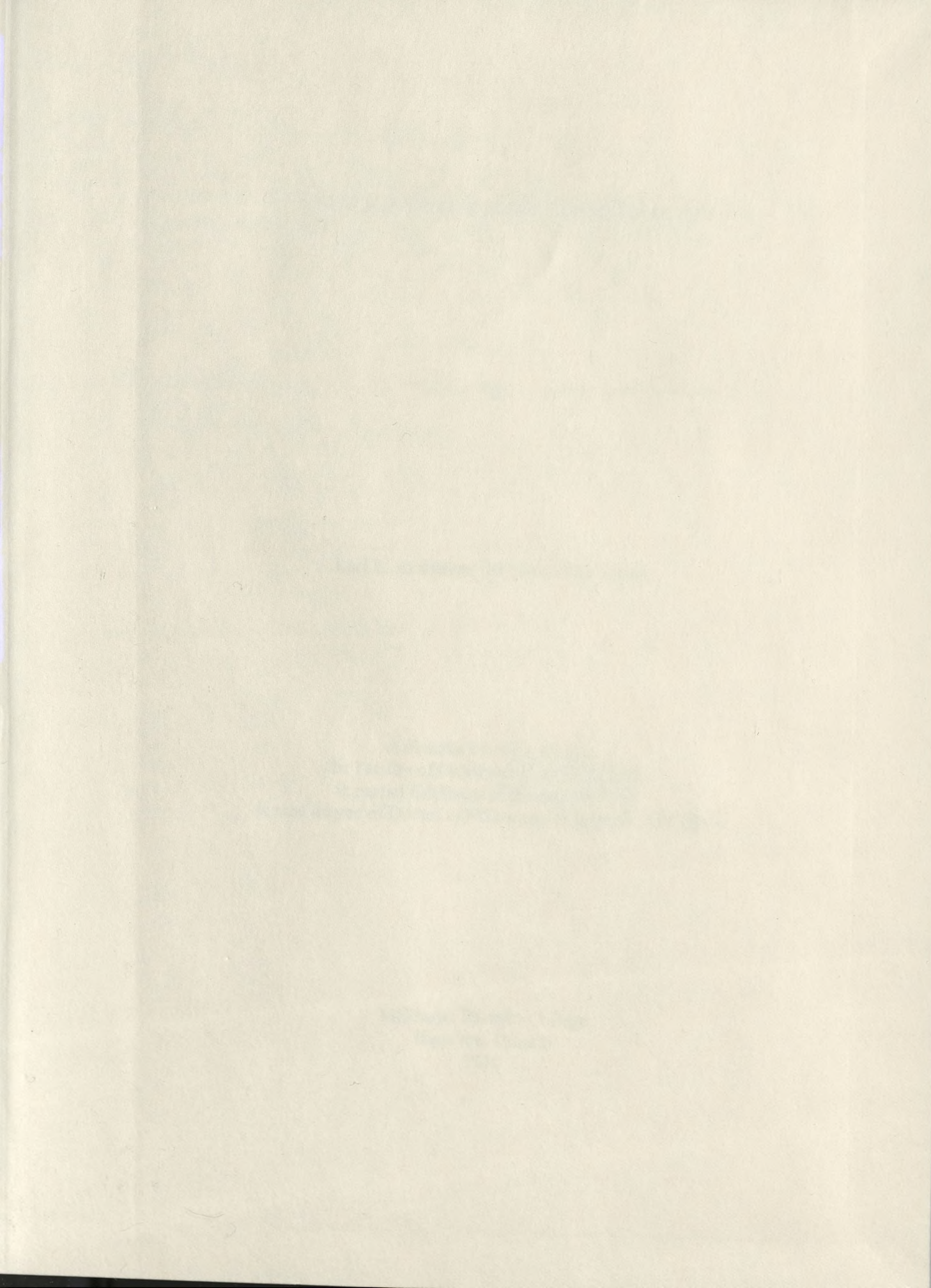


A NEW PLEA FOR AN EARLY DATE OF ACTS

BY

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Karl L. Armstrong, BComm, MDiv, MA

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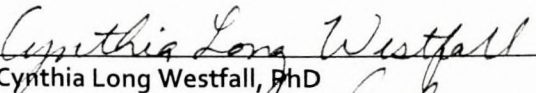
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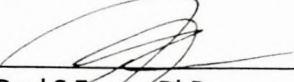
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ABSTRACT

“A New Plea for an Early Date of Acts”

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Although the date of Acts requires no introduction there has been consistent apathy in recent years with regards to this longstanding debate. While the ‘majority’ of scholars have been lulled into thinking it was written between 70 and 90 CE the vast majority of recent opinion is unanimously adamant that this middle range date is a convenient, political compromise. A large part of the problem relates to the recent and remarkable neglect of historical, textual, and source-critical matters. Compounding the problem further are the methodological flaws among the approaches to the middle and late date of Acts. A historiographical approach to the debate offers a stronger framework for evaluating the primary and secondary sources. Under this umbrella, and with the support of modern principles of textual criticism and linguistics, the historical context of Acts is determined to be concurrent with a date of 62–63 CE.

This thesis also examines the much-neglected issue of Acts and its sources. As a consequence, it was found that there is no clear evidence that Luke used Paul’s letters or the writings of Josephus—which (in concert with other evidence) effectively removes the plausibility of a late date of Acts. Additionally, the relationship between the date of Acts and the various interpretations on the end of Acts demonstrate that many of the modern and more recent theories are not only assumptive (especially with regards to genre), in

some cases they utilize anachronistic literary methods that were originally applied to nineteenth-century novels. It is proposed below that the ancient interpretation (that Luke wrote no more because he knew no more) remains the most logical in light of the combined literary and historical evidence. This interpretation is further strengthened by a study of the variants at the end of Acts, the fall of Jerusalem (and its aftermath), the great fire of Rome and the subsequent persecution of Christians under Nero—all of which strongly indicate a pre-64 CE state of affairs.

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There are several people I would like to personally thank for the many ways they have helped me throughout my PhD program. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the professors at MDC who offered a word of encouragement or insight along the way that helped shape this project from its inception. At a key time in my studies, Kelvin Mutter was one such professor who encouraged me to stay the course and keep moving forward. I am also grateful to him for giving me the opportunity to work on an article together that in many ways helped put into practice the lessons I had learned throughout my experience at MDC.

No dissertation is complete without the insights and erudite corrections from one's doctoral supervisors: Stanley E. Porter and Cynthia Long Westfall. You have both contributed to shaping my previous and (very rough) ideas and research into something that I hope will be of benefit to a much larger discussion in NT studies. I want to especially thank Stan as my primary supervisor who offered critical and timely advice on the issues relating to this thesis and also for matters relating to academic life in general and publishing in particular. I appreciate how you value your students.

Speaking of which, I am also grateful for my many classmates at MDC who encouraged me and showed me in various ways how to navigate the program from start to finish. There are a few I would like to mention in particular: David Yoon, David Fuller, and Adam Wright (a fellow Maritimer and ADC alumnus). Also from the Maritimes are my good friends Marc and Cynthia Richard who have been very kind to me for such a long time.

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For my family back east—this is where the acknowledgements become a dedication. I am sorry for my absence these past several years and this project would have been impossible without your love and support. To my mother Sally I am so thankful for your regular enquiries and conversations as to how I am doing and how my work is coming along (as well as the advice, support, and wisdom that I have benefitted from you along the way).

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Last, I want to mention that this research began many years ago when I became passionately interested in the study of Luke-Acts both before and during my graduate studies at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. I thank my former professors, classmates, and staff for preparing me for this part of the journey. In many ways, this thesis is a continuation of my earlier quest to understand what Luke was trying to communicate to the “most excellent Theophilus” (cf. Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Therefore, my dedication is not complete without giving due recognition to Luke the first Christian

historian and his God in whom he faithfully served—and who ultimately, and graciously enabled me to finish writing this thesis.

Karl L. Armstrong
September 20, 2019, Hamilton, ON

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABPRSSS	Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Special Studies Series
AGAJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
<i>AHR</i>	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentary
ASNU	Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis
BAFCS	The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	Bauer, Walter, et al. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BENT	Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Neue Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BG	Biblische Gestalten
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
<i>BJPS</i>	<i>British Journal for the Philosophy of Science</i>
BLG	Biblical Languages: Greek
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research</i>
<i>BJPS</i>	<i>British Journal for the Philosophy of Science</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CahRB</i>	<i>Cahiers de la Revue Biblique</i>

<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CEH</i>	<i>Central European History</i>
<i>CurBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
<i>EBC</i>	Expositor's Bible Commentary
<i>EC</i>	<i>Early Christianity</i>
<i>ECM</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum Graecum Editio Critica Maior</i>
<i>EtBib</i>	Études Bibliques
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
<i>Exp</i>	<i>Expositor</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>FH</i>	<i>French History</i>
<i>FN</i>	<i>Filologia Neotestamentaria</i>
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HNT</i>	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	Harvard Theological Studies
<i>H&T</i>	<i>History and Theory: Studies in Philosophy of History</i>
<i>IBRB</i>	Institute for Biblical Research Bibliographies
<i>ICC</i>	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>INTF</i>	Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Study</i>

<i>JGRChJ</i>	<i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>
JMH	Journal of Modern History
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
L&N	Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene A. Nida <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains</i> . 2 vols. New York: United Bible Societies, 1988.
<i>MDAI(RA)</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts (Römische Abteilung)</i>
<i>MJTM</i>	<i>McMaster Journal of Theology and Ministry</i>
Mnemosyne	Mnemosyne: Bibliotheca Classica Batava
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
NA ²⁸	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland, 28th edition
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NLR</i>	<i>New Left Review</i>

NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>NT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NTG	New Testament Guides
NTM	New Testament Monographs
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTRU	New Testament Textual Research Update
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
NTTSD	New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents
PAST	Pauline Studies
<i>PBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
PLL	Princeton Legacy Library
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>PRS</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
<i>PS</i>	<i>Population Studies</i>
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
<i>RBL</i>	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RECM	Routledge Early Church Monographs
<i>RelStR</i>	<i>Religious Studies Review</i>
RGHS	Routledge Guides to Using Historical Sources
<i>RHPR</i>	<i>Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses</i>
RNTS	Reading the New Testament Series
SBG	Studies in Biblical Greek

SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLStBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLTCS	Society of Biblical Literature Text-Critical Studies
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SD	Studies and Documents
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
<i>SH</i>	<i>Social History</i>
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies of the New Testament and its World
SP	Sacra Pagina
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
<i>SR</i>	<i>Social Research</i>
SSNT	Studia Semitica Novi Testamenti
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature (Lang)
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
SymS	Symposium Series
<i>ThBeitr</i>	<i>Theologische Beiträge</i>
THKNT	Theologischer handkommentar sum Neuen Testament
<i>ThLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TLG	Thesaurus Linguae Graecae Digital Library

TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
TSK	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
TU	Texte Und Untersuchungen Zur Geschichte Der Altchristlichen Literatur
<i>TynBul</i>	Tyndale Bulletin
UBSGNT	United Bible Societies Greek New Testament
VG	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZECNT	<i>Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche (1920–2005), des Urchristentums (1900-1919)</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
ZThK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: A NEW PLEA FOR AN EARLY DATE OF ACTS

Over a century ago, Rackham gave perhaps the best surviving defence for an early date of Acts. Since then, his arguments have been discussed, adapted, challenged, and dismissed. Although this thesis goes beyond his original arguments, the title is an intentional reference in appreciation of his pioneering insights that have not been duly considered amidst this ongoing debate.

Without diminishing the inherent complexities, and the additional evidence that has come into play since 1899, Rackham put the matter thus: “If the later date be correct, St. Luke is guilty of nothing less than a literary crime: he excites all his readers’ interest in the fate of St. Paul, and then leaves him without a word as to the conclusion.”¹ Given the nature and aims of the narrative (i.e. Luke 1:3), this basic question remains: is the author of Acts guilty of a literary crime? Yes, but only *if* a later date of Acts is to be accepted. Perhaps this is one thing that historians can agree upon.

Nevertheless, the process of arriving at a certain date for any historical document or the (pre-?) determination that the said author is guilty of a literary crime requires a comprehensive examination of the evidence.² A brief lesson from history should be

¹ The thesis reflects Rackham’s 1899 essay, “Plea,” 80. Harnack a few years later in 1911 similarly remains perplexed at the end of Acts. Harnack, *Date of Acts*, 95. This line of reasoning goes back as early as the second century with the *Muratorian Fragment* (lines 34–38) and Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.22:1–8. See also Michaelis, *Introduction*, 3:327 and Ebrard, *Commentary*, 3:412 who cautiously reflects an uncertainty concerning the events beyond Acts 28.

² Acts scholars from the Westar Institute (i.e. Joseph B. Tyson) rightly propose that Acts “must be interpreted in terms of its historical context” (caveat 2). Smith, “Report on the Acts Seminar,” para. 2. However, it seems rather circular that on the one hand they place great emphasis on the historical context for Acts (and this is ‘voted’ to be second century), but consider Acts as “Myth, and should not be confused

sufficient to illustrate this point. John Adams, the future second president of the United States, was given the seemingly impossible task of defending the British soldiers and their captain in the famous Boston Massacre trials of Dec. 4, 1770.³ They were on trial for firing into a Boston mob that resulted in five deaths.

When the evidence was presented and cross-examined, Adams soon proved the innocence of the British soldiers (despite the consensus view). The evidence revealed how these frightened soldiers were only trying to defend themselves from an assault on their lives—and were certainly not guilty of a ‘bloody massacre.’ In the end, the captain was acquitted along with six out of eight soldiers—and two were given a reduced sentence of manslaughter. After weighing the evidence before the court, Adams concludes with these words: “Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.”⁴

Setting aside the subjective nature of how we approach ‘facts’ and ‘evidence’ for the moment the lesson should be clear and applicable to the task of dating Acts.

Regardless of one’s opinion, this debate requires careful *interpretation* of facts and

with history” (para. 1). First, scholars have shown to varying degrees the general reliability of Acts as a historical document: e.g. Hengel, *Acts*; Gasque, *History*; Hemer, *Acts*; the large collection of essays in Winter, ed., *First Century Setting*; Marguerat, *Historian*. Second, since a historical context requires datable historical elements, how can the seminar view Acts as ‘myth’ and not ‘history’ (to some degree at least)? Third, and based on their own criteria, how is it possible to date Acts in the first place? And if so, what has the seminar discovered that has so decidedly found the ‘mythical’ context of Acts to be in the second century? Evidently one’s views on the date of Acts are directly related to the book’s perceived historical reliability. Cf. Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 75, 78. The Westar institute is the home of the Jesus seminar that was founded by Robert W. Funk.

³ According to Tosh (*Pursuit*, 108) the “evaluation of historical evidence may seem to be not unlike the cross-examination of witnesses in a court of law: in both cases the point is to test the reliability of the testimony.”

⁴ Gordon, *Independence*, 1:296. Although some events in history are inescapably factual, the empirical emphasis on facts and evidence as arbiters of truth has been greatly challenged by poststructuralist historians. See Green and Troup, *Houses*, 8; Carr, *History?*, 9, 23; and “Principles for Selecting Facts” in chapter 2.

evidence that rises above, and in the end, may be quite different than our own “wishes or inclinations.” My concern is that some of the recent views have been presented as conclusive, where, upon examination, there are serious problems in how the conclusions are drawn.⁵ Failures in methodology aside, there is also a tendency in the debate to ignore the valuable argumentation of scholars over the past century and earlier.⁶

Meanwhile, there are numerous scholars who claim a certain date of Acts with only scant reference to one or two scholars—while others do not present any argumentation at all.⁷ Having said that, this proposal will by no means be a panacea, but it should be a wake-up call for those that think this issue is settled—far from it. The aim of this thesis is not to convince everyone that the date for Acts presented is ‘definitive’—it is much more modest—it is a new plea to reconsider an early date for Acts.

Little has changed since Hemer’s instructive 1989 work with respect to the “huge variety of divergent and often contradictory criteria and arguments.”⁸ Since Pervo turned his attention to this critical subject in 2002, he has lamented how “very little detailed and penetrating research had been devoted to the date of Acts in recent decades.”⁹ He is also correct in his assessment that the 80–85 CE date is really more of a “political compromise” than the result of “scientific analysis.”¹⁰

⁵ There are a few notable exceptions listed in my note 8 below.

⁶ See chapter 2.

⁷ A few examples: Marguerat, *Historian*, 229; Dunn, *Acts*, xi. Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, 163; Gaventa, *Acts*, 51; Snyder, *Acts of Paul*, 13–14. My goal is not simply to point fingers but to insist that since Acts (and all of its textual strata) is a historical document—and our effective study and interpretation of its story demands attention to its historical and chronological setting as well as its variants.

⁸ Hemer, *Acts*, 366–70, quotation from 370. There are some recent and notable exceptions: See Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*; Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 75–79; idem, “Early Church,” 72–100; idem, “Dating,” 553–74; Schnabel, *Acts*, 27–28, 1062–63; Armstrong, “A New Plea,” 79–110; and idem, “Variants,” 87–110.

⁹ Pervo, “Suburbs,” 29–46 (30).

¹⁰ Pervo, “Suburbs,” 31. Pervo is right to conclude that “Dating Acts in the 80’s requires a great deal of explaining away” (46).

Fitzmyer, who perhaps represents the vanguard of the ‘middle ground’ date of 80–85 CE, makes the surprising claim that “there is no good reason to oppose that date, even if there is no real proof for it.”¹¹ Furthermore, I heartily share Tyson’s surprise at Fitzmyer’s concluding comments that the interpretation of Acts “depends little on its date or place of composition.”¹² For better or worse, the historical context of Acts is married to its interpretive significance.¹³

Historiographical Survey of the Date of Acts

A survey of the literature shows just how complex this debate is, and decades later, Cadbury’s caution is worth repeating:

Is there any other method by which the date of the gospel and Acts can be fixed? Probably not. At least none has yet been discovered. The extreme limits within which the composition of the two books must fall are c. 60 A.D. or a little earlier, when Paul reached Rome, and c. 150 A.D., when Marcion made use of the Gospel. The two extremes are improbable; but just as there is no decisive proof that Luke was not written before the fall of Jerusalem, there is also none that it was used by any writer before Marcion.¹⁴

¹¹ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 55. Gaventa (*Acts*, 51) writing in 2003, appears indifferent to the issue of the date of Acts and argues for a date somewhere in the 80s or 90s. Where Fitzmyer at least provides a critical assessment of the existing arguments and opinions, Gaventa offers only a single paragraph to the issue and does so without any serious consideration of the evidence or the identity of “many scholars” who support this ‘middle ground’ date.

¹² Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 55; Tyson, *Marcion*, 1.

¹³ Tyson’s (*Marcion*, 1–2) logic here is sound as well as Pervo’s aim to “undermine the widespread view that the dating of (Luke and) Acts, has little, if any, importance for the understanding of their texts.” Pervo, *Dating Acts*, viii. Further, Keener (*Acts*, 1:401) admits that if he is wrong about his post 70 CE date of Acts this will “bring into question” some of his “interpretive judgements at key points.” On the historical/historiographical context see Tosh, *Pursuit*, 10, 119, 173, 176, 290; Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 45.

¹⁴ Cadbury, “Identity,” 2:358. Elsewhere Cadbury refrains from picking an exact date for Acts when he claims the evidence is “equally indefinite, within certain obvious quite wide limits.” Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 327 (360). Haenchen, like Cadbury, does not commit to a date either, although his comments (*Acts*, 86) imply a date of 75 CE but also a date of 80 CE (164, 244–245) and possibly 85 CE (257). In a note of disappointment, Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 461) admits that Haenchen “does not argue for a ‘late date’ for Acts . . . he does not depart from the ‘consensus.’” Either way, Cadbury’s upper limit (150 CE) should be reduced accordingly since Roth considers the text of Marcion’s gospel to be “clearly related to Luke and prior to the middle of the second century.” Cf. Roth, *Marcion’s Gospel*, 1. Meanwhile this diminishes the feasibility of Tyson’s late date range of 100–150 CE (Tyson, *Marcion*, 23) while his narrowed range of 120–125 CE (78) is problematic on other grounds. Last, the upper limit may become further reduced

If the “extremes are improbable” according to Cadbury, what is the new and compelling evidence suggested by Tyson and Pervo that enable such a late date of Acts to be so compelling?¹⁵ Second, where is the “decisive proof that Luke was not written before the fall of Jerusalem”?¹⁶

For some NT scholars the pendulum has decisively swung as a result of Tyson’s *Marcion and Luke-Acts: A Defining Struggle* and especially Pervo’s *Dating Acts: Between the Evangelists and the Apologists*.¹⁷ What is both interesting and alarming is that in the last twelve years there have not been any dedicated responses to their positions. Is this a case of *qui tacet consentire videtur* (whoever is silent is taken to agree)? Furthermore, there has not been any serious consideration of Mittelstaedt’s arguments for an early date in *Lukas als Historiker: Zur Datierung des lukanischen Doppelwerkes*.¹⁸ The diversity of historic and recent opinion on the date of Acts warrants a systematic response that may prove beneficial for not only NT scholars and theologians, but also for historians, because the book of Acts is of immense importance for any study on the religious and social history of the early Roman Imperial period.

because of the similarities between Polycarp, *Phil.* 1.5 and “some Western manuscripts of Acts 2.24” that potentially dates these Western expansions to c. 112–15 CE (the date of Polycarp). See Shellard, *New Light on Luke*, 30; Parsons, *Acts*, 17.

¹⁵ Cadbury, “Identity,” 2:358. The scholarship to date suggests that a decidedly late date is anything but compelling.

¹⁶ Cadbury, “Identity,” 2:358.

¹⁷ The recent 2013 work by Snyder (that was edited by Pervo) is a good example: Snyder, *Acts of Paul*.

¹⁸ My sincere thanks to Alexander Mittelstaedt for his generosity in sending me a copy of his valuable book, Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*. See also Keener, *Acts*, 1:385; Snyder, *Acts of Paul*, 14; and Stenschke, Review of *Lukas als Historiker*, 387. Pervo in *Dating Acts* is unaware of Mittelstaedt’s 2004 dissertation, but mentions it in his 2009 essay, “Acts in the Suburbs of the Apologists,” 31. Pervo here suggests Mittelstaedt’s work is a mere “reiteration” of Hemer and Robinson’s previous arguments that “basically restated” Harnack’s influential work. This seems to be an overgeneralization of Mittelstaedt’s important contribution. The fact that Pervo confuses Alexander’s first name for Andreas lends to this supposition. Cf. Harnack, *Acts*, 290–97; idem, *Date of Acts*; Pervo, “Suburbs,” 31 (his note 17); and *Dating Acts*, 478 (works cited).

When it comes to the date of Acts, there are three main groups to which scholars subscribe (with some overlap): early (pre-70 CE), middle (post-70 CE to ± 80 CE), or late dating (90–130 CE).¹⁹ Some have dated Acts as early as the late 50s (Blass) and as late as the middle of the second century (Townsend). The main criteria in the debate that are repeatedly produced as argument points are the following: (1) the end of Paul’s imprisonment (c. 62 CE); (2) the fire of Rome and Nero’s persecution (64–65 CE); (3) the outbreak of the Jewish War (66 CE); (4) the destruction of Gaza (66 CE);²⁰ (5) the “traditional” death of Paul (67 CE); (6) the fall of Jerusalem (70 CE); (7) the date of Mark;²¹ (8) the date of the third gospel (after 70 CE or a proto-Luke pre-70 CE); (9) the uncertain lifespan of Paul’s companion (± 80); (10) the insertion of the “curse of the Minim” into the Eighteen Benedictions (c. 85–90); (11) the appearance of Josephus’s *Antiquities* (c. 93 CE) and/or his whole works (c. 100); (12) and the circulation of Paul’s letters ± 90 .²²

Table 1: Key Dates Relating to Acts in the Early Roman Imperial Period (c. 60–150 CE)

41–54 CE	Reign of Claudius
50–60s	Circulation of Paul’s letters
54–68	Reign of Nero
60–61	Paul (as a prisoner) goes to Rome

¹⁹ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52. Likewise Hemer suggests there are three main camps: (1) early, pre-70; (2) a date ± 80 ; and (3) a date “near the end of the first century or in the second.” Hemer, *Acts*, 373. My dates are borrowed from Hemer, supplemented by Fitzmyer and Pervo, and at times clarified by the author. More recently Porter narrows these groups to be around 63 (with Paul’s imprisonment under Nero), around 85 CE, and “around but no later than” 130 CE. Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 76.

²⁰ In Acts 8:26 Hemer explains there is no clear editorial allusion to the destruction of Gaza in 66 CE. Hemer, *Acts*, 371 (n. 17).

²¹ Hemer, *Acts*, 371. Dating Acts based on Mark alone is too simplistic especially because Acts relates to contemporary events more than “any other New Testament book” (Hemer, 376). Peterson asks: “Why must there have been more than a decade between the publication of Mark and the appearance of Luke-Acts?” Peterson, *Acts*, 5. A mid-date view of Acts (i.e. 85 CE) based on the standard synoptic solution and a relatively late date for Mark is problematic because both are “far from certain.” Cf. Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 77. And yet, some Acts scholars continue to date Acts based on the date of Mark. E.g. Gaventa, *Acts*, 51.

²² The criteria here are reproduced from Hemer, *Acts*, 371; cf. also Shellard, *New Light on Luke*, 31.

62	End of Paul's imprisonment + death of James (the brother of Jesus)
63–64	Death of Paul (terminus for the circulation of his letters)
July 19, 64	Great fire of Rome
64	Post-fire persecution of Christians in Rome under Nero
64–67	Death of Peter
66	Outbreak of the Jewish War (66–74 CE) and the destruction of Gaza
68	Death of Nero (r. 54–68)
68–69	Year of the four Emperor's (Galba, Otho, Vitellius ending with Vespasian)
69–79	Reign of Vespasian
Pre-70 CE	Early Dating Advocates
70	Destruction of the Jewish Temple
71	Roman triumph
73–74	Fall of Masada
75–79	Josephus writes <i>Jewish War</i>
79	Eruption of Mount Vesuvius and the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum
79–81	Reign of Titus
Post-70 CE to ±80	Middle Dating Advocates
81–96	Reign of Domitian
85–95	Persecution of Christians under Domitian
93–94	Josephus writes <i>Antiquities of the Jews</i>
94–95	Apostle John dies on the Isle of Patmos
95–100	Clement of Rome writes <i>1 Clement</i>
96–98	Reign of Nerva
98–117	Reign of Trajan
90–130 CE	Late Dating Advocates
100	Josephus's <i>Life</i> and <i>Against Apion</i> circulated shortly before his death
117–38	Reign of Hadrian
132–35	Bar Kokhba rebellion and the Second Jewish War
138–161	Reign of Antoninus Pius
144	Marcion founds his church and writes his gospel sometime before 150 CE.

Hemer notes that despite uncertainty in many of these cases, most of these events are presented as *termini post quem* along with other kinships with Gnostic writings, the Domitianic persecution, the Pastorals, Plutarch, Justin Martyr, or “with cultural phenomena exclusively characteristic of a chosen date almost anywhere along the

spectrum.”²³ Meanwhile, some scholars argue *against* a persecution setting (Schneider) while others argue *for it*, and so place the book “before and after the outbreak of a Domitianic persecution.”²⁴ This chapter, far from an exhaustive treatment of all the issues, will engage the major views of individual scholars in ascending chronological sequence, starting with early, then middle, and finally late.

The Early Dating Advocates (pre-70 CE)

The “early” group has a long tradition that goes back to ancient times.²⁵ The main issue is that Acts ends without any clear reference to the outcome of Paul’s trial.²⁶ In the modern period, it was the earlier work of Blass (1895–98), Rackham (1899) and Harnack (c. 1911) who launched the core arguments for the early group.²⁷ Where Harnack is usually given credit with the earliest and most significant view for an early date of Acts (64 CE), it was, in fact, Rackham’s article published in the first issue of *JTS* (1899) that presents the first “classic” defence for an early date of Acts.²⁸

For Rackham, the close of Acts ends the way it does because the author is unaware of the fate of Peter and Paul, James and the persecution of the Christians in

²³ Hemer, *Acts*, 371. I agree with Keener who questions the criteria for dating any document “no earlier than its first clear attestation.” Keener, *Acts*, 1:399.

²⁴ Hemer, *Acts*, 372. Though many scholars deny this persecution, Hemer finds evidence for it.

²⁵ The view is implied as early as the late second century when line 36 of the late 2nd century Muratorian fragment assumes that Luke’s compilation happened “in his own presence” (*sub praesentia eius*) while also omitting the martyrdom of Peter and Paul as well as his trip to Spain. See “Ancient Interpretation of the Enigma” and my note 57 in chapter 4 on the date of the fragment.

²⁶ Keener, *Acts*, 1:385.

²⁷ Rackham, *Acts*, 50–55; Harnack, *Abfassungszeit*, 86, 113; idem, *Date of Acts*, 92–93, 114–16; Blass, *Evangelium secundum Lucam*, lxxix; idem, *Philology of the Gospels*, 33–34; and his earlier *Acta Apostolorum*, 1–5. See also Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52.

²⁸ See Rackham, “Plea,” 76–87. Hemer (*Acts*, 367 [n. 3]) notes that Harnack’s earlier views shifted from a range “between 78 and 93” but by the time he wrote his *Acts* (290) he was “already inclined to the early date.” See also, Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 373 [n. 12]).

Rome under Nero, the destruction of Jerusalem (and the Temple)—and at the same time he considers the relations between the church and Rome to be peaceful.²⁹

Starting with the earliest date (Blass, 57–59 CE)³⁰ we have a wide range of dates to choose from: Mattill, Finegan, and Wikenhauser (near the end of Paul's imprisonment, c. 61 CE), Delebecque (Alexandrian by 61–63, Western by c. 67),³¹ Filson (early, before Peter arrives in Rome, c. 62 CE), Blaiklock, Mittelstaedt, Schnabel, Edmundson, Reicke, Harrison, and Robinson (62),³² Bihel (immediately after 62), Armstrong and Parker (62–63),³³ Lightfoot, Smith, Fuller, Robertson, and Porter (63),³⁴ Vine, Carson, Moo, Morris,

²⁹ He points to many prior OT parallel passages regarding Jerusalem (and the Temple's) destruction (Cf. Jer 20:4; Deut 28:64; 1 Kgs 8:46; Isa 5:5, 58:18; Dan 8:13; Zech 12:3; 1 Macc 4:60; Isa 29:3, 37:33; Jer 6:6, 52:4–5; Ezek 4:1–3; Ps 137:9; Hos 13:16). Luke's language is no surprise because Jerusalem had already been twice "surrounded by armies" in the preceding century and a half. See Rackham, "Plea," 76–87. Dodd most notably carries this argument in a convincing, systematic fashion. Cf. Dodd, "Jerusalem," 47–54.

³⁰ Blass, *Evangelium secundum Lucam*, lxxix; *Philology of the Gospels*, 33–34.

³¹ Delobel ("Luke-Acts," 88) interprets Delebecque's date as "about" 62 CE. Delebecque places Paul's first captivity in Rome to be from 61–63 CE. Delebecque, *Les Deux Actes des Apôtres*, 375. He says it is likely that during this time (and before the fire of 64) that Luke took advantage "pour rédiger au moins la majeure partie du texte premier des Actes [=Alexandrian]" (to write at least most of the first text of the Acts, 376). "l'incendie de Rome en 54 [sic]" is obviously an editorial oversight, cf. 382). The remaining (Western) text (380) was finished "à la fin de l'été 67" (at the end of the summer of 67). In his conclusion (p. 417), he seems to indicate that "il a retouche, perfectionne, un texte initial" (he retouched, perfected, an initial text) between the years of 63–67 CE. Hence by 67 CE, or a little afterwards, the Western text is finished.

³² Schnabel (*Acts*, 28) suggests that Acts was written sometime "after Paul's release in AD 62." Blaiklock says that a "date in the neighbourhood of AD 62 seems reasonable." Blaiklock, *Acts*, 17. Robinson settles on 62 CE (*Redating the New Testament*, 19, 72, 112) but implies a range of 57–62 CE (352). Mittelstaedt concludes that Luke was written in late Autumn of 59 in Caesarea, while Acts was written in 62 CE in Caesarea or Philippi. See Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 251–55.

³³ Armstrong, "A New Plea," 79–110; Parker, "Former Treatise," 52–58.

³⁴ Hemer (*Acts*, 369) dates Lightfoot after the fall of Jerusalem—"early seventies." However, his reference is either incorrect or he is quoting from another source. He refers to the 1893 edition of Smith and Fuller, eds., *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 40 (and 27). However, the dictionary reference on Acts (13–14) clearly argues for a date of 63 CE that reflects Lightfoot's chronology elsewhere (both the earlier 1868 and later 1898 editions argue for this date). See Lightfoot, *Biblical Essays*, 217–22 and his notes on "St. Paul's History After the Close of Acts" 419–437. Lightfoot's chronology places Paul in Rome in 61 CE (see *Biblical Essays*, 217–22) and based upon the two years of his captivity at the end of Acts his release would have been between 63 and the summer of 64 CE because of the great fire (429). From 63–66 CE Paul goes east, in 67 he revisits Macedonia and then is martyred in the spring of 68 before the death of Nero (223). Subsequently, Lightfoot claims the "Pastoral Epistles will have been written in the year 67 or 68" (429). I find it doubtful that Lightfoot would date the pastorals at this time and then date Acts in the seventies. Furthermore he states: "Here St. Luke's narrative ends abruptly; so that we are without information as to what occurred afterwards" (429). Lightfoot comes short of dating Acts but it seems reasonable to conclude

and Peterson (62–64),³⁵ R. R. Williams and Guthrie (before 64), Rackham and Harnack (by 64),³⁶ Torrey and Longenecker (64), Goodenough and Munck (early 60s), Manson (64–70 or the years immediately following), Wikenhauser (later 1958) and Dupont (after Paul's death), C. S. C. Williams and Schneckenburger (both 66–70),³⁷ Russell (pre-70), Bock (just before 70 CE),³⁸ Marshall (perhaps towards 70), and Ellis (early, perhaps around 70).³⁹

Table 2: The Early Dating Advocates (pre-70 CE)

57–59 CE	Blass
Near the end of Paul's imprisonment (c. 61)	Mattill, Finegan, and Wikenhauser (1921)
61–63 (Alexandrian), Western (c. 67)	Delebecque (du texte premier = Alexandrian)
Before Peter arrives in Rome (c. 62)	Filson
62	Blaiklock, Mittelstaedt, Schnabel, Edmundson, Reicke, Harrison, and Robinson
Immediately after 62	Bihel
62–63	Armstrong and Parker
63	Smith, Fuller, Robertson, and Porter
62–64	Vine, Carson, Moo, Morris, and Peterson
Before 64	R. R. Williams and Guthrie

he would consider 63 CE based on his chronology. Recently, Porter (*When Paul Met Jesus*, 78) expresses a similar view: "A date of around A.D. 63 has, in my opinion, the most to commend it, even though it is not as widely held as the intermediate view."

³⁵ Carson, Moo and Morris, *Introduction*, 190–94. The second edition of Carson and Moo (*Introduction*, 330) "suggest a date not long after A.D. 62" and in the "mid-60s." While Peterson thinks a "date in the 70's seems entirely reasonable" he suggests that "a good case can be made for a date as early as 62–64." Peterson, *Acts*, 5. These scholars note the (1) ignorance of Paul's letters; (2) Judaism "as a legal religion"; (3) the lack of any reference to Nero's persecution; (4) or the outcome of Paul's Roman incarceration.

³⁶ See Rackham, "Plea," 76–87; Harnack, *Date of Acts*, 92–93, 114–16. Harnack (93) thinks that Luke's "absolute silence concerning everything that happened between the years 64 and 70 A.D. is a strong argument for the hypothesis that his book was written before the year 64 A.D." Cf. also Gasque, *History*, 131–33.

³⁷ For Schneckenburger, the silence of Jerusalem and its Temple's destruction is key—and thus argues for a date "subsequent to the death of Paul, but prior to the destruction of Jerusalem." Gasque (*History*, 39) and his synthesis of Schneckenburger's 1841 work: *Über den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte*, 231–35.

³⁸ Bock, *Acts*, 27.

³⁹ Marshall, *Acts*, 51.

By 64	Rackham and Harnack
64	Torrey and Longenecker
Early 60s	Goodenough and Munck
64–70 (or immediately following)	Manson
After Paul's death (c. 64–68)	Wikenhauser (1958) and Dupont
66–70	C. S. C. Williams and Schneckenburger
Pre-70	Russell
Just before 70	Bock
Towards 70	Marshall
Around 70	Ellis

Many scholars in this group give Acts an early date for the following reasons:⁴⁰

(1) Luke's failure to mention Paul's death or his pending trial before Caesar;⁴¹ (2) the great fire of Rome in 64 CE;⁴² (3) the persecution of Christians under Nero;⁴³ (4) Luke's apologetic purpose of showing Christianity as a *religio licita* under Nero is problematic;

⁴⁰ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52.

⁴¹ Keener, *Acts*, 1:385. Tajra pins the death of Paul (by execution) as "quite certain" to have occurred specifically in Rome (and not in any other city) and during Nero's reign (54–68 CE). Tajra, *Martyrdom*, 199. He concludes (199) that the "likeliest juridical schema" involves (1) Paul release from house arrest at the end of the two years (62 CE, Acts 28:30), and (2) a "short period of freedom" with the possibility of a trip to Spain, (3) Paul was arrested for a second time and endured a harsher captivity, (4) he was tried according to "extra ordinem procedure," and (5) following the via Ostiense, was "led outside the city walls" and "beheaded by a *speculator*" (63/64 CE). Tajra also concludes he was buried in a columbarium "very near his *locus passionis*" (199). Based on all of the sources, and with some archaeological evidence, this location is considered very close to this section of the via Ostiense, where the basilica "San Paolo fuori le mure" (St. Paul Outside the Walls) now stands. See the 2nd century account of Gaius in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25.7 and Riesner, "Paul's Trial," 407; G. Filippi, "Neuen Ausgrabungen," 277–92. On a similar chronology to Tajra (especially the date of 62 CE as the end of Paul's first Roman imprisonment and his death "around 63/64" instead of a few years later with Peter in 67/68 CE) see Riesner, "Paul's Trial," 406 (here 407); Wehr, *Petrus und Paulus*, 359; and Pherigo, "Close of Acts," 277–84 (278). With regards to the debated trip to Spain, Riesner (409) considers this very likely while referring to Harnack who states in a footnote that the trip from Rome to Tarraco was not a big deal—as it only took between four and eight days. "Man brauchte von Rom nach Tarraco auf dem Seewege nicht mehr wie 4 bis 8 Tage. Eine Reise dorthin war keine erhebliche Sache." Cf. Harnack, *Die Mission*, 920 (his note 2). My thanks to Riesner for sharing his article with me. See also Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1271–83.

⁴² Nearly 70% of the city was destroyed in the summer of 64 CE. Cf. Lampe, *Valentinus*, 47 and Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.38–43. For details on the radical urban impact on the city see Laurence, Cleary and Sears, *The City in the Roman West*, 117–18.

⁴³ Lampe, *Valentinus*, 401 and Tacitus, *Ann.* 15:44.2, 4. The "expectation of Roman justice would be unlikely" after Nero's persecution. Keener, *Acts*, 1:387. An omission of this persecution in c. 64 CE seems incredible—especially given the stated friendliness to Rome. Parker observes that any gloss over such cruelties would be "egregious" after 64 CE. Parker, "'Former Treatise,'" 53. Nero's "hateful reputation among Christians . . . never died"—and for "any Christian to write, thereafter, with the easy optimism of Acts 28 would require an almost subhuman obtuseness" (53). For an overview of the demographics and socioeconomic status of the Christians in Rome under Nero, see Lampe, *Roman Christians under Nero*, 111–29.

(5) the peaceful tone of Acts (that is *inconsistent* with an awareness of Paul's tragic martyrdom and the subsequent persecution of the church); (6) the description of the early Jerusalem church that was still in contact with the Temple, Synagogues, Pharisees and Sadducees is far too idyllic for being written after the Jewish Rebellion and Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE;⁴⁴ (7) the author *seems* unaware of Paul's letters;⁴⁵ (8) the "obvious parallel" between the death of Jesus and the death of Paul is missing;⁴⁶ (9) and the Temple based Jewish Christian prayers in Acts.⁴⁷ In summary, Hemer states that Acts "reflects the situation and concerns of the church in the pre-70 CE period and betrays no clear indication of a later period."⁴⁸

One recent proponent of the early date (and challenger to late dating advocates) deserves special mention: Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*.⁴⁹ The timing is interesting because this book came out in Germany at the same time as Pervo's *Dating Acts* and Tyson's *Defining Struggle*. At the core of Mittelstaedt's thesis is the destruction of Jerusalem as a criterion for dating.⁵⁰ In his discussion on Luke and his sources he discusses two basic possibilities with regards to the prophecies of the city's destruction:

⁴⁴ Given the narrated rejection of (Jesus), and the persecution of the apostles by the Jewish leadership, it seems reasonable to expect the author to capitalize on the Temple's destruction (e.g. Ezra 5:12).

⁴⁵ This topic is discussed in Chapter 3. Where some scholars like Pervo are convinced that Acts reflects Paul's letters, others maintain that the author "makes no use of Paul's letters." Cf. Mount, *Pauline Christianity*, 169 (n. 17).

⁴⁶ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52. Considering the detailed treatment of Jesus's death in Luke, and Stephen in Acts 7, there is every reason to expect a note on the outcome of Paul's trial. Rackham, while commenting on the missing "obvious parallel to the Passion of the Gospel," explains how we should otherwise be at a loss to understand Chapter 20 to the end. The plan of Acts disappears and the end becomes "unintelligible" afterwards. Rackham, "Plea," 78.

⁴⁷ Since the prayer forms in Acts reflect the Temple and not the synagogue, there is "little evidence to suggest that Luke's picture contains elements from post-70 developments in Jewish and Christian worship." Cf. Falk, "Jewish Prayer," 4:267-301 (267).

⁴⁸ Hemer, *Acts*, 382. Rhee rightly explains that "Just like any other literature, Christian literature reflects and is shaped by the historical and cultural context in which it is born." Rhee, *Early Christian Literature*, 9.

⁴⁹ Mittelstaedt's 2006 book began as a dissertation at the University of Konstanz in 2004.

⁵⁰ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 49-163. This will be covered in detail in chapter 5, "Acts in its Jewish and Greco-Roman Historical Context."

“Either events of the Jewish War are reflected here, which may well be formulated on the basis of the OT, or the quotations have a purely theological background independent of contemporary history, which would hardly be conceivable given the drama and significance of the Jewish War after 70.”⁵¹ The prophecies in Luke provide us with only two options: they reflect the events of the Jewish war, or they do not.⁵² There is plenty of textual and linguistic evidence to suggest they do not in light of what actually happened post 70 CE; the description can hardly be written in retrospect of 70 CE.⁵³

Mittelstaedt also considers the destruction of Jerusalem to be clearly eschatological in the third gospel. Not only is the Temple an integral part of the Acts narrative, but he explains how Acts 6:13 and following are written in the present tense (=imperfective aspect) when mentioning temple details, and the narration of the Sadducees strongly suggests the temple is still standing at the time of writing.⁵⁴ However, the use of the present tense to indicate present time formulates an insufficient argument given the advances in Greek scholarship.

For example, Porter claims that “one cannot start with the individual verb tenses to establish extra-textual temporal reference.”⁵⁵ The present-tense usage in Hebrews (or Acts) for example, does not necessarily mean that the “author was writing before the

⁵¹ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 14 (my translation). “Entweder sind hier Ereignisse des Jüdischen Krieges reflektiert, die durchaus in Anlehnung an das AT formuliert sein können, oder die Zitate haben einen von der Zeitgeschichte unabhängigen, rein theologischen Hintergrund, was angesichts der Dramatik und der Folgeschwere des Jüdischen Krieges nach 70 kaum noch vorstellbar wäre.”

⁵² With regards to the Lukan prophecies (i.e. Luke 13:35; 19:43–44 and 21:20) see “The Middle Dating Advocates (post-70 CE to ±80)” below and the greater discussion in chapter 5: “The Fall of Jerusalem: Dividing the Early and Middle Groups.”

⁵³ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 152; Stenschke, Review of *Lukas als Historiker*, 387.

⁵⁴ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 159–62. It is noteworthy that καταλύω and ἀλλάσσω in verse 14 are both in the future tense with regards to Stephen’s reference to Jesus who “will overthrow this place” (καταλύσει τὸν τόπον τοῦτον) and “will change the customs” (ἀλλάξει τὰ ἔθη).

⁵⁵ See Porter, “Present Tense-Form,” 295–314 (312).

destruction of the Temple.”⁵⁶ Unfortunately, none of the major works on the date of Acts (including Pervo, Tyson, and Mittelstaedt) have duly considered recent linguistic research towards this debate (and verbal aspect theory was well-established by 2006).⁵⁷

The next major section, “Das Schweigen über den Tod des Paulus,” examines the oldest church traditions about the time of writing, the last block of Acts and the martyrdom of Stephen, Paul’s trial before Caesar, the farewell speech to the Ephesians (Acts 20:17–35), the oldest news about Paul’s death, Paul and Peter in John’s Revelation, the fire of Rome and the persecution under Nero.⁵⁸ At this juncture, he reasons effectively that “Paul lebt noch” at the time when Acts was written, which occurs prior to the summer of 64 CE.⁵⁹ He states, “Es ist an der Zeit, Bilanz zu ziehen. Lukas beschreibt eine Epoche bzw. schreibt in einer Epoche, die von einer Christenverfolgung von römischer Seite noch nichts weiß. Nichts deutet auf den Tod des Paulus.”⁶⁰

Mittelstaedt considers “further criteria” such as the non-use of Paul’s letters, the death of James and the justification of the pagan mission, the Italic cohort in Caesarea, whether Luke knew the works of Joseph or a common source, and Luke’s research in Caesarea and Jerusalem.⁶¹ His final summary affirms his previous tenets while offering a specific chronology and set of circumstances with regards to the writing and date of Acts:

In conclusion, in agreement with earlier dating advocates, it follows that in each case the book of Acts was completed before 64, rather 62, and the material for the gospel was most likely collected in Caesarea 57–59. The location of Theophilus

⁵⁶ See Porter, “Present Tense-Form,” 312.

⁵⁷ For a summary of key developments in Greek verbal structure and verbal aspect theory since the 1970s, see Porter and Pitts, “Linguistics in Recent Research,” 215–22; and also Porter, *Idioms*, 25–26; idem, *Verbal Aspect*, 17–65.

⁵⁸ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 165–220.

⁵⁹ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 219–21.

⁶⁰ “It is time to take stock. Luke describes an epoch or writes in an epoch that still knows nothing about a persecution of Christians on the Roman side. There is nothing to indicate Paul’s death.” Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 219.

⁶¹ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 221–49.

and the place of completion of Acts was in no case Rome, since Luke already collected his material in Caesarea and knows nothing of the end of Caesar's trial, which is best explained by the fact that he returned to the East before the end of the two years Paul was there."⁶²

In summary of the early dating arguments, it seems that the core concern is attention to the historical context (i.e. Rome and Jerusalem) and how that fits with the narrative of Acts. For this group, Luke's silence on several key events in the history of both the church and Rome remains the chief concern—and yet, the reasons extend beyond the silence of these notable events.⁶³ While it is difficult to reconcile the silence with regards to the persecution under Nero, it is incomprehensible that Luke should at the same time paint Rome in such a favourable light.⁶⁴ Similarly, to neglect the fire of Rome is perplexing enough (as there is no political or theological motivation to do so), but incredible that the final events in the narrative provide no hint of the city's widespread destruction—which is the very place where the narrative ends with Paul preaching “unhindered” (Acts 28:31).

The Middle Dating Advocates (post-70 CE to ±80)

The middle segment (with some overlap) seems to represent the current majority opinion.⁶⁵ For this group, before 70 CE is too early, and after 90 is too late. A significant

⁶² Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 254 (my translation, see 251–55 in context). “Abschließend ergibt sich in Übereinstimmung mit früheren Vertretern der Frühdatierung, daß die Apg in jedem Fall vor 64, eher noch 62 vollendet wurde und das Material für das Evangelium am ehesten 57–59 in Caesarea gesammelt worden ist. Standort des Theophilus und Ort der Vollendung der Apg war in keinem Fall Rom, da Lukas sein Material schon in Caesarea sammelte und zudem nichts genaues vom Ende des Kaiserprozesses weiß, was am einfachsten damit zu erklären ist, daß er noch vor dem Ende der zwei Jahre, die Paulus dort war, in den Osten zurückkehrte.”

⁶³ See “Principles for Interpreting Sources” in chapter 2.

⁶⁴ Granted there are some exceptions such as Paul's treatment by the Roman magistrates at Philippi (Acts 16:22–23) or when Felix expected a bribe and refused to free Paul as a favour to the Jews (Acts 24:26, 27). However, this is nothing compared to Nero's treatment of the Christians in 64 CE (see chapter 5).

⁶⁵ Spencer agrees with “most scholars” who date Acts after 70 CE but “before the letters of Paul,

number of scholars reasoned that Acts was probably written in the 70s, after the fall of Jerusalem.⁶⁶ With this in mind, we find a range of dates that fall somewhere within 70–80 CE: Headlam in 1900 (shortly after 70),⁶⁷ Page and Hanson (after 70), Bartlett (72–74), Knowling (based on the date of Luke), Zahn (75), D. J. Williams (about 75), Keener (70–80),⁶⁸ Neil (doubts an early date), Clarke (80 is more satisfactory, but an earlier date is possible), Plummer (no later than 80), Meyer, Johnson, Boismard and Lamouille (80),⁶⁹ and Witherington (late 70s or early 80s).⁷⁰ Meanwhile, there are the “late-middle” advocates: Marguerat and Dunn (80s),⁷¹ Kümmel (70–90), Ramsay (immediately after 81), Ehrhardt (75–90), Boismard (not before 80), Macgregor, Fitzmyer, and Bruce (c. 85),⁷² Schneider, Weiser, Juel, Jervell, Tannehill, and Hengel (80–90),⁷³ Maddox (80s or early 90s), Goguel (85–90), Barrett (late 80s or early 90s),⁷⁴ Jackson (before c. 90), and Trocmé (last quarter of the first century). Fitzmyer adds to this list: Marxsen, Michaelis, Perrot, Pesch, and Vielhauer.⁷⁵

Table 3: The Middle Dating Advocates (post-70 CE to ±80)

Shortly after 70	Headlam
After 70	Page and Hanson

which Acts does not allude to” and were “collected and circulated close to the end of the century.” Spencer, *Acts*, 16. Keener (*Acts*, 1:384) also “holds” to this “centrist” position.

⁶⁶ The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple is the hinge between early and middle groups. Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 10.

⁶⁷ Headlam, “Acts of the Apostles,” 25–35 (30).

⁶⁸ See Keener, *Acts*, 1:384 (and his full argument pp. 383–401). He seems to lean very close to 70 because “charges against Paul and his death in Roman custody remain a live apologetic issue.” Keener, *Acts*, 1:384 (and on p. 400 he ponders, “early 70’s, with dates in the 80s and 60s still plausible”).

⁶⁹ Johnson, *Luke*, 2; Boismard and Lamouille, *Actes*, 1:43.

⁷⁰ Witherington III, *Acts*, 62.

⁷¹ Marguerat suggests a date of “around the 80’s” but without reason. Cf. Marguerat, *Historian*, 229. Similarly, Dunn’s (*Acts*, xi) single paragraph on the date of Acts is disappointing as he states: “[n]ot much hangs on the date of the composition, but a date in . . . the 80s fits best with the evidence.”

⁷² Bruce progressively changed his opinion from as early as c. 62, and then later “towards 70,” and eventually 85 CE. See Bruce, *Acts*, 9–18 and Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 54.

⁷³ Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 86; Hengel, *Acts*, 63; Tannehill, *Luke*, 26.

⁷⁴ Barrett (*Acts*, 2:xlii), thinks this is probable “though anything but certain” while admitting his dating is “complicated by several factors.”

⁷⁵ Contrary to Fitzmyer’s list, Dupont and C. S. C Williams should be on the ‘early’ list as that seems to be a better fit based on their views.

72–74	Bartlett
75	Zahn
About 75	D. J. Williams
70–80	Keener
Based on Luke	Knowling
Doubts an early date	Neil
80 (earlier is possible)	Clarke
No later than 80	Plummer
80	Meyer, Johnson, Boismard and Lamouille
Late 70s or early 80s	Witherington
80s	Marguerat and Dunn
70–90	Kümmel
After 70, but before the circulation of Paul's letters	Spencer
Immediately after 81	Ramsay
75–90	Ehrhardt
Not before 80	Boismard
c. 85	Macgregor, Fitzmyer, and Bruce
80–90	Schneider, Weiser, Juel, Jervell, and Hengel
80s or early 90s	Maddox
85–90	Goguel
Late 80s or early 90s	Barrett
Before c. 90	Jackson
Last quarter of the first century	Troc��

Troftgruben suggests further reasons for a post-70 CE date that are summarised here.⁷⁶ First, the difficulty of the “many” in the early sixties CE who would “have undertaken to compile a narrative” before Luke.⁷⁷ Second, only after the destruction of Jerusalem (70 CE) does the phrase in Luke 13:35 “your house is abandoned” make sense.⁷⁸ Third, in Mark 13:2, Jesus pronounces judgement upon the Temple and in Mark 13:14 the “abomination of desolation” is replaced by “Jerusalem surrounded by camps” in Luke 21:20.⁷⁹ Fourth, that Luke 19:43–44 “alludes to Roman earthworks of the sort

⁷⁶ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 10.

⁷⁷ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 54.

⁷⁸ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 54. Previously Jeremiah used even stronger language in Lam 2:7 or Jer 22:5, “this house is for desolation.”

⁷⁹ See chapter 5 “The Fall of Jerusalem: Dividing the Early and Middle Groups.”

described by Josephus” indicates a post-70 dating (cf. *War* 6.150, 156).⁸⁰ Hence, many in this middle group prefer a date after 70 CE but before 81–96 because of a lack of reference to the Domitian persecution during this time.⁸¹

Since Keener has offered a more defensible view in recent years, it is worth exploring his reasons for a date “closer to 70” within the broader ‘centrist’ position (70–80s).⁸² For a date of Acts in the first-century, he offers several reasons: (1) authorship by a “companion of Paul” best explains the “we” sections;⁸³ (2) the “massive correspondences between Acts and first-century historical events” reflect a high degree of memory or at least a “heavy reliance on early sources”; (3) and the “Pauline apologetic” reflects localities and memories of an earlier period.⁸⁴ Although he maintains a “closer to 70” date it is cautiously couched within a very broad range of possibilities that sounds appealing to “most scholars.”⁸⁵

Since he considers the arguments “compelling” for the author being a travelling companion of Paul’s, he “would restrict any date estimate . . . to within the probable lifetime of such a companion.”⁸⁶ Moreover he states that the “date of Acts is uncertain,

⁸⁰ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 54. Again this is weak in light of Dodd’s (“Jerusalem,” 48) arguments, and the manner of Roman siege tactics against a walled city.

⁸¹ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 54.

⁸² See Keener, *Acts*, 1:384 (and his full argument pp. 383–401).

⁸³ Keener’s note on 16:10 (3:2350–2374). “The simplest solution is often the best, and the most obvious solution is sometimes the simplest” (3:2373).

⁸⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 1:384. He reasons that producing such “detailed charges merely for entertainment would have undercut Luke’s apologetic for Paul” (p. 384).

⁸⁵ Keener, *Acts*, 1:400. Here he states that “to an extent any suggested date is merely an educated guess.” For me this language echoes the language of “political compromise” that is typical for middle dating advocates as previously noted by Pervo, “Suburbs,” 31. Keener does a thorough job of working through the arguments, but a date in the 70’s, and especially in “the 80’s requires a great deal of explaining away” (Pervo, “Suburbs,” 46).

⁸⁶ Keener, *Acts*, 1:400. Although I appreciate Keener’s discussion on Luke’s estimated age, if Luke was already 20–30 years old in 50 CE (when he first began travelling with Paul), the likelihood of writing Acts later than 70 CE (though possible) diminishes exponentially based on life expectancy in the ancient world. Frier observes that almost “all ancient historians now accept the view, originally propounded by Keith Hopkins in 1966, that for the general population, average Roman life expectancy at birth is likely to have lain in a range from 20 to 30 years.” Cf. Frier, “More is Worse,” 144; Hopkins, “Roman

but my best guesses, for reasons that follow, are in the early 70s, with dates in the 80s and 60s still plausible, and a date in the 90s not impossible. The arguments limiting the range between 70 and 90 (the majority view) seem to me stronger than the alternatives.”⁸⁷ He then emphasizes once more his preference for a date “in the early 70s” because of his views of Lukan authorship and the “strong apologetic for Paul engaging a range of concrete accusations about his involvement in specific local riots.”⁸⁸ Last, he seems to settle on a post-70 date that is “within . . . living memory of Paul.”⁸⁹

While the early and middle groups do not find the evidence for a late date of Acts to be convincing (most notably dependence on Josephus and Paul’s letters), the middle group can not seem to go earlier than 70CE for the various reasons outlined above. They place remarkable weight on the historical nature of Acts but most of these scholars do not view Luke as the author and companion of Paul. Furthermore, placing Luke in the 60s presents a major hurdle for them as well as the prophecies relating to Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish Temple. Although their arguments rest upon Luke’s redaction

Population,” 245–64 (263–4). So by the 60s CE, Luke is already starting to live beyond average life expectancy. More recent discussion on life expectancy at birth remains at “about 25.” Cf. Garnsey and Saller, *Roman Empire*, 233. Cokayne (*Old Age*, 3) qualifies this range by explaining that if a child survived the “early danger years” to age 10, life expectancy was increased by 37.5 years (or a total age of 47.5 years). Hence, following Keener, if Luke was 30 at 50 CE, he would reach average life expectancy (based on Cokayne’s research) around 67 CE. Therefore, any argument that is tied to the age of the author as a companion of Paul requires qualification.

⁸⁷ Keener, *Acts*, 1:400.

⁸⁸ Keener, *Acts*, 1:400. His argument is far more compelling for a pre-70 date: “Luke the apologist would hardly invent a history of local riots surrounding Paul, yet unable to deny them, he must explain them, at a time when the local memories of such riots remained alive and Paul’s legacy remained contested” (1:400).

⁸⁹ Keener, *Acts*, 1:401. While citing Acts 22:3–21 specifically he notes that if he is mistaken this will “bring into question” some of his “interpretive judgements at key points” and “affect only a relatively small portion” of his commentary. A contention of this thesis is that a post-70 date of Acts significantly alters how we interpret several aspects of Acts. Regardless, a relatively small portion (“even less than 1 percent”) of a massive commentary (4,459 pages) like Keener’s represents a significant amount of material.

of Mark, Dodd and others have made a convincing case that the language is anything but decisive—and does not on its own necessitate a post-70 date of Acts.⁹⁰

The Late Dating Advocates (90–130 CE)

Promoters of a late date for Acts include: Gaventa (80s or 90s),⁹¹ Windisch (80s or 90s, possibly 100–110), McNeile, Dibelius, Goodspeed, and Roloff (c. 90), Davies (c. 90, 85–100), Streeter (90–95), Conzelmann (80–100),⁹² Lake (90–100), Bornkamm (towards the end of the first century, at the earliest), Kee (90s to 100s), Burkitt (95–105), Shellard (98–100),⁹³ von Soden, Moffatt, Talbert, Lohse, and Bonz (c. 100),⁹⁴ Schmithals, (90–110), Jülicher (100–105), Enslin (c. 100–105), Koester (100–110),⁹⁵ Schmiedel (105–

⁹⁰ See chapter 5 and “The Fall of Jerusalem: Dividing the Early and Middle Groups.”

⁹¹ Gaventa, *Acts*, 51. Gaventa thinks there is “little evidence” regarding the date of composition of Acts (51). She considers a date after 70 CE due to the destruction of Jerusalem (based on Luke 19:41–44; 21:20–24) and Luke’s dependency upon Mark. Since Mark is dated “around 70 CE” and Luke is dependent upon Mark, then she assumes a date “after 70” (51). Her upper limit is due to the use of Acts by second century writers such as Irenaeus (ca. 180). She then suggests this second century usage of Acts implies that “Acts must have been composed and well circulated by then” (51). Hence she arrives at a date in the 80s or 90s that rests between the two end points suggested by “many scholars” (51). She does not name any of these scholars, nor does she refer the reader to the considerable array of criteria and evidence available for an earlier or later date.

⁹² Conzelmann suggests that “somewhere between 80 and 100 best fits all the evidence.” Conzelmann, *Acts*, xxxiii.

⁹³ Shellard, *New Light on Luke*, 30. This is a very specific range that depends largely on Polycarp, *Phil.* 1.5 and “some Western manuscripts of Acts 2.24” that potentially places a cap on the date of the Western text of Acts in line with the early (c. 112–115 CE) date of Polycarp (since they share a common variant). Shellard settles on 98–100 CE but argues (based on the Polycarp connection in particular) that “Luke-Acts cannot be too much later than 95–100 CE.” Shellard, *New Light on Luke*, 25. Cf. also Parsons, *Acts*, 17; Pervo, “Suburbs,” 35; and *Dating Acts*, 17–20.

⁹⁴ Talbert, *Reading Acts*, 237. Bonz (*The Past as Legacy*, 163), without presenting any evidence, states that “Luke is writing at the end of the first century CE.” Bonz (*Luke’s Revision*, 151) claims that Luke placed “a sharpened version of Paul’s original words in the apostle’s mouth at the very close of Luke-Acts.” Part of her hypothesis relies on the speculative premise that Luke had time to “rethink this problem from a considerably later and more wholly Gentile perspective” (151). This is problematic especially for reasons of a short life expectancy (as noted in my note 86 from this chapter). Perhaps this thinking is recycled from earlier scholars like O’Neill (*Theology of Acts*, 93) who considered Acts to reflect “a theology which developed in the second century.” See Tyson, *Defining Struggle* and Pervo, *Dating Acts*, et passim and also Pervo, *Acts*, 685—all assume a similar projection.

⁹⁵ More recently, Koester (*Introduction*, 2:314) scaled back his date from 135 (as noted by Hemer, *Acts*, 370) to 100–110 CE.

130), Parsons (110),⁹⁶ Pervo, (110–120),⁹⁷ Drury and O’Neill (c. 115–130),⁹⁸ Tyson (120–125),⁹⁹ Knox (125), Mount (before 130),¹⁰⁰ Barnikol (c. 135) and Couchoud (135),¹⁰¹ Overbeck (second or third decade of the second century), Baur (deep into the second century),¹⁰² and Townsend (middle of the second century).¹⁰³

Table 4: The Late Dating Advocates (90–130 CE)

80s or 90s CE	Gaventa and Windisch (possibly 100–110)
c. 90	McNeile, Dibelius, Goodspeed, and Roloff
c. 90, 85–100	Davies
90–95	Streeter
80–100	Conzelmann
90–100	Lake
Towards the end of the first century (at the earliest)	Bornkamm
90s to 100s	Kee
95–105	Burkitt
98–100	Shellard
c. 100	von Soden, Moffatt, Talbert, Lohse, and Bonz (at the end of the first century CE)
90–110	Schmithalls
100–105	Jülicher and Enslin
100–110	Köster
105–130	Schmiedel
110	Parsons

⁹⁶ Parsons settles for about 110 CE “though a release anytime within the first two decades of the second century (ca. AD 100–120) would have provided sufficient time for Polycarp’s knowledge of the book.” Cf. Parsons, *Acts*, 17.

⁹⁷ See his 2006 work *Dating Acts* and his 2009 commentary *Acts*, xv and 5.

⁹⁸ O’Neill’s (*Theology of Acts*, 21, 25) date is between 115 CE and 130 CE. He considers Goodspeed’s (*Introduction*) view that Paul’s letters were “rescued from obscurity and ‘published’ as a collection” about 90 CE (*Theology of Acts*, 21). “If Goodspeed’s thesis is accepted,” says O’Neill then “Luke-Acts cannot be later” than about 90 CE (21). In the end, he argues against this notion via Polycarp as the “first of the Fathers to use a published collection of Paul’s letters” (24).

⁹⁹ Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, 1–23. Tyson’s view is discussed further below.

¹⁰⁰ Mount says that Luke-Acts was “probably completed sometime before about 130.” Mount, *Pauline Christianity*, 168 (n. 17). His reasoning seems to rest on the hypothesis that Luke-Acts belongs after Mark and Matthew but before Marcion “whom Tertullian places in Rome around 144” (n. 17). He ties this with Papias’s comments that also occur prior to 130 CE (169, n. 17).

¹⁰¹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 363.

¹⁰² Baur considered the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the epistles as “irreconcilable.” Hence, he gave a date for acts as “tief in das zweite Jahrhundert.” See Gasque, *History*, 40.

¹⁰³ Townsend argues for a much later date “that approaches the middle of the second century.” See Townsend, “The Date of Luke-Acts,” 47–62. Townsend relies heavily upon comparing Acts with second century Pseudo-Clementine literature.

110–120	Pervo
c. 115–130	Drury and O’Neill
120–125	Tyson
125	Knox
before 130	Mount
135	Barnikol and Couchoud
Second or third decade of the second century	Overbeck
Deep into the second century	Baur
Middle of the second century	Townsend

Scholars in this group place great emphasis on Acts having connections with late first-century and second-century writings (i.e. Josephus, Marcion, Justin Martyr, Polycarp, and Clement)—although this is not the majority view.¹⁰⁴ Credit goes to F. C. Baur in 1847 as the trailblazer among the late dating advocates.¹⁰⁵ Since Overbeck’s views are “much more dependent” upon Baur and his followers it is not surprising to see his preference for a very late date of Acts as well.¹⁰⁶ Overbeck was an early, but highly influential, Acts scholar who argued in 1870 that Acts could “not have been written during the apostolic age, or even as early as the last two decades of the first century.”¹⁰⁷

Overbeck considers that Acts “either must be an example of a completely meaningless fabrication, or presuppose a length of time between its date and the events it narrates sufficient to allow for the development.”¹⁰⁸ For him, Acts is “strongly affected

¹⁰⁴ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 53. Although a “faithful late-date remnant” remains, most do not subscribe “for good and persuasive reasons.” Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 77. Pervo dates Clement (*1 Clem.*) to 100 CE and claims it shares a “good deal” with Acts. Pervo, “Suburbs,” 36 and *Dating Acts*, 301–305. He says that Acts “may be attested by Polycarp, ca. 130 CE.” Pervo, “Suburbs,” 35; and *Dating Acts*, 17–20.

¹⁰⁵ Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, 3–5.

¹⁰⁶ Gasque, *History*, 81.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Gasque, *History*, 85 and W. M. L. De Wette, *Kurze Erklärung der Apostelgeschichte* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1870)—this 4th edition of De Wette’s commentary is “edited and greatly expanded” by Overbeck.

¹⁰⁸ Gasque, *History*, 332 (trans. from 85); De Wette, *Apostelgeschichte*, lxiv. Similarly, Rackham reasoned that “St. Luke then, if writing after St. Paul’s death, has undoubtedly been guilty of making a false climax.” Rackham, “Plea,” 78. This is unlikely according to Rackham for at least two valid reasons: (1) Luke’s literary power in Acts, (2) a false climax distorts the entire narrative. By literary power, he means that Luke had the “painter’s power in sketching a vivid scene by a few dramatic touches” (79). Given the range of the miraculous, and at times terrifying scenes (i.e. Ananias and Saphira’s deaths) that Acts

by the influences of legend” and that the image of Paul is “strongly distorted” leading to a date beyond the apostolic age.¹⁰⁹ Overbeck finds five items in church history that are comparable to what we read in Acts: (1) the advanced state of church affairs, (2) the apologetic nature of Acts, (3) the *parousia* as part of the “indefinite” future, (4) the start of the “hierarchical constitution of the Church,” and (5) the polemic against Gnosticism (as suggested by Acts 20:29).¹¹⁰

Over a century later, Pervo, in his monograph *Dating Acts*, argues that the author of Acts is familiar with Paul’s ten letters, the later writings of Josephus (c. 100 CE), and the Pastoral Epistles and Polycarp (c. 125–130).¹¹¹ Just like Overbeck, he argues that Acts should carry a date of c. 115 (c. 110–120 CE) from Ephesus “or its general environs.”¹¹² Spencer remains unconvinced in his dual review of *Dating Acts* and

Marcion and Luke-Acts:

As stimulating as these studies are, however, they do not quite hit their desired chronological and historical targets. Arguing for direct dependence on particular sources (other than the repeatedly flagged Greek Old Testament [LXX]) or a specific polemical context (Marcionite or otherwise) is a difficult case to make with an anonymous theological narrative like Acts.¹¹³

Likewise, Tannehill while appreciating Pervo’s efforts also remains cautious states that “P.’s alternative date of 110–120 should not be taken as the final word.”¹¹⁴

narrates, there are no sustainable reasons to avoid writing something of Paul’s death. Since Paul (Saul) was present at Stephen’s martyrdom, the “shedding of St. Paul’s own blood” would indeed be a “complete fulfillment of the doctrine” (79).

¹⁰⁹ Gasque, *History*, 85, 332; De Wette, *Apostelgeschichte*, lxiv.

¹¹⁰ Gasque, *History*, 85–86; De Wette, *Apostelgeschichte*, lxiv–lxv.

¹¹¹ Porter (*Paul in Acts*, 14–19), in his critique of Pervo’s 1987 *Profit with Delight*, relays how his use of anachronistic literary comparisons “verges on parallelomania” (18).

¹¹² Pervo, *Acts*, xv, 5; he maintains a date of 115 CE in “Suburbs,” 36 and his later “The Date of Acts,” 6.

¹¹³ Spencer, Review of *Dating Acts* and *Defining Struggle*, 190–93 (192).

¹¹⁴ Tannehill, Review of *Dating Acts*, 828.

In Pervo's later short article in *Acts and Christian Beginnings: The Acts Seminar Report*, he pegs Acts to the world of the Apostolic Fathers (100–150 CE) suggesting that Acts is familiar with post-100 CE “institutions” and “terminology and concepts.”¹¹⁵ Conversely, “Is this not a chicken and egg anachronistic fallacy?”—is it not simpler to argue that the second century writers are engaging with already established issues and concepts in Acts?¹¹⁶ It is ironic that one scholar could argue that the early second century is a better theological fit, where others use the exact same argument to argue the exact opposite.¹¹⁷ The evidence clearly points to Acts as the progenitor.

Pervo's influence continues to be prevalent as seen in Snyder's, *Acts of Paul: The Formation of a Pauline Corpus* where he defends Pervo's views while explaining that there is a “*counter-consensus developing* within scholarship on Acts that its ‘original text’ should be dated as a whole to the second quarter, if not into the third quarter, of the second century” (emphasis mine).¹¹⁸ Snyder maintains that Pervo's *Dating Acts* “has provided the most recent thorough argument for late dating.”¹¹⁹ He then commences with a summary from Pervo's appendix of late dating scholars who continue to be impacted by Baur and his students.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Pervo, “The Date of Acts,” 6 and also by the same: “Suburbs,” 29–46. It is very doubtful that the kind of Jewish political power narrated in Acts would be present post-70 CE. Longenecker, *Acts*, 31–34. Likewise, Keener (*Acts*, 1:400) observes Pervo's anachronisms.

¹¹⁶ Is it really improbable that in the first century the church (or any religious group) held leadership positions (Acts 6:1–7; 20:17–35), helped their widows (Acts 6:1–7; 9:36–41), and dealt with the “misuse of funds” (Acts 5:1–11; 8:14–25) and “deviant teaching?” Pervo, “The Date of Acts,” 6. Second, these social structures are already found in the gospels and Paul's earlier letters. Should we now date the earliest New Testament letters (e.g. Galatians) into the second century because Galatians addresses (1) deviant teaching all through it (e.g. Gal 1:6–9), (2) leadership structures (Gal. 2:2, 8, 9), (3) doing good to one's neighbors and one's church family (Gal 5:6, 13, 14; 6:2, 10), and (4) paying their instructors (Gal 6:6)?

¹¹⁷ E.g. Conzelmann, *Acts*, xxxiii as noted by Bock, *Acts*, 27.

¹¹⁸ Snyder, *Acts of Paul*, 13–14. His work stems from his earlier dissertation at Harvard University in 2010 that was given further feedback by Pervo later that fall for his 2013 book.

¹¹⁹ Snyder, *Acts of Paul*, 14 (his note 54).

¹²⁰ Snyder, *Acts of Paul*, 14 (n. 54). Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 359–63.

Tyson, for example in his *Defining Struggle*, repeats Baur and the Tübingen school's emphasis on the conflict between the Pauline and Petrine groups that extended into the second century: "Thus, the conciliatory Acts could not have been written until well into the second century."¹²¹ Snyder completely bypasses the contributions "within scholarship" of the early and middle groups, with a single passing reference to Mittelstaedt's, *Lukas als Historiker*.¹²² Granted the date of Acts is not central to Snyder's focus, there is still a clear and disappointing dismissal of the arguments put forth by the early and middle groups and an uncritical approval of the 'counter-consensus' represented by Pervo and Tyson in particular. It seems that 'birds of a feather, flock together' when it comes to the dating issue.

Unfortunately, Tyson, like Pervo, rather than critically engaging the arguments of scholars who date Acts in the first century, opts for a second-century date of Acts. He dismisses the position of the early group as "flawed" while the middle group is "built on an inadequate foundation."¹²³ Keener refers to a certain mentality where scholars "dismiss their position rather than considering their arguments seriously."¹²⁴ My contention is that Tyson's dismissal appears to be based on presuppositions on Marcion and the early church as well as those shared by the Westar Institute's sponsored 'Acts Seminar.'¹²⁵ Upon closer examination of his position, it is arguably "flawed" and his "foundation" is built without solid evidence.

¹²¹ Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, 359–63.

¹²² Cf. Snyder, *Acts of Paul*, 14 (n. 54).

¹²³ Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, 22.

¹²⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 1:383.

¹²⁵ Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, xii (recall my note 2 above).

Tyson argues for a range between 100–150 CE because of the church’s struggle “with Marcion and Marcionite Christianity.”¹²⁶ He narrows this to 120–125 CE when Marcion was gathering followers—hence, Luke-Acts is in fact, a reaction to Marcion.¹²⁷ This date is problematic for several reasons. First, it is problematic because it fails to account for the combined arguments from the early and middle groups discussed above. Second, it is problematic because it was not until July 144 CE that Marcion left Orthodoxy to found his own church.¹²⁸ Third, Barton suggests that Marcion was “not a major influence on the formation of the New Testament.”¹²⁹

Fourth, Roth considers the text of Marcion’s gospel to be “clearly related to Luke *and* prior to the middle of the second century”—together this strains Tyson’s late date range of 100–150 CE while his narrowed range of 120–125 CE remains troublesome for the other reasons listed here.¹³⁰ Fifth, since Polycarp, *Phil.* 1.5 shares a common variant with some Western manuscripts of Acts 2:24 and can be dated as early as c. 112–115 CE, this presents a further difficulty in Tyson’s hypothesis that Luke-Acts is a reaction to Marcion—since the former was circulating at least a decade before the latter.¹³¹ Sixth, in a later essay, Tyson rightly claims that the author of Acts “stresses the community’s fidelity to Jewish traditions and practices” and how the “missionary method

¹²⁶ Tyson, *Defining Struggle*, 23.

¹²⁷ Tyson, *Defining Struggle* 78 and 127 respectively.

¹²⁸ Lampe, *Valentinus*, 250.

¹²⁹ Barton, “Marcion Revisited,” 341–54 (354). See Kruger, *Canon*, 19 (n. 19) who also acknowledges how “Marcion’s role in the formation of the canon has been minimized in recent years.” Harnack was an early and influential proponent of the idea that “Marcion was responsible for the origins of the New Testament canon” (19 [n. 19]). See Harnack, *Marcion* and also Knox, *Marcion*, et passim.

¹³⁰ Roth, *Marcion’s Gospel*, 1; Tyson, *Marcion*, 23 and 78 respectively.

¹³¹ Shellard, *New Light on Luke*, 30.

used by the Paul of Acts and his message to Jews stands in stark contrast to Marcionite theology.”¹³²

Few, if any, would disagree with Tyson’s observations here, but where is the solid evidence that the author of Acts is “reacting against certain fundamental features of Marcionite theology”?¹³³ The simple and most obvious explanation is that the Jewishness of Acts reflects a time in history when the Temple, its institutions, practices, people, and prayers were central to the early church (this was clearly not the case in Marcion’s day).¹³⁴

A last point speaks directly to the foundation of Tyson’s argument. While second-century manuscripts of Acts are admittedly fragmentary, there remain only references to Marcion’s version of Luke by later Christian writers.¹³⁵ And for his entire theory, there is not one single available Marcion inspired manuscript of Acts to compare with canonical Acts. Since lower (historical) criticism forms the ‘foundation’ for any higher critical study, the foundation of Tyson’s position is not only flawed but missing entirely.¹³⁶

Overview of the Present Study

Given the current state of scholarship discussed above, and in light of the issues and arguments presented among the early, middle, and late proponents, the aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive solution to this ongoing research problem. The primary

¹³² See Tyson, “Marcion and the Date of Acts,” 6–9 (8–9).

¹³³ Tyson, “Marcion and the Date of Acts,” 9.

¹³⁴ So Falk, “Jewish Prayer,” 267.

¹³⁵ See chapter 4 with regards to the textual history of Acts. For an updated comprehensive list of the extant sources for Marcion see Roth, *Marcion’s Gospel*, 46–82 (for a reconstruction of Marcion’s gospel as it follows canonical Luke see 412–36).

¹³⁶ Or that his “building” is “no stronger than its basement.” Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 98–106 (102). Cf. Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 3 on the foundational aspects of textual (or lower) criticism.

goal of this first chapter is to bring the reader up to date on the exact nature of the thesis as well as provide an overview of the common questions and opinions associated with the topic in general.¹³⁷ A subsidiary goal is to go beyond a survey of positions but to listen carefully to the views of scholars from ancient times to the present day with an ear for the presuppositions and problems that lie beneath them.

Chapter 2 “A Historiographical Approach to the Date of Acts” explores the various methodological approaches in concert with the presuppositions of key scholars (including my own).¹³⁸ The underlying philosophy of approach for this thesis is that historical *and* literary concerns need to be addressed to ensure a firm foundation for any conclusions. A comprehensive solution requires not only a detailed awareness of the problem of dating Acts but the application of a strong and workable methodology that has the ability to address the multifarious nature of this debate. The approach then is to critically examine the sources as well as the major theories on the date of Acts and apply the principles of historiography, textual criticism, papyrology, and modern linguistics to the debate.

Chapter 3 “The Date of Acts and its Sources” examines the sources for Acts and considers how the various theories impact the way we date Acts. This chapter also re-examines several source related subjects such as the ‘we’ passages, Luke’s prefaces, and his attention to matters of geography, lodging, and politics. Subsequently, the issue of Acts being dependent upon on Paul’s letters or the works of Josephus remain at the centre of the debate and are examined in sequence. Although some so-called ‘parallels’ with other first-century and second-century texts are re-examined they are found to be

¹³⁷ Cf. Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 22–23.

¹³⁸ Porter and Robinson, *Hermeneutics*, 10.

unquestionably anachronistic, verging on “parallelomania.”¹³⁹ With regards to the theory that Acts is dependent upon the works of Josephus, the evidence is found to be lamentable. As a result, Acts is decisively placed into a much earlier timeframe than espoused by the late group of scholars in particular.

Since the end of Acts has played a key role in the date of Acts debate, chapter 4 “The Un-Enigmatic End of Acts” examines the various interpretations that frequently start with the presupposition of a post-70 CE date based on the so-called ‘majority’ of scholarship (without any substantial justification or engagement with the existing research). This, in turn, leads to the hypothesis that the end of Acts is the result of a literary device or fabrication. These theories are examined in detail and found to be highly speculative and methodologically troublesome.¹⁴⁰ This chapter also explores the scholarship on the Jewish response to the gospel in Acts (and Acts 28:17–28 specifically) and finds further evidence in support of an early date of Acts.

With the aid and application of modern principles of papyrology and textual criticism, a further purpose of this chapter is to understand the significance of the Acts variants in relation to the often debated and yet ever present ‘Western’ tendencies (see “Appendix: The Manuscript Record for Acts 28:11–31”).¹⁴¹ It is argued here that these variants provide additional evidence in support of E. J. Epp’s proposition that the Alexandrian and Western textual families are not only comparable in age but also

¹³⁹ Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 14–18 (18).

¹⁴⁰ Next to theories of literary fabrication (so Pervo, *Acts*, 688) three major trends have been identified: (1) Foreshadowing (Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52); (2) Rhetoric of Silence (Marguerat, *Historian*, 229–30); and most recently (3) Linkage (Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 170).

¹⁴¹ This section draws from Armstrong, “Variants,” 87–110.

decidedly earlier than previously thought.¹⁴² Here it is shown that the manuscript record for the end of Acts (28:11–31) in light of the unique transmission history of its texts, offers additional evidence for an early date of Acts.

Chapter 5 “Acts in its Jewish and Greco-Roman Historical Context” inculcates the insights from the previous chapters and places the book of Acts in a realistic historical setting and timeline that is supported by, but not dependent on, literary theories and devices alone.¹⁴³ Here the book of Acts is examined in light of the available sources relating to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE and the great fire of Rome in July of 64 CE and the subsequent Neronian Persecution of Christians in Rome. It is argued here that Acts unequivocally reflects a time before these events occurred.

In the last chapter 6 “Conclusion: A New Plea for an Early Date of Acts,” the direct results of the entire research project is summarized and presented. The combined evidence presented for an early date of Acts not only effectively demonstrates that a post-70 CE date is unsubstantiated, a late first-century, and especially second-century date is historically baseless. The conclusion proposes that Acts was written close to 62–63 CE and no later than 64 CE.

¹⁴² An early second century ‘Western’ text adopted by Irenaeus and Marcion is problematic for late dating advocates. Cf. Elliott, “The New Testament Text,” 12; Roth, *Marcion's Gospel*, 2 (n.4), 438 and idem, “Marcion,” 302–12.

¹⁴³ See Gill et al., “Preface,” 1:ix–xii.

CHAPTER 2: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL APPROACH TO THE DATE OF ACTS

Introduction: Dating Acts in Time

Until recently, there has been very little response to three conflicting monographs on the date of Acts (Pervo, Tyson, and Mittelstaedt)—except for a few entries in various books and commentaries, and recent essays.¹ The first two monographs, as we saw in chapter one, argue for an early second century date while the latter an early date of 62 CE. While Pervo, in particular, has received widespread attention, Mittelstaedt has not.

I am not sure why this detailed work flew under the radar but I am surmising it did for three reasons: (1) it is in German, or (2) it argues for an early date which is not as popular a position against the middle and later dating groups, or (3) the date of Acts has not received the attention it deserves in recent years. Perhaps it is some combination of all three. Meanwhile, a great number of scholars are content to give this issue a passing reference as if it has no bearing on the interpretation of Acts, or its place in *history*—which is (or should be) a fundamental concern to NT scholars.²

¹ The methods and conclusions are very conflicting: Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*; Pervo, *Dating Acts*; and Tyson, *Marcion*. Since Hemer's (*Acts*, 365–414) work the most recent and thorough commentary covering this issue is Keener, *Acts*, 1:382–401. Cf. also Snyder, *Acts of Paul*, 13–14; Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 75–79; idem, "Early Church," 72–100; and most recently, Armstrong, "A New Plea," 79–110 and idem, "Variants," 87–110.

² Recently, Woolf (*Concise History*, 3) suggests that the word history means "the forms in which the past is recovered, thought of, spoken and written down." According to Tosh (*Pursuit of History*, x) the word history carries two meanings in general discussion. It refers both to "what actually happened in the past" as well as the "representation of that past in the work of historians." Harris (*Linguistics*, 31–32) claims that the question "What is History?" is "always—and was always—a bogus question to start with. It is never asked except by those who think they already know the answer" (see his argument on p. 15 outlining the linguistic difficulties of claiming that history carries two meanings).

If there was ever an issue in Acts scholarship that should be solved, surely it is its date. The date of Acts (and the interpretation of Acts in general) is currently, and historically a matter of relentless debate. There are countless ways that an ancient text such as the book of Acts has been interpreted, and yet, from a position informed by *historiography*, any interpretation that fails to seriously consider its date will suffer a measure of deficiency.

Chronology is also vital for the interpretation of texts and yet students “usually accept dates given to them in textbooks without thinking about where the dates are derived from or on what sort of evidence they are based.”³ As reported in the first chapter, many reputable and well-intentioned NT scholars are guilty of the same thing. There is nothing wrong with accepting a certain date for a document or an event, but it should never be done without some measure of critical enquiry.⁴

For NT scholars, it seems problematic to quickly venture into matters of interpretation without first tackling the core issue of dating. However, this is not an easy task when considering the “question of dates and how they are determined”—simply because it is not as “cut and dried” as the “acceptance of a specific numerical date for a particular object or event might allow us to believe.”⁵ Regardless of the inherent difficulties in such a task, an approach to the date of Acts that is informed by recent historiographical theory and methods offers a better framework and ability to deal with the sources and evidence.⁶

³ Biers, *Chronology*, x.

⁴ See Bloch, *Craft*, 20.

⁵ Biers, *Chronology*, x.

⁶ There have been few NT studies to date. Cf. Sheppard, *Craft*; Licona, *Resurrection*, and Porter, “Witness,” 1:419–65.

Dating is a complex enterprise. Biers further comments on how the “specifics of the ancient world are seen through a haze, or fog, depending on where one looks, and chronology can be one of the more hazy areas.”⁷ The date of Acts and the associated chronology of the events it narrates (and excludes) is no exception to this haze as the ongoing debate suggests. The present study embraces the ‘haze,’ but also attempts to expand on the ‘scene’ while painting a clearer, alternative version of the story given the available data.⁸

Setting aside the ‘haze’ of the dating issue, I do sympathize with Pervo’s “burden and thesis” that the “general consensus by which Acts has been dated c. 80–90 is not well founded.”⁹ The evidence is lacking for this date as Porter explains that an intermediate date of 80 is “not so much argued for as tacitly accepted, because scholars do not want to accept the late date or an early date.”¹⁰

My contention is that there are simply too many problems with any date beyond 64 CE—and especially with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE—that grow exponentially with each passing year into the second century. Every scholar is entitled to their own opinion but there are far too many inconsistencies with the consensus and later dating perspectives. Since any rejection of the middle range requires “arguing against the

⁷ Biers, *Chronology*, x. Biers (x) continues to say that often it is “as if antiquity is being viewed through a telescope backwards; the image in the lens is tiny, only shows a portion of the scene, and there is no depth of perspective in the picture.”

⁸ There are some exceptions in history where the chronology is not hazy. The destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE provides one of the clearest examples of historical dating. See Biers, *Chronology*, 18; Cooley and Cooley, *Pompeii and Herculaneum*, 43; Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 6:16 and 20; and Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.*, 66.19–20. It was from Puteoli (modern-day Pozzuoli), the strategic port city for Neapolis (Naples), that Pliny the Younger wrote his eyewitness account about the eruption that killed his father (Pliny the Elder). Luke mentions Puteoli as a part of a weeklong stopover before finally arriving in Rome (Acts 28:13–14). Since there does not appear to be any clear motive for omitting the disaster it either did not happen yet, or it happened so long ago there was no need to mention it. See Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 48 and Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77.

⁹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, vii.

¹⁰ Porter, “Early Church,” 72–100 (93). He claims there is “far more substance to arguing for an early date for Acts” (93) that is “somewhere around AD 62–65, with the Gospel finished beforehand” (95).

grain” more effort and assimilation of the evidence will be required than a simple “acceptance of the consensus.”¹¹

The extra effort required to evaluate the literary evidence against the historical record is worth it in light of the importance of Acts for the church, academy, and its contribution to first-century Roman history. “There can be no doubt,” says Cadbury, that this “earliest little essay of Church History is *one of the most important narratives ever written*. Its importance is shown by the extraordinary darkness which comes over us as students of history when rather abruptly this guide leaves us with Paul a prisoner in Rome” (my emphasis).¹² Cadbury is correct, but with every difficulty, an opportunity presents itself for a new understanding of old problems.

Although the methods vary, the critical task before us is to “illuminate” the place of Acts in the “history of early Christianity.”¹³ A key factor in this placement is to establish the *historical context* of Acts, which is inexorably tied to its date.¹⁴ A different

¹¹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, viii. Consensus is perhaps too generous of a word to use for 2006 but especially in recent years: Porter, “Early Church,” 89–96; Armstrong, “A New Plea,” 79–110; and idem, “Variants,” 87–110.

¹² Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 3. Acts offers a significant amount of information concerning the city of Rome (Acts 2:10; 18:2; 19:21; 23:11; 25:25, 27; 28:11–31) and Jerusalem (Acts 1:4, 8, 12, 19; 2:5, 14; 63 references in total). The abrupt ending of Acts is given a fresh assessment with regards to its date in chapter 4.

¹³ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, viii.

¹⁴ Munslow (*Deconstructing History*, 45) rejects the ability of reconstructionist historians (i.e. Elton) to derive “[i]nductivist historical knowledge” from the “authority of the available and validated sources.” Munslow (45) refers to the British historian Tosh (*Pursuit* [2nd edn], 53) who says that the “interpretation of the evidence cannot *literally* generate a meaning, without ‘a command of the historical context’ which will reveal that to which the evidence corresponds” (Munslow’s emphasis). Historians (and I would include NT scholars as well) “cannot understand the past by only consulting the textual evidence. They must place it within the broader framework of which they are aware, the context, in order to reconstruct the past as it really was” (Munslow, 45). Just as an archaeological find requires careful attention to its “precise location in the site” Tosh (*Pursuit*, 10) claims that we “must place everything we know about the past in its contemporary context” (10). Although it is critical that we understand the historical context of our written sources we can only achieve this by “reading other texts.” Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 13. Therefore, historians should study the “material circumstances in which a text was produced and disseminated in order to pinpoint as carefully as possible the milieu in which it was written and read” (13). And since we are learning new things about context all the time, we have to be cautious about our conclusions (editing insight by Porter).

date produces a different context and a different interpretation—this is at the heart of why this study is so important. If Acts was written in 130 CE, the text(s) must be a reflection of the persons, places, and events of that specific time.¹⁵ In similar fashion, the world was a very different place at that time as compared to c. 80–90 CE or before 70 CE (but especially before 64 CE). Either way, the texts should reflect (with a certain degree of confidence) a particular time period.¹⁶

An accurate estimation should be of immense value for biblical scholars and theologians for our understanding of the early church, its birth, development, mission, and message is a reflection of a certain time period.¹⁷ If the book of Acts is a better fit for the second century (rather than the first), then the interpretation of the speeches and events it narrates will be necessarily different.

Nevertheless, scholars should remain abundantly “charitable in their disagreements” with respect to an estimated date, but given the wide range of dates, vague opinions and statements that remain (1) either too general or (2) unsubstantiated should be ruled out based on a better interpretation of the combined evidence.¹⁸ Dubious estimates on the date of Acts, along with the implications and conclusions on the place of

¹⁵ Keener asks a valid question that is often missed: “when we speak of Acts’ date, which draft do we have in mind?” Keener, *Acts*, 1:383. The issue of drafts (along with sources and the greater text critical issues for Acts) is discussed in chapter 4.

¹⁶ See Bloch (*Craft*, 27–28) who describes “historical time” as a “concrete and living reality” and the “very plasma in which events are immersed, and the field within which they become intelligible.” He (28) goes on to reason that “no historian would be satisfied to state that Caesar devoted eight years to the conquest of Gaul... It is of far greater importance to him to assign the conquest of Gaul its *exact chronological place* amid the vicissitudes of European societies” (my emphasis).

¹⁷ See Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 55 and the merited responses by Tyson (*Marcion*, 1) and Pervo (*Dating Acts*, viii).

¹⁸ Keener, *Acts*, 1:383. My chapter 1 gave a sufficient introduction to this malaise. See also Porter, “Early Church,” 72–100 (esp. 89–96).

Acts *in* history (or upon the history *in* Acts), should be critically challenged and dismissed.¹⁹

Current Approaches to the Date of Acts

A survey of the debate reveals that the majority of the approaches employ some form of literary, narrative (narratological), or source criticism as a methodology.²⁰ In short, there appears to be no clearly defined methodology in all three of the most recent monographs, and since the date of Acts is an issue clearly related to history it seems rather negligent that the first two approaches especially (and NT scholars in general) are not aware of or engaged with current trends and methods in historiography.²¹

Pervo, for example, relies on a modern revision of source criticism known as ‘intertextuality’ for his methodology.²² Intertextuality goes beyond finding an author’s source while recognizing that the “production and reception of texts is always

¹⁹ Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 3

²⁰ From chapter 1, the literary arguments of Tyson and Pervo especially, while focused predominantly on late first-century and early-mid second-century texts, significantly lack historiographical and text-critical concerns. Hemer (*Acts*, 1–29, 365–408) is correct—Acts must be studied in relation to its historical context.

²¹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*; Tyson, *Marcion*; Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*. One notable exception is Sheppard’s (*Craft*) overview of historiography for NT scholars. Porter (“Literary Sources,” 1:428 [n. 16]) considers Sheppard’s work “overall a fine introduction to historiography for New Testament scholars” minus some missing criteria related to his own study. Cf. also Skinner’s (“Review of *The Craft of History*,” 155) short but positive remarks. Meanwhile Pervo (“Review of *The Craft of History*,” 185–6 [186]) does not give Sheppard a favorable review but insists that “[t]he guild does need a current, short, balanced primer in critical thinking, with an outline of the development of various methods.” See also Olson, “Review of *The Craft of History*,” 1–4 and Sanzo, “Review of *The Craft of History*,” 1–4 (both are critical). Porter (“Literary Sources,” 1:427) in reference to Licona (*Resurrection*, 19 [n. 8]) remarks how it is “not only New Testament scholars that are limited in their exposure to the variety of historiographical methods” but also that “courses in historiography are rarely if ever taught in religious studies departments of even supposedly prestigious institutions.” See also Porter’s (1:427 [n.14]) assessment of Licona’s useful but oversimplified argument from historiography.

²² Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 7–8, 13, 26–27; Stoops, “Apocryphal Acts,” 1; MacDonald, ed., *Mimesis and Intertextuality*. See also Kristeva (*The Kristeva Reader*, 37) who is the progenitor of this method that sees texts behind texts.

conditioned by a larger web of ‘texts,’ both written and unwritten.”²³ He relies on MacDonald’s version of intertextuality, which has set forth criteria for identifying the ‘hypertext’ and ‘hypotext’ in determining intertextual relationships.²⁴

Pervo considers the “sheer volume of parallels” between Acts and other texts and admits he does not “apply these criteria to each case, but with two exceptions, they are *implicit throughout*” (my emphasis).²⁵ However, criteria aside, should not a true ‘parallel’ be explicit and obvious?²⁶ Perhaps the parallels are much easier to see if one is already conditioned to find them—as he automatically presumes (without justification) that Josephus’s *Antiquities* and the Pauline letter collection “appeared later than the conventional date of (Luke and) Acts.”²⁷

Setting aside Pervo’s method, Tyson’s methodology seems rather ambiguous. He appears passionate about Marcion, his life, theology and practice, influence and relationship to Paul’s letters, and Marcion’s version of the gospel, however, it seems that this preoccupation feeds his presupposition and ultimately his conclusion.²⁸ Tyson’s

²³ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 7; Stoops, “Apocryphal Acts,” 1.

²⁴ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 26; MacDonald, *Homeric Epics*, 8–9. Pervo (26) explains that the ‘hypertext’ indicates the ‘receptor text’ which is “the proposed user of a source” while the ‘hypotext’ points to the “undoubted or hypothetical source.” The criteria he (26) adapts are “accessibility, analogy, density, order, distinctiveness, and interpretability.”

²⁵ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 27. The two exceptions are ‘accessibility’ and ‘order.’ Some of the ‘parallels’ are dubious, such as highlighting ‘circumcision’ in Acts 10:45; Gal 2:12; Rom 4:12; Col 4:11 and Titus 1.10. Cf. Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 91. The “search for parallels is an attractive and often useful undertaking, but it is also fraught with danger.” See Hemer, *Acts*, 63 and Sandmel, “Parallelomania,” 1–13.

²⁶ His selective application of criteria seems to seriously weaken what he constitutes as a ‘parallel’—since he considers them to be ‘implicit throughout.’

²⁷ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 380 (n. 89). Chapter 3 directly addresses these two areas of historic debate in detail. Pervo’s (*Acts*, xv) ‘delight’ in finding parallels with Acts and ancient novels began with his doctoral work.

²⁸ Cf. Tyson, *Marcion*, his chapter 2 (24–49). Tyson’s view stems from his teacher John Knox, who earlier proposed that Acts was “composed as a post-Marcionite and anti-Marcionite text” with one of the author’s purposes being to “disassociate Paul from Marcion.” Tyson (*Marcion*, 16) here and his chapter 3 (50–78); Knox, *Pauline Letter Corpus*, 279–87. Tyson (23) hypothesizes that the “struggle of the church with Marcion and Marcionite Christianity provides the most likely context for the writing of Acts.” Recall my six arguments in chapter 1 (27–28) against Tyson’s hypothesis that (Luke-) Acts is a reaction to Marcion.

actual method seems to be finding literary ‘themes’ and ‘patterns’ in Acts while examining the ‘characterization’ of Peter and Paul and then drawing conclusions based on those themes.²⁹

Meanwhile Mittelstaedt’s ‘Vorgehensweise’ seems to employ a historical-critical method akin to Hemer that emphasizes the ‘Datierungskriterium,’³⁰ ‘Die Zerstörung Jerusalems,’³¹ and ‘Die anderen Datierungskriterien.’³² For Mittelstaedt this really comes down to a balancing of probabilities: “And where proven facts are the exception, the balancing of probabilities is a legitimate, and sometimes the only possible method for obtaining scientific knowledge” (my translation).³³ The basic premise of his argumentation is sound; however, his methodology is not well developed and he does not seem to understand or value the ways that papyrology and textual criticism contribute to the argument. In the end, he concludes with an early date for Acts being written in 62 CE in either Caesarea or Philippi.³⁴

It is unfortunate and ironic that Pervo and Tyson especially neglect both the historical context on the one hand and the actual manuscripts of Acts.³⁵ They compare the

²⁹ Tyson, *Marcion*, 50–78 (on the characterization of Peter see 6–62; on Paul see 62–76). An example of his (69) thinking is exemplified by this deduction: “The missionary method used by the Paul of Acts and his message to the Jews stand in stark contrast to Marcionite theology.” This seems defensible and few would disagree but then he (69) interprets this statement thus: “What better way to counter the Marcionite claims than to *have the apostle 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?” (my emphasis).

³⁰ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 49–250.

³¹ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 49–163.

³² Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 165–250 (this section includes a note on “Das Schweigen über den Tod des Paulus” [165–220] and ‘Weitere Kriterien’ [221–250]).

³³ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 17. “Und wo bewiesene Fakten die Ausnahme sind, ist das Abwägen von Wahrscheinlichkeiten eine legitime, weil zuweilen die einzig mögliche Methode zur Gewinnung wissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis.” My thanks are due to Eckhard Schnabel for improving my German translation here and elsewhere. I am also grateful for his thoughtful corrections, suggestions, and insights throughout.

³⁴ See Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 251–55.

³⁵ Along with other foundational text critical issues (see chapter 4).

first-century and second-century literary environment with the book of Acts, find some parallels, and argue for dependency.³⁶ Often times these “over-imaginative” approaches, which differ little from traditional historical criticism, suggest the author of Acts is endowed with “sophisticated literary skill” enough to intentionally ignore the broader historical context and especially Paul’s letters.³⁷

While addressing the texts is a fundamental aspect of this debate, it is vital to place these texts within a historical framework that values the contributions of previous scholars. Rather than relying on a simple comparison of “vocabulary and style” used between ancient authors (i.e., Acts and Josephus), the scope for this project is much more comprehensive and draws from multiple disciplines (cf. my chapter 3).³⁸

In essence, there are two major fields of research in this debate centering on (1) comparative texts and (2) the historical context. While later dating advocates rely primarily on a comparative study of the texts (Pervo/Tyson especially), the middle and especially early groups (recall chapter 1) draw heavily upon historical considerations; the decisive and dividing issue that separates them is the fall of Jerusalem, with Acts and its relationship to the city of Rome a close second. Since the events alluded to in Acts and Josephus can often be dated with relative accuracy (and sometimes with precision), it seems negligent to ignore elements of historical criteria (i.e. datable matters of history) in favour of speculative literary theories, comparisons, and devices (see chapter 4).

³⁶ Recall my comments on the “chicken and egg anachronistic fallacy” in chapter 1 (23). Such theories are critically assessed and challenged in chapter 3.

³⁷ See Barrett, Review of *The First Christian Historian*, 255.

³⁸ E.g. Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 13. Dating *any* historical document requires attention to several factors but especially to the primary and secondary sources. See Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 33–60; Williams, *Toolbox*, 56–78. The dividing and decisive issue among historians boils down to *how* primary sources and historical texts should be read. See Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 2, 5–15.

At the same time, higher literary critical methods applied in this debate are often lacking in a lower critical foundation of modern principles of textual criticism, and devoid of any consideration of recent advances in grammar and linguistics. There is also a distinct lack of awareness of the long-standing epistemological debates occurring among philosophers and historians.³⁹ Therefore, a comprehensive approach to this problem is necessary in order to address the (1) historical and (2) literary (text-critical and linguistic) concerns fairly and adequately.⁴⁰ A historiographical approach draws from principles of historiography and will provide a “strong” and “adequate” foundation for addressing the criteria within the two major fields of inquiry.⁴¹

This historiographical approach (from start to finish) is simply a consciously subjective reflection of the many ways that each of the ancient, modern, and more recent scholars have contributed to the date of Acts and its place in history.⁴² One could say that this historiography is merely *a* written history of *how* the date of Acts has been interpreted—but knowing this history is only the beginning.⁴³ In doing so, the goal is to discover what “actually [or probably] happened in the past” through the *narrative* of Acts and the interpreters who have contributed to the subject since ancient times.⁴⁴

³⁹ Green and Troup (*Houses*, 297) state: “Currently controversies rage around history and postmodernism, and history and poststructuralism.” Cf. also Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 1–18; Müller, “Understanding History,” 23–36; Reinfandt, “Reading Texts,” 37–54.

⁴⁰ The issue of whether Acts should be considered as a historical document is taken up in greater detail in chapter 5.

⁴¹ Contra Tyson, *Marcion*, 22. Postmodern, poststructural and even deconstruction are often used as synonyms by some historians. It is helpful to see postmodernism as an “historical description...of an age” and postructuralism as a “bundle of theories and intellectual practices, that derives from a creative engagement with its ‘predecessor,’ structuralism,” and deconstruction as ‘a method of reading.’” See Green and Troup, *Houses*, 297 citing Caplan, “Postmodernism,” 262–8. Cf. also Patterson, “Implications,” 83–8. Munslow (*Deconstructing History*, 2) argues that postmodernism is not a new thing but a re-evaluation of modernism.

⁴² Williams, *Toolbox*, 117; Salevouris and Furay, *Methods and Skills*, 255.

⁴³ Munslow, *A History*, 7.

⁴⁴ See Tosh, *Pursuit*, x; Pendas, “Testimony,” 227. Naturally there is a very important filter in this process as demonstrated by the critical work by White, *Tropics of Discourse* and idem, *Form*. White

Modern Movements and Trends in Historiography

The following section will provide a brief overview of some of the key figures and major movements in historiography from empiricism to poststructuralism. The purpose of this overview is meant to give a snapshot of the ongoing discussion of what ‘history’ is and how we should approach it from the mid-nineteenth century up to the present day.⁴⁵ Since historiography as a discipline is relatively unknown in NT studies this section is designed to provide some basic knowledge of the trends, methods, and principles.⁴⁶

Empiricist Historiography

Empiricism is the “most influential school of historical thought” in the twentieth century.⁴⁷ Empiricism is not only a theory of knowledge it is also an epistemology and arguably a “method of historical enquiry”—all at the same time.⁴⁸ Even today there are few historians who do not subscribe to some aspect of empiricism as a “research method”—since most of them regularly use the same kind of “analytical tools” that have been developing since the nineteenth century.⁴⁹

(*Form*, 4) argues that “[h]istoriography is an especially good ground on which to consider the nature of narration and narrativity because it is here that our desire for the imaginary, the possible, must contest with the imperatives of the real, the actual.”

⁴⁵ For further study and links to research on the broader movements see Green and Troup, *Houses*; Spalding and Parker, *Historiography*; Cheng, *Historiography*; Wilson’s (*History in Crisis?*, 70–104) instructive chapter 5 on the “Varieties of Histories” and the essays in Bentley, ed., *Companion to Historiography*. See Woolf (*A Concise History*) and his excellent bibliography at the end of each chapter. For further study on the Annalists, see Middell, “The Annales,” 104–117; Dewald, “Lost Worlds,” 424–42; André Burguière, *The Annales School*; and Burke, *Revolution*. For Marxist historiography, see Rigby, “Marxist Historiography,” 889–928; Perry, *Marxism and History*; Kaye, *The British Marxist Historians*; and most recently Williams, “Future,” 53–65.

⁴⁶ Recall my note 21 on New Testament and historiography.

⁴⁷ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 1. Munslow (*A History*, 2) argues that it was about 1700 when history began its “modernist cultural journey” and subsequently became the “collective noun for the master narrative (the story) that happened to human beings.”

⁴⁸ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 1. Some scholars separate empiricism as an “ideological formation” from the “empirical techniques of historical investigation” (1). See Thompson, *Poverty of Theory*, 6.

⁴⁹ Green and Troup, *History*, 1. There continues to be a great need to focus on theory and method in historiography. See Evans and Smith (*Knowledge*, 1–19) and their introduction to a theory of knowledge.

The ‘empirical’ approach began with the scientific revolution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵⁰ During the mid-nineteenth century, Leopold von Ranke at the University of Berlin played a key role in establishing “professional standards for historical writing.”⁵¹ He argued that historians should only use “primary” or “original sources”—those which were “generated at the time of the event under consideration.”⁵² These primary sources should then be studied with great scrutiny so that historians would be able to “reconstruct the past accurately.”⁵³ Only through “thorough research” could historians arrive at a “true understanding of the past.”⁵⁴

⁵⁰ This period saw a shift from a theistic world view to natural philosophy whereby it was argued that knowledge should be derived from “use of the senses as we observe and experience life, or through statements or arguments demonstrated to be true.” Cf. Munslow, *Companion*, 80. It was during this period that many of the recognizable disciplines including history, sociology, and anthropology emerged.

⁵¹ Green and Troup, *History*, 1; For further reading, see Warren, “The Rankean Tradition,” 23–41. Spalding and Parker, *Historiography*, 8–10; Evans, *Defence*, 15–23; Bently, *Companion to Historiography*, 406–8, 419–23; Iggers, *The German Conception of History*; Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*. As a leading empiricist of his time, Ranke became known as a highly influential scholar and his students populated universities throughout Europe and North America. According to Iggers (*Historiography*, 26) Ranke’s “‘impartial approach’ to the past, seeking merely to show ‘what had actually happened’ . . . revealed the existing order as God had willed it.” Furthermore, his “conception of history” reflected the “centrality of the state” (26). Altogether this indicates that we must always take “into account the political and religious context” in which a scholar’s history “emerged.” Cf. also Carr, *History?*, 5.

⁵² Green and Troup, *History*, 1. Ziemann and Dobson (“Introduction,” 2) relay how Ranke is far from the “inventor of the ‘historical-critical method’ of source criticism”—although his image is usually “set in stone.”

⁵³ Cf. Evans, *Defence*, 18. From a deconstructionist perspective empiricism commits a grievous ontological error by equating *the past* with history. Munslow (*A History*, 7) explains how the “ontological category” of ‘the past’ can be “defined as what once was but is no more, whereas ‘history’ exists in the category of a narrative that we construct (or write if you prefer) about ‘the past.’” In other words, the “past is the past” while “history is a narrative written about it” (7).

⁵⁴ Spalding and Parker, *Historiography*, 8. They (8–9) explain that for Ranke it was imperative to his method that the “sources be examined critically—to uncover, for example, the motives of the author of a document, as well as its status and veracity.” In its most “extreme form” this “scientific history” led to what is known as “positivism.” Green and Troup, *History*, 1. Woolf (*Concise History*, 263) suggests that positivism is best referred to as a “strict historical ‘empiricism.’” The term positivist was first associated with the French scholar Auguste Comte. For further study on Comte and the later emphasis on scientific history that developed into the later reconstructionist work of Bury and Elton, see Green and Troup, *History*, 1–4; Spalding and Parker, *Historiography*, 9–10; Woolf, *Concise History*, 263; Lenzer, ed., *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, 71–2, 75, 195–7; Bury, *Inaugural Lecture*, 31; Elton, *Practice*, 34–35; and Skinner, “Sir Geoffrey Elton,” 301–16.

With regards to method, the first principle of empirical history is the “careful evaluation and authentication of primary source material.”⁵⁵ While every historian should carefully evaluate their source material there are limitations to this process namely because the “records or artefacts that survive into the present are always incomplete and partial.”⁵⁶ In addition, it remains impossible for any historian to examine “all existing” source material that bears on a research question.⁵⁷ Moreover the surviving records are often written by the “literate elite” of that society and their conclusions may “reflect a very narrow range of experiences or perspectives.”⁵⁸ Therefore, the historian needs to look beyond one piece of the pie and in some cases read “such evidence against the grain.”⁵⁹

The second principle of empirical history is that of “impartial research, devoid of *a priori* beliefs and prejudices,” while the third employs the “inductive method of reasoning.”⁶⁰ According to Elton, the questions that the historian asks must never be “forced by him upon the material” rather it is the material that forces the question on the historian.⁶¹ The historian must remain a servant of the evidence and “should ask no

⁵⁵ Green and Troup, *Houses of History*, 4. This first principle is one of Ranke’s “most significant legacies” (4). Later generations have crystallized these principles in various ways as can be seen in Marwick’s (*The Nature of History*, 220–24) seven criteria for processing historical documents. Later intellectual historians argued that “texts should be understood as acts of rhetorical communication”—hence the need to “consider the intentions of the author.” Green and Troup, *Houses of History*, 5; Skinner, *Foundations*, 1:10; idem, “Meaning and Understanding,” 48–49.

⁵⁶ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 5.

⁵⁷ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 5. For most scholars there simply is not enough time to examine everything. Cf. Tosh, *Pursuit*, 98 and Elton’s (*Practice*, 92–93) suggestion to focus on one set of ‘master’ documents as a guide in selecting the remaining source documents.

⁵⁸ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 5.

⁵⁹ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 5. Such is the case with ethnohistorians in their quest to understand the colonists—they need to go beyond the records that are left behind by colonizer. See Green and Troup, *Houses of History*, 172–203; Chartier, “Texts, Symbols, and Frenchness,” 682–95; and Hunt and Bonnell, eds., *Beyond the Cultural Turn*.

⁶⁰ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 5.

⁶¹ Elton, *Practice*, 83.

specific questions until he has absorbed what it says.”⁶² This caution becomes all the more valuable given the fact that the “premature consignment of unfamiliar evidence to familiar categories” is difficult to avoid as even “apprentice historians know.”⁶³

With regards to the date of Acts, scholars in the early, middle, and late dating range seem to be unaware of the same kind of pre-determined theorizing. In fact, it is easy to see how a historian’s “judgement concerning causation or motivation” are frequently the by-product of their “inferences” that are “impossible to prove.”⁶⁴ It is no surprise then to hear of the difficulties in finding agreement among historians (or NT scholars for that matter) given the fact that many historical events are “open to a multiplicity of interpretations.”⁶⁵

The reason for such incompatibility among the various interpretations is that the same evidence can produce “two quite different stories about the past.”⁶⁶ This is exactly what is happening with the date of Acts debate—everyone is sifting through the same evidence but arriving at different conclusions (see *Selecting and Interpreting Primary and Secondary Sources* below). Further complicating matters is the fact that there seems to be widespread disagreement on what constitutes ‘evidence.’

⁶² Elton, *Practice*, 83 (and 121). Skinner (“Sir Geoffrey Elton,” 307) similarly affirms the “salutary warning” that we need to “avoid fitting the evidence” that we examine into “pre-existing patterns of interpretation and explanation.”

⁶³ Skinner, “Sir Geoffrey Elton,” 307. Skinner is using Gadamer’s thought to critique Elton. See Gadamer, *Warheit und Methode* and the popular English translation *Truth and Method*. Abrams (*Historical Sociology*, 306–7) builds on this central critique with regards to Elton’s study (*Reformation Europe*) of the protestant reformation in Europe. Everything from Elton’s choice for the title of the book to the familiar tale of Luther’s 95 theses being nailed to the door of the church in Wittenburg is a case of “sociological theorising on a major scale” (307). Tosh (*Pursuit*, 154) claims that the “facts are not given, they are selected. Despite appearances, they are never left to speak for themselves.”

⁶⁴ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 6. See also Tosh, *Pursuit*, and his chapter 7 (148–79) on the limits of historical knowledge.

⁶⁵ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 6. See also White (*Tropics of Discourse*, 55) and his concern for the adequacy/inadequacy of interpreting events. There are other significant events that have often been neglected entirely by the middle and late group (see Chapter 5).

⁶⁶ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 6.

This subjectivity of facts and evidence in examining history, leads to the question of relativism, which is the view that “absolute truth is unattainable” and that “all statements about history are connected or relative to the position of those who make them.”⁶⁷ In his important study on the question of objectivity, Novick points to the earlier work of the revisionist historian Beard who argues that historians should strive toward objective truth even though such truth is illusive.⁶⁸

In Britain, a similar relativist critique came from Carr who shared Beard’s perspective that the historians’ contemporary situation influenced their interpretations of the past.⁶⁹ For Carr the “facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions and so on, like fish on the fishmonger’s slab. The historian collects them, takes them home, and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals to him.”⁷⁰ Accordingly, Carr as a proto-deconstructionist insinuates that historical writing is “ultimately the product of the historian.”⁷¹

This is a useful point concerning our approach to the date of Acts—before we begin with the ‘facts’ we need to start first with the mind of the ‘historian.’ What are the chief influences and presuppositions behind each of the scholars and how might this

⁶⁷ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 7.

⁶⁸ Novick, *Dream*, 259. Novick looks at the issue of historical objectivity in historiography from its ‘enthronement’ in the 1880s to the 1980s at finds it problematic and a “sweeping challenge to the objectivist program of the founding fathers of the historical profession.” Cf. also Reinfandt, “Reading Texts,” 42. Beard (“*Dream*,” 86–87) claims the “effort to grasp at the totality of history must and will be continued, even though the dream of bringing it to earth must be abandoned.” He (87) thinks the historian should broaden the search for truth since they will “come nearer to the actuality of history as it has been.”

⁶⁹ For example, Stern (“Introduction,” 24) explains how the “tragic experiences” of the 1930’s and 1940’s have had a “profoundly unsettling effect on historiography.” Cf. also Carr, *History?*, 3.

⁷⁰ Carr, *History?*, 9. He (23) compares facts with “fish swimming about in a vast and sometimes inaccessible ocean” and what the historian catches depends on what “kind of fish he wants to catch” and “what part of the ocean he chooses to fish in and what tackle he chooses to use.” In this way the historian will “get the kind of facts he wants” (23).

⁷¹ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 7. Carr (*History?*, 40) says that “before he begins to write history, is the product of history.” He (22) elsewhere reasons that the “facts of history never come to us ‘pure’ . . . they are always refracted through the mind of the recorder.” Hence our “first concern” should not be with “the facts which it contains but with the historian who wrote it” (22).

affect their selection of sources and ultimately their interpretation? What underlying theories are driving their inferences and conclusions? Regardless, it is clear that certain epistemological processes are at work in each case long before the assemblage and interpretation of the bits of data that recreate a certain view of history.⁷²

Poststructural Historiography

After the second World War historiography as we know it changed dramatically with the advent of postmodernism.⁷³ Historians could no longer approach the past with the same “basic presuppositions” and “categories of explanation” as they previously did.⁷⁴ Stern remarks how the “generous faith in rationality” and the “possibilities of human progress”—which supported much of the historical thinking up to that point—were jettisoned.⁷⁵ As a result, historians began to think about history *not* as a collection of facts from *the past* but as *a story*—an imperfect interpretation of those events in time.⁷⁶

Since the advent of postmodernism, the influence of poststructuralism on historiography has reinforced the importance of subjectivity in historical accounts.⁷⁷ In

⁷² Cf. Porter, “Witness,” 1:431–2. For a recent discussion on epistemology, knowledge, and understanding see the recent essays in Grimm et al., eds., *Explaining Understanding* and especially Baumberger et al., “What is Understanding?,” 1–34; Sosa, *Epistemology*; Pryor, “Recent Epistemology,” 95–124; Evans and Smith, *Knowledge*, 1–19; and the insightful essay by Easthope, “Romancing the Stone,” 235–49 (esp. 236–40 and his section on the ‘Epistemological Question’).

⁷³ Williams (*Toolbox*, 117) refers to this “historiographic battle” to be just as “bitterly contested as the war itself.” Where the Allies had one version of the events Japan and Germany (the opposing powers) had another. From among the Allies there were marked differences in what actually happened and there has been a constant flow of interpretations ever since.

⁷⁴ Stern, “Introduction,” 24.

⁷⁵ Stern, “Introduction,” 24.

⁷⁶ White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 55; White, *Form*; Ankersmit et al., *Re-Figuring*; Paul, *White*, et passim. Munslow (*A History*, 7) uses the helpful description of ‘the-past-as-history’ as a ‘reminder of the practical situation that ‘the past’ and ‘history’ belong to different ontological categories. Their ‘being’ is different. The ontological category of ‘the past’ can be defined as what once was but is no more, whereas ‘history’ exists in the category of a narrative that we construct (or write if you prefer) about ‘the past.’” In summary, he (7) says that “history is a narrative” written about the past.

⁷⁷ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 7. Spalding and Parker (*Historiography*, 26) state that “scepticism is the hallmark of postmodernism” whereby “[e]verything could be deconstructed, even the individual

essence, poststructuralism branched away from empiricists' sole reliance on facts, noting that facts are of no value without an understanding of the subject's language.⁷⁸

Hence, the issue of using and interpreting language is central to this shift in thinking that has otherwise been referred to as a 'linguistic turn.'⁷⁹ This linguistic (or cultural) turn as some suggest gave rise to the "radical relativism" that is prevalent in many branches of recent postmodernist theory that attempts to elevate a "humanistic view" to a "philosophy of explanation"—that some consider to be ultimately "incoherent" and "self-denying."⁸⁰

Although it is crucial that historians approach a distant and alien culture with a measure of erudition and sensitivity, only credible "historical research" (like that of any logical process) strives to "improve its explanations"—which usually implies a "degree of objectivity."⁸¹ Consequently, and regardless of what constitutes a "contribution to improved explanation" there must be some consideration as to what would "constitute better methods and better results."⁸² Lloyd's caution with respect to the so-called linguistic turn is significant.⁸³

person"—even "[a]uthorial intent was inaccessible or irrelevant." On structuralism and poststructuralism, see Porter and Robinson, *Hermeneutics*, 14–16, 154–213 (chapter 7 and 8).

⁷⁸ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 7.

⁷⁹ On the so-called 'linguistic turn,' see Clark, *Text*, 1–8; Harris, *Linguistics*, 9–13. In his estimation as a linguist Harris thinks that most, if not all, historians fail to grasp the turn. He (13) explains the serious problem of how Western historians have "managed to ignore" the fact that their "contribution to human knowledge was itself language-dependent (not just dependent on the adoption of particular narrative forms or rhetorical devices)." His thesis is that a certain philosophy of language "sponsors" a certain philosophy of history (vii). Meanwhile Clark (*Text*, 5–6) surmises that if language does "not refer to a one-to-one fashion to things in the 'real world,' how could historians argue that their language about the past corresponded to 'what actually happened?'"

⁸⁰ Lloyd, "Social Sciences," 83–103 (86).

⁸¹ Lloyd, "Social Sciences," 86.

⁸² Lloyd, "Social Sciences," 86. Cf. also Reinfandt, "Reading Texts," 37–54.

⁸³ In fact, even among linguists (e.g. Harris, *Linguistics*) who recognize an actual linguistic turn, have challenged the "'unlinguistic' nature of the supposed linguistic turn in much historiography." Cf. Porter, "Literary Sources," 1:430 (n. 21). Porter (1:430) refers to the supposed linguistic turn in postmodernist historiography as neither "particularly linguistic" nor should its "aesthetic turn" be classified as "particularly artistic." Nevertheless, the postmodern shift in history has occurred and we are left with no

Accordingly, poststructuralist historiographers argue that “language shapes our reality” but at the same time it does “not necessarily reflect it.”⁸⁴ Hence, a central criticism against empiricism rests in the “rejection of any correspondence between reality or experience, and the language employed to describe it.”⁸⁵ However, the counter-criticism against poststructuralism is that this perspective (in theory) can lead to an unfettered “subjectivism” which in turn paves the way for an unacceptable form of “moral relativism.”⁸⁶

Consequently, where poststructural historians are more cautious with the ‘facts’ of history—and their subsequent interpretation/deconstruction of those facts—still, some events in history seem to be inescapably factual.⁸⁷ Although some of the events that occurred in the 60s and 70s CE (i.e. fall of Jerusalem and the fire of Rome) continue to be variously interpreted, the relationship between these sources and Acts points to a *plausible* chronology (cf. chapter 5).⁸⁸ If we can date those events with relative certainty then it seems reasonable to date Acts in relation to them.

In the end it seems inevitable that *any* method of historical enquiry must navigate safely between an “extreme documentary objectivism” on the one hand and a “relativistic

choice but to converse with the issues on a theoretical and practical level as there is no going back to the good old days of modernist interpretation. Porter (“Literary Sources,” 1:430–31) finds many prominent NT scholars to be stuck in some form of a modernist understanding of historiography. This is not surprising since many historians also “continue to write as if poststructuralism, indeed theory of any kind, did not exist.” Passmore, “Poststructuralism,” 138.

⁸⁴ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 7–8.

⁸⁵ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 8.

⁸⁶ Green and Troup, *Houses*, 8. They (8) caution that a “relativist position” invariably “destroys any claim to historical objectivity.”

⁸⁷ A classic case is the Jewish Holocaust in World War II. If some historians were to deny that such atrocities actually happened, should we accept this interpretation as valid? Should we not vociferously challenge such interpretations? See Green and Troup, *Houses*, 8; Passmore, “Poststructuralism,” 134–36.

⁸⁸ While keeping these principles in mind there is no room for dogmatism with respect to ‘how’ these factual events relate to the book of Acts. The goal is to offer the best plausible explanation given the great divide between the first-century sources and the intellectual framework of the scholars who have weighed in on this issue. “In any event historians do not reconstruct the event, but advance more or less probable ways of making sense of what is left over from the past.” Passmore, “Poststructuralism,” 134–36.

subjectivism” on the other.⁸⁹ For example, Popper, who suffered at the hands of the Nazi’s in the 1930s, addressed this “unsatisfactory dichotomy” between “objectivism and subjectivism.”⁹⁰ Popper’s method begins with a “hypothesis or ‘conjecture’” that one must seek to “disprove” by examining the “evidence.”⁹¹ Therefore, according to Popper’s method “[a]ll theories should, in principle, be able to be refuted.”⁹²

After the post-World War II fall of objectivism, a more refined branch of poststructural thought began to develop that is generally known as *deconstructive history*.⁹³ Deconstructive history

. . . treats the past as a text to be examined for its possibilities of meaning, and above all exposes the spurious methodological aims and assumptions of modernist historians which incline them towards the ultimate viability of correspondence between evidence and interpretation, resulting in enough transparency in representation so as to make possible their aims of moral detachment, disinterestedness, objectivity, authenticity (if not absolute truthfulness) and the objective constitution of historical facts—allowing the sources to speak for themselves.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ La Capra, *History and Criticism*, 63.

⁹⁰ Green and Troup, *History*, 8.

⁹¹ Green and Troup, *History*, 8. Accordingly, Popper’s quest for “objective knowledge” involves the “concept of refutation.” Popper (*Conjectures and Refutations*, vii) states that any theory that is “highly resistant to criticism” and which “appear to us at a certain moment of time to be better approximations to truth than other known theories, may be described as . . . ‘the science’ of that time.”

⁹² Green and Troup, *Houses*, 8. They (9) say that Popper’s theories were later challenged by Kuhn (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*). The difficulty with Popper’s refutation hypothesis is that it itself is not subject to the kind of refutation that he endorses (editing insight by Porter). While philosophers continue to debate Popper’s insights Munslow (*Deconstructing History*, 83) summarizes this “Kuhnian–Popperian” debate as to “how science gets at truth.”

⁹³ Munslow (*Deconstructing History*, 18) claims that *deconstructive history* is sometimes equated with postmodern history and the linguistic turn. Tillyard (“All Our Pasts,” 9) claims that “[w]e did not need postmodernism to tell us that objectivity was always a chimera, that individual historians, their lives, loves and beliefs, are always there, in choice of subject and argument and in the very words they write.” Cited by Reinfandt, “Reading Texts,” 43.

⁹⁴ Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 18. For further study, see Ankersmit, *History and Topology*; idem, *Frank Narrative Logic*; Caputo, *Nutshell*; Derrida, *Writing and Difference*; idem, *Grammatology*; Jenkins, ed., *Postmodern History Reader*; idem, ed., *Limits*; Foucault, *Knowledge*; Munslow, *New History*; idem, *A History*.

Since deconstructionists do not place much faith in empiricist principles or a socially or morally independent interpretation no one can “claim to know the past as it actually was”—all that is left are “possible narrative representations in, and of, the past.”⁹⁵

Given the widespread influence of poststructuralism on historiography, historians need to become conversant with the important changes that have impacted the discipline—especially since empiricism no longer offers safe ground for interpretation.⁹⁶ How we deal with the ‘facts’ of history will vary among historians but every approach must avoid the extremes of a naïve positivism on the one hand and an unbounded subjectivism on the other.

Historiography: Principles, Procedures, and Sources

In the milieu of diverse viewpoints from among his colleagues, Beard suggests that there needs to be more instruction on “dealing with the assumptions and procedures of historiography.”⁹⁷ Although he said this just before World War II, his advice is still valid.

While addressing the American Historical Association he asks:

What do we think we are doing when we are writing history? What kinds of philosophies and interpretations are open to us? Which interpretations are chosen and practiced? And why? By what methods or processes can we hope to bring the multitudinous and bewildering facts of history into any coherent and meaningful whole? Through the discussion of such questions the noble dream of the search for truth may be brought nearer to realization, not extinguished.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 18. He (194) says that the term ‘deconstructionism’ originated with Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) who thought that “understanding texts is not solely or exclusively dependent upon reference to the external reality of empiricism, God, reason, morality, objectivity or author intentionality.” See Sarup’s (*Introductory Guide*, 32–57) chapter 2 on “Derrida and Deconstruction” and also Porter and Robinson’s (*Hermeneutics*, 190–213) chapter 8 on “Jacques Derrida and Deconstruction.” They (15) refer to Derrida as the “most famous poststructuralist.”

⁹⁶ Porter, “Witness,” 1:432.

⁹⁷ Beard, “Dream,” 87.

⁹⁸ Beard, “Dream,” 87.

In light of the major trends and issues discussed within the previous sections on historiography, this “persistent questioning” of methods and motives offers the best hope for historiographers today and for the complex task of dating an ancient work such as Acts.⁹⁹

The goal of this section is to outline some guiding historiographical principles and procedures for the study of the New Testament in general and the date of Acts in particular.¹⁰⁰ This objective is not an easy one given the plethora of available research that almost exclusively deals with historiographical philosophy and theory while neglecting methodology and practical application.¹⁰¹

As a consequence, from start to finish this approach is inescapably eclectic and multifaceted, especially since there is little theoretical cohesion among historians—only recognizable clusters (i.e. constructionist, reconstructionist, deconstructionist views). This lack of historical cohesion is compounded further by the serious dearth in the “actual practice of textual interpretation.”¹⁰² This problem is magnified further still because of the very few examples of a historiographical method that have been applied to an issue in biblical studies—let alone for the date of a document.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Reinfandt, “Reading Texts,” 49; Passmore, “Poststructuralism,” 138.

¹⁰⁰ See the essays in the volume by Gunn and Faire, eds., *Research Methods for History* and especially their first essay (“Introduction,” 1–10) that looks at the question, “Why Bother with Method?”

¹⁰¹ Green and Troup (*Houses*, 301) observe how historians are “struggling to come to grips with poststructural practice” simply because there are “few models and examples.” They (301) go on to observe how historians have “critiqued and theorized poststructuralism for over twenty years, but are only slowly writing from this stance. Perhaps as various solutions to the text/context problem are suggested in writing, some resolution will become possible.” Passmore (“Poststructuralism,” 138) suggests that poststructuralism is productive in the sense of provoking “new questions” rather than “methodological innovation.”

¹⁰² Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 2. See, for example, Brown, *Postmodernism*, 48, 72; Evans, *Defence*, 103–28; Fullbrook, *Theory*, 98–121; Howell and Prevenier, *Reliable Sources*, et passim and Tosh, *Pursuit*, 98–121.

¹⁰³ See Licona, *Resurrection* and especially Sheppard’s *Craft* (application section: chapter 8–10, 183–234). Unfortunately, Sheppard pays no attention to textual criticism or matters of advanced grammar or linguistics—and that should also play a role in the interpretation of the NT. See my note 21.

However, despite a lack of practical examples, it is possible to forge a new path by aggregating some important guidelines and principles from among the various historical approaches. Thankfully in the last decade there have been more dedicated works and selected essays that describe (in varying degrees) some critical historiographical principles and methods that can be applied to the problem of dating a historical document.¹⁰⁴

Historiography has started to influence the discipline of NT studies, albeit at a remarkably slow pace. Nevertheless, the opportunities are limitless for developing robust historiographical approaches that draw from the key thinkers and movements in history. While Porter comes short of “defining” his own “historiographical method” he does offer some useful parameters whereby:

... ancient historiography must deal with the residual raw data of the past, recognizing that these data themselves are often the product of uncontrollable or unpredictable factors, including natural and human intervention. These raw data then become the basis of facts, that is, sayings and actions that are selected for explanation and/or interpretation. The interpretation and explanation of those facts result in the writing of and production of history.¹⁰⁵

Before we even begin to explain what happened in the past we must realize that what we (try to) read has already gone through a complex (and subjective) process of interpretation. As a consequence, there are many historians who are convinced that the “ground of reality” has been shaken with an increased concern for subjectivism¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Some recent examples on the praxis of history are Kamp et al., *Writing History!*; Tosh, *Pursuit*; Williams, *Toolbox*; Salevouris and Furay, *Methods and Skills*, and the essays in Dobson and Ziemann, eds., *Reading Primary Sources* and Sangha and Willis, eds., *Understanding*.

¹⁰⁵ Porter, “Witness,” 1:431–2.

¹⁰⁶ Porter, “Witness,” 1:432. Perhaps the only difference between historians and philosophers rests upon the “emphasis placed upon the balance between Subject and Object” (1:432).

Selecting and Interpreting Primary and Secondary Sources

Only a hardened empirical-analytical historian could maintain that the ‘ground of reality’ has not been shaken. However, even as theoretical controversies continue to dominate the broader conversation, there is an urgent need for historians (and even theory-friendly poststructuralists) to translate their theory into a recognizable framework that can be used to deal with an actual issue of historical significance.

Accordingly, the first part of this section offers a framework for dating Acts while suggesting some practical guidelines and principles for the selection, analysis and interpretation of sources.¹⁰⁷ The second part of this section describes the principles of modern textual criticism and papyrology that are used as a method for engaging the source documents (see “Principles for Sources and Textual Criticism” below).

According to Ziemann and Dobson, the heated debates that have occurred since the 1980s about the “nature of historical knowledge” among the postmodernists (and their critics) have unsettled historians.¹⁰⁸ The postmodernists want to liberate the old ‘empiricist’ notions of finding truth without any further conceptual framework.¹⁰⁹ This is, and has been, not only a systemic problem with the modernist interpretation of history,

¹⁰⁷ According to Müller (“Understanding History,” 21) it was Droysen who had a “hard time convincing his fellow historians that the decisive part in studying history was not the *verification* but the *interpretation* of sources” (my emphasis). Furthermore, Müller (26–27) explains that Droysen did not think that the sources themselves could “yield historical knowledge”—he saw them as the “indispensable basis of history; but in his eyes they only revealed their significance if they were interpreted by the historian.” Droysen’s principles are key to this volume. See Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 6; Droysen, *Principles*, et passim.

¹⁰⁸ Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 1. The issue as noted earlier in this chapter rests on epistemology whereby language is “at the core of the controversy” between the poststructuralists and their critics (1). Ziemann and Dobson (1) essentially argue that this “epistemological conflict” relates to the “nature and the possibilities of knowledge about the meaning of language and of written texts in particular.”

¹⁰⁹ Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 1. See Jenkins, *Re-thinking History*, 30, 45. The empiricist ‘defenders’ of Ranke are the “saviours of history” who are sure the poststructuralists are “simply...unrealistic,” and that their assertions are ‘self-evidently’ wrong” (Ziemann and Dobson [1] citing Evans, *Defence*, 127, 106, 109).

but remains a largely undiagnosed (and unaddressed) problem in recent biblical interpretation.¹¹⁰

Although the ongoing epistemological debate among historians is not going to be solved here, the solution rests in the way we handle sources. Essentially, the debate between the ‘realists’ and poststructuralists is “largely focused on the way primary sources or historical texts should be *handled, read and interpreted* in order to make true assertions about the past” (my emphasis).¹¹¹

Apparently the “fever-pitch nature of this controversy” has led to a “veritable theory industry.”¹¹² Rather than offering further “abstract...declarations regarding historical study” it is far more profitable to consider how the ‘realist’ and ‘postmodern’ divide “determines the way we handle primary sources.”¹¹³ Since the “nature of textual interpretation” is at the core of these controversies, offering further “abstract deliberations” will not solve anything.¹¹⁴ Instead, the solution requires a sincere attempt to “reflect theoretical differences” in view of the “actual empirical work of the

¹¹⁰ Porter, “Witness,” 1:427–31.

¹¹¹ Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 1. Sources for the historian are ‘the’ focal point of praxis for any historian regardless of their specific label that is sometimes difficult to define. While reconstructionism is rooted in empiricism, constructionism is essentially a “sub-species of reconstructionism.” Marwick and Elton are notable reconstructionists along with Wood, Trevor-Roper and Stone. The French *Annalists* may be identified as constructionists as well as the neo-Marxist thinkers such as Genovese, Rudé, Anderson and Thompson. Deconstructionists are represented by White, LaCapra, Harlan, Megill, Jenkins, Ankersmit, Munslow. See Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 20–28.

¹¹² Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 1. They (1–2) remark how many recent books that belong to the ‘realist’ camp offer their views on epistemology and postmodernism while arguing that history is ultimately “based on the proper reading and weighing of sources.” They further claim that these books do not offer a detailed example of the “actual practice of textual interpretation for the purposes of the historian.” In reference to Tosh (*Pursuit*, 119), they (2) regard such realist methodologies as “little more than the obvious lessons of common sense.” On this point, I think they (2) are bending Tosh (119) a little far—since he makes it clear that such an approach is far more systematic and supported by a “secure grasp of historical context and, in many instances, a high degree of technical knowledge.”

¹¹³ Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 2. See also the other instructive volumes in the *Routledge Guides to Using Historical Sources*.

¹¹⁴ Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 2

historian.”¹¹⁵ In spite of those theoretical differences, the “heart of an historian’s work” is the purposeful “reading and interpretation of texts.”¹¹⁶

Principles for Selecting Sources

Before we discuss the ways we can interpret sources and texts, an integral part of this discussion involves the actual *selection* of sources. This is absolutely essential for dating any document simply because of the fact that its date is to a large degree dependent on the dates of other documents (cf. chapter 3). Moreover, there is a great deal of subjectivism when it comes to choosing primary and secondary sources.¹¹⁷

In the mind of the historian, the interpretive process begins long before the actual interpretation of the sources. A case in point is seen in Tyson’s obsession with Marcion’s second century version of Luke’s gospel and Pervo’s exclusive focus on comparing the writings of Josephus and Paul’s letters with Luke and Acts. No scholar (including myself) is exempt from the bias that occurs in selecting some sources while neglecting others.

One of my own presuppositions is that many of the events in Acts can be compared chronologically with the Roman writers as well—and not just the events described by Josephus. Examining Josephus and Paul’s letters for clues are important (see chapter 3) but we should be open to other sources of information (chapter 5). For example, Tosh advocates for the “constant reassessment of the original sources” rather

¹¹⁵ Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 2. Munslow (*Companion*, 89) admits that “[m]ost historians today accept a middle position that rejects extreme empiricism.” While discussing the aesthetic turn he (21) says that most historians conceive of history as “empirical-analytical” rather than seeing history as a “literary construction of the author-historian.”

¹¹⁶ Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 2.

¹¹⁷ On the classification and distinction between primary and secondary sources, see Tosh, *Pursuit*, 73; Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 36–37 and Williams, *Toolbox*, 15.

than resting on “what has been handed down by earlier historians.”¹¹⁸ Therefore, it seems reasonable to expect a careful (albeit subjective) examination of all the available documents from the period in question.¹¹⁹ As the rest of my chapters will hopefully demonstrate, many of the documents that are contemporary with Acts are either largely ignored or neglected outright, and this points to *a priori* assumptions at work.

This dismissal of sources seems to be a limiting factor in historical research—unless of course an explanation for such dismissal is provided, but in many cases no explanation is put forth. Going one step further, it also seems crucial for any historical enquiry to read and carefully evaluate the interpretations of other historians who have weighed into the matter. This requires a full study of the “whole gamut of academic publications” available on the subject in order to acquire the (1) “necessary background information” and the (2) “theoretical and historiographical context.”¹²⁰ Our selective engagement (or lack thereof) with primary and secondary sources raises further interpretive issues.

One of the major complications with using written materials as the “principal historical source” is that they use the “same medium.”¹²¹ This is evident not only in their “choice of research topic” but also in the final project—historians are “influenced”

. . . to a greater or lesser extent by what their predecessors have written, accepting much of the evidence they uncovered and, rather more selectively, the interpretations they put on it. But when we read the work of a historian we stand at one remove from the original sources of the period in question—and further

¹¹⁸ Tosh, *Pursuit*, 73.

¹¹⁹ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 36. Ziemann and Dobson (“Introduction,” 14) highlight the fact that sources “rarely come alone” and therefore the “collation of different texts remains an important business for the historian.”

¹²⁰ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 37. From among those scholars who date Acts beyond the fall of Jerusalem (esp. Pervo and Tyson) there is a distinct lack of engagement with some key primary and secondary sources relating to Acts, Jerusalem, and Rome (see chapter 5).

¹²¹ Tosh, *Pursuit*, 73.

away still if that historian has been content to rely on the writings of other historians.¹²²

Accordingly, the first step in assessing the quality of any historical work is to consider its level of consistency with “all the available evidence”—including new sources or old ones that are “read in a new light.”¹²³

This selection process can also be seen in the relationship between *sources* and what constitutes *evidence*. Green and Troup observe how “[e]very piece of historical writing has a theoretical basis on which *evidence is selected*, filtered and understood” (my emphasis).¹²⁴ The historian ultimately (and subjectively) chooses what *they* consider to be evidence.¹²⁵ And this selection process occurs regardless of whether the approach stems from a form of ‘unbiased’ “scientific empiricism” or from theory-friendly poststructuralism.¹²⁶ And although the selection of *sources* and *evidence* is influenced by a particular theoretical basis or *a priori* knowledge, ultimately this process of choosing is up to the individual historian.¹²⁷ Therefore, a new theoretical framework, paired with a

¹²² Tosh, *Pursuit*, 73.

¹²³ Tosh, *Pursuit*, 73.

¹²⁴ Green and Troup, *Houses*, vii.

¹²⁵ Although every historian selects their own sources and how to interpret the evidence, some unconscious choices are not easily identified or explained. For example, Stern (“Introduction,” 24) explains how the “writing of history inflicts on every historian choices for which neither his method nor his material provides a ready answer.” He (24) goes on to say that in some cases only the historian can offer such an answer but “this has kept history a live, changing pursuit.” Cf. also Wilson, *History in Crisis?*, 2–3. It is also possible that the historian may not fully understand—or even be aware of—their choices because of the influence of prior knowledge. Munslow, *Companion*, 89.

¹²⁶ Green and Troup, *Houses*, vii.

¹²⁷ Loewenberg (*Decoding the Past*, 15) explains how “[e]ach historian and each age redefines categories of evidence in the light of its needs, sensibilities, and perceptions. The value of any conceptual framework is what new combinations of data or inferences from the data it may contribute to the historian’s ability to interpret documents and the other raw material of history.”

new combination of data and access to new sources, allows the historian to write 'a' new story of the past.¹²⁸

Principles for Selecting Facts

As incredulous as the title suggests, not only do historians select their sources and evidence, they choose which facts are worthy to emphasize and which ones to leave out.¹²⁹ It is argued here that what we consider to be historical 'facts' are actually the direct result of the interpretive choices of historians who have been influenced by their own present mindset.¹³⁰

For example, Carr famously compares the plight of contemporary historians to that of the "ancient or medieval" historian who has the advantage of acquiring and whittling down a "manageable corpus of historical facts" over many years.¹³¹ The modern historian therefore has the "dual task of discovering the few significant facts and turning them into facts of history" and working to weed out what is considered insignificant.¹³² He considers this compilation of "irrefutable and objective facts" to be the locus of the nineteenth-century historical "heresy."¹³³

He subsequently outlines the effects of this heresy on the modern "would-be" historians and their specialized works over the last hundred years as a case of "knowing

¹²⁸ Munslow (*A History*, 7) makes an important ontological distinction between "reproducing *the* story" and "producing *a* story" (emphasis original). Empiricists would have us believe that their version of history is 'the' most likely history rather than offering 'a' certain point of view.

¹²⁹ Beard ("Dream," 87) points to the well-neglected task of "exploring the assumptions upon which the selection and organization of historical facts proceed."

¹³⁰ Beard ("Dream," 87) explains how we "do not acquire the colorless, neutral mind by declaring our intention to do so. Rather do we clarify the mind by admitting its cultural interests and patterns—interests and patterns that will control, or intrude upon, the selection and organization of historical materials."

¹³¹ Carr, *History?*, 14.

¹³² Carr, *History?*, 15.

¹³³ Carr, *History?*, 15.

more and more” about “less and less” and “sunk without a trace in an ocean of facts.”¹³⁴

The problem, he argues, is the modern historian’s “unending accumulation of hard facts as the foundation of history.”¹³⁵ This commonly held empirical fallacy is that ‘facts’ “speak for themselves” and that we “cannot have too many facts” without asking the (still) fundamental question of “What is History?”¹³⁶

Carr’s key observation is that the empirical (and by extension today’s practical realist’s) reliance on facts and documents is insufficient to determine what actually happened in the past.¹³⁷ In order to determine what actually happened to the someone in the past (as opposed to someone else), the historian must make use of these facts through what he refers to as the “processing process.”¹³⁸ As he states, “The Facts, whether found in documents or not, have still to be processed by the historian before he can make use of them” (my emphasis).¹³⁹ This issue is far more pressing once we

¹³⁴ Carr, *History?*, 15. Carr engages many of the issues raised by philosophers of history (see pages 19–30). See further Sheppard, *Craft*, 23–24, 61–74; Cheng (*Historiography*, 29–60) and her chapter on “Enlightenment and Philosophical History”; Dray’s insightful essay “Philosophy and Historiography,” 763–81 and his earlier work Dray, *Perspectives on History*; Bebbington, *Patterns in History*; Collingwood, *Idea*; Walsh, *Philosophy of History*; Meyerhoff, ed., *The Philosophy of History*; and Gardiner, ed., *The Philosophy of History*.

¹³⁵ Carr, *History?*, 15–16.

¹³⁶ Carr, *History?*, 16. Cf. also Michael Cox, “Introduction,” 1–18; Stephanson, “Lessons,” 283–303; Jenkins, “English Myth,” 304–21.

¹³⁷ Carr, *History?*, 16.

¹³⁸ Carr, *History?*, 19. He (16–19) illustrates his point by pointing to the statesmen Gustav Stresemann who left behind an enormous amount of documents pertaining to his years as the Foreign Minister of the Weimar republic in 1929 (over 300 boxes). Bernhard, his dedicated secretary, wrote three volumes at over 600 pages each. And this would have been all that remains had it not been for the British and American governments who photographed the entire lot. A later abridgement and translation of Bernhard’s work continued to emphasize western policy achievements while it significantly minimized Stresemann’s foreign policy work to the Soviet Union. Carr (19) makes the point that it was not Bernhard or the translator who “started the process of selection” but Stresemann himself. Additionally, Stresemann’s original ‘history’ leaves out the accounts of the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin.

¹³⁹ Carr, *History?*, 16. For Carr (16), such documents can only tell us what the “author of the document thought” and “[n]one of this means anything until the historian has got to work on it and deciphered it.”

realize that we only have access to a collection of contemporary documents that are separated by both “word and world.”¹⁴⁰

Principles for Selecting Events

Every historian not only has a process for selecting sources, facts, and evidence, but also controls the selection of events—and their level of significance—that are described in a narrative (such as Acts). For example, Spalding and Parker discuss this event selection process, describing how “[f]actors that are seen as relatively unimportant may be downplayed or even ignored completely by the author of a monograph.”¹⁴¹ In my view, this process reflects the date of Acts debate precisely—every scholar (including myself) who is weighing in on the debate is choosing certain events that contribute to their argument while ignoring others. As a result, there needs to be a clear justification in the selection (or omission) of every event in question.

When it comes to the interpretation of an event and weighing its significance Collingwood advises that the historian “investigating any event in the past, makes a distinction between what may be called the *outside* and the *inside* of the event” (my emphasis).¹⁴² He uses the examples of Julius Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon or his death at the senate house in Rome—both are datable events in time, but are representative of something much larger.¹⁴³ He considers the ‘outside’ of an event to mean “everything belonging to it which can be described in terms of bodies and their movements.”¹⁴⁴ The

¹⁴⁰ Munslow, *A History*, 8. At the conclusion of Carr’s (*History?*, 19) argument, he affirms that “facts and documents are essential to the historian” but we must not “make a fetish of them”—since they do not “by themselves constitute history.”

¹⁴¹ Spalding and Parker, *Historiography*, 57.

¹⁴² Collingwood, *Idea*, 213.

¹⁴³ Collingwood, *Idea*, 213.

¹⁴⁴ Collingwood, *Idea*, 213.

'inside' of the event is described in "terms of thought" where Caesar's crossing is seen as the "defiance of Republican law" and his death as the "clash of constitutional policy between himself and his assassins."¹⁴⁵

Accordingly, the historian must give due consideration for both the *inside* and the *outside* of the event. These episodes are "not mere events" (that reflect a simple outside aspect without an inside) but "actions, and an action is the unity of the outside and inside of the event."¹⁴⁶ Although the interpretive work starts by "discovering the outside of an event" the historian should reflect upon the event as "an action" with the primary goal of thinking oneself "into this action" in order to "discern the thought of its agent."¹⁴⁷

Consequent reasoning suggests that within the book of Acts, there exists an *outside*, as well as the *inside* aspect of the events with the *action* (or the inner and outer unity) forming a link. As an extension of this concept, Collingwood describes historical knowledge as relating to "what mind has done in the past" while concurrently it is the "redoing of this, the perpetuation of past acts in the present."¹⁴⁸ The past then comes alive as we "plunge" ourselves into the "evidence and experience the past" as best as we can—"by rethinking it."¹⁴⁹ By rethinking the thoughts of the past, we relive the past. This is not

¹⁴⁵ Collingwood, *Idea*, 213.

¹⁴⁶ Collingwood, *Idea*, 213. The historian is concerned with the crossing of the Rubicon "only in its relation to Republican law, and in the spilling of Caesar's blood only in its relation to a constitutional conflict" (213).

¹⁴⁷ Collingwood, *Idea*, 213.

¹⁴⁸ Collingwood, *Idea*, 218.

¹⁴⁹ Munslow, *Deconstructing History*, 68. Collingwood (*Idea*, 218–19) uses the example of the so-called dark ages of history where historians can find "nothing intelligible" but "such phrases tell us nothing about those ages themselves, though they tell us a great deal about the persons who use them, namely they are unable to re-think the thoughts which were fundamental to their life."

a simple subjective imposition of our ideas onto past events—it is a conscious and critical reflection upon the difficult questions of the activities of people in the past.¹⁵⁰

All of this discussion on the subjective process of selection permeates the historian's thought from start to finish.¹⁵¹ In the end, every historian chooses what sources to study, how to study them, what to emphasize, what to include and what to leave out. Given the striking emphasis and influence of poststructural theory on the study of primary sources, it seems obligatory for any historian to not only justify their choices along the way but to explain them—so that others may test and see if their interpretations not only cohere with other narratives but correspond with the “available evidence.”¹⁵²

Principles for Interpreting Sources

The selection of sources, events, facts, and evidence leads us to another aspect of the research process: how to interpret sources. Heidegger reasoned that all of human understanding is interpretive and claims that “all acts of interpretation, are inseparable from our situatedness.”¹⁵³ No matter how objective a historian intends to be in their interpretation, there will always be “presuppositions and prejudgments” that colour their interpretation of a source.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ Carr (*History?*, 23) builds on this concept stating that the “reader in his turn must re-enact what goes on in the mind of the historian. Study the historian before you begin to study the facts.”

¹⁵¹ The contention that history is “inescapably value judgemental” frequently “turns on the consideration that, in elaborating their accounts, *historians have to select*. Their obligation with regard to a *chosen subject matter* is presumably to tell us what is important about it. And importance seems to be a category of value, although a very general one” (my emphasis). Cf. Dray, “Philosophy and Historiography,” 770.

¹⁵² Tosh, *Pursuit*, 73.

¹⁵³ Porter and Robinson, *Hermeneutics*, 10 (see also 8–10, 57–69) Heidegger, *Truth and Method*, et passim.

¹⁵⁴ Porter and Robinson, *Hermeneutics*, 10 (and also 9, 57–71).

This is a fundamental principle in historiography because interpretation is what historians do.¹⁵⁵ History was “originally an attempt to tell a true story” and essentially get the facts straight but since the postmodern debates the lines have blurred between “story and explanation, literature and history.”¹⁵⁶ Some postmodernist thinkers consider “all the past a text and historians merely tellers of a relatively meaningful (or meaningless) story that they construct from textual fragments found.”¹⁵⁷ As a consequence it becomes much harder to separate fact from fiction in the texts we read—but at the same time—the stories do contain varying amounts of truth that we can work with and interpret.

Reinfandt claims that in light of the postmodern shift “meaning can no longer be determined, criticized or evaluated by reference to facts or objects in reality” and accordingly

... the question of what historians are supposed to do indeed becomes pressing. But then, even if we accept that we cannot get at reality as such in its totality and ultimate meaningfulness . . . this does not necessarily imply that reality does not exist, and even historians’ belief in historical truth can survive the onslaught of deconstruction if one acknowledges that interpretations are all we have.¹⁵⁸

As a result, this essentially boils down to a ‘subjective’ process of distinguishing between “acceptable (‘true’) and unacceptable (‘false’) interpretations.”¹⁵⁹ Therefore, our interpretations hinge not so much on our correct gathering of sources and evidence (as

¹⁵⁵ Sheppard (*Craft*, 15) argues that the historian’s “primary task may be boiled down to one word: ‘interpretation.’”

¹⁵⁶ Williams, *Toolbox*, 9.

¹⁵⁷ Williams, *Toolbox*, 9.

¹⁵⁸ Reinfandt, “Reading Texts,” 46–7. Passmore (“Poststructuralism, 136) says that “just because truth claims cannot be established absolutely, does not mean that they cannot be established at all.” Williams (*Toolbox*, 9) insists that historians remain “doggedly concerned with approximating the truth about the past on the basis of available evidence” while at the same time being acutely aware of our own “present situation and inclinations.”

¹⁵⁹ Reinfandt, “Reading Texts,” 47.

crucial as that process is) but on our 'subjective' framework for determining a better interpretation of that evidence.¹⁶⁰

This leads to the question of how we read texts. A broadly poststructuralist view sees texts as "not so much 'carrying' meaning from a source to a recipient but rather bearing traces of meanings intentionally 'inscribed' as well as medially, socially and institutionally 'framed.'"¹⁶¹ Part of this interpretive process requires that we "critically question both the text under scrutiny" as well as the "act of reading itself as installments in the ongoing process of acting in and making sense of the world."¹⁶²

This does not require us to subscribe to a "fixed body of work or to this or that school or approach"—rather it necessitates an "awareness of the contingency of one's own and other people's practice of ascribing meaning to texts."¹⁶³ From this perspective, theory then can be seen primarily as a "mode of persistent questioning" as a safeguard from letting our own "*provisional* answers 'harden' into dogma" (original emphasis).¹⁶⁴ Being aware of 'how' scholars interpret Acts is critical to this debate because in many ways the meaning of a text is determined without a clear explanation.

This persistent questioning of other 'readings' and meanings allows space for other valid (and perhaps more appropriate) interpretations—some of which have been uncritically set aside.¹⁶⁵ My suspicion is that some of the literary attempts suggesting what the author 'really meant' are nothing more than their own politically (or

¹⁶⁰ This will vary depending on the theoretical framework of the historian as a reconstructionist, constructionist, deconstructionist (or some blend in between). Reinfandt, "Reading Texts," 47.

¹⁶¹ Reinfandt, "Reading Texts," 49.

¹⁶² Reinfandt, "Reading Texts," 49.

¹⁶³ Reinfandt, "Reading Texts," 49.

¹⁶⁴ Reinfandt, "Reading Texts," 49–50; Beard, "Dream," 87.

¹⁶⁵ Ziemann and Dobson (*Introduction*, 5–15) offer a helpful checklist for interpreting texts from the past in light of the "plurality of possible readings" (5). They (5) wisely caution against any "fixed set of rules" for this interpretive process such as those proposed by Marwick, *The New Nature of History*, 179–85.

theologically) infused opinions that are also missing significant elements relating to the narrative (see chapter 4).¹⁶⁶ How else can one explain the continued popularity of theories that see Jerusalem's destruction in Mark and Luke as a prophecy (after the event)—despite the simpler explanation that allow it to be written before?¹⁶⁷

Another key aspect of interpreting sources is to consider what is *absent* in the text. There can be a myriad of reasons why (and how much or how little) an author decided to write about a certain person or event in the past but it is equally valid to also consider “what is not in the text.”¹⁶⁸ During the process of interpreting sources it is imperative to realize that they not only contain “‘demonstrable’ information” but they may also exhibit “various kinds of ‘silence’”—and for many different reasons.¹⁶⁹ The book of Acts is certainly not exempt to the reality of silence in the narrative—however, as chapters 4 and 5 will attempt to demonstrate—a number of the explanations concerning the profound silences in Acts do not consider some valid alternatives.

Kamp *et alia* name three types of silences that offer a useful guideline for interpreting the silences narrative of Acts.¹⁷⁰ The first type of silence is because the information was “completely self-evident so no-one even thought to explain it.”¹⁷¹ The second type of silence is because “something was consciously omitted because it had to

¹⁶⁶ Haenchen (*Acts*) championed this ‘what is Luke up to’ approach to Acts that is still a popular (but problematic) method of interpretation. Marshall (*Acts*, 36) contends that Haenchen’s “method was to ask at every point in Acts ‘What was Luke trying to do?’ and he found that he could explain most of Acts in terms of Luke producing an edifying account of the early church that owed nothing to written sources and was based on the scantiest of oral traditions.” Cf. also Armstrong, “Haenchen” (forthcoming).

¹⁶⁷ Fulfilled prophecy carries a far greater literary force in the ancient world. See, for example, Hemer, *Acts*, 375; Bock, *Acts*, 27; and more recently Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 78. Besides this, other compelling grammatical evidence was introduced in chapter 1 (see also Rackham, “Plea,” 76–87 and Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 14). For now, it seems rather negligent that Pervo and Tyson (most notably) favor their own ‘readings’ while ignoring some of the evidence that other scholars have long discussed (see chapter 4 and 5).

¹⁶⁸ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77.

¹⁶⁹ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77.

¹⁷⁰ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77.

¹⁷¹ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77.

be withheld.”¹⁷² The third type of silence is because there was a “taboo on the subject so that the author could not find the words to describe something that was cloaked in shame or that even literally had no name.”¹⁷³

The interpretation of the silences in Acts has—and will continue—to play a key role in determining its date. Certain events that are missing from Acts such as the fire of Rome in 64 CE can be assessed with these and other criteria in mind (chapter 5). However, the search for silences should only be undertaken after the historian has an “explicitly formulated research question and good knowledge of the secondary literature.”¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, silences in the text are “rarely evident” and are usually not the first question to be asked during the interpretation of sources.¹⁷⁵ Nonetheless, silences can be found in the “context of research” and the “example of searching for silences” reflects the important relationship between archival research and methodology.¹⁷⁶

Principles for Sources and Textual Criticism

An important part of this historiographical approach to the date of Acts addresses the literary environment in chapter 3 through 5 by applying principles of modern textual criticism, papyrology, and linguistics (in concert with the guiding source principles above).¹⁷⁷ This new inculcation of old skills with new improvisations is made available

¹⁷² Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77.

¹⁷³ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77.

¹⁷⁴ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77–78; Tosh, *Pursuit*, 111.

¹⁷⁵ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77.

¹⁷⁶ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 78. Here they cite specific research contexts such as slavery, or persecution or with respect to “one’s belief, political convictions, or ideology.”

¹⁷⁷ The following works undergird this second aspect: Aland and Aland, *Text*; Colwell, *Studies in Methodology*; Metzger, *Text*; Metzger and Ehrman, *Text*; Comfort, *Encountering the Manuscripts*; Epp and Fee, *Studies*; Elliot, *Thoroughgoing Principles*; McKendrick and O’Sullivan, *The Bible as Book*; Hill and Kruger, *Early Text*; Parker, *Introduction*; idem, *Textual scholarship*. Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 129–

through the marriage of well-established principles of classical textual criticism along with some new insights from the field of linguistics.

This venture is appropriate for at least two very important reasons. The first is that the application of textual criticism is a necessary practice within the field of history. While discussing the process of historical dating Greene and Moore explain how historical writing (such as Acts) normally has a “clear purpose” to either “represent an event, an individual or a regime in a good or bad light (depending on the writers attitude), or to use history to make a particular point.”¹⁷⁸ They go on to explain that before “any written information about the past may be exploited” it is necessary to consider the following criteria:

. . . *the date and quality of surviving manuscripts; the distance (in time and place) of the author from the events described; the author’s record of accuracy if items can be checked independently; the quality of the sources available to the writer; and any personal biases or motives that might have led the writer to present a particular version of events (my emphasis).*¹⁷⁹

These documentary concerns and criteria are valuable for historical inquiry and used as a guide throughout the remaining chapters.

The second reason is that the textual record of Acts is complex, and yet all three of the most recent and major monographs on the date of Acts have either *missed* or *dismissed* this critical field of documentary evidence.¹⁸⁰ Since the ‘book’ of Acts has

36 (chapter 10) further provides a framework that incorporates traditional text critical methods with advanced linguistic insights.

¹⁷⁸ Greene and Moore, *Archaeology*, 155.

¹⁷⁹ Greene and Moore, *Archaeology*, 155; Bagnall, *Reading Papyri*; Biers, *Chronology*; and Shafer, *Guide*, 119–22. According to Kosso (*Knowing the Past*, 51) there are a few key criteria for assessing the “credibility of a textual report” such as the degree of (1) the “ancient author’s access to the event” and (2) the “preparation of the text,” and (3) its “treatment through time.”

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 23.

been subjected to significant revision(s) throughout the early development of its text this generates a valuable collection of source material.¹⁸¹

Failure to adequately address the textual record and the so-called ‘Western’ expansions overlook an important piece of the puzzle (cf. chapter 3 and 4). Scholars who solely rely on the ‘text’ of Acts found in the Nestle-Aland (or *UBSGNT*) are limiting themselves to one set of manuscripts—to the exclusion of the ‘Western’ textual variations found in others.¹⁸² These variants are not simply “scraps on the cutting room floor” as they have much to tell us about the early history of the church while providing clues to its date.¹⁸³

This is a widespread problem in Acts studies in general but an acute problem for the scholarship relating to its date. For example, Keener (along with the majority of Acts commentaries) does not engage the manuscript record of Acts in relation to the debate.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, all three of the major monographs that address the date of acts are (in varying degrees) lacking in attention to these important text-critical concerns. Starting with Tyson, it is clear that he does not seriously engage matters of textual criticism—

¹⁸¹ These Western variants are approximately 8.5% larger than the Alexandrian family of texts. The editors of the third volume of the *Editio Critica Maior* appear to dismiss the value of the Western variants while challenging other works on the subject. E.g. Epp, “Textual Clusters,” 519–77. However, there are some significant methodological assumptions that limit the *Coherence Based Genealogical Method’s* (CBGM) ability to make such a definitive judgment (see chapter 4).

¹⁸² See Ropes, “Text of Acts,” xvii–cccxx and more recently: Tuckett, “How Early,” 69–86 (70) and idem, “Early Text,” 157–74.

¹⁸³ Cf. Hill and Kruger, “Introduction”, 1–19 (5) in reference to Ehrman’s principle in “The Text as Window,” 361–79.

¹⁸⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 1:383–401. Keener certainly refers to many early patristic texts and on occasion refers to P⁵² in his footnotes; see for example, 1:398–99 notes 102 and 108 (though no mss. of Acts here that I am aware of). To be fair he does include ‘text criticism’ as part of his limitations section (see 1:7–11) and claims that he does “not neglect textual questions at necessary points” (1:7). He does not, however, factor text-critical issues with regards to the date of Acts (and this is not surprising given the scope of his work) but he is well aware of the issues in this helpful section as he remarks how the book of Acts “provides the thorniest text-critical situation in the NT” (1:7–8).

which is especially risky considering his precarious reliance upon Marcion's recreated version of Luke's gospel.¹⁸⁵

While Mittelstaedt and his view for an early date of Acts (62 CE) contains many valuable insights that have been ignored by English scholarship there is very little space given to the manuscripts and texts of Acts. He suggests that when the researcher relies on "tradiertes Texte" and "Archäologie und Papyrologie" they do not present "empirischen Fakten" and as a result we are often left with a balancing of probabilities.¹⁸⁶ While this is true, and he does present several pieces of historical and archaeological evidence in his analysis, he does not engage the textual record of Acts to consider how that may further tip the scales in this debate.

Although Pervo is familiar with the textual record (based on his commentary on Acts), and while on occasion he makes a note in his comparisons with Acts and other literature (that a certain reading is uncertain), he does not clearly factor the variants or the book's textual history in his study. In his chapter 2, he briefly addresses and then dismisses the value of the manuscript evidence:

Paleographical evidence is not relevant to this inquiry, as no one proposes to date Acts later than 175 CE, and there are no manuscripts of Acts that are indisputably earlier than 200–250. The criterion of manuscript evidence, which is not very precise, does not provide certain evidence for the existence of Acts in the second century. Other criteria will have to be invoked.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ See my note 28 above and the substantial problems with his view. Even Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 25) questions whether Marcion knew Acts, and if he did, did he reject it? He (25) further wonders at what point Marcion encountered Luke's gospel "and the form in which he found it." He thinks that Marcion "as the first certain witness to the gospel of Luke" may have seen a copy in Sinope as early as 110–120 CE (25). This point alone pushes back Tyson's date of Acts earlier from 120–125 CE. Tyson, *Marcion*, 78.

¹⁸⁶ Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 17 (see section 1.1.2 [17–20]: "Zur Problematik von argumenta e silentio." My thanks to Keener (*Acts*, 1:385) for helping me discover this important work.

¹⁸⁷ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 15. His "criterion of manuscript evidence" remains undefined (15). The other criterion he refers to as the "criterion of external citation" (15).

On the contrary, paleographical ‘evidence’ is very relevant to this inquiry because there have been significant text-critical studies that attest that even the ‘Western’ text of Acts is an early second-century text (and possibly earlier).¹⁸⁸ In chapter 4, it is argued that these variants provide additional evidence in support of Epp’s proposition that the Alexandrian and Western texts are not only comparable in age—but decidedly early (pre-70 CE)—which directly challenges not only Pervo’s thesis, but other middle and late dating positions as well.¹⁸⁹

Furthermore, Pervo also fails to understand that external criteria (or evidence) in textual criticism is not only concerned with the date of the *document* but also the date of the *text*.¹⁹⁰ He seems to recognize this principle but dismisses it in the next breath: “Nor is the date of the ms. a sure indicator of the antiquity of its text; late mss. may be quite valuable. For the present purpose, however, the date of the ms. is fundamental.”¹⁹¹ Since we are not dating actual manuscripts earlier than the second century, the date of the *text* and its development becomes an even greater arbiter of the evidence (see chapter 4).

Procedure and Method of Analysis

A historiographical approach to the date of Acts is intended as a framework for navigating the complexities involved in dating the book of Acts (or other ancient

¹⁸⁸ Tuckett, “How Early,” 69–86 (85–86); idem, “Early Text,” 157–74; Porter, “Developments,” 31–67; Parker, “Codex Bezae,” 43–50 (48–49); Epp, “Issues,” 17–76 (38, 41); and Ropes, “Text of Acts,” x, ccxlv.

¹⁸⁹ Epp notes that a “defensible argument can still be made for their comparable age.” Cf. Epp, “Traditional ‘Canons,’” 100. Part of my chapter 4 is based on a recent essay: Armstrong, “Variants,” 87–110.

¹⁹⁰ See Vaganay, *Introduction*, 74; Metzger, *Text*, 209; Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 104. Similarly, historians have long recognized the need for evaluating a document via external criticism. See Tosh, *Pursuit*, 102–4 (and 95–147 where he offers some useful guidelines for the authenticity and reliability of a document). Cf. also Shafer’s (*Guide*, 117–62) chapters on external and internal criticism.

¹⁹¹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 376 (n. 1).

documents). As discussed above, this method draws from principles of historiography in conjunction with principles of textual criticism, papyrology, grammar, and linguistics. References to these principles are found throughout each chapter and offered as a guide.

Conceptually, historiography supplies the guiding principles for the *macro*-level process of analysis and method of interpretation while principles of textual criticism (along with papyrology and linguistics) supply the framework for the *micro*-level analysis of the manuscripts and texts. Furthermore, papyrology contributes the specific tools to examine the documents virtually (via INTF) and provide an informed reading text and analysis of the texts in question (see “Appendix: The Manuscript Record for Acts 28:11–31”). On a smaller scale, principles of modern linguistics are employed in order to address some difficult points of grammar throughout Acts and among the manuscript record (e.g. “The ‘We’ Passages and the Prologue” in chapter 3).

One of the first steps for this approach was to identify exactly what the key issues are for dating Acts. As argued above, this ongoing process requires a persistent questioning of the issues, arguments, sources relating to the date of Acts.¹⁹² Much of chapter 1 was the direct result of asking questions based on the *status quaestionis* while offering some initial provisional responses based on the existing secondary research.¹⁹³ The second step was to identify what are the available sources that may shed some light on the date of Acts.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Beard, “Dream,” 87; Reinfandt, “Reading Texts,” 49; Passmore, “Poststructuralism,” 138.

¹⁹³ Cf. Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 22–23.

¹⁹⁴ Historians should engage “every sort of documentation that directly originates from the period that the historian is researching.” Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 23. Similarly, Tosh (*Pursuit*, 110) advises that we “amass as many pieces of evidence as possible from a wide range of sources—preferably from *all* that have a bearing on the problem at hand” (his emphasis). This is a crucial step in the process because it reveals the “inaccuracies and distortions of particular sources” and the “inferences drawn by the historian can be corroborated.” (110). However, due to time restraints it may not be possible to examine every source in detail. Recall my note 57.

The third step was to provide a careful assessment of the views of ancient and modern scholars in order to see what their presuppositions may be and how they interpreted the texts and arrived at their conclusions. One of the key discoveries in this process was that while the majority of scholars endeavor to place Acts within a certain period of time (e.g. 80–85 CE) they dismiss the historical context in their interpretation of the data in favour of modern literary theories.

Starting with chapter 3, the emphasis began with a need to explore how source theories potentially impact the way we date Acts.¹⁹⁵ As a result, it was argued that one's interpretation of sources directly relates to the issue of dating. This process of assessing source theory in Acts is a difficult task because the majority of source research to date remains at the theoretical level. Compounding this issue is the fact that there has been no substantial work on the sources of Acts since Dupont's landmark work in the 1960s.¹⁹⁶ Subsequently, the next step was to examine the reigning source theories (i.e. Single, Complementary, Antioch), and then interpret them using historiographical principles and criteria discussed above.

Furthermore, the various 'We' section theories and proposals were re-examined and new questions were asked of the Antioch theory in light of the textual evidence for the Western variants. In addition, the long-standing theories that link the author's claims in the preface and the 'we' sections, as well as the parallels to the prefaces were analyzed via textual criticism. Here the emphasis included attention to grammar and linguistics, as well as the textual variation in Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1–3.

¹⁹⁵ See Kamp et al. (*Writing History!*, 78) on the link between methodology and the organization of sources.

¹⁹⁶ Dupont, *Sources*, et passim.

Another task of this chapter was to revisit the various itinerary/travel/diary hypotheses and question the interpretation of those theories. In addition, Luke's concern with geography, travel, and lodging (as noted by Harnack and developed further by Cadbury and Dupont) was reconsidered for the ways this impacts the quality of sources. Subsequently, Dupont's conclusion was reinterpreted and given fresh consideration in light of the evidence he actually presented.

Since the relationship between Acts and Paul's letters is hotly contested, prominent passages between Acts and Paul's letters were carefully studied with the view of answering the question of dependency (Acts 9:23–25/2 Cor 11:32–33; Acts 9:21, 22:3/Gal 1:13–14, 23; and Acts 2:33/Gal 3:14/Eph 1:13). Essentially, the texts were compared with each other to see if there were any genuine connections between them.¹⁹⁷ Pervo's subjective claims for such intertextual connections (that are laden with presuppositions) were deconstructed in light of the textual evidence as well as the historiographical context.

The same process was used when comparing the book of Acts and the works of Josephus. Two passages were examined in detail: (1) the rebels Theudas and Judas in Acts 5:36–37 (and Josephus *Ant.* 20.97–102) and (2) the Egyptian Liberator in Acts 21:38 (and Jos. *War* 2.261–63; Jos. *Ant.* 20.169–71). In both cases the process of analysis began with the existing scholarship and then the texts were compared and contrasted via textual criticism and how they fit within their respective historical contexts.

Chapter 4 revisits the reigning theories on the end of Acts while challenging many of the popular assumptions in light of contemporary events. The process began with evaluating the theories and presuppositions that have developed across the history of the

¹⁹⁷ See Tosh's (*Pursuit*, 109–11) section on "Weighing sources against each other."

end of Acts interpretation. Part of this task was to examine the ancient, modern and contemporary views beginning with the NT (i.e. the prison and pastoral letters, the writings of Clement, the Muratorian fragment, Eusebius of Caesarea, Chrysostom's homilies on Acts).

As a result of this inquiry, it was realized that the most recent literary theories (e.g. Fabrication, Foreshadowing, Silence, Linkage) created more problems than they solved. Subsequently, the premises of these theories were evaluated in light of the Acts narrative and the significant events that follow the end of Acts. A second aspect of this chapter evaluated the major interpretations relating to Paul's engagement with the Jews in Acts 28:17–28. The process began by examining the popular views that interpret the Jewish response as evidence of Jewish condemnation, tragedy or hope. It was proposed that the interpretation of this event directly impacts one's view on the date of Acts (i.e. a condemning or tragic view usually reflects a post-70 CE date).

The arguments and assumptions in each of the categories were tested with the aid of modern grammar and linguistics. In many cases the conclusions were found to be suspect simply because of a faulty understanding of Hellenistic grammar and a lack of attention to the immediate (and greater) context of a given passage in Acts. Subsequently, the Jewish response at the end of Acts was examined further in consideration of the wisdom background of Isa 6:9–10 and the Jewish portrait of Paul in Acts.

Another significant aspect of this chapter was to explore the interpretive issues surrounding the end of Acts in light of the manuscript record. Textual criticism was the primary tool applied to the extant manuscript record of Acts 28:11–31. The core of this work began with research on the development of the texts of Acts and its textual

diversity. With some overlap, each of the manuscripts at the end of Acts was analyzed and collated based upon what textual family they represented (via the database at the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung). Subsequently, the results of this collation revealed only small scale deviations between the families which is remarkable given the Western tendency for expansion (see “Appendix: The Manuscript Record for Acts 28:11–31”).¹⁹⁸

The reasons for this anomaly were not immediately clear. However, during the early stages of this research there was mounting evidence for an early text of Acts on the one hand but also sufficient evidence for an early Western text of Acts on the other. Furthermore, Epp’s thesis that the Western and Alexandrian texts are comparable in age sparked further questions of the data. This testing and questioning of the data led to a discovery that directly relates to the date of Acts. Essentially, it was realized that the modern critical edition of Acts (which is largely based on Alexandrian manuscripts) paints a very similar picture as the (expanding) Western version of the events at the end of Acts. The end result of this interpretation produces a significant shift in not only how we interpret the end of Acts, but how this impacts its date and the place of the Acts variants in history.

In chapter 5, the main task was to place Paul (as the main character in the narrative of Acts) within the broader spectrum of the events and processes that were occurring in Jewish, Roman, and Christian history. In order to accomplish this, the first step was to evaluate the broader questions relating to the historicity of Acts (see “Acts in History”). Subsequently, the historical and grammatical arguments that focus on Luke

¹⁹⁸ As mentioned earlier (cf. my note 181), the issues raised by the third volume of the *Editio Critica Maior* are addressed in chapter 4.

and the fall of Jerusalem were examined in light of the LXX and the available extra-biblical texts (see “The Fall of Jerusalem: Dividing the Early and Middle Groups”).

Another step was to compare Luke’s narrative with Josephus’s account of the Jewish war with Rome and the resulting enormous physical, economic and religious impact it had on the population of Jerusalem and Judea.

The next task was to place Paul in relation to the events that took place in Rome soon after the last recorded event in Acts (see “The Great Fire of Rome” and the “Post-Fire Persecution under Nero”). With regards to the fire of Rome, the main procedure was to examine the impact of this disaster on the city and then consider how this relates to the book of Acts. With regards to the subsequent persecution under Nero a similar process was employed beginning with a consideration of the historical accounts and how they relate to Acts. Specifically, key themes in Acts (such as the friendly and peaceful relationship between Christians and Rome) were compared with the barbarity of the persecution. Last, other historical considerations such as the marked changes in Nero’s later reign were also a factor during the interpretative process.

Conclusion: A Historiographical Approach to the Date of Acts

This chapter has explored the critical issue of theory and method with regards to dating Acts. What was found is that (among the three monographs especially) there is no clearly defined method of approach to this historic issue. On the one hand, datable matters of history have often been ignored while on the other, the textual record has not been given the treatment it deserves. So far Pervo’s application of intertextuality and Tyson’s largely undefined literary and thematic obsession with Marcion’s gospel are incapable of

grappling the greater matters of historiography and textual criticism. While Mittelstaedt's historical-critical method effectively addresses the broader historical arguments, he does not (along with Pervo and Tyson) address the substantial textual record of Acts.

Where other methods are arguably deficient, a historiographical approach is capable of addressing the textual and historical issues related to the date of Acts. This approach is conceptually rooted in the concepts and principles of historiography that are outlined in this chapter while the practical work with the texts draws from modern methods of textual criticism.

CHAPTER 3: THE DATE OF ACTS AND ITS SOURCES

Introduction to the Sources of Acts

Smith calls the “spate of literature” on the sources of Acts simply “astounding.”¹ He is right in this assessment but the great volume of source work on Acts from the early twentieth century has withered in recent decades.² Perhaps the greatest reason for this lack of focus on the sources of Acts in recent years is the inherent difficulties of such a pursuit.³ For instance, Dupont’s often quoted “negative” conclusion on its own can leave the most rigorous scholars discouraged.⁴ The state of the research on the sources of Acts is certainly not without significant difficulties, but a fresh examination of the existing research reveals a more favorable prognosis.

Although a *complete* study of the sources of Acts is far beyond the scope of this chapter (or that such an enterprise is even possible), the emphasis is upon what we know (and do not know) about the sources and especially the ways this data can impact our

¹ Smith, “Sources,” 55–75 (55). For further study on sources and historiography, see Tosh, *Pursuit*, 71–121; Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 33–60; Williams, *Toolbox*, 56–78.

² See Wendt, *Die Apostelgeschichte*; Harnack, *Acts*, 162–202; Foakes-Jackson and Lake, “Prolegomena II: Criticism,” 2:122–208; Haenchen, *Acts*, 14–50; and Dupont, *Sources*, 9–14 for an extensive review of sources. Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 1) laments the lack of source work on Acts in recent times. Refer to his helpful list of scholarship on the sources of Acts (347–58).

³ “After nearly two hundred years of intensive research on Luke-Acts the mystery of Luke’s sources still remains.” Smith, “Sources,” 75. Are the sources of Acts really a mystery? The Septuagint (LXX) is an obvious source in Acts—although its form varies considerably. Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 9 and 374 (n. 38).

⁴ Dupont, *Sources*, 166 (especially his often quoted first point). See also Donelson, “Cult Histories,” 1; Marshall, *Acts*, 39–40 and Porter (*Paul in Acts*, 10 [n. 1]) who states that he is “not as pessimistic” as Dupont. Porter’s chapter 2 (10–46) is an updated version of his earlier essay: “The ‘We’ Passages,” 2:545–74.

view of the date of Acts.⁵ Therefore, the goal of the final section, “Concluding Observations on the Date and Sources of Acts,” is to reflect upon and provide some answers to this guiding question: “How does our knowledge of source theories impact the way we date Acts?”⁶ As a result, ten source points (or principles) have been compiled with respect to the source theories that are compatible with an early date of Acts (c. 62–63 CE).

It is true that the question of sources that Luke uses in writing Acts is “more easily raised than answered”—and yet, we must raise them—because one’s *interpretation* of sources directly relates to the issue of dating.⁷ For instance, if Acts is dependent on some passages in Paul’s letters (and not simply reflecting a common oral tradition) then obviously the date of Acts must take into account the letters of Paul.⁸ Second, if Acts is dependent upon Josephus’s *Antiquities* this establishes a *terminus a quo* of 93–94 CE for the date of Acts with a range somewhere in the vicinity of 100 and 130 CE.⁹ If Pervo (and others) is correct, then everyone who dates Acts before 93–94 CE is unambiguously wrong. Therefore, the issue of sources is obviously paramount to this proposal for an early date of Acts.

⁵ Recall “Principles for Selecting Sources” from chapter 2. According to Greene and Moore (*Archaeology*, 155) a fourth criterion for the process of historical dating requires attention to the “quality of the sources available to the writer.” See also Tosh, *Pursuit*, 73; Bagnall, *Reading Papyri*; and Biers, *Art, Artefacts and Chronology*, et passim.

⁶ See “Principles for Interpreting Sources” in chapter 2.

⁷ Longenecker, *Acts*, 221. Nock says that the “relation of Acts to its sources is a thorny topic...For Acts we have only internal evidence and the author’s stylistic skill and singleness of purpose make it very hard to probe beneath the surface.” Nock, Review of *Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte*, 497–506 (499).

⁸ Recall chapter 1 and “The Sources of Acts and Paul’s Letters” below.

⁹ See Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 149–99 (198) and “The Sources of Acts and the Works of Josephus” below.

The Sources of Acts

Dupont's classic study is worth a fresh re-examination given the quality of his work and the influence his conclusions have had on Acts scholarship ever since.¹⁰ Another reason is that although his final assessment seems notoriously discouraging, many of his other reflections provide valuable insights that may have been missed, misunderstood or misapplied.¹¹ At the same time there are other studies on the sources of Acts that are examined before addressing the major dependency theories (see "The Sources of Acts and Paul's Letters" and "The Sources of Acts and the Works of Josephus" below).

Much of the pioneering research up to the time of Dupont employed a combination of purpose, source, and form-criticism to the 'we' and 'they' source issues along with the various forms of the itinerary/diary hypothesis.¹² However, one critical method that appears to be missing in Dupont's work—and in more recent studies—is textual criticism.¹³ Given the significant textual variation in Acts, a study of the sources from a text-critical perspective merits further research and may help to answer some of the unsolved 'source' mysteries.¹⁴ Regardless, new approaches are required since the previous approaches seem to have reached their zenith.

¹⁰ His first version (*Les Sources du Livre des Actes: État de la question*) was published in Bruges (Belgium) in 1960. Hemer (*Acts*, 335) refers to this "classic work" that "shows the difficulty clearly"—since it was undertaken "so meticulously and comprehensively." Gasque (*Acts*, 3) states that "[b]ecause Dupont has done his job so very well, it has been unnecessary to stress the source criticism of Acts."

¹¹ See Dupont's (*Sources*, 157–65) and his second, third and fourth points (166–68).

¹² Dupont, *Sources*, 75. He says that the "way" the author has received the material is a "secondary consideration" (77).

¹³ For example Dupont (*Sources*, 76 [n.1]) prefers to "ignore" the 'we' in the Western text of Acts 11:28. Meanwhile Porter (*Paul in Acts*, 29 [n. 58]) highlights the serious implications of this potential 'we.'

¹⁴ Smith, "Sources," 75. Recently, Stevens declares that "neglecting textual variation means ignoring important features of history." Stevens, *Review of The Synoptic Problem*, 12–16 (15). The textual variation in Acts is a serious and longstanding issue. In fact, Kenyon calculated that the D text is about 8.5% longer than the (neutral) β -text (18,401 words vs. 19,983). Cf. Kenyon, "The Western Text," 310; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:26 and Tuckett, "How Early," 85. See the "Definition of the 'We' Passages" below.

Single Source Theories

If we consider all of the source theories, the “simplest explanation” (though laden with difficulties) is one that “confines itself to a single source.”¹⁵ Beyond any general single source theory, there are also some theories (notably by Weiss) that are concerned with finding a single source in the first part of Acts.¹⁶ After Weiss concluded the existence of a single source for the first part of Acts, he considered the possibility of a single source for the second part of Acts.¹⁷ Instead, Dupont supposes that the “unevenness” of this composition is due to a combination of the author’s “personal memories” and notes along with other “traditions” that were later incorporated into his work.¹⁸ He suggests that this “process” is not only the reason behind the bumps in the narrative but also an explanation for those passages whose “adventitious character is undeniable.”¹⁹

¹⁵ Dupont, *Sources*, 17. If this single source is extended to “Acts as a whole” then the net result is a book that has been edited and “transformed” from an “earlier text to a greater or lesser degree” (17). There are many “weaknesses” with the various single source theories such as Loisy’s “extreme position” that has been often criticized (17–24 [20]; Loisy, *Actes*). According to Loisy, the author “completely disfigured the work of Luke” (21; Loisy, *Actes*, 89 and 104). According to Kümmel, it seems that the theory of Acts being a “much-altered edition of an earlier work” was abandoned by 1942. Dupont, *Sources*, 24 and Kümmel, “Das Urchristentum,” 81–93; idem, “Das Urchristentum. II,” 155–73 (167).

¹⁶ Dupont, *Sources*, 25–32. This research was championed by Weiss in his grand survey on the sources of Acts (25; Weiss, *Einleitung*, 569–84). Weiss noted the “strong Hebrew character” of the first half of Acts, while the language of the second part was “more Greek” and comes closer to that found in the prologue addressed to Theophilus (25–26). Weiss accepted the fact that the author was a companion of Paul and wrote the second part from “oral information” and “personal memories” (26). For Weiss this “Judaean-Christian” source (for the first part) had undergone many “editorial changes” that resulted in “difficulties of interpretation” with the use of an underlying “basic document” (26). Turner (*Style*, 45–63) also discusses the Hebraic character in the early part of Acts (cf. my note 19 below).

¹⁷ Dupont, *Sources*, 26. However, the major problem for Dupont (that remains to this day) is that “all attempts” to discover the “content and character” of this source remain unsuccessful (26).

¹⁸ Dupont, *Sources*, 27.

¹⁹ Dupont, *Sources*, 27. Here he lists the following examples of “discourses and fragments of least importance”: Acts 13:6–12; 14:8–18; 16:1–8, 25–34; 17:19; 20:7–12, 16–38; 21:8–14; 23:26–30; 25:14–21, 24–27; 28:17–23. Other attempts such as Torrey’s Aramaic source hypothesis behind the first fifteen chapters of Acts may be useful in some specific cases but not as an “explanation” for the origin of Acts (31; Torrey, *Composition*). See also Sahlin, *Der Messias* who proposed that ‘Proto-Luke’ was behind Luke 1:5–Acts 15:33 (Luke 1:5–3:7 was written in Hebrew and the rest in Aramaic). Cf. also Argyle, “Aramaic Source,” 213–14 and Martin, “Aramaic Sources,” 38–59. More recently, Turner (*Style*, 45–63) thinks the Aramaic influence to be minimal (45–46) while the Hebrew influence is “far more extensive” and goes beyond the infancy narrative (46). He claims “there is no doubt that some of the Aramaisms, Hebraisms,

Parallel Source Theories

The two (or parallel) source theory is the view that the “composition of the text” is the result of a combination of two earlier accounts.²⁰ Spitta’s hypothesis was subsequently modified by others until Harnack considered the question of sources with his landmark study.²¹ Harnack also discounted the ‘criterion of discrepancies’ because these inaccuracies and contradictions can be found throughout the book and “clearly indicate a certain negligence on the part of the writer.”²² Harnack, along with later writers, variously built upon Spitta’s original (Source A and B) parallel source theory in the first part of Acts.²³ Such explanations for the “composition of Acts” remain questionable.²⁴

Complementary Source Theories

The third group is in many ways an extension of the previous parallel source theories since they often reflect “complementary sources.”²⁵ For example, De Zwaan found at least three sources in the first half of Acts: (1) the ‘we’ passage material that “must go

and Semitisms must be attributed to the use of sources” along with Greek sources “which had been translated there from” (55).

²⁰ Dupont, *Sources*, 33–50 (33). It was Spitta who initially saw a ‘Source A’ that provided the material for up to chapter 24 of the third gospel and Acts 1:15 to the end. Spitta considered the ‘we’ sections to be of “great historical value” since Luke was an eyewitness (34; Spitta, *Die Apostelgeschichte*). Source B that “scarcely deserves credence” was added (after 70 CE) and was described as a “popular account” with a “weakness for legends” (34). Spitta (34) estimated that the “fusion of the two documents” probably occurred near the “end of the first century” by an “impartial editor.”

²¹ Dupont, *Sources*, 35; Harnack, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 131–88; idem, *Acts*, 162–200 (chapter 5 “The Sources and their Value”). Harnack thought that it was “not possible to take either vocabulary or style as a basis: they were everywhere the same; if Luke used sources, he merely reproduced them in his own language and imposed his personal stamp on them” (Dupont, 35; Harnack, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 131 and Turner, *Style*, 55–57).

²² Dupont, *Sources*, 35. After these criteria were dealt with, Harnack surmised that it was “impossible to prove” that Acts 15:36 onward was “based on sources” (35). He claimed that “at most” we can say is that “Luke made use of personal notes, or a travel journal, to narrate the events in which he took part in Paul’s company”—along with the “information he gleaned from the lips of other witnesses of this period” (35). See also Harnack, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 13, 159–177 and 177–82.

²³ Dupont, *Sources*, 37–38.

²⁴ Dupont, *Sources*, 50.

²⁵ Dupont, *Sources*, 51–61 (51).

back to the years 56–62” CE, (2) an outline that was composed during 75–80 CE, and (3) the final composition of sources that were written under Trajan (c. 110 CE).²⁶ A few decades later Trocmé found extra layers in the first part of Acts—especially those that hail from specific sources such as a Hellenistic source in Acts 6:1–7.²⁷ He also thinks that from Acts 13:4 onwards Luke uses a ‘diary’ which “supplies at least the outlines of the narrative to the end of the book.”²⁸ In the end, the “varied sets of documents” that Trocmé seeks for his reconstruction did not “meet with much favour.”²⁹

Antioch Source Theories

Harnack’s work sparked further studies on the Antioch source by Wendt and Jeremias—these, in turn, led to two key essays by Bultmann and Benoit.³⁰ Subsequently, Jeremias examines Harnack’s hypothesis and challenges the two parallel source view in Acts 2–5 and claims the increase in details, paired with a change in tone, is an indication of a “new

²⁶ Dupont, *Sources*, 55. The first (55) is a document “written in Aramaic” underlying 1:3–5:16 and 9:31–11:18 that was “composed shortly before the Jewish revolt.” The second is a tradition received while Luke was in Caesarea (about 57–59) based on Acts 8:4–40 and 12:1–24. The third source is a “tradition associated with Antioch and Jerusalem” that supplies Acts 5:17–8:3; 11:19–30 and 12:25–15:35. Acts (55) further “makes use of material coming from Luke: 9:1–30 and from 15:36 to the end.” See De Zwaan, *Apostelen*, 10–15.

²⁷ Dupont, *Sources*, 60. Trocmé, “‘Livre des Actes,’” 154–214 (on the sources for chapters 1–15).

²⁸ Dupont, *Sources*, 60. See “The Itinerary/Diary/Travelogue Hypothesis” below.

²⁹ Dupont, *Sources*, 60. See also, Grant, *Gospels*, 126. Grant outlines five groups of sources: (1) an ancient tradition (Jerusalem or Judaea related to Peter); (2) a tradition related to Stephen and Acts 6:1–8:1a; (3) a Caesarean tradition concerning Philip: Acts 8:1b–40; (4) an “Antioch tradition” stemming from Barnabas and Saul (Acts 4:36ff; 11:19–30; 12:24–14:28 and 15:1–16:5); and (5) various “Pauline” source material (from 9:1–30; part of 12:24–14:48; 15:1–16:5 plus the remaining 16:6–28:31). Dupont (61) thinks that it is “no longer possible to distinguish or identify” this material because Luke has rewritten them.

³⁰ See Harnack, *Die Apostelgeschichte*; Wendt “Die Hauptquelle der Apostelgeschichte,” 293–305; Jeremias, “Quellenproblem der Apostelgeschichte,” 205–21; Bultmann, “Quellen der Apostelgeschichte,” 68–80 and Benoit, “La Deuxième Visite,” 778–92 (vs. Dupont, *Sources*, 69 [n. 28]: 778–96). A few years before Harnack, Wendt (in relation to ‘an’ Antioch theory of sorts) hypothesized that the “rewriting” of the ‘we’ sections demonstrates how the author of these sections should *not* “be identified with the writer of Acts” (63; Wendt, *Die Apostelgeschichte*; Wendt, “Die Hauptquelle der Apostelgeschichte,” 293–305 and also Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 39.

source.”³¹ After Jeremias, Bultmann addresses Haenchen’s skepticism on the sources for Acts and claims that it is easier to understand certain passages (such as Acts 15:1–35) if there is a written source behind it.³² For Benoit, Luke was not interested in simply “reproducing the sources” he received since he places his “personal stamp on them” as indicated by the “considerable editorial activity” throughout his “whole work.”³³ While this helps us to understand the process of composition the challenge of identifying specific sources remains.

The ‘We’ Source Theories

One “fairly obvious” source for Acts relates to the long-standing conversation concerning the internal ‘we’ sections.³⁴ If the author’s intention was to give the impression that he

³¹ Jeremias, “Quellenproblem der Apostelgeschichte,” 205–21; Dupont, *Sources*, 64. Jeremias sought to remove the interpolations in order to demarcate this source (i.e. Acts 8:5–40; 9:31–11:18; 12:1–24 and 15:1–33). As a result, we are left with a written Antioch source of “great value” (64). Jeremias attributes Acts 6:1–8:4; 9:1–30; 11:19–30; 12:25–14:28 and 15:35 to the end of the book as the Antioch source. Subsequently, Dupont (*Sources*, 65) challenges Jeremias’s methodology based on Kümmel’s argument (“Das Urchristentum. II,” 155–73).

³² Bultmann, “Quellen der Apostelgeschichte,” 68–80 (68) and Haenchen, *Acts*. This leads to the consideration of a greater source at Luke’s disposal which would “account for the linking of the pericopes in a considerable part of the book. Dupont, *Sources*, 67. This “account of Paul’s missions” depends in part on an ‘itinerary’ that was “written in the first person plural” as discussed by Dibelius and subsequently borrowed by Haenchen (Dupont, 67, 94 and Dibelius, *Studies*, 73–74). Bultmann claims the presence of the itinerary is “unmistakable” from Acts 16 onwards (Dupont, 67). And yet, he considers the Antioch source and the itinerary to be separate—at least to the extent that it is “unlikely” they “ever formed a literary unity” (69).

³³ Dupont, *Sources*, 70; Benoit, “La Deuxième Visite,” 778–92. Hence the difficulty in identifying sources since we are dealing with edited fragments. Benoit, “La Deuxième Visite,” 780; Dupont, *Sources*, 70. Benoit’s real contribution lies in his understanding of “Luke’s processes of composition” (72). The sections which “Luke dovetails” are not simply documents that he received as they are “rewritings by his own hand” that are later “joined” together with “omissions and link passages” (Benoit, 790; Dupont, 72). Weiss (*Einleitung*, 569–84) seems to have influenced Dupont’s thinking here as well.

³⁴ Bruce, *Acts*, 40. See also, Cadbury, “‘We’ and ‘I’ Passages,” 128–32; Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 10–46; Praeder, “Problem,” 193–218; Adams, “Relationships,” 125–42; Hemer, *Acts*, 308–34; idem, “Narrative,” 79–86; Campbell, “Narrator,” 385–407; idem, *The “We” Passages*, et passim; Robbins, “By Land and By Sea,” 215–42 and his earlier essay: “Ancient Sea Voyages,” 5–18. The ‘we’ passages, as a source in Acts, are for many scholars a rose with many thorns. See Dupont, *Sources*, 75–112 (esp. 75–93). The issue is attractive as it bears greatly on matters of its “historical reliability” according to Porter (*Paul in Acts*, 10) and the “questions of source and authorship” but the debate is contentious and prickly at the same

was included in the passages (even when he was not) then other literary and linguistic factors are at work.³⁵

Conversely, the “simplest” and “most obvious” solution is that the ‘we’ passages imply that the author was personally present during those times.³⁶ However, the simplest solution may not be the best interpretation of the available data. The other side to this equation begs the question: “Why would an author who is writing the entire work retain the “we” sections if it, like the rest of the work, is his own?”—the arguably ‘simple’ and ‘obvious’ alternative is that this represents some other person that was present in the narrative, or why else retain “we”?³⁷

Definition of the ‘We’ Passages

At this juncture, it seems appropriate to define the ‘we’ passages before engaging the various proposals.³⁸ Where many traditionally speak of three ‘we’ passages (Acts 16:10–17 = the first; 20:5–15 and 21:1–18 = the second; and 27:1–28:16 = the third), Porter has made a convincing case that there are at least five ‘we’ sections.³⁹ The first extends from Acts 16:10–17, the second from 20:5–15, the third from 21:1–18, the fourth from 27:1–

time. For a recent annotated bibliography see Green and McKeever, *Historiography*, 140–43 and also my chapter 5 on the historical reliability of Acts.

³⁵ E.g. Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 38–42 and Dupont (*Sources*, 77) who notes the “many writers” who reject the simple solution for “various reasons.”

³⁶ Dupont, *Sources*, 77. Today, this conclusion still finds favour. See Keener, *Acts*, 3:2373; 1:413.

³⁷ This alternative explanation was provided by Porter during the revision stage. Porter (*Paul in Acts*, 41) argues that the ‘we’ sections point to a “previously written ‘we’ source” that “probably” originated elsewhere. He questions the connection between the prologue (Luke 1:1–4) as indicative of the author’s eyewitness testimony (41). He considers it to be “[m]ore likely” the author of Acts used a “continuous, independent source, probably discovered in the course of his investigation of the events of early Christianity” (41).

³⁸ Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 10, 28–33 and Foakes-Jackson and Lake’s four hypotheses in: Dupont, *Sources*, 89.

³⁹ Dupont, *Sources*, 76; Campbell, *The ‘We’ Passages*, 1; and Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 28–33.

29, and the fifth being Acts 28:1–16.⁴⁰ One minor contention is that the fifth ‘we’ passage should be extended beyond verse 16 all the way to verse 29 (and possibly 31).⁴¹

A far greater contention arises from the possibility of a sixth passage (or better to call it the first of six) if we consider the ‘we’ found in the ‘Western’ text of Acts 11:28.⁴² Rather than ignore this rogue ‘we’ to the textual scrap-pile, it is worth serious consideration.⁴³ For example, Wendt considered the reading of the ‘we’ in Bezae at 11:28 to be authentic while offering a clue to the origins of the Antioch source.⁴⁴ Wendt may be correct—especially in light of the renaissance and recent theories on the text(s) of Acts.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ See Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 28–33.

⁴¹ Cadbury (“‘We’ and ‘I’ Passages,” 128) says that if the guard is still there, it is very doubtful that the ‘we’ group left Paul in Rome by himself—since only three days have passed (Ἐγένετο δὲ μετὰ ἡμέρας τρεῖς). Furthermore, the nature of the exchange between Paul and the Jews in the remaining verses implies an eyewitness from among the ‘we’ that just landed in Rome. The alternative is that ‘they’ left Rome within two days of arriving there leaving the apostle alone. Similarly, Keener (*Acts*, 3:2350 [n. 501]) explains that Paul’s travelling companion “must have been in the same geographic vicinity with Paul” for the entire section. We can only speculate when Paul’s company (including Luke) left the city (or if they did at all) during Paul’s two-year house arrest in Rome (c. 60–62; 2 Tim 4:11).

⁴² Dupont (*Sources*, 76 n.1) refers to “several” writers (he does not name) that think this ‘we’ at Acts 11:28 should be added but for him it “seems preferable to ignore.” See Head (“Problem,” 415–44 [420, n. 30]) for a list of the Western passages that are different from the Alexandrian. For the details of those differences see also Hemer, *Acts*, 193–201. Hemer (200) remarks how the Western readings have an “early pedigree as a revision” and “may preserve correct traditions or inferences.”

⁴³ Cf. Hill and Kruger, “Introduction,” 1–19 (5) in reference to Ehrman, “Text as Window,” 361–79. The western ‘we’ of Acts 11:28 is a microcosm of a much larger problem. For example, Epp (“Anti-Judaic Tendencies,” 11) remarks how the “text of Acts” is “legendary for its problems.” Barrett (*Luke the Historian*, 22) similarly complains that in “no other New Testament book is the problem so vexed.” And yet, the “Old Uncial text” and the Western text (taken together) “give us an excellent idea of what Luke had to say” (22). Even if we conclude the western ‘we’ was *not* in the ‘initial’ text of Acts, it formed a very early and significant branch of the textual tradition. The Western text has been dated very early historically, and more recently there are further reasons to turn back the clock. See Ropes, “Text of Acts,” x and ccxlv; Parker, “Codex Bezae,” 43–50 (48–49); Epp, “Issues,” 17–76 (38, 41); Tuckett, “How Early,” 69–86 (85–86); idem, “Early Text,” 157–74 and most recently Armstrong, “Variants,” 87–110. Since this ‘we’ is early, it offers a clue to the source debate and the date of Acts. Bruce (*Acts*, 275) remarks on the importance of this ‘we’ passage primarily because it appears “earlier than any in the β text” (70, β = the Alexandrian text with Codex Vaticanus (B) as the primary witness 70).

⁴⁴ Dupont (*Sources*, 63 [n. 6]) hints at Wendt’s support of this but without a specific reference. See Wendt, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (7th edition), 21–22 (and his footnote on the bottom of both pages).

⁴⁵ This view is dependent upon my hypothesis (in chapter 4) that both textual families developed before 70 CE. This relates to Epp’s theory that the Western and Alexandrian texts are comparable in age. See Epp, “Traditional ‘Canons,’” 100 and Armstrong, “Variants,” 87–110. Furthermore, Bruce (*Acts*, 9) says that if the Western text of Acts 11:28 “reflects the tradition (which is likely), then the tradition must not be later than the middle of the second century.” In light of an early Western text, it is more probable that the variant generates the tradition because the former likely arose before the latter. The later tradition

More recently, the reading of the text of Acts 11:28 (without the variant) indicates a “certainty of ‘A’” as it stands in the UBSGNT.⁴⁶ The implication is that if this ‘we’ was original the “entire argument” in Porter’s chapter and in “many other treatments of the ‘we’ passages would have to be re-assessed.”⁴⁷ This is reason enough to warrant a further investigation—but also because of the early date of the ‘Western’ text along with the renewed emphasis in textual criticism on the value of all variants (especially the early ones) as important for the study of early Christianity.

Instead of the established text of Acts 11:28 (ἀναστὰς δὲ εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀνόματι Ἀγαβος ἐσήμανεν) accepted by the NA/UBSGNT there is a ‘Western’ variant: (ἦν δὲ πολλὴ ἀγαλλίασις· συνεστραμμένων δὲ ἡμῶν ἔφη εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀνόματι Ἀγαβος σημαινων)
 “There was great joy, and when we were gathered together one of them named Agabus said signifying.”⁴⁸ The reading text of Bezae is reproduced here (folio 461v, col. 1, line 31 of Acts 11:27):

comes from Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.4.6) who writes: “And Luke, whose family was from Antioch, and a physician by profession, a close associate of Paul” (Λουκᾶς δὲ τὸ μὲν γένος ὦν τῶν ἀπ’ Ἀντιοχείας, τὴν ἐπιστήμην δὲ ἰατρός, τὰ πλεῖστα συγγεγονῶς τῷ Παύλῳ).” And also Jerome (*De vir. ill.* 3.7:1): “Lucus medicus Antiochensis” and the *Anti-Marcionite Prologue* to Luke: “Luke, the doctor from Antioch, disciple of the apostles, remained unmarried and died in Boeotia at age eighty-four.” See Keener, *Acts*, 1:410. Keener (1:411, n. 58) says that some use the variant in 11:28 (which “places the author in Antioch” as “secondary evidence”) to support Lukan authorship. Last, Keener (*Acts*, 1:411) via Bruce (*Acts*, 427) and earlier Ropes (“Text of Acts,” 442) point to a unique reading in Acts 20:13 following Ἡμεῖς δὲ from an old Syriac text (syr^{vet?}) of an uncertain date that ties Luke to this we passage.

⁴⁶ Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 28 (n. 58). Porter (n. 58) questions the “validity of including A readings” in the GNT.

⁴⁷ Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 29 (n. 58). Porter (n. 58) says the “textual traditions of Acts” fall outside his “purview.” The purpose is not to ‘prove’ this text but simply that it is, at the very least, an early and notable variant.

⁴⁸ Note that φημί [imperfect, active, indicative, 3rd person, singular] is not found in the established text while σημαίνω [present, active participle] is unique to D. The underlined text represents the same text found in the critical edition and the variants. The NA²⁸ shows only the following supporting manuscripts for this reading: D, p, w, and mae (G⁶⁷) where the NA²⁶ did not list (w) but included the old Latin of Bezae and Augustine (c. 430 CE) as well. Strange (*Problem*, 43) includes the following additional manuscripts: it⁶² (ro), vg^{1259* 1260 1277 1282}. See also Boismard and Lamouille, *Le Texte Occidental*, 195–96. Bezae Codex (D) (05) is usually dated to the fourth or fifth century CE. See Barrett, *Acts*, 1:5; Tuckett, “How Early,” 70–71. The old Latin version p (54) is from the twelfth century CE and w (58) is fourteenth or fifteenth century.

- (31) προφῆται εἰς ἀντιόχειαν
 (32) ἦν δὲ πολλὴ ἀγαλλίασις (v. 28)
 (33) συνεστραμμένων δὲ ἡμῶν

Folio 462v, col. 1:

- (1) ἔφη⁴⁹ εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν ὀνόματι ἄγαβος
 (2) σημένων⁵⁰ διὰ τοῦ πνς⁵¹
 (3) λειμὸν μέγαν⁵² μέλλειν ἔσεσθαι.

Additionally, manuscript G⁶⁷ represents an early (fourth or fifth century) witness to the Western text of Acts 11:28.⁵³ The text of G⁶⁷ must be earlier than the “date of the MS itself” because it is not the “working copy of the translator of this Coptic version, but is the work of a professional copyist working from an older MS.”⁵⁴ Petersen compares D with G⁶⁷ and transcribes 11:27–28 as: “down to Antioch, *and there was great joy about our returning*” (original emphasis).⁵⁵ Until more early and comparable manuscripts are

⁴⁹ Boismard and Lamouille (*Le Texte Occidental*, 196) do not think ἔφη is possible here: “Dans D, la séquence εφ η (=εφη)...σημενων est impossible.” However unlikely ἔφη is the more difficult reading (and what we find in Bezae). See Metzger, *Text*, 120. Their (Boismard and Lamouille) conjecture does not seem palpable as they argue the scribe was distracted by ‘ἀνέστη’ and the Latin ‘ait.’ This they think is verified by G⁶⁷ since it has ἀνέστη in place of ἔφη. They could be right, but there is nothing in D to imply that ἔφη should be split. Bruce (*Acts*, 275), the INTF and the NA²⁸ all assume ἔφη.

⁵⁰ The Nestle Aland and also Boismard and Lamouille (*Le Texte Occidental*, 196) should be corrected as Bezae has σημένων here and not σημαίνων.

⁵¹ This is the *nomen sacrum* for: πνεύματος and has the line above the letters to signify it as such.

⁵² Corrector 1 added λη just above and between the α and the ν = μέγαλην (μέγαν is the original hand). You can see μεγάλην in P⁴⁵ (folio 25r, col. 1, line 7).

⁵³ Epp, “Coptic G67,” 197–212 (207); Schenke, *Codex Glazier*, 1; and Pierpont’s curatorial note. G⁶⁷ has not yet been digitized.

⁵⁴ Epp, “Coptic G67,” 199. This may explain some of the differences between D and G⁶⁷ (i.e. ἀνέστη in G⁶⁷ vs. ἔφη in D). Petersen says they “were ordered from a professional copyist, perhaps for the purpose of having them replace older papyrus manuscripts” (229, n. 12). Roberts thought it should be dated to the “very late fourth or the fifth century” while Skeat suggested the fifth century. Petersen, “Coptic Manuscript,” 225 (n. 3). Pierpont library says it is fifth century and Metzger (*Early Versions*, 119) thinks it is fourth or fifth century.

⁵⁵ Petersen, “Coptic Manuscript,” 239. See also Epp, “Coptic G67,” 207. Epp (207) notes the “additional συνεστραμμενων δε ημων of D (and the other witnesses above, plus Ado) is perhaps attested also by the ‘about our returning’” of G⁶⁷. Metzger claims that in Acts Bezae is “fond of the verb συστρέφειν, which it introduces in 10:41; 11:28; 16:39; 17:5.” Metzger, *Textual Commentary* (1st ed.), 381 (cited by Hemer, *Acts*, 194, n. 65).

discovered G⁶⁷ “must be accorded the very great importance which it properly deserves.”⁵⁶

There is another reason why the Western ‘we’ should be given serious consideration—the early papyri. Although P⁴⁵ contains Acts 11:24–30 and follows the Alexandrian tradition at verse 28 it is the *only* early Acts manuscript with 11:28. P⁴⁵ is interesting because despite its affinity with the Alexandrian uncials (Ⲁ, A, B, C), when it comes to the gospels (Matthew, Luke, and John) they are known to exhibit a mix of Alexandrian *and* Western traditions.⁵⁷ Of greater importance is the fact that *none* of the remaining five early Acts papyri contain Acts 11:28 (along with the early third century parchment 0189).⁵⁸ This is significant because it is possible that the Western ‘we’ may have originally been a part of those early manuscripts.

To be clear, none of this discussion is a bid to redefine the source debate and insist that the first ‘we’ passage begins at Acts 11:28.⁵⁹ At the very least this ‘we’ represents a very early variant and a correspondingly earlier tradition than previously thought in light of my proposal for an early date of the Western text of Acts (cf. chapter 4). Where the traditional connections between Antioch and Luke as the author of Acts merit a level of caution, an early source for the Western text at Antioch may increase the strength of this connection in light of Cadbury’s earlier assessment:

Large sections of the book represent Antioch as the center of story, the starting point for Gentle Christianity and for the name Christian, and the ‘home base’ of Paul’s work for foreign missions. A proselyte of Antioch is mentioned by name

⁵⁶ Epp, “Coptic G67,” 199.

⁵⁷ See Comfort, *Manuscripts*, 66.

⁵⁸ To date there are only six early papyri for Acts (P²⁹, P³⁸, P⁴⁵, P⁴⁸, P⁵³ and P⁹¹) and one third-century parchment (0189). See Tuckett, “Early Text,” 157 and his note 1. We cannot know for certain if they contained the Western ‘we’ but it is very possible since three of the earliest six papyri of Acts show Western readings (P²⁹, P³⁸ and P⁴⁸), and the proto-Alexandrian P⁹¹ is too fragmentary to tell. Tuckett, “How Early,” 74; Comfort, *Manuscripts*, 64 and 69 and Barrett, *Acts*, 1:2.

⁵⁹ Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 29 (n. 58).

among the Seven at Jerusalem, and later five teachers resident at Antioch are listed. One of these, Lucius of Cyrene, was apparently at an early time identified with the author Lucas.⁶⁰

Further to the point is Cadbury's observation that the "first appearance of the pronoun 'we' is at Antioch" and it is found in a "very early form of the text (commonly called 'Western')."⁶¹ What is proposed here is that the origin of the Western variant began here at Antioch first—which in due course launched the known traditions connecting Antioch with the author of Luke-Acts.⁶² This hypothesis is compatible with an early date of the Alexandrian and Western families.

⁶⁰ Cf. Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 245. Although Bruce (*Acts*, 9) struggles with the equivalence of "Lucius of Cyrene" (Acts 13:1) with Luke (as the author of Acts) he says that Luke "certainly shows a special interest in Antioch" and goes on to list examples (9). It does not seem coincidental that the account of the church's founding in Antioch is much "fuller" than any other Gentile church (9 [note his reference should be to Acts 11:19–26 instead of 1:19–26]). The emphasis on Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch (Acts 6:5), along with the special and early role of Barnabas stands out so much from the surrounding narrative that the same charge with regards to the extra 'we' in 11:28 (that the scribe(s) is are/following the Antioch tradition) could be laid against these passages as well: Acts 4:36–37 (and possibly Ananias and Saphira 5:1–11 and further); 9:27; 11:19–30; from 12:25 all the way to 15:4; 15:12, 22, 25, 36–39 where Barnabas "leaves Antioch with Mark to prosecute his mission in Cyprus" (9). Acts 15:39 is the last we hear of this key leader from Antioch while the rest of the book (to Acts 28:31) rests unequivocally on Paul. It is entirely plausible that Barnabas (and/or Luke) could very well be the primary 'Antioch' source for the middle half of Acts (c. 11:19–15:39) where Paul (and/or Luke, Silas and Timothy) make up the second 'Rome' source from Acts 15:40 onward to 28:31. See also Glover, "'Luke the Antiochene,'" 97–106 and Öhler's chapter on "Der historische Barnabas—ein Rekonstruktionsversuch" in *Barnabas*, 478–86 and also idem, *Barnabas: Der Mann in der Mitte*, et passim.

⁶¹ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 245. Bruce thinks that ἡμῶν in Acts 11:28 is "probably due to the reviser's acquaintance with the tradition that Luke was a native of Antioch." Bruce, *Acts*, 275; Longenecker, *Acts*, 405; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:564. Pervo (*Acts*, 296) also maintains that the use of the first person plural "either reflects or helps to create the association of the author of Acts with Antioch." Pervo (n. 63) via Haenchen (*Acts*, 374 [n. 7]) argues that it is likely that the "author was identified with Lucius of Cyrene" from Acts 13:1. In addition to the Antioch association, Pervo (*Acts*, 296) supposes that the insertion of the 'we' (here in 11:28) reflects a second century preference for eyewitness accounts. In his footnote (62) he cites the following as his reasoning: "'We' does not otherwise occur after the arrival of new characters in Acts." This seems to be pure speculation that grew out of his second century view of Acts in the first place. While discussing the tradition that links Luke with Antioch Hemer (*Acts*, 345) states that the 'we' in the Western reading of Acts 11:28 "may reflect the early currency of this tradition" and also the "occasional identification in Acts of an Antioch-source." See also Eusebius, *Hist. Ecc.* 3.4.6 and Dupont, *Sources*, 36, 62–72.

⁶² Here I am appealing to transcriptional probabilities in light of the historical conditions and the possibility of the author's (or better reviser's) purpose in writing. See Fee, "Textual Criticism," 14; Metzger, *Text*, 209; Comfort, *Manuscripts*, 292 and Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 110–28. If this 'we' passage is early, perhaps this variant sparked the Antioch tradition instead of the other way around. Although it may simply be a scribe's (or editor's) attempt to reinforce the tradition that Luke is from (or connected with) Antioch, it seems that ἦν δὲ πολλὴ ἀγαλλίασις fits the earlier context of χαίρω in verse 23

It is further proposed that Luke (along with his own notes and memories) relied on Barnabas as a source from ‘Antioch’ as well for the middle half of Acts (c. 11:19–15:39), while Paul (along with Luke, Silas or Timothy) provided the ‘Rome’ source for the last section of Acts (c. 15:40–28:31).⁶³ There is also the possibility that the ‘addition’ of the ‘we’ passage in Acts 11:28 was an intentional ‘deletion’ by other scribes in an attempt to minimize this Antioch tradition for ecclesiastical reasons.⁶⁴ These interpretations should be given fair consideration rather than simply ignoring the textual record and the historiographical context behind them.⁶⁵

‘We’ Proposals

Although a concrete solution to the problem of the ‘we’ passages is beyond the purview of this inquiry, this aspect of the source issue impacts one’s view of dating.⁶⁶ Setting aside the first of five (or six ‘we’ passages if we allow for the Western variant of Acts

and the growth of the church in verse 24. It is also worth noting how ἀγαλλίασις in the Western version of Acts 11:28 is also found in Luke 1:14, 44; Acts 2:46 (and Hebrews 1:9; Jude 24). Additionally, one of the words from the variant is found in the same form in Luke 1:14 ἀγαλλίασις (nominative, feminine, singular) while in Acts 2:46 ἀγαλλίασις appears in the dative (feminine, singular). The variant from Antioch reflects the earlier picture of a happy (11:28[D]/2:46), growing (11:21, 24/2:47), sharing (2:45/11:29) church that gathered (11:28[D]/2:44, 46) in Jerusalem in Acts 2:42–47.

⁶³ Recall my note 60 above and Hengel, *Acts*, 39 (pointing to the significance of Antioch and Barnabas), 65; Haenchen, *Acts*, 86–87, 369 and the previous section on the “Antioch Source Theories.”

⁶⁴ See “Principles for Sources and Textual Criticism” in chapter 2 and Lake, *Influence of Textual Criticism*, 10; Epp, “Traditional ‘Canons,’” 127; Vaganay, *Introduction*, 60. These changes could be motivated by political or doctrinal motivations.

⁶⁵ See “Principles for Interpreting Sources” in chapter 2 and Reinfandt, “Reading Texts,” 47–50. Dupont (*Sources*, 76) was content to ignore the “several writers” that wanted to add the extra ‘we’ in Acts 11:28 but his focus was not upon textual criticism, nor was he privy to the resurgence in the broader textual studies on the Western variants of Acts that began in the 1980’s—see Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 83.

⁶⁶ The ‘we’ (and they) passages point to a source (or sources). If the sources are connected with the author then the writing of Acts must fall within the life of the author and (to some degree) the lives of the persons he narrates, and especially the datable events that they have participated in. Even if it can be proven—and it has not—that the we passages did not originate with the author and instead point to other sources this only reinforces the multiple attestation of the events in Acts that can be dated. See also Kosso’s (*Knowing the Past*, 51) criteria for assessing textual credibility.

11:28), what do we make of the major proposals?⁶⁷ The traditional explanation still carries a great number of adherents who follow the “simplest” and “most obvious solution.”⁶⁸ This traditional explanation of the ‘we’ passages goes back at least as far as Holtzmann, who thought the “narrator who says ‘we’ in certain parts of Acts is to be identified with the writer of the work.”⁶⁹ Subsequently, Harnack became the “great champion” for those who identified the author of the ‘we’ passages as the author of Acts.⁷⁰ Afterwards, Cadbury agreed with Harnack concerning the “unity of the language” that exists between the “we-passages and the rest of the book.”⁷¹

However, this only demonstrates that Luke has “rewritten his sources” so much that the “criterion of vocabulary or style” of a passage becomes “valueless” when it

⁶⁷ Porter (*Paul in Acts*, 10) offers a summary of the four respective positions: (1) traditional—the author was a personally present eye-witness, (2) source-critical—a literary source (diary/itinerary) from the author or “more likely from another writer,” (3) redaction-critical—a document that reflects the “author’s imaginative editorial manipulation,” or (4) literary-critical—the ‘we’ passages are literary creations. See also Dupont, *Sources*, 89.

⁶⁸ Keener, *Acts*, 3:2373; Dupont, *Sources*, 77. One of the major reasons why Keener supports a date of Acts close to 70 CE (see *Acts*, 1:384) rests on his view that a “companion of Paul” best explains the ‘we’ passages. See Keener, *Acts*, 3:2373 and his note on Acts 16:10 (3:2350–74). Since he considers the arguments “compelling” for the author being a travelling companion of Paul, he “would restrict any date estimate . . . to within the probable lifetime of such a companion.” Keener, *Acts*, 1:400. See note 86 in chapter 1. If we follow Keener’s estimation that Luke was about 30 years old at 50 CE, he would reach average life expectancy around 67 CE—thus restricting the time frame accordingly. Hengel similarly claims that the ‘we’ passages “do not go back to an earlier independent source, nor are they a mere literary convention, giving the impression that the author was an eye-witness.” Hengel, *Acts*, 66. As far as the author conveying the “impression of personal integrity and trustworthiness by a literary device” Marshall, like Hengel, considers this “improbable.” See Marshall, Review of *The ‘We’ Passages*, 755–57 (756).

⁶⁹ Dupont, *Sources*, 82; Holtzmann, *Einleitung*, 406–9. He focused on three common areas of justification for the now traditional position: (1) the “ecclesiastical tradition,” (2) the “unity of style and language” of Luke-Acts, (3) that Luke 1:3 implies the “manner of using the first person plural in the latter part of his work.” Dupont, *Sources*, 82.

⁷⁰ Dupont, *Sources*, 83. Dupont (83, n. 21) notes that Cadbury and Dibelius (n. 20) followed a similar line of reasoning as Harnack (*Luke the Physician*, 8–11). Harnack reasoned that Luke must have been the author of the ‘we’ passages based on language and style (Dupont, 85). Harnack’s views were preceded by Ramsay, *Roman Empire*, 6–8 and Rackham, *Acts*, xli–xlii.

⁷¹ Dupont, *Sources*, 87; Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 35. However, Cadbury challenged Harnack’s belief that the author of the ‘we’ passages is the same as the “writer of the whole work.” Dupont, *Sources*, 87. Cadbury’s views are discussed by Stanton, “Style and Authorship,” 361–81 (374–81 esp.)—however, Stanton (unsuccessfully) tried to maintain the linguistic argument that there was “no source underlying the we-sections” and that they are wholly Luke’s creations in the “manner” of his writing (Dupont, *Sources*, 88 [n. 34]). In a later response to Stanton Cadbury did “not hesitate to adhere to [his] former conclusion.” Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 67 (n. 2).

comes to assessing whether its composition is “based on the use of a document or not.”⁷² Accordingly, Cadbury further observes that unlike the Semitic fashion of preserving the “distinctive language of the originals” Luke’s method was to “recast his material” and paraphrase it into “his own style.”⁷³ So it appears reasonable to conclude with Cadbury (and Dupont) that we simply can not rely on Luke’s style as an arbiter of sources because of the simple fact that he smoothed them over to the point of obscurity.⁷⁴

Furthermore, since the ‘we’ sources have been modified in some fashion from the “original narrative” we can not prove a source based on the presence of a ‘we’ passage nor can we separate them from the surrounding context written in the third person.⁷⁵ One solution produced the Antioch source theory (see above) while the other began with Norden who thought it was ‘memoirs’ underlying the narrative of Acts—subsequently, Dibelius developed the itinerary/travel diary hypothesis (discussed below).⁷⁶ In the end,

⁷² Dupont, *Sources*, 87–88. Closer to his conclusion, Dupont states that “the way in which Luke rewrites his sources removes all possibility of discovering in his narrative the traces of a style and of interests which would not be his” (147). Beyond this he cites the ‘calming of the storm’ of Mark 4:35–39 that has been “so much rewritten” by Luke (8:22–24) that it “contains a proportion of Lucan characteristics at least equal to that of the account of the storm in Acts 27” (88). Similarly, Cadbury (*Luke-Acts*) thinks the style of Luke rules out any clear detection of an independent source.

⁷³ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 68. Apparently, this practice is shared by other “Greek and Latin writers” and “prevents the determination of his sources by the criterion of vocabulary” (68). See also Turner, *Style*, 45–63 (chapter 4: “The Style of Luke-Acts”).

⁷⁴ On the other hand, the way Luke handled his sources cannot rule out the use of a source either. Dupont, *Sources*, 88–89. For a conclusive explanation of the ‘we’ passages we must look elsewhere. Unfortunately, the fact that Luke’s source is no “mere fiction” does “not necessarily mean that the writer was an eye-witness.” Dupont, *Sources*, 93. It does imply that he had “some sort of access to some sort of eyewitness material for this part of his narrative.” Barrett, *Luke the Historian*, 22. Another option is to consider the ‘we’ narratives as a “literary fiction.” Pervo, *Profit with Delight*, 57. Pervo represents perhaps the vanguard of this approach that has been variously and successfully discounted by Campbell, “Narrator,” 387–88; Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 13–19 (esp. 25) and Keener, *Acts*, 3:2351–56. Keener (2353) states that a “majority of scholars reject the literary-fiction approach” (2353).

⁷⁵ Dupont, *Sources*, 94. In other words, both the ‘we’ and the ‘they’ suggest a common origin since they are so closely linked.

⁷⁶ Norden, *Untersuchungen*, 34, 313–31; Dupont, *Sources*, 94 and Dibelius, *Studies*, 73–74. The idea of memoirs underlying the narrative goes back to the 19th century but it was Norden who developed the idea. Norden drew attention to the fact that the ‘we’ and ‘they’ existed side by side in many travel accounts—especially in sea voyages. He hypothesized that a document underlying Acts included the ‘we’ and ‘they’ passages which he considered to be a “clearly defined literary type.” Dupont, *Sources*, 94–96 (96). This ‘memoranda’ consists of the author’s “personal memories” that are conveyed in the first person

we are left with a narrator who “counts himself among the companions of Paul” by the use of the first person in the context of a third person narrative where Luke is not mentioned.⁷⁷

The ‘We’ Passages and the Prologue

Another facet of the ‘we’ source debate is the prologue found at the start of the two-volume work (Luke 1:1–4). Cadbury claims that in the study of the “earliest Christian history no passage of scripture has had more emphasis laid upon it than the brief preface of Luke.”⁷⁸ Subsequently, Dupont states that the “explicit claim to have been present at a part of the events should come into the interpretation of the passages written in the first person.”⁷⁹ Since this weighs on our interpretation of sources the two prologues require a closer look (see “Table 5: Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1–3”). Starting with Luke 1:1, there is the question of the πολλοί ‘many’ compilers to which the writer seems to indicate that he has been privy to some of the events relating to his composition.⁸⁰ In verse 2 he signifies that he is among those who have “*received* the tradition” but not among those who were

while “additional information” relating to the events he did not take part were recorded in the third person (96–97). The good thing about Norden’s solution is that it accounts for the ‘we’ and ‘they’ source while also reflecting the practice of other ancient writers as well (98). Unfortunately, he tried to show that the ‘we’ (via the problematic example of Esdras and Nehemias) is not meant to “present himself as a companion of the Apostle” (98).

⁷⁷ Dupont, *Sources*, 99.

⁷⁸ Cadbury, “Appendix C,” 2:489–510 (489).

⁷⁹ Dupont, *Sources*, 101 (see also 52 and 102). He is adamant that the preface implies the author’s personal participation. A casual reading of the preface does imply that the author is “presenting himself” as a “contemporary and eye-witness” for at least part of the story he is telling (102). However, Luke may be *presenting* himself as a participant in order to support the eyewitness nature of the first person plural (even if he was not actually present during some or all of the events).

⁸⁰ Dupont, *Sources*, 103.

“*behind* the tradition”—“those who from the beginning became eyewitnesses and servants of the word” (my emphasis, Luke 1:2).⁸¹

At the outset, Luke 1:3 does not give the *impression* that he was carelessly slapping together some edifying stories. In verse 4 the expressed goal for Luke is that Theophilus and his readers “know the truth about the things that [they] have been taught.” It is no stretch of interpretation that some level of understanding is already implied in this verse with *περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων*.

Table 5: Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1–3

Luke 1:1–4 ⁸²	NA ²⁸	Variants
(1) Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that took place among us, ⁸³	(1) Ἐπειδὴ περ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν ⁸⁴ πραγμάτων,	
(2) just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning became eyewitnesses and servants of the word,	(2) καθὼς παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρεταὶ γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου,	
(3) it seemed good to me also, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write to you in an orderly	(3) ἔδοξεν κάμοι παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, κράτιστε Θεόφιλε,	

⁸¹ Dupont, *Sources*, 103. Dupont contends that this does not preclude him from being an “eyewitness or minister of the word” just that he was not one from the beginning.

⁸² Folio 182v of Bezae (D/05). The first corrector adds at the top of the folio: εὐαγγέλιον κατὰ λουκᾶν. Col. (1) ἐπειδὴ περ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνα (2) τάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν (3) πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν (4) πραγμάτων καθὰ παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν (5) οἱ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρεταὶ (6) γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου (3) ἔδοξε κάμοι (7) παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν (8) ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι (9) κράτιστε θεόφιλε ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς (10) περὶ τῶν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν. Bezae places the gospels in this ‘Western’ order: Matthew, John, Luke, Mark and then Acts. See Crawford, “A New Witness,” 1–7. He recently discovered via the concordance table of a sixth century mss (GA 073+74) that it also held to the Western order.

⁸³ My translation here in verse 1 draws upon L&N’s (13.106) understanding of πληροφορέω.

⁸⁴ The original scribe of Bezae used a special red ink right up to ἡμιν in verse 1. See Vaganay (*Introduction*, 7–8) on the various types of ink scribes used.

manner, most excellent Theophilus, ⁸⁵		
(4) so that you may know the truth about the things that you have been taught.	(4) ἵνα ἐπιγνώσῃς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.	The original scribe of D had: περὶ τῶν, the first corrector erased the τ leaving, περὶ ὧν. ⁸⁶
Acts 1:1–3⁸⁷		
(1) (So) I wrote the first book, Theophilus, about everything that Jesus began to do and teach,	(1) Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποίησάμην περὶ πάντων, ὧ Θεόφιλε, ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν,	*ὁ is missing before Ἰησοῦς in B (03)/Vaticanus and D (05)
(2) until the day when, having given commands to the apostles through the Holy Spirit he had chosen, he was taken up;	(2) ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου οὗς ἐξελέξατο ἀνελήμφθη.	*ανελήφθη is added before ἐντειλάμενος in D sy ^{hmg} (sa mae) *ἀνελήμφθη is replaced by καὶ ἐκέλευσε κηρύσσειν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον in D sy ^{hmg} (sa mae)
(3) to whom also he presented himself alive after his suffering by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking (the things) about the kingdom of God.	(3) οἷς καὶ παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις, δι' ἡμερῶν τεσσαράκοντα ὄπτανόμενος αὐτοῖς καὶ λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ.	Starting with Folio 415v/col.1/line (11) D adds after τεσσαράκοντα: ... ἡμερῶν ⁸⁸ (12)... ὄπτανόμενοις ⁸⁹ ... (13) τὰς ⁹⁰ ...

⁸⁵ Cf. L&N 61.1. They define *καθεξῆς* as “a sequence of one after another in time, space, or logic—in order, in sequence, one after another.” They translate *καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι* as such: “to write to you in sequence or...in an orderly manner.”

⁸⁶ The twenty-sixth to twenty-eighth editions of the Nestle Aland do not mention this.

⁸⁷ Folio 415v (D/05) begins with: Col. 1, line (1) *πρᾶξις ἀποστόλων* then line (2) *τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποίησάμην* (3) *περὶ πάντων ὧ θεόφιλε* (4) *ὧν ἤρξατο ἰης ποιεῖν τε* (5) *καὶ διδάσκειν ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας* (6) *ανελήφθη ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις* (7) *διὰ πνς ἁγίου οὗς ἐξελέξατο καὶ ἐκέλευσε* (8) *κηρύσσειν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον* (9) *οἷς καὶ παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα* (10) *μετὰ τὸ παθεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις* (11) *τεσσαράκοντα ἡμερῶν* (12) *ὄπτανόμενοις αὐτοῖς καὶ λέγων* (13) *τὰς περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θυ*. There are a few common *nomina sacra* here including: *ιης* = Ἰησοῦς (line 4), *πνς* = πνεύματος (line 7), and *θυ* = θεοῦ (line 13). See Comfort, *Manuscripts*, 199–253. Up until column 4 (ending with τε) the scribe used red ink here as well.

⁸⁸ The original scribe wrote: *τεσσαράκοντα ἡμερῶν* while the first corrector adds *δι'* between *τεσσαράκοντα ἡμερῶν* = *τεσσαράκοντα δι' ἡμερῶν*. The second corrector indicates it should be: *δι' ἡμερῶν τεσσαράκοντα* reflecting the majority reading/critical edition.

⁸⁹ It looks like the first corrector may have erased the iota from *ὄπτανόμενοις* to *ὄπτανόμενος*.

⁹⁰ Instead of *τάς*.

It is remarkable given the sizable differences among the Acts manuscripts that there are *no* significant variants in Luke 1:1–4 (as per the NA²⁸).⁹¹ If there was a place that variants would naturally occur then here is a prime location—instead we have a very early and stable text that agrees among often competing text-types (or families).⁹² Where Western and Alexandrian traditions agree there is every reason to assume we have the best and earliest text.⁹³ This does not rule out the possibility that the preface may only give the *impression* of participation and scrutiny of sources, but the integrity of the text does imply that the author’s *intention* has been preserved without political or doctrinal altercation.

Although the transmission history of Acts 1:1 is stable and relatively colorless with regards to variation (see table 5) verse 2 is more problematic syntactically.⁹⁴ The critical text reads: “Until the day when, having given commands to the apostles through the Holy Spirit he had chosen, he was taken up” (ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου οὗς ἐξελέξατο ἀνελήμφθη.). Although some perceive some awkwardness when separating ἀνελήμφθη at the end from ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας at the

⁹¹ My aim here is to value and evaluate *all* of the variants and any perceived “motives” and changes in the tradition that may impact our interpretation of the ‘we’ sections (via the prologues). Cf. Elliot, *Textual Criticism*, 49.

⁹² Given the well-established Western tendency of expansion this is a likely place for scribes to enhance the eye-witness nature of the events narrated. See Westcott and Hort, *Original Greek II*, 122–6, 174 and Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, 24–7. See more recently: Head, “Problem,” 415–44 (415); Strange, *Problem*, 38–56; Armstrong, “Variants,” 106–07 and my chapter 4. The reason why the prefaces must be so early (perhaps the closest we can come to the initial text) is because of the lack of interpolations, deletions and additions in the double prefaces. The “revision” or “interpolation” theory (shared by Westcott, Hort, Kenyon, Dibelius, and Ropes) is the most popular view on the development of the text of Acts where the “early period of textual transmission was considered to be more fluid, and this resulted in a number of interpolations being added to the text, possibly by revisers.” Porter, “Developments,” 34. Therefore (in theory) a lack of revision should point to the earliest text.

⁹³ This usually implies a superior witness. Metzger, *Text*, 218; Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 105.

⁹⁴ Although not as problematic as Pervo (*Acts*, 36–37) suggests. See Keener’s (*Acts*, 1:660–662) ‘unproblematic’ explanation on Acts 1:2.

start, there is nothing impossibly irregular about it.⁹⁵ Perhaps this is awkward for us (due to our bias in English translation), but perhaps not so much for a reader in first century Hellenistic Greek. There is also the tedious business of correcting a sentence on parchment if in fact ἀνελήμφθη (Acts 1:2) was an afterthought (which the Western reviser appears to be attempting to fix).

Luke could have begun with the idea of the ascension but wrote about the time first, and then the commands of Jesus, that were given to the apostles (he had chosen) through the Holy Spirit, then... ἀνελήμφθη “he was taken up.” From a modern linguistic perspective that factors the web of clausal relationships, the difficulty diminishes further still. Although Acts 1:1–2 contains two verses (that are obviously and artificially drawn centuries later) only one clause is evident for annotation (according to Opentext.org).⁹⁶ The primary clause (**Act.c1_1**) in Acts 1:1–2 contains six secondary embedded clauses **Act.c1_2** through to **Act.c1_7**.⁹⁷ The secondary clause (**Act.c1_2**) contains the third, fourth, and fifth embedded clauses.

Our ‘problem’ passage (v. 2) becomes much easier to comprehend linguistically when we consider the components as one (embedded) adjunct phrase [**Act.c1_5** = ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας + (**Act.c1_6** = ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ πνεύματος ἁγίου) + (**Act.c1_7** = οὗς ἐξελέξατο) ἀνελήμφθη]. In this light, ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας is less disjointed from ἀνελήμφθη since they function together as part of the same larger clause (**Act.c1_5**). The problem of οὗς ἐξελέξατο separated from τοῖς ἀποστόλοις is also less of an issue from this perspective.

⁹⁵ Longenecker, *Acts*, 253. Bruce (*Acts*, 99) similarly reasons that although the Alexandrian text is “awkward” with regards to the separation from οὗς ἐξελέξατο and τοῖς ἀποστόλοις it “gives good sense.” In a personal communication (February 6th, 2019) Porter suggests that “having an adjunctive participle is not a problem in periodic style.”

⁹⁶ See Armstrong, “ὑποτάσσω,” 152–71 (esp. 162–63) for a recent application of this methodology.

⁹⁷ This is visually portrayed at: <http://opentext.org/texts/NT/Acts/view/clause-ch1.v0.html>.

Acts 1:2 of Codex Bezae (D) reads: ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας ἀνελήφθη ἐντειλάμενος τοῖς ἀποστόλοις διὰ ^{πνς} ἁγίου οὖς ἐξελέξατο καὶ ἐκέλευσε κηρύσσειν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον “Until the day when he was taken up having given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen, and instructed them to proclaim the gospel.”⁹⁸ There seems to be an interpolation here and a possible attempt to smooth the grammar by placing ἀνελήφθη earlier in the sentence while adding: καὶ ἐκέλευσε κηρύσσειν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. The main thing to observe here is that there are no major issues in the variants among the major families that would weaken the link between the author’s intention in the prefaces and the ‘we’ source.⁹⁹

Parallels to the Prefaces

If we compare the prefaces of the third Gospel and Acts with other contemporaneous literature of the time the parallels are evident.¹⁰⁰ However, these parallels need to be made with care as Cadbury “repeatedly expressed the warning that such likeness in form between Luke’s material and the popular parallels is not to be misconstrued.”¹⁰¹ For example, Alexander suggests that the “preface of Luke-Acts does not fit the genre of

⁹⁸ Others have attempted to reconstruct the Western text as such: “on the day when he chose the apostles through the Holy Spirit and instructed them to proclaim the gospel.” Boismard, *Texte*, 48–49. I agree with Pervo (*Acts*, 37) that this is “unlikely to be original” as it deletes the ascension (ἀνελήμφθη).

⁹⁹ The way we interpret the prefaces impacts our assessment of the sources of Acts which in turn impacts one’s view of dating. As argued above, Luke’s preface (Luke 1:1–4) should be a factor in how we interpret those passages written in the first person plural. Additionally, Acts 1:1–3 demonstrates continuity with the ‘former book’ (Acts 1:1) that is addressed once more to Theophilus—otherwise there would be no point in factoring the link between the author’s intention in Luke and the ‘we’ passages in Acts.

¹⁰⁰ Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 36. Ellis, *Luke*, 62. Liefeld (*Luke*, 821) asserts that ἐπειδήπερ “inasmuch” is common to Thucydides, Philo and Josephus and also the biography of Diogenes Laertius. Cf. also Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 288–89.

¹⁰¹ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 146. See Porter’s (*Paul in Acts*, 18) criticism of Pervo’s “paralellomania” and my sections: “The Sources of Acts and Paul’s Letters” and “The Sources of Acts and the Works of Josephus” below.

Greek historiography” but *Fachprosa* (trade prose) which is found in technical/scientific literature.¹⁰² Contrary to her ‘evidence’ is the fact that the Greek NT reflects *Zwischenprosa* (between prose).¹⁰³ Perhaps more decisive is that Acts should be considered a “short historical monograph”—which is much more palatable than the other options.¹⁰⁴

More appropriate parallels are found with the start of Josephus’s *Against Apion* who writes: “In my history of our *Antiquities*, most excellent (κράτιστε) Epaphroditus, I have, I think, made sufficiently clear to any who may peruse that work the extreme antiquity of our Jewish race.”¹⁰⁵ From his second book he writes: “In the first volume of this work, my most esteemed Epaphroditus, I demonstrated the antiquity of our race.”¹⁰⁶

Of greater importance than finding parallels is Fitzmyer’s observation that sees Luke’s incipits as “examples of free Lucan composition” that are “independent of any source-material” and demonstrates his “ability to write” in a “contemporary literary

¹⁰² Alexander, *Acts*, 16. This conclusion she says “was forced on me by the evidence” (16). See also her earlier essay: Alexander, “Luke’s Preface,” 48–74 and her revised Oxford thesis: *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel*. For a recent discussion on the genre of Acts see Phillips, “Consensus?” 365–96.

¹⁰³ See Porter, “Disputed,” 11–38 (32); Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 16 (n. 16), 21–22 (n. 43) and Palmer’s critique of Alexander’s earlier position: Palmer, “Historical Monograph,” 1–29 (here 21–26: “IX. The Genre of Acts in Light of its Preface”). Meanwhile, Alexander (*Ancient*, 1) graciously acknowledges a “number of recent commentators” who took issue with her 1993 monograph. See Aune, “Luke 1:1–4,” 138–48 for a summary of criticism. Although Palmer (“Historical Monograph,” 26) grants that the “formal parallel” should remain between the “mention of tradition in Lukan and scientific prefaces” the greater parallel “between the *content* of scientific treatises and Luke-Acts is not so compelling” (my emphasis).

¹⁰⁴ Palmer, “Historical Monograph,” 29 (here) and 3. See also his earlier essay: “Acts and the Historical Monograph,” 373–88. Phillips (“Consensus?” 365–96 [384]) explains that the “emerging consensus of scholarship” agrees with Balch that Luke-Acts “belongs to ‘historical literature’ concerned with changing institutions, literature that includes not only histories but also political biographies of founders.” Cf. Balch, “Μεταβολη πολιτειων,” 139–88 (186). Phillips (384–85) suggests that “Acts is ancient history of various kinds and the mixture of genres within Acts makes further narrowing of the categories unwarranted.” My chapter 4 tackles the panoply of literary theories.

¹⁰⁵ Jos. *Apion* 1.1 and Thackeray, *Josephus*, 1:163. Note the address in Acts 1:3: κράτιστε Θεόφιλε

¹⁰⁶ Jos. *Apion* 2.1 and Thackeray, *Josephus*, 1:293. Compare the start of Jos. *Apion* 2.1: Διὰ μὲν οὖν τοῦ προτέρου βιβλίου, τιμιώτατέ μοι Ἐπαφρόδιτε with that of Acts 1:1 Τὸν μὲν πρῶτον λόγον ἐποιήσαμην περὶ πάντων, ὃ Θεόφιλε, ὃν ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν. Another interesting parallel is found in the *Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates*, 1:1–12: “Inasmuch as the account of our deputation to Eleazar, the High Priest of the Jews, is worth narrating, Philocrates.” Taken from Hadas, *Aristeas*, 93.

mode.”¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, it *seems* likely then that the author’s prologues are reinforcing the *impression* of participation in the events associated with the ‘we’ passages.¹⁰⁸ However, his claim is to have followed the events for a “considerable time” only—and not “from the beginning” (Luke 1:3).¹⁰⁹ Taken at face value, a claim to have “direct knowledge of the events” may simply be some sort of literary device.¹¹⁰

It is possible that an author who claims to have “carefully investigated everything for a long time” (Luke 1:3) intends to show himself a witness of the events narrated by his use of the first person.¹¹¹ Furthermore, the impression of participation in the preface is possible given the fact that the fictional use of a ‘we’ in “consecutive narrative” is rare.¹¹² On the contrary, it is equally possible that this theory is the ‘fake news’ of the ancient world as some maintain.¹¹³ Another factor is that even if the ‘we’ passages do not represent some form of “personal participation” by the author, we also need to consider

¹⁰⁷ Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 288.

¹⁰⁸ Dupont, *Sources*, 102. There is a real sense that Luke (like any “writer of an historical work”) is emphasizing in the prologues his indebtedness to others for their information, but also his participation and presence—which may or may not be factual (106).

¹⁰⁹ Dupont, *Sources*, 107.

¹¹⁰ Dupont, *Sources*, 108. Nock knows of only “one possible parallel for the emphatic use of a questionable ‘we’ in consecutive narrative outside literature which is palpably fictional.” See Nock, Review of *Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte*, 503 (see also n. 2); Dupont, *Sources*, 129 (n. 61).

¹¹¹ Dupont, *Sources*, 108.

¹¹² The idea that the ‘we’ sections are “meant to create the impression of an eyewitness account” comes in many forms. So Nock, Review of *Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte*, 503 (esp. n. 2) and Dupont, *Sources*, 129. Keener (*Acts*, 1:413) “against many NT scholars” continues to “maintain that ‘we’ in Acts as in other ancient historical narratives nearly always constituted a claim that the narrator was present.” Contrary examples would negate this point.

¹¹³ Cf. Conzelmann and Lindemann, *Interpreting*, 241 cited from Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 25. Porter (25, n. 50) says that this view “probably” stems from Dibelius (*Studies*, 204–6) and is repeated more recently by Campbell who argues that the ‘we’ enables readers to “share in the experience”—a view that Marshall (Review of *The ‘We’ Passages*, 755–57 [756]) considers “improbable.” Marshall found Sanger’s study a “careful analysis of the narrator’s use of the first-person form” but a “solution to the problem in Acts which in effect says that the author primarily sought to convey an impression of personal integrity and trustworthiness by a literary device which may or may not correspond to historical actuality does not sound very convincing” (my emphasis, 756–57).

how the first-century readers of Acts would interpret this.¹¹⁴ Consequently, there is no decisive proof either way that the author's intention in the prologue implies his later presence during the 'we' sections (to some degree).¹¹⁵ Regardless of one's view, the theory of a 'we' source has left "deep roots in the field of research on the sources of Acts."¹¹⁶

The Itinerary/Diary/Travelogue Hypothesis

As noted earlier, Dibelius developed the itinerary/travel diary hypothesis while Norden focused on the 'memoirs' behind the narrative of Acts.¹¹⁷ Although there has been a tendency to label this 'source' in a specific manner (such as the variety of my title section indicates), the theory has been variously and extensively defined. Dibelius initially envisioned this *itinerary* "or whatever we like to call the account which the author had at his disposal" to be much wider in scope than is often described.¹¹⁸ In light of the criticisms marshalled against this theory, the purpose here is not to define a specific

¹¹⁴ Dupont, *Sources*, 131. Praeder ("Problem," 217) thinks that it was either the author or "one or more of his source authorities had some role in Paul's sea and land travels." Although some of the 'we' passages could be the product of "Lukan redaction and composition" (217). Meanwhile, Hemer ("Narrative," 108) ponders the degree of "personal participation" in the 'we' passages and if they do then they "take us nearer to the historical Paul."

¹¹⁵ On the contrary, Porter (*Paul in Acts*, 37) considers the use of the first person plural in Acts to be different from other historical works. It is "surprising" that beyond Luke's intention "to provide an orderly account" (between Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1) the "use of the first person" is found "only in the latter chapters of Acts" and only at "specific points." However, the gap is reduced if the first 'we' occurs at Antioch (11:28)—and the material up to 11:18 represents older sources that Luke gathered (likely from the church in Jerusalem/Judea), and after Acts 11:19 until 15:39 to be some combination of an Antioch/Barnabas source that was later revised by Luke—and from Acts 15:40 onward this formulates the Rome (Luke/Paul/Silas/Timothy) source until the end of Acts. Even at the Jerusalem council we get a clear picture of how (in Acts 15:2) Paul, Barnabas and "some others among them" (καί τινες ἄλλους ἐξ αὐτῶν) were the "they" who "reported everything [or lit. how much]" (ἀνήγγειλάν τε ὅσα) in verse 4. That the author is a companion of Paul seems very likely, although naming this companion is beyond certainty according to Cadbury (*Luke-Acts*, 356). See also, Dupont, *Sources*, 108 (n. 47).

¹¹⁶ Dupont, *Sources*, 93; Keener, *Acts*, 3:2350–374.

¹¹⁷ Norden, *Untersuchungen*, 34, 313–31; Dibelius, *Studies*, 73–74.

¹¹⁸ Dibelius, *Studies*, 73–74.

itinerary (as some would define) but to revisit it as a broadly defined ‘account’ of personal notes used by the author.¹¹⁹

“Everywhere it seems,” says Dibelius, “that there underlies the account of the journeys an itinerary of stations where Paul stopped, an itinerary which we may suppose to have been provided with notes of his journeys, of the founding of communities and of the result of evangelising.”¹²⁰ He finds examples of this itinerary where aspects of Paul’s missionary journeys (i.e. 13:4–14:28 and 15:36–21:16) were “based on a written document” that “supplied the framework and served as a guiding thread.”¹²¹

Dibelius refers to this itinerary as Luke’s earliest source that is comprised of a series of notes and he thought it was especially discoverable in those places where the purpose was clearly not “to entertain” (i.e. Derbe, Thessalonica, or Berea [Acts 14:21; 17:1–9, 10–12]).¹²² He goes on to describe his theory further: “For this central part of his work there had been supplied to him a series of notes. To this itinerary he now made his own additions, as well as inserting other traditions. Among the former we may include the speeches particularly, but also many editorial observations (i.e. Acts 14:22 ff., and Acts 19:20).”¹²³

¹¹⁹ Schille, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 337–38; Haenchen, *Acts*, 84–86; Conzelmann, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 5–6. The way we interpret the itinerary hypothesis impacts our assessment of the sources of Acts which in turn informs the way we date Acts. It seems entirely plausible that Luke (in addition to personal memories and other sources from his church contacts) made use of a broadly defined itinerary (as per Dibelius’s suggestion). This observation reinforces the datable elements in Acts while at the same time mitigates the notion of Acts as a later literary creation.

¹²⁰ Dibelius, *Studies*, 5.

¹²¹ Dupont, *Sources*, 114.

¹²² Dibelius, *Studies*, 6. Dupont (*Sources*, 115) also thinks these passages are out of place unless they are to some degree “imposed on the writer by the source he was using.” Doubtless a source is involved at these points (as per Dibelius’s suggestion), but the content of this source is edited for Luke’s purposes. Barrett (*Luke the Historian*, 12) remarks how “Luke was a historical writer” but also a “religious writer.” For an expanded treatment of this duality see Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*.

¹²³ Dibelius, *Studies*, 6.

Accordingly, Dibelius saw “only one way of accounting for the procedure—the writer uses the first person plural to indicate his presence at the side of Paul.”¹²⁴ Cadbury had also discussed the idea of an ‘itinerary’ relating to Paul’s travels independently from Dibelius.¹²⁵ In addition to the “speeches in Acts,” Cadbury refers to the “series of detailed itineraries given for part of Paul’s journey.”¹²⁶ While he considers some of the factors leading to the development of these itineraries he asks whether “the longer episodes included in the narrative” (i.e. Philippi and Ephesus) were (1) once a part of the “original” outline *or* (2) they were “episodes derived from [a] separate transmission but inserted into it” (i.e. the outline) along with the “presence of the ‘we’ in parts (but by no means all) of the itinerary.”¹²⁷

Cadbury muses about other possibilities such as the itinerary being a “continuous geographical outline” that crystallizes earlier (auto?) biographical information (see also, “Luke’s Concern with Geography, Travel, and Lodging” below).¹²⁸ Further to this, he contends that such a form has some “parallels in contemporary literature.”¹²⁹ These

¹²⁴ Dupont, *Sources*, 118 (and 120). Dibelius further subscribed to the traditional view that the author was Luke the physician, a companion of Paul, and who was possibly from Antioch (Dupont, 118–19). There are several ancient sources that support the identification of Luke the physician as the author of Acts: Col 4:14; *Muratorian Fragment*, 2–8 (the gospel), 34–39 (of Acts); Irenaeus, *Her.* 3.1.1; 3.13.3; 3.14.1; Tertullian, *Marc.* 4.2; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 5.12 and Origen (cited by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.25) and the *Anti-Marcionite Prologue* to Luke. Luke as a companion of Paul is less certain though see Col 4:14; Phlm 23–24 and 2 Tim 4:11; Powell, *Acts*, 33 and Keener, *Acts*, 1:410–11. Most importantly, P⁷⁵ that is dated to the early third century (c. 200–225 INTF) contains the “oldest sure evidence of a contemporary name.” See Parker, *Introduction*, 313. We can see this on Folio 44r, Col. 1 (lines 7–9): (7) εὐαγγέλιον (8) κατὰ (9) λουκᾶν. The John inscription follows on lines 11–12: (11) εὐαγγέλιον (12) κατὰ ἰωάννην.

¹²⁵ Dupont, *Sources*, 120 (n. 32). Cadbury, like Dibelius, seems to rely on Norden’s earlier work. See Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 6, 8, 125, 145 and 196.

¹²⁶ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 60.

¹²⁷ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 60. He is a bit unclear at this point but this is my interpretation of what he said.

¹²⁸ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 60. He advises that the “itinerary in Acts” is a different genre and to some degree “discontinuous” 61. Dibelius and Dupont also discounted the possibility of a “continuous narrative prior to that of Acts” Dupont, *Sources*, 114 and 136. Porter (*Paul in Acts*, 35) affirms this as well.

¹²⁹ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 60.

parallels are found among the “popular and the literary forms of composition.”¹³⁰

Cadbury considers the *Reisebericht* or “travel tale” found among popular literature as an especially relevant parallel for Acts.¹³¹ This *travel tale* included both land and sea travels where the “story of storm and shipwreck on a desert island” was ever popular:

Characteristic of their style is the brief seriatim itinerary with the names of places, companions and duration of stay such as found in Acts. But the most impressive characteristic of all is the *frequent use of the first person*. The testimony of eyewitnesses is a desideratum in all narrative, but especially in travel narrative, and nowhere is the use of the first person more abundant (my emphasis).¹³²

The issue of whether or not Luke’s notes (Acts 27:44) *could* have survived the shipwreck is a contentious one and far from settled.¹³³ Porter may be right in saying the notes were destroyed; however, Keener makes several “stronger arguments” that go beyond Nock’s reference to Caesar preserving his papers while swimming (i.e. Suet. *Jul.* 64).¹³⁴ If Keener is correct it does to some degree “undermine Porter’s own thesis of the source.”¹³⁵ It does not seem necessary to argue for the survival of notes when Luke (or

¹³⁰ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 140 (and the difference between the popular and literary forms).

¹³¹ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 144.

¹³² Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 144.

¹³³ See Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 38 n. 95 countering Rapske (“Shipwreck,” 2:1–47 [34, n. 151]) and his reliance on Nock, Review of *Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte*, 499, n. 3. See also Smith, *Voyage and Shipwreck*; Bruce, *Acts*, 508–529; Gilchrist, “Shipwreck,” 29–51; Atauz, *Maritime*, 29–31 and Keener, *Acts*, 4:3555–660.

¹³⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 4:3658. To be fair, Nock left the matter open: “Any companion keeping a travel diary *might well have lost it* in the shipwreck; to be sure, Julius Caesar preserved his papers while swimming 200 paces” (my emphasis). Nock, Review of *Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte* 499 (n. 3). For Caesar to swim for approximately three hundred meters with his papers in his left hand seems highly unlikely even for the best of swimmers. Regardless, Keener (*Acts*, 4:3658–59) argues first that Luke could have relied upon his memory of the occasion. Second, he could easily have prepared ahead of time to preserve his notes beforehand in watertight containers (not that he needed them to remember the trauma of what just happened). Keener’s third and fourth point relate to his second where the notes could have survived the shipwreck either in whole or in part. Last, he (4:3659) suggests that Luke would have had a backup copy somewhere of his “most important notes” that he “probably left with Christians in Caesarea” or back in Syro-Palestine.

¹³⁵ Keener, *Acts*, 4:3657 (n. 1020). The other issue of the “consistent syntax” of these sections “in comparison with the rest of the material” requires a future linguistic analysis. Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 39.

his source) could rely on memory or from conversations with Paul and others in the shipwreck.¹³⁶

There are some further qualifications and criticisms concerning the itinerary hypothesis.¹³⁷ For example, although Nock agrees with Dibelius (via Cadbury) that Luke wrote Acts (as a companion of Paul) he rightly questions the itinerary as a single source.¹³⁸ Instead of speaking of a single “Itinerar” he rightly asks: “May there not rather have been several distinct travel-diaries covering separate periods, e.g. that of the collection for the saints in Jerusalem (cf. 20, 3–5)?”¹³⁹

In perhaps the greatest criticism of Dibelius’s itinerary, Schille raises some important weaknesses.¹⁴⁰ It is true that Luke’s literary prowess makes it difficult in assessing whether we are dealing with one or more sources—or if something like a travelogue or itinerary is behind it (or them).¹⁴¹ However, Dibelius’s (and Cadbury’s) theory has not been eradicated completely, and the “most devastating treatment” of Schille’s theories is to “examine them closely”—they reveal “much imagination and little

¹³⁶ Either way it is unlikely that those involved would forget the details of the ordeal.

¹³⁷ See Dupont, *Sources*, 137–65.

¹³⁸ Nock, Review of *Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte*, 502. Amidst the ‘formidable’ objections Nock gives credit to Cadbury (“The Knowledge Claimed,” 401–20) for changing his mind. In his response to Cadbury, Robertson validates Cadbury’s argument “at almost every point” in the former essay. Cf. Robertson, “The Implications,” 319–21 (321). His only contention is his “denial of research by the author” as he insists the “use of ἄνωθεν with παρηκολουθηκότι falls in also with the idea of careful preparation before writing” (321; Luke 1:3). See also, Cadbury, “The Purpose Expressed,” 431–41. Alexander (*The Preface*, 128) also indicates that παρηκολουθηκότι does not connote research specifically but in the end a “thorough acquaintance” is the net result (cited by Keener, *Acts*, 1:185). See also L&N 36.32.

¹³⁹ Nock, Review of *Aufsätze zur Apostelgeschichte*, 500. Based on the personal records and diaries of travellers Nock (500) suggests that “whether this travel material comes from one or from more documents is not very important, save for the fact that if there was only one, it is perhaps harder to account for some of the many omissions in this part of the story.”

¹⁴⁰ “Bei einer genaueren Prüfung verliert die Itinerar-Hypothese ihre Schlagkraft. Vielleicht ist sie nichts anderes als ein letzter Rest jener Quellentheorien, die M. Dibelius so scharf gerügt hat. Der Hinweis auf die schriftstellerische Fähigkeit des Lukas vermag mehr zu erklären, als selbst M. Dibelius annahm” (In a closer examination, the Itinerar hypothesis loses its clout. Maybe it is nothing but a last remnant of those source theories that M. Dibelius has criticized so sharply. The reference to the literary capacity of Luke can explain more than even M. Dibelius assumed). See Schille “Fragwürdigkeit,” (174) 165–74.

¹⁴¹ See Dupont, *Sources*, 147–56.

critical sense.”¹⁴² The value in Schille’s criticisms is that the itinerary theory is “only an hypothesis” and that in “some of its aspects it is fragile.”¹⁴³ Setting aside the itinerary, there are other source options worth investigating.

Luke’s Concern with Geography, Travel, and Lodging

Perhaps the most prevalent frustration relating to the source debate is how Dupont points to the problems and lack of agreement and then “refused to proffer a comprehensive thesis.”¹⁴⁴ Dupont may not have offered a ‘comprehensive’ thesis, but the section *before* his conclusion is very close to one and has not received the attention it deserves.¹⁴⁵ The importance that Luke places upon geographical considerations offers a path forward—both in the patterns of his gospel but also in the “very extensive information” that goes beyond “editorial additions.”¹⁴⁶ First, we can see Luke’s geographical interest in the “general arrangement of his work” that “governs the general plan” of both the gospel and

¹⁴² See Dupont, *Sources*, 156. “Schille... goes too far in attributing to the literary genius of Luke all that Dibelius explained by the hypothesis of the itinerary” (145, n. 15). Similarly, and based on Haenchen’s assessment of Schille’s theories, Dupont (156) explains that if the itinerary “is not inevitable” then there is “no reason to fall back on a hypothesis which claims to explain everything by speaking of the facility with which Luke could compose a narrative and give it the appearance of history.” See also Bultmann’s (“Quellen der Apostelgeschichte,” 68–80) defense of Dibelius’s itinerary hypothesis.

¹⁴³ Dupont, *Sources*, 156 (see page 151 for his critique of Schille’s criticisms). Dupont (*Sources*, 151) appears to have kept the door open to the itinerary hypothesis; not only because of his criticism of Schille’s critique, and his criticism of Haenchen’s *acceptance* of Schille’s critique, but especially his claim that “Criticism of the hypothesis of the itinerary is not yet very far advanced” (157).

¹⁴⁴ E.g. Donelson, “Cult Histories,” 1; Marshall, *Acts*, 39. This is partially true but in fairness to Dupont he has provided a vast array of insights throughout this chapter.

¹⁴⁵ “The Characteristics of Luke” (Dupont, *Sources*, 157–65). For this he relies on idem, “Salut,” 132–55; Menoud, “Plan,” 44–51; and Cadbury, *Luke-Acts* idem, “Lodging,” 305–22.

¹⁴⁶ Dupont, *Sources*, 159. On the geography in Acts see Hengel, “Geography,” 27–78.

Acts.¹⁴⁷ The second consideration relates to the expanded details of geography found in Luke-Acts.¹⁴⁸

What Cadbury observes is that the explanation of these places in the text are “not really distributed along geographical lines” which opens up the possibility of a source.¹⁴⁹

Another aspect of Luke’s geographical interest is something Harnack originally drew attention to—and Cadbury later explored.¹⁵⁰ Luke is supremely concerned with the

details of where the people in his narrative live, the places they travel, and their

lodging.¹⁵¹ In response to Harnack’s “ironical rejection of a source” (because some of the

¹⁴⁷ Dupont, *Sources*, 158. The author is clearly interested in the geographical details of the terrain in Luke-Acts as Cadbury and others have long established. Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 241. See further reading regarding the general plan of Luke and Acts in Dupont, *Sources*, 158 (n.57); idem, “Salut,” 132–55 and Menoud, “Plan,” 44–51.

¹⁴⁸ Luke is very much interested in “punctuating his whole narrative from the beginning with geographical observations.” Dupont, *Sources*, 160. Some of these passages Cadbury lists as examples: “Nazareth, a town in Galilee” (Luke 1:26), “Capernaum, a town in Galilee” (Luke 4:31), “the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee” (Luke 8:26), “a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:13), “the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city” (Acts 1:12), “Perga in Pamphylia” (Acts 13:13), “the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe” (14:6), “Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia” (16:12), “Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city” (21:39), “a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea” (27:8), “Phoenix... a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest” and many other such examples in Acts. The NIV is used here for Cadbury’s lists. Cadbury (*Luke-Acts*, 241) mentioned a few other places. I am not sure where Dupont (*Sources*, 160) (in citing Cadbury) came up with ‘Lystia which is in Lycia’ (27:5), or ‘a place called Good Havens, not far from the city of Thalassa’ (27:8)?

¹⁴⁹ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 242. He wonders whether or not the author is speaking with familiarity. For example, the Latin place names closer to Rome (i.e. Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns) are not given any expansive details (as compared to those in Palestine). Either Luke is from the area and did not see any need to expand on the Italian places (that would be relatively unknown in Judea or Galilee), or second, Rome (or environs) is his current address at the time of writing, or third, his intended audience (i.e. Theophilus) is in Rome and a lack of expansion here as compared to the earlier narrative in Acts (i.e. 1:12) suggests familiarity and perhaps an unfamiliarity of places outside of Rome. See Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 241–42; Dupont, *Sources*, 160 (n. 64), 161.

¹⁵⁰ Harnack, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 95 (n.1); Cadbury, “Lodging,” 305–22; idem, *Luke-Acts*, 249–54.

¹⁵¹ Dupont, *Sources*, 161. This is especially observable in the second half of Acts. Cadbury, “Lodging,” 306–07. Blass (*Acta Apostolorum*, 227) thought the purpose here was really to let his readers know who the host was: “ex more scriptoris indicandum erat ubi pernoctavissent” (as cited by Cadbury, 306). Among such examples Cadbury considers the potential that Philip the evangelist and his four unmarried daughters (Acts 21:8–9) are a possible source (306). He also thinks the example of “Mnason of Cyprus” in Acts 21:16 is “altogether enigmatic” (305). Bezae once had a variant (before it was mutilated) that places Mnason’s hospitality at a “certain village” between “Caesarea and Jerusalem” (305–6 [n. 2]). At present, all that can be seen (from the end of verse 15) in line 23 is: ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς ἱερ[οσόλυμα]... (24) ἐκ χεῖρα[ρείας] (25) ... (Note the use of the diaeresis above the iota in line 23 and how the first corrector

lodging passages occur in the ‘we’ section and others do not) Cadbury suggests instead that they “may be sometimes derived from a source” or they “may be introduced by the evangelist in rewriting a source.”¹⁵² For example, in Acts 9:11 there is given a full address: “Saul of Tarsus, Care of Judas, Straight St., Damascus.”¹⁵³ In Acts 10:5–6 we hear of “Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging with Simon the Tanner, whose house is by the sea” (in Joppa).¹⁵⁴ Either way such lodging references point to a source(s).¹⁵⁵

Re-Interpreting Dupont’s Overall Conclusion

Beyond Dupont’s overall ‘stated’ conclusion that is notoriously bleak, his full conclusion and cumulative research throughout his book deserve our attention.¹⁵⁶ Second, while his research affirms the complex nature of discovering sources this further reveals the

removed *απο* and wrote *εκ* in its place). Ropes called this mutilation an “irregular tear, or cut” where the Latin side is partially destroyed and correspondingly “on the Greek side a part of verse 16, the whole of verse 17, and a part of verse 18 have been destroyed.” Cf. Ropes, “Three Papers,” 163–86 (163). Ropes’s reconstruction uses the Latin parallel as a “trustworthy guide”: line 23: ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς ἱερ[οσόλυμα] (24) ἐκ κεσα[ρείσας] σὺν ἡμεῖν (25) οὗτοι δὲ ἤγαγον ἡμᾶς (26) πρὸς οὓς ξενισθῶμεν (27) καὶ παραγενόμενοι εἰς τινα κώ[μην] (28) ἐγενόμεθα παρὰ νάσωνι [τινα κυπρίω] (29) μαθητῆ ἀρχαίω κάκειθεν [ἐξερχόμενοι] (30) ἦλθομεν εἰς ἱεροσόλυμα. The NA²⁸ assumes a difference in word order with ἐξιόντες instead of ἐξερχόμενοι that is contrary to Ropes (166) and Cadbury, “Lodging,” 306, n.2: (29) ἀρχαίω μαθητῆ κάκειθεν ἐξιόντες ἦλθομεν. See also Casey, “Bently’s Collation,” 213–14.

¹⁵² Cadbury, “Lodging,” 306; Harnack, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 95 (n.1).

¹⁵³ Cadbury, “Lodging,” 306.

¹⁵⁴ Cadbury, “Lodging,” 306.

¹⁵⁵ Cadbury (“Lodging,” 308) cites many examples from the third gospel where “Jesus lodged at least to various forms of hospitality” that are “not in the other gospels” (309). At other times the evidence points toward a common source such as the centurion’s lament that he didn’t feel worthy to entertain Jesus at his house (cf. 309; Luke 7:6 = Mat 8:8). See also Dupont’s (*Sources*, 161–62) list of lodging sources. It is “obvious” says Cadbury (“Lodging,” 308 [n. 6]) that “the same habit of mind has led the author to give some names of places as well as of persons simply because they marked the overnight stops of journeys.” Dupont (*Sources*, 162) claims that this either points to a source or the personal experience of the author—either way this reveals more detailed information as compared with Matthew and Mark.

¹⁵⁶ Dupont (*Sources*, 166) thinks the “predominant impression is certainly very negative...it has not been possible to define any of the sources used by the author of Acts in a way which will meet with widespread agreement among the critics.” Marshall (*Acts*, 39) while stating the obvious “difficulty of discovering any sources” he echoes Dupont’s lament and then states that “Nothing has happened subsequently to alter this estimate in any significant way.” He further echoes the “general view” that Luke has “successfully managed to conceal whatever sources he used beneath a uniform editorial style” (39). Granted Marshall is hopeful despite Dupont’s “pessimistic conclusion” that some theories may be “more plausible than others” (40). See also Conzelmann, *Acts*, xxxvi–vii.

author's "individual turn of mind."¹⁵⁷ Third, along with the prologue, and in comparison with other ancient texts the author "wishes it to be understood that he has personally taken part in the events he is recounting."¹⁵⁸ Fourth, the problem of the 'we' passages directly relates to the question of sources and potentially for Luke as a "travelling companion of the apostle Paul."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Dupont, *Sources*, 166–67. Dupont (via Cadbury) uses the argument of the "author's psychology" and "characteristic personality" that matches "the writer to Theophilus" (164). This in turn leads Dupont to say this "information" did not originate with a "written source which someone else supplied him with" (164). Accordingly, he (166) finds favour with Benoit's theory of Acts being composed in stages "based not on sources coming from another author, but on Luke's own notes." Benoit, "La Deuxième Visite," 778–92. For Dupont, the secondary matter is compositional in nature—in other words—did Luke use notes, an itinerary, or a travel diary (165)? The solution is not so simple. We can only speculate as to how much or how little these sources are Luke's. Porter's (*Paul in Acts*, 39) hypothesis is that that the author of Luke-Acts uses a (redacted) "previously written 'we' source" that was "probably (although not certainly) not originating with the author himself" (41). Cf. also Barrett, *Luke the Historian*, 22 and Kümmel, *Introduction*, 177. However, Porter also (39, n. 97) recognizes the strong tradition that claims the author of Luke-Acts has "included his own eyewitness" to the narrative. See Ramsay, *Roman Empire*, 6–8; Rackham, *Acts*, xli–xlii; Bruce, *Acts*, 4; Munck, *Acts*, xiii; Hengel, *Acts*, 66; Fitzmyer, *Luke* 1.35–53; idem, *Luke the Theologian*, 1–26 (esp. 3–7, 11–16); Hemer, *Acts*, 321; Gilchrist, "Shipwreck," 36–50; Witherington, *Acts*, 485.

¹⁵⁸ Dupont, *Sources*, 167. It is still possible that the author did not take part. According to Porter (*Paul in Acts*, 40), the text alone is insufficient to determine "whether the writer of the 'we' source was himself an eyewitness or first-hand witness to the events narrated, although on the basis of the use of the first-person narrative convention in other writers it is plausible, and in fact likely, to think that such was the case." That the 'we' source originates with the author himself is a "possibility that cannot be entirely dismissed" (41). I disagree with Alexander's (*The Preface*, 120–23) rendering of *αὐτόπται* (Luke 1:2) as a "first-hand witness" (as noted by Porter [40, n. 100]). This may be possible in some contexts however there are a few reasons against this rendering here. First, even if we allow for Alexander's sense of the word that might exclude Luke as an 'eye-witness' there is nothing in the context to indicate he was *only* and always a first-hand witness to someone else's personal experience (which is really a second-hand witness). Second, the BDAG says that *αὐτόπτης* from (*αὐτός*, *ὀπτεύω* = *ὄραω*) implies 'seeing with one's own eyes' and cites several passages to justify this sense of meaning. Similarly, the L&N includes *ἐπόπτης* with their definition of *αὐτόπτης* (under domain 24: "Sensory Events and States" [24] and the subdomain "See" [24.1–24.51]) stating it means "one who has personally seen an event and thus has personal knowledge and can be expected to attest to the occurrence of such an event—eyewitness, personal witness." Cf. L&N 24.46. Third, if we consider *ἐπόπτης* it is difficult to see how *ἐπόπται γενηθέντες* (2 Pet. 1:16) could be taken to mean anything else except that they were "[personal] eyewitnesses" (*τῆς ἐκείνου μεγαλειότητος*) "of his majesty." Last, lines 34–39 of the *Muratorian Fragment* gives a similar interpretation.

¹⁵⁹ Dupont, *Sources*, 168. Where some follow the ancient tradition that ascribes Acts to "Luke the physician, Paul's collaborator" others do not because they think the picture of Paul in Acts is irreconcilably different from the Paul of his epistles (168).

In light of the evidence, it seems likely that Luke is the author of Acts and a companion of the Apostle Paul.¹⁶⁰ What is also likely (though with less certainty) is that Luke has participated in the ‘we’ passages (to some degree at least) while corroborating his details along the way through a mix of his own memories, notes, and other oral or written sources from others (i.e. Paul, Barnabas, Silas and/or Timothy).¹⁶¹ This also does not preclude the possibility that Luke participated in other passages going back to Acts 16:10–17 (or even earlier at Antioch in the Western text of Acts 11:28). Last, the expansive geographical details (along with the mention of specific persons), further reveals an underlying source(s). All of these points support the feasibility of an early date of Acts.

The Sources of Acts and Paul’s Letters

Beyond a general discussion of sources, two critical issues remain that require discussion and analysis: (1) Acts and Paul’s letters, (2) Acts and the works of Flavius Josephus.

These two areas need to be addressed as they directly impact the views on that date of Acts—perhaps more than any other. Where many scholars do not find clear evidence that Acts is dependent on Paul’s letters, Pervo has recently argued against the grain.¹⁶² He

¹⁶⁰ Dupont, *Sources*, 168. Although this continues to be debated I agree with Keener’s (*Acts*, 1:402–22) argument.

¹⁶¹ Recall Harnack’s view and my note 22 above.

¹⁶² Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 51–147; Armstrong, “A New Plea,” 87–90. Pervo is by no means alone as Shellard (*New Light on Luke*, 31) claims that “Luke did indeed know some, if not all of Paul’s letters, as indicated by many items in his narrative.” She argues that he does not refer to them “explicitly” but treats them “creatively as he had done his other sources” (31). Her ‘evidence’ (56–58) is based largely upon Mitton’s commentary on Ephesians who seems rather interested in the connection between the two books (Mitton, *Ephesians*, 198–220 and 205 esp.). Hence, if Ephesians is dated in the 90s (Mitton, 260) then for Shellard (58) if Luke-Acts were “completed soon afterwards, perhaps by the same person, this again would support a dating for Luke-Acts close to the turn of the century.” Elsewhere, Walton (*Leadership and Lifestyle*, 12) examines Paul’s speech at Miletus (Acts 20:18b–35) and finds a “number of parallels of vocabulary with the Pauline epistles.” These ‘parallels’ have long been recognized and discussed. See Rackham, *Acts*, 389–96; Conzelmann, *Acts*, 173–76; Bruce, *Acts*, 429–37. Walton (12) refers to Dodd

boldly states that the “case for coincidences” has been “exploded by the *near certainty* that Luke used Paul’s letters, and the very strong probability that he was familiar with some of Josephus’ works” (emphasis mine).¹⁶³

Like the question of Luke’s use of Josephus, this issue is an old one. While Cadbury’s decided opinion is that Acts is not dependent on Josephus, “the same may be said for the letters of Paul.”¹⁶⁴ Cadbury identifies the heart of the methodological problem—to make a valid dependency argument, it is not enough to draw upon similar vocabulary—it may only prove that Paul and the author of Acts spoke the same language.¹⁶⁵ More recently, Keener in his massive commentary, relays how the majority of scholars (including himself) reject Luke’s dependence on Paul’s letters.¹⁶⁶

(*Apostolic Preaching*, 32) who thought this “implies either that Luke used the epistles (which he regards as unlikely) or that he used reminiscences of a genuine Pauline speech.” Contrary to Dodd’s viewpoint, Walton compares the Miletus speech with (1) segments of Luke’s Gospel (99–137), (2) 1 Thessalonians (140–85), as well as (3) Ephesians and 1 Timothy (186–198). Walton’s conclusions have met with little success. See Weima, Review of *Leadership and Lifestyle*, 300–02 (301) and Donfried, Review of *Leadership and Lifestyle*, 253–56 (255). See also Goulder, “Letters,” 97–112 and his dubious findings (that Pervo employs) in my note 220 below.

¹⁶³ Pervo, *Mystery*, 4. Pervo’s interest in ancient parallels may be behind his choice of sources and what he constitutes as evidence. Recall “Principles for Selecting Sources” in chapter 2.

¹⁶⁴ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 327. Parker (“Former Treatise,” 54) claims that the later we date Acts the “more inexplicable becomes its ignorance of Paul’s own letters”—and the list of examples of this ignorance “could be extended almost indefinitely.”

¹⁶⁵ “The same fallacy regularly inheres in the argument from vocabulary, whether employed by Krenkel to show Luke’s knowledge of Josephus, or by Hobart and others to prove that the evangelist was a physician. While he undoubtedly has much in common with the diction of the Septuagint, Paul, Josephus and the medical writers and many other bodies of Greek writing taken one at a time, these facts give little clue to his individuality of speech.” Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 219 (see also 118–22, 219, 273, 338 and 358). Cadbury claims the “agreements in vocabulary are not striking but commonplace” (118). See also Dupont, *Sources*, 86. Krenkel (*Josephus und Lukas*) and Hobart (*The Medical Language of St Luke*) share the same fundamental error. Krenkel refers to words and phrases used by both writers “but fails to show that the same words and phrases were *not* used by other writers” Gasque, *History*, p. 104.

¹⁶⁶ Keener, *Acts*, 1:399. Keener (1:234) states: “Most scholars doubt that Luke knew Paul’s letters.” See also Spencer, *Acts*, 16; Mount, *Pauline Christianity*, 169 (n. 17); Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 206 and Longenecker, *Acts*, 237. Barrett considers the apparent failure of Luke to use Paul’s letters as a “serious matter” for a date of 90 CE—especially where *1 Clement* (c. 96 CE) refers to some. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:xliv. This question is certainly a popular one. See also Walker, “Pauline Letters,” 105–15.

Despite these views, Pervo concludes that the “cumulative evidence that Luke made use of Pauline letters is rather persuasive.”¹⁶⁷ Pervo, in chapter 4 of his book (pp. 51–147) shows many detailed comparisons between Acts and Paul’s letters.¹⁶⁸ Tannehill, in his review, addresses some of Pervo’s risky methodological assumptions.¹⁶⁹ First, that the author had access to Paul’s letters (or was familiar with Paul’s thinking and theology) is not a new supposition.¹⁷⁰ The relationship is an ongoing debate and certainly requires more attention.¹⁷¹ Second, what is the evidence for dating the circulation of Paul’s letters so late (100 CE)?¹⁷² Porter, building on the earlier work of Trobisch, claims this late date is “arguably wrong” based on his study on the gathering of Paul’s letters.¹⁷³

Third, despite a lack of agreement with how the Pauline canon formed, “virtually all are agreed that the gathering of the Pauline corpus required personal involvement at some level.”¹⁷⁴ Since Paul died no later than 68 CE, it seems reasonable to conclude that

¹⁶⁷ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 145. Earlier, Conzelmann (*Acts*, p. xxxiii) remarked that it is “almost inconceivable . . . that the author of Acts knew nothing at all about the letters.”

¹⁶⁸ Pervo claims that Acts “exhibits knowledge of 2 Corinthians (or at least a fragment thereof), Romans (8 references), 1 Corinthians (14 references), Galatians (25 references), Ephesians (19 references), and 1 Thessalonians (13 references).” Pervo, “Suburbs,” 33–34 and idem, *Dating Acts*, 139–43 and 320–21. Keener (*Acts*, 1:233 [n. 86]) is not persuaded: “Pervo’s detailed comparisons are commendable, but they admit of other possible explanations”—they “simply press too much into common use of widespread vocabulary to be plausible.”

¹⁶⁹ Tannehill, review of *Dating Acts*, 827–28.

¹⁷⁰ Fitzmyer, *Theologian*, 16. Fitzmyer (16) says that Acts “seems to have been composed quite independently of copies of Paul’s letters.”

¹⁷¹ Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 206; Porter, “Assessment of Theories,” 95–127; Barrett, *Acts*, 2:xlili; Keener, *Acts*, 1:399.

¹⁷² Pervo, “The Date of Acts,” 5; Armstrong, “A New Plea,” 89 (n. 43). O’Neill (*Theology of Acts*, 21), based on Goodspeed (*Introduction*) considers how Paul’s letters were “rescued from obscurity and ‘Published’ as a collection” about 90 CE. “If Goodspeed’s thesis is accepted,” says O’Neill, then “Luke-Acts cannot be later” than about 90 CE (21). However, he ultimately discounted this theory based on Polycarp’s use of a “published collection of Paul’s letters” (24).

¹⁷³ Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 77; idem, “Paul and the Process of Canonization,” 173–202; idem, “Assessment of Theories,” 95–127 (and especially his section on Trobisch’s theory on pp. 113–21); Trobisch, *First Edition*; idem, *Paul’s Letter Collection*.

¹⁷⁴ Porter, “Assessment of Theories,” 122. We cannot be certain who it was that began this collection (Timothy and Luke are top contenders) but there seems to be “reasonable evidence to see the origin of the Pauline corpus during the latter part of Paul’s life or shortly after his death” by a “close follower if not by Paul himself” (126–27). Last, Porter (127) claims that a “close examination of the early manuscripts with Paul’s letters seems to endorse this hypothesis.”

Paul's letters were already in circulation by this time or shortly afterwards.¹⁷⁵ A circulation date of ± 68 CE is entirely compatible with an early date of Acts as it also explains why there is no specific reliance upon Paul's letters in Acts (as argued below).¹⁷⁶ Regardless, Tannehill rightly concludes that the "supposed date of a Pauline letter collection cannot determine the date of Acts."¹⁷⁷

Consequently, even if, as Pervo alleges, Acts is influenced by Paul's letters, this cannot *a priori* peg the date of Acts to a late first- or early second-century date for two major reasons. First, it is entirely possible and reasonable that the author of Acts was influenced by Paul, his thought, vocabulary, and theology, and second, even if it could be proven that Luke relied upon Paul's letters, this could have happened long before 100 CE and perhaps as early as the 60's CE.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, a dependency on Paul's letters in Luke-Acts is entirely compatible with an early date.

Analysis of Selected Texts of Acts and Paul's Letters

There is no question that the book of Acts shares a considerable degree of lexical content

¹⁷⁵ See Taira, *Martyrdom*, 199 (on Paul's death in Rome). Based on the writing practices of Paul's time, there is every reason to believe that he was personally active in his own letter gathering. Archer ("Epistolary Form, 298") is perhaps the first to argue that Paul's letters were "first published as a series" based on "Seneca's philosophic collection." He dates this collection (along with Mark's gospel) "probably a little before the Fall of Jerusalem, and Luke's a little after that event" (298). Seneca was a prolific writer, philosopher, and an advisor to Nero. He was implicated in the Pisonian conspiracy and ordered to take his own life by the emperor in 65 CE. See Wilson, *Greatest Empire*, xiii, 1.

¹⁷⁶ See also Porter, "Assessment of Theories," 126. If Acts was written post-80 CE then why does the book "not make any overt or explicit reference to the Pauline letters" which unfortunately is an "assumption of much contemporary scholarship." See Porter, "Pauline Canon," 102.

¹⁷⁷ Tannehill, review of *Dating Acts*, 828. Pervo claims that the author of Acts had access to a Pauline collection that was not available until 100 CE. On the contrary, Keener (*Acts*, 1:234) states that it is "likely that Acts was composed before Paul's letters were collected."

¹⁷⁸ See Pervo's section on Acts and Galatians in: *Dating Acts*, 73–96. If Paul's undisputed letters were written in the 40s and 50s CE, and no later than his death (somewhere between 64–68), how realistic is it to expect a letter like Galatians to sit on the shelf for 40–50 years before the author of Acts became aware of it and used it? Gamble affirms the often "rapid and wide circulation" of Christian texts. See Gamble, "Book Trade," 23–36 (33) and also Porter's ("Dating," 568) timeframe for the four gospels written between 40 (or 50) and 65 CE.

with Paul's letters, but this is not enough to prove that one is borrowing from the other.¹⁷⁹

From among Pervo's extensive list of parallel passages, the following have been identified as showing the greatest potential for dependency: Acts 9:23–25/2 Cor 11:32–33 (p. 60); Acts 9:21, 22:3/Gal 1:13–14, 23 (p. 74); and Acts 2:33/Gal 3:14/Eph 1:13 (p. 77).¹⁸⁰ Each is examined in turn with a corresponding table that provides an overview of the texts in question.

*Acts 9:23–25/2 Cor 11:32–33: A Definitive Example?*¹⁸¹

At the outset, there are some lexical similarities between these two texts that are worth further investigation (see "Table 6: Acts 9:23–25/2 Cor 11:32–33").¹⁸² The key question is one of sources, "Is Luke using: (1) another written source, or (2) oral tradition, or (3) his own personal diary/memories, or (4) is he using 2 Cor 11:32–33 as a specific source?" Meanwhile, we must bear in mind the obvious hazards of trying to discover the source of Acts 9:23–25 in the first place.¹⁸³ Since there are no clear references in any of the Acts variants, nor any marginal notation indicating a possible source for this text, our relegation of a source to this passage should, at best, remain a possibility.¹⁸⁴

According to Pervo's train of thought, "Luke made use of canonical 2 Corinthians, which is not attested before c. 120–130 (Marcion, possibly Polycarp) and

¹⁷⁹ Just because a passage of Acts contains a handful of similar words that Paul uses in his letters may only prove they were referring to the same or similar event or theological concept at best, and worst this may only demonstrate they are only using a similar vocabulary.

¹⁸⁰ See Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 60, 74 and 77 respectively and Tannehill, review of *Dating Acts*, 827–28 (827).

¹⁸¹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 60. He entitles this section: "A Definitive Example: 2 Corinthians" (60–64).

¹⁸² Recall chapter 2: "Principles for Selecting Sources."

¹⁸³ Bruce, *Acts*, 40.

¹⁸⁴ Recalling Foakes-Jackson's (*Acts*, vi) caution that that NT source-criticism is "largely guess-work."

was not available before 100.”¹⁸⁵ As a result, this naturally pushes his date of Acts much later. His date for the first use of 2 Corinthians seems reasonable, but this only provides a *terminus ad quem* for 2 Corinthians. Accordingly, his view on such a late availability for 2 Corinthians is unreasonable and highly assumptive especially since we can date the “opening of the window” in 2 Cor 11:32–33 with “reasonable precision to the year 36 CE.”¹⁸⁶ As argued above there are strong reasons to conclude that Paul’s letters were in circulation during the 50–60s CE and that the date of collection (which is speculative to begin with) “cannot determine the date of Acts.”¹⁸⁷

Table 6: Acts 9:23–25/2 Cor 11:32–33

Acts 9:23–25	NA ²⁸	2 Cor 11:32–33	NA ²⁸
(23) And after some days passed, the Jews plotted together to kill him,	(23) Ὡς δὲ ἐπληροῦντο ἡμέραι ἱκαναί, συνεβουλεύσαντο οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀνελεῖν αὐτόν.	(32) In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes [in order] to capture me,	(32) ἐν Δαμασκῷ ὁ ἐθνάρχης Ἀρέτα τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφρούρει τὴν πόλιν Δαμασκηνῶν πιάσαι με, ¹⁸⁸
(24) but their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night so that they might put him to death;	(24) ἐγνώσθη δὲ τῷ Σαύλῳ ἡ ἐπιβουλή αὐτῶν. παρετηροῦντο δὲ καὶ τὰς πύλας ἡμέρας τε καὶ νυκτὸς ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀνέλωσιν. ¹⁸⁹	(33) and through an opening I was let down in a basket by/through the wall and escaped his hands.	(33) καὶ διὰ θυρίδος ¹⁹⁰ ἐν σαργάνῃ ἐχαλάσθην διὰ τοῦ τείχους καὶ ἐξέφυγον τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ.

¹⁸⁵ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 62.

¹⁸⁶ Campbell, *Framing Paul*, 184.

¹⁸⁷ Tannehill, Review of *Dating Acts*, 828. Recall my “Table 1: Key Dates Relating to Acts in the Early Roman Imperial Period (c. 60–150 CE)” in chapter 1.

¹⁸⁸ Θέλων is added for emphasis in: κ, D2, H, K, L, P, Ψ, 0121, 0243, 0278 (vid.), 33, 81, 104, 365, 630, 1175, 1241, 1505, 1881, 2464, (F G 1739), ℣, sy^h and bo. The text chosen by the committee is based on: B, D*, sa and Eus.

¹⁸⁹ Codex Alexandrinus has this variant: ὅπως πιάσωσιν αὐτὸν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς.

¹⁹⁰ Here θυρίς (as a genitive, feminine singular) is “an opening in a wall for the entrance of light and air and for the purpose of seeing in or out – window.” Cf. L&N 7.47. Whether this opening contains “glass or shutters” is anyone’s guess but the kind in Acts 20:29 is “probably” a simple opening. L&N 7.47

(25) and the disciples took him by night [and] let him down by/through the wall, lowering [him] in a basket.	λαβόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ¹⁹¹ νυκτὸς διὰ τοῦ τείχους καθήκαν αὐτὸν ¹⁹² χαλάσαντες ἐν σπυρίδι.		
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Pervo translates Acts 9:25 as the following: “but his disciples took him by night and *let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket*” (italics original).¹⁹³ The prepositional phrase διὰ τοῦ τείχους has been variously understood. Does it mean ‘by’ the wall or ‘through’ the wall or even ‘by means’ of the wall?¹⁹⁴ At any rate διὰ τοῦ τείχους plus the verb χαλάω (that are common to both accounts) raises the issue of source. Beyond the lexical parallels, Pervo makes much of the thematic differences between the two accounts that do not seem clear: “Of the two, Luke’s account is *clearly secondary*, for it is *difficult to believe* that no sooner than Paul was converted and preaching his new faith that a murder plot boiled up in the synagogues of Damascus” (my emphasis).¹⁹⁵ How is Acts clearly secondary based on this line of reasoning?

The danger Paul faced was not something unique to Acts or something Luke is obviously expanding upon (in 2 Cor 11:32–33). The plots against Paul and threats on his life are regularly narrated in his letters as well as in the Corinthian correspondence (1 Cor. 15:30).¹⁹⁶ In the very same context, and just a few verses before 2 Cor. 11:32–33,

¹⁹¹ There are some minor changes in αὐτός from the genitive to the accusative in some mss (αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταί).

¹⁹² There are some changes in word order for some mss: διὰ τοῦ τείχους καθήκαν αὐτὸν.

¹⁹³ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 60.

¹⁹⁴ Διὰ with the genitive is “a marker of intermediate agent, with implicit or explicit causative agent—through, by.” See L&N 90.4; Porter, *Idioms*, 148–49.

¹⁹⁵ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 60–61.

¹⁹⁶ “Why indeed, are we in danger every hour?” (Τί καὶ ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύομεν πᾶσαν ὥραν;).

Paul recounts his very blunt list of apostolic troubles and trials (2 Cor. 11:23–27). The threats to his person as an ex-persecutor is apparent very early on in the closing of his letter to the Galatians where he boasts of having the “marks of Jesus” (τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ).¹⁹⁷

In both cases there is a story of a plot to capture Paul but he escaped through the city’s wall.¹⁹⁸ In Acts it is the Jews who plotted against Paul, in 2 Corinthians it was King Aretas—and it is not too hard to imagine both groups behind the scene in each story.¹⁹⁹ Bruce thinks it is “conceivable that they alerted the ethnarch to his presence in the city.”²⁰⁰ Either way the fact that they wanted to kill him in Damascus is not unique as Paul faced the same threat in Jerusalem (Acts 9:29).

We can only speculate as to why Luke added some extra details with regards to the Jews (verses 23–24) on the one hand, but on the other he did not mention the ethnarch or Aretas.²⁰¹ It seems reasonable to suppose that *if* he was working with a copy of Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians he would have mentioned something about the ethnarch or Aretas—especially given Luke’s interest in political details.²⁰² At any rate, perhaps his overall “purpose” was not to describe the “political and historical circumstances of the

¹⁹⁷ Τοῦ λοιποῦ κόπους μοι μηδεὶς παρεχέτω· ἐγὼ γὰρ τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματί μου βαστάζω.

¹⁹⁸ Keener, *Acts*, 3:1683–86.

¹⁹⁹ Longenecker (*Acts*, 376–77) says that “Luke credits the Jews of Damascus as being the perpetrators to kill Saul, whereas in 2 Corinthians 11:32 that honour is given to ‘the governor...under King Aretas.’”

²⁰⁰ Bruce, *Acts*, 242.

²⁰¹ Shellard (*New Light on Luke*, 49) highlights the prophetic tradition that Luke is following in his “denunciation of the Jewish Cult.” I.e. Amos 5:21–23; Isa 1:11. She figures his attitude toward them is “particularly bitter” (49).

²⁰² Recall my note 64 above on doctrinal or political modifications. The differences in the details, and the lack of reference to the ethnarch and King is significant—especially given Luke’s interest in rulers, governors and officials (Acts 8:27; 11:28; 12:1; 16:20–22; 35–38; 17:7; 18:2; 23:24–26, 33–34; 24:1–10; 25:8, 13–14, 21, 24–26; 28:7).

day” but to demonstrate the “genuineness of Saul’s encounter with Christ on the Damascus road.”²⁰³

Although it seems clear that both texts are pointing to the same tradition, there are enough differences and reasons to suggest another solution instead of dependency. Since this story is in the earlier part of Acts (and before Antioch), it is conceivable that it came from another oral source that may have been Paul or someone else who passed on the core of the story.

Paul the Persecuting Zealot: Acts 9:21, 22:3/Gal 1:13–14, 23²⁰⁴

A further example that may seem at a first glance to carry some level of dependency on Paul’s letter to the Galatians does not stand up to reason (see “Table 7: Acts 9:21; 22:3/Gal 1:13–14, 23 below”).²⁰⁵ First, there is evidence that some level of oral tradition lies behind the source(s) of Acts.²⁰⁶ Long before Acts was written, Paul wrote: “you have *heard* about my former way of life” (Gal 1:13) and also that “they only kept *hearing*” about this persecutor turned preacher (Gal 1:23). It is easy to imagine a decade or so after Galatians was written that this information about Paul’s life would have become common knowledge by the time Luke wrote Acts.

²⁰³ Longenecker, *Acts*, 377. This makes sense given the narrative progression from Acts 9:1 to his escape via a “basket” *σπιρίς* in 9:25.

²⁰⁴ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 74.

²⁰⁵ Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 76) says the “data strongly support the hypothesis that Luke has made use of Galatians 1.”

²⁰⁶ Keener (*Acts*, 1:178) claims that Luke’s sources were “Most often... oral reports.” Oral tradition in the synoptic gospels has also been long observed but underdeveloped. See Porter and Dyer, “What Have We Learned,” 165–78; Porter, “Synoptic Problem,” 73–98 and Riesner, “The Orality and Memory Hypothesis,” 89–111. Riesner recognizes how “all three other Synoptic theories acknowledge the existence of an oral tradition” (161).

Table 7: Acts 9:21; 22:3/Gal 1:13–14, 23

Acts 9:21	NA ²⁸	Gal 1:13–14, 23	NA ²⁸
(21) And all those hearing were astonished and said, “Is this not the man who in Jerusalem was destroying ²⁰⁷ those who call on this name, and has he [not] come here to take them as prisoners for the chief priests?”	(21) ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες οἱ ἀκούοντες καὶ ἔλεγον· οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ πορθήσας εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους τὸ ὄνομα τοῦτο, καὶ ᾧδε εἰς τοῦτο ἐληλύθει ἵνα δεδεμένους αὐτοὺς ἀγάγῃ ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς;	(13) For you have heard of my former way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.	(13) Ἦκούσατε γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναστροφὴν ποτε ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ, ὅτι καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ἐδίωκον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐπόρθουν αὐτήν,
(22:3) I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, educated in strict conformance ²⁰⁸ to the Law of our forefathers, being zealous for God just as all of you are today.	(22:3) ἐγὼ εἰμι ἀνὴρ Ἰουδαῖος, γεγεννημένος ἐν Ταρσῷ τῆς Κιλικίας, ἀνατεθραμμένος δὲ ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, παρὰ τοὺς πόδας Γαμαλιήλ πεπαιδευμένος κατὰ ἀκρίβειαν τοῦ πατρῷου νόμου, ζηλωτῆς οὐπάρχων τοῦ θεοῦ καθὼς πάντες ὑμεῖς ἐστε σήμερον·	(14) And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age in my own race and being extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.	(14) καὶ προέκοπτον ἐν τῷ Ἰουδαϊσμῷ ὑπὲρ πολλοὺς συνηλικιώτας ἐν τῷ γένει μου, περισσοτέρως ζηλωτῆς οὐπάρχων τῶν πατρικῶν μου παραδόσεων.
		(23) and they only kept hearing that, “The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.”	(23) μόνον δὲ ἀκούοντες ἤσαν ὅτι ὁ διώκων ἡμᾶς ποτε νῦν εὐαγγελίζεται τὴν πίστιν ἣν ποτε ἐπόρθει,

²⁰⁷ See the entry on *πορθέω* and the translation of the first half of this verse in L&N 20.37.

²⁰⁸ Cf. L&N 72.20 on *ἀκρίβεια*.

Second, that Paul as a Jew had a zealous past in terms of the Law is so basic to his earlier letters (and descriptive of most teachers in Judaism [i.e. Acts 22:3]) that Luke's mentioning of this in Acts 9:21, 22:3 could have easily come from his own memory, another Christian, or just about *anyone* across the Roman Empire that was familiar with Paul's life and conversion to Christianity (Acts 9:19–21; 26–27; 11:25–26; 15:35; 28:30–31).²⁰⁹

Third, Pervo's interest in the statistical rarity of “being zealous” or “being a zealot” (ζηλωτής υπάρχων) that is *only* found together here in Gal 1:14 and Acts 22:3 (but see Acts 21:20) does not offer the kind of evidence required in order to establish a lexical relationship—especially when you consider how very common υπάρχω is in the NT and the LXX and how often Paul and Luke uses this supposedly ‘rare’ word ζηλωτής.²¹⁰ 156 times we encounter the verb υπάρχω in the LXX and 60 times in the NT. Luke uses υπάρχω fifteen times in his gospel and twenty-five times in Acts. This point alone should diminish the value of Pervo's ironclad parallel.

And yet Pervo seems to have missed another ‘rare’ example in Acts 21:20: “they are all [being] zealous for the Law” (πάντες ζηλωταὶ τοῦ νόμου υπάρχουσιν). So in Acts 21:20 Luke recounts the “thousands” of Jewish believers who are all “zealous for the Law” while a little later he uses this supposedly ‘rare’ combination of lexemes for the apostle Paul as well in Acts 22:3. Hence, the Jews (21:20) are all zealous for the Law just like Paul is—how does this demonstrate anything that the average Greek, Roman, or Jew

²⁰⁹ Surely somebody at Antioch after a “whole year” of Saul/Paul teaching (with the help of Barnabas) “great numbers of people” (Acts 11:26) picked up on the fact of Paul's former, persecuting way of life and his conversion to Christ.

²¹⁰ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 76.

in the first century would not automatically assume? So far there is nothing to indicate that Luke copied from Galatians. Why would he need to?

Granted the other word (ζηλωτής) is far less common with only six occurrences in the LXX and eight in the NT (Luke 6:13; Acts 1:13; 21:20; 22:30; Gal 1:14; 1 Cor 14:12; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 3:13). However, employing a fairly common word with a less common word does not make for an exceptional phrase; just a less common one in Hellenistic Greek.²¹¹ Meanwhile Luke's relatively high usage of ζηλωτής (based on the OT and NT alone), paired with the very common ὑπάρχω mitigates an already useless argument that Acts is dependent upon Galatians.²¹²

Last, in addition to the three uses of ζηλωτής from the eight in the NT used by Paul (Gal 1:14; 1 Cor 14:12; Titus 2:14), ὑπάρχω is used by Paul some twelve times in his letters (out of 60 in the NT). Although we have no other direct examples of ζηλωτής and ὑπάρχω being found in close proximity by Paul (beyond Gal 1:14), another close example is found with his description of Titus "being very eager" (σπουδαιότερος δὲ

²¹¹ Altogether Luke uses the word four out of the eight (50%) times that it is found in the NT—the other three are used by Paul (Gal 1:14; 1 Cor 14:12; Titus 2:14) and one by Peter (1 Pet 3:13). Luke employs ζηλωτής with regards to Simon in Luke 6:13 and Acts 1:13 which points to the historical reality of zealots, assassins and revolutionaries—movements that are well known in Greek literature (see Acts 21:37–40). E.g. Bruce, *Acts*, 452–53; Smith, "Zealots and Sicarii," 1–19; Keener, *Acts*, 3:3176–77. Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 76) claims that this combination (ζηλωτής ὑπάρχων) is rare in Greek literature based on a TLG search where only two known occurrences between the third century BCE and the second century CE. Nevertheless, the historical context suggests that the ζηλωτής was not so rare. Schäfer (*History of the Jews*, 117) explains how the period of "direct Roman control" (44–66 CE) before the war saw a "progressive deterioration in the internal political situation, so that war became almost inevitable." The next seven procurators, starting with Cuspius Fadus were "almost all incompetent, concerned only to exploit the province financially and, it would sometimes seem, to injure intentionally the national and religious feelings of the Jews" (117). It was during this period that saw the beginning of the "Zealot movement" and various "bands of brigands" that would eventually "lead the people into open revolt against Rome" (117).

²¹² The rarity of ζηλωτής ὑπάρχων erodes further as we consider how common ὑπάρχω (subdomain 13.5) is when classed alongside such bread and butter verbs as εἶμι (13.1), ἔχω (13.2), and γίνομαι (13.3) as part of the larger domain: "State" (13.1–13.47). The verb ὑπάρχω means to "be in a state, normally with the implication of a particular set of circumstances." See L&N 13.5. We also find an example of ζηλωτής paired with γίνομαι (a verb from the same domain as ὑπάρχω) in 1 Peter 3:13 (ζηλωταὶ γένησθε). This may not be an exact match, but it gives a very similar sense within the same corpus of usage.

ὑπάρχων) in 2 Cor 8:17.²¹³ Therefore, it seems best to view some of these lexical parallels as merely indicative of a common oral tradition circulating about Paul's persecuting zeal before his conversion that could have originated with his letters to the Galatians but other simpler explanations are more likely.

Promised Spirit: Acts 2:33/Gal 3:14/Eph 1:13

Pervo alleges that Luke's source for this connection is Romans and Galatians—although his example includes the later and variously debated letter to the Ephesians (see “Table 8: Promised Spirit: Acts 2:33/Gal 3:14/Eph 1:13 below”).²¹⁴ He is concerned that all three texts mention the promise of the Spirit (and Gal 3:14/Acts 2:33 receive it). This apparently provides a “strong case” for an “intertextual connection.”²¹⁵ The activity and reception of the Holy Spirit is a subject that is paramount to Luke-Acts to the point that much of Luke's theology would disappear without this emphasis.²¹⁶

How then can we reasonably substantiate that Acts 2:33 is somehow dependent upon Gal 3:14 because of three very common and central Greek words to the theology of the New Testament: ἐπαγγελία, πνεῦμα, λαμβάνω?²¹⁷ Obviously the reception of the Spirit is of central importance to Luke in Acts (i.e. 1:8; 2:33, 2:38; 5:3; 8:15, 17, 19; 10:47; 19:2) but this does not provide evidence of dependence.²¹⁸ What we find in the immediate context of Acts 2 is an emphasis on David (2:25, 29, 34) and the Psalm 16:8–

²¹³ The adjective σπουδαῖος (subdomain 25.75) is grouped with ζηλόω (25.76) and ζηλωτής (25.77/Gal 1:14 and Acts 22:3) as part of the domain: “Be Eager, Be Earnest, In a Devoted Manner” (25.68–25.79).

²¹⁴ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 77.

²¹⁵ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 76 (see also his ideas on intertextuality as a method: 7–8, 13, 26–27, 146).

²¹⁶ There are approximately thirteen direct references to the Holy Spirit in Luke's gospel and forty-two in Acts.

²¹⁷ These words occur multiple times in the NT: ἐπαγγελία (52), πνεῦμα (379), λαμβάνω (258).

²¹⁸ Where Paul talks about the reception of the promised Holy Spirit (Gal 3:14) this is tied to the blessing of Abraham. Wherever Luke mentions Abraham in his gospel and in Acts, this is not discussed.

11 (LXX) and 110:1—but not a single reference to Abraham (in the entire chapter).²¹⁹ It seems rather far-fetched that Luke would draw three words from Paul in Galatians here to develop his apologetic argument that rests on proving that Jesus is Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36).

Table 8: Promised Spirit: Acts 2:33/Gal 3:14/Eph 1:13

Acts 2:33	Gal 3:14	Eph 1:13
(33) Therefore, exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.	(14) in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.	(13) in whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the good news of your salvation, in whom also having believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
NA ²⁸	NA ²⁸	NA ²⁸
(33) τῇ δεξιᾷ οὖν τοῦ θεοῦ ὑψωθείς, τὴν τε ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου λαβὼν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, ἐξέχεεν τοῦτο ὃ ὑμεῖς [καί] βλέπετε καὶ ἀκούετε.	(14) ἵνα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη ἡ εὐλογία τοῦ Ἀβραὰμ γένηται ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ἵνα τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πνεύματος λάβωμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως.	(13) Ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ πιστεύσαντες ἐσφραγίσθητε τῷ πνεύματι τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ ἁγίῳ,

Many of the remaining examples are barely worth discussing.²²⁰ In the end, Pervo weighs the two options: (1) “Luke used the letters of Paul” and option, (2) “Luke had

²¹⁹ Additionally, in Acts 2:33 the context is on the resurrection where Jesus “received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit.” In Galatians (3:14) it is the Gentiles who (in Christ) “might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith”—on account of the “blessing of Abraham.”

²²⁰ Some ‘parallels’ seem baseless such as highlighting ‘circumcision’ in Acts 10:45 with Gal 2:12; Rom 4:12; Col 4:11 and Titus 1:10. Cf. Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 91. Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 67) finds another questionable connection between 1 Cor 7:32–35 and Luke 10:40–42 via ἀμέριμνος and ἀπερισπάστως/περισπάω. How could Luke invent the story of Mary and Martha based on a “transformation and application of a Pauline principle”? (68). With regards to 1 Cor 11:16 and Luke 22:24 he (65) draws the ‘connection’ between δοκέω and φιλόνηκος from Goulder (“Letters,” 106). Goulder’s earlier study is

direct contact with Paul and/or his [sic] some of his associates.”²²¹ Those following option (1) (that Luke used Paul’s letters) see the Paul of Acts as a “Lucan construction designed to deal with issues of a later period.”²²² Those who follow option 2 (that Luke had contact with Paul or his associates) somehow make “Luke a thorn in Paul’s flesh, better, a viper in his bosom.”²²³ Rather than following the majority of scholarship on this second point Pervo decides in favour of dependency.²²⁴

The Sources of Acts and the Works of Josephus

Another central issue for the date of Acts and its sources rests upon the recurring nineteenth-century claim that Luke depends upon Josephus.²²⁵ Josephus lived approximately c. 37–100 CE. His *Jewish War* was published in c. 75–79 CE while his *Antiquities of the Jews* was published in c. 93–94 CE.²²⁶ His last two works *Life* and *Against Apion* were published shortly before his death. This is a critical matter because

concerned with the presupposition held by some that Luke knew “all of the major Pauline letters.” Cf. Goulder, “Pauline Letters,” 98. His limited hypothesis that “Luke knew 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians” focuses on the “evidence” via “clusters or collocations of words that occur in common between these epistles and Luke” (98). His method does not appear to be significantly different than Pervo’s. Keener (*Acts*, 1:233 [n. 86]) questions both Goulder’s method and his hypothesis while stating that “his evidence is not impressive” (1:234). The stronger connections can easily reflect Luke’s contact with Paul. Keener, *Acts*, 1:234–35. One of Pervo’s ‘stronger’ examples is from Luke 18:11 and 1 Cor 6:9–10. Rather than seeing Luke as drawing from a common list of vices Pervo (65) would argue instead that it is “more difficult to explain the overlap as coincidence than dependence.” Where Paul (1 Cor 6:9–10) mentions a long list of sinners, Luke (18:11) employs three of these for his parable of the Pharisees: ἄρπαγες (thieves), ἄδικοι (rogues), μοιχοί (adulterers) next to this ὁ τελώνης (tax collector—that Paul does not employ). First, the three words are not even found in the same order in both texts, and second, by themselves they are not uncommon in the NT (ἄρπαγες [5 times], ἄδικοι [12 times], μοιχοί [3 times]). Third, the irony of this ‘example’ is that where Paul is calling out the sinners, Luke’s parable is calling out the hypocrisy of those who do not think they are sinners. Last, since Luke and Paul write about religious themes is it really that suspect they both talk about various types of sinners?

²²¹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 100.

²²² Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 100.

²²³ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 100. He goes on to say that “All of the efforts to transform this viper into a harmless garden snake gliding along in the apostle’s path end up slighting both Luke and Paul, neither of whom is allowed to speak his own piece.”

²²⁴ Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 51–2) here and elsewhere uses rhetorical language that seems to denigrate anyone with an opposite opinion. In my view, effort is better spent on evaluating the sources and arguments of other scholars.

93 CE would be the earliest possible date for Acts “if it could be shown that Luke made use of Josephus’s *Antiquities*.”²²⁷

Nearly a century ago, Cadbury indicated that the origins of the Lucan dependency hypothesis stem from the writings of J. B. Ottius in 1741 and J. T. Krebs in 1755 CE.²²⁸ During the nineteenth century “the theory evolved that Luke was dependent on Josephus.”²²⁹ This flourished based on three main passages in Acts: the first one deals with a certain Theudas (Acts 5:36) who led a rebellion of four hundred men;²³⁰ the second concerns Lysanias the “tetrarch of Abilene” (Luke 3:1);²³¹ and third, the Egyptian who led a revolt of some 4000 terrorists (Acts 21:38).²³²

Although Krenkel’s position has repeatedly been discounted by several scholars, Pervo has recently placed them on the table once more.²³³ Pervo does make a point saying that just because Krenkel’s method was insufficient it “does not automatically

²²⁵ Porter, “Dating,” 557; Hemer, *Acts*, 372, 94–99; Barrett, *Luke the Historian*, 75–76; Gasque, *History*, 103; Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 149–99. Pervo (197) considers this idea “deeply compelling and inherently attractive” while challenging those against this view to come up with a better argument (198). While Shellard (*New Light on Luke*, 31) claims that Luke’s use of Josephus is a “contested issue” she finds “numerous verbal connections” between Josephus’s *Against Apion* and Luke’s prologue (33, see also my “Parallels to the Prefaces” above). She claims that it is “more than likely that Luke used *Jewish War*, quite likely that he used *Jewish Antiquities*, and possibly that he used *Against Apion*” (34). In her estimation this supports (without justification) a date for Luke-Acts around 100 CE (34). She (32) also fails to interact with the “many critics” who have “dismissed the evidence” Krenkel offered (cf. also 31–34).

²²⁶ Cf. Schäfer’s (*History of the Jews*, 123–33) concerning the first Jewish War.

²²⁷ Conzelmann, *Acts*, xxxii.

²²⁸ Cadbury, “Identity,” 2:355–56; Ottius, *Flavio Josepho* and Krebs, *Flavio Josepho* (see corrected bibliography).

²²⁹ Cadbury, “Identity,” 2:356. According to Cadbury, it was Keim (and others) by 1878 who “adopted this view” peaking with Krenkel’s “classic defense” in 1894. Cf. Krenkel, *Josephus und Lukas*. Krenkel finds 92 passages that are common to Luke and Josephus but not found in the LXX. This “huge overkill of the significant” includes a “13 page list of mostly common words which the two writers share with the Septuagint.” Hemer, *Acts*, 372.

²³⁰ Marshall, *Acts*, 128–29. Barrett (*Acts*, 2:xliv) considers the alleged misreading of Josephus’s account of Theudas and Judas to have “little weight.”

²³¹ The Abilene inscription (c. 15–30 CE) is no longer a serious issue. Ellis, *Luke*, 87; Leaney, *Luke*, 48–50; and Ramsay, *Trustworthiness*, 297–300.

²³² Luke and Josephus are merely writing about the same event (with differing details). Bruce, *Acts*, 453; Smith, “Zealots and Sicarii,” 1–19.

²³³ Pervo attempts to find “additional wheat” from Krenkel’s “putative chaff.” Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 198.

disprove its hypothesis.”²³⁴ Granted a new method may prove a hypothesis, but a hypothesis that has been repeatedly discounted (e.g. the world is flat) does not need a new method, it needs a new hypothesis.

Furthermore, despite Pervo’s improved methodology he has failed to adequately engage the arguments of key scholars (e.g. Cadbury, Foakes-Jackson and Hemer) who do not subscribe to Josephus dependency theories.²³⁵ Perhaps even more alarming is that he grants only two pages for “objections to the proposal that Luke used Josephus”—for this he relies on Ben Witherington’s commentary and a 1980 essay by Heinz Schreckenberg.²³⁶ The irony is that in the very places where Luke and Josephus intersect, they often contradict each other.²³⁷ Therefore, it seems wise to remain critical of any claim that Acts is dependent upon the late first-century works of Josephus.²³⁸

Analysis of Selected Texts of Acts and the Works of Josephus

Pervo’s argument (in his chapter 5) rests primarily on two passages where he claims the ‘inaccuracies’ in Acts are due to a misreading of Josephus’s account: (1) the rebels

²³⁴ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 150.

²³⁵ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 149–99. Both Hemer and Cadbury receive only a single passing reference despite their opposing views. Hemer, *Acts*, 372; Cadbury, “Identity,” 2:357. Although Cadbury (357) considers these so-called examples of “Lucan errors explained by Josephus” as “very persuasive,” “they fall short of demonstration.”

²³⁶ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 194–96; Witherington, *Acts*, 235–39; and Schreckenberg, “Flavius Josephus,” 179–209.

²³⁷ Hemer, *Acts*, 372. E.g. Theudas in Acts 5:36, the Egyptian messianic pretender (4000 followers in Acts while 30,000 in Josephus), and the Quirinius census—regardless, Josephus is known for inflating numbers. Schürer (“Lucas und Josephus,” 582–83) suggested that, “Either Luke had not read Josephus, or he had forgotten what he read.” See also Hemer, *Acts*, 372–73; Schreckenberg, “Flavius Josephus,” 179–209; Kümmel, *Introduction*, 132; Gasque, *History*, 179–80; Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, xiii–xv; Ehrhardt, *Framework*, 85–86; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 53; Longenecker, *Acts*, 32; Bruce, *Acts*, 10, 43–44. More recently, Keener (*Acts*, 1:394) also finds it “highly unlikely” that Luke made use of Josephus while noting Pervo’s concession that a mistaken reference to Theudas might be as old as the 60’s CE. Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 310.

²³⁸ Pervo admits that proof of dependency is impossible. Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 198.

Theudas and Judas in Acts 5:36–37 and (2) the Egyptian in Acts 21:37–38.²³⁹ Each will be examined in sequence.

Theudas and Judas: Acts 5:36–37; Jos. Ant. 20.97–102

The problem with Acts 5:36–37 is that Theudas’s revolt “occurred later” than Gamaliel I’s speech “should have taken place” (rather than before him)—and “long after Judas the Galilean’s revolt” in 6 CE.²⁴⁰ Consequently, scholars have offered various solutions to the dilemma. For example, Pervo claims that “Luke’s use of Josephus is extremely probable and alternative explanations quite tenuous” (cp. Acts 5:36–37 with Josephus *Ant.* 20.97–102).²⁴¹ On the contrary, alternative explanations are actually quite viable in comparison to his speculative and anachronistic historical inferences between Luke and Josephus.²⁴²

His focus is on countering the “most common recourse” that this is a case of two different Theudas’s despite other explanations that are presented below.²⁴³ Pervo attempts to counter Bruce’s three reasons reproduced here: (1) Luke is a reliable historian, (2) Theudas is a “common name,” and (3) the prevalence of “such risings under similar

²³⁹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 152–60 “Theudas and Judas” and 161–66 “The Egyptian and Friends.”

²⁴⁰ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1231. As argued below, Theudas’s revolt likely occurred during the governorship of Fadus (44–46 CE) or his successor Alexander (46–48 CE) but certainly before Gamaliel’s death—that remains largely unknown but it occurred somewhere near 52–54 CE. Caulley (“Notable Galilean Persons,” 151–66 [esp. 152–53]) has recently explored the issue of whether Judas the Galilean from Josephus and Acts 5:37 (who died 6 CE) is the same as Judas the son of Hezekiah. They could very well be the same. See also Acts 22:3 and the essay by Chilton and Neusner, “Paul and Gamaliel,” 1–43 (see esp. n. 1 on the problem of identifying the historical Gamaliel). Which Gamaliel is Luke referring to that taught Paul (Acts 5:34–40 and 22:3)? Chilton and Neusner state that Gamaliel I is “represented as Hillel’s successor in the chain of tradition” (1 [n. 1]). Chilton and Neusner (38) place Gamaliel in “Jerusalem in the period between 20 and 50” CE which “makes his overlap with Paul possible, and his influence in the Diaspora enhances any such overlap.” They also claim that the “Temple-oriented material in several of the stories attributed to Gamaliel makes Acts 5:34 seem more plausible than might otherwise be the case” (38).

²⁴¹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 152 (152–60). See his table 5:1 (154).

²⁴² Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 152–60.

²⁴³ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 156 and Bruce, *Acts*, 176.

leaders.”²⁴⁴ Evidently, one plausible solution is that the esteemed Jewish leader Gamaliel was “referring to another Theudas” who flourished before 6 CE.²⁴⁵ Accordingly, there does not appear to be any logical reasons to rule out of hand these conclusions by Bruce.²⁴⁶

Pervo’s bias seems decidedly in favour of dependency on Josephus and his accuracy against the author of Acts—despite the widespread difficulties with Josephus’s literary agenda and inflation of historical facts for his own purposes.²⁴⁷ As argued below, it matters little *if* Josephus is accurate here and Luke is not—this is not a decisive issue. The decisive issue is whether or not Luke clearly used Josephus’s account and the evidence suggests he did not.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ Bruce, *Acts*, 176.

²⁴⁵ Bruce, *Acts*, 176; Keener, *Acts*, 2:1232. The phrase in Acts 5:36 “for some time ago” (πρὸ γὰρ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν) does not give a clear time frame but it does grant the possibility of an earlier Theudas.

²⁴⁶ Marshall’s arguments (*Acts*, 128–29) concerning Jos. *Ant.* 20.97 are convincing—such as the difficulties of Gamaliel describing the rise of Judas *after* Theudas despite this event taking place in 6 CE. Marshall via (Knowling) explains that “No plausible explanation of Luke’s alleged error has been offered. There is, therefore, much to be said for the suggestions either that Josephus got his dating wrong or (more probably) that Gamaliel is referring to another, otherwise unknown Theudas. Since there were *innumerable* uprisings when Herod the Great died, and since Josephus describes four men bearing the name of Simon within forty years and three that of Judas within ten years, all of whom were instigators of rebellion (my emphasis).” Marshall, *Acts*, 129 (in reference to Knowling, *Acts*, 2:158).

²⁴⁷ Luke is “marked by carefulness but that of Josephus by carelessness.” Hemer, *Acts*, 219. However, Luke may well be in error here—in which case that only reinforces that he could not have used Josephus.

²⁴⁸ From 46 CE to the revolt in 66 CE zealotry and revolutionary thinking was commonplace. Even a casual reading of the two accounts shows the vast differences in detail while the only similarities are the shared names of the two leaders that had some kind of a following with revolutionary intent. Part of Pervo’s (*Dating Acts*, 150) bias relates to a supposed “methodological flaw” that is “far more wearisome than all of Krenkel’s wearisome lists”—the long held view that “if Luke had access to Josephus, he would have made more substantial and careful use of his work.” I see his point but this long held view is still a legitimate concern. As far as ancient standards go, Luke is a fairly accurate user of sources as compared to Josephus (see my chapter 5). Although Keener (*Acts*, 2:1231–32) thinks it is possible that Josephus has his details mixed up he also (2:1232) thinks that (in this case) Josephus is more likely to be correct given his explicit mention of governors and his interest in revolutionaries (that remain “wholly peripheral” to Luke). Nevertheless, it should be obvious that Luke is *not* drawing on Josephus at this point because the two accounts are so different that Johnson (*Acts*, 99) rightly contends it is “impossible either to harmonize or to utterly dismiss either version.” Even the number of Theudas’s followers is strikingly different in both accounts. Where Acts 5:36 claims “about four hundred” (ὡς τετρακοσίων) Josephus boasts that Theudas persuaded “the majority of the masses” (πλείστον ὄχλον). Few scholars would accept Luke-Acts to be error-

As we compare the texts (see “Table 9: Theudas and Judas: Acts 5:36–37 and Jos. *Ant.* 20.97–102”), there does not appear to be a strong connection between the two texts as argued below. This is true not only because of the extra details found in Josephus’s expanded version, but there is a critical point of chronology between Gamaliel’s Theudas/Judas and that of Josephus’s with regards to Fadus when he was “procurator of Judaea” (*Ant.* 20.97). Keener argues that it is “chronologically implausible” that Luke follows Josephus.²⁴⁹ The events that Gamaliel refers to in Acts (Theudas in 5:36 and Judas in 5:37) provide a *terminus ante quem* where the events happened no later than the reign of the governors Cuspius Fadus (44–46 CE) and his successor Tiberius Alexander (46–48 CE)—in other words, this is compatible with an early date of Acts.²⁵⁰

Table 9: Theudas and Judas: Acts 5:36–37 and Jos. *Ant.* 20.97–102

Acts 5:36–37	NA ²⁸	Jos. <i>Ant.</i> 20.97–102 ²⁵¹	Greek text
(36) for some time ago there rose up Theudas, saying that he himself was someone, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and as many as were persuaded [by] him, were dispersed, and came to	(36) πρὸ γὰρ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀνέστη Θεουδᾶς λέγων εἶναί τινα ἑαυτόν, ᾧ προσεκλίθη ἀνδρῶν ἀριθμὸς ὡς τετρακοσίων· ὃς ἀνηρέθη, καὶ πάντες ὅσοι ἐπέιθοντο αὐτῷ διελύθησαν καὶ ἐγένοντο εἰς οὐδέν.	(97 [v.1]) During the period when Fadus was procurator of Judaea, a certain imposter named Theudas persuaded the majority of the masses to take up their possessions and to follow him to the Jordan River. He stated that he was a prophet and that at his command the river would be parted and would provide them an easy passage. (98) With this talk he deceived many. Fadus, however, did	(97 [v.1]) Φάδου δὲ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐπιτροπεύοντος γόης τις ἀνὴρ Θεουδᾶς ὀνόματι πείθει τὸν πλείστον ὄχλον ἀναλαβόντα τὰς κτήσεις ἐπεσθαι πρὸς τὸν Ἰορδάνην ποταμὸν αὐτῷ· προφήτης γὰρ ἔλεγεν εἶναι, καὶ προστάγματι τὸν ποταμὸν σχίσας δίοδον ἔχειν ἔφη

free, but the reasons in favour of the Theudas account in Acts being an earlier account (or referring to another Theudas) are just as substantial as Pervo’s attempt to insist that Acts is borrowing from *Antiquities*.

²⁴⁹ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 340.

²⁵⁰ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1231 (n. 218). Under Fadus was the “first instance of an uprising with messianic-apocalyptic overtones, whose political implications the procurator recognized and feared.” Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 117.

²⁵¹ See Thackeray, *Josephus*, 9:441–45. Volume 9 is translated by L. H. Feldman. The divisions in the English translation (beyond Feldman’s verse 1 and 2) are my own.

nothing.		not permit them to reap the fruit of their folly, but sent against them a squadron of cavalry. These fell upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them and took many prisoners. Theudas himself was captured, whereupon they cut off his head and brought it to Jerusalem. (99) These, then, are the events that befell the Jews during the time that Cuspius Fadus was procurator.	παρέξειν αὐτοῖς ῥαδίαν. (98) καὶ ταῦτα λέγων πολλοὺς ἠπάτησεν. οὐ μὴν εἶασεν αὐτοὺς τῆς ἀφροσύνης ὄνασθαι Φᾶδος, ἀλλ' ἐξέπεμψεν ἴλην ἰππέων ἐπ' αὐτούς, ἣτις ἀπροσδόκητος ἐπιπεσοῦσα πολλοὺς μὲν ἀνείλεν, πολλοὺς δὲ ζῶντας ἔλαβεν, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν Θευδᾶν ζωγρήσαντες ἀποτέμνουσι τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ κομίζουσιν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. (99) τὰ μὲν οὖν συμβάντα τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις κατὰ τοὺς Κουσπίου Φάδου τῆς ἐπιτροπῆς χρόνους ταῦτ' ἐγένετο.
(37) After him, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away people after him; and that one perished, and as many as were persuaded [by] him were scattered. ²⁵²	(37) μετὰ τοῦτον ἀνέστη Ἰούδας ὁ Γαλιλαῖος ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς ἀπογραφῆς καὶ ἀπέστησεν λαὸν ὀπίσω αὐτοῦ· κάκεινος ἀπώλετο καὶ ὅπαντες ὅσοι ἐπείθοντο αὐτῷ διεσκορπίσθησαν.	(v. 2) The successor of Fadus was Tiberius Alexander, the son of that Alexander who had been alabarch in Alexandria and who surpassed all his fellow citizens both in ancestry and in wealth. He was also superior to his son Alexander in his religious devotion, for the (101) latter did not stand by the practices of his people. It was in the administration of Tiberius Alexander that the great	(100 [v. 2]) Ἦλθε δὲ Φάδω διάδοχος Τιβέριος Ἀλέξανδρος Ἀλεξάνδρου παῖς τοῦ καὶ ἀλαβαρχήσαντος ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ γένει τε καὶ πλούτῳ πρωτεύσαντος τῶν ἐκεῖ καθ' αὐτόν. διήνεγκε καὶ τῇ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εὐσεβείᾳ τοῦ παιδὸς Ἀλεξάνδρου· τοῖς γὰρ (101) πατρίοις οὐκ

²⁵² Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 154) did not highlight anything in this example and so it has been left blank.

		<p>famine occurred in Judaea, during which Queen Helena bought grain from Egypt (102) for large sums and distributed it to the needy, as I have stated above. Besides this James and Simon, the sons of Judas the Galilaeen, were brought up for trial and, at the order of Alexander, were crucified. This was the Judas who, as I have explained above, had aroused the people to revolt against the Romans while Quirinius was taking the census in Judaea.</p>	<p>ἐνέμεινεν οὗτος ἔθουσιν. ἐπὶ τούτου δὲ καὶ τὸν μέγαν λιμὸν κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν συνέβη γενέσθαι, καθ' ὃν καὶ ἡ βασίλισσα Ἑλένη πολλῶν χρημάτων ὠνησαμένη σίτον ἀπὸ τῆς Αἰγύπτου (102) διένειμεν τοῖς ἀπορουμένοις, ὡς προεῖπον. πρὸς τούτοις δὲ καὶ οἱ παῖδες Ἰούδα τοῦ Γαλιλαίου ἀνήχθησαν τοῦ τὸν λαὸν ἀπὸ Ῥωμαίων ἀποστήσαντος Κυρινίου τῆς Ἰουδαίας τιμητεύοντος, ὡς ἐν τοῖς πρὸ τούτων δεδηλώκαμεν, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Σίμων, οὓς ἀνασταυρῶσαι προσέταξεν Ἀλέξανδρος.</p>
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Stated more plainly, if Luke got his details mixed up then he is talking about an event that still happened approximately some ten to twenty years earlier than the date of his composition.²⁵³ His words on Gamaliel's lips ("for some time ago") are telling—and reflect Luke's reliance on his own memory—he probably does not recall the exact time nor does it matter for his purpose in writing. Luke may also have conflated the additional

²⁵³ That Luke "made a mistake" is due to either being "unaware of the true date of Theudas" or that he confused him with "some other rebel." Barrett, *Acts*, 242. Luke's other "historical assertions can be tested most securely." Keener, *Acts*, 2:1235 and Riesner, *Early Period*, 333.

references to the “sons of Judas of Galilee” (Jos. *Ant.* 20) but we should keep in mind that “their activity was later than Gamaliel’s speech in the narrative world.”²⁵⁴

At any rate, the mention of Fadus and Alexander by Josephus allows us to estimate that Luke’s source (either by memory, word of mouth, or diary) had well over a decade before he incorporated *his version* of Theudas and Judas into the narrative of Acts by the early 60s CE.²⁵⁵ Whether Luke is right or wrong, or whether he refers to the same or other revolutionary figures than Josephus is entirely compatible with an early pre-70 date of Acts.

The crux of the debate is whether Luke is specifically relying on Josephus’s *Antiquities* as a source and there are several reasons why that is unlikely (especially if Luke is conflating the stories from another source).²⁵⁶ First, we can not assume that Josephus is the only available source for Luke to draw from. After all, the events relating to Acts 5:36–37 were very likely common knowledge for Luke’s readers. Second, we are completely in the dark as to what Josephus’s source was (assuming he used a source).²⁵⁷ Third, it seems incredible to assume that the “clearest trace” of his reliance upon Josephus is found in a place where “Luke contradicts him.”²⁵⁸

Fourth, reliance upon *Antiquities* (that would peg the writing of Acts after 93 CE) is already supremely difficult for many reasons already discussed.²⁵⁹ Fifth, Keener

²⁵⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1231 (n. 218).

²⁵⁵ He may have had this already compiled as a part of the pre-Antioch source(s) of Acts that came from someone connected to the church in Jerusalem or Palestine in general. This also fits in line with Gamaliel’s (I) death somewhere near 52–54 CE.

²⁵⁶ As argued above. See also, Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:xliii and Witherington, *Acts*, 237–38.

²⁵⁷ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1235; Barrett, *Acts*, 1:296.

²⁵⁸ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1235.

²⁵⁹ See chapter 1; Armstrong, “A New Plea,” 79–110 (109–110 esp.) and Keener, *Acts*, 1:383–401. Luke’s “friendlier” perspective toward Pharisaism and Rome as part of his earlier apologetic for Paul does not fit with such a late date (post 93 CE). Keener, *Acts*, 2:1235 (n. 260).

highlights Luke's attempt to preserve the "thrust of the speech" as "certainly well within the range of ancient historiographic practice."²⁶⁰ Sixth, there is a clear apologetic purpose in the application of Gamaliel's speech (Acts 5:38–39).²⁶¹ The narrative purpose in the shorter passages in Acts is very different than Josephus's.²⁶² Still other reasons remain.

Seventh, it seems rather negligent of Luke to avoid the tantalizing detail of Theudas as a "certain imposter" by Josephus (*Ant.* 20.97) given his proclivity to denounce sorcery throughout Acts (i.e. Acts 8:9–25; 13:6–12; 19:17–20). Surely Luke would have pounced on this aspect of Josephus's account of Theudas. Eighth, if we follow the transcriptional canon that the *more difficult reading* is to be preferred, the Acts account is more likely to be earlier (given the possible anachronism of Theudas and Judas).²⁶³ Ninth, since the Acts account is unquestionably brief as compared to Josephus's, the *shorter reading* is to be preferred.²⁶⁴ Tenth, given Luke's interest in rulers and political details in Acts, it seems rather negligent that he would skip over the note "when Fadus was procurator of Judaea" (*Jos. Ant.* 20.97).²⁶⁵

Taken together these arguments should be enough to cast serious doubt on the hypothesis of Luke's reliance on Josephus in this example. The reasons against

²⁶⁰ I.e. Tac. *Ann.* 11.24; Sall. *Catil.* 51.5–6; Jos. *War* 5.376–98 and Jer. 26:17–23. See Plümacher, *Lukas*, 38–72 (esp. 41–50); Conzelmann, *Acts*, 42 as cited by Keener, *Acts*, 2:1236 (n. 262, and his section on speeches: 1:258–319).

²⁶¹ Keener, *Acts*, 2:1236–37. The speech contrasts the failed movements of revolutionaries versus the continuing nature of Jesus's movement that would be known by Luke's readers (Keener, *Acts*, 2:1237 and Padilla, *Speeches*, 128–30).

²⁶² If we compare the second half of the two verses in Acts 5:36/37 this apologetic purpose becomes clear (5:36): "and as many as were persuaded [by] him, were dispersed, and came to nothing" (*καὶ πάντες ὅσοι ἐπείθοντο αὐτῷ διελύθησαν καὶ ἐγένοντο εἰς οὐδέν*) and (5:37): "and as many as were persuaded [by] him were scattered" (*καὶ ὅσοι ἐπείθοντο αὐτῷ διεσκορπίσθησαν*).

²⁶³ Fee, "Textual Criticism," 14. Sometimes a scribe would inadvertently make it more difficult because of a faulty quotation or because he did not understand the grammar, meaning or context. See Vaganay, *Introduction*, 81.

²⁶⁴ Naturally, Griesbach's canon can not be followed here in every case. Vaganay (*Introduction*, 80) and also Royse (*Scribal Habits*, 593–608) prefer longer readings under certain conditions.

²⁶⁵ E.g. Acts 8:27; 11:28. Recall the previous discussion above in my notes 202 and 64.

dependency are strong enough that any chance of Luke's reliance upon Josephus must remain a hypothetically possibility at best, but logically untenable at worst.²⁶⁶

The Egyptian Liberator: Acts 21:38; Jos. War 2.261–63; Jos. Ant. 20.169–71

The only other example worth examining in detail is the account of the Egyptian in Acts 21:38.²⁶⁷ It is very likely that Luke and Josephus refer to the same Egyptian rebel however the Acts account represents a tiny footnote in history as compared to Josephus's expanded accounts. If Luke was copying Josephus surely he would have added more details—and do so accurately—which he does not.

Table 10: The Egyptian Liberator: Acts 21:38; Jos. War 2.261–63; Jos. Ant. 20.169–71

Acts 21:38	Jos. War 2.261–63 ²⁶⁸	Jos. Ant. 20.169–71 ²⁶⁹
(38) So are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?	(261) A still worse blow was dealt at the Jews by the Egyptian false prophet. A charlatan, who had gained for himself the reputation of a prophet, this man appeared in the country, who collected a following of about thirty thousand dupes, (262) and led them by a circuitous route from the dessert to the mount called the mount of Olives. From there he proposed to force an entrance into	(169) At this time there came to Jerusalem from Egypt a man who declared that he was a prophet and advised the masses of the common people to go out with him to the mountain called the Mount of Olives, (170) which lies opposite the city at a distance of five furlongs. For he asserted that he wished to demonstrate from there that at his command Jerusalem's walls would fall down,

²⁶⁶ It is simply untenable that Luke has “plainly made use” of “Josephus.” Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 160.

²⁶⁷ Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 161–66 [166]) claims that to “describe such evidence as ‘irrefutable’ would be an exaggeration, but no overstatement is involved in proposing that this evidence is of sufficient weight to make dependence of Acts upon Josephus more probable than any alternative” (recall my note 224 above). This is an ‘overstatement’ given the most casual glance at the comparative texts (see “Table 10: The Egyptian Liberator: Acts 21:38; Jos. War 2.261–63; Jos. Ant. 20.169–171”).

²⁶⁸ See Thackeray, *Josephus*, 2:424–25. The corresponding notations in the English for lines 262 and 263 are mine.

²⁶⁹ See Thackeray, *Josephus*, 9:481. The corresponding notations in the English for lines 169, 170 and 171 are mine.

	<p>Jerusalem and, after overpowering the Roman garrison, to set himself up as tyrant of the people, employing those (263) who poured in with him as his bodyguard. His attack was anticipated by Felix, who went to meet him with the Roman heavy infantry, the whole population joining him in the defence. The outcome of the ensuing engagement was that the Egyptian escaped with a few of his followers; most of his force were killed or taken prisoners; the remainder dispersed and stealthily escaped to their several homes.</p>	<p>through which he promised to provide them an entrance into the city. (171) When Felix heard of this he ordered his soldiers to take up their arms. Setting out from Jerusalem with a large force of cavalry and infantry, he fell upon the Egyptian and his followers, slaying four hundred of them and taking two hundred prisoners.</p>
NA ²⁸	Greek Text	
<p>(38) οὐκ ἄρα σὺ εἶ ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ὁ πρὸ τούτων τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀναστατώσας καὶ ἐξαγαγὼν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον τοὺς τετρακισχιλίους ἀνδρας τῶν σικαρίων;²⁷⁰</p>	<p>(261 [v. 5]) Μείζονι δὲ τούτου πληγῇ Ἰουδαίους ἐκάκωσεν ὁ Αἰγύπτιος ψευδοπροφήτης. παραγενόμενος γὰρ εἰς τὴν χώραν ἀνθρωπος γόης καὶ προφήτου πίστιν ἐπιθεὶς ἑαυτῷ περὶ τρισμυρίους (262) μὲν ἀθροίζει τῶν ἠπατημένων, περιαγαγὼν δὲ αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῆς ἐρημίας εἰς τὸ ἐλαιῶν καλούμενον ὄρος ἐκεῖθεν οἷός τε ἦν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα παρελθεῖν βιάζεσθαι καὶ κρατήσας τῆς τε Ῥωμαϊκῆς φρουρᾶς καὶ τοῦ δήμου τυραννεῖν χρώμενος (263) τοῖς συνεισπεσοῦσιν δορυφόροις.</p>	<p>(169) ἀφικνεῖται δὲ τις ἐξ Αἰγύπτου κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα προφήτης εἶναι λέγων καὶ συμβουλευὼν τῷ δημοτικῷ πλήθει σὺν αὐτῷ πρὸς ὄρος τὸ προσαγορευόμενον ἐλαιῶν, ὃ τῆς πόλεως (170) ἀντικρυς κείμενον ἀπέχει στάδια πέντε· θέλειν γὰρ ἔφασκεν αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖθεν ἐπιδεῖξαι, ὡς κελεύσαντος αὐτοῦ πίπτοι τὰ τῶν Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν τεῖχη, δι' ὧν καὶ τὴν εἴσοδον αὐτοῖς παρέξειν ἐπηγγέλλετο. (171) Φῆλιξ δ' ὡς ἐτύθετο ταῦτα, κελεύει τοὺς στρατιώτας ἀναλαβεῖν τὰ</p>

²⁷⁰ The bolded lexemes are Pervo's. Notice the difference in prepositions (εἰς vs. ἐκ).

	<p>φθάνει δ' αὐτοῦ τὴν ὄρμην Φῆλιξ ὑπαντήσας μετὰ τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν ὀπλιτῶν, καὶ πᾶς ὁ δῆμος συνεφήψατο τῆς ἀμύνης, ὥστε συμβολῆς γενομένης τὸν μὲν Αἰγύπτιον φυγεῖν μετ' ὀλίγων, διαφθαρῆναι δὲ καὶ ζωγρηθῆναι πλείστους τῶν σὺν αὐτῷ, τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν πλῆθος σκεδασθὲν ἐπὶ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστον διαλαθεῖν.</p>	<p>ὄπλα καὶ μετὰ πολλῶν ἰππέων τε καὶ πεζῶν ὄρμήσας ἀπὸ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων προσβάλλει τοῖς περὶ τὸν Αἰγύπτιον, καὶ τετρακοσίους μὲν αὐτῶν ἀνείλεν, διακοσίους δὲ ζῶντας ἔλαβεν.</p>
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The following differences (both small and large) are easily noted. For example, if we compare εἰς τὴν ἔρημον (Acts 21:38) with ἐκ τῆς ἐρημίας (Jos. *War* 2.262) there are interesting differences in syntax. They may very well be the same Egyptian (ὁ Αἰγύπτιος) but Luke employs the preposition εἰς (into) while Josephus uses ἐκ (from). Are the rebels heading out into the wilderness (Acts) or coming from the wilderness to attack Jerusalem (Josephus)? Furthermore, it seems strange that Luke mentions the Sicarii (σικάριος) and Josephus does not mention them in connection with the Egyptian—which may reflect a substantial difference in time.²⁷¹ It seems further unlikely that Luke would fail to mention Felix in his account if he were relying on Josephus.

Accordingly, Luke seems to be writing about an event that happened during the age of Sicarii and Zealots (that is several years prior to the first Jewish Revolt in 66 CE)

²⁷¹ Recall my earlier note 211 on the Zealots and Sicarii 44–66 CE in Judea. Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 164–66) thinks that Luke (via the tribune) incorrectly associates the Egyptian and his rebels with Sicarii and hence is conflating Josephus's accounts (166). However, Josephus already mentions the Sicarii just a few verses beforehand in fairly close proximity (cp. *War* 2.254 and 261 where he mentions ὁ Αἰγύπτιος). Additionally, there would be other reasons for the tribune to conflate "two different enemies" as they existed side by side during Felix's time—as both were "undoubtedly on Roman's minds." Keener, *Acts*, 3:3176; Hemer, *Acts*, 180. Last, even Josephus (*War*. 7.253–54) referred to an "earlier resistance movement" (Judas the Galilean) as Sicarii "though the title elsewhere begins in the 50s" CE (Keener, 3:3176 [n. 487]). The Sikarioi (Latin Sicarii) used a "sica" (a short, curved dagger) and "mingled with the crowds" stabbing their victims with these small daggers often in broad daylight undetected. Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 118. At the "instigation of Felix" the high priest Jonathan became a notable victim (118; Jos. *War* 2.254–70).

while Josephus is writing long afterwards. Where some have proposed a date of 56 or 57 CE for this revolt it does not seem to have happened earlier than 55 CE given what “precedes it in Josephus” (see table 10).²⁷² This event corresponds to the procuratorship of Marcus Antonius Felix (52–60 CE)—which is compatible with a date of Acts in the early to mid-sixties CE (cf. *Jos. War* 2.263; *Jos. Ant.* 20.171; *Acts* 23:24).²⁷³

Furthermore, how do we explain the enormous difference in numbers between Luke and Josephus (*Acts* 21:38 = 4,000; *War* 2.261 = 30,000)?²⁷⁴ And how do we account for the marked difference in numbers between Josephus’s two accounts (cf. *Jos. War* 2.263; *Jos. Ant.* 20.171)?²⁷⁵ While his earlier account (*Jos. War* 2.263) mentions thirty thousand followers, some fifteen years later he writes: “slaying *four hundred* of them and taking *two hundred* prisoners” (*Ant.* 20.171, my emphasis). Now this may due to transcriptional errors, or a difference in oral or written sources, but Josephus’s tendency to “exaggerate numbers” may explain this difference.²⁷⁶

Assuredly, it remains the more “improbable” scenario that Luke would “blatantly contradict Josephus at the very point where one was supposed to be dependent on

²⁷² See Hemer, *Acts*, 170; Reisner, *Early Period*, 219; Witherington, *Acts*, 662 and Keener, *Acts*, 3:3174.

²⁷³ As proposed in chapter 1, Acts was likely written sometime close to 62–63 CE—this allows for five or six years for Luke’s source on this event to reach his pen (if he needed one). Since Acts 21:38 is so brief compared to Josephus’s accounts, his source is most likely based on word of mouth. See Schäfer (*History of the Jews*, 118) concerning Felix and the increase in “Zealot influence.”

²⁷⁴ This seems to be an even greater reason why Luke did not rely on Josephus’s reports. According to Keener (*Acts*, 3:3174 [n. 476]) the proposed solutions to this go back as far as Nathaniel Lardner (1684–1768) and possibly earlier. Two major options are worth considering: (1) either Luke, his tribune (or some other source) are misinformed, or (2) Josephus is misinformed. Keener, *Acts*, 3:3175. Either way this discrepancy increases the gulf between the two accounts substantially.

²⁷⁵ Keener, *Acts*, 3:3176.

²⁷⁶ Williams, *Acts*, 372; Hemer, *Acts*, 126–27. For this reason, many scholars accept the lower range of numbers between Luke and Josephus. It seems hard to believe that such a sizable force (of thirty thousand rebels) was repelled by Felix so easily (*Jos. War* 2.263). This scenario may reflect Josephus’s pro-Roman bias. Keener’s (*Acts*, 3:3176) final assessment that “all figures” even those of any “eyewitnesses on the scene” were probably “estimates, which could vary widely, but they were likelier to be inflated in transmission than diminished.”

him.”²⁷⁷ It seems rather disappointing that Pervo would find Luke’s “confusion” here as evidence of his dependence on Josephus.²⁷⁸ In the end, there does not seem to be any wheat in the leftover chaff except a few historical references shared between Luke and Josephus.²⁷⁹ In the end, it seems that the historian will “get the kind of facts he wants.”²⁸⁰

Concluding Observations on the Date and Sources of Acts

Once again we ask, “How does our knowledge of source theories impact the way we date Acts?” We can respond to this question after distilling the findings of this chapter and being careful to separate what we know from what we do not know and the grey area of possibility in between.²⁸¹ The following points are entirely plausible and in many ways support an early date of Acts.

First, the majority of scholars view Acts (in varying degrees) as a historical document (cf. “Acts in History” in chapter 5). Accordingly, Acts is better classed as a short historical monograph and not a work of fiction as some have maintained. The net result is that we can date Acts with relative certainty according to the people, places, and events that it describes as well as those that it does not. A historical document can be placed in a historical context whereas a literary creation is far more difficult to date.

Second, although it continues to be debated there are good reasons to affirm the traditional association that Luke is the author of Luke (and Acts) and was in some

²⁷⁷ Keener, *Acts*, 3:3173.

²⁷⁸ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 166. His cumulative evidence for dependence based on the three rebels (Judas the Galilean, Theudas, and the Egyptian) in Acts seems rather unconvincing (166).

²⁷⁹ Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 198 (and 197 for his list of his parallels).

²⁸⁰ Carr, *History?*, 23.

²⁸¹ Reinfandt’s (“Reading Texts,” 47) highlights the subjective nature of choosing between true and false interpretations that to a large extent depend upon the historian’s framework.

capacity a companion of the Apostle Paul. Accordingly, we can date Acts in relation to the events that are found within the narrative.²⁸²

Third, instead of a single source Luke clearly used some combination of personal, oral, and written sources that can be subjected to verification and collaboration with other dates and events in time.

Fourth, the 'we' (and they) passages indicate that Luke has (to some degree) been a participant in the narrative going back to Acts 16:10–17 (and possibly as early as Acts 11:28) while corroborating his details along the way with other oral (and possibly written sources). This in effect increases the historical value of Acts since it does not represent a 'one perspective' view on the people, places and events. Luke's handprint is throughout, but underneath there are a variety of collaborating sources. Fifth, and related to the fourth point, is that an analysis of the prologues indicate that Luke is, more likely than not, presenting himself as a participant beyond giving a simple literary impression. To some degree, this adds an extra layer to the reliability of the narrative which in turn supports an early date.

Sixth, in addition to Luke's own memories and use of oral traditions, his use of written sources must have included some measure of a broadly-defined itinerary or at the very least some personal notes that were kept by the author and likely supplemented by others connected with the churches in Acts. This minimizes the likelihood of Acts being a literary creation (or novel) that could not be dated in relation to key events in history.

²⁸² The author's access and chronological proximity to the events are key criteria for dating a document. See "Principles for Sources and Textual Criticism" in chapter 2.

Seventh, Luke incorporated many points in his narrative related to matters of geography, lodging, and politics that likely point to the form of sources mentioned in the sixth point above.

Eighth, Luke blended his sources with the narrative to such a degree that his personal style (and mind) is visible throughout Acts. Instead of seeing this as a negative source realization, this strengthens the view of Lukan authorship instead of some unknown author that is far removed from tradition and the datable elements in the narrative.

Ninth, Luke did not use Paul's letters—even if he did make use of them this does not preclude an early date of Acts.

Tenth, since Luke did not rely on the works of Josephus for Acts, any later dates based on this hypothesis should be discounted accordingly. Taken together, these points increase our ability to accurately place Acts into an early chronological framework (c. 62–63 CE).

CHAPTER 4: THE UN-ENIGMATIC END OF ACTS

Introducing the Enigma of Acts 28

The end of Acts has been the subject of enormous debate that has spanned the last twenty centuries. Fitzmyer claims that “no one knows why the Lucan story ends where it does, despite many attempts to explain it.”¹ Barrett explains that the “questions raised by Acts 28 are no new discovery; every student of Acts has encountered them and made some contribution—in some cases a negative one—to their solution. But they constantly call for re-examination.”² Alexander, commenting in “literary-critical terms,” calls the “ending of Acts a notorious puzzle.”³ Likewise Marguerat says the “way the book of Acts ends is surprising” while its “*enigmatic conclusion* has resisted centuries of enquiry” (my emphasis).⁴ Although the conclusion of Acts has been debated vociferously since modern times and has certainly become something of an “old chestnut”—does it warrant the title *enigmatic*?⁵

¹ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52. Holloway (“Inconvenient Truths,” 419) states that “none of these early proposals have stood the test of time.”

² Barrett, “End of Acts,” 545–55.

³ Alexander, *Acts*, 207.

⁴ Marguerat, *Historian*, 205. He (205) asks, like many of us: “Why does Luke remain silent about the appeal to Caesar, which represents the avowed motive for Paul’s transfer to Rome (28:19)?” Earlier Cadbury (*Acts in History*, 3) claimed that the importance of Acts for the historian is seen in the “extraordinary darkness” when “rather abruptly this guide leaves us with Paul a prisoner in Rome.”

⁵ See Pherigo’s (“Close of Acts,” 277) “*apologia* for dragging this old chestnut out of the fire” (his emphasis).

Eastman considers the fates of Peter and Paul to be one of the “great mysteries of early Christian history.”⁶ His summary of the issue is well made and strikes to the heart of the issue:

Although Luke has much to say in Acts about the lives and missions of these two apostles [Peter and Paul], he remains strangely silent when it comes to describing the locations and circumstances of their deaths. In the case of Paul the situation is particularly vexing, for Luke takes the reader all the way to Rome with Paul but then ends with the positive but abrupt outcome that Paul was able to preach unhindered.⁷

Given the lack of consensus, and the often conflicting interpretations on the end of Acts, the goal of this chapter is to ask new questions of the data⁸ and present a solution that endorses the ancient interpretations⁹ against the variety of modern literary explanations upon “the final stage of the text.”¹⁰ A better way forward is one that interprets the textual, literary and historical environment of Acts instead of the speculative and unsubstantiated claims that developed in the nineteenth century—that continue to be parroted and repackaged.

Regardless of one’s explanation for the end of Acts, this matter weighs greatly on its date. For better or worse, a scholar’s interpretation of the end of Acts is usually married to their position on the date of Acts.¹¹ For example, it is difficult (if not

⁶ Eastman, “Jealousy,” 34–53 (34).

⁷ Eastman, “Jealousy,” 34. Blaiklock (*Acts*, 195) claims that it is “inconceivable” that Luke would describe the scene with Agrippa on the one hand and fail to narrate “the scene in Caesar’s court” on the other “if indeed such a trial took place.” Recently, Tärrech (“Hispania,” 471) affirms the “numerous historical questions” with regards to the “last years of Paul’s life.”

⁸ One of the key principles of poststructural historiography is to continually ask questions of the data, theory, and method of approach behind a given interpretation. See Beard, “Dream,” 87; Reinfandt, “Reading Texts,” 49; Passmore, “Poststructuralism,” 138; Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 5–15; and Porter, “Witness,” 1:431–2.

⁹ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 8–11.

¹⁰ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 35 (n. 103) and “Linkage” below. Unfortunately, assumptions about the ‘text’ of Acts is symptomatic of the failure to address matters of textual criticism. This is addressed in “The End of Acts and the Comparable Age of its Variants” below.

¹¹ Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 10) is a recent example of how an interpretation on the end of Acts directly relates to an assumed ‘majority’ position that dates Acts to 80–90 CE. The logic flows

impossible) to maintain a post-70 CE date of Acts if it can be reasonably demonstrated that the end of Acts exhibits no clear evidence of fabrication or that earlier parts in the narrative show no clear sign of foreshadowing.¹² The reverse is also true.

Those who subscribe to the middle ground (post-70 CE to ±80) are in a similar position as the late dating advocates; and they can no longer sit on the fence.¹³ For example, Porter maintains that a compromise date of 85 CE “raises as many questions as it answers, because it leaves unexplained why the book ends where it does with Paul in prison, which would tend to implicate either a third volume...or that the author was writing up to the extent of his knowledge.”¹⁴ Subsequently, he argues that Acts is “written right after Luke’s gospel, reflecting the knowledge of the author up to the moment of writing, that is, with Paul still in prison (and hence no later than AD 65).”¹⁵ This simple explanation fits well with the ancient accounts and effectively nullifies the so-called *enigma* regarding the end of Acts. Conversely, a narrative solution based on a post 70 CE date of Acts only creates and perpetuates the enigma.

The solution is to place the end of Acts within its historical environment.¹⁶ In order to accomplish this, this chapter first examines the various ancient, modern, and

from an *a priori* view that Luke is well aware of Paul’s death since the date of Acts is many years (or decades later)—hence the need for a complicated literary explanation (see “Linkage” below). However, my sincere thanks are due to Troftgruben for sending me a copy of his book many years ago when I began my research on the end of Acts. Although I disagree with him on some key points, his book continues to be indispensable for my research.

¹² Cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 688; Lüdemann, *Acts*, 347–49.

¹³ More will be said on this below, but the most recent and in depth literary explanations leave many significant historical questions unanswered. See Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 35; Puskas, *Conclusion*, 32; Marguerat, *Historian*, 229–30 and Marguerat, “Paul’s End,” 305–32.

¹⁴ Porter, “Dating,” 553–74 (568).

¹⁵ Porter, “Dating,” 568.

¹⁶ I agree with Barrett (Review of *The First Christian Historian*, 257) who dismisses the supposition of Luke as a “writer of sophisticated literary skill.” Like the ‘Paul of history,’ the Jesus or Julius Caesar “of history” requires the “construction of a coherent picture or narrative from the literary and archaeological remains from the past.” See Evans, “Jesus of History,” 458 and also Reed, *Galilean Jesus*, xi, 1, 212.

contemporary interpretations regarding the end of Acts with the purpose of understanding the development of the core issues up to the present day. Subsequently, it further demonstrates how recent developments concerning Paul's engagement with the Jews in Acts 28:17–28 further substantiates an early date of Acts (see “The End of Acts and the Jewish Response” below). Altogether it is proposed that the simple solution observed by the ancient writers—that Luke wrote only what he was aware of—is far more likely than the elaborate literary explanations that began in the modern period. If the ancient view is correct, then the end of Acts is far less complicated and ‘enigmatic’ than the popular alternatives.

Acts 28 and the History of Interpretation

What happened to Paul at (and after) the end of Acts is at the heart of the interpretive debate. In the middle of the last century, Pherigo expressed concern over the “variety of conclusions” especially those “which end Paul's life with the Roman imprisonment of Acts.”¹⁷ My concern is that the majority of scholars today are continuing to go through all kinds of complex interpretive hurdles in order to bypass the consistently simple and ancient interpretation that Luke wrote only what he was aware of at the time of writing.¹⁸

In the last verse of Acts (28:31) we are left with Paul (Luke's associate and protagonist) in Rome under house arrest for two whole years, preaching “with all boldness and without hindrance” (μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἀκωλύτως).¹⁹ What happened after those two years? What happened to his trial and defence that Luke so carefully

¹⁷ Pherigo, “Close of Acts,” 277.

¹⁸ See Troftgruben's (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 7–36) survey (esp. 8–11) and also the collection of essays in Tärrech et al., eds., *The Last Years of Paul*.

¹⁹ See Mealand, “Close of Acts,” 583–97.

narrated throughout the last several chapters of Acts?²⁰ If the trial was successful, did Paul resume a ministry of teaching in the east or did he venture to Spain as he indicated in his own letter to the Romans (15:24, 28)?²¹ Or perhaps his trial was a failure and his readers would have (somehow) already understood his demise under Nero?²²

Since the end of Acts leaves the reader on a victorious note, then how do we explain the silence of his trial, the outcome, his martyrdom, the terrible fate of the citizens of Rome in the great fire of 64 CE along with the subsequent and systematic destruction of Christians under Nero?²³ Many of the ancient, modern, and contemporary interpretations tackle this enigma in various ways, but all of them require an explanation of Luke's *perceived* silence on these matters. The various literary explanations that Luke is *not* silent about Paul's fate (i.e. foreshadowing to the elders at Ephesus), or that his silence is motivated by some grand literary purpose is a fairly recent phenomenon in the history of interpretation.²⁴

Ancient Interpretation of the Enigma

The way that the ancients first understood the end of Acts and the fate of Paul in the first few centuries CE is rather telling. Not only did the early church struggle to find clarity as to what actually happened none of the explanations assume that Luke was withholding knowledge of Paul's trial, the outcome, or the circumstances in Rome after 64 CE. Next to the prison and pastoral epistles, and the post-canonical literature, the oldest texts worth

²⁰ I.e. Acts 21:27–26:32.

²¹ See Riesner's ("Paul's Trial," 391–409) proposal on Paul's Spanish mission and the response by Herzer, "End of Paul," 411–431.

²² The idea that Luke's readers already understood Paul's death is nothing new. See Bartlett, "St. Paul's Fate at Rome," 464–67.

²³ See chapter 5.

²⁴ See Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 7–36.

considering are the variants found at the end (see “The End of Acts and the Comparable Age of its Variants” below). At the very least, the early Western text is considered to be the earliest commentary on the primitive text available.²⁵

An examination of the manuscript record of Acts 28:16–31 offers no clues (nor commentary) on the fate of Paul, the church in Rome, or the destruction of Rome and Jerusalem.²⁶ If anything could be said on ‘what happened next’ surely the first scribes and redactors would have been the first to comment but there is nothing but silence across the entire manuscript record. Hence, not only can we say that ‘Luke knew no more’ at the end of Acts, the earliest scribes and correctors didn’t either.²⁷

Beyond the variants, the Prison Epistles offer some clues to Paul’s life at the end of Acts. Since it is relatively certain that Paul was a prisoner in Rome (c. 60–62) we can try to reconstruct some of the historical context for the end of Acts (28:16, 30) from his “prison” letters.²⁸ We must do so with caution while recognizing what we know for certain and what is speculation.²⁹ For example, on the one hand caution is necessary because not all of the prison epistles speak to Rome as the location.³⁰ On the other hand,

²⁵ Head, “Acts,” 444; Armstrong, “Variants,” 95, 98.

²⁶ Armstrong, “Variants,” 106–110.

²⁷ Recall my note 1 in chapter 1 and Rackham, “Plea,” 80; Armstrong, “Variants,” 107–08.

²⁸ On the tradition of Paul’s Roman imprisonment see *1 Clem.* 5:6–7; Chadwick, “Paul in Rome,” 31–52 and Keener, *Acts*, 4:3722. Where Philemon is generally regarded as authentically Pauline, Colossians and Ephesians are debated—but in any case they clearly speak about Paul’s imprisonment. See Reicke, “Caesarea,” 277. One of Paul’s travelling companions, a certain Macedonian named Aristarchus (Acts 20:4; 21:29; 27:2) was likely the same person mentioned in the prison epistles (cf. Col 4:10–18 and Phlm 23–24). See Keener, *Acts*, 4:3723; Bock, *Acts*, 731–32; Chance, *Acts*, 495 and also Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 2.22:1. Keener (*Acts*, 4:3723) claims that the Pauline corpus “supplies personal details missing in Acts—namely, that Mark (Col 4:10; Phlm 24), Epaphras (Phlm 23, as a fellow prisoner; Col 4:12), and Demas (Col 4:14; Phlm 24) were with him and later Demas left him (2 Tim 4:10), that Luke remained (4:11), and that Mark needed to join him (4:11).”

²⁹ I am more optimistic than Gerber (“Response,” 453) but his caution with regards to the evidence of Paul’s literary activity in Rome is prudent.

³⁰ Reicke (“Caesarea,” 277) explains that we should “not assume *a priori* that Paul’s imprisonment presupposed by Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians refers to the same location.” Paul’s earlier incarceration in Caesarea (c. 58–60, Acts 23:33–26:32) “fits quite well as background for the prison epistles addressed to Asia Minor” (279). He argues that “only Caesarea” matches the background of

a Roman imprisonment for Philippians has a large number of supporters and makes the best sense of the data.³¹ Therefore this letter offers an important and contemporaneous window into Paul's experience in Rome at the end of Acts.³²

Paul states “that it has become known throughout the entire palace guard (or the whole praetorium [ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ]), and by everyone else, that my imprisonment is for Christ” (Phil 1:13). Reicke explains that in Philippians the *praetorium* as a “group of persons can only mean the imperial bodyguard.”³³ Tiberius had placed this “elite guard near the Porta Nomentana in Rome.”³⁴ Additionally, Paul closes this letter (Phil 4:22) with a specific reference to “Caesar’s house” (τῆς Καίσαρος οἰκίας)—which could not

Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians (278) while Rome fits the background of Philippians (282–86). He also maintains that an Ephesian imprisonment can “neither be substantiated by any New Testament references, nor can it be brought into harmony with such” (279).

³¹ See Keener, *Acts*, 4:3723; Barth, *Ephesians*, 1:3; Dodd, *New Testament Studies*, 99; Nock, *St. Paul*, 22; Reicke, “Caesarea,” 277–286; and Fee, *Philippians*, 34–37. Reicke insists that “Only Rome... [is] entirely suitable as the location for the writing of Philippians” (283). Schnelle (“Roman Trial,” 441) says that “All in all, it is still most likely that Philippians was written in Rome about 60 CE.” Gerber (“Response,” 462) finds Schnelle’s conclusion “too specific” for his taste. More recently, Porter (*Apostle*, 67) claims that (for Paul) the Roman imprisonment (rather than Ephesus, Caesarea, Corinth) “still has the most to commend itself, even if one cannot be dogmatic about this conclusion.” See his discussion on the various imprisonment scenarios (60–68).

³² See “Principles for Sources and Textual Criticism” in chapter 2. Kosso (*Knowing the Past*, 51) explains that one of the key criteria for assessing the “credibility of a textual report” is the “ancient author’s access to the event.” Paul’s letter to the Philippians provides a valuable and credible first-hand account of his incarceration experience.

³³ Reicke (“Caesarea,” 283) claims this cannot refer to the “residence of the governor” as in the gospels rather Paul is referring to a “body of people and other individuals.” This Latin loan word is the common expression to use when referring to the guard. See Pliny, *Hist.* 25.6.17; Suetonius, *Net.* 9:2; Tacitus, *Hist.* 1.20. Reicke (283) remarks how it is found in several Greek inscriptions: Huezey and Daumet, *Mission Archéologique*, nr.130–31; Kaibel, ed., *Inscriptiones Graecae. XIV*, nr. 911 (editor’s name is missing here and elsewhere); Dittenberger, *Oriens Graeci Inscriptiones*, nr. 707. Cf. also Keener, *Acts*, 4:3722–26.

³⁴ Reicke, “Caesarea,” 283. Evidently, in the first few centuries CE these “praetorian cohorts” would remain in Rome while “at times sections of the guard accompanied the emperor into the field of action” (283). He (283) explains how proponents of the Ephesus theory are misreading inscriptions that only mention the retired praetorians living there who were acting as “gendarme” (*stationarius*) or policemen (283). Reicke describes the “active praetorians” as having the “responsibility of protecting the emperor and the capital city; the deployment of the group throughout the provinces during Paul’s time would have been impossible militarily” (283). Furthermore, since Asia was a “senatorial province... no troops were stationed there” (283).

have been confused with any other city than Rome.³⁵ Although this data does not provide the solid evidence required to answer the question of ‘what happened next’ after Acts 28:31, the picture of Paul’s custody written to the Philippians collaborates well with his picture of his custody in Rome at the end of Acts.

Paul’s letter to Philemon is another possible witness to Paul’s Roman custody at the end of Acts.³⁶ Paul is writing to Philemon requesting that he welcome back his runaway slave Onesimus (Phlm 1, 10–13).³⁷ Paul indicates that he was a prisoner three times (Phlm 1, 9 and 13) and lists several of his co-workers: Epaphras, Markus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke (Phlm 23–24).³⁸ The letter also reflects a measure of *Custodia Liberia* that Paul had with Onesimus that we see in Acts (cf. Phlm 13 and Acts 28:23).³⁹ Unfortunately, there is not much beyond this that we can add to our picture of Paul in Acts 28.

A further witness to Paul’s incarceration, trial, and fate comes from 2 Tim.⁴⁰

Although the purpose here is not to evaluate the authorship issues concerning this letter,

³⁵ The servants of the emperor lived “primarily in Rome.” Reicke, “Caesarea,” 285. In the first century CE, Caesar’s house (or *palace*) was located on the Palatine hill. See Reicke, *New Testament Era*, 227 and Keener, *Acts*, 3725–26.

³⁶ Schnelle (“Roman Trial,” 448–50 [451]) thinks that Philemon was written from Rome along with Philippians although the place of composition is debated between Rome and Ephesus (see his note 54 on p. 448). In line with Schnelle (and many scholars), Riesner (“Paul’s Trial,” 408) thinks that “between 57 and 63/64” Paul wrote Philippians and Philemon during his “Roman captivity described by Acts 28.” Although Riesner acknowledges the possibility that Philippians and Philemon were written from Ephesus this would imply several years “without any Pauline letter, except if one sets, very improbably, some of the captivity epistles in Caesarea” (408). With regards to an Ephesian origin of Philippians and Philemon see Brown, *Introduction*, 493–96; Omerzu, *Der Prozess des Paulus*, 320–31; Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul*, 175–84; and Eckey, *Philippian und an Philemon*, 20–31.

³⁷ Schnelle (“Roman Trial,” 449) contends that Onesimus, as a runaway slave, would have the status of *fugitivus*. Some have argued that he was not a runaway slave and “sought out Paul as his advocate in a domestic conflict” (449; Lampe, *Philemon*, 206). It seems strange that Onesimus would make the journey to Rome and stay with Paul for so long only to serve as an advocate (Schnelle, 450). See Church (“Rhetorical Structure,” 17–33) on the purpose and rhetorical elements in the letter (i.e. Phlm 17, 21).

³⁸ Recall my note 28 above on the persons mentioned in relation to Acts.

³⁹ Chance, *Acts*, 449.

⁴⁰ In particular, 2 Tim 1:16–17; 2:9–10; 4:6–8, 16. For example, in 2 Tim 4:16 Paul writes “In my first defence” (Ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ μου ἀπολογία). Where many see *πρώτη ἀπολογία* as the “*prima actio* of a

it may be authentically Pauline due to the number of personal names and collaborative details relating to Paul's life.⁴¹ Here Paul (or his follower) gives many personal details surrounding his imprisonment such as his mention of Onesiphorus (1:16) who "was not ashamed of [his] chain but being in Rome,"⁴² his personal suffering (2:9–10), his painful note of resignation (4:6–8), and his comment that "Luke alone is with me" (4:11).⁴³ The relationship between Second Timothy and what happened to Paul at the end of Acts is a matter of ongoing debate and to some degree a matter of speculation.⁴⁴

Perhaps the oldest post-canonical witness to Paul's life post-Acts comes from the writings of Clement, the Bishop of Rome who (some suggest) wrote his letter to the Corinthians close to 95 CE—but others have made convincing arguments for a much

present trial" some combine it with an "earlier trial that had ended with some kind of a release." See Riesner, "Paul's Trial," 399; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.22:4–5. Where the legal term ἀπολογία (defence) occurs 8 times as a noun in the NT (and twice in Acts) the verb ἀπολογέομαι occurs 6 times in Acts (out of the 10 times in the NT). Herzer ("Fiktion oder Täuschung?," 489–536) claims that Second Timothy was written during Paul's first incarceration in Rome. See also Herzer, "Die Pastoralbriefe," 538–42 and Riesner, "Paul's Trial," 396. Meanwhile, Karakolis ("Hispania," 515) thinks that 2 Tim 4:16–18 is a reference to the "first session" of Paul's trial in Rome. Herzer and Karakolis may be right but it seems more likely that Second Timothy represents a later, darker state of affairs than pictured in Acts 28:16–31. Where Second Timothy does speak "more clearly" (or alludes to) Paul's impending martyrdom I disagree with Riesner ("Paul's Trial," 398) that Luke in Acts "alluded to the martyrdom [sic] of Paul." Elsewhere he (395) claims that "Luke alludes clearly to the martyrdom of the apostle" (i.e. Acts 20:23–25, 37). See "Foreshadowing and Silence" and my note 109 below.

⁴¹ As noted by Westfall (during the editing stage) this letter is still a witness (even if it is not authentically Pauline). Riesner ("Paul's Trial," 396) explains how the "contacts in terminology and content between the Pastoral Epistles and Luke-Acts are that striking" that he thinks Luke's role in its composition is likely. See Engelmann, *Unzertrennlche Drillinge*, 44–48; Strobel, "Pastoralbriefe," 191–210; Lestapis, *L'Énigme des Pastorales*, 129–48; Riesner, "Once More," 239–58; Witherington, *Letters and Homilies*, 54–62. If the letter was not written by Paul but Luke or someone in his circle, it still provides a valuable window into Paul's last days after Acts.

⁴² Here ἄλυσις is singular in 2 Tim 1:16.

⁴³ This opens the possibility that Paul may have dictated this letter to Luke but it is strange that there is no clear inclination that he did (i.e. Tertius/Rom 16:22). See also Phlm 24, Col 4:14, and the later reflection of Irenaeus the Bishop of Lyons (ca. 125–202) concerning Luke's relationship with Paul in: *Against Heresies*, 3.1:7; 3.14:1.

⁴⁴ It seems reasonable to interpret Paul as foreseeing his "certain martyrdom 'in Rome' (2 Tim 4:6–8) during a second and heavier imprisonment 'in chains' (2 Tim 1:16–17)." Riesner, "Paul's Trial," 400. That 2 Tim 4:7 is a reflection of Acts 20:24 is plausible—that Luke wrote both seems speculative. Although Longenecker (*Acts*, 572) considers Paul's "tone of resignation" in 2 Tim. 4:6–18 as a clue to the outcome of his second trial we are "forced to look elsewhere for information about Paul's imprisonment and its aftermath."

earlier date to the “time of Vespasian” (69–79 CE).⁴⁵ If an early date can be substantiated then this places it much closer to the composition of Acts and worth mining for any information relating to the end of Acts. Clement (*1 Clem.* 5:6) briefly describes the following facts concerning Paul’s life that (1) he was incarcerated seven times, (2) exiled, (3) stoned, (4) and “had preached in the east and in the west” (κῆρυξ γενόμενος ἐν τε τῇ ἀνατολῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ δύσει).⁴⁶

Subsequently, the interpretation of the first part of the next verse (*1 Clem.* 5:7) is a matter of great debate where Paul, “having taught righteousness to the whole world and having reached the farthest limits of the west” (δικαιοσύνην διδάξας ὅλον τὸν κόσμον καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθὼν).⁴⁷ Some (but many do not) see this passage as evidence that Paul reached Spain after his Roman imprisonment in Acts—and whether ‘west’ means Rome, Spain, or simply west goes beyond the ‘limits’ of what can be known since there is no decisive proof either way.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Tajra, *Martyrdom*, 167. Pervo (“Suburbs,” 36) aims for c. 100 CE (see also idem, *Dating Acts*, 301–305). Riesner (“Paul’s Trial,” 401) makes a convincing argument for the composition of 1 Clement in the “time of Vespasian” 69–79 CE. For an overview on the authorship, date, literary, rhetorical aspects and text see Lightfoot and Harmer, *Apostolic Fathers*, 33–43. Based on internal considerations they think the document “probably was penned sometime during the last two decades of the first century” (35). The fact that chapter 5 and 6 probably refers to Nero’s persecution and the death of Peter and Paul certainly would make the earliest date to be 64–68 CE. They argue that this point, along with a note on the leaders in *1 Clem.* 63:3 living from youth to old age “require a date subsequent to the late 60s or early 70s” (35). That “some of the leaders appointed by the apostles are still living” (*1 Clem.* 44:3–5) rules out “any date beyond the turn of the century” (35). The traditional date of 95–97 CE largely based on the ‘persecution’ in 1:1 and 7:1 is attributed to either Domitian (81–96 CE) or Nerva’s (96–98 CE) reign rather uncritically (36). The texts simply do not indicate anything that could be concretely connected with either Emperor’s reign. Wilhelm-Hooijberg (“Clemens Romanus,” 266–88) dates it to 69 CE and Herron (“Probable Date,” 106–21) suggests 70 CE. Meanwhile, Welborn (“Date,” 35–54) considers a late date of 140 CE. Somewhere in the late 60s CE into Vespasian’s reign seems reasonable (as per Riesner’s suggestion) although some like Herzer (“End of Paul,” 424) think the end of the first century is still possible.

⁴⁶ Lightfoot and Harmer, *Apostolic Fathers*, 52–53 (*1 Clem.* 5:6).

⁴⁷ Lightfoot and Harmer, *Apostolic Fathers*, 52–53 (*1 Clem.* 5:7).

⁴⁸ Witherington (*New Testament History*, 323–24) and especially Tajra (*Martyrdom*, 31, 102–17 and 122) considers this a possibility. Riesner (“Paul in Spain,” 316–35; idem, “Paul’s Trial,” 400–03) thinks that Paul made it to Spain. For the speculative witness of the Spanish trip in *Actus Vercellenses* see Riesner (“Paul’s Trial,” 405) who thinks it is not “clear” whether the “Actus Vercellenses wish to narrate only the fulfilling of Paul’s plan in Romans 15 or simply clearing the Roman stage for Peter.” While

Where others entertain Paul's release from prison and a "return of the apostle to his churches in the east" others "combine a short stay in Spain with a last visit to the east."⁴⁹ Based upon Acts 20:25 Riesner "argues strongly against another voyage to the east" since Paul tells the Ephesian elders that none of them "will ever see my face again."⁵⁰ It seems that we cannot be certain what happened to Paul beyond Acts 28:31 except that he either stayed in prison or was released to a further ministry in the east or the west (Spain).⁵¹ The only thing we can be certain about is his death in Rome somewhere between 64 CE and the end of Nero's reign in 68 CE.⁵²

Additionally, *1 Clem.* 5:5 accounts for the martyrdom of Paul (after Peter in v. 4) suggesting that it was "Because of jealousy and strife Paul showed the way to the prize

Tàrrech ("Hispania," 469–506) claims that Paul's visit to Roman Tarraco is "historically plausible" (470) he admits that there is "limited evidence" (505). He acknowledges that the "burden of proof is greater for those who support the hypothesis that Paul travelled" to Spain (470). Despite the limitations, he generally affirms this hypothesis (505–06). See Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 20) who notes how the "polarized opinions only underscore that Clement's words are unclear." Just over a century ago Dubowy (*Klemens von Rom*) dedicated an entire book to this issue of Paul in Spain and *1 Clem.* 5:5–7. Grünstäudl ("1 Clement 5.7," 376–79) revisits Dubowy's thesis and finds "several weaknesses and inconsistencies" (379). I think he (389) is correct that there is "no need to assume that τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως signifies necessarily the same place" where Paul's martyrdom "took place." He also considers ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως ἐλθῶν as a reference to Spain is "perfectly possible" however "nothing hinders a 'Roman' reading" that understands this phrase as "(his) western goal"—pointing to the (alleged) end of Paul's life in Rome" (389). In the end Grünstäudl concludes that Clement "presupposes" Paul's perseverance rather than providing "historical information" (389). In a response to Tàrrech, Karakolis ("Critical Observations," 507–19 [510]) notes several problems with the Spanish hypothesis such as the "historical speculation" of connecting a text such as Acts 20:4 with Rom 15:24, 28. He is also correct in his hesitation to see *1 Clem.* as a "real historical memory or just the knowledge of Rom 15" (515). Also, the "strongest witness" from *1 Clem.* 5:7 "could very well be influenced by Rom 15 and not by a local tradition" (519). In the end he states it "still remains a possibility, although not a strong one, that Paul did visit Spain" (519). See also Pherigo, "Close of Acts," 284 and Herzer ("End of Paul," 423–25) who doubts the Spanish mission hypothesis as well.

⁴⁹ Riesner, "Paul's Trial," 397 and Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 19. Brown and Meier (*Antioch and Rome*, 98) remark how it is "generally assumed that he [Paul] was freed from imprisonment, left Rome for further missionary travels, and ultimately returned for a second imprisonment that led to his death. That the travels were to Spain (Rom 15:24; *1 Clem.* 5:7) is more likely than the visit to Asia Minor and Greece that scholars have constructed on the basis of the post-Pauline Pastorals, a visit unknown to the author of Acts" (cf. Acts 20:25, 38). On the contrary, Karakolis ("Critical Observations," 519) questions the evidence of a Spanish trip and thinks it is "more probable that Paul never left Rome" and was "sentenced to death" after a long Roman captivity.

⁵⁰ Riesner, "Paul's Trial," 397; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.22:2 and Chrysostom, *Hom. Acts.* 10.3. This is possible but Paul may have returned to the east (but perhaps not Ephesus/Miletus; Acts 20:17).

⁵¹ See Schnabel, *Mission*, 1271–83.

⁵² Taira, *Martyrdom*, 199.

for patient endurance” (διὰ ζῆλον καὶ ἔριν Παῦλος ὑπομονῆς βραβεῖον ὑπέδειξεν).⁵³ It may be coincidental but it seems striking that Clement’s consistent theme of ‘jealousy and strife’ in his letter is also found in Paul’s letters as well (Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 3:3; and 2 Cor 12:20).⁵⁴ Paul’s letters in general, and especially 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 1:10–13; 3:3–7) provide sufficient background for Clement to draw from given the strife and division the Corinthian church had faced (and was continuing to deal with).⁵⁵ Lightfoot and Harmer also recognize the “same kind of factiousness that Paul had earlier encountered in Corinth”—that “apparently flared up once again in that congregation near the end of the first century.”⁵⁶

The next ancient witness comes from the *Muratorian fragment* (or canon) which contains a vital late second-or early third-century reference to the gospels, other early Christian writings, and especially Paul’s life in relation to Acts.⁵⁷ Lines 34–39 of this text

⁵³ Lightfoot and Harmer, *Apostolic Fathers*, 51 (Greek on p. 50). Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 20) raises the issue that Clement seemed unclear about the details of “Paul in Rome three decades earlier.” This is a good point but also equally valid for an early date of Clement. Clement may be ambiguous on Paul’s fate to some degree but a few verses later he recalls the “vast multitude” that were tortured and killed by Nero (1 Clem. 6:1). Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.44.4) also refers to “an immense multitude” that were persecuted during this time. Jeffers (*Greco-Roman World*, 319) says it was “perhaps several thousand” Roman Christians who “lost their lives in this persecution.” Lampe (*Valentinus*, 82) calls the combined witness of Tacitus and Clement a “coincidence that can hardly be explained by imputing rhetorical exaggeration to both authors.”

⁵⁴ Clement is either reading Paul’s letters or more likely he is dealing with jealousy and strife in the church at Corinth in the 60s or 70s CE. Cullmann (“Les Causes,” 294–300) expanded the interpretation that Clement’s use of jealousy and strife offers more information regarding the date of the apostles Peter and Paul. See Cullmann’s later work (*Peter*, 91–110) and Eastman (“Jealousy,” 34–53 [53]) who builds on Cullmann’s reasoning in his analysis and similarly claims that “internal jealousy could have been at play in the deaths of Peter and Paul.”

⁵⁵ 1 Clem. 3:2, 4; 4:7–13; 5:5; 6:1–3; 9:1; 14:1; 43:2; 45:4; 63:2.

⁵⁶ Lightfoot and Harmer, *Apostolic Fathers*, 33–34.

⁵⁷ Metzger (*Canon*, 305) refers to it as a “kind of introduction to the New Testament.” The fragment was named after Lodovico Muratori who in 1740 published a list of NT books from a “codex contained in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.” See Hill, “Debate,” (437) 437–52. The “badly transcribed Latin” list mentions the majority of the NT books except for Hebrews and some of the Catholic letters most notably 1 Peter and James while accepting the *Wisdom of Solomon* and excluding the *Shepherd of Hermas* (437). The fragment has been traditionally dated to the “end of the second century or the beginning of the third” (437). This ‘canon’ list represents and reflects the writings that were “later agreed upon by the whole church” (437). Earlier Hahneman (*Muratorian Fragment*, 131) wrote against the traditional date claiming it is an “anomaly” in the development of the canon while giving the fragment an eastern fourth century

provide a window into Paul's fate: "Moreover, the acts of all the apostles were written in one book. For 'most excellent Theophilus' Luke compiled the individual events that took place in his presence—as he plainly shows by omitting the martyrdom of Peter as well as the departure of Paul from the city [of Rome] when he journeyed to Spain."⁵⁸

As introduced in chapter 1, it is important to note that according to line 36 Luke recorded the events that took place "in his presence" (*sub praesentia eius*). The author's reasoning for this rests on Luke's omission of Peter's martyrdom and Paul's trip to Spain. This may simply be a reflection of Paul's expressed intention to visit Spain on his way to Rome (cf. Rom 15:24, 28) and the author's knowledge of the deaths of the apostles.⁵⁹ Either way, this early account betrays no other known explanation as to why Luke omits this data.

Subsequent to the above discussion, another early interpreter of the end of Acts is the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 265–340). Eusebius states (in reference to Luke) "in this way he closed the history" (*ἐν τούτοις κατέλυσε τὴν ἱστορίαν*).⁶⁰ Some commentators emphasize the abruptness (i.e. cut his history short at this point) where the

origin. Grant (*Heresy and Criticism*, 110) seems to accept this conclusion. Refer also to the earlier essay by Sundberg, "Fourth Century," 1–41. Koester (*Introduction*, 12) thinks the fourth century is "more likely." Although Hill (452) thinks Hahneman has "beefed up" Sundberg's hypothesis for a later date of the fragment he finds it "unconvincing and that the traditional dating does far better justice to the evidence." See also Hill, *Johannine Corpus*, 128–34. Verheyden ("Dispute," [556] 487–556) emphatically concludes that a "fourth-century, eastern origin for the Fragment should be put to rest not for a thousand years, but for eternity." Cited by Riesner, "Paul's Trial," 403. Riesner (403) states that "it seems that a majority of scholars favour an early date." He personally dates the canon to the "turn of the 2nd to the 3rd century" (404) or "around 200" (409). Schnabel ("Fragment," 239–53) similarly dates it to "around AD 200" (239). Therefore, a late second (to early third) century date for this fragment seems reasonable.

⁵⁸ Metzger, *Canon*, 305–7 (Appendix 4.1, "The Muratorian Canon"). According to Schnabel ("Fragment," 232 [n. 11]), Metzger's translation is "based on the amended text" edited by Lietzmann, *Das Muratorische Fragment* and is in turn reproduced by McDonald, *Biblical Canon*, 369–71. For the Latin, see Schnabel, "Fragment," 234–36 (that is taken from Lietzmann, *Das Muratorische Fragment*).

⁵⁹ According to Herzer ("End of Paul," 426), the Spanish reference can "easily be explained if we suppose that the *canonicus* knew Rom 15, which for a Roman author is very likely."

⁶⁰ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.22:1.

sense is simply to bring something (i.e. the history) to a close.⁶¹ Eusebius then specifically mentions the “two whole years” (διετίαν ὅλην) from Acts 28:30 and also how “he [Paul] preached without hindrance” (ἀκωλύτως κηρῦξαι) while he also indirectly refers to Paul’s imprisonment in verse 16.⁶²

Eusebius is basing his view (in some measure) on the text of Acts 28:30–31 and does not seem aware of additional historical information beyond the biblical texts with regards to events surrounding the end of Acts. He further describes how Paul was initially released and then re-incarcerated where he suffered martyrdom: “Thus after he had made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom. In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death.”⁶³ Eusebius subsequently mentions Paul’s second letter to Timothy and quotes it extensively (vv. 2–6). In verse 7 he states: “But these things have been adduced by us to show that Paul’s martyrdom did not take place at the time of that Roman sojourn which Luke records.”⁶⁴ Last, in verse 8 he accurately comments upon the changes in Nero’s earlier and more peaceful reign in connection with Paul’s defence.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Contra Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 23.

⁶² Eusebius could be reflecting a tradition here, but it is also equally possible that he was simply following the Acts account.

⁶³ Eusebius, *Ecc. His.* 2:22:2 (NPNF 1:124). Herzer, “End of Paul,” 427 notes that Eusebius “explicitly combines” Acts 28 and 2 Tim 4:16–17. Similarly, Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 8) observes how Eusebius’s suggestion is “purely to harmonize the account of Acts with the Pastoral Epistles” (e.g. 2 Tim 4:16–18).

⁶⁴ Eusebius, *Ecc. His.* 2:22:7 (NPNF 1:125).

⁶⁵ The difference between Nero’s earlier and later reign is well attested by historians. Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World*, 318.

Furthermore, the lack of ancient commentaries on Acts greatly increases their historical value—in addition to the previous witnesses.⁶⁶ A notable example is found in the writings of John Chrysostom, writing about 400 (347–407) CE. In his commentary he states in his opening verse: “To many persons this Book is so little known, both it and its author, that they are not even aware that there is such a book in existence.”⁶⁷ Chrysostom was by no means on the fringe of Acts scholarship at the time as Quasten refers to Chrysostom’s homilies on Acts as the “only complete commentary on Acts that has survived from the first ten centuries.”⁶⁸

Further in his first homily on Acts Chrysostom asks: “And why then did he [Luke] not relate every thing, seeing he was with Paul to the end?”⁶⁹ His response to that question seems to indicate that Luke (in the tradition of sacred writers) wrote only what was of “immediate importance” and the rest would have been known by oral tradition.⁷⁰ In other words, if there were more pressing things of importance surely Luke would have wrote about them—but he didn’t. Closer to the end of Acts Chrysostom asks: “But of his affairs after the two years, what say we? (The writer) leaves the hearer athirst for more: the heathen authors do the same (in their writings), for to know everything makes the reader dull and jaded. Or else he does this, not having it in his power to exhibit it from his

⁶⁶ Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 22) laments how “ancient commentaries on Acts are few.”

⁶⁷ Chrysostom, *Hom. Acts*, 1 (NPNF 11:1). This may have been said for rhetorical effect but Schaff (note 3) says that Chrysostom had “made the same complaint” at Antioch.

⁶⁸ Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:440.

⁶⁹ Chrysostom, *Hom. Acts*, 1 (NPNF 11:2). Although Chrysostom (just a few verses earlier) refers to 2 Tim 4:10 “Only Luke is with me”—and so he could be reading this verse into the end of Acts.

⁷⁰ The “sacred writers ever addressed themselves to the matter of immediate importance...it was no object with them to be writers of books: in fact, there are many things which they have delivered by unwritten tradition.” Chrysostom, *Hom. Acts*, 1 (NPNF 11:2). Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 322 says that this “implies that it was an intentional, even conventional, secular custom thus to stop in mid course.”

own personal knowledge.”⁷¹ He laments Luke’s lack of knowledge while speculating that this could be a literary device designed to leave the reader wanting more or that he really didn’t know anything beyond the two years.

As a result, we can conclude that Chrysostom is not aware of any new information post-Acts 28.⁷² Cadbury highlights Chrysostom’s point that the “sequel would have been no different in kind from what has already been told.”⁷³ Any further information beyond Acts 28 would have included the same kind of struggles throughout Acts. It appears then that Chrysostom was left wondering why the book ended as it did but also with the impression that Luke was not aware of any events beyond Acts 28:31. At any rate, by the end of the fourth century CE, it is clear that the ancient interpreters did not have any concrete information on the end of Acts beyond the simple explanation that Luke wrote about the events that he had knowledge of.

Modern Interpretation of the Enigma

In modern times we find no shortage of interpretations concerning the end of Acts. Beginning with the early nineteenth century, it is interesting that many of the conclusions about Paul’s fate and the end of Acts mirrored that of the ancient writers (Luke stopped writing because he was unaware of further events).⁷⁴ For example, Michaelis stated that Acts was written from Rome “in company with St. Paul, shortly before the close of the

⁷¹ Chrysostom, *Hom. Acts*, 55 (NPNF 11:326). Pervo (*Acts*, 688) and Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 22) discuss this passage. Subsequently, Chrysostom muses on the texts from Romans 15:22, 23 in a similar way as the author of the *Muratorian fragment* did.

⁷² Chrysostom, *Hom. Acts*, 55 (NPNF 11:326).

⁷³ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 322. “Why didst thou wish to learn what happened after these two years? Those too are such as these: bonds, tortures, fightings, imprisonments, lyings in wait, false accusations, deaths, day by day.” Chrysostom, *Hom. Acts*, 55 (NPNF 11:327).

⁷⁴ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 8–11. The earliest interpretation remained virtually unchallenged until the nineteenth century.

book.”⁷⁵ There is also a growing concern to place the events at the close of Acts within a historical framework. For instance, Ebrard reasoned that it was “not after the lapse of these two years Paul suffered martyrdom, but that he was set free at his first trial before Nero, and then perished in a second imprisonment.”⁷⁶

Before the advent of complicated literary explanations, questions were asked following a similar line of reasoning as the ancients. For example, Ebrard asks “why Luke concludes his work in the manner he does” since there is “no particular account of the process against Paul” or a “concluding address to Theophilus, and a re-view of the whole, in a short formal conclusion of the book.”⁷⁷ Ebrard simply states that “this phenomenon may be explained from the circumstance that Luke has detailed the events as far as they had developed themselves at the time, and thus we have a clue to the time of the composition of the work.”⁷⁸ Although he emphasizes that Acts 28:31 “concludes at most the last narrated event” it does “not form a conclusion to the wholework: [sic] we naturally expect a reference to the beginning of the book, and to Theophilus.”⁷⁹

The ancient view that Luke was not aware of the events post Acts 28 continued into the early twentieth century. Harnack observed how throughout “eight whole chapters” Luke “keeps his readers intensely interested in the progress of the trial of St Paul, simply that he may in the end completely disappoint them they learn nothing of the

⁷⁵ Michaelis, *Introduction*, 3:327. Otherwise Luke as a “credible historian” would have “related some other particulars relative to St. Paul, or would at least have mentioned the event of his imprisonment, which the Christian reader was highly interested” (3:327).

⁷⁶ Ebrard, *Commentary*, 3:412.

⁷⁷ Ebrard, *Commentary*, 3:412.

⁷⁸ Ebrard, *Commentary*, 3:412. This is a very important clue for the time of composition. Again he (3:412) points to the main “question” that concerns the “substance of the concluding verses” that leave the “account regarding Paul unfinished; the decision of his appeal to the Emperor must have been stated, if it had taken place when Luke concluded.”

⁷⁹ Ebrard, *Commentary*, 3:412–13.

final result of the trial!”⁸⁰ Subsequently, he insists that “Neither is the slightest reference made to the martyrdom of St Paul.”⁸¹ Harnack’s argument merits repeating:

We are accordingly left with the result: that the concluding verses of the Acts of the Apostles, taken in conjunction with the absence of any reference in the book to the result of the trial of St Paul and to his martyrdom, make it in the highest degree probable that the work was written at a time when St Paul’s trial in Rome had not yet come to an end.⁸²

A similar but nuanced approach to the preceding interpretation gained popularity during the nineteenth and early twentieth century—the idea that Luke was prevented from finishing his two-volume work.⁸³ One version of this view is that Luke somehow left things unfinished due to a “mechanical reason like the filling of a papyrus roll to the limit.”⁸⁴ A second view is that Luke died before he could finish Acts.⁸⁵ A third view is that Luke lost his “more complete” ending.⁸⁶ Similarly, a fourth view is that Luke planned on writing a third volume but it was “not completed or lost.”⁸⁷ A fifth view that remains a popular explanation is that Luke did in fact know about Paul’s death—but for

⁸⁰ Harnack, *Date of Acts*, 95. He compares this glaring omission with that of the gospels ending with the trial of Jesus before Pilate in Jerusalem.

⁸¹ Harnack, *Date of Acts*, 97. Similarly, Rackham (*Acts*, 51) exclaims: “It seems incredible that if S. Luke had known it, he should have not mentioned it.”

⁸² Harnack, *Date of Acts*, 99.

⁸³ For survey of these views see Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 12–14.

⁸⁴ Hemer, *Acts*, 386; Rüegg, “Lukasschriften,” 94–101. Hemer (386) states that there is “every reason to suppose that the ending was intended, whatever the motive for it.” Harnack (*Date of Acts*, 96–97) had rejected this explanation as well.

⁸⁵ De Zwaan, “Posthumous Edition?” 95–153. See also Lietzmann, *Founding*, 78 and Blaiklock, *Acts*, 195. Although this is possible (and we cannot rule out of hand that it is not) the problem with this and other speculations is that “our actual ending, however difficult, bears the marks of deliberation.” Hemer, *Acts*, 387 (n. 52).

⁸⁶ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 12. Loisy, *Actes*, 103–04, 120, 940–54.

⁸⁷ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 13 (and esp. his n. 13). Ramsay (*St. Paul*, 23) based his view on the opening line of Acts thinking that *πρῶτος λόγος* as a “*First Discourse*” implies a third volume otherwise Luke would have used the term *πρότερος* “*Former Discourse*.” Blaiklock (*Acts*, 195) muses whether “Another book” was planned beginning with Paul’s “release or acquittal in Rome, and proceeding with the story of further evangelism”—but it was “never written.” See also, Winandy, “La finale,” 106.

various ‘literary’ reasons—he intentionally fabricated the end of Acts (see “Fabrication” below).⁸⁸

Contemporary Interpretation of the Enigma

During the latter part of the twentieth century, variations of the ancient and modern explanations continued to be repeated and repackaged while in some cases new perspectives developed from literary criticism.⁸⁹ And yet the common thread of the contemporary interpretations stems from Baur and the Tübingen school who presupposed that Luke was aware of Paul’s fate at the time of his writing.⁹⁰ With the support of modern literary criticism (esp. narrative and composition criticism), it is now commonly thought that Luke wrote his conclusion to Acts in order to fulfill some higher literary purpose.⁹¹ For some, the “solution must therefore be literary”⁹²—rather than dealing with the so-called “speculative historical questions.”⁹³ Why should historical enquiry take a back seat to literary criticism (especially given the lack of a literary consensus)?

⁸⁸ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 14–16. The root of these explanations stem from nineteenth century German scholarship such as Baur’s (*Paul*, 226–52) chapter 9 (on Paul’s imprisonment and martyrdom) and is still popular in recent times. See Haenchen, *Acts*, 732 and Holloway, “Inconvenient Truths,” 418–33.

⁸⁹ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 22–35.

⁹⁰ Baur, *Paul*, 226–52; Davies, “Ending of Acts,” 334; Pervo, *Acts*, 688. A perfect example is openly stated by Pervo (*Acts*, 688): “The close of Acts is fictitious in that it chooses to abandon its principal story line on a high note rather than follow it into failure and contradiction.” Pervo admits to Haenchen’s influence in the preface (xv), therefore it is not surprising to read Haenchen’s (*Acts*, 732) earlier conclusion that Luke’s “apologetic attempt” was “hopeless from the beginning.”

⁹¹ E.g. Marguerat, “Enigma,” 284–304; idem, *Historian*, 205–30; Puskas, *Conclusion*, 137–40; Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 179–88; Moessner, “Completed End(s)ings,” 193–221. Fitzmyer (*Acts*, 792 [n.2]) says the end of Acts “is that which is planned by Luke for his literary composition.” Holloway (“Inconvenient Truths,” 419–20) challenges the explanations that rely upon the “internal logic” of the narrative (here 419). This approach is problematic because it “does not so much explain *why* Luke decided to end his narrative on such a[n] ambivalent note as it documents *how* Luke attempted all along to prepare his reading for such an ending” (his emphasis).

⁹² Pervo, *Acts*, 688. Why must it be a literary solution to the neglect of history? Recall my note 14 from chapter 2 on the importance of the historical context and interpretation.

⁹³ Puskas, *Conclusion*, 28. Here Puskas laments that “there has been too much preoccupation with the more speculative historical questions but no consensus has been reached on the significant literary concerns.”

Fabrication

As discussed above, the explanation that Luke was aware of Paul's death but intentionally left that out and therefore fabricated (or falsified) his ending was developed as early as the nineteenth century in Germany.⁹⁴ This basic theory grew in popularity via Haenchen who claimed that "Luke thus presupposes Paul's martyrdom."⁹⁵ Essentially, scholars here explain Luke's silence on Paul's death because it would (1) be considered unedifying;⁹⁶ (2) imply Paul's guilt;⁹⁷ (3) implicate Christians who abandoned Paul;⁹⁸ (4)

⁹⁴ See Baur, *Paul*, 226–52; Haenchen, *Acts*, 732; Pervo, *Acts*, 688–90.

⁹⁵ Haenchen, *Acts*, 732; Pervo, *Acts*, 688 and Puskas (*Conclusion*, 32 [n. 82]) says that Acts 20:25, 38 "seems to presuppose his death around A.D. 64."

⁹⁶ Barrett (*Acts*, 2:1249) claims that the "end of the story was omitted because it was not edifying." More recently, Holloway ("Inconvenient Truths," 423–32) refers to other ancient histories such as 2 Maccabees that seem to leave out key events such as the death of Judas (see 1 Macc 9:1–22). However, several objections can be made for this line of argument. First, as Holloway admits (432) there is the problem that we do not know exactly when 2 Macc was written—its final form arrives "sometime after" 124 BCE based on the "date of its prefatory letter in 1:1–9." Moreover, 2 Macc is also an "epitome of Jason of Cyrene's longer five-volume" and we "do not know when Jason ended his work" (432). This chronological uncertainty seems to minimize the value of comparing the last recorded event in 1 Macc (i.e. Judas's defeat of Nicanor in 161BC) with Acts (Paul's imprisonment). The time lag between the end of Paul's imprisonment (c. 62) and the writing of Acts (62–63 CE) is conceivably very short compared to 2 Macc. Second, it does not seem reasonable to compare the omission of the death of Judas in 2 Macc with the omission of not only the death of Paul (and Peter and James) in Acts but also the fire of Rome, Nero's persecution, and the Jewish War in such a short span of time (see chapter 5). Third, if the omission of Judas's death in 2 Macc is intentional there exists a clear motive for doing so (i.e. avoiding the death of the hero). In Acts there is no clear motive for omitting the death of Paul given Luke's own tendency to narrate the suffering and martyrdom of his characters—that is corroborated with Paul's own teaching (as argued below). Besides, Paul's trial formulates a significant part of the plot of Acts that is left unfinished. See Gempf ("Luke's Story," 42) on the significance of the omitted trial. Furthermore, Holloway's argument breaks down even further in light of the combined omissions that can be dated with relative certainty in relation to the end of Acts. It is certainly *possible* that Luke omitted the death of Paul (along with other key events in world history) as an 'inconvenient truth' but it does not make it a logical necessity. It seems to be a rather *convenient* interpretation to argue that "whatever happened to Paul" contradicted Luke's "larger theological narrative" (433). Last, Holloway (432 [n. 53]) refers to less persuasive examples such as the comparison between the end of Acts with the end of 2 Kings that leaves the Jewish King Jehoiachin "being well treated in exile." See, Davies, "Ending of Acts," 334–35. Davies essentially relates the story of Jehoiachin (as the end of the Davidic line) with Luke's emphasis on Jesus as the "Davidic King" (335). Somehow the life and death of Paul as a part of the "new kingdom" and as the "prisoner and servant of the son of David" directly relates back to the end of 2 Kings. In fairness, Davies is not definitive in his conclusion; he merely suggests that Luke as the "historian of the old kingdom ends in a way which *may* have provided inspiration for the end of Acts" (my emphasis, 335). Although his proposition is possible, Davies's short essay is entirely speculative and undeveloped.

⁹⁷ See Schneckenburger (*Der Apostelgeschichte*, 124–33, 244–53) who builds on Baur's (*Paul*, 5–14, 226–52) reconstruction of Jewish and Gentile Christian relations. Cf. also Haenchen, *Acts*, 15–24.

⁹⁸ Barrett, "End of Acts," 549–50; idem, *Acts*, 2:1236, 1248–50. You can see how this view developed based on the contemporary texts: E.g. *1 Clem.* 5:2, 5; *2 Tim* 1:15–18; 4:16; *Phil* 1:15–17.

blame the Roman Empire for Paul's death;⁹⁹ (5) parallel the death of Jesus too closely.¹⁰⁰ All of these scholars presuppose a late date and dismiss the simple (and most ancient explanation) that Luke was not aware of Paul's death at the time of writing.

These views remain popular explanations. For example, Lüdemann calls the ending of Acts "bizarre . . . Luke knows that the Roman state executed Paul" and he "fails to report it."¹⁰¹ Instead of giving reasonable consideration that the author of Acts may not have been aware of Paul's death at the time of writing, he assumes that he was: "We are told that Paul's imprisonment dragged on for another two years (28:30); but his trial—to say nothing of the possibility of his being found guilty—must be expunged from the record to allow for a properly basic heroic ending. By not telling the story of Paul's martyrdom Luke avoided introducing the reader to the ugly side of it."¹⁰²

Where is the evidence to support this hypothesis? Lüdemann describes Luke's picture as a "theologically grounded (but deliberately unhistorical) picture of the Roman state . . . it casts serious doubt on Luke's veracity in general and on the credibility of this account. Luke again turns out to be a cunning propagandist with a theological bias."¹⁰³ Although Lüdemann's explanation is entirely possible, nevertheless, it is fraught with assumptions about the "chief" literary "motive" of Acts that Rome should continue its "hands-off" policy toward Christianity.¹⁰⁴ Given Nero's 'policy' in the summer of 64 CE

⁹⁹ Schrader, *Paulus*, 5:573–74. Similarly, Walasky (*Political Perspective*, 62–63) thinks that Luke is trying to protect Rome's reputation.

¹⁰⁰ Jülicher, *Introduction*, 439. Haenchen (*Acts*, 732) thinks this may "enhance devotion to the martyrs." See Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 15–16) on these five common explanations (and their problems).

¹⁰¹ Lüdemann, *Acts*, 349.

¹⁰² Lüdemann, *Acts*, 347; Pervo, *Acts*, 688.

¹⁰³ Lüdemann, *Acts*, 349.

¹⁰⁴ Lüdemann, *Acts*, 347. Since Cadbury and Dibelius may be regarded as "the seminal figures in Lukan research" for the past century it is worth a moment's reflection on their methodology in light of Lüdemann's comments. Bonz, *The Past as Legacy*, 1. For Cadbury (*Luke-Acts*, 48) the recognition of

any literary motive to paint Christianity as a legitimate religion after this event seems a little too late for the “immense multitude” of exterminated Christians in Rome.¹⁰⁵

Foreshadowing and Silence

Another common literary explanation stems from the ‘fabrication’ view discussed above but emphasizes how Acts somehow provides ‘hints’ in the text that Paul had long been ‘processed’ by Caesar (Nero) and that everyone was aware of the outcome (i.e. Acts 20:25, 38; 21:13). Among those who assume this foreshadowing in the text infer that “arguments for an early date” arise from the “unwarranted” assumption that the “Lucan writings must have been completed *before* Paul’s trial or death or *before* the destruction of Jerusalem” (emphasis mine).¹⁰⁶ Ironically, a few pages later Fitzmyer observes how “Modern interpreters have long been puzzled by the failure of NT writers to mention the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70.”¹⁰⁷ An argument from silence (with regards to the destruction of Jerusalem and other important events) does not provide

motive is central, but Lüdemann’s hypothesis remains highly speculative given the historical framework of Acts. Cadbury explains that the author’s motive is “never strictly historical, but always aetiological, and frequently apologetic” (48). In other words, the central motive is to present, defend, and confirm the faith of its readers. He also taught that motive is “not so much a creative as a molding force” (48). The motives operating in oral tradition impacted the character of the written “material long before it came to the hands or ears of Luke” (48). On a similar scale, Dibelius was very much focused on discovering motive (cf. Dibelius, *Studies*, 4, 11, 144–45). The application of these earlier theories of motive criticism survive in more recent works such as Marguerat, *Historian* and once more in his more recent work “Paul’s End,” 332 (Marguerat states that “the same reluctance to expose the internal dissensions within Christianity—drove the author of Acts to remain silent about Paul’s end”; my emphasis). This goes beyond the parameters of Dibelius and especially Cadbury. Further, Barrett questions Marguerat’s attempt to present “Luke as a writer of sophisticated literary skill.” Barrett, Review of *The First Christian Historian*, 257. “Was he such a writer? I do not think so” (257). It seems negligent to draw conclusions of an ancient narrative based on authorial motives alone. See Reed, *Galilean Jesus*, xi, 1, 212.

¹⁰⁵ Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44.2, 4; Lampe, *Valentinus*, 401; Parker, “‘Former Treatise,’” 53; Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 48; Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77. See also Greene and Moore’s (*Archaeology*, 155) fifth criterion for the historical dating process that seeks to evaluate any perceived authorial motive.

¹⁰⁶ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52. See also idem, *Luke*, 54–57. It is equally important to “avoid the opposite conclusion as well—that Luke-Acts could not have been completed before Paul’s trial or death.” Armstrong, “End of Acts,” 72.

¹⁰⁷ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 55. See chapter 5.

proof they did not happen by the time of Luke's writing; however, in a dispute of probabilities, such arguments should not be left out.¹⁰⁸

This is especially true in light of the hypothetically possible but un-provable argument that Luke has foreshadowed Paul's death. Fitzmyer (and others) claim that Luke's failure to account for Paul's death was because it was foreshadowed (cf. Acts 20:25, 38; 21:13).¹⁰⁹ Fitzmyer maintains that the "best way" to account for this ending (and here he quotes Hanson) "is that his [Luke's] readers knew the rest of Paul's story."¹¹⁰ This hypothesis is over (at least) a century old with Bartlett who assumed that it was not necessary for Luke to mention Paul's execution, because for Luke's readers the consequences of prosecution under Nero were obvious.¹¹¹ There are serious problems with these theories and consequently they should remain just that—theoretical possibilities.

¹⁰⁸ See Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 17–21 (esp. his closing remarks on p. 21). See also Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77 and "Principles for Interpreting Sources" in chapter 2.

¹⁰⁹ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52–53 and 674–76. Bruce says when Luke "wrote, he probably knew" that Paul's Miletus prediction (Acts 20:25) "had come true." Bruce, *Acts* (3rd ed.), 10. See also Mount (*Pauline Christianity*, 128) who claims this speech is "foreshadowing Paul's death." See also Schneider, *Die Apostelgeschichte II*, 300; Larkin, *Acts*, 18 and Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 515. Puskas (*Conclusion*, 32) thinks that Acts "seems to presuppose his death." More recently, Riesner ("Trial and End," 395) maintains that "Luke alludes *clearly* to the martyrdom of the apostle" in the Miletus speech (Acts 20:23–25, 37–38) and "speaks strongly against such a date of composition" (my emphasis). Here Riesner (395) is arguing against Robinson (*Redating*, 88–92) and Mittelstaedt, (*Lukas als Historiker*, 165–220) who maintain that Luke-Acts was written during Paul's captivity (60–62 CE).

¹¹⁰ Fitzmyer (*Acts*, 53) citing Hanson, "Provenance," 228 and Crehan, "Purpose," 354–68 (here 361–2). Note Crehan's corrected reference in my bibliography (as it is not only missing here in Fitzmyer but elsewhere it referenced incorrectly).

¹¹¹ Bruce (*Acts* [1983], 535) refers to Bartlett, "St. Paul's Fate at Rome," 464–67 who is writing in response to Ramsay, "Trial of St. Paul in Rome," 264–284. Bartlett does not think Paul survived Nero's persecution in 64 and so argues against Ramsay and "any theory of St. Paul's release from the imprisonment" (467). In light of Nero's infamy he (465) presupposes the silence of Paul's death in Acts and how Luke's readers would understand Agrippa's comments (Acts 26:32): "'This man might have been set free, if he had not appealed to Caesar;' but he had, and the reigning Caesar was Nero!" Since Nero was this Caesar and an "abnormal monster" Luke's readers would be "relying upon the Christian estimate of Nero after 64 A.D. to guide their reading" (466 and 465). Bartlett also factors "Paul's doubly recorded foreboding at Miletus that he would never again see the Ephesian elders" (465). His argument is reasonable except for at least two major problems (that continue to be repeated)—that Acts was written after 64 CE and clearly foreshadows Paul's death. Trompf ("Declined," 232–34) later modifies Bartlett's earlier theory and argues for a deliberate ending to Acts.

Perhaps the most straightforward criticism is that the end of Acts could easily have been completed *before* Paul's trial and death and the "destruction of Jerusalem."¹¹² Paul's death *may* be foreshadowed in Acts (esp. 20:25); however, neither Paul's actual trial nor any details concerning his death are recorded in Acts (or in any of the variants).¹¹³ Additionally, although Cadbury did not commit to a specific date of Acts, he was adamant there is no "decisive proof that Luke was not written before the fall of Jerusalem"¹¹⁴

Beyond Cadbury's point, there has never been a decisive argument against the early dating proponents who (like Rackham) maintain the incredulity of Luke not mentioning Paul's death if he knew it.¹¹⁵ Elsewhere Rackham remarks how from Acts 19:21 onwards matters have been "working up to a crisis" and that there is "not even a single anticipatory hint or allusion to the fate of St. Paul."¹¹⁶ Additionally, Macgregor later emphatically states that Paul's "whole progress from Corinth to Jerusalem reads in Luke's account like a march to martyrdom."¹¹⁷ In light of this 'march to martyrdom' what possible literary explanation can justify Luke's silence?¹¹⁸

Since Marguerat's solution presupposes the death of Paul then in some respects it can be viewed as a branch of the fabrication/foreshadowing theory. His proposition is that

¹¹² Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52. This subject is discussed in chapter 5.

¹¹³ See chapter 5.

¹¹⁴ Cadbury, "Identity," 2:358.

¹¹⁵ Rackham, *Acts*, 51. A falsified ending provides an easy alternative but creates far more problems than it solves.

¹¹⁶ Rackham, 'Plea', 78. Although some argue that Luke alludes to Paul's death in Acts (i.e. Riesner, "Paul's Trial," 398; Acts 20:23–25, 37) this is nothing beyond what he wrote in his own letters (i.e. 1 Cor. 9:15; 15:31–32, 2 Cor 1:8–10; 7:3, 11:23–26; Gal 2:19–20; 6:14, 17; Rom 6:8, 12:1, 14:8; esp. Phil 1:21; Col 3:3; and later 2 Tim 4:6).

¹¹⁷ Macgregor, *Interpreter's Bible*, 350.

¹¹⁸ Recall "Principles for Interpreting Sources" in chapter 2.

Luke is using a rhetorical procedure (i.e. narrative suspension) to explain this silence.¹¹⁹ He claims that “Luke wishes to reinterpret the memory of the apostle’s martyrdom, by inverting the structure of the expected trial (Acts 27–28), and to ensure the perpetuation of his missionary work in the present.”¹²⁰ Marguerat’s application of narratological criticism leads him to conclude that the Acts narrative is “intentionally ambivalent.”¹²¹

However, the book of Acts is anything but ambivalent—the narrative is intentionally filled with trials, suffering, martyrdom, and miracles. Furthermore it was Harnack who (over a century ago) explained that the “contrary impression” of Peter and Paul’s “presupposed” death in Acts is given—thus challenging Marguerat’s ‘rhetoric of silence.’¹²² Recently, Troftgruben considered Marguerat’s rhetoric of silence “questionable” because ancient literature does not “explicitly speak of such a convention for narrative endings.”¹²³ Troftgruben’s detailed criticism of this rhetorical device leads him to rightfully conclude that Marguerat’s “proposal that the ending of Acts implies particular outcomes (for both Paul and the reader) is flawed.”¹²⁴

Why would an author be content to foreshadow Paul’s death (or ‘invert’ his trial) when elsewhere the founder and followers of the gospel story have already been presented in their suffering and death as heroes and examples to follow in Luke-Acts and

¹¹⁹ Cf. Marguerat, *Historian*, 229–30 and his earlier essay “L’énigme,” 1–21 that was published in English in idem, “Enigma,” 284–304; idem, “Rhetoric of Silence,” 74–89; and in his chapter “The Enigma of the End of Acts (28:16–31)” in *Historian*, 205–30. For his most recent treatment see idem, “Paul’s End,” 305–32. Parsons (*Acts*, 366) considers Acts to be either “characterized by ‘suspended’ ending” (cf. Magnus, *Sense and Absence*) or Marguerat’s “rhetoric of silence.”

¹²⁰ Marguerat, *Historian*, 229–30.

¹²¹ Marguerat, *Historian*, 230.

¹²² Harnack, *Date of Acts*, 97.

¹²³ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 34–35. The use of silence in rhetoric occurred but “no ancient rhetorician applies these ideas explicitly to the practice of concluding narratives” (35 [n. 101]; Aristotle, *Poetics*, 7:3).

¹²⁴ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 169 (162–69). He explains that the “openness of the ending cannot be pinned down to such predictable results” (169).

other New Testament writings?¹²⁵ Jesus's death was clearly foreshadowed (e.g. Mark 9:12; Luke 24:46) and vividly described in all four gospel accounts and in Luke's version especially (23:26–49)—so why not Paul's death (if he had known)? Beyond this, Paul, in Acts, as well as in his letters, describes sufficient danger that a foreshadowed death is really a moot point.¹²⁶ Should we now consider Paul's 'undisputed' letters as posthumous writings? Further, how could we reasonably assume that a close companion of Paul (Col 4:14; Phlm 24; 2 Tim 4:11) and careful writer (Luke 1:3) would fail to record Paul's fate at this time?¹²⁷

It seems that the foreshadowing theories are incredibly assumptive and lacking in solid evidence. Recently, Walton claimed that the Miletus speech in Acts shows “significant parallels to other farewell speeches, especially from Jewish contexts.”¹²⁸ He reasons that the “argument that Luke assumes Paul to be dead at the time of writing Acts is inconclusive” and that Acts 20:25, 38 taken together “do not necessarily say more than that Luke's Paul is uncertain about his future, although his firm expectation is that he will not revisit Ephesus. Further the evidence is lacking that Luke intends this as his narrative farewell for Paul, since Paul goes on being active for some time and makes further speeches.”¹²⁹ Therefore, rhetorical explanations for the silence at the end of the narrative must remain theories at best.

¹²⁵ Marguerat, *Historian*, 229–30.

¹²⁶ In Romans, Paul asks for prayer “that I may be delivered from those in Judea who refuse to believe” (Rom 15:31). Why else would Paul write that unless he was genuinely worried about what might happen in Jerusalem? Recall Collingwood's (*Idea*, 218) advice on rethinking the thoughts of the past. See also “Principles for Selecting Events” from chapter 2.

¹²⁷ Regardless the author clearly has great respect for Paul as the hero of his narrative. Commenting on Paul's fate at the end of Acts Munck claims it is a “reasonable assumption that this question is not answered because it could not be answered”—therefore, it is “unlikely that he [Luke] would have deliberately avoided an account of Paul's death.” See Munck, *Acts*, 53–54.

¹²⁸ Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*, 202.

¹²⁹ Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*, 202. Consider also Rom 15:23 where Paul ‘in his letters’ wanted to visit Spain and stop in Rome along the way. Such statements should be taken at face value and not necessarily as factual.

Theological and Political Explanations

Another common perspective on the end of Acts is that it provides a sufficient literary or spiritual/theological explanation. This is especially prevalent among the commentaries such as Marshall who suggests that the “fate of Paul is secondary to that of the gospel... Nothing that men can do can stop the progress and ultimate victory of the gospel.”¹³⁰

Williams suggests that “Acts ends at 28:31, but the story of Jesus goes on wherever his Spirit finds men and women ready to believe, to obey, to give, to suffer, and if need be, to die for him.”¹³¹

Other dedicated studies on the end of Acts broadly represent both a literary and theological approach to the conclusion of Acts 28:16–31.¹³² Puskas’s expressed methodology is that of “composition criticism with insights gleaned from narrative criticism.”¹³³ Puskas approaches the text of Acts 28:16–31 by analyzing both the structure and literary forms of the pericope.¹³⁴ While he provides some valuable exegetical insights the book is lacking in modern grammatical, linguistic, text-critical and historical considerations.¹³⁵

Puskas focuses upon the theological significance of Paul “as one like Jesus engaged in the work of Jesus.”¹³⁶ He concludes with this axiom: “The mission of Paul in Acts sets forth an agenda of world-wide mission for the church. In Acts 28, Luke seems

¹³⁰ Marshall, *Acts*, 447.

¹³¹ Williams, *Acts*, 17. See also Jennings, *Acts*, 242–57.

¹³² See Puskas, *Conclusion*, 140 for a similar view that is expressed by many commentaries. Puskas’s book is a modified form of his 1980 PhD dissertation.

¹³³ Puskas, *Conclusion*, 30.

¹³⁴ Puskas, *Conclusion*, 33–63.

¹³⁵ Puskas, *Conclusion*, 145–70. Besides the BDAG, there are minimal resources along these lines and barely any attention to the significant matters of textual criticism or the more “speculative historical questions” (28). See Puskas, *Conclusion*, 32 and Skinner, *Review of The Conclusion of Luke-Acts*, 189. Compare Puskas with Keener’s (*Acts*, 4:3717–775) treatment on the end of Acts.

¹³⁶ Puskas, *Conclusion*, 115 (see also 115–35, 139); Skinner’s (*Review of Conclusion*, 189).

to be telling his readers/auditors: to be identified with Christ and his church, one must also do the work of Christ and his church."¹³⁷ This may be valuable for a theological interpretation on Acts (that can be found in many of the commentaries); however, this does not add to our knowledge of Acts in its historical context.¹³⁸ Furthermore, Puskas 'assumes' the death of Paul and the destruction of Jerusalem as bygone events; and like Troftgruben (see "Linkage" below) states that a "date near the end of the first century (A.D. 80–90) is assumed for the composition of Luke-Acts."¹³⁹

It seems arbitrary to draw moral and theological value from a text that aims to provide an accurate report (Luke 1:3) but then intentionally conceals the trial and death of Paul (its main character in the second half of the book) as well as other major historic events.¹⁴⁰ On the positive side however, Puskas's insights indirectly removes some of the 'abruptness' of the ending of Acts by showing its literary significance as a completed and fitting ending that connects the narrative back to Luke.¹⁴¹

There are a number of sub-theories and explanations on the end of Acts that are briefly worth mentioning. One view is that the end of Acts represents some form of narrative climax with Paul's arrival in Rome thus fulfilling the beginning of Acts 1:8.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Puskas, *Conclusion*, 140.

¹³⁸ Where Williams (*Acts*, 17) is typical of the commentaries Bock (*Acts*, 706) gives greater attention to the historical context of Paul's situation at the end of Acts.

¹³⁹ Puskas, *Conclusion*, 32 (he does not find Pervo's [*Dating Acts*] second century date convincing). The date of Acts is far too important to assume.

¹⁴⁰ Puskas, *Conclusion*, 32 (n. 82). Most notably the fire of Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem—omissions of this nature would render Acts as a deliberate and delusional fabrication of reality. As argued in chapter 1 and 2, the date of Acts greatly impacts our interpretation of its text(s). Tyson, *Marcion*, 1–2; Pervo, *Dating Acts*, viii; Keener, *Acts*, 1:401.

¹⁴¹ See Keener's (*Acts*, 4:3716–18) list of Puskas's comparisons where he concludes: "Certainly Acts 28:17–31 provides a fitting climax to Luke's work" (4:3718). A fitting climax to Acts is also consistent with a pre-70 date.

¹⁴² In Acts 1:8 Jesus promised his disciples: "you will be my witnesses . . . unto the ends of the earth." The idea that this represents some form of Gentile or Roman narrative climax is widespread. Bock in 2007 declares how "Luke chose to end his book here because his point was the arrival of the word to the highest levels of Rome." Bock, *Acts*, 758. Pervo (*Acts*, 686) similarly states: "'The ends of the earth' (Acts

Another perspective is that Paul's Jewish encounter in Rome (and the lack of response to the Gospel) represents the book's narrative climax.¹⁴³ A further view sees the close of Acts as a similarly completed ending but fatally disregards the unanswered events generated in the narrative.¹⁴⁴ Last, Mauck insists that "Luke-Acts was written as a legal defense of Paul as he awaited trial before Nero."¹⁴⁵

The problem with such interpretations is that they raise more questions about the end of Acts than providing solid answers. The common root is that they assume a later date where Paul is dead, Rome and the church are decimated, the Jews, Jerusalem, and its Temple are destroyed, and somehow Luke as a historical and theological writer (via some advanced literary tactic) has opted to leave all of this out of his narrative.¹⁴⁶

Linkage

Troftgruben's interpretation of the conclusion of Acts consists of a theological approach with the aid of literary criticism (esp. narrative).¹⁴⁷ He surveys the close-of-Acts

1:8) is realized in a mission that has no limits." Although see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:17–18, 108–9, and 356. Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 24) highlights a variant of the Roman narrative climax view "not because it fulfills the promise of 1:8, but because it signifies the spread of the gospel to the capital of the Gentile world." See also his note 57 and his reasons that mitigate the validity of such views (25–26). See also Moessner ("Completed End(s)ings," 218–21) who considers the close of Acts as fulfilling the promise of Acts 1:8 and the mission to the Jews.

¹⁴³ See Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 25. Since this interpretation has a direct bearing on the date of Acts it will be discussed in greater detail below: "The End of Acts and the Jewish Response."

¹⁴⁴ See Moessner, "Completed End(s)ings," 193–221 and Troftgruben's (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 34 and 161–62) critique of this explanation.

¹⁴⁵ Mauck, *Paul on Trial*, 226. See also Omerzu, *Der Prozess des Paulus*, et passim. At the very least we can say with Puskas (*Conclusion*, 137) that Luke "defends Paul."

¹⁴⁶ The tension is felt by Keener (*Acts*, 4:3762) who states that "Luke is not denying Paul's eventual execution." He (4:3763) further says that he has "written on the assumption that Paul was dead when Luke wrote." Then he claims a post-70 CE date is "likelier than not" pending the date of Mark but then he back-peddles somewhat and states that it is "not possible to be dogmatic on this point" (4:3763). Further he (4:3763) points to the commentators and the "internal evidence" that point to Paul's "eventual martyrdom"—but logically Paul's death (and other key events) either happened before or after Luke wrote Acts—there is no other option available.

¹⁴⁷ His book is a "slightly revised version" of his 2009 PhD dissertation. Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 5.

perspectives among ancient, modern, and more recent scholars and provides a helpful analysis that identifies some of the problems and advantages of each respective view.¹⁴⁸ Instead of focusing on *why* the book of Acts ends, his goal is to focus on *how* it ends.¹⁴⁹

He believes that the conclusion of Acts is a “question of narrative interpretation” and specifically “narrative closure” that seeks to understand the “question about an ancient writing.”¹⁵⁰ Subsequently, he engages the enigma with the principles of narrative *closure* and *openness* as a means to understand the endings of ancient works in general—and correspondingly, Acts in particular.¹⁵¹ Beyond his comparison with other endings in Greco-Roman literature, he offers a familiar blend of existing theological, exegetical and/or literary explanations discussed in the previous two sections.¹⁵²

Troftgruben maintains that the questions relating to *how* Acts concludes are “not so simply answered.”¹⁵³ However, his solution is assumptive and raises more issues than it solves—he insists that this is a “question of narrative interpretation, which requires a response informed by narrative criticism”¹⁵⁴ This solution seems tendentious given the

¹⁴⁸ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 7–36. He (8–28) lists the following categories: 1) Luke knew no more; 2) Luke was prevented from finishing; 3) the ending was deliberately abrupt; 4) the ending was an intentional and fitting conclusion.

¹⁴⁹ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 1–6.

¹⁵⁰ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 35. He (28) cites three key studies that effectively launched the quest for a narrative closure approach to the end of Acts: Dupont, “La Conclusion,” 359–404; Hauser, *Strukturen* and Puskas, “Conclusion.”

¹⁵¹ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 60. With respect to the end of Acts (144–78) he finds evidence for both narrative closure and openness.

¹⁵² Cf. Puskas, *Conclusion*, et passim.

¹⁵³ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 35. Perhaps a better question to ask is not so much *how* or *why* Acts ends the way it does, but rather “What is the ending of Acts?” and “How does the ending add to our knowledge of its historical context and especially its date?”

¹⁵⁴ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 35. Troftgruben (37) states that the “narrative criticism” he employs “is an interpretive approach that focuses on the narrative (or literary) features of a text.” This methodology may be sufficient for studying an ancient novel or epic, but it seems insufficient when it comes to interpreting the end of Acts since it has always been a matter of historical inquiry. On narrative criticism see Powel, *Narrative Criticism?*; “Narrative Criticism,” 19–43; Torgovnick, *Closure*, 198–99, 209; and Westfall, “Narrative Criticism,” 237–38.

fact that all of the ancient interpreters until modern times discussed the ending of Acts at face value while asking reasonable questions concerning the silence of Paul's fate.

So after nearly twenty centuries of interpretation (where Luke is seen as writing only about the events he was aware of) how can modern principles of narrative criticism offer the 'correct' answer to the questions the ancients were asking?¹⁵⁵ A narrative interpretation *may* very well supply a *theory* on the ending of a book in the ancient world (as compared with the endings of other ancient works), but the theory falls short of demonstration because the content and genre of Acts, along with the historical context of the people in Acts are vastly different from the literature Troftgruben finds comparable in many significant ways.

While he recognizes the genre debate and identifies the four genres that "nearly all scholars associate Acts with" (prose fiction, biography, epic, and historiography)—there still remains a methodological deficit in his approach.¹⁵⁶ While he looks at the endings of various literatures that are "contemporaneous with Acts" he fails to consider the content of those endings that are in many ways anachronistic.¹⁵⁷ Although he examines historiography "most fully since it is the genre to which Acts is most often

¹⁵⁵ What about the "extraordinary darkness" we face when we grasp the abrupt ending that Cadbury (*Acts in History*, 3) spoke of? As argued in chapter 2, historians factor not only what is present in a document but also what is absent—and what Luke (as the historian) leaves out of Acts (either by lack of knowledge or by choice) speaks volumes.

¹⁵⁶ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 4. See his note 12 on the diversity of genre studies.

¹⁵⁷ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 5. He (6) chooses Heliodorus, Achilles Tatius and Chariton for prose fiction, Plutarch's *Lives* (esp. *Cato Minor*) for biography, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* for epic, and for historiography he uses Heroditus, Thucydides, Sallust, 1–4 Kingdoms and Josephus (see his chapter 3 [61–113]). Acts is *somewhat* 'contemporaneous' with Sallust, Plutarch, Josephus and Virgil but Acts is certainly not contemporaneous with some of the other works—especially Heroditus, Thucydides, 1–4 Kingdoms and Homer's *Iliad* (eighth to sixth century BCE) which he especially relies on.

compared” he finds that the ending of Acts is “most comparable to the endings of certain epic narratives” (esp. Homer’s *Iliad*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*).¹⁵⁸

He proposes that the narrative ‘openness’ and ‘closure’ finds a ‘linkage’ that “connects the story of the narrative (i.e. Acts) to another, subsequent story.”¹⁵⁹ Acts then is an “expansive saga” that continues beyond the end “in similar ways Homer’s *Iliad* envisions events that occur beyond the end of the narrative: the death of Achilles and the fall of Troy, events that occur later on in the Epic Cycle.”¹⁶⁰

From the outset there are significant difficulties with his methodology starting with the rather precarious nature of comparing Acts in the first century CE with Homer’s works that are easily dated several centuries earlier.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, another serious issue is that a large contingent of scholarship considers Acts to be some form of historiography or biography—but certainly not epic.¹⁶² More recently Adams in his dedicated study on

¹⁵⁸ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 6 (and his chapter 5 [144–178]).

¹⁵⁹ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 169.

¹⁶⁰ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 176, also 177, 187. In his analysis he also looks to Sallust’s *Jugurtha* and identifies two of the main characters (Marius and Sulla) who “follow the path of power, corruption, and demise in subsequent Roman history, but Sallust’s narrative ends midway along this path” (160). He compares *Jugurtha* with Acts and claims that both “conclude with broken cycles: the narratives allude to events that would complete their respective cycles” (cp. *Bell. Jug.* 63:6; 95:3–4 with Acts 20:24–25, 38; 21:13). And yet, this presupposes that the Miletus speech is a clear allusion to the event (of Paul’s death). This allusion is far from clear and hypothetical at best. Recall “Foreshadowing and Silence” above. See also Pervo, *Acts*, 689–90 who compares *Jugurtha* with the end of Acts.

¹⁶¹ See Graziosi, *Inventing Homer*, 91 (see esp. her chapter on ‘The date of Homer’ [90–124]). The late dating advocates ascribe a date of around the “middle of the sixth century” BCE and the early group consider a date in the eighth century BCE. A third group considers a date somewhere in between based on the “fall of Egyptian Thebes in 663, and the destruction of Babylon in 688” CE (92). Meanwhile Herodotus lived c. 484 BCE–c. 425 BCE; Thucydides c. 460–c. 400 BCE and Plutarch wrote in the two decades before his death in 125 CE. Sallust lived 86–c. 35 BCE while Virgil wrote somewhere between 29 and 19 BCE.

¹⁶² See Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 4 (n. 12). Although there are some who classify Acts as epic literature such as Bonz (*Legacy*, 163), who after deciding (without argument) that Luke is “writing at the end of the first century” CE, claims that “in the early Roman imperial period there is only one genre in which audiences expect to find supernatural beings intermingling with human characters in historical stories. That genre is epic.” See also MacDonald, *Homer?* and idem, “Paul’s Farewell,” 189–203. Part of the problem is due to the fact that there continues to be a variety of views on the genre of Acts. Recall my chapter 3 and Palmer, “Historical Monograph,” 1–29; idem, “Acts and the Historical Monograph,” 373–88; Phillips, “Consensus?” 365–96; Balch, “Μεταβολή Πολιτειων,” 139–88. More recently, see the excellent overview of genre research and interpretation in: Adams, *Genre of Acts*, 1–22.

the genre of Acts remarks that “it is apparent that Acts is *not an epic*. There are very few formal features that support this claim” (emphasis mine).¹⁶³ Furthermore, although Adams considers there to be “some generic relationship between Acts and ancient novels...there are a number of areas in which Acts and novels differ.”¹⁶⁴ Adams argues that the “best genre label for Acts is collected biography.”¹⁶⁵

This makes Troftgruben’s comparisons troublesome from the start since Acts is some form (or blend) of historiography or biography. How can we take two very different texts, with different genres, written by very different authors (that in some cases are hardly contemporaneous [esp. Homer]) and find parallels with the ends and formulate a credible interpretation? While Troftgruben claims that his study is “not an argument” for the genre of Acts which is “an issue too large” to address (and certainly for this study)—this is a tendentious point in his argument—unless we can prove the minority position that the genre of Acts (or its ending) is epic.¹⁶⁶ He claims that the “conclusion to Acts implies that the narrative, *like other epic narratives*, relates the historic beginnings of a particular movement” (my emphasis).¹⁶⁷ Therefore, in some measure he considers Acts as epic literature despite the evidence to the contrary.

¹⁶³ Adams, *Genre of Acts*, 170.

¹⁶⁴ Adams, *Genre of Acts*, 170. This challenges the views of Pervo and others who say that “novel is the best generic fit for Acts” (170).

¹⁶⁵ Adams, *Genre of Acts*, 171. He clarifies that his view on the genre of Acts as collected biography (and not history) has “no bearing on the historical accuracy of the text’s content” (22).

¹⁶⁶ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 181 (see also 170). It is problematic to isolate the end of Acts as epic—which is what his study implies: “In terms of literary closure, Luke’s ending is best compared to the endings of famous epic works” despite the fact that this has been “overlooked by the majority of biblical scholarship” (181).

¹⁶⁷ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 181. A very serious and subsidiary problem of method relates to the application of modern principles of narrative openness and closure. For example, Troftgruben (30 [see also 7 and 37]) relies on Tannehill (*Narrative Unity*, 2:353–57) who in turn employs Torgovnick’s “categories of narrative closure (circularity, parallelism) and openness (incompletion) to examine the ending of Acts.” However, Torgovnick (*Closure*, 10) in her book chooses to examine eleven very modern novels in order to give a “roughly historical or chronological sense of the developments in the novel since 1848.” This is highly problematic from a chronological standpoint and also because Acts is not a novel.

While his focus is on narrative criticism his disclaimer is that it “may also be a question of source criticism or historical events, certainly. This study, however, is primarily concerned with the final stage of the text.”¹⁶⁸ Although the sources of Acts is a contested issue it is nevertheless critical that we do not bypass those issues before engaging the ‘final stage’ of the text (recall my chapter 3). We must also ask, “What is the final stage of the text of Acts and which manuscripts or textual family is he referring to?”¹⁶⁹ Although this represents a much greater issue in Acts scholarship, no study on Acts (including its end) can afford to ignore the major text-critical issues (see “The End of Acts and the Comparable Age of its Variants” below).¹⁷⁰

Additionally, interpreting the end of Acts is definitely a question of the ‘historical events’ that are found both inside (and outside) of Acts.¹⁷¹ Since Acts contains a number of historic persons, places, and events—and is not simply a grand theological epic like Homer’s *Iliad* or Virgil’s *Aeneid*—then it seems reasonable for any defensible interpretation to require a serious consideration of the historical context (see chapter 2 and 5). So Troftgruben’s narrative solution seems to be more open to criticism because it focuses on the ‘final stage’ of the text (that is difficult to define given the textual variation in Acts) to the neglect of the historical context.

My greatest contention with Troftgruben’s thesis relates directly to the date of Acts and his dismissal of scholarly views that see the end of Acts as a result of Luke’s

¹⁶⁸ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 35 (n. 103). He is correct in saying that the end of Acts is neither to “entertain readers” or “narrate a life of Paul” or “narrate history for history’s sake”—however, the end does relay many historical events relating to Paul in Rome in a well-detailed geographical context. Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 181.

¹⁶⁹ It seems that he equates the ‘final stage’ of the text with the critical editions NA/UBS (recall chapter 3).

¹⁷⁰ See Ropes, “Text of Acts,” xvii–cccxx; Head, “Problem,” 415–44; Porter, “Developments,” 31–67; Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 83–107; Tuckett, “Early Text,” 157–74 and most recently Armstrong, “Variants,” 87–110.

¹⁷¹ See “Principles for Selecting Events” in chapter 2.

lack of further knowledge (or that he ran out of sources).¹⁷² While he claims that these “explanations make sense of the abruptness of Acts 28, and the narrative’s preoccupation with Paul in chapters 20–28” and also accounts for the ‘we’ passages of Acts, he claims that “both proposals have problems.”¹⁷³ For him a major roadblock for the ‘Luke knew no more’ perspective directly relates to my thesis—that the “majority of scholars date Luke-Acts much later” which he relegates to 80–90 CE.¹⁷⁴

If an early date of Acts can be maintained (or if a date range of 80–90 CE can be dismantled) then Troftgruben’s argument breaks down and this roadblock can be safely removed allowing the ancient and un-enigmatic interpretation (that ‘Luke knew no more’) to be reinstated to its rightful place.¹⁷⁵ The other major roadblock for Troftgruben is the “ominous tone” of Paul’s Miletus speech (Acts 20:17–38), the “several parallels to earlier material in the narrative,”¹⁷⁶ and a “concluding summary” (Acts 28:30–31) “like

¹⁷² Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 9. See also Wendt, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 31–32; Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 321 and more recently, Walasky, *Political Perspective*, 77. Troftgruben (10) challenges the idea that Luke ran out of sources after the final events in Acts since there is “no compelling evidence that Luke used sources for composing Acts.” Although the identification of specific sources is a matter of ongoing debate very few (if any) scholars (historically or recently) would deny that Luke used sources (see Dupont, *Sources*; Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 10–46 and my chapter 3).

¹⁷³ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 9–10.

¹⁷⁴ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 10. He (10) also claims that the ‘Luke knew no more’ view does “not explain why Luke did not ‘finish’ the book at a later date.” This concern is only valid for a late date and besides, many argue that the end of Acts did *not* need finishing (as Troftgruben himself maintains on the next page (11) when he says these “features show that the ending of Acts is hardly haphazard” (see also his conclusion: 179–88). There are several reasons why Luke did not or could not ‘finish’ it at a “later date” (10). He may have (1) ran out of sources or (2) died in Rome along with Peter or Paul as a result of Nero’s persecution or (3) was otherwise inhibited or (4) that he was content to leave it as is. Cadbury’s (*Luke-Acts*, 321) point in relation to the “omission caused by the abrupt end of Acts” is still valid. “Perhaps the author’s information here came to an end. Then his source, whether his own information or the writings of others, must be credited with this abrupt silence. Perhaps he had no interest in going further because the outcome was indecisive, or was too well known to his readers.”

¹⁷⁵ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 8. Unfortunately, it is all too common to parrot the political compromise 80–90 CE range (or later) as if it is a closed case. See Pervo, “Suburbs,” 31 and Porter, “Dating,” 568. Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 10 [9]) relies on Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 51–55 and refers to Pervo, *Dating Acts*, 359–63 and Tyson, *Marcion*, 1–23 for the early second century view.

¹⁷⁶ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 11. He refers to Dupont, “La Conclusion,” 359–404 and Puskas, *Conclusion* and other examples (see his note 12).

those found earlier in Acts” (5:14; 6:7; 9:31; 11:21; 6:5; and 19:20).¹⁷⁷ The Miletus speech (which has been discussed above) does not present any significant barrier to an early date of Acts. The latter two points simply reflect Luke’s writing style and only affirm that he was cognizant that he was writing a conclusion to his two-volume work.¹⁷⁸

As compelling and creative as the modern and contemporary interpretations are for the end of Acts, the consistent and most ancient interpretation concerning Luke’s silence at the end of Acts seems to offer a more acceptable explanation.¹⁷⁹ It may seem trendy to bypass the hard questions of history in favour of narratological concerns but in the end there really needs to be a consideration of both.¹⁸⁰ The ancient interpretation of Luke’s silence is expanded into a study of the variants at the end of Acts that challenges the literary critical solutions further still (see “The End of Acts and the Comparable Age of its Variants” below).

The End of Acts and the Jewish Response

Perhaps one of the most misinterpreted aspects in the history of end-of-Acts interpretation that directly impacts one’s view on the date relates to Paul’s engagement

¹⁷⁷ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 11. As noted by Lake and Cadbury, “Acts,” 4:349.

¹⁷⁸ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 11. For these reasons he states that the end of Acts is “hardly haphazard” and “[a]ll of this calls into question the idea that Luke ended at Acts 28:31 because he did not know what happened next” (11). However, recall my chapter 3 and the discussion on the prefaces. An intentional ending should be no surprise given an intentional beginning.

¹⁷⁹ Reinfandt, “Reading Texts,” 47. Even Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 9) admits the earliest approaches “make sense of the abruptness of Acts 28” and the “narrative’s preoccupation with Paul” in Acts 20–28. His hesitation against the ancient view is based on (1) the ‘majority’ view of a 80–90 CE date of Acts, (2) the lack of “compelling evidence that Luke used sources” for composing Acts, (3) the foreshadowing at Miletus (Acts 20:17–38), (4) the “parallels to earlier material in the narrative” and (5) the “summary statement” at Acts 28:30–31 “like those found earlier in Acts” (10–11). None of these points remain impediments to an early date or the view that Luke knew no more.

¹⁸⁰ E.g. Puskas, *Conclusion*, 28. Cf. Ziemann and Dobson, “Introduction,” 13 and my note 14 in chapter 2.

with the Jews in Acts 28:17–28.¹⁸¹ Among the conflicting views, it is found that scholars (with some overlap) fall into one of three general categories that suggest some degree of Jewish condemnation, tragedy, or hope. A tragic or condemning interpretation tends to reflect a post-70 CE state of affairs where a more hopeful interpretation reflects a date before the Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem. Recent trends demonstrate a more hopeful prognosis than prior assessments with regards to Luke's attitude towards the Jews. This trend is supported by recent studies regarding the wisdom background for the text of Isa 6:9–10 in light of the growing recognition and appreciation for an increasingly Jewish portrait of Paul in Acts.

For Tuckett the subject of "Luke's attitude to Jews and/or Judaism" is for him "perhaps one of the most controversial in contemporary Lukan studies."¹⁸² The post-World War II reaction produced many overgeneralizations that are still repeated today such as Haenchen who plainly states that "Luke has written the Jews off."¹⁸³ Meanwhile a less condemning rejection motif is promulgated by Tannehill as he concludes that Luke

¹⁸¹ Little has changed since Wills's ("Depiction," 631) assessment that Luke's attitude towards the Jews has been "anything but clear in recent scholarship." This section is a condensed (but modified) version of my essay in light of its implications on the date of Acts. See Armstrong, "Jewish Response," 209–30.

¹⁸² Tuckett, *Luke*, 50.

¹⁸³ Haenchen, "Source Material," 278. Similarly, O'Neill (*Theology*, 90) claims that Acts "presents a theology in which the Church has abandoned the People [Jews]." A few years later, Ruether (*Faith and Fratricide*, 89) argued that the Jews as a "religious community" in Acts became "a hostile symbol." Likewise Sanders ("Jewish People," 53) bluntly states that "Luke condemns 'the Jews.'" Similarly, Cook ("Myriads," 122) says that "Luke's contention" is that they "receive only what they deserve and what retribution demands." Some also charge Luke with anti-Semitism (Sanders, "Salvation," 116; Cook, "Myriads," 123; Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 64–116). Others claim that it is an "unjustified conclusion" that "God has abandoned his people because of their unbelief" which is the "first step towards Christian antisemitism." Dunn, *Acts*, xii. See more recently Bonz, "Luke's Revision," 151; Pervo, *Acts*, 685 and Buttica, "Rejected," 162.

presents the Jews as “a tragic story.”¹⁸⁴ Given such a *mélange* of interpretation it is no surprise that Luke-Acts has come under “critical scrutiny in recent years.”¹⁸⁵

More recently, Keener explains that, against “many interpreters,” Acts 28:16–31 “does not teach a final rejection of Israel.”¹⁸⁶ Like Immanuel we ask similar questions: “What is Luke’s position regarding the Jews in Acts? Is he anti-Jewish? Are the Jews lost forever, especially after Paul’s quotation and interpretation of Isaiah in Acts 28:23–28?”¹⁸⁷ Which view accurately reflects the story of Paul’s engagement with the Jews in Acts 28:17–28? And how does such a view inform our understanding of the date of Acts?

It is argued here that the recent and notable shift in the interpretation concerning the Jewish response at the end of Acts directly impacts the dating debate. Views that see the Jews as condemned in Acts in general (and the end in particular) reflect a post-70 CE date of Acts where Jerusalem and its Temple are destroyed. This is also true for those who see the Jews in Acts as a ‘tragic’ story rather than condemned completely. Conversely, a more hopeful view that sees evidence of a more favourable attitude toward the Jews in Acts and an acceptance of the gospel more accurately reflects a pre-70 CE date.¹⁸⁸

At a first glance, the end of Acts does seem to leave the reader on a “triumphant” note concerning the Gentile mission on the one hand but a sense of ‘tragedy’ or

¹⁸⁴ Tannehill, *Shape*, 124; idem, “Tragic Story,” 69–85; idem, “Rejection,” 130–41 and idem, *Narrative Unity*, et passim.

¹⁸⁵ Tuckett, *Luke*, 50.

¹⁸⁶ Keener, *Acts*, 4:3714. Further Keener (4:3718) states that this “passage cannot function as a decisive and permanent rejection of God’s plan for all the Jews.” See also idem, 2:2098; Tuckett, *Luke*, 62–64; Sanders, “Reflections,” 265–86; Immanuel, *Repent*, 157; Bock, *Acts*, 755 and most recently Jennings, *Acts*, 245.

¹⁸⁷ Immanuel, *Repent*, 156. Cf. also Tuckett, *Luke*, 50–64; Buttica, “Rejected,” 162–63.

¹⁸⁸ One of the reasons commonly cited for dating Acts early is the fact that the early Jerusalem church was still in contact with the Temple establishment, Synagogues, Pharisees and Sadducees which would make a date of Acts after the Jewish rebellion in 66 CE difficult and incomprehensible after Jerusalem’s destruction in 70 CE along with the Temple (cf. chapter 1, sixth reason).

‘condemnation’ concerning a lack of Jewish response to Paul’s gospel on the other.¹⁸⁹

While some emphasize the recurrent themes of Jewish rejection (or condemnation), others focus upon the success of the Gentile mission while remaining hopeful with regards to the Jewish response. Regardless, the common thread seems to be that the end of Acts formulates some kind of narrative climax—either Jewish ‘tragedy,’ Gentile ‘triumph,’ or at times a blend of both themes.

Jewish Condemnation

There are several categories or ‘degrees’ of how some interpret the so called ‘tragic’ response of Israel to the gospel at the end of Luke-Acts. The most severe is outright condemnation. (J.) Sanders explains how the view that “Luke condemns ‘the Jews’” and “‘writes them off’ is almost as old as critical New Testament scholarship.”¹⁹⁰ The history goes back to Overbeck (= DeWette) who “took such a view” after rejecting the Tübingen school’s explanation that the intention of Acts was to “reconcile apostolic Jewish Christianity and Pauline Gentile Christianity.”¹⁹¹

A few decades later Loisy, contra Tübingen, continued Overbeck’s view as did Haenchen in more recent times.¹⁹² Haenchen picks up where Loisy left off arguing that Paul’s pronouncement to the Jews in Rome (Acts 28:28) represents a *final* rejection of the

¹⁸⁹ Troftgruben (*Conclusion*, 26) states that many view the end of Acts as containing a “definitive theological message about the lack of response to the gospel by the Jews.” For example, Tannehill (“Tragic Story,” 85) concludes with these words: “The story of Israel, so far as the author of Luke-Acts can tell it, is a tragic story.”

¹⁹⁰ Sanders, “Jewish People,” 51–75 (53). It is clear that the conclusions of some in this camp are simply a repeat of the previous generation. For instance, the first four pages of Sanders’s (“Jewish People,” 51–54) argument reveals only four references that are not dependent upon Haenchen’s viewpoint—and two of them—DeWette (*Apostelgeschichte*) and Loisy (*Actes*) are the progenitors of Haenchen’s viewpoint. Recall my chapter 2; Porter and Robinson, *Hermeneutics*, 10 and Bultmann’s dictum (“Exegesis,” 145) that “no exegesis is without presuppositions.”

¹⁹¹ Sanders, “Jewish People,” 53. See also, Baur, *Paul*, 1:6; Dewette, *Kurze Erklärung*, xxxviii.

¹⁹² Loisy, *Evangelies Synoptiques*, 2:652; idem, *Actes*, 118; and Haenchen, “Judentum und Christentum,” 155–87.

Jews who are replaced by the Gentiles—who will listen.¹⁹³ Following Haenchen, Conzelmann proposes that “Luke no longer counts on the success of the Christian mission with ‘the Jews’...the situation with the Jews was hopeless.”¹⁹⁴ Conzelmann also insists that the “turning away from the Jews and turning toward the Gentiles is final.”¹⁹⁵

It seems that Ruether, in a similar fashion to Haenchen and Conzelmann, also holds a condemning view.¹⁹⁶ Like Ruether, J. Sanders does not see much hope for the Jews in Luke-Acts.¹⁹⁷ One of his key arguments is that the verb *πείθω* (“to convince/persuade”) rarely constitutes conversion.¹⁹⁸ While he provides only three examples (Acts 13:43; 18:4; and 28:23–24), it is also clear that his understanding of *πείθω* is deficient (cf. the discussion on *πείθω* in “Jewish Tragedy” below). He further claims that “there is precious little conversion to Christianity in the diaspora according to Acts.”¹⁹⁹ This is strange as he dismisses the evidence of the “great crowd of Jews” who “believed” in Borea and that of Acts 21:20.²⁰⁰ Here the verb in question (*πιστεύω*) means

¹⁹³ Haenchen, “Judentum und Christentum,” 185 (see also 165–66, 171, 173–75).

¹⁹⁴ Conzelmann, *Acts*, 227.

¹⁹⁵ Conzelmann, *Acts*, 227.

¹⁹⁶ Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 64–116 (89–90). Ruether wrongly considers Acts 13:45–48 as a representative “formula in Acts for Jewish rejection versus gentile faith” (90). Ruether fails to include the greater context of Acts 13 where Paul not only addresses his fellow Israelites (v. 16), but also that “many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas” (v. 43). They were also (in v. 43) “persuading them to continue in the grace of God” (*ἔπειθον αὐτοὺς αὐτοὺς προσμένειν τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ*). Ruether further recounts Paul’s situation where the “Jewish religious community of Rome confronts him” and explains how their “rejection of the gospel then constitutes the culminating ‘rejection of the Jews’ and ‘election of the Gentiles’” (90). On the contrary, the end of Acts does not paint such a clear picture of Jewish rejection (cf. esp. Acts 28:24, 30).

¹⁹⁷ Sanders (“Salvation,” 104) considers it the “standard view” that the Jews “no longer have the opportunity to accept the gospel” in Acts 28. See also, Jervell, *People of God*, 44; Conzelmann, *Theology*, 163 and Haenchen, *Acts*. Sanders (108) works through the less ‘condemning’ views of Jervell (*People of God*, 63) and Franklin (*Christ the Lord*, 114–15) who think that there is some hope for Israel and that “Paul’s final statement is not a rejection of the Jews” (quotation is Franklin’s). See also Sanders (“Jewish People,” 52) who outlines the two main camps of opinion: some Jews accept while others do not, or Luke “condemns all the Jewish people collectively for their obstinacy in the face of divine proffering of salvation and for their participation in the execution of Jesus.”

¹⁹⁸ Sanders, “Salvation,” 108.

¹⁹⁹ Sanders, “Salvation,” 109.

²⁰⁰ Sanders, “Salvation,” 111; Cook, “Myriads,” 102–23.

“to believe something to be true and, hence, worthy of being trusted—to believe, to think to be true, to regard as trustworthy.”²⁰¹ Hence the clause *πόσαι μυριάδες εἰσιν ἐν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις τῶν πεπιστευκότων* reads: “how [many] thousands are among the Jews [who] have believed.”

Sanders also highlights the repeated “hostility of the Jewish people to the purposes of God” that is “so vehemently denounced here and portrayed ad nauseam throughout the rest of Acts right up to the concluding scene.”²⁰² He emphasizes the “pervasive character of the theme of Jewish rejection in the Gospel” that culminates in the “most infamous act of rejection possible by murdering Jesus.”²⁰³ As some have pointed out, it is simply not true that Luke’s gospel blames ‘the Jews’ for the murder of Jesus.²⁰⁴ Rather, Luke points to a narrower audience—the Jewish leadership as the ones responsible for Jesus’s death (Luke 22:1–6, 52, 66–71; 23:1, 2).²⁰⁵

There are scholars who still hold to this condemning view such as Bonz who claims that Luke placed “a sharpened version of Paul’s original words in the apostle’s

²⁰¹ L&N 31:35. Porter (*Verbal Aspect*, 260–70) suggests this heavily marked verb in the stative aspect represents a complex state of affairs. Further to this, the head term for this word group in Acts 21:20 is *μυριάς* which is a “very large number, not precisely defined” (BDAG). The interrogative *πόσος* is an “interrogative of quantity of objects or events, usually implying a considerable amount—how many” (L&N 59:5 and Rom 11:12). Accordingly, *πόσος* defines (modifies) *μυριάς* (‘thousands’)—at the same time *τῶν πεπιστευκότων* (inflected = ‘believers’) qualifies the scope of *μυριάδες*. The distributional preposition *ἐν* is the specifier (along with *τοῖς*) for the head term *Ἰουδαίοις* (see Armstrong, “ὑποτάσσω,” 152–71 with regards to my linguistic framework).

²⁰² Sanders, “Salvation,” 110. Cook (“Myriads,” 122) is another proponent of the ‘condemning’ view as he insinuates how Luke’s argument is that the Jews essentially get what “they deserve and what retribution demands.”

²⁰³ Sanders, “Salvation,” 116–17. See also idem, “Jewish People,” and Cook, “Myriads,” 123. This interpretation is a dangerous and unjustified misapplication of prophetic texts to other groups as noted by Callaway, “Hammer,” 21–38 (esp. 38).

²⁰⁴ Keener, *Acts*, 1:941–42.

²⁰⁵ Similarly, Maddox (*Purpose*, 45) observes that “Luke received from the gospel-tradition the basic information that the career of Jesus was marked by constant clashes with the Jewish leaders, which ultimately led to his crucifixion.” Further to this point, Evans (*Perceive*, 123–25) refutes the charge that Luke’s use of Isa 6:9–10 is anti-Semitic. He (123) points to Sanders’s oversight of “intra-Jewish polemic and sectarian controversy” while noting the very real hatred the Pharisees had towards the Sadducees (cf. also 1 *Enoch* 38.5, 95.3; *m. Sanh.* 10.1, *b Ber.* 58a).

mouth at the very close of Luke-Acts.”²⁰⁶ Part of her thesis relies on the speculative premise that Luke had time to “rethink this problem from a considerably later and more wholly Gentile perspective.”²⁰⁷ Bonz argues based on the “past tense” of ἀποπέλλω (‘to send’) that “this last warning” turns “into a solemn pronouncement” (Acts 28:28).²⁰⁸ However, in the Acts narrative the Gentile *and* Jewish mission continues on (cf. Acts 28:30–31).²⁰⁹ Bonz does not seem to consider this as she states in her conclusion: “With this pronouncement, Luke’s narrative essentially ends, making Paul’s words of judgment against Jewish unbelief no longer an interim reflection but *the final word*—and not only Paul’s final word, but *God’s final word as well*” (emphasis added).²¹⁰ On the contrary, the Acts narrative does not end until v. 31—which is (contra Bonz) “God’s final word” in Luke-Acts.

Since then, Butticaz draws upon Bonz claiming that Acts 28:25–27 “appears to be the final judgement against the Jews who oppose the gospel.”²¹¹ Similarly, Pervo perceives “a shift toward invoking the passage [Acts 28:26–27=Isa 6:9–10] to condemn the Jews in general.”²¹² This line of reasoning fails to account for (1) the grammatical and linguistic issues discussed above, (2) the evidence for a mixed Jewish response in verse

²⁰⁶ Bonz, “Revision,” 143–51 (151).

²⁰⁷ Bonz, “Revision,” 151. Here the connection between date and interpretation is most evident. Earlier, O’Neill (*Theology of Acts*, 93) argued that Acts reflects “a theology which developed in the second century” (see also, Tyson, *Marcion*; Pervo, *Dating Acts*; and idem, *Acts*, 685). Bonz’s (via O’Neill’s and other’s) view is assumptive and precarious given the strong evidence for a much earlier date of Acts. See Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*; Keener, *Acts*, 1:383–401; Porter, “Dating,” 553–74; Schnabel, *Acts*, 27–28, 1062–63 and Armstrong, “A New Plea,” 79–110.

²⁰⁸ Bonz, “Revision,” 151. This proposition suffers from a fatal neglect of the well-established research on Greek tense form and function (cf. Stagg, “Aorist,” 222–31; Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 29, 76–83, 98–102; Decker, *Temporal deixis*, 26). As the least marked tense, the aorist in Acts simply formulates the narrative background as noted by Culy and Parsons, *Acts*, xv–xvi. The meaning of verse 28 is such that the “gospel has been sent to the Gentiles *even* they will listen.” The conjunction καὶ in this case is adverbial, giving the sense of “even” or “also.” Cf. Porter, *Idioms*, 211.

²⁰⁹ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 127.

²¹⁰ Bonz, “Revision,” 151.

²¹¹ Butticaz, “Rejected,” 162; Bonz, “Revision,” 151.

²¹² Pervo, *Acts*, 685.

24, (3) the inclusive and welcoming nature of verse 30, and especially (4) the wisdom background of Isa 6:9–10 in light of (5) the Jewish portrait of Paul in Acts.²¹³

Jewish Tragedy

This camp of scholars, though not as extreme as J. Sanders *et al.*, still interprets the end of Acts as some form of Jewish ‘tragedy’ or rejection of the gospel.²¹⁴ Jervell, thinks that Luke has in effect declared an end to the Jewish mission—but not because it was a failure, but because it was a success. Furthermore, Jervell thinks that the Isaiah quotation is directed to the unrepentant Jews only—so he does not see a ‘problem’ per se because there are ‘repentant’ Jews who do accept the Christian message.²¹⁵

Since then, Tyson who engages Jervell, provides an overview for understanding the fundamental problem of why the Jews are portrayed in Acts the way they are.²¹⁶ He is certain that this problem is, to a large extent, tied to the end of Acts along with the major themes throughout the book.²¹⁷ He explains that “Luke-Acts must also deal with a historical problem, namely the problem that most Jews did not become Christians.”²¹⁸ Tyson’s perspective offers a tragic but less condemning view when it comes to the difficulties apparent in Acts 28. With regards to Paul’s second meeting with the Jews (Acts 28:24) he admits that “the reaction of the Jews is not one of total rejection, but of

²¹³ See Evans, “Isaiah 6:9–10,” 415–18; idem, “Interpretation”; idem, *Perceive*; Foster, “Contribution;” Hartley *Wisdom Background*; Kilgallen, “Acts 28, 28–Why,” 176–87; Watts, “Isaiah,” 213–33; and Zetterholm, *Approaches*, et passim.

²¹⁴ Jervell, *People of God*, 41–74, 63–69.

²¹⁵ Jervell, *People of God*, 63–69.

²¹⁶ Tyson, “Jewish Rejection,” 124–37.

²¹⁷ He suggests that “[a]lmost all scholars agree” that Paul’s meeting with the Jews in Acts 28:17–28 represents a “narrative event of special prominence” but some consider this to be a “special problem” because Paul “rejects Jews in a way that is incompatible” with earlier themes in Acts. See Tyson, “Jewish Rejection,” 124.

²¹⁸ Tyson, *Images*, 182.

partial acceptance.”²¹⁹ He also notes the important difference (and distance created) between Paul’s use of ‘our’ vs. ‘your ancestors’ (28:17, 25) as well as the debate on *ἐπειθοντο* (Acts 28:24).

Tyson relays Bruce’s caution that “the imperf. does not necessarily imply that they were actually persuaded.”²²⁰ Likewise, Tannehill thinks that some of Paul’s hearers “were in process of being persuaded but had made no lasting decision.”²²¹ Meanwhile, Williams (based on the imperfect tense) thinks that the “possibility remains that the process of conversion went on until some were converted.”²²² Still others argue they were in fact “persuaded”—and this can be substantiated through a linguistically informed understanding of tense, mood, and aspect.²²³ The verb *πείθω* here in the imperfective aspect means “to convince someone to believe something and to act on the basis of what is recommended—to persuade, to convince.”²²⁴ If *πείθω* does not connote persuasion, then the clause *οἱ δὲ ἠπίστουν* (which is directly dependent upon the previous clause) would not make any sense.²²⁵

²¹⁹ Tyson, *Images*, 175. Tyson (“Jewish Rejection,” 137) considers both acceptance and rejection motifs in Luke–Acts and shows that while Luke “ends with Paul preaching the gospel in Rome, ‘openly and unhindered’ (Acts 28:31), not far from his mind is the rejection by that final group of Jews Paul tried to convince.” Hence, he (137) considers the “problem of Jewish rejection” to be “more significant than the story of Gentile acceptance.” His concluding viewpoint is that “the mission to the Jews has been a failure” (137) and later he says “it has been terminated” (latter quotation is from Tyson, *Images*, 176).

²²⁰ Bruce, *Acts*, 540. Tyson, *Images*, 180. Bruce (540) takes *ἐπειθοντο* (Acts 28:24) in the sense that they “gave heed.”

²²¹ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:347. Marshall, *Acts*, 444–45 also notes a lack of a definitive conversion.

²²² Williams, *Acts*, 453.

²²³ Evans, *Perceive*, 125–26; Longenecker, *Acts*, 570.

²²⁴ L&N 33:301.

²²⁵ Additionally, the imperfective aspect suggests that the ‘convincing’ is “in progress” while the indicative mood of the verb is used to “grammaticalize simple assertions about what the writer or speaker sees as reality, whether or not there is a factual basis for such an assertion.” See Porter, *Idioms*, 21 and 51 respectively; and also idem, *Verbal Aspect*, 163–77. While *πείθω* occurs 52 times in the NT, it occurs 4 times in Luke (11:22; 16:31; 18:9; 20:6) and 17 times in Acts (5:36–37, 39; 12:20; 13:43; 14:19; 17:4; 18:4; 19:8; 19:26; 21:14; 23:21; 26:26, 28; 27:11; 28:23–24). In every single case the context suggests the persuasion produced some kind of action or result. For example, Acts 14:19 graphically suggests that the

According to other Jewish ‘tragedy’ proponents like Maddox the end of Luke-Acts reveals a negative “anti-Jewish orientation” where “the Jews are excluded.”²²⁶ Although Maddox recognizes that “many Jews became disciples of Jesus” and “many others became believers in him,” Luke “nevertheless stands over against Judaism as an organized community, which he regards as unbelieving.”²²⁷ For Maddox, the final scene of Acts presents a clear contrast between “Isaiah’s words to ‘this people’” (v. 26) and “the Gentiles, who ‘will actually listen’” (v. 28).²²⁸

Tannehill is perhaps the best known and often quoted proponent of the Jewish rejection/tragedy motif in Luke-Acts.²²⁹ The following is a good summary of his viewpoint (and for this section): “Jewish rejection dominates the final scene in Acts and is emphasized in other major scenes of the narrative. The story of Israel, so far as the author of Luke-Acts can tell it, is a tragic story.”²³⁰ Tannehill explains that since this theological problem is given so much weight in the Acts narrative (as it was in Rom 9–11) this “is a sign of the importance of scriptural promises to the Jewish people for the implied author.”²³¹ Although he promotes a Jewish rejection motif in Acts, he does offer some glimmer of hope for the Jews.²³²

crowd was amply persuaded (πείσαντες τοὺς ὄχλους)—enough to stone and almost kill Paul. Therefore it seems clear in Acts 28:24a that the basic sense of οἱ μὲν ἐπείθοντο τοῖς λεγομένοις is that “some were convinced by what he said.”

²²⁶ Maddox, *Purpose*, 42–43. Maddox does highlight the positive Gentile theme (esp. the last two verses) but observes the Jewish rejection throughout (citing Haenchen and Conzelmann).

²²⁷ Maddox, *Purpose*, 46.

²²⁸ Maddox, *Purpose*, 46.

²²⁹ For example, Tannehill is cited at least eleven times by Peterson (*Acts*, 717–25) on the last few verses of Acts. Peterson (717) reproduces Tannehill’s view as he claims how this “final statement about the Jewish lack of response to the gospel is certainly pessimistic.”

²³⁰ Tannehill, *Shape*, 124. See also idem, “Tragic Story,” 69–85 and idem, *Narrative Unity*, 2:354–57. Tannehill (*Shape*, 145) highlights the “increasing emphasis on Jewish rejection in the Pauline portions of Acts” which represents a grand theological problem for Tannehill (see also *Shape*, xvi, 145–65 and “Rejection,” 130–41).

²³¹ Tannehill, *Shape*, 145. The role of an “implied author” also implies the concept of an “implied reader” which is an important but debated concept (see Booth, *Rhetoric*, 137–40; Suleiman, “Introduction,”

There are a few other scholars who fit into the tragedy camp such as Pao who claims that in Luke 4:16–30 the “dawn of the new age as characterized by the Isaianic New Exodus is announced” and in Acts 28:25–28 the “rejection of the prophetic movement by the Jews is noted by a lengthy quotation from Isaiah 6.”²³³ He substantiates the “connection between the rejection by the Jews and the mission to the Gentiles” by appealing to Acts 13:46, 18:6b and 28:28.²³⁴ Last, Puskas presents a similar tragic view that goes back to O’Neill.²³⁵

Jewish Hope

While the first two groups interpret the Jewish response at the end of Acts with varying levels of doom and gloom, this group is more hopeful and does not consider the issue to be a closed case. For example, Skarsaune explains that the mission to the Jews is not finished—and the patristic evidence further points to this fact.²³⁶ Likewise, Marshall is

3–45; and also Tompkins, “Introduction,” ix–xxvi). Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 42), via Fowler (“The Reader,” 13), raises the question as to what degree do “texts influence (direct, control, manipulate) readers?” and vice versa (see n. 20). Troftgruben (43) observes how “texts are scarcely without influence in the reading process.” Additionally, Parsons and Pervo (*Rethinking*, 77–78) explain the inherent problem of “identifying an implied author with a real historical author”—especially with regards to the “implied author of Acts” and of Luke.

²³² Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 2:357.

²³³ Pao, *New Exodus*, 109. He explains how “the early Christian community” is “the true heir of the Israelite traditions” (Pao, *New Exodus*, 37–69 [here 69]). See also his concluding chapter: “The Transformation of the Isaianic Vision: The Status of the Nations/Gentiles” (217–48).

²³⁴ Pao, *New Exodus*, 243. Here Pao (243 [n. 88]) leaves a (small) window open for the Jewish mission (cf. also Porter, *Paul in Acts*, 186; Tannehill, “Rejection,” 83–101). With regards to the end of Acts, Pao (104) declares that the “theme of the rejection of the Christian message by the Jews reaches its climax” (along with Tannehill, this is repeated by Peterson, *Acts*, 716–18). This view is not new as O’Neill (*Theology of Acts*, 90) explained how the “Church is shown to be at last facing the destiny to which God was leading it, by finally turning from the Jews to the Gentiles” (see also 93).

²³⁵ Puskas (*Conclusion*, 116 n. 35) argues that the “Jewish indifference to Paul’s preaching” is because of the “traditional disobedience of the Jews reflected in the unbelief of their fathers to the message of the prophets” (see also 112–14, 127; Acts 7:51–53; 28:25b–28; Luke 6:22–23; 11:47–50; 13:33–34; O’Neill, *Theology*, 76 (n.1) and Franklin, *Christ the Lord*, 114–15). Puskas (*Conclusion*, 137–40) rests most of his conclusions upon the success of the gospel and the Gentile mission in Rome.

²³⁶ Skarsaune, “Mission,” 82.

optimistic and does not consider the Jewish rejection to be final.²³⁷ Meanwhile, Soards notes how the “results of Paul’s efforts were mixed, and as they [the Jews] quarrelled among themselves Paul had the last word, which he spoke to those who disbelieved.”²³⁸ He also notices how in “form and function the concluding remarks, vv. 25b–28, are comparable to 13:46–47; 18:6, but these verses are generally similar to other polemical remarks made in speeches” (see Acts 7:4b).²³⁹ Subsequently, Soards considers this to be a correct interpretation against “those readings of Acts which find the door to salvation closed to Israel at the end of Acts.”²⁴⁰

Others have also challenged the rejection motifs in favour of a more hopeful interpretation. Gempf explains how it is “completely unlikely” that the story of Paul in Rome is an “attempt by Luke to disown any continuing attempts to evangelize the Jews.”²⁴¹ Gempf further reasons that a more “careful reading of the story” shows that “Christianity has not rejected the Jews, although Jews have rejected Christianity.”²⁴² Meanwhile, Litwak compares Rom 11 and Acts 28:16–31 and proposes that “both Pauls

²³⁷ Marshall, *Acts*, 445. He refers to Rom 11:25–32 and suggests that this indicates that Paul was looking “for a change of heart on their part in due time” (cf. also his note on Luke 13:35 in Marshall, *Luke*, 577). Peterson (*Acts*, 719 [n. 105]) disagrees (re: Acts 28:28) and states that Marshall has misread “the text in its context...and that he is missing the point of Acts 28:30–31” (however, Peterson [as noted above] is heavily influenced by Tannehill).

²³⁸ Soards, *Speeches*, 131.

²³⁹ Soards, *Speeches*, 132. Maddox (*Purpose*, 44) holds a contrary view where the verses are “not merely parallel: there is a progressive intensification of the theme” [cf. also Soards, *Speeches*, 132]). However, Soards (132) further (via Moessner, “Preacher,” 96–104) reasons that here there is a clear Jewish “eschatological remnant illustrating non-believing Israel’s peril but also the continuing possibility of repentance and belief.”

²⁴⁰ Soards, *Speeches*, 132.

²⁴¹ Gempf, “Reception,” 59. He (60) refers to the inclusive ‘all’ found in Acts 28:30 and Paul’s pattern of going to the Synagogue first.

²⁴² Gempf, “Reception,” 60. He (63) is optimistic in the sense that the Jews in Rome are not as “anti-Christian as we might have expected. Instead, to our surprise, they seem quite open and even interested.”

agree on several points regarding Jewish response to the gospel.”²⁴³ At the end of Acts Litwak sees Paul “as an Israelite: at one with the people of Israel and in sympathy with them and the customs of the fathers.”²⁴⁴ He estimates that this account should “not be read as a final, decisive rejection for Jews as a whole, as that is contrary to the pattern already established in Acts and the first half of Acts 28:24.”²⁴⁵

The popular ‘tragic’ Jewish position proposed by Tannehill has recently been challenged by O’Toole who indicates that “Not all scholars would accept Tannehill’s interpretation.”²⁴⁶ In his rebuttal he highlights Luke’s narration of Paul’s loyalty to Judaism in Acts (i.e. Acts 21:24).²⁴⁷ He contends that Luke actually redefines Israel,²⁴⁸ and that the statement “about salvation for the Gentiles in v. 28 does not diminish the openness of v. 31.”²⁴⁹ In his conclusion he argues that the “structure of Acts 28:16–31 surely emphasizes the quotation from Isaiah” but the emphasis rests on “salvation being sent to the gentiles” (v. 28) and Paul’s “freedom to receive and preach to all of his

²⁴³ Litwak, “Judaism,” 229. He infers (229) that the historical Paul and the Paul of Luke “see a mixed response among Jews, the developing of a faithful remnant, and in both texts ‘provoking to jealousy’ is a critical element.”

²⁴⁴ Litwak, “Judaism,” 232. He argues against Barrett that Acts 13:46 does not represent “‘a decisive and radical turning-point in Paul’s mission’... The Jews are never abandoned, but the rejection of the gospel by some of them ‘provided the occasion,’ though not the cause, for the mission to the Gentiles” (Litwak [233] cites Barrett, *Acts*, 657). Litwak (233) contends that Acts 28:24 and 28:30 “frame the citation from Isaiah 6 and indicate that some, including Jews, continue to respond positively to Paul’s preaching” (see also Witherington, *Acts*, 804).

²⁴⁵ Litwak, “Judaism,” 233. Litwak (234) sees the last scene with Paul in Acts as a mixed response: “Paul’s preaching does have some success, and we are not told that the group that did not believe is larger than the group that did, nor should such a view be read into the text.” Last he challenges the prevalent view “that Paul will no longer preach to Jews at all” (237–39; Acts 28:28). He does this (and I think successfully) by noting the problems of this view against the background of Paul’s expressed desire in Romans 11 “to continue to win Jews to an acceptance of Jesus” (237; Acts 17:2).

²⁴⁶ O’Toole, “End of Acts,” 371–96 (372). He (372) refers to Barrett (*Acts*, 1246 [who writes in response to Tannehill]) saying this “seems to be too simple an analysis of Acts.”

²⁴⁷ O’Toole, “End of Acts,” 378. He (373) uses composition criticism (vs. Tannehill’s narrative criticism) which is a “specification of redaction criticism.” The purpose of this method is to “determine what the final author

(editor) wanted to say to his readers or, if one wishes, what the present text tells us” (372).

²⁴⁸ O’Toole, “End of Acts,” 376–79.

²⁴⁹ O’Toole, “End of Acts,” 382–83.

visitors” (vv. 30–31).²⁵⁰ The purpose of Isa 6:9–10 at the end of Acts relates to “God’s guiding what happens and challenges the Roman Jews and Luke’s reader to value rightly the Christian message.”²⁵¹

Troftgruben also challenges those who see the end of Acts as a final blow to the Jews. First, he states that Paul “throughout Acts makes a concentrated effort to minister to Jews, a practice that he continues in the ending” (Acts 28:17).²⁵² Second, he highlights the mixed response of the Jews to Paul’s preaching (vv. 24–25a).²⁵³ Third, although Troftgruben considers the Isaiah quotation (28:26–27) to be “forceful,” the purpose “may be aimed at generating a response from the hearers (i.e. repentance) rather than finalizing their rejection.”²⁵⁴ His fourth point relates to the ‘all’ inclusive nature of Paul’s welcoming in Acts 28:30–31.²⁵⁵ He concludes by stating that the “message of Acts 28:16–31 concerning the Jews appears more ambiguous than decisive.”²⁵⁶

²⁵⁰ O’Toole, “End of Acts,” 392.

²⁵¹ O’Toole, “End of Acts,” 392.

²⁵² Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 27.

²⁵³ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 27. Spencer (*Acts*, 239) and Alexander (*Ancient*, 215) similarly emphasize the mixed response of the Jews. Elsewhere Troftgruben (126) notes how “many features of Acts 28:16–31 call into question the idea that vv. 25b–28 conclude all hope for the Jews” based on the fact that there are “Jews still being persuaded by the message of Jesus” (127; Acts 28:24). Here there appears to be some crossover with Tannehill (*Narrative Unity*, 2:347) who “indicates that there is still hope of convincing some Jews in spite of what Paul is going to say about the Jewish community in Rome.”

²⁵⁴ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 27 (see also 127–30 and Alexander, “Reading,” 442). Troftgruben (27 [n. 72]) suggests that Paul’s “turning” to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46–47; 18:6) is “followed by continued ministry among the Jews. If Paul has not followed through by decisively abandoning the Jewish people earlier in the narrative, is there anything to indicate that he will do so here (cf. 28:30–31)?” As a result, the point of Acts 28:25b–28 is “to sense the tragedy of Paul’s words” (130).

²⁵⁵ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 27–28. See also Cassidy, “Proclamation,” 147; Jennings, *Acts*, 246. Jennings (245) captures the Spirit of the Isaiah text from the viewpoint of Jewish hope: “Paul’s final statement to his own is not one of hatred but a lover’s anguish”—and that “frustration is not rejection.” Strangely enough, it seems that many advocates in the ‘condemnation’ camp either bypass or argue against the inclusive elements in Acts 28. It was Dupont (“La Conclusion,” 377) who previously corrected Haenchen’s (*Acts*, 726 and others’) view that v. 30 could not include the Jews. Dupont (377) considers a restrictive interpretation of πάντας unjustified “pour peu qu’on tienne compte des habitudes littéraires de Luc.” In Acts 28:30 the adjective πάντας (here in predicate structure) clearly denotes an extensive use which is “often translated all” (Porter, *Idioms*, 119). It appears that Dupont is correct—especially since ‘all’ the major translations similarly reflect this extensive use. Some scholars (i.e. Bonz, “Revision,” 151 [n. 31]) seem to have missed Dupont’s dated (but correct) observation.

²⁵⁶ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 28.

Isaiah 6:9–10 in Light of the Jewish Portrait of Paul in Acts

Two additional factors need to be taken into consideration with regards to the interpretation of the Jewish response at the end of Acts. The first is the notoriously complex nature of the Isaiah passage found in Acts 28:26–27 (Isa 6:9–10), and second is the Jewish background of Paul in Acts.²⁵⁷ Starting with the first issue, Evans comments on how Luke’s inclusion of Isa 6:9 “Go to this people, and say” is “particularly appropriate in light of the missionary thrust of Acts.”²⁵⁸ Subsequently, Evans claims that according to Luke “what prompted Paul’s recitation of this Old Testament text was the response of unbelief” (Acts 28:24).²⁵⁹ Accordingly, the “text now has little to do with the threat of final hardening, but is a promise of ultimate forgiveness. According to the Rabbis Isa 6:9–10 [=IQIsaa] implies the gracious extension of a final offer of repentance.”²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ Hartley (*Wisdom Background*, xiii) admits that Isa 6:9–10 “by any definition or estimation, is a difficult text to understand.”

²⁵⁸ Evans, *Perceive*, 121. Evans (115) observes how the first appearance of Isa 6:9–10 in Luke-Acts is a paraphrase of Mark 4:12 (Luke 8:10b) while the second quote (which is roughly based on the lxx) appears in Acts 28:26–27 (cf. Bock, *Acts*, 755 as he notes the exceptions). Evans (121) explains (that Luke’s use of the lxx here is not significant because that is “the only version of the Old Testament that the Evangelist ever uses” (see also Pao, *New Exodus*, 103).

²⁵⁹ Evans, *Perceive*, 121. In other words, Paul (in v. 25) is addressing the unbelievers in v. 24: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet.” Afterwards, in v. 28 Paul subsequently “admonishes his fellow unbelieving Jews” when he states: “Let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, they will listen.” Evans, *Perceive*, 121. In similar fashion, Spencer (*Acts*, 240) claims that “Paul links his present audience with ‘your [rebellious] ancestors’ whom Isaiah denounced—thus distancing himself from ‘our ancestors’ whom he had openly embraced in the previous scene” (original emphasis; cf. also Bock, *Acts*, 755 and Acts 28:17, 25). After explaining Paul’s Jew first program, Spencer (240) claims that since the “days of Isaiah up to the time of Paul, God’s gracious plan to save Jews as well as Gentiles has remained in force. Prophetic warnings have always been designed to prepare God’s people for renewal; judgement leads to hope—the ‘hope of Israel.’ There is no reason to think that this hope has suddenly been abandoned at the end of Acts.”

²⁶⁰ Evans, “Isaiah 6:9–10,” 418. More recently, Kilgallen (“Acts 28, 28—Why,” 186) similarly proposes that Acts 28:26–28 is “a speech ordered to repentance and faith” and “is not a condemnation or abandonment of Jews” (cf. also the similar conclusion of “repentance” in Robinson, “Motif,” 186). Buttica nuances his position by explaining that Acts 28:27b reflects a similar pronouncement of a “salvation for

Beyond the hope of Israel motif, the often misunderstood fattening/hardening motif of Isa 6:9–10 is also vital for understanding its purpose in the context of the New Testament in general and the end of Acts in particular.²⁶¹ Hartley explains how this text (Isa 6:9–10) “which is part of the commissioning of Isaiah, is most likely programmatic for the entire prophecy.”²⁶² Hartley examines the hermeneutical and philosophical underpinnings of many interpretations and discovers that they are loaded with presuppositions.²⁶³

He finds that Isa 6:9–10 “outlines divine fattening of the heart as a prevention of perception, knowledge, and understanding.”²⁶⁴ Therefore this ‘fattening of the heart’ represents the identification of a deprivation in wisdom—and the purpose is not to condemn the Jews and “write them off.”²⁶⁵ Consequently, Luke’s concluding remark is simply a reflection of the “church’s experience in general, and of the Pauline mission in

Israel” that is “peppered throughout the diptych of Luke-Acts” (see Buttica, “Rejected,” 162–63 and Luke 13:34–35; 21:24; Acts 3:21).

²⁶¹ Since Hartley’s thesis (*Wisdom Background*, xiii) is on the “congenital nature of the fatness of the heart” his insights illuminate this particularly complex issue. Hartley (24) refers to Evans’s 1983 thesis as a “watershed work on obduracy and the use of Isa 6:9–10” (refer also to Foster, “Contribution,” for his extensive treatment of Isa 6:9–10 in Acts 28:23–28).

²⁶² Hartley, *Wisdom Background*, 1. The fact that Isa 6:9–10 appears at critical junctures throughout the NT further confirms its significance (1). Hartley (24) points to Romans 9–11 and Heb 3:8, 13, 15; 4:7 and suggests that “Jewish hardening... serves as a warning to Christians who can harden themselves and suffer the same fate... The hardening of Isa 6:9–10 serves the same purpose for believers in the NT (Acts 28).”

²⁶³ Hartley, *Wisdom Background*, 55. He claims that the historical and philosophical question of freedom is the central bias that impacts the interpreter’s view of this passage: “this view of freedom is usually unstated, seldom critically examined, yet serves as a guiding hermeneutic that dictates how Isa 6:9–10, and passages like it, can or cannot be construed” (97). If we are convinced that Acts portrays a separation between Paul and Judaism, paired with a growing and consistent theme of Jewish rejection, then naturally, the Isaiah passage will be presented as the final blow (the reverse is also true). Johnson-DeBaufre (“Historical Approaches,” 18) is correct in that “What we see depends on where you stand.”

²⁶⁴ Hartley, *Wisdom Background*, 98. Along with hearing and seeing these terms “serve as a circumlocution for *the prevention of wisdom*” (98; original emphasis).

²⁶⁵ Haenchen, “Source Material,” 278.

particular”—and certainly nothing that justifies a condemning view toward the Jews at the end of Acts.²⁶⁶

A secondary issue relates to ‘Paul and Judaism’ in Acts, or as (E.) Sanders explains “should one not say, ‘Paul and *the rest* of Judaism,’ since Paul himself is surely Jewish?”²⁶⁷ Niebuhr rightly claims that Paul (during his last years in Roman custody) was “regarded as a Jew by those who came to see him in prison. He also considered himself a Jew” aside from his view of Christ as the “only judge he would have to confront” and “not the emperor.”²⁶⁸

Paul, in his letters, clearly thought of himself as thoroughly Jewish (i.e. Phil 3:5–6).²⁶⁹ At the same, Paul (according to Luke) states: “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today” (Acts 22:3; cf. also Acts 21:39). With regards to Acts the portrait of Paul is thoroughly Jewish—despite the incident where Jews from Asia had falsely accused him and had him arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27–36).²⁷⁰

Therefore, if there is an anti-Jewish or literary plan in Acts to present the Jews as a rejected or condemned people (such that would match a post-70 CE context), why is Paul consistently presented as not only a Jew but a Jewish (Christian) *hero* in Acts? Luke

²⁶⁶ Evans, *Perceive*, 121.

²⁶⁷ Sanders, *Judaism*, 1 (original emphasis); see also Eisenbaum, “Perspectives,” 135–54.

²⁶⁸ Niebuhr, “Roman Jews,” 89.

²⁶⁹ Porter (*Apostle*, 27) relays how Paul at “several places in his letters...chronicles his ethnic and religious background in Judaism.” See also Porter’s seven reasons (pp. 27–30).

²⁷⁰ See Porter, *Apostle*, 48. The issue that led to his arrest relates to the assumption by the Jews from Asia (v. 27) that Paul was teaching heresy and had brought “Trophimus the Ephesian” into the Temple (v. 29)—they were not calling into question Paul’s Jewish identity. The nature of the accusation reinforces the fact that they considered Paul to be Jewish; otherwise there would be no point in accusing a gentile of heresy. While noting the complexities Keener (*Acts*, 3:3150) explains that Paul is a “*Jewish* Roman citizen and so could not be accused of profaning the temple by his own presence” (emphasis original). See also Keener’s discussion on the accusation (3:3144–50).

gives priority to the Jewish mission city after city, synagogue after synagogue—something which accurately reflects the missional impulse of Paul and “prevails all the way to its close” (Acts 3:26, 13:46, 17:2, 11, 12; 28:17–31).²⁷¹ At the same time, Luke (in Acts) emphasizes Paul’s “Jew first principle” (i.e. Rom 1:16; 9:1–5; 10:1) that was not without results.²⁷² Finally, beyond the text, the archaeological record indicates that the Jewish response to the gospel in Rome was quite substantial.²⁷³

In summary, it seems there are far greater reasons to see Luke’s attitude toward the Jews in Acts and their response at the end as a far more hopeful situation than is often painted by the first group of (condemnation) scholars who over-generalize the issue of Jewish rejection to the neglect of complex evidence.²⁷⁴ Although the second (tragedy) group of scholars approach the rejection motifs in a more balanced (and less extreme) fashion than the former, there is still a tendency to overplay the rejection motif while minimizing the clear cases of Jewish acceptance. The condemnation and rejection motifs are further deflated by an understanding of the wisdom background of Isa 6:9–10 in light of the Jewish portrait of Paul in Acts. The real Jewish ‘tragedy’ from the perspective of Acts 28 is that some, but not all, rejected Paul’s message of salvation (as many Gentiles

²⁷¹ Buttica, “Rejected,” 160.

²⁷² For example, in Thessalonica it was Paul’s *εἰωθὸς* (‘custom’) as he went “into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures” (Acts 17:2). See also Spencer, *Acts*, 240; Gempf, “Reception,” 60 and Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 27 [n. 72]. That Paul was rejected from the synagogue is no indication that he was not Jewish. The problem was that he was teaching an aberration of Judaism (Acts 21:28).

²⁷³ Although NT scholarship views the church in Rome as predominantly gentile the material evidence points to another reality. Within the confines of Rome is the XIV Augustan region known as ‘Trastevere’ where Jews are known to have lived since the first century CE. Lampe states “with great certainty” that Trastevere is also “an early Christian residential quarter” (cf. Lampe, *Valentinus*, 42 [also 38, 44–45]). Given that Roman Christianity likely “emerged from the Roman synagogues” it is entirely plausible that many of the Jews who lived in this region converted to Christianity (Acts 28:24a). See Lampe, “Roman Christians,” 117 and also my chapter 5 with regards to the topography of Rome during Nero’s reign (54–68 CE).

²⁷⁴ For example, Evans (*Perceive*, 123–24) bluntly states how “[J.] Sanders does not fail to assess the items adequately; *he does not address them at all*” (emphasis added).

did as well). Therefore, it seems that the best interpretation of the evidence envisions a hopeful and mixed Jewish response at the end of Acts.

All of these factors are consistent with a pre-70 date of Acts. Otherwise, “How can we reconcile the picture of a Jewish Paul consistently (and in many cases successfully) reaching out to his kinsmen immediately after his conversion in Damascus (Acts 9:20) to the last verse in Rome (Acts 28:31)—with the incredibly macabre picture of Rome in ashes on the one hand and the destruction of the Temple and the wholesale slaughter of his fellow Jews in Jerusalem on the other?”²⁷⁵ Much ink has been spilled on literary critical attempts to navigate past the most ancient and un-enigmatic interpretation—that Luke did not write more, because he knew no more. Foreshadowing, silence, linkage and the other views discussed above are all creative attempts to explain the other alternative—that Luke fabricated his ending. The evidence points to the latter because no amount of rhetorical skill on Luke’s part or creative literary interpretation can explain a post-70 date of Acts.

The End of Acts and the Comparable Age of its Variants

As we have seen in the last section, the end of Acts provides no shortage of discussion and debate.²⁷⁶ While the two most recent monographs on this subject have suggested narrative and literary critical solutions for the ending, many of the historical and textual matters remain unaddressed.²⁷⁷ Their efforts have in some ways advanced scholarship, but one critical aspect of the so called enigma has remained untouched—the textual

²⁷⁵ The great fire of Rome in 64 CE and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE are examined in chapter 5.

²⁷⁶ This section (including the Appendix) is a modified version of my essay in *Filologia Neotestamentaria*: “Variants,” 87–110.

²⁷⁷ E.g. Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered* and Puskas, *Conclusion*.

variants of Acts 28.²⁷⁸ Scholars who solely rely on the ‘text’ of Acts found in the Nestle-Aland (or UBS) are limiting themselves to one set of manuscripts—to the exclusion of the ‘Western’ textual variations found in others.²⁷⁹ These variants are not simply “scraps on the cutting room floor” as they can also “function as ‘windows’ into the world of early Christianity, its social history, and the various theological challenges it faced.”²⁸⁰

Shortly after WWII, Kenyon stated what could easily be said today—that the issue of the Alexandrian and Western texts remains “the outstanding issue in the criticism of the New Testament.”²⁸¹ Delobel, in his excellent summary, states that it is “not an exaggeration to pretend that the ‘Western’ text is the *most complicated* matter in the field of New Testament textual criticism” (my emphasis).²⁸² And yet, none of the recent

²⁷⁸ My methodology here draws from classical and recent approaches to papyrology and textual criticism (recall “Principles for Sources and Textual Criticism” from chapter 2). As far as papyrology, interpretation, and transcription of the texts, my manuscript research stems from the INTF database while drawing from Porter and Porter, *Greek Papyri and Parchments* and Turner’s, *Greek Papyri* (esp. 54–73). This research is found in the “Appendix: The manuscript Record for Acts 28:11–31.”

²⁷⁹ For example, consider Troftgruben’s (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 35 [n. 103]) reliance on “the final stage of the text” or Puskas’s (*Conclusion*, 25) dismissal of the Western variants in favour of the “the superior Alexandrian text.” This problem is a widespread issue in Acts scholarship in general. Concerning the ‘Western’ text Ropes (“Text of Acts,” 3:vii) laments that “it is unfortunate that no better name should be at hand.” It has been well-established that the Western tradition is “misnamed, since it is not particular to ‘the west.’” Porter, “Developments,” 31 (n. 3). See also Zuntz, “Western Text,” 189 and Tuckett, “How Early,” 70. Some scholars, most notably Parker (*Introduction*, 171), have seriously called into question the validity of text-types, and notes how the Western text-type differs “from each other almost as much.” Meanwhile Porter (*New Testament*, 57) observes how the discipline is in a “state of flux” where the “methods of categorizing and using manuscripts are undergoing serious reevaluation.” I am in general agreement with Elliott’s (*Thoroughgoing Principles*, 7) emphasis on the text-types as “family allegiances between mss” and Epp’s (“Twentieth Century,” 83–108) classification as “clusters” in a looser sense as the variants in this study show.

²⁸⁰ Cf. Hill and Kruger, “Introduction,” 1–19 (5) in reference to Ehrman’s principle in “Text as Window,” 361–79.

²⁸¹ Kenyon, *Greek Bible*, 171. Cadbury (*Acts in History*, 149) sees the two texts in Acts as “so similar as to be not independent, so different as not to be merely the accumulation of usual variants in copying, has posed to scholars a difficult if not insoluble problem. How did two such texts arise?” See more recently Porter, “Developments,” 31–67.

²⁸² Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 83–107 (106). Metzger (*Text*, 293) considers the “evaluation of the ‘Western’ type of text” to be “one of the most persistent problems in New Testament textual criticism.” Epp relays how the Western/Alexandrian textual controversy “really has not been resolved” and the obvious bias from Westcott and Hort continues through to the Alands’ who obviously “pre-judged” the D-text manuscripts and in a sense they had been already “sent into exile.” Epp, “Traditional ‘Canons,’” 79–127 (99–100).

approaches to the end of Acts addresses this issue in detail or provides a first-hand encounter with the actual manuscripts themselves.²⁸³ A critical study on the end of Acts should first assess and engage the “centuries-old riddle” of the variants no matter how “secondary” they appear to be.²⁸⁴ Second, all of the variants of Acts 28:11–31 should be studied together in light of the historical events relating to Acts in general, but especially those tied to its end. Substantial pieces of the puzzle will be forfeited when we neglect the historical context as well as the variants.²⁸⁵

The goal of this section is by no means an attempt to solve the puzzle of the ending, nor the ongoing problem of the text(s) of Acts—it is much more modest—to understand the significance of the variants in light of the ever present ‘Western’ tendency for expansion.²⁸⁶ Subsequently, the question of the silence at the end of Acts that was introduced earlier in the chapter is revisited once more—but this time with an examination of the manuscript record (see “Appendix: The Manuscript Record for Acts 28:11–31”). It is proposed that these variants provide additional evidence in support of Epp’s proposition that the Alexandrian and Western texts are comparable in age.²⁸⁷

Second, a further deduction is that the age of these variants (along with the Alexandrian) is decidedly early (pre-70 CE), which directly challenges post-70 CE advocates.²⁸⁸ This conclusion arises not only from a detailed examination of the variants

²⁸³ There have been several studies on the broader “texts” of Acts: Ropes, “Text of Acts,” 3:i–cccxx, 1–371; Kenyon, “The Western Text,” 287–315; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 222–36; Barrett, *Acts*; Boismard, “Problem,” 147–57; Delobel, “Focus,” 401–10; Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 83–107; Head, “Problem,” 415–44; Porter, “Developments,” 31–68; Strange, 1–34; Tuckett, “How Early,” 69–86; and his more recent essay “Early Text,” 157–74.

²⁸⁴ See Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 106 and Head, “Acts,” 415 respectively.

²⁸⁵ Prior to WWII, historical concerns took center stage in Acts studies as exemplified by the massive (and still useful) work of Lake, Foakes-Jackson, and Ropes, eds., *Beginnings*. Afterwards, the pendulum swung from historical concerns to an unbalanced emphasis on the theology and literary motives of Luke. Since the 1990s, attempts were made to revisit the historical context of Acts once more. See Gill et al., “Preface,” 1:ix–xii.

in Acts 28:11–31 (with the help of INTF), but also due to the cumulative research in the previous chapters where I examine the major positions represented by the early (pre-70 CE), middle (post-70 CE to ±80 CE), and late dating advocates (90–130 CE).²⁸⁹

Therefore, a strong case for an early date of the Western variants of Acts stems from a consideration of the cumulative textual and historical evidence discussed below.

The “Western” Front

But first, all is not “quiet on the ‘Western’ front.”²⁹⁰ The history of discussion behind the two versions of Acts is extensive and many scholars have put their hand to the plough in the quest to provide a cogent solution.²⁹¹ Furthermore, recent trends in text-critical scholarship suggest that the time is ripe for revisiting theories with regards to the origins and development of the text of Acts.²⁹² Although the grander problem of the origin of the text(s) of Acts will not be solved in this dissertation, the variants found in Acts 28:11–31 shed light onto an early period in the textual history of Acts.²⁹³ Given the textual diversity

²⁸⁶ Although there are many studies on the Western theological tendencies, some have challenged Epp’s earlier thesis (*Theological Tendency*), and since then have not found any great differences between the author of Acts and the Western variants. Cf. Strange, *Problem*, 26–27 (65) and Barrett, “Codex Bezae,” 15–27 (25–27). However, it seems that Epp, at the very least, generated greater attention towards the variants of Acts at a key turning point in Acts scholarship. See Kilpatrick, Review of Epp, *Codex Bezae*, 166–70.

²⁸⁷ Epp (“Traditional ‘Canons,’” 100) claims that a “defensible argument can still be made for their comparable age.”

²⁸⁸ The Alexandrian family is usually considered to be earlier than the Western, but this chapter argues that both are essentially early.

²⁸⁹ See Armstrong, “A New Plea,” 79–110; Porter, “Dating,” 553–74; Schnabel, *Acts*, 27–28, 1062–63; and Mittelstaedt (*Lukas als Historiker*, 251–55) who concludes that Acts was written in 62 CE. The major attempts to date Acts in the second century (i.e. Tyson, *Marcion* and Pervo, *Dating Acts*) remain unconvincing. See Puskas, *Conclusion*, 32 (n. 82); Spencer, Review of *Review of Dating Acts and Defining Struggle*, 190–93; Tannehill, Review of *Dating Acts*, 827–28; and Keener, *Acts*, 1:382–401.

²⁹⁰ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 83. This popular phrase hails from Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues*.

²⁹¹ See Kenyon, “The Western Text,” 299.

²⁹² My initial research has led me to agree (in principle) with Ropes’s (“Text of Acts,” 3:viii) original 1926 assessment that “a definite Western text, whether completely recoverable in its original form or not, once actually existed.”

²⁹³ Where Metzger (*Text*, 207) sees “the reconstruction of the history of a variant reading” as a

in Acts, as well as the Western tendency of expansion, it is exceptional that the Western scribe(s) fail to add any significant information with regards to the fate of Paul, the fate of the Roman church, and the destruction of Rome.²⁹⁴

Since there are multiple variants, roughly comprising at least two versions (or editions) of Acts, we must go beyond a tacit rejection of the ‘lesser’ variants by Committee decisions.²⁹⁵ Meanwhile, a tacit acceptance of the eclectic text leaves out a valuable piece of textual history and clues to the end of Acts puzzle.²⁹⁶ Therefore, one way to move the discussion forward with regards to the interpretation of the end of Acts (that was introduced in chapter 4) is to factor the important research on the development of the texts of Acts along with a study of the variants themselves. Since there is so much textual diversity in Acts it seems paramount that this issue is addressed—otherwise we are only dating one family of texts (Alexandrian).²⁹⁷

This text-critical problem is unavoidable. Strange insists that it is “forced upon the reader of Acts”—and “decisions about the text affect conclusions about the work in

“prerequisite to forming a judgement about it,” Kenyon (*Greek Bible*, 253) sees the comprehension of the history of the NT text as “the final goal of textual criticism.”

²⁹⁴ As discussed below (and in chapter 5), these factors are magnified by proximity and chronology. At the end of Acts (28:14–16) Paul goes to Rome in 60–61 CE and stays there under house arrest for the subsequent two year period (28:16, 30). This brings us to approximately 63 CE which is only a year (or so) away from Rome’s great fire that occurred in July of 64 CE and Nero’s subsequent persecution of the Christians. Although the exact year of Paul’s death is debated it likely occurred close to 64 CE and no later than the end of Nero’s reign in 68 CE. Since all of this happened in Rome and within a very short span of time it seems incredible that the scribe(s) would not capitalize on these well-known events in history or the fate of Paul (the book’s main character).

²⁹⁵ Vaganay (*Introduction*, 88 and 169) refers to the presuppositions of the UBS editorial committee as well as their bias against the Western text (while it is also clear that Vaganay [and Amphoux] are biased in favour of the Western text). The first and second committee was made up of Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce Metzger and Allen Wikgren while the third added Carlo Maria Martini. See also Metzger, *Commentary*, 23 and Head, “Acts,” 419.

²⁹⁶ While Marshall includes a brief note on the *stratopedarch* found in the expanded verse 16 of some Western texts, and verse 29, he does not refer to the Western ‘omissions’ found in Acts 28:11, 12–14a, or the addition of verse 19, and the extended verse 31. Marshall, *Acts*, 439–47 (446).

²⁹⁷ Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 35 (n. 103). He is correct in saying that the end of Acts is neither to “entertain readers” or “narrate a life of Paul” or “narrate history for history’s sake”—however, the end does relay many historical events relating to Paul in Rome in a well-detailed geographical context. Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 181.

all its aspects.”²⁹⁸ This ‘problem’ has been noted for a long time. Concerning the Western texts, Ropes asserted that “we should be the poorer, for those fragments of its base, which it enshrines like fossils in an enveloping rock-mass, would probably have perished, and we should have lost these evidences of a good text of extreme antiquity, vastly nearer in date to the original autographs than any of our Greek manuscripts.”²⁹⁹ More recently, Parker claims that the early second century Western text of Acts (and possibly earlier) can be found among the Old Latin, Syriac, and D text.³⁰⁰

Over seventy years later, Delobel’s survey of this issue *actualized* what Ropes *hypothesized*—Delobel claims that it was not until the mid-1980’s that scholarship began to engage the ‘Western’ front once more.³⁰¹

Apart from a few stubborn ‘heretics,’ most editors and exegetes during the preceding decades had based their text-critical decisions on the explicit or silent assumption that the ‘Western’ text is the result of some form of corruption of the original text, which is more faithfully represented by the Alexandrian text-tradition. Everything seemed to be ‘quiet on the Western front.’ But all of a sudden, the hostilities started again.³⁰²

Delobel credits the “impressive” study by Boismard and Lamouille as a primary reason for the shift in focus away from a pure Alexandrian development to a reconsideration of the Western text once more.³⁰³ Barbara Aland explains that when she first wrote her methodology she assumed that the “established” view was that the Western text is a later revision of the book of Acts—“Dem ist aber nicht so.”³⁰⁴

²⁹⁸ Strange, *Problem*, 1. Recall my note 4 above with regards to the assumptions of Troftgruben and Puskas. Meanwhile others ignore the variants entirely. E.g. Williams, *Acts*, 446–55.

²⁹⁹ Ropes, “Text of Acts,” 3:ix.

³⁰⁰ Parker, “Codex Bezae,” 43–50 (48–49).

³⁰¹ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 83.

³⁰² Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 83. The opposition from pro-Western scholars is so great that it almost “looks like a conspiracy against the dominant critical text” (96). See also Delobel, “Focus,” 401–10.

³⁰³ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 83; Boismard and Lamouille, *Le Texte Occidental* (1984 ed.).

³⁰⁴ Barbara Aland, “Charakter und Herkunft,” 5–65 (6). Apparently it was Boismard and Lamouille’s (*Le Texte Occidental*) that shifted her viewpoint. Cf. Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 83.

There have been numerous attempts to provide a solution to the distinct and divergent “traditions” or “text-types.”³⁰⁵ The first position (credited to Blass) is that the author of Acts “issued two editions of each of his works.”³⁰⁶ The major critique against this view is that “it has not always been clear why the author made the changes that he did.”³⁰⁷ Where Blass’s position was later adapted by Boismard and Lamouille, Tavardon builds on Boismard-Lamouille’s work, and sees the Alexandrian text as the work of a redactor, thus promoting the Western text as “more primitive.”³⁰⁸ Like the first, the second theory involves “two different but related editions” except that the second view argues that the Alexandrian text came first.³⁰⁹ It is possible that the Alexandrian text could have been expanded upon and improved (while forming the Western edition)—though few scholars accept this possibility.

The third position—the “revision” or “interpolation” theory—is perhaps the most popular. This view suggests that the “early period of textual transmission was more fluid, and this resulted in a number of interpolations being added to the text, possibly by revisers.”³¹⁰ Clark proposed a fourth view that the Alexandrian text, which came later,

³⁰⁵ It is beyond question that two editions (or versions) of Acts exists. See Barrett, *Acts*, 1:26 and Metzger, *Commentary*, 222.

³⁰⁶ See Kenyon, “The Western Text,” 299. Kenyon explains (299) that Luke originally wrote his gospel in Palestine but “issued a new edition” when he went to Rome with Paul. Luke then wrote two copies of Acts—one for Theophilus and another “with substantial differences, for the church at large” (299). See also Porter, “Developments,” 33. The two edition view goes back at least as far as Jean Leclerc in 1684 (Semler had also suggested that Hemsterhuis was of a similar view). In 1871, Lightfoot revived it while F. Blass (in 1895) presented this idea in full detail. For Blass the Western text of Acts is earlier, while the Gospel is later. See Kenyon (299); Porter, *New Testament*, 62; Boismard and Lamouille, *Le Texte Occidental*, 1:ix; idem, “À Propos d’Actes 27, 1–13,” 48–58; and Boismard, “Problem,” 147–57. For the original proposal, see Blass, *Acta Apostolorum*, 24–32 and idem, *Philology of the Gospels*, 96–137.

³⁰⁷ Porter, “Developments,” 34.

³⁰⁸ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 96 and Tavardon, *Doublets et Variantes*, 1–41.

³⁰⁹ Porter, “Developments,” 34.

³¹⁰ Porter, “Developments,” 34. Westcott, Hort, Kenyon, Dibelius, and Ropes all held to this view. The variant readings could have began as early as the first draft of Acts was written in the early 60s CE. Strange (*Problem*, 185–89) thinks Luke left marginal notations in his first draft which later became the Western text. Delobel (“Luke-Acts,” 105) agrees with Strange’s view in that the Western readings are “(narrative or theological) commentary.” The various Bezan correctors suggest an evolution of the text

was the result of abbreviation due to the “stichometric arrangement” of the Western text.³¹¹ Last, a fifth position involves theories of translation that attempt to explain the Western text’s “growth in length.”³¹²

There are a few more theories worth mentioning that represent a blending of the previous viewpoints. For example, Delebecque proposes that Luke first wrote the Alexandrian draft of Acts around 62 CE. The Western text was Luke’s second improved edition completed a few years later in 67 CE. His view is a blend of Ropes and Aland due to the Alexandrian priority—he also joins rank with Blass who ascribes “the Western text to the same author and dating it in the first century.”³¹³ Meanwhile Amphoux claims that

where marginal notations may have entered the text early on. Cf. Parker, “Codex Bezae,” 43–50 (esp. 48) and Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 91–2. Strange’s hypothesis sees the final revised published versions as a result of two earlier drafts. He believes (176–78) that Acts was a posthumous edition (as the end of Acts shows that Luke never completed). He (177) reasons from Rackham’s observation that the “textual variety” arose from early drafts or perhaps Luke’s death. He (181–82) thinks that after Luke’s death his gospel was published, but Acts was not (as there is no evidence of them ever being together either by scroll or codex). He further speculates (183) that Acts was needed after Marcion because it undermined his views (he considers the anti-Judaic content as a result of pro-Marcion influence). This I find highly problematic for similar reasons as Tyson/Knox’s theory (as argued in chapter 1 & 2). In the end, he seems to be saying that prior to Luke’s death there were two drafts: 1) the non-western and 2) an annotated “copy” (by Luke)—both of which gave rise to the later second century published versions (175, 189). Head (*Problem*, 427) outlines the “several weaknesses” of his thesis first by challenging his erroneous view that since there are no earlier references to Acts it didn’t exist until the “middle of the second century” (cf. Head’s n. 71). Second, Head (428) explains (with an accidental pun?) that it is “rather strange” that somehow “two forms of Luke’s notes were kept, quite independently, across over eighty years, but never published or referred to.” On the positive side, Strange helps to reignite the conversation while providing valuable research for the theories on the development of the western text (1–34) while providing an excellent appendix of the extant witnesses for Acts (for an updated list see <http://www.uni-muenster.de/INTF/>). Last, the view that Luke left his work unfinished is not a new one. Recall chapter 4 and Troftgruben, *Conclusion Unhindered*, 12.

³¹¹ Clark (*Descent and Primitive Text*) later modified his position (*Acts*) to show the “conscious editorial effort” by the editor who “created the Alexandrian text.” Cf. Porter, “Developments,” 35. See further Kenyon’s (“The Western Text,” 287–315) critique of Clark.

³¹² Porter, “Developments,” 35. Here Porter argues for Alexandrian priority while the Western text evinces later editorial activity. Head (“Acts,” 419) explains how this Alexandrian “consensus is clearly reflected in the texts of the favoured modern editions of the Greek New Testament (NA²⁶, UBS³).” Likewise Metzger (*Commentary*, 23) explains how the Committee “more often than not” preferred “the shorter, Alexandrian text.” He also claims “the information incorporated in certain Western expansions may well be factually accurate, though not deriving from the original author of Acts” (235).

³¹³ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 88 and Delebecque, *Les Deux Actes*.

the Western text of the gospels “is the most anciently accessible form of the text” and that the Alexandrian text “is the result of editorial work” from around 175 CE.³¹⁴

More recently, the work of Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger has significantly ‘disquieted’ the Western front further.³¹⁵ Using principles of discourse analysis, Read-Heimerdinger proposes that Codex Bezae (05) is earlier than the Alexandrian text and not “the work of an enthusiastic and fanciful scribe who embellished the original text represented by the Alexandrian manuscripts.”³¹⁶ In their combined work they “highlight the inner coherence of Bezae in Acts” drawing attention to the “distinct message communicated by its narrator, in the hope that the manuscript’s witness to the concerns of the early Church might once more be recognized and valued.”³¹⁷ In many ways, their conclusions support the intrinsic value of the Western variants of Acts 28:11–31 in this essay.³¹⁸

Although the debate regarding the age and stages of Bezae’s development continues, it is clear that Bezae represents a concrete expression of the later developing Western tradition.³¹⁹ It seems reasonable to suppose that the (pre-Bezae) Western text preserves an earlier ‘version’ of the text of Acts. Who the author (or authors) of this version is, and just how early it is, remain a matter of ongoing debate. Nevertheless, the

³¹⁴ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 94. Amphoux’s work on the gospels supports an early date of the text.

³¹⁵ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 95. See Rius-Camps, *Commentari*; Read-Heimerdinger, *Bezan Text of Acts* and their combined work in Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Message of Acts*.

³¹⁶ Read-Heimerdinger, *Bezan Text of Acts* (abstract). This is not the place to debate her synchronic approach but the point of agreement here is that the text of Bezae is a very early witness. She proposes that the Bezan text is earlier because it “displays an exceptional degree of linguistic consistency and a coherence of purpose which is essentially theological, with a marked interest in a Jewish point of view.” Delobel (“Luke-Acts,” 95) conveys how Rius-Camps (*Commentari*) also defends the “primitive character” of the Western text.

³¹⁷ Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *The Message of Acts*, 4:12.

³¹⁸ They believe that their extended Bezan text is one that “preserves a voice of the Church in the first decades of its existence.” Rius-Camps and Read-Heimerdinger, *Message of Acts*, 4:ix.

³¹⁹ See Parker, *Introduction*, 288 and 298; Porter, “Developments,” 66–7. Earlier Parker (*Codex Bezae*, 284) relayed how the Bezan text “is not a defined text... We have not a text, but a genre.”

Western text is, at the very least, the “earliest commentary” on the primitive text available.³²⁰

Delobel claims the problem stems from the second century, “the period during which the text may be supposed to have enjoyed [the] most freedom and to have suffered most corruption.”³²¹ He maintains that although “imaginative constructions are to be welcomed” every “theory can only be hypothetical.”³²² The inevitable deduction is that both pro-Western and pro-Alexandrian views must remain theories because the textual evidence is mixed, and for at least two major reasons. First, because the “earliest papyri for Acts are from the third century” and second, because many of them exhibit Western tendencies (i.e. P³⁸, P²⁹ and P⁴⁸).³²³ Consequently, we must not confuse our hypotheses with facts—or our “building” will be “no stronger than its basement.”³²⁴

Tuckett provides a more recent assessment of this text-critical problem while engaging the Alands and especially B. Aland’s definitive article on the subject.³²⁵ Aland, after examining Bezae (D 05) and notable papyri (P³⁸ and P⁴⁸ especially) postulates that somewhere during the *second century* variants began to appear.³²⁶ Later in the third-

³²⁰ So Head, “Acts,” 444. See also Zuntz (“Western Text,” 196) and his comments on the Western “paradigmatic expansions” that “give concrete directions for Christian life, as it was meant to be lived in the early Christian communities” (as noted by Head, “Acts,” 444). See more recently Armstrong, “Variants,” 95, 98.

³²¹ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 96.

³²² Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 96.

³²³ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 103. See my note 326 below (esp. Comfort and Barrett’s remarks).

³²⁴ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 98–106 (102).

³²⁵ See Aland and Aland, *Text*, 54–64 and also Aland, “Charakter und Herkunft,” 5–65. B. Aland claims that the Western text “cannot be traced back to a period earlier than the early third century.” Cf. Tuckett, “How Early,” 70. While Boismard considers the Western text to be the original, B. Aland considers it to be a corruption of the Alexandrian text, which “remained much closer to the autographs.” Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 91.

³²⁶ Porter (*New Testament*, 63) considers the age of P³⁸ to be close to 300 CE while P⁴⁸ can be dated to the late third century. Cf. Metzger, *Commentary*, 5* and Aland and Aland, *Text*, 98–99. Comfort and Barrett (*Complete Text*, 135) suggest P³⁸ is “late second or early third century” while (via Sanders) they state that the form is close to P. Oxy. 843 (late second century), P. Oxy 1607 (late second or early third century), and that other “comparable examples of this kind of handwriting can be seen in P. Oxy. 37 (ca. 200), P. Oxy. 405 (ca. 200), and P. Oxy. 406 (early third century).” Perhaps further research on the form

century these variants developed into something more significant—as the similarities between Codex 614 and some early manuscripts reveal.³²⁷ Some infer that the text carried in codex 614 and its sister text 2412 (twelfth/thirteenth century), should be used to “establish the stage of the text prior to the early third century.”³²⁸ The Western tradition then is best understood as a series of developmental stages; and although related, the earlier texts should not be directly equated with the fifth century Codex Bezae (D) (05).³²⁹ It was not until sometime later in the fourth or fifth century that Codex D became the refined product of this ‘Western’ development.³³⁰

The better, external evidence for the early Western text is found in P³⁸—not simply because it is more Western than 614, but because the manuscript is far older (third century).³³¹ Furthermore, despite a recent change in consensus with regards to the Western readings found in the very fragmentary P²⁹ the Western branch in P⁴⁸ continues to be upheld.³³² This is very compelling evidence because there are only six early papyri

and hand of such texts (i.e. P³⁸) may push the date back further. They also state that P³⁸ (in addition to D, P²⁹, and P⁴⁸) is “representative of the ‘Western’ form of the Book of Acts” (135).

³²⁷ Aland’s “Hauptredaktor,” the ancient Western redactor/editor, produced the extra Bezan material. Tuckett, “How Early,” 70.

³²⁸ See Tuckett, “How Early,” 75. At the same time, the similarities between 614 and 2412 are compelling (see Aland and Aland, *Text*, 137). Acts 28:29, for example, is almost exactly the same in 614 (including the diaeresis above the ι’s)—except συζήτησιν contains a marked ü. Similar to Aland, Kenyon (“The Western Text,” 314) earlier considered 1571 and 1165 each to be an “unquestionably Western text of Acts” and this shows how “texts of this type existed in Egypt in the fourth century.” Meanwhile, Tuckett (“How Early,” 75) considers 614 to be a “Byzantine manuscript rather than ‘Western.’” See also Aland, *Text und Textwert*, 135. Further, Strange (*Problem*, 11) considers 383 and 614 to be a Byzantine text-type with some Western readings. Strange’s assessment is reasonable based on my analysis of Acts 28:11–31.

³²⁹ Tuckett, “How Early,” 70–71.

³³⁰ Some date Bezae earlier, while some prefer later. See Barrett, *Acts*, 1:5.

³³¹ Tuckett, “How Early,” 72 and 75. Sanders dated the fragment “as early as 200–250 CE” (Tuckett, 71) and Sanders, “Papyrus Fragment,” 1–19.

³³² Tuckett (“Early Text,” 169) claims that although P⁴⁸ has been “carelessly written” it has a “form of the text that is strongly ‘Western’ in its readings.” That P²⁹ exhibits Western readings has come under greater scrutiny in recent years despite the earlier views (see 160–62 and his note 16 on p. 160). See also Porter (“Developments,” 41) who sees P²⁹ not as a Western text but indicative of “another tradition” or “possibly a freer paraphrase.”

(P²⁹, P³⁸, P⁴⁵, P⁴⁸, P⁵³, P⁹¹) and one third-century parchment (0189) to begin with.³³³

Furthermore, although P⁴⁵ shows the “greatest affinity” with the Alexandrian uncials (Ⲁ, A, B, C), the gospels (Matthew, Luke, and John) exhibit a mix of Alexandrian and Western traditions.³³⁴ Since there are only seven manuscripts that are earlier than the third century, it is very difficult “to maintain that the ‘Western’ textual family is significantly less well attested among all early manuscripts.”³³⁵

There are further reasons to turn back the clock on the Western tradition. For example Sanday, nearly a century ago, had discovered that there are “close points of contact with fourth century patristic quotations” both in the Gospels *and* in Acts.³³⁶ The alleged agreement between the D text and Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* is of particular interest for the date of the Western text.³³⁷ Souter determined that the “Greek text of Acts, even in its surviving fragments, shows striking observations about Irenaeus’ text of the gospels.”³³⁸ In his analysis, Souter explains how the “translator wrote in Africa in the period 370 to 420” CE.³³⁹

³³³ Tuckett, “Early Text,” 157 (n. 1). Comfort (*Manuscripts*, 64 and 79) notes that while P⁵³ and P⁹¹ are both ‘proto-Alexandrian,’ the latter is “too fragmentary to be sure.”

³³⁴ Comfort, *Manuscripts*, 66. Comfort (65) relays how Kenyon in his *editio princeps* thought the original order was Western (Matthew, John, Luke, Mark and then Acts). See Kenyon, *Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri II/1 and II/2: The Gospels and Acts, Plates*. It may be worth following up with a detailed study of the version of Acts in P⁴⁵ especially where Colwell (*Scribal Habits*, 118–19) showed how the scribe did not copy word for word (i.e. P⁷⁵) but phrase per phrase while freely omitting material. Roysse (“Scribal Habits,” 156) also found that the scribe had a “marked tendency to omit portions of the text, often (as it seems) accidentally but perhaps also deliberately pruning.” For the latest list of manuscripts and evidence for the Western order of the Gospels see Crawford (“A New Witness,” 1–7) and his discovery via the concordance table of a sixth century mss (GA 073+74) that also reflects the Western order.

³³⁵ Tuckett, “How Early,” 74.

³³⁶ Sanday et al., *Sancti Irenaei*, clxv.

³³⁷ It is remarkable that a second century writer employed Western readings. The traditional view (contra B. Aland, “Charakter und Herkunft,” 43–56) has been defended by Barrett, *Acts*, 1:15–18 and Tuckett, “How Early,” 76–82. The Latin translation of Irenaeus’s book is considered to be “a faithful one.” Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 103.

³³⁸ Sanday et al. *Sancti Irenaei*, clxiv.

³³⁹ Sanday et al., *Sancti Irenaei*, xcvi. Sanday (lxiv) agrees with Souter’s assessment. Souter relays the earlier opinion of Hort who also suggested that the “true date of the translation is the fourth century. The inferior limit is fixed by the quotations made from it by Augustine about 421” (lxv). See Westcott and

Subsequently, Sanday explains that although Turner does not “specify any precise date” he “clearly suggests that the translation is considerably early.”³⁴⁰ Sanday then suggests that there is a “distinct possibility that the Latin version of Irenaeus was already accessible to Tertullian when he wrote his treatise against the Valentinians in AD 207. If that is so, its date might be represented as ±200.”³⁴¹ A few years later, Ropes, who agrees with this assessment, argues that a “copy of Acts used by Irenaeus was, like his copies of the Gospels and the Pauline epistles, a Greek manuscript with a thorough-going ‘Western’ text, showing but few departures from the complete ‘Western’ text.”³⁴²

More recently, Barrett claims that Irenaeus “is the first Christian author extant to quote Acts *explicitly*. He does so frequently and at length” (my emphasis).³⁴³ Barrett, through his list of examples, shows that there is “no doubt that Irenaeus is often in agreement with readings found in D, in the Old Latin MSS, in the Harclean, or in combinations of these.”³⁴⁴ Similarly, Tuckett concludes by stating it is “clear how the judgement of Ropes and others [i.e. Barrett, Souter] has been reached: there is clearly a significant level of agreement between the text of Acts presupposed by Irenaeus and the D text of Acts.”³⁴⁵

Hort, *Introduction*, 160. Ropes (“Text of Acts,” 3:clxxxvii) accepts Souter’s translation estimate of 370 to 420 CE.

³⁴⁰ Sanday et al., *Sancti Irenaei*, lxiv (Sanday refers to Turner’s work on pp. 229–52). Based on Turner’s comments, Sanday gives the Latin translation a third century dating.

³⁴¹ Sanday et al., *Sancti Irenaei*, lxiii. He cautions that it should not be dated “too near the actual completion of the Greek Irenaeus” because there is evidence of development between the Greek and Latin versions (lxiii).

³⁴² Ropes, “Text of Acts,” 3:clxxxvii.

³⁴³ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:15. He (1:16–17) compares the D text with Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3).

³⁴⁴ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:16 and Parker, “Codex Bezae,” 48–49.

³⁴⁵ Tuckett, “How Early,” 82. Delobel thinks that the date of the *Hauptredaktion* may be subject to change pending further research on the “longer readings in Irenaeus.” Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 104. He goes on to say the *Hauptredaktion* would only “need a (somewhat) earlier dating” and “not the rejection of the theory as such” (104). Remarkably Irenaeus mirrors the Western theological tendencies such as the modified Apostolic degree with the absence of “things strangled,” the added Golden rule, and the longer reading in Acts 15:29 (Tuckett, “How Early,” 85). All of this evidence from Irenaeus leads him to a second

Last, there are many prominent third-, fourth-, and fifth-century patristic manuscripts that use the D text.³⁴⁶ One of the most notable is John Chrysostom (347–407 CE) whose sermons, that showcase Western (and Byzantine) variants, are the “only complete commentary on Acts that has survived from the first ten centuries.”³⁴⁷ Therefore, it seems very likely that the D text has roots that date “before and perhaps long before, the year 150” CE.³⁴⁸ However, there are some scholars who would question this view.

The New Quest for the “Western” Text

Since the release of the third volume of the *Editio Critica Maior* in 2017, the editors of the ECM claim that the ‘Western’ front has been silenced. For example, Wachtel concludes that

[t]he quest for the ‘Western text’ has failed. What we have instead are variants in different kinds of texts. If there are agreements between Irenaeus’ citations and variants in 05, this does not mean that the ‘Western text’ goes back to the second

century date for the Western text (or earlier). Tucket’s research (and the earlier work of Ropes, Souter, Westcott and Hort), challenges B. Aland’s assessment (86). See also Dawson, “Acts and Jubilees,” 9–40 with regards to the Noahide Laws in Acts 15 and 21.

³⁴⁶ Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian (third century), Eusebius of Caesarea, Lucifer of Cagliari, Athanasius of Alexandria, Cyril of Jerusalem (fourth century), Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Speculum, and the venerable Bede (fifth century). Eusebius of Caesarea shows a curious “mixture of Old Uncial and Western readings” Barrett, *Acts*, 1:18–20 (19).

³⁴⁷ Quasten, *Golden Age*, 3:440. Recall the discussion on Chrysostom from chapter 4. Chrysostom’s text is “basically Antiochian, as one might be expected, but shows from time to time awareness of Western variations.” Barrett, *Acts*, 1:20. Chrysostom uses an Alexandrian version of Acts 28:11–16 that is similar to Codex 614, but with the addition of verse 29.

³⁴⁸ Ropes, “Text of Acts,” 3:ccxliv. Ropes (along with Jackson and Lake) conclude that the Western text (ironically) hails from the East and “perhaps in Syria or Palestine” (3:ccxliv). They further suggest that the revisers aim was to “improve the text, not to restore it, and he lived not far from the time when the New Testament canon in its nucleus was first definitely assembled” (3:ccxliv). Zuntz (“Western Text,” 214) argues that the “re-written text of Acts” was in use in the church community at Edessa “as early as about A.D. 100.” For those who expect a longer period of rewriting “between original and rewriting” he counters with this counter-question: “how long a period must be supposed to have elapsed between the re-writing of Q by Mark, and of Mark by the other Synoptics?” (214 [n. 1]).

century, but rather that these particular variants do. Thus the notion of a second century ‘Western text’ should be abandoned once and for all.³⁴⁹

This is a bold conclusion that seems to overturn much of the current research on the history of the development of the texts of Acts.

However, even if the findings of the ECM are found to be correct, there still remains the issue of Acts containing a significant number of textual variants that go back at least as early as the second century (as noted by Wachtel above). In other words, we still have comparably ancient sources in addition to the initial or *Ausgangstext* regardless of whether or not these texts have “sufficient coherencies” to demonstrate a definable textual family (cluster or type).³⁵⁰ From the perspective of historiography these variants (however one defines them) collectively represent a very early witness to the narrative.

With regards to the ‘failure’ of the ‘Western’ text, there are several reasons why such a conclusion should remain tentative at best and these issues relate directly to methodology. In their application of the *Coherence Based Genealogical Method* (CBGM), the editors seem to minimize the value of the Western text based on a lack of *coherence* between variants.³⁵¹ However, one of the distinctive issues with the Western text is the issue of multiple languages and translation—this is significant because the

³⁴⁹ Wachtel, “‘Western Text,’” 147. Strutwolf (“Irenäus,” 180) comes to the same conclusion. For a contrary view, see Tuckett, “How Early,” 69–86; idem, “Early Text,” 157–74.

³⁵⁰ Wachtel, “Notes,” 31 (and 28).

³⁵¹ Wachtel, “Notes,” 31. In 1999 the CBGM or ‘Münster Method’ was developed by Gerd Mink at the Münster Institute who with “singular clarity recognized the philological opportunities offered when the data can be recorded and analysed digitally.” Parker, *Textual Scholarship*, 84–85. Parker (“‘Living Text,’” 21) claims that the CBGM (along with phylogenetic analysis) makes “Lachmannian stemmatics work for the first time.” The CBGM is about establishing relationships between variants by tracing manuscripts for agreements and divergencies. See Mink, “Contamination,” 141–216 (149) and also Wachtel and Holmes, “Introduction,” 1–12.

ECM cannot accommodate non-Greek evidence.³⁵² Epp further explains some of the difficulties with the ‘D-text’ cluster:

The most distinctive variants involved words, phrases, clauses, and even full sentences . . . that alter a scene, a context, a description, a sequence, an apparent motivation, or an expressed viewpoint. When such notions are written in Latin, but especially Syriac or Coptic, syntax differences often will disallow word-for-word equivalence, and there are other disjunctions, but in most cases it will be obvious whether the same idea is being expressed regardless of the language and in spite of minor differences.³⁵³

Since the Western Greek witnesses reflect the “relationship between translations,” Wachtel acknowledges the problem that the CBGM “does not provide tools appropriate for studying this strand of transmission.”³⁵⁴ Despite this drawback he states that it “goes without saying that the present edition dispenses with a theory of two texts of Acts.”³⁵⁵

A further weakness of the CBGM rests on the “lack of an adequate definition of what is meant by *coherence*” (emphasis original).³⁵⁶ While CBGM provides a more *coherent* view of the history of the text and details the ancestry of manuscripts, it “does not address the question [of] how they align with the history of copying the NT writings

³⁵² Epp, “Traditional ‘Canons,’” 87.

³⁵³ Cf. Epp, “Textual Clusters,” 566.

³⁵⁴ Wachtel, “Notes,” 31. He (31) further admits that the CBGM can be “applied only if sufficient coherencies are extant.” Additionally, he explains that an “essential reason why the CBGM cannot be applied to the phenomena of the ‘Western text’ is the fact that a substantial part of this tradition is transmitted in versions.”

³⁵⁵ Wachtel, “Notes,” 32. Here he quotes Parker (*Introduction*, 298)—who does not allow for any consideration of text-types. Parker is certainly not alone, but the perceived fall of text-types is far from consensus and requires a much greater discussion than a mere assertion and seriously impacts how we evaluate external evidence among other criteria. Cf. Elliott, *Textual Criticism*, 7 and Epp “Interlude,” 83–108.

³⁵⁶ Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 90 (n. 2). They (n. 2) further observe that coherence becomes a “mathematical calculation, rather than a literary concept that appreciates the possible means for variants within a given manuscript.” Others have noted problems with the ECM. For example, Elliott states that “nowhere are we informed how and on what principles the ECM text was established.” Elliott, *Textual Criticism*, 477. Citing Housman he asks that critical editors should be “called to account and asked for his reasons” (p. 557). Elliott further notes the small number of changes in 1 Peter and James (post-NA/UBS), and the consistent reliance on Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (p. 505)—the text is essentially a fully eclectic 4th-century text (p. 508).

in the framework of Christian culture.”³⁵⁷ Furthermore, the “individual traits of a manuscript are completely overlooked, because variants are studied in isolation apart from their original contexts.”³⁵⁸ In fact, Mink admits that the focus is not on the manuscripts “as physical artifacts” but on the “texts they carry, whose sequence of variants can be compared with DNA chains.”³⁵⁹

Still, there is the issue of “relating the initial text to the original text”—if the goal is to reconstruct the latter there will be a deficiency due to the gap in transmission history.³⁶⁰ Additionally, another issue is that CBGM does not begin with text-types—rather it looks for an emerging structure based on the textual “relationships between all witnesses and thus determine their places in the transmission history.”³⁶¹ Although the method claims to involve external and internal criteria, there seems to be an unhealthy imbalance on the ‘texts’ via internal considerations instead of the manuscripts themselves.³⁶² In the end, there seem to be sufficient reasons to continue the quest for the Western text of Acts.³⁶³

³⁵⁷ Wachtel and Holmes, “Introduction,” 9.

³⁵⁸ Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 90 (n. 2).

³⁵⁹ Mink, “Contamination,” 146. CBGM finds “relationships between preserved witnesses, that is, between texts as transmitted by manuscripts, not between manuscripts as historical artifacts” (p. 202). Cf. also Wachtel, “Notes,” 31. This seems problematic because manuscripts are definably historic artifacts.

³⁶⁰ Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 90 (n. 2 [see also 1–6]). The concept of an original text is much debated in textual criticism. Epp (“Multivalence,” 280) explains how the term ‘original’ has “exploded into a complex and highly unmanageable multivalent entity.” Some text critics are adamant that the best we can hope for is an initial text (*Ausgangstext*). See Elliott, *Textual Criticism*, 7. For further study see Strutwolf, “Original Text and Textual History,” 23–41 and most recently Porter, “The Domains of Textual Criticism,” 131–53.

³⁶¹ Mink, “Contamination,” 148. Meanwhile, Wachtel (“Conclusions,” 222) suggests the method is not a cure for contamination, but a way to live with it (or understand it).

³⁶² Wachtel states that the method applies “internal criteria predominantly” while deriving “tendencies regarding ancestor relationships on this basis.” Wachtel, “Conclusions,” 224. Although Mink allows for the inputted internal and external criteria to be corrected, starting without text-types is disconcerting. Mink, “Contamination,” 149.

³⁶³ Wachtel (“Western Text,” 148) recognizes the need to pursue other methodologies and avenues of research with regards to the “vexing problems” caused by the “phenomena labeled ‘Western.’”

Evaluation of the End of Acts Variants

In the final analysis, it seems that on the one hand there is sufficient evidence to show an early origin of the Western textual variants. On the other, there remains a general lack of consensus concerning theories of what came first and how the text(s) of Acts developed.³⁶⁴ Even among pro-Alexandrian scholars, there are those who suggest that the Western text has its roots in the early second century (or earlier).³⁶⁵ There are also a growing number of scholars who are finding sufficient value in studying the variants for their intrinsic worth and the light they can shed on the historical development of the text (beyond a need to establish an initial or original text).³⁶⁶

So what is the value of these variants in Acts 28:11–31—“what do they suggest”? Perhaps it is better to ask, “What do they *not* suggest”?³⁶⁷ The goal as stated at the introduction of this chapter is to understand the significance of the variants in light of the known Western tendencies.³⁶⁸ These tendencies, though often debated, exhibit one unifying characteristic since Westcott and Hort onwards—and that is *expansion*.³⁶⁹ However, as we have seen the differences among the manuscripts with respect to Acts 28:11–31 are relatively *colourless*. The end of Acts begs for an answer to what happened to Paul—his appeal to Caesar and upcoming trial (Acts 25:11).³⁷⁰ At the same time this triumphant ending begs for at least a scribal note concerning the catastrophic events that

³⁶⁴ Delobel, “Luke-Acts,” 106.

³⁶⁵ Recall my note 312 above and Epp, “Issues,” 17–76 (38, 41). Ropes (“Text of Acts,” 3:x) saw the second century development of the Western text as a “monument of the life and thought of that period, an historical source, although one not easily reconstructed with completeness and accuracy.”

³⁶⁶ Elliot, *Textual Criticism*, 18; Epp, “Traditional ‘Canons,’” 100; and Parker, *Textual Scholarship*, 26–27.

³⁶⁷ See “Appendix: The Manuscript Record for Acts 28:31.”

³⁶⁸ Recall Head’s (“Acts,” 415) observation on the Western *Tendenz*.

³⁶⁹ See Westcott and Hort, *New Testament*, 122–6, 174; Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, 24–7; Hemer, *Acts*, 55; and Strange, *Problem*, 4, 38–56.

³⁷⁰ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 52. This has been consistently pointed out for centuries and is at the heart of the interpretive debate at the end of Acts (recall chapter 4).

soon followed. And yet not one single extant manuscript of Acts says anything about either. So what conclusions can be drawn from the evidence?³⁷¹

The greatest observation is in fact a negative one. The so-called Western variants do *not* present any major theological, social, cultural, or historical differences as compared with the Alexandrian text. Given the generally accepted tendency for Western scribe(s) to expand on the text of Acts, intrinsic probabilities imply that a Western editor would capitalize on the story line and present a much more colourful ending to Acts. However, the variants at the end of Acts (with a few more details and differences) nevertheless paint a similar picture of the hero of the story (Paul) in house arrest and awaiting trial in Rome (vv. 16, 30).³⁷² This supports an early date of Acts because we have an entire collection of variants that all point to the same period in history—pre 64 CE.

Since modern times, a variety of literary or narrative solutions have been offered (chapter 4), but these do not account for the colourless expansions in light of Roman and Jewish history in the mid 60's CE. Is it reasonable to suppose that the later versions of Acts were published well into the late first or early second century, decades apart from the first draft while betraying no major differences in the end of the narrative?³⁷³ No, it is more reasonable to suggest that the variants are comparable in age. The gap between the first draft and the later stages of its transmission is minor, represented by months and years—and not decades.

³⁷¹ Given the variety of conclusions regarding the end of Acts, it requires a careful assessment of the "extant evidence, drawing only such conclusions as seem to be warranted by it." See Pherigo, "Close of Acts," 277.

³⁷² Tajra claims the concentration on "legal terminology and procedure can only lead to the conclusion that Luke has given a legally realistic account of Paul's judicial history in Acts." Tajra, *Trial of St. Paul*, 1–2.

³⁷³ If Acts did not have such an extensive amount of textual variation that can be seen in the Western expansions especially then this would be a reasonable supposition.

Not only is the author of Acts (in 28:11–31) silent with regards to the fate of Paul, the terrible events that affected the Roman Empire, the city of Rome, and the church in the mid 60's CE, the Western scribes and editors are also equally silent.³⁷⁴ In my opinion, the earliest and simplest explanation that was argued in chapter 4 (that Luke knew no more) should now be given greater attention because of the combined silence of *all* the variants.³⁷⁵ Great literary efforts (often divorced from a study of the variants and the historical context of Acts 28) have been given to explain away this silence through various literary methodologies and theories of foreshadowing without addressing the foundation of history and lower criticism first.³⁷⁶

If a scribe would take the time to provide additional details about Paul's imprisonment with regards to the captain of the guard (τῷ στρατοπεδάρχῳ) in Acts 28:16, how could the same scribe fail to narrate Paul's martyrdom, the dying multitudes of Christians and victims of the great fire of Rome, the Jewish War with Rome, or the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple?³⁷⁷ There is not so much as a marginal notation anywhere, in any textual strata of Acts.

³⁷⁴ See my chapter 5 and Hemer, *Acts*, 365–410.

³⁷⁵ Recall Rackham's (*Acts*, li; idem, "Plea," 76–87) incredulity of Luke's silence with regards to Paul's death that was introduced in chapter 1. Cf. also Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered*, 8–11; Muratorian fragment (lines 35–39); Clement, *1 Clem.* 5:2–7; Chrysostom, *Hom. Act.* 55 and Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.22:1, 6–8; 3.1:3.

³⁷⁶ Perhaps the greatest interpretive (and methodological) failure of some is that they develop their hypotheses based on a supposed 'majority' view on the date of Acts between 80–90 CE—that has been recently dismissed by *every* major monograph on the subject and continues to be dismissed in the most recent essays. See Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*; Pervo, *Dating Acts*; Tyson, *Marcion*; Porter, "Early Church," 72–100, idem, "Dating," 553–74; Armstrong, "A New Plea," 79–110; idem, "Variants," 87–110. See also Keener, *Acts*, 1:382–40.

³⁷⁷ It has long been observed how Western readings regularly "impinge on historical questions." See Head, "Acts," 419. And yet, with all the propensity to fill in the "historical" blanks elsewhere the scribes (or redactor) of these variants remain silent with regards to the major events that tragically affected both Jews and Christians along with the people Jerusalem and Rome (see chapter 5). The earliest redactor or B. Aland's "Hauptredaktor" could have been from Rome as he seemed to be aware of very specific political and military situations unique to the Imperial city. Cf. Tuckett, "How Early," 70. The στρατοπεδάρχῳ (Acts 28:16) in particular gives an "impression of authenticity." Cf. Kenyon, "The Western

The burden of proof must be shifted back to scholars who claim that the end of Acts evinces sophisticated literary devices not only by the original author, but across the entire manuscript record.³⁷⁸ Is it realistic to argue that all of these scribes, writing from different geographical areas, faithfully maintained the same silence throughout the first and second century? Surely the later Western redactor(s) and scribes would say something of the obvious about Paul, his trial and death, or the destruction of the Temple or Jerusalem itself? How completely out of context is the picture of Paul's peaceful relationship with the Roman authorities and his free preaching—that spans the entire manuscript record—given the events that followed the narrative?³⁷⁹

The city of Rome takes center stage in Acts 28 and yet every textual variant examined in this essay fails to mention the city's greatest disaster—the fire of Rome in 64 CE that turned 70% of the city into ashes, along with a sizable portion of its general population (in addition to the Christians who were murdered during Nero's subsequent persecution).³⁸⁰ No credible historian, whether ancient or modern (much less the “first

Text,” 310; Bruce, *Acts* (1983), 528–29 and Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, 347–48. That the ‘stratopedarch’ in the western text of Acts 28:16 is the Praetorian Prefect Afranius Burrus is interesting but speculative. See Witherington, *New Testament History*, 788.

³⁷⁸ As discussed earlier in the chapter.

³⁷⁹ Marguerat (*Historian*, 34–35) notices the positive attitude in Acts towards Rome versus the negative portrayal in Revelation: “It is the goal of Paul's mission for the former [in Acts] and the symbol of evil for the latter.” Likewise Tajra (*Trial of St. Paul*, 164) recognizes the “positive tone on which Acts ends.” The Western additions in Acts 28 are also favourable to Rome suggesting a time that was prior to Nero's conflagration policy against Christians.

³⁸⁰ See chapter 5. Tacitus records the devastating news: “Rome is divided into fourteen regions, among which only four remained intact. Three were burned to the ground, and of the other seven there were only a few houses left, which were severely damaged and half-burnt” (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.40). Cf. Lampe, *Valentinus*, 47 and more recently “Roman Christians,” 111–29. In addition to the death of Paul (c. 63–64 CE), the great fire of Rome (64 CE), and the destruction of the Jewish Temple (70 CE), many other significant historical events are *not* clearly detailed in Acts: (1) the deaths of the other two great apostles: James (62 CE) and Peter (c. 64 CE); (2) the Jewish Revolt in 66 CE; (3) the death of Nero in 68 CE; (4) the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE; (5) the Roman Triumph in 71 CE; (6) the eruption of Mount Vesuvius and the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 CE. Cf. Hemer, *Acts*, 365–410. Tajra (*Martyrdom*, 199) finds “a few facts about Paul's final days”—(1) that Paul died in Rome; (2) Paul died during Nero's reign (54–68 CE); (3) Paul was martyred. Every single variant at the end of Acts is equally silent concerning Paul's death.

Christian historian”)—could invent such an ending if these events had already passed.³⁸¹

If such a fabricated ending can be justified by popular literary theories then the book of Acts should then be relegated to a fictional class of literature that ignores the historical context.

Although it is possible that Luke *and* the subsequent redactors all decided to ignore the outcome of the narrative as well as the most important events in Roman, Jewish, and Christian history that follow the end of Acts within a few years it seems speculative. It seems far more reasonable to interpret these grand omissions in light of the historical context and not with complicated and speculative literary theories.

Concluding Observations

Whatever date one ascribes to the text(s) of Acts 28:11–31, they are comparable in age, especially when factoring the modest expansions that betray no clear knowledge of the aftermath of Paul (the book’s protagonist), nor the destruction of Rome and Jerusalem (the book’s central locations), nor the Jewish Temple (the book’s central institution).³⁸²

For all the Western tendencies for expansion, there is not one reference to these tragic events anywhere in the manuscript record of Acts. Nor are there any clearly significant theological expansions that reflect a later state of the church’s life or theology. These

³⁸¹ Gasque relays how Meyer was perhaps the first to give the title “Luke the historian” par excellence before Dibelius called Luke the “first Christian historian.” See also Marguerat, *Historian*, 12. Marshall (*Luke: Historian and Theologian*, 49) considers Mark to be the first Christian historian.

³⁸² See my note 278 and chapter 5. Paul is the central character in Acts: Acts 8:1; 9:1–30; 11:25–30; 12:25; chapters 13–15 and especially from 15:40 all the way to the end in 28:31. Rome is a central location: Acts 2:10; 18:2; 19:21; 23:11; 25:25, 27; 27:1; 28:11, 14, 16–17. Jerusalem is also central: Acts 1:4, 8, 12, 19; 2:5, 14; 4:5, 16; 5:16, 28; 6:7; 8:1, 14, 25–27; 9:2, 13, 19–21, 26–28; 10:39; 11:2, 22, 27; 12:25; 13:13, 27, 31; 15:1–4; 16:4; 18:22; 19:21; 20:16, 22; 21:4, 11–17, 31; 22:5, 17–18; 23:11; 24:11, 17; 25:1–24; 26:4, 10, 20 and is mentioned in 28:17 where Paul’s engagement with the Jews in Rome occurs approximately five years before the Jewish War in 66 CE. The Temple as well plays a key role in the narrative: Acts 2:46; 3:1–10; 4:1; 5:20–25, 42; 21:26–30; 22:17; 24:6, 12, 18; 25:8; 26:2.

observations further strengthen Epp's observation regarding the "comparable age" of the B and D text clusters.³⁸³ Given the lack of expansion, it is proposed that the age of the variants should be dated within relative proximity to the events of the mid and late 60's CE that impacted Rome, Judaea, and the church in remarkable ways. It is to these terrifying and cataclysmic events in world history that we now turn.

³⁸³ Epp, "Traditional 'Canons,'" 100.

CHAPTER 5: ACTS IN ITS JEWISH AND GRECO-ROMAN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

Since the first chapter there has been a consistent attempt to place the book of Acts in its proper historical context.¹ The last chapter presented arguments that this context is consistent with a pre-70 date of Acts while challenging the credibility of the various literary explanations that often start with the assumption that Acts must have been written later. On the one hand such literary explanations focus primarily on the presumed death of Paul to the almost wholesale neglect of other key events.

The great fire of Rome in July of 64 CE is one such event that devastated a large portion of the city. Additionally, Nero's subsequent persecution (according to non-Christian sources) saw 'multitudes' of Roman Christians slaughtered with notorious barbarity. Most scholars in the middle and especially late dating camps completely ignore this aspect of Christian and Roman history. There has also been much discussion about the prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction in Luke's gospel where it is often assumed (rather than argued) that this reference is proof that Luke (and by extension Acts) is clearly written *after* this event. In a sense, this final chapter is a tale of two cities (Rome and Jerusalem) where the assumptions and literary explanations regarding the Christian

¹ Recall my note 14 on the historical context in chapter 2. Gill, Marshall, and Winter make this distinction in their preface (*Ancient Literary Setting*, ix–xii).

history in Acts are re-examined once more in the context of Jewish and Greco-Roman history.

It is argued below that the book of Acts is resolutely consistent with a time that is not only before the siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE, but also before the death of Paul and the fire of Rome in July of 64 CE.² Such events in Jewish, Roman, and Christian history are far too cataclysmic to be ignored—or relegated to a footnote—in favour of yet another speculative literary explanation (recall chapter 4).

Acts in History

Before diving into a discussion of the fall of Jerusalem and the fire of Rome, it seems appropriate to briefly discuss the historicity of Acts—as this relates to our ability to connect the events in the narrative within the broader spectrum of history.³ Since there

² Hence my chosen date is somewhere between 62–63 CE. See chapter 1 and Armstrong, “A New Plea,” 79–110. There is some debate as to the exact date of Paul’s death but historians are clear it happened before the end of Nero’s reign in 68 CE and very likely a few years beforehand; that was either just before or during the Neronian persecution in 64 CE. Recall my note 41 from chapter 1. See Mittelstaedt (*Lukas als Historiker*, 165–220) and his section on “Das Schweigen über den Tod des Paulus.” Furthermore, perhaps the single greatest factor in the date of Acts that essentially ‘divides’ the early and middle group relates to the interpretation of the prophecies in Luke with regards to the destruction of Jerusalem (see chapter 1). An analysis of the texts in Luke shows reliance upon the LXX for the prophecies against Jerusalem and its Temple while at the same time the language of the Temple establishment reflects a time that matches a pre-70 CE historical context. See “The Fall of Jerusalem: Dividing the Early and Middle Groups” below. As regards the fire of Rome in 64 CE (and the following persecution under Nero) these factors have largely been ignored in the dating debate by the middle and especially late groups. Since Rome is the final destination in Acts it seems necessary to consider how the end of Acts fits within the history of Rome. See “Acts and the City of Rome” below.

³ See chapter 2 and “Principles for Sources and Textual Criticism.” Greene and Moore (*Archaeology*, 155) suggest (as their third criterion for historical dating) that we factor the “author’s record of accuracy.” Hemer’s (*Acts*, 1) observation with regards to Acts is just as relevant today as he states that the “question of its historicity has been strangely neglected” and not answered definitively. And yet, his work remains foundational to this question. As regards the historical reliability of Acts in general refer to the earlier studies by Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller* and idem, *Recent Discovery*; Lake et al., eds., *Beginnings of Christianity*; Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*; idem, *History*; Dibelius, *Studies*. For more recent discussion see Hengel, *Acts*, 1–68; Bruce, *Acts*, 27–34; Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*; idem, *Acts*, 35–36; Gasque, *History*; Marguerat, *Historian*; Porter, *Paul in Acts*; and the collection of essays in Winter, ed., *First Century Setting*; Barrett, “Historicity,” 515–34; and Keener, *Acts*, 1:166–220. For more critical (or better skeptical) views see Haenchen, *Acts*; Conzelmann, *Acts*; Pervo, *Acts*; and Lüdemann, *Acts*.

continue to be scholars who assume (to varying degrees) the fictional character of Acts it is important to not make a similar mistake by assuming its historicity.⁴ For example, Alexander cuts to the chase and asks “whether or not Acts should be read as ‘history.’”⁵ A little further she asks: “Does Acts give an accurate picture of the events it narrates?—or more simply, ‘Is Acts true?’”⁶ The answers to these questions are not a simple yes or no but a matter of ongoing debate and require a much greater discussion than can be allotted here but they do require some consideration because of the relationship between the events in the narrative of Acts and their relationship to history.

In chapter 1, it was suggested that one’s views on the date of Acts are directly related to the book’s perceived historical reliability.⁷ This seems to be the general trend although some scholars perceive its relative historicity while also subscribing to a later date:

Today there are few who support the early date for Acts championed by Rackham. To reject the early date does not in itself deny the historical value of the book, the question remains open. A date as late as 150 is fairly generally abandoned[—]AD 90 or thereabouts is more probable—and this is neither early enough to forbid the intrusion of legend, nor late enough to be out of touch with facts.⁸

⁴ E.g. Haenchen, *Acts*; Pervo, *Acts*; idem, *Profit with Delight*; Lüdemann, *Acts*; and MacDonald, “Paul’s Farewell,” 189–203. Haenchen’s perspective is discussed in more detail below. Helga Botermann, who is a German historian of classical antiquity, writes: “I have been shocked for many years concerning the manner in which New Testament scholars treat their sources. They have managed to question everything to such a degree that both the historical Jesus and the historical Paul are hardly discernible any longer. If classical scholars were to adopt their methods, they could take their leave immediately. They would not have much left to work with . . . If classical scholars analyzed their sources as ‘critically’ as most New Testament theologians do, they would have to close the files of Herodotus and Tacitus.” Cf. Botermann, “Heidenapostel,” 62–84 (64, 73). Translation from Schnabel, *Mission*, 1:23.

⁵ See Alexander, *Acts*, 133. This question goes back at least to Baur and the Tübingen school. See Baird, *From Deism to Tübingen*, 244–93.

⁶ See Alexander, *Acts*, 133. This is a “perfectly right and proper question to ask of any narrative” (133). Hemer (*Acts*, 15) ponders the question as to whether Acts is essentially reliable or not—or somewhere in between. He figures that “inquiry is overlaid with conflicts of presupposition.” As well, the quest to “prove the historicity of Acts” is far too simplistic (206). See also Hemer’s first chapter on “Acts and Historicity” (1–29).

⁷ Recall my note 2 from chapter 1 and Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 75, 78.

⁸ Barrett, “Historicity,” 515–34 (530).

Although Barrett's erudition on Acts is generally commended, his assertion here seems problematic.⁹ On this point I am inclined to agree with Pervo—that such comfortable parameters sound more like a “political compromise”—especially where Pervo explains that a date in the “80's requires a great deal of explaining away.”¹⁰

Barrett's point that the relative historicity of Acts is compatible with a later date is feasible—to a certain degree—where some of the events may still be considered factual and datable. However, at the same time the relative historicity of *any* ‘historical’ document that fabricates its narrative in order to hide the fate of its main character (Paul), along with the destruction of the city he is residing in (Rome), the subsequent murder of the people he was at great pains to reach (Christians), and the destruction of his people's holy city (Jerusalem), should be called into question and placed into the realm of historical fiction at best.¹¹

The relative historicity of Acts is also related to our understanding of sources (recall chapter 2 and 3). If one's views on the date of Acts are directly related to the

⁹ For example, according to Kosso (*Knowing the Past*, 51) the first criterion for assessing the credibility of a text is the “ancient author's access to the event.” Additionally, Greene and Moore's (*Archaeology*, 155) second criterion for historical dating is “the *distance* (in time and place) of the author from the events described.” See “Principles for Sources and Textual Criticism” in chapter 2. If Acts is dated somewhere in the 90s CE then it seems that the author is fairly out of touch with the events within the narrative. In simpler terms, Porter (“Dating,” 565) claims a late date implies that the NT books were “second-generation or later documents, without direct contact with the events or people that they purport to represent.” Therefore, against Barrett's view there seems to be a diminishing historical ‘credibility’ for Acts as it is dated increasingly later (especially c. 90 CE).

¹⁰ Pervo, “Suburbs,” 31 and 46 respectively. See also Porter, “Dating,” 553–74 (568). With regards to the NT books in general the “middle dates are less argued dates than a settled-upon compromise between the perceived extremes of the early dates—which usually implies a level of conservatism and orthodoxy unacceptable to many scholars” (565). Dupont (*Sources*, 168 [n.1]) in his final comment says that a “traditional affirmation is not necessarily erroneous. At the level of critical thought, the reasons which make one opinion preferable to another are more important than the fact of knowing whether this opinion has been put forward by ecclesiastical or academic authorities.”

¹¹ If Paul goes to Rome in 60–61 CE and stays there under house arrest for the subsequent two year period this brings us close to 63 CE—just within a year of Rome's great fire in July of 64 CE and Nero's subsequent persecution of the Christians. Paul's death was arguably close to this time. The Jewish revolt began in 66 CE while Jerusalem was levelled in 70 CE.

book's perceived historical reliability (at least to some degree) then by reasonable extension the book's perceived historical reliability relates to one's perceived reliability of the author's sources.¹² A view that the book is much later and decidedly unhistorical tends to increase the propensity that the sources are deemed as spurious. Acts is then subject to parallels with romance novels, Homeric works, and later historians (notably Josephus)—and in some cases Acts is considered to be no more than the author's literary invention or imagination.¹³

Nevertheless, even the most critical (and overtly skeptical) scholars recognize a measure of historicity for Acts and recognize the author is clearly relying on some form of source (or sources) and did not invent all of the stories and speeches in the narrative for some imaginative purpose. For example, although Haenchen is hesitant to name specific sources he does not dismiss the likelihood of such sources either.¹⁴ Even the longstanding Antioch source theory he does not reject outright but challenges its veracity while also weighing the possibility of Paul's companions as legitimate sources of information.¹⁵

¹² Pervo (*Dating Acts*, 1) is absolutely correct in his lament at just how far away the issue of dating early Christian texts and sources are from the "cutting edge" in order to "make the subject exciting only to a highly impressionable freshman." He refers to Wendt (*Die Apostelgeschichte*) who gave substantial attention to the sources of Acts and then to Haenchen (*Acts*) who sent "reams of source theory up the chimney" (1). Pervo refers to Talbert (*Reading Acts*, 2) who "efficiently dispenses with questions about the sources and date of Acts before he has completed the first page" (*Dating Acts*, 1). Questions of source and date must return to the forefront of any serious discussion on the interpretation of Acts.

¹³ A decidedly historical (or unhistorical) view of Acts also directly impacts one's view of sources. Keener (*Acts*, 1:199) thinks that "on the whole, scholars seem more appreciative than not of Acts as a legitimate source for historical reconstruction"—although he notes this appreciation is anything but unanimous. Cf. also Marguerat, *Historian*, 2–7. For a decidedly unhistorical view of Acts, see MacDonald, "Paul's Farewell," 189.

¹⁴ Haenchen, *Acts*, 86. Although Marshall (*Acts*, 36) with regards to the publication of Haenchen's *Die Apostelgeschichte* (1956) says that up to that point "[a]nyone who thought that R. Bultmann represented the ultimate in historical scepticism as regards the New Testament was in for a rude shock."

¹⁵ Haenchen, *Acts*, 87, 369. Recall the "Antioch Source Theories" from chapter 3.

For Haenchen it was not a simple matter of choosing between a “travel-journal and the chronicle of Antioch.”¹⁶ He thought there were both oral and written traditions that originated with certain Christians and their associated church communities. For Luke there were “various possibilities of collecting the required material.”¹⁷ He could “look up the most important Pauline communities—say Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus, Antioch”—or he “might even visit Jerusalem.”¹⁸ He could have asked “other Christians travelling to these places” or “written to the congregations in question and asked them for information.”¹⁹

If we compare Haenchen with Hengel, on the one hand it is clear that Hengel is far more optimistic in his assessment concerning the “historical reliability of Acts” and yet he does agree “substantially” with Haenchen as regards to “Luke’s method of collecting data.”²⁰ According to Hengel, Luke is the “first theological representative of an approach that is concerned to go back *ad fontes*, i.e. back to the primitive Christian sources (cf. Luke 1:1).”²¹ So for Hengel there is this picture of Luke gathering his information, asking questions of those who “handed on the traditions, and evaluating critically his sources.”²²

¹⁶ Haenchen, *Acts*, 86. Over the course of his publications he came to question (in greater intensity) the itinerary/travel-journal hypothesis proposed by Dibelius. Haenchen’s views with respect to Dibelius’s hypothesis changed substantially over time (initially he supported it but later rejected it).

¹⁷ Haenchen, *Acts*, 86.

¹⁸ Haenchen, *Acts*, 86. Haenchen (503) thinks that Luke “probably received the information concerning Philippi—directly or indirectly—from an eyewitness of the Pauline mission . . . He may have received not only information about the founding of the community and the expulsion of the Apostle, but also stories which circulated about Paul in Philippi.”

¹⁹ Haenchen, *Acts*, 86. His view on the process of gathering information is reasonable.

²⁰ Donelson, “Cult Histories,” 3.

²¹ Hengel, *Acts*, 63.

²² Donelson, “Cult Histories,” 3; Hengel, *Acts*, 61–63. Against Haenchen Hengel (65) proposes that “Luke makes use of two strands of source material” although “we can no longer make a consecutive reconstruction of them.” The first is the so-called “Antiochene or Hellenist” source which he thinks derives from Stephen, Philip and the “reports about Barnabas and Paul’s early days” (65). The second is from a “collection of stories about Peter” (66). Then basically Luke used these sources to “make a careful selection

With regards to the historical reliability of Acts, Hengel has much to say— although he is not naive concerning some of the errors and inaccuracies in Acts.²³ But this is no surprise due to the fact the events took place over the course of some thirty plus years.²⁴ For him, the author can be compared to his contemporaries:

Luke is no less trustworthy than other historians of antiquity. People have done him a great injustice in comparing him too closely with the edifying, largely fictitious, romance-like writings in the style of the later acts of apostles, which freely invent facts as they like and when they need them. There is a great gulf between him and the later romances about the apostles.²⁵

Hengel remarks how Acts at “many points” is “connected with other contemporary historical sources.”²⁶ Some of these points of connection (i.e. Josephus, Seutonius, or the Gallio inscription at Delphi that dates Paul’s stay in Corinth) enable us to develop a chronology for Paul and our earliest sources for Christianity.²⁷

from them to serve the purpose of his narrative.” Hengel, *Acts*, 66. The flow of the narrative moves from the Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem (that is given “central significance”) to “Paul’s world-wide mission to the Gentiles” (66).

²³ Hengel, *Acts*, 35 and 112. He claims that the “chronological arrangement is substantially better than that in the gospels, though it too has errors and inaccuracies” (35). Although Acts is “incomplete, fragmentary and misleading” at times it he reminds us that we cannot place Paul in his proper geographical or historical setting without this source (38). We would be in the dark about much of Paul’s life without Acts (i.e. Paul’s origins in Tarsus, link with Jerusalem, the significance of Antioch and Barnabas, the sequence of Paul’s letters, his missionary activity—all this and more would be “completely or largely unknown to us without Acts” (39).

²⁴ Hengel, *Acts*, 35 (see his chapter on “Acts as a Historical Source”).

²⁵ Hengel, *Acts*, 60 (see also p. 12).

²⁶ Hengel, *Acts*, 39.

²⁷ Hengel, *Acts*, 39. See also Cadbury, *Acts in History*, 115; Gill and Winter, “Acts and Roman Religion,” 98–103; Lampe, *Valentinus*, 14; McRay, *Archaeology*, 227; Keener’s section on “Claudius’s Expulsion of Jews from Rome” (*Acts*, 3:2697–2714) and his discussion on Gallio with reference to Acts 18:12–17 (3:2760–2779). Keener declares that “despite a small number of detractors, most scholars agree that the Gallio inscription allows us to pinpoint to within a year or two the time when Gallio was in Corinth” (3:2761). Murphy-O’Connor (*St. Paul’s Corinth*, 161) insists that our “only means of dating the presence of this official in Corinth” is this “badly broken inscription containing a letter of the Emperor Corinth.” This lynchpin in Pauline Chronology was a letter written after Claudius had been acclaimed emperor for the 26th time. Hence the upper limit is the 27th year which is dated between January 25th and August 1st of 52 CE. Murphy-O’Connor proposes that the letter was written in the late spring or early summer of 52 (164) based on Seneca’s statement that his brother did not finish his term of office—hence, “it is impossible to place Gallio’s encounter with Paul (Acts 18:12–17) in the latter part of the proconsular year A.D. 51–52” (167). Therefore, Gallio’s encounter with Paul “must have taken place between July and September A.D. 51” (167). See also, Murphy-O’Connor’s (“Paul and Gallio,” 315–17) terse and persuasive rebuttal of Slingerland’s (“Gallio Inscription,” 439–49) seven year window theory. Last, see Campbell’s

There are other avenues to evaluate the historicity of Luke-Acts. Hengel claims that if we go by “ancient standards, the relative reliability of his account can be tested in the gospels by a synoptic comparison with Matthew and Mark.”²⁸ Hengel sees the author as an ‘editor’ emphasizing the parts he wants while shrinking the others to fit his authorial need. On the one hand Luke combines “separate historical traditions to serve his ends” while on the other he can “separate matters that belong together”—if this achieves a “meaningful sequence of events.”²⁹ Hengel is also right in saying that “one can hardly accuse him [Luke] of simply having invented events, created scenes out of nothing and depicted them on a broad canvas, deliberately falsifying his traditions in an unrestrained way for the sake of cheap effect.”³⁰

Based on the “standards of antiquity” there is a sense that Luke-Acts “always remains within the limits of what was considered reliable” at the time.³¹ Furthermore, it seems reasonable to suppose that the author’s “assurance” in the preface (Luke 1:3) is no “mere convention” as it reflects a “real theological and historical programme.”³²

(*Framing Paul*, 182–89) recent treatment on Pauline chronology where he argues that Paul’s letters do in fact provide an “absolute chronology” with respect to 2 Cor 11:32–33 (quotation from 182).

²⁸ Hengel, *Acts*, 61. Similarly, Keener (*Acts*, 1:181) explains how in the third gospel Luke “preserves the basic substance of his sources where we can compare them.” See also Keener, *Historical Jesus*, 85–94. As a consequence, we have “no reason to assume that he acted completely differently” in Acts from his first work, or that he invented his narrative “largely out of his own head.” Hengel, *Acts*, 61. Since Christianity was based on a series of events that were not only eschatological but also historical, its proclamation had to be narrative (41).

²⁹ Hengel, *Acts*, 61. Evidently, “All of this” says Hengel, “can be found in the secular historians of Greek and Roman antiquity” (61).

³⁰ Hengel, *Acts*, 61. The suppositional thinking that sees the author as painting a falsified picture continues without clear evidence. Cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 688 and Lüdemann, *Acts*, 347–49.

³¹ Hengel, *Acts*, 61.

³² Hengel, *Acts*, 61. He contends that this assurance “cannot be measured by the standards of a modern critical historian” (61). Recall the discussion on “The ‘We’ Passages and the Prologue” from chapter 3.

Accordingly, Hengel maintains that the author does “not set out primarily to present his own ‘theology’” but an honest recollection of the events described in the book.³³

We only do justice to the significance of Luke as the first theological ‘historian’ of Christianity if we take his work seriously as a source, i.e. if we attempt to examine it critically, reconstructing the work which he tells by adding and comparing other sources. The radical ‘redaction critical’ approach so popular today, which sees Luke above all as a freely inventive theologian, mistakes his real purpose, namely that as a ‘Christian’ historian he sets out to *report the events of the past* that provided the foundation for the faith and its extension (original emphasis).³⁴

These reported ‘events of the past’ are measurable and datable on the *outside* while on the *inside* they represent something far greater as Hengel indicates.³⁵

The events narrated in Acts provide nothing short of the foundation of the faith of the early church (Acts 2:1–41).³⁶ And yet they cannot be divorced from the contemporaneous events that we can realistically tag into a logical historical framework. Furthermore, the first Christian authors (in general) did not “claim to be inspired writers, like the prophets of the OT. Their authority did not rest on a theory of inspiration, but on the truth-claim contained in the eschatological saving event which they presented.”³⁷ The (outside) of the events happened first, and the subsequent (inside) *interpretation* of those

³³ Hengel, *Acts*, 68.

³⁴ Hengel, *Acts*, 67–68.

³⁵ Recall “Principles for Selecting Events” from chapter 2 and Collingwood, *Idea*, 213. There is a tendency for Acts scholars to focus on the inside of the event and begin the process of interpretation without doing the hard work of assessing the external/outside of the event. At the same time it is also possible to assess the external and bypass the internal meaning as well.

³⁶ In Acts 2:13 we have an early case of interpreting the inside of an event. On the *outside* Luke describes this miraculous experience of speaking in other tongues (v. 4). This supernatural interchange of speaking and understanding leads some to the *inside* interpretation (or better charge) that “they have had too much wine” (v. 13). The counter-interpretation (also on the inside) is that this is an outpouring of God’s Spirit and they are not drunk due to the early time of day (vv. 15–21). The inside nature of this event can be set aside for the moment in favour of the *outside* interpretation that this group of early Christians heard a sound (v. 2), saw “tongues of fire” (v. 3), spoke in “other tongues” (v. 4), while the crowd also “heard this sound” (v. 6) and their “own language being spoken.” While other explanations of each aspect of this experience may be offered something momentous occurred to the disciples and the crowd in Jerusalem that was worth recording by Luke. The crowd witnessed this event and immediately began the process of interpretation asking “What does this mean?” (12)—while Luke (via Peter’s speech in 2:14–21) explains what was happening from Joel 2:28–32.

³⁷ Hengel, *Acts*, 19 (but see Rosner, “Acts and Biblical History,” 1:65–82).

events occurred in light of the OT writings (e.g. Acts 2:16, 22–24). Nevertheless, such events (regardless of interpretation) happened in our history.

There are further reasons to assign a measure of credibility to Luke as a historian. The traditions of early Christianity were handed down “not with anonymous communities but with well-known individual authoritative bearers of tradition.”³⁸ Additionally, there is an established paper trail of sources for Acts that involves recognized people, places, and events as Hengel explains that the “history of earliest Christianity in the first sixty or seventy years down to the time of the composition of the four gospels did not get lost in any anonymous, unbounded and imaginary setting; it can still be traced.”³⁹

Perhaps the most applicable point to this discussion in particular and the date of Acts in general is the question of Luke’s intention and impression that was introduced in chapter 3.⁴⁰ His intention was to present a reliable account for Theophilus (Luke 1:3).

Rosner asks a similar question: “Did Luke intend to write history?”⁴¹ He points to the fact that Acts has

. . . so many features in common with the Old Testament historical works strongly suggests that Luke was writing what he conceived to be a historical work. The conclusion that Luke wrote as a historian does not of course settle the question of whether he was a reliable writer. That would depend on the state of his sources, the soundness of his historical judgment, and so on.⁴²

This entire discussion on the historicity of Acts in general and Rosner’s point in particular does not answer Alexander’s initial question of whether or not Acts is “true.”

And yet, if we consider Luke’s intention to write history, his proximity to his sources, the

³⁸ Hengel, *Acts*, 26.

³⁹ Hengel, *Acts*, 27.

⁴⁰ Recall “The ‘We’ Passages and the Prologue” from chapter 3.

⁴¹ Rosner, “Acts and Biblical History,” 1:81.

⁴² Rosner, “Acts and Biblical History,” 1:81.

relative accuracy of the people, places, and events he records this surely places his two-volume work in a different class of writing than an ancient novel or epic.⁴³

The Fall of Jerusalem: Dividing the Early and Middle Groups

While the first two groups (early and middle) are inclined to place a higher value on the historicity of Acts and generally view the author in some way as an associate of Paul, late dating advocates tend to place a lower historical value on Acts.⁴⁴ They consider the author as a ‘redactional theologian’ while connecting their dates with dependency on Josephus, changing relations between Jews and Christians (via the curse of the Minim), Domitian’s persecution, or “cultural or theological kinship to various features of a later date.”⁴⁵

As identified in chapter 1, the key divide between the early and middle groups rests on the relationship between Luke and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.⁴⁶ Those who argue for a date after the fall of Jerusalem claim that Luke 21:20–24 shows a “post-70

⁴³ See Alexander, *Acts*, 133; Hemer, *Acts*, 1–29. As argued in chapter 3 and 4 Acts is historical in the sense that it represents some form of historiography or biography—but certainly not epic. See Adams, *Genre of Acts*, 1–22, 170–71; Phillips, “Consensus?” 384–85; Palmer, “Historical Monograph,” 1–29. Additionally, Porter (*Paul in Acts*, 188) recognizes that Acts is “primarily a book of ancient historiography.” On the contrary, MacDonald (“Paul’s Farewell,” 189–203 [189]) via his ‘mimesis criticism’ claims that the author “intended to write” anything but an “accurate history” that “only the most credulous could consider historically plausible.” He dismisses Luke’s sources as “incredibly naïve” and that he was “a sophisticated, clever and creative author of fiction” (189). He further states that a “growing number of scholars [without naming them]... have argued that Luke had no intention of writing history” (189). In the next paragraph he (189) refers to Bonz (*The Past as Legacy*, 26) and her problematic theory that Luke-Acts is a “prose epic modelled after Vergil’s *Aeneid*.” MacDonald says she is “generally on the right track, but she does not take her insight far enough” (190). He then suggests that Paul’s farewell address (Acts 20:17–38) is in fact a “strategic rewriting of a famous episode in Homer’s *Iliad*” (190). See also MacDonald, *Homer?* and idem, *Homeric Epics*. Recall also Troftgruben’s comparisons with Homer’s *Iliad* and Virgil’s *Aeneid* with the end of Acts in chapter 4.

⁴⁴ This section expands upon my arguments in Armstrong, “New Plea,” 91–94.

⁴⁵ So Hemer, *Acts*, 373. This tendency is common for dating the NT in general. See Porter, “Dating,” 565.

⁴⁶ Fitzmyer (*Acts*, 54) in his summary claims that the “reasons for a post-70 dating are drawn mostly from the Lucan gospel.” See Schäfer (*History of the Jews*, 123–33) and his chapter 7 on “The First Jewish War (66–74 CE).” See also Mittelstaedt (*Lukas als Historiker*, 68–164) and his valuable insights on the destruction of Jerusalem. See also Mason, *History*, et passim.

editing of Mark.⁴⁷ However, the prediction of Jerusalem's destruction as a *vaticinium ex eventu* is not decisive—especially given the city's history.⁴⁸

Although the silence of Jerusalem's destruction in Acts does not prove an early date, Dodd's essay in particular (along with the conclusions of Rackham, Torrey, and Hemer) has successfully challenged the arguments that support a post-70 CE date as too simplistic.⁴⁹ In Mark 13:2, Jesus pronounces judgement upon the Temple and in Mark 13:14 the "abomination of desolation" is replaced by "Jerusalem surrounded by camps" in Luke 21:20.⁵⁰ Fitzmyer explains how this "Marcan apocalyptic prophecy, alluding to Dan 9:27 or 12:11, about the coming desolation of the Temple has given way to a description of a siege and capture of the city of Jerusalem itself."⁵¹

At a first glance, the theory of Luke's post-70 CE editing of Mark does merit attention. However, an analysis of the prophetic language of Luke challenges this simple interpretation starting with the widespread LXX usage of ἐρήμωσις (destruction/desolation) in Luke 21:20 as part of the phrase "the Abomination of Desolation" (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως) from Mark 13:14.⁵² Dodd in his analysis (that

⁴⁷ Hemer, *Acts*, 374. However, the central 'prophetic' description is common to all three synoptic gospels (Luke 19:44; Mark 13:2; Matt 24:2).

⁴⁸ Besides, fulfilled prophecy carries a far greater literary force in the ancient world. See Hemer, *Acts*, 375; Bock, *Acts*, 27; Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 78 and the example from Cassius Dio in "The Great fire of Rome" below.

⁴⁹ Dodd, "Jerusalem," 47–54; Hemer (*Acts*, 375); Torrey, *Date of Acts*, 69–70. Pervo (*Dating Acts*) fails to engage Dodd's convincing arguments.

⁵⁰ The word κυκλώω "surround/encircle" or "to move around an object" is very popular in the LXX with 95 occurrences and only four in the NT (Luke 21:20; John 10:24; Acts 14:20 and Heb 11:30). See BDAG/L&N 15.146 and also Dodd, "Jerusalem," 48. Hebrews 11:30 is used in a military sense regarding the walls of Jericho: "Πίστει τὰ τεῖχη Ἰεριχῶ ἔπεσαν κυκλωθέντα ἐπὶ ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας." Similarly, περικυκλώω (περι + κυκλώω) is found only once in Luke 19:43 (in a military context) as compared to 16 times in the LXX.

⁵¹ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 54.

⁵² Although many scholars point to Luke's "redaction" of Mark 13:14 in Luke 21:20, one could argue that the central "prophetic" description is common to all three synoptic gospels. For example, the phrase "stone upon stone" λίθον ἐπὶ λίθον is found in Luke 19:44 while the corresponding phrase λίθος ἐπὶ

remains largely ignored by middle and late dating advocates) argues persuasively against Luke's supposed "editing" of Mark stating that the "term 'editing' is in fact inapplicable."⁵³

Dodd explains that Luke in 21:21b–22 and 23b–24 is either "following a different source, or 'writing out of his own head.'"⁵⁴ Meanwhile in verses 21a and 23a Luke is "not 'editing' Mark but simply copying him. It is only in [verse] 20 that it is plausible to speak of him as 'editing' Mark 13:14."⁵⁵ Where Mark 13:14a reads "When you see the 'abomination of desolation'" (Ὄταν δὲ ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως) Luke 21:20a writes "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies" (Ὄταν δὲ ἴδητε κυκλουμένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων).

With regards to Luke's 'editing' in 21:20 he says that it will "hardly" be argued that the "mere expression *κυκλουμένην ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων*, describes Titus's siege so precisely that it must necessarily be a 'vaticinium ex eventu.' If you want to say in Greek 'Jerusalem will be besieged,' the choice of available expressions is strictly limited, and *κυκλοῦσθαι ὑπὸ στρατοπέδων*, is about as colourless as any."⁵⁶ So in effect Luke (in 21:20) wished to modify Mark's usage here because otherwise it would be "unintelligible to the public he had in view."⁵⁷

λίθον is identical to both Mark 13:2 and Matt 24:2. The only difference is that the first stone in Luke 19:44 is accusative, where Mark and Matthew's usage is masculine.

⁵³ Dodd, "Jerusalem," 48. See his full argument here.

⁵⁴ Dodd, "Jerusalem," 48.

⁵⁵ Dodd, "Jerusalem," 48.

⁵⁶ Dodd, "Jerusalem," 48. One would think that Luke would make some reference to *στρατόπεδον* rather than *στρατοπέδων* if he was looking back on the event since the actual siege was by 'the' Roman army; or at the very least some imagery indicative of the Roman army or its 'legions' perhaps.

⁵⁷ Dodd, "Jerusalem," 48–49. For this point in history, this would be a natural choice for any Greek speaking Jew or Christian (49). Dodd further cites several key passages where variants of *ἐρήμωσις* is found in the LXX (i.e. Lev 26:34, 35; 2 Chr 30:7, 36:21; Jer 4:7; 1; Esd 1:55; Jdt 8:22; and 1 Macc 1:54;

Another facet of the dividing wall between the early and middle groups involves the phrase “your house is abandoned” in Luke 13:35 that some say can only make sense *after* the destruction of Jerusalem.⁵⁸ It seems that a number of scribes found this verse so familiar that they added *ερημος* (*ερήμωσις*) from Jer 22:5 after *υμων*.⁵⁹ In other words, this prophetic language (or better the language of prophets) very easily reflects Jer 22:5 where the force of the words is even stronger: “But if you will not obey these words, I swear by myself, says the LORD, that this house will be for desolation” (*εάν δὲ μὴ ποιήσητε τοὺς λόγους τούτους, κατ’ ἑμαυτοῦ ὥμοσα, λέγει κύριος, ὅτι εἰς ἐρήμωσιν ἔσται ὁ οἶκος οὗτος*).⁶⁰

Whether ‘your house’ in Luke 13:35 means Jerusalem or the Temple makes little difference for the purposes of dating Acts.⁶¹ The fact that Luke borrows directly (or indirectly) from Jeremiah or Lamentations is sufficient to show that this is not some unique and never before heard of indictment against Jerusalem or its Temple. It can easily be interpreted as an indictment that was borrowed from the OT prophecies on the destruction of Jerusalem. In fact, given the political circumstances of Israel leading up to 66 CE this language is entirely predictable—and in fact some ways expected.⁶²

Another argument for a post-70 date of the third gospel is that Luke in 19:43–44 “alludes to Roman earthworks of the sort described by Josephus” (cf. *War* 6.150, 156).⁶³

etc). Where there are some 23 references in the LXX, only three are found in the NT—curiously, they are the synoptic ‘desolation’ passages (Mark 13:14; Matt 24:15; and Luke 21:20).

⁵⁸ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 54.

⁵⁹ D, N, Δ, Θ, Ψ, *f*¹³, 33, 700, 892, 1241, 1424, pm, it, vg^{cl}, sy^{c p h}; and the Latin Irenaeus.

⁶⁰ A similar sentiment is expressed earlier in Jer 12:17: (*εάν δὲ μὴ ἐπιστρέψωσιν, καὶ ἐξαρώ τὸ ἔθνος ἐκεῖνο ἐξάρσει καὶ ἀπωλεία*). See also Lam 2:7: “The Lord has rejected his altar, he has abandoned his sanctuary, he has shattered in the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces” (*Ἀπόσατο κύριος θυσιαστήριον αὐτοῦ, ἀπετίναξεν ἅγίασμα αὐτοῦ, συνέτριψεν ἐν χειρὶ ἐχθροῦ τείχος βάρων αὐτῆς*).

⁶¹ Morris (*Luke*, 229) claims that many “hold the house to be the Temple, but it is more probably Jerusalem as a whole.”

⁶² Recall chapter 3 (and note 211) and Schäfer (*History of the Jews*, 117) on the “progressive deterioration” of the political situation in Judea during 44–66 CE.

⁶³ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 54. Josephus uses *χωμάτων* from line 150 and *χώματα* from line 156 where

However, this line of reasoning is rather precarious for at least two reasons. The first is that in chapter 3 it was shown that there is no credible evidence to suppose that Luke is dependent upon the writings of Josephus. The second reason relates to the manner of ancient siege tactics against a walled city (such as Jerusalem).

Dodd rightfully explains that the military operations described in Luke 19:42–44 are “no more than the regular common-places of ancient warfare.”⁶⁴ The prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem is simply a reflection of the earlier LXX account of Nebuchadnezzar’s siege in 586 BCE (and the siege of other cities as well).⁶⁵ We do not need to scour the much later works of Josephus in order to find Luke’s sources. Some of the exact same military language that Luke uses is found in the LXX of Isa 29:3; 37:33; Ezek 4:1–3; 21:27; 26:8; Jer 27:29; 41:1; and also 1 Macc 15:13–14.⁶⁶ This can hardly be coincidental given Luke’s frequent use of the LXX.⁶⁷

Luke uses a different word altogether—*χάραξ* (see my note 66 below on the difference). Regardless the LXX of Ezek 21:27 uses both *χάραξ* and *χώμα* and there are 12 occurrences for *χώμα*, 3 in Exod 8:12–13; the rest are found in (Josh 8:28; Job 14:19; 17:16; 20:11; 22:24; 28:6; Hab 1:10; Isa 25:2; Ezek 21:27; and Dan [Theodotion] 12:2). The LEH defines *χώμα* as “earth thrown up” or a “mound (thrown up against the walls of cities in order to take them).”

⁶⁴ Dodd, “Jerusalem,” 49.

⁶⁵ According to Dodd (“Jerusalem,” 50) Luke’s phrase in 19:44 (*καὶ ἔδαφιοῦσίν σε καὶ τὰ τέκνα σου*) is “commonplace of Hebrew prophecy” and has intriguing parallels in the LXX with (Hos 10:14; 14:1; Nah 3:10; Isa 3:25–26; Ps 137:9 [136:9 LXX]; cf. Mark 13:17 and Luke 21:23).

⁶⁶ Isa 29:3 recounts the Assyrian advance on Judea: *καὶ κυκλώσω* ὡς Δαυὶδ ἐπὶ σὲ καὶ βαλῶ περὶ σὲ *χάρακα* and the later promise of safety in 37:33: οὐδὲ μὴ *κυκλώσῃ* ἐπ’ αὐτὴν *χάρακα*. Ezekiel 4:2 warns of the coming Babylonian siege: *χάρακα* καὶ δώσεις ἐπ’ αὐτὴν *παρεμβολὰς* καὶ τάξεις τὰς βελοστάσεις *κύκλω*, and in Ezek 21:27 the King of Babylon decides whether to attack Ammon or Judah: ἐγένετο τὸ μαντεῖον ἐπὶ Ἱερουσαλημ τοῦ βαλεῖν *χάρακα*...τοῦ βαλεῖν *χάρακα* ἐπὶ τὰς πύλας αὐτῆς καὶ βαλεῖν *χώμα* καὶ οἰκοδομησαὶ βελοστάσεις, while Ezek 26:8 describes the siege of Tyre: *καὶ ποιήσει ἐπὶ σὲ κύκλω χάρακα*. Jeremiah 27:29 writes: *παρεμβάλετε ἐπ’ αὐτὴν κυκλόθεν*...ἀνταπόδοτε αὐτῇ κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῆς and later in 41:1 states: καὶ Ναβουχοδονοσορ βασιλεὺς Βαβυλώνης καὶ πᾶν τὸ *στρατόπεδον* αὐτοῦ. 1 Macc 15:13–14 further uses such military terms: *παρενέβαλεν* Ἀντίοχος ἐπὶ Δωρα...καὶ *ἐκύκλωσεν* τὴν πόλιν. See Dodd’s full list of examples in: “Jerusalem,” 50–51 (and also his note 6 on p. 50). The earlier and basic use of the *χάραξ* “stake/barricade” in Luke 19:43 is especially noteworthy because this is the only occurrence in the NT and that the LXX *always* uses this form (with 15 references). Josephus (*War* 5.269) uses a later Hellenistic form *χαράκωμα* (*χάραξ* + *χώμα*) “palisade” whereas Luke does not. See Xenophon, *Hist. Hellenica* 5.4.39 and *Hist. Anabasis* 5.2.26.

⁶⁷ Rosner (“Acts and Biblical History,” 1:80) says the “Semitic cast of the books is best explained

Furthermore, Josephus's *Jewish War* (that was written c. 75–79 CE) describes some very specific 'eye-witness' details that go far beyond Luke's very brief and simple account—such as the inner Jewish faction fighting inside the walls, the “horrors of pestilence and famine,” cannibalism, and the fire that destroyed the Temple and a large part of the city.⁶⁸ Josephus's account is clearly looking back on the siege from the vantage point of having several years to process his sources and reflect on his own involvement.

Josephus spared no details—what he wrote is not only lengthy but exceptionally barbaric. Such details are nowhere to be found in Luke-Acts. For example, one starving woman cooked and ate her own infant (*War* 6.201–13).⁶⁹ Sadly, this was not an isolated incident as Josephus further describes how the “whole city instantly rang with the abomination, and each, while picturing the horror of it, shuddered as though it had been perpetrated by himself. The starving folk longed for death, and felicitated those who had gone to their rest ere they had heard or beheld such evils” (*War* 6.212–13).⁷⁰ This represents but one small section of Josephus's graphic account of the siege. In comparison, Luke's description is very brief and very similar to the well-known account of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in 586 BCE.

Furthermore, Luke 19:44 cannot be used as evidence for looking back at the siege of 70 CE: “and they will dash you to the ground and your children within you” (χαῖ)

in terms of the linguistic influence of the LXX, that is the use of deliberate Septuagintisms.”

⁶⁸ Dodd, “Jerusalem,” 49; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 134.

⁶⁹ See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1343. Josephus (*War* 6.208) writes: “With these words she slew her son, and then, having roasted the body and devoured half of it, she covered up and stored the remainder.” See Thackeray, *Josephus*, 3:437. There is an account of this happening with a painful twist during the siege of Samaria where this woman cries out to the King of Israel who was “passing by on the wall” (2 Kgs 6:26). She explains her ordeal: “This woman said to me, ‘Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we’ll eat my son.’ So we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, ‘Give up your son so we may eat him,’ but she had hidden him” (2 Kgs 6:28–29, NIV).

⁷⁰ Thackeray, *Josephus*, 3:437.

ἔδαφιοῦσίν σε καὶ τὰ τέκνα σου). Dodd explains that “among all the barbarities which Josephus reports, he does not say that the conquerors dashed children to the ground.”⁷¹ In fact Josephus (*War* 6.418–19) says instead: “those under seventeen were sold” (οἱ δ’ ἐντὸς ἑπτακαίδεκα ἐτῶν ἐπράθησαν) and “of the rest, those over seventeen years of age he sent in chains to the works in Egypt, while multitudes were presented by Titus to the various provinces, to be destroyed in the theatres by the sword or by wild beasts” (*War* 6.418).⁷² Regardless, the phrase in Luke 19:44 (ἔδαφιοῦσίν σε καὶ τὰ τέκνα σου) is “in any case not based upon anything that happened in 66–70: it is a commonplace of Hebrew prophecy.”⁷³

Rather than assuming that Luke (and Acts) was written after the destruction of Jerusalem and showing the prophecies as ‘proof,’ the linguistic evidence demonstrates the opposite.⁷⁴

It appears, then, that not only are the two Lucan oracles composed entirely from the language of the Old Testament, but the conception of the coming disaster which the author has in mind is a generalized picture of the fall of Jerusalem as imaginatively presented by the prophets. So far as any historical event has coloured the picture, it is not Titus’s capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, but Nebuchadnezzar’s capture in 586 B.C. There is no single trait of the forecast which cannot be documented directly out of the Old Testament.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Dodd, “Jerusalem,” 50.

⁷² Thackeray, *Josephus*, 3:496–97.

⁷³ Dodd, “Jerusalem,” 50. For example, Hosea (10:14) is warning Israel of coming destruction by recalling the time when Shalman destroyed the house of Arbel and “mothers were dashed to the ground with their children” (μητέρα ἐπὶ τέκνοις ἠδάφισαν). Compare also Hos 14:1 (ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ πεσοῦνται αὐτοί, καὶ τὰ ὑποτίθια αὐτῶν ἔδαφισθήσονται, καὶ αἱ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσαι αὐτῶν διαρραγήσονται) with Mark 13:17 (οὐαὶ δὲ ταῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχούσαις καὶ ταῖς θηλαζούσαις ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις). See also Nah 3:10; Isa 3:25–26; and Ps 137:9 (136:9 LXX).

⁷⁴ For various reasons (that remain largely unsubstantiated), late dating advocates assume a post-destruction state of affairs. Tyson (*Marcion*, 140 [n. 58]) for example, gives only a single passing reference to Dodd’s article.

⁷⁵ Dodd, “Jerusalem,” 52. As far as the gospel of Mark the “prototype” of “coming disaster” is the “sacrilege of Antiochus” in 168–167 BCE (see p. 53).

In the future, scholars who insist on a post-70 CE date of Luke-Acts need to marshal better evidence that these prophecies are not simply the language of the prophets but somehow demonstrate that Luke is offering a very specific and unambiguous reflection of the actual siege and destruction of Jerusalem.⁷⁶ However, the likelihood of this occurring seems remote considering how the *entire* narrative of Luke-Acts reflects the language of a city going about its business with its Temple still standing with all of its establishments in operation—including an active Sanhedrin (συνέδριον) and the office of the High Priest (ἀρχιερεύς).⁷⁷

At this point in the discussion it is worth recounting a brief summary of the aftermath of the Jewish rebellion against Rome (this does not seem to be a significant factor for the middle and late dating groups). Schäfer explains how the “consequences of the first great war of the Jews against Rome were extremely far-reaching and their significance for the future history of Judaism can hardly be over-estimated.”⁷⁸ He goes on to describe how the “immediate political consequences were drastic” as Judaea became an “independent Roman province” after the war.⁷⁹

As far as the population of Judea, “[e]ntire communities had been totally destroyed and depopulated” to the extent that “modern research puts the figure at up to one-third of the Jewish population of Palestine.”⁸⁰ As a result this also produced

⁷⁶ Troftgruben (*Conclusion Unhindered*, 10) explains how one of the “principal reasons for dating Luke-Acts” later than 70 CE is because of the ‘editing’ in Luke 21:20 (from Mark 13:2, 14) that “makes most sense as a prophecy *ex eventu*.”

⁷⁷ See the συνέδριον in Acts 4:15; 5:21, 27, 34–35, 41; 6:12, 15; 7:54; 22:30; 23:1, 15, 20, 28; and 24:20. It is rather curious that Luke does not use this term once in his gospel but only the chief priests (ἀρχιερεύς) and often in combination with the teachers of the law (γραμματέων).

⁷⁸ Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 135.

⁷⁹ Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 135.

⁸⁰ Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 135. Schäfer (135) claims that both Josephus and Tacitus report “massive casualties amongst the population.” Josephus (*War* 6.420) with some expected exaggeration writes: “Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be

“catastrophic economic consequences” beyond the already exploited “rural population” who were now “impoverished even further.”⁸¹ Essentially, the “land” in Jerusalem and all of Judea became “the property of the emperor” (i.e. Vespasian).⁸² Another consequence from the war is the “major upheaval in Jewish religious life”—since Judaism had been “centered for centuries around the Temple cult as the focal point of religious life.”⁸³ Its destruction “demanded a fundamental rethink, a radical new beginning.”⁸⁴

This radical restructuring also meant the end of the office of High Priest (Luke 3:2; 22:50, 54). After the Temple’s destruction the High Priesthood “disappeared for good”—along with the “orderly ‘functioning’ of the Temple cult.”⁸⁵ One of the more obvious and visual changes that immediately impacted the post-70 CE Jewish population was that the old Temple tax “now had to be paid in the form of the *fiscus Judaicus* to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome.”⁸⁶ This was a powerful gesture that symbolized

ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand” (see *War* 420–434 for more details on the aftermath). One wonders how Luke (Acts 28:21) could take the time to account for the lack of letters from Judea concerning Paul to the Jews in Rome—but somehow fail to mention that many of their friends and family had been slaughtered and that their homeland was raised to ground.

⁸¹ Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 135.

⁸² Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 135. Josephus (*War* 7.216) writes that “Caesar sent a letter to Bassus, and to Liborius Maximus, who was the procurator [of Judea], and gave order that all Judea should be exposed to sale.”

⁸³ Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 136. Again, this is something that Luke is absolutely blind to (both in his gospel and in Acts). Given the central importance of the Temple in Luke-Acts there can be no rational explanation for a post-70 date—unless one can clearly demonstrate that 1) Luke carefully crafted the entire narrative of Luke-Acts based on pre-70 sources and information and 2) that it was politically and theologically advantageous to do so. In my reading and research neither has been rationally and satisfactorily accomplished.

⁸⁴ Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 136.

⁸⁵ Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 136.

⁸⁶ Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 136. According to Udoh (“Taxation,” 378), before 70 CE when “Vespasian converted the temple tax into a poll tax imposed on all Jews, the Jews in Palestine did not pay an annual ‘head’ tax.” Josephus (*War* 7.218) writes that Vespasian also “laid a tribute upon the Jews wheresoever they were and enjoined every one of them to bring two drachmae every year into the Capitol, as they used to pay the same to the Temple at Jerusalem” (cf. also Cassius Dio, *Hist.* 65.7.2). Schäfer (136) explains how this represented “less a financial burden—the Temple tax was two drachmas—than an

“where Jewish loyalty must now be directed.”⁸⁷ Last, along with the demise of the High Priesthood the next most significant “state and religious institution”—the Sanhedrin—also “disappeared” along with the Sadducees.⁸⁸ As indicated in chapter 1, the contacts between the early Jerusalem church and these essential Jewish institutions can only suggest a time before they were eradicated.⁸⁹

Therefore, the burden of proof must remain with those who consider Luke to be writing at a time after the destruction of Jerusalem, its people, its economy, and its beloved Temple.⁹⁰ Fitzmyer’s observation is somewhat ironic on the one hand but on the other it presents the solution to this key division in the debate as he states: “Modern interpreters have long been puzzled by the failure of NT writers to mention the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70.”⁹¹ Instead of being puzzled by this omission, the easiest and by far the most logical solution in light of the combined evidence is that the NT writers did not mention this fact in history simply because it had not happened yet. To insist that such an epic event in Jewish, Roman, and Christian history had already occurred but was not important enough for the NT writers to openly

unprecedented and dispiriting humiliation for the pious orthodoxy (the *chasidim*.)” For a post-70 CE date of Luke-Acts, an omission of this critical change in taxation is exceptionally baffling. See also Luke 20:1, 22–26 (and also Mark 12:17; Matt 22:21).

⁸⁷ Fitzpatrick-McKinley, “Synagogue Communities,” 55–87 (75).

⁸⁸ Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 136. The Sanhedrin was “headed by the High Priest and, despite the growing influence of the Pharisees, was undoubtedly dominated largely by the aristocratic and economically influential Sadducee families” (136).

⁸⁹ Unless one subscribes to the unhistorical notion that Luke intentionally falsified his narrative to reflect some idyllic pre-70 CE status of the Temple (along with all of its elements). Even the prayer forms in Acts reflect the Temple and not the synagogue which leads to the conclusion that Acts does not exhibit any “elements from post-70 developments in Jewish and Christian worship.” Cf. Falk, “Jewish Prayer,” 4:267.

⁹⁰ This was certainly front page news across the Roman Empire but especially in Rome. The Arch of Titus (constructed in 82 CE) demonstrates just how “widespread this event was known in antiquity.” See Armstrong, “End of Acts,” 14 and Schäfer, *History of the Jews*, 130–31.

⁹¹ Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 55.

and clearly mention seems to represent a profound case of special pleading. The alternative is far more logical and requires far less loopholes of interpretation.

Acts and the City of Rome

Not only is Jerusalem of central importance to Acts, the city of Rome plays a key role in the narrative as well—especially towards the end (Acts 2:10; 18:2; 19:21; 23:11; 25:25, 27; 27:1; 28:11, 14, 16–17).⁹² Acts reveals a geographical and thematic shift in importance from Jerusalem to Rome (Acts 19:21), where Paul awaits the outcome of his appeal to Caesar while remaining under house arrest (Acts 28:30–31).⁹³

Since Paul is left in Rome without any clear indication of the outcome of his trial or his fate (despite the unconvincing alternative literary explanations outlined in chapter 4), it is necessary to consider the end of Acts in light of the most significant events in the history of Rome and the church in the mid 60's CE.⁹⁴ The great fire of Rome, the subsequent persecution of Roman Christians under Nero, and the martyrdom of Paul, are far too significant events to be brushed aside by the middle and late dating advocates.⁹⁵ Therefore, the goal of this section is to place these events in their proper historical context—which accurately reflects a time before 64 CE.⁹⁶

⁹² See Keener's "Continuing Ministry in Rome" in *Acts*, 4:3714–75.

⁹³ Recall "Luke's Concern with Geography, Travel, and Lodging" from chapter 3. It was deduced that Luke is either from Rome or Rome was his current address at the time of writing. A third possibility is that his intended audience (i.e. Theophilus) is in Rome. Since the city of Rome is central to the narrative, the author and recipients it seems reasonable to expect at least a footnote to the terrible events that transpired within a year or so after the end of Acts.

⁹⁴ Rhee, *Early Christian Literature*, 12.

⁹⁵ See Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 165–220; Lampe, "Roman Christians," 111–29; Oakes, "Historical Evidence," 131–51; Barrett et al., *Nero*, 149–70; and Dando-Collins, *Great Fire*, et passim. While the great fire of Rome and the subsequent persecution are frequently discussed by early dating advocates it is often dismissed (or not even considered at all) by those preferring a later date of Acts.

⁹⁶ See Cadbury, *Acts in History*; Hemer, *Acts*; Clarke, "Rome and Italy," 2:455–48.

The Great Fire of Rome

The great fire of Rome in July of 64 CE represents one of the most significant aspects on the date of Acts for at least two reasons—first, it was the ancient city’s worst recorded disaster and, second, the last recorded event in Acts (i.e. Paul in Rome) is dated just before the fire—and Luke says nothing.⁹⁷ There are no allusions and no hints anywhere in the textual record to this catastrophic event. Furthermore, there can be no discernible political or theological motive for such an omission either.⁹⁸ Although this event is but one piece of the larger historical context, it is argued here that the experience of Paul described in the texts of Acts 28:11–31 (and Luke-Acts as a whole for that matter) reflects a time prior to the city’s greatest disaster.⁹⁹ Hence, the context of this discussion centers upon the text(s) of Acts 28:11–31 in relation to the city of Rome c. ±64 CE.

No one knows where Paul stayed in Rome,¹⁰⁰ but there are a few clues that describe his accommodations starting with Acts 28:16. We learn that after arriving in Rome “Paul was permitted to live by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him” (ἐπετρέπη τῷ Παύλῳ μένειν καθ’ ἑαυτὸν σὺν τῷ φυλάσσοντι αὐτὸν στρατιώτῃ).¹⁰¹ A

⁹⁷ See Mittelstaedt, *Lukas als Historiker*, 208–18 (Der Brand von Rom und die Verfolgung unter Nero). Oakes, (“Historical Evidence,” 131) states that the “only narrative account of Christians in Rome, in a text that is probably fairly close to this period, is that of Luke in Acts 28.” Oakes (134) further claims that the “archaeology of the centre of Rome supports and clarifies the literary accounts of the fire of 64 CE and its effects.” See also Pollini, “Burning Rome,” 213–36.

⁹⁸ Kosso (*Knowing the Past*, 51) explains how the meaning of a text is “often revealed only in context with other claims about the past such as about related events or the author’s motives.” See also Greene and Moore’s (*Archaeology*, 155) fifth criterion for the historical dating process. See Kamp et al., *Writing History!*, 77; Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, 48; and Dibelius, *Studies*, 4, 11, 144–45.

⁹⁹ Although major fires in the city were “regular events,” the fire of 64 CE was the “most spectacular of these.” See Parkin and Pomeroy, *Roman Social History*, 239.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 4:3727–32 and his insightful section on “Apartments in Rome.” Lampe (“Roman Christians,” 118) while commenting on the various places both Jews and Christians were known to live in Rome highlights the fact that the “topographical results cohere with the situation in the year 64 CE” (i.e. the time of the great fire).

¹⁰¹ Some of the later expanded Western variants such as found in Codex 614 read after (εἰς Ῥώμην), “the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to live by himself outside of the barracks with a soldier guarding him” (ὁ ἐκατόνταρχος παρέδωκε τοὺς δεσμίους τῷ

further description in verse 23 says “they [Jewish Leaders, v.17] came to him into his lodging in great numbers” (ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν ξενίαν πλείονες οἴς).¹⁰² Last, verse 30 says that “He [Paul] lived there two whole years in his own rented house” (Ἐνέμεινεν δὲ διετίαν ὅλην ἐν ἰδίῳ μισθώματι).

Mealand has established that the word *μισθωμα* (v. 30) is used in the sense of “payment in general” and there are many examples where it “specifically refers to the payment of rent.”¹⁰³ Along with *ἀκωλύτως* (v. 31) and *διετία*, the three words together “regularly appear in ancient papyri dealing with the leasing of property” and are found in “ancient leases.”¹⁰⁴ Additionally, it seems plausible that Paul’s “rented accommodation . . . gave him unrestricted use of it.”¹⁰⁵ For example, P. Oxy. 14.1641, dated to Nero’s fourteenth year (May 11th, 68 CE), refers to the “lease of a house which is to be used without let or hindrance.”¹⁰⁶ As a result, the picture of Paul’s unhindered accommodation is one of availability, affordability, and accessibility for his visitors. Therefore, how does our understanding of Paul’s lodging in Acts relate to (1) his ability to afford such accommodations and (2) the cost and availability of housing in Rome before and after the fire?

στρατοπεδάρχη· τῷ δὲ παύλῳ ἐπέτραπη μένειν καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς). Hemer (*Acts*, 200) thinks the stratopedarch may prove “important to the historical puzzles surrounding the end of Acts.”

¹⁰² *ξενίαν* is “a place of temporary lodging for a person away from home—guestroom, lodging for guest [sic], place to stay in” (cf. L&N 7:31, and Phlm 22).

¹⁰³ Mealand, “Close of Acts,” 585.

¹⁰⁴ Mealand, “Close of Acts,” 590 and 595.

¹⁰⁵ Mealand, “Close of Acts,” 595.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. <http://www.trismegistos.org/text/21951>. Compare *ἀκολούτως* in line six with *ἀκωλύτως* in Acts 28:31. It is unlikely that *ἀκολούτως* derives from a different verb than *ἀκωλύτως*. See Mealand, “Close of Acts,” 592 (n. 16). There are hundreds of papyri that relate to renting and the leasing of property.

Granted, any estimation of Paul's socio-economic status at the time of his Roman sojourn and his ability to afford rent must remain tentative.¹⁰⁷ However, it seems reasonable to extend a recent and "moderate thesis" that Paul and his family were "most likely among the artisan-business class of the ancient world who had some success in their occupation as tent makers."¹⁰⁸ This is supported by the picture of Paul in Corinth (Acts 18:1–3), along with Priscilla and Aquilla, who (in v. 3) were "tentmakers by trade" (σκηνοποιοὶ τῆ τέχνη).¹⁰⁹

Although it is difficult to place where and exactly what time Paul lived for those two years (c. 60–61 CE; Acts 28:30), his choice of accommodations after 64 CE would have decreased dramatically and would call into question his ability to entertain the "many" (πολύς of v. 23) and "all" (πάντας of v. 20) of the visitors, and especially his ability to afford his own rented house for that length of time after the fire.¹¹⁰

The material context of Rome in the time of Nero (before July of 64) was radically different than it was during its complex and systematic rebuilding phase. Narrow streets, coupled with crowded timber tenement housing, were always a concern

¹⁰⁷ The adjective ἴδιος (v. 30) seems to suggest he did not rely on the support of family, friends or associates [though Phil 4:10–23 [N.B. vv.18 and 22]]. There is also no indication that he worked to support himself in Rome especially given his house arrest (Acts 28:17, cf. Herod Agrippa's case in Josephus, *Ant.* 18.235.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Pitts, "Paul in Tarsus," 43–67.

¹⁰⁹ For some of the textual problems and versional renderings of σκηνοποιός see Hock, *Tentmaking and Apostleship*, 20. Meanwhile, Murphy-O'Connor (*St. Paul's Corinth*, 195–96) offers a snapshot of what Paul's workshop would have entailed: a downstairs shop, basic tent making tools, with modest upstairs living quarters.

¹¹⁰ Keener (*Acts*, 4:3730) states that "Housing in Rome... was expensive" and "much more expensive in Rome than elsewhere." Earlier, Blue ("House Church," 156) remarks on the "high cost of housing" in Rome. Blue (155) explains how the average Roman would have lived in an *insula* (a multiple unit building) versus the 3% wealthy fortunate who lived in a *domus*. See also Packer, "Housing and Population," 62 and Carcopino, *Daily Life*, 23. The wealthy property owners would lease the upper storeys of their *insula* for approximately 2,000 *sesterces* to a "middle-manager for a five year term and give him the rent of the ground floor *domus*" (156, and Packer, 86). This would not be economically possible for the average Roman since they earned just three *sestertii* per day (156 [n. 141]). Carcopino (*Daily Life*, 56) states, "So intolerable was the burden of rent that the sub-tenants of the first lessee almost invariably had to sub-let in their turn every room in their *cenaculum* which they could possibly spare."

for city officials and residents.¹¹¹ The city center changed forever when the fire broke out on July 18–19th somewhere in the shops of the Palatine “with their flammable booths” and burned for nine days, spreading north across the Capitoline and as far as the Esquiline.¹¹² The severity of the damage was so great that Tacitus stated that out of fourteen regions “only four remained intact.”¹¹³ Everything from temples to tenement housing vanished, along with many of the city’s fleeing inhabitants.¹¹⁴

Nero’s subsequent and extensive rebuilding campaign began with a revised building code for spacious streets and tenements with “courtyards and porticos,” height limits, and the use of “fire-resistant stone.”¹¹⁵ Some of Nero’s largest post-conflagration building projects such as the Domus Aurea (Golden House) required a massive amount of land that was expropriated.¹¹⁶ His extravagant building projects added to the “constant

¹¹¹ Barrett et al., *Nero*, xv–xvi. Before the fire of 64 CE the ancient writers were “very conscious of the absence of beauty in the streets of Rome.” See Laurence et al., *City*, 117. Apparently Rome was known for its “ugly buildings and narrow winding streets or *vici*” and unlike Pompeii and the other colonies it was “filled up rather than laid out” (117). Additionally, Parkin and Pomeroy (*Roman Social History*, 239) observe how the “practice of constructing the upper storeys of apartment buildings with timber frames would have lightened the load on the lower floors, but increased the fire risk.”

¹¹² Barrett et al., *Nero*, 149.

¹¹³ “Rome is divided into fourteen regions, among which only four remained intact. Three were burned to the ground, and of the other seven there were only a few houses left, which were severely damaged and half-burnt.” Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.40 (cited by Lampe, *Valentinus*, 47). The destruction was “so complete that in most of the devastated areas only piles of ashes and useless rubble remained, and most streets were impassible.” Dando-Collins, *Great Fire*, 99. Cf. also Parkin and Pomeroy, *Roman Social History*, 239.

¹¹⁴ Barrett et al., *Nero*, 149. Fuelled by the wind, the speed of the fire hemmed in many of those trying to escape (p. 154). The exact death toll remains unknown but later writers say that “countless persons perished” (καὶ ἀνθρώποι ἀναρίθμητοι). Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 62.18.2.

¹¹⁵ Barrett et al., *Nero*, 149, 151. After the fire there began a “new form of urbanism” with “rows of measured streets with broad thoroughfares, a restriction on the height of buildings, open spaces, and the addition of colonnades in front of the apartment blocks.” See Laurence et al., *City*, 117 and Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.43. Rome’s “shady, winding streets, and towering buildings” had been replaced with “broad streets with colonnades and lower buildings” (117–18, and Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.38). The “new Rome” was later described by Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.41) as a “city of beauty” (118).

¹¹⁶ Suetonius, *Ner.* 31.1–2; Barrett et al., *Nero*, 151. McRay (*Archaeology*, 345) notes that this included a 120 foot “gilded bronze statue” of Nero (cf. Suetonius, *Ner.* 31:1). The statue stood approximately southwest of the Domus Aurea just in front of the Temple of Venus and Rome and the Coliseum. Barrett et al. (*Nero*, 160 [n. 27]) refer to Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* 34.45–47) who apparently saw a “model of it and noted its resemblance to the emperor.” The entire surrounding vestibule was so spacious that its “triple portico was a mile long” and contained a pool “the size of a sea”—and was surrounded by

theme in Roman literature” of the “high cost of rental housing in the city.”¹¹⁷ Parkin and Pomeroy observe how this cost is partly the “result of the density of the urban population (usually estimated at a million or more) crammed into a limited space, partly the high risk of investing in housing.”¹¹⁸ Paul in some measure, along with the “poor,” would “no doubt be seriously affected, since proper planning to discourage overcrowding would lead to a shortage of accommodations and pressure to increase rents.”¹¹⁹

In consideration of this, it seems that the language of Acts 28:11–31 reflects an earlier time when tenement housing was both available and more affordable.¹²⁰ Although this interpretation is by no means decisive it is firmly supported by the substantial omission of the fire in *any* textual strata of Acts.¹²¹ Given the established propensity for expansion among the Western and Byzantine traditions, it seems very strange that neither the text, nor any of the variants in Acts 28:11–31 show an awareness of the city’s greatest disaster.¹²² Given the steady stream of datable events in Acts, it seems extremely unlikely that Luke (either deliberately or accidentally) failed to mention one of the “best known historical events.”¹²³

“tilled fields, vineyards and woods” (160, Suetonius, *Ner.* 31.1). As far as the structure, “everything was overlaid with gold and studded with precious stones and mother-of-pearl. The dining rooms had ceilings made of ivory panels that could rotate for flowers to be scattered from above, and were fitted with pipes for dispensing perfume. The principle dining room had a dome that, day and night, was continuously revolving like the heavens” (160, Suetonius, *Ner.* 31:2).

¹¹⁷ Parkin and Pomeroy, *Roman Social History*, 239.

¹¹⁸ Parkin and Pomeroy, *Roman Social History*, 239.

¹¹⁹ Barrett et al., *Nero*, 151.

¹²⁰ It is highly unlikely that Luke mentioned Paul’s rental situation in order to indicate his affluence given the well-established concern for the appropriation of wealth in Luke-Acts (cf. Luke 5:11, 28; 6:24–26; 12:33; 16:1–13; 18:18–23, 24–30; 21:1–4; Acts 2:41–47; 4:36–5:11; 6:1–7; 11:12–30; 24:17; 20:30–35).

¹²¹ See “Appendix: The manuscript Record for Acts 28:11–31.” See also “Principles for Interpreting Sources” in chapter 2.

¹²² Westcott and Hort, *Original Greek II*, 122–26.

¹²³ See Dando-Collins, *The Great Fire of Rome*, 1. This is especially inconsistent given Luke’s well established attention to time and detail in Luke-Acts (recall chapter 3 and Luke 1:5, 39; 2:1; 4:25; 17:26–28; Acts 5:37; 7:2–47; 11:28; and 18:2).

This last point is worth considering further in light of the many narrative solutions put forward concerning the end of Acts (see chapter 4). First, since the author of Acts readily describes significant events in Roman history like the Jewish expulsion (Acts 18:2), or the “severe famine” (Acts 11:28), and incidental details relating to historical figures (i.e. Sergius Paulus, Acts 13:7), why is the great fire omitted? Second, there does not appear to be any conceivable, rational “motive” for the author to omit this information.¹²⁴ Third, other contemporary writers that discuss the great fire (such as Cassius Dio below) provide an example of what we should expect from Acts, if it is to be dated after the fact. In stark contrast to Cassius Dio, we find a favorable attitude toward both Rome and Nero in Acts.¹²⁵

Cassius Dio (c. 155–235 CE) claimed the great fire was “without parallel earlier or later, apart from the Gallic sack. The entire Palatine Hill, the theater of Taurus, and some two-thirds of the rest of the city went up in flames, and the loss of life was incalculable.”¹²⁶ Moreover, in the context of the Roman people blaming and ‘cursing’ Nero (v. 3), Cassius made it a point to remind his readers of the Oracle spoken in the time of Tiberius that tells of Rome’s future destruction: “Thrice three hundred years having run their course of fulfillment, Rome by the strife of her people shall perish.”¹²⁷

A further Sibylline prophecy was circulating among the people (in reference to Nero) that said, “last of the sons of Aeneas, a mother-slayer will govern” (ἔσται δὲ τοῦτο

¹²⁴ Cadbury, *Luke-Acts*, ix, 32; Greene and Moore, *Archaeology*, 155.

¹²⁵ E.g. Acts 25:11; 28:20; Porter, *When Paul Met Jesus*, 78.

¹²⁶ Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 62.18.2 (and not 62.17 in Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 159). See his full account in Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 62 (chapters 16–18). Compare his account with Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.38–43. For an extensive discussion of the known sources see the chapter on “The Great Fire” in Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 149–70.

¹²⁷ Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 62.18.3 and Cary and Foster, *Dio’s Roman History*, 8:117

‘ἔσχατος Αἰνεαδῶν μητροκτόνος ἡγεμονεύσει).¹²⁸ Given the author’s tendency in Acts to frequently incorporate prophecies from the LXX in his narrative (notably in Acts 28:26–27 = Isa 6:9–10), it seems reasonable to expect some prophetic dialogue directed towards Rome or its leaders—if Acts was written after the fire (and especially the subsequent Neronian persecution).¹²⁹ Taken together, the cumulative evidence indicates that the texts of Acts 28:11–31 reflect a time prior to Rome’s greatest disaster.

Post-Fire Persecution under Nero

Along with the fall of Jerusalem and the great fire of Rome another facet of the debate identified in chapter 1 was the persecution of Christians that happened after the fire (c. 64 CE).¹³⁰ The relationship between the two related events requires some contextualizing. Whereas the fire itself “marked an important turning point in Nero’s reign,” it generated “political repercussions that went far beyond the immediate effects of the fire itself.”¹³¹ The image of the crazed ruler playing his harp while Rome burned is not an entirely accurate picture of history while his reputation as an infamous despot did not happen overnight.¹³² In fact it took “some time for it to emerge that Nero’s appointment as emperor was a disaster.”¹³³

¹²⁸ Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 62.18.4 and Cary and Foster, *Dio’s Roman History*, 8:116–17. On the one hand Cassius Dio considers whether this was spoken beforehand as a prophecy (v. 4), but goes on to say that Nero was in fact the last of the Julian line “from Aeneas” (ἀπὸ Αἰνείου).

¹²⁹ Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44.2, 4. Marguerat notes the positive attitude in Acts towards Rome versus the negative portrayal in Revelation: “It is the goal of Paul’s mission for the former [in Acts] and the symbol of evil for the latter [Revelation]. The capital of the Empire is the target of the narrative from Acts 19:21 onwards whereas from Revelation 13 onwards it is silhouetted behind the metaphors of evil.” Marguerat, *Historian*, 34–35.

¹³⁰ Hemer, *Acts*, 371.

¹³¹ Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 150.

¹³² Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.39.2.

¹³³ Potter, *Emperors of Rome*, 66.

Before 64 CE Nero had already exhibited “erratic and autocratic behaviour” but it was the “devastation of the fire” that “caused an enormous drop in his broader popularity.”¹³⁴ Many scholars split Nero’s rule into two distinct periods: “the early period, until 62, when he allowed himself to be guided by the philosopher Seneca and by the head of the Praetorian Prefect Burrus; and the later period, when he ruled on his own. The early period saw a more balanced, enlightened rule, including several popular reforms.”¹³⁵ It was not until the later period that Nero was “characterized by the eccentric rule of a despot.”¹³⁶ Nero increasingly saw himself an “artist” and “left the Empire in the hands of freedmen while he conducted a concert tour through Greece.”¹³⁷ He began to become increasingly paranoid in his rule and “viciously murdered anyone who seemed to threaten him”—including his mother, wife and his stepbrother.¹³⁸

However, the blame that he placed on the Christians was not immediate and it came after Nero’s initial and substantial relief efforts. It is generally understood by historians that Nero did in fact deserve “some credit for the vigorous measures of relief which he instituted for the homeless, and the rules which he laid down for the more scientific reconstruction of the devastated areas.”¹³⁹ Tacitus recounts how the populace were at first pleased because

[v]ital supplies were shipped up from Ostia and neighboring municipalities, and the price of grain was dropped to three sestertii. These were measures with popular appeal, but they proved a dismal failure, because the rumour had spread

¹³⁴ Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 150.

¹³⁵ Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World*, 318. Cary and Scullard (*History of Rome*, 358) describe how the government under Nero—with the aid of Seneca and Burrus—“followed a cautious but efficient administrative routine . . . and outside his family he had spilt hardly any blood.” Witherington (*New Testament History*, 278) similarly describes Nero’s first five years as “relatively moderate.”

¹³⁶ Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World*, 318.

¹³⁷ Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World*, 318. It is said that he loved Greek culture so much that he “declared all of Greece free” (318).

¹³⁸ Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World*, 318; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.25.2.

¹³⁹ Cary and Scullard, *History of Rome*, 359.

that, at the very time that the city was ablaze, Nero had appeared on his private stage and sung about the destruction of Troy, drawing a comparison between the sorrows of the present and the disasters of old (*Ann.* 15.39.2–3).¹⁴⁰

It was not only the rumours described by Tacitus that caused the suspicion of the populace. It was Nero's appropriation of some "120 acres of the burnt-out region between the Palatine and Esquiline hills" for his own pleasure with his "sumptuous new palace, the Domus Aurea."¹⁴¹ As a result, the people began to set the blame on Nero directly for trying to acquire this land for next to nothing in addition to his scandalous singing about the destruction of Troy.¹⁴²

The question as to whether Nero was guilty of setting the fire in the first place is something ancient and modern historians debate. For example, Seutonius (*Ner.* 55) discusses the rumours and thinks that he did start the fire as he planned on naming the rebuilt city "Neropolis."¹⁴³ Tacitus is more cautious and seems to leave the door of Nero's culpability open as compared to other sources. At any rate the evidence that he was responsible for starting the fire is inconclusive and circumspect.¹⁴⁴

Nevertheless, the people increasingly pointed the finger at Nero as the one "responsible for the disaster" and he found his "scapegoats" by blaming the already

¹⁴⁰ Cited from Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 156. On this passage they (156 [n. 13] remark how Tacitus on the one hand kept an "open mind about Nero's responsibility for the fire" but that he also gave credit for the ways Nero tried to improve the wellbeing of the people (esp. as compared to other sources).

¹⁴¹ Cary and Scullard, *History of Rome*, 359. Recall my note 116 above.

¹⁴² Cary and Scullard, *History of Rome*, 359.

¹⁴³ Seutonius, *Ner.* 55; Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 151.

¹⁴⁴ Barrett et al. (*Emperor Nero*, 151–52) explain that it was a full moon on the night of the fire which is not ideal for committing public arson but especially the fact that "neither outbreak started in the area that Nero would develop for his Domus Aurea. The energetic measures he took to prevent the spread of the fire, as described by Tacitus, speak against the notion of its being deliberately set." Nero's own Domus Transitoria was destroyed and it broke out again near Tigellinus's estates six days later. It seems that Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.39) is "cautious, observing that the claim began as a rumour," unlike Seutonius (*Ner.* 38.2) or Cassius Dio (*Hist. Rom.* 62.16.1–2). Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 152. Although Jeffers (*Greco-Roman World*, 318) thinks that Tacitus "seems to believe the rumours that Nero ordered the fire" even though there is "no hard evidence for this."

“unpopular Christians.”¹⁴⁵ Nero then began to target members of the Christian community with the aid of Tigellinus (his Praetorian prefect).¹⁴⁶ An “unknown number” of victims were “condemned on mere profession of faith, and burnt or otherwise tortured to death.”¹⁴⁷ Tacitus (*Annals* 15.44.4) says that “an immense multitude” was convicted while Clement, using a similar phrase, claims that “a great multitude” was put to death at this time” (*1 Clem.* 6.1).¹⁴⁸ This translates into what Jeffers describes as hundreds or even “perhaps several thousand” Christians in Rome who “lost their lives in this persecution.”¹⁴⁹ Lampe claims that this dual witness (of Tacitus and Clement) is a “coincidence that can hardly be explained by imputing rhetorical exaggeration to both authors.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 161. Cary and Scullard (*History of Rome*, 359) similarly report that once the rumours took hold the people “persisted in its belief that Nero was the real culprit, while his ruthless cruelty excited pity for the victims and thus increased his unpopularity.” Cf. also Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World*, 31. Lampe (“Roman Christians,” 118) may be correct in his theory that if Christians settled in the “perimeter regions” such as Trastevere and Porta Capena it becomes “all the more plausible that Nero would choose them as scapegoats, accusing them of arson.”

¹⁴⁶ Cary and Scullard, *History of Rome*, 359. Cary and Scullard consider the Christians in Rome as “newly formed” but Christianity thrived long before Paul entered Rome in c. 60–61 CE. Lampe (*Valentinus*, 42) for example identifies Trastevere (XIV Augustan region) as an “early Christian residential quarter” (see also pp. 42–45). Trastevere was situated “west of the Tiber river across from Tiber Island.” See Lampe, “Roman Christians,” 118 and Philo, *Legat.* 155, 57). Brown and Meier (*Antioch and Rome*, 103) state that the “contention that Christianity reached Rome in the early 40’s remains unverifiable probability; that it had reached Rome by the late 40s or early 50s is virtually certain.” Meanwhile, Peterson (*Acts*, 709) via Tajra (*Martyrdom*, 76–77) considers the evidence that Christians were in Rome by the end of Tiberius’s reign (which extended to 37 CE). Additionally, Claudius’s datable expulsion of 49 CE (*Acts* 18:2) further provides evidence of Christianity in Rome. Also, *Acts* 28:14–15 provides evidence that there were in fact Christians at Puteoli, the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns by the time Paul reached Italy. Last, and this is more speculative but during the early account of the church’s birth at Pentecost in Jerusalem Luke records that there were Jews from Rome (*Acts* 2:10). With regards to Tigellinus, Potter (*Emperors of Rome*, 68) explains how after joining Nero’s inner circle he would “prove a loyal confederate in encouraging the worst of Nero’s vices, and was rewarded in AD 62 by being made prefect of the Praetorian Guard.”

¹⁴⁷ Cary and Scullard, *History of Rome*, 359.

¹⁴⁸ See my note 53 from chapter 4. On Tacitus 15.44 see Schnabel, “Trial,” 192–93.

¹⁴⁹ Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World*, 318.

¹⁵⁰ Lampe, *Valentinus*, 82. Kosso (*Knowing the Past*, 82) explains the added value of an independent witness when two pieces of “textual evidence” are written by “different authors.” Similarly, Leone and Crosby (“Epilogue,” 399) explain the value of independent data that is provided by “different individuals, at different times, for different purposes.” Naturally data that arises from different literary sources that corroborates with the material remains is superior evidence (such as the fire of Rome).

This was “arguably the first Christian ‘persecution.’ So horrific was their treatment that it elicited popular sympathy.”¹⁵¹ Among all of the accounts, Tacitus’s chapter of the *Annals* is “one of the most intensely studied passages of classical literature.”¹⁵² Just before he describes the nature of the persecution, Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.44.1) makes it clear that there was an intense religious quest for appeasement and for answers via the Sibylline books, while prayers were offered to Vulcan (the god of fire), Ceres, and Proserpina, along with “propitiatory ceremonies” that were “performed for Juno by married women.”¹⁵³

Subsequently, Tacitus explains the process of how Christians became implicated:

But neither human resourcefulness, nor the emperor’s largesse, not appeasement of the gods could stop belief in the nasty rumor that an order had been given for the fire. To dispel the gossip, Nero therefore found culprits, on whom he inflicted the most exotic punishments. These people were hated for their shameful offenses, people whom the common people called Christians. The man who gave them their name, Christus, had been executed during the rule of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilatus. The pernicious superstition had been temporarily suppressed, but it was starting to break out again, not just in Judea, the starting point of that curse, but in Rome as well, where all that is abominable and shameful in the world flows together and gains popularity.¹⁵⁴

It is especially unfortunate for the purpose of dating Acts that Tacitus does not give any

¹⁵¹ Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 161.

¹⁵² Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 166.

¹⁵³ Formal banquets were held where the image of the god was set before the dining guests (as was common in Roman religious life). Ritual feasts held for female gods were called *sellisternia* and *lectisternia* for the male gods. Apparently, the Sibylline books that were inside the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine managed to survive the fire. See Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 166 (nn. 35 and 37 and my note 128 above). One wonders how many countless pagan, Jewish or Christian manuscripts (including Luke’s or even Paul’s) perished in the fire (except for those in the few unaffected regions such as Trastevere or Porta Capena). See Lampe, “Roman Christians,” 117–19.

¹⁵⁴ Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44.2–3; Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 166–67. As regards to the “shameful offenses” this may refer to the second century rumors alleging cannibalism or infanticide (n. 39). *Chrestiani* was apparently the original reading before it was corrected to *Christiani* (the *e* was erased with an *i* added). Exactly which hand made the change is debated but it seems likely that it had something to do with the *i* in Christus in the next verse (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44.3). It is rather interesting that in “in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians” (πρώτως ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ τοὺς μαθητὰς Χριστιανούς, see Acts 11:26). There is some variation for Χριστιανός and of particular interest is that Χρηστιανούς with the *η* is found in the original reading of κ* and also 81. See also Keener’s (*Acts*, 2:1847–50) discussion on the Latin political background of this term.

precise indication as to how much time passed between the fire and the punishment.¹⁵⁵

However, there is every reason to suspect that the time between the fire, the “nasty rumour,” “gossip,” and the subsequent punishment was probably a matter of days—or perhaps a few weeks at most—but it is very likely that the persecution happened by the end of the summer of 64 CE.¹⁵⁶

The historical value of this account is strengthened by the fact that Tacitus is clearly no fan of Christianity (or Judaism for that matter—see *Hist.* 5.5.1) but also because he describes the persecution in relation to the death of Christ under Pontius Pilate:¹⁵⁷

And so, at first, those who confessed were apprehended, and subsequently, on the disclosures they made, a huge number were found guilty—more because of their hatred of mankind than because they were arsonists. As they died, they were further subject to insult. Covered with hides of wild beasts, they perished by being torn to pieces by wild dogs, or they would be fastened to crosses and, when daylight had gone, set on fire to provide lighting at night. Nero had offered his gardens as a venue for the show, and he would also put on circus entertainments, mixing with the plebs in his charioteer’s outfit or standing up in his chariot. As a result, guilty those these people were and deserving exemplary punishment, pity for them began to well up because it was felt that they were being exterminated not for the public good but to gratify one man’s cruelty.¹⁵⁸

The cruelty of this account is self-evident and requires no further comment.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 166–67 (n. 38). It is also uncertain as to exactly who the Christians were brought before. Perhaps it was Ofonius Tiggelinus, Nero’s “sinister praetorian prefect,” or the “prefect of the city” or even the *praefectus vigilum* who was in charge of the “Imperial fire service, who could deal with cases of arson” (n. 38).

¹⁵⁶ My interpretation could be wrong but in light of the magnitude of the tragedy, the human suffering and the people’s want of answers it seems reasonable to conclude that justice would be sought rather quickly (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44.1). Furthermore, the time period must have been short given Nero’s decisiveness on the relief efforts and his increasingly autocratic nature—plus the fact that Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.44.2 and 4) does not indicate any lengthy judicial process. The account progresses rather quickly from confession to apprehension and subsequent death (verse 4).

¹⁵⁷ This provides a measure of evidence for the significant existence of Christianity in Rome by 64 CE. Recall my note 146 above.

¹⁵⁸ Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.44.4–5; Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 167–68. Tacitus’s (*Hist.* 5.5.1) comments on the Christian “hatred of mankind” reflect his views elsewhere toward the Jews as well: “The customs of the Jews are base and abominable. ... [T]oward every other people they feel only hate and enmity” (166). See also Lampe’s (“Roman Christians,” 119) section C. on the “‘Bad Press’ about the Christians.”

What does require further comment is that this account of the Roman persecution is notoriously difficult—if not impossible—to corroborate with the friendly and peaceful relations between the Christians and the Roman authorities in the Acts narrative.¹⁶⁰ While commenting on the peaceful “tone” of Acts, Rackham highlights how the

. . . cruel and bloody persecution of the Church at Rome under Nero must have been a greater disaster than the scattering of the Church at Jerusalem after the death of Stephen. It must have affected the whole Church. Hitherto there had been persecutions, but on a limited scale, with few deaths. Now the wholesale slaughter under Nero must have marked an epoch in the relations of the Church and the Empire...St. Luke’s description in chapter xxviii 30, 31 would not only have been difficult to write but actually misleading.¹⁶¹

Rackham’s argument is sound because a late date—even a date past 64—creates even more problems because there is a “very obvious...apologia for Christianity to the Roman authorities” that “would serve excellently—before 64 A.D.”¹⁶² However Nero’s persecution “altered the whole relation of Church and Empire...the Emperor had declared war; Christianity had become a *religio illicita*; and St. Luke’s arguments were thrown away.”¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ There are other sources such as Seutonius (*Ner.* 16.2.2): “The Christians, devotees of a new and abominable superstition, were subjected to punishment.” Notice his view of the Christians is very similar to Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.44.2) but does not go into any further details about the punishment. Still this means we have two independent and corroborating non-Christian references to the same event. Meanwhile, Lactantius (*De mort. pers.* 2.5–7) refers to the death of Peter and Paul in Rome and Nero’s attempt to wipe out Christianity but does not provide a specific post-great fire persecution account. See Barrett et al., *Emperor Nero*, 168–69. Last, Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 2.25.1–5) has much to say about Nero as the enemy of the Christian faith. In verse 2 he writes (169–70): “it is possible for anyone who so wishes to see from them the loutish qualities of the bizarre man’s insanity. Driven on by this, he brought about the destruction of countless men one after the other” along with the murder of his “closest relatives and friends.” Eusebius speaks only of the persecution in “general terms” as does Tertullian (*Apol.* 5.3) “with no reference to the fire or the horrific punishments” that we read in Tacitus’s account (170 [n. 48]).

¹⁶⁰ There does not appear to be any plausible motive for this dichotomy. Cf. Reinhardt, “Reading Texts,” 47; Greene and Moore, *Archaeology*, 155.

¹⁶¹ Rackham, “Plea,” 81.

¹⁶² Rackham, “Plea,” 83. Setting aside their views on the date of Acts, this case in point corresponds well to the motive criticism of Cadbury (*Luke-Acts*, 48) and Dibelius (*Studies*, 144–45). See also Kosso, *Knowing the Past*, 51.

¹⁶³ Rackham, “Plea,” 83.

Under closer examination, the persecution of 64 CE does not harmonize with the pro-Roman sentiment in Acts by any stretch of the imagination. Furthermore, the distinction between Nero's earlier and later reign is also critical for interpreting the date of Acts. After 62 CE any 'appeal' to Caesar seems risky while no one (especially a Christian) in their right mind would attempt an appeal after 64 CE given Nero's reputation along with the grisly details of the persecution discussed above.¹⁶⁴ Any author (and especially a Christian one) would lose all credibility if they were to narrate such an appeal to Nero or present such a friendly attitude toward the Roman government after 64 CE.

A far more plausible scenario is that Acts was written prior to Nero's persecution and moral slide into a tyrannical autocracy. Harnack's position sums up the arguments for an early date well:

Not only is the slightest reference to the outcome of the trial of St Paul absent from the book, but not even a trace is to be discovered of the rebellion of the Jews in the seventh decade of the century, of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, of Nero's persecution of the Christians, and of other important events that occurred in the seventh decade of the first century.¹⁶⁵

Conclusion

These events in history are far too significant and contemporaneous with the last event in

¹⁶⁴ Rackham ("Plea," 83) explains that up to this time in "individual cases they had asserted the innocence or harmlessness of the Christian teachers. But an appeal had been made to Caesar at Rome." In Acts 25:11, Paul spoke two simple words in Greek (or perhaps in Latin) to the Roman Procurator Festus: "I appeal to Caesar" (*Καίσαρα ἐπικαλοῦμαι*). In turn Festus echoes Paul's choice in v. 12: "To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you will go." This process was known as the *provocatio* not the later *appellatio* as in the case of modern English law where the sentence or verdict could be changed. See Barrett, *Acts*, 2:1131; Tajra, *Trial*, 144–47; Sherwin-White, *Roman Law*, 68–70; and Witherington, *Acts*, 724–26. Peterson (*Acts*, 649) suggests that at this time Nero "was not yet guilty of the sort of injustices for which he later became famous." Since Paul knows he does not stand a chance of surviving a (lower) Jewish court he plays, as Barrett (*Acts*, 2:1131) calls it, his 'trump card.' And yet, after 64 CE Paul (or any Christian for that matter) would realize his chances of surviving an appeal to Nero would be extremely unlikely. Cf. Bartlet, "St. Paul's Fate at Rome," 465–66. Last, although Porter ("Latin," 308) thinks that Paul "may have spoken Latin" the evidence is "far from convincing."

¹⁶⁵ Harnack, *Date of Acts*, 99.

Acts to ignore. We are left with Paul the 'unhindered' Jewish-Christian protagonist under house arrest in Rome engaging Jews and Gentiles alike. Within the next two to three years Rome is utterly destroyed by fire in July of 64 CE along with multitudes of Christians that may have also included Luke and Paul. A couple years later in 66 CE the Jews rebel against Rome. In 70 CE the city of Jerusalem, their beloved Temple, and much of its population are either killed or sent into slavery. Luke says nothing. The book of Acts was written before all of these events took place. The various attempts to explain all of these omissions from Luke's narrative, however creative, are divorced from the Jewish and Greco-Roman historical context.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION: A NEW PLEA FOR AN EARLY DATE OF ACTS

The date of Acts is a paradox in many ways. For example, while the so-called majority of scholars think that Acts was written somewhere between 70 and 90 CE the *vast* majority of those who have written the most extensively and recently on the subject are absolutely convinced that this range is simply an untenable and convenient political compromise. There are simply far too many problems with this range as this dissertation (and many others before me) has shown. At the same time, the arguments in favour of a post-90 CE date are easier to dismantle.

In chapter 2 several critical methodological flaws were identified among the various approaches to the date of Acts in general and especially among the most recent monographs. Assessing the date of Acts should never be reduced to comparing texts between completely different authors, purposes, and genres and then claiming a date. The problem is far more complex and requires attention to several areas of research. Unfortunately, Pervo's application of intertextuality fails to adequately address the notoriously problematic textual record of Acts or provide a satisfactory account of its place in history. Meanwhile Tyson's method remains largely undefined while his conclusions rest on several shaky assumptions that are easy to refute. Last, while Mittelstaedt provides several compelling historical arguments for an early date there are some valuable arguments and areas of research that he does not address.

Dating any historical document requires attention to several factors (i.e. literary, textual, source, and material) that in many cases remain largely untouched among the so-called majority 'middle' and late dating positions. Where methodological deficiencies have been identified a historiographical approach to the date of Acts meets these deficiencies by providing an appropriate framework for addressing the date of Acts in history. It is hoped that an analysis of the historiography on the date of Acts, supplemented with textual criticism and modern grammatical insights, have advanced the debate substantially in new ways while also modernizing and reinforcing the existing arguments in favour of an early date of Acts. Hence, a *new* plea for an early date of Acts.

Subsequently, Chapter 3 indicated that our source theories impact the way we date Acts. Since there is strong evidence that Luke is the author of Acts and a companion of Paul this allows us to date Acts in accordance with Paul's life and death. What is more difficult to process is the fact that Luke's personal style (and mind) is visible throughout Acts making it difficult to determine his sources. However, on the positive side this strengthens the view of Lukan authorship and also his relationship to the datable elements in the narrative.

Accordingly, the we (and they) passages clearly point toward Luke's incorporation of other written or oral sources with those of his own. It was proposed that the we passages should be redefined to consider the possibility of a sixth we passage that occurs before the others in the Western text of Acts 11:28 while the last we passage (Acts 28:1–16) should be extended to verse 29 (and possibly 31). It was further suggested that this early Western variant arose from Antioch first and in due course launched the known traditions connecting Antioch with the author of Acts.

Furthermore, it was argued that Luke is presenting himself in the prologues as a participant in the narrative (to some degree at least) rather than giving a simple literary impression. It further seems clear that Luke, in addition to his own memories, makes use of written sources that must have included some measure of a broadly-defined itinerary—or at the very least some personal notes that were kept by the author and likely supplemented by others connected with the churches in Acts. It was also shown that Luke's attention to matters of geography, lodging, and politics increases our ability to date Acts as well as indicate the form of the sources he employed in the narrative. Consequently, it appears that Luke (in addition to his own notes and memories) relied on Barnabas as his source from Antioch. Together this data undergirds the material in the middle half of Acts (c. 11:19–15:39) while Paul (along with Luke, Silas, or Timothy) provided the Rome source for the last section of Acts (c. 15:40–28:31).

Another contribution from chapter 3 was the analysis that re-affirmed that there is no clear evidence that Luke used Paul's letters—and even if this were to be proven it does not preclude an early date of Acts. Similarly, it was also demonstrated that the long-held theory that Luke relies on the writings of Josephus should be thrown out entirely. All of these points increase our ability to place Acts into a much earlier chronological framework.

Chapter 4 explored the relationship between the date of Acts and the ancient, modern, and contemporary interpretations of the end of Acts. Here it was discovered that many of the recent literary explanations on the end of Acts often *assume* a post-70 CE date of Acts. The nineteenth-century premise of fabrication morphed into the later theories of foreshadowing and more recently Marguerat's *rhetoric of silence* or

Troftgruben's *linkage*. The common root with all such rhetorical explanations is that they assume (rather than argue) a later date where Paul is dead, the city of Rome and the church are decimated, while many of the Jews in Judea and Jerusalem, along with its Temple, are destroyed.

Somehow Luke as a historical and Jewish-Christian writer (via some advanced literary tactic) has opted to abandon his plot and leave all of this out of his narrative in favour of an epic ending that loosely mirrors pagan literature from several centuries earlier. Moreover, all of these interpretations bypass the most ancient interpretation that Luke's silence at the end of Acts is due to a lack of further knowledge. It was proposed that the simple interpretation remains the most logical choice among the other options in light of the combined literary and historical evidence.

The discussion on the Jewish response to the gospel in Acts (and Acts 28:17–28 specifically) offered a further contribution towards the dating debate and for the interpretation of Acts in general. Simply stated, a tragic, condemning, or otherwise negative view of the Jewish response in Acts more aptly reflects a post-70 CE historical context whereas a more hopeful situation supports a pre-70 CE view. After sifting through the layers of argumentation, and in due consideration of the wisdom background of Isa 6:9–10 in light of the Jewish portrait of Paul in Acts, it was affirmed that the Jewish response to the gospel in Acts is in fact far more hopeful than previously espoused. The implication is that such a hopeful view is logically inconsistent with the fall of Jerusalem and its aftermath discussed in chapter 5.

Despite the general lack of consensus concerning theories of what came first and how the texts of Acts developed, it was further proposed in chapter 4 that there is

sufficient evidence to show an early origin of the Western text. In fact, a further implication is that the texts of Acts are comparable in age. It was demonstrated that none of the variants at the end of Acts show any significant expansions that reflect a later (post-64 CE) state of affairs. In the very place where extra scribal details should be expected we do not find any major theological, social, cultural, or historical differences—and not one single reference to the tragic events that soon followed the narrative. This is exceptional given the well-established Western tendency for expansion. Another implication is that a study of the variants magnified the already problematic literary solutions to the end of Acts that were introduced earlier in this chapter.

While chapters 3 and 4 focused on the sources of Acts, the interpretation of the end of Acts, and the text(s) of Acts, chapter 5 considered how all of these factors relate to the historical context. After a brief discussion on the question of the historicity of Acts, it was proposed that the fall of Jerusalem and its aftermath (which has long divided the early and middle groups) presented decisive evidence that Acts was written before 70 CE. It was amply demonstrated that Dodd's conclusion is correct—the Lukan texts and prophecies with regards to Jerusalem's destruction and its Temple in 70 CE simply reflect that which can already be found in the LXX.

Moreover, it was further argued (in concert with chapter 3) that the language of Luke clearly reflects a literary and historical context prior to 70 CE and not the depth and details found in Josephus's much later account (i.e. *Jewish War*). Meanwhile it seems that the middle group also failed to satisfactorily explain why Luke and Acts unequivocally reflect the language of an unscathed Jerusalem. The city, along with its Temple organization and officers, is narrated as functioning in every respect—including its

worship practices and prayers—as if nothing had happened. A post-70 CE date of Acts is doubtful given the historic aftermath of the Jewish rebellion and all of its catastrophic effects on the Jewish population, politics, economics, and religious practices.

Perhaps even more decisive than the fall of Jerusalem is the last recorded event in Acts. Paul is in Rome under house arrest—and yet Luke says nothing of the great fire that devastated this very city in July of 64 CE, nor does he say anything about the subsequent persecution of Christians in Rome under Nero. Given the untold thousands of casualties to both the Roman and Christian population (that is well attested by several non-Christian authors), it remains extremely far-fetched that any rational motive could exist for Luke's silence on what happened to Rome and its populace in 64 CE.

A rational explanation for such an omission is also unlikely if we factor Luke's frequent use of the Jewish prophetic tradition (LXX) in light of the contemporaneous application of the non-Christian prophetic texts at the time (i.e. Cassius Dio). It was also reaffirmed (in line with Rackham and Harnack) that the Roman persecution remains entirely at odds with the friendly and peaceful relations between the Christians and the Roman authorities in Acts. Hence, those who support a post-64 CE date of Acts need to not only substantiate these grand historical omissions they *also* need to explain why Acts contains many pro-Roman elements in the narrative—complete with an appeal to a famously murderous (post 64 CE) tyrant by Luke's main character (Paul in Acts 25:11).

In the final analysis, we are left with a series of unexplainable absences in the narrative of Acts that clearly point to its place in history before 64 CE. The most notable absences are the death of Paul, the destruction of Rome (along with large tracts of its general population as well as the multitudes of Christians who were murdered at Nero's

request), the destruction of Jerusalem (along with its Temple), while Palestine suffered the destruction of approximately one-third of its Jewish population. At the same time, we are left with a series of unexplainable realities in Acts—an unscathed Jerusalem with its unscathed Temple complete with unscathed Jewish and Christian relations with Rome. At the book's end we find an unscathed and unhindered Paul in an unscathed Rome liberally and legally proclaiming his gospel while he awaits an audience with an even-tempered Nero.

A new plea for an early date of Acts may not be popular given the current scholarly status quo but in the end its date, like that of any historical problem, must not rest on untested literary theories and assumptions. Instead the date should be based on the ways that historians (however imperfectly and subjectively) have interpreted the sources and available evidence—the historiography of dating Acts. This process should always include an awareness of the historical context of the sources for both the ancient writers and those commenting on the issue into the present day. An interpretation of the cumulative facts and evidence discussed in this study finds that the book of Acts should be securely dated just prior to 64 CE (c. 62–63 CE).

APPENDIX: THE MANUSCRIPT RECORD FOR ACTS 28:11–31

Despite the changing trends in NT textual criticism, one unifying principle among text critics is that the study of the manuscripts themselves remains a prerequisite for making any judgments about a text, or the history of its development.¹ This is somewhat ironic because text critics often have divergent views on everything from choosing a variant to the overall goals of the discipline.² Where some scholars emphasize the need to compare actual manuscripts instead of a set of readings, should not the goal be to include a consideration of both?³ Consequently, the following three sections will catalogue the extant papyri, majuscules, and minuscules of Acts (that may or may not include 28:11–31) and compare them with the NA²⁸.

The overall goal for this appendix is to assess what the variations and changes may (or may not) suggest in light of the well-established Western tendencies of expansion.⁴ At the end of Acts we simply do not find the level of variation that we can reasonably expect from Western scribes; and this is exceptional given the magnitude of the events that occurred soon after the final scene in Acts (see chapter 5).

¹ Metzger, *Text*, 207; Porter, “Developments,” 32, 36; and Parker, *Codex Bezae*, 1.

² For a helpful comparison of the traditional and socio-historical goals for the discipline, see Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 1–6.

³ Porter, “Developments,” 36. Other methods (such as the CBGM) deal primarily with texts and not the manuscripts. See Wachtel, “Notes,” 28.

⁴ See my note 278 and “The New Quest for the ‘Western’ Text” in chapter 4.

(A) Manuscripts with an Alexandrian Ending

The first manuscript on the docket is P⁷⁴—which is commonly considered to be the best surviving Acts manuscript to date.⁵ The Alands considered P⁷⁴ to be a top manuscript of a “very special quality” used for establishing the original text.⁶ Accordingly, it is no surprise that the (reading) text of Acts 28:11–31 (P⁷⁴) is basically the same as the NA²⁸ starting with verse 11: [μ]ετὰ δὲ τρις (l. τρεῖς) μῆνας [ἀ]νήχθημεν πλοῖ[ι]ω παρακεχιμακότ[ι] ἐν τῇ νήσῳ ἀλεξανδρίνῳ παρασήμῳ δισκοροῖς· (l. δισκούροις).⁷ Folio 184 contains verse 12 and most of verse 13 as well. P⁷⁴ has τρις instead of τρεῖς at the end of verse 12. Verses 14–15 are very fragmentary but seem to reflect the NA²⁸. At the bottom of the fragment (folio 184) one can see [Τρ]ιῶν [ταβερνώων]. Verse 16 reads: [μέ]νιν (l. μένειν) καθ’ ἑαυτοῦ[ν] σὺν τῷ φυλάττοντι αὐτὸν στρατιώτ[η] and starts with ἐγένετο in verse 17. P⁷⁴ shows part of ἀπεστάλη and σωτήρι[ον] from Acts 28:28 (folio 187).

The subsequent fragment contains only two words from verse 30 and the remaining verse 31: [π]ρὸς αὐτόν κηρύσσω (the NA²⁸ states that verse 29 is missing from P⁷⁴). The final folio is missing vv. 29–30 and includes the rest of verse 31: [π]ρὸς αὐτόν· κηρύσ[σ]ων τὴν βασιλείαν [τ]οῦ θ· και διδάσκων [τ]ὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας (l. βασιλειας)

⁵ P⁷⁴ is a sixth or seventh century manuscript (from the Bodmer collection in Geneva) that contains a large portion of Acts. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 47.

⁶ Category I, so Aland and Aland, *Text*, 101. Their scale of quality (cf. 106) ranges from 1 (being the best) to 5 (being the worst). Barrett (*Acts*, 1:3) further notes the “general agreement with κ A B, that is, the Old Uncial, or Alexandrian text.” For criticism of the circular nature of the Alands’ categories see Metzger and Ehrman, *Text*, 238 and also Elliott, “Catholic Epistles,” 204–24 (209).

⁷ The first ἐν is missing before πλοῖω. Some of the Western versions omit Μετὰ δὲ τρεῖς μῆνας and παρασήμῳ Δισκούροις. See also Boismard, *Le Texte Occidental*, 424. Δισκούροις is the usual Attic spelling of the word where ου represents the Hellenistic form. Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 2:128.

[ι]υ χυ μετὰ πάσης σωτηρίας ἀκωλύτως.⁸ The πράξις [απ]οστόλων follows underneath a series of symbols and what looks like a tally count for the scribe. It is doubtful that the non-Alexandrian verse 29 was originally part of this manuscript.

The next manuscript to examine is the fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus Ɀ (01).⁹ Although 01 is known for some Western readings, it follows the NA²⁸ very closely with regards to verses 11, 16, 19, 28–31 with no Western variants in the whole chapter.¹⁰ The fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus (A) (02), like Sinaiticus, once contained the whole Bible (and then some). It contains the book of Acts right up until 28:30: ἔμεινεν δὲ δίαιτιαν ὄλην (Ἐνέμεινεν in the NA²⁸). The text does not show any signs of the Western variants.

The fourth-century B (03) Codex Vaticanus is also a “primary witness for the Alexandrian or Old Uncial text.”¹¹ Verse 11 reads: Μετὰ δὲ τρεῖς μῆνας ἀνήχθημεν ἐν πλοίῳ παρακεχειμακότει ἐν τῇ νήσῳ, Ἀλεξανδρίνῳ, παρασήμῳ Διοσκούροις.¹² Vaticanus contains vv. 12–14 while including καὶ οὕτως εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἦλθαμεν.¹³ Verse 15 is the same as the NA²⁸ except that the article οἱ is missing before ἀδελφοὶ and has the *nomem sacrum* θεῶ. Verse 16 is the same with σὺν τῷ φυλάσσοντι αὐτὸν στρατιώτῃ. Verse 28 reads οὖν ὑμῖν ἔστω ὅτι instead of οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν ὅτι. Although verse 29 is absent in B

⁸ P⁷⁴ has τῆς βασιλείας instead of τοῦ κυρίου and σωτηρίας instead of παρρησίας (NA²⁸).

⁹ For a descriptive list of the majuscules, see Aland and Aland, *Text*, 107–28 and Barrett, *Acts*, 1:4–7.

¹⁰ It is no surprise to find the διοσκούροις in verse 11 (316v) with no expanded verse 16 or the additional verse 29. In verse 16 it has μενιν instead of μένιν (NA²⁸) with πράξεις αποστόλων at the very end.

¹¹ Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:5. For its Egyptian roots see Ropes, “Text of Acts,” 3:xlvi–xlviii.

¹² Notice the variant spelling τρεῖς instead of τρίς in P⁷⁴.

¹³ οὕτως is missing in some Western texts. Cf. Boismard, *Le Texte Occidental*, 424.

(03), there is a large space between ἀκούσονται (v 28) and Ἐνέμεινεν (v 30).¹⁴ Verses 30 and 31 are the same with Πράξεις απολοστόλον at the end.¹⁵

E (08), with its biblical majuscule hand, is a sixth- or seventh-century Graeco-Latin Majuscule that ends with Acts 26:29 ὁ δὲ Παῦλος (224v) and starts again with Acts 28:26 πορεύθητι πρὸς τὸν λαόν.¹⁶ Hence, the earlier (pre-verse 26) variants cannot be examined. Verse 28 reads: γνωστὸν οὖν ἔστω ὑμῖν ὅτι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπεστάλη τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ· αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀκούσονται[ι].¹⁷ E shows a true omission for verse 29 between ἀκούσονται[ι] (verse 28) and Εμινεν (Ἐνέμεινεν) from verse 30.¹⁸ Verse 31 is identical to the NA²⁸ except that it reads παρρησία instead of παρρησίας. The final words are written below verse 31: Πράξεις τῶν ἁγίων απολοστόλον.

The ninth-century codex Athous Laurensis (Ψ, 044) does not contain the expanded verse 16 or verse 29.¹⁹ 048, the ‘category II’ fifth-century double palimpsest, includes the Alexandrian παρασήμερον Διοσκούροις and not the expanded verse 16, 19 or verse 29.²⁰ 033, the tenth-century Byzantine (category V) majuscule, does not contain verse 29.²¹ 1175, the tenth-century manuscript, contains the Διοσκούροις of verse 11, but not the extra variants in verse 16, 19 or the extra verse 29.²² Similarly, the ninth-century Codex 2464 and the tenth-century Codex 1739 include the Alexandrian Διοσκούροις in

¹⁴ Though speculative, it is possible the scribe was aware of v. 29.

¹⁵ Note the spelling variation of Πράξεις in 03 as compared with P⁷⁴.

¹⁶ Latin is on the left of the manuscript with Greek on the right. E’s physical dimensions are 27.0 x 22.0 cm with 227 leaves.

¹⁷ τοῦτο is missing from ἀπεστάλη [τοῦτο] τὸ σωτήριον.

¹⁸ The ι is likely buried between the parchment pages. Verse 30 is the same except for Ἐμινεν instead of Ἐνέμεινεν (NA²⁸). The last few letters of εἰσπορευομένους is hard to decipher.

¹⁹ The last word of verse 31 is usually ἀκωλύτως. Here it is found with a variant spelling and is followed by an ἀμήν.

²⁰ Aland and Aland, *Text*, 118.

²¹ This manuscript is not indexed for Acts (INTF).

²² Folio 52v includes the extra ἀμήν and the signature πράξεις αποστολών.

verse 11, and not the extra variants in verse 16, 19 or the extra verse 29.²³ Codex 81, which is dated to 1044 CE, reflects the same Alexandrian text as 1739 and 2464 with the addition of *πράξεις τῶν αποστόλων* at the end (56v).²⁴

(B) Manuscripts without Acts 28:11–31

This section is somewhat of a grey area because, unfortunately, most of the earliest papyri (and majuscules) do not include Acts 28:11–31 (irrespective of Alexandrian, Western, or a mix of readings): P⁸, P²⁹, P³³, P³⁸, P⁴¹, P⁴⁵, P⁴⁸, P⁵⁰, P⁵³, P⁵⁶, P⁵⁷, P⁹¹, P¹¹², P¹²⁷, 04, 05, 057, 076, 077, 095, 096, 097, 0140, 0165, 0175, 0189, 0236 (Greek and Coptic), 0244 and 0294.²⁵ Since P²⁹ is counted among “the witnesses to the Western text,” it is unfortunate that only Acts 26:7–8 and verse 20 remains.²⁶ Likewise, the sixth-century fragment P³³ does not contain anything from Acts 28 at all—only Acts 7:6–10; 7:13–18; 15:21–24; 15:26–32. The Western fragment P³⁸ (which is known to be related to Codex 614) is dated to around the year 300 CE or earlier, and only includes Acts 18:27–19:6; 19:12–16.²⁷

Meanwhile P⁴¹, the very fragmentary eighth-century papyrus (which includes a Coptic translation) only contains approximately Acts 17:28–22:17. P⁴⁵, the third-century papyrus, contains only Acts 4:27–17:17. Another third-century papyrus, P⁴⁸, exhibits a

²³ There may be evidence of redaction due to the large space between verse 28 and 30 in 033, 1175, 1739 (and 03).

²⁴ The last word of verse 13 shows: *ποτιευλούς* | corrector: *ποτιολούς* (INTF). The indexing is off by one page (cf. 55r). The final word *ἀποστόλων* is written as a unique *nomen sacrum*. The *α* has the breathing mark and a long, flowing accent, followed by two π’s with large dots above them.

²⁵ Majuscule 066 does contain Acts 28:8–17 and shows no sign of Western expansion or omission.

²⁶ Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:2. A Western version of Acts 28:11–31 is likely.

²⁷ P³⁸ could be dated earlier (see my note 326 in chapter 4 on the issue).

Western “type of text” where only Acts 23:11–17 and 23:25–29 survived.²⁸ P⁵⁰ (fourth to fifth century) contains only Acts 8:26–30; 8:30–32; 10:26–27; 10:27–30; and 10:30–31. The third-century papyrus, P⁵³, includes only Acts 9:33–10:1. P⁵⁶, a fifth- to sixth-century papyrus, includes only Acts 1:1–11. The fourth- (to fifth-) century papyrus P⁵⁷ contains only Acts 4:36–5:2; 5:8–10. The third-century papyrus, P⁹¹, includes only Acts 2:30–37, 46–47; 3:1–2. P¹¹² (fifth century) contains only Acts 26:31–32; 27:6–7. P¹²⁷ (fifth century) has only Acts 10:32–17:10.²⁹

All of these fragmentary papyri are missing Acts 28:11–31—hence, we cannot know with certainty what variants the ending contained—but given that three of the earliest six papyri exhibit Western readings (P²⁹, P³⁸, P⁴⁸), and the proto-Alexandrian P⁹¹ is too fragmentary to be sure, the propensity is certainly there that they may have contained Western variants.³⁰ The same goes for the list of majuscules that do not contain Acts 28:11–31—the whole of chapter 28 is missing (or destroyed) in every single case (recall list above).

Perhaps the most disappointing for this study is that although Codex D (= Bezae, 05) is an extremely important manuscript for the greater textual discussion, it is unfortunate that it is missing the rest of Acts after chapter 22, v. 29b onwards. It is highly likely that Bezae once contained Western variants in Acts 28 as it is “the most important representative of the so-called Western text.”³¹ Secondly, and equally disappointing to this discussion is that the difficult to read fifth-century palimpsest Codex Ephraemi

²⁸ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:3.

²⁹ According to Tuckett (“Early Text,” 157 [n. 1]) there is “considerable text-critical interest” in P¹²⁷. See more recently Wachtel (“Notes,” 31) who explains that P¹²⁷ and Bezae “feature the same paraphrasing expansions of the ‘Western’ text.”

³⁰ Recall the discussion above: Tuckett, “How Early,” 74 and Comfort, *Manuscripts*, 64 and 69.

³¹ Barrett, *Acts*, 1:6.

Rescriptus C (04) does not contain Acts 28:5 onwards since it is known for its Western readings.³²

Last, 0166 is a tiny fragment worth mentioning that includes a few words from Acts 28:30 and part of the first word in verse 31. The text is reproduced here as follows: [δι]ετί[αν ὄλην ἐν] [ι]δίῳ [μισθῶμα]τι καὶ [ἀπεδέχε]το πάν[τας τοὺς] εἰσπορευ[ομέ]νους πρὸ[ς αὐτόν] κηρύσ[σων τὴν][. It is anyone's guess if this fragment once contained verse 29 or any other Western variants.³³ We can only speculate as to the number of variants (Western or otherwise) that were once a part of these ancient texts.

(C) Manuscripts with a Western Ending

This third section examines the manuscripts that exhibit some form of Western (and non-Alexandrian) reading of Acts 28:11–31. Beyond the known Latin and Syriac manuscripts that contain some of these variants,³⁴ the following Greek manuscripts meet this criterion: H (014), L (020), P (025), 18, 323, 383, 424, 614, 630, 945, 1241, 1505 and 2412.³⁵ First on the list is H (014), the ninth-century Byzantine codex Mutinensis (43 leaves, 33.0 cm x 23.0 cm)—this is an important majuscule because it only contains the book of Acts. It exhibits the Alexandrian text *παρασήμῳ Διοσκούροις* and the expanded verse 16: εἰς

³² Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:5 and Ropes, “Text of Acts,” 3:lv.

³³ James 1:11 is found on the verso (INTF).

³⁴ The following manuscripts contain the expanded version of verse 16: gig, p, sy^{h2}, and sa. Verse 29 is also found in vg^{cl} and sy^{h2}. In some manuscripts (p, vg^{mss} and sy^h) verse 31 has this extended Latin ending: *dicens quia hic est Christus Jesus filius dei per quem incipiet totus mundus iudicari*.

³⁵ The following manuscripts include some version of the expanded text that includes the *στρατοπεδάρχῳ* found in Acts 28:16: 1241 (*στρατοπεδάρχῳ*), 18, 323, 614, 630 and 945 (*στρατοπεδάρχη*). Verse 29 is found in: P (025) (ninth century, folio 248, col. 1); 323 (very decorative and clear, twelfth century); 383 (very clear, thirteenth century); 945 (eleventh century); 424 (eleventh century); 630 (twelfth to thirteenth century). Notice how *σῦζήτησιν* in 630 has the *ü* but not *ï* (cp. 614 and 2412). 1241, the very decorative twelfth century text, includes verse 29 (note the decorative picture of Paul with a halo, 137r). See also the decorative thirteenth century manuscript 1505 that shows v. 29 but the *αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος* is reversed (136v).

Ῥώμην· ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος παρέδωκεν τοὺς δεσμίους τῷ στρατοπεδάρχῳ· τῷ δὲ παύλῳ·
ἐπετραπει (the remaining text here matches the NA²⁸).³⁶ The text of verse 29 reads: καί
ταῦτα αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος· ἀπῆλθον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, πολλὴν ἔχοντες ἐν ἑαυτοῖς συζήτησιν.³⁷

Codex Angelicus L (020) is a ninth-century Byzantine text. Angelicus has the
Διοσκούροις from verse 11 (NA²⁸) and the expanded verse 16 with a few spelling
errors/variants: παρέδωκε(ν), στρατοπα(ι)δάρχῳ and στρατιώτ(ι). The text of (verse 29)
folio 42v, Col. 2 (lines 5–9) reads: καί ταῦτα αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος· ἀπῆλθον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· πολλήν
ἔχοντες· ἐν ἑαυτοῖς συζήτησιν· (the straight upright letters suggests a later biblical
majuscule style).³⁸ The scribe makes use of ligatures or what appears to be ‘combination’
letters (as common to minuscule mss.) such as found on line 5 where τοῦ, from αὐτοῦ, is
morphed into one symbol.³⁹

Many of the ninth-century (and later) minuscules include the Western variants.⁴⁰
Since the majority of the 2,931 plus minuscules have not been examined in detail, it is
very likely a good portion of them contain Western variants.⁴¹ Codex 614 (thirteenth
century) has been frequently discussed as a known Western manuscript.⁴² Due to its
“special textual character” and its (potential) relationship to D (05), the Alands

³⁶ Compare this with 614’s reading below: ἐπετράπη μένειν καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς.

³⁷ The book ends with: πράξεις τῶν ἁγίων ἀποστόλων.

³⁸ Cf. Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 47. Here 020 has the same Greek text as 614 and 2412.

³⁹ Where 2412 contains the extra diaeresis, 020 shows no accent or diaeresis markings at all. There is an abrasion here along with ἔ[χο]ντες on line 7.

⁴⁰ Aland and Aland, *Text*, 128.

⁴¹ See Aland and Aland, *Text*, 128; Vaganay, *Introduction*, 22; and Parker’s (*Introduction*, 171–74) discussion on Byzantine manuscripts and text-types in general. The lack of attention to the minuscules has long been observed. Wisse for example remarks how “lower criticism seems to have become the study of what to do when Codex Vaticanus and P75 disagree,” while “a study of the minuscules could change this situation.” Wisse, *Profile*, 5 as noted by Michael Holmes, “Minuscule Tradition,” 129. For an up-to-date list of manuscripts visit: <http://www.uni-muenster.de/INTF>.

⁴² This ‘second order’ witness (so NA²⁸) resides in Milan, Italy at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana. It includes 276 leaves and is approximately 25.0 cm x 18.0 cm (INTF).

considered this to be a ‘category III’ manuscript.⁴³ Categories aside, the quality of agreement between 614 and 05 is too low; it seems best to think of it as a mixed Byzantine witness.⁴⁴

For example, 614 shows a blend of textual families with some striking similarities with the NA²⁸—Acts 28:11, for example, is the same with the παρασήμω Διοσκούροις (which reflects the Alexandrian tradition). Verse 12 is also the same except ημέρας τρεῖς is found in reverse order in 614 (metathesis).⁴⁵ Verse 13 has περιελθόντες instead of περιελόντες. Meanwhile, verse 14 begins to show some textual cross-pollination that is different from the NA²⁸. It has ἐπ αὐτοῖς instead of παρ’ αὐτοῖς, ἐπιμεῖναντες instead of ἐπιμεῖναι, and εἰς Ραμην ἦλθομεν instead of εἰς τὴν Ῥώμην ἦλθαμεν. Verse 15 has ἡμῶν ἐξηλθον instead of ἡμῶν ἦλθαν and ἄχρις Απφίου instead of ἄχρι Ἀππίου. Most notable is how verse 16 contains this extra, sizable, text following εἰς Ῥώμην: ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος παρέδωκε τοὺς δεσμίους τῷ στρατοπεδάρχη· τῷ δὲ παύλῳ ἐπετραπή μένειν καθ’ ἑαυτὸν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς.⁴⁶

Verse 19 also contains this extra variant after Ἰουδαίων and before ἠναγκάσθη: καὶ ἐπικραζόντων αἶρε τὸν ἐχθρὸν ἡμῶν (and cried out, “Away with our enemy”).⁴⁷ Further additions in verse 19 of codex 614 follow κατηγορήσαι (κατηγορεῖν in the NA²⁸): ἀλλ’ ἵνα

⁴³ Aland and Aland, *Text*, 106, 133. 2412 agrees with 614 in 96.62% of the mutually extant passages (322). Barrett (*Acts*, 1:26) highlights the strong textual relationship with 614, P38 (c. 300 CE) and P48 (third century).

⁴⁴ Parker, *Introduction*, 290. Concerning the similarities see Aland and Aland, *Text*, 107, 133, 149 and Tuckett, “How Early,” 74–76.

⁴⁵ Comfort, *Manuscripts*, 292. Cf. Porter and Pitts, *Fundamentals*, 115.

⁴⁶ This text is the same as the NA²⁸ plus this western addition noted above: “Ὅτε δὲ εἰσῆλθομεν εἰς Ῥώμην, [plus Western variant] ἐπετραπή τῷ [δε] Παύλῳ μένειν καθ’ ἑαυτὸν [plus Western variant: ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς] σὺν τῷ φυλάσσοντι αὐτὸν στρατιώτῃ.

⁴⁷ Longenecker, *Acts*, 571.

λυτρώσωμαι τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐκ θανάτου· (but in order that I might free my soul from death). Verse 28 is the same except it has an interesting *nomen sacrum*: σ̄ ρ̄ ιον for σ(ωτή)ριον.⁴⁸ The additional verse 29 is also found in 614 (80v): καὶ ταῦτα αὐτοῦ εἰπόντος ἀπῆλθον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι· πολλὴν ἔχοντες ἐν ἑαυτ[οῖς] συζήτησιν.⁴⁹

There are several interesting peculiarities about verse 29. First, the scribe is attentive to all accents, breathing marks, and diaeresis marks—one sits above the first Ἰ in Ἰουδαῖοι, the second is found in συζήτησιν. Also, ἑαυτοῖς is missing the second half of the word (οῖς).⁵⁰ Since the last letter of line 18 is a τ, and the following word συζήτησιν begins with a σ, it is easy to see how the copying error occurred (due to ὁμ.). Verse 30 is mostly the same except it has the conjunction οὐν instead of δὲ plus ἰουδαίους τε καὶ ἔλληνας.⁵¹ Verse 31 reveals an interesting error with a triad of *nomina sacra*: κῡ κῡ ιῡ (κυρίου, κυρίου, Ἰησοῦ).⁵²

⁴⁸ The superscript line is far above the ρ. Evidently, even the word salvation carried sacred significance.

⁴⁹ “And having said these things, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.” See also 614’s *editio princeps*: Valentine-Richards and Creed, *Codex 614*, 60.

⁵⁰ Valentine-Richards and Creed, *Codex 614*, 60. The original editors of 614 assumed the full ἑαυτοῖς in their reading (see also NA²⁸ v. 29 apparatus).

⁵¹ Ἰουδαίους τε καὶ ἔλληνας is probably a theological insertion that seeks to clarify the adjective πάντας (here in attributive structure). Cf. Porter, *Idioms*, 119.

⁵² The correct reading should be κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. There is plenty of scholarship regarding *nomina sacra*, however, perhaps one of the best treatments is found in Comfort, *Manuscripts*, 199–253 and Kraft (“Textual Mechanics,” 51–72) who carefully (and I think successfully) challenges some of the prevalent theories (esp. Roberts, *Manuscript*) on the origins of the *nomina sacra*.

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