Bruce Winter, Philo and Paul Among the Sophists

A summary of key chapters

Introduction

‘Is Paul Among the Sophists?’ is a question that would have been asked of Paul in his role as a public speaker in the first century. It would have been thought appropriate for any itinerant speaker in the early Roman empire, ‘such was the interest in, and status of, the virtuoso orators who dominated much of the public and intellectual life of the cities in the East.’ The purpose of Winter’s book is to explore in what sense Paul (and Philo) were ‘among the sophists.’ (1).

Much discussion of the Pauline corpus has centred on his [supposed?] indebtedness to ancient rhetoric for an understanding of how he wrote. However, no attention has been paid to how his letters enhance our understanding of the first century sophistic movement in Corinth. Generally, the NT documents are an important source of information about the social world of the first century for the ancient historian (2).

How did Paul, the Hellenised Jew and Christian apostle, relate to the sophistic tradition both in secular Corinth and in the Christian community which he established in the Roman colony? (3).

A σοφιστής originally referred to an ancient wise man. By the first century, it referred to those rhetoricians whose ability in oratory was such that they could both secure a public following and attract students to their schools. Bowersock defines a sophist as ‘a virtuoso rhetor with a big public reputation.’ The movement had its roots in the second half of the fifth century BC. The history of the growth of the movement is somewhat sketchy, but by the first half of the first century AD the ‘Second Sophistic’ was flourishing. Philo, in his own day, could observe that the sophists were ‘winning the admiration of city after city, and … drawing well-nigh the whole world to honour them.’ (4).

Three branches of rhetoric: judicial [forensic?], deliberative, and epideictic oratory. Their ‘art’ (τέχνη) was claimed to be the mother of all other arts and sciences. Consequently, young men were sent to the sophists to be educated by means of model speeches delivered in the classroom and also by observing the public declamations of their teacher (4). The sophists taught rules on style, and the management of the voice and body. The first and second centuries AD saw the sophists continue to combine the activities of declaiming in public and teaching students their skills [the former being the means of obtaining students for the latter, I believe] (5).

The training provided by a sophist was seen as essential preparation for a young man wishing to enter into professional and political life. Senators, forensic rhetoricians and councillors, as well as civic and provincial ambassadors and officials of the imperial government all came from the sophists’ schools. ‘Parents expected the sophist to make public speakers of their sons, for they judged that this form of education was most useful in producing leaders accomplished in the great art of persuasion whether it be in the legal courts or the council or political assembly of their city’ (5).

Winter follows others, most notably J Munck, in positing a rhetorical and/or sophistic background [distinction between these two terms?] as the cause of tensions between Paul and the Corinthian church. Munck argued that chs 1-4, which deal with bickering and divisive elements, simply reflects the Hellenistic milieu of the sophistic movement (9). He says that the Corinthians identified their new faith as a kind of wisdom. Its leaders were teachers of wisdom and they were the wise men who had drawn on that wisdom (10).

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1 Bruce W Winter, Philo and Paul Among the Sophists: Alexandrian and Corinthian Responses to a Julio-Claudian Movement (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002 (2nd Ed)).
Mentions Bowersock’s work on the Second Sophistic (1969). Munck’s study was written prior to this important work, and so doesn’t quite succeed in showing that the ‘strife’ (ἐρίζ) and ‘jealousy’ (ζηλος) of 1:11 and 3:3 were sophistic. Other studies have failed to properly account for the church’s questioning of Paul’s leadership after his departure and the resistance of many to his return. There is also the matter of the sophistic language which the Corinthian detractors and Paul used in the controversy (10-11).

Liftin’s work also mentioned. He argues that 1:17-31 is Paul’s apologia against the Corinthians’ criticism that his preaching failed to measure up to Graeco-Roman eloquence. Says that it is a very important study, but does not sufficiently probe the influence of the sophistic movement on the thinking of the Christian community, which is the wider issue at stake in the Corinthian letters (11).

Also mentions the work of Betz, Pogoloff and Mitchell (12).

Winter believes that the sophistic movement provides the background for the problems in the church discussed by Paul in 1 Cor 1-4, 1 Cor 9, and 2 Cor 10-13. His aim is to show that: (1) the ‘strife’ and ‘jealousy’ of 1:11 and 3:3 are related to the sophistic movement; (2) Paul’s modus operandi in 2:1-5 has been formulated in the light of the conventions of sophists ‘coming’ to a city and operating in it; (3) Paul offers a substantial critique of the movement in 1 Cor 1-4; (4) Paul’s own ministry was critiqued by those trained within the sophistic movement using its canons in 2 Cor 10-13; (5) Paul, in answering his opponents in 2 Cor 10-13, does so in categories that show that he is arguing with Christian orators or sophists who are now within the Christian community in Corinth (13).

Introduction to Part II (the Corinthian Sophists)

Here, mentions that unnamed Jewish-Christian ‘orators’ were connected with the Corinthian congregation for an unknown period during the fifties (after Paul had visited and taught there for 18 months). [Winter, if I recall, believes that the Corinthians wanted the Apollos, not Paul, to return to them, but when he refused (wise man!), they obtained other ‘Christian’ rhetoricians. These rhetoricians then denigrated Paul according to sophistic standards. These are the men, and this is the critique, to which Paul responds in 2 Cor 10-13. There, I think, Paul engages in ‘covert allusions,’ demonstrating his own rhetorical ability but at the same time rejecting it and rebuking those who think that the ‘boasting’ and self-promotion of the sophists is totally inappropriate for gospel ministry. Paul in fact inverts the boasting conventions to show up the absurdity of it all.]

Mentions that Paul himself was trained in Greek rhetoric (112).

Ch 8: Paul and Sophistic Conventions

Chapter will argue that Paul deliberately adopted an anti-sophistic stance and defended his church-planting activities against a backdrop of sophistic conventions, perceptions and categories. Paul’s converts formulated a sophistic convention of ‘discipleship’ which, in turn, exposed the church to the inevitable problems of dissension and jealousy associated with that secular movement. The problem was aggravated to some extent by the modus operandi of Apollos, who arrived subsequently to Paul’s departure (141).

Paul critiques the sophistic tradition in 1 Cor 1-4. This critique angered at least some in the congregation, namely those who are wise by the world’s standards (1 Cor 3:18). Along with other anti-Paulinists in the church, they had become ‘puffed up’ in the face of Paul’s inability to return to Corinth at that point (4:18-19). In fact, despite the congregation’s loyalty to different teachers, it as a whole had been persuaded to invite Apollos to return – an invitation that Apollos rejected for the present (16:12). Subsequently the church appointed men with Greek rhetorical training to teach the congregation. It seems that these teachers had access to Paul’s critique of the sophistic tradition, because they ridiculed his performance as a public speaker by drawing on categories from his own apologia and critique of the sophistic tradition
found in 1 Cor 1-4, 9. Their criticisms can be recovered from 2 Cor 10:10 and 11:6, and are supplemented by an allusion to Paul’s allegedly ‘ sophistic’ attitude towards money (2 Cor 12:16-18). Munck’s thesis is regarded as substantially correct (142).

On Paul’s anti-sophistic ‘coming’ (1 Cor 2:1-5), Winter reviews the various views about what the passage means. Some say Paul was simply rejecting the ‘grand style’ of rhetoric, or the epideictic branch of oratory, while others argue that he renounces all the technical rhetorical devices in his gospel presentation. Technical rhetorical language dominates the passage (144).

When a sophist came to a city for the first time, he would give a sample of his eloquence by delivering a lecture/ declamation. This was often advertised in advance. If they managed to impress, the young men of the elite would then offer themselves as students, and so the sophist would establish himself in paideia. He might then be able to appeal to a wider group, declaiming to additional groups for which the audience would pay. The sophist might then establish himself in politeia as well: the city might choose to grant citizenship to the sophist. The sophist, through paideia and politeia, might then obtain high honours for himself (and money). The city would then expect the sophist to reciprocate by providing benefactions to the city and making himself politically useful by serving as a spokesman of an embassy to a proconsul or the emperor for obtaining concessions or resolving inter-city rivalry (145).

A good sophist would demonstrate his rhetorical prowess with an extempore oration (delivery of a written speech was of lesser worth). Furthermore, ‘presence’ (υπόκρισις) was an essential criterion (declarations were delivered standing up). An unbecoming appearance and a weak voice were fatal to the aspirations of a sophist (146).

Therefore, when a sophist came to a city he was expected to observe certain conventions and by such means establish his reputation as a speaker. The initial speech would usually begin with an introduction – an encomium (a formal, high-flown expression of praise) to the city – designed to encourage a favourable response to the declamation as a whole. The performances could take place in a large lecture hall or theatre. There might be a general invitation extended to the public, or a personal invitation to attend a private lecture. The sophist was on trial, for the citizens who heard him determined his success or failure in the city, the possibility of the latter being high (147). But an enhanced reputation and pecuniary gain were the fruit for those who were successful. Paul deliberately rejected these conventions when he came to Corinth (147).

Important rhetorical terms appear in 2:1-5. πίστις ('confidence,' ‘conviction,’ ‘proof’) had three dimensions to it. First, θρός (‘character’) was considered the most effective means of proof. It was about speaking in such a manner that the speaker appealed to the audience. They found him to be of good character and hence credible. The speaker had to project a sympathetic image of himself as a likeable and trustworthy person. The next πίστις was πάθος, which was about playing on the feelings of the audience. There were 10 such πάθη, the aim of all being to play on the hearer’s emotions. The final ‘proof’ was ἀποδεικνύομαι (used by Paul in v 5) – a ‘clear proof.’ [The reasoning/mind part.] A process of reasoning that leads from things perceived to something not previously perceived (149). Therefore, ethos was bound up with the speaker, pathos with the [emotional?] effect of the message on the hearer, and apodeisis with the arguments and contents of the message itself. By means of these three pisteis (proofs or techniques), the orator sought to persuade his audience.

Other rhetorical terms in 2:1-5 (on top of pisteis and apodeisis) are ‘power’ (δύναμις). Aristotle defines rhetoric as the ‘power’ of discovering the possible means of persuasion, and eloquence as the ‘power’ of speaking. Then there is πειθώ (actually a noun), which often appears in definitions of rhetoric (the art of ‘persuasion’); and ὑπεροχή (v 1) is also used by Aristotle to describe the superiority men feel based on race, power, and moral virtue, and also observes the ‘superiority’ of the eloquent man over against the incompetent speaker in the matter of oratory. [I wonder also about λόγος and σοφία. Does not Winter translate the former as ‘rhetoric’ here?] Winter says that even those who neglect the sophistic background
of the Corinthian situation concede that there is a constellation of rhetorical terms and allusions here (150).

Paul also speaks about his ‘coming’ to a city in 1 Thess 2. Paul wrote the letter from Corinth, and describes his ‘entry’ (ἐίσοδος) to the city of Thessalonica (150). He describes it in an antithetical way (‘not … but’). Succinct negatives are followed by two strong adversative statements referring to his own ethical conduct by contrast, as well as a series of negative comments exonerating his behaviour over against the conduct of others (151). The gospel message, he said, did not arise from ‘error,’ nor were there impure or immoral motives on his part. Nor did he aim to beguile his audience with ‘trickery’/deceit. His intention was to please God – not his audience, for God judges the motives of his messengers. Paul and his fellow workers did not engage in a flattering encomium, nor engage in flattery ‘at any time’ [ie even in subsequent preaching and teaching; contra Witherington who suggests that Paul used rhetoric when speaking to converts, even if he abandoned the ‘grand style’ when evangelising]. Winter says that λόγος here should be translated as ‘rhetoric’ – the ‘rhetoric of flattery’ (2:5a) (152). Paul also said that they aimed to please God, and not to use the gospel as a ‘cloak of covetousness’ (v 5).

Paul also said that he did not exercise his apostolic right to financial support. He worked night and day so that he would not be a burden on them – unlike the sophists who boasted that ‘their hands had never known labour.’ He shared both the gospel and himself with the community. His behaviour among them was ‘holy,’ ‘righteous,’ and ‘blameless’ (2:10) (154).

With whom is Paul contrasting himself? Not with other Christian missionaries and teachers. Rather, with other teachers who were already living in Thessalonica when he arrived there. That is, those who sought glory and praise and financial gain, and did so by deceptive means such as flattery – the public orators and sophists. Therefore, Paul adopted an anti-sophistic stance when he undertook his mission in Thessalonica. [It was the sophistic movement that determined the manner of his είσοδος] (155).

As to his coming to Corinth, 2:1-5 contrasts Paul’s coming with established sophistic conventions. Paul’s modus operandi was a calculated anti-sophistic stance adopted to replace conviction derived from sophistic rhetorical wisdom with confidence in the power of God (155).

2:1-5 is in two sections, each introduced with a καγώ. It introduces his evangelistic method (both on arrival and used throughout his visit), with the overall purpose stated in the final clause (v 5) (ίνα). It is an autobiographical account of why Paul will not preach the message of the cross using ‘the wisdom of words’ and why the one who glories should glory only in the Lord (155-56).

On the grammar of 2:1, Winter argues that Paul is not focusing on his physical arrival, but on the stance he took when he arrived. Κάγω ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, άδελφοί, ἡλθὼν οὐ καθ’ ύπεροχήν λόγου ή σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. The prepositional phrase, beginning with κατά, indicates the manner of Paul’s coming and not the manner of his proclamation. That is, it goes with ἡλθὼν and not καταγγέλλων. It’s not simply that Paul rejected the ‘grand style’ of oratory [but happily employed other forms of oratory], but that he consciously rejected all rhetoric, and the superiority of it in the modus operandi of his gospel. Winter approves of the translation: ‘When I came to you I did not come in such a way as to distinguish myself in eloquence or wisdom’ (156). Paul did not arrive in Corinth with a
sophistic attitude of superiority (ὑπεροχή) and the goal of establishing his own reputation. He did not ‘present’ himself and deliver an encomium on the greatness of Corinth. Rather, he came to declare Jesus, the crucified Messiah. [With such a message, there could be no grounds whatsoever for self-promotion or superiority] (157).

In vv 3-5, Paul also says that he rejected the three traditional rhetorical proofs (or means) of persuading his hearers that his message was true. He did not labour to project or manufacture an image of himself as likeable and trustworthy – someone who could identify with their feelings – in order to put them in a receptive state [the ἡθος proof] (157). Instead, Paul was with the Corinthians ‘in weakness and fear and much trembling’ (v 3). There are many explanations for this verse, but arguably the terms are a ‘trilogy of shame’ and the antithesis of the persuasive, forceful, and eloquent orator. Marshall aligns them with the terms his opponents use of him in 2 Cor 10:1, 10 – ‘weak,’ ‘servile,’ and ‘contemptible.’ In other words, as Lifton says, the weakness Paul is speaking about here relates to weakness in rhetorical skills and power. Paul was anti-ἡθος and anti-πάθος [ie refused to play on the feelings of the audience]. He did not project the ‘character’ or ‘characteristics’ expected of an orator. From his description of himself he certainly would not have enticed the audience by playing on their feelings, nor would his preaching have evoked shouts of ‘bravo!’ or ‘marvellous!’ [or, dare I say it, ‘amen!’]. [Somewhere in a footnote in Winter, I think, is an ancient source about what Paul looked like, which if true would have seriously undercut any success he may have had as a sophist. The footnote is fn 73 on p 222 re the criticisms of Paul by the Christian sophists in 2 Cor 10:10 (‘his bodily presence is weak.’ The quote is from an ancient source, which says that ‘Paul was a man little of stature, bald-headed, with crooked legs, well-born, with eye-brows meeting and a long nose.’] (158).

As to the remaining proof – ἀποδείξεως – Paul says in v 4a that his preaching was not with the ‘persuasiveness of rhetoric’ [note Winter’s translation of λόγος here] but in ‘clear proof’ (ἀποδείξεως) of the Spirit and ‘power’ (δύναμις) (158). These terms, plus πειθόν, have already been shown to have rhetorical connotations. Paul’s selection of these terms is important, for it drives home his point. His preaching did not achieve results through the persuasiveness of wisdom – that is, the art of persuasion, which is rhetoric. Rather, the ‘clear proof’ was the Spirit’s work and power. As Paul says in 2 Cor 12:12, the signs of apostolic ministry were manifest in Corinth ἐν ὑμῖν, and this supernatural conviction and force furnished a better proof of the gospel’s truth than any logical process. Paul didn’t simply reject a particular style of rhetoric (ie epideictic); he did not merely substitute one form of oratory for another; the concluding ἵνα clause shows that where preaching was concerned, Paul’s overall strategy left no room for confidence in technical rhetorical devices (159). [At this point, I’m reminded of Gary Koo’s comment to me once that he’s seen many converted through a bad sermon, and no one converted through a good sermon. Conversion, he rightly concluded, is the work of the Spirit. This then begs the question: Why do we learn how to preach fine-sounding speeches at all?]

The Corinthians delighted in public declamations and orations. Paul, however, adopted a method of preaching that would have been unacceptable to them. He gives the reason in v 5b: So that their πίστις would be in God’s δύναμις rather than man’s σοφία (159).

Winter suggests that 1 Cor 1:26-31 (ie ‘not many of you were wise … Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord’), is anti-sophistic. Paul is once again seen to repudiate ingratiation, a favourite strategy of the sophists, so that the church’s πίστις might have a firm foundation (159).

Suggests that Paul used πίστις in the rhetorical sense of ‘proof.’ This is how the word would have occurred to an educated first century reader, given its use in the rhetorical handbooks and the cluster of rhetorical terms in vv 1-5 generally (159). This may be a unique use of the word in Paul, but that doesn’t constitute sufficient grounds for rejecting it (160). God gave the Corinthian converts the ‘proof’ of absolute certainty through the Spirit and power (160). It may well be that Paul used a double entendre – ‘proof’/‘faith.’ Paul has put rhetorical terms to a particular use for the purpose of his own argument. He is
telling the Corinthians that it was not the ‘demonstrations’ that the orators bring with their rhetorical proofs that were to be regarded as critical to any presentation to the audience. Rather, it was a demonstration of the Spirit and of power that resulted in the proof/faith. Paul’s *modus operandi* was that the converts’ proof/faith would not rest in the wisdom of men (ie the presenter), but in the power of God confirming the truth of the message (163).

‘By flouting accepted sophistic conventions and with the skilful use of terms wrenched from the semantic field of rhetoric, Paul aimed to further his central thesis, disclosed in 1 Corinthians 1.18, that the sophistic means of persuasion are unsuitable for securing belief in the gospel … He refused to anchor the confidence of the Corinthian converts in the persuasiveness of rhetorical argumentation; therefore, he adopted an anti-sophistic posture to eliminate any confusion of his message with that of the sophists. The Corinthian response to his person did not concern him as it did the orators. Thus he would not modify his “plain” style to elicit praise, instead striving to highlight the message rather than the messenger’ (164).

*Paul’s work in Corinth (1 Cor 9)* …

Sophists were expected to promise to undertake public benefactions when they settled in a city. They were expected to finance building projects to beautify the city. In contrast, Paul made no promise of material benefactions for Corinth (nor was there a rush of young men eager to be his disciples). Thereby, Paul deprived himself of the *entrée* that such promises would have won for him. Instead, in 1 Cor 9, Paul indicates that he *worked* at his craft. Plutarch said: ‘While we delight in the work [ie of craftsmen artisans], we despise the workman … Labour with one’s hands on lowly tasks gives witness, in the toil thus expended on useless things, to one’s own indifference to higher things … it does not necessarily follow that, if the work delights you with its graces, the one who wrought it is worthy of your esteem’ (164-65). Manual labour cost Paul credibility with many, presumably with those converted after his departure who did not wish to have a working class apostle back in their midst [an aside: there’s an interesting idea. Perhaps those who were converted under Paul and were his friends for that initial 18 months remained loyal to him, whereas those converted after who did not know him personally despised him on the basis of his objective ‘profile’ (ie a tradesman, a poor public speaker, etc)] (165). Winter wonders whether Apollos may well have exercised his right to financial support, since Paul only mentions Barnabas along with himself as not having used it in 1 Cor 9. This may have further encouraged the Corinthians’ preference for Apollos and exacerbated their (or at least the social elite among them) embarrassment at the prospect of having Paul back in their midst (165).

Verse 3: ‘my *apologia* to those who accuse me …’ Paul took a drastic step of refusing financial support while in Corinth. It got him off side with many. Why? In vv 1-11, he proves the right of an apostle to derive financial support from his hearers. But then says: ‘But we did not exercise this right over you.’ A *i[n* statement then gives the reason for this self-imposed burden: ‘in order that we may not give any hindrance to the gospel of Christ.’ Arguably this is yet another example of Paul’s anti-sophistic stance while in Corinth, because the connection between the reception of a speaker and financial gain would have been clear to the sophists (166).

Sophists were well-known for their appetite for wealth, to the point where it undermined their credibility as teachers of civic virtue (166). They charged high fees for their instruction in their schools, and also for their public display lectures. Only the wealthy could afford instruction in their schools. Also, many perceived that sophists were imposters and flatterers motivated by love of glory and money’ (167). [So, are we saying that Paul did not want to attract negative views about himself – that he did not want people to have a negative view about him, thinking that he was a greedy sophist? If that’s it, why then did certain people in the church look down on him. Would they not have been happy that he wasn’t charging money? I thought the Corinthians expected their sophistic teachers to take money and not lower themselves by working with their own hands. Perhaps this is where the risk came in. In being anti-sophistic with respect to money, he then debased himself socially by getting his hands dirty in manual labour – at least in the eyes of the social elite. The other question I have is why Paul would be concerned about his own
reputation, when he has effectively said already that it’s not his own reputation, but that of the gospel and of God, that concerns him. Perhaps Paul’s concern is that the gospel would be reduced to the same level as the sophist’s ‘truth,’ which was sold for a fee.]

Paul did not want to ‘live off’ the gospel because it would have led to him being identified with the commercialism of the sophists – an identification which he had already anticipated in his anti-sophistic ‘coming’ to Corinth (167-68).

2 Cor 2:17: ‘for we are not among the many who “hawk around” the word of God.’ Paul’s Corinthian audience might identify him with the sophists who charged willing students for the truth. ‘To correct this misconception of his ministry Paul replaces the sophists’ boast that they “knew nothing of labour” with his own: he charges nothing for his message (9:15) so as “not to use to the full my right in the gospel” (9:18)’ (168). The argument of vv 19-23 (‘to the Jews I become a Jew …’) further shows that Paul is adaptable so as to remove any obstacles which might hinder others from listening and responding to his message. Therefore, he forgoes his right to support. He did not want to be ‘all things to all men’ in order to gain honour and wealth, but in order to ‘save some’ (169).

Winter argues that vv 23-27 (‘Run so as to obtain the prize … I discipline my body and keep it under control …’) is a continuation of Paul’s anti-sophistic stance. The sophists boasted about their appearances and lifestyles. They gloried in their ‘enlightened’ celebration of the pleasures of life. They were ‘stout, sleek, robust, living luxuriously, proud, knowing nothing of labour, conversant with pleasures which carry the sweets of life to the all-welcoming soul by every channel of sense.’ In turn, they despised the so-called ‘lovers of virtue’ – those who were ‘destitute of the necessities of life … sallow, reduced to skeletons, with a hungry look for want of food, the prey of disease,’ engaged in ‘training for dying’ and studying ‘to die in the life in the body’ (169). Their opponents, by contrast, said that the sophists only ‘fight in the shade’ (ie the school), ‘beating the air’ – declaiming powerfully and winning admiration in their mock encounters, but accomplishing little of consequence when engaged in real combat. Those who refuse to appear before the people and debate (‘the real combat’ according to Philo) are ‘degenerate athletes’ who only engage in ‘make believe sparring and wrestling.’ They ‘refuse to enter the stadium.’ Paul, however, does not box ‘in the air’ (v 26). Unlike the sophists, who boast about their lifestyle and justify it on the basis that the senses are the allies and friends of the soul, Paul buffalo his body lest he be rejected because of a lack of control over his appetites. His discipline and self-control contrasts starkly with the self-indulgence of the sophists. They [the sophists] lecture ad nauseam as experts on the classical virtues and the self-defeating nature of the corresponding vices but their behaviour denies the very virtues they espouse. Thus Paul goes beyond manual labour to a thoroughly anti-sophistic lifestyle in order to decrease further any possible connection with the sophists. He likens himself to a well-disciplined athlete (vv 24-26a): he is not what Philo calls a “shadow boxer”’ (170).

Paul, then, adopts his modus operandi in order to remove any obstacle to his message which might arise from his being identified – by his preaching or his lifestyle – with the sophists. He needs to adopt methods, however costly to himself, which further his message and protect him and his gospel from any suggestion that he is simply like the sophists.

The Corinthians’ sophistic response (1 Cor 1:12; 3:4). The young men who enrolled in the sophists’ schools were called μαθηταί and were also described as ζηλονταί because they gave exclusive allegiance to their teacher and were zealous for his reputation. Such loyalty resulted in strong competition between the disciples of different sophists. This rivalry was describes as ὑπεράσπισις or ἡμετεροτος (172). Winter argues that some of the Corinthian converts had begun to perceive themselves as ‘disciples’ ‘zealots’ of their Christian teachers according to the sophistic understanding of the term. Their attitude to Paul and Apollos was not all that different from that of disciples to their sophists. Paul describes their conduct in sophistic terms, namely as ἵρις and ζήλος (172-73).
The language of 1:12 and 3:4 (that is, the copula followed by the genitive) indicates relationship [ie the genitives are genitives of relationship – ‘I myself belong to Paul/Apollos/etc’]. [See also 3:21 and 6:19]. Perhaps the Corinthians considered themselves exclusively committed to one of the ‘itinerant’ teachers who had visited Corinth, following the sophistic precedent.

Paul also describes the Corinthians as κατὰ ἀνθρωπον περιπατεῖν and as ἀνθρωποι in 3:3-4. The preposition denotes measure or standard (‘according to,’ ‘after the fashion of’). Therefore, Paul is saying that his hearers are behaving (περιπατεῖν) in a thoroughly secular fashion.

In 1 Cor 3:1-3, Paul uses a constellation of terms to further indicate that the Corinthians are operating in a secular fashion. He links σάρκιος (‘made of flesh’ – ie babies; the –ιος ending indicating a material relationship), σαρκικός (‘behaving like children;’ the –ιος ending indicating an ethical relationship), and νήπιος with κατὰ ἀνθρωπον and ἀνθρωποι and uses them as antonyms of πνευματικό (spiritually mature). The Corinthians are babies, worldly, infants, and secular – and not spiritually mature – and this is the reason for the existence of ἐρίς and ζήλος (174-75).

As to those latter terms, are used by Philo to describe the wrangling and the drive to obtain victory in argument of the sophists (175). Dio Chrysostom describes the ‘disciples’ of the sophists as ‘zealots,’ which connotes imitation/emulation of the sophist in order to acquire the sophist’s art (τε,σον). Aristotle regards ζήλος as a positive virtue – the young and ‘high-minded’ are right to be ‘emulous’ of those with courage, wisdom, and authority (such as orators).

For Paul, the word when combined with ἐρίς has a negative connotation. Paul denounces any improper ‘emulation’ of himself by which anyone on his behalf is ‘puffed up’ against a supporter of Apollos (1 Cor 4:6). 1 Cor 3:4 indicates clearly that the divisions in particular have to do with Paul and Apollos. The ‘zeal’ and the ‘strife’ clearly have to do with matters of loyalty. Winter makes the point that the classic use of ἔτερος in the sense of ‘a division into two parts’ supports this reading (176). Arguably the allegiance of the members of the church is now effectively divided between two former teachers – Paul and Apollos. Winter then refers to 16:12 (περὶ δὲ Ἀπόλλων) – the church requesting Apollos to return to minister to the congregation – and also to 4:18, where there is obvious relief on the part of some that Paul’s promised return had not eventuated. These support the view that there is a split in the church between sophistic ‘zeal’ for one over the other (177).

The background and modus operandi of Apollos supports the view that the congregational party spirit and desire to emulate former teachers had been culturally determined by the sophistic movement in Corinth. In Acts 18, we see that he is ‘Alexandrian by birth,’ which indicates that he was a full citizen of the Greek πόλις. A series of rhetorical terms are then used about him. He is a ἀνήρ λόγιος – a phrase which Philo uses to describe those with rhetorical training. His handling of the OT is δύνατος and he ‘demonstrates’ (ἐπιδείκνυμι) in public that Jesus is the Messiah. Apollos, it appears, depended on his rhetorical skills in his open debates with the Jews in Corinth (178).

In conclusion, Winter says that certain Christians enjoyed the ministry of Apollos and persuaded the church, in spite of a commitment on the part of some to Cephas, to invite Apollos to return even though some had supported Paul. As to the financial hardships that Paul endures to avoid misconceptions about his ministry, some in the church continued to misconstrue either the theological motivation behind his Corinthian activity or the nature of Christian discipleship. Even when Paul was with them, he said he needed to treat them as infants (3:1-2), indicating that Paul felt a disturbing degree of commitment to him. The subsequent arrival and preaching of one trained in rhetoric only heightened the Corinthians’ predilection for secular perceptions of teachers. As 2 Cor 10-13 shows, even Paul’s discussion of the problem in 1 Cor 1-4, 9 did not resolve this culturally conditioned response to teachers. The proposal of the congregation to invite Apollos back provided the opportunity to signal to Paul that he was not welcome. This appears to have been the catalyst that brought the divisions into the open (179).
Chapter 9: Paul’s Critique of the Corinthian Sophistic Tradition

Paul critiques the Corinthian sophistic tradition in 1 Cor 1-4 (180).

As to the so-called *apologia* of Paul’s ministry, Paul exhorts his hearers to have a common mind (v 10). Their lack of it lies behind the stife-creating *σχίσματα* (vv 10-11) and was caused by their perception of themselves as *μαθηταὶ* and *ζηλωταὶ* of certain Christian teachers in Corinth (181). His call, however, is not to a mere consensus, but to have ‘the same mind and the same judgment’ as himself on the matter. Winter thinks that Paul’s use of *καταρτίζω* in v 10 is decisive on this point. The verses are not implying that there is a lack of unity in the church. There is unity in certain matters [eg the letter that they’ve joined together to write, the decision to invite Apollos back and, I take it, Winter is saying that there is some sort of culturally conditioned agreement about the sophistic-style divisions.] (181). What Paul wants, then, is to push the Corinthians outside their cultural sphere and invite them to follow him not as *μαθηταί* but *μιμηταί* (182).

Paul’s concern is not to reinforce his own position over against them [in which case the description of these chapters as an *apologia* is misleading], but to refute what he believes to be a serious error on the part of the Corinthians. He is not simply justifying his *modus operandi*, but critiquing the Corinthians. And this critique begins, says Winter, not merely at v 10, but in the thanksgiving of vv 4-9 (182).

He says that Paul’s encouragement to the Corinthians in vv 5-7, ὅτι ἐν παντὶ ἐπιπλούσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει ... ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑπερείσθαι ἐν μηδὲν χαρίσματι, is aimed at removing from them a feeling of inadequacy because they don’t have rhetorical skill. As Paul thanks God, he alludes to what troubles him. If Paul did not use rhetoric in his preaching, then no rank-and-file Christian should feel precluded from either speaking in the church (1 Cor 12-14) or from sharing the Christian message with outsiders. Although the sophists regularly drew attention to the inadequacies of those without *paideia* and rhetorical training, the Christian is assured that he ‘lacks’ nothing because he is gifted by the Spirit (*χαρίσματα*). [I’m not quite sure how this fits within the notion that Paul is critiquing the Corinthian sophistic culture. Do they feel inadequate, or are they ‘puffed up’? Is it just a case of Paul marginalising the whole sophistic culture which makes much of rhetorical ability and denigrates a lack of it? Paul is saying that all that stuff is of no importance. Perhaps for some in the congregation, the culture manifested itself in feelings of inadequacy, while for others the problem was pride and ‘zeal.’ One point though: if Winter is right, and that part of Paul’s reason for turning away from rhetoric was to spare his hearers a sense of inadequacy on account of their lack of rhetorical training, then he is hardly likely to use rhetoric when writing to them. That is, Witherington’s view that Paul merely substitutes one form of rhetoric for another is illogical.] (184-85).

As to how v 10 relates to Paul’s discussion of Christ’s crucifixion, and baptism, Winter says that just as one enrolled in a school of a sophist or became a zealous follower and admirer at public declamations [so this is how Winter links the formation of divisions in the church even though not all would have had any experience as formal ‘disciples’ of a sophist – there was also the more popular form of discipleship of simply becoming a ‘far off’ ‘fan’], so the newly baptised received instruction from their Christian teacher. Where a household baptism occurred, the teacher entered into a social unit, which also had its cultural precedent in the sophistic movement. This, then, makes some sense of the leaders-parties-baptism nexus in these verses (186).

However, this does not actually address the argument. Paul’s real point is that the Corinthians’ sophistic-style loyalty to their former teachers is actually idolatry. They are putting the teachers in the place of Christ. For example, no one was baptised into Paul. Before their conversions, the Corinthians would have been familiar with confessions of belonging to Aphrodite, Apollo, Dionysos, etc (again taking the form of the copula plus a genitive of relationship). Paul uses the same language here to sheet home to the Corinthians exactly what they were doing (186-87).
In this passage, Paul judges the boasting of the sophistic tradition, concluding with a scriptural prohibition against all boasting. When Paul says in v 17 that he was sent not to baptise but to preach the gospel, the issue, says Lifton (with whom Winter agrees), is not the theological content of the message, but the form or manner of his preaching, for Paul follows up that statement with οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἀλλὰ μὴ κενωθῇ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The phrase, Lifton argues, means ‘without rhetorical skill,’ and he says that this governs the argument that follows. [Yes, arguably Paul is not simply saying that the ‘message’ of the cross – that is (it would seem), the content of the message of a crucified saviour – is ‘foolishness,’ but also the manner of the delivery of that message. In v 21, Paul speaks about the ‘foolishness of the proclamation.’ This seems to fit very well with the overall sophistic context of these chapters. No doubt the gospel could have been very persuasively presented with rhetorical flair by a sophist. After all, when rightly understood the message of Christ crucified reveals the wisdom of God. But Paul seems to be making the point that God confounds the wise and their boasting by saving people through a ‘foolish’ proclamation. A ‘plain,’ ‘weak,’ ‘uninspiring’ proclamation that nevertheless saves. It just goes to show that it’s not the form of our preaching that makes the difference; it’s the content and the ultimate author himself.] (187).

Winter links 1:17 with 2:4 (where Paul says that his speech and his kerygma were not delivered in the persuasiveness of rhetoric). The latter verse, he says, explicates the former. Σοφία relates to form, not content (188).

Paul eschews the rhetorical method of presentation because it ‘empties’ the cross of its essential message. Philo makes the point that rhetorical methods often overshadowed the message as a means to persuade the audience. ‘Audiences surrendered their critical faculties to the techniques of the sophists.’ Paul came to Corinth to present Jesus as the Messiah and also ‘him crucified.’ He did not aim to persuade his audience of the truth of this message by the use of the three pisteis in rhetoric (ethos, pathos, and apodeixis). He clearly sets out his reasons for doing so in 2:1-5: he does not want his hearers’ faith to rest in human wisdom, but in the power of God. As in 2:4 and 2:5, in 1:18 Paul adapts the rhetorical term δύναμις with λόγος to indicate where the true ‘eloquence’ or the ‘power’ of persuasion of the preached message resided. In both passages it rests with God through the crucified Messiah, and not with the rhetorical techniques of Paul or any other evangelist. ‘Because rhetorical techniques clouded content he declared them unsuitable. Attention would be diverted from the message of the crucified God as Paul or Apollos as orators themselves became the focal point’ (188). [To my way of thinking, this exposition of Paul’s attitude to sophistry demands that the sermon be abolished. There can be no legitimate ground for pastors and others to continue to craft and perform orations week after week. We are obliged to speak plainly to the congregation – to deliberately ‘dumb down’ our presentations so that those who come to faith in Christ do so because of God’s power and not because they are carried away or seduced by the ‘siren sound’ of the preacher’s fine rhetoric. The message is meant to direct us and draw us to Christ. But if we perform with sophistic eloquence – the pretence given that the message deserves to be delivered ‘well’ – then all we do is direct attention to, and draw people to, ourselves. In that way, we ‘empty’ the cross of its essential message. The sermon should be abandoned altogether. Nor should preaching be taught in theological colleges. Nor should churches ‘call’ pastors on the basis of their preaching ability. The content of what the man teaches, together with his own spiritual condition – his godliness, his obedience, his Christian maturity, etc – must be the determining criteria (if, of course, we’re going down the call-a-professional-to-do-all-the-ministry).]

Eloquence, then poses a threat to the gospel. But Paul also argues that God intended to destroy the wisdom of the wise, since it had not been the means by which he had come to be known. [Once again, there is no place for worldly wisdom, rank, status, boasting, or hero-worship in the church. Salvation is not just for the clever, or the rich, or the well-connected, or the eloquent, or the ordained, etc. On the contrary, such people are likely to be excluded from the kingdom, because they refuse to humble themselves and be ‘poor in spirit.’] The wise and the prudent are outlined in 1:20ff. They are the σοφός, the γραμματεύς, the συζητητής τοῦ αἰώνος τοῦ (188). There are a number of different views about who
these terms refer to, although there seems to be virtual unanimity that the ‘skilful debater of this age’ refers to the sophists – and is arguably Paul’s real concern in Corinth (189). Winter seems to argue that the first two terms are discussed in vv 20-25 (where Paul speaks about Greeks and Jews), while the activity of the last-mentioned individuals is reflected in the argument in vv 26-31 (190).

The sophists came from the elite social classes. Munck is right that those mentioned in v 26 – the οοφοί, δυνατοί and εὐγενεῖς – were used of the sophists (as well as the sophists’ students and their parents – the ‘powerful’ and the ‘well-born’). First-century authors, through their language, demonstrate that ‘rhetors,’ ‘wise men,’ the ‘rich,’ the ‘well-born,’ the ‘good’/’beautiful’ were much a muchness. There was an intimate connection between sophism and social status (190).

Winter surveys the ancient sources, and quotes Isocrates who argued that the men who were ‘superior and pre-eminent’ were not only ‘well-born’ and of ‘reputation,’ but were also noted for their wisdom and eloquence (191). Nothing had changed in Roman times. Magistrates of cities were nominated because they were ‘well-to-do.’ There was a property requirement in their qualifications for office. And along with the wealth came a certain kind of education. Therefore, 1 Cor 1:26 refers to the ruling class of Corinth from which orators and sophists came. As the first century inscriptions show, the orators contributed to the political life of the city. They were among the ‘powerful,’ ‘well-born,’ and ‘wise’ (192).

The sophists argued from a Platonic view of the senses as the allies of the soul that their wealth, fame, honours and offices enabled them to enjoy what nature intended. Therefore, they gloried in the trappings of their success, and demeaned others. The sophists were notable, rich, the leaders, healthy, robust, powerful, affluent, debauched, never working, and pleasure seeking. Their opponents were obscure, despised, low class, sallow, filthy, skeletons, hungry looking, prey of disease, training for dying. Paul uses a similar set of antonyms to show God’s work as contrasted with Fortune’s blessing. Status in secular Corinth belonged to the wise, the powerful and the well-born. But God calls the foolish of the world, the weak of the world, the despised, the nobodies (1 Cor 27:28; note the use of the neuter to emphasise the lowly state of the person) (193).

And so, while the Greeks seek wisdom (‘the wise’ of v 20) and the Jews (‘the scribe’) ask for a sign, the ‘debaters of this age’ (v 20) boast that their lifestyle testifies to the class to which they belong – ie the wise, the powerful, the well-born. However, where are they in God’s church? God has put them to shame – the wise, the strong, the ‘things being’ – choosing instead those who they themselves call ‘the foolish things of the world,’ the ‘weak things,’ the ‘low born/insignificant/inferior things,’ ‘the despised things,’ and ‘the things not being’ (194). God has chosen to humble all, including the sophist, so that no flesh might boast before him (v 28b). Upon those who were easy to look down upon, God had bestowed an all-sufficient status in Christ. In him they have ‘wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption’ (v 30). They may have had nothing in the way of secular status, but they had a lasting status conferred upon them in Christ. Therefore, says Paul quoting Jer 9:23-24, ‘Let him who boasts boast of the Lord.’ The full quote is important, because it proscribes the wise and the mighty and the rich from boasting of their attributes (194).

Therefore, in vv 26-31 Paul makes explicit what was implicit in the reference to the ‘skilful debater’ in v 20. God shames the Corinthian sophists’ boast – their argument from a successful life – but also supports his apologia [for his modus operandi?] that God has overthrown wisdom as the grounds upon which he can be known. There is no legitimate grounds for boasting save in that which glories in the Lord’s accomplishments (195).

Reversal of the sophist/disciple boasting and imitation (1 Cor 3:18-23). To those who presume themselves to be wise ‘among you’ (which Paul has already said are ‘not many’), Paul warns against self-deception. They ought to be foolish in order to be wise, for as the OT quotes show, the wisdom of this
world is foolishness in God’s eyes. Paul, then, continues to speak against the boasting of the ‘wise, powerful, and well-born’ (195).

However, he also speaks against the Corinthians boasting of their Christian teachers. In v 21b onwards, he tells the Corinthians that all things belong to them [genitive of relationship], including their teachers, and that they belong to Christ. [Earlier the Corinthians were saying that they belong to their teachers. Paul rebukes them for this, pointing out that they are actually guilty of idolatry. Here he seems to confirm this. If they belong to anyone, they belong to Christ. As to the teachers, the situation is actually reversed. The teachers belong to them!] ‘Paul radically reverses the μεθαστής/αοφιστής perception by which the congregation measured its relationship to the teachers, for the secular Corinthian precedent was totally inappropriate in the church. While sophistic Corinth may have affirmed ἐγὼ εἰμι … , and the Corinthian church did the same of its teachers, Paul is in effect stating, Παῦλος ἐστιν ὑμῶν. So within the Christian church “the sophist” belongs to the μαθητής’ (195-96). Winter goes on to make the point that the Christian teacher is seen in functional not status terms. In 3:5, Paul says ‘what’ is Paul rather than ‘who.’ This passage sums up the entire argument beginning in 1:18. The passage clearly rejects the Corinthian affirmations of loyalty in 1:12 and is the culmination of the argument spanning 1:10-3:23 (196).

The irony of Paul’s ‘covert allusion,’ boasting, status and true imitation, 1 Cor 4:6ff. In 4:6ff, Paul once again addresses Corinthian boasting in their teachers. The Corinthians are ‘puffed up’ on behalf of Paul against Apollos and vice versa. Like the students of sophists, they are engaged in εἰρονία and ἄρσεν – there is a competitive spirit among them (196).

Winter says that Paul announces in v 6 that he is making use of a rhetorical device called a ‘covert allusion:’ Ταῦτα δὲ, ἄδελφοί, μετασχημάτισα εἰς ἐμαυτὸν καὶ Ἀπόλλων δὲ ἑμᾶς. A covert allusion [is it a ‘figure of speech’?] could be used for a variety of reasons, and was usually be identified by the use of irony. The strange thing here is that Paul draws the Corinthians’ attention to the fact that he is using a covert allusion! Winter says that he ironically uncovers his covert allusion in order to advance his case (197-98) [I’m not quite with it yet! A definition of ‘covert allusion’ would have helped.]

Chapter 4 begins with a reaffirmation of the last verses of ch 3 – that the Corinthians need to regard himself and Apollos in non-status, functional terms, and he rebukes them from usurping the role of the divine Judge when they dare to assess his ministry [ie either positively or negatively depending on whom they ‘belong’ to]. They are not to judge prematurely. The ἀναφορά of v 6 is probably anaphoric – it relates back to what Paul has already said. He has applied these things for their benefit so that they might not go beyond what is written. A marked change then takes place. Paul refers to what they’ve been doing (ie becoming puffed up one against the other), and then ironically declares that the Corinthians are already ‘full,’ ‘rich,’ and ‘reigning.’ These terms find a ready echo in the sophists’ boasting. Paul wishes that his hearers would act according to their status in Christ and behave like kings, so that he could share their status with them (198). Paul then applies low-status terminology to himself and the apostles (cf 1:27-28) – they are ‘fools,’ ‘weak,’ and ‘dishonoured’ – and high-status terminology to the Corinthians – they are ‘wise,’ ‘strong,’ and ‘esteemed.’ This is their status in Christ – in spite of their secular status. [ie I think at that point Paul is not speaking ironically.] And the status of the ones they esteem in a sophistic way are in fact lowly (199).

Paul says that he uses irony not to shame them, but admonish them. He exhorts them to imitate him. The full weight of irony is seen in these verses. ‘[The Corinthians] must not, like the sophist, model themselves on their teacher’s mannerisms and techniques of rhetoric. Instead, they ought to emulate the apostles of the crucified Messiah with their low status and suffering – and the ignominy which that brings before the sophistic milieu of Corinth. This imitation, called his “ways in Christ” (v 17), bears no resemblance to that of the sophistic tradition’ (200).

In vv 18-21, Paul speaks of certain people who have become arrogant, as though Paul is not coming to them. Perhaps, in the light of their request for Apollos to return, they assume that Apollos will come and
Paul won’t [or at least they have shown their hand, and are now haughty and defiant]. They presume to have ‘power.’ The tradition of the sophist’s μαθηταί to imitate their sophist. Given that Apollos was a man of powerful eloquence, his ‘disciples’ at Corinth perhaps reckoned themselves to be powerful also. Or, at least, they were concerned with the power of eloquence, and for that reason preferred Apollos to Paul. But Paul says that when he arrives, he will not be concerned with their eloquence (λόγος) but with their power (200). Paul juxtaposes two rhetorical terms in a way that resembles Philo’s complaint against the sophists. They are competent as speakers, but prove themselves to be impotent in living. What Paul does here is take a rhetorical term, δύναμις, and relates it to the Kingdom of God. [Real power, Paul seems to be saying, is not found in eloquence, but in godly living.] (201).

Conclusion. Winter reasonably clearly rejects the notion that Paul consciously structured his letter along the lines of an oration (ie that he employed rhetoric). He says that it is uncertain that Paul did that, and then says: ‘His ability to do so is not in doubt, but if he had, he would have exposed himself to the charge of engaging in what he condemns, given his critique of the sophistic movement and his parody of the rhetorical form in 4.6ff’ (201).

Winter further says: ‘Finally, a critique of the sophistic tradition emerges based on its inappropriateness as an essential qualification for church leadership. The censure of Christian admiration for rhetorical skill permeates Paul’s apologia, both as he defends his own modus operandi and as he formulates definitions of Christian leadership and discipleship’ (202).

[Chapter 10 deals with the important question of Paul among the Christian sophists (2 Cor 10-13). I will leave off on this for the moment, even though it is clearly related to (a continuation of) the issues in 1 Cor.]

Conclusion

It was inevitable that there would be sophistic inroads into the church’s perception of teachers, given the role of teachers as public speakers in secular Corinth. Paul did not underestimate the risk, and so adopted a radical anti-sophistic stance. He aimed to distance himself from any possible identification with that movement. ‘Renouncing the use of “the persuasive words of wisdom” in his preaching, trusting in God’s power alone, and deciding to work with his own hands so as not to hinder that proclamation were the necessary steps to take in sophistic Corinth in Paul’s estimate’ (242). [The phrase ‘sophistic Corinth’ raises the question whether Paul’s choice to renounce rhetoric in Corinth – or, I guess, Thessalonica also – is applicable to us also. Are Paul’s reasons for rejecting rhetoric in first century Corinth equally applicable to the 20th century church? I believe so, but that question would need to be satisfactorily answered.] (242).

Winter says that the issues raised by the opponents in 1 Cor were the same as those in 2 Cor 10-13. There were those who were ‘wise in the present age’ in 1 Cor 3:18 (243). They are the ones who were ‘puffed up’ because he could not return immediately in 4:19. They were eloquent, but lacked Christian δύναμις. There is a link between these people and those invited as alternative ἄνδρες λόγωι after the refusal of Apollos to return, and the subsequent problems that these sophistic teachers of 2 Cor (Jews trained in Greek rhetoric, it appears) created for Paul (244). As to these teachers, Winter says: ‘As Hellenophiles, they would have propounded the view that such elitist training was the ideal or even an essential prerequisite for the high teaching or preaching office of the church, especially in Gentile areas’ (244). [Sounds familiar!]

Therefore, the nature of the divisions in 1 Cor 1-4 are not theological, but sophistic. Therefore, Munck’s thesis is essentially correct (244).

Paul described himself as a ‘layman’ (ιδιωτῆς) in 2 Cor, meaning that although he had tertiary education in rhetoric (Greek paideia), he chose not to engage publicly in the art of rhetoric (247). When it came to
his letter writing, Winter finds favour with the view of one scholar who argues that Paul had the ability to write better Greek but chose not to [contra Witherington et al]. ‘If Paul informed the Corinthians that he rejected the wisdom of rhetoric and eloquent rhetoric in speaking (1 Cor 1:17; 2:1), then it is not inconceivable that he adapted his writing style to what became known in a much later period, that is, in Wycliffe’s day, as “plain style” for the sake of his recipients’ (250).

Winter expresses clear reservations about ‘the rhetorical form-critical approach currently being used on NT documents’ (250). In fn 40, he refers to Philip Kern’s work on Galatians.

When Apollos failed to return, the Corinthians secured Apollos look-alikes (251). What they sought were teachers skilled in ‘ecclesial rhetoric’ – ie the suggestion is that what pertained to the secular ἐκκλησία was believed to be good for the Christian ἐκκλησία too. This, perhaps, makes sense of Paul’s criticism that the Corinthians were behaving in ‘a secular way’ (251).

Makes the intriguing point, in connection with this matter of the secular assembly, that Paul does not use the language of ‘leadership’ (ἀρχων) when speaking of the church. Paul avoided importing the overtones of secular politics and elitism into the church. Footnote 48 makes a comment about current practice. Paul’s language re the church was more familial, where the gatherings are all about encouragement, comforting, and building up (252).

The significance of the Jeremiah quote for Paul in dealing with the situation in Corinth (254).