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Pauline Hamartiology: Conceptualisations and Transferences

Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie

Mohr Siebeck

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Positioning Cognitive Semantic Theory and Method Within Theology

Mohr Siebeck

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Abbreviations

Versions of the Bible, encyclopaedias, and general abbreviations

BNT	BibleWorks NT Nestle-Aland, Novum Testamentum Graece, 27th Revised Edition
CD I/1	Church Dogmatics, followed by volume/part
ESV	The English Standard Version
EWNT	Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
ICM	Idealised cognitive model
LN	Louw & Nida Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament
LXX	Rahlfs' Septuagint
NRS	New Revised Standard Version
PI	Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations
ThWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
VUL	Latin Vulgate (Nova Vulgata)
WA	Dr. Martin Luthers Werke Weimarer Ausgabe
ZUR	Zürcher Bibel

Chapter 1

Introduction

> *„Theologie ist ihrer adäquaten Sachbestimmung nach eine textbezogene Wissenschaft. Die Theologie ist exakt zu definieren als die Wissenschaft der Rede von Gott. Eine solche Wissenschaft ist heute wissenschaftstheoretisch nur zu begründen im Rahmen der Wissenschaft von der menschlichen Rede überhaupt. Diese Wissenschaft von der menschlichen Rede überhaupt ist jedoch die Linguistik."*
>
> *Erhardt Güttgemanns*

Theories and approaches from textual linguistics, generative poetics, and linguistic structuralism have been employed as the basis for historical-critical exegesis throughout the 20th century. Thoughts have been uttered about how far linguistic theories can actually contribute to biblical studies and theology in the analysis, the reception, and interpretation of biblical literature. Today semiotics, text pragmatics and deconstructionism have managed to gain a solid foothold in biblical studies – gathered under the heading of a linguistically oriented exegesis –, which analyse the biblical text according to its syntactic structures, its words' semantic content, and its pragmatic functions[1]. Recently, biblical scholars and linguists such as Ellen van Wolde, Pierre van Hecke, Bonnie Howe, Eve Sweetser, and Kurt Feyaerts have ventured towards interdisciplinarity by taking the cognitive turn in linguistics as it has developed since the

[1] For example, Uwe Gerber; Erhardt Güttgemanns (eds.). *Linguistische Theologie. Biblische Texte, christliche Verkündigung und theologische Sprachtheorie* (1972); Wolfgang Schenk. *Die Sprache des Matthäus. Die Text-Konstituenten in ihren makro- u. mikrostrukturellen Relationen* (1987); Gerhard Ebeling. *Einführung in theologische Sprachlehre* (1971); Wolfgang Nethöfel. *Theologische Hermeneutik. Vom Mythos zu den Medien* (1992); Peter Cotterell; Max Turner. *Linguistics and biblical interpretation* (1989); Stanley E. Porter; D.A. Carson. *Linguistics and the New Testament. Critical junctures* (1999); James Barr. *The semantics of Biblical language* (1967); George B. Caird. *The language and imagery of the Bible* (1980). Barr and Caird are prominent biblical scholars who use linguistic insights in their work. They predominantely apply linguistic theories to biblical studies in the field of lexical semantics; Barr examines words within larger linguistic complexes, i.e. contextually (cf. pp.263ff). But they insist on the importance of linguistics for the study of the Bible because in general biblical studies as a discipline has given too little attention to modern theories of language and linguistics.

1980s. Even though it has still not entered the mainstream of biblical studies and theology, by now there exist several important studies on the cognitive grammatical and cognitive semantic structure of various biblical texts and theological concepts.

In systematic theology, cognitive linguistics offers a promising starting point to connect biblical research with hermeneutics and to analyse dogmatic writings by Augustine, Luther, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Hegel, or Schleiermacher.[2] Since cognitive semantics is based on the general understanding that human beings embody meaning and actuality, it is an excellent approach to study cultural and interreligious receptions of theological concepts and motifs throughout history. This may be performed not only by looking at linguistic discourse, but also by analysing non-linguistic modes and multimodal meaning systems such as the arts, film, advertisement, music, and gestures according to the principles of cognitive semantics, as, for example, embodied schemas and concepts, conceptual mappings of abstract concepts, or conceptual integration.

Even though cognitive linguistics has gained international popularity within the disciplines of linguistics and literary studies in general, a theological grounding is still desirable in order to approach the biblical text and theological concepts as a cohesive whole. Besides being a (most necessary) means of communication, language is a way into concepts of the human mind, which includes their categorisation and conceptual structuring of actuality. The revised understanding of language proposed by cognitive linguistics assumes the notion of *experiential realism* and *the embodied mind* as an ontological grounding. However, the ontological grounding of how cognitive linguists view the relation of language, metaphor, actuality, and truth can be elaborated on. The theological notion of a relational ontology and Luther's literal understanding of metaphor as an actual *translatio* are compelling ideas to propose a *metaphorical ontology* and the *metaphorical existence* of man, which, as I will show, are revealed by the conceptual structure of Paul's concept of ἁμαρτία. As a holistic model, cognitive linguistics has the potential to be integrated into mainstream historical-critical exegesis in order to complement and advance biblical analysis. But by altering and adapting the ontological basis of embodied realism, cognitive semantics maintains a fundamental systematic-theological position within the discipline of theology, and, thus, should be able to contribute to the analysis and understanding of Pauline ἁμαρτία from a new and interdisciplinary perspective.

Sin is a crucial idea in moral, theological, and religious discourse. No matter whether in ancient Israel or in today's Western society, sin is often equated with

[2] Noteworthy are the two studies which have recently been published in the field of philosophy of religion and systematic theology: Robert Masson. *Without Metaphor no Saving God. Theology after Cognitive Linguistics* (2014); John Sanders. *Theology in the Flesh: How Embodiment and Culture Shape the Way We Think about Truth, Morality, and God* (2016).

a violation of divine law or at least of conventional habit. The Pauline understanding of ἁμαρτία as an act, a power, and as a personified slavemaster is a primary and familiar perspective in theology which, if not worth revising, is at least worth arguing about as to what concerns, which of those perspectives is the correct or most prominent in Paul's world of thought. Is it a soteriological perspective, a metaphorical viewpoint, or even a cultural, sociological or psychological perspective? If we continue to discuss isolated perspectives, a succession or even juxtaposition of diverse, disconnected meanings of ἁμαρτία is maintained. Accordingly, the issue this study confronts is the atomisation of the Pauline understanding of ἁμαρτία, a problem which occurred and persists because of the (i) inner constitution and (ii) inner perceived crisis of the historical-critical method in biblical analysis. The former presupposes a binary understanding of language in which the human being is primarily excluded from actively taking part in the construction of meaning. The latter is subject to a pluralism of methods in which current, interdisciplinary approaches are atomistically applied to biblical texts and theological concepts.

Drawing from cognitive linguistic theory, philosophy of language, and theological discourses on language, metaphor, and truth, the current study identifies in Paul's authentic epistles six major conceptual metaphorical mappings that shape his experience and understanding of ἁμαρτία in terms of an existential powerful state: ἁμαρτία as an action, ἁμαρτία as an event, ἁμαρτία as an object, ἁμαρτία as a state, ἁμαρτία as a power, and ἁμαρτία as a slavemaster. The three common perspectives of sin as an action, a personal power, and as a slavemaster are disclosed as constituting only one part of Paul's entire concept AMAPTIA[3]. In particular, the EVENT and STATE domains as part of the complex Event-Structure metaphor present prominent structures in his embodied network AMAPTIA IS AN EXISTENTIAL POWERFUL STATE. It is determined how Paul not only understood ἁμαρτία in terms of those concepts, but how his conceptualisations were experientially grounded and embodied. The language Paul uses to talk about ἁμαρτία serves as an access to Paul's mind and his experiential world. Through the embodiment of the experiences with the external world, actuality becomes conceptualised and linguistically externalised. Since language and meaning are viewed as grounded in the spatiality and bodiliness of human beings, it is possible to extract actual experiences of sin – not only its linguistic meaning.

Cognitive semantics is guided by cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy. With its ontological foundation in embodied realism it is opposed to and a theoretical development of substance ontological thinking and classical (Cartesian) Western thought. As it does not assume a classical, structural understanding of language and meaning, which views the construction of

[3] Mental concepts, categories, domains, and schemas are written in capitals in order to distinguish them from their lexical items.

meaning as a perfect word-to-world match and a conglomeration of lexical relations, the present study of Pauline ἁμαρτία exceeds a solely linguistic-metaphorical analysis. By assuming a holistic model of language in which meaning is embodied and metaphorically structured throughout, a cognitive semantic approach considers Pauline ἁμαρτία not only as a linguistic phenomenon *expressis verbis*: it particularly puts the focus on Paul and his direct environment as well as on ἁμαρτία as an actual phenomenon, which can be experienced, embodied, and conceptual-metaphorically structured. The meaning of Pauline ἁμαρτία is no longer only constructed on a linguistic but also on a conceptual level. Even though conceptual metaphors seem to structure thought and knowledge alone, through the notion of embodied realism an experiential level of actuality is added to the conceptual level of meaning construction by which Paul and his linguistic concept of ἁμαρτία are directly linked to the experiential world. Hence, even though Pauline ἁμαρτία is approached as a linguistic phenomenon, a cognitive semantic analysis is able to simultaneously draw anthropological, epistemological, and ontological conclusions.

In order to integrate the cognitive semantic understanding of language into theology and religious discourse, we have to theologically adapt it. Spatiality and bodiliness clearly imply the relationality and metaphoricity of human *being*. Man's existence is ontologically entwined in relations he holds to God, to his self, and to the world that surrounds him. God is a relational being who provided man and the world with this relationality through his affectionate creative act and who continuously enters a discursive relation with man. A cognitive linguistic understanding of language and meaning is already relational because meaning and truth emerge through relational transfers between man and actuality. Through their connection to relational ontological assumptions, embodied realism and cognitive semantics delicately reveal a crypto-ontology, in which everything is not only connected and structured relationally but also in a transferential way. This is how we can understand transferences to emerge in actuality, which as *rerum metaphora*, following Luther, precede the *verborum metaphora* – and as such also the conceptual metaphor. Metaphor therefore occurs not only on the linguistic and conceptual levels, but above all it alters actuality because it effects actuality.

If metaphor is understood as a transfer, transferences consequently do not only occur linguistically between words or conceptually between domains, but also ontically between actual entities and events. Even the process of the embodiment of experiential actuality into the human conceptual system and its linguistic externalisation are disclosed as metaphorical, transferential processes. Following Nietzsche's contribution to metaphor, which equals the notion of embodiment, Eberhard Jüngel can conclude that metaphorical language is true, with metaphor thus being completely detached from its classical understanding as mere figurative speech. Metaphor does indeed tell more than there

actually *is*, not only by putting two words in relation with each other on a linguistic level, but particularly by occurring on a conceptual as well as on an actual level and by operating as an embodiment of actuality and its lexicalisation. Metaphor and transferential processes become linguistically externalised, and it is thus presumed that language and truth as a whole are metaphorical in their essence. Accordingly, a relational ontology in which man has relational being in discursive communion with God cannot be assumed alone, but beyond this, a metaphorical ontology has to be considered in which man has metaphorical being-in-relation.

Thus, the Pauline concept of ἁμαρτία, as revealed in the epistles analysed, is not only a linguistic and conceptual-metaphorical construct, but can be traced back to an actual metaphoric event. However, analysis shows that originally ἁμαρτία is a powerful state in which human beings are existentially situated. Hence, the cognitive semantic notion of the embodiment of experiences of actuality suggests that the ontic relational being of man in conversation with God is embodied in a perverted way, i.e. as a caricature of the actual God-man, man-world, and man-man relation. As such the performance of a cognitive semantic analysis of ἁμαρτία reveals that cognitive semantics is more than just a linguistic and metaphorical approach to the biblical text. Embodiment, relationality, and metaphoricity (i.e. *metaphora*) integrate cognitive semantics into fundamental-theological and relational ontological assumptions and thus contribute to the understanding of personhood.

After the introduction, the study proceeds as follows: chapter 2 gives a brief overview of the *Corpus Paulinum* and introduces the reader to the state of research of Pauline ἁμαρτία. It states the difficulties and problems those approaches carry along, especially in the context of the historical-critical method. Chapter 3 continues with an introduction to the classical theory of language and categorisation and shows why the embodied and cognitive linguistic understanding of language has had to evolve. It draws on the preceding illustrations to point out benefits of integrating cognitive semantics into biblical analysis and theology. Chapter 4 positions cognitive semantics more deeply in the discipline of theology. Therefore, philosophical and theological approaches to and understandings of the (relational) ontological basis of language and of metaphor are being discussed, with embodied realism and conceptual metaphor theory being re-evaluated through this discussion.

Chapter 5 forms the major analytical chapter and starts with an analysis of ἁμαρτάνω and ἁμαρτωλός with respect to their conceptual dependency on ἁμαρτία by using Langacker's theory of grammatical valence and profile-base relations (5.2). Conceptual mappings are analysed in the passages where ἁμαρτία, ἁμαρτάνω, and ἁμαρτωλός occur in the Pauline homologumena of the ancient Greek version of the New Testament (BNT) by way of a semasiological approach. Thereby, the concept of ἁμαρτία is disclosed to be structured according to domains ACTION, OBJECT, EVENT, STATE, and POWER (5.3–5.5),

which metonymically form the complex conceptual metaphor AMAPTIA IS AN EXISTENTIAL POWERFUL STATE (5.6). Metaphorical conceptualisations of ἁμαρτία in relation to νόμος, σάρξ, and θάνατος and in relation to the postbaptismal state in Christ are analysed by considering metonymically related metaphorical entailments (5.7). The mastery metaphors of ἁμαρτία as a compression of the metaphor AMAPTIA IS AN EXISTENTIAL POWERFUL STATE within a conceptual integration network are analysed under the consideration of Luther's understanding of language as *concretio* (5.8).

In chapter 6 the results of the cognitive semantic analysis are considered as a reflection of Paul's metaphorical ontological thinking, and as pointing to the assumption of a metaphorical ontology, which proposes man's metaphorical being in relation. Cognitive semantic theories are evaluated with regard to their capacity to function in a theological and exegetical analysis of New Testament epistolary literature and to a theological understanding of Pauline hamartiology and metaphor.

Chapter 2

On the state of research of Pauline ἁμαρτία and primary (critical) considerations

„Missverstehen ist das Normale, Verstehen die Ausnahme“
Gerhard Roth

In this first chapter I will outline theological subjects that are relevant for my later analysis and argument to set the critical framework for philosophical matters in language and cognitive semantic approaches in biblical studies. For this reason a general outline of the *Corpus Paulinum* and Epistolary literature will be provided, before we take a closer look at theological assumptions for a scholarly overview on Paul's use of ἁμαρτία and understanding of sin. The focus is placed especially on Romans, since the epistle seems to offer the vital layout of a Pauline hamartiology. Chapter 5 will, however, also lay down objectives about other, minor, appearances of Pauline ἁμαρτία in 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, and 1 and 2 Corinthians. After a general criticism of Old and New Testament exegesis – the historical-critical method being the most prominent approach –, which even suggests an exegetical crisis and calls for a different linguistic setting and analysis to approach Pauline ἁμαρτία, the section will conclude with the formulation of specific research questions that guide the following procedure and analysis.

2.1 The Corpus Paulinum and the Epistle to the Romans: historical data and facts

2.1.1 Epistolary literature

It is vital to start with the peculiarities of epistolary literature and exegetical interpretation. The theology within the epistles is encountered as a direct line of argumentation. Schnelle (cf. 2000: 159) describes the letter as a direct form of communication – especially in antiquity (cf. Klauck 1998). In contrast to other means of communication, "time lags" (Altman 1982) are typical of letter writing. Compared to oral communication, discourse in letters is admittedly slowed down and might lack immediateness, due to the temporal and spatial distance between the act of writing and the act of reading. But as Klauck points

out, it is advantageous for the realisation of some serious reflection (cf. 1998: 25–26). The epistolographic author carefully arranges and thoughtfully constructs the text to realise the intended message within the existing discourse of (usually) two parties – although, as Klauck remarks (cf. 1998: 167), in antiquity the letter was not only read by the addressee but often publically presented to a whole community (family, neighbours, friends), of course depending on the type of letter[1]. In general the methodological steps of historical-critical exegesis also hold for NT epistles, although Schnelle (cf. 2000: 160) notes that different elements are highlighted in form criticism, tradition and redaction criticism. Particularly the form of the letter, its argumentative structure and the semantic analysis of lexical items and motifs need to be considered in linguistic textual analysis. Schnelle (cf. 2000: 159) stresses the importance of each epistolary element: The prescript opens the discourse and introduces the aim of communication, whereas the main corpus wants to elaborate on a present problem and gives advice on possible solutions. The closing serves the functions of a summary (epilogue) and of announcing future intentions (postscript).[2] Furthermore, Klauck (cf. 1998: 181) emphasises that Judaism (and early Jewish epistolary literature) constitutes the literary and sociocultural context of early Christian letter writing and subsequently needs to be taken into account as well. Christianity emerged within Judaism, so it seems only reasonable that early Christian epistolographers acted and wrote their letters having Jewish roots, yet at the same time Graeco-Roman ideas and phrasing.[3]

[1] A collection of ancient Graeco-Roman epistolographical remarks are ascribed to someone named Pseudo-Demetrios (falsely ascribed to Demetrios of Phaleron), who lists 21 different types of letters in Typoi Epistolikoi

[2] See also the more detailed chart by Klauck (cf. 1998: 54) for approaching epistolary literature

[3] Gerd Theissen regards the early Christian community as a sect, which imagines itself as being a reformed movement within an existing religion, namely Judaism. The subsequent Jewish Christian believers do not have to be converted, but only persuaded "that they can now consistently realize what they had always sought in their religion" (2011: 252). But at the same time early Christian belief seemed to be a completely new cult for Hellenistic citizens, subsequent Gentile Christians, who seemed to be more in need of conversion and interested in "an alternative means of salvation" (253). Schnelle (cf. 2014: 54–74) offers an excellent summary of Pauls' Jewish-Hellenistic and Graeco-Hellenistic background and possible influences on his life and (theological) thinking; Troels Engberg-Pedersen (ed.). *Paul in His Hellenistic Context* (2004) gives an introduction to (philosophical) Hellenistic contexts.

2.1.2 The Corpus Paulinum

Scholars generally divide the Corpus Paulinum into 13 genuine or deutero-Pauline epistles[4]. Seven epistles of these are ascribed to the direct authorship of Paul. The Homologumena include Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians and Philemon. Six belong to the Pseudepigrapha or Antilegomena, which means that these letters are taken to have not been written directly by Paul himself, but much later by, for example, students of the Pauline school: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians[5], and the Pastoral epistles 1 – 2 Timothy, Titus (cf. Riesner 2011: 9; Stuhlmacher 2005: 223–224; Schnelle 2000: 164). The dating of the seven genuine epistles can assuredly be placed between 49/50 and 56/57[6] during Paul's second and third missionary journeys, which took him around Minor Asia, Achaia, Athens and Corinth, where he remained for the longest time (cf. Schnelle 2014: 132.138–140; Stuhlmacher 2005: 225–226.229–231). This covers a comparatively short period of time considering the nearly 20 years Paul spent on his missions developing his theology prior to his accessible writings, i.e. between his call near Damascus in 31/32 (cf. Riesner 1998: 59–74; Dunn 2009: 257) or 36/37 (cf. Strobel 1977: 116; Riesner 1998: 36–37) and the Council of the Apostles in Jerusalem in 48 (cf. Riesner 2011: 18–19; Stuhlmacher 2005: 229).

Archaeologists and theologians consensually agree that the incidents in Damascus and Jerusalem provide crucial experiences in Paul's life which influenced and prompted his subsequent thoughts, convictions, and decisions. Surely, the overall turning point was Paul's encounter with a revelation of Christ near Damascus (cf. Act 26:16–18), due to which Paul was appointed a messenger of the Gospel and made aware of his own sinful being. As Stuhlmacher confirms:

> Die Grunderfahrung, von der Paulus als Apostel Jesu Christi ausgeht, ist die ihm selbst vor Damaskus zuteilgewordene Rechtfertigung des Gottlosen (Röm 4,5; 5,6), d.h. des sich Gottes Willen in Christus widersetzenden Frevlers, der wider alles religiöse Erwarten nicht dem Gericht überantwortet, sondern begnadigt und zum apostolischen Dienst im Glauben an Christus erwählt wird (vgl. 1Kor 9,16; 15,8–10; 2Kor 2,14–17). (2005: 230)

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[4] Or 14, depending on whether the epistle to the Hebrews is considered to be part of the Corpus Paulinum, even though it is generally agreed that this letter does not belong to the authentic Pauline nor to the pseudepigraphic or deutero-Pauline authorship (cf. Klauck 1998: 248–249).

[5] The proto- or deutero-Pauline authorship of Col and 2Th remains a contested issue (cf. Stuhlmacher 2005: 224).

[6] Chronological order of the seven epistles suggested by i.a. Stuhlmacher (cf. 2005: 225) and Riesner (cf. 2011: 18–22): Gal 48 in Antioch, 1Th 49/50 in Corinth, 1 – 2 Co 54–56 in Ephesus, Phil 54/55 in Ephesus or even 60 in Rome, Phlm 54/55 in Ephesus, Ro 56/57 in Corinth.

Paul's life was oriented towards the Torah, but since the Damascus event he experienced both the Torah and the Gospel as the revelation of one and the same God. Consequently, he had to combine Torah and Gospel theologically to find an appropriate relation between them (cf. Stuhlmacher 2005: 229–230). The execution of the mission of the Gentiles and the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem as well as the break with the Jewish-Christian community (Petrus, Barnabas and others) in Antioch shortly after, present two more situations that highly influenced Paul's thinking. Paul and Barnabas refused to circumcise the Gentiles on their first missionary journey, which led to much dispute with the Jewish Christians. But due to his religious experience near Damascus Paul did no longer acknowledge the law the way he did as Jew; the faith in God alone gained in importance (cf. Ro 4). He theologically distanced himself from Peter and the other apostles in Jerusalem until an argument led to a break between Paul and Peter, Barnabas and the Jewish-Christian community[7], i.e. the argument came to head the decree of the council of Jerusalem (cf. Stuhlmacher 2005: 229).

The epistles available to us present only fragments of Pauline thought and his missionary work because 1Co 5:9, 2Co 2:4 and Col 4:16 show that there must have been Pauline letters which have not been transmitted to us (cf. Stuhlmacher 2005: 223.231–232). The letters written during his last two missions highlight only specific circumstances of the communities to which Paul had to give answers; everything beyond remains mere conjecture, if not hidden from us.

2.1.3 The Epistle to the Romans

The letter to the Romans was written by Paul in 56/57 while he was in Corinth, from where he was about to travel to Jerusalem bringing them the gathered collection of the Gentile mission (Ro 15:25f). From Jerusalem he planned to go to Rome to visit the Christian community (Ro 15:24f); a community to whom he is unknown and even foreign because the Roman congregation was not founded by Paul (cf. Theobald 2003: 3; Roberts 2011: 93) and the intended visit would be his first – a long wished-for undertaking (Ro 15:22).[8]

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[7] However, the theological differences and the resulting split involved many more factors, for example, historical events, sociocultural differences between Palestine and Hellenistic provinces and cities, and ethnic differences.

[8] When he wanted to bring the gathered collection to the early Christian community in Jerusalem, just before his mission to Rome and Spain, Jewish Zealots took hold of him in the temple of Jerusalem. But before they were able to kill him, Paul was taken into custody by the Romans and spent two years under arrest in Caesarea until he was taken to Rome at his own request in 59. In 64 he died as martyr (1Clem 5:7; 6:1) during the reign of Nero (54–68) (cf. Stuhlmacher 2005: 230; Riesner 2011: 23).

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