

Stilkritik und Verfasserfrage im Johannesevangelium: Die johanneischen Sprachmerkmale auf dem Hintergrund des Neuen Testaments und des zeitgenössischen hellenistischen Schrifttums, by Eugen Ruckstuhl and Peter Dschulnigg. NTOA 17. Freiburg (Schweiz): Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991. Pp. 277. SFr 69.00.

For Johannine scholars, the name of Eugen Ruckstuhl is forever linked with that of Eduard Schweizer in their statistically based questioning of Bultmann's source-critical analysis of the Fourth Gospel. Their works (1939 and 1951) led to the more subtle but in some ways more telling criticism of Bultmann offered by D. Moody Smith in his *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel: Bultmann's Literary Theory* (Yale Publications in Religion 10; New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1965). Now Ruckstuhl has joined with Peter Dschulnigg to offer a new study to show that the style of the Fourth Gospel is uniform throughout and stylistically unlike potentially parallel literature in the New Testament and the broader Hellenistic world.

The book opens with a summary of the work of Schweizer and Ruckstuhl, followed by brief observations on the work of J. C. Hawkins, R. Morgenthaler, J. Schreiber, and P. Dschulnigg. These are apparently chosen—the first one writing on the Synoptics, the last two on Mark, and the second providing his valuable *Statistik des neutestamentlichen Wortschatze* (Frankfurt am Main: Gotthelf Verlag, 1958)—for their interest in what constitutes distinctive stylistic material in an author (“sprachliche Eigentümlichkeiten”). Drawing from the strongest points of these scholars, Ruckstuhl and Dschulnigg deploy four criteria that must be met before any word or construction is admitted to their list of Johannine “Stilmerkmale”: (1) it must appear in John (i.e., in the Fourth Gospel: although they are sympathetic to common authorship of the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine epistles, Ruckstuhl and Dschulnigg exclude the latter from their statistical analysis) at least three times; (2) it must not appear in any of the Synoptic Gospels or in the Apocalypse more than half as often as in the Fourth Gospel (in absolute numbers); (3) in any of the rest of the NT writings it must not occur more frequently than in John (in relative terms); and (4) it must not occur more frequently (in relative terms) in any of the thirty-two witnesses drawn from extra-NT Hellenistic literature than in John. (This last criterion is applied only to Groups A and B of the list; Group C is not compared with such literature. See below.)

The Hellenistic literature that serves as something of an extrabiblical control is drawn from about 100 BCE to 150 CE, and is responsibly representative. Hellenistic writers whose work has come down to us in abundance are represented by sections of their output. Each such witness is compared with the Fourth Gospel in numbers of words and relative length (e.g., Justin's *Dial.* chaps 1–103 is listed as having 39,200 words, 2.54 times the length of John; the whole of Philo's *Flacc.* has 9,040 words, and, added to the two other portions drawn from Philo, is 2.03 times the length of John.

Using such criteria, Ruckstuhl and Dschulnigg find twenty-six peculiarly Johan-

nine stylistic features in Group A, sixty-five in Group B, and sixty-two in Group C. These three groups are labels of convenience to congregate stylistic features in descending order of importance. Most of the rest of the book lists these stylistic features with critical notes, and then classifies them in various ways. For example, part of chapter 6 indexes the stylistic features against each verse in John; another part plots them against each pericope. The strongly worded conclusion of Ruckstuhl and Dschulnigg is that one writer wrote all of the Fourth Gospel, or that if parts of it sprang from discrete sources the reworking of the material is so thorough that the existence of discrete sources is simply not provable. In many ways this book is a delight to read. The aim is clear and the method well executed. Numerous charts summarize a great deal of useful material, and the authors take pains to stop now and then and review the evidence and its significance. Apart from a selected subject index and an alphabetical listing of the stylistic features in John (with page references), there are no indexes.

But the strengths of the book are also its weaknesses. Ruckstuhl and Dschulnigg do not probe very far outside German literature. For instance, they do not mention D. Moody Smith's book, and they do not refer to numerous articles in French and English (to go no further) that bear on their theme. For instance, they do not cite the important essays by Vern Poythress on intersentence conjunctions in John (*NovT* 26 [1984] 312–40; *WTJ* 46 [1984] 350–69). More importantly, they focus so narrowly on stylistic features peculiar to John that their argument, important as it is, lacks nuance. What are we to make, for instance, of the 150 words that the evangelist places on Jesus' lips that are not found elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel—a list published in H. R. Reynolds's commentary in 1906? Although I am in entire sympathy with the conclusions advanced by Ruckstuhl and Dschulnigg, and warmly welcome this addition to the literature, I wonder if questions of source criticism and the uniformity of the style can be adequately handled on so narrow a basis.

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