

## BOOK REVIEW

George K. Barr, *Scalometry and the Pauline Epistles* (JSNT Sup Series, 261; New York and London: T. & T. Clark, 2004). xi + 178 pp. Hdbk. \$120.00 USD.

*Scalometry and the Pauline Epistles* by George Barr is his response to what he sees in New Testament scholarship as a lack of regard for scale within a text. Barr believes that there is a dramatic range of scale within a work and that scale is important for determining different sections of a text and for determining authorship of a work.

In his first chapter, Barr relates the study of scale to other disciplines, such as art, music, literature and architecture. It is in this section that Barr looks to his personal background as an architect for different examples. This provides a rich variety of perspective that might not have been apparent to the biblical scholar. Barr compares writing a work with building a house; it is created with certain intentions, with specific purposes, that convey particular ideas.

Chapter 2 focuses on the specific graphical methodology, so that the graphs are consistent not only internally but may also be related to one another. Barr initially notes that it is well known that statistics can be manipulated to produce certain results and that his method section is designed to alleviate some of those fears.

Barr outlines a number of different styles of graphs that have been used in the past, such as sentence distribution, word distribution and superQsums. However, Barr elects to use sentence sequence information given in a cumulative sum graph (CS graph). It is by analyzing the unique form of the CS graph that the scale of an author can be determined.

One of the more subjective aspects outlined in the method section is the punctuation. Barr rejects the use of ‘modified full stop sentences’, for example the colon, which breaks the flow of the text, but instead accepts

only recognized full stops. In addition to this, he groups strings of questions together and considers them one sentence and eliminates 'Amens' and one-word exclamations. This is done because Barr believes that they 'cause unnecessary disturbance' to the scale. Although the reasoning given has some merit, this is rather subjective and may be a case of smoothing the data to better fit the desired graph.

Also within this section, Barr explains that at the tail end of a few epistles there is 'afterthought' material, which is material that does not follow the scale pattern within the body of the text. This piece, which can be up to a few chapters in some cases, is separated from comparison and the graphs focus on the 'embedded prime patterns'. Again this eliminates part of the text that can potentially alter the scale of a text.

Although there is some concern regarding the methodology of creating the scale of a text, Barr has a number of interesting and statistically solid methods that produce impressive results, which are presented in Chapter 3.

This chapter creates a CS graph of each of the Pauline Epistles with regard to scale. These graphs show the scale of the work and the structural divisions within the text. Barr also utilizes these graphs to indicate potential interpolations in the text because of their dissonance to the overall scale of the text. These are helpful for understanding the flow of the letter and the different sections. This chapter also gives deep insight into the structure of each letter, which is useful for exegesis. The abundance of these informative graphs that visually present the information in a clear and concise manner is a real strength of this book.

In Chapter 4, Barr gives a general overview and critique of the previous statistical studies of the Pauline and Pastoral Epistles. Barr states that most of the early studies focused on vocabulary, themes and other univariate criteria and were, as a result, superficial. After this, Barr proceeds to outline a more recent multivariate study that, although it has a few drawbacks, is moving in the right direction.

Barr changes his focus in Chapter 5 and studies the two Petrine Epistles and Hebrews. Through the comparison of CS graphs, Barr shows that the scale related patterns in Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter are remarkably similar. The fact that these letters are so consistent is not a matter of chance, but may potentially indicate similar authorship. He then continues to say that this author is Silvanus based on 1 Pet. 5.12. Although there is no literary evidence for this, the statistical information portrayed in the graphs is compelling.

Chapter 6 focuses on the points of contact and similarities in vocabulary and themes found within the Pauline Epistles and the group comprising Hebrews and 1 and 2 Peter. Barr explains these connections, not by claiming literary dependence, but by noting the three years they spent evangelizing together. Throughout this time, Paul and Silvanus would have preached in each other's presence and would have had continuous discussions regarding difficult issues. This is an interesting proposition that Barr supports through three tables of overlapping biblical material.

Barr concludes by stating that 'the paradigm underlying the consensus held by main stream New Testament scholars is no longer adequate'. He then proceeds to outline a number of areas where he believes that the study of scale would bring fresh insight into problematic issues.

Barr adds five appendices to augment the data presented in the book. Appendix A gives a technical outline of statistical methods including the different formulas and motivations for different setups. Appendix B gives the mathematical model for the Pauline Epistles. In this section, Barr creates mathematically engineered 'ideal' Pauline epistle forms in order to better compare Paul's actual epistles. The importance of scale sensitivity is the focus of appendix C. It is in this section that Barr expresses that caution is needed when dealing with texts that are less than 50,000 words. A smaller text increases the opportunity for skewed results. Consequently, certain precautions must be taken to ensure accurate results.

Appendix D assesses different scale-related patterns found in different authors. Barr creates a CS graph for over 20 ancient and modern authors to reinforce the idea that different authors have unique scale related patterns. Although many of the authors have no pattern, there are a few that do and these patterns that are generated are distinct, which, in turn, emphasizes the validity of using scale to determine Pauline authorship.

In addition to the critiques above, there are a couple ways in which Barr could have improved his book. First, there were a number of times within the book that Barr uses pertinent information from the appendices, but does not indicate to the reader where to find this information. In some cases, it is only after one reads the appendices that certain sections truly make sense.

Secondly, Barr utilizes statistics throughout the book, but fails to indicate the statistical relevance of his findings. He makes many statements regarding the importance of the data and the uniqueness of his findings, especially in regards to the 'Pauline' pattern, but does not

substantiate this with other empirical evidence, although there is an attempt in appendix D.

Overall, *Scalometry and the Pauline Epistles* presents a number of interesting ideas that have the potential to make an important contribution to the study of the Pauline Epistles and to the issue of authorship within the New Testament.

Sean A. Adams  
McMaster Divinity College