulses introduced by the "narrative approach" and integrating them into a *narratologically founded and text-linguistically explicated* perspective on the Pauline letters. In the process, both explicit narrative textualizations and implicit mental proto-narratives have proven to be extremely relevant entities for the interpretation of the text.

At the same time, however, it has proven to be true again and again that one must proceed with great caution here in order to prevent exegetical uncontrolled growth. I hope that scholarship will not be scared off by the potential problems of the analysis and by the fact that I have highlighted them frequently. These discussions of the obstacles – which are undoubtedly real in my opinion – can ultimately be understood as constructive guidelines for a comprehensive analysis of the Pauline texts from a narratological perspective.

It is my hope that this book will help to advance the discussion in two respects. First, Chapters 4 through 7 offer a very detailed presentation of the text grammar of Heinrich von Siebenthal, which will hopefully contribute to an increased use of his approach in exegetical scholarship. At the same time, however, concrete Pauline texts are also already discussed here. Chapters 12 to 14 also provide individual observations on numerous passages throughout the whole Pauline epistolary corpus, so that other New Testament scholars may find diverse building blocks that can also be used to subject the letters they work on to a narratological approach, i.e., alongside other approaches that retain their justification.

A disadvantage of the presentation chosen for Chapters 12 through 14, which are oriented to the variety and breadth of the linguistic possibilities of expression, lies in the fact that it can obfuscate the fact that narrative structures actually hold together and make intelligible, in context, larger portions of text or entire texts. This also applies

– to a lesser extent – to earlier chapters (e.g., Chapter 7). To be sure, cross-references to phenomena that can be analyzed in conjunction were inserted into the text when possible, but it should also be stressed again here that it is the systematic assessment of larger text parts in relation to the letter as a whole that ultimately allows for the most significant insights.

A brief look at Galatians demonstrates this. Of course, I focused on the extensive narrative textualization of Gal 1.13–2.21, highlighting different narratologically suspicious features and attempting an overall interpretation.³ This fundamental understanding is, however, also confirmed by the immediate embedding of the narrative – and, moreover, it can be demonstrated on this basis that the narrative exhibits a very specific function that has its place within the broader communicative intention of the author (cf. Chapter 8, section 5.4 on the narration-specific tasks, as they are carried out especially in Gal 1.10–12 and in the transition to 3.1). Fragments of proto-narratives, such as the petition in Gal 4.12, also contribute to this text-function (cf. the discussion of Gal 4.12 and of Gal 4.30 in Chapter 8, section 4.4.4). It is part of a small proto-narrative, which is clearly identifiable in the immediate context. The way Gal 4.12 interlocks with these earlier signals concerning Paul's communicative intention demonstrates that this smaller proto-narrative is part of a more comprehensive proto-narrative about the Galatians (on the smaller proto-narrative of Gal 4.1–12, cf. Chapter 9, section 5; see also Chapter 17, section 4.2.2 on the unity within that proto-narrative; cf. also the discussion of the narrative substructure within Gal 4.1–7 in Chapter 16, section 3). Since this extensive proto-narrative underlies the writing as a whole, it also casts light on very small fragments, such as Gal 1.6 (cf. Chapter 8, section 4.4.1) or even the purpose clause in Gal 1.4 (Chapter 14, section 5.3.2.6). This last verse, in particular, raises the question of the extent to which this proto-narrative is itself part of a larger mentally simulated proto-narrative (cf. Chapter 17, section 5.8 on the possibility of the “reworking” of a very comprehensive original Pauline main narrative).

As this – very selective – overview shows, the discussion of individual⁴ Pauline

³ See the index of C. Heilig, *Paulus als Erzähler?* for details. Some of the discussed aspects would be, in the order of the text, the following ones. Text structure and plot/theme in Gal 1.13–17 (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2), elliptical narration and contextual prior knowledge in Gal 1.15–17 (Chapter 8, section 3.4), the macrostructure of the propositional macro-structure in Gal 1.15–17 (Chapter 5, section 5.1.2.1), the influence of aspect and tense on the information structure in Gal 1.16 and Gal 1.17 (Chapter 4, section 8.1.3.4 and Chapter 6, section 3.3.4.4), the adversative connection in Gal 1.16c–17 (Chapter 5, section 3.6), the disnarration in Gal 1.16c–17a (Chapter 10, section 1), the meaningful connection of temporal blocks in Gal 1.18, 1.21, and 2.1 (Chapter 5, section 5.2.3), the elliptical narration on the basis of world knowledge in Gal 1.18–19 (Chapter 8, section 3.6), the embedded narration type in Gal 1.18–21 (Chapter 8, section 7.3), elliptical and summary narration in Gal 1.21–2.1 (Chapter 8, section 3.2), the explicative connection in the embedded narrative in Gal 1.23 (Chapter 5, section 3.8), foreshadowing to the past of the storyteller in Gal 2.2 and 2.16–17 (Chapter 11, section 6.2), embedded narration in 2.4 and 2.5 (Chapter 6, section 3.5), narrative figure and text function in Gal 2.11 (Chapter 8, section 4.4.4), embedded narration in Gal 2.12 (Chapter 6, section 3.5), etc.

⁴ On a canonical level this can, of course, also go beyond the letter as a whole, in which case the intertextual connections – which the present work often perceived to be inadequately integrated in the interpretation – within the framework of the assumption of pseudepigraphy could also find an appropriate place. Cf., for example, M. Ebner, *Der Brief an Philemon*, EKKNT 18 (Ostfildern: Patmos, 2017), 148–50 on Col 4.7–9 as narrative connection of Phlm 13, 21.

letters in text-sequence under the aspect of narrativity would be possible and potentially very profitable. In the medium term, a commentary series on the New Testament texts – including the Pauline letters – from a narratological perspective would therefore be extremely desirable. The same verdict applies to a text-grammatical analysis of the propositional macrostructure of the New Testament texts as well as, in general, the text-linguistic description of text sorts used in the communication sphere of early Christianity by participants in this communication.⁵

The cases of plagiarism in the genre of New Testament commentaries, which have repeatedly made headlines in recent years, point to a fundamental problem, namely, that the variety of the descriptive and interpretive approaches to the text and the flood of the secondary literature that must be cited – which sometimes does not even take into account the fact that these different operations are sometimes incompatible – basically no longer permit the production of all-encompassing biblical commentaries.⁶

It would therefore be very advisable to limit the tasks that authors of the individual series are obligated to fulfill. The combination of highly specialized commentary series that comment on individual descriptive dimensions of the text (and only on these and only where they are present), and proposals on text-meaning composed within the framework of different theories of interpretation (which consider only the descriptions relevant for this purpose and only alternative interpretations that make use of the same conception of meaning and are, thus, ultimately comparable) appears to offer the best chance of escaping from the present misery.⁷

⁵F. Simmler, “Textsorten des religiösen und kirchlichen Bereichs,” in *Text- und Gesprächslinguistik/Linguistics of Text and Conversation*. 1. Halbband: *Text- und Gesprächslinguistik*, ed. G. Antos, K. Bringer, W. Heinemann, and S. F. Sager. Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft/Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Sciences 16/1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 681: “As for the Old Testament, so also for the New Testament writings (Gospels, Acts, Apocalypse, Letters) there is no complete linguistic text analysis or text sort classifications.” Paul is not even mentioned in the short considerations that follow. Since the text grammar of Heinrich von Siebenthal relies to some extent on the work associated with the SIL International, the volumes of the Semantic and Structural Analysis Series offer at least some initial contribution toward closing the first of these two gaps. See the interaction in the present work with E. M. Rogers, *A Semantic Structure Analysis of Galatians* (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics).

⁶S. E. Porter analyzes commentaries on Romans from different periods of time against the background of (what constitutes in his judgment) the respectively current linguistic state of knowledge. See S. E. Porter, “The Linguistic Competence of New Testament Commentaries,” in *On the Writing of New Testament Commentaries: Festschrift for Grant R. Osborne on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, ed. S. E. Porter and E. J. Schnabel, TENTS 8 (Leiden: Brill, 2012). Despite all disagreement with respect to the insights linguistics holds for exegetes (on this, see, in detail, Chapter 6, section 3.3.4, on information structure and section 3.1 in the same chapter on the temporality of Greek tenses), Porter’s concluding judgment (pp. 52–53) is to be affirmed. The claim to discuss every dimension of the text leads – already due to the mass of secondary literature and also because of the great breadth of necessary competencies – to an over-taxation, which finds expression in the fact that many “commentaries have become less commentaries on the Greek text, or even on the text in translation, and more commentaries on previous commentators – as these commentaries provide the major source of information for current commentators.”

⁷Porter, “Linguistic Competence,” 53 calls for at least the first of these two steps in a way that is indeed convincing: “I believe that it is time to re-assess what it is to write a commentary, and to adjust our sights to something much more manageable and attainable – commentaries that specialize in particular elements of the text, or that reflect particular viewpoints, and that can make a valid attempt to cover the most important secondary literature and actively respond to it in the commentary itself, all the while keeping the text

Bibliography

- de Jonge, I. J. F. *Narratology and Classics: A Practical Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Ebner, M. *Der Brief an Philemon*. EKKNT 18. Ostfildern: Patmos, 2017.
- Fludernik, M. *An Introduction to Narratology*. Translated by P. Häusler-Greenfield and M. Fludernik. Abingdon: Routledge, 2009.
- Heilig, C. *Paulus als Erzähler? Eine narratologische Perspektive auf die Paulusbriefe*. BZNW 237. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2020 [<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110670691>].
- . *Paul the Storyteller: A Narratological Approach*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2024.
- Herman, D. *Basic Elements of Narrative*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- Porter, S. E. "The Linguistic Competence of New Testament Commentaries." Pages 33–56 in *On the Writing of New Testament Commentaries. Festschrift for Grant R. Osborne on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*. Edited by S. E. Porter and E. J. Schnabel. TENTS 8. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- Rogers, E. M. *A Semantic Structure Analysis of Galatians*. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1989.
- Simmler, F. "Textsorten des religiösen und kirchlichen Bereichs." Pages 676–89 in *Text- und Gesprächslinguistik/Linguistics of Text and Conversation*. 1. Halbband: *Text- und Gesprächslinguistik*. Edited by G. Antos, K. Bringer, W. Heinemann, and S. F. Sager. Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft/Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Sciences 16/1. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000.

as the center of focus. In other words, we should have commentaries that investigate the linguistic issues of the Greek text (I don't know of a commentary series devoted to such an approach), the historical and literary issues, or the theological issues; as well as commentaries that approach the text from a particular point of advocacy, such as an epistolary commentary, or a historical commentary, or a particular ideological commentary." The "Papryologische[n] Kommentare zum Neuen Testament" (edited by P. Arzt-Grabner, J. S. Kloppenborg, and Mauro Pesce) provides such an approach (with different degrees of success, of course). In other commentary series (which, for example, apparently have something "sociological" in view), the conceptual orientation is unfortunately often less clearly recognizable. This unfortunately applies also to numerous series that are committed, according to their titles, to a specific concept of meaning. The Semantic Structural Analysis Series of SIL provides at least a stimulating text-grammatical preliminary work that is sketched out in rough lines. However, the interaction with Rogers, *Galatians* in the present work also reveals a lack of sharpness with respect to individual propositional connections, which also has an impact upon the analysis of higher levels of the semantic structure. It also becomes clear that the narratological approach, on the one hand, and the semantic-communicative interpretation of narrative textualizations that integrates these narratological categories, on the other hand, require a more comprehensive "toolbox." At least as one work among many others, the New Testament is planned to be included in the forthcoming series "Brill's Narratological Commentaries on Ancient Texts" (edited by J. F. de Jong and R. Kirstein). The theoretical basis for the series is to be provided by I. J. R. de Jonge, *Narratology and Classics: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); M. Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology*, trans. P. Häusler-Greenfield and M. Fludernik (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009); D. Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).