

**Review of King, J. *Speech-in-Character, Diatribe, and Romans 3:1-9: Who's Speaking When and Why It Matters*, Leiden: Brill, 2018**

In this revision of his Baylor thesis, King identifies a problem when using diatribe to model dialectic forms in Romans, namely identifying the “voices”. King notes that three distinct vocalisations of Rom 3:1-9 (Bultmann, Stowers, Elliot) attribute utterances to “Paul” or the “interlocutor” only rather haphazardly. King seeks to improve this by better locating diatribe within the practice of speech-in-character which he explores first (part 1, chs. 2-5). Turning to diatribe (part 2, chs. 6-7), illustrated via Epictetus, he shows how *characterisation* rather than verbal markers best identifies the voices, breaking down only if one capitulates. Applying this to Rom 3:1-9 (part 3, chs. 8-11), King concurs with Elliot in having Paul *lead* the exchanges and the interlocutor conceding in 3:9b, totally inverting the traditional reading.

King is clearly aware that his analysis must make sense within Romans as a whole, which he takes to be arguing for gentile inclusion. In the diatribe, Paul thus pits “himself” against an opponent arguing for Jewish privilege. Whilst the harmony of King’s vocalisation with his perception of the letter’s theme could be implicated in a certain circularity, the author notes that many scholars have had to leave glaring inconsistencies in their own analyses. Finding a principle that allows a pattern to emerge as naturally as this must surely be significant. Whilst most readers would not have imagined themselves coming to such a radical view of this classic passage, the analysis nicely catches us off-guard and may suggest new approaches to other problem passages.

*John R. L. Moxon, University of Roehampton, UK*