

Reconstructing Historical Context

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Preface

How one interprets anything depends on the context in which it is viewed; so the more one discovers about the original context of a person, object or text the clearer and more accurate one's understanding of its formation. While the traditional biblical canon programs the casual reader to interpret the disparate texts between its covers as integral pieces of a harmonious or at least continuous whole, detailed probing of the evidence sometimes requires revising prior views of the contexts in which these texts took shape.

The articles in this volume, though as diverse in origin and focus as the biblical books themselves, share a theme of challenging common assumptions about the world of early Christianity. The first two deal with issues of education.

Rubén Dupertuis examines in detail Greek educational practices that influenced authors—Jews and Christians included—who composed their works in the early Roman empire. Since the evidence shows that for almost a millennium there was a surprisingly static educational system that stressed imitation (*mimesis*) of standard literary models, Dupertuis shows how the utopian model of Plato's guardians in the *Republic* may have influenced both the description of the primitive Christian community in Acts, and Philo and Josephus' descriptions of the Essenes. His cautious conclusion of *possible* literary influence opens questions not only about how much objective observation is embodied in such *mimetic* reports but on whether similarities in the latter support theories of direct historical relationship between these respective communities.

Chris Shea charts a different course by challenging the usefulness of generalized social models based on evidence drawn from across the Roman world to draw conclusions about the literacy of a given Galilean Jew such as Jesus. Taking exception to William Harris' minimalist claim of a low literacy rate among common subjects in the early Roman empire, Shea argues that such estimates depend on who is doing the counting. Then she picks apart assumptions based on lack of physical evidence and the equation of education with formal schooling. Having deconstructed Harris' argument, she leaves the question of getting an education in ancient Galilee open for future investigation.

The next two papers explore reasons for revising traditional assumptions about the historical setting in which early Christian works were composed.

Surveying implications of the Acts Seminar's redating the canonical book of Acts to the early second century CE (see *Forum* n.s. 5,1) , Joseph Tyson argues that viewing this work as a *response* to the challenge posed by Marcion's radical interpretation of Paul resolves questions that *any* supposed first-century date of composition leaves unanswered.

Then, Robert Price, after assessing echoes of the Pauline correspondence in the Acts and Apocalypses of Paul, concludes that *both* extracanonical *and* canonical texts reflect the struggle between second century gnostic and orthodox authors who imposed their own religious perspectives on the apostle. Most notably, Price argues that portions of 1 Cor. 6–7 are best understood as attempts by post-Pauline encratites to co-opt the apostle as their spokesman. Such emendations indicate that even a genuine letter of Paul needs to be read as a latter day compendium of varying mindsets.

Finally, Valerie Abrahamsen's detailed examination of a marble relief of a Greco-Thracian goddess found in excavations of the third-century residence of a bishop of Philippi raises questions about religious syncretism even in communities founded by the apostle Paul. This important archaeological finding cautions against making generalized impressions about the beliefs and practices of early Christians on the basis of orthodox literary evidence alone.

—Mahlon H. Smith

Editor's Note: This issue begins a new series focusing primarily on questions relating to Christian origins that have been raised in papers delivered to Westar Seminars since October 2005.

Writing and Imitation

GREEK EDUCATION IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

Rubén R. Dupertuis

INTRODUCTION

The imitation of a handful of accepted literary models lies at the core of the Greco-Roman educational process throughout all of its stages. While at the more advanced levels the relationship to models became more nuanced, the underlying principle remained the imitation of those authors who had achieved greatness.¹ Quintilian explains the rationale as follows:

For there can be no doubt that in art no small portion of our task lies in imitation, since although invention came first and is all-important, it is expedient to imitate whatever has been invented with success. And it is a universal rule of life that we should wish to copy what we approve in others. It is for this reason that boys copy the shapes of letters that they may learn to write, and that musicians take the voices of their teachers, painters the works of their predecessors, and peasants the principles of agriculture which have been proved in practice, as models for their imitation. (*Inst. or.* 10.2.1–2)

The emphasis on the imitation of models does not stop with a student's education. The primary and secondary stages of education were specifically designed to lay the groundwork for rhetorical training, where a would-be *rhetor* or writer would learn the subtle art of imitation more fully. Students approached what is essentially the same set of texts at all stages of their education, but in increasingly complex and nuanced ways. The end result was what might be thought of as a mimetic compositional ethos. As *rheto*rs and writers began to practice their craft, the years of training and preparation created, as Ruth Webb puts it, "certain modes of thinking about language, about the classical texts which served as models and about the relation to language in general."² These modes

1. For discussions of literary *mimesis* or imitation see Fiske, *Lucilius and Horace*, esp. 25–58; Elaine Fantham, "Imitation and Decline," 102–16; Russell, "De Imitatione," 1–16; Brodie, "Greco-Roman Imitation of Texts," 17–46; MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark*, 3–7.

2. Webb, "The *Progymnasmata* as Practice," 290.

of thinking are evident in the widespread imitation of literary models in the literature of the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

In what follows I will examine how one learned to read and write Greek in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods with an eye on the implications these educational practices may have on the study of Jewish and Christian texts of the period. In particular, I am interested in the mimetic compositional ethos created by the centrality of a small group of classical texts that served as models in education, and later, in literary practice.

GREEK EDUCATION in the LATE HELLENISTIC and ROMAN PERIODS

Evidence for education in the Greco-Roman world comes primarily from two different types of sources. To the information provided by elite writers such as Plato, Aristotle, Quintilian, and Cicero, among others, has been added in recent study the data from Greek educational papyri (mostly from Egypt) representing, by and large, both a different geographical region and a different segment of society.³ The latter have helped balance out the somewhat idealizing tendencies among the elite educationalists—the system proposed in the *Republic* was, after all, designed to produce philosopher-kings, and Quintilian's educational program in his *Institutio oratoria* was designed to produce the ideal orator. Despite differences in scope, the portraits of education that emerge from both sets of evidence are similar.

Literate education was divided into three mostly-fixed stages. There was some flexibility, however, in how and when some of the elements could be covered, especially in the early stages of the progression. The first elements could be taught in homes or subsumed by teachers of the second stage of education. Furthermore, the first stage need not last five to six years, as the basic tools needed to move on could be acquired in two or three years.⁴

At the primary level of education students—mostly boys⁵—first learned the alphabet, then worked their way through various increasingly difficult syllable combinations.⁶ They then copied and memorized lists of words arranged alphabetically or, in some cases, thematically. Janine Debut has suggested that the word lists were used by teachers for more than just practicing reading and

3. Until recently, the standard studies of Greek and Roman education were those of Marrou (*Education in Antiquity*) and Bonner (*Education in Ancient Rome*); both drew primarily from the elite educationalists. The evidence provided by the extant educational papyri is incorporated into the more recent treatments of education by Morgan (*Literate Education*) and Criore (*Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*; and idem, *Gymnastics of the Mind*).

4. Booth, "Elementary and Secondary Education in the Roman Empire," 1–14.

5. Criore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 74–101.

6. For discussions of the first stage of education, see Criore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 50–53, 160–84; and Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 142–49.

expanding vocabulary; they were probably used to teach students basic knowledge of the world. Among the areas covered by the vocabulary words in the extant lists are mythology, history, geography, names of philosophers associated with the well-known schools, and the names of things.⁷ After word lists, students copied and memorized short passages from poetry, maxims and *chreiai*, then longer passages taken, most often, from Homer. Already at the first stage can be seen the importance of the imitation of models, as well as the creation of a fairly manageable understanding of the world drawn predominantly from the world of poetry and myth. While the above represents the typical or ideal progression, some of the papyri indicate that students could begin to learn to write their names or copy brief passages while learning the letters or immediately after.⁸ The emphasis at this stage on copying did not necessarily imply an understanding of the model texts. At the completion of this stage, students' ability to read and write was still somewhat limited.

At the second level of education a significantly smaller number of students began to apply knowledge of grammar to the material they had already covered at the primary stage.⁹ Letters were classified into consonants and vowels, syllables were assigned their metric value, words were divided into parts of speech—nouns, verbs, participles, etc.—based, by the first century BCE, primarily on Dionysius Thrax's grammar.¹⁰ In addition, short sentences were declined through the different cases and longer passages, almost exclusively from the poets, were copied, memorized, studied and paraphrased. At this point, *scholia* appear, predominantly on Homer.¹¹

The third level of education was usually either rhetorical or philosophical training—most chose rhetoric because it provided the basic course of training for public life. In addition to giving (mostly) elite men the tools needed for careers in politics, rhetorical training was the basic course for literary composition.¹² The transition from the secondary stage of education, with its emphasis on grammatical analysis, to training in composition and declamation was accomplished through preliminary rhetorical exercises known as *progymnasmata*.¹³ These exercises were designed to equip students with the building

7. Debut, "De l'usage des listes de mots," 261–74.

8. Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 167–71.

9. For discussions of the second stage of education, see Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 185–219; Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 160–75.

10. Morgan argues that grammatical texts are unattested before the Roman period (*Literate Education*, 58, 154–62).

11. Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 206.

12. Luce, *The Greek Historians*, 113–15; Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography*, x.

13. Four manuals of these exercises survive. For a discussion and summary of the extant *progymnasmata*, see Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*, 54–72; Webb, "The *Progymnasmata* as Practice," 289–316; and Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 221–30. The most relevant of the four for this study is the text of preliminary exercises by Aelius Theon, as it is typically dated to the first century CE; for the most recent critical edition, see Patillon and Bolognesi, *Aelius Théon: Progymnasmata*. For a recent English translation of the four extant *progymnasmata*, see Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 3–72.

blocks for later compositions by marching them through a rigorously controlled process that gradually increased in difficulty. Although ordered differently in the extant *progymnasmata*, students at this stage worked their way through different types of exercises starting with *chreia*, narrative, fable, *topos*, *prosopopoeia*, *synchrisis*, *encomion* and invective, and speeches on law. Each of these elements could be expanded, reduced, refuted, or defended based on a rather rigid set of guidelines given to students. Students could also be asked to rewrite the model in various tenses and numbers.

As was the case with the first two stages of education, at the heart of the *progymnasmata* was the imitation of literary models taken from a store of classical and Hellenistic texts, most of which were poetry. In addition to giving students facility in a literary language modeled on classical authors, the exercises provided them with a repertoire of narratives drawn principally from Homeric epic and tragedy. The texts students encountered in the *progymnasmata* consisted of an expanded version of the material to which they had been introduced through the word lists, short passages of poetry, and *chreia* of the first and second stages of education. As Webb notes, “the *progymnasmata* presented the students with a closed, fictional universe, with predictable values and roles for characters, and an imaginary world, with set rules of engagement with which they can work.”¹⁴ After the *progymnasmata*, when students moved on to more complex rhetorical training and the actual composition of their own speeches, the compositional ethos of the preliminary exercises continued.

The Models

One of the striking features of Greco-Roman education is its essentially static nature from the fourth century BCE to about the fifth century CE, a remarkable feat for what was essentially a private institution. Cribiore notes that education in the Greco-Roman world functioned “largely independent of societal changes and geography. An attempt at a more defined periodization would not capture the substantially ‘frozen’ quality of education, particularly in the provinces.”¹⁵ The inflexibility of the system and the lack of local color in the examples and models from which students learned may be partly the result of the role of education as a tool of enculturation and as a marker of status and of Greek identity. As such, education was concerned with transmitting and protecting a carefully circumscribed body of texts and attitudes towards those texts.¹⁶ Furthermore, education codified and preserved a somewhat artificial mode of the language that was not subject to the typical linguistic changes over time.¹⁷

14. Webb, “The *Progymnasmata* as Practice,” 304.

15. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 8.

16. Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire*, 90–130.

17. See the discussion of this phenomenon as late as the fifth and sixth centuries CE in Heather, “Literacy and Power in the Migration Period,” 177–97.

The sourcebooks and texts used by students and teachers throughout all stages of education were primarily Attic Greek writers. As with knowledge of Greco-Roman education in general, information about which texts were used at different stages of education comes primarily from two different sources. The educational papyri are helpful for gaining an understanding of which authors and texts were used in the early stages of education, while the writings of the elite educationalists, the *progymnasmata*, and rhetorical manuals allow an entry point at a more advanced stage of the same process.

The preeminence of Homer as a literary model in education and literature in the Greco-Roman world is unparalleled. Ronald Hock has shown that Homer is, indeed, the most attested educational text at both the primary and secondary levels, and was prominent as a literary model for students working through the exercises of the *progymnasmata*.¹⁸ In her study of educational papyri from Egypt, Morgan found that where authors can be identified in the school texts, fifty-eight texts are from Homer, twenty are from Euripides, seven are from Isocrates and seven are from Menander.¹⁹ Many other authors are represented just once or twice. In addition, certain works and particular sections within works were more popular in educational settings than others. The *Iliad*, especially its first six books, appears far more often than the *Odyssey*.²⁰ Euripides is by far the most popular of the tragedians, with his later plays, especially the *Phonissae*, generally being favored over his earlier works.²¹ From this evidence, Morgan suggests that in the predominant curricular model in ancient education there were core and peripheral texts used for classroom instruction. Homer stood very firmly at the center of this core, as he was expected to be taught to all students. Outside of that, a few authors formed a second tier. This second grouping of texts, which includes Euripides, Isocrates and Menander, can be placed somewhat closer to the core than Hesiod, who is found in the school texts more infrequently.²² All other authors belonged to a third tier of even more peripheral texts from which teachers could choose in order to supplement the core texts.²³

18. Hock, "Homer in Greco-Roman Education," 56–77; see also Marrou, *Education in Antiquity*, 161–63.

19. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 69, 313. On which authors are used in education, see also Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 197–205.

20. Morgan, *Literate Education*, 115–16.

21. Criboire, "The Grammarian's Choice: The Popularity of Euripides' *Phonissae*," 241–59.

22. But see Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 197–98.

23. For Morgan this model is part of the unifying and differentiating function of education. Those who made it past the initial stage of education started to become familiar with more "peripheral" authors. This broader knowledge of literature functioned as a passport, of sorts, into elite circles; it was a form of authentication and a mark of "Greekness" (*Literature Education*, 71–89). That literary knowledge could function in this way is supported by Atheneus' *Deipnosophistae*, in which the proceedings of a symposium are narrated, showing how at every turn the participants were expected to have a line from Homer or other (primarily Attic) literature on the tips of their tongues; see the discussion in Hock, "The Cynic Cynulcus among Atheneus's *Deipnosophists*," 20–37.

The authors that appear with most frequency in educational texts also correspond to the authors recommended by elite writers on education. The list of recommended reading put forward by Dionysius of Halicarnassus survives only in an epitome. As for poets, he lists Homer first, then Hesiod and Antimachus among others; for drama he lists Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; for comedy he lists only Menander; for history he lists Herodotus, Thucydides, Philistus, Xenophon, and Theopompus; for philosophy he recommends Xenophon and Plato above all others; and finally, he includes Lysias and Demosthenes among rhetors to be read and imitated (*De imitatione* 9.1.1–5.6).²⁴ For his part, Quintilian actually has two lists in the *Institutio oratoria*. The first is a short starter list for beginning students (*Or.* 1.8.5–12). The second and more complete list, given in the context of his most extended discussion of imitation, is similar to Dionysius' list, the central difference being the inclusion of an analogous list of Latin authors (Quintilian, *Inst. or.* 10.1.45–131).²⁵ The authors suggested as models in the lists by Dionysius and Quintilian differ very little from those recommended by Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 18.6–19), suggesting that there was general agreement regarding which authors were to be considered good models.

Because I will explore the centrality of Plato's *Republic* for later images of ideal communities in the final section of this study, at this point I want to briefly look at evidence for Plato in education and suggest that Plato should be added to the short list of principal authors students could be expected to encounter in their training. The evidence for knowledge of the writings of Plato is more difficult to find and assess than it is for Homer, whose influence in Greco-Roman education and literature is unequalled. However, by the early stages of rhetorical training Plato belongs among a handful of writers who rank in second place after Homer in popularity. Furthermore, for a general, cultivated audience, Plato's identity as a writer or *rhetor* is at least as important as the philosophical content of his writings.

As one would expect, in the first two centuries CE there was great interest in Plato in philosophical circles.²⁶ However, as Phillip De Lacy has noted, while Plato's writings were of obvious interest to philosophers, "beyond those circles he had the considerable advantage of being good reading."²⁷ It is this aspect of Plato's popularity that is of interest here.

There is almost no evidence for the use of Plato's writings in the first and second educational stages. However, in these early stages students might be

24. For the Greek text and French translation, see Germaine Aujac, Ed., *L'Imitation (Fragments, Épitomé)*, 25–40.

25. The list in Dionysius probably served as the basis for the one proposed by Quintilian (Russell, "De Imitatione," 6).

26. See the discussion in Snyder, *Teachers and Texts in the Ancient World*, 93–121. For discussion of the importance of Plato as a source of the images of Socrates in the Hellenistic period, see Long, "Socrates in Hellenistic Philosophy," 150–71.

27. De Lacy, "Plato and the Intellectual Life of the Second Century AD," 5.

introduced to Plato indirectly in two ways. First, if the word lists students typically encountered at the first stage of education were also used as the starting point for lessons on mythology, history and names of things, as Debut has suggested, then students might be introduced to basic aspects of Plato's thought at this point. Most of the lists are dominated by mythological names clustered around different myth cycles or characters and are arranged either alphabetically or thematically. In addition to the mythological themes, moral and democratic principles could be introduced. In the school text known as P. Bour. 1, for example, major philosophical schools are represented by the figures of Thales, Socrates, and Zeno.²⁸ Furthermore, in this and other lists can be found the names of Gorgias and other historical figures whom Plato makes characters in his dialogues.²⁹ It is at least possible that some key ideas from Plato could be introduced at this time. Second, students might be introduced to the figure of Plato, though not yet his writings, in the *chreiai* used for various writing exercises. I was unable to find evidence of Plato as the subject in a *chreia* in the extant texts from the early educational stages, but given that Plato is the subject of several *chreiai* in the extant *progymnasmata*, it is likely that students would have been introduced to him as a literary and philosophical figure by the second educational stage.³⁰

Clearer evidence for Plato as a target of imitation emerges in the early stages of rhetorical training. In his section on pedagogy, unique among the extant *progymnasmata*, Theon asserts the importance of choosing good models to place before the students: "First of all, the teacher must choose good examples of each exercise from ancient works and make the young learn them by heart" (65.30–66.2).³¹ As George Kennedy notes, "by 'ancient' Theon means Attic writings by philosophers, historians and orators of the fifth and fourth centuries BC," since they represent the majority of his ensuing examples.³² The first example Theon gives is the "*chreia*" found in *Rep.* 1.329c. He also proposes that good examples of mythical narration can be found in Plato's accounts of the ring of Gyges (*Rep.*

28. Debut takes the name of Socrates as representative of Platonism, which is certainly possible, but, as Long has shown, in the Hellenistic period Plato was not the only source of knowledge and images of Socrates ("Socrates in Hellenistic Philosophy," 150–71). For the text of P. Bour. 1, also known as P. Sorbonne 826, see Collart, *Les Papyrus Bouriant*, 17–27.

29. See, for example, P. Chester Beatty, published by Clarysse and Wouters, "A Schoolboy's Exercise," 210–17.

30. Theon, for example, has the following *chreiai*: "Once, when Diogenes was lunching in the *agora* and invited Plato to join him, 'Diogenes,' Plato said, 'how pleasant your lack of pretension would be were it not so pretentious' (98.14–17; Patillon, 21); and "Plato the philosopher used to say that the buds of virtue grow with sweat and toil." (100.14–15; Patillon, 23). Hermogenes has the following: "Plato said that the muses dwell in the souls of those naturally clever" (3.6; Kennedy 76), which can also be found in Nicolaus' *progymnasmata* (4.23; Kennedy, 142). This last example appears elsewhere with Diogenes as the subject; see Hock, and O'Neil, Ed., *The Chreia and Ancient Rhetoric*, 46–47.

31. Patillon, *Aelius Theon*, 9.

32. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata*, 9 n. 28.

2.359b–60a), the birth of Eros (*Symp.* 203b–c), those in the underworld (*Phd.* 107d–8c, *Grg.* 523a–24a), and the myth of Er in *Rep.* 10.614a–21b (66.2–21).³³ Elsewhere, Plato’s description of Sais in *Ti.* 21e–25d is suggested as a model of *ecphrasis* (68.10–12),³⁴ and both the *Phaedrus* and the *Republic* are put forward as models of rhetorical elaboration and contradiction (95.19–23).³⁵ Throughout the exercises, Theon treats Plato as a prose writer on whom students should model their style, not necessarily as a philosopher. Plato is most likely one of the “ancient rhetoricians” to whom Theon refers in the opening line of his manual.³⁶ Only in the *chreiai* in which he is a subject is Plato specifically identified as a philosopher.

While a distinction between the different types of writers is made in the lists of models proposed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Quintilian, the primary reason both writers recommend reading Plato is for his style, not necessarily for the content his philosophy. Dionysius recommends Xenophon and Plato, above all others, for the “grace of their characters, pleasure and grandeur in their writing” (*De imit.* 9.5.1). Quintilian places Plato first, stating, “As to the philosophers, from whom Cicero confesses that he derived much of his own eloquence, who would doubt that Plato is supreme either for acuteness of argument or for his divine, Homeric gift of style. He soars high above prose—‘pedestrian language’ as the Greeks call it—and seems to me to be inspired not by human genius, but as it were by the oracle of Delphi” (*Inst.* 10.1.81). Quintilian then goes on to recommend Xenophon, Aristotle, and Theophrastus, before noting that the early Stoics paid very little attention to their style, being “shrewd thinkers rather than grand speakers” (10.1.82–84). In Hermogenes’ *Peri ideōn*, Plato is similarly recommended as an example of good style. In his discussion of how one attains sweetness of style, Hermogenes cites several passages in Plato as examples of successfully integrating references to poets (1.12.297).³⁷ And in an extended discussion of panegyric style, Hermogenes identifies Plato as the unrivaled master, specifically citing passages from the *Phaedrus*, *Gorgias* and the *Symposium* (2.10.386–89). In *On the Sublime* Plato is put forward by Pseudo-Longinus as both the pre-eminent example of literary mimetic emulation or rivalry for his imitation of Homer and as an author who is a fitting target of imitation (13–14). Finally, that Plato was often read for his style and not his philosophical content is suggested by Aulus Gellius’ remark that one of his teachers complained that another student’s interest in Plato was limited to Plato’s style, with no concern for his philosophy (*Noctes Atticae* 1.9.10).

33. Patillon, *Aelius Theon*, 9–10.

34. Patillon, *Aelius Theon*, 12.

35. Patillon, *Aelius Theon*, 60.

36. Kennedy, *Progymnismata*, 3 n. 4.

37. The passages that are highlighted are *Symp.* 174d citing Homer, *Il.* 10.224; *Rep.* 5.468c–d citing *Il.* 7.321; *Rep.* 5.468e citing Hesiod, *Op.* 122–23; *Symp.* 197c; and *Phaedr.* 241d.

Plato's place in the small group of authors who rank second to Homer is also suggested by the number of surviving fragments listed in Roger Pack's index of Egyptian papyri. By his count there are over six-hundred and seventy extant fragments of Homer, while there are over eighty of Demosthenes, over seventy of both Euripides and Hesiod, forty-three of Isocrates, and forty-two of Plato. By way of comparison, Pack lists twenty-eight of Aeschylus, twenty-seven of Xenophon, twenty of Aristophanes, and ten of Aristotle.³⁸

The role of Plato's dialogues as literature and examples of good style cannot be separated from their content and ideas. Nevertheless, the importance of Plato as a rhetorical and literary model made some dialogues more well-known than others. In his study of Plato's dialogues in Dio Chrysostom, Michael Trapp suggests that Dio reveals a preference for six of them: the *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Phaedo*, *Gorgias*, *Clitophon*, and *First Alcibiades*. In addition, Dio displays some knowledge of ten others. Regarding those dialogues of which Dio makes more frequent use, Trapp states, "These are dialogues generally known and read by the cultivated person as part of literate education. The hard, technical dialogues such as *Philebus*, *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, and *Cratylus*, the territory of the real philosopher, are conspicuous by their absence. Moreover, in what he chooses to discuss in those dialogues he does call up, Dio keeps firmly to a grammarian's rather than a philosopher's agenda."³⁹ Dio's use of "mainstream Plato, the works most familiar to rhetorical education and the cultivated general public,"⁴⁰ reflects a pattern found elsewhere as well. De Lacy has argued that, while the use of all Plato's dialogues are attested in second-century CE writers, four of them—the *Republic*, the *Phaedrus*, the *Timaeus* and the *Laws*—were among the most favored. Roughly the same dialogues appear with most frequency among second-century Christian writers.⁴¹

A Mimetic Compositional Ethos

The increasingly complex modes of imitation students learned in the early stages of rhetorical training carried over into rhetorical and literary practice. Citations and allusions of classical authors in elite writers of the Greco-Roman period roughly correspond with the texts used in education.⁴² But beyond the specific texts that served as models, the same critical engagement with models attested in the *progymnasmata* can be seen in, for example, writers like Lucian

38. Pack, *The Greek and Latin Literary Texts from Greco-Roman Egypt*. There are limits on how much can be made of this type of evidence, particularly because Pack's index could reflect particularities of Egyptian political and geographical concerns. However, the numbers of identifiable fragments do correspond with popularity in school texts and elite authors, making some generalization possible.

39. Trapp, "Plato in Dio," 236–37.

40. Trapp, "Plato in Dio," 238.

41. Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 2:107–27.

42. Criboire, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 192–93.

and Dio Chrysostom.⁴³ Thus, the mimetic ethos of Greco-Roman composition created complex literary and intertextual relationships between authors and their models, typically marked by the following features:⁴⁴

1. *Close familiarity with the predominant models.* The type of reading recommended to students was virtually indistinguishable from memorization. On the subject of reading the masters, Quintilian suggests the following:

... what we read must not be committed to memory for subsequent imitation while it is still in a crude state, but must be softened and, if I may use the phrase, reduced to a pulp for frequent re-perusal. For a long time also we should read none save the best authors and such as are least likely to betray our trust in them, while our reading must be almost as thorough as if we were actually transcribing what we read. (*Inst.* 10.1.19–20)

Similarly, in the context of explaining the benefits of Greek over Latin models, Horace advises would-be writers, “For yourselves, handle Greek models by night, handle them by day” (*Ars poetica* 268–69). In addition to reading and memorization, educationalists advocated paraphrase and translation of the masters.⁴⁵

2. *The imitation of multiple models.* Authors were urged to be familiar with multiple models and to cull the best features from each for their own writing. Cicero gives the example of Zeuxis the painter who chose the best features of five different models for his painting of Helen (*De inventione* 2.1–2). Seneca expresses a similar idea using the metaphor of bees making honey:

We should follow, men say, the example of the bees, who flit about and cull the flowers that are suitable for producing honey, and then arrange and assort in their cells all that they have brought it. . . . It is not certain whether the juice which they obtain from the flowers forms at once into honey, or whether they change that which they have gathered into this delicious object by blending something therewith and by a certain property of their breath. . . . We should so blend those several flavours into one delicious compound that, even though it betrays its origin, yet it nevertheless is a clearly different thing from that whence it came. (*Epistulae* 84.3–5)

Furthermore, it was important that one model not be singled out above all others, since even great writers had occasional missteps—only the very best of the very best was to be the target of imitation (Quintilian, *Inst. or.* 10.2.24). Imitation was also to be done across genres, as “each branch of literature has its own laws and its own appropriate character. . . . But all forms of eloquence have something in common, and it is to the imitation of this common element that our efforts should be confined” (*Inst. or.* 10.2.22). The imitation of multiple

43. Webb, “The *Progymnasmata* as Practice,” 302.

44. I addressed this topic in an abbreviated form in “The Summaries of Acts 2, 4 and 5 and Plato’s Republic,” 278–80.

45. See, for example, Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.5.4. On the importance of paraphrase and translation, see Clark, *Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education*, 169–76; and Fiske, *Lucilius and Horace*, 36.

models was also important in order to avoid crossing the (somewhat moveable) line between creative imitation and plagiarism.⁴⁶

3. *Advertising or concealing the imitation.* The relation to a particular model was often obvious. Authors could advertise their dependence, expecting the reader to be aware of the allusion, as in many of Virgil's structural similarities to Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. The ways in which the dependence was advertised could range from the obvious to the subtle—it sufficed for an author to make clear to the reader that he was aware of his resources.⁴⁷ Quintilian comments on one such dependence by noting that Menander “often testifies to his admiration for Euripides” (*Inst.* 10.1.69). According to the Seneca (the Elder), “The poet [Ovid] did something he had done with many other lines of Virgil—with no thought of plagiarism, but meaning that his piece of open borrowing should be noticed” (*Suasoriae* 3.7). But just as the imitation of a model could be advertised, it was also often disguised. Macrobius, for example, reports the following: “Sometimes Vergil conceals his imitation of Homer by simply changing the presentation of a passage which he has copied so giving it a different look” (*Saturnalia* 5.16.12–14). Macrobius goes on to give two examples of such theft. In the first Virgil transforms a narrative (*Il.* 20.61) into a simile (*Aen.* 8.243), and in the second Virgil (*Aen.* 10.758) simply says the same thing as Homer regarding the toil-free life of the gods (*Il.* 6.138), but he says it “darkly [*occultissime*]” (*Sat.* 5.16.16).

4. *Measuring creativity.* Given the emphasis on imitation, creativity was measured by how writers handled traditional subjects and themes, not by the originality of the subject matter. Fiske notes that “both creative art and critical theory combined to regard μίμησις τῶν ἀρχαίων, the imitation of the great masters, as the final criterion of a work of art.”⁴⁸ New stories, in fact, were discouraged, which led to a search for obscure myths.⁴⁹ Seneca advises a young writer, “it makes a great difference if you approach a subject that has been exhausted or one where the ground has merely been broken; in the latter case, the topic grows day by day, and what is already discovered does not hinder new discoveries” (*Ep.* 79.6). It is interesting to note that Seneca does not offer the option of writing on something completely new, just topics either often imitated or obscure. “Besides,” Seneca continues, “he who writes last has the best of the bargain; he finds already at hand words which when marshaled in a different way, show a new face. And he is not pilfering them, as if they belonged to someone else, when he uses them” (*Ep.* 79.6). The pressing question for a writer was not what subjects to write about, but how to write them.

5. *Rivalry with the masters.* A competitive relationship with the targets of imitation—*aemulatio* in Latin or *zēlos* in Greek—is an integral part of Greco-Roman

46. For a discussion of plagiarism, see Fantham, “Imitation and Decline,” 104–11.

47. Russell, “Creative Imitation,” 12.

48. Fiske, *Lucilius and Horace*, 37.

49. Fiske, *Lucilius and Horace*, 33.

literary imitation.⁵⁰ Literary models provided both a standard toward which to strive as well as a target the student sought to surpass. In *On the Sublime* Pseudo-Longinus suggests thinking about the act of writing as kind of competition in which the masters are present:

We too, then, when we are working at some passage that demands sublimity of thought and expression, would do well to form in our hearts the question, 'How perchance would Homer have said this, how would Plato or Demosthenes have made it sublime or Thucydides in his history?' Emulation will bring those great characters before our eyes, and like guiding stars they will lead our thought to the ideal standards of perfection. Still more will this be so, if we give our minds the further hint, 'How would Homer or Demosthenes, had either been present, have listened to this passage of mine? How would it have affected them?' (14.1–2)

Writing with Homer or Demosthenes in mind at the level suggested by Pseudo-Longinus would not have been a new experience; rather, it was a more complicated and nuanced instance of the encounter with a carefully guarded and extensively promoted group of literary models that was central in all stages of literary education and continued in literary and rhetorical practice.

JEWISH and CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

Perhaps the most significant implication for the study of literature of the period, including Jewish and Christian literature, is that we should expect to find writings that conform to the principles of composition instilled throughout the various stages of education, including attention to the classical models that were the typical targets of imitation in education. Put simply, if someone learned to write Greek, they are highly likely to know those texts typically used in education and rhetorical training. This is virtually assumed in the study of “pagan” literature, but it is not as readily granted for Jewish and Christian literature of the period. The recent work of Dennis R. MacDonald has focused attention on the importance of imitation in education and literary practice, especially for the study of early Christian narrative. MacDonald first applied the understanding of literary imitation to a Christian text in his study of the *Acts of Andrew*, showing it to be a mimetic transformation of multiple models, especially Homer, Euripides, and a handful of Plato’s dialogues—precisely those texts that appear most frequently in educational texts. He has subsequently argued that much of the Gospel of Mark and parts of Luke and Acts are creative imitations of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.⁵¹ MacDonald’s work calls into question the use of religious boundaries

50. Russell, “Creative Imitation,” 12; and Fiske, *Lucilius and Horace*, 43–45.

51. MacDonald, *Christianizing Homer*; idem, “Luke’s Eutychus and Homer’s Elpenor,” 5–24; idem, *Does the New Testament Imitate Homer?* Thomas Brodie has also been instrumental in calling attention to the importance classical *mimesis* for the study of early Christian literature (“Greco-Roman Imitation,” 17–46).

to decide whether a Christian or a Jewish author would have been familiar with certain classical texts. It is more likely the dominant mimetic, literary ethos, not exclusively piety, which determines an author's literary models.⁵²

Attention to the mimetic ethos in education and literary practice also has implications for assessments of literary influence. The problem of how to account for literary parallels and how to understand the interrelationships between texts is not a new one, particularly in the related fields of literary criticism, and classical and biblical studies. Classicists have long debated if and how one can precisely determine the intentional use of one text by another, proposing numerous models and criteria for assessing the relationship between texts. For some, establishing a direct literary relationship between two texts requires clear philological dependence,⁵³ while for others, particularly those influenced by discussions of "intertextuality," such identification is an impossibility since all texts exist in an interconnected web of meaning in which each individual text is a mosaic of quotations and allusions to earlier (unidentifiable) texts.⁵⁴ The tendency in biblical studies has been closer to the former model, requiring clear, philological dependence in order to determine direct literary influence. If dependence cannot be established by lexical similarities, the parallels are typically accounted for by the requirements of a genre or the use of literary *topoi*.⁵⁵ But the structure of Greco-Roman education, with its emphasis on imitation, complicates matters. Repeated imitations of, allusions and references to a particular author likely lead to the creation of a literary commonplace over time, but do not necessarily diminish the influence of the original target of imitation. As Stephen Hinds and others have shown, in the carefully circumscribed world of Greco-Roman literature both direct allusion and the more general literary *topos* co-exist. He makes a distinction between composition based on "source

52. For imitations of Homer in Jewish texts, see Cousland, "Dionysus Theomachos?," 539–48; and MacDonald, "Tobit and the *Odyssey*," 11–40. See also Hadas, "Plato the Hellenizer," 72–81.

53. For Thomas, for example, there are two possibilities for understanding the similarities between two texts: there is a reference, which he understands as a clear and direct connection, and there is accidental confluence, with no other possibilities in between ("Virgil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference," 171–98, esp. 173). Morgan similarly requires clear philological dependence in order to support claims for a literary allusion (*Ovid's Art of Imitation*, 3).

54. See, for example, Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation*, 23–99.

55. Conzelmann, for example, consistently chooses the use of a *topos* over a direct literary connection when encountering parallels with Greek literature in his work on the Acts of the Apostles. After noting the presence of the term θεομάχος in 5:39, a term prominent in Euripides' *Bacchae*, he is quick to point out that there is no literary dependence. Similarly, Conzelmann does not understand the phrase, "it hurts to kick against the goads" (Acts 26:14), which is found in the *Bacchae* in a similar context, to be the result of a direct literary connection (*Acts of the Apostles*, 43, 210–11). In contrast, MacDonald has argued that both of these instances, along with Paul and Silas' adventures in Philippi (16:11–34), are best read as the author of Acts' imitation of the *Bacchae* ("Lydia and Her Sisters as Lukan Fictions," 105–10).

passages” and composition based on “modeling by code.”⁵⁶ Thus, an author may invoke a common motif, such as a shipwreck, or he or she may model a particular episode on a specific author’s account of a shipwreck.⁵⁷ And since a range of relationships exists, each instance of a possible imitation or allusion should be assessed individually. A quick look at a few examples will help illustrate some of the interpretive issues raised by the prominence of imitation in Greek education.

PLATO’S GUARDIANS and the COMMUNAL IDEAL

Descriptions of idealized places and communities are part of a long and rich tradition in Greek literature, present already in Homer and Hesiod, and certainly still thriving in first three centuries CE.⁵⁸ Utopian ideals in Greek literature emerge out of a number of different strands or trajectories, the boundaries between which are rather fluid, making tracing out lines of influence difficult. Nonetheless, some works stand out for their influence on the later tradition. Some of Plato’s works, principally the *Republic* and related dialogues, represent a high point of philosophical utopianism that will cast a long shadow on subsequent utopian writings of all types.

In particular, Plato may be largely responsible for the recurring presence of concerns with the corrupting effects of wealth and personal possessions in subsequent philosophical discussions, golden age images, and idealized remote lands. In earlier traditional images of a paradise in the distant past in which humans and gods lived simply and in harmony with nature and each other, as preserved in Homer, Hesiod and Pindar, there is no concern with the corrupting power of wealth.⁵⁹ In Hesiod, for example, the reason for the loss of the earlier and easier existence is not human action but the machinations of the gods. By the time of Plato’s “utopian” dialogues, something has changed. In the *Republic* the absence of private property and the dissolution of traditional family structures are the primary mechanisms by which to ensure that the ideal state’s leaders do not succumb to corruption. Indeed, Plato’s rulers are ideal specifically because they are free from dissension typically arising from concerns for

56. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, Roman Literature and its Contexts, 40–49. See also, Finkelpearl, “Pagan Traditions of Intertextuality,” 78–90.

57. MacDonald, “The Shipwrecks of Odysseus and Paul,” 88–107.

58. For a discussion of Greek utopianism, see Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World*; Baldry, *Ancient Utopias*; Dawson, *Cities of the Gods*; and Giangrande, “Les Utopies hellénistiques,” 17–33.

59. See Homer’s descriptions of Syria (*Od.* 15.403–14), the Elysian plain (*Od.* 4.563–69), Olympus (*Od.* 6.43–46), and Scheria, the home of the Phaeacians (*Od.* 6–7). See also Hesiod’s myth of the devolving races (*Op.* 106–200) and Pindar’s portrait of the Isles of the Blessed in his *Olympian Odes* (2.67–73).

private property (*Rep.* 5.464c). And it is precisely at the point when the guardians acquire property that they stop being guardians (3.417a). The mechanism by which the inhabitants of the ideal city are to be persuaded to accept the necessary conditions to achieve justice is the so-called “noble lie,” wherein the inhabitants of the ideal city are to be told that they are sprung from the earth containing the properties of a metal that corresponds to the role they are to play in the society. Ruler guardians contain gold within their natures, warrior guardians contain silver, and the producers contain bronze (3.414b–415a). This myth is used to justify the rather austere life the guardians are asked to lead: they are not to have private property or possessions, houses are to be open for any to enter at will, they are to have sufficient but never excessive supplies of food, and are to eat communally (3.416d–e). By means of the “noble lie” the guardians are to be convinced that they need no actual gold or silver since they have these metals in their very natures. What might appear to be a great sacrifice on the part of the guardians is what allows them to serve a much more important role, nothing less than achieving the one truly just society (3.417a). The sustainability of the just *polis* as Plato envisions it depends on understanding the corrupting nature of personal wealth for the rulers and structuring their lives in such a way that they are removed from its potentially corrupting influence.⁶⁰

Plato’s suspicion of personal wealth and was not entirely novel. *The Republic* and related utopian dialogues are part of a tradition of philosophical discussions of the best possible city.⁶¹ The shift in attitudes toward personal wealth and possessions has been located, at least in part, in the circle of Socrates.⁶² But placed within a broader context, the concern for individual wealth and its effect on the *polis* is made possible by the rise of a money-driven economy in the sixth

60. The concern with the corrupting power of wealth appears elsewhere in Plato’s dialogues, notably in the *Critias*, where primeval Athens’ greatness is specifically linked to the inhabitants’ refusal to accumulate personal wealth (*Criti.* 112c) and the corruption of Atlantis is linked to the Atlantans’ succumbing to the burden of their excessive wealth (114d, 120e–121b). The role of wealth in the creation and maintenance of an ideal state reappears in the lengthy and complex *Laws*. The absence of gold or silver is given as the reason primitive man fared as well as he did since he was able to avoid the extremes of poverty and riches (*Laws* 679 b–c). Indeed, the ideal *polis* of the *Laws*, Magnesia, is to have a rather basic economic structure in which no one is allowed to accumulate money in the form of gold and silver (741e).

61. Aristotle reports that Hippodamus had proposed that at least a third of the land of his ideal state be held as common possession to support the warrior class (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1267b 22–1268 16). Phaleas of Chalcedon had identified personal wealth as the issue that divides states. Accordingly, he proposed an egalitarian society brought about by a rather novel system of dowry exchange between the rich and the poor that would, over time, eliminate both classes leaving a single group (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1266a 39–b 6). The organization of guardian life in the *Republic* and subsequent dialogues may also owe something to existing states with political structures different from Athens; many find a number of Spartan features in Plato’s proposals; see Dawson, *Cities of the Gods*, 35–36; Ferguson, *Utopias of the Classical World*, 29.

62. On Socrates as the center of the shift in attitudes, see Schaps, “Socrates and the Socratics,” 131–59.

century BCE.⁶³ Regardless of the reasons for which Plato was concerned with personal wealth, it is probably as a result of Plato's subsequent literary influence, not least in the educational curriculum, that the connection between idealized primitive ages or (quasi-)contemporary idealized peoples and communism of property becomes more and more common, becoming a *topos* in the literature of the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

At the very least we can say that Plato influenced some of the particular ways in which this concern was later expressed. By the first century CE golden age imagery in literature routinely includes the absence of private property.⁶⁴ Most often, the cause for the loss of that early idealized existence was understood as the personal accumulation of possessions.⁶⁵ Descriptions of more contemporary idealized people and lands also routinely feature property sharing. Gregory Sterling has argued that descriptions of leaders of religious-philosophical groups from the period are part of a *topos* or literary tradition.⁶⁶ Sterling finds many of the same features—including the absence of personal possessions—in descriptions of the Egyptians priests in Chaeremon, the Essenes in Philo, Josephus and Pliny, Arrian's description of the Indian sages, Philostratus' descriptions of the Indian and Egyptian sages, Iamblichus' description of the original Pythagoreans, and the descriptions of the early Christian community in Jerusalem in Acts 2 and 4.⁶⁷ Certainly such a *topos* existed, but given Plato's widespread influence and prevalence as a literary model in educational settings it may be possible to see the more direct influence of Plato on some of these descriptions.

Plato's influence can be seen, for example, in the description of early Christian community life in the so-called "major summaries" in the early chapters of Acts of the Apostles in language that has long been understood to evoke Greek utopian and golden age ideals.⁶⁸ I have argued elsewhere that the description of the early Christian community in the summaries of Acts is modeled on Plato's description of the guardians in the *Republic* and related dialogues.⁶⁹ Key terms in Acts echo distinctive and characteristic language for the

63. Seaford, *Money and the Early Greek Mind*.

64. See Virgil, *Georgics* 1.125–128; Tibullus, *Elegies* 1.3.35–52; Pompeius Trogus (preserved in Justinus, *Epit.* 43.1.3–4).

65. Seneca, for example, characterizes the golden age as a time marked by "no blind love of gold" (*Phaedra* 525) that comes to an end thanks to human greed: "Impious passion for gain broke up this peaceful life, headlong wrath, and lust that sets men's hearts on fire" (540–542). See also Seneca, *Ep.* 90; Ovid, *Met.* 135–40; *Amores* 38.35–36; Pseudo-Seneca, *Octavia* 403, 420–422.

66. Sterling, "Athletes of Virtue," 679–96.

67. Chaeremon as cited in Porphyry, *De Abstinencia* 4.6–8; Philo, *Good Person* 75–91, *Hypoth.* 8.11.1–18; Pliny, *Nat.* 5.73; Josephus, *JW* 2.120–161, *Ant.* 18.18–22; Arrian, *Indica* 11.1–8; Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 3.10–51, 6.6; Iamblichus, *Vit. Pyth.* 96–100; Acts of the Apostles 2:42–47, 4:32–35.

68. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 23–24, 32; Dupont, "Community of Goods in the Early Church," 85–102.

69. "The Summaries of Acts 2, 4 and 5 and Plato's Republic," 275–95. See also Mealand, "Community of Goods and Utopian Allusions," 97–99.

description of the guardians.⁷⁰ In addition, both Plato and the author of Acts describe the founding of a *politeia* at the center and top of which is a collective leadership distinguished by its extraordinary unity, which is in turn made possible by the absence of private possessions and property. The large number of parallels, both lexical and thematic, suggested to me that whatever the realities behind the account of early Christian property sharing, the author of Acts has emphasized the similarities to the guardians of Plato's *Republic*. The purpose in Acts is likely apologetic.⁷¹ Largely through Plato's influence, by the second century CE Socrates represented the prototypical image the philosopher. By modeling his description of the early Christian community in Acts on Plato's ideal leaders, the author of Acts invests them with significant leadership credentials. Additionally, this is in keeping with the argument of some early Christian apologists that Christianity represents the true philosophy.⁷²

70. The term *κοινωνία* (Acts 2:42) occurs in *Rep.* 2–5 primarily in relation to a very specific form of property sharing among the guardians (*Rep.* 5.449c, d; 450b; 461e; 464a, b; 466d; 476a). The phrase *ἅπαντα κοινά* (Acts 2:44, 4:32) can be compared to repeated Plato's repeated characterization of the guardians' living arrangements: the guardians are to live together (*κοινῇ ζῆν*) (3.416e); Plato twice uses the proverb, *κοινὰ τὰ φίλων*, regarding sharing of all things, including wives and children (4.424a, 5.449c); both male and female guardians are to have *κοινῇ* . . . *πάντα* and are to be given the same nurture and education (5.451e); females and males should share all tasks (*ἅπαντα τὰ ἔργα*) (5.453a); all women shall be *κοινὰς* to the men (5.457d); having houses and meals in common (*οικίας τε καὶ ξυσσίτια κοινὰ ἔχοντες*) (5.458c–d); and all are to spend their stipend in common (*κοινῇ πάντας*) (5.464b–c). The construction in Acts 4:32, *οὐδε . . . ἴδιον*, closely resembles the way in which Socrates repeatedly describes the absence of possessions among the guardians: this is first described as *οὐσίαν κεκτημένον μηδεμίαν μηδένα ἴδιαν* (*Rep.* 3.416d); in extending the communalism to wives and children, *ἰδίᾳ δὲ οὐδενός οὐδὲν τοιοῦτον κεκτημένου* (5.458c); and in repeating the requirements in order to show that the guardians achieve the greatest good as a result of their polity, *μηδὲν ἴδιον ἐκτῆσθαι* (5.464e).

71. Countryman has suggested that most instances of the use of the language of communism among early Christian writers are part of an argument for almsgiving. But when they do use it differently, "their object was to impress a pagan audience accustomed to the fact that some philosophers advocated communism, with the philosophical character of Christianity" (*The Rich Christian in the Church of the Early Empire*, 77).

72. Justin Martyr notes the transformation effected by the gospel by boasting, "we who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into a common stock, and communicate to every one in need" (*1 Apol.* 14.2). Other Christian authors also appear to use property sharing for apologetic purposes, sometimes appearing sensitive to the link between the practice and Socrates. The *Epistle to Diognetus*, clearly understands references to communal sharing in light of the *Republic*—or at least those traditions influenced by it—for he notes that Christians have "a common table; but not a common bed" (5.7). In Tertullian's *Apology* that link is even clearer; he boasts, "So we, who are united in mind and soul, have no hesitation about sharing property. All is common among us—except our wives" (39.11). As in the *Epistle to Diognetus*, Tertullian appears to be anxious about the connection between the sharing of property and the sharing of wives. He then explicitly identifies the latter with Socrates:

"At that point we dissolve our partnership, which is the one place where the rest of men make it effective. Not only do they use the wives of their friends, but also most patiently yield their own to their friends. They follow (I take it) the example of those who went before them, the wisest of men—Greek Socrates and Roman Cato, who shared with their friends the wives they had taken in marriage, to bear children in other families too. And I don't know whether the wives objected; for why should

Philosophical and utopian ideals serve a similar apologetic function in the writings of Philo and Josephus. Both authors' descriptions of the Essenes are influenced by Greek utopian ideals and by Plato in particular, but in different ways. As noted above, the mimetic compositional ethos of Greco-Roman education creates a situation in which authors may use a particular literary text as a model or, after repeated imitation of the model over time, may evoke a *topos* more generally. The descriptions of the Essenes by Philo's *That Every Good Person is Free* (75–88) and Josephus' *Jewish War* (2.119–161) illustrate this point.

If one grants that the Qumran sectarians should be identified with the Essenes,⁷³ then the differences between the images of the Essenes in the Qumran sources and descriptions of the Essenes in Philo and Josephus sources can justifiably be accounted for by the apologetic goals of the latter two writers, resulting in what Todd Beall termed, in the case of Josephus, a “dual tendency towards idealization and accommodation to Greek thought. . . .”⁷⁴ But this raises the question of how much of the descriptions of the Essenes in Philo and Josephus is to be considered the creation of the respective authors and how much is traditional material drawn from sources. Some have suggested that Josephus' *Jewish War* 2.119–161 in its entirety is a later interpolation⁷⁵ or is dependent on a Gentile source.⁷⁶ More recent proposals have put forward more nuanced and at times much more complicated theories, including the suggestions that Josephus is drawing on four distinct sources including a Hellenistic Jewish source shared by both Philo and Josephus,⁷⁷ that the shared source is Strabo,⁷⁸ or the idea that Philo served as central source for Josephus for one but not both of his accounts.⁷⁹ Identifying the sources for Philo's and Josephus' descriptions of the Essenes remains an important, if unsettled, subject of study. I do not claim to be able to solve the issues here, but I can suggest that in keeping with the mimetic compositional ethos instilled throughout all stages of education, attention to an

they care about a chastity which their husbands gave away so easily? O model of Attic wisdom! O pattern of Roman dignity! The philosopher a pander, and the censor, too!” (39.12–13).

By excoriating Plato's Socrates for his immorality, Tertullian turns the differences between the communities of goods among the guardians the Christians into an extraordinary improvement.

73. Although the debate on the identification of the Essenes with the Qumran materials continues, in this study I suppose, like Rajak, “that Josephus was describing Jewish ascetics who were, at the very least, part of the same tradition as those who, over the generations, wrote the sectarian scrolls from Qumran” (“Josephus and the Essenes,” 142).

74. Beall, *Josephus' Description of the Essenes*, 2–3. See also Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, 226–308.

75. Del Medico, “Les Esséniens dal l'oeuvre de Flavius Josephé,” 1–45.

76. Smith, “The description of the Essenes,” 273–313.

77. Bergmeier, *Die Essener-Bericht des Flavius Josephus*; Argall, “A Hellenistic Jewish Source,” 13–24.

78. Goranson, “Posidonius, Strabo and Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa as Sources on Essenes,” 295–98.

79. Rajak, “Josephus and the Essenes,” 141–60.

author's literary models is as important as looking for written sources. For both Philo and Josephus Plato is not far from the scene.

In *Every Good Person is Free* (75–88) Philo presents the Essenes as the supreme example of high moral excellence.⁸⁰ The centerpiece of Philo's description is their communalism, which he addresses twice. The second, longer note is introduced by a list of the Essenes' virtues that culminates in the note that their fellowship (κοινῶνία) exceeds description (84). Nonetheless Philo does elaborate and does so in a way that evokes Plato's first description of the property sharing among the guardians in the *Republic* (3.416d–417b).

After establishing the guardians are to live in an area of the city separated from the workers, Socrates' describes the guardians' way of life as follows: "In the first place, none must possess any private property [πρῶτον μὲν οὐσίαν κεκτημένον μηδεμίαν μηδένα ἰδίαν] save the indispensable [ἀνάγκη]. Secondly, none must have any habitation [οἰκησιν] or treasure-house [ταμιεῖον] which is not open for all to enter at will" (*Rep.* 3.416d). Philo's first point in the description of the community of goods appears to combine Plato's first two points: "First of all then, no one's house is his own [πρῶτον μὲν τοίνυν οὐδενὸς οἰκία τίς ἐστὶν ἰδία] in the sense that it is not shared by all, for besides the fact that they dwell together in communities, the door is open to visitors from elsewhere who share their convictions" (*Good Person* 85). Philo uses some of the same terms as Plato, as well as some of the same constructions.⁸¹ Plato's next points emphasize food supplies which are to be neither excessive nor scarce, communal meals (συσσιτία) and living together (κοινῆ ζῆν) (416e). Philo has already noted that the Essenes' communism includes living together (*Good Person*, 85). He then gives some of the details, principally the Essenes' "single treasury and common disbursements" including common clothes, meals [συσσιτία], earned wages placed into a common stock, and sick who are treated from the common treasury (*Good Person* 86–87).

Several other points in Philo bear striking similarities to Plato's first description of the guardians (*Rep.* 3.416d–417b), but they stand toward the beginning of his description in *Every Good Person is Free*. After telling of the Essenes' various forms of labor, with which he opens his description, Philo notes that they do not hoard silver and gold, accumulating only what is necessary [ἀναγκαίως] for their survival, and concluding that: "For while they stand almost alone in the whole of mankind in that they have become moneyless and landless by deliberate action rather than by lack of good fortune, they are esteemed exceedingly rich" (*Good Person* 77). First, it is worth noting that Philo uses the same word as Plato does for the group's accumulating only what is needed—ἀνάγκη (*Rep.* 3.416d)—and though worded differently, the same idea is stressed in

80. Philo also discusses the Essenes in *Hypothetica* 11.1–18, which is largely a repetition of the slightly longer and probably earlier description in *Good Person*.

81. See my note n. 70 above.

the requirement that the guardians live modestly, receiving from the working classes just enough to live as soldiers at war (*Rep.* 3.416d). The reference to silver and gold recalls Socrates' prohibiting the guardians from handling gold and silver, since they have it in their natures.⁸² Accordingly, Plato's "noble lie" justifies the guardians not handling money or accumulating wealth by positing a kind of inner wealth (*Rep.* 3.414b–415a). Similarly, for Philo it is the Essenes' lack of external wealth, including the accumulation of possessions and money, which makes them truly wealthy and free. It is also worth noting that the Essenes' respect and treatment of their elders as though they were truly their parents (*Good Person* 87) echoes the notion in the *Republic* that the community of wives among the guardians would lead to a situation in which no one knows who their true parents are, thus requiring that younger guardians treat all of their elders with respect in order to avoid accidentally hurting or offending a parent (*Rep.* 5.465b).

Philo concludes his description of the Essenes with what I take as an allusion to Plato. Whereas the *Republic* likens the guardians' modest living conditions to "athletes of war [ἀθληταὶ πολέμου]" (*Rep.* 3.416d), Philo's Essenes are called "athletes of virtue [ἀθλητὰς ἀρετῆς] produced by a philosophy free from pedantry and Greek wordiness, a philosophy which sets its pupils to practice themselves in laudable actions . . ." (*Good Person* 88). In keeping with the typical mimetic practice, Philo here uses a model and improves upon it by claiming that his philosophers actually exist, in contrast to Plato's hypothetical guardians constructed in words or in theory [τῶ λογῶ] (*Rep.* 2.239c).

It is unclear whether the actual Essene practice was that property was owned by all. There are a number of instances in the *Rule of the Community* that appear to describe the absence of private property (1QS 1:11–12; 1QS 5:1–2; 1QS 6:17–22). However, there are also indications that some members of the community may have had some personal property (1QS 7:6–7; CD 9:10–16).⁸³ Whatever the actual practice, Philo emphasizes the Essenes' communalism in ways characteristic of the communalism of the *Republic*. As Rajak notes, "Philo's judgment of the Essenes carries marked Platonic echoes."⁸⁴ I would go further, suggesting that Philo's account of the Essenes in *Every Good Person is Free* is a literary imitation of parts the *Republic*. Like Acts' description of the early Christianity community, the imitation is designed to invest the Essenes with accepted leadership characteristics. I would also suggest that given the structure and process of Greek

82. In what I consider an analogous imitation of the *Republic*, the Acts of the Apostles also has a reference to gold and silver in the context of the first description of property sharing among the early Christian community in Jerusalem (2:42–3:10). See Dupertuis, "The Summaries of Acts 2, 4 and 5 and Plato's Republic," 282.

83. Beall suggests that the differences between the practices could possibly be explained by ascribing the texts to different stages of the community (*Josephus' Description of the Essenes*, 44–45).

84. Rajak, "Josephus and the Essenes," 153.

education, especially the importance of imitating a handful of literary models, Philo's reliance on Plato in his description of the Essenes is to be expected.

Josephus' descriptions of the Essenes also evoke Greek utopian and philosophical ideals, the latter explicitly (*Jewish War* 2.119). Josephus' two lengthiest accounts are quite different from each other, something that has long led to speculation regarding sources. The description in *Antiquities* 18.18–22 appears to incorporate information from Philo's description in *Every Good Person is Free*,⁸⁵ which then raises questions as to the origins and structure of Josephus' description in *Jewish War* 2.

In the context of describing the major Jewish philosophical schools (*Jewish War* 2.119–61), Josephus begins with the Essenes, devoting considerable space to their various practices and highlighting their lack of attachment to wealth:

“You will not find one among them distinguished by greater opulence than another. They have a law that new members on admission to the sect shall confiscate their property to the order, with the result that you will nowhere see either abject poverty or inordinate wealth; the individual's possessions join the common stock and all, like brothers, enjoy a single patrimony.” (*Jewish War* 2.122)

As mentioned above, the evidence for the absence of private property in the Qumran texts is mixed, which suggests that the emphasis Josephus places on this aspect of the community may owe more to the models he is following than to historical reality. However, unlike Philo's description in *Every Good Person is Free*, Josephus' account does not appear to be directly modeled on Plato's description of the guardians. This description is probably influenced by Greek utopian traditions, but not on the level of direct imitation; rather, here we have Josephus having recourse to a more general *topos* of idealized, utopian communities. One could also say, as Rajak has argued, that the description of the Essenes in *Jewish War* 2 also displays a degree of Hellenization operating on larger structural levels. For it is especially in the account in *Jewish War* that what Josephus says about the Essenes appears different from what he could have said, particularly if Josephus possessed first-hand knowledge of his subject. What Josephus says of the Essenes here is limited by his apologetic, and perhaps more importantly, rhetorical and literary *modus operandi*. Rajak suggests that in *Jewish War* 2

the themes are those favoured in descriptions of ideal states in Greek political thought, and the organization corresponds to a progression appropriate in studying a polity. Greek ethnographic writing, with its large component of idealization and eulogy, was heavily influenced by the philosophers, and Josephus' Essene communities are depicted, like those of other writers on the subject, as a form of ideal society.⁸⁶

85. *Ibid.*, 146

86. Rajak, “Josephus and the Essenes,” 149.

Rajak goes on to argue that the description in *Jewish War 2* follows a standard arrangement of themes: the first theme is family, then the household, which for the Essenes will include their communal organization, followed by the city, in turn followed by trading practices, which for the Essenes are expressed negatively. These are followed by cultic habits, the social hierarchy, education, and the political and legal system. Josephus' description of the Essenes in *Jewish War 2* largely follows this pattern, and, at the same time curiously omits other distinctive features of Essene belief and practice such as the solar calendar. The likely reason for these omissions is that they do not fit the scheme Josephus is following.⁸⁷

Rajak also suggests that the origin of this scheme or pattern can be traced at least in part to Plato:

The various themes under which the model city is discussed in Plato's *Republic* and in his *Laws*, together with the analysis of the elements of the city in Aristotle's *Politics* (from couple to household to city and so on), probably lie behind all such designs, although the philosophers operate, of course, on a much bigger scale than any ethnographic work seems to have done. Much ethnography appeared in digressions comparable in length to Josephus' miniature composition. The constructions of the philosophers influenced the historians.⁸⁸

Given the prominence of Plato in the educational and literary environment of the Greco-Roman world, it is not necessary, as Rajak rightly notes, to posit that when writing of the Essenes Josephus was in the process of rereading Plato's *Republic*. Rather than posit a source, she attributes the organization of *Jewish War 2* to Josephus himself, understanding the Platonic influence to be filtered through the historiographic and ethnographic writings with which Josephus was no doubt familiar.

CONCLUSION

The implications of the awareness of the Greek educational process and the resulting compositional practices are only recently beginning to be explored in the study of Jewish and Christian literature from this period written in Greek. The central point I have sought to illustrate in this study is the idea that how one learns to read and write affects later compositional practice. Among the effects of the emphasis on imitation in Greek education in the Greco-Roman world is what I have called a mimetic compositional ethos in which students were taught to write in relation to a relatively small list of classical authors. Repeated imitation and allusion to these acknowledged masters created literary *topoi* over

87. Rajak, "Josephus and the Essenes," 151.

88. Rajak, "Josephus and the Essenes," 151.

time, but did not eliminate the direct imitation of particular models. The possibility of the latter applies to the study of Jewish and Christian literature. To be sure, not every parallel between a Jewish or Christian text and one of the prominent literary models promoted in the educational system should be understood as an literary imitation, but the compositional ethos created by the educational process would suggest that this is indeed possible, if not likely.

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Education in Roman Palestine

Christine Shea

INTRODUCTION

In some ways the question of the education available in first-century Galilee is essential to our portrait of the Jesus of history. Consider these Jesuses, any one of whom might emerge from this discussion: a Cynic sage, who miraculously wrested a cosmopolitan education from the barren clods of Nazareth (Jesus as classicist?); a bumpkin boy philosopher, original because naïve (Forrest Gump, perhaps); an educated, even erudite, intelligence playing backwoodsman (Will Rogers); or the product of a sophisticated mind (Mark's, perhaps) portraying a hero-type from a culture not quite his own (Andy of *Mayberry* played by Daniel Day-Lewis, perhaps).

But we may have to circle a bit before we can home in on Jesus' own education. Certainly our appraisal of educational opportunities available in first-century Judea/Galilee would be altered if we could assert with some confidence that most or many or even some of the adult male population were literate in any language. After all, would Nazareth still seem a jerkwater hamlet perched on the edge of the Empire if we knew its residents had access to minds ranging far beyond its limits? Thus, perhaps before we turn to the topic of education in general we might spend a bit of time on the troublesome question of literacy in the Empire.

William Harris, in his recent book and in the paper he presented before the Jesus Seminar,¹ had determined that modern social science methods of assessing levels of literacy when applied to the ancient Mediterranean yielded results that virtually reversed the calculations taken for granted by generations of classicists and ancient historians. In short, Harris would have us believe that literacy in the early Roman Empire, for example, did not reach much more than the surface of the population, never much percolating down into the lower socio-economic reaches of that society.² Harris, if pressed, I am sure, would propose some low

1. *Ancient Literacy*; "On Ancient Literacy" before the Jesus Seminar at Rutgers, October, 1992.

2. He sums it up thus, "Among the inhabitants of the Empire in general, though few used writing heavily and though some knew how to use written texts without being literate, for

percentage of literacy, calculated across the whole population—some ten or twenty percent, certainly not more than thirty percent.

Any of these numbers would appear to be in direct contradiction to any percentage figures a traditionally trained classicist³ might be lured into producing (undergraduate textbooks, for example, have been known to cite 90%). But there are some pitfalls, it seems to me, in applying modern social science models to the ancient world. We must not be too quick to let Harris have it all his own way about the Empire as a whole, but perhaps particularly about the Hellenized East.

But, more than just rushing to the defense of my beleaguered classics colleagues, I have another motive in taking the time to examine Harris' arguments here. That ten or twenty percent may seem to some a reasonable place to start in tracking the actual education of an actual individual living an actual life in a backwater of the Roman Empire. Someone (not one of us, surely) may, for example, be tempted to make some such argument as this: if the whole Empire has a literacy rate of ten percent and that includes Greece⁴ and Rome, Palestine has to be below average, right? So, let's say, 7%. Now, Galilee has to be lower, right? Say, 5%. And if that 10% includes the upper class, and they're much more likely to be literate, let's say 90% of that 5% is of the governing class. Then, perhaps only skilled tradesmen make up the 10% that's not noble. Jesus, therefore, has at most only a .5% probability of being literate.

Unfortunately, no frequency rate of any activity across the whole population has any real bearing in determining the activities of a single individual living in history—so long as the frequency rate is greater than zero. With all the statistics in the world we still could not answer the simplest question with a plain yes or no. Could Jesus read? We don't know. Will you be able to answer that question with a yes or no after reading Harris' book? No.

Still it is difficult (and tiresome) to be so rigorous. After all the caveats of the last paragraphs, we might review what Harris' study can contribute to the discussion. But first a few quibbles about Harris' methodology and conclusions.

WHO COUNTS?

Who counts? I

Let us remember in all this that Harris has not compiled significantly different data than that with which, for example, E. A. Havelock made his arguments

most the written word remained inaccessible" although the very next sentence seems a bit contradictory, "In manifold ways, however, the Roman world was now dependent on writing, particularly with respect to political and administrative power" (*Ancient Literacy*, 232).

3. The Harvard papyrologist Herbert C. Youtie and his *epigoni* perhaps might represent a major exception; cf. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 144–145, *et pass*.

4. Possessed of the highest rate, according to all commentators, including Harris.

for mass literacy among the Greeks in 1982.⁵ Harris has just chosen to read the same data from a different point of view than the “optimists” (as he calls them). Thus, for example, in assessing literacy rates in the Roman army, Harris, having found “only one illiterate legionary (a veteran in fact) in the surviving evidence,” goes on to say of a squadron of auxiliary cavalry, “Thus perhaps as many as 34% of these cavalymen were subscription-literate, which would be an *interestingly high* figure” [my italics]. “*Interestingly high*” when legionaries may have had a 100% rate in some cases?

Harris is probably right to keep suggesting that others of a different philosophical/emotional bent might assemble his own data in support of a contrary view, and, indeed, the attitudes and training of the modern observers are important to this debate. But Harris may have inadvertently misled us by failing to take into account the attitudes of the ancient reporters on this subject, as, it might be argued, earlier commentators did.

Thus, when classicists compile their demographic statistics about ancient Athens, for example, they customarily think in terms of the population about which, given the paucity of evidence, one might reasonably make any general statement *at all*, i.e., the households (including women, children, and slaves) of the urban upper economic groups. This is a given, just as it is understood that modern social scientists would “count” the disabled, the homeless, single women, the prison population, etc., in the percentages of Americans without health insurance or dying of lung cancer or living in Seattle. Moreover, since it is never quite clear whom the ancients are counting, we tend to center our arguments on the adult male “citizen” population,⁶ because we can’t say anything with any certainty about anyone else. A 90% literacy rate for this population is certainly more easily defended (*pace* Harris) than one for a population base which includes visually-impaired and learning disabled non-Greek speakers, children under five, old, blind, female slaves from countries whose languages are not written, etc., and whomever else Harris would lop from the 90% of the old textbooks.

But as a quibble with Harris’ methodology this is pretty small potatoes. Let me move on to something more material.

Who Counts? II

Harris favors the modern demographic model of defining the adult population as discrete individuals with a full range of individual choices, setting aside such notions as strict divisions of labor along gender lines. Thus, in his model, the question of female literacy is deemed relevant and significant (every female is statistically counted as one, just as is every male). But Harris lives in a world

5. “Prologue to Greek Literacy” (1973); *Origins* (1976); *Literate Revolution* (1982). I’m being mischievous here; Havelock’s work has been much criticized, especially by classicists.

6. In a culture in which citizenship has an income requirement, “citizenship” is an economic as well as a political/ethnic indicator.

in which women live alone or are heads of households, a world in which the highest level of literacy in a household might be that possessed by its adult females.⁷ This, of course, is a function both of increasingly liberal laws and traditions regarding women in the West and of economic necessity—and where women work, women write.

But few females in antiquity had their own households, and fewer still lived alone, under any circumstances. Thus, rather than account literacy as something of universal and equal access, ungoverned by sex-role distinctions, like speech acquisition, or cancer, or death—why not measure literacy in the same way in which we measure, well, cooking?

Ponder how we might approach the question, what percentage of the population of the Roman Empire could cook?⁸ Instantly we would be aware that this is actually a rather complicated calculation. Since cooking is an activity more closely associated with one sex than the other in most (but not all) the cultures of the Empire, it may have been taboo for males to admit to being conversant with cooking.⁹ Because cooking is an activity which can be relegated to slaves, it may have been in some areas taboo for an upper-class female to admit to possessing this skill. And yet cooking is a useful skill of which all may someday have need, nor is it so difficult a task or so hidden and secret (kitchens are not off limits to male children, for example) that it is not possible to assert with some confidence that nearly everyone, males and females alike, upper-class and peasants, must have had some knowledge of cooking. Not “who *could* cook?” then, but “who *would* cook (and would admit to cooking)?”

Moreover, in a world in which few lived the sullen, solitary lives of our *megalopoleis*, was it not enough in a household division of labor that someone cooked? Would it be saying something about the value the culture put on cooking—or even about the number of cooks in the society—to try to assess the number of individuals who might have, but never did cook? Surely we might comfortably assert that 90% of the population had *access* to cooking (barring only those cultures where no cooking is done at all)—perhaps the only truly relevant point for cultures in which no one is completely singular, no one is just one blip on a social scientist’s computer screen.

This has been a facetious example, of course, but I do think it has some bearing on this recently resuscitated quest for the demographics of education

7. If we consider literacy to be not merely the basic skill level required for hand writing a receipt for the sale of a donkey, if we favor a fondness for “free reading” as a test of reading ability, then we might assert that, in modern America at least, this is in fact the more common situation. Women show up consistently as the more frequent book buyers and library users, and the more likely to list “reading” as an avocation.

8. Or, more to the point perhaps for us, could Jesus cook?

9. Certainly, our Midwestern grandfathers only reluctantly admitted to this ability (if ever), although many of them had routinely been assigned to K. P. in the army, and military service was almost universal for males of that generation. Could Bob Funk’s father cook?

in antiquity. It might be that “what percentage of the population of the Roman Empire in the first century CE was able to read and write with more than craftsman’s ability?” is simply not the best question to ask about the peoples of the Roman Empire.¹⁰ A better question might be, “what percentage of the population of the Roman Empire had access to the benefits of reading and writing?” Hey, I’ll try that one—better than 70%. (I’d up it to 90% for a boy—he’d be groomed for overseer, paedagogus, bailiff, etc.)

Thus, I would certainly confess to having problems with Harris’ application of the comparanda of modern census-taking to the ancient world and would be pleased to rank myself with the optimists and to present their case. But first, perhaps, Harris’ work deserves more attention. Since he argued his own case so ably earlier, perhaps the Seminar would forgive me if I confine myself to a few nitpickings.

NITPICKINGS

Literates vs. literati

Harris at times seems to be making a case for defining a “real” literacy against some mere “subscription” literacy.¹¹ Included in this real literacy would appear to be some marked facility in and predilection for reading and writing literature.¹² That this would be holding ancient societies to a higher standard than UNESCO’s and would tend to vitiate comparisons with modern societies¹³ does cause Harris to hesitate, but still the bias is omnipresent—else why single out for attention the “slow writers” of the papyri?

Harris is aware that this distinction is contaminating his argument in one direction, but he doesn’t appear to realize it weakens his argument in another way: appreciation for written works of the high culture is not dependent on the ability to read. This would not be true for us surely, but particularly not for the ancients for whom every bit of reading, even solitary reading, is some-

10. Just as to compile a percentage based on the whole population of an Arab nation, male and female, and then to compare that percentage with a Western industrialized nation, for example, is a meaningless activity. When 51% of the population is denied access to reading and writing and *would not admit to possessing that ability*—what can an 13.8% literacy rate in Morocco mean in 1960? But, more than that, what would it mean in the context of a comparison with societies in which reading and writing are everywhere available and everywhere encouraged?

11. I would venture to guess Harris hears the word etymologically whenever he uses the designation “sub-scription”.

12. If one argues with Harris (*Ancient Literacy*, 126), that “Any assumption that the intellectually less demanding genres of Hellenistic literature aimed at, or reached, a truly popular audience of readers should be resisted [reference to W. W. Tarn],” what percentage of the population can he believe to be educable if even the “intellectually less demanding genres” (the Greek romances and Roman cookbooks, perhaps) are not even *aimed at* the masses?

13. Cf. the difference between “literacy of the U. S. population” rates and the percentage of the population who read a book unconnected with work or school in 1993 (approximately 40).

how a performance, since the ancients read aloud. Thus, focusing on the dissemination and appreciation of “literature” alters the definition of literacy and *increases*, not decreases, its incidence in the population. Most women in the Empire are likely to have been literate by this standard—no one lives so far away from civilization that he or she cannot even “hear” Homer or the other ethnic histories, for example.

Co-existence of oral forms

Occasionally Harris appears to be making some sort of *argumentum ex silentio* about literacy based on the fact that in some areas of activity oral forms continued to thrive, although written forms were available to replace them:

Even for the highly educated the spoken word retained a larger sway than is sometimes recognized . . .

. . . and in the Hellenistic world in general documentary proof may not have gained much or indeed any ground at the expense of direct testimony

. . . the culture of the elite continued to have a strong oral component, with oratory and performance retaining their important roles.¹⁴

But surely we don’t need to argue that legal customs related to “hearing” cases need have anything at all to do with general literacy in the Empire, just as they would have nothing at all to do with literacy rates in the U. S.—so long as humans believe they can detect falsehood by subtle shifts in facial expression and body language there’ll be oral testimony. The perpetuation of performance art, I would contend, also has little relevance here.

The ephemera of learning

Harris concedes that the *impedimenta* of learning to read and write are ephemeral and are unlikely to have survived antiquity: schools are “make-shift”;¹⁵ permanent writing materials (outside of Egypt) expensive and difficult to obtain, etc. These facts alone make it virtually impossible to estimate with any accuracy the prevalence of schools from their physical remains, rendering the archaeologist a timid contributor to this discussion.

Harris’ is a rigorously fair presentation of the case, but Harris the pessimist has overlooked a fact, which we optimists will recklessly pass on: the *impedimenta* of elementary learning are ephemeral, *because they are designed to be ephemeral*. Happy the child in any culture at any time whose parent has preserved,

14. *Ancient Literacy*, 232, 121, 125.

15. *Ancient Literacy*, 236. On this subject, with reference to synagogue schools in Roman Judaea, Professor Rousseau has already spoken; let me mention that most archaeologists agree it is impossible to estimate the number of “schools” in this part of the world since the synagogues themselves have proven to be flimsy structures often lacking identifying marks.

in a form to last 2,000 years, his or her first misshapen scrawls, replicated in tiresome repetition on the cheapest, most disposable material available. Surely, in a culture in which papyrus may have cost the equivalent of 30–35 dollars per “sheet”¹⁶ the alphabet was practiced with a stick in the dirt,¹⁷ in the open air. Thus, we are *supposed* to have much less evidence for elementary education than for, for example, gold-working in antiquity, and, it might be argued, optimistically, that the archaeologist has no place in this discussion.

These arguments would apply equally to elementary education conducted at any stage of life, and this leads to another nit I would pick in Harris’ construction. I believe, in general, Harris is prone to overvalue formal education.

Over-valuation of childhood education

Harris observes, “a pervasive system of schools is a prerequisite for mass literacy,”¹⁸ but this may be at once too narrow a view of “school” and too broad a view of “literacy.” Let’s cast a wider net and try to bring in every circumstance in which someone of any age might acquire just enough letters to write a letter to his mother or read the password of the day.

Language considerations may come into play here. In most areas, the two most useful languages of the Empire—Latin and Greek—have the best “delivery system” (i.e., the alphabet), and the acquisition of literacy in those languages is a relatively simple matter. They are also undoubtedly the most common second languages in the Empire and are thus the most likely to have been picked up after childhood. Moreover, these are particularly the languages of upward mobility. We might speculate, therefore, that writing in some areas of the Empire is more commonly acquired in adulthood than in childhood, as individuals move up in politics, government, the military, etc. into the languages which are more commonly written.

If we could concede at least temporarily these points, we might unlock our eyes from scanning literature and remains for signs of P.S. 102 and look for an adult with a stick teaching the alphabet to four others during a break at work or a father drilling his teen-age son while his wife and daughters look on, pretending not to pay attention. With this in mind, we might well find that the single greatest supplier of elementary education in the Empire was not, in fact, a well-organized network of publicly supported schools training youngsters in the wisdom and values of an Enlightened society, but

16. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, cf. p. 195.

17. That no readers à la McGuffey’s survive from antiquity is probably likewise the result of economics—why waste expensive materials and the copyist’s labor on beginners?

18. *Ancient Literacy*, 233. In the same paragraph he gives a nod to the notion that one might learn outside a formal school, but concludes his discussion with “In short, we have no reason to suppose that the Romans somehow transmitted literacy in great quantities without the help of great quantities of formal schooling.” He is obviously focusing on childhood education; he uses “boys” and “girls” throughout this section.

The army

The imperial army relied to an astonishing degree on written documentation; as Harris himself observes,

Whereas there is a rather conspicuous lack of evidence about clerical functions in the army of the late Republic, [reference to J. Harmand], the army of the principate was almost modern in its love of documentation¹⁹

although Harris the pessimist concludes his paragraph with this caution:

What any of this evidence may tell us about the literacy of soldiers is a question to which we shall return. And in spite of the wide range of military documentation, we should certainly beware of supposing that documentation was constantly present in every soldier's life. [reference to G. R. Watson]²⁰

Again, as is usually the case, what percentage of the army outside the citizen legionaries was literate neither Harris nor I can know. What percentage possessed better than the literacy required to operate the military "telegraph", for example, is even more shrouded in doubt.

But a percentage I will proffer as ascertainable and relevant here is this one: if advancement in the army was firmly tied to the ability to read and, possibly, to write, 100% of the army had an *incentive* to become literate. That all may not have achieved promotion, we optimistically concede, but that most who had advancement in mind might have taken the reasonably small step (we expect seven-year-olds to manage it, after all) of learning to read on the way we expect Harris to concede.

More to our purposes, in reference to Roman Galilee, we might point out that it's again a matter of which questions to ask: "was there a school in Nazareth?" would certainly bear on this issue, but "did boys in Nazareth in the early principate expect to join an army organized on the Roman model?" may contribute as much to the discussion.

The omnipresence of Egypt as an example

Harris reminds us, as any skilled and rigorous historian would, that much of our documentary evidence comes from the papyrus heaps of Egypt and may have bearing only on literacy in that corner of the Empire. He then proceeds, of course, to make use of the papyri in constructing his arguments—no one would do otherwise. But let us keep in mind another cautionary note: it is not merely that, in being forced to rely through an accident of climate on Egyptian material, we are, like Procrustes, tugging on evidence from one of the provinces of the Empire and stretching it to fit the whole; Egypt is the least typical province

19. *Ancient Literacy*, 217.

20. *Ancient Literacy*, 217.

of the Roman Empire, just as it was the least typical province of Alexander's empire,²¹ and the least typical province of the Persian Empire before that. The Egyptian evidence in the end probably has very little to say about literacy in Greek and nothing at all to say about literacy in the other major languages of the Empire.

Next time: the optimist's case; the optimist's case and Judaea.

21. I invite you merely to consider the contrast in lifestyles between the first of the Ptolemies (Alexander's Macedonian crony) and the last (Cleopatra).

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Implications of a Late Date for Acts

Joseph B. Tyson

The purpose of this paper is to consider some important implications of dating Acts in the second century. Since we have previously given a good deal of attention to the issue of the date of Acts, it does not seem necessary here to rehearse the arguments for a late date for Acts, but only to call attention to the main considerations that support the arguments and then to concentrate on ways in which this dating might impact the critical study of early Christian history, ways in which it helps us to understand various aspects of the composition of Acts, ways in which a late dating aids in the interpretation of the book, and ways in which it enhances our appreciation of the author's theological contribution. I should say up front that my concern has as much to do with the context for the composition of Acts as with the actual date of its publication.

The major arguments for dating Acts in the early second century—more specifically in about 120 CE—have been developed in papers presented here by Richard I. Pervo and myself, now published in *Forum*, and in books by Pervo and myself.¹ The major points that have a bearing on the date of Acts are the following: (1) External references to Acts are relatively late. They do not require us to date the composition of Acts before about the middle of the second century. (2) The failure to include a specific mention of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. does not mean that Acts was written before these events took place. The Gospel of Luke contains a reasonably clear allusion to the events of 70 CE, and the lack of an explicit reference is not surprising in a document written about a half-century afterward. (3) Neither does the failure to mention the outcome of Paul's trials and his ultimate fate require us to believe that the book was written before these events took place. (4) The use of the writings of Josephus by the author of Acts shows that the Acts could not have been written before 94/95 CE, the date at which Josephus completed his *Antiquities*. (5) Recent scholarship has shown that the author of Acts was acquainted with and

1. See Tyson, "The Date of Acts: A Reconsideration" and Pervo, "Dating Acts" in *Forum* 5; also, Pervo, *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists*, and Tyson, *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle*. Pervo and I generally agree that the probable date for the composition of Acts is c. 120 CE. The understanding of Acts as an anti-Marcionite text draws on my own work, which builds on but goes beyond that of Pervo at this point.

made use of several of Paul's letters. Since it is generally agreed that the letters were collected at about the end of the first century, the date of the Acts of the Apostles cannot be placed before c. 100 CE. These considerations tend to locate the composition of Acts after 100 CE, but before 150 CE, the time of Justin Martyr, who probably was the first to make reference to it. Within this time frame, it is the challenge of Marcion and Marcionite Christianity that, in my judgment, provides the most meaningful context for the composition of Acts. In what follows, I will stress some of the implications of setting Acts within this time frame and context, and the comments themselves will, it is hoped, lend confidence to our suggestions about date and context.

The implications of a late date for Acts are numerous, but it may help to sort them out in three categories: (1) implications for the authorship, reliability, and purpose of Acts; (2) implications for the study of early Christian history; and (3) implications that bear on the interpretation of Acts. Most of the attention in this paper is devoted to the third category.

Implications for the authorship, reliability, and purpose of Acts

If the supposed date when Acts was composed is shifted to the first quarter of the second century, it becomes nearly impossible to regard the author of the book as an eyewitness of any of the events he describes. The latest events described in Acts may be dated to about 60 CE, well over a half-century before the proposed date when the book was written. Proponents of an early date for Acts (i.e. a date in the 60's) cite a distinctive advantage of their position as the ability to regard the material in Acts about Paul as based on an eyewitness account. Although most critical scholars who accept an intermediate date for Acts (i.e., c. 80–90 CE) do not regard the author as an eyewitness, some do. Luke Timothy Johnson, for example, notes that an author who wrote in the 80's would not be too old to have been an eyewitness. He says that, "nothing in the writing prohibits composition by a companion of Paul who was eyewitness to some events he narrates. If a thirty-year old man joined Paul's circle around the year 50, he would still be only sixty in the year 80, young enough to do vigorous research, yet old enough and at sufficient distance to describe the time of beginnings with a certain nostalgia."² But Johnson's appears to be a minority view, and for most scholars who accept an intermediate date for the composition of Acts, authorship by an eyewitness is not a major issue.

Another implication of dating Acts in the second century has to do with the historical reliability of the document. On the surface, it may seem that the farther the document is removed from the events being narrated, the less confidence may be put in its reliability. Here too proponents of an early date for Acts seem to have an advantage not only in citing the eyewitness basis for much of Acts but also in citing the proximity of the author to those events in which

2. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*. 2. See also Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, and "Luke-Acts, Book of."

he did not participate. He is still temporally close to the events, and those who participated in them are still able to provide testimony about them. Probably the most serious recent effort to analyze the Acts narrative as an early text and to adjudicate its historical references is that of Colin J. Hemer.³ Most proponents of an intermediate date for Acts long ago surrendered the apparent advantage that a Hemer enjoyed, although some are still interested in the traditions on which the author may have drawn and in the historical material that might be contained in the traditions.⁴ But the fact is that moving the date of Acts from an intermediate to a late date, i.e., from the last decades of the first century to the early second century, does not require a major change in historical method. What is required for an assessment of the historical value of Acts is an understanding of its purpose and its major themes, and at this point the claim that Acts was written in the second century as, at least partially, a reaction to the challenge of Marcionite Christianity makes a signal contribution. If we see the Acts as intended to play a role in a major theological controversy of the second century, we may be able to judge the historical value of a number of features in the Acts narrative. Comments below on the interpretation of Acts will illustrate this possibility.

In general, implications of a late date for Acts in terms of the authorship and historical reliability of the book are not of great significance, except in underscoring the relevant observations made by proponents of an intermediate date. On the issues of authorship and historical reliability, proponents of a late date add little, formally, to the claims that have long been made by proponents of an intermediate date, who constitute the majority of critical scholars today.

On the purpose of Acts, however, proponents of a late date and an anti-Marcionite context for Acts are able to pursue a significant implication. Ernst Haenchen noted that Acts was a problem for early Christians. After a careful survey of possible quotations and allusions to Acts in second-century writings, he concluded that Justin was the first writer whose knowledge of Acts is certain. He added that “until the middle of the second century Acts was not considered an authoritative book to which one might appeal.”⁵ Then he asked why it was not acknowledged earlier and concluded,

The only answer is that, unlike the gospel, it had no ‘life-situation’ in the Church at all. In Acts the Christian reader encountered a book unlike any he had previously known, and one which was neither necessary nor customarily used in preaching or instruction. Only because of its connection with the third gospel, then, was Acts allowed to cross the threshold of the Canon.⁶

3. See Colin J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*.

4. See, e.g., Gerd Lüdemann, *The Acts of the Apostles: What Really Happened in the Earliest Days of the Church*. This is the second edition of Lüdemann, *Early Christianity according to the Traditions in Acts: A Commentary*.

5. Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, 9.

6. Haenchen, *Acts*, 9.

Haenchen noted further that Acts first proved useful to the church in the struggle against Gnosticism and that it was used extensively by Irenaeus.⁷

Haenchen's inquiry is directed to the reception of Acts in the church, but his comments raise questions about its composition as well. Indeed, Haenchen creates a problem by holding to a first-century date for the composition of Acts but in failing to find a proper context for its reception before the late second century. One might more plausibly explain that the neglect of Acts by writers before Justin was due to its not being available rather than by assuming that no earlier writer knew what to make of it. In any event, a question about the context of reception has implications about the context of composition. If, as Haenchen asserts, Acts found no audience at the time it was composed and for several decades thereafter, the question of the context for its composition becomes serious indeed. But, given the probable date for the composition of Acts in the first quarter of the second century, it is likely that its author was aware of the challenge of Marcion, who at that time was traveling throughout Asia Minor preaching his gospel of the heretofore unknown God of grace. Thus, if Acts was written at about 120 CE as, in part, an attempt to address the challenge of Marcionite Christianity, we have an answer to Haenchen's question. Acts is not a book that puzzled early church leaders; it is not a book without a situation in the life of the church. It precisely addressed the most threatening issues of the day, and the leaders knew just what to do with it. It was used as a major part of the church's arsenal in the most serious theological battle of the second century.⁸

Implications for the study of early Christian history

The dating of one early Christian text is not the kind of study that may be done in isolation. That is, the dating of one document has a bearing on the date of others, and it is hardly possible to re-date one text without disturbing the position of the others. This re-dating has a significant bearing on the study of early Christian history.⁹ At this point, I intend simply to list some of these implications, all of which will require further investigation.

Most notably, a re-dating of Acts necessarily carries with it questions about the position of its companion volume, the Gospel of Luke. Unless one is willing

7. See Haenchen, *Acts*, 9. Note that the major target of Irenaeus was Marcion. Although he does not say so explicitly, it is probable that Haenchen meant to include Marcion among the Gnostics whom Irenaeus attacked.

8. Haenchen's views about the neglect of Acts in the early second century are echoed by, among others, C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* 1:48. For a critique of Haenchen's contention that there was no interest in stories of the apostles in the late first century, see Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts*, 19–39. The role that Luke-Acts played in the struggle against Marcionite Christianity has recently been highlighted by Christopher Mount, *Pauline Christianity: Luke-Acts and the Legacy of Paul*.

9. John A. T. Robinson put this point aptly: "Disturb the position of one major piece and the pattern starts disconcertingly to dissolve" (*Redating the New Testament*, 9).

to abandon the long-held view that both Luke and Acts have the same author or to subscribe to the view that they were written at widely separated times, the composition of the gospel becomes an issue.¹⁰

Placing Acts in the first quarter of the second century implies that its language and ideology comport with that time. Even a translation of the text may be affected. Ἐκκλησία might better be translated to reflect the concept of a more or less established institution; a designation of the believers as “Christians” (see Acts 11:26; 26:28) does not seem to be out of place; even a reference to the Hebrew Scriptures that implies canonicity (see Luke 24:44; 16:29, 31; Acts 26:22; 28:23) seems appropriate. Further, we should expect the ideology of Acts to be similar to that found in other Christian writings of the time, such as the Pastoral Epistles and Justin.¹¹

The theological importance of the apostolic tradition as a second-century development will need to be taken seriously. An early and even an intermediate date for Acts might give the impression that the authority of the apostolic tradition was taken for granted from an early time, but to see Acts as involved in the debates with the Marcionites suggests that sources of authority were contested for some time and that the concept of an apostolic tradition had not been well worked out until the author of Acts came along.¹² The Tübingen model of struggle between Pauline and Petrine Christianity, with its resolution based on the book of Acts, probably will not hold up, but a concept of early Christian diversity that does not get resolved until the end of the second century is almost unavoidable.¹³

Issues regarding expressions of apparent anti-Judaism in the NT have been plagued by uncertainties regarding the context of some of the documents. This is certainly the case with Acts. If it is the case that Acts is an early Christian text, written at a time when the Jesus movement still perceived itself and was perceived as Jewish, it would be possible to explain apparently anti-Jewish statements as inner Jewish polemic. The later we date Acts the less plausible this explanation becomes.¹⁴ It is likely that Acts was written from the perspective of one who was an outsider to the various Judaisms of the time.

On the other hand, placing Acts in the second century as a response to Marcion should lead us to an appreciation of this author's effort to provide meaningful links to the Hebrew Scriptures, including Torah and prophets, and

10. In my *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, I suggest that canonical Luke is a post-Marcionite text and that the canonical author, who also wrote Acts, added, among other narratives, Lukan Sondergut material that is now in Luke 1–2 and 24.

11. See Stephen G. Wilson, *Luke and the Pastoral Epistles*, and J. C. O'Neill, *The Theology of Acts in its Historical Setting*.

12. See Klein, *Die Zwölf Apostel: Ursprung und Gehalt einer Idee*. Klein contends that Luke linked the apostolate of the twelve with the historical Jesus in a way that grounds authority for church belief and practice in this body.

13. See Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*.

14. See Pervo, “The Gates Have Been Closed (Acts 21:30): The Jews in Acts.”

to Jewish messianic expectation. His effort is to show that Jesus did not suddenly appear without anticipation and announce a God hitherto unknown. As a counter-point to the anti-Judaism in Acts, the author's claims of support from the Hebrew Scriptures and his identification of the God of Jesus with the God of Israel was a major theological move that contributed to the very definition of Christian faith.

On the assumption that Acts was written in the first quarter of the second century as an anti-Marcionite text, these and other implications, which can only be listed here, will require extended investigation among critical scholars. I turn now to examine implications for the interpretation of Acts, where we can begin to see some immediate results.

Implications that bear on the interpretation of Acts

A theory about the context of Acts should have a bearing on its interpretation. Indeed, if it should turn out that a second-century post Marcionite setting for Acts allows us to address some traditionally difficult issues in new and convincing ways, our confidence in this proposed *Sitz im Leben* should be increased. Such is the case with a number of classic problems of Acts interpretation, but here I wish to concentrate on a particularly difficult set of problems, connected with the characterization of Paul, a topic that will require extended discussion.¹⁵

An intriguing aspect of the characterization of Paul in Acts is the parallelism with Peter. Both characters deliver speeches, perform healings and resurrections, defeat workers of magic, correct inadequate teaching, are miraculously released from prison, and witness the giving of the spirit and the phenomenon of glossolalia among converts. This parallelization has long been noted.¹⁶ The work of Matthias Schneckenberger inspired F. C. Baur to characterize Acts as an attempt to harmonize Jewish and Gentile Christianity.¹⁷ In his recent dissertation, Andrew Clark subjects the parallels to an exhaustive treatment.¹⁸ He attempts to be self-conscious about the methodology to be employed in identifying the parallels, and he employs useful criteria. In addition, he maintains that the writing of Plutarch, a near contemporary of Luke, shows that parallelization was a recognized literary device.

The characterization of Paul in Acts, affected by Luke's device of parallelization, has constituted an issue in the interpretation of Acts for some time. F. C. Baur was certain that the characterization of Paul was completely under the control of the author of Acts, who was intent on harmonizing Pauline and Petrine Christianity. He claimed that the author of Acts intentionally distorted

15. The material that follows is an abbreviated and adapted form of material in my *Marcion and Luke-Acts*, chapter three.

16. See, e.g., Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts*, who treats parallelism as fundamental to the entire structure of Luke-Acts.

17. See Schneckenberger, *Über den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte*.

18. See Clark, *Parallel Lives: The Relation of Paul to the Apostles in the Lucan Perspective*.

the portraits of both Peter and Paul in order to support his own theological tendencies. Thus, Luke stresses Paul's adherence to Torah observance and de-emphasizes his convictions that may have called Torah into question. In the Tübingen view, Luke's Paul is far closer to Jewish Christianity than was the actual Paul.¹⁹

Adolf von Harnack faced the objections of Baur and his colleagues in an effort to minimize the distance between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the letters. Harnack defended the traditional view of the authorship of Acts, namely that it was written by a companion of Paul. But he was aware of the objection that a companion of Paul would not have erred significantly in dealing with historical information and would not have portrayed Paul in ways that appeared to contradict the impressions we gain from the letters. But here Harnack questions these modern impressions of Paul. He argues vigorously that, although Luke is no more immune than any other writer from making historical errors, we have no right to substitute our impressions, drawn from the letters, for his.²⁰ Harnack also contrasts Luke and Paul in respect to their religious backgrounds. Luke had not come to grips with the problem of Torah in the way that Paul had. In addition, Harnack maintains that we should not simply interpret Paul's letters as anti-Torah. He calls attention to some things in the letters that suggest that Paul's attitude was more complex than it has been represented to be. Even in Gal 5:11, Paul is accused of still preaching circumcision, and, says Harnack, there must be some ground for the accusation. In 1 Cor 7:18–20, Paul implies "that the converted Jew should remain faithful to the customs and ordinances of the fathers."²¹ Romans 9–11 constitutes a serious qualification to Paul's judgments in Galatians, since here he holds out a future hope for historical Israel. Strict logic would have required Paul to abandon this hope, but "the Jew in him was still too strong and his reverence for the content of the Old Testament still too devoted!"²² Also in 1 Cor 9:20, Paul says, "To the Jews I became a Jew, in order to win Jews." Harnack concludes that there were more pro-Jewish tendencies in Paul than most critical commentators have heretofore recognized and that Acts brings out these tendencies in ways that the letters, because of their occasional contexts, only leave implicit.

The issue was most sharply treated by Philip Vielhauer, in the article, "Zum 'Paulinismus' der Apostelgeschichte."²³ His work has been influential on a generation of Acts scholarship. Vielhauer intentionally ignored the historical and

19. See especially, F. C. Baur, *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ, his Life and Work, his Epistles and his Doctrine*.

20. Harnack wrote: "If he [Luke] has here assigned less honour to St. Paul than from his epistles seems to be due to him, and if in chaps. xxi ss. he makes him appear more Jewish in his behaviour than we, judging from the same epistles should imagine possible, it is at least permissible to ask which is right—our imagination or the representation given in the Acts" (*Luke the Physician*, 126–27).

21. Harnack, *The Date of Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels*, 43.

22. Harnack, *Date of Acts*, 49.

23. E. T. "On the 'Paulinism' of Acts". References below are to the English translation.

chronological comparisons between Acts and the Pauline letters and concentrated exclusively on the theology. He maintained that the theology attributed to Paul in Acts was unrelated to that found in the letters on four major issues: natural theology, the law, Christology, and eschatology. It is on the issue of Torah observance and connection with Judaism that Vielhauer finds the most dramatic contrasts between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the letters. In Acts Paul is a faithful Pharisaic Jew, believing everything in the Scriptures and devoutly adhering to the customs and requirements of his faith. Vielhauer catalogues the practices in Acts that demonstrate Paul's adherence to Jewish customs:

1. By his missionary method: beginning at the synagogue; only after a formal rejection by the Jews does he turn directly to the Gentiles;
2. By his submission to the Jerusalem authorities;
3. By the circumcision of Timothy (16:3);
4. By spreading the apostolic decree (16:4) (nonhistorical);
5. By assuming a vow (18:18);
6. By trips to Jerusalem to participate in Jewish religious festivals (18:21; 20:16).
7. By participating, on the advice of James, in a Nazirite vow with four members of the Jerusalem congregation (21:18–28);
8. By stressing when on trial that he is a Pharisee (23:6; 26:5) and that he stands for nothing other than the “hope” of the Jews in the resurrection of the dead.²⁴

All of these practices stress Paul's observance of Torah and his connection with Judaism and the Jewish people. And, to cap it off, Paul never in Acts hints at any critical attitude toward Torah. Only two verses in Acts may be cited as suggestions of Paul's views. In Acts 13:38–39, Paul announces: “Let it be known to you therefore, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.”²⁵ The other verse is actually attributed to Peter rather than to Paul: “We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will” (Acts 15:11). But Vielhauer insists that even in Acts 13:38–39 we do not have a reflection of the genuine Pauline message, since in 13:38 Luke substitutes the term “forgiveness” for the

24. Vielhauer, “Paulinism,” 38.

25. NRSV translation. But this translation conceals the fact that Luke here uses a favorite Pauline term, δικαιοῦω. The Greek of Acts 13:38–39 reads: γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ὅτι διὰ τούτου ὑμῖν ἄφεσις ἁμαρτιῶν καταγγέλλεται, καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν οὐκ ἠδυνήθητε ἐν νόμῳ Μωυσέως δικαιοθῆναι, ἐν τούτῳ πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων δικαιοῦται. The NKJ makes the meaning clearer: “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Even if Luke uses a term we tend to identify with the Pauline letters, he seems to equate forgiveness and justification in a way that is not characteristic of Paul.

Pauline “justification.” Paul’s theology of the Torah, Vielhauer notes, is far more complex than Luke represented it to be.

Writing only a few years after Vielhauer, Haenchen comes to essentially the same conclusions. He stresses that Paul and Luke are in basic agreement on the legitimacy of the Gentile mission without the law. Luke, says Haenchen, takes it for granted but is “unaware of Paul’s solution”²⁶ and unable to justify it “from within,” as Paul was.²⁷ “He must therefore seize on a justification ‘from without’—God willed the mission, and that was sufficient.”²⁸ Furthermore, in Haenchen’s view, Luke’s portrait of Paul differs from the Paul of the letters in significant ways: in Acts Paul is a miracle worker and a great orator, but not an apostle. Further, Acts misses the real point of Paul’s theology: “From beginning to end, according to Acts, the Jewish hostility to the Christians was kindled by the latter’s preaching of the Resurrection (Acts 4.2, 28.23).”²⁹ But, in fact, says Haenchen, the real bone of contention was Torah. This point surfaces from time to time in Acts, but only as a charge against Paul, a charge of which Paul is said to be not guilty.

The challenges of Vielhauer and Haenchen have not gone unanswered. Jacob Jervell reminds us that the letters of Paul were occasional letters, which do not require full biographical information. He writes, “As such they [the Pauline letters] obviously conceal parts of Paul’s preaching and activity, since it was not necessary to treat such in a letter.”³⁰ Jervell maintains that “The Lukan Paul, the picture of Paul in Acts, is a completion, a filling up of the Pauline one, so that in order to get at the historical Paul, we cannot do without Acts and Luke.”³¹ He emphasizes the Lukan treatment of Paul as a practicing Pharisee and calls attention to those places in the Pauline letters where Paul claims to have lived as a Jew (Rom 9:7; 11:2; Gal 2:15; 2 Cor 11:22; and especially 1 Cor 9:20). In general these references certify the context in which Paul saw himself. And it is as a Pharisee faithful to Torah that Paul is represented in Acts. Jervell concedes that Luke has built his portrait of Paul “on material to be found in the marginal notes in Paul’s letters.”³² But the Acts picture can be harmonized theologically with an important section of one of Paul’s letters, namely Romans 9–11. Here Paul emphasizes the irrevocable covenant of God with Israel and projects the expectation of the eventual inclusion of all Israel in the believing community.

Stanley E. Porter faced the challenges from Vielhauer and Haenchen directly in a book originally published in 1999.³³ He noted Haenchen’s claim that the Acts portrait of Paul stresses him as miracle worker and orator but not apostle

26. Haenchen, *Acts*, 112; emphasis in original.

27. Haenchen, *Acts*, 113.

28. Haenchen, *Acts*, 113.

29. Haenchen, *Acts*, 115.

30. Jervell, *The Unknown Paul: Essays on Luke-Acts and Early Christian History*, 90.

31. Jervell, *Unknown Paul*, 70.

32. Jervell, *Unknown Paul*, 67.

33. Porter, *The Paul of Acts*.

and contended that there is no necessary contradiction with Paul's letters on the first two points. On the matter of apostleship, Porter called attention to Acts 14:4,14, where Barnabas and Paul are called apostles. Haenchen said that these verses were unimportant, but Porter notes that of the 28 uses of the word, apostle, in Acts, two apply to Paul, and he maintains that this cannot be overlooked as unimportant.³⁴ Porter also questions Haenchen's claim that Luke was unaware of Paul's solution to the issue of the Gentile mission without the law.³⁵ Porter concludes that whatever differences may be found between the letters and the Acts are not as significant as Vielhauer and Haenchen maintained and that they simply occur when different writers use different genres for writing.

In some respects the emerging new perspective on Paul, based in part on the work of E. P. Sanders, allows scholars to address questions about the Paul of Acts in different ways.³⁶ A major study related to this new perspective is that of Mark D. Nanos on Galatians.³⁷ Although it is not directly concerned with the apparent conflicts between the Pauline letters and Acts, Nanos's work has a significant bearing on the issue. His interpretation of Paul's letter to the Galatians opens the possibility that the author of Acts may not be so far distant in his presentation of Paul. Nanos understands Galatians as an "ironic rebuke" of Paul's converts. These converts from paganism had been drawn to Paul's promise that they could become members of the community of God's people simply by believing in Jesus. Opponents of Paul, designated by Nanos as "influencers," disagreed and attempted to persuade Paul's converts that they must become something more than guests in the house of Israel. They maintained that to be part of the people of God requires being circumcised and becoming full proselytes. Paul, of course, objected and reaffirmed his conviction that faith in Jesus is sufficient and that circumcision and Torah-observance are not required. This way of shaping the context and problematic of Galatians has significant implications. In Nanos's view, Paul neither attacks Torah-observance *per se*, nor questions its appropriateness for non-Christian Jews. Those influencing the Galatian converts are not attacking belief in Christ; they are rather saying that it is not sufficient for membership in Israel. Further, it is notable that the goal of the pagan converts is to be members of the people of Israel and that Paul affirms this goal. Nanos's conclusion, which he states at the beginning of the book, brings the epistolary Paul very close to the Paul of Acts: "In fact, nothing I have encountered in Galatians has led me to question the working assumption

34. See below, for a fuller discussion of Acts 14:4, 14.

35. Porter, *Paul of Acts*, 199. Porter calls attention to a number of places in Acts where Paul is accused of disobeying the law and instructing others to do so. In Acts, however, these are regarded as false charges.

36. See especially E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.

37. See Mark D. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context*; see also Nanos, ed., *The Galatians Debate: Contemporary Issues in Rhetorical and Historical Interpretation*.

that the Paul who writes this letter is a Torah-observant Jew, known as such by his addressees when he had lived among them."³⁸ Nanos's study suggests that a solution to the problem we face here may well come from the side of scholarship on Paul rather than on that of Acts, but we must await further developments from that area.

The studies that compare the Paul of Acts with the Paul of the letters have not resolved the problem, but they help to illuminate features of the characterization of Paul that we find in Acts. However he might appear in the letters, in Acts Paul is a missionary, a miracle worker, an impressive speaker, and a hero who is willing to suffer for his faith. Both before and after his conversion, the Paul of Acts is a faithful Jew who observes Torah and the customs of his people, believes the Hebrew Scriptures, and intends to convince one and all that Jesus is the fulfillment of Jewish expectations. He is a Pharisee, who, like other Pharisees, believes in resurrection. He works hand-in-hand with the Jerusalem apostles and is even subservient to them on occasion.

Even if Nanos is right about Galatians, it is difficult to reconcile the views expressed there and in other Pauline letters with a Paul who in Acts 16 would circumcise Timothy. How might one reconcile Paul's rejection of his past in Phil 3:1–11 with his maintenance of it in Acts 23:6? In the former passage Paul refers to his life as a Pharisee in highly derogatory terms, but the latter reference conveys only a sense of pride. In the former it is clear that Paul looks upon his Pharisaic identification as past, a stage of his life not to be continued, but in Acts 23:6 he announces his Pharisaic identification as a matter of the present: "I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees." How can one reconcile Paul's vehement definition of himself as an apostle in Gal 1:1 and his repeated claims to the designation in Rom 1:1; 11:13; 1 Cor 1:1; 9:1,2; 15:9; 2 Cor 1:1; 12:12 with the almost total denial of the title to him in Acts?

It is at this point that our late dating and contextualizing of Acts present us with an intriguing solution to our problem. If Acts was written in the early second century, its characterization of Paul and Pauline theology may be understood as an extraordinarily appropriate attempt to correct the teachings of Marcionite Christianity. The author of Acts is not dealing directly with the real Paul, whom he did not know, but with the Paul of the Marcionites. In this respect, the issue is not the accuracy of his characterization of Paul, but the adequacy of his response to Marcion. We can grant that the *historical* Paul was a complex figure, not easily understood by his contemporaries. But we know that in the second century Marcion made abundant use of Paul's letters, especially Galatians, and that he understood Pauline theology as a denial of the religious validity of the Hebrew Bible, Torah, and Judaism. Whatever role Paul played during his own lifetime, there appears to be a struggle for his legacy in

38. Nanos, *Irony*, 3.

the second century.³⁹ By the early second century, it became clear that Paul was being co-opted by Marcionite Christians and interpreted as an opponent of the Hebrew Scriptures, Torah, and Jewish customs. The author of Acts, in the effort to rescue Paul from the Marcionites, portrayed a Paul who was a faithful Jew and a devout Pharisee.

If Acts was written, at least in part, as a reaction against the Marcionite use of the Pauline letters, it is not difficult to understand the characterization of Paul that meets us in this book. To explore this point, it will be useful to focus on a few major features of Luke's characterization and to show how they may have been intended to counter Marcionite claims. In what follows, I will comment on three of the major items in Luke's characterization of Paul, drawing from the list of features that Vielhauer emphasized as divergences from the epistolary Paul. I intend to examine them in the light of the themes that govern Acts and the literary patterns used by the author, in an effort to show that they are aspects of Luke's response to the Marcionite challenge.⁴⁰

1. *Paul's missionary method.* In episode after episode, the Lukan Paul begins his visit to a locality with a visit to the synagogue, where he presents his message to Jews. The heart of Paul's message in the synagogues is that Jesus is the fulfillment of Jewish expectation and prophetic promises. A reader may conclude from these narratives that a parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity has been firmly established, but it should also be clear that the reason for the parting is due to Jewish rejection of Paul rather than to Pauline intention.⁴¹ The Paul of Acts returns to the synagogue again and again, proclaiming that Jesus is the fulfillment of Jewish expectations.

Why does Luke portray Paul in this way? If he wrote in the early second century, it is plausible to suggest that he would have been familiar with Marcion's elevation of Paul and his denial that Jesus was the Christ of Jewish expectation. The missionary method used by the Paul of Acts and his message to Jews stands in stark contrast to Marcionite theology. What better way to counter Marcion's

39. Daniel Marguerat (*The First Christian Historian: Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles'*) has clearly perceived this issue. In reference to Vielhauer, Marguerat writes, "This view (which is correct) of the theological difference between the Paul of the epistles and the Paul of Acts must today be replaced in a historical paradigm which takes account of the reception of the Pauline tradition and the school phenomenon. In other words, we should stop repeating that Luke was a (bad) student of the apostle to the Gentiles and ask why and how the missionary figure of Paul was received along a narrative trajectory (Luke-Acts, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*), while the pastoral and institutional dimension was retained in a discursive trajectory (deutero-Pauline epistles; the Pastoral Epistles; *Correspondence of Paul and Seneca*)" (p. 62, note 46).

40. For a discussion of themes in Acts, see Tyson, "Themes at the Crossroads: Acts 15 in its Lukan Setting."

41. It may be reasonably objected that the use of the terms, Judaism and Christianity, is anachronistic when dealing with the time of Paul. But in the second century the terms are appropriate to use, and the author of Acts is certainly familiar with the term, Christian, in the singular (Acts 26:28) and the plural (Acts 11:26).

claims than to have the apostle he revered make repeated attempts to convince Jews that Jesus is the fulfillment of the biblical prophets and that belief in Jesus is harmonious with Jewish theology. Acts makes it clear that Paul's failure to convert masses of Jews is not due to the character of the message he preached, but to the recalcitrance of the people.

2. *Paul and the Jerusalem apostles.* Two interrelated issues are involved here: the question of Paul as apostle; and his relationship to the Jerusalem leaders. It is known that Marcion maintained that Paul was the only true apostle of Jesus and that Peter and the Jerusalem leaders were "false apostles." Luke employed a number of literary techniques to dispute this claim, including the characterization of Peter as the leader of the early community and chief of the apostles. Further, the parallelization of Peter and Paul negates any concept of Pauline independence. But the parallelism between Peter and Paul is not complete, since the title "apostle" is almost totally confined to Peter and the Jerusalem leaders and used apparently to designate Paul (and Barnabas) only in two verses (Acts 14:4, 14). Is this not a direct reversal of the Marcionite claims? For Marcion, Paul is *the* apostle, and he stands opposed to the Jerusalem authorities, who are false witnesses to the gospel. For Luke, there is complete harmony between Peter and Paul; the Jerusalem leaders are undoubtedly apostles, and Paul's official position is ambiguous.

The question of the apostleship of Paul in Acts is a particularly thorny one that has elicited a great deal of debate. A discussion of it should begin with the observation that the requirements set forth by Peter in his first speech in Acts 1:21–22 define apostleship in such a way that Paul could not have been accorded the title: "So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection" (Acts 1:21–22).⁴² Further, the narrative in Acts 1 makes it clear that the apostles must be twelve in number, since the original twelfth apostle, Judas Iscariot, must be replaced. Given these stipulations, there is no way for Paul to be called an apostle in Acts. He was not appointed by Jesus; he was not with the other disciples/apostles from the time of Jesus' baptism by John to the time of the ascension; and his inclusion as apostle would expand a group whose numbers must remain constant.

As is well known, however, the title is apparently applied to Paul and Barnabas in Acts 14:4, 14. How can one account for this? A number of possibili-

42. These verses link with the pericope in Luke 6:12–16, where Jesus himself chooses twelve of his disciples and grants them the title, apostle. As if to remove any doubt, the names of the apostles are given in both Luke 6:14–16 and Acts 1:13. The lists are identical except for slight changes in the order and for the omission of Judas Iscariot in the Acts list. One might object that even those listed in Luke 6 and Acts 1 did not meet the requirements set out in Acts 1:21–22, since none of them were present at Jesus' baptism, which occurred in Luke 3:21–22. But in the face of the lists of named apostles in Luke and Acts, the objection seems trivial.

ties lie at hand, but before we examine them it is necessary to take note of a text-critical matter affecting Acts 14:14. The so-called Western text of this verse omits the term apostles (ἀκούσας δὲ Βαρναβᾶς καὶ Παῦλος). This is a difficult reading, and some texts correct the singular participle to the plural ἀκούσαντες.⁴³ If the more difficult Western text is acceptable, as it is to a number of scholars, the problem has been reduced to one verse, Acts 14:4, where readers must rely on the context to determine the identity of those called apostles. The verse itself, indeed the entire pericope that deals with the mission to Iconium, has a number of indefinite references. In 14:1, “they” speak in the synagogue at Iconium;⁴⁴ in 14:2, the unbelieving Jews stirred up trouble “against the brothers;” 14:3 has only the third person pronoun. When the reader gets to Acts 14:4 and learns that the people of Iconium were divided, some siding with the Jews and some “with the apostles,” it is necessary to go back six verses to the previous episode in Acts 13:50 to determine who is meant by the title. A hearer of the text would have even greater difficulty. Acts 13:50 is the last time before 14:4 that actual names, Paul and Barnabas, are used. Is this perhaps a subtle distancing of the title from the persons?

Despite the language, the most likely reading of Acts 14:4 is that Paul and Barnabas are the apostles there designated: some Iconium residents sided with the Jews, and some with Paul and Barnabas. How then may we account for Luke’s use of the title, apostle, for two persons who, according to his own definition, did not qualify? Most interpreters attribute the problem to Luke’s uncritical use of a tradition.⁴⁵ This is a solution similar to that frequently used for the “we” sections: Luke found this material in a source and used it without editing it. Another possibility is that Luke intended readers to understand that the title designated a group wider than the one he had described in Acts 1, or that he used it as a subtle hint that Paul and Barnabas were equivalent to Peter and the Jerusalem apostles, except in terms of jurisdiction. Günter Klein, who stresses the Lukan exclusion of Paul from the twelve apostles, downplays the significance of Acts 14:4, (14). He says that Luke would have had no fear that his readers would have been confused. The definition of apostle should by now have become so clear that no reader would have thought that Paul and Barnabas were to be included with Peter and the others.⁴⁶ Andrew Clark has recently suggested that the two verses in Acts 14 reflect a Lukan view that Paul and Barnabas function in the Gentile mission in the same way as Peter and the Jerusalem group do in the Jewish mission. Clark points out that Acts 14:4 (14)

43. For a discussion of the textual problems, see Klein, *Zwölf Apostel*, 212–13; see also Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 423–24.

44. The translation in NRSV masks the problem at this point by including names—Paul and Barnabas—that are not present in the Greek.

45. For a helpful discussion of these verses, together with a summary of critical opinions about them, see Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 136–49.

46. See Klein, *Zwölf Apostel*, 212.

reinforces the impressions made by the parallelization of Peter and Paul: the reader is to think of them as equivalents, except in terms of jurisdiction.⁴⁷

The problem with Acts 14:4 (14) is one of consistency. If Luke had been strictly consistent, he could not have used the term apostle to designate Paul and Barnabas, unless he intended for the reader to understand the term as meaning something different from the definition given in Acts 1:21–22. Since, however, the author provides no help for the reader to formulate a new definition, it seems unlikely that this was his intention. For good reasons, modern interpreters are hesitant to impute inconsistency to Luke, without first examining every conceivable alternative explanation. But in this case, the inconsistency, at the logical level, is so clear that hesitancy to recognize it seems due to other assumptions about the author. If, however, critical scholars generally make no assumptions about the historical accuracy of an author such as Luke, why should they expect logical consistency? If Luke is capable of historical errors, is he not also capable of logical ones?

There is, however, a different way of approaching the problem of Acts 14:4, (14). We know that Marcion regarded Paul as the only apostle and called Peter and the Jerusalem leaders, false apostles. In my judgment, Luke wrote Acts as, in part, a response to the challenge of Marcion and Marcionite Christianity. If this is the case, Luke's major problem was not with Paul but with Peter and the Jerusalem leaders. He needed to show that Marcion was wrong in his estimation of these men and that they were real apostles, appointed by Jesus himself, fully prepared and fully credentialed. Luke's task was not to argue for Paul as apostle, but to show that he was not the only apostle. To fulfill this task he "rehabilitated" the twelve as the authorized bearers of tradition, and he showed that Paul was in every respect in line with them and at some points subservient to them. If he once used the title apostle for Paul, this is only due to the fact that, despite his own definition that would exclude Paul from the group, he did not doubt its appropriateness. We may regard Luke as inconsistent at this point, but his inconsistency is understandable.

The Peter-Paul parallelism and Luke's stress on the apostolicity of the Jerusalem leaders has yet another consequence. The community's inclusion of Gentiles, a major theme in Acts, is first exhibited in the work of Peter, not Paul (Acts 10:1–11:18). This section of Acts is particularly important for Luke, as its size and complexity make clear. The story of Cornelius and Peter is the story of the conversion of the first God-fearing Gentile. We learn from the story that Cornelius is a devout worshiper of God, who gives generously to the people and prays to God (Acts 10:2); he is highly regarded by Jews (Acts 10:22), and he observes the Jewish times of prayer (Acts 10:30). But the conversion of this God-fearer is unlike the conversion of Jews as described in the previous chapters of

47. See Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 136–49.

Acts.⁴⁸ Something more is necessary, something that will permit both Jews and Gentiles to be members of the community without disrupting its unity. The necessary permission comes through Peter's vision, in which the distinction of clean and unclean foods is abolished, and in Peter's interpretation of the vision, "God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean" (Acts 10:28; cf. 11:18; 15:9).⁴⁹ In his speech at the home of Cornelius Peter stresses his role as witness to all that Jesus had done, from the time of the baptism by John (Acts 10:37) to the resurrection (Acts 10:40), and he recalls the choice of the witnesses and the commission given to them (Acts 10:41–42). The reader would be reminded of the requirements for apostleship from Acts 1:21–22.⁵⁰ But for Luke there must be an authoritative confirmation of the validity of the new move of Peter, and that is given in Acts 11:1–18. Here Peter is called to give account of his actions in regard to this God-fearing Gentile, and after he does so, the Jerusalem apostles agree that repentance has also been granted to Gentiles (Acts 11:18). It is important to observe that, for Luke, the story is not over until the Jerusalem apostles have agreed that Gentiles may be members of the early community and that their admission will not create disharmony.

Interpreters of Acts have long regarded it as curious that the one who in his letters claimed to be the apostle to Gentiles played no role in that momentous first conversion. But, in fact, the narrative in Acts 10:1–11:18 is fully controlled by a theme that plays out in the book as a whole. For Luke, the importance of order in the community requires that the conversion of the first Gentile be the work of an apostle and that it be authorized by the entire group of Jerusalem apostles. After that authorization, the story can proceed, and the marvelous ministry of the non-apostolic Paul may be praised. Such an important event as the inclusion of the first Gentile cannot be seen as an unauthorized departure or a disruption of order and harmony in the early community.

The relation of Paul to the leaders in Jerusalem is most vividly treated in Luke's narrative of the apostolic conference in Acts 15. Recent studies of Acts

48. Barrett's comment at this point is germane: "The drift of the section as a whole, especially when it is viewed in the setting provided for it by Luke, is that the event marks a notable step in the extension of the Gospel to the world outside Judaism. . . Yet within the narrative, Luke goes out of his way to show how close Cornelius was to Judaism" (Barrett, *Acts* 1:493).

49. The contrast between the vision and its interpretation presents critics with a number of thorny issues. Dibelius (*Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, 109–22) concluded that Luke had access to a traditional conversion story similar to that of the Ethiopian and that he altered it so that it would serve as a precedent to be invoked in Acts 15. Dibelius' position is supported by Lüdemann (*Early Christianity*, 124–33) and by Jervell (*Die Apostelgeschichte*, 299–320). François Bovon ("Tradition et rédaction en Actes 10,1–11, 18") has a similar approach. He concludes that "tradition gives a literal sense to the vision, redaction a figurative sense" (p. 34). Haenchen, however, rejects Dibelius' views on the grounds that such stories were inappropriate for Christians under the influence of their eschatological convictions. See Haenchen, *Acts*, 343–63. For a compelling critique of Dibelius, see Klaus Haacker, "Dibelius und Cornelius: Ein Beispiel formgeschichtlicher Überlieferungskritik."

50. Note, however, that the terminal point in Acts 1 is the ascension, whereas in Acts 10 it is the resurrection appearances.

15 have shown that Luke used Paul's letter to the Galatians as a source for his narrative and that he intentionally subverted the Pauline letter.⁵¹ Why would he do so? It would be difficult to explain the reasons for this treatment of Galatians if Acts had been written by a companion or follower of the historical Paul. The treatment is born of an effort to read Galatians in such a way that it would not call attention to rifts between Paul and the other apostles and would not lead readers to think that Paul and his followers were unfaithful to Jewish traditions and practices. It is not unreasonable to think that it resulted from an effort to reconcile followers of Paul with followers of Peter, as the Tübingen School maintained. One of the most notable aspects of the chapter is the short speech in Acts 15:7–11, which puts Pauline words into Peter's mouth.⁵² It seems more reasonable, however, to think that there was a serious and specific challenge that the author of Acts intended to meet, a challenge that stressed the distance between Jewish and Christian practices and the opposition of Paul to the imposition on Gentile Christians not only of circumcision but of any requirements coming from Torah. Such a challenge came from Marcionite Christians, who stressed Paul's claim not to yield to the opponents of Gentile freedom for a moment (Gal 2:5). How better to counter these Marcionite assertions than by publishing a narrative of this very meeting that Paul described in Galatians, and by showing that there was no genuine disagreement between Paul and the other apostles and that the meeting ended in full accord with an agreement that some requirements from Torah were imposed on Gentile believers. The fact that the requirements as listed in Acts are said to be minimal is not the issue. Rather, the imposition of any such requirements on Gentile believers would signal to Luke's readers that Marcionite Christians were in error. Their total separation of Jewish and Christian practices is not to be countenanced; Peter cannot be regarded as a false apostle; and the distance between Jewish and Christian practices is not as great as Marcion had said. Paul's spreading of the apostolic decree (Acts 16:4) underscores his own agreement with it and leads the reader to understand Paul as quite different from the way the Marcionites portrayed him. Again, it is difficult to see why Luke would have so altered the material from Galatians except under the threat of a serious challenge such as that of Marcion.

51. See, e.g., William O. Walker, "Acts and the Pauline Corpus Revisited: Peter's Speech at the Jerusalem Conference"; see also Pervo, *Dating Acts*.

52. Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 93–101, regarded Acts 15 as literary theology, not history. He noted that the reference to Cornelius in Acts 15 would have meaning only for readers of Acts and would not have stood independently of the story in Acts 10–11. Dibelius did, however, believe that the decree was not part of Luke's invention; Luke drew on a source for the four requirements, but it was a source that did not go back to the time of Paul and Peter. Esler (*Community and Gospel in Luke-Acts: The Social and Political Motivations of Lucan Theology*, 107) recognizes the contribution of Luke: "The particular method employed by Luke to legitimate Jewish-Gentile table-fellowship against the background of persistent opposition from the Jerusalem church in the period before the events of 67–70 CE is both simple and yet thoroughly audacious—he re-writes the history of early Christianity relating to this subject and assigns to Peter, James and the church in Jerusalem exactly the opposite roles to those which they played in fact."

3. *Paul as a faithful Jew and a Pharisee.* For Vielhauer and many other scholars, the assertion that Paul continued to think of himself as a Pharisee even toward the evident end of his life rings false to the assertions Paul makes about himself in the letters. I agree, but I also think that the claims of Paul in Acts sound very much like anti-Marcionite assertions. In addition, the content of Paul's preaching in Acts is anti-Marcionite. While Marcion would totally divorce the Hebrew Scriptures, the prophets, and Jewish messianic expectation from Jesus, Paul in Acts asserts that Jesus is the fulfillment of these expectations.

A major objective of the scenes in Acts where Paul is on trial appears to be to portray him as a Torah-abiding Jew. In his appearance before the Sanhedrin in Acts 23, Paul submits to the Jewish high priest, quoting from Exod 22:28, "You shall not speak evil of a leader of your people" (Acts 23:5). In the next Pauline speech, before the Roman governor Felix, Paul describes himself as a loyal Jew: "I worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets" (Acts 24:14). Paul reiterates his hope in the resurrection and calls attention to this hope as Jewish (Acts 24:15). He calls attention to his return to Jerusalem to bring alms to his people and make sacrifices in the Temple. He reminds us that he was seized while engaged in a ritual of purification (Acts 24:17–18). In the hearing before Festus, Paul defends himself by saying that he has done nothing against the Jewish law or the Jewish people (Acts 25:8, 10). In the climactic hearing before Agrippa and Bernice, Paul firmly proclaims his Jewish allegiance:

All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I have belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee. And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, your Excellency, that I am accused by Jews! Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? (Acts 26:4–8)⁵³

53. Dibelius, *Studies in Acts*, 213, regards Paul's claims at his trials as part of Luke's political apologetic. "These themes are intended to emphasise the fact that Christians have not rebelled against the emperor, nor against the temple, nor against the law, but that the essential matter of dispute between them and the Jews is the question of the resurrection." Darr (*On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts*, 123) recommends that we should not take Paul's claims at these points seriously. "Given Paul's desperate situation, the reader will take these words about his membership in the Pharisaic party with a grain of salt. In any event, the emphasis of Paul's claim seems to fall on his affiliation through heritage ('a son of Pharisees'), not on the status of his present membership." Tannehill (*The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*) argues that Luke intends to present Paul "as a resourceful witness from whom other missionaries can learn" (2:290). As such, later Christians can learn how to address Jews. Tannehill adds: "This view does imply that there is a continuing concern in Acts with a mission to Jews, even though relations have been poisoned by controversy" (2:290).

When in Acts 26:22, Paul asserts that he says “nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place,” we know that the Paul who speaks here has nothing whatsoever to do with the Marcionite Paul. In fact, however, the reader of Acts should not be surprised at this claim, because the author has prepared for it by portraying a number of incidents in which Paul is shown to be just what he claims to be in his trials, the most important of which are Acts 16:1–3 and 21:18–28.

In Acts 16:1–3 Paul has Timothy circumcised. Luke explains that Timothy’s mother was Jewish and his father was Greek and that Paul wanted him to travel with him and had him circumcised because of pressure from the Jews of Lystra. Whether this act would have been anathema to the historical Paul may not be certain, but it would surely have been contrary to the Marcionite Paul. A Paul who would preach a message of release from the God of Torah would hardly participate in or even approve an act that so clearly fulfills the requirements of this God. A Paul who rejects the God of creation would not bring himself so close to this physical Jewish act. A second-century reader of Acts who was aware of Marcionite teaching would surely have seen here a deliberate rejection of that teaching.

Viewed as a response to the Marcionite challenge, the narrative of Acts 21:18–28 is very interesting. It tells of Paul’s arrival in Jerusalem and of the news that greeted him there. First we learn categorically that there are myriads of believers among the citizens of Jerusalem and that “they are all zealous for the law” (Acts 21:20). This would be an impossibility for Marcion, who saw the role of Jesus as freeing believers from the domination of Torah. Then we learn that Paul has been accused of teaching diaspora Jews to forsake Moses, to forego circumcision for their sons, and not to observe the customs (Acts 21:21). This is clearly regarded as a false charge against Paul, and he is to demonstrate its falsity by participating in a ritual of purification and paying the expenses of four men under a Nazirite vow. There should be no doubt that the purpose of this series of actions is to show that Paul did not teach the abolition of Torah. James’s statement in Acts 21:25 makes the point explicitly: “Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself observe and guard the law.”⁵⁴ It is as if Luke is saying to the reader: “You may have heard Marcionite Christians say falsely that Paul did not observe Torah, but here is what he really did.” Paul willingly engaged in the practices recommended by James but the charges against him persisted. He was seized by Asian Jews, who shouted: “This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place” (Acts 21:28). The author of Acts knows this to be a vicious falsehood, and he here attributes it to Jews from Asia. But we know it also as a claim made by Marcionites. The message to the

54. On the appropriateness of James’s advice to Paul, see Jacob Neusner, “Vow-Taking, the Nazirites, and the Law: Does James’ Advice to Paul Accord with Halakhah?”

reader is that Paul was not as the Marcionites said he was, but he was arrested because people believed this falsehood.

A few additional items may also be observed in this connection. In Acts 18:18, Paul has his hair cut because of a vow. It is not clear that Luke intended the reader to understand this act as associated with Jewish tradition. But if ancient readers would have seen it as underscoring Paul's fidelity to Jewish practices, they would almost certainly have seen it as an indication of opposition to Marcionite Christianity. Acts 20:16 pictures Paul as eager to be in Jerusalem in time for the observance of Pentecost.⁵⁵ This note would serve to let the reader know that Paul is an observant Jew and would further distance him from the Marcionite portrait of him.

Luke's characterization of Paul in Acts is internally consistent. He is a loyal Jew, obedient to Torah and faithful to Jewish practices. His message is that Jesus fulfills the words of the Hebrew prophets: he is the Messiah of Israel. Paul does not act unilaterally but only in harmony with Peter and the Jerusalem apostles. It is they who establish the authentic Christian tradition, and Paul neither adds to it nor subtracts from it. The author of Acts has made use of the characterization of Paul to produce an engaging narrative that responds, almost point by point, to the Marcionite challenge. Readers of Acts learn that the God of Jesus is the God of the Jews, that Jesus was the fulfillment of Jewish expectation as announced by the Hebrew prophets, and that the early Christian leaders continued to observe Torah and Jewish practices.

SUMMARY

Other implications of dating Acts in the second century and regarding it as responding to the challenge of Marcionite Christianity may also be of significance. Here I have attempted, first, to show that implications about the author of Acts and about its historical reliability are not materially different from those maintained by proponents of an intermediate date. Of greater significance, however, are implications about the purpose of Acts: Acts is not a document that puzzled early church leaders; it was rather accepted as it was intended, as a useful tool in the second-century debate with Marcion. Second, I listed a number of implications for the study of early Christian history, implications that require further investigation. Among the important tasks is that of understanding the ideology of Acts in a second-century context. Finally, I concentrated on implications for the interpretation of Acts in an effort to show that the interpretation benefits greatly from the assumption that Acts is an anti-Marcionite text. In particular, the characterization of Paul, a difficult problem for critical scholarship, can now be understood as motivated by the need to provide a portrait of him that answers the challenges of Marcion.

55. 1 Cor 16:8 shows that Paul continued to think in terms of the Jewish calendar.

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The Apocalypses and Acts of Paul

DO THEY KNOW THE PAULINE EPISTLES?

Robert M. Price

The goal of the present investigation is to assess the use of the Pauline epistles by the authors/redactors of the major second to fifth-century Pauline apocrypha, the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, the two surviving *Apocalypses of Paul* and the *Acts of Paul*. Our discussion will keep in mind two implicitly rival theories.

First, "catholic" documents from this period make little use of Paul's letters because these letters were guilty through association with the "heretics" who used them; Paul had become the "apostle of the heretics." Second, as argued by Dennis Ronald MacDonald,¹ whatever may have been the case generally during this period, the Acts and the non-Gnostic *Apocalypse of Paul* make little use of the epistles because of the deutero-Pauline character of the former, majoring in what for Paul were distinctly minors, i.e., visions and miracles. (Against MacDonald, one may quickly invoke the chicken-and-egg question: how is it that such a non-Pauline or deutero-Pauline picture of the apostle came so thoroughly to prevail, if not through the prior neglect of the letters?)

A fresh review of this fascinating apocryphal literature will yield insights into the contemporary use or disuse of the Pauline letters as well as into the composition of the Acts and Apocalypses themselves.

THE APOCALYPSES

Before we examine the extant Pauline apocalypses, it may be worth asking after the reason for writing such documents. If we were to begin from the standard explanation encountered in the study of the pseudepigraphical Jewish apocalypses,² we might expect that a later Christian had a revelation (or at least some

1. For a summary of the theory of orthodox neglect of Paul see William S. Babcock, "Introduction," in Babcock (ed.), *Paul and the Legacies of Paul*, , xiii-xvii; for MacDonald's viewpoint see his essay in the same collection, "Apocryphal and Canonical Narratives about Paul," 55-69.

2. Charles, *Eschatology*, 202-5; Schmithals, *The Apocalyptic Movement*, 16; Rowland, *The*

good ideas) to announce and decided to secure a wider hearing by attaching to it the name of an apostolic worthy. The connection with the historical figure whose name he or she chose might be minimal, though if the figure were already associated with visions and revelations (like Moses and Enoch) so much the better. In this case we would expect there to be some cosmetic connection of the vision with any known visionary experience of the pseudonym, and then we would expect to plunge into blue skies. After all, if the apocalyptist hasn't anything new to say, why go to the trouble?

But if we were to approach the Pauline Apocalypses with these expectations in mind, we would be seriously disappointed. In fact they are heavily indebted to traditional materials, including previous apocalypses. We might account for this seeming lack of originality by appealing to another factor sometimes cited by students of both ancient and modern apocrypha, namely simply to fill in the gap left by the loss of an ancient work, the title of which has alone survived to intrigue us. To this cause, for instance, we seem to owe the unspectacular *Epistle to the Laodiceans*.³ And here we may suggest that Paul's account of his vision of the third heaven, together with his coyness in revealing precisely what he heard there, naturally proved too great a temptation for later pseudepigraphists to resist.

Our Pauline Apocalypses all seem to conform to this type for the most part. And in such an apocalypse, primarily intended to "fill in the gap," we are not surprised to find derivative contents (again, cf. *Laodiceans*, which is a pointless cento of phrases from the canonical Philippians). Now if a Pauline pseudepigraphist were to go anywhere for traditional material with which to pad his apocalypse, where might we expect him to go? Why not to the Pauline epistles? Surely there is abundant material of a visionary nature, despite the Apostle's keeping mum on the famous Paradise revelation. He is forever vouchsafing mysteries (Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 2:7; 4:1; 15:51; Eph. 1:9; 3:3; 5:32; Col. 1:27; and commands of the Lord (14:37). He knows all manner of things about the coming of the Lord (1 Cor. 15:51–54; 1 Thess. 4:12–17), the appearance of the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:1–12), etc.

Open Heaven, 69. Rowley's explanation (*The Relevance of Apocalyptic*, 37–39), that pseudonymity was merely a literary convention arising from slavish imitation of the Book of Daniel, whose visionary author used the name simply because he wished to identify himself as the author of the earlier part of the book containing stories of Daniel, seems, to say the least, highly tenuous. Little better is the conjecture of Russell (*The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, 132 ff.) which invokes H. Wheeler Robinson's now much-disputed "corporate personality" theory. John J. Collins's explanation, that the device of pseudepigraphy aimed to lend a note of remoteness and numinous mystery to the revelations (*The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 4), is interesting, but it may be unduly influenced by modern literary theory: would ancient writers have intentionally striven for such an effect, for all that they may occasionally have achieved it?

3. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 478; Goodspeed, *Famous Biblical Hoaxes*, 81.

At least two pseudo-Pauline Apocalypses have not survived the passage of the centuries. One of these is that mentioned by Origen as accepted by the Church. This *Apocalypse of Paul* had certain points of contact with the well-known Apocalypse to be discussed presently, but H. Duensing thinks it cannot be the same text, since of the still-extant Apocalypse Sozomen says that it was unknown to older writers but appeared in the reign of Theodosius. The Apocalypse known to Origen may have been an ancestor of the later work, since both the Pauline Apocalypses known to us treat of the postmortem fate of the damned, the very topic mentioned by Origen in connection with his text.

We also hear, from Epiphanius, of a text called *The Ascension (Anabatikon) of Paul* composed by the Cainite sect and disseminated among their Gnostic brethren.⁴ It was an attempt to supply the revelation hinted of in 2 Cor. 12:1–10.

What remains are two Pauline Apocalypses proper, and a third text not strictly an apocalypse in form, but clearly related in substance, the Nag Hammadi text *The Prayer of the Apostle Paul*. Of the two formal Apocalypses the earlier is (apparently) the Nag Hammadi Apocalypse of Paul (hereafter, *Apocalypse of Paul NH*). Of this text MacRae and Murdock judge that “Nothing in [it] demands any later date than the second century”.⁵ The better known *Apocalypse of Paul* dates from “the last years of the fourth century” (M.R. James) or “the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century” (H. Duensing).⁶ *The Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, because of its apparently Valentinian coloring, would seem to stem from “between the second half of the second century and the end of the third century” (Dieter Mueller).⁷

The two Nag Hammadi texts are clearly Gnostic (from their content, not from the mere accident of their preservation at Nag Hammadi).⁸ According to the “apostle of the heretics” model we would expect to see some familiarity with the Pauline epistles in Gnostic sources. Do we find it? Indeed we do.

The Nag Hammadi Apocalypse of Paul

The *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH), surprisingly, makes only the shakiest allusion to 2 Corinthians. In 19:21–24 we read, “Then the Holy Spirit who was speaking with [him] caught him up on high to the third heaven.” But immediately we are told that “he passed beyond to the fourth [heaven],” apparently pausing in the third for no revelation at all! MacRae and Murdock say, “The ascent itself

4. James, 525.

5. George W. MacRae and William R. Murdock, “The Apocalypse of Paul,” 256–57.

6. James, 525; Duensing, “The Apocalypse of Paul,” 756.

7. Mueller, “The Prayer of the Apostle Paul,” 27.

8. Until recently the Gospel of Thomas was assumed to be Gnostic in origin and character simply on the basis of its inclusion in the ancient Gnostic library in the midst of which it was found. Indeed this gospel is susceptible to Gnostic exposition, but so are the canonical four. For a different interpretation of Thomas see Davies, *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian Wisdom*.

builds on 2 Co 12:2–4”⁹, but we might rather say it bypasses this text just as Paul bypasses the third heaven.

Instead, the Apocalypse makes clear use (as MacRae and Murdock also recognize) of Galatians. On his way to Jerusalem Paul is accosted by a “little child,” apparently a revealing angel or the polymorphic Risen Christ (who often appears in Christian apocrypha, e.g., the *Acts of John*, as a child). “I know who you are, Paul. You are he who was blessed from his mother’s womb” (18:14–17). Though such a salutation in and of itself need not be an allusion to Gal. 1:15 (it could be simply a biblical-style honorific derived from the same Old Testament sources as Gal. 1:15), the allusion is made secure by the immediately following words to Paul, “For I have come to you so that you may go up to Jerusalem to your fellow apostles” (18:17–19).

Surely this sentence refers to Paul’s account in Gal. 2:1–2, “I went up . . . to Jerusalem . . . I went up by revelation; and I laid before them (but privately before those who were of repute) the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles . . .” In the immediate context these reputable ones are identified as the “apostles” (1:19). But why would a journey “up country” to Jerusalem become the occasion for a journey to heaven? Simply because later in the epistle Paul refers to “the Jerusalem that is above” (4:26). So by creative esoteric exegesis, the apocalypticist has cleverly made the revelation of Galatians 2 into his jumping off point, rather than the visionary journey of 2 Corinthians 12.

The rest of the vision is taken up with fairly standard features of apocalyptic, including glimpses of the judgment of damned souls accosted by tormenting angels (although the scene takes place in the fourth heaven rather than in hell as in later apocalypses) and challenges which must be met if the visionary is to ascend through the heavens without hindrance.

Paul encounters one who is apparently to be identified with Daniel’s Ancient of Days and certainly with the cosmic Demiurge. This entity seeks to bar Paul’s entrance to the Ogdoad, or eighth heaven, by unleashing upon him the Principalities and Authorities. But at the suggestion of the Holy Spirit, Paul presents an unnamed “sign” before which the Demiurge and his creatures cringe.

Strikingly, in this brief text Paul himself is made a Gnostic redeemer figure (recalling the atoning savior-Paul of Col. 1:24). He it is who will proceed to descend to the lower parts of the earth and “lead captive the captivity that was led captive in the captivity of Babylon,” i.e., the sparks of pleromatic light. Here we have a reference to Eph. 4:8–9, where, however, it is Christ who descends and ascends to rescue the elect. Presumably Paul’s own mission to the Gentiles has been reinterpreted in this sense. It is this great destiny of redemption to which Paul had been “set apart from his mother’s womb” (23:3–4, another allu-

9. MacRae and Murdock, “Apocalypse of Paul,” 256.

sion, and a closer one, to Gal. 1:15) as even the Demiurge himself acknowledges, much as the demons of the Synoptics recognize the great hidden truth about Jesus.

Paul does indeed meet his fellow apostles in the heavenly Jerusalem, but they are merely a crowd of extras at the side of the stage. None speaks a word; none is named. The interesting thing here is that the historical rivalry between Paul and the Twelve has been harmonized, just as the emerging Catholic Church harmonized it, only in neither case did anyone maintain the careful balance attained by Luke, who begrudged either Peter or Paul a single miracle or apostolic feat not paralleled in the other.

As F. C. Baur pointed out,¹⁰ Jewish (Ebionite) Christianity tended to blacken Paul's memory by casting him in the role of Simon Magus, archenemy of the true gospel and its true apostle Peter, while Catholic Christianity tended to make Paul into the merest shadow and imitator of Peter. In this way, Paul could be domesticated and safely ignored, shunted into the shadow of Peter and the Twelve who even usurped his role (in church tradition) of Apostle to the Gentiles.

But the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH) has harmonized in the other direction: here Paul is central, as he was in his own conception, and the Twelve become sanctified superfluities.

The *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH), then, manifests some familiarity with two epistles anciently received as Pauline, Galatians and Ephesians. The apocalypticist may have known more epistles, but his text is really quite short, and perhaps he had no occasion, given the brief compass of the work, to make any further references.

The Prayer of the Apostle Paul

The *Prayer of the Apostle Paul* is even shorter than the *Apocalypse* (NH), but it alludes much more freely to Pauline epistles. Christ is invoked as "the one who is and who preexisted in the name that is above every name," a reference to the kenosis hymn of Phil. 2:5–11. He is "[the Lord] of Lords, the King of Ages," apparent reflections of 1 Tim. 6:15 and 1:17. Paul prays, "give me your gifts, of which you do not repent," a possible allusion to Rom. 11:29. Again, Christ is "the First-born of the pleroma of grace," a possible harking back to the gnosticizing language of Col. 1:15, 19, though really it is the common parlance of Gnosticism and need not come directly from Colossians.

This document knows not only Pauline texts, but also John's gospel (cf. the reference to "the Spirit, the Paraclete of [Truth]") and even the late doxology to the Lord's Prayer ("[for] yours is the power [and] the glory and praise and the greatness for ever and ever. [Amen.]"). There is what seems to be an exegeti-

10. *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ: His Life and Works, His Epistles and Teachings*, vol. I: 232–33 and *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, vol. I: 96–98.

cal reflection on Paul's quoted mystagogical formula in 1 Cor. 2:9, interpreting it in light of the preceding vv. 6–8. By itself, the verse, which also appears in the *Gospel of Thomas* logion 17, the *Acts of Peter* 39, and an *Apocalypse of John the Lord's Brother* contained in a Coptic *Encomium on John the Baptist*,¹¹ would seem to promise the initiate secrets which have hitherto remained hidden from human beings. This seems to be implied by the fact that these wonders are said never to have entered into the "human mind / heart of man;" presumably the eye and ear unfamiliar with them are human as well.

But the sharp eye of the composer of the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul* has noticed how in 1 Cor. 2:6 and 8 we read that the esoteric wisdom of which the Apostle speaks was hidden also from the prying archons of this age. Hence the version we read in the *Prayer*: "Grant what no angel eye has [seen] and no archon ear (has) heard and what has not entered into the human heart" (A.1.25–29). The best way to explain the *Prayer's* modification of the traditional wording is by reference to the material surrounding the verse as it appears in 1 Corinthians but not in any of the other ancient sources containing it. Our author is working from 1 Corinthians.

So the author of the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul* is clearly no stranger to the Pauline epistles. He has even spent some time in close study of the text of 1 Corinthians. We find an altogether different situation when we come to the fourth century *Apocalypse of Paul*.

The Apocalypse of Paul

The *Apocalypse of Paul* is heavily dependent on earlier apocalyptic texts. Duensing agrees with James on the evident influence on our text of the *Apocalypses of Peter, Elijah, and Zephaniah*.¹² Not surprisingly, there are also frequent echoes of the hellfire passages of Matthew and Revelation from the canonical New Testament. But I venture to go farther and to suggest that our would-be Paul also used the work of his anonymous predecessor, the writer of the *Apocalypse of Paul* (NH).

In chapter 13 of the later *Apocalypse*, Paul wishes to behold the fate of souls as they depart earthly life. He is bidden: "Look down at the earth" "And from heaven I looked down on earth, and I saw the whole world and it was as nothing in my sight. And I saw the children of men as if they were nothing and growing weaker; and I was amazed and I said to the angel: 'Is this the size of men?'"

In the next chapter, Paul sees an angel greeting a righteous soul just exiting its dead body. The angel urges the soul, "Soul, take knowledge of your body which you have left, for in the day of resurrection, you must return to the same body to receive what is promised to all the righteous."

11. Budge, *Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt*, 344–50.

12. James, 525; Duensing, 757.

Is it possible that both visions are elaborations suggested by the words of the revealing Spirit to Paul in the earlier *Apocalypse* (NH): "'Look and see your [likeness] upon the earth.' And he looked down and saw those [who were upon] the earth" (19:26–31)?

The terrifying reception granted the damned is a commonplace in apocalyptic works (e.g., the Zoroastrian *Menok i Khrat* 1.101–122),¹³ but it may not be entirely coincidental that both our Apocalypses of Paul have similar scenes of demonic retribution, a briefer one in the earlier text (20:5–22) and a more elaborate one in the later work (15–17). In both the soul of the wicked is made to face the souls of the very ones he had murdered and otherwise wronged on earth.

The fourth century *Apocalypse of Paul* has a scene (chapter 20) in which Paul arrives in the third heaven and finds himself approached by "an old man whose face shone as the sun. And he embraced me and said, 'Hail, Paul, dearly beloved of God.'" This figure turns out to be the undying Enoch. Can the fourth century apocalyptic have been inspired by this similar scene in the earlier Gnostic *Apocalypse*?:

[Then we went] up to the seventh [heaven and I saw] an old man [clothed in?] light [and whose garment] was white. [His throne], which is in the seventh heaven, [was] brighter than the sun by [seven] times. The old man spoke, saying to [me], 'Where are you going, Paul, O blessed one . . . ?' (22:23–30; 23:1–3)

As noted above, the old man in the Nag Hammadi text seems to be the Danielic Ancient of Days, but there is no real contradiction, since the apocalyptic tradition had already identified Daniel's "one like a son of man" with Enoch (*1 Enoch* LXXI:14), and in Revelation 1:13–14, the figures of the Ancient of Days and the one like a son of man have been combined. Thus for the later Pauline

13. "But when the man who is damned dies . . . the demon Vizarsh comes and binds the soul of the damned in a most shameful wise . . . And the soul of the damned cries out with a loud voice, makes moan, and in supplication makes many a hideous plea, . . . but the demon Vizarsh drags him off against his will into nethermost Hell. Then [an ugly girl] comes to meet him. And the soul of the damned says to that ill-favoured wench, 'Who art thou? for I have never seen an ill-favoured wench on earth more ill-favoured and hideous than thee.' [She replies:] 'I am thy deeds,—hideous deeds,—evil thoughts, evil words, evil deeds, and an evil religion.'" There follows a list of the man's crimes and sins against the righteous (quoted in Zaehner, *The Teachings of the Magi*, 136–37).

Islam envisions the same scenario. We read in the Koran, Surah *Qaf*, "When the two angels meet together, sitting one on the right and one on the left, not a word he utters, but by him an observer is ready. And death's agony comes in truth. . . . And the Trumpet shall be blown. . . . And every soul shall come, and with it a driver and a witness. 'Thou wast heedless of this; therefore We have now removed from thee thy covering, and so thy sight today is piercing.' [And God will say to the angels:] 'Cast, you twain, into Gehenna every froward believer, every hinderer of the good, transgressor, disquieter, who set up with God another god; there fore, you twain, cast him into the terrible chastisement.'"

This frightening postmortem encounter is graphically embellished by al-Ghazali in his twelfth century work, *The Pearl precious for unveiling knowledge of the world to come*. See Brandon, *The Judgment of the Dead*, 147.

apocalypticist so to reinterpret the imagery of his predecessor involved only a shift within the same exegetical range.

The use of Danielic imagery and the possible use of the earlier *Apocalypse* of Paul suggest two interesting points for understanding the later *Apocalypse*. First, as we have seen, the earlier text pointedly did not seize the literary opportunity generously provided by 2 Cor. 12:1–10, instead curiously sinking its roots into the shallower soil of Gal. 2:2. The later *Apocalypse* has “corrected” this seeming peculiarity, as the prologue makes explicit: “The revelation of the holy apostle Paul: the things which were revealed to him when he went up even to the third heaven and was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words.”

Thus the later apocalypticist has succumbed to the temptation to supply the tantalizing revelation which readers of 2 Corinthians had so long wondered after. In doing so, he has shrewdly reinterpreted Paul’s absolute refusal to utter what after all surpasses human speech along the lines of a rather different refusal to divulge a revelation in Daniel 12:9, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.” Suppose Paul merely meant he could not yet utter the secrets vouchsafed him in the third heaven? Suppose he had simply bequeathed them to a subsequent generation whose time had now come, i.e., the late fourth century?

The earlier apocalypticist was a Gnostic; his successor was a Catholic churchman, and apparently a monk.¹⁴ Indeed the only genuinely new element in the later work is a set of threats aimed at those who fail to keep monastic and liturgical duties as they ought. Here we see the monkish hand of our would-be Paul revealed. We might suggest that the writer was a monastic archivist much read in the earlier apocalyptic texts. Perhaps he wanted to throw a holy scare into his lazy brethren, but he felt the barbs hurled by the *Apocalypse of Peter*, being aimed at the laity, were too easily shrugged off. At hand was the *Apocalypse of Paul*, itself a favorite of earlier monastics (remember, the Nag Hammadi collection may well have been the library of the ancient monastery of Saint Pachomias), but it was dangerously Gnostic. So our “ecclesiastical redactor” set out to compile a new and orthodox *Apocalypse of Paul*, utilizing the best of previous works in the genre.

But strangely, except for the Corinthian letters, his sources seem not to have included the Pauline epistles (as we hope soon to show). Is this because they, too, shared the heretical odium that disqualified the earlier *Apocalypse of Paul*? Our next task is to examine the passages in the *Apocalypse of Paul* that might be taken as allusions to the Pauline epistles to see if the resemblances are strong enough to count them as such.

Duensing discerns an allusion to 2 Thess. 1:7–10 in the words of the angel to Paul in chapter 21, “and then the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal king, will be revealed and he will come with all his saints to dwell in it [the restored earth]

14. Duensing, 757.

and he will reign over them for a thousand years." This passage, however, seems to be a mere cento of early Christian apocalyptic phrases drawn from Jude 14; Rev. 20:6, etc. The only thing reminiscent of 2 Thessalonians is the phrase "the Lord Jesus Christ will be revealed," and this could as easily have come from 1 Pet. 1:13, "set your hope fully on the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Two passages might possibly be taken as allusions to Romans. In chapter 15, a worldly man, about to discover the error of his ways on the other side, is characterized as saying, "I eat and drink and enjoy what is in the world. For who has gone down into the underworld and coming up has told us there is a judgment there?" Might we have an allusion to the skeptical taunt of Romans 10:7, "Who will descend into the abyss?"? Possibly, but the verbal coincidence is far too slight to be sure.

We might as easily seek an echo of Paul's proposed alternative to the expectation of the resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:32, "If the dead are not raised [i.e., if there is no future judgment to face, as in our passage], 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'" Here we would seem to be on somewhat firmer ground—especially as there do seem to be other, stronger allusions to 1 Cor. 15—but still we cannot be sure we have more than a spontaneous parallel arising from the treatment of a similar theme. The parallel is just as close to Luke 16:19–31, which may be the origin of this passage of the *Apocalypse*.

In chapter 49, the beatified Job says to Paul, "For I know that the trials of this world are nothing in comparison to the consolation that comes afterwards." Duensing refers the reader to Rom. 8:18, "I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." This is indeed a close parallel, though we cannot help but wonder if the sentiment, and even the phrase, were not common in exhortations made in times of persecution; cf. Acts 14:22, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

Chapter 48 presents a rather detailed lament by the glorified Moses, who is anguished that his people have utterly and totally apostasized. The writer of this soliloquy certainly paid no mind to the more complex and more optimistic sketch of the Jews' falling away and final destiny laid out in Rom. 9–11. Could he have had it in front of him?

Chapter 14 gives us what might be an allusion to Col. 1:12. A saved soul is called "a fellow-heir with all the saints," recalling this phrase from Colossians, "giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." Yet we find pretty much the same language in 1 Pet. 3:7, "you are joint heirs of the grace of life."

This leaves us with a small set of possible allusions to the Corinthian letters. First, needless to say, there are repeated references to the third heaven journey. These occur in the prologue, in chapter 11 ("and he caught me up in the Holy Spirit and carried me up to the third part of heaven, which is the third heav-

en,”), chapter 19 (“and he lifted me up to the third heaven”), chapter 21 (“And the angel answered and said to me: ‘Whatever I now show you here and whatever you will hear, do not make it known to anyone on earth.’ And he brought me and showed me and I heard there words which it is not lawful for a man to speak. And again he said: ‘Follow me further and I shall show you what you ought to tell openly and report.”)

In this last case it is especially clear that we are dealing with the text of 2 Cor. 12:1–10, since we behold the rationalizing footwork of the author who is presuming to divulge Paul’s esoterica, yet denying that he is doing so.

In the Coptic recension only—more about this in a moment¹⁵—we find a possible allusion to 2 Cor. 3, where the Apostle ventures to compare himself with Moses, estimating himself the minister of a new and greater covenant. In the Coptic text, Christ greets Paul as “mediator of the covenant.”

In chapter 42, Paul is shown a hell of ice and snow and told it is the assigned abode of “those who say that Christ has not risen from the dead and that this flesh does not rise.” Duensing sees this as an allusion to 1 Cor. 15:12 *ff.*, and with some justification. The two clauses juxtapose the specific denial of Christ’s resurrection with that of the resurrection generally, precisely as Paul does in 1 Cor. 15: “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised” (v. 13). Of course, the same general-to-specific denial of the resurrection occurs in Acts (4:1–2; 17:31–32; 23:6–8; 24:21; 25:19 with 26:8), but the verbal parallel is not nearly as close.

It must be kept in mind that our apocalyptist is by no means shy of citing New Testament literature. There are numerous clear references to Revelation and the Gospels in the Apocalypse of Paul. Why are there hardly any demonstrable allusions to the Pauline epistles in an apocalypse credited to Paul? And if there are a very few, why are they all from the Corinthian letters?

Before we venture an explanation, let us remind ourselves that virtually the same condition obtains in the case of the epistles of Polycarp, Ignatius and 1 Clement. All these documents show themselves aware of Paul’s reputation as a great epistolarian, yet each makes strange statements implying an utter lack of familiarity with the Pauline corpus. For instance, Clement seems to know of only one Corinthian epistle (47:1). Ignatius has somewhere gotten the notion that Paul mentions the Ephesians in every letter (Ephesians 12:2). Polycarp somehow thinks Paul brags on the Philippians in his letters to “all churches” (Philippians 11:3) and that he had written several letters to the Philippian church (3:2). Such statements betray a distant second-hand knowledge of the Pauline letters. On the other hand, Polycarp, Ignatius, and 1 Clement can with some reasonable probability be shown to make allusions to 1 or 2 Corinthians.

(I remain unpersuaded by the attempts of Andreas Lindemann to secure other Pauline citations,¹⁶ save for Polycarp’s references to the Pastorals, which

15. See next page.

16. Most recently, Lindemann, “Paul in the Writings of the Apostolic Fathers,” 25–43.

are but exceptions which serve to prove the general rule, since the Pastorals are pseudepigraphical attempts to supply more “safe” Pauline epistles to replace the ones used with such profit by heretics.)

I believe that we may look to Walter Bauer’s theory as to the early currency of 1 Corinthians to find the explanation of these phenomena. Bauer suggests that, starting at least with 1 Clement, the Roman hierarchy found 1 Corinthians to be quite useful as a weapon against heresy and sectarianism. Because of this utility 1 Corinthians was early circulated, even as other Pauline letters were shunned and suppressed in Roman-leaning circles.¹⁷ This would certainly explain a few things. Our *Apocalypse* fits the pattern perfectly.

Bauer spoke only of the ecclesiastical/orthodox circulation of 1 Corinthians, but I am including 2 Corinthians as well. This is only to extend his theory farther in the same direction. I propose that “2 Corinthians” is simply a later collection of Pauline (?) fragments compiled by Roman (or other ecclesiastical/orthodox) authorities as a sequel to 1 Corinthians, i.e., a new weapon in the same arsenal. The fictional address of Corinth was chosen simply because in orthodox eyes a Corinthian epistle had by this time come simply to mean an epistle against heresy. “2 Corinthians” was tantamount to “a second treatise against heresy.” This hypothesis will serve us well in understanding the genesis of the apocryphal 3 Corinthians later on when we come to consider the *Acts of Paul*.

A Coptic Appendix/Apocalypse

A word need be said concerning the Coptic conclusion of the *Apocalypse*. Duensing thinks that it may represent the original ending, lost from all other manuscript traditions.¹⁸ If he is right, we would have an even closer parallel with the pattern evident in the Apostolic Fathers, for in the Coptic conclusion Christ greets Paul as “honoured letter writer!” We would have the very same sort of blanket statement about the great epistolarian juxtaposed with a stunning ignorance of his epistles.

Yet there is reason to doubt it. M. R. James is surely right in denying the originality of the Coptic text. Most manuscript traditions bring the *Apocalypse* to an end, rather abruptly, with chapter 51, in which Paul converses with the prophet Elijah. While I dissent from James’s guess that the original conclusion was chapter 44, in which Paul wrings from God a Sabbath rest from the torments of hell for all the poor souls interred there, I concur in his judgment, against Duensing, that the Coptic continuation and conclusion veritably crawls with traits specific to Coptic gospel apocrypha, especially the appearance of the ascended Christ to converse with the apostles atop the Mount of Olives. Here we are clearly in the neighborhood of the *Pistis Sophia*.¹⁹

17. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, 219 ff.

18. Duensing, 757, 795–96.

19. James, 555.

Yet even this result is interesting. If the Coptic conclusion is a secondary embellishment, we can consider it virtually a separate document, and it is striking that we find in it just the same pattern of knowledge of Paul's letter-writing activity coupled with the conspicuous absence of references to any but the Corinthian correspondence. The Coptic text, as we have seen, seems to make reference to 2 Cor. 3, and there is a reference to 2 Cor. 12, as Paul ascends yet again to the third heaven and is warned to reveal nothing of what he beholds there.

This reascent must be recognized as a redactional seam; in the original brief Coptic Pauline Apocalypse this trip to the third heaven must have been his initial and only trip to Paradise, an independent revelation-journey. Eventually someone added it onto the longer Apocalypse of Paul by way of harmonization.

THE ACTS of PAUL

The second century Acts of Paul was widely known, in its entirety or in part (e.g., the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* section circulated independently). As Dennis Ronald MacDonald has shown,²⁰ some of what were traditionally taken for Patristic references to the *Acts of Paul* are more likely references to some of the stories which circulated orally before they were crystallized in writing. But this fact does not appreciably change the picture. It remains apparent that the *Acts of Paul* was quite popular throughout the ancient church despite the qualms of Tertullian and the hierarchs in Asia Minor who defrocked the author of the work.

This popularity of the *Acts of Paul* is important for our purposes for two reasons. First, its image of Paul will have been a widespread and important one in the period that concerns us. Reading these Acts we are seeing just who Paul was in the minds and imaginations of a great many Christians in the second century. Second, we have another important sample of Pauline literature to offer its voice in an assessment of how widely the Pauline epistles were known to the second century church.

The most striking feature of the teaching of Paul according to the *Acts of Paul* is his forthright advocacy of the encratite doctrine.²¹ Paul teaches that one

20. MacDonald, "The Oral Legends Behind the Acts of Paul" (Chapter 1 in *The Legend and the Apostle*), 17–33.

21. I am venturing to use the term "encratite," as MacDonald does, in a broader sense than the original reference to the sect of Tatian. I believe we may extend it to cover the wider movement toward celibate, egalitarian, prophetic, rigorist, socially radical, family-rejecting, and vegetarian Christianity in the second and third centuries. This is why I do not capitalize the term. Of course, in just the same way Harnack extended the application of the term "adoptionist" from the later specific theological party to apply it to the conceptual tendency wherever it occurred. Stevan L. Davies forbears using the term "encratite" in this broader sense (*The Revolt of the Widows*, 12–13), but Schneemelcher also uses it the way I do in this paper.

must embrace celibacy in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are the continent, for to them shall God speak" (chapter 5). Paul's teaching here has notable points of contact with that of his opponents in 1 Cor. 7.

What are we to make of this? It is an important point to which we must return, for much hinges upon it. Does Paul's continence-preaching in the *Acts of Paul* presuppose 1 Cor. 7, or vice versa? Or some third option? We will be better able to say once we have briefly examined the possible allusions to the Pauline letters elsewhere in the *Acts of Paul*. To this vexing task we now turn.

Possible Allusions?

In his introduction to the *Acts of Paul* in the Hennecke-Schneemelcher collection, W. Schneemelcher ventures the noncommittal opinion that "the author perhaps takes knowledge both of [the canonical] Acts and of Paul's letters for granted".²² The question of the author's knowledge of Luke's Acts is especially difficult since the itinerary of the Apostle according to the *Acts of Paul* seems to proceed in sovereign disregard of the itinerary in the canonical Acts. It really seems hardly likely that he could have known Luke's text and so brazenly ignored it. Rather, it would make more sense if the *Acts of Paul* were an original and independent collection of oral tradition. Any definite-seeming allusions to the canonical Acts might then be best explained as later scribal assimilations to Luke's Acts at a subsequent stage of the transmission of the *Acts of Paul*, inadvertent redaction on a trivial level.

But we are concerned here with the matter of our author's possible knowledge of the letters attributed to Paul. And here, as Schneemelcher's remark implies, there is little to work with. For the moment let us bracket the apparent use of 1 Cor. 7 in the Iconium sermon in the *Acts of Paul*, chapter 5, as well as the allusions to various Pauline letters in 3 Corinthians. They are special cases and will concern us later. Our conclusions with regard to the rest of the *Acts of Paul* will in fact help us to make sense of the apparent allusions in the Iconium sermon and 3 *Corinthians*.

In chapter 2, we are told that the good Christian Anchaes refuses to "requite evil for evil." While we do indeed find this phrase amid Paul's paraenesis in Rom. 12:17, I am far from sure that the present instance of the phrase denotes the use of Romans. As all recognize, the writer of Rom. 12 is himself employing traditional material, which we also find in Matt. 5:39 and Luke 6:27-28.²³ It would be dangerous to insist that the phrasing of the sentiment as we find it in Rom. 12 is original to that context, and thus it is equally dubious to suppose that the Acts of Paul is quoting Romans. Probably he simply has access to the same paraenetic tradition.

22. W. Schneemelcher, "The Acts of Paul," in Hennecke-Schneemelcher, 343.

23. Bruce, *Paul & Jesus*, 77-78; O'Neill, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 205.

Schneemelcher thinks we may have an allusion to 2 Thess. 1:7 in this sentence from chapter 37, where Thecla assures the pagan governor that the Son of God is “to the oppressed relief.” But surely these few words are too slim a basis to claim literary dependence.

In chapter 43, Hermocrates expresses the pious hope that he “may believe as thou [Paul] hast believed in the living God.” But can we believe as Schneemelcher believes that this confession harbors an allusion to 1 Thess. 1:9? All that the two passages have in common is the phrase “the living God.”

The chances of an allusion to 1 Thess. 1:9 seem a bit better in the fragment recording Paul’s visit to Ephesus, where Paul exhorts Artimilla “no longer [to] serve idols and the steam of sacrifice, but the living God.” But surely such terminology is the stock in trade of Hellenistic Jewish missionary preaching and need not have come from 1 Thessalonians.

In the same context Paul refers to “the sonship that is given through him in whom men must be saved.” Schneemelcher here points us to Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5. But this very plenitude (relatively speaking) of possible reference points implies rather that the bare phrase “sonship” was simply a known piece of Pauline or Paulinist terminology and need denote reference to no particular text. There is not enough in common with any of the passages Schneemelcher cites for that. (We will have more to say about this question later.)

Schneemelcher suggests a reference to Phil. 4:22 in the *Martyrdom of the Holy Apostle Paul*, another sometimes independently circulated portion, the conclusion of the *Acts of Paul*. It consists solely of the notice that “a great number of believers came to him from the house of Caesar.” But if historically Paul had actually made converts of some of the imperial household, that item, sure to be remembered, would certainly have survived among Christian circles without the aid of a citation of the fact in Philippians.

Before he loses his head, Paul promises Nero “I will arise and appear to thee (in proof) that I am not dead, but alive to my Lord Christ Jesus.” Do we here have, as Schneemelcher thinks, an allusion to Rom. 14:8, or rather as I judge more probable, to Luke 20:38 (“all are alive unto him”), or to no text in particular?

As in the *Apocalypse of Paul* clear references to the Gospel of Matthew and occasionally to other New Testament writings abound, so it is by no means as if our author were shy of making references to other Christian writings. We can only explain the dearth of Pauline references by the supposition that such writings were unknown to him—or tainted by heresy and thus to be shunned.

The Iconium Sermon

We must now take up the question of the relationship between 1 Cor. 7 and the Iconium sermon. The latter would on first reading seem to abound with literary echoes of the former. The sermon is set forth in the form of a series of

beatitudes, clearly modeled upon those in the Sermon on the Mount. This fact itself is quite interesting, as it implies the writer did not know Luke's Acts, for if he had, models for apostolic sermonizing would have been plentiful as well as ready to hand there. But as it was, the closest model he could think of was the sermon of Jesus from Matthew's gospel.

Several of the beatitudes of the encratite Paul recall 1 Corinthians. The second, "Blessed are they who have kept the flesh pure, for they shall become a temple of God," brings to mind Paul's reminder to the Corinthians that collectively they are God's temple (3:16–17), as well as individually (6:19), though of course the image is not unique to Paul (1 Pet. 2:4–5).

The fifth beatitude, "Blessed are they that have wives as if they had them not," strikingly recalls Paul's words in 1 Cor. 7:29, "from now on let those who have wives live as though they had none."

The eleventh beatitude, "Blessed are they who through love of God have departed from the form of this world, for they shall judge angels and at the right hand of the Father they shall be blessed," seems to reflect 1 Cor. 7:31, "For the form of this world is passing away," as well as 6:3, "Do you not know that we are to judge angels?" The last part of the beatitude would seem to reflect Psalm 16:11, "in thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

The thirteenth beatitude, "Blessed are the bodies of the virgins, for they shall be well pleasing to God, and shall not lose the reward of their purity," carries various echoes of 1 Cor. 7:32–34, which we quote here, emphasizing the relevant phrases: "I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to *please the Lord*; but the married man is anxious about worldly affairs, how to *please his wife*, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman or *virgin* is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be *holy in body* and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about worldly affairs, how to *please her husband*."

Not only are there several pronounced verbal similarities (all of them more pronounced than any of the other alleged allusions suggested by Schneemelcher), but the effect of these is compounded by the fact that most of them reflect the same complex of verses in 1 Cor. 6–7. Thus if anyone concludes that 1 Corinthians was one of the sources of the *Acts of Paul*, we cannot for the present gainsay him. And if this is true, let us note the repetition of the pattern discerned in our consideration of the *Apocalypse of Paul*: a general ignorance of the Pauline letters with the conspicuous exception of 1 Corinthians, and this probably because this letter was circulated by the ecclesiastical authorities as a "panarion." (Of course, this observation to some extent anticipates our conclusions with regard to 3 Corinthians, and we will have to beg the reader's patience.)

Having granted for the moment the likelihood that the *Acts of Paul* employs 1 Corinthians as a source, we must now explore another possible way of accounting for the parallels, namely that portions of 1 Cor. 7 are post-Pauline and stand

in the same relation to the *Acts of Paul* as do the Pastorals: do both documents reflect traditions which claimed Paul as the great champion of encratism, the Acts embracing them, while 1 Corinthians conscripts Paul to oppose them?

First, we must decide what 1 Cor. 7 is about. Here a great deal of confusion exists among translators and commentators, most of it, one suspects, because the apparent sense is unpalatable in terms both of modern Western sexual ethics and of apologetics for Pauline authorship. I will attempt, as briefly as possible, to review the case that the chapter makes very good sense understood as a discussion primarily of celibacy, within and without marriage, framed on encratite terms.

Some translations place the statement of v. 1, "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," in quotation marks so as to make it seem an eccentric opinion to be refuted. But in view of what follows, the sentiment is surely the writer's own. There is at least an approval of some kind of celibacy here, but it is strengthened and widened if one translates, "It is good for a husband not to have sex with his wife," given the ambiguity of ἀνήρ and γυνή and the contemporary use of ἀπτεισθαι as a euphemism for "to have sexual relations with." Thus the writer already gives at least a qualified endorsement in principle to the practice of continence within marriage, a theme he will explore at greater length.

Traditionally, verse 2 ("But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.") has been taken as a sober reckoning with the danger of embracing a single, celibate life instead of getting married: since the unmarried would-be celibate is bound sooner or later to give vent to his or her sexual urges, it would be more prudent morally to be married and so to ensure oneself a legitimate sexual outlet. But the larger context (as we will see) implies that we ought instead to translate, "But because of the temptation to immorality, let each husband have [sex with] his own wife and each wife her own husband." Precisely as in English, ἐξω, "to have," was also a euphemism for sexual intercourse.

In this case, the advice is to be realistic about the chances that one partner will sooner or later prove unable to keep his or her commitment to celibacy within marriage and, because the other will not break the encratite vow, the lusty one will have to seek satisfaction elsewhere, in adultery or prostitution.

Note how this reading makes the next verses follow much more smoothly, whereas the traditional view makes 3 ff. seem to introduce a new subject out of thin air. Instead of an unrealistic commitment to permanent mutual continence, or a stubborn unilateral holding to it by one partner once the other has reconsidered, "the husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does [thus no unilateral celibacy declarations]; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does. [In contrast to permanent unilateral celibacy] do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season that you may devote yourself to prayer."

Note here the admission that sexuality and spirituality are incompatible. “But then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control [ἀκρασίαν, the opposite of ἐγκράτεια].”

In v. 6 (“I say this by way of concession, not of command.”) what is the writer conceding, allowing as a necessity, for the hardness of their hearts? The restriction of celibacy to certain periods. How he wishes all could indeed experience the glories of the sexless existence: “I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.”

V. 8 advises the single and members of the celibate order of widows to maintain their vow of celibacy, as I read it. Marriage, says v. 9, is only an option for those unable to maintain the ideal of ἐγκράτεια (οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται).

V. 10 considers a new wrinkle in encratite ethics: suppose one spouse wishes to undertake the encratite discipline but knows good and well that the other spouse will have none of it. Again, she declares unilateral celibacy, but this time legally via the expedient of divorce. But the writer cannot countenance this course of action, just as Marcion appears to have forbidden the undertaking of marriage but equally to have forbidden the dissolution of marriages already constituted.²⁴

I would see vv. 12 through 16 as a bit of a digression, treating a similar issue, that of Christian spouses divorcing pagans for fear that there are no mixed marriages in the sight of God, that the Christian is then living in sin, the children being illegitimate. But the writer reasons that one Christian partner legitimates the union. Again, do not divorce. (Note the similarity to the concern in the Pastorals that radical Christians not blacken the Christian name by antisocial behavior.)

Vv. 17 through 24 seem to be trying to put the damper on the kind of social radicalism we associate with the prophetic encratite movements of the second century.²⁵ The writer actually turns their reasoning on its head: the nearness of the end does indeed relativize all social structures and relations, but this being so, it is hardly worth the trouble to change things—like rearranging the furniture aboard the Titanic.

Vv. 25 through 38 are in some ways the crux of the problem. Who are the virgins in view here (not so clearly in view, thanks to some translators who modestly veil them)? Surely the New English Bible (with the renderings of James Moffatt and F. F. Bruce) is correct in seeing here a reference to the practice of the *virgines subintroductae*.

The NEB renders vv. 36 and 37 as follows: “But if a man has a partner in celibacy and feels that he is not behaving properly towards her, if, that is, his

24. Hoffmann, *Marcion: On the Restitution of Christianity*, 255–56, dependent on Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 4.34.1f., 5f.

25. MacDonald, “The Storytellers Behind the Legends” (Ch. II in *Legend*, 34–53); Davies, “Introduction,” *Revolt*, 11–16; Pagels, “The Paradise of Virginité Regained” (Ch. IV in *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*, 78–97).

instincts are too strong for him, and something must be done, he may do as he pleases; there is nothing wrong in it; let them marry. But if a man is steadfast in his purpose, being under no compulsion, and has complete control of his own choice; and if he has decided in his own mind to preserve his partner in virginity, he will do well. Thus he who marries his partner does well, and he who does not will do better.”

Against this interpretation many translators have resorted to various alternatives. One of the most popular is the “engaged couple” view (found in RSV, NJB, NIV, REB, TEV, J. B. Phillips, Olaf Norlie, Frank Laubach, Edgar J. Goodspeed).²⁶ Here *παρθένης* is taken to mean “fiancée” or “betrothed.” But there are two insurmountable difficulties attaching to this view. First, it is lexically impossible. *Παρθένης* never means “fiancée,” the only exception listed in the Bauer lexicon coming from a Byzantine erotic court poet of the 12th century, and thus irrelevant for both the context and the New Testament period. Second, what sense can it possibly make for the writer to advise the man to “keep” the woman in question “as his fiancée” if the decision is precisely never to marry her?

The other major alternative exegesis is the “father-daughter” view, which reads three persons into the text and envisions an arranged marriage, or at least one that a Christian father may veto unconditionally. (This view is promoted by the ERV, JB, NASB, Charles B. Williams, Kleist and Lilly, Weymouth, Montgomery, Wuest, and Cassirer.) Again, the use of *παρθένης* to mean “virgin daughter” would be very peculiar. Besides, this view would compel us to take *ὑπέρακμος* in verse 36 to mean “she is getting on past childbearing years.”

Indeed it might mean this, but it seems improbable in light of the next verse, where we seem to have the second half of a contrast (“ . . . but if he is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity, but having his desire under control . . .”). The preceding half of the sentence forms the other half of the contrast only if *ὑπέρακμος* means “his passions are strong.” In fact otherwise the chiasmic structure is destroyed in which “If anyone thinks he is not behaving properly toward his virgin” matches “has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his virgin;” “if his passions are strong” matches “having his desire under control;” and “it has to be” balances with “being under no necessity.”

In defense of the “father-daughter” view it might be urged that *γαμεῖν* in verse 36 means “to give in marriage,” but this is only certain when, as in Luke 17:27, *γαμεῖν* is coupled with *γαμιζεῖν*. Otherwise, by itself, *γαμεῖν* can and sometimes demonstrably does mean “to marry.”

Thus I find it reasonable to read 1 Cor. 7 as treating of encratite ethics. While accepting a preference for the celibate state, it attempts to moderate the encratite stance, in particular allowing that marriage “is no sin” (v. 36), that to marry is to “do well,” even if only second best (v. 38).

26. Conzelmann maintains the “engaged couple” view, unconvincingly in my opinion, in his *1 Corinthians, A Commentary*, 135–36.

We must ask whether such a debate can have occurred during the lifetime of the Apostle Paul. It hardly seems likely for the simple reason that the discussion presupposes not only an “enthusiastic” zeal for celibacy otherwise attested only for the second century and beyond, but also a church structure in which there exist celibate orders subsidized by the congregation. This is implied by the sovereign freedom from worldly concerns predicated of the *παρθένοι* who are apparently as free as the birds of the air and the flowers of the field to pursue holiness of body and spirit (vv. 32–34). Can church structure have advanced so far already in the lifetime of the Apostle Paul?

I consider it likely that much of the material in chapter 7 of 1 Corinthians is a subsequent interpolation along the lines suggested by Winsome Munro.²⁷ It deals with issues Paul would not have recognized and does so in ways uncharacteristic of him as far as we know. We can say that the author of 1 Cor. 7 is trying to moderate and to domesticate encratism, not to eradicate it.²⁸

So at least for the sake of argument we can take it as established that 1 Cor. 7 and the Acts of Paul are both dealing with the question of encratism and that both are using the memory of Paul to promote their viewpoints.

Even on this understanding of 1 Cor. 7 it is possible to envision the writer of the Acts of Paul using 1 Corinthians, though we would have to picture him rejecting the many verses which seek to moderate or actually to confute the thoroughgoing encratite gospel he espoused. This is certainly not out of the question if we only consider the way in which today’s radical Pentecostals read 1 Cor. 12–14 as compatible with their doctrine that all may and must speak in tongues, and that simultaneously in public worship. Selective citation of only amenable texts is certainly nothing new.

So it is possible that the author of the Acts of Paul made selective use of 1 Cor. 7. Yet why would he have done so? We cannot assume he would have considered it an authoritative text, part of scripture. And if it was not, then what would have motivated him to utilize a hostile text that happened simply to make reference to his views? Perhaps a more relevant analogy would be to imagine a Pentecostalist picking out a few unobjectionable quotes from an anti-Pentecostal polemical tract for inclusion in his own work. Why would he bother?

Is it possible to understand the parallels between 1 Cor. 7 and the Iconium sermon in the Acts of Paul in another way? Might both writers have drawn on a common fund of traditional encratite terms and notions?

We have already noted that the idea (encountered in the second beatitude) of keeping the body pure as a temple for God is a fairly obvious piece of moral

27. Munro, *Authority in Paul and Peter, The Identification of a Pastoral Stratum in the Pauline Corpus and 1 Peter*.

28. This was precisely the approach of St. Augustine in a later time. Pagels, “The Politics of Paradise,” (Chapter V in *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*, 98–126).

exhortation. But let us now suggest that it may be seen to comport with something else in 1 Corinthians in a less than obvious way, such as to indicate a more subtle connection between 1 Corinthians and the Acts of Paul than straight borrowing. Does not the beatitude, "Blessed are they who have kept the flesh pure, for they shall become a temple of God," not comport rather well with the logic of 6:13b, 19? "The body is not for πορνεία, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy spirit which you have within you, which you have from God?"

I suggest that, especially in light of the admission in 7:5, 34 that sexuality is, strictly speaking, not quite compatible with the highest path of spirituality, the rejection of πορνεία in 6:13b must naturally refer, and originally did refer, to sexual intercourse *per se*. The writer of 1 Corinthians no longer so understands it, and his use of it implies he is reinterpreting an originally more radical encratite formula, according to which the one devoted in body and spirit to the Lord must be united to no mortal partner. On this understanding, any sexual union, even that with a legal spouse, must constitute adultery (cf. 1 Tim. 5:11–12). This, needless to say, was precisely why the people addressed in 1 Cor. 7:1–5 were "refusing one another." I suggest, then, that the Iconium beatitude preserves the original sense of the formula, while 1 Cor. 6:13b is secondary.

The third beatitude, "Blessed are the continent, for to them God will speak," is very interesting because it does not reflect the wording of any particular statement in 1 Corinthians. But it does supply a missing link that enables us better to understand the particular situation being addressed in 1 Cor. 11:2–16. At first glance it is not quite clear who is to wear the veil while prophesying: all women, or only wives? Probably the reference is to wives in light of the discussion of Eve's having been created for Adam and subordinated to him.

The idea seems to be that wives must wear the veil as some kind of token of modesty before and subordination to their husbands. The male-female relationship here is pictured solely in terms of the husband-wife relationship. Thus wives are most likely in view. But then what of the Corinthian παρθένοι? The argument seems to bypass them entirely. Why? I suggest it is because it is presupposed that their vow of celibacy lifts them above the customary male-female (= husband-wife) framework (cf. Gal. 3:28), and their sexual modesty no longer comes into question. They are, so to speak, off limits, no longer sex objects. Thus they may go unveiled as they prophesy.

The principle underlying this state of affairs is nowhere stated in 1 Corinthians, but the beatitude supplies it: the continent have made themselves pure and proper vessels of the revelations of God, which they are to pass on to the community. Questions remain only in the case of the married Corinthian women. And sure enough, it is only their case that arises in 1 Corinthians 11. And a compromise is struck. They may indeed prophesy, but they must still bear the marks of wifely submission. So again, the material in the Acts of Paul deals with the same topic as that in 1 Cor. 7, but the former seems the more primitive.

The fifth beatitude would, on the face of it, appear the clearest possible instance of straight borrowing from 1 Corinthians. "Blessed are they who have wives as if they had them not" surely sounds more than a little like 1 Cor. 7:29, "From now on let those who have wives live as though they had none." But closer examination will reveal that, again, it is the beatitude which preserves the original sense of this striking phrase. In the light of the discussion in the whole of chapter 7, what could the phrase possibly refer to but the formal, sexless marriages of the *virgines subintroductae*?²⁹ Indeed it would be hard to think of a more clear and succinct way to sum up the idea of a celibate "marriage" than as "having a spouse as though not." And in the context of the Iconium sermon this is precisely what it does mean.

But in 1 Cor. 7 this meaning has been obscured, as can readily be seen from the author's unsuccessful attempt to apply the phrase in blanket fashion to all aspects of Christian existence: ". . . and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it" (1 Cor. 7:30). The writer has broadened out (and in so doing sacrificed) the original clearly encratite sense, making it into a nebulous, Stoicizing counsel to inner detachment applied vaguely to all of life.

I suggest that the writer of 1 Cor. 7:29–30 no longer understood the phrase, or he felt uncomfortable with it, and reinterpreted it. Since the Iconium beatitude still understands "having wives but living as not" in its straightforward sense, I judge it the more original and certainly not secondary to 1 Cor. 7.

(In precisely the same fashion Luke has reinterpreted or misinterpreted an encratite saying, "Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck," [Luke 23:29], while Thomas has preserved the original sense in logion 79.)

"Blessed are they who through love of God have departed from the form of this world, for they shall judge angels . . ." The similarity of this beatitude to the words of 1 Cor. 7:31 and 6:3 again may be best explained if both documents have independent access to common encratite paraenesis. That 1 Cor. 6:3 appeals explicitly and admittedly to common knowledge is clear: "Do you not know that we are to judge angels?"

But whence the connection between departing the worldly schema and (of all things) judging angels? Keep in mind that in the Iconium sermon the righteous encratite is always in view as the Christian ideal. It is only the sex-shunning encratite who will sit in judgment over angels. It is interesting to note that Revelation (14:4 and 20:4) makes this connection between celibacy and sharing the judgment seat of Christ, but 1 Corinthians does not make it. And

29. See the classic treatment of the subject, Hans Achelis, *Virgines subintroductae, Ein Beitrag zu I. Kor. VII*. More recently, see Brown, *The Body and Society*; Elm, 'Virgins of God'; Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*.

in failing to make it, the text severs the underlying link without which the very notion becomes wholly arbitrary. It is not just any Christians whose privilege it is to judge just any angels. We must keep in mind just what form, according to contemporary belief, the fall of the angels took. Surely it is the celibate Christians who are to judge those notorious angels “who kept not their first estate” of chastity but instead lusted after the daughters of men (Gen. 6:1–4; 1 Enoch VI and VII). The chaste encratites will rise at the judgment with the perverted Watchers and condemn them, for unlike the latter, the former made no provision for the lusts of the flesh. Who could have a better right to wield the gavel?

We have once more to conclude that the beatitude stands closer to the source and thus by no means depends on 1 Corinthians. All that now remains is to note that the eleventh beatitude (“Blessed are the virgins, for they shall be well pleasing to God and shall not lose the reward of their purity”) is not after all so close to the wording of 1 Cor. 7:32–34 as to demand direct dependence either way. It seems more likely that we are dealing with common paraenetic tradition, stock continence exhortation.

So it may not be so clear that the author of the Acts of Paul knew or referred even to 1 Corinthians. As we have seen, the rest of the narrative evidences no certain knowledge of any of the Pauline epistles. The only remaining section of the Acts where we may yet encounter Pauline references is the apocryphal 3 Corinthians. To it we must now turn.

Third Corinthians

While it is not unnatural for an ancient narrator to interrupt his story with a real or fictitious letter, just as the author of the canonical Acts has done, scholars have doubted whether 3 *Corinthians* (and the material immediately surrounding it, a letter from Corinth which prompts 3 *Corinthians* as a reply, as well as connective material between the two letters) originally formed part of the *Acts of Paul*. If this complex did not originate as part of the narrative, we face two possibilities. First, it might be that 3 *Corinthians* pre-existed the *Acts of Paul*, and the author of the Acts decided to incorporate it into his book. Second, it might be that 3 *Corinthians*, whether it pre-dates or post-dates the Acts, was only later interpolated into it after the Acts left the hand of its author.

W. Schneemelcher argues that the author of the Acts created 3 *Corinthians*. Indeed he says, “It must . . . be taken as certain that 3 Cor. was an original constituent part of the AP”.³⁰ He bases his argument on the fact that in most of the manuscript tradition, the two epistles from and to Corinth appear with some or all of the contextual (introductory and connective) material. He seems to realize

30. Schneemelcher, 342. In the Revised Edition (1992) Schneemelcher changes his opinion (228–29), convinced by A.F.J. Klijn and Willi Rordorf (then unpublished material). I prefer to stand by my own, independent arguments here.

that if the two letters occurred in any manuscripts without the adjacent text, we might have to consider, as suggested by Testuz,³¹ that the letters did originate independently.

As it happens, there is indeed such evidence, as Schneemelcher himself notes, but he discounts it, perhaps too hastily. The Bodmer Papyrus, our only Greek text of the letters, as well as some Latin manuscripts, contain only the letters with no adjacent contextual material. Why does Schneemelcher dismiss the force of this evidence? All that is apparent from his discussion is that he feels that the Bodmer Papyrus is an inferior witness on the grounds that it contains some readings judged inferior in comparison to those of later Latin manuscripts, which do, however, include the adjacent textual material.

But the form of a text and the quality of its particular readings are two entirely distinct text-critical questions. After all, may it not be that the letters began their literary life without the contextual material, and as they wended their way through the vicissitudes of scribal copying, they suffered two different kinds of corruption/embellishment? Along one track they may have accumulated the explanatory contextual material. Along another path, they may have remained formally intact but suffered corrupt readings. So the Bodmer Papyrus and its Latin congeners may well preserve the original form of the text even though they contain poorer readings of that text.

Against Schneemelcher we may also point out a form-critical parallel, that of the *apophthegmata* of the gospel tradition. It seems that certain aphorisms circulated for a while, puzzling their hearers since they contained insufficient clues as to their meaning (cf. Matt. 7:6). Eventually unknown tradents sought to supply exegeses of these aphorisms in the form of narrative introductions. In this way, a brief narrative account of what led Jesus to utter the saying provided an interpretation of it.

We can readily picture something like this occurring in the case of the two letters from and to Corinth. Perhaps they did originate as we now find them in the Bodmer Papyrus. But as they continued to circulate, they attracted to themselves short narrative introductions and continued to circulate in this form, but still independent of any larger narrative framework.

For this hypothetical state of affairs we are able to supply ancient and close analogies. First let us consider the apocryphal letters between King Abgarus of Edessa and Jesus. As James notes, these letters came to form the centerpiece of the legend of the Apostle Addai in Edessa.³² But the first appearance of the letters is their quotation by Eusebius. It is clear that Eusebius is not abstracting them from any larger narrative. Instead, he says, they come from the archives of Edessa. While Bauer is no doubt correct that their origin was not quite as

31. Schneemelcher, 341.

32. James, 477.

Eusebius would have us believe (or believed himself),³³ there is no reason to doubt that Bishop Kune did deliver them to Eusebius as discrete letters, not as part of a larger document.

Yet the letters carry with them adjacent explanatory/introductory material nonetheless: "A copy of a letter written by Abgarus the toparch to Jesus, and sent to him by means of Ananias the runner, to Jerusalem." "The answer, written by Jesus, sent by Ananias the runner to Abgarus the toparch."

Next we may consider the *Letter of Lentulus*, which purports to be the eye-witness description of Jesus written down by a Roman official. This document began as a straight narrative, not a letter. Even in this form it carried with it a brief introduction: "It is read in the annal books of the Romans that our Lord Jesus Christ, who was called by the Gentiles the prophet of truth, was of stature . . ." and so on. In all other manuscripts, however, the report of Lentulus appears as a letter, and it, too, has an introduction: "A certain Lentulus, a Roman, being an official for the Romans in the province of Judaea in the time of Tiberius Caesar, upon seeing Christ, and noting his wonderful works, his preaching, his endless miracles, and other amazing things about him, wrote thus to the Roman senate . . ." Thus we have two cases of just what Schneemelcher believes to be impossible: apocryphal letters which originated and circulated independently of any larger narrative, yet with brief introductory or connective narrative notes.

Granted, then, that the 3 *Corinthians* complex might have originated independently of the Acts of Paul in which it is now embedded; do we have reason to believe that in fact it did originate independently? Indeed we do, for as will immediately become apparent, whoever composed 3 *Corinthians* made ample use of the Pauline epistles, whereas, as we have seen, it does not seem that the author of the rest of the *Acts of Paul* did so. It now remains to show that 3 *Corinthians* did use a set of Pauline letters.

We read first that "the Corinthians were in [great] distress [over] Paul, because he was going out of the world before it was time." Though there is certainly no strong verbal parallel here, in light of what follows, it is not unlikely that we have an echo of Phil. 1:25, "I know that I shall remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith."

One of the Corinthian presbyters who send Paul a letter complaining of the infiltration of Gnostic heretics is named Stephanus, apparently a reflection of the Stephanas mentioned in 1 Cor. 1:16; 16:15. Paul's lamentation upon reading of the Gnostic blasphemies being disseminated at Corinth, "Better were it for me to die and be with the Lord than to be in the flesh and hear such things! . . ." reminds us clearly of Phil. 1:23b–24, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on

33. Bauer, 36.

your account." The narrator reports that "Paul in affliction wrote the letter," an apparent borrowing from 2 Cor. 2:4, "For I wrote you out of much affliction."

The salutation of *3 Corinthians* (3:1), "Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ," appears to have been taken directly from the salutation of Philemon. To be sure, the expression also occurs in Phlm. 9 and Eph. 3:1, but there is no way the writer would have chosen it as the salutation if he had not seen it so used in Phlm. 1. This is important, for the use of Philemon demands the use of an entire Pauline collection; otherwise, little Philemon would never have come to the writer's attention by itself.

In 3:2, Paul says, "I am in many tribulations" which looks like another reflection of 2 Cor. 2:4.

Chapter 3, verse 4, "For I delivered unto you in the beginning what I received from the apostles who were before me, . . ." is certainly a composite of 1 Cor. 15:3, "For I delivered to you first what I also received, . . ." and Gal. 1:17, "to those who were apostles before me."

Verse 7 contains a Pauline phrase, "adoption into sonship," which suggests borrowing from Rom. 8:15, 23 or Gal. 4:5.

In close proximity, vv. 19, 20, and 22 juxtapose the phrases "children of wrath" and "sons of disobedience," as we find in Eph. 2:2 and 3. The use of Ephesians also implies the use of a whole Pauline collection, if we accept the theory of Goodspeed and Knox that this epistle was composed to serve as an introduction to such a collection.

3:21 advises readers to steer clear of Gnostic troublemakers: "From them, turn ye away." We are reminded here of the admonition of the writer of the Pastorals in 2 Tim. 3:5, ". . . holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. From such people turn away."

It is possible that 3:31 ("How much more, O ye of little faith, will he raise up you who have believed in Christ Jesus, as he himself rose up?"), as Schneemelcher suggests, draws on Rom. 6:4, but the wording is not particularly close.

We are on firmer ground suggesting that the polemic against the deniers of the resurrection in 3:24 ff. comes straight from 1 Cor. 15. For instance, 3:26, "they do not know about the sowing of wheat or the other seeds, that they are cast naked into the ground and when they have perished below are raised again by the will of God in a body and clothed," depends verbally as well as conceptually on 1 Cor. 15:36–38, "You foolish man! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body which is to be, but a naked kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen."

3 Cor. 3:34–35, "But if you receive anything else, do not cause me trouble; for I have these fetters on my hands that I may gain Christ, and his marks on my body that I may attain to the resurrection of the dead," is an obvious conflation of several Pauline texts, 2 Cor. 11:4 ("For if someone comes and preaches

another Jesus from the one we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received . . ."); Gal. 6:17 ("Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."); 2 Tim. 2:9 ("the gospel for which I am suffering and wearing fetters like a criminal."); and Phil. 3:8 ("in order that I may gain Christ") and 11 ("that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.").

Immediately we find in 3 Cor. 3:36–37 ("And whoever abides by . . . the holy Gospel, he shall receive a reward . . . But he who turns aside therefrom—there is fire with him . . .") a recollection of 1 Cor. 3:13, 15 ("each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire . . . if the work which any man has built survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, . . . he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.").

What then are we to make of 3 Corinthians? We can observe three things about it. First, it knows many Pauline letters, probably the whole corpus, though it neglects to quote a few. Second, it is clearly an epistle against heresy, explicitly against Gnosticism. Third, though it is heavily theological and markedly Pauline, it is never theological where it is Pauline, except for the references to 1 Corinthians, which really constitute the exception that proves the rule. The writer seems to have known the whole corpus but to have felt comfortable with only 1 Corinthians.

We can infer that of all the letters, 1 Corinthians was not tainted with heresy in our writer's mind. No doubt the Pastorals and 2 Corinthians were equally amenable to him, but in light of the easy utility of 1 Corinthians for his purposes, the use of these others seemed superfluous. References to the other epistles show the tendency to salvage from them only "safe" elements of vague paraenesis or Pauline hagiography, precisely the elements of Paul that survived among the orthodox in the second and subsequent centuries.

I suggest that in 3 Corinthians the author was trying to produce a miniature substitute for the dubious Pauline corpus. His aim was somewhat similar to that of the writer of Ephesians, who also produced a digest of the Pauline epistles, also depending mainly on one of them, in his case Colossians.³⁴ But whereas Ephesians was intended to preface and to preinterpret the Pauline corpus in a gnosticizing direction, 3 Corinthians was apparently to substitute for the others in the manner of a Pauline *Diatessaron*.

The Pastorals had already been written to co-opt Ephesians,³⁵ prefacing and preinterpreting the Pauline corpus in an orthodox direction, but apparently the

34. Goodspeed, "The Place of Ephesus in Early Christian Literature," in *New Chapters in New Testament Study*, 29 and *The Key to Ephesians*, x; Knox, *Philemon Among the Letters of Paul*, 71–90. On the Gnosticizing character of Ephesians F. C. Baur must still be reckoned with; I for one find it too convenient to relegate the Gnostic-sounding language as an opportunistic appropriation of the opponent's terminology in order better to refute it.

35. MacDonald, *Legend*, 85–89.

“heretical” character of the epistles managed to penetrate the shield nonetheless (i.e., heretics continued to read them through their own spectacles), and our author decided that more radical measures were called for; hence *3 Corinthians*. From his standpoint, if you had *3 Corinthians*, you had all that was safe and needful of Paul.³⁶

Why designate it as another Corinthian epistle? Simply because it was now intended to supplement (or perhaps more likely to replace) the old favorite weapon against heretics, *1 Corinthians*. By this time a “Corinthian” epistle simply meant an anti-heretical epistle.

Now can we decide whether *3 Corinthians*, which we have judged to be originally independent of the *Acts of Paul*, was taken over by the author of the Acts, and so formed a part of the first version of the Acts though not written by the same author? Or was it a subsequent interpolation after the Acts had left the hand of its author? I believe the former is closer to the truth. One might argue that if the author of the Acts had known *3 Corinthians* he surely would have borrowed some of its Pauline phraseology to pepper Paul’s speeches throughout the letter. Since he did not, should we not conclude that he did not know *3 Corinthians*?

But it may be that he did use material from *3 Corinthians* elsewhere in the Acts. I suspect that the lone reference (back in the scene in the Ephesian arena) to “the sonship that is given through him,” is an allusion not to Rom. 8:15 or 23 or Gal. 4:5, but rather to 3 Cor. 3:8. Note that it is the *3 Corinthians* reference which seems to preserve a bit more of the phraseology of Romans and Galatians, whereas the reference earlier in the *Acts of Paul* retains the bare word “sonship.” This is why earlier on we could not recognize this reference as an allusion to the Pauline letters. But it may be an allusion to *3 Corinthians*.

Further I would suggest that scholars have misconstrued what are actually other allusions to and borrowings from *3 Corinthians* elsewhere in the *Acts of Paul*. Schneemelcher cites as evidence that the author of the Acts also wrote *3 Corinthians* “the kinship in spirit and in tendency between the letters and the other parts of the AP,”³⁷ but may this kinship not rather be explained as the influence upon the author of the only Pauline epistle he had, namely *3*

36. Norris (“Irenaeus’ Use of Paul,” 79–98) and Sider (“Literary Artifice and the Figure of Paul,” 99–120) argue for a wide use of Paul’s letters by orthodox as well as heretics in the second century on the basis of their study by Irenaeus and Tertullian. But such usage is by no means incompatible with Bauer’s thesis. We must keep in mind that both Irenaeus and Tertullian were heresiologists. Naturally they would be acquainted with the Pauline letters, just as they were with Marcionite and Gnostic writings. It would be far more revealing to know whether Irenaeus and Tertullian promoted the general reading of the Pauline letters among the faithful. The writer of *3 Corinthians*, too, had access to the Pauline corpus, but on my reading he certainly did not want the rank-and-file reading it. Instead he saw fit only to pass on to the Christian public a severely expurgated version in the form of *3 Corinthians* itself.

37. Schneemelcher, 342.

Corinthians? Granted, much of what he borrowed partook of the non-Pauline substance of 3 *Corinthians*, but how was the author of the Acts to know the difference? He thought he was lending Pauline color to his narrative.

And if we have correctly assessed the similarities between 3 *Corinthians* and the rest of the *Acts of Paul*, then another important conclusion follows. If the author of the Acts made such use of the one epistle available to him (perhaps it was the only one precisely because in his area 3 *Corinthians* did for a time successfully replace the Pauline corpus), we can see that, contra MacDonald, the author did not find an Acts to be a genre inappropriate to the use of Pauline letters. He did use the one single letter that he did have, and the fact that he used no others surely means he had no others to use.

CONCLUSION

Our survey of the apocryphal Pauline literature of the second to the fifth centuries disclosed that we are dealing with no less than six documents, not four as first appears to be the case: the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul*, the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Paul*, the *Apocalypse of Paul*, the Coptic Appendix/*Apocalypse of Paul*, 3 *Corinthians*, and the *Acts of Paul*. Of these, we saw that the *Prayer of the Apostle Paul* and the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse* were Gnostic compositions. The *Prayer* made use of various Gnostic-sounding or gnosticizing phrases from the Pauline epistles, while the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse* apparently knew Ephesians and Galatians and interpreted the latter in an esoteric manner. Both documents' usage of Pauline texts demonstrates the very "twisting" of "all his letters" by "unstable persons" (2 Pet. 3:16) that led, on Bauer's theory, to the shunning of the Pauline letters, in large measure, by the emerging "orthodox," or "ecclesiastical" authorities. Accordingly, when we considered the later *Apocalypse of Paul* we found that the author was probably an "ecclesiastical redactor" (specifically a monastic) who by no means strove after originality, but simply digested and regurgitated traditional sources, one of them very probably the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Paul*, tainted as it was by Gnosticism. In sanitizing and rehabilitating the Pauline apocalyptic tradition, he might have been expected to make use of the Pauline epistles which fairly brim with appropriate material. But in fact he can be shown to have used (and presumably therefore to have known) only 1 and 2 *Corinthians*.

This fact we sought to explain by reference to Bauer's theory that 1 *Corinthians* alone was promulgated by the orthodox authorities as a kind of *panarion* against all heresies. (We suggested that 2 *Corinthians* was a subsequent compilation for the same purpose, and that a "Corinthian" epistle had come to denote precisely an anti-heretical epistle.)

The same situation held good for the Coptic Appendix/*Apocalypse*, really a separate Pauline *Apocalypse*. Though it made explicit reference to Paul as a

famous epistolarian, it, too, showed awareness only of the Corinthian correspondence.

3 *Corinthians*, by contrast, used various phrases drawn from a wide variety of Pauline letters, but it used only innocuous, non-theological phrases (except in the case of the anti-heretical 1 Corinthians). The theological passages in this apocryphon were derived from non-Pauline texts or traditions. We further suggested that 3 *Corinthians* was an orthodox attempt to substitute for the Pauline corpus, tainted as it was by heretical use, a digest of “safe” material from the epistles in the form of yet another “Corinthian” (anti-heretical) epistle.

The *Acts of Paul* used traditional materials throughout, as MacDonald has shown, but we found ourselves unable to agree with his account of why the writer used no material from the Pauline letters. MacDonald ventured that the letters were inappropriate to the Acts genre. Instead we found that the writer took the trouble to incorporate 3 *Corinthians* into his Acts and even borrowed ideas and phrases from it to lend some “Pauline” color to the rest of his work. Presumably he would have so used the other Pauline letters had they been available to him.

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Evidence for a Christian Goddess

THE BENDIS-ZODIAC RELIEF AT PHILIPPI ¹

Valerie Abrahamsen

INTRODUCTION

In 1979, a marble relief depicting a goddess surrounded by two signs of the zodiac—the bull and the twins—was discovered in the so-called “bishops’ palace” of Philippi in northern Greece.² The relief has tentatively been dated to the third century CE. As reconstructed, it would show a goddess, probably Artemis/Bendis,³ with a crescent and the point of a spear behind her head and twelve zodiac symbols around her. Its reconstructed diameter would be .35 meters (or 14 inches).⁴

This plaque is significant in helping us understand more clearly the intersection between pagan and early Christian sensibilities in this important Pauline community. As we shall see through examining this particular object, some early Christians worshipped the Divine in female form. The worship of goddesses, a long-standing pattern among pagans, was adopted by some Christians and practiced even into the early Byzantine era.

PHILIPPI

Philippi in northern Greece has been inhabited at least since the Neolithic era.⁵ It is situated near both Thrace and Macedonia and was influenced by both regions over time, especially with regard to its religious heritage, as we will see below.

1. This article has been adapted from a paper originally presented at the European Studies Conference in Omaha, NE, in October 1998, and the author would like to thank members of the Boston-area chapter of the National Council of Independent Scholars for helpful feedback on an early draft of the article.

2. Tsitouridou, “Ena anaglypho apo tous Philippous,” 97.

3. Charalampos Bakirtzis, private communication, 1983.

4. Tsitouridou, 97.

5. Hoddinott, *Thracians*, 15.

In 42 BCE, Philippi was the site of a decisive battle between the forces of Brutus and Cassius and those of Antony and Octavian. When the latter were victorious, Antony installed veterans and their families in the city, adding Italian blood to the native Greek and Thracian population. By around 30 BCE, Philippi had become an official Roman colony. Thus, by St. Paul's time in the 50s CE, Philippi was growing in size and importance and its governance resembled that of other imperial colonies.

The site has been well-excavated since the early twentieth century, and the excavations have yielded excellent remains from structures that were part of a second-century CE construction project initiated by the emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–80 CE). The forum, probably lying directly on top of the site's original agora, is a rectangular area obviously (re)constructed systematically and all at one time, although some features were added later. It is bordered on the north by the Via Egnatia, one of the major imperial thoroughfares that stretched from Constantinople in the East to Albania in the West. Acts 17:1 relates that Paul traveled from Philippi through Amphipolis and Apollonia on his way to Thessaloniki; all of these cities lie on the Via Egnatia, so we can surmise that Paul did in fact use this road.⁶ The forum at Philippi includes a library, fountains, government buildings, water and sewer channels, a large stoa and various monuments, including an impressive one to the deified Livia, wife of Augustus. Twin temples, one of which was dedicated to the empress Faustina the Younger, were located in the northeastern and northwestern corners of the rectangular area.⁷

Roman shops stood along another road south of the forum, and in a block to the west was a *palaestra* consisting of various rooms, an exercise area, a small amphitheater and a large underground latrine.⁸ Third-century baths were located south of the forum. Part of the eastern portion of this complex appears to have been dedicated to the gods Liber, Libera and Herakles; interestingly, the evidence shows that Liber may have been worshipped here by women, unusual for this generally all-male cult.⁹

The theater, north of the Via Egnatia and a bit east of the forum, had been built in the fourth century BCE and refurbished in the second-third centuries CE. In the Roman period, the structure appears to have been used primarily for gladiator fights, hunting contests and mock naval battles.¹⁰ Paul would have seen the theater during his stay there.

The theater was built into the acropolis hill, and it is this hill that sets the stage for the examination of the Bendis plaque. One of the area's primary dei-

6. While Acts is in many ways fictitious, any journey that Paul would have made between Philippi and Thessaloniki would have taken him this way.

7. Collart, "Inscriptions de Philippes," 340–41; Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship at Philippi*, 11–12.

8. See Lazarides, "Philippi," 704–5; and Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 9–13.

9. Hendrix, "Philippi," 315; Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 13.

10. Collart, "Philippes," 725–26; Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 13.

ties into the early Christian era was Artemis, the virgin goddess worshipped by hunters and women in childbirth. Bendis was her Thracian name, and she was known to the Romans as Diana. Philippi's most unique feature, found on the acropolis hill, are the approximately 200 live-cut reliefs sculpted into the hill, the majority of which depict Artemis and are dedicated to her. Female priestesses were also carved, and these female depictions are *seven times* more prevalent than male figures. The reliefs date to about 200 CE, shortly after the forum was reconstructed.

As the rock reliefs suggest, women figured prominently in Philippi's religious heritage. Women joined men as leaders and participants in the cults of Dionysos, the wine god Bacchus, and Isis, an Egyptian deity often paired with her husband Serapis. In addition, a cult dedicated to Augustus' wife Livia was attested to by a colossal monument that stood in the forum; dated to the second half of the first century CE,¹¹ this base originally held over-life-size statues of five priestesses and two priests.

Therefore, one hundred years after Paul and for several centuries thereafter, pagan deities, including goddesses, were still worshipped at Philippi and women held leadership roles in those cults, including Christianity. The Christ cult remained a minority religion in Philippi's vibrant and diverse religious climate.

Artemis and Bendis at Philippi

The significance of the goddess Artemis in Graeco-Roman antiquity cannot be underestimated. She was an Olympian deity, daughter of Zeus and Leto, and twin of Apollo, but she meant much more than that to average women. The object of several major feasts and much private devotion, Artemis was petitioned for protection of women in childbirth and the health of newborns. Obviously in an agrarian society, fertility and the safe, healthy bringing-forth of new life would be significant not only for the woman and child themselves but for the entire community.

The counterpart to the *life-giving* goddess, of course, was the death-wielder, also part of Artemis's nature. Some of the rock reliefs show her killing an animal with her spear or with bow and arrow—hence the spear in the plaque. This action signifies the goddess *taking* the child's or mother's life at the time of childbirth. Such portrayals could also represent the hunter taking the life of the hunted animal; in some agricultural societies, this was accompanied by rituals: the ancients knew that the death of an animal was essential for the sustenance of a human being. Thus ancient peoples often took great pains not only to thank

11. Koukouli-Chrysantaki, "Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis," 16. She quotes Gertrude Grether, "Livia and the Roman Imperial Cult," 222–52 and states that the cult was introduced in 44 CE but, without citing a specific page number in the article, that date is uncertain. On page 246, Grether states, "Her deification, therefore, did not take place until 41 A.D., and on page 247, "[a]t the time of Livia's consecration, in 41 A.D. . . ." Barrett, *Livia: First Lady of Imperial Rome*, in his list of Significant Events, agrees with the date of 41 CE.

the deity for the gift of this nourishment but also to ensure that the entire animal species was not decimated, so that future human generations might survive.

Another aspect of Artemis was her role in healing. Healing and health are, of course, essential aspects of the mothering of small children, so there is a ready link with fertility. The Artemis cult on Thasos, an island not far from Philippi, was primarily concerned with healing and childbirth.¹² In South Thrace (south of the Danube) healing springs are linked to Roman spas, the Three Nymphs and Artemis.¹³ The Thracian Horseman/Hero—a male deity linked with Artemis/Bendis and found in great quantity in the region around Philippi—was also associated both with a king who had healing powers and, at a shrine in Bulgaria, with the healing god Asklepios.¹⁴

With regard to the *community*, healing is linked to the worship of the goddess as the city's protector. Artemis in an uncommon guise (shown with her torso covered with breasts, or possibly testicles¹⁵) was the protector of the city of Ephesus in early Christian times. This statue, now in the Louvre, shows the goddess wearing a city wall as a crown on her head. While a comparable statue has not been found at Philippi, it seems very possible that Artemis functioned in this way at Philippi: her sanctuary dominated the acropolis hill, and no other deity appears as influential in the community at this point in time (with the possible exception of the Thracian Horseman).

Artemis, then, remained a very powerful deity—even at a growing Christian community like Philippi—into the third century and later, despite competition from other powerful divinities and the emperor cult. The existence of the Bendis-zodiac plaque and its discovery in a Christian setting should give us pause. Is it possible that a church leader of the fourth century continued to revere Philippi's ancient goddess? Is it further possible that this church leader, and probably also members of his "flock," identified this ancient goddess, Artemis/Bendis, with a Christian "Goddess" in some other guise?

To answer these questions, we must examine not only the early Byzantine setting in which the Bendis-zodiac plaque was found but also the nature of zodiac symbolism for ancient peoples and the worship of other goddess figures in early Christianity.

The ZODIAC and ASTROLOGY in ANTIQUITY

The zodiac and astronomy had great significance for people in antiquity. In prehistoric times, agrarian peoples read the stars, moon and planets as a means

12. Ecole Française d'Athènes, *Guide de Thasos*, 39; Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 48.

13. Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 138; see also Hoddinott, *Thracians*, 162–63, 165, 170–71.

14. Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 70, and Ljubenova, "Ein Thrakisches Heiligtum aus der Römischen Epoche," 369–78.

to know when to mate animals, prepare fields, plant, sow, etc. They noticed the cyclical nature of the heavens, which passed through each configuration of planets on a regular basis each year; the sun has a yearly cycle, the moon a monthly one. Women were often in the best position to read and interpret these phenomena because, first, the men were away hunting, leaving women and children to tend crops and animals; and, second, because women's bodies with their 28-day cycles were synchronized to the moon's cycles.¹⁶ It was logical, then, for people living close to the earth to attribute these phenomena to a powerful *female* deity. The reading of the stars and other signs—the use of astrology to assist crops and animal husbandry—was done by both women and men.

Relatedly, there is significance in portraying *animals* processing in sequential order, that is, the zodiac. Such processions, especially those that were circular, also symbolized the cyclical motions of time. Depictions of animal processions have been found dating to prehistoric times—on European vase paintings, Minoan engravings on seals, and Neolithic stone slabs. When associated with goddess symbols such as hands and inverted V's¹⁷ and with signs of cyclical time like spirals and crescents, animal processions were almost certainly linked to the all-powerful female deity of life, death and regeneration.¹⁸

Astrology was held in high regard by many people as Christianity developed. Even into Graeco-Roman times, ancients believed that the stars influenced the weather and, through the gods whose names were given to various stars, influenced human beings as well. The heavens were divided into twelve compartments ruled over by twelve constellations, the twelve signs of the zodiac,¹⁹ some of which were animals.

Significantly, however, the deity overseeing the heavenly bodies came to be viewed in male rather than female form. The Bendis-zodiac plaque at Philippi, in contrast to this transition, represents the significance of astrology from the ancient, female perspective: Bendis, brandishing her spear for the hunt, is associated with her cyclical moon nature (the crescent) and rules over (or with) the twelve celestial beings represented by the zodiac. She is truly Queen of Heaven, and the heavenly bodies in turn rule floral, faunal and human existence.

Notably, none of the reliefs on the acropolis hill at Philippi portrayed the goddess with zodiac figures. This raises the possibility that the representation

15. Thomas, "On Not Finding Small Finds."

16. See Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*, 302, and Sjöö and Mor, *The Great Cosmic Mother*, 142–43.

17. Gimbutas explains in detail how the V symbol is associated with the goddess, especially due to the link with the pubic triangle. V's, chevrons, multiple chevrons, M's and other symbols previously considered merely "geometric" are incised in thousands of artifacts that have unmistakable connections with female objects of worship (see especially Gimbutas, *Language*, 3ff). Similarly, she cites numerous examples from prehistoric eras of hand prints as symbols of the goddess (*ibid.*, 305 ff).

18. Gimbutas, *Language*, 302.

19. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 225.

of Bendis on the zodiac plaque was a minority position, a rare way of depicting the goddess' power. By this time (third century CE) elsewhere in the empire, the zodiac had come to be associated more with figures such as Mithras, the relatively new male deity revered by soldiers, or Sol Invictus, the male Sun God. In fact, in 274 CE, the emperor Aurelian ruled that worship of the invincible sun would become the imperial religion—an abrupt change from devotion to the powerful female deities that had previously ruled the heavens. It is possible, then, that the Bendis plaque was made in defiance of this trend, or at least as an alternative to it, proclaiming that the female deity still ruled the heavens.

Supporting this is the fact that no remains of Mithras or the Sun God have come to light at Philippi or in surrounding cities. The masculine images that have been discovered are considerably more egalitarian or otherwise equated, even paired, with female deities. The pairing of male and female deities was believed by peoples of many ancient cultures to double the deities' strength.²⁰ The Philippian community reflected such pairing in several ways: the forum housed both an emperor and empress temple; the community worshipped both Artemis and Sylvanus in the "wild places" of the acropolis hill; the city's religious heritage knew of a hero god, the Thracian Horseman, and his female counterpart, Bendis; and, unlike other cities, it allowed women to worship Herakles, whose shrine also featured the male-female pair, Liber and Libera.²¹

That a plaque to the native goddess Bendis, surrounded by zodiac symbols, was found in a Byzantine Christian context, then, raises the question of whether the Christian leader/s who inhabited the bishops' palace thought of Artemis/Bendis as more than an ancient deity that had once had power and was now merely a remnant of that former status. Can we dare to imagine that an early Byzantine church leader, probably male, continued to worship a female deity alongside Jesus? Is it possible that a brand of Christianity practiced at Philippi revered primarily a goddess? If so, who was she?

The BASILICAS and the BISHOPS' PALACE

Christianity was introduced at Philippi shortly after the movement began in Palestine. St. Paul visited Philippi in the early 50s CE, writing his letter to the Philippian Christians about halfway through that decade; the Christ cult had apparently already been established there. The Acts of the Apostles and the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*, with its riveting stories of St. Thecla, contain stories about Philippi. Bishop Polycarp of Smyrna wrote to the Philippian Christians about 110 CE and mentioned divisions and conflict, and a Bishop Porphyrios from Philippi flourished around 344.²² That is the extent of Philippi's literary attestation in antiquity.

20. Gimbutas, *The Civilization of the Goddess*, 235.

21. Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 13–19.

22. See Abrahamsen, "Bishop Porphyrios and the City of Philippi," 80–85.

Where the literary evidence leaves off, the archaeological evidence steps in. A total of six basilicas have been discovered at Philippi, dating between 313 and 550 CE; the archaeologists designated them as Basilica A, Basilica B (also known as Direkler), Basilica C or Gamma, St. Paul's Basilica/Octagon complex, Beside-the-River, and Extra-Muros ("outside the wall"). Some were built when others burnt down or collapsed in earthquakes, but at any given time during these 200 years, at least two basilicas were functioning simultaneously. This suggests that quite a few Christian worshippers lived in or visited a rather small colony. The main reason for this, according to archaeologists, was Philippi's destination as a pilgrimage site, both Christian and pre-Christian. Healing was most likely the main reason for pilgrimage.²³

Each basilica tells something about Philippi's history and the nature of Christianity. Directly across the Via Egnatia from the forum are remains of a Christian basilica designated Basilica A, constructed between 450 and 500 CE. It exhibits features typical of early Byzantine basilicas: narthex, three aisles, balcony, ambo, choir area, apsidal construction at the altar (east) end, baptistery and possible priests' rooms (west end).²⁴

The interior walls were covered with marble slabs and painted designs, and the floor was composed of mosaic pavements in various geometric and floral patterns. The capitals were ornately sculpted with floral, Christian and animal motifs. The basilica was destroyed by fire in 518 CE, probably as a result of an earthquake.²⁵ To the southwest are the remains of a small Ionic hero's shrine from the third or second century BCE²⁶ and nearby the crypt traditionally purported to be the "prison of St. Paul."²⁷

Perhaps because of the destruction of Basilica A, Basilica B (Direkler) was built around 550 CE on top of the ruins of a large building south of the forum. Several of its walls, demonstrating early Byzantine architectural techniques such as alternating brick and stone, can still be seen; in fact, it was these columns that gives Direkler its name. Direkler means "columns" in Turkish, and these were the only visible portion of the structure at the site until excavations began. A dome was built above the intersection of the nave and transept.²⁸ It is this dome which may have collapsed prior to completion of the building, thereby preventing its dedication. The basilica's size, the originality of its architectural form and its decorative features make it unique among known basilicas in Greece.²⁹

23. See Hoddinott, *Early Byzantine Churches in Macedonia and Southern Serbia*; Thompson, "Philippi," 665; and Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 151–77.

24. Thompson, "Philippi," 665; original publication, Lemerle, *Philippes*.

25. Hoddinott, *Churches*, 105.

26. Hendrix, "Philippi," 314.

27. Charalambos Bakirtzis, on-site lecture, 1980. See also Bakirtzis and Koester, eds., *Philippi at the Time of Paul and after His Death*.

28. Lassus, *Early Christian and Byzantine World*, 74.

29. Collart, "Philippes," 736; original publication, Lemerle, *Philippes*.

Despite the collapse of its dome, the structure still appears to have been used for burials. Several Christian graves were found in the floor, dating from the fourth to the sixth centuries. Since one of these graves held two men and another held two women, it has been speculated that the same-sex couples formed committed missionary pairs.³⁰ The remaining graves held either single individuals or married couples.

Beside Basilica A to the west, another basilica, designated C (Greek letter gamma), was discovered when builders first began surveying for the site museum. Like the other basilicas, this too has an apse to the east. It dates to the fifth (possibly sixth) century, and so far the total length is unknown, since its western end lies under the museum.³¹

The Extra-Muros (“outside the wall”) Basilica, whose chronology is problematic, could date as early as the first half of the fourth century. It was located beside a small stream east of Philippi, near the Neapolis Gate, perhaps to commemorate Paul’s baptism of Lydia as recorded in Acts.³²

Numismatic evidence shows that this basilica had three building phases.³³ The earliest Extra-Muros Basilica, as far as can be determined, had a nave and two aisles, a semi-circular apse, galleries, a narthex and an atrium. Several annexes were attached to the northern and southern walls of the basilica. The decoration inside Extra-Muros was “simple and unassuming, although skilfully [sic] and carefully executed.”³⁴ While very little remains of the mosaics and sculptures, what is left, especially in the narthex, is instructive. Various cross designs—four-leaved types, double Maltese crosses, a Latin cross hanging from a lamb’s collar, and an encircled monogram cross composed of six ivy leaves with, on either side, Latin crosses standing on ivy stems³⁵—are in evidence, and a spiraling ivy branch with leaves appears in the mosaic floor of the nave.³⁶ The ivy leaves are highly suggestive of Bendis, “to whom in her aspect of goddess of the underworld and immortality the ivy was a sacred attribute.”³⁷

Extra-Muros, like other early Christian houses of worship and the Roman catacombs, may have been used as a martyrium. This is suggested by the presence of sixteen funerary crypts, an annex on the south side placed over a crypt, and a square reliquary crypt under the site of the altar.³⁸ The graves found in the basilica, dating from the fourth through sixth centuries, provide epigraphic

30. Lemerle, *Philippes*, 101–2; and Feissel, *Recueil*, 205–9. See also D’Angelo, “Women Partners in the New Testament,” 65–86, and Abrahamsen, “Burials from Greek Macedonia,” 33–56.

31. Bakirtzis, 1980.

32. Hoddinott, *Churches*, 99.

33. Hoddinott, *Churches*, 99. To my knowledge, no systematic study on this problem of chronology has been undertaken on Extra-Muros since Hoddinott’s.

34. Hoddinott, *Churches*, 102.

35. Hoddinott, *Churches*, 103.

36. Hoddinott, *Churches*, 103.

37. Hoddinott, *Churches*, 102.

38. Hoddinott, *Churches*, 103.

evidence for same-sex interments;³⁹ two presbyters named Paul⁴⁰ and several other male presbyters,⁴¹ and a married woman deacon.⁴²

Judging by the numismatic evidence, the first phase of Extra-Muros ended around the time of Theodosius II (408–450).⁴³ The next coins date from the reign of Justinian I (527–565); it was probably at this time that the basilica was repaired and entered its second phase. It had most likely remained in use between those periods but on a lesser scale. Extra-Muros' reconstruction occurred at a time when projects were being undertaken elsewhere by Justinian to defend the Balkans against invaders. This second phase of Extra-Muros lasted until the first half of the ninth century; the last coin from the site dates from the reign of Leo VI (886–912).

A fifth basilica discovered at Philippi is known as "Beside-the-River" Basilica. In recent years, the Ephoria of Byzantine Antiquities in Northern Greece has uncovered its apse, situated near Extra-Muros. This apse is even larger than that of Extra-Muros and dates to the fourth century, a dating established by a funerary inscription from the site. Another inscription, associated with a tomb dating to the sixth century, lists the various titles of the deceased man, who seems to have been a patron of the church, as well as the names of the bishops who were his contemporaries.⁴⁴

The final and sixth basilica at Philippi is referred to as St. Paul's Basilica and the Octagon complex. It is here that the Bendis-zodiac plaque was found.

The excavated Octagon, which lies directly east of the forum, dates to the mid-fifth century. One entered the complex from the Via Egnatia through a long, three-aisled colonnade and uncovered propylon; an apse is located on the eastern side of the structure.⁴⁵

What is now octagonal in shape was originally a small rectangular structure built about 313 CE, making it one of the earliest Christian buildings in Byzantium.⁴⁶ An important mosaic inscription from this earliest stage of the construction gives the building its name: "Bishop Porphyrios has done the mosaics of the (St.) Paul Basilica for Christ."⁴⁷ The inscription also provides other important information: Bishop Porphyrios, as known from other sources, attended the Council of Sardica, held around 344 CE;⁴⁸ the building was dedi-

39. Bakirtzis, "Ekthese Palaiochristianikon Archaiteton," 95; Hoddinott, *Churches*, 103–4; Feissel, *Recueil*, 199–200; Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 158.

40. Hoddinott, *Churches*, 103–4; Feissel, *Recueil*, 200–201; Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 158.

41. Feissel, *Recueil*, 200, 203; Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 158.

42. Bakirtzis, *Athens Annals*, 95; Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 158.

43. Hoddinott, *Churches*, 105.

44. Bakirtzis, 1980, and Hendrix, "Philippi," 317.

45. Catling, "Archaeology in Greece, 1980–81: Philippi," 34.

46. Stylianos Pelekanides, "Kultprobleme in Apostel-Paulus Oktogon von Philippi," 393.

47. Feissel, *Recueil*, 192. See also Pelekanides, "Kultprobleme," 393, and Abrahamsen, "Porphyrios."

48. See Abrahamsen, "Porphyrios."

cated to St. Paul, no doubt recalling New Testament and early patristic tradition; and it was specifically called a basilica.⁴⁹

Beside this small basilica at this time was an episcopal complex consisting of a baptistery, priests' quarters, a bath complex and storage rooms.⁵⁰ This area had previously been a rather typical Roman bathing establishment; the Bendis-zodiac plaque was found in this part of the complex.

Just because St. Paul's was called a basilica, built within city walls and seemingly approved by the whole community, it is not absolutely certain that the city's population was completely or even principally Christian at this time. Rather, in the tradition of other early Christian buildings, this structure was most likely a privately owned martyrium.⁵¹ The juxtaposition here of both Christian and pagan practices on the same site, then, indicates that, while Christianity may have been gaining enough of a foothold for a wealthy individual or the government to purchase the land and construct a Christian edifice on it, that owner still respected the traditions of the local pagan populace.⁵² As a martyrium, the Christian structure could have been promulgated as its own heröon, with the hero buried in the tomb now being called a Christian martyr. This appears to be what transpired in the fourth century.

The fact that the Bendis-zodiac relief was found here suggests that the line between pagan and Christian worship was still blurred in the early Byzantine era. An artifact depicting a goddess was found in a complex that for the most part had become used by Christians for Christian purposes.

FEMALE OBJECTS of WORSHIP in EARLY CHRISTIANITY

It is well known that peoples of antiquity worshipped deities in both male and female form. What has not been extensively explored is the worship of the Divine in female form by *Christians*. There is evidence, however, that female images, if not also goddesses, were part of the developing Christ religion, both at Philippi and elsewhere in the Roman empire.

Mary was widely venerated as the mother of Jesus or the mother of God (*theotokos*), but in some places throughout the empire she also appears to have been worshipped as a goddess in her own right. Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis (Cyprus; 315–403 CE) condemned the Collyridian sect (*Haer/Panarion* 79,1). This

49. Charalambos Bakirtzis, lecture at Harvard Divinity School, February 28, 1985.

50. Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 159–60.

51. Bakirtzis, February 28, 1985. Three additional features of the rectangular building and the subsequent Octagons on top of it support this hypothesis: 1) the fact that it was situated in very close proximity to a Hellenistic tomb (a heröon), which had apparently served as the locus of a local hero cult; 2) the discovery on and around this heröon of approximately 1500 coins, mainly bronze, of the fourth to sixth centuries; and 3) the burial of a number of young children in the courtyard of the Octagon.

52. Bakirtzis, February 28, 1985. See also Pelekanides, "Kultprobleme," 393, 396.

group, composed primarily of women and apparently originating in Thrace, the region directly northeast of Philippi, sacrificed cakes to Mary in a possible parallel to the cult of Ceres (Demeter)⁵³ or Artemis.⁵⁴ Epiphanius betrays his misogyny when he states, “For who should it be that teach thus but women? For the race of women is slippery, fallible, and humble-minded.” He goes on to explain the difference between Mary being worthy of veneration and worthy of actual worship: “Yea, verily, the body of Mary was holy, but was surely not God. Verily, the Virgin was a virgin, and was honoured, but was not given to us to worship.”⁵⁵ This reveals that there was a difference in the mind of some Christians, including Christian leaders, between revering Mary for bearing Jesus and actually worshipping her in her own right; the latter was condemned by leaders such as Epiphanius, indicating that the practice was being followed. The Collyridian sect may have lasted for as long as 100 years, between 350 and 450 CE, which is not insignificant.⁵⁶

The powerful Egyptian goddess Isis was also a model for the actual worship of Mary, both in literature and in art, and Isis was a prominent deity at Philippi from the third through fifth centuries CE. Apuleius’s novel of the mid-second century CE, *The Transformations of Lucius*, or *The Golden Ass*, preserves the author’s devotion to Isis. The story’s main character, Lucius, is accidentally turned into an ass by witchcraft; he is eventually transformed back into a man by Isis, Queen of Heaven. In a fifth- or sixth-century Christian document, the *Arabic Infancy Gospel*, a similar story is related, with Mary in the role of Isis. Mary comes upon three weeping women who relate that, through a spell, their brother was turned into a mule. Mary transforms the animal back into the young man by putting him on the mule’s back and asking Jesus to make the mule a man; the women, their mother and their brother all worship “the Lady Mary” while praising Jesus as the savior of the world. Not only would this story have been very familiar to early Christians because of *The Golden Ass*, but the iconographic image of Isis holding her infant son Horus on her lap also became one of the most direct templates for that of Mary holding the infant Jesus. Some people thus believed that “Mary and Jesus were every bit as powerful as the most powerful deity from Egypt.”⁵⁷

It is also in the *Arabic Infancy Gospel* that Mary, along with Joseph and Jesus, are referred to as gods. In chapter 17, a girl is cleansed of her leprosy by being

53. “Mariolatry,” *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 874.

54. Wright and Neil, eds., *A Protestant Dictionary*, 390, as cited in <http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Contrad/External/marytrin.html>, January 2004.

55. Translation from <http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Contrad/External/marytrin.html>, January 2004; see also <http://www.womenpriests.org/traditio/epiphany.htm>, January 2004.

56. <http://www.catholic-legate.com/epologetics/heresy.html>, January 2004.

57. *Arabic Infancy Gospel* 20–21, as cited in Miller, *Born Divine*, 300–301.

washed in Jesus' bath water. Upon witnessing this, the townspeople say, "There is no doubt that Joseph and Mary and this child are gods, not men."⁵⁸

In addition, there is evidence from Islam that Muhammad believed that early Christians saw Mary as one-third of the Trinity (and rejected that belief in the Moslem assertion that Allah was One):

And behold! Allah will say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, 'Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah?'" He will say: "Glory to Thee! Never could I say what I had no right (to say)."⁵⁹

Muhammad appears to have known of certain Christian groups that worshipped Mary, called her "Queen of Heaven," attributed to her divine attributes, and thought of her as part of the Trinity—"Father, Mary, Jesus," "Jesus, Mary, God," or "Mary, Jesus, God."⁶⁰

In addition, three pieces of religious evidence have been discovered near one of Philippi's city gates that further point to early Christians worshipping goddesses.

First, a copy of the famous yet spurious correspondence between King Abgar of Edessa and Jesus was found on an inscription near the city gate. Dating between the fifth and sixth centuries, the two letters describe Abgar seeking Jesus' help with a medical ailment and Jesus replying that he cannot come himself but will send someone after his ascension. The significance of this inscription with regard to the Bendis-zodiac plaque is its reference to healing and the protection of the city: in the inscription, Philippian residents appeal to *Jesus* on behalf of Philippi.⁶¹ Recall that Artemis may have been Philippi's city protector earlier in its history; now it seems that some citizens see Jesus in this role.

Near the Abgar-Jesus inscription was found an altar to Isis, where she is named "Queen Isis." A dove and cross, Christian symbols, were carved on one side, yet nothing was defaced. This altar, probably dating to the third century, had been moved to its find spot sometime in antiquity. Since moving it would have required tremendous planning, strength and perhaps money, it was probably accomplished in the face of some impending doom such as an invasion or an earthquake. With this altar and inscription, the Philippians appealed to Isis for the protection of their city.⁶²

However, near this altar was found an inscription to Jesus: "(Lord Jesus Christ, born of the) Virgin Mary, crucified (for us, help) this city always to

58. Cartlidge and Elliott, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha*, 92.

59. Qur'an 5:116 as cited in <http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Contrad/External/marytrin.html>, January 2004.

60. Tisdall, *The Original Sources of the Qur'an*, 180–81, as cited in <http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Quran/Contrad/External/marytrin.html>, January 2004.

61. See Picard, "Un texte nouveau de la correspondance entre Abgar D'Osoène et Jésus-Christ," 41–69; and Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 179–91.

62. Collart, "Le sanctuaire des dieux égyptiens à Philippes," 69–100; Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 185–87.

Abgar-Jesus Inscription, Philippi, Greece⁶³

- A. "Abgar, son of Uchamas, toparch, to Jesus the good savior who has appeared in the city of Jerusalem, greeting. I have heard spoken about you and your healings that you have performed (them) without herbs or drugs. It has been said that you have given sight to the blind, made the lame walk, cleansed the lepers, exorcised unclean spirits and cured those who have been long afflicted. Having been apprised of all these things about you, (I am persuaded) that you are God (. . . and that you are the Son of God, you who accomplish) these things. Therefore, (I beseech you to take the trouble to come find me and cure) the malady (which I suffer. I have heard that the Jews plot) against you but (I have a city), (which) though very small (is yet noble and sufficient for both of us)."
- B. "Blessed are you who have believed in me without seeing me. For it is written of me that those who have seen me will not believe in me, but those who have not seen me, those are the ones who will believe and live. With regard to what you have written me, that I should come find you, I must finish here all that I have been sent to do and then to ascend to the one who sent me. After my ascension I will send you one of my disciples that he may obtain for you and your city and those with you eternal life and peace. And I will make your city strong so that none of your enemies will have power over you, nor will they ever prevail."⁶⁴

remain, (and protect) those who live in it for (your) glory." Dating to the fifth or sixth century,⁶⁵ it asks *Jesus* for protection for the city. Thus two artifacts near the city gate appealed to Jesus as city protector while one appealed to Isis. However, the Jesus petition also mentions Mary, albeit formulaically. Devotion to Mary the mother of Jesus was growing throughout the empire and is implied here. In the goddess-dominated atmosphere of Byzantine Philippi, the mention of Mary in the short petition at the city gate indicates her importance for the people. While Philippians prayed to Jesus, Mary was fully present in their minds' eye and most likely bore many of the qualities of her goddess predecessors, including those of Bendis. For many worshippers, then, Mary and Bendis may have been practically indistinguishable.

63. Feissel (*Recueil*, 185–89) demonstrates that several lines of the Philipian example do not correspond to Eusebius' version; instead, on the basis of the layout of the fragments and the number of letters estimated per line, they agree more closely with the texts from Pontus or Ephesus. I present the texts as restored by Feissel based on his convincing arguments that, in many places, Picard has added more letters than possible for the size of the fragments. The overall translation changes little from what Picard's would have been, however, and still resembles Eusebius' at its main points.

64. It should be noted that the letters on Jesus' response are larger and more widely spaced than those of Abgar's letter.

65. Feissel, *Recueil*, 189–91; Abrahamsen, *Women and Worship*, 187–88.

CONCLUSION

The existence of the Bendis plaque in the bishops' quarters in "downtown Philippi" could be an insignificant religious anomaly. It is possible that it was created by an artisan who was devoted to Bendis as Queen of Heaven and accidentally found its way to the bishops' quarters. Perhaps the bishop or other Christian priest was intending to dispose of it but could not before he had to flee the town at the time of an invasion or earthquake. Perhaps the relief had no religious significance at all and was only decorative; it is possible that, since Bendis had reigned supreme in the region so far in the past, the plaque was primarily a piece of nostalgia with little underlying meaning.

However, the totality of the factors related to the plaque, the bishops' palace, the other religious finds under discussion, and Philippi's history in the fifth or sixth century suggest that the plaque did have meaning. The artifact, along with the finds at the city gate and literary evidence demonstrating the actual worship of Mary in Thrace and elsewhere, suggest that the people of Philippi, including the Christian hierarchy, still believed in the power of Philippi's traditional female deity, variously referred to as Artemis, Bendis, Diana, or Isis. These Philippians were appealing to her—in the guise of Queen of Heaven, a title also used for Mary—for help in times of peril, perhaps in some desperation. In good polytheistic fashion, they appealed to whatever powerful divinities they had at their disposal, and for them, female deities remained powerful.

Whether the plaque was a wall hanging in a private home or a votive offering from a shrine is unclear. Either way, it was fashioned to honor the ancient Thracian deity Bendis, probably known to Philippians as both Artemis and Diana, as ruler of the zodiac, that is, ruler of the heavens. If it hung in a private home, it probably reflected domestic worship. If it had originally been placed as a votive offering in a shrine, it still found its way into the bishops' palace so had perhaps been used by different people in two different contexts.

While Bendis was uppermost in the creator's and probably the user's mind, the overall religious context suggests that she was revered at the same time that many Philippians, perhaps even the plaque's owner, were also worshipping Jesus the Christ. The bishop in whose chambers the relief was found almost certainly worshipped Jesus and the Christian God. However, this bishop and his fellow Christian priests were also surrounded by Isis, designated "Queen of Heaven," and Mary. In this dynamic time, one challenged by internal and external threats, it is quite possible that most Philippians, pagan or Christian, prayed to all of these—Bendis, Jesus, Isis, Mary—for help, protection and preservation. Thus Christianity in its orthodox form, devoid of female objects of devotion, cannot be viewed as an exclusive or entirely victorious religion at Philippi in the early Byzantine era. Rather, Philippians continued to revere their ancient deities, both male and female, and appear to have equated the new Mary with the old Artemis/Bendis and Isis.

We can expect to find this pattern repeated throughout the empire, and we can thus see “Christianity” in a new light. If some people of the first several Christian centuries, calling themselves Christian, in fact worshipped a female deity—alongside or apart from Jesus—our notions of what it meant to have been a Christian must shift and must allow for new ways of envisioning divinity.

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Voting Record

Acts Seminar Fall 2005

There is only one paper in this issue of *Forum* that presented propositions to a Westar Seminar for a vote. The voting tables below represent the range of the Fellows' agreement or disagreement with theses discussed in that paper. The colors represent degrees of historical reliability (or of support for a proposition or statement).

Red: This information is virtually certain. It is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

Pink: The information is not certain, but probably reliable. It fits well with evidence that is verifiable.

Gray: The information is possible, but unreliable. It is not a clear fabrication, but lacks supporting evidence.

Black: This information is improbable. It does not fit verifiable evidence, or it seems to be a fabrication.

The votes are reported as percentages and rounded to the nearest hundredth, which occasionally results in a total not identical to 100%. The four colors are weighted, respectively, as 3, 2, 1, and 0. The weighted average (in italics) is then converted to a scale of 1.00, with each quadrant representing a different color: up to .25 = black, above .25 to .50 = gray, above .50 to .75 = pink, above .75 = red.

Implications of a Late Date for Acts (Joseph B. Tyson)

1. The Book of Acts is best situated historically as a useful tool in the second-century debate with Marcion.

0.79 Red 54% Red 33% Pink 8% Gray 4% Black

2. The characterization of Paul in Acts, as a faithful Jew and Pharisee, is motivated by the need to provide a portrait of him that answers the challenges of Marcion.

0.61 Pink 30% Red 26% Pink 39% Gray 4% Black

3. The characterization of Paul in Acts, acting in harmony with Peter and the Jerusalem apostles, is motivated by the need to provide a portrait of him that answers the challenges of Marcion.

0.67 *Pink* 36% Red 32% Pink 27% Gray 5% Black

4. The characterization of Paul in Acts, with a mission focused initially on synagogues, is motivated by the need to provide a portrait of him that answers the challenges of Marcion.

0.64 *Pink* 36% Red 23% Pink 36% Gray 5% Black