

Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture



Social and Literary Contexts
for the New Testament

EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN
ITS HELLENISTIC CONTEXT
VOLUME 1

EDITED BY

Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts

TEXTS AND EDITIONS FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDY (TENT) [9]

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VOLUME 9

Early Christianity in Its Hellenistic Context

VOLUME 1

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PREFACE

This is the first of three volumes that we have compiled focusing on the ancient world and the New Testament. We have given them the collective name of *Early Christianity in Its Hellenistic Context*. The three volumes will appear in two different series from Brill. This and the second volume will appear in the TENTS—Texts and Editions for New Testament Study—series, and the third volume, because it focuses upon matters of language, will appear in LBS—Linguistic Biblical Studies.

This first volume focuses in particular on Christianity and its Greco-Roman and related origins. This involves both the social and literary dimensions of the origins of Christianity. As a result, this volume has a wide range of chapters that explore connections that early Christianity has with its surrounding Hellenistic world, the world of the Greeks and Romans into which Christianity was born. This world included both Greeks and Romans—and their progeny—and their literary, material, and social artifacts, and there are essays here that address most of these major areas in one way or another. This volume is not a small volume. This is because not only does it include a large number of essays, but some of these essays are significant efforts in their own right to address their chosen topics. We are glad that the authors have felt free to undertake such significant work in this volume.

The second volume focuses upon the origins of Christianity and its relationship to Hellenistic Judaism. It is entirely appropriate, as those essays will demonstrate, that Christianity in its relations to Judaism was also a part of the larger world of its Hellenistic Context. This volume also appears in the TENTS series, and includes a large number of essays.

The third volume is devoted to the language of the New Testament, and hence its appearance in LBS. This volume, though not quite as large as its two related volumes, itself contains significant work in the area of Greek language and linguistics as it is relevant to the origins of Christianity within its Hellenistic context.

The editors are appreciative of the contributions of the authors, and appreciate the opportunity to work with them in publishing their work. We also apologize for the delay in their publication, which was unavoidable due to personal circumstances. In any case, we believe that the material included here will provide much to contemplate in future research on the New Testament in its relation to its Hellenistic context.

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GRECO-ROMAN CULTURE IN
THE HISTORY OF NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION:
AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts

Many factors have contributed to the renewed interest in Greco-Roman culture's relevance for New Testament scholarship. At the turn of the last century, with the discovery of the documentary papyri in Egypt and their application to the New Testament in the work of scholars like Adolf Deissmann¹ and James Hope Moulton,² we see the first sparks of the kind of social-descriptive analysis that has become so prominent in scholarship today. Hellenistic literature served as one of the reservoirs of comparative material from which the early form critics drew. Even though they distinguished between *Hochliteratur* (literary works) and *Kleinliteratur* (popular works)—equating early Christian literature with the latter—Martin Dibelius, Rudolf Bultmann, and especially Karl Schmidt (a student of Deissmann) used Hellenistic parallels either to show how different this literature was from early Christian documents (e.g. the Gospels are *sui generis*) or to substantiate universal patterns outside of the New Testament for the development of their literary forms.³ In the 1940s and 50s, discovery of

¹ A. Deissmann, *Bible Studies: Contributions, Chiefly from Papyri and Inscriptions, to the History of the Language, the Literature, and the Religion of Hellenistic Judaism and Primitive Christianity* (trans. A.J. Grieve; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1901); A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East* (trans. L.R.M. Strachan; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910); A. Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (trans. L.R.M. Strachan; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1912). Deissmann's use of the papyri for assessing New Testament letters has continued to be a factor in scholarship up to the present, e.g. J.L. White, *The Form and Structure of the Official Petition: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (SBLDS 5; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1972); W.G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (GBNTS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973); S.K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC 5; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); S.E. Porter and S.A. Adams, eds., *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form* (Pauline Studies 6; Leiden: Brill, 2010).

² J.H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 1: *Prolegomena* (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908); J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1930).

³ K.L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu: Literarkritische Untersuchungen zur Ältesten Jesusüberlieferung* (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1919); M. Dibelius, *From Tradition*

the Dead Sea Scrolls and (if we may psychologize a bit) the guilt felt for the horrific tragedies inflicted upon the Jews in the Second World War, led to a massive revival of interest in the Jewishness of early Christianity and the use of Jewish texts to illuminate the meaning of the New Testament. This approach was exemplified in the work of scholars like Jacob Neusner, W.D. Davies (and his student, E.P. Sanders), Birger Gerhardsson, and Geza Vermes.⁴

Nevertheless, in a discipline such as contemporary New Testament studies that is persistently sociologically oriented towards Judaism, a number of scholars in various places have continued to emphasize Greco-Roman culture as a significant social matrix for early Christianity. Early on, many of the studies seemed to go back in some form or another to the divinity schools at the universities of Chicago and Yale. The University of Chicago Divinity School already had a history of social analysis of early Christianity through the founding of the so-called "Chicago School" based around the work of Shirley Jackson Case.⁵ But much in the same way that the old Tübingen school's history-of-religions approach had not been able to distance itself from the faulty Enlightenment-driven assumptions of historical criticism, the Chicago school's social-history model remained tainted with the sociological baggage of form criticism. But in the work of Chicago's Hans Dieter Betz, we see a definite move away from a historical-critical social model to a framework that may be best labeled as social description. His numerous studies began to set in motion many of the contemporary

to Gospel (trans. B.E. Woolf; New York: Scribner, 1965 [1919]); K.L. Schmidt, *The Place of the Gospels in the General History of Literature* (trans. B.R. McCane; Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002 [1921]); R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (trans. J.H. Marsh; New York: Harper & Row, 1963 [1921]).

⁴ J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia* (Studia post-Biblica 9, 11, 12, 14, 15; 5 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1965); J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (3 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1971); W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1955); W.D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Pantfyedwen Trust Lectures 1968; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986); B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998 [1961]); B. Gerhardsson, *The Origins of the Gospel Traditions* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981 [1973]); G. Vermes, *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

⁵ S.J. Case, *The Social Origins of Christianity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1923); see also W.J. Hynes, *Shirley Jackson Case and the Chicago School: The Socio-Historical Method* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

trends we observe today in social analysis of the New Testament. His debut monograph dealt with paraenetic parallels between Lucian and early Christian literature,⁶ but his commentary on Galatians was the first of what would be many studies that apply the categories of ancient rhetoric to Pauline epistolary material.⁷ His former student Margaret Mitchell, now the dean at the University of Chicago Divinity School, developed his work, applying Greco-Roman rhetoric to 1 Corinthians.⁸ Along with the work of classical scholar George Kennedy,⁹ Betz and his students seem largely responsible for the explosion in rhetorical study of the New Testament that we witness today.¹⁰ The social-descriptive work in relation to the Greco-Roman world continues at Chicago with the research of Hans-Josef Klauck, who has studied the relation between rhetoric and epistolography.¹¹

⁶ H.D. Betz, *Lukian von Samosata und das neue Testament: religionsgeschichtliche und paränetische Parallelen* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961).

⁷ H.D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

⁸ M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).

⁹ G.A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). See also C.C. Black and D.F. Watson, eds., *Words Well Spoken: George Kennedy's Rhetoric of the New Testament* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008).

¹⁰ In addition to Galatians and 1 Corinthians mentioned above, nearly all of Paul's letters have now been subjected to rhetorical analysis, many by numerous authors. For example, see F.J. Long, *Ancient Rhetoric and Paul's Apology: The Compositional Unity of 2 Corinthians* (SNTSMS 131; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); B. Witherington, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); B. Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); R. Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); B. Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011). But see the critique of R.D. Anderson, *Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Paul* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 18; Leuven: Peeters, 2000). The ability to continue holding conferences (and publishing the anthologies that result) on rhetorical criticism reflects its continued interest to New Testament scholars. E.g. S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht, eds., *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht, eds., *The Rhetorical Analysis of Scripture: Essays from the 1995 London Conference* (JSNTSup 146; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); T.H. Olbricht and A. Eriksson, eds., *Rhetoric, Ethic, and Moral Persuasion in Biblical Discourse: Essays from the 2002 Heidelberg Conference* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity; New York: T&T Clark, 2005).

¹¹ H.-J. Klauck, *Magic and Paganism in early Christianity: The World of the Acts of the Apostles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000); H.-J. Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006).

Along with figures like E.A. Judge,¹² John G. Gager,¹³ and Gerd Theissen,¹⁴ Yale University and Divinity School's Abraham Malherbe and Wayne Meeks were among the first to rigorously collect, assess, and set the primary source literature of the Greco-Roman era in relation to the world of the earliest Christians. If scholarship from Chicago tended to emphasize the literary—especially rhetorical—relationships within the New Testament, the scholarship from Yale focused more on configuring the social milieu itself, especially as it related to Greco-Roman philosophy and the social strata of early Christianity. Malherbe early on produced important source books designed to aid biblical scholars in accessing primary source material.¹⁵ While he spent some time reconstructing the general social environment out of which Christianity emerged,¹⁶ he invested most of his energy in exploring the relation between the Hellenistic moral philosophers and the earliest Christians.¹⁷ Meeks's pivotal influence was also felt in the early years of the development of social description as a methodology in New Testament research. His landmark social analysis of the early Pauline church communities constructed a convincing social framework out of which the basic concepts and terminology applied to the Pauline churches seem to have developed.¹⁸ He shared with his Yale colleague the conviction that Hellenistic moral philosophy bore in it elements essential for understanding the ethical world of early Christianity.¹⁹

This movement we have been describing, typified by the authors included in this volume,²⁰ goes by various names—new historicism, social

¹² For a collection of his writings, see E.A. Judge, *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century: Pivotal Essays* (ed. David M. Scholer; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008).

¹³ J.G. Gager, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975).

¹⁴ G. Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).

¹⁵ A.J. Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles: A Study Edition* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977); A.J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); A.J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* (SBS 19; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988).

¹⁶ A.J. Malherbe, *The World of the New Testament* (Austin: R.B. Sweet, 1967); A.J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983).

¹⁷ A.J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); A.J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

¹⁸ W.A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).

¹⁹ W.A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); W.A. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

²⁰ And others as well. See, e.g. B.W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as*

history, social analysis, sociology of early Christianity—but we prefer the term social description, since it most helpfully distinguishes it from social-scientific approaches to the New Testament, like those of John Elliot and Bruce Malina.²¹ Social description—the methodology that this volume seeks to advance—takes its starting point from the data. It is a descriptive methodology. Social-scientific criticism takes precisely the opposite approach. Instead of beginning with the ancient data, social-scientific critics begin with a modern sociological/anthropological model. Rather than being descriptive, they are prescriptive. We remain unconvinced that models drawn from the study of modern tribal or folk societies in social anthropology have very much necessarily to tell us about the world of the New Testament. Since we do not have access to the people of the ancient world, there remains insufficient evidence to establish whether or not the societies studied today by cultural anthropologists are sufficiently similar to those of early Christianity to warrant comparison. All that we have from the ancient world are its literary and material artifacts, and these documents must remain the focus of social study. The numerous claims made within this prescriptive discipline, literally without a shred of evidence from the ancient world, continue to baffle us. Responding directly to what Bengt Holmberg calls “the fallacy of idealism” (interpreting historical phenomena as formed by underlying theological structures), Judge in return identifies within social-scientific criticism what he calls the sociological fallacy. Judge states that “Until the painstaking field work is better done, the importation of social models that have been defined in terms of other cultures is methodologically no improvement on the ‘idealistic fallacy.’ We may call it the ‘sociological fallacy.’”²² He criticizes Holmberg, for example, for his application of Weber’s sociology of authority to Pauline church structures, concluding that those in authority bear a relation to their subordinates in which the subordinates must render money to their authorities. This may be true for Weber’s model,

Benefactors and Citizens (First-century Christians in the Graeco Roman World; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); B.W. Winter, *Philo and Paul Among the Sophists* (SNTSMS 96; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); B.W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

²¹ J.H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981); J.H. Elliott, *What Is Social-Scientific Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); B.J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981); B. Malina, *Social Gospel of Jesus: Kingdom of God in Mediterranean Perspective* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2000).

²² E.A. Judge, “The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question of Method in Religious History,” in Judge, *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First Century*, 128.

but, as Judge shows, there is not a single piece of evidence from the ancient world to support this kind of scenario for the Pauline situation. In fact, the opposite is true. In the Greco-Roman world, those in authority (patrons) used the distribution of their funds to their subordinates (clients) in order to keep them loyal, not vice versa.

In our view, model-driven approaches like Holmberg's inevitably leave one's analysis vulnerable to error, since the interpreter is often forced to draw conclusions quite independent of the data. We prefer in this volume a data-driven analysis, applying a social-descriptive approach in assessing the literature and culture of the New Testament. Each essay, therefore, seeks to set early Christianity into relation with the artifacts that remain from Greco-Roman society and the culture that they embody. The first eleven essays focus on the social contexts out of which early Christianity originated. The volume begins with an examination of the materials that made up the textual culture of early Christianity, leading to two chapters that examine the papyrological remains in more detail, followed by two chapters setting the discussion of the historical Jesus in cultural context. Several further studies of the Gospels ensue, followed by three social-descriptive analyses of Paul and a chapter examining the imperial exile setting for Revelation. The second half of the volume, including a further fourteen essays, focuses on literary contexts for Christian origins. These range from a consideration of the literary-historiographic citation strategies of Luke to Paul's use of progymnasmata in his portrayal of love to genre considerations for the *Didache*.

In the opening essay, Michael Kruger explores ancient Christian book production in the Greco-Roman world, placing primary focus on the form and production of the writings that came to be part of the New Testament. He argues that early Christians were not a community concerned solely with oral tradition—as the current fad in New Testament scholarship states—but also and importantly with books. Kruger surveys a wide range of New Testament manuscripts and offers insight into the codex form used within early Christianity. Based on this analysis, he is able to draw several conclusions regarding the character of the Christian scribal traditions as well as the publishing and circulation practices from the first three centuries of the church.

The second and third essays by Stanley Porter further explore the manuscripts that make up our knowledge of early Christianity. In the first essay, he uses the range of manuscripts of early Christianity from the second century to much later to reconstruct a community that was culturally literate, literarily creative, theologically interpretive, consciously theological, and

worship-oriented. The manuscripts are examined, not necessarily for their texts, but for other features that they contain and represent, to reconstruct these features of the early Christian community. In his second essay, Porter focuses upon the second century and examines issues surrounding dating of manuscripts and how these influence our potential reconstruction of early Christianity. He focuses upon the so-called Rylands fragment of the Gospel of John and the Egerton Papyrus, tracing how they were once closely associated, then broken apart, and now have been brought together again—but with possible new implications of these recent efforts.

The question of what to make of parallel messianic figures in historical-Jesus research continues to linger. Craig S. Keener addresses this question by assessing both Greco-Roman and Jewish figures that bear similarities with the life and ministry of Jesus. He shows that many of the so-called parallels turn out to be based upon anachronistic reconstructions that do not convincingly take into account the full range of evidence at the historian's disposal. Other supposed parallel figures simply do not conform to the situation of Jesus at all, so that the comparisons that typically are made seem tenuous at best or anachronistic at worst.

Tony Costa continues the discussion of the historical Jesus, restricting his investigation to the healing and exorcism accounts recorded in the Gospels. Costa employs the historical-critical method and the criteria of authenticity to examine miracle material. He takes into consideration issues surrounding the early dating of the Gospels, Hellenistic cultural context, and historical context that in his judgment have not been sufficiently weighed in previous discussion. He insists that criteria of authenticity and various levels of historical context support that Jesus did perform signs that both Jesus and his audience considered miracles.

Chapter 7 turns to Matthew Forest Lowe's analysis of the Lukan motif of release. Lowe sets this against an imperial backdrop and shows its relevance for Luke's portrayal of the atonement. Lowe emphasizes the need for an investigation of release language with attentiveness toward the sociological context of Luke's Gospel. He concludes that his imperial analysis of the release motif unifies the many alternative views of the atonement.

In a study of Roman imperial identity, Osman Umurhan and Todd Penner explore early conceptions of imperial perception in several first- and second-century writers. With special attention given to Juvenal, they illustrate the relevance of Roman perception—including spatial, moral, and geographical considerations—for the book of Acts. By blurring the distinctions of Greek and Hellenistic influences on Rome, Umurhan and Penner attempt to paint a fuller picture of the sociological context for Acts. In

comparison to first-century Roman writers, such as Juvenal, who see Rome as the hub from which expansion to outlying regions begins, Umurhan and Penner argue that Luke portrays a reversal and casts Rome as the destination toward which the Christian movement advances in Acts.

Greco-Roman friendship conventions continue to provide insight into the social structure of earliest Christianity. In Chapter 9, Ronald Hock reveals their importance for configuring the Johannine construction of discipleship with specific reference to the Beloved Disciple. Unlike many studies of the Beloved Disciple, which focus on the identity of the disciple, Hock assesses the social matrix best suited for understanding the Jesus-Beloved Disciple relationship. He surveys ancient friendship conventions prior to the writing of John's Gospel and shows that Jesus and the Beloved disciple are related as a "pair of friends," a relation configured on the broader scale of other pairs of friends in antiquity.

A hand-full of recent studies has shown that the concept of *mimesis* has some potential for illuminating dimensions of early Christianity's social environment. In Chapter 10, however, James R. Harrison complains that not nearly enough scholarly attention has been given to the role of *mimesis* in the New Testament. While previous studies have restricted the issue of *mimesis* to its traditional aesthetic boundaries, Harrison notes the important function of *mimesis* in the formation of Pauline house churches. He argues that Paul configures his imitation language in terms of the mimetic conventions of his day. This analysis enables Harrison to demonstrate the counter imperial nature of Paul's imitation paradigm, depicting Jesus as the legitimate eternal ruler, in contrast to the Roman rulers who were temporal and passing.

Chapter 11 brings the role of empire into discussion with Christian origins as well. In a study of its imperial context, Fredrick Long focuses on political *topoi* in Ephesians. Long thinks that Ephesians was written to subvert social and political authorities in favor of establishing a new authority under Jesus Christ. He shows that Paul implements the Jewish political covenantal system, interpreted in light of God's holy people. Thus, Jesus becomes the *telos*, the head and superior Savior of the body, while several other political *topoi* are used to undermine prevailing Roman authority structures.

Brian Rapske seeks to clarify several dimensions of John's portrayal of Rome in Revelation. Rapske identifies Revelation as an exilic writing and compares it with other parallel writings from around John's time. He also addresses the issues of how and why John was sentenced to the island of Patmos by Rome. After a survey of the relevant evidence from antiquity, Rapske draws several conclusions concerning the nature of John's exile,

identity, and imperial perspective. Revelation presents the reader with an author who had formed a non-Roman identity and advances a clearly anti-imperial agenda.

At this point we turn to the second group of essays. Andrew Pitts applies source-citation strategies established among the Greco-Roman historians to Luke's Gospel in Chapter 13. While previous treatments have emphasized Jewish midrash as a model for the use of Scripture in Luke, Pitts proposes that Luke's citation strategy is informed directly by his historiographic method. Two ways of using sources can be established within the historians—*mimesis* and direct citation. Applied to Luke's text, *mimesis* accounts for numerous biblical echoes, illusions, and the incorporation of Jesus material into the narrative, while direct citation accounts for his citation of Old Testament literature. Within this historiographic framework, Pitts identifies how Luke strategically uses *mimesis* to function as the literary background and direct citation to place crucial points of the narrative in the foreground and frontground of his narrative.

One of the long-standing debates in Gospels and Acts research concerns the nature and processes employed in the transmission of speech material. In Chapter 14, Sean Adams assesses speech recording in ancient historiography. Adams evaluates the ways in which ancient historians documented information and the relation of this information to the factual nature of the events they record. Adams concludes that it was the primary objective of the historian to preserve the truth of what they recorded for the sake of those who succeeded them. Adams believes that Luke's Gospel follows these conventions in recording Jesus' speech material and, although Jesus' recorded speeches in Luke are not verbatim, they are likely very accurate representations of what he said.

In Chapter 15, Paul Maier adds yet another plank to the accumulating case in contemporary research for viewing Luke as a historian. He makes the case that although Luke is an inspired biblical writer within the Christian community, given his Gentile background, he can also be seen as a reliable Hellenistic historiographer. Maier argues for Luke's reliability as a historian on the basis of several conventions within his two-volume writing that conform to the historical practice of his day, with his accuracy often surpassing that of his contemporaries. Although many have tried to categorize Luke as writing within the boundaries of other genres, Maier finds them unconvincing.

In Chapter 16, Andreas Köstenberger recognizes the literary similarities between John's Gospel and contemporary Greco-Roman literature, but suggests that a biblical historiographic framework provides a more appropriate

genre designation for the Gospel. While acknowledging the commonalities found in John's Gospel and ancient literary genres such as *bioi*, Köstenberger contends that John writes from the literary framework that follows from Jewish historical narrative. According to Köstenberger, the many features contained in the Gospel that parallel Greco-Roman literary forms result from John's attempt to contextualize his Gospel for a widely Hellenistic audience.

Dennis MacDonald makes a contribution to the ongoing research on the influence of Greek literature on the book of Acts. While believing that Luke drew from many classical Greek texts as his influences, MacDonald proceeds by dedicating his article to tracing the similarities found between Acts and Euripides' *Bacchae* in particular. Chalking up much of the confusion and misunderstanding of Lukan interpretation to the failure of New Testament scholars to recognize Luke's *mimesis* of the Greek classics, MacDonald suggests that further exploration along these lines will bring new levels of clarity to our understanding of Luke.

Continuing the emphasis on Pauline epistolography, Randolph Richards gives attention to the role of Paul's prescripts and epistolary conventions in helping to assess which particular tradition of ancient letter-writing Paul's letters seem to conform to. It appears to Richards that Paul does not adhere to the Greco-Roman letter-writing conventions of his day but instead draws from a variety of traditions that account for different elements within his letters, making it difficult to trace their literary origins. While granting that Paul wrote within the context of Greco-Roman epistolography, Richards asserts that even within that context Paul did not produce letters that correspond in any explicit way to standard Hellenistic letter conventions.

Though not making conclusive statements concerning the possible influence of Plato on Paul's writings, James Starr draws attention to the parallels found in the openings of the epistles both of Plato and of Paul. He identifies Paul's deviation from common ancient epistolary conventions, and sees him conforming, albeit not completely, more closely to Plato's epistles. Starr suggests that Paul takes liberties similar to Plato in expanding his openings to accommodate the shared worldview of his recipients.

In Chapter 20, Dean Anderson assesses the use of progymnasmata in 1 Corinthians 13. These rhetorical exercises drawn from Hellenistic school settings illuminate Paul's eloquent description of love, especially its literary and linguistic structure. Anderson examines several literary units in 1 Corinthians 13 to determine whether Paul used these techniques to guide his writing, appealing to two early treatises on progymnasmatic rhetorical

practices. While Anderson states his conclusions cautiously, he shows that a strong case can be made for the possibility of Paul's knowledge of and training in these common rhetorical methods.

A great deal of academic industry has gone into the study of Greco-Roman household codes and their fruitfulness for understanding Christian origins. Cynthia Westfall mines the household codes further for insight into the Pauline portrayal of marriage in Ephesians 5. This text from Ephesians has an important function within Greco-Roman culture, clarifying the roles of the husband and wife in terms of patron-client relationships, the social building blocks of ancient society. Westfall gives a detailed description of reciprocity within the marriage relationship as prescribed in Ephesians. She explains the responsibility of submission and service held primarily by the one in power and the responsibility of providing a model of submission by the other. She concludes that this Christian household code of mutual submission between the husband and wife, motivated by their identity in Christ in the kingdom of God, undermined traditional Greco-Roman familial relations.

In Chapter 22, Michelle Lee-Barnewall continues the discussion on marriage and Ephesians 5, taking the complex web of issues surrounding Paul's use of κεφαλή. Lee-Barnewall investigates the rhetorical use of the head-body metaphor within ancient Greek literature and compares it to Paul's use in Ephesians. She highlights the significance of Paul's radical intentions of reversing the customary understanding of status and headship within the marriage relationship. She also notices the redefinition of the Greco-Roman honor system within a distinctly Christian theology of family. She concludes that Paul uses κεφαλή as a way of referencing the traditional understanding of leadership and authority and as a way of illustrating his reconfiguration of it.

Benjamin Fiore takes his starting point from John Chrysostom's commentary on Hebrews, which suggested that the author of Hebrews employed rhetorical techniques in the composition of his homily. Fiore sets out to test that claim through an analysis of frank speech in Hebrews. The first part of his chapter surveys the general and widespread use of direct speech in Hebrews. The second half narrows in on two paraenetic passages in order to give more detailed analysis: Heb 5:11–6:12 and 10:19–39. These passages share in common the use of fear by the author to motivate the audience.

The Book of Hebrews continues to fascinate scholars, because of both its debated status regarding authorship and the particular features of the book itself. David deSilva examines the book of Hebrews in an attempt to establish the social location of the author, especially his relationship

to the Greek notion of *παιδεία*, or what constituted the educated person in the classical world. On the one hand, deSilva finds that the author of Hebrews draws fairly restrictively upon imagery associated with the Jewish cult. On the other hand, the author utilizes a range of rhetorical techniques that reflect a developed rhetorical capability. While it is possible that the author of Hebrews simply picked up this rhetorical style within his authorial environment, deSilva believes that the sophisticated use of progymnastic exercises indicates that the author may well have been rhetorically trained.

The next chapter moves from a discussion of the New Testament to the earliest piece of Christian literature written after it, the *Didache*. In this chapter, William Varner gives detailed attention to three literary texts—the *Stichometry* of Nicephorus, the *Paschal Letter* of Athanasius, and the Greek commentaries of Didymus the Blind—and two papyrus fragments of the *Didache*. Based on his assessment of this literary and material evidence, Varner challenges alternative views of the *Didache* and presents his proposal that the *Didache* likely functioned as a Christian handbook in Egypt in the late fourth century, being read and possibly copied by catechumen.

In the final chapter, Gregory Snyder makes a comparison of the writings of Justin Martyr and Galen, giving insights into their roles as exegetical thinkers. Snyder evaluates their distinct rhetorical practices, the ways in which each incorporates intertextual materials, and how they each employ the language of proof. He goes on to imagine how Galen might have interacted with Justin's texts and concludes that Galen likely would have discarded Justin's works, having disagreed with his approach to claims of authority. Nevertheless, Justin's treatises pioneered a new category for intellectual Christian discourse.

Although there clearly is much more that has been, can be, and no doubt will be said about the relationship of early Christianity, especially in its social dimension, to its Hellenistic context, these essays cover a broad range of topics that reflect areas of continuing research and importance. Within these essays, we witness the reaffirmation of some previously formulated positions, the disputation of others, and new argumentation for constructive and innovative proposals. Each essay, we trust, invites further critical thought on the specific topic at hand, as well as the larger issue of the New Testament in its Hellenistic context.

GRECO-ROMAN SOCIAL CONTEXTS
FOR CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

MANUSCRIPTS, SCRIBES, AND
BOOK PRODUCTION WITHIN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

Michael J. Kruger

*And the sacred books of [the Christians]
were read aloud.*

—Lucian of Samosata, *Peregr.* 11

At its core, early Christianity was a religion concerned with books. From the very beginning, Christians were committed to the books of the Hebrew Scriptures and saw them as paradigmatic for understanding the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. The apostle Paul was so immersed in the Old Testament writings that he even conceived of the resurrection of Jesus “according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor 15:3–4).¹ The Pauline use of books (particularly Old Testament books) in the course of his ministry is borne out in passages like 2 Tim 4:13 where Timothy is urged to “bring ... my scrolls, especially the parchments.”² Moreover, Gospel accounts like those of Matthew and John, as well as books like James and Hebrews, exhibit similar indebtedness to the Old Testament, often citing from it directly and extensively. Such intimate connections between the earliest Christian movement and the Old Testament writings led Harry Gamble to declare, “Indeed it is almost impossible to imagine an early Christianity that was not constructed upon the foundations of Jewish Scripture.”³

Of course, it was not only the Old Testament books that mattered to early Christianity. At a very early point, Christians also began to produce their

¹ For more on Paul and the Old Testament, see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), and Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T&T Clark, 2004).

² See discussion in T.C. Skeat, “‘Especially the Parchments’: A Note on 2 Timothy iv.13,” *JTS* 30 (1979): 173–177.

³ Harry Gamble, “Literacy, Liturgy, and the Shaping of the New Testament Canon,” in Charles Horton, ed., *The Earliest Gospels* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 28. A fuller discussion of the origins of the Old Testament canon can be found in Roger T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church, and its Background in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), and more recently in Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders, eds., *The Canon Debate* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 21–263.

own writings—Gospels, letters, sermons, prophetic literature, and more—some of which eventually began to be viewed as (and used as) Scripture.⁴ Indeed, Christianity was distinguished from the surrounding religions in the Greco-Roman world precisely by its prolific production of literature and its commitment to an authoritative body of Scripture as its foundation.⁵ Even by the end of the second century, a core collection of “New Testament” books was functioning as Scripture within early Christianity and was being read in public worship alongside the Old Testament writings (Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 67.3).⁶ So prominent were these scriptural books for Christians that even their pagan critics—like Lucian of Samosata in the opening quote above—noted the Christian predilection for writing (and using) books and thus were forced to reckon with these books in their anti-Christian attacks.⁷ All of these factors indicate that the emerging Christian movement, like its Jewish counterpart, would be defined and shaped for generations to come by the same means: the production and use of books.

⁴ Some have argued that Christianity was primarily an oral religion at the beginning with little interest in texts until a much later time; e.g. Helmut Koester, “Written Gospels or Oral Tradition?,” *JBL* 113 (1994): 293–297; W. Kelber, *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul, and Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983). However, there is no need to consider the oral and written modes of Christianity as mutually exclusive. See helpful discussions on this point in Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 28–32; Graham Stanton, “Form Criticism Revisited,” in M.D. Hooker and C.J.A. Hickling, eds., *What About the New Testament?* (London: SCM, 1975), 13–27; Graham Stanton, “The Fourfold Gospel,” *NTS* 43 (1997): 317–346, esp. 340; Loveday Alexander, “The Living Voice: Skepticism Toward the Written Word in Early Christian and Graeco-Roman Texts,” in D.J.A. Clines, S.E. Fowl, and S.E. Porter, eds., *The Bible in Three Dimensions* (JSOTSup 87; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 221–247; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), esp. chs. 2, 10, and 11.

⁵ William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); A.K. Bowman and G. Wolf, eds., *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁶ John Barton, *The Spirit and the Letter: Studies in the Biblical Canon* (London: SPCK, 1997), 18; Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 254.

⁷ Lucian, *Peregr.* 11–12; Origen, *Cels.* 1.34–40; A. Meredith, “Porphyry and Julian Against the Christians,” *ANRW* II.23.2, 119–1149. For more on pagan critiques of Christianity, see the helpful overview in Wayne C. Kannaday, *Apologetic Discourse and the Scribal Tradition: Evidence of the Influence of Apologetic Interests on the Text of the Canonical Gospels* (Atlanta: SBL, 2004), 24–57; Stephen Benko, “Pagan Criticism of Christianity During the First Two Centuries AD,” *ANRW* II.23.2, 1055–1118; Robert L. Wilken, *Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); and Robert L. Wilken, “Pagan Criticism of Christianity: Greek Religions and Christian Faith,” in William R. Schoedel and Robert L. Wilken, eds., *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition: In Honorem Robert M. Grant* (Paris: Editions Beauchesne, 1979), 117–134.

The fact that Christianity is so fundamentally shaped by a vivid “textual culture” means that any account of its origins and development must appreciate and reckon with its bookishness. However, despite this reality, most research into the origins of Christianity has concerned itself with the *content* of early Christian writings and not so much with the *vehicle* of early Christian writings—the physical book itself. While issues like authorship, date, and provenance of writings have received abundant scholarly attention, issues like the production, publication, and circulation of these writings have received dramatically less consideration.⁸ Thus, it is the goal of this chapter to restore an appreciation for the *physicality* of early Christian literature, seeing these books as artifacts in their own right and not simply carriers of historical information where the husk can be easily discarded. Indeed, when the physical and visual features of these texts are examined we quickly realize that they are not at all disposable “husks” but provide a fresh window into the literary culture of early Christianity, the development of the New Testament canon, and the expansion of the infant church.

Given the distinctive focus of this chapter on *Christian* book-production, it is important to acknowledge from the outset the scope of our study. Although the larger trends of Greco-Roman book production form a vital background and context for Christian book production, there will not be space here to enter into that world in any substantive detail.⁹ Thus, we shall be restricting ourselves primarily to the discussion of distinctively Christian texts, making explicit appeal to Greco-Roman writings as the situation warrants. Moreover, even within the world of Christian book production, we will be focusing primarily on those writings that eventually became part of the New Testament canon. It is the New Testament manuscripts themselves that will occupy most of our attention, since they form the foundational documents for the early Christian movement.

⁸ Of course, this has begun to change in recent years. In addition to Harry Gamble's excellent study, *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, see also David Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas, eds., *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World* (TENTS 2; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

⁹ Standard treatments of the Greco-Roman book include W. Schubart, *Das Buch bei den Griechen und Römern* (2nd ed.; ed. E. Paul; Heidelberg: Schneider, 1962); F.G. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1932); H. Blanck, *Das Buch in der Antike* (Munich: Beck, 1992).

1. THE PRODUCTION OF CHRISTIAN BOOKS

Our study will begin with an examination of the physical form of early Christian books. We will take into account how these books were constructed, the writing material used, the style of handwriting, and other noteworthy inscriptional features.

1.1. *Form*

The most notable feature of the early Christian book was that it was almost always in the form of a codex.¹⁰ The primary form of a book in the broader Greco-Roman world was the scroll (or roll), which was made from sheets of papyrus or parchment pasted together (end to end) in a long strip and rolled up.¹¹ Writing was done only on the inside of the scroll so that when it was rolled up the words were protected.¹² The codex, in contrast, was created by taking a stack of papyrus or parchment leaves, folding them in half, and binding them at the spine. This format allowed for the traditional leaf book with writing on both sides of each page. Such a single-quire codex could hold a maximum of about 250 pages (approximately 125 leaves) before the

¹⁰ Relevant works on the codex include A. Blanchard, ed., *Les débuts du codex* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989); C.H. Roberts and T.C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987); E.G. Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977); T.C. Skeat, "The Origin of the Christian Codex," *ZPE* 102 (1994): 263–268; H.A. Sanders, "The Beginnings of the Modern Book," *University of Michigan Quarterly Review* 44, no. 15 (1938): 95–111; C.C. McCown, "Codex and Roll in the New Testament," *HTR* 34 (1941): 219–250; L.W. Hurtado, "The Earliest Evidence of an Emerging Christian Material and Visual Culture: The Codex, the Nomina Sacra, and the Staurogram," in Stephen G. Wilson and Michael Desjardins, eds., *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), 271–288; S.R. Llewelyn, "The Development of the Codex," in S.R. Llewelyn and R.A. Kearsley, eds., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity. Vol. 7: A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1982–1983* (North Ryde, NSW: Macquarie University Ancient History Documentary Research Center, 1994), 249–256; Graham N. Stanton, "Why Were Early Christians Addicted to the Codex?," in his *Jesus and Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 165–191; Eldon J. Epp, "The Codex and Literacy in early Christianity at Oxyrhynchus: Issues Raised by Harry Y. Gamble's *Books and Readers in the Early Church*," in Charles Prebish, ed., *Critical Review of Books in Religion 1997* (Atlanta: AAR and SBL, 1997), 15–37.

¹¹ A helpful discussion of scrolls is found in Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 43–48; and more recently in William A. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

¹² Occasionally, scrolls were reused and writing was done also on the backside (or outside) of the parchment or papyrus. Such a scroll, known as an opisthograph, is likely referred to by Pliny the Younger (*Ep.* 3.5.17).

binding at the spine became overtaxed and the central pages of the codex would protrude out too far when the book was closed.¹³ Many of our earliest papyrus codices—such as P⁴⁶ (Paul), P⁴⁷ (Revelation), and P⁷⁵ (John and Luke)—were single-quire in their construction.¹⁴ Larger volumes, like P⁴⁵ (four gospels and Acts), often used a multiple-quire codex that was made up of numerous single-quire units (often between 4–12 pages each) all bound together at the spine. However, sometimes a multiple-quire codex was also used for smaller works like P⁶⁶, a late second-century codex containing only the Gospel of John, suggesting that the multiple-quire format might go back well into the second century.¹⁵

It is now well established among modern scholars that early Christians not only preferred the codex instead of the roll, but they did so at a remarkably early point. Prior generations of scholars, limited by the amount of manuscript evidence at their disposal, originally considered the codex to be a rather late development.¹⁶ But various manuscript discoveries—particularly documents like P⁵² (Gospel of John),¹⁷ Papyrus Egerton 2 (apocryphal gospel),¹⁸ and P.Yale 1 (Genesis)¹⁹—indicate that the codex was the

¹³ Some single-quire codices could hold even more, e.g. P. Milan Vogliano V, a Coptic edition of Paul's letters, contains more than 280 pages. For more on the capacity of such codices, see Roberts and Skeat, *Birth of the Codex*, 65–66; Turner, *Typology of the Early Codex*, 55–60.

¹⁴ T.C. Skeat, "The Oldest Manuscript of the Four Gospels?," *NTS* 43 (1997): 1–34, argues that P⁴, P⁶⁴, and P⁶⁷ are all from the same *single-quire* codex that contained all four gospels. If so, then this would be an example of how single-quire codices could be used for quite sizeable volumes. Skeat has been challenged in recent years by Peter M. Head, "Is P⁴, P⁶⁴, and P⁶⁷ the Oldest Manuscript of the Four Gospels? A Response to T.C. Skeat," *NTS* 51 (2005): 450–457.

¹⁵ Some have suggested that P⁶⁶ is even in the first half of the second century; see Herbert Hunger, "Zur Datierung des Papyrus Bodmer II (P⁶⁶)," *Anzeiger der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 4 (1960): 12–33.

¹⁶ E.g. C.R. Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907), declared, "I am inclined to think that this change [from roll to codex] was made about the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century" (322). In fact, he viewed codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus as some of the first codices to be made. For discussion, see McCown, "Codex and Roll," 219–221.

¹⁷ C.H. Roberts, "An Unpublished Fragment of the Fourth Gospel in the John Rylands Library," *BJRL* 20 (1936): 45–55.

¹⁸ The key works on this gospel include, G. Mayeda, *Das Leben-Jesu-Fragment Papyrus Egerton 2 und seine Stellung in der urchristlichen Literaturgeschichte* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1946); Jon B. Daniels, "The Egerton Gospel: Its Place in Early Christianity" (Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1990); C.H. Dodd, "A New Gospel," *BJRL* 20 (1936): 56–92; H.I. Bell and T.C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1935); and most recently Thomas Kraus, Michael J. Kruger, and Tobias Nicklas, *Gospel Fragments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), see section one.

¹⁹ C.H. Roberts, "P Yale 1 and the Early Christian Book," *ASTP* 1 (1966): 25–28.

widely established Christian practice by the early second century, if not late in the first.²⁰ So dominant was the Christian preference for the codex, in the face of a broader Greco-Roman world that continued to use the roll for centuries to come,²¹ that some have even suggested that the codex may have been a Christian invention.²² It was not until the fourth century and beyond that the rest of the ancient world began to prefer the codex to the roll, something Christians had done centuries earlier.²³

With these considerations in mind, the question of why Christians preferred the codex has been widely debated. Suggestions that the codex was chosen for practical advantages (convenience, size, cost) or for socio-economic reasons (the lack of education among Christians made the informal codex more palatable) have been largely considered inadequate.²⁴ Although such factors may have played some role, they would only allow an incremental and gradual transition to the codex over many years, and thus cannot account for the fact that the transition to the codex was rather abrupt, early, and widespread.²⁵ A more foundational and influential cause is needed to

²⁰ Roberts and Skeat confirmed the early dominance of the codex by showing how it was the format of choice for Christians from the very beginning of Christian book production (*Birth of the Codex*, 38–44). This early date has been challenged by J. van Haelst, “Les origines du codex,” in A. Blanchard, ed., *Les débuts du codex* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989), 13–36, where he argues for a later date for some of these manuscripts. E.G. Turner, *Greek Papyri: An Introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 10, also cautions against excessively early dates. However, T.C. Skeat, “Early Christian Book-Production,” in G.W.H. Lampe, ed., *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 54–79, and Roberts, “P Yale 1 and the Early Christian Book,” 25–28, maintain an early date by appealing to the discovery of P.Yale 1, the papyrus codex containing Genesis, which dates from 80–100 CE. Moreover, recent manuscript discoveries continue to confirm the dominance of the codex. Between 1997 and 1999, a number of early manuscripts from Oxyrhynchus were discovered and were all on codices: P.Oxy. 4403–4404 (Matthew); P.Oxy 4445–4448 (John); P.Oxy. 4494–4500 (fragments of Matthew, Luke, Acts, Romans, Hebrews and Revelation).

²¹ See statistics offered by Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 44–53.

²² Skeat, “Early Christian Book Production,” 68. See discussion in McCown, “Codex and Roll in the New Testament,” 219–221. Of course, now it is well-accepted that the codex was likely a Roman invention (see Roberts and Skeat, *Birth of the Codex*, 15–23).

²³ Roberts and Skeat, *Birth of the Codex*, 35–37.

²⁴ Roberts and Skeat, *Birth of the Codex*, 45–53; Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 63–69; T.C. Skeat, “The Length of the Standard Papyrus Roll and the Cost Advantage of the Codex,” *ZPE* 45 (1982): 169–175.

²⁵ Other theories about the origin of the codex suffer from some of the same problems. For example, Epp (“Codex and Literacy,” 15–37) and Michael McCormick, “The Birth of the Codex and the Apostolic Life-Style,” *Scriptorium* 39 (1985): 150–158, suggest the codex was established by its use in the travels of itinerant missionaries; and Stanton, “Why Were Early Christians Addicted to the Codex,” 181–191, suggests that it was early Christian uses

explain the transition. Consequently, the most plausible suggestions are those that link the codex with the early development of the New Testament canon. Skeat has suggested the codex was chosen because it, and it alone, could hold all four gospels in one volume, and thus set a precedent for early Christian book production.²⁶ In a similar vein, Gamble has suggested that the codex was chosen because it could hold all of Paul's epistles in one volume and allow easy access to individual letters.²⁷ Regardless of which of these theories proves to be more plausible—and each has strengths and weaknesses—it seems that the significance of the codex lies in its role in the development of the corpus of New Testament books. As J.K. Elliott has noted, “Canon and codex go hand in hand in the sense that the adoption of a fixed canon could be more easily controlled and promulgated when the codex was the means of gathering together originally separate compositions.”²⁸

The link between codex and canon sheds some much-needed light on the relationship between the *form* of a book and the *content* of a book. When it comes to *scriptural* books, the Christian preference for the codex is so overwhelming that one is hard pressed to find copies that are not on codices.²⁹ However, at the same time, Christians still employed the roll format on occasion for other kinds of books, as in P.Oxy. 405 (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*); P.Mich. 130 (*Shepherd of Hermas*); P.Oxy. 655 (*Gospel of Thomas*); and P.Ryl. 463 (*Gospel of Mary*). Of course, this pattern does not suggest that any book copied onto a codex was considered scriptural by early Christians—we have numerous extrabiblical books on codices.³⁰

of primitive “notebooks” (e.g. wax, wooden, and parchment tablets) for recording sayings of Jesus or Old Testament proof texts that led to the wholesale adoption of the codex.

²⁶ Skeat, “Origin of the Christian Codex,” 263–268. One is also reminded of the comments of Frederick Kenyon: “When, therefore, Irenaeus at the end of the second century writes of the four Gospels as the divinely provided evidence of Christianity, and the number four as almost axiomatic, it is now possible to believe that he may have been accustomed to the sight of volumes in which all four [Gospels] were contained” (F.G. Kenyon, *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri: Descriptions and Texts of Twelve Manuscripts on Papyrus of the Greek Bible* [London: Emery Walker, 1933–1937], 113).

²⁷ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 58–66; Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 69–83.

²⁸ J.K. Elliott, “Manuscripts, the Codex, and the Canon,” *JSNT* 63 (1996): 111.

²⁹ E.g. during the second century we have only the following Christian scriptural books not on codices: P.IFAO (Revelation); P.Oxy. 4443 (Esther); P.Barc.inv. 2 (Psalms). However, it should be noted that the manuscript of Revelation is simply a reused roll (opisthograph) and therefore does not represent a conscious decision to use a roll. Moreover, it is uncertain whether the manuscripts of Esther and Psalms derive from a Christian or Jewish provenance. For more discussion, see Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 54–56.

³⁰ E.g. P.land. 1.4 (*Shepherd of Hermas*); P.Lond.Christ.1 (P.Egerton 2).

However, it does suggest that some Christians (in certain instances) may have reserved the roll format for books that they did *not* consider scriptural. Put differently, Christians not only had a general preference for the codex, but, as Hurtado has stated, “Christians favored the codex *particularly* for the writings they treated as scripture.”³¹

1.2. *Material*

In addition to the format of early books, ancient writing material—whether papyrus³² or parchment³³—was another important factor in Christian book production. Papyrus was produced from the papyrus plant, a reed that typically grew 2–5 meters in height and was primarily found in the Nile region in upper Egypt (though also found in parts of Palestine). The stem of the plant was cut into long, thin strips that were laid side by side and then another layer of strips was placed over them at right angles. When these strips were compressed tightly together the juice of the plant would be excreted and would act as a glue of sorts, binding the strips together. This created a strong,³⁴ paper-like writing surface with horizontal fibers on one side, and vertical fibers on the other—often known as the recto and verso respectively.³⁵ Parchment (or vellum) was made from animal skin (usually sheep, goats, or calves), where the hair is removed from the pelt and then

³¹ Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 59 (emphasis mine).

³² For more on papyrus, see Roger S. Bagnall, *Reading Papyri, Writing Ancient History* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Turner, *Greek Papyri*; Naphtali Lewis, *Papyrus in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974); F.G. Kenyon, *The Palaeography of Greek Papyri* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1899); and Eldon J. Epp, “The New Testament Papyrus Manuscripts in Historical Perspective,” in M.P. Horgan and Paul J. Kobelski, eds., *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 261–288.

³³ For details on the history and production of parchment, see R. Reed, *Ancient Skins, Parchments and Leathers* (London: Seminar Press, 1972); M.L. Ryder, “The Biology and History of Parchment,” in P. Ruck, ed., *Pergament: Geschichte, Struktur, Restaurierung, Herstellung* (Simarigen: Thorbecke, 1991), 25–33; Richard R. Johnson, “The Role of Parchment in Greco-Roman Antiquity” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1968).

³⁴ Both Skeat, “Early Christian Book-Production,” 59–60, and Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 45, make a point to dispel the misconception that papyrus is a fragile material. See comments on papyrus by Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 13.74–82.

³⁵ E.G. Turner, “Recto and Verso,” *JEA* 40 (1954): 102–106; E.G. Turner, *The Terms Recto and Verso: The Anatomy of the Papyrus Roll* (Brussels: Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth, 1978). When papyrus was used to make a roll, the horizontal fibers (which were easiest for the scribe to write upon) would be placed on the inside, and when made into a codex, scribes would often arrange the leaves so that when the book was open horizontal fibers would be facing horizontal fibers and vertical fibers would be facing vertical fibers. See Turner, *Typology of the Codex*, 55–71.

the skin is washed, soaked, stretched, and tanned. Afterwards, an intensive scraping process creates parchment of various thickness and quality. The resulting writing surface has two sides, a “hair” side that is typically darker and rougher due to the remains of the hair roots, and a “flesh” side that tends to be lighter and smoother.³⁶

Although it is unclear whether the first codices in the broader Greco-Roman world were parchment or papyrus, the extant MSS in our possession indicate that papyrus was the material of choice in the construction of the earliest *Christian* codices.³⁷ Of Greek and Christian literature from the fourth century and earlier, Turner found some 160 codices of papyrus compared to only 29 of parchment.³⁸ Only three of these parchment codices could be placed definitively in the second century, and none of them were Christian documents. In terms of just New Testament books, no parchment MSS are found from the second century, only one from the second/third century (0189), two from the third century (0212, 0220), and two from the third/fourth century (0162, 0171).³⁹ In the fourth century, the

³⁶ The terms “recto” and “verso” have also been applied to parchment manuscripts with the flesh side generally being referred to as the “recto” (since it is the preferred writing surface) and the hair side being referred to as the “verso.” However, such uses of these terms have created problems. Since, in a strict sense, the term “recto” simply refers to the front of a folio and the “verso” to the back (Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 265 n9), questions arise as to whether the terms should be used simply for the front and back of a document or for the horizontal/flesh and vertical/hair sides. For example, in the apocryphal gospel fragment, P.Oxy. 840, the original editors unexpectedly referred to the *front* of the folio as the “verso” (because it was the hair side), causing a substantive deal of confusion in subsequent literature on the fragment. For the original edition of P.Oxy. 840, see Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1908). For more discussion of its use of recto and verso, see Michael J. Kruger, *The Gospel of the Savior: An Analysis of P.Oxy. 840 and Its Place in the Gospel Traditions of Early Christianity* (TENTS 1; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 21–22, 35–36.

³⁷ We do have evidence that parchment codices were known and used quite early in Egypt. P.Oxy. 30 is a non-Christian manuscript from Egypt containing the historical work *De bellis Macedonicis*. This Latin text is in the form of a parchment codex and can be dated to the early second century (Turner, *Typology*, 38). In regard to whether the parchment or papyrus codex was first, Roberts and Skeat declare, “At present the question is wide open” (Roberts and Skeat, *Birth of the Codex*, 29). For further discussion of the significance of parchment and papyrus when evaluating a manuscript, including P.Oxy. 840, see Thomas J. Kraus, “Pergament oder Papyrus?: Anmerkungen zur Signifikanz des Beschreibstoffes bei der Behandlung von Manuskripten,” *NTS* 49 (2003): 425–432.

³⁸ Turner, *Typology*, 37–39.

³⁹ Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 76.

1.3. Size

Although Christian codices were produced in a wide range of sizes—with heights ranging from 41 to 2.9 cm.—the average height of codices in the second and third centuries exceeded 20 cm.⁴⁵ This range is borne out in some of our most significant New Testament manuscripts: \mathfrak{P}^{45} (20.4×25.4 cm.⁴⁶), \mathfrak{P}^{52} (18×21.3 cm.⁴⁷), and \mathfrak{P}^{75} (13×26 cm.). The width of codices also varied over a wide range, but papyrus codices tended to be narrower in width than their parchment counterparts, with the height often being twice the width (as can be seen in \mathfrak{P}^{52} and \mathfrak{P}^{75} just mentioned above).⁴⁸ In contrast to the common oblong shape of papyrus codices, parchment codices had a more equal height and width, creating a more square shape.⁴⁹ The more narrow format of the papyrus codex is possibly due to the fact that the sheets of the codex were typically cut from a manufactured roll of papyrus.⁵⁰ The height of the codex was determined by the height of the roll,⁵¹ but the width of the codex was determined by the length of the sheets that were cut (which would then be folded in half to form a codex). Although, in principle, the sheets of the codex could be cut at any length desired, the standard practice was to try to avoid the seams on the roll where the papyrus sheets had been glued together (known as *kolleseis*). Given this limitation on the length of the sheet, it would naturally create a codex with a narrower width when that sheet was folded in half.

One noteworthy feature of early Christian books is the phenomenon of the “miniature” codex (defined by Turner as less than 10 cm. wide). Small codices were not rare in the ancient world and most likely were designed for private use.⁵² Despite their small size, some could contain a surprising number of pages.⁵³ The advent of miniature parchment codices in secular

⁴⁵ Turner, *Typology*, 14–22; Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 162–163.

⁴⁶ Dimensions will list breadth first and then height in accordance with Turner’s methodology.

⁴⁷ Although \mathfrak{P}^{52} is a tiny fragment, its overall dimensions can be estimated with a fair degree of accuracy.

⁴⁸ See Turner’s group 8 (*Typology*, 20). Of course, there are numerous papyrus codices that are wide (e.g. P.Oxy. 2258, 37×28 cm.) or have a more square format (e.g. \mathfrak{P}^{66} , 14.2×16.2 cm.).

⁴⁹ The only parchment codex mentioned by Turner with a height that is twice its width is the fifth century Demosthenes, *Symmetrics* (8.5×17.5 cm.).

⁵⁰ Turner, *Typology*, 51.

⁵¹ Although the height of the codex was limited by the height of the roll, the codex could be made *shorter* than the roll if further cuts were made (Turner, *Typology*, 50–51).

⁵² Roberts, *Manuscript*, 10–11.

⁵³ The Mani Codex is the smallest known miniature codex and is about the size of a matchbox (3.5×4.5 cm.), yet still contains 192 pages. For more discussion, see A. Henrichs

literature can be dated back to the time of Martial, where classical authors (e.g. Homer, Virgil, Cicero) were put in the format of *pugillaribus membraneis* for the private use of the literate upper class.⁵⁴ However, this innovation did not appear to meet with much success and in the later years of Martial's publishing there are no more references to the miniature parchment codex. The popular return of the pocket codex in the fourth century can be attributed in large part to early Christian communities. The fact that 47 of the 55 codices listed by Turner are Christian demonstrates that it was a favored format among private Christian book owners.⁵⁵ These tiny books were often quite elegant and provided convenient and portable access to various forms of Christian literature. Roberts sums it up well, "They are best regarded not as amulets but as devotional handbooks for the well-to-do."⁵⁶

The majority of the miniature codices are on parchment and not on papyrus. Of the 55 codices Turner catalogs, 45 are on parchment, composing over 80% of the known miniature codices.⁵⁷ For that reason, most of these tiny books date to the fourth century and later, although some do appear earlier (e.g. P.Oxy 849; P.Lit.Lond. 204, both third century). Also, miniature codices preserve a surprising number of non-canonical texts: the *Shepherd*

and L. Koenen, "Ein griechischer Mani-Codex (P.Colon. inv. nr. 4780)," *ZPE* 5 (1970): 97–216. Other miniature codices also contained an impressive number of pages. The *Acts of Peter*, P.Oxy. 849 (early fourth century), contains the page numbers 167 and 168 in the top margin.

⁵⁴ Roberts and Skeat, *Birth of the Codex*, 27.

⁵⁵ Turner, *Typology*, 22, 29–30. Curiously, Turner does not include P.Ryl. 3.463, which is a page from a third-century miniature codex (9.9 × 8.9), containing the *Gospel of Mary*, though this could be because of some ambiguity about its original size. The fact that the vast number of miniature codices are Christian has spurred speculation that the miniature codex was a distinctively Christian invention. Roberts declares, "On present evidence the miniature codex would seem to be a Christian invention" (*Manuscript*, 12). Gamble takes a more moderate approach, "The miniature format was, if not a uniquely Christian phenomenon, one heavily favored by Christians" (*Books and Readers*, 236).

⁵⁶ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 11.

⁵⁷ This figure is nearly the exact opposite of the material used for amulets, where 73 out of 93 are on papyrus (78%) according to J. van Haelst, *Catalogue des Papyrus Littéraires Juifs et Chrétiens* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1976). The tendency to use papyrus for amulets seems to have little to do with the dates of these texts. According to van Haelst, virtually all amulets are fourth century or later, and the majority of these are concentrated in the fifth and sixth centuries—which would have been a quite natural time to use parchment. Thus, it seems possible that early Christians viewed amulets and miniature codices as distinct literary forms requiring different materials. For more discussion of amulets and miniature codices, see Michael J. Kruger, "P.Oxy. 840: Amulet or Miniature Codex?," *JTS* 53 (2002): 81–94; and Thomas J. Kraus, "P.Oxy. V 840—Amulett oder Miniaturkodex? Grundsätzliche und ergänzende Anmerkungen zu zwei Termini," *ZAC* 8 (2004): 485–497.

of *Hermas* (P.Oxy. 1783 [V.H. 659]),⁵⁸ *Acts of Peter* (P.Oxy. 849 [V.H. 603]), *Acts of Paul and Thecla* (P.Ant. 1.13 [V.H. 610] and P.Ant. 1.6 [V.H. 609]), an apocryphal gospel (P.Oxy. 840 [V.H. 585]), *Proteuangelium of James* (P.Grenf. 1.8 [V.H. 601]), *Didache* (P.Oxy. 1782 [V.H. 642]),⁵⁹ the *Apocalypse of Peter* (V.H. 619),⁶⁰ the *Life of Mani* (P.Colon. inv. 4780 [V.H. 1072]), *Bel and the Dragon* (Bodl. gr. bib. d2 [V.H. 323, 1083, palimpsest]), the *Gospel of Mary* (P.Ryl. 3.463 [V.H. 1065]), VI Ezra (P.Oxy. 1010 [V.H. 574]), Tobit (P.Oxy. 1594 [V.H. 82]), and the *Apocalypse* (P.Oxy. 1080 [V.H. 561]).⁶¹ In contrast to larger codices designed for public use, the tiny format of these books allowed them to be easily carried on journeys, quickly referred to in the context of conversations (perhaps evangelistic discussions), and conveniently hid during times of persecution (e.g. Diocletian). Furthermore, the abundance of apocryphal literature in these miniature codices indicates that private books may have been a primary means of promulgating literature that had not been approved by ecclesiastical authorities.⁶²

1.4. *Inscriptional Features*

The earliest Christian papyri (second and third centuries) were not characterized by the formal bookhand that was common among Jewish scriptural books or Greco-Roman literary texts, but were marked by a more plain hand that could be called “informal uncial” or even “reformed documentary.”⁶³ This style of handwriting has affinities with the documentary papyri of the same time period, such as its use of spaces between groups of words⁶⁴ or an

⁵⁸ The abbreviation “V.H.” refers to the catalog of van Haelst mentioned above.

⁵⁹ See also R.H. Connolly, “New Fragments of the Didache,” *JTS* 25 (1924): 151–153.

⁶⁰ See also K. Prümm, “De genuino Apocalypsis Petri textu,” *Bib* 10 (1929): 62–80 and M.R. James, “The Rainer Fragment of the Apocalypse of Peter,” *JTS* 32 (1931): 270–279.

⁶¹ To some, Revelation was seen as non-canonical.

⁶² Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 236.

⁶³ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 14. It is important to note that some *literary* papyri of classical works were also written in a rather plain, unadorned, and non-callographic hand (e.g. P.Oxy. 1809, 2076, 2288). However, E.G. Turner does not necessarily consider this as an indication of low scribal quality; indeed, he declares that “‘calligraphic’ hands are suspect ... It is not uncommon for the finest looking hands to be marred by gross carelessness in transcription” (“Scribes and Scholars,” in A.K. Bowman et al., eds., *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts* [London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2007], 258–259).

⁶⁴ Examples of the use of spacing in Christian manuscripts include P.Egerton 2 (second century); P³⁶ (late second century); P.Dura inv. 24 (third century); P⁷⁵ (third century); P¹⁰⁰ (third/fourth century); P¹¹⁵ (third/fourth century); P.Oxy. 1080 (fourth century); the Chester Beatty Melito (fourth century); Codex Sinaiticus (fourth century); Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century). Examples of Greek texts that leave spaces include, Hypomnema on Homer, Iliad,

enlarged letter at the beginning of a line (or new sentence).⁶⁵ Although this style did not share the elegance and artistry of the typical literary script, it was not as rough and rapidly written as most documentary papyri. The practical and no-frills hand of early Christian scribes simply “suggests an interest in the *content* of the text that is more or less indifferent to its appearance.”⁶⁶

Lest one construe the early stages of Christian handwriting as unprofessional, Roberts is quick to point out that “a degree of regularity and clarity is aimed at and achieved.”⁶⁷ Although early Christian papyri certainly exhibit a mix of literary and documentary features, Haines-Eitzen acknowledges that early Christian papyri “appear toward the literary end of the spectrum.”⁶⁸ Moreover, the fact that a number of early Christian

B.M. Pap. 2055; Thucydides I.2.P. Hamb. 646; and Menander, Sikyonios, P.Sorbonne, Inv. 2272b. For more discussion, see W.H.P. Hatch, *The Principal Uncial Manuscripts of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), 3 and Kenyon, *Palaeography*, 26–27. E.J. Revell, “The Oldest Evidence for the Hebrew Accent System,” *BJRL* 54 (1971): 214–222, esp. 214–215, notes that a number of texts from Qumran exhibit such spacing in order to mark various divisions in the text, showing that spacing is one of the earliest forms of punctuation in the ancient world.

⁶⁵ Such enlarged first letters were often employed in documentary papyri for the opening word of a text, for the name of the addressee, and for the beginning of new sections or sentences, e.g. two second century documentary texts, *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* and P.Brem. 5. However, it should be noted that such a practice was not unheard of in Roman or Ptolemaic literary papyri: P.Oxy. 2161 (Aeschylus, *Dictyulci*); P.Oxy. 1373 (Aristophanes, *Equites*); P.Oxy. 1235 (Hypotheses to Menander); P.Oxy. 1182 (Demosthenes, *De Falsa Legatione*); P.Oxy. 473 (Honorary Decree). See E.G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (2nd ed.; London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 9, for more detailed discussion. Although enlarged initial letters are found in some of our earliest Christian texts—P.Egerton 2 (second century), P.Ant. 1.12 (third century), Chester Beatty Numbers and Deuteronomy (second/third century), Chester Beatty Ezekiel (third century)—the practice did not become abundant or pronounced until the fourth century or later as can be seen in texts like Chester Beatty Melito (fourth century), P.Berlin inv. 6747 (fourth century), Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century), Codex Bezae (fifth century).

⁶⁶ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 71 (emphasis mine). William Johnson points out that much of the elegance of the literary manuscripts in the Greco-Roman world was due to the fact that “the literary roll exemplifies high culture not just in the demonstration that the owner is ‘literate’ and educated, but by means of aesthetics the bookroll also points to the refinement of the owner ... In ancient society, that reading was largely an elitist phenomenon was accepted as a matter of course” (“Towards a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity,” *AJP* 121 [2000]: 613, 615). It is possible, then, that early Christians, concerned *not* with establishing their own elite status but reaching to the common person, would have (initially) constructed their manuscripts not as objects of art or indicators of status, but in a manner primarily concerned with content and accessibility.

⁶⁷ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 14.

⁶⁸ Kim Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters: Literacy, Power, and the Transmitters of Early Christian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 200), 65. The general distinction be-

manuscripts contained an impressive amount of punctuation and readers aids—which are rare even in literary papyri—suggests that early Christian scribes were more in tune with professional book production than often realized.⁶⁹ In addition, it cannot be overlooked that many early Christian texts do exhibit a more refined hand and literary style, such as a late second/early third-century text of Irenaeus *Against Heresies* (P.Oxy. 405), which has a “handsome professional hand,”⁷⁰ a late second-century text of Matthew (P.Oxy. 2683), which has an “elegant hand,”⁷¹ a late second-century copy of Paul’s epistles (P⁴⁶), which has a hand with “style and elegance,”⁷² a late second/early third-century copy of Luke and Matthew (P⁴-P⁶⁴-P⁶⁷), which has a “handsome script” which is “incontrovertibly literary in style,”⁷³ and a late second-century copy of John (P⁶⁶), which has calligraphy of “such high quality” that it may “indicate the work of a scriptorium.”⁷⁴ By the fourth century and beyond, this more refined bookhand had become the norm for Christian texts.

A particularly important inscriptional feature of early Christian manuscripts was the use of the *nomina sacra*. The term *nomina sacra* refers to certain words that were written in a special abbreviated form in Christian documents in order to set them apart as sacred.⁷⁵ They usually appeared as a

tween “literary” and “documentary” papyri has come under criticism as some scholars have challenged the sharp dichotomy that is often drawn between the two. For more on this point, see Turner, *Greek Papyri*, vi–vii; Roger A. Pack, *The Greek and Latin Literary Texts from Greco-Roman Egypt* (2nd ed.; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967), 1; and Eldon Jay Epp, “New Testament Papyrus Manuscripts and Letter Carrying in Greco-Roman Times,” in B.A. Pearson et al., eds., *The Future of Early Christianity: Essays in Honor of Helmut Koester* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 39–40.

⁶⁹ E.g. P.Mich. 130 (*Shepherd of Hermas*; third century) and P.Ryl. 1.1 (Deuteronomy; third/fourth century) contain a surprising number of accents and other lectional aids. Such features indicated that many early Christian books were written for public reading; for more on this see, Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 203–230.

⁷⁰ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 23.

⁷¹ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 23.

⁷² Kenyon, *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri*, vol. 3/1, ix.

⁷³ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 23. For a discussion on dating these fragments, see Skeat, “The Oldest Manuscript of the Four Gospels?,” 26–31.

⁷⁴ Gordon D. Fee, *Papyrus Bodmer II (p66): Its Textual Relationships and Scribal Characteristics* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1968), 82, n. 20.

⁷⁵ Studies on the *nomina sacra* include Ludwig Traube, *Nomina Sacra: Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Kürzung* (Munich: Beck, 1907); A.H.R.E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1959); Jose O’Callaghan, *Nomina Sacra in Papyrus Graecis Saeculi III Neotestamentariis* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970); S. Brown, “Concerning the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*,” *SPap* 9 (1970): 7–19; G. Howard, “The Tetragram and the New Testament,” *JBL* 96 (1977): 63–83; Roberts, *Manuscript*, 26–48;

contraction (and occasionally by suspension) with a horizontal line over the top. Roberts divides the *nomina sacra* into three categories: (a) the earliest and most consistent four, Ἰησοῦ, χριστός, κύριος, θεός, (b) those that appear relatively frequently and also quite early, πνεῦμα, ἄνθρωπος, σταυρός, and (c) the latest and least consistent, πατήρ, υἱός, σωτήρ, μήτηρ, οὐρανός, Ἰσραήλ, Δαυεῖδ, Ἱερουσαλήμ.⁷⁶

Although the origin of the *nomina sacra* is unclear and still being debated,⁷⁷ their significance lies in the fact that they not only appear in the very earliest of our Greek manuscripts, but their appearance is remarkably widespread across regions and languages—even apocryphal texts were no exception.⁷⁸ Indeed, so distinctive was the use of the *nomina sacra* that in many ways it identified a manuscript as being Christian in its origins. Consequently, there are good reasons to think that these abbreviations were not concerned with saving space but functioned as a textual way to show Christian reverence and devotion to Christ alongside of God—particularly given that the earliest terms of the *nomina sacra* were Ἰησοῦ, χριστός, κύριος, and

Larry W. Hurtado, "The Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*: A Proposal," *JBL* 117 (1998): 655–673; C.M. Tuckett, "'*Nomina Sacra*': Yes and No?," in J.M. Auwers and H.J. de Jonge, eds., *The Biblical Canons* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 431–458.

⁷⁶ Although these fifteen are the most common, scribes occasionally experimented with new/different words as *nomina sacra*. Examples of such variants can be found in P.Egerton 2 and P.Oxy. 1008 (P¹⁵). For other examples of variants of *nomina sacra*, see Kurt Aland, ed., *Repertorium der griechischen christlichen Papyri*. I. *Biblische Papyri* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976), 420–428 and Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 36–37.

⁷⁷ For various approaches, see Kurt Treu, "Die Bedeutung des Griechischen für die Juden im römischen Reich," *Kairos* 15 (1973): 123–144; Robert A. Kraft, "The 'Textual Mechanics' of Early Jewish LXX/OG Papyri and Fragments," in Scot McKendrick and Orlaith O'Sullivan, eds., *The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text* (London: British Library, 2003), 51–72; Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament*, 11–19; Hurtado, "The Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*," 655–673; Brown, "Concerning the Origin of the *Nomina Sacra*," 7–19.

⁷⁸ Most notably, it appears the *nomina sacra* are found in our earliest New Testament fragment, P⁵². This has been challenged by Christopher M. Tuckett, "P⁵² and the *Nomina Sacra*," *NTS* 47 (2001): 544–548. For responses to Tuckett, see Charles E. Hill, "Did the Scribe of P⁵² Use the *Nomina Sacra*? Another Look," *NTS* 48 (2002): 587–592, and Larry W. Hurtado, "P⁵² (P.Rylands Gk. 457) and the *Nomina Sacra*: Method and Probability," *TynBul* 54 (2003): 1–14. *Nomina sacra* are found not only in Greek MSS, but also in Latin, Coptic, Slavonic, and Armenian. Furthermore, they are widely found in apocryphal texts (P.Egerton 2, *Gospel of Thomas*, P.Oxy. 840), amulets (see Campbell Bonner, *Studies in Magical Amulets* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950], 185, 223), and other Christian literature. The rare exceptions occur in private documents, magical texts (e.g. P.Oxy. 407), or from oversights of a careless scribe (e.g. P.Oxy. 656; Traube, *Nomina Sacra*, 90). For more detail, see Roberts, *Manuscript*, 27.

θεός.⁷⁹ Such an early and dominant scribal convention suggests an emerging Christian scribal culture that was not as individualistic and decentralized as is often times supposed.⁸⁰ When taken in conjunction with the unique, widespread, and early use of the codex (as noted above), T.C. Skeat argues that the *nomina sacra* “indicate a degree of organization, of conscious planning, and uniformity of practice among the Christian communities which we have hitherto had little reason to suspect.”⁸¹ Epp agrees, “[Churches] were perhaps not as loosely organized as been assumed, and, therefore, they were also not as isolated from one another as has been affirmed. Indeed, at least one ‘program of standardization’—the *nomina sacra*—was certainly functioning with obvious precision and care.”⁸²

2. THE TRANSMISSION OF CHRISTIAN BOOKS

Now that we have examined (briefly) the mechanics of how early Christian books, particularly scriptural books, were produced, we now turn our attention to the manner in which these books were copied and transmitted in the earliest centuries (first through third) of the Christian faith. Since this subject is far too vast to cover in detail here, we will provide a general overview, focusing upon Christian scribes and some key aspects of how books were published and circulated.

⁷⁹ Tuckett, “Nomina Sacra,” 431–458 challenges this conception of the *nomina sacra*. Rebuttal to Tuckett is offered by Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 122–133.

⁸⁰ Haines-Eitzen downplays the significance of the *nomina sacra* in this regard, arguing that it does not provide any evidence for organization and structure amongst early Christian scribes (*Guardians of Letters*, 92–94). She bases this argument on the fact that scribes were not always consistent in the words they abbreviated. However, she overplays the amount of disparity in regard to the way *nomina sacra* were employed. To be sure, there were differences amongst various scribes, but the overall pattern is still intact (particularly as it pertains to the four main epithets: Ἰησοῦς, χριστός, κύριος, and θεός). Moreover, even if one were to grant that scribes were routinely inconsistent in the way they used the *nomina sacra*, one still has to explain its early and dominant appearance. The scribal convention still demands an explanation, even if it is inconsistently applied. With this in mind, Haines-Eitzen’s explanation that the *nomina sacra* originated from (and were disseminated through) *only* haphazard scribal relationships seems inadequate. If this were the case, we would expect the adoption of the *nomina sacra* to be gradual and slow—precisely the opposite of what we find.

⁸¹ Skeat, “Early Christian Book-Production,” 73.

⁸² Eldon Jay Epp, “The Significance of the Papyri for Determining the Nature of the New Testament Text in the Second Century: A Dynamic View of Textual Transmission,” in Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee, *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (SD 45; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 288.

2.1. *Christian Scribes*

Although we have very little direct testimony about the scribes who copied Christian texts in the earliest centuries of the Christian movement,⁸³ the above discussion has already revealed some key information about them. It appears that the earliest Christian scribes were not necessarily trained solely in the art of copying literary texts (though some Christian scribes were), but were often “multifunctional scribes” who were used to copying *both* documentary and literary texts.⁸⁴ These were professional scribes to be sure—meaning this was the occupation in which they were primarily engaged—and most knew their craft well, but they typically would not have been literary copyists who were employed in the commercial book trade.⁸⁵ Instead, it appears these early Christian scribes were often the type that were employed privately by individuals who may have varying needs, such as taking letters by dictation, producing administrative documents, or the copying of letters or formal literary pieces.

Such multifunctional (and largely private) scribes were common in the Greco-Roman world as can be seen by the account of a certain clerk/secretary Chariton of Aphrodisias who did administrative work for a lawyer

⁸³ Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 68. For some other general works on scribes in the ancient world, see E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 2.42; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991); L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968); Elaine Fantham, *Roman Literary Culture from Cicero to Apuleius* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Turner, “Scribes and Scholars,” 256–261; E.G. Turner, “Roman Oxyrhynchus,” *JEA* 38 (1952): 78–93; Peter Parsons, “Copyists of Oxyrhynchus,” in A.K. Bowman et al., eds., *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2007), 262–270; and Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus*.

⁸⁴ Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 39. We have evidence from practice exercises preserved on Greco-Roman papyri that a single scribe was often capable of writing in very contrasting styles, ranging from formal bookhand to informal cursive (e.g. P.Oxy. 4669; P.Köln IV.175). We should be careful, therefore, to assume the hand of a particular manuscript tells us everything about the training/ability of the scribe. For more, see Parsons “Copyists of Oxyrhynchus,” 269–270.

⁸⁵ Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 68. Of course, this is not to suggest that every Christian manuscript was copied by a professional scribe. Undoubtedly, there would have been instances where a non-professional scribe would have undertaken the task of copying a manuscript; e.g. P⁷², a codex containing 1 and 2 Peter amongst various other works is clearly copied by a non-professional scribe. In addition, *The Shepherd of Hermas* recounts how Hermas copied a book himself even though he admits “I copied the whole thing, letter by letter, for I could not distinguish between the syllables” (2.1.4). It is unclear whether Hermas should be viewed as typical of Christian practice, but it should be noted that this same practice also occurred in the Greco-Roman world; e.g. Atticus mentions a scribe that he uses on occasion that cannot follow whole sentences but where words must be given “syllable by syllable” (*Att.* 13.25).

named Athenagoras and, at the same time, copied literary texts such as *Chaereas and Callirhoe*.⁸⁶ Cicero also employed scribes who not only received dictated letters and copied letters, but also copied various literary works; and the scribes were often mentioned by name (*Att.* 4.16; 12.14; 13.25). One of the earliest Christian uses of such a scribe can be seen in Paul's use of an amanuensis, Tertius, who also is identified by name in Rom 16:22: "I, Tertius, the one writing this letter, greet you all in the Lord."⁸⁷ Thus, there are reasons to think Christians would have had ready access to professional scribal assistance, either by way of hiring scribes to do work, by using slaves who were scribes and owned by well-to-do Christians, or by using scribes who had converted to Christianity and were willing to provide secretarial assistance. Haines-Eitzen notes, "There is no reason to suppose that literate Christians who wished for copies of literature had substantially different resources from those of other literate folk in the empire."⁸⁸ As for whether private (as opposed to commercial) copying would necessitate a drop in quality, Gamble declares, "There is no reason to think that commercially produced books were of higher quality than privately made copies. Indeed, frequent complaints suggest they were often worse."⁸⁹ He goes on to note, "The *private* copyists ... were as a rule more skilled than those employed by booksellers."⁹⁰

2.2. *Publication and Circulation of Christian Books*

The concept of "private" copying, as discussed above, can give the impression that all instances of Christian book production were done on a small scale and done separately and disconnected from each other—as if all scribal activity in early Christianity was a random, haphazard affair. Although we do not have clear evidence that there were established "scriptoria" in the second and third centuries, it would be misleading to suggest there were no instances during this time where copying happened on a larger scale or within a more highly organized network. Indeed, the early and dominant use of the codex and *nomina sacra* (as discussed above) already inclines us to recognize that early Christian book production (and

⁸⁶ Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 32.

⁸⁷ In several other places, Paul mentions portions of the letter are in his own hand (1 Cor 16:21; Gal 5:11; Col 4:18; 2 Thess 3:17), showing that the prior portions were written by a scribe (Richards, *Secretary in the Letters of Paul*, 172–175).

⁸⁸ Haines-Eitzen, *Guardians of Letters*, 40.

⁸⁹ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 91.

⁹⁰ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 93; emphasis mine.

distribution) may have had a more integrated and collaborative structure than we might otherwise have assumed. Let us consider a number of other factors that support this contention.

First, even within the letters of Paul, we witness a remarkably well-structured network for the copying and dissemination of early Christian writings. Paul sent his letters through friends or associates to be delivered to the various churches under his care (e.g. Rom 16:1; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7), and regularly asked that they be read publicly to the church (e.g. 2 Cor 2:9; Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27).⁹¹ This public reading was analogous to the *recitatio* in the Greco-Roman world, where a book was read aloud to groups and acquaintances as a form of “publishing” it to wider communities.⁹² Moreover, it seems Paul expected his letters to be copied and circulated amongst the churches. For example, Galatians is addressed to a *region* of churches, “the churches of Galatia,” and Romans is addressed to “all God’s beloved in Rome,” which would likely have included many smaller churches. It is unlikely that each of these sub-churches received the *original* letter of Paul; undoubtedly copies were made. Also, Paul expressly asks that his letter to the Colossians be passed along to the Laodiceans, presumably by making copies (Col 4:16). Such a scenario reveals a fairly impressive network of churches that would have been actively copying and distributing Paul’s letters, even within Paul’s own lifetime. In addition, recent studies have shown that Paul would have undoubtedly possessed copies of his own letters, as was common in the Greco-Roman world, and may have even published one of the earliest collections of his letters.⁹³

A second example can be found in the *Shepherd of Hermas* where Hermas receives the following instructions:

⁹¹ For discussion of reading books in early Christian worship, see Martin Hengel, “The Titles of the Gospels and the Gospel of Mark,” in *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (London: SCM, 1985), 64–84. See also Justin Martyr, 1 *Apol.* 67.3.

⁹² Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 84.

⁹³ E. Randolph Richards, “The Codex and the Early Collection of Paul’s Letters,” *BBR* 8 (1998): 151–166; David Trobisch, *Paul’s Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 100–101. Cicero illumines the Greco-Roman practice of keeping copies of (and even publishing) one’s own letters, “There is no collection of my letters, but Tiro has about seventy, and some can be got from you. Those I ought to see and correct, and then they may be published” (*Att.* 16.5.5). Also, as Plutarch records, after Alexander set fire to his secretary’s tent he regretted the fact that all the copies of his letters were destroyed; so much so that he sent new letters to various people asking for copies of the letters he had originally sent (*Eum.* 2.2–3).

And so, you will write two little books, sending one to Clement and one to Grapte. Clement will send his to the foreign cities, for that is his commission. But, Grapte will admonish the widows and orphans. And you will read yours in the city, with the presbyters who lead the church. (*Hermas* 2.4.3)

This passage reveals an impressively organized system for publication and distribution of Christian literature, likely by the early second century.⁹⁴ After making two copies of the revelation he has received (“two little books”), Hermas is to give those copies to two selected individuals who will then make copies for their constituencies, while Hermas takes the book to his own constituency (“the presbyters”). It is clear that Clement and Grapte are secretaries or correspondents of sorts given the special task of making sure these texts are copied and distributed (“for that is his commission”).⁹⁵ In fact, Gamble refers to Clement’s role here as an “*ecclesiastical publisher*, a standing provision in the Roman church for duplicating and distributing texts to Christian communities elsewhere.”⁹⁶ And if Rome retained such a system for copying, publishing, and circulating Christian literature, then we might reasonably expect other major Christian centers like Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Caesarea to have similar structures.⁹⁷

Third, we learn more about early publication and circulation practices in the early second-century letter of Polycarp Bishop of Smyrna to the Philipians to which he attached the collected letters of Ignatius.⁹⁸ The historical details surrounding this letter from Polycarp tell us that after Ignatius had written various letters to churches (some of which he wrote from Smyrna),

⁹⁴ For discussion of the date of the *Shepherd*, see *The Apostolic Fathers* (trans. Bart D. Ehrman; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 2:165–169.

⁹⁵ It is unclear whether or not the “Clement” here is intended to be an allusion to the writer of *1 Clement*. Regardless, it is clear that this individual is charged with the copying and distribution of books, whether he does it himself or has scribes at his disposal who will perform the task. Either way, a well-established publishing network is still visible here.

⁹⁶ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 109; emphasis mine.

⁹⁷ The fact that these major Christian centers contained established Christian libraries makes publication and copying resources all the more likely. For example, the library at Caesarea was established by the early third century (Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 112; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.32.25), and contained extensive resources for copying, editing, and publishing biblical manuscripts (some colophons in biblical manuscripts, like Sinaiticus, indicate manuscripts were collated and corrected there even by Pamphilus and Eusebius themselves). Jerusalem also contained a library by the early third century (*Hist. eccl.* 6.20.1), and most likely Alexandria as well (as can be seen by the extensive literary work and possible “catechetical school” in Alexandria under Pantaenus, Clement, and Origen; *Hist. eccl.* 5.10, 6.3.3). For more discussion, see Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 155–159.

⁹⁸ For dating and other introductory detail, see Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2:324–331.

the following occurred within a very short frame of time:⁹⁹ (1) the Philippians sent a letter to Polycarp asking for a copy of Ignatius's letters and also sent along another letter for Polycarp to forward onto Antioch (*Phil.* 13.1–2); (2) next Polycarp collected the epistles of Ignatius and had them copied; (3) then Polycarp sent a letter back to the Philippians with a copy of Ignatius's letter collection; (4) and finally, at the same time, Polycarp forwarded a letter from the Philippians onto Antioch—something he appeared to be doing for many churches (*Phil.* 13.1–2).¹⁰⁰ This dizzying amount of literary traffic raises two important points: (1) Smyrna appears to have been a veritable “beehive” of activity in regard to letter-writing, copying, and distribution, showing that they not only had the scribal infrastructure to handle this sort of activity, but an ecclesiastical network between churches that made such activity a necessity.¹⁰¹ (2) Given the short time frame in which Polycarp was able to collect Ignatius's seven letters, it appears this could only have been done if Polycarp *already* had copies of the letters that Ignatius had sent from Smyrna when the Philippians made their request. This suggests that when Ignatius originally wrote from Smyrna, copies of his letters must have been made before they were sent out (and those copies were then stored at Smyrna).¹⁰² Indeed, this is suggested by Polycarp's statement that he is sending not only the letters that “[Ignatius] sent to us” but “*all the others we had with us*” (*Phil.* 13.1). Not only does this scenario suggest that Smyrna was somewhat of a publishing “hub,” but it reflects a similar pattern that we saw in Paul's epistles—authors often made copies of their letters before they were sent so that later collections could be made and published.

Fourth, we continue to learn about the transmission and publication of early Christian books in the account of the scribal resources available to Origen in Alexandria in the early third century. According to Eusebius, Ambrose had supplied Origen with a well-staffed literary team including “seven shorthand-writers ... many copyists ... [and] girls skilled in penmanship” (*Hist. eccl.* 6.23.2). It appears that Ambrose supplied this literary team so that Origen's work could be extensively copied, corrected, and

⁹⁹ Gamble suggests no more than a couple of weeks (*Books and Readers*, 110).

¹⁰⁰ Apparently the Philippians' request to have Polycarp forward a letter to Antioch was part of a larger pattern of churches sending letters to Polycarp to forward to Antioch. These letters were being sent at the behest of Ignatius who asked that letters be sent to Antioch (*Smyrn.* 11.3).

¹⁰¹ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 112.

¹⁰² Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 110–111.

published for the benefit of the church—which undoubtedly explains Origen’s impressive level of literary production. Although it is possible that Origen’s situation was entirely unique, it is not hard to imagine that similar publication “centers” would have existed elsewhere. Surely Ambrose was not the only Christian with financial means who had an interest in seeing Christian books produced in greater quantities. It would be quite natural to think that Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and other Christian leaders may have enjoyed similar resources.¹⁰³ Moreover, if such resources would be allocated to make sure Origen’s works were adequately copied, it seems reasonable to think that similar, or even greater, levels of resources would have been employed (at least in some instances) by Christians in the copying of books they considered to be *Scripture*.¹⁰⁴

Fifth, the voluminous literary production and distribution at Oxyrhynchus in the second and third centuries—demonstrated by the vast discoveries of papyri at that site—indicate the likelihood that the Christian community there possessed substantial resources for copying, editing, and publishing.¹⁰⁵ Remarkably, Oxyrhynchus has provided over 40% of our New Testament papyri (more than any other single location), covering at least 15 of our 27 New Testament books,¹⁰⁶ and many of these papyri date to

¹⁰³ Indeed, a number of details suggest this possibility. Irenaeus produced *Adversus haereses* in multiple stages and yet it found its way around the empire quite rapidly in its completed form, suggesting substantial scribal and publishing resources in Gaul (more on this below). The third edition of Tertullian’s work, *Adversus Marcionem*, so quickly replaced the prior two editions that it must have been copied quickly and in great quantities, suggesting again that substantial publishing resources must have been available in Carthage to publish such a lengthy work in this fashion (Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 121). As for Cyprian, not only were his collected works published soon after his death—accounting for why so many survived—but he seemed to promote the copying and dissemination of works during his own lifetime (*Ep.* 32), again implying a degree of scribal resources at his disposal.

¹⁰⁴ Although the extent of the canon was not yet resolved by the end of the second century, by that time there was a core set of New Testament books that would have been highly esteemed and regarded as “Scripture” alongside the Old Testament. See, Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 67.3; Barton, *Spirit and the Letter*, 18; Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, 254.

¹⁰⁵ Eldon J. Epp, “The New Testament Papyri at Oxyrhynchus in their Social and Intellectual Context,” in William L. Petersen, ed., *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-Canonical* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 47–68; Peter M. Head, “Some Recently Published NT Papyri From Oxyrhynchus: An Overview and Preliminary Assessment,” *TynBul* 51 (2000): 1–16. For more on the site of Oxyrhynchus as a whole, see AnneMarie Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); P.J. Parsons, et al., eds., *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2007); Turner, “Roman Oxyrhynchus,” 78–93.

¹⁰⁶ Epp, “The New Testament Papyri at Oxyrhynchus,” 52. According to Peter Head, there were 47 New Testament papyri from Oxyrhynchus when the total count was 115 (“Some

the second or third centuries.¹⁰⁷ Oxyrhynchus has also provided numerous non-biblical Christian writings from this time period such as the *Gospel of Thomas* (P.Oxy. 1, 654, 655), an unknown gospel (P.Oxy. 1224), the *Gospel of Mary* (P.Oxy. 3525, P.Ryl. III.463), the *Gospel of Peter* (P.Oxy. 2949, 4009¹⁰⁸), the *Sophia Jesu Christi* (P.Oxy. 1081), *Shepherd of Hermas* (P.Oxy. 404, 1828, 3527, 3528), Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* (P.Oxy. 405), an anti-Jewish dialogue (P.Oxy. 2070), and many other Christian works, suggesting that Oxyrhynchus was likely a “Christian intellectual center.”¹⁰⁹ In addition to Christian writings, the extensive publication capacity at Oxyrhynchus is also manifested in the vast amounts of non-Christian literary texts also discovered there such as Aristotle, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Homer, Plato, Plutarch, Sophocles, Thucydides, and many others—all of which date in the first or second centuries.¹¹⁰ So compelling is the intellectual and literary environment at Oxyrhynchus that Roberts was led to declare that a Christian

Recently Published NT Papyri,” 6). With the addition of P.Oxy. 4803, 4804, 4805, 4806, 4844, and 4845, the total count of New Testament papyri from Oxyrhynchus is 53. Thus, 53 out of the overall 124 New Testament papyri come from Oxyrhynchus (42%). Of course, this is just an approximate number because it does not account for the fact that some of the more recently discovered papyri are actually portions of prior known manuscripts (e.g. P.Oxy. 4405 is a new portion of P³⁷). Though done at an earlier point, this same percentage is reached by Eldon Jay Epp, “The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri: ‘Not Without Honor Except in Their Hometown?’,” *JBL* 123 (2004): 12. When one considers the fact that many of our New Testament papyri have unknown provenances (e.g. P⁵²), and may have actually come from Oxyrhynchus, then this percentage could be even higher.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. relatively recent Oxyrhynchus discoveries P.Oxy. 4403 and 4404 contain noticeable serifs and consequently have been dated to the late second/early third century.

¹⁰⁸ Dieter Lührmann, “P.Oxy. 2949: EvPet 3–5 in einer Handschrift des 2/3 Jahrhunderts,” *ZNW* 72 (1981): 216–226; Dieter Lührmann, “P.Oxy. 4009: Ein neues Fragment des Petrus-evangeliums?,” *NovT* 35 (1993): 390–410. Recently, the identification of these fragments with the *Gospel of Peter* has been challenged by Paul Foster, “Are there any Early Fragments of the So-Called *Gospel of Peter*?,” *NTS* 52 (2006): 1–28.

¹⁰⁹ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 24 n. 5. For a more detailed catalogue of Oxyrhynchus papyri, see Julian Krüger, *Oxyrhynchus in der Kaiserzeit: Studien zur Topographie und Literaturrezeption* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1990).

¹¹⁰ Epp, “The New Testament Papyri at Oxyrhynchus,” 60. The documentary papyri discovered at Oxyrhynchus continue to support the idea that there was extensive copying and publishing of literary works at this site; e.g. P.Lond.inv. 2110, a second-century letter likely from Oxyrhynchus, details payments to a scribe for copying literary works. Roberts declares that this letter (and others like it) suggests “there was a good deal of actual copying of classical texts, perhaps in a scriptorium or a library, at Oxyrhynchus itself” (“Roman Oxyrhynchus,” 90). This is supported by the vast amount of papyrus sold at Oxyrhynchus as shown by other documentary papyri (e.g. P.Oxy. 1142, 1727). Dirk Obbink declares that “the Oxyrhynchus papyri abundantly provide the basis ... for concluding that it was a lively center of learning in the first four centuries AD” (“Readers and Intellectuals,” in A.K. Bowman et al., eds., *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts* [London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2007], 281).

scriptorium at Oxyrhynchus was “not unlikely” by the time we reach the third century.¹¹¹ Whether or not we want to call this a “scriptorium” along with Roberts is unclear; however, the extensive archaeological evidence at Oxyrhynchus at least suggests that in the second and third centuries there was a substantially developed system for copying, publishing, and distributing early Christian literature.¹¹²

These five examples—and many others could be added—point towards a publishing environment within the first three centuries of the Christian movement that, while not necessarily at the level of “scriptoria,” is nevertheless quite organized, developed, and intentional. Such a reality is borne out by the early evidence for the rapid dissemination of Christian literature within these centuries. P.Oxy. 405, a copy of *Against Heresies* by Irenaeus dated to the late second century, was discovered in Egypt only about 20 years after its initial composition in Gaul in c. 180. Likewise, the *Shepherd of Hermas*, which was composed in Rome in the mid-second century, was discovered in Egypt in a late-second century manuscript (P.Mich. 130).¹¹³ \mathfrak{P}^{52} was discovered in Egypt and dates to only a few years after the original composition in the late first century.¹¹⁴ It is precisely this rapid dissemination that sets Christian literature apart from its Greco-Roman counterparts—Christians enjoyed an expansive and well-established network of churches, groups, and individuals that were not only interested in the copying and publication of Christian writings but apparently had the means at their disposal for that publication to take place.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Roberts, *Manuscript*, 24.

¹¹² A further illustration of this literary environment amongst Christians at Oxyrhynchus is the fourth-century Christian letter (P.Oxy. 4365) detailing the exchange of books between Christians—in this case the deuterocanonical books of *Jubilees* and *4 Ezra*—evidently for the sake of knowledge and personal study. Though this letter is a little later than our targeted date range (second and third centuries), it is still illustrative of the overall Oxyrhynchus environment from the perspective of Christian documentary papyri. For more discussion, see Epp, “The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri,” 21–31; and Thomas Kraus, “The Lending of Books in the Fourth Century C.E.P.Oxy. LXIII 4365—A Letter on Papyrus and the Reciprocal Lending of Literature Having Become Apocryphal,” in Thomas Kraus, *Ad Fontes: Original Manuscripts and Their Significance for Studying Early Christianity—Selected Essays* (TENTS 3; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 185–206.

¹¹³ For more on this text, see Campbell Bonner, “A New Fragment of the Shepherd of Hermas, Michigan Papyrus 44,” *HTR* 20 (1927): 105–116.

¹¹⁴ The rapid dissemination of \mathfrak{P}^{52} becomes even more impressive if one adopts the earlier date of CE100 defended by K. Aland, “Neue neutestamentliche Papyri II,” *NTS* 9 (1962–1963): 303–316.

¹¹⁵ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 140–141. For more on the circulation of ancient manuscripts, see Epp, “New Testament Papyrus Manuscripts,” 35–56.

3. CONCLUSION

The above survey, although far too brief and limited in scope, reveals that earliest Christianity was not a religion concerned only with oral tradition or public proclamation, but was also shaped by, and found its identity within, a vivid “textual culture” committed to writing, editing, copying, and distributing Christian books, whether scriptural or otherwise. When the form and structure of these books is considered, and not just the content within, a more vivid picture of the early Christian literary culture begins to emerge. From a very early point, Christians not only had an interest in books, but had a relatively well-developed social and scribal network—as seen in conventions like the codex and *nomina sacra*—whereby those books could be copied, edited, and disseminated throughout the empire. Indeed, it is just this rapid transfer of literature that set early Christians apart from their surrounding Greco-Roman world, and set the early church on the path toward eventually establishing a collection of “canonical” books that would form the church’s literary foundation for generations to come.

WHAT DO WE KNOW AND HOW DO WE KNOW IT?
RECONSTRUCTING EARLY CHRISTIANITY
FROM ITS MANUSCRIPTS*

Stanley E. Porter

1. INTRODUCTION

The standard critical edition of the Greek New Testament, in a number of ways, is a misleading and potentially unhelpful representation of early Christianity and its development. We know that we have well over 5,700 different manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, dating from the second century until the advent of printing.¹ These manuscripts are written on different types of material—these materials include papyrus, parchment, paper, and if you wish to extend your sights and categories a bit, even clay.² Most of these manuscripts have the color of papyrus or parchment in their natural states, but a few others are colored, such as a beautiful deep purple. They are written in a number of different hands, in several different types of ink. There is the sloping pointed majuscule hand often found in early manuscripts, or the more refined and regular Biblical majuscule book hand so well known from the great codexes, or the Alexandrian majuscule influenced by Coptic writing, or a hybrid script associated with environments where both Greek and Coptic were used, or the decadent and ossified book hand of later manuscripts, or the various types of minuscule hands. For many manuscripts, the lettering is meticulous and carefully done, while for others there is sloppiness and haphazardness, while for still others there

* An earlier form of this paper was presented at the conference entitled “The Scrolls and the Scriptures—The Bible as Artifact: Who Wrote it and How was it Preserved?” at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, on 2–3 April 2010.

¹ See Paul Foster, “Bold Claims, Wishful Thinking, and Lessons about Dating Manuscripts from Papyrus Egerton 2,” in Craig A. Evans, ed., *The World of Jesus and the Early Church: Identity and Interpretation in Early Communities of Faith* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 193–211, and my essay, “Recent Efforts to Reconstruct Early Christianity on the Basis of its Papyrological Evidence,” 71–84 in this volume, for discussion of the issue of dating of early Christian manuscripts.

² See Cornelia Römer, “Ostraka mit Christlichen Texten aus der Sammlung Flinders Petrie,” *ZPE* 145 (2003): 183–201 with plates.

are various ways in which letters are connected together into an almost running cursive hand. Most of the time the individual letters of each word are written out fully, stroke for stroke, but at other times there are special forms used for particular kinds of words, such as *nomina sacra* or sacred names. Sometimes the manuscripts are written in charcoal based ink and sometimes in ink with metallic content (iron gall), etching the letters into and even through the writing surface. Most of the lettering is in black often now faded to brown, but there are a few manuscripts that are written in silver and gold letters, and sometimes with other colors added as well.³

The contents of these manuscripts vary greatly. Some are perhaps just a few verses, but a few of them are virtually complete books of the New Testament, a smaller number contain groups of books, and a very small number are virtually complete for the New Testament. The “books” in which these manuscripts were collected vary in size, from “miniature codexes” up to and including the deluxe form of the great biblical codexes (and larger), with many sizes in between. The ornamentation and extras found on these manuscripts vary considerably as well. Some of them have virtually nothing more than the individual letters, while some have quite a bit more. Some manuscripts have varying degrees of accentuation and marks of punctuation. This accentuation and punctuation is sometimes haphazard and incidental, but other times is obviously intentional and self-consciously applied. Some manuscripts have additional drawn lines and indications of unit divisions, while others have full-blown systems of notation to guide readers of the text in their use. A number of manuscripts have additional ornamentation in the form of various elaborately drawn and sometimes enlarged initial letters, and other symbols and figures drawn for decorative purposes. Sometimes the lettering itself is displayed in various ways on the manuscript. There are ekthetic letters, occasionally poetic arrangement, sometimes indentation, and a variety of other characteristics. These are just some of the many and different—and I might add, very exciting and noteworthy—features of the manuscripts of the New Testament. Each one is a unique artifact that provides a window of opportunity into envisioning the world in which this particular manuscript was copied and the various characteristics of Christianity that it represents.⁴

³ Most of these hands are represented in Stanley E. Porter and Wendy J. Porter, *New Testament Greek Papyri and Parchments: New Editions* (2 vols.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008).

⁴ See Michelle P. Brown, ed., *In the Beginning: Bibles before the Year 1000* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2006), esp. 106–133, for color plates of representative manuscripts.

By contrast, the standard Greek New Testament—whether it is the *UBS-GNT* or the Nestle-Aland—is a rather boring and pedestrian item. I hesitate to use the word artifact of it, because there is little art that I can see. We have all of the textual diversity of early Christianity compressed into a single small-size book. Most of the beauty of diversity that I just referred to is gone, as all of the difference and particularity is regularized into a single text and a standard set of typographical conventions. The text is presented as if this were *the* text of the New Testament. In some ways this is true, but in other ways this is misleading, as our standard Greek New Testament has taken all of the diverse features and reduced them essentially into matters of lettering. The diversity of textual witness—such as it is presented in these standard editions—is reduced to what is unaffectionately and inelegantly called the textual apparatus. The apparatus represents only a relatively small number of the possible variants to be found among the manuscripts that we have.⁵ The others are excluded, as if they do not exist, and they are now very difficult to recover short of examining the manuscripts or their published editions. Instead, the variants deemed worthwhile for discussion are presented in a boiled down form that excerpts particular words for presentation at the foot of the page.⁶ More to the point is that, in all of my time of dealing with manuscripts, I have not yet ever seen an early Christian manuscript that came with a critical apparatus at the bottom of the page in quite this manner. I have read and edited a number of Johannine manuscripts with interpretation below the text—more on that below in section 5—but never a list of critical variants. In other words, the modern critical edition—whereas it may be an excellent example of nineteenth- and possibly even twentieth-century scholarship,⁷ presented in a modern typographical form—is a very poor representation of the manuscript artifacts

⁵ Estimates of the total number of variants differ in large part because of the question of what constitutes a variant (e.g. does phonetic spelling count as a variant?). In any case, the number of variants is large, and certainly larger than the number represented in our standard Greek New Testament.

⁶ I will pass over the interesting criticism that in some cases variants that are presented in these critical notes are in fact variants not found at all in any of these manuscripts but are gleaned from pure conjecture. See Maurice A. Robinson, “Rule 9, Isolated Variants, and the ‘Test-Tube’ Nature of the NA²⁷/UBS⁴ Text: A Byzantine-Priority Perspective,” in Stanley E. Porter and Mark J. Boda, eds., *Translating the New Testament: Text, Translation, Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 27–61, esp. 43.

⁷ Most books on textual criticism contain a history of the development of the modern eclectic text. For example, see Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (rev. ed.; trans. Erroll F. Rhodes; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 3–47.

of early Christianity, and an even poorer representation of the manuscripts themselves.⁸ Their textual integrity and beauty have been lost and, with it, I believe, one major element in our attempt to appreciate on the basis of the artifacts themselves what they can tell us about early Christianity.

If we were to use our critical editions of the Greek New Testament as a means of reconstructing early Christianity, we would probably think of early Christianity as a relatively well synthesized, orderly, and perhaps even rigid phenomenon—much like what we perhaps think of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German scholarship—rather than the vibrant and creative and developing communities that we see from the artifacts of early Christianity. The fundamental underlying reason is that this text is not designed to appreciate the manuscript as artifact, but to treat these thousands of documents simply as repositories of readings of the Greek New Testament. This fact was brought home to me in a striking way in a review of the edition of New Testament papyri and parchments that my wife and I recently published. We prepared this volume with the explicit purpose of presenting the manuscripts as artifacts, that is, appreciating each one as a document in its own right, attempting to capture and accurately record not only the lettering of the text but the other features such as accentuation, notation, and ornamentation. However, one reviewer criticized the work because we did not have running verse numbers down the side of each transcription.⁹ That is the point. These documents—no matter what else they do come with, and often it is much of importance and even beauty—do not come with verse numbers. They are not simply repositories of verses and readings, but are documents with their own integrity that can offer us insight into more than simply another variant, but an entire world that they represent, something like a window into their context.

In this chapter, I wish to explore what it is that we can know, and how we can know it, about the history and development of Christianity through some of its major artifacts. By artifacts, I of course mean the over 5,700 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament—of which I will only refer to a

⁸ See Porter and Porter, *New Testament Greek Papyri and Parchments*, xi–xiv.

⁹ David Parker, Review of Stanley E. Porter and Wendy J. Porter, *New Testament Greek Papyri and Parchments: New Editions*, in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60 (4; 2009): 747–749. Our concerns are similar to those in Thomas J. Kraus, *Ad fontes: Original Manuscripts and Their Significance for Studying Early Christianity. Selected Essays* (TENT 2; Leiden: Brill, 2006).

small portion. But by artifact, I also mean some of the other early Christian texts that help us to understand something about this set of communities that we know now as early Christianity.

2. CULTURALLY LITERATE COMMUNITY

There are many and varying theories about the socio-economic status of early Christianity. Some emphasize its peasant origins,¹⁰ others its middle class representation,¹¹ and, most recently, a few others its lower socio-economic status.¹² Whatever view one takes of the socio-economic distribution of early Christianity, the views all make clear that the vast majority of early Christians were formally illiterate. There have been various studies of literacy in the ancient world. William Harris has been the most influential, in which he estimates that, among Greco-Roman urban dwellers, the literacy among urban males may have reached 20–30%, with women less at 10–15%, and with suburban or country dwellers at an even lower percentage. The average would be somewhere around 15%.¹³ Whereas some have contended that Harris overestimated the literacy rate,¹⁴ others have contended that he has underestimated it, by failing to take into account the pervasiveness of access to reading and writing.¹⁵ In any case, no one contends that the majority of people were formally literate.

How then do we account for the large quantity of manuscripts of ancient Christianity being found? There is no doubt that some of this rests on the fact that fairly early on Christianity became an institutionalized religion, and this led to the production and preservation of manuscripts. This

¹⁰ This is the gentle-Jesus-meek-and-mild period. This wording comes from Charles Wesley's hymn, "Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild," and is captured in Adolf Deissmann's characterization of Paul as writing letters not epistles. See Adolf Deissmann, *Bible Studies* (trans. A. Grieve; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1907), 1–71.

¹¹ Found in Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New York: Yale University Press, 1974).

¹² Found in Justin Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).

¹³ See William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 266–267 for summary of his research.

¹⁴ See Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ 81; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 496–504, who estimates Jewish literacy in Palestine to be as low as 2–3%.

¹⁵ See Mary Beard, ed., *Literacy in the Roman World* (Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement Series 3; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), with essays by Beard, Alan Bowman, and Keith Hopkins; Alan Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (Biblical Seminar 69; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

accounts for the discovery of many manuscripts in Egypt, where Christianity at first vied with Judaism, but then gained strength until it became the sanctioned religion of the Roman empire under Constantine and then of the Christian Byzantine empire.

I believe, however, that there is another more important reason. This is that, despite the widespread formal illiteracy of the ancient world, there was what has been called a "literate culture" in the ancient world that Christianity was a part of, and that the impact of this literate culture has been underestimated.¹⁶ What I mean by a literate culture is that even those who were illiterate were never too far removed from the necessary use of written documents. This has been one of the great insights gained from the thousands of documentary papyri from ancient Egypt. They attest to the fact that, even if someone had to write on behalf of someone else because of their being illiterate or unlettered (a common formula in the papyri to indicate that a scribe was used), the person commissioning the letter had to make use of and know the contents of written documents, such as the receipt or will or whatever that he or she was attesting. People were in widespread need of being able to transact business by means of sending and receiving written documents. As one scholar has opined, a "large portion" of the 80% or so who were illiterate were still necessarily participants in literate culture.¹⁷ If we use Harris's figures regarding literacy, there were still over two million adult men in the Roman empire who could read, a significant number of people to have exerted a major influence upon Greco-Roman society, including Christian society within it.¹⁸

How do the early Christian manuscripts play a role in this societal function? One of the difficulties for many of our early Christian documents is that we cannot determine their origins. However, they certainly do have their source(s) of origin. Eldon Epp has done an excellent job of laying out some of the information regarding these manuscripts.¹⁹ First, let us dis-

¹⁶ See Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, "Paul's Bible, his Education and his Access to the Scriptures of Israel," *JGRChJ* 5 (2008): 9–40, esp. 31–32, relying on the work of Beard, ed., *Literacy in the Roman World*.

¹⁷ A.K. Bowman, "Literacy in the Roman Empire: Mass and Mode," in *Literacy in the Roman World*, 119–131, here 122.

¹⁸ According to Keith Hopkins, "Conquest by Book," in *Literacy in the Roman World*, 133–158, here 135.

¹⁹ Eldon Jay Epp, "Issues in New Testament Textual Criticism: Moving from the Nineteenth Century to the Twenty-First Century," in David Alan Black, ed., *Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 17–76, esp. 61–70. See also his "The New Testament Papyri at Oxyrhynchus in Their Social and Intellectual Context," in W.L. Petersen,

cuss the five major codex manuscripts, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Bezae, and Washingtonianus. No one knows for certain where they were written, but it may have been Constantinople (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Alexandrinus, perhaps if Sinaiticus and/or Vaticanus were two of the fifty deluxe Bibles commissioned by Constantine himself), Alexandria (Vaticanus and Alexandria), Caesarea (Vaticanus and Alexandrinus), Beirut (Bezae and Alexandrinus), or Giza in Egypt (Washingtonianus).²⁰ We notice that there have been several major cities suggested, spread around the Mediterranean. The ability to produce such books implies a widespread Christian literate culture that valued and was able to produce these codexes. There were enough Christian communities with such interest and ability in a number of places throughout the Mediterranean world of the time to produce these codexes and other types of literature. More than that, however, this also implies a culture in which such books would have been used and valued, making it unreasonable to suspect otherwise. The books themselves evidence care and attention to their literary characteristics. For example, Sinaiticus demonstrates a number of different hands involved in its copying and subsequently in its editing. These multiple hands attest to the manuscript having value and continuing currency for the Christian community that used it.

Secondly, let us examine the New Testament papyri. There have, of course, been huge numbers of papyri discovered in Egypt, including documentary, literary, and what some like—perhaps mistakenly—to call semi-literary papyri, of which the New Testament papyri are examples. The New Testament papyri, whether they are considered literary, attest to the literate culture of early Christianity. Some papyri have been found outside of Egypt, in such places as the Negev and near the Dead Sea. However, the vast majority have been found in Egypt. The variety of places of origin is extensive—although much of the evidence is not certain. I will list those places where it is thought that manuscripts were found and possibly originated (it is not surprising that few have been found in the Nile Delta region, because of the high exposure to water). These places are: the Fayyum region, including the city of Aphroditopolis (the Chester Beatty papyri P⁴⁵, P⁴⁶, P⁴⁷), Mardinat Madi (P⁹²), and other Fayyumic cities (P³, P¹², P³³ + 58

J.S. Vos, and H. de Jonge, eds., *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-Canonical: Essays in Honour of Tjitze Baarda* (NovTSup 89; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 47–68. Both are repr. in Epp, *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism: Collected Essays, 1962–2004* (NovTSup 116; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 641–697, 497–520.

²⁰ Epp, “Issues,” 61–62.

[possibly Hermopolis in middle Egypt], P34, P53, P55, P56, P57, P79); a number of cities in the upper Nile region including Dishna (the Bodmer papyri P66, P72, P75, P99), Thebes (P44), and Coptos (P4); and several cities in middle Egypt including Qarara (P40) and Wadi Sarga (P43). Epp tends to dismiss the significance of these supposed provenances. Admittedly, we cannot be certain. Nevertheless, they represent a number of different places—especially the Fayyum—in which papyri were discovered. However, the largest number of papyri came from the city of Oxyrhynchus. Of the 127 registered papyrus numbers (123 different papyri, following Epp's scheme), 55 are from Oxyrhynchus, or 43 %. Of those from before the early fourth century, 40 of the 68, or 59 %, are from Oxyrhynchus.²¹ These numbers may even increase, as recently the Oxyrhynchus collection has been publishing more new papyri than most other collections.

There are various views as to what this evidence from Oxyrhynchus indicates.²² Some think of Oxyrhynchus as the location of a particularly vibrant Christian community in Egypt, apparently becoming one early on and expanding as Christianity continued to develop within Egypt.²³ Others, however, are suspicious of Oxyrhynchus, and believe that it may have represented a particular, and perhaps even schismatic, form of early Christianity. There are others who are suspicious of the representativeness of any Egyptian Christianity including its manuscripts, due to the various later developments within Christianity, such as the rise of Gnosticism.²⁴ I believe that what this papyrological evidence indicates is that the literate culture of the time encompassed early Christianity. Christianity, so far as its early documents indicate, was a part of the literate culture of the Greco-Roman world, and not an aberrant or isolationist group that shunned literary conventions. It is believable that the same city, Oxyrhynchus, produced or contained manuscripts from such authors as Homer, Hesiod, Callimachus, Plato, Demosthenes, Euripides, Aeschylus, Menander, Pindar, Herodotus,

²¹ Epp, "Issues," 62–64, but with his figures updated.

²² For important books on Oxyrhynchus, see Peter Parsons, *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish: Greek Papyri Beneath the Egyptian Sand Reveal a Long-Lost World* (London: Phoenix, 2007); A.K. Bowman et al., eds., *Oxyrhynchus: A City and Its Texts* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2007).

²³ See Epp, "New Testament Papyri," 516.

²⁴ See Stanley E. Porter, "POxy II 210 as an Apocryphal Gospel and the Development of Egyptian Christianity," in Isabella Andorlini et al., eds., *Atti del XXII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia, Firenze 1998 Istituto Papirologico 'G. Vitelli,' Firenze 2001* (Florence: Istituto Papirologico 'G. Vitelli,' 2001), 1095–1108, esp. 1104–1107.

Thucydides, and a host of others, and manuscripts from sixteen of the twenty-seven New Testament books.²⁵ Thus, the manuscripts of early Christianity were part of the wider literate culture of the Greco-Roman world.

Related to this phenomenon is the early Christian adoption of the codex or book form. Christians did not invent the codex, but they early on embraced it as a means of conveying their most coveted documents, including especially scriptural texts but others as well. There is widespread debate over why Christians so eagerly adopted the widespread use of the codex, but Roger Bagnall shows that the rate of adoption was apparently no greater than in non-Christian circles. Christians at first seem to have used the scroll as the means for textual transmission—using what was the frequently found form of conveyance in the ancient world, further reinforced by the use of the scroll in Jewish circles.²⁶ Christian origins in Judaism, and even of the Christian missionary movement in the synagogue, indicate that Christians would naturally use the scroll. However, they early on took over the use of the codex, and made it their primary vehicle of textual transmission.²⁷

²⁵ Epp, "New Testament Papyri," 510, 502, 518–519.

²⁶ For information on the codex, see Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 43–93, who has been corrected by Roger Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) 70–90, where he shows that the Christian uptake of the codex was no greater than in secular literature.

²⁷ There is still debate regarding the advantages of the codex over the scroll, but I believe that the advantages clearly outweigh the disadvantages. These advantages include compactness, with the codex taking more information in a smaller space and allowing for much smaller formats to be developed, along with functionally more useful larger forms. Further, more information could be contained in a codex than on a scroll, because both sides of the individual sheets were used. This in effect either doubled the capacity of the transmissional device or made the same amount of information available in half the size. The use of half of the amount of papyrus or parchment meant that more could be written for the same cost, or the same amount written for less cost. Whereas for scrolls it was very difficult to get more than one significant biblical book into a single scroll, with the codex one could put many books into one book, and even an entire testament. This also provided for greater ease of transportation, with a single codex containing much more information more handily than a number of scrolls. The codex was also more flexible and malleable than the scroll. If one wanted or needed to change material in the codex, putting in another sheet or replacing several sheets (even if they were in the middle of the document) was much easier than doing so in a scroll, and certainly a more logical means than simply adding sheets at the end of the roll. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the codex provided much greater accessibility to the textual material. Whereas a scroll had to be wound from one end to the other, a codex was much more flexible, in that the person could simply turn to the page that was required, whether that was at the beginning or end of the codex itself. William Johnson has pointed out the cognitive shift that took place with the use of the codex instead of the roll. See Johnson, "Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity," *American Journal of Philology* 121 (2000): 593–627, cited in Bagnall, *Early Christian Books*, 81.

Thus, there are a number of types of manuscript evidence that all point to the literate culture of early Christianity, to the point of, if not outright innovation, at least significant promotion of the codex, which became known and used widely—to this very day—as the book form.

3. LITERARILY CREATIVE COMMUNITY

Early Christianity was not only a part of the literate culture of the Greco-Roman world, but it was also a creative and literarily generative community. The early Church produced a surprisingly wide range of important early documents, including Gospels (= biographies), many letters, an early historical biography (or biographies), and even an apocalypse.

The major question is how these books all came into existence. Here, briefly, is how I think that this process unfolded for the two major groups of books, the Gospels and Acts, and the Pauline letters.²⁸ The canonical Gospels were all written in the first century, quite possibly one of them as early as AD 45, but all of them by AD 65, at which time Acts was written as well. The major *possible* exception is Matthew being written later. Many would put most of the Gospels later, but that doesn't really matter here. In the second century, a process began of bringing the Gospels together into the fourfold Gospel, so that by the end of the second century the canonical Gospels as we know them had been collated together. There is what I consider to be convincing evidence of this process in various manuscripts and other evidence we have from the second century. This includes P⁴, P⁶⁴, and P⁶⁷, three second-century papyri that probably belong together and attest to an early gathering of more than one of our Gospels; the evidence of the longer ending of Mark (16:9–21), which is known from the middle of the second century and bears witness to the four Gospels and Acts; a parchment document numbered 0212, with a harmony of the four canonical Gospels; Tatian's *Diatessaron*, with its use of the four Gospels and arguably only the four Gospels; and that great codex manuscript P⁴⁵, a major Gospel and Acts collection (estimated at 224 pages originally) that dates from the late

²⁸ I argue this at greater length in Stanley E. Porter, *How We Got the New Testament: Text, Transmission, Translation* (Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology; Grand Rapids: Baker, forthcoming); and idem, "Paul and the Process of Canonization," in Craig A. Evans and Emanuel Tov, eds., *Exploring the Origins of the Bible: Canon Formation in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective* (Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 173–202.

second or possibly early third century. The book of Acts, though written early, was probably always associated in some way with this group, although it was conceived of functioning in different ways within the forming canon. Hence it is located in a number of different places in early large manuscripts, usually as a transition between the Gospels and the letters, and sometimes as a link between groups of letters.

At the same time as the Gospels and Acts were on their own journey to canonicity, Paul the letter writer was proclaiming the gospel in various churches and people throughout the Mediterranean. I take it that Paul wrote at least all of the letters that are attributed to him in the New Testament.²⁹ This means that all of his letters would have been written by around AD 65, when he was put to death by Nero in Rome. As a good letter writer—and Paul was one of the great letter writers of the ancient world—he and his scribes wrote and retained copies of his letters, so that Paul himself began the process of his own letter collection. The current canonical arrangement, which is found by AD 200 in the equivalent great codex manuscript of Paul's letters, P46, reflects an ordering by descending size, with the church letters preceding the personal letters.³⁰ These scriptural texts alone—along with other early manuscripts that I have not mentioned (e.g. *Didache*)—would be enough to convey something of the textual creativity of the early Christian community, which began with individual books written for various purposes in and to various places, and which then gathered them together in increasingly larger volumes, until their apparent culmination occurred in our great fourth-century codexes.

There is, however, another dimension to the creativity of the early Church that must be mentioned. During the second and third centuries (and later as well), while the Church was clearly forming and drawing firm boundaries around its group of authoritative texts, it was also engaged in immense literary creativity. I refer here to the writing of what we now call non-canonical New Testament literature. In particular, I wish to discuss the fragmentary apocryphal Greek gospel papyri.

²⁹ See Lee Martin McDonald and Stanley E. Porter, *Early Christianity and Its Sacred Literature* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 409–516, and my forthcoming commentary on 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus in the Baker Exegetical Commentary Series. Cf. Stanley E. Porter, “The Implications of New Testament Pseudonymy for a Doctrine of Scripture,” in Carlos R. Bovell, ed., *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Authority of Scripture: Historical, Biblical, and Theoretical Perspectives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 236–256.

³⁰ I will pass over the implications for Hebrews being found after Romans in P46, but it is certainly something to think about.

There has been much discussion of the apocryphal gospels of late.³¹ The first Greek apocryphal gospel papyrus was published in 1885, the so-called Fayyum fragment (P.Vindob. G. 2335). It was soon followed in 1892 by publication of the Akhmim manuscript containing what has been identified (convincingly, at least to some) as the *Gospel of Peter*, as well as the *Apocalypse of Peter* (both in P.Cair. 10759). Soon afterwards, the logia of Jesus from Oxyrhynchus were published in 1897, with republication in 1898 (P.Oxy. I 1), followed in 1904 by several other fragments (P.Oxy. IV 654, 655) of what have since been identified as earlier Greek papyri reflecting a version of the later Coptic *Gospel of Thomas*. After these few documents were published, others soon followed. These include the Christian fragment P.Oxy. II 210 published in 1899, which was later identified as an apocryphal gospel; the annunciation story from Egypt (P.Cair. 10735) in 1903; the small book from Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. V 840) in 1905; and the numbered pages of P.Oxy. X 1224 in 1915. The publication of these documents was met with great excitement, both in scholarly and in popular circles. P.Vindob. G. 2325, the Fayyum fragment, generated several republications, a number of popular and scholarly comments, and other notifications. The logia of Jesus were met with a veritable landslide of popular treatments. This barrage of discoveries continued with the Berlin amulet or book (P. Berol. 11710) in 1923 and the controversial P.Ryl. Greek III 464 in 1938, and, arguably, the most important of all of the Greek apocryphal gospel fragments, the Egerton papyrus (P.Egerton 2/P.Lond.Christ. 1), in 1935 in two different editions, with reprints and corrections published in 1951 and 1955. The last such apocryphal gospel to be published was P.Mert. II 51 in 1959, which has been largely overlooked since that time—although since then two supposed fragments of the *Gospel of Peter* have been published, P.Oxy. XLI 2949 in 1972 and LX 4009 in 1994 (the latter unlikely).³² Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, there was a general decline in interest in these Greek apocryphal gospel papyri. This declining interest in the Greek papyri can be attributed to such discoveries

³¹ See Stanley E. Porter, "The Greek Apocryphal Gospels Papyri: The Need for a Critical Edition," in Bärbel Kramer, Wolfgang Luppe, Herwig Maehler, Günter Poethke, eds., *Akten des 21. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses Berlin, 13.-19.8.1995* (2 vols.; Archiv für Papyrusforschung Beiheft 3; Stuttgart and Leipzig: Teubner, 1997), 2.795–803; idem, "Early Apocryphal Gospels and the New Testament Text," in Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger, eds., *The Early Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 350–369; and the pertinent section in idem, *How We Got the New Testament*. In the following discussion, I assume knowledge of the standard papyri publications, unless otherwise indicated.

³² See Paul Foster, *The Gospel of Peter: Introduction, Critical Edition and Commentary* (TENTS 4; Leiden: Brill, 2010), 69–79.

as the Dead Sea Scrolls; the discovery that the Greek logia of Jesus were versions of the *Gospel of Thomas* discovered in its Coptic form at Nag Hammadi, with all of the interest that attended that discovery; and, most of all, the fact that in the first half of the century most if not virtually all scholars believed that these documents were derived from the canonical Gospels. However, recently there have been some who would revisit this conclusion.

One of the major contentious issues with these apocryphal gospel texts is that of dating—in other words, the date when the manuscript was actually written versus the date of the text itself. As far as copying of the documents is concerned, the Egerton papyrus is now usually dated to the last half of the second century, P.Oxy. LX 4009 to the second century, and P.Oxy. XLI 2949 to the second or third century. P.Vindob. G. 2325, P.Oxy. II 210, P.Mert. II 51, and P.Ryl. Greek III 464 are usually dated to the third century, while P.Oxy. X 1224 is dated to the late third or early fourth century.³³ The Greek fragments of the *Gospel of Thomas* are also usually dated to the late second/early third century (P.Oxy. I 1 and IV 655) and the third century (P.Oxy. IV 654).

The question regarding the date of the text, as opposed to the date of the document, is a much more difficult one. John Dominic Crossan, for example, has proposed that the earliest layer of the *Gospel of Thomas*, P.Vindob. G. 2325, P.Oxy. X 1224, and his Cross Gospel that he has “found” embedded in the *Gospel of Peter* all date to AD 30–60, the first stratum of Jesus tradition. He dates the second layer of the *Gospel of Thomas* and P.Oxy. VI 840 to the second stratum, AD 60–80.³⁴ His major argument appears to be that the material in these apocryphal documents does not match the New Testament text and is therefore independent, and hence early. Relatively few have actually followed him (or the few others) in these conclusions, and for good reason—a more plausible conclusion from the evidence is that these documents are all derivative of the canonical Gospels and other New Testament writings. However, just because they are later does not mean that they are not interesting. They are very interesting, and instructive in learning about early Christianity. I think that we should not overlook the very important fact that the early Church was textually generative and literarily creative in producing these documents.

³³ There are various opinions on some of these dates, but these are not germane here.

³⁴ John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 427–430. I note that P.Oxy. II 210 and P.Mert. II 51 are not mentioned in the works of Crossan, Helmut Koester, or Robert Miller, all of whom have theories regarding the early dating of the apocryphal gospel fragments.

3.1. *The Gospel of Peter*

The outline of the *Gospel of Peter* clearly follows the story of Jesus in the canonical Gospels, but also includes some additional material.³⁵ When nobody wants to wash their hands of Jesus, Herod takes the initiative in marching Jesus off to be crucified. Joseph (Josephus) then comes to ask for Jesus' body before the crucifixion, and Jesus is pushed toward crucifixion, including hailing him as king of Israel, crowning him with thorns and scourging him. The soldiers cast lots for Jesus' garments while he is nailed on the cross between two sinners. As darkness covers the sky, Jesus requests a drink at the time of his death, crying out, "My power, O power, you have forsaken me." After this crucifixion event, Jesus' body is taken down from the cross and given to Joseph for burial. The Jewish leaders lament what they have done, with the scribes and Pharisees admitting Jesus' righteousness and requesting guards at the tomb. In the resurrection account, two men descend from heaven, and a voice is heard from heaven and the cross talks. This is reported to Pilate, and many regret their actions. When the women arrive at the tomb, they find the stone rolled away. The fragment ends with the twelve disciples grieving, including the narrator Simon Peter, who goes fishing.

The *Gospel of Peter* is a bit like a Mary Renault or Taylor Caldwell novel, that is, fictionalized history. There are clearly some passages in the *Gospel of Peter* that are directly dependent upon the canonical Gospels, including the overarching narrative and some specific passages. There are also numerous individual Gospel words used and quite a few allusions made. However, there are also a number of incidents, including the incredible huge talking cross, that are simply not found in the canonical Gospels but can only be seen as demonstrating second-century or later Christian literary creativity, emphasizing and depicting in graphic form the canonical resurrection account.

3.2. *P.Egerton 2*

The most important apocryphal gospel text is the Egerton papyrus (P.Egerton 2/P.Lond.Christ. 1).³⁶ There has been much recent discussion regarding

³⁵ See Porter, "Early Apocryphal Gospels." I use Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas, eds., *Das Petrus-evangelium und die Petrusapokalypse: Die griechischen Fragmente mit deutscher und englischer Übersetzung* (GCS NS 11; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004). See also Foster, *The Gospel of Peter*, especially for the history of research.

³⁶ For the latest edition, see Tobias Nicklas, "The 'Unknown Gospel' on Papyrus Egerton

the date of P.Egerton 2. The proposals range from the original suggestion in the middle of the second century with original composition from AD 110–130, to sometime in the third century.³⁷ What is important to note about this extra-canonical text is that it is clearly derivative from the four canonical Gospels. There are four major episodes to the P.Egerton 2 papyrus, each of which appears to be derivative from Gospel material.³⁸

Episode 1: P.Egerton 2.1–4—Jesus speaks to lawyers and tells them to search the Scriptures in which they think they have life, because they bear witness of him. He says he did not come to accuse them, but Moses accuses them. They respond by questioning who Jesus is. This passage is dependent upon John 5:39, where Jesus tells his hearers to search the Scriptures, because they think they have eternal life in them, and they bear witness to him; John 5:45, where it is not Jesus but Moses who accuses his hearers; and John 9:29, where Jesus' interlocutors know of Moses, but not Jesus.

Episode 2: P.Egerton 2.5–10—As counsel is given to stone Jesus, the rulers seek to lay hands on him, but they cannot take him, because his hour has not come. He departs through their midst. A leper comes to him and asks for cleansing, which request Jesus grants. The leprosy goes away, and the man is told to go to the priests. This episode is dependent upon a number of Johannine passages, as well as a number of synoptic Gospel passages. The Johannine passages include: John 8:59 and 10:31, which indicate they tried to stone him, and John 7:30, 44 and 10:39, where they seek to capture Jesus but are unable. Luke 4:30 states that he passed through the midst of the crowd and went away. The episode with the leper seems to reflect elements of Matt 8:2–3, Mark 1:40–42, and Luke 5:12–13, along with Luke 17:14. What is important to note is that, while the synoptic accounts are reflective of a common incident, P.Egerton 2 appears sometimes to begin with Matthew's account, and then with Luke's. The form of address of the leper to Jesus, "Teacher Jesus," shows later theological veneration of Jesus. The unit closes with wording from the second Lukan passage, another leper episode.

2," in *Gospel Fragments*, by Nicklas, Michael J. Kruger, and Thomas J. Kraus (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 11–120.

³⁷ See Foster, "Bold Claims," 201–204; but disputed in Porter, "Recent Efforts," 82, who shows that the second century date is still plausible.

³⁸ See H.I. Bell and T.C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri* (London: Trustees of the British Library, 1935), 16–25, for commentary, and 26–29 for text and biblical parallels, from which the discussion below is derived. See also Nicklas, "Unknown Gospel," 24–95.

Episode 3: P.Egerton 2.11–14—Jesus' interlocutors attempt to test him with a question. They state that they know he is from God, but then ask whether it is lawful to give to kings what pertains to their rule. Jesus realizes their thoughts and becomes angry, and questions their integrity. He notes that Isaiah recognized that people honor with their lips but not with their hearts. This episode is dependent upon a mix of passages that supplement the episode regarding paying taxes to Caesar. These include: Matt 22:16 (cf. Mark 12:14; Luke 20:21), where people approach Jesus and acknowledge him as master, and then enquire regarding paying tax to Caesar; John 3:2, with the recognition that Jesus is a good teacher; cf. John 10:25. Luke 6:46 and 18:19 have Jesus responding to interlocutors in terms of why they call him Lord or good. Language in which Jesus condemns hypocrisy is found in Matt 15:7–9 and in Mark 7:6–7 with reference to Isaiah. Jesus is again addressed as "Teacher Jesus."

Episode 4: P.Egerton 2.15–17—After stating that something is shut up, Jesus stands on the edge of the Jordan, stretches out his right hand, and sprinkles something on the water. This episode is fragmentary, and the specific incident of standing at the bank of the Jordan is not found in the canonical Gospels, although the language still appears to reflect the Gospels. The opening may reflect John 12:24 concerning the seed. Similar reference to the Jordan River is found in Matt 3:6 and Mark 1:5. Reference to joy at the end of the passage may refer to Luke 2:10.

Apart from this "river" episode (episode 4), which is part of a highly fragmentary section, all of the episodes recorded in P.Egerton 2 reflect a pastiche of Gospel references. As Jeremias states, "There are contacts with all four Gospels. The juxtaposition of Johannine ... and Synoptic material ... and the fact that the Johannine material is shot through with Synoptic phrases and the Synoptic with Johannine usage, permits the conjecture that the author knew all and every one of the canonical Gospels ... The text shows no historical knowledge that carries us beyond the canonical Gospels."³⁹ If this is the case, P.Egerton 2 is a creative retelling of a number of Gospel stories from the Synoptics and John, woven together into a new series of communally inspired episodes.

³⁹ J. Jeremias, "An Unknown Gospel with Johannine Elements," in E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha* (ed. W. Schneemelcher; trans. R.McL. Wilson; 2 vols.; London: Lutterworth, 1963), 1.94–97, here 95.

3.3. *P.Vindobonensis Greek 2325*

P.Vindob. G. 2325, or the Fayyum fragment, which is usually dated to the early third century (though we have suggested that it may be as early as the late second century),⁴⁰ is a particularly difficult text to deal with for two major reasons. The first is that the text itself has proved difficult to establish—it has only six lines of around 29 characters each. The second is that the text appears to be a composite of two canonical Gospel passages, Mark 14:26–27 and 29–30, and Matt 26:30–31 and 33–34. The episode recorded is Jesus' conversation with Peter regarding his betrayal. Jesus says that all will be ashamed of him that very night, according to the passage in Zech 13:7, "I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered." But Peter objects, to which Jesus replies that, before the cock cries twice, he would betray him three times. The author creatively expands what one Gospel has on its own by interweaving it with another Gospel account.

3.4. *P.Merton II 51*

P.Mert. II 51⁴¹ is a third-century gospel that relates how taxgatherers and others acknowledged God's goodness and confessed their sins, while the Pharisees rejected God, along with a brief portion on the verso speaking about producing good and bad fruit. This text has numerous references to what is now canonical literature, including allusions to Luke (Luke 7:30 in recto lines 4–7, Luke 7:36 in recto line 8, Luke 6:45 in verso lines 2–4, and Luke 6:46 in verso lines 6–7) and such books as 1 John and 2 Corinthians, as well as possibly the *Gospel of Thomas*. This text ranges more broadly than have previous ones into the rest of the New Testament literature, expanding the creative potential of the Gospels by utilizing epistolary material.

3.5. *P.Oxyrhynchus II 210*

P.Oxy. II 210 is a third-century document that was first identified as an early Christian fragment, and later as an early Christian papyrus (without identifying it as a gospel). I take credit as the first one to identify it as a possible apocryphal gospel, because it has a narrative frame tale in which Jesus is in

⁴⁰ Porter and Porter, *New Testament Greek Papyri and Parchments*, 291, which edition we use.

⁴¹ See Thomas J. Kraus, "Other Gospel Fragments," in *Gospel Fragments*, 219–280, esp. 252–263.

dialogue with various enquirers and utters a parable-like statement.⁴² This text is so fragmentary that all we can really recover from the episode(s) is that Jesus says something that sounds like the parable of the good and bad fruit (note that the early church apparently liked the story of the good and bad fruit—see P.Mert. II 51 above). Along the way, however, the text seems to be citing passages from Matthew, Luke, John's "I am" sayings, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Colossians, and Philippians (especially 2:6 in the Christ hymn). This is a veritable treasure trove of biblical knowledge—all completely dependent upon the canonical texts but presented in nothing short of a highly innovative and creative way.

3.6. *P.Oxyrhynchus V 840*

P.Oxy. V 840⁴³ is a fourth-century manuscript of what is possibly an early second-century text.⁴⁴ Even though no biblical text is explicitly cited, the miniature parchment codex records two scenes of interest. One side records statements about punishment of evildoers and a scene where the "Savior" (hence calling the document the *Gospel of the Savior*), who has disciples, speaks about purification, holy vessels, and the temple. The other side continues the dialogue, with the Savior questioning the purity of his dialogue partner, and concluding with words of admonition. John 10, John 13, Luke 11, Matthew 23, and John 7 all seem to be drawn upon in this short text. Even though I am not as optimistic as others as to the early dating of this text (the reference to the Savior and the ritualistic language argue for a later date), the use of a range of canonical Gospel texts is somewhat reminiscent of the longer P.Egerton 2, but with its own creative features.

3.7. *P.Rylands Greek III 464*

P.Ryl. Greek III 464 is a not very well known possibly apocryphal gospel from the third century AD. It was published in 1938 as possibly an apocryphal

⁴² Porter, "POxy II 210," 1108. That this argument has been convincing is shown by inclusion in the edition of Andrew Bernhard, *Other Early Christian Gospels: A Critical Edition of the Surviving Greek Manuscripts* (London: Clark, 2007), 98, 100; Eldon J. Epp, "The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri: 'Not without Honor Except in Their Hometown'?" *JBL* 123 (2004): 5–55 (16 note 40); repr. in Epp, *Perspectives on New Testament Textual Criticism*, 743–801.

⁴³ See Michael J. Kruger, *The Gospel of the Savior: An Analysis of P.Oxy. 840 and its Place in the Gospel Traditions of Early Christianity* (TENT 1; Leiden: Brill, 2005); and Kruger, "Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840," in *Gospel Fragments*, 123–215.

⁴⁴ Kruger, "Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840," 123–124, 144–145.

gospel, but since that time has fallen into neglect. I have brought it back into discussion as a document at least worth considering as an apocryphal gospel in a forthcoming publication.⁴⁵ The text is far too fragmentary to make any clear determination, but seems to refer to counting, portions, and canon or rule. The indication that it is possibly a Christian document is the use of a *nomen sacrum* for Jesus, as well as a line that marks the end of a section or paragraph.

3.8. *P.Cairensis 10735*

P.Cair. 10735, a sixth-century fragment, has been variously identified as an apocryphal gospel by its first publishers (Grenfell and Hunt), a homily by its first serious student (Deissmann), and a possible apocryphal gospel by its latest examiner (Kraus).⁴⁶ In any case, the fragment records something that has to do with Mary's annunciation. The angel of the Lord speaks to Joseph regarding his wife Mary, and tells Mary about Elizabeth having a baby, John. The text makes use of both Matthew 2 and Luke 1, the two canonical Gospel infancy accounts, but also creatively goes beyond its sources.

3.9. *P.Berolinensis 11710*

P.Berol. 11710 is a sixth- or seventh-century apocryphal gospel miniature book or amulet, with both Greek and Coptic writing on it.⁴⁷ The document records someone addressing Jesus as rabbi, Lord, and son of God. The rabbi answers Nathaneal and tells him to walk in the sun, to which Nathaneal responds by calling him again rabbi, Lord, and saying he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. This document is a creative pastiche of various verses in John 1 and John 3, and possible parallels in Mark 10.

There are some who worry about the fact that our earliest New Testament manuscripts—and they are not particularly abundant—are not much earlier in their date of copying than some of the early apocryphal documents. However, I think one of the securest attestations to the text of the New Testament is in fact the apocryphal documents, such as these fragmentary

⁴⁵ Stanley E. Porter and Wendy J. Porter, "Rylands Apokryphes Evangelium (?) (P.Ryl. III 464," in Christoph Markschies and Jens Schröter, eds., *Antike christliche Apokryphen in deutscher Übersetzung* (2 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 1: 377–378.

⁴⁶ See Kraus, "Other Gospel Fragments," 240–251, esp. 241, 248–250.

⁴⁷ See Kraus, "Unidentified Gospel Fragments," 228–239.

gospels. They are creative and engaging accounts of the biblical text that give witness both to the earlier biblical text and—perhaps equally, if not more importantly—to the literary creativity of the first few centuries of early Christianity.

4. THEOLOGICALLY REFLECTIVE AND INTERPRETIVE COMMUNITY

We have already seen that the early Christians were part of literate culture and literarily creative. I have already shown how they were also in some ways a reflective and interpretive community by noting their literary creativity in how they took their scriptural texts and combined and expanded them into what we now call the apocryphal gospel literature. However, in this section I wish to say something not just about their creativity but about their interpretive powers. The early Church was also theologically interpretive.

A major place to see this early interpretive capacity is in a number of Johannine papyri.⁴⁸ These papyri, even though they have been given Gregory-Aland numbers and are hence considered New Testament papyri, are not really continuous text of the New Testament, any more than a Joseph Barber Lightfoot commentary is continuous text of the New Testament.⁴⁹

What distinguishes these papyri is that they have text from the Gospel of John on the top portion of each page, then the word *hermeneia* (interpretation or translation), and below that some type of comments. Scholars are divided on what these comments mean. Bruce Metzger thinks that they are oracular comments, similar to the oracular sayings used for divination purposes that were added to the Markan text of Codex Bezae and to the Latin Johannine text of Codex St. Germain (G), while other interpreters think that they indicate some form of textual commentary on John's Gospel.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The information that follows is taken from Stanley E. Porter, "The Use of Hermeneia and Johannine Papyrus Manuscripts," in Bernhard Palme, ed., *Akten des 23. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Wien, 22.-28. Juli 2001* (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 573–580.

⁴⁹ For those who possibly are no longer familiar with Lightfoot's significant commentaries, they are distinguished by a Greek text at the top of the page and a verse-by-verse commentary at the bottom of the same page.

⁵⁰ For discussion of the opinions, see Porter, "Use of Hermeneia," 573. See also Bruce M. Metzger, "Greek Manuscripts of John's Gospel with 'Hermeneiai,'" in T. Baarda et al., eds., *Text and Testimony: Essays on New Testament and Apocryphal Literature in Honour of A.F.J. Klijn* (Kampen: Kok, 1988), 162–169.

There are seven such manuscripts known. Note that they are all Johannine manuscripts covering portions from various places in the book, and ranging over a wide range of dates.

- a. P.Barcelona inv. 83 (P80) with John 3:34, dated to the third to fourth centuries. This manuscript has a single instance of *hermeneia*, and two partial statements written below. The statements are fragmentary and too brief to interpret accurately, but they include a third class conditional statement, and refer to something being true.
- b. P.Berolinensis inv. 11914 (P63) with John 3:14–18 and 4:9–10, dated to around 500 to the sixth century. The manuscript has four pages, each with *hermeneia*, followed by a Greek and a Coptic statement. The Greek passages are: “glory becomes great,” “don’t rest or cease concerning election,” “if you believe, joy comes to you,” and a fourth indeterminate statement. One of the statements has a third class conditional statement.
- c. P.Vindobonensis G 36102 (P76) with John 4:9, 11–12, dated to the sixth century. This single sheet has an instance of *hermeneia* on each side. On the one side is fragmentary wording that has a form of the verb “believe” probably in the subjunctive (possibly part of a third class conditional) and a line that has been reconstructed with “a man comes into being,” language similar to other Johannine *hermeneia* manuscripts (P.Ness. [P.Colt] 2.3, P.Berol. inv. 11914 and 3607 and 3623) and John 1:6. This line also resembles one of the lines on Codex Bezae (no. 46), with “if you might believe, let it be joy to you.” The other side is also fragmentary but has words for “much,” “make,” and “be able.” This line is similar to Codex Bezae oracular line no. 47: “you want to do many times or many things, and you are not able.”
- d. P.Vindobonensis G 26214 (P55) with John 1:31–33, 35–38, dated from the sixth to the seventh centuries. The manuscript has a single sheet, with *hermeneia* on one side, but the text is fragmentary and presumably the other page had it as well. There is no text remaining below the *hermeneia*.
- e. Parchment from Damascus, Kubbet el Chazne (0145), now lost, with John 6:26–31, dated to the seventh century. This manuscript apparently had (according to comments by von Soden) two *hermeneia* statements. One says, “if you believe well, you obtain,” with a third class conditional, and the second “let us grasp salvation.”
- f. P.Berolinensis 3607 and 3623 (0210), a parchment with John 5:44 and 6:1–2, 41–42, dated to the seventh century. The first fragment has

two statements: “good testimony” and “scattering comes about.” The second has a fragmentary uninterpretable statement.

- g. P. Nessana (P.Colt) 2.3 (P59) with portions of John 1, 2, 11, 12, 17, 18 and 21, dated to the seventh to eighth century. This large but fragmentary manuscript has seven full or partial instances of *hermeneia*, with several readable sets of statements below. These include: “unbelief and treachery in the deed,” “good salvation,” “the one who is ill ...,” and “comes about.”

What is the interpretive significance of this evidence? There is no doubt that the comments on these papyri in some ways do resemble the oracular statements in Codex Bezae and the St. Germain codex, including the use of *hermeneia* after the Johannine text, with a short statement or statements below. However, there are also a number of significant differences. The oracular statements are written in the margins of the first ten chapters of Mark’s Gospel of Codex Bezae, whereas all of the papyrus *hermeneia* statements are found *in* the manuscripts noted above. The oracular statements were marginalia, written in a second hand at a later date, but the Johannine *hermeneia* were written at the same time, as an integral part of the Johannine manuscript.

Whereas what we find in Codex Bezae is no doubt oracular, this does not mean that these cryptic statements were oracular from the start or considered oracular in other documents. These kinds of marginal statements as a whole have been categorized by J. Rendel Harris as consisting of one of three types: (1) “an actual collection of possible answers to enquiries, from which a special oracle is selected,” (2) “the whole of a sacred book ... considered as a mine of oracles and a storehouse of possible guidance,” or (3) both.⁵¹ The integral appearance of the *hermeneia* statements in the Johannine Gospel papyri argues against the first option, in which independent apothegms might be attached to the manuscript, as is found in Codex Bezae, and against the second option, in which the statements do not have independence but appear to be contextually placed. The statements, while not direct quotations of the New Testament, are distinctly Johannine in character, with such words as “faith,” “truth,” “salvation,” and “glory,” among others. The third class conditional is widely used in John’s Gospel, and is consistent with applying particular Johannine statements to a reader. In other words,

⁵¹ J. Rendel Harris, *The Annotators of the Codex Bezae (With Some Notes on Sortes Sanctorum)* (London: Clay, 1901), 45.

the statements are neither strictly commentary nor simply unattached oracular pronouncements nor part of an oracular book, but biblically motivated and connected reflections on the Johannine text, utilizing similar appropriate language.

There are many observations that can be made on the basis of this evidence—all of which points to the robust theologically interpretive environment of the early Church (and beyond). The first thing to be learned is that this interpretive interest seems to have been significant within the Christian Church, to the point that we have a number of manuscripts that display this characteristic, over a broad span of time. One might even argue that this interpretation is both theologically and practically inclined, because the theological statements have practical significance for the readers in mind.

The second observation is that this interpretive instinct, rather than being confined to a later period of advanced theological development, seems to have emerged fairly early, with the earliest Johannine interpretive manuscript dating to the third or fourth century. We are used to a model of theological discovery that credits theological developments with being late, because they required time to evolve sufficiently. Yet in this instance, we have evidence of the *hermeneia* text in the third or fourth century.

The third observation is that the interpretive practice seems to have been consistent and thoroughgoing, as the manuscripts have the *hermeneia* section on virtually every page for which this can be determined. The use of the *hermeneia* section was not capricious or applied on an *ad hoc* basis, simply at the whim or inclination of the writer or scribe. These manuscripts were created in this form from the start. We do not know whether these *hermeneia* statements were instigated by the scribe or reflected the practice of a given Christian community. The fact that they are so consistently used indicates that these were not the personal musings of the individual scribe, but probably based upon a tradition of theological interpretation that was incorporated into these manuscripts as integral to the text from the start. In other words, the community's theological reflection accompanied the text from the outset, to the point of the manuscripts reflecting such theological interpretive practice. I find it interesting that these *hermeneia* statements are attached to the "theological Gospel."⁵²

⁵² Incidentally, let me say that I believe that these manuscripts are not continuous text and should not be included in the Gregory-Aland list. Instead, I believe that they should be in a second list of documents that should be created for those manuscripts that, while

5. CONSCIOUSLY THEOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

In the previous section I emphasized that the early Christian artifacts indicate an interpretive community. In this section, I wish to emphasize something similar, but draw attention to other factors. The major point I wish to make here is that the early Christian community—as revealed in its artifacts—was a consciously theological community (not just an interpretive community).

A major way that this can be studied is to examine the *nomina sacra*, or sacred names.⁵³ *Nomina sacra* are a device used by manuscript copyists, in which certain words are written in an identifiable form that uses some of the letters from the word, usually with a distinct supralinear horizontal line drawn above the letters. Many people refer to the *nomina sacra* as abbreviations, contractions or suspensions. In one sense, this may be correct in that the ways that these devices are formed is similar to what we see when we observe an abbreviation—that is, some of the letters that one would expect to find in the full word-form are definitely missing. However, in another sense, this identification is misleading, because it implies that these *nomina sacra* are simply cost or time or material saving devices. In other words, they are used for the purpose of conserving, whether that is effort or expense. I do not believe that this is the case, and so we should be very careful in how *nomina sacra* are described.

The origins of the *nomina sacra* have been widely debated, and their origins, I think, help us to determine how they should be described and how they functioned. Some have proposed that the *nomina sacra* are patterned after abbreviated forms of words found in Greco-Roman texts, such as on coins where the word for Emperor may have been abbreviated or in documentary texts, where there was a wide range of abbreviations used. There is certainly the possibility that these uses of abbreviated or shortened forms

not continuous text, still have a role to play in textual criticism. We should be sure that the manuscripts that we include in our first list are those with continuous text. However, there is valuable information to be gained from any number of different types of other manuscripts—commentaries, amulets, individual verses copied for memorization or the like—and their contribution to this discussion should not be lost. See Stanley E. Porter, “Textual Criticism in the Light of Diverse Textual Evidence for the Greek New Testament: An Expanded Proposal,” in Thomas J. Kraus and Tobias Nicklas, eds., *New Testament Manuscripts: Their Texts and Their World* (TENT 2; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 305–337, esp. 315–336.

⁵³ Much of the information that follows is from Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 95–134, although I do not hesitate to include my own opinions.

may have had some influence upon Christian development of *nomina sacra*. But along with Larry Hurtado's opinion, I do not believe that this is sufficient to account for their development.⁵⁴ In both Greco-Roman instances, the use of abbreviated forms is singularly motivated by the desire to save space or fit a text into a confined space, such as that on a coin. This is a motivation based primarily on expediency and convenience. But when we compare the use of *nomina sacra* in Christian texts this factor does not appear to be the motivation at all—*nomina sacra* are used in the middle of lengthy texts where a few letters more or less would make no difference, and sometimes *nomina sacra* are used and sometimes they are not in the same text, revealing probably that the scribe had other motivations than simply space constraints. Thus, the secular use may have been a motivation, but not a cause of the development of the *nomina sacra*.

A second possible origin of the *nomina sacra* is Jewish writings, especially the abbreviation of the name of God as the tetragrammaton, whether in Hebrew or Greek manuscripts. As with the secular usage noted above, there is little doubt that this Jewish practice may have influenced development of the Christian *nomina sacra*, but I am skeptical that it is a sufficient cause. This Jewish proposal is not concerned with expediency, but clearly with theology, that is, the Jews used the tetragrammaton for reverential purposes. However, as Hurtado again points out, their practice was varied in that they used a number of conventions in the actual writing of the divine name,⁵⁵ and the intent was in many ways to hide or obscure the name, or at least to minimize it so that it would not be pronounced. The notion of a theological process lying behind the use of the *nomina sacra* seems to be one that both Jewish and Christian users shared; however, the Christian development was much more straightforward and consistent. This purpose was not to make obscure but to make clear and noticeable. The *nomina sacra* were not designed for obfuscation but for clarity and assertion; hence their form of lettering and the use of the supralinear line. On the basis of this evidence, I believe that it is fair to say that the *nomina sacra*, while perhaps encouraged by other practices known to early Christians, were a distinctly Christian development.

This conclusion raises the question of why this practice was developed by Christians. There are four *nomina sacra* that seem to have been used first. These are the abbreviations for God, Lord, Jesus, and Christ. Scholars debate

⁵⁴ Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 101.

⁵⁵ Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 102.

as to which one came first and led to the development of others. A case can be made for each one of them. For example, the use of God or Lord as a *nomen sacrum* might reflect similarities to Judaism, as well as Greco-Roman interest. Hurtado believes that “Jesus” was the initial *nomen sacrum* that led to the development of all of the others.⁵⁶ And the list of others grew to some considerable length. The “names” that are written in this way include Spirit, father, heaven, mankind, David, Israel, Jerusalem, son, savior, cross, and mother, among possibly others. These several factors indicate to me that the use of the *nomina sacra* is not a form of abbreviation, contraction, or suspension—contra Hurtado who refers to the *nomen sacrum* of Jesus as a suspension⁵⁷—but a conscious theological device. It may well have originated with reflection upon Jesus, but it may also have reflected thought about God or the Lord. In any case, it appears that the *nomina sacra* began with a small and select number of words that authors/scribes wished to draw forward for theological reasons. This raises the further question of how it is that the list continued to expand, so that such words as mankind, son, and others also became *nomina sacra*. Hurtado believes that they were used for visual purposes,⁵⁸ and they certainly perform that function. He also believes that they were used as an act of devotion, as they no doubt were.⁵⁹ However, their widespread use in Christianity, and the expansion in the number of *nomina sacra* and the items described, point in the direction of the *nomina sacra* performing an expanding theological purpose. These are the developed symbols that are used to characterize and label important, even fundamental, concepts in the early Church. The New Testament is concerned with God acting in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is no wonder that these constitute the first four *nomina sacra*, and that other contiguous yet important theological concepts were then invoked by means of their own *nomina sacra*.

6. WORSHIPING COMMUNITY

We do not know nearly as much as we would like to know about how the early Christians worshipped.⁶⁰ Statements about this are surprisingly few in

⁵⁶ Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 115.

⁵⁷ Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 115.

⁵⁸ Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 132.

⁵⁹ Hurtado, *Earliest Christian Artifacts*, 118.

⁶⁰ For a summary, see Gerald L. Borchert, *Worship in the New Testament: Divine Mystery and Human Response* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2008).

the New Testament itself. There is, as a result, much speculation. Questions are raised, for example, regarding whether the early Christians worshipped like the Jews of the time, and whether and how they maintained traditions related to the Temple and the synagogues. There are questions about the constituents of early Christian worship services, and what elements they included. We have strong indicators that early Christians had Scripture readings and sermons or homilies based upon or around these texts. We know that they appeared to be charismatic in nature, including exercising of charismatic gifts, and prayer. We also know that they had musical elements, such as the use of hymns, songs and spiritual songs, probably in a chanting fashion—although we are less certain about any possible use of musical instruments.⁶¹

The artifacts of early Christianity can give us some further insight into how the early Christians worshipped. There is a pattern of notational development that one observes on the New Testament manuscripts that reveals something about Christian worship. This progression moves from a spartan occurrence of stress markers, to a more extensive use of marks to indicate reading units and some elements of intonation, to a fully fledged musical-rhetorical system used to guide the reader through the intoning of the text, called ekphonic notation. The ekphonic notation had its origins (as did the musical signs) in the prosodic or accentual markings developed by Aristophanes of Byzantium (second century BC), and were used to indicate for those in the east how Greek was meant to be pronounced. This ekphonic notation, which first began to develop in the fourth century AD and was fully formed by the eighth century, includes an extensive set of symbols that, used in pairs, mark the beginnings and endings of phrases, and hence served a discourse function of indicating the intoning patterns for larger units. Some symbols indicate rising pitch of various spans, others descending pitch, some with various types of emphasis and others without. These signs are called such things as *oxeia*, *syrmatike*, *bareia*, *kathiste*, *kremaste*, *apostrophes*, *synemba*, *paraklitike*, *teleia*, *apeso exo*, and *hypokrisis*. These markings are different from musical notation, which is concerned with individual syllables. Musical notation developed alongside ekphonic notation fairly early in Christian manuscripts, the earliest Christian musical manuscript being the third-century P.Oxy. XV 1786.⁶²

⁶¹ See Wendy J. Porter, "Music," in Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 711–719; cf. also Porter, "Creeds and Hymns," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, 231–238.

⁶² See Egon Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (2nd ed.; Oxford:

In an important article, Wendy Porter chronicles the growth of musical-rhetorical indicators in manuscripts in the Vienna collection of papyri. As she notes, "What we observe is a gradual but progressive inclusion of a larger and more frequent range of markings."⁶³ Thus, third-century manuscripts display very little apart from some marks of punctuation like the raised dot, diaeresis, and rough breathing. The fourth-century manuscripts display such markings as punctuation, the raised dot, occasionally double dots and the low dot, the spiritus asper, diaeresis, the diastrophe, and some accentuation. Fifth-century manuscripts, besides increased use of accentuation, have frequent raised dots, the occasional use of medial, low or double dots, rough breathing, diaeresis, and other accentual or intonational indicators. By the sixth century, the manuscripts evidence frequent musical-rhetorical marks to indicate accentuation, intonation, unit ending indicators, and sometimes many of these especially at the end of units. Seventh-century manuscripts use a greater number of musical-rhetorical marks, including the teleia. By the eighth and ninth centuries, these manuscripts indicate a full range of ekphonic notation, which continues into the tenth century and beyond.⁶⁴

There are two Vienna manuscripts that illustrate this progressive development of notation.

- a. P.Vindobonensis Greek 3073 (0223), dated to the sixth century but with later diacritical marks. This manuscript with portions of 2 Corinthians 1 is significant because it appears that a later hand marked the manuscript for declamatory purposes after the original manuscript had been written. This indicates that the scriptural texts themselves were also liturgical texts. In this case, a manuscript prepared for scriptural use was clearly marked for liturgical use through the addition of elementary ekphonic notation. The notation found on this manuscript includes rough breathing marks, a number of different marks designed to indicate what appears to be rising and falling intonation, and marks that join letters together.

Clarendon, 1961), 246–260, esp. 246–247, 249, 252; Wendy J. Porter, "The Use of Ekphonic Notation in Vienna New Testament Manuscripts," in *Akten des 23. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Wien, 22.-28. Juli 2001*, 581–586; and most recently on P.Oxy. XV 1786, Charles Cosgrove, *An Ancient Christian Hymn with Musical Notation: Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1786: Text and Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

⁶³ W. Porter, "Use," 583.

⁶⁴ I have added information on the third century not found in W. Porter's article, but based upon an examination of manuscripts from that period, including those in Porter and Porter, *New Testament Greek Papyri and Parchments*. The two examples cited below are included in this edition, pp. 215–219 and 94–102.

- b. Austrian National Library Suppl. Gr.106 (0148), dated to the eighth century. This manuscript with Matthew 28, which my wife and I first published in 2008, has a full-blown ekphonic notational system (indicated in our edition). This includes balanced use of symbols at the beginning and ending of units to indicate various types of rising and falling intonation. There are also a variety of marks used to indicate the end of major and minor declamatory units.

We clearly see that the ekphonic notation was fully developed by the eighth century. However, we also see that this notation was in the process of development before that, in the manuscripts discussed here from the sixth century on, and in other manuscripts from the fourth century on. In other words, by the fourth century, we see that the scriptural documents of early Christianity were integrally connected to early Christian worship. That is, these manuscripts, rather than simply being texts to be read or to serve solely as theological documents, were used as liturgical documents to help guide the worshipful practice of the early Church. I do not find it plausible to believe that this type of use of the documents only occurred in the fourth century, but I do think that the ekphonic notation—like the accents themselves of an earlier period—indicates that Christians of this time, who were accustomed to using their documents for worship, realized that they needed to take steps to preserve the way in which these documents were intoned and declaimed, and hence, they began to develop an appropriate notational system. Greek accentuation, if you will, became an act of early Christian worship.

Thus, the early Christian community as a worshipping community was integrally connected to its use of Scripture, as these scriptural texts were used as liturgical texts as well. These are not lectionary texts proper, although lectionary texts also have this ekphonic notation, but represent the integration of text and worship through the common use of the same document. Their use indicates public participation in worship, since the one who declaimed the text used the notated manuscript to guide reading and hearing of it. Although these texts were not formally musical documents—Christians had separate musical texts—they had a musical-rhetorical dimension to them, in which expressive intonation was a fundamental part of the Christian worship experience.

7. CONCLUSION

There are many other areas that I could have selected to illustrate the informative power of early Christian manuscripts. I have selected five for particular attention. I believe that early Christianity was a culturally literate community, a literarily creative community, a theologically reflective and interpretive community, a consciously theological community, and a worshiping community—all of these are shown directly from the documents of early Christianity itself. In some of these respects, early Christianity was not distinct from its surrounding environment, especially regarding its being a culturally literate community. However, in other respects, it stands out for its innovative and textually creative use of its written documents. In these areas, Christianity shows itself to have been a force for engagement with and expansion upon the conventions of textual transmission. So, in answer to the question “What do we know and how do we know it?” about early Christianity, I believe that we can know quite a bit, and in fact go a long way in reconstructing important elements of Christianity from its manuscripts and artifacts.

RECENT EFFORTS TO RECONSTRUCT EARLY CHRISTIANITY ON THE BASIS OF ITS PAPYROLOGICAL EVIDENCE*

Stanley E. Porter

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent reconstructions of the development of early Christianity have come to recognize two primary sets of papyrological evidence that must be taken into account—the biblical documents (such as P.Ryl. III 457 or, in New Testament parlance, P⁵²) and especially the extra-biblical Christian and related documents (such as P.Egerton 2, the so-called Egerton gospel). Traditional reconstructions of Christianity have often neglected even the biblical manuscripts, but recent efforts have brought both sets of data into consideration. In light of recent discussion, this chapter will shift the scope of investigation by differentiating a third group of manuscripts in the course of assessing both methodological approaches to reconstructing early Christianity from its documentary remains, along with several recent reconstructions and their revisions and implications. Important to this chapter will also be questions related to specifying which documents should be included in such a reconstruction, the question of dating, and what it means to offer a reconstruction on the basis of such evidence.

2. RECENT DISCUSSION REGARDING DATING OF CHRISTIAN MANUSCRIPTS

The twentieth century was foundational for the issue of the dating of early Christian manuscripts. As is commonly known, it was during the twentieth century that the majority of New Testament and related Christian Greek papyri, as well as the majority of non-canonical documents, were

* I wish to thank several people who made constructive comments on an earlier version of this chapter, especially Robert Kraft. An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the 26th International Congress of Papyrology, August 16–21, 2010, at the University of Geneva, Switzerland.

identified and published.¹ Although these documents span several centuries, this chapter will concentrate upon the second century, as this has been the focus of much recent discussion and debate.²

There are three categories of manuscripts that I wish to identify and to take into account. The first is the New Testament manuscripts. Some of the most important New Testament manuscripts in recent discussions include P.Ryl. III 457 (P52), a fragment of John's Gospel, dated originally to the first half of the second century and now usually anywhere from the early to the middle to the late second century; P.Oxy. L 3523 (P90), also a fragment of John's Gospel, originally dated to the second century but possibly late second or early third century; and P.Oxy. LXIV 4404 (P104), a fragment of Matthew's Gospel dated to the late second century. Additionally, three other New Testament manuscripts have also entered into the debate. These are P.Magdalen Greek 18 (P64) and P.Barcelona 1 (P67), which are from the same manuscript of Matthew and variably dated to the late second century or around AD 200, and possibly Bibliotheque Nationale, suppl. Gr. 1120 (P4), a fragment of Luke, sometimes joined to the above, sometimes said to be from the third century if not part of the same manuscript.³ There are also some Old Testament fragments that must enter into the discussion, although it is debatable whether these are Christian or Jewish. These include: Bodleian MS. Gr. Bibl. G.5 (Rahlfs 2082), a fragment of the Psalms dated originally to the late second century, and later to the second/third century; P.Ant. I 7 (Rahlfs 2077), also a fragment of the Psalms dated originally to the middle second century, and later to the second/third century; and P.Bad. IV 56 (Rahlfs 970), a fragment of Exodus and Deuteronomy, originally dated to the second century, and later to the late second century. The third category of manuscripts comprises non-canonical Christian documents. These include: P.Egerton 2 (P.Lond. Christ. 1), originally dated to around AD 150 (with some suggestions of a date before this by Schubart), but later to the last half of the second century or even into the third cen-

¹ See David G. Martinez, "The Papyri and Early Christianity," in Roger S. Bagnall, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 590–622.

² I use information on the various manuscripts, people, and dates, from Roger S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), esp. 11–13, 27–37, with some modifications; Joseph van Haelst, *Catalogue des Papyrus Littéraires Juifs et Chrétiens* (Université de Paris IV Paris-Sorbonne Série 'Papyrologie' 1; Paris: Sorbonne, 1976); and Brent Nongbri, "The Use and Abuse of P52: Papyrological Pitfalls in the Dating of the Fourth Gospel," *HTR* 98.1 (2005): 23–48.

³ This manuscript has also been dated much earlier by Carsten Thiede, but virtually no scholar follows this dating.

tury; P.Oxy. LX 4009, a fragment of an apocryphal gospel,⁴ dated originally to the second century, although later dated (by Bagnall) to the early or middle second century.

In assessing the evidence regarding the dates, Roger Bagnall makes several observations. The first is that “there is not much disagreement among those who have studied [these documents] about what papyri they may legitimately be compared to. There are comparisons within the group, and there are comparisons to several papyri generally dated to the end of the second or beginning of the third century.”⁵ The second observation is that the major disagreement surrounds the issue of dating. These disagreements depend, so Bagnall contends, on whether one falls into one of two clusters or camps of dating: “One may see one camp, typically consisting, across the generations, of [H. Idris] Bell, [C.H.] Roberts, and [T.C.] Skeat, which prefers an early date for the group, and another, represented in more recent times by [Eric G.] Turner and [J. David] Thomas, but originally by [Bernard P.] Grenfell and [Arthur S.] Hunt, arguing that the entire cluster should be put later.”⁶

Actually, in the history of discussion, the situation is even more complex than Bagnall indicates, in that there are four clusters or camps regarding dating. Besides the two noted by Bagnall, there is a third group that tends to argue for earlier dates than Bell, Roberts, and Skeat. In recent times, this includes Philip Comfort (along with David Barrett), who has examined and published an edition of all of the New Testament Greek papyri and parchments that date to before the time of Constantine (and who propose a date of “closer to AD 100, plus or minus a few years,” for P⁵²).⁷ However, on various previous occasions, early dates have been proposed by such scholars as Adolf Deissmann, Ulrich Wilcken, and Wilhelm Schubart. For example, in discussion of P.Ryl. III 457 (P⁵²), Roberts suggested the first half of the second century, supported by Fredric Kenyon, Bell, and Schubart. However, Deissmann suggested that it be dated to the time of Hadrian (AD 117–138) or possibly Trajan (AD 98–117), Wilcken to AD 117–120, on the

⁴ Some have identified this fragment as part of the *Gospel of Peter* (e.g. Dieter Lührmann, with Egbert Schlارب, *Fragmente apokryph gewordener Evangelien in Griechischer und Lateinischer Sprache* [Marburg: Elwert, 2000]), but most disagree with this assessment. See Paul Foster, “The *Gospel of Peter*,” in Paul Foster, ed., *The Non-Canonical Gospels* (London: Continuum, 2008), 30–42.

⁵ Bagnall, *Early Christian Books*, 13, 15 (there is a photograph on p. 14).

⁶ Bagnall, *Early Christian Books*, 15.

⁷ Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett, *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), 367.

basis of comparison with the Apollonius archive (P.Bremer), and Schubart noted features from the first century though he placed the manuscript in the second century.⁸ Whereas Bell and Skeat proposed around AD 150 for P.Egerton 2, Schubart thought it dated to before AD 150. The fourth group tends to argue for later dates than Turner and Thomas. These tend to be more recent scholars, and include those such as Michael Gronewald and (apparently) Brent Nongbri. Gronewald, who published the P.Köln VI 255 fragment of P.Egerton 2, argued that the presence of the hooked apostrophe dated the entire papyrus to the third century and no earlier than around AD 200;⁹ and Nongbri, though he remains somewhat noncommittal, appears to want to date both P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) and P.Egerton 2 to the late second or early third century.¹⁰

This collection may, on first appearance, not seem like much manuscript evidence for such an important task as the reconstruction of early Christianity through its textual evidence. Indeed, the number of manuscripts that are relevant and are relatively well agreed to fall within this time-period is limited. However, in light of the development of early Christianity within the larger Roman empire, they are perhaps even over-represented. Bagnall has analyzed the representation of manuscripts in relation to the number of Christians within the wider empire, and shown that, statistically, the manuscripts of early Christianity are larger than is mathematically probable.¹¹ In any case, this is the number that we currently have with which to work.

3. ASSESSING THE VARIABLES IN RECONSTRUCTING THE HISTORY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

The evidence above indicates that there are a number of factors that must be taken into account when assessing the early textual evidence used in recon-

⁸ See C.H. Roberts, *An Unpublished Fragment of the Fourth Gospel in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1935), 30 n. 7.

⁹ Michael Gronewald, "Unbekanntes Evangelium oder Evangelienharmonie (Fragment aus dem 'Evangelium Egerton')," in Michael Gronewald et al., eds., *Kölner Papyri*, 6 (Papyrologica Coloniensia 7; Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1987), 136–145 (136).

¹⁰ Andreas Schmidt has proposed a date of the early third century for P.Ryl.III 457, which Bagnall says "may be too definitive" (*Early Christian Papyri*, 12). He also claims that Nongbri (he misspells it as Nongbi) "has brought forward a range of palaeographical parallels that undermine confidence in an early date, even if they do not fully establish one in the late second or early third century" (12). I examine some of these claims below.

¹¹ Bagnall, *Early Christian Books*, 16–18.

structing the history of early Christianity. Recently, the major controversy has revolved around the relationship between P.Ryl. III 457 and P.Egerton 2. I will concentrate upon this controversy and dispute over dates as my means of access into the discussion of the pertinent issues.

There are four major issues in the recent discussion, so far as I can determine, especially as it is reflected in the “exhaustive” (to use Bagnall’s term) article by Nongbri. One is the place and evaluation of comparative manuscripts. A second is the perceived “date creep” of P.Ryl. III 457. Another is “date distancing” between P.Ryl. III 457 and P.Egerton 2. A fourth is the implications of the different perspectives. I will treat them in order.

3.1. *Evaluation of Comparative Manuscripts*

I do not need to say anything here about how tentative paleographic dating is. Virtually every book on Greek manuscripts makes this point.¹² All papyrologists recognize the difficulty in selecting appropriate comparative manuscripts, the subjectivity involved in assessing similarities, the difficulty of assigning dates to various paleographical features especially for literary hands (e.g. when there are issues of archaism, etc.), the usefulness of dated manuscripts even if they do not solve all issues, and the like. Nongbri emphasizes these and related points in his treatment—although he gives the impression that there has been a wider diversity and perhaps even cavaliness in treating the various comparative manuscripts than is probably warranted. Bagnall has observed that, for the most part, the same manuscripts are drawn upon for comparison with regard to this set of early manuscripts.¹³ Nongbri in his article wishes to add several manuscripts to the group of comparative data. All of these manuscripts are dated, and all are from the last half of the second century or even the third century. However, none of these additional manuscripts is literary or semi-literary. They are instead petitions, a judgment, an invitation, and a receipt. Whereas the desire to have dated documents is commendable, I wonder whether these new examples add as much as they could, because of their non-literary/documentary hands (which are in several cases quite different from the literary documents being considered). In comparing the group of

¹² For a recent treatment, see Guglielmo Cavallo, “Greek and Latin Writing in the Papyri,” in *Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, 101–148. Cavallo has done as much as anyone to differentiate various writing hands of Greek papyri.

¹³ They are not all late second or third century, however. Some are as early as the late first century, as will be noted below.

manuscripts brought into the discussion from early on, the most convincing are the literary texts, as Nongbri seems to admit,¹⁴ but they are limited in number, and require that we consider the full range of evidence. There is the further issue of criteria by which comparisons are made. As we know, at least four factors need to be considered—the writing of individual letters, spacing and display, manuscript features, and overall manuscript presentation and appearance. It is not always clear how these are to be weighed in relation to each other, that is, how similar letters are countered by dissimilar ones.

3.2. *Date Creep of P.Ryl. III 457 (P52)*

A number of recent scholars have noted that the date of P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) has, over recent years at least, gotten more specific and earlier. The result has been that there is more fixity or certainty to the date than was originally proposed and with which some are comfortable. Nongbri blames this creep especially on Kurt Aland.¹⁵ Especially open to criticism is Comfort, who dates P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) to around AD 100. It is true that this makes the date more specific and puts it at the earliest possible time in relation to Roberts's original date.

Several factors, however, need to be taken into account. One is that Comfort is one of few that I know of who has actually examined and published a major work in which he contends that he has examined the entire range of early New Testament manuscripts. He may be early in his dates, and he may be wrong, but he at least speaks on the basis of what amounts to a comprehensive examination. Another factor is that Comfort is not the first to suggest that kind of early date. Deissmann, as noted above, suggested the possibility of P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) being dated to the reign of Trajan from AD 98–117, which looks very much like around AD 100, give or take a few years. Deissmann too may have been wrong, but he thought similarly to Comfort over fifty years earlier. A third factor is that specifying dates is not a recent development at all. As noted above, both Deissmann and Wilcken restricted the date, Wilcken restricting it to around AD 117–120. However, it must also be recognized that there have always been those who have been cautious regarding the date of P.Ryl. III 457 (P52), not just the

¹⁴ Nongbri, "Use," 32.

¹⁵ Nongbri, "Use," 30–31. He also cites Eldon Epp. However, he has also to admit that most early scholars endorsed Roberts's date, including, besides those already mentioned, Ellwood M. Schofield, W.H.P. Hatch, Bruce M. Metzger, and Georg Malfeld.

German New Testament scholars who have recently raised the issue, but also other New Testament scholars as well.¹⁶ More importantly perhaps is that there have been later papyrologists who have been more cautious, but who have still endorsed Roberts's earlier conclusion, including Eric Turner forty years later¹⁷ (besides Kenyon, Bell, and others noted above). A fourth factor concerns the dates themselves. An examination of the dates proposed by the two clusters or camps suggested by Bagnall, however, does not indicate the kind of radical divergence that one might anticipate on the basis of some of the recent discussion. The variation is hard to estimate, as precise dates are not given, but the difference is usually somewhere around roughly fifty years difference, with seventy-five years at the most. So, whereas some creep may have occurred in New Testament studies, it is not unprecedented and without parallel from papyrologists, who generally endorse the date of Roberts, within fairly narrow variance.

3.3. *Date Distancing between P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) and P.Egerton 2*

From the outset, the dates of writing of P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) and P.Egerton 2 have been linked because Roberts cited P.Egerton 2 as one of his comparable manuscripts when examining the Johannine fragment. He also recognized some differences between the two, which presumably led him and those whom he consulted to settle upon an arguably earlier date than P.Egerton 2—while also recognizing that they had much in common, and even possible overlap in date. The original editors of P.Egerton 2 claimed a date in the middle of the second century, but expressed the opinion that they were being cautious in this date and that there were features that may have been earlier (later clarified as AD 140–160).¹⁸ They used virtually the same

¹⁶ Nongbri cites Georg Strecker, Andreas Schmidt (but dismisses his proposal as ultimately unconvincing because he does not use dated manuscripts for comparison), Walter Schmithals, Titus Nagel, C.K. Barrett, R. Alan Culpepper, Stuart R. Pickering, Bart D. Ehrman, and Larry W. Hurtado ("Use," 26–27 and note 12).

¹⁷ Eric G. Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 100. A further factor to consider is codicology, which is admittedly very tentative. Turner tended to take a late date for development of the codex, but an early date for P.Ryl. III 457 (P52), which is a fragment of a codex. This has implications both for dating of this early Christian document and for development of the codex. Robert Kraft argues for an early date for development of the codex, at least in Christian circles, on the basis of developments in Jewish scriptural transmission. I wish to thank Robert (personal conversation) for discussion of these points.

¹⁸ H.I. Bell and T.C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri* (London: Trustees of the British Library, 1935), 2; *The New Gospel Fragments* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1951), 17.

manuscripts as did Roberts for comparison and dating.¹⁹ I note that the editors of P.Egerton 2 were Bell and Skeat. Bell approved of Roberts's date for P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) and Roberts later wrote a book on the birth of the codex with Skeat. However, since the time of publication, despite Schubart's statement regarding an earlier date, there has been apparently less discussion of the date of P.Egerton 2 by papyrologists. Arguably, more distance has been created between the dates for these two manuscripts due to Gronewald's redating of P.Egerton 2 on the basis of P.Köln VI 255 (a part of the Egerton papyrus) to no earlier than AD 200 because of the hooked apostrophe, which he claims, following Turner, only really appears in the third century. There is no wonder that it has been noted that P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) appears to be placed at the beginning of the second century, while P.Egerton 2 is placed at the end—even though both were once used as comparable manuscripts for dating purposes.

3.4. *Implications for Reconstruction*

The implications for reconstruction of early Christianity through its manuscripts on the basis of these developments are several. (1) One of the most important is clearly the need to return to the manuscripts themselves, and to examine them and their comparable manuscripts. These include manuscripts from early Christianity alongside non-religious manuscripts that may prove to be suitable for comparison. (2) A second implication is to consider a wider range of comparable manuscripts. Nongbri has brought five new manuscripts into the discussion, but these are, I believe, of somewhat limited value. This is both because they are documentary texts, and because he appears to be overly skeptical about what can be determined on the basis of comparison of undated literary manuscripts. However, there are still a number of documents that have not been taken fully into account in such reconstructions. These include some of those that are noted by Bagnall, such as P.Oxy. L 3523, P.Oxy. LXIV 4404, and P.Oxy. LX 4009, but I would contend that the others to consider are P.Oxy. IV 656, a fragment of Genesis, and P.Vindob. G. 2325, a fragment of an unknown gospel (the so-called Fayyum fragment).²⁰ (3) A third implication is to recognize the limitations of undated literary manuscripts. There is no doubt that literary manuscripts are much more difficult to date on the basis of the lack

¹⁹ The one additional comparative manuscript is P.Lond. I 30.

²⁰ See Stanley E. Porter and Wendy J. Porter, *New Testament Greek Papyri and Parchments: New Editions* (2 vols.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 1: 291.

of explicit date, their conservatizing tendency, and especially the lack of knowledge of comparable texts of this early period. (4) A fourth and final implication of the above discussion is to expand the analytical perspective for using undated manuscripts. Most of the focus of comparison is still (and perhaps rightly) upon the formation of individual letters. This is no doubt important and will continue to be at the center of analysis. However, we know that change is slow and not consistent with individual letters, so that it is difficult to establish firm temporal parameters. There is also the archaizing or conservative tendency within literary or even semi-literary manuscripts. Another is codicological features. These are more difficult to define in some ways because of the lack of evidence and the possibilities of slippage, but still are important features to take into account. A final set of features that are often overlooked, especially with literary hands, is the tendency toward fixity and regularity, whether that is of format, letter and line spacing, or even bilinearity. All of these need to be taken into account.

4. A TENTATIVE WAY FORWARD IN THE DISCUSSION

In this final section, I will offer a tentative proposal of a way forward in this discussion, using the manuscripts and the perspectives noted above. There are three criteria that I propose here as a means of moving forward.

4.1. *Comparative Manuscripts*

The first criterion concerns the manuscripts that are to be used for comparison. Whereas dated manuscripts must enter into consideration and form the overall basis for much dating, I believe that it is also important to distinguish documentary from literary or semi-literary hands and attempt to use literary manuscripts for comparison with literary manuscripts. This is especially true from the fourth century on,²¹ but is also important in the earlier period, as there are characteristics of documentary hands, such as ligature and cursive forms, that distract from comparison. As Turner states, “[c]onfidence will be strongest when like is compared with like: a documentary hand with another documentary hand, skilful writing with skilful, fast

²¹ C.H. Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands 350 BC–AD 400* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), ix; G. Cavallo and H. Maehler, *Greek Bookhands of the Early Byzantine Period AD 300–800* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 3.

writing with fast. Comparison of book hands with dated documentary hands will be less reliable. The intention of the scribe is different in the two cases ...; besides, the book-hand style in question may have had a long life."²²

4.2. *Typology*

A number of scholars have formed various typologies of manuscript features, especially of various key letters. I am not here advocating a return to the use of what Roberts and others call a "test letter," in which "a single letter form provided a useful, if not an infallible, criterion of date."²³ I am instead arguing that representative letters, especially those that well illustrate different hands and can be dated, should be identified so that they can be used for comparison purposes. These typologies can be used in ways similar to Turner's *Typology of the Early Codex*. For example, Edward Maunde Thompson developed a Table of Alphabets of Literary Papyri, in which the forms of the individual letters were displayed based on study of significant manuscripts, and Turner made a similar list of representative letters from the manuscripts in his *Greek Manuscripts*.²⁴ These provide for comparison of a given manuscript with the letters in isolation.

4.3. *Trajectory*

I believe that there are a number of features of manuscripts that develop over time that can form a trajectory against which one can compare a given manuscript. This is discernable for New Testament manuscripts in particular. Trajectory features include a variety of different characteristics, such as the development in Christian manuscripts of the more or less formal literary or book hand, in relation (not necessarily opposition) to the cursive script, into the distinctive Biblical majuscule (second to ninth century) and then the Alexandrian majuscule (fourth century on), complicated by use also of the sloping (second to ninth century) and upright (second and third century) pointed majuscules in the early years. Other features include the

²² E.G. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (ed. P.J. Parsons; 2nd ed.; London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1987), 19–20. Cf. Bell and Skeat, *Fragments*, 1.

²³ Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands*, xiv. Cf. Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 20.

²⁴ Edward Maunde Thompson, *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912), 144–147, whose manuscripts can of course be expanded; Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 2. Note his cautions about styles on 20.

tendency toward stylization, archaism, multiple overlapping styles, and fossilization, as well as various additional textual features such as accentuation and punctuation.²⁵

5. APPLICATION TO P.RYL. III 457 (P52) AND P.EGERTON 2

By way of application, I will examine the two major manuscripts mentioned in the discussion above according to these three criteria and see if any clarity can be brought to this discussion.

5.1. *Comparisons*

As noted above, in recent discussion of some of the manuscripts used in reconstructing early Christianity, a number of new manuscripts have been brought forward as possibly suitable for comparison. New manuscripts for comparison are to be welcomed. However, all of the new ones proposed by Nongbri are documentary texts. Whereas they have value, they are not as valuable as literary documents.²⁶ As he seems to admit, regarding his new comparable manuscripts, P.Mich. inv. 5336 (= SB 22.15782), a petition dated to AD 152, seems to provide the closest comparison for P.Ryl. III 457 (P52).²⁷ Even though P.Egerton 2 has some cursive characteristics, it is not sufficiently close to any of the examples Nongbri cites, which in several cases are more cursive. More pertinent are the literary or semi-literary manuscripts that have been suggested. One of the most important comparative documents brought into the discussion by Bagnall is P.Oxy. LX 4009. This manuscript, as noted above, is dated to the second century, and Bagnall puts it in the early to middle part of the century. This fragment, written in an informal rounded bookhand, has a number of similarities to P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) and P.Egerton 2, such as the mu, epsilon, and types of ligatures. Bagnall also notes P.Oxy. LXIV 4404, dated to the later second century, which the editor of the text, David Thomas, notes is similar to P.Ryl. III 457 (P52).²⁸ I think that it is also worth mentioning P.Fayum 110, a letter firmly dated to AD 94. This dated manuscript was first commented upon by Roberts, and is

²⁵ Cavallo and Maehler, *Greek Bookhands*, 2, 3; Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands*, xv; Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 8–12.

²⁶ There are, as Nongbri admits (“Use,” 31–32 n. 25), some problems with direct comparison of literary and documentary texts.

²⁷ The similarities include shaping and spacing of letters, as well as overall appearance. See Nongbri, “Use,” 41.

²⁸ Bagnall, *Early Christian Books*, 13.

apparently cited approvingly by Nongbri.²⁹ What is important here is that Roberts, whom Nongbri gently criticizes for being young when he made the original identification of P. Ryl. III 457 (P52),³⁰ re-endorsed P. Fayum 110 as a comparison for both P. Ryl. III 457 (P52) and P. Egerton 2 again in 1955 when he published his *Greek Literary Hands*.³¹ So far as comparative manuscripts are concerned, there is reinforcement of the second-century date of both P. Ryl. III 457 (P52) and P. Egerton 2, and little to suggest a date of the third century. We can perhaps refine this a little by saying that the range of dates is from around AD 100 to around AD 150—the very dates suggested originally by Roberts for P. Ryl. III 457 (P52).

5.2. *Typology*

A typological comparison should not focus simply on a single letter or a single formation of a letter. However, a typological comparison can be used when there is a range of letters that have been established within a time period. Comparison of the individual letters of the two manuscripts, P. Ryl. III 457 (P52) and P. Egerton 2, with the sets of letters in both Maunde Thompson's and Turner's representative alphabets indicates what may appear to be a surprising result in the light of recent discussion. Both manuscripts clearly fit comfortably within the second century. There are, of course, some letters that are similar to those in the third century (as there are some in the first century), but the letters that are given to the most individualism, such as alpha, mu, and even sigma, appear to be second century. I find it hard to believe that the author of P. Ryl. III 457 (P52) or P. Egerton 2 was deliberately archaizing his script so as to make it look older, or simply retaining older features. Nevertheless, there are some differences between the two hands. Roberts had noted early on that the hand of P. Ryl. III 457 (P52) was "a heavy, rounded and rather elaborate hand," which "often uses several strokes to form a single letter ... with a rather clumsy effect." The scribe also adds "a small flourish or hook to the end of his strokes."³² By comparison, P. Egerton 2 is a less heavy hand with more formal rounded characteristics, but also with what the original editors called "cursive affini-

²⁹ Nongbri, "Use," 35–36, but his argument is that the common features are found in later manuscripts.

³⁰ Nongbri, I believe, was a doctoral student when he wrote his article, so I am not sure what this observation shows.

³¹ Roberts, *Greek Literary Hands*, 11. Nongbri acknowledges that Roberts cites this text again favorably ("Use," 35 note 34).

³² Roberts, *Unpublished Fragment*, 13.

ties.”³³ Both manuscripts were apparently written before development of the more formal Biblical majuscule style, which began to develop in the late second and early third centuries. These several characteristics push for a distinction in date, if only a minor one, between the two manuscripts. P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) was at first identified by Roberts as being slightly earlier than P.Egerton 2, on the basis of comparisons and the less formal character of the hand. There is nothing here to dispute this analysis.

5.3. *Trajectory*

Though firmly placed within the second century, both P.Ryl. III 457 (P52) and P.Egerton 2 have a number of features to note. I will treat the one that has been the center of recent discussion: the issue of separation in date over the hook apostrophe. This provides a good argument for how important it is to use a feature-based trajectory in attempting to arrange manuscripts chronologically. Gronewald, in his analysis of P.Köln VI 255, argued that the hooked apostrophe in recto line 3 (line 21 of the reconstructed manuscript page) indicates a date no earlier than around AD 200. Gronewald argued on the basis of a comment in Turner’s *Greek Manuscripts* that the apostrophe between mute consonants was a feature of the third century AD.³⁴ This was a major factor in pulling the dating of the two manuscripts apart. However, here is what Turner actually says: “In the first decade of iii AD this practice [of using an apostrophe between two consonants, such as double mutes or double liquids] suddenly becomes extremely common and then persists.” Note that Turner does not say that the practice does not exist before the third century AD, but that in the first decade it becomes “extremely common” and then “persists.” He then notes examples. These include one previously known example from AD 101 (ΑΥΧΟΡΙΜΦΙΣ in BGU III 715.5), and two from the end of the second century (P.Petaus 86.11, from AD 184/85; SB XIV 11342.11 from AD 193). After this evidence, Turner includes the intriguing further comment that “P.Oxy. xlii 3013, a dramatic hypothesis in a semi-cursive hand, which might otherwise be assigned to ii AD, has αΥ’ϐΩΩΝ (ii 30).”³⁵

³³ Bell and Skeat, *Fragments*, 1.

³⁴ Gronewald, “Unbekanntes Evangelium,” 136, citing Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 11 n. 50 (see also p. 108). I find Gronewald’s date problematic on the basis of the evidence he marshals. According to his logic, I would have expected him to argue for a date no earlier than in the mid third century, to give time for the phenomenon to erupt fully. He also seems to conceive of the centuries as discrete blocks of time.

³⁵ Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 11 n. 50. Contra Paul Foster, “Bold Claims, Wishful Thinking, and Lessons about Dating Manuscripts from Papyrus Egerton 2,” in Craig A. Evans, ed., *The World of Jesus and the Early Church: Identity and Interpretation in Early Communities of*

Perhaps the solution is found in Turner's further comment on P.Bodmer II (P66), which has an instance of the hooked apostrophe between double nasals (αγ'γελους): this phenomenon "is not normally written in documents till iii AD"³⁶ The example in P.Köln VI 255 is ανενεγ'κον, virtually identical to the one found in BGU III 715.5 from AD 101. I do not dispute that according to simple frequency the hooked apostrophe would indicate the third-century AD date. However, the trajectory of the development of the hooked apostrophe, according to the evidence in Turner, including his own example of a cursive hand that he thinks should be assigned to the second century AD, allows for a second-century date if there is other evidence. I think a case can be made that the other factors point exactly in this direction. The result is to mitigate the single biggest factor for pushing the date of P.Egerton 2 to AD 200, and hence separating it from proximity in date to P.Ryl. III 457 (P52).

6. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study and the result of its investigation is that we are essentially back where we began in 1935 with the first publication of P.Egerton 2 and P.Ryl. III 457 (P52)—two manuscripts that have figured largely in recent discussion of the reconstruction of early Christianity. Roberts concluded that P.Ryl. III 45 (P52) should be dated to the first half of the second century, a conclusion with which Turner was generally in agreement even if expressing caution. Bell and Skeat concluded that P.Egerton 2 should be dated to the mid second century, a cautious date on their part. Even if we recognize the two clusters of dates and evidence that Bagnall has suggested (as opposed to the four noted above), the evidence seems to indicate that we are back at the beginning. And this fact remains the same even if we take into account a larger number of comparable manuscripts, weigh letter typology, and find a suitable trajectory of manuscript features. In other words, the result is to bring the two manuscripts together, somewhere in the middle second century, perhaps tending toward the early part of it, as a workable and serviceable date of transcription.³⁷ With that in place, we can then begin to place other manuscripts and frame the development of early Christianity in the second century.

Faith (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), 193–211, esp. 201–204, who apparently does not take what Turner actually says into account, but is too quick to jump to the later date.

³⁶ Turner, *Greek Manuscripts*, 108.

³⁷ One might well argue that P.Egerton 2 should be dated later than P.Ryl. III 457 (P52), and hence in the second half of the second century, on the basis of the evidence cited above.

JESUS AND PARALLEL JEWISH AND GRECO-ROMAN FIGURES

Craig S. Keener

Examining figures compared with Jesus either in antiquity or today allows us to highlight both ways that Jesus fit expectations of his culture and ways that he diverged from them. Clearly Jesus is intelligible as a real historical figure in a first-century milieu. Each historical figure is distinctive in some respects; by noting analogies and differences, we can better understand how Jesus fulfilled or challenged his contemporaries' expectations for him. Some proposed analogies (such as Jewish sign prophets) are useful for historical comparison; some others (such as rising deities) are too distant to prove very helpful for contemporary Jesus research.

Because almost no one questions that Jesus was a sage with disciples, we will not expend space arguing that point. Because Hellenism influenced Judaism even in Galilee, Hellenistic sages broaden our context for Jesus, but because he was Jewish and Galilean one must look more particularly at Jewish sources for Jesus. Most relevant to the point of this essay's assignment are Jewish contexts for miracle workers, prophets, messiahs, and exalted figures.¹

1. MIRACLE WORKERS AND PROPHETS

1.1. *Jesus as Healer and Exorcist*

All relevant ancient sources present Jesus or early followers as miracle-workers: "Q" (the hypothetical source behind Matthew and Luke), Mark, special material in Matthew and Luke, John, Acts, the epistles, and Revelation.² Even unsympathetic rabbis and the pagan critic Celsus depict Jesus as a wonder-worker, albeit attributing his success to sorcery.³ In *Ant.* 18.63,

¹ I have addressed much of this material in different form in my *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), chs. 17–19; and idem, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), chs. 1–3.

² See also Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 297–301.

³ Cf. e.g. *b. Sanh.* 107b; Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Magic or Miracle? Diseases, Demons and

Josephus calls Jesus a “wise man,” who also worked “startling deeds,” a term by which Josephus also depicts the miracles worked by the prophet Elisha (*Ant.* 9.182).⁴ This unanimity contrasts starkly with the silence about miracles involving respected prophetic figures like John the Baptist in all ancient sources. Most scholars today therefore recognize that Jesus’ contemporaries viewed him as a miracle-worker.⁵ How did Jesus compare with contemporary miracle workers?

1.2. *Gentile Wonder-Workers*

Pagan miracle claims mostly fall into several classes: direct intervention by deities; cures at healing shrines; stories about a distant, mythical era; secretive magic; and most relevantly, occasional reports of the traveling sage-healer, though these do not flourish widely till the third century (perhaps partly a response to the growing Christian movement’s accounts). Even for the final category, the most pervasive “parallel” with Jesus is that both kinds of accounts involve what we might term “supernatural” activity through human agents. Petitioners in all societies seek health, often through super-human means; anthropological studies regarding shamans illustrate that such figures appear in various cultures without any necessary connecting influence.

Exorcisms,” in David Wenham and Craig Blomberg, eds., *The Miracles of Jesus* (vol. 6 in *Gospel Perspectives*; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 89–183 (90–91); John Granger Cook, *The Interpretation of the New Testament in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002; Tübingen: Mohr, 2000), 36–39; during Jesus’ ministry, E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 166.

⁴ For authenticity, see Geza Vermes, “The Jesus Notice of Josephus Re-Examined,” *JJS* 38 (1; 1987): 1–10; idem, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973), 79; see also John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. Vol 2: *Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 621; Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 74.

⁵ For summaries of this consensus, see Barry L. Blackburn, “The Miracles of Jesus,” in Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, eds., *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (NTTS 19; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 353–394, here 362; Eric Eve, *The Jewish Context of Jesus’ Miracles* (JSNTSup 231; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 16–17; for examples, see Otto Betz, *What Do We Know About Jesus?* (London: SCM, 1968), 58–60; Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 11; Meier, *Mentor*, 678–772; Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to Grave. A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 143–144; David Flusser, “Jesus, His Ancestry, and the Commandment of Love,” in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *Jesus’ Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus within Early Judaism* (New York: American Interfaith Institute, Crossroad Publishing, 1991), 153–176 (154).

1.2.1. *Healing Divinities*

Mythical healers and healing sanctuaries are only minimally relevant. Greeks' most prominent superhuman healer was Asclepius, reputed to heal the sick even before his apotheosis.⁶ According to the usual version of the ancient myth, he was originally a mortal and eventually divinized.⁷ Yet such stories about the mythical past offer weak parallels for biographies or historical works about recent persons, as they would for recent reports about shamans.⁸ Most Greeks believed that Asclepius, now immortal, continued to heal the sick,⁹ often through dreams in his temples,¹⁰ and his cult is widely attested in various cities.¹¹ Jesus, however, was an itinerant Galilean teacher, not a stationary healing shrine where suppliants often received messages from a deity in dreams.

1.2.2. *Individual Miracle-Workers in History*

While better possible analogies than myths and shrines exist, they too are incomplete. Political propagandists exploited healing reports surrounding Vespasian, but there are only two of them; Vespasian was not a characteristic healer like Jesus.¹² Miracle workers probably existed, though their detractors considered them magicians¹³ (and skeptical intellectuals sometimes set out to expose fraudulent wonder-workers).¹⁴ Ancients often vilified supernatural claims in rival groups as magic, while affirming analogous claims among themselves.¹⁵ Public religion was acceptable; secretive magic,

⁶ The myth appears in, e.g. Paul J. Achtemeier, *Jesus and the Miracle Tradition* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008), 205.

⁷ Panyassis frg. 5, in Sextus Empiricus, *Math.* 1.260; Lucian *Dance* 45; on him raising the dead, see also Pausanias 2.26.5.

⁸ Pace e.g. Robert M. Price, *The Incredible Shrinking Son of Man: How Reliable Is the Gospel Tradition?* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2003), 21, 131.

⁹ Sophocles, *Philoc.* 1437–1438; Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.2; Maximus of Tyre 9.7.

¹⁰ Aristophanes, *Plutus* 410–411, 620–621; Pausanias 2.27.2; Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 2.30–36, 74–76; Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 1.25.536; 2.4.568; Iamblichus, *Myst.* 3.3.

¹¹ E.g. Strabo 8.6.15; Pliny, *N.H.* 20.100.264; Statius, *Silv.* 3.4.23–24; Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.63; 4.14; Fronto, *Ad M. Caes.* 3.9.1; Pausanias 2.26.9.

¹² Tacitus, *Hist.* 4.81; Suetonius, *Vesp.* 7. These unexpected recoveries may be authentic (cf. Michael R. Licona and Jan G. van der Watt, "The Adjudication of Miracles: Rethinking the Criteria of Historicity," *HvTSt* 65 [1; 2009], 5).

¹³ See e.g. the fraudulent Egyptian prophet-magician in Apuleius, *Metam.* 2.28, though this example appears in a significantly later novel.

¹⁴ E.g. Lucian, *Alex.* 20, 26–28, 50, 53–55.

¹⁵ Harold Remus, *Pagan-Christian Conflict over Miracle in the Second Century* (Cambridge,

condemned.¹⁶ Detractors thus attributed “magical feats” to the Pythagorean Empedocles,¹⁷ and apparently Apollonius as well.¹⁸

1.2.3. *The “Divine Man”*

One proposed category for such wonder-workers is unlikely. Many scholars once envisioned a characteristic type of ancient wonder-worker labeled a “divine man.”¹⁹ Today, however, most scholars recognize that the various characteristics derive from many diverse sources and were united as a single class only by modern scholars’ creativity.²⁰ The phrase’s ancient usage is too diverse to predict specific characteristics; most scholars today feel that earlier scholars blended too many disparate features in their pictures of the “divine man.”²¹ Those who fit the category best are associated with Pythagoreanism: Pythagoras himself (about whom we actually know fairly little); Empedocles; and Apollonius (for reports of whom we are largely dependent on third-century CE Philostratus). The attribution of wonders to Pythagoras and Empedocles apparently derives from long after their own lifetimes.

This model is not likely to have influenced early Christianity, and still less likely to have influenced the historical Jesus and his immediate Galilean followers.²² Indeed, that third-century miracle narratives are much

MA: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1983), 67–72; idem, “Magic or Miracle? Some Second-Century Instances,” *SecCent* 2 (3; 1982): 127–156.

¹⁶ For magicians as deviant from the religious community, see Andy Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (JSNTSup 235; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 248.

¹⁷ Diogenes Laertius 8.2.59.

¹⁸ Cf. Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 169.

¹⁹ See e.g. Richard Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions: Their Basic Ideas and Significance* (PTMS 15; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978), 207; Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951), 1:130.

²⁰ See David Lenz Tiede, *The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker* (SBLDS 1; Missoula, MT: SBL, 1972), 99; Eugene V. Gallagher, *Divine Man or Magician? Celsus and Origen on Jesus* (SBLDS 64; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982), 173; Howard Clark Kee, *Miracle in the Early Christian World: A Study in Sociohistorical Method* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 37, 297–299; Barry L. Blackburn, “‘Miracle Working ΘΕΙΟΙ ΑΝΔΡΕΣ’ in Hellenism (and Hellenistic Judaism),” in *Miracles of Jesus*, 185–218 (188–191); Betz, *Jesus*, 64.

²¹ See Carl R. Holladay, *Theios Aner in Hellenistic Judaism: A Critique of the Use of This Category in New Testament Christology* (SBLDS 40; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 237; Klauck, *Context*, 177.

²² See the critique of the “divine man” hypothesis in earlier New Testament scholarship in Holladay, *Theios Aner*; Gallagher, *Divine Man*; Aage Pilgaard, “The Hellenistic *Theios Aner*—

more complete than accounts in earlier historians might suggest that pagan propagandists actually suited their accounts to existing Christian parallels.²³

1.2.3.1. *Philostratus's Claims about Apollonius*

Of all ancient stories about miracle-workers, those about Apollonius come closest to the stories about Jesus in the Gospels. Only these two subjects of multiple healing narratives appear as immanent bearers of numinous power.²⁴ By the fourth century pagan writers explicitly used Apollonius as an alternative to Jesus, claiming that the pagan world offered its own healers.²⁵

If we ask which stories circulated first, however, miracle stories clearly circulated about Jesus before Mark, who wrote about Jesus' miracles roughly a century and a half before Philostratus wrote about Apollonius's. The period between Jesus' crucifixion and Mark's Gospel may be less than a third of the period between Apollonius' departure and Philostratus' story about him, and Philostratus's portrait of Apollonius fits the author's third-century setting much better than Apollonius's first-century one.²⁶ Philostratus writes as much as 120 years after Apollonius and 150 years after Mark.

Against many, Christian accounts were likely among important influences on Philostratus. Thus, for example, Apollonius promises to meet his disciple at a specified location, and the disciple views him as risen from the dead (*Vit. Apoll.* 7.41; cf. Mark 14:28; 16:7). When he appears to followers in a distant location (*Vit. Apoll.* 8.10–11), he urges them to take hold of

A Model for Early Christian Christology?," in Peder Borgen and Søren Giversen, eds., *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 101–122; Blackburn, "ANΔPEΣ"; Tiede, *Figure*; Leopold Sabourin, "Hellenistic and Rabbinic 'Miracles,'" *BTB* 2 (3; 1972): 281–307 (291–295).

²³ See John S. Lown, "The Miraculous in the Greco-Roman Historians," *Forum* 2 (4; 1986): 36–42; Blackburn, "ANΔPEΣ," 199–204. Individual pagan miracle-workers arose especially in the first-century east and thereafter developed in competition with early Christianity (Christa Frateantonio, "Miracles, Miracle-workers: Greco-Roman," 9:52–53 in *Brill's New Pauly*, 53).

²⁴ Werner Kahl, *New Testament Miracle Stories in their Religious-Historical Setting: A Religionsgeschichtliche Comparison from a Structural Perspective* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 236.

²⁵ Klauck, *Context*, 170. Deists revived the comparison; see Robert M. Burns, *The Great Debate on Miracles: from Joseph Glanvill to David Hume* (London: Associated University Presses; Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1981), 72–74.

²⁶ Graham Anderson, *Philostratus: Biography and Belles Lettres in the Third Century A.D.* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 121–239, argues for the antiquity of the Apollonius traditions; Ewen L. Bowie, "Apollonius of Tyana: Tradition and Reality," *ANRW* II.16.2: 1652–1699 (1653–1671), argues for their lateness.

him and see that he is not a ghost (*Vit. Apoll.* 8.12; cf. Luke 24:39). Earlier, Apollonius stops a bier and raises a dead girl (*Vit. Apoll.* 4.45)—as Jesus does (Mark 5:41–42; Luke 7:14–15). The parallels tell us more about Christian influence on paganism in late antiquity than the reverse.²⁷ It is difficult to argue otherwise, against the chronological evidence, unless one is committed to maintain early Christian borrowing from Apollonius at any cost.

Further, elements in Philostratus's account supported by earlier sources²⁸ display the fewest parallels with the Gospels. This observation indicates that Philostratus's strongest parallels with the Gospels reflect not early tradition about Apollonius, but motifs derived from now widely-circulated stories about Jesus.²⁹ Philostratus's accounts of Apollonius even resemble some contemporary accounts from Christian apocryphal gospels.³⁰ Moreover, Philostratus writes in a different genre than the Gospels, which show the strongest connections with biography;³¹ by contrast, Philostratus includes many novelistic features, especially in distant, exotic locations.³² For example, a number of Philostratus's geographic details (such as having the Caucasus border the Red Sea) cannot reflect an eyewitness source.³³ Yet this would not be problematic for Philostratus; like the writers of the apocryphal gospels but unlike the Synoptics, he wrote in the heyday of Greek novels.³⁴

²⁷ Narrative techniques in 1 Kgs 17:17–24 likelier influenced Luke's composition, though also pre-Lukan tradition (e.g. Nain was an insignificant village).

²⁸ Although the letters' authenticity is dubious, they predate Philostratus, involving Greek cities where Apollonius probably actually traveled (versus where Philostratus's most exotic tales occur).

²⁹ Of course, Philostratus also welcomes other less relevant material as well, e.g. involving healing the bite of a mad dog (*Vit. Apoll.* 6.43), incantations, vampires, and divination; see Jean-Marie Van Cangh, "Miracles grecs, rabbiniques et évangéliques," in J. Verheyden et al., eds., *Miracles and Imagery in Luke and John: Festschrift Ulrich Busse* (BETL 218; Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 213–236, here 224–226 (esp. 224).

³⁰ Klauck, *Context*, 170.

³¹ See discussion in Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (SNTSMS 70; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992); more briefly, Keener, *Historical Jesus*, ch. 5.

³² Cf. Richard Purtill, "Miracles: What If They Happen?," in Richard Swinburne, ed., *Miracles* (New York: Macmillan; London: Collier Macmillan, 1989), 189–205, here 201.

³³ John Wilson, "The Miracles of the Gospels," *American Journal of Theology* 9 (1905): 10–33 (20–21). Philostratus's geography is fairly accurate within the confines of the empire, but largely departs from reality in Mesopotamia and India (C.P. Jones, "Apollonius of Tyana's Passage to India," *GRBS* 42 [2; 2001]: 185–199).

³⁴ For that period, see Ewen Bowie, "The Readership of Greek Novels in the Ancient World," in James Tatum, ed., *The Search for the Ancient Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 435–459, here 443; Susan A. Stephens, "Who Read Ancient Novels?" in *Search for Ancient Novel*, 405–418 (414).

1.2.3.2. *Jewish "Divine Men"?*

Jesus and his first followers were Galilean Jews, and this foundation shaped their early movement; even the most "Hellenistic" first-century Christian writers (like Luke and Paul) regularly cite biblical sources far more than the classical ones favored by their contemporaries. Moreover, although some Diaspora Jewish writers did emphasize miracles in their sources, they rarely accentuated them for Hellenistic audiences. The expression "divine man" is fairly rare in Jewish sources, never even appearing in the Septuagint or New Testament.³⁵ Moses is a miracle-worker in some sources (Artapanus) and a philosopher in others (Philo and Josephus), but never both.³⁶ The primary background for Jesus' miracles is Old Testament miracle-workers, and the emphasis on Jesus as miracle-worker declines as one moves away from a Jewish context.³⁷ The designation "divine man" is too culturally removed and too ambiguous to explain Jesus' role as a miracle-worker.

1.2.4. *Differences between Early Christian and Most Pagan Miracles*

Although the Gospels' miracle reports share some common "elements" to most miracle stories (e.g. a miracle, and often people's response to it), many differences exist.³⁸ Some motifs (especially those intrinsic to miracle narrations in any setting) were widespread.³⁹ Some other miracle motifs in the Gospels, however, exhibit rare, perhaps only coincidental, parallels.⁴⁰ Similarly, some superhuman reports in pagan sources (normally much later than their subjects) have few early Christian parallels: love-magic (often); a continual fast; a 57-year nap; magicians' self-transformation into animal forms (fairly often); teaching in two places at the same time; flying; and revealing

³⁵ See Holladay, *Theios Aner*, 237–238.

³⁶ Tiede, *Figure*, 101–240. Moses was "divine" only in the sense that he was affected by the deity (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 1.279).

³⁷ Holladay, *Theios Aner*, 238–239; cf. similarly Betz, *Jesus*, 64.

³⁸ Emphasizing differences, see e.g. Laurence J. McGinley, *Form-Criticism of the Synoptic Healing Narratives: A Study in the Theories of Martin Dibelius and Rudolf Bultmann* (Woodstock, MD: Woodstock College Press, 1944), 145–152; Sabourin, "Miracles," 305.

³⁹ One may survey miracle stories in Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 47–72; Wendy Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook for the study of New Testament Miracle Stories* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

⁴⁰ Cf. e.g. the detailed (but admittedly overschematized) comparison chart in McGinley, *Form-Criticism*, 145–149. For some elements being simply necessary to tell a miracle story, see Pierre Benoit, *Jesus and the Gospel*. Vol. 1 (trans. Benet Weatherhead; New York: Herder & Herder, 1973), 33–34.

golden thighs.⁴¹ By contrast, the Gospels usually emphasize healings and exorcisms as benevolent acts of compassion (e.g. Mark 1:41; 6:34, 41–42; cf. 8:2, 6–8).⁴²

A key contrast involves the genre of our sources;⁴³ as ancient biography about a recent character for whom many sources remained, the Gospels are barely analogous to collections of mythography or novels.⁴⁴ They do not report fictions about distant, exotic countries; fabulous monsters; discussions in divine courts; or the like.⁴⁵ They do claim healings, but these also appear in Paul's clearly firsthand reports (Rom 15:19; 1 Cor 12–14; 2 Cor 12:12; Gal 3:5), and millions offer sociologically analogous firsthand claims today.⁴⁶ Moreover, John Meier finds very few literary parallels to ancient miracle claims attested so soon after the events.⁴⁷

Jesus' detractors accused him of magic (Mark 3:22, probably also in Q Matt 12:24//Luke 11:15), but this was the most common charge against wonder-workers. The Gospels portray Jesus differently; whereas magicians were thought to transform substances,⁴⁸ Jesus rejects the temptation to transmute stones into bread (Q Matt 4:3–4//Luke 4:3–4). Pagan magicians typically sought to coerce deities or spirits by incantations; Jesus simply

⁴¹ Blackburn, "ΑΝΔΡΕΣ," 190–193. For magicians transforming themselves into animals, cf. Ovid, *Amores* 1.8.13–14; Lucian, *Lucius* 4, 12, 54; Apuleius, *Metam.* 2.30; Ps.-Callisthenes, *Alex.* 1.10.

⁴² For this focus, see e.g. Marcus Dods, "Jesus as Healer," *BibW* 15 (1900): 169–177; for Jesus' miracles in the context of ancient benefaction, see Jerome H. Neyrey, "Miracles, In Other Words: Social Science Perspectives on Healings," in John C. Cavadini, ed., *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity: Imagining Truth* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1999), 19–56, here 24–27.

⁴³ With also e.g. Michael Licona and Jan Van der Watt, "Historians and Miracles: The Principle of Analogy and Antecedent Probability Reconsidered," *HvTSt* 65 (1; 2009): 4; cf. earlier Burns, *Debate*, 243.

⁴⁴ Regarding the Gospels' genre, see more fully Keener, *Historical Jesus*, 73–94, 428–441; idem., "Assumptions in Historical-Jesus Research," *JSHJ* 9 (2011): 26–58 (30–39); for the Gospels' sources, see 126–161, 459–482 (and the evaluation of much individual material in light of its Palestinian Jewish environment, 163–348, 482–590 *passim*).

⁴⁵ Some compare Luke's account of the African court official to novels' use of "exotic" lands, but detailed examination of the actual sources shows that such accounts are barely comparable in content (Craig Keener, "Novels' 'Exotic' Places and Luke's African Official [Acts 8:27]," *AUSS* 46 [1; 2008]: 5–20).

⁴⁶ Cf. Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 310; Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 107; "Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals," *Pew Forum Survey* (2006), at <http://pewforum.org/surveys/pentecostal> (accessed Jan. 4, 2009); Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011).

⁴⁷ Meier, *Mentor*, 536, 576–616, 624.

⁴⁸ E.g. Homer, *Od.* 10.239–240; Ovid, *Metam.* 14.414–415; *p. Hag.* 2:2, § 5; *Sanh.* 6:6, § 2.

commanded as God's authoritative agent.⁴⁹ The Hellenistic and Egyptian settings of extant magical papyri differed significantly from the setting of a Galilean sage and prophet.⁵⁰ Despite critics, many people in antiquity perceived differences. The movement did not spread simply because people liked fanciful stories; fanciful stories proliferated elsewhere. Yet something distinctive about the cumulative force of early Christian claims rendered them more persuasive than mere myths about the past or claims about some folk healer.

1.3. *Early Jewish Miracle-Workers*

Models of Jewish charismatic and eschatological prophets were closer, hence are more relevant, for understanding Jesus than are geographically distant categories (such as urban Hellenistic Cynics or Gentile magicians). Some Jewish wonder-workers existed, who offer closer models for Jesus of Galilee than most Gentile analogies could.⁵¹ (Even the Gospel writers, probably writing in the Diaspora rather than Jesus' Galilee, contain many explicit biblical citations as well as allusions, whereas they lack the classical citations characteristic of typical Greek works.) Some Gentiles complained of them in the Diaspora;⁵² Jewish practitioners of magic also became common there (cf. Acts 8:9–11; 13:8; 19:13).⁵³

1.3.1. *Charismatic Sages*

Better known are Palestinian Jewish models (cf. e.g. exorcists in Matt 12:27//Luke 11:19). Josephus shows little interest in healers.⁵⁴ Rabbinic

⁴⁹ Cf. Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 296; Yamauchi, "Magic," 133; Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson; Tübingen: Mohr, 1993), 172–173.

⁵⁰ See Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 306–307.

⁵¹ With e.g. Erkki Koskenniemi, "Apollonius of Tyana: A Typical θεῖος ἀνὴρ?" *JBL* 117 (3; 1998): 455–467; Rick Strelan, *Strange Acts: Studies in the Cultural World of the Acts of the Apostles* (BZNW 126; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 27.

⁵² Juvenal, *Sat.* 6.542–547; sources in Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism: Edited with Introductions, Translations and Commentary* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974–1984), 2:221–223.

⁵³ See e.g. Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (12 vols.; New York: Pantheon, 1953–1965), 12:58–63; Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament* (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 1:380–381. For Jewish influence in later magical texts, see e.g. *PGM* 1.301–302, 305; 3.405; 4.1200–1204, 2355–2356, 3040–3041, 3047–3048; 5.114–115; 13.327, 815–818; 35.1–42; *PDM* 14.1061–1062.

⁵⁴ Eve, *Miracles*, 52.

miracle accounts generally offer limited basis for comparison, not only due to their later date but because of strong genre differences from the Gospels.⁵⁵ Many rabbinic accounts are simply homiletic illustrations, and miracles are proportionately far rarer there than in the Gospels.⁵⁶ Rabbinic stories also tend to focus more on procuring rain (following the model of a major miracle of Elijah) than on healings,⁵⁷ and later Jewish stories often associate healing miracles with Jesus' followers.⁵⁸

Some scholars emphasize more plausibly the probably late first-century Galilean sage Hanina ben Dosa and the pre-Christian pietist Honi (Onias).⁵⁹ While Honi was undoubtedly known for answered prayer concerning rain,⁶⁰ most of the miracle stories about him are not attested until perhaps half a millennium after he lived.⁶¹ Like Jesus, Hanina ben Dosa was Galilean (though we do not know of other Galileans associated with miracles).⁶² But though sources just over a century later portray him as discerning whether those for whom he prayed would recover and being unaffected by a lizard's bite,⁶³ the more abundant later material (e.g. healing the sons of Johanan ben Zakkai and Gamaliel II, *b. Ber.* 34b) reflects three or four centuries of development.⁶⁴ Moreover, even if the tradition is reliable, its portrayal differs significantly from that of Jesus: whereas Jesus traveled to minister, Hanina apparently merely received supplicants, and few of the

⁵⁵ See e.g. Sabourin, "Miracles," 301–303.

⁵⁶ Cf. Eve, *Miracles*, 285–286; Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971), 150–151; Morton Smith, "A Comparison of Early Christian and Early Rabbinic Tradition," *JBL* 82 (1963): 169–176 (173–174); idem, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels* (Philadelphia: SBL, 1951), 84.

⁵⁷ A.E. Harvey, *Jesus and the Constraints of History* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 100, 115. On rain miracles, see Josephus *Ant.* 14.22; *m. Taan.* 3:8; *tos. Taan.* 2:3; for the rareness of healings, see Eve, *Miracles*, 253, 378.

⁵⁸ Cf. e.g. R. Travers Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (repr. Clifton, NJ: Reference Book Publishers, 1966), 50–51, 54–56, 211–215.

⁵⁹ On Jesus as a Jewish charismatic, see especially Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, *passim* (e.g. 58–80); idem, *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984; London: SCM, 1983), *passim*; idem, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), *passim* (e.g. 6, 70–74).

⁶⁰ Josephus, *Ant.* 14.22; on Onias (Honi) in Josephus (where some aspects of his depiction resemble Elijah), see Rebecca Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Jewish Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 145–147.

⁶¹ The only Tannaitic account is *m. Ta'an.* 3:8 (Eve, *Miracles*, 274–275).

⁶² Blackburn, "Miracles," 378.

⁶³ *M. Ber.* 5:5; *t. Ber.* 3:20.

⁶⁴ Eve, *Miracles*, 282–283; idem, *The Healer from Nazareth: Jesus' Miracles in Historical Context* (London: SPCK, 2009), 14–16; Blackburn, "Miracles," 378.

miracles reported involve healing.⁶⁵ Hanina petitioned God's power; Jesus carried it.⁶⁶ We know little about other Galilean folk-healers, but our evidence suggests that Jesus was no ordinary one.⁶⁷

1.3.2. *Jewish Sign Prophets*

Other scholars highlight the relevance of prophetic figures, disdained by Josephus, who promised eschatological signs.⁶⁸ Popular prophets⁶⁹ include both those who led movements such as these⁷⁰ and "solitary popular prophets," such as Joshua ben Hananiah.⁷¹ The former were often perceived as prophets of deliverance, whose claims evoked Moses or Joshua; the latter resembled the majority of prophets in ancient Israel.⁷²

But first-century Jewish Palestine's most popular figures may have been the prophets of deliverance, leading messianic movements and modeling their ministries after Moses and Joshua.⁷³ Some of their promised activities may evoke Moses, signifying their expectation of eschatological deliverance.⁷⁴ First-century sign-prophets evoking Moses or his successor Joshua included Theudas, who promised to part the Jordan, and a Jewish-Egyptian

⁶⁵ Eve, *Miracles*, 285. None involved exorcism (Eve, *Miracles*, 294).

⁶⁶ Eve, *Miracles*, 289, 295. He also argues (292–293) that the Mishnah's category for Hanina, "men of deed" (*m. Sot.* 9:15) need not specify miracle-workers. Israel's God was sole bearer of numinous power in Jewish tradition (Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 234).

⁶⁷ Eve, *Miracles*, 357–359, 379 (comparing a particular Mexican folk-healer).

⁶⁸ On these sign prophets, see initially Paul W. Barnett, "The Jewish Sign Prophets—AD 40–70—Their Intentions and Origin," *NTS* 27 (5; 1981): 679–697; idem, "The Jewish Sign Prophets," in James D.G. Dunn and Scot McKnight, eds., *The Historical Jesus in Recent Research* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 444–462; and now especially Gray, *Figures*, 112–144.

⁶⁹ Besides these categories, Robert L. Webb, *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study* (JSNTSup 62; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), also lists "clerical prophets" (317–322, including John Hyrcanus); "sapiential prophets" (322–332, including Essenes [322–326]) and Pharisees (326–332). Christian Grappe, "Jésus parmi d'autres prophètes de son temps," *RHPR* 81 (4; 2001): 387–411, also includes some other categories.

⁷⁰ Webb, *Baptizer*, 333–339.

⁷¹ Webb, *Baptizer*, 339–342.

⁷² Webb, *Baptizer*, 348.

⁷³ Josephus, *Ant.* 20.97 (Moses and esp. Joshua), 170 (Joshua); the idea of a new Moses became still more prevalent in later sources.

⁷⁴ See Eve, *Miracles*, 115–116, 324. On these sign prophets, see initially Barnett, "Prophets"; now Craig A. Evans, "Josephus on John the Baptist and Other Jewish Prophets of Deliverance," in Amy-Jill Levine et al., eds., *The Historical Jesus in Context* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) 55–63; and Gray, *Figures*, 112–144 (though limiting exodus and conquest allusions to two figures, 137).

false-prophet, who promised that Jerusalem's walls would collapse before him.⁷⁵ Some of these figures may have viewed themselves as messianic candidates; our source, Josephus, had audience incentives to minimize royal claims (although he does not label them "brigands," in contrast with ordinary revolutionaries).⁷⁶ They could not but have known that some of their followers would have perceived them in such terms.

Yet Josephus's failed prophets of national deliverance each promised an individual sign, all different from the many healings claimed for Jesus.⁷⁷ These sign-prophets apparently all emerged in the decades *after* Jesus' ministry and failed to perform their promised signs.⁷⁸ Whereas Jesus healed many and expelled spirits, Jesus' only possible promised "eschatological" earthly sign in the Gospel accounts is his resurrection. (Scholars debate whether and in what sense Jesus rose, but the relevant point is that his movement flourished on testimony of eyewitnesses that he did, whereas none of these other movements survived their leaders' deaths.)

Still, no less than these prophets who sought to evoke a new Moses, Jesus was an "eschatological" prophet, preparing for God's impending reign. Most scholars today recognize that Jesus' miracles act as signs of the kingdom (explicit also for exorcisms in Matt 12:28//Luke 11:20).⁷⁹ Jesus' reported miracles fit his interpretation of them in light of Isa 35:5–6 (Q, in Matt 11:5//Luke 7:22); he views them as present gifts of the future kingdom.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Cf. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 138, 171; Richard A. Horsley, "'Like One of the Prophets of Old': Two Types of Popular Prophets at the Time of Jesus," *CBQ* 47 (1985): 435–463.

⁷⁶ See David Hill, *New Testament Prophecy* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), 28–29; cf. Betz, *Jesus*, 68.

⁷⁷ Eve, *Healer*, 6–12; idem, *Miracles*, 377; on them not performing healings, see Eve, *Miracles*, 321.

⁷⁸ Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 308–309; Eve, *Miracles*, 324.

⁷⁹ See Blackburn, "Miracles," 372–374; Franz Mussner, *The Miracles of Jesus: An Introduction* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1968), 41–49. This is distinctive, though cf. 4Q510 1.4–5 in Vermes, *Religion*, 130.

⁸⁰ Cf. Hendrik van der Loos, *The Miracles of Jesus* (NovTSup 9; Leiden: Brill, 1965), 246, 254; Mussner, *Miracles*, 41–42, 73–74; Harvey, *Jesus*, 115; Ben Witherington III, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 171; E.P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (New York: Allen Lane, 1993), 167–168. Qumran also may have combined the very texts to which Jesus alluded here, perhaps suggesting a Palestinian tradition (Craig A. Evans, "Messianic Apocalypse [4Q521]," in Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000], 695–698, here 696; though cf. Hans Kvalbein, "Die Wunder der Endzeit. Beobachtungen zu 4Q521 und Matth 11,5," *ZNW* 88 [1–2; 1997]: 111–125).

One expert concludes that Jesus was “unique in the surviving Jewish literature of his time as being portrayed as performing a large number of healings and exorcisms,” and especially as a *bearer* (not just a mediator or petitioner) of divine power.⁸¹ While Jewish wonder-workers offer closer parallels than pagan ones do, even they differ significantly from Jesus (especially in working only through prayer and lacking eschatological miracles).⁸² No other sources associate so many miracles with one individual as the Gospels do regarding Jesus;⁸³ and Jesus was the first reported miracle-worker to employ miracles, in his case healings and exorcisms, to signal eschatological fulfilment.⁸⁴

1.3.3. *Biblical Models: Elijah/Elisha and Moses*

1.3.3.1. *Elijah/Elisha's Model*

Gospel accounts of Jesus share far more in common with earlier biblical Elijah and Elisha stories (models available for Jesus to imitate) than with later stories of Philostratus, Hanina, and others. Jewish tradition continued to associate miracles with some biblical prophets,⁸⁵ especially Elijah and Elisha,⁸⁶ and Jesus' and his followers' miracles evoke particularly the biblical miracles of Elijah, Elisha, and occasionally Moses.⁸⁷ Although the Gospels and their oral tradents exploited such patterns, Jesus and his Galilean hearers would have also recognized these as the closest models for the sorts of signs Jesus performed, biblical tradition being their most basic shared cultural canon. For one brief example, one may illustrate some of the links between Jesus and Elijah or Elisha in Mark:

⁸¹ Eve, *Miracles*, 378; on his distinctiveness, see further Eve, *Miracles*, 384–386, esp. 386.

⁸² Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 307–308; Blackburn, “Miracles,” 379 (who notes that Jesus rarely is said to pray before working a miracle).

⁸³ Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 290.

⁸⁴ Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 309.

⁸⁵ E.g. Sir 48:13; *Liv. Pr.* 2.3 (on Jeremiah, in OTP 2:386–387; Schermann, 81–82, § 25).

⁸⁶ In Josephus, see Otto Betz, “Miracles in the Writings of Flavius Josephus,” in Louis H. Feldman and Gohei Hata, eds., *Josephus, Judaism and Christianity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 219–220.

⁸⁷ See also e.g. Strelan, *Strange Acts*, 27; especially Raymond E. Brown, “Jesus and Elisha,” *Perspective* 12 (1971): 85–104; for Elisha and the feedings, Stephen C. Barton, “The Miraculous Feedings in Mark,” *ExpTim* 97 (4, 1986): 112–113. Elisha's miracles also evoke those of Elijah (Nachman Levine, “Twice as Much of Your Spirit: Pattern, Parallel and Paronomasia in the Miracles of Elijah and Elisha,” *JOT* 85 [1999]: 25–46).

Activity	Jesus	Elijah	Elisha or others
Heals leprosy	Mark 1:40–42	–	2 Kgs 5:14; cf. Num 12:13–15
Raises the dead relatively privately	Mark 5:40–41	1 Kgs 17:19–23	2 Kgs 4:33
Child's life returns	Mark 5:42	1 Kgs 17:22	2 Kgs 4:35
Multiplies food	Mark 6:41–42	1 Kgs 17:16	2 Kgs 4:3–7, 42–44
Explicit comparison, but Jesus greater	Mark 6:15; 8:28; 9:4–13; cf. Luke 4:25–27	–	–

Although Mark does not appear to draw deliberate attention to the links (and the Gospels also underline contrasts), these provide the most obvious pre-Christian parallels for Jesus' ministry that would have been available in Galilee as models for Jesus himself.

Some other Jewish wonder-workers appear to have deliberately emulated these models,⁸⁸ and interpreters like Luke recognized and highlighted them. Elijah's model involves not only miracles but also eschatological restoration (see Mal 4:5–6; Sir 48:10), fitting Jesus' role as a worker of signs of the kingdom. The forced choice that some pose between Jesus being a charismatic prophet or an eschatological one is unnecessary if, like Elijah, he could be both. Jesus may have viewed himself as *more* than Elijah, but not likely as less.

1.3.3.2. *Moses' Model*

Many Jewish people expected Moses as well as Elijah as a central end-time prophet. We noted above that some prophets sought to emulate a new, eschatological Moses. Scripture generated both expectations (Deut 18:15, 18; Mal 4:5); thus the Qumran Scrolls at least sometimes connect their expected "prophet" with Deuteronomy's promise of a prophet like Moses.⁸⁹ Some apparently further connected this role also with the future anointed ruler.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Cf. as models among signs-sages, Susanne Galley, "Jüdische und christliche Heilige—Ein Vergleich," *ZRGG* 57 (1; 2005): 29–47.

⁸⁹ See e.g. José R. Villalón, "Sources vétéro-testamentaires de la doctrine qumraninienne des deux Messies," *RevQ* 8 (29.1, 1972): 53–63 (62–63); cf. also Howard M. Teeple, *The Mosaic Eschatological Prophet* (JBLMS 10; Philadelphia: SBL, 1957), 51–52; Géza G. Xeravits, "Moses Redivivus in Qumran?" *QC* 11 (1–4, 2003): 91–105. John C. Poirier, "The Endtime Return of Elijah and Moses at Qumran," *DSD* 10 (2, 2003): 221–242, thinks Qumran texts envisioned an eschatological prophet and an eschatological priest, corresponding to Moses and Elijah.

⁹⁰ A Qumran Scroll links the Mosaic prophet (4Q175 1.5–8) with the star from Jacob (Num 24:15–17; 4Q175 1.9–13).

Likewise, Samaritan belief (insofar as we can reconstruct it from much later sources) may also preserve this prophet like Moses tradition.⁹¹ Samaritans apparently rejected the Israelite tradition of prophets between Moses and the final prophet, who would be the promised prophet like Moses, the *Taheb* or “restorer.”⁹² If so, they may have viewed the prophetic figure that Josephus mentions among them (*Ant.* 18.85–87) as this *Taheb*. Later rabbis also developed a future Moses tradition; while rarely construing Deut 18:15–18 eschatologically,⁹³ many compared the future redeemer to the former one, i.e. to Moses.⁹⁴ The hidden Messiah tradition often connects the Messiah with Moses, who was also hidden before he was revealed.⁹⁵ The related expectation of a new exodus was already present in the biblical prophets (cf. e.g. Is 40:3; 52:4, 12; 63:11–14; Hos 2:14–15; 11:1, 11).⁹⁶

Admittedly, the only sign attributed to Jesus that resembles Moses is providing food in the wilderness (Mark 6:41–42; cf. Ex 16:12–21), not plagues or conquest, and this could evoke Elisha as well (2 Kgs 4:42–44). At the very least, however, such traditions indicate that Jesus’ contemporaries could have understood him eschatologically as both prophet and leader for Israel.⁹⁷

1.3.4. *Jesus As an End-Time Prophet*

Though Jesus differed in many respects from Josephus’s sign prophets, many (probably the majority of) New Testament scholars today believe that he

⁹¹ Moreover, they use the same testimonia for this expectation as at Qumran; see Theodor H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 393 (cf. 444–446).

⁹² F.F. Bruce, *New Testament History* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 37–38. On the *Taheb*, see also Teeple, *Prophet*, 63–64; John MacDonald, *The Theology of the Samaritans* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 362–363; Ferdinand Dexinger, “Die Taheb-Vorstellung als politische Utopie,” *Numen* 37 (1, 1990): 1–23.

⁹³ David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 125–126.

⁹⁴ E.g. *Pesiq. Rab Kah.* 5:8; *Ruth Rab* 5:6; cf. Ulrich Mauser, *Christ in the Wilderness* (SBT 39; London: SCM, 1963), 55–56.

⁹⁵ Commentators cite *1 En.* 48:6; *4 Ezra* 13:52; Justin, *Dial.* 8.4; 110.1; for rabbinic documentation, see Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 137–139. See further *1 En.* 62:7; T. Francis Glasson, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1963), 103. Most rabbinic attestation is late, but the basic tradition surely does not derive from inferences from earlier Christian sources like Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho*.

⁹⁶ See e.g. Glasson, *Moses*, 15–19.

⁹⁷ For Moses as king, see Deut 33:5; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.327; *L.A.B.* 9:16; 20:5; Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (NovTSup 14; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 107–117, 147–150, 177–179, 181–196, 236.

fit many contemporary Jewish expectations for an eschatological prophet.⁹⁸ Jesus acted like a prophet in various ways.⁹⁹ Like one prophetic figure a generation later (Joshua ben Hananiah; Josephus, *War* 6.300–309) or like Jeremiah centuries earlier (Jer 19:10), Jesus announced judgment on the temple. Like Jeremiah, he offered a dramatic symbolic action to draw attention to the temple's problematic status.

Likewise, Jesus chose twelve disciples as the nucleus for a renewal movement. This action is consistent with a prophet of restoration who anticipated God's restoration of his people, as evidenced in his promise that the twelve would sit on twelve thrones judging Israel. He also announced judgment on Israel, and offered many sayings that were more characteristic of prophets than sages.

2. MESSIANIC CATEGORIES

2.1. *Jesus as Messiah*

"Messiah" was a Jewish category, not a Gentile one, so the occasional proposal that later Gentile Christians invented the title can be dismissed outright. Some question whether Jesus' earliest followers considered him a Messiah, but this skepticism rejects all explicit testimony we have in favor of a hypothesis argued from the silence that remains after that rejection.¹⁰⁰ Often writing to Gentiles for whom "anointed one" made no sense as a title, Paul, our earliest extant New Testament writer, sometimes treats "Christ" as if it were Jesus' surname; the claim that Jesus was "Messiah" must pre-date Paul. Paul may indeed imply that the entire Judean Jesus movement that he knew considered Jesus as "Christ" (Gal 1:22). Although early Christians debate circumcision and other issues in our sources, none of these sources reveals awareness of (the need to refute) followers of Jesus who

⁹⁸ E.g. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*; idem, *Figure*; idem, "Know," 57; Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 240–280; Dale C. Allison, *Jesus of Nazareth: Millenarian Prophet* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998 esp. 96–171; Scot McKnight, *A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* (Grand Rapids, Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999); Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), 125–139; N. Thomas Wright, "Five Gospels but no Gospel: Jesus and the Seminar," in Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, eds., *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus* (NTTS 28.2; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 83–120 (101–107).

⁹⁹ See more detailed discussion in Keener, *Historical Jesus*, ch. 17.

¹⁰⁰ For one example of this extreme approach, see Burton L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q & Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1993), 4–5.

deny his messiahship, including Paul's so-called "Judaizing" opponents.¹⁰¹ Granted, Josephus interprets Jesus in a nonmessianic way in the first century (*Ant.* 18.63), but no one claims him as part of Jesus' movement.

Pilate ordered Jesus executed on the charge of sedition, for claiming kingship. Given the danger of following anyone charged with this offense, most scholars recognize this charge against Jesus as "king of the Jews" (Mark 15:2, 9, 12, 26) as historical.¹⁰² Both Pilate (who had Jesus executed) and the earliest extant views of Jesus' followers on the question portray Jesus as a Jewish king. *Yet it is not plausible to think that either Pilate or the disciples got the idea from each other; certainly later Christians did not derive the title from Pilate.* What potential source did Pilate and the disciples share? Surely Jesus is the likely originator of the idea. The alternative would be that both Pilate and the disciples—disciples who knew far more about Jesus than we do—both understood him less well than modern interpreters arguing from the silence that remains after discounting the original witnesses. That Jesus believed himself the Messiah is not only a likely inference; it is what our only extant sources claim.

Yet most scholars concur that Jesus did not claim to be "messiah" in what was likely the most common *traditional* sense, that of a warrior king.¹⁰³ The gospel tradition itself suggests that Jesus, when he accepted the title, would not always accept it in an unqualified way (Mark 8:29–31; cf. 15:2);¹⁰⁴ his "triumphal entry" to Jerusalem on a donkey may also suggest a qualified understanding of his messianic role (Mark 11:7–10).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ The "other Jesus" in 2 Cor 11:4 is still viewed as "Christ" in 2 Cor 11:13, 23. While possibly some in 1 John 2:22 deny that Jesus is Christ, they have left the dominant Jesus movement (2:19), possibly due to pressure from the synagogue (cf. John 9:22; 12:42; 16:2; Rev 2:9; 3:9), though possibly reflecting early docetism (cf. 1 John 4:2; 5:6; later, Ignatius, *Trall.* 9–10; *Smyrn.* 3; *Ep. Barn.* 5; Justin, *Dial.* 103.7).

¹⁰² So even Paul Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Company, 1961), 108–109.

¹⁰³ Cf. *Pss. Sol.* 17:21–25.

¹⁰⁴ Mark 14:61–62 accepts a messianic title, but cf. more ambiguously Matt 26:63–64; for a combination, Luke 22:67–70. Cf. also the "messianic secret," although its purposes remain disputed. For a skeptical view of its authenticity, see Wilhelm Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971), 17–18, 228, apparently later retracted; contrast others, e.g. T.A. Burkill, *New Light on the Earliest Gospel: Seven Markan Studies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 1–38; idem, "Strain on the Secret: An Examination of Mark 11:1–13:37," *ZNW* 51 (1960): 31–46. It was noticed at least as early as Chrysostom, *Hom. John* 3.

¹⁰⁵ See discussion in e.g. C.F.D. Moule, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 87; Sanders, *Figure*, 242. On the historical likelihood of this entry, see Kim Huat Tan, *The Zion Traditions and the Aims of Jesus* (SNTSMS 91; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997), 138–143.

2.2. *Messianic Expectations*

Understanding the range of contemporary concepts associated with messiahship helps us to understand why Jesus would have needed to qualify some popular messianic expectations. By any definition, the Davidic Messiah was a future political ruler appointed by God with political (not merely spiritual) rule.¹⁰⁶ The prophets had foretold an eschatological king and/or dynasty descended from David,¹⁰⁷ an expectation that apparently persisted widely.¹⁰⁸ Because the king was the “anointed one,”¹⁰⁹ Palestinian Jews often titled the eschatological king “the Messiah.” The Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures regularly rendered “anointed” as *christos*.¹¹⁰ Most Jewish hearers in the Gospels appear to understand the term “messiah” and expected some such figure. Given the difficulty of construing the term in the Diaspora,¹¹¹ even among later Christians (who emphasize Jesus as Lord or wisdom far more than “son of David”), one is hard-pressed to claim that the Gospels merely invented this usage.¹¹²

2.2.1. *Political and Eschatological Figures*

Yet our sources for the subject are limited and varied. Not surprisingly, Josephus, seeking to avoid offending his Roman patrons, minimizes messiahs (and marginalizes revolutionaries).¹¹³ Some argue that he may have even minimized David’s revolutionary activity and connection with the Messiah.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, some of those “whom he describes as brigands

¹⁰⁶ For this political emphasis, see e.g. Ludwig Wächter, “Jüdischer und christlichen Messianismus,” *Kairos* 18 (2; 1976): 119–134.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. Isa 9:7; Jer 23:5; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24–25; Hos 3:5. Apparently the Davidic line would be restored after being cut off (Isa 11:1; Amos 9:11).

¹⁰⁸ *Pss. Sol.* 17.21; 4Q252 frg. 1, col. 5.1–4; *b. Sanh.* 97b–98a. See further Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament* (2nd ed.; SBLBS 5; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974), 113–126; Richard N. Longenecker, *The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity* (London: SCM, 1970; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 109–110.

¹⁰⁹ A concept that made more sense in some ancient Near Eastern (esp. Egyptian and Hittite) than Hellenistic settings; see Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 104.

¹¹⁰ Although even the royal applications usually applied to historic kings, some could be read eschatologically by Jesus’ contemporaries (see e.g. Ps 2:2; 18:50 [17:51]; 132[131]:10, 17).

¹¹¹ The Greek term may admittedly stand behind Suetonius, *Claud.* 25.4, but if so, Suetonius himself misconstrued it.

¹¹² Pauline literature employs “son of David” only at Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8.

¹¹³ Cf. e.g. Witherington, *Christology*, 83.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Louis H. Feldman, “Josephus’ Portrait of David,” *HUCA* 60 (1989): 129–174.

and deceivers must really have been messianic pretenders."¹¹⁵ Even among such messianic figures, however, their character varied; not all necessarily embraced militant resistance. Apparently Theudas, the Egyptian Jewish prophet and the Samaritan prophet expected miraculous divine intervention, not simply military force.¹¹⁶

Unsuccessful revolts dampened messianic enthusiasm in many of our sources. Yohanan ben Zakkai, who survived Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE, reportedly warned hearers to finish what they were doing before bothering to meet a new messianic claimant.¹¹⁷ Rabbinic sources soon after the failed Bar Kochba revolt of 132–135 CE are much more reticent about messianic claims than later texts that have returned to contemplation on biblical prophecies about the Son of David.¹¹⁸ Even in the late second century, however, many rabbis were still reportedly expecting the Messiah.¹¹⁹

Not all sources, however, are so reticent.¹²⁰ For example, the first-century BCE source *Psalms of Solomon* 17:21–25, 32 hopes for a coming military messiah. Likewise, a conventional prayer probably composed before 70 CE seeks the restoration of David's house.¹²¹ A variety of other early Jewish sources

¹¹⁵ Carl H. Kraeling, *John the Baptist* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 52.

¹¹⁶ See Sean Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels: Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 194–195, on Josephus, *Ant.* 18.85–87; 20.97–98, 169–171; *War* 2.261–266; Acts 5:36; 21:38; cf. also John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 158–168. Richard A. Horsley and John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus* (Minneapolis: A Seabury Book, Winston Press, 1985), 110–131 do, however, point out that popular attempts to rule often focused on commoners rather than a revived Davidic dynasty.

¹¹⁷ *Ab. R. Nat.* 31, § 67 B.

¹¹⁸ Cf. *Ab. R. Nat.* 31, § 67 B; George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (2 vols.; New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 2:346.

¹¹⁹ *Sipre Deut.* 34.4.3 (resurrection in the Messianic era); *p. Ket.* 12:3, § 13 (R. Meir).

¹²⁰ For groups that emphasized biblical messianic hopes, see Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits*, 102–110. Cf. the Messiah's global role in 4Q521 frs. 2, 4, col. 1.1.

¹²¹ The fourteenth and fifteenth benedictions; Horsley and Hanson, *Bandits*, 109. Although scholars debate how early corporate recitation occurred, these are among our earliest extant postbiblical prayers; see discussion in Lawrence H. Schiffman, "At the Crossroads: Tannaitic Perspectives on the Jewish Christian Schism," in E.P. Sanders, ed., *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (3 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980–1982), 2:115–156 (151); Lee I. Levine, "The Second Temple Synagogue: The Formative Years," in Lee I. Levine, ed., *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1986), 19; earlier, William Oscar Emil Oesterley, *The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925), 54–67.

involve the Messiah, often in association with the final judgment.¹²² Some sort of preexistent Messiah who will punish the wicked appears in both Enoch's *Similitudes* and 4 Ezra 13.¹²³

2.2.2. Multiple Figures at Qumran

The rabbinic idea of two messiahs¹²⁴ probably arose after the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt,¹²⁵ but many scholars find two messianic figures in the earlier Dead Sea Scrolls. These documents sometimes speak of two different significant eschatological figures who were anointed, a Davidic Messiah and a high priest.¹²⁶ The earlier Hasmoneans had combined priesthood with kingship in the same persons (1 Macc 14:41–42), inspiring a fierce reaction from the Zadokite priests who founded the Qumran community.¹²⁷ This separatist priestly community thus emphasized not only an anointed king, but also an “anointed” priest (cf. Zech 4:14; 6:13). Other texts less clearly connected with this movement also stress the role of the future priest.¹²⁸ Beyond the earliest period at Qumran, scholars debate whether the scrolls support one Messiah,¹²⁹ two Messiahs,¹³⁰ or different views in dif-

¹²² See Marian Wittlieb, “Die theologische Bedeutung der Erwähnung von ‘Masîah/Christos’ in den Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments palästinischen Ursprungs,” *BN* 50 (1989): 26–33.

¹²³ John J. Collins, “The Son of Man in First-Century Judaism,” *NTS* 38 (3; 1992): 448–466.

¹²⁴ See e.g. 3 *En.* 45:5; *b. Suk.* 52a; *p. Suk.* 5:2, § 2; Charles C. Torrey, “The Messiah Son of Ephraim,” *JBL* 66 (1947): 253–277; this idea persisted in ninth century Karaite texts; cf. Naphtali Wieder, “The Doctrine of the Two Messiahs Among the Karaites,” *JJS* 6 (1; 1953): 14–23.

¹²⁵ So Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 140.

¹²⁶ E.g. 1QSa 2.11–17; 4Q174 3.11–12; see Craig A. Evans, “Messianism,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, 698–707 (701–702).

¹²⁷ Cf. probably the Wicked Priest of 1QpHab 8.8–10; 9.4–7; 11.5–6; 12.5.

¹²⁸ *T. Reub.* 6:8; *T. Jud.* 21:1–2; cf. *T. Sim.* 5:5 with 1QM. Some apparently viewed Melchizedek as eschatological priest (see Emile Puech, “Notes sur le manuscrit de 11QMelchisédeq,” *RevQ* 12 [4; 1987]: 483–513), though probably not the anointed ruler (John J. Collins, “A Messiah before Jesus?,” in John J. Collins and Craig A. Evans, eds., *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 15–35 [34]).

¹²⁹ A.J.B. Higgins, “Priest and Mesiah,” *VT* 3 (4; 1953): 321–336 (333); idem, “The Priestly Messiah,” *NTS* 13 (1966–1967): 211–239 (215–219); Robert B. Laurin, “The Problem of Two Messiahs in the Qumran Scrolls,” *RevQ* 4 (13/1; 1963): 39–52 (52). Cf. *T. Benj.* 11:2. The Scrolls do conflate different anointed figures (e.g. 4Q174 3.10–13; 4Q252 frg. 1, 5.1, 3; 11Q13 2.15–20).

¹³⁰ Aune, *Prophecy*, 123; Villalón, “Deux Messies” (esp. 63); Millar Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Viking, 1958), 297–311 (or maybe three, 311); Marinus de Jonge, “The Use of the Word ‘Anointed’ in the Time of Jesus,” *NovT* 8 (2–4; 1966): 132–148 (141–142); Raymond E. Brown, “The Messianism of Qumran,” *CBQ* 19 (1; 1957): 53–82 (54–66).

ferent documents,¹³¹ perhaps because the community's views evolved over time.¹³² Probably views vary in different texts: a prophet appears with "the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel" in 1QS 9.11; a single figure appears, by contrast, in the Damascus Document.¹³³

In any case, the community could apply the title "anointed" to any figure for a leading office.¹³⁴ Only one of these anointed figures is the eschatological *king*.¹³⁵ Most importantly for our present discussion, however, is the recognition that messianic expectations varied: if the Damascus Document envisioned a single Messiah of Aaron and Israel, it would imply a greater Levitic hope than a Davidic one.¹³⁶ (Most scholars now reject the earlier proposal that the Dead Sea Scrolls predict a slain Messiah.)¹³⁷ The messianic view articulated by Jesus' followers exists within the range of early Jewish messianic views, but Jesus' own mission and identity carved out a distinctive niche within this framework.

3. EXALTED FIGURES

3.1. *Jesus As an Exalted Figure*

The first-generation sources astonishingly portray Jesus not only as prophet and Messiah but as a cosmic exalted figure.¹³⁸ Thus in Mark Jesus claims to

¹³¹ Morton Smith, "What Is Implied by the Variety of Messianic Figures?" *JBL* 78 (1959): 66–72; Martin G. Abegg, "The Messiah at Qumran: Are We Still Seeing Double?" *DSD* 2 (2; 1995): 125–144; Emil A. Wcela, "The Messiah(s) of Qumrân," *CBQ* 26 (3; 1964): 340–349 (342, 347).

¹³² Raymond E. Brown, "J. Starcky's Theory of Qumran Messianic Development," *CBQ* 28 (1; 1966): 51–57; Longenecker, *Christology*, 114; cf. Morton Smith, "'God's Begetting the Messiah' in 1QSa," *NTS* 5 (1958–1959): 218–224 (224).

¹³³ CD 12.23–13.1 (with an emendation); 14.19; 20.1; cf. 1QM 11.7–8.

¹³⁴ William Sanford LaSor, "The Messiahs of Aaron and Israel," *VT* 6 (4; 1956): 425–429 (429); Gaster, *Scriptures*, 392; Bruce, *History*, 122.

¹³⁵ Cf. Lou H. Silberman, "The Two 'Messiahs' of the Manual of Discipline," *VT* 5 (1; 1955): 77–82 (82), though questioning the extent to which it is eschatological.

¹³⁶ Cf. 1Q22.11–12; 1Q28a 2.19–20; 4Q377 frg. 2, 2.5.

¹³⁷ E.g. Vermes, *Religion*, 211 n. 1; idem, "The Oxford Forum for Qumran Research: Seminar on the Rule of War from Cave 4 (4Q285)," *JJS* 43 (1; 1992): 85–94; idem, "The 'Pierced Messiah' Text—An Interpretation Evaporates," *BAR* 18 (4; 1992): 80–82; Markus Bockmuehl, "A 'Slain Messiah' in 4Q Serekh Milhamah (4Q285)?" *TynBul* 43 (1; 1992): 155–169; Martin G. Abegg, "Messianic Hope and 4Q285: A Reassessment," *JBL* 113 (1; 1994): 81–91; Evans, "Messianism," 703. This slain Messiah view was supported by James D. Tabor, "A Pierced or Piercing Messiah?—The Verdict Is Still Out," *BAR* 18 (6; 1992): 58–59, among others.

¹³⁸ See further discussion in Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); more briefly, Keener, *Historical Jesus*, 276–281; idem, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 298–310.

be David's Lord (Mark 12:35–37). Throughout our sources Jesus is the "Son of man" (e.g. Mark 2:10–12; 8:31; Matt 8:20//Luke 9:58), undoubtedly alluding to the eternal, heavenly ruler of Daniel 7:13–14 (and maybe *1 Enoch*; see e.g. Mark 13:26; 14:62).¹³⁹

The early source "Q" is even more emphatic. For example, Jesus is an eschatological judge, who will baptize in God's Spirit and fire (Matt 3:11//Luke 3:16), though only God could pour out the divine Spirit (e.g. Isa 44:3; Ezek 39:29; Joel 2:28–29) and fiery end-time judgment. Likewise, Jesus' sermon on ethics climaxes with a parable that provides the authority for his ethics (Luke 6:47–49//Matt 7:24–27). In Jesus' parable, whoever builds on his wise words will endure testing, whereas whoever does not will be swept away. A Jewish parable tradition, however, not at all likely dependent on Jesus, offers almost the same parable except that the foundation is God's Torah (*Ab. R. Nat.* 24A). In this clearly early Palestinian Jewish tradition, Jesus' words thus assume a role that normally belonged to God's word.¹⁴⁰ Elsewhere in Q, Jesus desires to gather his people under his wings (Matt 23:37//Luke 13:34), an image that recalls an ancient Jewish image of God sheltering his people under his wings.¹⁴¹

No other Jewish, insistently monotheistic movement from this period had a deified founder; that this image appears in some of the earliest and most distinctively Jewish materials makes the feature all the more remarkable. Nevertheless, the movement remained clearly Jewish in its ethos during the circulation of such images (cf. e.g. Mark 12:29; 1 Cor 8:5–6).

3.2. *Dying and Rising Deities?*

Most scholars today doubt early twentieth-century comparisons with "dying-and-rising" deities, the earliest evidence for which differs starkly from the Jewish resurrection teaching connected with Jesus' resurrection.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ The phrase makes no sense in Greek and was barely used christologically by the first-century church, and is surely authentic; see sources cited in Keener, *Historical Jesus*, 200–202.

¹⁴⁰ See Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (2nd rev. ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 194; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 452; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 255.

¹⁴¹ E.g. Ps 17:8; 36:7; 63:7; 91:4; 1 En. 39:7; *Sipre Deut.* 296.3.1; 306.4.1; 314.1.1–6. For converts, see e.g. 2 Bar. 41:4; *Sipre Num.* 80.1.1.

¹⁴² Against Frazer's old patchwork of disparate elements, see Giulia Sfameni Gasparro, *Soteriology and Mystic Aspects in the Cult of Cybele and Attis* (ÉPROER, 103; Leiden: Brill, 1985), 30 n. 16; Keener, *Historical Jesus*, 335–339.

Some early dying deities did return from death in some sense;¹⁴³ deities might visit the netherworld¹⁴⁴ or even be restored to life.¹⁴⁵

But aside from the concept of afterlife, shared with much of humanity, proposed parallels fall far short of the Palestinian Jewish resurrection conception more relevant to the milieu of Jesus and his disciples. Whereas Osiris resuscitates,¹⁴⁶ he is magically revived through the sort of power available in procreation, not transformed into an eschatological new creation; he further remains in the netherworld.¹⁴⁷ Most alleged sources are later: despite historic mourning for Adonis, his rising is first attested in the mid-second century CE.¹⁴⁸ Clear attestation for Attis's return from death appears significantly later.¹⁴⁹ Dionysus's return from death¹⁵⁰ resembles stories of mortals being deified or deities suffering harm.¹⁵¹ Some who returned had not actually died, but descended alive.¹⁵²

Most of the resuscitation rituals were vegetative and seasonal¹⁵³—a far cry from the earliest sources' portrayal of Jesus' resurrection, a bodily claim rooted in explicit Jewish eschatological hopes. Vegetative myths differ significantly from Paul's insistence that Jesus' eschatological transformation was a recent historical event certified by hundreds of eyewitnesses, including himself. Paul presents his position as the only one possible for those who believe the earliest apostolic message about Jesus (1 Cor 15:1–2, 12–19, 29–34), and earlier Palestinian Christianity would not have held a less rigorously Jewish perspective than Paul did.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴³ With annual fertility connections, see Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 160; *ANET*, 126–142.

¹⁴⁴ E.g. *ANET*, 84, 107–108.

¹⁴⁵ *ANET*, 52–57 (esp. 55).

¹⁴⁶ See Günter Wagner, *Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1967), 115–120; *ANET*, 5; Diodorus Siculus 1.20–22; Plutarch, *Isis* 35, *Mor.* 364F; euhemerized in Manetho, *Aeg. frg.* 1.1.

¹⁴⁷ Wagner, *Baptism*, 119.

¹⁴⁸ Wagner, *Baptism*, 171–207, especially p. 195; cf. Klauck, *Context*, 120–128 (esp. 121–122). Some sources here also suggest merely seasonal revivification (Apollodorus, *Bib.* 3.14.4), a pale contrast with the Jewish eschatological resurrection belief.

¹⁴⁹ Wagner, *Baptism*, 219, 229; but cf. Lucian *Parliament of Gods* 9.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Walter F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1965), 79–80, 103–119.

¹⁵¹ E.g. Homer, *Il.* 5.339–342, 382–404, 855–859, 870.

¹⁵² E.g. Apollodorus, *Bib.* 1.5.3; cf. W.K.C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of the Orphic Movement* (2nd ed.; New York: Norton, 1966), 31.

¹⁵³ For the vegetative association see e.g. Ovid, *Metam.* 5.564–571; Gasparro, *Soteriology*, 29, 43–49; Guthrie, *Orpheus*, 55–56.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Bruce M. Metzger, "Considerations of Methodology in the Study of the Mystery Religions and Early Christianity," *HTR* 48 (1; 1955): 1–20 (19–20).

The only *pre-Christian* “third day” association appears in the cult of Osiris, but the “third day” was a fairly regular expression for a short period of time (such as “the day after tomorrow”) in Jewish sources, a small enough figure to generate many coincidences. Palestinian Jewish Christians appealed to the “third day” (which merely meant parts of three days) before any Diaspora exposure to the cult of Osiris (the pre-Pauline formula in 1 Cor 15:3–4).¹⁵⁵

Bodily resurrection was a common Palestinian Jewish idea.¹⁵⁶ If a newly Gentile church preached a dying-and-rising mystery deity, why would Palestinian Jewish Jesus monotheists adopt this concept and give it the Palestinian Jewish language of “resurrection”? It seems far more likely that Gentiles attracted to a growing Jewish movement would have adapted the Palestinian Jewish resurrection concept.

Early Christian proclamation about an exalted, bodily resurrected universal Lord did not evoke simply apparitions of ghosts (deceased mortals)¹⁵⁷ or even of those who had become immortal (without physical transformation); these are not *resurrection* appearances. Even in later sources, Apollonius proves that he has not died, not that he has risen;¹⁵⁸ Protesilaos has returned to life and appears to people,¹⁵⁹ yet his body explicitly remains buried.¹⁶⁰ (Some of these claims may reflect proliferation of teaching about Jesus’ resurrection.)¹⁶¹ Jewish hope in the body’s resurrection evoked an entirely new order,¹⁶² the sort of kingdom of God Jesus preached. It meant not simply the appearance of a ghost from the afterlife, but the end-time raising of the dead affirmed in Dan 12:2–3.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁵ Metzger, “Considerations,” 18–19.

¹⁵⁶ See e.g. *Pss. Sol.* 3:12; 15:12–13; *1 En.* 22:13; 61:5; 2 Macc 7:9, 14, 23, 29; 14:46; 2 Bar. 30:1; 51:1–6; *L.A.B.* 3:10; 25:6–7; *m. Sanh.* 10:1. In Scripture, see Mamy Raharimanantsoa, *Mort et Espérance selon la Bible Hébraïque* (Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 53; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2006), 363–447.

¹⁵⁷ E.g. Apuleius, *Metam.* 8.8; 9.31; Eunapius, *Lives* 473; in dreams, *Ab. R. Nat.* 40A; *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.* 11:23; among Gentiles, see, e.g. Homer, *Il.* 23.65, 83–85; Euripides, *Hec.* 30–34, 703–706; Virgil, *Aen.* 1.353–354; 2.268–297, 772–794; 4.351–352; 5.721–723; Ovid, *Metam.* 11.586–588, 635, 650–673. Apotheosis is closer.

¹⁵⁸ Blackburn, “ANAPEΣ,” 193.

¹⁵⁹ Philostratus, *Hrk.* 58.2.

¹⁶⁰ Philostratus, *Hrk.* 9.1; cf. later Antonius Diogenes, *Thule* 109ab, 110b.

¹⁶¹ Cf. G.W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 108–113.

¹⁶² For the concrete connection with a new creation, see e.g. Jürgen Moltmann, “The Resurrection of Christ and the New Earth,” *CV* 49 (2; 2007): 141–149.

¹⁶³ See more extended discussion of the common Palestinian Jewish teaching in Keener, *Historical Jesus*, 337–339. Jesus’ movement affirmed Judaism’s corporate, eschatological resurrection.

3.3. *Proposed Jewish Analogies*

Jewish use of divine language remained fairly fluid in this period.¹⁶⁴ (One may compare, for example, Hellenistic Jewish application of divine language to Moses¹⁶⁵ or Palestinian Jewish exalted language for “Melchizedek.”)¹⁶⁶ Some envisioned something like a subordinate but powerful vizier alongside God, sometimes apparently understanding wisdom or the logos in such terms.¹⁶⁷ More often, Jewish thinkers treated wisdom as a divine attribute, distinct only by way of personification.¹⁶⁸

Although early Jewish Christians’ beliefs about Jesus went beyond what most of their Jewish contemporaries would have accepted (especially among later teachers seeking greater conformity),¹⁶⁹ they reinterpreted rather than denied God’s unity.¹⁷⁰ From as early as our sources depict (hence within the first generation), Jesus’ followers venerated him. They quickly also affirmed Jesus’ deity within the identity of the God of their Bible, the way their contemporaries often presented wisdom as a divine attribute. In keeping with the point of biblical monotheism, they continued to distinguish this biblical God’s identity from all other realities.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁴ On Jewish monotheism in this period, see especially Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Darrell L. Bock, *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism: The Challenge against Jesus in Mark 14:53–65* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 112–183 (on exalted figures); more briefly, e.g. N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress; London: SPCK, 1992), 248–259.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Philo, *Sacr.* 9; Orphica 25–41 (though missing in the short version); Aristobulus *frg.* 4 (in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 13.13.5); Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 103–106. The sense is qualified, however; cf. Holladay, *Theios Aner*, 236; David T. Runia, “God and Man in Philo of Alexandria,” *JTS* 39 (1, 1988): 48–75.

¹⁶⁶ E.g. 11Q13 2.10 (using Ps 82:1).

¹⁶⁷ See Peter Hayman, “Monotheism—A Misused Word in Jewish Studies,” *JJS* 42 (1; 1991): 1–15 (though he probably overstates the case for the pervasiveness of dualistic monotheism). Cf. Wolfgang Fauth, “Tatrosjah-Totrosjah und Metatron in der jüdischen Merkabah-Mystik,” *JSJ* 22 (1; 1991): 40–87; Daniel Abrams, “The Boundaries of Divine Ontology: The Inclusion and Exclusion of Metatron in the Godhead,” *HTR* 87 (3; 1994): 291–321.

¹⁶⁸ See Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 2–4, 27–28. He argues that early Christian texts treat Jesus like wisdom, as within God’s identity (26–42).

¹⁶⁹ Ray A. Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity: From the End of the New Testament Period Until Its Disappearance in the Fourth Century* (Jerusalem-Leiden: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, Brill, 1988), 110; David Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1988), 620, 624.

¹⁷⁰ See e.g. William Foxwell Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1946), 304.

¹⁷¹ For detailed argument, see most fully Bauckham, *Crucified*, 2–15, 26–42; cf. N.T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand

Wisdom Christology informed early Christian understanding about Jesus already in our earliest sources such as Paul (esp. 1 Cor 1:30; 8:5–6) and possibly “Q.”

That a first-century Palestinian Jewish movement would within its earliest decades already hold a consensus that their founder rose from the dead and somehow embodied or existed as divine wisdom is remarkable. We have no comparable evidence for the deification (or even belief in the heavenly exaltation) of other first-century Jewish messianic figures. It seems that something distinctive within the movement, rather than merely following a common first-century Jewish social pattern, produced this consensus. Coupled with its intensely charismatic and prophetic character, some of the movement’s eventual welcome of Gentiles without requiring circumcision, and other elements, Jesus’ movement is highly distinctive in its context.

The authority of Jesus’ own teaching about his exalted identity in some form seems the best explanation for how so many monotheistic Jews in the early church quickly began affirming Jesus’ exalted status. Although they disputed issues from Jerusalem’s authority to circumcision and food laws, we hear of no detractors among them (even by way of refutation) concerning Jesus’ exalted character.¹⁷² Israeli scholar David Flusser rightly points out that “On the one hand, Christology developed from Jesus’ exalted self-awareness and from what happened to or was believed to have happened to Jesus and, on the other hand, from various Jewish religious motifs which became connected with Jesus Christ.”¹⁷³

4. CONCLUSION

Hellenistic healers and divine men offer little basis for understanding the earliest Jewish traditions about Jesus. Various Palestinian Jewish figures and understandings of prophets, messiahs, and exalted figures better inform how Jesus, his first followers, and others constructed his identity. In the end, Jesus and his followers seem to have adapted some elements from these models, but in a way distinctive to Jesus’ own purpose and mission. Like the sign prophets reported in Josephus, Jesus was a real historical figure with a

Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 63–72.

¹⁷² Cf. discussion in Raymond E. Brown, “Did Jesus Know He was God?” *BTB* 15 (1985): 74–79 (77–78); Witherington, *Christology*, 276; Peter Stuhlmacher, “The Messianic Son of Man: Jesus’ Claim to Deity,” in *The Historical Jesus in Recent Research*, 325–344.

¹⁷³ *Judaism and Origins*, 620.

significant following, seeking to lead Israel. From our earliest sources, however, Jesus' followers made claims for him that differed from other figures. Whereas most other contemporary messianic movements dissipated soon after the deaths of their founders, Jesus' movement flourished, claiming that he as exalted Lord continued to prophesy and heal through many of his followers. This was a contrast celebrated by early voices in the movement (Acts 5:36–39; John 5:35–36).

THE EXORCISMS AND HEALINGS OF JESUS WITHIN CLASSICAL CULTURE

Tony Costa

1. INTRODUCTION

The deeds and sayings of the historical Jesus continues to be an important domain of investigation for New Testament scholars and, in recent discussion, there is a growing interest in understanding Jesus as miracle worker.¹ This essay will seek to investigate the healings and exorcisms of Jesus within the tradition transmitted in the New Testament Gospels.² They will be examined through the lenses and by application of the criteria of authenticity,³ first by means of the internal evidence found in the Gospels and secondly, by exploring them from the standpoint of the external evidence found outside the Gospels, including an investigation of these deeds of Jesus in relation to his contemporaries, first from a Jewish perspective and secondly from a Greco-Roman perspective—delineating both similarities and dissimilarities in these perspectives. I will argue in this essay that the place of healing and exorcism appears to be a core ingredient of the Jesus tradition.

¹ R. Latourelle, *The Miracles of Jesus and the Theology of Miracles* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988); Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978); Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London: SCM, 1983); Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999).

² I will only address the subject of healings and exorcisms of Jesus in this essay. There are other deeds attributed to Jesus that are referred to as “nature miracles” such as the calming of the storm, raising of the dead, the feeding of the five thousand, the withering of the fig tree, and walking on water, which I will not treat. On nature miracles, see Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker*, 314–322.

³ On the criteria for authenticity, see Robert H. Stein, “The ‘Criteria’ for Authenticity,” in R.T. France and David Wenham, eds., *Gospel Perspectives*. Vol. 1: *Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 225–263.

2. THE ACTS OF JESUS IN THE GOSPELS

The acts of healing and exorcism by Jesus of Nazareth are well attested in the Synoptic Gospels, as well as John's Gospel. The Fourth Gospel calls these acts "signs." The Fourth Gospel, while recording instances where Jesus healed and performed acts that would be considered extraordinary, is nonetheless different from the Synoptics in that it contains no accounts of exorcisms performed by Jesus. The reason for the absence of exorcisms within the Fourth Gospel is not stated, but its absence is generally attributed to a theologically motivated interest in realized eschatology.⁴ The question scholarship has rightly been asking in investigating the gospel records of the healings and exorcisms of Jesus is not so much whether these miracles actually happened, but whether or not Jesus of Nazareth *was believed* to have performed them in the Hellenistic culture out of which he emerged. Does the tradition about the extraordinary deeds of Jesus fit within the profile of the *historical* Jesus? The question concerns whether or not the gospel records of the healings and exorcisms of Jesus are coherent with the culture from which they came. This brings us to a realization that this question is primarily a historical-critical question.

It appears axiomatic that what can be ascertained from the historical-critical method is not whether miracles really occurred, but whether Jesus was believed to have performed them by his contemporaries. Hence the question is first and foremost, not philosophical or metaphysical in nature, but historical-critical. If we abide within the contours of historical-critical research in regards to the data in the Gospels in relation to the healings, exorcisms, and miracles of Jesus, we will be in a better position to assess the available evidence in terms of authenticity.

While the definitional questions about "miracle" as a conceptual notion typically fall outside of what is appropriate historical-critical discussion, it is precisely the historical-critical method that has buttressed the notion

⁴ On the subject of exorcism and the Gospel of John, see Graham H. Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant: Exorcism Then and Now* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985), 88–90. Even if a realized eschatology is granted within John to account for the absence of exorcisms, this is still problematic in that it does not account for the fact that disease or illness and death itself are still present even while being defeated by Jesus. Of all the Gospels, John is the only one that states that "Satan entered him [Judas Iscariot]" (εἰσῆλθεν εἰς ἐκεῖνον ὁ Σατανᾶς) (John 13:27), which seems to grind against a notion of realized eschatology. While there are no accounts of exorcism in John, the idea of demonic possession is implied in the Fourth Gospel when Jesus is accused by his opponents as having a "demon" (John 7:20; 8:48, 52; 10:20).

that Jesus was indeed believed to have performed the miracles attributed to him in the New Testament Gospels. The use of the historical-critical method and the criteria of authenticity employed by scholars in studying the sayings of the historical Jesus are useful for understanding the deeds of Jesus. Most interpreters are willing to grant that Jesus did engage in a ministry of miracle working, healing, and exorcisms.⁵ E.P. Sanders, for instance, argues that, "There is agreement on the basic facts: Jesus performed miracles, drew crowds and promised the kingdom to sinners."⁶ Marcus Borg similarly asserts, "Despite the difficulty which miracles pose for the modern mind, on historical grounds it is virtually indisputable that Jesus was a healer and an exorcist."⁷ Of course, the issue and theme of the kingdom of God is crucial to understanding the exorcisms and healings of Jesus.⁸ The modern emphasis on Jesus' miracles in relation to his eschatological agenda in many ways emerges from Albert Schweitzer's picture of Jesus, who saw the theme of the kingdom of God as Jesus' central message.⁹ It was this message of God's kingdom, according to Schweitzer, that infused Jesus with an eschatological fervor that led him to believe that the kingdom would materialize with his vindication by God against his enemies. One of the ways this kingdom would be displayed would be through the various deeds Jesus performed.

One of the main reasons for this acknowledgement regarding the historical Jesus, according to Craig Evans, has much to do with viewing these acts and deeds of Jesus within the context of a *Sitz im Leben Jesu* rather than

⁵ See for instance, Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 123; Paula Hendriksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (New York: Knopf, 1999), 114; Barry Blackburn, "The Miracles of Jesus," in Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, eds., *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (NTTSD 19; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 356–357; Reginald H. Fuller, *Interpreting the Miracles* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 39; Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 277; Craig A. Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries: Comparative Studies* (AGJU 25; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 213–243; Michael Labahn, Bert Jan and Lietaert Peerbolte, eds., *Wonders Never Cease: The Purpose of Narrating Miracle Stories in the New Testament and its Religious Environment* (LNTS 288; London: T&T Clark, 2006).

⁶ E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 157.

⁷ Marcus Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision: Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987), 61–62.

⁸ The idea of the kingdom of God occurs more than 100 times in the New Testament, 70 of which are in the Synoptic Gospels. Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 60 n. 74.

⁹ Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (trans. W. Montgomery; London: A & C Black, 1910).

ascribing them to the *Sitz im Leben der Gemeinde*.¹⁰ In ascribing the healings and exorcisms of Jesus to the *Sitz im Leben der Gemeinde* one would wish to argue that such deeds were later created by the early Christian community and are read back into the gospel accounts. This view, propounded mainly by the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, has been defended by historical Jesus scholars, such as Bousset,¹¹ Bultmann,¹² Crossan,¹³ and Funk,¹⁴ who attributed the miracle stories of Jesus to mere parallels or copying of their Greco-Roman surroundings and influences. As we shall see, such a scenario is highly implausible when we apply various features of the criteria of authenticity to the gospel accounts that record these acts of Jesus.

The main arguments that have been put forward in favor of attributing miracle stories in the Gospels to Greco-Roman influences¹⁵ are no longer tenable or convincing, primarily because although an emphasis on the similarities between the gospel accounts of Jesus' healings and exorcisms with Greco-Roman traditions has been advanced in scholarship, surprisingly less attention has been paid to the striking *differences* with this body of literature and the events they record. The early dating of the New Testament texts in comparison to the Greco-Roman materials that are appealed to for comparison, has also been neglected in these discussions. This essay will examine the healings and exorcisms of Jesus, utilizing both internal and external source materials, especially within the surrounding Hellenistic culture of Jesus. When these considerations are weighed in the discussion, the evidence points toward the authenticity of the deeds of healing and exorcism recorded in the gospel tradition.

¹⁰ Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 213.

¹¹ Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus* (trans. John E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970).

¹² Rudolf Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in H.W. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Myth* (trans. R.H. Fuller; London: SPCK, 1953), 11–44.

¹³ John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Francisco, 1991).

¹⁴ Robert Funk, Roy W. Hoover and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997).

¹⁵ See, for instance, Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 214 n. 3, who argues that Bultmann "seems controlled by his questionable assumption that the miracle tradition originated in Hellenistic, non-Palestinian circles of the early Church." In placing the origin of the miracle tradition in "non-Palestinian circles," Bultmann is essentially removing this tradition outside of the Palestinian *Sitz im Leben Jesu* and thereby farther away from the primitive Jesus tradition.

3. HISTORICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

The reticence to accept the miracles of Jesus, and by extension, his healings and exorcisms as recorded in the Gospels are rooted primarily in philosophical rather than historical presuppositions. This approach to the text tends to be influenced by one's *Weltanschauung*. The philosophical position, for instance, that assumes *a priori* that naturalism reflects the existential reality of our world will preclude any possibility that Jesus could have in reality performed such extraordinary acts in the historic past or that they really happened.¹⁶ David Friedrich Strauss, in his 1835 work *The Life of Jesus*,¹⁷ further advanced the notion that the healings, exorcisms, and miracles of Jesus were merely myths clothed in historical garb and retrojected back into the Gospels by the Christian community. Strauss stripped miraculous deeds from the historical Jesus. This paved the way in due time for Rudolf Bultmann's well-known popularization of his theological methodology of demythologization.¹⁸ Part of the disinterest in seriously examining the accounts of the healings, exorcisms and miracles of Jesus may have also been due in part to Bultmann's over skepticism regarding a sound retrieval of the historical Jesus.¹⁹ With the work of Bultmann's student Ernst Käsemann, who challenged Bultmann's skepticism regarding sound information of the historical Jesus, a new quest emerged that opened the way for a historical reconstruction of not only the sayings, but also the deeds of Jesus.²⁰

In the same vein, however, the *a priori* assumption that supernaturalism is true will accept the miraculous elements in the New Testament Gospels as a given,²¹ but both of these approaches falter, since they approach the

¹⁶ This was argued as early as 1828 by Heinrich Paulus in his *Das Leben Jesu als Grundlage einer reinen Geschichte des Urchristentums* (2 vols.; Heidelberg: C.F. Winter, 1828).

¹⁷ David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined* (ed. Peter C. Hodgson; trans. George Eliot; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973).

¹⁸ Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," 3–8.

¹⁹ In Bultmann's words, "I do indeed think that we can know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus since the early Christian sources show no interest in either, are moreover fragmentary and often legendary; and other sources about Jesus do not exist." Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (trans. Louise Pettibone Smith and Erminie Huntress Lantero; New York: Scribners, 1958), 8.

²⁰ Following Käsemann's lead were Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus von Nazareth* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1956) and James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (SBT 25; London: SCM Press, 1959).

²¹ See, for instance, Gary R. Habermas, "Did Jesus Perform Miracles?," in Michael J. Wilkins and J.P. Moreland, eds., *Jesus under Fire* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 117–140;

tradition with modernist philosophical presuppositions, creating Jesus in their own image as Schweitzer famously showed, instead of understanding the tradition within its original cultural context.²² The clashes of the *weltanschauung* of both of these camps have continued unabated to the present. The treatment of the deeds of Jesus, such as healing, exorcism and miracles, has tended to result in one of two conclusions, when operating from naturalist assumptions. The first is describing these acts of Jesus as noted above as later accretions to the Jesus tradition by the Christian community, which borrowed such stories from Greco-Roman sources and wrote them retrospectively into the Jesus story contained in the Gospels. The other approach has been to dismiss the accounts of the extraordinary acts of Jesus as pure fiction or as ahistorical, as we saw in the case of Strauss. When approaching the question from supernaturalistic assumptions, miracles accounts are often granted historical status without argument, suggesting *a priori* that the presupposition of naturalism is the only reason a scholar would deny miracles—this is often the case, especially with popular Christian apologists.

The question of one's philosophical *Weltanschauung* should not enter into the application of the historical-critical method in such an explicit way; although, admittedly, it must be acknowledged that everyone agrees that a particular worldview cannot be entirely avoided in interpretation. Both approaches, then, betray an apologetic intent, one to disprove the existence of miracles as supernatural, and the other to prove the existence of miracles as supernatural. Both sides are guilty of employing their respective philosophical presuppositions to interpret the gospel texts rather than attempting to situate them within their cultural context to understand how their original readers would have understood them. And when these original contexts are considered, a full assessment of similarities and differences is often not given nor are issues of date and setting considered, as I have previously noted. In what follows I hope to begin the initiatory phases of weighing such considerations.

William Lane Craig, "The Problem of Miracles: A Historical and Philosophical Perspective," in David Wenham and Craig Blomberg, eds., *Gospel Perspectives*. Vol. 6: *The Miracles of Jesus* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986), 9–48.

²² An example of a "naturalistic" philosophical worldview is reflected in the Fellows of the Jesus Seminar. Robert Funk comments that, "The contemporary religious controversy ... turns on whether the worldview reflected in the Bible can be carried forward into this scientific age and retained as an article of faith." Robert Funk, Roy W. Hoover and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: What Did Jesus Really Say?* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 2.

4. THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE: THE NEW TESTAMENT GOSPELS

One of the reasons that has convinced New Testament scholars of the veracity of the gospel accounts that record the miracles, healing, and exorcisms of Jesus is the criteria of authenticity. These criteria have been useful in assessing the authenticity of both the sayings and the deeds of Jesus, especially the healings and exorcisms. Throughout this section appeal will be made to these commonly established criteria in order to weigh level of the authenticity that can be attributed to the miraculous deeds of Jesus.

The primary sources for the healings and exorcisms of Jesus are the Gospels.²³ One of the criteria used to establish the nature of these reports in the Gospels that Jesus performed miraculous feats is the criterion of multiple attestation.²⁴ That Jesus performed such extraordinary acts of healings, miracles, and exorcisms are multiply attested in the Gospels and also in Acts (e.g. 2:22; 10:38). Moreover, they are not only multiply attested, but at the same time, they are independently attested in the various layers of the textual tradition, including Mark, Q, M, L, and John. The miracles of Jesus tradition, therefore, has multiple and independent attestation in these sources.²⁵ The Pauline epistles, the earliest New Testament texts, which focus primarily on the death and resurrection of Jesus, make no direct allusions to the healings, exorcisms, and miracles of Jesus. Paul does, however, contain what some believe to be sources for dominical sayings in his letters.²⁶ Insofar as any indirect allusions may be present in Paul, we do have Paul's statement concerning himself in 2 Corinthians 12:12 that the "signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works," which Paul elsewhere states was wrought in him by Christ in both "word and deed" (Rom 15:18–19).²⁷ This seems to imply at least that

²³ It should be presumed that when mention is made of exorcisms in relation to the Gospels throughout this essay, I only refer in this case to the Synoptics.

²⁴ Multiple attestation is usually defined as tradition that is found in one or more independent sources in the gospel texts. See Craig A. Evans, "Authenticity Criteria in Life of Jesus Research," *CSR* 19 (1989): 3–31; John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1991–), 1174–175. Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 213, cautions correctly, however, that, "Multiple attestation, of course, is no guarantee that a given story is authentic, no more than single attestation proves that a given story is inauthentic."

²⁵ Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 213–214.

²⁶ Rom 14:14; 1 Cor 7:10; 9:14; 11:24; 1 Thess 4:14–17; cf. Acts 20:35. On the "dominical sayings" in Paul, see Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 259–292.

²⁷ The language used by Paul in Rom 15:19: "by the power of signs and wonders" (ἐν δυνάμει

there was an early miracle tradition known to Paul surrounding Jesus, which was believed to have continued in his disciples or followers,²⁸ among whom Paul counted himself. Luke is also aware of this miracle tradition among the disciples of Jesus as he has recounted it in Acts.²⁹ That the first-century Jewish world was one that was interested in “signs” for proof of divine intervention seems to also be implied in Paul’s statement that “Jews demand signs σημεῖα” (1 Cor 1:22).³⁰

The earliest gospel, Mark, begins the ministry of Jesus following his baptism and calling of the first disciples (Mark 1:9–20) with an account of an exorcism (Mark 1:21–28), followed by an account of Jesus healing individuals and large numbers of people, including the healing of a leper (Mark 1:29–34, 40–45). The earliest gospel thus begins by drawing attention to the exorcisms and healings of Jesus. While Mark is our earliest gospel, the exorcism account in Mark 1:21–28 may be earlier still as it seems to contain pre-Markan elements.³¹ The notion of demonic attack and repelling demons is attested before the Gospels in Second Temple Jewish literature.³² Jewish texts like *Ethiopic Enoch* or *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* (both of which predate the first century) contain elements of demonology including the binding of demons and prayers to God to bind and repel demonic attacks upon the faithful (*1 En.* 10:4–6, 11–4; *Jub.* 10:1–13). The Dead Sea Scrolls also contain elements of demonology. One important passage in the *Genesis Apocryphon* (1 QapGen^{ar}) relates to the theme of exorcism, where the Pharaoh of Egypt, after trying to take Sarai as his wife, experiences a torturous attack by an evil spirit on him and his household.³³ The Pharaoh pleads with Abram to

σημείων καὶ τεράτων) is the same as that of 2 Cor 12:12. In Rom 15:18 Paul attributes these signs and wonders to Christ but in Rom 15:19 he attributes them to the Spirit.

²⁸ Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 214.

²⁹ See esp. Acts 2:43; 3:6–10; 4:30; 5:12. Luke also supplies a miracle tradition regarding Paul where he performs healings (Acts 14:8–11; 28:8–9), exorcism (Acts 16:16–18), and wonders (Acts 14:3 cf. Acts 13:6–12).

³⁰ See also Mark 8:11–12; Mat 12:38–39; 16:1, 4; Luke 11:16, 29–30; John 2:18; 6:30, where signs are demanded of Jesus by his Jewish audience.

³¹ B.D. Chilton, “Exorcism and History: Mark 1:21–28,” in *Gospel Perspectives*, 6:260–261. Among the pre-Markan elements, Chilton mentions the demon’s attempt to gain control over Jesus by using his name and the violence involved when the demon leaves the possessed.

³² See Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant*, 25–34. Twelftree (21–22) also cites the earliest known idea of exorcism in Egypt from an Egyptian hieratic pre-sixth century BCE papyrus (BM. Pap. 10685C) dealing with the time period of 1250 to 1100 BCE.

³³ Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant*, 31–34. The *Genesis Apocryphon* story in this case is adapted from the original story found in Gen 12:14–20. Philo of Alexandria (*De Abrahamo* 96) interpreted this story as the Pharaoh being plagued severely by God, which is closer to the Genesis account.

pray to God so that the demon or evil spirit will be expelled from him and his household. The method by which Abram expels the evil spirit is through prayer and laying on of hands, "So I prayed [for him] ... and I laid my hands on his [head]; and the scourge departed from him and the evil [spirit] was expelled [from him], and he lived" (1 QapGen^{ar} 20:30).³⁴ In this text, exorcism is employed by both prayer and laying on of hands. In the Gospels, Jesus also employs the method of laying on of hands in order to heal (Mark 6:5; 8:23, 25; Luke 4:40; 13:13), and also to bless (Mark 10:16; Mat 19:15).³⁵ In the case of exorcisms, Jesus does not pray nor does he lay hands on anyone but commands the demon(s) in the imperative to leave (Mark 1:25; 5:8; 9:25; Luke 4:35).³⁶ Another text from Qumran that relates to an incidence of exorcism is 4QprNab or the *Prayer of Nabonidus*. The king Nabonidus has been smitten by God with an evil disease for seven years, which apparently led him to a state of madness. What is of particular interest is the prayer,

I was afflicted [with an evil ulcer] for seven years ... and an exorcist pardoned my sins. He was a Jew from [among the children of the exile of Judah, and he said], 'Recount this in writing to [glorify and exalt] the name of the [Most High God.] And I wrote ...'³⁷

In this account, the exorcist is in all probability Daniel,³⁸ who was among the exiles of Judah (Daniel 2:25; 5:13; 6:13), and the Aramaic term used in this text for "exorcist" is נִרְר, which appears in Dan 2:27; 4:4; 5:7, 11. This text indicates

³⁴ Translation from Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 455.

³⁵ Also, see Acts 28:8, where Paul prays and lays his hands on the sick for healing. The method of prayer and laying on of hands resembles that of 1 QapGen^{ar} 20:30, where Abram prays and lays his hands on Pharaoh to expel the evil spirit from him.

³⁶ In Mark 9:14–29, we have the story of the disciples' failure and impotence to exorcise a demon (Mark 9:18). When the disciples question Jesus in Mark 9:28 as to why they were unable to exorcise the demon, the response is given: "this kind can come out only through prayer" (Mark 9:29). What is of interest in this passage is that when Jesus expels the demon he does not pray, but merely commands the demon to leave and never to return (Mark 9:25), which seems to be his consistent *modus operandi*. The statement of Jesus also seems to be directed at the disciples in particular who appear to be faithless (see Mark 9:19) and who should be engaged in prayer. Prayer and belief are essential to see results (Mark 11:24). Jesus is depicted in Mark as actively being in prayer (Mark 6:46). What we do not see are cases where Jesus prays while exorcising. In the Gethsemane pericope, while Jesus is praying, the disciples show their impotence again in being unable to stay awake and pray but rather falling asleep (Mark 14:32–41).

³⁷ Translation from Vermes, *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 573.

³⁸ Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 240.

that even in Qumran, the idea of exorcism was known and believed. What is striking about this story is the connection between forgiveness of sins and healing. The text seems to identify the exorcist with a healer. A story with similar features appears in Mark 2:1–12 where Jesus heals a paralytic but first announces that his sins have been forgiven. Another similar feature is that the Jewish exorcist instructs Nabonidus to recount what happened in writing and to glorify and exalt God. In the Gospels, after Jesus heals the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1–20), he instructs him to go home and recount to his friends what God had done for him and the mercy he was shown (Mark 5:19; cf. Luke 17:12–19). In the cases of the Pharaoh in the *Genesis Apocryphon*, Nabonidus in the *Prayer of Nabonidus*, and the Gerasene demoniac in the Gospel of Mark, the exorcism serves to specifically glorify the God of Israel³⁹ in what seems to be a polemical motive in showing the supremacy of the God of Israel above all other deities. Another pattern emerges among the three events described in these texts. In all cases we encounter Gentile figures, the Pharaoh who is healed by Abram in the *Genesis Apocryphon*, the king Nabonidus who is healed by Daniel, and the Gerasene demoniac who is healed in the exorcism by Jesus.⁴⁰ We see in these stories the supremacy of God over the demonic forces, but at the same time we see what appears to be an outreach to Gentiles who come to acknowledge the God of Israel. In both Qumran texts above, the Gentile figures are royal, the Egyptian Pharaoh and the Babylonian king. If both rulers recognize the supremacy of the God of Israel how much more should their subjects follow suit? The Gospels and Acts also show a development of interest in outreach to Gentiles.

Another helpful text in understanding the issue of exorcism is the book of Tobit, a text dated to the second century BCE.⁴¹ A demon named Asmodeus is introduced in the text who is known to have killed seven successive husbands of a woman named Sarah (Tob 3:8; 6:14). There is no mention of possession in Tobit, only that the demon was in love with Sarah (Tob 6:14 RSV), and that she was oppressed by the demon. Tobias, a central character in the story, is instructed by the angel Raphael to repel the demon by placing live ashes of incense on the heart and liver of a fish so as to cause smoke.

³⁹ Compare Matt 15:31 where after Jesus performs various healings the crowds are amazed and “they praised [‘glorified,’ RSV] the God of Israel” (ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν Ἰσραήλ).

⁴⁰ On the Gentile identification of the Gerasene demoniac, see Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 1999), 342, 347, 353; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 2:711–714, 758–759.

⁴¹ Twelftree, *Christ Triumphant*, 28. Tobit was also known in Qumran, as it is attested in the scrolls 4QTob ar^{a–d}, 4QTob hebr^a.

Upon smelling the smoke, the demon will flee and never return,⁴² being ultimately bound by the angel Raphael (Tob 6:17–18; 8:2–3). While there is no actual exorcism in Tobit as we find in the Gospels, where a spiritual entity is removed from a person, there is a removal of the demon from an oppressive situation. The “binding” of the demon in Tob 8:3 is done by the angel Raphael so that angelic agents are seen as the ones responsible to combat demonic attack.⁴³ What this literature indicates is that already prior to the first century, the concept of demons as malignant entities that were hostile to humans, in particular the faithful, were taken to be real and that prayer and ritual were among the methods used in repelling them as we saw in Tobit but also in *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, and in the *Prayer of Nabonidus*. In the case of Jesus as we noted above, he does not repel the demon(s) through prayer or ritual, but by direct command in the imperative (Mark 1:25; 5:8; 9:25; Luke 4:35).

The evidence for the practice of exorcism in the first-century world of Jesus is considered to be very strong. There is evidence that exorcisms were practiced by some Jews of Jesus’ day.⁴⁴ One of the strongest criteria of authenticity in the Gospels, especially in regards to exorcism by Jesus, is the hostile enemy attestation we encounter against the practice of Jesus in casting out demons. This kind of hostile enemy attestation also appeals to the criterion of embarrassment. In Mark 3:22–27, we have the earliest written account of the tension between Jesus and his opponents, the religious leaders, which comes to a head:

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, “He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.” 23 And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. 27 But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.”

⁴² The motif of the demon leaving and not permitted to return is also seen in Mark 9:25 where Jesus commands a demon to depart and never return.

⁴³ The same picture emerges in the New Testament where Satan is bound by the angel and thrown into the abyss or pit (Rev 20:1–3; cf. Rev 9:14). Satan is also said to bind people, as in the case of the crippled woman in Luke 13:16. On angelic combat with demons, see Rev 12:7–9.

⁴⁴ Jewish exorcism is attested in Josephus, *Ant* 8.2.5, and in rabbinic literature (*Sabb.* 104b; *ʿAbod. Zar.* 12.2; *Sanh.* 10.1).

The application of the criterion of embarrassment demonstrates that we have a piece of authentic tradition that goes back to the historical Jesus. It would seem inconceivable that an early Christian writer would associate Jesus and his ministry as being in league with Satan. The scribes do not deny the ability of Jesus to do what he does, but rather they attribute such power to Beelzebul or Satan. Jesus retorts to this charge by arguing in a systematic logical fashion that if he is in league with Satan then he would be destroying his own kingdom and house and dividing it, not being able to triumph over the demonic realm. If this were the case Jesus would be engaged in work of self-destruction. Jesus then applies the concept of “binding” when he speaks of entering a strong man’s house and plundering his property by first “binding” the strong man. The idea of “binding” as noted above is already present in pre-Christian Jewish texts, such as *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, and *Tobit*. The strong man here is most likely an allusion to Satan himself. The response Jesus gives to what he perceives to be a baseless charge is that he is in fact plundering Satan’s kingdom through his work of exorcism. What is missing here in the Markan account is the actual account of the exorcism itself, which Matthew and Luke will supply. Another missing ingredient is the reference to the breaking in of God’s kingdom through the exorcism ministry of Jesus as we find it in Matt 12:22–29 and Luke 11:14–22. A number of other points are also lacking in Mark, which we find in Matthew and Luke. Both Matthew and Luke state that the demoniac was “mute” (Matt 12:22; Luke 11:14), but Matthew adds that he was also “blind” as well (Matt 12:22),⁴⁵ and thus seemingly providing perhaps a double impact by raising the bar of the wonder. Matthew alone states that in exorcising the demon Jesus healed him (ἐθεράπευσεν αὐτόν), thereby associating exorcism with healing.⁴⁶ At this point Matthew interjects a question by the crowds in which they ask, “Can this be the Son of David?” (μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ) (Matt 12:23). Evans posits the idea that when the crowds raised this question they thought of Jesus as “the son of David, i.e. one like Solomon.”⁴⁷ This notion is based on the Jewish tradition that Solomon was known to have mastered

⁴⁵ See Matt 9:32–34, where Matthew provides an earlier story of an exorcism of a mute demoniac. The Pharisees (instead of Mark’s “scribes”) are also quoted at this point as saying that Jesus casts out demons by “the ruler of the demons” (τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων), who is later identified as Beelzebul and Satan (Matt 12:24, 26).

⁴⁶ Mark does not speak of exorcism as healing but reserves the word θεραπεύω only to the healing of disease and bodily ailments. Mark appears to distinguish exorcism from healing (Mark 1:34; 3:2, 10; 6:5, 13). Luke also associates exorcism with healing (Luke 6:18; 7:21; 8:2).

⁴⁷ Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 241.

the arts of exorcism (see Wis 7:17–21).⁴⁸ Evans argues on this basis that, “This is evidence of the close association of exorcism and Solomon. It may also indicate that a messianic figure should possess the powers of David’s famous son.”⁴⁹ This however seems unlikely. The phrase “son of David” should rather be taken as a messianic title as it functioned as a descriptor for the Messiah.⁵⁰ It seems rather that the crowds are inquiring as to whether or not Jesus is the Messiah. It would seem by the nature of the exorcism in Matthew that to exorcise a blind and mute demoniac was considered extraordinary and something that was probably attributed to an act only the Messiah would be able to perform. It appears as if the Pharisees have to justify why it is Jesus is able to accomplish such an exorcism, which perhaps they could not perform, hence their dismissive comments that Jesus operates in this manner through the aid of malevolent forces. The same dismissive comments are made in Matt 9:32–34, where a mute demoniac is exorcised.⁵¹ The issue here seems to be that of the demoniac being “mute” or unable to speak. This may explain the Pharisees impotence in exorcising these kinds of demons. In order to exorcise a demon, it was essential to discover the demon’s name in order to gain mastery over it.⁵² This would not be possible with a “mute” demoniac who could not divulge the demon’s name, and hence would render the exorcism fruitless. The success of Jesus in this type of exorcism immediately raised the attention of the crowds, including the Pharisees. This criterion of dissimilarity seems to point in the direction that this is an authentic piece of the Jesus tradition. The criterion of coherence is also applicable in this area in that Jesus also sought to know or discover the name of the demon(s) in order to exorcise them as seen in Mark 5:9.⁵³

⁴⁸ In Christian circles, the tradition that Solomon had mastered the art of exorcism is attested in Origen who knew of people who utilized the spells that allegedly came from Solomon (*Comm. Matt* 33). Also, see the *Testament of Solomon* (which was probably written by a Christian writer) in D.C. Duling, “Testament of Solomon,” in J.H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.; Garden City: Doubleday, 1981–1983), 1:935–959. Also see remarks in Josephus who acknowledges this Solomonic tradition in relation to exorcism (*Ant.* 8.2.5 §§ 46–49).

⁴⁹ Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 241.

⁵⁰ See *Pss. Sol.* 17:21: “raise up unto them their king, the son of David.” See also Matt 21:9, 15; Luke 1:32, where Jesus is identified as the son of David in a messianic context.

⁵¹ What should not be missed is the excited and amazed reaction of the people in relation to this extraordinary exorcism that, “Never has anything like this been seen in Israel” (Matt 9:33). The uniqueness of this exorcism seems to be attached to the fact that the demoniac was mute and unable to speak.

⁵² Craig L. Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987), 89.

⁵³ See parallels in Matt 8:28–34 and Luke 8:26–39. Matthew does not give the name of the demoniac while Luke does.

Another area of coherence is that in both Matthew and Luke, Jesus acknowledges that the Pharisees practiced exorcism and he also refers to their “sons” (Matt 12:27 RSV) as doing the same.⁵⁴ The justification Jesus gives for his successful exorcism is that he casts out demons “by the Spirit of God” (Matt 12:28) / “by the finger of God” (Luke 11:20) and this signals that the kingdom of God is present in the deeds of Jesus. Jesus summed up his ministry as one of both exorcisms and healings, “I am casting out demons and performing cures” (Luke 13:32). Part of Jesus’ ministry of healing and exorcisms was the understanding, at least as the Synoptics present it, that Jesus believed that the kingdom of God was present in his person, and that it was crashing or invading into the human realm. Mark begins the ministry of Jesus following his baptism and temptation with Jesus announcing that the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand with the call to repentance and belief in the gospel (Mark 1:15). This appears to be the preface in the Gospel of Mark for all that will follow in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus perceived the kingdom of God to be present in his ministry and his exorcisms and healings were seen to be visible demonstrations of that conviction. It is this theme of the kingdom of God that defines and shapes everything Jesus says and does, and it seems that the exorcisms and healings of Jesus were an integral part of that message and a display of its veracity. Both the message and deeds of Jesus appear to be inextricably woven together. What strikes the people with amazement is that Jesus comes with a teaching that is backed up by authority, specifically the authority to order and exorcise demons (Mark 1:27). The multiple attestation of these exorcisms and healings, the criterion of embarrassment, the criterion of dissimilarity, and the criterion of coherence cumulatively lend support that these actions were part of the authentic Jesus tradition. His contemporaries, both friend and foe alike, acknowledged them.

⁵⁴ Most read “your sons” (οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν) as referring to Jewish exorcists who were followers or disciples of the Pharisees. E.g. J.P. Louw and E.A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (2nd ed.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 9.4. But see R.J. Shirock, “Whose Exorcists are they? The Referents of οἱ υἱοὶ ὑμῶν at Mat 12:27/Luke 11:19,” *JSNT* 46 (1992): 41–51, who argues that the “sons” in this text may be a reference to the disciples of Jesus.

5. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JESUS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

When we consider the socio-cultural world of the time of Jesus, there are a number of similarities with Jesus and his contemporaries. It is here that the criterion of coherence can be applied to our investigation. Among the similarities between Jesus and his contemporaries in respect to the practice of exorcism, three areas of agreement are notable: 1) the attempt to discover the demon's name in order to gain mastery over him (Mark 5:9); 2) the use of touch and/or laying on of hands (Mark 9:29; Luke 4:40), and 3) the application of spittle (Mark 7:33; 8:23; John 9:6).⁵⁵ As with the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus, there are some similarities with his Greco-Roman contemporaries as well. The imperative command "Come out of" to the one afflicted by a demon was not only attested in Jewish circles⁵⁶ but also in Greco-Roman sources, such as magical papyri, and appears to have been a common practice.⁵⁷ When one assesses the subject of exorcisms among the Jews of Jesus' day there are some similarities to be sure with those of Jesus, but the differences are much more significant when it comes to Jesus.⁵⁸

At this point we can engage the criterion of dissimilarity. There are poignant points of dissimilarity with Jesus' methodology in the practice of exorcism as opposed to his contemporaries. One striking dissimilarity on the part of Jesus as presented in the Synoptics is the absence of employing the common practices of elaborate spells, incantations, altering the tone of voice, and appealing to an authority outside himself by employing the name of a certain deity. While Jesus never performed exorcism in his own name or even the name of God,⁵⁹ it appears clear that his disciples were to

⁵⁵ Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 89.

⁵⁶ As in the case of Eleazer the exorcist who was known to Josephus in the first century. See *Ant.* 8.2.5 §§46–49.

⁵⁷ C.K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 34.

⁵⁸ Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 89, notes, "the differences far outweigh the similarities."

⁵⁹ Later Jewish tradition does ascribe to Jesus the use of the divine name of God to account for his extraordinary acts. The late fourteenth-century document *Toledoth Yeshu*, which is believed to reflect tradition coming from the sixth century, is considered a parody on the life of Jesus that recounts how Yeshu (Jesus) learned the letters of God's name (Tetragrammaton?) and wrote them down in a parchment that he placed and hid in an open cut in his thigh, which he covered with his flesh. He later re-opened his flesh with a knife and learned the letters of the divine name, and used that knowledge to perform his

perform exorcisms in the name of Jesus (Mark 9:38–39; Luke 10:17; Acts 16:18; 19:13–16).⁶⁰ In Mark 9:38–39, in particular, we have a complaint made by the disciples to Jesus that they witnessed someone exorcising demons in Jesus' name, and they objected because he was not part of their following. Jesus forbids the disciples to stop this person and states that one who performs a δύναμιν “deed of power,” or a “mighty work” (RSV) in his name, cannot be against them. This passage indicates a number of things. First, the use of invoking the name of someone who was reputed to be significant or a person in touch with the divine (in this case Jesus) in exorcism appears to have been current in the first-century Greco-Roman period. Josephus (*Ant.* 8.2.5 §§ 45–49) also attests to the use of Solomon's name in exorcisms in the case of Eleazar, the exorcist whom he claimed to know. This also indicates that Jesus was not necessarily opposed to invocation in exorcism, but invocation for the purposes of exorcism in his circle seems to have been restricted to the use of his name only. The use of the name of Jesus in exorcism was, therefore, not restricted to members of the Jesus movement but seems to have been practiced by those who were outside of the group as well, even hostile opponents. The account in Acts 19:13 shows that a number of non-Christian Jewish exorcists (Ἰουδαίων ἐξορκιστῶν), who were not Christian believers, attempted to use the name of Jesus to exorcise demons, but proved unsuccessful (Acts 19:14–17). The use of any name deemed successful in exorcism appeared attractive to first-century exorcists.

Secondly, Jesus seems to accept that a deed of power can be performed in his name and thus seems to indicate that the authority he has to exorcise and heal can be funneled to others who appeal to his name, whether they are part of the group or outside of it. In this case the idea of the name carries

miraculous deeds. This tradition does not deny that Jesus performed extraordinary acts but seeks to explain it away in this case to a divine source and origin, namely the utilization of the divine name. In this text, the deeds of Jesus are not attributed to a demonic source or magic, but to his using of the divine name. For more on the *Toledoth Yeshu*, see Morris Goldstein, *Jesus in the Jewish Tradition* (New York: Macmillan, 1950), 148–154. According to *Sabb.* 104b, which is considered earlier than the *Toledoth Yeshu*, what seems to be a probable reference to Jesus has him learning witchcraft in Egypt (perhaps based on Exod 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18), and to perform miracles he used methods that involved cutting his flesh. In another medieval Jewish text, *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*, Lilith, the first wife of Adam, flees from the Garden of Eden by pronouncing the Ineffable Name of God. See Samuel Tobias Lachs, “The Alphabet of Ben Sira,” *Gratz College Annual of Jewish Studies* 11 (1973): 9–28. These very late texts do show that there was an interest in using the divine name to perform extraordinary acts.

⁶⁰ Also, see the longer ending of Mark, which, although spurious, nonetheless preserves the on-going tradition of casting demons out in the name of Jesus (Mark 16:17).

with its connotations of authority and power.⁶¹ The Markan passage seems to warn, however, that those who are with him (Jesus) will prove to be successful in utilizing his name in exorcism whereas those who are against him will not, which seems to be the case in the story of the botched exorcism in Acts 19:13–17.

The idea of invocation and incantations were also employed in non-Jewish and non-Christian circles⁶² as we shall see below. What is unique and markedly exceptional about Jesus is that he does not pray to or invoke God before exorcisms, nor does he employ magical objects as was the custom of his contemporaries.⁶³ Graham Twelftree also points out that among the common objects used in exorcisms among both Jews and Greeks were incense, rings, a bowl of water, amulets, palm tree prickles, wood chips, ashes, pitch, cumin, dog's hair, thread, trumpets, olive branches, and marjoram,⁶⁴ and Jesus, according to the Gospels, never used these items when he performed exorcisms. What seems clear as we noted above is that in two incidences of healing in the Gospel of Mark, he uses his saliva when he heals a deaf person (Mark 7:33) and a blind person (Mark 8:23),⁶⁵ and once, in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus uses saliva and mud in healing a blind person (John 9:6, 11, 14–15). The use of one's saliva was considered in the first-century world of Judaism to have curative powers.⁶⁶

6. THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE 1: RABBINIC, SECULAR AND PATRISTIC

6.1. *Rabbinic Sources*

The miracles of Jesus are not only multiply attested within the New Testament Gospels, but are externally attested as well. The pejorative charge of Jesus deriving his ability to heal from evil powers as we saw in the Synoptic

⁶¹ On the relationship of one's name and authority, especially in regards to Jesus, see Bern Hans Bietenhard, "ὄνομα," *TDNT* 5:277–278.

⁶² See Barrett, *New Testament Background*, 31–35.

⁶³ Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 89.

⁶⁴ Graham Twelftree, "ΕΙΔΕ ... ΕΓΩ ΕΚΒΑΛΛΩ ΤΑ ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΑ ..." in *Gospel Perspectives*, 6:383, cited in Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 89.

⁶⁵ The two-stage healing of the blind man in this Markan passage (Mark 8:23–25), where initially his vision is not fully restored until Jesus again applies his hands and his vision is then fully recovered, evokes a ring of authenticity based on the criterion of embarrassment. It would be difficult to see an early Christian attribute a measure of failure to Jesus, especially in his healing ministry.

⁶⁶ William L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 267 n. 78.

Gospels (Mark 3:22; Mat 9:32–34; 12:24, 26) is also externally attested. An example of this is seen in rabbinic sources,⁶⁷ particularly in the Babylonian Talmud:

On the eve of Passover they hanged Yeshu (of Nazareth) and the herald went before him for forty days saying (Yeshu of Nazareth) is going forth to be stoned in that he hath practiced sorcery and beguiled and led astray Israel. Let everyone knowing aught in his defense come and plead for him. But they found naught in his defense and hanged him on the eve of Passover.

(*b. Sanh.* 43a; cf. 107b)

This text charges “Yeshu” (whom some take to be a reference to Jesus of Nazareth) with sorcery and leading Israel astray, and calls for his execution for this offence. While this rabbinic text condemns “Yeshu” or Jesus of Nazareth, and attributes his miracles to sorcery (see *Sotah* 47a, where the reference may also be referring to Jesus being a magician), it nevertheless acknowledges and presupposes that Jesus was known to perform certain acts deemed extraordinary. There is no denial here of his ability to perform these acts, but rather an attribution of the ability to perform these acts to another source, namely sorcery. As we saw in Mark 3:22 and Matt 9:32–34; 12:24, 26, there was no denial on the part of the religious leaders that Jesus could exorcise a mute demon, but rather they attributed his ability to do so to another source, namely the prince or ruler of the demons. A sorcerer or magician thus was conceived as one who could tap into the realm of the demonic as his source for his feats or acts as opposed to a holy man or prophet who could do certain miracles or signs because his source was divine in that it came from God. But here, as opposed to the Babylonian Talmud, Josephus in his *Testimonium Flavianum* (18.3.3) does not speak of Jesus in a pejorative or negative manner. Josephus merely appears to be reporting on the information he had gathered about Jesus of Nazareth.

A number of famous Jewish holy men in the time of Jesus are mentioned who were reputed to perform various miracles.⁶⁸ I will only mention three

⁶⁷ The Gospels pre-date the rabbinic sources, which will be examined in this essay. The earliest written portions of the Mishnah are no earlier than 200 CE. See Barrett, *New Testament Background*, 141, 143, 145, 190.

⁶⁸ On the subject of Jewish holy men in the first century, see Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973), 72–82. Vermes believed Jewish holy men were part of “charismatic Judaism.” But see critique by B.D. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program within a Cultural History of Sacrifice* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1992), 92 n. 5, who charges Vermes with a false dichotomy between holy men and rabbis. The distinction according to Chilton is not as solid as Vermes suggests.

of them and will summarize the main points instead of detailing the full accounts.⁶⁹ Among these holy Jewish men were Honi ha-Ma'aggel (first century BCE),⁷⁰ Hanan ha-Nehba (late first century BCE; early first century CE) and Hanina ben Dosa (first century CE).⁷¹ These holy men are placed either before the time of Jesus or during the time of Jesus and these stories can thus provide a helpful comparable analysis.

Honi ha-Ma'aggel⁷² takes his latter name, "the Circle Drawer," for an incident that occurred when he drew a circle and stood within it and prayed that God would send rain during a time of severe drought.⁷³ If there would be no rain, he would continue to stand in the circle and not leave. The various accounts in Josephus and the Mishnah relate the story that rain did come and it was seen as a sign of the answered prayer of Honi ha-Ma'aggel.⁷⁴ A number of similarities and dissimilarities can be observed when compared with the gospel accounts. Honi's persistence in prayer reflects the teaching of Jesus regarding persistence in prayer to God (Luke 11:5–8; 18:1–8). Honi was compared to the prophet Elijah because of the association with rain. Jesus was also compared with Elijah (Mark 6:15; 8:28).⁷⁵ On the phenomenon of the rain that fell in the case of Honi, a comparison can be made with the account of Jesus stilling the storm (Mark 4:37–41). In both cases we have natural phenomena. The importance of rain is evident in this story of Honi ha-Ma'aggel but also in the story of Hanan ha-Nehba, which will be addressed next. Jesus also speaks of God's graciousness displayed in the rain,

⁶⁹ For a full treatment on the rabbinic miracle stories, see the helpful material in Evans, *Jesus and his Contemporaries*, 227–236, for which I am dependent for the rabbinic texts and the discussion that will follow. For other accounts of rabbis and Jewish holy men, see Evans, *Jesus and his Contemporaries*, 241–243.

⁷⁰ See Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 51–53.

⁷¹ See Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 53–60. The other two are Abba Hilqiah (late first century BCE, early first century CE), and Eleazer the Exorcist (first century CE). I will treat the case of Eleazer the Exorcist below in my discussion on Josephus.

⁷² Josephus also knew of Honi but referred to him by the Greek equivalent Onias. Josephus remarked about him, "Onias, a righteous man beloved of God" (*Ant.* 14.2.1 §§ 22–24). Josephus also referred to King Solomon as one who was "beloved of God" (*Ant.* 8.2.5 §§ 45–49). The story of Honi the Circle Drawer is also found in the Mishnah (*m. Ta'an.* 3:8; cf. *b. Ta'an.* 23a).

⁷³ The importance of rain and its relation to prayer is also seen in Jdt 8:31 where the people ask Judith, because she is a God-fearing woman, to pray for them for the provision of rain so they will not suffer of thirst. The belief seems to be that a God-fearing person can approach God with a request and that he will listen and provide.

⁷⁴ The idea of granting rain was seen as a divine work. In EpJer 1:53, which condemns idolatry, one of the things idols cannot do is "neither can they give rain to people" (οὔτε ὑετὸς ἀνθρώποις οὐ μὴ δῶσιν).

⁷⁵ Elijah was known to be a prophet famous for his mighty deeds (Sir 48:1–16).

which he sends on both the just and the unjust (Matt 5:45). As in Honi's prayer to God in which he speaks of his people as "your sons" and implores God to "have mercy on Your sons," so Jesus in speaking of the rain that God graciously sends also speaks of his hearers as "sons of your Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:45, RSV) in which Jesus calls on them to love and pray for their enemies (Matt 5:43–44) and thus be gracious as God is, who sends the rain indiscriminately on both the good and the bad.

In the case of dissimilarity, Honi demands rain of God, draws a circle on the ground and refuses to leave until God has answered his prayer. He thus appears to wager with God on set conditions he has established. The very act by Honi of circle drawing attracted the criticism of Simeon b. Shetah who charged Honi with unorthodoxy in his use of magical circle drawing.⁷⁶ While Jesus teaches persistence in prayer, we do not find cases in the Gospels where Jesus tempts or makes demands of God. The command to not tempt God seems to have been taken seriously by Jesus and appears as an early saying in Q (Matt 4:7; Luke 4:12).

In the story of Hanan ha-Nehba we encounter the grandson of Honi. He was known to be a modest man who would hide from public view, perhaps to pray. He was also known like Honi to bring rain through his prayers.⁷⁷ Unlike Honi, he did not wager with God by setting down conditions. When rain was needed, children would be sent by the rabbis to Hanan ha-Nehba and they would seize the hem of his cloak and would implore him to give them rain. One of the similarities with the Jesus tradition is that as the children seized the hem of Hanan ha-Nehba's cloak, so in the Synoptic tradition, people sought Jesus that they may touch the fringe of his garment so that they would have their request answered by way of being healed (Mark 6:56). Another similar feature in one respect with the Jesus tradition is that Hanan ha-Nehba used to hide from public view. We are not explicitly told why he hid from public view but perhaps we can surmise he spent solitary time in prayer. The Gospels also show that Jesus would resort to spending time alone and in prayer is sometimes mentioned (Mark 1:35; Matt 14:23; Luke 6:12; 9:18).

Hanina ben Dosa is considered the most famous of the Jewish holy men. He lived in a small Galilean village ten miles north of Nazareth.⁷⁸ He was known to pray for the sick and announce beforehand who would live and

⁷⁶ See Barrett, *New Testament Background*, 150–151.

⁷⁷ The story is related in the Mishnah (*b. Ta'an.* 23b).

⁷⁸ In the Mishnah (*m. Sota.* 9:15), Hanina ben Dosa is remembered as one the "men of deeds," an allusion to the miracles wrought by him.

who would die (*m. Ber.* 5:5). At other times he would pray for the sick who were not present and the time that he declared the sick person to be healed would be later confirmed (*b. Ber.* 34b; cf. *y. Ber.* 5:5). Just like Honi ha-Ma'aggel and Hanan ha-Nehba, Hanina ben Dosa was also known to pray and bring rain (*b. Ta'an.* 24b; *b. Yoma.* 53b). Where Hanina ben Dosa differs from the others is that he was also known to function as an exorcist or one who can command demons. One story conveys that, as Hanina ben Dosa was walking alone at night, the queen of the demons met him and informed him that she would have harmed him had he not had divine protection (*b. Pesah.* 112b).⁷⁹ Hanina then bans her from going through inhabited places.⁸⁰ In another story Hanina hears the *Bat Qol*, the voice from heaven, which says to him, "The whole universe is sustained on account of my son, Hanina" (*b. Ta'an.* 24b; *b. Ber.* 17b, 61b; *b. Hull.* 86a; cf. *b. B. Bat.* 74b).

By way of similarity, Hanina was a healer of the sick as Jesus was. The ability on the part of Hanina to pray for a sick person who was absent and the confirmation that the sick person was healed at the moment of Hanina's prayer parallels the accounts in the Gospels where Jesus responds to a request for healing from someone and the granting of the request coincides with the time the sick person was healed (Matt 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10; John 4:46–53). While the story of Hanina had elements of nature miracles, as in his ability to pray and bring rain, Jesus—as I noted above—also calmed the storm (Mark 4:37–41). The encounter of Hanina with the queen of demons parallels Jesus' encounter with the Gerasene demoniac who also declared to Jesus that he knew the identity of Jesus (Mark 5:1–20). The ability to order demons is also reflected in both Hanina banning the queen of demons from going through inhabited places and Jesus commanding the demons to never enter the man again. Both these stories reveal the belief in demons in the first century as a given fact. Hanina's encounter with the queen of demons may also parallel Jesus' encounter with Satan during the temptation in the wilderness (Mark 1:13; Matt 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13). There is also a parallel by way of the *Bat Qol*. As Hanina is called by God "my son," so God declares to Jesus at his baptism and transfiguration, "You are my Son, the Beloved" (Mark 1:11; cf. 9:7).

⁷⁹ This charge is somewhat similar to the story in Job 1–2, where Satan makes the case that Job enjoys a good life because he has the blessing and protection of God.

⁸⁰ This is presumably based on the idea that in Jewish and Christian belief, as well as Persian and Egyptian, the wilderness was regarded as the area of demons or evil spirits because it was the zone outside of the boundaries of society and was reflective of chaos. This is implied in Matt 12:43 and Luke 11:24. See W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *Matthew 1–7* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 354.

6.2. *Secular Sources*

Flavius Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, in the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum* (*Ant.*18.3.3), also speaks of Jesus. I only quote the part of the passage that is pertinent to our discussion and I place in italics a clause that is considered by most scholars as a later interpolation.⁸¹

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, *if it be lawful to call him a man*; for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles.

Josephus makes mention of Jesus as “a doer of wonderful works,” which concurs with the deeds of Jesus as set out in the Gospels. This phrase is considered authentic even by scholars who deem most of the *Testimonium Flavianum* to be spurious.⁸² Josephus thus serves as an important external witness to the understanding that Jesus had the reputation of being one who performed deeds that were considered extraordinary or “wonderful” by his contemporaries. What can be deduced from Josephus is that the tradition of Jesus as a wonder worker continued in the first century and thus we find external corroboration for what appears to be a piece of the authentic Jesus tradition attested internally in the Gospels.

Another important source coming from Josephus is his account of a Jewish exorcist whom he claimed to know and observe by the name of Eleazer. This source is extremely valuable from the perspective of the first-century Greco-Roman world. Josephus is the earliest non-biblical source that relates what appears to be an eyewitness account of an exorcism. Josephus (*Ant.*8.2.5 §§ 45–49) says:

God also enabled him [Solomon] to learn that skill which expels demons, which is a science useful and wholesome to men. He composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return; and this method of cure is of great force to this day; for I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing

⁸¹ See comments in Barrett, *New Testament Background*, 198–199. For a fuller discussion and treatment, see Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 1:57–88. Also, see Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus and Modern Scholarship* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984). Even in the absence of the *Testimonium Flavianum*, one could still conclude Josephus knew of Jesus since he makes reference to him in his report of the martyrdom of James who was “the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ” (τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ) (*Ant.* 20.9.1).

⁸² E. Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist* (trans. A.H. Krappe; London: Methuen; New York: Dial, 1931), 62.

people that were demonic in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: he put a ring, that had a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately, he warned him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations which he composed. And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man; and when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon was shown very manifestly: for which reason it is, that all men may know the vastness of Solomon's abilities, and how he was beloved of God, and that the extraordinary virtues of every kind with which this king was endowed, may not be unknown to any people under the sun for this reason, I say, it is that we have proceeded to speak so much of these matters.

Josephus is well aware of the tradition that Solomon had learned and mastered the art of exorcising demons and that this was seen as a gift from God. Exorcism is seen as useful and "wholesome" to aid people and relieve them of their illnesses. What is pertinent here is that "incantations" are mentioned, which would seem to indicate that Jewish exorcists used them to insure the demon does not return. Josephus further indicates that "this method of cure" is still operative "to this day," which demonstrates it was still current in the first century. As we noted above, there does not seem to be any indication in the Gospels that Jesus employed incantations in his exorcisms but merely ordered the demon(s) to depart and "never return" (Mark 9:25), a point that is also made here in the case of Eleazar where he warns the demon "not to return into him anymore." Josephus's mention and knowledge of Eleazar indicates that exorcists were well known. This may also help to explain the notoriety of Jesus by the people in the Gospels as a healer and exorcist (Mark 1:28, 45; Matt 4:24; 9:26, 31; Luke 4:14, 37; 5:15). In the case of Eleazar, the exorcism was conducted "in the presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers" and he also sought to "persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power." This is markedly different from the *modus operandi* of Jesus. In the Gospels, while Jesus performs exorcisms and healings, he refuses to perform them on demand (Mark 8:11–12), and specifically in the Markan Gospel he restrains those whom he heals not to broadcast their healing to others (Mark 1:43–44; 7:36).

The methodology of Eleazar in conducting the exorcism by the use of a ring and a root (believed to be prescribed by Solomon), which was placed to

the nostrils of the demoniac through which the demon would be expelled, differs from the practice of Jesus. Jesus does not use any items in his exorcisms but again orders the demon(s) to leave. There does not seem to be any indication in the Gospels that Jesus depended on the tradition of Solomon's exorcism techniques or using Solomon's name as Eleazer did.⁸³ While Jesus did not invoke any particular name in his exorcisms, his disciples did invoke the name of Jesus when they performed exorcism (Mark 9:38–39; Luke 10:17; Acts 16:18; 19:13–16). The falling down of the possessed person following the exorcism parallels the description given in the Gospels (Mark 3:11; Luke 8:28). Josephus also recounts that Eleazer sought to show proof that the demon had left the possessed by placing a cup or basin of water to the side and ordered to the demon to overturn it. There is no parallel to this in the Gospels, but the closest we come is to the account of Jesus casting out the demons from the Gerasene demoniac into a herd of swine, which ran down the hill side and drowned in the lake (Mark 5:11–13). The emphasis here seems to be on demonstrating the “skill and wisdom of Solomon” in being successful in exorcisms. What is peculiar in this account is that there is no emphasis as there is in the case of the Synoptic Gospels in linking exorcism with the coming or presence of the kingdom of God (Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20). In the case of Eleazer, exorcism demonstrates the vastness of Solomon's wisdom and shows that he was gifted by God in the area of exorcism. While Josephus sees exorcism as a demonstration of the legacy of Solomon's wisdom, Jesus saw exorcism as an indication that the kingdom of God was present in his ministry and that Satan's kingdom was being plundered and destroyed (Mark 3:24–27; Luke 10:18).

6.3. *Patristic Sources*

This reputation of Jesus as a wonder worker can also be traced beyond the Gospels and Josephus in the first century well into the second and third century in the patristic writings. This attestation comes by way of enemy

⁸³ Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 240–241 suggests that there may be a hint of this when Jesus claims that something greater than Solomon was present in his work and ministry (Matt 12:42; Luke 11:31) but this seems speculative. Evans here also sees the question by the people of whether Jesus is “the son of David” (Matt 12:23) to possibly refer to Jesus, as Evans puts it, as “one like Solomon.” The text does not state that Jesus is “like” Solomon, but it seems rather that “son of David” should be taken as a messianic title so that what the people were asking was whether Jesus was the Messiah. The designation “son of David” is used for the Messiah (Matt 21:9, 15; Luke 1:32; cf. *Pss. Sol.* 17:21). Even if Jesus made a reference to Solomon in the context of his exorcisms it appears that Jesus was not dependent on the Solomonic tradition as his methodology is sharply dissimilar.

attestation by opponents of the Christian movement. Such opposition is recorded indirectly in patristic writers and the charge against Jesus in the case of his miracles is that of magic and sorcery. The criterion of embarrassment can be used at this point to establish the authentic core of this Jesus tradition in that it would be highly improbable that a Christian would call Jesus a sorcerer or magician, both of which were practitioners believed by the patristic writers to be in league with demonic forces. In Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, Justin makes mention of the point that Jesus' opponents charged him with magic. Justin comments to Trypho concerning the ministry of Jesus, "But though they saw such works, they asserted it was magical art. For they dared to call Him a magician, and a deceiver of the people."⁸⁴ This charge appears to be consistent with what we also read in the Babylonian Talmud that "Yeshu" was condemned to death because he practiced sorcery and for leading Israel astray by deceiving the people (*b.Sanh.* 43a; 107b). What makes this charge of sorcery particularly heinous is that the practice of sorcery and magic were vehemently condemned in the Torah and Jewish Scriptures as a whole and the penalty was execution (Lev 19:26–28, 31; 20:6; Deut 18:9–14; 2 Chron 33:6; Isa 8:19; Mal 3:5).⁸⁵ Even in this text there is no denial that Jesus performed certain exceptional deeds. What we encounter again is an attempt to explain it away by attributing his acts to another source, that of magic and sorcery. The attributing of magic and/or sorcery, the elements of the demonic realm, to Jesus is also consistent with what we encounter in the Synoptic Gospel accounts where the religious leaders dismiss the ability of Jesus to exorcise demons and explain it as coming from Satan or Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons (Mark 3:22; Matt 9:32–34; 12:24, 26). A consistent picture appears to emerge in respect to the authentic Jesus tradition in regards to his exorcisms and healings. From the Synoptic Gospels onward, the charge that Jesus was operating under Satan's power in his ministry of exorcism eventually develops into a charge of utilizing magic and sorcery (Babylonian Talmud; *b. San.* 43a; cf. 107b and *Sotah.* 47a). The move from Satan to magic/sorcery is not a great leap since magic and sorcery were attributed to the realm and jurisdiction of the demonic powers. Both the Talmud and Justin Martyr's polemics against the Jewish charge of magic on the part of Jesus to explain his wonderful deeds seem to corroborate quite strongly the Jesus tradition on the subject of exorcisms and healings.

⁸⁴ Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 69.7.

⁸⁵ In the New Testament, sorcery and magic are also categorically condemned (Acts 8:9–11; 19:19; Gal 5:20; Rev 9:21; 21:8; 22:15).

Origen, in his refutation of the pagan philosopher Celsus, engages his opponent in disclaiming the same charge of magic on the part of Jesus. In a citation, preserving the words of Celsus, Celsus claims regarding Jesus,

... who having hired himself out as a servant in Egypt on account of his poverty, and having there acquired some miraculous powers, on which the Egyptians greatly pride themselves, returned to his own country, highly elated on account of them, and by means of these proclaimed himself a God.⁸⁶

As with Justin Martyr, it would appear inconceivable that Origen, as a Christian, would have applied this charge to Jesus unless there was some truth to it, and again here the criterion of embarrassment comes into play. What is noticeable is the similar charge Celsus brings against Jesus that he went to Egypt where he learned “some miraculous powers” and practiced them and proclaimed himself a god or to be divine. This is similar to what we find in the rabbinic sources (*Sabb.* 104b), which also make reference to Jesus learning witchcraft in Egypt (perhaps based on the Egyptian practice of sorcery in Exod 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18), and thereby learning to perform miracles. It is possible that Celsus had access to these Jewish traditions about Jesus and utilized them against Christians. Celsus is also aware of the divine status accorded to Jesus (“proclaimed himself a God”) and sees this as a self-delusional claim on the part of Jesus in which he was carried away by his extraordinary deeds. This indicates that the charge against Jesus as a sorcerer or magician continued well into the third century to the time of Origen and that opponents of the Christian movement knew of these charges and used them in their denunciation of Christianity.⁸⁷

The multiple attestation in the gospels and the external sources in regard to the healings, miracles and exorcisms of Jesus, including the criterion of dissimilarity do present a convincing argument from a historical critical view that these things were true of the historical Jesus.

7. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE 2: GRECO-ROMAN PARALLELS

When we examine the Greco-Roman world outside of the Jewish framework of Jesus we do find some similarities, but at the same time differences. It behooves us to take the cautionary note of Samuel Sandmel seriously, to

⁸⁶ Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.28.

⁸⁷ Morton Smith has addressed this very issue as indicated by the title of his book: Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978).

avoid the trap of “parallelomania” where we assume a copy cat or dependence of a source on another source that seems to have a parallel with the first.⁸⁸ We have seen that within the Jewish framework of the world of Jesus there were many things he did that were similar to his contemporaries and to those who came before him. These correlations, however, are not exact parallels because there are also dissimilar features within the Jesus tradition regarding exorcisms in particular. The criterion of dissimilarity can be invoked here as evidence that Jesus did perform exorcisms in his own unique way. While Jesus may have been pejoratively accused of employing magic in rabbinic sources, it should be stated that such a charge implied that Jesus obtained the power of magic from pagan sources, and not from God, showing that Jesus said and did things that were *outside* the parameters of Judaism and hence he was one who led Israel astray (*b.Sanh.* 43a; cf. 107b). The charge that Jesus learned to obtain his power to perform miracles from Egypt also strongly indicates that Jesus was believed to have tapped into pagan sources outside of Judaism as attested in the rabbinic writings (e.g. *Sabb.* 104b) and in Origen, who quotes Celsus on the very same charge (*Contra Celsum* 1.28). In effect, Jesus is portrayed as an Egyptian sorcerer rather than as a devout Jew. What appears consistent in all these sources is that there is never a denial that Jesus performed such deeds of wonder, rather there is a consistent method of dismissing them through alternate explanations.

As far as the Gospels are concerned, Jesus did not engage in the methodology that his Greco-Roman counterparts did in healing and exorcism. He never simulated the methods that his contemporaries used that appear much more “magical,” such as the use of amulets and other items. A common feature in the Greco-Roman world in regards to exorcism involved incantations, a notable feature that is missing in the ministry of Jesus.

The use of incantations in the Greco-Roman world was customary and was intended to invoke any source names and formulae that sounded impressive and effective. The *Paris Magical Papyrus* (lines 3007–3085),⁸⁹ which dates to about 300CE, contains a series of names to be invoked in exorcism and appear to show a dependence on Judeo-Christian sources as well as non-Jewish and non-Christian sources. There is also an implicit awareness of biblical texts. Among some of the lines of this *Magical Papyrus* reads,

⁸⁸ Samuel Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13.

⁸⁹ Barrett, *New Testament Background*, 31–35.

Joe ... Jaeo ... Phtha ... I adjure thee by the god of the Hebrews
 Jesu, Jaba, Jae, Abraoth, Aia, Thoth, Ele,
 Elo, Ae, Eu ...
 thou that appearest in fire [Exod 3:2?] ...
 I adjure thee by him who appeared unto
 Osrael in the pillar of light and in the cloud by
 day [Exod 13:21–22?] ...
 ... and brought upon Pharaoh the
 ten plagues, because he heard not ...
 ... For I adjure thee by the seal
 which Solomon laid ...
 ... I adjure thee by the great God Sabaoth.⁹⁰

What is immediately noticeable is the invocation of various Hebrew sounding names such as “Joe,” “Jaeo,” “Jaba,” “Jae,” which are most likely allusions to the divine name Yahweh (יהוה), while “Elo” and “Ele” seem to be allusions to the Hebrew words for God, אֱלֹהִים and אֵל. The references to “Phtha” and “Thoth” show knowledge of Egyptian deities.⁹¹ Interestingly, another name appears as “Jesu,” which seems to be an allusion to Jesus,⁹² and if so, demonstrates that the name of Jesus was already considered efficaciously potent in exorcising demons. As we noted above, the name of Jesus was used by his disciples in their practice of exorcism and healing (Mark 9:38–39; Luke 10:17; Acts 16:18; 19:13–16; cf. the tradition in the “longer ending” of Mark [Mark 16:17–18]). The description of “Jesu” as “the god of the Hebrews” would seem to be plausibly at home in a non-Christian context. Barrett believes this name refers to Jesus and that a non-Christian would have been familiar with it and would have utilized it in incantations for the purposes of exorcism.⁹³ The dating of this magical papyrus and its dependence on Judeo-Christian sources indicates that it is later than the Gospels and dependent on Judeo-Christian traditions.

The question of dating is important when comparison is made between the Gospels and Greco-Roman texts. Most of the similarities assumed in Greco-Roman literature post-date the dating of the Gospels, thus dismissing previous notions of the gospel writers borrowing from Greco-Roman sources and applying them to the life and ministry of Jesus.⁹⁴ Perhaps the

⁹⁰ Translation taken from Barrett, *New Testament Background*, 32–33.

⁹¹ Barrett, *New Testament Background*, 34.

⁹² Barrett, *New Testament Background*, 34.

⁹³ Barrett, *New Testament Background*, 34.

⁹⁴ Blomberg argues that if there was any literary dependence it would be vice-versa where the Greco-Roman sources would borrow from Christian literature. Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 85.

most famous of all Greco-Roman stories alluded to in comparison with the healings and exorcisms of Jesus is the story of Apollonius of Tyana, a first-century legendary sage.⁹⁵ The account of his life was recorded and written in the early third century CE by Philostratus of Athens, who wrote a work entitled *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.⁹⁶ The motive for Philostratus to write this text was principally polemical in that he was attempting to defend Apollonius from what he perceived to be attacks on his person. Ancient attempts to compare the miraculous deeds of Jesus with that of Apollonius were made by Greek writers such as Hierocles, who wrote a book on this subject entitled *Lover of Truth*.⁹⁷ The comparison was not that of the sayings of Jesus with Apollonius, but rather the miraculous deeds of both men. This would imply that Christians were retelling the gospel stories of the wonders of Jesus and some of their Hellenistic hearers responded by asserting the same things for Apollonius, thus implying either that both were divine men or that Christians merely copied their Greco-Roman neighbors. If Christians were willing to assert divine status to Jesus, then the same, Hierocles claimed, could be said of Apollonius.⁹⁸ This work did not go unchallenged, but was responded to by Eusebius of Caesarea in his work, *Against the Life of Apollonius*.

The issue of the dating of these documents are important in regards to the question of literary dependence. The argument has been made in the past by some scholars that early Christians and the gospel writers embellished the Jesus tradition according to the lives and deeds of Hellenistic wonder workers like Apollonius.⁹⁹

The problem with this approach is again one of dating. Apollonius of Tyana, while being a first-century sage, is first described as a wonder worker two hundred years later by Philostratus of Athens.¹⁰⁰ The time gap between the sayings and deeds of Jesus and the writing of at least the Synoptic Gospels are only decades in comparison.

⁹⁵ See the brief but helpful discussion with references on Apollonius of Tyana in Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 245–250.

⁹⁶ For the English translation of this work, see Philostratus, *Philostratus: The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (trans. F.C. Conybeare; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912).

⁹⁷ Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 245.

⁹⁸ Evans, *Jesus and His Contemporaries*, 245.

⁹⁹ As was argued by M. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (London: James Clarke, 1971), 70–103, and R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 218–244.

¹⁰⁰ Geza Vermes in his book *Who's Who in the Age of Jesus* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), while mentioning all the notable historical figures of the first century who were contemporaneous with Jesus never mentions Apollonius of Tyana.

Some scholars have speculated that Philostratus may have been familiar with the Christian stories regarding the miracles of Jesus, his post-mortem appearances, and ascension to heaven and attributed the same to Apollonius.¹⁰¹ However, the early dating of the Gospels continues to remain a strong argument against any literary dependence on Greco-Roman sources for the life of Jesus. Others have concluded regarding the correlation between Jesus and Apollonius that there was no literary dependence on either side but that both came from independent sources,¹⁰² but this appears highly doubtful in light of the polemical work of Hierocles who compares Jesus with Apollonius. The later account of the life of Apollonius by Philostratus in the early third century has led some scholars to regard this account as fictitious.¹⁰³ The important issue here is the time factor.

The analysis of Roman historian A.N. Sherwin-White,¹⁰⁴ that the time gap between a given event and the writing down of that event is crucial to understanding the development and accruelement of legendary elements, lends support to this explanation. The longer the time gap, the higher the possibility for legendary material to accrue.¹⁰⁵ Gerd Lüdemann agrees with this assessment, that the older or later a given unit of a text is, the more densely it is covered by later tradition.¹⁰⁶ Sherwin-White contends that even two generations is too short a time to erase the historical core of a recorded event, and he places the New Testament Gospels in this category.¹⁰⁷ If Sherwin-White and Lüdemann are correct, this further supports the view

¹⁰¹ Murray J. Harris sees the differences in *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* in comparison with the miracles of Jesus as numerous and substantial. Murray J. Harris, "The Dead are Restored to Life: Miracles of Revivification in the Gospels," in *Gospel Perspectives*, 6:303.

¹⁰² Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 83, 85.

¹⁰³ See M. Dzielska, *Apollonius of Tyana in Legend and History* (Rome: L'Erma, 1986).

¹⁰⁴ A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963).

¹⁰⁵ Sherwin-White in his book also uses the example of Alexander the Great where long intervals of time resulted in completely revamping his image and person. The life of Alexander the Great was greatly embellished for a period of more than 1,000 years, and the earliest sources depict him as a very different man than the mythological figure that later legends made him out to be. Alexander's most reliable ancient biographer, Arrian of Nicomedia, says nothing of a virgin birth of Alexander or any fantastic claims as accepting praise as a god as Plutarch was known to do in his biography (Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* 2:3–6; 27:8–11). See Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 84–85.

¹⁰⁶ Gerd Lüdemann, *Jesus After 2000 Years: What He Really Did and Said* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 2001), 5. Also see Ben Witherington, "The Wright Quest for the Historical Jesus," *The Christian Century* (November 19–26, 1997): 1075–1078, who also maintains the same position and rejects any parallels of legendary materials to the New Testament Gospels.

¹⁰⁷ Sherwin-White, *Roman Society*, 188–191.

that the healings and exorcisms of Jesus were part of the authentic Jesus tradition, as found particularly in the Synoptic Gospels, which were written just decades after the life of Jesus. Thus, in this respect, given the relatively early date for the Synoptics assumed by many scholars and the general belief in exorcisms and miracles in the first century, the authors and organizers of the Jesus tradition likely recorded what they understood to be reality rather than seeking to mimic Greco-Roman parallels.

Other Greco-Roman stories exist such as that of the healing god Asclepius, the patron of physicians, who is said to have performed miraculous healings including raising the dead (Ovid, *Fasti* 6:743–762), which Jesus is also said to have done (Mark 5:35–43; Luke 7:11–17; John 11:38–44). The cult of Asclepius was widely attested in the ancient world. There continues to be debate as to whether Asclepius was a real historical person, whether he actually existed,¹⁰⁸ or was a historical figure later deified by his followers, as Alexander the Great was. Historians on the other hand view Jesus as a historical person and the tradition of his healings and exorcisms appear to be early and hence part of the authentic Jesus tradition.

8. SUMMARY

The evidence assessed above situates Jesus of Nazareth in a unique way within his first-century culture. The evidence surveyed has led a number of scholars toward a reconsideration of the historical Jesus in relation to the contemporary figures often believed to be like him in many respects. The tide does seem to be changing in scholarship in regards to the historical Jesus, as a number of scholars seem to be moving towards a consensus that Jesus was a significant individual who believed that in his person the kingdom of God had come, and that it was visibly manifested in his ministry of healing and exorcism. As I have argued, the criteria of authenticity employed in the study of the historical Jesus lend significant support to the notion that Jesus did indeed perform such acts as healing and exorcisms or, at the very least, was believed to have done so by his contemporaries rather than the Synoptics embellishing material based upon supposed parallel accounts. The miraculous feats of Jesus are coherent with his first-century culture, and yet dissimilar in other respects. The application of the various criteria, such as coherence, dissimilarity, and embarrassment are only

¹⁰⁸ Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 84–85.

a few that help to establish this important component of the Jesus tradition. The existence of enemy attestation witnessed in hostile sources such as rabbinic writings and Patristic writings such as Justin Martyr and Origen demonstrate that Jesus was recognized to be a miracle worker of sorts, but that it was explained away as sorcery. A neutral source like Josephus equally acknowledges Jesus as a doer of "wonderful works." It is doubtful such a reputation about Jesus could survive for so long unless there was some truth to the charge that he performed certain acts deemed extraordinary.

The hypothesis of a literary dependence by the gospel writers on late Greco-Roman sources has been considerably weakened in scholarly circles. The early dating of the Gospels in relation to the later Greco-Roman sources remains a formidable argument against the dependence of the Gospels on such sources. The charge that the gospel writers were copying or borrowing from Greco-Roman materials in relation to the healings and exorcisms attributed to the historical Jesus should be taken as highly dubious in light of the primary sources surveyed in this essay. The evidence seems to indicate that quite the contrary was true. It seems that Greco-Roman writers who were familiar with the Christian story of Jesus, such as Philostratus of Athens in his account of Apollonius of Tyana, and most definitely Hierocles, modeled their stories according to the Jesus story. While debate continues in this area of historical-Jesus research, there has been much progress in acknowledging the historical Jesus as one who understood himself to be the herald of God's kingdom, which was invading the human sphere, and that he believed this phenomenon was visibly manifested in his performance of healings and exorcisms.

CASH AND RELEASE:
ATONEMENT AND RELEASE FROM OPPRESSION IN
THE IMPERIAL CONTEXT OF LUKE'S GOSPEL*

Matthew Forrest Lowe

Robert Tannehill has affirmed ῥησις, *release*, as a significant, unifying theme in Luke's Gospel: significant in the repetition of the word, its cognate terms, and congruent themes in pivotal moments of Jesus' ministry, and unifying in connecting otherwise disparate parts of the author's narrative, both in the Gospel and in Acts. The semantic range of the resulting group of cognate terms and motifs, while complex, integrates some of Luke's strongest narrative emphases. Working from Jesus' commissioning pledge of preaching good news to the poor and release to captives (Luke 4:18–19, invoking Isa 61:1–2; 58:6), Tannehill first factored the meaning of ῥησις into (a) deliverance from economic oppression (as in Luke 4:18); (b) freedom through healing from physical disorder and/or demonic possession (13:10–17); and (c) release or forgiveness of sins (1:77; 3:3; 24:47; and multiple instances in Acts).¹ This imagery of release and rescue is theologically rich, with implications for the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, liberation theology, Christology, atonement theory, and other disciplines. But recent New Testament scholarship demands that Tannehill's literary analysis be revisited: if Christianity's early texts were written in a world order dictated by the Roman empire, then how does this imperial cadence affect Jesus' proclamation of release?

Initial observations would indicate a parallel of *oppression* running between Tannehill's first two formulations; this might be extended to the third factor, inasmuch as the individual or community may be said to be

* A modified form of this essay was presented at the "Theology on Tap" program at the University of Western Ontario, February 13, 2008; a later edition was successfully submitted to the Program Unit "Jesus Traditions, Gospels, and Negotiating the Roman Imperial World" for the 2008 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. I am grateful to those who expressed helpful comments in each of these settings.

¹ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation: The Gospel according to Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 65–66. Though Luke 13:10–17 does not use the same root, a similar sense is clearly intended by the author; other passages will be marshaled to support this point below.

oppressed, burdened, or tormented by sin. This correspondence, however, only highlights a more tenable bridge between the factors, as all three involve *suffering*. Affliction and hardship have been recently confirmed as central to early Christian kerygma and specifically to the atonement.² They fit plausibly within Jesus' conception of his own messianic identity, his expectation of an eschatological tribulation and persecution for his followers, and his death as a ransom that would bring about the end of the exile.³ Suffering has also been documented repeatedly as basic to peasant life under Roman rule in the first century CE.⁴

Strong ties can be suggested, then, between suffering, empire, release, and soteriology.⁵ But in approaching a narrative such as Luke's, these bonds must be forged, not forced. Any attempt to describe the Christian atonement constitutes the shaping of a narrative, whether drawing it out from events in the biblical metanarrative, or constructing it from new elements gathered from tradition, reason, or experience. Even a survey of Christ's soteriological functions or "job descriptions" implies a series of narrational perspectives from which these descriptions are borrowed.⁶ Any categories established to contain or classify these descriptions must respect the connections between them.⁷ Further, the context of a given narrative is vital to the shaping of the theology that emerges from it.⁸ Luke-Acts does not accuse

² See, for instance, L. Ann Jervis, *At the Heart of the Gospel: Suffering in the Earliest Christian Message* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), and Michael P. Knowles, *We Preach Not Ourselves: Paul on Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008).

³ Brant Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement* (WUNT 2.204; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), esp. 413. Also, see my review of this proposal in *JGRChJ*.

⁴ See, for example, Gildas Hamel, *Poverty and Charity in Roman Palestine, First Three Centuries C.E.* (Near Eastern Studies 23; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); and more recently, Dennis C. Duling, "Empire: Theories, Methods, Models," in John Riches and David C. Sim, eds., *The Gospel of Matthew in its Roman Imperial Context* (JSNTSup 276; New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 49–74.

⁵ This essay will employ *atonement* more frequently than *soteriology*, as the former term corresponds more naturally with *release* as an action or activity. It should be understood, however, that this discussion is an exercise that combines sociological and soteriological concerns, a combination pivotal to the author's previous and forthcoming work; see examples provided later.

⁶ Such as those offered by Marilyn McCord Adams, *Christ and Horrors: The Coherence of Christology* (Current Issues in Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), ix, 29–30, 52, and 69–71.

⁷ As Adams (*Christ and Horrors*, 16) fails to do; I find the conceptualities she sets out (apocalyptic, cultic, legal, etc.) to be far too rigid.

⁸ See the introductory chapter to Alexander Lucie-Smith's *Narrative Theology and Moral*

Rome of actively persecuting Jesus or Christians, but its author adapts Israel's covenantal traditions to serve as a metric for evaluating the ways of empire—and the ἄφεσις motif forms the core of this metric, underscoring Rome's structural oppression and God's active deliverance. Understanding the covenantal and imperial contexts that informed Luke's (and Jesus') application of ἄφεσις is thus essential to the task of interpreting Luke's view of the atonement.

This study, then, will unfold in three phases. The first is an attempt to reread Tannehill's emphasis on release in Luke with a heightened sociological and imperial awareness, beginning with an analysis of the semantic field of release and noting the ways in which the Roman empire would have shaped its applications. Certainly Rome's impact will be more readily apparent in terms of socio-economic oppression and physical suffering than in the anticipated release of sins; and as we examine four key Lukan texts as test cases, we should not expect to find the full semantic range of ἄφεσις at work in every instance. But we will find ample evidence of Rome's role in Luke's discourse. Renewed attention to the Greco-Roman historical context of the author, narrator, and audience—with help from Warren Carter, among other voices—will sharpen the realities behind the interrelated biblical metaphors of release and ransom, etching in deeper relief the gap Luke laments between rich and poor.

This socioeconomic gap is central to the second phase, which draws upon the biblical resources Luke employed in drafting Jesus' sabbatical reading. The words of "good news," which Jesus directs to the poor, were originally addressed to the *oppressed*, to those in need of deliverance. A relief package was promised in Deuteronomic and Levitical tradition, pledging a regular practice of Jubilee for the return of property and personal liberty from bound labor. Though Isaiah's references to this tradition are placed in Jesus' mouth as a commission, they were originally spoken as an indictment of those who neglect social justice. A brief study of Isaiah reveals that Luke may be adopting Isaiah's tone as a thinly veiled critique, forming a metric that targets Rome's inequalities in handling land, people, and even resources as basic as food. Suffering caused by previous injustice is what gives this covenantal metric its force, as so many suffered at the bottom of Roman society, with no hope of release.

Theology: The Infinite Horizon (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), for an emergent theory of interrelationship among narrative, community, context, and tradition.

Phase three follows from the first two in pursuing the evocative power of release as a metaphor relating to the atonement, not as a motif complete unto itself, but as a connective concept, engendered in Old Testament covenant traditions and linking together some of the New Testament's more prominent atonement themes, such as ransom and *Christus Victor*. Marilyn McCord Adams categorizes the motif of ransom as part of a *legal* framework, distinguishing it from the *apocalyptic* concept of Christ as conquering warrior;⁹ yet inasmuch as the two conventions employ similar language of overcoming enemies and rescuing prisoners from bondage, they share a considerable semantic range of symbol. Gustaf Aulén's *Christus Victor* motif, once adapted to better incorporate the empire's often destructive role, should prove highly compatible with ransom, in a comparison centering on the shared idea of release. In triumphing over demonic—and imperial?—opposition, God's Messiah and Son announces the ironic end of all powers that would compete with God's rule, and the rescue of all those whom they have oppressed.

This study is intended to respond to emergent issues in New Testament scholarship at the concrete level of imperial poverty, in the appropriation of Old Testament themes, and in the evocative metaphors of Christ's act of atonement. The point is not to chart completely new territory, but to refine previous approaches and exegetical interpretations of relevant texts to meet the challenges posed by the first-century Roman world, a context historically distant yet disturbingly relevant today. Beginning with specific words and concluding with the soteriological statements born from them, the intent is to illustrate the compatibility of distinct but related atonement motifs in a New Testament narrative, one demonstrably influenced by both Israel's covenant and Rome's empire. Specific to the present volume's aim of exploring the Greco-Roman world as a social context for Christian origins, it should be obvious that Roman socio-economics determined much of the structure of the first-century Mediterranean, the world in which Rome was the reigning superpower. The ramifications of Rome's rule for early Christian language, scriptural hermeneutics, and soteriology will become gradually evident below. But in a time when many North Americans are growing increasingly aware of their complicity in the imperial systems of the present, we should acknowledge that the influence of "classical" culture, usually so urbane in its civilizing connotations, is not always so positive when empire is involved.

⁹ See Adams, *Christ and Horrors*, 16 and elsewhere, as already cited above.

1. ἈΦΕΣΙΣ IN LUKE'S NARRATIVE: IMPERIAL CONTEXTS

Before approaching applications of the domain of ἄφεσις in Luke's text or in Tannehill's commentary, it is helpful to begin with Bultmann's analysis. Probing the four related terms of ἀφίημι, ἄφεσις, παρίημι, and ἄρεσις, Bultmann acknowledges that ἀφιέναι can take either a material or a personal object, a fact that will resurface later in our studies of Lukan texts; ἀφιέναι and the corresponding but rarer substantive, ἄφεσις, are (in Bultmann's estimate) never used in religious applications outside of Scripture.¹⁰ The terms often have legal connotations, as in a release from office, marriage, other official obligations, or (significantly here) debt, while in the Septuagint they also convey remission, as from sin or guilt.¹¹ In other LXX contexts, the terms can also denote an eschatological form of liberation (Isa 58:6; 61:1), or, alternatively, amnesty or tax exemption (Esth 2:18).¹² The New Testament adopts and adapts the LXX usage, taking ἄφεσις more consistently in the direction of forgiveness, usually that granted by God. Says Bultmann: "Even where ἄφεσις is meant in the sense of 'liberation' (twice in Lk. 4:18, quoting Is. 61:1 and 58:6), this at least includes the thought of forgiveness."¹³ Bultmann, then, admits some intermingling of the meanings of ἄφεσις and its cognates, but is largely content to isolate them into secular and sacred uses.

Recent research offers substantial reasons for critiquing and developing this understanding. In historical-Jesus scholarship, familiar territory for Bultmann, Brant Pitre has shown eschatological liberation to be firmly linked to Jesus' use of the concepts of suffering, ransom, and release, with major political ramifications—though even Pitre does not explore these fully.¹⁴ Further critique, again at least in part from discussion of the historical Jesus, might be voiced by Paul Anderson and Craig Evans. Much of Anderson's career has been devoted to showing the dialectic nuances, the plurality of meanings, in John's thought, left largely unacknowledged by Bultmann.

¹⁰ Bultmann uses this distinction throughout; see Rudolf Bultmann, "ἀφίημι, ἄφεσις, παρίημι, ἄρεσις," *TDNT* 1:509–511.

¹¹ Bultmann, "ἀφίημι," 1:509–510. The very existence of the LXX, of course, testifies to the globalizing effects of Hellenistic culture upon the ancient world.

¹² Bultmann, "ἀφίημι," 1:510.

¹³ Bultmann, "ἀφίημι," 1:511.

¹⁴ Pitre, *Jesus*, 404–417, connects Jesus' understanding of his own "ransom for many" logion in Mark 10:45 to deliverance or release marking the end of the exile. He offers a helpful critique and adaptation of N.T. Wright's work, demonstrating that the end of exile needed to include the tribes from the Assyrian captivity, not just the Babylonian, but he does not capitalize on the imperial implications of this hoped-for return under the ongoing rule of Rome.

Though he does not address ἄφεςις directly, Anderson insists on the surprising agreement between the Synoptics and John in applying “basileic” language to Jesus.¹⁵ When this insight is brought to bear on Luke, whose references to kingship are so often bound tightly to language of finance and cost (Luke 14:28–33; 19:11–27), the authority of “king” Jesus (19:38;¹⁶ 23:2–3, 37–38; Acts 17:7) would seem to encompass both “sacred” and “secular” uses of ἄφεςις. Evans offers intertexts on Jesus’ kingship and authority from biblical and early apostolic literature, further cementing this point;¹⁷ and Richard Cassidy points out that the directive to “render to Caesar” (Luke 20:25) is an implicit reminder that even the items under Caesar’s authority belong ultimately to God.¹⁸ If Jesus’ kingship is divinely mandated, there is nothing that does not belong under his authority to bind or to release, so the sacred-secular divide is a false dichotomy.

To return to Bultmann: though ἄφεςις is fundamentally significant to understanding the New Testament, he says that its “terminological explanation is not highly developed.”¹⁹ Bultmann is likely correct in making this statement, but the claim is hardly unique: Stanley Porter has noted that other features of Classical and New Testament Greek, such as the relationships among tense-forms, frustrated even the ancient grammarians’ attempts at systematization.²⁰ But if such articulations are difficult, this

¹⁵ John’s Gospel, says Anderson, while less prone to explicit kingdom references, is more “basileic” in language and character than many scholars will admit. See Paul N. Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus: Modern Foundations Reconsidered* (LHJS; LNTS 321; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 52–54.

¹⁶ Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh note in their *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 391–392, the contrast between this reference and 19:11–27, immediately previous. Jesus, entering Jerusalem not just as prophet but as “broker” of the kingdom, prophesies about the Roman siege encampment (67 CE) and has praise offered “first to God, the Patron, rather than Jesus, the Broker.” He comes “in the name of the Lord,” as opposed to the nobleman who traveled to receive kingly authority *for himself*, 19:12.

¹⁷ Craig A. Evans, “King Jesus and His Ambassador Paul: Empire and Luke-Acts,” in Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall, eds., *Empire in the New Testament* (MNTS; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 120–139 (120–125); cf. 125–130 for further connections from the imagery of benefaction to Jesus’ redemptive ministry.

¹⁸ Richard J. Cassidy, *Christians and Roman Rule in the New Testament: New Perspectives* (Companions to the New Testament; New York: Herder and Herder [Crossroad], 2001), 28–29: “Harbors, roads, aqueducts, gymnasiums, treasuries, soldiers, territory [the bases for establishing taxation]: do any of these things ultimately belong to Caesar? No, in the perspective of Jesus all such items and all other *realia* ultimately belong to God as sovereign creator,” with Caesar as his temporary steward.

¹⁹ Bultmann, “ἄφῆμι,” 1:512.

²⁰ Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (BLG 2; 2nd ed.; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 26.

should be all the more reason to be cautious in limiting ἄφεσις and its cognates to forgiveness, or in dividing its uses so cleanly. The legal and eschatological poles in Bultmann's analysis, separated in keeping with twentieth and twenty-first century mores, may not be quite so definitively far apart as they first seem. Acknowledging this ambiguity, we can expand the perspective²¹ of our inquiry, moving from a word-study to a narrative analysis of Luke to see how our initial reflections on the meaning of ἄφεσις apply to Luke's story and sociopolitical context.

1.1. *Critiquing and Developing Tannehill's Analysis*

1.1.1. *Release from Captivity/Debt*

Tannehill introduces his outline of Luke's use of ἄφεσις as he comments upon Luke 4:18: "The importance of the proclamation and realization of release is indicated by the double use of this word. Indeed, the line in which 'release' is used for the second time [inserted from Isa 58:6] ... is best explained by the desire to reemphasize this word 'release.'"²² If the sense of this word is so strong as to govern the way in which Luke, as author and editor, interprets Scripture, then it is worth following Tannehill in his factored meanings of the term, offering critique and hinting at further development to come. Luke 4:18, as the initial context for Tannehill's discussion suggests, revolves around the release of captives, which "would include those economically oppressed, those enslaved because of debts, etc."²³ The likely economic nature of the captivity (both in the original Isaianic context and in the programmatic appropriation Luke ascribes to Jesus) is a vital point, but it is almost glossed over by Tannehill, with the context of oppression ignored completely. Why do the captives suffer so?

1.1.2. *Release from Physical Disorder and/or Demonic Oppression*

For the anticipated deliverance on this front, Tannehill points to texts such as Peter's summary of Jesus' ministry in Acts 10:38, healing those oppressed by Satan. Luke 13:10–17 is his selected example in the Gospel, an account

²¹ Judging by Porter's "discourse pyramid" diagram (*Idioms*, 298), this move entails a leap from the base of individual words up to a point near the whole-discourse apex, the better to survey interconnected passages; space does not permit a step-by-step climb through the stages of phrases, sentences, and individual pericopes.

²² Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 65; this discussion will work primarily from 65–66.

²³ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 65.

to which we will return. To this text and the healing of Simon's mother-in-law (4:38–39) we could also add the synagogue healing of the man with the paralyzed hand (6:6–11) and certainly Jesus' own summaries of his work, "Your faith has saved you," in 7:50 (following the release of the woman's sins in 7:48–49) and again in 8:48. Though these passages are often more closely related in content than exact terminology—Tannehill's own pivotal example, 13:10–17, does not use ἄφεσις or its cognates—we can certainly concur that the same *sense* of release is preserved, agreeing that "Jesus' healings and exorcisms are an important aspect of his mission of bringing 'release.'"²⁴ But are physical disability and spiritual opposition the only causes of such problems, of such suffering?

1.1.3. *Release of Sins*

Alluded to above, release of sin is best seen in the setting of the Lord's Prayer, in Luke 11:4: καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίομεν, followed by the embedded clause,²⁵ παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν. This phrase exhibits a problem common to Greek-English translation: *forgive*, the usual choice for rendering ἄφες,²⁶ is seldom seen without a personal object in modern, colloquial English. So while it is natural for English translators and readers to interpret the imperative request as "forgive *us*," a closer translation might read, "and release from us our sins, for we ourselves also release everyone in debt to us" (my translation). The conventional reading seems a better fit with the oppression present in Tannehill's first two factors, but again, suffering is the true common denominator among the three. Nor is oppression necessarily ruled out by this closer reading of the text; Tannehill's subsequent examples of the release or forgiveness of sins (in John the Baptist's ministry, Luke 1:77; 3:3; in the missional charge at the end of Luke, 24:47; and numerous points in the speeches of Acts) clearly connect back to the contexts of his first two factors.²⁷ But once more, there may be elements to these contexts that have yet to be explored. The pairing of sin and the sense of obligation makes clear that uncanceled sins place one in God's debt.²⁸ And

²⁴ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 65.

²⁵ In discussing clausal structure, I refer to the resources offered by the OpenText.org project, at www.opentext.org.

²⁶ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 65–66.

²⁷ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 66; most notably in the mention of bondage in Acts 8:22–23, another intertext of Isa 58:6 and Luke 4:18.

²⁸ Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary*, 350.

even this does not address the “debts” accrued on a corporate level, as participants and even as unwitting perpetrators in an imperial social structure. In this and the previous two factors, understanding the context is essential.

Let us return to each of Tannehill's three points to fill in contextual gaps. First, Tannehill makes brief mention of enslavement through debt. A closer look at Palestinian poverty under Roman rule in Jesus' day reveals debt to be a *permanent feature* of the economic structure at the time, as with many agricultural societies based on sharecropping practices; Gildas Hamel cites multiple instances from Luke (6:34; 7:41–42; 12:58–59; and 16:1–9) dealing with the large debts to which many sharecroppers would have been subjected (some of whom, no doubt, made up part of Jesus' audiences).²⁹ Landowners could control the type of crops sown and the amount of land cultivated, thus modulating tenant and sharecropper income, allowing the farmers few chances to reciprocate such treatment.³⁰ The only recourse left would have been occasionally to force one's landowner to appear generous, canceling debts for fear of risking a loss in status.³¹ Escape from this systematic, manipulative cycle would have been rare and difficult, but likely all the more desirable. Debt constituted *bondage*, especially when death, disease, or malnutrition threatened; and in a rural, bartering economy, the taxes imposed by Rome (payable only in cash) only exacerbated these urgent problems.³² Both in and outside of the New Testament, the degree of need was often the only real measurement of status among the poor, and the price of release was unattainably high.

We must be careful when commenting on the context of physical disability and demonic oppression; it is far too easy for comparatively affluent societies to dismiss the former, and for most moderns to explain away the latter. Hamel is certain that any “socially enforced contraction of needs” in the ancient world was worsened in cases of disability.³³ Warren Carter brings

²⁹ Hamel, *Poverty and Charity*, 156 and esp. n. 61.

³⁰ Hamel, *Poverty and Charity*, 156 and esp. n. 60, where he speculates that Jesus' accent on feasting, and on not worrying over the next day's provisions, may mark the scarcity of extra resources for tenant farmers.

³¹ Hamel, *Poverty and Charity*, 157 and esp. n. 67, notes this as a possible explanation of the “fast manoeuvring steward” of Luke 16:1–8.

³² Hamel, *Poverty and Charity*, 162, 163 and n. 92; on malnutrition, 52–53; on status and language of poverty, 55 and 177; on the difficulty of coming up with hard currency, 144 and 162. A comparable situation can be found in Philip Pullman's popular fiction, where a gypsy leader speaks carefully in asking for a self-imposed tax of gold from his people, in *The Golden Compass* (New York: Knopf [Random House], 1998), 116 and 134.

³³ Hamel, *Poverty and Charity*, 163 and n. 91.

in a modern example of the cost of political conflict, citing children so traumatized by war in Kosovo that they are unable to speak or move;³⁴ surely this begins to address the causes behind some of the afflictions described by the Gospels. Physical problems caused by privation are not interchangeable with disabilities and demonic possessions, but when imperial forces are involved, the categories occupy a common spectrum: “imperial power is bad for your health.”³⁵

Tannehill’s final factor of ἄφεσις, the release of sins, seems the least likely to yield an imperial background. Yet even here, at least two brief arguments can be made to the contrary. First, that of potential complicity in structural sin: Adams asserts that Jesus’ earthly career was “horror-studded,” punctuated by sins of mammoth and dehumanizing proportions. Most monstrous among these would be Jesus’ death by crucifixion, but the description also applies to his birth (occasioning Herod’s slaughter of the innocents), his prophetic ministry (risking perpetration of horrific evil in challenging the established religious and political order)—specifically his healing and exorcizing (provoking the religious leaders to ruinous acts, up to and including self-betrayal)—and finally to his participation, however minimal, in the benefits of Roman-ordered society; “he joined every other subject in collective complicity in the horrors wrought by Rome.”³⁶ This is not to say that Jesus committed sin—but it does cause us to wonder if the release of sins is broader in scope than our own conventional, often individualized understanding allows.

The second argument for imperial influence on Jesus’ prayer arises from the hopes expressed in the prayer’s language: perhaps, in teaching the prayer, Jesus was offering phrases that he himself prayed regularly. This claim has been made by Pitre, who wonders whether Jesus also hoped to be delivered from the πειρασμός, the eschatological time of trial, as he certainly

³⁴ Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 71 n. 41.

³⁵ Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 71; as opposed to Rome’s imperial myth of societal well-being, 70–73. Further arguments for the sociological dimension implicit in exorcism accounts have been made by Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (new ed.; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989); more recently, and for specifically postcolonial readings of the same Gospel, see Simon Samuel, *A Postcolonial Reading of Mark’s Story of Jesus* (LNTS 340; London: T&T Clark, 2007), and Tat-siong Benny Liew, “The Gospel of Mark,” in Fernando F. Segovia and R.S. Sugirtharajah, eds., *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (The Bible and Postcolonialism 13; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 105–132.

³⁶ Adams, *Christ and Horrors*, 69–71.

hoped his disciples would be.³⁷ The language of the Lord's Prayer is fundamentally eschatological, as are many of Jesus' most puzzling sayings: Pitre offers solid support for his later claim that *ransom for sins* means first and foremost a *release*, as from bondage or exile, and he lacks only a blended, linguistic-theological focus resembling Tannehill's to further enliven his resulting doctrine of atonement.³⁸ Further, the very fact that Luke mixes debt-language and sin-language should help readers to calculate the (ongoing!) relevance of his thoroughgoing financial metaphor, that accrued debt (of money, of sin) must be released with generosity and compassion. For a modern political equivalent in release-language, we might look to a recent campaign from the Christian international aid agency, Mercy Corps. The agency's phrasing of attempts at peaceful change in Nepal—including an end to bonded plantation labor—has been titled "Unshackling Potential," with telling reminders of the slavery involved and the hope for release.³⁹

To situate these insights in Luke's narrative, we now return to selected texts from his Gospel, which have already been drawn into discussion above.

Luke 4:18–19

As we have already mentioned, ἀφεσις appears twice here, as Luke arranges Jesus' commission statement into a tripartite series of embedded clauses, each beginning with an infinitive. Tannehill notes the connotation of Jubilee, of *a year of release*, in 4:19;⁴⁰ this expectation is set up by the release or deliverance promised to the captives (first embedded clause) and the oppressed (second embedded clause), all of which follows the proclamation of good news to the πτωχοίς. From the beginning to the end of this Isaianic amalgam, Luke's concern—and the concern of Jesus, as the Lukan narrator portrays him—is *with* and *for* the poor. Oppression in any form is the enemy here, the evil (or to adopt Adams' language, the horror) continually perpetrated that must be actively and creatively opposed.

³⁷ Pitre, *Jesus*, 331, introduces the *paschal* side of the messianic tribulation: "He taught his disciples to pray to be delivered from the *peirasmos*, the time of trial. Did he pray this prayer also? Would he need to be delivered as well?"

³⁸ Pitre, *Jesus*, 413; again, as I have argued in my review.

³⁹ See www.mercycorps.org/countries/nepal/1940?source=E155, or for a broader view, including the relevance to this argument of Mercy Corps' explicit mission "to alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression by helping people build secure, productive and just communities," see www.mercycorps.org/aboutus/overview (both sites accessed December 10, 2007).

⁴⁰ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 67.

Some interpreters, then, may be justified in reading this passage as politically confrontational. In Michael Northcott's words, "The evil Jesus challenged was that state of affairs which manifested itself in imperial slaughter," in the "debt, privation and sickness" visited upon subjected peoples, and in the self-deception of collaboration.⁴¹ But Northcott cautions against further political appropriation of this passage and its Old Testament context, criticizing George W. Bush's reading of Isaiah in his "Mission Accomplished" speech on the flight deck of the *Lincoln* aircraft carrier. President Bush invoked the same Isaianic material there as Luke did, but Northcott targets the resulting speech as a juxtaposition of Christian apocalyptic and civil religion, with the goal of sacralizing imperial violence.⁴² Jesus' words may be confrontational, but they do not have to be read as militant; the "good news" elsewhere in Luke's Gospel entails simple but life-giving gestures of hospitality, as with those offered to those disabled (and so *least* likely to be invited to dinner, parabolically in 14:15–24) in 7:22.

Consonant with this volume's interest in classical literary forms is one more political reading of this passage, offered by Shane Claiborne and Chris Haw. Their book *Jesus for President* is intended to provoke and unfetter the Christian political imagination, presenting some of the findings of imperial New Testament scholarship in a more accessible format.⁴³ No wonder, then, that they present Luke 4:18–19 as Jesus' "formal entrance" into the political scene, his "commencement address," as though opening a run for the presidency, with "Jubilee" as campaign slogan and the resurrection of an ancient "jubilee economics" of release and debt cancellation as his platform.⁴⁴ The attempt to read a contemporary American genre of political rhetoric back into the first-century Greco-Roman world is surely a bit simplistic, and aligning this form of commencement address with ancient and modern counterparts from the political arena would require an entirely separate article. In focusing attention on the revolutionary claims inherent in the titles ascribed to Jesus and in his speech in this context, however, Claiborne and Haw are right in highlighting the economy Jesus suggests as a boldly covenantal alternative to that of Caesar.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Michael Northcott, *An Angel Directs the Storm: Apocalyptic Religion and American Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 142.

⁴² Northcott, *An Angel Directs*, 7 (quoting Bush's direct address to those in captivity during his speech) and 12.

⁴³ Shane Claiborne and Chris Haw, *Jesus for President: Politics for Ordinary Radicals* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), esp. 20–21.

⁴⁴ Claiborne and Haw, *Jesus for President*, 88–91.

⁴⁵ Claiborne and Haw, *Jesus for President*, 86 ("All of his titles granted him political

Luke 11:2–4

Again, ἄφεσις appears twice here, with important conjunctions linking the imperative ἄφεξ with the indicative, first-person plural ἀφίομεν and its subject, grammaticalized in the pronoun αὐτοί. The request (difficult to render in modern, colloquial English with respect to its imperative mood) for the release of sins by God appears uncomfortably *contingent* upon release (or forgiveness) of others' debts owed to the individual or the community. We can also look to 7:41–50, where a woman's thankfulness (for forgiveness, apparently granted even before Jesus explicitly says so in 7:47–48) is likened by Jesus to having a greater financial debt forgiven. The Lord's Prayer is one of Luke's many points of emphasis on prayer, which some have rightly characterized as key to the Evangelist's view of God's redemptive drama; but even within this accent, the effects of empire are acknowledged. Craig Bartholomew and Robby Holt teach that "those who pray with Jesus learn to call upon the God of Israel as 'Father' and so learn to relate to him as kind, caring and benevolent toward those willing to repent of selfish, fearful, violent, slavish, destructive and dehumanizing orientations"⁴⁶—in close parallel with the attitude and intent of deliberate horror-perpetrators in Adams' view. The vicious and dehumanizing impact of corporate sin is an effective reminder of the continuing need for Luke's readers, ancient and modern, to pray Jesus' prayer together.

Luke 13:10–17

Even when the ἄφεσις cognate group is absent, a sense similar to that of release remains intact. It is the comparable idea of *loosing* that Jesus employs here, to considerable rhetorical effect, highlighting the view of those who do *not* align themselves with Jesus' direction of prayer. It is not just disability that takes the foreground, but also Jesus' opponents' "disability" that prevents them from seeing God's redemptive ministry as he does (the reader can compare Mark and John's frequent use of a metaphor based on sight and blindness). "Devotion to other basic commitments and resisting God's agenda obscures, for those who fail to see and hear, the good news

authority. Calling him Messiah or Lord is like acclaiming him—unlikely as it is—as president") and go ("the way out of Rome's grip lay not in appealing to Rome or in trying to overthrow Rome but in resurrecting Yahweh's alternative economy right under Caesar's nose").

⁴⁶ Craig G. Bartholomew and Robby Holt, "Prayer in/and the Drama of Redemption in Luke: Prayer and Exegetical Performance," in Craig G. Bartholomew, Joel B. Green, and Anthony C. Thiselton, eds., *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation* (Scripture and Hermeneutics 6; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 359.

announced in God's name."⁴⁷ Tannehill draws in another instance of healing where an ἄφεσις cognate does appear; in Luke 4:36, Jesus' action forces a fever to "release" Simon's relative.⁴⁸ But even this account is placed in the context of a narrative arc accenting the *rejection* of Jesus, culminating ultimately in the suffering of a very Roman crucifixion that leads, paradoxically, to eternal life for Jesus' followers.⁴⁹ Another intertext comes from Luke 6: Jesus, shortly after healing a local paralytic, heals the sick and demon-tormented as he begins his Sermon on the Plain (6:18). These acts of release form the context for the Lukan rendering of the Beatitudes, opening with promises of satisfaction for the poor and hungry and coming to fruition in the miraculous feeding at 9:17.

Luke 23:34

Though the verse is questioned by some witnesses, it is still worth considering here, as it places in Jesus' mouth a use of ἄφεσις applying not to his healing ministry, but to his suffering and death on a Roman cross. Directed toward God and thus recalling the language of the Lord's Prayer above, the pairing of the vocative and imperative πᾶτερ ἄφες αὐτοῖς is forceful and evocative. Even (or perhaps especially) Jesus' death, then, seems tied to the concept of release, as in this uniquely Lukan reference. The programmatic promise of release in 4:18–19 thus finds new fulfillment, at once sobering and joyous, in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁵⁰

2. COVENANTAL CONTEXTS

If this metaphor is such an integral part of Luke's depiction of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, then how does release function as a means of negotiating the imperial world? I believe that the theme's power is determined not just by Luke's skilful *deployment* of the term, but also by his *employment* of evocative covenant traditions. A closer look at the texts he has Jesus select in Luke 4, metonymically extended to their original literary contexts, clearly reveals the three interrelated facets of

⁴⁷ Bartholomew and Holt, "Prayer in/and the Drama," 361.

⁴⁸ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 84.

⁴⁹ So David P. Moessner, "Reading Luke's Gospel as Ancient Hellenistic Narrative: Luke's Narrative Plan of Israel's Suffering Messiah as God's Saving 'Plan' for the World," in Bartholomew, Green, and Thiselton, eds., *Reading Luke*, 138.

⁵⁰ See again Moessner, "Reading Luke's Gospel," 138.

ἄφεσις. Luke 4:18–19 echoes Isaiah 58 and 61; these texts draw in turn upon the core Sabbath obligations of Israel's covenant. The prophetic voice there unleashes:

- A protest against the oppression of workers (Isa 58:3, recalling the protection offered to bound laborers and foreign slaves in Lev 25);
- Another protest against abuse of/on the fasting day, intended as a day “acceptable” or “favorable” to the Lord (Isa 58:5, remembering Jubilee traditions in Lev 25; Deut 15; and Isa 49:8);
- An indicting reminder that fasting should include loosing bonds, ending injustice, lifting yokes (a symbol of oppression, often imperial and almost certainly economic), sharing bread with the hungry, housing the homeless poor, and meeting the needs of the afflicted (Isa 58:6–7);
- A promise of deliverance/vindication/salvation (58:8), appearing largely contingent on addressing the oppressive problems above;
- A further promise of rebuilding ruined cities (58:12; 61:4; summoning the important role of land in covenant);
- And a cumulative equation between the sins/transgressions of God's people (58:1) and their neglect of justice in the rest of the chapter; the promise of light and lifted gloom (58:10) comes when this neglect is reversed.

We have little evidence that any such reversal took place, and certainly not in any permanent manner, but the presence of empire made Isaiah's demands no easier to follow, and this variable became something of a constant in Israel's history.⁵¹ Luke has Jesus adapt Isaiah's measurement into an indictment, a *metric* for evaluating the empire's justice. Though it is phrased covertly so as to protect the author and his patron/audience, the metric is politically charged: the Roman empire's very structure, noted earlier, condemns it on these oppressive counts (even if Israel had historically done no better). Rome's transaction record is at least as incriminating as those of past empires; for Jesus to pledge release from this context is to show that God offers release and Rome does not.

⁵¹ The structure of Walter Brueggemann's *Reverberations of Faith: A Theological Handbook of Old Testament Themes* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002) provides as good an example as any: “empire” does not appear as one of the book's 100 “topics of theological interest,” but each historical superpower Israel faced receives its own entry—as previously noted in my essay, “This Was Not an Ordinary Death: Empire and Atonement in the Minor Pauline Epistles,” in Porter and Westfall, eds., *Empire in the New Testament*, 197–229.

Compare the Lukan Jesus' appropriation of Isaiah over against Richard Horsley's portrayal of the "pre-political" popular prophetic movements of Jesus' day, operating without conscious understanding of the socio-economic forces affecting their people. Even among these groups, "the historical prototypes of liberation on which they patterned their action included rather distinctive images of political domination"; the movements were fueled by

a hope, if not an actual program, for the liberated character of their society ... directly informed by the religious-political traditions of historical deliverance. Thus, like the Qumranites, they may well have expected the new exodus and gift of land to be followed by renewal of the covenantal society.⁵²

In portraying Jesus as politically and economically aware in his emancipatory interpretation of the Scriptures, Luke is offering a prophetic (and explicitly messianic) program distinctive in its greater degree of comparative scrutiny, remembering the stipulations of covenant and subtly marking the ways in which Rome's societal structure fails to measure up. The hypocrisy decried in Isaiah is foundational to Luke's math: the promises of the *Pax Romana*, read in this light, become self-indicting. Though we must be careful not to draw overly facile parallels, the claims of certain later empires might begin to deconstruct here, too: witness R.S. Sugirtharajah's point on the historical resurgence of empire, when he states boldly and accurately that "the current military interventions and territorial occupations in the name of democracy, humanitarianism and liberation are signs of a new form of imperialism."⁵³ Sugirtharajah spotlights *liberation* as a false imperial claim in our day; though the historical contexts are decidedly different, the Isaianic critique behind Luke's deployment of ἄφεσις looks remarkably similar.

3. REVIEW AND INTEGRATION:

ἄφεσις AS LUKAN ATONEMENT CONCEPT

These are the socio-economic, political, and traditional contexts of Luke's motif of release. What we have seen is the requirement for a more nuanced understanding of the term and its cognates than Bultmann allows, a simi-

⁵² Richard A. Horsley, with John S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988; orig. 1985), 251.

⁵³ R.S. Sugirtharajah, in the conclusion to Segovia and Sugirtharajah, eds., *Postcolonial Commentary*, 455.

lar need for more concrete contexts in which to locate Luke's use of the term (especially involving the intentions, words, and actions of Jesus), and a way forward in interpreting Luke's texts with specifically imperial and covenantal contexts in mind, pointing to a reading of Luke's narrative—in his Gospel, and more broadly in the overarching framework of Luke-Acts—in similar fashion. What remains is to briefly detail how the repeated application of *release* compares and connects to other views on the atonement.

First, to review the release motif itself, as a basis for comparison: the metaphor in Luke consists of the sum total of the meanings we have explored so far, complemented by imperial and covenantal contexts. It foregrounds opposition to, and release from, multiple forms of oppression. It signals a hope for God's deliverance, driven by prophetic concerns for social justice and divine redemption. Its repetition in crucial places and narrative junctures, especially in Jesus' words on the cross, confirms intentional deployment on the part of the author and narrator, serving to accentuate Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection as the ultimate example of divinely orchestrated release. Michael Goheen, following and expanding upon the work of David Bosch, calls release an "imprisonment metaphor," but does this label not emphasize the wrong aspect, placing those who have *already* been released back in bondage?⁵⁴

The idea of release remains evocative. It has even been rendered for popular audiences in forms edging toward Anselm's "satisfaction" theory, as when Mark Pinsky writes, "Christians believe that Jesus knew he would have to die in order to 'neutralize' the sins of the world."⁵⁵ Pinsky attributes the

⁵⁴ Goheen's explanation ("Jesus has been sent to release *all* those in bondage," italics in original) shows that he well understands the metaphor, building upon the conventional "forgiveness" translation, the freeing of slaves, the cancelling of debts, eschatological liberation, and other meanings already dealt with here; my point is simply that the label does not respect the already-initiated sense, operating perhaps within a "realized" eschatology, of release. Earlier, Goheen highlights our central text of 4:18–19 in the context of Luke's rich-poor dichotomy, among those passages where "Jesus [does he mean to say *Luke*?] announces a reversal that has come about in Jesus." See Michael Goheen, "A Critical Examination of David Bosch's Missional Reading of Luke," in Bartholomew, Green, and Thiselton, eds., *Reading Luke*, 246 and 250.

⁵⁵ Critiquing the 1985 film *The Black Cauldron*, Mark Pinsky (*The Gospel according to Disney: Faith, Trust, and Pixie Dust* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004], 106) comments that "here, in a frankly occult tale, Disney writers and animators resort to a resurrection motif," but they do not in fact import the motif until the end of the movie; though Pinsky does not admit as much, the theme of voluntary death as the *cost* of defeating evil, dispelling the cauldron's dark power, is central to Lloyd Alexander's original novel and rich with overtones of suffering, atonement, and release.

“neutralization” of sin to Jesus’ atoning death, but it is Jesus’ vindicating resurrection that secures release even from death itself (Luke 1:79; 18:31–33; 21:16–19; 24:19–21; and in another emphatic example of Jesus’ interpretation of Scripture, 24:26–27; cf. 1 Cor 15:26, 54–57). Elsewhere in the New Testament, resurrection from the dead challenges the claims of empire, confirming the overthrow of its rulers and promising life beyond its control; Paul perversely combines crucifixion and resurrection as the basis of Christ’s lordship.⁵⁶ Joerg Rieger, summarizing an argument from Jon Sobrino, confirms that Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection, and lordship are verified through transformative, counter-imperial practices.⁵⁷ So in the process of exploring the facets of ἀφῆσις in Luke, we have only scratched the surfaces of the potential pastoral/practical applications of release.

Next, we consider release in relationship to the motif of ransom, no more frequent than release in the New Testament but more readily discernible for its recognizable ideas of substitution and payment of a price of release. But ransom itself in the New Testament is not necessarily a simple matter of exchange, as of prisoners. James Williams tells us that the “ransom, *lytron*, that which looses, unbinds, liberates, is derived from sacrificial usage, but this is not a substitution—a sacrifice standing-in-stead-of—of one for all that God imposes on humans, who must in turn render the ransom to God to satisfy the divine command or to appease divine wrath.”⁵⁸ This distinction is an important one: ransom, though sacrificial in origin, does not necessitate a propitiatory or substitutionary stance on the atonement. Rather, as Williams continues, the ransom is “God’s free offering of release to human beings through Jesus as the divine son ... the king who rules through serving.”⁵⁹ This logic is compelling, in that God’s free choice in offering release is emphasized, along with the foci of Christ’s kingship and (suffering) service noted earlier. The concept of release, grounded in both legal *and* religious usage, is pivotal to the motif of ransom.

Finally, we turn to *Christus Victor*, the atonement motif seminally championed by Gustaf Aulén as central to the New Testament and to the soteriology and Christology of the early church. This perspective on the cross

⁵⁶ Joerg Rieger, *Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 48, citing 1 Cor 15:20–25, 32 and Rom 14:9.

⁵⁷ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 48–49.

⁵⁸ James G. Williams, “King as Servant, Sacrifice as Service: Gospel Transformations,” in Willard Swartley, ed., *Violence Renounced: René Girard, Biblical Studies, and Peacemaking* (Studies in Peace and Scripture 4; Telford, PA: Pandora, 2000), 193.

⁵⁹ Williams, “King as Servant,” 193.

conceptualizes God as overcoming enemy powers through Christ in a dramatic battle, staged “behind the scenes” of the crucifixion. Though Aulén’s language is implicitly theatrical and deliberately based in divine warfare, some of the metaphors he chooses (as when a king or a king’s son negotiates the release of his imprisoned people) and those he highlights from Scripture (such as the triumphant march of Christ, taking his own captives, in Ephesians 4)⁶⁰ show how closely interconnected these motifs of ransom and victory are—and how crucial the metaphor of release is, running back and forth between the two. The metaphor becomes all the more prominent when we pause to reflect on the imperial context where the *Christus Victor* theme would have developed,⁶¹ which Aulén’s view of the incarnation failed to flesh out.

Just as we required from Bultmann a more fluid, nuanced definition of ἄφεσις and its cognate group, we see that the metaphor of release, nuanced with its imperial and covenantal contexts, can provide a means of bridging the gaps among divergent views of the atonement, wrought by Christ on a Roman cross. These connections remain provisional. There is still much more to be said on the way in which release fits into the broader biblical narratives—and our own. Sin and its consequences are multileveled, and too often ingrained in social structures as well as in human persons; once promised a gracious release from the binding effects of the dehumanizing horrors we have perpetrated (whether deliberate or unintended), there still remains the question of finding positive ways in which to pledge our allegiance. Paul speaks eloquently of a release from sin’s enslaving claims, as in Rom 6:6–11 and 6:14, but even here the troubling analogies of serving a new master, of being liberated from sin only to be *enslaved* to righteousness/justice (6:18), form a language we must grapple with continually.

⁶⁰ Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement* (*Den kristna försoningstanken*) (trans. A.G. Hebert; London: SPCK, 1931).

⁶¹ As I have argued in my article “Atonement and Empire: Reworking *Christus Victor* for Roman Imperial Contexts,” *Princeton Theological Review* 37 (Fall 2007): 35–48, demonstrating ways in which Aulén’s traditional *Christus Victor* can be altered and reworked to reflect Rome’s influence on the New Testament and its theology.

LUKE AND JUVENAL AT THE CROSSROADS: SPACE, MOVEMENT, AND MORALITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Osman Umurhan and Todd Penner

1. THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE GREEK EAST

It hardly needs demonstration that one of the most important shifts in the last few years with respect to the study of early Christianity has been the application of colonial-critical perspectives to the socio-cultural context of early Christianity, both to its historical situation and to the development of its literary traditions and ideological/theological discourses. One would immediately think of Richard Horsley, as well as a myriad of others, who have sought, in one way or another, to demonstrate the palpable effects of Roman *imperium* on the Eastern provinces and the subsequent results of imperial formations on native literary traditions and constructs of identity, especially with respect to the development of (mostly) discursive counter-resistance in a variety of forms.¹ In these readings, early Christian writers—Paul, John, Luke, Matthew, John the Seer—are all seen as largely developing theological categories that resist empire, proffering *Christos* as an alternative authority to the Roman emperor, and *Pax Christi* as a “truly” peaceful resolution to the tyranny of the *Pax Romana*.² True, some scholars, drawing more explicitly on post-colonial criticism have pointed out the powerful nature of mimicry in early Christian responses to empire and the reinscription of colonial violence, often parlayed in and through representations of

¹ See most recently Richard Horsley, ed., *In the Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008). For more nuanced analyses, see Davina Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered: Reimagining Paul's Mission* (Paul in Critical Contexts; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008); Joseph A. Marchal, *The Politics of Heaven: Women, Gender, and Empire in the Study of Paul* (Paul in Critical Contexts; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008); and Stephen D. Moore, *Empire and Apocalypse: Postcolonialism and the New Testament* (The Bible in the Modern World 12; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006).

² See the detailed summary of the evidence in Eberhard Faust, *Pax Christi et Pax Caesaris: Religionsgeschichtliche, traditionsgeschichtliche und sozialgeschichtliche Studien zum Epheserbrief* (NTOA 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

Jews and Judaism in early Christian literature.³ Either way, empire is everywhere in scholarship on early Christianity these days, almost to the point of becoming a colonizing focus of the modern historical gaze.

One certainly cannot deny the importance of “empire” as a category of interpretation. One of the more important turns in recent studies on the ancient world has in fact been the engagement of the dominant iconic image and spectacle that Rome—as reality, illusion, fiction—played in the Greek East. Tim Whitmarsh’s oft-cited and highly influential study, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire*,⁴ set the tone for much of the subsequent scholarly agenda. In a nuanced and substantive analysis, Whitmarsh directed our attention to the construction of identity among Greek elites of the Second Sophistic, especially with respect to negotiating Roman power precisely through a cultivation and (re)performance of a Greek past, redeployed in innovative and diverse ways so as to reposition these select philosophers, rhetoricians, and *littérateurs* on their own regional scene and in empire.⁵ One might equally examine the Greek novels for divergent (although also similar in many respects) interactions with empire.⁶

³ See Shelly Matthews, “The Need for the Stoning of Stephen,” in S. Matthews and E.L. Gibson, eds., *Violence in the New Testament: Jesus Followers and Other Jews under Empire* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 124–139; and *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Making of Gentile Christianity in Acts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). For the imitation of Roman imperial themes and dynamics in Luke-Acts, see Gary Gilbert, “The List of Nations in Acts 2: Roman Propaganda and the Lukan Response,” *JBL* 121 (2002): 497–529; Gary Gilbert, “Roman Propaganda and Christian Identity in the Worldview of Luke-Acts,” in T. Penner and C. Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (SBLSymS 20; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 233–256; as well as Allen Brent, *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order: Concepts and Images of Authority in Paganism and Early Christianity before the Age of Cyprian* (VCSup 45; Leiden: Brill, 1999).

⁴ Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁵ For instance, see the analysis of the relationship between Lucian of Samosata and Alexander of Abonoteichus by Erik Gunderson, “Men of Learning: The Cult of *Paideia* in Lucian’s *Alexander*,” in T. Penner and C. Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses* (BibInt Series 84; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 479–510. Also see Douglas R. Edwards, *Religion and Power: Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greek East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), where he delineates well the emergence of various local elites establishing themselves as “cosmic powerbrokers.” On the cultivation and performance of the past in this period, see Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, “Script(ur)ing Gender in Acts: The Past and Present Power of *Imperium*,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, 231–266.

⁶ See the helpful treatment by Eric Thurman, “Novel Men: Masculinity and Empire in Mark’s Gospel and Xenophon’s *An Ephesian Tale*,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, 185–229.

Of course, Rome itself is often startlingly absent from the literature of the Second Sophistic. The *Heriokos*, sometimes attributed to the early third-century CE writer Flavius Philostratus (author of *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*), offers a prime example of the type of literature that cultivated a deep appreciation for the Greek cultural heritage and a rich reconfiguration of contemporary Greek identity in a world seemingly uninhabited by Roman imperial powers (despite the political and social turmoil that accompanied the Severan dynasty at the time). In this extended fictional conversation between a “vinedresser” and a “Phoenician,” focus is placed on the epic history of Greece, complemented by a preoccupation with the tombs of the various heroes of the Greek past.⁷ At once a display of mastery of Greek *paideia* and an iconic representation and distillation of Greek culture brought visibly before the “eyes” of the spectator, underscored by a (not so repressed desire for) the resurrection of Greek glory and power in an era of Roman imperial decline, this text provides a model example of the complex negotiations of identity and power that the tradition, loosely designated by the generic classification “Second Sophistic,” cultivated, mediated, and performed.

Scholars clearly cannot avoid the “imperial factor” in any discussion of early Christian literature. At the same time, one also has to reflect on the ways in which empire is conceived, since there is no universal *experience* of empire as such. In fact, even within the “movement” of the Second Sophistic, it is clear that various writers and philosophers experienced and engaged empire in vastly different ways. So also one cannot create a uniform pattern for early Christian experience and engagement of the Roman empire. And even within the category of “experience” one has to think more complexly about Roman rule. One might well extend the concept of “empire” itself to include all of those aspects that were attendant on Roman imperial administration—we tend to conceptualize “empire” rather narrowly at times. True, there was military domination and provincial regulation. There was also manifest imperial presence through the construction of temples to the divine *Augustii*. And, as with any empire, goods and other monetary benefits flowed towards Rome (as well as into the pockets of local governors and administrators of Roman territories). At the same time, Roman rule brought with it mechanisms to aid in control of territories, some of which dramatically reshaped the ancient Mediterranean world in ways that we do not often take into account.

⁷ For the text, see [Flavius Philostratus], *Heroikos* (trans. Jennifer K. Berenson Maclean and Ellen Bradshaw Aitken; SBLWGRW 1; Atlanta: SBL, 2001).

One significant contribution in this respect was the development of elaborate road systems, which united regions of empire that, until the Romans at least, were often isolated. In fact, one might well reconceptualize empire through the intricate road systems designed by the Romans. In a period of vast imperial expansion, alongside all of the administrative and military mechanisms necessary for this accomplishment, spaces were opened for new experiences of imperial presence, which hitherto had been reserved for an elite few—not only did legions, traders, cattle, goods, and chattel move along these roads, but so did many travelers (varied and diverse) and, perhaps most significantly, so did ideas, customs, and exotic images. As Henry J. Cadbury once noted with respect to situating the book of Acts historically, “the cosmopolitan life of the age, the abundance of travel, the curiosity about alien cultures and religions, led at this time to fresh transfers of oriental blood and culture into the West” (and one would add, vice versa too, as all roads lead away from Rome as much as they lead toward it).⁸ Our point, then, is that in some ways the discussion of the influence of Hellenism on early Christianity—or, for that matter, the evolution of the Second Sophistic literary tradition in the East—is often limited in terms of the spatial framework of interpretation. That is, we tend to localize these interactions geographically, as if there is some imaginary line between West and East in the imperial period. Indeed, we work with notions of Greek and Hellenistic influence as if these philosophical, social, and cultural categories were somehow stable and non-permeable, as if they existed in isolation.⁹ But conceptualizing empire, both literally and figuratively, in terms of travel, road systems, and systemic cultural and intellectual interactions and exchange, might well entail us pushing the distinctive identifications “Hellenism” and the “Greek East” beyond the traditional uses and definitions of these interpretive categories. Can we really just limit our conceptions to the geographical regions of the East, since we know that Roman ideologies and social, political, religious, and cultural practices spread throughout empire—that they were exported?¹⁰

⁸ Henry J. Cadbury, *The Book of Acts in History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), 13.

⁹ For further assessment of the porous nature of ancient cultural boundaries, see Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd Penner, *Contextualizing Gender in Early Christian Discourse: Thinking beyond Thecla* (London: Continuum, 2009), 88–135.

¹⁰ In some respects, scholars of early Christianity have been limited by an over-determination of Greek presence and Hellenistic influence in their work. There are particular modern presuppositions that fostered this accent on Hellenism, and in the process these helped (mis)construe the ancient reality, shaping the historical interpretation rather narrowly. See further Todd Penner, “*Die Judenfrage* and the Construction of Ancient

At the same time, of course, those same movements outwards also circulated back towards Rome. Movement in and through empire was not a “one-way” thoroughfare. As we know from the famous words of the author of Acts, narrated in the first-person travel account—“and so we came to Rome” (28:14)—whatever Roman elements travelled abroad, probably as much (and realistically even more) came back to Rome, and not just in the form of imperial economic tributes or the spoils of conquest. Indeed, in the late first and into the second centuries CE we see an increased presence (and fear) of the influx of foreign influence in Rome.¹¹ Thus, whatever we mean by the terms “Second Sophistic” and the “Greek East”—even “Hellenism”—must also consider the way in which these intellectual, social, and cultural forces found their way to Rome—the heart of empire. In our view, then, a new set of questions needs to be raised with respect to the role of early Christian literature—specifically thinking here of the book of Acts—in the Roman empire. How does the prevalence of movement in and out of Rome itself shape the way that empire is conceived, experienced, reimagined, engaged, and remapped? How does the spatial and geographic imagination of people in the ancient world palpably shape their interactions with and their perceptions of the Roman empire? And, more importantly, to what degree does resistance to empire also require some reliance on the geographic imagination of the conqueror? The place to begin with this analysis, in our mind, is not with the early Christian narrative of the book of Acts, but, rather, those Roman writers who were preoccupied with the spatial and geographic nature of empire. Whatever else Roman

Judaism: Toward a Foregrounding of the Backgrounds Approach to Early Christianity,” in P. Gray and G. O’Day, eds., *Scripture and Traditions: Essays on Early Judaism and Christianity (in Honour of Carl Holladay)* (NovTSup 129; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 429–455). Martin Hengel’s *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) has indelibly shaped the imagination of most scholarly inquiry into the socio-cultural context of early Christianity, but in ways that are often historically unhelpful and theologically idiosyncratic. Erich S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (2 vols; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), has definitely shown how Roman expansion came with a ready willingness on the part of the Roman administrators to adopt Greek political and cultural ideas and mechanisms for governance. That said, cultural interactions are complex, and frequently hybrid assemblages of meaning are born in such moments, and they can be difficult to distinguish and to interpret given their similarity in language to the prior systems of meaning upon which they are based.

¹¹ For a thorough treatment of this theme in light of tropes related to gender, sex, and sexuality in the ancient world, see Diana M. Swancutt, “Still before Sexuality: ‘Greek’ Androgyny, the Roman Imperial Politics of Masculinity, and the Roman Invention of the *Tribas*,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, 11–61.

imperial aspiration brought to the ancient world, it carried with it a manifest desire for the formulations of geographic cartography, social and political mapping, and the control of space and place, displaying, in the end, the ever present dual edge of the sword of conquest: the need to situate space so as to dominate it and the constant anxiety that the center of power might not hold.

2. CARTOGRAPHY OF SPACE AND THE CONTROL OF EMPIRE

In one form or another, geography was a major preoccupation of writers in the late Republican and early imperial period, associated as it was with political and military expansion throughout the Roman era.¹² Overall, in first- and second-century CE Roman literature, geographic knowledge is commonly used in service of Roman theories of ethnocentrism.¹³ Tacitus's *Germania* and *Agricola*, for example, identify and evaluate foreign people groups—the Germans and British, respectively—in light of features and habits of Roman culture, and simultaneously broach the issue of Roman political and territorial aspirations.¹⁴ Horace and Ovid frequently allude

¹² See the collection of essays in Richard J.A. Talbert and Kai Brodersen, eds., *Space in the Roman World: Its Perception and Presentation* (Muenster: LIT, 2004), wherein the cartographic tradition and its influence on Roman illustrations of the empire's space are explored in detail.

¹³ Theories of ethnocentrism, with a concentration on space, were not unique to Roman authors. It can be argued that Homer's epics use geography both to demarcate the known world and to distinguish the Homeric Greeks from "others," i.e., the Ethiopians to the south and the Hyperboreans near the river Oceanus to the North. Achilles' shield in *Iliad* 18 best articulates this construct. Some ethnocentric views portray in spatial terms the center as the best and the most advanced location and, therefore, demote distant peoples to the status of savages (cf. James S. Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992], 46. Romm further notes that the historian Ephorus [ca. 400–330 BCE] represents one author who articulates a shift in this construct, wherein the center represents the opposite, that is, the least civilized.)

¹⁴ For more detailed analyses of this phenomenon in Tacitus, see E.C. O'Gorman, "No Place like Rome: Identity and Difference in the *Germania* of Tacitus," *Ramus* 22 (1993): 135–154; Tacitus: *Germania* (with an Introduction and Commentary) (trans. James Rives; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999); Brent D. Shaw, "Rebels and Outsiders," in Alan K. Bowman, Peter Garnsey and Dominic Rathbone, eds., *The Cambridge Ancient History XI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 361–403; and Rhiannon Evans, "Containment and Corruption: The Discourse of Flavian Empire," in A.J. Boyle and W.J. Dominik, eds., *Flavian Rome, Culture, Image, Text* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 255–276. For a similar use of ethnography in Sallust, see Thomas F. Scanlon, "Textual Geography in Sallust's *The War with Jugurtha*," *Ramus* 17 (1988): 138–175.

to their contemporary figure of authority, Augustus, and his reforms in government and his military efforts to ensure a *Pax Romana* throughout the empire.¹⁵ Approximately sixty years following the death of Augustus, the Elder Pliny would use his encyclopedic *Natural Histories* to map the extent of the Roman empire under the Julio-Claudians and at the outset of the Flavian dynasty (Vespasian and Titus), much like Agrippa's map that was intended to be affixed to Augustus's military exploits recorded on the *Res Gestae*.¹⁶ The surrounding geography and foreign places that Pliny maps in the *Natural Histories* come to symbolize specific individual qualities and, thereby, assist in the celebration of Roman authority over its vanquished subjects, while, at the same time, the copious amounts of information also help assimilate the unfamiliar aspects of empire to the operating system of the Roman culture.¹⁷ Pliny's encyclopedic portrait of Rome, focusing as it does on aspects of Rome's spatial expanse, natural environment, and inhabitants, thus serves both as a cultural map of Rome at its territorial apex under the emperor Vespasian and as a testament to Rome's authority and power.¹⁸

Whereas maps and other cartographic illustrations offer one perspective on space, geographical descriptions in literature offer a more extensive look at the cultural formation of Rome and resultant constructions of space. Scholars such as Claude Nicolet, James Romm, and Daniel Selden have

¹⁵ Cf. Horace *Odes* 4.14, which is a panegyric to Augustus (see Andrew Dalby, *Empire of Pleasures: Luxury and Indulgence in the Roman World* [London: Routledge, 2000], 9); and Ovid's *Halieutica*, which represents a geographic description of the empire under Augustus. Similarly, Pliny's *Natural Histories* reflects on Rome's powers over nature, and Martial's *de Spectaculis* inaugurates the opening of the Colosseum, a celebration of Vespasian's and Titus's returning to the people the public land once occupied by Nero's *domus aurea*.

¹⁶ Cf. Trevor Murphy, *Pliny the Elder's Natural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), esp. ch. 4 ("Triumphal Geographies"). For additional analyses of Agrippa's map and its representation of Roman authority, see Catherine Connors, "Imperial Space and Time: The Literature of Leisure," in O. Taplin, ed., *Literature in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 492–518, esp. 508–513. She also analyzes other literary representations of Rome (e.g. in Petronius, Statius, and Martial) in which the city is "measured" against the rest of the world. Cindy Benton ("Bringing the Other to Center Stage," *Arethusa* 36 [2003]: 271–284) examines how the voyage of the Argo in Seneca's *Medea* parallels Roman imperialism and the consequences of mixing cultures: Seneca's *Medea* is driven by her desires for foreign excess and luxury.

¹⁷ Murphy, *Pliny the Elder's Natural History*, 15.

¹⁸ See esp. SORCHA CAREY, *Pliny's Catalogue of Culture: Art and Empire in the Natural History* (Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation; London: Oxford University Press, 2003), 41–74, who argues that the *Natural History* is more than just a record of the Augustan (and after) Roman Empire: the text itself becomes a "physical" monument of empire.

paved the way for reading geography as a means to providing a view into Roman society.¹⁹ In particular, we build here on Nicolet's influential reading of the emperor Augustus's use of geography and the articulation of the space of empire. His study observes how Roman representations of physical space contributed to the formation of a political history via monumental architecture and geography. He also views Augustus's building program as a form of imperial propaganda. Agrippa's (ca. 64–12 BCE) famous map, for example, offered a clear manifestation of politics and geography that Nicolet argues characterized the "crisis" of the empire. It also served as a fitting and complementary counterpart to Augustus's *Res Gestae*, a literary account of the emperor's military exploits set up for public display at the entrance of his (and "Rome's") monumental mausoleum in Ancyra in Galatia. Other contemporary writers also engage with Rome and the empire's geography in a similar fashion, including Livy and Strabo, both of whom wrote under Tiberius (first century CE), and the later second-century authors Florus and Appian.²⁰

In this respect, rather illuminating is Strabo's *Geography*, which offers a Greek view of Roman hegemony and explores Roman interactions with its conquered rivals in the age of Augustus.²¹ His work affirms cultural perceptions of Rome as the central commercial and geographic point of the empire early in the Roman imperial period. As Clarke argues, for Strabo the

¹⁹ Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire* (trans. H. Leclerc; Jerome Lectures 19; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); Romm, *Edges of the Earth*; and Daniel Selden, "Alibis," *Classical Antiquity* 17 (1998): 289–412.

²⁰ For the interpretive strategies of spatial representation in Livy, see Michel Griffe, "L'espace de Rome dans le livre I de l'*Histoire* de Tite-Live: Essai d'approche linguistique du problème," in C. Jacob and F. Lestringant, eds., *Arts et Légendes d'Espaces: Figures du Voyage et Rhétoriques du Monde* (Paris: Presses de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure, 1981), 111–122; Christina Kraus, "No Second Troy: Topoi and Refoundation in Livy, Book V," *TAPA* 124 (1994): 267–289; and Mary Jaeger, "Reconstructing Rome: The Campus Martius and Horace's *Ode* 8," *Arethusa* 28 (1995): 177–191. For Strabo, see Katherine Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999).

²¹ Clarke, *Between Geography and History*, 193–336, pays particular attention to the intersections between geography and historiography in the late Hellenistic period. A significant portion of her study examines Strabo's *Geography* and its representations of space and time as they relate to Roman politics. For Strabo's construction of ethnicity in the *Geography*, see Edward Ch.L. van der Vliet, "The Romans and Us: Strabo's *Geography* and the Construction of Ethnicity," *Mnemosyne* 56 (2003): 257–272. One should contrast here Pausanias's "travel" guide, which in many respects offers a counter-memory that pits Greek history and culture (organized around monuments and places) over against the new Roman colonizers' imagination of territory and space. See Penner and Vander Stichele, "Script(ur)ing Gender in Acts," 238–247; and Jás Elsner, "Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World," *Past and Present* 135 (1992): 3–29.

city serves as the hub into which all peoples and resources converge: the general world of the *Geography* is constructed with a primary center and periphery.²² She points out how Strabo describes Rome's military triumph in terms of draining its conquered lands of natural resources. According to her reading of Strabo, Rome's interaction with its conquered subject is configured as a low-lying drain that draws all surrounding fluid inward. It is not surprising that Strabo, who was born in Pontus, found himself writing his geographic testament to empire in the actual city of Rome! A similar portrayal is found in Augustus's *Res Gestae*, which depicts the influx into Rome of people from the Italian mainland as a river depositing its supply into a basin (*cuncta ex Italia ad comitia mea confluyente multitudine* ...: "with a multitude flowing into [Rome] for my election from all Italy;" *R.G.* 10.2). Other imperial writers such as Sallust, Livy, and Seneca the Younger also develop portraits of a Rome in which it figures as a central space into and out of which the movement of all commodities, people, and resources flow.

While geographic representation creates and sustains borders and boundaries, real and imaginary, it is clear that in the minds of both Romans and Greeks (like Strabo, for instance) Rome was always at the center, as both a geographic and cultural core. For instance, modern scholars of Roman literature have explored how the area of Rome—a place identified either by a series of monumental architectural structures or by features of its physical landscape—contributes to an ancient author's presentation of contemporary historical or cultural events. Mary Jaeger, for example, analyzes how monumental spaces and other monuments in the Rome of Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* propel the course of the author's narrative.²³ According to Jaeger, Livy uses the Lacus Curtius located in the Forum valley and the temple of Jupiter Stator to commemorate certain turning points and events within his battle narrative. These spaces and monuments located within the city allow Livy to establish Rome as a geographic and thematic locus from which to discuss Rome's past and its entire history in general. Catharine Edwards applies a comparable reading of Rome's topography in light of the Capitoline hill.²⁴ She traces the way in which the literary accounts of Livy, Vergil, Ovid, and Tacitus demonstrate the hill's significance as a center of Roman religion and imperial power, as well as providing the locus of political

²² Clarke, *Between Geography and History*, 10.

²³ Jaeger, "Reconstructing Rome."

²⁴ Catharine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 69–95.

transition from Republic to empire.²⁵ Italy, and Rome in particular, thus come to represent the center of Roman political, cultural, and historical identity. Herein, the Italian mainland in the late Republic and early imperial era serves as an extension of the core of Rome's greater territorial expanse—the impulse of growth begins in Rome and moves outward to the outlying regions of the world.²⁶

This trope obviously becomes particularly relevant for our assessment of Acts, which, in reverse, sees Rome as a center toward which Christianity advances (as predicted by Jesus in the famous missionary expansion proclamation of Acts 1:8). Before we advance on Acts, however, it will be helpful to explore further some of the moral implications of this flow, of this movement outward and toward. Juvenal, the early second-century satirist, proves to be a particularly helpful writer for elucidating some of these themes further, not least since, by the time Juvenal arrives on the scene, Rome had burgeoned into a cultural megalopolis and a territorial and political superpower, the borders of which stretched as far west and north as Spain and Britain, as far northeast as Dacia and Armenia, and to the southeast as far as Syria and Mesopotamia.²⁷ This territorial expanse represents the empire that early Christians in both imaginary and real ways encountered and engaged. This territory was the space that shaped their cultural and religious imagination, not least in terms of fostering conceptions of spatial boundaries, margins, and center, including perceptions of the flow of morality in and out of Rome.

²⁵ Ann Vasaly (*Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996]) has similarly demonstrated how the Temple of Jupiter Stator serves as a monumental locus from which Cicero drives his discourse on Catiline and the latter's conspiracy to overthrow the Republic. For Cicero, the temple represents the institution of the Republic and a spatial realm that is threatened by Catiline's forces stationed outside Rome both in Faesulae and around the Mulvian Bridge (where Catiline's co-conspirators are eventually apprehended).

²⁶ See further Emma Dench, *Romulus' Asylum: Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), esp. 18–25, 30, 156–157. Dench analyzes the literary formulations of the center-periphery scheme as a means for understanding Roman identity.

²⁷ For a historical account of Rome's expansion to its frontier provinces, see C.R. Whitaker, "Frontiers," in A.K. Bowman, P. Garnsey, and D. Rathbone, eds., *Cambridge Ancient History XI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 293–319. Penelope Goodman, *The Roman City and its Periphery* (London: Routledge, 2007), 179–180, also explores how Rome's physical limits and boundaries in the imperial era were in a constant state of flux.

3. MORALITY AND MOVEMENT IN JUVENAL

Juvenal's *Satires* represent a satiric canvas of second-century Rome wherein issues of morality and movement are inextricably linked. Much like the book of Acts, the Roman author's concentration on Rome centers on the question of virtue and vice. For Juvenal, however, virtue has been dwarfed by the multitude of vice present both in Rome and in areas all around the territorial expanse of its empire. Any testament to virtuous behavior appears to be the remnant of an unrecoverable past and beyond the scope of Roman influence. The *Satires* determines that contemporary vice, which infects the very foundation of Rome's social and political institutions, both collects and originates at the very center of the empire itself.

One key to understanding the cause and effect of vice in Rome is Juvenal's poetic construction of travel, portrayed in the form of movement. The *Satires* employs a network of movements that quantifies and qualifies the measure of Rome's corruption. This network represents a range of vices related to consumption and trade and to imperial expansion and concomitant issues of ethnicity, all of which the satirist represents as the source of Rome's institutional decay in ca. 110–130 CE. These institutions are, in his mind, the fabric of Rome's Republican past, which had ended with the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE. These institutions include foremost the practice of patronage, a system based on client-patron relations, such as those exercised at a dinner-party (the *cena*) or during the handout (*salutation/sportula*) from patrons to their clients (in exchange for social and political favors). The relationship between client and patron serves as the glue for all social and political interactions in Rome. The deterioration of these institutions in the imperial era surfaces as one of Juvenal's major concerns. The satirist perceives a complete breakdown of the very foundation of Rome's former glory as a Mediterranean superpower, especially as the movement of goods and people, as well as the empire's vast territorial reach—from Britain to the north and Spain in the West to Syria and Egypt—has accelerated the decline of morality in Juvenal's mind, particularly through weakening and diluting the traditional structure of Roman society (and its values) by the intrusion and intermixing of foreign elements. The system of patronage and benefaction was, in Juvenal's perspective, one of the traditional bases for keeping the moral structure in place, not least by the dissemination of upper class virtues through the reciprocal relationships with beneficiaries.

Regardless of the historical realities (and certainly Juvenal's picture does not represent the totality of ancient Roman experience), our focus here is on

how Juvenal chooses to represent these movements in and out of the center of empire. This literary representation provides an illuminating window into the cultural constructions of morality at the juncture of movement and travel. Various manifestations of vice in the Juvenalian satirical landscape assume a symbolic capital that articulates the boundaries between virtuous and unfavorable behavior. Much like the book of Acts, in fact, Juvenal is critically aware of the potential for cultural and social interaction that travel and movement through the spaces and places of empire bring. Unlike the book of Acts, however, Juvenal is much less optimistic with respect to the positive side of this exchange.

Another vital key to understanding Juvenal's landscape of circulation lies in Roman literary perspectives on travel and morality that figure Rome as a topographic and culture center. Much of Roman literary thought before Juvenal draws a causal link between Rome's location and its rise to a pre-eminent superpower. Cicero's discussion in *De Republica* 2 offers a useful literary parallel to Juvenal's perception of the city space. Though Juvenal does not explicitly allude to Cicero's account of Rome's foundation, both authors predicate their larger discussion of morality and contemporary politics on the idea that Rome occupies the spatial and geographic hub of the empire's commercial, cultural, and political activity. In *De Republica* 2, the city's space and location feature significantly in Scipio's account of Rome's foundation and future prominence.²⁸ Scipio, Cicero's representative ideal of Republican morality, recounts the factors that led Romulus to found Rome at its specific site, but not without his problematizing its location as being prone to external dangers. Upon a brief description of Romulus's birth and rise to power (2.4), Scipio discusses Romulus's grounds for situating Rome in its present location, namely to ensure the city's legacy and permanence (2.5–11). Rome's rise to power, he adds, lies in its safe distance from mercantilism and cultural exchange that may threaten the city's ancestral institutions (2.7). Thus, there is a significant focus on purity and containment in the conceptual representation of the physicality of Roman space. It is for

²⁸ T.J. Cornell, in his essay "Cicero on the Origins of Rome," in J.G.F. Powell and J.A. North, eds., *Cicero's Republic* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2001), 41–57, argues that Scipio's account in *Resp.* 2 should not be read as an intentional history of the origins of Rome so much as a theoretical discussion about the essential features of an ideal government that Rome represented in its early years. For a discussion of the *De Republica*'s Platonic model, the influences on the dialogue's setting and content, and Cicero's choice to set the dramatic date in 129 BCE at Scipio's home during the *Feriae Latinae*, see James E.G. Zetzel, *Cicero: De Re Publica: Selections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

this reason that Scipio praises Romulus's choice for the city's site, as it avoids the allure of vices prone to maritime cities that destroyed other great civilizations, including Carthage and Corinth (2.7). Yet Scipio's description of Rome's site reveals that the city is not entirely free of maritime influence due to its location along a major body of water and the banks of the Tiber River. He notes,

(8) Indeed, many of these dangers to cities, which serve as inducements toward luxury and are either snatched or imported, are supplied by the sea; and even this very comfort contains many incitements, either costly or lazy, to immoderate desires ... (9) But, nevertheless, there lies that great advantage in these vices—anything in the world can be brought by sea into the city that you live and, in turn, they can export or send what their fields produce into whichever lands they wish.²⁹ (*Resp.* 2.8–9)

Access to the river, as opposed to the sea, Scipio intimates, allows a careful control of the flow of goods and culture into and out of the city and offers protection from maritime enticements (2.9–10). In this view, Rome's location represents an area that enjoys a delicate balance: the advantage of both being partially landlocked and within a safe distance of the sea. This distance, however, reflects a smaller city at its foundation in the era of Romulus. The emphasis on being a "safe" distance from the sea would no longer be applicable later given Rome's immense growth in the late Republic and, certainly, by Juvenal's era in the early second century CE.

Scipio's account of and attention to Rome in the *De Republica* offers valuable insight into how the city's location was understood to determine its eminent legacy. He declares that Romulus had a divine intimation that Rome one day would act as the physical and political heart of a mighty empire (... *hanc urbem sedem aliquando et domum summo esse imperio praebituram*; 2.10) and a hub for the import and export of culture and people. In the larger picture, Cicero's presentation in *Resp.* 2.5–11 offers one snapshot into the Roman literary past that views the city and its space as tied to the formation and longevity of the Roman state, and Cicero figures as just one among several Roman writers who investigate the effects

²⁹ (8) multa etiam ad luxuriam invitamenta perniciose civitatibus subpeditantur mari, quae vel capiuntur vel inportantur; atque habet etiam amoenitas ipsa vel sumptuosas vel desidiosas inlecebras multas cupiditatum ... (9) sed tamen in his vitiis inest illa magna commoditas, et quod ubique gentium est ut ad eam urbem quam incolae possit adnare, et rursus ut id quod agri efferant sui, quascumque velint in terras portare possint ac mittere. Cicero's account here is a translation of a dialogue between an Athenian and Cleinias in Plato's *Leg.* (4.704–708e). This link suggests that the importance of the city's location goes back as early as the Greek literary tradition.

of import and export on Rome. Others include the Republican era historians Sallust and Livy, and those closer in time to Juvenal, such as the Elder Pliny, Seneca the Younger, Tacitus, and Martial.³⁰

Their accounts serve as a bridge to an analogous outlook in Juvenal. His *Satires* demonstrates how Romulus's caution has now been undermined by the empire's territorial reach and influence. The city's delicately balanced scale of control of imports and exports has been tipped towards the negative side. Here is where Juvenal's satires are particularly helpful in terms of looking at some of the anxieties of empire that arose at the end of the first century (already reflected in Tacitus) and continued into the second, wherein Rome's physical space is understood to devolve into the decay and devastation that Romulus, in Cicero's conception, made every meticulous efforts to avoid.

Given the clear perceptions in the literary tradition related to Rome's insular character (outlined above), it is striking to see the way in which Juvenal's *Satires* illustrates Rome's participation in a larger network of circulation and movement. For instance, within Juvenal's discussion of Roman vice, the location of Rome itself plays a formative role. Rome functions as the core of the known world, the center of all global activity—commercial, political, and social. Unlike a typical ethnocentric model that stresses the superiority of a centralized, cultural center (e.g. the Homeric paradigm of ethnocentrism), the satirist inverts this framework to emphasize the inferiority of the geographic center that is Rome. Because the city is a topographic midpoint of foreign exchange and goods, it also exercises outward negative influences. In the following citation, Juvenal describes numerous examples of decay that collect at Rome. The portrait programmatically coordinates the issue of vice with the ease of foreign movement into Rome. Consequently, Rome attracts and harbors vice:

When part of the Nile people, when a slave of Canopus, Crispinus—while his
shoulder hitches his Tyrian cloak—airs out the summery gold on his sweaty
fingers

(nor could he bear the weight of a heavier stone)

it is difficult not to write satire. For who is so enduring of an unfair City,
so calloused that he can restrain himself when the new litter of Matho, the

³⁰ For a more detailed account of these authors' focus on the question of morality and issues of luxury and ethnic identity, see Osman Sami Umurhan, "Spatial Representation in Juvenal's *Satires*: Rome and the Satirist" (Ph.D. diss. New York University, 2008), 32–90.

pleader, filled with himself, arrives; after him the informer of a powerful friend and who will quickly seize what remains of the consumed nobility ...³¹
(*Sat.* 1.26–35)

The satirist links his writing satire (1.30–31) to Rome (*urbis*; 31), the latter of which functions as the focus of and endpoint to other geographic and ethnographic points of comparison for the remainder of the satire. In 1.26–29, for example, Juvenal introduces the foreign Crispinus, a recurring character in the *Satires*, according to his region of origin, physical attributes, and luxurious adornment. The Egyptian is identified by his local river, the Nile (*Niliacae* [26]). He is a man of low social status (*verna* [26]), revealed as such by his pretentious display of wealth, which itself is further designated by a foreign place-name: “Tyrian cloak” (*Tyrias* [27]). In this way, the satirist deploys markers of foreign identity and geography to symbolize one source of vice within Rome’s city limits. Juvenal’s signification of these features in ethnic and geographic terms (i.e., river, region, etc.) marks them as shorthand for moral decay. This cipher functions as an implied trope for Juvenal’s discourse on the variety and multitude of vice that incubates in Rome.

Juvenal’s illustrations of the movement of vice engage with a longer moralistic tradition in Greek and Roman literature centering on notions of excess.³² The Roman authors Sallust, Cicero, and Livy explore the literary *topos* regarding the damaging effects of vice such as foreign influence and extravagance at Rome.³³ Ultimately, several of their discussions culminate

³¹ cum pars Niliacae plebis, cum verna Canopi // Crispinus, Tyrias umero revocante lacernas, // ventilet aestivum digitis sudantibus aurum, // nec sufferre queat maioris pondera gemmae // difficile est saturam non scribere. nam quis iniquae // tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus, ut teneat se, // causidici nova cum veniat lectica Mathonis // plena ipso, post hunc magni delator amici // et cito rapturus de nobilitate comesa // quod superest ...

³² See further Edwards, *Politics of Immorality*, 173–206, who centers on Roman views of immorality and excess, particularly in the form of luxury and consumption in politics. For further discussion of extravagance in terms of diverse consumptions, or, as Edwards terms it, “conspicuous consumption,” see 160–163, 180, 186–190, 200–204. Likewise, Anthony Corbeill (*Controlling Laughter* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996], 128–173) focuses on scenes of immoderate behavior at the *cena*.

³³ The preface to Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita* (12–15) also engages this *topos*, which details the current state of Rome’s depravity as being due to the negative effects of luxury. Furthermore, in his *Medea*, Seneca explores the relationship of center and periphery with a scenario set not in contemporary Rome, but in Corinth (“Bringing the Other to Center Stage”) argues that Seneca’s characterization of Medea coincides with contemporary Roman anxieties regarding the clash of cultures and the shifting of territorial boundaries due to Rome’s imperialist expansion.

in a discussion on the state and definition of that which is understood to be quintessentially Roman. In addition, they configure vice as a form of physical movement or as an incoming flow into Rome.³⁴ Rome's territorial ambition, according to Sallust and Livy, initiate the introduction of foreign elements, the importation of which will infect the city's institutions and unravel its moral fabric.

Juvenal builds upon this literary *topos* of incoming infection with numerous illustrations of the negative effects on Rome, which are represented in terms of the city's urban topography. Evocations of fluidity, movement, and foreign elements abound. For instance, in the satirist's second book of satires, which is occupied by only one satire (6), Juvenal presents an apotrepic against marriage. Amidst his rants against men who avoid marriage and women who pervert the established social and sexual hierarchies, Juvenal casts Rome's overall moral decline at the hands of the foreign(er) as being a result of non-Roman conquest.³⁵ Greek influence is seen to be the cause of Rome's loss of stalwart and old Republican values and traditions:

Now we endure the evils of a long peace, luxury more savage than war, has
set in and avenges the conquered world.

No crime and deed of lust is absent as a result of which Roman poverty has
perished.

Into this place [Rome] and its hills have flowed
Sybaris, Rhodes and Miletus,
and the garlanded, drunk, and shameless Tarentum.

Filthy cash was the first to bring in foreign morals,
the effeminate wealth has broken our era with its base luxury ...³⁶

(6.292–300)

The satirist here uses the language of transportation to articulate the effects of foreign "invasion" on Roman morality, a movement specifically described as being "fluid" (*fluxit*; 6.295), which results, of course, in moral fluidity as well. Like a body of water, wealth flows into Rome. The islands of Rhodes

³⁴ For representative examples, see Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 10–13; Cicero, *Resp.* 2.5–11; *Res gest. divi Aug.* 10.2, and Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 39.6.7–8. For a more detailed analysis of these themes in light of Juvenal's appropriation and articulation of Rome's central location, see Umurhan, "Spatial Representation in Juvenal's *Satires*," 40–72.

³⁵ See further Swancutt, "Still before Sexuality," 51–55.

³⁶ nunc patimur longae pacis mala, saevior armis // luxuria incubuit victumque ulciscitur orbem. // nullum crimen abest facinusque libidinis ex quo // paupertas Romana perit. hinc *fluxit* ad istos // et Sybaris colles, hinc et Rhodos et Miletos // atque coronatum et petulans madidumque Tarentum. // prima peregrinos obscena pecunia mores // intulit, et turpi fregerunt saecula luxu/ divitiae molles ...

and Miletus primarily mark Rome's eastern periphery and are synonymous with the Greek East. The port town of Sybaris in the gulf of Tarentum and the city of Tarentum itself has added significance. Both are situated on the southern tip of the Italian mainland, which represents an even more immediate threat to Rome in light of its geographic proximity to the city. Juvenal's inclusion of this Italian port town in his catalogue of "foreign" places is not extraordinary. Though not a topographic representative of the East, its Greek influence comes to mark Tarentum as a byword for the Greek East in Roman literature. All three areas—the gulf of Tarentum (Sybaris and Tarentum), Miletus, and Rhodes—establish a network of travel originating from outside Rome leading into Rome itself.

Juvenal then presents the state of Rome's moral decay as a double-edged sword, wherein both the city and foreign ethnicities are implicated in a system of free movement. In this particular passage cited above, the satirist links Rome's contemporary decay with its territorial ambitions that recall Rome's expansion during and following the Punic Wars against its last formidable Mediterranean foe (264–146 BCE). According to Juvenal, however, this new world domination and peace comes at a price, since money (*pecunia* [6.298]) and effeminate riches (*divitiae molles* [6.300]) corrupt the current age and adulterate Roman morals, and this debased luxury is inextricably linked with foreign places and spaces.

What is the source or mechanism that triggers Rome's loss of morality? On the surface, Juvenal's metaphorical expression of movement as a foreign flow into Rome is explicit. Verses 6.292–300 demonstrate the notion of depravity as a form of cause and effect articulated by a series of movements: Rome's territorial ambitions and military triumphs represent an outward movement, but the ensuing peace triggers the importation of luxury that wreaks vengeance on the conquerors. In addition, the metaphorical characterization of luxury as exercising vengeance on the world (*ulciscitur orbem* [6.293]) suggests that Rome and her territorial ambitions are to be blamed directly for this contemporary vice. The tropes delineating Rome's experiences of corruption due to foreign infiltration are explicit elsewhere in the *Satires* (3.62–65 and 3.79–83) and were in vogue among other moralizing authors such as the historians Sallust and Livy.

But there is more to this emergent picture too, since Rome also plays a key role in the problem that Juvenal describes (and satirizes). As a final demonstration of the satirist's articulation of movement in and out of Rome, we offer an instance where the city, in an intriguing twist, itself functions as the source and purveyor of contaminated morals. The city for Juvenal represents the beginning and endpoint for all things that corrupt both Roman

and foreign morality. In satire 2, for example, Juvenal exposes the hypocrisy of peoples' philosophical, cultural, and sexual practices at Rome with the warning that appearances are not as they seem, or, what one sees is not what one necessarily gets (*fronti nulla fides* [2.8]). He opens with the threat to flee to the ends of the earth whenever he encounters people who dare to speak about matters of morality.³⁷ From here, he systematically castigates Roman aristocrats who bear the superficial trappings of Republican descent and philosophical learnedness, yet lead an alternate and hidden lifestyle. The satire embarks on a program of exposure as it demonstrates how superficial trappings, like a veneer of moral righteousness, mask the inner corruption and impurity found within each of these hypocrites. Examples include a man who in public offers his hairy arms and legs as a testament to his manliness, but underneath his cloak his smooth, plucked buttocks and anus demonstrate his effeminacy, and a fiery advocate, descended from an old Republican family of outstanding virtue and morality, who now pleads before a crowd and defames his heritage as he is dressed in a transparent toga for all the public to view.

Building on the examples of individual behavior, satire 2 then concludes with an explicit claim regarding Rome's hypocrisy for being a transmitter of these corrupting morals on a global scale. Rome thereby is implicated on the charge of moving moral decay from the empire's center to its periphery, specifically the to Armenian town of Artaxata:

Indeed, we have moved ahead beyond
 the shores of Ireland and the recently captured Orkneys
 and the Britains content with the shortest night;
 but these things which now happen in the City of the conqueror
 the conquered do not do. And, nevertheless, one Armenian,
 Zalaces, who is more effeminate than all ephebes,
 is said to have indulged himself in a passionate tribune.
 You see what commerce does: he had arrived as a hostage
 where men are made. For if a longer delay puts
 the city on the boys, then they will never lack a lover.
 Their trousers, small knives, harnesses and whip will be abandoned:
 in this way, they carry back to Artaxata cloaked Roman morals.³⁸

³⁷ *Ultra Sauromatas fugere hinc libet et glaciale Oceanum, quotiens aliquid de moribus audent // qui Curios simulant et Bacchanalia uiuunt ...* ("I want to flee beyond the Sauromatae and the ice cold Oceanus from this place [Rome] whenever those who dare to say something about morals assume the appearance of the Curii and live like Bacchanals" [2.1–3]). Juvenal's desire to flee Rome functions to cast the remainder of the satire's focus on the numerous demonstrations of lackluster morality.

³⁸ ... *arma quidem ultra // litora Iuuernae promouimus et modo captas // Orcadas ac*

The spatial framework above illustrates a network of movement initiated more generally by Rome's territorial expansion. Like the examples of metonymy mentioned earlier, where Rhodes, Miletus, and Tarentum come to represent the Greek East in its totality (6.292–300), in the same way Ireland (*Iuverna* [2.160]), the Orkneys (*Orcadae* [2.161]), and Britain (*Britanni* [2.161]) symbolize an ethnic “other” bordering on the far reaches of the northern frontier of Rome's sphere of influence. Further, Juvenal attributes the corruption of an Armenian hostage at Rome to *commercium*³⁹ (“human dealings”) and to his exposure to a corrupt tribune, an official office of the Roman state, both of which account for the slackening of his sexual mores. Men like Zalaces transport the moral infection, harbored and incubated in the city of Rome, to its periphery, thereby facilitating the free and indiscriminate movement of vice throughout the empire.

The satirist further emphasizes the widespread ease of movement between Rome and its outlying areas in the satire's biting concluding lines (2.169–170). In these final verses, the system of circulation takes on more sinister connotations: that which Rome circulates—its morals (*mores*; 2.170)—are also cloaked (*praetextatae*; 2.170) and, therefore, go undetected by unsuspecting victims just as does a dormant disease that at the opportune moment will metastasize. In this way, Juvenal both emphasizes Rome's generative role in the distribution of moral decay and brings to completion the ring composition of the satire itself, accentuating in the process that the appearances mask the sickening reality of this spreading vice.

In the end, we see that Juvenal is preoccupied with the movement that imperial expansion necessarily entails. The outlying areas provide a boundary against which Rome defines itself, but at the same time territorial conquest brings with it a destabilization and permeability of such boundaries. In this conceptual field, “all roads” quite literally “lead to Rome”—just as, conversely for Juvenal, “all roads lead out of Rome” too. And so we find a circular movement, where the center and hub—the city of Rome—is both corrupted by external influences and also exports that same

minima contentos nocte Britannos // sed quae nunc populi fiunt uictoris in urbe // non faciunt illi quos uicimus. et tamen unus // Armenius Zalaces cunctis narratur ephēbis // mollior ardenti sese indulsisse tribune // aspice quid faciant commercia: uenerat obsess // hic fiunt homines. nam si mora longior urbem // induerit pueris, non umquam derit amator. // mittentur bracia, cultelli, frena, flagellum: // sic *praetextatos* referunt Artaxata *mores*.

³⁹ See “*commercium* -i,” in P.G.W. Glare, ed., *The Oxford Latin Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), entry 5: “connection, intercourse, dealings, relationship (with person or things).”

corruption. It becomes difficult in Juvenal to determine which comes first, since in many respects the dual natures of corruption constantly interact. In the end, however, both combine to undermine the glory that was the Republic wherein, at least in the imagination of these Roman writers, there was a purity of identity and clarity of cultural and social values that marked the Romans as a great people. Hereby the alterity of the past becomes a foil for a writer like Juvenal's present. That the past he envisions never existed as a historical reality is inconsequential for assessing the rhetorical focus on and function of movement and spatiality with which Juvenal is preoccupied. In the end, his conception of Roman conquest and concomitant identity is a grim one: the empire will gain nothing of value (and much to the contrary) from this movement and expansion through space.

4. MORALITY AND (COUNTER)MOVEMENT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

As Jonathan Z. Smith once noted, "It is the relationship to the human body, and our experience of it, that orients us in space, that confers meaning to place. Human beings are not placed, they bring place into being."⁴⁰ This particular formulation fits our theme in this essay quite well, as it is evident from the discussion above that Juvenal is doing precisely this: giving meaning (even if negatively so at times) to place (trying to preserve and conserve traditional notions of Roman morality and delineate firm boundaries of imperial space). Luke, in the book of Acts, is doing something similar, as he remaps the Roman empire with the ubiquitous presence of Christians and Christianity, which supplies not only a confirmation of Juvenal's point that Roman imperial expansion inspires social and cultural (and here also religious) corruption, but also a realization of his worst fears: the Oriental religion is making its way towards the city of Rome, and, as the book of Acts concludes, it has arrived on the scene, presumably to continue taking the empire by storm.

Irrespective of the historical realities behind the portrait in Acts, it is evident that imperial space has been remapped from a significantly divergent perspective than Juvenal's. Using similar conceptual categories related to geography, movement, and space, the book of Acts re-imagines imperial territory and creates openings for newly emergent social and cultural

⁴⁰ Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 28.

practices. This powerful (re)placement of empire should not be taken as merely fictional, however, since the imaginary readily spills over into the formation of new identities and realities. As the critical spatiality theorist Henri Lefebvre observed, “The idea of a new life is at once realistic and illusory—and hence neither true nor false. What is true is that the preconditions for a different life have already been created, and that that other life is thus on the cards ... A total revolution—material, economic, social, political, psychic, cultural, erotic, etc.—seems to be in the offing, as though already immanent to the present. *To change life, however, we must first change space.*”⁴¹ Juvenal was somewhat prescient in his understanding of these dynamics of space. While his was a concern with corruption and decline in Rome, Luke’s was much more on the other end of the spectrum, invested as he was in precisely those “corrupting” influences that Juvenal feared. It was this ability to imagine space (and to enable Christianity “to take place”⁴²) through energizing narrative with spatial and moral significance that provided at least one facet of the remarkably persuasive power of Luke’s story in the book of Acts.

There was clearly a whole narrative canvas on which to reimagine (and to replace) empire, and Luke certainly took advantage of the conceptual world that was available to him. That said, the geographical elements in the book of Acts, which are obviously salient throughout the work, are still debated among scholars, most often viewed, as they are, as a resonance or reflection of either narrative artistry or theological design on the part of the author.⁴³ Long ago Hans Conzelmann had already argued that the geographical portions of Luke’s narrative (particularly in the Gospel) were largely theological

⁴¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (trans. D. Nicholson-Smith; Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 189–190 (our emphasis).

⁴² This phrase (and also something of our conceptual use of it) is taken from Smith, *To Take Place*.

⁴³ Fewer scholars than in the past would be willing to see in Acts an actual tracing out of historical developments of early Christian mission, at least in the way that those are portrayed in the text. Still, there are scholars who place significant weight on the reliability of the narrative. See especially Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*. Vol. 1: *Jesus and the Twelve* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity; Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004). Also see the recent tome by James D.G. Dunn, *Christianity in the Making*. Vol. 2: *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). For a counter position to the historical reliability of Acts, see Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity 10; London: T&T Clark, 2004). The “(re)turn” to situating the origin of Acts in the second century also has ramifications for the historical reliability of the material in the book (see esp. Joseph B. Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* [Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006]).

in orientation (they represented particular theological tropes rather than “actual places” as such).⁴⁴ Certainly Acts 1:8 would bear out the importance of geography for the expansion of the Christian gospel, as the entire book is essentially a spatial meditation on Jesus’ opening proclamation. That scholarly paradigm has increasingly been confirmed in subsequent scholarship, albeit with differing emphases. While some scholars have focused on the scriptural tradition underlying the geographical features of Acts,⁴⁵ others have emphasized the pivotal role of politics in Luke’s articulation of Christian movement through empire and towards Rome (and away from Jerusalem).⁴⁶

More recently, a shift in analysis has occurred, with more focus being placed on the performative quality of the travel features in Acts. Much of the current discussion on space and travel in Acts is situated at this juncture, in terms of accenting how the travel of the apostles, and especially Paul, provides the “cloak” of philosophical and socio-cultural sophistication (or enhancement) in the narrative. Paul is, as Jerome Neyrey notes,

⁴⁴ Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (trans. G. Buswell; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960 [1954]), 18–94 (his observations on the Gospel have frequently been extended to Acts). See more recently, Mikeal Parsons, “The Place of Jerusalem on the Lukan Landscape: An Exercise in Theological Cartography,” in R.P. Thompson and T.E. Phillips, eds., *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998), 155–172.

⁴⁵ Two very different readings of the role of Scripture can be found in James M. Scott, *Geography in Early Judaism and Christianity: The Book of Jubilees* (SNTSMS 113; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 56–96 (who places emphasis on the “Table of Nations” tradition that is taken up by Luke); and David P. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 296–325 (who accents the use of Deuteronomistic influences in the Lukan literary construction of travel in both the Gospel and Acts).

⁴⁶ Already noted above is Gary Gilbert’s work (“List of Nations in Acts 2”; and “Roman Propaganda and Christian Identity”), in which he situates the various geographical elements in Acts as a counter-response to Roman imperial territorial claims. Herein Luke is seen to employ and mimic Roman imperial discourses and tropes. Traditionally, Acts is rather seen as an apologetic for the church in order that it might receive fair treatment by the Roman authorities (with narrative arguments such as “we are peaceful,” “we are Jewish,” “we are social, cultural, and philosophical equals [if not superiors]”). Some scholars, such as Paul W. Walaskay, have suggested that the book of Acts is actually an *apologia pro imperio* to convince early Christians that the Roman empire is not a threat (*‘And So We Came to Rome’: The Political Perspective of St. Luke* [SNTSMS 49; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983]). That position would seem rather untenable upon a closer reading of Acts, given the implicit anti-Roman stance that arises throughout (see Todd Penner, “*Res Gestae Divi Christi*: Miracles, Early Christian Heroes, and the Discourse of Power in Acts,” in D.F. Watson, ed., *The Role of Miracle Discourse in the Argumentation of the New Testament* [Early Christianity and Its Literature Series; Atlanta: SBL; Leiden: Brill, 2012]; cf. Jennifer Knust, “Enslaved to Demons: Sex, Violence, and the Apologies of Justin Martyr,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses*, 431–455).

“an urban person, who ... lodges in cities and deals with all the levels of the ancient stratified city, especially the elites.”⁴⁷ The public role of the apostles is evident throughout Acts, and resonates with the civic role of philosophers more generally in late antiquity.⁴⁸ The more recent focus on the Second Sophistic in the Greek East also adds further contours to the emergent discussion of the Lukan images of the apostles and Paul in Acts. For instance, Laura Nasrallah has recently argued that the depiction of Paul in Acts employs similar tropes related to the founding and organization of cities in the Greek East.⁴⁹ Therein we find numerous themes related to a stylized portrait of Paul as one who brings culture, civility, city alliances/affiliations embedded in his missionary activities, mimicking similar practices of Greeks and Romans in the regions in (and to) which Paul is travelling in the narrative.

Yet with respect to geography, space, and movement in Acts, one wonders if at times scholars might not be over-determining the thematic parallels with other Greco-Roman literature, or, at the very least, over-emphasizing the significance of many of these analogous features. The

⁴⁷ Jerome Neyrey, “Luke’s Social Location of Paul: Cultural Anthropology and the Status of Paul in Acts,” in B. Witherington, ed., *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 251–279 (256; cf. 275–276). This focus correlates with the broader attempt by Luke to enhance Paul’s social image throughout Acts (see John Clayton Lentz, *Luke’s Portrait of Paul* [SNTSMS 77; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993]).

⁴⁸ See esp. Loveday Alexander, “‘Foolishness to the Greeks’: Jews and Christians in the Public Life of the Empire,” in Gillian Clark and Tessa Rajak, eds., *Philosophy and Power in the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Miriam Griffin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 229–249; and Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, “‘All the World’s a Stage’: The Rhetoric of Gender in Acts,” in R. Bieringer, G. van Belle, and J. Verheyden, eds., *Luke and His Readers: Festschrift A. Denaux* (BETL 182; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 373–396 (here with a focus on the masculine character of this public comportment). Cf. Doron Mendels, “Pagan or Jewish? The Presentation of Paul’s Mission in the Book of Acts,” in H. Cancik, H. Lichtenberger, and P. Schäfer, eds., *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag, I. Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 431–452, who emphasizes Paul’s role as “Kulturbringer.”

⁴⁹ Laura Nasrallah, “The Acts of the Apostles, Greek Cities, and Hadrian’s Panhellenion,” *JBL* 127 (2008): 533–566. Also see her earlier article, “Mapping the World: Justin, Tatian, Lucian, and the Second Sophistic,” *HTR* 98 (2005): 283–314 (for more on Acts in the context of the Second Sophistic, see Ryan Carhart, “The Second Sophistic and Luke’s Characterization of Paul in Acts 13–28,” in R. Dupertuis and T. Penner, eds., *Reading Acts in the Second Century* [London: Equinox, forthcoming]). An earlier variation on the theme of Acts and the founding of cities was traced out by Walter T. Wilson, “Urban Legends: Acts 10:1–11:18 and the Strategies of Greco-Roman Foundation Narratives,” *JBL* 120 (2001): 77–99; cf. David L. Balch, “ΜΕΤΑΒΟΛΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ. Jesus as Founder of the Church in Luke-Acts: Form and Function,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts*, 139–188.

literature of the ancient world, as we mentioned at the outset of this essay, is filled with travel-related themes and spatial reconfigurations—boundaries and borders are constantly being (re)constituted and (re)imagined in these texts. Not unlike us today, ancient writers and communities were constantly seeking to (re)claim, to (re)imagine, and to (re)configure space, their own and that of others, hereby providing at least one avenue by which to create and sustain identities, ancient and newly formed. Thus, it really should come as no surprise that territory, geography, space, and movement therein play such a critical role in the book of Acts, an ancient literary work that is dedicated to the delineation of a new identity (the “Way”; Acts 18:26; 24:22) in an old (or at least older) world. The spatial spheres in Acts set the parameters of the world that Luke envisions: there is the fixed pole of Jerusalem (chapters 1–7), countered by the other pole, the city of Rome, as the latter’s presence looms ever larger the closer one gets to the end of the book (esp. chapters 16–28). Between these two spheres, there is of course significant travel in various regions of Asia Minor and around the Aegean Sea (which forms the predominant locus of the Pauline apostolic activity in the story). One could focus on the various concentric circles that continue to keep Jerusalem in focus, with the major apostolic conference in Acts 15 and then Paul’s visit in Acts 21. Jerusalem as place is essential for the construction of the “base” out of which the early Christian movement arises and then moves forward.

Yet it does not function like Rome in Juvenal’s construction of space. Jerusalem is a place of opposition (which is the major theme of the opening section of Acts). Moreover, it is not the place that Luke envisions must be conserved or preserved—it is, rather, the place to leave behind (the Hellenists do so in Acts 8; so also Paul in Acts 27). Indeed, one of the interesting facets of early Christian identity as it is constructed in Acts is that it is not tied to place in the explicit sense (one might imagine that Stephen’s “prophetic” words in 7:48–49—the holy one does not dwell in “houses made by hands”—become something of a broader mantra for the Lukan reconfiguration of “all space” as “God’s space”).⁵⁰ Christianity, as conceptualized in the Lukan narrative, moves in and between these poles of empire—Jerusalem and Rome—occupying spaces in both. These poles are

⁵⁰ See further Gregory Sterling, “‘Opening the Scriptures’: The Legitimation of the Jewish Diaspora and the Early Christian Mission,” in D.P. Moessner, ed., *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim upon Israel’s Legacy* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 199–225.

also places of opposition too, as is clear from the narrative. Acts ends like it begins, with Jewish opposition to the Christian message (even as there is also positive response too). And, of course, Paul is under house arrest in the final moments of the narrative, awaiting a trial before the emperor.

In reconceiving Acts through the prism of Juvenal's discourse on movement and space, it is evident that for Luke this "new" movement he is depicting is not tied to space, and that is precisely what places it so prominently (according to the narrative) in the public sphere of empire.⁵¹ To be sure, there are emergent Christian "hubs" like Antioch and Jerusalem. But these are places from which movement flows outward (and toward the great centers such as Athens and Rome). Obviously, these incipient Christian religious and cultural ideologies related to the deity are manifestly reflected in this spatial orientation (or dis-orientation). It is intriguing that the converse of the dislocation of the movement from major centers of power, which results in a relocation of this "Way's" identity into "all space," should also accompany a clear sense of moral self-definition and communal identity in the narrative. That is, unlike Juvenal who perceives Rome to be corrupt(ed) (or at the very least compromised) by the dialogical effects of Roman imperial expansion, Luke constructs emergent Christianity as the embodiment of the best of Greek and Roman values.⁵² The communities and their representative narrative leaders/apostles are everywhere shown to embody the quintessential character of public comportment and private virtue. This group, in stark contrast to the effects of Roman conquest and territorial expansion as envisioned by Juvenal, is not compromised through its expansion and movement. Although, to be sure, the issues reflected in Acts 10 and 15 indicate that "foreign" influences (particularly the Gentile inclusion in the

⁵¹ On the gendered dynamics of this placement and spatial conception in Acts, see Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, "Gendering Violence: Patterns of Power and Constructs of Masculinity in the Acts of the Apostles," in A.-J. Levine and M. Blickenstaff, eds., *A Feminist Companion to Acts* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 193–209.

⁵² See Nasrallah, "Acts of the Apostles"; and Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 262–330 (for a summary of the former, see Todd Penner, "Early Christian Heroes and Lukan Narrative: Stephen and the Hellenists in Ancient Historiographical Perspective," in W. Braun ed., *Rhetoric and Reality in Early Christianities* [Studies in Christianity and Judaism 16; Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005], 75–97). More generally, with respect to these same themes elsewhere in early Christian literature, see Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Early Christian Sexual Politics and Roman Imperial Family Values: Rereading Christ and Culture," in C.I. Wilkins, ed., *Papers of the Henry Luce III Fellows in Theology* 6 (Pittsburgh: Association of Theological Schools, 2003), 23–48; and Jennifer Knust, *Abandoned to Lust: Sexual Slander and Ancient Christianity* (Gender, Theory and Religion; New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

burgeoning movement) provide the occasion for reflection on community identity, wherein there is opposition that is premised on the perceived compromising of the Jewish character of the earliest Jerusalem community. But that conflict is resolved quickly and expediently. Perhaps, however, we do catch a glimpse of that broader theme of Roman literature outlined above: the presence of foreign elements represents possible contagion. Yet from Luke's perspective at the least this mixing is something to be celebrated and embraced, and the resolution of any resultant conflict demonstrates the civic superiority of the community.⁵³

It is at precisely this juncture that Juvenal and Luke most overlap in terms of their conception of Roman space abroad, thinking here especially of their similar ambivalence toward Roman rule in originally non-Roman territories. In some sense, the spatial dimensions of Juvenal's world is such that the further one ventures out from the center—Rome (the insulated city that, at one time at least, was thought to preserve immaculately the Republican values and traditions)—the more contested Roman identity becomes. The roads leading away from Rome, whatever real danger they may have had for travelers, certainly also possess a metaphorical moral peril. Yet Luke, looking at Rome from the margins, does not make the distinction between the colonies and the center. While Jewish opposition is manifest throughout,⁵⁴ the overall perception of Roman authority is much harder to pinpoint in the story, and herein we catch a glimpse of Luke's ambivalence toward the empire. In fact, there appears to be no unified perspective on Roman rule in the book of Acts. Paul meets several proconsuls in his travels, and both times there is a "story." In Acts 13, Paul travels to Cyprus (Phaphos) and encounters the proconsul Sergius Paulus (13:7), who, in this narrative, appears to be under the "spell" of a magician by the name of Elymas/Bar-Jesus, and is thus blinded to the message of Paul. Sergius Paulus finally comes to "believe" when Paul invokes the power of Jesus to blind Bar-Jesus. In Acts 18, Paul

⁵³ See Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 276–287 (on the thematic importance of resolution of community *stasis* in Acts, see 265–276); as well as David L. Balch, "The Cultural Origin of 'Receiving All Nations' in Luke-Acts: Alexander the Great or Roman Social Policy," in J.T. Fitzgerald, T.H. Olbricht, and L.M. White, eds., *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (NovTSup 110; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 483–500 (cf. Balch, "ΜΕΤΑΒΟΛΗ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΥΜΕΝΟΥ").

⁵⁴ Although throughout the text Jews respond both negatively and positively to the "gospel," a prominent place in the narrative is reserved for stories related to Jewish conflict with and persecution of the emergent Christian communities and individuals in the narrative. See Penner and Vander Stichele, "Gendering Violence;" Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins*, 287–327; and Matthews, *Perfect Martyr*.

is brought (by Jewish opponents) before Gallio, the proconsul (of Achaia) (18:12). Here Paul is simply dismissed by the Roman administrator, while the leader of the synagogue is beaten in front of him.⁵⁵ Certainly the portrayal of (Antonius) Felix, the governor of Judaea, both “hearing” Paul while at the same time also hoping for a bribe from him (24:26), suggests an aspect of corruption in Roman rule. Further, the Roman military presence seems absent in the opening chapters of Acts (in Jerusalem), and is only faintly hinted at (as a veiled threat by the town clerk) during the riot in the temple of Artemis in Ephesus (19:38–40). When a Roman tribune (finally) arrives on the scene in Acts 21:31–34 to quell the riot, it is Paul (the innocent one) who is arrested and brought to the barracks. Moreover, in Acts 23 the Roman tribune seems powerless to protect Paul in Jerusalem, and so sneaks him out to Caesarea. Finally, King Agrippa, not (Porcius) Festus (Felix’s successor as governor), is the one who declares Paul to be innocent. And, ironically, despite this declaration there is an apparent inability of the authorities to repeal the order for Paul to be tried before Caesar (26:32).

At best, there is ambivalence towards Roman power in the provinces. Most likely, there is also an edge of criticism of Roman authority and control—the garrisons and proconsuls and governors are fairly inept in terms of exhibiting authority over, and superior administration of, the territories. One might configure this trope as Luke’s displacing of Roman imperial presence, conceptualizing this feature as Sandra Schwartz has: “Rome is ... present in its absence ... It may have seemed better to divert the text’s gaze from the center of imperial power and to keep Rome as a vanishing point outside the frame of the narrative.”⁵⁶ And yet Rome is not entirely vanishing either. Luke constructs the Romans as “out of place” or “no place” in the very moment that emergent Christianity is made to inhabit “all space.” There is a juxtaposition here in terms of a shifting of power relations in the early Christian imagination. No doubt, also, such conceptions are influenced by real experiences of and consequent ambivalence toward Roman

⁵⁵ For more on this narrative, see Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, “Le territoire corinthien: point de vue et poétique dans les Actes des Apôtres,” in Daniel Marguerat, ed., *Regards croisés sur la Bible: Etudes sur le point de vue* (Lectio Divina; Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 2007), 197–204; and Vander Stichele and Penner, *Contextualizing Gender in Early Christian Discourse*, 208–213.

⁵⁶ Sandra Schwartz, “The Trial Scene in the Greek Novels and in Acts,” in Penner and Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts*, 105–137 (132). Schwartz goes on to comment that “although invisible, [Rome] is the center point that organizes the actions and verdicts within the provincial courtrooms on the peripheries of the empire. Rome thus lends significance to all the action of the narrative and is itself being drawn into the ideologically drama” (132).

colonial power. At the very least, then, the placing of and the making space for this new “Way” in the spatial (and moral) landscape of the Roman empire involves a substantive displacement of other, often competing, identities (and there are many in Luke’s text). And in all of this movement through empire, on a seeming inevitable collision course with the city of Rome itself, early Christians continue to embody (narratively) excellence in moral, religious, and even political endeavors. When there is a “Felix-like” moment in the community of Luke’s narrative (such as we find in Acts 5 with respect to the monetary corruption of Ananias and Sapphira), the potentially compromising incident is dealt with swiftly and decisively: the hand of God strikes the perpetrators dead. Whatever ambivalence exists elsewhere in the narrative, the purity of the “Way” and its leaders remains uncontested.

“And so we came to Rome” (28:14). Indeed, in the narrative, some sixty or so years before Juvenal would begin the undertaking of his *Satires*, Paul arrives in the bastion of Roman-ness, that city that was to be protected from foreign corruption. As Juvenal himself noted, “for a long time has the Syrian Orontes flowed down into the Tiber” (*iam pridem Syrus in Tiberim defluxit Orontes* [3.62; cf. 6.295 above]). Commenting on this passage, Henry J. Cadbury aptly observed: “Could we have a more exact illustration of [Juvenal’s] complaint than Luke’s story of Paul’s propaganda among the Gentiles beginning precisely at Syrian Antioch on the Orontes and ending at Rome on the Tiber?”⁵⁷ Granted, and even more to the point, whenever (and if ever) the historical Paul made it to Rome, the writing of that narrative of Paul’s grand entrance via the Appian Way (28:15) is (likely) written around the same time period that Juvenal was working on his satires. Luke (presumably) never read or heard Juvenal’s satires, and Juvenal certainly would not have wasted his time reading a book like Acts.⁵⁸ Juvenal would unquestionably have been ambivalent about the Lukan “gospel,” and undoubtedly he would have satirized the emergent Christian movement much like he did the Jews. Yet Luke’s reconfiguring and remapping of imperial territory—so as to make Christianity to take place in the Roman empire, to bring something “new” to life by reconceiving and

⁵⁷ Cadbury, *Book of Acts in History*, 13.

⁵⁸ It is unlikely even that Juvenal could have recognized the difference between a “Christian” and “Jew” at the turn of the second century in Rome—even if Luke is certain he could (cf. Acts 11:26). The process distinguishing Jews and Christians was gradual and clear distinction took shape much later. For a convincing case to that effect, see Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Divinations; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

reimagining space—would have provided strong confirmation of Juvenal's worst fears: Rome's greatness is clearly being compromised, and its once unyielding moral, cultural, and political principles are fast in decline. Striking in this scenario is precisely that two writers—one from the Western part of the empire and the other presumably from the Eastern—are both looking at the vast expanse of Roman territory from their respective locales. Both writers conceptualize space in terms of movement and morality, which suggests that, whatever differences we may posit between separate parts of the empire, there is a shared framework for imagining space and place in the this larger world. The anxiety of empire is manifestly apparent in Juvenal's work, the aspirations of empire in Luke's. As much as East and West, Luke and Juvenal, intersect with respect to a common conceptual core related to space, movement, and morality in the Roman empire, it is at the crossroads of anxiety and aspiration that we perceive most clearly the critical divide between the two.

JESUS, THE BELOVED DISCIPLE, AND GRECO-ROMAN FRIENDSHIP CONVENTIONS*

Ronald F. Hock

1. INTRODUCTION

Two issues of Johannine scholarship, one a longstanding issue and the other a more recent one, may both be advanced by dealing with them together. The longstanding issue concerns the disciple whom Jesus loved, introduced at 13:23 and often called the Beloved Disciple. Since this disciple remains unnamed even in subsequent appearances, scholars have sought to identify him but none of the numerous proposals has proved persuasive. Of more recent concern is the theme of friendship in the Gospel. Scholars have naturally focused on Jesus and have regarded him as the exemplary friend, especially through his laying down his life for his friends (15:13), a commonplace sentiment of ancient friendship discussions. But this concern rarely goes beyond a christological use of friendship discussions.

The purpose of this essay is to argue that discussions of this unnamed, if important, disciple in the Gospel would be more fruitful if we were to move beyond the question of identity—that is, who is this disciple?—a question that seems to defy being answered, to another question, the question of function—that is, what role does this disciple play in the narrative? The answer to this question of function emerges more clearly if we look for it in terms of the second issue, the theme of friendship, but apply the friendship conventions not only to Jesus but also to the Beloved Disciple. Specifically, I propose that the Beloved Disciple's behavior would have been regarded by readers of John's Gospel as those of a friend to Jesus. Indeed, as Jesus' friend the two of them become a pair of friends—indeed, a pair of *Christian*

* I wish to thank my student at USC, David Harrison, for many helpful and stimulating conversations as we read the principal texts on friendship and their bearing on the Gospel of John during the Spring 2008 semester. I also wish to thank my long-time friends, Professors David J. Lull of Wartburg Theological Seminary and Martha Stillman of Baker College, for reading earlier drafts of this paper.

friends—much like the various pairs of friends that were so common a feature of Greco-Roman discussions of friendship, namely, the convention of visualizing ideal friendships in terms of pairs.

2. THE BELOVED DISCIPLE AND FRIENDSHIP: TWO SEPARATE ISSUES IN JOHANNINE STUDIES

Our first task, however, will be to situate this proposal more fully in the discussions of these two issues before relating them to one another. The anonymous disciple “whom Jesus loved” appears only in the Gospel of John. Anonymous characters appear regularly in this Gospel, even rather prominent ones, such as the Samaritan woman in chapter 4 and the man born blind in chapter 9, not to mention Jesus’ mother (2:1–12; 19:25–27).¹ There are even other unnamed disciples (1:35, 40; perhaps 18:15), but what makes the Beloved Disciple so intriguing is that he has a role in a number of key events in the Gospel, especially in the passion narrative. This disciple² appears for the first time in the midst of the last supper, introduced initially as “one of the disciples” (εἷς ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν) and then further specified as the disciple “whom Jesus loved” (ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς) (13:23). He is probably the “other disciple” (ἄλλος μαθητής) who went with Jesus into the palace of the high priest where Jesus was to be questioned (18:15–16).³ He is definitely present at the cross in an exchange with Jesus and his mother (19:25–27) and

¹ On anonymous characters in John, see David R. Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (BIS 27; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 17–34. On characters in John more generally, see Jerome H. Neyrey, *The Gospel of John* (NCBC; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5–9.

² For fuller analyses of the evidence and options regarding the Beloved Disciple, see Werner Georg Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament* (trans. A.J. Mattill, Jr.; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), 165–174; Philipp Vielhauer, *Geschichte der urchristlichen Literatur: Einleitung in das Neue Testament, die Apokryphen und die Apostolischen Väter* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 453–460; George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), lxx–lxxv; R. Alan Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee: The Life of a Legend* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 56–88; Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 368–373; and Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 73–91.

³ On this probability, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (AB 29–29A; 2 vols.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966–1970), 2:822, 841; Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee*, 58; Neyrey, *Gospel of John*, 234; and Franz Neirynck, “The ‘other disciple’ in Jn 18, 15–16,” *ETL* 51 (1975): 113–141, esp. 139–140. Less sure are Kümmel, *Introduction*, 165; Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, 453; and Bauckham, *Testimony*, 83–84, 86.

witnesses the sword thrust (19:35). He is the first to arrive at the empty tomb after notification from Mary Magdalene that the body of Jesus was missing (20:1–10) and the first to recognize the man by the lakeshore as the risen Jesus (21:1–8). Finally, he is the subject of rumors about his fate (21:20–23) and is seemingly identified as the author of the Gospel itself (21:24–25).

Given the importance of this disciple in the Gospel, it is not surprising that there has been a keen interest in his identity. This interest goes back to the early church and has continued up to the present. Eusebius cites a passage from a second-century author, Papias of Hierapolis, who favors John the Elder,⁴ a view that has been rigorously defended anew by Richard Bauckham.⁵ Still, John the Elder was soon merged with another John, the apostle John, i.e., the son of Zebedee,⁶ and while this identification soon became traditional, a number of other candidates have been proposed in more recent times—among them Lazarus, Thomas, John Mark, Matthias, or simply a literary or symbolic figure.⁷ And yet, despite all the effort, this quest for the identity of the Beloved Disciple has proved frustrating and fruitless. As Werner Georg Kümmel concludes: “[T]he identity of the Beloved Disciple remains unknown to us.”⁸

But while the question of identity has proved fruitless, a way forward for understanding this disciple suggests itself by asking another question, that of function. Some scholars have moved in this direction already, but their answers—for example, seeing this disciple as a “model of appropriate response to Jesus”⁹—remain vague, at least in terms of content that would have made sense in the first century.

Greater clarity is possible, however, if we turn to the other issue of Johannine scholarship mentioned above, that is, the recent interest in the theme of friendship in John’s Gospel, as is shown by the recent studies of Sharon Ringe and Klaus Scholtissek.¹⁰ Their studies are helpful in many respects,

⁴ See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.39.4–6.

⁵ See Bauckham, *Testimony*, 33–72.

⁶ See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.8.4.

⁷ For a convenient summary of the arguments for these and other candidates, see Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee*, 72–84.

⁸ Kümmel, *Introduction*, 167. So also Vielhauer, *Geschichte*, 456; Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee*, 84; and, more recently, Harold W. Attridge, “Genre Bending in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 121 (2002): 3–21, esp. 19: “Despite constant attempts to identify the figure ... he remains resolutely anonymous.”

⁹ E.g. Beck, *Discipleship*, 9.

¹⁰ See esp. Sharon H. Ringe, *Wisdom’s Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 64–83, and Klaus Scholtissek, “Eine grössere Liebe als diese hat niemand, als wenn einer sein Leben hingibt für seine

notably in their convenient, if general, summaries of Greco-Roman (and Jewish) discussions of friendship¹¹ and in their conceptualizing the behavior and role of Jesus in John's Gospel in terms of friendship. Both focus on John 15:9–17, with its friendship *topos* of dying for a friend (15:13),¹² although Ringe also analyzes well the friendship dimensions of the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd in John 10¹³ and Scholtissek locates Jesus' frank and open speech (παρρησία) (especially 16:25, 29) within the conventions of friendship.¹⁴ And for both Jesus' friendship toward his disciples, even to the point of dying for them, becomes the basis for making friendship the defining characteristic of discipleship, then and now, which is to love one another (13:34–35; 15:12, 17).¹⁵ In other words, Christology grounds ecclesiology.

And yet, the influence of Greco-Roman friendship conventions on the Gospel of John in these studies is vitiated by two factors. First, both Ringe and Scholtissek, however much they discuss friendship conventions, finally draw back from making these conventions central to the Gospel. Ringe emphasizes instead the Jewish friendships of David and Jonathan and of Naomi and Ruth, which feature the distinctly Jewish notion of *hesed*, or "covenant faithfulness," a notion that finally "serves," she says, "to elaborate the terse language of love in John 15."¹⁶ Scholtissek, while noting that dying for one's friends is a Greco-Roman *topos*, not a Jewish one,¹⁷ nevertheless minimizes this Greco-Roman friendship *topos* by subordinating it to the Gospel writer's distinctive overall theological program, which ends up *contrasting* the Hellenistic *Freundschaftsethik* to that of Jesus: "Jesu Freundschaft ist einseitig, wird ohne Vorbedingungen geschenkt, ist universal und

Freunde' (Joh 15,13): Die hellenistische Freundschaftsethik und das Johannesevangelium," in J. Frey and U. Schnelle, eds., *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums: Das vierte Evangelium in religions- und traditions-geschichtliche Perspektive* (WUNT 175; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 413–439. Scholtissek notes (426 n. 71) the lack of studies on friendship terms in John's Gospel: "Die Sprache der Freundschaft im Johannesevangelium ist noch wenig gründlich untersucht worden."

¹¹ See Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends*, 69–74, and Scholtissek, "Eine grössere Liebe," 415–425.

¹² On this *topos*, Scholtissek, "Eine grössere Liebe," 420–422.

¹³ See Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends*, 80–81.

¹⁴ See Scholtissek, "Eine grössere Liebe," 428–430. He also discusses (427–428) briefly other places in the Gospel where the term friend appears, such as John the Baptist as the friend of the bridegroom (3:29), Lazarus as a friend (11:11), and Pilate as a friend of Caesar (19:12).

¹⁵ See Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends*, 82, and Scholtissek, "Eine grössere Liebe," 438–439.

¹⁶ See Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends*, 72–74 (quotation on 73).

¹⁷ See Scholtissek, "Eine grössere Liebe," 422–425, esp. 425 and 438.

überwindet soziale Hierarchien (von Knechten zu Freunden).¹⁸ The extent to which John's Gospel *conforms* to Greco-Roman friendship conventions slips into the background.

The second factor is that both Ringe and Scholtissek do not go much beyond the Gospel's christological use of friendship conventions in their analyses and so miss the equally obvious use of another convention—thinking of friends in terms of pairs.¹⁹ But this convention, as we shall see, is central to John's portrayal of both Jesus and the Beloved Disciple. And here, of course, is where we have the two issues of Johannine scholarship, mentioned at the outset, brought together—the Beloved Disciple and the theme of friendship.

3. PAIRS OF FRIENDS AND THE CONVENTIONS OF GRECO-ROMAN FRIENDSHIP

Studies of Greco-Roman friendship²⁰ have long noted the role of pairs of friends in ancient discussions of friendship.²¹ But scholars have done little more than cite the pairs of friends and call them *sprichwörtlich*.²² Dio Chrysostom names three pairs that were widely bandied about (θρυλούμενοι) in his day: Orestes and Pylades, Theseus and Peirithous, and Achilles and Patroclus.²³ Cicero at one place also speaks of three pairs, but names

¹⁸ See Scholtissek, "Eine grössere Liebe," 437–439 (quotation on 438).

¹⁹ See, e.g. Scholtissek, "Eine grössere Liebe," 437, where he summarizes his analysis of Greco-Roman friendship: "Griechisch-hellenistische und römische Freundschaftspositionen sind (mit unterschiedlichen Akzenten) von den Charakteristika der gegenseitigen Solidarität, des gemeinsamen Lebens, des gleichgerichteten Tugendstrebens, des wechselseitigen Nutzen (Reziprozität), der offenen Rede, die Geheimnisse voreinander ausschliesst (*parresia*), und der Öffentlichkeit geprägt." No mention of pairs.

²⁰ The literature on friendship in the Greco-Roman world is vast. Among older studies see esp. the pioneering work by Gottfried Bohnenblust, *Beiträge zum Topos ΠΕΡΙ ΦΙΛΙΑΣ* (Inaug. Diss., Univ. of Bern; Gustav Schade [Otto Francke], 1905). Much general information is packed into two articles: Kurt Treu, "Freundschaft," *RAC* 8 (1972), 418–434, and Gustav Stählin, "φιλέω κτλ," *TDNT* 9:113–171, esp. 146–171. Among more recent studies, see esp. John T. Fitzgerald, ed., *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (SBLRBS 34; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Michael Peachin, ed., *Aspects of Friendship in the Graeco-Roman World* (JRSup 43; Portsmouth, RI: JRA, 2001). All of these volumes have copious bibliographies.

²¹ See, e.g. Bohnenblust, *Beiträge*, 41; Stählin, "φιλέω," 153; and Konstan, *Friendship*, 24.

²² So Bohnenblust, *Beiträge*, 41. Mention of pairs of friends is already *sprichwörtlich* at the time of Aristotle (*Eth. nic.* 9.10.6.1171a14–16).

²³ See Dio, *Or.* 74.28. As examples of how widespread the admiration of Orestes and Pylades was down through the centuries, see, e.g. Cicero, *Amic.* 7.24, which speaks of a play

only Theseus (and Peirithous) and Orestes (and Pylades) but doubtlessly would have included Achilles and Patroclus (Cicero, *Fin.* 1.65).²⁴ At another place, however, he speaks of three or four pairs,²⁵ again naming none but now presumably thinking of the same three plus the Pythagoreans Damon and Phintias, a pair he mentions elsewhere.²⁶ Plutarch agrees with these four pairs and adds a fifth, presumably out of deference to his Boeotian background: the Theban generals Epameinondas and Pelopidas.²⁷ In any case, whether the number is three or four or five pairs, it is the rarity of such exemplary friendships that is being emphasized²⁸ as well as a belief that friendship is most clearly embodied in pairs.²⁹

And yet, these proverbial friendships do not exhaust the pairs of friends who were considered as exemplary. In fact, there seems to have been a trend in Greco-Roman accounts of friendship to add pairs to the standard list, beginning with Cicero in the mid-first century BCE. In fact, Cicero is explicit on the point. One of the purposes of his *De amicitia* is to propose a new pair of friends to the standard ones. He says that he hopes the friendship of Laelius and Scipio, to whom he often refers and praises in this treatise,³⁰ will become known to posterity alongside the three or four traditional pairs.³¹ We have, in effect, Cicero placing a *Roman* pair of friends alongside the celebrated Greek ones. Similarly, Josephus, when paraphrasing the stories of David and Jonathan in 1–2 Samuel (= 1–2 Kings LXX), consistently emphasizes their friendship by adding the term φίλια to his paraphrase as well as by using other friendship-related terminology.³² At the time of Jonathan's death David calls him, according to Josephus, a most loyal friend (πιστοτατος φίλος) and thus seems to regard the two as a pair of exemplary *Jewish* friends.³³ Another example is in Chariton's novel, where Chaereas and

by Marcus Pacuvius that had the audience cheering the willingness of Orestes and Pylades to die in place of the other, and Lucian's *Toxaris*, which highlights the dangers shared by these two (*Tox.* 1–8).

²⁴ On the continuing popularity of Achilles and Patroclus down to late antiquity, see Libanius, *Orat.* 1.56, and Konstan, *Friendship*, 24 and 41–42.

²⁵ See Cicero, *Amic.* 4.15.

²⁶ See Cicero, *Off.* 3.45. On their friendship, see esp. Iamblichus, *De vita Pythag.* 233–236.

²⁷ See Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 93E. On their friendship, see Plutarch, *Pel.* 3.2 and esp. 4.1–5.

²⁸ See Cicero, *Amic.* 4.15; 21.79; Seneca, *Ben.* 6.33.3; Dio, *Or.* 74.28; and Bohnenblust, *Beiträge*, 15, 37.

²⁹ On this notion, see Cicero, *Amic.* 5.20, and esp. Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 93E–F.

³⁰ See Cicero, *Amic.* 1.5; 6.22; 7.25; 9.29–30 7; and below.

³¹ See Cicero, *Amic.* 4.15.

³² See Josephus, *Ant.* 6.225 (φιλία), 237 (εὐνοία), 239 (φίλος), 276 (εὐνοία καὶ πίστις), and 7.111–116 (φιλία).

³³ Josephus, *Ant.* 7.5.

Polycharmus are depicted throughout as a new pair of Greek friends and even compared to the pair *par excellence*, Achilles and Patroclus.³⁴ Finally, Lucian, seemingly tiring of the traditional pairs and calling them “antiquated friends” (παλαιοὶ φίλοι),³⁵ provides stories of ten contemporary and exemplary pairs (οἱ καθ’ ἡμᾶς) of friends, five Greek and five barbarian.³⁶ In short, exemplary pairs remained a vital part of Greco-Roman discussions of friendship not only among Greeks but also among Romans, Jews, and others.

What made these friendships exemplary was their embodying the various commonplaces of friendship, whether it was their virtue, the harmony of their views and values, or their willingness to share each other’s lives and fortunes. The importance of virtue in friendship goes back, as is well known, to Aristotle, who proposed a tri-partite analysis of friendship in which friendships arose because of utility, pleasure, or virtue (ἀρετή), with those based on virtue being genuine friendships.³⁷ Cicero constantly underscores the importance of virtue or goodness in friendship, going so far as to say that friendship cannot exist in any way without virtue (*sine virtute amicitia esse ullo pacto potest*)³⁸ or that friendship exists only among good men (*in bonis*),³⁹ whom he describes shortly afterwards with a virtue list: loyalty, integrity, fairness, and generosity.⁴⁰ Among these good men Laelius places his friend Scipio.⁴¹ Similarly, Lucian in the *Toxaris* has the title character say that the Scythians admired Orestes and Pylades, in part, because they were good men (ἄνδρες ἀγαθοί).⁴²

The second commonplace—friends enjoying a harmony of views or being of “one mind” (μία γνώμη)—is also characteristic of friendship,⁴³ and

³⁴ See Chariton, 1.5.2, and Ronald F. Hock, “An Extraordinary Friend in Chariton’s *Callirhoe*: The Importance of Friendship in the Greek Romances,” in Fitzgerald, *Perspectives on Friendship*, 145–162, esp. 147–157.

³⁵ See Lucian, *Tox.* 10.

³⁶ See Lucian, *Tox.* 12–61, and Richard I. Pervo, “With Lucian: Who Needs Friends? Friendship in the *Toxaris*,” in Fitzgerald, *Perspectives on Friendship*, 163–180.

³⁷ See Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 8.2.1155b17–8.3.1156b32; *Eth. eud.* 7.1.1234b29–7.2.1237a36; and Frederic M. Schroeder, “Friendship in Aristotle and some Peripatetic Philosophers,” in Fitzgerald, *Perspectives on Friendship*, 35–57, esp. 35–45.

³⁸ Cicero, *Amic.* 6.20.

³⁹ Cicero, *Amic.* 5.18; cf. also 8.26; 9.32; 22.82; and 27.100. Further discussion in Bohnenblust, *Beiträge*, 27–28.

⁴⁰ Cicero, *Amic.* 5.19; *fides, integritas, aequitas, liberalitas*.

⁴¹ Cicero, *Amic.* 6.21.

⁴² Lucian, *Tox.* 1.

⁴³ See, e.g. Dio, *Or.* 38.15: “What is friendship except unanimity among friends?” (ἡ δὲ φιλία τί ἄλλο ἢ φίλων ὁμόνοια;). Cf. also Dio, *Or.* 4.42; Plutarch, *Adol. poet. aud.* 51B; and for its

again Cicero emphasizes this quality when he defines friendship in part as being nothing else than agreement in all matters, human and divine.⁴⁴ Indeed, Laelius sees his own friendship with Scipio in this light, saying that their friendship consisted *inter alia* of agreement (*consensus*) in public matters.⁴⁵

But it is the third commonplace mentioned above—that of sharing a friend's life and fortunes—that most often characterizes these exemplary friendships.⁴⁶ Plutarch speaks of the pleasure that friends have from simply spending their days together.⁴⁷ Cicero elaborates these daily activities, saying that Laelius and Scipio shared one home, ate the same food, went on military tours together, visited foreign sites together, and vacationed together in the country.⁴⁸ Likewise, among Lucian's contemporary friendships are Demetrius and Antiphrilos who had been companions from childhood (ἐταῖροι ἐκ παιδων) and fellow ephebes (συνέφηβοι) before sailing to Alexandria where they lived together (συνεῖναι) and got their educations together (συνπαιδεύειν), one in philosophy, the other in medicine.⁴⁹

But friendship means more than daily association. Fortunes change, for the good or bad. Thus, Aristotle speaks of friends sharing their joys and sorrows (Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.4.1.1166a8) or of the need for a friend in both prosperity and misfortune (Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 9.11.1.1171a20–21), and this sentiment is repeated in general terms by Cicero⁵⁰ and Seneca,⁵¹ whereas Chariton, Plutarch, and Lucian give specific examples of friends sharing various kinds of adversity. Chariton narrates in detail the travels, the capture, the slavish work, the near execution, the battles on land and sea as well the victorious homecoming that Polycharmus and Chaereas shared in search

Homeric origins, see John T. Fitzgerald, "Friendship in the Greek World prior to Aristotle," in Fitzgerald, *Perspectives on Friendship*, 13–34, esp. 21–23.

⁴⁴ Cicero, *Amic.* 6.20: *Est enim amicitia nihil aliud nisi omnium divinarum humanarumque ... consensio.*

⁴⁵ Cicero, *Amic.* 27.101.

⁴⁶ See Bohnenblust, *Beiträge*, 32–34.

⁴⁷ Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 94F.

⁴⁸ See Cicero, *Amic.* 27.103. It has also been pointed out that Epicurus and his very close friend Metrodorus were never apart except for a six month visit of the latter to his native Lampsacus (see Diogenes Laertius, 10.22).

⁴⁹ See Lucian, *Tox.* 27.

⁵⁰ See Cicero, *Amic.* 5.17 and 6.22.

⁵¹ See Seneca, *Ep.* 9.8. For an elaboration of the value of friends in good times and bad, see Libanius, *Prog.* 3.3 (8.63–73, Foerster); text and translation in Ronald F. Hock and Edward N. O'Neil, eds., *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric: Classroom Exercises* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 140–155.

of the latter's wife,⁵² while Plutarch speaks of Theseus and Peirithous sharing punishment and imprisonment in an ill-fated attempt to get a wife for Peirithous.⁵³ But it is Lucian who most strongly presents friends in terms of sharing good times and bad, virtually defining a friend as one who obligates himself to share his friends' every twist of fortune (χρὴ τοῖς φίλοις ἀπάσης τύχης κοινωνεῖν) (Lucian, *Tox.* 6). Orestes and Pylades are his opening example as they face danger together in Scythia—getting captured, but then escaping from prison, freeing Orestes' kidnapped sister, and returning home in harrowing fashion.⁵⁴

Several of Lucian's contemporary pairs experience dangers no less harrowing. After Deinias murders his lover and her husband, he is arrested by the authorities and sent to Rome for trial. His friend Agathocles shares the journey to Rome, stands by him at trial, and follows him into exile on Gyara, where he at first cares for Deinias who has fallen ill and then remains on the island after his friend has died.⁵⁵ Similarly, when Antiphilus is falsely arrested and thrown into prison for stealing sacred objects, his friend Demetrius, on his return from a trip up the Nile, learns of the imprisonment; finds his sickly and depressed friend in prison; works at the harbor in order to support himself and his friend as well as bribe the guard to let him inside; and, when security in the prison is tightened, even implicates himself in the crime so that he, too, can be imprisoned and so remain at his friend's side.⁵⁶

While these examples could be multiplied, it is better to offer some analytical comments, all of them of some import for our later look at the Beloved Disciple. The first comment is a linguistic one. When narrating how friends share adversity of one kind or another, these authors often use verbs with the prepositional prefix σύν-, presumably to emphasize the close bond between the two.⁵⁷ For example, in the course of narrating Chaereas's and Polycharmus's search for Callirhoe, Chariton uses a number of such compounds for Chaereas's and Polycharmus's joint adventures: share danger with (συγκινδυνεύειν),⁵⁸ sail with (συμπλεῖν),⁵⁹ and die with (συναποθανεῖν).⁶⁰

⁵² See further Hock, "Extraordinary Friend," 150–155.

⁵³ See Plutarch, *Adol. poet. aud.* 49F.

⁵⁴ See Lucian, *Tox.* 1–8.

⁵⁵ See Lucian, *Tox.* 17–18.

⁵⁶ See Lucian, *Tox.* 30–33.

⁵⁷ See also Hock, "Extraordinary Friend," 156.

⁵⁸ Chariton, 3.5.7.

⁵⁹ Chariton, 8.7.8.

⁶⁰ Chariton, 4.2.14, and 7.1.7.

This linguistic convention is especially clear in Plutarch's treatise "On Having Many Friends." One problem with having many friends, he says, is the obligation of friends to share their lives, so that, if one has many friends, he might end up in a bind because they might all require his help at the same time: one friend who is leaving on a voyage asks him to travel together (συναποδημείν), another who has been accused asks him to go to trial together (συνδικεῖν), another who is acting as judge asks him to sit together as judges (συνδικάζειν), another who is buying and selling asks him to manage his household together (συνδιοικεῖν), another who is getting married asks him to offer sacrifice together (συνθύειν), and another who is burying a loved one asks him to mourn together (συμπενθεῖν) (Plutarch, *Amic. mult.* 95C).⁶¹ Not surprisingly, σύν-compounds also appear frequently in Lucian's *Toxaris*⁶² as well as in various other authors in friendship contexts, such as Diodorus Siculus who comments that Pythagorean friends not only shared their money but shared dangers (συγκινδυνεύειν) as well, citing the traditional pair of Damon and Phintias as evidence.⁶³

A second comment involves the point at which a pair of friends emerges. In several cases a person is depicted as belonging to a circle of friends, and it is only when adversity strikes that a true friend appears and stands by and aids his friend. Thus, at the start of Chariton's novel Chaereas is part of an indeterminate group of young men who passed their days at the gymnasium and indeed had befriended him (ἐφίλει αὐτόν),⁶⁴ but it is only when Chaereas has to search for and redeem his kidnapped wife that Polycharmus, now called a friend (φίλος),⁶⁵ joins him in the lengthy and dangerous search that makes up much of the novel. Likewise, Agathocles was at first only one of many friends of Deinias. The latter were all too eager to share in Deinias' newly-inherited wealth and consequent revels, and indeed Agathocles, because he disapproved of his friend's profligate living, was no longer invited to attend these revels.⁶⁶ When Deinias lost his fortune,⁶⁷ however, and later when he was to be tried for murder,⁶⁸

⁶¹ Plutarch uses other series of σύν-verbs at 94F, 95E, and 96A.

⁶² E.g. Lucian, *Tox.* 7 (συμπονεῖν); 18 (συνεῖναι, συνέρχεσθαι, συμφεύγειν); 20 (συννεῖν, συγκουφίζειν); and 27 (συνεκπλεύειν, συνεῖναι, συμπαιδεύειν).

⁶³ Diodorus Siculus, 10.4.2. See also Diodorus Siculus, 3.7.2 (συμπενθεῖν, συλλυπεῖσθαι); Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.22.37 (συμπιεῖν, συσκηγεῖν, συμπλεύειν); and Achilles Tatius, 2.27.2 (συμφεύγειν).

⁶⁴ See Chariton, 1.1.9–10.

⁶⁵ See Chariton, 3.5.7.

⁶⁶ See Lucian, *Tox.* 12.

⁶⁷ See Lucian, *Tox.* 15.

⁶⁸ See Lucian, *Tox.* 17.

Agathocles comes forward as his genuine friend, first by supplying Deinias with money from the sale of his own estate⁶⁹ and later by joining him at trial in Rome, going with him into exile on Gyara, and staying with him there through sickness and even death.⁷⁰ Such are the lengths that friends go to in order to be with their friends and share their fortunes.

A third comment about pairs of friends goes beyond their willingness to share dangers, punishment, and even death, and this feature of friendship is what we might term the posthumous responsibilities of friends. Agathocles was just described as staying on Gyara even after Deinias's death, presumably to do the rites for his dead friend.⁷¹ But there is much else to these responsibilities, as a few examples will show. One example is seen in the friendship of Epicurus and Metrodorus. In the famous, but brief, letter that Epicurus wrote on the day he died he closed with this instruction: "Take care of the children of Metrodorus."⁷² As we learn from Epicurus' will, he had been caring for his friend's children ever since Metrodorus had died seven years earlier, but that responsibility had not been fully carried out, for the will stipulates that the executors are to care for Metrodorus' son and daughter until the former is educated and the latter is married.⁷³ Such care of a deceased friend's children occurs also in the case of David and Jonathan. In Josephus's fuller account of David's actions in 2Sam 9:1–11 (= 2Kgs 9:1–11 LXX) he says that David, after Jonathan's death, recalled the friendship (φιλία) that Jonathan had had for him and so enquired about any remaining relatives. When he learned that Jonathan had left a crippled son, he summoned the boy and not only left him the land and slaves of his grandfather Saul, but also included him at his table to eat as one of his sons.⁷⁴ Finally, among the friendships in Lucian's *Toxaris* we have the story of Aretaius and his two friends Eudamidas and Charixenos. The former left a will stipulating that Aretaius should feed and care for Eudamidas's aged mother and that Charixenos should marry off his daughter and provide a dowry. Eudamidas died, but so did Charixenos only five days later. Aretaius not only carried out his responsibility in the will by caring for Eudamidas's mother but also Charixenos's by marrying Eudamidas's daughter and his own daughter on the

⁶⁹ See Lucian, *Tox.* 16.

⁷⁰ See Lucian, *Tox.* 17–18.

⁷¹ On these rites, see, e.g. Chariton, 5.1.6–7; Diogenes Laertius, 5.61; 10.18; and Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (trans. J. Raffan; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 193–194.

⁷² See Diogenes Laertius, 10.22.

⁷³ See Diogenes Laertius, 10.19.

⁷⁴ See Josephus, *Ant.* 7.111–116.

same day and with an equal dowry.⁷⁵ In short, friendship hardly ends with the death of one of the friends.

These comments do not exhaust what could be said about these exemplary friendships, but they should help us to consider more fully the friendship of Jesus and the Beloved Disciple.

4. JESUS AND THE BELOVED DISCIPLE AS A CHRISTIAN PAIR OF FRIENDS

Now that we have reviewed the conventions of behavior regarding pairs of friends we can return to the Gospel of John and discuss more fully the passages in which the Beloved Disciple appears and determine the extent to which this disciple is depicted as the genuine friend of Jesus and thus turns him and Jesus into a pair of Christian friends. To be sure, this pair is not the focus of the narrative, as it is, say, in Lucian's series of stories of pairs of friends, but the appearance of this unnamed disciple in key events of the Gospel story surely calls for an understanding of his role in them, and this role emerges when his behavior toward Jesus is compared with the conventions of friendship. And those conventions are those involving pairs of friends, as will become evident from four of the passages that involve the Beloved Disciple.

The first passage is the last supper (13:1–35), when, as noted earlier, the Beloved Disciple, or the disciple “whom Jesus loved,” appears for the first time (v. 23). While the descriptive phrase “whom Jesus loved” (ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς) suggests a close relationship, as does his position of honor next to Jesus (ἦν ἀνακείμενος ... ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ), this passage is more suggestive of their forming a pair of friends than providing actual evidence of it. What makes this passage suggestive is the context in which this disciple is introduced, and that context is filled with content that can be related to conventions of friendship, including the setting of the supper itself.⁷⁶

First, the passage opens with a sharp change in Jesus' situation. His hour has come (v. 1), meaning that Jesus knows that he will soon face betrayal, arrest, and death—a situation that would, as we have seen, call for

⁷⁵ See Lucian, *Tox.* 22–23. For another will in which a friend is made a trustee of his friend's property, see B.G.U. 326 (CE 189–194), in A.S. Hunt and C.C. Edgar, eds., *Select Papyri* (trans. S. Hunt and C.C. Edgar; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932–1934), 1:250–255.

⁷⁶ See Konstan, *Friendship*, 137–140, although this ideally amicable setting was often not realized, as seen, e.g. in Lucian's *Symposium* (see also Michael Peachin, “Friendship and Abuse at the Dinner Table,” in Peachin, *Aspects of Friendship*, 135–144).

a true friend and is in fact precisely when the Beloved Disciple, previously unidentified among the disciples, is introduced into the narrative.

In addition, Jesus himself is characterized here as a true friend in that it is said that having loved his own in the past he would also love them εἰς τέλος—meaning both to the end (of life) and to the utmost (v. 1),⁷⁷ a phrase that in any case points forward to Jesus' death on the cross and so to the convention of dying for one's friends.⁷⁸

For the present, however, Jesus demonstrates his love or friendship⁷⁹ for the disciples by washing their feet (vv. 4–12). This action, while certainly demeaning for a teacher and supposedly reserved only for Gentile slaves,⁸⁰ is not simply “servant love”⁸¹ or “a loving act of abasement,”⁸² but also an act of friendship, as is evident from several of Lucian's stories where friends do things for their friends that are far below their status. For example, Agathocles joins some purple fishers to support his sick friend who has been exiled to Gyara,⁸³ Demetrius hires on as a porter at the docks of Alexandria to support his imprisoned friend as well as to bribe the jailor in order that he can get inside the prison to be with him,⁸⁴ and Sisinnus volunteers to engage in gladiatorial combat in order to raise funds for himself and his friend after their lodgings had been ransacked.⁸⁵ Friends clearly feel no qualms about doing what needs to be done, however demeaning, to show their friendship.

Two other features are more obviously related to conventions of friendship. The first is the mention in v. 29a of the γλωσσόκομον, or common purse, as the NRSV renders it. The word itself, which appears also at 12:6, has

⁷⁷ See, e.g. Brown, *John*, 550, and Neyrey, *Gospel of John*, 226.

⁷⁸ See Scholtissek, “Eine grössere Liebe,” 433.

⁷⁹ While the word used throughout this passage is ἀγαπᾶν, not φιλεῖν nor φίλος, the theme of friendship is nevertheless present since, as both Ringe and Scholtissek show, the author of the gospel uses these words interchangeably (see Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends*, 65, and Scholtissek, “Eine grössere Liebe,” 426–427, which concludes: “Eine semantische Differenzierung wird zwischen den Verben ἀγαπάω und φιλέω nicht erkennbar.”). This practice of using both roots also appears, e.g. in Dio Chrysostom's lengthy discussion of friendship (*Or.* 3.86–122) where, in addition to the usual φίλος and φιλεῖν, he uses ἀγαπᾶν seven times (see *Or.* 3.89, 103, 112 [4 times], and 120).

⁸⁰ So, e.g. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 233, and Ernst Haenchen, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (trans. R.W. Funk; Hermeneia; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 2:108.

⁸¹ So Ringe, *Wisdom's Friends*, 66.

⁸² So Brown, *Introduction*, 351.

⁸³ See Lucian, *Tox.* 18.

⁸⁴ See Lucian, *Tox.* 30–31.

⁸⁵ See Lucian, *Tox.* 58–60.

caused comment, but largely lexical,⁸⁶ and yet a common purse also recalls the most familiar of friendship conventions—friends having all things in common (κοινὰ τὰ φίλων).⁸⁷ The implication is that, as friends, Jesus and the disciples pooled their resources, which could be used, as the disciples themselves supposed, for purchasing what was necessary to celebrate a festival or for giving money to the poor (v. 29b). In any case, the possession of a common purse would surely suggest friendship conventions. The second feature is Peter's claim that he would lay down his life for Jesus (v. 38), an explicit, if unfulfilled, reference to the now familiar friendship convention.

Finally, this passage contains the first and second instances of the central ethical command in the Gospel: the command that the disciples should love one another (ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους) (vv. 34–35). The Beloved Disciple is present for this teaching, and like the other disciples (minus Judas who leaves at v. 30) he could have easily interpreted the command in this context as “Be friends to one another,” an interpretation that is made explicit shortly afterwards when Jesus repeats the command (15:12), followed by the convention of laying down one's life for his friends (v. 13), and then calling the disciples his friends (φίλοι) (v. 14). By understanding this command as instructing the disciples to be friends to one another, with all the specific content that this language implies, we have an unmistakable friendship context for introducing a true friend, a role that readers would have assigned to the Beloved Disciple who appears into view only now in 13:23.

If the first passage is only suggestive of the Beloved Disciple and Jesus forming a pair of friends, the second passage is explicit in the use of one of the linguistic conventions that was used when discussing pairs of friends. The passage concerns the arrest and trial of Jesus (18:1–27). The disciples are present in the garden when Jesus is arrested (vv. 1–14), and while only Peter is explicitly mentioned in this context (vv. 10–11), the Beloved Disciple is presumed to be present as well, for after the arrest he and Peter are

⁸⁶ Scholars, for example, have been uncertain about where to accent the word, either γλωσσόκομον, as above, or γλωσσοκόμον, and have noted, in any case, that the word's proper Attic form is γλωσσοκομείον (see James Hope Moulton and Wilbert F. Howard, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Vol. 2: *Accidence and Word-Formation* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986; orig. 1929], 58 and 272). The original meaning of γλωσσοκομείον refers to a case for holding tongue pieces of musical instruments, but was used later to refer to a box, chest, or coffer and hence, here, a money box (see Marcus Dods, “The Gospel of St. John,” in W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967; orig. 1931], 1:806). See also James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1930), 128.

⁸⁷ See Bohnenblust, *Beiträge*, 41.

described as following a bound Jesus to Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest Caiaphas (vv. 12–14). While much attention has been paid to the remark that the Beloved Disciple was known to the high priest and the implications of this relationship for the disciple's identity,⁸⁸ the following verb συνεισῆλθεν, or he entered together with, has been all but ignored. And yet this verb has the prepositional prefix σύν-, which we now know is one of the linguistic conventions for describing pairs of friends. Indeed, a very close parallel appears in Lucian's story of Agathocles and Deinias, complete with verbs using σύν-. When Deinias was arrested for murder, Agathocles sailed together with (συναπῆρεν) Deinias to Italy and, alone of his friends, entered the court together with (συνεισῆλθεν) him as he was tried and convicted.⁸⁹ Similarly, while Peter followed Jesus after the arrest as far as the gate, only the Beloved Disciple entered the high priest's palace together with (συνεισῆλθεν) Jesus (v. 15) for his interrogation (vv. 19–24). Clearly, readers familiar with the conventions of describing pairs of friends would have picked up on this linguistic clue and recognized the Beloved Disciple as acting as Jesus' friend when he enters together with him into the palace.

The third passage likewise draws explicitly on friendship conventions and so confirms the readers' identification of the Beloved Disciple and Jesus as a pair of friends. This passage has Jesus' mother, three other women, and the disciple whom Jesus loved standing near the cross (19:25–27). Jesus is about to die (v. 29) and addresses his mother and says, "Woman, behold your son" (v. 26) and then the Beloved Disciple with the words, "Behold your mother" (v. 27a). His response was to take Jesus' mother immediately into his home (v. 29b).

There has been a tendency to interpret this passage symbolically,⁹⁰ most recently by Raymond Brown.⁹¹ Brown's claim that a more literal or mundane interpretation does not do justice to the Gospel's theology⁹² fails to persuade

⁸⁸ See further Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee*, 61–63.

⁸⁹ See Lucian, *Tox*. 18.

⁹⁰ Rudolf Bultmann, for example, interpreted Jesus' mother as representing Jewish Christianity and the Beloved Disciple as representing Gentile Christianity (see *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* [trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971], 673).

⁹¹ Raymond Brown says that the Beloved Disciple's taking Jesus' mother into his home "is a symbolic way of describing how one related to Jesus by the flesh ... becomes related to him by the Spirit (a member of the ideal discipleship)" (see *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave* [AB; 2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1994], 2:1021–1026 [2:1024]; see also Brown, *John*, 2.922–927]). For criticism of this symbolic approach and coming down on the side of filial piety, see Beasley-Murray, *John*, 349–350.

⁹² See Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2:1023.

not only because of the centrality of friendship in the Gospel (including the posthumous responsibilities of friends) but also because of the widespread obligation of children to care for parents in their old age.⁹³ Surely, such a mundane obligation would have been the primary meaning sensed by the Gospel's readers when the Beloved Disciple accepted responsibility for caring for Jesus' mother when he himself could obviously not meet it.

Especially important for interpreting the passage in this fashion is Lucian's story of the friends Eudamidas, Aretaius, and Charixenos.⁹⁴ Scholars have occasionally referred to this Lucianic story in this context, but only in passing.⁹⁵ This story is important for both Jesus and the Beloved Disciple. Eudamidas can trust his friends Aretaius and Charixenos to care for his mother and daughter after his death and so stipulates this role for them in his will. Likewise, Jesus can trust his friend, the Beloved Disciple, to care for his mother and so meet his obligation to care for her through him. Although Charixenos dies too soon after Eudamidas's death to carry out his responsibility, Aretaius takes on both posthumous responsibilities. Likewise, the Beloved Disciple accepts his posthumous responsibility to Jesus and takes his mother into his home. Nothing less would be expected of a friend. But, as Lucian also notes, the credit goes not only to Aretaius for fulfilling both stipulations of the will, but also to Eudamidas for the confidence that he had in his friends to act on his behalf after his death. So also Jesus simply and confidently assigns his mother to the Beloved Disciple's care, and the latter accepts the responsibility immediately (ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ὥρας) (v. 27b). Such is the behavior of a pair of friends.

The fourth passage is the empty tomb story (20:1–18). The Beloved Disciple plays an important part again, even if it is not as central as that of Mary Magdalene. In any case, Mary's discovery of Jesus' tomb having been opened and Jesus' body missing prompted her to run to Peter and the Beloved Disciple and to report the disappearance (vv. 1–2). The two disciples run to the tomb, presumably to check into the disappearance of the body. The race ends with the Beloved Disciple reaching the tomb first, although he did not enter (vv. 4–5). Peter finally arrives, enters, and sees the burial cloths (vv. 6–7). Then the Beloved Disciple enters, sees what Peter had seen, and believes (v. 8). The rest of the account focuses again on Mary Magdalene (vv. 11–18).

⁹³ On a child's obligation to care for his parents when they get old, see Homer, *Il.* 24.540–541; Xenophon, *Oec.* 7.12.19; Euripides, *Med.* 1019; Isaeus, *Or.* 2.10; Herodas, 3.29; Diodorus Siculus, 13.20.3; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.5.3; Diogenes Laertius, 1.55; and ps.-Diogenes, *Ep.* 47. For this convention among Jews, see Josephus, *Ant.* 1.231; 4.261; 5.336; 7.183 and 272.

⁹⁴ See Lucian, *Tox.* 21–23.

⁹⁵ See Dods, "St. John," 1.858, and Pervo, "Friendship in the *Toxaris*," 169 and n. 33.

The inclusion of the Beloved Disciple here again makes sense in terms of his friendship with Jesus. For example, the Beloved Disciple's concern for his friend is shown by his running faster than Peter (v. 4: προέδραμεν τάχιον) to the empty tomb, an action that parallels two of Lucian's friends: Demetrius went at a run (δρομαίος) to the prison when he learned that his friend Antiphilus had been imprisoned while he was away,⁹⁶ and Toxaris ran (προσδραμών) from his seat in the theatre to help his friend Sisinnus who had just been seriously wounded in a gladiatorial contest.⁹⁷ A closer parallel is a friend's concern for his friend's corpse. We have already noted the decision of Agathocles to remain on Gyara even after Deinias' death.⁹⁸ But more dramatic is the example of Epameinondas. At the first battle at Mantinea (in 418 BCE) Epameinondas and his friend Pelopidas were fighting side by side when the latter fell severely wounded. Epameinondas, although he supposed that his friend had died, stood his ground on behalf of him and so risked his life all alone against many enemies, having decided to die rather than abandon Pelopidas's corpse and armor to the enemy.⁹⁹ In short, concern for a friend's corpse is yet another posthumous responsibility, and the Beloved Disciple is presented as acting on that concern.

5. CONCLUSION

In this article I have addressed two issues of Johannine scholarship—the Beloved Disciple and the theme of friendship—and have tried to advance them both by discussing the former in terms of the latter, that is, by proposing that the function of the Beloved Disciple was that of being a genuine friend to Jesus and the two of them thus forming a pair of friends. Pairs of friends—Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, and so forth—were a common feature of Greco-Roman discussions of friendship. Indeed, at the time the gospel was written new pairs of friends were being proposed. Cicero, Josephus, Chariton, and Lucian wrote about Roman, Jewish, Greek, and even barbarian pairs of friends that could take their place alongside the traditional pairs—pairs that exemplified especially the commitment of friends to aid their friend in a time of need. Given this trend of proposing new pairs, it seems probable that the author of the Gospel of John was likewise proposing the Beloved Disciple and Jesus as a *Christian* pair of friends

⁹⁶ See Lucian, *Tox.* 30.

⁹⁷ See Lucian, *Tox.* 60.

⁹⁸ See Lucian, *Tox.* 18.

⁹⁹ See Plutarch, *Pel.* 4.5.

and so intended for them to be ranked among the pairs of friends, old and new, that were such a staple of friendship discussions at this very time.

The evidence for identifying the Beloved Disciple as a friend of Jesus is that his behavior conformed to conventions that were used to describe pairs of friends: the Beloved Disciple emerges at a moment when Jesus, facing betrayal, arrest, and death, needed a friend (13:23); he is described with a verb having the prepositional prefix *σύν*- when depicted as going with Jesus to trial (18:15); he takes on the posthumous responsibility of a friend to care for the friend's family members by accepting Jesus' request that he care for his mother (19:26–27); and he shows this responsibility again by running to see where Jesus' missing body had gone (20:4).

As a genuine friend of Jesus, the Beloved Disciple thus functions to embody in an exemplary fashion Jesus' command to love one another, that is, he demonstrates what it means to be a friend, particularly when one's friend is facing adversity, danger, or even death.

THE IMITATION OF THE “GREAT MAN” IN ANTIQUITY: PAUL’S INVERSION OF A CULTURAL ICON

James R. Harrison

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOLARLY DEBATE ON THE MOTIF OF “IMITATION” IN PAUL’S LETTERS

There is no scholarly discussion of *mimesis* (μίμησις, “imitation”) that covers the sweep of the ancient literary and documentary evidence. In approaching the topic, modern scholars have gravitated towards the development of aesthetics as an intellectual discipline, analysing the seminal contributions that Plato and Aristotle made to Western literary and artistic theory. In particular, the momentous collision between Plato and Aristotle over the nature of *mimesis* has generated an avalanche of scholarship.¹ In Plato’s

¹ The literature on the debate between Plato and Aristotle is voluminous. See J. Tate, “Imitation in Plato’s *Republic*,” *CQ* 22 (1928): 16–23; J. Tate, “Plato and Imitation,” *CQ* 26 (1932): 161–168; W.J. Verdenius, *Mimesis: Plato’s Doctrine of Artistic Imitation* (Leiden: Brill, 1949); H. Koller, *Die Mimesis in der Antike* (Bern: Francke, 1954); G. Else, “‘Imitation’ in the Fifth Century,” *CPh* 53 (1958): 73–90; O.B. Hardison, “Epigone: An Aristotelian Imitation,” in L. Golden and O.B. Hardison, eds., *Aristotle’s Poetics* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968), 281–296; L. Golden, “Plato’s Concept of *Mimesis*,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 15 (1975–1976): 118–131; L. Golden, *Aristotle on Tragic and Comic Mimesis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); K.F. Morrison, *The Mimetic Tradition of Reform in the West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982): 5–31; E. Belfiore, “A Theory of Imitation in Plato’s *Republic*,” *TAPA* 114 (1984): 121–146; A. Nehamas, “Plato on Imitation and Poetry in *Republic* 10,” in N.D. Smith, ed., *Plato: Critical Assessments*. Vol. III: *Plato’s Middle Period: Psychology and Value Theory* (London: Routledge, 1998), 323; P. Woodruff, “Plato on *Mimesis*,” in M. Kelly, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Aesthetics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3:521–523; S. Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts, Modern Problems* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); B. Earle, “Plato, Aristotle, and the Imitation of Reason,” *Philosophy and Literature* 27/2 (2003) 382–401; S. Tsitsiridis, “*Mimesis* and Understanding: An Interpretation of Aristotle’s *Politics* 4.1448B4–19^a,” *CQ* 55/2 (2005): 435–446; M. Potolsky, *Mimesis: The New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 2006), 15–46. Ironically, literary scholars have brought the classical debate on aesthetics into dialogue with the Christian gospels, a discussion that New Testament scholars have not pursued. E. Auerbach (*Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* [New York: Anchor Books, 1957; Germ. orig. 1946]) argues that modern Western realism, emanating from the early nineteenth-century French realist writers (Stendahl, Balzac), broke aesthetically from the classical rule of distinct levels

Republic, Socrates is presented as arguing that poetry imitates reality. Consequently, only those artists who imitate noble actions should be allowed into the ideal state (Plato, *Resp.* 3.392d–398b).² Although Aristotle agrees with Plato that the ideal work of art should express what it seeks to imitate (Aristotle, *Poet.* 6.1450a; 9.1451b; 23.1459a; 24.1460b; 25.1461b; 26.1461b–1462b),³ his view is diametrically opposed to Plato's because of its cathartic rationale; that is, when people view evil actions in a dramatic performance of tragedy, they can be emancipated from the desire to act badly by being moved to pity.⁴ This philosophical debate is central to the development of the Western intellectual tradition in the arts and in ethics. However, the failure of many modern scholars to move outside of the confines of the ancient debate on the role of *mimesis* in aesthetics has meant that the public context of imitation in civic life remains largely unexplored. The centrality of honour culture in the Greek East and the Latin West ensured that the imitation of the "great man" was a vital dimension of civic ethics in antiquity; but, inexplicably, this has been little discussed by classicists and New Testament scholars alike.⁵

of style. In seeking precedents for this, Auerbach posits that the *first* break with the classical tradition came about because of the Christian gospel: "It was the story of Christ, with its ruthless mixture of everyday reality and the highest and most sublime tragedy, which had conquered the classical rule of styles" (Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 490). However, the same comment could apply equally to Paul's graphic portrait of the incarnate and crucified Christ as "weak," "poor" and "foolish" (1 Cor 1:18–30; 2 Cor 8:9; 13:4). On the social and artistic dimensions of the Pauline metaphors, see J.R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context* (WUNT 2.172; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); L.L. Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1–4 in the Comic-Philosophic Tradition* (ECC; JSNTSup 293; London: Continuum, 2005).

² However, Plato brought a series of charges against tragedy and wanted to ban it. Consequently, in Plato's view, there is no worthwhile knowledge purveyed by poetry (*Apol.* 22b–c; *Ion* 534a) because it relies on inspiration (*Ion.* 34b–e; *Phaedr.* 245a) and propagates falsehoods (*Resp.* 337–391). Ultimately, poetry is idiosyncratic and irrational (*Resp.* 605c), articulating private opinion as opposed to universal truth (*Prot.* 347c–e).

³ Cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* 2.2.194a: "art imitates nature." Moreover, art brings to completion nature's deficiencies (Aristotle, *Phys.* 2.2.199a; *Pol.* 7.17.1337a). For an excellent discussion, see Morrison, *The Mimetic Tradition*, 10–26.

⁴ Aristotle, *Poet.* 1449b24–28: "Tragedy is the *mimesis* of a serious and complete action of some magnitude; in language embellished in various ways in its different parts; in dramatic, not narrative form; achieving though pity and fear, the catharsis of such passions." See Morrison, *The Mimetic Tradition*, 21–22; N. Pappas, "Aristotle," in B. Gaut and D. McIver Lopes, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2001), 15–26. Plutarch, too, refers to the educative value of negative examples as much as positive mimetic examples (*Plutarch, Demetr.* 1.4–6). See also *Socraticus* 28.10 (A.J. Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1977], 291).

⁵ Note the comment of J.E. Lendon regarding the link between honour and imitation (*Empire of Honour: The Art of Government of the Roman World* [Oxford: Oxford University

This consuming interest in aesthetics on the part of classicists and literary theorists is not unexpected: it simply reflects the sharply focused discussion of the ancient philosophers on *mimesis* in antiquity. Morrison observes that the Greek philosophers had nominated three areas in which *mimesis* occurred, namely, (a) the realm of nature; (b) the realm of art; and (c) the realm of moral reproduction, facilitated by the mediation of nature and art. Morrison concludes that Paul, as a mimetic thinker, concentrates on the third realm at the expense of the other two realms, whereas Philo embraces all three realms in his thought.⁶ Morrison's comment helps us to situate Paul as ethical thinker who drew selectively on the mimetic traditions in the Greco-Roman world and Second Temple Judaism. In the case of New Testament scholars, however, few have been willing to explore the Greco-Roman context of "imitation," with a view to relating its evidence to the mimetic concerns of Paul's letters. The oversight is surprising, given the overlap of the language of imitation (μιμητής: "imitator;" μιμεῖσθαι: "to imitate") in the Greco-Roman and early Christian traditions.⁷

So far, there have only been three major works written in English devoted exclusively to the motif of "imitation" in the letters of Paul.⁸ First, W.H. de

Press, 1997], 46): "A natural consequence of the ascription of honour by the aristocratic community, of aristocrats regulating their conduct by close attention to the opinion of those around them, was the ostentatious imitation of celebrated men."

⁶ Morrison, *Mimetic Tradition*, 42, 47. In the case of Philo, the evidence regarding μιμεῖσθαι and its cognates is categorised as follows: (a) the realm of nature: *Leg.* 1.48; 2.4; *Opif.* 25, 133, 139; *Migr.* 40; *Her.* 165; *Aet.* 15; (b) the realm of art: *Mut.* 208; (c) the realm of moral reproduction: *Sac.* 65; *Mos.* 1.303, 158; 2.11; 4.173, 188; *Virt.* 66, 161, 168; *QG* 1.64a; *Leg.* 1.45; *Sacr.* 30, 86; *Det.* 45, 83; *Post.* 135, 185; *Migr.* 133, 149, 164; *Her.* 112; *Abr.* 38; *Decal.* 111, 114; *Spec.* 2.2, 135; *Prob.* 94; *Aet.* 2; *Legat.* 86–87. In the case of Josephus, the evidence regarding μιμεῖσθαι and its cognates is categorised as follows: (a) the realm of nature, in contrast to Philo, is bypassed; (b) the realm of art: *Ant.* 1.19; (c) the realm of moral reproduction: *Ant.* 1.12, 68; 4.154; 5.98, 129; 6.143, 341, 347; 7.126; 8.193, 196, 251, 300, 315, 316; 9.44, 99, 243, 282; 12.203; 13.5; 15.271; 17.109, 110, 244; *Ag. Ap.* 2.130, 270, 283.

⁷ For the Pauline "imitation" terminology, see μιμητής γίνεσθαι ("to become an imitator"): 1 Thes 1:6; 2:14; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Eph 5:1; μιμεῖσθαι ("to imitate"): 2 Thes 3:7, 9; συμμιμηταὶ γίνεσθαι ("to become imitators together"): Phil 3:17.

⁸ W.P. de Boer (*The Imitation of Paul: an Exegetical Study* [Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1962], xii) notes: "The literature specifically dealing with the subject of the imitation of Paul is very limited." The judgement of de Boer still remains largely true almost five decades later. We will bypass H.D. Betz's idiosyncratic suggestion that Paul's understanding of imitation is derived from the mystery cults (*Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1967], 48–83). For a sound critique of the methodological flaws underlying Betz's suggestion, see V.A. Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director: An Analysis of the Concept of the Imitation of Paul with the Implications and Applications to the Practice of Spiritual Direction* (Nottingham: Paternoster, 2007), 43. B. Fiore (*The Function of Personal Example in the Socratic and Pastoral Epistles* [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1986]) has

Boer's stimulating monograph, published in 1962, still remains an important exegetical discussion of the topic. However, although de Boer thoroughly investigates the Jewish context of imitation, he only briefly explores the Greco-Roman writers, concentrating mainly on the cosmological thought of Hippocrates and the aesthetics of Plato.⁹ Consequently, de Boer ignores the civic context of Greco-Roman *mimesis*, a methodological flaw in his study. According to de Boer, the mimetic context of the teacher-pupil relationship in the Greek world was determinative for Paul.¹⁰

However, de Boer's "educational" model for Pauline *mimesis* does not do justice to the urban context of Paul's ministry. Although Paul sometimes casts himself in the role of the "gentle" philosopher with his converts (1 Thess 2:1–12),¹¹ he carried out his missionary outreach in the eastern Mediterranean *poleis* in ways that do not easily align with the teaching practice of contemporary philosophers. He does not fit the model of the teacher who lectured permanently at an established philosophical school (*pace* Acts 19:9–10), or who travelled city-to-city begging like the Cynics (1 Thess 2:5–9; 2 Thess 3:7–8; 1 Cor 9:1–18; 2 Cor 12:14–15), or who, like the fee-charging sophists, was sponsored salon-to-salon by the wealthy elite (*pace* Rom 16:1–2, 23; Acts 16:14).¹² New Testament scholars like de Boer would have been

extensively explored the teacher-pupil relationship from the perspective of the Socratic tradition in the Pastoral Epistles of the "Pauline School." However, since we are exploring the civic context of imitation, we will not discuss the mimetic context of the teacher-pupil relationship, except where the inscriptional evidence eulogises a tutor (§ 2.4.1).

⁹ See de Boer, *Imitation of Paul*, 1–50. The earlier work of E.J. Tinsley (*The Imitation of God in Christ: An Essay on the Biblical Basis of Christian Spirituality* [London: SCM, 1960], 27–64) demonstrates the same unbalanced emphasis as de Boer's monograph in regards to the Greco-Roman evidence. For a more comprehensive coverage, see W. Michaelis, "μίμησις," *TDNT* 4:659–674.

¹⁰ de Boer, *Imitation of Paul*, 25.

¹¹ A.J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Fortress: Minneapolis, 1989), 35–66.

¹² See E.A. Judge, "First Impressions of St Paul," and E.A. Judge, "The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community," in E.A. Judge and J.R. Harrison, eds., *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and Roman Essays* (WUNT 299; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), respectively, 410–415, 526–552. For a "Cynic" model of Paul, see F.C. Downing, *Cynics, Paul and the Pauline Churches* (London: Routledge, 1998). Downing (*Cynics*, 194–202) also proposes that there are Cynic resonances to Paul's call to his converts to imitate himself (1 Cor 11:1). However, R.F. Hock's criticism (*The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship* [Fortress: Philadelphia, 1980], 37, 65) of Judge's portrait of Paul as a "sophist"—which was heavily dependent on the evidence of Acts—does have a certain force. While Paul moved among the houses of the patronal elite at various stages in his missionary career, attracting thereby high-placed patrons (e.g. Rom 16:1–2, 23; Acts 16:14) and influential Latin co-workers (E.A. Judge, "The Roman Base of Paul's Mission," in *The First Christians*, 553–567), normally he provided his own funding by working in a socially humiliating trade

better served by investigating how the mimetic models of civic leadership in the late Hellenistic age—articulated in the eulogistic inscriptions of local city benefactors and visually reinforced by their statues in the public spaces—interacted with the pattern of leadership in Paul's house churches.¹³ This is the mimetic context of the house churches in which Paul ministered city-by-city in the eastern Mediterranean basin.

Further, E.A. Judge has argued from a careful study of the Latin names found in the inscriptions of the eastern Mediterranean *poleis* that Paul's co-workers and the chief patrons within his network of communities were drawn from the socially advantaged who were used to travel on business—i.e. Roman citizens and those with Latin status—in the Roman world.¹⁴ Thus, the late republican and early imperial understanding of *imitatio* represents another important paradigm of leadership, overlooked by classical and New Testament scholars, which should be considered in our study. How did Paul's understanding of mimetic leadership engage with the paradigm of leadership found in the statue program of the *forum Augustum*? Augustus had intended that his conception of his place in history—revealed in the *Res Gestae* and in his elaborate statue program in the forum—should be emulated by a new generation of Roman leaders.¹⁵ The visual and documentary evidence, therefore, has been sidelined in discussions of “imitation” in

(Acts 16:14–15; 18:3; 1 Cor 4:11–12; 9:12, 15; 2 Cor 11:7; 1 Thes 2:9; 2 Thes 3:7–8). For an alternate interpretation of σκηνοποιός (“tentmaker”) as “maker of stage properties,” see Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ*, 111–112.

¹³ F.W. Danker's *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Greco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St Louis: Clayton publishing House, 1982) is an outstanding example of the “civic” analysis of leadership in antiquity that I am advocating. For additional works alert to the civic context of Pauline ethics, see W. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); W. Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); L.L. Welborn, *Politics and Rhetoric in the Corinthian Epistles* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997); B. Blumenfeld, *The Political Paul: Justice, Democracy and Kingship in a Hellenistic Framework* (JSNTSup 210; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001); J.R. Harrison, “Paul and the Gymnasiarchs: Two Approaches to Pastoral Formation in Antiquity,” in S.E. Porter, ed., *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman* (PAST 5; Brill: Leiden, 2008), 141–178.

¹⁴ Judge, “The Roman Base of Paul's Mission.”

¹⁵ Lendon (*Empire of Honour*, 129–130) is sensitive to the imitation of the imperial ruler in antiquity. J.K. Hardin (*Galatians and the Imperial Cult: A Critical Analysis of the First-Century Social Context of Paul's Letter* [WUNT 2.237; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 67, 71 ff., 124) points out that a Latin copy of the *Res gest. divi Aug.* existed at Pisidian Antioch, which Paul visited (Acts 14:14–50). Whether Paul as a Roman citizen had any facility in Latin is unknown, though his intention to evangelise in the Latin West might point to some rudimentary ability in the language on his part (Rom 15:24). For recent discussion, see S.E. Porter, “Did Paul Speak Latin?,” in *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, 289–308.

antiquity and its relation to Paul's thought never effectively explored.¹⁶ As a result, the continuity and discontinuity of Paul's leadership ethos with the mimetic traditions of his Greco-Roman contemporaries has been underestimated in each case.

Second, E.A. Castelli's stimulating monograph on imitation is, in my opinion, too ideologically driven. She comes to the ancient texts and the epistles of Paul with *a priori* suppositions about the nature of power, overlooking how the subtleties of the honour system shaped power relations in antiquity.¹⁷ In viewing Pauline imitation from a Foucaultian perspective,¹⁸ Castelli inevitably distorts the apostle's social and ethical stance.¹⁹ In the view of Castelli, Paul's hierarchical understanding of imitation enforces ideological sameness upon his house churches and denies social exclusivity (i.e. difference). But in not engaging with the inscriptional evidence relating to imitation in the late Hellenistic and early imperial period, Castelli does not sufficiently reckon with the urban context of Paul's ministry and the mimetic paradigms of leadership that were found throughout the eastern Mediterranean *poleis*.²⁰ Like de Boer, she argues that the Greco-Roman educational context provides the lens for understanding Paul's view of imitation.²¹

Paul, I will argue, was urging his urban believers to imitate the crucified Christ over against the much fêted "great men" of the first-century world, each with his own network of hierarchically based patronage. The apostle's establishment of alternate benefactor communities in Mediterranean cities meant that the mimetic ethos of ancient benefaction culture was firmly in his sights as he sought to redefine in Christ the experience and expression of divine and human beneficence for his converts. In this article, I will argue that Paul sponsors a model of imitation that up-ends Greco-Roman

¹⁶ For a methodological discussion of Paul's interaction with the visual evidence of antiquity, see J.R. Harrison, "Paul and the Athletic Ideal in Antiquity: A Case Study in Wrestling with Word and Image," in S.E. Porter, ed., *Paul's World* (PAST 4; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 81–109.

¹⁷ See Lendon, *Empire of Honour*.

¹⁸ E.A. Castelli, *Imitating Paul: A Discourse of Power* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 35–58.

¹⁹ See the extensive critique of Castelli's work in Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*, 181–218.

²⁰ Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*, 59–87. Castelli's discussion of the Greco-Roman literary evidence is more extensive than W.H. de Boer's selection, touching on various models of imitation (aesthetic, cosmological, theological, royal, pedagogical and ethical) in antiquity. However, Castelli does not explore the documentary and visual evidence relating to imitation.

²¹ Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, 84–85.

conventions of patronal power, without thereby diminishing the social importance of traditional benefaction ethics and its rewards.²²

Third, the recent book of V.A. Copan is an excellent exegetical and pastoral analysis of the role of imitation in Paul's spiritual formation of his converts.²³ Particularly valuable is Copan's discussion of contemporary spiritual therapy,²⁴ as well as his decisive rebuttal of the imposition of Foucault's sociological models upon the Pauline texts.²⁵ Also he covers the Greco-Roman context of imitation in a less blinkered manner than the discussions of de Boer and Castelli.²⁶ He posits a series of mimetic models (i.e. parent-child, leader-people, teacher-student, human-divine)—Greco-Roman and Jewish—as impacting upon Paul.²⁷ But, once again, the civic context (i.e. Copan's "leader-people" model) is insufficiently examined, overlooking the documentary and visual evidence of the eastern and western Mediterranean *poleis*. Nor does Copan satisfactorily integrate the Greco-Roman background materials with his exegesis in a way that differentiates Paul's understanding of imitation from the competing models found in antiquity.²⁸

Two articles have focused helpfully on important aspects of the mimetic tradition in Greco-Roman antiquity, namely, E.A. Judge's discussion of imitation within the honorific culture of the Ephesian inscriptions,²⁹ and H. Crouzel's examination of the widespread motif of the imitation of the gods.³⁰ Judge, in particular, takes seriously the urban context of the Ephesian believers to whom Paul was writing. More recently, in a satisfying study, R.A. Burridge has discussed theologically Paul's understanding of the "imitation" of Jesus,³¹ with a strong emphasis on its social implications for Paul's

²² This paragraph draws from Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 315 n. 99. For a more positive evaluation of Castelli's monograph, see D.M. Reis, "Following in Paul's Footsteps: *Mimesis* and Power in Ignatius of Antioch," in A.F. Gregory and C. Tuckett, eds., *Trajectories through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 287–306, esp. 288–293.

²³ Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*.

²⁴ Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*, 25–37, 229–265.

²⁵ Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*, 181–218.

²⁶ Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*, 40–71.

²⁷ Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*, 44, 48–51, 54–61.

²⁸ The only example of integration is found in Copan, *Saint Paul as Spiritual Director*, 101–102.

²⁹ E.A. Judge, "The Teacher as Moral Exemplar in Paul and in the Inscriptions of Ephesus," in D.M. Scholer, ed., *Social Distinctives of the Christians in the First-Century: Pivotal Essays by E.A. Judge* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 175–188.

³⁰ H. Crouzel, "L'imitation et la suite de dieu et du Christ dans les premiers siècles chrétiens ainsi que leurs sources gréco-romaines et hébraïques," *JAC* 21 (1978), 7–41.

³¹ R.A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand

house churches and twenty-first century society.³² However, we still do not gain any appreciation of how Paul's understanding of "imitation" interacted with the mimetic traditions of his Greco-Roman contemporaries.

Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 81–154. For additional theological discussions of "imitation" in Paul's thought, see D.M. Stanley, "Become Imitators of Me: The Pauline Conception of Apostolic Tradition," *Bib* 40 (1959): 859–877; J. Jervell, *Imago Dei. Gen. 1, 26f., in Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und in den paulinischen Briefen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 171–336; A. Schulz, *Nachfolgen und Nachahmen: Studien über das Verhältnis der neutestamentlichen Jüngerschaft zur urchristlichen Vorbildethik* (München: Köschel-Verlag, 1962), *passim*; Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi*, 48–83; E. Güttgemanns, *Der leidende Apostel und sein Herr* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), *passim*; P. Gutierrez, *La paternité spirituelle selon Saint Paul* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1968), 178–188; J.H. Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (SNTSMS 26; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 226–232; B. Sanders, "Imitating Paul: 1 Cor 4:16," *HTR* 74/4 (1981): 353–363; L. Hurtado, "Jesus as Lordly Example in Philippians 2:5–11," in P. Richardson and J.C. Hurd, eds., *From Jesus to Paul: Studies in Honour of Francis Wright Beare* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 113–126; D. Stanley, "Imitation in Paul's Letters: Its Significance for His Relationship to Jesus and to His Own Christian Foundations," in *From Jesus to Paul*, 127–141; R.G. Hammerton-Kelly, "A Girardian Interpretation of Paul: Rivalry, *Mimesis*, and Victimhood in the Corinthian Correspondence," *Semeia* 33 (1985): 65–81; W.S. Kurtz, "Kenotic Imitation of Paul and of Christ in Philippians 2 and 3," in F.F. Segovia, ed., *Discipleship in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 103–126; G. Lyons, *Pauline Autobiography: Towards a New Understanding* (SBLDS 73; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), 226–232; Fiore, *The Function of Personal Example*, 164–190; N. Onwu, "Mimetic Hypothesis: A Key to the Understanding of Pauline Paraenesis," *AJBS* 1/2 (1986): 95–112; A. Reinhartz, "On the Meaning of the Pauline Exhortation: 'mimetai mou ginesθε—Become Imitators of Me,'" *SR* 16 (1987): 393–403; E.R. Best, *Paul and His Converts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 59–72; M.A. Getty, "The Imitation of Paul in the Letters to the Thessalonians," in R.F. Collins and N. Baumert, eds., *The Thessalonian Correspondence* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 277–283; Morrison, *Mimetic Tradition*, 41–48; S.E. Fowl, *The Story of Christ in the Ethics of Paul* (JSNTSup 36; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990); S.E. Fowl, "Imitation of Paul/of Christ," in G.F. Hawthorne, et al., eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 428–431; L.L. Belleville, "Imitate Me, Just As I Imitate Christ: Discipleship in the Corinthian Correspondence," in R.N. Longenecker, ed., *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 120–142; A.D. Clarke, "Be Imitators of Me: Paul's Model of Leadership," *TynBul* 49/2 (1998): 329–360; B.J. Dodd, "The Story of Christ and the Imitation of Paul in Philippians 2–3," in R.P. Martin and B.J. Dodd, eds., *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998), 154–160; R.L. Plummer, "Imitation of Paul and the Church's Missionary Role in 1 Corinthians," *JETS* 44.2 (2001): 219–235. The unpublished dissertation of D.M. Williams (*The Imitation of Christ in Paul with Special Reference to Paul as Teacher* [Ph.D. diss.; Columbia University, 1967]) was unavailable to me. Somewhat unexpectedly, books on Pauline theology and New Testament ethics devote little space to the motif of "imitation" in Paul: e.g. L. Cerfaux, *Christ in the Theology of Paul* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1959), Index s.v. "Imitation"; L. Cerfaux, *The Christian in the Theology of Paul* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), Index s.v. "Imitation of Christ"; W. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1968), 222–224; W. Schrage, *The Ethics of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1988; Germ. orig. 1982), 208–209; J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), Index of Subjects s.v. "Imitatio Christi."

³² Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 116–138.

Other New Testament scholars have plumbed the *exempla* tradition,³³ drawing on Greco-Roman historiographical and biographical models, as a backdrop to understanding the rhetorical strategies of comparison and imitation employed in the New Testament writings. This discussion has been mostly carried out in relation to Luke-Acts, the Thessalonian epistles and Hebrews.³⁴ B. Witherington, however, has drawn attention to Paul's sophisticated rhetorical use of positive and negative examples that the Philippian believers were either to imitate or avoid if there was to be *concordia* in the house churches.³⁵ M.M. Mitchell has also highlighted the summons to imitation found in the *exempla* of deliberative rhetoric, arguing that Paul adopted this rhetorical tactic in several places in 1 Corinthians.³⁶ Finally, S.E. Fowl has shown how Paul employs the story of Jesus as a paradigm to inculcate ethical transformation in his house churches, whereas B.R. Gaventa has demonstrated how Paul's autobiography in Galatians 1–2 is intended to have paradigmatic force in Paul's theological argument.³⁷ The rhetorical conventions of the *exempla* tradition, too, have to be kept in mind when we

³³ For discussion of the use of *exempla* as a rhetorical genre, see K. Alewell, *Über das rhetorische PARADEIGMA. Theorie, Beispielsammlung, Verwendung in der römischen Literatur der Kaiserzeit* (Leipzig: Hoffman, 1913); H.W. Litchfield, "National *Exempla Virtutis* in Roman Literature," *HSCP* 25 (1914): 1–71; A. Lumpe, "Exemplum," *RAC* 6 (1966): 1229–1257; S. Perlman, "The Historical Example, Its Use and Importance as Political Propaganda in the Attic Orators," in A. Fuks and I. Halpern, eds., *Scripta Hierosolymitana VII: Studies in History* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 150–166; E. Eyben, "The Concrete Ideal in the Life of the Young Roman," *L'Antiquité Classique* 41 (1972): 200–217; J.R. Fears, "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology," *ANRW* II.17.2, 827–948; G. Maslakov, "Valerius Maximus and Roman Historiography: A Study of the *Exempla* Tradition," *ANRW* II.32.1, 437–496; C. Skidmore, *Practical Ethics for Roman Gentlemen: The Work of Valerius Maximus* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 3–27.

³⁴ In relation to Acts, see W.S. Kurz, "Narrative Models for Imitation in Luke-Acts," in D.L. Balch, et al., eds., *Greeks, Romans, and Christians: Essays in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 171–181; A.C. Clark, *Parallel Lives: The Relation of Paul to the Apostles in the Lucan Perspective* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001). In relation to Hebrews, see M.R. Cosby, *The Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews 11 in Light of Example Lists in Antiquity* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988); P.M. Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997). On imitation in the Thessalonian epistles, see Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*, Index of Subjects s.v. "Imitation."

³⁵ B. Witherington, *Friendship and Finances in Philippi: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 19–20.

³⁶ M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 39–60.

³⁷ Fowl, *The Story of Christ, passim*; B.R. Gaventa, "Galatians 1 and 2: Autobiography as Paradigm," *NovT* 28/4 (1986): 309–326.

analyse Paul's response to the inscriptional eulogies of the "great man" and the commemoration of his virtue for the imitation of posterity.

We turn now to an investigation of the mimetic concerns of civic leadership in the late Hellenistic age and the early imperial period (§ 2.1-§ 2.5). In § 3 we will consider how Paul's gospel overturns the iconic status of the "great man" and replaces it with a new understanding of the function and status of leadership in the community of Christ. Here we will range more widely than the passages employing "imitation" terminology. We will then be better placed to discuss how Paul's language of "imitation," within its exegetical context, engaged the civic paradigms of virtue (§ 4).

In concentrating on the evidence relating to the civic context of imitation, we are not suggesting that this is the only Greco-Roman model of imitation that elicited a theological and social response from Paul in his letters. As noted, V.A. Copan correctly isolates a diversity of models in the Jewish and Greco-Roman evidence. But we are proposing that New Testament scholars (with the exception of F.W. Danker and E.A. Judge) have overlooked the important "civic" band of literary, documentary, and visual evidence, a methodological oversight of some importance, given that Paul's converts were urban believers. Moreover, it provides us with another valuable lens to view the intersection of Paul's gospel with the first-century society of the eastern Mediterranean basin. The study, therefore, represents another step in researching the background of the Pauline house churches "city by city, institution by institution," social convention by social convention.³⁸

2. THE IMITATION OF THE "GREAT MAN" IN ANTIQUITY: A SURVEY OF THE LITERARY, DOCUMENTARY, AND VISUAL EVIDENCE

2.1. *Introduction*

At the outset, we need to identify the evidence to be investigated relating to the "great man" in antiquity, with a special focus on the civic context in the Latin West and the Greek East. First, Roman nobles competed with each other in order to surpass the fame of their family forebears, with a view to enhancing their own house's prestige. Models of ancestral or personal virtue were held forth for the imitation of future generations. In imperial times, this culminated in the ruler becoming the embodiment of all virtue

³⁸ See E.A. Judge, "The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question of Method in Religious History," in *Social Distinctives of the Christians*, 135.

with the triumph of the Julio-Claudian house over its rivals. Second, models of virtue were celebrated not only in literary memorials (e.g. *Res gest. divi Aug.*) but were also represented architecturally in the statue program of the Augustan forum, with its two lines of Roman leaders culminating in Augustus as *Pater Patriae*.³⁹ Third, the Greek honorific inscriptions of the eastern Mediterranean basin allude to ancestral glory in eulogising public benefactors or, alternatively, establish the benefactor as the yardstick of virtue for imitation by new benefactors. Latin inscriptions honouring soldiers in the early empire reveal the same phenomenon. Fourth, the literary comparison of famous Greeks and Romans in the writings of Plutarch, Valerius Maximus and the anonymous *De Viris Illustribus* serve the conservative function of either maintaining the ancient ethical tradition or reinforcing socially acceptable paradigms of leadership of the past for future generations.

2.2. *The Imitation of Ancestral Glory in the Roman Republic and in the Early Imperial Age*

The Roman nobility—comprising a narrow group of aristocratic families whose descendents had held the consulship—boasted in prominent examples of ancestral glory for each new generation to imitate and surpass.⁴⁰ This is well illustrated by the epitaphs of the republican Scipionic family. The Scipionic epitaphs set out the pedigrees (filiation, magistracies, military victories and official posts, priesthoods, board memberships etc.) of each of the deceased members of the family.⁴¹ The ethos evinced by the epitaphs points to the vitality of the Roman nobleman's replication of ancestral glory.

Two epitaphs in particular demonstrate clearly this culture of ancestral imitation. Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio Hispanus (*praetor peregrinus*, 139 BCE) lists his magistracies and then adds this highly revealing *elogium*:

By my good conduct I heaped virtues on the virtues of my clan: I begat a family and sought to equal the exploits of my father. I upheld the praise (*laudem*) of my ancestors, so that they were glad that I was created of their line. My honours have ennobled (*nobilitavit honor*) my stock.⁴²

³⁹ For full discussion, see J.R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), § 5.5.3.

⁴⁰ On the Roman nobility, see M. Geltzer, *The Roman Nobility* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969; Germ. orig. 1912).

⁴¹ For discussion, see R.E. Smith, *The Aristocratic Epoch in Latin Literature* (Sydney: Australasian Medical Publishing, 1947), 8–10.

⁴² E.H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin: Archaic Inscriptions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), "Epitaphs," § 10. For all the Scipionic epitaphs, see Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," § 1–10.

This epitaph sums up succinctly the world-view of the Roman *nobiles* ("nobles"). The ancestral virtues of the noble house had to be replenished by each new generation. The praise accorded the ancestors placed enormous expectations on each new generation of nobles. Each noble had to equal (and, hopefully, surpass) by virtuous conduct the achievements of the ancestors,⁴³ with the exploits of the immediate father being the starting point. If this replication of ancestral merit was successfully carried out by each new generation, the *nobilitas* of the family was rendered even more noble and virtuous. Remarkably, the dead ancestors are depicted as still vitally interested in the replenishment of the family honour attached to their line.⁴⁴

What happens, however, if the noble's life was prematurely cut short by his death before he could add to his ancestral glory? The answer is given with moving simplicity in the epitaph of a young Scipio who had only achieved "the honoured cap of Jupiter's priest" before he died:

Death caused all your virtues, honour, good report and valiance, your glory (*gloria*) and your talents to be short-lived. If you had been allowed long life in which to enjoy them, an easy thing it would have been for you to surpass by great deeds the glory of your ancestors (*gloriam maiorum*). Wherefore, O Publius Cornelius Scipio, begotten son of Publius, joyfully does earth take you to her bosom.⁴⁵

Here we see how the Scipios handled their less successful members, when their advancement in the *cursus honorum* was either cut short by death, as was the case with Publius Cornelius Scipio above,⁴⁶ or by a lack of significant magistracies, as was the case with the two family members named Lucius Cornelius Scipio below. The *elogium* of Lucius Cornelius Scipio, the twenty-year-old who died ca. 160 BCE without achieving any magistracies at all, adds

⁴³ Note that Cicero (*Fam.* 12.7.2) also speaks of the *nobilis* surpassing his own accomplishments: "do your utmost to surpass yourself in enhancing your own glory."

⁴⁴ Note the comment of D.C. Earl ("Political Terminology in Plautus," *Historia* 9/1 [1960]: 242) regarding the role of *virtus* in Plautus and the Scipionic *elogia*: "(*Virtus*) consists in the gaining of pre-eminent *gloria* by the winning of office and the participation in public life. It concerns not only the individual but the whole family, not only its living members but the dead members and the unborn posterity as well."

⁴⁵ Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §5. Smith (*The Aristocratic Epoch*, 10) observes: "We see the constancy of the ideal, consisting still in public honours and public office, to the extent that even where the dead man took no part in public life, the only comment is on what he would have done had he lived longer."

⁴⁶ See also Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," §8: "Cornelius Scipio Asiagenus Nevershorn, son of Lucius, grandson of Lucius, sixteen years of age."

somewhat self-consciously: "Whose life but not his honour fell short of honours, he that lies here was never outdone in virtue".⁴⁷ This *elogium* is particularly interesting because it demonstrates that whereas *virtus* had been understood to be an active demonstration of leadership in the public arena, in this case *virtus* is conceived as an inner quality that animated the honour of Lucius, notwithstanding his lack of any public profile.

Similarly, the *elogium* of another Lucius Cornelius Scipio, the thirty-three-year old quaestor (167 BCE) and tribune of the soldiers, finds refuge in ancestral honour: "His father vanquished King Antiochus".⁴⁸ Thus these less known Scipios are made to avoid scrutiny of posterity by basking in the *gloria* of more famous relatives or by vaunting what could have been if circumstances had been otherwise.⁴⁹

In the late republic, Cicero strengthens the motif of the replication of ancestral glory by linking it strongly to the language of "imitation." He sums up the early republican quest for ancestral glory by reference to the celebrated military *exempla* of the leading Roman noble houses:

... it is almost an instinct in the human race that members of a family which has won credit in some particular line ardently pursue distinction, seeing that the virtues of their fathers are perpetuated by the speech and recollection of the world; so did Scipio emulate the military renown of Paulus; so also did his son emulate Maximus; so also Publius Decius was imitated (*imitatus est*) by his son in the sacrificing of his life and in the very manner of his death.⁵⁰

(Cicero, *Rab. Post.* 1.2)

Elsewhere Cicero argues that the preservation of the liberty of the republic could only be preserved when the heroes of the republic are imitated:

⁴⁷ Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," § 6.

⁴⁸ Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, "Epitaphs," § 7.

⁴⁹ Even the more famous Scipios were not immune from criticism. Smith (*The Aristocratic Epoch*, 21–22) refers to the fragment of the dramatist Naevius (210 BCE), which exposes the youthful sexual indiscretions of the great Scipio (Gellius, 7.8.5):

Even him whose hand did oft
Accomplish mighty exploits gloriously
Whose deeds wane not, but live on to this day,
The one outstanding man in all the world,
Him, with a single mantle, his own father
Dragged from a lady-love's arms.

⁵⁰ See also Cicero, *Cael.* 30.72; *Div. Caec.* 8.25. Cf. Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.68: "Keep and preserve, Conscript Fathers, a man of such ready counsels, that every age may be furnished with its teacher, and that our young men may imitate Regulus, just as our old men imitate (*imitentur*) Marcellus and Crispus."

Accordingly let us imitate (*imitemur*) men like our Bruti, Camilli, Ahalae, Decii, Curii, Fabricii, Maximi, Scipiones, Lentulii, Aemilii, and countless others, who firmly established the *res publica*, whom, indeed, I reckon among the company and number of the immortal gods.⁵¹ (Cicero, *Sest.* 68.143)

In his speeches, Cicero sometimes singles out particular family members as worthy of imitation. This was a rhetorical ploy on Cicero's part designed to undermine those who accused unfairly faithful allies of the Republic. For example, Castor had accused his grandfather, Deiotarus, the Galatian king and a loyal client of Rome, of dancing drunk and naked at a banquet. Cicero responds bluntly in this manner:

This king is an exemplar of all the virtues, as I think you, Caesar, know well enough; but in nothing is he more remarkable and more admirable than in his sobriety ... It would have been more becoming in you, Castor, to model yourself (*imitari*) on the character and principles of your grandfather than to malign a good and noble man through the lips of a runaway. But even had you possessed a grandfather who was a dancer, instead of a man to whom one might look for an ideal of honour and propriety, even so such slanders would be ill applied to a man of his years. (Cicero, *Deiot.* 10.26, 28)

Moreover, as a *novus homo* ("new man"), Cicero was highly sensitive to the influential family clients and the ancestral *exempla* that ensured the political dominance of the leading consular families in Rome for so long and that had ensured their replenishment generation by generation. Cicero, as the first in his family to achieve the consulship, did not have such ancestral advantages. Thus, while Cicero urges the Roman nobles to seek the traditional paths of ancestral glory by imitating worthy *exempla*, he still reserves

⁵¹ After citing several illustrious defenders of the *res publica*, Cicero says: "Imitate these examples (*haec imitami*), I beg you in the name of the immortal gods, you who aspire to honour, praise and glory! These examples are glorious, they are superhuman, they are immortal; they are proclaimed in common talk, are committed to the records of history, are handed down to posterity" (Cicero, *Sest.* 47.101). See also Cicero, *Arch.* 14. Note, too, Quintilian, *Inst.* 12.2.29–30: "It is still more important that we should know and ponder continually all the noblest sayings and deeds that have been handed down to us from ancient times ... Who will teach courage, justice, loyalty, self-control, simplicity and contempt of grief better than men like Fabricius, Curius, Regulus, Decius, Mucius and countless others? For if the Greeks can bear away the palm for moral purposes, Rome can produce more striking examples of moral performance, which is a far greater thing." For an excellent discussion on the specific virtuous individuals that Romans admired and imitated, see E. Ryben, "The Concrete Ideal in the Life of the Young Roman," *L'Antiquité classique* 41 (1972): 200–217. Additionally, see Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 13–21. On the precise virtues to be imitated and the individuals embodying them, see the excellent coverages of K. Alewell, *Über das rhetorische PARADEIGMA*, 54–86; H.W. Litchfield, "National *Exempla Virtutis*," 9, 28–35.

a significant place for the *novi homines* ("new men") who were the first to achieve consular distinction without the advantage of any illustrious family models to imitate:

You, young Romans, who are nobles by birth, I rouse you to imitate the example of your ancestors (*ad maiorum vestrorum imitationem excitabo*); and you who can win nobility by your talents and virtue, I will exhort to follow that career in which many "new men" (*novi homines*) have covered themselves with honour and glory. (Cicero, *Sest.* 64.136)

Finally, Cicero, as a *novus homo*, has no compunction in appealing to himself as an example worthy of imitation. In a piece of special pleading, Cicero argues that he had selflessly resigned his consulship so that he could extinguish the conflagration of the Catilinarian conspiracy in 63 BCE, thereby preserving the liberty of the *res publica*:

Imitate me (*Imitare me*), whom you have always praised, who resigned a province organised and equipped by the Senate, so that, dismissing every other thought, I might quench the conflagration that was devouring my country. (Cicero, *Phil.* 11.10)

What happened to this republican ideal of the imitation of ancestral virtue in the early imperial period, given that the influence of the noble families waned before the onslaught of the triumphant Julio-Claudian rulers?⁵² The answer of Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.55) is that his age still furnished worthy models to imitate: "Nor was everything better in the past, but our own age too has produced many specimens of excellence and culture for posterity to imitate (*imitanda posteris*)."⁵³ Although not stated in this instance, Tacitus would have had his father-in-law, Cn. Iulius Agricola (CE 49–93), the governor of Britain, firmly in view here as an outstanding example of virtue during the tyranny of Domitian.

More importantly, as J.E. Lendon observes,⁵³ the ruler was now the man most worthy of imitation in the empire. Tacitus informs us that a reform had occurred in the Roman aristocracy (*Ann.* 3.55; cf. *Hist.* 2.68) when Vespasian became the moral exemplar among the social elite.⁵⁴ Dio Chrysostom, too, contrasts the unrestrained infatuation of Nero with music with

⁵² See esp. Juvenal, *Sat.* 8.1–38, on the decline of the Roman nobility. For commentary, see J. Henderson, *Figuring Out Roman Nobility* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997).

⁵³ Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 129–130.

⁵⁴ Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.55: "But the main promoter of the stricter code was Vespasian, himself of the old school in his person and table. Thenceforward, deference to the Princeps and the love of emulating him (*aemulandi amor*) proved more powerful than legal sanctions and deterrents."

the more restrained approach of Trajan to popular culture: "How much better it would be to imitate (μιμεῖσθαι) the present ruler in his devotion to culture and reason" (*Or.* 32.60). Thus, a significant shift had occurred in the conventions of ancestral imitation. Just as ancestral glory was increasingly concentrated in the Julio-Claudian rulers because their house had eclipsed all the aristocratic competitors by virtue of their patronage and military superiority,⁵⁵ so too the ruler had now become the embodiment of exemplary virtue.⁵⁶ Consequently, Nero advises the young Nero that the state will reflect his image if he dispenses mercy to his dependents—worthy citizens and allies—in the imperial body:

That kindness of your heart will be recounted, will be diffused little by little throughout the whole body of the empire (*per omne imperii corpus*), and all things will be moulded into your likeness (*in similitudinem tuam formabuntur*). It is from the head (*a capite*) that comes the health of the body; it is through it that all the parts are lively and alert or languid and drooping according as their animating spirit has life or withers. There will be citizens, there will be allies worthy of this goodness (*hac bonitate*), and uprightness (*recti mores*) will return to the whole world; your hands will everywhere be spared. (Seneca, *Clem.* 2.2.1)

In conclusion, as the imperial age unfolded from the house of the Julio-Claudians to the Flavian household, the role of the ruler as the embodiment of virtue expanded into role of a benefactor who dispensed grace through the Virtues. The Roman ruler, as the world-benefactor and the providentially appointed agent of the Roman gods, was ideally placed to render benefits to his dependents through the cult of the Virtues and to project his official image at a popular level throughout the empire by the means of specific hypostasised Virtues.⁵⁷

2.3. *The Forum Augustum and Julian Conceptions of Rule*

The contribution of *forum Augustum* to our understanding of the motif of "imitation" of the "great man" in the early imperial period has not fired the

⁵⁵ See Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, § 6.3.

⁵⁶ On the teaching of the Pythagorean political theorists and the popular philosophers regarding the king imitating the gods and his subjects imitating the king, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, § 7.2.1.

⁵⁷ J.R. Fears, "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology," *ANRW* II.17.2, 827–948. See also H. Axtell, *The Deification of Abstract Ideas in Roman Literature and Inscriptions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907); A. Wallace-Hadrill, "The Emperor and His Virtues," *Historia* 30 (1981): 298–323.

interest of New Testament scholars.⁵⁸ Prior to the Augustan era, the ostentatious tomb monuments of the late republican *nobiles* ("nobles") expressed their self-aggrandisement as they sought to outdo each other in a quest for ancestral glory. What had been essentially private monuments became public monuments on a grand scale with the erection of the Theatre of Pompey and the Forum of Caesar in the mid-first century BCE.⁵⁹ By then the glorification of the "great man" in Roman history had reached unprecedented architectural heights. But, with the triumph of Octavian at Actium and the inability of the republican *nobiles* ("nobles") to compete against the new world benefactor, the grandiose monuments of the *familia Caesaris* were enlarged and integrated into the public life and mythology of Rome.⁶⁰

The forum developed out of Augustus' desire to avenge his adoptive father's assassination at the Battle of Philippi in 42 BCE. On the eve of the battle, Octavian vowed that he would construct a temple to Mars Ultor, should he be victorious (Suetonius, *Aug.* 29.2; Ovid, *Fast.* 5.569–578; cf. *Res gest. divi Aug.* 21.1). Forty years later Augustus fulfilled his long-delayed vow when the temple was opened (2 BCE), though in different form than he envisaged because the temple was now included as part of his forum project. In addition to commemorating the deeds of Julius Caesar by means of the temple, the forum was intended to relieve congestion in the existing *forum Romanum* by expanding its facilities for public business. Additionally, the

⁵⁸ On the Roman forum, see P. Romanelli, *The Roman Forum* (2nd ed.; Rome: Instituto Poligrafico Dello Stato, 1955); M. Grant, *The Roman Forum* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970); F. Coarelli, *Il Foro Romano* (Rome: Quasar, 1992); D. Favro, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). For ancient texts on the *forum Augustum*, see D.R. Dudley, *Urbs Romana: A Source Book of Classical Texts on the City and Its Monuments* (London: Phaidon, 1967), 123–129. On the *forum Augustum*, see H.T. Rowell, "The Forum and the Funeral Images of Augustus," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 17 (1940): 131–143; E.A. Judge, "On Judging the Merits of Augustus," in *The First Christians*, 224–313, esp. 235–239; E.A. Judge, "The Eulogistic Inscriptions of the Augustan Forum," in *The First Christians*, 165–181; J.C. Anderson, *The Historical Topography of the Impeira Fora* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1984), 65–100; P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 201–205; G. Sauron, *QVIS DEVM? L'expression plastique des ideologies politiques et religieuses à Rome* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1994), 525–536.

⁵⁹ See Zanker, *Power of Images*, 11–31.

⁶⁰ See P.J.E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor: Roman Imperial Funerary Monuments from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), *passim*. The sitting rooms of Nero's Golden House, a Roman *domus* and garden of "cosmic" proportions (M. Bradley, "Fool's Gold: Colour, Culture, Innovation, and Madness in Nero's Golden House," *Apollo: The International Magazine of the Arts* [July 2002]: 35–44), exceeded all the land owned by illustrious Republican generals (Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 36.111).

victory tokens (e.g. crowns, sceptres) of returned *triumphators* were to be placed in the sanctuary of Mars Ultor, and governors on their way to military provinces took their leave there (Suetonius, *Aug.* 29.2).

More important is the design of the forum and the ideological purposes served by the portrait statue programme. The temple of Mars Ultor faced the South West, with the result that Mars Ultor faced the statue of Julius Caesar, Augustus's adoptive father, which was located prominently in the *forum Iulium*. The *forum Augustum* was set at right angles to the *forum Iulium*, with two semicircular bays (*exedrae*) jutting out on the South East and North West sides of the forum. Arrayed around the two *exedrae* and porticoes of the forum were statues of famous republican leaders (*principes*) and of the ancestors of the Julian nobility. Each line of republican and Julian luminaries radiated from a different founding-hero of Rome, the republican statues expanding outwards from South East *exedra*, the Julian statues from the North West *exedra*.⁶¹ As Ovid (*Fasti* 5.563–566; cf. Dio Cassius, 56.34.2; Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 22.7.13; Aul. Gell. *Noc. Att.*, 10.11.10) explains for the observer,

On the one side (one) sees Aeneas laden with his precious burden, and so many members of Julian nobility. On the other (one) sees Ilia's son Romulus bearing on his shoulder the arms of the (conquered) general, and the splendid records of action (inscribed) beneath (the statues of the) men arranged in order.⁶²

Each statue was adorned with a distinctive emblem relevant to his career, and below each statue were boldly lettered laudatory inscriptions (*elogia fori Augusti*) that catalogued each man's career achievements. While there is a heavy concentration upon magistracies and military triumphs in the catalogues—many which prefigured Augustus' illustrious career in the *Res Gestae*—there are features in the careers of the republican luminaries that proleptically and symbolically point forward to the civic and moral grounds for Augustus's unprecedented *auctoritas* (*Res gest. divi Aug.* 34.1, 3). As Judge observes,⁶³ each inscription focused on an episode that involved the republican leader in "political crisis management," that is, handling a desperate

⁶¹ Judge ("The Eulogistic Inscriptions," 175–176) lists the republican *principes*.

⁶² Zanker (*Power of Images*, 201) notes: "In the Forum of Augustus, in the central niches of the two large *exedrae*, Aeneas and Romulus stood as counterparts of Mars and Venus ... Venus' grandson was depicted fleeing from Troy in flames, the son of Mars as *triumphator*. The juxtaposition was not intended to measure the two heroes against one another, but to celebrate their deeds as the embodiments of two complimentary virtues."

⁶³ Judge, "The Eulogistic Inscriptions," 169.

situation that imperilled Rome. Each inscriptional vignette of “crisis management” pointed forward to the decisive way that Augustus had extinguished the civil wars tearing apart the Roman republic (*Res gest. divi Aug.* 34.1) and had returned his official powers (*potestas*) without recalcitrance to their owners, namely, the senate, the magistrates, and the people (34.1, 3). By exalting his *auctoritas*—his personal dignity and influence in the widest sense⁶⁴—over his rank, Augustus defined exemplary virtue for future generations. Roman history had found its culmination in Augustus and he provided the yardstick of *virtus* (“virtue”) for all future rulers of Rome.

In the *Res Gestae* inscribed on bronze tablets in front of his nearby mausoleum (Suetonius, *Aug.* 101.4), Augustus states that the revival of exemplary ancestral practices (*multa exempla maiorum*) in his legislative program formed part of a much wider transmission of “exemplary practises to posterity for their imitation” during his principate (*Res gest. divi Aug.* 8.5: *ipse multarum rerum exempla imitanda posteris tradidi*). Undoubtedly, the *forum Augustum* formed a pivotal part of this Augustan culture of imitation.

Suetonius (*Aug.* 31.5) provides us insight into Augustus’s motives in dedicating statues in triumphal form in the two porticoes of the forum. Augustus had declared in an edict:

I have contrived this to lead the citizens to require me, while I live, and the rulers of later times as well, to attain the standard (*ad exemplar*) set by those worthies of old.

The forum became one of the hallowed viewing places for Augustus’s civic and military honours:

During my thirteenth consulship the senate and equestrian order and people of Rome unanimously saluted me father of my country and voted that this should be inscribed in the vestibule of my house, in the Julian senate house and in the Augustan forum beneath the chariot which had been set up in my honour by ruling of the senate. (*Res gest. divi Aug.* 35.1)

What, then, do we learn from the fragments of the *elogia fori Augusti* about the fulfilment of the Roman ideals of leadership in Augustus?⁶⁵ Three examples will suffice, illustrating important facets of Augustus’s propaganda concerning his rule.

⁶⁴ *Res gest. divi Aug.* 30.1: “I was the leading citizen (*princeps*);” 34.3: “I excelled all in influence (*auctoritate*).”

⁶⁵ Anderson (*Historical Topography*, 82) observes regarding the number of *triumphatores* originally represented: “The extant inscriptions from the Forum also fail us, as we have no way of determining from the fragments how many *triumphatores* were represented, or which ones were in the hemicycles and which in the porticos.”

First, given the overflow of Augustus's beneficence (e.g. *Res gest. divi Aug.* 15–24; cf. § 5.2 *infra*), we observe how comprehensively Augustus replicated and surpassed the beneficence of the republican *principes*. Of Manius Valerius, for example, the statue inscription says that “on his own initiative the Senate freed the people from heavy debt” (*ILS* 50; cf. *Res gest. divi Aug.* 15). In the statue inscriptions of Appius Claudius Caecus (*ILS* 54) and Gaius Marius (*ILS* 59), we see how both men combined their military role with that of civic benefactor.⁶⁶ In the case of Caecus's beneficence, the inscription states that “In his censorship he laid the Appian Way and built an aqueduct into the city; he built the temple of Belonna.” Regarding Marius's beneficence, we learn from the inscription that “From the Cimbric and Teutonic spoils he built as victor a temple to Honour and Virtue.”⁶⁷ In reading these *elogia*, literate Roman residents would be aware that Augustus, like the *principes*, juggled the roles of general and benefactor during his principate, but on a vastly greater scale in terms of their scope and longevity.

Second, in the statue inscriptions the piety of the republican *principes*—a feature of Augustus's rule to which he draws attention (*Res gest. divi Aug.* 7.3; 9–12; 19; 24; 29.2) and one that his critics derided—is demonstrated by their commitment to the traditional cults in times of crisis. Thus, it is said of L. Albinus that “when the Gauls were besieging the Capitol, he led the vestal virgins down to Caere, and there made it his concern that the solemn rites and ceremonies were not interrupted” (*ILS* 51). Similarly, L. Papirius Cursor “returned to Rome to renew his auspices” (*ILS* 53). In the *Res Gestae*, however, Augustus underlines his superiority to the *principes* of the *forum Augustum* through his telling references to the vestal virgins and the auspices. In Augustus's case, the vestal virgins made an annual sacrifice in honour of his return to Rome from Syria (*Res gest. divi Aug.* 11), and the army of the Dacians was defeated and routed under his auspices (*Res gest. divi Aug.* 30.2). The republican *principes* of the statue inscriptions only anticipate in rudimentary form Augustus's piety and the central position he assumed in the state cult.

⁶⁶ Note, however, the military parallel between Augustus and Gaius Marius. Augustus (*Res gest. divi Aug.* 1.1): “I successfully championed the liberty of the republic when it was oppressed by the tyranny of a faction.” Gaius Marius (*ILS* 59): “while consul for the sixth time, he freed the republic when it was troubled by the revolt of tribunes of the plebs and praetors, who had seized the Capitol under arms.”

⁶⁷ Anderson (*Historical Topography* 83) observes regarding the *elogia fori Augusti* that “Temples built by four of these men were restored by Augustus in confirmation of Suetonius' statement that Augustus restored the works of great generals preserving the original inscriptions (*Aug.* 31.1).”

Third, a final elogium honours Quintus Fabius Maximus. Fabius Maximus had rescued the legion of Mucinius from military disaster and earned thereby from the grateful soldiers the title "Father of the Legion":

Quintus Fabius Maximus, son of Quintus, twice a dictator, five times consul, censor, twice interrex, curule aedile, twice quaestor, twice tribune of the soldiers, pontifex, augur. In his first consulship he subdued the Ligures and triumphed over them. In his third and fourth he tamed Hannibal by dogging his heels though rampant after numerous victories. As dictator he came to the aid of the magister equitum, Minucius, whose *imperium* the people had ranked equal with the dictator's, and of his routed army, and on that occasion was named "father" by the army of Minucius. When consul for the fifth time he captured Tarentum, and triumphed. He was considered the most cautious general of his age and the most skilled in military matters. He was chosen *princeps senatus* at two Lustra.⁶⁸ (ILS 56)

What was so impressive about Fabius Maximus's selfless and magnanimous act was that the Senate had previously snubbed him by giving his military subordinate, Mucinius, the same official power as him.⁶⁹ Fabius Maximus's honour, however, was excelled by the unprecedented honour, "Father of his Country," which the Roman people pressed upon Augustus for saving them from a century of civil war (*Res gest. divi Aug.* 35; cf. Suetonius, *Aug.* 58; Horace, *Carm.* 2.1.2.45 ff.). Once again, within the "typological" conventions of leadership articulated in the *forum Augustum*, we see how Augustus surpassed the best of his republican forebears and became the iconic model of political crisis management for future generations.

2.4. *The Honorific Inscriptions and the Imitation of the "Great Man"*

2.4.1. *The Greek Public Inscriptions*

The Greek public inscriptions resort to the language of "imitation" and "emulation" in eulogising benefactors and teachers in the eastern Mediterranean world and in encouraging uncommitted members of the wealthy elite in the city to assume the mantle of benefactor. Four Greek inscriptions

⁶⁸ Cicero had the title of "parent of his fatherland" bestowed unofficially upon him for suppressing the Catilinarian conspiracy and the title was later officially granted to Julius Caesar (Dio, 44.4.4; Suetonius, *Jul.* 85). In the case of Cicero and Caesar, however, the title did not come to have the all-defining status that it assumed in Augustus's career; nor did the Roman people and Senate press the title upon Fabius Maximus, Cicero and Caesar with the same relentless insistence that they did with Augustus.

⁶⁹ For full discussion of Fabius Maximus's selfless act in the Roman annalistic tradition, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, § 5.2.

reveal the culture of imitation that was promoted by the erection of inscriptions in the public spaces of the city.

First, a first-century AD inscription from Mantinea, Antigonea (Greek mainland), praises the wife of Euphrosynus, Epigone, for her replication of her husband's piety towards the gods:

For they were linked together in a union of body and mind in their lives and they shared a common and undivided concern in always seeking to go beyond the other in devoting themselves to the performance of good deeds; thus, they rebuilt the temples which had been in utter ruins and they added dining-rooms to those existing and they provided the [religious] societies with treasures, extending their piety not only to the gods but to the places themselves. Epigone, indeed, a woman of saintly dignity and devoted to her husband, imitated his example (μειμησαμένη τὸν γαμήσαντα) herself by taking up the priesthood ordained for every priestess, worshipping the gods reverently at sacrificial expense, in providing all men alike with a festive banquet.⁷⁰ (IG. V. 2[268])

Second, an inscription of Antiochus I of Kommagene, recounting the regulations for cultic observance at his burial shrine, concludes with a personal vignette of the piety that his descendants should display towards the gods. What is intriguing is the *do ut des* mentality ("I give in order that I may receive") underlying the inscription. The propitiation of the gods towards the homeland of Kommagene, as well as the maintenance of their favour towards its royal house, is entirely dependent on the mimetic ethos of the descendants of Antiochus I:

Through these, as well as many other ways, I have set forth for the benefit of my children and my descendants a clear impression of the piety one ought to show towards the gods and one's ancestors, and I expect them to imitate this fine example (καλὸν ὑπόδειγμα μιμήσασθαι) and ever increase the honours that are part of their family heritage, and that they will likewise, when they reach the peak of their own lives, add to my honours and magnify the glory of their ancestral house. And if they all do this, it is my prayer that all the gods of Persia and Macedonia and the homeland of Kommagene should remain propitiate and grant them every favour.⁷¹ (OGIS 383 [mid. 1st c. BCE])

Third, an Athenian decree (261/260 BCE) honouring Zeno, the father of Stoicism, sets out the rationale for Zeno's honours in mimetic terms. The focus is upon the way that young men saw in Zeno's personal example the Stoic self-control (σωφροσύνη) about which he taught:

⁷⁰ Translation, A.R. Hands, *Charities and Social Aid in Greece and Rome* (London and Southampton: Thames and Hudson, 1968), §D.14.

⁷¹ Translation in Danker, *Benefactor*, § 41.

Since Zeno, son of Mnaseas, from Kition, having been involved with philosophy for many years in the city, both in other ways continued to be a good man (ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός), and by urging those young men who entered into association with him toward excellence (ἀρετήν) and self-control (σωφροσύνην), he stimulated them toward the very best things (τὰ βέλτιστα), having offered to all as an example his own life (παράδειγμα τὸν ἴδιον βίον) which was in agreement with the theories he professed⁷²

(The decree is cited in Diogenes Laertius 7.10–12)

Fourth, in a letter of Attalus II praising Arist[---], the tutor of Attalos III, the same mimetic concerns are highlighted. The character of the tutor provided an impetus for the moral transformation of young men that he taught:

And he was much the more highly regarded by us not only by reason of his being in rhetorical skill [and t]radition superior to many, but because also in character he seemed worthy of every [praise] and very suited to keeping company with a young man. For it is manifest to everyone that those who are naturally gentlemen amongst the young are zealous (ζηλοῦσι) for the training [of their] masters.⁷³ (*I. Ephesos* II, 202 [150–140 BCE: Provenance; Ephesus])

There are other mimetic features of the eastern Mediterranean inscriptions that need discussion. In the “manifesto” clause of the honorific inscriptions, for example, there is regular mention of how the public honouring of benefactors stimulates other benefactors to imitate the beneficence of the honorand.⁷⁴ A decree of Sestos (133–120 BCE), in honour of the gymnasiarch Menas, concludes with this rousing call to the imitation of exceptional civic benefactors for the good of the city:

Therefore, in order that all people might know that Sestos is hospitable to men of exceptional character and ability, especially those who from their earliest youth have shown themselves devoted to the common good and have given priority to the winning of a glorious reputation, and that the People might not appear remiss in their gratitude, and that also all others, as they see the people bestowing honours on exceptional men, might emulate the

⁷² Translation in S.M. Burstein, ed., *The Hellenistic Age from the Battle of Ipsos to the Death of Kleopatra VII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), § 59.

⁷³ Translation in Burstein, *Hellenistic Age*, § 90. For a discussion of the decree, see R. Saunders, “Attalus, Paul and PAIDEIA: The Contribution of *I. Eph. 202* to Pauline Studies,” in T.W. Hillard et al., ed., *Ancient History in a Modern University. Vol. 2: Early Christianity, Late Antiquity, and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 175–183. On the imitation of Cynic teachers, see *Crates* 20.13; *Diogenes* 14. 4. See Malherbe, *The Cynic Epistles*, 70, 108, respectively.

⁷⁴ On the “manifesto” clause of the honorific inscriptions, see Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 40–43.

noblest qualities (ζηλωταὶ μὲν τῶν καλλίστων γίνονται) and be moved on to virtue, to the end that the common good might be advanced as all aim ever to win a reputation for doing something beneficial for our home city⁷⁵
(OGIS 339)

In another Ephesian inscription, the statue of Diodorus the gymnasiarch is set up in the gymnasium with the intention of “guiding everyone to become emulators of excellent deeds (ζηλώτας γίνεσθαι τῶν καλλίστων πράξεων)” (*I. Ephesos* Ia. 6 [2nd c. BCE: Provenance: Ephesus]). Some inscriptions also mention a son following his father’s example in his policies towards city-states.⁷⁶ Other inscriptions refer to benefactors either exceeding the generosity of their ancestors⁷⁷ or emulating their moral qualities.⁷⁸ Thus the imitation of ancestral virtue in the Greek East was just as much an important incentive motivating ethical behaviour as it was in the Latin West.

⁷⁵ Translation in Danker, *Benefactor*, § 17. Note, too, *Michel* 1553 (Danker, *Benefactor*, § 21: 250 BCE): “[so that] the members might be prompted to emulate ([ἐ]φάμιλλον) one another in generous service to the membership (knowing) that they will be honoured accordingly and that the Association of the Sarapiastae will find a further way to reward them as they continue their benefactions in the future.”

⁷⁶ E.g. C.B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period: A Study in Greek Epigraphy* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1974; orig. 1934), § 32: “in the future I shall try following my father’s example to aid you in furthering them in whatever matters you summon me or I myself think of;” Welles, *Royal Correspondence*, § 14: “I have in former times shown all zeal in behalf of your city both through a gift of land and through care in all other matters as was proper because I saw that our father was kindly disposed toward the city and was the author of many benefits for you and had relieved you of harsh and oppressive taxes and tolls which certain of the kings had imposed.” The literary evidence confirms this emphasis. Amidst a list of duties (Pseudo-Isocrates, *Demon.* 9–15) occurs this paraenesis: “I have produced a sample of the nature of Hipponicus, after whom you should pattern your life as after an example, regarding his conduct as your law, and striving to imitate and emulate your father’s virtue.” Cited in A.J. Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation, a Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (LEC 4; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 126. See also Pliny, *Ep.* 8.13: “he whom nature designed you should most resemble, is, of all others, the person whom you should most imitate!”

⁷⁷ Hands, *Charities*, §D.46: “in this going beyond the generous gifts of his forefathers;” Hands, *Charities*, §D.69: “maintaining the good relations with the people inherited from his ancestors.” Danker, *Benefactor*, § 24: “not only surpassed the generosity of his ancestors in his public services to the city and in his generosity toward the Synod both individually and collectively, but also matched the enthusiasm of many superintendents of the contests who have been especially generous toward us.”

⁷⁸ Danker, *Benefactor*, § 19: “and (further assuring him) that (Opramoas) already from his earliest youth even until now has been emulating his ancestors’ majestic qualities and generosity.”

2.4.2. *The Latin Public Inscriptions*

Turning to the Latin inscriptions of the early imperial period, the ethos of imitation is also present, even though, as noted (§ 2.2), the Julio-Claudian rulers had become the supreme model of virtue. In a revealing epitaph from the Flavian period, cited by J.E. Lendon,⁷⁹ a soldier portrays himself as the unprecedented paradigm of military prowess, effectively leaving no room for others to excel his achievements.

While this type of exalted boasting was standard fare for the Julio-Claudian world-benefactors, it is unconventional for a soldier in the imperial era to make such bold claims unabashed. The inflated boasting of Cornelius Gallus about his military exploits in Egypt in 29 BCE drew Augustus's wrath and the renunciation of his friendship, resulting in Gallus's suicide in 26 BCE.⁸⁰ The chilling consequences of overreaching oneself before the ruler was a lesson learned by Caesar's military retinue from that time onwards: even minor military officials were careful to acknowledge in their inscriptions the importance of the patronage of the ruler.⁸¹

Although deference toward the ruler is shown in our inscription ("With Hadrian watching"), the soldier magnifies his role at the expense of his rivals. Indeed, the mention of Hadrian only serves to enhance his prestige indirectly. Even bolder is the soldier's claim that his only exemplar is himself:

Once I was most renowned on the Pannonian shore;
amidst a thousand Batavians the strongest;
With Hadrian watching I swam the huge waters
of Danube's deep in arms.
While a bolt from my bow hung in the air—
while it fell—I hit and shattered with another arrow.
Neither Roman or Barbarian, no soldier with his spear,
no Parthian with his bow, could defeat me.
Here I lie. My deeds I have entrusted to the memory of this stone.
Whether another after me will emulate my deeds (*mea facta sequ[a]tur*) has
yet to be seen.
I am the first who did such things: my own exemplar (*exemplo mihi*).

⁷⁹ Lendon, *Empire of Honour*, 245. The text (*ILS* 2558) can be found in M.E. Smallwood, ed., *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), § 336. Provenance is unknown, but given as "near the Danube."

⁸⁰ See E.A. Judge, "Veni. Vidi. Vici, and the Inscription of Cornelius Gallus," in *The First Christians*, 72–75.

⁸¹ For discussion, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, § 6.3.1.

The inscription, therefore, is graphic testimony to the tenacity of the rhetorical conventions regarding the imitation of the “great man” in antiquity, notwithstanding the fact that the ruler in the early imperial period had become the paradigm of all virtue.

2.5. *The Literary Exempla and the Imitation of the “Great Man”*

We have already noted M.M. Mitchell’s discussion of how rhetoricians like Isocrates resorted to proof by example and the call to imitation when using deliberative rhetoric, especially in cases where the orator wanted to establish concord in the city-state.⁸² We might also profitably refer in this regard to Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 31.118) who, when discussing the conventions of praising and criticising famous city-states like Athens, offers this guideline:

For as it is the custom of all men to recount the admirable institutions and practices which are found among other peoples for the purpose of encouraging eager emulation (ζήλου) of them, we should not in the same way mention any bad practice that is current elsewhere for the sake of encouraging imitation of it (ᾧστε μιμεῖσθαι), but, on the contrary, only in order that one’s people may be on their guard against it and may not fall unawares into that sort of thing.

But, as important as the mimetic concerns of civic rhetoric might be for our purposes, there is little point in covering territory well worn by Mitchell. Another fruitful field of enquiry is the Greek and Latin corpus of collectors of *exempla*. New Testament scholars have not as yet examined these writings in discussions of imitation in the letters of Paul. These works ranged from biographical vignettes of famous figures (*De Viris Illustribus*; Valerius Maximus) to Plutarch’s full-fledged program of biographical comparison.⁸³ What light do these works throw on the mimetic ethos of antiquity?

⁸² Mitchell, *Rhetoric of Reconciliation*, 60–64.

⁸³ Cornelius Nepos’s *On the Great Generals of Foreign Nations* is left out of consideration, notwithstanding the fact that the work belongs to the ancient corpus of *exempla* and has a close affinity, as Alewell notes (*Über das rhetorische PARADEIGMA*, 48), with Valerius Maximus in its rhetorical genre. However, in contrast to Valerius Maximus and Plutarch, Nepos does not engage in *explicit* moralistic reflection, especially in regards to the “imitation” motif, within his work. For coverage of the authors and *exempla* comprising the Roman corpus of rhetorical literature, see Alewell, *Über das rhetorische PARADEIGMA*, 100–118.

2.5.1. *The συγκρίσις of Plutarch*

Plutarch's biographies, which compare leading Romans with their Greek counterparts, are infused with moralistic purpose. The intent of Plutarch was to provide moral *exempla* for the leading men of his day so that a new generation of leaders might be raised up in the civic and military arena. Plutarch observes in the *Life of Pericles* 1.4, 2.4:

We find these examples in the actions of good men, which implant an eager rivalry and a keen desire to imitate them (εἰς μίμησιν) in the minds of those who sought them out, whereas our admiration for other forms of action does not immediately prompt us to do the same ourselves ... These, then, are the reasons which have impelled me to persevere in my biographical writings, and which I have therefore devoted this tenth book to the lives of Pericles and of Fabius Maximus, who staged such a land war with Hannibal. The two men possessed many virtues in common

In order to help his readers visualise more clearly his paradigm of mimetic leadership, Plutarch prefaced his parallel lives with a comparison (συγκρίσις) of each Roman and Greek leader that he was discussing.⁸⁴ Eighteen of these comparisons have come down to us intact. At first sight, Plutarch's comparisons do not seem to throw light on the mimetic concerns of Paul's occasion-bound letters. On the three occasions where Plutarch resorts to the language of "imitation" in the comparisons,⁸⁵ he does not employ it with the imperatival force of Paul's letters. Plutarch prefers to concentrate on the character traits that contributed to each man's power and authority,⁸⁶ thereby making his moral points in ways appropriate to the biographical genre, but in a manner remote from Paul's formation of communities in Christ.

⁸⁴ For occurrences of μιμεῖσθαι and cognates in Plutarch's *Lives*, see *Publ.* 10.2; *Cat. Maj.* 9.4; 19.7; *Pomp.* 60.4; *Cat. Min.* 65.10; 73.6; *Ti. C. Gracch.* 7.1; *Demetr.* 11.2; *Ant.* 17.4; *Arat.* 1.5; 38.9; *Alex.* 4.3; *Sol.* 31.4; *Dem.* 14.2; *Cic.* 42.3; *Demetr.* 1.6; 22.1; 52.6; *Dion.* 21.6. It is beyond the scope of this article to explore Plutarch's extensive use of the language of "imitation" in the *Moralia*.

⁸⁵ Plutarch, *Comp. Ag. Cleom. Ti. Gracch.* 5.3: "Lycurgus, whom he professed to imitate (μιμεῖσθαι)" Plutarch, *Comp. Ages. Pomp.* 4.4: "there were many plains, ten thousand cities, and a whole earth which (Pompey's) great resources by sea afforded him had he wished to imitate (μιμεῖσθαι) Maximus, or Marius, or Lucullus, or Agesilaüs." Plutarch, *Comp. Sol. Publ.* 1.1: "There is, then, something peculiar in this comparison (ταύτην τὴν σύγκρισιν), and something that has not been true of any other thus far, namely, that the second imitated (γεγονέναι μιμητὴν) the first, and the first bore witness for the second."

⁸⁶ Plutarch, *Comp. Dem. Cic.* 3.2: "But what is thought and said most of all to reveal and test the character of a man, namely power and authority (ἐξουσία καὶ ἀρχή), which rouses every passion and uncovers every baseness, this Demosthenes did not have."

Notwithstanding, Plutarch's programme of biographical comparison exhibits several general points of convergence with Paul, even if he comes to vastly different conclusions regarding the ethos of leadership. For example, Plutarch provides a clear blueprint of what the true leader should be like;⁸⁷ he reflects on the interplay between Fortune and character in the development of a leader (Plutarch, *Comp. Thes. Rom.* 3.1; *Comp. Arist. Cat.* 2.4; *Comp. Cim. Luc.* 3.6; *Comp. Nic. Crass.* 5.1); he critiques the morality of the subjects of his biographies;⁸⁸ he reflects on the leader's attitude towards and use of wealth (Plutarch, *Comp. Lys. Sull.* 3.1–2; *Comp. Alc. Cor.* 3.1–2); he highlights the importance of leaders establishing civic concord by persuasion;⁸⁹ and, last, he employs the familiar ethical motifs of his culture (e.g. the endangered benefactor) in order to convey the integrity of a leader.⁹⁰

A more meaningful dialogue between Plutarch's programme of biographical comparison and the ethical concerns of Paul's epistles becomes possible when we remember that Paul employs christological narrative patterns (2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:5–11) in order to transform communal life within his house churches. An interesting intersection occurs in Plutarch's discussion of the acceptance or rejection of absolute power by rulers and the quality of rule that emerged from their decision. Solon and Publicola are contrasted in this manner:

Moreover, though Solon rightly and justly plumes himself on rejecting absolute power even when the circumstances offered it to him and his fellow citizens were willing that he should take it, it redounds no less to the honour of Publicola that, when he had received a tyrannical power, he made it more democratic and did not use even the prerogatives which were his by right of possession. (Plutarch, *Comp. Sol. Publ.* 2.3)

It is against this type of paradigmatic narrative that Paul's Gentile audiences would have been able to assess, if only by contrast, the nature and scope of Jesus' radical divestment of status and power in Phil 2:5–11 and its

⁸⁷ E.g. Plutarch, *Comp. Thes. Rom.* 2.1–2; *Comp. Lys. Num.* 1.2; *Comp. Alc. Cor.* 1.4; *Comp. Ages. Pomp.* 3.3–4; *Comp. Nic. Crass.* 2.3–5; *Comp. Arist. Cat.* 3.1.

⁸⁸ See Plutarch's philosophical critique of styles of leadership in *Comp. Cim. Luc.* 1.1–4. Note, too, Plutarch's negative attitude to the pursuit of *do/ca*, an attitude consonant with the Greek ethical tradition, in *Comp. Dem. Cic.* 2.1–2.

⁸⁹ Plutarch, *Comp. Lys. Num.* 4.8: "he changed the whole state by force of persuasion alone (πάντα πειθοί μεταβαλεῖν) and ... by his wisdom and justice (he) won the hearts of all the citizens and brought them into harmony (συναρμόσαντα);" *Comp. Nic. Crass.* 2.3–5: "[Nicias's] love of peace, indeed, had something godlike (θεῖος) about it."

⁹⁰ Plutarch, *Comp. Dion. Brut.* 1.3: "yet of his own accord he hazarded a peril (ἐκὼν κίνδυνον) so great in order to save Sicily (σῶσαι Σικελίαν)." On the "endangered benefactor" motif, see Danker, *Benefactor*, 417–427.

social implications for humility and selflessness in their corporate relations. It also helps us to understand sympathetically Paul's refusal to play the role of a tyrant over his Corinthian converts (2 Cor 11:20–21), as opposed to the interloping super-apostles.⁹¹

Finally, we find another intriguing intersection between Paul and Plutarch when the biographer compares the stance of Aristides and Cato towards wealth. Whereas Cato increased his wealth,

Aristides, on the other hand, was so poor (τῇ πενίᾳ) as to bring his righteousness (τὴν δικαιοσύνην) into dispute, as ruining a household, reducing a man to beggary (πτωχοποιόν), and profiting everybody rather than its possessor ... He is not helpful to others, while heedless of himself and his family. Indeed, the poverty of Aristides would seem to have been a blemish on his political career, if, as most writers state, he had not foresight enough to leave his poor daughters a marriage portion, or even the cost of his own burial ... Whereas, though Aristides was foremost of the Greeks, the abject poverty (ἄπορος πενία) of his descendants forced some to ply a fortune-teller's trade, and others, for very want, to solicit the public bounty, while it robbed them all of every ambition to excel, or even to be worthy of their great ancestor.

(Plutarch, *Comp. Arist. Cat.* 3.3, 5–6)

Here we see registered with graphic horror the reaction of the ancients to the idea that a benefactor like Aristides might, inconceivably, so impoverish himself that he would no longer be a “day-labourer” (πένης) but a “beggar” (πτωχός).⁹² Such a decision was ultimately inimical to his family and himself, no matter its benefits to others, because it deprived his family of the ability to maintain or surpass their ancestral honour. The immensity of the cultural shame involved in Aristides' self-impoverishment provokes Plutarch to reappraise the dishonour of poverty and thus construe Aristides' “reprehensible” actions as being in reality “noble”:

Poverty (πενία) is never dishonourable (αἰσχρόν) in itself, but only when it is a mark of sloth, intemperance, extravagance, or thoughtlessness. When, on the other hand, it is the handmaid of a sober, industrious, righteous, and brave man, who devotes all his powers to the service of the people, it is the sign of a lofty spirit that harbours no mean thoughts.⁹³

(Plutarch, *Comp. Arist. Cat.* 4.1)

⁹¹ See S.B. Andrews, “Enslaving, Devouring, Exploiting, Self-Exalting, and Striking: 2 Cor 11:19–20 and the Tyranny of Paul's Opponents,” in *Society of Biblical Literature 1997 Seminar Papers* (SBL Seminar Papers 36; Atlanta: SBL, 1997): 460–490.

⁹² On rhetorical paradigms of poverty, see Alewell, *Über das rhetorische PARADEIGMA*, 56–60.

⁹³ Note how Plutarch (Plutarch, *Comp. Arist. Cat.* 4.5–6) concludes (somewhat defensively) regarding Aristides: “Great is the simple life, and great its independence, but only

This comparison of Cato and Aristides provides us keen insight into the profound shock with which the self-destitution of Christ in 2 Corinthians 8:9 (δι' ὑμᾶς ἐπτώχευσεν) would have been heard. It also allows us to appreciate the sheer delight for contemporary auditors to learn—in an unexpected reversal of cultural expectations—that Christ's dependents were left enriched (ἵνα ὑμεῖς πλουτήσητε) rather than impoverished through his divestment of wealth (τῇ ἐκείνου πτωχείᾳ). It also underscores the social force that a paradigmatic narrative could acquire for an audience when wielded by skilled writers such as Plutarch and the Apostle Paul.

2.5.2. De Viris Illustribus

Another important collector of *exempla* is the writer of the anonymous *De Viris Illustribus* ("Deeds of famous Men"). This anonymous collection of seventy-seven biographical sketches stretches from King Proca, Romulus's great-grandfather, to the Roman general Pompey, defender of the *res publica* in the face of Caesar's onslaught. There is little doubt that this list of republican luminaries, prefaced by the Roman kings (*De Viris Illustribus* 1–9), is intended to depict a cavalcade of virtue (10–77) culminating in Pompey the Great. The *exempla* are designed for the replication of posterity, presumably from the age of the Caesars onwards. On the rare occasion where the language of "imitation" and "example" is used, it refers to the maintenance of the cult and ancestral piety (*De Viris Illustribus* 4 [*imitatur*], 7 [*exemplo*], 27 [*exemplum patris imitatus*]).

The imitation, therefore, is more conceived collectively than individually as far as the *exempla* enumerated. It is the cumulative force of republican virtue that is the writer's focus here as opposed to the virtue of isolated republican individuals. In this regard, the absence of moralistic commentary interrupting each sparse narrative allows readers to draw their own conclusions in an impressionistic way as to why the republican leaders were so great. Significantly, the figure of Caesar is bypassed, apart from the symbolism of the telling episode where Caesar—strategically recounted in the final sentence of the work—is reduced to tears when Pompey's head was presented to him in an Egyptian covering (*De Viris Illustribus* 77). In sum, the transformation envisaged for each new generation in *De Viris*

because it frees a man from the anxious desire of superfluous things. Hence it was that Aristides, as we are told, remarked at the trial of Callias, that only those who were poor in spite of themselves (τοῖς ἀκουσίως πενομένοις) should be ashamed of their poverty (αἰσχύνεσθαι πενίαν); those who, like himself, chose poverty, should glory in it."

Illustribus consisted in conformity to an idealised past and the reinvigoration of Rome's future leadership through a renewed commitment to its republican legacy.

2.5.3. Facta et Dicta Memorabilia

Finally, we turn to Valerius Maximus' *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* ("Memorable Doings and Sayings"), composed during the reign of Tiberius (CE 14–37). Divided into short chapters, the work provides *exempla*—Roman and foreign—for the consideration of posterity.⁹⁴ The *exempla* congregate in the fields of virtue and vice, religious practice and ancestral custom.⁹⁵ The work evinces a strong senatorial perspective towards the republican past, but, over against the *De Viris Illustribus*, Valerius Maximus endorses enthusiastically the new imperial order (Valerius Maximus, 3.2.19).⁹⁶ The aim of the work is set out clearly at the outset (1. praef.):

I have determined to select from famous authors and arrange the deeds and sayings worthy of memorial (*memoratu digna*) of the Roman City and external nations, too widely scattered in other sources to be briefly discovered, to the end that those wishing to take examples may be spared the labour of lengthy search.

Valerius Maximus also makes it plain that he is totally committed to Roman mimetic culture (Valerius Maximus, 2.1.10):

At dinners the elders used to recite poems to the flute on the noble deeds of their forebears to make the young more eager to imitate them (*quo ad ea imitanda iuventutum alacriorem redderent*). What more splendid and more useful too than this contest? Youth gave appropriate honour to grey hairs, age

⁹⁴ For helpful discussion of the genre of the work, see Alewell, *Über das rhetorische PARADEIGMA*, 36–53; Maslakov, "Valerius Maximus," *passim*; Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 31–50.

⁹⁵ On the moral purpose of the work, see Skidmore, *Practical Ethics*, 53–82.

⁹⁶ For Julius Caesar, see Valerius Maximus, 3.2.19: "bright glory of the stars, as formerly of arms and the gown, the divine Julius, surest image of true valour." For Augustus, see Valerius Maximus 2.8.7: "with (the oak wreath) the doorposts of the August dwelling triumph in eternal glory." For Tiberius, see Valerius Maximus 1. praef.: "Caesar, surest foundation of the fatherland, in whose charge the unanimous will of the gods and men has placed the governance of land and sea, by whose celestial providence the virtues of which I shall tell are most kindly fostered and the vices most sternly punished." There is no need to dismiss Valerius Maximus' adulation of Tiberius as "conventional" for his age and, therefore, insincere. As J. Hellegouarc'h ("Etat présent des travaux sur l'Histoire Romaine" de Velléius Paterculus," *ANRW* II.32.1, 427) observes, "Velléius a servi sous Tibère et on peut parfaitement admettre qu'il ait eu de l'admiration pour lui; il est le représentant d'une classe sociale, composée d'officiers et de fonctionnaires, qui est naturellement attachée et soumise à l'empereur."

that had travelled the course of manhood attended those entering on active life with fostering encouragement. What Athens, what school of philosophy, what alien-born studies should I prefer to this domestic discipline?

In this regard, while the motif of “glory” appears regularly throughout the work (esp. 8.14), our author makes it plain that “glory” emanates pre-eminently from Roman *exempla*. Speaking of examples of military discipline, Valerius comments regarding the great difficulty in representing accurately examples of glory in a glorious culture:

Give any one of these (examples) to communities no matter how a famous and they will seem amply furnished with the glory of military discipline. But our city ... has filled the entire globe with every kind of marvellous examples ... Therefore I too, Postumius Tubertus and Manlius Torquatus, strictest guardians of warlike concerns, feel hesitation as I include you in memorial narrative, because I perceive that overwhelmed by the weight of the glory you have deserved I shall reveal the insufficiency of my abilities rather than present your virtue in its proper light.⁹⁷

Notwithstanding, Valerius Maximus parades a range of *exempla*, Roman and foreign, in which the language of “imitation” is specifically used. The models are variegated but decisive in their impact. Crassus imitated Romulus in his dedication of the *spolia opima* to Jupiter (3.2.4: *imitari*). Anaxarchus emulated the fortitude of Nearchus (3.3 ext. 3: *aemulus*). M. Curius was the “consummate pattern of Roman frugality (*exactissima norma Romanae frugalitatis*)” and, simultaneously, “a clearly established model of bravery (*fortitudinis perfectissimum specimen*)” (4.3.5a). Porcia M. Cato’s daughter, upon hearing that her husband Brutus had been killed at Philippi, imitated (*imitata*) her father’s “manly end with a woman’s spirit” by placing burning coals in her mouth (4.6.5). M. Cotta emulated the filial piety (*hanc pietatem aemulatus*) of the young Manilius towards his father L. Manilius Torquatus by defending his own father at trial (5.4.4). Finally, Valerius Maximus (5.8.3; cf. Polybius, 6.53.1–6.54.4) reveals why the Roman nobles decked their houses with funeral masks and their pedigrees below them in the first part of the house:

For he saw that within the hall where he sat was placed the mask of Torquatus the Imperious, conspicuous in its severity, and as a very wise man he bethought himself that the effigies of a man’s ancestors with their labels are placed in the first part of the house in order that their descendants should not only read of their virtues but imitate them (*imitarentur*).⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Valerius Maximus 2.7.6.

⁹⁸ See also Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 35.3.7; Sallust, *Bell. Jug.* 4.

To conclude, the crucial difference between the *De Viris Illustribus* and *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* lies in the forward-looking outlook of Valerius Maximus: the glory of the republican houses had culminated in the glory of the triumphant Julio-Claudian house, whereas, in the former work, Caesar's tears over Pompey's decapitation (*De Viris Illustribus* 77) underscores with pathos the decline in exemplary virtue during the reign of the Julio-Claudians.

3. PAUL'S INVERSION OF CONTEMPORARY MODELS OF EXEMPLARY VIRTUE

In this section we will demonstrate how Paul's gospel interacts with the iconic status of the "great man" in Greco-Roman antiquity, the paradigm of which was discussed in § 2.2–§ 2.5. In response, we will proceed in the same order.

First, in response to the "boasting" culture of the Scipionic *elogia* and the imitation of the ancestral "glory" articulated in Cicero's speeches (§ 2.2),⁹⁹ Paul underscores that boasting is excluded by the law of "faith" over against the law of "works" (Rom 3:28; 4:2–3). The gospel of Christ crucified, with its radical reversal of human standards, reduces to nothing the accolades of status—past and present—so that no one could boast before God (1 Cor 1:26–27). There is one "Lord of glory" even if the rulers of this age did not recognise him (2 Cor 2:8). For Paul, the believer's "boasting" arises from the wonder of our new status in Christ (1 Cor 1:30–31); it celebrates God's missionary work through his appointed vessels as opposed to the self-commendation of the "super-apostles" (2 Cor 10:18); it rejoices in the progress of converts towards the day of Christ (Phil 2:16). Experientially, Paul boasts in his weakness (2 Cor 11:30; 12:6) because Christ's sufferings (Col 1:24) rob him of his self-sufficiency and open him up to the discovery of divine power amidst weakness (2 Cor 12:9–10). In sum, Paul gutted the Roman boasting system of its anthropocentric basis as he considered the social and theological implications of "dying and rising" in Christ against the backdrop of the agonistic culture of the first century.

While the glory of ancestral culture presented advantages for the Jew (Rom 9:1–5; cf. Phil 5:5–6; Gal 1:14), the only legitimate ancestral inheritance that would secure "glory" for Jew and Gentile before God was the justifying faith of Abraham and Isaac, our "fathers" (Rom 4:1–25; 9:10; Gal 3:6–14).

⁹⁹ On ancestral glory in Cicero, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, § 6.2.2.2.

Moreover, although transformation in glory has begun already through the Lord who is Spirit (2 Cor 3:18; cf. Gal 3:14; 5:16–26), Paul postpones the full attainment of glory until the arrival of the eschaton (Rom 8:18–21; 2 Cor 4:17–18; Phil 3:20–21).

We have seen that Cicero called upon the narrow clique of the senatorial *optimates* to imitate him in defence of the *res publica* (§ 2.2). By contrast, Paul is more constricted in the locus of his imitation but wider in the scope of his appeal: “Imitate me as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor 11:1: μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε καθὼς καὶ γὼ Χριστοῦ). Christ, who had become “all things to all people” in his crucifixion, provides the paradigm for Paul’s pastoral ministry. Rather than enshrining the rights of one particular group (e.g. Cicero’s *optimates*), Paul accommodates to different ethnic and cultural groups by selflessly surrendering his rights (1 Cor 9:19–23), with a view to establishing communities in Christ that would unite diverse groups rather than divide them into warring factions.

Whereas the Julio-Claudian and Flavian propaganda asserted that the ruler had become the embodiment of all virtue, Paul demotes the ruler to the subordinate status of God’s “servant” (Rom 13:4, 6) who, like the rest of humanity, awaits the arrival of eschatological judgement (13:11–13). Moreover, Christ’s “virtue” has been democratised throughout the body of Christ (Rom 5:18b, 19b; 8:29). The extension of mercy, the prerogative of Nero in the imperial body, was now the preserve of believers in the body of Christ (Rom 12:1, 8b).

Second, the iconic Augustus—the fulfilment of republican history and the yardstick of virtue for Roman leaders past and future (§ 2.3)—had been outshone by the Benefactor of the ages. Romans 5:12–21 explodes with the language of “grace” and “overflow”—formulaic in the imperial propaganda—as Paul describes the superiority of the reign of grace in Christ.¹⁰⁰ Whereas Augustus had descended from the line of Romulus and the line of Aeneas, Paul reconfigures humanity in Romans 5:6–10 into two new lines of virtue that culminate in disappointment: one might conceivably die for the “benefactor” (ὅπερ γὰρ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ) from the Greek world or the “righteous” man (ὅπερ δικαίου) from the Jewish world, but no one would die for dishonourable humanity. Seemingly, in terms of “crisis management” of humanity, there was no hope of any soteriological solution to humanity’s desperate plight. The reason was clear. In the Greco-Roman honour

¹⁰⁰ For discussion, see J.R. Harrison, “Paul, Eschatology and the Augustan Age of Grace,” *TynBul* 50/1 (1999): 79–91.

system, grace calculated the likelihood of its reciprocation in advance: Nero's mercy, for example, would only be extended to *worthy* citizens and allies in the imperial body (§ 2.2).

But, at the "right" time (Rom 5:6: ἔτι κατὰ καιρόν)—both in terms of God's timing and the desperate situation of his dependents—a dishonoured benefactor chose to die in an act of grace for his impious enemies (5:6b [ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν], 8b [ἔτι ἀμαρτωλῶν], 10a [ἐχθροὶ ὄντες]). By means of this indiscriminating and foolish act of beneficence on behalf of ungrateful dependents (Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 1:18–25), Christ managed the universal crisis that Augustus and the other heroes of the *forum Augustum* could not solve: the Adamic reign of sin and death (Rom 5:12–21). Christ, the τέλος of salvation history (Rom 10:4: "goal," "end"), fulfilled the law by absorbing its curse in his own person on the cross (Gal 3:10–14; Col 2:13–14), so that the blessing of Abraham might come by faith to humanity through the promised Spirit (Gal 3:14b).¹⁰¹ As a result, instead of the accolade *Pater Patriae* being the preserve of Augustus, believers had the extraordinary privilege of addressing God as *abba*, "Father," through the indwelling Spirit (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; cf. Mark 14:36). Paul's counter-imperial family, which crossed the social and ethnic divide of antiquity, had supplanted the Julio-Claudian networks of privilege and obligation with a new set of social relations that would ultimately transform the ancient world.

Third, the honorific inscriptions of the eastern Mediterranean basin, infused with mimetic concerns (§ 2.4), are open to the same criticisms that Paul launched against the Roman ideal of glory, outlined above. With their carefully tabulated lists of benefactions, priesthoods, gymnasiarchal service, and so on, the eulogistic inscriptions fall prey to Paul's savage parody of Greco-Roman honorific culture in 2 Corinthians 11:16–30. Paul "foolishly" boasts in the inflated rhetorical style of the honorific inscriptions, but robs their content of validity by boasting in a shameful catalogue of weakness.¹⁰² Even the prized boast of being an endangered benefactor (2 Cor 11:26: κινδύνοις) is subverted by his grandiloquent oath that he, like Demosthenes, was the cowardly benefactor who abandoned the city in the hour of crisis (2 Cor 11:30–32).¹⁰³ In the end, Paul portrays himself as a comic figure playing a series of stereotyped roles in the passing mime shows of antiquity—

¹⁰¹ For discussion, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, § 5.5.3–§ 5.5.4.

¹⁰² For discussion, see J.R. Harrison, "In Quest of the Third Heaven: Paul and His Apocalyptic Imitators," *VC* 58/1 (2004): 24–55, esp. 46–55.

¹⁰³ See Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 335–340.

an abject figure of ridicule like his crucified Lord.¹⁰⁴ Only such brutal self-derision on Paul's part could shock the self-satisfied Corinthians to reappraise their client-patron relationship with their boastful "super-apostles."

Fourth, whereas the carefully constructed paradigms of virtue found in the collectors of *exempla* (Plutarch's ΣΥΤΚΡΙΣΙΣ; *De Viris Illustribus*; Valerius Maximus, § 2.5.1-§ 2.5.3) venerated the idealised past, the emphasis of Paul is upon the transforming newness of the reign of grace in the present (Rom 7:6; Gal 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17), with a view to the inconceivably glorious arrival of the new creation in the future (Rom 8:18-25; 1 Cor 15:42-49; 2 Cor 4:16-18).

Of particular interest is the paradigm of the "impoverished benefactor" in antiquity,¹⁰⁵ as Plutarch's heated debate about the social legitimacy of Aristides' divestment of wealth illustrates. Ancient cities ensured that benefactors were not reduced to the humiliation of being either a πέννης ("day-labourer," "poor man") or a πτωχός ("beggar," "pauper"): the honour of being deemed ἀλειτούργητος ("free from public services") for a specified period enabled the benefactor to have enough breathing space to recoup his depleted reserves. However, a benefactor who let his reserves slide to the level of becoming a πτωχός was morally, as the Anonymous Iamblichi note, καχός ("bad").¹⁰⁶ Useless as a benefactor, therefore, Christ had been disqualified as a paradigm of virtue. Such was the momentum of the social dishonour that Christ had experienced in becoming God's impoverished benefactor for the salvation of the ungrateful (2 Cor 8:9) and in being an exemplar of unstinting grace for his suffering apostles (6:10). Only God's glorious vindication of his dishonoured benefactor reversed this crippling social stigma (Phil 2:9-11) and enriched his dependents beyond their wildest dreams (2 Cor 8:9b).

There is little doubt, therefore, that Paul is debunking the adulation of the "great man" in antiquity, no matter the social and cultural context or the eulogistic genre employed to celebrate his status. Paul does not thereby dismiss the conventions of honorific culture towards the powerful (Rom 13:7b), but sets them in the new context of mutual honouring as an expression of love (12:10; 13:8-10), with special emphasis on the priority of the weak as far as the extension of honour within the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:23-24). In sum, Paul's figure of the crucified and impoverished benefactor triumphed over the powerful luminaries of antiquity by virtue of his impartial offer of overflowing beneficence to the unworthy, through

¹⁰⁴ L.L. Welborn, "The Runaway Paul," *HTR* 92/2 (1999): 115-163.

¹⁰⁵ For discussion, see Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 250-256.

¹⁰⁶ Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace*, 264-268.

his “crisis management” of the cosmic forces holding humanity hostage to sin and death, and by means of his flawless “virtue” being freely transferred to his dependents.

However, a final issue demands clarification. How does Paul’s language of “imitation” contribute to the demise of the “great man”? The issue must be addressed because E. Castelli has powerfully argued Paul has employed his parental imagery in order to impose hierarchically μίμησις of himself upon his converts as a strategy of conformity.¹⁰⁷ In other words, if Castelli is correct, Paul merely dismantles one hierarchy—the imitation of the “great man” in antiquity—in order to impose another hierarchy upon his house churches. This, in my opinion, distorts the social intention of Paul’s parental metaphors and his language of imitation.

4. PAUL’S LANGUAGE OF “IMITATION” AND CIVIC PARADIGMS OF VIRTUE

In this section I will argue that Paul undermined the status of the “great man” in antiquity by linking a cruciform model of discipleship to the corporate *mimesis* that the apostle sponsored within his house churches. In particular, Paul’s experience of Christ’s resurrection power in the humiliation of weakness radically reshaped his understanding of social relations in ways that were antithetical to the values of the Greco-Roman elite. Consequently, Paul’s mimetic ethos became a subversive force for social transformation within the eastern Mediterranean *poleis* as the first believers articulated a new understanding of leadership that challenged the hierarchical, agonistic, and honour-driven models of antiquity.

In the case of the church at Thessalonica, the believers imitated the suffering apostles and the Lord by persevering in their persecutions and receiving God’s word with Spirit-inspired joy (1 Thess 1:6: ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου). Paul’s use of the passive ἐγενήθητε in verse 6, as many scholars have observed, points to God’s agency in producing a Christ-centred imitation in the lives of the believers. The Thessalonians had also imitated the churches of God in Judea by not wilting under the heavy persecution of their countrymen (1 Thess 2:14: ὑμεῖς γὰρ μιμηταί, ἐγενήθητε, ἀδελφοί, τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ). Finally, Paul encouraged his converts to imitate him as an artisan who worked with his own hands (cf. 1 Cor 4:12) instead of being dependent on wealthy Roman patrons

¹⁰⁷ See Castelli, *Imitating Paul*, 98–111, 115–116.

(2 Thess 3:7: δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς; 3:9: ἵνα ἑαυτοὺς τύπον δώμεν ὑμῖν εἰς τὸ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς; cf. 1 Thess 2:9), including, if B.W. Winter is correct, Thessalonian politarchs such as Aristarchus (Acts 19:29; 20:4).¹⁰⁸

Paul's mimetic ethos addresses two significant areas of urban life at Thessalonica for the first Christians. First, Paul transforms the social humiliation of persecution for the Thessalonians at the hands of their countrymen by interpreting the believer's suffering as a replication of the sufferings of the earthly Jesus.¹⁰⁹ Second, the paradigm of mimetic behaviour was extended to the work life of believers. Paul warned the Thessalonians against becoming increasingly dependent on the patronage of the wealthy, even though there were serious corn shortages in the empire in CE 51 due to famine (Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.43).¹¹⁰ In this regard, Paul insisted that certain believers at Thessalonica were to abandon their parasitic dependence upon Roman networks of patronage for (presumably) the corn dole.¹¹¹ Rather, in imitation of their apostle's personal financial policy, these believers were not to insist upon their perceived "rights" (2 Thess 3:9a) or burden the "great men" of Thessalonica with further demands for financial support (3:8b). Consequently, Paul's mimetic ethos began to challenge the traditional structures of the benefaction system and the social dominance of the benefactor in antiquity. In a reversal of social custom, the Thessalonian believers themselves were to assume the role of benefactor vacated by the "great man," performing acts of beneficence for the needy through their house-church networks and from their own resources (2 Thess 3:12–13: μὴ ἐγκακῆσητε καλοποιούντες; cf. Gal 6:9: τὸ καλὸν ποιοῦντες μὴ ἐγκακῶμεν), notwithstanding the personal cost (cf. 2 Cor 8:1–5).

In the case of the Corinthian house churches, factionalism had erupted among the believers as to whether Paul or Apollos was the more rhetorically accomplished teacher (1 Cor 1:10–16; 3:1–9, 16–17, 21–23; 4:6–7, 15), a contest that Paul, along with Apollos (4:6a), disavowed (1:20; 2:1–5; 4:20).¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ B.W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens of the City* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994), 46.

¹⁰⁹ Note the observation of Stanley ("'Become Imitators of Me,'" 866): "... Paul conceived his apostolic vocation as a prolongation of Jesus' role as the Suffering Servant of Yahweh." Further, see D.M. Stanley, "The Theme of the Servant of Yahweh in Primitive Christian Soteriology, and Its Transposition by St Paul," *Bib* 16 (1954): 385–425.

¹¹⁰ Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City*, 53–55.

¹¹¹ On the Roman benefaction culture of Thessalonica, see especially H.L. Hendrix, *Thessalonians Honor Romans* (PhD diss., Harvard University 1984).

¹¹² For a very helpful coverage of the topic, see D. Litfin, *St Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1–4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

In reply, Paul encouraged his converts to imitate their “weak” and “dishonourable” apostle (1 Cor 4:16: μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε), whose socially humiliating ministry is depicted in vv. 9–13.¹¹³ Thus, another significant status-indicator of the “great man” in antiquity—rhetorical eloquence—is here debunked by Paul’s graphic portrayal of his self-lowering on behalf of others. Although it has been claimed that in this instance Paul is imposing conformity on his converts by means of his appeal to “fatherhood” (1 Cor 4:16–17), it is very clear that Paul as a parent wanted to approach his children in a spirit of loving gentleness (4:21: ἐν ἀγάπῃ πνεύματι τε πραΰτητος; cf. 2 Cor 10:1: πραΰτητος; Matt 11:29: ὅτι πραῦς εἰμι) rather than adopting the harsh tone of a disciplinarian (ἐν ῥάβδῳ).¹¹⁴ Last, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul encourages his converts to imitate himself and Christ (μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε καθὼς καὶ γὼ Χριστοῦ) by forgoing their right to eat meat offered to idols. The intention behind Paul’s summons was that the factionalised Corinthians might thereby experience the unity that comes through mutual acceptance and the service of the weak in the body of Christ (1 Cor 9:19–23; 10:31–33). Here the rights of the “strong”—those who possessed the wealth and social mobility to enjoy “consecrated meat” at various cultic occasions—are bypassed in favour of the “weak” of the lower classes who could not afford to buy meat and who were scandalised by the ‘idolatrous’ involvement of the “strong” in the cultic associations (1 Cor 8:9–11; 10:14–22, 23–24, 28–30).¹¹⁵ Once again, we are witnessing how Paul’s mimetic ethos restructures social relations in antiquity.

¹¹³ For an outstanding discussion of Paul’s social metaphors in 1 Cor 4:9–13, see Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ*, 52–86.

¹¹⁴ For Castelli’s arguments, see n. 18 *supra*. S.S. Bartchy (“Who Should Be Called Father? Paul of Tarsus between the Jesus Tradition and *Patria Potestas*,” *BTB* 33/4 [2003]: 146, original emphasis) makes this comment about Paul’s purported patriarchal attitudes: “Paul’s apparent goal was not the creation of an egalitarian community in the political sense, but a *well-functioning family* in the kinship sense. In this family, each surrogate member used his or her strengths, whatever they were, to enrich the quality of life for the family rather than for themselves as individuals. Thus I contend that Paul was anti-patriarchal while *not* being egalitarian. His vision is that of a society of siblings, of surrogate brothers and siblings, not related by blood, but now bound together by something even deeper: the personally chosen, intentionally embraced, and shared commitment to the will of God the Compassionate.”

¹¹⁵ For a sociological analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1–11:1, see G. Theissen, “The Strong and the Weak in Corinth: A Sociological Analysis of A Theological Quarrel,” in G. Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 121–143. On the cultic associations, see J.R. Harrison, “Paul and the Cultic Associations,” *Reformed Theological Review* 58/1 (1999): 31–47.

Moreover, in confining the paradigm of imitation to Christ alone (1 Cor 11:1b: καθὼς καὶ γὰρ Χριστοῦ), Paul undermines the centrality of imperial *mimesis* in the first century (§§ 2.2–2.3). Paul counters the social agenda of the Julio-Claudian propaganda by saying that divine “justice” and “mercy” is mediated exclusively through the crucified Christ (Rom 3:25–26; 9:15–18; 11:31–32; 12:1; 1 Cor 7:25b; 2 Cor 1:3a; 4:1) as opposed to the Roman ruler, notwithstanding the ruler’s legitimate role in maintaining social cohesion (Rom 13:4).¹¹⁶ Christ rules with impartial justice over the nations as the messianic son and the risen Lord of the house of David (1 Cor 8:5–6; Rom 1:2–5; 2:5–16; 15:12; 16:25–27; cf. 2 Sam 7:11–16; Pss 2:1–12; 89:19–37; 110:1–7) and offers unsolicited mercy to the nations (Rom 9:23–26; 10:16–20).¹¹⁷ By contrast, Augustus and Nero, sons of the apotheosised Caesar and Claudius respectively (1 Cor 8:5),¹¹⁸ belong to this passing age (7:31). The dynasty of the Caesars, with its iconic line of “virtuous” rulers, did not understand the vast social and political reordering that had occurred in the shame of the cross (1 Cor 2:6b, 8; cf. 1:22–23). Consequently, the house of the Caesars, along with the rest of humanity, awaits God’s eschatological judgement (Rom 2:5–16; 13:11–12; 16:20). This would have been a rebuff to those “strong” believers among the social elite at Corinth (1 Cor 1:26b) who attended the Isthmian games, resided from Corinth back to the Isthmia in the early fifties,¹¹⁹ and who had participated there in the idolatrous temple feasts and public festivals held in honour of the imperial ruler and the members

¹¹⁶ For the demonstration of divine “justice” and “mercy” in Paul, see δικαιοῦν (“to declare and treat as righteous”): Rom 3:24, 26, 28, 30; 4:5; 5:1, 9; 8:30, 33. δίκαιος (“just”): Rom 1:17; 3:26. δικαίωμα (“acquittal”): Rom 5:16. δικαίωσις (“putting into a right relationship,” “acquittal”): Rom 4:25; 5:18. οἰκτιρμός (“compassion,” “mercy,” “pity”): Rom 12:1; 2 Cor 1:3. ἔλεος: “mercy,” “compassion”: Rom 9:23; 11:31; Eph 2:4. ἐλεῆν (“to be merciful,” “to show kindness”): Rom 9:15, 16, 18; 11:31, 32; 1 Cor 7:25. On Paul’s presentation of *clementia* (“mercy”) and *iustitia* (“justice”) in their imperial context, see N. Elliott, *The Arrogance of the Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 59–119. On the question of God’s impartiality in relation to his judgement, see J.M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982).

¹¹⁷ On the imperial context of 1 Cor 8:5–6, see B.W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 269–286.

¹¹⁸ For documentary evidence on Nero as the son of the divine Claudius, see D.C. Braund, *Augustus to Nero: A Sourcebook on Roman History 31BC–AD 68* (London/Sydney: Croom and Helm, 1985), §§ 235, 240, 244. For documentary evidence on Augustus as the son of the divine Julius, see Braund, *Augustus*, *passim*; L.R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Middletown: American Philological Association, 1931), 270–283.

¹¹⁹ For discussion of the date of the resiting of the games, see Harrison, “Paul and the Athletic Ideal,” 89–90 n. 24.

of his family (1Cor 8:10; 10:14–22).¹²⁰ In considering the needs of the “weak” in the body of Christ (1Cor 8:8–13; 9:22; 10:31–11:1), the “strong,” with their commitment to the powerful imperial networks at Corinth, would have to imitate the crucified Christ instead of being moulded into the likeness of Nero as the head of the “body of the empire” (§ 2.1: Seneca, *Clem.* 2.2.1).

Finally, in Philippians 3:17 Paul encourages his converts to imitate him (συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε), as well as others who had lived according to the example that he and Timothy had set at Philippi (τύπον ἡμᾶς [cf. Phil 1:1; 2:19–24]). As far the local Philippians who imitated the apostolic paradigm, undoubtedly Paul had in mind the selfless Epaphroditus (Phil 2:25–30; 4:18). But what precisely was the point of “imitation” that Paul wanted the Philippians to replicate? In context, Paul must be referring to his refusal to boast in his ancestral status and nomistic fidelity as a Jew, as well as in his missionary achievements as a believer (Phil 3:4b–8; cf. Gal 1:14).¹²¹ Paul's abandonment of achievement and inheritance is explained by the fact that he had gained by faith in Christ the gift of righteousness of God (Phil 3:9). However, somewhat unexpectedly, Paul's knowledge of Christ's resurrection power was experienced in the fellowship of his sufferings and in daily conformity to his death, with a view to the eschatological resurrection (Phil 3:10–11). Precisely because Paul overturned any “confidence in the flesh” (Phil 3:3b, 4a, 4b) at the foot of the cross (3:10), the boasting culture of Greco-Roman antiquity—with its catalogues of achievement and virtue—was sidelined in the Western intellectual tradition. Progressively humility would emerge as the crowning virtue of the “great man.”

¹²⁰ See Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*, 271–276, 278–286. Note, too, how imperial family members were also considered “godlike” in the honorific inscriptions: Julia (“New Aphrodite:” IGR IV.114); Livia (“New Hera:” IGR IV.249); Gaius (*Neos Theos*: IGR IV.1094); Drusilla (“New Aphrodite:” SIG³ 798). The gem and numismatic evidence also points to the apotheosis of imperial family members, see L.J. Kreitzer, *Striking New Images: Roman Imperial Coinage and the New Testament World* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 69–98. For the apotheosis of Caesar, watched by Augustus and his heirs, see the Belvedere altar (Rome, 12–2 BCE). For the relief, see M. Beard et al., ed., *Religions of Rome*. Vol. 1: *A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 187, fig. 4.3.d.

¹²¹ R.T. France (*Philippians* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1959]: 145, original emphasis) notes in regards to the change of tense from the perfect to the present in verses 7 (ἡγγμα: “I have considered”) to 8 (ἡγοῦμαι: “I consider”): “In the scales of his choice all the privileges he could claim as a Jew (verses 5–7) and as a Christian (verse 8) were offset by inestimable gain. This is stated in terms of *knowledge* (cf. verse 10) which is described in such a way as to leave the reader in no doubt about its uniqueness.”

What, then, was the dynamic that differentiated Paul's understanding of *mimesis* from that of his Greco-Roman contemporaries? First, Paul confronted his auditors with the choice of conformity to this world (Rom 12:2) or to the image of Christ (8:29).¹²² The status of Christ as "the image of the invisible God and the first-born of every creature" (Col 1:15) reduced the boastful luminaries of the Greco-Roman world to insignificance. The choice between models, therefore, could not have been clearer. Second, the transformation of believers into Christ's glorious likeness had already begun in the present age through the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17–18; Col 3:10–11) and was given sharp behavioural focus in daily life by Christ's and the Father's example (Eph 4:32–5:2; cf. 5:1: γίνεσθε οὓς μιμηταὶ τοῦ θεοῦ). Third, the death and resurrection of Christ had ensured the conformity of believers to the model of the risen Christ in the age to come (Rom 6:5; 8:19–21; 1 Cor 15:49; Phil 3:21). Fourth, as noted, it was ultimately the *cruciform* nature of Jesus' call to mimetic discipleship (Mark 8:34–38; cf. 1 Cor 11:8–25; 2 Cor 4:7–12; 13:4) and his example of humility and service (Mark 10:35–45; Luke 22:24–237; John 13:1–17; cf. Phil 2:5–8; Rom 15:7; 2 Cor 10:1; Col 3:13) that triumphed over the Greco-Roman preoccupation with inherited status, individual achievement, and self-advertisement. Paul, a meticulous imitator of Christ, understood well the cost and glory of this alternate social order that was powerfully manifesting itself in his house churches.¹²³

¹²² Morrison, *The Mimetic Tradition*, 42.

¹²³ Note the comment of Judge ("The Teacher as Moral Exemplar," 187): "The idea of imitation offered a means of expressing the replication of Christ's experience, especially in social relations, that could be passed on in turn to those who believed in him."

EPHESIANS:
PAUL'S POLITICAL THEOLOGY IN
GRECO-ROMAN POLITICAL CONTEXT*

Fredrick J. Long

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *The Study of Politics in Paul*

It is a well-known fact, but its implications too often forgotten, that the designation Χριστιανός first applied to the disciples in Antioch in Acts 11:26 originally carried political connotations (formed with the Latin suffix *-ianus*).¹ It meant they “were now viewed as a separate society rather than as a section of the Jewish synagogue” and this would have carried with it the problems of protection under *religio lecita* and “how they related their knowledge of the Messiah to the Messianic promise given to Israel.”² Also,

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¹ BDAG, s.v. “one who is associated w. Christ, *Christ-partisan*, *Christian*.” The first examples with the same ending *-ανός* are Ἡρωδιανοί and Καισαριανοί, the latter from Epict. *Diss.* 1.19 in reference to “the household members” of Caesar. Χριστιανός is found also in Acts 26:28, in which in reply to Paul’s attempts to convince King Agrippa of the truth of Christ in historical events and as revealed in the Prophets, Agrippa replies “In so little time you are attempting to make me a Christian? [ἐν ὀλίγῳ με πείθεις Χριστιανὸν ποιῆσαι;]” The only other occurrence is in 1 Pet 4:16 where one is encouraged to suffer as a Christian knowing that judgment will begin in the “household of God.” Cf. G. Schneider, s.v., *EDNT*, 3:478, who suggests the designation originated with outsiders observing the disciples as a separate group. Marvin R. Vincent, “Acts 11:26,” in *Word Studies in the New Testament* (4 vols.; Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002), 1:506–507 suggests it was given by Gentiles who misunderstood Χριστός as a proper name rather than as a title, “which they converted into a *party* name.” See especially Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (trans. L.R.M. Strachan; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1910), chap. “Christ and the Caesars: Parallelism in the Technical Language of their Cults,” 342–383.

² Walter Grundmann, s.v., *TDNT* 9:537 n299.

Adolf Deissmann's conclusions a century ago are still germane: "It must not be supposed that St. Paul and his fellow-believers went through the world blindfolded, unaffected by what was then moving the minds of men in great cities. These pages [of this book], I think, have already shown by many examples how much the New Testament is a book of the Imperial age."³

However, despite these concrete historical realities, and even Aristotle's inductive pan-anthropic axiom that "it is clear that the polis is one of the natural things, and that man is a political animal by nature" (Aristotle, *Politics* 1253a2–3),⁴ in an entry in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* on "Early Christian Attitudes towards Rome" it was concluded that "The predominant impression in the Pauline epistles is of a profound lack of interest in either local or imperial politics."⁵ Furthermore, Ephesians is not once mentioned or cited in this entry. Such a view, articulated 20 years ago, must now be completely rejected. It is time again to seek to understand to what extent Jesus and his followers and the documents they produced were political, even articulating a "political theology."

My use of the expression *political theology* corresponds to that found in Dieter Georgi, who perhaps more than any other recent New Testament interpreter, has written on the political dimensions of biblical thought for the contemporary urban world.⁶ In addition to Georgi, numerous other scholars have pursued similar lines of thinking with, e.g. Richard Horsley,⁷

³ Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, 344.

⁴ As quoted in Eric S. Petrie, "Moral and Political Virtue in Aristotle's Ethics," in L.G. Rubin, ed., *Politikos II: Educating the Ambitious: Leadership and Political Rule in Greek Political Thought* (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1992), 174.

⁵ Loveday C.A. Alexander, "Rome, Early Christian Attitudes To," *ABD* 5:837.

⁶ Dieter Georgi, *Theocracy: In Paul's Praxis and Theology* (trans. David E. Green; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1991), 1–2, affirms that "From the very outset, the description of the biblical God as unique and omnipotent had a political dimension, which it never lost. As it enshrined the religious experiences of individuals and groups, so also it reflected political models and implied political demands[It is found in] the intimate bond between covenant, people, and cult, not to mention the analogy between divine and human monarchy and the relationship of both to the royal cult." See a collection of twenty essays of life-long studies by Georgi, *The City in the Valley: Biblical Interpretation and Urban Theology* (Atlanta: SBL, 2005). Georgi's political understanding of the New Testament is seen in his focused studies on specific political matters in Paul's letters, e.g. *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians: A Study of Religious Propaganda in Late Antiquity* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996; orig. 1986); *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992).

⁷ E.g. Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman imperial Society* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997); *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press

Warren Carter,⁸ and N.T. Wright,⁹ Eberhard Faust,¹⁰ Bruno Blumenfeld,¹¹ Brian J. Walsh and Sylvia C. Keesmaat,¹² Neil Elliott,¹³ and Davina C. Lopez.¹⁴ So, it would not be going too far to announce a growing understanding, if not an emerging consensus,¹⁵ that a number of the Pauline letters (e.g. Romans, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians), and even many of the New Testament documents (e.g. the Gospels and Revelation), are written, if not intentionally to subvert Roman imperial ideology, than to present a counter reigning Lord using terms and themes related to Mediterranean political thought and *realia*. Although major scholarly attention has been given to

International, 2000); *Paul and the Roman imperial Order* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2004); Richard A. Horsley and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Message and the Kingdom: How Jesus and Paul Ignited a Revolution and Transformed the Ancient World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002).

⁸ E.g. Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000); Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire: Initial Explorations* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001); Warren Carter, *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006); Warren Carter, *John and Empire: Initial Explorations* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), who offers other more specific books and various articles.

⁹ See most recently, N.T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), although the idea that the New Testament documents are written confronting the Roman imperial ideology appears in many of Wright's writings, e.g. "Paul and Caesar: A New Reading of Romans," in C. Bartholomew, ed., *A Royal Priesthood: The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 173–193.

¹⁰ Eberhard Faust, *Pax Christi et Pax Caesaris: Religionsgeschichtliche, Traditionsgeschichtliche und Sozialgeschichtliche Studien zum Epheserbrief* (NTOA 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

¹¹ Bruno Blumenfeld, *The Political Paul: Justice, Democracy and Kingship in a Hellenistic Framework* (JSNTSup 210; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).

¹² Brian J. Walsh and Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Colossians Remixed: Subverting the Empire* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004). Cf. Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings* (SNSTMS 60; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹³ Neil Elliott, *Liberating Paul: The Justice of God and the Politics of the Apostle* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994) and Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Paul in Critical Contexts; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008).

¹⁴ Davina C. Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered: Reimagining Paul's Mission* (Paul in Critical Contexts; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008).

¹⁵ It is important to note that this politically subversive understanding of many of the New Testament documents is expressed by a variety of scholars in various faith confessions across the theological spectrum. Robert Jewett, at the 2007 annual SBL session on Pauline Theology, Nov 18, as respondent to the papers of John Barclay and Tom Wright who debated whether Paul has Rome in mind at significant points in his letters (Wright) or whether Paul ignores Rome altogether, developing instead Christ's rule in a spiritual "Archonic theology" (Barclay), favored Wright's view and announced that "there is, in fact, despite the appearance of this debate, a growing emerging consensus that the Roman imperial setting needs to be taken into account in a careful way when interpreting Paul's letters."

the undisputed-Paulines, the crowning epistle arguably representing “the political Paul” is none other than Ephesians, which is ripe for a full and fair exposition as an authentic (non-pseudepigraphic) Pauline epistle.¹⁶ This chapter provides an initial, exploratory foray that is part of a larger interpretive project.¹⁷

1.2. *Defining Political Theory and Theology*

It is misleading to separate sharply political theory and theology/religion, since in the ancient world these realms intimately overlapped.¹⁸ However,

¹⁶ Wright, *Paul*, 76, sadly must “pass over Ephesians with the merest mention” and devotes only one paragraph amidst his discussion of “Gospel and Empire.” However, Wright is not unaware of the political nature of Ephesians (see his brief discussions on 19 and 52). Conversely, Jennifer G. Bird, “The Letter to the Ephesians,” in F.F. Segovia and R.S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings* (The Bible and Postcolonialism 13; London: T&T Clark, 2007), 265–280, offers an “unfair” reading of Ephesians (reading it against its own grain), although thoroughly recognizing the imperial themes such as citizenship, temple building, a counter reigning Lord, written propaganda, household codes in the new regime, and battle ready followers. Ephesians, argues Bird, co-opts many specific elements of imperial ideology and propaganda, but by so doing re-inscribes hierarchy and oppressive relations. Moreover, “the victorious emperor and his empire are thoroughly ‘spiritualized,’ giving the subjects of this realm no reason to seek change within the earthly realm, with its unjust rulers and systems, but rather passive acquiescence to its systems. In fact, in order for their counter-empire to make any sense, the earthly empire must be maintained” (278). This last statement is not correct; for Paul in Ephesians offers a non-violent response to resisting evil “empire;” the response centers around God’s forgiving actions in a moral, unifying Lord who does not offer military solutions, but self-sacrificing service for performing good deeds. It overcomes through non-coercive (free) recruitment. Ephesians is a statement of the best way to live among and to convert others who would embrace vice and violence against others; it does not produce violence in return. At the same time, Ephesians recognizes that there are spiritual forces which influence (not cause) human willful acts of vice and violence against one another; this is the real battle—in the arena of teaching (4:14–16; 6:10–12).

¹⁷ I am currently finishing a commentary on Ephesians for the new series, *Rhetoric of Religious Antiquities*, edited by Vernon Robbins and Duane Watson, parts of which inform this current essay. My commentary on Ephesians looks squarely and consistently at this political background as the context for best interpreting the letter. At the annual SBL Meeting, Boston, Mass. Nov. 23, 2008 in the Disputed Paulines Session, I presented a paper “Discerning Empires in Ephesians: Trumping the Powers by the Triumphant One Lord Jesus Messiah” in which I explored the specific titles and roles of Caesar that are effectively “trumped” in Ephesians, including God, Son of God, Lord, Father of the fatherland, Head of the body, and Savior by comparison with Greco-Roman inscriptional, numismatic, and literary sources.

¹⁸ See S.R.F. Price, “Rituals and Power,” in *Paul and Empire*, 48, who argues that “Christianizing assumptions” have made it difficult to understand the imperial cult and its relevance in New Testament texts “the most pervasive is our assumption that politics and religion are separate areas.” Also, Albert A. Bell, *Exploring the New Testament World: An Illustrated Guide to the World of Jesus and the First Christians* (Nashville: Nelson, 1998), 91: “While the

it may be helpful to distinguish ancient political *theory* (and theology) from mere political *thought*, as Ernest Barker has helpfully done:

Political theory is the speculation of individual minds (though it may well become, and in the process of time often does become, the dogma of a school); and, as such, it is an activity of conscious thought, which is aware both of itself as it thinks and of the facts about which it thinks. Political thought is the thought of a whole society; and it is not necessarily, or often self-conscious.

Barker continues by cautioning against understanding political theory as mere speculation and removed from actual history. Rather, in the ancient world "political theory was conceived as a 'practical science' ... because it was concerned with making men and states better."¹⁹

So then, when I speak of Paul's political *theology*, I intend by it a *self-conscious articulation of a political theory*. In terms of Ephesians, this theory is thoroughly derived from Paul's understanding of God's gracious saving actions in Christ in history as the one Lord who brings peace to and unifies all humanity for good works of service to the praise of God. Ephesians is full of purpose and instrumentation, and when such "means to end thinking"²⁰ is considered on a communal scale focusing particularly on a central divine king, this correlates to ancient political theory, one dimension of ancient philosophy, which has as its goal the formation of a properly functioning society which produces the good (τὸ ἀγαθόν).²¹

dispute between the Christians and the Jews was theological, that between the Christians and Romans was legal. Yet, when we say that, we must remember that the ancient mind did not distinguish as clearly as we try to do between religion and politics." And Henry F. Burton, "The Worship of the Roman Emperors," *The Biblical World* 40.2 (Aug 1912): 86 "The Romans did not sharply distinguish religion from politics; for religion was a function of the state, and the worship of the gods which were recognized by the state was part of the duty of the citizen. Emperor-worship therefore expressed the attitude of the worshiper toward the emperor as the embodiment of imperial power."

¹⁹ Quoted at length in Mason Hammond, *City-State and World State in Greek and Roman Political Theory until Augustus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), 4–5, from Ernest Barker, *CAH* (1st ed.), 4:504.

²⁰ Means to end thinking was central in Greco-Roman moral philosophy when considered on an individual scale. Commenting in the introduction to Cicero's *De Finibus* ("On [Moral] Ends"), Julia Annas, ed., *Cicero: On Moral Ends* (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xviii, summarizes: "the person who embarks on ethical reflection will, in the ancient world, soon find himself confronted by a variety of theories offering different answers to the question of how best to live and how properly to conceive of the overall, ultimate goal in living. By the time Cicero writes, there has been a long and sophisticated tradition of doing this."

²¹ Blumenfeld, *Political Paul*, 42–44, explains the role of the philosopher king: The ideal polis has an infallible philosopher ruler (Plato 6.497a–502c). "Becoming godlike,

Various political theories (*politeiai*) were written in antiquity,²² most foundationally by Plato and Aristotle,²³ and were in circulation in some form in the first century and influenced even Jewish thought.²⁴ The term πολιτεία in this sense refers to a classification of genre, i.e. a “civil polity” or “constitution of a state”; the term was also used to describe the “conditions and rights of citizens,” the citizenry itself, or the “government, administration.”²⁵ Πολιτεία is found in Eph 2:12 in the phrase describing the Gentiles once “having been excluded from the *politeia* of Israel” (ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραήλ). Since the cognate συμπολίται “co-citizen” is emphatically found at 2:19 at the point of describing the reversal of gentile ethnic identity and political reality which is brought about by attachment to Christ, the noun πολιτεία in 2:12 is best understood to involve “citizenry” and all that

the philosopher refashions society and brings about a truly divine humanity. The language is less that of philosophy and dialectics and more that of religion, of mysteries and mystical hope. Plato produces less a political figure than a savior. Paul reverses the process and, starting with a savior, exploits his political potential” (43–44). Again, towards these common political ends, in Aristotle’s *Ethics* 7.1152b2, “The Political Philosopher ... is the architect of the end” (47). Aristotle begins with the soul and moves to the state, as Paul does, and opposite of Plato. Aristotle’s psychology leads him to the conclusion of the good: “The good (*to agathon*), is for Aristotle the end (τέλος, *telos*) of any thing The Supreme Good, the ultimate end or the end in itself, is the end of the master art, politics. The end of politics, therefore, is happiness, the highest of all goods achievable by action” (49). Thus, politics concerns determining what is good for the happy life; and how to structure the polis in terms of its constitution and social structure to best achieve the happy life (46).

²² On the history of writing *Politeiai* by various philosophers from various traditions by the time of Paul, see R.W. Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics: An Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1996), 116–127.

²³ In the estimation of Blumenfeld, *Political Paul*, 15, there were hardly any significant advances made after Plato and Aristotle to political thinking, save Paul and Theophrastus, the possible exception being the Hellenistic Pythagoreans, who Blumenfeld argues influenced Paul (15 nn).

²⁴ Jewish writings influenced by the Greco-Roman philosophical tradition would include the Qumran War Scroll, written after the custom of descriptions of idealized military stratagems based upon a philosophical system. Dahl, “Ephesians and Qumran,” in D. Hellholm, et al., eds., *Studies in Ephesians: Introductory Questions, Text- & Edition-Critical Issues, Interpretation of texts and Themes* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 107–144, has explored this relationship, and it is noteworthy that many of the commonalities between Ephesians and Qumran in the areas of style, dualism, ethics, and military imagery, although in Dahl’s estimation not sufficient enough to indicate direct relationship (137), are otherwise political in nature, and thus likely are linked by a common Jewish political worldview, if not a known “ideology” or strategy of a sub-cultural community in the world surrounded by a dominant political culture. As Dahl concludes, the relation is due to “a widespread ideological and literary milieu.”

²⁵ LSJ, 1434.

accompanies this. Indeed, apart from the word πόλις, out of the five cognate forms (πολιτεία, πολίτης, συμπολίτης, πολίτευμα, πολιτεύομαι) occurring ten times in the New Testament, seven are directly related to Paul.²⁶ Perhaps the most significant is in Acts 23:1, in his defense before the Sanhedrin when Paul straightway affirms his *living as a citizen for God* (ἐγὼ ... πεπολίτευμαι τῷ θεῷ) in his opening statement, showing his ultimate allegiance.

This is not accidental. Paul would have had ample opportunity or general exposure to, if not careful study of, ancient *politeiai*. Blumenfeld has shed light on the intellectual and literary environment by which such a working assumption is justifiable—digests, compendiums, and doxographies of philosophers were in wide circulation in the schools, Tarsus being a great center of (in particular Stoic) learning in Paul's day, and thus Paul would have had primary and quick accessibility to these various philosophical systems should he have wanted to.²⁷ Also, there was quite an extensive book trade across the Roman world as a result of the *Pax Romana*.²⁸ And, the philosophical eclecticism characteristic of Paul's age is, in fact, observed in Paul's letters.²⁹ Even though this observation would be disputed, it rather

²⁶ Πολιτεία "state, people" (L&N 11.67) Eph 2:12; πολίτης "citizen" (L&N 11.68) Luke 15:15; 19:14, Acts 21:39 (Paul as citizen of Tarsus), and Heb 8:11 ('teaching co-citizen'); πολιτεία "citizenship" (L&N 11.70); Acts 22:28 (Paul acquired Roman citizenship at great expense); πολίτευμα "place of citizenship" (L&N 11.71) Phil 3:20 "our place of citizenship is in heaven;" συμπολίτης "fellow citizen" (L&N 11.72) Eph 2:19; πολιτεύομαι "I conduct my life" (L&N 41.34) Acts 23:1 (Paul defending his conduct before his people); Phil 1:27.

²⁷ *Political Paul*, esp. 19–22; see also a brief historical discussion of such doxographies being disseminated after the death of Cicero in Mark Morford, *The Roman Philosophers: From the Time of Cato the Censor to the Death of Marcus Aurelius* (London: Routledge, 2002), esp. 134.

²⁸ See H.L. Pinner, *The World of Books in Classical Antiquity* (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1958). Several details of Pinner's review are worth summarizing: Egyptian papyri contain privately made copies of books (11); publishing houses developed a particular fine script for book trade (15); some books included illustrations and portraits of the author (e.g. Vergil) (16); frescos have been found in Naples of women reading books (18); book codices are known by Martial at the end of the first century "in miniature format for traveling, for school editions and anthologies, in short, for uses which tough is better suited than delicate papyrus." These parchment books were less expensive than papyrus and more durable (19); there was no profit in publishing, so it was done for idealistic or political reasons (26); types of works included "classics, anthologies, collections of proverbs, digests, and ... light reading matter of little value" (26).

²⁹ Blumenfeld, *Political Paul*, 18–21: "this eclecticism is one of the popular philosopher's most characteristic features" (21). "Paul of Tarsus was certainly perceived as, and promoted himself as, an itinerate teacher, a Hellenistic popular philosopher" (20). Paul likely used handbooks or assembled his own (*hypomnēma*) from lectures or reading handbooks. These handbooks were called *digesta* or isagogics, "a literary genre of commentaries that functioned as introductions ... to grammatical, rhetorical, or philosophical works" (21).

gives testimony at a minimum to his indirect exposure and at a maximum to direct exposure to the various philosophical schools, each wearing publicly their own political and ethical theories for their converts and communities.³⁰

Finally, we must not forget the rapid growth and pervasiveness of the Emperor cult in Asia Minor in the first half of the first century;³¹ between the years 35 BC to 60 AD, approximately fifty-two imperial temples and shrines

³⁰ Interpreters have compared relatively equally Paul's thought and argumentation to the moral and philosophical theories of Aristotle, Stoicism, Cynics, Epicureanism, and Neopythagoreanism. See Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Mifflintown, PA: Sigler, 1987); Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989); Abraham J. Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," *ANRW* II.26.1, 267–333; for helpful comparison with New Testament writings, see his *Moral Exhortation, A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (LEC 4; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); David L. Balch, "Neopythagorean Moralists and the New Testament Household Codes," *ANRW* II.26.1, 380–411; Clarence E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* (NovTSup 81; Leiden: Brill, 1995); Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (Cambridge, MA: Yale University Press, 1995); Gregory Sterling, "Hellenistic Philosophy and the New Testament," in Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Handbook to Exegesis of the New Testament* (NTTS 25; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 313–358; David Winston and Gregory E. Sterling, *The Ancestral Philosophy: Hellenistic Philosophy in Second Temple Judaism: Essays of David Winston* (Brown Judaic Studies; Providence, RI: Scholars Press, 2001); Fredrick J. Long, "From Epicheiremes to Exhortation: A Pauline Method for Moral Persuasion in Hellenistic Socio-Rhetorical Context," *Queen: A Journal of Rhetoric and Power: Special Volume 2: Rhetorics, Ethics & Moral Persuasion*, 2002, available at <http://www.ars-rhetorica.net/Queen/VolumeSpecialIssue2/Articles/Long.html>; Fredrick J. Long, "From Epicheiremes to Exhortation: A Pauline Method for Moral Persuasion in 1 Thessalonians," in T. Olbricht and A. Eriksson, eds., *Rhetoric, Ethic, and Moral Persuasion in Biblical Discourse: Essays from the Heidelberg 2002 Conference* (Emory Studies in Early Christianity; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 289–317; Fredrick J. Long, "'We Destroy Arguments ...' (2 Corinthians 10:5): The Apostle Paul's Use of Epicheirematic Argumentation," in F.H. van Eemeren et al., eds., *Proceedings of the Fifth Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation* (Amsterdam: Sic Sac, 2003), 697–703; Luke T. Johnson, "Transformation of the Mind and Moral Discernment in Paul," in J.T. Fitzgerald et al., eds., *Early Christianity and Classical Culture: Comparative Studies in Honor of Abraham J. Malherbe* (NovTSup 110; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 215–236; Michelle V. Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ* (SNTSMS 137; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³¹ S. Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, Gods in Asia Minor I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 100, states, "The diffusion of the cult of Augustus and of other members of his family in Asia Minor and throughout the Greek East from the beginning of the empire was rapid, indeed almost instantaneous." Cited in Bruce W. Winter, "The Imperial Cult and the Early Christians in Pisidian Antioch (Acts XIII 13–50 and Galatians VI 11–18)," in T. Drew-Bear et al., eds., *First International Congress on Antioch in Pisidia: 2–4 Temmuz 1997, Yabac* (Ismi: Kocaeli Press, 2000), 67. Wright, *Paul*, 64, is correct in his assessment, "Within this framework of imperial ideology, the emperor-cult itself was the fastest-growing religion in Paul's world, that of the Eastern Mediterranean."

have been found and identified in Asia Minor.³² Roman dominance over the Mediterranean world was pervasive for a variety of reasons.³³ Socially, politically, religiously, early Christian movements were surrounded by emperor worship, which brought heaven and earth together.³⁴ The temples erected in honor of Caesar were "often the most imposing and most frequented temple in each city."³⁵ This was no less true for Caesarea Maritima, where Paul had visited and was under guard for some two years (Acts 21:8–14; 23:23–26:32). Herod had constructed the Roman-styled city with a temple dedicated to Augustus and Roma, whose massive statues (in imitation of Jupiter and Hera) were seen from the sea. In such temples and other media (coinage, inscriptions, fountains, altars, statues, etc.), visibility was paramount.

Richard Horsley, while speaking to the issue of ancient literacy, argues that "Public inscriptions ... of emperors' edicts and letters had a symbolic as well as practical function as what Suetonius calls 'the imperial power's finest and oldest record' (*Vespasian*, 8). Such political-cultural "messages" on monumental stones and buildings were important media of Romanization"³⁶ Fledgling Christian communities, in order to maintain their fidelity to the gospel mission of Christ, would have been under considerable socio-political and religious strain: Were the benefits and protections associated with this new political entity efficacious (now and hereafter)?³⁷ Did identification with the historic crucified Jesus as the true Messiah truly bring

³² Tallied from S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 249–274.

³³ Price, *Rituals and Power*, is the standard work cited to this effect. But on the coordinate phenomena of Romanization, see also David Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor to the End of the Third Century after Christ* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950) and W.M. Ramsay, *The Social Basis of Roman Power in Asia Minor* (Amsterdam: J.G.C. Anderson, 1967). Other helpful essays by Price include, "Between Man and God: Sacrifice in the Roman imperial Cult," *JRS* 70 (1980): 28–43; "Gods and Emperors: The Greek Language of the Roman imperial Cult," *JHS* 104 (1984): 79–95; "Noble Funeral to Divine Cult: The Consecration of Roman Emperors," in D. Cannadine and S.R.F. Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 56–105; "The Place of Religion: Rome in the Early Empire," in *CAH* (2nd ed.), 10:812–847.

³⁴ Wright, *Paul*, 60, rightly summarizes, "The gods of the Greco-Roman world were woven into the fabric of social and civic life; the newest god in the pantheon, Caesar himself, was a living example of the uniting of the divine and human spheres."

³⁵ Burton, "Worship," 86.

³⁶ R. Horsley, *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee: The Social Context of Jesus and the Rabbis* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 156–157.

³⁷ For extended discussions of the Roman Society and Persecution in relation to the Christian Mission, see Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (2 vols.; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 2: chs. 16 and 18. The emperor cult was one threat to the church's mission (2:1585).

salvation for Gentiles as a fulfillment of Jewish hopes?³⁸ Was identification with Jesus honorable and morally empowering? Paul's letter of Ephesians presents a *tour de force* with a resounding "Yes!" to each of these questions.

1.3. *Overview of Thesis:*

The Political Theology (Politeia) of Paul in Ephesians

Turning to the task of this chapter, my thesis, simply put, is this: Ephesians represents Paul's "mature" political theology for the *ekklēsia* of Christ to meet the socio-political needs of believers in Asia Minor, drawing upon such ancient political conceptions as benefactions, proclamation of the gospel, peace-making, temple building, unified head-body imagery, military triumphs with a victorious Lord, descriptions of household relationships, and military imagery of a standing army engaged in battle. Ephesians portrays a trickledown economy of benefits stemming from God the Father as the supreme world Benefactor (1:3) and Founder/Creator (2:10)—an economy that affects all human relationships, and particularly those household relationships central to the life of the polis: husband-wife, parent-child and master-servant (5:22–6:9). The supreme divine benefit is the revelation of the one Lord, Jesus the Messiah, by whom and in whom the one body of the saints—the mystery comprised of Jews and Gentiles as the *ekklēsia*—is founded and formed to reflect God's manifold wisdom to the (human) rulers and to the authorities in the heavenly places (3:10). The *Politeia* of Israel (2:12) through the messianic agency of Jesus is now extended to Gentiles who in Christ are co-citizens and household members of God (2:19), and even radically transformed into God's temple (2:20–22).

This total vision of Ephesians conforms to ancient political theory in which the divine ordering of the world through the establishment of wise, just, meritorious rulers results in the formation of good and productive citizens who will be morally upright and defend the state.³⁹ Such good citizens participate in heavenly realities, and receive as their ultimate reward a place among the gods and rulers (cf. Cicero, *Resp.* 6, *Somnia Scipionis*). Ephesians describes such a divinely appointed ruler in Christ who is far above all rule, power, authority, and lordship (1:21). As a consequence, household

³⁸ On the rapid spread of emperor worship and the pressure of such Roman ideological influence on Christians in Galatia, see Winter, "Imperial Cult," who offers this political situation as the basis for persuading Gentile Christians to show the mark of circumcision, in order to avoid persecution by coming under the *religio licita* of Judaism.

³⁹ For a summary of Plato's and Aristotle's understanding of the ideal organization of the ideal state, see Blumenfeld, *Political Paul*, 41–49.

members of God's people in Christ are situated on the throne with Christ in the heavenly realms (2:4–7) and are to embody a life worthy of God's calling (4:1–6:9), to function as a community of love and truth, and ultimately as a messianic army opposed to spiritual foes in the heavenlies (6:10–18), who through active prayer participate in the spread of the true εὐαγγέλιον on earth (6:19–20).

Not surprisingly, Ephesians appears to have been written near the end of Paul's life (either in Caesarea Maritima between AD 57–59 or possibly from Rome AD 60–62) after his arrest, defense before his people, and exile from the geo-political entity of historic Israel (ca. AD 57).⁴⁰ Such an exile could naturally encourage one such as Paul to compose a *politeia*. A century earlier, for example, Cicero, having been exiled in 58 BC, returned to Rome and secluded himself from active politics for five years and wrote and immediately published and circulated what is considered by some to be his *magnum opus*, the (sadly) largely laconic *De Re Publica*, in six books of which we have parts of three; this work concluded apparently with the apocalyptic *Dream of Scipio* (*Somnia Scipionis*).⁴¹ Some of the numerous connections between what remains of Cicero's work and Paul's discourse we call "Ephesians" will be incorporated in the essay below.⁴²

The reason for this comparison comes from two historical considerations. First, Cicero studied and drank deeply from the Greek political traditions of kingship, which were in broader circulation throughout the Mediterranean world.⁴³ In particular, Cicero is indebted to the Stoic political

⁴⁰ See the fine treatment of Loveday Alexander, "Chronology of Paul," in Gerald F. Hawthorne, ed., *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 115–123.

⁴¹ Cicero, *De Re Publica, De Legibus* (trans. C.W. Keyes; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 9, speculates that it would have been "the most brilliant and interesting" of all Cicero's published works.

⁴² I conducted preliminary research for the Rhetoric of Religious Antiquities Session on Wisdom Topoi at the annual SBL in Washington (November 18, 2006), where I presented a paper entitled "Ephesians as Christ's *Politeia*? Wisdom Discourse in Communal Context." In this research/paper, Cicero's *De Re Publica*, Epictetus's *Enchiridion*, and Ephesians were analyzed according to topics related to "wisdom discourse" as described in Vernon K. Robbins, *The Invention of Christian Discourse: From Wisdom to Apocalyptic* (Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Series 1; Blandford Forum, Eng.: Deo, 2008).

⁴³ The intriguing and well-supported thesis of Blumenfeld, *Political Paul*, 13, is that "Christianity is deeply rooted in the politics of Hellenistic kingship, and analysis of the *basileia*-group fragments issues in a discussion of Hellenistic monarchy and Paul By grounding Pauline Christianity in Hellenistic political theory in general, and in the theory of Hellenistic monarchy in particular, this work also provides a new explanation for the success of Christianity."

thought, which envisioned a heavenly city/realm of justice and righteousness to which humans could be citizens, since they share in rationality and justice with the gods.⁴⁴ This powerful doctrine, not all that different from the Jewish notions of heavenly Mt. Zion (cf. Heb 12:22–24), is apocalyptic in nature, and provided motivation for ethical conduct while offering hopes in a better life in the ages to come.⁴⁵ Second, there is considerable evidence that Caesar Augustus studied and was concerned to implement aspects of Cicero's *De Re Publica*, in order to legitimate his position as *princeps*,⁴⁶ because Romans were very anxious about coming again under the rule of a tyrant-king (like the Tarquinii).⁴⁷ If so, the (stoic-philosophical) political currents of Cicero's thoughts implemented by Augustus would have been experienced in the broader world within the context of Roman imperial ideology and propaganda.

⁴⁴ Malcolm Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). See also Margaret E. Reesor, *The Political Theory of the Old and Middle Stoa* (New York: J.J. Augustin, 1951), 32, who finds this notion clearly articulated in Cicero: "Cicero spoke also of the universal society prevailing among all men. Men share in a world society through their capacity to use reason and speech (Cic. *Off.* 1.50)."

⁴⁵ J.B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan, 1913), 299–316, has an extended discussion and reflection on the observation that stoic philosophers were associated with oriental locales (see extensive list and locations on 299 n. 2) and suggests their likely borrowing from Judaism in their philosophical thought.

⁴⁶ Hammond, *City-State*, 157–158, surmises, "Perhaps the parallels which can be drawn between the 'Restored Republic' with a *princeps* as established by Augustus and the *de Republica* of Cicero are due simply to the fact that Cicero's concept expressed so closely the general pattern both of orthodox Greek political theory and of Roman traditional institutions, as these had come together in the second century AD. But the rather close similarity between Augustus' position as *princeps* and the fragments of Cicero's fifth book, particularly the emphasis on authority, virtue and glory, strongly suggest that Cicero's treatise had a direct influence on Augustus. A deliberate use of Cicero would coincide well with Augustus's effort to conciliate the republican feelings still strong among senators and other Roman citizens." And also Hammond, *City-State*, 156, suggests that "Augustus' elaborate directions for his burial and the deification which he was accorded exemplify Cicero's doctrine, in the *Dream of Scipio*, that a great statesman should seek the reward of glory in the memory of following generations and in the afterworld."

J.E. Lendon, "The Legitimacy of the Roman Emperor: Against Weberian Legitimacy and imperial 'Strategies of Legitimation,'" in Anne Kolb, ed., *Herrschaftsstrukturen und Herrschaftspraxis: Konzepte, Prinzipien und Strategien der Administration im römischen Kaiserreich* (Berlin: Akademie, 2006), 58, describes phenomena that have been viewed as imperial strategies of legitimizing its regime: imperial coin types, art, building, inscriptions, cultivation of the urban *plebs* (circus and food), the imperial cult, wars of conquest, provincial panegyric to emperors, provincial raising of statues of emperors, and poetry praising emperors.

⁴⁷ On the history of this antagonism, see Andrew Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy and Roman Political Invektive," *CQ* 41 (1991): 106–120, who discusses also Cicero's concerns as seen in his speeches and latter in his letters.

So then, the core of Ephesians concerns God's beneficent, salvific actions in the Lord, Jesus the Messiah, in the formation of the one Christian *ekklēsia*. If Mason Hammond might speculate that Pericles "was possibly the prototype for Plato's philosopher king,"⁴⁸ I will argue with much more certainty that Jesus Messiah as wise ruler was (the prototype for) Paul's τέλειος ἄνθρωπος "perfect man" and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ "Son of God" (Eph 4:13) politically.⁴⁹ These christological functions and titles take on political signification when placed as the *telos* of a unified community that is to produce "works of service" (4:11–13; cf. 2:10), founded by the exalted, triumphant messianic Ruler (4:7–10).

2. METHODOLOGY FOR THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE THESIS

2.1. *Discerning Authorial Intention and the Audiences' Reception*

Primary exegetical questions for understanding any ancient text are first, what were the intended purposes of its author? And second, what would the originally intended audience(s) have understood by the discourse? Put simply, as F.F. Bruce has done, "the exegete's task is to determine what the writers meant and what the persons addressed understood."⁵⁰

There is no consensus on the genre of Ephesians but perhaps only of the authorial intention to demonstrate Christian unity and promote the Christian ethic of love.⁵¹ ("Unity" and "ethic" are fundamental facets of ancient

⁴⁸ Hammond, *City-State*, 11.

⁴⁹ Interpreters often take "the perfect man" [ἄνδρα τέλειον] as the goal of what the church corporate is itself to become based upon the growth of the body imagery. However, it is better to understand the phrase as a description of Christ as the perfect man into which the body of Christ attains or "grows" (4:15). See discussions in A.T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas: Word, 1990), 256–257; P.T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 307, and H.W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 554–556, the latter two maintaining that the church corporate is to become "the mature man," not in any absolute moral sense, but in contrast to infants. For the eschatological view that these verses describe the church's uniting with Christ, see M. Barth, *Ephesians* (AB 34–34A; New York: Doubleday, 1974), 2:489–496.

⁵⁰ F.F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (WBC 45; Dallas: Word, 1982), 171. The context of the quote is the discussion of the "mystery of lawlessness" in 2 Thess 2:7. My former colleague, David Reed, recalled and found this excellent exegetical dictum for me.

⁵¹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 97–106, has recently surveyed commentators' proposed purposes for Ephesians, and although there is no consensus as to its genre as a whole, several interpreters recognize its central moral dimension (Ralph P. Martin, Rudolph Schnackenburg, Andrew T. Lincoln). Hoehner himself concludes that the predominate theme of divine love leading to human unity is primary: "Love in action within the community fosters unity" (105)

political thought.) The letter, too, is best understood as addressed to Christians in Asia Minor more broadly, since the ascription to the letter recipients “in Ephesus” (1:1) is disputed.⁵² And since no satisfactory concrete theological, social, or religious problem has been identified for the letter⁵³—despite the focused, but self-admittedly very tentative, attempt of Clinton Arnold⁵⁴—there remains an open invitation to clarify both what Paul’s full intention was, and how the letter would have benefited and been heard by its recipients in Asia Minor.⁵⁵ Such an endeavor involves two avenues of

and “It seems reasonable to conclude that the purpose of Ephesians is to promote a love for one another that has the love of God and Christ as its basis” (106).

⁵² Due to the conflicted text-critical history of the phrase “in Ephesus” (ἐν Ἐφέσῳ) (see B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [2nd ed.; London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994], 532), my judgment is that the original Greek text omitted this phrase, resulting in the need to understand the καὶ that follows with the meaning “also” (so RSV). The resulting Greek construction does not utterly lack sense (*pace* Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 147), since there are numerous instances of the articular participle of εἶμι as a further qualifier (“which are” or “which is”) before a modifier (see, e.g. in the LXX Gen 19:11; 41:31; 49:32; Lev 18:27; Deut 3:25; 16:14; and in Paul 2 Cor 11:31), in this case πιστοῖς. In my final analysis, the evidence would suggest that Ephesians was a circular official letter treating God’s establishment of Christ’s *politeia* with all of its implication for living worthily. Thus, the conclusion is sound of Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1492 (cf. 1414) that “The Epistle to the Ephesians evidently was written to all churches in the province of Asia and thus was addressed to the church in Ephesus as well.”

⁵³ Indeed, Clinton Arnold, *Ephesians: Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 167, rightly summarizes, “The overarching problem in research on Ephesians has been in trying to understand the ‘life setting’ or circumstances which occasioned the epistle.”

⁵⁴ Arnold, *Ephesians*, 167, attempts to situate Ephesians within a historical-cultural context of Ephesus as a major center of magic and host to the Artemis Cult, but even so presents his findings very tentatively as a “hypothesis.” Equally prominent was Ephesus as the seat of regional Roman provincial power, and the magnificence and centrality of temples promoting the worship of Roman deities attests to the fact of this influence in the environs. Arnold admits, “While my reconstruction of the situation is not sufficient to give a full account of the reasons Ephesians was written, or sufficient to explain all of the theological peculiarities of the epistle, it does provide an explanation for the prominence of the power-motif” (168). This statement is not entirely true, since this power motif would relate directly to the Roman *Imperium*, even as this power was related to and granted by the spiritual world.

⁵⁵ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2:1414 (re)presents an unsatisfactory account of the letter in a section on “Apologetic Confrontation: The Defense of the Gospel” (2:1409–1416), though correct in assessing Paul’s general perspectives (2:1409–1411) and after his wonderful summary of the apologetic thrust of Romans (2:1413–1414), which however he problematically carries into Ephesians. Thus, Schnabel (2:1414) argues that Paul is confronting in Ephesians “Gentile Christians (Eph 2:11) who are proud on account of their good works to remember that it is God’s grace alone that grants salvation, and that everything that they have, including their good works, is the result of God’s grace (Eph 2:8–10). He reminds the

investigation: genre determination through observed cohesive themes (to better understand authorial intention) and socio-historical investigation (to better understand the audiences' needs).

2.2. Discerning the Presence of Political Topics, and Especially Roman Imperial Ideology

In what follows, my argument will largely consist of explicating the predominant themes of Ephesians, which I maintain, are thoroughly political in nature and orientation by Mediterranean standards. But how does one know a Greco-Roman political *topos* when one sees one?

2.2.1. Discerning Roman Imperial Themes

Two approaches are relevant. First, generally, there is the "cultural milieu method" of Blumenfeld, which works with the assumption that Paul's cultural world overlapped with the broader culture, and so one's attempt to find possible influences between them, regardless of their directness, are merited.⁵⁶ Second, is the application of Richard Hays' intertextual criteria to find "echoes of Caesar," as used by Wright and Elliott.⁵⁷ To work with such

believers who may have become conceited of their past as pagans—"without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." Romans 11 has influenced Schnabel's understanding of Ephesians. I think most detrimental to his view is that Paul rather bolsters the social-status and religious position of Gentiles in 2:11–22 (see my discussion below vis-à-vis Judaism), and wants them to walk in good deeds (2:10) so that they would distinguish themselves *morally* from the Gentiles around them (4:17; 5:1–18). But I heartily agree with Schnabel's summary of the fundamental truths of the gospel for Gentiles, which includes the truth that "God begins to establish his rule (*basileia*) with the coming of Jesus his Son (cf. 1 Thes 2:12; Gal 5:21). This teaching was potentially dangerous in the political context of the Roman Empire and the imperial cult" (2:1564). It is this political context which best informs us in our attempts to understand the occasion of Ephesians.

⁵⁶ Blumenfeld, *Political Paul*, 26–27, argues, "The method of estimating influence is to see whether a certain doctrine, tenet or attitude is not most naturally explained as a development from, an impression of or a reaction to a prior author's view. The question is not, How does Paul's position square with his knowledge of, for example, Aristotle? Rather, the question is, Is there anything in Paul that is best accounted for as a result of Aristotelian influence? ... The enterprise of estimating probable influence, however, has scholarly validity."

⁵⁷ Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), which is also appealed to and considered for discerning imperial themes in Paul generally in a portion of Wright, *Paul in Fresh Perspective*, 60–61, and in Romans specifically by Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations*, 42–43.

a set of criteria would benefit any probe into the socio-cultural world and its possible influence upon any ancient text.⁵⁸ Heuristically and methodologically, Vernon Robbins's socio-rhetorical analytic anticipated such a use of "inter-textual" criteria in which "inter-textur-al" relations encompasses not simply one text making reference to other ancient texts (hence, inter-text-ual), but additionally one text making particular reference to cultural information (values, scripts, codes, and systems of culture that one within that culture would recognize), social information (roles, institutions, codes, and relationships within a broader social environment), or historical information (events).⁵⁹

These considerations and criteria have played a role in my collection and correlation of sources, materials, and influences within Ephesians. So, in addition to identifying ancient political *topoi* in Ephesians, I will correlate the discourse with parts of Cicero's *Republic* and public artifacts of imperial ideology and propaganda (honorific inscriptions, temples, and coins) praising the Caesars from the first centuries (BC and AD) and located primarily throughout Asia Minor.

2.2.2. *Main Aspects of Roman Imperial Ideology and Propaganda*

Discerning Roman imperial themes intertexturally within a social-cultural milieu presupposes a basic understanding of just what constitutes such a theme at that time. After searching the primary materials and secondary literature, I offer below a preliminary sketch of key features of Roman imperial ideology and its implementation as propaganda. The list is not exhaustive, but it attempts to be fairly representative of what one might find.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ See, e.g. my review of Roger David Aus, *Imagery of Triumph and Rebellion in 2 Corinthians 2:14–17 and Elsewhere in the Epistle: An Example of the Combination of Greco-Roman and Judaic Traditions in the Apostle Paul*, *Review of Biblical Literature* [<http://www.bookreviews.org>] (2006), a book which will inform one's understanding of Christ's victory as presented in Eph 4:7–11.

⁵⁹ See corresponding chapters in V.K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996); and V.K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996).

⁶⁰ I have a growing bibliography in support of each element, but the limitations of time and the need for focus here will preclude their full elaboration; I plan on co-authoring a book with Roy Jeal entitled (something like) *Roman Religion and Imperialism for New Testament Interpretation*.

Aspects of Roman imperial Ideology and Propaganda

1. Its claim to rule by divine will and providence;
2. Its eternity;
3. Its realization of old golden age;
4. Its promotion of the worship of the gods (*pietas*);
5. Its attachment to and promotion of the goddess Roma, a symbol of the Roman people;
6. Its establishment of imperial family households through adoption;
7. Its affirmation of the apotheosis of some of its emperors and their family members;
8. Its ascension of emperors proclaimed as good news (εὐαγγελία);
9. Its possession of and appeal to power and authority;
10. Its securing of peace and blessing for the nations;
11. Its reliance on military force to maintain peace;
12. Its geographic broad scope in relation to the whole inhabited, civilized world ("sea and land");
13. Its call for allegiance to the empire, if not demand for complete submission;
14. Its clemency towards those people(s) once hostile;
15. Its working with the local aristocracies to secure regional stability;
16. Its acquisition of wealth through securing legacies (inheritances), taxation, tribute, and conquest;
17. Its use of colonization for the spread of its influence and power;
18. Its claim to public benefactions (e.g. Augustus's *Res Gestae*);
19. Its reinforcement of imperial ideology through coinage, statuary, honorific inscriptions, games (*ludi*), and literary media of propaganda;
20. Its attachment to Greek political/wisdom traditions;
21. Its appeal to historical precedent and development of its legal code of justice;
22. Its promotion of reverence towards or worship of the emperor (i.e. imperial cult) in the form of liturgical praise, governmental policies, public monumentation, and cultic structures as seen in the erection and establishment of temples, cults, and priesthoods across the broader Roman empire.

With these methodological considerations in place, then, I will identify ancient political topoi in Ephesians, correlating them with ancient political thought and theory (e.g. Cicero, *Resp.*) and public artifacts of imperial propaganda (honorific inscriptions, temples, and coins) especially as located throughout Asia Minor in the first century.

3. THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE AND THEOLOGY OF EPHESIANS

The most troubling feature and social dynamic of the epistolary opening in Eph 1:1–2 is the complete allegiance given to Jesus as "Christ" (thrice mentioned) and as "Lord." The term "Lord" (κύριος) was used of the Roman

Caesars,⁶¹ and we must not forget that “Christ/Messiah” was a religio-political Jewish title of supreme rule for the Jewish *politeia*, which, as 2:12 reminds us, is in view in Ephesians. And we must remember that Jesus’ acceptance of the titles “Christ,” “the Son of God,” and “King” precipitated Jesus’ crucifixion (Luke 22:67–23:3). Such affirmations could pose a threat to Roman governance (cf. Luke 23:2; John 19:12; Acts 17:7), and consequently would challenge Roman imperial sensibilities.⁶² To what extent Paul engaged in “silent protest” or even confronted Roman imperial ideology in his depiction of God as the Father of Jesus, the Messiah and the “one Lord” (Eph 4:5) will become clearer as the letter progresses.⁶³

⁶¹ For extensive discussions, see H.A.A. Kennedy, “Apostolic Preaching and Emperor Worship,” *The Expositor* 7 (1909): 289–307, who argues: “The all important fact to observe at the stage we have reached is that the chief names of reverence and adoration given to him [Christ] whom the Christian missionaries proclaimed on their journeying as the sole Hope of humanity were precisely those accorded to the Emperors, dead and living, by the votaries of the imperial cult. They also are worshipped under the appellations of κύριος, σωτήρ, υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, θεὸς ἐπιφανής, etc.” (294). On the term κύριος “Lord” as “constantly found attached to the names of emperors,” see Kennedy, “Apostolic Preaching,” 297–298, and likewise, Deissmann, *Light*, 357–359.

⁶² Kennedy, “Apostolic Preaching,” 300–301, argues, “A supreme test of loyalty for citizens of the Empire was adherence to the worship of the imperial ruler who was κύριος, σωτήρ, and θεός. The Christian Commonwealth also has a κύριος and σωτήρ. But the commonwealth and its Lord belong in reality to the unseen world.” Deissmann, *Light*, 343–344, likewise argues, “The deification of the Caesars was an abomination to Christianity from the beginning. It is very probable that this antipathy was inherited by the daughter from monotheistic Judaism. In those words of quiet delicacy in which Jesus names both the Caesar and God, we see already the place reserved for God which belongs to Him alone.”

Alternatively, Price, “Between Man and God,” 36–37, challenges the notion that the imperial Cult required the worship of the Emperor as a god, and may have only promoted reverence for and sacrifice “on behalf of” the emperors. Such would be allowable to Jews, but not for Christians who believed Christ ended sacrifice once and for all. About persecutions against the Christians, Price concludes (36): “It has been shown that the cult of the emperor played a lesser role than the cult of the gods in the persecutions. Emperors and others were mostly concerned to enforce sacrifices to the gods. These sacrifices might be made on behalf of the emperor but it was only exceptionally that sacrifices to the emperor were demanded.” For other reviews of Rome’s response to Christianity, see G.E.M. de Ste Croix, “Why Were the Early Christians Persecuted?” *Past and Present* 26 (1963): 6–38; and S. Bacchiocchi, “Rome and Christianity Until AD 62,” *AUSS* 21 (1983): 3–25.

⁶³ For Deissmann, *Light*, 357–359, after surveying the appellation “lord” applied to Nero, Paul’s affirmation amounted to a “silent protest” (359): “Further examples of the *Kyrios*-title down to Domitian could be easily given, especially from the ostraca, but they are not necessary. It is sufficient for our purpose to have realized the state of affairs in the time of Nero and St. Paul. And then we cannot escape the conjecture that the Christians of the East who heard St. Paul preach in the style of Phil. 2:9, 11 and 1 Cor. 8:5, 6 must have found in the solemn confession that Jesus Christ is “the Lord” a silent protest against other “lords,” and against “the lord,” as people were beginning to call the Roman Caesar. And St. Paul himself must have felt and intended this silent protest”

The renown convoluted syntax of Ephesians, which displays numerous lengthy subordinate clauses, containing elaborative relative, prepositional, participial, purpose and content phrases and clauses (e.g. 1:3–14, 15–21; 3:1–7, 8–12, 14–19), has baffled interpreters in terms of generic classification.⁶⁴ This distinctive style is a considerable factor for those rejecting Pauline authorship.⁶⁵ And, interpreters are faced with it immediately in Eph 1:3–14.

No consensus exists as to the literary form of these verses. Hoehner reviews the history of interpretation and the most common forms identified include hymn, berakah, and eulogy.⁶⁶ But the parallels offered (e.g. Psalms, 1QH, Eighteen Benedictions) are Jewish in nature, and yet the audience of Ephesians is predominantly Gentile. As *Gentiles*, how would they have heard these opening verses? What literary form and phenomenon would help them to understand Paul?

A much more satisfying understanding of 1:3–14 is gained by the recognition that Paul was fittingly using “a verbose, Asiatic style of Greek,” since he addressed Christians in Asia Minor, where such style abounded and was appreciated; in particular, Ephesians displays epideictic rhetoric of praise and honor.⁶⁷

However, more precision is possible. Frederick Danker, after his careful and detailed lexico-grammatical study of “official and semi-official” inscriptions concerning benefaction, has concluded that “No document in the New Testament bears such close resemblance in its periodic style to the rhetoric of inscriptions associated with Asia Minor as does the letter to the Ephesians.”⁶⁸ About these inscriptions, Eduard Norden was elated to have found

⁶⁴ See H. Hendrix, “On the Form and Ethos of Ephesians,” *USQR* 42 (1988): 3–4; E. Best, *Ephesians* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 1998), 27–32; and Dahl, “Ephesians and Qumran,” 111–112, for a brief review of the stylistic peculiarities of Eph 1:3–14.

⁶⁵ See B. Witherington, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 110–111, who rightly calls interpreters to consider what implications recent rhetorical work on Paul has made for understanding the variation in style of the “disputed Paulines.”

⁶⁶ See Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 153–161, for a very thorough review of positions, who concludes that Eph 1:3–14 is a Christian eulogy.

⁶⁷ Witherington, *Paul Quest*, 110, who has also provided an excellent overview of this type of rhetoric and its applicability for Christians in Asia Minor in the introduction to *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). What Witherington, however, has not seen is the thoroughly political nature of the letter in the topoi it employs, which is completely in step with epideictic and honorific inscriptions.

⁶⁸ *Benefactor*, 451. Indeed, methodologically, Danker argues, “To do hermeneutical justice, then, to public documents like those found in the Pauline corpus—including even

the first full exemplar (237 lines) of Asiatic style, which had been often mentioned among ancient literary critics but never before previously seen by modern scholars. It was found in northern Syria in an honorific inscription ("Declaration by Antiochus I of Kommagene, Providing for Cultic Observance at his Burial Shrine"), and dates to the middle of the first century BC.⁶⁹ The prologue of the honorific inscription (lines 1–9) has also been found in Samosata and Ephesus. Such replication in various locales was a common feature thereby increasing their visibility.⁷⁰

Although there are serious limitations to historical research based upon inscriptions,⁷¹ recent work correlating honorific inscriptions with the New Testament allows us to be more specific in our appreciation for and understanding of this "grand" style in relation to the letter of Ephesians. Public inscriptions, additionally, would have been more readily available and known in style and content to the general public. Indeed, Danker surmises, "This awareness is especially important when dealing with New Testament documents, which were designed to meet the needs of primarily a non-literary public. At the same time such method permits more accurate access to the writer's intentions than does a loose parallelistic approach that takes in a motley array of literary and non-literary texts."⁷²

Holland Hendrix, pursuing Danker's pregnant but brief remarks on Ephesians, has further developed this seminal observation. Hendrix argues: "There is a central paradox of Ephesians which scholars have recognized implicitly for some time. The document appears to be emphatically public, but its loquacious style renders it publicly incomprehensible—especially

Philemon—it is necessary to interpret them first of all in the light of linguistic data that would have been available to the larger public and which would have provided the necessary semantic field for understanding the argument of a versatile communicator like Paul ..." (28).

⁶⁹ An extended discussion of this inscription (no. 41) "Declaration by Antiochus I of Kommagene, Providing for Cultic Observance at his Burial Shrine" is found in Danker, *Benefactor*, 237–246, who reports that Eduard Norden deemed its style "bacchantic dithyrambic prose" and was so impressed by this that he printed it in its entirety in *Die Antike Kunstprosa: Vom VI. Jahrhundert V. Chr. Bis in Die Zeit Der Renaissance* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1958), 1:141–145.

⁷⁰ Danker, *Benefactor*, 242. John P. Bodel, "Epigraphy and the Ancient Historian," in John P. Bodel, ed., *Epigraphic Evidence: Ancient History from Inscriptions* (Approaching the Ancient World; London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 14, concludes that epigraphy in western Asia Minor was notable for "its local variety and its dominant physical presence in the public life of the city."

⁷¹ For a concise statement of such, see Paul R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities of Asia Minor* (SNTSMS 69; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 2–3.

⁷² *Benefactor*, 29.

if one supposes it were a sermon or public speech framed as an epistle.⁷³ Rather, with Danker, Hendrix has argued that the closest literary form matching the style and tenor of 1:3–14, and all of Ephesians, is that of honorific inscriptions.⁷⁴

Hendrix provides the setting by which to justify his conclusion that Ephesians as a whole is an honorific “epistolary decree.”⁷⁵ In his analysis, Hendrix considers various honorific inscriptions, drawing heavily upon the work of Danker, while elaborating upon the benefactor-beneficiary network of relations. The most pertinent conclusions for my purposes here are provided below.

1. A basic form of honorific inscriptions involves a move from cause to effect: “Whereas ... therefore [*oun*] ...” Hendrix sees Ephesians 1–3 and 4–6 as following this pattern.
2. “It would appear that the peculiar honors and ceremonies which came to be associated with benefactors in general were derived historically from grants of citizenship (proxeny) status to non-native individuals who made distinctive contributions to their host communities” (6).
3. Roman political and military leaders in Hellenistic regions adopted benefactorial roles and customs, and “The title ‘benefactor’ and ‘*soter*’ (savior) became personalized epithets of an increasingly divinized Hellenistic royalty” (6).
4. Caesar Augustus brings this practice to culmination as exemplified in the “Letter of Paulus Fabius Maximus and Decrees by Asians Concerning the Provincial Calendar;”⁷⁶ henceforth, referred to as “the Letter of Paulus Fabius Maximus.”

⁷³ Hendrix, “Ephesians,” 5.

⁷⁴ I am less certain with Hendrix’s understanding the whole structure of Ephesians from this generic point of view; I especially disagree with his criticism of the patriarchalism within Ephesians and the household codes in 5:21–6:9.

⁷⁵ Hendrix, “Ephesians,” 9, “proposes as a working hypothesis that Ephesians is an epistolary decree in which the author recites the universal benefactions of God and Christ and proceeds to stipulate the appropriate honors, understood as the moral obligations of the beneficiaries. This hypothesis might account for other peculiar features of the document. Ponderous grammatical constructions and hyperbole are the rule and not the exception in Ephesians. When viewed from the perspective of honorific decrees, however, the document certainly is not anomalous. The density of its diction is appropriate to its public task: proclamation of benefaction [chapters 1–3] and the fulfillment of the beneficiaries obligations [chapters 4–6]. While the author has framed the document in an epistolary genre, its form follows the general conventions of honorific decrees.”

⁷⁶ This title and the treatment of this honorific inscription are from Danker, *Benefactor*, 215–222. For a further bibliographic reference, see Hendrix, “Ephesians,” 14 n30.

5. Networks of relationships were involved in benefaction: the gods who provided institutions for human well-being, the political leaders who participated and promoted such institutions by cultic piety and/or civic beneficence, and the beneficiaries. “The human benefactor was a mediator of divine power and at the same time a facilitator of appropriate response to the divine and so served as an important link between the divine and humanity” (7). Thus, in the case above in the “Letter of Paulus Fabius Maximus,” benefaction and honor “networks” are extended “from Providence through Augustus through the benefactor proconsul Paulus Fabius Maximus through the provincial assembly (note that the high priest made the motion) and ultimately to the cities represented in the assembly” (7).

Given the publicity and importance of this official “Letter of Paulus Fabius Maximus,” I offer my translation of the honorific portion of the official motion by the high priest (lines 30–41) included in the official letter. This portion, together with the letter opening and followed by political motions (lines 41–77), was published in 9 BC and has been found in five different locales throughout Asia Minor (Priene, Apameia, Eumeneia, Dorlyaeon, and the rather small town of Maioneia) in Greek and/or Latin.⁷⁷

It seemed good to the Greeks in Asia, by the opinion of the high priest Apollonius the son of Menophilos, of Aizanoi: Since Providence [πρόνοια], divinely ordering [θείως διατάξασα] our life [τὸν βίον ἡμῶν], having displayed earnestness and love of honor [σπουδὴν ... καὶ φιλοτιμίαν], arranged [διεκόσμησεν] for the highest good [τὸ τελειότατον ... ἀγαθόν], by bringing in Augustus, whom for the benefit of humanity she has filled [ἐπλήρωσεν] with moral excellence [ἀρετῆς], even as [ὥσπερ] she gave [χαρισάμενη] to us and those who will come after us a Savior [σωτήρα] who not only stopped war, but who shall arrange peace [κοσμήσοντα δέ εἰρήνην]; and Caesar, when he was manifest, surpassed the hopes [τάς ἐλπίδας] of all who had anticipated [τῶν προλαβόντων] the good news [εὐανγέλιον], not only by surpassing the benefits which occurred before him [τοὺς πρὸ αὐτοῦ γεγονότας εὐεργέτας], but neither leaving a hope of surpassing him in future ones [ἐν τοῖς ἐσόμενοις]. And the birthday of the god [ἡ γενέθλιος ἡμέρα τοῦ θεοῦ] began the good tidings [τῶν ... εὐανγγελίων] for the world [τῷ κόσμῳ] because of him

One is struck by the similarities of lexical correspondences and the corresponding similarities of the network of benefaction in comparison/contrast to Eph 1:3–14:

⁷⁷ The Greek text is from the version found at the “Searchable Greek Inscriptions” located at <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/main?url=gis%3Fregion%3D8%26subregion%3D40>; see bibliographic information located there and in Danker, *Benefactor*, 215–216.

Features	The Letter of Paulus Fabius Maximus	Eph 1:3–14
Media	Communicated as a letter [Engraved as Public Monument]	Communicated as a letter [Believers sealed with the Holy Spirit?]
Initiator	Apollonius High Priest of Azianoi, then Augustus through Paulus Fabius acting as Proconsul	Paul acting under divine will as Apostle
Overarching Benefactor	Providence [πρόνοια]	God the Father
Character of Divine Benefaction	Divine action in eagerness and love of honor Divine ordering [θείως διατάξασα] Divine Gracing [χαρισσάμενη] a savior	Divine choosing [ἐξελέξατο; 1:4], predestining [προορίσας; 1:5], according to the good pleasure of his will [κατὰ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ; 1:5, 9, 11]; Divine gracing [εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ ᾗς ἐχαρίτωσεν ἡμᾶς; 1:6–8]
Sphere of Benefaction	our life [τὸν βίον ἡμῶν]	in the heavenlies [ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις; 1:3]
Political Ruler given	Augustus, Savior [σωτήρα], Caesar, God	Our Lord, Jesus, the Messiah The beloved One
Time Frame	Recent past and undisclosed future	Precreation and undisclosed future
Political Activity	Stopping war Arranging Peace [κοσμήσοντα ... εἰρήνην]	Summing up all things in the Messiah [ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ]
Message	the good news [εὐαγγέλια] the good tidings [τῶν ... εὐαγγελίων]	“the gospel of your salvation” [τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν; 1:13]
Scope of Benefaction	“us” humanity	“us” “we” and “you”
Anticipation of Benefaction	all who had anticipated [τῶν προλαβόντων] the good news	“those first to hope in the Messiah” [τοὺς προηλπικότες ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ; 1:12]

Other technical words of honorific praise, not in the Letter of Paulus Fabius Maximus, are found in Eph 1:3–14, such as “to the praise [ἐπαινος] of God’s glory” (or “glorious grace”) (1:6, 12, 14).⁷⁸ Even the focus upon God as “Father” (1:2, 3, 17; 2:18; 3:14; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23; cf. 5:1) conceptually is related to ancient conceptions of benefaction and the development of one of the highest Roman political titles and honors, *Pater Patriae*, “Father of the Fatherland.”⁷⁹

A further parallel with imperial propaganda here could be seen in Paul’s use of “adoption” (υἱοθεσία; 1:5). Adoption was customary in the imperial family to legally pass along the position of Caesar, especially in the Julio-Claudian emperors.⁸⁰ So well known was this custom that Epictetus, at the beginning of the *Discourses* (1.3), after affirming that proper human self esteem rests upon the recognition that “God is the father both of humans and the gods,” adds sarcastically, “Yet, if Caesar adopts you [καίσαρ εἰσποιήσας σε] no one will be able to endure your conceit”⁸¹ Paul asserts rather that adoption was God’s plan all along (cf. Eph 2:2; 5:1), and that this adoption of believers is accomplished in the political ruler, Christ.

Adoption granted legal rights of family, creating an heir for inheritance (land, wealth, etc.). Foreign benefactors in honorific inscriptions received grants of citizenship and sometimes land grants.⁸² Such benefactors among

⁷⁸ On this use of ἐπαινος and cognates, see Bruce Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens* (First-century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 26–36.

⁷⁹ See T.R. Stevenson, “The Ideal Benefactor and the Father Analogy in Greek and Roman Thought,” *CQ* 42/2 (1992): 421–436, esp. the discussion of Seneca’s *Ben.* (424–427). Stevenson summarizes: “The relationship between a state and its citizens could be seen in benefactor-beneficiary terms, and this is why it was often likened to a parent-child relationship” (425).

⁸⁰ Caesar Augustus himself had been adopted in the last will of Julius Caesar, and made chief heir. Augustus in turn, not having any sons, adopted the two sons of his daughter, Julia, Gaius and Lucius (17 BC); when these two died, Augustus adopted Tiberius (AD 4) (*OCD*, 149–150).

⁸¹ Translations from Epictetus, *The Discourses As Reported by Arrian, the Manual, and Fragments* (trans. William Abbott Oldfather; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

⁸² See select inscriptions in P.J. Rhodes, *The Greek City States: A Source Book* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986), 205, 226–228. For example, see the official letter from King Antiochus I of the Seleucid kingdom to Meleager governor of the Hellespontine satrapy giving land (226). Then Meleager writes to the council and people of Illium about this land grant added to their city that it comes “because of your sanctuary and his good will towards you.” Meleager then urges them to vote and grant all the benefits that King Antiochus I would ask them, and then “to write out, inscribe on a pillar and place in the sanctuary the terms of the [land] grant, so that what is granted may remain securely yours for all time.”

the Greek city states historically in Asia Minor, when officially and thus publicly recognized, were given pillars or statues with the honor so-engraved for security and placement in temples.⁸³ In Ephesians, as Hendrix argues, God the benefactor subverts the custom by not receiving but granting citizenship to those he has adopted, even the Gentiles. Moreover, when Gentile believers are officially “sealed” (σφραγίζω) with the down deposit of the promised Holy Spirit they gain an “inheritance” (κληρονομία [1:13–14]); one wonders whether also the letter recipients might understand, in addition to their official adoption with full inheritance rights, that they themselves are likened to the inscribed pillars and statues that testified to the transaction, especially as they themselves are built into a temple of God (2:19–22).

However, these social-cultural backgrounds of Hellenistic-Roman practice alone are insufficient to explain each significant element in 1:3–14. The honorific praise of these verses is framed by theological notions from the foundational Jewish political documents, Exodus and Deuteronomy, even as these passages are reshaped in Christ. Of particular significance in 1:4 is the intertextual reconfiguration⁸⁴ of pivotal covenantal passages like Deut 7:6//14:2, which are derived from Exod 19:5.⁸⁵ Below are the LXX of Deut 14:2 and the GNT with common ideas or words underlined.⁸⁶

Eph 1:4 just as He chose us in him (or for himself⁸⁷) before the foundation of the world, (so) that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love, (*my translation*)

Eph 1:4 καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀγίους καὶ ἀμώμους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀγάπῃ,

Deut 14:2 For you are a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord your God chose you to be a people for himself, His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth (*my translation*).

⁸³ A.D. Nock, “Σύνναος Θεός,” *HSCP* 41 (1930): 52: “A civic benefactor commonly received a statue, or the right to procure one, in some public place. The benefactor of a religious body, or, for the matter of that, of the city since it had a proprietary right in public temples, might have such a representation in a temple.”

⁸⁴ By “intertextual reconfiguration” I have in mind a socio-rhetorical category of one type of interpretive citation as discussed by Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse*.

⁸⁵ Deut 14:2 and 7:6 have the same word order, but vary in a few word choices; respectively, ἐξελέξατο instead of προεἶλατο; γενέσθαι instead of εἶναι; and ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν instead of παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη.

⁸⁶ Surprisingly, this allusion is not listed in either the UBS⁴ or the NA²⁷ critical apparati.

⁸⁷ That this could be rendered a reflexive is suggested by D and F that read ἐαυτῷ here rather than ἐν αὐτῷ.

Deut 14:2 (LXX) ὅτι λαὸς ἅγιος εἶ κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ σου καὶ σὲ ἐξελέξατο κύριος ὁ θεός σου γενέσθαι σε αὐτῷ λαὸν περιούσιον ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν τῶν ἐπὶ προσώπου τῆς γῆς

Deuteronomy 7:6//14:2 is further evoked at the end in Eph 1:14 at the mention of God's "possession" (περιποίησις—"possession" L&N 57.62), which overlaps in semantic range with the περιούσιον ("private possession" L&N 57.5) of Deut 14:2 (LXX).⁸⁸ Additionally, omissions and additions to the reconfiguration of Deut 14:2 seem purposeful and instructive. Missing in Eph 1:3–14 is the ethnic exclusivity found in Deut 14:2, which indicated that Israel was chosen "out of all the nations on the face of the earth." Instead, the honorific praise of Eph 1:3–14 concludes with an inclusive understanding of Jew and Gentile together (the "you also" [καὶ ὑμεῖς] of 1:13) as God's own inheritance (1:14), which anticipates the argument in 2:11–22 that Gentiles are merged into "the *politeia* of Israel" through the agency of Christ who by abolishing the enmity, brings peace in order to create both peoples "into one new humanity" (cf. 3:1–13). The literary contexts of Deut 7:6 and 14:2 are tantalizing in view of the correspondences to the honorific praise of the Caesars, since Deut 7:1–5 discusses holy warfare against the idolatrous heathens culminating in 7:5 with a call to smash idols, and Deuteronomy 13 calls for complete rejection of idolatry and the destruction of those enticing Israel to do so.

Equally important is the addition of the agency of Christ in 1:4 ("in Him"), whose agency is the glue to the whole discourse.⁸⁹ Wright has proposed that the incorporative language in relation to Christ ("in Him/Christ") within the Pauline letters is messianic, and invokes the biblical notion of "the incorporative King in whom Israel is summed up."⁹⁰ Also, in 1:6 Jesus as "the Beloved One" (ὁ ἡγαπημένος; singular substantive perfect passive participle—an

⁸⁸ Paul's use of the synonym περιποίησις instead of the LXX περιούσιον may be deliberately anticipatory of his description of believers as God's ποιήματα at Eph 2:10. Such word associations are prevalent in Ephesians, e.g. see the Greek roots οἶκ- (*house*) and πολ- (*pertaining to city or citizen*) in 2:11–22. Thus, one might wonder to what extent Paul is engaged in a sort of midrashic interpretation of these central Hebrew covenantal texts and notions, as other New Testament documents reflect, most notably 1 Pet 2:9–10.

⁸⁹ The meaning of ἐν αὐτῷ is typically understood simply as "in Christ" (NRSV; thus Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 23; Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 176); however, I suspect a double entendre in which a reflexive meaning is also present, as is suggested by Deut 14:2 ("you to be a people for himself;" γενέσθαι σε αὐτῷ λαόν) and by manuscripts D and F that read ἐαυτῷ here rather than ἐν αὐτῷ.

⁹⁰ Wright, *Paul*, 46, and N.T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 46–48.

anomaly in New Testament usage⁹¹) in the context of “blessing” (1:3) and “inheritance” (1:14) would evoke Moses’ blessing in Deuteronomy 33, where Israel’s title in the LXX is “the beloved One” (ὁ ἡγαπημένος—the LXX translation of the intimate name for Israel, *Jeshurun* יֵשׁוּרֻן in Deut 33:5) and found at 33:5 and 33:26 surrounding 33:6–25, which contain specific blessings to the tribes of Israel often in relation to their land inheritance (see 33:28). Also, the blessing of Moses is apocalyptic in theme (not unlike Eph 1:3–14), referring to God as one controlling a heavenly host of angels (33:2) and as one “who rides through the heavens to your help, majestic through the skies” (33:26, NRSV). The blessing ends with “Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph! Your enemies shall come fawning to you, and you shall tread on their backs” (33:29, NRSV).

So then, just as the Suzerain Treaty form, which culminated in lists of blessings and curses, was adopted for Exodus and Deuteronomy in the presentation of its national theology (i.e. relationship with the Covenant God),⁹² so Paul in Ephesians adopts honorific traditions in his praise of God the Father’s blessings/benefactions in Christ within the context of a political theory including appeals to faithfulness in imitation of God. The “eulogy” in 1:3–14, due to its elaborative, Asiatic style, and its praise for God’s benefactions and grace in historical review of the past, present, and future agency of the Messiah who will comprehensively sum up all things, would have found correspondence with the honorific inscriptions praising the kings and emperors, which are found prominently scattered across Asia Minor. Such honorific inscriptions actually intersected, and at times were completely interfaced, with the cultic, spiritual realm. Indeed, ancient understandings of blessing and curse were deeply political. Not bowing down to the localized deities in cultic observance would invite heavenly wrath resulting in fury and famine from the divine beings.⁹³ It could result

⁹¹ The perfect participle of ἀγαπάω is only otherwise used in a corporate sense of the people of God in the New Testament (Rom 9:25 [2×]; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 4:8; Jude 1; Rev 20:9).

⁹² This parallel was first brought to my attention in a question by my former colleague, John Haas, Bethel College, during my colloquium on the political theory of Ephesians.

⁹³ See inscription nos. 41–42 in Danker, *Benefactor*, in which divine threats and “several penalties” are offered against those not faithfully conducting the cultic observances related to worshipping the deceased King Antiochus I (no. 41) or his father, Mithradates Kallinikos (no. 42). The pertinent text from Danker, no. 41 lines 115–124 (identical to no. 42 lines 82–95), reads: “for they must know how terrible is the avenging wrath of the Royal divinities and that it pursues impiety no less than it does negligence and arrogance; for when the law of consecrated Heroes is despised, it brings on penalties no prayers can redress. As for holy

in loss of fertility and poor economic productivity. Lack of loyalty to the emperor would displease the gods, who would then bring punishment.

To begin a political discourse with the reference to the gods and divine matters was *a propos*. Book I of Cicero's *Republic* affirmed reflection on eternal and divine matters. For Cicero (*Resp.* 1.17–33), the universe and its divine components envelop and “frame and shape” the whole of the Republic.⁹⁴ Indeed, at the conclusion of the prologue (1.7) Cicero affirmed that “there is really no other occupation in which human virtue approaches more closely the august function of the gods than that of founding new States or preserving those already in existence.”⁹⁵ Thus, fittingly does Eph 1:3–14 praise God's benefactions for pre-planning, executing, and promising future inheritance of the formed holy people of God. As will be seen below, Christ's central agency in 2:11–22 will be precisely in the (trans)formation of the *politeia* of Israel.

The honorific praise of 1:3–14 is followed in 1:15–22 by a section illustrating Paul's functionary role as liturgist and supplicant. Paul first prays for believers to understand the hope and power available to them now and for the future (1:15–19). The fulfillment of “hope” and the embodiment of power⁹⁶ in the Emperor were topoi of Roman political propaganda. For example, the Letter of Paulus Fabius Maximus relates the action of the Asian League (*Commune Asiae*)⁹⁷ (9 BC) to honor Augustus by aligning their calendars to the Julian one (begun in 46 BC), renaming months after Julius and Augustus. Also instituted was the swearing in all levels of political officers on the birthday of god, Augustus, annually; in the course of announcing such motions, the Asian League offered praise of Augustus as having “surpassed

deeds, they are no burden for the doer; but impiety inexorably brings within its wake a load of misery. My voice proclaimed this law; its ratification came from the mind of the Gods.”

⁹⁴ J.E.G. Zetzel, *Cicero De Re Publica: Selections* (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 25.

⁹⁵ Translations from Cicero, *De Re Publica, De Legibus* (trans. C.W. Keyes; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928).

⁹⁶ References to God's exaltation of Christ and power manifest in Christ would address the needs of Christians inundated with Roman imperial propaganda, of which the *imperium* (power) of Rome was a standard feature; see J.S. Richardson, “*Imperium Romanum*: Empire and the Language of Power,” *JRS* 81 (1991): 1–9, in which the meaning of *imperium* is shown to have changed from “the right of command within the Roman state, vested in the magistrates and pro-magistrates” to by the second half of the first century AD “‘empire,’ in an increasingly concrete, territorial sense ... for the official activity of the Roman people” (1) by the agencies of Caesars Julius and Augustus and the extension of the Roman army. See also A. Lintott, “What was the ‘Imperium Romanum?’,” *GR* 28 (1981): 53–67.

⁹⁷ For a brief history of the league, see William Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches* (rev. ed.; ed. M.W. Wilson; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 82–91.

the hopes [τὰς ἐλπίδας] of all who had anticipated [τῶν προλαβόντων] the good news [εὐαγγελία]" (line 37).⁹⁸ Paul, rather, assures believers that they have plenty of power and hope (ἐλπίς) in Christ for this age and the coming ones (2:7; 3:21).

Paul in 1:20–22 continues praising God for placing Christ as head above all other spiritual-political rule and power for the benefit of the assembly (*ekklēsia*), which is Christ's political body. Markus Barth is right to conclude that "The image of a royal court in which servants, supplicants, and defeated foes pay their respect to the ruler is used in Eph 1:20–22." Indeed, Christ "as Head [κεφαλὴ] over all things for the church" (1:22) employs a well-known political topos, already found in some form in the notion of "head/tail" (Deut 28:13, 44) and "head" as "ruler" (ἄρχων) in the LXX,⁹⁹ but more formally developed in Hellenistic, Stoic political thought (see Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.12.12; Plutarch, *Galb.* 4.3; Curtius Rufus, *Historiae Alexandri Magni Macedonensis* 10.9.1; Philo, *Praem.* 114, 125).¹⁰⁰ For example, Seneca, *De Clementia* 1.5.1, thus made a request of Nero: "For if ... you are the soul of the state and the state your body [*corpus*], you see, I think, how requisite is mercy: for you are merciful to yourself when you are seemingly merciful to another. And so even reprobate citizens should have mercy as being the weak members [*membris*] of the body."¹⁰¹ Caesar was the head of the empire, just as Rome, deified as goddess *Roma* (to which was added deified Caesar) eventually was understood as *Caput Mundi*.¹⁰² Paul, however, maintains that the Church,

⁹⁸ Text translated from the Greek text as found in R.K. Sherk and P. Viereck, *Roman Documents from the Greek East: Senatus Consulta and Epistulae to the Age of Augustus* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1969), 328–337.

⁹⁹ Marburg Schlier, "κεφαλὴ," *TDNT* 3:674–676.

¹⁰⁰ References from Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 69, who supports this background. Likewise, dismissing the Gnostic-redeemer position of Schlier, "κεφαλὴ," 3:676–679, and drawing upon references such as are discussed in Zürich Eduard Schweizer, "σῶμα," *TDNT* 7:1038–1039 and Lincoln, J.D.G. Dunn, "The Body of Christ' in Paul" in M.J. Wilkins and T. Paige, eds., *Worship, Theology, and Ministry in the Early Church* (JSNTSup 87; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 160, surveys options and concludes regarding the origins of the language of headship in relation to Christ that "Most likely the emphasis on Christ as head emerged, initially at least, from the first factor [Stoic thought], since the Stoic concept of both state and cosmos as a body could include also thought of the ruler of the state or the divine principle of rationality in the cosmos (Zeus or the logos) as the head of the body." See also the very careful dismissal of the Gnostic background to the head-body imagery in J. Paul Sampley, *'And the Two Shall become One Flesh': A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21–33* (SNTSMS 16; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 61–66.

¹⁰¹ The quotation is from Sampley, *'Two Shall Become One Flesh,'* 65.

¹⁰² See Ronald Mellor, *ΘΕΑ ΡΩΜΗ: the Worship of the Goddess Roma in the Greek World* (Hypomnemata Untersuchungen zur Antike und zu ihrem Nachleben 42; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), 201–202.

not Rome, is the divinely chosen community under Jesus the Messiah's supreme headship, and that God is the ultimate granter of mercy.

In 2:1–7, which I take as the *narratio* of Ephesians, Paul prepares for the thesis statement for the remainder of the discourse. As such, Paul describes a transformation of moral-ethical and spiritual-political positions such that the Gentile believers, who had once walked in sin and under the influence of “the ruler of the authority of the air” (ἡγεμὼν)¹⁰³ (2:2) are translated by God, “who is rich in mercy,” to a position of co-rulership with the resurrected, ascended, exalted heavenly Christ (2:4–6). This reposition into the heavenly realms resembles, and at the same time trumps, the Roman imperial ideology of apotheosis, in which the Roman emperor (or a family member) upon death was “reportedly” seen by official witnesses carried heavenward upon an eagle to join the gods and previous emperors in the heavenly domains.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ BDAG, 23:2b: “of the political domain of transcendent beings or powers.” Schweizer, “σωμνα,” 7:1037, argues that, “Certainly in Nero’s time there is attestation that aether is regarded as the director and thinking substance of the cosmos par. to the head in the body, and also as the chief of the gods.” Alternatively, the research conducted for my commentary has produced a large body of evidence leading me to conclude that “the ruler of the ‘authority’ over the air” is a veiled reference to the “ruler” Nero who is under the authority of Jupiter, the patron god of Rome, who rules over the air. Zeus/Jupiter is identified as air in the *scholia* of Homer and other works. Moreover, the emperors associated themselves with Jupiter, and especially Nero increasingly towards the end of his reign (as seen in imperial prints). Either notion would locate the letter we call Ephesians to the middle of the first century during Nero’s reign.

¹⁰⁴ Julius Caesar was apotheosized upon death in 42 B.C.E, but the tradition precedes this to include even the founder of Rome, Romulus, who was thought to be the Son of his father Mars (*patre Marte natus* [Cicero, *Resp.* 2.4]), a tradition also that granted divine status and attributes to those deserving historic rulers of Rome. Upon death, Romulus was said to have ascended into heaven from a hill and to have been “set up [*collocō*] among the number of the gods” (Cicero, *Resp.* 2.17; cf. 2.20). Romulus was deified, and thus establishes the Roman doctrine of apotheosis of the later emperors. S.R.F. Price, “Noble Funeral,” 57, summarizes that from Augustus to Constantine: “thirty-six of the sixty emperors ... and twenty-seven members of their families were apotheosized and received the title of *divus* (‘divine’).” Cited in D.N. Schowalter, *The Emperor and the Gods* (HDR 28; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 62.

For a brief sketch and reflection on the idea, see M. Radin, “Apotheosis,” *The Classical Review* 30.2 (March, 1916): 44–46, who emphasizes the naturalness of the idea to the Hellenistic mind, since rulers were sent from the divine world, and upon death returned to it only to add another person to the throng of deities at Olympus. L. Kreitzer, “Apotheosis of the Roman Emperor,” *BA* 53.4 (December, 1990): 216, after surveying the Roman practice of honoring and deifying the deceased Caesars concludes that “Christians found that the incarnational basis of their faith was more readily synthesized with the prevailing religious system of the Romans, which included the apotheosis of the emperor. The Roman concept of apotheosis moved a man from earth toward heaven, whereas the Christian concept of incarnation moved God from heaven toward earth, but the two are similar in that they both deal

Five emperors and seven of their family members were apotheosized in the first century.¹⁰⁵ Some Greeks held out similar hopes for the average person.¹⁰⁶ Paul affirms, rather, that such a translation into the present, graceful, eternal abodes is not automatic for all (one must change status from the children of wrath into adopted household members [1:5; 2:19]), but was, in fact, a reality for all believers, not merely the political elite.

The thesis statement or *partitio* for Ephesians is found in 2:8–10 in which the argument heads are established for the remainder of the letter:

1. *Salvation is by God's grace through faithfulness. This salvation is not a human achievement by works (of the law), thereby there is no boasting in the law (cf. Rom 2:17, 23; 3:27); it is the sacrificial gift (δῶρον) of God in Christ (2:8–9).* This partition head is elaborated in two movements; 2:11–22, which addresses the abolishment of the law and God in Christ's sacrificial accomplishment of political unity and the foundation of believers as the temple of God; and 3:1–21, in which Paul provides himself as an exemplum of God's grace to carry the gospel mystery of unity to the Gentiles, for whom he then prays that they would know Christ's sacrificial love.
2. *Believers are God's workmanship created as a body politic upon Christ's good works, in which they are then to walk (περιπατέω) (2:10).* This partition head is taken up in five successive argument units built around the key notion of περιπατέω in 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15. The central section initiated significantly with the call to imitate God in Christ in terms of love (5:1–2).

The section 2:11–22 is foundational in its description of the political and sacral nature of Christ's work of creating (κτίζω [2:15])¹⁰⁷ one new humanity.

with the relationship between the human and the divine. It is important to note that the barrier between humans and God was transcended in Christianity in a way that it was not in Judaism. Perhaps this aspect more than any other allowed Christianity to gain a foothold in the life of the average Roman citizen in a way that Judaism was unable to do."

¹⁰⁵ Price, "Gods and Emperors," 83.

¹⁰⁶ Max Radin, "Apotheosis," 45, explains that the verb "to apotheosize" (ἀποθεόω) is found used to describe the burial of ordinary people (*CIG* 2831, 2831) and thus, "the ceremonial interment of the lowliest citizen was as much a restoration to his divine nature as the formal *consecratio* of the Master of the World, τοῦ κόσμου κύριος, as Antoninus Pius called himself (*Dig.* 14,2,9)." Both the verb ἀποθεόω "deify" and the noun ἀποθεώσις "deification" have possible meanings of consecrating a burial location or burial, respectively (LSJ, 199).

¹⁰⁷ Paul uses the verb κτίζω to describe God's work of "founding" the Christian community in 2:10 and then in describing Christ's agency to form the two groups (Jews and Gentiles) into one new humanity at 2:15. Prevalent in the inscriptions is the accolade of political personages

Christ is himself the embodiment of “peace” (Latin, *pax*) effecting vertical and horizontal reconciliation between God and humans simultaneously, and in so doing thus reformulates the political entity of Israel such that believers become themselves the temple of God. The volume of political topoi in these verses is immense, and hardly needs any sustained demonstration, but rather exposition as to the socio-political-theological implications.¹⁰⁸ Space and time limits me only to comment on two pivotal features.

First, 2:11–22 is structured chiastically (see Appendix)¹⁰⁹ so as to emphasize Christ’s agency to bring about the socio-political-spiritual transformation of socially and culturally estranged Gentiles (2:11) who were once without Christ, alienated from the *politeia* of Israel, foreigners to the promised covenants, not having a hope, and godless in the world (2:12). By Christ’s agency, these Gentiles now have Christ and access to God in the Spirit, are co-citizens of Israel, no longer aliens, and finally, rather than being socially-culturally estranged, are, in fact, household members of God and the very temple of God.

Temple construction was central for the dissemination of worship of the emperor and Rome. As soon as possible, the Emperor Augustus took over temple building: “after 33 BC only Augustus and members of his family built temples in Rome Temple building placed the emperor in a unique relationship with the gods.”¹¹⁰ In his self-published aretology in AD 14, the later named “Deeds of the Divine Augustus” (*Res Gestae Divi Augusti*) (para.20),

as founders of various political entities. For example, the titles Σωτήρ and κτίστην “savior and founder” is found 24 times and κτίστην alone nearly 200 in reference to founding cities, etc., using the incomplete search database found at <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/>.

¹⁰⁸ Eph 2:11–22 is the focus of Faust’s study, *Pax Christi*, although Faust views Ephesians as pseudoepigrahic and dated at the end of the first century. However, Faust is very helpful in describing the political background and nature of 2:11–22, which he describes as coming from Jewish-gnostic influence (in comparison with Philo), but then constructed in view of Roman imperial ideology (see esp. 221–314). For an intertextual-theological reading based in Isaiah in conversation with and rejection of Gnostic background, see Peter Stuhlmacher, “He is our Peace” (Eph. 2:14). On the Exegesis and Significance of Ephesians 2:14–18,” in his *Reconciliation, Law, & Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 182–200, who offers a rather a-political exposition, noting only how 2:11–22 functioned written in a post AD 70 situation of “ancient anti-Semitism and of Jewish contempt for Gentiles” (192).

¹⁰⁹ Compare my chiasmic rendering with that of J.P. Heil, *Ephesians: Empowerment to Walk in Love for the Unity of All in Christ* (Studies in Biblical Literature 13; Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 22–24 and 109–132.

¹¹⁰ Price, “Place of Religion,” 10:831. Older temples were “romanized” in form (e.g. the temple of Cybele).

which was inscribed on two bronze tablets at his mausoleum and published throughout the provinces,¹¹¹ Augustus reported rebuilding eighty-two temples in Rome. Many others were built in Asia Minor.¹¹²

And such temple building extended beyond Rome into the provinces, and first into Asia Minor, where competition between cities drove the building.¹¹³ Ronald Mellor summarizes the development of the imperial cult in Ephesus: "a temple of Roma established with the priesthood; a statue of Caesar erected in 48 with a cult after 40; the temple of 29 dedicated to Rome and Divus Julius; a new (or rebuilt) temple dedicated to Roma and Augustus and called the Augusteum ... placed in or adjacent to, the temenos of the Artemision by the Ephesians before 5/6 BC."¹¹⁴ Additionally, sometime after AD 26 Ephesus did receive a provincial temple, perhaps before or under Claudius, since a temple at Ephesus is depicted on a cistophorus (a coin minted in Pergamum with Dionysius on the obverse) during the reign of Claudius with the words ROM. ET. AVG. COM. ASI. (*Romae et Augusto Communitas Asiae*; "The Community of Asia to Roma and Augustus").¹¹⁵ On the obverse is TI.CLAUDIVS CAESAR AVG. and has the bear head of Claudius. Also, Augustus was strategic in taking over temples by having his image

¹¹¹ See Danker, *Benefactor*, 256–280. Danker records fragments were found in Ancyra of Galatia, Apollonia in Pisidia, and Antioch of Pisidia (257).

¹¹² See by region and city the descriptions of imperial shrines and temples built in Price, *Rituals and Power*, 249–274.

¹¹³ Asia Minor appears to be the first place to venerate the Roman emperors at the end of the 1st century BC Augustus declined worship from Roman citizens, but accepted it from Greco-Asians. Pergamum erected the first temple to Augustus and Roma that involved a chorus "of God Augustus and Goddess Roma" (θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ καὶ θεᾶς Ρώμης). Another similar temple is found at Ancyra in Galatia (Dittenberger, *OGI*, 533, 2). With regard to Julius while stilling living, an inscription in Ephesus reads "the god descended from Ares and Aphrodite, manifest and common Savior of human life" (τὸν ἀπὸ Ἄρεως καὶ Ἀφροδείτης θεὸν ἐπιφανῆ καὶ κοινὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπινου βίου σωτήρα) (Dittenb. *Syll.*³ 347, 6). His apotheosis followed upon his death 42 BC (Kennedy, "Apostolic Preaching," 295–296).

¹¹⁴ Mellor, *Θεὰ ΡΩΜΗ*, 138. For a religious history of Ephesus in relation to Rome, see Mellor, *Θεὰ ΡΩΜΗ*, 56–59 and C.M. Thomas, "At Home in the City of Artemis: Religion in Ephesos in the Literary Imagination of the Roman Period," in H. Koester, ed., *Ephesos, Metropolis of Asia: An Interdisciplinary Approach to its Archaeology, Religion, and Culture* (HTS 41; Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 107–115.

¹¹⁵ S.W. Stevenson, *A Dictionary of Roman Coins Republican and imperial* (ed. C.R. Smith and F.W. Madden; London: Bell and Sons, 1889), 237, holds that this coin reflects the image of the temple at Pergamum. However, Ramsay, *Letters*, 89, contains the coin face depicting that temple, and the image is different. Also, Ramsay (168) affirms that a provincial temple was set up in Ephesus either under Claudius or Nero. Whether or not this particular coin is depicting the provincial temple at Ephesus, the reality was that the Asia League and its cities were eager at the likely time of the writing of Ephesians to compete for and have imperial temples in honor of the emperor.

replace past political rulers, as, for example, in Thebes in which he replaced the cult of Ptolemaios Soter with Augustus Soter, thus paving the way for the growth of his cult in Egypt.¹¹⁶ Thus, it is not wrong to conclude that from the start, “The Imperial cult was now an elaborately organized institution ... and this organized worship was the real basis of Roman provincial unity.”¹¹⁷

A second feature for comment in Eph 2:11–22 is the chiasmic center (see Appendix) which has Christ’s activity of setting aside or “annulling [καταργέω] the law of commandments with ordinances” (2:15a). The center of chiasms may indicate the cause for the surrounding outer elements. In this case, if I am correct, Christ achieves the unification of Jew and Gentile into a new humanity and establishes a new temple community precisely by doing away with the law in its particulars as a religious system of commandments. This is good Pauline theology (Gal 3:19, 23–29; Rom 8:2; 10:4).¹¹⁸ And likewise, such a statement debarring “law” as central to cultic community formation would have been anathema to Jews apart from the revelation of Christ.

Here, I need to peer forward ahead into my survey of Ephesians—what is truly amazing in Ephesians is that Paul replaces the law with Christ who thus becomes the *telos* of a growing maturing community, which strives for the unity of faith and knowledge in the Son of Man, the τέλειος ἀνὴρ

¹¹⁶ For details of Augustus’s stratagem, which appears limited according to Nock, “Σύνναος Θεός,” 42–43, see Walter Otto, “Augustus Soter,” *Hermes* 45 (1910): 448–460. On the term σωτήρ, see Kennedy, “Apostolic Preaching,” 298–300, who, reviewing the work of Wendland, concludes that regardless of whether the Christian documents used the language and its cognates in reference to the imperial cult, such language would have nevertheless brought them into conflict with the claims of that cult.

¹¹⁷ Kennedy, “Apostolic Preaching,” 296.

¹¹⁸ I can affirm this despite Paul’s statement in Rom 3:31: “Do we set aside [καταργέω] the law through faith? No way! But we establish the law” (νόμον οὖν καταργούμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως; μὴ γένοιτο· ἀλλὰ νόμον ἱστανόμεν). The rhetorical setting of each discourse determines Paul’s meaning. In Romans, Paul is partly answering criticism that he promotes immorality and sin (3:8); but, he emphatically does not (2:6–12), and Paul repeatedly affirmed the law’s role to point out human sinfulness (3:2, 9–20, 23; 5:13, 20; 7:7–9); indeed, it is “holy, righteous and good” (7:12), and yet does not lead to a life pleasing to God, but only leads to condemnation and death (7:25–8:2); consequently, a new law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is needed to overcome sin in human existence (8:1–16). In Ephesians, Paul speaks of the law in its particulars, i.e. in its initial temporary covenantal intention, its cultic practices that reinforce separation from Gentiles. This purpose of the law is now invalidated by the work of Christ. On the one hand, the law is valid as revelation, and remains valid as pointing out sinfulness in humanity; on the other hand, the law, as a religious system of rightly relating to God (i.e. being righteous with God), does not remain in place, but is annulled by the sacrificial work of Christ, who simultaneously brings ethnic and theological reconciliation.

(4:13). Believers learned Christ (Χριστόν ἐμάθετε; 4:20), and heard about (the historical) Jesus and were taught in him (ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε; 4:21); in the end, Jesus the Messiah, like the philosopher king, becomes the embodiment of all that is good.¹¹⁹ He directs the community from his earthly example, heavenly position, and internal dwelling in the heart of each believer as the temple of God (3:16–17).¹²⁰ As the perfect man, he needs no law.¹²¹ In contrast, Greek philosophy could espouse law,¹²² and the Roman government prided itself on its jurisprudence, that is, the growing mass tradition and custom and laws by which it ruled itself and maintained its empire.¹²³ The Christians have no law but “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:2).

In Eph 3:1 Paul turns, “On account of this [Τούτου χάριν],” to affirm “I am a political prisoner [δέσμιος] of Christ.” The transition here connects the three fundamental points of Paul’s understanding of Christ’s work from 2:11–22 (a. reconstituting God’s people Israel, b. annulling the law of commandments with ordinances, and c. reconfiguring God’s people to be God’s temple) with his imprisonment. The actual historical circumstance for this imprisonment was Paul’s political exile as a result of the claim by “Jews from Asia” (Acts 21:27) that he had been teaching “against the Jewish people, the

¹¹⁹ Such a substitution of “Christ” for the Jewish conceptualization of the “eternal law” by Paul has been studied by a former peer of mine from Marquette University, S.K. Davis, *The Antithesis of the Ages: Paul’s Reconfiguration of Torah* (CBQMS 33: Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 2002). That such a move is made here is in keeping with Paul’s theology. Davis does not treat the disputed-Pauline letters, and thus my research in this area contributes towards the extension of Davis’s illuminating thesis into Ephesians.

¹²⁰ See the convincing argument of R.L. Foster, “‘A Temple in the Lord Filled to the Fullness of God’: Context and Intertextuality (Eph 3.19),” *NovT* 49 (2007): 85–96, who demonstrates that the language of God’s fullness in believers refers to the glory of God filling God’s new temple, thus affirming its legitimacy.

¹²¹ See Philo, *Alleg. Interp.* 1.93, where the perfect person (ὁ τέλειος) has no need of command, or prohibition, or recommendation and is made in the image [of God] (κατ’ εἰκόνα).

¹²² See the brief summary of Stevenson, “Ideal Benefactor,” 434, of Plato’s and Aristotle’s understanding of law.

¹²³ Throughout Cicero’s *Resp.*, this aspect is found, but especially within his opening prologue. Those involved in writing up laws have discovered all the just and honorable principles found by the philosophers, such as a sense of duty, principles of religion, laws of nations (*ius gentium*), the (particular) laws of Rome (civil law, *ius civile*), justice, faithfulness (*fides*), fair-dealing, decency, self-restraint, fear of disgrace, eagerness for praise and honor, endurance in the face of toils and danger (1.2). Philosophers train men in these things, whereas others confirm them by custom or enforce them by statutes and so “Therefore the citizen [*civis*] who compels all men, by the authority of magistrates and the penalties imposed by law, to follow rules of whose validity philosophers find it hard to convince even a few by their admonitions, must be considered superior even to the teachers who enunciate these principles” (1.3). Cicero was such a *civis*.

law, and this place [the temple]" and had brought Greeks into the temple (i.e. across the temple balustrade/dividing wall) and had defiled it (Acts 21:28). The correspondence among the central three aspects of the content of Eph 2:11–22 and the charge in Acts 21:28 is not accidental, but rather historical in the actual claims surrounding Paul's arrest, and thus relate *materially* to the contents of the letter.¹²⁴

What follows 3:1 is an elaboration of God's grace specifically given to Paul as administrative servant (διδάκωνος) of the gospel of Christ, our Lord (3:2, 6–7, 11). Paul presents himself as one among many political leaders of the Christian community, the "apostles and prophets" (3:5; cf. 4:11–12). He is an *exemplum* of how to suffer rightly in the cause of the politics of Jesus Christ. Cicero in the opening prologue to his *Republic* (1.7) describes himself as an example of a statesmen risking his life to serve and to save [*conservo*] his countrymen and the Republic; and as one who sacrifices himself so that others can have a quiet life. Paul embodies this same ethos of suffering on behalf of the Gentile Christians (ὕπερ ὑμῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν [3:1]), and asks that they not be disheartened by his circumstances (3:13).

The purpose of Paul's work is to proclaim the good news of Christ to the nations and thereby to illuminate God's mysterious plan that Gentiles are co-body members, co-heirs, sharers of the promise of Christ (3:6), so that now the manifold wisdom of God (ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ) is demonstrated "to the (earthly) rulers and to the authorities in the heavenlies *through the church*" (3:10). As Israel was to function in humble obedience in the giving of the law, which would result in the declaration "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deut 4:6), so too is the function of the church under Christ to the rulers and to the authorities in the heavenlies.

Ancient politics was ideally about employing wisdom at the *polis* scale. Cicero's laconic *Republic* is replete with various terms related to wisdom and wise administration in politics.¹²⁵ Indeed, the best focus of the Republic

¹²⁴ I can't help thinking that Luke's summary of the charges against Paul by the Jews of Asia in Acts 21:28 is representative if not an accurate summary, and these charges would have been on Paul's mind awaiting rebuttal or clarification for all those involved, especially the Christians in Asia. It strikes me as a real possibility that Ephesians would have been the first letter written after his arrest (in Caesarea) to explain his understanding of God's grand purposes in the formation of Christ's community as a viable body politic in the Roman world.

¹²⁵ The primary Latin definitions given before the reference in Cicero's *Republic* are summarized (but not always exhaustively) from the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982) s.v. (henceforth, OLD): *Sapiens* "wise" (24x; 1.9 [2x], 10, 11 [3x], 12, 13, 15, 27, 36, 43, 45, 63; 2.4, 32, 51, 54, 59, 63; 3.7 [2x], 26; VI.8); *sapientia* "wisdom" (16x; I.3, 19, 28, 33; 2.11, 24, 30, 43; 3.7,

is "the most glorious office of wisdom" and "the noblest proof and business of virtue" (1.33).

In order to place Paul's statement in Eph 3:10 into proper focus, it is worthwhile to track some statements in Cicero's *Republic* from his protagonist, Scipio Africanus the Younger. Scipio, the main voice of the dialogue, is the wisest. Out of Philus's mouth comes this praise of Scipio: "I am confident, Scipio, that no one is your superior in innate ability [*ingenio*], and that your experience in the highest spheres of government is absolutely unsurpassed" (1.37). For Scipio, the main question to consider is whether "wisdom rules the Republic" [*sapientia gubernet rem publicam*] (3.47). Citing the historical work of Cato, Scipio repeatedly uses the word *ingenium*: by the *ingenium* of no single person (as in the case of many surrounding States) could the Republic have been formed. The republic was formed with the *ingenium* of many (2.2). This then leads to the explicit statement of the next theme in 2.3 of "the Origins of the Roman People" (the title of Cato's historical work), and the development of the theme of retracing the birth, growth, maturity, and fully robust form of the Republic. (On the similarity of bodily imagery associated with descriptions of body politics, see my summary of 4:11–16 below.) Scipio later in the work contrasts his efforts (based in reality) with those of Plato's Socrates (based in imagination) (3.4–7). Civilization climaxes with the rise of philosophy and statesmanship; individuals attain lofty thoughts perceived by being able to act and to think "by the gift of the gods" [*dono deorum*]. These "great men" are "learned and are teachers of truth and virtue" [*eruditi, ... veritatis et virtutis magistri*—3.4]. These participate in the incredible and divine virtue of statesmanship and the training of people. They set up educational institutions for the state so that people can become, if not naturally wise, then at least deserving of honor and praise. Cicero in the third prologue (3.7) then states: "And if we consider how many praiseworthy commonwealths exist now and have existed in the past, and remember that the establishment of a State which is stable enough to endure for ages requires by far the highest intellectual powers that nature can produce, what a multitude of great geniuses there must have been, even if we suppose that every such State possessed only one!"

12, 16, 24 [4×], 47); *consilium* "deliberation; counsel; advice; decision; purpose; strategy" (44×; 1.3 [2×], 6, 8, 25, 41[2×], 43[2×], 47, 51[2×], 52, 55[2×], 60[5×], 65, 71; 2.12, 12[2×], 15, 21, 30, 35, 50, 51, 57, 59[3×]; 3.7, 13, 28[3×]; 4.11, 12; 6.11, 12); *prudens* "open eyed; having prudence; sagacious" (10×; 1.18, 38, 58, 70; 2.23, 67[2×]; 3.16); *prudentia* "practical understanding or wisdom" (4×; 2.45, 61; 3.6, 28; 6.1); *ingenium* "natural disposition, talent, good mental powers, ingenuity" (17×; 1.8, 22, 30, 37, 49, 58; 2.2[3×], 4, 20, 37, 45; 3.4, 13; 6.12, 18); *doctus* "learned" (12×; 1.11[2×], 12, 18, 21, 38, 56, 57; 2.2, 19, 34; 3.19).

Paul has been given a trump card to play, a risen Messiah Lord who had left behind him a community of followers, including Paul who now served in the spread of this good news across the inhabited world, a proclamation that the true wise master plan of God has been revealed, a plan that is for every person regardless of nationality, and one that displays God's manifold wisdom. The church is to manifest God's wisdom to human rulers (3:10).

In 3:14–15 Paul again turns to his task as supplicant and offers prayer “to the Father from whom every fatherland in heaven and earth is named” (πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἐξ οὗ πάντα πατριά ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ὀνομάζεται). The inclusive scope (“all”) is to be noted as well as the heavenly and earthly regions, for it would have included and thereby subsumed the highest honor awarded for Roman political officials on earth, the acclamation “Father of the Fatherland” (*Pater Patriae*).¹²⁶ Cicero had received this for “saving” Rome from the Cataline conspiracy, and so did Julius Caesar. The titular importance is further seen especially in the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* when Augustus autobiographically and climactically details receiving this title as his crowning honor in the final paragraph (§ 35). In the following decades, the abbreviation *P.P.* became a common feature of imperial prints.¹²⁷

At this point, for the purpose of ideological comparison, I offer my translation of an inscription from Halicarnassus dated after 2 BC, the year of Augustus's reception of *Pater Patriae*, celebrating this event.¹²⁸

Since the eternal and deathless Nature of *all* has given [ἐχαρίσατο] the greatest good [τὸ μέγιστον ἀγαθόν] for the surpassing [ὑπερβαλλούσας] benefits for humankind, offering for the blessed life [εὐδαίμονι βίῳ] of *each one of us*, namely, Caesar Augustus, indeed, the Father of his own Fatherland [πατέρα μὲν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ πατρίδος], divine Rome, and Zeus Paternal [Δία πατρῶν], and

¹²⁶ The Latin *pater* is equivalent to the Greek πάτηρ (OLD s.v.) as *patria* is to πατριά. It is notable, too, that the use of “Father” for God in Ephesians is twice that of any other Pauline letter (1:2, 3, 17; 2:18; 3:14; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23). It needs also be said that on the Greek inscriptions, the Latin title is translated using the Greek noun πατρίς rather than πατριά; however, the use of πατριά in Eph 3:15 actually places it nearer to the Latin second noun used in the title, *pater patriae*.

¹²⁷ Stevenson, *Dictionary of Roman Coins*, 647: “It was by this title that Augustus was most desirous of being called on his coins, as indicating the clemency of his government, and the security of the people under it; a name of honour which, after his example, the successors of that prince seldom, if ever omitted to couple with their own It is found on medals of Tiberius and of Caligula. Nero at the commencement of his reign refused the title, but subsequently P.P. is read on his money.”

¹²⁸ This is British Museum Inscriptions 894, and the Greek text is from Paul Wendland, *Die Hellenistisch-Römische Kultur in ihren Beziehungen zu Judentum und Christentum: Die urchristlichen Literaturformen* (HAW 1.2; 3rd ed.; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1912), 410, no. 9.

Savior of the common human race [σωτῆρα τοῦ κοινοῦ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένους], in whom Providence [πρόνοια] has not only fulfilled [ἐπλήρωσε] but even surpassed [ὑπερῆρεν] the prayers of *all* people [τάς πάντων εὐχάς]. For indeed *land and sea* are at peace [εἰρηνεύουσι], and cities flourish with good order [εὐνομία], harmony [ὁμονοία], and prosperity; and he/it is the acme and fruit of *every* good thing, indeed of glad hopes [ἐλπίδων μὲν χρηστῶν] for what is yet coming, and of contentment for the present affairs of people having been satisfied/filled [ἐνπεπλησμένων]¹²⁹ with public games and with statues and with sacrifices [θυσίαις] and with hymns [ὕμνοις].

A number of specific lexical and conceptual correspondences are seen with Ephesians. Nature “has graced” (φύσις ἐχαρίσατο [cf. Eph 1:6–8; 2:5, 7, 8; 3:2, 7, 8; 4:7, 32]) Caesar Augustus for “surpassing” (ὑπερβαλλούσας [Eph 1:19; 2:7; 3:19]) benefits of the blessed life (Eph 1:3). Providence “has fulfilled” (ἐπλήρωσε [Eph 1:23; 3:19; 4:10, 13; 5:18]) and surpassed “the prayers of all” (τάς πάντων εὐχάς [Eph 1:15–21; 3:14–19; 6:18–20]). “Peace” is established (εἰρηνεύουσι [Eph 2:14–17; 4:3; 6:15]) in “land and sea” (cf. “heaven and earth” in Eph 1:10; 3:15; 4:9–10), and there is harmony among cities (Eph 2:13–16; 4:2–6); Caesar is the acme of glad “hopes” (ἐλπίδων μὲν χρηστῶν [Eph 1:18; 2:7, 12; 4:4]) and of the contentment of people who are “filled” (ἐνπεπλησμένων [Eph 5:18]) with games, statues, “sacrifices” (θυσίαις [Eph 5:2]), and “hymns” (ὕμνοις [Eph 5:18–19]). Most notable to me for comparison and contrast are the following items:

1. The grand, inclusive scope of the praise for Caesar: “all,” “each one of us,” “every,” “land and sea” (the common spheres of human military domain); Ephesians contains thirty-eight instances of πᾶς. But, additionally the sphere of divine military conquest in Ephesians is not merely “land and sea,” but all of “heaven and earth” (see esp. 4:9–10, but also 1:10; 3:15);¹³⁰
2. The idea of surpassing (ὑπερβάλλω; ὑπεραίρω); in Ephesians (“surpassing” ὑπερβάλλω) repeatedly describes divine commodities provided for believers in terms of the great power for us who believe which is accomplished in Christ (3:18–19), the greatness of God’s kind grace

¹²⁹ The text in Wendland, *Hellenistisch-Römische Kulture*, 410 reads ἐνπεπλησμένων, which is a nonsensical form; the database at <http://epigraphy.packhum.org/inscriptions/main?url=gis%3Fregion%3D8%26subregion%3D40> has ἐνπεπλησμένω, which is a perfect middle/passive participle.

¹³⁰ Kennedy, “Apostolic Preaching,” 302, understands Paul’s expression “the fullness of the time” 1:10 in light of the imperial dominion and its claims of *Pax Romana* in which the claim, found at Halicarnassus (εἰρηνεύουσι ... γῆ καὶ θάλαττα) “land and sea are at peace,” was the standard line; in the end, Christians “refused to compromise with the State-religion.”

for us in Christ Jesus (2:7), and “the love of Christ, in order to be filled into all the fullness of God” (3:19). Lexically, the meaning of ὑπερβάλλω invites comparison and contrast with other alternatives (“surpassing of X”). Given the content of power, hope, and prayerful knowledge in a political context, the surpassing of the gospel in Ephesians would appear to be precisely in the arena of Roman imperial propaganda.

3. The achievement of hopes (ἐλπίδες) and fulfilling (πληρώω) of the prayers (εὐχαί) of all; in Ephesians, as already touched upon previously, Paul prays that believers would understand what is their future hope (1:18), which extends even for ages to come (2:7). Believers are called “into one hope” (ἐν μιᾷ ἐλπίδι) in relation to the “One Lord” (4:4). Then there is the language of “(ful)filling” πληρώω/πληρώμα in Ephesians: “the fulfillment/fullness of the time to gather up all things in Christ” (1:10); the church as “His [Christ’s] body, the fullness of God who (ful)fills all in every way” (1:23), Paul’s prayer for knowledge of Christ’s love, “in order that believers would be filled in all the fullness of God” (3:19); Christ descending and ascending far above the heavens in order to (ful)fill all things (4:10), the body of Christ is to grow into the fullness of Christ (4:13), believers are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit, which results foremost in speaking psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to one another (5:18). So, then, too, Paul’s prayers in Ephesians are “instructive” prayers—perhaps to counter the many prayers offered cyclically for the Emperor in Asia Minor¹³¹—prayers that illustrate and thus shape how believers should appropriately conceive of power, hope, and inheritance in relation to contemporaneous geopolitical life structures, and then also how one experiences the fullness of God—through the love and forgiveness of the Messiah Jesus. Rather than seeking explication of the idea of “fullness” in second-century Gnostic, or some imagined first-century “proto-Gnostic” thought, we should rather see Paul in Ephesians countering Roman political propaganda in his use of superlatives and “surpassing” and “(ful)filling”

¹³¹ Price, “Between Man and God,” 33. Cf. Mellor, *Θεα ΡΩΜΗ*, 117: “Perhaps the most familiar epithet of Roma in antiquity was *Aeterna*. Kings are associated with such eternal power. The Egyptian subjects of Attalus III prayed to the gods to preserve his reign εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα αἰῶνα.” Other epithets were *Urbs Aeterna*, *Roma Aeterna*, *Aeternitas Augusti*; “Of all the aspects of the cult of Roma and of the emperors, it is perhaps the idea of eternity which derives most from the native Roman Tradition” (118). Cf. with the conclusion to Paul’s prayer in Eph 3:21 αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν (“to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all the generations for ever and ever, amen”).

language. The fullness language is related to the presence of God in the midst of his people, a biblical concept and one that would have been needful for the believers in Asia Minor surrounded with alternative political and religious hopes.¹³²

4. The notion that humans are vessels to be filled (ἐμπίμπλημι) with divine spectacles and realities, including sacrifices and hymns (ὕμνοι). A significant feature of Ephesians is the locus of divine presence in the community of believers. This presence is mediated through God's ordained Lord, Jesus the Messiah, who is a keystone of the believers growing into the temple of God (2:11–22), and through whose presence by way of relational love (“beyond knowledge”) allows for the fullness of God to be a reality for believers (3:14–19). Rather than producing citizens who engage in entertainments (drinking) that waste time (5:15–16), believers are urged to be filled with the Spirit in which they speak hymns (ὕμνοι) to one another and offer thanks to God for everything (5:4, 20).

Returning to Ephesians 3, if Robert Foster is correct that Paul's multi-dimensional prayer in 3:14–19 culminating in being filled with all the fullness of God is “temple language,” such that believers (as in 2:19–22) are the locus of the indwelling presence of God in Christ (3:17),¹³³ then the doxology initiated with the dative “To the one who is able ...” (3:20) and restarted with “to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all the generations forever and ever, amen” (αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν) (3:21) would find analogy with the common practice of inscribing pagan temple and altar dedications in which gods and human benefactors are customarily so signified in the dative case.¹³⁴

The transition to the “exhortation section” of Ephesians in 4:1 is notable, since no imperatives are found until 4:25.¹³⁵ The reason for this is that, after establishing the beneficent preplan of God (1:3–14) and the nature of God-in-Christ's work of forming believers into a unified humanity suitable for the

¹³² See Foster, “Temple in the Lord,” who understands Ephesians as depicting the fulfillment of the temple vision of Ezekiel 40–46 in the formation of a people in Christ.

¹³³ Foster, “Temple in the Lord.”

¹³⁴ Nock, “Σύνναος Θεός,” 47–50.

¹³⁵ I don't intend to minimize the exhortative nature of 4:1–3 (“Therefore, I ... exhort you to live worthily of the calling ...”) and 4:17–19 (“Therefore I say and testify in the Lord that you not walk any longer like the nations ...”) but only to point out the emphatically political function of 4:4–16 as the basis for the Christian communal-ethical life.

dwelling of God (2:1–3:20), Paul first describes the foundational ethical unity for the body politic around the one Lord (4:1–6)¹³⁶ and then the triumphant conquest of Christ (4:7–10) and basic governance structure, which moves all towards Him (4:11–13) in the analogy of a growing body (4:14–16). All of these themes in 4:1–16 lead to and support upright, ethical living in an international context (4:17—“Don’t live like the nations/Gentiles”). Pivotal in all of this is Christ, as Lord, into whom the body politic is to grow (4:13). From the historical “Jesus” and his teaching (4:20–24), one encounters the first set of imperatives, which culminates in the command to imitate God in Christ (4:25–5:2).

The density of political topoi in Ephesians 4–6 is quite phenomenal, and in the brief time of my survey, I cannot do them all justice. For the sake of summary I may organize them around the following headings: Unity, Military Triumph, Leadership Structure, Body Analogy, Ethics centered in imitation of God in Christ, Household Codes, Standing Army, and Paul as Ambassador.

Unity and *mutuality* are common topoi of political discourse.¹³⁷ In Eph 4:2–3 Paul introduces the unifying features around God’s economy in Christ with corporate virtues (humility, gentleness, patience, and love) that will assist in maintaining “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (recalling 2:11–22). Then follow seven aspects of unity, which features “one Lord” as the central element, and “One God and Father of all” as the climax.

The *military triumph* of Christ is described 4:7–10, drawing upon Ps 68:18. Roger D. Aus has recently surveyed the phenomenon which occurred some 320 times in Roman antiquity.¹³⁸ The nature of Christ’s triumph is cosmic, involving heaven and earth, and completed.¹³⁹ Paul inverts the language of

¹³⁶ The seven elements (note the significance of the number) in 4:4–6 are structured chiastically to place “One Lord” in the center, and also climactically to place “one God and Father of all.”

¹³⁷ See M.M. Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993), who establishes the unity of 1 Corinthians based upon deliberative-political rhetorical conventions of which mutuality and unity are major topoi. Mitchell concludes that 1 Cor 1:10 is the thesis statement for the entire letter: “I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment” (RSV).

¹³⁸ R.D. Aus, *Imagery of Triumph and Rebellion in 2 Corinthians 2:14–17 and Elsewhere in the Epistle: An Example of the Combination of Greco-Roman and Judaic Traditions in the Apostle Paul* (Studies in Judaism; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005); see also my review in *Review of Biblical Literature* [<http://www.bookreviews.org>] (2006).

¹³⁹ Dahl, “Ephesians and Qumran,” 136, correctly surmises the import of Christ’s triumph: “while it is clear that both [Ephesians and the Qumran War Scroll 1 QM] envisage a war,

Psalm 68:18, which speaks of receiving gifts among humanity (MT $\text{לְבָרְכָם בְּאֶדְנֵי מַתָּנֹת}$; LXX [67:18] $\text{ἔλαβες δόματα ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ}$); Paul changes this to “distributing gifts to people” (Eph 4:8 $\text{ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις}$) ostensibly for the purpose of updating the imagery of “triumph” to that of the Roman custom of generals rewarding their military officials with gifts.¹⁴⁰ Grace, argues Paul, is distributed according to Christ's Triumph and is seen particularly in the leaders for Christ's community.

The *leadership structure* of the church is derived from Christ's triumph and his distributed grace: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (4:11). These leaders prepare the saints for works of service and building up the body numerically and “christologically” (4:12), since this body is to grow “into the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God” ($\text{εἰς τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς ἐπιγνώσεως τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ}$), into the perfect man (εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον), into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ ($\text{εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ}$) (4:13). It is indeed very tempting to see in these three *εἰς* phrases the three political acmes of the Roman, Greek, and Jewish cultures, respectively. Caesars after Julius were *divi filius* “son of (a) god,” the equivalent expression of which is the very common θεοῦ υἱός .¹⁴¹ The definite articles in Paul's titulature would likely

it is indubitable that the Ephesian writer sees the struggle as an aftermath of the one important dramatic victory which has determined the whole course of the War: the sacrifice of Christ. The Christian fights in the light of that once-for-all historical event, as the Qumran covenanter does not.”

¹⁴⁰ See Aus, *Imagery of Triumph*, 17–23, on the officers and soldiers in procession behind the conquering general as applied to 2 Corinthians.

¹⁴¹ On “Son of God,” see Kennedy, “Apostolic Preaching,” 301, who concludes that “The inscriptions abound with the direct title θεοῦ υἱός .” Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, 167, says of the title “Son of God:” “ υἱὸς θεοῦ is a translation of the *divi filius* which is equally frequent in Latin inscriptions.” The title $\text{αὐτοκράτωρ θεοῦ υἱὸς Σεβαστός}$ is found throughout Dittenberger (Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, 167 n1). Thus, Deissmann (166) concludes, “But when the question is raised as to the manner in which the ‘Heathen-Christians’ of Asia Minor, of Rome, or of Alexandria, understood this designation, it seems equally probable that such ‘Old Testament presuppositions’ were not extant among them.” This is especially the case given that “Son of God” is a technical term, e.g. of Augustus in an inscription (Pap. Berol 7006 in *BU* vi, p. 180 no. 174= Helmut Satzinger, *Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Koeniglichen Museen zu Berlin*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1937): $\text{ἔτους ἑ[χ]του καὶ τριακοστοῦ [τῆς] Καίσαρος κρατήσεως θεοῦ υἱοῦ}$ = “36th year of the dominion/accession of Caesar, Son of God” (cf. applied to Augustus ca. 27 B.C.E at Olympia in Dittenberger, *Syll.*² 351, 1 and applied to Tiberius in AD 31 at Tarsus, $\text{θεοῦ Σεβαστοῦ υἱός, θεοῦ Ιουλίου νιωνός}$ from Dittenberger, *OGI*, 471, 1).

See also Price, “Gods and Emperors,” 83–85 who argues that “The numerous instances of the phrase *theou huios* in imperial titles in documents produced by the Greeks themselves might seem to be translations from Latin bearing the same meaning as the ‘original.’ They may indeed often function as equivalents of the Latin *divi filius*, but their meaning cannot be the same since they form part of a different conceptual system. The *theos* element of *theou*

stress the monadic status of Jesus as The (one and only) Son of (the one and only) God.¹⁴² Additionally, Jesus' description as ἀνὴρ τελείος "perfect man" (here qualitatively anarthrous) would appeal to Greek philosophical thought:¹⁴³ Philo's Hellenized Jewish theology has extended discussions of such a person;¹⁴⁴ and Epictetus's *Enchiridion* (AD 100) describes the progress of the pupil towards this ultimate goal.¹⁴⁵ Jesus as "the Christ/Messiah" would relate to the Jewish political ruler; Jesus the Messiah is precisely who the audience "learned" (Χριστόν ἐμάθετε [4:20]) and they "were taught in him" (ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε [4:21]) and they were to forgive as God did in Christ (4:32), who loved and gave himself as a sacrifice (5:1–2). To have as the community's τέλος Christ (as the τελείος ἀνὴρ) would answer an understood need in political theory humanly conceived, as Hammond summarizes in regard to Plato's view of perfection: "[A]ccording to the scheme set forth in the *Republic*, a degeneration from the ideal state would inevitably occur because of an inescapable tendency of human nature to fall away from

huios retained the elusivity of the common Greek usage of *theos*. So, while it was impossible to refer to the living emperor as *divi filius divus*, because he only became *divus* after his death, the Greeks could refer to the living emperor as *theou huios theos* ('god, son of god')" (84).

¹⁴² For explanations of this category of definite article usage, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 223–224.

¹⁴³ I would like to even say "Greek political thought", but more research is needed. Interestingly, in their brief comments on Ezek 28:12, V.H. Matthews, et al., *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), indicate that "Assyrian royal epithets included the titles 'perfect man' and 'perfect king.'" Also, Ignatius, *Smyrn.* 4.2 describes Christ as ὁ τελείος ἄνθρωπος who empowers Ignatius's witness even when persecuted. W.R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 233, understands Eph 4:11–16 as different than the Ignatian notion; however, the logic of Ephesians has the body growing into the perfect head, Christ, and would suggest rather continuity with Ignatius. Schoedel argues: "There [Eph 4:11–16] we who are children are said to attain the perfect (or mature) human being by being incorporated into the body of Christ In Ignatius, however, it is the perfect human being himself who brings human nature to mature expression in his incarnation, death, and resurrection. Thus the perfect human being ... embodies the highest form of the type. If this is correct, the expression 'perfect human being' here anticipates later usage where it designates the complete humanity of the God-Human."

¹⁴⁴ E.g. Abraham (*Alleg. Interp.* 3.203; *Unchangeable* 4) and Moses (*Moses* 1.1; *Alleg. Interp.* 2.9; cf. *Dreams* 2.234) are perfect ones. In general, according to Philo, *Spec. Laws* 4.140, "the perfect man" should be instructor of all.

¹⁴⁵ By the end of the discourse (51.1), by learning one's own nature, the will of nature, and nature herself and by imitating Socrates, and by taking in Epictetus's philosophical principles, then, the pupil has thus become "already the mature man" (ἀνὴρ ἤδη τελείος) and has no need of a teacher (διδάσκαλος), but must make progress (προκόπτω) by applying principles to actual living (βίωω).

perfection.¹⁴⁶ Thus, rather than the law as the focus of the community (cf. 2:15), believers now are to have their sight set on Jesus, the Son of God, the perfect man, and the Jewish Messiah.¹⁴⁷

The *body analogy* of growth and maturation in 4:14–16 was a common motif in political discourse (Plato, *Resp.* 462c–d; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.3.18; Livy, *Urbe cond.* 2.32.7–2.33.1; Cicero, *Off.* 3.5.21–23; Seneca, *Ira.* 2.31.7; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.10.4–5; Plutarch, *Arat.* 32.5; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 33.16, 44; 39.5; 40.21; 41.9; 50.3–4; Aelius Aristides, *Or.* 17.9; 23.31; 24.18, 38–39; 26.43; Josephus, *Wars* 4.406–407; 5.277–279; Philo, *Spec.* 3.131).¹⁴⁸ Cicero's protagonist, the great statesman, Scipio describes the growth of the Republic in terms of "infancy, progress, and maturity, and now already stable and robust [*nascen-tem et crescentem et adultam et iam firmam atque robustam*]" (*Resp.* 2.3). A little later he adds, "Do you not perceive, then, that by the wisdom of a single man a new people was not simply brought into being [lit. "born a new people" *ortum novum populum*] and then left like an infant crying in its cradle, but was left already full-grown [*adultam*] and almost in the maturity of manhood [*paene puberem*]?" (*Resp.* 2.21). The State's progression is towards "perfection" (*Resp.* 2.22), and this is done by the statesman, who "by the inculcation of principles and by systematic training" perfects [*perfecit*] the commonwealth, "so that shame deters the citizens from crime no less effectively than fear" (*Resp.* 5.6).

The hallmark of the *ethic* in Ephesians is *the imitation of God* in Christ in terms of truth and love (4:15, 21; 5:2). This ethic, 5:1–2, is the heart of the five walking (περιπατέω) sections: 4:1–16, 17–32, 5:1–6, 5:7–14, and 5:15–6:9.¹⁴⁹ The

¹⁴⁶ Hammond, *City-State*, 19.

¹⁴⁷ As Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 280, has expressed in relation to Eph 4:20–21: "Just as a Jew learned Torah, so now a Christian can be said to learn Christ."

¹⁴⁸ References are from Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 391 n17 and n18.

¹⁴⁹ See my "Taught in Christ" (Eph 4:20–24): Paul's Rhetorical Curriculum of Moral Transformation in Ephesians," *Reflections* 7 (2003): 80–98; so, too, Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 61–77. The number *five* is intriguing as a biblically significant number relating to the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch; cf. the structure of Matthew's gospel). The theme of *walking* (Heb.: *hālak*) in *the way of the Lord* (Heb.: *derek YHWH*) is a common theme in the OT (my former colleague, Eugene Carpenter, suggested this connection to me). Moreover, in the second *walking* section (4:17–32 with 5:1) Paul issues twelve commands (see discussion below) around seven themes. Paul structured his letters with attention to biblical numerical patterns (in Romans, see Robert Jewett, "Numerical Sequences in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in D.F. Watson, ed., *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* [JNTSup 50; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991], 227–245), not just for ornamentation and rhetorical impact, but for emphasizing the continuity of God's purposes across covenants, the completeness of the revelation of Christ, and for aiding the memorization of key ideas.

core of the moral curriculum is none other than Christ, who is learned (4:20) and who demonstrates sacrificial love (5:2). God in Christ is to be imitated.

One might wonder why Ephesians moves so quickly to dissuade its audience from sexual immorality, uncleanness, and being greedy (which makes one an “idolater”) immediately in 5:3–8. The various pagan cults worshipped the gods (as encouraged by Roman rule) would allow for such behavior. If one imitated the gods, these sorts of behaviors might result. Jupiter, the deceiver, often was literarily depicted as masquerading to seduce unsuspecting wives (e.g. Plautus’s comedy *Amphitruo*). The emperor Nero became particularly known for his licentiousness and moral laxity, which worsened over the duration of his rule,¹⁵⁰ in which he increasingly identifies himself with Zeus/Jupiter.¹⁵¹

The ethics of the community culminates in Paul’s exposition of the conventional *household codes*. The relations of husband/wife, parent/child, and master/servant were common in politics beginning with Aristotle (*Pol.* 1.1253b.1–14; cf. also *Eth. nic.* 8.1160b, 23–1161a, 10).¹⁵² Of the many excellent conclusions in his treatment of these domestic codes, David L. Balch demonstrates the common analogy between managing households and managing cities, as well as the recognition that proper management of the

¹⁵⁰ For descriptions of Nero’s lifestyle, see Suetonius, *Nero* 26–38, and Michael Grant, *Nero: Emperor in Revolt* (New York: American Heritage, 1970), esp. chapters 2–5.

¹⁵¹ It is interesting also to note how brazen Nero becomes in his identification of himself with Jupiter or Zeus on coinage. In AD 66–67, Alexandria, the bust of Nero (obverse) is mirrored by a bust of Zeus on billon tetradrachms (*BMC, Alexandria*, p. 16 nos. 126 and 129). As far as Jupiter, on an aureus (gold coin) dating AD 64–68, the head of Nero laureate (obv.) is coupled on the reverse with Jupiter seated on a throne with thunderbolt and scepter (*BMC, Imp.* I, p. 209 no. 67; cited in Mary E. Smallwood, *Documents Illustrating the Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero* [London: Cambridge University Press, 1967], 34–35). Furthermore, Nero is hailed “heavenly Zeus” (οὐρανίῳ Διός), in an epigram of Leonides of Alexandria in AD 62, one of Nero’s flattering clients (D.L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 533 no. XXIX, translated in R.K. Sherk, *The Roman Empire: Augustus to Hadrian* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], 110, no. 70A); this same Leonides gave a celestial globe (AD 63) or “heavenly model” (Οὐράνιον μείμημα) to “Poppaea, wife of Zeus [= Nero], Augusta” [Ποππαία, Διὸς ἐὶνι, Σεβαστιάς] (Page, *Further Greek Epigrams*, p. 535 no. 32).

¹⁵² J.T. Fitzgerald, “*Haustafeln*,” *ABD* 3:80, describes their widespread use: “Examples of the lists, which vary widely in form and function, occur in the ‘unwritten laws’ of popular Greek ethics (e.g. Aeschines, *Supp.* 701–709; ps-Aristotle, *Rh. Al.* 1421b37–40; ps-Isocrates, *Demoniacus* 16; Lycurgus, *Leoc.* 15; Xenophon, *Mem.* 4.4.18–24), philosophical traditions (e.g. Cicero, *Off.* 1.17.58; 3.15.63; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 4.91; Diogenes Laertius 7.108, 119–120; 8.22–23; Epicetus, *Diss.* 2.10.1–23; 14.8; 17.31; Hierocles, *apud* Stob. [cf. Malherbe 1986: 85–104]; Horace, *Ars P.* 312–316; ps-Plutarch, *De liberis educandis* 7E; Sen. *Ep.* 94.1), Hellenistic Judaism (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.190–210; Philo, *Dec.* 165–167; *Deo* 17, 19; *Hypo.* 7.3, 14; *Post* 181; ps-Phocylides, *Gnom.* 175–227)”

household relationships would impact the governance of the city/empire.¹⁵³ Thus, the codes in Christian literature functioned apologetically.¹⁵⁴ In line with Balch, I would want to stress their evangelistic function.

In Ephesians, these relationships are thoroughly recast in terms of Jesus as "Lord" (5:22; 6:1, 4, 7–9) and "Christ" (5:23–25, 29, 32; 6:5–6). The pagan standards for these basic societal relationships are not just adopted, but are critiqued.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, the codes are placed within the context of "walking wisely" and "making the most of the opportunity" (5:15–16; cf. Col 4:5–6), which builds upon the previous walking section that calls for believers to be "children of light" (5:8) "refuting the deeds of darkness" (5:11; cf. Col 4:5–6) so that "Christ will shine" upon believers (5:13–14). Elsewhere in the New Testament, the household codes (Col 3:18–4:1; 1Pet 2:11–3:12; 1Tim 2:8–15; 5:1–2; 6:1–2; Titus 2:1–10; 3:1) and restrictions on social appearance/conduct of women (1Tim 2:9–15; 1Cor 11:2–16; 14:34–36) are elaborated in view of Christian social visibility (1Cor 11:6, 10, 16; 14:16, 22–25, 36; 1Pet 2:15; 3:16; Tit 2:7–8, 10; 3:8) and even witness to outsiders (1Cor 12:3; Col 4:5–6; 1Tim 2:1–7; 1Pet 2:12; 3:1, 15). Thus, Paul and other leaders within the Christ-movement choose to organize followers in such a way that deliberately reflected socially recognized relationships, but more importantly transformed them for their evangelistic witness to the lordship of Christ.

In particular in Ephesians, the comparison of husband/wife to Christ/church carried political connotations, since, as J. Paul Sampley, concludes, "It remains that the author's predominant concern ... is an explication of the relationship of the *hieros gamos* of YHWH and Israel."¹⁵⁶ The final statement of 5:23, *αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος* "He being the Savior of the body," is puzzling to interpreters. Sampley laments that it breaks up an otherwise nice chiastic structure in 5:23–24, and concludes that the phrase functions parenthetically to distinguish the husband/wife relationship from the Christ/church relationship.¹⁵⁷ But, would Paul relegate the only occurrence of *σωτὴρ* to such a trivial function? In its placement, the phrase builds on the Head-Body political metaphor and is the chiastic center of 5:23–24. Also, we must consider what meaning this *heiros gamos* would have for those (believers) living in Asia Minor.

¹⁵³ Hammond, *City-State*, 21 summarizes, "For Aristotle, the state develops naturally from the union of male and female through the family to the village and city."

¹⁵⁴ D.L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (SBLMS 26; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 23–62.

¹⁵⁵ See Balch, "Household Codes," *ABD* 3:319.

¹⁵⁶ Sampley, *Two Shall Become One Flesh*, 133, cf. 37–42.

¹⁵⁷ Sampley, *Two Shall Become One Flesh*, 124–126.

A more suitable explanation is that Paul wanted to affirm believers as politically connected to the ultimate Savior by comparing Christ-Savior of the church with Caesar-Savior of Roma. The Emperor as savior (σωτήρ) had a *heiros gamos* relationship with Rome, which was actively and strategically depicted as deified *Roma*.¹⁵⁸ The importance of this relationship, *Roma* with Caesar, was seen across the empire, for “in the provinces the regulation was that temples were acceptable only if Dea Roma shared in the cult” with the emperor (Suetonius, *Aug.* 52).¹⁵⁹ In relation to Ephesus, Mellor summarizes, “Ephesus shows the clearest historical development of the cults of Roma: first, Roma alone; then Roma and [the Roman Proconsul Publius Servilius] Isauricus; then the provincial temple of Roma and Julius Caesar (29 BC); and finally, by 5 BC, a municipal cult of Roma and Augustus. The Cult of Roma was important at Ephesus and a temple of the goddess is likely.”¹⁶⁰ The two entities were joint religious figures, and their statues shared temples in Asia Minor as occurred in 29 BC with Roma/Julius at Ephesus and Nicaea and Augustus/Roma in Pergamum (see Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.37.4) and Nicomedia.¹⁶¹ In Galatia a cult to Caesar and Roma existed during the reign of Tiberius,¹⁶² and an altar for the pair was found even in the small village of Choriani near Hierocaesarea.¹⁶³ Herod also built a very notable temple at Caesarea Maritima with statues of Caesar Augustus (in imitation of Jupiter Olympius) and Roma (like Juno at Argos) that could be seen from a far distance out in the sea as one came into the harbor (Josephus, *Wars* 1.414; *Ant.* 15.339).¹⁶⁴ The

¹⁵⁸ Mellor, *Θεα ΡΩΜΗ*, 195 explains: “Suetonius [*Aug.* 52] tells us that this marriage [between Roma and Augustus] was required in provincial cults by imperial command, but a similar pattern filtered down to the municipal cults as well.”

¹⁵⁹ Duncan Fishwick, “Dio and Maecenas: The Emperor and the Ruler Cult,” *Phoenix* 44.3 (1990): 270.

¹⁶⁰ Mellor, *Θεα ΡΩΜΗ*, 138. Mellor explains the history and religious significance of Roma, “The goddess Roma had always played a political role Roma existed solely as a divine embodiment of the Romans themselves and thus would not be honored by them. ... she [Roma], like *patria*, symbolized Rome past as well as Rome present. This use of Roma enabled the destinies of the imperial house to be linked with those of the state—the title *pater patriae* is one expression of this and the association of Roma and Augustus is another. The goddess was represented as a traditional divinity. Sometimes a warrior, sometimes a mother-figure, she had always to draw on the attributes of other gods since she herself had no history, no myth” (199–200).

¹⁶¹ Nock, “Σύνναος Θεός,” 43.

¹⁶² *OGIS* 533, translated by Sherck, *The Roman Empire*, 73–75.

¹⁶³ T.R.S. Broughton, “Roman Landholding in Asia Minor,” *TAPA* 65 (1934): 207–239.

¹⁶⁴ Fishwick, “Dio and Maecenas,” 270; K.G. Holum, “Caesarea’s Temple Hill: The Archaeology of Sacred Space in an Ancient Mediterranean City,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67 (2004): 184–199.

Apostle Paul was held at Caesarea Maritima when he appealed to Caesar (Acts 23:23; 25:8–12, 21; 26:32; 27:24; 28:19).

Repeatedly under Nero in AD 60–64 coinage featuring the emperor (obverse) was printed in Rome with the goddess Roma or Virtue (*Pietas*) in military garb triumphant on the reverse.¹⁶⁵ On reliefs Roma was also depicted as a warrior.¹⁶⁶ Given that Christ is the savior of the church, his political body, it is quite understandable that believers are shown dressed virtuously in military garb as a standing *army* in battle reminiscent of Roman soldiers (Eph 6:10–20). Often it is thought that the church's position is defensive, but this is not so, since the adversary uses trickery and arrows and the brave army stands, as all brave armies stand, ready to advance.¹⁶⁷ Most significantly the verses represent the summarizing conclusion (or *peroratio*) of the letter.¹⁶⁸ This implies that the metaphor of a standing army is extended across the whole letter. The reason why is because this too was a Mediterranean political topos.

The citizenry of a polis was expected to be such an army, ready to take up arms in struggle against an enemy (Plato, *Resp.* 467A–468D; and the “citizen army” [τὰ πολιτικά] in Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 3.8; 7.9).¹⁶⁹ At Qumran, the

¹⁶⁵ C.H.V. Sutherland, *The Roman Imperial Coinage Vol. 1 From 31 BC to AD 69* [= RIC²] (2nd ed.; London: Spink and Son, 1984), nos. 25, 26, 31, 32, 36, 37, 40, 41 (Aureus and Denarius with helmeted Virtue right foot on a pile of spoils/armor with right hand holding the honorary short sword [*parazonium*] and left hand a spear), nos. 27, 28, 33, 34, 38, 39, 42, 43 (Aureus and Denarius with helmeted Roma left foot on helmet with dagger and bow and right hand inscribing shield held with left hand on knee; cf. no. 54, 65, 70 dating from AD 64–68). For Claudius Asses were printed with *Constantia* helmeted in military dress holding a long spear (no. 95) or Minerva helmeted throwing javelin with shield (nos. 100, 116).

¹⁶⁶ E.g. Diane Favro, “The iconiCITY of ancient Rome,” *Urban History* 33 (2006): 29, fig. 10, who describes the late first century Cancellaria relief: “Roma as warrior; with bearded *genius Senatus*.”

¹⁶⁷ Thus, convincingly argues Jeffrey Asher, “An Unworthy Foe: Heroic Ethoi, Trickery, and Slander in Eph 6:11,” (paper presented at the annual meeting of SBL, Washington, DC, 20 November 2006), who compares the language of Ephesians to military descriptions of standard positions and tactics; the devil, on the contrary, is a deceptive foe, who relies on cunning and deceit. Similarly, Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 21464, argues that the footwear of the believer is preparatory for proclamation of the gospel: “The genitive construction *het-oimasia tou euangelioi* is best interpreted in terms of an objective genitive: Paul speaks of the readiness or preparation of the outward-going movement required for the proclamation of the good news of peace.” Also, the sword (*macharia*) was an offensive weapon, so the Christian's posture should not be understood as a defensive one.

¹⁶⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 432–440; A.T. Lincoln, “‘Stand, Therefore’ Ephesians 6:10–20 as a *Perotatio*,” *BiblInt* 3 (1995): 99–114. Best, *Ephesians*, 61, although not viewing Ephesians as a speech, admits that 6:10–17 “resembles a peroration.”

¹⁶⁹ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 437–438, is right to note the communal dimension of the warfare imagery, as opposed to the use of military motifs and imagery in the Stoic-philosophical

War Scroll (1QM; cf. 1QH 3.24–39; 6.28–35) likewise shows the community of “the Sons of Light” engaged in the idealized holy war campaign.¹⁷⁰ Cicero emphasized this apocalyptically when disclosing how to secure a place in the heavenly abodes by the pursuit of the “best tasks,” which Scipio in his dream (*Resp.* 6.29; cf. 6.12, 13 and 26) defines as “those undertaken in defense of your native land.” The *Republic* begins with touting the military accolades of several Roman political figures, not least of all Scipio (1.1).

However, Paul in Ephesians critically subverts existing political views, which called for bloodshed to accomplish the goals of the political body. In contrast, the church’s battle is precisely not against flesh and blood, but against human rulers and spiritual forces (6:12). Much more could be said about the nature of the armor donned (e.g. moral integrity, the Word of God, prayer), and its relation to the Messianic struggle to bring justice and extend mercy in the world (see the contexts of “the breastplate of righteousness” in Isa 11:5 and “feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace” in Isa 52:7).

Fittingly, the last image of Paul is that of *ambassador in chains* (πρεσβεύω ἐν ἀλύσει), who wants boldly to present the mystery of the good news (6:20).¹⁷¹ By this point auditors of the letter would have understood the subversive presentation of a counter-reigning Lord, a counter-community, with a counter-military agenda in relation to the surrounding political systems. These governing powers were holding the Apostle Paul as a political prisoner, who represented and proclaimed boldly the exalted, ultimate political ruler, Jesus the Messiah.

4. CONCLUSION

The total political vision of Ephesians is only grasped as one understands how completely Paul relied on conventional topoi to present a political theology across the discourse. These topoi taken together are meant rhetor-

description of moral living. However, Lincoln does not perceive the thoroughly political nature of the army corporate in light of the whole of Ephesians.

¹⁷⁰ K.G. Kuhn, “πανοπλία,” *TDNT* 5:300 remarks, “If one compares Eph. 6:16 (πάντα τὰ βέλη τοῦ πονηροῦ τὰ πεπυρωμένα) the great similarity both of the image and also of the sense is immediately apparent. In the light of the new discoveries verses like R. 13:12 (ἐνδυσώμεθα δὲ τὰ ὅπλα τοῦ φωτός) and Eph. 6:11 (πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαι ὑμᾶς στήναι πρὸς τὰς μεθοδείας τοῦ διαβόλου) acquire a new vividness and a rich background.” This background must be further extended to include the complete realm of politics and the responsible, brave function of citizens to participate in the defense of their people.

¹⁷¹ On Paul’s self-understanding and the use of πρεσβεύω in Eph 6:20, see Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, chapter 24, esp. 967–970.

ically to move listeners from one viewpoint into another. My identification of these political topoi has brought me to conclude that Paul was "trumping" competing alternative political systems even while drawing upon major commonplaces with them. The "loudest" of these political systems in the Mediterranean world undoubtedly was Roman; the social structures in Asia Minor with its common Asian League vigorously (even competitively) embraced the Emperor Augustus and continued the dance with subsequent imperial household members and Julio-Claudian Caesars.

But for Paul, the most "hurtful" political system, personally (Rom 9:1–3) and physically (2 Cor 11:22–25), would have been that of his own nation. Although my attention has been primarily upon Greek or Roman political topoi, it has certainly not been my intention to divorce Ephesians from any Jewish theological/political influence. In fact, the more I have looked into this political dimension of Ephesians, the more profoundly I see it as having a deep covenantal current related to the story of Israel now "being summed up" under the headship of Jesus the Messiah. This begins immediately in 1:3–14 with the allusions to the founding political Jewish documents (Exodus and Deuteronomy), which are re-understood in terms of God's plan for a holy people (Deut 7:6//14:2) as a special possession (Exod 19:6), which in the mystery of (the revelation of) Christ includes also Gentiles (Eph 3:3–6), a fact guaranteed by the giving of the Spirit to them (Eph 1:13; cf. Acts 10; Gal 3:1–4). Moreover, the political reality of this inclusion is squarely seen in the transfer of Gentile "non-Israel political status" (*ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ*; 2:12) into "co-citizen status with the saints" (*συμπολίται τῶν ἁγίων*; 2:19). They are thus by Jesus the Messiah's agency grafted into faithful Israel (cf. Gal 6:16; Rom 11:24–26a), so that Gentile Christians no longer have a Gentile status (Eph 4:17—"Walk no longer like the gentiles/nations!").

Apparently, there was quite some animosity between Paul and the Asian Jewish community, such that these Asian Jews brought charges against Paul in Acts 21:27–28: he spoke against this people Israel, the law, and the temple and brought in a Greek to defile the temple. The letter of Ephesians appears to be Paul's reply to these charges, since Paul affirmed Christ's reconstitution of Israel's citizenry (2:12, 19), his annulling of the law (2:15a), and the construction of a holy temple featuring Jesus (2:20–22), thus affirming the co-equal status of Gentile believers as co-citizens, joint body members, co-household members, and co-recipients along with Jewish believers of the promise (of the covenants) in Christ (1:3; 2:12; 3:6). So, in Christ Paul deliberately trumped the political understandings of large factions of his Jewish kinsfolk.

But, this Jewish side is only part of the picture in Ephesians, because the letter was written to a primarily Gentile audience in Asia Minor. As an incarnational discourse (as I affirm for all of Scripture), it is critical to consider *how the words were written to address the original audiences and how those original audiences would have heard the words*. The audiences for Ephesians, I have argued, heard trumping not only of Jewish political notions, but of Roman imperial ones. Christ is “our Lord” and the “one Lord” (1:3; 3:11; 4:5; 5:20; 6:24) and this Lordship extends over all other political entities on earth or in heaven and even into future ages (1:10, 20–23; 2:7; 4:10). The gospel proclaimed is the triumph of Christ (4:7–11), who establishes (or “is”) peace, by uniting Jew and Gentile into a unified body politic (2:14–16; 4:4). Thus, there is a new supreme head and civic body, Christ’s bride, the church, to replace the otherwise well-known and very visible “divine” pairing of Caesar and Roma. Christ as head is the Savior of the body (5:23b), more than Caesar was the savior of the Roman world. More impressive than “bringing peace to land and sea” is Christ’s victory and supremacy over “heaven and earth” (1:10; 4:7–11) to bring about the peaceful unification of all to form a new humanity (2:14–15).

Likewise, it was not the emperor and his family members who received the best adoption and best family status, and consequently (possible) entrance into heavenly places by way of apotheosis. Rather, God has pre-arranged for the adoption of believers (1:5) and granted them family status (2:19; 5:1, 8; cf. 2:3; 3:15) and has secured their co-rising and co-ruling status with Christ in the heavenly realms for ages to come (2:5–7). Additionally, God is Father (πατήρ) above all, from whom every fatherland (πατριά) in heaven and earth is named. The supreme father of the fatherland (*Pater Patriae*) is none other than God, the Father, and not Caesar. Thus, I am drawn to the view of Wright that Paul was engaged in a “coded critique” of imperial politics.¹⁷²

And, in Christ there is made fully available to believers immeasurable spiritual power (1:19–20; 3:20), even if it must be asked for (3:15). They have direct and bold access (προσπαγωγή) to the heavenly supreme Father as king (2:18; 3:12). Certainly being “well connected” in the immaterial world would have spoken volumes to believers in Asia Minor, because there had been a tradition of worshipping rulers (both alive and deceased) through sacrificial ceremony and public rites of remembrance, which had now been transferred in the imperial Cult to the Emperor, which if Christians refused

¹⁷² Wright, *Paul*, 60.

to participate, would have made them vulnerable to the wrath of divinities in the netherworld. Rather, believers are freed from the wrath of God by not living anymore as “sons of disobedience” (2:2–3; 5:6).

Religiously, when the Christians were debarred from having any publicly recognized sacred space (i.e. temples), Paul affirms that they themselves are the sacred place of worship, and to one another they would speak (the) Psalms, hymns, and spiritual odes while filled with the Holy Spirit (5:19). Rather than being “godless [ἄθεοι] in the world” (2:12), faithful believers are well connected with divinities—God, Spirit, and Christ the Lord (1:13; 2:18, 22; 4:4–5; cf. 1:17).

But these theological and “otherworldly” dimensions of Ephesians do not diminish the political dimensions of Paul’s claims, but places them within an apocalyptically informed worldview (not completely dissimilar to Cicero’s *Republic*). In this sense, Paul’s political vision of the implications of Christ’s heavenly rule moved beyond Rome’s “earthly” and brutal imperialism and addressed a dimension of human existence that is virtually absent in Greco-Roman philosophical thought (e.g. in Cicero)—namely, the existence of malevolent spiritual entities, which fundamentally inform and determine the nature of the Christian warfare. This warfare is conducted on earth, but against foes organized around the devil’s schemes (6:11–12), who seeks to find a place to cause people to stumble (4:27, probably by way of anger) and uses false teaching as a scheme to deceive (πρὸς τὴν μεθοδεῖαν τῆς πλάνης [4:14; 6:12; cf. 5:5–6]). These schemes, however, are experienced in human life through the deceitful teachings of humans (4:14). The nature of the warfare concerns truth and morality, since “the ruler of the authority of the air” creates an atmosphere of immorality (2:1–2; 5:3–6).

In order to counter these maneuvers, believers are “to (speak the) truth in love” (ἀληθεύοντες ἐν ἀγάπῃ [4:15, 25]) and live in the realm of God’s merciful love and kindness (2:4–7) in imitation of God’s ways in Christ (4:32–5:2). Thus, too, believers are counter-equipped with messianic armor to conduct such a warfare, armored with virtue, knowledge, and truth, and wielding weapons of the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and intercessory prayer (6:10–20).

In short, the letter of Ephesians subverts and supplants errant socio-political orders. Human efforts are superseded by divine accomplishments. Human sacrifices to God are replaced by God’s sacrifice of his Son. No benefits of citizenship are granted to the benefactor God, but rather He grants the citizenship. No temple is needed for God, rather God through Christ constructs God’s own temple. No adoption is needed for legitimating the new ruler, rather God works through his Beloved One and adopts believers.

God's people are not simply ethnic Israel, but are reconfigured to include all ethnicities. There is no central geographical locale sanctioned as holy or as "God's temple space," but rather God's space has become all of human space, not least of which are human hearts. All in all, the letter we call "Ephesians" relied judiciously upon core covenantal Jewish theology, was profoundly inspired by the revelation of Jesus the wise crucified Messiah, drew heavily upon Hellenized political topoi and forms, and had dire implications for life dominated by Roman imperial politics.

APPENDIX: CHIASM OF EPH 2:11–22

	Eph 2:11–22	Translation and Explanations [...]
A—11	Διὸ μνημονεύετε ὅτι ποτὲ ὑμεῖς τὰ ἔθνη ἐν σαρκί, οἱ λεγόμενοι ἀκροβυστία ὑπὸ τῆς λεγομένης περιτομῆς ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου,	<i>"Therefore, remember that once you, the gentiles in flesh, who are called uncircumcision by the so-called handmade circumcision in flesh,"</i> [Gentiles are culturally and socially separated by human conditions "in flesh" and agency by speech.]
B—12	ὅτι ἦτε τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ ① χωρὶς Χριστοῦ, ② ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς πολιτείας τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ③ ξένοι τῶν διαθηκῶν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας, ④ ἐλπίδα μὴ ἔχοντες καὶ ⑤ ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.	<i>"that you were at that time</i> ① <i>without Messiah,</i> ② <i>alienated from the citizenship of Israel and</i> ③ <i>foreigners of the covenants of the promise,</i> ④ <i>having no hope and</i> ⑤ <i>being godless in the world."</i> [The Gentile audience had an alienated status in that they were lacking various attributes.]
C—13	νυνὶ δὲ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὑμεῖς οἳ ποτε ὄντες μακρὰν ἐγενήθητε ἐγγὺς ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ.	<i>"But now, in Messiah Jesus you who once were far away have come near by the blood of the Messiah."</i>
D—14a	Αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν,	<i>"For He is our peace,"</i> [stated positively; "peace" is opposite to "enmity" in D'—16b]
E—14b	ὁ ποιήσας τὰ ἀμφοτέρω ἐν	<i>"who made both groups one"</i>
F—14c	καὶ τὸ μεσότοιχον τοῦ φραγμοῦ λύσας, τὴν ἔχθραν ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ,	<i>"even by destroying the dividing wall of hostility, that is, the enmity by means of his flesh"</i> ["Destroying" and "enmity" are opposite to "creating" and "peace" in F'—15b]
G—15a	τὸν νόμον τῶν ἐντολῶν ἐν δόγμασιν καταργήσας,	<i>"by having annulled the law of commandments in decrees"</i> [forward position—center of chiasm]

	Eph 2:11–22	Translation and Explanations [...]
F'—15b	ἵνα τοὺς δύο κτίσῃ ἐν αὐτῷ εἰς ἕνα καινὸν ἄνθρωπον ποιῶν εἰρήνην	<i>"in order that he would create <u>in himself</u> one new humanity making continuous <u>peace</u>"</i> ["creating" and "peace" are opposite to "destroying" and "enmity" in F—14c]
E'—16a	καὶ ἀποκαταλλάξῃ τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι τῷ θεῷ	<i>"and would reconcile to God <u>both groups</u> in <u>one body</u>"</i>
D'—16b	διὰ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἐχθρὰν ἐν αὐτῷ.	<i>"by killing through the cross the <u>enmity in himself</u>" [stated negatively; "enmity" is opposite to "peace" in D—14a]</i>
C'—17	καὶ ἔλθων εὐηγγελίσατο εἰρήνην ὑμῖν τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ εἰρήνην τοῖς ἐγγύς·	<i>"And when he came, he proclaimed <u>peace to you</u> who are <u>far away</u> and <u>peace to those near</u>,"</i>
B'—18–20	⑤ & ④ ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ ἔχομεν τὴν προσαγωγὴν οἱ ἀμφοτέροι ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. ¹⁹ ③ Ἄρα οὖν οὐκέτι ἐστὲ ξένοι καὶ πάροικοι ἀλλὰ ② ἐστὲ συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων καὶ οἰκεῖοι τοῦ θεοῦ, ²⁰ ἐποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ① ὄντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ <u>Χριστοῦ</u> <u>Ἰησοῦ</u> ,	<i>"④ & ⑤ because through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.¹⁹ ③ Therefore then, no longer are you <u>foreigners and aliens</u>, ② but you are <u>co-citizens of the saints</u> and ⑤ <u>household members of God</u>,²⁰ being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, ① with <u>Messiah Jesus himself</u> being the capstone,"</i>
A'—21–22	⑤ ἐν ᾧ πάντα οἰκοδομῇ συναρμολογουμένη αὕξει εἰς ναὸν ἅγιον ἐν κυρίῳ, ²² ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς <u>κατοικητήριον</u> τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν <u>πνεύματι</u> .	<i>"⑤ in whom the whole structure being bound together will grow into <u>a holy temple</u> in the Lord, ²² in which even <u>you</u> are being built into the <u>dwelling place of God in the Spirit</u>." [Gentiles are cultically converted and bound by divine action in the Messiah Jesus by the Spirit.]</i>

EXILES, ISLANDS, AND THE IDENTITY AND PERSPECTIVE OF JOHN IN REVELATION

Brian Mark Rapske

1. INTRODUCTION

In his 2006 commentary, Ian Boxall writes: “Although commentators have regularly, and rightly, attended to the context of Revelation’s recipients in the Roman province of Asia, the neglected context of John remains fruitful for exploration.”¹ What we know of the author’s circumstances is most fully disclosed in a single verse: “I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus” (Rev 1:9, NIV).

There is no overt verbal indication of John’s exile at Rev 1:9. Rather than using the terminology of flight into exile or banishment, it is simply stated that John “was” or “had been” (ἐγενόμην)² on the island of Patmos. The following phrase (διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ) is additionally rather oblique; it could be construed as a notice of either purpose or cause.³ In the former case, John would be indicating that he had gone to Patmos to preach the gospel to its inhabitants or to receive the visions of the apocalypse; in the latter, that he had gone or been sent to Patmos subsequent to and in consequence of his proclamation and witness.

What of the former case? There was, to be sure, a population on the island of Patmos to whom John might have preached. But if a fruitful and extensive preaching was the objective, the balance of probability would

¹ Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of Saint John* (BNTC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 10.

² Whether the aorist verb indicates a circumstance that does or does not presently hold at the point of writing is debated. David E. Aune, *Revelation* (WBC 52a–c; Dallas: Word Books, 1997–1998), 1:77, indicates that “even though the aorist often functions to indicate complete past action, and the imperfect incomplete past action, the use of the aorist itself does not prove that John is no longer on Patmos.” Factors outside of the choice of tense, it appears, are more determinative of the probabilities.

³ BDF, § 222.

surely have favored his choosing one of the larger, nearer, and more populous islands off the coast of provincial Asia over diminutive Patmos.⁴ There are also difficulties in asserting that John's objective in going to Patmos was to receive visions. Revelation 1:2 does stand near 1:9, to be sure, and if the phrase "the testimony of Jesus" is taken as a subjective genitive indicating Jesus' own witness standing in apposition to "the word of God" as it likely does at 1:2, the context of the phrase at 1:9 could be construed as largely positive and a reference to the apocalypse itself.⁵ There are, however, other instances and variants of the phrase in the Revelation that describe human proclamation of the word of God and testimony to Jesus *in extremis*. At both Rev 6:9 and 20:4 the phrase denotes the persistent faithfulness of the persecuted on account of which they have suffered death. A similar context of persecution is indicated for the concatenated phrases "the commandments of God" and "the witness/faith of Jesus" at Rev 12:17 and 14:12. The immediately preceding notice of John's companionship with his hearers "in the suffering ... and patient endurance" (ἐν τῇ θλίψει ... καὶ ὑπομονῇ) at Rev 1:9a adds conviction that John's indication at 1:9b is yet another instance of persistent Christian proclamation and witness to Jesus⁶ that has brought trouble. It is John's personal notice of his own faithfulness and the cost; it resulted in his removal to the island of Patmos.

While early Christian tradition concerning the circumstances of John's presence on Patmos probably carries some legendary elements,⁷ there appears to be a stable core indicating that John's removal to and restoration from Patmos was not a personal choice, but officially sanctioned by Roman

⁴ So Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation* (NTC; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 91; John R. Yeatts, *Revelation* (BCBC; Scottsdale, AZ: Herald Press, 2003), 40. See also the discussion in section 3 below.

⁵ See the discussion in Henry B. Swete, *Commentary on Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977; orig. 1911), 12; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT; rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 54–55.

⁶ See P. Vassiliadis, "The Translation of *Martyria Iēsou* in Revelation," *BT* 36 (1985): 129–134. One may not agree with Vassiliadis that every instance of the phrase μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ in the Revelation (1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4) should be construed as objective genitive and carry the sense "witness (unto death) to Jesus" (133). However, context indicates that Rev 1:9 should be so construed. Aune, *Revelation*, 1:82, seems to imply that John too may legitimately be considered to fit to the pattern of witness "unto death" in that his presence on Patmos may equate to his having suffered a capital penalty (*poena capitalis*). One interest of the present discussion is to explore the possibility.

⁷ So Mounce, *Book of Revelation*, 55, of Tertullian's notice that John miraculously survived an attempt to boil him in oil before he was sent to Patmos.

authorities. Tertullian (220 CE), Origen (254 CE), and Eusebius (313 CE) use the terminology of sentencing and relegation in speaking of John's removal.⁸ Clement of Alexandria (211 or 216 CE) and Eusebius indicate a return from Patmos to Ephesus on Domitian's death by arrangement of his successor Nerva and the senate.⁹

While Rev 1:9 and early Christian tradition give comfort that John was removed to the island of Patmos for his preaching and witness, they also raise interesting questions. John's circumstances look like a case of exile, but what kind of exile and what does it mean? Exile was not a monolithic Roman arrangement. It was typically the punishment of high status persons; Roman citizens with some claim to consideration. But others without the franchise or such claim were also punished thus. How do the discernible Roman patterns of treatment help us in regard to John's status and the perception of his crime? It is also the case that not all places of exile were the same. In fact, where one was exiled could speak volumes regarding what a sentencing authority thought of a person and his crime. Can something be said about John and how seriously he had offended based on the fact that he was banished to Patmos and not some other island? Finally, the book of Revelation is an exilic writing. Near its heart, it says things about Rome and its emperors. John is not alone in his literary activity; nor is his treatment the only one of its kind on those two subjects. What might be learned about John's perspective and his identity through a comparison with the exilic writings of his contemporaries? It might be, as Boxall asserts, that something more can be said.

⁸ Tertullian, *Praescr.* 36: *apostolus Ioannes ... in insulam relegatur*. Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 16.6: κατεδίκασε ... εἰς Πάτμον τὴν νῆσον; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.18: Πάτμον οἰκεῖν καταδικασθῆναι τὴν νῆσον. Cf. Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 9: *in Patmos insulam relegatus*.

⁹ Clement of Alexandria, *Quis div.* 42: τοῦ τυράννου τελευτήσαντος ἀπὸ τῆς Πάτμου τῆς νήσου μετῆλθεν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἔφεσον; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.18: Μετὰ δὲ τὸν Δομετιανὸν πεντεκαίδεκα ἔτεσιν κρατησαντα Νερούα τὴν ἀρχὴν διαδεξαμένου, καθαιρεθῆναι μὲν τὰς Δομετιανοῦ τιμάς, ἐπανελθεῖν δ' ἐπὶ τὰ οἰκεία μετὰ τοῦ καὶ τὰς οὐσίας ἀπολαβεῖν τοὺς ἀδίκως ἐξεληλαμένους ἢ Ῥωμαίων σύγκλητος βουλὴ ψηφίζεται. Cf. Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 9: *Interfecto autem Domitiano et actis eius ob nimiam crudelitatem a senatu rescissis, sub Nerva redit Ephesum*.

This chapter assumes that the Revelation was written during or just after the reign of Domitian. For a helpful discussion of the evidence, see G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 4–27; Collin J. Hemer, *Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (BRS; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001; orig. 1986), 1–12; Steven J. Friesen, *Imperial Cults and the Apocalypse of John: Reading Revelation in the Ruins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 136–141.

2. EXILES, CRIMES, AND JOHN

2.1. *Exile during the Republic*

In 69 BCE Cicero could declare that “exile” (*exilium*) was not a punishment in Roman law, but rather the expected and voluntary means by which an individual might avoid punishment.¹⁰ A citizen charged with a crime calling for death or a crippling pecuniary penalty¹¹ could voluntarily go into exile for self-preservation, making off with what moveable property he might be able to take with him.¹² The object of flight was to remove to a “*civitas libera*, an independent state outside of Roman jurisdiction. Even Latin colonies were able to receive Roman exiles, as they were governed by their own laws and had separate citizenship.”¹³ There was no official interest in an exile’s extradition and, so long as he did not return or settle in a territory under Roman jurisdiction, an exile was safe.

The exercise of this option was formally sealed. If a defendant did not appear, a tribune of the people would propose (*rogatio*) a decree to be ratified by the citizen assembly (*concilium plebis*) that if the defendant did not present himself by a certain date, or show cause for his nonappearance, he would be considered to have gone into exile. In that circumstance, it was asked that the presumed exile be interdicted from fire and water (*aquae et ignis interdictio*), which denied him the means of sustenance and life anywhere within Roman jurisdiction. No Roman was to give him comfort or quarter if he attempted to return—he was an outlaw. The plebiscite of interdiction

¹⁰ Cicero, *Caecin.* 100 (Grose Hodge, LCL): “And so, in no statute of ours will you find, as you will in the laws of other states, that exile figures as the punishment for any crime at all; but people seeking to avoid imprisonment, death, or dishonour, when imposed upon them by our laws, take refuge in exile as in a sanctuary.” Exile does not seem to have been a right in law but more a permitted option according to Caesar in Sallust, *Bell. Cat.* 51.21–22, 40; Cicero, *Cat.* 4.7–8. See further Peter Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 111–112.

¹¹ The Roman governor Gabinius, for example, went into exile and was fined (Appian, *Bell. civ.* 2.24; Dio Cassius, 39.63). See also the cases of Gn. Cornelius Dolabella (Cicero, *Verr.* 1.77, 98–100) and C. Claudius Pulcher (Cicero, *Fam.* 73 [3.10], 84 [8.8.2–3]).

¹² Gordon P. Kelly, *A History of Exile in the Roman Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 18, 138–139; Richard A. Bauman, *Human Rights in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 2000), 44–45.

¹³ Kelly, *History of Exile*, 55. See, for example, what Polybius indicates (Polybius 6.14.7–8).

usually,¹⁴ but not invariably,¹⁵ included notice of the confiscation of the exile's property in Rome.

Exile and interdiction did not automatically result in the loss of Roman citizenship.¹⁶ However, it barred exiles from the very place where citizen rights and privileges made most sense and conferred greatest advantage. The practical effect was to encourage exiles to take up citizenship in the states to which they had fled (Cicero, *Dom.* 78). By the Roman "rule of incompatibility,"¹⁷ this action automatically ceded Roman citizenship.

The arrangements of exile changed over time. The political violence and social dislocation caused by Rome's move from republic to empire sent many into and returned many from exile, depending upon the changing fortunes of those leaders whom its sufferers supported or could influence. Caesar's victory ended mass recalls and consolidated the power of return into his hands.¹⁸ Extension of the Roman citizen franchise and rights throughout Italy over time also meant that exiles had to flee further to be beyond the reach of Roman law. In the closing decades of the Republic,¹⁹ legislation moved exile from a self-chosen option to a statutory penalty that could have non-capital aspect for some crimes. In 63 BCE, Cicero introduced the *lex Tullia de ambitu*, which punished electoral corruption with banishment from Rome without pecuniary or civic impairment for ten years.²⁰ Both Cicero in 46 BCE and the Augustan jurist Labeo could speak of *exilium* as a penalty (*poena* [Cicero, *Parad.* 30; *Dig.* 37.14.10]).²¹

¹⁴ So Kelly, *History of Exile*, 37. This was Cicero's experience (Kelly, *History of Exile*, 91, 112 for discussion and sources) and Cicero himself notes this for the *eques* C. Trebianus (Cicero, *Fam.* 223 [6.10a], 224 [6.11]).

¹⁵ For example, the property of M. Claudius Marcellus (Cicero, *Fam.* 229 [4.8], 230 [4.7], 231 [4.9.4]) and, apparently, A. Manlius Torquatus (Cicero, *Fam.* 242 [6.1.1]) was left intact.

¹⁶ J.P.V.D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (London: Duckworth, 1979), 103. Cf. Kelly, *History of Exile*, 46.

¹⁷ So described by A.N. Sherwin-White, "The Roman Citizenship: A Survey of Its Development into a World Franchise," *ANRW* I.2:46. The rule is indicated in Cicero, *Balb.* 28; *Caecin.* 100; *Leg.* 2.2.5.

¹⁸ Kelly, *History of Exile*, 14–15, 221–223, for his summary and his detailed argument, *passim*.

¹⁹ Richard A. Bauman, *Human Rights in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge, 2000), 45; Kelly, *History of Exile*, 45.

²⁰ Though there seem to have been earlier anticipations. See Bauman, *Human Rights*, 45–46, and consult the sources there cited.

²¹ Cf. Suetonius, *Jul.* 42.3 who notes that Caesar increased the severity of penalties and then mentions exile without confiscation. For discussion, see Garnsey, *Social Status*, 112.

There were many places to which republican exiles fled and settled. Some chose Italy and locations around its nearer periphery; others, coastal cities and islands on the eastern shores of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. Many fled to Athens. Exiles were also found in the islands of the Aegean Sea and as far as the city of Smyrna in Asia and Pontus on the shore of the Black Sea.

For whom was exile in the republican period an option or penalty? The extant sources largely concern themselves with the exile of Roman ruling elites; senators and equestrians charged with crimes of some consequence. While this does not entirely rule out exile for the lower citizen orders, the pattern of deference to status and power demonstrated in the various cases tends to move in that direction.²²

Beyond *exilium* there was also relegation (*relegatio*), a measure of magisterial²³ coercion (*coercitio*) in the face of troublesomeness. Kelly observes,

All examples of relegation were accomplished by magistrates with *imperium*, and lesser magistrates probably did not possess this power. Any number of individuals could be relegated under a single decree, and they could even be directed to relocate to a specific area. This act was generally used to remove undesirable foreigners from Rome, as when Greek philosophers were expelled from Rome in 161 and two Epicureans, Philiscus and Alcaeus, were banished seven years later. *Relegatio* was also employed in 139, when the praetor Cn. Cornelius Scipio Hispanus issued an edict expelling Chaldeans and Jews from Rome.²⁴

Rarely, it appears, was *relegatio* employed against troublesome citizens—at least in the case of the Roman elites.²⁵ It seems to have been the lesser individual's version of exile for vexing the Roman body politic or its magistrates.

2.2. Exile during the Empire

The imperial period lends complexity to exile in the terminology used and the means of its employment. Garnsey's discussion helpfully clarifies. The most common terminology can fit under two broad categories—"for non-capital exile, *relegatio*, and for capital exile, *interdictio aqua et igni*, *deportatio* and *exilium*."²⁶

²² So Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 103; Kelly, *History of Exile*, 19–20.

²³ Husbands and patrons could also relegate intransigent or troublesome inferiors over whom they had power. Garnsey, *Social Status*, 119 calls this "its most primitive form"

²⁴ Kelly, *History of Exile*, 65, and sources there cited.

²⁵ For discussion, see Kelly, *History of Exile*, 65 and Garnsey, *Social Status*, 115–116.

²⁶ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 111.

The terms *exilium* and *interdictio aqua et igni* are used interchangeably in the literary sources to describe the penalty of capital exile for such crimes as treason (*maiestas*), public violence (*vis publica*), crimes of accusers (*accusatores/delatores*), extortion (*repetundae*) with cruelty (*saevitia*) and adultery (*adulterium*) when combined with other charges.²⁷ Garnsey writes that “*deportatio* as a technical term does not seem to have made headway until the early second century.”²⁸ As the century progressed, he continues, “the use of *deportatio* became more regular and the other terms fell out of use.”²⁹ Jurisdictionally, capital exile was the preserve of the urban prefect and the emperor. Provincial governors could not independently sentence to capital exile, but had to petition the emperor in writing for ratification of the sentence (*Dig.* 48.19.2.1; 48.22.6.1).

Capital exile came to include loss of citizenship but not one’s free status (*Dig.* 48.22.15),³⁰ confiscation of one’s property by the state, excepting a certain living allowance (cf. Philo, *Flacc.* 151, 168–169, 172; Suetonius, *Tib.* 50.1), and deportation to a particular place, specifically an island.³¹ In the last instance, “now the offender could only avoid death by going to the nominated island.”³² The general pattern is assumed in the Augustan refinements and corrections to capital exile under the date 12 CE. Dio Cassius writes:

As there were many exiles who were either living outside of the districts to which they had been banished or living too luxuriously in the proper places, he ordered that no one who had been debarred from fire and water should live either on the mainland or on any of the islands within fifty miles of it, except Cos, Rhodes, Samos, and Lesbos; for he made an exception in the case of these alone for some reason or other. Besides this, he enjoined upon the exiles that they should not cross the sea to any other point, and should not possess more than one ship of burden having a capacity of a thousand amphorae and two ships driven by oars; that they should not employ more than twenty slaves or freedmen, and should not possess property to the value of more than half a

²⁷ See the many examples provided in Garnsey, *Social Status*, 112–113 nn. 1–4.

²⁸ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 113. The term is used interchangeably or in concert with *interdictio*, *exilium* and *relegatio*. See Garnsey’s examples from Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, and Suetonius, Garnsey, *Social Status*, 113–114.

²⁹ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 115. See *Dig.* 48.13.3; 48.19.2.1; 48.22.2.

³⁰ For discussion, see Garnsey, *Social Status*, 133.

³¹ Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 105–106; Garnsey, *Social Status*, 58, 62, 112; John Crook, *Law and Life of Rome* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1976; orig. 1967), 272–273. Cf. *Dig.* 28.1.8.1–2.

³² Bauman, *Human Rights*, 158 n. 81. Bauman notes from Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.48.5–7, that forfeiture of one’s property and deportation to an island was the statutory penalty of the Tiberian *maiestas* law.

million sesterces; and he threatened to punish not only the exiles themselves but all others as well who should in any way assist them in violating these commands.
(Dio Cassius 56.27.2 [Cary, LCL])

Against past and current practices, Augustus's declaration appears to have been an attempt to domicile exiles only on more remote islands and to severely curtail mobility. The notice of limitations on ships, slaves and freedmen, and on the possession of property also admits of official awareness of the lengths to which exiles would go to resist or mitigate state confiscation and to advance themselves economically in their places of exile.³³

Again, the preponderance of instances of capital exile relate to Roman elites. There are, however, some examples of wealthy imperial freedmen and possibly lesser individuals who were sentenced to capital exile.³⁴

The term relegation (*relegatio*), despite its popular equation to other terms for exile in the literary sources,³⁵ is legitimately distinguishable (e.g. Ovid, *Trist.* 2.137; 5.2.62–63; 5.11.2.21, 29–30)³⁶ in that it was non-capital. Those sentenced did not lose their citizenship or its rights (Ovid, *Trist.* 5.2.56; *Dig.* 48.22.7.3), nor did they lose their property (Ovid, *Trist.* 2.129; 5.2.57),³⁷ except where the crime called for a financial penalty as in the cases of adultery and violent conduct (*Dig.* 48.22.4; 48.22.14.1).³⁸ Relegation could be for a certain period of time (Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.17; 6.49; Dio Cassius, 76.5.5; Pliny, *Ep.* 3.9; 10.56; *Dig.* 1.6.2) or lifelong (Suetonius, *Aug.* 16, 65; Tacitus,

³³ Kelly, *History of Exile*, 138: "Another way to prevent seizure of goods by Roman authorities was to own real estate in a state independent of Roman jurisdiction (*civitas libera*). Not only would such land be safe from forfeiture, but an estate in another community could also serve as a new domicile. An informal manumission of slaves at Rome before departure to banishment was a further method of protecting property from confiscation. If an exile's property was forfeit and sold at auction, the slaves could claim that they were freedmen, and thus not a part of the exile's possessions. The exile would still benefit from these former slaves, since they would be his freedmen and owe him certain duties. If, however, confiscation did not take place (or the exile managed to secure a recall before confiscation), they would remain slaves in their master's estate."

³⁴ For examples and discussion, see Garnsey, *Social Status*, 120–121.

³⁵ See Garnsey, *Social Status*, 115, and sources noted. The principle of *relegatio* must, at times, be inferred from the context as other terms than *relegatio* are used (e.g. *summoveo*, *expello/expulso*).

³⁶ Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 104, notes that Ovid protests that he is not an exile but an "enforced émigré."

³⁷ *Dig.* 48.22.1 and 48.22.7.4 indicate the principle, but also acknowledge official declarations.

³⁸ Augustus's family appears to have been treated most severely in this regard (Agrippa [Dio Cassius, 55.32.2; Suetonius, *Aug.* 65]; the elder Julia [Suetonius, *Tib.* 50; Suetonius, *Aug.* 65; Dio Cassius, 55.10.14]; the younger Julia [Suetonius, *Tib.* 50]).

Ann. 1.53, 4.71; Pliny, *Ep.* 10.56), and it could take the form of conduct to (*relegatio ad/in*) a place (Suetonius, *Aug.* 16, 65; *Tib.* 50; Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.71; Dio, 55.10.15; Ovid, *Trist.* 5.2.61–64) or exclusion from (*relegatio ab/extra*) a place (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.50.4; 14.41.1; Pliny, *Ep.* 2.11; *Dig.* 47.14.3.3; 47.18.1.2; 48.22.7 praef., 10). Emperor, senate, prefects and governors could relegate (Pliny, *Ep.* 10.56; *Dig.* 47.9.4.1; 48.22.14.2).

Like its republican counterpart, *relegatio* was used as a means of magisterial coercion against a broad range of troublemakers. Garnsey notes *relegatio* for actors, Jews, and philosophers from the literary sources, and soothsayers, astrologers, and gangs of youths from the legal sources, commenting that “most of these enemies of order would have been low in rank.”³⁹ Actors (*histriones*) could not be citizens and were in various ways legally and socially disqualified (*infames*);⁴⁰ but their power to publicly insult (Suetonius, *Aug.* 45.4), to excite violence (Suetonius, *Tib.* 37.2), and to insinuate sedition against the state (Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.14) amongst the higher orders through their performances made them especially dangerous. There are numbers of instances where they and their adoring betters were relegated from Rome and Italy.⁴¹ Expulsions of the Jews occurred out of concern for the numbers who settled in the capital and their religion’s reach and effect upon Roman mores. The Tiberian expulsion of 19 CE saw 4,000 men of military age forcibly assigned to policing duties in provinces of less healthy climate (Josephus and Tacitus indicate the island of Sardinia) with the rest of the Jewish population driven out of Italy (Suetonius, *Tib.* 36; Josephus, *A.J.* 18.81–84 [18.3.5]; Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.85.4; Dio Cassius, 57.18.5a). Josephus insists that the expulsion was triggered by the single action of a few Jewish troublemakers who had swindled a highborn Roman female convert to Judaism (Josephus, *A.J.* 18.81–84 [18.3.5]). Roman sources indicate that the Jewish expulsion was part of a wider program to discourage Romans from participating in foreign cults.⁴² In 49 CE Claudius expelled the Jews for inciting disturbances in Rome (Suetonius, *Claud.* 25; Acts 18:2). Suetonius’s notice that the expulsion occurred over disturbances about a certain *Chrestus* may indicate Christian

³⁹ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 119.

⁴⁰ William Wayte, “Histrion,” in William Smith, William Wayte, and G.E. Marindin, eds., *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (3rd rev. ed.; London: John Murray, 1890), 1:962.

⁴¹ Suetonius, *Aug.* 45.4 (individual actors); *Nero* 16.2 (actors and partisans *en masse*); *Tib.* 37.2 (actors and partisans for life); Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.77 (spectators), 4.14 (actors *en masse*).

⁴² Suetonius and Tacitus, noted above, indicate that the broader program had a special focus to Jews and Egyptians. Josephus mentions the expulsion of Egyptians as a separate action, also sparked by a single action (*A.J.* 18.65–80 [18.3.4]).

proselytism.⁴³ Domitian, about the year 96 CE, relegated his sister's daughter Flavia Domitilla to the island of Pandateria and condemned many others on the charge of atheism for having drifted into Jewish ways (Dio Cassius, 67.14.2).⁴⁴ Eusebius notes this as an action targeted against Christians (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.18).

The expulsions of philosophers under Nero and the Flavian emperors are interesting for the number of Roman elites who feature and the Greeks who influenced them. The turmoil of these years—the Pisonian conspiracy, Nero's suicide, the great disturbances of the year of the four emperors and the accession of the Flavians—emboldened some philosophically-minded Romans to agitate against the imperial succession in favor of more republican arrangements.⁴⁵ Nero relegated the equestrian Stoic Musonius Rufus to the island of Gyaros in 65 CE. Musonius returned under Galba in 68 CE and was exempted when Vespasian again relegated all philosophers in 71 CE (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.71; Tacitus, *Hist.* 3.81; Dio Cassius, 62.27.4, 65.13.2; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 7.16). Vespasian relegated, in particular, the senator Helvidius Priscus from Rome, and Hostilianus and the Greek Cynic Demetrius were sent to islands (Dio Cassius, 65.12; 65.12.2; 65.13; 65.13.2).⁴⁶ Again, in 93 CE under Domitian, numbers of philosophers were executed and the remainder expelled from Rome (Dio Cassius, 57.13.3; Suetonius, *Dom.* 10.3; Tacitus, *Agr.* 2.1–2). Caught up in that round were Artemidorus, the son-in-law of the equestrian Musonius Rufus (Pliny, *Ep.* 3.11), the equestrian Dio Chrysostom, and the Greek Stoic Epictetus.⁴⁷

Prophecy and the magical arts were of particular concern because of the risk of damaging predictions regarding the life of the sovereign and the wellbeing of the state. Relegation of soothsayers and astrologers⁴⁸ was

⁴³ See Irina Levinskaya, *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*. Vol. 5: *Diaspora Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 171–181, who inclines in this direction.

⁴⁴ Following Domitian's death, Nerva restored the exiles, including philosophers and Jews. He would not entertain further accusations of Judaism (Dio Cassius 68.1.2; cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 1.5; 9.13).

⁴⁵ Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 108. See the notices of the strident anti-monarchism of Hostilius (Dio Cassius, 65.13.2) and Helvidius Priscus (Dio Cassius, 65.12; 65.12.2), and how a eulogy to the memory of Helvidius Priscus and his father-in-law, the senator and Stoic Thræsea Paetus who possessed republican sympathies, sparked a further round of expulsions and relegations (Suetonius, *Dom.* 10.3; cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.60–64; Tacitus, *Agr.* 2.1–2.).

⁴⁶ Vespasian later ordered Helvidius to be executed (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 15) but showed restraint when, on meeting Demetrius abroad, he was again insulted by the philosopher (Suetonius, *Vesp.* 13).

⁴⁷ See below Section 4.

⁴⁸ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 119, and the examples cited.

employed as part of a graduated response to various levels of intransigence (Suetonius, *Tib.* 36). Garnsey notes, in particular, that “in AD17 when the senate rounded on astrologers, the citizens among them were exiled, but the foreigners were put to death.”⁴⁹ Finally, exile and death were the options for a magistrate dealing with gangs of youths who repeatedly caused public violence and raised disturbances (*Dig.* 48.19.28.3).

The above discussion indicates that the Roman legal system was interested not only in the matter of what crimes an individual had committed, but also in showing consideration to the status of defendants as punishments were assigned. Nicholas writes:

The Romans made a broad distinction, which was at first social but acquired in the Principate and thereafter an increasing number of legal consequences, between an upper class usually termed *honestiores* and a lower class of *humiliores*. ... The legal consequences lay in part in the private law, but were most marked in the criminal law, *honestiores* being subject to milder penalties than *humiliores* (rarely the death penalty, never death by crucifixion or *bestiis obicere*; *relegatio* [q.v.] in *insulam* in place of forced labour in the mines, etc.).⁵⁰

The *honestiores/humiliores* distinction cut across the citizen/alien distinction, so that, for example, a lower status citizen might be treated less well than a higher status alien.⁵¹ This amounted to a dual penalty system and the arrangements for exile were part of it. This is illustrated in a rescript and edict of Hadrian (emperor: 117–138 CE). The edict specifies a graduated sequence of penalties of exile if a criminal should illicitly return;⁵² the rescript specifies a similarly graduated sequence of penalties of confinement and labour for escapees.⁵³ Garnsey observes, “Roughly speaking, the edict dealt with penalties for high-status offenders, the rescript with penalties for low-status offenders.”⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 261, and see sources there cited.

⁵⁰ Barry Nicholas, “*Honestiores*,” in N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 526.

⁵¹ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 271, writes: “In Roman society legal and political capacity depended, not only upon the *persona* or character of the individual as defined or recognized by the civil law (free or slave, citizen or alien), but also upon his background or status.” See further Brian M. Rapske, *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*. Vol. 3: *Paul in Roman Custody* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 46–62.

⁵² *Dig.* 48.19.28.13: *relegatio ab/extra* for a time → *relegatio* to an island → *deportatio* to an island → execution (*capite puniri*).

⁵³ *Dig.* 48.19.28.14: imprisonment for a time → life sentence → condemnation to the mines (*damnatio ad metallum*) → aggravated death (*summum supplicium*).

⁵⁴ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 104.

Crook's declaration that "exile in its various forms was on the whole for the upper classes"⁵⁵ may be too close to the "extreme thesis" with which Garnsey cannot agree. Garnsey moderates in his conclusion that officials during the empire "*normally* deported and relegated offenders of high status and found harsher punishments for criminals from the lower ranks of society"⁵⁶

3.3. *John the Exile*

The potential options for John's exile are laid out rather neatly by Aune: 1) flight from a capital penalty into voluntary exile (*exilium/interdictio*); 2) capital exile (*deportatio*) to an island; 3) non-capital exile (*relegatio*) to an island; and 4) non-capital exile (*relegatio*) from the province.⁵⁷ Options 1) and 4) do not make good sense. First, if John had fled a capital sentence or had been simply expelled from provincial Asia, why would he have chosen the discomforts and limited ministry prospects of such a diminutive island as Patmos? Second, both generous means of self support, assuming John's higher social status (*honestiores*), and very modest means, assuming his lower status (*humiliores*), would certainly have argued the choice of a more hospitable location. Finally, if Patmos was within the jurisdiction of provincial Asia, as seems likely,⁵⁸ voluntary flight there on the basis of 1) would still have left the exile vulnerable to the penalty, and removal there on the basis of 4) would have constituted a breach of the provisions.⁵⁹

This leaves us with options 2) and 3), which are officially enforced arrangements. 2) presumes a higher status for John and 3) not necessarily so. How does what can be confidently said about John's identity and the reasons for his exile fit to the above examples and discussion? We must draw inferences from the text itself and the statements of later tradition.

⁵⁵ Crook, *Law and Life*, 273.

⁵⁶ Garnsey, *Social Status*, 121.

⁵⁷ Aune, *Revelation*, 1:79.

⁵⁸ See discussion in Section 3 below.

⁵⁹ *Dig.* 48.22.7.17: "Governors have the power and the custom of giving persons who are being relegated [so many] days to leave; for it is the habit to pronounce as follows: 'I relegate him from this province and its islands; and he must leave by such and such a date.'" Translation from *The Digest of Justinian* (ed. Theodor Mommsen and Paul Krueger; trans. and ed. Alan Watson; 4 vols.; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

Four times the writer of Revelation identifies himself simply as “John” (Rev 1:1, 4, 9; 22:18). The name Ἰωάννης is “a grecized form of the Hebrew name ... a theophoric name meaning ‘Yahweh is [or has been] gracious’”⁶⁰ The economy of this self reference, when taken together with the appositional ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν καὶ συγκοινωνός, indicating intimacy and a broad experience of Christian community with his readers at Rev 1:9, suggests that John was well known and would have been readily identified.⁶¹ The concursus of John’s evident familiarity regarding many significant local details in each of the cities of Asia with the divinely given visions also argues a longer rather than shorter period of familiarity with the region and its people.⁶² He addresses the Christian communities of provincial Asia with a measure of confidence that suggests he is a church leader of some standing. Beyond his name, there are other intimations that John is Jewish and probably a Palestinian émigré. He writes in a “Semitizing Greek that clearly suggests he is not a native Greek speaker but rather a native speaker of Aramaic and perhaps even Hebrew”⁶³ He also shows a remarkable familiarity with the Hebrew Old Testament, the apocalyptic genre, and something of Palestinian topography, including the Jerusalem temple and its worship.⁶⁴ John does not call himself an apostle. Rather, he refers to the saints, apostles, and prophets at Rev 18:20 and the twelve apostles at 21:14, preferring to represent himself to his readers as a prophet (Rev 1:3; 10:11; 22:7–10, 18–19).⁶⁵ There is no overt indication in the Revelation that John possessed Roman citizenship or a high status.⁶⁶

We have already seen that later tradition generally supports the view that John’s exile occurred as a result of direct imperial action. Tertullian indicates *relegatio* for John and a trial in Rome, probably implying that

⁶⁰ Aune, *Revelation*, 1:xl ix–l.

⁶¹ The declarative “I John” is probably also a kind of apocalyptic framing device as noted by Aune, *Revelation*, 1:75.

⁶² See Hemer, *Letters*, 29, 222 n. 6, and *passim*; William M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and Their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse* (Minneapolis: James Family Publishing, 1978; orig. 1907), *passim*.

⁶³ Aune, *Revelation*, 1:1. See further the discussion in Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1965), 158–159; Nigel Turner, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Vol. 4: *Style* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976), 145–159.

⁶⁴ See the discussion in Aune, *Revelation*, 1:1.

⁶⁵ We leave aside the attempt to settle the vexed question of the historical identity of the writer of the Revelation as unnecessary to the present discussion.

⁶⁶ We might wonder what circumstances would have given the Roman citizenship to John or his forebears in a Palestinian context. It was possible to pair a serious Judaism with Roman citizenship and its demands (e.g. the Apostle Paul), but there would have been undeniable and severe tensions. See the discussion in Rapske, *Paul in Roman Custody*, 83–90.

it is before the emperor (Tertullian, *Praescr.* 36). Clement of Alexandria leaves the name of the emperor open, identifying him only as the tyrant (ὁ τύραννος [Clement of Alexandria, *Quis div.* 42; cf. Clement cited in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.23.6]). But Eusebius, Origen, and Jerome indicate quite clearly that Domitian was the emperor and that he heard John's case personally (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.20, 23; Origen, *Com. in Matt.* 16.6; Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 9).

Domitian's personal crusade to discourage the spread of Jewish customs (ἔθνη) by charging Romans who held to them with atheism (ἀθεότης)—a broad category of offense that would have included the Christian faith—did result in executions, fines, and non-capital exile (Dio Cassius, 67.14.2).⁶⁷ He may also have perceived in the Jewish ways and their promulgation a more personal threat. Eusebius notes that Domitian had ordered the extermination of individuals who were of David's line (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.19). This may have been no more than an attempt to frustrate the resurgence of Jewish nationalism in Palestine. But it is also possible that he wished to foreclose Roman and "Jewish" talk of a Davidic messiah because it seemed seditious and raised imperial anxieties. Domitian was apparently not beyond personally interrogating the grandsons of Judas, Jesus' half brother, because of their Davidic connections. He apparently dismissed them once he had assured himself that they were poor and their belief was in the coming of a heavenly kingdom and not the establishment of a rival earthly dynasty (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.20). Such action looks to be a near relative to earlier Flavian exertions against the pro-republican and anti-dynastic pressures brought to bear on them by the philosophers.

Concerning John, it may be that in the course of other local actions against the "Jewish" faith—bringing trouble to many (ἡ θλίψις [Rev 1:9]) and capital punishment to some (cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 20:4)—John was informed against and brought to trial in Ephesus before the proconsul. Given John's influence throughout provincial Asia in the Christian communities and in promulgating his brand of "atheism" (i.e. "the word of God and the witness of Jesus") the proconsul could well have referred John's case to Rome for direct imperial action. Imperial recourse for an influential Palestinian émigré, as for a Greek philosopher who preached an anti-imperial message, would quite fittingly have been *relegatio ad insulam* for life. It served a multiple function, being punitive and exemplary and permanently removing the malefactor from the sphere of his influence. Relegation to Patmos off the coast of Asia would also keep John under the proconsul's

⁶⁷ Flavia Domitilla was banished without the seizure of her property which indicates *relegatio*.

watchful eye. Alternately, even if the later accounts of John being banished by the emperor himself are “legendary elaborations,”⁶⁸ much of the scenario above still stands intact. It is, moreover, minimalist in not requiring a high status John, though a high status John cannot be ruled out at this point.⁶⁹

3. ISLANDS OF EXILE AND PATMOS

3.1. *Choosing an Island and “Island Shifts”*

Until near the end of the Republican period, the choice of an island of exile was determined by the accused with consideration to any imposed restrictions.⁷⁰ Beyond this essential, the choices reflected a range of priorities. For some, the best island was one sufficiently near to Rome to allow ease of communication to mount a bid for pardon and recall.⁷¹ Others sought to find islands that would afford a warm welcome owing to fruitful previous political connections.⁷² For others still, the ideal island was far from Rome, affording safety from one’s enemies and the comforts of cultural and intellectual diversion.⁷³

In the imperial period, an exile did not typically choose an island; rather, an island was judicially assigned and that island was the only place where an exile might safely reside. Contemporary scholarship has observed the fact that there were more and less severe islands of exile and has noted the ancient factors in play related to status, crime, and choice of island assigned. To date, however, no one has considered whether there might be sufficient system in the ancient considerations to furnish a backdrop against which Patmos, John’s place of exile, might be helpfully set and assessed.

⁶⁸ Boxall, *Revelation*, 39.

⁶⁹ Pace William M. Ramsay, *Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and Their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse* (Minneapolis: James Family Publishing, 1987; orig. 1907), 83–86, who several times declares that the prospect of a high status John is “impossible” and bends John’s experience on the island of Patmos in the direction of a servile punishment.

⁷⁰ The need to seek a place outside of Roman jurisdiction was a given. But an exile might be required to stay a specified distance from Rome as in the case of Cicero, whose plans to reside on the island of Sicily, and even Malta, were frustrated by a 400 (or 500) mile exclusion zone (Cicero, *Planc.* 40.96; Cicero, *Att.* 49 [3.4]; Dio Cassius, 38.17.7).

⁷¹ These were Cicero’s reasons for recommending the islands of Corcyra (modern Corfu) and Sicily to his exiled friends (Cicero, *Fam.* 235.2 [6.8.2], 247 [6.20.2]).

⁷² C. Antonius (59 BCE) fled to Cephallenia and there began to build a city, running the island as though it was his own (Strabo, 10.2.13). Kelly, *History of Exile*, 108, wonders whether he may have had clients there from his previous governorship of Macedonia.

⁷³ Kelly, *History of Exile*, 86.

In the following discussion, attention is given to “island shifts”—instances in the literature where there is an island-to-island shift either contemplated or arranged to alter the severity of exile, and where a mainland-to-island or island-to-mainland shift occurs for the same purpose. Four of the first kind of island shifts will be considered and one each of the latter two kinds.

The first island-to-island shift is related by Philo of Alexandria with drama and relish. In 38 CE, Aulus Avillius Flaccus, formerly prefect of Egypt and a persecutor of the Jews, suffered capital exile. The actual trial charges are not specified. Philo writes that “when his property had been taken from him he was sentenced to banishment and expelled not only from the whole continent, which is the larger and better section of the habitable world, but also from every one of the islands in which life can prosper” (Philo, *Flacc.* 151 [Colson, LCL]; cf. 172). He is initially assigned to Gyarus, which Philo terms “the most miserable of the Aegean islands” (εἰς τὴν λυπροτάτην τῶν ἐν Αἰγαίῳ).⁷⁴ Flaccus prevails upon his powerful friend Lepidus to intervene on his behalf for a change of venue from Emperor Gaius and is granted an exchange from Gyarus to “Andros, the island which lies nearest to it” (151). This is later described as a lightened sentence (181). Flaccus is made to describe Andros as a “fine land,” an “unblessed,” and a “petty island” (157, 159). Formally conducted by military escort, he is identified as *exul* to the entire gathered populace of Andros and then left to his own devices (161). A few months later, Flaccus manages to buy a small piece of land with a farmhouse on it, but not long after he has settled, a military detail with orders from Gaius arrives and executes him (168–169, 185–190). The island shift is from Gyarus, measuring 17 km², to Andros, which is 384 km²,⁷⁵ some 22.6 times larger.

The second island-to-island shift occurs for Gaius Silanus, a proconsul of Asia brought up on charges of *repetundae* and *maiestas* under Emperor Tiberius in 22 CE. On Silanus’s conviction, Tiberius asked Lucius Piso for an opinion regarding sentence. Tacitus relates, “After a long preface devoted to the sovereign’s clemency [*celementia*], he declared for the outlawry of

⁷⁴ The expression λυπροτάτης indicates wretchedness or poverty of land in Strabo, 2.5.32. Cf. LSJ, 1066. Juvenal 1.73 (Braund, LCL), speaks of “cramped Gyara” (*brevibus Gyaris*).

⁷⁵ Hansjörg Kalcyk, “Gyarus (Γύαρως; *Gýaros*),” in Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, eds., *Brill’s New Pauly: Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World* (trans. and ed. Christine F. Salazar et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 5:1046; Hansjörg Kalcyk, “Andros (Ἀνδρος; *Ándros*),” in *Brill’s New Pauly* (2006), 1:689. Yücel Acer, *The Aegean Maritime Disputes and International Law* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 258–259, table 6 indicates 383 km² for Andros.

Silanus from fire and water and his relegation to the isle of Gyarus" (Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.68 [Jackson, LCL]). The notice of *aqua atque igni ... interdicendum* suggests capital exile; in *insulam Gyarum relegandum*, the act of deportation. The rest of the senate concurred. Tiberius was inclined to show *clementia*, declaring that "Gyarus was a bleak and uninhabited island" (*insulam Gyarum immitem et sine cultu hominum esse*: 3.69). He proposed that "out of consideration for the Junian house and for a man once their peer, they might allow him to retire to Cythnus instead" (Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.69). The action met with the satisfaction of Silanus' sister Torquata, "a Vestal of old-world saintliness" (Tacitus, *Ann.* 3.69) who had intervened on his behalf. There was no further discussion. Cythnus, having a land mass of 99km²,⁷⁶ is 5.8 times larger than Gyarus.

The third island shift involves Gaius Vibius Serenus, proconsul of Further Spain. He was condemned under Tiberius on a charge of *vis publica* and given what looks to have been an aggravated penalty of capital exile "as the result of his savage character" (*ob atrocitatem morum* [Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.13]); he was deported to the island of Amorgus in 23 CE. A year later, Serenus was brought back from exile and prosecuted by his own son. He appeared, writes Tacitus, "a mass of filth and rags, and now in irons" (4.28) as he stood before the court. The prosecution failed. Notwithstanding, Tiberius had to veto two motions; one that Serenus be executed by flogging and decapitation, and the other that he be confined to either Gyarus or the island of Donusa. Both motions constituted an intensification of his previous aggravated sentence. Tiberius responded that "both islands ... were waterless, and, if you granted a man his life, you must also allow him the means of living" (4.30).⁷⁷ Serenus was shipped back to Amorgus. The island shift has a "bad-to-worse-to-bad" connotation. Amorgus has a land mass of 121km².⁷⁸ Gyarus, measuring 17km² and Donusa, 14km²,⁷⁹ are 7.1 and 8.6 times smaller than Amorgus respectively.

⁷⁶ We have adopted the area given by Acer, *Aegean Maritime Disputes*, 258, table 6. However, L. Büchner, "Kythnos 1)," in *PW* 12.1:219 records an area of "85,2km² (ohne die kleinen Nebeninseln 76 km²)," which may indicate that the 99km² number actually includes more than Cythnus itself. If Büchner's 76km² is the more accurate area reading, the shift is to an island about 4.5 times larger.

⁷⁷ The philosopher Musonius Rufus would find a fresh water spring there during his exile under Nero (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 7.16. Cf. Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.71; Dio Cassius, 62.27.4).

⁷⁸ Acer, *Aegean Maritime Disputes*, 258, table 6; Hansjörg Kalczyk, "Amorgus (Ἀμοργός; *Amorgós*)," in *Brill's New Pauly* (2006), 1:594.

⁷⁹ Acer, *Aegean Maritime Disputes*, 258, table 6.

Cassius Severus's case is the fourth island-to-island shift. In 12 CE, Severus was prosecuted in the senate under Augustus for *maestatis* against the nation for publishing libels in which he "blackened the characters of men and women of repute ..." (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.72). He was relegated to the island of Crete, which has a land mass of 8,261 km².⁸⁰ Tacitus continues: "There, by continuing his methods, he drew upon himself so many animosities, new or old, that he was now stripped of his estate, interdicted from fire and water, and sent to linger out his days on the rock of Seriphos [*saxo Seripho consenuit*]" (4.21).⁸¹ Seriphos has a land mass of only 75 km².⁸² The downgrade from *relegatio* to *exilium* for Severus is emphatically punctuated by a shift to an island 110.2 times smaller than Crete.

The final two island shifts relate to members of the imperial family. Augustus had tried to inculcate a deep moral conservatism among the Roman elites. He wished to model the pattern for Rome in his own family, particularly among the women of his household. Tacitus writes that "at the height of his happiness and his confidence in his family and its training, Fortune proved fickle. He found the two Julias, his daughter and granddaughter, guilty of every form of vice, and banished [*relegavit*] them" (Suetonius, *Aug.* 65.1 [Rolfe, LCL]). We concern ourselves only with the elder Julia, Augustus's daughter by Scribonia, wife of Marcellus, M. Vipsanius Agrippa, and, eventually, Tiberius (Suetonius, *Aug.* 63). Dio indicates that Augustus was enraged when he discovered what was occurring and, after informing the senate, banished Julia in 2 BCE "to the island of Pandateria, lying off Campania, and her mother Scribonia voluntarily accompanied her" (Dio Cassius, 55.10.14–15 [Cary, LCL]). Augustus forbade Julia wine and other delicacies in her exile and prohibited any male, whether bond or free, from approaching her except by his permission (Suetonius, *Aug.* 65.3). After five years, Augustus "moved her from the island to the mainland and treated her with somewhat less rigor" (65.3). She was permitted the freedom of the town of Rhegium on the Sicilian Strait (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.53; Suetonius, *Tib.* 50). Following Augustus's death, Tiberius ordered Julia into a close confinement to her house, denied her the use of the allowance left her by Augustus and her yearly income (Suetonius, *Tib.* 50). She died in 14 CE. Notwithstanding the

⁸⁰ Acer, *Aegean Maritime Disputes*, 260, table 7. Acer's table distinguishes between the area of Crete proper and the area of Crete including its surrounding islands (8,336 km²).

⁸¹ Juvenal 6.564 and 10.170 describe Seriphos as "tiny."

⁸² Andreas Külzer, "Seriphos (Σέριφος/*Sériphos*)," in *Brill's New Pauly* (2008), 13:317. Acer, *Aegean Maritime Disputes*, 258, table 6, gives 74 km².

presence of a sizeable villa,⁸³ the exile to Pandateria (modern Ventotene), an island of only 1.247 km²,⁸⁴ was intended to be a particularly severe punishment for Julia and a sharp caution to the Roman people.

Finally, Augustus's adoptive son, Agrippa Postumus, was disowned "because of his low tastes and violent temper" (Suetonius, *Aug.* 65.1 [Rolfe, LCL]) and sent off to Surrentum (modern Sorrento) on the coast. Later, Suetonius writes, "As Agrippa grew no more manageable, but on the contrary became madder from day to day, he transferred him to an island and set a guard of soldiers over him besides. He also provided by a decree of the senate that he should be confined there for all time [*in perpetuum*]" (65.4). The island was Planasia (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.3). At Augustus's death, Agrippa was executed (Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.6; Suetonius, *Tib.* 22). The shift in this case intensified Agrippa's exile from a coastal city to an island of only 10.2 km².⁸⁵

The cases above demonstrate an observable pattern. Including the very real impact of a sentencing authority with inclinations to *clementia* and the countervailing pressures of influential persons who appealed for consideration to the *dignitas* and *honor* of an exile's family, the punishment had to "match" to the offender and the crime. In general, the size of the island and the nature of its appointments had to be such that the more significant the personal downgrade in status and the more heinous the crime, the smaller the island and/or the more severe its appointments. By the descriptions and measures noted above, we may set the islands discussed into clusters and approximately associate them with other known islands of exile of similar size.⁸⁶ Among the cluster of "worst islands" would be Gyarus and Donusa for

⁸³ So Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 105, who writes that this made it an "appropriate place of exile for members of the imperial family." For other royals who were sent to Pandateria, see Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.25, 14.63–64; Suetonius, *Tib.* 53.

⁸⁴ Alessandro Corsini et al., "Assessment of H₂- and H₂O-based Renewable Energy-buffering Systems in Minor Islands," *Renewable Energy* 34 (2009): 280. This fits to the description of the island in B. De Vivo, et al., "Fluid Inclusion Evidence for Magmatic Silicate/Saline/CO₂ Immiscibility and Geochemistry of Alkaline Xenoliths from Ventotene Island, Italy," *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta* 59.14 (1995): 2924: "The island of Ventotene is about 2.8 km long and between 250 and 800 m wide"

⁸⁵ F. Barbanera et al., "Analysis of the Genetic Structure of Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*, Galliformes) Populations by Means of Mitochondrial DNA and RAPD markers: a study from central Italy," *Biological Conservation* 122 (2005): 276, describes Planasia (modern day Pianosa) thus: "This island (10.2 km²) belongs to the Tuscan Archipelago National Park (PNAT), which is sited in the Tyrrhenian sea" Rudolph Hanslick, "Planasia (Πλανασία. 1)," in *WP*, 20.2:2009, notes the dimensions as "ca 4 km lang und 3 km breit"

⁸⁶ The writer is keenly aware that the Mediterranean, its coastlines, and its islands have always been and are currently dynamic sea- and landscapes due to various interlinking

their small size and all but unlivable environment. The even more diminutive islands of Pandateria and Planasia, despite their somewhat mitigated living arrangements, would put them in a place only slightly removed from the “worst” cluster.⁸⁷ The islands of Seriphos, Cythnus, and Amorgus would constitute a “severe” category⁸⁸ and Andros “less severe.”⁸⁹ Finally, an island climbing in area to the likes of Crete or larger would be “better,”⁹⁰ reflecting significant consideration to the exile’s continuing Roman status and possessions and indicating a crime that was less serious.

3.2. *Where Patmos Fits Relative to the “Island Shifts”*

Patmos (modern Patino), one of the Sporades islands,⁹¹ had long been inhabited. Mycenaean and geometric period potsherds suggest habitation from the 14th to 8th centuries BCE.⁹² It “functioned in the Hellenistic period as one of a series of fortress islands for the mainland city of Miletus, protecting it from attack from the sea”⁹³ Aune writes:

In an inscription from Patmos dating to the second century BC (*SEG* 1068.2), a certain Hegemandros was honored by the Association of Torch Runners on Patmos. The inscription mentions the presence of a gymnasium on the island and mentions that Hegemandros was gymnasiarch seven times and that he had funded the erection of a stone statue of Hermes as well as performed

processes such as tectonic uplift, volcanism, subsidence, wind and water erosion, and general oceanographic and climatological trends over time. The island areas given above and cross-compared constitute a modern “snapshot” and should not be taken to imply that they exactly equate to the measures in the period of antiquity. Having said this, it is arguable that the ancient measures, if discoverable, would not displace any of the islands in the general cross-comparisons noted above. For example, Gyarus and Donusa would still compare very unfavorably to the relatively much larger Amorgus. For descriptions of how archaeology can be employed in establishing Mediterranean paleosea level, see Kurt Lambeck, et al., “Sea Level in Roman Time in the Central Mediterranean and Implications for Recent Change,” *Earth and Planetary Science Letters* 224 (2004): 563–575; Rita Auriemma and Emanuela Solinas, “Archaeological Remains as Sea Level Change Markers: A review,” *Quaternary International* 206 (2009): 134–146.

⁸⁷ Another example of roughly this type might be Delos though this was a religious center. Trimerus would also fit to this description.

⁸⁸ Another example of roughly this type is Cercina.

⁸⁹ Cos, Corcyra, Naxos, and Samos are comparable examples.

⁹⁰ The Balearic Islands, Cephallenia, Corsica, Lesbos, Rhodes, Sardinia, and Sicily match to this last group.

⁹¹ All of these sources give Patmos only the barest notice.

⁹² Otto F.A. Meinardus, *St. John of Patmos and the Seven Churches of the Apocalypse* (Athens: Lycabettus Press, 1970), 13.

⁹³ Boxall, *Revelation*, 39. For detailed discussion and sources, see Aune, *Revelation*, 1:77.

other benefits for his fellow citizens and athletes. An inscription from the second century AD (G. Kaibel, *Epigrammatica Graeca ex lapidibus conlecta* [Berlin: Reimer, 1878] no. 872) honors Bera, a hydrophore, “priestess,” of Artemis (ὕδροφόρος was the Milesian term for such priestesses), and reveals the presence of a cult and temple of Artemis on Patmos, complete with a public feast, a procession, and the recitation of hymns in honor of the goddess (Saffrey, *RB* 82 [1975] 399–407; cf. Peek, *RMP* 107 [1964] 315–325). It is also likely that the inhabitants of Patmos had their own tradition of the birth of Artemis on that island (Saffrey, *RB* 82 [1975] 407–410), which may have influenced the version of the Apollo-Leto myth used in Rev 12 (Strabo, *Geogr.* 10.5.13; Pliny, *Nat.* 4.23; Thucydides 3.33).⁹⁴

Patmos’s jurisdictional status relative to Roman provincial Asia—it was situated a little over 90 km from Ephesus and 70 km from Miletus—is somewhat uncertain, though Hemer is prepared to offer that “on balance its [geographical] position favours inclusion in Asia: it is more naturally grouped with the eastern islands and is outflanked by Asian Amorgos to the southwest, though the latter’s attachment to Asia receives special mention and might be anomalous.”⁹⁵

Patmos is generally described in modern discussion as a “bare, rocky volcanic island with hills rising to about a thousand feet.”⁹⁶ There were no ancient mines on Patmos, and whether a quarry or quarries actually existed at the time of John has not been certainly determined.⁹⁷ Victorinus’s notice, at some distance in time, of John’s condemnation to the mines on Patmos in his commentary on Revelation may simply be an embellishment redounding to the credit of John’s saintliness.⁹⁸ Against the notice

⁹⁴ Aune, *Revelation*, 1:77.

⁹⁵ Hemer, *Letters*, 28. He continues: “Ptolemy assigns to Asia the coastal islands from Rhodes to Tenedos together with Amorgos, Astypalaea and some others (*Geog.* 5.2.28–32), and marks the Aegean, Icarian and Myrtoan Seas as the province’s western limit (5.2.1). In his account of the islands belonging to Achaia (3.15.23–30) he includes most of the Cyclades and some of the Sporades by name. Patmos is not named in either list. The reason for this omission is not clear: perhaps its settlement was a dependency of a larger island-state, and so without political status. Geographically its position is marginal: the issue might depend on the latitude permitted in interpreting Ptolemy’s reference to islands which τῇ Ἀσίᾳ παράκεινται (5.2.28).”

⁹⁶ George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 30. So also J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (AB 38; Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 384; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 81; and others.

⁹⁷ Hemer, *Letters*, 27; Swete, *Revelation*, clxxvii–clxxviii; Ramsay, *Letters*, 85.

⁹⁸ Hemer, *Letters*, 27. Victorinus may also be intimating a lower status John as condemnation to the mines (*damnatus in metallum*) was a servile punishment (*summum supplicium*).

that Patmos was a “penal settlement,” or “penal colony,” or that it might so have served,⁹⁹ evidence is lacking.¹⁰⁰

What we do know is that Patmos is small; in fact much smaller than the ancient notice of its 30 Roman mile circumference (Pliny, *Nat.* 4.12.69). It is also about 75 % smaller than the modern descriptions of it as ten miles long and five or six across might suggest.¹⁰¹ This is because the island’s “coastline is so deeply indented”¹⁰² In fact, Patmos measures only 34 km².¹⁰³ Patmos’s land mass and appointments put it somewhere between the “worst” and the “severe” classes of islands noted above. Its comparative size and appointments suggest that Patmos would have been where a high status person who had suffered disenfranchisement and confiscation was likely to have been exiled if he had no claims to consideration or powerful interveners. *Relegatio in insulam* to Patmos, irrespective of status, would not have been quite like the near death sentence of a Gyarus or Donusa, but it was certainly nearer to them than those islands discussed above that constituted an aggravated confinement. We may conclude that John’s stay on Patmos suggests that there is no moderation owing to high status for him (if he had previously even possessed it); perhaps more likely, the fact that he is sent to Patmos may simply reflect John’s lower status. Correspondingly, relegation to Patmos may also suggest that John’s crime of counseling conversion to “Jewish ways” through his proclamation of Jesus, had been judged quite serious.

⁹⁹ E.g. G.R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (NCB; London: Oliphants/Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1974), 64; Robert W. Wall, *Revelation* (NIBCNT; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 61; Mounce, *Book of Revelation*, 54; Hemer, *Letters*, 27 (who notes it as “very possible”).

¹⁰⁰ The idea is frequently and falsely attributed to Pliny, *Nat.* 4.12.69 in the literature. Among those who deny the possibility are: Aune, *Revelation*, 1:78–79; Swete, *Revelation*, 64; Boxall, *Revelation*, 39.

¹⁰¹ Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, 384; Yeatts, *Revelation*, 40; Osborne, *Revelation*, 81.

¹⁰² Hemer, *Letters*, 27.

¹⁰³ So Andreas Külzer, “Patmos (Πάτμος/Patmos),” in *Brill’s New Pauly* (2007), 10:601–602, who confirms Hemer’s description: “Outer perimeter: irregular, approximately semicircular, open to the east (remains of a crater rim), maximum length of 12 km, width of 300–5,000 m, highest elevation is Prophetis Elias in the SE (269 m); the island consists of four main parts with each being connected by a low isthmus, the widest of which is in the north between Leukas and cape Geranos; there are several micro-islands to the east.”

4. EXILIC PERSPECTIVES ON ROME AND ITS EMPEROR

It is not a surprise that literate and powerful exiles would have written to clarify their “implied combative relationship to Roman power”¹⁰⁴ and by this means come to terms with their consequent displacement and marginalization. It is no less surprising that there was also a public interested in reading their works. This section will consider the writing of three exiles; one from the time of Claudius (Seneca) and two from the time of Domitian (Epictetus and Dio Chrysostom). These three are only part of a significant number of exiles whose literature has been preserved. They include the likes of Cicero, Ovid, Musonius Rufus, and others. The logic in considering Seneca, Epictetus, and Dio Chrysostom is their closeness to the period of the Revelation’s writing and a certain breadth in their respective identities and their connection to Rome and imperial power. Our interest is to compare what they write concerning Rome and its sovereign with what we find in the Revelation.

4.1. *Seneca, Epictetus, and Dio Chrysostom*

Lucius Annaeus Seneca was born about 4 BCE to an equestrian family from Cordoba, Hispania (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.53). As a youth, he came to Rome (Seneca, *Helv.* 19.2) where he was educated in Stoic philosophy and entered imperial politics. In 41 CE the Emperor Claudius’s wife Valeria Messalina, in a bid to secure her place against a perceived rival, accused Claudius’s niece Julia Livilla of adultery with Seneca (Tacitus, *Ann.* 12.8; Dio Cassius, 60.8).¹⁰⁵ Seneca was banished to the island of Corsica (Dio Cassius, 60.8.5–6) where he remained for eight years until the fall of Messalina and the rise of Claudius’s new wife Agrippina, the mother of Nero (Dio Cassius 60.32.3). Two documents have survived to us from the time of Seneca’s exile: the *Ad Helviam* to his mother, consoling her on the death of her grandson and his own exile, and the *Ad Polybium*, a document of consolation to Claudius’s freedman and secretary *a libellis* (Seneca, *Polyb.* 6.5) on the death of his brother. The subject of exile is treated in other documents written before

¹⁰⁴ T. Whitmarsh, “‘Greece is the World’: exile and identity in the Second Sophistic,” in S. Goldhill, ed., *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 304. Whitmarsh indicates that this holds especially for the philosophers who were expelled by Vespasian and Domitian.

¹⁰⁵ See also the comments of Jo-Marie Claassen, *Displaced Persons: The Literature of Exile from Cicero to Boethius* (London: Duckworth, 1999), 63.

and after Seneca's exile, but these have a much less personal quality and possess "little empathy"¹⁰⁶ for those to whom they are addressed.

Born in Hierapolis in Phrygia about the year 50 CE, the Greek Epictetus "was a slave woman's son, and for many years a slave himself."¹⁰⁷ He came to be owned by Nero's freedman Epaphroditus (Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 1.1.20; 1.9.29; 1.19.19; 1.26.11–12; 4.1.150), and was schooled in Stoicism by the philosopher Musonius Rufus (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.1.27; 1.7.32; 1.9.29; 3.6.10; 2.15.14; 3.23.29). He knew of the Stoic senators Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.1.27; 1.11.19; 4.1.123), and was himself banished from Rome along with many other philosophers by order of Domitian, perhaps in the late 80s or early 90s CE (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.24.12; 2.7.8).¹⁰⁸ On his banishment, he retired to the city of Nicopolis (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.19.28; 1.25.19; 2.6.20; 2.21.14) never to return to Rome. In Nicopolis, he established a school and taught philosophy (Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.21) until his death around the year 120 CE.¹⁰⁹ The Greek philosopher Arrian preserved Epictetus's discourses, which contain, in various places, Epictetus's engagements and reflections on the subject of exile.

The third exile to be considered is Dio Chrysostom, who was born at Prusa in the Roman province of Bithynia about the year 40 CE. From his mother's side, he possessed Roman citizenship (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 41.5–6; cf. 40.22). He was a man of considerable wealth and influence in his home city (*Or.* 43). Perhaps in the reign of Vespasian, Dio came to Rome, making connections with the wealthy and influential there, including some who had ties to the imperial family. His exile in the year 82 CE was, Dio states,

... on account of my reputed friendship with a man of good character and very closely connected with those who at that time were Fortune's favourites and indeed high officials, a man who lost his life on account of the very things which made him seem fortunate to many men, and indeed to practically everyone, I mean his connection by marriage and blood with these officials; the charge brought against me being that I was that man's friend and adviser¹¹⁰ (*Or.* 13.1 [Cohon, LCL])

¹⁰⁶ Elaine Fantham, "Dialogues of Displacement: Seneca's Consolations to Helvia and Polybius," in Jan F. Gaertner, ed., *Writing Exile: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 173–174.

¹⁰⁷ *Epictetus: The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, the Manual and Fragments* (LCL; trans. W.A. Oldfather; London: William Heinemann, 1967; orig. 1925), 1:vii.

¹⁰⁸ See discussion in Oldfather, *Epictetus*, 154 m and Claassen, *Displaced Persons*, 65.

¹⁰⁹ Oldfather, *Epictetus*, 1:xi.

¹¹⁰ For discussion of the identity of the man and the date, see *Dio Chrysostom with an English Translation* (trans. J.W. Cohoon; LCL; London: William Heinemann, 1977; orig. 1939), 2:89.

While Dio protests that he was innocently caught up on the principle that “it is the custom of despots to throw in several others for no reason whatever with those who are being executed by them,” (*Or.* 13.1) frank speech in Rome and before Domitian may also have been a contributing factor (*Or.* 3.3; 13.1).¹¹¹ Dio was exiled from Rome and Italy and could not return to his home province of Bithynia (*Or.* 19.1–2).¹¹² His property does not appear to have been confiscated, but it was degraded by predation and neglect over the 14 years of his absence from Prusa (*Or.* 40.2; 45.10). In 96 CE, following Domitian’s death, Dio was restored by Nerva, whom he characterized as “humane and fond of me and an old-time friend” (*Or.* 45.2.; cf. 44.6). Dio mentions his exile numbers of times elsewhere in the collection of his discourses. Most complete is his address to the Athenians about his banishment (*Or.* 13) and notice of details of his exile in a defense of his relations with the city of Prusa (*Or.* 45).

4.2. *The Philosophers on Rome and Its Sovereign*

Seneca declares to his mother in the *Ad Helvium* that he is happy in circumstances that usually make others wretched. In true Stoic form, he indicates that this comes of treating external things—i.e., his expulsion from Rome and the imperial court, confiscation of his possessions, and removal to the island of Corsica—as of slight importance (*Seneca, Helv.* 4.2–5.2; esp. 5.1). He does not claim the title of wise man (*sapiens*), confessing the need to take “refuge in the camp of others—of those clearly who can easily defend themselves and their followers” (*Helv.* 5.2 [Basore, LCL]). By this means, he forearms himself through Stoic philosophy against Fortune’s wiles so that he will stand constant with a mind unconquered. He argues that though exile is considered terrible by most, it is in fact only a change of place (*loci commutatio* [*Helv.* 6.1; cf. 8.1; 10.1]). Just as foreigners have chosen from desire (*animi causa*) to settle in Rome, so too have they chosen from desire to reside in the harshest islands of exile, including Corsica (*Helv.* 6.2–6). This disposition to wander and settle in foreign places conforms to the patterns of the celestial bodies and the movements of tribes so that every place, including Rome and Corsica, has been successively peopled by wanderers and exiles (*Helv.* 7.7–10). Seneca, drawing upon the Stoic *topoi* of the cosmopolis and

¹¹¹ It must be conceded, however, that Dio does not claim to have been a philosopher at the time of his earliest Roman domicile.

¹¹² See discussion in Paolo Desideri, “Dio’s Exile: Politics, Philosophy, Literature,” in Jan F. Gaertner, ed., *Writing Exile: The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 194.

contemplation of the heavens, advises: "... let us traverse any lands whatsoever. Inside the world there can be found no place of exile; for nothing that is inside the world is foreign to mankind" (*Helv.* 8.5). He declares that "so long as I may keep my mind directed ever to the sight of kindred things on high, what difference does it make to me what soil I tread upon?" (*Helv.* 8.6).

Seneca also considers in the *Ad Helvium* the ardent republican Marcus Claudius Marcellus (consul in 51 BCE) as an example of the philosophic ideal of equanimity in exile. In fact, he asserts a kind of reversal in circumstances between Marcellus and his peers.¹¹³ He observes that Brutus

... saw Marcellus in exile at Mytilene, living as happily as the limitations of human nature permit, and that he had never been more interested in liberal studies than he was at that time. And so he adds that, when he was about to return to Rome without him, he felt that he himself was going into exile instead of leaving him behind in exile. (*Helv.* 9.4)

Seneca offers that the senate petitioned for Marcellus's recall "lest they should be exiles if they should be left without him ..." (*Helv.* 9.6). Moreover, in Julius Caesar's refusal to visit Marcellus when he passed by Mytilene, Seneca daringly imagines Marcellus comforting himself thus:

The mere loss of your country is not unhappiness. You have so steeped yourself in studies as to know that to the wise man every place is his country. And, besides, the very man who drove you forth [i.e., Caesar]—was he not absent from his country through ten successive years? (*Helv.* 9.7)

Virtuous though Caesar's peregrinations were because he was extending the boundaries of empire, the implication in Seneca's piece of imagining is that Caesar was more an exile than Marcellus. Fantham sees the Marcellus example as sufficiently distant in time and circumstance as not to carry the damaging implication of an "analogy with the political oppression under the principate, from which Seneca himself might seem freer in Corsica than at Rome."¹¹⁴ It is also well chosen for a "happy ending" in Marcellus's recall.

Seneca's stated philosophical restfulness concerning the confiscation of his property because "the wants of the body are trifling" (*Helv.* 10.2) is followed by a diatribe with examples against Rome's insatiable present hungers for every luxury and excess of food, clothing, and shelter, which stand against the simplicity of earlier times and the little that is required for Nature's need (*Helv.* 10.3–11.4). He observes:

¹¹³ See Jan F. Gaertner, "The Discourse of Displacement in Greco-Roman Antiquity," in *Writing Exile*, 12.

¹¹⁴ Fantham, "Dialogues," 183.

Even places of exile will provide necessities, but not even kingdoms superfluities. It is the mind that makes us rich; this goes with us into exile, and in the wildest wilderness, having found there all that the body needs for its sustenance, it itself overflows in the enjoyment of its own goods. (*Helv.* 11.4–5)

The *Ad Polybium* is a different document, principally because it descends from the Stoic heights to a level of un-philosophical pleading.¹¹⁵ At its beginning, Seneca plaintively offers to Claudius's freedman, "... I do not refuse to shed whatever tears my own fortune has left me in regret for yours; for I shall even yet find some that may flow from these eyes of mine, that have already been drained by my personal woes, if only thereby I may do you some good" (*Seneca, Polyb.* 2.2 [Basore, LCL]).¹¹⁶ He concludes the piece by begging to be excused for the failings of his consolation on account of a mind weakened and dulled by exile:

... reflect how he who is held fast in the grip of his own misfortunes is not at leisure to comfort others, and how Latin words do not suggest themselves readily to one in whose ears the uncouth jargon of barbarians is ever ringing, distressing even to the more civilized barbarians. (*Polyb.* 18.9)

Seneca's desire for restoration to Rome and his former life is a subtle but strong undercurrent throughout the piece. He acknowledges that Polybius shouldered a great burden in receiving the countless pleadings of many as Claudius's *a libellis*, all the while feeling his own burden of grief for his deceased brother: "You, I say, are not allowed to weep; in order that you may be able to listen to the many who weep—in order that you may dry the tears of those who are in peril and desire to obtain mercy from Caesar's clemency, it is your own tears that you must dry" (*Polyb.* 6.5). By this means, Seneca insinuates the willingness of Polybius's ear to hear the sound of Seneca's own earlier-mentioned tears and his unexpressed plea for intercession with the emperor for the clemency and return that they ask.

¹¹⁵ Fantham, "Dialogues," 185, remarks that "this dialogue's flattery of the freedman Polybius and of his imperial master has troubled many scholars from the age of the enlightenment on. How did it relate to the fawning appeal to Messalina and various freedmen which Dio (61.10.2) claims Seneca wrote?" Claassen, *Displaced Persons*, 25, observes that modern opinion runs from judging the *Ad Polybium* servile to seeing it as an expression of deep irony. There are ancient notices of accusations of inconsistency between Seneca's expressed philosophical commitments to material contentment and railings against Roman excess and his later remarkable wealth in Dio Cassius, 61.10; 62.2.1–2, 25; Tacitus, *Ann.* 13.42; Juvenal, 10.16. See, however, Seneca's later attempts to relinquish that wealth to Nero and plead for retirement at Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.52–53, 56; 15.64 and compare this with Suetonius, *Nero* 35.

¹¹⁶ Note how this contrasts with the heroic tones in which Seneca begins *Helv.* 1.1.

By an artful bifurcation, Seneca splits off Fortune and Caesar as separate players in both Polybius's brother's loss and Seneca's own exile. The construction permits Seneca to decry the circumstances of the loss and suffering as Fortune's lot for each, while at the same time praising the help—or prospect of help—from Caesar. Polybius will find greatest consolation against Fortune's blow in the merits of the comfort of Caesar. On account of Caesar's kindness and gracious favour to Polybius and to so many others, Seneca declares, he prays for Fortune's kindness toward Caesar for unrivaled achievements and victories, protection from the grief of personal loss, and great length of years for him and his heirs (Polybius 12.3–13.2). The bifurcation also allows Seneca to venture hope of his own recall without offending the majesty. He says of Claudius,

For he has not cast me down with no thought of ever lifting me up—nay, he has not even cast me down, but when I had been smitten by Fortune and was falling, he checked my fall, and, using the mitigating power of his divine hand, he let me down gently when I was plunging to destruction; he besought the senate in my behalf, and not only gave me my life, but even begged it.

(Polybius 13.2–3)

Seneca protests neither his innocence nor confesses his guilt in the matter of Julia Livilla. To do the former would be to accuse Caesar of injustice; to admit to the latter would be to confess the fitness of his exile. So he stands mute and defers the choice to Caesar:

Be his the care—howsoever he shall wish, such let him account my case. Let either his justice discern that it is good, or his mercy make it good; whether he shall discern that I am innocent, or shall wish me to be so—either, in my eyes, will equally show his kindness.

(Polybius 13.3)

The return of many others from exile is a comfort to Seneca's restfulness in the timing of his own eventual return in accordance with Caesar's mercy. The whole argument seems more alive to *Realpolitik* than philosophy.¹¹⁷

The philosopher and former slave Epictetus works the themes of philosophic and religious insight and a fierce resolve not to be enslaved to consistent effect throughout his discussions and reflections on exile. He begins

¹¹⁷ Fantham, "Dialogues," 185–186, writes: "Innocenti Pierini accepts the work as conformist panegyric, and panegyric was necessary for Seneca's purpose. I heartily agree with Miriam Griffin's comment that Pliny the Younger understood the realities of despotism, and the level of flattery required for powerful freedmen; as with the Senate's honorific decrees for Pallas under the same emperor Tacitus (*Ann.* 12.53) and Pliny (*Ep.* 8.6.3 and 8.6.13) accepted the obsequious language at face value: these writers knew the level of flattery required in addressing or referring to the living emperor."

with the Stoic assumption that there is that which is within one's power to determine and that which is outside of it. The former is the realm of a person's moral purpose (ἡ προαίρεσις), which stands outside of even Zeus's power to influence or control (Arrian, *Epict. diss.* 1.1.23); the latter is the realm of actual experiences—from the heights of wealth, pleasure and power to the most painful and ignominious death—which stands entirely within Zeus's will to determine (*Epict. diss.* 1.1.17). Against the disposition to pierce oneself with concern regarding actual experience, Epictetus advises that the true philosopher will count actual experience as a matter of indifference (ἀδιάφορα) and an opportunity to demonstrate serenity (εὐροια) in the face of providence (*Epict. diss.* 1.30.4).

Exile stands outside the moral purpose and so it is a matter of indifference (*Epict. diss.* 1.30.2–3). Perceiving too that exile is entirely within the province of the deity, the philosopher will serenely acquiesce:

I have been set free by God, I know His commands, no one has power any longer to make a slave of me, I have the right kind of emancipator, and the right kind of judges. "Am I not master of your body?" Very well, what is that to me? "Am I not master of your paltry property." Very well, what is that to me? "Am I not master of exile or bonds?" Again I yield up to you all these things and my whole paltry body itself, whenever you will.

(*Epict. diss.* 4.7.17–18. Cf. 3.29.99–101; 4.1.99–100; 4.4.34)

Any domicile too, whether it be Rome or Gyarus, is a matter of indifference (*Epict. diss.* 3.3.19; 3.22.45–48; 4.7.14–15; 4.11.23).¹¹⁸ Epictetus readily admits that Rome's allures can be distracting (*Epict. diss.* 1.10.2–6; 1.26.10–11), but advises,

If you are at Gyara, don't picture the style of life at Rome, and all the relaxations a man had who was living there, as well as all that he might have upon his return; but since you have been stationed there, you ought to strive to live manfully at Gyara, as beseems the man whose life is spent in Gyara.

(Epictetus, *Diss.* 3.24.109. Cf. 2.6.20, 22–23)

In true Stoic fashion, Epictetus also counsels that Zeus calls the philosopher to bear witness to a citizenship that is not place-specific; to a "large state" called the universe that overarches small, more localized states (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.9.1; 2.15.11; 3.24.19, 112). Considering that larger state, Epictetus asks, "Exile? And to what place can anyone thrust me out? Outside the universe he cannot. But wherever I go, there are sun, moon, stars, dreams, omens, my converse with gods" (Epictetus, *Diss.* 3.22.22. Cf. 2.16.32–33).

¹¹⁸ See the embodiment of the philosophy in the example of Agrippinus (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.1.28–32).

Such a philosophy removes the coercive power of exile from the arsenal of the emperor. Epictetus asserts that

... no one is afraid of Caesar himself, but he is afraid of death, exile, loss of property, prison, disfranchisement. Nor does anyone love Caesar himself, unless in some way Caesar is a person of great merit; but we love wealth, a tribuneship, a praetorship, a consulship. When we love and hate and fear these things, it needs must be that those who control them are masters over us. (*Epict. diss.* 4.1.60)

But where one treats one's body and one's possessions as matters of indifference and where one sees that the actions of the one who threatens also stand under and are merely the doing of Zeus's bidding, a tyrant's threats of exile and confiscation are emptied of their force (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.9. 15, 17; 1.29. 7–8, 61; 3.22.56; 4.7.1–4). To level the ground even further, Epictetus reminds that tyrants themselves are not immune from life and death or pleasures and sorrows; if they threaten the head of another, he asks, "[D]oes the tyrant's head always stay in its place ...?" (Epictetus, *Diss.* 4.7.31. Cf. 1.25.22). Notwithstanding Epictetus's denial that he is a political subversive,¹¹⁹ one can easily understand why the likes of Vespasian and Domitian saw seditious implications in such fearless philosophical quietism and the bold speech that it engendered. Epictetus seems mindful of the danger, even at a distance from Rome, as he uses the names of deceased emperors and Domitian only when describing the daring exploits of others. When he engages more directly, he speaks of a "tyrant," or "Caesar," or simply "He" (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.24.12).¹²⁰

The way Dio Chrysostom comes to terms with his exile is not so much by means of philosophy as religion.¹²¹ He is helped to determine whether his exile was a terrible misfortune or a matter of indifference by reflecting upon

¹¹⁹ Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.29.9–10: "Do you philosophers, then, teach us to despise our kings?—Far from it. Who among us teaches you to dispute their claim to the things over which they have authority? Take my paltry body, take my property, take my reputation, take those who are about me. If I persuade any to lay claim to these things, let some man truly accuse me." What Epictetus does deny is that an emperor can control anyone's judgment, which is sacrosanct except by consent. He furnishes an example in Helvidius Priscus's behavior toward Vespasian (Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.2.19–24).

¹²⁰ See also Oldfather, *Epictetus*, 1:154 n1.

¹²¹ Dio indicates that he himself never presumed to be a philosopher; rather, the vocation and wisdom of philosophy were increasingly presumed of him by others over the course of his exile, so he felt himself pressed to rise to the task to the best of his ability (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 13.1–3, 11–13; 47.8). Whitmarsh, "Greece," 286, writes: "... his exile is fundamental to his philosophical authority, even attributing his initiation directly to the experience." He continues: "Dio's exile is, according to his own account of his life, a *rîte de passage* which authorizes his assumption of the role of genuine philosopher" (292).

his knowledge of a form of divination: "... perhaps God lightens the weight according to the importance of the matter in question, and in the second case, I imagine, to suit the strength and willpower of the afflicted one" (Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 13.3 [Cohoon, LCL]). Having sought out the advice of Apollo at his temple, Dio says, the god advised him "to keep on doing with all zeal the very thing wherein I am engaged, as being a most honourable and useful activity, 'until thou comest,' said he, 'to the uttermost parts of the earth'" (*Or.* 13.9). Without fear or shame for his status as exile, Dio dons a simple garment and begins to roam those parts of the world that have not been forbidden to him.

Religious empowerment is vital to Dio's ability to bear up under and combat the emperor's antipathy. Domitian is "not of this or that one among my equals, or peers as they are sometimes called, but rather of the most powerful, most stern man, who was called by all Greeks and barbarians both master and god, but who was in reality an evil demon [τὸ δὲ ἀληθὲς ὄντα δαίμονα πονηρόν] ..." (*Or.* 45.1). Dio is able to engage the demon openly in his speeches and writing to the world not "out of madness or desperation to do these things, but trusting in a greater power and source of aid, that which proceeds from the gods, though most men scorn it and deem it useless ..." (*Or.* 45.1). *Post reditum*, Dio reflects upon what Gaertner calls "the nature and limits of imperial power and of the relation between Greek intellectuals and the Roman emperor"¹²² in the form of four discourses on kingship (*Or.* 1-4).

Dio seems to engage the residents of Rome in philosophical discourse. Their vices are luxury and intemperance and they clamor for emperors like Nero who will indulge them these things; Dio's antidote is a thorough and sound education (*Or.* 13.29; 21:8). He promises that only then "will your city be great and strong and truly imperial, since at present its greatness arouses distrust and is not very secure" (*Or.* 13.33). The greater the Romans' learning and the more "god-fearing and pious" (*Or.* 13.35) their disposition, the less will be their consumptive lifestyle and the greater the economies of sacrifice. To prevent his counsel from being disqualified because he seems old-fashioned and ignorant and to avoid people's ridicule, Dio resolves to cite the wisdom of others rather than speaking on his own account (*Or.* 13.29).

¹²² Gaertner, "Discourse," 17.

4.3. *John's Perspective in the Revelation*

What is the exilic perspective of John and how does it compare with the perspectives surveyed above? In the question we are confronted with two problems. The first is sourced in the fact that the content of the Revelation is represented as visionary and prophetic; it is not the revelation of John, but of Jesus Christ. John repeatedly indicates that he has received it—indeed has been caught up in it—and is obediently and accurately passing it along to be read and heard by co-religionists. But it is equally true that John does not feign a perspective independent of or dissenting from what he represents as received. In fact, the degree of his investment in and embrace of the content and its perspective is precisely indicated in both the blessings that preface the Revelation and the threats that close it:

Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

(Rev 1:3)

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

(Rev 22:18–19)

This suggests a degree of alignment that permits an interpretation of the visionary perspective as at the same time reflecting the exile's perspective. The second problem relates to the fact that the perspective is mediated through apocalyptic imagery. Is it too opaque for precise and confident assertion? The answer would seem to be no. The references to a multi-headed, multi-crowned beast, Babylon, a woman who is a prostitute, and bodies of water are sufficiently clarified in what they represent and how they relate so that the reader can appreciate the perspective on Rome and its sovereign that is indicated.

The beast coming out of the sea with its seven heads and ten horns is a cipher for Roman governance and its power relations (Rev 13:1–3; 17:3, 7–12).¹²³ The seven heads of the beast from the sea are “seven kings. Five

¹²³ The notice at Rev 17:9 that the seven heads also represent seven hills (ἑπτὰ ὄρη) makes a secure connection to Rome. Mounce, *Book of Revelation*, 315, writes: “There is little doubt that a first-century reader would understand this reference in any way other than as a reference to Rome, the city built upon seven hills. Rome began as a network of seven hill settlements on the left bank of the Tiber, and was from the time of Servius Tullius (her sixth king) an *urbs septicolis*. The reference is commonplace among Roman authors.” For further discussion, see

have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. The beast who once was, and is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction" (Rev 17:10–11). Notwithstanding the more specific indication that one of the heads "seemed to have a fatal wound, but had been healed" (Rev 13:1. Cf. 13:12, 14),¹²⁴ modern efforts to identify the heads more precisely with particular Roman emperors have not met with success.¹²⁵ Friesen is correct to state that "In the world of historians, emperors succeed one another. In the world of the Seer, we encounter more complicated relationships that defy historicizing descriptions."¹²⁶ The heads of the beast do represent emperors and their hegemony,¹²⁷ but what is significant for the present discussion is that, contrary to the specific and more generic-individual references in Seneca, Epictetus, and Dio Chrysostom, the characterization of the principate in the Revelation is summative. John's reader is intended to understand the emperors as a totalized and singular entity.

The beast is identified as the earthly iteration of a Satanic reality—an enormous red¹²⁸ dragon who also has "seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads" (Rev 12:3) who is further identified as "that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray" (Rev 12:9). The dragon co-opts the beast to its destructive agenda against the Christian faithful (Rev 12:17) and empowers and authorizes the beast to rule on the plane of human history (Rev 13:2). A further element in the description is that on each of the seven heads there is a "blasphemous name" (Rev 13:1) and elsewhere that the beast is "covered with blasphemous names" (Rev 17:3)

Aune, *Revelation*, 3:920–921, 944–945; Beale, *Revelation*, 868–869. We leave aside discussion of the ten horns (Rev 17:12–13; cf. 13:1; 17:3, 7, 16), though these appear to represent client kings to Rome.

¹²⁴ Commentators variously identify this head with Gaius Caligula who survived a serious illness (Suetonius, *Cal.* 14; Dio Cassius 59.8) later dying of sword wounds (Suetonius, *Cal.* 58; Tacitus, *Ann.* 11.29; Josephus, *A.J.* 19.105–113 [19.1.14]; Dio Cassius, 59.29.4–7; Seneca, *Dial.* 12.18.3), Nero who stabbed himself (Suetonius, *Nero* 49; Josephus, *B.J.* 4.493 [4.9.2]) and for whom many pined and who a few falsely claimed to be long after his death (Suetonius, *Nero* 57; Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.2, 78; 2:8; Dio Cassius 66.19.3), and the whole imperial system that was distressed but survived (e.g. Mounce, *Book of Revelation*, 248).

¹²⁵ For a survey of the discussion, see Aune, *Revelation*, 3:945–949; Beale, *Revelation*, 870–878. Another extensively debated issue is the name that the number "666" represents in Rev 13:18.

¹²⁶ Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 141.

¹²⁷ Aune, *Revelation*, 3:945–946; Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 141.

¹²⁸ The dragon's colour is *πυρρός*, the beast's is *κόκκινος*, and the woman wears clothes that are *πορφυροῦν καὶ κόκκινον*.

and is given a mouth that utters proud words and blasphemies against God, his name, and heaven (Rev 13:5–6). The names arrogate deity to the beast as does the demand that the world worship the beast or suffer death (Rev 13:8, 12, 15; 14:9–11). The demand, of course, stands against Deut 6:13 (cf. Luke 4:8) and is the cause of Christian resistance, suffering and death (Rev 13:7; 10; 14:12–13; 15:2; 18:4–5, 20).

In 29 BCE, a temple was nominated by the whole province of Asia and permitted by Augustus at Pergamon to the worship of Rome and Julius Caesar (Dio Cassius, 51.20.6–9).¹²⁹ Later in 22 CE, another temple was voted by the cities of Asia to Tiberius, his mother and the senate, receiving Roman sanction (Tacitus, *Ann.* 4.15). After a failed provincial attempt at establishing a local cult to the Emperor Gaius, a provincial temple was later established in honour of the Flavian emperors (*sebastoi*) at Ephesus. There were also, in this period, municipal imperial cults throughout provincial Asia.¹³⁰ In Rome, good emperors were voted god-like honours by the senate and worshipped as heroes after their deaths; they were referred to as divinized one (*divus*), but not god (*deus*). Foreign Hellenes in the provinces, however, were permitted to worship the living emperor as god (*deus*). Romans, would have been scandalized at the thought of giving a living emperor such worship, but many were eventually cowed into acceding to the pretensions to godhood of a few: Gaius desired to be so worshipped (Philo, *Legat.* 11–15, 30; Dio Cassius 59.26, 28), and Domitian referred to himself and preferred to be addressed as a god (Suetonius, *Dom.* 13).

Seneca speaks deferentially of Claudius's "divine hand" (*divinae manus* [Polybius 12.2 f.]) acting in his interest and speaks hopefully of release from exile. Epictetus philosophically reminds that emperors too are mortals subject to the absolute arrangements of Zeus, including the potential loss of their own heads. Dio Chrysostom, admitting to feeling the pressure of one who is universally acknowledged as both master and god (καὶ δεσπότην ὀνομαζόμενον καὶ θεόν), names Domitian a δαίμονα πονηρόν (Dio, *Or.* 45.1) who can only be resisted with the help of the gods. Following his exile, however, Dio betrays a reformist hopefulness in his discourses on the ideal king. For John in the Revelation, however, the entire principate and its power relations are beyond remediation; they are ultimately fit only for

¹²⁹ That Rome was worshipped as well as its sovereigns, members of their families, and the senate may explain why Revelation indicates that the beast was "covered with blasphemous names" (γέμοντα ὀνόματα βλασφημίας [Rev 17:3]). See Aune, *Revelation*, 3:920–923.

¹³⁰ For a full discussion, see Friesen, *Imperial Cults*, 25–103.

final destruction because they make war against the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 14:11; 17:14; 19:16–17, 19–21).

If the principate is beyond remediation, so too is the great city from which it rules. The city is called Babylon and described as a woman who is a prostitute. The symbolic use of the name “Babylon” (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) for Rome, found in other literature roughly contemporary to Revelation,¹³¹ is based upon the connection that as Jerusalem fell to historical Babylon in 587 BCE, it also fell to Rome in 70 CE. Rome is further characterized as a great prostitute (Rev 17:1, 15–16; 19:2) and the mother of prostitutes (Rev 17:5) in her influence. The emphasis in these images is upon Rome’s coercive and irresistible power to make the Mediterranean world—both kings (Rev 17:2; 18:3, 9) and nations (Rev 14:8; 17:2; 18:3; 19:2)—complicit in its economic and moral and spiritual corruption (Rev 17:15; 18:3). Rome is characterized as filled with opulent excess and insatiable acquisitiveness. The woman “was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries” (Rev 17:4; cf. 18:7, 16–17). Babylon collects from merchants and captains the world over vast cargoes of luxury goods, foods, livestock and animals, and “the bodies and souls of men” (Rev 18:11–13). A singular outrage for which Rome is prophetically censured is her treatment of Christians: She is “drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus” (Rev 17:6; 18:20).

The exiles surveyed above show themselves mindful of Rome’s material excesses; especially as they are thrust from the opulent center to an impoverished periphery. Seneca appears to come to terms by advising against pining after Rome’s superabundance. His own recourse is to a philosophical “recalibration” for contentment with the bare necessities available in exile. This he asserts, however, all the meanwhile bending significant literary efforts to return to the capital city of the empire. Epictetus, with greater consistency, argues for a loose hold on material wealth, treating it as a matter of studied philosophical indifference. The object is to live manfully wherever one is, being mindful of one’s greater citizenship in the larger state which is the universe. Dio Chrysostom seems restful in his straitened circumstances. His remedy for Rome’s excesses is a thorough and sound education in philosophy.

¹³¹ For a discussion of the sources, see Aune, *Revelation*, 2:830–832; Beale, *Revelation*, 754–757.

For the Revelation, the cipher of Babylon fits to Rome not only because it permits a delimiting of Rome's material excesses, its demonic hubris, and the fearful harm done to the faithful, but because historical Babylon was expunged. The Revelation anticipates the same for Rome in its repeated declarations and heavenly enactments of fall (Rev 14:8; 18:2, 10, 21). Declarations and visions alike detail complete economic collapse (Rev 18:12–19), depopulation by famine, plague, and death (Rev 18:8, 21–23), and ultimate destruction by fire (Rev 18:8, 18).

John writes at Rev 18:4, "Then I heard another voice from heaven say: 'Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues' The voice from heaven is divine and not angelic because the faithful who are addressed are ὁ λαὸς μου. The message of Rev 18:4 is, on its face, a forceful summons to flight from Babylon (ἐχέλθατε ... ἐξ αὐτῆς). It recalls the Old Testament prophetic exhortations of Jeremiah (Jer 50:8; 51:6, esp. 51:45) and Isaiah (48:20; 52:11). Beale writes that "these prophets exhorted Israel to separate from Babylon's idolatry by leaving it and returning to Israel at the appropriate time of restoration."¹³² Consistent to the Revelation's destination, the present call might best be taken symbolically as reflecting "the necessity of Christians disentangling themselves and distancing themselves morally, and perhaps even socially, from the corrupt and seductive influences of Roman rule in Asia."¹³³ Prophetically heard, embraced, and annunciated by John, these words are a call to present and immediate action; they insist upon a self-chosen exile for Christians.

It is instructive that Seneca, who had previously had the most comfortable connections with Rome and the closest involvements with the imperial power is least able of the three men considered to reconcile himself to his exile. Epictetus, on the other hand, a Greek philosopher and former slave to a member of the imperial household, seems best able to do so. Dio Chrysostom is situated somewhere in between, but perhaps more closely to Epictetus. Where is John? The arrangements of exile and what we know of John, the place of Patmos relative to other islands of exile, and the assessments of empire and imperial power in the Revelation and in the heavenly summons to flight seem to resonate in varying degrees and with general consistency to a non-Roman identity for John and an anti-Rome perspective.

¹³² Beale, *Revelation*, 898.

¹³³ Aune, *Revelation*, 3:991.

GRECO-ROMAN LITERARY
CONTEXTS FOR CHRISTIAN ORIGINS

SOURCE CITATION IN GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY AND IN LUKE(-ACTS)

Andrew W. Pitts

Jewish hermeneutical techniques, especially midrash and peshet models, have been employed as the primary interpretive base for understanding the use and interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel by the authors of the New Testament. Luke-Acts is no exception. Most scholars approaching the use of Scripture in Luke-Acts appear to be working from the basic assumption that the authors of the New Testament—perhaps because many of the writers are Jewish or because the events being described in many instances build out of Jewish narrative and theological categories—were working with an essentially Jewish (or at best, Jewish-Christian) hermeneutic when they cited Scripture.¹ Sanders and Evans exemplify this approach in their essay on methodology in *Luke and Scripture*, where they argue that the best framework for approaching the evangelist's citation strategy is "comparative midrash." In his analysis of the genre of the Gospels, Evans claims that the Gospels "contain midrash and are in places midrashically driven," thus justifying his larger midrashic interpretive framework.² Yet as Evans readily grants, "to conclude that the Gospels are themselves midrashim can lead to gross misunderstanding."³ This failure of literary correspondence seems to justify an analysis of Luke's use of (scriptural and traditional) sources in the context of his broader literary framework—history—which has received surprisingly little attention from contemporary scholars working in this area.

¹ E.g. Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation From Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology* (JSNTSup 12 Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987); François Bovon, "The Role of the Scriptures in the Composition of the Gospel Accounts: The Temptations of Jesus (Lk 4.1–13 par.) and the Multiplication of the Loaves (Lk 9.10–17 par.)," in Gerald O'Collins and Gilberto Marconi, eds., *Luke and Acts* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 27–28; Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, "The Gospels and Midrash: An Introduction to Luke and Scripture," in Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, *Luke and Scripture: The Function of Sacred Tradition in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Minneapolis, 1993), 1–13; Craig A. Evans, "Luke and the Rewritten Bible: Aspects of Lukan Hagiography," in James H. Charlesworth and Craig A. Evans, eds., *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation* (JSPSup 14; SSEJC 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 170–201.

² Evans and Sanders, "Gospels and Midrash," 3.

³ Evans and Sanders, "Gospels and Midrash," 3.

In this chapter, I isolate two forms of intertextuality among the historians—mimesis and direct citation—with mimesis, a form of imitation used by historians to imitate the work of their predecessors, being used as a more general background way of integrating sources into the narrative and direct citation being employed only when the narrative development is in need of special credibility. I argue that Luke, following his historical predecessors, utilizes the same framework in his own implementation of source material. The focus, however, remains upon how Luke used direct citation of source material in his Gospel, but mimesis and links to Acts are constantly in view (thus “Acts” in Luke-Acts is in parentheses in the title) and how this technique moves forward the narrative structure and strategy of the discourse. I will seek to show that while Luke seems to have viewed the First Testament as Scripture, he appears to conceive of it more fundamentally—at least in terms of his literary composition—as a Jewish source that lent special credibility to his narrative at key movements in his historical development. Luke also uses a mimetic model, drawn from Greek historical theory, primarily when integrating material based in his sources for Jesus tradition (e.g. L, Q [if there was such a source], Mark, Matt, oral tradition).

1. A THEORY OF INTERTEXTUALITY IN GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY

Intertextuality among the Greek historians is a highly complicated and yet greatly understudied issue among classicists and New Testament scholars alike. There is, of course, much talk about sources: how they were used and the role that they played within broader concerns of historical method, but substantial attention has not been given to the intertextual relationships between the historians on too many occasions. And even though a selection of studies have been undertaken along these lines, of these, very few have sought to develop an integrated methodological framework that is able to help support meaningful interpretation of the data. A comprehensive method cannot (obviously) be attempted here, but I will endeavor in this section to set some of the key components of such a (narrative-linguistic) method in place.

One of the most dominant trends in contemporary historiography—not unlike biblical studies—revolves around understanding the narrative structure and techniques employed by the historians. The historians used important programmatic indicators as well as a number of structuring devices in pursuing their narrative agendas, and it is not at all uncommon for classical

scholars to employ narrative methods of interpretation to assist in understanding the significance of these devices. Hornblower, for example, applies narratological principles to Thucydides, as does Morrison and Gribble.⁴ Gray uses narrative criticism in her examination of Xenophon and I.J.F. de Jong incorporates it in his analysis of Homer.⁵ While these and other classicists have typically pointed to a number of significant narratological strategies, most of these studies have been limited to focusing upon individual narrative techniques and devices. Hornblower's study, for instance, is restricted to an analysis of narrative displacement, presentation through negation, denomination for rhetorical reasons, and the use of narrative voice.⁶ Similarly, Morrison's study focuses upon multiple perspective, authorial reference, and episodic presentation.⁷ Gribble and Gray highlight the narrative function of first-person interventions.⁸ In other words, most of these studies have not been concerned in a major way with narrative structure, merely narrative strategies, often at a fairly localized level rather than global narrative agendas. The way that such strategies and programmatic indicators govern the literary structure of the historians still seems to be a fairly open field. The literary function of the preface is the only feature that has received a fair amount of treatment in this regard. One of the distinct techniques for global literary organization in the Greek historians (and in Luke), I shall argue, is the use of intertextuality.

In the historians, two forms of intertextuality can be identified: mimesis/imitation and direct citation. These refer to two distinct ways of citing sources. The former method introduces material into the historical narrative without indicating that the material is incorporated from sources. It is simply imitated and adapted from a literary predecessor. This can, therefore, include a whole spectrum of parallel material, ranging from a simple verbal queue that may or may not invoke other literary associations in the

⁴ Simon Hornblower, "Narratology and Narrative Techniques in Thucydides," in Simon Hornblower, ed., *Greek Historiography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 131–166 (131); James V. Morrison, "Preface to Thucydides: Rereading the Corcyrean Conflict (1.24–55)," *CA* (1999): 94–131; David Gribble, "Narrator Interventions in Thucydides," *JHS* (1998): 41–67.

⁵ Vivienne Gray, "Interventions and Citations in Xenophon's *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*," *CQ* 53 (2003): 111–123; I.J.F. de Jong, "Homer and Herodotus," in Ian Morris and Barry B. Powell, eds., *A New Companion to Homer* (Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava 163; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 305–325.

⁶ Hornblower, "Narratology," esp. 165–166.

⁷ Morrison, "Preface," 94–131.

⁸ Gribble, "Narrator Interventions," 41–67; Gray, "Intervention," 111–123.

minds of the audience to the exact repetition of wording from a previous literary text without formally indicating that the tradition is being taken over from a source. Direct citations are a form of mimesis more readily identified through the use of citation formulas to introduce source-material. For narratological purposes, it is important to note the varying levels of specificity that a citation can take on. A source may be cited in an anonymous fashion ("it is said") or the exact author might of the source might be named ("Herodotus says") or something in between, such as "it is written" (generically referring to a body of writings, assumed to be known by the audience).

In attempting to understand the theory and practice of intertextuality at work among the historians, there are several questions that must be asked, most of them concerning methodology. The first revolves around the whole issue of sources, especially as it relates to mimesis. What is a source and how can we know when a historian is imitating a predecessor? This question is answered easily enough with respect to direct citation since there are formal markers that clue the reader to the use of a source. The use of mimesis is more tricky, however. Since imitation, by definition, does not entail formal marking, it may often go unnoticed. If this first issue is a question concerned with form, the second is one concerned with function. What role in the narrative does mimetic and directly cited material play? How do they contribute in distinctive ways to the compositional and narrative development of the history as a whole?

The answers to these questions are related. Concerning the first question, it is at the outset imperative to determine what exactly is meant by a "source" and to determine when a source is being used mimetically. The second question may be answered first. It seems that without any verbal clues within the text, the only way to know when an author is imitating a predecessor is when we have a copy of the previous historian's work and are able to compare the details of each of the respective accounts. So it is highly likely that there is a lot more mimesis taking place within ancient historiography than we will ever be able to detect based upon the limited number of extant historiographic works available to us.

There are a number of questions that are necessary to raise here regarding orality/literacy, memory, tradition, and the nature of authoritative evidence that go into addressing how a source should be defined within the context of ancient historiography. It is certainly not the case, as it is today, that knowledge of sources by the historian always involved a written copy of that text. Besides the fact that he clearly considers it his primary duty to report what is "said" (Herodotus, 7.152.2–3), many of the sources Herodotus

cites use orally based introductory formulas like “the Persians say” (λέγουσι Πέρσαι) (Herodotus, 1.2). While these types of formulas introduce direct citation—not what we are considering as mimesis here—what they tell us about mimesis is nevertheless substantial. The extensive citing of oral sources indicates that there must have been numerous oral sources that were integrated into the narrative from the mimetic level of his source framework as well. The nature of mimetic material resists citation forms, but much of it must have been oral based upon what we know about the nature of Greek sources in general. Such oral records were, in many quarters, deemed generally more reliable than written sources. As Champion puts it: “Greek historiographical source theory, as far as we can reconstruct it, did not value written documents highly. Books ranked behind travel, autopsy, interrogation of eyewitnesses, and personal political experience, and this attitude informed a Greek tendency, from Thucydides onward, for serious history to be orally derived, contemporary history.”⁹ So it is not surprising that we find such extensive use of oral sources and a relatively infrequent implementation of written documents.

Related to the issue of orality is the means by which this oral tradition was collected and accessed: memory. Polybius seems to know large portions of Herodotus by memory. Herodotus clearly has sizable sections of Homer locked away in his mind, often slipping into a Homeric style of discourse and filling his historical narrative with references to Homer, yet only mentioning Homer by name 10 times, six of which are in his Egyptian Book 2 where he is discussing Homer.¹⁰ Thucydides shows less knowledge here, but of course he has a greater pool of historical tradition to draw upon in his imitations, so it might not be as much of an issue of access as it is simply citing the most relevant sources to the historical task and the progression of the tradition. So many of the echoes of literary texts that we find in the historians may be the sheer result of the practice of mass memorization of these texts emerging to the surface. But memory not only provides the basis for recalling and utilizing literary sources, it was also probably the foundation for keeping record of most of the interviews that historians would conduct during their travels. Between these interviews and the oral historical tradition, both predominately stored by memory, most of the

⁹ Craighe Champion, “The Nature of Authoritative Evidence in Polybius and Ageluas’ at Naupactus,” *TAPA* 127 (1999): 111–128 (115).

¹⁰ Hornblower, “Introduction,” 65.

mimetic material is accounted for. Shrimpton goes as far as to state: “on the surface, the early histories were representatives of the collective memories of their communities not directly controlled by any critical or systematic investigation of documents. And when they did cite documents, they fell under suspicion for mendacity.”¹¹ What this means for mimesis is that it functioned largely on the basis of memorized oral tradition. As historians would write, this memorialized tradition would infiltrate their narrative, both consciously and unconsciously.¹²

A question that remains is how this tradition was employed from memory into the composition of the narrative. In cognitive, psychological, and now more recently within linguistic studies, discourse is often understood in terms of distinct planes of communication. Dressler explains his two planes of discourse as:

[The] parameter of contrasting a more important, more precise, more dynamic figure (or foreground) with a less important, more pallid, more static ground (background) This parameter seems adequate for capturing hierarchies within the rhythmic structuring of sequential linearization of text—and all texts must have hierarchical structuring. This rhythmic structuring follows—again iconically—from underlying cognitive, pragmatic, and semantic hierarchies. The stronger the contrast between figure and ground, the better the figure is perceived¹³

Building upon this framework, Porter, writing in the context of Greek linguistics, has suggested a third plane of discourse, which he identifies as the foreground.¹⁴ So in addition to background elements, which usually provide the backbone material in narrative and foreground elements, which generally serve to highlight the mainline or thematic material, Porter suggests that the user of Hellenistic Greek also incorporates foreground material, which serves to establish those themes that are most prominent, contoured and well-defined in the author’s mind.

¹¹ G.S. Shrimpton, *History and Memory in Ancient Greece* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1997), 67.

¹² Cf. Simon Hornblower, “Introduction,” in *Greek Historiography*, 1–72 (65–66).

¹³ W.U. Dressler, “Marked and Unmarked Text Strategies within Semiotically Based NATURAL Textlinguistics,” in Shin Ja J. Hwang and William R. Merrifield, eds., *Language in Context: Essays for Robert E. Longacre* (Arlington, TX: SIL, 1992), 5–18 (14–15); but cf. H.A. Dry, “Foregrounding: An Assessment,” in *Language in Context*, 435–450 (441–442), who suggests that foregrounding is in need of redefinition in accordance with the discipline that is using the term.

¹⁴ Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (2nd ed. BL: Greek, 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 23.

Elements that are more well defined or semantically specific are said to be “marked.”¹⁵ These marked elements are able to be projected onto the foreground or frontground of the narrative. There are multiple language-specific diagnostics for determining markedness relations.¹⁶ The most significant of these is semantic indeterminateness, which refers to the level of semantic specification grammaticalized by the form.¹⁷ The specified character of the marked element causes it to have a more contoured meaning and restricted range of usage, giving rise to additional marked categories. Semantic markedness (markedness on a scale of more or less semantically determinate) is the most fundamental criterion since semantically marked items usually end up more formally complex and less frequent precisely because they are more semantically marked, and vice versa. Applied to intertextuality, this would mean that less specified, more frequent source-citations are less marked whereas more specified, less frequent usages count as more marked. The fact that imitated material is, on the one hand, far more frequent than direction citation and is, on the other hand, not marked by specificity through the use of a citation formula, highlights its background function. The historian does not attempt to draw attention to source material, but to the original composition that he intends to propose, at places where a mimetic source is employed. At the narratological level, this is where events and participants are included along the basic backbone of source-development within the narrative. Since direct citation employs more semantic specificity through the use of a formula, the author in these passages intends to draw attention in some way to the information communicated by these sources. The motivation for drawing attention to this

¹⁵ E.L. Andrews, *Markedness Theory: the Union of Asymmetry and Semiosis in Language* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 2. On markedness, see also E.L. Battistella, *Markedness: The Evaluative Superstructure of Language* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990); E.L. Battistella, *The Logic of Markedness* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); S. Fleischman, *Tense and Narrativity: From Medieval Performance to Modern Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1992), 52–56; M. Shapiro, “Explorations into Markedness,” *Language* 48 (1972): 343–364; K. Mary-Louise, “On a Theory of Markedness: Some General Considerations and a Case in Point,” in A. Belletti, L. Brandi, and L. Rizzi, eds., *Theory of Markedness in Core Grammar* (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore Pisa, 1981), 559–604; J.W. Gair, “Kinds of Markedness,” in S. Flynn and W. O’Neil, eds., *Linguistic Theory and Second Language Acquisition* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), 225–250; O.M. Tomić, ed., *Markedness in Synchrony and Diachrony* (Berlin: Mouton, 1989).

¹⁶ Battistella, *Markedness*, 27.

¹⁷ See Roman Jakobson, “The Structure of the Russians Verb,” in Roman Jakobson, ed., *Russian and Slavic Grammar: Studies, 1931–1981* (Junua Lingua Rum; Series Major 106; Berlin: Mouton, 1984), 1–14.

information will vary according to the author's narratological interests. Further specificity within the formula itself will tend toward higher levels of markedness, moving information from the foreground to the frontground. An anonymous formula, for example, would clearly be foreground material whereas employing the specific name of the source would be frontground material. That these direct citations are used to project source-material onto the foreground of the discourse implies a background in which source-material is not highlighted, but simply supports the consistent development of the narrative. The ensuing analysis of individual historians gives further support to these points.

2. INTERTEXTUALITY AND THE USE OF SOURCES IN GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY

We turn now to consider the two basic components of intertextuality within Greek historiography: mimesis and direct citation. Relations of mimesis must be observed here in the context of the origins and development of Greek historiography as a whole. The implementation of direct-citation from a historiographic source-framework shall be illustrated within a single historian, Herodotus. Both the theoretical underpinnings and the practical outworkings of these doctrines within the Greek historians shall be considered.

2.1. *Mimesis in the Development of Greek Historiography*

Mimesis or imitation had a significant role to play within the development and transmission of Greek historiographic tradition. A number of issues emerge here in relation to the historical theory and practice of mimesis. At the most basic level, mimesis proceeds from the fact that the literary predecessors of a given historian would provide the major pool of background material that helped give shape to their own narrative. This pool of data would be drawn upon for informational purposes (in order to provide actual documentation for the narrative account), for stylistic purposes (in order to support the literary structure and development of a historical writing), for authoritative purposes (in order to give credence to the narrative), and for the mere sake of artistic quality. Imitation ranged from the imitation of the character and emotions of the participants being described within the historical narrative to the actual imitation of the details of previous historical accounts. The types of sources imitated and the level of integration was in many ways dependent upon the time and location of the author.

Herodotus obviously did not have the same rich historical tradition to draw upon as, say, Diodorus. This led him to draw more heavily from the lyrical poetic tradition. Another consideration that, as far as I can tell, has not been addressed within classical studies (and certainly not within the study of the New Testament), is the compositional function of mimesis. The following three sections attempt to account for these various strands of mimetic phenomena: (a) the classical theory of mimesis and ancient historiography, (b) mimesis in Greek historiography: origins and development, and (c) the role of mimesis in narrative composition.

2.1.1. *The Classical Theory of Mimesis and Ancient Historiography*

The Greek word “mimesis” means imitation. The classical theory of imitation is generally believed to have been forged within the rhetorical schools as students of rhetoric imitated oratory models. It took on a different sense, however, in Plato as well as in Aristotle and the poets. In these contexts mimesis is understood as the general principle of art. For Plato, the “doctrine of artistic imitation is based on the conception of art as an interpretation of reality,” according to Verdenius.¹⁸ Plato insists that in art, one must attempt to transform reality by capturing ideals in its imitation that may be unconnected to the forms represented within reality, but one will still never be able to imitate what is beyond the forms and, therefore, all imitation remains a counterfeit in significant ways (*Resp.* 497e). A poet may be able to get at the ideals by seeking to imitate them as they are represented in the forms (*Resp.* 603c), but he will never be able to fully move beyond the forms.

Aristotle parts ways with Plato at this point. In the first part of section 1 of his *Poetics*, he states: “There is another art which imitates by means of language alone, and that either in prose or verse—which verse, again, may either combine different meters or consist of but one kind—but this has

¹⁸ W.J. Verdenius, *Mimesis: Plato's Doctrine of Artistic Imitation and Its Meaning to Us* (Philosophia Antiqua 3; Leiden, 1949), 36. On Plato's doctrine of imitation, see also J. Tate, “Imitation in Plato's *Republic*,” *CQ* 22 (1928): 16–23; J. Tate, “Plato and Imitation,” *CQ* 26 (1932): 161–168; H. Koller, *Die Mimesis in der Antike* (Bern: Francke, 1954); G. Else, “‘Imitation’ in the Fifth Century,” *CPh* 53 (1958): 73–90; O.B. Hardison, “Epigone: An Aristotelian Imitation,” in L. Golden and O.B. Hardison, eds., *Aristotle's Poetics* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968), 281–296; L. Golden, “Plato's Concept of Mimesis,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 15 (1975–1976): 118–131; E. Belfiore, “A Theory of Imitation in Plato's *Republic*,” *TAPA* 114 (1984): 121–146; A. Nehamas, “Plato on Imitation and Poetry in *Republic* 10,” in N.D. Smith, ed., *Plato: Critical Assessments*. Vol. III: *Plato's Middle Period: Psychology and Value Theory* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 323.

hitherto been without a name." He contends with the notion that a work composed in meter distinguishes poetry from other writings: "as if it were not the imitation that makes the poet, but the verse that entitles them all to the name." A poet may use a variety of meters, but in final analysis, it is imitative art that distinguishes poetry from other genres. Aristotle further distinguishes poetry from history on this basis. Poetry is mimetic while history is not. There are other kinds of imitation besides poetry, of course: music, dancing, dialogue. But what distinguishes poetry among the arts, for Aristotle, is its imitation of language, rhythm, and harmony.¹⁹ As with Plato, Aristotle's doctrine of mimesis did not entail the idea of exact reduplication, but of re-creation and creative transformation through the mind of the artist.

Although these usages among the ancient poets and artists have been well canvassed by classical scholars, relatively little attention has been given to exploring the notion of mimesis in ancient historical theory. As Gray notices, mimesis still "needs to be more widely recognized as a technical term in ancient historical theory and its meaning needs to be more precisely defined by proper assemblage of the most relevant evidence."²⁰ And she attempts precisely this. Based upon an examination of the use of the term in, especially in Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Longinus, she concludes "The meaning of mimesis in history is the recreation of reality, encompassing recreation of both character and emotion."²¹ In other words, when narrating a story, the historian would attempt to reinvent the persona of the persons being described based upon their sources, including their character and emotions, within the particular context in which the person in the story was represented. It shares, then, with its poetic predecessor the creative re-rendering of reality.

Imitation also took on a more directly intertextual function, adapting not only some of its uses in poetics but also incorporating particular dimensions from its function within rhetoric. And since historiography was viewed by many as a branch of rhetoric,²² this portrayal makes sense. Marincola's more

¹⁹ Peter Simpson, "Aristotle on Poetry and Imitation," *Hermes* 116 (1988): 279–291 (279). On Aristotle's doctrine of mimesis, see O.B. Hardison, "Epigone: An Aristotelian Imitation," in L. Golden and O.B. Hardison, eds., *Aristotle's Poetics* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968), 281–296; L. Golden, *Aristotle on Tragic and Comic Mimesis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). On the debate between the Platonic and Aristotelian view, see esp. B. Earle, "Plato, Aristotle, and the Imitation of Reason," *Philosophy and Literature* 27/2 (2003): 382–401.

²⁰ Vivienne Gray, "Mimesis in Greek Historical Theory," *AJP* 8 (1987): 467–486 (468).

²¹ Gray, "Mimesis," 469.

²² John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997), 16.

recent study understands mimesis along these lines, setting the discussion in the context of the overall trajectory of the development of historiography. He sees mimesis as the pool of fundamental background material that historians drew upon to construct the basic frameworks for their narrative histories. Historians would not attempt to make substantial departures from those who had gone before them. Instead, they would imitate their work and make gradual changes in the tradition, refining and adapting the work of their predecessors. According to Marincola, the good Greek historian utilized and altered traditional material—which was for the most part, oral—in an artistic fashion that brought together and adapted the insights of his predecessors, but with its own unique, fresh angle. Marincola notices that: “The imitator does not seek a one-to-one correspondence with a single previous model, nor is his imitation to be slavish (this is mere copying) but rather creative: the writer must appropriate the spirit of his model or models and breathe new life into them, to show how something could be better done, or, if not better done, then well done in a different way.”²³ He notes further the various forms that historiographic imitation might take:

[T]he most common type is verbal imitation, which can range from a single word to a phrase to the appropriation of an entire style. The employment of the same or slightly altered phrases from predecessors, especially the great masters, is a feature of almost every ancient history. Sometimes it is the placing of a familiar element into a new context where it is striking because it is appropriate in a different way, while at other times it can be merely verbal ornament. Often it is difficult to determine whether there is any larger meaning in verbal echoes of a predecessor, or whether the ancient audience, with its keen ear for language simply took pleasure in the echoes and adaptations themselves, without any assumption thereby of the aims and intentions of the author. An historian might employ a certain dialect, it was natural to assume some imitation of Herodotus or other early writers. At its worst, as Lucian details it ..., phrases were simply taken out wholesale from the masters’ works Certain types of incidents common in war, such as the capture of a city, or the speech of a commander before battle, were particularly subject to imitation. An historian might also imitate the type of history practiced by a predecessor, and do the same for his own subject Historians might imitate the arrangement of their predecessors. Finally, an author might imitate the attitude or disposition (*διάθεσις*, *dispositio*) of a predecessor.²⁴

²³ Marincola, *Authority*, 14.

²⁴ Marincola, *Authority*, 16–18.

These forms of mimesis may be summarized as follows: (1) verbal imitation (including an imitation of style), (2) imitation of phrases, (3) imitation of content with distinct appropriation, (4) echoes of a predecessor, which I take to mean similar phrasing or paraphrasing of a predecessor through verbal queues, (5) imitation of dialect, (6) imitation of historical type, (7) imitation of arrangement, and (8) imitation of attitude/disposition.

2.1.2. *The Practice of Mimesis in Greek Historiography: Origins and Development*

Intertextual relationships among the historians must be understood in direct association with the origins and development of Greek historiography. Prior the emergence of the discipline, historians would be compelled to derive their intertexts from previously existing literary genres. This is precisely what seems to have happened in the case of Herodotus, who is often considered to be the father of Greek historiography. Forms of intertextuality that we find in use among the historians are, therefore, relative to their position within the development of ancient history.

The most influential study of the origins of Greek historiography as an independent discipline was undertaken in 1909 by Jacoby.²⁵ Jacoby proposed an evolutionary theory using a method inspired by stemmatic analysis (the dominant text-critical model in classical studies) according to which historiography developed in opposition to the epic tradition. Jacoby proposed a form of source criticism that presupposed that one could trace all the variations of the literary spectrum back to a single genre. Most now consider the method itself to be invalid, but still recognize the importance of noticing significant patterns of intertextuality among the historians and using such patterns to set them in some type of evolutionary relation to one another.²⁶

Jacoby seems correct to trace the origins of ancient history back to the Greek epic tradition, especially Homer and Hesiod.²⁷ Historiography distinguished itself from epic on two accounts, according to Momigliano: "history was written in prose, and was meant to separate facts from fancies about the

²⁵ F. Jacoby, "Über die Entwicklung der griechischen Historiographie und der Plan einer neuen Sammlung der griechischen Historikerfragmente," *Klio* 9 (1909): 1–44.

²⁶ E.g. David S. Potter, *Literary Texts and the Roman Historian* (London: Routledge, 1999), 62–66.

²⁷ So also around that time, J.B. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians (Harvard Lectures)* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1909), 1–35.

past.”²⁸ One of the major cornerstones in setting this movement away from epic into motion was the foundational work of Hecataeus. He did work in geography and wrote a history of Greece. But while he composed in prose style, he had a tendency in his geographical and historical work toward mythologizing. For example, in his *Genealogies*, he attempted to construct something that might look like a history according to later ancient standards, but the methods employed were weak and faulty. And the genealogy he creates traces his family origins back to the mythological pantheon. His literary successors, Charon of Lampsacus and Dionysius of Miletus, imitated the historical trajectory of his research in their histories of Persia. We also know of Xanthus from this period, who wrote a history of Lydia.

While Hecataeus, Charon, Dionysius, and Xanthus were substantial scholars, Greek historiography does not officially begin until Herodotus (484–425 BCE) steps onto the scene. But at the same time: “In approaching Herodotus through these shadowy forerunners, we are equipped only to a limited extent to assess the degree of his originality.”²⁹ In other words, the level of intertextual adaptation within Herodotus from his sources is often unclear. What is clear is that he had a strong tendency toward imitating the lyrical poets, especially Homer. Herodotus imitated the authoritative third-person narrative framework that we find in Homer. Specific literary forms are brought over from Homer as well. For example, Herodotus employs the use of amplification (amplifying the importance of his subject matter), as Homer did, in his account of Troy.³⁰ He also duplicated specific Homeric motifs, according to Caskey: “the charm of the language itself, the rapidity, the relish for bold deeds, the sympathetic portrayal of women, the role of divinity, the moments of joy and the persistent note of sadness.”³¹ Hecataeus is the only scholar treated authoritatively by Herodotus as his predecessor. Based upon the fact that Herodotus mentions—on more than one occasion—the advice of Hecataeus not taken by the Ionians, Bury speculates that Herodotus had access to Hecataeus’s writings or at least access to a source containing Hecataeus’s accounts of particular events since, “The most likely person to record advice which has not been followed is the adviser; and we may pretty confidently assume that the source of Herodotus was Hecataeus himself.”³² One of the things that distinguished Herodotus

²⁸ Arnaldo Momigliano, “Greek Historiography,” *History and Theory* 17 (1978): 1–28 (2).

²⁹ Stephen Usher, *The Historians of Greece and Rome* (New York: Taplinger, 1970), 3.

³⁰ Cf. Marincola, *Authority*, 34–35.

³¹ John Caskey, “Herodotus and Homer,” *The Classical Weekly* 35 (1942): 267.

³² Bury, *Ancient Greek Historians*, 12.

from his predecessors, however, was his detailed attention to sources, and this would become a starting point for imitation and adaptation for those after him.³³

Thucydides (460–395 BCE) follows Herodotus and is able to draw more substantially from the historical tradition that preceded him. Like Herodotus, Thucydides continues to imitate Homer in a number of ways. The implementation of literary forms such as amplification is brought over (1.23.1–2), for example.³⁴ There is evidence of Thucydides imitating several dimensions of Herodotus's previous work so that there is a strong inter-relationship here, as well as with other of Thucydides' contemporaries.³⁵ Thucydides, however, also moves away from Herodotus in certain areas, especially deemphasizing the first-person interventions to a more third-person based narrative.³⁶ The result is not the total removal of the narrator, but certainly a less intrusive one.³⁷ Thucydides also wants to draw attention away from his sources and toward the final result, unlike Herodotus, who was greatly concerned that the reader be aware of his sources.³⁸ Hornblower suggests that Thucydides also had knowledge of Hecataeus in his description of Chaironeia as "the last city of Boiotia" (4.76.3; cf. *FGrHist.* I F 116) and that he used Herodotus in his account of the Second Sacred War (1.112) (and perhaps Hellanicus).³⁹ So, within Thucydides, we already see a rich web of intertextuality beginning to form. Thucydides' imitation consists of stylistic adoptions, consideration of the same *topoi* as his predecessors, use and adaptation of narrative form, use and adaptation of source-citation style, and imitation of actual accounts of historical details.

Xenophon (431–355 BCE) develops the tradition further. He is a direct predecessor of Thucydides, picking up in his *Hellenica* right where Thucydides left off in his unfinished history of the Peloponnesian War. Xenophon clearly imitates the Thucydidean model of narrative intervention and takes it even further. As Marincola observes, "The narrator in Xenophon (both *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*) is not only unintrusive: he is practically anonymous. His works recognize the value of most impersonal narrative told in a style largely

³³ Cf. Robert L. Fowler, "Herodotus and his Contemporaries," *JHS* 116 (1996): 62–87 (62).

³⁴ Marincola, *Authority*, 35.

³⁵ See Thomas F. Scalon, "Echoes of Herodotus in Thucydides: Self-Sufficiency, Admiration and Law," *Historia* 43 (1994): 143–176.

³⁶ On the programmatic role of the first-person interventions that do take place, see Gribble, "Narrator Interventions," 41–67.

³⁷ Marincola, *Authority*, 9.

³⁸ Cf. Marincola, *Authority*, 9.

³⁹ Hornblower, "Introduction," 58–59.

free of rhetorical adornment, in achieving credibility.”⁴⁰ Nevertheless, in several areas, “it falls so manifestly short of Thucydides’ standards that a serious imitation seems out of the question. It is on a far smaller scale for the most part, does not exhibit that particularly Thucydidean concern for accuracy and analysis and it is not written in his kind of language,” as Gray points out.⁴¹ An ancient literary critic, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in his *Letter to Gnaeus Pompeius*, includes a survey of historians, which he claims is the second part of the work *On Imitation* that he was composing.⁴² Dionysius claims in this portion of his letter that Xenophon was imitating Herodotus’s model rather than that of Thucydides. Gray agrees with this ancient assessment. She asserts that the most obvious influence of Herodotus on Xenophon was upon his style of storytelling.⁴³ Gray, like Dionysius, prefers a primarily Herodotonian model to explain the character of Xenophon—reflecting his dependence upon an earlier, more common tradition—while also keeping in mind the possible imitation of contemporary historians such as Ctesias, Diodorus Siculus, and Theopomus.⁴⁴ We see, then, in Xenophon, an even more sophisticated web of intertexts, one that has become increasingly difficult for classicists to untangle.

The next major historian in the development of intertextual traditions in Greek historiography is Polybius (203–120 BCE). The most significant intertextual streams of mimesis we find in Polybius are from his older contemporary, Timaeus of Tauromenium. He picks up upon his *History of Sicily* in significant ways, but also devotes an entire book of his *Histories* (Book 12) to criticizing Timaeus. This would eventually result in a fairly universal discrediting of Timaeus and a tendency among later historians to criticize Timaeus as part of their historical project. Polybius probably knew Thucydides. He mentions the fact that Theopomus began where Thucydides left off at 8.11.3. Hornblower has cataloged several “echoes” of Thucydides, including a Thucydidean distinction between particular *topoi* at 3.31.12 and 1.22.4 and an imitation of elements of Thucydides’ causation theory in his historical model at 3.6–7.⁴⁵ Although, there are indications that

⁴⁰ Marincola, *Authority*, 10; so also, Shrimpton, *History*, 66.

⁴¹ Vivienne Gray, *The Character of Xenophon’s Hellenica* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 1–2.

⁴² On this fragment, see Malcolm Heath, “Dionysius of Halicarnassus ‘On Imitation,’” *Hermes* 117 (1989): 370–373.

⁴³ Gray, *Character*, 5.

⁴⁴ Grey, *Character*, 5.

⁴⁵ Hornblower, “Introduction,” 60.

Polybius may not have had complete access to Thucydides work, perhaps only portions.⁴⁶ Very few others sought to imitate the work of Thucydides, not least because of its extremely difficult style, with perhaps the exception of Agatharchides, whom Photius (*FGrHist.* 86 T 2) says was an “imitator” (ζηλωτής) of Thucydides. Herodotus barely finds his way into Polybius at all, only being mentioned by Athenaeus within Polybius’s narrative at 12.2.

As we progress closer to the first century, Diodorus Siculus (60–30 BCE) is another milestone in the intertextual development of Greek historiography. There is much discussion of Diodorus’s use of his sources and many argue that he was slavishly dependent upon them. His method was to employ one source at a time—usually the source in front of him—as we find, for example, in his use of Kallisthenes in Ephorus rather than utilizing Ephorus directly.⁴⁷ He also appears to be imitating excerpts from the fifth book of Agatharchides’ *On the Red Sea* found in Photius (cod. 250.24–108). The accounts are parallel in significant ways (so also Diodorus Siculus, 3.16.6 and Photius, 250.35–36).⁴⁸ Diodorus clearly imitates Polybius’s account of Aemilius Paulus and Scipio Aemilianus at 31.22–30 in Diodorus 31.26–27.8. He does not cite Polybius, but does paraphrase his praise for Aemilius.⁴⁹

We observe, then, a wide variety in the use mimesis among the historians. The early historians did not have the same rich historical tradition that some of the later ones did and so drew more heavily upon previous lyrical traditions, but sought to set their work up in contrast to the epic tradition that had developed before them. Even later historians did not always have access to the entire preceding literary tradition. So not only time, but also location could affect which texts were imitated and even which portions of text. The types of imitation that we find also vary, from imitating a literary form or compositional technique to the imitation of particular stories or accounts. In all of this, it was generally observed that the historians sought to bring their own fresh angle to the account, gradually altering and developing the tradition to suit their own aims and subject matter. There is only evidence for mimesis in cases in which we have a previous source that we can compare it too. Undoubtedly, there are levels of mimesis embedded in the historical record that we will probably never be able to detect.

⁴⁶ See Bury, *Ancient Greek Historians*, 210, for the ignorance of Thucydides in Polybius.

⁴⁷ Hornblower, “Introduction,” 62–63.

⁴⁸ See Catherine Rubincam, “Did Diodorus take over Cross-References from his Sources?,” *AJP* 119 (1998): 67–87 (71–72).

⁴⁹ For analysis, see Rubincam, “Diodorus,” 8.

The frequency and lack of specificity involved in integrating mimesis into the narrative make it the ideal component within the source framework for including data within the historical record that the author does not desire to draw attention to. Mimesis, then, functions on the narrative background of the discourse.

2.2. *Direct Citation in Greek Historiography*

Direct citation, the second major form of intertextuality in Greek historiography—although itself a form of mimesis—functions as a more direct, more immediate, more intentional historical-narrative technique than other less explicit forms of imitation and so warrants separate treatment.⁵⁰

Direct citation of sources is far less common than mimesis in general, although there does seem to be a distributional distinction between biography and narrative history in terms of what is acceptable regarding direct citation of sources. History and biography are notoriously difficult to distinguish. Biography is viewed by some as a form of historiography or a substitution for it.⁵¹ In any case, there is great deal of overlap between the two genres, which were not always distinguished in the minds of the ancients. Historiography may also exhibit biographical interest or intent, resulting in literary similarity. This must be distinguished from biography as an independent literary form, however.⁵² Two major sets of differentiating criteria have been established. Stadter highlights the first set of criteria, emerging from features specific to individual categories of ancient biography.⁵³ Philosophical biographies are characterized by the tendency to draw a correlation between the moral character of the teachers they chronicle and his teachings. Literary biographies (of poets and rhetoricians) drew heavily upon the primary writings of their subjects. And so on. At the local level of the text, the biographical form of encomia could also be employed inside of other genres, such as history. So the genre-specific features of biography in distinction from history will be dependant upon the type of biography

⁵⁰ This paragraph draws upon Hornblower, "Introduction," 54–72; Dennis R. MacDonald, "Introduction," in Dennis R. MacDonald, ed., *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (SAC; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 1–9.

⁵¹ E.g. Ronald Syme, "History or Biography. The Case of Tiberius Caesar," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 23 (1974): 481–496 (481).

⁵² Phillip Stadter, "Biography and History," in John Marincola, ed., *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography* (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World; Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 528–540 (528).

⁵³ Stadter, "Biography," 529–531.

that is being composed, according to Stadter. But though these criteria have some validity and may help establish some basic tendencies of biography often not found in history, it is not formally rigorous enough to be able to support definitive distinctions—as Stadter clearly recognizes. A more promising criterion is proposed by Potter. He observes that though the literary features of history and biography are parallel in almost every way, “In terms of form, perhaps the most important point is that [biography] allowed for direct quotation of documents in a way that the generic rules for narrative history did not. It is not altogether clear why this should be so, but it may be that the tradition of the eyewitnesses memorialist influenced the later practitioners in such a way that they too wished to include first-hand statements about their subject.”⁵⁴ This is not to say that historical writings did not employ direct citations—they just did so less frequently and for differing purposes. Biographers were more free in the citation of their sources whereas authors of narrative history reserved them for specific purposes of validation at places in the historical narrative that needed further support, as I argue below.

The historians had access to and cited directly a variety of source material. These included written and oral sources, although oral sources seem to be most readily available. Among written records, historians refer to the work of other literary texts, especially other historians. They also cite documentary evidence, including inscriptions and various types of records—both official and unofficial. Citations of religious authorities and the invocation of muses are also common and may originate in oral or written traditions. National and anonymous citations, some of the most frequently referenced sources, are primarily oral but may on occasion be located within a literary tradition. These various contexts for citation lend themselves to a variety of formal introductions, ranging from a generic anonymous abbreviated form (“it is said”) to the more definitive citations of particular literary authors, referencing the source by name (e.g. “according to Aristoboulos ...” Plutarch, *Alex. fort.* 1.327D–E).

2.2.1. *Source-Citation Form*

The historians cited several types of sources, often indicated by the form of the citation formula they used: (a) literary works, (b) documentary sources, (c) religious authorities, (d) muses, (e) nations, and (f) anonymous sources.

⁵⁴ Potter, *Literary Texts*, 67.

2.2.1.1. *Citation of other Literary Works*

Historians, especially later ones who have a greater abundance of tradition to draw upon, make reference to other literary texts, especially other historians.⁵⁵ For example, Arrian cites the more marginal historian Aristos (*Anab.* 7.15.5). Thucydides cites Hellanicus at 1.97. Plutarch (*Lyc.* 1.31) cites a number of literary sources, including Aristotle, Eratosthenes and Apollodorus, Timaeus and Xenophon. Sometimes historians are cited and criticized as we find, for example, in Polybius's criticisms of Callisthenes' account of the battle of Issus (12.19) or his corrections of Timaeus (a regular sparing partner for the ancient historians) (12.4).

2.2.1.2. *Citation of Documentary Sources*

Although not as frequent as some types of citation, written official and unofficial documents were employed as sources from time to time.⁵⁶ Herodotus cites several inscriptions—for example, a Delphic inscription at 8.82.1.⁵⁷ Thucydides also refers to various inscriptions,⁵⁸ as well as to official documents, such as an alliance treaty between Athens and Argos (8.4.117–5.81).

2.2.1.3. *Citation of a Religious Authority*

Religious authorities are important sources for the historians to cite. Fehling proposes a similar category but assumes the fictive nature of all such authorities, such as the *law of Moses* and the *Book of Ahiqar*,⁵⁹ but these sources were clearly not always perceived as fictive by the historian and their implied readers. Sterling notes a number of examples in Jewish Historiography (Josephus, 1 Edras, Pseudo-Philo) where the Scriptures of Israel are treated as a reliable and trustworthy source.⁶⁰ In Greek Sacred History, a branch of local history according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Thuc.* 5.1), records from temple archives were commonly employed as accepted legitimate authorities, as for example in the second-century historian Leon

⁵⁵ On the use of literary texts among the historians, see Potter, *Literary Texts*.

⁵⁶ See M.I. Finley, *Ancient History: Evidence and Models* (New York: Viking, 1986), 27–46; P.J. Rhodes, "Documents and the Greek Historians," *Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 56–66.

⁵⁷ On the citation of inscriptions in Herodotus, see Stephanie West, "Herodotus' Epigraphical Interests," *CQ* 35 (1985): 278–305; Robin Osborne, "Archaic Greek History," in I. de Jong and H. van Wees, eds., *Brill's Companion to Herodotus* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 497–520.

⁵⁸ For references, see Bernhard Smarczyk, "Thucydides and Epigraphy," in A. Rengakos and A. Tsakmakis, eds., *Brill's Companion to Thucydides* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 495–522.

⁵⁹ Detlev Fehling, *Herodotus and His "Sources": Citation, Invention and Narrative Art* (trans. J.G. Howie; ARCA 21; Wiltshire: Francis Cairns, 1989), 161.

⁶⁰ Gregory E. Sterling, "The Jewish Appropriation of Hellenistic Historiography," in *Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, 238–239.

of Samos (*FGrH*. 540). Dionysius claims further that Herodotus employed sacred local tradition in his historical accounts (*Thuc.* 5.1).⁶¹ A written or oral source could be employed in these citations.

2.2.1.4. *Invocation of Muses*

The invocation of muses differs from reference to a religious authority in that it is a more general divine reference, such as, “according to the gods,” and the like. Historiography developed out of the epic tradition, where reference to Muses and other divine sources functioned as an important authority and this technique is carried over in the historiographic tradition to some degree as well. Numerous examples could be cited from Herodotus along these lines, although not all with equal authority. For example, in his *Histories* (6.105.1–2), Herodotus informs us that of the god Pan’s appearance to Philipides while he was running over the mountains to Sparta—or at least, Philipides says that Pan appeared to him. Later he states that the killing of two Spartan heralds by the hero Agamemnon “was obviously the action of divinity” (7.137.2). Again, written or oral sources could be employed here.

2.2.1.5. *National Citations*

National citations involve various references to national sources and are quite common among the historians. For example, Herodotus says that “The Persian learned men say that the Phoenicians were the cause of the feud” (1.1). Similarly, Lucian (*Icar.* 19) mentions a number of national sources, including what the Cretans, Thessalians and Athenians “say” about various things, especially different myths. As the typical citation forms associated with national citations seem to indicate, these sources originate primarily in oral tradition.

2.2.1.6. *Anonymous Citations*

One of the most frequent citation formulas employed by the historians appears to indicate access to and use of some form of oral tradition, though a literary source may be in mind from time to time. These citations are introduced with various forms of “it is said” or “they say” or “it is reported,” employing verbs such as λέγειν (which can be used to refer to written sources as well), λέγουσιν, λέγεται, ἔφασαν, φάναι, ἀκοή, and ἀκούειν. Examples are numerous. One from Xenophon will suffice. He notes that “it was said” that Mnasippus was not willing instead of unable to pay his soldiers

⁶¹ For these and other references, see John T. Dillery, “Greek Sacred History,” *AJP* 126 (2005): 505–526.

since most allies had already sent money (*Hell.* 6.2.16). In many of these instances, the source is known, but for various reasons, it is left unnamed. Xenophon, in the passage cited above, probably knows his source(s), but chooses not to call direct attention to it by using an abbreviated citation formula (see below on citation function).

2.2.2. Source-Citation Function

In terms of the narrative function of direct citation, the evidence is clear. Within narrative history, direct citations serve the specific purpose of strengthening the narrative development at key places where additional validation is needed. Fehling asserts, for example, that one of Herodotus's primary reasons for citing a source was to establish credibility, and he employs sources most frequently when events are most fantastic, especially for "astounding stories" involving the miraculous. When stories are too astounding or he lacks source support, Herodotus seems to distance himself further from the reality of the event. Gray observes a similar phenomenon in Xenophon's writings where "The major function of citation is to validate content that the reader might find too hard to believe. The writer engages with his reader to authorize: excessively large or small numbers, sensational deaths, significant reputations, great impiety or the activities of gods, significant sayings, and that which is generally excessive."⁶² She also suggests that citations are used to validate very significant turning points in narrative.⁶³ She supports these claims with numerous examples from *Hellenica* and *Anabasis*. While imitation and autopsy were the most common ways of maintaining historical authority, Marincola comments that explicit reference to sources in the ancient historians more generally was reserved "for emphasizing special sources and as a validation for exceptional events."⁶⁴ In local sacred histories, citation served the same purposes. According to Dillery, "in addition to documents, historical narratives are cited as supporting evidence" at key points in the narrative-historical development.⁶⁵ Thus, direct citations were used selectively and purposefully by the ancient historians so that the impact was not lessened in cases where authoritative validation was required or a significant turning point in the narrative needed to be established.

⁶² Gray, "Interventions," 116–117.

⁶³ Gray, "Interventions," 118.

⁶⁴ Marincola, *Authority*, 86.

⁶⁵ Dillery, "History," 521.

2.3. *Mimesis and Direct Citation in Herodotus*

At this stage it will be helpful to explore the source citation technique of one particular historian—Herodotus—in some detail in order to see what kinds of conclusions can be drawn about the strategy of citation employed by him, especially in light of the narrative strategy that seems to be driving his citation of sources. The advantages of choosing one historian (in addition to the brief survey in the previous section) is that the limited selection allows for a level of detail that a survey would not. It also allows for patterns to be observed across an extended piece of text. The advantage of choosing Herodotus is that he provides theoretical and practical precedent for many of the later Greek historians, as seen in the above analysis of mimesis. Generalizations, therefore, will not be able to be made in any sweeping way, but the analysis will give a great deal of insight into the historian that lays the foundations for most subsequent Greek historiography and so the implications for other historical writers, including Luke, will be significant.

Herodotus employs direct citation as a strategy for establishing the credibility or truthfulness of his account. This is established in a number of ways. Shrimpton and Gill have assembled quantitative data that helps confirm this. According to Shrimpton and Gill, Herodotus's Books 1 and 5–8, have less frequency of direct citations (a ratio of 0.8720) and one and a half times this much in 2 to 4. And they are least frequent in Book 9 (0.9513). They count 188 named source citations and 93 unnamed (e.g. "it is said"), but this figure does not take into consideration various abbreviated citations that pick up anaphorically upon the citation of sources that have already been introduced. If this number were calculated into the total, the number of abbreviated and anonymous citations (to use my categories) would be exceedingly more frequent than instances where the source is named. It is nevertheless interesting that in unnamed source-citations in Herodotus "no radical difference in the pattern of distribution by book number" can be observed whereas the distribution of named citations is extremely diverse. Even on this analysis of just anonymous citations (i.e. not including abbreviated citations, which in my model would also be background) form a nice even distribution and then the foreground formulas, where the source is named, are able to project information of special importance. Shrimpton and Gill's interpretation of this data is summarized as follows: "This shift in the distribution of source references seems to be part of a response to a change in the nature of the material as perceived and shaped by Herodotus. For example, the earlier books deal primarily with events that are remote

in time or are located in a mythical past, and there is extensive discussion of non-Greek cultures and accounts of the exploration of the frontiers of the known world.”⁶⁶ There are two such criteria that call for source-citation, according to Shrimpton and Gill: recording non-Greek culture and remoteness in subject matter, either in time or distance. There are a number of citations that fall outside of these criteria, such as instances of conflict between sources, doubt, and miracles. Although these instances may not have remoteness, they do require additional verification. The citation of the source, then, seems to be used strategically by Herodotus to strengthen the narrative at places where people may be in doubt of the credibility of the testimony. In this case, since Herodotus is describing geographically remote places, there is a greater need for source-citation to reassure the reader of the reliability of the record. Interestingly, when a named source is used, in 76% of the instances, it is employed to support information that is in some way distant from the readers. A connection, then, between naming the source and supporting information in need of special validation can be established.

Fehling’s detailed analysis of Herodotus’s citation of sources (surprisingly, since Shrimpton and Gill’s essay is a critique of Fehling) supports the basic thesis that Herodotus cites his sources in order to establish credibility for the events he records. Now, Fehling thinks that Herodotus is lying when he does this—he doesn’t really have any sources; he is fabricating them to lend credence to his story-telling. Nevertheless, Fehling makes a convincing case at several places that Herodotus cites his (embellished) source in order to confirm what might otherwise be hard to believe. In a broad sweep survey of several passages from Herodotus where sources are cited, Fehling puts forward eight basic occasions that call for Herodotus to cite his source. His first category is the supernatural, accounts which involve “details of local cults, cult-aitia, and myths, sometimes miraculous, also miracles and portents, together with an example of a natural but nevertheless astounding event (1.191.6).” “In all these examples,” according to Fehling, “the source-citation offers a Confirmation, often intended to save the author’s own credit.”⁶⁷ The second category incorporates citations for events that are geographically or chronologically remote. The third category

⁶⁶ See the appendix by Gordon Spencer Shrimpton and K.M. Gill, “Herodotus’ Source Citations,” in Gordon Spencer Shrimpton, *History and Memory in Ancient Greece* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 231–265 (240), whose study here has greatly added the present study’s accumulation of data from Herodotus.

⁶⁷ Fehling, *Herodotus*, 143.

involves a few local accounts not involving the miraculous or cult activity. The fourth is citations supporting party bias. The fifth is when two versions are cited to enhance credibility. The sixth is splitting up a source into two to enhance credibility. A seventh category contains expressions of opinion, and the eighth is five passages that don't fit into the other categories. Now, I will resist the temptation here to go on about how poorly defined and developed these categories are, other than to say that they are pretty weak. What Fehling's accumulation of this evidence does indicate in general is a tendency in Herodotus to employ source-citation at places within the narrative where he expects that his audience might doubt its validity.

Again, what ties these two major analyses of Herodotus together—though they differ upon the question of whether Herodotus communicates true information—is the key insight that Herodotus typically cites his sources (especially named sources) in order to lend credibility to his narrative. This assessment is further confirmed as we turn directly to the evidence provided for us in Herodotus.

The first category of evidence that should be assessed is Herodotus's various unnamed source-citations. Of the 93 anonymous direct citations, 18 are used in contexts of doubt (1.216.1; 2.15–17.1; 2.106; 2.161; 2.17.2; 2.20.1; 3.3.1; 3.56 [2×]; 5.32 [2×]; 5.85–87; 6.74.2; 6.76; 8.8.2 [2×]; 8.120; 9.84 [2×]). For example, at 2.106, Herodotus is discussing two Ionian statues that some have said to be Memmon, so that there is uncertainty about their identity. Herodotus, however, is certain that they are not Memmon and cites an inscription to prove his intimate acquaintance with it. Sources are cited in these instances to lend credibility to situations that are in doubt. As noted above by Fehling, a large category of unnamed citations function to support the mention of the supernatural or cultic practices (16×), including, for example, 1.159.3, 1.171, 3.5.3, 4.40.2, 4.179, 6.61.4 and 8.84.2, but the large majority of these use a named source citation. Unnamed source citations also are used to chronicle conflicting accounts (e.g. 1.27.2; 1.65; 2.106; 3.45.1). This rhetorical strategy of citing different source accounts for the same event has the effect of securing the audience's sympathies since it gives an overall sense of objectivity to the record. Sometimes Herodotus will even say things to reaffirm this judicious use of his sources. For example, he concludes after citing two conflicting source accounts (although the sources he follows up from here are named, his strategy in citing conflicting sources can be observed): "These are the stories of the Persians and the Phoenicians. For my own part, I will not say that this or that story is true, but I will name him who I myself know to have done unprovoked wrong to the Greeks, and so go forward with my history, and speak of small and great

cities alike" (Herodotus, 1.5 [Godley, LCL]). He goes on to name Croesus and this account of conflicting sources gives the impression of honesty for the forthcoming, more important, details where he seeks to gain the sympathy of his audience. Extravagant stories about Greeks (e.g. 1.92; 2.8; 2.110; 5.105) and Barbarians (e.g. 1.92; 1.153; 1.187; 2.8; 2.29–34; 2.81) are also supported by unnamed source-citations. And a few stories involving remote regions (e.g. 2.29; 3.98.1) and times (e.g. 1.91; 4.178) are supported by unnamed citations. Statements that tend toward the extreme end of the event-category they occupy are also supported by direct unnamed citations. For example, it is said that Mardonius was the bravest Persian in Plataea (9.71).

We may now move on to discuss Herodotus's named citations. As already noted, according to Shrimpton and Gill's calculations, 76% of the named citations within Herodotus are used to support culturally, geographically, and temporally remote events within the narrative. In other words, foreign stories that people might find hard to believe require source-validation. Most of the remaining named citations are employed to support descriptions of the supernatural or mythical events—we might, say, metaphysically distant events, to continue Gill's dislocation analogy. For example, Herodotus cites the Athenians regarding a mythical story about spring and an olive tree (8.55). In 9.120.1, the Chersonnesians are cited in support of the miraculous proclamation of the end of Artayctes. Others include significant narrative events. For example, in 2.144 and 2.146.2, the Greeks are cited in support of the birth of Dionysius, the last divine ruler of Egypt. But this event ends up not only being significant to the narrative development, starting at 2.144 and going through 2.146, it has to do with supernatural activity as well. It is claimed by the Greeks that Zeus stitched into Dionysius's thigh and carried him over Nysa in Ethiopia. The citation of the Greeks is used to introduce this narrative participant that takes center stage by marking his birth and then other references to what the Greeks say about his supernatural character are used to support the miraculous activities associated with Dionysius. Herodotus cites the Greeks regarding Heracles and the temple associated with him. Heracles is introduced into the narrative by a detailed description of Herodotus's Greek sources. He says, "These researchers of mine indicate that quite clearly Heracles is an ancient god. I think that, among the Greeks, their procedure is most correct who have established and cultivated two cults of Heracles; to one they sacrifice as to a god and by title Olympian, and to the other they offer worship as a hero" (2.44–45 [Godley, LCL]). Then he goes on to give the Greeks' account of this supernatural activity, involving Heracles going Egypt.

We see, then, in Herodotus, both levels of intertextuality at work. At the level of mimesis, he utilizes his source-framework to incorporate—no doubt—substantial amounts of previous historical tradition, but also much of the lyrical tradition that we find in the poets before him. This forms the basic source-backbone of his narrative, the pool of material from which he is drawing the major literary structure and foundational information for his narrative. When his history reaches points where his audience might doubt the credibility of his account, he cites his sources directly and with greater frequency. Anonymous or unnamed citations are fairly evenly distributed within Herodotus, highlighting thematic material throughout. Unnamed direct citations project information onto the foreground of the discourse. Named direct citations, however, have a massively disproportionate distribution within Herodotus. Gill's interpretation of his quantitative analysis of these named source-citations is that Herodotus is employing direct citations in cases where the credibility of the account is weakened through cultural, temporal, and geographical dislocation. This accounts for 76% of the instances of direct citation. Many further citations can be accounted for by adding an additional criterion of dislocation—metaphysical dislocation. These are accounts of the supernatural that people might feel distanced from by virtue of their existence within the natural world. It is also interesting that in instances of supernatural activity, that would typically be endorsed by a Greek audience, Greeks are cited as the authority. This would have gained the sympathies of Herodotus's Athenian readers, to be sure. These named source-citations are semantically specific and, therefore, marked, projecting information onto the frontground of the discourse. This makes good sense of the data from Herodotus before us and how source-citation fits into his overall narrative strategy. He cites sources to reinforce the credibility of his account at points where the audience may seem epistemologically distant and in need of reassurance regarding the truthfulness of part.

3. MIMESIS AND DIRECT CITATION IN LUKE(-ACTS)

Luke-Acts can now be situated in relation to the Greek historical tradition and the way that sources were integrated and utilized within their narrative histories. I hope to show that understanding the composition of Luke's narrative in terms of a distinctly Greek historical (as opposed to Jewish midrashic) framework provides important insights into his use of sources, including those based in the Jesus tradition and the Hebrew Scriptures.

3.1. *Hellenistic Historiography and the Literary Context for Luke-Acts*

Scholars have pointed to a number of generic indicators that locate Luke-Acts within the tradition of Hellenistic historiography.⁶⁸ Perhaps the most often discussed indicator of the historical status of the Lukan tradition has been the style of preface used to introduce the Gospel in Luke 1:1–4 and its subsequent recapitulatory link in Acts 1:1.⁶⁹ Alexander has suggested that the preface aligns with the scientific rather than the historical preface-form in antiquity.⁷⁰ However, Balch, Moessner, Aune, and most recently, Adams, have convincingly shown that Alexander's arguments for making this correlation place too much emphasis upon the normative status of the Thucydidean preface, which was atypical in many respects.⁷¹ Adams demonstrates that, "there are many parallels between Luke's preface and the prefaces of the Greek historians and Luke falls well within the accepted spectrums of style and content for Greek prefaces."⁷² Numerous other features help further clarify the connection between Luke and ancient historiography. These include the implementation of symposia, genealogy, speeches, travel

⁶⁸ For literary indicators aligning Luke/Luke-Acts with the ancient historical tradition, see esp. Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic History* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 369–374; David E. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment* (LEC 8; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 77–157. On Acts, see Collin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (ed. C.H. Gempf; WUNT 49; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989); Todd Penner, *In Praise of Christian Origins: Stephen and the Hellenists in Lukan Apologetic Historiography* (ESEC; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 262–330.

⁶⁹ E.g. H.J. Cadbury, "Commentary on the Preface of Luke," in F.J. Foakes-Jackson and K. Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity* (5 vols.; London: Macmillan, 1922–1933), 2:489–510; W.C. van Unnik, "Remarks on the Purpose of Luke's Historical Writing (Luke 1.1–4)," in W.C. van Unnik, *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W.C. van Unnik* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 6–15; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke* (AB 28; Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 287–301; D.L. Balch, "ἀκριβῶς ... γράψαι (Luke 1:3): To Write the Full History of God's Receiving All Nations," in D.P. Moessner, ed., *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1999), 229–250; D.P. Moessner, "The Appeal and Power of Poetics (Luke 1:1–4)," in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel*, 84–123; David E. Aune, "Luke 1.1–4: Historical or Scientific Prooimion?," in Alf Christophersen, Carsten Claussen, Jörg Frey, and Bruce Longenecker, eds., *Paul, Luke and the Graeco-Roman World: Essays in Honour of Alexander J.M. Wedderburn* (JSNTSup 217; London: T&T Clark, 2002), 138–148; Sean A. Adams, "Luke's Preface and its Relationship to Greek Historiography: A Response to Loveday Alexander," *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 177–191.

⁷⁰ Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel* (SNTSMS 79; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 21–42; Loveday Alexander, "The Preface to Acts and the Historians," in Ben Witherington, ed., *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 73–103.

⁷¹ Balch, "ἀκριβῶς," 229–250; Moessner, "Appeal," 84–123; Moessner, "The Lukan Prologues," 399–417; Aune, "Luke 1.1–4," 138–148; Adams, "Luke's Preface," 177–191.

⁷² Adams, "Luke's Preface," 191.

narratives, first person interjection (we passages), letters, the use of sources, dramatic episodes, and digressions.⁷³ Although other literary forms, such as Greco-Roman novels and monographs, exhibit a number of these features as well, in combination with the historical preface, they provide a powerful argument for the historical status of Luke-Acts. Although some have attempted to fit Acts into the mold of ancient epic or novel,⁷⁴ in recent scholarship, most are willing to grant that the collection fits somewhere within the broad spectrum of historiography. The precise historical designation is debated, however.⁷⁵ An especially tricky issue (taken up briefly below) is the literary relationship between Luke and Acts—particularly, in relation to whether Luke should be understood as biography with the other Gospels—which is precisely what led Talbert to classify both volumes as intellectual biography.⁷⁶ Others understand Luke-Acts more directly in line with Greek historiography, but with varying literary intentions. Penner and Sterling make connections with apologetic historiography, Balch argues that the collection should be viewed in light of political historiography (although he has now seen less of a need for such specificity),⁷⁷ and Brodie suggests an Old Testament literary framework, borrowing from the Elisha-Elijah model in articulating a deuteronomic or prophetic history.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Phillips has suggested an emerging consensus that recognizes Luke-Acts as history, but allowing that there may be literary variation within Luke-Acts, perhaps representing a number of differing forms that are not always easy to isolate independently of one another.⁷⁹

⁷³ Cf. Aune, *New Testament*, 120–131, for a convenient survey.

⁷⁴ Dennis MacDonald, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer?: Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); R.I. Pervo, *Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

⁷⁵ For an analysis of recent research, see T.E. Phillips, “The Genre of Acts: Moving Toward a Consensus?,” *CBR* 4 (2006): 367–396 (384–385).

⁷⁶ Charles H. Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1987). See also, Alexander, “Acts,” 31–63.

⁷⁷ David L. Balch, “ΜΕΤΑΒΟΛΗ ΠΟΔΙΤΕΙΩΝ—Jesus as Founder of the Church in Luke-Acts: Form and Function,” in T. Penner and C.V. Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts* (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 139–188 (141).

⁷⁸ Penner, *Praise*; Sterling, *Historiography*; Balch, “Comments,” 343–361; “Genre,” 5–19; “ἁκριβῶς,” 229–250; Thomas L. Brodie, “Greco-Roman Imitation of Texts as a Partial Guide to Luke’s Use of Sources,” in Charles H. Talbert, ed., *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 17–46; Thomas L. Brodie, “Luke-Acts as an Imitation and Emulation of Elijah-Elisha Narrative,” in Earl Richard, ed., *New Views on Luke and Acts* (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1990), 78–85.

⁷⁹ Phillips, “Genre,” 384–385.

A further question related to the genre of Luke-Acts must be raised concerning the unity of the collection—if it is in fact a collection. Burbridge's substantial treatment of the Gospels as ancient biography in tandem with Talbert's analysis has convinced most of the appropriateness of the biographical label.⁸⁰ That the recapitulatory statement and mention of the "former treatise" in Acts 1:1 is a reference to the Gospel is not seriously questioned.⁸¹ However, the implications for the literary relationship between the two volumes is not so clear.⁸² Does the unity of the collection entail that the individual volumes were composed according to the same generic code? Does the apparent biographical nature of Luke suggest that the collection should be understood biographically, as Talbert proposes?⁸³ Or should we reread Acts' evidently historical character back into Luke, as Aune recommends?⁸⁴ Palmer points to various collections in antiquity that were understood as a unit, but did not employ the same genre throughout the entire collection, as with the Josephus's three major works: *War*, *Antiquities*, and *Contra Apionem*.⁸⁵ Yet, as Alexander points out, "in these cases the changed subject matter and genre of the new work are indicated clearly in the preface."⁸⁶ This is not the case in Acts. There are no obvious indicators that a shift in genre is occurring. Although the possibility that Luke is composing a (literarily) independent sequel to his previous composition cannot be ruled out,⁸⁷ Burridge, Balch, and Porter are correct in noting that the hard and fast distinction between history and biography is a false disjunction since the two genres made use of so many of the same literary forms.⁸⁸ As Balch comments, "the line between history and biography is not so easily

⁸⁰ Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004); Talbert, *Literary Patterns*.

⁸¹ Cf. Mikael C. Parsons and Richard I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

⁸² For a survey of the issues, see I. Howard Marshall, "Acts and the 'Former Treatise'," in Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke, eds., *The Book of Acts in Its First-Century Setting*. Vol 1: *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 163–182; Alexander, "Preface," 23–27.

⁸³ Talbert, *Literary Patterns*.

⁸⁴ Aune, *New Testament*, 77.

⁸⁵ D.W. Palmer, "Acts and the Ancient Historical Monograph," in B.W. Winter and A.D. Clarke, eds., *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*. Vol. 1: *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 1–29 (25).

⁸⁶ Alexander, "Preface," 27.

⁸⁷ Cf. Alexander, "Preface," 27.

⁸⁸ Balch, "METABOΔH," 143; Burridge, *Gospels*, 275–279; Stanley E. Porter, "The Use of Authoritative Citations in Mark's Gospel and Ancient Biography: A Study of P.Oxy. 1176," in Thomas R. Hatina, ed., *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels*. Vol. 1: *The Gospel of Mark* (LNTS 304; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 116–130 (118).

drawn, as the overlap in material is not always statistically evident.⁸⁹ Luke's well defined preface (with the recapitulation in Acts) probably signaled a broadly historical work to its original readers, but like much ancient history Luke has clear biographical interests, expressed in the biographical character of much of his narrative. But as I explore below, sensitivities to the distribution of direct citation in Hellenistic historiography may bring further clarity to this issue.

3.2. *Intertextuality and Narrative Strategy in Luke's Gospel*

Given the Greek historiographic context out of which Luke's writings were conceived, it should not be surprising to discover that Luke seems to have implemented a highly informed historiographic model in the use and application of his source material. As a historian, Luke appears to frame his work according to the two major forms of accessing and utilizing sources that the historians were working with—mimesis and direct citation—in the composition of his own history of the early Christian church.

3.2.1. *Mimesis in Luke*

Of the two forms of intertextuality used by the historians, mimesis is by far the more common approach to using sources and accounts for Luke's numerous echoes, allusions, and quotations not introduced by a formula.⁹⁰ Luke's use and alterations of the oral tradition and other sources were also standard practice in ancient literary imitation. For Luke, this includes alterations of dialect (improvement of Mark?), arrangement, style, vocabulary, and genre (at least, if we view Luke as history and the other Gospels as biography) when we compare his material to the other Synoptics. These alterations or adaptations of the oral tradition—depending upon one's theory of Gospel relationships (i.e. whether Luke's sources involve L [such as the Lukan infancy narrative], [so-called] Q, Matt, Mark and/or oral tradition)—has been well canvassed in the literature and there is no need to rehearse it here, other than to say that it fits in at the mimesis level of Luke's source-integrative framework. This level of integration of source material is incorporated—due to its relative frequency—to form the background of the narrative. Brodie, therefore, has rightly suggested that imitation mod-

⁸⁹ Balch, "METABOΔH," 143.

⁹⁰ For an analysis of this material, see Kenneth Duncan Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God's People Intertextually* (JSNTSup 282; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 66–208.

els in Greco-Roman literature provide an important tool for assessing the Lukan use of sources.⁹¹ More significant, for the present purposes of this chapter, is how Luke employed his sources more directly, through specific citation and how this strategy supports the foregrounding/frontgrounding of key narrative movements.

3.2.2. *Direct Citation in the Narrative-Rhetorical Strategy of Luke*

As we approach Luke's use of direct citations in comparison with the other synoptics, it is immediately obvious that, like the historians, Luke is far more selective in his use of direct citation. Luke only contains around 25 citations, about half as many as Matthew and roughly the same as Mark. But as Moyise notes, "Bearing in mind that Luke is nearly twice as long as Mark, we can say that quotations in Luke are about half as frequent as in Matthew and Mark."⁹² This is interesting in light of Potter's comment above that perhaps the only distinctive formal feature of the biographical genre when compared to ancient history is its more free use of direct citations. That Luke is in fact more reserved in the citation of his sources may, therefore, be an indication that he perceived himself to be composing his two volumes more closely to traditional history than ancient biography, like Mark and Matthew. Further, if Luke was dependent upon Mark and/or Matthew this would mean that he intentionally excluded material introduced by direct citation—although most of Mark's citations are present—perhaps in the interests of preserving the literary integrity of his work or even limiting himself mostly to citations found in his sources. He also appears to have reduced, in many places, a Marcan citation formula to imitation, perhaps of the Marcan source, or from a citation formula using the name of the prophet or corpus to the more abbreviated form: "it is written." This points to several key differences that emerge between Luke and the Jewish Gospels that may be historically motivated. I will argue throughout the remainder of this chapter that Luke uses his citations more like sources whereas the Jewish Gospels refer to Israel's sacred traditions as Scripture in the conventional sense. Luke's far more selective use of direct citation of sources also distinguishes him, as does the fact that he is much more reluctant to cite the name of his source than the Jewish evangelists. These distinctions bring clarity both to the uniqueness of Luke and to that of the Jewish Gospels and probably indicate the Lukan Gospel's uniquely historical character.

⁹¹ Brodie, "Imitation," 17–46.

⁹² Cf. Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New: An Introduction* (T&T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies; London: T&T Clark, 2001), 45.

The various forms of Lukan citations are not unfamiliar to the historians. Luke cites written religious documents, introducing his use of sources with formulas like “as it is written in the law of the Lord” (καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν νόμῳ κυρίου) (Luke 2:23; cf. also 2:24) and reference to “the Book of Psalms” as a source (Luke 20:42–43). At other times, Luke cites an authoritative author. He refers to Isaiah (3:4–6; 4:17), Moses (20:37), and David (20:42–43), in particular. Each of these may be viewed under citation form 3 above (§ 2.1.1.3): religious authorities. The other synoptic writers cite the names of their sources more frequently, which was typical in ancient biographical literature. In some ways, Luke’s use of “it is written” formally parallels various “it is said” formulas, but employing a written instead of an oral source—which was not untypical in Greek historiography when written sources were available—and in Acts, the oral formula is the dominant formula used for introducing scriptural quotations.

Numerous narrative-rhetorical strategies have been suggested for Luke’s use of scriptural sources. These studies, for the most part, have sought to understand Lukan patterns of intertextuality primarily in terms of his larger theological (usually christological or salvation-historical) agenda.⁹³ While theology undoubtedly plays a significant role in the development of Luke’s narrative, I argue that Luke’s direct citation of sacred Jewish tradition was informed most immediately by his historical agenda. In Greek historiography, it was shown that direct citations of a source were only employed at key places in the narrative where additional verification is needed, such as significant transition points, miraculous activity, interventions by the gods, important sayings and other generally extraordinary, distant and/or hard to believe events that the historian may record.

Luke appears to execute a similar strategy. In the Gospel, each time a scriptural source is directly cited, it comes at a pivotal point in the narrative, often where additional validation is needed. The citations that are employed are selective and purposeful. In places of special significance, Luke mentions the author of the source by name. As noted above, he introduces a citation using Moses’ name once, Isaiah’s name twice and David’s

⁹³ E.g. Paul Shubert, “The Structure and Significance of Luke 24,” in W. Eltester, ed., *Neutestamentlichen Studien Für Rudolph Bultmann* (Berlin: Alfred Töpelman, 1954), 165–186; Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation*; François Bovon, “The Interpretation of the Old Testament,” in François Bovon and Ken McKinney, eds., *Luke the Theologian. Thirty-Three Years of Research (1950–1983)* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1987), 78–108; Charles A. Kimball, *Jesus’ Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke’s Gospel* (JSNTSup 94; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); Gert J. Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations in the Context of the Petrine and Pauline Speeches of the Acta Apostolorum* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995).

name once. Luke's citation of representative authors from each of the major Jewish corpora, appears to be an attempt to invoke the authority of the entire Tanak, as a significant religio-prophetic source that underlies and gives credibility to his historical account. This has significant implications for the relationship of Luke-Acts to Jewish Christianity in that it shows that the current Jewish understanding of Luke's citation strategy is incorrect and encourages a more literally sensitive analysis. The positive argument put forward here undermines pesher, midrash, and other rabbinic models for understanding Luke's use of sources (and specifically Scripture) and suggests instead a more historiographically based motivation. Luke, a Greek author, uses Greek literary forms to compose a historical narrative about what is an essentially Jewish movement, validated—in Luke's eyes—by Jewish Scripture. It seems that reading the narrative as history also opens up the possibility that Luke viewed the First Testament primarily as a Jewish source employed to lend additional credibility to his narrative at key points where further verification was needed. This is not in any way to undermine Luke's high view of these sources. He clearly perceived them as divine, authoritative, and prophetic. It is only to say that—in distinction from the Jewish Gospels—the literary function of these texts is more like that of sources than religious literature. They are religious literature used as sources. And the high level of authority and credibility that Luke seems to assign to his Jewish sources appears to assume a sympathetic—i.e. Jewish, God-fearing or very open/curious—readership: the authority of ancient sources is embedded directly in the relationship between the author and his implied reader. All of this can be substantiated by looking at Luke's individual citations.

The first direct citations are from “the law of the Lord” (Exod 13:2, 12; Lev 5:11; 12:8) (Luke 2:23–24) and are made in association with Jesus' birth, the first major historical event in his life. The citation formula (καθὼς γέγραπται) seems to be of Jewish origin, the equivalent being employed at Qumran.⁹⁴ Like much of Luke's infancy narrative, these citations are Lukan, perhaps reflecting his historical intention to support this key event in his narrative. Mark's Gospel does not include an infancy narrative while Matthew's Gospel employs different citations altogether in his description of the nativity scene.⁹⁵ Luke's citation here also serves to fill out the identity of Jesus as

⁹⁴ John Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20* (WBC 35a; Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 118.

⁹⁵ Tannehill notices the significance of the birth story in the development of the Lukan narrative strategy. Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (Foundations and Facets; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 16.

an individual that, as the firstborn, was set apart for the Lord's purpose from birth: "as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord'" (Luke 2:23).

The second citation confirms the validity of Jesus' prophetic forerunner, John the Baptist, who was in the wilderness,⁹⁶ by employing a direct citation from the prophet Isaiah (Luke 3:4–5). This text functions as an authentication for the miraculous preparations that paved the way for Jesus' coming through John, and it validates John's ministry, including his testimony to Jesus (3:16–17) and Jesus' baptism (3:21–22) mentioned in the subsequent narrative, which occupies the second major narrative movement in Luke's story of Jesus. Both Matthew and Mark also include the citation in their accounts.

The third major narrative development, appearing in both Matthew and Luke's account, is supported by a set of direct citations from Scripture, although the specific source is not named: the temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1–13). The entire narrative is framed by temptations from Satan in the form of conditional sentences and responses from Jesus, each introduced by an abbreviated quotation formula and a passage from Deuteronomy. It might be tempting to maintain that the extraordinary nature of the event requires validation, but the citations are not employed in support of the event itself, but in dialogue with its main protagonist. Each citation does, however, support Jesus' success where Israel had failed in a similar wilderness experience. He was tempted with hunger as Israel was tempted with the monotony of eating manna each day, but did not depend solely upon food and cited Deut 8:3 to this effect. He was tempted with idolatry and did not waver, as Israel (Deut 6:13), nor did he test God as Israel had done at Massah (Deut 6:16).

The next set of direct citations, in Luke 4:16–30, is of special significance for a number of reasons. Perhaps, most importantly, Luke employs a different arrangement (see § 3.2.1. above) of the material than Mark and Matthew. In Luke's narrative, it comes directly after the temptation whereas Mark (6:1–6) and Matthew (13:53–58) place it much later. For Luke it is the inaugural event of Jesus' public ministry. The third evangelist also adds substantially to the account, especially in 4:17–21—which Paffenroth observes has

⁹⁶ Mauser has shown that eschatological renewal began in the wilderness according to contemporary Jewish sources. Ulrich Mauser, *Christ and the Wilderness: The Wilderness Theme in the Second Gospel and its Basis in the Biblical Tradition* (SBT 39; London: SCM, 1963).

several stylistic features in correlation with other L material⁹⁷—with the citation from Isaiah 61 and 58, which is uniquely Lukan. Distinct emphasis is placed upon this source by indicating the author's name. These additions and their unique arrangement in Luke's narrative seem to reflect the historiographic intention of its author. The passage cited by Jesus from Isaiah functions to frame and give validation to Jesus' subsequent healing and preaching ministry. From the Isaiah passages we learn that Jesus has been anointed to proclaim the gospel to the poor, heal the blind, and set free the captives. Each of these themes play a pivotal role in Luke's subsequent development of the fulfillment of Jesus' mission. Jesus even summarizes his ministry in precisely these terms in Luke 7:22. Like other Hellenistic historians, Luke grasps the importance of providing special authoritative support for the miraculous and the extraordinary and, therefore, (uniquely) introduces and frames Jesus' public ministry with a direct citation from a specified authoritative author (Isaiah) that enables him to provide prophetic endorsement for the numerous miraculous feats that he plans to recount. It appears to be Luke's intent to use this citation to bolster Jesus' entire teaching and healing ministry. Proof of this is found in the fact that besides a reinforcing citation in support of John's ministry (7:27—see below) and an additional allusion to Isaiah 61 (7:22—see below), no direct citations appear in Luke's Gospel until after the last miracle story (18:35–43), where the narrative shifts away from Jesus' healing ministry.⁹⁸ Since literary constraints within the historical genre only allowed for a sparing use of direct citation, Luke had to arrange his narrative carefully and use direct citation quite purposefully in order to successfully validate the large amount of miraculous material that he hoped to chronicle. Jesus' inaugural sermon at Nazareth provided precisely this opportunity, but it required innovation on Luke's part, both in his use of sources and in the arrangement of his material. But such adaptation is completely in line with the established canons for mimesis in ancient historiography and is to be expected from any great historian.

In Luke 7:27, the ministry of John the Baptist is supported with prophetic citation for the second time in Luke's Gospel, but on this occasion it is on the lips of Jesus instead of the narrator (cf. Luke 3:4–5), and it is from the prophet Malachi (3:1) instead of Isaiah. This passage seems to serve somewhat of a

⁹⁷ Kim Paffenroth, *The Story of Jesus according to L* (JSNTSup 147; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 34.

⁹⁸ The citations at 8:10, 10:27, 13:35 and 18:20, while important, do not employ a citation formula and are, therefore, relevant at the mimesis level of the discourse.

summary function within the Gospel,⁹⁹ re-evoking the citation from Isaiah 61 in 7:22, as a proof for Jesus' messiahship, and further supporting—this time, from another prophet—the validity of Jesus' prophetic forerunner. These events group together naturally in the mind of Luke and his implied reader since they are the only two historical events that he has authenticated by specific reference to the prophet Isaiah. But while important, these are not major movements in the narrative, but serve instead to remind the audience of the credibility that has already been established for them earlier in the account and to further establish John's ministry. Therefore, specific authors are not mentioned. The material is merely alluded to in the first instance and is referenced by use of the abbreviated citation formula—"it is written" (γέγραπται)—in the second.

As indicated above, Luke's next direct citation does not occur until after Jesus' last miracle in Jericho, where he healed the blind beggar. This miracle story serves as a fitting ending since the man is both blind and poor, encapsulating precisely the prophetic points of Jesus' ministry that are emphasized by the Isaiah passages he cited in the Nazarene synagogue (4:16–30). Although the liberation motif is not explicit, demon possession and sickness were often correlated in the minds of the ancients so that various sicknesses, such as blindness, can incorporate both.

It is not until the cleansing of the temple episode (Luke 19:45–48) that Scripture is directly cited again in Luke's Gospel, after Jesus' last miracle had been preformed. Although this event fits outside of the purview of the miraculous, it is an extraordinary event that requires immense religious authority and, thus, needs prophetic endorsement. This citation also occurs at an important turning point in the narrative with the first major incident of Jesus' time in Jerusalem, the geographical location where the remainder of Luke's Gospel will unfold. Scripture is cited twice in connection with this event: (1) in the process of Jesus cleansing the temple (19:46, citing Isa 56:7) and (2) in his defense of his authority to cleanse the temple (20:17, citing LXX Psalm 117:22). Based upon the reduced formula, the event does not appear to be on the same level as the birth and inauguration of Jesus' public ministry, but it is quite significant warranting two citations in support of it.

In a controversy with the Sadducees over the resurrection, Luke has Jesus citing Scripture again. Moses' name is mentioned specifically—a strategy that has not been employed since Jesus' citation of Isaiah in chapter 4—and

⁹⁹ Contra I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 295.

the burning bush episode is quoted in support of his belief in the resurrection. Surprisingly, few interpreters deal with this passage in the context of the larger Lukan narrative agenda. Powery is an exception. He asserts that, “As far as the citation’s narrative role, Jesus uses it—as he does the previous two citations—to *defend* his position on resurrection. Hermeneutically, Jesus *accommodates* this text, as he does all explicit scriptural passages in Jerusalem (in Luke)” (emphasis his).¹⁰⁰ From my perspective, this only assesses one dimension of the passage’s narrative function, however. Powery in no way helps us see how this citation functions within Luke’s larger citation strategy as a historian. It is an odd form of narrative criticism that does not take into consideration the larger narrative framework. From a historical standpoint, this citation not only provides information about Jesus’ beliefs, but more importantly, it pre-figures and validates the resurrection of Jesus, which Luke will later record. This is an especially significant point in the narrative and looks to lend credibility to future narrative developments. Luke’s unique framing of the citation reflects this intention:

Mark 12:25

ὅταν γὰρ ἐκ νεκρῶν
ἀναστῶσιν

Luke 20:37

ὅτι δὲ ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί

Matthew 22:31

περὶ δὲ τῆς ἀναστάσεως τῶν
νεκρῶν

Mark uses the subjunctive, projecting a possible world for the consideration of the audience.¹⁰¹ Matthew employs a noun phrase, probably indicating a more limited narrative application, focusing upon the individual doctrinal debate itself. Luke’s phraseology, however, seems concerned to indicate the truthfulness of the reality: “that the dead rise” (ὅτι δὲ ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί) is the proposition he supports from Moses. It is not stated as a possibility or as a doctrinal issue, but as a proposition that, for Moses, Jesus, and Luke, corresponded to reality. This is key for Luke’s specifically historical agenda, since such a significant miracle would need substantial credibility to be accepted within the broader historical framework of his narrative. Luke, therefore, turns to his sharpest tool in the tool box for verification: direct citation employing the name of his source.

The next citation also occurs in the context of Jesus’ responses to questioning from the religious authorities in Jerusalem, but the citation is given

¹⁰⁰ Emerson B. Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture: The Function of Jesus’ Use of Scripture in the Synoptics* (BIS 63; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 234.

¹⁰¹ Porter, *Idioms*, 56.

on Jesus' own initiative, not prompted by a question. David is named as the source (LXX Psalm 109:1) and this citation appears to prefigure Jesus' post-resurrection ascension in Luke's second volume. Therefore, both the resurrection and the exaltation to glory are supported with direct-specific citation by Luke.

The final instance in which Jesus names a specific source is in Luke 22:37 in connection with Jesus' prophetic death. Here a specific name is not mentioned, but the source is specified as "this Scripture" or "this that is written" (τοῦτο τὸ γεγραμμένον), indicating that the author is referring to an authoritative prophetic religious document. Although a death may seem like a normal enough event—since, of course, all die—the sensational nature of Jesus' death required further validation through the use of direct citation. The use of specific citation in this way in the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus can be compared to Xenophon's citations in support of the death of Orantos and the disappearance of his body in *Anabasis* 1.6.11 (see also *Hell.* 3.1.14; *Anab.* 1.8.24). The demonstrative pronoun does seem to specify a particular document, but not with the same force as citing a name. But, a death is a bit less extraordinary from a historical perspective than a series of miraculous healings, a resurrection, or an ascension, and so Luke appears to use somewhat of a mid-grade form, as with Jesus' birth, to describe this event in which the source is specified, but the author is not named.

The pattern of scriptural source citation that emerges in Luke's Gospel is quite consistent with the citation strategies employed by the ancient historians. Like the historians—and unlike the other Synoptic Gospel writers—Luke uses direct citation very sparingly. He reserves his citations—especially naming the specific source—for key narrative developments and portions of his story that may seem more "excessive" or "unbelievable" to his audience and, therefore, require additional verification. Luke cites his sources directly by mentioning the specific source only at the most crucial developments in the narrative: at the birth of Jesus, in support of his prophetic forerunner, at the inauguration of his public healing and teaching ministry and in reference to his resurrection, exaltation and death. Specific names, however, are only employed at places where miraculous validation is needed. The more normal events of birth and death employ a mid-grade form, citing a specific source, but not mentioning the author. Luke also employs the abbreviated formula at less crucial, but still important progressions. These include Jesus' temptation and a reinforcement of John the Baptist's healing ministry with an additional allusion to Isaiah 61 in the same context.

There also seems to be a correlation between direct citation and Luke's rejection motif during Jesus' public ministry. Three times we have Luke citing Scripture in an event that caused the people to reject Jesus. The ultimate response to his sermon in Nazareth was rejection and attempted murder. In 7:28, after Luke cites the Scripture in support of John's ministry, he records that "the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him." And in Luke 19–20, in Jesus' dialogues with the Sadducees, Luke's narrative is continually accented by their rejection. In light of Luke's historical interests, this is not surprising. Luke employs additional support through directly citing his sources at points in the narrative where Jesus was rejected. Instances of rejection by religious authorities would seemingly require further validation to help vindicate Jesus as the main character of the story.

Another point to be noted at the narrative-rhetorical level is the function of direct citations in which Luke names his source specifically. Not only are the key events of Jesus' public ministry marked by a name-specific source citation, each citation appears to function cataphorically in order to lend credibility to the narrative that follows. John the Baptist is mentioned, and Isaiah is cited in support of his ministry in 3:4–6, but this citation is intended more directly to support John's testimony to Jesus in 3:15–17. It was also shown that the Lukan citation of Isaiah 61/58 appears to be uniquely positioned in Luke's narrative for the purpose of validating the healing and preaching ministry that follows. Incidentally, Luke does not name his source specifically again until after Jesus' last miracle has been accomplished. It was noted further that Luke only uses one direct citation in this entire stretch of text and here only to reemphasize the credibility of events that had been supported previously within the narrative. I argued that the next three citations, in which the source is specifically named, also look forward to future events in Luke's narrative: Jesus' resurrection, exaltation, and death. Luke's strategy thus seems to be aimed at giving support and credibility to the unbelievable before it transpires. He sets his audience up and attempts to frame their beliefs before recording what he knows may be difficult for them to accept. By contrast, the less globally prominent events mentioned above that are supported by abbreviated formulas all function anaphorically, mentioning or recapping a detail of the narrative and offering source-support for it (e.g. the temptation narrative, recap of John's credibility and Jesus' citation of Isaiah 61/58 [Luke 7:26–27], etc.). Therefore, we might conceive of Luke's abbreviated citations as anaphoric foreground material and his citations where he names his source as cataphoric foreground discourse, as developed in the opening section

on methodology, with mimesis framing the background. In all of this, Luke seems to closely resemble the citation strategies of the ancient historians.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Two forms of intertextuality are employed by the ancient historians, mimesis and direct citation, and each for their own distinct narrative-historical purposes. This chapter argued that Luke adopted a historiographic rather than a theological model for source integration and citation within his narrative. It was suggested that mimesis functions at the background level of the discourse—integrating sources such as Q, L, Matt, Mark, and other oral and scriptural tradition—whereas direct citation, especially when the name of the source is mentioned, moves events and participants to the foreground or frontground. This claim is substantiated by the fact that each of Luke's major narrative movements revolving around the person of Jesus are supported with a direct source-specific citation: his birth, public healing and teaching ministry, resurrection, exaltation, and death. This is frontground material. Foreground material is supported by abbreviated citation formulas. Like the historians, Luke uses direct citation sparingly, only when special validation is needed for an event or saying—especially in cases of supernatural intervention.

ON SOURCES AND SPEECHES:
METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS IN
ANCIENT PROSE WORKS AND LUKE-ACTS

Sean A. Adams

Speeches played an important role in the ancient world, not only in the political sphere, but in many aspects of life. It is not surprising, therefore, that they inhabit a prominent position within ancient literary works. It is widely held that speeches provide insight into a character and are essential determinates of decisions.¹ Indeed, it appears that speeches hold an important place in historical and biographical works, as the words of an individual are equally as important for understanding a person's character as his actions.²

For the modern historian understanding the nature of speeches in the ancient world, how they were recorded, transmitted, and used, is vital for understanding literary works and the historical events they present. Unlike today's culture where everything is precisely recorded, digitally transcribed, and posted on the internet for all to access, an ancient speech could only become known after its original utterance through the use of a stenographer or if the speech was committed to memory and later reported to someone who wrote it down. This recording process is much more precarious than ours today and has led scholars, historians, and the general populous to be wary of the contents of speeches and to question whether or not the memory and report of that speech was accurate.³ This engenders questions of sources, their nature and how they were acquired and handled by authors.

Accuracy of speeches and source material, however, is not only a modern concern; many ancient writers share this anxiety. The major difference between our two cultures is the current widespread availability of information and the ease by which it is transmitted. Before castigating the ancients for their lack of interest in historical details and reported speech we need

¹ K.J. Dover, *Thucydides* (Greece & Rome: New Surveys in the Classics 7; Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 22–23; A.W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides Vol. 1: Introduction and Commentary on Book I* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1945), 147.

² E.g. Thucydides, 1.22.1–2; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.9.33, 1367b; *Poet.* 15, 1454a18; Xenophon, *Ages.* 1.6; Plutarch, *Phoc.* 5.4.

³ Dover, *Thucydides*, 21.

to understand their concerns, perspectives, and methods. Accordingly, this article will present and evaluate the methods of acquiring and reporting factual information (particularly speeches) by ancient historians and biographers. We will begin by determining their practices and perspectives when investigating and recording events and utterances with a particular focus on the use and availability of sources when recounting speeches. Ultimately, this investigation of ancient writers will provide the backcloth for our discussion of the speeches of Acts in which we will determine the limits of modern discussion of historical practice and speech accuracy.

1. HERODOTUS

Herodotus is considered to be the father of modern history. However, as a progenitor of this field his discussion of historical method is not as developed as later historians who have criticised his work (cf. Cicero, *Leg.* 1.5). Nevertheless, there are a number of instances in his history that provide the foundation for subsequent historians and address our topic of discussion.

First, there are a number of places where Herodotus speaks of a desire to find a person who was an “eyewitness” (αὐτόπτης) of a particular place or event. The term αὐτόπτης appears three times in his *Histories* (2.29, 3.115 and 4.16), each use describing a person who has seen, in these cases, a certain geographical region for themselves.⁴ The mention in 2.29 discusses the geography of Egypt and his personal eyewitness of Elephantine. The use in Book Three is also geographically related, expressing that he has met no one with firsthand experience of a sea North-West of Europe. In the final citation, Herodotus states that he never encountered anyone who claims to have visited (and therefore seen) the certain region in question. Associated with these statements of eyewitness testimony are comments by Herodotus about his confidence (or lack thereof) in his reporting (esp. 3.115). This use of αὐτόπτης indicates that Herodotus was more than simply creating stories or events, but was aware of the need to ascertain factual information from outside sources (or at least appear to have done so).

Although Herodotus speaks of his own experiences, there are times when he also relied on hearsay. It is through these oral and eyewitness reports

⁴ For a discussion regarding the nature and various means of interpreting αὐτόπτης, see Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary convention and social context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1* (SNTSMS 78; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 120–122. For a critique of Alexander, see Sean A. Adams, “Luke's Preface and its Relationship to Greek Historiography,” *JGRChJ* 3 (2006): 177–191.

that Herodotus supplemented and confirmed information he acquired from other sources, either oral or written. References to sources are scattered throughout the *History* and indicate a general desire for gaining information from native residents or event participants. For example, Herodotus, after finishing his personal observations, provides Egyptian records given to him by a local priest (2.99, 119). In another section (9.16) Herodotus records a portion of a dinner conversation between an un-named Persian and Thersandrus of Orchomenus before the battle of Plataea. This conversation, provided to him by the same Thersandrus, is reported speech that, Thersandrus claims, he also recounted to other writers.

To determine by inquiry, for Herodotus, is one of the most important methodological traits of a historian (cf. 1.1). Moreover, it was his belief that a historian was not to accept uncritically everything that he received, but must verify it through inquiry (e.g. 2.29, 34, 44, 50, 99, 113, 119).⁵ This process is confirmed when Herodotus had two versions and could not discern which was correct. In these cases Herodotus supplied both versions and reserved judgment (e.g. 4.96).⁶ In other instances, Herodotus informs his reader when reporting stories or accounts that he thinks are dubious.⁷

Regarding Herodotus's methodology for reported speech there are two programmatic statements that summarise his position. The first is found in 2.123 where Herodotus, after providing a number of stories about Egypt, states, "These Egyptian stories are for the use of whosoever believes such tales: for myself, it is my rule throughout this history that I record whatever is told me as I have heard it." The second statement is in 7.152 where Herodotus informs his readers that "it is my business to set down that which is told to me; however, to believe it is not at all my business."⁸ These two statements outline Herodotus's use of reported speech: he presents stories as he was given them and allows the reader to determine their veracity.

⁵ These examples are of Herodotus asking priests and other individuals to verify stories that he had heard in the past.

⁶ A.W. Mosley, "Historical Reporting in the Ancient World," *NTS* 12 (1965–1966): 10–26 (11–12). There are times, however, when the decision between the two should have been easy, but Herodotus retains both. This suggests either a lack of critical reason or that there was an alternate motivation (such as to entertain).

⁷ For example, see 1.75, 182; 2.3, 73, 121; 3.3, 115; 4.5, 25, 105; 5.86; 7.214; 8.119. Interestingly, Herodotus reports some stories that he did not believe, but our later perspective suggests that they were likely true (e.g. 4.42).

⁸ Cf. also 1.5 in which Herodotus, after recounting the initial conflict between the Persians and the Phoenicians, does not venture to say which of their claims is true. Rather Herodotus asserts that he will discuss whom he himself knows to be the first to have wrongfully injured the Greeks.

In Herodotus's *History*, there is no mention of speech composition or adaption—an issue that later historians were concerned about. Moreover, despite Herodotus's use of sources and his expressed desire to verify his information, some scholars, such as Kenneth Dover, believe that Herodotus, “felt as free as an epic poet to have his characters speak whenever the story involved speech.”⁹ Similarly, J. Bury notes that Thucydides critiques Herodotus for attempting to develop “good reading” and for the pervading mythical aspect in his work.¹⁰ Most of Herodotus's reported speeches are vivid, a characteristic that is difficult to explain as most of the events he records did not occur within his lifetime. As a result, some scholars claim that his speeches could not be factual and so sharply contrast his historical approach with that of Thucydides.¹¹ A.W. Gomme, comparing the process of recounting speeches and reconstructing narrative, employed by these two historians, claims that Herodotus uses poor methodology for distinguishing trustworthy and non-trustworthy sources, and over-represents his knowledge of the speeches' content and accuracy by placing them in the style of the speaker.¹² However, Gomme sees some redemption for Herodotus as Thucydides agrees with his content on a number of occasions.¹³

Although it is true that Herodotus, in writing his *History*, does not appear as rigorous as Thucydides (see below), it is not accurate (or at least not fair) to claim that discerning the truth was unimportant to him, as he makes special reference to it. Was Herodotus, who gained the title “father of history,” attempting to initiate a methodological change towards a greater accuracy in reporting facts and recorded speech? If this is the case, then Thucydides, far from denigrating Herodotus, is rather building on his movement in the promotion of factual histories.¹⁴

⁹ Dover, *Thucydides*, 21.

¹⁰ J.B. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians* (New York: Dover Publications, 1958), 81. Bury sees critiques of Herodotus in Thucydides' work. Though Herodotus has mythical elements to some of his stories, it is a stretch to see in Thucydides' *History* a strong, specific critique of Herodotus, as he is not mentioned. Other scholars, such as Gomme (*Thucydides*, 148), allow for the possibility of a critique of Herodotus (specifically) in this section; however, this must be tempered by remembering that Herodotus was not the only historian at that time, although the only one that has survived in any size. As a result, we should not inevitably think that this implied criticism is for him alone.

¹¹ A.W. Gomme, “The Speeches in Thucydides,” in his *Essays in Greek History and Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1937), 184.

¹² Gomme, *Commentary*, 144.

¹³ Gomme, *Commentary*, 148.

¹⁴ R.C. Jebb, “The Speeches of Thucydides,” in Evelyn Abbott, ed., *Hellenica: A Collection of Essays on Greek Poetry, Philosophy, History and Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1898), 244–295 (246).

2. THUCYDIDES

When discussing ancient historiography and the writing of history, no author has drawn as much attention by both moderns and ancients as Thucydides.¹⁵ Indeed, no passage has demanded as much scholarly inquiry as 1.22.1–4, in which Thucydides outlines his methodology for the recounting and creating speeches in his *History*:

With reference to the speeches in this history, some were delivered before the war began, others while it was going on; some I heard myself, others I got from various quarters; it was in all cases difficult to carry them word for word in one's memory, so my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said. [2] And with reference to the narrative of events, far from permitting myself to derive it from the first source that came to hand, I did not even trust my own impressions, but it rests partly on what I saw myself, partly on what others saw for me, the accuracy of the report being always tried by the most severe and detailed tests possible. [3] My conclusions have cost me some labour from the want of coincidence between accounts of the same occurrences by different eye-witnesses, arising sometimes from imperfect memory, sometimes from undue partiality for one side or the other. [4] The absence of romance in my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but if it be judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it, I shall be content. In fine, I have written my work, not as an essay which is to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time. (Smith, LCL)

This passage has become so well known that many scholars, both biblical and classical, have developed a Thucydidean view of speech writing and historical methodology. Charles Fornara expresses that “Thucydides set down a positive methodological rule: speeches were deeds or actions requiring accurate reproduction in substance, always with the possibility, when necessary, of expansion, truncation, or reduction. Thucydides’ methodological rule proved authoritative.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Cf. Cicero, *De or.* 30–32, 39; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *On Thucydides*.

¹⁶ Charles W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 145. For other authors who believe that there is a Thucydidean view, see Donald Kagan, “The Speeches in Thucydides and the Mytilene Debate,” *YCS* 24 (1975): 71–94 (71–73); Marc Cogan, *The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles of Thucydides’ History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), ix–xvii; Jebb, “The Speeches of Thucydides,” 245; F.F. Bruce *The Acts of the Apostles: Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 34–35; Alexander, *Preface to Luke’s*

However, although this passage has received substantial scholarly attention, there is still disagreement over what Thucydides is attempting to express in this section. Of particular importance is 1.22.1, within which there are number of interpretive difficulties.¹⁷ Most of the disagreement has centered on one particular clause, "... so my habit has been to make the speakers say what was in my opinion demanded of them by the various occasions, of course adhering as closely as possible to the general sense of what they really said."¹⁸

One of the most important aspects of this phrase and that of its parallel in 1.22.2 is that Thucydides admits that there is a subjective element to his method.¹⁹ However, it appears that it is immediately contradicted by the second half of the clause, which adopts a view of accurate reporting. J.H. Findley addresses this problem by subordinating the ideas of the secondary clause, stating that, as a participial clause, it has "a purely secondary, limiting force."²⁰ Unfortunately, this does not adequately deal with the sentiment of the second clause or that of the methodology section itself. Consequently, Findley avoids the difficult issue of wrestling with Thucydides' accuracy. A. Andrewes responds to Findley well when he states, "This is clearly no answer. If the clause has a limiting force, then it limits, and the force is not nullified by calling it secondary. It is not, as many critics take it, a matter of weight or balance: the question is whether the author means what he says, and we have no general licence to disregard participles."²¹ This view is paralleled in Kagan and Gomme, in that, though they concede that this clause opens the door for scholars to argue that Thucydides created some of his speeches, this is not ultimately what he was articulating.²²

Schwartz proposes a similar perspective to Findley in that he does not believe Thucydides was honest in his expressed interest in portraying the facts, but desired to create speeches that were important to him and so used this discussion as a cover-up. Gomme, however, challenges Schwartz's

Gospel, 24. For someone who disputes this view, see Stanley E. Porter, "Thucydides 1.22.1 and Speeches in Acts: Is There a Thucydidean View?," in his *Studies in the Greek New Testament* (SBG 6; New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 173–193 (179–180).

¹⁷ For a thorough delineation of the grammatical problems in this passage, see Porter, "Thucydides 1.22.1," esp. 180–191.

¹⁸ Thucydides 1.22.1: ὡς δ' ἂν ἐδόκουν ἐμοὶ ἕκαστοι περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα μάλιστα εἰπεῖν, ἔχοντές τι ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων, οὕτως εἴρηται.

¹⁹ Porter, "Thucydides 1.22.1," 183.

²⁰ John H. Findley Jr., *Thucydides* (Ann Arbor: Harvard, 1942), 95.

²¹ A. Andrewes, "The Mytilene Debate: Thucydides 3.36–49," *Phoenix* 16 (1962): 64–85 (66).

²² Kagan, "Speeches," 73–74; Gomme, "Speeches in Thucydides," 158–159.

interpretation that Thucydides' τὰ ἀληθῶς λεχθέντα meant "truly spoken" rather than "spoken truthfully".²³

The natural, and therefore the proper, translation of the whole sentence is: "the speeches have been composed as I thought the speakers would express what they had to express (not, "the ideal arguments") on the several occasions, by keeping as close as possible to the general sense of what was actually said." Only thus do we give any meaning to the words which imply that Thucydides was meeting with difficulties, and did his best to get over them.²⁴

It would not have been too difficult for Thucydides to get the insider information and records of speeches that he claims to have in his work. First, as a general for Athens, Thucydides was privy to political and military conversations. Second, security and confidentiality were not high in ancient Greek culture and many of the generals/politicians may have boasted about, confided in, or complained to their friends after a conference.²⁵ Third, Thucydides would likely have had continued access to fellow Athenian generals following his exile in 415 BCE.

Thucydides' *History* has also been a focus of ancient writers, who have accused him of impressing too much of himself on his speeches. All but one of Thucydides' speeches are composed in literary Attic and have very little characterisation between the different speakers.²⁶ This, as well as the fact that Aristotle and Plutarch do not use Thucydides' *History* when they recount Pericles' orations, but rely on other texts, suggests that the ancients recognised Thucydides' influence on a character's speech. In addition, Dionysius of Halicarnassus claims that Thucydides crafted his own speeches (*Thuc.* 34). However, if we understand that Dionysius was approaching Thucydides' work as a person who was primarily concerned with literary quality (*Thuc.* 24–33; *Comp.* 22), it is easy to understand how he could dismiss Thucydides' historical approach. Both of these writers approach the study of history from different angles: Thucydides from that of a historian, and Dionysius from that of a literary critic.²⁷ However, despite his critiques, Dionysius views Thucydides as a good historian, but lacking innovative speech style.²⁸

²³ Gomme, "Speeches in Thucydides," 159–160. This is in response to Schwartz's review of Taeger's *Thukydides in Gnomon* 2 (1926): 65–82 (79–80).

²⁴ Gomme, "Speeches in Thucydides," 160.

²⁵ Dover, *Thucydides*, 23.

²⁶ Dover, *Thucydides*, 23–24. For a good discussion regarding the difficulty of having the same style for every speech, see Jebb, "The Speeches of Thucydides," 257–262.

²⁷ Gomme, "Speeches of Thucydides," 160–161.

²⁸ In light of the critique of Herodotus above and the general preference for Thucydides'

Putting aside the discussion of rhetorical speech construction, the case against the truthfulness of 1.22.1 rests on misgivings about the plausibility of particular items in speeches and of whole speeches.²⁹ The actual words used within a speech, without a stenographer, are impossible to recover. Therefore, Thucydides would have had to limit himself to a summary of the general argument or totally revamp the speech. Had he attempted to record the speeches in the unique styles of the speakers, Dover claims, it would have been falsifying the evidence, in that it would have given the impression that he was writing what was actually said. Thucydides makes no such claim. As a result, Gomme claims, we can have more confidence in Thucydides' historical content because he does not pretend to record the actual words of the speaker.³⁰ Andrewes echoes this notion when he comments on Thucydides' statement τὴν ἀκρίβειαν αὐτὴν τῶν λεχθέντων διαμνημονεύσαι:

However much we water down the meaning of these words, and some scholars have wished to dilute it very much, it is of basic importance that Thucydides should bring the speeches actually delivered into the question at all and suggest that they might be of concern to his reader.³¹

This realisation is profoundly important for this discussion, because it indicates not only that Thucydides believed that authenticity was important, but that he believed his readers would also care about his methods. This understanding is vital if a proper interpretation of the following clauses is to be achieved.

Another theory that has been argued agrees that in this section Thucydides made statements that he was going to strive for accuracy, but failed

historical approach, it is interesting that Dionysius prefers Herodotus as a writer over Thucydides (*Thuc.* 23). For a critique of Thucydides' style, see *Thuc.* 10–22.

²⁹ Dover, *Thucydides*, 24. Dover does an excellent job of disarming a number of critiques against Thucydides including the subjective content of some speeches and the apparent precision of other speeches. See Dover, *Thucydides*, 24–27.

³⁰ Gomme, "Speeches of Thucydides," 166–167. Rokeah challenges Gomme's interpretation and understanding of this passage. He believes that Gomme misses the point when he fails to realize that by compacting, abridging and selecting which speeches to include, Thucydides is, in fact, biasing his readers to his understanding of the war. D. Rokeah, "τὰ δέοντα περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων, Speeches in Thucydides: Factual Reporting or Creative Writing?," *Athenaeum* 60 (1982): 386–401 (387–395). Although this is true, it must be pointed out that all pieces of writing, even modern histories, are biased in their presentation of events. This is not different with Thucydides. The major difference and issue within Thucydides is the question of whether or not he was historically accurate, to the best of his abilities, with the sources that he had. This does not negate the fact that his history presents his own interpretation of events, but allows later interpreters to see the truth with the speeches.

³¹ Andrewes, "The Mytilene Debate," 65–66.

to uphold his standards. Andrewes, following Pohlenz, argues that Thucydides began his work adhering to the accuracy principle; however, as he progressed in his writing he gradually left this ideal.³² This view has not become very popular especially since Kagan's article, which clearly outlines its weaknesses.³³

The last alternative is that Thucydides did, in fact, express his desire to accurately reproduce the speeches, and that he was consciously attentive to this standard throughout his entire work. Although Gomme does not see these two phrases as being contradictory, he does propose that there is a fundamental difference in the reporting of speeches and actions. In reporting a speech, the words, style, and literary quality must be his own, as opposed to the historical content. On the other hand, there was no speech substitution needed for actions, although the writer's style is still prominent.³⁴ Kagan responds to this issue:

The clause *ὥς δ' ἂν ἐδόκουν ἔμοι ἕκαστοι περὶ τῶν αἰεὶ παρόντων τὰ δέοντα μάλιστα εἰπεῖν* presents little difficulty for the view that Thucydides tries to report actual speeches accurately. The subjective and imaginative faculties come into play in two ways. Without recording devices or shorthand stenographers, memory alone could not hope to achieve an accurate record. Thus the statement may be taken to refer to the form rather than the content of the speeches. It is also likely that Thucydides received reports of some speeches that were less complete than others. He may have been told of the general line of argument and given a few quotations and details and supplied the rest of the speech from what seemed to him *τὰ δέοντα*. That, however, is as far as his words permit us to go. Seen in this light there is no contradiction between the two clauses.³⁵

After evaluating all of the options, the most plausible explanation is that Thucydides did adhere to his methodology of attempting to provide historically accurate accounts of events and speeches. This does not mean that Thucydides attained perfect historical accuracy or that he was clear

³² Andrewes, "The Mytilene Debate," 67–71. Throughout this section Andrewes defends Pohlenz's work that Thucydides, as he aged, left his youthful idealistic mindset and gradually matured in his understanding of how to write history. In addition to this, Andrewes also attempts to refine it in light of Gomme's commentary and other scholarly works that have called it into question.

³³ Kagan, "Speeches," 75–77. In this section, Kagan expresses that, if this is the case and Thucydides moved away from his original principles, then why was section 22 left within Book One? This question is poignant because it is generally believed that Book One is the most polished and, therefore, one of the later redacted sections. (That is, if one subscribes to the redaction theory, which Andrewes does). For further details, see his article.

³⁴ Gomme, *Thucydides*, 140–141.

³⁵ Kagan, "Speeches," 74–75.

where and when he used sources. However, as Bruce states, "The speeches in Thucydides were thus not designed as merely rhetorical exercises, they were intended as positive contributions to the historical record, giving at least a general impression of what was said on the various occasions in question."³⁶

3. POLYBIUS

Polybius, in his *Histories*, displays much intolerance towards previous historians, reprimanding them for their careless work (1.12; 1.14.1–2; 2.56.1–3; 16.14). These reproofs clearly express his deep concern regarding the methods and standards used in the composition of a historical work. Polybius is anxious to reinforce the educational nature of a history and its responsibility to push its readers toward practical and moral truths (1.4.10–11; 1.14.1–9; 13.5). This concern arose primarily in response to the "romantic" approach to history, which had gained favour after the death of Alexander the Great.³⁷ It is during this time that those writing history became less interested in exactness and more interested in creating a story that would be pleasing to the reader.³⁸

In response to this trend, Polybius makes a number of important statements regarding the responsibilities of a true historian. This first statement directly addresses the use of speeches in a history:

For the goal (τέλος) of history is not the same as that of tragedy but quite the opposite. The tragic poet should thrill and charm his audience for the moment by the verisimilitude of the words he puts into his characters' mouths, but it is the task of the historian to instruct and convince for all time serious students by the truth of the facts and the speeches he narrates, since in the one case it is the probable that takes precedence, even if it be untrue, the purpose being to create illusion in spectators, in the other it is the truth, the purpose being to confer benefit on learners. (2.56.11–13)

It is clear from this section that Polybius is distinguishing the work of a historian from those of other disciplines, in that the historian is concerned with truth, while the poet may fabricate material if it were to benefit his

³⁶ Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 34–35.

³⁷ F.W. Walbank, "Speeches in Greek Historians," in his *Selected Papers: Studies in Greek and Roman History and Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 242–261 (248). Cicero also expresses that history could be a form of show-piece with entertainment value (*De or.* 11.37).

³⁸ Gomme, "Speeches in Thucydides," 162. Polybius desired that the reader gain *both* pleasure and benefit from his history (1.4.11).

work.³⁹ For Polybius, falsehood is not conducive to proper teaching and, as a result, should not be incorporated into a history, whose primary goal (τέλος) and reason for being is to educate future generations and guide them in life decisions.⁴⁰

In Book 12 Chapter 25b, Polybius continues this sentiment:

The special province of history is, first, to ascertain what the actual words used were; and secondly, to learn why it was that a particular policy or argument failed or succeeded. For a bare statement of an occurrence is interesting indeed, but not instructive: but when this is supplemented by a statement of cause, the study of history becomes fruitful. (12.25b.1–2)

Following this, Polybius continues to argue that a writer is not allowed to pass over speeches in silence, and is especially not permitted to introduce false rhetoric in its place. Apparently, Timaeus was particularly guilty of this.⁴¹

This chastisement against composing speeches and unduly amplifying a speech's rhetoric is continued in Book 36:

Still, as I do not think it becoming in statesmen to be ready with argument and exposition on every subject of debate without distinction, but rather to adapt their speeches to the nature of the particular occasion, so neither do I think it right for historians to practice their skill or show off their ability upon their readers: they ought on the contrary to devote their whole energies to discover and record what was really and truly said, and even of such words only those that are the most opportune and essential. (36.1.6–7, Paton)

³⁹ A similar sentiment is expressed in Lucian, *Ver. hist.* 8: "Again, such writers seem unaware that history has aims and rules different from poetry and poems." Cf. Cicero, *Leg.* 1.1.5, who also distinguishes between poets and historians.

⁴⁰ Walbank rightly allows that Polybius might on occasions have preserved less than accurate speeches because of the fact that he might have been deceived by his sources. As a result, he "cannot fairly be accused of inventing." Walbank, "Speeches in Greek Historians," 260.

⁴¹ This is a continuation of the critique introduced in 12.25a and is also mirrored in 12.25i.5–6. Gempf makes an insightful comment on 12.25b, however, by questioning how Polybius knew that Timaeus was guilty of wrongfully recording speeches, when the speeches that were most criticized by Polybius were delivered by Hermocrates at Gala in 424 BCE. As a result of this inquiry, Gempf suggests that there might have been an "approved" version available to Polybius from which serious scholars were not to deviate. The conclusion drawn by Gempf is that historians took seriously the tradition of the faithful reporting of speeches in historical works. Conrad Gempf, "Public Speaking and Published Accounts," in Bruce W. Winter and Andrew D. Clarke, eds., *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*. Vol. 1: *Ancient Literary Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 259–303 (271). See also Walbank, "Speeches in Greek Historians," 252. If Gempf's insight is valid, it would appear from this that not all historical works were considered equal, but that there was a system of differentiating strong historical works from less respected ones. Are there other examples of this system of differentiation at work?

It appears in this section that Polybius is claiming that the author should only record the words that were actually uttered in speeches and not adapt or change them to fit the history. At the same time, the historian is to be brief in his recollection and act as a filter for the reader, only conveying the information that is important.

This last statement presents a problem for the “unbiased” presentation of truth. If the author is only to present important information, whose opinion does the author use to determine what information is important or unimportant? Some might say that if he uses his own judgment, then he is guilty of adapting the source/speech to serve his own means. This argument, however, fails to understand that every act of writing is an interpretation and that there is no such thing as “objective” presentation. True, some writers go too far in their “selection” of material and adaption of sources, though this is not what was claimed by Polybius. Because excess information is available to the writer and finite space and time is provided to record this information, it is the responsibility of the author to eliminate superfluous details so that the reader is not distracted by meaningless data. It is true that the historian’s understanding of events shape his selection of facts and speeches; however, this in itself does not constitute a malicious manipulating of material to serve one’s own ends.⁴²

Another statement that portrays a different aspect of Polybius’s use of sources and speech recollection is 29.12.10:

Indeed, in all these [reports of battles, speeches, etc.] ... I may be justly pardoned if I am found to be using the same style, or the same disposition and treatment, or even actually the same words as on a previous occasion ... It is only if I am found guilty of deliberate mendacity or if it be for the sake of some profit, that I do not ask to be excused ...
(Paton, LCL)

Some argue that the repetition of metaphors, phrases, and terms is a sign of the speeches’ inaccuracy or adaptation. Gempf comments on this section noting that, “this passage, too, leads us away from the notion of complete verbatim accuracy and closer to the ideals of Thucydides.”⁴³ I would disagree that Polybius (or any other ancient author for that matter) claimed that all speeches and utterances need to be verbatim. Not only would this be impossible for the ancient historian, it is also impractical. However, I would

⁴² Walbank, “Speeches in Greek Historians,” 249.

⁴³ Gempf, “Public Speaking and Published Accounts,” 274. Although Gempf does not state that these speeches are fabricated, this passage does reinforce to him that Polybius uses his own words to convey the speeches that are uttered in his history.

agree with Gempf's conclusion that Polybius's methodology is similar to Thucydides, in that he attempts to be as accurate as possible with the information that he has received.

Walbank, however, has posited that repetition does not necessarily indicate the invalidity of a speech. He suggests that if a point is valid once, then it would be valid multiple times and possibly in different circumstances.⁴⁴ This is an important consideration because it provides space for the rearticulation of ideas by the same or different characters. The repetition of ideas and phrases is a common technique used by politicians today; is there any good reason why politicians in ancient times could not have used this same form of oratory, especially in a culture that valued rhetoric? As a result, it is unfair for us to disregard the potential accuracy of Polybius's speeches purely because there is repetition found among them. Although some might take 36.1.6–7 as giving permission to the historian to choose whatever argument they like or would best fit their point regardless of what had actually been said, Walbank responds to this by claiming it was, in fact, not the historian's task to select the most appropriate argument for the situation, but was the responsibility of the statesman giving the speech: "Here as elsewhere, the historian is restricted to retailing what was really said and indicating why the speakers failed or succeeded in their object."⁴⁵

Overall, although it is clear that Polybius strove to present a factual and honest interpretation of events, it is still an interpretation. Both Polybius and Thucydides admit this. Due to the nature of sources and the difficulty in recovering the exact words of speeches, they have, on occasion, penned a speech that would have been appropriate to the situation, or conveyed the message of the speech in their own words. The major issue for modern scholars is that they do not tell us which speeches are based on sources and which are less grounded in historical events.

4. CICERO

Cicero provides another example of how truth was valued within the historian's guild. Although he did not write a history or biographical work himself, Cicero's comments provide external perspective regarding the writing

⁴⁴ Walbank, "Speeches in Greek Historians," 254–256.

⁴⁵ Walbank, "Speeches in Greek Historians," 252. Though I generally agree with Walbank's argument, there are times where his statements regarding Polybius's historical methodology and accuracy are overly generous and lack nuance.

of speeches. Traditionally, it has been easy to attack Cicero for his inability to attain to rigorous historical standards in the search for truth because of his comments in a couple sections regarding his work as a rhetorician. For example, in *Brutus* 42–43 Cicero discusses the changing of facts to fit a work: “At this he smiled and said: ‘As you like, since the privilege is conceded to rhetoricians to distort history in order to give more point to their narrative.’”⁴⁶

It is easy to see how a statement such as this could appear to some that Cicero’s approach to history (as a rhetorician) was dismissive and that he took liberties with created speeches.⁴⁷ Cicero, and other ancient rhetoricians, differentiated between the writing of history, whose ultimate goal was the search for truth, and the use of eulogy, whose purpose was propaganda.⁴⁸ This is an important differentiation because without it two separate literary genres, which at their hearts have strongly different values and goals, would be wrongfully amalgamated and key distinctions would be lost.⁴⁹ Cicero expresses this in *De Oratore* 2.62:

Do you see how great a responsibility the orator has in historical writing? I rather think that for fluency and diversity of diction it comes first. Yet nowhere do I find this art supplemented with any independent directions for the rhetoricians; indeed its rules lie open to the view.

In fact, Cicero himself strongly approves of the study of history, which Thucydides champions by stating in *Brutus* that,

“Thucydides,” you say, “we are striving to imitate.” Very good, if you are thinking of writing history, but not if you contemplate pleading cases. Thucydides was a herald of deeds, faithful and even grand, but for our forensic speech with its wrangling, its atmosphere of the court-room, he never used. As for the speeches which he introduced (and they are numerous) I have always praised them; but imitate them?—I could not if I wished, nor should I wish to, I imagine, if I could.⁵⁰ (*Brut.* 287)

⁴⁶ See also Cicero, *Fam.* 5.12; *Leg.* 1.5.

⁴⁷ As far as we know, Cicero did not get around to writing a history. This has not stopped speculation. For ancient comments, see Plutarch, *Cic.* 41; Nepos, *de ill. vit.* fr. 18.

⁴⁸ Helen F. North, “Rhetoric and Historiography,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 42 (1956): 234–242 (237). Cf. Cicero, *Brut.* 62. Lucian, *Ver. hist.* 9: “Now some think they can make a satisfactory distinction in history between what gives pleasure and what is useful, for this reason they work eulogy into it as giving pleasure and enjoyment to the readers; but do you not see how far they are from the truth? In the first place, the distinction they draw is false: history has one task and one end—what is useful—and that comes from truth alone.”

⁴⁹ For Cicero’s comments on the relationship between oratory and history, see *Leg.* 1.5; *De or.* 207.

⁵⁰ Cicero, in *De or.* 2.62, states that history’s first law is to tell the truth and the second is to

Although Cicero might praise Thucydides for this truthfulness and fidelity to chronicling the facts, he in no way wishes to be like him. He would rather be a rhetorician and please the crowds.⁵¹

5. PLUTARCH

The final author we will consider before turning our attention to Luke is Plutarch. As is well documented, Plutarch differentiates his collected biography, *Parallel Lives*, from the genre of history. However, this does not mean that history and biography do not have overlapping interests, particularly when it comes to accuracy and reported speech. For example, in *Galba* 2.5 Plutarch states, “Now to give an accurate, detailed account of events is the task of the historian proper; but it would not be right for me either to pass over in silence the most notable deeds and sufferings of the Caesars.” Like the well-known parallel statement in *Alex.* 1.1–2, Plutarch is providing parameters for interpreting his work and highlights the importance of deeds and sayings for the reader’s understanding of a character.⁵² Likewise in *Cato Minor* 37.4 Plutarch indicates that small incidents shed great light on the “manifestation and understanding of character” (πρὸς ἐνδειξιν ἥθους καὶ κατανόησιν). It is clear, however, that Plutarch is more focused on deeds than words as only about 12 % of the work is of direct speech.⁵³ Suetonius in his collected biography, like Plutarch, does not rely on direct characterisation despite his contrasting “topical approach” (*neque per tempora sed per species*, *Aug.* 9). Although nearly each *Life* has some discussion of personal appearance, there is little direct analysis of character. Rather, it emerges

tell that truth boldly without partiality or malice. He follows this by saying “this groundwork of course is familiar to everyone.”

⁵¹ Gempf, “Public Speaking and Published Accounts,” 277.

⁵² A. Georgiadou, “The Lives of the Caesars and Plutarch’s Other Lives,” *ICS* 13 (1998): 349–356, 351. Important female action rarely passes without a speech. Cloelia’s brave leadership in the Roman women’s escape from Porsenna (*Publ.* 19) and Terentia’s jealous manipulation of Cicero in the trial of Clodius (*Cic.* 29). For further discussion, see B. Buszard, “The Speech of Greek and Roman Women in Plutarch’s *Lives*,” *CP* 105 (2010): 83–115.

⁵³ Plutarch *Phoc.* 5.4 claims that “a word or a nod” (καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ νεύμα) are more important than lengthy writing. R.I. Pervo, “Direct Speech in Acts and the Question of Genre,” *JSNT* 28 (2006): 285–307, 300.

Such a perspective is found in other biographies. For example, Xenophon (*Age.* 1.6) seeks to present Agesilaus’s person through deeds that portrayed his character. Similarly, Tacitus opens his *Agricola* by referencing *clarorum virorum facta moresque posteris tradere* (1.1).

from the overarching account of the person's words and deeds.⁵⁴ This is also the case for the virtue and vice sections.⁵⁵

Similarly, Plutarch's incorporation of themes found in history works further indicates the flexible generic nature of biography and its close relationship to other prose genres (e.g. history) (cf. Plutarch, *Thes.* 1.5; *Alex.* 1.1–2; *Galb.* 2.5).⁵⁶ In light of these generic connections, Stadter claims, "The proems to the Lives do not follow the model of other biographical proems, or of historical proems, although there are similarities of topic. In their variety and techniques they often remind one, as might be expected, of the essays of the *Moralia*."⁵⁷ Stadter concludes that "the principal themes and techniques which Plutarch employs in the proems to the Parallel Lives, their relation to rhetorical theory, and some of the features ... distinguish them from those of other writers."⁵⁸

Regarding the main purposes and goals of Plutarch's writings a welcome insight comes from *Aemilius* 1.1–4. In the proem of *Aemilius*, Plutarch expresses that spending time admiring the virtuous actions of others develops a longing for virtue within oneself; there is nothing more effective for the improvement of character (*Aem.* 1.4, πρὸς ἐπ'ανόρθωσιν ἡθῶν).⁵⁹ Accordingly, the pairing of Aemilius and Timoleon provides the "best of examples" (τὰ κάλλιστα τῶν παραδειγμάτων) for the modeling of virtue. As a result, Plutarch in his Lives invites readers to model their life directly on the lives (words and deeds) of his virtuous men.⁶⁰

As most of the people whom Plutarch writes about lived before his time, Plutarch is dependent on sources for his information. For some people it was easy to get sufficient information; however, for others it was much more difficult. Nowhere is this expressed better than the preface to *Theseus and Romulus*: "so in the writing of my *Parallel Lives*, now that I have traversed those periods of time which are accessible to probable reasoning and which

⁵⁴ Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 171. Cf. Nepos, *Pel.* 1.1.

⁵⁵ A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Suetonius* (London: Duckworth, 1995), 143–144.

⁵⁶ For a discussion of the parallels between Plutarch and historians (primarily Tacitus and Thucydides), see C.B.R. Pelling, "Plutarch and Thucydides," in his *Plutarch and History: Eighteen Studies* (London: Classical Press of Wales, 2002), 117–141; T. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 159–160; P.A. Stadter, "The Proems of Plutarch's Lives," *ICS* 13 (1988): 279 n. 14, 289.

⁵⁷ Stadter, "The Proems of Plutarch's Lives," 275.

⁵⁸ Stadter, "The Proems of Plutarch's Lives," 275.

⁵⁹ In evaluating biography proems Stadter expresses that there is a "radical difference" in proem themes of individual and collected biographies. Stadter, "The Proems of Plutarch's Lives," 275–295 (283).

⁶⁰ Duff, *Plutarch's Lives*, 33. For a pair of lives that provide a counter example, see Deme-trius and Antony, *Dem.* 1.1–3.

afford basis for a history dealing with facts, I might well say of the earlier periods" (1.1). This idea is continued in 1.5, "May I therefore succeed in purifying Fable, making her submit to reason and take on the semblance of History." According to Plutarch, accuracy of sources and information diminishes the more removed in time his subject was. This was a problem for Plutarch, who depended on accurate descriptions of his subjects in order to provide a precise depiction of their character for emulation.

Having provided a brief discussion of the role and importance of sources and speeches in ancient writers, we will now turn our attention to Luke-Acts to determine if these concerns are paralleled and how the concerns of other authors might assist in this debate.

6. LUKE-ACTS

The speeches of Acts are one of the most contested topics in Acts studies⁶¹ with a number of scholars debating Luke's literary methodology and the historical accuracy of the reported speech.⁶² This discussion is often paired with a claim of the author's intention and purpose of Acts, a topic for which there are also many proposals. For example, Pervo posits that Acts is a work intended for legitimising the Christian faith through narrative entertainment.⁶³ Johnson claims that Luke's purpose in Acts is "to defend God's activity in the world."⁶⁴ Squires argues that Acts is a "cultural translation," an apologetic to explain Christianity to Hellenised Christians.⁶⁵ These positions rightly identify aspects of Acts, although they miss Luke's explicit emphasis on education.⁶⁶ Luke's programmatic statements in Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1 indicate that the intended purpose of (Luke-)Acts is both informative and conformational, "that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, 1:4).⁶⁷ This

⁶¹ For a recent overview of this topic, see O. Padilla, "The Speeches in Acts: Historicity, Theology, and Genre," in S.A. Adams and M. Pahl, eds., *Issues in Luke-Acts* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2012), 171–193.

⁶² Although I recognize that we do not know for sure who wrote Luke-Acts, for convenience I will use "Luke" for the author and "GLuke" for the Gospel of Luke.

⁶³ R.I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 21.

⁶⁴ L.T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (SP 5; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 7.

⁶⁵ J.T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts* (SNTSMS 76; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 191.

⁶⁶ So M.C. Parsons, *Acts* (Paideia; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 20, although with a focus on rhetoric.

⁶⁷ Cf. Jerome, *Vit. praef.*, "systematic account" (*ordinem digeram*).

is echoed in Acts's preface and further indicated by the content of Acts (e.g. 2:36). This is not to say that Luke did not have an eye towards making Acts entertaining or a pleasure to read. Rather, Luke teaches the reader through the use of characters and, as we have seen above, the reported speech of a person is one of the main ways this is accomplished.⁶⁸

Luke's presentation of characters, however, is limited by his temporal distance from the historical events. A problem he seeks to rectify, according to the preface, by the use of sources from those who were eyewitnesses.⁶⁹ Through the discussion above, it is clear that there was a general understanding among ancient writers, particularly those writing history and biography, that the conservation and reproduction of the truth was the primary responsibility of a historian so that their work might be used to educate future generations and those who came after them.⁷⁰ Luke, in his use of αὐτόπτης, claims to have consulted people who were actually eyewitnesses of Jesus and his ministry.⁷¹ The importance that is placed on eyewitnesses is also articulated by other writers and indicates the importance that firsthand accounts have in the acquisition of factual information.⁷² It would be difficult for Luke to say that he carefully investigated everything from the beginning, if he did not speak to the (still living) disciples who were taught by Jesus or those who were with him in his ministry. Cadbury agrees, "the close association of αὐτόπται and ὑπηρέται is further justified when we appreciate that Luke is following a convention of historians in urging the intimate connection of himself and his associates with the facts themselves."⁷³ With his expressed desire to create an accurate account and his use of eyewitnesses and other sources that came before him, Luke places himself well within the sphere of ancient biography and history genres.⁷⁴

One major struggle in evaluating Luke's accuracy in speeches is that there is insufficient evidence by which to come to a firm conclusion. Scholars

⁶⁸ For a further discussion, see S.A. Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography* (forthcoming).

⁶⁹ For a full discussion regarding the nature of Luke's preface and its connection to Greek historiography, see Adams, "Luke's Preface and its Relationship to Greek Historiography," 177–191.

⁷⁰ Cf. Diodorus Siculus, *History*, 1.1.1–1.2.8; Herodotus, 1.5; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 1.1.2; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.1; Plutarch, *Thes.* 1.1.

⁷¹ John Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20* (WBC 35A; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1989), 7.

⁷² Polybius, 3.4.13; Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.53–54. It is interesting to note that Thucydides does not make use of αὐτόπτης.

⁷³ H.J. Cadbury, "Commentary on the Preface of Luke," in F.J. Foakes-Jackson and K. Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity* (London: MacMillan, 1922), 489–510 (498).

⁷⁴ Adams, "Luke's Preface and its Relationship to Greek Historiography," 190–191.

when writing in this topic often end up making circular or un-nuanced arguments, either from poor methodology or in an attempt to hold to a particular view of Acts's historical accuracy (or lack thereof). Also problematic is the desire of some scholars to make the speeches a litmus-test for historical (or verbatim) accuracy, a standard that was not only absent in other ancient works, but was also unattainable. In light of these issues, I propose to approach the speeches in Acts via GLuke by evaluating authorial statements and his use of sources.⁷⁵ As we do not have parallel documents for Acts it is outside our ability to compare in order to determine if the speeches in Acts are accurate to their source(s) or were altered/created by Luke. However, if we evaluate Luke's use of sources in a document that does have parallels (i.e., GLuke) it is possible to determine Luke's general practice when handling acquired speech material. This understanding can then be extrapolated to Luke's speeches and reported sayings in Acts.

As discussed above, Luke's preface informs his readers that he made use of sources for his narrative. This explicit statement indicates that scholars are justified in evaluating Luke's acquisitional and editorial practices. For GLuke we have at least one document by which we can evaluate how the author handled his source material. The dominant source-critical theory for the Gospels is the two source hypothesis, in which it is posited that both GLuke and GMatthew made (independent) use of GMark and Q.⁷⁶ In dealing with Luke's use of GMark it is widely held that Luke was generally faithful to his source.⁷⁷ There is wide verbal agreement and similarities in order and structuring as can be seen in any Gospel parallel. Regarding Luke's use of

⁷⁵ This assumes authorial unity for GLuke and Acts. Although it has been challenged recently, the majority position still works from the assumption that the two works had the same author.

⁷⁶ For a discussion, see B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (London: Macmillan, 1924); R.H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987); C.M. Tuckett, "Synoptic Problem," in D.N. Freedman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:263–270.

Another possible explanation for the relationship among the Synoptics is the Farrer-Goulder-Goodacre hypothesis. For a discussion, see M. Goodacre, *The Synoptic Problem: A Way Through the Maze* (London: Sheffield, 2001). For this article either theory would provide sufficient data.

⁷⁷ E.g. I.H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 31. In the recent decades there has been a greater emphasis on oral traditions and sources for the Gospel writers. These, however, fall outside the purview of this article. For a discussion, see Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History—History as Story: The Gospel Tradition in the Context of Oral History* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); J.D.G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered: Christianity in the Making, Volume 1* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

Q there has been more discussion in the recent past. At the macro level Luke generally adopts Q's ordering and, in this respect, is closer to the original than GMatthew.⁷⁸ At the level of the pericope, Luke has a tendency to adjust the order of the Q sayings, provide summary statements, incorporate Marcan texts into Q, and extend and expand Q material.⁷⁹ On the level of the individual sentence, however, Luke appears to be much more willing to adapt Q to better conform to his theology and style, and to better insert them into his narrative.⁸⁰ The nature of Q and its exact relationship with GLuke is problematic and definitely not as secure as GLuke's relationship with GMark. Accordingly, we can be less secure about Luke's redactional activity from his use of Q material.⁸¹

Luke, on the whole, was generally faithful to his source material,⁸² although felt free to make minor changes in order to better fit his narrative. In light of this, we can cautiously argue that the same principles would have been used for Acts. Unfortunately for Acts we do not have as clear a window into its sources as we did for GLuke. Some scholars, however, have proposed that we do know of at least one source for Acts,⁸³ the "we" passages (Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–16; 21:1–18; 27:1–28:16).⁸⁴ Whether or not this source originated from an actual eyewitness account is debated; however, the instances of "we" within the Acts narrative, it is argued, could be a result of Luke's retention of the first-person plural within his source.⁸⁵ Some scholars holding this position, such as Harnack and Porter, have attempted to reconstruct

⁷⁸ H.T. Fleddermann, *Q: A Reconstruction and Commentary* (BTS 1; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 190.

⁷⁹ H.T. Fleddermann, "Mid-Level Techniques in Luke's Redaction of Q," *ETL* 79 (2003): 53–71.

⁸⁰ Fleddermann, *Q*, 193.

⁸¹ Marshall, *Luke*, 31.

⁸² Bruce claims that this fidelity derives from the belief that the words of Jesus are utterances of the Lord, imbued with special sanctity, and therefore are not likely to be altered. Bruce, however, does not take the same view of Paul's and Peter's speeches. I question the idea that Luke would hesitate to alter Jesus' words, and then take a completely different approach to those of Paul or Peter. Bruce, *Acts of the Apostles*, 35.

⁸³ Pervo (*Acts*, 12) claims that Luke used Paul's letters and some of Josephus's works, though these are contested by scholars.

⁸⁴ In addition to this, there are "we" passages located in Codex Bezae, most notably Acts 11:27. For additional examples, see J.H. Ropes, *The Text of Acts*. Vol. 3 of *The Beginnings of Christianity* (ed. F.J. Foakes-Jackson and K. Lake; 5 vols.; New York: Macmillan, 1926), ccxxxix. Although interesting in its own right, the nature and role of the first person plural in Codex Bezae will not be discussed due to space limitations.

⁸⁵ There have been a few attempts at assigning the we-source to a particular travel-companion of Paul, while a number of them are interesting, they are not particularly convincing due to lack of evidence. See J.A. Blaisdell, "The Authorship of the 'We' Sections

the “we”-source text.⁸⁶ Though some have suggested a written “we” source, this does not have to be the case, as the “we” sections could have derived from an oral recollection told from memory.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the use of “we” within Acts is not accidental, but rather presents a first-hand account of one of the intermittent travelling-companions of Paul.

The theory that the “we” passages betray a source, however, has been recently challenged.⁸⁸ The intentional use of the first-person plural indicates to the reader that these passages are part of a first-person account, an important aspect of Lukan composition (Luke 1:2),⁸⁹ and, moreover, is consistent with the practice established by history and biography writers.⁹⁰ In all of these examples the use of the first person is not merely a piece of literary accenting, nor an accidental inclusion by the author who forgot to correct his source, but notes for the reader that the author is including himself in the action. I have yet to find any examples in which the first person plural is adopted by an author directly from his source without due consideration of the narrative context, nor in places where the author himself could not have been involved. A similar sentiment has been expressed by Praeder, “if Acts is a first person ancient history, then it is alone in its lack of first person

of the Book of Acts,” *HTR* 13 (1920): 136–158, who proposes the “Diarist” to be Epaphras/Epaphroditus.

⁸⁶ A. von Harnack, *Neue Untersuchungen zur Apostelgeschichte und zur Abfassungszeit der synoptischen Evangelien* (Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Neue Testament 4; Leipzig, 1911) 3–9; S.E. Porter, *The Paul of Acts: Essays in Literary Criticism, Rhetoric, and Theology* (WUNT 115; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 42–46. For a critique of the reconstruction by Porter, see A.J.M. Wedderburn, “The ‘We’-Passages in Acts: On the Horns of a Dilemma,” *ZNW* 93 (2002): 78–98 (80 n. 5).

⁸⁷ Haenchen states “there was no travel-diary (the papyrus-scroll—or would it have been a codex?—would scarcely have survived the shipwreck), but a tale told from memory which Luke then enriched with interpolations.” E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 87. While I do not agree with the timeline that Haenchen proposed (namely that the text in question would have had to be already written and on the shipwrecked vessel, although this would likely be the case if it were a “diary”) there is definitely some validity to his assertion that there could have been an oral tradition or recollection that Luke utilized as one of his sources. See also Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1987), xxxix.

⁸⁸ S.A. Adams, “The Relationships of Paul and Luke: Paul’s Letters and the ‘We’ Passages of Acts,” in S.E. Porter, ed., *Paul and His Social Relations* (PAST 7; Leiden: Brill, 2012).

⁸⁹ *Contra* S.M. Praeder, “The Problem of First Person Narration in Acts,” *NovT* 29 (1987): 195, who states that “the portrayal of the first person plural participants suggests that eyewitness support was of little concern to Luke.” While it is important to evaluate the methodological claims of an author that are expressed within the preface and not immediately take them at face value, it is problematic to ignore them and to not let them provide some interpretive perspective to the role of sources as a whole.

⁹⁰ For references to first-person use in ancient biographies and histories, see Adams, “The Relationships of Paul and Luke”.

singular participation.”⁹¹ If this is the case, and I believe it to be so, then we cannot view the we passages as an independent source.

Nowhere in his preface or in the body of Luke-Acts does Luke discuss the nature of speeches or his methodology concerning them. It is quite possible, however, and even likely, that he received his information of Paul’s and Peter’s words just like he did those of Jesus, from one or more sources. This, however, does not dictate that their words are exact representations of what was said. The claim that Luke was careful in his handling of sources does not speak to the historical accuracy of the Acts speeches, which are beyond our ability to evaluate. All that this article claims is that Luke explicitly sought sources for his work and appears to have handled them with care, though not without some authorial freedom. This, however, does not speak to the quality of sources that Luke used. Although it could be argued that Luke as a historically minded author would have selected only the best sources for his work, he could have received poor information from his sources, or the speeches could have already been composed by someone else. Still possible is the view that Luke may have created his speeches in order to best represent the character of the speaker. If, however, Luke was careful with his speech sources in his Gospel, it is fair to suggest that his practice continued in Acts. Although this does not address the whole issue of Acts’s speeches, it does recommend that the speeches in Acts, if they were taken from sources, are likely fair representations. Just as with Thucydides and Polybius, the issue we have again here is that we do not know which speeches Luke has sources for, as the author did not tell us.

7. CONCLUSION

The representation and use of sources was an important topic for ancient prose writers. As seen above, biographers, historians, and rhetoricians all recognised the ever-pressing issue of access to and representation of material. For ancient historians and biographers material was to be handled fairly

⁹¹ Praeder, “First Person Narration in Acts,” 208. Though I am not convinced that Acts is a history (see Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography*), the explicit self-reference of an eyewitness and participation within a narrative is the dominant practice in the ancient world. On the other hand, Kurz rightly notes that in the we-section of Acts 20:7–12 the narrator is only peripherally involved and appears to lack the omniscience that is expressed in other sections in Acts. The lack of omniscience associated with the use of the “we” in this case casts doubt on the actual eyewitness of the author, according to Kurz, and is rather used to increase the reader’s vivid experience. William S. Kurz, *Reading Luke-Acts: Dynamics of Biblical Narrative* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 113.

and evaluated for its accuracy. However, in tension with this is the need to represent ideas (often as speeches) for which information may have been lacking. The acquisition of sources, the evaluation of quality (e.g. αὐτόπτης), and how they were used, therefore, become pressing issues. This difficulty of sources was a recognised problem for ancient writers, who were expected to make the best of what was available and were not held to the modern expectation of complete verbal accuracy.

In the preface of Luke-Acts we find a similar concern for sources with Luke claiming that he sought eyewitnesses (αὐτόπτης) and ministers who were with Jesus from the beginning. What we do not find, however, is explicit discussion of speeches. This does not necessarily imply that Luke did not know this literary practice (he likely did), but it does limit modern discussion, as we do not have Luke's perspective. In light of this, I have argued that the manner by which Luke handled sources in his Gospel may shed some light on how Luke treated his speech sources in Acts. Luke, in his use of GMark and Q, appears to be a conscientious user of sources in that he does not take excessive liberties with the text. If, therefore, Luke was careful with his speech sources in his Gospel, it is fair to suggest that his practice continued in Acts. To reiterate, this does not address the historical accuracy of the speeches, only that Luke likely used them with fidelity.

Overall, with the information and sources available to us today, modern scholars are not able to determine the historical accuracy of the speeches in Acts. We can, however, discuss the author of said speeches to determine his authorial practices when handling sources in order to determine if he is generally trustworthy. If after careful consideration of the text we conclude that he was cautious in his handling of texts we can use this platform to argue for a perspective on his speeches. This perspective, however, is not conclusive, but will likely be the best we can do with the information available to us.

LUKE AS A HELLENISTIC HISTORIAN

Paul L. Maier

Of all the writers in that otherwise totally Semitic anthology of 64 other books called the Bible, only one, Luke, was apparently a Gentile.¹ Although the author of both the Third Gospel and the Book of Acts is anonymous, Luke has justifiably been named the author of both on the basis of internal and external evidence, as well as the universal testimony of the early church. He is distinctive among biblical writers in his continual penchant to correlate sacred and secular history, to attach events in the New Testament to a Greco-Roman chronological grid, and to present governing authorities in the New Testament world who are very well known also from non-biblical sources. Accordingly, Luke would seem a particularly interesting example of one who is generally understood as an evangelist, but who could justifiably be regarded also as a Hellenistic historian.

1. THE SECONDARY LITERATURE

The evaluation of Luke as an author, especially his reliability as a historian, has engaged much scholarly interest across years of biblical research. Almost every commentary or monograph on Luke takes up such issues, and the literature on Luke in this regard is so vast, that were the present study to respond to it all, it would necessarily be of book length. Indeed, as a secular historian of ancient history, I find that much of modern biblical scholarship seems to emphasize an encounter with secondary studies, often at the expense of more appropriate research into the primary ancient sources involved. Accordingly, after a brief survey of secondary scholarship on the present theme, I will focus far more heavily on the crucial original evidence from contexts in the ancient world.

For many centuries, both Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts were taken at face value as reliable records of the information on Jesus and the early church, as was the case with other New Testament authors. Biblical "higher

¹ In Col 4:10–14, Paul's companions are grouped into "men of the circumcision" and those not, with Luke in the latter group.

criticism" over the last two centuries changed all that, of course, with German critics ranging from David Friedrich Straus² and the Tübingen School in the nineteenth century to Martin Dibelius,³ Hans Conzelmann,⁴ and E. Haenchen⁵ in the twentieth, who are among the foremost of those very skeptical of Luke's reliability.

Interestingly enough, however, there seemed to be something of a geographical divide in scholarship on Luke, since a far more favorable evaluation of the evangelist as historian emerged at the same time in Britain and North America. Sir William M. Ramsay, who first shared the radical criticism of German scholarship, became increasingly impressed with Luke as a credible historian, especially in view of his geographical/historical studies in Asia Minor, with *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen* (1895) as his best-known work. Similar conservative appreciation of Luke was voiced in Britain by F.F. Bruce,⁶ C.K. Barrett,⁷ and C.J. Hemer,⁸ as well as in North America by Henry J. Cadbury,⁹ and others. The findings in the present article will demonstrate that this positive tradition in Lukan scholarship has far more historical support than the hypercriticism of the Germanic school of New Testament studies and those affected by it.

In a recent, perceptive summary of scholarship on Luke, Thomas E. Phillips has updated current informed opinion on Luke as an author by pointing to a parallel debate that "has questioned whether the historicity debate was predicated upon an inaccurate assessment of the genre of Acts as history."¹⁰ Phillips discussed other suggestions that have recently surfaced, contending that Luke did not engage in historiography but in other literary genres. Charles H. Talbert compared Luke-Acts with Diogenes Laertius's *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* and claimed that the Lukan material should be regarded as Greco-Roman biography in terms of content, form,

² *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined* (trans. George Eliot; London: S. Sonnenschein, 1902; Germ. orig. 1835).

³ *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Scribner's, 1956).

⁴ *Acts of the Apostles—A Commentary* (trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

⁵ *The Acts of the Apostles—A commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971).

⁶ *Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954); and "The Acts of the Apostles: Historical Record or Theological Reconstruction?," *ANRW* II.25.3.

⁷ *Luke the Historian in Recent Studies* (London: Epworth, 1961).

⁸ *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (WUNT 49; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989).

⁹ *The Making of Luke-Acts* (London: SPCK, 1958).

¹⁰ "The Genre of Acts: Moving Toward a Consensus?," *CBR* 4.3 (2006): 366.

and function.¹¹ Richard I. Pervo deemed Acts more of an ancient novel, since it was too popular and “entertaining” a document to be considered serious history,¹² while Dennis R. MacDonald termed both Mark’s Gospel and Luke-Acts as epics in the genre of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.¹³

While these alternate options for the literary form in Luke-Acts are interesting—and certainly a tribute to their advocate’s ingenuity—all of them fail to convince. Acts, certainly, cannot be biography, since only the second half of the work might be so construed. Moreover, what is biography but individual history, the obvious genre that Luke clearly intended? And to interpret his records as novels or epics—ancient fiction¹⁴—does violence to both texts. The parallels from antiquity adduced in support of such theses are forced, not persuasive, and contradicted by the contextual geography, archaeology, and secular documentation from the ancient world.

For this and other reasons, the clear majority of New Testament scholars continue to maintain that Luke intended to convey history—factual knowledge—in both his treatises, and that they are history in fact. The hermeneutical rule that the immediate and clearest interpretation of a text is most apt to be the proper one applies also to the genre of Luke and Acts. This article intends to bring fresh evidence in support of the traditional and majority view of Luke as historiographer in the Hellenistic tradition.

In this role, it will be instructive to compare Luke with the secular historians of his contemporary Greco-Roman world under the rubrics of credentials, dedications, methodology, sources, objectivity, literary ability, and accuracy. Clearly, an entire chapter could be devoted to each of these facets of historiography, but it would seem appropriate to view them also as a whole.

2. CREDENTIALS

In antiquity, a historian’s intentions and qualifications to write of the past with some credibility was often expressed in a preface or prologue of some sort. Herodotus, Thucydides, and Tacitus, for example, availed themselves

¹¹ *Literary Pattern, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts* (SBLMS 20; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974).

¹² *Profit with Delight: the Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

¹³ *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001).

¹⁴ One small example may represent many such: Morton S. Enslin, “Luke, the Literary Physician,” in David E. Aune, ed., *Studies in New Testament and Early Christian Literature*:

of this device, though Xenophon, Suetonius, and others did not. Herodotus (1.1) relates what he has “learned by inquiry” (ἱστορίαι, thus giving the name to history itself) “... so that the memory of the past may not be obliterated from mankind by time.” In his prologue to the *Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides (1.1) reports that he started writing his history “at the very outbreak of the war,” thus adding contemporaneity to his eyewitness account. He also intended his work “... not as a prize-essay to be heard for the moment, but as a possession for all time” (1.22), a treasure for the ages. Josephus uses an epilogue to his *Jewish Antiquities* for the same purpose, pointing out—with exemplary modesty—that no one else could have provided the historical accuracy he had achieved in his 60,000 sentences. (*Ant.* 20.262 ff.). Dio Cassius claims to have read all the previous historical records, and then cautions his readers that they should not doubt his accuracy because of his “excellent style,” since he had tried to be “equally exact” in both substance and style (1.1–2). Clearly, such prologues or epilogues in antiquity were not occasions for modesty, and a measured amount of blowing one’s own horn was permitted in the ancient world, even if Cicero overdid it. Quite the opposite is Livy’s apparent humility in stating that if the achievements of the greats in the past obscured his own, he would not only be consoled but satisfied if he had done “as much as in me lies to commemorate the deeds of the foremost people of the world” (1.3).

In establishing their credentials, ancient historians regularly invoke claims of careful research, eyewitness experience, travels to the historical sites involved, and promises to report the material fairly and accurately. In the case of Julius Caesar and his *Gallic Wars*, no such presenting of credentials was necessary, since the commander’s name itself accomplished that.

Against this background, Luke offers only a modest presentation of his credentials, and only in the preface to his Gospel when he states that “... it seemed good to me also, having followed all matters closely for some time past, to write an orderly account ...” (1:3).

3. DEDICATIONS

Prologues in ancient literature that include dedicatory material, as in the Lukan prefaces, occur repeatedly. Josephus so honors Epaphroditus in the prologue to his *Antiquities* (1.8 ff.); Cicero, his friend Brutus in that of *De*

Essays in Honor of Allen P. Wikgren (NovTSup 33; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 138, calls the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7 “definitely a Lukan invention.”

Natura Deorum (1.1); and Vitruvius, Augustus in the preface to his *De Architectura* (1.1). Pliny dedicates his *Natural History* to the Emperor Titus (1.1); Quintillian, his *Institutio Oratoria* to his friend Marcellus (1.6); and Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* to other friends—all examples of a literary custom that continues to the present day.

In comparison, Luke's prologues both in the Third Gospel and the Book of Acts offer very strong parallels to those in Greco-Roman historiography. Luke 1:1–4 begins, familiarly:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Few ancient authors have spelled out so succinctly a description of their literary project and the approach they will employ. In these sparse lines, Luke does not claim exclusivity for his reportage but authenticates the sources of his own information, explains his research methods without lofty claims, and dedicates his work to a certain Theophilus. He does so in order to corroborate information previously provided to this man. Robert M. Grant rightly concludes that this preface "... marks a higher level of literary culture than almost anything else in the New Testament"¹⁵

While some have argued that no one with the name "Theophilus" was literally intended but rather any "friend of God," i.e., an interested theistic readership in general, more scholars are now inclining to the view that an actual Christian convert and probable literary patron with the name Theophilus was indeed intended. And since Luke prefixes that name with the qualifier, *κράτιστε*, "most excellent"—a term he uses elsewhere only for Roman officials¹⁶—some Greek or Roman magistrate with that name may very well have been intended here, as was often the case with Hellenistic historians.

In his subsequent prologue to the Book of Acts, Luke felt no need to repeat his *modus operandi* for Theophilus, but simply reminded him of his previous work that dealt with the life of Jesus. Nor are any speculations necessary as to whether Theophilus's friendship with Luke had cooled, since the dedication in the Book of Acts omits the *κράτιστε*.

¹⁵ *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 133.

¹⁶ Cf. Acts 23:26 and 24:2.

4. METHODOLOGY

Among the Greeks, historical method doesn't take on "modern" forms until Thucydides, who felt obliged to distinguish his own work from previous and contemporary historians whose writings were specifically intended for competition. The Greeks, who gave us the Olympics, made a contest of everything else as well, not just sports. Their dances, hymns, poems, plays, and even their narratives were written and produced *in competition* with other such productions. One of the earliest examples of post-Dark Age Greek written in regular Greek characters was on a trophy from the eighth century BCE: "The dancer who performs best shall receive this." Against this background, Thucydides fairly revolutionized authorship with his prologue comment that in his history, he was eschewing any temporary contest for permanent future readership.

He also gave the reader a sense of immediate presence within the bounds of the past by his use of direct quotation addresses on the part of the political leaders, generals, and admirals who made history in the great Greek civil war. He does not claim word-for-word accuracy in these, "... though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said" (1.22). Many subsequent historians followed Thucydides in this tactic, Josephus in particular. So often in his writings, Jewish forces would not go into battle without first hearing a direct-quote harangue from a Hebrew prophet, a Maccabean patriot, or a Zealot commander.

Did Luke do the same? He certainly did, as did the other three evangelists as well. Otherwise, we would not have Jesus' famed "Sermon on the Mount" in the Synoptics, or the dialogue between Jesus and Pontius Pilate in the Fourth Gospel. Since the tradition of using direct quotes in historic addresses was by now three-centuries old, the biblical authors easily conformed to the literary devices of their day, and none more than Luke. In Acts, for example, he will not demur at quoting Paul's speech on the Areopagus at Athens (Acts 17:22 ff.) even though Luke himself was far away in Philippi at the time, or having Paul detail his own conversion experience before Agrippa and Bernice at Caesarea when Luke was probably absent as well (Acts 26).

5. SOURCES

Greco-Roman historians drew their information from a variety of sources. The “father of history” himself, Herodotus, showed the importance of the geographical dimension in giving background and structure to history itself by personally visiting many of the sites he will describe in his *History* as he traveled through much of the Near East. Personal, eyewitness experience was particularly important, especially in the case of military commanders who later wrote memoirs of their exploits, such as Thucydides, Xenophon, Julius Caesar, and Josephus.

Consulting the writings of previous historians—many of whose works were subsequently lost—was also a major source for most Hellenistic historians, as well as those before and after the Hellenistic era. Herodotus borrowed broadly from Hecataeus. For Thucydides, such sources had to be dealt with critically, even if from eyewitnesses. Early in his *Peloponnesian War*, he claims:

I have described nothing except what I saw myself, or learned from others of whom I made the most careful and specific inquiry. The task was onerous, since eyewitnesses of the same events gave different reports of them, as they recalled or were interested in the actions of one side or the other. (1.22)

Josephus's sources, apart from personal experiences in the *Jewish War*, include the Hebrew Bible, rabbinical traditions, 1 Maccabees, and such Greco-Roman historians as Nicolaus of Damascus, secretary to Herod the Great, who wrote a universal history of the world in 144 book scrolls, none of which have survived.

The use of government archives and records dramatically assisted the work of Tacitus and Suetonius, since both had participated in Roman imperial government. Indeed, Suetonius was the Emperor Hadrian's secretary before losing that position after words with Hadrian's sharp-tongued wife, Sabina. Josephus could provide maximum detail not only on Jews but also Romans because he had similar access to the imperial archives.

Luke's historiography rested partially on personal experience. As Paul's companion who joined his second mission journey at Troas—the famous “we” passage at Acts 16:10—Luke easily used the geographical and experiential sources readily available to him in writing the second half of the Book of Acts, including the shipwreck voyage to Rome, since he remained Paul's companion on that voyage. In that sense, his reportage parallels that of Herodotus, who also learned from eyewitness experiences on his travels.

This traditional view, of course, is predicated on an earlier rather than later dating of Luke-Acts. For years, a later provenance for the Lukan material was in high scholarly fashion. Hans Conzelmann, for example, claims (confidently and without even a “probably”-sort of modifier) that Luke’s Gospel “... was composed after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.”¹⁷ The later the date of the writing of Luke-Acts, of course, the less reliable is the identification of the traveling companion of Paul as the author. A strong current reaction against such late dating, however, has set in, with many scholars pointing to the high *improbability* of Luke-Acts being written *without* any reference to the burning of Rome, the first Christian persecution, or the destruction of Jerusalem—all epochal events for both Jews and Christians. A date prior to CE 64 also best explains why Acts concludes as abruptly as it does without any reference to Paul’s trial before Nero.¹⁸ Beyond all debate, an earlier dating best satisfies all surviving evidence.

For the first half of Acts, as well as for his Gospel, church tradition generally assumes that Luke gathered his data from eyewitnesses among the apostles in Jerusalem, probably during the two-year period of Paul’s imprisonment at Caesarea, when Luke could well have facilitated communication between Paul and the Jerusalem church leaders. During these months, he would also have interviewed Mary, the mother of Jesus, who was still in Jerusalem at this time, for she alone could have provided him details of the Nativity. Luke, in fact, credits her as his source in two statements that equate to modern footnotes: “But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart” (2:20; cf. 2:52). More critical views, however, claim that Luke’s infancy narratives are “a form of haggadic midrash” when, after the “elegant Greek of the prologue,” Luke plunges into Old Testament prophecy.¹⁹

As for using the work of previous authors and historians, all of Luke’s citations from the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint would fall into this category. If the *Anti-Marcionite Prologue* to Luke and Eusebius (*H.E.* 3.4) are correct in telling us that Luke was originally from Antioch in Syria, we may

¹⁷ Conzelmann, *Acts*, xxxiii. Similarly, Norman Perrin, *The New Testament—An Introduction* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1974), 195, suggests “a date of AD 85, plus or minus five years or so.” Various scholars have ventured dates even later than this.

¹⁸ See David Noel Freedman and Henry I. MacAdam, “Acts 28:15–31: The Critical Witness to Early Dating of the Synoptic Gospels,” *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia* 6 (2008): 15–37. John A.T. Robinson was an early exponent of the earlier dating in his *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976). Hemer, *Book of Acts*, makes a very strong case for a dating prior to CE 70.

¹⁹ So Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament—An Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 226, and others.

well conclude that he was among the large group of Gentiles in that city who were converted to Christianity, to the astonishment of the Jewish-Christian leaders in Jerusalem. It was in Antioch, in fact, that Jesus' followers were first called "Christians" (Acts 11:21 ff.). Here Luke would have had his first contacts with "those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word," referenced in the prologue to his Gospel (1:2).

And, of course, because of the parallel narratives in the Synoptic Gospels, both Luke and Matthew must also have used Mark as well as a collection of Jesus' sayings, whether in written form—as exponents of "Q" maintain—or just oral traditions of those sayings if Q never existed. Alternatively, the Griesbach hypothesis claims that Mark distilled what Luke and Matthew had previously written, but enough has been written about the Synoptic Problem to obviate any further digression here.

6. OBJECTIVITY

Most historians—ancient, medieval, or modern—claim to be impartial, but hardly ever are. Some succeed better than others, yet a bit of bias or favoritism seems to tinge even their works. Thucydides—likely the finest historian of antiquity—at first appears astonishingly impartial when dealing with the causes of the Peloponnesian War. As an Athenian general, one would have expected him to "blame the other side" for starting the war. And yet he can be objective enough to write: "The most valid explanation [for the war], though the least offered, I believe to have been the growth of the Athenian power, which terrified the Lacedaemonians [Spartans] and forced them into war" (1.23). For an ancient writer, prey to the hatreds swirling in antiquity, to write so objectively is rare indeed. And yet Thucydides, too, will not escape the charge of playing favorites. He has a large blind spot for Pericles, who can do no wrong, as well as for Cleon, who can do no right. Xenophon is an even stronger example of bias: his *Hellenica* exudes love for Sparta and hatred for Thebes.

Similarly, Cornelius Tacitus—likely the greatest Roman historian—aims for full objectivity in his prefatory material for the year CE 14. He will claim to relate the facts "without either partiality or anger [*sine studio et ira*]" and not "prompted by any motivation from which I am far removed" (*Ann.* 1.1). Still, his crypto-Republican sympathies, honed under Domitian's tyranny, will occasionally color his record of events in the first-century Roman empire.

At times, the reader may well applaud the obvious favoritism or antipathies of the ancient historian. When, for example, Josephus regularly

denounces the baleful activities of the Zealots in fomenting war with Rome—a war he knew they could never win—the reader readily concurs.

Against this mixed degree of objectivity among the secular historians of the time, one might readily conclude that Luke, too, has his heroes and his villains, i.e., that he will obviously favor Christians and despise those who opposed them. But this is too simplistic. That Luke is pro-Christian, of course, is obvious—a matter to be discussed further—but he is so not at the expense of fairness. It is Luke alone, a Gentile, who provides us one of the most important, yet overlooked, verses in the entire Bible: Luke 23:27, which demolishes a major root of anti-Semitism, i.e., that Jews in Jerusalem were a fickle mob that could sing “Hosanna” to Jesus on Palm Sunday, only to scream “Crucify!” five days later. Luke clearly shows that the Palm Sunday crowds never turned against Jesus. In 23:27, he carefully points out that many Jewish men and women were *weeping* as Jesus dragged his cross to Golgotha.

But what about Luke’s obvious pro-Christian sympathies? Clearly, this evangelist did not set out to provide an impartial, secular history for a general readership, as was the case with the other Hellenistic historians cited above. He admits as much in his prologue, in which he asserts that his record has two purposes: 1) to authenticate the oral traditions regarding the life of Jesus through the findings of his own research; and 2) to demonstrate to Theophilus that the oral traditions he had encountered were valid indeed. These intentions are not far removed from their more direct expression in the Fourth Gospel: “These things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing this, you may have life through his name” (John 20:31).

It would be simplistic to write off such Gospels as too biased for belief since their stated purpose was to inculcate faith rather than—it is claimed—to report fact. Partiality does not necessarily connote falsehood or any “massaging” of the truth. While this may well be the case with some sources and authors, the multiple attestation of the main events in Jesus’ life, reported by all four Gospels and resonating in the rest of the New Testament suggests that sober fact can be communicated even with a stated purpose of inculcating faith. Put the case that the major events reported in the New Testament *were* absolutely true and faithful to the facts involved. Would Luke have reported them any differently? One doubts. Perhaps, then, he can be “excused” for involving himself so affirmatively in the material he reports. He exhibited favorable bias, to be sure, but so did many of the secular Hellenistic historians.

7. LITERARY ABILITY

Researching the past is one thing; conveying the findings in a readable manner is quite another. As for the latter, some among the great Greco-Roman historians have succeeded more than others, beginning with the “father of history.” While Herodotus may be the earliest of the historians in our purview, he remains as modern as tomorrow in his ability to engage the reader and sustain interest with his colorful description of events in the Persian Wars.

Although Thucydides must yield pride of place to Herodotus in this respect, he remains the better historian in dealing with causation and other factors. He has also given the world a masterpiece of literary craftsmanship, for example, in reporting Pericles’ funeral oration at the close of the first year of the Peloponnesian War. Never has anyone better described the differences between democracy and totalitarianism in government—a true classic of Western civilization.

Other ancient historians are quite pedestrian in their reportage, content to communicate unvarnished facts in as simple and direct a manner as possible. Xenophon and his battle diary, the *Anabasis*, come to mind, as well as his Latin counterpart, Julius Caesar and his *Gallic Wars*. Small wonder that these two works are standard primary reading for those learning Greek and Latin respectively.

In still other cases, personal interests of the historians will color their works. In his *Annals*, Tacitus, perhaps unintentionally, reveals a blazing interest in civil and criminal trials at Rome, along with very firm chronological grasp of history. Quite oppositely, Suetonius, in his *Lives*, cares little for any time grids and regularly eschews the great events of the day for the fascinating *little* anecdotes regarding the emperors, particularly those involving a sexual dimension. (Since reader tastes do not seem to have changed that much across the centuries, Suetonius’s *Lives* has come down to us intact in manuscript transmission, whereas Tacitus, far the better historian, is missing four crucial years in his *Annals*!)

Although a Jew, Flavius Josephus would deem himself a Hellenistic historian—no more, no less—since he wrote in Rome under the patronage of the Flavian emperors, and his vast *Antiquities of the Jews* was published in twenty books in imitation of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, whose *Roman Antiquities* was also divided into twenty book scrolls. Josephus’s literary prowess lies in detail. Detail is deity for Josephus, and he cannot abandon any known “factoid” about the past for fear it will be forever lost. And he had plenty of room for such expatiation. Whereas the

Gospel writers had to do with *one* scroll each to report their great story, Josephus, with his unlimited imperial patronage, had no less than twenty-eight.

In terms of literary ability, how does Luke compare with his Hellenistic colleagues in reporting the past? That library of sacred literature that has come down to us—the Holy Bible—contains all sorts of writing, thanks to its multiple authorship. Some of the writing is beautiful and poetic—the Psalms, the Song of Songs—while some is also legalistic and boring—Leviticus, Numbers—and yet other forms are symbolic and opaque—Ezekiel, the Book of Revelation. But our focus is on the past tense of narrative prose—history’s own medium. How does Luke, as a Hellenistic historian, compare, first of all, with the other *biblical* authors in this genre?

My thesis, baldly stated, is this: Luke is the finest historical writer in the Bible, and that for many reasons, but one is his literary ability. More than any other scriptural author, he employs an immense *variety* of literary forms in both his Gospel and the Book of Acts. In the former, we have a host of colorful narratives, lyric praise, poetry, carols, prophecies, genealogies, temptation and conflict stories, miracle accounts, parables, beatitudes, sermons, proverbs, political disclosures, trial narratives, and resurrection accounts. And in the Acts, Luke adds to this list more encounters with governing authorities, trial reports, much personal travel documentary, and even the finest maritime account from the ancient world, as admitted also by secular classicists, namely, Paul’s shipwreck voyage to Rome (Acts 27–28).

No other biblical author exhibits this range and variety, or is more concerned to throw an anchor into the mainstream of the Greco-Roman world in order to give both structure and credibility to his account, especially in matters chronological and political. Any Gentile reader anywhere in the Mediterranean world could easily identify the many Greek and Roman political authorities with whom both Jesus and Paul came into contact. Paul, in particular, seems to stand before one Greek or Roman magistrate after another in his mission journeys: Sergius Paulus on Cyprus, urban authorities at Philippi, Dionysius the Areopagite in Athens, Gallio in Corinth, Asiarchs in Ephesus, Felix and Festus in Caesarea, and Publius on Malta.

As for chronology, it is through Luke 3, verses 1 and 23 that most timeline studies of Jesus are anchored. With extreme care, Luke wants to make clear to his readers *when* the public ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus began. Undoubtedly, he would *love* to have had the luxury of our BCE/CE calendar, but that manner of reckoning the years will not arrive until ca. CE 525. He therefore had to fall back on the usual system of attaching dates in relation

to the years in office of the regnant Roman emperor or important regional magistrate. This will explain the tangled nature of Luke 3:1–2, which may bore the general reader but is a positive delight to the historian:

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

In effect, Luke is giving us six different footnotes to support a date of CE 28/29 for the inception of John the Baptist's ministry, and thus also that of Jesus. Beyond all debate, this shows great care on the part of Luke, and substantiates his claim in the prologue that he has worked carefully in his research to provide an "orderly" account for Theophilus—and the world.

Similarly, the one anchor date for Pauline chronology is Luke's reference to Lucius Junius Gallio at Paul's hearing in Corinth (Acts 18:12 ff.). Fragments of an imperial rescript from the Emperor Claudius to Gallio, which dates to CE 51–52, reveals those years as the time frame when Paul was in Corinth during the Second Mission Journey, since Gallio was there only for one year as governor.²⁰ Accordingly, all dates before and after this time in Paul's life are dependent on this lynch pin. Even Luke's detail that Gallio was "Proconsul of Achaia" (Acts 18:12) is absolutely accurate, since Roman governors of Greece bore this very appellation at the time.

Luke's literary skills are further evident in how he introduces Paul to his narrative. Clearly, the Book of Acts has two parts, the first (chapters 1 through 12) dealing with experiences of the earliest Christians in Jerusalem from the Pentecost event in CE 33 to the death of Herod Agrippa I in 44. The second part (chapters 13 to the end) switches the focus almost exclusively to the Apostle Paul. A lesser author might well have introduced Part II with some such pedestrian wording as: "From now on, we will tell of the extraordinary mission of Paul of Tarsus." Luke, however, was too much of a word craftsman for something that abrupt. Instead, he provides, already in

²⁰ The inscription, on four pieces of stone discovered at Delphi, was dated to the 26th acclimation of Claudius as *imperator*, or CE 51–52. The fact that Gallio was the brother of the philosopher Seneca, an early advisor of Nero, may help explain why Paul would appeal to Nero's court against miscarriage of justice in Caesarea (Acts 25:11 f.). Furthermore, this appeal took place during the *quinquennium Neronis*, the inaugural "five year period" of excellent government in Nero's administration, according to the later Emperor Trajan, when Seneca virtually ran the government in Rome while the teenage Nero was growing up. Gallio was adopted out of the Seneca family by a same-named senator, hence the absence of a common family name with Anneas Seneca.

Part I, clever little “previews of coming attractions” regarding Paul. As Saul, he shows up first at the stoning of Stephen and persecutor of the Jerusalem Christians (Acts 7), then, as convert on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), and next, as missionary recruit (Acts 11).

Luke shows even greater artistry in the way he introduces himself to the Acts narrative. When he comes aboard at Troas during the Second Mission Journey, there is no flourish of trumpets, no proud claims to added authority in the record because he was now an eyewitness. In fact, he names himself not at all, nor his joining the missionary trio of Paul, Silas, and Timothy. He merely uses grammar! Thus far, his account in the Book of Acts was all reported in the third person, singular or plural: “He spoke,” for example, or “they prayed.” But a momentous change comes at Acts 16:10, where Luke writes that after Paul’s vision, “... *we* lost no time in arranging a passage to Macedonia,” and it’s first person plural from then on for all events in Acts at which Luke is present, including the shipwreck voyage to Rome.

In other stylistic ways also, both of Luke’s treatises offer vivid and detailed descriptions that easily bring the past to life for most readers, which is likely the most important thing a historian can achieve, aside from accuracy itself.

8. ACCURACY IN NUMBERS?

Although absolute accuracy is more an attribute of the modern, scientific era, the better ancient historians aimed also for a faithful retelling of the past, although they did not always succeed. Again we start with Herodotus, and a problem that surfaces among so many ancient chroniclers, namely, their apparently incurable tendency to *exaggerate numbers*. The great father of history, for example, will tell us—with an apparently straight face—that when Xerxes invaded Greece in 480 BCE to avenge the Persian defeat at Marathon a decade earlier, a combined army and navy of more than 5,000,000 Persians followed him (Herodotus 7.60 ff.). That number would merely be *ten times* the number of Allied troops that landed in France on D-day in 1944, and impossible by any measure. Most modern historians hold Xerxes’ forces to something like 250,000—still, the largest army of antiquity.

Herodotus is not alone in “padding” his numbers. Perhaps it was Homer who started it all, some four centuries before Herodotus. The magnificence and size of the city of Troy, as set forth in the *Iliad*, hardly corresponds to the smaller ruins one sees today at the site of ancient Troy near the mouth

of the Dardanelles in Turkey. (Homer's defenders, of course, would respond by saying that the magisterial bard was blind, after all, or even that the *true* ruins of Troy have yet to be discovered.)

The numbers problem, however, pervades almost *all* historical sources in the ancient world, whether those sources be other Hellenistic authors, the Hebrew Bible, or Josephus. The last has too many Hebrews on the exodus from Egypt, too many troops ranged for battle in conquering the Promised Land, and too many victims of those battles. Remarkably reliable in many other areas, Josephus stumbles when it comes to numbers. He would have us believe, for example, that Mount Tabor in Galilee is "30 stadia in height" (*War* 4.55)—18,200 feet—when, in fact, it is only 1,920, and that as many as 3,000,000 crowded into Jerusalem for a Passover festival (*War* 2.280), which most scholars reduce to several hundred thousand. In another hyperbole, the Jewish historian reports that so much blood was shed in the Roman conquest of Jerusalem that the gore actually extinguished the flames at places (*War* 6.403). Robert M. Grant rightly observes that numerical figures from antiquity "... were part of rhetorical exercises and were not always meant to be taken literally."²¹

Probably none of these ancient sources intended dishonesty. Rather, if "padding" figures were the norm of the day and hyperbole a common device, historians of antiquity were doubtless tempted to follow suit lest their own narratives suffer by comparison were they to offer the sort of accurate data that moderns demand.

Against this background, we may justifiably wonder whether Luke may not also have exaggerated the number of converts he claims at the outset of Christianity: 120 (Acts 1:15), to 3,000 (Acts 2:41), to 5,000 (Acts 4:4). Luke's critics and revisionist historians argue that these figures should also be diminished, as is the case with overblown numbers from the other ancient historians. Both internal and external evidence may shed additional light on this issue, even if a brief digression is necessary.

We must first determine if Luke is prone to augment his numbers elsewhere in his two treatises. At times, he does indeed accept the round-numbered quantities he has found in the Synoptic tradition, as, for example, Jesus' Feeding of the Five Thousand. Yet even here, he qualifies Mark's bald statement—"The number of men who had eaten were five thousand" (6:44) to "*about* five thousand men were there" (Luke 9:14, emphasis mine). In Matthew's version, there were "five thousand men, besides women and

²¹ Robert M. Grant, *Early Christianity and Society: Seven Studies* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), 7–8.

children" (14:21). Of the three Synoptic Gospels, then, Luke's seems least numerically enhanced, at least in this episode.

Luke's penchant for numerical specificity without apparent exaggeration is also demonstrated in his Gospel when he reports that Mary visited Elizabeth for three months (1:56), that Anna the prophetess was 84 years old when the infant Jesus was presented in the temple at Jerusalem (2:37), that he visited the temple again as a twelve-year old (2:42), that a woman's disease lasted twelve years (8:43), and that eighteen were killed at the collapse of the Tower of Siloam in Jerusalem (13:4).

The many numerical references in Acts also appear highly credible: Paul spending eighteen months in Corinth (18:11), traveling a specific number of days between ports on his mission journeys, as target of a plot by 40 Jews in Jerusalem (23:13), embarking on a ship with 276 passengers (27:37), enduring a Mediterranean storm for fourteen days (27:27), wintering three months on Malta (28:1), spending seven days with Christians in Puteoli (28:14), and the like. Luke also shows restraint in *not* augmenting Paul's success (or lack thereof) in Athens, where he names only two converts after Paul's address at the Areopagus (17:34).

Such precise figures, of course, only suggest that the other numerical citations found in Luke's two works might not have been exaggerated. His larger figures—the 3,000 converts at Pentecost, for example—must still be tested. In these, Luke is at least consistent with himself in Acts 17:6, where he reports Paul's activities in Thessalonica during the Second Mission Journey, he records that the opponents of Paul and Silas in that city protested, "These men who are *turning the world upside down* have come here also ..." (emphasis mine). As of CE 51, then, there is at least this interesting bit of "fall-out" from what must have been a rather explosive Pentecost event that had taken place only some eighteen years earlier in Jerusalem, a distant thousand miles from Thessalonica. The impression of a gathering Christian momentum in the Mediterranean world is unmistakable, an impression echoed and reinforced by those Jews who debated with Paul at Rome after his arrival when they commented, "With regard to this sect [Christianity], we know that *everywhere* it is spoken against" (28:22, ital. added).

Important secular evidence beyond Luke's writings also has an important bearing on the credibility of his numbers. Since Cornelius Tacitus was a dedicated opponent of Christianity, as his famous passage in *Annals* 15.44 more than demonstrates, he would have had little reason to augment his figures on them. In that famed passage, however, he uses a phrase that seems to have escaped the notice of scholars in its bearing on Luke's numbers. I have italicized that phrase. The context, of course, is Nero's response to

rumors that he had set fire to Rome in the summer of 64, only four or five years after Paul had arrived in Italy:

Therefore to suppress the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty a class of people loathed for their vices, whom the crowd called "Christians." The source of the name, Christus, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius by sentence of the procurator, Pontius Pilate. The pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out again not merely in Judea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself [Rome], where all horrible and shameful things from everywhere flow together and become fashionable. First, the confessed members of the sect were arrested; next, on their disclosure, *vast numbers* [*multitudo ingens*] were convicted, not so much on the charge of arson as for hatred of the human race [*odium humani generis*].

Tacitus continues with a lurid description of how Christians had to fight wild beasts, were crucified, or were impaled on posts and set aflame.

Attempts to impugn the authenticity of this passage have failed. The italicized phrase, *vast numbers* or "an immense multitude" would be a natural translation for Tacitus's *multitudo ingens*. While this phrase is hardly precise, it does suggest high hundreds if not thousands, numbers consistent with the way Tacitus uses parallel terminology elsewhere.²² And the phrase covers *only those Christians arrested*, not the certainly much larger numbers of Roman believers who hid or fled Rome to escape death.

The point, of course, is this: with the Pentecost conversions occurring in CE 33, and the Great Fire of Rome *only 31 years later* in 64 (and, again, at a distance of 1,500 miles from Jerusalem), we are surely justified in assuming a larger statistical base for Christianity at its Pentecost inception that would seem to support Luke's statistics. For a philosophy or teaching to spread this far and this fast in the ancient world is absolutely unparalleled, again suggesting a powerful origination.

Nor is Tacitus the only pagan source to shed light on this matter. By 112, Christians were evidently so numerous in Asia Minor that Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, could ask his emperor, Trajan, what to do about the growing problem of Christians.

Many [*multi*] individuals of every race and class, both men and women, are being brought to trial. Not only the cities but villages and rural districts are being infected through this contagious superstition [Christianity]. It seems possible, however, to check and correct it. It is certain that the temples, which had been almost entirely deserted, are again frequented. The flesh of

²² Tacitus uses the same phrase at two other places in his *Ann.* (2.40 and 14.8) but neither can be reduced to specific numbers.

sacrificed victims is on sale again everywhere, though up to recently there were hardly any buyers. From this it is easy to imagine what a crowd [or mob] of people [*turba hominum*] could be reformed if given an opportunity to repent.
(Pliny the Younger, *Ep. Tra.* 96)

The *multi* and *turba hominum* referred to above in the first and last lines surely bespeak a large number of Christians in Asia Minor just two generations after Jesus. Moreover, mention of “the rural districts” is startling. The word “pagan,” defining classical non-Christians, derives from the Latin *pagani*, the “country folk” who presumably were the last converts to Christianity, which was primarily an urban phenomenon. Yet in the year 112, even the rustic *pagani* were already converting, at least in Anatolia.

This trend continued in Asia Minor a generation later, when Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was martyred. When the aged patriarch was brought before them in chains, the crowds in the Smyrna hippodrome shouted, “This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the destroyer of our gods, who teaches many not to offer sacrifice or worship!”²³ Similar citations regarding the spread and penetration of earliest Christianity from Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others could be listed here. Such references may seem to bear little weight if taken individually. Collectively, however, the various terms for “multitude” and “great number” with reference to post-Pentecost Christians, especially from pagan sources, all suggest that Luke’s figures may have more validity than critics accord them. The clear weight of evidence—internal and external, Christian and pagan—points to a statistically dramatic inauguration for Christianity.

9. ACCURACY IN GENERAL

To find mistakes in the records of ancient historians is no great feat. *Errare humaum est* applies to all writers of antiquity, especially in view of their limited resources, difficulty in communication, the paucity of reference materials, their problems in retrieving information from scrolls and other library materials, the absence of recall devices, and a dozen other deficits. All scholars in the ancient world would be positively astonished at how easily their counterparts today are able to conduct research.

Accordingly, *gaffes* abound in ancient literature. The most cursory survey would start with Herodotus, who stated that the Danube River began in the Pyrenees, that the Nile ran from West to East, and that the wind affected the

²³ “The Martyrdom of Polycarp,” as cited by Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4:15.

course of the sun. Pliny the Elder refers to a sharp-eyed individual who could see accurately over a distance of a hundred miles. Josephus, too, apart from his numerical exaggerations, has a considerable number of overlapping areas where there are marked differences between what he wrote in the *Jewish War* and the *Jewish Antiquities*.

Nor is Luke exempt from charges of error, distortion, and inaccuracy. We now examine Lukan passages in which errors are claimed, aside from the charges of numbers inflation already discussed. Luke 2:2 is easily the most famous of these. In his Nativity narrative, Luke states that the Augustan census, which brought Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, "... first took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria." According to Josephus, however, that governorship occurred in CE 6, ten years later than the birth of Jesus (*Ant.* 17:354).

A vast amount of scholarly literature has been devoted to this issue, and to wade through it is beyond the purview of this study. Suffice it to say that, from a purely academic viewpoint, it would make no difference whatever if Luke *had* made a mistake here. It would not reflect on the reliability of the rest of his record since *all* ancient writers had their miscues, and in far greater numbers than Luke.

Still, there has never been a scholarly consensus that Luke did, in fact, get it wrong here, in view of the variant values of the $\pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\eta$ in Luke 2:2. As is well known, the Greek syntax here can also be translated, "This census was *before* that made when Quirinius was governor of Syria." I also propose another alternative rendering: "This census was first *completed* when Quirinius was governor of Syria," i.e., a decade later. Ten years to take a census? Yes. It took the Romans *forty years* to complete their census of Gaul. Accordingly, Luke may have been referring to a preliminary enrollment in Herod's Judea, during which census data was collected and then used later for the complete assessment under Quirinius.²⁴

²⁴ Publius Sulpicius Quirinius is well known from Roman sources (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.30; 3.22ff.; Suetonius, *Tib.* 49; Dio Cassius 54.48) as well as Josephus, *Ant.* 17:355, 18.1, 20.102. He had been a consul with military and business successes to his credit, thought a chronic avarice stained his memory. For Quirinius and the census, see also *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* III, Suppl. 6687; Lilly R. Taylor, "Quirinius and the Census of Judaea," *AJP* 54 (1933):120–133; and A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 162–171. The last calls a provincial census of Judea during the reign of Herod the Great "an impossibility" (163), but Herod, as client-king, might easily have cooperated with Augustus's well-known proclivities for censuses in the provinces (see Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.41.)

The other major target in Luke's historiography on which critics take aim is his version of Gamaliel's speech in the Sanhedrin cautioning his colleagues against further persecution of the earliest Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 5:34 ff.). To demonstrate how non-divinely-ordained undertakings come to nothing, Gamaliel cited examples of two insurrectionists who were killed, along with all of their followers: Theudas and the uprising of his 400, and Judas of Galilee who led his rebellion *after* Theudas in the days of the census. According to Josephus, however, the Theudas uprising came a half-century later during the administration of Cuspius Fadus in CE 44 or 45 (*Ant.* 20.97).

Again, many scholars readily conclude that Josephus was right and Luke was wrong. But *is* this traditional assumption really justified? One often hears the assertion that Luke misread Josephus, but this is an egregious error, since, unquestionably, Luke wrote Acts at least thirty years *before* Josephus published his *Antiquities* in CE 93–94 (or 25 years later for those who prefer a later dating for Acts). As such, Luke was an observer much closer to the events he was reporting. It is at least possible that the same scribe (or someone like him) who “baptized” the celebrated *Testimonium Flavianum* passage at *Antiquities* 18:63 may also have interpolated the Theudas passage in Josephus from Acts. Alternatively, there could well have been two Theudas, since others by that name are known, and Josephus reports a general insurrection by his Theudas involving “a great majority of the people,” whereas Luke limits his following to 400 insurgents. Again, however, even if the Josephus-right/Luke-wrong hypothesis were true in fact, no academic would impugn the rest of Luke's record because of an assumed error like this.

Predictably, Luke has also been faulted by non-Christians for credulity in reporting miracles, a charge, of course, that could be leveled at any biblical author. Even in this respect, one could point to parallels in Herodotus and other ancient historians like Josephus who regularly reported wonders. But that could also debase claims for the supernatural in the Old and New Testament, and any discussion on the miraculous is far beyond the purview of these pages.

In fairness, the extraordinary credits in Luke's historiography should also be measured against the alleged deficits. Aside from those mentioned earlier, Luke is the only biblical author to approach the life of Jesus holistically, taking him literally from the cradle to the grave—and beyond. Mark and John are silent on the nativity, Eusebius explaining that the latter knew how Matthew and Luke had already provided narratives about Jesus' infancy, youth, and early ministry (*Hist. eccl.* 3.24). Presumably, Mark's *Reader's*

Digest version of Jesus' life had no room for such reporting, short as was Mark's scroll in any case. Luke, however, is the only evangelist to tell not only of Jesus' Nativity, but also of his youth. His account of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple (2:40ff.) is the only episode he (or anyone else) cites from Jesus' boyhood, to be sure, but it does have a prefix and a suffix dealing with how the boy became the man. No other evangelist attempted this.

Several statements in Luke, overlooked by other Gospel writers, are of *crucial* significance in understanding events surrounding Jesus' trial and crucifixion. One is at 22:66, where Luke, following Mark, informs us that the Sanhedrin's condemnation of Jesus did, in fact, take place—at least on a *pro forma* basis—in the morning, as required by Jewish law for capital cases, even though the decision had already been arrived at the night before.

Another is Luke's crucial involvement of Herod Antipas in the trial of Jesus (23:6ff.). Whereas the other evangelists—even the Fourth Gospel, half of which is devoted to Jesus' passion—make no mention of this “change of venue” in Jesus' trial, Luke carefully includes it. As we know from several important non-biblical episodes in the career of Pontius Pilate derived from Josephus and Philo, Antipas and his rivalry with Pilate are key to understanding the politics behind the events of Good Friday. In particular, they help explain Luke's statement that, after Pilate's courtesy in remanding Jesus to Antipas's tribunal, “Herod and Pilate became friends that very day, since before this they had been hostile to one another” (Luke 23:12).²⁵ Here the biblical and non-biblical evidence corresponds seamlessly, thanks to Luke.

Beyond such credits, it is only in Luke's Gospel that we find a special stress on the universal outreach of the faith also to the Gentile world, a particular interest in the role of women in Jesus' ministry, and a deep concern also for the poor, social outcasts, public sinners, and even Samaritans. His dedicated concern to relate both his books to world events and personalities outside of the zones where Christianity originated has already been cited.

²⁵ Other episodes in the career of Pontius Pilate, not mentioned in the New Testament, are of immense importance in understanding the politics behind the crucifixion and the attitude of the Roman governor during the trial of Jesus. See Paul L. Maier, *In the Fullness of Time* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997), 145ff.; and *Pontius Pilate* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990; orig. 1968). Josephus records the episode of Pilate and the Roman military standards in *Ant.* 18.55, the aqueduct riot in 18.60, the reference to Jesus in 18.63 (interpolated, to be sure, but since corrected); and the circumstances surrounding Pilate's recall, *CE* 36, in 18.85–88. Philo reports the episode of the golden Roman shields in Jerusalem, which helped compromise Pilate in *Legat.* 38.299–305.

Similarly, only in Acts do we learn what happened to the earliest Christians in Jerusalem after Jesus was no longer physically present, of the Pentecost event, of the activities of Peter and the other disciples, and, above all, of the career of that greatest of all apostles, Paul of Tarsus. Accordingly, Luke's contributions to our knowledge of how Christianity began are incalculable.

10. CONCLUSION

The burden of this study, however, has been to demonstrate that the information Luke supplies that is of such immense value to the church is also of great importance to secular history as well, since it is fact, not fiction. All attempts to turn Luke into an ancient novelist or epicist or anything other than a historiographer fail against both the plain texts of his own writings and also their corroboration from contextual evidence in the ancient world. Using the same tools as Hellenistic historians in the secular world, Luke delivers records that may be of sacred significance, to be sure, but are not, on that account, unreliable. Call him an evangelist, a Gospel writer, a missionary, and a dedicated Christian, but clearly he was also a Hellenistic historian. His qualifications for historiography, his methodology, use of sources, attempted objectivity, literary ability, and accuracy not only run parallel to those of the most important Greco-Roman historians of his day, but often exceed them.

THE GENRE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL AND GRECO-ROMAN LITERARY CONVENTIONS

Andreas J. Köstenberger

1. INTRODUCTION

While there is a small specialized body of literature exploring affinities between the genre¹ of the Fourth Gospel and Greco-Roman literary conventions,² there remains a need to present these affinities in an accessible format and to assess in a balanced manner the way in which these similarities shed light on the implications of any such parallels for the interpretation of John's Gospel.³ It is the purpose of this essay to explore similarities in genre between the Fourth Gospel and ancient Greco-Roman literature and to evaluate the significance of these similarities within the overall framework of John's canonical consciousness and indebtedness to Jewish, biblical

¹ The discussion of genre itself is complex and beyond the scope of this essay. The definition given in Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 630, will have to suffice for our present purposes: "a grouping of texts related within the system of literature by their sharing recognizably functionalized features of form and content." Similarly, Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2007), 298 n. 7, speaks of genre "as a category of literary composition characterized by a particular style, form and content;" and Tom Thatcher, "The Gospel Genre: What Are We After?," *ResQ* 36 (1994): 137, defines genre as "a certain group of writings sharing a certain set of conventions recognizable in a certain social matrix." See also Grant R. Osborne, "Genre Criticism—Sensus Literalis," *TrinJ* 4 (1983): 1–27; ED. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), chapter 3; and Robert Guelich, "The Gospel Genre," in Peter Stuhlmacher, ed., *The Gospel and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 173–175.

² See esp. Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel* (JSNTSup 69; Sheffield: JSOT, 1992), chapter 3; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:3–34; Mark W.G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative criticism and the Fourth gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), chapter 2; Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), chapter 9; and Jo-Ann A. Brant, *Dialogue and Drama: Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004).

³ Most of the literature focuses on the genre of the Gospels in general and/or on the genre of the Synoptic Gospels (e.g. Guelich, "Gospel Genre," 173–208; Loveday Alexander, "What Is a Gospel?," in Stephen C. Barton, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 13–33).

historiography as found in the Old Testament historical books. It is my thesis that while the Fourth Gospel displays a considerable amount of surface affinities with Greco-Roman literature, both on the macro- and on the micro-level, these affinities operate mostly on the level of contextualization. With regard to the theological and literary underpinnings of John's mode of presentation, we will defend the conclusion that the Fourth Gospel is grounded foremost in antecedent scriptural patterns (see John 1:1; cf. Mark 1:1–3).⁴

2. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Although the first four books of the New Testament are commonly referred to as “Gospels,” this designation was not part of the original documents. None of these works carried the title *euangelion* (“Gospel” or “good news”), and Mark, the only Gospel that uses the expression at the outset, does so most likely not with reference to the written document.⁵ The title “Gospel” was attached to Matthew's, Mark's, Luke's, and John's accounts by the early Christian church, quite possibly when the Gospels were first collected.⁶ All four Gospels focus on the earthly life and ministry of Jesus and hence share common characteristics in content, form, and general purpose. For this reason these writings are generally categorized under the same rubric of genre.⁷ At the same time, certain differences may obtain with regard to genre or

⁴ For a thorough treatment of the use of the Old Testament in John's Gospel, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “John,” in G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 415–512, with further extensive bibliographic references. References in this essay are to John's Gospel unless indicated otherwise.

⁵ E.g. William Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 44: “In the initial phrase of Mark's Gospel ..., the word ‘gospel’ has not yet come to mean a written document. It refers to a living word of hope from the lips of an appointed messenger.” He adds, “Not until the second century did the term ‘gospel’ come to designate a particular kind of document” (44 n. 20). Martin Hengel, *The Four Gospels and the One Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Collection and Origin of the Canonical Gospels* (trans. John Bowden; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 91, adduces the parallel opening of Hosea (LXX): “Beginning of the word of the Lord.” See Hengel's entire discussion on 90–96. See also Guelich, “Gospel Genre,” 194–205, esp. 203–204.

⁶ This is the argument of Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 64–84; see the summary in D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 140–141.

⁷ It is possible that the author of the Fourth Gospel was aware of the existence of at least one of the other three canonical Gospels, as is argued by Richard Bauckham, “John for Readers of Mark,” in Richard Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 147–172. Andreas J. Köstenberger, “John's

sub-genre both between John and the Synoptics and among the Synoptics.⁸ This raises the question of whether or not the four canonical Gospels should be classified collectively as exemplars of one and the same genre or individually as displaying similar yet distinct genre characteristics. In this regard it is important to note that the Fourth Gospel carries the traditional superscription κατὰ Ἰωάννην ("According to John"), which suggests that those who affixed this epithet considered the Gospel to occupy the same literary category as the Synoptics. This construction is common to all four Gospels, indicating that the early church conceived of the gospel as one, fourfold gospel (in the singular) rather than as four separate gospels (in the plural).⁹ Moreover, as Keener points out, historically it is highly unlikely that John developed the Gospel form independently from his Synoptic predecessors.¹⁰

Turning to the recent history of research, as early as 1915 C.W. Votaw found similarities between the Gospels and popular biographical literature of the Greco-Roman era.¹¹ He suggested that the Gospels be put in this category. A few years later, K.L. Schmidt argued against this classification, suggesting instead that the Gospels should be classified as "popular or informal folk literature" (*Kleinliteratur*) rather than as "literary works" proper (*Hochliteratur*).¹² Schmidt proposed that the Gospels should not be viewed in conjunction with Greco-Roman literature but as displaying a distinct literary form, and hence as constituting a new literary genre. In the years following these pioneering studies, the Gospels have been variously categorized as biographies of Jesus, memoirs of the apostles, aretologies,

Transposition Theology: Retelling the Story of Jesus in a Different Key," in Michael F. Bird and Jason Maston, eds., *Earliest Christian History: History, Literature, and Theology. Essays from the Tyndale Fellowship in Honor of Martin Hengel* (WUNT 2.320; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 191–226.

⁸ Keener, *John*, 1:4, points out that Willi Marxsen, *Mark the Evangelist: Studies on the Redaction History of the Gospel* (trans. James Boyce, Donald Juel, and William Poehlmann, with Roy A. Harrisville; Nashville: Abingdon, 1969), 150, objects to applying Mark's term "Gospel" to Matthew and Luke, arguing that Matthew is a collection of "Gospels" and sermons (150 n106; 205–206), and Luke a "life of Jesus" (150 n106).

⁹ Burridge, *What Are the Gospels?*, 215. See also Hengel, *Four Gospels*; and Francis Watson, "The Fourfold Gospel," in *Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*, 34–52.

¹⁰ Keener, *John*, 1:33. This assumes that John's was the last canonical Gospel to be written, which is supported by both external and internal evidence: see Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 6–8; and David A. Croteau, "An Analysis of the Arguments for the Dating of the Fourth Gospel," *Faith and Mission* 20/3 (2003): 47–80.

¹¹ C.W. Votaw, *The Gospels and Contemporary Biographies in the Greco-Roman World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970 [1915]).

¹² Karl Ludwig Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969 [1919]).

comedies, tragedies, Greco-Roman biography, theological biography, an allegorical two-level drama (for all or at least some of the episodes), Jewish theodicy, and christological or proclamation narrative.¹³

While Schmidt's proposal remained popular for a considerable amount of time, today the genre most commonly proposed is that of Greco-Roman biography.¹⁴ Indeed, suggesting that Jewish Christian readers would have been familiar with Hellenistic *bioi* ("lives" of famous persons) or ancient biographies, Keener asks the question: "Since writers steeped in the OT would want to testify in historical terms concerning the one they regarded as the fulfillment of Israel's history, the nature of gospels was somewhat predetermined from the start. What form would a Gospel writer have used to describe Jesus' life even if he wished to *avoid* the genre of biography?"¹⁵ Those who view the Gospels as biographies attribute the differences between the individual Gospels to different ways in which the writers applied the general genre characteristics of biography.¹⁶

3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GOSPELS AND GRECO-ROMAN BIOGRAPHIES

Similarities with Greco-Roman biographies notwithstanding, there are several important differences that have been invoked by those who suggest that

¹³ See the review of the discussion by Guelich, "Gospel Genre," 175–194; the discussion by Martin Hengel, "Eye-witness memory and the writing of the Gospels," in Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner, eds., *The Written Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 76–96; and the survey by Blomberg, *Historical Reliability*, 298–303, who lists (1) apocalypse (Mark); (2) aretalogy (accounts of the life of a "divine man"); (3) tragedy or comedy; (4) midrash; (5) Old Testament historical narrative; (6) parable; and (7) biography. Blomberg favors the latter ("theological biographies," 302), over against Charles H. Talbert, *What Is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); see esp. the critique by David E. Aune, "The Problem of the Genre of the Gospels: A Critique of C.H. Talbert's *What Is a Gospel?*," in R.T. France and David Wenham, eds., *Gospel Perspectives*. Vol. 2: *Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 9–60, and with reference to the work of Hengel, Hemer, and Keener.

¹⁴ See, e.g. Blomberg, *Historical Reliability*, 298–303. Burridge, *Gospels*, compares characteristics of Greco-Roman *bioi* and concludes that both the Synoptics and John fit this genre. According to Burridge, the *bios* that is most like the canonical Gospels is Apollonius' *Life of Tyana*. However, this work was written over a century after the canonical Gospels (CE 217). See Davies, *Rhetoric*, 103.

¹⁵ Keener, therefore, proposes the more specific genre of *historical* biography (*John*, 1:30); cf. Blomberg, *Historical Reliability*, 302, who, as mentioned, proposes the designation "theological biography."

¹⁶ See Burridge, *Gospels*, 68–69 (though a detailed exploration of the possible differences in subgenre between the Synoptics and John is beyond the scope of this essay).

the canonical Gospels constitute a unique genre of its own (*sui generis*).¹⁷ First, of the four Gospels, only Luke has a formal literary preface (1:1–4; cf. Acts 1:1–2). Second, all four canonical Gospels, unlike their Greco-Roman counterparts, are formally anonymous.¹⁸ Third, the evangelists' intended audience was Christian and thus called upon to respond in faith rather than reading the document merely for enjoyment or information. Fourth, the central character of the Gospels, Jesus Christ, transcends the category of a "hero" in Greco-Roman literature. Fifth, the Gospels lack comprehensive biographical detail regarding Jesus as well as in some cases chronological order. While each of the four Gospels devotes a considerable amount of space to the last few days of Jesus' life, little is known regarding the events prior to the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Only Matthew and Luke include the birth narrative (Matt 1:18–25; Luke 2:1–20); only Luke records the temple incident featuring the twelve-year-old Jesus (Luke 2:41–51); and only Matthew recounts the escape to Egypt and the subsequent return to Nazareth during Jesus' childhood (Matt 2:13–23). Apart from these accounts, little else is known of Jesus' early life, and neither Mark nor John has any additional information pertaining to Jesus' childhood or early adulthood. Again, this may not be significant in and of itself, since Greco-Roman biographies likewise did not necessarily provide complete biographical details, including only the information relevant for a given biography, nor proceed in chronological order.¹⁹ None of these alleged differences constitute an insurmountable obstacle to identifying the Fourth Gospel as displaying

¹⁷ See the discussion in Robert H. Gundry, *The Old Is Better: New Testament Essays in Support of Traditional Interpretations* (WUNT 178; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 18–48; and Hengel, "Eye-witness memory," 72.

¹⁸ Note, however, that this assumption has been challenged in recent scholarship. See especially Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 300–302, who does not view the Gospels as anonymous for the following reasons: (1) in three cases—Matthew (emphasis on the character Matthew), Luke (1:3), and John (21:23–24)—the evidence of the Gospel itself shows that it was not intended to be anonymous, that is, these Gospels were not presented as works without authors and as coming from a given community; (2) the evidence of the traditional titles of the Gospels—"According to" Matthew/Mark/Luke/John—signifies the particular version of the evangelist in question, distinct from the other Gospels in existence; (3) as soon as the Gospels circulated in the churches, they had the authors' names attached to them. See also Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 140–150, with reference to Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark*, 64–84; and R.T. France, *Matthew—Evangelist and Teacher* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 50–80.

¹⁹ See William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (rev. ed.; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 400.

the genre of biography, yet these concerns necessitate at least a closer look at possible alternatives. The most promising of these is Jewish historiography.

4. JEWISH HISTORIOGRAPHY

Before addressing literary conventions—whether Jewish or Greco-Roman—in greater detail, it will be helpful to pursue the implications of the fact that none of the evangelists wrote their Gospel in a theological or literary vacuum. To the contrary, they demonstrably started out with a “canonical consciousness,” that is, with a sense that they continued to write Scripture in continuity with antecedent Scripture.²⁰ In keeping with this “canonical consciousness,” the evangelists imitated and took their cue, not only from the theology of the Hebrew Scriptures, but also from its underlying historiographic and linguistic conventions (e.g. John 1:1; Mark 1:1–3; and the Septuagintalsisms in Luke 1–2).

For this reason, as Hengel aptly notes, “The Gospels are simply not understood if one fails to appreciate their fundamental ‘salvation-historical’ direction, which presupposes the ‘promise history’ of the Old Testament, equally narrative in character.”²¹ One obvious candidate for the genre classification of the Gospels would therefore seem to be that of historical narrative as found in Jewish works, particularly in the Hebrew Scriptures.²² In this regard, any similarity to Greco-Roman literature on part of the canonical Gospels (including John’s Gospel) may be attributable to the evangelists’

²⁰ See on this especially the important work by Willard M. Swartley, *Israel’s Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994).

²¹ Hengel, “Eye-witness memory,” 71.

²² Although note Keener’s comment: “The central difference between biography and history was that the former focused on a single character whereas the latter included a broad range of events (Lucian, *Hist.* 7; also Witherington, *Sage*, 339; citing Plutarch *Alex* 37.4; 56.1)” (*John*, 1:12); and Charles William Fornara’s remark that “[h]istory thus contained many biographical elements but normally lacked the focus on a single person and the emphasis on characterization” (*The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983], 185). See also Blomberg, *Historical Reliability*, 301, who registers the concern that “the Old Testament historical narratives never seem to describe the events or teachings of God’s spokespersons *with an eye to focusing specifically on the nature of those prophets or leaders*, as the Gospels do with Jesus. Instead, attention is diverted beyond the individual to God’s dealings with his covenant people more generally, whereas in the Gospels all the material seems constantly designed to raise the questions of Jesus’ identity ... and of allegiance to him.”

desire to contextualize their message to a Greco-Roman audience. While Keener points out that the Gospels in general adhere more closely to Greco-Roman literary conventions rather than those exhibited by Palestinian Jewish writings, because they are written in Greek and have Diaspora audiences, it does not necessarily follow that the evangelists followed primarily Greco-Roman literary conventions rather than taking their cue from Old Testament historiography.²³

Indeed, similar to the historical narratives found in the Hebrew Scriptures, the canonical Gospels do not merely report historical or biographical facts. The evangelists carefully selected and arranged material that most effectively conveyed God's message of salvation, employing a Christ-centered approach issuing in a theologically grounded account of the life and work of Jesus. Similar to Old Testament historical narrative, the Gospels focus on God's salvific activity in history and demand a faith response from the readers. In this the Gospels make use of various Old Testament terms, motifs, and literary forms. For instance, the extended metaphor of the shepherd and the flock (10:1–18) draws on the shepherd imagery employed in many portions of the Old Testament, incorporating direct quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament, in many cases in contexts that indicate prophetic fulfillment.²⁴

Mark Stibbe notes that as the narrative progresses, the fourth evangelist develops the twin themes of Jesus as both shepherd and king, together with the portrayal of Jesus as the paschal lamb.²⁵ This literary style is commonly found in Old Testament narrative. There are also biblical type-scenes that reflect the literary style of Old Testament narratives. R. Alan Culpepper notes that the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well is a conventional biblical type-scene that harks back to similar scenes in the narratives featuring Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.²⁶ The connection with regard to form, content, and vocabulary between the Fourth Gospel and the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy is evident

²³ While not minimizing the Jewishness of the Gospel, Keener notes, "they share more external characteristics with Diaspora or aristocratic Palestinian Jewish biographies in Greek than they do with many of the Palestinian works composed in Hebrew or Aramaic" (*John*, 1:25).

²⁴ See Köstenberger, "John," 461–463; Andreas J. Köstenberger, "Jesus the Good Shepherd Who Will Also Bring Other Sheep (John 10:16): The Old Testament Background of a Familiar Metaphor," *BBR* 12 (2002): 67–96.

²⁵ See Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 115–117.

²⁶ R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 137, citing Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 51–58.

as well.²⁷ Similarities between the portrayals of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel and Moses in the Pentateuch have likewise been noted by a considerable number of scholars.²⁸

The four major modes of Old Testament narrative—reporting of events, dramatic mode, pure description, and commentary—are all found in this Gospel. The speeches and dialogues in the narrative portions provide dramatic effect and a deeper understanding of the characters involved. For instance, the interactions between Jesus and the Jewish authorities in John constitute a window into the Jewish nation's unbelief and rejection of Jesus' message and messianic claim (e.g. 8:31–59). As in some historical narratives, especially Exodus-Deuteronomy and 1–2 Kings where the lives of the prophets are recounted, the arrangement of material reflects the juxtaposition of events and miracles with explanatory dialogues and discourses.²⁹

Rabbinic literature offers numerous anecdotes comparable to pericopes featuring Jesus in the Gospels, but no connected rabbinic biography.³⁰ In Jewish narrative literature, writers frequently combined historiographic and novelistic traits. While some Jewish writers did compose self-contained biographies, not all of them conform to Greco-Roman biographical conventions. For instance, even though Philo does display Hellenistic biographical features, his purpose in idealizing Abraham, Joseph, and Moses is to communicate his philosophical views. A Jewish collection, *The Lives of the Prophets*, which exhibits genre parallels to the Greek lives of poets, resembles the briefer lives.³¹ Josephus's *Antiquities*, in relating the accounts of Moses, often follow Hellenistic philosophical biography and novelistic conventions, as do his treatments of Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Saul, Zedekiah, and the Akedah narrative.³²

²⁷ Davies, *Rhetoric*, 70, citing Howard M. Teeple, *The Mosaic Eschatological Prophet*, (SBLMS 10; Philadelphia: Scholars Press, 1957); T. Francis Glasson, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (SBT 40; London: SCM, 1963); and Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King* (Leiden: Brill, 1967).

²⁸ E.g. John 5:45; 6:25–59; 7:19. Note that some of Moses' signs in Egypt share common characteristics with the Johannine signs, such as the provision of water (Exod 15:22–23; 17; Num 20) and bread (Exod 16; Num 11) for the Israelites in the wilderness. In fact, Davies, *Rhetoric*, 70, suggests that the Fourth Gospel be viewed as a transposition of the theological story of Moses and the Exodus (though this may be overstating her case).

²⁹ An example of this is John 6 with the account of the feeding of the five thousand and the ensuing discourse on Jesus as the "bread of life." See Davies, *Rhetoric*, 70–71.

³⁰ Noted by Alexander, "What is a Gospel?," 27. See also P.S. Alexander, "Rabbinic Biography and the Biography of Jesus: A Survey of the Evidence," in C.M. Tuckett, ed., *Synoptic Studies: The Ampleforth Conferences of 1982 and 1983* (JSNTSup 7; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 19–50.

³¹ Keener, *John*, 1:26, citing David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (LEC 8; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 41–42.

³² Keener, *John*, 26, citing Milo Van Veldhuizen, "Moses: A Model of Hellenistic Philan-

Variation in detail for literary purposes was not considered inappropriate, even when relating historical accounts, as long as one was faithful to historically accurate sources such as the Old Testament. For instance, later storytellers often reworked biblical narratives, and these later became separate accounts (e.g. Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* [L.A. B.] or the *Assumption of Moses*).³³ Similar to other historical works, the Fourth Gospel features a certain number of supernatural phenomena (e.g. 12:28; 20:12), yet it does not contain frequent imaginary appearances of heavenly beings as is common of early Jewish and Christian novels.³⁴ While its narrative style may be compared to Tobit or even 1 Maccabees, the Fourth Gospel more generally resembles the historical sections of the Septuagint (LXX). Like other Jewish Diaspora texts, the Gospel exhibits Septuagintal stylistic and theological influences.³⁵

Also, the Hebrew Bible is prone to "bio-structuring," and "[m]uch of the narrative of the Hebrew Bible is built around biographical 'story cycles' like those of Samson or Elijah, cycles in which individual tales of the hero's powers 'are so arranged to encompass his entire life, from birth to death.'³⁶ These and numerous other characteristics found in Old Testament historical narratives can be identified in the Fourth Gospel. As Hurtado notes, "A writing can be associated with a particular genre only to the degree that all characteristics of the writing can be understood adequately in terms of the features of the genre."³⁷ Hence rather than propose that the Gospels constitute a new genre altogether or are to be identified with Greco-Roman

thropia," *Reformed Review* 38 (1984–1985): 215–224; Daniel J. Silver, "Moses and the Hungry Birds," *JQR* 64 (1973–1974): 123–153; Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Jacob," *JQR* 79 (1988–1989): 101–151; Aune, *Environment*, 107; Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus' Version of Samson," *JSJ* 19 (1988): 171–214; Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Saul," *HUCA* 53 (1982): 45–99; Christopher Begg, "Josephus's Zedekiah," *ETL* 65 (1989): 96–104; and Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus as a Biblical Interpreter: The 'Aqedah,'" *JQR* 75 (1984–1985): 212–252.

³³ Although these reworkings are not strictly midrashic or targumic, certain midrashic or haggadic principles are at times at work in their composition (Keener, *John*, 1:27–28). However, this variation in accuracy of detail was acceptable in both Jewish and Greco-Roman historiographic conventions (Keener, *John*, 1:29, citing James M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark and Other Marcan Studies* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982], 60).

³⁴ Keener, *John*, 1:34.

³⁵ Keener, *John*, 1:25, 34.

³⁶ Alexander, "What is a Gospel?," 27, citing Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 31, and M.J. Edwards and Simon Swain, eds., *Portraits: Biographical Representation in the Greek and Latin Literature of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997).

³⁷ Larry Hurtado, "Gospel (Genre)," Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 277.

popular biography, it may be best to understand them as belonging to the genre of Old Testament historical narrative.

Nevertheless, because John's Gospel was penned in an environment in which Jewish as well as Hellenistic ideas were prominent, both of these kinds of influence are evident. Burrige points out that "the gospel belongs within the syncretistic milieu of the eastern Mediterranean towards the close of the first century CE; within such a culture, those involved in its production would have been influenced by both Jewish and Hellenistic philosophical and religious ideas—everything from Platonic thought and proto-Gnosticism to Rabbinic or 'non-conformist' Judaism—without needing actually to belong to any of these groups."³⁸ These include various Septuagintal, contemporary Jewish, and Greco-Roman narrative conventions.³⁹

We conclude with Loveday Alexander, "It is to the biblical tradition, surely, that we should look for the origins of the 'religious intensity' of the gospel narratives and their rich ideological intertextuality with the biblical themes of covenant, kingdom, prophecy and promise—all features hard to parallel in Greek biography. The evangelist's move from disjointed anecdotes and sayings to connected, theologically coherent narrative is most easily explained with reference to the narrative modes of the Hebrew Bible."⁴⁰ Nevertheless, as Alexander points out, the writings of Philo demonstrate that "biographical narrative provided a point of cultural contact between Greek and Jew, a flexible and readily comprehensible framework that could be moulded without difficulty to reflect the ideology and cultural values of a particular ethical tradition."⁴¹

5. THE GOSPEL AND GRECO-ROMAN LITERARY CONVENTIONS

In light of these observations the Fourth Gospel seems to reflect Jewish antecedents, particularly as found in Old Testament narratives, yet owing to the influence of the Greco-Roman environment in which the evangelist found himself, and in keeping with his desire to present the life-changing message of salvation in Jesus in a way that would be perceived as relevant by his wider audience, he appears to have adapted certain Greco-Roman

³⁸ Burrige, *Gospels*, 215.

³⁹ Keener, *John*, 1:30.

⁴⁰ Alexander, "What is a Gospel?," 27–28.

⁴¹ Alexander, "What is a Gospel?," 28. Alexander also draws attention to martyrology, such as in the case of the Maccabean martyrs (2 and 4 Mac), and the central message of good news through the salvation provided by Jesus (Alexander, "What is a Gospel?," 28–30).

literary conventions. By contextualizing the good news about Jesus, John presents Christianity as a world religion with a universal scope, transcending its Jewish roots.⁴² For this reason John makes use of both Jewish and Hellenistic biographical techniques.⁴³ As Hurtado suggests, “Similarities to other Greco-Roman narrative genres such as biography reflect the cultural setting in which the gospels were written It is likely that the evangelists consciously, and perhaps more often, unconsciously reflected features of Greco-Roman popular literature.”⁴⁴ When particular literary characteristics employed in the Fourth Gospel and Greco-Roman literature are compared, numerous similarities with respect to internal and external features emerge.

5.1. *Internal Features*

5.1.1. *Range of Topics*

There is an overlap in the range of topics covered in this Gospel and in Greco-Roman literature in general. This includes references to ancestry, an emphasis on the great deeds and words of the central subject, the narration of his death and its consequences, and one or several vindication scenes.

5.1.1.1. *Ancestry*

Certain genres of Greco-Roman literature, such as *bioi*, often include details of the subject’s ancestry. This is generally traced back to an impressive ancestor, with legendary or semi-divine status. While Matthew traced Jesus’ origins back to Abraham (Mat 1:1–2, 17) and Luke to Adam (Luke 3:37), John went back to “the beginning,” the time before creation, in eternity past (1:1). Jesus’ origins are established on a cosmic scale.⁴⁵ This serves the purpose of setting Jesus’ earthly ministry (as narrated in the Synoptics) into a larger perspective. Before the reader starts reading about Jesus’ earthly exploits,

⁴² Faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of God is presented as entrance into a personal relationship with God the Father in Christ and into the messianic community, which is no longer defined by ethnic boundaries. See Andreas J. Köstenberger, “John,” in T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 285.

⁴³ Keener, *John*, 1:33, citing Stibbe, *Gospel*, 55–63.

⁴⁴ Hurtado, “Gospel,” 282.

⁴⁵ Burridge, *Gospels*, 224, with reference to Ernst Haenchen, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (trans. Robert W. Funk; ed. Robert W. Funk with Ulrich Busse; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 101, 124–125.

he is told that Jesus came to earth from heaven; that he was not a mere human but divine; and that everything he said and did served to reveal God to humans.⁴⁶

5.1.1.2. *Great Deeds and Words*

Miracles and exorcisms are prominent in the Synoptics; the Gospel of John likewise includes several startling feats performed by Jesus labeled “signs” by the evangelist (e.g. 2:11; 4:54).⁴⁷ Notably, in comparison with the Synoptics, John downplays the miraculous character of Jesus’ works. His powerful acts are presented from the vantage point of their prophetic symbolism (cf. Isa 20:3). As in the accounts of Moses and the Exodus, Jesus’ signs feature as a dominant motif in the Fourth Gospel and are central to John’s presentation of Jesus’ work. Most likely, all the “signs” are narrated in the first half of John’s narrative, serving the purpose of setting forth evidence for Jesus’ messiahship (see esp. 12:36–40; cf. 20:30–31). Thus, in keeping with the theology of the latter portions of the Book of Isaiah, Jesus’ “signs” are shown to point to a new exodus (cf. Luke 9:31),⁴⁸ and as with Moses and the later prophets, the signs’ function is primarily to authenticate the one who performs them as God’s true representative. While there is no universal agreement on the number and exact identity of the Johannine “signs,” their prominence in the Fourth Gospel is not under dispute. Not only are there important salvation-historical, intercanonical connections, on the level of contextualization John’s depiction of Jesus’ startling “signs” doubtless resonated with the Greco-Roman *bioi*, which frequently featured records of a hero’s great and mighty deeds. Dialogues and discourses magnifying the subject’s “great words” also feature prominently in this Gospel, just as they are found particularly in *bioi* of philosophers and teachers such as *Demonax* and *Apollonius of Tyana*, which convey the sage’s lofty teachings. Satyrus’ *Euripedes* also evinces this feature of dialogue.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ On John’s portrayal of Jesus as divine in the context of first-century Jewish monotheism, see chapter 1 in A.J. Köstenberger and S.R. Swain, *Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John’s Gospel* (NSBT 24; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008). See also Köstenberger, *John*, 25–29, 48–50. See also Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 51–103.

⁴⁷ On the “signs” in John’s Gospel, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “The Seventh Johannine Sign: A Study in John’s Christology,” *BBR* 5 (1995): 87–103.

⁴⁸ Cf. David W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (WUNT 130; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark* (BSL; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

⁴⁹ Burridge, *Gospels*, 218, 225.

5.1.1.3. *Death and Consequences*

The passion narrative takes up one-sixth of the Gospel (chaps. 18–21) and includes Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, death, and burial, concluding with his subsequent resurrection and appearances. The trial scenes reflect the genre of "trial narratives" and resemble the narration of Socrates' final trial, discourses, and execution.⁵⁰ Like most *bioi*, with the exception of Isocrates' *Evagoras*, the flow in this section is chronological and focuses on the subject's death and immediate consequences at the completion of his work.⁵¹ This mode of finishing the Gospel, beginning with the farewell discourse and ending with the aftermath of the subject's death, is a feature typically employed in Greco-Roman *bioi*.

5.1.1.4. *Vindication Scene*

In addition, this Gospel includes a series of vindication scenes—Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, another common device in Greco-Roman literature.⁵² The resurrection appearances and the disciples' commissioning by their risen Lord constitute the focal point of the last two chapters of John's Gospel.

5.1.2. *Emphasis and Content*

There are also similarities in thematic emphases and content between the Fourth Gospel and Greco-Roman biographies. These include the promotion of a particular "hero," the type of material included, and the early mention of the subject's name.

5.1.2.1. *Promotion of a Particular Hero*

Greco-Roman historical writings treat historical figures differently from Hebrew and Aramaic Jewish texts. Rather than have the person dominate the account, it is usually the events that receive the most attention. Citing the examples of Job, Ruth, Judith, Jonah, Esther, Daniel, and Tobit, all of which have books associated with them in the Greek Bible, Keener notes that "only rarely is a document devoted to a person in such a way that it would be called biography ... usually the treatment of an individual

⁵⁰ BurrIDGE, *Gospels*, 225, citing John A.T. Robinson, *The Priority of John* (London: SCM, 1985), 92–93. For a study of John's presentation of Jesus' trial before Pilate, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, "What Is Truth? Pilate's Question in Its Johannine and Larger Biblical Context," in Andreas J. Köstenberger, ed., *Whatever Happened to Truth?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005), 19–51.

⁵¹ BurrIDGE, *Gospels*, 225.

⁵² Hurtado, "Gospel," 278.

is part of a larger narrative.”⁵³ Popular Greco-Roman biographies tended to promote a particular hero or important person. Similarly, the Gospels may be said to focus on and promote a “hero.” The evangelists recorded Jesus’ deeds and activities and emphasized that his purpose was to save humankind.

While most believe that John’s Gospel evinces less interest in Jesus’ activities and is mostly driven by John’s theological and christological interests, an analysis of verb subjects reveals that more than half of the verbs in John’s Gospel are taken up with Jesus’ words or deeds (55.3%). In fact, John gives more prominence to Jesus’ activity than Matthew and Luke. This Gospel, therefore, “displays the same exaggerated skew effect which is typical of *Bioi* in both Jesus’ activity in the narrative and in the large amount of his teaching.”⁵⁴ In terms of allocation of space, the last week of Jesus’ life dominates this Gospel (one-third), as is also the case with Greco-Roman *bioi* such as *Agricola* (26% devoted to Mons Graupius); *Agessilaus* (37% to the Persian campaign); *Cato Minor* (17.3% to the last days); and *Apollonius of Tyana* (26.3% to the imprisonment dialogues, trial, death, and subsequent events).⁵⁵

5.1.2.2. *Type of Material*

In terms of material included in the Fourth Gospel, one sees some similarities with political and philosophical biographies such as those featured by Cornelius Nepos and Diogenes Laertius, respectively.⁵⁶

5.1.2.3. *Early Use of Subject’s Name*

Bioi often use the subject’s name early as a common opening feature. In the Gospel of John, the opening words are, “In the beginning was the Word” (*logos*), who is later identified as Jesus Christ. While the name “Jesus Christ” does occur later on in the introductory section of John’s Gospel (1:17), the use of *logos* sufficiently identifies the subject of the Gospel. Burridge notes,

⁵³ Keener, *John*, 1:26, citing Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 126; Aune, *Environment*, 37.

⁵⁴ Burridge, *Gospels*, 216–217.

⁵⁵ Burridge, *Gospels*, 217.

⁵⁶ Keener, *John*, 1:33–34, citing Ben Witherington, *John’s Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995); Culpepper, *John*, 64–66. Though note the discussion in Alexander, “What is a Gospel?,” 26, who points out that “Diogenes Laertius’ great collection of anecdotes about the philosophers is arranged on thematic rather than chronological lines, and there is little attempt to provide narrative coherence. And what is most obviously missing in this tradition is the *good news* aspect that is essential to the gospels.”

"Thus, although Jesus' actual name is not part of the immediate opening words, he is clearly identified as the subject of the prologue, and his name and messianic identity commence the text itself after the prologue."⁵⁷ An example of this feature can be observed in *Agricola*.⁵⁸

5.1.3. *Style*

5.1.3.1. *Narrative Style*

The narrative style of the Fourth Gospel is continuous prose, unlike some non-canonical Gospels that consist of a collection of sayings and discourses. John's Gospel features three main types of units: (1) narratives; (2) dialogues; and (3) speeches or discourses.⁵⁹ Many scholars have noted a number of *aporias* or "literary seams" that at first glance seem to break up the narrative, such as the apparent abrupt shift from 14:31 to 15:1 or the "conclusion" in 20:30–31 that does not in fact end the Gospel but is followed by another chapter with its own conclusion. These so-called "seams" or literary incongruities have been the source of various rearrangement theories. However, it is possible to account for the flow of these passages adequately without resorting to source or redaction-critical solutions.⁶⁰ Within this flow, there is the repetition of words, themes, and motifs, which result in a recurrent, cyclical pattern.⁶¹

Apart from continuous prose, the Gospel includes extended discourses and dialogues, which frequently (though not always) explicate the inner significance of a "sign." These are usually initiated by questions from the crowd or the Jewish leaders. The largest block of discourse material in John's Gospel is the Farewell Discourse (13:31–16:33), which is followed by the Johannine Passion Narrative. This style, varying continuous prose with dialogue, is common in *bioi*, particularly in philosophers such as Philostratus's *Apollonius of Tyana* and Satyrus's *Euripedes*.⁶² BurrIDGE points out that "through the *chronological narrative*, all the necessary information about Jesus' cosmic origins, earthly ministry, Passion and Resurrection is provided

⁵⁷ BurrIDGE, *Gospels*, 215.

⁵⁸ BurrIDGE, *Gospels*, 215.

⁵⁹ BurrIDGE, *Gospels*, 219–220.

⁶⁰ For instance, Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 364–369, shows that this two-part conclusion is a literary device. See also L. Scott Kellum, *The Unity of the Farewell Discourse: The Literary Integrity of John 13:31–16:33* (JSNTSup 256; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), esp. chapter 4.

⁶¹ Keener, *John*, 6.

⁶² BurrIDGE, *Gospels*, 218.

for the reader to realize the true identity of Jesus, while through the *discourse material* the reader comes to appreciate the teaching of Jesus and the Christian faith.”⁶³

5.1.3.2. *Language*

There is no consensus with regard to the nature of the language used in the Fourth Gospel. Some suggest that John’s Gospel has a more Hellenistic feel to it, while others emphasize its Semitic character. The sentences are generally short and connected paratactically with the characteristic Johannine intersentence connections οὖν, δέ, καί, or asyndeton.⁶⁴ Burridge suggests that this may reflect a bi- or trilingual culture typical of the eastern Mediterranean.⁶⁵ The vocabulary is not extensive and tends to be repetitive.⁶⁶ The use of characteristic key words and dualistic contrasts, which may point to Greek philosophical or Jewish religious thought, fits into the social milieu of the eastern Mediterranean as well. This style is typical of *bioi* or treatises of Greco-Roman origin.⁶⁷

Another significant use of language that reflects Greco-Roman influence is the use of the “‘we’ of authoritative testimony,” sometimes called “the plural of majesty or authority.”⁶⁸ Note the following conclusion to a treatise in the essay of Dionysius of Halicarnassus on *Demosthenes* (58), where the concluding three sentences read as follows:

I would have given you examples of what I have said but for the risk of becoming a bore, especially as it is you that I am addressing. That is all *we* have to say about the style of Demosthenes, my dear Ammaeus. If god preserves us, *we* shall present you in a subsequent treatise with an even longer and more remarkable account than this of his genius in the treatment of subject-matter.⁶⁹

⁶³ Burridge, *Gospels*, 218.

⁶⁴ Randall Buth, “Οὖν, Δέ, Καί and Asyndeton in John’s Gospel,” in David Alan Black, ed., *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Discourse Analysis* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 141–161.

⁶⁵ Burridge, *Gospels*, 226.

⁶⁶ For a presentation of Johannine vocabulary, including statistics and frequency lists, see A. Köstenberger and R. Bouchoc, *The Book Study Concordance* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 479–610.

⁶⁷ Köstenberger and Bouchoc, *Book Study Concordance*, 479–610.

⁶⁸ Possible instances of this use are found in John 3:11; 21:24–25; 1 John 1:1–5; 4–14; and 3 John 9–10, 12. For the use of “we” as a form of self-reference, see Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 370–383; and Köstenberger, *John*, 604.

⁶⁹ Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 371, translation adapted from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *The Critical Essays* (trans. S. Usher; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 1:455 (emphasis added).

This use of the authoritative “we” adds force to self-reference and is sometimes used by one whose status is superior to his hearers or readers (e.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 2.68–69). James Moulton also showed evidence of this use of “we” for “I” from later Greek literature and papyrus letters.⁷⁰

There is also the use of sublimity, obscurity, and solemnity, as found in connection with religious themes in Greco-Roman rhetoric.⁷¹ Sublimity is represented by the prolific use of asyndeton as well.⁷² Obscurity, rather than rearrangement theories, may be the explanation behind the apparent *aporias* in the Fourth Gospel (e.g. 5:47–6:1 and 14:31–15:1). Solemnity may provide the stylistic basis for the universality of language, such as at 1:3 and 4:23, and the use of symbolism and ambiguity.⁷³ Other stylistic features that figure prominently in the Fourth Gospel include tropes or plays on words (e.g. 3:3–5, 6–8, 14–15); the use of irony (e.g. 4:12; 7:35, 42; 8:22; 11:50); and metaphor (e.g. that of a flock in John 10 or that of a vine in John 15).⁷⁴ Structural features such as chiasm (e.g. 1:1–18; 6:36–40; 18:28–19:16) or poetic parallelism (3:11, 18, 20, 21; 4:36; 6:35, 55; 7:34; 8:35; 9:39; 13:16) are all demonstrable features of Johannine literary style.⁷⁵

5.1.3.3. *Atmosphere*

The Fourth Gospel, unlike the Synoptics, is characterized by a meditative, contemplative style that lends the book a serious atmosphere. It has an even tone, steady mood with few variations, unlike Mark’s Gospel, which has an almost choppy feel to it. Burridge points out that “[t]he attitude to

⁷⁰ Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 372, citing J.H. Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Vol. 1: *Prolegomena* (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908), 86. See also Howard M. Jackson, “Ancient Self-Referential Conventions and Their Implications for the Authorship and Integrity of the Gospel of John,” *JTS* 50 (1999): 1–34.

⁷¹ Dennis L. Stamps, “The Johannine Writings,” in Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 BC–AD 400* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 619.

⁷² E.g. 1:40, 42, 45; 2:17; 4:6, 7; 5:12, 15; 7:32; 8:27; 9:13; 10:21, 22; 11:35, 44; 20:18.

⁷³ Stamps, “Johannine Writings,” 619, citing Frank Thielman, “The Style of the Fourth Gospel and Ancient Literary Critical Concepts of Religious Discourse,” in Duane F. Watson, ed., *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy* (JSNTSup 50; Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 180–182.

⁷⁴ Stamps, “Johannine Writings,” 619, citing Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985); J.E. Botha, “The Case of Johannine Irony Reopened I: The Problematic Current Situation,” *Neot* 25 (1991): 209–232; J.E. Botha, “The Case of Johannine Irony Reopened II: Suggestions, Alternative Approaches,” *Neot* 25 (1991): 221–232; Davies, *Rhetoric*, 162–181, 197–208; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples according to the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 161–167.

⁷⁵ See, e.g. R. Alan Culpepper, “The Pivot of John’s Prologue,” *NTS* 27 (1980): 1–31. Whether this is merely a feature of good communication or a deliberate reflection of rhetorical practice remains to be seen. Stamps, “Johannine Writings,” 631, contends, “The Gospel of John

the subject reflects this high estimation: Jesus is revealed as divine from the opening words of the Prologue through to Thomas' words, 'my Lord and my God,' in 20:28. There is a sense of awe which follows from this view of the subject."⁷⁶

In addition, one detects somber, even tragic moments at critical junctures in the Gospel. One such incident is when Jesus is deserted by many of his disciples (6:60–66) and Jesus asks his inner circle if they want to leave him as well. Repeated references to Judas's betrayal of Jesus cast an ominous shadow over the latter stages of Jesus' ministry as well (6:70–71; 13:10–11, 18–30; 15:2–3; 17:12). John's reference to Judas's departure at the Last Supper, "As soon as Judas has taken the bread, he went out. And it was night" (13:30), reveals considerable pathos.

Tragedy is present in John's concluding reference at the end of the first part of his Gospel, "Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (12:37). Indeed, if they do not believe in Jesus' "signs," they will not believe even if he rises from the dead (cf. Luke 16:31). The element of tragedy is also palpable when Pilate fails to recognize Jesus as the truth (18:38; cf. 14:6) and when the Jews disown, not merely Jesus, but their messianic hopes, by telling Pilate that they have no king but Caesar (19:15).

5.1.3.4. *Characterization*

The absence of character growth in all of the Gospels shows close affinities with Greco-Roman literary techniques.⁷⁷ As in the Synoptics, characterization in John's Gospel is achieved indirectly through relating the subject's words and deeds. In the Fourth Gospel, the signs performed by the subject are an important window into Jesus' character. The "I am" statements provide a metaphorical kind of direct characterization. In some instances, the author of the Gospel reveals certain aspects of Jesus' motives (e.g. 6:15).

A protagonist's deeds and words, sayings and imputed motives, are all typical devices of characterization in Greco-Roman *bioi*.⁷⁸ Because John presents Jesus as divine from the very outset of his Gospel, there is a certain tension between the characterizations of Jesus as both human and

is a form of *bios* ... there is nothing to suggest the deliberate employment of arrangement, invention and style according to Greco-Roman rhetoric so that one can definitely specify the species of rhetoric."

⁷⁶ Burridge, *Gospels*, 226.

⁷⁷ Hurtado, "Gospel," 279.

⁷⁸ Burridge, *Gospels*, 227.

divine. This is further accentuated by the fact that Jesus frequently speaks in Johannine idiom seeming to convey Johannine theology. This quality of ambivalence in characterization is also found in Greco-Roman *bioi*.⁷⁹

5.2. *External Features*

5.2.1. *Structure*

The Fourth Gospel exhibits external structural features that closely resemble those of Greco-Roman *bioi*. These include a formal preface, features related to its overall format, careful arrangement, and length.

5.2.1.1. *Formal Preface*

The Fourth Gospel begins with a preface that displays rhythmic prose or even poetic style. It serves to introduce the subject of the Gospel, identified in the opening line as the *logos*. This formal opening conforms to the general style of introductions to Greco-Roman literary works.⁸⁰ P.J. Williams has recently argued, primarily on text-critical grounds, that John does not have a Prologue.⁸¹ Instead, Williams noted that the archetypical text, represented by \mathfrak{P}^{66} and \mathfrak{P}^{75} , contained a division after 1:5 but not after 1:18, and many early exegetes followed suit. Augustine, for example, called 1:1–5 the *capitulum primum* (“first chapter”) of John (*Tract. Ev. Jo.* 2.1). Williams also notes that 1:6 involves a step into this world; 1:14 constitutes an *inclusio* with 1:1 (*logos*) and with 2:11 (*doxa*); and 1:17 marks the climax of the naming of the previously unnamed (“Jesus Christ”). While it is thus disputed whether 1:1–5 or 1:1–18 should be regarded as the Johannine Prologue (or Preface), it is clear that John opens his Gospel with a prefatory section that orients and introduces the reader to the identity of the Gospel’s main protagonist, the Word (1:1), Jesus Christ (1:17).

5.2.1.2. *Postscript and Dual Conclusion*

One striking structural feature of John’s Gospel is the presence of a postscript or epilogue and of two formal conclusions. The postscript, vis-à-vis the preface, provides balance and symmetry to the structure of the Gospel.⁸²

⁷⁹ Burridge, *Gospels*, 227.

⁸⁰ The formal preface of Luke (1:1–4; cf. Acts 1:1) conforms even more closely to Greco-Roman introductions. See Loveday Alexander, *Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles* (LNTS 289; New York: T&T Clark, 2007).

⁸¹ P.J. Williams, “Not the Prologue of John,” paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, CA, November 17, 2007.

⁸² For a discussion of John 21, see Köstenberger, *John*, 583–586, with further bibliographic references.

Both units form an integral part of the theological and literary fabric of the entire narrative. Among other things, John 21 resolves the relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple in terms of non-competition and identifies the latter as the fourth evangelist. Beyond this, there are many other terminological links between the final chapter and the rest of the Gospel.⁸³

With regard to the dual conclusion, while 20:30–31 is a statement of purpose providing closure to the Gospel proper in terms of its presentation of Jesus as the Christ and Son of God by virtue of his messianic signs, resultant in eternal life for those who believe, 21:24–25 constitutes a final affirmation of the role of the author as eyewitness and of the credibility and truthfulness of the Gospel.⁸⁴ In comparison with Rev 22:18–19, the author's concern is not with the possibility that some might add or take away from the book but to assert that the Gospel, while selective, is true.⁸⁵

5.2.1.3. *Format*

Similar to Greco-Roman *bioi*, the Fourth Gospel consists of continuous prose of medium length.⁸⁶ The narrative itself, as noted above, consists of stories, dialogues, and speeches or discourses. Suggesting that proto-Gospels probably existed temporarily, Keener notes that “[t]he writers of the Synoptics, like writers of most ancient historical works, probably began with a basic draft of the material in chronological order, to which a topical outline, speeches, and other rhetorical adjustments would be added later.”⁸⁷

⁸³ See the list in Köstenberger, *John*, 585 n9.

⁸⁴ R. Alan Culpepper, “John 21:24–25—The Johannine *Sphragis*,” in a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, CA, November 2007, contends that the last two verses of John's Gospel serve as a *sphragis*, that is, as a “literary seal” or authenticating statement “in which the editor, speaking on behalf of the Johannine community, affirms the truthfulness of the community's gospel.” Culpepper denies any element of authorial self-reference in these verses, yet he inadequately considers the first person verb *oimai* (“I suppose”) in John 21:25, on which see Andreas J. Köstenberger, “‘I Suppose’ (*oimai*): The Conclusion of John's Gospel in Its Literary and Historical Context,” in P.J. Williams, Andrew D. Clarke, Peter M. Head, and David Instone-Brewer, eds., *The New Testament in Its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B.W. Winter on His 65th Birthday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 77–88.

⁸⁵ See Köstenberger, *John*, 606: “John's hyperbole, however, extols neither the books people write nor the wisdom people acquire, but rather the deeds Jesus performed. Taken together with the prologue's stress on Jesus' person, the epilogue's reference to his works renders John's Christological portrait not exhaustively comprehensive but sufficiently complete.”

⁸⁶ Burridge, *Gospels*, 223.

⁸⁷ Note, however, that the old source theories concerning proto-Mark and proto-Luke are unfashionable. See Keener, *John*, 1:6.

The usual process was to check the copyist's manuscripts once the work was complete. In that way one could publish the finished product and not an unfinished form of it. The result was a polished and intricate product that was to be expected of writers in a Greco-Roman context (e.g. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.47–50, Lucian, *Ver. hist.* 16, 48; and *Demonax*).⁸⁸ Aristotle's recommended process, illustrated by the *Odyssey*, was to sketch the plot in outline, then to expand it by inserting episodes.⁸⁹ In this way, literary techniques such as foreshadowing could be achieved (Quintilian, 10.1.21).

5.2.1.4. *Careful Arrangement*

Writers in the Greco-Roman context tended to arrange their material carefully, both in written form and in oral discourse. The Fourth Gospel is organized chronologically, most likely structured around Jesus' attendance of and participation in various Jewish festivals.⁹⁰ Burridge, citing Hengel, registers the following observation regarding this framework: "This is similar to the synoptic gospels, as Hengel says: 'All the gospels follow a geographical and chronological order, which contains fundamental historical features common in essentials to all the gospels, even if there are differences between the synoptic gospels and John.'"⁹¹ While some Greco-Roman writers preferred a continuous style, and hence recommended connecting episodes to provide continuity (e.g. Lucian, *Ver. hist.* 55; Quintilian 7.1.1), others preferred to have disjunctions (e.g. Polybius, 38.5.1–8).⁹² While Mark adheres to the former continuous practice, John may be following the latter disjointed one, and this may explain certain apparent *aporias* in his narrative.⁹³

5.2.1.5. *Length*

With regard to length, Keener notes that "Luke and Acts are roughly the same length; Matthew is within 1 percent of the length of either; John is within 1 percent of three-quarters this length and Mark is close to half."⁹⁴

⁸⁸ Keener, *John*, 1:6, citing Burridge, *Gospels*, 203; Aune, *Environment*, 82, referring to Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.47–50; Lucian, *Ver. hist.* 16, 48; *Demonax*.

⁸⁹ Keener, *John*, 1:6, citing Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 64, with reference to Aristotle, *Poet.* 17.6–11.

⁹⁰ For a detailed chronology of John's Gospel, see Köstenberger, *John*, 11–13.

⁹¹ Burridge, *Gospels*, 219, citing Martin Hengel, *Acts and History of Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1979), 19.

⁹² Keener, *John*, 1:6, citing Aune, *Environment*, 90.

⁹³ Keener, *John*, 1:6.

⁹⁴ Keener, *John*, 1:7, citing A.Q. Morton and G.H.C. MacGregor, *The Structure of Luke and Acts* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 16.

Length not only indicates the author's intention to publish, but also the nature of the document's genre.⁹⁵ The Fourth Gospel, like the Synoptics, is of medium-range length (10,000–25,000 words), which conforms to that of ancient biographies. It is approximately 15,416 words, roughly the same length as *Cato Minor*.⁹⁶

5.2.2. *Similarities in Historiography*

5.2.2.1. *General Purpose*

The general purpose of Greco-Roman *bioi* was historical rather than novelistic. Most writers aimed for historical verisimilitude rather than high probability (by modern standards; see Dio Cassius, 62.11.3–4).⁹⁷ Truthfulness was expected in the relating of history (e.g. Josephus, *C. Ap.* 1.26; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Thuc.* 8). If a historian was suspected of falsehood, particularly for self-serving reasons, he was harshly criticized.⁹⁸ At least three purposes for writing history are identified by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, summed up by Keener as follows: “first, that the courageous will gain ‘immortal glory’ that outlives them; second, that their descendants will recognize their own roots and seek to emulate their virtue; and finally, that he might show proper goodwill and gratitude toward those who provided him training and information.”⁹⁹

While specific purposes may differ from Gospel to Gospel, all four Gospels focus on the life of Jesus and hence to a large extent tend to be biographical. At the same time, they record historical events. The Fourth Gospel aims to present Jesus to second and subsequent generations of believers (cf. 17:20), those who did not see Jesus' signs (20:29) but have the Gospel's written account of them (20:30–31: “these are written”). By making clear who Jesus is and what is the nature of the salvation he offers, the Gospel intends to encourage and strengthen believers in their faith in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God and equip them to share this message of good news with others.¹⁰⁰ Also, as part of its exhortatory function, the

⁹⁵ He points to Aristotle, *Poet.* 24.4, 1459b, for length in distinguishing genre. See Keener, *John*, 7.

⁹⁶ Burridge, *Gospels*, 219.

⁹⁷ Keener, *John*, 1:22; cf. Aune, *Environment*, 83; Fornara, *Nature of History*, 134–136.

⁹⁸ Keener, *John*, 1:18.

⁹⁹ Keener, *John*, 1:15.

¹⁰⁰ On the putative purpose of John's Gospel see Köstenberger, *John*, 8. See also the interchange between D.A. Carson, “The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: John 20:30–31 Reconsidered,” *JBL* 108 (1987): 639–651; Gordon D. Fee, “On the Text and Meaning of John 20:30–31,” in F. van Segbroeck, C.M. Tuckett, G. van Belle, and J. Verheyden, eds., *The Four Gospels 1992. Fs.*

Gospel endeavors to clarify the relationship of Jesus to Judaism by showing his superiority to the patriarchs of the Jewish faith (4:12; 6:32; 8:53–58); the replacement in his person of Jewish feasts and religious institutions (2:1–11, 19–22; 6:32–41; 7:37–39); and the relationship between the law and Moses on the one hand and Jesus Christ on the other (1:17; 5:39–40, 45–47; 7:19–23).¹⁰¹

Similarly, it was not uncommon for first-century historiography to focus on notable individuals.¹⁰² Keener notes that the Gospel's intent to promote a particular moral and religious perspective does not detract from its biographical perspective, since *bioi*, in seeking to provide role models for moral instruction, also tended to be propagandist.¹⁰³ Jewish writers also understood the Bible's narratives as providing moral lessons (e.g. Philo, *Abraham* 4; cf. 1 Cor 10:11), and post-biblical models also served as examples of virtue (e.g. 4 Macc 1:7–8).¹⁰⁴ Apart from the obvious biographical purpose, some *bioi*, particularly those in political or philosophical debate, also had apologetic and polemic purposes. These can also be detected in the Fourth Gospel.¹⁰⁵ Since history was written differently than it is in modern times, these purposes, including the theological motivation of the author, did not necessarily deter from its historicity.

5.2.2.2. *Use of Sources*

While a number of scholars have attempted detailed source-critical analysis in the past (e.g. Bultmann and Fortna), it is widely recognized that sources behind the Fourth Gospel are almost impossible to retrieve.¹⁰⁶ Recent study

Frans Neirynck (BETL 100; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 3:2193–2205; and D.A. Carson, "Syntactical and Text-Critical Observations on John 20:30–31: One More Round on the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 124 (2005): 693–714, which revolves around the question of whether John's purpose is to identify Jesus as the Messiah or the Messiah as Jesus.

¹⁰¹ See Köstenberger, "John," 282.

¹⁰² Keener, *John*, 12, citing Fornara, *Nature of History*, 185.

¹⁰³ Keener, *John*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Keener, *John*, 15.

¹⁰⁵ Burridge, *Gospels*, 229. See also Rodney A. Whitacre, *Johannine Polemic: The Role of Tradition and Theology* (SBLDS 67; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982).

¹⁰⁶ The relevant works are Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (trans. George R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971); Robert T. Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Robert T. Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); Robert T. Fortna and Tom Thatcher, eds., *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 189–235. See esp. D.A. Carson, "Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel: After Dodd, What?" in *Gospel Perspectives*. Vol. 2, 83–145; Eugen Ruckstuhl and Peter Dschulnigg, *Stilkritik und Verfasserfrage im Johannesevangelium: Die Johanneischen Sprachmerkmale auf dem Hintergrund des Neuen Testaments und des zeitgenössischen hellenistischen Schrifttums* (NTOA 17; Göttingen:

has shown that it is probable that the author of the Fourth Gospel was at least aware of the Synoptic tradition, if not of the Gospels themselves (particularly Mark).¹⁰⁷ Writers of *bioi*, particularly those concerned with philosophers and teachers, frequently altered sources in order to make them relevant in their context. At the same time, good historiography distinguished between accurate and inaccurate sources.¹⁰⁸ There are no sources cited explicitly by the Gospels (other than the Old Testament) “perhaps in part because of their relatively popular level but also probably in part because they report recent events on which sources have not yet diverged greatly (e.g. Tacitus, who naturally does not need to cite many sources on his father-in-law *Agricola*).”¹⁰⁹

Whatever the sources behind the Fourth Gospel, like ancient writers who frequently exercised their freedom to revise and alter their sources, both oral and written, this is probably true of the fourth evangelist as well.¹¹⁰ The main “source” is, of course, the testimony of the Beloved Disciple himself (cf. 21:24), a participant at critical junctures of Jesus’ ministry (e.g. 13:23; 19:35), and the Gospel’s author (21:24), who most likely follows the model of ancient memory techniques.¹¹¹ John’s interpretive method may be said to resemble that of Josephus in his *Antiquities*, though it is far from certain whether the fourth evangelist created new speeches in some contexts to fit the model of a Hellenistic history as did Josephus.¹¹² In addition, the inclusion of editorial asides for interpretive or illustrative reasons, or even for making explicit the author’s point of view, was not uncommon.¹¹³

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991); and G. van Belle, *The Signs Source in the Fourth Gospel: Historical Survey and Critical Evaluation of the Semeia Hypothesis* (BETL 116; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994). There are three types of Johannine source theories: (1) displacement theories; (2) theories involving multiple sources; and (3) some form of multiple edition theory. See Burridge, *Gospels*, 221.

¹⁰⁷ See Bauckham, “John for Readers of Mark,” 147–172. Köstenberger, “John’s Transposition Theology.”

¹⁰⁸ Except when a consensus view was available; see Livy, 1.1.1; Keener, *John*, 1:21.

¹⁰⁹ It is possible that they also follow some Jewish conventions on this point. See Keener, *John*, 1:23.

¹¹⁰ Burridge, *Gospels*, 222, citing Robert Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975), 81.

¹¹¹ Tom Thatcher, “John’s Memory Theater: The Fourth Gospel and Ancient Mnemorethoric,” *CBQ* 69 (2007): 487–505.

¹¹² But Josephus writes for a far more literate and Hellenized audience than John does and writes a Hellenistic history, not a biography. See Keener, *John*, 34.

¹¹³ Instances of this can be seen in Polybius, 1.35.1–10; Diodorus Siculus, 31.10.2; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rhet.* 7.65.2; Dio Cassius, 1.5.4; Arrian, *Alex.* 4.10.8; and Cornelius Nepos 16 [Pelopidas], 3.1. See Keener, *John*, 1:14.

5.2.2.3. *Variation in Detail*

Aristotle pointed out that one distinguished a historical article from a piece of poetry not on the basis of literary style, but by whether it conveyed specific facts as opposed to general philosophical truths.¹¹⁴ However, even with the reporting of historical fact, variation in detail was allowed, and accounts could be expanded or abridged depending on the author's preference without interfering with their historical value.¹¹⁵ This is explained in Theon's rhetorical exercises (*Prog.* 4.37–42; 4.80–82). Theon's example for expanding *chreia* demonstrates how variation in detail did not detract from its basic meaning (*Prog.* 3.224–240).¹¹⁶ In some cases, poets and prose writers would sometimes add or remove material (whether essential or non-essential) for aesthetic purposes (e.g. Dionysius, *Lit. Comp.* 9). Keener adds,

Inserting sayings from sayings-collections into narrative, or adding narratives to sayings, was considered a matter of arrangement, not a matter of fabrication. ... Thus Phaedrus feels free to adapt Aesop for aesthetic reasons, meanwhile seeking to keep to the *spirit* of Aesop (Phaed. 2.prol.8). And paraphrase of sayings—attempts to rephrase them without changing their meaning—was standard rhetorical practice, as evidenced by the school exercises in which it features prominently.¹¹⁷

(Theon *Progymn.* 1.93–171; cf., e.g. Epictetus *Diatr.*

1.9.23–25 with Oldfather's note referring to Plato, *Apol.* 29C, 28E [LCL 1:70–71])

Expansion could also be attributed to the passage of time and consequent growth of tradition, though in some cases long stories ended up being shortened. Elaborations could be used for rebuttal (*Prog.* 1.172–175) or to emphasize a point (Longinus, *Subl.* 11.1; cf. Menander Rhetor, 2.3, 379.2–4).¹¹⁸ However, there were limits as to how much variation in detail was permitted. Note, for example, the objections by the second-century rhetorician Lucian, directed against historical writers whose purposes were merely literary or encomiastic, or Polybius's objections to writers who amplified their accounts merely for sensationalistic purposes (15.34; 2.56.1–11; 2.57.1–2.63.6).¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Keener, *John*, 1:18; cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 9.2, 1451b.

¹¹⁵ Variation in tradition and editing of sources was also not problematic in Palestinian Jewish narrative techniques, as in 2 and 4 Maccabees. See Keener, *John*, 1:29, citing Hugh Anderson, "Introduction to 4 Maccabees," *OTP* 2:555.

¹¹⁶ Keener, *John*, 1:19.

¹¹⁷ Keener, *John*, 1:19.

¹¹⁸ Keener, *John*, 1:19.

¹¹⁹ Keener, *John*, 1:20, citing Philip L. Shuler, *A Genre for the Gospels: The Biographical Character of Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 11–12; cf. Glen W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 1–27. See especially Lucian, *Ver. hist.* 7–13.

5.2.2.4. *Reliability of Eyewitness Testimony*

Eyewitnesses and first-hand sources of the events were generally considered to provide a more reliable recounting of events (Plutarch, *Her. mal.* 20; *Mor.* 859 B).¹²⁰ Greater credibility was attached to eyewitness testimony as opposed to hearsay, and the account was considered even more reliable if the source was a living eyewitness as he could verify the truth of the account.¹²¹ The Fourth Gospel claims to be eyewitness testimony of someone who refers to himself as the “disciple Jesus loved” (21:24–25). That this type of self-reference was not considered presumptuous can be seen in Porphyry’s *Life of Plotinus*.¹²² In relating an account in which he was a participant, the writer generally referred to himself in the third person, by name (e.g. “Thucydides,” “Xenophon,” “Polybius,” “Julius Caesar,” and “Josephus”).¹²³

The fourth evangelist also uses the literary device of *inclusio*, which in all likelihood enunciates the historiographic principle of eyewitness testimony from beginning to end and identifies the main eyewitness source of the Gospel (1:35 and 21:24).¹²⁴ Since the eyewitnesses mentioned in all four Gospels had experienced the events they eventually related, their direct experience was considered the best basis for historical accounts. This perspective is evident in Josephus’s *Jewish War* in which the author claims to be both a participant in the action and an eyewitness of the events.¹²⁵ The eyewitness terminology of the Fourth Gospel therefore relates to a historiographic category and constitutes “direct autopsy.”¹²⁶ As Bauckham contends,

¹²⁰ Keener, *John*, 1:21.

¹²¹ Keener, *John*, 1:21–22. See “Fragments of Papias,” in M.W. Holmes, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (3rd ed.; trans. M.W. Holmes; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 747: “For books to read are not as useful to me as the living voice (Lat. *viva vox*) sounding out clearly up to the present day in the persons of their authors.”

¹²² Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 401.

¹²³ Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 393. For additional examples, see Jackson, “Ancient Self-Referential Conventions,” 28–29.

¹²⁴ Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 114–147, esp. 131.

¹²⁵ Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 394.

¹²⁶ Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 384–385. The term “direct autopsy” as well as the perspective of the importance of eyewitness testimony are from Samuel Byrskog, *Story as History—History as Story* (WUNT 123; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000). Bauckham notes that there is linguistic confusion surrounding the English usage of the terms “witness,” “testify,” and “testimony,” the words comprising the μαρτυρέω word group. μαρτυρέω, which is used of the Beloved Disciple’s witness, generally signifies a legal usage. αὐτόπτης is what translates to eyewitness. However, in the Fourth Gospel the use of μαρτυρέω is not only legal (see the cosmic trial motif in A.T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000]), but also historiographic, at least in a functional sense. For this discussion see Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 384–390.

In all four Gospels we have the history of Jesus only in the form of testimony, the testimony of involved participants who responded in faith to the disclosure of God in these events. In testimony fact and interpretation are inextricable; in this testimony empirical sight and spiritual testimony are inseparable.¹²⁷

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This essay set out to explore similarities in genre between the Fourth Gospel and ancient Greco-Roman literature and to evaluate the significance of these similarities within the overall framework of John's canonical consciousness and indebtedness to Jewish, biblical historiography as found in the Old Testament historical books. It was suggested that this Gospel most closely resembles historical narrative as found in Jewish works, particularly in the Hebrew Scriptures.

At the same time, the Gospel also displays a considerable amount of surface affinities with Greco-Roman literature, both on the macro- and on the micro-level. However, there are several important differences that suggest that *rather than reflect* the wholesale adoption of a particular Greco-Roman literary genre, these affinities, which relate to both internal and external features, represent John's attempts to contextualize the Gospel message for a Greco-Roman audience.

With regard to internal features, it was found that the range of topics covered is similar. Like certain genres of Greco-Roman literature, such as *bioi*, John includes details of the subject's ancestry, going back to "the beginning." He also includes great deeds and words in the form of Jesus' signs and discourses. This resonates with Greco-Roman *bioi*, which frequently featured records of a given hero's great and mighty deeds. The fourth evangelist ends his Gospel with a section cataloguing the death of the subject and the consequences following this event. A vindication scene, which consists of Jesus' resurrection and post-resurrection appearances, is another device common in Greco-Roman literature.

The emphasis and content of the Gospel also reflect Greco-Roman influence. Similar to popular Greco-Roman *bioi*, John evinces a strong focus on the protagonist. The material he covers has similarities with political and philosophical biographies. As in *bioi*, which often use the subject's name early as a common opening feature, John introduces his Gospel with the subject, the *logos*.

¹²⁷ Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 411.

With regard to style, John displays similarities with *bioi* by varying continuous prose with dialogue. His language consists of characteristic key words and dualistic contrasts; his use of the authoritative “we” reflects Greco-Roman influence; and he features sublimity, obscurity, and solemnity, as found in connection with religious themes in Greco-Roman rhetoric. The atmosphere is imbued with a sense of awe, which follows from a high view of the subject. Finally, his characterization, which reflects an absence of character growth, and the quality of ambivalence in the characterization of Jesus, which results from a mix of stereotype and reality, is also found in Greco-Roman *bioi*.

It was noted that this Gospel also displays some external characteristics that are consistent with various Greco-Roman literary features. With regard to structure, it has a formal opening which conforms to the general style of introductions to Greco-Roman literary works. The format probably consists of a basic draft of the material in chronological order, to which a topical outline, speeches, and other rhetorical adjustments were added later. The Gospel reflects a careful arrangement of material, incorporating a continuous style as well as disjunctions, and the length conforms to that of ancient *bioi*.

The Gospel also exhibits similarities in historiography. With regard to general purpose, the Gospel demonstrates a high degree of historical reliability. While the sources are not recoverable, it is likely that the author altered any such sources for theological purposes. This variation in detail was allowed in Greco-Roman works, and accounts could be expanded or abridged without interfering with their historical value. Finally, the Gospel claims to be the work of an eyewitness and first-hand source. In a Greco-Roman context, this was generally considered to provide a more reliable recounting of events.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Elizabeth W. Mburu in the preparation of this essay.

CLASSICAL GREEK POETRY AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES:
IMITATIONS OF EURIPIDES' *BACCHAE*

Dennis R. MacDonald

Whereas Luke acknowledges his debt to sources at the beginning of his Gospel (1:1–4), it is by no means clear that he had such sources for the composition of Acts. He did, however, have several literary models, some of which came from the Jewish Bible in Greek, but the majority came from classical Greek literature, including Plato's Socratic dialogues, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and the tragedies of Euripides.¹ This study contributes to the investigation of Luke's indebtedness to Greek literature of the fifth century BCE by monitoring the influence of one Greek tragedy throughout Acts: the *Bacchae*.²

¹ I have argued for Luke's imitations of classical Greek literature in several publications: "Luke's Eutychus and Homer's Elpenor: Acts 20:7–12 and *Odyssey* 10–12," *JHC* 1 (1994): 5–24; "The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul," *NTS* 45 (1999): 88–107; "The Soporific Angel in Acts 12:1–17 and Hermes' Visit to Priam in *Iliad* 24: Luke's Emulation of the Epic," *Forum* NS. 2.2 (1999): 179–187; "The Ending of Luke and the Ending of the *Odyssey*," in Randal A. Argall, Beverly A. Bow, and Rodney A. Werline, eds., *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 161–168; *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer? Four Cases from the Acts of the Apostles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); "Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders and Hector's Farewell to Andromache: A Strategic Imitation of Homer's *Iliad*," in Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, eds., *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse* (SBLSymS 20; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 189–203; "Lydia and her Sisters as Lukan Fictions," in Amy-Jill Levine, ed., *A Feminist Companion to the Acts of the Apostles* (FCNT 9; London: T&T Clark, 2004), 105–110; "The Breasts of Hecuba and those of the Daughters of Jerusalem: Luke's Transvaluation of a famous Iliadic Scene," in Jo-Ann A. Brant, Charles W. Hedrick, and Chris Shea, eds., *Ancient Fiction: The Matrix of Early Christian and Jewish Narrative* (SBLSymS 32; Atlanta: SBL, 2005), 239–254; and "Imitations of Greek Epic in the Gospels," in Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison, and John Dominic Crossan, eds., *The Historical Jesus in Context* (PRR; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 372–384.

² Several scholars have argued for the imitation of the *Bacchae* in Acts, especially in the accounts of Saul's conversion (9:1–19a, 21:1–21, and 26:4–32) and the prison break of Paul and Silas (16:13–34): e.g. Wilhelm Nestle, "Anklänge an Euripides in der Apostelgeschichte," *Phil* 59 (1900): 46–57, and Friedrich Smend, "Untersuchungen zu den Acta-Darstellungen von der Bekehrung des Paulus," *Angelos* 1 (1925): 34–45, and Otto Weinreich, *Gebet und Wunder: Zwei Abhandlungen zur Religions- und Literaturgeschichte, in Religionsgeschichtliche Studien* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968; Germ. orig. 1929), 1–198; repr. from

In this play Euripides tells a tale of hostility to the expansion of a new, enthusiastic religion from Asia Minor: the arrival at Thebes of Dionysus and his followers from Lydia. King Pentheus, outraged by the ecstatic behavior of the Theban women under the sway of the foreign god, including that of his mother Agave, sought to quash the new religion and was punished with death for his *θεομαχία*, “god-warring.” The Acts of the Apostles similarly is the tale of the advent of a new religion and violent opposition to it.

Euripides’ Dionysus and Luke’s Jesus have much in common. Both are sons of gods from mortal women. It was at Thebes that Zeus bedded with Semele, who later boasted that she carried the child of the god, but the residents of Thebes refused to believe her and accused her of fornication with a mortal. To add injury to insult, Hera convinced pregnant Semele to demand that she behold Zeus in all his glory; the god of lightning incinerated her in that encounter. The king of Olympus then rescued the fetus, sewed it in his thigh, and took it to term.

The *Bacchae* begins with the young god on stage disguised as a mortal.

I, the child of Zeus, have come to the land of Thebes—
 Dionysus, whom Semele daughter of Cadmus once bore,
 induced to do so by a lightning bolt—
 after having changed myself into human form from that of a god;
 I stand at the springs of Dirce and the waters of Ismenus.³ (1–5)

He had returned to the city of his conception to vindicate his mother and establish his cult with the help of his Maenads, women who accompanied him from Asia Minor after he had established his worship throughout the East.

On leaving the gold-rich fields of Lydia
 and Phrygia, the sunlit plains of Persia,
 Bactrian walled cities, and the dangerous lands
 of Media, arriving at prosperous Arabia
 and all of Asia that lies by the briny sea,
 that has cities with beautiful towers filled

Genethliakon Wilhelm Schmidt (ed. Friedrich Focke, et al.; Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 5; Stuttgart: W. Kohlmann, 1929), 169–464. Those who doubt direct literary influence include Alfred Vögeli (“Lukas und Euripides,” *TZ* 9 [1953]: 415–438); Reinhard Kratz (*Rettungswunder: Motiv-, traditions- und formkritische Aufarbeitung einer biblischen Gattung* [Europäische Hochschulschriften: Reihe 23, Theologie; Bd. 123; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1979]); Richard Seaford (“Thunder, Lightning and Earthquake in the *Bacchae* and the Acts of the Apostles,” in *What Is a God? Studies in the Nature of Greek Divinity* [ed. Alan B. Lloyd; London: Duckworth, 1997], 139–152); John B. Weaver (*Plots of Epiphany: Prison Escape in the Acts of the Apostles* [BZNW 131; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004]); and most commentators.

³ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

with a mixture of Greeks and barbarians together,
 I have now come for the first time to the land of the Greeks,
 after making Asia dance and establishing my
 rites, so that a god might be revealed to mortals. (13–22)

The women who accompanied Dionysus from Lydia comprise the chorus for the play.

Characteristic of the worship of Dionysus and the source of Pentheus's repulsion was its wild worship. Here is how Dionysus describes it in this opening speech:

I drove them [the women of Thebes] from their homes,
 mad. They dwell in the mountains frenzied in mind.
 I forced them to take the tokens of my revelry.
 All the Cadmean female seed, as many
 women as there were, I drove from their houses in madness.
 Mingling together with the daughters of Cadmus,
 they sit on rocks under open sky and under green firs. (32–38)

The tokens mentioned here include robes made of animal skins, pine torches, and thyrsi (wands wound with vines and topped with pinecones). The poet describes Bacchantes letting down their hair, rolling their eyes, dancing about wildly, and invoking the god with cries of "evohé," and "io." Maenads even "upon their hair / carry fire, and it does not burn them" (757–758).

The god persisted in establishing his worship at Thebes despite the opposition of Cadmus's grandson Pentheus, "sufferer," who, according to Dionysus,

god-fights [θεομαχῆι] against me, bars me from libations,
 and never remembers me in his prayers.
 For this reason I will show him that I am a god,
 and all the Thebans, too. And into some other land,
 once I have set things right here, I will travel by foot
 to reveal myself.

To this end I have changed into this mortal appearance
 and transformed my shape into the form of a man. (47–50 and 53–54)

The god ends his opening speech by calling forth the chorus, the Lydian women, his devoted entourage, to beat their sacred drums outside Pentheus's palace: "You who have left Mount Tmolus, defender of Lydia, / women whom from the barbarians / I have brought ..." (55–57).

Acts 16 narrates the initial arrival of the Christian message on European soil; the first convert was a woman who was worshipping with other women outside the city in the wild. "On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate,

near the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; we sat and spoke with the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia—a merchant in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, a worshipper of God—was listening to us. The Lord opened her heart to accept what was said by Paul” (16:13–14). Although there is nothing inherently implausible about this tale, it contains several peculiarities that have befuddled interpreters. Luke calls the place where the women convened “a prayer,” metonymically a place of prayer. Although it is possible to take the word to designate a synagogue, it more likely designates a wild, natural setting where the women convened for worship. Surely Luke did not have in mind a building recognizable as a synagogue: Paul and company “supposed” the place was cultic. The total absence of men likewise speaks against taking the reference to refer to a synagogue. Furthermore, all other synagogues in Luke-Acts are clearly designated as such and are buildings within the city gates.⁴ These women are outside the male-dominated city, in the wild, worshipping their god, like the Maenads of Euripides worshipping Dionysus in the woods.⁵ Their place of prayer is near the river; the opening lines of the *Bacchae* refer to Thebes at the confluence of two rivers: the Dirce and the Ismenos.⁶ In Luke’s tale, unlike Euripides’, there is no madness, at least not yet.

The name Lydia is also the name of her home province in Asia Minor; Thyatira was in Lydia, the center of the cult of Dionysus according to Euripides and the homeland of the Maenads that comprised his chorus. Some worshippers of the god in the Hellenistic period referred to themselves as Λύδαι, “Lydian women” (Athenaeus, *Deipn.* 5.198e).

Furthermore, Lydia from Lydia sold purple garments, which seems to be a gratuitous reference to her livelihood. Perhaps Luke wished to call attention to her as a woman of independent means; after all, she had a household, implying dependents and perhaps slaves. But why the reference to purple? Purple, of course, was the color sacred to the wine god.⁷

Insofar as nearly every detail about Lydia in Acts points to her as a Christian Maenad, it would appear that by making the first convert in Europe a woman from Lydia, named Lydia, a seller of purple garments,

⁴ The location of synagogues within city confines is explicit in Acts 9:2, 20; 13:5; 14:1; 17:1, 10, 17; 18:4, 19, 26; 19:8, 24.

⁵ According to Euripides, the only Theban men who worshipped Dionysus were Tiresias and Cadmus (*Bacch.* 195–196).

⁶ The closest river to Philippi was the Gangites, over a mile away.

⁷ See *Hom. Hymn* 7 (to Dionysus), 6, where the gods wears “a purple cloak.”

Luke broadcast the similarities between Paul's mission to Greece and that of Dionysus. As we shall see, parallels with Euripides' play will continue later in Acts 16, where Paul will establish the first Christian community in Europe. First, however, it may be useful to will analyze the imitations of the *Bacchae* at the beginning of Acts, the creation of a new religion in Jerusalem.

As with Dionysus's Maenads, early Christians cherished divine madness: glossolalia, speaking in the "tongues of angels." Worshippers became ecstatic and uttered incomprehensible sounds, "mysteries," that other worshippers translated into meaningful exhortations, prophecies, prayers, songs, or blessings. Paul considered this experience significant but problematic, for "if the entire church comes together and all speak in tongues, and if strangers or unbelievers should enter, will they not say that you are in a frenzy?" (1 Cor 14:23). The word I have translated here "are in a frenzy," is *μάλινεσθε*, a cognate to Maenad. In the same epistle Paul complained about women who removed veils from their hair when praying and prophesying, perhaps reminiscent of the unbinding of hair by the female worshipers of Dionysus.⁸

The author of Acts knew of such ecstatic speech and narrated its first manifestation among Christians in Acts 2, the baptism with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, but under Luke's knife, divine madness underwent major plastic surgery to alter undesirable traits. Instead of incoherent glossolalia one finds xenolalia, the speaking of foreign tongues. "When the day of Pentecost had come, all were together at the same place. Suddenly a sound came from the sky like the rush of a violent wind and filled the entire house where they were sitting, and they saw tongues like fire that divided and rested on each one of them" (Acts 2:1–3). According to the *Bacchae*, Maenads possessed "upon their hair / carry fire, and it does not burn them" (757–758).⁹ Luke continues:

⁸ By removing their veils Christian women at Corinth seem to have signified their return to primordial perfection before Eve's sin (see Dennis R. MacDonald, *There Is no Male and Female: Galatians 3:26–28 and Gnostic Baptismal Tradition* [HDR 20; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987], 72–91).

⁹ According to Vergil, when Aeneas and his family left their home to escape the sack of Troy they saw a portent. "Between the hands and faces of his discouraged parents, above the head of Iulus [= Ascanius], a light tongue of flame was seen to pour forth, and flames harmless in touch licked his soft hair and nibbled about his temples. Quickly and in terror we shake out the burning hair and extinguish the holy fires with water" (*Aen.* 2.679–686). Anchises recognized this flame as a divine sign and asked Jupiter to affirm it with another. The god did so by sending thunder and a shooting star (2.687–698).

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit prompted them to speak. Jews were living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under the sky. When this voice occurred, the throng came together and was confounded, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astonished and amazed: "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? So how is it that each of us hears in his own mother tongue? ... We hear them speaking about the great deeds of God in our languages!" Everyone was amazed and at a loss. (Acts 2:4–12)

Luke here depicts glossolalia not as madness but as universal rationality: it empowered Jesus' followers to speak in the native languages of the Jewish Diaspora. In his opening speech Dionysus lists the nations where he had introduced his cult: Lydia, Phrygia, Persia, Bactria, Arabia, and "all of Asia" (*Bacch.* 13–18). Those who heard the apostles speaking their languages were "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and Roman sojourners, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs ..." (Acts 2:9–11). Four of the regions in Acts are identical with those in the tragedy: Phrygia, Media, Asia, and Arabia. Furthermore, Euripides' Persia and Bactria generally correspond to Luke's Parthia, Elam, and Mesopotamia. But Luke's list of nations extends further, to Egypt, Libya, and even Rome. The tragedian mentions a combination of Asian "Greeks and barbarians;" Luke mentions a combination of Roman "Jews and proselytes." Luke's list also captures eastern territories outside the Roman empire: Parthia, Media, and Elam. This expansion of the list to include peoples outside the empire demonstrates the superiority of the Christian movement.

After his opening monologue, Dionysus exits and the chorus of Lydian women enter to sing his praises and to provide the back-story (64–167). The next scene concerns two old men, Cadmus, Pentheus's grandfather, and the blind seer Tiresias, a mainstay of classical Greek tragedy. This is how he lost his sight according to a dominant version.

In his youth, Tiresias saw two snakes copulating and killed the female with a stick, which transformed him into a woman. She then married and bore children but later saw two more amorous serpents. This time she killed the male and thus regained her masculinity. In a dispute between Hera and Zeus about which gender experienced the greater pleasure in lovemaking, they chose bisexual Tiresias to decide the matter. When he declared that the pleasures of the women were several times greater, Hera blinded him. To compensate him for his loss, Zeus gave him the gift of prophecy. Tiresias thus is easy to spot in ancient art. Although he usually is bearded, he wears a dress or a wrap, and often holds the hand of a young lad as a guide.

The depiction of Tiresias as a transvestite surely reflects how he appeared on stage, as in the *Bacchae*, where he arrives with a boy leading him by the hand; he himself is decked out like a Maenad, draped with a fawnskin, with ivy in his hair, and carrying a thyrsus as a cane (176–177). Cadmus, too, then arrives on stage, also in Bacchic drag and praises Tiresias's wisdom. Because the prophet cannot see the light of the sun, he also promises to lead (παῖδαγωγῆσω) him into the wild to worship the god: “hold my hand (χεῖρα)” (193 and 197–198). Tiresias responded that they must go because the god wants worship both from the young and the old (206–209).

King Pentheus then appears. Convinced that it is wine and lust that were driving the women into the hills, he says that he has arrested many of them and will soon arrest the others (215–232).

Our women abandon their homes
in fake Bacchic ecstasy, scurry about in the wooded
hills, and honor in dances some new daemon,
Dionysus—whoever he is.
At the center of their revelries stand full
wine bowls.

For when the joy of the grape comes to women's feasts,
I say that nothing wholesome remains in their rites.

(217–222 and 260–262; see also 236 and 814)

Pentheus thus decided to put an end to it.

My servants keep safe with their hands bound
in the public jail those I have seized;
those still on the loose I will hunt from the hills.

By securing them in iron nets,
I will soon put a stop to this pernicious Bacchic activity.
They say that some stranger has come,
a beguiling wizard from the land of Lydia. (226–228 and 231–234)

Tiresias then rebukes the king: he may think that he is intelligent, but there is nothing prudent in what he says (266–269). “Though he himself [Dionysus] is a god, he is poured out in libations to the gods / so that through him mortals may receive good things” (284–285). The ecstatic worship of the women is divinely inspired rationality.

This deity is a prophet, for the Bacchic frenzy
and mania contain much prophecy. Whenever the god enters the body fully,
he makes those he has crazed to tell the future.

Do not boast that political power is the supreme force among humans,
as you suppose. Your supposition is sick;
do not suppose that it is prudent. Receive the god into the land,
pour libations, play the bacchant, and wreath the head!

I will not be convinced by your words and fight against the god.
Your own madness is the most tragic of all!

(298–301, 310–313, and 325–326)

It is not Tiresias but Pentheus who is blind (319).

The king remains defiant and dispatches soldiers to arrest the stranger, who is Dionysus disguised as a mortal priest. Tiresias then leaves the stage with Cadmus leading him by the hand. The blind seer's last words in the play are addressed to Cadmus and adumbrate the outcome.

One must serve as a slave to the Bacchic god, the son of Zeus.
May it not be that Pentheus brings sorrow [πένθος]
on your house, Cadmus. I am not speaking from prophetic insight
but from the events themselves. A fool is speaking foolish things.

(366–369)

Left on stage are Pentheus and the Lydian chorus, who lament the king's folly and express their desire to escape Thebes' insanity.

May I go to Cyprus,
island of Aphrodite,
where the Erotes who charm the hearts
of mortals hold sway
at Paphos.

(402–406)

Luke imitates several features in this Euripidean scene; here I will discuss one of them and take up others later. According to Acts 13, Paul Barnabas, and John Mark sailed for Cyprus.

Having traveled the entire island as far as Paphos, they discovered a magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. But the magician Elymas—for this is the translation of his name—sought to divert the proconsul from the faith. (13:6–8)

Bar-Jesus means, “son of Jesus;” it certainly cannot be translated into Greek as Elymas. Both names are significant: Bar-Jesus is ironic insofar as the prophet opposes the apostolic preaching and shows instead that he is “a son of the devil” (13:10). An ἔλυμα, on the other hand, is a cloak, a mantle, or a himation, or better, a woman's wrap or shawl.¹⁰ This “translation” of Bar-Jesus should jolt the reader into looking for a deeper significance. The Euripidean analog for Elymas is Tiresias, who, as we have seen, appears in the *Bacchae* dressed like a woman, draped in a fawnskin. But the two

¹⁰ See the related verb εἰλύω, “I wrap.”

prophets play opposite roles. Tiresias, a true prophet, tries to persuade a ruler to accept a new religion; Mr. Shawl, a false prophet, tries to persuade a ruler to reject one.

Similarly, the proconsul Sergius Paulus and Pentheus play inverted roles. Euripides emphasized the folly, even blindness, of the king of Thebes, who rejected the new religion, but Luke describes the Roman proconsul as "an intelligent man, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God." Paul plays the role of Tiresias insofar as he was possessed by the divine: "full of the Holy Spirit," he said, "O you who are full of every deceit and fraud, son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness, do you never stop twisting the straight ways of the Lord? Behold, now the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind, for a time unable to see the sun" (13:9–11a). Paul thus makes the pseudo-prophet blind, like Tiresias, who could not "see the light" of the sun (*Bacch.* 210). Tiresias's blindness was permanent; Elymas's was "for a time." "Immediately a mist and darkness fell over him, and he groped about in search of people to lead him by the hand [χειραγωγούς]. Then, when the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, astonished [ἐκπλησσομένης] at the Lord's teaching" (Acts 13:11b–12).

Characteristically in Greek art and literature, as in the *Bacchae*, Tiresias appears with a χειραγωγός, "one who leads by the hand." Significant, too, is Luke's use of the verb ἐκπλήσσω, the participle of which appears here and is translated as "smitten by." As we shall see, Dionysus will smite Pentheus with madness; Paul smote Sergius Paulus with "the Lord's teaching." Surely Luke expected his cleverer readers to make the associations between this episode and Euripides: the name Elymas for a prophet, the location at Paphos of Cyprus, and the infliction of blindness all point to emulation.

Clement of Alexandria has Christ beckon Tiresias as follows:

Come to me, old man, you too. Leaving Thebes and throwing away prophecy and Bacchic revelry, be led by the hand [χειραγωγῶ] to truth. Look, I give you the wood [of the cross] to lean on. Hurry, Tiresias, believe! You will see! Christ, through whom the eyes of the blind recover their sight, shines more brightly than the sun. Night will flee from you; fire will fear you; death will leave you. Though you cannot now see Thebes, old man, you will see heaven.

(*Protr.* 12.119.3)

Luke wrote that all those who witnessed glossolalia were "astonished and perplexed; some said to each other, 'What does this mean?' Others scoffed and said that they were filled with sweet wine" (Acts 2:12–13). Drunks do not speak in foreign languages, but Luke apparently expected his readers to assume that those who made this accusation heard only gibberish. Compare

Paul's concern in 1Cor 14:23: "If the entire church comes together and all speak in tongues and if strangers or unbelievers should enter, will they not say that you are in a frenzy [μαίνεσθε]?" The Jewish philosopher Philo used Bacchic imagery to describe Jewish mysticism: "Any soul that is filled with grace immediately rejoices, grins, and leaps up to dance, for it is inspired with Bacchic frenzy [βεβαύχεται] such that to many of those who are uninitiated in the mysteries the soul might seem to be drunk, demented, and beside itself" (*Ebr.* 146).¹¹

Luke's model for the accusation of drunkenness seems to have been the *Bacchae*, where King Pentheus similarly accuses the Maenads of being filled with wine.

Our women abandon their homes
in fake Bacchic ecstasy, scurry about in the wooded
hills, and honor in dances some new daemon,
Dionysus—whoever he is.
At the center of their revelries stand full
wine bowls.

For when the joy of the grape comes to women's feasts,
I say that nothing wholesome remains in their rites.

(*Bacch.* 217–222 and 260–262; see also 236 and 814)

Pentheus and the Jewish observers of Pentecost were wrong, the Maenads and the apostles were not drunk; they were possessed by the god.

As we have seen, Tiresias rebuked King Pentheus for insolence and insisted that the Maenads were not drunk but were divinely inspired.

This deity is a prophet, for the Bacchic frenzy
and mania [μαινώδες] contain much prophecy [μαντικήν]. Whenever the
god enters the body fully,
he makes those he has crazed to tell the future.

Do not boast that political power is the supreme force among humans,
as you suppose, but your supposition is sick;
do not suppose that it is prudent. Receive the god into the land,
pour libations, play the bacchant, and wreath the head!

I will not be convinced by your words and fight against the god [θεομαχήσω].
Your own madness is the most tragic of all!

(298–301, 310–313, and 325–326)

¹¹ The author of Ephesians contrasted Christian worship, especially singing, with drunkenness: "Do not be drunk with wine, which is profligate, but be filled with the Spirit" (5:18–20).

Later in the play a spy on the Maenads tells Pentheus that he saw them asleep in the woods, "modestly—not as you say drunk from the wine-bowl" (686–687).

Similarly, Peter defended glossolalia as prophetic inspiration.

Jewish men and all residents of Jerusalem, let this be known to you and pay attention to my comments. These people are not drunk as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning, but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "It will happen in the last days, God says, that I will pour out some of my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters will prophesy; your young will see visions; your old people will dream dreams; and in those days I will pour out some of my spirit on my male slaves and on my female slaves, and they will prophesy. And I will give portents in the sky above and signs on the earth below: blood, fire, and smoky mist." (Acts 2:14b–19)

Luke's selection of Joel 3:1–5 as the text for Peter's speech permits a fruitful comparison with divine madness at Thebes. Nowhere else in Jewish Scriptures can one find a text more congruent with the prophesying Maenads, for the prophet predicts that God's spirit will inspire Jewish daughters and female slaves; Luke adroitly added after the reference to female slaves "and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:17–18). Notice also that the "young [νεανίσκοι] will see visions; your old people [πρεσβύτεροι] will dream dreams." Similarly, Tiresias told Cadmus that they must join the Maenads because Dionysus desires worship both from the young (νέον) and the old (γεραίτερον; *Bacch.* 206–209). Both in Acts and the *Bacchae*, divine madness is sober inspiration and afflicts women as well as men, the old as well as the young. And as in Thebes, in Jerusalem "many portents and signs performed by the apostles were producing fear in everyone" (Acts 2:43).

Near the end of Tiresias's speech he admonishes Pentheus with an imperative to repent and join in the worship of the god. "Receive the god into the land, pour libations, play the bacchant, and wreath the head!" (*Bacch.* 312–313). Similarly, Peter admonished his audience with an imperative.

Peter [said] to them: "Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for everyone in far-flung places, whomever the Lord our God has called." With many other words he witnessed to them and urged them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" (Acts 2:38–40)

Some three thousand people converted, but not the Jewish authorities, who remained as defiant as Pentheus.

When early Christian texts refer to Jesus as God's Son, the word for son almost always is υἱός, but four times early in Acts—twice in Peter's speech

in chapter 3—Luke uses instead the word *παῖς*, which can mean both “son” and “servant” (3:13, 26; 4:27, 30). The only other use of *παῖς* for Jesus in the New Testament is in Matt 12:18, where the author is quoting Isaiah 42:1 (the LXX reads *παῖς*). Commentators almost universally attribute this distinctive title in Acts 3 and 4 to pre-Lucan sources that interpreted Jesus in light of Jewish prophetic traditions of a suffering servant. It is more likely, however, that the antecedent to *παῖς* is to be found in Greek tragedy.

Five times in the *Bacchae* Euripides calls the god the *παῖς* of Zeus, and in three cases the name Dionysus follows, as in the first two lines: “I, the *παῖς* of Zeus, Dionysus.” Later, the poet calls him “God, *παῖς* of a god, Dionysus,” and “*παῖς* of Zeus, Dionysus” (84–85 and 550–551; cf. 417 and 581). Similarly, in three of the four instances of *παῖς* as a title for Jesus in Acts it is followed by Jesus’ name. God “glorified his *παῖς*, Jesus”; the authorities acted violently against God’s “holy *παῖς*, Jesus”; and God produced “signs and wonders” through the name of his “holy *παῖς*, Jesus” (3:13; 4:27, 30; cf. 3:26: God raised up “his *παῖς*”). The context of each instance resembles Euripides’ Dionysus, who also was persecuted by the authorities and performed wonders. Luke’s distinctive repetition of the unusual epithet only in passages potentially influenced by the *Bacchae* seems to emphasize that Jesus, not Dionysus, is the name of God’s *παῖς*.¹²

These early chapters of Acts use another title for Jesus that appears nowhere elsewhere in Luke’s writings, and only twice elsewhere in the entire New Testament: *ἀρχηγός*, “originator.” The first time it appears in Acts Peter calls Jesus “originator of life,” and the second time he calls him “originator and savior” (3:15 and 5:31).¹³ Although Euripides does not use these titles for Dionysus, Plutarch called the god the *ἀρχηγός* of wine, while Clement of Alexandria preferred to think of him as the *ἀρχηγός* of shame.¹⁴ Early Christians often applied the title “savior” to Jesus Christ, so there is nothing peculiar about its appearance here. One might note, however, that pagans used it of their gods as well, especially of Zeus, but also of Dionysus.¹⁵ Its association with *ἀρχηγός* in Acts 5:31 may suggest a Bacchic connection.

Already we have seen that Pentheus boasted that he had arrested some of Dionysus’s followers and intended to incarcerate them all.

¹² Justin Martyr included Dionysus among the Greek sons of Zeus who rivaled Christ (1 *Apol.* 54).

¹³ See also Heb 2:10; 12:2; and 2 *Clem.* 20:5 (“savior and originator of incorruptibility”).

¹⁴ Plutarch, *Is. Os.* 365a (Dionysus is “lord and *ἀρχηγός*” of every kind of moisture, including wine); Clement, *Protr.* 2.39.3.

¹⁵ Aristophanes, *Ran.* 1150 (apparently citing a play of Aeschylus or Euripides) and Pausanias, *Descr.* 2.23.1.

My servants keep safe with their hands bound
in the public jail those I have seized;
those still on the loose I will hunt from the hills.

By securing them in iron nets,
I will soon put a stop to this pernicious Bacchic activity.
They say that some stranger has come,
a beguiling wizard from the land of Lydia. (226–228 and 231–234)

Euripides says nothing about the response of the Maenads to their arrest, but later it will become clear that they remained adamantly devoted to their god.

The divine madness in Jerusalem similarly led to an arrest.

And while they were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees confronted them; they were flummoxed about their teaching of the people and proclaiming the resurrection of the dead because of Jesus. They laid their hands on them and, because it already was evening, placed them in custody until the next day. Many of those who heard the word believed, and the number of men was about five thousand.

The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes came together in Jerusalem—as well as Annas the chief priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and as many as were of the high priestly clan—presented them in their midst, and questioned them: “By what power and in whose name did you do this?” (4:1–7)

Peter responded under divine possession.

Then Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, since we are examined today for having done good for a disabled person, [and are asked in] whose name he was cured, let it be known to you and to all the people of Israel that this person stands before you able-bodied through the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead.” (4:8–10)

The chorus in the *Bacchae* responded to Pentheus's god-fight by advocating a preference for the religious views of common people: “What the simpler crowd think and practice, / this I could accept,” namely, not to ask too many questions about the manifestation of divine power (430–431). Compare this with the following:

When they [the Jewish authorities] observed the boldness of Peter and John and took note that they were uneducated and common people, they were amazed and recognized that they had been Jesus' companions. And when they saw the person who was standing with them healed, they had no objection to lodge. They commanded them to go outside the Sanhedrin and deliberated the matter with each other. “What are we to do with these people? The public sign that they produced has become known to all the residents of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it; but lest it be spread any further to the

people, let's warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." After they recalled them, they ordered them to speak or teach absolutely nothing in the name of Jesus.

In response, Peter and John said to them, "You decide for yourselves whether it is right in the sight of God to obey you or God, for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." They [the religious authorities] gave them strict orders and released them because they found no way to punish them due to the people, because everyone glorified God because of what had happened. (4:13–21)

Tiresias had anticipated the resolution of the apostles: "One must serve as a slave to the Bacchic god, the son of Zeus" (*Bacch.* 366).

Several times already we have observed Euripides' use of the verb θεομαχεῖν, "to god-fight." Pentheus, of course, is the golden belt of god-fighters. The theme of θεομαχία provides much of the plot for the first half of Acts, and culminates in the conversion of Saul, Luke's god-fighter supreme. After their miraculous release from prison, the apostles launched a Jeremiad against the Jewish authorities as god-fighters.

"Master [δεσπότη], you who created the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything in them, you who said through the Holy Spirit by the mouth of our father David, 'Why do the nations scorn and the people contrive vain plots? The kings of the earth have come, and the rulers have convened together against the Lord and against his Messiah.' Truly they have convened in this city against your holy παῖς, Jesus, whom you anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with Gentiles and the people of Israel, to carry out whatever your hand and your will preordained to take place. And now, Lord, take notice of their threats and give your slaves [δούλοις] the ability to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand for healing, and signs and portents are taking place through the name of your holy παῖς Jesus." And as they were praying, the place where they were gathered was shaken, and everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit and were speaking the word of God with boldness. (4:24–31)

This prayer not only resembles Euripides' play by using the word παῖς, the Maenads, too, called on their God using the word δεσπότης, as in the following prayer: "Io, Io, master, master [δεσπότη δεσπότη]" (*Bacch.* 582). The word δεσπότης appears as an address to God in this speech and only once elsewhere in Luke-Acts (Luke 2:29, again in opposition to "slave [δούλος]"). The only occurrences of the word "slave" in Acts to describe Jesus' followers are in 2:18 (quoting Joel 3:2), here in 4:24, and in 16:17 (uttered by a girl possessed by a demon). But perhaps nowhere in this passage are the parallels with the *Bacchae* more apparent than in 4:31: "The place where they were gathered was shaken." We will examine the earthquake in Euripides'

play more thoroughly in another context; here it will suffice to note that Pentheus locked Dionysus in a prison from which he escaped by means of a tremor.

The apostles continued to produce miraculous deeds, despite the threats of the authorities.

Many signs and portents occurred among the people though the hands of the apostles. All of them were together in Solomon's Stoa, and none of the rest dared join them, but the people highly regarded them. Even so, a throng of both men and women believed and were added, so that they also carried the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that as Peter passed by his shadow might fall on one of them. The throng from cities surrounding Jerusalem also gathered, bringing the sick and those who were vexed with unclean spirits, all of whom were healed. (5:12–16)

Whereas the signs of divine power in Thebes were the exuberant dances of the possessed Maenads, those in Jerusalem were healings and exorcisms.

The Jewish authorities then met to decide what to do, and a Pharisee named Gamaliel argued that they should not use violence against the apostles, citing two failed insurrections in the recent past. "So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone; because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them—you may even be found to be god-fighters [θεομάχοι!]" (Acts 5:38–39). This word clearly points to the *Bacchae*. For example, Dionysus accuses Pentheus of "making war on a god [θεομαχέει]," and Tiresias says he never will "make war on a god [θεομαχήσω]" (45 and 325). The speech of the god later in the play faults the king by using a similar expression: "he dared to wage war [μάχην] on a god [θεόν]" (635–636; cf. 789). His mother Agave lamented that his only passion was to "fight a god [θεομαχεῖν]" (1255–1256).

Gamaliel's speech won the day, but not for long. "Full of grace and power, Stephen began performing great portents and signs among the people" and aggressively disputed in a synagogue (Acts 6:8–11). The authorities dragged him before the Sanhedrin, where he accused them of being god-fighters. "Stubborn and uncircumcised in hearts and ears; you who always oppose the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors did! Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who predicted the coming of the righteous one, whom you now have betrayed and murdered" (7:51–52). The Sanhedrin's response resembles that of Pentheus: more violence. They stoned Stephen, "and Saul consented to his death" (7:59–8:1a).

Saul thus became a *theomachos*.

At that time a great persecution took place against the church in Jerusalem, and everyone was scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, all but the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made a great lamentation for him. And Saul was ravaging the church, bursting into houses, dragging off both men and women, and handing them over to prison. (Acts 8:1b–3)

As we shall see, unlike Pentheus, Saul will convert when confronted with divine power.

At *Bacch.* 434 one of Pentheus's soldiers arrives with the god bound in chains (δεῖν). Dionysus had not resisted arrest when the soldier told him, "Stranger, it is not gladly / that I lead you away, but I do so with letters [ἐπιστολαῖς] from Pentheus, who sent me" (441–442). Soldiers already had imprisoned many of the Maenads "with their hands bound [δεσμῖους]" (226).

As we shall see, in Acts Saul/Paul plays the role of a god-fighter who carries out the orders of Jerusalem authorities. Particularly resonant with the *Bacchae* is the following passage: "Saul still kept breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the chief priest and asked from him letters [ἐπιστολαῖς] to Damascus, to the synagogues, so that if he should find some members of the Way—men or women—he could bring them in shackles [δεδεμένους] to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1–2). Here Saul plays the role of the soldier who carried letters from Pentheus with orders to shackle Dionysus, as he had the Maenads earlier.

In addition to the good news that the god now was in chains, the soldier in Euripides brought bad news to Pentheus:

The Bacchant women you shut up—those you arrested
and bound in chains at the public prison [δεσμοῖσι πανδήμου]—
they have fled, freed! At the meadows
they are leaping about, calling on their god,
Clamor. The chains loosened themselves from their feet,
without a mortal hand, the bars of the door [θύρετρ'] were undone.¹⁶
(*Bacch.* 443–448)

Similarly in Acts, despite commands that the apostles cease their public preaching and miracle working, Peter and the others continued to do so. "The chief priest and all who were will him—that is, the sect of the Sadducees—rose up; they were full of zeal, laid hands on the apostles, and placed them in the public prison [τηρήσει δημοσίᾳ]." Only here in the New Testament do we find a prison called "public," but its equivalent is

¹⁶ *Christus patiens* adapts these lines to describe Christ's liberation of the dead from Hades (2070–2075).

used twice in the *Bacchae* for Pentheus's prison (227 and 444). Luke's narrator continues:

During the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors [θύρας] of the prison, led them out, and said, "Go, stand in the temple, and tell the people everything about this life." When they heard this, they entered the temple at dawn and continued teaching.

When the high priest and those with him arrived, they summoned the Sanhedrin, all of the council of elders of the children of Israel, and sent word to the prison to bring them. (Acts 5:19–21)

As was the case in Euripides, it falls to unfortunate underlings to bring bad news to the authorities.

When the subordinates arrived, they did not find them in the prison and turned on their heels to make it known. "We found the prison locked with every precaution and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened the doors we found no one inside." When the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were flummoxed about them—what was happening? Someone else arrived and told them, "The men whom you placed in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." Then the captain and his subordinates brought them in, but not with violence, for they feared being stoned by the people. (5:22–26)

In the *Bacchae*, the Maenads freed from prison, returned to the hills to worship their god. As Tiresias put it, "One must serve as a slave to the Bacchic god, the son of Zeus" (366). In Acts, the apostles return to their public denunciation of the authorities as *theomachoi*.

They [the Jewish authorities] brought them in and stood them before the Sanhedrin, and the chief priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, and now look: you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you want to foist on us the blood of this man." Peter and the apostles responded, "One must obey God rather than mortals. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you disposed of by hanging him on a tree, God exalted this man to his right hand, to be an originator and savior".

(5:27–31a)

Here again Peter uses titles used for Dionysus: ἀρχηγός and σωτήρ.

Despite the displays of Dionysus's powers, Pentheus remained bull-headed. The Lydian chorus prayed that Dionysus would come to rescue his "prophets" and "restrain the hubris of a murderous man [φονίου ... ἀνδρός]" (550–555). So the god revealed his power to him directly. Shut up in a stable for a prison, the god shouted to his followers who awaited him outside the door, and produced fire and earthquake (585–595). When the Maenads saw the fire blazing around Semele's tomb, they cried out to each other:

Throw yourselves to the ground,
 Maenads! Throw your quaking bodies down!
 For the lord is coming to overturn these halls,
 the son of Zeus! (600–603)

Dionysus then appeared and comforted them.

Barbarian women, dumbfounded by fear
 have you fallen to the ground? It would appear that you observed Bacchus
 shaking the house of Pentheus. But raise
 your bodies, take courage, and dispel fear from your flesh! (604–607)

The god then narrated what he had done. “Bacchus came and shook the house, at the tomb of his mother / he lit a fire” (623–624). When the prison doors flew open, the king feared that his prisoner might escape, so he drew his sword to slay him; but he could do no harm, for he was stabbing a look-alike phantom. He dropped his sword in exhaustion; “though he was a man, / he dared to wage war [μάχην] on a god [θεόν]” (635–636).

Pentheus then emerged from the ruins, certain that his prisoner had escaped; but he was astonished to discover him standing there calmly. The god told him to listen to a dispatch from the field: “We will wait for you. We will not flee” (659). The messenger reported what he had seen in the hills. After listening to a litany of outrageous activities performed by the women, his mother Agave among them, the king decided to rid Greece of this religious scourge from the East once and for all. But the god warned him not to do so: “I would rather sacrifice to him than / kick against the goads, a mortal raging against a god” (794–795).

Acts twice imitates the Euripidean scene. Here I will discuss the first instance. As we have seen, “Saul still kept breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the chief priest and asked from him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues, so that if he should find some members of the Way—men or women—he could bring them in shackles to Jerusalem” (9:1–2). What follows is Saul’s conversion at the manifestation of divine power.

During his journey, as he was approaching Damascus, all at once a light from the sky flashed around him. He fell to the earth and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” He said, “Sir, who are you?” He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But rise up, go to the city, and it will be told you what you must do.” The men who were traveling with him stood there dumbfounded. They heard the voice but saw no one. Saul rose up from the ground, and when his eyes opened, he saw nothing. The others led him by the hand and brought him to Damascus, and for three days he was without sight and ate and drank nothing.

There was a disciple in Damascus by the name of Ananias, and the Lord spoke to him in a dream: "Ananias." He said, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Rise and go along the street called Straight and in a house of Judas look for someone named Saul of Tarsus, for he is praying. He has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming to him and laying his hands on him so that he may recover his sight."

Ananias responded, "Lord, I have heard about this from many people who report how much harm he has caused for your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to shackle all who call on your name!"

The Lord said to him, "Go, for this man is a chosen vessel for me to carry my name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him what he must suffer for my name."

Ananias left, entered the house, laid his hands on him, and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me, Jesus appeared to you on the road where you were traveling, so that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

And things like scales fell from his eyes; he received his sight, rose up, was baptized, took food, and regained his strength. (Acts 19:3–18)

As in the *Bacchae*, here one reads of a divine encounter with a θεομάχος that includes a brilliant light, the falling to the ground in awe, and a command to rise. Notice that Jesus claimed that Paul was not persecuting his followers but him personally: "Why are you persecuting me?" Jesus struck Saul blind, so that "others led him by the hand," thus calling to mind Tiresias, who was led on and off stage in the play by a sighted guide.

Acts 9 contains one additional flag to Dionysus. Jesus commanded Ananias to seek out Saul and used an unusual metaphor to justify the command, "for he is my select vessel for carrying my name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel" (9:15). The word σκεῦος, "vessel," appears elsewhere in the New Testament as a metaphor to describe someone, but it is never developed as it is here (2 Cor 4:7; 2 Tim 2:21). Saul is a chosen container that Jesus will use to "carry" his name to the world. Dionysus as the god of wine, of course, was intimately associated with various sorts of vases, as ancient art amply attests.

Later in Acts, Luke has Paul twice recount his conversion: once to a Jewish audience (22:6–16) and once to Gentiles (26:12–18); in this third version Luke actually cites *Bacchae* 794–795! "I heard a voice speaking to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads [πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζειν]'" (26:14; *Bacch.*: πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζοιμι). This is one of a few passages in the New Testament that scholars recognize as a quotation from Greek poetry, even though similar sayings

appear in other ancient texts.¹⁷ In light of the other significant imitations of Euripides' play, Luke's readers should have seen here a flag to its classical antetext.

The cult of Dionysus was vibrant throughout antiquity, and Euripides' dark depiction of it gave Christians a large target for their objections to Greek deities. For example, Clement of Alexandria mocked the first line of the *Bacchae* where the god says, "I have come [ἦκω], child of Zeus."

Come [ἦκε], O madman, not propped up by a thyrsus, not wreathed with ivy! Throw off your headband! Throw off your fawn-skin! Get sober! I will show you the Logos ["Word," a title for Christ] and the mysteries of the Logos, and I will describe them with your own imagery. This mountain is beloved of God and is not subject to tragedies, like Cithaeron [a bacchic mountain prominent in the play], but exalted by dramas of truth, a sober mountain and shaded by chaste woods. Reveling here are no Maenads, daughters of "thunder-stricken" Semele, initiates in the disgusting distribution of raw flesh; instead, they are the daughters of God, the beautiful lambs [ἀμνάδες, a pun on μαινάδες], who utter the solemn rites of the Logos and gather together a sober chorus. This chorus consists of the righteous, and their song is a hymn to the King of all.

(*Protrept.* 12.118)

Similarly in Acts, Luke uses Dionysian imagery to describe the conversion of Saul.

The beginning of this study discussed Acts 16 and the conversion of Lydia from Lydia, a Christian Maenad, whom Paul found with other women worshipping outside the city. In that episode there was no mention of divine madness, but there is in the episode that follows it. Although, as we shall see, Luke continues to imitate the *Bacchae* in this chapter, his depiction of a possessed slave girl may echo a play by Aeschylus. The *Eumenides* opens with the "Pythian prophetess [Πύθιας προφήτις]" onstage, alone, praying to the gods to inspire her before she utters her prophecies at the temple to Apollo at Delphi. She ends her prayer with the following invocations. Once again, Dionysus is prominent.

I do not forget Bromios [Dionysus] who haunts this place;
from here a god marched with his Bacchics
to contrive for Pentheus a death fit for a rabbit.
I invoke the springs of Pleistus, the might of Poseidon,
and all-powerful Zeus Most-High [ὑψίστον],
and then sit as a prophet [μάντις] on the throne.

¹⁷ The trope also appears in Pindar, *Pyth.* 2.94–95; Aeschylus, *Ag.* and *Prom.* 324–325, and Julian, *Or.* 8b.

Would that they might grant me now to attain by far, of all my entrances
 thus far,
 the most successful session. If there are any here from among the Greeks,
 let them draw lots and enter as is the custom.
 For I give oracles [μαντεύομαι] as god leads. (Eum. 24–34)

The parallels between this passage and Acts 16:16–17 are striking:

It so happened that while we were going to the place of prayer, a girl who had a Pythian spirit [πνεῦμα πύθωνα] met us; she supplied her owners much income from her giving oracles [μαντευμονένη]. This girl kept following Paul and us, shouting out, “These people are slaves of the Most High God [ὑψίστου]; they are proclaiming to you a way of salvation.”

In the New Testament only here does one find a reference to the Delphic Pytho and the word μαντεύομαι, “I give oracles” or “prophesy.”¹⁸ Eight times elsewhere in the New Testament and often in the LXX one finds ὑψίστος, “Most-High,” to refer to the God of the Jews; this setting in Acts suggests that the oracle correctly identified the God of Paul and Silas to be the Most-High, not Zeus or Apollo.¹⁹

In the *Bacchae*, Tiresias warned Pentheus not to despise Dionysus; note the play on words between madness and prophecy. “This god [δαίμων] is a prophet [μάντις], for bacchic possession and madness [μανιώδεις] have great prophetic power [μαντικήν]. For when the god enters the body fully, he makes those who are crazed [μεμηνότας] to predict the future” (298–301).

This girl at Philippi correctly identified Paul—none of the men did!—but her mantic pestering so annoyed the apostle that he exorcised the spirit. Dionysus drove women mad, even allowing them to prophesy; Paul did the opposite: he drove the girl sane, thereby demonstrating his superiority over her Pythian Spirit.

When her masters saw that their hopes for financial gain had vanished, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities in the agora. Having presented them before the magistrates, they said, “These people are disturbing our city. They are Jews and are promoting customs that are inappropriate for those of us who are Romans to accept or perform.” The crowd added their objections, and the magistrates tore off their clothes and

¹⁸ According to the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, “Pythians utter oracles [μαντεύονται], but once uprooted by us as demons, they are banished” (9.16).

¹⁹ It may be worth noting that in *Eumenides* the Furies, advocates of traditional Greek laws, bring Orestes to trial; but the jury vindicates him, and he goes free. In Acts 16, the owners of the slave girl bring Paul and Silas to trial for having introduced foreign practices. An earthquake vindicates the missionaries, and they go free.

commanded them to be flogged. They laid many blows on them and tossed them into a prison with orders to the jailer to hold them securely. Having received such instructions, he threw them into the innermost part of the prison and secured their feet in stocks. (Acts 16:19–24)

This episode again resembles the *Bacchae*, where Pentheus, scandalized by the strange religious practices that he thought inappropriate for Greeks, arrested and imprisoned the god (*Bacch.* 215–262; see also 481–484 and 778–779). Even more striking is the prison break that follows.

“At midnight Paul and Silas were singing psalms to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake such that the foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors [θύραι] immediately flew open, and the restraints [δεσμά] all fell off” (Acts 16:25–26).²⁰ This passage almost certainly is an emulation of the earthquake and prison escape of Dionysus in the *Bacchae*.

Pentheus arrested Dionysus and put him in a prison, actually in horse stalls at his palace, “hidden in darkness” (509–510 and 549). Euripides apparently expected the following scene to be staged outside the gate of the makeshift jail with the Lydian women dancing and singing on stage, calling for their god to come out to them. Suddenly, the audience would have heard this cry from within.

(DIONYSUS) Io! Listen! Listen to my song!

Io! Bacchae! Io! Bacchae!

(CHORUS) What was that? Where comes that cry
of the god of evoé calling me?

(DIONYSUS) Again I sing: Io! Io!

I Semele's son, the παῖς of Zeus!

(CHORUS) Io! Io! Master! Master!

Come now to our

company, O Clamor, Clamor!

(DIONYSUS) Shake, O surface of the ground! Tremble, Lady Earth!

(576–585)

A quake then shook the palace to rubble, freeing the god from his chains (δεσμίωσιν; 586–593 and 615; see also 616–619). The god again calls from within the prison, summoning fire.

²⁰ This passage also resembles an earlier prison escape in the *Bacchae*, when Dionysus freed his incarcerated Maenads (443–448). Particularly noteworthy are lines 447–448: “Of themselves [αὐτόματα] the bonds [δεσμά] were loosed from their feet and the bolts unlocked the doors [θύρετρ'] without a mortal hand.” See also Acts 12:7 (“the chains fell off his hands”) and 10 (“It [the iron gate] opened for them of its own accord [αὐτομάτῃ]”).

(DIONYSUS) Ignite the thunderbolt, a fiery torch!
 Consume, consume Pentheus's halls!
 [At this point an audience would see the buildings light up.]
 (CHORUS) Aha! Do you not see the fire? Does not the ancient flame
 shine around the holy tomb of Semele,
 that flame left behind when Zeus hurled his thunderbolt?
 Throw yourselves to the ground,
 Maenads! Throw your quaking bodies down!
 For the lord is coming to overturn these halls,
 the son of Zeus!
 [Here the Lydian chorus would fall to the ground.]
 (DIONYSUS) Barbarian women, are you so stricken with fear
 that you have fallen to the earth? It would appear that you sensed that
 Bacchus
 was shaking the house of Pentheus. Now stand up,
 take heart, and expel trembling from your flesh. (594–607)

From the debris the god emerges onstage to tell the chorus what had taken place within. The king had taken him inside the stable but shackled instead a bull, demented to do so by the god. "Bacchus came and shook the house; at the tomb of his mother / he lit a fire" (623–624). When the prison doors flew open, the king feared that his prisoner might escape, so he drew his sword to slay him; but he could do no harm, for he was stabbing a look-alike phantom. He dropped his sword in exhaustion; "though he was a man, / he dared coming to war [μάχην] on a god [θεόν]" (635–636). Pentheus then emerged from the ruins, certain that his prisoner had escaped; but he was astonished to discover him standing there calmly. The god told him to listen to a dispatch from the field: "We will wait for you. We will not flee" (659).

To the jailer in Acts falls the role of Pentheus, who, after the quake, drew his sword to kill his prisoner lest he escape. Pentheus's sword did no harm, nor did that of the jailer.

At midnight Paul and Silas were singing psalms to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake such that the foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors immediately flew open, and the restraints all fell off. The prison guard woke and saw the doors of the prison wide open, so he drew his sword intending to commit suicide because he presumed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted with a loud voice, "Don't hurt yourself! All of us are here!" Having asked for a lamp, the jailer burst inside in panic, fell before Paul and Silas, brought them out, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and your house will be saved." And they were speaking to him the word of the Lord, and to everyone in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them in and washed their wounds; he himself and all those of his

household were baptized at once. He brought them to his house, set a table, and rejoiced with everyone in his house that he had believed in God.

(Acts 16:25–34)

The guard obviously had overreacted: he could hardly have been held responsible for the escape of prisoners during an earthquake. The motif of the drawn sword seems to be an awkward imitation of Pentheus's sword in the *Bacchae*. Be that as it may, in Acts 16, as in the play, the prisoners do not flee, even though the prison doors lie wide open. What is different, of course, is that the Philippian jailer converts whereas Pentheus persisted in his fight with a god. Luke's emphasis on the rejoicing of the jailer's entire household contrasts with the agony of Pentheus's mother Agave and his grandfather Cadmus.

The similarities between the *Bacchae* and Acts 16 did not escape ancient readers. A second-century intellectual named Celsus claimed that Jesus was inferior to Dionysus, who rightly predicted that "the god himself will free me, whenever I desire" (Origen, *Cels.* 2.34, quoting *Bacch.* 498). Jesus, however, died on a cross; his god did not rescue him. Furthermore, Pilate, "the one who condemned him, suffered nothing like Pentheus did by going crazy or being torn in pieces." The Christian Origen responded by claiming that it was not Pilate but "the Jewish people" who killed Jesus. "This people was condemned by God to be torn in pieces and scattered over the entire earth, worse than the rending of Pentheus." Had Celsus read Christian Scriptures more carefully, he would have noticed that their God, like Dionysus, freed Peter from prison. "In Philippi of Macedonia Paul, with Silas, though bound under a yoke, was freed by divine power when the doors of the prison were opened" (Origen, *Cels.* 2.34). Here Origen cites the prison break in Acts 16 to refute an informed pagan who claimed that Jesus was inferior to Dionysus as presented in the *Bacchae*. Luke would have approved.

Prison breaks were popular type-scenes in ancient fiction, but the prison breaks of Dionysus and Paul share unusual details that set them apart: incarcerations by men because of raving women, earthquakes opening the doors and loosening the chains, refusals to flee, drawn but unused swords, and discussions with jailers about religion. If Luke's readers detected this antecedent, they might well have compared Paul positively against Dionysus. Whereas Dionysus sent women into dangerous frenzies, Paul exorcised the mantic slave girl. Whereas Dionysus's earthquake resulted in Pentheus's even more adamant unbelief and ultimate destruction (along with the anguish of his mother Agave and his grandfather Cadmus), Paul's earthquake resulted in the salvation of the Philippian jailer "and his household" (16:31).

When Agave returned to her senses, she was overcome with horror. Cadmus spoke for himself and for all of Thebes with a *nostra culpa*: "We have committed injustice! ... We recognize that these things [the god's accusations] are true" (1344 and 1346). But Dionysus was unforgiving: "I was abused by you, even though I was a god" (1347).

According to Acts, Paul, too, was vindicated after the prison break at Philippi.

At daybreak the magistrates sent the lictors and told them: "Release those men." The jailer told these words to Paul: "The magistrates sent to have you released. So now, leave and go in peace." But Paul said to them, "They beat us in public, without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison, but now they are throwing us out on the sly? Certainly not! Let them come and escort us out themselves!" The lictors reported these words to the magistrates, who were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, so they came, called for them, escorted them out, and asked them to leave the city.²¹ When they left the prison, they went into Lydia's home, and when they had seen and encouraged the brethren, they left town. (16:35–40)

Although other scholars have recognized echoes of the *Bacchae* in Acts, none has argued for such a profound and strategic use of it as I have here. Luke apparently expected his readers to notice these similarities and, by comparison, judge Jesus and his followers to be more compelling than Dionysus and the Maenads. In other words, at least here in Acts, Luke consciously composed counter fiction, Christianized myths.

In my forthcoming commentary on Acts, I similarly propose the following indebtedness to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

The <i>Iliad</i>	Content	Acts
7.54–205 (imit. [B])	Casting of lots for Ajax	1:12–26
<i>passim</i> (imit. [A])	Achilles against the Trojan army	6:1–7:60
24.332–697 (imit. [A])	Hermes and Priam	8:26–40
2.1–41 (imit. [B])	Agamemnon's dream	10:1–18
2.301–335 (imit. [B])	Portents of the serpents and sparrows	10:9–23
2.42–83 (imit. [A])	Agamemnon reports his dream	10:24–33
2.16–34, 301–335 (imit. [A])	Agamemnon's dream and the portent	11:4–18

²¹ It may be worth noting that Codex Bezae (D) contains a variant in which the authorities apologize, much as Cadmus and Agave had: "We did not know in your case that you are innocent men."

The <i>Iliad</i>	Content	Acts
24.677–718 (imit. [A])	Priam's escape from Achilles	12:1–17
9.9–188 (imit. [A])	Council of Achaean elders	15:1–35
6.86–115, 313–391 (imit. [A])	Hector's return to Troy	20:13–17
6.369–502 (imit [B])	Hector's farewell to Andromache	20:18–38
6.369–502 (imit [A])	Hector's farewell to Andromache	21:4–6
6.369–502 (imit [A])	Hector's farewell to Andromache	21:7–14
The <i>Odyssey</i>	Content	Acts
16.342–408 (imit. [A])	Amphinomus's speech	5:34–42
16.154–320 (imit. [A])	Odysseus mistaken for a god	14:1–20
3.130–158 (imit. [B])	Dispute between Agamemnon and Menelaus	15:35–41
9.37–42 (imit. [A])	"We-voyages" of Greek heroes	16:9–12
10.467–574 (imit. [B])	Elpenor's death	20:2–12
3.151–183 (imit. [A])	Nestor's nostos to Pylos	20:13–17
4.81–85 (imit. [A])	Menelaus's nostos	21:1–3
5.262–453 (imit. [B])	Odysseus's shipwreck	27:1–44
5.451–493, 6.117–245 (imit. [A])	Hospitality at Scheria	28:1–11

I also propose imitations of Pindar's fourth *Pythian Ode* and Aeschylus's *Septem contra Thebes*, and extensive use of the depictions of Socrates in Plato and Xenophon.

Plato and Xenophon	Content	Acts
Plato, <i>Resp.</i> 416d–417 (imit. [A])	All things in common in the <i>Republic</i>	2:31–47
Plato, <i>Resp.</i> 416d–417 (imit. [A])	All things in common in the <i>Republic</i>	4:33–37
Xenophon, <i>Mem.</i> 1 (imit. [A])	Socrates sacrifices to the gods	16:1–5
Plato, <i>Apol.</i> 31d–33c, 40a–41d (imit. [A])	Thwarting sign of Socrates	16:6–8
Plato, <i>Apology</i> (imit. [A])	Socrates' apology in Athens	17:16–34
Xenophon, <i>Mem.</i> 1.2.62–63 (imit. [A])	Trial of Socrates	19:21–20:1

Plato and Xenophon	Content	Acts
Plato, <i>Apology</i> (imit. [A])	Socrates' apology before Athenians	22:22–23:11
Plato, <i>Apology</i> and <i>Crito</i> (imit. [A])	Socrates' apology before Athenians	24:1–27
Plato, <i>Apology</i> (imit. [A])	Socrates' apology before Athenians	25:1–26:3
Plato, <i>Phaedo</i> (imit. [A])	Socrates in prison	28:12–31

In order to identify and defend mimetic connections between Acts and classical Greek literature, I apply the following criteria. The neologism antetext simply refers to an antecedent textual model.

- The Status of the Antetext (criteria 1 and 2)
 1. The criterion of *accessibility* pertains to likelihood that the author of the later text had access to the putative model.
 2. The second criterion is *analogy*, and it, too, pertains to the popularity of the target. It seeks to know if other authors imitated the same proposed antetext.
- Links with the Antetext (criteria 3, 4, 5, and 6)
 3. Criterion 3 is *density*; simply stated, the more parallels one can posit between two texts, the stronger the case that they issue from a literary connection.
 4. The criterion of *order*, examines the relative sequencing of similarities in the two works. If parallels appear in the same order, the case strengthens for a genetic connection.
 5. A *distinctive trait* is anything unusual in both the targeted antetext and the proposed borrower that links the two into a special relationship.
 6. *Interpretability* assesses what, if anything, might be gained by viewing one text as a debtor to another. As often as not, ancient authors emulated their antecedents to rival them, whether in style, philosophical adequacy, persuasiveness, religious perspective, or whatever.

The bulk of this article was devoted linking Acts with the *Bacchae* using criteria 3–6: the parallels are dense (criterion 3), often sequential and distinctive (including a citation!; criteria 4 and 5), and interpretable (criterion 6). Occasionally I cited evidence that early Christians, like Clement of Alexandria and Origen, explicitly engaged parallels between Jesus and Dionysus, evidence that Euripides' play was available to them (criterion 1).

To satisfy criterion 2 one would need to show that others similarly imitated the play. One advantage of doing so is to locate Acts within a mimetic tradition in ancient literature. For example, Vergil imitated Euripides' graphic depiction of Bacchic madness (*Aen.* 7), where Juno conjures the Fury Allecto to "sow wicked war" to thwart the settling of the Trojans in Italy. Allecto goes to Queen Amata, wife of the Italian king Latinus, and drives her to a raging madness. Amata thus resembles the Maenads as Euripides had described them.²²

Then feigning the sway of Bacchus,
attempting a greater outrage and causing a greater madness,
she flies off and hides her daughter [Lavinia] in the leafy mountains
to snatch the bridal chamber from the Teucrians and delay the wedding
torches.²³

"Evoé Bacchus!" she roars.²⁴ "You alone are worthy of the maiden!"
she shouts. "For indeed, it is for you that Lavinia takes up the pliant thyrsi;
it is you she circles in the dance; it is for you that she grows long her sacred
locks."²⁵

Rumor flies, and the mothers burn with madness in their breasts;
the same frenzy drives them all to seek out new dwellings.²⁶
Deserting their homes, they toss their necks and hair to the winds,
while others fill the sky with quavering howls
and wrapped in hides carry vine-clad spears.²⁷
Amata herself among them in frenzy holds up the flaming pine-torch
and sings a marriage song for her daughter and Turnus,
rolling her blood-shot eyes.²⁸ Suddenly and savagely
she shouts, "Io, mothers of the Latins, wherever you are, hear this!²⁹
If any fondness for unhappy Amata remains in your faithful hearts,
if a care for a mother's rights disturbs you,
untie your hair bands and seize with me the sacred objects!"³⁰

²² Vergil refers to Euripides' Pentheus in *Aen.* 4.469–470.

²³ Cf. *Bacch.* 216–220, where Pentheus complains of "a new evil in the city, our women deserting their homes in sham Bacchic revelries to rush about the leafy mountains honoring with dances the new god Dionysus, whoever he is."

²⁴ Cf. *Bacch.* 142.

²⁵ Cf. *Bacch.* 494 where Dionysus says, "my locks are sacred, I grow them for the god."

²⁶ Cf. *Bacch.* 32–36.

²⁷ Cf. *Bacch.* 240–242; 864–866 and esp. 695–698: "First letting their hair fall to their shoulders and those whose straps were undone tying up their fawn skins, they wore speckled hides."

²⁸ Cf. *Bacch.* 145–146 ("holding the flaming torch of pine"), 1122–1123 ("frothing at the mouth and rolling her distorted eyes"), and 1166–1167.

²⁹ Cf. *Bacch.* 576–582.

³⁰ Cf. *Bacch.* 34 where the god says that he forced the Maenads to "take tokens of my revelry."

Such was her condition in the woods; in the wilderness of wild beasts
 Allecto drives the queen on every side with the goads of Bacchus.³¹

(*Aen.* 7.385–405; see also 4.300–303, 666; 7.580–582)

Vergil here provides an analogous imitation of the *Bacchae* to Luke's Lydia. Soon after the Trojans arrive on Italian soil, Queen Amata is possessed of the divine madness and invites other women to join her in the wild for Bacchic revelries. Soon after Paul arrives on European soil, he finds Lydia from Lydia with other women outside the city, in the wild, worshipping their God.

The Jewish novel that we know as *3 Maccabees* imitates the *Bacchae* by casting Diaspora Jews in Alexandria in the role of the Maenads, who are asked to worship Dionysus, but who are saved by divine intervention and punishment of pagans who fought with them and their God.

The apocryphal *Acts of Andrew*, too, contains a repentant emulation of Euripides' Pentheus in the characterization of a Roman proconsul. It merits extensive treatment here because the author used the *Bacchae* in a fashion remarkably analogous to that in *Acts*.

When he [Andrew] entered the city, a rumor spread that a stranger had entered the city, reportedly naked, destitute, and bringing with him for his journey nothing but the name of a certain person named Jesus through whom he performs signs and great wonders, eradicates diseases, casts out demons, raises the dead, cures lepers, and heals every kind of suffering.

(*Acts Andr.* GE 22)

Andrew here resembles Dionysus, whom ancient artists often depicted nude. According to the *Bacchae*, when the god arrived at Thebes, he performed many wonders, as Andrew does here. But unlike Dionysus, the giver of wealth, Andrew was destitute. "When the proconsul Lesbius heard this, he was disturbed and said, 'He is a magician and fraud. We must not give him attention, but rather seek help from the gods.' He wanted to arrest and destroy him." Although Andrew plays a role reminiscent of Dionysus, so does Lesbius. The island Lesbos produced such famous wine that one word for a goblet was λέσβιον. Like Dionysus, Lesbius was extremely rich.

This apparent confusion in roles issues from a transformative twist. Lesbius, "Goblet," represents the civic establishment and its traditional gods, whom he was prepared to defend by arresting and destroying the preacher of a foreign God, like Pentheus in Euripides' play. Lesbius, instead of striking people with madness, is struck with madness himself.

³¹ In this last phrase Vergil seems to have in mind Dionysus's advice to Pentheus: "I would rather sacrifice to him than kick against the goad, a mortal raging against a god."

At night an angel of the Lord appeared to the proconsul Lesbius and with great fanfare and an awesome threat said, "What have you suffered from this stranger Andrew such that you wickedly contrived to lay hands on him and cheated the God he preaches? Now behold the hand of his Lord is on you, and you will be crazed until you recognize the truth through him." The angel vanished from him, and he was struck dumb.

Not much later, partially regaining his senses [literally: becoming sober again], he called his bodyguard and with tears said to them, "Take pity on me! Quickly search the city for a certain stranger, a tramp called Andrew who preaches a foreign god through whom I will be able to learn the truth." They ardently sought out the blessed Andrew, and when they found him, they brought him to the proconsul.

Unlike Pentheus but like Paul, Lesbius recognized divine power when he saw it.

Seeing him, the proconsul fell at his feet and begged him: "Man of God, stranger and acquaintance of a strange god, take pity on one deceived, a stranger to the truth, one spotted with the stains of sins, one who knows many false gods but who is ignorant of the only true God. I beg the God in you, stretch out to me the hand of salvation, open to me the door of knowledge, shine on me the light of righteousness."

In the *Bacchae*, Dionysus, the strange god, opened the doors of his prison and shone a light on the tomb of Semele, his mother.

The blessed apostle, stunned and tearful at the words of the penitent, lifted up his eyes toward heaven, placed his right hand over his entire body, and said: "O my God Jesus Christ, unknown by the world but now revealed through us, ... touch your servant and heal him, by bringing your vessel to completion, so that even he may be among your people, preaching your vigorous power." Immediately he grasped his right hand and raised him up.

Here Andrew prays that Mr. Goblet would become a "vessel" to bring Christ to others. Unlike Dionysus, the object of several annual celebrations, the Christian God had no need of such festivals.

Getting up, he [Lesbius] gave thanks to the Lord and said: "Stranger, surely he is God who needs neither hours nor days nor seasons. Therefore, I devote myself and all my house to you. I believe in the one who sent you to us."

"Since you have believed so greatly in the one who sent me," Andrew told him, "you will be abundantly filled with knowledge."

Mr. Goblet, Christ's vessel, will be filled to the brim with knowledge.

The entire city of Patras became devotees of Christ, just as Thebes had been persuaded to serve Dionysus.

Astonishment overtook all those living in the city, who shouted out, "Great is the power of the foreign God! Great is the God preached by the stranger,

Andrew! From today on let's destroy the statues of our idols, let's cut down their groves, let's crush their monuments, let's reject the polytheistic knowledge of vain demons. Let's recognize rather the only God, the one preached by Andrew. Great is the God of Andrew!" Together they all rushed to the temples and burned up, pulverized, cut down, scorned, trampled on, and destroyed their gods saying, "Let Andrew's God alone be named!" The proconsul Lesbios likewise rejoiced at the cry of the citizenry and exulted at the action of the crowd.³²

Finally, the Byzantine poem *Christus patiens* contains a remarkable imitation of these opening lines of the *Bacchae* placed on the lips of Jesus' lamenting mother at his tomb. The following extensive quotation is unique in this volume, which otherwise includes just a few lines. The fuller treatment here illustrates the attraction that this play held for at least one Grecophone Christian intellectual.

(≡ *Troad.* 752) [Mary:] "After having snatched up the human race, you will come again in renown,

(≡ *Bacch.* 1031) my king, O king imperishable, who, though remaining God,

(≡ *Bacch.* 4, 54) linked human nature with your form.

(≡ *Bacch.* 13, 15) It is good that you leave the land of foes,

(≡ *Bacch.* 20) the house of Israel, where you first came,
wishing to shepherd the lost sheep

and to fulfill the promises of the fathers

(≡ *Bacch.* 4, 54) by linking the nature of mortals with the form of God.

(≡ *Bacch.* 2) I gave you birth but still was pure [i.e., a virgin];

(≡ *Bacch.* 4) having come from God, you took on human form.

(≡ *Bacch.* 26) But your mother's kindred—whom one might least expect,
since you performed many amazing feats for them

(≡ *Bacch.* 472) to make known unspeakable things to uninitiated mortals—

(≡ *Bacch.* 27) these people were saying that you were not a savior born from
God,

(≡ *Bacch.* 28) but that I had been seduced by a mortal man,

(≡ *Bacch.* 31) bore you out of wedlock, lied about the marriage,

(≡ *Bacch.* 29) and foisted my sexual sins onto God.

And now they have lawlessly sped to kill you out of jealousy

(≡ *Bacch.* 30) and by a stratagem of the enemy through those murderers

(≡ *Bacch.* 489) and all the other stratagems of evil.

(≡ *Bacch.* 232) You will put a stop to a world twirling with sophistries

(≡ *Bacch.* 231) by catching them in iron nets

(≡ *Bacch.* 232) and will stay the evildoer from doing evil, O child.

³² For a fuller treatment, see *Christianizing Homer*, 177–180.

- (≡ *Bacch.* 21) You will make your friends dance and establish your
 (≡ *Bacch.* 22) mysteries so that you might be revealed to mortals,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 48) as it is revealed to all in heaven. And into some other land,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 49) once you have revealed yourself here, you will lift up your
 might.
 (≡ *Bacch.* 39) Whether it wants to or not, this city must learn the truth,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 40) though now it is ignorant of your mysteries,
 so also in every other habitation of earth-born people
 (≡ *Bacch.* 45) that god-fights against you, bars you from libations,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 46) and never remembers you in prayers.
 (≡ *Medea* 59) For the wretches do not know that you are offspring
 that came from the Father, from heaven down to earth.
 (≡ *Bacch.* 47) For this reason, reveal to them that you are God.
 (≡ *Bacch.* 50) And reveal yourself everywhere. And if
 (≡ *Bacch.* 51) you want in wrath to expel the race of Jews from this land with
 arms
 you will strike them with the blows of Ausonian [i.e., Roman] military
 commanders,
 whom they chose, in their folly, to rule over them,
 when they refused your lordship
 and affirmed Caesar as lord.
 For I see the punishment for your life-producing fate [i.e., death]:
 (≡ *Bacch.* 7) fire near their houses and ruins of their mansions
 (≡ *Bacch.* 8) already burning, an unquenchable flame of fire—
 (≡ *Bacch.* 9) the immortal city of God [punished] for its hubris.
 (≡ *Bacch.* 10) I praise this judgment that makes this land untrodden
 (≡ *Bacch.* 11) by all those who murdered you, O child,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 13) who left the cities in Lydia, praised by all,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 14) and Phrygia, the sunlit plans of Persia,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 15) Bactrian walled cities and the hard to conquer lands
 (≡ *Bacch.* 16) of Media, by-passing prosperous Arabia,
 peoples far away and plunged in darkness,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 17) and all of Asia that lies by the briny sea,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 18) that has cities with beautiful towers filled
 (≡ *Bacch.* 19) with a mixture of Greeks and barbarians together.³³
 (≡ *Bacch.* 20) You came at first to the land of the Hebrews
 that placed you in a tomb, a corpse from slaughter.
 (≡ *Troad.* 1315) Io, temple of God, beloved city,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 1202) lovely-towered city of the land of David,
 (≡ *Bacch.* 120) O refuge of the prophets of old,
 you now are a cave of god-killers!
 (≡ *Bacch.* 1027) How will I lament you? How will I mourn your murder?
 (≡ *Bacch.* 55) But you women who have left the land of Galilee,

³³ The translation reverses lines 1593 and 1594 to make sense of them in English.

(≡ *Bacch.* 56–57) my thiasos [Bacchic crowd], who traveled with me
from there, initiates of the mysteries of the wound,
alas, the corpse now is placed in the tomb.

(≡ *Bacch.* 58) Let there be chants customary for the dead.

(≡ *Bacch.* 71) Now raise hymns to him with fine laments,

(≡ *Bacch.* 69–70) then praise the living king.

(≡ *Orest.* 136) Come, come, let us go in quiet procession

(≡ *Bacch.* 116–117) to the home where the women folk are staying,
especially Mary, the mother of Mark,
where, I think, the mystic thiasos gathers".

(*Christ. pat.* 1534–1536, 1539–1543, 1545–1559, 1563–1608, and 1613–1616)

As in the *Bacchae*, a messenger later in the poem describes Jesus' escape from the tomb, the attending portents, and the fear of the guards. He concludes his account with advice for the chief priests.

(≈ *Bacch.* 794) I would rather sacrifice to him than

(≈ *Bacch.* 795) kick against the goads, a mortal raging against a god.

(2268–2269)

The Jewish authorities respond defiantly and order the guard to say that Jesus' "initiates [*mystai*]" stole his body. The response of the guard then imitates that of Dionysus to Pentheus just a few lines earlier.

(≈ *Bacch.* 787) You do not want to heed any of my words;

(≈ *Bacch.* 788) even though you are unfavorably disposed,

(≈ *Bacch.* 789) I advise that you be haughty no longer

(≈ *Bacch.* 790) but calm down. God will not allow it. (2277–2280; cf. 2286)

The poet used Pentheus's penitential appeal to his mother as a model for the postscript, written as a prayer.

(≈ *Bacch.* 1344) O rescuer, we beg for mercy; we have committed injustice
pitifully in body, soul, and mind.

We have sinned against you and often violated your laws.

(≈ *Bacch.* 1345) We recognized it too late; we did not understand when it
was right to have done so.

(≈ *Bacch.* 1346) We know our failures, but you overlook them.

(≈ *Bacch.* 1348) We know that your wrath is not like that of mortals.

(2557–2560 and 2562–2563)

I am convinced that the most misunderstood aspect of the composition of Luke-Acts is its brilliant use of models from classical Greek literature, Homer, Euripides, and Plato above all. In this chapter I have argued for an extensive use of the *Bacchae*, but similar studies are possible with respect to other Greek writings that by Luke's day comprised the *encyclion paideia*.

Luke expected his more educated readers to detect this mimesis and to evaluate it for what it was: imaginative remythologizing. Modern interpreters have been blind to these imitations largely because our *mundus significans*, our cultural repertoire, differs so dramatically from that of Luke's first readers. More insight into Luke-Acts is certain to issue from future investigations of classical Greek literature; it is my wish that this one will encourage others to conduct them.

PAULINE PRESCRIPTS AND GRECO-ROMAN EPISTOLARY CONVENTIONS

E. Randolph Richards

A study of Paul's letters "must take its starting-point from analysis of the formal epistolary structures of the Hellenistic world," as Loveday Alexander aptly notes in her helpful study of Philippians. In fact, Alexander calls this "axiomatic in recent years."¹ Clearly first-century Mediterranean letters are Paul's context. Letters in the Mediterranean world were remarkably consistent in format from about 300 BCE to 300 CE, whether written in Greek, Latin, or even provincial languages like Aramaic. The last century has seen scholars focus on Greco-Roman letters. Indeed, generalizations about Greco-Roman letters are not without basis.²

1. GRECO-ROMAN LETTER WRITING

The study of the Greco-Roman letter has enjoyed consistent attention since the early 1900s when Deissmann³ introduced Biblical scholars to the recently discovered Egyptian papyri. The early euphoria and sweeping statements were followed with nuanced studies by Francis Exler, J.G. Winter, Otto Roller, and Paul Schubert.⁴ Specialized studies of particular aspects

¹ L. Alexander, "Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians," *JSNT* 37 (1989): 87–101; reprinted in Stanley Porter and Craig Evans, eds., *The Pauline Writings: a Sheffield Reader* (BibSem 34; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 232.

² Unification under various empires from the Seleucid to the Roman can account for only part of this standardization. As White concluded, this conformity was most likely caused by widespread elementary training in letter writing; John White, "The Ancient Epistolography Group in Retrospect," *Semeia* 22 (1981): 10; so also Abraham J. Malherbe, "Ancient Epistolary Theorists," *Ohio Journal of Religious Studies* 5 (1977): 4–5. The widespread use of secretaries by all levels of society for all types of letter writing was also a major force in standardizing the format and content of letters; see E. Randolph Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (WUNT 2.42; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991).

³ E.g. Adolf Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (trans. L.R.M. Strachan; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1912).

⁴ Francis X.J. Exler, *The Form of the Ancient Greek Letter: A Study in Greek Epistolography* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1922); John G. Winter, *Life and*

of Greco-Roman epistolography followed in the 1960s led by Jack Sanders and T.Y. Mullins.⁵ Ancient letters moved from a more specialized field to a central stage in the late 1960s and 1970s under the auspices of Gordon Bahr, Robert Funk, William Doty, John White, Abraham Malherbe, and David Aune⁶ in the SBL Ancient Epistolography Group. Most recently, those findings were reapplied toward Paul's letters with studies by Stanley Stowers, Harry Gamble, Randolph Richards, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, Luther Stirewalt⁷ and others. And now, Hans-Josef Klauck has released a magisterial work on the ancient letter.⁸ Klauck demonstrates that New Testament letters such as 2 John or 3 John fall easily within the parameters of a standard Greco-Roman letter.⁹ How well did Paul fall within the boundaries of Greco-Roman letter convention? Previous attempts to compare the body of Paul's letters with those of typical Greco-Roman letters have failed.¹⁰ They didn't conform well to Greco-Roman epistolary convention. Likewise, Paul's let-

Letters in the Papyri (The Jerome Lectures; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1933); Otto Roller, *Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe: Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom antiken Briefe* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933); and Paul Schubert, *The Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgiving* (Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 1939).

⁵ Jack T. Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," *JBL* 81 (1962): 348–362; and Terrance Y. Mullins, "Petition as a Literary Form," *NovT* 5 (1962): 46–54 (and then a series of other articles in *JBL* and *CBQ* on disclosure, greetings, formulas, benediction).

⁶ Gordon J. Bahr, "Paul and Letter Writing in the First Century," *CBQ* 28 (1966): 465–477; Robert Funk, "The Apostolic *Parousia*: Form and Significance," in W.R. Farmer, C.F.D. Moule, and R.R. Niebuhr, eds., *Christian History and Interpretation: Studies Presented to John Knox* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 249–269; William G. Doty, "The Epistle in Late Hellenism and Early Christianity: Developments, Influences, and Literary Form" (Ph.D. diss.; Drew University, 1966); and *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973); John White, "Introductory Formulas in the Body of the Pauline Letter," *JBL* 90 (1971): 91–97; Malherbe, "Ancient Epistolary Theorists," 3–77; and David E. Aune, *The New Testament and Its Literary Environment* (LEC 8; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987).

⁷ Stanley Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC 5; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); Harry Gamble, *New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Richards, *Secretary*; Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer: His World, His Options, His Skills* (GNS 41; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1995); and M. Luther Stirewalt, *Paul, the Letter Writer* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

⁸ Hans-Josef Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006).

⁹ Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 27–40.

¹⁰ This is a bit of a misstatement for no one has really tried, since the attempt by John White, *The Body of the Greek Letter* (SBLDS 2; Cambridge, MA: SBL, 1972); so also Murphy-O'Connor, *Letter Writer*, 64. Paul's letters clearly do not conform. Very helpful studies have been done identifying elements, primarily stereotyped formulas. Very fruitful results have also come from comparing the body of Paul's letters to *speeches*, using not only rhetorical elements but rhetorical outlines, beginning with the pioneering work of H.D. Betz, *Galatians*

ter endings were unusual.¹¹ Nonetheless, it is often suggested that Paul did conform to what is commonly considered the most standardized aspect of Greco-Roman letters, the letter opening.

2. GRECO-ROMAN LETTER OPENINGS

With what we currently know,¹² how conventional were Paul's letters? The debate over how Paul fit into Greco-Roman letter writing is an old discussion. While at least some New Testament letters followed rather well the canons of Greco-Roman letter writing, Paul's letters have stubbornly refused to be classified into even general categories like public versus private.¹³ This very modest essay will revisit one of the simplest and most standardized aspects of the Greco-Roman letter: the prescript or letter address,¹⁴ part of the opening of a Greco-Roman letter. The openings of Paul's letters are often cited to demonstrate how typically Greco-Roman Paul's letters were.¹⁵

(Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) and G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

¹¹ See, e.g. the fine work of Jeffrey A.D. Weima, *Neglected Endings: the Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings* (JSNTSup 101; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994).

¹² Historians write burdened by the knowledge that tomorrow's discoveries may well change today's assertions.

¹³ Just when it seemed scholarly consensus was forming that Deissmann's (*Light*, 230) categories of "epistle" (public) and "letter" (private) were not helpful for describing Paul's letter type, Klauck has rightly objected to the censure that I and others have leveled against Deissmann, noting "That Deissmann's simple bifurcation of letter types is insufficient in the long run and that he made too little use of transitional categories goes without saying" (Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 70) and then correctly rebuking us: Deissmann's contribution was distinguishing *broadly* "between non-literary and literary letters, which nobody denies today." We have been properly chastened; nonetheless, if we see "literary" and "non-literary" as endpoints on a sliding scale, then Paul's letters fall in the poorly defined middle region.

¹⁴ This is often called more colloquially the letter address. "Prescript" is preferred in more technical works, which reserves "letter address" for the lines written on the outside of the dispatched letter to indicate to whom the letter should be delivered. This outside address uses the dative (or εἰς with the accusative, *vid.* BGU II.423) to identify the recipient first, so P.Mich. VIII.465 (Greek); Tab. Vindol. II.248 or P.Mich. VIII.471 (Latin). Often the recipient was further identified with a title (mother, brother, sister, lord; see P.Mich. 8.465) and sometimes an indication of an intermediary, "deliver to Julia" (P.Mich. VIII.465) or his/her location, "Deliver to Karanis" (P.Mich. VIII.490). There are examples of further delivery instructions being written on the outside, such as "Deliver at the camp of the first cohort of the Apameni to Julianus, vice-secretary [this letter] from Apion so that [it might be forwarded] to his father, Epimachos" (BGU II.423); for the editorial clarifications, see Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 10–11.

¹⁵ So Alexander, "Structure of Philippians," 232–233.

The letter opening in a Greco-Roman letter consisted of a prescript and a proem. The prescript (letter address) was “sender to recipient, greetings.” The proem has proven more challenging to define. It was the bridging text from the prescript to the body of the letter and thus it is sometimes difficult to ascertain where one ended and the other began. Often this is because the purpose of the letter was primarily philophrenesis (to use Koskenniemi’s term),¹⁶ that is, to keep a relationship “warm,” as in:

Sollemnis to Paris his brother, very many greetings. I want you to know that I am in very good health, as I hope you are in turn, you neglectful man, who have sent me not even one letter. But I think that I am behaving in a more considerate fashion in writing to you [...] to you, brother [...] my messmate. Greet from me Diligens and Cogitatus and Corinthus and I ask that you send me the names [...] Farewell, dearest brother (?).

(Back, 1st hand) To Paris ... of the 3rd Cohort of Batavians, from Sollemnis.¹⁷

This letter illustrates the challenge of delineating the proem. Like many typical proems, the sender mentioned his good health and complained the recipient has not written, but since the writer used a disclosure formula (“I want you to know”) for transition,¹⁸ is it really a proem? Did his request for names comprise the “body” of the letter, with the bulk of the letter a proem? A proem commonly included a health-wish, a promise that the sender prays regularly for the recipient, and perhaps a remark at the joy of receiving news, and so on. For example, this letter could technically have a one-sentence “body,” notifying the recipient that he will (hopefully) meet with the governor soon:

Niger and Brocchus to their Cerialis, greeting. We pray, brother, that what you are about to do will be most successful. It will be so, indeed, since it is both in accord with our wishes to make this prayer on your behalf and you yourself are most worthy. You will assuredly meet our governor quite soon. (2nd hand) We pray, our lord and brother, that you are in good health ... expect ... (?)

(Back, 1st hand) To Flavius Cerialis, prefect of the cohort ...¹⁹

¹⁶ Heikki Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Proseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1956), 115–127, uses the term φιλοφρόνησις to denote the desire of the sender to establish, strengthen or restore a personal relationship with the recipient. E.g. Cicero, *Fam.* 4.9 and 4.10.

¹⁷ Tab. Vindol. II.311. The size of the fragments and the nature of the lacunae suggest little text is missing (all edited texts and translations of Vindolanda tablets are from <http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk>).

¹⁸ Disclosure formulas are used to introduce material; see T.Y. Mullins, “Disclosure: a Literary Form in the New Testament,” *NovT* 7 (1972): 47–48. Such formulas can be seen at the beginning (P.Oxy. 1155, 1481) and in the middle of a letter body (P.Oxy. 1670).

¹⁹ Tab. Vindol. II.248.

But this “news” was already woven into the proem. On the other hand, the proem seems missing in this short letter from the wife of a Roman military officer to another:

Claudia Severa to her Lepidina greetings. On 11 September, sister, for the day of the celebration of my birthday, I give you a warm invitation to make sure that you come to us, to make the day more enjoyable for me by your arrival, if you are present (?). Give my greetings to your Cerialis. My Aelius and my little son send him (?) their greetings. (2nd hand) I shall expect you, sister. Farewell, sister, my dearest soul, as I hope to prosper, and hail.

(Back, 1st hand) To Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of Cerialis, from Severa.²⁰

Proems were often not neatly defined or separated from the letter body. Consider the following letter. Again, the complaint “you have not written” was typical of a proem. Here the complaint was introduced with a typical astonishment formula “I am surprised;” however, it was blended with the letter body, introduced by a petition formula “I ask you, brother.”

Chrauttius to Veldeius his brother and old messmate, very many greetings. And I ask you, brother Veldeius—I am surprised that you have written nothing back to me for such a long time—whether you have heard anything from our elders, or about Qu[.]tos in which unit he is; and greet him from me in my words and Virilis the veterinary doctor. Ask him (*sc.* Virilis) whether you may send through one of our friends the pair of shears which he promised me in exchange for money. And I ask you, brother Virilis, to greet from me our sister Thuttena. Write back to us how Velbuteius is (?). (2nd hand?) It is my wish that you enjoy the best of fortune. Farewell.

(Back, 1st hand) (Deliver) at London. To Veldedeius, groom of the governor, from his brother Chrauttius.²¹

We see a proem was transition text and varied considerably within Greco-Roman epistolary convention.²² Noting Paul’s similarities or dissimilarities with other proems provides no insight into how well Paul’s letters conformed to Greco-Roman convention. The “conventional” part was the tripartite prescript.

²⁰ Tab. Vindol. II.291 (101–102 CE).

²¹ Tab. Vindol. II.310. I provided the “Qu[.]tos” because the writing is blurred for three letters where the ink blotted on this spot of the tablet, but it is clearly intended to be a personal name. There is no large lacuna here.

²² Klauck lists the following elements as common components of the proem: health-wish or *formula valetudinis*, prayers or *proskynema* formula, thanksgiving, and expressions of joy (*Ancient Letters*, 21–23, 190). The line separating the proem from the letter body is often difficult to determine. Klauck notes this problem well: “It is debatable whether further elements can be included in the proem beyond the health wish” (*Ancient Letters*, 22).

3. THE LETTER PRESCRIPT

We shall examine typical Greco-Roman prescripts and compare those to what we find in the canonical letters of Paul. The prescript (letter address) was very standardized and contained three parts: the sender or *superscriptio*, the recipient or *adscriptio*, and the opening greeting or *salutatio*.²³ While using the nominative for the sender and the dative for the recipient is plain sense, why was the greeting in an infinitive (χαίρειν)? Typically, each part of the prescript is termed a grammatical absolute, that is, the word “does not occur in a sentence.”²⁴ While identifying the sender as a “nominative of salutation”²⁵ or the infinitive as some sort of epistolary infinitive of greeting is adequate for students, such expressions merely describe the phenomenon. Are these cases really “absolutes” occurring without a connecting syntax?²⁶ The best discussion and solution is provided by Klauck.²⁷ It was indirect discourse with an ellipsis. A (tells) B to rejoice (or to feel greeted): (λέγει) Παῦλος Τιμοθέω χαίρειν.

3.1. Sender

The form of the sender’s name connected directly to her/his culture. Rural areas of Palestine retained the custom of a single (given) name with one’s place of origin (*origo*), usually a village designation, such as Jesus of Nazareth (Mark 10:47) or Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:11). When the given name was common—as was very often the case—clarifications were added, such as “Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, ... Simon the Zealot

²³ E.g. Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 18.

²⁴ So Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 50 (for prescript nominatives) and 608–609 (for prescript infinitives).

²⁵ Typically, these are listed as a unique category or subset of the nominative absolute. See Wallace, *Grammar*, 49–51; James Brooks and Carlton Winbery, *Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1979), 5–6; and Richard Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 14.

²⁶ As an aside, we agree with Dan Wallace’s cautions (*Grammar*, 63 n. 97) about “prescriptivism” and the need to note that unusual incidences may be merely “bad grammar” (*pace* Young, *Intermediate*, 13) and not some distinct category. Our discussion here, however, cannot merely be an example of poor syntax because it is standard epistolary practice. Hence, we should ask, is there a syntax that can engage the nominative and the infinitive appropriately?

²⁷ Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 18. As he noted, “Even the ancient grammarians racked their brains over this.” Klauck suggests it arose from an older oral custom for messengers to announce: τάδε λέγει Παῦλος Τιμοθέω, χαίρε (with the imperative) (18).

and Judas Iscariot" (Matthew 10:3–4) or "... [Mary], his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary the Magdalene" (John 19:25). Yet, the standardization occurring across the Mediterranean world by the Romans also spread the use of the Roman tripartite name, the *tria nomina*: a *praenomen* (given name or forename), a *nomen* (an ancestral clan name, which in the provinces was often connected to the receipt of citizenship), and a *cognomen* (family name, which could also have a tribal or regional meaning). A Roman name sometimes suggested a family history. In Roman Britain (Vindolanda) we have multiple letters from Flavius Cerialis, the prefect of the cohort there.²⁸ Soldiers granted citizenship after 70 CE, when the Flavian dynasty began under Vespasian, often took the clan name Flavius. The tablet editors suggest that because the earlier Batavian revolt (69–70 CE) was squelched by Petillius Cerialis, this prefect (or his father) may have been one of his soldiers granted citizenship.²⁹

Unlike most North American culture, letter writers typically used their *cognomen* (family name). Their *praenomen* (given name) was often so common, such as Titus, Quintus, Lucius or Marcus, it was just written as an initial. Thus, the famous orator, M. (Marcus) Tullius Cicero, referred to himself as Cicero (at least in letters). The *nomen*, clan name—for lack of a better term—came from the *gens*, referring to the ancestral founder of the family or to the one granting citizenship; hence the frequency of Julius, Claudius or Flavius as a *nomen*. In addition to emperors, Roman culture had great aristocratic families: the Bruti, Aemilii, Vettienii, and Sergii. Acts 13:7 tells of the proconsul Sergius Paulus, perhaps L. (Lucius) Sergius Paulus, brother of Q. (Quintus) Sergius Paulus. Perhaps they had a family connection with the aristocratic Sergius clan, but more likely, when an ancestor of the Paulus family received his citizenship, he took the *nomen* of Sergius. Freedmen then used their given name for their new family name.³⁰ Whether related to or freed by the Sergii, the Pauli prospered, owning large, landed estates in the region, based upon inscriptions in Cyprus and Pisidian Antioch.³¹

²⁸ E.g. Tab. Vindol. II.248.

²⁹ "Names" available from <http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/reference/names.shtml>, accessed 28 February 2009.

³⁰ E.g. Marcus Tullius Cicero freed his secretary-slave, Tiro, who then became Marcus Tullius Tiro. He did not adopt the Cicero family name. This view conflicts with the opinion of the Vindolanda tablet editors; see note 29 above.

³¹ See the discussion in Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: a Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 399–400.

The evidence may suggest the citation of all three names was largely a Roman (Italian?) practice.³² Greeks, Egyptians, Jews, and Christians were less likely than Romans to use all three names. An Egyptian, Apion, who is proud of his new Roman name uses only two: Antonius Maximus.³³ No Roman in the New Testament is given all three names.

3.2. *Recipient*

After identifying the sender, the recipient (*adscriptio*) was noted in the dative case. The same conventions seemed to apply to the tripartite name of the recipient. Obviously names indicated status. One may be tempted to assume when the sender used a fuller Roman name and only a single name for the recipient that the sender was marking status. This is difficult to prove. In the example noted earlier: "Claudia Severa to her Lepidina greetings,"³⁴ why did Severa *not* use Lepidina's fuller name (which is known from the outside letter address, "To Sulpicia Lepidina, wife of Cerialis, from Severa")? One might argue that one military wife felt she was of higher status than the other; yet on the outside letter address, the *opposite* occurs, the sender's cognomen only was used with the recipient's fuller name. While we do not doubt status games were played with how names were used in letters, the rules of the game are not yet clear.

The use (or omission) of titles was a much stronger indication of status marking. Commonly, the use of "mother" meant one's mother,³⁵ but the identification of the recipient as "father" was often a marker of status.³⁶ The use of the term "brother" or "sister" was often status rather than blood,³⁷ often to indicate friendship among peers.³⁸ Other titles were also unlikely familial, such as κύριος or γλυκύτατος (sweetest). Titles such as

³² It is less clear if this is a cultural or epistolary phenomenon. In correspondence it was common to use only the *nomen* and *cognomen* or only the *cognomen*, as any quick survey of Greco-Roman letters shows (So also the Vindolanda editors, <http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/reference/names.shtml>).

³³ BGU II.632. It was not uncommon for Roman soldiers to adopt the *tria nomina* before they were entitled to do so (at discharge).

³⁴ Tab. Vindol. II.291 (101–102 CE).

³⁵ See the letter of a fresh military recruit back to his mother (P.Mich. VIII.490).

³⁶ At times it is just not clear. It appears P.Mich. VIII.465 is a new recruit to his father. When in a closing greeting, such as P.Tebt. 415: "I greet my father" or P.Tebt. 412: "Greet your mother," these are more likely family connections.

³⁷ Thus, "Chrauttius to Veldeius his brother and old messmate, very many greetings" (Tab. Vindol. II.310); or "sister" (Tab. Vindol. II.309).

³⁸ Whether or not they were actually peers is part of the status game played in antiquity.

φίλατος (dearest) or τιμιώτατος (most esteemed) also “do not occur in family letters.”³⁹

3.3. Greeting

The identification of the recipient (and usually the sender) is already known from the outside letter address, so why did the prescript repeat this information? It was integral to the greeting. Letters were read (as in read aloud), often (perhaps usually) by a third person.⁴⁰ When the reader stated “Claudius Terentianus to Claudius Tiberius, his father and lord, very many greetings” (P.Mich. VIII.477), at that moment Tiberius heard his “son” Terentianus greet him. As Koskenniemi observed, the ritual of greeting was essential.⁴¹ The audience (often including others besides the stated recipient) needed to hear Terentianus greet his “father.” The letter was not merely the recording of a greeting sent earlier but the very *delivery* of the actual word of greeting. Likewise, the closing greetings in a letter were spoken by the

³⁹ Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 190.

⁴⁰ This was not necessarily because the recipient was illiterate. Rather, at least three factors are at play. First, Paul Achtemeier correctly noted ancients read aloud; “*Omne verbum sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,” *JBL* 109 (1990): 15–17. We are indebted to Frank Gilliard’s cautions (“More Silent Reading in Antiquity: *Non Omne Verbum Sonabat*,” *JBL* 112 [1993]: 689–694), but his exceptions demonstrate the rule. We may even argue the ability to “read” without actually hearing the sounds is a skill that must be taught, so modern elementary teachers tell me. Thus, oral cultures often have very fluid spelling, since any spelling that produces the correct sound is “correct.” For example, my Minahasan student did not see any difference between Johnny, Joni, and Djony, submitting written papers to me on various occasions spelling his name—I maintained—differently. He was unable to see the “difference” since when he read (aloud) the word, they all “said” his name. Second, in antiquity, correspondence was to be heard and enjoyed. The reader (lector) would need to acquaint himself with the letter before publicly reading it, not the least because it was *scriptio continua*; Achtemeier, “*Omne*,” 3–27. The lector was to concentrate upon the pronunciation, the cadence of syllabus, the clarity of meaning; thus, the aristocracy kept trained slaves as lectors; see A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 225 n. 15; 515–516. The recipient was to hear the lector as if the sender were himself speaking; see Pieter J.J. Botha, “The Verbal Art of the Pauline Letters,” in Stanley Porter and Thomas Olbricht, eds., *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference* (JSNTS 90; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 409–428, esp. 417–419. Third, if modern Mediterranean values have ancient antecedents, then we may suggest ancients felt no need for “efficiency” in reducing the number of people involved—they preferred to include more people (sharing). They also had no concept of “privacy.” When a part of the letter’s contents required secrecy, the lector was warned (Mark 13:14) or the secret message was entrusted to the carrier; see Cicero, *Fam.* 11.20.4 (a letter to Cicero from Brutus) or 11.26.5 (a letter from Cicero); or see Richards, *Letter Writing*, 183–184.

⁴¹ Koskenniemi, *Studien*, 157–158.

lector to the various individuals. Modern Western cultures that downplay formalities are challenged to understand the significance of giving/receiving greetings.

4. PAULINE PRESCRIPTS

Clearly Paul's letters differ from modern Western correspondence.⁴² How well did Paul's openings conform to Greco-Roman epistolary convention? Paul's proems were different. He used thanksgiving formulae that were rare in his day.⁴³ Moreover, Paul omitted some of the rather common elements of a proem. We may argue his prayers were Christianized versions of the *proskynema* formula, as were his joy and astonishment formulae.⁴⁴ Yet, we have already noted the general lack of a consistent pattern for Greco-Roman proems in general. We struggle to delineate when the body of Paul's letters begin, but this is not uncommon for many ancient letters. Proems were transitions. Prescripts, though, were standardized; so, how well did Paul's prescripts conform?

4.1. *Sender*

In a private letter, we often find the letter sender merely using her/his *cognomen*. The sender's fuller name (but not often the *tria nomina*, even if s/he had it) was in the outside letter address.⁴⁵ In an official or business letter, the sender used a fuller name. Paul always used a singular name

⁴² While this seems self-evident, even trite, it is not uncommon for exegetes to read modern assumptions back onto most aspects of Paul's letters. Sociological exegetes, like Malina, Neyrey, and Rohrbaugh have made careers of chastising (deservedly) the rest of us for this. See E. Randolph Richards, "(Mis)Reading Paul through Western Eyes," in Trevor J. Burke and Brian S. Rosner, eds., *Paul as Missionary: Identity, Activity, Theology, and Practice* (LNTS 420; London: T&T Clark, 2011), 247–263.

⁴³ Paul uses thanksgivings more often and more elaborately than any known ancient letter writer. Paul often "previews" the letter's contents in the thanksgiving (1 Cor 1:4–7). The only full study of Pauline thanksgiving was by Paul Schubert, whose conclusions demonstrate how unconventional they were; *Pauline Thanksgiving*, 35; so also the brief but excellent discussion by Murphy-O'Connor, *Letter Writer*, 55–64.

⁴⁴ See the helpful list in Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul*, 65, which included the following formulas: introductory (so White in Murphy-O'Connor), disclosure (so Mullins in Murphy-O'Connor); request (so Bjerkelund in Murphy-O'Connor); confidence (so Olsen in Murphy-O'Connor); benedictions (so Jewett and Mullins in Murphy-O'Connor); autobiographical (so Lyons in Murphy-O'Connor); and travel (so Funk and Mullins in Murphy-O'Connor).

⁴⁵ See, e.g. Tab. Vindol. II.248; cf. Cicero, *Att.* 5.1.1. to *Fam.* 3.2.1.

(*cognomen*?⁴⁶), even in the disputed Paulines, however, never just his name. Paul's method of self-identification doesn't seem to match any patterns. If he were following Palestinian custom, one would expect "Saul of Tarsus" or "Paul of Tarsus" (Acts 21:39). If one disputes the Lukan-Paul, then we might expect "Saul of Jerusalem" or other such designation. Yet, the epistolary

⁴⁶ It is not inappropriate to ask, what was Paul's *tria nomina*, if he was a Roman citizen as the Lukan-Paul maintains? What about "Saul, also called Paul" (Acts 13:9)? Some assert Saul merely changed his *cognomen*; so Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 99, citing an insightful parallel (inscription), *CIL* 10.3377: "To the spirits of the dead, Lucius Antonius Leo, also called Neon, son of Zoilus, by nation a Cilician, a soldier of the praetorian fleet at Misenum." Paul's may be a simple name change, but Luke's phrase is probably the equivalent of the Latin *qui et*. G.A. Harrer, "Saul who is also called Paul," *HTR* 33 (1940): 19–33, argues this makes Saul a *supernomen* (21). See the excellent discussion in G.H.R. Horsley, "The Use of a Double Name," *NewDocs* 1 (1981): 89–96. Yet, usually the nickname occurs after the *qui et*, the reverse of Acts 13:9. In any case, it is unlikely Saul added the name "Paul" during his Cyprus visit (see A. Deissmann, *Bible Studies* [2nd ed.; trans. A.J. Grieve; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1909], 181ff.). We are not given the apostle's full Latin name. More likely, the apostle began using a different part of his name. (Παῦλος is a Greek form of Paul[*l*]us.) His name was perhaps Saul(us)/Paul(us) or Paul(us)/Saul(us). Acts places Paul's name *switch* precisely at the point of meeting Sergius Paulus. Paul subsequently visits Pisidian Antioch where the Pauli had connections. Some suggest Saul's family was freed (manumitted) by a Paulus. Martin Hengel (*The Pre-Christian Paul* [London: SCM Press, 1991], 105 n. 73) excludes Paul as a *nomen*, since freed slaves did not adopt their master's *cognomen* and concludes "it cannot be decided with any certainty whether Paulus was this *praenomen* or *cognomen*." I agree. The key issue is the use of "Paul" singularly in his letters. I know of no letters where a writer uses only his *nomen* in the opening. Epistolary convention would suggest Paulus was his *cognomen*. It is not impossible the apostle was distantly related to the Paulus family (so Harrer, "Saul," 26, *pace* Jewett, *Romans*, 99). The Lukan-Paul's claim, "I was born a citizen" (Acts 22:28), does not require that Paul's father was the first citizen. If related to the Paulus family, albeit distantly, Paul would be his *cognomen*. Epistolary convention could explain the use of (switch to?) Paulus, since in letters the sender used his *cognomen*. But the Lukan Paul is portrayed as making the switch during the narrative, so it is fair to ask why Luke switches from Saul to Paul, particularly since he makes no references to Paul's letters? Is it Pauline expediency or does Luke want to emphasize Paul's family connection to Sergius Paulus? If Luke is accurate about both names and the switch of names, there is a plausible historical reconstruction. Jews would be familiar with a Hebrew king named Saul from a thousand years earlier, making it a great given name or nickname (*signum* or *supernomen*) in Jerusalem. From inscriptions, ostraca, and Josephus, we know the name Saul was common in Palestine (but not in the Diaspora). King Saul was the most famous person in Paul's tribe, Benjamin (Phil 3:5). Most Greeks had never heard of someone named Saul. They would assume it was a nickname. They knew the adjective σαῦλος (meaning the provocative way prostitutes walked). Also, as the Lukan Saul moved into regions where the Paulus family was well known, a connection to them became an asset rather than a liability, while the name "Saul" (whether a *cognomen*, *praenomen* or *supernomen*) became the reverse. Lukan Pauline and epistolary Pauline needs converge. For fuller discussions of Paul's name, see C.J. Hemer, "The Name of Paul," *TynBul* 36 (1985): 179–183 or Hengel, *Pre-Christian Paul*, 105–106 n. 73.

Paul never claimed a geographical identifier. Paul did, though, describe himself far more than typical letter writers and the descriptors were always appointments (titles), what sociologists term “ascribed honors,” rather than “achieved honors.”⁴⁷ The uniqueness of Paul’s prescript is easily seen in Romans:

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (NIV)

While this was his longest prescript (and the longest known Greco-Roman prescript⁴⁸), expounding the prescript was not unusual for Paul. In fact, the opposite is true. Paul had no unadorned self-identification.

Luther Stirewalt has suggested Paul’s self-identification was the result of Paul adopting as his epistolary pattern “official” or “royal” correspondence.⁴⁹ Obviously, the king needed no further description or identifier, although occasionally he elaborated, more commonly in inscriptions, such as,

Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of the deified [Julius], pontifex maximus, consul-designate for the twelfth time, and holding the tribunician power for the eighteenth time, to the magistrates, the Senate, the people of Cnidos, greetings.⁵⁰

But as Stirewalt notes, these were “atypical.”⁵¹ He argues the parallel to Paul is not the letter of a king but that of an official or other recognized ruler to his people: “In these five units—identification of primary sender, naming of cosenders, multiple address, dual structure of the body, and subscriptions—

⁴⁷ See, e.g. Halvor Moxnes, “Honor and Shame,” in Richard Rohrbaugh, ed., *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 19–40, esp. 20.

⁴⁸ This prescript is noted to be the longest letter opening in Greco-Roman epistolography by David E. Aune, “Romans, Paul’s Letter to the,” in David E. Aune, *The Westminster Dictionary of the New Testament and Early Christian Literature and Rhetoric* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 429.

⁴⁹ Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 33–45.

⁵⁰ This and other examples may be seen in Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 35.

⁵¹ Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 35 n. 18.

Paul adapted the conventions of official correspondence.”⁵² Stirewalt’s thesis has much to commend it. In letters from lesser bureaucrats, the sender was inclined to identify himself more fully, although usually only with a title. The strongest part of Stirewalt’s argument (that Paul followed the pattern of an official letter) is from Paul listing cosenders as part of his delegation, for it is here that the five-fold format is most distinctive from other letter formats. Paul’s use of cosenders is a puzzle.

4.2. *Cosenders*

Examples of letters from cosenders are few. Stirewalt lists up to six situations,⁵³ but they divide into three categories: family letters, petitions, and official letters. Family letters typically came from an individual, as Stirewalt concedes.⁵⁴ The few family letters with cosenders amounts to the listing of litigants or those otherwise bound together in the business discussed in the letter. In fact, family letters with cosenders must be considered very rare.⁵⁵ When “family members” were noted in a letter (other than for business), they appeared in the (final) greetings.

Yet, even if there were family letters with cosenders, it does not seem Paul’s use fits under the rubric of “family.” Paul listed cosenders in 1–2 Thesalonians, 1–2 Corinthians, Philippians, and Philemon where he and “his family” were well known to the recipient. He had no cosenders to Rome where he was not known. The pattern, however, starts breaking down. There were no cosenders to the Ephesians (perhaps it was a circular letter). Yet, he wasn’t known to the Colossians and had a cosender. Listing cosenders as part of his family does not seem to explain adequately the data.⁵⁶

⁵² Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 54. Klauck notes the parallels between Paul and royal correspondence “have received too little attention in New Testament exegesis” (78).

⁵³ Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 38–42.

⁵⁴ Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 38.

⁵⁵ Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 38 n. 26: “Of the fifty personal letters in K & W only one names dual senders, and that one is, in intent, a business letter.” Gordon Bahr refers to Cicero, *Att.* 11.5.1, as the sole example. Yet, Cicero only refers to a letter Atticus “wrote in conjunction with others” (Bahr, “Paul and Letter Writing,” 476). From the context, it was likely a petition letter. I found six family letters with cosenders (P.Oxy. 118, 1158, 1167, 3064, 3094, and 3313) in Kim’s collection; C.-H. Kim, “Index of Greek Papyrus Letters,” *Semeia* 22 (1981): 107–112. P.Zen. 35 is too fragmentary to be clear. There are no doubt a few others.

⁵⁶ Unless one considers these non-Pauline. I would caution about using conformity to convention to support or discount authenticity since it cuts both ways and is prone to circular reasoning.

Since the cosenders were not being listed as “family,” were Paul’s letters “petition” letters? As Stirewalt notes, petition letters sometimes came from a sender and her/his “group.” Unfortunately, these take the format of “To recipient from sender [who is further identified] and [a group].”⁵⁷ This “To Y from X” differs from Paul’s pattern “X to Y,” which was the common private letter prescript. Also, Paul’s letters are clearly not letters of petition (from a subordinate).

Since the cosenders were not listed as “family” or as fellow petitioners, then were they listed because this was the pattern for an official letter, as Stirewalt argues? Indeed, the examples he cites seem quite compelling:

- Jonathan and the Gerousia (1Mac 12:6)
- The brethren, both the apostles and the elders, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting (Acts 15:23)
- Gaius Manlius ... and the emissaries from Rome to the Council and people of Heracleia, greeting.
- Jonathan and those with him who have been sent from Jerusalem to Josephus, greeting.⁵⁸

While Paul’s letter to the Galatians seems to match this pattern well, we must note Galatians is the only letter of Paul that followed this pattern: “Paul and [group] to” The Thessalonian letters may fall into this category, but the pattern has already shifted from a group to named individuals, a pattern not found in the examples above. Stirewalt may be correct that Paul had in mind an official letter, but if so, we must also concede that Paul deviated considerably from the model.

In fact, it may be that Paul’s use of cosenders is where he deviated the most. They are not family, fellow litigants, or apparently a “group” (his delegation). How was Timothy’s role different in Paul’s letter to Rome and his letters to Corinth? Timothy was named in the prescript of 2 Corinthians, but not in Romans or 1 Corinthians. Yet, Timothy was present when Romans was written (Rom 16:21) and still seemed a part of Paul’s delegation (1Cor 16:10–11). I maintain Timothy’s role was somehow different in 2 Corinthians than Romans.⁵⁹ It is sometimes suggested that Paul cited cosenders because of the Jewish requirement of two or more witnesses;⁶⁰ yet, why had he no

⁵⁷ See Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 35–36.

⁵⁸ Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 40.

⁵⁹ A parallel scenario in Cicero’s letters is discussed in Murphy-O’Connor, *Letter Writer*, 17.

⁶⁰ Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 42–43, notes “the function of Pauline co-senders is supported by the essential requirement of witnessing in Jewish and Christian societies.”

need of witnesses in his Roman letter? There seems (to many of us) to be a Jewish component in the Roman church. The other possibility for the identification of the cosenders is that they were coauthors.⁶¹ I have made this argument elsewhere⁶² and will not repeat it here. I caution only that more recent discussions of coauthors tie them to letter carriers; they are not connected in antiquity. Demonstrating a cosender could not (historically) have carried a particular letter does not then prove he was not a coauthor.⁶³ Concomitantly, demonstrating someone was the carrier did not then make him a coauthor or secretary.⁶⁴

4.3. *Recipient*

Among his letters most like convention (addressed to an individual) are the letters most disputed as Pauline (the Pastorals). In fact, their conformity is sometimes considered evidence of their inauthenticity. The undisputed Paulines are less conventional. Paul cited:

1. Multiple recipients: "... to Philemon, our dear friend and colaborer, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your house" (Phlm 1–2) or "... to the saints, elders and deacons in Philippi" (Phil 1:1).
2. A specific group: "... to the church of the Thessalonians" (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1).
3. Vague groups: "... to all the beloved in Rome" (Rom 1:1) or "... to the churches of Galatia" (Gal 1:2) or "to the church of God in Corinth ... with all those in every place" (1 Cor 1:2).

Paul also elaborated his recipients in more unusual ways. He mixed common terms, like those of endearment, ἀδελφός/ἀδελφή or ἀγαπητός,⁶⁵ or

⁶¹ E.g. Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 38, dismisses this option with "It is noteworthy that no other reference is made to a co-sender as co-sender; for example, Paul never writes, 'Timothy and I say ...' or 'Timothy and I send greetings.'" I am unsure how Stirewalt explains the "we" commonly found in Paul's letters, particularly when (1) it clearly doesn't include the recipients or an editorial "we" or (2) when "I" is also used in the same letter and sometimes with emphasis, such as "I Paul" (2 Cor. 10:1); see Murphy-O'Connor, *Letter Writer*, 16–19. For example, Paul only uses a plural thanksgiving formula in letters where Timothy is a cosender (1 Thess 1:3; 2 Thess 1:3; and Col 1:3; 2 Cor 1:8 uses a plural disclosure formula).

⁶² E.g. Richards, *Letter Writing*, 32–46, 109–121.

⁶³ As Stirewalt seems to argue (*Letter Writer*, 38, esp. n24).

⁶⁴ See E. Randolph Richards, "Silvanus was not Peter's Secretary," *JETS* 43 (2000): 417–432.

⁶⁵ Oddly, Paul calls the Romans beloved but had never been there and does not use the term for any others but Timothy (2 Tim) and Philemon.

those of bond, *συνεργός* or *συσπρατιώτης*, with terms of ascribed honor, like “called of God,” “sanctified in Christ and called saints.”

4.4. *Greeting*

When Paul reached his greeting, he abandoned the conventional syntax of the infinitive and deviated from what was a very standardized structure. Paul did not use the highly common *χαίρειν* (e.g. Jas 1:1; Acts 15:23).⁶⁶ Paul tweaked the *χαίρειν* into *χάρις* and then used a doubled greeting: grace and peace. The addition of *εἰρήνη* is typically viewed as a Greek adaptation of *shalom*, such as found in Aramaic letters.⁶⁷

5. CONCLUSIONS

We began this essay by asking how well Paul fit within the Greco-Roman letter tradition. Klauck terms the tripartite Greco-Roman prescript “relatively inflexible in the Greek and Roman letter formula and shows itself capable of expansion only to a very limited extent.”⁶⁸ Surprisingly (or perhaps not), Paul did not conform well to convention even in the very rigid prescript.

Paul identified himself (as the sender) at greater length and more elaborately than Greco-Roman convention. In the few letters where the length of his self-identification was rather typical (i.e. briefer), such as Philippians 1 or Philemon 1, Paul identified himself atypically (*δοῦλος* or *δέσμιος*) and added a cosender. He often added cosenders.⁶⁹ While this was already unusual, their inclusion does not fit well the typical official letter (*pace* Stirewalt) and, more significantly, the cosender’s role is difficult to explain. Paul didn’t always list cosenders. Neither the presence (or absence) of these individuals nor the need for witnesses can explain the phenomenon. Paul sometimes listed an individual recipient (in the disputed Pastorals); yet, it is clear the sender was addressing the church behind the individual.⁷⁰ In one letter Paul

⁶⁶ 2 Macc 1:10 reads *χαίρειν καὶ ὑγιαίνειν*. Where other terms are found, like *ὑγιαίνειν* (be healthy) or *εὐψυχεῖν* (be of good courage), Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 19–21, notes these often seem *deliberate* alterations by the letter writer to make a point. Paul appears to fall into this select category.

⁶⁷ See letters from Wadi Murabbaat, such as P.Mur. 42 or 43.

⁶⁸ Klauck, *Ancient Letter*, 20.

⁶⁹ Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 38, calls using cosenders “customary,” meaning customary for Paul.

⁷⁰ See L. Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (AB 35A; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

listed multiple recipients and then added a generic “to the church,” a format more typical of an official letter, but it is in Philemon, what is typically considered a personal letter. He most commonly addressed a community and not individual recipients. Lastly, to the Corinthians he added a “to those in every place.”

In short, we are unable to find any Pauline prescript that conformed to Greco-Roman convention. When one element conformed, the rest of the prescript did not. Often, none of the elements conformed. So was Paul just uniquely Paul? In the 19th century, Second Temple letters were sometimes held as a possible paradigm for Paul. Stirewalt indicated 1 Macc 12:6 and the letter to Josephus had very similar prescripts to Paul.⁷¹ The pioneering work of Otto Roller shifted the attention of scholars to Greek and Latin letters.⁷² Certainly, Roller is correct. Paul used Greco-Roman epistolary formulas. His letters were very like Greco-Roman letters.⁷³ Other elements in his letter clearly match elements described in Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks. Obviously, Paul was a Greco-Roman letter writer (as opposed to a Chinese or African writer), but Paul stubbornly refused to comply with convention. Greco-Roman letters were not like our modern ones and yet Paul’s were often not even like theirs.

Without deliberate intent, we have often restricted Mediterranean letters to Greco-Roman (and then to Greek and Latin) letters, casting only a glance at Aramaic and Hebrew letters. Since even the most conventional aspect of a Greek/Latin letter—the prescript—fit Paul poorly, we should look again at other influences on Pauline letter writing. After the time of Roller, more Jewish letters from the periods of the First and Second Revolt have been discovered. These letters show similarities to Paul. The use of a salutation (instead of an infinitive) for the greeting was common in Aramaic letters from the Bar Kokhba period.⁷⁴ Even earlier, 2 Bar. 6:19–20 reads, “Baruch, the servant of God, writes to Jeremiah in the captivity of Babylon, rejoice (χαίρε) and be glad (ἀγαλλιῶ)” —a doubled greeting. Paul used salutations⁷⁵ and a doubled greeting. Second Maccabees 1:10 has a doubled greeting and

⁷¹ See above or Stirewalt, *Letter Writer*, 40, 42–43. He lists these as examples of official letters and not particularly because they were Jewish letters.

⁷² Roller, *Formular*.

⁷³ Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 190–191, lists at least eight areas.

⁷⁴ Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 294 notes: “Simeon, son of Kosiba, the ruler over Israel, to Jonathan and Masabbala, peace (*shalom*)!”

⁷⁵ So Wallace, *Grammar*, 51. While other New Testament letters used χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη, they added a verb πληθυνθείη (1–2 Pet, Jude) and ἔσται (2 John).

then follows with a thanksgiving, which were not common in Gentile letters. Jewish (especially Palestinian) letter writing deserves more attention.⁷⁶ They have not yet been scrutinized as thoroughly as Greco-Roman letters for formulas, rhetoric, and structure. These letters were part of Paul's Mediterranean world. Were there patterns to how they deviated from Greco-Roman epistolary convention? We cannot and should not abandon Greco-Roman letters as an interpretive grid for Paul, but could some of Paul's unconventional epistolary practices be the result of his Palestinian background? A modern analogy may be helpful. My Danish colleague was taught in school what was polite and appropriate in a Danish letter. Now, after thirty years in America, his (English) letters are better crafted than mine. But—as he tells me—there are still unconventional things he will write in a letter because “it’s just polite, period.” Paul’s letters fit (loosely) within Greco-Roman epistolary convention, but his prescripts, which should be standard, reveal Paul’s refusal to conform completely. While he can be “all things to all men” (1 Cor 9:22), this letter writer was still Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων (Phil 3:5). Paul was still Saul. Perhaps it is not yet time to declare the starting-point “axiomatic.”

⁷⁶ Indeed epistolographists have never ignored these letters; see, e.g. the discussion of Jewish letters in Klauck, *Ancient Letters*, 229–297, immediately (n.b.) before he discusses New Testament letters.

LETTER OPENINGS IN PAUL AND PLATO

James Starr

It is generally recognized that Paul's letters diverge from ancient Hellenistic letter-writing practices.¹ Although Paul wrote with Greco-Roman epistolary conventions in mind, he allowed function to dictate form with seemingly unbridled freedom. The principal function of Paul's letters was to address theological questions and pastoral needs in his congregations, and the traditional components of a letter were adapted as necessary. Subsequent letters by New Testament authors usually followed Paul's example and continued to mould each section of a letter with a view to the letter's aim. This originality is nowhere more evident than in the letter openings.

Earlier research on Paul's letters, as for New Testament letters as a whole, has attended to the literary function and form of distinct letter parts, especially on the opening thanksgiving, which seems to burst letter-writing conventions.² The complexity of Paul's letter openings in particular suggest a theological intentionality that I wish to examine from a different angle. This complexity can be seen in part in a cluster of discreet allusions to a Christian worldview, which appear in virtually all of the opening sections of Paul's letters, not to mention the vast majority of subsequent New Testament letters.³ These allusions are formulated and arranged differently in each letter, but

¹ This disparity was observed already in H.G. Meecham, *Light from Ancient Letters: Private Correspondence in the Non-literary Correspondence of Oxyrhynchus of the First Four Centuries and Its Bearing on New Testament Language and Thought* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1923), 99. Research has focused on Greco-Roman epistolary traditions rather than Jewish traditions in part because extant Jewish letters largely follow Hellenistic conventions. See note 54.

² Milestones include P. Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings* (BZNW 20; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1939); H. Koskenniemi, *Studien zur Idee und Phraseologie des griechischen Briefes bis 400 n. Chr.* (AASF B 102,2; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiede, 1956); K. Thraede, *Grundzüge griechisch-römischer Brieftopik* (Zetemata 48; Munich: Beck, 1970); W.G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973); G.P. Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers: The Significance of the Intercessory Prayer Passages in the Letters of St Paul* (SNTSMS 24; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); P.T. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* (NovTSup 49; Leiden: Brill, 1977); K. Berger, "Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament," *ANRW* II.25.2, 1326–1363.

³ This chapter develops an observation made in my *Sharers in Divine Nature: 2 Peter 1:4 in Its Hellenistic Context* (ConBNT 33; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2000), 175, 215.

recognizable motifs recur in nearly every letter. The steady reappearance of allusions to the same aspects of the Christian worldview and Christian identity suggest that Paul has an intention worth examining more closely. My proposal is that Paul's reasons for beginning his letters by judiciously recalling this shared identity and worldview can best be understood in light of familiar Hellenistic convictions about friendship and moral exhortation, with an important clue from popular readings of Plato's epistles.

1. IDENTIFYING THE PATTERN OF TOPICS

All of the Pauline letters whether genuine or contested open with a comparable series of references to major elements in the Christian worldview. If we take into consideration the rest of the New Testament, we find the same collection of references in six of the ten remaining letters, with only Hebrews, James, and 3 John failing to follow suit. The final exception, the Apostolic Council's letter in Acts 15:23–29, begins without reference to the Christian worldview.⁴ Non-Pauline letters follow the same pattern as Pauline letters; in fact, no discernible difference can be detected on this point between Paul's genuine letters and the contested letters. For that reason, this chapter treats the thirteen Pauline letters together as a letter collection with at least this common feature. As the earliest Christian letter writer, Paul is the acknowledged "creator of the apostolic letter tradition"⁵ and his influence on other writers is understandable. Culling the Pauline letter openings yields the following motifs:⁶

1. *The Christ Event.* A clear allusion to Christ's death and/or resurrection figures in most letter openings. Four letters have only possible allusions (1 Cor 1:2, 4, 9; Phil 1:5, 11; 2 Thess 1:8; Phlm 5).⁷

⁴ These exceptions are not surprising. If the innovation is Paul's, the composition of the letter in Acts 15 ostensibly predates Paul's letters. With regard to other New Testament letters, it is doubtful whether Hebrews and James began life as letters, and the brevity of 3 John would almost preclude the elaborate allusions found in Paul's letter openings. More surprising is that short letters such as 2 John and Jude should follow the Pauline pattern.

⁵ J.L. White, "New Testament Epistolary Literature in the Framework of Ancient Epistolography," *ANRW* II.25.2, 1739.

⁶ See Table 1 below for a full listing of references.

⁷ In the non-Pauline letters, only James and 3 John open without referring to the Christ event.

2. *God's Call/Conversion*.⁸ Only 2 Corinthians and Philemon lack this element. Two letters, Galatians and 1 Timothy, speak of *Paul's* call rather than the readers' call.
3. *History's Conclusion*. Without exception every Pauline letter opening alludes to Christ's return or to the Christian's eschatological inheritance.⁹
4. *Divine Gifts/Aid*. Most Pauline letters open with a mention of God's presence to the readers by means of divine gifts and help to the recipients, while three letters speak of God's gifts specifically to Paul (Romans, 1 and 2 Timothy).¹⁰
5. *This Present Life*. All letters refer to the recipients' current situation and faith.¹¹
6. *Ongoing Growth*. Titus is the only Pauline letter not to express a hope for and the need of the recipient's ongoing spiritual growth and fruit.¹²

Common to all of these allusions is that they are never argued or motivated. The understanding of God's work in the world and of the Christian's place in it are mentioned more or less in passing. The straightforward nature of the letter openings indicates that the recipients are expected to share these thoughts as familiar convictions.¹³ They demarcate the parameters of the Christian's life, from its inception in God's call to its fulfillment at Christ's return. Naturally, these elements frequently serve to anticipate issues addressed later in the body of the letter,¹⁴ but an attempt to read these passing references to the Christian worldview as an overview of topics to be discussed proves ultimately unsatisfactory. As Loveday Alexander observes regarding Philippians, "commentators find a certain difficulty in defining what is the real 'business' of Philippians. Paul's opening reassurances about himself (1:12–26), and his concern for the recipients (1:27 'you

⁸ In the non-Pauline letters, only Acts 15:23–29, James and 3 John begin without mentioning either the Christ event or the recipients' coming to faith.

⁹ Third John is the only New Testament letter to lack an eschatological allusion, although the allusion in Jas 1:1 (the church as "the twelve tribes in the Dispersion") is at best unassuming.

¹⁰ Colossians may be an exception, although the divine gifts Paul prays for (Col 1:9–14) are from the logic of his prayer at least present inchoately.

¹¹ Of the non-Pauline letters, the opening of Hebrews is unique in lacking this feature.

¹² Hebrews and 3 John also omit mention of this expectation in the letter introduction.

¹³ Schubert, *Form and Function*, 180–181.

¹⁴ See J.L. White, "Saint Paul and the Apostolic Letter Tradition," *CBQ* 45 (1983): 138–139, and the more recent discussion in E.R. Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition and Collection* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 131–132.

...') are naturally taken as preliminaries to the main point. But what is the main point?"¹⁵ The same question has been asked of most of the New Testament letters. The letter openings offer hints, but their chief concern lies elsewhere.

These allusions to a Christian worldview are, it will be argued, a cogent feature of the letter openings. Paul, with other New Testament authors following his lead, aimed to create a composite effect in the first few sentences of his letters in order to remind the reader of the overall shape of the Christian life. The fact that he incorporated allusions to the Christian worldview in a rather ad hoc manner was due to the occasional character and constraints of each letter.

By "letter opening" I refer to the letter's salutation and thanksgiving or blessing, which is to say all of the letter's contents up to the body of the letter.¹⁶ A parallel to this usage is the way some (though not all) rhetorical critics include the greeting as part of the *exordium*, reasoning that the greeting also serves one of the two purposes of the *exordium*; that is, to make the audience "well disposed or receptive or attentive" to what follows (*Rhet. Herm.* 1.4.6; 1.7.11).¹⁷ The designation *exordium* has not here been found to be germane, however, in part because rhetorical critics understand the salutation in different ways,¹⁸ and in part because Pauline letter openings fail to fulfill the "most essential" purpose of the *exordium*, which is to "make clear what is the end or purpose of the speech."¹⁹ As noted above, while Pauline letter openings preview his agenda, none can be said to fulfill the

¹⁵ L. Alexander, "Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians," *JNT* 37 (1989): 94.

¹⁶ The one time I may be accused of breaking this rule is with 2 John, where I include the first verse of the letter body (verse 7). This letter would still support my thesis if I limited the analysis to 2 John 1:1–6, as all the allusions but one are present. With 1 Thessalonians, however, I consider only 1:1–10 in order to limit the material to the opening sentences, even though the thanksgiving and prayer extend to 3:13.

¹⁷ So D.F. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter* (SBLDS 104; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 21, 41. Similarly, Cicero, *Div.* 1.20; Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.1.5.

¹⁸ See the comparison of scholars' different rhetorical designations of Galatians 1:1–5 in P.H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle* (SNTSMS 101; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 91–92.

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.14.6 (1415a). Cf. *Rhet. Alex.* 29 (1436a): "the introduction [*prooimion*] is a preparation of the hearers and a summary explanation of the business to persons who are not acquainted with it, in order to inform them what the speech is about and to enable them to follow the line of argument" (trans. H. Rackham; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 377.

exordium's aim of stating plainly the letter's purpose. The similarities to rhetorical discourse notwithstanding, Paul appears not to feel compelled to play only by the rules of rhetoric.

With this in mind, I turn now to an inductive demonstration of how a cross-section of Pauline letters open by incorporating the same constellation of concentrated references to a Christian worldview.

1.1. *Galatians 1:1–9*

The Letter to the Galatians is notorious for lacking an opening thanksgiving (or blessing), which otherwise is a trademark of Paul's letters, and so makes for an interesting place to begin. In place of the usual εὐχαριστῶ Paul writes a summary of what amazes him, θαυμάζω, in 1:6–9. Read together with the epistolary salutation, these first nine verses make several reminders of central components of a Christian worldview and identity. For heuristic reasons they are summarized under six headings.

The first element in a Christian worldview is a reminder of *the Christ event*, “God the Father raised [Jesus Christ] from the dead” (1:1). Paul returns to the significance of God's work in Christ in 1:4; in his death Jesus “gave himself for our sins.” Secondly, the readers are reminded of *God's call*, both to Paul (1:1) and to themselves; God has “called you in the grace of Christ” (1:6). Thirdly, God's call brings with it *divine gifts and help*. The readers' position in the world has been fundamentally altered since God's will is that Christ's death should “liberate” (ἐξέληται middle voice) them from “the present evil age” (1:4). The phrase in 1:4 is unusual for Paul and suggests that, having accepted God's call and Christ's lordship (1:3), the recipients are now caught up in God's “apocalyptic rescue operation.”²⁰ With Christ as their Lord, life in the world ought not lead to commiseration with this age's wickedness because they live now in anticipation of their utter release from it.²¹ Fourthly, Paul draws their attention to *the present reality* and ambivalence of their life in Christ. On one hand, they have been called by God (1:4a), are being rescued from the evil present age (1:4b), and live with faith in the gospel of Christ (1:7). On the other hand, the Galatians are turning away from the gospel (μετατίθεσθε, 1:6) and in danger of perverting and changing the gospel (μεταστρέψαι [1:7]). Paul is unable to describe their present faith positively, and implies much needed *growth*

²⁰ R.B. Hays, “The Letter to the Galatians,” *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2000), 11:202.

²¹ J.L. Martyn, *Galatians* (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 90, 97–98, 102.

and change; the Galatians must strive to reverse Paul's diagnosis, to return to the "grace of Christ" and embrace the undistorted gospel (1:6–7). The final portion of the Christian worldview, discernible at several points in the background, regards *history's conclusion* when the present evil age is replaced by God's reign (implied in 1:4b) and God receives eternal glory (the hope of 1:5). People will stand before God either sharing in Paul's doxology (1:5) or standing accursed (the threat of *ἀνάθεμα* in 1:9). The language of Paul's curse in 1:8–9 indicates this is no exhortation to church discipline but means turning someone over to destruction by God's wrath.²² Paul's curse thereby is an eschatological allusion to God's coming judgment on everyone opposed to the gospel of Christ.

Paul takes for granted throughout Gal 1:1–9 that his readers share his convictions about what God has done, is doing, and will continue to do in Christ. His assumption is that they share his basic theological understanding of the significance of this Christian view of reality and are ready to adjust their thought and behaviour accordingly. Paul does not allude to his worldview in strict narrative order, but I have attempted to show above that the logical relationship between these several theological convictions can also be described in narrative terms.²³ The *Christ event* (1:1, 4) results in *God's call* and commission (1:1, 6) with the promise of liberation from sin and the trials of the present age (1:4b). The Galatians' *present challenge* (1:7) shapes Paul's directions for how they need to *move forward* (1:7–8) and prepare for *history's conclusion* (1:4–5, 9).

These allusions may at first glance not be striking enough to merit comment. After all, Paul only refers to what might be called self-evident aspects of a Christian belief, viz., the shape and direction of the Christian life in view of God's ultimate self-revelation in Christ. These Christian commonplaces cannot be designated the chief purpose of Gal 1:1–9.²⁴ These elements

²² H.-W. Kuhn, "ἀνάθεμα," *EDNT* 1: 81. Contra Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers*, 128, who believes the curse involves "at least excommunication from the church." As Wiles then notes, Paul's use of *anathema* otherwise (Rom 9:3) "goes beyond church discipline" and "involves being expelled from fellowship with Christ" (128 n. 4).

²³ A.T. Lincoln sketches the "story" of the readers in the letter as a whole in "The Stories of Predecessors and Inheritors in Galatians and Romans," in B.W. Longenecker, ed., *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 174–176. For heuristic reasons Lincoln brackets the Christ event and the eschatological conclusion from the readers' story as belonging to the "stories" of Christ and God. N.T. Wright speaks of Paul's "storied worldview," *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 407.

²⁴ This is not to deny that the letter's agenda is foreshadowed in its introduction. For example, Martyn (*Galatians*) argues that the main thrust of the letter, to live in accordance

of Christian faith continue, naturally, to be referred to in different ways throughout the letter. A liturgical background to the language is possible, in Paul's other letters it is even probable,²⁵ but identifying the source does not advance our understanding of what Paul *does* with that language.²⁶ Concentrated allusions arguably appear also in Gal 2:14–20 and 4:3–9, but there as well Paul simply incorporates what he needs for the argument at hand, with pedagogical reminders of the essential building blocks of their faith. What is noteworthy about the letter opening, however, is that so many elements are so closely and neatly juxtaposed, and that despite their naturalness in the letter's thought flow, they constitute a pattern repeated in the same place in other Pauline letters.

1.2. 1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

The same components of Christian theology appear in the opening of what is perhaps Paul's earliest letter, 1 Thessalonians.²⁷ Normally an introductory thanksgiving should be considered as a unit, but the unusually protracted thanksgiving in 1 Thessalonians continues conceivably to 3:13,²⁸ well beyond what can be considered the letter's opening. Only the first few sentences of the letter are relevant for this study, and I consider here only 1:1–10, since 2:1 begins a new topic within the larger thanksgiving.²⁹ Although the

with apocalyptic freedom (102), is introduced in the apocalyptic language of 1:4b (98).

²⁵ This link was forcefully demonstrated by J.M. Robinson, "Die Hodajot-Formel in Gebet und Hymnus des Frühchristentums," in W. Eltester, ed., *Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen* (BZNW 30; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964), 194–235, though not with regard to Galatians.

²⁶ J.L. White admits ("New Testament Epistolary Literature," 1742) that form criticism does not explain Paul's use of those traditions: "But the thanksgiving—whether because of its liturgical use, its accepted epistolary purpose, *or for reasons yet to be discerned*—conveyed a special positive meaning to Paul" (*italics mine*). Identifying one of those reasons is the aim of the present essay.

²⁷ On whether 1 Thessalonians or Galatians is Paul's earliest letter, I consider the view more convincing that Galatians belongs to the time of Paul's composition of Romans, due to the theological similarities between the two, and thus written several years after 1 Thessalonians was composed. For the purposes of this chapter, however, the chronology of the letters' composition is unimportant, apart from the assessment that Paul's letters predate other New Testament letters.

²⁸ Schubert, *Form and Function*, 17–27, closely followed by A.J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (AB 32B; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 103–105.

²⁹ On the logical integrity of 1:2–10, see T. Holtz, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher* (EKK 13; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1986), 42, 65. J.T. Sanders, "The Transition from Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus," *JBL* 81 (1962): 356, argues that the opening period ends with 1:10 and that 2:1 begins the body of the letter. For a different reading of 1:6–10, see A. Smith, "The First Letter to the Thessalonians," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 9:687–694.

order of allusions differs, the same six parts of a Christian worldview and identity appear in 1 Thessalonians as in Galatians.

Paul begins with a portrayal of the Thessalonians' *present life*: everyone knows them for their faith, love, and hope (1:3, 8). The situation is so positive that Paul's vision for their *ongoing growth* is to pray that they will continue on the same path (1:2–3; cf. 3:7–8). He then reminds them of the starting point of their Christian life. Paul speaks first of God's calling, they are "beloved by God" and *chosen* (ἐκλογή) by God (1:4), and then of their conversion to Christ which was marked by rejoicing and a warm welcome of the gospel (1:5–7, 9a). This reminder of the beginning of their Christian life is far more developed than in Galatians (the Galatians' conversion was only faintly alluded to in Gal 1:6) and encompasses both the Thessalonians' *calling* and their *conversion*. At the time of their conversion they were equipped with *divine gifts*, viz., the Holy Spirit's power (1:5) and joy (1:6). Paul's introductory sentences conclude with a word about the *Christ event* (God "raised him from the dead," 1:10) and a reminder of *history's conclusion* when God's Son appears from heaven and "rescues us from the wrath that is coming" (1:10).³⁰

Paul's comments in this passage include much more than the above paragraph would indicate, but combing the passage for references to a shared understanding of who God is and who they are in God's world yields at least this much. The same range of events are touched on here as were observed in Gal 1:1–9: the Christian's present life and ongoing need to hold fast, this life's origin in God's call, which was accompanied by God's gifts and aid, and a reminder of what the Christ event is and what its culmination will be.

If the allusions are put in a narrative order,³¹ Paul looks back to God's call to the Thessalonians (1:4) and their being equipped with divine gifts for life in the present (i.e., power, the Holy Spirit, and joy, 1:5–6). They are now incorporated into Christ and his people (as imitators of Paul and the Lord in 1:5; as an example to others in 1:7 ff.). Paul anticipates that their future will be marked by progress in knowledge and Christian character (this is implied in "work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope" in 1:3),

³⁰ History's conclusion looms in the background in the phrase "steadfastness of hope" (1:3).

³¹ A comparable description appears in J. Lambrecht, "Thanksgivings in 1 Thessalonians 1–3," in K.P. Donfried and J. Beutler, eds., *The Thessalonians Debate: Methodological Discord or Methodological Synthesis?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 158–159.

until history reaches its culmination at Jesus' return (1:10). As in Galatians, these convictions about Christian identity, origin, and orientation continue to appear throughout the letter, occasionally clustered together (e.g. 2:11–14), indicating that they are genuine reference points in Paul's thought as he addresses the congregation's situation.

1.3. *Romans 1:1–17*

Paul's magnum opus contains two important variations in this rehearsal of the Christian worldview: (a) *Paul's* commissioning is mentioned but not that of the Romans and (b) history's conclusion is mentioned only implicitly. Romans is well known for opening with an elaborate, creedal-like reference to the Christ event, "the gospel concerning his Son" (1:2–3) who was resurrected from the dead and is "Jesus Christ our Lord" (1:4). Paul's conviction is manifest in this letter opening that the *Christ event* emphatically explains all other aspects of the Christian worldview and identity. In light of God's work in Christ, Paul reminds the Roman Christians that *God called them* to faith in Christ (1:6–7). Sandwiched between the mention of the Christ event and God's call, Paul brings up *God's gifts* to live the present life, but in this letter God's provision is specifically to Paul: "through whom we have received grace and apostleship" (1:5).

In light of God's calling (1:6–7), Paul summarizes the readers' *present reality* and vigour of their life in Christ (1:8, 12) and looks forward to what lies ahead for them. This is in two steps. Most immediately, Paul wishes to visit them in order to strengthen them with "some spiritual gift" (1:11), specifically the mutual encouragement of their faith (1:12), and to work among them in order to harvest "fruit" (1:13). The first stage of their foreseeable future requires spiritual stamina, and Paul anticipates their continued spiritual growth. The second stage of their future, the eschatological conclusion to history, is only hinted at. Neither the return of Christ, nor the final judgment nor eternal life is addressed overtly in Rom 1:1–17, but Paul describes his mission in widely known eschatological terms. He aims to bring "all the Gentiles" (πάντων τοῖς ἔθνεσιν) to the obedience of faith, which is nothing less than the final accomplishment of God's purposes to reconcile a rebellious world with himself. Paul's language echoes a familiar Old Testament motif (cf. especially LXX Dan 7:14; LXX Ps 85:9; see also Ps 2:8; 22:27; Isa 45:2–23)³²

³² Cf. Schubert, *Form and Function*, 33. R. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), discusses the similar hope in Rom 15:7–13 for the Gentiles to join Israel in praising the Lord, an eschatological hope described in Scripture, (70–73).

speaking of the eschatological goal of history.³³ The Gentile members of the Roman church are encouraged to see themselves as living confirmation that God is bringing about his eschatological purpose in history. If 1:16–17 are counted as part of the letter opening, we find a new statement of the Christ event's significance, the allusion to God's call to faith, and a future hope of (eternal) life.

Romans opens with the same survey of the Christian worldview that was observed in Galatians and 1 Thessalonians,³⁴ with the significant exception that Paul speaks only about his own commissioning and not about God's past gifts to the readers. By contrast, God's gifts to the Romans are examined at length later on (Rom 5–8; 12; 15:14), though without any mention there of Paul's apostolic commission. Paul reminds his readers of their gifts and of the Spirit's empowerment in their lives, but subordinates that particular element of Christian identity in the letter opening to the more pressing need to cast himself in the right light. The importance of Paul's message and of his coming visit compel him to speak initially only of himself (1:9–15; 15:15–29).³⁵

1.4. 1 Corinthians 1:1–9

When we turn to 1 Corinthians we find that the letter begins with the same cluster of ideas as in the other Pauline letters.³⁶ Paul reminds the church that their new life began with God's calling them to be saints (1:2), participating in Christ (1:9). Admittedly, the Christ event is not articulated as such, but the sheer repetition of the name "Jesus Christ" means that he hovers in the background as the backdrop to every thought in the introduction. "Lord Jesus Christ" is mentioned five times in nine verses (1:2, 3, 7, 8, 9), and "Christ" or "Christ Jesus" appears an additional four times (1:1, 2, 4, 6). The introduction's climactic verse clarifies that this is moreover God's Son. Reiteration of the messianic titles of Jesus (ὁ Χριστός, ὁ κύριος) makes the life and work of

³³ E. Käsemann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8a; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973), 12. Schubert (*Form and Function*), 5, admits that the Romans thanksgiving differs from Paul's other letters in not building up to an eschatological climax, presumably because the thanksgiving is written ad hoc under eagerness to get on to Paul's view of the gospel.

³⁴ The narrative substructure of these elements in 1:1–17 has been noted by R. Penna, "Narrative Aspects of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," in C. Thoma and M. Wyshogrod, eds., *Parable and Story in Judaism and Christianity* (New York: Paulist, 1989), 195, 198.

³⁵ J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (WBC 38a; Dallas: Word, 1988), 22–25.

³⁶ Although space prevents our considering the opening of 2 Corinthians, that letter too has nearly as complete a theological survey as 1 Corinthians, with mention of the Christ event (1:5, 9), divine aid (1:4), this present life (1:3–7, 10), expected on-going growth (1:6–7, 11), and history's conclusion (1:9–10, 14). Absent is any mention of the receivers' call or conversion.

the Messiah a palpable backdrop to the entire letter introduction.³⁷ If there is any doubt whether Paul imagines that his readers can think of “the Lord Jesus Christ” without bearing in mind Jesus’ death and resurrection (what I am calling “the Christ event”), he goes on to clarify the matter by writing that the substance of his message about Christ is found in the cross (1:17–31) and the resurrection (15:3–28). The readers are gently but persistently led in 1:1–9 to recall that Christ is the true starting point of their own history with God. Only so can Paul’s ensuing comments make sense.

Paul then elaborates the gifts the church has been given as divine help for the present (1:4–5), as they participate together in the life of the Christ (1:9).³⁸ Paul’s expectation, though, is that the waiting will not be a static state but a period of continued renewal in Christ, as they rely on his strength to live irreproachable lives in him (1:8). History’s conclusion will come “on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:8) with “the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:7b). The thought that their participation in Christ (1:9) will then take on a new dimension (1:8) is implicit.

In the space of a few verses, Paul has again touched on all of the chief elements in the Christian worldview and experience, previewing along the way a few of the topics addressed in the letter. Not all the letter’s topics are mentioned here, such as the Holy Spirit, love, and the resurrection, although they are intrinsic for Paul to “participation in life of Christ” (1:9). The letter opening gives only a partial picture then of the contents of the letter. Later in the letter Paul returns to the ideas touched on here, but usually one at a time and never in this letter in such concentrated form. As noted with the earlier letters, these references to the Christian worldview can be described here in a narrative sequence so that they tell a history of God’s work and how the readers’ lives are integrated into that work.³⁹

Our survey of four of Paul’s undisputed letters has shown that Paul consistently opens his letters by recalling for the readers (1) what God has done in Christ, (2) that God has called them and they have turned to Christ, (3) that their lives are equipped by God for (4) the present challenges, and (5)

³⁷ While Χριστός has begun to take on the character of Jesus’ second name in Paul, the order Χριστός Ἰησοῦς has been interpreted as a translation of “Messiah Jesus.” See J.D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of the Apostle Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 198–199, with references. It is historically unlikely that ὁ Χριστός had been completely severed semantically from its meaning as the Jewish Messiah only 25 years after the crucifixion.

³⁸ A.C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 104.

³⁹ J.P. Sampley makes same observation in “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” in *New Interpreter’s Bible*, 10:800.

that they are called to spiritual growth as they await (6) the conclusion of God's work. All of these theological convictions are articulated and incorporated into the letter opening in a way that is unique to each letter. Paul takes enormous freedom in *how* he goes about reminding his readers of these points, but he makes the same points in each letter. When they are considered as a whole, they can be seen to describe in a nutshell the Christian worldview and the Christian identity. If space and time allowed, the same pattern of allusions could be demonstrated in the remaining undisputed letters of Paul.⁴⁰

1.5. 2 Timothy 1:1–14

Few letters ascribed to Paul have so widely been considered pseudonymous as 2 Timothy. Even if many of the old arguments against authenticity have come under fire,⁴¹ there can be no doubt that the letter belongs to a different sphere than Paul's other letters. Most obviously, this letter is not addressed to a church but to an individual. For a variety of reasons, then, 2 Timothy is worth investigating as a contrast to the undisputed letters of Paul written to congregations. Does the author approach the letter's business in a similar manner? The answer is yes. Despite apparent differences in setting, language, and theology, we find the same type of allusions to the Christian worldview in the letter's opening as in the letters studied above.

There is no consensus as to where the body of 2 Timothy begins,⁴² but Paul's language indicates that the thought of his thanksgiving in 1:3–5 continues at least through 1:10 and possibly to 1:14.⁴³ First, the thought of the thanksgiving in 1:3–5 continues directly into 1:6–7 (δὲ ἡν αἰτίαν, 1:6), which in

⁴⁰ A summary of the allusions in each letter is included below in Table 1.

⁴¹ See the massive critique in L.T. Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (AB 35A; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 55–99, and more cautiously, I.H. Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 1999), 57–108.

⁴² A sign of scholars' uncertainty can be seen in the curious discrepancy in B. Fiore, *The Pastoral Epistles* (SP 12; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007), where the letter outline defines the first units of the letter body as 2 Tim 1:6–8 and 1:9–17 (132), while the discussion defines the unit as 2 Tim 1:1–10 (133–143).

⁴³ A. Weiser, *Der zweite Brief an Timotheus* (EKK 16.1; Düsseldorf: Benziger, 2003), 85, limits the letter's *proomium* to 1:3–5, with the letter body beginning in 1:6, but points out the difficulty of making a rigid division due to the fluid transition from the one to the other. J.D. Quinn and W.C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (ECC; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995), 572–608, describe 1:3–14 as a three-part introduction focusing on the past (1:3–5), the present (1:6–12), and the future (1:13–14).

turn leads overtly into 1:8–10 (or 1:8–14) (μὴ οὖν ἐπαίσχυσθῆς). Paul's language requires that we read 1:3–14 as a paragraph, with a new topic beginning in 1:15.

What references to the Christian worldview are found in this letter opening? As we have seen before, there is an allusion to the Christ event (1:9–10). Timothy's own coming to faith and his divine calling are referred to in 1:5, 9 ("God ... called us with a holy calling"). At the same time, Paul recalls for Timothy how God equipped him for ministry, with a "spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline" (1:7), "God's power" (1:8) and the indwelling Holy Spirit (1:14). These divine gifts enable him to live a life now in "sincere faith" (1:5), "relying on the power of God" (1:8). The challenge that lies before Timothy is to preserve the teaching that he has received and persevere in his faith (1:13–14). This he is to do in anticipation of history's conclusion, "until that day" (1:12), when the gospel's life and immortality finally prevail (1:10).⁴⁴

Some will object that the "creedal fragment" in 1:8–9⁴⁵ (like the creedal nature of Rom 1:2–4) biases the results in this study's favor; it goes without saying that a creed summarizes a theological worldview. In 2 Timothy, however, as also in Romans, these creedal-like statements speak only of God's action in Christ, salvation's character, and history's culmination. What should be observed in 2 Timothy is that these elements are incorporated into reflections about the recipients' identity, from faith's inception, through spiritual growth and perseverance to the realization of faith's hope. Moreover, in those letters where Paul is not arguably incorporating fragments of tentative Christian creeds, such as 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and Galatians, Paul still touches the same theological bases in his introductory remarks to the recipients. The fact that Paul integrates the kerygmatic summaries of other Christians does not belie his intention to review succinctly the Christian worldview and Christian identity before turning to the letter's immediate issues.

1.6. *Summary of Allusions in the Pauline Letter Openings*

We have seen so far that a pattern of allusions recurs in several Pauline letters, and that this pattern effectively outlines the parameters of the Christian worldview and identity. These theological references are described differently in each letter, but can be summarized in six identifiable elements. Given the freedom of variation with which Paul sweeps the readers' eyes

⁴⁴ Looking ahead a few lines, "that Day" is also the day of God's judgment (1:18).

⁴⁵ R.E. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus* (NTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 222–223.

past the Christian worldview, my division into six elements should not be understood as a strict pattern that Paul felt compelled to follow. Rather it should be seen as a heuristic systematization of the topics covered for purposes of comparison. The following paragraphs summarize where each theological topic appears in each letter opening, not only in the Pauline letters but in other New Testament letters as well,⁴⁶ and in which letter openings it is absent. If the topic is ambiguous or weak, the reference is followed by a question mark. Occasionally the reference concerns Paul and not the letter recipients, in which case “Paul” is added in parentheses.

1. *The Christ event*, essentially Christ's death and resurrection: Rom 1:2–4; 1 Cor 1:2?, 7?, 9?; 2 Cor 1:5, 9; Gal 1:1, 4a; Phil 1:5?, 11?; Col 1:13–14; 1 Thess 1:9–10; 2 Thess 1:8?; 1 Tim 1:15; 2 Tim 1:9–10; Tit 1:4; Phlm 5?; Heb 1:1–4; 1 Pet 1:1–3; 2 Pet 1:3?, 9?; 1 John 1:1–3a; 2 John 7; Jude 4; Rev 1:5–7. The Christ event is not referred to in the openings of James and 3 John.
2. *The beginning of the Christian life*, often spoken of in terms of the readers' conversion or God's call: Rom 1:6–7; 1 Cor 1:2, 9; Gal 1:1 (Paul), 6; Eph 1:4–5, 11, 13; Phil 1:6a; Col 1:5–7; 1 Thess 1:4–7, 9; and 2 Thess 1:11; 1 Tim 1:12–14 (Paul); 2 Tim 1:5–7, 9; Tit 1:1, 3; 1 Pet 1:1–3; 2 Pet 1:1, 3, 10; 1 John 1:1–2; 2 John 5–6; Jude 1; Rev 1:5–6. The readers' coming to faith is absent in the opening of 2 Corinthians, Philemon, Hebrews, James, and 3 John.
3. The bestowal of *divine gifts* to the letter recipients (or to Paul), which enables them to live the Christian life faithfully: Rom 1:4 (Paul); 1 Cor 1:4–5; 2 Cor 1:4; Gal 1:4b; Eph 1:3, 5, 7; Phil 1:6–7; Col 1:9?; 1 Thess 1:5; 2 Thess 1:7, 11; 1 Tim 1:8–11, 11–12 (Paul); 2 Tim 1:6–7; Titus 1:3 (Paul); Phlm 6; 2 Pet 1:3–4; 1 John 1:7, 9; 2 John 2–3; Jude 3–4; Rev 1:1. A mention of God's gifts is lacking in the beginning of Hebrews, James, 1 Peter and 3 John.
4. The Christ-believers' *present life and situation* in Christ and in the church: Rom 1:8, 11–12; 1 Cor 1:7, 9; 2 Cor 1:3–7, 10; Gal 1:4, 7; Eph 1:15; Phil 1:5, 7, 9–10; Col 1:4, 8; 1 Thess 1:3; 2 Thess 1:4, 6–7; 1 Tim 3–4, 6–7; 2 Tim 1:5, 8, 11–12 (Paul); Titus 1:4; Phlm 4–5, 7; James 1:2; 1 Pet 1:6, 8; 2 Pet 1:4–10; 1 John 1:6–10; 2 John 2, 4; 3 John 3–4; Jude 3–4; Rev 1:3. The only “letter” not to open by referring to the recipients' present situation is Hebrews.
5. The Christ-believers' *on-going spiritual progress*, often described as growth in the knowledge of Christ, in goodness or in the righteousness of Christ: Rom 1:11–13; 1 Cor 1:8; 2 Cor 1:6–7, 11; Gal 1:7; Eph 1:17–19; Phil

⁴⁶ The letter from the apostolic council (Acts 15:23–29) and Christ's letters to the churches (Rev 2–3) have been excluded for the moment. See below.

- 1:9–11; Col 1:6, 9–11; 1 Thess 1:2–3; 2 Thess 1:3, 5, 11–12; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 1:13–14; Phlm 1:6; James 1:3–4; 2 Pet 1:5–8; 1 John 1:3–4; 2 John 5; Jude 2; Rev 1:3. An expectation of the readers' spiritual growth is lacking in the opening of Titus, Hebrews, 1 Peter, and 3 John.
6. The *eschatological goal* of Christ's return and eternal life in Christ's kingdom: Rom 1:5; 1 Cor 1:7b–8; 2 Cor 1:7?, 9–10, 14; Gal. 1:3–5?, 9?; Eph 1:10, 12–13, 18, 21–22; Phil 1:6b, 10–11; Col 1:5, 12–13; 1 Thess 1:10; 2 Thess 1:5–10; 1 Tim 1:16; 2 Tim 1:10, 12; Titus 1:2; Phlm 6; Heb 1:2; Jas 1:1?; 1 Pet 1:1, 4–5, 7, 9; 2 Pet 1:11; 1 John 1:2; 2 John 2; Jude 1, 3; Rev 1:4–5, 7. Only 3 John opens without referring to history's conclusion.

The only letter in the New Testament that lacks all six of these elements is also the only letter that conceivably predates Paul. The letter in Acts 15:23–29 from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to the church in and around Syrian Antioch lacks any allusion to a Christian worldview. It was, in other words, possible for apostolic Christian leaders to compose letters to congregations that did not employ this pattern. That fact makes it more striking that nearly every other letter in the New Testament begins with a cluster of four to all six of the theological strands identified above. The one letter on the low end of the spectrum, where I have only been able to identify four of these elements, is 1 Peter. Eighteen of the New Testament's 21 letters arguably begin with five or all six of these elements. The three exceptions are the letters of James⁴⁷ and Hebrews,⁴⁸ with only two elements each, and 3 John, which begins only with reference to the present life of the believers. Hebrews and James are both problematic texts that defy easy genre definition; they lack many of the signs of a letter and may begin differently from other New Testament letters because of the different circumstances of their composition. The absence of these elements in 3 John may possibly be explained in part by its brevity and in part by the fact that it follows 2 John, which opens with the mention of all six (2 John 2–7).

The vast majority of the New Testament's letters share a common habit of beginning the letter with a quick review of what God is up to and what that means for the recipients. Apparently the pattern exhibited by Paul was recognized and mimicked as effective communication and an appropriate

⁴⁷ Jas 1:1–4 mentions the recipients' present life in Christ and their expected spiritual growth. A possible reference to Christ's return lies implicit in the mention of the Diaspora in 1:1, in which case the letter opens with three elements.

⁴⁸ Heb 1:1–4 mentions the Christ event (Christ's first coming) and history's conclusion (Christ's second coming).

beginning for an apostolic letter.⁴⁹ Even the seven letters to the churches in Revelation 2–3, despite their extreme brevity, contain between two and four of these elements; the recipients' present life in faith is always mentioned, usually with a glance to Christ's return and often with mention of the Christ event or of the recipients' conversion. Nearly wherever one turns in the New Testament epistles, this constellation of theological ideas stands at the outset as a reminder to the reader of the shape and scope of the Christian life. A feature that was typical of Paul seems to have been understood and was readily adopted by the authors of the deutero-Pauline letters, 1–2 Peter, 1–2 John, Jude, and Revelation.

The odd thing is that this feature shared by virtually all New Testament letter writers disappears from Christian epistolary literature soon after the close of the apostolic period. A survey of the Apostolic Fathers reaps meager results. Only *2 Clement* and the *Letter of Barnabas* follow the pattern, each mentioning four of the six narrative moments identified above. *2 Clement* begins with Christ's eschatological role as judge (1:1) and reference to Christ's earthly suffering "for our sake" (1:2). The beginning of the Christian life is referred to in 1:4 ("he saved us when we were perishing") and in detail in 1:6–8. The present challenge is to live lives that bear fruit (1:3). He initially omits mention of divine gifts or the readers' present life. By contrast, *Barnabas* makes no mention of the Christ event or of the recipients' calling or coming to faith, but it makes much of the gift of the Lord's Spirit to them (1:2–3). Therefore, their presence can be characterized by the triad of Christian virtues, faith, love, and hope (1:4). The challenge for the future is for their knowledge and faith to be perfected (1:5) as they look forward to the resurrection ("the hope of his life" [1:4]).⁵⁰

Many later Christian writings lack any opening mention at all of the Christian worldview, and the relationship between the author and reader may provide a clue as to why these allusions were considered inappropriate or unnecessary. Ignatius's letter *To Polycarp* is a letter from one bishop to another and thus between equals. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* is in the form of a letter from one church to another. Neither of these writings are thus from a pastor or teacher to a congregation or protégé. *Diognetus* is an anonymous writing to someone who does not share the Christian

⁴⁹ J.L. White makes a similar observation about the imitation of Paul's letter openings by later New Testament authors, "New Testament Epistolary Literature," 1752.

⁵⁰ Two of Ignatius's letters include three of the six elements. *To the Ephesians* mentions the readers' calling (Inscr.), the readers' present life (1.1), and eternal life (Inscr.). *To the Trallians* mentions the Christ event (Inscr.), the readers' present life (1.1), and the resurrection hope (Inscr.).

worldview. Similarly, Irenaeus's *Apologies* are written to Roman officials who adamantly disagree with the Christian worldview.

Nonetheless, we possess a number of letters from pastors and bishops to their congregations, and as such parallel the situation of the New Testament letter authors. The fact that Christian leaders continued to write letters is commonly recognized to be due not only to practicalities but also to the desire to follow in the footsteps of the New Testament authors. This makes the virtual disappearance of a widespread feature of New Testament letters even more striking. One explanation might be that the rhetorical force of this feature was lost on later generations and so it died out naturally. Another explanation may be that the relationship between the Apostolic Fathers and the churches was fundamentally different than that of Paul to his congregations. Paul and other New Testament letter writers were (either in fact or in fiction) co-workers and friends with the congregations and individuals they address. The Apostolic Fathers were by contrast bishops and church officials addressing large congregations. Friendship is no longer a significant way to understand the relationship between author and recipient. For example, Ignatius's intention is often to remind the church of the bishop's authority, meaning that his letters are neither friendship letters nor paraenetic in the sense that New Testament letters are. An interpretation developed below is that the author's personal intimacy with the recipients provides a clue as to the purpose of beginning a letter with a cluster of theological statements encapsulating a shared worldview.

2. PAUL'S EPISTOLARY INSPIRATION?

In order to understand Paul's reason for beginning his letters by reviewing the Christian worldview, as well as how his recipients likely understood him, it would be helpful to have before us letters contemporary with Paul that begin similarly or letter-writing guides that sanction precisely Paul's practice. Assembling such material is easier said than done. Ancient epistolary handbooks tend to urge correspondents to do precisely the opposite and to keep introductory comments to a bare minimum,⁵¹ announcing their

⁵¹ Writing a few centuries after Paul, Ps.-Libanius could look back and conclude that "it befits someone who wishes to add an address to the letter type not to chatter on, indeed not (even) to use adjectives, lest any flattery and meanness be attached to the letter ... For thus all the ancients who were eminent in wisdom and eloquence appear to have done" (*Epistolary Styles* 51, translation in A. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists* [SBLBS 19; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988], 75). Similarly Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle* 51.4, 7.

errand as early and as plainly as possible.⁵² Admittedly, Paul's letter openings give hints of his errand, but as noted above they fail to inform the reader of the letter's central purpose. An example is the forthright way Seneca announces the topic of his letters to Lucilius, as in Letter 56: "Beshrew me if I think anything more requisite than silence for a man who secludes himself in order to study" (*Mor. ep.* 56.1), making redundant the LCL heading "On Quiet and Study."⁵³ An obvious explanation is the complexity of Paul's letters, which address a number of issues and needs,⁵⁴ prompting Paul to go against the stream of epistolographic conventions. Nothing in rhetorical theory would lead Paul to do as he does either. The letters of Second Temple Judaism are also unenlightening in this particular regard. Since Jewish letters of the period were in all essentials similar to contemporary Hellenistic letters,⁵⁵ the extent to which Paul deviates from common Hellenistic letter-writing practice cannot be explained by reference to Paul's Judaism.

A comparable practice of opening letters with a summary of a shared worldview appears from the initially unexpected direction of the writings of Plato. A collection of thirteen epistles allegedly composed by Plato includes three examples of letters that begin similarly, with Plato rehearsing shared philosophical convictions with his correspondent before turning to the letter's chief errand. Before examining these letters more closely, though, we

⁵² Demetrius, *On Style* 231: "A letter is designed to be the heart's good wishes in brief; it is the exposition of a simple subject in simple terms" (Malherbe, *Epistolary Theorists*, 18–19). So also Julius Victor, *Art of Rhetoric* 27.

⁵³ Somewhat more loquacious but nonetheless lucid are Plutarch's declarations of his letter-treatise subject, as in "How to Profit by One's Enemies" (86b–c) and "On Having Many Friends" (93a–b).

⁵⁴ Paul is not unique in this regard. Some of Seneca's letters to Lucilius rival or even surpass Paul for overall complexity (e.g. *Ep.* 58 and 94). Such deviations from the norm raise the question of where to draw the boundary for the genre. I follow here R.K. Gibson and A.D. Morrison, "What Is a Letter?," in R. Morello and A.D. Morrison, eds., *Ancient Letters: Classical and Late Antique Epistolography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1–16, who reason (13) that the genre "letter" is a spectrum: "Texts usually considered firmly within the category of letter can be seen to share core characteristics with marginal examples of the genre ... without doing damage to the idea of the letter as a useful category of literature."

⁵⁵ M. Reiser provides a succinct introduction to ancient Jewish letters as largely following Hellenistic conventions in *Sprache und literarische Formen des Neuen Testaments: Eine Einführung* (UTB 2197; Paderborn: Schöningh, 2001), 119–120 with references. T. Nisula has demonstrated how letters in 1–2 Maccabees are modeled on Hellenistic epistolary conventions: "Time has passed since you sent your letter: Letter Phraseology in 1 and 2 Maccabees," *JSP* 14 (2005): 201–222. F.O. Francis, "The Form and Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James and I John," *ZNW* 61 (1970): 110–124, has identified the presence of double opening statements in some Jewish and early Christian letters (e.g. Josephus, *Ant.* 11.123–124; 1 John 1:1–3, though this feature is not typically Pauline).

need to consider the problem of how this ostensible parallel should be understood. Paul is not normally considered to have an advanced Hellenistic education. Would Paul or Paul's associates have had any knowledge of the letters of Plato? How we formulate the question dictates the sort of answer given, and to ask if Paul was either a product of Tarsus (and so Hellenistic Judaism) or a product of Jerusalem (and so ostensibly untouched by pagan Hellenism) is to suggest an unworkable alternative. Even if Paul's upbringing took place solely in Jerusalem, it should be kept in mind that Jerusalem in times of peace, under Roman occupation, dependent on a vibrant international trade, and the goal of multitudes of pilgrims from the Diaspora,⁵⁶ was not hermetically sealed from the rest of the Mediterranean world. Hellenistic thought and culture, with its literature and philosophy, could not be shut out even if Jerusalem's inhabitants wanted to do so. It is not certain that they always did. Although Greek education was forbidden in times of national crisis (e.g. 2 Macc 4:13; *m. Sot* 9.14),⁵⁷ there are indications that instruction in both Greek and "Greek wisdom" were available in Jerusalem in times of peace.⁵⁸ Josephus's extensive study of Greek language and literature (*Ant.* 20.262–265) must have begun during his student days in Jerusalem, in order for him to have been able to function as a delegate to Rome in 64 CE (*Vita* 13–16). Nathan Drazin argues that even if Greek education was held in lower esteem than the study of the Scriptures, and was even deprecated on occasion, some Jews in the Tannaitic Period clearly "did learn Greek philosophy."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ On the invasion of pilgrims to Jerusalem, see Philo, *Spec. laws* 1.69 and Josephus, *B.J.* 6.425.

⁵⁷ M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (trans. J. Bowden; 2 vols.; London: SCM, 1974), 1:76–77.

⁵⁸ L.L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*. Vol. 2: *The Coming of the Greeks: The Early Hellenistic Period (335–175 BCE)* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 149–159, demonstrates how pre-Maccabean Jews were admired for their "learning by Greek standards" (156, italics original) and concludes that "for the first century and a half of Greek rule there is no evidence that the Jews saw anything different or more threatening than they had under previous empires" and that the reign of Antiochus IV was a unique, traumatizing event (158–159). Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:76–77, gives evidence of a continued positive view of Greek education both prior to and following the fall of Jerusalem in CE 70. J.N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek?* (NovTSup 19; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 40–61, reviews the rabbinical evidence and concludes that "in certain periods many rabbis had no objections to the use of Greek and an acquaintance with Greek wisdom" (60).

⁵⁹ N. Drazin, *History of Jewish Education from 515 BCE to 220 CE. during the Periods of the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaim* (Johns Hopkins University Studies in Education 29; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1940), 101. Far more skeptical is E. Ebner, *Elementary Education in Ancient Israel during the Tannaitic Period (10–220 CE)* (New York: Bloch, 1956), 84–87.

Paul's letters prove that his own education equipped him not only with a facility to think and write in Greek, but also with a familiarity with both Greek rhetoric⁶⁰ and Hellenistic popular philosophy,⁶¹ and a preference for the Septuagint over the Hebrew text. All of these factors weigh heavily, indicating that whether Paul's education was entirely in Jerusalem or divided between Jerusalem and Tarsus, it included a healthy portion of training in Greek language and thought.⁶² If this is granted, it ought to follow that Paul's education exposed him to at least *some* snatches of the Greek literary and philosophical classics.

Of interest in this regard is the longstanding interest, both in Judaism and among those interested in Judaism, to set Moses alongside Plato and the Greek philosophers and evaluate their relative virtues.⁶³ Given Plato's dominance in Hellenistic popular philosophy, some familiarity with his thought is necessary if this exercise is to be viable. What writings of Plato were most widely known and available in the Greco-Roman era? Advice as to the best place to begin when reading Plato varied depending on whom one asked. According to Albinus, writing in the mid-second century CE, one can begin the writings of Plato anywhere, but a good starting point for many novices is Plato's epistles.⁶⁴ If Albinus is at all representative of first training

⁶⁰ C. Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric," *NTS* 32 (1986): 23–24, concluding that Paul's rhetorical skills show "real mastery" and that his education must have gone beyond the basics of Greek language and grammar.

⁶¹ A. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 8.

⁶² See the persuasive analysis in A. du Toit, "A Tale of Two Cities: 'Tarsus or Jerusalem' Revisited," *NTS* 46 (2000): 375–402; repr. in C. Breytenbach and D.S. du Toit, eds., *Focusing on Paul: Persuasion and Theological Design in Romans and Galatians* (BZNW 151; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 23–33. The argument from silence in M. Hengel, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (trans. J. Bowden; London: SCM, 1991), 34–39, that Paul wrote unaffectedly, without Greek literary vocabulary, and therefore was ignorant of Greek literature, fails to explain Paul's skills in Greek rhetoric. More likely, Paul was guided by the inappropriateness of composing a letter to friends in language that could be interpreted as affected or pretentious (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistle* 51.4, 7). A letter was intended to create a sense of the sender's actual presence (Koskeniemi, *Idee*, 38–42), making an elevated literary language rhetorically and pastorally useless for Paul's purposes.

⁶³ Jewish apologists for Moses' superiority over Plato include Aristobulus (*apud* Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 13.12–13, and Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.15; 5.14), Josephus (*C. Ap.* 2.168, 2.256–257), and the more tactful comparison in Philo (*Opif.* 8, 12, 22, 25). Similarly, Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 177.

⁶⁴ Albinus, *Introduction to the Dialogues of Plato*, relevant text with German translation in H. Dörrie, *Der hellenistische Rahmen des kaiserzeitlichen Platonismus: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar* (Der Platonismus in der Antike, Bd. 2; Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1990), 96. Dörrie conjectures that by beginning with the *Epistles* the reader was equipped with Plato's autobiographical portrait (356).

in rhetoric and philosophy, Plato's *Epistles* ought to have been among the most readily available of Plato's writings. In fact, according to Michael Erler, these texts, which today are largely neglected, played an important role "im antiken Lektürkanon."⁶⁵ The likelihood increases, then, that a student in Jerusalem such as Paul, with presumably only a modest exposure to Greek rhetoricians and philosophers, would have had access to some snatches of Plato's writings, chief among these being the *Epistles*.

My premise is that Paul's education included exposure to Greek thought and Greek writers, and that extracts of Plato were not inaccessible, given the Jewish interest in ranking Moses superior to Plato. Finally, the possibility exists with some historical credibility that Paul's encounter with Plato was via the *Epistles*. The conclusions of this article are not dependent on Paul having a direct knowledge of these letters. Rather, the possibility of Paul's knowledge of them, which cannot finally be proved or disproved, provides the simplest answer to how it was that Paul expanded his letter openings with complex summaries of his worldview, contra Hellenistic practices, but in a manner that is similar to Plato.

3. PLATO'S EPISTLES

The allusions to a shared worldview that open Pauline letters may be compared with the openings of some of the thirteen letters ascribed to Plato. The authenticity of Plato's epistles is debated, ranging from those who reject the historicity of all thirteen,⁶⁶ to those who accept that Plato composed many if not all of them.⁶⁷ As with the Pauline letters, authorship must finally be judged by knotty verdicts about style, vocabulary, and perceived overall coherence, since the letters are not in and of themselves anachronistic.⁶⁸ I consider the letters authentic on the grounds that their language is genuine to Plato's time and place, the circumstances described are historically credible, and their thought is not dissimilar enough from Plato's dialogues

⁶⁵ M. Erler, *Platon, Die Philosophie der Antike 2/2, Grundriss der Geschichte Philosophie* (ed. H. Flashar, Basel: Schwabe, 2007), 309.

⁶⁶ T.H. Irwin, "Plato: The Intellectual Background," in R. Kraut, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1992), 78.

⁶⁷ Erler, *Platon*, 309, shows that the letters' authenticity can neither be fully proven nor fully disproven. W.K.C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*. Vol. 5: *The Later Plato and the Academy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 399–401, contends that subjective value judgments tend to play a disproportionate role, regardless of whether the letters are viewed as being Plato's own or pseudonymous (401).

⁶⁸ Erler, *Platon*, 310.

to arouse suspicion, if one allows that occasional letters differ in tone and consistency from dialogues written for publication.⁶⁹ Unfortunately, modern interest in the letter collection has concentrated either on determining whether they in fact come from Plato or on studying the contents of the important *Seventh Letter*.⁷⁰

Whether or not these letters actually derive from Plato is, however, of little consequence at present, since they certainly predate Paul⁷¹ and were regarded as authentic in antiquity. Three epistles, *Letters 3, 4, and 10*,⁷² are of particular interest for starting in a manner comparable to the Pauline letters and going against the accepted convention of getting immediately to the point. Even philosophical letters, regardless of whether they are public or private, typically began with the briefest of salutations and then directly turned to the letter's subject matter.⁷³ These three letters attributed to Plato are unusual in prefacing the letter body with references to metaphysics and the appropriate shape of human life.

3.1. *Plato's Third Letter*

The opening of Plato's *Third Letter* begins with a reflection about the difference between greeting someone with χαίρειν and greeting someone with εὖ πράττειν:

⁶⁹ N. Gulley, "The Authenticity of the Platonic Epistles," in K. von Fritz and R. Syme, eds., *Pseudepigrapha I* (Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 18; Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1972), 105–130, dismisses the epistles' historicity on the grounds that they portray Plato advocating a peaceful revolution and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, contradicting the political thought in the dialogues (e.g. *Pol.* 293d–e). Two answers can be given. First, it is not improbable that Plato shied away from the ruthlessness of the dialogues' idealism when the lives of those he knew were at stake, and, secondly, since the dialogues are not explicitly Plato's voice (cf. *Letter 7*), he may have privately disagreed with Socrates' political theory.

⁷⁰ E.g. Rainer Knab, *Platons Siebter Brief: Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar* (Spudasmata 110; Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2006). The massive G. Fine, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Plato* (Oxford: Oxford, 2008), mentions the letters only in passing (44, 59, 98, 505).

⁷¹ Diogenes Laertius (3.56, 61) states that thirteen letters were part of a collection of Plato's works made by Thrasyllus, who died in CE 36 before Paul's letters were composed. Cicero (106–43 BCE) quotes the letters as genuine and well known (e.g. *Fin.* 2.45). See further Erler, *Platon*, 309. Guthrie (*History* 5:399) suggests that if the letters are spurious then on the basis of dialect and style they must have been composed within a generation or two of Plato's death (347 BCE).

⁷² *Letters 3 and 4* are by many considered authentic, while *Letter 10* is deemed spurious because of its brevity, personal nature, and apparent deviation from Platonic philosophy.

⁷³ See the introduction to C.D.N. Costa, "Introduction," in C.D.N. Costa, ed., *Greek Fictional Letters: A Selection with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), xi–xxi.

"Plato to Dionysius wishes Joy [χαίρειν]!" If I wrote thus, should I be hitting on the best mode of address? Or rather, by writing, according to my custom, "Wishes well-doing [εὖ πράττειν]," this being my usual mode of address, in my letters to my friends? You, indeed,—as was reported by the spectators then present—addressed even the God himself at Delphi in this same flattering phrase, and wrote, as they say, this verse—*I wish thee joy! And may'st thou always keep the tyrant's life a life of pleasantness*. But as for me, I would not call upon a man, and much less a god, and bid him enjoy himself—a god, because I would be imposing a task contrary to his nature (since the Deity has his abode far beyond pleasure or pain),—nor yet a man, because pleasure and pain generate mischief for the most part, since they breed in the soul mental sloth and forgetfulness and witlessness and insolence. Let such, then, be my declaration regarding the mode of address; and you, when you read it, accept it in what sense you please.⁷⁴ (315a–c)

Plato writes here to the ruler of Syracuse, Dionysius II, with whom his relationship was never better than strained and ended in alienation. Nonetheless, their first contacts were marked by positive expectancy. Dionysius's uncle Dion was a friend and student of Plato and had hoped to bring Dionysius under Plato's influence as well. Plato was introduced to Dionysius, who already showed promise as a philosopher and a poet, and Plato had hoped to influence his leadership and style of government. At the time of this letter their relationship had deteriorated dangerously but not yet fully broken (despite their disagreement Plato can still close the letter by addressing Dionysius as his good friend, ὦ τᾶν, 319e), and Plato writes here in order to object to Dionysius's slanderous comments about Plato.⁷⁵

The letter's purpose is to address the problem of Dionysius' accusations. Before tackling that question, Plato devotes a paragraph (315a–c) at the letter's outset to reflecting on the appropriateness of the standard greeting (χαίρειν) over Plato's own usual greeting (εὖ πράττειν). His comments, which are only tangentially related to the letter's subject matter, sketch the difference between human beings and divine beings. Human beings are subject to pleasure and pain, the gods are not. The human capacity for pleasure and pain means that the soul can be led into sloth (δυσμαθία), forgetfulness (λήθη), witlessness (ἄφροσύνη), and insolence (ὑβρις) (315c). The gods, by contrast, are free from pleasure and pain, and therefore are not in danger of falling prey to vice. Therefore neither gods nor humans should be greeted

⁷⁴ Translations of Plato's epistles are from *Plato with an English Translation* (trans. R.G. Bury; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), volume 7.

⁷⁵ Dionysius II is also the recipient of *Letters* 1, 2, and 13. Plato's relationship with Dionysius is there beyond repair.

with the exhortation to rejoice, because it is contrary to the nature of the gods (παρὰ φύσιν) and because it leads humans into a state of indulgence that makes them thoughtless about themselves and introduces dangers to the soul. Of the four vices mentioned, three involve failures of reason and one concerns an over-fed passion. Pleasure leads to poor reason, excessive passion, and an utter lack of discipline, which are of course precisely the weaknesses Dionysius exhibits according to Plato. In that regard, the opening comments serve to prepare Dionysius for the critique to come, and possibly help him recognize his error. Be that as it may, the ensuing letter is not a philosophical treatise but a personal appeal for justice.

What Plato has succeeded in doing in this paragraph is to remind Dionysius of matters about which he ought to be intimately familiar: the nature of the gods, the nature of human beings, the implicit dangers that life's circumstances pose to living life well, and the need to be on one's watch. It is a subtle, rhetorically effective form of moral exhortation rooted in a particular view of the world Plato assumes he shares with Dionysius. Arguments and proofs can be bypassed in this instance; it is enough to recall the basic philosophical perspective.

It is worth noting that the relationship between Plato and Dionysius is in part parallel to that of Paul and an errant congregation such as the Galatians. Both Dionysius and the Galatians are letter recipients who once affirmed a set of philosophical or theological teachings, who have not yet recanted, and who can be presumed to recognize and subscribe to the briefest mention of them, as a mirror in which to assess actions contradictory to these beliefs.

3.2. *Plato's Fourth Letter*

Dion of Syracuse was an intimate associate and long-time admirer of Plato, and arranged the introduction of Plato to his nephew Dionysius II in order to reform Dionysius's political philosophy. At the time of the *Fourth Letter* Dionysius II had been overthrown and Plato writes to encourage his friend Dion to act decisively and take the pivotal leadership role circumstances have given him: νῦν οὖν αὐτοῦ τε ἀγωνίζεσθε (321a).

Plato begins this letter with a general reminder about what constitutes excellence of character and the importance of exhibiting this excellence in visible deeds and acts:

Plato to Dion of Syracuse wishes well doing. It has been plain, I believe, all along that I took a keen interest in the operations that have been carried out, and that I was most anxious to see them finally completed. In this I was mainly prompted by my jealous regard for what is noble; for I esteem it just

that those who are truly virtuous, and who act accordingly, should achieve the reputation they deserve. Now for the present (God willing) affairs are going well; but it is in the future that the chief struggle lies. For while it might be thought that excellence in courage and speed and strength might belong to various other men, everyone would agree that surpassing excellence in truth, justice, generosity and the outward exhibition of all these virtues naturally belongs to those who profess to hold them in honour. (320a–c)

What Plato endeavors to remind (ἀναμνήσκειν [320c]) Dion is that both Dion and Plato's other pupils have all professed to honor above all things not the excellence of courage and physical prowess but excellence in truth, justice, and generosity (ἀληθεία δε καὶ δικαιοσύνη καὶ μεγαλοπρέπεια, 320b). These virtues belong to what is most noble (τὰ κάλα, 320a) and ought to be what we seek after most in life.

The reminder is in effect a summary description of life's ethical dimension as the logical conclusion of Plato's metaphysics. Dion is given a brief refresher course in the philosophical view of life, so that when Plato exhorts him as to the best method to bring about political reform, the task is seen for what it is: an exhibition of what is truly noble. Naturally, Plato's few comments here cannot be called an epitome of his philosophy; the reminder consists only of Plato's and Dion's shared ethical commitments. Rather, Plato's words need to be seen in light of the letter's purpose, which is to exhort Dion to play his part well and not to lose his ethical bearings as he prepares to assume leadership. As in the *Third Letter*, the ethical import of this letter appears to determine the content and extent of the reminder of the philosophical perspective referred to in the letter opening.

3.3. (*Pseudo*) Plato's Tenth Letter

Plato to Aristodorus wishes well-doing. I hear that you now are and always have been one of Dion's most intimate companions, since of all who pursue philosophy you exhibit the most philosophic disposition; for steadfastness, trustiness, and sincerity—these I affirm to be the genuine philosophy, but as to all other forms of science and cleverness which tend in other directions, I shall, I believe be giving them their right names if I dub them "parlour-tricks." So farewell, and continue in the same disposition in which you are continuing now. (358b–c)

The shortest of Plato's letters is a brief encouragement to Dion's close friend Aristodorus to continue in the same philosophical disposition he already exhibits, and thereby presumably support Dion in the best way imaginable. True philosophy, Plato then states, lies in the ἡθος that Aristodorus already exhibits: steadfastness, trustworthiness, and sound-mindedness (τὸ βέβαιον

καὶ πιστὸν καὶ ὑγιές). The letter is less than ten lines long, about a third of the length of 3 John, and apart from the salutation there is no opening to the letter; Plato states the above message and closes. To that extent the letter does not offer support for the thesis of this chapter that this letter opening per se has a comparable function to those of Paul. Our interest in the *Tenth Letter* derives from the fact that its author makes a general statement about the nature of his philosophical perspective. This serves as a reminder to the recipient of the parameters of his own philosophy in order that decisions and actions may be made in harmony with their shared perspective.

The authenticity of this letter has been overwhelmingly doubted because of the injustice that its summary of “true philosophy” does to the thought of Plato’s dialogues. If one takes into consideration, however, the pragmatic and occasional nature of the letter, with its urgent need to elicit support for Dion whose life was threatened, one can imagine that circumstances made it incumbent for the author to elevate ethics over everything else. Moreover, the centrality of acting rightly, expressed in the *Tenth Letter*, coheres well with Plato’s usual greeting, εὖ πράττειν, which intentionally highlights the importance of ethical excellence, as he explains in the *Third Letter*.

These three letters reflect a social setting comparable to Paul’s in which a recognized teacher writes to a close friend (Dion, *Epistle 4*), an ally (Dion’s friend, *Epistle 10*), and a former disciple (Dionysius II, *Epistle 3*).⁷⁶ Plato writes to people whom he believes share his philosophical assumptions, just as Paul writes to congregations whom he believes share his theological convictions. There are, however, differences. Plato’s interest in all three letters is ethical, but his allusions to his philosophical convictions are limited to the importance of ethics to the well-lived life. References to God/the gods are mentioned only by way of contrast, and world history is not considered. Plato’s comments are thus not nearly as ambitious as Paul’s letter openings, which elegantly sketch the same outline of Christian thought in new ways in each letter.

Despite the fact that Plato’s letters were known in antiquity as appropriate first readings for students, the letter collection seems not to have substantially influenced ancient letter-writing practices. All the evidence suggests that Plato’s letters were valued and read as a way to get to know Plato and not as examples of the art of letter writing to be imitated. Their unconventional openings may nonetheless have caught the eye of the young Paul, who took inspiration from them when he wrote to his congregations.

⁷⁶ *Letters 7 and 11–13* are not to philosophical friends as are *Letters 4 and 10*.

This possibility is slightly preferable to the alternative that Paul, admittedly an intellectual genius, created on his own something entirely new in his letter openings, which coincidentally bears a striking resemblance to features of Plato's writings that were most easily accessible in the first century.

4. WHAT DO THESE LETTER OPENINGS ACCOMPLISH?

Whether or not Paul read Plato's letters cannot be demonstrated beyond doubt, and it is not the purpose of this chapter to make that claim. More to the point is the question of what Paul (and presumably Plato) intended to accomplish with this rehearsal of a worldview. Paul evidently composed his elaborate letter openings under the conviction that readers would understand his communication, whether or not they had read Plato's letters. That they did recognize it is evidenced by the fact that other New Testament authors mimicked him ardently. What is it, then, that they expected to communicate? And if this strategy was transparent and effective for New Testament writers, why does it disappear in later Christian letters? I wish to close by postulating two reasons why Paul and other New Testament authors began their letters to Christians in this way.

4.1. *Friendship*

The first reason is that Paul's letter opening is a subtle reminder of his friendship with the readers, based on their having "all things in common," namely, a common worldview including a common participation in God's plan. This reminder combined with his thanksgiving for them, blows life into a friendship that has been on hold during their separation and helps the readers to receive Paul's letter as words from a friend.

Many have already demonstrated how Paul is influenced by the tradition of the letter of friendship, which was one of the standard letter types in Greco-Roman society. The "friendly letter" is the first category listed in pseudo-Demetrius's description of letter types (*Epistolary Types*).⁷⁷ This interest in letters between friends reflects something of the Greek interest in friendship per se, beginning at least with Socrates⁷⁸ and continuing through

⁷⁷ Text and translation found in Malherbe, *Epistolary Theorists*, 32–33. The same letter style "in which we exhibit simple friendship only" is described by Pseudo Libanius, *Epistolary Styles* 11, with a sample letter in § 58 (Malherbe, *Epistolary Theorists*, 68–69, 74–75).

⁷⁸ Aristotle devotes Books 8 and 9 of his *Eth. nic.* to the topic of friendship as being one of the most necessary things of the good life (8.1.1). L. Dugas, *L'amitié antique d'après les mœurs*

the first century as the visible fruit of a virtuous soul, “a fixed and steadfast character which does not shift about, but continues in one place and in one intimacy” (Plutarch, *On Having Many Friends* 97b).⁷⁹

One of the basic qualities of friendship was that friends should have all things in common (the proverbial nature of which was already familiar to Plato, κοινὰ τὰ γε φίλων λέγεται [*Lysis* 207c]). The κοινωνία of friends as well as of siblings figures prominently in Aristotle (*Eth. nic.* 8.9.1–2; 9.8.2), and is frequently picked up on by Hellenistic popular philosophers. Seneca’s vast correspondence with his friend Lucilius mentions at one point that friendship cannot be lacking “when souls are drawn together by identical inclinations into an alliance of honorable desires ... Because in such cases men know that they have *all things in common*, especially their troubles” (*Ep.* 6.3).⁸⁰ Accordingly, a letter of friendship might typically include a reminder of the basis for friendship and the shared experiences upon which the friendship rested.⁸¹

Strictly speaking, the Pauline letters are not friendship letters, because the purpose of friendship letters was specifically the maintenance of the friendship. No New Testament letter can be said to have “keeping in touch” as its sole purpose.⁸² Having said that, it should also be recognized that no New Testament letter fits neatly into *any* category of the epistolary handbooks. They are simply too multifaceted to be pigeon-holed. Nonetheless, a feature of Pauline and other New Testament letters that has been demonstrated by many is the frequent use of phrases and topics that were typical of friendship letters.⁸³ Philippians is the most conspicuous in this regard, but

populaires et les theories des philosophes (Paris: F. Alcan, 1894), explains the parallel views of friendship, one utilitarian, the other an exercise in virtue.

⁷⁹ Plutarch, *Plutarch's Moralia II* (trans. F.C. Babbitt; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 69.

⁸⁰ (Italics mine) Seneca, *Seneca's Epistulae Morales I* (trans. R.M. Gummere; LCL; London: Heinemann, 1967), 26–27. For further examples, see J. Fitzgerald, “Christian Friendship: John, Paul, and the Philippians,” *Int* (2007): 293.

⁸¹ S.K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (LEC 5; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1986), 59, citing Pseudo Demetrius.

⁸² S.K. Stowers, “Friends and Enemies in the Politics of Heaven: Reading Theology in Philippians,” in J.M. Bassler, ed., *Pauline Theology*. Vol. 1: *Thessalonians, Philippians, Galatians, Philemon* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 107, overstates the matter by calling the designation of Philippians as a friendship letter a generally agreed upon fruit of research, referring to Koskeniemi, *Idee*, for support. On the contrary, Koskeniemi, *Idee*, 120, writes that there is in the first century “kaum einen einzigen Brief, den man zu den reinen Freundschaftsbrieffen rechnen könnte.” According to Stowers, *Letter Writing*, “there are no letters of friendship in the New Testament” (60).

⁸³ E.g. A. Mitchell, “‘Greet the Friends by Name:’ New Testament Evidence for the Greco-

the same features can be traced throughout the New Testament letters.⁸⁴ The philophrnetic quality of Pauline letters, to help overcome the separation between the author and the recipient, has been argued elsewhere.⁸⁵ It should not be necessary to point out that the tokens of mutual concern and affection that pervade many of the Pauline letters are not rhetorical platitudes or utilitarian manipulations in a system of patronage,⁸⁶ but give every sign of being genuine expressions of a common bond arising out of a fellowship in a common faith.⁸⁷

If we consider the Pauline letters as employing the language of friendship, what would that suggest about the purpose of Pauline letter openings? Quite obviously, the allusions to the Christian worldview and identity are a reminder of what he and they have in common. Their shared faith is the basis of their fellowship and friendship. By going over at the outset the main aspects of this worldview, which was shared only by a few individuals in the 50s CE, Paul effectively reminds the readers of the grounds and depth of their friendship. Friends are those who are of one mind, and the contents of their shared faith makes Paul and his readers of one mind in all things essential, thereby defining their relationship as necessarily one of friendship. One especially telling sign of how Paul and other New Testament letter writers incorporate the language of friendship into the letter opening is the presence in many letter openings of *κοινωνία* and cognates.⁸⁸ The language of fellowship, partnership, or joint participation is consistently used to refer to their sharing together in the life of Christ or in the pattern of Christ's life.⁸⁹

Roman *Topos* on Friendship," J.T. Fitzgerald, ed., *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (SBLRBS 34; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 223–226. R. Aasgaard, "My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!" *Christian Siblingship in Paul* (JSNTSup 265; London: T&T Clark Continuum, 2004), demonstrates the connection between the language of friendship and Paul's language of metaphorical siblingship, 53–60, 106, 108 ff., 118 ff.

⁸⁴ Mitchell, "Greet the Friends," 226–236.

⁸⁵ A.J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 52, building on Koskenniemi, *Idee*, 35–37.

⁸⁶ Friendship letters exist whose purpose is to secure the service of the receiver, Koskenniemi, *Idee*, 120, but these letters should be considered separately from friendship letters whose purpose is to deepen the friendship. S.K. Stowers argues, however, that friendship letters ought to be recognized to include "politics and business" and the obligation of reciprocity ("Friends and Enemies," 107–114).

⁸⁷ T. Engberg-Pedersen, *Paul and the Stoics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 126–127, makes a similar point regarding Philippian.

⁸⁸ 1 Cor 1:9; 2 Cor 1:7; Phil 1:5, 7; Tit 1:4; Phlm 6; 2 Pet 1:4; 1 John 1:3, 6, 7; Jude 3; Rev 1:7.

⁸⁹ Starr, *Sharers*, 202.

For purposes of comparison, one particularly interesting example is Plutarch's letter of consolation to his wife on the death of their daughter (*Consolatio ad uxorem* 608a–612c). The aim of this letter is to deal with the present grief and to exhort his wife to keep her emotions within bounds. Plutarch writes, however, with great awareness of the pain of this child's death, and reminds his wife of his partnership (κοινωνοῦσα) with her (608c). Following some initial practical matters, Plutarch begins his letter by reviewing with her their shared history and basis for mutual affection as parents of several children (608c). They stand together with a shared experience of losing a beloved child, and their friendship and partnership are valuable reasons for her to read his ensuing words attentively. Interestingly, the letter concludes with a philosophical overview that reflects on the child's death, her condition now after the death, what implications it has for their present life and an admonition to temperance (612a–b). Plutarch is not sketching a meta-physical overview of their lives, as does Paul, but he nonetheless sketches on a modest level their own philosophical bearings.

The beginning of this letter thus rehearses Plutarch's shared history with his wife and closes by summarizing their shared worldview. Plutarch (writing after Paul and without knowledge of Paul's letters) demonstrates a strategy in his composition that resembles Paul's letter openings. Both can make mention of their fellowship or friendship with the recipient and remind them of their shared understanding of the world. Unlike Paul, Plutarch makes his shared human history the starting point of his letter, and closes with philosophy. Paul, by contrast, makes little mention to start with of his time with the recipients, but rather establishes his friendship with the recipients on their common faith and life in Christ.⁹⁰

If Paul's expansion of his letter openings proceeds from this interest in reminding the readers of his friendship with them, it offers the important hint that Paul's letters should be read in light of classical ideals of friendship. As previously noted, the function of the letter opening may correspond to the introduction of a speech, which was to create an ethos of the speaker's character so that the reader was prepared to hear favorably what the author

⁹⁰ The same strategy is evident in another of Plutarch's letters, *Consolatio ad Apollonium*, following the death of the son of Apollonius. Plutarch writes explicitly as a friend (102b) who shares his sorrow (note the συν- prefixes in 101 f.–102a). No summary of their shared history is given, but Apollonius is reminded of the warmth of Plutarch's friendship with him. Likewise, this letter concludes with a philosophical perspective of the boy's life after his body's death, which Plutarch need not argue since he presumes Apollonius shares his convictions (121e–122a).

had to say.⁹¹ The subtle reminder of friendship, and indeed a shared lot in the universe, as Paul's worldview makes clear, would be ideal for that purpose.

4.2. *Paraenesis*

Paul's friendship with his congregations is directly related to the second purpose of his letter openings with a meta-perspective on the Christian life and history. The Pauline letters always include a paraenetic function; some such as 1 Thessalonians are even primarily paraenetic.⁹² Paul's manner of starting his letters serves well to prepare the readers for the moral exhortations that follow. Paraenesis has been described as moral injunctions that do not anticipate agreement.⁹³ The readers were expected to receive the advice readily because they shared the presuppositions that lay behind the exhortations.⁹⁴ Even though the two were not necessarily equals, since the person giving advice was recognized as being further advanced and so superior, they both subscribed to the same beliefs and were of one mind in all things essential. Thus, paraenesis was a mode of communication that was appropriate between *friends*.⁹⁵ The tone to be struck in paraenesis is one of benevolence, complimenting present behavior and gently reminding the readers of things they already know (Seneca, *Ep.* 94.25).⁹⁶ All that is necessary is to recall that knowledge and apply it to the present circumstances more consistently.

By reminding his readers at the outset of the parameters and *telos* of the Christian life, Paul recalls his readers to their new (shared) identity, which has ramifications for every aspect of their new life. As we have noted repeatedly, Paul never needs to argue for the points he makes in his letter openings, but manifestly assumes the readers understand these things.

⁹¹ G. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 91.

⁹² Malherbe, *Paul*, 49–66.

⁹³ Pseudo Libanius, *Epistolary Styles* 5.

⁹⁴ For the understanding of paraenesis presented here, with references, see J. Starr, "Was Paraenesis for Beginners?" in J. Starr and T. Engberg-Pedersen, eds., *Early Christian Paraenesis in Context* (BZNW 125; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 79–81. Also, A.J. Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," *ANRW* II.26.1, 278–293.

⁹⁵ This same understanding of the function of paraenesis was argued independently in the same year by J. Thomas, *Der jüdische Phokylides: Formgeschichtliche Zugänge zu Pseudo-Phokylides und Vergleich mit der neutestamentlichen Paränese* (NTOA 23; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 271–272; and Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists," 281.

⁹⁶ The first to apply this insight to the study of the New Testament was W. Nauck, "Das oun-paräneticum," *ZNW* (1958):134–135.

He can mention them in passing as a cue to them to fix these foundational convictions in their minds, as the basis for his subsequent teaching. Paul's letter openings underscore how thoroughly the Christian identity was a shared *theological* identity first, and that it secondarily had social and ethical ramifications. If Paul's counsel was to be well received, it was imperative that his readers share his presuppositions about the shape and direction that their faith in Christ was taking them.

These two factors, the *topos* of shared experience from letters of friendship and the shared worldview prerequisite to moral exhortation, are efficiently combined in Paul's letter openings. The presence of this idea cluster both in the deutero-Pauline letters and in most other New Testament letter authors indicates that this feature was recognizable and appositely created the desired ethos of uniting the author and recipients in friendship and unity of thought.

5. CONCLUSION

We have seen that the Pauline letters consistently open by reviewing the Pauline worldview, typically composed of six components: (1) Christ's death and resurrection as the foundation of the whole; (2) the recipients' positive response to God's call; (3) God's divine gifts and presence to the recipients; (4) the present status of their faith and witness; (5) the next step needed for the readers' spiritual growth or moral progress; and (6) history's culmination at Christ's return and their entry into eternal life. Paul's convictions about God's workings in the world and the readers' participation in God's activity are never argued; they are simply assumed to be the readers' convictions as well.

This pattern of opening a letter is taken up by subsequent New Testament letter writers, but it fades in the post-biblical authors. Paul's innovation goes against all conventions in ancient epistolary theory and practice, except for the unusual letter openings of three of Plato's epistles. They, too, open by reminding the reader of central philosophical and ethical convictions, and are similarly addressed to individuals whom Plato expects will share his viewpoint. Unlike Paul, however, Plato does not repeat a pattern of dogmas that effectively outline an entire worldview; he simply seizes on that aspect of his worldview that provides a necessary foundation for his subsequent comments to be convincing. Plutarch was observed to close two of his letters with a somewhat more (than Plato) systematic reminder of a shared worldview.

Paul may well be the creator of this epistolary innovation. If Paul knew Plato's epistles, then he developed Plato's innovation in a new direction, shaped by the radically different nature of his emphatically non-platonic worldview.

Regardless of whether Paul had read Plato, both Paul and Plato appear to be motivated to open their letters this way based on two common elements. First, their frame of reference is a relationship of friendship, or at least potential friendship, given how friendship was understood in the ancient world. This involved in part a communion of minds that shared the same basic beliefs and values. By beginning with a reminder of what they have in common, the author establishes an amicable tone (even in Galatians, the rebuke is spoken out of Paul's benevolent commitment to the church).

More importantly, perhaps, the letter opening itself serves a paraenetic function. The letters invariably move toward moral exhortation. Paraenesis consisted of injunctions that did not expect disagreement, since the advice follows logically from a previously agreed upon common ground. By initially reminding the readers of this philosophical and theological common ground, the readers are recalled to their identity as bearers of these commitments and prepared to think logically about what those commitments mean practically and how to live with integrity in light of that worldview.

For the student of Pauline theology, the substance of these letters openings gives a hint as to the structure of Paul's theological thought. The content of the Christian faith for Paul and his New Testament colleagues begins and ends with God's work in Christ, in his death and in his ultimate return. Paul's thought is confirmed as being simultaneously christological and eschatological. Given that perspective, the challenge for Paul of his theology was to address what it means that his readers' lives have now been successfully grafted into God's plan. A thorough study of the relationship between these letter openings and Pauline theology leads us, however, beyond the scope of this essay.

Table 1. Allusions to a Worldview in Early Christian Letter Openings

Letter Introduction	Christ Event	Calling or Conversion	Divine Gifts, Help
Rom 1:1–15	1:2–4	1:6, 7	1:4 (Paul)
1 Cor 1:1–9	1:2?, 4?, 9?	1:2, 9	1:4–5
2 Cor 1:1–14	1:5, 9		1:4
Gal 1:1–9	1:1, 4a	1:1 (Paul), 6	1:4b
Eph 1:1–23	1:6–9, 20–23	1:4–5, 11, 13	1:3, 5, 7
Phil 1:1–11	1:5? 11?	1:6a	1:6–7
Col 1:1–14	1:13–14	1:5–7	1:9?
1 Thess 1:1–10	1:9–10	1:4–7, 9	1:5
2 Thess 1:1–12	1:8?	1:11	1:7, 11
1 Tim 1:1–17	1:15	1:12–14 (Paul)	1:8–11, 11–12 (Paul)
2 Tim 1:1–14	1:9–10	1:5–7, 9	1:6–7
Tit 1:1–4	1:4	1:1,3	1:3 (Paul)
Phlm 1–7	5?		6
Heb 1:1–4	1:1–4		
Jas 1:1–4			
1 Pet 1:1–9	1:1–3	1:1–3	
2 Pet 1:1–11	1:3?, 9?	1:1, 3, 10	1:3–4
1 John 1:1–10	1:1–3a	1:1–2	1:7, 9
2 John 1–7	7	5–6	2–3
3 John			
Jude 1–4	4	1	3–4
Rev 1:1–7	1:5–7	1:5–6	1:1
Rev 2:1–7		2:5	
Rev 2:8–11	2:8		
Rev 2:12–17			
Rev 2:18–29	2:18?		
Rev 3:1–6	3:3b?	3:3	
Rev 3:7–13			
Rev 3:14–22	3:14		
1 Clem.		Inscr.	
2 Clem.	1:2	1:4, 6–8	
Ign. Eph.		Inscr.	
Ign. Magn.			
Ign. Trall.	Inscr.		
Ign. Rom.			
Ign. Phld.	Inscr.		
Ign. Smyrn.	1:1–2: 2:1		Inscr., 1:1
Ign. Pol.			
Pol. Phil.	1:2		
Barn.			1:2–3
Mart. Pol.			
Diogn.			

Letter Introduction	This Life	Ongoing growth	History's conclusion	#
Rom 1:1–15	1:8, 11–12	1:11–13	1:5?	5
1 Cor 1:1–9	1:7, 9	1:8	1:7b–8	6
2 Cor 1:1–14	1:3–7, 10	1:6–7, 11	1:7?, 9–10, 14	5
Gal 1:1–9	1:4, 7	1:7(!)	1:3–5?, 9(!)	6
Eph 1:1–23	1:5	1:17–19	1:10, 12–13, 18, 21–22	6
Phil 1:1–11	1:5, 7, 9–10	1:9–11	1:6b, 10–11	5–6
Col 1:1–14	1:4, 8	1:6, 9–11	1:5, 12–13	5–6
1 Thess 1:1–10	1:3	1:2–3	1:10	6
2 Thess 1:1–12	1:4, 6–7	1:3, 5, 11–12	1:5–10	5–6
1 Tim 1:1–17	1:3–4, 6–7	1:5	1:16	6
2 Tim 1:1–14	1:5, 8, 11–12	1:13–14	1:10, 12	6
Tit 1:1–4	1:4		1:2	4–5
Phlm 1–7	4–5, 7	6	6	4–5
Heb 1:1–4			1:2	2
Jas 1:1–4	1:2	1:3–4	1:1?	3
1 Pet 1:1–9	1:6, 8		1:1, 4–5, 7, 9	4
2 Pet 1:1–11	1:4–10	1:5–8	1:11	5–6
1 John 1:1–10	1:6–10	1:3–4	1:2	6
2 John 1–7	2, 4	5	2	6
3 John	3–4			1
Jude 1–4	3–4	2	1, 3	6
Rev 1:1–7	1:3	1:3	1:4–5, 7	6
Rev 2:1–7	2:2–6		2:7	3
Rev 2:8–11	2:9–10		2:10–11	3
Rev 2:12–17	2:12–16		2:17	2
Rev 2:18–29	2:19–20, 24–25		2:23, 26–28	3
Rev 3:1–6	3:1–3		3:3–5	4
Rev 3:7–13	3:8–10		3:10–12	2
Rev 3:14–22	3:15–20		3:21	3
1 Clem.	1:2–3			2
2 Clem.		1:3	1:1	4
Ign. <i>Eph.</i>	1:1		Inscr.	3
Ign. <i>Magn.</i>		1:2	1:2	2
Ign. <i>Trall.</i>	1:1–2		Inscr.	3
Ign. <i>Rom.</i>	Inscr			1
Ign. <i>Phld.</i>			Inscr.	2
Ign. <i>Smyrn.</i>				2
Ign. <i>Pol.</i>				–
Pol. <i>Phil.</i>	1:1–2			2
<i>Barn.</i>	1:4	1:5	1:4	4
<i>Mart. Pol.</i>				–
<i>Diogn.</i>				–

PROGYMNASMATIC LOVE*

R. Dean Anderson

Paul's chapter on love has touched and spoken to all generations of Christians ever since its inception. It is possible that he had conceived this rhetorical vignette before setting about to writing what we know as his first letter to the church at Corinth.¹ In any case, chapter 13 forms what school rhetoric in Paul's day would have called a *παράβασις* or *digressio*. In the midst of his discussion of spiritual gifts he takes time out to treat the most important motive for any course of action. The necessity for acting out of love is especially important when sensitive issues are discussed and regulated.

That Paul chose to see "love" as the "preeminent way" (1 Cor 13:1) must surely lie in the emphasis that Jesus had laid on the concept of love as the binding element of God's commandments (Matt 22:36–40; Mark 12:28–34; cf. Rom 13:8–10). But the impact that this chapter has had on its subsequent readers is also a result of the way in which Paul has put it together. It, therefore, makes for an interesting endeavour to analyse the chapter according to the precepts of the school rhetoric of Paul's day. The rhetorical textbooks make mention of the description of virtues such as love as a form of *κοινὰ τόποι* ("commonplaces"). Quintilian describes practice in these kinds of commonplaces as part of the preliminary rhetorical exercises known in Greek as *progymnasmata*. The *progymnasmata* were considered to be the building blocks of speeches. Once a student had mastered these exercises, he could proceed to trying his hand at practice speeches (known as declamations). In a discussion of the preliminary exercises Quintilian states:

As to *commonplaces* (I refer to those in which we denounce vices themselves such as adultery, gambling or profligacy without attacking particular

* This essay is an expansion and modification of parts of the commentary on 1 Corinthians 13 in R.D. Anderson, *1 Korintiërs: Orde op zaken in een jonge stadskerk* (Kampen: Kok, 2008).

¹ The way 1 Cor 12:31a is picked up again in 1 Cor 14:1 would seem to indicate that chapter 13 was later inserted, as does the fact that "love" nowhere else in the argument of chapter 12 or 14 plays a role. Nevertheless, the argumentation of chapter 13 is itself constructed with the special gifts of the Spirit in mind. The chapter, therefore, ought not to be completely isolated from the argumentative context of the two adjoining chapters.

persons), they come straight from the courts and, if we add the name of the defendant, amount to actual accusations Sometimes too they entail defence: for we may speak on behalf of luxury or love, while a pimp or a parasite may be defended in such a way that we appear as counsel not for the character itself, but to rebut some specific charge that is brought against him.
(*Inst.* 2.4.22–23 [Butler, LCL])

It is, therefore, interesting to compare the structure of Paul's chapter on love with the more detailed instructions from progymnasmatic textbooks on how to compose such a commonplace. For the purposes of this essay I will draw on the two earliest extant progymnasmatic treatises, that of Theon, probably dating to the first century CE, and that of Pseudo Hermogenes, probably dating to somewhere between the second and fourth century CE.² Both treatises preserve traditional material for school rhetoric. That of Pseudo Hermogenes became the starting point and structural basis for most later writers on progymnasmatic exercises.

The descriptions of arguments or argumentative techniques to be used with respect to commonplaces are invariably applied with a view to judicial rhetoric and thus concern stereotypical crimes and criminals, for example the thief, temple-robber, murderer, or tyrant. Nevertheless, such τόποι were to be used for both bad and good actions (*Prog.* 106.5–6 Sp.). The point of calling these exercises *commonplaces* was that they concerned actions common to men generally and left out everything specific to a particular person or crime (or heroic deed).

The textbooks rarely speak specifically about treating an abstract virtue, nevertheless the treatment of abstract virtues was not completely unknown, and it is interesting to see to what extent the same argumentative techniques can be applied in such a case. In any case, an abstract virtue, just as the commonplace, is by definition not tied to a particular person or set of circumstances.

Although Theon and Hermogenes generally describe the same techniques, they do not prescribe the same sequence for the composition of a commonplace. Their suggestions for the composition and ordering of arguments in a commonplace are compared in the following table.

² For the dating of Theon, see M. Patillon, *Aelius Théon: Progymnasmata* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1997), viii–xvi, 168–169. For the dating of Pseudo Hermogenes, see H. Rabe, "Praefatio," in H. Rabe, ed., *Hermogenis Opera* (BSGRT; Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1985; orig. 1913), iv–vi.

Theon (<i>Prog.</i> 106.4–109.20 Sp.)	Pseudo Hermogenes (<i>Prog.</i> 6)
introduction	introduction
narrative of the action	examination of the opposite
intent of the perpetrator	the matter itself
the matter itself	comparison
what is encompassed	intent / motive (γνώμη)
by the term of the deed	(opt.) description of perpetrator's past life
comparison	removal of pity
by the opposite	– by means of τελικά κεφάλαια ³
description of probable	concerned
past life of the perpetrator	– by means of vivid description of the deed
consequences of the crime	
the irreparable damage caused	
judgements or opinions of others	
vivid description	

As will become clear it is the sequence of arguments suggested by Pseudo Hermogenes that comes closest to that followed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13. For this reason we will follow Pseudo Hermogenes in our analysis of Paul's treatment of love.

The noun ἀγάπη, the central lexeme in 1 Corinthians 13, is not common in secular Greek literature, but is frequent in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). This fact will have determined the preference in Christian writers for this noun above other synonyms. The noun ἀγάπη was further a normal word for "love" and did not contain in itself any special connotations.⁴ The way in which Paul defines the concept of "love" must therefore be determined by his own definition and not by his choice of this particular noun. In Gal 5:22 he calls "love" the fruit of the Spirit.

According to Pseudo Hermogenes, a commonplace does not really need a formal introduction. Nevertheless, an introductory sentence is to be preferred, and Pseudo Hermogenes supplies several examples related to a temple-robber. Paul also introduces his topic with a short introductory sentence: "And yet I show you a superior way" (1 Cor 12:31b).

The first argument, according to Pseudo Hermogenes, ought to be an examination of the opposite (ἡ ἐξέτασις τοῦ ἐναντίου). The idea is that it is most effective to treat the opposite issue before dealing with the matter itself, which stems from the fact that a commonplace has to do with a matter

³ "Arguments of purpose" related to such concepts as justice, legality, advantage, etc.

⁴ See E.J. Schnabel, *Der erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther* (Historisch Theologische Auslegung Neues Testament; Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 2006), 758–760.

that is generally known. As we shall see below, this fact also has consequences for how one ought to treat the matter itself. Although Theon does not suggest the same ordering of arguments, it has already been noted that Pseudo Hermogenes' ordering was to become standard in later school rhetoric. It is, then, all the more interesting to see that the Apostle Paul takes the same approach. As noted above, an abstract virtue such as "love" is also a well-known entity, which allows Paul to delay a treatment of what "love" actually is and to begin with a consideration of its opposite (1 Cor 13:1–3). Pseudo Hermogenes continues with his example of the temple-robber and suggests that one might mention that the laws have provided for the worship of the gods. They have erected altars, decorated temples with votive offerings, appointed sacrifices, festivals, and processions. He then suggests that one examine the reason for this, namely that by such laws the gods remain well-disposed to the cities, for if their worship were to be abandoned the cities would of necessity be ruined.

The Apostle Paul in his "examination of the opposite" chooses not to examine the nature of a concept such as "hate," but the effect of the absence of love. In several successive relative clauses containing five examples he illustrates how serious the absence of love would be in the case of activities that would otherwise be considered to be very religious (in a positive sense). In this way he emphasizes the necessity of love. The activities he describes are related to various gifts of the Spirit, which he had mentioned in the previous chapter: γλῶσσαι, προφητεία, γνώσις, πίστις, ἀντίληψις (the gift of languages, prophecy, knowledge, faith, assistance, see 1 Cor 12:8–10; 28–30). Paul emphasizes the seriousness of the absence of love by portraying the oppositions in a very black and white manner. The gifts of the Spirit are presented in a deliberately exaggerated way: speaking in the language of *angels*, knowledge of *all* mysteries, faith to *move mountains*, giving away *all* one's possessions. Yet without love these achievements would amount to nothing. The language of angels⁵ would be like the noise of bronze⁶

⁵ The idea that angels speak in a different language to humans is also found in *T. Job* 48.1–50.3 and *Apoc. Zeph.* 8, both Jewish writings written in Greek and dated to the first century before or after Christ.

⁶ The phrase χαλκὸς ἤχων has often been translated "noisy gong." The term χαλκός, however, is nowhere else in Greek literature used of a musical instrument. Recent scholarship has pointed to the possibility that Paul is referring to acoustical vases. Vitruvius, 5.5, describes the use of such vases in Hellenistic theatres in Greece and the (southern Greek) provinces of Italy. They were placed at strategic points in order to strengthen the speakers' voices with their resonances. See W. Harris, "'Sounding Brass' and Hellenistic Technology: Ancient

or a shrill cymbal.⁷ Prophecy, special knowledge and faith would make him a “nothing.” Even if he would give all his possessions to the poor, it would not benefit him at all.⁸ The use of deliberate exaggeration (ὑπερβολή, *superlatio*) was a much-loved technique of rhetoric in Paul’s day.⁹ Strabo calls the use of ὑπερβολαί “the customary rhetoric” (ἡ συνήθης ῥητορεία) in respect to Posidonius. It was a recognized technique for the amplification or diminution of subject matter (Trypho, *Trop.* 2.1; *Rhet. her.* 4.44) and thus all the more appropriate for commonplaces, which both Theon and Pseudo Hermogenes define in terms of the amplification of the subject matter. Paul himself may well have been influenced by Jesus’ use of this technique. In fact he uses several of Jesus’ deliberate exaggerations here, for example, “faith to move mountains” (Matt 17:20; 21.21; Mark 11:23; Luke 17:6), and giving away all one’s possessions to the poor (Matt 19:21; Luke 12:33). By means of these exaggerations Paul amplifies the wonder of the spiritual gifts concerned only to diminish their value even more if they are exhibited

Acoustical Device Clarifies Paul’s Well-known Metaphor,” *BAR* 8 (1982): 38–41; W.W. Klein, “Noisy Gong or Acoustic Vase? A Note on 1 Corinthians 13.1,” *NTS* 32 (1986): 286–289; P. Arzt-Grabner and R.E. Kritzer, *Korinther* (Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006) and a more detailed description in J.G. Landels, *Music in Ancient Greece and Rome* (London: Routledge, 2001), 192–195. Plato observes that bronze, when beaten, resounds for a long time (*Prot.* 329a).

⁷ The cymbal was a musical instrument that was used everywhere. Paul describes its sound with the verb ἀλαλάζω, which comes from the war-cry *alalai* (cf. LXX Josh 6:20; 1Sam 17:52). This verb is seldom used for the sound of a musical instrument and it is possible that Paul is thinking of the use of cymbals in the army, see K. Ziegler, “Krotalon,” in K. Ziegler and W. Sontheimer, eds., *Der Kleine Pauly: Lexicon der Antike* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1979), 3:364. Cymbals were small and fairly thick and would have sounded like a small bell (Landels, *Music*, 83).

⁸ One of the verbs used in Paul’s last example (not listed above) is textually uncertain. The western manuscripts read: “and if I hand my body over that I might boast” while the Egyptian manuscripts read: “and if I hand my body over in order that it be burnt.” Burning was not a legal punishment for the Romans in Paul’s day, but it did occur in the persecution of Jews in their recent history (Philo, *Flacc.* 66–69; Josephus, *Ant.* 17.167; 2 Macc 7:5; 4 Macc 6:24–26; 7:13). One might also think of Daniel’s three friends (Dan 3:19–20). However, a passage from the letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians seems to plead for the western reading. In 55.2 he seems to refer to 1 Cor 13:3 when he says that many have given themselves over (παραιδιδωμι, as Paul) to slavery in order to redeem others or to feed the poor (ψωμίζω, as Paul). The letter is probably to be dated to around CE 69, see K.L. Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation* (Tyler Texas: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), 176 ff. Others date Clement’s letter to CE 90.

⁹ For this and the following figures and tropes, see further R.D. Anderson, *Glossary of Greek Rhetorical Terms connected to Methods of Argumentation, Figures and Tropes from Anaximenes to Quintilian* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 24; Leuven: Peeters, 2000).

without love. The effect of these examples of spiritual gifts is strengthened by Paul's use of ἀναφορά, the attacking effect created by beginning each clause with the same word, and also by the use of πολυσύνδετον, constant repetition of a connecting particle. The use of ἀναφορά was also associated with amplification (*Rhet. Her.* 4.19). Πολυσύνδετον served to emphasize the multitude of examples used (cf. Demetrius, *Eloc.* 54, 63). With the latter figure Paul creates in his audience the feeling that whatever one might do, if it is without love, it cannot bring any benefit.

After the examination of the opposite, Pseudo Hermogenes directs his students to treat the matter itself, not in a dry "teaching" manner, but forcefully. The forceful description of the matter flows forth from the contrast with its opposite. Paul describes love in a series of short clauses concerned with the effects of love (1Cor 13:4–7). Love is here personified and stands for a person who is characterized by love. These effects of love show us that for Paul, love is more a way of behaving than an emotion. In contrast to the first section he now presents us with a series of clauses without using connecting particles. This effect was generally called ἄσύνδετον in the rhetorical schoolbooks and was considered to be a technique that provided force and emotion to the matter under description (*Rhet. her.* 4.41; Pseudo Longinus, *Subl.* 19–21). The effect of the technique is of course heightened by its juxtaposition to the foregoing πολυσύνδετον. Ἄσύνδετον was often combined with ἀναφορά (see above). Paul allows the tension to slowly increase by adding ἀναφορά only at the third clause. From that moment on each clause begins with a forceful οὐ. The tension in the last four clauses is once again heightened by the addition of ἐπιφορά (a recurring termination) whereby Paul ends each clause with the termination -ει. In this way he achieves a rhetorical climax wherein the negative clauses are transformed into deliberately exaggerated characteristics, which complete the description of love in staccato fashion (each clause has but two words). By means of this carefully thought out application of rhetorical figures, Paul has avoided a dry "didactic" description of love. He has in fact defined love in a way well known to rhetorical teachers, that is, by means of properties and differences (*propria et differentia*, see Quintilian, *Inst.* 5.10.58–64). The rhetorical structure of this definition can be schematized as follows:

Ἡ ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ,	(properties)	
χρηστεύεται ἡ ἀγάπη,		
οὐ ζηλοῖ,	(differences)	– ἀναφορά begins
οὐ περπερεύεται,		
οὐ φυσιοῦται,		
οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ,		
οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς,		
οὐ παροξύνεται,		
οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν,		
οὐ χαίρει ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδικίᾳ,		
συγχαίρει δὲ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ·		
πάντα στέγει,	(properties)	– ἐπιφορά is added
πάντα πιστεύει,		
πάντα ἐλπίζει,		
πάντα ὑπομένει.		

Once the matter itself has been dealt with Pseudo Hermogenes suggests amplifying it by the use of comparisons (συγκρίσεις). Quintilian discusses the use of comparisons as one of the methods of amplification (*Inst.* 8.4.9–14). Paul also now embarks on an extended comparison by comparing love with (the spiritual gifts of) prophecy, languages, and knowledge in terms of their *durability* (1Cor 13:8–13). With this comparison Paul is seeking to do more than just praise the concept of love. In the context of the whole argument of chapters 12–13 he also wishes to relativize the value of these striking gifts of the Spirit. The point of the comparison—durability—is for Paul the overarching thought and *the* point that he desires to make. Love does not disappear, in contrast to the spiritual gifts of prophecy, languages, and knowledge, which will all in time be left unused (καταργέω).¹⁰ In order to emphasize the shorter durability of these gifts of the Spirit, Paul discusses their shortcomings with respect to quantity, maturity, and clarity. The shortcoming with respect to quantity (1Cor 13:9–10) is introduced with the particle γάρ showing that Paul considers this discussion to be an explanation of the fact that these special means of revelation are temporary in nature. At the time of writing Paul concluded that the gifts of knowledge and prophecy were merely piecework. Later, when “the complete” (τὸ τέλειον) would come, the piecework would be left unused. At that time the piecework would be *replaced* by “the complete.” What this “complete” amounts to becomes clearer in v. 13 (see below).

¹⁰ Paul does not state in this chapter exactly when the special revelatory gifts of the Spirit will cease and love (together with faith and hope, see v. 13) will remain. A discussion of this problem goes beyond the intent of this essay. See Anderson, *1 Korintiërs*.

The next image (1 Cor 13:11) illustrates the comparison in durability between love and the special means of revelation in terms of *maturity*. Paul contrasts the communicative properties of a child (νήπιος can mean “baby” or “a child of an age before puberty,” depending on the context) with those of an adult. The special communicative gifts of the Spirit (prophecy, languages, knowledge) are compared here to speaking, thinking, and reasoning as a child. A mature adult leaves everything that had to do with being a child behind. Paul plays here with a double meaning of the word τέλειος from v. 10. It can take both the sense of “complete” as well as that of “mature / grown-up.” “The complete” is here equated to maturity.

Another illustrative image is introduced in v. 12. This time the image concerns the question of *clarity*. Paul creates a contrast between seeing someone in a mirror and seeing the same person face to face.¹¹ Paul was surely thinking of bronze handmirrors, which were very popular in the ancient world, but also quite expensive.¹² When someone stands behind you and you see his image in a bronze mirror, the image can be characterized, according to Paul, as “in a riddle.” Bronze mirrors were quickly affected by corrosion, which fragmented the image. When, however, you turn around and see the person face to face, you see him as he really is.¹³ The image of the mirror is another illustration of the piecework of prophecy and knowledge in comparison to the coming maturity. When one is able to see another person face to face, a mirror is no longer used.

In order to clarify these illustrative images Paul adds that he at this time knows (γινώσκω) only in part, but that “at that time” (that is, when “the complete” comes) he will “come to know” (i.e. recognize, ἐπιγινώσκω) just

¹¹ G. Kittel, “Ἀνιγμα (ἔσοπτρον),” *TDNT* 1:178–180, followed by Schnabel (*Der erste Brief*), finds the point of the image not in the mirror, but in the riddle. According to Kittel, the mirror was a well-known image for all prophetic speaking (he references various rabbinic sources). Kittel, therefore, concludes that Paul is not referring to a hazy mirror image. His reasoning seems rather far-fetched given that on the most natural reading of Paul’s words the phrases “in a mirror” and “in a riddle” complement each other. The average mirror was always to some extent affected by corrosion, which adequately explains Paul’s reference to seeing in a riddle. Bronze mirrors had to be constantly polished to remove corrosion (see Sir 12.11).

¹² Artz-Grabner, *Korinther*.

¹³ Many commentators have not given enough thought to the fact that Paul is using an illustrative image here. This leads to an over-theologizing of what is said with respect to the use of the mirror. The idea of seeing “face to face” is sometimes exalted to a kind of eschatological statement to the effect that believers will eventually see God face to face. Paul does not say *who* is seen face to face because this is not the point of his comparison. He is concerned with the difference between seeing the real thing (“face to face”) and the piecework of an image from a (naturally corroded) bronze mirror.

as he has been recognized. The difference between γινώσκω (“to know”) and ἐπιγινώσκω (“to come to know,” “recognize”) is that between an initial knowledge through perception¹⁴ and a knowledge that is sufficient to speak of recognition.¹⁵ Paul does not state by whom he is recognized. He may be thinking of Christ, but it is equally possible that he is alluding to the fact that he has been recognized in the whole world as an apostle through the signs and wonders that he has worked in the power of the Spirit (see 2 Cor 12:12).

It is through the use of the concrete images of a child versus an adult and of a (corroded) mirror image versus seeing face to face that enables Paul to place his overall comparison between love and the special means of revelation vividly before the eyes of his audience. Vivid description (known as ἐνάργεια), described in terms of putting the matter “before the eyes” of the audience,¹⁶ was a commonplace in ancient rhetoric. Paul himself was very much aware of this technique and describes his own use of it in preaching in Gal 3:1.

In v. 13 Paul finally comes to the conclusion of his extended comparison. While, as stated in v. 8, prophecy, languages, and knowledge (as means of revelation) disappear, love will never pass away. “But *now* faith, hope and love remain.” He adds two other virtues to that of love, namely faith and hope (that is, expectation). These three virtues form a triad that was also used by Paul elsewhere (cf. 1 Thess 1:3; 5:8). And yet love rises above both faith and hope. The manner in which Paul words this closing thought can be characterized as an ἐπιφώνημα (a maxim added as a finishing touch). It is thus at this point that Paul ceases to follow the argumentative schema of a commonplace as described by Pseudo Hermogenes. Indeed, the rest of Pseudo Hermogenes’ arguments do not apply to the treatment of an abstract virtue. The use of an ἐπιφώνημα to close one’s treatment of a theme was recommended by the rhetorical schoolbooks. Theon states that one’s closing thought (ἐπιφώνημα) ought to appropriately and briefly

¹⁴ See LSJ, 350.

¹⁵ The preposition ἐπι- in the verb ἐπιγινώσκω is sometimes interpreted as if it adds the idea of completeness to the verb (cf. BDAG s.v. 1a). It should be said, however, that ἐπιγινώσκω in the sense of “to know fully” is unknown in Greek literature. The only references given for this sense in BDAG are from the New Testament. All of these references can, however, be interpreted in terms of the normal semantic range for this verb. For this reason the existence of a sense “to know fully” ought to be doubted.

¹⁶ E.g. Polybius, 2.56; Trypho, *Trop.* 2.3; *Rhet. her.* 4.68–69; Cicero, *De or.* 2.264; 3.202; *Tog. cand.* 139; *Inv.* 1.107; 2.78; Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.3.61–71.

demonstrate that what has been said is true or good or beneficial or esteemed by other approved men. The general idea is that of a suitable closing comment that leaves the audience favorably disposed to the point that has been argued. Paul's closing thought brings three well-known virtues together, stresses their durability (the point of the comparison with the revelatory gifts of the Spirit), and adds that of these virtues, love remains the greatest.

Whether or not Paul in his treatment of love consciously followed a textbook ordering of techniques cannot be established beyond doubt. Pseudo-Hermogenes' treatise does postdate Paul's letter, although his treatment is traditional and may well have been common in Paul's day. Paul's capable use of several standard progymnasmatic techniques does at least suggest that he may have had some kind of training in these preliminary exercises. It is always possible that his knowledge of such techniques was imbibed from his surrounding culture, apart from any formal education, but the extent to which this chapter uses these techniques suggests otherwise and provides scope for further detailed analysis of Paul's letters from the perspective of progymnasmatic techniques.

“THIS IS A GREAT METAPHOR!”
RECIPROCITY IN THE EPHESIANS HOUSEHOLD CODE

Cynthia Long Westfall

1. INTRODUCTION

The instructions to wives and husbands in Eph 5:21–33 adapt a more basic household formula from Col 3:18–19 by interpreting the marital relationship with a constellation of Pauline metaphors that have been used in the Pauline epistles for Christ’s patron-client relationship with the church. Usually the household codes in the New Testament have been treated as closed units with an identifiable single source outside of the New Testament, but there has been a movement towards understanding them as they function in both their social context in the Greco-Roman culture and in the context of the letters in which they occur in terms of the argument and the author’s theology. The traditional Greco-Roman understanding of the household responsibilities of the wife and husband will be shown to function within the patronage system that was the basic building block of the society. While the Greco-Roman household code for husbands and wives may only be slightly modified with Christian teaching in Col 3:18–4:1, in Eph 5: 21–33 the material from Colossians is significantly edited and expanded in the section on wives and husbands. A reading of Eph 5:22–33 in this socio-cultural and literary context contributes significantly to the understanding of the passage. The Ephesians household code creates a variation on traditional Greco-Roman and Christian themes that maintains the Greco-Roman principle of reciprocity but interprets it in such a way that it is consistent with Pauline teaching and theology on servanthood and so effectively undermines the assumed privileges of the patron in the patronage system without denying social realities of power and dependency.

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON HOUSEHOLD CODES

The relationship between the household codes in the New Testament and household codes in the Greco-Roman culture has been under discussion

since Martin Dibelius categorized a group of texts as *Haustafeln* in 1927: Col 3:13–4:1; Eph 5:22–6:9; 1 Peter 2:18–3:7; Titus 2:1–10; and 1 Tim 2:8–15; 6:1–2.¹ Subsequently, most recent scholarship has narrowed the household codes in the New Testament to a shorter list: Col 3:18–4:1; Eph 5:22–6:9; and 1 Pet 2:18–3:7.² However, the discussion has evolved from the basic form-critical approach that assumed that the New Testament household codes found their source in traditional Greco-Roman or Jewish material.³ The discussion has broadened to include a more extensive literary context, as well as the Greco-Roman culture and the broader societal structure as source materials. In addition, some scholars are reconsidering the possibility that they may reflect Christian teaching. In addition, attention has been given by some of the recent scholarship to the relationship between the household codes and the discourses in which they appear in terms of their theology.

The discussion of the origins of the household codes has largely assumed form-critical assumptions and methodologies. Dibelius's student Karl Weidinger provided the definitive work on the form-critical analysis of the household codes, adopting Dibelius's texts and suggested that the Stoic duty lists were the *Vorlage* or origin of the codes.⁴ In time, that which defined their form was refined to eight common elements according to Marlis Gielen:⁵

1. It is composed of a closed parenetic unit that stands out from its context.
2. The subjects are addressed in pairs in sequence.
3. There is a sub/superordinate relationship between the pairs.
4. The cohesive theme of the unit is subordination.

¹ First published in M. Dibelius, *An die Kolosser* (HNT 12: Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1927). See also M. Dibelius, *An die Kolosser, Epheser, an Philemon* (3rd ed.; HNT; ed. H. Greeven; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1953), 48. Martin Luther coined the term *Haustafel*, rendered "household codes," but it referred to a broader set of exhortations to social groups as in *Luthers Werke, Volksausgabe in acht Bänden* (ed. Kawerau, et. al; Berlin: C.A. Schwtschke und Sohn, 1898), 103.

² As represented by W. Lillie, "The Pauline House-Tables," *ExpTim* 86 (1974–1975): 179–183.

³ I am indebted to J.P. Hering's excellent analysis and summary of the discussion in *The Colossian and Ephesian Haustafeln in Theological Context: An Analysis of Their Origins, Relationship, and Message* (TR 260; New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 9–60.

⁴ K. Weidinger, *Die Haustafeln, ein Stück urchristlicher Paränese* (ed. H. Windisch; UNT 14; Leipzig: J.C. Mohr, 1928).

⁵ Marlis Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie neutestamentlicher Haustafelethik* (eds. Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Helmut Merklein; Athenaeums Monografien: Bonner Biblische Beiträge 75; Frankfurt: Anton Hain, 1990), 3. See also Hering's summary (Hering, *Haustafeln*, 10).

5. The subordinated party is addressed first.
6. It utilizes the nominative plural of direct address with the article.
7. Direct address occurs with imperative exhortation.
8. Exhortation is followed by explanation (exceptions: Col 3:19 and Eph 6:4).

The primary goal of form-critical scholars is the search for an identifiable single-source pre-Christian *Vorlage* that contains these elements in their original social context. It was suggested that the source was either the Stoic duty lists that circulated in the contemporary Hellenistic world view as philosophical propaganda, or Jewish traditional instruction. Either view assumes that the household code is an imported foreign text that is not well integrated into the “host letter.”⁶ Others suggest that the sources include traditional Christian materials such as liturgical, creedal or catechetical texts, but they also assume that the household codes composition and context are distinct from the host letter.⁷ However, scholarship has moved away from assuming an identifiable single source towards accepting a more complex relationship among earlier literary forms.

More recently, scholars such as K.H. Rengstorf, James Crouch, and Klaus Thraede have explored sociological and ethical aspects of the household codes, so that methodology is drawn from social-scientific criticism, which either enhances form criticism or replaces it. Greek and Roman philosophy and Hellenistic Judaism are viewed as being joined together in a social context that reflects economic sources and ethical concerns of the first century.⁸ David Balch expanded the literary context to include source material

⁶ Traditional Jewish instruction as the *Vorlage* is proposed by Ernst Lohmeyer, *Die Briefe an die Philipper, an die Kolosser und an Philemon* (13th ed.; KEK 9; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964).

⁷ Traditional Christian *Vorlage* is proposed by E.G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1946), 18; A. Seeberg, *Der Katechismus der Urchristenheit* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1903); and P. Carrington, *The Primitive Christian Catechism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940).

⁸ The social context of the οἶκος (household) was initially suggested by K.H. Rengstorf, *Die neutestamentlichen Mahnungen an die Frau, sich dem Manne unterzuordnen* (Witten: Luther Verlag, 1953), 133. Twenty years later, James Crouch reflected the trajectory in scholarship when the social context played a crucial role in his argument in *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972). Klaus Thraede placed the household codes in a contemporary debate on order and authority found in economic literature in “Zum historischen Hintergrund der haustafeln des Neuen Testaments,” *Pietas* Sup. Vol. 1980, FS B. Kötting (1980): 359–368.

such as gnomic sentences in the Greek wisdom tradition as well as Plato and Aristotle and works influenced by them, which convincingly places the household texts in a generally known tradition in Greek political thought, and obviates the need to find an identifiable single source.⁹ In addition, there is growing support among scholars such as F. Laub and James Hering for the view that the household codes may represent a genuine Christian composition.¹⁰ Most recently, there is a challenge to the assumption that the household code is a foreign imported element in the “host letter.” James Hering particularly has made an attempt to find a relationship between the theology of Ephesians and Colossians and the household codes.¹¹

The recent developments in scholarship depict the household code texts as relevant to their texts and the political and social context are more consistent with current understanding of how language works.¹² The theories that explain the household codes within the context of the readers’ situation (such as a crisis or the author’s theological or missional concerns for the recipient church) are valid attempts to understand the relevance of the texts.

The assumption that household codes are imported foreign texts that are not well integrated into the “host letter” may be further challenged by a consideration of the theories of intertextuality. Recent studies on intertextuality focus on how an author selects, edits, and utilizes borrowed texts in a new context to make meaning, and how the new context constrains the meaning of the borrowed material. Studies on the use of the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint in the New Testament clarify how an author’s use of quotations, allusions, or other incorporated material can be very complex.¹³ When

⁹ D.L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (SBLMS 26; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

¹⁰ See, for example F. Laub, “Sozialgeschichtlicher Hintergrund und ekklesiologische Relevanz der neutestamentlich-früchristlichen Haus- und Gemeinde-Tafelparänese—ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des Frühchristentums,” *MTZ* 37 (1986): 249–271. See also Herring, *Haustafeln*.

¹¹ Herring, *Haustafeln*.

¹² Relevance and coherence are considered to be properties of texts. Pragmatics, a branch of linguistics, includes the assumption of the relevance of communication. One commonly cited axiom of relevance theory is: “The speaker tries to make the utterance as relevant as possible to the hearer” (J.T. Reed, “Modern Linguistics and the New Testament: A Basic Guide to Theory, Terminology and Literature,” in S.E. Porter and D. Tombs, eds., *Approaches to New Testament Study* [JSNTSup 120; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 242). It is based on Sperber and Wilson’s axiom of relevance, in D. Sperber and D. Wilson, *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 118–171.

¹³ For an introduction to the discussion on the role of intertextuality or the use of the Hebrew Bible and the LXX in the New Testament, see J.M. Court, ed., *New Testament*

an author “borrows” another text, the borrowed text is transformed by its new context and by any interpretation that the author makes. The material should be interpreted in its new literary context and the context of the original text should not be automatically imported into the new text. The sources from Greek and Roman philosophy, Hellenistic Judaism, or Christian tradition should be handled in the same way as biblical quotations, particularly if it is apparent that the material has been edited by the author. According to intertextuality, it should be assumed that any choice by an author or editor to utilize a source is a motivated choice that is coherent and consistent with the author’s purpose.¹⁴

3. THE HOUSEHOLD CODE AND RECIPROCITY IN THE PATRONAGE SYSTEM

3.1. Introduction:

Reciprocity as the Building Block of Greco-Roman Culture

David Balch convincingly shows that classical Greek philosophers developed “classical *topoi*” that have strong parallels to the New Testament household codes. They included an “exact outline” of three household pairs (husband-wife, father-children, and master-slave) and the concern for authority and subordination. The *topoi* developed by Plato and Aristotle were promoted through the Greco-Roman period by Middle Platonists,

Writers and the Old Testament: An Introduction (London: SPCK, 2002); Steve Moyise, ed., *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J.L. North* (JSNTSup 189; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); S.E. Porter, ed., *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament* (McMaster New Testament Studies; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006). For concerns about the term “intertextuality,” see S.E. Porter, “The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” in C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders, eds., *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals* (JSNTSup 148; SSEJC 5; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 79–96; S.E. Porter, “Further Comments on the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” in Thomas L. Brodie, Dennis R. MacDonald, and Stanley E. Porter, eds., *The Intertextuality of the Epistles: Explorations of Theory and Practice* (NTM 16; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2006), 98–110.

¹⁴ Coherence is one of the properties that defines a text and allows it to make sense. It involves both the nature of the text and the readers’/hearers’ ability to interpret the text coherently. Though texts will vary in the degree of coherence, according to M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, in order to be a text, it must be coherent with the context of situation, and coherent with respect to itself. The coherence of a text with respect to itself involves cohesion which is the formal links within a passage or a discourse that makes it “hang together” internally and with its immediate co-text. M.A.K. Halliday and R. Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (English Language Series; London: Longman, 1976), 4–5.

Peripatetics, Stoics, Epicureans, Hellenistic Jews, and Neopythagoreans, and so were widely available.¹⁵

The relationship between these three household pairs may be placed in the broad context of the patronage system, which is considered the basic building block of Greco-Roman society. Each pair represents a form of the patron-client relationship that is “marked by the mutual exchange of desired goods and services.”¹⁶ Though it may occur between people of equal social status as in “friendships,” the default paradigm of the relationship is between people of unequal social status (a benefactor and a recipient) as described by David DeSilva:

Someone of lesser power, honor and wealth seeks out the aid of a person of superior power, honor and wealth. The kinds of benefits exchanged between such people will be different in kind and quality, the patron providing material gifts or opportunities for advancement, the client contributing to the patron’s reputation and power base.¹⁷

All social classes participated in the patronage system in some way and formed relationships of reciprocity. When a person receives a gift they also receive an obligation to respond appropriately to one’s benefactors with gratitude and loyalty. As Seneca says, “The person who intends to be grateful, even while she or he is receiving, should turn his or her thoughts to returning the favor” (*Ben.* 2.25.3). DeSilva concludes that,

Grace ... held two parties together in a bond of reciprocal exchanges, a bond in which each party committed to provide what he or she (or they) could to serve the needs or desires of the other In the case of social equals, this amounted to an exchange of like goods and services, always within the context of mutual loyalty and commitment. Between a social or political superior and his or her juniors, goods and opportunities were channeled down from above, and respect, public praise and loyal service were returned from below, again within the context of mutual commitment. Giving was to be done for the sake of generosity and bringing another benefit, and not with a view to profit from returns. Receiving, however, was always to be accompanied by the desire and commitment to return grace for grace.¹⁸

¹⁵ See Balch’s summary in *Domestic Code*, 61–62, and the detailed argument with support in 23–59.

¹⁶ D.A. DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 97.

¹⁷ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 99.

¹⁸ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 118.

3.2. Patronage and Reciprocity in Marriage

The husband and wife are usually unequal partners in the patronage system in the Greco-Roman world. The husband functions as the benefactor and the woman functions as the inferior party in the marital relationship.¹⁹ Patronage between unequal pairs often consisted of both authority and reciprocity, which were reflected in the household. The authority of the husband in the household was held to be of vital importance, while the wife received her identity, social position, and a share in the property from her husband and her husband's family (with the exception of the Roman practice of marrying without *manus*),²⁰ and the two had equal and reciprocal obligations towards each other.

Patronage is the basic building block of the Greco-Roman society, and the household relationships were believed to be the foundation of the political system. Ancient authors such as Plato and the Stoics often saw an analogy between the household and the city or the state, so that, as DeSilva observes, the household "is a kind of microcosm" of the society's structures.²¹ The Athenian wife during the classical period was thought to hold the entire city state together by her commitment to the integrity of the *oikos*.²² Platonic-Aristotelian ideas about the relationship of the household to political science influenced Roman Stoics and Hellenistic Jews such as Philo and Josephus.²³ As the patron or the benefactor in the relationship, the husband represents rulers and the mighty who hold the power in the relationship.²⁴ As Balch stated, "a rejection of the husband's authority by

¹⁹ Russ Dudley, "'Submit Yourself to One Another': A Socio-Historical Look at the Household Code of Ephesians 5:15–6:9," *RQ* 41 (1999): 39, concludes that in such an arrangement, "The patriarchs of ancient households were likely to feel that they *owned* their wives, their children, and their slaves." However, the assumed ownership of women is disputed.

²⁰ In the late Roman Republic, marriage without *manus* was common, where the wife remained under the authority of her father or guardian and she retained her property from her family lineage. It also meant she had no rights over her husband's property (S.B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* [New York: Schocken, 1975], 155). It was beneficial to wealthy women and alters the reciprocity of the marital relationship. It also destabilized marriages.

²¹ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 179–180. Aristotle (*Pol.* 1.1252a7–9) did not like the comparison between a "house" and a "city" because it confused various kinds of authority and rule.

²² W.K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 100–104.

²³ See, for example Philo, *Ios.* 38–39; cf. Philo, *Ios.* 54.

²⁴ Craig Evans, "King Jesus and His Ambassadors: Empire and Luke-Acts," in Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall, eds., *Empire in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 120–139, associates benefaction with authority and power: "Luke's readers would readily interpret the reference to 'benefactors' in the context of rulers and the mighty,

the wife, or of the master's authority by the slave or of the father's authority by sons led to anarchy in both home and city, to the rejection of the king's authority, and to the *degeneration* of the constitution from monarchy to democracy."²⁵ The control of a wife's sexuality was also particularly important to the entire society. Russ Dudrey states:

A sexually loose wife confuses the question of inheritance and succession, casting doubt on the legitimacy of all her children, and bringing shame and confusion on the entire kinship group. This value holds everywhere in the cultural world of the NT.²⁶

Though the wife's commitment to the integrity of the household was vital and her honorable contribution of legitimate children to the succession was central, she generally was considered to be subject because of her essential inferiority. The husband and wife in the household represented the hierarchy (superior/inferior), societal status (more/less), and sex role (penetrator/penetrated) (Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 728a18–20; 737a25–35; 775a 15).

Usually the husband and wife share the same identity in the Greco-Roman world. DeSilva states, "A person's family of origin is the primary source for his or her status and location in the world and an essential reference point for the person's identity."²⁷ However, women left their father's or guardian's household and took the identity, social status, religion, and location in the world of her husband's family. Through him, she would often be able to claim a share in the husband's family property. The Roman custom of marriage without *manus* is an exception to this practice. It became normal in Rome during the late empire to keep the wife under the authority of her father's or guardian's household. This is not addressed in the Ephesians household code. Similarly, the actual authority patterns in the family are not addressed. The *paterfamilias* or legal authority in the husband's household was not necessarily the husband in the case of extended families or slaves. The *paterfamilias* could be the husband's grandfather or another male member of the family, and the master of the household would be the authority over a female slave, not her husband. We see that the Ephesians

the very people who lord it over others, defining their tyrannical rule with the euphemism 'benefaction.' Luke's readers knew that the epithet 'benefactor' (εὐεργέτης) was commonly bestowed on gods, kings, and wealthy and powerful men who contribute to society" (125–126).

²⁵ Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 76.

²⁶ Dudrey, "Submit," 27–44 (29).

²⁷ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 158.

household code places the focus on a shared identity, social status, and location in the world that the wife would derive directly from her husband, rather than from her relationship with her own family, her husband's family, the *paterfamilias*, or her master's household.

The marital relationship was characterized by reciprocity. Significantly, Seneca speaks of the "reciprocal and equal obligations" of parents to children, and husbands to wives (*Ben.* 2.18.1–2).²⁸ Many of the ancient writers stressed the "duty," "responsibility," and "care" that went with the husband's authority.²⁹ In return, the wives were to strive to be "worthy women." Piety, chastity, domesticity, and submissiveness were virtues that defined the "worthy woman."³⁰ A Neo-Pythagorean text of the third-second century BCE asserted: "A woman's greatest virtue is chastity. Because of this quality she is able to honor and to cherish her own particular husband."³¹ Providing the husband with unquestioned legitimate offspring was one of the primary ways that a woman could honor her husband.³² So the basic patronage relationship is in place in the marital relationship where the benefactor or patron is the superior in power and wealth, and the wife, who is the recipient of his care, returns respect, public praise, and loyal service, honoring him particularly through her obedience and chastity. The elements of submission and honor appear in the Ephesians household code as a wife's application of being filled with the Spirit, but it appears in the context of mutual submission and honor. There were additional elements of reciprocity in marriage that appear in marriage covenants and contracts.

²⁸ According to DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 186, "Children are held to have incurred a debt to their parents that they can never repay, so that the virtuous person will honor the parents, and 'return the favors' bestowed by the parents throughout childhood for the remainder of the parents' lives."

²⁹ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 179.

³⁰ Piety, chastity, modesty, and other traits of "worthy women" were often simply given as abbreviations on Roman tombstones, which shows they were understood as common or stereotypical (Richard Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1942], 290–299). Dudrey, "Submit," 32, rightly argues that though we must beware of drawing conclusions through anecdotal sources and diachronic literature rather than synchronic literature, the diachronic picture of the social reality for wives is evident in the literary and non-literary evidence spanning Proverbs and Homer to Egyptian papyri and Roman legal material and tomb inscriptions. Dudrey describes these character traits as ubiquitous or "supercultural" (38–39).

³¹ Text from a Pythagorean sect in Italy, ca. 3rd–2nd century BCE; cited from Mary R. Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant, *Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 104.

³² Dudrey, "Submit," 29.

3.2. *Function of Reciprocity in Marriage Covenants and Contracts*

The Ephesians household code reflects three actions that were held to be the appropriate care of a husband for a wife in the ancient Near East as well as in the first-century Greco-Roman culture, which is shown in various texts. In Exodus 21:10, there is a stipulation that a second wife must not be preferred over the first wife even if she had been a slave, and the first wife is given a three-fold maintenance clause: she is entitled to food, clothing, and marital relations. In the ancient Near East, marriage covenants were most often stated verbally at a ceremony before witnesses, but if the dowry (payment by the bride's father to the groom) was unusually large or there were unusual stipulations, it was written down.³³ The two features in Exodus 21:10 are parallel to stipulations that occur regularly in ancient Near Eastern texts: a man may not take a second wife in preference to the first, and he is obligated to provide food, anointing oil, and clothing for her.³⁴ Much later in Egyptian papyri from the Byzantine period, three parallel essential needs are brought up in addressing an injustice perpetrated against a widow: θάλπειν καὶ τρέφειν καὶ ἱματίζειν αὐτήν (care, food, and clothes).³⁵ These three obligations are very close to the terminology of the husbands' treatment of wives in Eph 5:22–33. Christ models clothing the wife (corresponding to ἱματίζειν) in a laundered garment (5:27), and the proper care for the body (ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν) models feeding and taking care of the wife (5:29).

The obligations to nurture, food, and clothes were guards against exploitation and material neglect of wives and widows, who were vulnerable because their lives were dependent on the provision of raw goods and ser-

³³ David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 8.

³⁴ Shalom M. Paul, "Exod. 21:10: A Threefold Maintenance Clause," *JNES* 28 (1969): 48–53. The sexual faithfulness of the wife was an unwritten stipulation—all ancient Near Eastern codes that have rulings about adultery prescribe capital punishment.

³⁵ This is a widow's petition for justice. The widow Sophia's first husband died, leaving an underage child. Then a man defrauded her of everything she owned. She married a second time and another man killed her husband and beat her up, and a third perpetrator who was supposed to be a "helper" (βοηθός) took her son away and refused to give him back. M.J. Maspero, *Catalogue general des antiquités égyptiennes du musée du Caire: Papyrus Grecs d'Époque Byzantine* (Le Caire: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1911), 1:67005:18–33, see 33 line 132. Similarly, in a contract of apprenticeship, the father is obligated to provide τρεφομένου καὶ ἱματισζομένου (food/support and clothing) ("Contract of Apprenticeship," in *Selections from the Greek Papyri: Edited with Translations and Notes* [ed. G. Milligan; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910], 54–58 [56]). Thus, these two terms particularly indicate basic essentials.

vices from husbands and guardians.³⁶ Later, the rabbinic courts defined the mutual obligations more specifically, which are consistent with the expectations for gender roles in Greco-Roman culture, and they were also explicitly reciprocal. By the first century, teachers of the law interpreted Exodus 21:10 in terms of a reciprocal relationship between husbands and wives. They determined that both partners in the marriage had equal obligations in the areas of marital love, feeding, and clothing.³⁷ Men were to provide the raw material for the home such as wheat, barley, oil, figs, flax, and wool.³⁸ Women were to turn the raw material into finished products: they were to prepare the food, make the clothing and other articles such as bedding for the household in the home, and care for the children, as stated in the *Mishnah Ketuboth* 5.5.³⁹

These are the kinds of labour which a woman performs for her husband: she grinds flour, bakes bread, does laundry, prepares meals, feeds her child, makes the bed, works in wool.

The rabbinic discussion reflects the two different systems (the public and private domestic sphere) that men and women were expected to belong to in the Greco-Roman world, and perpetuated traditional roles that were common in the Hellenistic world, and were related to the traditional values that were brought forward from the Greek classical period. The Stoic Hierocles summarized the traditional Greek gender roles aptly: "These therefore are to be divided after the accustomed manner; rural, forensic, and political works are to be attributed to the husband; but to the wife, such works as pertain to spinning wool, making of bread, cooking, and in short everything of a domestic nature."⁴⁰ The husband's "rural" work included providing the raw materials for the wife's labor from farming, and the public function of any economic transactions were considered to be a man's role and part of the public domain. Therefore, in the Greco-Roman world, men and women were considered to belong to two different systems, which is reflected in the rabbinic discussion. Women's work in the domestic sphere had a lower

³⁶ However, marriage without *manus* decreased the dependency of wealthy women on their husbands.

³⁷ The issue was discussed in the schools of Hillel and Shammai. See the discussion in Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage*, 99–103.

³⁸ See, for example, the list of food and items a man must provide for the care of his wife in *m. Ketub.* 5.8.

³⁹ See also Pomeroy, *Goddesses*, 71–73, for a similar description of the woman's role in Athens during the 6th century BCE.

⁴⁰ Hierocles, 5.696, 23–697, 3 (Hense).

value and status. It was comparable to slave's work and it was delegated to slaves when possible, with the possible exception of spinning. This is in contrast with men's work that took place in the public sphere.

From the Hellenistic period on, some of the lines between the two spheres were blurred in that women were entering the public sphere in various capacities. However, three things must be noted. First, regardless of inconsistency with the actual behavior of women in the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman period, the traditional values were still in place and sometimes they were strengthened through positive rhetoric and polemic. They were held up as standards by which individuals and fringe religious sects were judged.⁴¹ Second, the opposite did not hold true. There was not a detectable complementary movement as there is now for "stay at home fathers" who took responsibility for domestic tasks. Some of the domestic tasks were also done by men in the public domain and involved economic transaction, such as laundry. However, the standards for masculinity appear to have remained more stable in practice, consistent with the reluctance of those in a position of privilege to surrender their advantage. Third, the rabbinic action of "marital love" may not have been understood by the broader culture in the same way. It may have been seen as "nurture" or "care" (consistent with the widow's provision). At any rate, the requirement of chastity or sexual faithfulness was not necessarily binding for the man in the Greco-Roman world.

The Ephesians household code must be read through this complex lens. The husbands are motivated to do the three actions that reflect traditional expectations of husbands in the wider culture (θάλπειν καὶ τρέφειν καὶ ἰματίζειν), but the way the author expands on and describes these actions are not traditional. Whether one considers Christ's example (5:25–27) or the metaphor of the care of the body (5:28–31), the applications of the three actions in this passage belong in the domestic sphere and correspond to activities related to the woman's role in the home: providing clothing (that is already made, not raw material), doing laundry including washing and ironing, bathing, feeding, and nurturing. In effect, the husbands are told to serve their wives by doing low status women's or slave's work.

⁴¹ See Balch's (*Let Wives be Submissive*, 63–80) extended argument about the Greco-Roman criticism of minority religious communities that focused on precisely how women related to their husbands.

4. THE INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE HOUSEHOLD CODE IN EPHESIANS 5 TO COLOSSIANS 3:13–4:1

One of the keys to unlocking the meaning in the household code in Ephesians and understanding what is being done with language is a comparison of it with the household code in Colossians 3:13–4:1. The household code in Ephesians is dependent on Colossians for similar reasons that Markan priority is assumed for the Synoptic Gospels.⁴² While form critics have looked for an identifiable single pre-Christian source for the New Testament household codes, at least we can treat Colossians as the identifiable single source for the household code in Ephesians. Either Paul has adapted his own material, or a later writer has edited the shorter version in Colossians. What has been edited or added is central to the editor's theology, the purpose of this version of the household code, and its function in Ephesians.⁴³ If Paul wrote it, it represents either a later or more likely a more complete representation of the household code than the Colossians passage.⁴⁴ If it was written by a later author, the author was familiar with at least 1 Corinthians and Colossians. However, this rendition of the household code was not on a trajectory with a traditional view of the household.

The basic commands to wives and husbands in Col 3:18–19 are streamlined in Ephesians:

Col	Αἱ γυναῖκες, ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ὡς ἀνήκεν ἐν κυρίῳ.
Eph	αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ
Col	Οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπάτε τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ μὴ πικραίνεσθε πρὸς αὐτάς
Eph	Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπάτε τὰς γυναῖκας

⁴² The priority of Colossians will hold up whether Paul or a later follower of Paul is the author of Ephesians and/or Colossians. Either Paul wrote Ephesians after he wrote Colossians, or a later follower of Paul was responsible for both or used Colossians to write Ephesians. Furthermore, Ephesians demonstrates familiarity with the Pauline corpus, and combines Pauline metaphors from other corpus in a unique way in the passage.

⁴³ As Hering argues, "The result of the Ephesians author's redaction is a HT which is, to a greater degree than its Colossian counterpart, a vehicle of the theology of the letter" (Hering, *Haustafeln*, 201).

⁴⁴ Pauline authorship of Ephesians is widely contested. For an extensive discussion of the authorship, see H.W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 2–61. It is beyond the purposes of this chapter to discuss the authorship of Ephesians. The author edited the Colossian household code, he was familiar with much or all of the Pauline corpus and he utilized Pauline metaphors that are combined in new ways. These assumptions hold true whether Paul wrote it or a later follower wrote it. I have not come to the point of seeing weighty reasons against Paul's authorship, but I do not want to make Pauline authorship a fencing point.

The instructions for wives in Ephesians deliberately omits the command ὑποτάσσεσθε and the command for husbands not to be harsh with their wives is omitted.⁴⁵ But the rest of Eph 5:22–33 builds on the instructions to wives and husbands and interprets them. Colossians places prominence on the slave-master relationship, but Ephesians devotes approximately 60 % of the code to the wife-husband relationship placing prominence on it.

The two codes share some of the common elements that define the household codes.⁴⁶ The same three pairs of relationships are treated in the same sequence in the two passages. There is a sub/superordinate relationship between the pairs and the subordinated party is addressed first. They both utilize the nominative plural of direct address with the article, and exhortation (or address) is followed by explanation with the exceptions of Col 3:19 and Eph 6:4.

However, the editing of the Ephesians household code shows some deviation from the eight common elements that are held to define the household code. It is not a closed parenetic unit, but it is grammatically embedded in a complex sentence, which is a command to be filled with the Spirit. The cohesive theme of the wife-husband relationship is not subordination. In the instructions to the wives and husbands, the instruction for the husband who is the “superordinate” is far more prominent. This prominence is demonstrated by the number of commands given to the husband and the amount of expansion given to the husband’s commands (5:25–32) as well as the focus on the husband in the summary/conclusion in 5:33. Finally, the element of imperative exhortation is missing from the instructions to the wives.⁴⁷ Though she is the first addressed, her obligations are relatively backgrounded by the grammar, though semantically significant to the unit. In the summary/conclusion in 5:33, her obligations are mentioned again, but in a dependent purpose clause rather than in a parallel command.

Each of these elements that are changed from the Colossian code are significant for the meaning of the passage. The meaning of the added explanations will form the bulk of the following discussion, but the significance

⁴⁵ See the discussion on the textual variants below.

⁴⁶ See the eight common elements in the household codes above in the discussion of form criticism.

⁴⁷ There is are textual variations where some form of ὑποτάσσω is supplied—either the 2nd person plural or the 3rd person plural. As Lincoln concludes, “these longer readings are all best explained as scribal additions for the sake of clarity” (Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* [WBC 42; Dallas: Word, 1990], 351 n. a). The shorter reading is certainly the more difficult reading.

of the way the household code is formally embedded in the previous context merits further attention. The material about wives, which is the point of departure for the household code, is embedded in the previous complex sentence in 5:18–21, which is a command to be filled by the Spirit. It is further embedded in the last of five participial phrases that expand the command to be filled by the Spirit. Significantly, Colossians has a parallel complex sentence to “The word of Christ must dwell in you richly,” which is expanded by four participles (Col 3:16–17), but the household code that directly follows in 3:18–4:1 begins with a finite verbal clause. In contrast, the phrase in Eph 5:22 that introduces wives in relationship to their husbands is a grammatical expansion of the participial phrase ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ (submitting to each other with the fear of Christ). The reason this is so is that 5:22 lacks any kind of verb, so that it is understood that the participle from 5:21 is still activated in 5:22: αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ (wives to their own husbands as to the Lord). Shared information about the cultural expectation and role of women would assist a first-century reader to understand submission as being carried forward as the verb in the clause, but that submission is constrained in an uncharacteristic way as “mutual submission.”⁴⁸ The editing and structure of the point of departure of the household code has several important connotations.

First, the sentence that begins in 5:18 formally ends with the dependent clause in 5:23: ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἐστὶν κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικὸς ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος (because the husband is the wife’s head as also Christ is the head of the church, he being the savior of the body). Therefore, the command to be filled by the spirit; the series of participial phrases that explain the manner, means, or result of being filled with the Spirit; and the instructions to the wives in vv. 22–23 all make one periodic sentence. Since the household code is a recognizable and coherent unity, the significance of the grammar is that it makes the entire household code part of the instructions to be filled by the Spirit, so it belongs to a larger unit: 5:18–6:9.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Dudrey, “Submission,” 40, argues, “That Paul upholds the existing social order is not primary, but secondary: it is his opening gambit, his communication bridge to his audience, which he crosses over with the new and transforming perspective of Christ.”

⁴⁹ Lincoln is in agreement that the household code is joined to the main verb “be filled,” but he finds the beginning of the section in 5:15, and sees the entire unit as being about “walking wisely” or conduct (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 338). Contra Markus Barth, *Ephesians 4–6* (AB 34A; New York: Doubleday, 1974), 609, who talks about the Ephesians household code as being the only version that “opens with a call to mutual subordination.” A participial phase

Second, the relationship of the wives to the husband is therefore an extension of being filled with the Spirit as well as an extension of mutual submission. The submission of the wives is consistent with the four previous participles of mutual encouragement; furthermore, it is an application of every believer's obligation. Through the editing, the author is making the point that women are not asked to do anything more than all Christians are asked to do. As DeSilva says,

The more universal rules ... apply all the more within the Christian natural household. This is something that Paul brings out forcefully in Ephesians 5:21, the preface to the entire household code: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." Mutual love, unity, cooperation for one another's good, putting the interests of the other ahead of one's own—all these form the relational context in which these household codes are to be enacted and the interpretive lens through which they are to be understood and applied.⁵⁰

The fact that a woman is expected to submit (ὑποτάσσω) rather than obey (ὑπακούω) as are the children and slaves is significant. Not only does it reflect every believer's responsibility, but the diachronic material overwhelmingly describes a wife's role as obedience, so that the change in the terminology in the source passages in Colossians and Ephesians should be flagged as marked in its use in the household register, though not without precedent.⁵¹

Third, the wife is not addressed with a formal command. The participle ὑποτασσόμενοι in 5:21 is understood as the verb that is carried forward into the wives' instructions. In fact, wives are not given a single formal command in Eph 5:22–33 and the word "submit" does not appear in 5:22–24, which

that is part of a series is hardly a signal for an opening of a new unit. Ernst Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (ICC; London: T&T Clark, 1998), 531, follows a traditional division and starts the unit with 5:21 as it is the start of the household code, saying "This verse lacks a verb and this needs to be supplied from v. 21." However, he apparently finds no significance in the unusual grammatical features or the link with 5:21, though he discusses the options. He concludes that the juxtaposition of mutual submission and a unit on subordination reflects "an unresolved tension between authority and mutuality" (517).

⁵⁰ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 230.

⁵¹ This is significant also in the omission of the ruling function of the husband, which corresponds to obedience in the traditional texts. However, the significance of the difference between ὑποτάσσω and ὑπακούω is not without challenge. For example, Best, *Ephesians*, 517, finds ὑποτάσσω to be "a strong word" and used in relation to slaves (Tit 2:9; 1Pet 2:18). Nevertheless, the difference between the words is indicated with one clear distinction that is incontrovertible: the author speaks of mutual submission, but to the best of my knowledge one does not find a comparable example of mutual obedience. They are therefore not interchangeable in this context.

is not apparent in English translations. In contrast, husbands are exhorted with two imperatives in 5:25 and 5:33 (ἀγαπάτε, ἀγαπάτω [love, 2nd pl, 3rd pl]), and the modal ὀφείλουσιν (ought to) in 5:28, which indicates obligation and is semantically a command. This pattern is particularly shown to be intentional and significant in the conclusion of the passage in 5:33 where the husbands' and wives' mutual obligations are summarized and the husband is commanded with the finite command, but the wife's obligation occurs in a dependent purpose clause, indicating that her behavior is the goal or outcome of the husband's behavior:

Πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἑνα, ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν, ἥ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.

Nevertheless, each one of you (emphatic) must love his own wife but [this is done] in order that the wife might fear/honor (pres mid subj) the husband.

Therefore, there is an emphatic focus on the husband with the finite command and added emphasis on "each one of you," as a well as a logical connection (ἵνα) between the husband's behavior and the wife's honor or fear of the husband, which will be discussed further below. The continued link between the wife's obligation and 5:21 to submit in the fear of the Lord (ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ), is strengthened with repetition of φοβέω in 5:33.⁵² The grammatical patterns and cohesive ties between the wives' obligation and 5:21 have the effect of both once more demonstrating the formal connection of the wife's submission to the mutual submission in 5:21, and place the grammatical focus of this part of the household code on husbands, which is confirmed by the amount of material that expands or explains the husbands' responsibility.

Given the assumed priority of Colossians and the discussions on Ephesians relationship to Colossians and the rest of the Pauline corpus, it may seem surprising that more attention has not been given in commentaries to the significance of the grammatical editing of the point of departure of the household code in 5:22.⁵³ The editing must be treated as an intentional

⁵² Markus Barth, *Ephesians 4–6*, 662–668, has a helpful explanation of the relationship between the fear of the Lord and the wife's fear of her husband. The fear of Christ is occasioned by the "good and glorious things achieved by Christ" (667). "It becomes clear why and in which sense Paul can also hope that a wife would fear the husband who loves her (vs. 33): fear without love would be horrible. Just as God's love of man and man's responding love of God are the basis of the fear of God, so only the wife who is joined to her husband by love can fear her husband" (667).

⁵³ A helpful discussion on the redaction of the passage is Hering, *Haustafeln*, 137–156, who discusses the "transformation" in detail and offers a helpful chart (137–138) that illustrates

and significant signal that functions at the discourse level. The immediate outcome is that the traditional relationship of the woman with her husband is maintained but reframed and placed as an application of Christian discipline and the praxis of mutuality that is a theme in Ephesians and applies to every believer. The broader outcome is that the relationship between all three of the sub/superordinate pairs in the household code are reframed.

5. A READING OF THE EPHESIANS HOUSEHOLD CODE IN ITS SOCIO-CULTURAL AND LITERARY CONTEXT

In the Ephesians household code, the wives' and husbands' marital responsibilities are understood in the context of the patron-client relationship and the principle of reciprocity. As the client in the marital relationship, the wife is under an obligation for the benefits that she receives from her husband, which, in terms of the culture, should result in submission and honor of the patron, her husband. A patron-client correlation is drawn between the husband's relationship to the wife and Christ's relationship to the church. In the case of husbands, their responsibilities as patrons are not a direct reflection of either the household codes or the status and benefits of a patron. Instead, the model for the patron is Christ and his relationship to the church. Pauline metaphors are used to correlate the relationship between the husband and wife with Christ and the church, with a transformative effect so that mutual reciprocity becomes mutual submission.

5.1. *Wives' Reciprocal Relationship with Husbands*

The wife's application of the command to be filled with the Spirit and the expectation of the Christian community to submit to one another in the fear of the Lord is to submit to her husband as she does to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.⁵⁴ As Hering observes, the relatively ambiguous Colossians formulation to submit "as is appropriate in the Lord"

the redaction. But see also Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 354–355, and B. Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 55. Interestingly, D. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 659, finds a break here regardless of grammar, observing that 5:22 is the first major section that does not begin with a conjunction since 1:3.

⁵⁴ As Dudrey "Submission," 41, says, "Thoughts of reciprocity did exist in some non-Christian *Haustafeln*. Thus, while it is not unique to Christianity, the transforming power of its driving force is."

(Col 3:18b) is strengthened in Eph 5:23–24 “indicating a more direct level of identification of the wives’ behavior with their relation to Christ.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, it is strengthened by the addition of “in all things,” which may reflect the nature of the Christ-church relationship. The patron-client relationship is directly related to the description of the two patrons (the husband and Christ) as the head of the clients (the wife and the church).

An understanding of the meaning of “head” has rightly been understood as essential to the interpretation of the passage, and its meaning has been a storm center in recent scholarship. As part of an ongoing argument about the meaning of κεφαλή in 1 Corinthians 11:3, Fitzmyer breaks down the semantic range of κεφαλή into 5 meanings. First, it means head in the anatomical sense of the word (the vast majority); second, it is a synecdoche for the whole person in a number of occurrences; third, it has the metaphoric sense of “source” in seven sources; fourth, he finds the word is a metaphor for “leader, ruler, person in authority” in sixteen passages.⁵⁶ Fitzmyer concludes:

These examples show us that *kephalē* could indeed be used in the sense of “source.” Though it does not occur in as many instances as *kephalē* in the sense of “ruler, leader,” there is no reason to see it as the meaning intended in 1 Corinthians 11:3, as claimed by writers such as Barrett, Bruce, Cervin, Cope, Delobel, the Mickelsons, or Murphy-O’Connor. For the question still remains whether the meaning ‘source’ is any better than the traditional understanding of *kephalē* as “leader, ruler.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Hering, *Haustafeln*, 142.

⁵⁶ The interested reader may familiarize themselves with the discussion through the following sources: Stephen Bedale, “The Meaning of κεφαλή in the Pauline Epistles,” *JTS* 5 (1954): 211–215; R. Scroggs, “Paul and the Eschatological Woman,” *JAA* 40 (1972): 283–303; J. Murphy-O’Connor, “Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16,” *CBQ* 42 (1980): 482–500; B. Mickelsen and A. Mickelsen, “Does Male Dominance Tarnish Our Translations?,” *Christianity Today* 5 (1979): 23–29; B. Mickelsen and A. Mickelsen, “The ‘Head’ of the Epistles,” *Christianity Today* 20 (1981): 20–23; W. Grudem, “Does *kephalē* (‘head’) Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority Over’ in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples,” *TrinJ* 6 (1985): 38–59; it also appears as an appendix in G.W. Knight III, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women* (rev. ed.; Chicago: Moody, 1985); R.S. Cervin, “Κεφαλή in Greek Literature,” *TrinJ* 10 (1985): 85–112; B. Mickelsen and A. Mickelsen, “What Does *Kephalē* Mean in the New Testament?,” in A. Mickelsen, ed., *Women, Authority and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 97–110; P.B. Payne, “What Does *Kephalē* Mean in the New Testament?: Response,” in *Women, Authority*, 118–132; J.A. Fitzmyer, “Another Look at ΚΕΦΑΛΗ in 1 Cor 11:3,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 503–511; J.A. Fitzmyer, “*Kephalē* in 1 Cor 11:3,” *Int* 47 (1993): 32–59; W. Grudem, “Appendix 1: The Meaning of *Kephalē* (‘Head’): A Response to Recent Studies,” in J. Piper and W. Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 425–468.

⁵⁷ J.A. Fitzmyer, “Another Look,” 510.

For the sake of argument, I am willing to take Fitzmyer's caveat as a point of departure,⁵⁸ though a strong case has been made for "preeminent" as being either part of the semantic range or a preferred replacement for "leader, ruler."⁵⁹ In Eph 5:22, there are good reasons to see "source" (or a nuanced gloss) as a better understanding than the traditional understanding of κεφαλή (head) as a reference to authority in this passage. The primary reason to understand head as "source" is the way its meaning is constrained by the context.

First, the expectation of mutual submission in 5:21 does not activate a hierarchical understanding as may be expected in the beginning of household codes—rather it points towards the opposite understanding of mutuality as a starting point for conducting household relationships in a manner that reflects the filling of the Spirit in the family of God.

Second, κεφαλή (head) is constrained by the explicit expansion of Christ's identity as "savior" (σωτήρ). The range of meaning of σωτήρ includes the close and overlapping meanings of one who rescues: rescuer/savior, deliverer or preserver.⁶⁰ It may be argued that it would constrain "head" to mean

⁵⁸ LSJ, the best lexicon to consult for both synchronic and diachronic use of ancient Greek, do not list "leader, ruler, person in authority" as a possible meaning for κεφαλή. It is not a natural metaphor that was employed in ancient Greek (see Heinrich Schlier, "κεφαλή," *TDNT* 3:673–681 [676]). A majority of the sixteen instances where he finds the word means "leader, ruler, person in authority" were generated by the translators either selecting the "wrong alternate meaning of a word" or a choosing to practice what we would call "formal equivalence" when translating from Hebrew (LXX) and Latin into Greek—for example five instances are a translation of מֶלֶךְ in the LXX, out of a total of 180 instances where מֶלֶךְ is a metaphor for "leader, ruler." The language in the LXX then conceivably influenced the language of Philo, Josephus, and patristic use, much like the KJV and other more formal equivalent translations have influenced the Christian community and biblical scholars to use "flesh" (σάρξ) in a range of metaphors that are unnatural in contemporary English.

⁵⁹ See A.C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 200), 812–822, where Thiselton carefully weighs the merits of "authority," "source, origin, temporal priority," and "preeminence." He concludes that "preeminence" "has the merit of *most clearly drawing interactively on the metaphorical conjunction between physiological head* (which is far and away the most frequent, 'normal' meaning) and the notion of *prominence*, i.e. the most conspicuous or *top-most* manifestation of that for which the term also functions as *synecdoche* for the whole" (821).

⁶⁰ BDAG, 985. BDAG notes that it is a title of divinities, particularly Asclepius the god of healing, Sarapis and Isus from the mystery religions, and Hercules. It predicates high-ranking officials and people in private life in inscriptions and papyri. "It is applied to personalities who are active in the world's affairs, in order to remove them from the ranks of ordinary humankind and place them in a significantly higher position." Contra Hering and others who believe "savior" to be limited as a technical soteriological term: "The images presented in Eph. 5:25–27 appear to refer solely to the sacrifice of Christ, and the benefits wrought on

authority, because it is a common title for the Roman emperor. However, “Lord” (κύριος) would activate the emperor’s authority,⁶¹ while “savior” is a title given in recognition of his noble actions that safeguarded the people of the Roman empire through battle or by maintaining the *Pax Romana* or preserved what was valuable to them.⁶² So σωτήρ is used as an honorific expression of gratitude to the Roman emperor as the patron or benefactor of the people and belongs to the register of patronage.⁶³ In 5:23, the title of σωτήρ is applied to Jesus, which has clear cohesive ties with 5:25, where husbands are commanded to love their wives “just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” However, the purpose of his sacrifice is to serve the church with practical actions that are neither authoritative nor high status, but rather expressions of love (Eph 5:25–27). This places the focus even more on Christ as savior who is not only the “rescuer,” but the

behalf of the church. The association of the agency or work of Christ in these verses with the human axis cannot be sustained on grammatical grounds, and are equally unlikely in terms of the theological emphasis of sacrifice and redemption” (Hering, *Haustafeln*, 196). Rather the grammar compels us to draw correlations between the function of the two heads.

⁶¹ There may be a tendency to see “Lord and savior” (ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρ) as a conflated title for authority or as terms that usually collocate, but the combined title does not appear in Paul. There is a close connection between them only in Phil 3:20 (σωτήρα ἀπεκδεξόμεθα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν), but the familiar combined title occurs in 2Pet four times as τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος (2Pet 1:11; 2:20; 3:2; 3:18). See also Acts 5:31 for a collocation of ἀρχηγόν and σωτήρα, but in the light of the fact that it is presented as a speech by Peter, it sharpens the semantic connection between κύριος and ἀρχηγός.

⁶² It is often used for the emperor’s ability to maintain peace in the empire. For example, “savior” was used to describe Julius Caesar in this way: “In addition to these remarkable privileges they named him father of his country, stamped this title on the coinage, voted to celebrate his birthday by public sacrifice, ordered that he should have a statue in the cities and in all the temples of Rome, and they set up two also on the rostra, one representing him as the savior of the citizens and the other as the deliverer of the city from siege, and wearing the crowns customary for such achievements” (Dio 44.4.5). It was also used to describe Augustus in an inscription: “It seemed good to the Greeks of Asia, in the opinion of the high priest Apollonius of Menophilus Azanitus: ‘Since Providence, which has ordered all things and is deeply interested in our life, has set in most perfect order by giving us Augustus, whom she filled with virtue that he might benefit humankind, sending him as a savior, both for us and for our descendants, that he might end war and arrange all things, and since he, Caesar, by his appearance (excelled even our anticipations), surpassing all previous benefactors, and not even leaving to posterity any hope of surpassing what he has done, and since the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the good tidings for the world that came by reason of him,’ which Asia resolved in Smyrna.” (Priene Calendar Inscription in honor of Caesar Augustus [OGIS 458; ca. 9 BCE]). This inscription is translated by C.A. Evans in “Mark’s Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco-Roman Gospel,” *JGRChJ* 1 (2000): 67–81 (68–69).

⁶³ So Evans, “Mark’s Incipit,” 69, summarizes the description of Augustus the Priene Calendar as “‘Augustus,’ the ‘savior’ and ‘benefactor,’ θεός.”

“preserver” who cares for and maintains the church (as also in Eph 4:15–16). The patronage relationship clarifies the connection between the husband as head of the wife and Christ as head of the church, and correlates the husband’s role as a benefactor to Christ’s role as the “patron of the Christian community.”⁶⁴

Third, partially through Christ’s model, the three obligations of supplying care, food, and clothing (θάλπειν καὶ τρέφειν καὶ ἱματίζειν) constrain “head” as the source of benefits a wife needs to survive, and function as the application of the commands “to love.” As indicated in ancient Near Eastern contracts and covenants, Exodus 21:10, and the first-century rabbinic discussion, the provision of adequate care and raw materials for the wife was widely understood as the husband’s minimal obligation. These represent the necessities of life, so that the wife is pragmatically dependent on her husband for what she needs to live.

Fourth, Eph 4:15–16 occurs in the close literary context of the household code, and offers a very interesting picture of how the metaphor of Christ as head of the church is related to the physiological head as the source of the body’s life support:

Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

The parallel passage in Col 2:19 also illustrates the relationship of Christ as head to the head as the source for life support:

They don’t stay connected to the head which nourishes and supports the whole body through the joints and ligaments, so the body grows with a growth that is from God.

The relationship here between the physiological head and the metaphor of Christ as the head of the church is that the body receives what it needs to grow from the head—the head is the natural provider of the body’s life support. Physiologically, the body receives food, water, and air for survival from the head, without which the body cannot be sustained or grow.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ So described by DeSilva in the context of Jesus’ function as mediator or brokerage as God’s son (D.A. DeSilva, “Patronage,” in C.A. Evans and S.E. Porter, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000], 766–771 [769]).

⁶⁵ The head also receives light (sight) and sound from the head, which are great benefits and important for normal development, but the body can be sustained and grow without sight or hearing. Piper and Grudem’s extension of the metaphor of head as source

There are occurrences of κεφαλή that show additional understanding of the association between the head and life. One example is the Delphic Oracle that warned the Argives who were going to battle, “Guard the head; for the head will save the body” (Καὶ κεφαλὴν πρύλαξο· κάρη δὲ τὸ σῶμα σώσει) (Herodotus 7.148). This was understood to be a metaphor and in need of interpretation. Some interpret the head as the citizens, and others as the acropolis (κάρη meaning “head,” “top,” or “mountain castle”).⁶⁶ However, the metaphor works because of the literal physiological importance of the head and its vulnerability in battle—it was recognized then as now that protecting the head with helmets is essential to preserve one’s life (then in battle, now on motorcycles, bicycles, etc.). Furthermore, decapitation was seen as losing the source of life (see Artimidorus Daldianus, *Oneirocriticon* 1.2 below). Therefore, the metaphor of the head as the source of life is the closest to the physiological function of the head of all the metaphors.⁶⁷

Fifth, the metaphor for the “head” as the provider and/or preserver of life and benefits appears in a kinship register in Eph 5:22–33, which has the

goes beyond these metaphors of Christ’s function as head: “Now, if *head* means ‘source,’ what is the husband the source of? What does the body get from the head? It gets nourishment (that’s mentioned in verse 29). And we can understand that, because the mouth is in the head, and nourishment comes through the mouth to the body. But that’s not all the body gets from the head. It gets guidance, because the eyes are in the head. And it gets alertness and protection, because the ears are in the head. In other words, if the husband as head is one flesh with his wife, his body and if he is therefore a source of guidance, food and alertness, then the natural conclusion is that the head, the husband, has a primary responsibility for leadership, provision, and protection” (J. Piper and W. Grudem, “An Overview of Central Concerns: Questions and Answers,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, 60–92 [63]). They are importing elements into the interpretation that are not explicit in the text and treating them as the primary meaning and are therefore allegorizing. On the other hand, these additional elements may well have been understood as the benefits received by women in Eph 5:22–33, though alertness and protection are not the dominant understandings for the metaphor and value should not automatically be assigned to all the details as in the hermeneutical methodology of allegory. However, Paul rather uses this data to indicate an obligation for the wife, not the responsibility of the husband.

⁶⁶ Herodotus VII & VIII (eds. C.F. Smith and A.G. Laird; New York: American Book Company, 1908), 215 in the editors’ notes.

⁶⁷ Thiselton prefers “preeminent, foremost, and synecdoche” as a representative role for the metaphor of head in 1Cor 11:3 because “this proposal has the merit of *most clearly drawing interactively on the metaphorical conjunction between physiological head* (which is far and away the most frequent, “normal” meaning) and the notion of *prominence*” (Thiselton, *1 Corinthians*, 821). This is more true of “face” in kinship metaphors (though certainly the whole head represents the person in statuary), while entire head as the source of life has a clear physiological basis that is if anything closer to the function of the literal head in relationship to the body.

closest parallels to other occurrences of “head” in a kinship register. The following selections are texts where “head” is used as a metaphor for relationships in a family. The first is in Philo, *De congressu quaerendae eruditionis gratia* 12.61:

Κεφαλή δέ ὡς ζώϊου πάντων τῶν λεχθέντων μερῶν ὁ γενάρησ ἐστὶν Ἡσαῦ, ὅς τότε μὲν ποίημα, τότε δὲ δρύς ἐρμηνεύεται

Like the head of a living creature, Esau is the progenitor of all the clans mentioned so far; [his name] is sometimes interpreted as “product” and sometimes as “oak” ...

Philo interprets his own simile, stating that being a “progenitor” is like “the head of a living creature.”⁶⁸ The association of “head” with the relationship of parents to children or ancestors to descendants is the primary collocation for “head” in the kinship register. The development of this metaphor might have had an additional origin in the belief that semen is produced and/or stored in the brain of both men and women, which enhances the presumed physiological connection between the literal head and the metaphor of “head” as source in terms of a progenitor (Hippocrates, *Genit.* 1).⁶⁹

Artimidorus Daldianus (2nd c. CE), uses parts of the body as metaphors for kinship relations in the interpretation of dreams. In *Oneirocriticon* 1.2 there are two interesting examples:⁷⁰

Καὶ πάλιν ἔδοξέ τις τεταχνηλοδοπήσαι. Συνέβη καὶ τούτου τὸν πατέρα ἀποθανεῖν, ὅς καὶ τοῦ ζῆν καὶ τοῦ φωτός αἴτιος ἦν, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡ κεφαλὴ τοῦ παντὸς σώματος.

And again, someone thought that he had been decapitated. It turned out that this man’s father had died, who was the source of both life and light, just as the head is the source of the entire body.

Ἀφῆρήσαι δὲ δοκεῖν τῆς κεφαλῆς εἶτε καταδίκης ... πονηρόν τῷ γονεῖς ἔχονται καὶ τῷ τέκνῳ· γονεῦσι μὲν γὰρ ἔοικεν ἡ κεφαλὴ διὰ τὸ τοῦ ζῆν αἰτίαν εἶναι· τέκνοις δὲ διὰ τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα.

And it seems that to deprive someone of his head ... is an evil deed for the parents and for the children. It is evil for the parents because the head is like

⁶⁸ Progenitor has a range of meaning that includes “originator,” “ancestor,” and “source.” Cervin, “Κεφαλὴ,” 92, adds another layer of interpretation to find “preeminence” as the meaning of “head.”

⁶⁹ The nature of men is to eject or release the semen and the nature of women is to draw up the semen and congeal it into a fetus. See further discussion in T.W. Martin, “Paul’s Argument from Nature for the Veil in 1 Corinthians 11:13–15: A Testicle instead of a Head Covering,” *JBL* 123 (2004): 75–84.

⁷⁰ First brought into the argument by Payne, “Response,” 124–125, the examples are further developed and explained by Cervin, “Κεφαλὴ,” 92–93.

them because it is the cause of life; it is evil for the children because of the face and the image.

In the first example, Daldianus indicates the physiological nature of the head as the source (αἴτιος) of light and life for the entire body. The father is therefore represented by the “head,” because he is the source of life as the progenitor, as in Esau’s case, but also, he is the “source of light” to his children, which could be interpreted as guidance and education, which would be a reference to the function of the eyes in the head.⁷¹

In the second quotation both parents are compared to the head because the head is “the cause of life.” This shows that women can be referred to as the head of their children as well as men, as they too are the cause of their life. Again, the “cause” of life has a similar semantic range to origin or source. It is interesting that an additional meaning for the “head” is introduced in relationship to the children: the head bears the face and the image in that it represents the whole person. In this case it is more than synecdoche, which is a figure of speech. It is related to the fact that a bust can represent the person, but also if you remove the head, you remove an essential component of a person’s identity. Perhaps we find here the physiological relationship of the head to “preeminence.”

The quotations above suggest that “head” in kinship metaphors primarily refer to an ancestor, father, or parents as progenitors of descendants or children. A similar statement about the husband being the “head” of his wife occurs in Gregory Nazianzus, the Archbishop of Constantinople, who wrote an epigram in the fourth century CE in *Greek Anthology* 8.19:

Οὐχ ὅσῃς ῥίζης μὲν ἐγὼ θάλος, εὐαγέος δὲ
 συζυγίης κεφαλὴ καὶ τεκέων τριάδος·
 ποιμνὴς καὶ χθονίων κοῦρανίων ἐτέων.

I’m not the shoot of a holy root; but I’m the head of a pious wife and three children; I ruled an agreeable flock; I have departed hence full of earthly and heavenly years.

Being the head of a pious wife is in contrast with being the shoot of a holy root, that is, Gregory did not originate from a holy root (another metaphor

⁷¹ Cervin dismisses these examples because he insists that “head” is a representation of one’s father rather than a metaphor of “source” (Cervin, “Κεφαλὴ,” 94). Here, he ignores Daldianus’s explanation of the metaphor. Of course, αἴτιος (source) occurs in the passage and clearly explains that the head is the source of life. One wonders if the problem may be that some are dubious about the foreignness of the gloss “source” or the ancient understanding of the physiological function of the head and dismiss the semantics.

for head), but a holy root originated from him where he himself was the head: he had a pious wife and children as well (who may also be pious).⁷² He appears to value his wife's spirituality above his parents' spirituality and in some sense takes credit for it. This may suggest that in view of Paul's head and body metaphor for the husband and wife, Gregory has conflated the identity of the husband as the source of his wife's life with the more common metaphor that relates the head metaphor to the parent as the source of a child's life. This leads to the question of how Paul came to associate the head-body metaphor to the husband and wife. This is found in his exegesis of Gen 2:24, which is a sixth reason that "head" should be taken as "source" (or a more nuanced gloss) in this passage.

Sixth, the quotation in Eph 5:31 from Gen 2:24 connects the head-body metaphor to the creation of woman out of man. It explains the unity between both the man and the wife: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will be one flesh" (TNIV).⁷³ The reference to the unity of one flesh in Gen 2:24 forms cohesive ties with the speech by Adam in the verse immediately preceding it in Gen 2:23 as well as serves secondarily as an illustration of the intimacy of the sexual union (cf. 1 Cor 6:16). It indicates that the reason for the unity was the relationship that was formed by the creation of man out of woman:

The man said,
 This is now bone of my bones
 And flesh of my flesh;
 she shall be called woman,
 for she was taken out of man.
 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

The unity of the husband and wife is therefore connected to the creation account where Eve was made from Adam, which is the essential foundation of unity in marriage. Eve derived her very life from Adam—he was the source of her life. This connection is arguably the exegetical basis of the

⁷² Gregory considers himself to be both the source of his wife's and children's lives and the ruler of the household. They are separate but related concepts that arguably collocate but should not be conflated.

⁷³ As this quotation is embedded in a plea to the husband to love and care for his wife as his own body, this passage is not supporting the exercise of hierarchical authority that is encouraging the husband to subject his wife, but rather motivating him to treating his wife like he treats himself.

complex mixing of metaphors in Eph 5:22–33.⁷⁴ The husband is one flesh or body with his wife, which is true in the Genesis passage in part because Adam is the source or origin of Eve. Therefore, according to the existent Greek metaphor that is used in parallel kinship relationships, Adam is appropriately Eve's "head" by virtue of being her origin or source, and Eve in turn must be his body by virtue of the unity of one flesh. From there, Paul finds an interpretive correlation or typology between Eve being created from Adam, and the traditional historical-cultural relationship between husbands and wives, where the husband is the benefactor or patron of the wife from whom she derives her identity and her necessities of life. This passage parallels Paul's previous use of Genesis in 1 Cor 11:3–12 where he explains that the husband is the head of wife (v. 3) because woman came from man and woman was created for the sake of man (vv. 8–9). The function of a "head" has a close relationship to being a benefactor or a patron who is the source of benefits to a client, so that there is a transparent relationship between head as origin or source and the exercise of authority. Functioning as a "head" may be the grounds for holding a position of authority over a client, but it is not the same thing as the exercise of authority.

In addition, metaphors that Paul has used elsewhere for the relationship between Christ and the church interpret and are interpreted by the evolving metaphor of the marital relationship: the church is Christ's bride (2 Cor 11:2), the church is Christ's body (Rom 12:4–8; 1 Cor 6:15, 12:12–30; Eph 1:22–23; 3:6; 4:4, 15–16), and Christ is the head of the church (Eph 1:22; 4:15–16; 5:23; Col 1:18; 2:19) by virtue of both being the bridegroom and the source of the church's foundation and support.

In conclusion, the focus in the wives' instructions is on the wife's obligation for the benefits that she receives from her husband rather than on an arbitrary concession to authority. In the light of a wife's experience of dependency on her husband for her identity, social status, place in the world, and shelter as well as the raw materials that are a necessity for her existence, it is not too much to say that her husband is her "head" or *σωτήρ* in terms of dependency on him as her preserver.⁷⁵ Therefore, "head" as the

⁷⁴ The metaphors of the church as a bride and the body of Christ are combined with the metaphor of the "head" as well, which will be discussed below.

⁷⁵ As G.D. Fee, "Praying and Prophesying in the Assemblies: 1 Corinthians 11:2–16," in R.W. Pierce and R.M. Groothuis, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementary without Hierarchy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 142–160 (154), suggests: "And this point is the apt one: just as the church is totally dependent on Christ for life and growth, so the wife in

source of the wife's life is an apt summary of the benefits she receives from her patron that are present in the passage and also an apt summary of the reality of a woman's dependence on her husband in the ancient world. Consequently, a wife is to submit to her husband on the grounds of reciprocity—everything she has and is comes from him, which would require gratitude, honor, and submission, regardless of the injustice of the level of dependency.⁷⁶ The wife's role is not heavily expanded, because submission as the wife's responsibility is already understood and practiced—it becomes the model for mutual submission (5:24), which is borne out in the instructions to husbands.

5.2. *Husbands' Reciprocal Relationship with Wives*

The instruction to the husbands is the largest expansion of the Colossians household code, and it is the focus of the passage. Christ's treatment of the church as its patron is the model for the husbands' behavior towards their wives—they are to love them as in Col 3:19, with the addition "just as Christ loved the church" (5:25). The husband's responsibility of love is expanded by the implications of the metaphors of the church as Christ's bride and the church as Christ's body, and the associations are supported from Gen 2:24. The traditional obligations to "clothe, feed, and care for" the wife occur in this context, but every concrete activity that is specified, whether it is Christ's sanctification of the church or the husband's care of the body, is taken from the domestic sphere, and which correspond to the low status work that women do in the household. They represent services that an inferior typically does for someone with higher status, so that servanthood and submission, which is modeled by women, is applied directly to the husbands. The result is an outworking of the mutual submission in 5:21.

Here in the command to love, we have a major departure from the classical and Greco-Roman philosophical discussions of the household code. As Balch asserts, beginning with Plato, "It seems obvious that these pairs result from the concern for 'ruling': the ____ must 'rule' and the ____ must be

the first-century household was totally dependent on her husband as her 'savior,' in the sense of being dependent on him for her life in the world."

⁷⁶ The problems of the wife's vulnerability are not changed by direct empowerment and a direct challenge of the traditional household code, because the topic is mutual submission. Furthermore, in Pauline theology, there is the willingness to take the position of an inferior and relinquish the right to power.

ruled; Greek authors filled in the blanks with various pairs.⁷⁷ Plato spoke of “the matter of ruling and being ruled,” and the rights of the ruler to rule the “child, woman, slave, free artisan” (*Laws*, 3.690A–D; *Rep.* 4.433C–D). Aristotle spoke likewise of “rulers and ruled” and compares the default relationship of the husband to the wife as an aristocracy: “the husband rules in virtue of fitness, and in matters that belong to a man’s sphere; matters suited to a woman he hands over to the wife” (*Eth. nic.* 8.1116ob23–1161a 10).⁷⁸ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, recalling the law of Romulus in the foundation of Rome, wrote in 30–37 BCE, “the husbands [are obliged] to rule their wives as necessary and inseparable possessions” (*Ant. rom.* 11.24.2). The Stoic writer Areius Didymus, similarly to Aristotle, spoke of the marital relationship as an aristocracy where “The man has the rule (ἀρχή) of this house by nature. For the deliberative faculty in a woman is inferior” (*Stob.* 2.148.15; 149.5).⁷⁹ Josephus stressed that “The woman, says the law, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be submissive, not for her humiliation, but that she may be directed, for the authority has been given by God to the man” (*Ag. Ap.* 2.199). Therefore, in the classical and Greco-Roman household codes, the correlation is between the wife’s obedience and the husband’s rule.⁸⁰

However, in the Ephesians household code, the correlation is between the wife’s submission as to Christ and the husbands love “just as Christ” (καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστός). This variation in the two biblical household codes and the added qualification in Ephesians has tremendous significance. The commands to love “just as Christ” restrict the analogy between the marital relationship and Christ and the church. We must guard against importing

⁷⁷ Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 25. Balch demonstrates this concern for ruling throughout three chapters (23–59).

⁷⁸ In the same text Aristotle also entertains alternative authority structures, where the man controls everything, or when the wife is an heiress or when the house is without a master. He is only expressly critical of the husband controlling everything because “he governs in fitness, and not in virtue of superiority.”

⁷⁹ Areius Didymus was a Stoic who was Augustus Caesar’s friend and a philosophical teacher; he wrote an *Epitome* of Aristotle’s ideas, with a summary of his ethics (Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 40). This illustrates the continuing and pervasive effect of Aristotle on gender roles.

⁸⁰ Philo, however, is rather a mixed bag in regard to the husband’s rule, and does not seem to be as blatant about the “rule-ruled” paradigm. He assigns the “greater government” of cities to men, and, like Aristotle, assigns the lesser government of household management to women. However, he confines women to the house in “a life of seclusion” that is so restrictive that it reverts back to the seclusion of women by Solon in Athens during the classical Greek period (see Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores*, 57–78), so that the control and restriction of women and entitlement of men to exercise power are thrown into sharp relief (*Spec.* 3.169–171).

every aspect of the relationship between Christ and the church and applying it to the husband and wife. The text does not say “govern the wife just as Christ governed the church,” though the authors of the Greco-Roman household codes would not have hesitated to say exactly that.⁸¹ Therefore, one may not assume or import theology or supposedly parallel passages about Christ’s rule of the church or contemporary texts about a husband’s rule of the wife as an interpretive framework, because we must conclude that the dominant concern about the husband’s authority or rule has been deliberately replaced by the commands to love, and signals a reversal of the traditional household code. And yet, there is still continuity with threads running through the literature, the rabbinic discussion, and the marriage contracts and covenants concerning the husband’s “loving care of a wife.”⁸²

The role of the husband as savior is reinforced by the example of Christ who “gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:25b). First of all, there is a level of dissonance between the honorific title of σωτήρ that indicates high status and the service that is provided, which is consistent with Jesus’ honor and high status that is based on his seemingly dishonorable death on a cross. The reversal, further signaled by the replacement of “rule” with “love,” is confirmed with the purpose of Jesus’ self-sacrifice, which is signaled with three ἵνα clauses

ἵνα αὐτήν ἀγιάσῃ καθαρίσας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι

in order to make her holy by washing her in a bath of water with the word

ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ ἑνδοχον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ ἔχουσιν σπῖλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων,

in order to present himself with a glorious church, one without any stain or wrinkle on her clothes,

ἀλλ’ ἵνα ᾗ ἁγία καὶ ἄμωμος.

but rather in order that she be holy and blameless

⁸¹ Witherington is correct when he cautions against pressing the analogy between Christ and the church and the husband and wife “beyond clear points of contact” (Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 55). However, he is not correct when he fails to find the clear points of contact in the text itself: “This means that the material in vv. 26a–27c, the description of Christ’s sanctifying work for and effect on the Church, while very interesting, is not meant to be a description of the husband’s role or effect on his spouse” (55). Witherington misses the interpretive framework (sanctification is the specific example and application of Christ’s love not the topic) and so assumes a lack of coherence in the passage that would diminish its function as a text.

⁸² As Philo exhorts Onan in *Post.* 181.

The three ἵνα clauses are a description of the church's sanctification. Jesus is described as bathing the church and providing the church with clothes (spun, woven, and sown) that are laundered and ironed. While this depiction of Jesus' sanctification of the church is sometimes interpreted as being fulfilled in the future culminating marriage of the Lamb,⁸³ it is more parallel to the extended metaphor of Yahweh's past adoption and marital covenant with Israel (Ezek 16:1–13). Normally in the ancient Near East, female relatives, midwives, and/or servants cared for infants at birth, by cutting the natal cord, washing the blood from childbirth off, rubbing the infant with salt,⁸⁴ and wrapping it in swaddling clothes (Ezek 16:4).⁸⁵ A daughter would be clothed throughout childhood with garments spun, woven, and sown by her mother, and she would be initiated into womanhood with the care, instruction, and appropriate clothing when she began to menstruate (presumably she would be trained by this time to spin, weave, and sow her own clothing). However, in the case of Israel, Ezekiel describes a daughter that has been completely neglected and abandoned by her mother. At birth, neither a midwife, nor a mother nor a servant had love, pity, or compassion to care for the newborn Israel. Israel was naked and without care during childhood (16:7), and even at puberty no one cleansed the menstrual blood from her body or clothed her (16:8–9), so Yahweh performed these services for her and clothed her with wedding garments (16:10–13). In Yahweh's case and in Christ's case, they are performing services for Israel and the church (their brides/wives) that were performed by women for the family, including children, men, and the other women of the household.

As stated above, the marriage contracts and covenants specify that men are to provide care, food, and clothes for their wives (θάλπειν καὶ τρέφειν καὶ ἱματίζειν), but the discussion of the teachers of the law in the first century clarified that in the case of clothes, husbands provided the raw materials for clothing from the public sphere, while wives were responsible to make the

⁸³ See, for example, Thomas Schreiner, *Paul: Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 221. This is not to deny some intertextual link between the Ephesians and Revelation, but it is likely that the Rev 21:9 is later.

⁸⁴ Rubbing the infant with salt was an antiseptic measure (M.M. Brayer, *The Jewish Woman in Rabbinic Literature: A Psychohistorical Perspective* [Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1986], 30).

⁸⁵ See P.J. King and L.E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 52–53, where this process is said to be the standard birth ritual. It is understood that a Hebrew woman in childbirth would be surrounded by women. She was often attended by two midwives, one in front to deliver the child and postnatal care, and one in behind the mother to support her (M.J. O'Dowd and E.E. Philipp, *The History of Obstetrics and Gynecology* [New York: Parthenon, 2000], 7).

clothes and do the laundry.⁸⁶ Bathing, spinning, weaving, sowing, and laundry were perpetual needs in the domestic sphere, but here they are provided by Christ in some sense.⁸⁷ The cleansing with water in Eph 5:26 may have a figurative reference to a bride's prenuptial washing, and the clothing and laundering (including spot removal, washing, and ironing) in 5:27 may refer to obtaining and maintaining a bride's wedding clothes, none of which were typically obligations of a bridegroom or performed by a bride's father. The mother was normally responsible for the bride's preparation and dressed the bride. Additional garments were provided by the wife's family at the time of marriage (the mother being primarily responsible for the production of the clothing), along with a dowry and whatever goods the bride's family could supply. Paul is portraying Christ and the husband as performing services for a bride or wife concerning clothing (ἡμαρτίζειν) and bathing, which belong to the women's domain and role in ancient Greek and Hellenistic culture as well as in Judaism. Particularly in Hellenistic culture, these are explicit household functions that women and slaves provide for men and for other women.

In Eph 5:28, the complementary concept to the husband's headship is introduced and the other shoe drops: if the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, the wife corresponds to the head's body in the same way that all believers in the church are members of Christ's body (5:30). This mixing of metaphors results in the mixing and blurring of gender identity. On the one hand, the wife is identified with her husband's male body, and on the other hand, the husband has been identified with the female bride, which is the church, and is assigned an equivalent relationship to the wife in the body of Christ. However, the husbands are exhorted as the head: "In this same way [as Christ's model of sanctification] husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." In 5:29, Paul's extension of self-maintenance to the wife in the traditional areas of θάλλειν καὶ τρέφειν again appears to involve additional activities from the private/domestic realm rather than the public realm. In

⁸⁶ See the section on the Function of Reciprocity in Marriage Covenants and Contracts.

⁸⁷ See Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 552. This is only true if there is an understood parallel to Zech 16:1–13, where the marital garments are provided (also see Rev 6:11 for the provision of white robes). An alternate reading may see only the laundering of the garments as the great multitude that washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev 7:14). See Keener, *Bible Background Commentary*, 552.

addition, the concept of serving by bathing and clothing in 5:25–27, explicitly constrains the application with the οὕτως in 5:28.⁸⁸ The self-maintenance is described in 5:29:

Οὐδείς γάρ ποτε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν

After all, people have never hated their own bodies, but they feed and care for them, just as Christ does the church.

Here the traditional husband's responsibilities from marriage contracts and covenants are explicitly evoked in ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν.⁸⁹ As in the case of washing and clothing, feeding and caring for one's own body is a private activity rather than a function in the public sphere. The preparation and serving of food was women's or slaves' work. Furthermore, in this context, self-care (θάλπει) may evoke the kind of nurturing that is more consistent with childrearing rather than the sexual relationship that some teachers of the law saw in Exodus 21:10.⁹⁰ In the ancient world, it is a given that one of the primary purposes of obtaining a wife would be childbearing, but other

⁸⁸ Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 378, says, "Christ's love for the Church set out in vv 25–27 now serves as the model (cf. οὕτως, 'in the same way') for the writer's second assertion of husbands' obligation to love their wives. The earlier use of οὕτως in v 24, its place here at the beginning of the sentence, and the passage's constant links between its paraenesis and the underlying analogy, all suggest that οὕτως in this verse has reference to what presences rather than simply being taken as part of the sentence's later comparison in a οὕτως ... ὡς construction."

⁸⁹ The association of this phase with marriage covenants and contracts is recognized by Clinton Arnold and Ernst Best, but Arnold and Best have erred in the identification of their source, and do not recognize that the husband's "appropriate care" involved supplying the wife with raw materials for food and clothing that she was responsible to process. They mislabel a widow's petition for justice as marriage contact (see note 36 for a further description of the widow's petition). Clinton E. Arnold, "Ephesians," in Clinton E. Arnold, ed., *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2002), 301–341 (334), states that "Both of these words appear in a papyrus marriage contract that delineates the husband's responsibilities for his wife: 'to cherish and nourish and clothe her'" and cites Arnold Best. Best claims the papyrus is a marriage contract that confirms the meaning of the appropriate care of a husband for a wife, citing Preisigke, *Wörterbuch*, I, 665, and produces this text: θάλπειν καὶ τρέπειν καὶ ἱματίζειν αὐτήν (Best, *Ephesians*, 550). The petition is found in Maspero, *Papyrus grecs d'époque byzantine*, 67005:18–33, see 33 line 132.

⁹⁰ Harold Hoehner agrees with Ralph Martin that here ἐκτρέφει and θάλπει are affectionate words "from the language of the nursery" (Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 766; Ralph P. Martin, "Ephesians," in Clifton J. Allen [ed.], *The Broadman Bible Commentary* [London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1971], 11:125–177, 170). They are even used for breast feeding. While the LXX occurrences are not limited to women's work, they certainly are in that register when occurring with other household responsibilities.

primary purposes for obtaining a wife were so that she would provide these domestic services or manage the household so that slaves would provide them in the domestic realm. In the Ephesians household code passage, rather than pressing the obligations to perform the “rural, forensic and political works” such as were attributed to the husband by Hierocles the Stoic,⁹¹ the husbands are being exhorted to fulfill responsibilities that more closely resemble what were understood as a wife’s obligations, which are repeated here from the *Mishnah Ketuboth* 5.5,

These are the kinds of labour which a woman performs for her husband: she grinds flour, bakes bread, does laundry, prepares meals, feeds her child, makes the bed, works in wool.

Furthermore, by caring for his wife as his own flesh, the husband assigns his own high status to his wife, and serves her with work that is low status—he serves her by doing women’s work on her behalf. He acts like a woman, who is his primary model for mutual submission.

The quotation in Eph 5:31 from Gen 2:24, which connects the head-body metaphor that is used throughout the passage to the creation of woman out of man, is discussed above. The union of Christ and the church, which is paralleled by the union between the husband and wife that results in one flesh, is emphatically described as τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ μέγα ἐστίν. This is often translated as “This [description of Christ and the church] is a profound mystery!” but it could be better translated as “This [description of Christ and the church] is a great metaphor!,” or “Marriage is a significant metaphor that I’m applying to the church.” This would convey both the explanation and satisfaction with the discovery of the constellation of metaphors’ explanatory power for Gen 2:24 that have been derived from connecting and combining the relationship in Gen 2:24 with these various Pauline metaphors for Christ and the church.⁹² The configuration of the metaphors

⁹¹ Hierocles, 5.696, 23–697, 3.

⁹² Though μυστήριον occurs five other times and is glossed as “mystery” connoting “the once hidden purpose which has now been revealed in Christ” (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 381), the overlapping sense of a newly discovered allegory in the sense of an extended metaphor fits best with the passage, and is not truly a meaning that is distinct from the other uses. As Best argues, “It is probably better ... simply to view him as providing a scriptural basis and theological justification for the drawing together of the husband-wife relation and the Christ-church relations and at the same time carrying a step further his teaching about the church’s close relationship to Christ, a relationship already defined through ‘body.’ He uses the word ‘mystery’ with its sense of a secret now revealed because he believes what he says is not something which he has thought up on his own but comes from God” (Best, *Ephesians*, 557). While “allegorical significance” is given as a possibility of the meaning for μυστήριον

have enabled an elegant explanation of how those who are unequal in a patron-client relationship can submit to one another in the fear of Christ and honor each other above one's self.

Paul formally summarizes and concludes his discussion of the household code for wives and husbands in 5:33, which highlights the reciprocal nature of the husband's obligations and reflects the primary focus of the passage on the husband's responsibilities:

πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἓνα, ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν, ἥ δὲ γυναῖκα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.

In any case, as for you individually, each one of you should love his wife as himself so that the wife can honor/respect her husband.

The focus on the husband is created by emphatically individualizing the third person command for each husband to love his wife as himself,⁹³ and introducing the wife's obligation as a dependent ἵνα clause of purpose, which makes the wife's submission dependent on the husband's behavior, at least from the husband's perspective, which is primary here.⁹⁴ That is, the husband is responsible for the initiation of the exchange. This is consistent with the reciprocity of the patron-client relationship—the patron provides benefits and the client returns respect, public praise, and loyal service. The husband enables or equips the wife to submit by the benefit of his loving service in which he acts as if he has the same status as a woman and treats his wife as the one who holds superior status.⁹⁵

in a similar literary device in Revelation (BDAG, 662, see Rev 17:7) “allegory” is either understood by the English reader as a hermeneutic that draws hidden meaning from the text and assigns value to all the details in the text (not in view here) or it has a contemporary definition of a story with two meanings, so “metaphor” is the better gloss. This reading has the virtue of maintaining the topic for the English and the focus on the relationship between husbands and wives and preserves the coherence of the text.

⁹³ The command to the husband to love his wife as himself not only is an application of mutual submission in 5:22, but also it evokes Lev 19:18 (cf. Matt 5:43 and Mark 12:31): “love your neighbor as yourself” (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 384).

⁹⁴ Lincoln finds a “broad chiasmus” that creates literary unity in the passage, where wives are addressed (5:22–24), husbands are addressed (5:25–32), husbands are addressed, then wives are addressed (5:33). There certainly is literary unity in the passage. However, there is not a formal chiasm (in terms of grammatical structure it is out of balance), and Lincoln is confusing a summary-conclusion with chiasm.

⁹⁵ Contra Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 270, who sees the relationship between the passages, but draws the opposite conclusion. She sees the author promoting mutuality, unity, and equality between the Jews and Gentiles, but claims that “Ephesians christologically cements the inferior position of the wife in the marriage relationship” and

6. CONCLUSION

While recognizing the social realities of power and dependency, the description of the benefits that the husband provides for his wife has turned the traditional system on its head. It is near to impossible to see how Eph 5:22–33 could be intended as an apologetic, since it would be painfully obvious to those who had a traditional understanding of the household codes and the patron-client relationship that while the author has maintained the traditional role for the wife in practice, he has failed to articulate or support the traditional understanding of the rule of the husband, he has mixed and confounded gender roles and identities, and he has commanded men to act like women. Rather, an understanding of this text in its socio-historical and literary context further elucidates Tertullian's statement (*Apol.* 3) that reveals the problems caused by the conversion of women, children, and slaves to Christianity apart from the consent or conversion of the husband/father/master:

Though jealous no longer, the husband expels his wife who is now chaste; the son, now obedient, is disowned by his father who was formerly lenient; the master, once so mild, cannot bear the sight of the slave who is now faithful.

While the household code may have actually resulted in increased submission of the dependent parties in the household or the society, it subverted the traditional understanding of the household relationships even if the patron was not a believer and the submission was unilateral. Christian submission was not based on the ontological inferiority of the client; the inherent ability, honor, value, or authority of the patron; or to preserve the Roman empire. Christian submission was motivated by principles that are located in an ultimately competing system: the family of Christ and the kingdom of God, which is the true source of each believer's "status and location in the world and an essential reference point for the person's identity."⁹⁶ That is,

claims that the modifications the author makes of the husband's patriarchal position and duties do not "have the power, theologically to transform the patriarchal pattern of the household code, even though this might have been the intention of the author." Fiorenza distinguishes between the author's intention and the power of the communication to transform the patriarchal system theologically. However, the author has promoted functional unity and equality by exhorting the man in the superior position to take the position of the inferior. Both the husband and wife are cemented into an inferior position, and both are honored by the other. Perhaps the historical misunderstanding and misapplication of the passage appears to indicate ineffectiveness.

⁹⁶ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 158.

the context in which believers who are clients apply the command: "Give to everyone what you owe: if you owe taxes, pay taxes; if you owe revenue, pay revenue; if you owe respect, then give respect; if you owe honor, then give honor" (Rom 13:7). And is it also the context in which patrons who are believers apply the command: "Honor one another above yourselves" (Rom 12:10). Mutual submission is not accomplished by the direct empowerment of women, but instead by men giving up any entitlement and advantage that they had in the Greco-Roman system and following Christ by emptying themselves and taking on the form of the service that their wives give them (cf. Phil 2:7), which is held up as the model of servanthood.

The reading of Eph 5:33 has ramifications for the application of the principle of reciprocity to contemporary marriages and our theology of power relationships. Reciprocity is the principle behind the household codes that the Greco-Roman culture got right, as opposed to their view of the ontological relationship between men and women and the set of gender roles that were meant to maintain the social and governmental system. The reciprocal description in 5:33 is a signal to the household of faith that the primary obligation and responsibility of mutual submission and servanthood in power relationships belong to those who hold the power—they are the ones who are required to give up the most and make the most adjustments in their worldview, and when this is done, it transforms the power structure in the relationship to look like the relationships in the family of God based on love and unity (c.f. 1Cor 8:9; 9:1–27). From the standpoint of the husband, his mutual submission through loving service sets the bar for his wife's honor/respect, and so has the honor of modeling the incarnate work of Christ.

On the other hand, those who have learned submission through necessity are honored by providing models of submission for the household of God. However, this does not depict a unilateral responsibility of a wife to submit to the authority of her husband without boundaries. The reciprocity of the wives' responsibility to submit has two built in limitations: first, from the standpoint of the women, the submission and honor given as a client is appropriately reciprocal for true benefits. Honor and respect are given where they are due. It goes beyond the teaching of the passage to insist that all women must remain perpetual clients under the same obligation to their husbands that is mirrored in the normal marital relationship in the first century because of their gender, regardless of the circumstances or culture. Even the ancient writers believed that circumstances, such as a woman's inheritance, changed the reciprocity and the power structure

of a marriage.⁹⁷ Women are expected to practice reciprocity and mutual submission that is appropriate to the structure of their marital relationship and their culture, which cuts across patterns of entitlement, enablement, and abuse and recognizes that the benefits that the wife may bring to the relationship change the pattern. The movement in this passage pushes irrevocably towards unity and what DeSilva describes as the reciprocity between social equals: "This amounted to an exchange of like goods and services, always within the context of mutual loyalty and commitment"⁹⁸ as existed between the Jews and Gentiles in the church (2:11–22).

⁹⁷ Ironically, some interpreters see the subjugation of women as more comprehensive than the Greeks in the classical period, let alone the first-century context, because they fail to read the household codes in their cultural and literary context. For example, John Piper, "A Vision of Biblical Complementarity," in *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 51, suggests that women compromise their femininity when they exercise personal direct authority over any man. However, women would be masters of male slaves in the domestic sphere. As already mentioned, when Aristotle discussed the default rule of the husband "in virtue of fitness, and in matters that belong to a man's sphere," he believes that the woman should control matters "that belong to women." And there are exceptions to the norm. For example, "And sometimes when the wife is an heiress, it is she who rules. In those cases then authority goes not by virtue but by wealth and power, as in an oligarchy" (*Eth. nic.* 8.1160b23–1161a 10). It is interesting that in other places, the husband's rule is thought to be comparable to ruling with an aristocracy.

⁹⁸ DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 118.

TURNING ΚΕΦΑΛΗ ON ITS HEAD: THE RHETORIC OF REVERSAL IN EPHESIANS 5:21–33

Michelle Lee-Barnewall

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most difficult aspects of interpreting Eph 5:21–33 is understanding the use of κεφαλή in 5:23, when Paul says the husband is the “head” of the wife.¹ The discussion generally centers on the meaning of the term and whether or not it indicates a type of authority and so supports a patriarchal interpretation of the passage.

However, this essay will attempt to show that in addition to finding the meaning of κεφαλή, there may be another dimension to understanding Paul’s use of the term and therefore the implications of the instructions to husbands and wives. A look at the use of the head-body metaphor in antiquity reveals a variety of concerns with some discernible patterns. What I propose to show is that while κεφαλή does have definite connotations of “authority,” the primary significance of its use is the way in which Paul reverses the cultural expectations of the “head” according to the radical new values of the Christian community.

2. THE INTERPRETIVE CONTEXT

A common suggestion for translating κεφαλή as head is that it means “authority.” Probably the most commonly cited study in this regard is Wayne Grudem’s essay.² Grudem surveys 2,336 examples in the literature most relevant to the New Testament period and argues that there is demonstrable

¹ I understand Paul to be the author of Ephesians, but my argument does not depend upon Pauline authorship of the letter.

² “Does Κεφαλή (‘Head’) Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority over’ in Greek Literature?” A Survey of 2,336 Examples,” *TrinJ* 6 (1985): 38–59; Wayne Grudem, “The Meaning of *Kephalē* (‘Head’): A Response to Recent Studies,” in John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 425–468. Also, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Another Look at Κεφαλή in 1 Corinthians 11.3,” *NTS* 35 (1989): 503–511.

evidence that it could be used metaphorically to mean “authority over.”³ As a result, “authority over” can be seen as a “legitimate sense” of κεφαλή,⁴ and he concludes that this is the best sense in Ephesians 5.

Others have proposed alternative ways of understanding κεφαλή. Catherine Clark Kroeger argues that the term should instead be translated as “source” and cites as an example a passage from Cyril of Alexandria in which he identifies κεφαλή with ἀρχή four times.⁵ Similarly, Stephen Bedale proposed that by biblical times the two terms had become closely associated.⁶ But as Gregory Dawes points out, while it may be possible that “source” is present in terms of the *sense* of the metaphor, this is not the same as saying that one can *translate* the metaphor as “source.” He says,

To *translate* the word as “source” is to prejudge an important issue: it is to imply that in this context the word is functioning as a dead metaphor. It implies that a contemporary reader would have understood the word in the same way as he or she would have understood ἀρχή, that is, independently, without any reference to that which the science of anatomy would describe as a “head.”⁷ (italics his)

As will be discussed in more detail below, understanding the significance of “head” entails examining how it would have been seen in its relationship to the physical body.

A third alternative is presented by Richard Cervin, who argues that κεφαλή means “preeminent,” an interpretation which gives the husband as head some type of prominence, but without connotations of authority.⁸ Rather than meaning “authority over,” Paul is “merely employing a head-body metaphor” in which the head is the topmost and most conspicuous member of the body.⁹ However, it is very difficult to imagine a situation in

³ Grudem “2,336 Examples,” 51, cites 49 occurrences, or 2.1% of the total instances and 16.2% of total metaphorical uses.

⁴ Grudem, “2,336 Examples,” 59.

⁵ Catherine Clark Kroeger, “The Classical Concept of *Head* as ‘Source,’” in Gretchen Gaebele Hull, ed., *Equal to Serve* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 268.

⁶ Stephen Bedale, “The Meaning of κεφαλή in the Pauline Epistles,” *JTS* 5 (1954): 215. Note that Bedale also concluded that κεφαλή “undoubtedly carries with it the idea of ‘authority,’” although the authority “derives from a relative priority (causal rather than merely temporal) in the order of being.” Bedale, “Meaning of κεφαλή,” 215.

⁷ Gregory W. Dawes, *The Body in Question: Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21–33* (BIS 30; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 126.

⁸ Richard Cervin, “Does Κεφαλή Mean ‘Source’ or ‘Authority Over’ in Greek Literature? A Rebuttal,” *TrinJ* 10 (1989): 85–112.

⁹ Cervin, “A Rebuttal,” 110–112. As Grudem correctly notes, the term “suggests greater status, honor, and importance for the one who is preeminent” (“Meaning of *Kephale*,” 448).

antiquity where a person could be recognized as having a sense of prominence that is devoid of any substantive privilege or power.¹⁰ In fact, upon closer examination of the ancient sources, we will see that the precise reason why the head has the privileged position is because there is a fundamental and necessary connection between position and function.

3. THE GOAL OF STUDY

The rise of rhetorical studies has revealed the importance of understanding the author's argumentative strategy and the intended effect upon the audience. Since rhetoric depended not only upon the meaning of words, but the way in which those words were used in arguments, we need to examine carefully the use of the head-body metaphor in antiquity to determine the nuances of its use in this passage. The use of common rhetorical conventions shows a continuation with a tradition. However, another key element was the way in which the orator used the conventions to suit *his or her particular purpose*. What was important was the way in which he or she applied the conventions to make a point.

By examining prominent uses of the image of the body in antiquity, we will discover that Paul both refers to the head in relationship to the body in a traditional way and also "turns it on its head" to make a point about how God has transformed marriage relationships in the eschatological age. Thus, the two overarching goals of this article are: 1) to examine evidence from antiquity regarding the use of the head-body metaphor; and 2) to consider how Paul might have modified it according to the gospel of Christ crucified. We will see how Paul utilized a common rhetorical *topos* but also radicalized it according to the gospel.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE HEAD-BODY METAPHOR

Our understanding of κεφαλή must include knowing the significance of the head-body relationship in antiquity. As Grudem states, it is necessary "to ask exactly which characteristics of a physical head were recognized in

¹⁰ Or as Craig Blomberg, "Women in Ministry: A Complementarian Perspective," in James R. Beck, ed., *Two Views on Women in Ministry* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 156, states, "It is unclear if an entity can be most or even more prominent without implying at least some kind of functional superiority in the context at hand."

the ancient world and were evident in those contexts where people were metaphorically called 'head.'¹¹

This part will examine the common uses and assumptions of the body metaphor as they relate to the position and privileges of the head. While Paul's use in many ways follows the standard application, at key points he diverges from the common application. These divergences, which represent a startling reversal of societal expectations, are ultimately what define his concept of headship.

4.1. *The Basic Use of the Head-Body Metaphor*

The body metaphor was diverse and flexible and could be used to illustrate a number of different situations. A common theme was the unity and diversity of the body. For example, the body was a common *topos* in antiquity in political speeches arguing for unity in the form of *homonoia*, or "concord" speeches.¹² According to this use, the group, which was not limited to formal political associations, was like a body in that it was composed of various parts that needed to cooperate in order to survive, or for the "common good" (Philo, *Decal.* 150; Dio Chrysostom, 2 *Tars.* 34.20).¹³

Sometimes the metaphor focused on a single part. In the famous Mene-nius Agrippa fable, the body learned the importance of the belly. In his attempt to quell the rebellion against the Senate, Agrippa told a story about the body's revolt against the belly. In the fable, the other body parts objected that they had to provide for the belly, while the belly merely enjoyed the food that was brought to it. However, when they tried to starve it into submission by refusing to feed it, they ended up weakening the entire body. Thus, the body learned that the belly's distributive function was necessary for the survival of the whole. Agrippa argued that although the belly did not initially seem to serve any useful function, it served an important and necessary function, and in a similar manner, the Senate performed a critical role in administering the labor of others (Livy, *History of Rome* 2.32.12–2.33.1; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom.* 6.86.1–5; Plutarch, *Cor.* 6.2–3).

¹¹ Grudem, "Meaning of *Kephalē* ('Head')," 460.

¹² E.g. Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 38–47; Margaret Mitchell, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 157–164. Some famous examples of these speeches would include Antiphon's *Περὶ ὁμονοίας* and Isocrates' *Panegyricus*.

¹³ For a more extensive description of the various uses of the body metaphor, see Michelle V. Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ* (SNTSMS 137; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 29–58; and Mitchell, *Paul*.

In addition to the stomach, other parts such as hands¹⁴ and feet¹⁵ were often used, as was the head. What characterized the use of the head in the metaphor was how it commonly described the superior and leading part of the body, the one most important for the overall health of the body.

Dawes' survey of the Greek medical writers on the literal relationship of the head to the body leads him to conclude that both "authority" and "source" are possible senses of the metaphor, although in its context in Ephesians 5 the metaphor indicates authority.¹⁶ In a similar manner, Clinton Arnold examines the medical literature and concludes that "leadership" and "source of provision" are fitting ways to summarize the metaphor in Ephesians.

For the medical writers such as Hippocrates and Galen, the head or brain was seen as the leading member of the body since it coordinated all the activities of the other members.¹⁷ For example, Hippocrates states, "neither (the heart or the diaphragm) has any share of intelligence (φρονήσις), but it is the brain (ἐγκέφαλος) which is the cause of all the things I have mentioned."¹⁸ This common physiological understanding is then reflected in various places, such as in Plato's cosmology¹⁹ and Philo.²⁰

When the concept of headship was applied politically, there was often an emphasis upon the power and authority of the head. Plutarch relates,

But after Vindex had openly declared war, he wrote to Galba inviting him to assume the imperial power, and thus to serve what was a vigorous body (σώματι) in need of a head (κεφαλήν), meaning the Gallic provinces.²¹
(Plutarch, *Galb.* 4.3)

¹⁴ See Plutarch, *Praec. ger. rei publ.*, 812B–E; *Frat. amor.*, 478C–E; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.7.11–12; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.3.17–19.

¹⁵ See Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.3.17–19; Plutarch, *Frat. amor.* 478C–E; Aristotle, *Eth. nic.* 1.7.11–12.

¹⁶ Dawes, *Body in Question*, 129–137.

¹⁷ Clinton E. Arnold, "Jesus Christ: 'Head' of the Church (Colossians and Ephesians)," in Joel B. Green and Max Turner, eds., *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 346–366; Dawes, *Body in Question*, 129–133.

¹⁸ Hippocrates, *Morb. sacr.* 20.27–29, as cited in Arnold, "Jesus Christ," 352. Galen speaks of the head's sovereignty over the body when he states, "To most people the head seems to have been formed on account of the encephalon and for that reason to contain all the senses, like the servants and guards of a great king." Galen, *De Usu Partium* 1.445.14–17, as cited in Arnold, "Jesus Christ," 354.

¹⁹ "The divine revolutions, which are two, they bound within a sphere-shaped body, in imitation of the spherical form of the All, which body we now call the 'head,' it being the most divine part and reigning over all the parts within us. To it the gods delivered over the whole body they had assembled to be its servant" (*Tim.* 44d, as cited in Arnold, "Jesus Christ," 352).

²⁰ He calls human beings "a kind of ruling head" (ἀρχικὴ τις κεφαλή) of all living creatures Philo, *QG* 2.9.

²¹ All translations are from the Loeb Classical Library, unless otherwise indicated.

We see this in Seneca, who sees Nero as the head of Rome, his body (*Clem.* 1.4.3). He discusses how the whole body (*corpus*) is the servant of the mind. Thus, “the hands, the feet, and the eyes are in its employ; the outer skin is its defence; at its bidding we lie idle, or restlessly run to and fro; when it commands, if it is a grasping tyrant, we search the sea for gain.” Such is the body’s loyalty to the head as its sovereign that it will even “thrust a right hand into the flame” or plunge “willingly into a chasm” if necessary. The body will do this because it knows the critical role of the head. Seneca describes the head’s leading role when he says that the people are “guided by his reason, and would crush and cripple itself with its own power if it were not upheld by wisdom” (*Clem.* 1.3.5).

The head’s literal position as the “topmost” member in the body plays an important role in this characterization as the leading part because its high stature represents or makes it worthy of greater power and privilege. For example, Philo says that the head is sovereign because it is the topmost part of the body. He says,

[N]ature conferred the sovereignty (ἡγεμονίαν) of the body (σώματος) on the head (κεφαλῇ) when she granted it also possession of the citadel (ἄκρην) as the most suitable position for its kingly rank, conducted it thither to take command and established it on high with the whole framework from neck to foot set below it, like the pedestal under the statue.²² (*Spec.* 184)

For Philo, the head’s position on top of the body cannot be separated from its subsequent duties. Because the city’s acropolis is the highest point, it is also the most fitting place for the city’s center and fortress. In the following passage he adds protection to the head’s/citadel’s duties:

And where in the body has the mind made its lair? ... Some have regarded the head, our body’s citadel (ἄκρόπολιν), as its hallowed shrine, since it is about the head that the senses have their station, and it seems natural to them that they should be posed there, like bodyguards to some mighty monarch.²³

(*Somn.* 32)

Elsewhere, in discussing Ptolemy’s superior accomplishments as measured against other kings, Philo uses the metaphor to illustrate that “as the head takes the highest place (ἡγεμονεύον) in the living body, so he (Ptolemy) may be said to head the kings” (*Mos.* 2.30).

²² Similarly, he says in *Somn.* 2.207, “‘Head’ (κεφαλὴν) we interpret allegorically to mean the ruling part of the soul, the mind on which all things lie.”

²³ Philo also cites the importance of the head in *QG*, 2.5, “the head, like the citadel of a king, has as its occupant the sovereign mind.”

The head's position as "topmost" and "preeminent" is a reflection of the substance of its position as the most accomplished member of the body. Headship could represent other types of superiority beyond military leadership. For example, Philo states, "So then one such (wise) man in a city, if such be found, will be superior to the city, one such city to the country around, one such nation will stand above other nations, as the head above the body (ὡσπερ κεφαλὴ σώματι) to be conspicuous on every side" (*Praem.* 113–114).

Thus, the position itself was defined by ability and function. Headship served as more than an honorary title, although the substance of the head's prominence could vary. Overall, the head was considered preeminent because its position as "topmost" indicated its superior role.²⁴

However, if "head" signifies a position of prominence because of its leading role in the body, this does not imply that we can simply transfer meanings of leadership and authority wholesale into Ephesians. As emphasized earlier, in rhetoric it was not the appearance of a common metaphor, but its specific use that was significant. It becomes critical at this point to examine more closely the way in which Paul uses the image, and it should not surprise us to see that Paul makes a radical transformation. Our next step will be to take a closer look at the expectations regarding love and leadership in ancient uses of the head-body metaphor.

4.2. Expectations Regarding the Head-Body Metaphor

As we have seen, the head-body metaphor was used in antiquity to signify a leading or prominent role for someone (or something). The purpose of the metaphor was to illustrate visually, through the head's literal position at the "top" of the body, one's superiority in achievement, function, etc. A common function for the metaphor, derived from the physiological understanding of the body, was that the head was the primary leader and source of provision for the body.

Reflecting the head's significant status and role, a common theme emerges in treatments of headship in antiquity that the head is the most important

²⁴ In another passage, Philo calls the virtuous person the "head" of the human race, the one from whom all other people draw their life force, just as the head is the first and best part of the animal (*Praem.* 125). While there was debate over whether the head or the heart was the guiding member, the passage does reflect a tradition of ascribing the most important role to the head.

member of the body. Thus, Polyaeus in *Strategems of War* states, "Iphicrates used to resemble an army marshalled for action to the human body. The phalanx he called the breast, the light armed troops the hands, the cavalry the feet, and the general the head. If any of the inferior parts were wanting, the army was defective; but if it wanted a general it wanted every thing" (3.9.2).²⁵ Seneca calls Nero the "head" of Rome, which is his body, and describes his importance in this way: "It is not strange that kings and princes and guardians of the public order ... are held more dear even than those bound to us by private ties; for if men of sense put public interests above private, it follows that he too is dearer upon whom the whole state centres For while a Caesar needs power, the state also needs a head (*capite*)" (*Clem.* 1.4.3.).²⁶

The passage from Seneca reflects the idea that the underlying concern in regards to the health of the body was the well-being of the whole, i.e. the "common good." As a result, one's priority was to do what is most necessary for the survival of the entire body, and some parts had greater importance because the survival of the entire body depended more upon them than the others. The head, in particular, played a critical role in the survival of the body.

As a result, a primary concern was to protect the head at all costs. Seneca describes how the people are willing to give their lives in order to protect Nero as their head:

(the king or prince) alone has firm and well-founded greatness whom all men know to be as much their friend as he is their superior; whose concern they daily find to be vigilant for the safety of each and all ... In his defence they are ready on the instant to throw themselves before the swords of assassins, and to lay their bodies beneath his feet if his path to safety must be paved with slaughtered men; his sleep they guard by nightly vigils, his person they defend with an encircling barrier, against assailing danger they make themselves a rampart. (*Clem.* 1.3.3)

²⁵ Text from Martin, *Corinthian Body*, 93–94. Likewise, in Plutarch, Antigonus describes his position as head or general, as "the one who saves everything else" (*Pel.* 2.1–2).

²⁶ Seneca explains the emperor's importance for Rome, "For he is the bond by which the commonwealth is united, the breath of life which these many thousands draw, who in their own strength would be only a burden to themselves and the prey of others if the great mind of the empire should be withdrawn" (*Clem.* 1.4.1). "Just so long will this people be free from (destruction) as it shall know how to submit to the rein; but if ever it shall tear away the rein, or shall not suffer it to be replaced if shaken loose by some mishap, then this unity and this fabric of mightiest empire will fly into many parts, and the end of this city's rule will be one with the end of her obedience" (*Clem.* 1.4.2–3).

Not without reason do cities and peoples show this according in giving such protection and love to their kings, and in flinging themselves and all they have into the breach whenever the safety of their ruler craves it. Nor is it self-depreciation or madness when many thousands meet the steel for the sake of one man, and with many deaths ransom a single life, it may be, of a feeble dotard. (*Clem.* 1.3.4)

The people are willing to make this sacrifice for him because they know that the safety of the whole depends upon his well-being. Seneca quotes Virgil and then summarizes, “‘If safe their king, one mind to all; Bereft of him, they troth recall.’ Such a calamity would be the destruction of the Roman peace, such a calamity will force the fortune of a mighty people to its downfall” (*Clem.* 1.4.1–2).

Furthermore, not only does the body seek to protect the head, but the head’s duty is to ensure its own preservation, as Plutarch describes:

For if, as Iphicrates analyzed the matter, the light-armed troops are like the hands, the cavalry like the feet, the line of men-at-arms itself like chest and breastplate, and the general like the head, then he, in taking undue risks and being over bold, would seem to neglect not himself, but all, inasmuch as their safety depends on him, and their destruction too. (Plutarch, *Pel.* 2.1)

Since the “common good” demands that the most important part be preserved in order to ensure the survival of the whole, for the head to endanger itself is not seen as a noble action, but rather a misguided one. Plutarch continues:

Therefore, Callicratidas, although otherwise he was a great man, did not make a good answer to the seer who begged him to be careful, since the sacrificial omens foretold his death; ‘Sparta,’ said he, ‘does not depend upon one man.’ For when fighting, or sailing, or marching under orders, Callicratidas was ‘one man’; but as general, he comprised in himself the strength and power of all, so that he was not ‘one man,’ when such numbers perished with him. (Plutarch, *Pel.* 2.1)

It was the duty of the leader to see to his own safety so that he could ensure the safety of all. As Plutarch concludes:

Better was the speech of old Antigonos as he was about to fight a sea-fight off Andros, and someone told him that the enemy’s ships were far more numerous than his: ‘But what of myself,’ said he, ‘how many ships wilt thou count me?’ implying that the worth of the commander is a great thing, as it is in fact, when allied with experience and valour, and his first duty is to save the one who saves everything else. (Plutarch, *Pel.* 2.2)

Because of the need to save the whole, it naturally followed that the body should preserve the members that had the primary roles in ensuring the

survival of the whole.²⁷ In many cases, this was the head, the leader and guide of the body.

Finally, another aspect of the tradition was that the head, as ruler, was not called to be the one who loves, but rather was more deserving of being loved. Thus, Seneca specifically states that the people's actions in sacrificing themselves for Nero is their demonstration of "love" for their head,²⁸ in response to which Nero is to show not love but mercy (*Clem.* 1.5.1–2).

Aristotle also states the expectations in terms of love for the superior by the one over whom he stands when he states:

For it would be ludicrous if one were to accuse God because he does not return love in the same way as he is loved, or for a subject to make this accusation against a ruler; for it is the part of a ruler to be loved, not to love (φιλεῖσθαι γάρ, οὐ φιλεῖν) or else to love in another way. (*Eth. eud.* 7.3.4)

The difference in roles was a reflection of the asymmetrical relationship between the head and the body for the good of the whole.

In conclusion, the metaphor was a graphic representation of the roles of the head and the body. The superior physical placement of the head was symbolic of its leading role in the body and resulted in specific behavioral expectations for both parties.

5. APPLICATION TO HEADSHIP IN EPHESIANS 5:21–33

The normal expectation for the metaphor is that the head is the leader and provider of the body. Consequently it is the head's responsibility to ensure its own safety and the body's responsibility to sacrifice itself for the sake of the head. As a result, we would expect Paul to instruct the wife, the body, to be willing to sacrifice for the sake of the husband, the head. Such instructions would be the most logical since, according to common reasoning, the body could not survive without the head. But that is not what

²⁷ Although Cervin casts doubt on the relevance of this passage because Plutarch is "merely employing a simile" as opposed to a metaphor (Cervin, "A Rebuttal," 101) and Grudem concedes that the example should be placed in a "different category" although still useful ("Meaning of *Kephalē*," 439), this may be unnecessary since simile and metaphor were not considered fundamentally different by the rhetoricians. Thus, Aristotle states, "A simile is also a metaphor; for there is little difference (Similes) should be brought in like metaphors, for they *are* metaphors, differing in the form of expression" (*Rhet.* 3.4.1). Translation from *Aristotle: On Rhetoric* (trans. George A. Kennedy; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

²⁸ As cited above, "Not without reason do cities and peoples show this according in giving such protection and love (*protegenti amandique*) to their kings, and in flinging themselves and all they have into the breach whenever the safety of their ruler craves it" (*Clem.* 1.3.4).

we find, and rather, Paul states the precise reverse. The husband as the head is called to give up his life for the wife as his body, just as Christ loved and gave himself up for the church, which is his body.²⁹

The fundamental nature of the reversal cannot be overlooked since it would have struck the readers as being against nature, which would then have disastrous consequences for the entire body. As mentioned earlier, without the guidance of the head, the body would suffer great harm and might even be destroyed.

Maintaining the natural order was key to preserving society, and one accepted part of this order was that the husband was considered to be the ruler over the wife.³⁰ Aristotle states, “There are by nature various classes of rulers and ruled. For the free rules the slave, the male the female, the man the child in a different way” (*Pol.* 1.5.6). This rule was because of man’s superior nature³¹ or given to him by God.³² It was vital that all parties conform to the hierarchy, especially since the household order was seen as a microcosm of society. Keeping the household order was vital to guaranteeing order in society as a whole.³³ “The man is intended by nature to rule as husband, father, and master, and ... not to adhere to this proper hierarchy is detrimental not only to the household but also to the life of the state.”³⁴ When Paul asks husbands as heads to sacrifice themselves for their wives, he asks them to do that which goes against this fundamental order of society.

²⁹ Thus, the emphasis is upon Christ’s love for the church as a whole rather than as individuals. Some have noted that this is the only occurrence in the New Testament that specifically mentions Christ’s love for the church as a corporate entity. Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 749; Heinrich Schlier, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1957), 255.

³⁰ See David L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (SBLMS 26; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981), 23–62.

³¹ “For the male is by nature better fitted to command than the female It is true that in most cases of republican government the ruler and the ruled interchange in turn ... but the male stands in this relationship to the female continuously” (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.5.2). “The male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject” (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1.2.12). “The man has the rule of this house by nature. For the deliberative faculty in a woman is inferior ... Rational household management, which is the control of a house and of those things related to the house, is fitting for a man” (Aelius Didymus, 149.5 as quoted in Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive*, 42).

³² “The woman, says the law, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be submissive, not for her humiliation, but that she may be directed; for the authority has been given by God to the man” (Josephus, *Ag. Ap.* 2.201).

³³ Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 51.

³⁴ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Dallas: Word, 1990), 358.

It is also helpful to examine the significance of Paul's reversal of status conventions. When Paul asks husbands, and not wives, to love and sacrifice, this reversal would be shocking in light of traditional status conventions because he tells the most honored part, the head, to perform the duties of the less honored member.

The quest for honor for men was central in the ancient Mediterranean culture. As Scott Bartchy states, "Among all social classes, traditional male socialization programmed males to pursue a never-ending quest for greater honor and influence."³⁵ Since honor for men was gained through domination of others, the husband would have been expected to dominate and be served by his wife.³⁶ However, Paul states that he should instead do the opposite and exercise his headship through service and sacrifice.

While this behavior would be shameful in the larger culture, it was considered honorable in God's economy. We see this type of "reversal" elsewhere in the New Testament. For example, the Gospels state that the first will be last (Matt 19:30; 20:16; Mark 10:31; Luke 13:30), all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted (Matt 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14), and whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all (Mark 9:35).

Paul reverses concepts of honor in 1 Corinthians so that in the body of Christ, the parts thought less honorable are given greater honor and the weaker parts are indispensable (12:22–23). He also presents the Corinthians as an example of how God uses the lowly for his grand purposes:

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. (1 Cor 1:26–29)

Most of all, he presents the cross as confounding the world through a profound reversal. What is "foolishness" to the world is actually the "power of God" (1 Cor 1:18). It is precisely Christ crucified, a "stumbling block" to Jews and "foolishness" to Gentiles, who is "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:23–24).

³⁵ Scott Bartchy, "Who Should Be Called Father? Paul of Tarsus between the Jesus Tradition and Patria Potestas," *BTB* 33 (2003): 136.

³⁶ Bartchy, "Who Should Be Father?," 136.

Since Paul says that the husband is to give himself up for his wife in the same way that Christ gave himself up for the church,³⁷ understanding the possible status implications of Christ's sacrifice can provide insight into Paul's instructions for husbands. Joseph H. Hellerman has recently argued that Christ's example in Phil 2:6–11 is a reversal and subversion of the Roman *cursus honorum* ideology. The *cursus honorum* was a sequence of offices or ladder of political advancement for the Roman senatorial class, and its ideology was replicated in various settings throughout the empire. The hierarchy represented in the *cursus* was closely aligned with the social value of honor³⁸ as "there persisted an overarching ideology ... that continued to insist on an appropriate fit between the honor of an office and the social status of its occupant."³⁹

However, Paul presents Christ not as following a prescribed course of ascending in status and offices, but rather as descending in status by moving from equality with God to taking the form of a slave to suffering an utterly shameful death on the cross.⁴⁰ Whereas Christ could have rightfully used his status to dominate others, he chose the opposite course and willingly endured humiliation and served instead. Paul then exhorts the Philippian, particularly those who could claim honor in the community, to follow Christ's example.

Hellerman states,

In stark contrast to the values of the dominant culture, moreover, Paul's Christ surrenders his status willingly, and, most astoundingly, he ultimately

³⁷ It has been argued that the Christ-church comparison is the more important point of the passage. E.g. J. Cambier, "Le grand mystère concernant le Christ et son Église. Éphésiens 5,22–33," *Bib* 47 (1966): 61; Marlis Gielen, *Tradition und Theologie neutestamentlicher Haustafelethik* (BBB 75; Frankfurt am Main: Hain, 1990), 276. However, the immediate context would seem to indicate that the purpose of the comparison is to support Paul's teaching on marriage. Thus, Christ's sacrifice for the church provides a model for the husband's actions towards his wife. "Eph 5:22–33, and Col 3:18–19 as well, concern the order between husband and wife in marriage, and view marriage only from that aspect. However, to establish the right understanding of husband-wife order in marriage, Paul in this passage also considers the purpose of marriage and compares Christian marriage to the relationship between Christ and the church." Stephen B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1980), 73.

³⁸ He describes it as a "hierarchy of honors." Joseph H. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor in Roman Philippi: Carmen Christi as Cursus Pudorum* (SNTSMS 132; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 53.

³⁹ Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor*, 55.

⁴⁰ "Among the ancients, death by crucifixion was universally deemed the most dishonorable experience imaginable," and considered particularly fitting for slaves. Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor*, 144–148.

receives the highest of honors at the hands of God himself, who thereby legitimates Christ's decidedly anti-Roman approach to power and status (vv. 9–11). The presentation, I suggest, was intended by Paul (the likely author of the "hymn") to encourage persons in the church who possessed some degree of honor or status in the broader social world of the colony to utilize their status, after the analogy of Jesus, in the service of others.⁴¹

What we see, then, is a radical reversal in the way that status is to be perceived in the Christian community based on Christ's own sacrifice. Christ demonstrates that those with status are especially called upon to renounce their worldly privileges and reverse the expectations of their status in order to serve.

In a similar way, Paul calls husbands in Ephesians 5 to follow the example of Christ, the head of the church, who sacrificed himself for his body, the church. Paul plays upon the head-body metaphor in order to present a picture of the husband/wife relationship in which the husband as the head, endowed with leadership responsibilities and the privileges of position, is called to fulfill his role in a way that reflects the opposite expectations of his status, that is, sacrificing himself and loving the body, rather than saving his own life and receiving love. As Christ did not use his status, but instead sacrificed on behalf of the church, so too are husbands to sacrifice for, rather than dominate, their wives.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In the ancient Mediterranean world, "masculinity was closely tied to the concepts of personal freedom and power over others," and to attack a man's authority was to attack his masculinity.⁴² As the head of the wife, the husband would have been expected to exercise power over his wife, and not to do so would have been considered shameful. The beginning of Paul's instructions in Eph 5:21–33 would seem to agree with these values. He tells wives to submit to their husbands (5:22, 24) and explicitly says that the reason they are to do so is because the husband is the "head." But when he instructs husbands in the content of this headship, he presents a startling reversal. Contrary to common conceptions of what is fitting and thus honorable, the husbands are to love their wives and give themselves up for them.

⁴¹ Hellerman, *Reconstructing Honor*, 2.

⁴² Jennifer Larson, "Paul's Masculinity," *JBL* 123 (2004): 91.

Paul's instructions reflect the Christian movement's radical reversal of the content of traditional values, so that there is a "redefinition of the basis for attaining honor: serving rather than competing."⁴³ This reversal is based upon the example set first by Christ, as Paul calls husbands to sacrifice willingly for their own wives. As a result, the passage works by seeing both how *κεφαλή* functions as a metaphor connoting authority and leadership as understood in the ancient Mediterranean culture and how Paul radically reorients it through his application of Christian values. It is the unexpectedness of this reversal that ultimately gives the metaphor its power in this passage.

The husband as head does not pursue the privileges of leadership for his own gain, but rather fulfills his responsibilities by doing the opposite. Although as the head he is the leader or authority, he performs a function normally designated to the "lesser" part.

Thus, Paul's statements may be significant in terms of the way they call for a reevaluation of notions of status and privilege, a reevaluation that finds its basis in the example of Christ himself, the head of the body. Paul cites Gen 2:24 in support of his argument and reveals that the sacrifice of the head does not result in the expected destruction of the body but paradoxically the reverse. The husband's love is critical to the unity of the husband and wife, who are called to a "one flesh" union. "The effect of such love upon the beloved is now described. What is the wife in the presence and under the impact of love abounding?" She *is* her loving husband's body ... just as the people chosen and loved by Christ are "members of his body."⁴⁴ Richard B. Batey concludes, "Love is the dynamic which creates unity."⁴⁵

Ephesians 5:21–33 has played a key role in Christian history because of its possible patriarchal implications. However, the greater question may not be whether or not the passage sees a patriarchal headship, but how headship is redefined in the eschatological age of a crucified Christ. As the head of the church, Christ is the one who nourishes and provides and is the primary cause of growth and unity. He does this because his role as head is centered on the defining event of the crucifixion, and through this he brings life

⁴³ Bartchy, "Who Should Be Called Father?," 146.

⁴⁴ Markus Barth, *Ephesians* (AB 34; Garden City, Doubleday, 1974), 630.

⁴⁵ Richard A. Batey, *New Testament Nuptial Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 33. Significantly, before introducing the example of Christ in Phil 2:6–11, Paul also describes the desired behavior as "love" in Phil 2:2. Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (WBC 43; Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 68, observes, "the adjective *αὐτήν* ('same'), stresses the mutuality of love that is to pervade the Christian community, identical with the self-sacrificing love of Christ for the church."

to the church and unity with his body. Likewise, Paul calls the husband to be the head of the wife, and so through love and sacrifice to bring the two into their intended union.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ I would like to thank the many friends and colleagues who read and commented on earlier versions of this article, in particular Ken Berding, Mimi Haddad, Moyer Hubbard, Joanne Jung, and Ron Pierce.

FRANK SPEECH AT WORK IN HEBREWS

Benjamin Fiore

John Chrysostom was born, most likely, in 349 CE in Antioch. As a son in a well-placed family, he was educated in the traditional three-stage educational program of the Greco-Roman world of his day. After his elementary schooling in reading, writing, and arithmetic from age 7 onwards, from age 10 to about 15 he studied Greek classical literature in grammar school, where he was drilled in grammar and learned mythology and practical moral lessons. In the third stage, the school of rhetoric, he was trained in the art of composition and public speaking. His professor was the distinguished rhetorician Libanius (314–393), whose writings provide a picture of the political, social, and economic life of the city.¹ John's writing style earned him acclaim in the ancient world² and from modern authors alike.³ In John Chrysostom's commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, he reveals a working knowledge of Greek rhetorical techniques in his exegesis of Hebrews 10:30–34. The particular trope he refers to is “palliation” and this will be explored in the remainder of this study.

1. EXHORTATION BY THREAT AND PROMISE

The Epistle to the Hebrews characterizes itself as a brief “message of encouragement” (τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως) at 13:22. As such the structure of the letter oscillates between exposition (1:1–14; 2:5–18; 5:1–10; 6:13–10:18; 11:1–40) and exhortation (2:1–4; 3:1–4:16; 5:11–6:12; 10:19–39; 12:1–13:19). In developing the rationale that motivates the desired outlook and actions among the addressees, the author makes frequent appeal to threat of punishment for wrongdoing. As the discussion below will make clear, this rhetorical tactic intends to catch the attention of the target audience, shake them up, and lead to a reformation of attitude and action.

¹ J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 6–8.

² Pelusion (435 CE), *Ep.* 4.224 (PG 47:357).

³ Urs von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff quoted by O. Bardenhewer in *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur* (Freiburg im B.: Herder, 1912), 3:353.

One of the bases for this threat is the record of God's dealings with the Israelites in the past and the lessons the author of Hebrews draws from it. At 3:7–19 the author cites Ps 95:7c–11, which in turn recalls the quarreling of the thirsty Israelites against Moses and God as narrated at Exod 17:1–7 and Num 20:13. The threat at Ps 95:11, "They shall never enter my rest," which recalls the wilderness generation's and Moses' not entering the promised land, is taken by the author of Hebrews to be a warning against the Hebrews community that resistance to God will leave them excluded from the heavenly resting place of the faithful. The theme continues in Heb 4:1–11, where the heavenly rest is related to the rest God took after the six days of creation. Hebrews seems to make an oblique reference to the same Sinai wilderness event at 8:9, where the author cites Jer 31:31–34. Massah or "place of testing" and Meribah or "place of quarreling," the symbolic names given to Rephidim, highlight the lesson for the Hebrews community.

The promised reward of entering God's rest takes on a this-worldly sense in connection with the image of Jesus as the high priest. At 3:6 Christ is referred to as the faithful one placed over his house, a house identified with the Hebrews community if they hold fast to their "confidence and pride in our hope." Later at 9:24–26, in the development of the image of Jesus as high priest, Jesus is said to have entered the heavenly sanctuary on which the earthly temple was modeled. There his once-and-for-all sacrifice took away sin. This gives the community faithful "confidence of entrance into the sanctuary by the new and living way he opened for us through the veil, that is, his flesh" (10:19–20). The author brings this heavenly expectation down to earth in the moral lesson he draws when he urges his audience that they "not stay away from our assembly." The community's Eucharistic gatherings, which recall the sacrifice of Jesus, are seen as parallel to the services in the Jerusalem temple. As the latter sanctuary is an image of the heavenly temple, so the Christian assembly is linked with the heavenly sacrifice in the heavenly temple offered by Jesus the high priest.

The disobedience of the Israelites, which led to their exclusion from their goal of promised rest (3:18; 4:6), is the lesson the author of the epistle draws for the audience (4:11). The lesson is applied to listening to and accepting the word of God and then worshipping God in reverence and awe (12:25–28). The lesson then becomes more local in chapter 13 where the author urges attention to "the leaders who spoke the word of God to you." Obedience and deference to them are what the author expects from his audience (13:17).

The author associates disobedience with faithlessness ("And we see that they could not enter for lack of faith" [4:19]), which expands the lesson from the Exodus narrative. This "unfaithful heart" can lead them to "forsake the

living God" (3:12). It is the community's faith and acceptance of the good news that distinguishes them from the rebellious generation in the Sinai Desert (4:2–3). The epistle provides depth to the idea of faith by noting two dimensions to it: receiving the good news and uniting in faith with those who listened (4:2). This sets up the focus in the letter on association in belief and practice with the community and its leaders (10:24–25; 13:15, 17).

Another aspect of threat and fear from the Exodus narrative also receives mention in the Epistle to the Hebrews when the author alludes to the fearful circumstances and warnings to stay away during God's appearance on Mt. Sinai at 12:18–21, recalling Exod 19:12–24 and Deut 4:11. This threat is mitigated by the contrast the author draws between the Exodus epiphany and the invitation to embrace the covenant introduced by the mediator Jesus. Once again, the community worship is seen as their reaction to the gift of an "unshakeable kingdom" (12:28). Of course, the author also retains an eschatological perspective as well in his concluding reminder that God is "a consuming fire" (12:29).

The fear evoked in connection with the coming eschatological judgment runs throughout the letter. It has just been seen as operating in chapter 12, where the author cautions the audience not to "reject the one who speaks" (12:25), who "has promised, 'I will once more shake not only the earth but heaven'" (12:26). The eschatological threat starts in the first chapter (1:10–12), where the author cites Ps 102:26–28, which contrasts the permanence of the creator God over against the inevitable dissolution of the created order. At 4:12–13, the letter alludes to the eventual account to be rendered to God that all will have to make for their thoughts and deeds. The end time fires (see Matt 7:16; 13:7; Mark 4:7; Luke 8:7) to consume useless produce receives mention at 6:8. Realized and future eschatology are combined in chapter 9, when the author mentions at 9:26 that Jesus has appeared and offered his saving sacrifice "at the end of the ages," and at 9:27, where the author expresses the expectation that the dead will be judged and Jesus will "bring salvation to those who eagerly await him" at his second appearance. In this vein, 10:27 describes the "prospect of judgment and a flaming fire that is going to consume the adversaries." God's epithet as "a consuming fire" (12:29) continues this expectation.

In alluding the eschatological judgment and punishment for the wicked, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is following the overwhelming majority of New Testament authors with the exception of the Gospel and Letters of John. The author stands out, however, in the use of this threat as a tool of moral persuasion. With the New Testament majority, the author of Hebrews uses the threat as a way to shake up the epistle's wavering

audience. Along with perhaps only 2 Thess 3:4, however, the author mitigates the threat with expressions of confidence in the audience's goodness. There are words of encouragement throughout the epistle, where the author reminds the audience of the divine protection and assistance they can expect. This assistance includes ministering angels for those "who are to inherit salvation" (1:14); liberation from slavery through the fear of death by the expiation sacrifice of Jesus (2:14–18); the compassion of a high priest who knows humanity's struggles and gives people confident access to divine mercy, grace, and "timely help" (4:14–16); an immutable declaration of blessing by God (6:17); a mediator always ready and able to intercede and save those who approach God (7:25); and a purgation of conscience and revival of good works and worship (9:13–14). Thus, the threat of punishment is deflected as long as the community members remain faithful and accept the exhortation. The author makes this clear at 3:12–14, where he reminds the audience to take care not to "have an evil and unfaithful heart, so as to forsake the living God" nor be "hardened by the deceit of sin." Their partnership in Christ is a reality "if only we hold the beginning of the reality firm until the end." A further analysis of the rhetoric of encouragement will be pursued below.

The caution against an "unfaithful" heart at 3:12 directs attention to an important theme and element of the epistle's exhortation, the guidance that faith gives. It is clear from what has been discussed above that the author of Hebrews finds that a lack of faith prevented the rebellious Israelites from entering into their promised rest (3:19; 4:2). It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the epistle exhorts the audience to "hold fast to our confession" (4:14) to "approach the throne of grace" (4:16). The epistle identifies Jesus as the "leader and perfecter of faith" (12:2) who has entered the heavenly sanctuary (4:14). Jesus surpasses Moses who was "faithful in all his house" because he "was faithful as a son placed over his house" (3:5–6). The Hebrews community, which is "his house," is expected to take care not to have "an unfaithful heart so as to forsake the living God" (3:12) but rather "hold fast to our confidence and pride in our hope" (3:6). As "partners of Christ" they are to encourage themselves to "hold the beginning of the reality firm until the end" (3:14).

To balance the negative example of faithlessness found in the rebellious Israelites in the Sinai Desert, the epistle presents a long list of positive examples. The presentation of models and the call either to avoid or imitate them is a commonplace rhetorical strategy in hortatory works.⁴ Primary

⁴ Benjamin Fiore, "Paul, Exemplification, and Imitation," in J. Paul Sampley, ed., *Paul in*

among these is Jesus, on whom the epistle urges the audience to “reflect,” as one “who was faithful to the one who appointed him” (3:1–2). The author points to the faithful in the Hebrews community “who have faith and will possess life” (10:39). The entirety of chapter 11 presents a litany of the faithful from Israel’s religious past. Some, like Abraham, journeyed to a place he did not know (11:8) and all of them were “approved because of their faith” (11:39). Despite their faith, however, the author realizes that they did not receive what had been promised, but would be made perfect through the community and its faithfulness (11:39–40). The epistle becomes direct and practical when it exhorts the audience to imitate “those who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises” (6:12). Some of these models are identified as the leaders whose teaching the audience is urged to remember as they “consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” Jesus is the first among these (13:7–8).

The author’s appeals to fear to motivate correct action can be found at 2:2 with the recollection that “every transgression and disobedience received its just recompense.” The requirement to “render an account” at 4:13 finds vivid expression at 6:8 in the image of the fallen being rejected, cursed, and finally burned. Hebrews 10:29 speaks of the punishment due to “the one who has contempt for the Son of God,” and 13:25 notes the impossibility of escaping “if we turn away from the one who warns from heaven.” At the same time the author reminds the addressees of the divine protection and assistance they can expect from ministering spirits (1:14), from Jesus who is “able to help those who are being tested” (2:18; 4:15) and who “saves those who approach God through him” (7:25; and see 9:13–14, 28), and from God in his immutable purpose (6:17). Thus, the threat of punishment is deflected, as long as the audience remains faithful and accepts the exhortation (for example, see 3:12).

2. RHETORICAL DEVICES IN HEBREWS 5:11–6:12 AND 10:19–39

In the rest of this study, I will focus on two hortatory passages, 5:11–6:12 and 10:19–39, where the author motivates through fear of punishment by suggesting that a relapse into sin after one has accepted the way of faith is unforgivable. The addressees are exempted from the charge of apostasy⁵ and

the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2003), 228–237.

⁵ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 161; Alan C. Mitchell, *Hebrews* (SP 13: Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007), 125, 129.

the threat of separation from God in both instances. The contrast between the judgment on apostates and the confidence in the addressees' abiding relationship with God intends to strengthen their resolve not to slip away from the circle of the saved. In adopting this persuasive strategy, the author follows a rhetorical tactic described by Greco-Roman rhetoricians of the day.

Through the third century CE a more literal reading of the passages against the backdrop of the periodic Roman persecution of Christians provided authoritative warrant for the position against the readmission to the Church of the *Lapsi* (i.e. those who appeared to renounce their faith to avoid persecution).⁶ One of the theological issues of that debate had to do with the uniqueness of baptism, as regards the baptized individual's participation through the ritual in the death of Christ. The uniqueness of the crucifixion of Christ and its salvific effects thus made baptism a one-time event for the baptized person as well.⁷ At the same time, the pastoral practice of achieving forgiveness for moral faults committed after baptism was gradually becoming established.⁸

In the rhetorical strategy of Hebrews, the confidence expressed about the addressees' uprightness (6:9–12; 10:39) indicates that the warning earlier in the passages are not a response to actual apostasy, but rather serve as a caution against the possibility of falling away.⁹ This confidence, as Johnson makes clear, rests on two realities: the fidelity of God to the people (6:10; 10:38–39) and their demonstrated fidelity to God (6:11–12; 10:32–36). The author uses the warning and the confidence of the audience's record to substantiate the call for continued uprightness (6:11; 10:36).

As part of the exhortation in chapter 10, the author of Hebrews reminds the audience of the "boldness" ("confidence," *παρρησία*, 10:35) that they have been given by being firm in the faith during their previous sufferings (10:32–34). Mitchell notes that "boldness" or "confidence" is a virtue of friendship, just as this "frank speech" is also the right of the free citizen to speak in the city assembly. In Hebrews, this virtue refers to the confidence of open access to and dialogue with God. Mitchell notes that this access to God, constituted by him through Christ, is "eschatologically oriented, as it is concerned with future expectation."¹⁰

⁶ Johnson, *Hebrews*, 163.

⁷ Theodoret, *Interpretation of Hebrews* 6 (PG 82:717) and Photius, *Fragments on the epistle to the Hebrews* 6.6 (NTA 15:646).

⁸ Ambrose, *Concerning Repentance* 2.2.7–12 (NPNF² 10:345–346).

⁹ Johnson, *Hebrews*, 164.

¹⁰ Mitchell, *Hebrews*, 84.

As Witherington points out, the effectiveness of the exhortation in Hebrews rests in part on the fact that the exhortation includes the author as well.¹¹ It will be shown below how this inclusion plays out in the author's exhortation. Among the rhetorical strategies employed by the author is the use of "dramatic rhetorical statements for the purpose of waking up the audience."¹² The reference to re-crucifying Jesus is an instance of this (6:6). In conjunction with this and similar dramatic statements (e.g. 10:26–31), Witherington notes the author's use of the rhetoric of impossibility, which suggests that some sins cannot be remedied by forgiveness.¹³ In the two passages under consideration in this study (5:11–6:20 and 10:19–39), the same pattern can be detected: 1) admonition (5:11–6:3; 10:19–25); 2) stern warning (6:4–8; 10:26–31); and 3) encouragement based on the audience's past behavior (6:9–20; 10:32–39).¹⁴

The reference to frank speech or boldness/confidence (παρρησία) at 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35, provides us not just with a virtue possessed by the audience of Hebrews, but also with an identification of the rhetorical strategy behind the exhortation of the two selected passages (5:11–6:12; 10:19–39). Over time παρρησία underwent a shift from a word describing the political right of a free citizen of a Greek city-state to a private virtue. This virtue denoted the personal candor greatly prized in the friendship relationship. In this sense, παρρησία countered and exposed the danger represented by self-seeking flatterers. Frank speech became seen as a duty of friends.¹⁵ This was the meaning of the word at the time of the writing of Hebrews. While the author refers to the virtue in the possession of the audience (13:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35), the author demonstrates and makes use of it himself as he develops the exhortation.

The New Testament writers use the word παρρησία in a variety of ways. One reflects the original socio-political sense of the word as it denotes the public voice of a Greek citizen. This usage drifts toward the idea of speaking clearly and openly. Thus, John refers to Jesus speaking and acting publicly and not in secret (18:20; see Mark 8:32; John 7:4, 13, 26; 10:24; 11:14, 54; 16:25

¹¹ Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 134.

¹² Witherington, *Letters*, 212.

¹³ Witherington, *Letters*, 211–215.

¹⁴ Witherington, *Letters*, 282.

¹⁵ David Konstan, et al., "Introduction," in David Konstan et al., eds., *Philodemus: On Frank Criticism* (SBL Texts and Translations 43; Graeco-Roman Series 13; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 3–4.

and cf. Col 2:15). Akin to this usage, but reflecting the attitude of the speaker is the use of *παρρησία* to describe the confidence and boldness of the speaker (Acts 2:29; 4:13, 29, 31; 9:27, 28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26; 28:31; and see 2 Cor 3:12; Phil 1:20; 1 Thess 2:2; Phlm 8; Eph 3:12; 6:19; 1 Tim 3:13). In Hebrews the word *παρρησία* also refers to the individual's emotional attitude, but not necessarily in speaking or acting. Rather, it describes the faithful person's confidence in approaching God (3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35 and see 1 John 2:28; 3:21; 4:17; 5:14).

While the Epistle to the Hebrews, like its New Testament counterparts, makes use of the term *παρρησία* consistent with common Greco-Roman usage of the day, none of these usages, describes the employment of *παρρησία* as a tool for exhortation and moral correction. Nonetheless, by examining the argumentation in the Epistle to the Hebrews, one notices *παρρησία* as a rhetorical device at work in Hebrews. The author, however, as a good rhetorician and moralist, does not identify the technique being used. The analysis of the epistle above detected the fearful warnings based on the historical past, the eschatological future, and the present situation, that the author gives to the epistle's audience. These warnings function as reminders to the audience to take stock of their fidelity to community leaders and practice. The analysis also noted that the author of the epistle gave ample encouragement to the community of a better outcome than that warned against. In addition the author provided exemplars of fidelity that set a pattern for the community's choices and actions. This offered the community a stimulus to choose the path set forth by the author.

Glad cites Philo of Alexandria and Plutarch who connected *παρρησία* or frank speech with friendship as a "very potent medicine."¹⁶ As a treatment for spiritual ailments, *παρρησία* is similar to *νουθεσία* (admonition), *ἐπιτιμία* (censure), and *ἐλεγχος* (reproof), as terms of moral reproof which seeks the improvement of the one criticized, as found discussed in several Greco-Roman authors (Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 47A–B; 66A; *Conj. praec.* 139F; *Exil.* 606C; *Quaest. conv.* 617F; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 33.7; 51.4; Philo, *Her.* 19; Julian, *Or.* 6.201A–C).¹⁷ Mitchell explains the varied meanings of the word

¹⁶ Clarence E. Glad, "Frank Speech, Flattery, and Friendship in Philodemus," in John T. Fitzgerald, ed., *Friendship, Flattery and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (NovTSup 82; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 32.

¹⁷ David E. Fredrickson, "Παρρησία in the Pauline Epistles," in *Friendship, Flattery and Frankness of Speech*, 165–169.

παρρησία in the letter to the Hebrews.¹⁸ In discussing 4:14–16 and 10:19–39, he finds both consolation and warning conveyed in the frank exhortation there.

The charred remains of papyri belonging to the first-century BCE Epicurean philosopher and moralist Philodemus, who taught in the Epicurian school in the Naples area, were discovered in a villa in Herculaneum. Among these were his transcripts of the notes that he took while studying in Athens under Zeno of Sidon. His book *On Frank Criticism* (Περὶ Παρρησίας) is the only known work in antiquity with this title.¹⁹ Although badly damaged, it nonetheless provides a good description of the uses of frank criticism in the work of moral improvement. Thus, the aim of moral healing in the use of παρρησία finds articulation in Philodemus's treatise *On Frank Criticism* (frag. 32 and frag. 39). Philodemus also describes how the person using the sting of reproachful παρρησία "will add praise of good qualities as well" (Tab IV.I). In a similar vein, Plutarch, in his essay "How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend" (*Adul. amic.* 74A–D) discusses treating frank speech as a fine art. He finds in Sophocles an example of artful παρρησία, where the playwright has Odysseus impute cowardice to Achilles to move him toward heroic action. Plutarch explains the rhetorical technique here,

Such is the method which frankness seeks to take when it would reclaim a wrongdoer; but to stir a man to action it tries the opposite action. For example, whenever it either becomes necessary to divert persons that are on the point of going wrong, or when we would give an earnest impulse to those who are trying to make a stand against the onset of a violent adverse impulse, or who are quite without energy and spirit for what is noble, we should turn around and ascribe their action to some unnatural or unbecoming motives So by alarming the spirited and manly man with an imputation of cowardice, the chaste and orderly with an imputation of licentiousness, the liberal and lordly with an imputation of pettiness and stinginess, they give to such persons an impulse toward what is noble and turn them from what is disgraceful, proving themselves moderate in matters beyond remedy.²⁰

(Plutarch, *Adul. amic.* 74A–D)

Similarly in the two sections of Hebrews under scrutiny here, the author stresses the dire consequences for the audience should they choose a sinful path ("they are re-crucifying the Son of God for themselves," 6:6; "it is

¹⁸ Alan C. Mitchell, "Παρρησία in Hebrews," in *Friendship, Flattery and Frankness of Speech*, 215.

¹⁹ David Konstan et al., eds., *Philodemus: On Frank Criticism*, 2.

²⁰ Translation from Plutarch, *Moralia* (trans. Frank Cole Babbitt; LCL; London: W. Heinemann, 1927–1936).

rejected, it will soon be cursed and finally burned,” 6:8; “there no longer remains sacrifice for sins but a fearful prospect of judgment and a flaming fire,” 10:26–27; “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,” 10:31). By describing the hopeless condition of the sinner, the author hopes the audience will “rouse one another to love and good works” (10:24), as he asserts that “we are sure in your regard, beloved, of better things related to salvation, even though we speak in this way,” 6:9. The aim of this tactic is to confirm the audience in their virtuous path (“so that you may not become sluggish, but imitators of those who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises” [6:12]; “we are not among those who draw back and perish, but among those who have faith and will possess life” [10:39]).

Witherington identifies the author’s technique as *deinosis*. As Quintilian describes the effect of the rhetorical device, it “gives additional force to things unjust, cruel, hateful” (Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.2.24). In the Epistle to the Hebrews, then, the author expresses the extreme consequences of apostasy in his exhortation to move the audience away from it.²¹ Witherington sees this strategy at work when the author details the impossibility of repentance (“It is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened ... and then have fallen awayto bring them to repentance again” [6:4–6]) and the eschatological consequence of loss (“If we sin deliberately after receiving knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains sacrifice for sins but a fearful prospect of judgment and a flaming fire that is going to consume the adversaries” [10:26–27]).²²

The author of Hebrews does not leave his audience in a desperate state. Instead the exhortation goes on to highlight the virtuous alternative by stressing its nearness (“Let us draw near” [10:22]). In this instance the fearful consequences of apostasy either are pushed to the distance or made to appear non-existent. Thus, Witherington finds this to put into practice what Aristotle describes at *Rhetoric* 2.5.16. Here Aristotle describes the source of confidence and says,

It is, therefore, the expectation associated with a mental picture of the nearness of what keeps us safe and the absence or remoteness of what is terrible: it may be due either to the near presence of what inspires confidence or to the absence of what causes alarm. We feel it if we can take steps—many, or important, or both—to cure or prevent trouble ... and generally, if our relations with the gods are satisfactory.²³

²¹ Witherington, *Letters*, 289. Translation from Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* (trans. H.E. Butler; LCL; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1963–1966).

²² Witherington, *Letters*, 211–215.

²³ Witherington, *Letters*, 285.

One other aspect of the way the author of Hebrews employs *παρησία* in his exhortation is the use of what Witherington identifies as “palliation,”²⁴ which he finds described in *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. The *rhetor* explains:

If frank speech of this sort seems too pungent, there will be many means of palliation, for one may immediately thereafter add something of this sort: ‘I here appeal to your virtue, I call on your wisdom, I bespeak your old habits,’ so that praise may quiet the feelings aroused by frankness. As a result, the praise frees the hearer from wrath and annoyance, and the praise deters him from error.²⁵ (*Rhet. Her.* 4.37.49)

Thus, the author of Hebrews softens the threats of judgment and punishment (10:26–31) by referring to the audience’s former faithful endurance in the face of affliction (10:32–38) and by expressing the assurance that they both are not apostates but rather have faith and will possess life (10:39). So also, the eschatological rejection posed at 6:4–8 is tempered by the author’s reference to the audience’s demonstrated love, service, virtue, and expected inheritance of God’s promises (6:9–12).

As noted at the start of this study, John Chrysostom, in his sensitivity to the rhetorical flow of the exhortation, noted the tactic described in *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, although he does not identify the trope. Thus, he explains, “The best physicians, after they have made a deep incision and have increased the pains by the wound, soothing the afflicted part and giving rest and refreshment to the disturbed soul, proceed not to make a second incision but rather soothe that which has been made with gentle remedies and such as are suited to remove the violence of the pain.”²⁶ He then applies the medical image to the exhortation that he finds here in Hebrews. In doing this, he follows the practice of moralists of his day. Thus, he notes, “This Paul also did after he had shaken their souls and pierced them with the recollection of hell and convinced them that he who does insult to the grace of God must certainly perish. After he had shown from the laws of Moses that they also shall perish ... and had said, ‘It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.’”²⁷

Another rhetorical technique employed by the author to the Hebrews to bolster the exhortation is the use of maxim (*sententia*). The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.17.24.1 clarifies, “The hearer, when he perceives that an

²⁴ Witherington, *Letters*, 219.

²⁵ Translation from Eugene Garth, ed., *Aristotle: Poetics and Rhetoric* (trans. S.H. Baker and W. Rhys Roberts; New York: Barnes and Noble Classics Series, 2006).

²⁶ John Chrysostom, *On the epistle to the Hebrews* 21.1 (NPNF¹ 14.461).

²⁷ NPNF¹ 14.461.

indisputable principle drawn from practiced life is being applied to a cause, must give it his tacit approval" (4.17.25). Thus, the author of Hebrews fortifies the threat in chapter 10 by adding the maxim at 10:31, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God."

Once again, the use of this maxim supports and makes more threatening the warning in chapter 10. This is part of the frank speaking by the author as he exhorts the audience to maintain their faith and practice in the face of a tendency of some to let these slip ("We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some" [10:25]; "those who draw back" [10:39]; "Strengthen then your drooping hands and your weak knees" [12:12]).

John Chrysostom notices the harshness of the warning in the epistle and makes sense of it in terms of the commonplace tactic of the moralists of his day and that of the author of Hebrews to inflict pain through the frank speech of reproof with a view toward provoking a change of heart. He then goes on to note the practice of "palliation" employed by the author of Hebrews. He observes, "Then, lest the soul, desponding through excessive fear, should be swallowed up with grief, he soothes them by commendations and exhortation and gives them zeal derived from their own conduct Powerful is the exhortation from deeds already done, for he who begins a work ought to go forward and add to it."²⁸

Clearly, then, the rhetorical trope was both described by rhetoricians in Cicero's day and continued to be part of rhetorical education and practice through the fourth century. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews made it a prominent feature of the exhortation, as part of the hortatory application of frank speech, *παρρησία*. A trained rhetorician such as John Chrysostom was able to detect the stratagem quite readily. The literalist interpreters reading the epistle in the context of the great persecutions did not.

The *παρρησία* in Hebrews is not only a prerogative and a virtue possessed by the audience, which the author cautions them not to let slip, it is also possessed by the author and is put to work in his exhortation effort. In the progress of the exhortation, the frank confrontation of the audience's tendencies to slacken expresses the aim of frank speech, which is to jolt the listener's attention and lead to reform and restoration of well-being. The starkness of the admonition's threat, however, finds relief in expressions of confidence that the audience will not be exposed to the dire consequences of the sin of which the author warns them. The wrath of God will be deflected due to God's justice in recalling their service and love in the past

²⁸ *NPNF*¹ 14.461.

(6:10), as well as to their own enlightenment and faithful endurance (10:32–34). While it is interesting to speculate on the type of offence that knows no repentance or forgiveness, this exercise is peripheral to the author's use of the threat. The author uses it to give force to his hortatory effort of frank and healing admonition. The relaxation of the threat immediately following it serves the end of the frank speech and throws light on the virtues of the audience to be affirmed and the qualities of God to be relied on.

HOW GREEK WAS THE AUTHOR OF “HEBREWS”?
A STUDY OF THE AUTHOR’S LOCATION
IN REGARD TO GREEK ΠΑΙΔΕΙΑ

David A. deSilva

Many and varied have been the investigations of the author of Hebrews’s interaction with classical culture and his “location” within that culture. These investigations have ranged from explorations of the “Platonism” of Hebrews vis-a-vis Jewish apocalypticism,¹ to points of commonality between the author’s critique of the Levitical cult and philosophical critique of the practice of traditional Greco-Roman religion and popular religion,² to the rhetorical artistry and composition evidenced by the author of this well-crafted sermon.³ The present study seeks to supplement this larger venture by collecting observations concerning the author’s location in regard to Greek παιδεία, the theory and practice of shaping new, productive, culturally engaged citizens. This study will approach this question by an investigation of the intertexture—the arenas of cultural knowledge upon which the

¹ C.K. Barrett, “The Eschatology in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in W.D. Davies and D. Daube, eds., *The Background the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 363–393; R. Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1970); Ronald Williamson, “Platonism and Hebrews,” *SJT* 16 (1963): 415–424; C. Carlston, “The Vocabulary of Perfection in Philo and Hebrews,” in R.A. Guelich, ed., *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1978), 133–148; L.D. Hurst, “Eschatology and ‘Platonism’ in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *SBLSP* 23 (1984): 41–74.

² H.W. Attridge, “The Philosophical Critique of Religion under the Early Empire,” *ANRW* 2.16.1 (1978): 45–78; E.C. Ferguson, “Spiritual Sacrifice in Early Christianity and its Environment,” *ANRW* 2.23.2 (1980): 1151–1189; J.W. Thompson, *The Beginnings of Early Christian Philosophy* (CBQMS 13; Washington, DC: CBA, 1982), 103–115; P. Gray, *Godly Fear: The Epistle to the Hebrews and Greco-Roman Critiques of Superstition* (Academia Biblica 16; Atlanta: SBL, 2003).

³ M.R. Cosby, *The Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews in Light of Example Lists in Antiquity* (Macon: Mercer University, 1988); W.G. Übelacker, *Der Hebräerbrief als Appel* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1989); T. Olbricht, “Hebrews as Amplification,” in S.E. Porter and T.H. Olbricht, eds., *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (JSNTSup 90; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 375–387; D.A. deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (SBLDS 152; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995; rev. ed., 2008).

author draws—as well as the inner texture of Hebrews. At what points in the midst of the dense array of Jewish scriptural intertexture would a Greek reader resonate with the author's sermon and feel, after all the strangeness, "at home" with the author's imagery, convictions, and forms of presentation? What might this tell us about the author's own formative experiences as he moved from being an unskilled infant to maturation, able not only to digest, but artfully to prepare and serve, solid food?

1. GREEK EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The author of Hebrews shares at least two fundamental tenets regarding education with his Greek cultural environment. The first emerges in his description of Jesus' own process of becoming qualified to serve as the perfect high priest, a process of formative education in which "he learned (ἐμαθεν) obedience from the things he suffered [or, experienced, ἐπαθεν]" (Heb 5:8). With the words ἐμαθεν ... ἐπαθεν, the author incorporates a celebrated Greek word play, the classical equivalent of our "no pain, no gain."⁴ Greek teachers sought to prepare their students to embrace the difficulties—even the pains—of the process of formative discipline (παιδεία) that would equip them with the skills, and carve into them the virtues, that would position them to flourish in Greek culture and leave behind a praiseworthy remembrance of a life well lived. Discipline was not merely punitive (i.e. punishment for doing something wrong, with the result that learning came from trial, error, and a whooping). Educative discipline challenged students with rigorous exercises training mind, soul, and body.

Students following the progymnastic course of studies would encounter early on the famous saying of Isocrates, "the root of education is bitter but its fruit is sweet" (Hermogenes, *Preliminary Exercises* 3.7).⁵ This saying draws on agricultural imagery to communicate the same cultural assumption as

⁴ See, for example, Aeschylus, *Ag.* 177; Herodotus, 1.207. For further references, see Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 152 n. 192; N.C. Croy, *Endurance in Suffering: Hebrews 12:1–13 in its Rhetorical, Religious, and Philosophical Context* (SNTSMS 98; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 139–144.

⁵ Quotation is from the translation of G.A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World 10; Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 77; See also Priscian, *De usu* 35–64; Aphthonius, *On the Chreia* 23–77; Nicolaus of Myra, *On the Chreia*, 72–73, 83–84, 133–134, all to be found in R.F. Hock and E.N. O'Neil, *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric: Volume I. The Progymnasmata* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986).

the motto $\xi\mu\alpha\theta\epsilon\nu$, $\xi\pi\alpha\theta\epsilon\nu$: learning is difficult, but without embracing these difficulties one will never enjoy the profit to be had. The author of Hebrews incorporates an expansive paraphrase of Isocrates' saying at the close of his most extended reflection on the Christian's formative discipline: "All formative discipline ($\pi\alpha\iota\delta\epsilon\iota\alpha$), while it is present, does not seem to be joyful, but grievous; but later it yields the peaceful fruit ($\chi\alpha\rho\pi\acute{o}\nu$) of righteousness to those who have been trained through it" (12:11).⁶

If Jesus, the "Son," underwent a process of formation that involved learning through suffering (5:8), it should be expected that the "many sons and daughters" who follow this Son to glory (2:10) should undergo the same. This is the topic of a lengthy reflection on the hardships of discipleship, largely occasioned by the majority culture's rejection and marginalization of Christ-followers, as a process of formative discipline (12:5–11). While the author opens this discussion with a quotation from Prov 3:11–12, the conversation moves away from Proverbs toward Greco-Roman discourse in several notable ways. Proverbs expresses a punitive model of discipline, but the author of Hebrews mutes the punitive overtones in the recitation in favor of a model of formative discipline (discipline as "training" rather than "correction").⁷ This is the model that Greco-Roman and Hellenistic Jewish authors tend to favor when speaking of divine discipline.

A striking parallel to the exhortation to endure hardships as divine parental discipline in Heb 12:5–11 is to be found in Seneca's *De providentia*. Seneca describes the sage as God's "pupil, imitator and true progeny, whom that magnificent parent, no mild enforcer of virtues, educates quite sternly, just as strict fathers do" (*De prov.* 1.6). God "'rears' (*educat*) the wise person like a son (2.5) ... God 'tests, hardens, and prepares' the sage for Himself (1.6)."⁸ Seneca comes strikingly close to Prov 3:12 itself as he writes that "those whom God approves and loves (*Hos ... deus ... quos amat*), God toughens, examines, and exercises" (*De prov.* 4.7).⁹ Seneca goes so far as to compare the paternal training of God with the way in which Spartan fathers whipped their children in public as a demonstration of the child's attainment of the prized virtue of endurance (4.11–12). Such hardships, however, were probative and formative, not punitive. This remarkable Latin

⁶ See below for a fuller analysis of this verse as itself an example of the author's progymnastic training.

⁷ This argument is compellingly set forth in Croy, *Endurance*, 196–214.

⁸ Croy, *Endurance*, 149.

⁹ Croy, *Endurance*, 150.

text suggests that the author of Hebrews' argument in 12:5–11 would have been as much at home in Seneca's parlor as in the Hellenistic synagogue. In both texts, hardships are a sign of God's parental training, by means of which God prepares the disciple or sage for some greater destiny (described as "God's own self" in *De prov.*, and "a share in God's holiness" in Heb 12:10). Being subject to hardship shows that one is God's legitimate progeny ("true progeny" in Seneca, stated from the contrary in Heb 12:8). Neither Seneca nor the author of Hebrews conveys the sense that these hardships befall the sage/disciple because he or she has done something wrong. The emphasis consistently falls on the positive fruits that the courageous endurance of such trials would yield in the future, aligning thus with Isocrates' maxim.

The second tenet shared by the author of Hebrews with the Greek culture concerns the notion of discrete stages of instruction, with the student moving (ideally) from one to the next at the proper age. The author of Hebrews evokes this topic in a passage upbraiding the hearers for not having made greater progress in their formation as Christian disciples and not having made a surer transition to becoming themselves promoters and teachers of the Christian philosophy:

Concerning [Jesus' high priesthood] we have a lengthy message to speak that will be difficult-to-understand, since you have become sluggish in hearing. For indeed, though having the obligation to be teachers on account of the length of time spent, you again have need for someone to continue to teach you the rudimentary principles of the primary level of the oracles of God, and you have come to stand in need of milk rather than solid food. For everyone who partakes of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he or she is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who have their faculties trained through constant practice for the discernment of the noble and the base.

(5:11–14)

As the author attempts to shame the hearers into taking a more active stance in regard to their own and one another's formation, he employs common metaphors for levels of education to drive his appeal home. Milk versus meat, the infant versus the mature adult, were frequently used by philosophers to speak of stages of education or achievement in philosophy.¹⁰

¹⁰ See, for example, Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.16.39; 3.24.9 on milk; Seneca, *Ep.* 88.20 on "elementary teachings"; Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.26.3; 2.18.27; Philo, *De virt.* 18 on education in the philosophy as "training." Paul also makes use of these metaphors in 1 Cor 3:1–3, again in an effort to shame the audience out of some failure to measure up to the expectations or virtues of the Christian culture for them. On the cultural intertexture of philosophical texts and educational metaphors, see Thompson, *Beginnings*, 29–30; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 158–161.

It is not simply the case that the author uses images common in Greek culture. He uses them to the same ends as one finds in Greek philosophical discourse. Two passages from Epictetus are particularly informative, as the philosopher uses these images to motivate greater progress among the hearers in regard to their commitment to the way of life he promotes and to internalize its values more fully and consistently:

Are you not willing, at this late date, like children, to be weaned and to partake of more solid food? (*Diss.* 2.16.39)

You have received the philosophical principles which you ought to accept, and you have accepted them. What sort of teacher, then, do you still wait for, that you should put off reforming yourself until he arrives? You are no longer a lad, but already a full-grown adult.¹¹ (*Ench.* 51.1)

Both Epictetus and the author of Hebrews use these metaphors to shame the hearers for not "measuring up" to where they ought to be and to motivate them to prove themselves "mature" by their readiness to meet the expectations articulated by the author for the "mature."

It is noteworthy as well that, as the author describes the mature believer as one who is equipped for "the discernment of the noble and the base" (5:14), he incorporates a standard definition of the virtue of Wisdom, one of the four cardinal virtues promoted by Platonists and Stoics and a feature of the mainstream of dominant cultural ethics. The mature person who has made sufficient progress in the formative discipline offered by the "school" has attained wisdom: he or she has "intelligence capable, by a certain judicious method, of distinguishing good and bad" (*Rhet. Her.* 3.3.4–5).¹² It is precisely the discernment of the good or evil course, the noble versus the base response, the proper evaluation of advantage and disadvantage, that is in jeopardy among the wavering disciples. The author draws on intertexture from the Greek cultural environment, rather than from the inherited tradition of the Jewish and Christian culture, to arouse the hearers' attention and shame them for not yet adequately exercising this faculty of wisdom and zealously encouraging and teaching one another about the truly advantageous course.

¹¹ Quoted in Attridge, *Hebrews*, 159 n. 59; 158 n. 42.

¹² Aristotle (*Rh.* 1.9.13) similarly defines wisdom as an intellectual capacity for deliberating well about good and bad, thus moving even closer to the decision-making function of wisdom.

2. THE ELABORATION PATTERN: A GREEK SCHOOLBOOK EXERCISE APPLIED

Moving from issues of content drawn from the stock of Greco-Roman culture, particularly in the areas of education and moral formation, to forms of argumentation drawn from Greek education, one may observe that the author of Hebrews exhibits familiarity with, and facility in, the elaboration pattern known from the *Preliminary Exercises* and also attested in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* as the figure of “descanting on a theme” (*Rhet. Her.* 4.43.56–57). This pattern combined the basic argumentative strategies available to orators—the deductive strategies of enthymematic reasoning and the inductive strategies of observations drawn from a number of arenas—into a memorable form, the completeness of which conveyed the impression of argumentative “tightness.”

The *Progymnasmata* attributed to Hermogenes presents this pattern to students in connection with the elaboration of a chreia, the attribution of a noteworthy saying or deed to a famous figure, and with the elaboration of a maxim (Hermogenes, *Preliminary Exercises* 3.7–8; 4.10):¹³

Statement of chreia (or maxim)
Cause (rationale)
Contrast (contrary)
Comparison (analogy)
Example (historical example)
A judgment (quotation of authority)
Concluding exhortation/restatement

The author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* expands the application of this argumentative scheme to any theme (any thesis or exhortation) that might arise in the course of a speech (*Rhet. Her.* 4.43.56–4.44.57):

Theme
Reason
Restatement of theme in another form (with or without reasons)
Contrary
Comparison
Historical Example
Conclusion

¹³ Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 77–78. See, further, B.L. Mack and V.K. Robbins, *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1989), on this pattern, its place in classical education, and its use as an organizational principle in many collections of Jesus sayings.

Each of these elements may include a more fully developed argument with its own rationales, as Pseudo-Cicero's model of elaboration shows. This pattern contains many of the basic building blocks of appeals to *logos* discussed at greater length, for example, in Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*. As rhetoricians grew in their facility, they could improvise the order of arguments and even subtly shift the focus of each phase to confirm not only the thesis but also the rationales adduced in support of the thesis.

This pattern undergirds the argumentation of Hebrews in at least two key passages: 8:1–13 and 12:5–11. The first of these develops not a *chreia* or *maxim* (as in the use of the pattern in the *Progymnasmata*), but a thesis (as in the practical application of the pattern evidenced in an actual handbook on oratory rather than a preliminary schoolbook) that sums up the preceding argumentation at a critical hinge point in the "long and difficult word" (5:11) that comprises the centerpiece of the sermon.¹⁴ An outline of the argumentative texture of 8:1–13 might run as follows:

Thesis (8:1–2)

The chief point of the things being said [is this]: We have a high priest of this kind, who sat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavenly places, a minister of the holy places, indeed, of the true tent that the Lord, not a human being, pitched.

[*"Rationale," introducing new topic to be treated in 9:11–10:10* (8:3)]

For (γάρ) every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, whence it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer up.

Contrary, with rationale and authority (8:4–5)

If, then, he were upon earth, he would not be a priest, there being those who offer gifts according to the law, who serve in a model and shadow of the heavenly places, just as Moses was commanded as he was about to finish the tent: for (γάρ) he said, "See that you make all things in accordance with the exemplar shown to you on the mountain."

Restatement of Thesis, with a supplement (8:6)

And now he has received a more distinguished ministry to the degree that he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which is established as law on the basis of better promises.

¹⁴ For a more complete analysis of this passage, see D.A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 280–288.

Contrary, confirming supplement (8:7)

For (γάρ) if that first one had been faultless, a place would not have been sought out for a second.

Argument from ancient authority (8:8–12)

For (γάρ), finding fault with them, he says: “Behold! The days are coming, says the Lord, and I will establish a new covenant over the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not in accordance with the covenant which I made with their forebears in the day of my taking them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt ...”

Conclusion, affirming supplement (8:13)

In saying “new” he makes the first one obsolete; and the thing that is growing obsolete and old is on the verge of disappearing.

Within this self-contained unit, one can readily see many of the building blocks of the elaboration pattern: a thesis, rationales, restatements, arguments from the contrary, and arguments from written authority. Only the arguments (or illustrations) from comparison and historical example appear to have been omitted. But the author does not employ these building blocks in a pedantic manner. As a “graduate” who no longer has to satisfy the requirements of textbook exercises, he is free to play with the pattern in a manner that suits him and his argument.

The opening thesis, being a summary statement, already enjoys substantial argumentative support from the preceding material. What the author presents in the *form* of the expected rationale (8:3) actually serves artfully to announce a topic that, though previously hinted at (5:1; 7:27), will only be given full attention in the section following this passage. His focus returns more properly to the thesis of 8:1–2 in a supporting argument from the contrary, which is presented with its own rationale confirming the contrary:

[Thesis: Jesus is a priest in heaven.]

Contrary: If Jesus were on earth, he would not even be a priest.

Rationale: The law has already prescribed who would be priests here.

The argument from the contrary recalls material from the preceding argument, specifically Jesus’ lineage as an obstacle to his mediation as a priest on earth (7:13–14). The author expands his description of the legitimate priests in the earthly sphere by drawing attention to the imitative, secondary character of their shadowy sanctuary,¹⁵ returning thus in an indirect manner to

¹⁵ “Shadow” is a Platonic term for what belongs to the material world in contrast to the “real” and “true” types in the immaterial, ideal world (see especially Plato, *Rep.* 7.515A–B).

the thesis (Jesus is "a minister of the holy places of the true tent that the Lord pitched," 8:2). The recitation of an authoritative text (Exod 25:40) at this point provides proof for the existence of this heavenly sanctuary and its superior quality.¹⁶ Since the author has already established that Jesus was appointed a high priest (through his exegesis of Ps 110:1, 4), and that Jesus' appointment could not apply to the earthly temple, he *must* be, as the thesis affirms, "a minister of ... the true tent." And so the author restates his thesis, using new words to express the same idea found in 8:1–2: "but now he has received a correspondingly more distinguished ministry as he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was legislated on the basis of better promises" (8:6).

The restatement includes an implicit rationale for the claim that Jesus enjoys a "more distinguished ministry" than the Levitical priests, a claim reflected clearly in the first statement of the thesis (8:2). This rationale—"because Jesus brokers a better covenant founded upon better promises"—becomes the new focal point for the remaining argumentation, which functions collectively as a confirmation of this rationale. The author begins this confirmation with an argument from the contrary: if the first covenant were adequate, God "would not have sought out a place for a second" (8:7). A citation from ancient authority (Jer 31:31–34) demonstrates that the first covenant was indeed inadequate, and attests to God's intent to establish a second, better covenant.¹⁷ The author had already explained that better

The use of Exod 25:40 in Heb 8:5 affords "a happy opening by which the Platonic speculation enters our epistle" (G.H. Gilbert, "The Greek Element in the Epistle to the Hebrews" [*AJT* 14 [1910]: 521–532], 528), although the author is far from a Platonist. Platonic terms, and specifically the notion that invisible realities are superior to their material imitations, are placed within a Jewish cosmology (the heavenly versus the earthly) and Judaeo-Christian interest in the historical, unfolding drama of redemption. Williamson correctly observes that Jewish-Christian views of cosmology and God's redemptive activity in history intrude upon the static, unchanging notion of the ideal realm as found in Plato: "Plato's Ideal world is not a heaven that could be entered by Jesus; it can be penetrated only by the intellect" (Williamson, "Platonism and Hebrews," 419).

¹⁶ For a fuller discussion of this concept and its Jewish precedents, see Attridge, *Hebrews*, 222–224; A. Cody, *Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (St. Meinrad, IN: Grail, 1960), 9–46.

¹⁷ Christians appear to have been alone in reading Jer 31:31–34 in this way. The concept of a "new covenant" plays a strikingly small role in the vast body of literature that has been preserved from the intertestamental and early rabbinic periods. The Qumran community shares the early church's interest in this oracle, but there the "new covenant" signaled not the setting aside of the first, but rather its perfecting as the Teacher of Righteousness taught the people of the covenant at Qumran to observe Torah properly and fruitfully. See,

guarantees stand behind this priesthood, namely God's oath, conveyed in Ps 110:4, and thus God's commitment of God's own honor to the new arrangements for priesthood. The citation from Jeremiah provides the authoritative text for the new covenant itself, together with the promises of a deeper level of internalization and effective performance of the covenant stipulations. At the end of this lengthy quotation, the author closes this period of argumentation with a conclusion drawing out the implications of the text, specifically Jeremiah's use of the adjective "new" (ἐν τῷ λέγειν Καινήν). This concluding statement specifically announces the "Q.E.D." that confirms the argument from the contrary (8:7), which, in turn, supported the restatement of the thesis (in particular, the supplementary claim added thereto) in 8:6.

The second, and fuller, example of progymnasmic elaboration occurs in the climactic exhortation that follows the encomium on faith (11:1–12:3), specifically the author's exhortation to the hearers to embrace the hardships they endure for the sake of their commitment to Christ and each other as divine discipline (12:5–11).¹⁸ In his helpful primer on rhetorical analysis of the New Testament, Burton L. Mack had already celebrated this passage as "a marvelous elaboration on the theme of discipline," clearly intending "elaboration on [a] theme" in its technical sense, as his outline shows:

Introduction: (Heb. 12:5)

Have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons?
 "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
 nor lose courage when you are punished by him.

Thesis: (12:5–6)

For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves,
 And chastens every son whom he receives."

Paraphrase: (12:7a–b)

It is for discipline that you have to endure.
 God is treating you as sons.

Argument:

Example: (12:7c)

For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

further, S. Lehne, *The New Covenant in Hebrews* (JSNTSup 44; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 32–61; G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Allen Lane/The Penguin Press, 1997), 67–69.

¹⁸ See, further, deSilva, *Perseverance*, 446–453.

Opposite: (12:8)

If you are left without discipline, which all experience, then you
Are illegitimate children and not sons.

Example: (12:9–10)

We respect earthly fathers who discipline us.
Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and
live?

For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a short time at their
pleasure,

Reason: (12:10)

But he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.

Maxim: (12:11)

For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant;
Later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who
have been trained by it.¹⁹

While Mack has drawn our attention to the correspondences between the argumentation of Heb 12:5–11 and the elaboration pattern in a preliminary and helpful way, he is not *both* the ἀρχηγός and τελειωτής of this mode of analysis. Though I would not presume myself to be the latter, I would suggest some refinements to his analysis in order to render it more precise.

Introduction: (Heb. 12:5a)

You have forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons:

Thesis (Exhortation): (12:5b)

"My son, do not regard lightly the formative discipline (παιδεία) of the Lord, nor lose courage while being reproved²⁰ by him.

Rationale: (12:6)

For (γάρ) whom the Lord loves, he disciplines (παιδεύει),
and chastens every son whom he receives."²¹

Restatement of Thesis (Exhortation): (12:7a)

Endure for the sake of formative discipline (παιδεία).²²

¹⁹ B.L. Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 77–78.

²⁰ The Greek (ἐλεγχόμενος) does not reflect punitive measures here so much as corrective action.

²¹ The appearance of the inferential particle γάρ clearly identifies this as a rationale: Mack has missed the fact that the actual "thesis" appeared in Heb 12:5b, which he included as part of the "introduction."

²² The form ὑπομένετε could be read as an indicative verb, as does Mack, though there is no defense for introducing a helping verb of "compulsion" into the second part of this sentence ("you *have* to endure"). I prefer to translate ὑπομένετε as an imperative in light of the broader

Restatement of Rationale: (12:7b)

God is treating you as sons.

Confirmation of Rationale: (12:7c)

For who is the son whom a father does not discipline (παιδεύει)?

Contrary: (12:8)

If you are without formative discipline (παιδεία), of which all [children] have become partakers, then you are bastards and not sons.

Comparison: (12:9–10)

Since we have had our biological fathers as educators (παιδευτάς)

and showed reverence,

shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?

Rationale: (12:10)

For (γάρ) they disciplined (ἐπαίδευσον) us for a few days as seemed best to them,²³

But he [disciplines us] for our benefit, that we may share his holiness.

Conclusion (incorporating a maxim): (12:11)

All formative discipline (παιδεία), while it is present, does not seem to be joyful, but grievous;

but later it yields the peaceful fruit (καρπὸν) of righteousness to those who have been trained through it.

The introduction to the elaboration of a chreia was typically to include “praise” of the originator of the saying, but in the actual practice of oratory (rather than school exercises) any of a number of kinds of statement that might reawaken attention would serve. Here, the author, in effect, quickens attention by upbraiding the hearers for losing sight of an important fact and its implications for their conduct. The thesis itself is supplied in a recitation of an authoritative pronouncement, heightening the resemblance of this passage to an elaboration of a chreia. The recitation from Proverbs 3:11–12 poses the thesis in the form of an exhortation, in keeping with the paraenetic character of this section of Hebrews, which includes its own rationale. The pains of divine discipline are to be esteemed and courageously borne

context of paraenesis in this chapter (see the commands in 12:1, 3, 12, 14, 17 [though ἵστε may also be either imperative or indicative]) and the particular context of elaborating a hortatory thesis (12:5).

²³ Perhaps it was only by mechanical error that Mack postpones labeling the beginning of this rationale until the second half of 12:10. The γάρ offers a clear signal that a rationale is introduced with the beginning of 12:10 in the form of an antithesis (μέν ... δέ).

(12:5b = Prov 3:11) because they are a token of God's love and acceptance into God's own household (12:6 = Prov 3:12). The author provides a "restatement of theme in another form," still as an exhortation (12:7), and restates the rationale as well (12:8).²⁴ The author follows this with a rhetorical question eliciting the evidence from the audience that would add confirmation for the rationale: surely the hearers' own experience would lead them to assent that experiencing parental discipline is inherent in being a child in a household.²⁵

This leads, in turn, to the argument from the contrary: Those who are exempt from parental discipline tend not to be the children in whom parents invest themselves and for whom parents have a care (12:8). Therefore (implicitly), the experience of formative trials reinforces the Christians' conviction that they are indeed children of God (12:6, 7c), which in turn ought to embolden them to embrace those trials rather than eschew them (12:5b, 7a), for example, through defection from the Christian community (compare Heb 10:24–25). The argument from comparison works by moving between the observable sphere of human parenting and the invisible, ideological sphere of "discerning" God's parenting. It is, in this sense, properly an argument from analogy, explicitly supporting the hortatory thesis (12:5b, 7a). The author adds a rationale to the argument from comparison, a kind of variation allowed and modeled also in *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, establishing the superiority of God's parenting since it is infallibly imposed for the benefit (ἐπὶ τὸν συμφέρον) of the disciplined, whereas human parents simply do the best they can, but are bound to err.

The author rounds out this descant on the theme of discipline with a concluding summary (12:11) picking up on the beneficial promise of enduring divine discipline as a deeper participation in the holiness of God (12:10c). Mack correctly observed that this conclusion "is a thinly veiled reworking of a stock saying, frequently attributed to Isocrates."²⁶ Indeed, Hermogenes recites it in his *Preliminary Exercises* and employs it as the chreia around which he develops his sample elaboration: "Isocrates said that the root of education is bitter but its fruit is sweet" (3.7). The expansive paraphrasing of a chreia, however, was itself a facet of the preliminary exercises.

²⁴ Compare *Rhet. Her.* 4.43–56, which prescribes the restatement "with or without reasons" at this point in the elaboration.

²⁵ This is not, as Mack suggests, properly an argument from "example," as no actual historical example is introduced either here or in 12:9–10.

²⁶ Mack, *Rhetoric*, 78. Attridge (*Hebrews* 364 n. 75) cites the version of this saying found in Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Phil.* 5.18, who attributes it to Aristotle.

Hermogenes (3.7) instructs that, in elaboration, “you will not state [the chreia] in bare form but expand the statement.” Theon (*Exercises* 3.103–104) provides an example of how to render a chreia in expanded, paraphrased form. The author of Hebrews exhibits precisely this learned technique. Two key words from the well-known maxim—*παιδεία* and *καρπός*—are preserved in the expanded form. The temporal contrast between the present experience of discipline and the benefits that are enjoyed later in due season, captured by Isocrates in the metaphor of a fruit-bearing tree (the roots, which must be established first, and the fruits, which only come after the tree has reached maturity), is preserved in an expanded, explanatory form here (“while it lasts,” “later it pays back”). The description of each state is another focal point for expansion: the author elaborates “bitter” by introducing its opposite and shifting the language from “taste” to emotional sensation (“to be not joyful, but grievous”), and elaborates “sweet” again in a non-figurative manner, describing the virtuous product of God’s formative discipline. The fact that the author concludes an argument constructed after a standard textbook pattern (the “elaboration” pattern) with a standard chreia used in several *Progymnasmata* as the sample chreia upon which the various exercises, including elaboration, are demonstrated, compounds the impression that the author is “showing off” his rhetorical education (at least his progymnasmic training).²⁷

3. DISCRETE LESSONS IN MORAL FORMATION

The author draws on Greek cultural intertexture in regard to educational theory (the levels of instruction, the frank acknowledgment that education entails embracing a difficult course). He exhibits an awareness of the basic argumentative strategies—and coordination of strategies—taught within the program of “Progymnasmic” training. At several points, the author goes beyond form and theory, drawing on material reflective of the moral formation imparted within Greek culture as well.

This emerges first in the author’s summary of what the example of Jesus, the founder of this particular “philosophy,” taught his followers.

²⁷ The author of Hebrews evidences far more advanced facility in oratory than was associated with progymnasmic training. His attention to stylistic ornamentation, rhetorical forms, and the deployment of both deliberative and epideictic topics sets him apart from other New Testament authors in terms of the likelihood of enjoying some formal rhetorical training. See the discussion in deSilva, *Perseverance*, 37–58, and the literature therein discussed.

Since, then, the children have shared flesh and blood in common, he himself also fully shared the same things in order that, through death, he might destroy the one holding the power of death, namely the Slanderer, and set free those who were liable to slavery all their lives by the fear of death.

(2:14–15)

Jesus is celebrated for having brought an enormous benefit to humankind—at least, to those who would internalize the lesson of his own life—liberating them from the bondage of the will and imagination that comes from fear of death.

While this passage resonates with the traditions of the apocalyptic victory of the Messiah over demonic forces,²⁸ it draws even more closely upon philosophical discourse on liberation from the fear of death, particularly as this liberation is to be found in the approach of key teachers to their own deaths. The author presents Jesus in a manner reminiscent of the portrayal of Socrates in Seneca (*Ep.* 24.4): "Socrates in prison ... declined to flee when certain persons gave him the opportunity ... in order to free humankind from the fear of two most grievous things, death and imprisonment." Lucian, though highly suspicious of the wandering sophist Peregrinus, nevertheless attests to the latter's attempt to imitate this pattern for the sake of teaching his followers a similar lesson through his self-immolation: "He alleges that he is doing it ... that he may teach them to despise death (θανάτου καταφρονεῖν) and endure what is fearsome" (*Peregr.* 23; see also *Peregr.* 33).²⁹ The author of Hebrews, at this one point at least, sounds very "Greek" as he attributes to Jesus the freedom from fear of death that enabled him to maintain his own virtue intact in the face of the external compulsions of hardship, thus becoming a model enabling the audience to maintain their virtuous response to God and arrive at the honor promised them no matter what deviancy-control techniques society might use to hinder them.

In addition to drawing upon the life lessons taught by the great philosophers in his portrait of Jesus' teaching by example, the author also draws upon Greek and Roman cultural topics pertinent to discussions of

²⁸ See Attridge, *Hebrews*, 93 n. 153 for comparative texts.

²⁹ Such concerns appear not to be limited to Mediterranean society. Mary Douglas (*Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966], 178), for example, comments on the suicide of the Dinka elder in similar terms: "His own willing death, ritually framed by the grave itself, is a communal victory for all his people. By confronting death and grasping it firmly he has said something to his people about the nature of life."

reciprocity.³⁰ Having supported an exhortation to remain committed to the Christian group, its values, and its confession (“to be borne along to perfection,” 6:1) with an argument from the contrary explicating the disgrace of, and danger that follows, the alternative course (“falling away,” 6:6), the author reinforces the argument from the contrary with an illustration from agriculture.

For ground that drinks up the rain that often falls upon it³¹ and bears vegetation suitable for those for whose sake it was cultivated receives a blessing from God; but if it bears thorns and thistles, it is proven worthless and near to a curse—its end is to be burnt. (6:7–8)

Where has the author learned such an illustration? While there are some clear linguistic resonances here with Gen 3:17–18 (where the ground is cursed, so as to yield thorns and thistles, ἐπικατάρατος ... ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους) and Deut 11:26–28 (with its famous contrast of blessing and curse, εὐλογίαν καὶ κατάραν),³² the passage resonates most fully with Greco-Roman discourse concerning reciprocity.³³

Seneca frequently uses agricultural images and analogies in his lengthy essay on patronage, friendship, and reciprocity. This social system has been degraded, he avers, because “we do not pick out those who are worthy of receiving our gifts; ... we do not sow seed in worn out and unproductive soil; but our benefits we give, or rather throw, away without any discrimination” (*Ben.* 1.1.2). Seneca recommends that benefactors investigate the quality of the recipient using the analogy of sowing seeds on appropriate soil, namely soil that will produce a good crop rather than prove “worn out and unproductive soil.” The same thought is captured later (*Ben.* 4.8.2): “we ought to take care to select those to whom we would give benefits, since even the farmer does not commit his seeds to sand.” While a giver might watch to discern a recipient’s character, however “we never wait for absolute certainty [concerning whether or not a recipient will prove grateful],

³⁰ See, further, D.A. deSilva, “Exchanging Favor for Wrath: Apostasy in Hebrews and Patron-Cleint Relations,” *JBL* 115 (1996) 91–116.

³¹ On rain as a gift of God, see also Matt 5:44–48; Seneca, *Ben.* 7.31.4.

³² F.B. Craddock, “Hebrews,” in L. Keck, ed., *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 12 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 1–174 (78); Attridge, *Hebrews*, 173 n. 90. On the difficulties of postulating dependence on Isa 5:1–7 here, see deSilva, *Perseverance*, 229–230.

³³ Thompson (*Beginnings*, 37–38) reads 6:7–8 as an echo of agricultural metaphors in Philo regarding education and cultivating knowledge of virtue (see especially *de Agricultura* 9–18). The context of Heb 5:11–14 might invite an interpretation of Heb 6:7–8 in terms of Greco-Roman theory of education, were it not for the intervention of 6:4–6, which has moved the discourse from the topic of education to topics of reciprocity, with the result that 6:7–8 must be heard in terms of this new context.

since the discovery of truth is difficult, but follow the path that probable truth shows. All the business of life proceeds in this way. It is thus that we sow ... for who will promise to the sower a harvest?" (*Ben.* 4.33.1–2). Sowing and harvesting are used as quite natural and obvious metaphors for giving benefits and enjoying a grateful response. Seneca also counsels that a single act of beneficence may prove insufficient to cultivate a client or friend:

The farmer will lose all that he has sown if he ends his labours with putting in the seed; it is only after much care that crops are brought to their yield; nothing that is not encouraged by constant cultivation from the first day to the last ever reaches the stage of fruit. In the case of benefits the same rule holds. (2.11.4–5)

These examples from Seneca show that analogies from agriculture were quite naturally at home in Greco-Roman discourse about fulfilling the obligations of reciprocity.³⁴ The author of Hebrews shares this same ethic—and the same images—as he speaks of the disciples' obligation to respond gratefully and fruitfully to the gifts that God has lavished upon them (6:4–6) for the sake of one another's encouragement and support (6:9–10).

4. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

As is well known, the author of Hebrews includes some striking examples of athletic imagery in his sermon. It is important not to overlook the fact here that these images come from the world of Greek games—notably, a world closely related to the arena of Greek education, the *lyceum* and *gymnasium* being twin institutions serving the formative task of *paideia*. The most notable passage comes at the climax of the celebration of the exemplars of faith:³⁵

Having, therefore, such a great cloud of spectators surrounding us, let us also run with endurance the race laid out before us, putting off every weight and the sin which easily ensnares, looking away to the pioneer and perfecter of faith—Jesus, who, for the sake of the joy set before him, endured a cross, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne. Consider him who had endured from sinners such hostility against himself, in order that you may not become faint, growing weary in your souls. You have not yet, while contending against sin, resisted to the point of bloodshed.

(12:1–4)

³⁴ A similar use of an analogy from agriculture can be observed in the Hellenistic Jewish text fictionally attributed to the Greek ethicist Phocylides: "Do not benefit a wicked person; it is like sowing into the ocean" (*Sentences* 152).

³⁵ For a fuller analysis of this text, see deSilva, *Perseverance*, 426–430.

The author brings together the two events of running and wrestling, both major focal points for training and competition in Greek games. And he has done so in a manner showing some familiarity with the events. He first directs attention to the stands of the stadium, filled with a particular quality of spectators of the events in which the audience will compete.³⁶ He uses a “fixed classical expression” to describe a race, the course of which is determined by the masters of the games (τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα).³⁷ He draws attention to the need for the appropriate state of dress (or undress, as the case may be). And, like a good coach, he keeps his runners’ minds fixed on the best example of how to run this racecourse well, so that this exemplar’s strategies, skills, and success will empower their own running. He shifts metaphors in 12:4 from the racetrack to the wrestling floor, where each believer is pitted against “Sin,” the antagonist whom they must defeat. The athletic metaphor enters the text again in 12:11 with the word “training” (γεγυμνασμένοις),³⁸ a verbal echo of the γυμνάσιον (“gymnasium”) where the future citizens of the Greek city state trained for the development of physical prowess and strength as part of the larger process of *paideia*, now used to speak of God’s training of the disciples for the formation of the virtues of justice and holiness.

While the imagery is thus derived from the cultural context of Greek games, the specific use to which the author puts the imagery draws on the philosophical culture of Greek (and hellenized Roman) schools as well as the culture of Judaism where it has been profoundly influenced by Greek culture (for example, the culture of Philo and the author of *4 Maccabees*).³⁹ In these circles, athletic imagery was used to interpret the experiences of hardship that frequently accompanied the pursuit of the school’s philosophical

³⁶ This usage of μάρτυς is well attested in contemporary Greek literature. Wisdom 1:6 speaks of God as “a witness (μάρτυς) of the inmost feelings, a true observer (ἐπίσκοπος) of their hearts and a hearer of their tongues.” The parallelism shows “witness” to be used here in the sense of “onlooker.” Josephus uses the term to speak of people observing acts of courage or moral failure, who will thence attest to the subject’s honor or worthlessness (see *B.J.* 4.134 and *Ant.* 18.299). The first three texts are listed in Attridge, *Hebrews*, 354 n. 19 and are developed in greater detail in Croy, *Endurance*, 58–61.

³⁷ Attridge (*Hebrews*, 355) refers to Euripedes, *Or.* 847; Plato, *Laches* 182A; Epictetus, *Diss.* 3.25.3; Josephus, *Ant.* 19.1.13 § 92. Croy (*Endurance*, 66) adds Plato, *Phaedrus* 247b; Dio Chrysostom 13.118.

³⁸ See J. Héring, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (trans. A.W. Heathcote; London: Epworth, 1970), 113; C. Spicq, *L’Épître aux Hébreux* (2 vols; Paris: Gabalda, 1953), 2.395.

³⁹ For more detailed discussion, see V.C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); Croy, *Endurance*, 37–77, 167–182; deSilva, *Perseverance*, 361–364.

ideals. Perhaps the hardships were self-imposed, as in the case of turning away from tasty and abundant foods and drink in order to accustom oneself to temperance and moderation. Often they were imposed from outside, as the uninitiated insulted and ridiculed the unconventional behavior of the adherents of the philosophy. Sometimes they were quite daunting, as in the rare incident when a tyrant would take special interest in testing a philosopher's commitment to his or her lifestyle and goals.

The arena of athletics provided an endless resource for arguments from analogy for ethical philosophers writing from a sub-cultural or counter-cultural location. The athlete willingly chooses to endure physical discomfort (sometimes even significant pain and injury), to submit to harsh discipline, to curb luxury and turn away from many pleasures, all for the prospect of the significant gains that victory in the games might bring. Such, ethical philosophers often argued, was the pursuit of virtue and of the particular ideals espoused by the particular philosophy. The voluntarily undertaken journey entailed hardship and deprivation, often pitted the philosopher against others in contests testing the will and commitment, but in the end promised the nobility of virtue and living in accordance with divine ideals. Athletic imagery was also a powerful rhetorical resource, potentially turning a victim (e.g. of society's abuse and scorn) into a competitor and raising his or her dignity correspondingly. The metaphor transforms difficult and even debilitating experiences into endurable ones, since it holds out the prospect of victory, even if that victory comes not from gaining the upper hand, but merely enduring to the end of the contest. Stoics, Cynics, and Hellenistic Jewish authors seemed particularly interested in the moral victory to be attained as the one suffering external assaults (censure, physical violence, and the like) does not allow them to alter his or her internal convictions and commitments to do what he or she knows to be just and right.⁴⁰ For the author of Hebrews, this means persevering in a lifestyle that manifests gratitude to the divine Benefactor and to Jesus, the broker of that relationship—in short, maintaining a just response to God in view of prior gifts and future benefactions already promised.

⁴⁰ See *4 Macc* 5:16; 7:4 9:18, 30; 11:20–21; Epictetus, *Diss.* 3.24.71; 4.1.60, 87; Philo, *Quod omn. Prob.* 29–30; Seneca, *De constantia sapientis* 5.6–7; 9.5. Further uses of athletic imagery can be observed in Seneca, *De prov.* 2.3–4; Epictetus, *Diss.* 1.18.21; 1.24.1–2; 3.20.9; 3.22.52, 56; Dio, *Or.* 8.11–16; *4 Macc* 16:16; 17:11–16.

5. CONCLUSION

There are arenas of life in the Greco-Roman culture upon which the author of Hebrews draws but minimally, if at all. One striking example would be Greco-Roman religion: in matters pertaining to religious cult, the author appears to draw solely on the Jewish Scriptures and Christian cultural knowledge.⁴¹ One might posit that, as a member of a monotheistic faith that had consistently contrasted its own practice of “true” piety with the empty rites of idol worshipers, the author would not have found the latter to offer any worthwhile resources for an exhortation to embrace the advantages offered by the priest “after the order of Melchizedek.”

The same cannot be said of the author’s relationship to Greco-Roman educational discourse. The author evidences a significant familiarity with the ethos and lessons of Greek παιδεία and a willingness to draw upon this realm of Greco-Roman life as a pool of valuable resources for shaping Christian culture and nurturing ongoing commitment to the same. It provided a frame of reference for understanding experiences of marginalization as part of the divine discipline that, painful though it was for the moment, would yield the fruit of a fully formed character, or as the competition for which they have been training and in which they must now prove their mettle (5:8; 12:1–4, 11). It provided the frame of reference for assessing the disciples’ progress in Christian formation and challenging the disciples to act in a way appropriate to a higher level of attainment (5:11–14). It supplied particular lessons concerning the virtuous response to favors received (6:7–8) and the importance of a good teacher modeling freedom from the fear of death (and good disciples internalizing this lesson taught at greatest cost to the teacher; 2:14–15).

At several points, we observed the author of Hebrews not only using imagery drawn from Greek cultural intertexture, but doing so with a view to achieving the same rhetorical goals sought by non-Christian Greek authors in their deployment of the same imagery. Further, we observed how the author makes use of a standard combination of particular argumentative

⁴¹ See, on this point, D.A. deSilva, “The Invention and Argumentative Function of Priestly Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *BBR* 16 (2006): 295–323. Thompson has shown that the author would have natural allies in Greco-Roman philosophical and Hellenistic Jewish critiques of sacrificial cult (*Beginnings*, 103–115; see also V. Nikiprowetzky, “La Spiritualisation des sacrifices et le culte sacrificiel au Temple de Jérusalem chez Philon d’Alexandrie,” *Semitica* 17 [1967]: 97–116, especially 98–99), but the author does not draw on these resources in the invention of priestly discourse in the same way that he draws on Isocrates’ famous maxim.

strategies in order to elaborate a particular theme within the larger oration (8:1–13; 12:5–11). Certainly, such techniques can be learned merely through informal observation of accomplished orators. But when the author chooses to offer as the conclusion to one such elaboration an expansive paraphrase—such paraphrase being itself a progymnasmic exercise—of a textbook *chreia*, he leaves the impression that all this is more than accidental, more than osmosis. Indeed, it suggests that the author himself benefited from a formal education in a Greek cultural setting, or at least a Hellenistic Jewish school that patterned itself after, and utilized material in common with, Greek elementary and progymnasmic education. While the formative discipline he there endured may indeed have been difficult, its fruits are apparent throughout the fabric of his literary legacy, the sermon “to the Hebrews.”

THE DIDACHE AS A CHRISTIAN ENCHIRIDION

William Varner

It is neither original nor particularly exciting to write that the *Didache* was used in ancient times for the instruction of new converts and/or baptismal candidates. Readers of Eusebius and Athanasius had long noted that these writers referred to such use of a book with a similar name before the rediscovery of its ancient text in what has come to be called the Jerusalem Codex (Hierosolymitanus 54). When access to the full sixteen chapters became available after 1883,¹ the reference in 7.1 made such use plain: “After you have reviewed all these things (ταύτα πάντα προειπόντες), baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in running water.” It is generally recognized that these words indicate that the first five or possibly six chapters were used in the original *Didache* community for pre-baptismal catechetical instruction. Our assumption also is that other communities utilized the *Didache* for such catechesis at least up until the fourth century when the Alexandrian fathers clearly mention this catechetical use.

My thesis, therefore, is not something radical, but rather adapts an accepted position and defines it further on the basis of what I believe has been some neglected evidence. I believe that by the fourth century a *Didache* shorter than the size of the work in the Jerusalem Codex was used as a handbook of the Christian faith that was literally placed in the hand of new converts.² The English term for this type of handbook, *enchiridion*, is a transliteration of the Greek term ἐγχειρίδιον.³ I base my argument on a re-examination of three ancient authors who mention the *Didache* plus a re-examination of the only other material evidence of a Greek *Didache*. The three literary texts are the *Stichometry* of Nicephorus, the *Paschal Letter* of Athanasius, and the Greek commentaries of Didymus the Blind. The

¹ Philotheos Bryennios, *Διδαχὴ Τῶν Δώδεκα Αποστόλων* (Constantinople: Tupois S.I. Voutryra, 1883).

² This chapter develops further the thesis that I proposed in *The Way of the Didache: The First Christian Handbook* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007), 14.

³ *PGL*, 405; *LSJ*, 475, mentions ἐγχειρίδιον as the title of works by “Epictetus and others.” The *OED* defines the word: “A handbook or manual; a concise treatise serving as a guide or for reference,” and traces its first use to Miles Coverdale in 1541.

material evidence is that of the two fragments found among the Oxyrhynchus material. The case is not as certain as I would like, but I do believe that the argument is worthy of consideration as possibly providing another piece of the puzzle in the textual history of this little document.

I will not include in this chapter a detailed review of all the secondary literature that has arisen around each of these four literary and material remains. I have attempted, however, to interact with as much of this literature as possible, and will only utilize the literature that is appropriate to my point at hand. My argument, however, is not based on some peculiar view that I hold about these sources but on the generally accepted interpretation of each one. The most controversial aspect of my argument is my proposal interpreting the Oxyrhynchus fragments. These four items of evidence stretch chronologically from the fourth century (Athanasius, Didymus and the fragments) to the ninth century (Nicephorus). I will begin with the last literary source, the *Stichometry* of Nicephorus, and work my way back in time.

1. THE *STICHOMETRY* OF NICEPHORUS

Nicephorus was Patriarch of Constantinople from 806–815 and was known for his defense of orthodoxy over against the iconoclasts. His *Stichometry* is attached to the end of his much longer *Chronography* and is basically a canon list that mentions the length of canonical and some non-canonical books by the number of stichoi (στίχοι) that each one contains.⁴ He lists a number of “New Testament Apocrypha” (τῆς νέας ἀπόκρυφα) and among them is a work that he titles “Teaching of Apostles” (Διδαχὴ ἀποστόλων). He lists the number of “stichoi” in the book as 200. The line entry is as follows:

Ἐ. Διδαχὴ ἀποστόλων στίχοι ς'.

The reference to 200 stichoi has been noted by a number of writers as early as Bryennios who have called attention to the fact that there are 204 lines in the *Didache*'s five leaves in the Jerusalem Codex. This should not be considered significant, however, for as early as Schaff (1887) scholars have pointed out that the total number of stichoi for the Clements in Nicephorus is 2,600, while the total number of lines in those books in the codex is 1,120.⁵

⁴ PG 100.

⁵ Philip Schaff, *The Oldest Church Manual* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1887), 118.

This disparity points out two problems. First, the length of a stichos in the codex is different from the stichos of antiquity. The standard length most often mentioned is 16 syllables on a line.⁶ Using the facsimile transcription published by J. Rendell Harris, I sampled around 12 different lines in the Jerusalem Codex and found that the number of syllables in Leon's line is usually 24.⁷ Clearly the stichos used by Leon, the scribe of the codex, was longer than the one used by Nicephorus. Second, and more important for my purposes, is the problem of the large difference in respective lengths of the known writings among the "Apostolic Fathers" and the length of the *Didache* in Nicephorus. For example, Nicephorus lists the *Epistle of Barnabas* as containing 1,360 stichoi. Therefore, the *Didache* mentioned by him (200 stichoi) would be 14.7% the size of *Barnabas*. A word count of the Greek texts of each of these works, utilizing the *Didache* text in the codex, indicates that the *Didache* is about 34% the size of *Barnabas* (7,340 to 2,494 words).⁸ I will not attempt to answer all the questions raised by this reference in the *Stichometry*, but only suggest the following. If we remove chapters 7–16 from the *Didache* and then do a word count, we arrive at a text about 14.4% the size of the word count in *Barnabas* (aprox. 7,340 to 1,060 words). This is very near the relative size of Nicephorus's *Didache* to that of his *Barnabas* (14.7%). It is my proposal, therefore, that by the early ninth century, the *Didache* had been reduced to approximately the content in chapters 1–6. In other words, I believe that we have tangible, not suppositional, evidence in the *Stichometry* that a shorter form of the *Didache* was being used at some point prior to 800 CE. It is hoped that a complete study of the Jerusalem Codex someday will help to answer questions like these.⁹ For example, we do not know the exact number of lines in the *Barnabas* section of the Jerusalem Codex since Bryennios only published

⁶ See J. Rendell Harris, *Stichometry* (London: C.J. Clay and Sons, 1893). The *Didache* of Nicephorus was probably written in uncial letters rather than in the miniscule script of the Jerusalem Codex. See W. Rordorf and A. Tuilier, *La doctrine des douze apotres* (2nd ed.; Paris: Cerf, 1998), 109.

⁷ J. Rendell Harris, *The Teaching of the Apostles* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1887). The transcription of his *Didache* text is on 1–10.

⁸ The Greek texts used for *Didache* and *Barnabas* from Lightfoot's edition.

⁹ After his own examination of the codex David Flusser in Huub van de Sandt and David Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and Its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 18, wrote, "A closer examination of the Jerusalem Manuscript considered to its full extent will help solve problems about the two-fold title of the *Didache*, its abrupt ending in 16:8, and the quality of the manuscript."

the two *Clements* and *Didache*, and photographs of only these documents were published in the Lightfoot and Harris volumes.¹⁰

2. ATHANASIUS AND DIDYMUS THE BLIND

These two fourth-century Alexandrian church fathers will be taken together because Athanasius appointed Didymus as the head of the Alexandrian catechetical school and both describe the role of the *Didache* in similar ways. Athanasius's reference to the book in his famous *Paschal Letter* of 367 CE on the canon has often been noted. On the other hand, Didymus's remarks on the *Didache* have been largely overlooked. Yet they both expressed similar thoughts.

While Eusebius had mentioned some books that he styled *antilegomena*, concerning which there were some doubts, Athanasius seeks to remove all doubt about these books. The ones he mentioned as canonical are those that have comprised the New Testament ever since. Eusebius had mentioned the "Teachings of the Apostles" as spurious (νόθοι), but not heretical as some other works that he condemns (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 24.15). Athanasius specifically mentioned that both *The Shepherd of Hermas* and the *Didache*, although not canonical, were "appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who are now coming to us (ἀναγινώσκεσθαι τοῖς ἄρτι προσερχομένοις), and who desire to be instructed (κατηχεῖσθαι) in the word of godliness."¹¹ It is clear from this quotation that some form of the *Didache* was being found useful in fourth-century Alexandria for catechesis of new converts. Moreover, Athanasius's reference about the "fathers" commending these books indicates an attitude prevalent for quite some time about the value of *Didache* as a catechetical manual.

What we do not know from this reference is whether the *Didache* to which he referred was the complete *Didache* that has come down to us in the Jerusalem Codex or a shorter form, possibly limited to the "Two Ways" section embodied in chapters 1–6. Previously I argued that by Nicephorus's

¹⁰ J.B. Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers: Part One*. Vol. 1: *Clement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981; orig. 1893). Photographic plates of the two *Clements* are on pages 425–484. Photographic plates of the *Didache* follow Harris, *The Teaching of the Apostles*, 107. Bryennios hoped to publish *Barnabas* as he did the *Clements* and *Didache*, but was not able to do so before his death in 1914. See Varner, *The Way of the Didache*, 7–9.

¹¹ Athanasius, 39th *Paschal Letter*. The Greek wording does allow the possibility that the book was read to catechumens as well as read by them.

time a shorter form of the *Didache* was being used and was reflected in that form in his *Stichometry*. I suggest that the same situation had developed by the time of Athanasius. The reason for the abbreviated edition would be that by his time the simplicity of the eucharistic prayers in *Didache* 8–9 had been replaced by a far more developed liturgy of the mass. Furthermore, local church leadership in the hands of ἐπίσκοποι and διάκονοι (15.1) had been replaced by a more hierarchical church structure of deacons, presbyter/priests, bishops and archbishops. Athanasius himself was a monarchical bishop, whose authority was not limited to one church. Finally, in the fourth century there were no more itinerating apostles and prophets (11; 12). Therefore, the later “ecclesiastical” chapters of *Didache* would not have been of value to young converts—they may even have raised uncomfortable questions. The “Two Ways” teaching in the first part, however, would still be valuable for catechesis.

Additional information from Didymus the Blind confirms this use of the *Didache* as reflected in his predecessor, Athanasius. This information, however, has not been taken into consideration by some *Didache* scholars. Until the discovery of the “Toura” manuscripts in 1941 and their subsequent publication, knowledge of Didymus the Blind was based mainly on some Latin translations of a few of his works and some deeply appreciative comments by such people as Jerome.¹² Now with the publication of some of his Greek commentaries on Old Testament books such as Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Zechariah, we know much more about both his allegorical hermeneutic and also about his citation of various “Apostolic Fathers.” In his commentaries, he refers at least five times to the *Shepherd of Hermas* and once refers to it as “the catechetical book, the *Shepherd*” (τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς κατηχήσεως τῇ Ποιμένι).¹³ He also refers twice to the *Didache*, each time using the same word that he applied to the *Shepherd*. Once he cites words in 4.3 (εἰρηνεύσεις μαχομένους) and says that the words are found in “the *Teaching*, the catechetical book” (τῇ Διδασχῇ τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς κατηχήσεως) (Didymus, *Comm. Ps.* 227.26).¹⁴

¹² PG 39:186. For the Jerome quotation, see his *Epist. 84, ad Pammachium et Oceanum*. For an account of the discovery and a description of the Toura manuscripts, see *Didyme L'Aveugle, Sur Zacharie* (ed. Louis Doutreleau; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1962), 1:21–22. The publishing of all of his commentaries is still in progress.

¹³ Cited by Bart D. Ehrman, “The New Testament Canon of Didymus the Blind,” *VC* 37 (1983): 12. The *Shepherd* quotation is found in *Comm. Zach.* 86.24–27.

¹⁴ In his edition Bryennios divided the Jerusalem Codex into chapters. Harnack later divided the chapters further into the verses that we follow today in modern texts. Adolf von Harnack, *Die Lehre der Zwölf Apostel: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1886), 2:1–70.

He also mentions the same expression as it is found in “the Teaching of the Apostolic catechesis” (τῇ Διδασκαλί τῆς κατηχήσεως τῶν ἀποστόλων) (Didymus, *Comm. Eccl.* 78.22).¹⁵ His way of referring to the *Shepherd* and the *Didache* is consistent with the way which his predecessor Athanasius described the function of these two works a generation before.

What can be concluded from these references to the *Didache* by two prominent fourth century Alexandrian fathers? Simply this, that the *Didache* in an abbreviated form was being used to catechize young converts in the same way it had been used in the first century and for nearly three hundred years in between. But how specifically was it used in catechesis? Was it the written basis for a teacher’s oral instruction or was it used in some other method of catechesis? That question leads us to the last piece of evidence—two fragments of a tiny book found 160 kilometers south of modern Cairo in the trash heap of an ancient town named “Sharp-Nosed” or Oxyrhynchus (Ὀξύρυγχος).

3. THE OXYRHYNCHUS MANUSCRIPT

In 1922 Grenfell and Hunt published a fragment of a vellum codex from Oxyrhynchus that is the only other material remains of a Greek copy of the *Didache*.¹⁶ In addition to Hunt’s evaluation of the tiny fragments, Kurt Niederwimmer has a thorough discussion of the textual significance of the discovery.¹⁷ Our purpose here is not to evaluate their conclusions, but to simply summarize what we know about the fragments and to propose a function that the complete copy may have served.

1. Unlike most of the other material recovered from Oxyrhynchus, the two leaves were written on vellum rather than papyrus.

¹⁵ Professor Ehrman is to be thanked for bringing these Didymus references to the attention of the scholarly world over twenty years ago. I must, however, demur from the main conclusion of his article. Ehrman, “The New Testament Canon,” 18, argues that Didymus considered *Shepherd of Hermas*, *Barnabas*, *1 Clement* and the *Didache* as part of his New Testament canon. However, Didymus applies to both *Shepherd* and *Didache* the expression, “the catechetical book.” This is the same role assigned to them by his predecessor, Athanasius. This expression actually argues for the fact that they were *not* viewed as being on the same level of the 27 that Athanasius defended as canonical. For Didymus and Athanasius, both *Shepherd* and *Didache* were *catechetical*, not *canonical* books.

¹⁶ Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt, eds., *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Part 15 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1922), 12–15.

¹⁷ Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache* (trans. Linda Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 21–23. See also Jean-Paul Audet, *La Didache Instructions des Apotres* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1958), 26–28; and Rordorf and Tuilier, *La doctrine des douze apotres*, 111.

2. The editor dates the fragments to the late fourth century.
3. The two leaves were part of a codex rather than a roll, and the two leaves were probably part of separate quires in the codex, although they are now broken at their seam.
4. The leaves are inscribed *recto* and *verso*, so that four “pages” contain writing.
5. The first folio contains words from Didache 1.3 *recto* and words from 1.4 *verso*. The second folio contains 2.7–3.1 *recto* and 3.1, 2 *verso*.
6. There are a number of minor spelling differences from the Jerusalem Codex. The most significant addition is found following 1.3: ἀκούε τι σε δεῖ ποιοῦντα σωσαι σου το πνα πρωτον παντω (“Hear what is necessary for you to do to save your spirit. First of all”). Another addition is the παραγματος inserted between ἀπὸ παντός and πονηροῦ in 3.1.
7. Folio 1 contains part of what has been called the *sectio evangelica*—the passage (1.3–2.1) that has been widely regarded as a later Christian gloss. This has implications for the textual history of the “Two Ways” section that cannot be discussed here.
8. The unique series of six signs (>) and two columns of three parallel lines (____) with a *lamed*-like symbol in between (ʌ) together are an effort at inserting a *signum dispositionis*, or chapter division. It would be helpful to have the rest of the manuscript to see if and how this was followed throughout the document. Without knowing about the fragment, Bryennios had earlier made a chapter break exactly at this point in his published edition.¹⁸
9. These fragments of two complete folio leaves are the smallest ever discovered from a “Christian” codex. They measure 5.8×5 cm and 5.7×4.8 cm (2.25×2 in and 2×1.87 in).
10. The significance of these two leaves for the textual history of the *Didache* should not be minimized. They are 650 years older than the Jerusalem Codex. They come from the same time period as Athanasius and Didymus, which was also the same period when the author of the *Apostolic Constitutions* was copying the *Didache* into chapter seven of his church manual.¹⁹
11. Niederwimmer concluded that the fragments rest on a different archetype than that of the Jerusalem Codex. “Neither of the two forms of the text is always superior to the other.”²⁰

¹⁸ Bryennios, *Διδαχὴ Των Δωδεκά*, 13.

¹⁹ Bryennios reprinted the Greek text of the *Constitutions* in the “Prolegomena” of his *Didache* edition. An English translation of the *Constitutions* is in vol. 17 of ANF.

²⁰ Niederwimmer, *The Didache*, 23. I am convinced, however, that the fragments indicate

The following table compares the verses of the Jerusalem Codex (H) to the corresponding ones in the fragment (O). The line numbering follows the individual lines of the fragments and an attempt is made to reproduce their spelling, spacing, and special characteristics.

H		O	
(1.3c)	οὐχὶ καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τὸ αὐτο	(fol. 1 ^r)	ουχι και τα ε θνη <u>τουτο</u>
(1.3d)	ποιουσιν; ὑμεῖς δὲ ἀγαπάτε τοὺς μισοῦντας ὑμᾶς καὶ οὐχ ἔξεται ἐχθρόν·		ποιουσιν υμ εις δε φιλειτ 5 ε τους μισου τας υμας και ουχ εξετε εχ (fol. 1 ^v) θρον <u>ακου</u> ε τι σε δει ποι 10 <u>ουντα σωσαι</u> <u>σου το πνα πρω</u> <u>τον παντω</u>
(1.4)	ἀπέχου τῶν σαρκικῶν καὶ σωματικῶν ἐπιθυμιῶν·		αποσχοу των σαρκειων — ε 15 πιθυμειων
(2.7b)	... ἐλέγξεις· περὶ δε ᾧν προσεύξῃ, οὓς δὲ ἀγαπήσεις ὑπὲρ τὴν ψυχὴν σου·	(fol. 2 ^r)	ἐλεγξεις περι ω δε προσευξει ους δε αγαπησεις υπερ την ψυχη 20 σου > > > > >
(3.1)	τέκνον μου φεύγε ἀπὸ παντός — πονηροῦ καὶ ἀπὸ παντός ὁμοίου αὐτοῦ· μὴ γίνου ὀργίλος· ὁδηγεῖ γάρ ἢ ὀργὴ πρὸς τὸν φόνον·		— — — — — — τεκνον μου φευγε απο (fol. 2 ^v) <u>απο</u> παντος 25 <u>πραγματος</u> πονηρου και — — ομοιου αυτου μη γεινου οργει λος <u>επειδη</u> οδη 30 γει — η οργη προς τον φονον

Differences in the Oxyrhynchus fragment are noted by underlines and spaces.

the hand of a later editor. This can be seen by the exhortation inserted into 1.3 and by the switches of ι and ει, a practice common in later Greek.

What can these few but extremely valuable fragments tell us about how the *Didache* may have been used in fourth century Egyptian Christianity? It is apparent that the “scribe” of O was in no way a professional. The letters on Folio 1 recto are much larger than the others. The spelling and irregular divisions of the words probably point to a writer of no great culture, certainly not to a professional scribe. But it is the size of the leaves and of the codex of which they were a part that, in my opinion, is the most striking feature of this discovery. I remember the first time that I saw the tiny fragments in the Sackler Library at Oxford and how mesmerized I was when I realized that these tiny leaves were at one time whole pages of a complete book. This impression cannot be really received by simply reading the figures about its size— 5.8×5 cm. and 5.7×4.8 cm.

We cannot know for sure the length of the entire codex, but I offer a conjecture. Suppose that the codex consisted of 1.1–6.2, based on the evidence we have mentioned previously. My ending the first section at precisely 6.2 is based on the appearance in 6.3 of the first of the five $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota$ $\delta\epsilon$ constructions in chapters 6–11 (see also 7.1; 9.1, 3; and 11.3). The following chapters are either the second main section of the “discourse” or possibly comprise a second stage of the *Didache*’s composition. According to an electronic text of the *Didache* in BibleWorks 7.0, there are 932 words in 1.1–6.2. By my visual count, the 4 “pages” of the codex contain 64 words, or an average of 16 to a page. Assuming they are representative of the other pages, a simple correlation formula results in a codex whose total length would be 58 pages or 29 leaves. If the number of leaves was much higher than that figure, the relative size of its thickness to its height and breadth would be a rather bulky codex to handle despite its small size. Furthermore, this shape would certainly be much different than the relative dimensions (height/breadth to thickness) of other codices. For example, if the entire 16 chapters of the *Didache* were in this codex, it would be approximately 138 pages long, or around 69 leaves. This would result in a codex whose width and breadth could fit in the palm of one’s hand but would be over half the thickness of the later Jerusalem Codex, which contained twelve works! Yet a codex of around 30 leaves containing 1.1–6.2 would still be small enough to be considered as an enchiridion.²¹

²¹ I suggest further that the codex consisted of 4 quires, each of which contained 4 bifolia. When folded, these 4 quires would yield a total of 32 individual folia, or leaves. Since it appears that the codex was written recto and verso throughout, this would yield a total codex of sixty four “pages.” This would be large enough to accommodate the 58 pages of text I suggested as its length and also would allow more space needed for additional chapter

This last statement leads into my final proposal. Why *was* this codex so small? In his seminal study, Eric G. Turner lists 45 known manuscripts that are in the category of a “miniature” codex (breadth less than 10 cm.).²² Only three of these tiny manuscripts are smaller than the *Didache* codex and all of them are of Old Testament texts, one of which is not a codex. Therefore, Oxyrhynchus 1782 is the smallest codex ever found that contained a specifically Christian text. Some writers have suggested that the codex was used as a sort of amulet.²³ With all due respect, I seriously demur from that suggestion. On the one hand, I cannot completely disprove the idea that some Christians may have used Christian texts for that purpose. Chrysostom later mentioned that some Christian women would hang Gospels from their necks (John Chrysostom, *Hom. Matt.* 72).²⁴ On the other hand, however, I simply cannot imagine why a text like the *Didache* would be used in this way. There is no evidence that at the time of the fragment, the *Didache* was viewed as a sacred text like the Gospels. Furthermore, where elsewhere is there evidence for such a text like the *Didache* functioning as an amulet? I think that there is a more practical purpose for the small size of the *Didache* codex, and it is a purpose consistent with the evidence deduced thus far for a shortened *Didache* being used by this time for the purpose of catechesis.

I propose that in the miniature codex from Oxyrhynchus we have a tangible example of a Christian enchiridion—a literal handbook that was placed in the literal hand of a catechumen. Perhaps the little codex was given to catechumens at the beginning or at the end of their training. Perhaps an exercise during the instruction was that the catechumen would copy out the *Didache* into his or her own little codex, which might explain the cruder style of the writing. One scholar (Jonathan Draper) raised an objection to my proposal after my presentation of an early form of this chapter at a meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. His objection was based on the widespread illiteracy in the ancient world.²⁵ He suggested that

breaks like the one in the fragment. Thus, it appears that the *Didache* mini-codex would be the right size to accommodate the length of what we know today as chapters 1.1–6.2.

²² Eric G. Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 30.

²³ See the early suggestion by L. Amundsen, “Christian Papyri from the Oslo Collection,” *SO* 24 (1954): 125–147. I am indebted to Rordorf and Tuilier, *La doctrine des douze apotres*, 111, for this reference.

²⁴ Chrysostom criticized this practice in his day as being like the Pharisees’ practice of wearing large phylacteries. Even these “Gospels” probably consisted only of the *incipits* of each individual Gospel (Turner, *The Typology of the Early Codex*, 31).

²⁵ William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

the book may have been used by a *cathechist* rather than by a *catechumen*, and thus was read *to* them rather than *by* them. I refer the reader to Gamble's helpful (and more nuanced) discussion²⁶ and suggest that the objection may not be as strong as it first sounds. Not all scholars have accepted uncritically the proposal that 10–15% of the ancient world was literate.²⁷ Furthermore, the ancient Jewish population could never be described as illiterate and the *Didache* originated from such a culture—one in which it was intended to be read. Finally, Athanasius's reference to it being read seems to carry a strong presumption that at least some of the catechumens could read. In any case, even if it could be shown that the book was intended to be read *to*, rather than *by*, the catechumens, it would not seriously rule out its overall role as a Christian enchiridion.

We may still have many questions about this codex, its form, and its specific function. But I propose that we have in Oxyrhynchus 1782 concrete evidence that *Didache* 1–6 served as a literal enchiridion in late fourth-century Egypt. In other words, here we have actual evidence of “the catechetical book, the *Didache*,” which Didymus described around the same time that someone was copying the words of the *Didache* 1–6 into this enchiridion.

As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, my argument is not as convincing as I would like it to be. Discovery of another miniature codex of the *Didache* from the same time period would certainly strengthen my case. But this miniature codex does have all the characteristics that writers from Eusebius to Nicephorus attribute to the *Didache*. Furthermore, I have worked long enough amidst the perplexities surrounding this little book to know that there is almost no opinion about it that does not have both passionate advocates and equally passionate opponents (and at least as many others who are agnostic on the issue). Absolute certainty is very difficult to attain in historical studies. The best that we often can do is to offer a proposal that best fits the evidence.

I promised that my proposal would not be radical, but maybe it is not entirely novel either. Perhaps someone has proposed this specific idea before and it has escaped my notice. But even if I am not the first to propose this idea, I do think that it is worthy of consideration by those who are trying to pry further secrets out of this little gem from antiquity.

²⁶ Harry Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 2–10.

²⁷ See the recent discussion in William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker, *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

THE CLASSROOM IN THE TEXT:
EXEGETICAL PRACTICES IN JUSTIN AND GALEN

H. Gregory Snyder

While Justin Martyr, the philosopher and exegete, would have resisted the title of sophist, he would certainly have been aware of other literary and philosophical teachers who answered to the description. Narrowly defined, the term “sophist” refers to speaker-performers who gave *ex tempore* declamations on classical themes in affected, high-Attic style, and who often sold their services as educators for a high price. According to this definition, Justin is most decidedly not a sophist. However, in the more general sense of “expert,” or even “textual expert,” the label “sophist” fits Justin quite well: Justin himself can use the terms philology and philosophy interchangeably, as he does when giving an account of his philosophical activity to the old man he meets by the sea (*Dial.* 3.2–3).¹ Justin’s decision to address the emperor in his *Apologies*, for example, calls to mind the sophistic *topos* of address to the tyrant and the activities of men such as Dio of Pruso, Dio Chrysostom, and Aelius Aristides.²

In the *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin constructs a virtual classroom in which he displays several kinds of behaviors that most sophists of the period would have recognized. He conspicuously displays his mastery of the texts and traditions of his school. No doubt the long lemmata in the *Dialogue* were produced with reference to written copies of Scripture, but within the literary conceit of the *Dialogue*, Justin reels off amazingly long stretches of Scripture purely by memory, without reference to written texts of any kind. And even his opponents recognize his virtuosity when it comes to textual analysis: “never,” says Trypho, “have we ever heard anyone inquiring into

¹ The remote location is “most suitable for philology” (φιλολογίᾳ τε ἀνυτικώτατα). The choice of the term φιλολογία has drawn comment; φιλοσοφία would seem to have been the more natural choice, given what follows. See the commentary of Philippe Bobichon, *Justin Martyr: Dialogue avec Tryphon* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2003), 2:581. In what follows, I have used Bobichon’s text; I have also consulted that of Miroslav Marcovich, *Iustini Martyris: Dialogus cum Tryphone* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997), noting any significant differences. Translations of Justin are my own.

² See Tim Whitmarsh, *Second Sophistic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 59–65.

and searching out and proving these things" (*Dial.* 56.16). The language of persuasion and most of all "proof" (ἀπόδειξις, ἀποδείκνυμι) is ubiquitous in his work. We also find an unmistakable agonal strain throughout the *Dialogue With Trypho*, where he contends with and bests an opponent in literary debate. All these tendencies—the conspicuous display of mastery where texts are concerned, a premium on proof and persuasive utterance, and the language of the *agôn*, are hallmarks of the gathering cultural phenomenon of the Second Sophistic.³ And there can be no doubt that in choosing to present the Justin character in the *Dialogue* as he does, the real Justin is carefully fashioning his own image, presenting himself as a master handler of his school's texts and traditions. Whether or not he consciously wrote with an awareness of these developments, we may justifiably place him and his work in the cultural field of the Second Sophistic.⁴

Justin's use of "proof language" invites comparison with the work of Galen, another Roman intellectual deeply concerned with proof and with the proper use of texts. Like Justin, Galen would have vigorously renounced the title of sophist, but as was the case with Justin, many aspects of Galen's self-presentation fit comfortably within the Second Sophistic.⁵ A comparison between Justin and Galen might seem ill-posed in light of Galen's quite different social location and philosophical commitments. Galen was, moreover, aware of Christians, and none too impressed. Even though they might rise to a level "not inferior to ... genuine philosophers" where behavior was

³ Though somewhat ill-defined around the edges, the term refers to a clearly discernible cultural phenomenon in Antonine Rome. Among its relevant aspects: 1) public declamations by virtuoso speakers, "frequently with the conceit of improvisation;" 2) special interest in matters of language, often entailing a revival of Attic style; 3) conspicuous display of one's education and culture; 4) a pronounced agonistic strain; and 5) a marked emphasis on role-playing and self-fashioning. These elements represent a paraphrase of a longer list given in Heinrich von Staden, "Galen and the Second Sophistic," in Richard Sorabji, ed., *Aristotle and After* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1997), 33 n. 31. Other fundamental works on the topic include: Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1993); Graham Anderson, "The *pepaideumenos* in Action: Sophists and their Outlook in the Early Empire," *ANRW* II.33.1, 79–208; Glenn Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); for a recent summary of scholarship, see Tim Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴ Timothy Horner, in *Listening to Trypho: Justin Martyr's Dialogue Reconsidered* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 73–93, discusses the Second Sophistic as a context for Justin's activity, focusing especially on Justin's use of the dialogue genre.

⁵ Heinrich von Staden: "Galen and the Second Sophistic;" Heinrich von Staden, "Anatomy as Rhetoric: Galen on Dissection and Persuasion," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 50 (1994): 47–66.

concerned, they only did so based on threats of punishment and promises of future rewards.⁶ And yet both men were profoundly exegetical thinkers, Justin making use of the Hebrew Scriptures, and Galen drawing on the writings of Plato and Hippocrates. The works of both men teem with the language of “proof,” especially terms based on the *δεικ*-stem (e.g. *ἀπόδειξις*, *ἀποδείκνυμι*, *ἐπίδειξις*, and *ἐπιδείκνυμι*). Galen complained that certain physicians accepted *ἀναποδείκτοι νόμοι*: “unproven” or “undemonstrated laws,” a practice that made them no better than Jews or Christians (*Puls. diff.* 2.4).⁷ For his part, Justin argues that he and those for whom he speaks have not accepted “unproven arguments” (*ἀναποδείκτοι λόγοι*). Galen’s attachment to Plato and his writings is well known, and in this, he finds another point of commonality with Justin. And finally, Justin and Galen enjoyed overlapping sojourns in the city of Rome between 162 and 165 CE. Based on testimony given at his trial, we know that Justin lived in Rome for at least eight years, up until his death in the year 165.⁸ Galen, meanwhile, arrived in Rome in the summer of 162, departing in 166, only to return soon after. And while they certainly inhabited very different worlds, we may with confidence speak—if somewhat mordantly—of a mutual acquaintance, known to both Galen and Justin, Q. Junius Rusticus, the official who presided over Justin’s trial.⁹

⁶ “For they include not only men but also women who refrain from cohabiting all through their lives; and they also number individuals who, in self-discipline and self-control in matters of food and drink, and in their keen pursuit of justice, have attained a pitch not inferior to that of genuine philosophers” (trans. by Richard Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* [London: Oxford University Press, 1949], 15).

⁷ On this quotation, see Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians*, 14, 48–56. For comments about Galen’s use of *ἀναπόδεικτος*, see Jonathan Barnes, “Galen on Logic and Therapy,” in Fridolf Kudlien and Richard Durling, eds., *Galen’s Method of Healing* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 70 n. 65.

⁸ See the *Acts of Justin*, published in Herbert Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).

⁹ For Rusticus’s role in Justin’s trial, see *The Acts of Justin*. The Pascal Chronicle places Justin’s death in the year 165 CE. By itself, this would scarcely be considered reliable, were it not the case that Rusticus is known to have served as *praefectus urbi* for the years 162–168, during which time he presided over the trial that led to Justin’s execution. Galen, on the other hand, would have encountered Rusticus in more congenial circumstances. Very soon after his move to Rome, Galen became deeply embedded among the Roman political and intellectual classes: consuls Sergius Paullus and Flavius Boethus were enthusiastic sponsors of Galen, along with members of the emperor’s household, resulting in Galen’s appointment as personal physician to Marcus Aurelius. It seems highly likely that the teacher and friend of Marcus, the philosophically inclined Rusticus, would have made Galen’s acquaintance within the context of the imperial household. For Galen’s biography and connections to Roman intelligentsia during his first sojourn in Rome, see Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2004), 216–239, esp. 224.

The question of commensurability also arises when considering which texts of Justin and Galen may be fruitfully compared. Even by modern standards, Galen's productivity is nothing short of amazing: in Kühn's edition, his work runs to 8,000 pages of Greek text, and this edition falls significantly short of being comprehensive.¹⁰ He wrote numerous commentaries on Hippocratic treatises, many of which are still extant.¹¹ He is also responsible for a number of works, among them, *On the Elements according to Hippocrates* and *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, in which he explores the writings of Plato and Hippocrates for their doctrines on particular themes and polemicizes against opponents, and it is these writings that may be usefully compared with Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*.¹² Especially in the latter of these two—*On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*—he engages in a kind of virtual dialogue with Chrysippus, and this makes for a particularly apt comparison with Justin's literary conversation with Trypho in the *Dialogue with Trypho*.

While many possible points of comparison can be imagined, we shall consider only the following topics: 1) diatribal rhetoric in both authors: language that smacks of schools and instruction, 2) the ways in which the texts to be examined—the Hebrew Bible and the writings of Plato and Hippocrates—are brought up for consideration, i.e., the way in which each author brings textual material onto the table, and 3) the language of proof and persuasion. Exploration along these lines of inquiry yields valuable insights about these authors in their roles as exegetes, both similarities and differences: the common diatribal rhetoric of their work, Justin's emphasis on voice when citing Scripture as compared to Galen's more bibliographic manner of citation, and the way Justin's proof language compares with Galen's. These topics would certainly find a place within a general

¹⁰ In volume, Galen's literary remains account for approximately 10 per cent of all surviving Greek literature written before 350 CE (Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, 390 n22).

¹¹ See Wesley D. Smith, *The Hippocratic Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978); also Daniela Manetti and Amneris Roselli, "Galeno commentatore di Ippocrate," *ANRW* II.37.2, 1529–1635.

¹² For purposes of this chapter, I have employed the critical editions in the *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*: *Galen: On the Elements According to Hippocrates* (CMG 5 1,2; ed. Phillip De Lacy; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996) and *Galen: On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (CMG V 4,1,2; ed. Phillip De Lacy; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1978). Unless otherwise noted, I have provided my own translations, though generally with reference to De Lacy's. As De Lacy's editions are widely available, references to Kühn's edition have been omitted, in the interest of streamlining the notes.

comparison of Galen and Justin's use of texts; a comprehensive comparison of Justin and Galen where textual usage is concerned must remain at present, the topic of future work.

1. THE CLASSROOM IN THE TEXT

Here, we attend to the ways in which both authors adorn their text with the language of the classroom. The works I examine are somewhat different in this regard, at least superficially. Justin has written a dialogue in which he addresses, reasons with, cajoles, remonstrates, and rebukes his interlocutors. Along the way, he employs several different types of direct address: "my friends" (ὦ φίλοι [*Dial.* 27.2; 35.4; 48.4; 60.2; 61.1; 121.1]), "gentlemen" (ὦ ἄνδρες [23.2; 24.1; 30.2; 32.2; 78.10; 124.1]), "my brothers" (ὦ ἀδελφοί [58.3; 137.1]), "you, my audience" (ὦ ἀκροαταί [129.4]) and of course, on many occasions, "Trypho" (ὦ Τρύφων). Only the addressee, a certain Marcus Pompeius, is addressed as "dear" (φίλτατε [141.5; see also 8.3]). The degree to which Trypho and his companions are in fact real opponents, composite portrayals of conversations Justin might have had with Jewish adversaries, or simply fictive constructs has yet to be settled.¹³ In any event, Justin presents to his readers a picture of a learned debate, complete with answers given by Justin to questions furnished by Trypho, reactions to these answers, and finally, the jeers and catcalls of background characters.¹⁴

The writings of Galen under examination here are not dialogues in this sense. And yet, Galen quotes such long stretches of Chrysippus's works that Chrysippus himself is, in effect, brought into the room, and actually addressed as if present: "Well said, Chrysippus!" or "So then, my dear Chrysippus (ὦ φίλτατε Χρύσιππε), you are expressing Plato's view when you say ..." or, "but what, Chrysippus, does this have to do with the rational part, which is the subject of our inquiry?"¹⁵ Praxagoras and Aristotle are also

¹³ Horner takes up this question in *Listening to Trypho*, 16–32. He helpfully schematizes the debate into five distinct opinions and argues that there is an original "Trypho Text" that does represent an actual conversation.

¹⁴ *Dial.* 8.3, 9.2; 122.4: "some of those who had come around on the second day yelled aloud like spectators in the theater."

¹⁵ Respectively, *PHP* 196.3; 174.21; 218.22. The precise expressions and their locations: ὦ Χρύσιππε (196.3; 218.22, 31; 220.27; 260.18; 262.15; 304.21); ὦ φίλτατε Χρύσιππε (174.21, 218.1); γενναϊότατε Χρύσιππε (206.19; 244.35; 262.20; 300.36). In some of these sections, second-person singular verbs are used, "you should not have supposed ..." (218.33–36); "you say ..." (220.4), etc.

addressed in this way.¹⁶ And imaginary groups of opponents are conjured up and debated:

But by heaven, some Stoic may say—as indeed they do say—there is not the same analogy between soul and body in respect of affections and diseases and health. But then, good people (ὦ βέλτιστοι) we would reply to them, do you compare the soul's affections to the affections and diseases of the body?¹⁷

(*PHP* 298.23–27 [trans. De Lacy])

Better examples of diatribal utterance would be hard to find. And on many occasions, even if they are not directly addressed, opponents are mentioned as if present:

What arteries did they grow out from? It is only right that Praxagoras should tell us. Yet why do I challenge him to speak, when I can myself give the correct account without further delay?

(*PHP* 84.26–29 [trans. De Lacy])

And so with both Justin and Galen, we have what might be termed a “fictive teaching theater,” furnished with students and rhetorical opponents.

In fact, the wandering and rambling style of both writers certainly grows out of actual teaching situations. When it comes to staying on topic, Justin and Galen generally receive low marks from those who have studied their work. In particular, the word “prolix” arises with remarkable frequency. Galen is judged as “tedious and prolix,” by Gentile Da Foligno, in the fourteenth century; “marred by prolixity and constant repetitions,” says Vivian Nutton in the twenty-first century.¹⁸ The criticism may have gone back even further, all the way to the source: Galen apologizes frequently for the sheer volume of his writing, saying that he himself would prefer brevity and concision were it not for friends who beg for his work:

But when one of the most eminent sophists said to me that it was not possible to refute all that Chrysippus had written to prove that the heart alone in the body of an animal is the source of the governing part, he forced me to present in this third book a full discussion of the things I had passed over.¹⁹

(*PHP* 168.26–170.2 [trans. De Lacy])

Alternatively, Galen blames his long-winded opponents for writing lengthy texts that require lengthy refutations if they are to be taken seriously:

¹⁶ Praxagoras: 82.24 (ὦ γενναῖοτάτε Πραξαγόρα); Aristotle: 94.8 (Ἀριστοτέλες φίλτατε).

¹⁷ General address to “sages” (ὦ σοφώτατοι): *PHP* 134.32; 392.29.

¹⁸ Gentile Da Foligno, Canon I, 2r., quoted in Robert French, *Canonical Medicine: Gentile Da Foligno and Scholasticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 45 n. 106; Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2005), 218.

¹⁹ Cf. *PHP* 204.35: “but since my friends thought it would be better not even to pass over Chrysippus’ utterly foolish talk in complete silence ...,” cf. also 232.21–29.

Therefore, if the choice had been mine, the matter would have been demonstrated before now with the greatest possible brevity (βραχυτάτος); and the blame for the length of my discussion must not be placed on me for refuting the faulty arguments that those men put forth, but rather on the men who composed them.
(*PHP* 488.38 [trans. De Lacy])

Here, Galen might have restrained himself to a greater degree: when he criticizes Chrysippus for citing a multitude of Homeric texts in support of anatomical claims, he does not simply give one or two examples of the practice; he gives twenty four (*PHP* 178.1ff.). Ironically, in his own writings, Galen engages in the same practice that he criticizes in Chrysippus:

For indeed, what could be more anile, more tedious, more like a schoolmaster, or further removed from the demonstration that a philosopher ought to use, than ... to quote poets and to call in a multitude of non-experts as witnesses ...
(*PHP* 196.2ff. [trans. De Lacy])

One is forced, in reading Galen's criticism of Chrysippus, to sample at great length the very garrulity of Chrysippus that is being censured! It is not enough to simply refer to a practice of Chrysippus: one must actually put it on display. So the rambling and diffuse nature of Galen's writing grows directly out of the give and take of actual teaching situations. Modern scholarly culture, anchored as it is in reference libraries where books are readily available, allows for a writer to simply refer to the practice or statement of another author he wishes to criticize, knowing that the interested reader can verify the claim being made. In most cases, the simple act of pointing suffices. But in the absence of such bibliographic resources, one must reproduce for the reader whatever text is at issue—bring it into the room, as it were—whether it is a text of Chrysippus that Galen wishes to criticize, or in the case of Justin, a lengthy quotation from Scripture.

Justin, too, has been subjected to very similar charges when it comes to style: according to L. Gildersleeve, "Justin is negligent and prolix;" more recently, Avery Cardinal Dulles comments, "his style of writing is unfortunately disorderly and prolix."²⁰ And if asked, Justin might plead guilty to the charge. He allows himself to go on at great length, both by way of digression and by repetition:

Allow me, Trypho, to first gather some other proofs on this head, many in number, so that you may be persuaded concerning this point, and after this I will produce the argument for which you ask.
(*Dial.* 57.4)

²⁰ Basil L. Gildersleeve, *The Apologies of Justin Martyr* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877), xxv; Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005), 33.

Justin's readers have often wished that Trypho was less indulgent of Justin's logorrhea, but we can hardly expect that Justin, the real author lying behind Trypho would allow himself to be curbed by his own literary character. In fact, as we might expect, Justin the author has Trypho the character provide the "Justin" of the Dialogue with opportunities to digress. For example, Trypho can be made to say, "Even if I seem to interrupt these arguments which you say it is necessary to investigate, oblige my urgent desire if first I ask about something I wish to investigate" (*Dial.* 45.1).²¹ And repetitions are sometimes required because new listeners appear: Justin repeats himself,

... on account of those who were not present with us yesterday. I say this to you, even at the risk of repeating myself over and over (εἰ καὶ ἐταυτολόγησα πολλάκις), knowing that it is not inappropriate to speak thus.

One of the listeners, a certain Mnaseus, jumps up to enable Justin's loquacious tendencies: "We are grateful that you undertake to say the same things again to us" (*Dial.* 85.5–6). So by modern standards of academic prose, anchored in a bibliographic culture with easy access to written texts, Galen and Justin may indeed appear rather verbose. But their works should not be held up against this modern standard. Rather, their writing mimics the digression and repetition typical of ancient classroom environments where texts are read and analyzed.

2. TEXTS ON THE TABLE

On literally hundreds of occasions, Galen and Justin produce excerpts from the authors upon which they comment. In so doing, they employ certain verbs for the act of producing such quotations and certain nouns for the passages produced. As a general characterization, Galen refers to such material with language that highlights its textual, written character, while Justin places a surprisingly strong emphasis on speaking and voice. Intensely, even annoyingly bibliographical, Galen constantly refers to his own writings and to those of others, and he employs a wide range of terminology when producing such passages: παραγράφω (to add or supply; sometimes, to interpolate); παρατίθημι (to mention, to cite, to quote, to place before; also interpolate); προστίθημι (to add, to insert), and infrequently, παραναγιγνώσκω (to

²¹ The topic at hand is a discussion of Isa 7:12, "a virgin shall conceive" The thread of the discussion is not picked up again until 66.1.

make a comparative reading; to collate).²² He can also use formulations with γράφω, as in, “when he [Plato] writes in the *Timaeus*” (*PHP* 174.10: ἐπειδὴ ἐν Τιμαίῳ γράφῃ) or, “this is the passage in which he has written concerning these things” (*PHP* 562.8–9: ἔστι δ’ ἡ ῥῆσις αὐτοῦ καθ’ ἣ γέγραπται ταῦτα αὕτη). His preferred term for the lemmata themselves is ῥῆσις, as in, “these are the passages (ῥῆσεις) from Chrysippus,” (*PHP* 242.12) or “what need is there to quote still other passages?” (Τί ἂν ἔτι δέοιμεν ἐτέρας παραγράφειν ῥήσεις; *PHP* 370.24). The term has roots in spoken language (ἑρῶ) and might be rendered by “speech” or “expression,” but on dozens of occasions it is used specifically of excerpts drawn from various texts, and so De Lacy quite properly translates ῥῆσις as “passage.” Frequently, Galen delivers up a quotation as something spoken: “Hippocrates says” or “it is now time to listen (ἀκούσαι) also to the things he [Plato] says (φημί) in the *Phaedrus*” (*PHP* 546.35). Galen also uses the term λόγος when referring to lengthy excerpts (552.8) as well as λέξις (*PHP* 558.7). When he wishes to draw special attention to the precision or accuracy of a quotation, he often employs, “here is the reading” (*PHP* 546.8) or more stringently with κατὰ λέξιν: “I shall quote for you the passages using his exact words” (*PHP* 516.22 [παραγράφω δέ σοι καὶ τὰς ῥῆσεις αὐτοῦ κατὰ λέξιν ἐχούσας ὧδε]).

By contrast, the language Justin uses when producing passages is remarkable for its emphasis on the voice. Never do we find phrases such as κατὰ λέξιν. Verbs of saying—λέγω, φημί, and ἑρῶ—occur very frequently: phrases such as “Isaiah says,” or “God, through David, says ...” are ubiquitous. In addition, we find a cluster of terms drawn from the prophetic lexicon: “cry aloud” (βοάω, ἐμβοάω), “shout, scream” (κράζω), “preach” (κηρύσσω), “command” (κελεύω), “announce, proclaim” (ἐπαγγέλλω), “denounce” (ὀνειδίζω), “utter aloud” (ἀναφθέγγομαι) and the like. Individual prophetic writers—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel—the prophets taken together, the Holy Spirit, the Word, God, any of these entities, can serve as the subject of these verbs. Justin only twice employs ῥῆσις, on both occasions, paired with verbs of speaking and so, rightly translated as “words” or “utterance.”²³ Instead of referring to

²² παραγράφω: *PHP* 92.2, 104.28, 130.2, 132.16, 140.24 (comparing passages), 178.3 (of Chrysippus’ quotations from Homer); παρατίθημι: 130.23, 146.30, 182.10 (quotations by Chrysippus), 240.33, 372.2; προστίθημι: 272.23, 492.24 (of interpolation); 558.5; παραναγγινώσκω: 132.13.

²³ 1 *Apol.* 32.12: “And Isaiah, another prophet, says the same thing in other words (ῥῆσεις), when he spoke (εἶπεν) thus”; *Dial.* 92.1: “If, therefore, someone does not receive from God great grace to understand the things said and done by the prophets, it will profit him nothing to seem to speak (λέγειν) the utterances (ῥῆσεις) and the accomplishments [of the prophets].”

Scripture *texts* of the prophets, from which he draws excerpts, passages are presented as directly spoken. The fact that they are drawn from a written text is effaced.

One might have guessed that a writer as scripturally based as Justin would often introduce biblical quotations with a formula such as, “as it is written” (ὡς γέγραπται), a practice often taken as an indicator that the text so quoted is granted scriptural authority.²⁴ The phrase does occur in the *Dialogue*, though surprisingly, it rarely introduces a scriptural quotation in the sense of intoning a solemn note before a lengthy quotation of authoritative text. In a few cases, the text introduced is quite short, as in *Dial.* 34.6, where we find, “And at the end of this Psalm of which I have spoken (φημί), it is written, ‘the Psalms of David, the son of Jesse, are ended’” (see also *Dial.* 78.1; 79.4). In some cases, it occurs as part of the lemma being quoted (e.g. *Dial.* 17.3, where Jesus says, “it is written, my house shall be a house of prayer;” cf. also 125.4). In most cases, it refers to a biblical story that is not actually quoted but simply referred to (“It is written that they ate” [57.2]) or summarized, as in: “God appeared from a tree to Abraham, as it is written, by the oak of Mambre” (86.5; cf. also 121.2 and 141.3) or paraphrased, “If Moses relaxed from [holding his arms up in] the shape of the cross, as it is written in the writings of Moses, the people were beaten” (90.4). The following example captures both usages and thus the difference between the two:

By Moses, brothers, again, *it is written*, that this man, the one who appeared to the patriarchs and being called God is also called both angel and lord, so that from these things you might know him to be servant to the Father of all things as you have already admitted; and being persuaded by more [arguments? scriptures?] you may be settled in your opinions. The Word of God, explaining through Moses the things concerning Jacob, the son of Abraham, *speaks* thus, “and it came to pass ...” (*Dial.* 58.3)

So, when a general reference to a scriptural passage or incident is at issue, γέγραπται is sometimes used, but verbatim quotations are almost exclusively introduced by verbs of saying.

²⁴ See D. Moody Smith on Paul’s citation formulae, “The Pauline Literature,” in D.A. Carson and H.G.M. Williamson, eds., *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 265–291. Other articles in this volume treat the question of scriptural citation in different bodies of literature. C.D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (SNTSMS 74; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), treats Paul and contemporary Greco-Roman literature; he does not take Justin into consideration.

Strikingly, when Justin does use γέγραπται it is very often with reference to Gospel literature in whatever form he is using it: “it is written that his disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist” (*Dial.* 49.5); “you crucified him on Passover, it is written” (111.3) or, “in the gospel (ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ) it is written, saying, ‘all things have been given to me by the father ...’” (100.1).²⁵ When Justin refers to the “Memoirs of the Apostles” (ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων), he very often utilizes “it is written” (e.g. 101.3; 103.6; 104.1; 105.6; 106.4; 107.1).²⁶ In fact, nine of the thirteen references to the ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων involve some form of γράφω. Justin’s conceptions about Gospel literature draw from him a manner of reference that acknowledges the textual and documentary character of the source. By contrast, the Books of Moses and the Prophets massively favor modes of reference that involve voice or speech.²⁷ Clearly, there is something about the *writtenness* of the Memoirs that is important.

What accounts for this difference? In a discussion of Justin’s use of Gospel material, Skarsaune makes a useful observation that goes some distance towards explaining Justin’s use of γράφω-language. According to Skarsaune, Justin is keen to show that the Memoirs of the Apostles are historically reliable, not just shifting oral tradition:

The Gospels were written by Jesus’ disciples or their successors, who faithfully and reliably *remembered* what Jesus had said and done Justin evidently sees considerable argumentative value in the fact that these *Memoirs* were *put into writing* at an early stage, by Jesus’ closest disciples, the apostles, or by their immediate followers. We therefore do not have to rely on oral tradition only, transmitted through a large number of intermediary transmitters.²⁸

Indeed there is a noticeable emphasis on the fact that words *spoken* by or about Jesus were then put into *writing*: “these things which they said, concerning which it is written in the Memoirs of the Apostles ...” (101.3); “it is

²⁵ *1 Apol.* 66.3, the “Gospels” are identified with the “memoirs of the apostles.”

²⁶ Also at *Dial.* 103.8, a proposed emendation in the editions of Thirlby, Marcovich, and Bobichon.

²⁷ Bruce Metzger notices similar differences in New Testament literature and in the Mishnah; see “The Formulas Introducing Quotations of Scripture in the NT and the Mishnah,” *JBL* 70 (1951): 305: “When one compares the frequency of certain types of formulas, it is discovered that the Mishnah shows a great preference for those formulas involving a verb of saying, whereas in the NT the frequency of this type is more evenly balanced by the type containing a reference to the written record.”

²⁸ Oskar Skarsaune, “Justin and His Bible,” in Sara Parvis and Paul Foster, eds., *Justin Martyr and His Worlds* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 73.

written in the Memoirs of the Apostles that he said ..." (105.6); "it is written in the Memoirs of the Apostles that those from your nation said ..." (107.1; so too at 103.6, 105.5). Where the Jewish Scriptures are concerned, the text becomes a voice; where the Memoirs of the Apostles are concerned, voice becomes text.

Justin's preference for voice-language may simply be in conformity with conventions among Greek writers when producing quoted material: "Greeks tend almost universally to use verbs of saying rather than writing, even when they are citing written texts."²⁹ Indeed, Galen provides evidence for this practice, as we have seen. But Justin raises this use of voice language to an entirely new level. If it is true, as Loveday Alexander remarks, that the use of verbs of saying when producing quotations tends, "to reinforce the idea that authority lies in a living, present teaching tradition rather than in a dead text written in the past," then Justin is manifestly stressing a living and present tradition.³⁰ And to "living" and "present," one might also add "mutable," or "updatable." For him, the Christian meaning is found "between the lines," or perhaps, behind the lines, in what the text "really says," which is precisely not what is written. Justin's reliance upon voice language where Jewish Scriptures are concerned makes sense when it is understood as a Christian attempt to find a new voice within the pages of the Jewish scriptures: the voice of the *logos*, a voice that authorizes and underwrites a new movement.

Once the texts are on the table, as it were, both authors can be found turning a critical eye on the product. In fact, both authors tend to blame corrupt manuscripts on sectarians who have altered the texts of their schools:

Therefore, I was compelled to make a comparison (παραναγιγώσκω) with the books of the other Stoics, who alter the expression either to "goes out" or to "is sent out"; and I have now shown that Chrysippus and Diogenes do just that.³¹
(PHP 132.12 [trans. De Lacy])

²⁹ Loveday Alexander, "IPSE DIXIT: Citation of Authority in Paul and in the Jewish and Hellenistic Schools," in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press), 119.

³⁰ Alexander, "IPSE DIXIT," 119.

³¹ On Galen as a text critic, see Smith, *Hippocratic Tradition*, 123–176; Loveday Alexander, "Canon and Exegesis in the Medical Schools of Antiquity," in Philip S. Alexander and Jean-Daniel Kaestli, eds., *The Canon of Scripture in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (Lausanne: Éditions du Zèbre, 2007), 141–145; J.A. López Férez, "Galen, lector y crítico de manuscritos," in Antonio Garzya, ed., *Tradizione e ecdotica dei testi medici tardoantichi e bizantini. Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Anacapri 29–31 ottobre 1990* (Naples: M. D'Auria, 1992), 197–209. His text-critical comments are more extensive in his Hippocratic commentaries.

Galen observes that his opponents may make similar arguments: “Some dared to say that these membranes do not exist, and that the account was interpolated by a follower of Erasistratus (ὅπ’ Ἐρασιστρατείου διεσκευάσθαι) in order to support such a view” (*PHP* 396.6). On occasion, the material in question runs to greater length:

Hippocrates wrote a book *On the Nature of Man*, to which was added the little booklet *On Regimen*; and between was inserted an anatomy of the veins which, in my opinion, an interpolater added (ἦν ὁ διασκευάσας δοκεῖ μοι προσθεῖναι). (*PHP* 492.22; see also 378.36 ff.)

Justin also comments on the integrity of his texts, though his remarks refer not to additions but to excisions. Referring to the Septuagint, he avers that Trypho’s “teachers” have “taken away (περιαιρέω) many scriptures (γραφαί) from the translations made by the elders under Ptolemy” (*Dial.* 71.2). When Justin speaks of such excisions, he employs a variety of terms: ἀφαιρέω (“remove”), περιαιρέω (“strip away, take away”; perhaps a bit stronger than ἀφαιρέω), ἐγκόπτω (in the sense of “incise”) and also, περικοπτῶ, to “cut out, to cut around,” or “to mutilate.”³² When making reference to such disputed places, Trypho uses παραγράφω (“write alongside,” as with a gloss, but here, “replace,” “erase,” “overwrite”) (*Dial.* 71.4, 73.5, 84.3, 4).³³ These readings have drawn a good deal of scholarly attention, the main question being whether they stem from the re-translation of the Septuagint by Aquila or whether they may in fact go back to the so-called *kaige*-recension.³⁴ For the present, we note only this difference between Justin and Galen when it comes to text-criticism, that Galen tends to complain of additions to the text of Hippocrates, while Justin worries about items that have been taken away. On no occasion does he speak of additions, and so the vocabulary employed by Justin and Galen is rather different.

In the matter of producing texts, as we have seen above, there is no doubt that Galen is working with books: transcribing passages from the actual texts of Chrysippus, Plato, Hippocrates, etc. Here, there is a signal difference from Justin, who represents himself as reeling off very long stretches of text

³² ἀφαιρέω (*Dial.* 72.1, 73.1) περιαιρέω (71.2); ἐγκόπτω (72.3); περικόπτω (72.2, 4, 73.6).

³³ Trypho may perhaps employ the stronger term here as a way of rhetorically exaggerating—and thereby ridiculing—Justin’s claims, though Justin himself uses the same terms in *Dial.* 84.4, 5, as noted by Philippe Bobichon, in his commentary (*Dialogue avec Tryphon*, 2:766).

³⁴ E.g. Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr’s Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 18–23, *passim*.

by memory. We can hardly doubt that the *Dialogue* is constructed at a table where manuscripts of various kinds are present. But in the dialogue itself, no books are present, other than the one that Justin produces from memory. By structuring the *Dialogue* in this way, Justin represents himself as a virtuosic performer of texts, a fact to which he brings attention through the mouth of Trypho: "You seem to me to have come from a great struggle concerning all these things under investigation, and therefore, to respond readily to all who might question you" (*Dial.* 50.1). Justin might resist the title of sophist, but most sophists would recognize this feat of *ex tempore* utterance as an accomplishment befitting one of their own guild.

3. GIVING PROOF

As a final point of comparison, we examine the use of proof language in both authors. As a general rule, Galen tends to employ ἀπόδειξις/ἀποδείκνυμι where logical or mathematical proof is concerned, while preferring ἐπιδείξις/ἐπιδείκνυμι when speaking of the type of proof that follows from dissection or experiment.³⁵ Where "epideik-" words are concerned, there is usually something to behold; where "apodeik-" words occur, there is something to understand or to follow intellectually. Taking first his treatise *On the Elements*, we find that ἀπόδειξις/ἀποδείκνυμι refers to arguments of a logical nature (*Elem.* 68.18, 78.13) or in a general way to broad claims (*Elem.* 134.9). Ἐπιδείκνυμι is used for things shown, pointed out, or set forth. The things pointed out may be as tangible as bones or hairs (e.g. *Elem.* 98.2–4). It might refer to a literary aspect of a text by Hippocrates, as in the following excerpt:

But since this has been adequately proven (ἀποδείκνυμι), to those at least who have had any training at all in following a proof (ἀπόδειξις), it would be better next to discuss something that we have pointed out (ἐπιδείκνυμι) many times and many places in the writings of Hippocrates, namely, that when he has spoken of one member of a class of things he lays it on us to add to the argument the remaining elements that have the same force as that one.

(*Elem.* 74.23–76.1; my translation, with reference to De Lacy's)

It may also concern an opinion held by Hippocrates: "I think it has been clearly demonstrated (ἐπιδείκνυμι) from passages that I have already cited that he does not want to make the elements' qualities the elements of bodies" (*Elem.* 124.14–16). On one occasion, ἐπιδείκνυμι carries a distinctly

³⁵ See von Staden, "Anatomy as Rhetoric," 53; von Staden, "Galen and the 'Second Sophistic,'" 37–39.

negative valence. Here, Galen reports a rebuke delivered by Athenaeus, one of his teachers, who accused him of “playing the sophist with us, in order to showcase his literary skill.”³⁶ *Epideik*- words, in particular, carry a special resonance in the context of public intellectual activity in second-century Rome, where *epideixis* often described the kinds of oratorical displays of public speakers. Galen tended to disparage such performers, so perhaps it is not surprising that the noun *ἐπιδειξις* is not found at all in *De Elementis*.

For the most part, patterns of usage observed in *De elementis* carry over in *PHP*. Galen uses *apodeik*-language when speaking generally of having given a satisfactory argument for something: “this was proven in the first of our two books *On Semen*,” or “the things we proved in the treatise *Concerning the Natural Powers*.”³⁷ Here, *ἀποδείκνυμι* functions as broad term that includes different kinds of proof, including that of dissection and clinical observation.³⁸ As noted above, *apodeik*-language is preferred where matters of logical inference are concerned.³⁹ At times, the term loses a specific valence, as when Galen toggles between terms for apparently stylistic reasons. Wrapping up Book I of *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, he writes,

... so also we demonstrated (*ἐπιδείκνυμι*) that the heart is the source of the arteries; that the source of the veins is the liver is proven (*ἀποδείκνυμι*) in what follows. Having brought the first book to a close, I will turn in the second book to the things that come after what has here been demonstrated (*ἀποδείκνυμι*).⁴⁰

But this sort of stylistic fluidity is the exception rather than the rule: Galen does not swap his proof terms indiscriminately in *De Elementis* or in *PHP*.

As noted above, Galen favors *ἐπιδείκνυμι* when speaking of dissection: “we demonstrated these things in the dissections of animals” (*PHP* 122.14; cf. also 124.9, 11, 372.32, 406.18, 432.22). *Ἐπιδείκνυμι* is also commonly found in the general sense of “pointed out” where it means little more than “show” (*δείκνυμι*), with which it may even stand in parallel:

³⁶ ... κυκλῶ σοφίζόμενος ἡμᾶς, ἵν' ἐπιδείξῃται τὴν λογικὴν παρασκευὴν (*Elem.* 110.1).

³⁷ *PHP* 410.12; 410.18; also 122.4; 162.27; 358.21; 414.25.

³⁸ So also, at *PHP* 394.30.

³⁹ *PHP* 144.13; on the *ἀποδεικτικὸς μέθοδος*: 430.7.

⁴⁰ *PHP* 100.3–5; similarly at 380.22: “Others before us have demonstrated (*ἀποδείκνυμι*) that the anatomy of the above-mentioned veins is not the authentic view of Hippocrates or Polybus; and we too, if god ever grant us to write on the genuine works of Hippocrates, would demonstrate (*ἐπιδείκνυμι*) at greater length what Hippocrates' view is on the source of the veins” (trans. De Lacy).

Better, I think, for the one who says that they [the nerves] come from the heart to have shown (δείκνυμι) how the nerve comes to each part of the animal from which it comes, just as we demonstrated (ἐπιδείκνυμι) with respect to the arteries just now.⁴¹ (PHP 90.29–32)

Epideik-language can be used (albeit rarely) where logical matters are concerned, though there appears to be a felt difference between ἐπίδειξις and ἀπόδειξις. In the following excerpt, Galen uses it to characterize an argument of Plato that falls short of being logically conclusive in some of its particulars but is nevertheless “cogent and irrefutable:”

I shall now pass to Plato's demonstration (ἐπίδειξις) in the fourth (book) of the *Republic* that the parts of the soul that move us by conation are three in number. Here again one must acknowledge that he does not give a necessary proof (οὐκ ἀναγκαστικῶς ἀποδεικνύμενον) that they are parts, each differing from the others, for the argument is no more a demonstration that the three are powers than that they are parts (οὐδὲ γὰρ μάλλον τρεῖς εἶναι δυνάμεις ἢ τρία μόρια δείκνυσιν ὁ λόγος). But that they are three in all, whether parts of the soul or powers, by which our life is controlled, this he proves cogently and irrefutably (βιαστικῶς τε καὶ ἀναντιρρήτως ἀποδείκνυται).⁴² (PHP 336.16–23)

Surprisingly, the noun ἐπίδειξις occurs only here; in *PHP*, at least, Galen never uses it of his own activity, perhaps because of its association with the display pieces of the sophists from whom he is anxious to distance himself.

Does Galen regard a statement from Hippocrates or Plato as sufficient proof of a claim? In fact, he does not. I do not find anywhere in *De Elementis* or *PHP* where ἀποδείκνυμι is used for this purpose.⁴³ On the contrary, Galen affirms that authority flows not from a text or the person behind it, but from proper application of the scientific method, which for him, stands upon the pillars of proper reason and careful observation:

For not merely is Euripides or Tyrtaeus or any other poet, or any non-expert at all, insufficient authority for a doctrine in the absence of all proof, but even Hippocrates himself, admittedly the best of all physicians, or Plato, the first of all philosophers, is not sufficient. And Plato's successors, even if they all burst with envy or contentiously contrive shameless sophisms, as Chrysippus

⁴¹ Δείκνυμι can appear where we might expect ἀποδείκνυμι, as at 414.33: “These things have been demonstrated (δείκνυμι) at greater length in my commentaries *On The Natural Powers*.”

⁴² The translation is De Lacy's, lightly altered to distinguish between different Greek words that De Lacy translates as “proof.”

⁴³ On one occasion, ἐπιδείκνυμι is used in this way, at *PHP* 366.26: “these are the passages (ρήσεις) from Plato, which not only demonstrate clearly (ἐπιδείκνυμι) what we were saying, that it makes no difference whether hunger, thirst and desire in general, or pursuit and avoidance, are called ‘things we do’ or ‘things done to us’ ...” (trans. De Lacy).

and his school did, will never be able to surpass his reputation or match the beauty of his proofs (ἀποδείξεις). And yet no intelligent person thinks he should accept the mere statement even of those men whose souls are graced with knowledge so far above the rest; rather, he waits for the proof (ἀπόδειξις). (PHP 198.23–30 [trans. De Lacy])

With respect to Plato, Galen remains fairly true to sentiments expressed here. On several occasions he criticizes Plato: “he [Plato] errs (ἀμαρτάνω) when he says” (504.16); “Plato spoke incorrectly” (οὐκ ορθῶς [504.3, 14]), or Plato “was careless (ἀμελῶς) in his examination of these things” (520.3). When he does invoke written authorities other than Plato and Hippocrates in argument, he often uses the language of “witness” or “testimony” (μαρτυρεῖν, μάρτυς), and it is clearly of secondary importance:

I could have wished that Chrysippus had read this passage of his [Plato, commenting on Homer] and given it his attention. He would surely have derived some profit from it himself, by learning on what occasions one may properly call Homer as a witness (μάρτυς), and about what subjects. For one thing, witnesses should not be called at the beginning of the argument, but when you have proved adequately what you set out to prove, then there is no objection to calling on men of earlier times to testify. (PHP 356.25–30)

Galen is nearly always critical of the procedure, though he can on occasion play at it in order to beat Chrysippus at his own game:

I have decided to make this addition to the argument because of that man’s astounding wisdom, who keeps turning away from scientific proofs (ἐπιστημονικαὶ ἀποδείξεις) and uses poets, myths, and women for confirmation of his teaching. (PHP 424.12–15 [trans. De Lacy]; see also 104.8–12; 148.6; 184.10–12)

He then proceeds to quote a text of Homer as proof that the desiderative soul is in the liver. But for Galen, this is a last and grudging resort.

Galen treats Hippocrates somewhat differently even than Plato. While Galen does not present the opinions of Hippocrates as sufficient proof for a claim, he never brings himself to utter a critical word where Hippocrates is concerned, at least in *De Elementis* and *PHP*. On the contrary, he liberally affirms his admiration for Hippocrates and the correctness of his opinions on numerous occasions.⁴⁴ And while he does not formally “proof-text” from

⁴⁴ “What Hippocrates wrote about these matters is seen to be more precise and indeed more useful to a physician” (502.14–16); “Hippocrates worked out in great detail ...” (506.30); “[Hippocrates] gave a starting-point ...” (506.33); “Hippocrates excelled Plato ...” (510.9); “Hippocrates imparted to us ‘the letters’ of the method of science ... and ... he instructed us in the ‘syllables’ as it were, that rest on the letters” (516.18–22); “Plato, then, did not have precise

Hippocrates, when Galen makes a claim about something, it often happens that a citation from Hippocrates follows shortly thereafter:

For we must not call things natural that are not common to all; indeed what is natural must not only be common to all but also have a common nature. I say that you all do have natural criteria, and in saying this I am reminding you, not teaching or demonstrating (ἀποδείκνυμι) or making an assertion on my own authority. (PHP 542.10–13)

After seven lines that argue the point based on common experience, he writes, “Hippocrates wrote about them as follows ...” (542.21).⁴⁵ Never do we find a statement akin to, “Hippocrates erred when ...” The closest we come to criticism is, “being the first to discover the truth about these matters, [Hippocrates] dealt with them in a rather disjointed (ἀτακτότερος) way” (572.34), or, “the solution to this problem was not stated very clearly by Hippocrates” (578.5). In fact, anything untoward or erroneous in a Hippocratic writing suggests that it was not, in fact, by Hippocrates:

The more error Galen detects in a treatise, the more likely it is not to have been written by Hippocrates, and hence it can be excluded from his medical purview. Thus Galen the scholar-physician creates a picture of an unerring Hippocrates that, in turn, justifies and inspires Galen. The self-identification of hero-worshiper with hero is almost complete.⁴⁶

So, while Galen cannot bring himself to admit that the writings of Hippocrates have what might be described as scriptural status, Hippocrates stands in a special category where textual authorities are concerned. “Concerning all these views which I have examined, Hippocrates is my guide (ἡγεμὼν)” (PHP 478.4).⁴⁷

knowledge about these parts of the science of Hippocrates, although he tried to follow the man” (520.34–35); “Hippocrates was on surer ground ...” (524.22).

⁴⁵ So also at 550.8ff., where an argument about practice vs. theory is followed by, “This, then was the view expressed by Hippocrates and Plato I shall produce a few examples ...” whereupon he supplies a series of long quotations from *The Republic*; then, “let me add still another quotation from Hippocrates as a model ...” (558.5), then, “perhaps it is better to cite one more passage from the Treatise on Joints ...” (560.34).

⁴⁶ Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, 221. See also Geoffrey Lloyd, “Scholarship, Authority and Argument in Galen’s *Quod animi mores*,” in Paola Manuli and Mario Vegetti, eds., *Le opere psicologiche di Galeno: atti del terzo colloquio galenico internazionale, Pavia, 10–12 settembre, 1986* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1988), 12 (Galen, “idealises even idolizes Hippocrates”), along with the sources in n. 2.

⁴⁷ Occasions can be found in Galen’s corpus where he takes up different positions than those advocated by Hippocrates, for example, where Galen professes to take a mediating position between Hippocrates and “those who believe that the best temperament in animal

Justin shares with Galen a deep affinity for the language of proof. His first use of ἀπόδειξις in the *Dialogue* helps to fix its particular character. Speaking of the scriptural writers, the old man who sparked Justin's conversion says, "They did not make their statements (λόγοι) by means of proof (μετὰ ἀποδείξεως) seeing that they were trustworthy witnesses of the truth above all proof (ἄνωτέρω πάσης ἀποδείξεως)" (*Dial.* 7.2). Ἀπόδειξις is thus set in distinction to statements that automatically elicit belief without argument or demonstration.⁴⁸ *Apodeik*-terms are nearly always used where proof from texts are concerned and they can occur with great frequency, as in the following excerpt:

And Trypho replied, "Give to us an account, then, that this man, whom you say was crucified and taken up into heaven is the messiah of God. For that the messiah suffers and comes again in glory and will receive eternal kingship over all peoples, all of whom will be subjected to his rule, this has been sufficiently proven (ἀποδείκνυμι) by you from the aforementioned scriptures. But that this man [Jesus] is he, prove (ἀποδείκνυμι) to us."

And I replied, "It has been proven (ἀποδείκνυμι) already, gentlemen, to those who have ears, even from the points upon which we have already agreed. But that you may not think me to be at a loss and unable to make proofs (ἀποδείξεις) concerning those things about which you ask, I will do so in the proper place, as I promised."⁴⁹ (*Dial.* 39.7–8)

Not surprisingly, we do not observe Justin using *apodeik*-language in the special logical sense that Galen does, nor does Justin ever sharpen the term

bodies is the warm and wet." See *On My Own Opinions* (trans. Vivian Nutton; CMG 5.3.2; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999), 71.

⁴⁸ This text bears on the debate about the phrase, "the grace to understand" (χάρις τοῦ νοῆσαι), various forms of which occur in *Dial.* 30.1, 58.1, 78.10,11, 92.1, 100.2, 119.1. According to N. Pycke, "Connaissance rationnelle et connaissance de grâce chez saint Justin," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 37 (1961): 52–85, Justin believes that this grace is supernaturally given, independent of rational argument, while Robert Joly, *Christianisme et philosophie* (Brussels: Editions de l'Université Bruxelles, 1977), 104–113, claims that proper understanding of the scriptures does call for rational arguments. The debate is described by Skarsaune, in *Proof from Prophecy*, 12. The case should not be reduced to an either/or, but the entire literary enterprise of the *Dialogue*, not to mention the ubiquity of "proof" language seems premised on the notion that persuasion based on rational arguments is possible. As Justin says in *Dial.* 38.2: "being in sympathy with you, I am striving to the utmost that you may understand these things that to you are paradoxical." These matters were indeed formerly obscure, but are fully accessible to reason now that Christ himself has interpreted the scriptures with reference to himself and transmitted his teaching to the apostles. As Skarsaune observes, it is precisely the exegetical traditions initiated by Christ, passed on by the Apostles, and now handed on by Justin, that represent, "the grace necessary to understand."

⁴⁹ In *Dial.*, the nouns and verbal forms of ἀπόδειξις appear 166 times.

with a qualifier such as ἐπιστημονική, which De Lacy generally renders as “scientific proof” or “scientific demonstration” (*PHP* 104.7; 106.34). Justin’s use of the term nearly always refers to proofs based on texts, while Galen almost never uses it in this sense.

What exactly does it mean for Justin to “make a proof?” In principle, it involves a fixing of reference: showing that a prophetic text finds its fulfillment in the life of Jesus or to his second advent and that it does so more aptly than to its ostensible reference in the Hebrew Scriptures. This, as Justin says in his *First Apology*, is the “truest proof.”⁵⁰ For example, the priest-king mentioned in Psalm 110 is compared to Melchizedek from Genesis 14, and Justin proceeds to argue that Jesus is a better fit to the Melchizedek language than Hezekiah, because 1) Hezekiah was not a priest; 2) Melchizedek was described as a priest to the uncircumcised, a role that Jesus fulfills (according to Justin), more so than Hezekiah, and that 3) the Psalm hints at the cycle of humiliation and exaltation seen in Jesus’ life when it says, “He shall drink from the stream by the path; therefore he will lift up his head.” “I am not ignorant,” says Justin, “that you venture to explain the king spoken of here as Hezekiah, but that you have erred, based on the passages that follow immediately, I will prove to you” (*Dial.* 33.1). The “proof,” therefore, requires the reader to see a fit between the language of Scripture and elements in Jesus’ life. Often, this fit is quite tenuous, as when Justin argues that the trussing of the Passover lamb hints at Jesus’ posture on the cross (*Dial.* 40.3). In such cases, the reader is likely to feel a good deal of sympathy for Trypho when he says, “I hope you realize that you are out of your mind, saying these things” (*Dial.* 39.3).

For Justin this kind of proof has an immediately evidentiary and compelling effect, not being the kind of truth that emerges logically at the end of a syllogism, but something almost visual, where appreciating “fit” is involved: confronted with such clear evidence, only a recalcitrant and willingly obtuse spectator could remain unconvinced. Justin believes the evidence of his exegesis should have the same compelling effect that Galen claims for evidence based on dissection. Indeed, Justin’s ideal listener would probably be similar to a man of Galen’s acquaintance, who steadfastly

⁵⁰ See *1 Apol.* 30.1: “... we will now make the proof, not believing in mere assertions, but, being persuaded by those who prophesied before the fact, on account of the things we see having happened and that are now happening, just as they were prophesied. It will be plain to you, we think, that this is the greatest and truest proof (ἀληθεστάτη ἀπόδειξις).”

refused to believe that veins have their origin in the liver. But when Galen demonstrated this by dissection, his resistance was transformed into conviction:

A certain man who honored the truth was amazed to hear this [that the liver not the heart, is the source of the veins] and refused to believe the account and asked that the thing being described be shown (δείκνυμι) to him; and when he saw it he greatly scorned those who had asserted that the heart is the source of the veins. (PHP 390.32–35 [trans. De Lacy])

A refusal to yield in the face of such patently clear evidence indicates willful blindness, a failure to simply open one's eyes. Similarly for Justin, the person who remains unmoved by so many clear and evident homologies between the prophecies and their fulfillment in Christ must be considered willfully perverse, and a lover of strife.⁵¹

We have seen that Galen frequently employs ἐπιδείκνυμι, though he exhibits a noticeable antipathy to the noun-form ἐπιδείξις, at least in *De Elementis* and *PHP*. Justin uses *epideik*-language somewhat infrequently, the verb occurring three times and the noun only once.⁵² In some cases, Justin uses ἐπιδείξις in parallel with ἀποδείξις:

As you wish, Trypho; I will come to these proofs (ἀποδείξεις) for which you ask at the proper point, I said. For now, with your permission, I will first call to mind prophecies in order to make it plain (εἰς ἐπιδείξιν) that Christ is parabolically called both God and Lord of the powers, and Jacob by the Holy Spirit. (Dial. 36.2)

Like Galen, Justin shows his awareness of the culture of *epideixis*, of which he ostensibly disapproves: "I am not anxious to make an artistic display of words by craft alone (ἐπιδείκνυσθαι), for I do not have this ability."⁵³ Trypho objects, "you seem to be joking when you say that you possess none of the rhetorical arts."⁵⁴ But of course, in the *Dialogue with Trypho*, it is Justin that lies behind the literary Trypho and who constructs his own image

⁵¹ E.g. Dial. 123.7: ... οὐδὲ πάλιν φιλεριστεῖν

⁵² Dial. 10.4: "If, therefore, you have a defense to make concerning these things, and are able to show (ἐπιδείκνυμι) in what way you hope for anything whatsoever ..." (Trypho speaking); 24.1: "And this is indeed possible to make clear (δυνατὸν ἐπιδείξαι), gentlemen, I said, that the eighth day has a certain mysterious import ..."; the noun form in 36.2 "And I said, 'As you wish, Trypho; I will come to the proofs (ἀποδείξεις) for which you ask at the proper point, I said. For now, with your permission, I will first recall prophecies in order to make it plain (εἰς ἐπιδείξιν) that Christ is parabolically called both God and Lord of the powers, and Jacob by the Holy Spirit.'"

⁵³ Dial. 58.1: οὐ κατασκευὴν λόγων ἐν μόνῃ τέχνῃ ἐπιδείκνυσθαι σπεύδω, οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναμις ἐμοὶ τοιαύτη τίς ἐστίν.

⁵⁴ Dial. 58.1: εἰρωνεύεσθαι δέ μοι δοκεῖς, λέγων δύναμιν λόγων τεχνικῶν μὴ κεκτηθῆναι.

through the voice of Trypho—regardless of whether we take the *Dialogue* to be reportage of an actual conversation or as fictive—so Justin has it both ways, portraying himself as a non-participant in epideictic culture, while in the guise of Trypho, simultaneously drawing attention to his abilities as a speaker.

So what would Galen have made out of the *Dialogue*, had he encountered it while browsing in the bookshops in the Sandalarion?⁵⁵ Bringing himself to overlook Justin's stylistic peculiarities, he might have extended some initial sympathy to the book in light of the Platonic leanings of its author. He may perhaps have followed along with the dialogue between Justin and the old man on the nature of the soul, given his interest in that topic, but Justin's stock would have fallen sharply when he read that these so-called "prophets" did not make their arguments by means of proof (μετὰ ἀποδείξεως) seeing that they were "trustworthy witnesses of the truth above all proof," or that "the words of the Savior have an awe-inspiring authority in and of themselves" (*Dial.* 7.2; 8). Galen was a severe critic of this sort of prostration before authority where physicians and philosophers were concerned, in fact, using the Jews and Christians as a bench mark for unreflective dogmatism: "One might more readily teach novelties to the followers of Moses and Christ than to the physicians and philosophers who cling fast to their schools."⁵⁶ Confronted with such an unfalsifiable claim to authority, Galen would most likely have tossed the *Dialogue with Trypho* back into the bin. But had he been inclined to read further, he would have noticed the *apodeik*-language that was so frequent in his own work, and have recognized the kind of textual wrangling going on, much like the debates he had with competing physicians, philosophers, and intellectuals. He describes one such incident during which the practice of exegesis and the act of dissection strikingly converge. One day, while lecturing in the Temple of Peace, he challenged his detractors to a kind of textual showdown, staged after the fashion of one of his public dissections of animals:

⁵⁵ An area that Galen often visited (see *De libr. Propr.* 1). It is worth considering how Justin's writings might have been gathered, preserved, and altered after his death by his students.

⁵⁶ See *Puls. diff.* 2.4 (8.579 Kühn); 3.3 (8.657 Kühn); for these passages and others, see Richard Walzer, *Galen on Jews and Christians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 10–16. Justin frequently said much the same thing to Trypho about his teachers: "you have been persuaded by teachers who do not understand the scriptures" (*Dial.* 9.1); "you only say what your teachers say" (62.2); "you ought not to be persuaded by your teachers" (68.7); "shall we so thoughtlessly accept such things, as your teachers say?" (112.2).

When I came forward, displaying myself (ἐπιδείξων ἑμαυτὸν) as not having spoken falsely in my anatomical commentaries, I set up in public the books of all the anatomists, thereby giving each of those present the means to propose whatever part he wished to be dissected.⁵⁷

Members of his audience challenge him to compare his statements about the chest with those of Lycus of Macedon, and so Galen proceeds to subject his writings and those of Lycus to careful and public scrutiny over a period of at least two days.

Finally, what is most surprising about Justin's use of *apodeik*-language is that he uses it at all, let alone with such frequency. The term makes almost no appearance in early Christian literature; indeed, Justin's use of proof language appears to be one of his signal contributions to the development of early Christian intellectual discourse.⁵⁸ Justin is widely recognized as a seminal figure in the field of heresiology and more generally as one of the first Christian writers to think philosophically, and here we see him planting his flag in new semantic territory. Even if writers like Galen would have disagreed strongly with Justin about what constituted a proper proof, Justin's use of this terminology placed him and his work in a new community of intellectual discourse. And of course, it is not necessarily the case that Justin himself intended all this. After his death, his treatises entered a world in which the language of proof, display, and conspicuous mastery of texts came to have special significance in a culture experiencing the effects of the Second Sophistic.

⁵⁷ ὅποτε προήλθον ἐπιδείξων ἑμαυτὸν οὐδὲν ἐψευσμένον ἐν τοῖς ἀνατομικοῖς ὑπομνήμασιν εἰς τὰ μέσον ἀνέθηκα τὰ τῶν ἀνατομικῶν ἀπάντων βιβλία τὴν ἐξουσίαν δοὺς ἐκάστῳ τῶν παρόντων ὁ βούλεται μῶριον ἀνατμήθηναι προβάλλειν ἐπαγγειλάμενος δεῖξειν (*De libr. propr.* 2; 19.22 Kühn = *Scr. Min.* 2:101 Müller). The reference and translation is from von Staden, "Galen and the Second Sophistic," 43.

⁵⁸ Ἀπόδειξις/ἀποδείκνυμι occur in 1Cor. 2:4, 2Thess 2:4 and Acts 25:7. In 1Cor 2:4, it is juxtaposed to logical or argumentative proof; in Acts 25:7, it is used in the sense of legal proof; Aristides, *Apol.* 4.1. In his commentary on the *Dialogue*, Bobichon gives a brief note on Justin's use of ἀπόδειξις, observing that Irenaeus also employs the term (*Dialogue avec Tryphon*, 2:604 n. 7).

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