

**Gräbe, Petrus J.:** *The Power of God in Paul's Letters* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II., 123), Mohr Siebeck / Tübingen 2000; 305 pp.

This book is a revised doctoral dissertation from the university of Pretoria, South Africa, defended in 1990, directed by A.B. du Toit. The author (b. 1958) benefited also from some study periods in Münster, Munich, Cambridge and Oxford. The work is organized as follows: In an introduction, the author, P.J. GRÄBE, reviews eleven earlier studies of *dynamis* (power) in Paul, by O. Schmitz, W. Grundmann (s.v. *dynamai* in TDNT), A.H. Forster, E. Fascher (s.v. *dynamis*, RAC), K. Prümm (ZKT 83 (1961) 393–430; Greg 42 (1961) 643–700), G. Friedrich (s.v. *dynamis*, EWNT), H.K. Nielsen, U. Heckel, T. Savage, M.M. Gruber, and Gordon Fee, and weigh the respective merits of synchronic and diachronic approaches. The author seems to opt for a diachronic approach, because he not only gives a historical overview of some previous usage, but also analyses the relevant Pauline passages in chronological order, so far as this can be known (6). (Given this intention, it is regrettable that G. does not refer to J. Murphy-O'Connor's recent biography of Paul where this issue is discussed at length.) The work is then divided into three main sections. The first (11–39) offers a lexical overview of the use of *dynamis* in profane Greek, the Septuagint, early Judaism, Philo and Qumran. Here it emerges that in Stoic thought divine power notions are tinged with pantheism and that in Hermetic soteriology the believer or initiate becomes divine power itself. In the OT, divine power is manifest especially in the moments of creation and of the Exodus, and is praised in prayer. The link with the Spirit of God is frequent, and this link will have a major influence on Paul. The great doxology of 1 Chr 29:11–12 will also influence him and much of the rest of NT.

The second section (43–236) consists of a rapid exegesis of the following Pauline texts: 1 Cor 1:18,24; 2:4–5; 4:19–20; 5:4; 15:43,56; 2 Cor 4:7; 6:7; 12:9; 13:4; Rom 1:4,16,20; 15:13,19; 1 Thess 1:5; Phil 3:10; Eph 1:19; 3:16. This study is rounded off by a brief look at God's power in Luke-Acts and in the book of Revelation. There are two excursus, one on the meaning of the phrase »spirit of holiness« in Rom 1:4, where G. denies that it means the Holy Spirit, the usual, and, I still think, the correct view (cf. *m. Sota* 9:15). The other excursus is on the social impact of the presence of the power of God.

The third section attempts a synthesis and systematic summary of the main results of the exegetical part (239–267). Here the author shows the harmony between the theology of the cross in the Corinthian letters and the message of justification in Romans, and adds a note on the ethical dimension. He then sets forth the pneumatological emphasis in Paul's understanding of the demonstration of God's power. The Spirit enkindles hope, empowers the ministry, works in the inner person, makes possible the resurrection, and even makes the kingdom of God present by anticipation, a foretaste. GRÄBE then concludes by returning to the provocative theme of God's power manifested in and through our weakness. In this connection the catalogues of hardships or so-called peristasis catalogues serve as the horizon for Paul's understanding of power in his ministry (256–259).

These peristasis catalogues were a literary micro-genre among Greek philosophers to distinguish true from false sages. Paul uses the genre to prove that he is a true apostle. He includes elements from the OT traditions about the afflicted righteous man and suffering prophet, and adds his own emphasis on the cross of Christ. GRÄBE notes that Paul's confidence and boasting are in God, not in his own achievement, though he does present this in the same dialectical, scintillating way that Paul himself does. When reading Paul, one feels that he is boasting even when he says he is not, and one smiles. Paul had a great need to boast, and he does, but always giving the honor to God. GRÄBE speaks not only of *institia aliena* and *sapientia aliena* (Rom 1:16–17; 1 Cor 1:18–2:5), but also of *vis aliena*, *virtus aliena*, *vita aliena*. There is truth in all this, but it must not be so hardened that the divine-human interaction is arrested and the human element obliterated. In Paul the human is still very much there.



Since the work is essentially a word study one is alarmed at the outset that there is no mention of James Barr's work, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: University Press, 1961), which warns against an exclusively lexical approach. Nevertheless, GRÄBE takes pains, in his long march through the concordance, to situate the verses which refer to *dynamis* in their context. This enables the reader to reacquaint him/herself with such verses as Rom 15:13 and its connection with Rom 14:17, or to see the power of 2 Cor 13:4 in the context of vv. 1–3. The long middle section is divided up into eighteen little units, which gives a somewhat scattered impression in a short book, that nothing is being treated very thoroughly, although in fact it is mainly a book about the Corinthian letters. These short units usually begin with a »discourse analysis« and a moderate use of semiotic terminology such as »actants«. These analyses may have been useful to the author in coming to grips with the biblical text, but I did not find them easy to read or very useful. Had they been omitted, the book would probably not have suffered and would have been more reader-friendly. (Translations of some of the non-biblical Greek quotations would also have helped.) The author shows an interest in Greek grammar, which makes his claim on p. 78 all the more disconcerting: in colon 20 (1 Cor 15:20) »the first person singular occurs«. Surely he means the plural. English is not the author's first language, one gathers. The text could have benefited from a read-through by a native English speaker, to correct such oddities as piousness for piety, or »an energizing of his existence of whose God is the source« (258). Also, often GRÄBE separates can and not, but sometimes writes cannot.

One of the most interesting issues discussed in the book (98–99, 128–130) is the matter of Stoic parallels to Paul's statements in 2 Cor 4:7 and 6:7. There are no doubt differences as well, as the author is at pains to demonstrate, but when he tries to distinguish between Stoic courage and Christian faith, he seems unaware that for many Christians, ancient and modern, faith is a form of the »courage to be«. Another interesting problem (262–263) is the question: how do we reconcile Paul's understanding of suffering and his theology of the cross with his appeal to the miracles he has performed? Here I found G's discussion sound, including his distinction: »Paul does not say that power reveals itself as weakness, but in weakness.« On the whole then, this book is a useful refresher course on Paul, with a valuable dialogue with the more recent monographs and commentaries on his letters.

Fribourg

Benedict T. Viviano

**Haug, Walter / Schneider-Lastin, Wolfram** (Hg.): *Deutsche Mystik im abendländischen Zusammenhang. Neu erschlossene Texte, neue methodische Ansätze, neue theoretische Konzepte* (Kolloquium Kloster Fischingen 1998), Max Niemeyer / Tübingen 2000, 1815 S.

Fast genau 15 Jahre nach dem wichtigen Engelberger Symposium (Abendländische Mystik im Mittelalter, Stuttgart 1986) ist hier erneut die Avantgarde der Mystikforschung versammelt, um aktuelle Arbeitsergebnisse und Forschungsperspektiven zu diskutieren. Die Diskussionen über die auf hohem wissenschaftlichen Niveau ausgearbeiteten 28 Beiträge – zuvor verschickt und während 5 Tagen intensiv besprochen – werden in ihrer Essenz ebenfalls dokumentiert. Die verlässlichen Register tun ein übriges, wiederum ein unerlässliches Standardwerk entstehen zu lassen.

Chronologisch ist der Rahmen weit gespannt: von mystischen Texten des 13. Jahrhunderts bis hin ins 16. Jahrhundert eines Johannes vom Kreuz. Geographisch liegt ein Schwerpunkt gewiss auf der »deutschen Mystik« (zwischen Mechthild von Magdeburg und Kusanus), aber neben patristischen Ansätzen (bei Gregor von Nyssa, Maximus Confessor, Erigena) finden paradigmatische Texte und Gestalten aller (westeuropäischen) Länder Berücksichtigung (von Ramon Lull und Hadewijch bis hin zu Walter Hilton und Juan de la Cruz u.v.a.). Dass in allen Beiträgen auf den historischen Kontext