

Ute E. Eisen / Heidrun E. Mader (eds.)

# Talking God in Society

Multidisciplinary (Re)constructions of Ancient (Con)texts

Festschrift Peter Lampe

Volume 2

*Hermeneuein* in Global Contexts:  
Past and Present

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of Ancient (Con)texts  
Festschrift for Peter Lampe

Edited by Ute E. Eisen and Heidrun E. Mader

in cooperation with Mirjam Daume-Wolff, Kathleen Ess,  
Laura Viktoria Richter, Kaja Wiczorek

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## On the Addressees of the Letter to the Galatians

In New Testament scholarship, there have been many views on introductory matters. Several theories rival each other and will probably continue to compete in the future. An example of this is the addressees of Paul's letter to the Galatians. As is well known, scholars even today are divided. Did the first recipients of this letter live around Ancyra (North Galatian hypothesis) or did they live in the southern parts of the Roman province *Galatia* (South Galatian hypothesis)? The main data and arguments representing both major hypotheses are known. There is often some subjective element in scholars' decisions when weighing the evidence. A certain view on some particular arguments may tip the balance in favour of one of the hypotheses. In the following short paper, I will discuss some of the major data scholars repeatedly mention in favour of the two main rival hypotheses concerning the addressees of the Letter to the Galatians and will show why I find the South Galatian hypothesis more convincing.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. On the History of Galatian Ethnic Groups and the Province *Galatia*

Many commentaries give a detailed history of ethnic Galatians and of the Roman province called *Galatia*. Here I summarise only some of these data, which may be especially relevant when searching for the location of the addressees of Paul's letter.<sup>2</sup>

1 I thank Professor Peter Lampe for continued scholarly friendship since my research in Heidelberg with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in 1999–2000. In this paper I rely on material I have published in a conference paper on the question of the addressees of the Letter to the Galatians (Balla, 2017), in another paper on the question of which journey of the Apostle Paul is related to the events narrated in Gal 2:1–10 (Balla, 2016), and also in a commentary on Galatians (Balla, 2009). These were written in the Hungarian language. For the present paper, I mainly use my own Hungarian paper on the addressees of Galatians (2017); I follow its structure but re-worked it. I greet Professor Lampe with my gratitude for his support of me and of other colleagues from Central Europe.

2 This summary is based primarily on the commentaries of Oepke (1979), Betz (1988), Rohde (1989), Longenecker (1990), Witherington (2004), Schreiner (2010), and Moo (2013).



The ethnic Galatians of Asia Minor were descendants of some Celtic tribes that lived in the Danube River basin in central Europe in the third century BCE.<sup>3</sup> Members of this group migrated from territories that we today call France (the Roman name Gaul was related to the Greek name *Galatai*) to various parts of Europe, for example, ancient Pannonia, Dalmatia, and Illyria.<sup>4</sup> From there, in the third century BCE, some Celtic tribes reached central Asia Minor and settled in the region around ancient Ancyra (modern Ankara). In Greek these people were called Γαλάται, Κέλτοι, or Κέλται and in Latin *Galatae*, *Celtae*, or *Galli*.<sup>5</sup> Most of them were warriors who from ca. 278 BCE were in the service of Nicomedes, the king of Bithynia. Oepke estimated their number to be more than twenty thousand; of these, about ten thousand were men at arms,<sup>6</sup> hired as mercenaries by various princes for their wars with their neighbours. However, soon they became feared even by their lords—as they were violent and plundered places where they won battles. They caused much unrest in Asia Minor for over a century, claiming taxes from the people in the defeated regions.<sup>7</sup> In 189 BCE, the Roman consul Manlius Vulso succeeded in conquering them, and from this time on they were under Roman rule. In 36 BCE, the Romans placed Galatia under the rule of king Amyntas, who already ruled over some portions of Phrygia and Pisidia.<sup>8</sup> Amyntas also received a part of Pamphylia and later some portions of Lycaonia, “and after the battle of Actium Octavian gave him a portion of Cilicia Tracheia as well.”<sup>9</sup>

The year 25 BCE was especially important for the history of this region. In that year king Amyntas died, and the Roman emperor (Augustus) organised the territories formerly controlled by Amyntas (with the exception of parts of Pamphylia and Cilicia) into a new Roman province, governed by a praetorian legate.<sup>10</sup> This province was called *Provincia Galatia*, and the Romans continued to add territories to this province in the following decades. As Witherington notes: “It was standard procedure for the Romans to add areas to already existing provinces rather than create many separate provinces.”<sup>11</sup> At the beginning of the first century CE, *Provincia Galatia* “included the old country named Galatia as well as parts of Pisidia, Isauria, Pamphylia, Lycaonia,

3 Witherington (2004), 2.

4 Rohde (1989), 1. I note that Longenecker (1990), lxii, describes a different direction of the migration of the Celtic people: He holds that these tribes originated “in the Danube River basin of central Europe” and from there “migrated into Switzerland, southern Germany, and northern Italy, then into France and Britain, and finally south-eastward into the Balkan peninsula and Asia Minor”. For a similar view, see Witherington (2004), 2. Above I have followed the view of Rohde.

5 Moo (2013), 2.

6 Oepke (1979), 20.

7 Oepke (1979), 20.

8 Witherington (2004), 2.

9 Witherington (2004), 3.

10 Witherington (2004), 3.

11 Witherington (2004), 3 n. 5.

Paphlagonia, and Pontus Galaticus”.<sup>12</sup> In the time of Paul, this province “bordered on the Black Sea in the north and the Mediterranean Sea in the south”.<sup>13</sup>

It is important to note that the province’s size decreased not long after the time of Paul and continued to become even smaller in the next century. As Witherington notes: “Vespasian detached almost all of Pisidia from Galatia in A.D. 74 and about A.D. 137 Lycaonia Galatica was removed and added to an enlarged province of Cilicia.”<sup>14</sup> This process continued also at the end of the third century CE:

In A.D. 297 southern Galatia was united with surrounding regions to form a new province of Pisidia with Antioch as its capital, and this in turn meant that the province of Galatia at this point reverted back to its original ethnological dimensions.<sup>15</sup>

This is significant for our discussion of the addressees of Paul’s letter, because “the earliest Christian discussions of Paul’s Galatians were undertaken with a knowledge only of subsequent developments in the province”.<sup>16</sup> As Schreiner rightly affirms:

Hence, commentators in early church history naturally thought Galatians was written to the province as it existed in later Roman history, and therefore, virtually all scholars believed that Galatians was written to the ethnic Galatians in the northern part of the province.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. Major Arguments for the North Galatian and South Galatian Hypotheses

Scholars have long known all the major arguments for and against the two rival hypotheses.<sup>18</sup> There are examples when commentators discuss the arguments for the North Galatian hypothesis separately from those relating to the South Galatian hypothesis.<sup>19</sup> However, it is possible to discuss the two hypotheses together, as most of the phenomena are mentioned in both cases, except that proponents of the two hypotheses offer different explanations.<sup>20</sup> Some of the

12 Betz (1988), 2.

13 Witherington (2004), 3; here he refers to Strabo 12.5.1.

14 Witherington (2004), 5.

15 Witherington (2004), 5.

16 Witherington (2004), 5.

17 Schreiner (2010), 23.

18 See, e.g., Longenecker (1990), lxiii–lxx, summarising the views of Lightfoot, Moffatt, Ramsay, and others.

19 So, e.g., Schreiner (2010), 24–29.

20 So, e.g., Vouga (1998), 9–12. Vouga (1998), 11, affirms: “The answer to the question whether the addressees are the so-called ‘North Galatians’ or simply ‘South Galatians’ proves to be in-

arguments may be found, as Longenecker has put it, “ambiguous, inconclusive, or faulty”.<sup>21</sup> I shall refer to the main arguments without grouping them under the heading of one or the other hypothesis and shall discuss here only some major arguments that surface in most of the studies on our topic.

1. Scholars disagree concerning the interpretation of Galatians 3:1, where Paul addresses the recipients of the letter in a direct way: “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified!”<sup>22</sup> Many argue that the Greek vocative Γαλάται addresses the readers and hearers of the letter as members of a nation, as “Galatians”. For example, Schnelle argues that the different nations who were united in the province of Galatia kept their cultural distinctives, including those of their language (he points to Acts 14:11).<sup>23</sup> He affirms: “It is therefore striking that Paul addresses Lycaonians or Pisidians as ‘foolish Galatians’ (Gal 3:1). This reproach can only be apt, if the addressees feel themselves completely as Galatians.”<sup>24</sup> Rohde approvingly refers to Oepke, calling this address a “proof” of the North Galatian hypothesis.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, Hengel has pointed to an earlier observation of Zahn, who argued in his commentary on Galatians that no other convenient word than “Galatians” stood at an author’s disposal to address the different people living in the southern part of the province. Hengel calls attention to this important observation of Zahn in the preface of a new edition of Zahn’s commentary. Thus, Zahn’s following sentence appears twice in the book: “If someone wanted to address them all collectively [i. e., the peoples living in the southern territories of the province; P.B.], he not only could but had to call them Galatians.”<sup>26</sup> Witherington similarly affirms, “the only term which could be predicated of all of them in Paul’s day would be Galatians”.<sup>27</sup> As Paul visited the southern parts of the province on his first missionary journey, Moo applies the same observation to Paul’s journey: “[I]t is difficult to know what other word Paul could have used if

significant for the time and place of the writing of the letter as well as for its interpretation” (translation P.B.). It is worth noting that Moo (2013), 9, offers a detailed list to show that scholars holding the two rival hypotheses differ widely on their views related to the dating of the letter even within the two groups of scholars: Dates suggested for the letter by scholars arguing for the South Galatian hypothesis range between 48 and 57 CE, and dates offered by scholars supporting the North Galatian hypothesis range between 50 and 57 CE.

21 Longenecker (1990), lxix. Here he lists ten such points.

22 In this paper, unless otherwise stated, quotations of the Bible are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV, 1989).

23 Schnelle (2017), 120.

24 Schnelle (2017), 120–121 (translation P.B.).

25 Rohde (1989), 129. See also Oepke (1979), 24, 99–100.

26 Zahn (1990); the exact quotation by Hengel is on p. VII, and the sentence itself is in the commentary on p. 12: “Wer sie alle zusammenfassen wollte, konnte nicht bloß, sondern mußte sie Galater nennen.”

27 Witherington (2004), 4.

he wanted to refer to all the Christians living in the cities of the first missionary journey.<sup>28</sup>

2. Many scholars refer to two passages in Acts as references to Paul's journeys toward the territories of ethnic Galatians in the region around Ancyra. However, others have suggested that these texts do not necessarily prove that Paul journeyed so far north; it is possible that he did not visit the territories mentioned by proponents of the North Galatian hypothesis. The two passages in question are Acts 16:1–8 and 18:21b–24. In these passages, the Greek term *Γαλατικὴν χώραν* (“the Galatian region”;<sup>29</sup> Acts 16:6 and 18:23) appears in phrases that are difficult to interpret, and the question is just this: Which regions did Paul visit on his second and third missionary journeys according to these texts?

Schnelle affirms that the term *Γαλατικὴ χώρα* in Acts 16:6 and 18:23 (in both cases with Phrygia) stands for the region Galatia, in which Paul carried out mission work, “from a Lukan point of view”.<sup>30</sup> Boer argues that “Acts clearly distinguishes this region from the regions of Pisidia and Lycaonia”.<sup>31</sup> However, there are scholars who give another interpretation to this term at least in Acts 16:6, and possibly also in Acts 18:23. It is worth quoting both verses, because the Greek expression, *Γαλατικὴν χώραν*, occurs in a longer phrase—with slight differences. In Acts 16:6 we read: “They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.” Acts 18:23 reads as follows: “After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.” In the Greek text of Acts 16:6a we read the following longer expression: *Διήλθον δὲ τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ Γαλατικὴν χώραν*.<sup>32</sup> The NRSV translation, quoted above, indicates that Phrygia and Galatia may refer to two distinct geographical regions. However, it may be significant that there is only one definite article belonging to the two proper names. Thus, “the reference to Phrygia may simply designate the ethnic area of Galatia that Paul travelled through according to Acts 16:6”.<sup>33</sup> Thus, Carson and Moo suggest the following translation for this term: “the Phrygio-Galatic territory”.<sup>34</sup> Moo in his commentary refers to several earlier works, which point in this direction, and concludes: “On this view, both geographical names are adjectives, and the

28 Moo (2013), 5.

29 Translation P.B.; the NRSV gives this translation only in a footnote to Acts 18:23.

30 Schnelle (2017), 120.

31 Boer (2011), 4.

32 Nestle-Aland 28<sup>th</sup> edition. In this edition there is only one variant mentioned in the apparatus in relation to this longer phrase: In the case of the first word, instead of the indicative mood of the verb we find the participle plural nominative of the same word in numerous manuscripts: *διελθόντες*. This does not change the meaning of the longer expression as a whole.

33 Schreiner (2010), 27. Here Schreiner adds: “This may be supported by one article for both the Galatian and Phrygian region.”

34 Carson/Moo (2005), 461; Peterson (2009), 454, uses a similar expression: “the Phrygian-Galatian region”.

single article associates the two together as coordinate descriptions of one ‘region’ (χώραν).<sup>35</sup>

In Acts 18:23 we find a slightly different Greek expression: ἐξῆλθεν διερχόμενος καθεξῆς τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν καὶ Φρυγίαν. Because here the term χώραν comes earlier, and not at the end of the expression, Φρυγίαν does seem to stand separately and to refer to a region itself. However, this longer phrase may mean something very similar to what we have found above in connection with the expression in verse 16:6. As Carson and Moo affirm: “The similar expression in Acts 18:23 seems to mean much the same” as in 16:6.<sup>36</sup> We may add that even if the term Φρυγίαν in 18:23 were more distinct from Γαλατικὴν χώραν than in 16:6, it could still be argued that it does not refer to north Galatian regions. Witherington argues as follows:

the term καθεξῆς would seem to point to the visiting of two regions, for the term means in order, assuming a sequence of at least two members. Thus I agree with Hemer that it is likely that here Luke uses the term Galatia to refer to the southern Galatian cities previously visited, or the province as a whole which included these cities, and the term Phrygia is used with the awareness that Phrygia extended beyond the Galatian province into the province of Asia and that Paul went through both Phrygian Galatia and Phrygian Asia on his way to Ephesus.<sup>37</sup>

Whichever view we accept from the two grammatical analyses above, it is significant that on the basis of both it can be argued that Paul did not visit the north Galatian territories even on his second and third missionary journeys. This view may be strengthened by Moo’s observation: “Paul generally focused his evangelistic work on cities with a strong Roman culture and used Roman roads to make his way from city to city.”<sup>38</sup> Moo adds that “North Galatia was not very Romanized in the first century [...] and major Roman roads were not constructed in north-central Galatia until the 70s and 80s of the first century”.<sup>39</sup> Witherington concludes: “It is not really feasible to argue that Paul detoured some 200 kilometres north and east out of his way in order to pass through old ethnic Galatia on his way between Lystra and Ephesus.”<sup>40</sup>

3. Some scholars point to a term in Galatians 4:13 that may imply that Paul

35 Moo (2013), 7. We may add that Carson/Moo (2005), 459, in their introductory work refer to two papers by Colin Hemer, in which Hemer “has shown conclusively” that the term Φρυγία is an adjective that has three terminations, and thus it “may well qualify the word” χώρα. Thus, Carson/Moo (2005), 458–459, disprove the earlier view of Haenchen who held that “Φρυγία (Phrygia) is an adjective of two terminations and cannot qualify χώρα (chóra, ‘land’ or ‘region’)”.

36 Carson/Moo (2005), 459. We may add that William Ramsay (1902), 210–211, long ago observed that in Greek it was possible to have a word order of “adjective—noun—other adjectives”, with all adjectives belonging to the noun. The phrase in Acts 18:23 may just be an example of this phenomenon.

37 Witherington (2004), 6.

38 Moo (2013), 8.

39 Moo (2013), 8.

40 Witherington (2004), 5.

visited the congregations in Galatia at least twice before he wrote Galatians to them. In English the verse reads: “You know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I first announced the gospel to you.” The term translated by the NRSV edition as “first” is τὸ πρότερον in the Greek. Oepke argues that in most cases the term means “a previous occasion from one or more later ones”.<sup>41</sup> Rohde affirms:

It may, therefore, be implied by Paul here that he had already been twice in Galatia and preached the gospel there. This stands in agreement with Acts, in which there is mention of two stays of Paul in Galatia (16:6 and 18:23).<sup>42</sup>

However, others have pointed out that the Greek term had lost this precise meaning by the time of Paul. Boer affirms: “In Hellenistic times [...] *proteron* had come to mean simply ‘earlier’ (BDF §62) and *to proteron* ‘the first time’ or ‘before’ (BDAG 889; cf. John 6:62).”<sup>43</sup> Longenecker argues that in the context τὸ πρότερον should be contrasted with the time when Paul writes the letter, “the implied νῦν (‘now’) of v 16”.<sup>44</sup> Boer concludes: “It thus seems that Paul had been to Galatia only once before writing the letter. ‘The earlier time’ refers to the founding visit.”<sup>45</sup> We have previously seen that not even the verses Acts 16:6 and 18:23 force us to envisage a visit of Paul to the north of the province; now we can see that irrespective of how one exegetes those verses in Acts, the Greek term τὸ πρότερον in Gal 4:13 does not prove the North Galatian hypothesis but is in harmony with the South Galatian hypothesis.

4. Scholars often discuss how Paul uses proper names of geographical areas and provinces. This also is an aspect that scholars try to interpret in support of both of the rival hypotheses—a typical example of how subjective the weighing of the evidence may sometimes be. Let a few examples suffice here.

Oepke affirms: “Paul himself uses as a rule the *names of provinces*, Macedonia, Achaia etc. However, where the names of regions and of provinces differ more strongly, he makes *exceptions*.”<sup>46</sup> Rohde emphasises Paul’s reference to Illyricum in Rom 15:19, because Illyricum is not a province name but a designation of a region.<sup>47</sup> Schreiner rightly points out that although

41 Oepke (1979), 142 (translation P.B.).

42 Rohde (1989), 184–185 (translation P.B.).

43 Boer (2011), 279.

44 Longenecker (1990), 190. See also Gal 4:20.

45 Boer (2011), 279. We may add that Paul did visit some of the congregations he founded in the cities in the southern part of the province twice, because according to Acts 14:21 Paul and Barnabas “returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch”. Thus, Carson/Moo (2005), 462, argue that “even if the Greek expression is taken to mean ‘on the first of my two visits,’ the second visit may have been the return swing on the first missionary journey (Acts 14:21–26), rather than something later”. In his commentary, Moo (2013), 283–284, affirms that in Gal 4:13 “Paul probably intends simply to contrast his ‘former’ or ‘earlier’ relationships with the Galatians to the situation that ‘now’ prevails (see v. 16 [...])”.

46 Oepke (1979), 25 (italics his; translation P.B.).

47 Rohde (1989), 8.

it is a true observation that “Paul normally uses Roman imperial terms when there are geographical references”, in itself this “does not prove a south Galatian destination, for the north Galatians were part of the province of Galatia as well”. However, other use of proper names by Paul may point slightly more decisively to the southern regions as the location of the addressees of the letter. Moo observed that Paul never mentions cities of the central and northern part of the province (although Ancyra and Pessinus were significant cities in his day), but he “refers to the South Galatian cities of (Pisidian) Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra in 2 Tim. 3:11”.<sup>48</sup>

Moo notes that although Paul “refers twice to Galatia outside the Letter to the Galatians (1 Cor 16:1; 2 Tim 4:10) [...] neither reference enables us to locate the area”.<sup>49</sup> Longenecker is more confident regarding 1 Cor 16:1. He quotes Burton who holds that “the evidence of the Pauline epistles is [...] decidedly more favourable to [...] the view that by Galatia he [Paul] means both in 1 Cor 16:1 and Gal 1:2 the Roman province”.<sup>50</sup> Longenecker finds “Ramsay’s research on the historical issues convincing in the main: that from 25 B.C. to at least A.D. 74, the Roman province of Galatia included the cities of Paul’s first missionary journey (Acts 13:14–14:23)”.<sup>51</sup> Thus, we may say that although this point in itself is not conclusively in favour of the South Galatian hypothesis, Oepke’s affirmation concerning the “exception” in Paul’s usage of the names of provinces is not proven either.

5. One further exegetical debate is worth mentioning, because it may have a bearing on the decision regarding the addressees of Galatians. Scholars have long debated the question of which Jerusalem visit Paul refers to in Gal 2:1–10.<sup>52</sup> It is a widely held view among scholars that Paul here refers to the “apostolic conference” as narrated in Acts 15.<sup>53</sup> However, it may also be argued that Paul intends to summarise his contacts with the leaders of the early church in Jerusalem in a precise way (Gal 1:20);<sup>54</sup> thus, his report on his second visit to the Jerusalem leaders may indeed refer to his second visit mentioned in Acts

48 Moo (2013), 6. This is a good argument irrespective of which view one holds on the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles.

49 Moo (2013), 6.

50 Longenecker (1990), lxx.

51 Longenecker (1990), lxx.

52 Witherington (1998), 90, affirms: “It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that one of the most difficult problems in NT studies is assessing the relationship, if any, between Galatians 2 and Acts 11:30; 12:25; and 15.”

53 So, e.g., Boer (2011), 8–9, 115 (he uses the term “conference” to describe the event); Pokorný/Heckel (2007), 180–181, 183 (they use the term “Apostelkonvent”).

54 Moo (2013), 111, holds the view that it is possible “that Paul intends this oath to apply to all of verses 13–24 and even into Gal. 2”. Peterson (2009), 420 n. 11, affirms: “The identification of Gal. 2:1–10 with Acts 15 means that Paul provided no parallel to the visit mentioned in Acts 11:29–30, which is hard to believe since he claims to be providing a record of all his contacts with Jerusalem in his appeal to the Galatians.”

11:27–30.<sup>55</sup> A decision on this exegetical problem may only indirectly contribute to the discussion of the addressees of Galatians. If the events narrated in Gal 2 are those narrated in Acts 15, then this exegetical decision does not help us in our determination of the addressees. Indeed, we find scholars holding this exegetical view among scholars supporting the North Galatian hypothesis as well as among those supporting the South Galatian hypothesis.<sup>56</sup> However, if the view is followed that the visit mentioned in Acts 11:27–30 is the same as the one referred to by Paul in Gal 2:1–10,<sup>57</sup> then it may be argued that Galatians was written prior to the apostolic conference narrated in Acts 15.<sup>58</sup> If so, then this can be a further support for the South Galatian hypothesis.

I do acknowledge that this exegetical question cannot be solved in a conclusive way. Scholars will probably continue to argue for both options. Here I mention only one argument, which (in my subjective weighing of the possibilities) points to the early dating of Galatians, and, by implication, to the South Galatian hypothesis. This argument is an argument from silence: In Galatians Paul does not refer to the apostolic decree narrated in Acts 15. This decree did not prescribe circumcision for Gentile Christians, so it would have been a strong argument in Paul's hand. For me, the simplest and most convincing reason why Paul did not refer to this decree is that he wrote Galatians before the apostolic conference and its decree; thus, he did not have this strong argument in his hands when writing the letter. Witherington emphasises that Paul did not mention the Jerusalem decree in his arguments when rejecting the "suggestion by the agitators that his Galatian converts be circumcised", nor when he "opposed Peter to his face over the matter of table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles".<sup>59</sup> Witherington affirms:

Some silences are rather quiet silences, but these omissions shout out for an explanation if in fact Galatians was written after the Apostolic Council. [...] Had Paul known of and had the Jerusalem Church agreed to such a compromise before

55 So, e.g., Witherington (1998), 91–94, 374–375, 440–446. Witherington discusses the arguments for both views in detail, and his own conclusion is: "Though no view is without its problems, the one which causes least difficulties and makes best sense of what both Acts and Galatians suggest is the view that Acts 11:30/12:25 = Gal. 2:1–10, and thus that Galatians was written *prior* to the apostolic council" (444–445; italics his).

56 For an example among the supporters of the North Galatian hypothesis, see Rohde (1989), 76, 94. Dunn (1993), 6–8, 88–89, inclines to support the South Galatian hypothesis, and he is open to favouring "the view that Gal. ii.1–10 is Paul's account of the Jerusalem council (Acts xv ...)" (8).

57 Zeigan (2005) comes to this conclusion in his detailed monograph on this exegetical question (see esp. 481–492). I note that Calvin in his commentary on Gal 2:1 comes to the same conclusion; see Balla (2009), 90; Balla (2016), 235.

58 So, e.g., Witherington (1998), 444–446; Peterson (2009), 421.

59 Witherington (2004), 13.



Galatians was written it is very difficult to explain why Paul did not refer to it in this letter to support his arguments.<sup>60</sup>

Scholars differ in their views on the date of the apostolic conference as narrated in Acts 15; the majority view in our days may be to date it in 48 or 49 CE.<sup>61</sup> For our present discussion, it is not decisive to determine the exact year of the conference—it is important only that the case can be argued that Galatians was written prior to the conference. As Bruce affirms: “[T]he letter to the Galatians was written [...] on the eve of the Jerusalem meeting described in Acts 15:6 ff.”<sup>62</sup>

Schreiner summarises the state of the matter in a properly cautious way: “We must admit that untangling the knots in deciphering the destination of Galatians is difficult.”<sup>63</sup> He, too, has pointed to the possibility that the South Galatian hypothesis can be held even if one would opt for equating Gal 2 with Acts 15.<sup>64</sup> He formulates his own view as follows: “On balance, it seems that a south Galatian hypothesis is preferable, and I incline towards Gal 2:1–10 = Acts 11:27–30/12:25.”<sup>65</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

As indicated above, I have discussed here only some of the arguments put forward by scholars in the discussion about the recipients of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians. Not only the weighing of the possibilities, but even the selection of the main arguments is somewhat subjective—it shows what I regard to be the main questions to answer or decisions to make when trying to decide between the North Galatian and South Galatian hypotheses. I acknowledge that both views can be argued for—and probably will continue to be argued for in the future. In my opinion, the conclusion is that the arguments tip the scales in favour of the South Galatian hypothesis. I incline to the view that Galatians was written to the congregations Paul founded on his first missionary journey in the southern part of the province *Galatia* as narrated in Acts 13–14 and also to the view that the letter was written prior to the apostolic conference in Jerusalem narrated in Acts 15. I hope that the voice of those supporting the

60 Witherington (2004), 13.

61 See, e.g., Pokorný/Heckel (2007), 181. They date it to the year 48 CE; Carson/Moo (2005), 369, give the dates for the “Apostolic Council” as “48 or 49”, but they also mention 48 CE as a probable date (367).

62 Bruce (1982), 55. Bruce here continues: “[I]f this is so, Galatians is the earliest among the extant letters of Paul. I know of no evidence to make this conclusion impossible, or even improbable.”

63 Schreiner (2010), 29.

64 Schreiner (2010), 29.

65 Schreiner (2010), 29. Here he adds: “though, as noted, a south Galatian destination is possible with Gal 2:1–10 = Acts 15:1–35 as well”.

South Galatian hypothesis will be listened to by scholars holding the North Galatian hypothesis. The discussion should go on.

The arguments presented above may have one further consequence. Perhaps the time has come that even maps in Bibles should reflect this division of views among scholars. Most Bible editions contain maps presenting the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul in such a way that lines indicating both his second and third missionary journeys are drawn almost as far north as Ancyra.<sup>66</sup> Biblical maps should indicate that Paul's visit to that region is not a proven fact. He may, indeed, have visited only the southern parts of the province: regions in which those congregations lived to which he addressed his letter to the "Galatians".

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<sup>66</sup> See, e.g., the map on the inside of the back cover of the 28<sup>th</sup> Nestle-Aland edition.

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