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TITLE: THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS AND THE PROBLEM OF GENRE

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ABSTRACT

The single question to which this dissertation is addressed is: to what literary genre do the synoptic gospels belong? The question per se is not a new one; nor is it one which fails to generate scholarly interest from one generation to the next. Nevertheless, it is one which is lacking a satisfactory solution. The essential difficulty with a solution appears to be derived from two sets of data which may be expressed in paradoxical relationship to one another:

- 1) the synoptic gospels are narratives composed of traditions attributed to Jesus and preserved by the church, traditions which are so presented as to focus upon Jesus' person, and
- 2) the synoptic gospels appear to have no "biographical intent" (understood in contemporary terms as a primary intent to preserve an accurate, historical account of Jesus).

The problem, therefore, is this: the synoptic gospels are in some sense "biographical", but they are not "biographies".

Our own approach to this question begins with a preliminary discussion of the nature of a literary genre. Our conclusion is that the concept itself is broader and more dynamic than contemporary New Testament scholarship has yet

accepted. Then, following a brief presentation of presuppositions, the reconstruction and definition of a literary genre, which was current at the time the gospels were written (historical aspect of genre reconstruction) and which is an appropriate category for the synoptic narratives (descriptive aspect of genre), is set forth. This genre is initially referred to as laudatory biography and is later more specifically identified as "encomium" biography. Its existence is posited on the basis of the ancient dichotomy between history and some biographical counterpart: it is defined by reference to the rules of characterization which were codified in the rhetorical rules for the encomium.

The proposition is then tested by a discussion of the synoptic gospels and their affinities with the genre as set forth. The basis of this discussion is as new in this dissertation as is the proposed solution to the initial question of genre. After pointing out the weaknesses of establishing genre relationships by a comparison of one specific text with another, we discuss the affinities of the synoptic gospels to the "encomium" biography in terms of genre characteristics: namely, topoi, literary techniques, and purposes.

The essential contribution of this thesis is that it presents a reasonable identity and definition for the synoptic gospels as literary wholes. It offers a historical

explanation for the paradoxical character of these narratives of Jesus by providing the literary basis for the presentation of a praiseworthy person in a narrative form which was not composed primarily for the purpose of recording events. More important for the exegete, it provides an intelligible whole with which and through which the individual parts may be viewed. This contributes to the "exact" interpretation of the text. Finally, after having identified a proper literary genre which conveys certain meanings and presuppositions, the authenticity of the "portraits" may now be addressed anew.

PREFACE

I first became interested in the question of the genre of the gospels in the Spring of 1964, while working with Prof. Wm. R. Farmer. My task at that time was to devise some way by which selected examples of Plutarch's Lives could be compared with the synoptic gospels when both were examined from the perspective of the rhetorical rules for the encomium as set forth by Hermogenes (second century A.D.). The idea for the comparison was originally that of Prof. Farmer and was precipitated by a "suggestion" which appeared almost as an afterthought in D.L. Clark's Rhetoric in the Greco-Roman World. The stimulating suggestion was simply that the rhetorical device known as "comparison" (closely associated with the encomium) might possibly provide the key to the format of Plutarch's parallel lives. As I look back upon this task some ten years later (I still have the charts which demonstrated the results of the comparisons), I continue to find the results impressive, and I can remember the difficulty I had trying to understand them in the context of the sui generis view of gospel genre which prevailed at that time.

Although many endeavours have occupied my attention

since my initial exposure to this area of research, I have continued to follow the discussion as requirements on my time would permit. It seemed to me, on the one hand, that the gospels must have been received by their readers as some kind of biography. On the other hand, I could not reconcile this with current hypotheses describing the gospels as essentially "formless" entities. I attempted to formulate my own views on several occasions in papers delivered before various Society of Biblical Literature meetings (Toronto in 1969, New Orleans in 1971, and the Canadian society in Toronto, 1974), but it was not until the writing of this dissertation that I was able to address myself to the many multifaceted aspects of the question.

It is precisely at this moment of writing, therefore, that I am aware of my indebtedness to others throughout the course of my research. To Prof. Farmer, who first introduced me to this area and who continued to offer encouragement when I could find none elsewhere, and to Prof. E.P. Sanders, who first suggested that I might find at McMaster University the quality of independent scholarship needed to complete the task and who throughout the course of my study offered freely his wisdom, guidance, and more of his valuable time than was rightfully mine, I now express my deepest appreciation and friendship and warm and sincere gratitude.

I also want to express my appreciation to Prof. D.M. Shepherd, who consented to add me to his list of responsibilities in the Department of Classics by serving on my committee and by being an active resource for the area of research to which he is devoted. In addition, I wish to express my appreciation to Prof. Ben Meyer, whose valuable suggestions and critiques at every stage of my work at McMaster conveyed his sincere interest both in me as a student and in my work. There are many others who should be mentioned but who, for lack of space, cannot. I trust they, too, will accept my sincere gratitude even as they must now accept the omission of their names. In spite of the above list of my intellectual creditors, I trust that it is obvious to all who read this dissertation that I alone can be held responsible for its contents.

Finally, I must express my love and devotion to those who sacrificed more than anyone else that this work might be completed: Margie (my wife) and our three children, Joel, Lance, and Suzanne. They bore the strain of separation and added responsibilities far better and with more encouragement to me than I could have, had the circumstances been reversed. To them I dedicate the work which follows in the hope that my efforts, however this work is received, will bring to them even a small portion of the honour and respect they so richly deserve.

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THE PROBLEM UNDER CONSIDERATION

The theory of books is noble. The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him life; it went out from him truth. It came to him short-lived actions; it went out from him immortal thoughts . . . It was dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing.¹

There is little need to expound upon the significance of the gospel narratives for the Christian community. Were value at issue, it would be enough merely to allude to the volumes upon volumes of research which have been and continue to be produced on what seems like an infinite number of subjects related to these narratives. Indeed, in view of the "knowledge explosion" the benefits of which have left no field of endeavour untouched in recent years, what strikes one as strange is the necessity of turning one's

¹Ralph Waldo Emerson in an address delivered to the Phi Beta Kappa chapter at Harvard University on August 31, 1837.

attention to such an elementary subject as the literary nature and character of the synoptic gospels. In general, it is the purpose of this dissertation to address the question of the genre or Gattung² of the synoptic gospels; in particular, it is the purpose of this first section to demonstrate that the genre question is still awaiting a satisfactory solution.

The more immediate concern of the present chapter could be accomplished in either one of two ways. We could attempt a thorough review of the history of research related to the question of gospel genre. An alternative would be to examine several key works in which significant aspects of the problem are illustrated. The advantage of the historical and chronological approach would be that of enabling one to understand the manner in which the question has been previously discussed. Such a survey, however, would have the disadvantage of tending to become too time-consuming because of the complexity of the problem. Further, a detailed historical analysis, though beneficial, would not, in our view, contribute significantly to the current task of proposing a new hypothesis concerning the generic nature

²The present work presumes the French term, "genre", to be synonymous with the German term, Gattung, and understands that they may be used interchangeably. For the most part, however, the former will be the more commonly employed term. A discussion of what is meant by the two terms appears below, pp. 50ff.

of the gospels. The scope of the present work and the requirement of brevity, therefore, weigh in favour of the alternative route. Accordingly, the following demonstration of the problem of gospel genre will consist of a discussion of three works by four scholars -- C.W. Votaw, K.L. Schmidt, Moses Hadas, and Morton Smith -- and the responses those works generate.

1. The Gospels and "Popular Biography"

In 1915 C.W. Votaw of the University of Chicago wrote an article titled "The Gospels and Contemporary Biographies".³ This article predates the acceptance and popularity of form criticism and therefore illustrates one approach to the problem of the genre of the gospels prior to form critical considerations. As the title implies, Votaw sought to relate the gospels as total entities to classical and Hellenistic parallels. Since comparisons of this kind are not generally common practice, it is important to note Votaw's view of the gospel narratives and his methodological presuppositions behind the comparisons he made.

Votaw's basic understanding of the nature of the gospel literature may be considered representative of the

³C.W. Votaw, "The Gospels and Contemporary Biographies", The American Journal of Theology 19(1915), pp. 47-73, 217-249; recently reprinted in monograph form by Fortress Press.

current "standard" position. For example, he wrote: "in character it [the gospel] was a religious tract, intended to promote the Christian movement. In style it represented the popular spoken language of the common people, for the author was not a trained philosopher or a professional littérateur".⁴

Also,

The Gospels were not intended to be a contribution to historical or philosophical literature . . . The Gospels are to be viewed, not as historical writings produced by a historical impulse and method, but as propagandist writings of this early Christian movement . . . These books were not called lives of Jesus, but "Gospels," i.e., evangelistic tracts to promote the Christian movement, to commend Jesus as Christ, Lord, Savior, and Teacher to the Mediterranean world.⁵

And there are few who would argue with his following assessment:

The Gospels are not chronicling but dramatic productions. They present pen pictures of Jesus as a divine Person on earth, revealing God; saving men, teaching righteousness, calling to repentance, healing sickness, heralding the new age . . . They aimed to make men "see Jesus," not in the literal garb of a Galilean prophet, but in the transfigured raiment of the son of God redeeming the world.⁶

⁴Ibid., pp. 45-46.

⁵Ibid., pp. 46-49.

⁶Ibid., p.49. For views similar to those expressed above, cf. Martin Dibelius, From Tradition to Gospel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), p. 6; Rudolf Bultmann, History of the Synoptic Tradition, John Marsh trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 369; W.D. Davies, Christian Origins and Judaism (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 12-13; Werner Georg Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 32-33;

Votaw did not feel that the above views of the nature of the gospel narratives precluded comparisons with other examples of literature, from that general period. Requisite for such comparisons, however, was the recognition that there is a distinction to be made between popular biography and historical biography and that the gospel narratives are to be found as representative of the former category. Votaw proceeded carefully in establishing the legitimacy of his comparisons. He asked rhetorically: "Then are the Gospels biographies of Jesus"? His answer was: "No or Yes, according to the connotation given the term 'biography'". Then, in the qualification of his "no or yes" answer which follows, he presented his understanding of popular and historical biography.

In the historical sense, a biography is a writing which aims to present all the important dates and facts about a person, with perspective and exactness, including his relation to other persons and to his times. This involves research, criticism, and interpretation, according to the current principles of history-writing. It is obvious that the Gospels are not biographies in this sense of the term.

In the popular sense, a biography is any writing which aims to make one acquainted with a historical person by giving some account of his deeds and words, sketchily chosen and arranged, even when the motive of the writer is practical and hortatory rather than

W. Marxsen, Introduction to the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), p. 148; and Helmut H. Koester. "One Jesus and Four Primitive Gospels", Harvard Theological Review, 2 (1968), p. 206.

historical. The amount, character, order, and accuracy of the historical information contained in these pragmatic writings vary greatly, according to the purposes, interests, abilities, and resources of the several authors. The Gospels may be classified with productions of this kind; in the popular sense they are biographies, and we commonly so think of them.⁷

Accordingly, the remaining portion of Votaw's article is devoted to a discussion of the similarities of the "portraits" contained in the gospels with those contained in Arrian's Epictetus, Philostratus's Apollonius of Tyana, and the works of both Xenophon and Plato which preserve traditions about Socrates. He obviously believed that these works also belonged to the "popular biography" category.

Methodologically, it is important to observe the kinds of comparisons that Votaw made. His comparisons were not derived from textual or form critical analysis of the sources behind the gospels. He was rather concerned with the image or portrait that evolved from the whole of the works chosen for examination. Comparisons were limited to the general purposes of the tracts including the apologetic or didactic intentions of the authors, a consideration of the impact of the "hero" upon the society in which he resided and especially upon those disciples who were drawn to his side, an all-too-brief account of the hero's teachings,

⁷Votaw, "The Gospels", p.49.

and references to biographical material in so far as biographical details were discernible (accomplishments, death, glorification, etc.). There were no attempts on the part of Votaw to establish direct literary relationships or to outline any common pattern of development of either the hero's image or the particular type of literature from which the image emerged. His only assertion was that each of these examples falls into the same broad category of popular biography, and on this basis were such comparisons thought to be justified.

It is one thing to argue for a rationale behind one's comparisons: it is quite another to build a case for generic relationships. If it was Votaw's intention to accomplish the latter, then it is indeed regrettable that he did not spend more time verifying the existence of his "popular" and "historical" classifications with respect to biography. It is precisely on this point that he becomes vulnerable; for genres require more for verification than a rationale for literary comparison. In the first place, there is ample evidence for restricting the use of the term "biography", since biography as a literary discipline is of relatively recent development. To be sure, there are numerous works dating back to the ancients which bear the title "bios" or "vita", but none of these works may be referred to

as "biography" in a modern sense -- a fact which Votaw himself observes. To defend such a position now would require much more elaboration on the meaning and use of the term "biography" as a genre designation. Secondly, the use of the terms "popular" and "historical" create problems for the New Testament exegete. It is true that the former term is frequently applied to the gospels with reference to the type of literature and the character of the audience to which this literature is addressed. But if it was Votaw's intent to identify a particular genre in which the gospels are to be classified, then he must be questioned as to the basis upon which he argues for the presence of a popular biographical genre as distinct from a historical biographical genre. The question is: where is the historical evidence for such genres during the period in which the gospels were written?

Closer examination, on the other hand, leads us to conclude that Votaw was not primarily concerned with the isolation of specific, clearly identifiable, literary genres. He has not appealed to the rhetoricians for support of a genre, nor does he elaborate upon the "historical-popular" dichotomy except to show that his comparisons are methodologically sound. At several points he does use the term "memorabilia" in connection with traditions concerning

Jesus's ministry: e.g., "They contain historical reminiscences, or memorabilia, of Jesus' ministry; but for the practical use these may serve in the evangelistic mission".⁸ For Votaw, the gospel narratives contain memorabilia; they are not in themselves examples of "memorabilia". His brief survey of ancient biographical writings serves to illustrate the point that the ancients -- like the gospel writers -- sought to "portray" rather than "photograph" in their literary compositions, and the resulting "portraits" served a propagandizing function for the evangelists.⁹ Thus Votaw was more concerned with the literary product and its application than with "form" and "origin" questions related to genre classifications. Accordingly, he writes:

It was the purpose of these writings to make known the personality and the message of these three great moral-religious teachers. The authors write with a practical, not with a chronicling intent. They did not make historical investigations, or give a systematic accurate account of the life . . . but gave memorabilia of the teaching, with more or less incident in conjunction. . . The message of each man was the thing of primary interest and value, together with the personality of the man behind his message. The events of his life, the genetic relationship to his environment, and his influence upon his times were secondary matters that received little or no attention. Therefore, these lives of Epictetus, Apollonius, and Socrates, like the Gospels, are not biographies of the

⁸Ibid., p. 47.

⁹Ibid., cf. pp. 47, 51, 55, 222-223, etc.

historical but of the popular type. They eulogize and idealize their heroes. They select their best sayings and interpret them for practical use, they give the memorabilia in an atmosphere of appreciation, they commend the message to the faith and practice of all.¹⁰

Elsewhere,

Obviously Socrates and Jesus are presented as public heroes, as exemplary persons to be appreciated and imitated. The primary motive of putting them before the public in writings is to instruct and to inspire men in their type of living. The interpretation of them given by the authors will be such as the practical end requires. Acts, utterances, and characteristics that have inspirational and pedagogical value will be selected and presented in an effective way. The hero will be read into the later environment of which the writer is a part, and will be arrayed to function for this environment, however, it may differ from the conditions in which his own life was set . . . The chief concern of their biographers was to accomplish practical results in the moral-religious sphere.¹¹

It would seem, therefore, that Votaw's primary concern was not with the task of defining literary genres, but rather with the fruitful results to be gained from comparisons of the nature and function of the portraits which emerge from these writings taken as literary wholes. Such comparisons, however, would soon be denied him by the work of Karl Ludwig Schmidt, to which we now turn our attention.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 554

¹¹Ibid., p. 223.

2. The Gospels and "Kleinliteratur"

In 1923, Karl Ludwig Schmidt set the tone for subsequent discussions of the genre of the gospels when his article, "Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte", was published in the Gunkel Festschrift¹² Schmidt, whose purpose was to survey and evaluate the literature related to the question of the Gattung of the gospels, did not take the time to comment on the results of Votaw's comparisons, but he did respond to the basis upon which such comparisons were made thereby preparing the ground for his own position. Schmidt felt that Votaw and others had erred in their classifications of literature and in the proposed relationship of the gospels to these categories. His own categories were much more broadly conceived: Hochliteratur as distinct from Kleinliteratur. It is important that we understand fully what Schmidt means by this dichotomy and the effect of the dichotomy upon the question of gospel genre before we examine its current usefulness.

For Schmidt, Hochliteratur included all literature in which the personality and artistic intentions of the "author" are clearly discernible. Style, structure,

¹²K.L. Schmidt, "Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte", EUCCHARISTERION, Studien zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments, Gunkel Festschrift, Hans Schmidt, ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1923), pp. 50-134.

authorial intent, and literary skill are recognizable in these literary works at least in design if not in the final results. In cases where the "author" is using pre-existing materials or tradition, his literary tasks include systematic collecting, evaluating, editing, and the placing of these smaller units into a predetermined narrative form. This form is the product of the author's creative design. In the case of what may be called formal biography, for example, there usually exist such factors as the perception of personality, statements concerning outward appearance, characterization, and indications of the hero's inner motivations. In the case of memoir literature, to cite another example, there is the dominant presence of what Schmidt calls the literary "I". At every point, Schmidt asserted that the gospels contained none of the characteristics identifiable in Hochliteratur.

Kleinliteratur, on the other hand, is synonymous with "folk" literature -- that vast, loosely defined body of material consisting of small, broken, and often incoherent literary units which are attached together with little innate connection. One cannot speak of an "author", because these units are given their form through a long process of oral transmission governed by universal laws; and the compiler (or compilers), if and when these units are compiled, display

little personal interest in systematic editing. He certainly does not impress himself upon the materials. The result of collecting materials in this manner is what one may call a Volksbuch whose traditions are hopelessly entangled from start to finish. The text displays strong evidence of revisions, amplifications, and even distortions which are the natural hazards of a long history of popular oral transmission. Even when in book form, it continues to possess the free mobility of the oral tradition which produced it. There is no "Gattung motive" and the accounts may be based upon living, popular, and cultic traditions. According to Schmidt, the gospels may be regarded as examples of Kleinliteratur.

With the distinction Hoch- versus Kleinliteratur in hand, Schmidt proceeded with his task. One by one every literary parallel with which the gospels had been compared fell. Research that had previously related the gospels to contemporary biography, autobiography, memoir materials, Rabbinic anecdotes, and history (to mention a few) was reviewed and positive conclusions rejected. Again and again Schmidt's readers encounter the statement that one cannot make comparisons between examples of Hochliteratur and Kleinliteratur. Only with comparisons made within these general categories respectively can one expect to arrive at

valid conclusions: i.e., the gospels can only be compared with examples of Kleinliteratur. This position functions to preclude almost all comparisons with literature of a period approximating that of the gospels, because there are no examples available for consideration. Those cited by Schmidt for consideration included cult and folk legends such as the eighteenth century Chassidic legends of the Great Maggid, traditions behind Doctor Faust, Apophthegmata Patrum, Franciscan legends, and a vast amount of popular traditions presently preserved in a fifty volume collection located in Paris.¹³ According to Schmidt, it is only in examples of this type, even though they be relatively late, that one can see how the traditions of the gospels were circulated, collected, and finally written down. The gospels, therefore, belong to no genre; they emerged through a natural process of folk transmission, i.e., they are sui generis.

The differences between the position of Votaw and that of Schmidt now surface in a significant manner. The primary problem resides in the fact that for Votaw "popular" is not synonymous with "folk" literature. Obviously, for him, Arrian, Xenophon, and Plato were capable of producing historical and/or popular literature, of which the latter

¹³ Littérature orale de la Haute Bretagne (Paul Sebillot).

was directed to the general public with purposes of entertainment, moral instruction, or related intentions. Votaw's literary choices for comparison were heroes whose lives were doomed by their respective exponents as worthy of the attention of the public and as contributing by their example to the public good. Schmidt's categories, on the other hand, were of a very different type and were more deeply rooted culturally and sociologically. The rigidity of Schmidt's view is apparent: in his mind, Plato simply could not and would not produce literature which could be confused or classified with what Schmidt calls Kleinliteratur. Likewise, the gospel editors were incapable of producing (however noble their efforts) or being directly influenced by Hochliteratur. As in the case of Kleinliteratur, the gospel narratives were the collective productions of the social stratum and the cultural and cultic milieu which combine over an extended period of time to produce Kleinliteratur. The positions of Votaw and Schmidt are irreconcilable.

For a proper understanding of Schmidt's thesis, one should realize that it was developed in the context of form criticism, a then relatively new discipline the emergence and acceptance of which were certainly enhanced by Schmidt's own

contributions.¹⁴ As early as 1882, Franz Overbeck had described the gospel narratives as "preliterary" (Urliteratur), noting especially their brief literary development and history.¹⁵ In 1919, Martin Dibelius observed that the real distinction to be made in a study of literature must necessarily be between high and low forms: i.e., between those works considered literary and those considered nonliterary. In his book, From Tradition to Gospel, Dibelius wrote:

In prosecuting a research in the history of the Form of the Gospels, we must not concern ourselves first of all and most of all with only one section of primitive Christian literature, namely the synoptic Gospels. Without a doubt these are unliterary writings (Kleinliteratur). They should not and cannot be compared with "literary" works (Hochliteratur).¹⁶

Dibelius explained his position by referring to the absence of the creative hand of a single author:

Many anonymous persons take part in handing down popular traditions. They act, however, not merely as vehicles, but also as creative forces by introducing changes or additions without any single person having a "literary" intent. In such cases the personal peculiarities of the composer or narrator have little significance; much greater importance attaches to the form in which the

¹⁴ Schmidt's own book, Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu (Berlin: Trowitzsch und Sohn), was published in 1919; and this significant work contributed much to the initial application of form criticism to gospel texts.

¹⁵ Franz Overbeck, Über die Anfänge der patristischen Literatur (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966), p. 23 (also, pp. 19-20). This work first appeared in the Historischen Zeitschrift 48 (1882), N.F. 12, Band 5, pp. 417-474.

¹⁶ Dibelius, From Tradition, p. 2. The words in parenthesis were those employed in the original German version (1919).

tradition is cast by practical necessities, by usage, or by origin. The development goes on steadily and independently, subject all the time to certain definite rules, for no creative mind has worked upon the material and impressed it with his own personality.¹⁷

On this particular point, Rudolf Bultmann agreed. In his History of the Synoptic Gospels, Bultmann wrote: "It seems to me that while we need analogies for understanding the individual components of the Synoptic Tradition we do not need them for the Gospel as a whole". He continued:

What analogies can be suggested? There are none in the Greek Tradition: . . . There is no historical-biographical interest in the Gospels, and that is why they have nothing to say about Jesus's human personality, his appearance and character, his origin, education and development; quite apart from the fact that they do not command the cultivated techniques of composition necessary for grand literature (hohe Literatur), nor let the personalities of their author appear. The literature of memoirs and lives of the philosophers are related to the Gospels at the most in that they, like the Gospels, gather together in somewhat looser form dialogues and episodes from the lives of important men; but as they lack any link with myth and cult, so the Gospels lack any interest in the scientific-historical kind.¹⁸

Thus it is in the context of the development of the extremely significant and useful discipline of form criticism -- the essential founders and exponents of whom were in basic agreement as to the generic nature of the genre of the gospels -- that we can understand the sui generis solution being

¹⁷Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁸Bultmann, History, pp. 371-372.

applied to the character of the gospel narratives as whole entities.¹⁹ In particular, Schmidt's article tied up all of the loose ends and had the effect of removing (until recently) the question of genre from the form critical concerns of gospel research except in the case of the smaller literary units within the whole.

Because the above stated positions of Schmidt and the other form critics continue to represent the dominant view within the discussions of the Gattung of the gospels, it is necessary to examine Schmidt's premise more closely and critically. The following arguments and discussion, when considered separately, may be regarded as lacking compelling force; but, when considered together, they make it necessary that we reconsider the question of the genre of the gospels.

Interestingly enough, one of those who saw problems with Schmidt's conclusions was Dibelius himself, even though one cannot say that the problems which he observed altered his own views significantly. Dibelius was concerned with the relation of gospel formation to those rules which govern the formulation and transmission of traditions in the oral stage of development. The question raised was

¹⁹E.g. G. Bornkamm, "Evangelien, synoptische", RGK (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1958), Vol. III, col. 750.

essentially this: to what extent can the gospels be understood as reflecting the controlled presence of a literary development such as that contained in the evolution of popular traditions? Dibelius's conclusion was that general comparisons involving the history of tradition cannot yield conclusive results because of the vast difference of cultures, the remoteness of periods, and the various contents of the traditions. To this conclusion of Dibelius, we could add a fourth: the inability of scholars to arrive at a consensus which would identify in a credible manner those specific and general literary laws functional in popular transmission (against Schmidt and the examples of Kleinliteratur he cited). Nevertheless, Dibelius went on to accept Schmidt's work in general, and he stated that "it may suffice to hint at this broad, indeed boundless region".²⁰

More recently, W.D. Davies recognized the problem of comparing the gospels with other forms of tradition in which general rules of transmission are said to exercise literary influence. Davies has accepted the contributions of form criticism in general, but feels that it has been "unduly influenced" by the history of tradition in the Old Testament

²⁰ Dibelius's concern appears in the English text of From Tradition to Gospel where he refers directly to Schmidt's work (Tradition, pp. 176-177).

and in other "folk literature". He writes:

But any comparison between such literature and the New Testament must be dubious. The Old Testament covers at least ten centuries; folk literature usually stretches over long periods of time. The New Testament, on the other hand, probably was all composed within a century . . . The Gospels contain materials remembered recently, at least as compared with other traditional literature, so that the rules which governed the transmission of folk tradition do not always apply to the tradition found in the Gospels.²¹

The question to which Davies has alluded is: had sufficient time lapsed between the events and the written record to allow universal or general rules, however they may have been operative and influential within the early Christian community, to have become functional in the formation of the gospel narratives? Davies's observation serves to raise serious doubt as to the degree to which the gospel narratives were shaped by the rules of popular transmission of the type implicit in Schmidt's understanding of Kleinliteratur.

E.P. Sanders, a pupil of Davies, has pointed to another important and not unrelated critical issue for those who would relate the laws of popular transmission to the gospel traditions. Many such attempts in the past rest upon unproven assertions. In his book, The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition, Sanders observes that the universal

²¹W.D. Davies, Invitation to the New Testament / (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1966), pp. 115-116.

tendencies of tradition and their comparisons with synoptic traditions have not been firmly and objectively established.

He writes:

It has been necessary to emphasize this last point [that Taylor, like Dibelius and Bultmann, never investigated the tendency of material more or less parallel to that in the synoptics] because of what apparently is a fairly common assumption concerning the laws of the tradition, namely, that they have been derived by studying the course of development of traditions which, though non-Christian, parallel the Christian materials in type and age, and that these laws thus derived may be considered the more or less universal tendency of tradition. This assumption, wherever it is held, is unjustified. Although the form critics compared the Christian tradition with other traditions, they did so in order to understand the formal characteristics of the tradition, not the types of changes it underwent. Even McGinley, who investigates some Rabbinic and Hellenistic healing stories and compares them to those in the Synoptics, does not compare different forms of the same story at different levels of transmission in order to discover the laws of transmission characteristic of healing stories. To my knowledge, this has never been done. Until it is done I do not see how we can speak of the tendencies of each form, in contrast to the characteristics of each form, on which the form critics did so much excellent work. That the form critics, in establishing the characteristics of each form, actually were correct in comparing the Gospel literature to folk traditions has been questioned (McGinley).²²

One should note, therefore, that the emergence of the gospel narratives within the context of the Christian community and the manner in which these traditions were nurtured,

²²E.P. Sanders, The Tendencies of the Synoptic Tradition (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), pp. 21-22. Cf. pp. 21-26.

developed, and presented prior to these written narratives are by no means settled issues; and Schmidt's position now appears to be a vastly oversimplified one. What William O. Walker has recently written concerning the Gospel of Matthew is also true of the other synoptics: "The unresolved questions include those relating to authorship, date, place and circumstances of composition, source or sources, and the exact nature and duration of the process which led from the primitive traditions about Jesus to the appearance of the Gospel According to Matthew".²³ There are numerous questions surrounding the laws of transmission of the gospel traditions which, though thought by Schmidt and others to have been settled, are in fact yet to be resolved. This weakness in Schmidt's position becomes even more complicated with the advent of Redaktionsgeschichte.²⁴

More dubious for the present writer than the problems connected with the laws of popular transmission is the one created by the mechanical manner in which the terms Hoch- and Kleinliteratur -- categories initially employed in

²³Wm. O. Walker, "The Identification on Compositional Grounds of Redactional Passages in Matthew", p. 4. This unpublished programmatic paper was presented to a Gospel Seminar composed of scholars who met September 21, 1974 at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University. Underlining is that of the present author.

²⁴See below, pp. 27f.

the study of Medieval literature -- have been used to justify the removal of all literary types from comparison with the gospels. One acquires the distinct impression that Schmidt is working with a thesis already presumed to be true, a presupposition which serves as the basis for the exclusion of all theories which view the gospel narratives as total literary units. It is not the distinction itself against which the present objection is directed. No doubt the ancient world produced "high" and "low" forms of literature. Indeed, it no doubt witnessed the production of a great deal of material which would lie somewhere in between these two poles (an assertion which must, in the final analysis, remain speculative because of the relatively small amounts of evidence preserved from the periods in question). This, however, is precisely the objection: here is a hypothesis which does not admit to the possibility of anything lying in between these two poles, one which presupposes the mutual exclusiveness of the two categories. Certainly in our own milieu the vast majority of literary and artistic output would not admit to the title of "grand" literature or art. Surely the same would be true of the classical world if to a lesser degree. F.C. Grant comes close to describing such a situation when he writes:

In the first place, the earliest Christians were not literary, not even, for the most part, an educated group -- as we should define "educated." . . . They were the humble, the simple, the poor, and some of them were no doubt illiterate . . . Their very language, when they did come to write, was as Adolf Deissmann conclusively showed (chiefly in his Light from the Ancient East), the language of the masses; not illiterate, but certainly nonliterary.²⁵

It is doubtful that the observation, "not illiterate, but certainly nonliterary", though perhaps true, legitimately serves to preclude the type of comparisons Votaw made in favour of the exclusive categories utilized by Schmidt. For the present writer it is precisely Schmidt's exclusiveness along with that of others after him which is to be questioned. Perhaps an illustration will further clarify the objection. When Lucian wrote his essay, "How to Write History", he was disturbed about the manner in which history was being written at that time.²⁶ Many were writing and calling their works "histories", but the result, according to Lucian, left much to be desired. Apparently, it was common practice to distort, amplify, and even omit for the sake of creating good impressions. Lucian felt this approach was not good historical procedure, and his essay was intended to correct

²⁵F.C. Grant, The Gospels: Their Origin and Their Growth (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 28.

²⁶K. Kilburn, ed., Lucian, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), Vol. VI, pp. 10-17.

the situation. All would no doubt agree with Lucian in the rejection of these works as examples of good history. And from what Lucian says about them, it would be difficult for us to call them examples of biographies. But, by the same token, one cannot deny them the status of literature regardless of how far they missed the literary mark. Nor can their literary character be denied simply because they were obviously addressed to the populace. Here we encounter the difficulty of applying Schmidt's dichotomy. Were the terms Hochliteratur and Kleinliteratur familiar to Lucian, he would no doubt apply the latter designation to the character of the works in question.²⁷ Schmidt, on the other hand, would more than likely place them in the Hochliteratur category on the basis of literary intent associated with the pretense of writing "history". What actually appears to be the case is that Lucian is confronted by a form of laudatory oratory (encomium) which, as being employed publicly by those against whom he is writing, strives to please and entertain even at the expense of recording history. The results may have even been "nonliterary" when measured against literary models, but they were obviously not produced by illiterate practitioners. This example illustrates the fact that

²⁷ Cf. e.g., History 7; see below, pp. 82f..

Schmidt's dichotomy does represent an oversimplification of a situation which is more complex and less neatly differentiated than the radical application of the two categories admits. Consequently, it is difficult to use either the term Hochliteratur or Kleinliteratur in connection with any or all of the works against which Lucian is addressing himself without producing an assessment which is only partially correct. Were such categories commonplace for Lucian, he would perhaps make one judgment and his antagonists another while a modern reader might disagree with both. The Hoch- and Kleinliteratur-dichotomy, therefore, is of little assistance to a discussion of the problem of gospel genre: on the contrary, the distinction when excessively applied works against a solution by radically limiting the options. For this reason,

Considering the whole question again and again I cannot help feeling that the best way is really to compare the actual gospels and the various types of literature as we actually have them -- no matter what they are called. A terminological study -- hypomnemata or apomnemoneumata -- as such does not seem to help. And again a theoretical distinction between Hochliteratur and Kleinliteratur is not helpful. The only question, surely, must be: what is actually there in the Greek and Roman tradition and to what extent is it comparable in content or form to the gospels? And where there are comparable features: is this necessarily an indication of dependence upon a

tradition; or could the similarity be accidental?²⁸

In addition to what may be said of the work of K.L. Schmidt directly, we must also take into consideration recent trends in New Testament scholarship which are relevant to Schmidt's thesis. Although the emphasis of form continues to be on the smaller literary pericopes, there has recently emerged a discipline commonly referred to as Redaktionsgeschichte. Practitioners of this discipline would certainly include Conzelmann, Marxsen, and Bornkamm, Barth, and Held.²⁹ These investigators and others making use of the methodology have attached considerable importance to the presence of the "redactor" or "editor" of the gospel narratives. Conzelmann, for example, presumes to have discovered a "theology" of the editor or editors. Largely through the emergence of this discipline, it is now recognized that these unknown editors have exercised considerable choice both in the selection and the structuring of the materials available to them. Each gospel reflects the emphases imposed upon the tradition by its redactor, and these emphases are discernible in the analysis of their redactional techniques. Scholars now

²⁸Letter of April 27, 1968 to the present writer from C. Joachim Classen.

²⁹Hans Conzelmann, The Theology of St. Luke (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960); W. Marxsen, Der Evangelist Markus, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1956);

proceed in the belief that the person and intent of the gospel writers may be isolated and programmatically set forth -- a fact which, of itself, alters considerably Schmidt's view of the complete anonymity and impersonal structuring of the synoptic narratives. It is through an analysis of the literary choices these editors made -- their additions, omissions, amplifications, chronological ordering, and the changing of chronological order from one gospel to another -- that adherents of Redaktionsgeschichte would arrive at the literary presence and theologies of those responsible for the present form of the gospels. Thompson, for example, describes his task in the following manner:

I call myself a composition-critic rather than a redaction-critic. My basic methodological presupposition is that Matthew's editorial activity -- whether it be called redaction or composition -- was so thorough-going and proceeded out of such a unique vision that it transformed all that he touched.³⁰

It is clear, therefore, that the acceptance of the results and methodology of this discipline requires considerable modification if not a complete overhaul of Schmidt's understanding of those forces present in the formation of the

and G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H.J. Held, Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963).

³⁰William G. Thompson, "An Historical Perspective in the Gospel of Matthew", JBL, XCIII, 2 (1974), p. 244, n. 2.

gospel narratives. Redaction criticism would seem to have pushed the gospel narratives into Schmidt's Hochliteratur category.

Regardless of where one begins in gospel studies, he must sooner or later come to grips with the bios factor (i.e., the literary procedure by which traditions related to Jesus are presented in narratives about Jesus which are so structured as to be highly suggestive of biographical literature) obviously evident in these narratives. One may with Schmidt reject the term "biography". One may persist in his desire to refer to the gospels as nonliterary. The bios factor nevertheless remains a dominant concern of these narratives, the subject of which is Jesus of Nazareth. It is apparent that this concern may be traced to the editors of the synoptic texts, for they could have easily avoided the bios aspect in favour of a more collective and impersonal format (e.g., collections of sayings, miracles, and the like, with little interest in a "beginning" and "conclusion").³¹

³¹Consider, for example, the character of Arrian's Discourses of Epictetus which Arrian explains in a letter to Gellius: "I have not composed these Words of Epictetus as one might be said to 'compose' books of this kind . . . But whatever I heard him say I used to write down, word for word, . . . endeavouring to preserve it as a memorial, for my own future use, of his way of thinking and the frankness of his speech . . . This being their character, they have fallen, I know not how, without my will or knowledge, into the hands of men." [W.A. Oldfather, ed., Epictetus, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 6-7.]

The question is: what accounts for such a bios factor and its thematic development within the gospels?³²

The most common explanation is that the bios factor was important because of its germinal presence in the kerygma. Schmidt along with Dibelius and Bultmann anticipates this explanation by acknowledging the cultic character of the gospels. Indeed, the current understanding of gospel origins accounts for the present form on the basis of the preexistent kerygma. Schniewind was the first to make this observation. He concluded that the gospels assumed their present form because the essential ingredients of that form (Vorformen) were already contained in the kerygma.³³ The gospels were said to have given "the kerygma a definite place and task", and this is to be seen in the "theological character of the Gospels". The New Quest of the historical Jesus continues to follow Schniewind in its emphasis upon the kerygma in gospel formation. Robinson writes:

³²The importance of what I have called the "bios factor" was recently affirmed by Jack Suggs in a personal communication. Suggs wrote: "I have turned these books around every which way I can. Finally, I decided to ask the question: what would a first century reader have thought the gospel was? Obviously, he would have thought it was some type of biography. I do not see how he could have thought it was anything except biographical literature. That hardly settles the case, since reader apprehension may be completely at variance with authorial intent. But it has finally convinced me". [October 15, 1974]

³³J. Schniewind, "Zur synoptiker - Exegese", Theologische Rundschau, NF 2 (1930), pp. 129-189.

In the narrative, just as in the kerygma, we are confronted with paradox: exaltation in humiliation, life in death, the kingdom of God in the present evil aeon, the eschatological in history. This kerygmatic meaning of the "historical section" is constitutive of the Gospel as a literary form.³⁴

In his attempt to convey the proper relationship between "Gospel", "kerygma", and "history", Robinson is very close to Schniewind:

The Gospels . . . do not present the historical Jesus in distinction from kerygma, but rather present a kerygmaticized history of Jesus . . . Hence the decisive point with regard to the kerygma and history is not whether the kerygma preserves detailed historical memories about Jesus, but rather that the kerygma is decidedly an evaluation of the historical person.³⁵

Koester³⁶ also adopts the views of Schniewind and explains the form of the gospels as essentially a creation of "the Kerygma of the early Christian community". In addition, he maintains with Schmidt that they are a distinctively Christian type of literature: i.e., a literary form with no forerunners and no contemporary parallels for the whole. He writes:

Indeed, the form of the canonical Gospels cannot be explained in any other way [than the one proposed by Schniewind]. It is, in fact, a creation of the Kerygma of the early Christian community . . . This Kerygma of the death and resurrection "of the

³⁴James M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 55.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 80 and 90.

³⁶Koester; "One Jesus".

Son of God and Lord, proclaimed in the word and present in the cult of the church -- the Lord who is at the same time the Rabbi and Prophet Jesus of Nazareth" -- has made the written Gospel a distinctively Christian type of literature.³⁷

And again:

Nor is Jesus' earthly life directly reflected in the outlines of these Gospels; these outlined, providing a framework for the incorporation of sayings and narratives, are actually an extension of the Kerygma of Jesus' passion and resurrection. Thus the Gospels are pseudo-biographical, not truly biographical.³⁸

Having thus affirmed his thesis of the theological motivation inherent in the formation of these uniquely kerygmaticized narratives, Koester devotes the remaining portions of his article to a demonstration of this "theological motif" in the earliest literary genres which preserve the Christian community's traditions pertaining to Jesus beginning with collections of sayings, aretalogies, revelation discourses up through some of the creedal affirmations of the second century. His thesis is that the gospel form reflects a combining of several genres, but the resulting narrative mirrors no literary type outside of the Christian milieu.

While the contributions of Schmidt correctly emphasize the "uniqueness" of the gospels and those of Schniewind,

³⁷Ibid., p. 206.

³⁸Ibid., p. 207. For an excellent critique of the Kerygma-Gospel hypothesis, cf. Norman Petersen, Jr. "So-Called Gnostic Type Gospels and the Question of the Genre 'Gospel'", Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting papers, 1970, Task Group on Gospel Genre of Gospels Seminar.

Robinson, and Koester quite properly emphasize the importance of the kerygma and faith in the formation of these narratives, what has not been satisfactorily demonstrated is the precise manner in which the kerygma was extended in such a way as to give the vehicle for proclamation (i.e., the gospels) such a strongly bios form and flavour. In an environment in which there admittedly already circulated collections of "sayings" materials and perhaps miracles along with at least verbal proclamation of the "death and resurrection" of Jesus, are the explanations of Schmidt coupled with those of Schniewind, Robinson,³⁹ and Koester sufficient to account for the dramatized accounts that appear as "gospels" however partial, inadequate, or seemingly incomplete the "drama" may appear to be in each particular instance?

It becomes increasingly clear that in addition to the internal weaknesses of Schmidt's argument, two other factors have emerged as a result of current trends in gospel studies: 1) the presence of an editor-redactor-author who did exercise considerable control over the formulation and organization of his materials and 2) the presence of a controlling bios factor, which if not original to, was accepted

³⁹ A discussion of Robinson's theory of an evolving gospel genre is presented below, pp. 42ff.

and further developed by those who wrote the traditions down in narrative form. What has not been acknowledged fully and without qualification since the work of Schmidt (with the exception of Hadas and Smith) is that the gospels are, in a very real sense, "lives" of Jesus, and the Christian community's understanding of the purpose and function of her Lord is presented in the essential literary form of biography. It is to the exception that we now turn our attention, the work of Hadas and Smith.

3. The Gospels and "Aretalogy"

The first attempt to relate the gospel narratives to a biographical literary form known as the aretalogy was a joint project undertaken by Moses Hadas and Morton Smith. Their effort, presented under the title Heroes and Gods, was published in 1965 and gave full weight both to the presence of an editor-redactor and to the controlling presence of the bios factor in the gospel literature. An aretalogy is initially defined as a "formal account of the remarkable career of an impressive teacher that was used as a basis for moral instruction".⁴⁰ Often an aretalogy conveys the preternatural gifts of the teacher and an account of his teachings which brought him fame. Accompanying the fame is often conflict

⁴⁰ Moses Hadas and Morton Smith, Heroes and Gods (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 3.

with established authorities "whom he confronted with courage and at whose hands he suffered martyrdom".⁴¹ The subject of an aretalogy frequently possesses the power to work wonders and the magnetism to gather about him a following of devoted disciples who are "committed to propagating the teaching of the master".⁴² The central figure of the aretalogy could not be described as a mere "hero". He "is consistently and intentionally benevolent and free from the stark passions so often inseparable from the ordinary hero's virtues", and his benefits are of a "spiritual, not material order".⁴³ These benefits include a continuous cure of souls and teaching "by example as well as by precept".⁴⁴ An individual of such magnitude often attains cultic significance. When the hero is of cultic significance, he embodies the highest ideals for which one could strive within the cultic community. According to Hadas, one can see the impact of the poets upon aretalogy, and can trace the development of aretalogy through such personages as Dionysus, Heracles, Theseus, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Empedocles, and the Socrates of Plato. After Plato, there seems to be a parting of the way. On the one hand, there are the more scientific elements of bios or

⁴⁰ Moses Hadas and Morton Smith, Heroes and Gods (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 3.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., p. 17.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 17-18.

aretalogical literature as developed under the influence of Aristotle and the Peripatetics. On the other hand, there are the more spiritual emphases of the Hellenistic schools such as the Epicureans and the Stoics. The stories of the reforming kings of the third century B.C. reflect much of what is contained in aretalogy, and Dio Chrysostom's "The Hunters of Euboea" and the plots of the romances became important links among others in the development and continuation of the aretalogy.

Many of the personages cited by Hadas and Smith reportedly died as martyrs; a fact which characteristically endears them to cultic traditions. Hadas wrote: "A martyrdom is in effect an aretalogy, and if it gives largest place to the holy man's heroism under persecution and his glorious death, that is because the death is after all the crown of the career".⁴⁵ In the second portion of the book, Smith presented for consideration four works which were said to reflect clearly the aretalogical tradition: Porphyry's "The life of Pythagoras"; Philo's "Life of Moses" (excerpts), excerpts from "The Gospel According to Luke", and excerpts from Philostratus's "Life of Apollonius of Tyana".

The value of the efforts of Hadas and Smith lies in

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 94.

the proposition of a bios type of literature the examples of which have the potential of shedding more light on the problem of the gospel as a literary form. Not everyone, however, is willing to accept this thesis as presented and further supported by Smith.⁴⁶ One difficulty with the proposal is the absence of clear aretalogical examples for investigation, and it is to Hadas's credit that he is the first to admit this difficulty. He writes:

After so elaborate a preamble it is something of an anticlimax to have to acknowledge that we have no complete text surviving from the past specifically labelled aretalogy, and indeed that the word is hardly recognized in our standard dictionaries; but there can be no reasonable doubt that the thing and its name once had currency. We know that the careers of holy men were given literary form in order to serve as a basis for moral instruction because vestiges and adaptations of such works are recognizable in certain biographical and other writings that have in fact survived.⁴⁷

Hadas can show only indirectly that aretalogy constitutes a literary genre. He can cite no examples of aretalogy, only examples of what aretalogy might be if examples were available. Of the four translated examples, all are comparatively late for the verification of a literary genre prior to the gospels. Porphyry wrote in the middle of the third century A.D. Philo wrote in the first half of the first century A.D. while Eusebius

⁴⁶E.g., Morton Smith, "Prolegomena to a Discussion of Aretalogies, Divine Men, The Gospels and Jesus", JBL, 90 (1971), pp. 149-156.

⁴⁷Hadas and Smith, Heroes, p. 60.

wrote in the second half. Philostratus's work is no earlier. In addition, three of these examples contain the designation, bios, while the fourth is an "account" in which "proclaiming the gospel" is as close as one gets to the designation, "gospel". It would seem that with all of these examples antecedents are to be found not in early aretalogies as described by Hadas and Smith but in early biographical or similarly related forms of literature. This raises the question: what is it that distinguishes aretalogies from other biographical types? Is it the vocation of the subject under consideration, the scope of the undertaking in terms of topoi to be presented, or some other as yet undisclosed criteria? Hadas himself must infer the existence of the term, aretalogy, from the study of the use of the Latin word, aretalogus, and the Greek phrase, aretas legein.⁴⁸ Kee has challenged the existence of the aretalogical form by noting that neither the examples translated by Smith nor the gospels contain all of the essential ingredients of aretalogy.⁴⁹ It is therefore one thing to say that the end result of the efforts of the gospel writers may be described as "aretalogical": it is

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 60-62.

⁴⁹Howard Kee, "Aretalogy and Gospel", JBL, 92 (1973), pp. 402-422; also, Kee, Jesus and History (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1970), p. 122.

quite another to affirm that the form of the gospels has been influenced by an inferred aretalogy whose generic existence is textually uncertain and which is not subject to literary examination.

By calling into question the existence of an aretalogical genre at this point, we mean only that the existence of the genre as presented by Hadas and Smith is subject to some doubt. Hadas and Smith's reconstruction represents the nearest one has come since Votaw to relating the gospels directly to ancient biographical literature,⁵⁰ and we are not fully convinced by the problems presented above. It is important to note, however, that the position presented does not exhaust the possibilities for the aretalogy. Others who have examined aretalogical traditions in relation to the gospels are not as forthright in their descriptions of a biographical form: i.e., an account that approximates a "life" of the person. Generally speaking, aretalogies of this type are usually associated with the careers and

⁵⁰Hadas specifically identifies aretalogy as a species of biography [Heroes, pp. 3 and 58]. The emphasis upon the biographical character of the aretalogy is also reflected in the choice of the examples offered for consideration. More recently, others who affirm a relationship with ancient biographical literature would include Dieter Georgi [e.g., "The Records of Jesus in the Light of Ancient Accounts of Revered Men", Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Literature (1972), pp. 527ff.] and G.N. Stanton, Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Preaching (Cambridge: University Press, 1974), esp. pp. 67-136.

accomplishments of individuals who have, for one reason or another, been attributed a divine status: i.e., "divine man" concept.

Posited relationships between aretalogies understood as related to "divine men" and the gospels have proven to be more acceptable than those involving aretalogies as more broadly defined by Hadas and Smith. Koester's article, for example, includes a section which is specifically titled "Jesus as the Divine Man (Aretalogies)".⁵¹ H.-D. Betz has written an article bearing a similar title in which he discusses the understanding of theios aner implicit in the gospels.⁵² To illustrate, we shall quote briefly from Koester's work:

In such primitive gospel sources Jesus appears as a man endowed with divine power who performs miracles to prove his divine quality and character Aretalogies were normally written for purposes of religious propaganda, these stories of extraordinary events and performances represent in themselves the essential creed and belief of a religious movement. Gospels in the form of aretalogies, such as the miracle sources of Mark and John, proclaim that a particular divine power is present and available in these powerful acts of Jesus.⁵³

⁵¹Koester, "One Jesus . . .", Reprinted in James M. Robinson and H. Koester, Trajectories through Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971).

⁵²H.-D. Betz, "Jesus as Divine Man", Jesus and the Historian, Festschrift for E.C. Colwell, ed. F. Thomas Trotter (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), pp. 114-133.

⁵³Koester, "One Jesus . . .", Trajectories, pp.187-188.

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What is essential to this understanding of aretalogy is not literary pattern or form per se; but rather the relation of the individual traditions to the "divine man" whose authority is chiefly derived from miracles. The aretalogy of which Koester speaks may be in the form of a collection of miraculous stories and events or even in the form of a letter of recommendation based upon the authority of miracle.⁵⁴ There have also been commendable attempts to reconstruct a composite view of the theios aner;⁵⁵ however, as Tiede has shown, while these reconstructions are useful and instructive, their value is limited by the fact that the resulting composite view is constructed from many different sources thereby giving the somewhat misleading notion of a single, dominantly prevailing "divine man" understanding.⁵⁶ There simply does not exist for investigation an account of the divine man which corresponds to the ones reconstructed from an accumulation of all of the evidence related to the theios aner concept. For the most part, therefore, aretalogies of divine men (with the exception of Hadas and Smith's

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 190.

⁵⁵ E.G., R. Reitzenstein, Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1956); and Ludwig Bieler, ΘΕΙΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ (Wien: Buchhandlung Oskar Hofels, 1935-1936), Vols. I and II. Also, cf. H.-D. Betz, Lukian von Samosata und das Neue Testament, Texte und Untersuchungen (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961), Vol. 76, pp. 100-143.

⁵⁶ David L. Tiede, The Charismatic Figure as Miracle Worker (Missoula: University of Montana, 1972), esp. pp. 243-247.

view which could emphasize the "life" aspect) are not narratives primarily concerned with a "life" of the divine man.

They are collections or traditions related to the career of the theios aner which give particular emphasis to his supernatural powers and accomplishments.

Robinson was one of the earliest to associate the aretalogy with the development of the gospel form.⁵⁷ Pre-supposing the priority of Mark, he explained it in terms of a process of literary evolution in which aretalogy (i.e., miracle traditions related to the "divine man") played an important part. He began his thesis with reference to the identification of the "Signs Source" in John's gospel which, in turn, becomes supporting evidence for the detection of the "pre-Markan stage in the morphology of the Gattung".⁵⁸ The "Signs (miracle) Source" (or sources), therefore, is thought to be evident both in Mark and John.⁵⁹ The significance of this source is stated by Robinson: "The Signs Source shows with all clarity Jesus being assimilated to the θεῖος ἀνὴρ ideal of the Hellenistic miracle worker or faith

⁵⁷As far as I know, Robinson's use of the term "aretalogy" is independent of the work by Hadas and Smith.

⁵⁸James M. Robinson, "The Problem of History in Mark, Reconsidered", Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 20 (1965), p. 136.

⁵⁹Ibid. Cf. also, Robinson and Koester, Trajectories, pp. 266-268 and 46-66.

healer".⁶⁰ Viewed from the perspective of trajectory,

Robinson explains the emergence of the gospel form:

Kähler's definition of Mark as a passion narrative with a long introduction together with form criticism's recognition that the only sizable part of the tradition that had been held together as a unit prior to Mark was the passion narrative, had tended to cast Mark's role in the creation of the gospel Gattung into that of simply prefixing to the passion narrative oral materials without really explaining the origin of this "introduction" in terms of Gattung. But the parallel of the Signs Source might suggest that (somewhat in analogy to Matthew and Luke imbedding Q in Mark and thus blocking the gnosticizing proclivities of saying sources leading to the Gospels of Thomas and Philip) Mark (and John) blunted the proclivities of collections of miracle stories (leading to apocryphal acts and infancy narratives like that of Thomas, . . .) by connecting this material with the passion narrative by means of the secrecy motif -- a tour de force that has left scars especially in chapter 8.⁶¹

Thus, according to Robinson, by softening the aretalogical character of a body of Jesus tradition (closely resembling that of the Signs Source in John's Gospel if not identical with that source) through the use of both the secrecy motif and the addition of the passion narrative, the Gospel of Mark came into existence: i.e., "emerged". It is now clear that, in contrast with the view of aretalogy as presented by Hadas and Smith, neither Koester, Betz, nor Robinson understand aretalogy as providing the genealogical key to

⁶⁰Robinson, "Problem, Reconsidered", p. 136.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 137. Cf. also Robinson and Koester, Trajectories, pp. 266-268 and 46-66.

the genre of the gospels.

We are now prepared to see the complexity of the problem of isolating and referring to an "aretalogy". D.L. Tiede put his finger on the real difficulty in the first sentence of his dissertation: "There appears to be no unified picture of what constituted an aretalogy in the ancient world".⁶² As Tiede's study unfolds, it becomes increasingly apparent that the aretalogical traditions may in no way be considered fixed or uniform.⁶³ Structure, topoi, and techniques differ to the extent that no uniform pattern emerges from the whole. In his attempt to provide an intelligible key to understanding the aretalogical traditions of the ancient world, Tiede offers two general types: 1) the aretalogy whose authority was based primarily upon the miraculous and 2) the one whose authority was derived from philosophy. In fact, these two types might better be understood as polar regions between which aretalogies tended to vacillate. In either case, given the complexity of the aretalogy, one could conclude that neither the concept of aretalogy presented by Hadas and Smith, nor that of Koester and Robinson is necessarily incorrect. The problem with the former, as previously stated, is the lack of clear examples which provide the evidence of the manner in which each

⁶²Tiede, Charismatic Figure, p. 1.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 253f.

gospel is to be related to the aretalogy. The essential problem with the latter is that it amounts to only a partial explanation: and, as previously noted, fails to account sufficiently for the bios factor which is present in the gospels.

We conclude, therefore, that much work is still to be done before one can measure precisely the impact of the aretalogical tradition or the specific aretalogical type upon the formation of the gospels viewed as literary unities. As far as aretalogies are concerned, it must remain an open question as to whether or not such traditions represent a literary genre and in precisely what manner the gospels may in fact be viewed on the whole as aretalogical in function.

4. Summary

By way of summary, the following conclusions have emerged from the brief survey of the problem of the genre of the gospels as reflected in the writings of Votaw, Schmidt, and Hadas and Smith.

1) Whereas Votaw may indeed be challenged on the basis of his distinction between historical and popular biography, such a challenge does not necessarily preclude his methodological approach nor the substance of the comparisons he made. It is true that there is difficulty in establishing his distinction between historical and popular

biographies in the ancient world, but this fact does not automatically remove the gospels from comparisons with other classical texts. His basic understanding of the gospel literature is sound. There needs only to be found a more substantial and verifiable basis for the comparisons of texts.

2) Schmidt is correct in arguing that the gospels are unique examples of literature, but recognition of this uniqueness does not mean that they are sui generis in the sense of having no literary forerunners or contemporary parallels. The Hoch- and Kleinliteratur dichotomy may retrospectively reflect the literary poles between which all ancient literature would fall, but the radical and exclusive application of these terms, understood sociologically and separating "folk" from "literary" concerns, is not productive in clarifying the problem of the genre of the gospels. It is now recognized that the editors exercised considerable literary intent and skill in their choice and arrangement of traditions included in the production of the present texts of the gospels. It is true that these narratives are kerygmatic, but it has not been demonstrated satisfactorily from a literary standpoint exactly how or in what manner the kerygma could have been expanded in such a way as to result in the present form of the gospel narratives. Certainly, one

can and should attribute to it the role of a catalyst. To move beyond this role, however, is to move in the direction of less certainty. A better explanation would be one which would explain the literary procedures present in the production of the gospels as a whole, one which would give full credence to the dominant presence of the cult and the kerygma, and one which would at the same time explain the bios form these kerygmatic narratives assumed.

3) The proposal of Smith and Hadas involving the relationship of aretalogies with the gospels is a step in the right direction. Difficulties that have been noted, i.e., the absence of a sufficient number of examples to establish the genre without question and the recently recognized complexities resulting from the variety of aretalogical traditions, make it difficult for one to accept it at face value as a solution to the problem of the genre of the gospels. The appealing aspect of the Hadas and Smith proposal is that it accounts for the biographical character of the gospel literature and offers a reasonable explanation for the movement of the church's kerygmatic proclamation in the direction of a bios presentation. The majority of those who have worked with aretalogical traditions, however, have stopped far short of positing a literary genre of the Hadas and Smith type, and prefer instead to admit only a limited

and indirect influence upon the gospel form through the "divine man" conceptualization. If more tangible evidence were available, Smith's proposal would probably be more acceptable; for it would meet the conditions set forth in the second conclusion. Consequently, it may be expected that if there is a literary genre with which the gospels may be identified, it will in several respects be very similar to the aretalogical tradition as perceived by Hadas and Smith. In the following section, the demonstration of the existence of such a literary genre and its close affinity with the gospels will be attempted.

What has been established thus far is that the problem of the genre of the gospels remains just that: a problem. In an attempt to address this problem, we will consider a different and, in some respects, more basic approach. It is to this task that we now turn our attention.

II

A GENRE FOR THE GOSPELS

Classification is a mode of naming, and I have enough empathy with the elementary principle of meaning to desire that names assigned in classifying do their jobs -- the exerting of a certain amount of linguistic control over entities. For our purposes we speak of names of genres and mean thereby to identify specific types of literature. Concern for the genre littéraire of a literary piece is part of one's historical-critical apprehension of that text, and regulates attention given to it by recognizing the variability of possible hermeneutical starting points.⁶⁴

The purpose of the previous chapter was to demonstrate that there is still lacking a satisfactory solution to the genre of the gospels. The purpose of the present chapter is to address the problem directly: the identification of a suitable genre for the gospels, one contemporary with the evangelists. We shall begin this part of the discussion with a preliminary statement of what we mean by the term "genre" and of how we understand the concept of a literary genre to be related to those individual treatises which

⁶⁴William G. Doty, "The Concept of Genre in Literary Analysis", Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Literature (1972), pp. 413-414.

are classified therein. Following this preliminary section, we shall attempt to show that the gospels do belong to a literary genre of the ancient world, one which was commonly employed and one whose characteristics may be clearly delineated. To be even more specific, we will argue that there was a genre of laudatory biography whose existence is evidenced by the fact that it is consistently contrasted with the discipline of history-writing. Further, it is our view that the chief character of this genre may be discerned by references to the works of the rhetoricians who discuss epideictic oratory and, in particular, the encomium. It is our thesis that the gospels are related to the "encomium" biography understood in terms of a literary genre. Finally, several examples which may also be included from ancient literature (in addition to the gospels) will be offered for consideration. Having thus stated our intentions, which admittedly are more easily stated than accomplished, we first begin with a brief discussion of the nature of a literary genre.

1. Aspects of a Literary Genre

Pattern

Arnaldo Momigliano has defined biography in the following manner: "An account of the life of a man from

birth to death is what I call biography."⁶⁵ On the surface, this definition of a literary genre appears oversimplified almost to the point of being ludicrous. It becomes clear, however, that Momigliano has his reason for such a definition: the removal from consideration, and hence from his discussion, of the burden of defining how one writes a biography. In effect, what he succeeds in accomplishing is the elevation of the level of the discussion and a broadening of the subject matter to a proper consideration of genre, thereby rejecting (and rightly so) the notion that the determination of literary genres can be reduced to questions of how-to-write a particular narrative.

For the present work, the term "genre" is intended to convey the concept of pattern implicit in the total configuration of a text and its affinities with other texts whose total configuration mediates similar patterns. Terms other than "pattern" could be employed. For example, Wellek and Warren define genre in the following way:

Theory of genres is a principle of order: it classifies literature and literary history not by time or place (period or national language) but by specifically literary types of organization or structure.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Arnaldo Momigliano, The Development of Greek Biography (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 11.

⁶⁶Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, Theory of Literature (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1949), p.235.

Likewise, Doty prefers the term "structure":

The genre of any given text is made available to us only in the structure and configuration of the whole; the genre of a text is that which is characteristic of the whole yet in common with other texts sharing those characteristics.⁶⁷

Although either term, "pattern" or "structure", could be acceptable to the present writer, the former appears to be more appropriate for reasons which will become clear before our discussion of a literary genre reaches its conclusion.

Dynamic

Genre criticism must begin with the realization that genre is a dynamic concept, not a static or fixed one. This means that one may expect to find a variety of treatises as well as variety within treatises in a single genre. Indeed, variety can be the start of sub-genres or even new genres. Wellek and Warren testify to this dynamic aspect of genres when they write: "Do genres remain fixed? Presumably not. With the addition of new works, our categories shift".⁶⁸ Creativity within literary genres often consists of the manner by which existing genres or characteristics of genres are appropriated, reshaped, and modified even to the point of creating new ones: i.e., internal change accommodating

⁶⁷Doty, "Genre", p. 422.

⁶⁸Wellek and Warren, Theory, p. 236.

the desires of the particular author. This dynamic character of literary genres appears to be true of classical genres as well as the more modern theories (with which Wellek and Warren are primarily concerned) even if to a lesser degree with respect to the former. Of the classical theory of genre, Wellek and Warren note:

Anyone interested in genre theory must be careful not to confound the distinctive difference between "classical" and modern theory. Classical theory is regulative and prescriptive, though its "rules" are not the silly authoritarianism still often attributed to them. Classical theory not only believes that genre differs from genre, in nature and in glory, but also that they must be kept apart, not allowed to mix. This is the famous doctrine of "purity of genre", of the "genre tranché".⁶⁹

The reservation implicit in the phrase, "not the silly authoritarianism", should be noted; for the ancients were also improving upon, refining, modifying, and, in some instances, producing new literary genres through their literary efforts even in the process of adhering to the prescriptions set before them.⁷⁰ For example, the differentiation of oratorical types is often made in terms of occasion, place, and

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 243-244. Examples of this doctrine in operation may be observed in the writings of Polybius and Lucian (cf. below, pp. 80-82).

⁷⁰This is implied in the "development" of biography. E.g., D.R. Stuart, Epochs of Greek and Roman Biography (Berkeley University of California Press, 1928). For change within genre, cf. Francis Cairns, Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry (Edinburgh: University Press, 1972), pp. 98ff.

audience rather than prescriptive form and content.⁷¹

Another factor which requires that the theory of literary genres be understood as a dynamic concept is evident in a consideration of the variations which exist between genres and the variation of genres which are found in different cultures. With respect to the former, there is often interaction between genres even at relatively early stages of development in spite of the "purity of genre" concept mentioned above.⁷² In the case of the latter, Wellek and Warren write: "Every 'culture' has its genres: the Chinese, the Arabian, the Irish; there are primitive oral 'kinds'. Medieval literature abounded in kinds. We have no need to defend the 'ultimate' character of the Graeco-Roman kinds".⁷³ Amid such a multiplicity of variables, it is doubtful that one can speak of the "perfection" of a specific genre;⁷⁴ for genres will be employed in different ways by different persons for varied reasons within a given culture, and the disparity between cultures and periods will be much greater. Furthermore, with respect to comparisons between periods, it is often difficult to establish the

⁷¹Cf. below, pp. 104f.

⁷²Cf. n. 69 above and pp. 104f. below.

⁷³Wellek and Warren, Theory, pp. 244-245.

⁷⁴Doty, "Genre", p. 427.

exact relationship between a genre of one culture and comparable one of another time and period. The genre critic must therefore cultivate the art of discerning which criteria are relevant in a specific historical context in order to arrive at convincing results. For example, we have already noted the use of the term "biography" as designating a broadly conceived literary type capable of transcending temporal and cultural limitations. But to assume that the term conveyed universal meaning and standards in each specific instance is unwarranted. Thus, for example, in the Greco-Roman period the term was virtually nonexistent until quite late. The question then confronting the genre critic is: what, in this period, did their bioi/vitae denote when written down and what did such treatises have as their objectives? In other words, such works must be taken on their own terms and related to the milieu in which and to which they were addressed. A second, equally significant example may be cited. One of the reasons cited by Marxsen for the exclusion of the gospels from the category of biography is the "absence of everything required for a biography (sequence of events, development, Jesus' appearance, etc.)".⁷⁵ As Bultmann put it, "they have nothing to say about Jesus'

⁷⁵Marxsen, Introduction, p. 125.

human personality, his appearance and character, his origin, education and development"⁷⁶ The implication of Bultmann's words (and those of Marxsen) is that there were "biographies" in the first century which had such characteristics. The real question which emerges is: is this true? do these observations accurately describe the biographical genre or genres current in the first century A.D.? The contrast intended by Marxsen and Bultmann is accurate if the purpose of such observations is to differentiate gospel literature from more recent, contemporary biographical works. Such a differentiation, however, is obviously not the point of these observations: consequently, they create a false and inaccurate assumption; namely, that what is said to be lacking in the gospels is present and indeed requisite for ancient bios narratives. Momigliano, to the contrary, has stated:

As I have already hinted, we have no reason to believe that "literarisches Porträt," "Individualität," "Persönlichkeit," and so forth, are terms which can be transferred to the Greek and Roman world without a great deal of explaining -- even of explaining away.⁷⁷

Even more pointedly, Stanton has recently examined the statements of Bultmann and Marxsen (and others) and has

⁷⁶ Bultmann, History, p. 371. Cf. p. 17 above.

⁷⁷ Momigliano, Development, p. 17.

convincingly demonstrated that concern for chronology, direct characterization, development, and placing the "hero" against the wider background of his time are not requisite for ancient biographical literature as heretofore believed.⁷⁸

These examples indicate the pitfalls encountered when universal conceptualizations are applied without proper acknowledgment of the manner in which individual literary treatises served their own particular milieu. There is in the notion of literary genres, therefore, the recognition of continuity and discontinuity, freedom and authoritarianism, and newness in literary flux both within a given cultural milieu and among cultures. It is to be emphasized further that continuity does not mean conformity to a set of universals. If, to refer to a final example, one accepts the argument of biographical intent (or lack of it) as illustrated by the comments of Bultmann and Marxsen above, then Diogenes Laertius -- commonly recognized as a collector of philosophical traditions whose authorship is not impressed upon the resulting narratives and whose accounts are not characterized by emphases upon sequence, development, appearance, etc. -- would also be denied any relationship with ancient biographical works. The task of the genre critic, on the other hand,

⁷⁸Stanton, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 118ff.

is to discern in what way Diogenes Laertius's works belong to bios categories: it is not to impose standards upon him the knowledge of which was perhaps denied him on account of cultural and/or time differentiation.

Finally, genre criticism has also come to realize that because of the dynamic character implicit in the theory of genres, new genres are not created in a literary vacuum: i.e., they are not completely sui generis in a literal sense. It would be more accurate to say that new genres emerge through the process by which writers use existing patterns and methods under different circumstances or for different purposes to create new ones. One of the most cogent statements of the process by which new genres are formed appears in E.D. Hirsch's Validity in Interpretation:

This is one of the many penetrating observations that E.H. Gombrich makes in his book, Art and Illusion. He quotes approvingly Quintilian's remark, "Which craftsman has not made a vessel of a shape he has never seen?" and comments: "It is an important reminder, but it does not account for the fact that even the shape of the new vessel will somehow belong to the same family of forms as those the craftsman has seen." This tendency of the mind to use old types as the foundation for new ones is, of course, even more pronounced when communication or representation is involved. Not every convention could be changed all at once, even if the craftsman were capable of such divine creativity, because then his creation would be totally incommunicable, radically ambiguous. The point is stated pithily by Gombrich: "Variants can be controlled

and checked only against a set of invariants."⁷⁹

In a similar way, Wellek and Warren have observed:

The totally familiar and repetitive pattern is boring; the totally novel form will be unintelligible -- is indeed unthinkable. The genre represents, so to speak, a sum of aesthetic devices at hand, available to the writer and already intelligible to the reader. The good writer partly conforms to the genre as it exists, partly stretches it. By and large, great writers are not the inventors of genres: Shakespeare and Racine, Moliere and Jonson, Dickens and Dostoevsky, enter into other men's labours.⁸⁰

Thus it is the process by which the internal movement becomes externalized because it can no longer be contained within a given genre that accounts for newness: and one of the tasks of genre criticism is to seek to understand the forces at work in the development of the pattern which is being communicated by the person writing. Further, Doty is surely correct when he writes: "Part of the tracing of generic viability involves not only the ways in which authors respond to available patterns, but how such adaptation of patterns is received".⁸¹

Genre and Form

In addition to the dynamic character of literary

⁷⁹E.D. Hirsch, "The Concept of Genre", Validity in Interpretation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p.104.

⁸⁰Wellek and Warren, Theory, p. 245.

⁸¹Doty, "Genre", p. 428.

genre, it must be observed that the investigation of genre transcends the analysis of form. This is perhaps the real reason for Momigliano's definition of biography mentioned above. In a manner not unlike Momigliano's concern for the removal of how-to-write questions from dominating the discussions of genre, Doty notes: "Unless formal/structural criteria are explicitly stated . . . genre tends to be equated with form".⁸² In the absence of these criteria, such an equation can at best result in a half truth; for genre, while it encompasses the notion of form, encompasses much more. This fact has been expressed by Wellek and Warren in terms which refer to "inner" and "outer" forms.

Genre should be conceived, we think, as a grouping of literary works based, theoretically, upon both outer form (specific metre or structure) and also upon inner form (attitude, tone, purpose -- more crudely, subject and audience). The ostensible basis may be one or the other . . . ; but the critical problem will then be to find the other dimension; to complete the diagram.⁸³

A view of genre, therefore, which is identified with what may be called "outer" forms can be at best only partially correct. Genre is form only in the combination of both its "inner" and "outer" connotations.

In New Testament scholarship, the choice of terminology is critical in the study of generic relationships.

⁸² Ibid., p. 434.

⁸³ Wellek and Warren, Theory, p. 231.

With the rise and attraction of form criticism in the twenties, "form" was largely limited to the smaller literary units for "the whole" was considered relatively formless. "Form", then, came to mean "recurrent patterns" within a pericope, thus acquiring a technical connotation comparable to what Wellek and Warren call "outer" form. It is partly because of this context that Redaktionsgeschichte has been received as a refreshingly new approach to the study of the gospels. Likewise, it is from this context that genre criticism has received renewed emphasis and from this context that it will have to be disengaged in order to blossom significantly.⁸⁴ It is primarily because of the technical status the word "form" has assumed in its application to gospel studies that we prefer the term "pattern" in discussions of the theory of genres to perhaps the more natural

⁸⁴An example of the continued influence of this more limited understanding of "form" within the confines of genre criticism as applied to the gospels occurs in a book by J. Rohde whose primary concern is with the merits and contributions of redaction criticism: "It was precisely by detaching this framework from the rest of the original tradition material that it became possible to see the framework itself as an entity sui generis and to interpret it as such." [Rediscovering the Teaching of the Evangelists (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1968), p. 33.] Another would be Kee's critique (cited above) against Hadas and Smith's aretalogical patterns based on the fact that none of the examples offered by Smith portray the death of a martyr. Genre, as a concept, transcends this strict understanding of form, an understanding which presupposed the absolute conformity by rote to the rules associated with a given genre. Unless there is a broadening of this sense of "form" in

terms, "form" and even "structure".⁸⁵

Genre, therefore, as the determining principle of the whole, may encompass a variety of forms, motifs, themes, and the like: i.e., smaller (in the sense of "smaller than the whole") literary units which may be employed in a variety of ways or in differing sequential orders depending upon the skill, purposes, and/or whims of the author. Rigidity of form is not necessarily characteristic of any particular narrative genre: rather, the concept of genre which admits movement and variety will more than likely ~~contain numerous~~ variables. At the same time, it will take note of recurring forms though it will hesitate to define them as arbitrarily requisite to a specific genre. Pattern may be demonstrable in different literary works regardless of whether or not "b" always follows "a", "d" always precedes "e", or whether "c" exists at all (based on a pattern usually consisting of elements a, b, c, d, and e). It is rather with the resulting configuration and the pattern which emerges from that

New Testament studies to include generic meaning -- which incidently, is not at odds with early form critical theorists such as Gunkel -- then the separation of genre criticism from form criticism for the development and healthy application of the former to the New Testament texts, especially the gospels, is an absolute necessity. In fact, the call for separation has already been uttered in articles by Petersen ("So-called Gnostic Type") and Doty ("Genre").

⁸⁵Cf. above, p. 52.

configuration that the genre critic must primarily concern himself. Pattern is more than a mere summation of its parts: it includes the manner in which the parts have been utilized and the means by which the whole gradually unfolds along with those often less tangible factors (authorial intent) governing the whole process.

Genre and Source

If genre cannot be equated with form per se, neither can it be equated with content understood as subject matter or source. It is obvious that a topic may be present in different genres. For example, men are actors both in histories and biographies as well as dramas. What distinguishes the genre is not the subject, but the manner in which the subject is treated and developed. Likewise, the fact that two or more authors have made use of a common source does not guarantee identical results. Nor does it follow that a common source is employed to develop the same pattern in two different literary works. The latter observation deserves further comment.

The close literary relationship that exists among the gospels, especially among the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), has long been recognized as a fundamental fact. The synoptic gospels share a direct literary relationship to the degree of indicating the presence of "copyists":

i.e., the source question includes and often revolves around attempts to establish just who is copying and/or altering whom. Traditionally, the answer has been that Matthew and Luke have copied Mark plus others (Q and M or L respectively). Although this particular thesis has recently been called into question for good reason, the presence of literary dependency remains an established fact. In the case of the Gospel according to John, no thesis of direct literary dependency has gained the upper hand, even though a similarity of source material has long been acknowledged. Largely on the basis of the similarity of the material, all four of these literary works have commonly been included under the category of "gospel" and each is referred to as such. While the gospel designation may be justified on a descriptive level (for reasons similar to that of Votaw's popular/historical biography and Frye's "dramatic history" classification), Petersen has recently challenged the "gospel" classification as a designation of a literary genre (particularly in the case of Matthew and Luke). After discussing the use of the noun "gospel" as a title designation which only occurs in Mark, Petersen notes that "the role of authorial intent which we have considered in connection with genre theory and redaction or composition criticism gives added significance to the

absence of the absolute use of the noun 'gospel' in Matthew and Luke".⁸⁶ He concludes:

Here again I would assert that the compositional intent as evident in what an author composed and how he composed it must take methodological precedence over the more abstract notions of kerygma or subject matter. To this extent I think that we must flatly reject, unless empirically verified, the idea that source dependence constitutes genre dependence.⁸⁷

The direct implication of Petersen's argument is not only to raise the possibility of the removal of Matthew and Luke from the classification of "gospel" but also to challenge the view that the term designates a genre. More important for the present work, however, is the realization that dependency upon a single literary source even to the large extent evident in the synoptic gospels does not necessarily result in the production of literature under a single generic rubric.⁸⁸ What does determine genre classification must certainly include, among other things, authorial intent and purpose as reflected in the pattern which emerges from a consideration of the total configuration of the text.

In another portion of his paper, Petersen discusses "collection" as genre, and his observations there are also

⁸⁶Petersen, "Gnostic Type", p. 25.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸A good example from classical literature is Polybius's reference, below pp. 80-81.

relevant for present considerations. Recent scholarship has noted the possibility that collections of materials were employed in the construction of the gospel narratives. Matthew, for example, tends toward the presentation of collected units in the production of his narrative. At least some of this material in its collected form is possibly pre-Matthean (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount). Luke preserves much of the same material though in a different manner, whereas it is largely absent in Mark. On the basis of this observation, some have identified this source material as representative of a "collection" genre.⁸⁹ In a similar manner, Mark's gospel has been described as being closely related to the aretalogy (in the sense of a collection of miracle stories). Petersen agrees that under certain circumstances [i.e., when groups of materials are collected by someone for a particular reason in accordance with some organic principle (e.g., theme, character, etc.) to be presented or maintained for some audience (he calls this his "WXYZ" understanding)] a collection may be thought of as a genre. To this extent, he thus affirms the research of Robinson and in part that of Koester. The issue to which he addresses himself, however, is that literary point at which

⁸⁹E.g., James M. Robinson, "LOGOI SOPHON", Trajectories through Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 71-113.

a collection ceases to be a collection, generically understood, and becomes something else while retaining its collected form. He writes:

The bridge between collection and another genre is crossed, descriptively and normatively, at that moment when an intent beyond the explicit claims of the component material is given either formal (structural, compositional) or material (simple editorial) expression in a text. That is to say, a collection becomes something else at that moment when mere concatenation is replaced by composition at whatever level of sophistication. Thus we have more than a collection of hero stories when a collection is given a prefatory call story in which the subsequent stories are conceived thematically as a carrying out of a commission.⁹⁰

If Petersen is correct, as it would seem he is, then a genre can neither be determined on the basis of source dependency nor on the basis of the nature and character of the sources. In the case of the gospels -- since it can be shown that the narratives are more than a concatenation, more than a group of literary units whose present organizational relationships are due to the accidents of popular transmission (as redaction criticism has already demonstrated) -- the question of genre must reside with the pattern which emerges from the whole. Further, the question of genre is neither related to the nature nor structure of the sources which an author has utilized except at the specific points which convey the

⁹⁰Petersen, "Gnostic Type", p. 45.

author/editor at work in the intentional organization of his narrative as a whole.

Authorial Intent

Genre criticism must ~~admit~~ to the role of authorial intent in the construction of a literary text regardless of whether the end result is on the whole a free creation or whether the end result involves extensive literary dependency of the kind described above (i.e., in the synoptic gospels). This is true because of the correlation between the genre to which an author's treatise belongs and the original intention of the author in writing the treatise. This does not mean that other factors are not present in the production of a generic treatise: i.e., factors such as the nature of the subject and even the character of the sources or traditions related to the subject. It does mean, on the other hand, that the entire process involving the production of a narrative may be related to aims, decisions, and skills of the one (or ones) engaged in the production process. Indeed, with respect to gospel studies, there is as much authorial intent present in the borrowing and copying of traditions as there is in the editorial creation of summary statements and other places where the hand of the redactor is visible.

Bernard Lonergan writes:

Heuristically, then, the context of the word is the sentence. The context of the sentence is the paragraph. The context of the paragraph is the chapter. The context of the chapter is the book. The context of the book is the author's opera omnia, his life and times, the state of the question in his day, his problems, prospective readers, scope and aim.⁹¹

In view of its importance, therefore, the question is: is it really possible to identify authorial intent in a given narrative?

It is doubtful that one can know all of the intentions an author brings to his creative task of writing:⁹² only those which he objectifies in the nature and content of the work he produces. For example, it is reasonable to assume that Paul "intended" to write a letter to Philemon and that an examination of its contents would reveal at least some of the reasons for his writing. In this instance, Paul has objectified his intentions, at least in part, by his choice of the epistolary type and by the specific concerns he addresses in the contents of the letter. The same phenomenon of objectified authorial intent occurs in all types of literature, although the degree of accessibility and clarity may indeed vary from author to author and from

⁹¹Bernard Lonergan, Method in Theology (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 163.

⁹²Cf. discussions in Lonergan, Method; Hirsch, Validity; Hans-Georg Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methods (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1972), 3. Auflage; and Richard E. Palmer, Hermeneutics (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969).

work to work. This is the case regardless of whether the author has an identity or is anonymous. In either case, the crucial issues involved in determining authorial intent which is objectified in the text are the sensitivities of the interpreter to the text, to those hermeneutical principles undergirding the process of interpretation, and to those disciplines developed to assist him as aids in interpreting a specific text.

It is for this reason that we again raise the question of the relationship of form criticism to genre criticism (understood now in close proximity with redaction criticism). Petersen has stated the relationship in the following manner:

What we are concerned with in genre criticism in the literary sense is the criticism of literary totalities through a perception of their formal types and their laws. Form criticism and genre criticism may thus be seen as working analogously with two different classes of phenomena, the form of the parts ("Formen") and the forms (genres) of the wholes. We must insist, however, that the relationship between parts and wholes is a separate problem that may be dealt with in a variety of ways depending on the nature of any given text or genre. In one case we may have to do with a question of source relationships, in another of a relatively free authorial creation, in another of an apparently random accumulation of content.⁹³

The role of the redaction critic with respect to the gospels

⁹³ Petersen, "Gnostic Type", p. 38.

in which there is clear evidence of literary dependency would be to identify the presence of the hand of the author and, through an analysis of those portions where it is clearly present, to determine as much as possible the author's perspective, purposes, milieu, function, and the like. Whereas we agree with the above assessment to the extent that we affirm the distinctiveness of each discipline and the tasks implicit therein, there is an interdependency which must not be ignored in the task of interpretation. The need for interdependency is evident in the realization that interpretation involves the paradox of what Lonergan calls the "hermeneutic circle". He writes:

The meaning of a text is an intentional entity. It is a unity that is unfolded through parts, sections, chapters, paragraphs, sentences, words. We can grasp the unity, the whole, only through the parts. At the same time the parts are determined in their meaning by the whole which each part partially reveals. Such is the hermeneutic circle.⁹⁴

For a theory of genre related to the gospels, all of this means that the attempt to arrive at that authorial intent which is fundamental to genre identification will involve the close cooperative efforts of form, redaction, and genre criticisms: that is, the proper investigation of the nature and application of the "forms" as utilized and employed by an identifiable though still anonymous "author"

⁹⁴Lonergan, Method, p. 159.

who, regardless of his continued anonymity, is nevertheless responsible for a total, unified literary entity. The paradox remains: the parts are explicable by the whole and the whole is explicable through an analysis of its parts. There is, however, a system of checks and balances currently available to the one who inquires into the generic character of the gospels which is capable of producing reasonably confident results.

To conclude our brief discussion of the theory of genre, it may be said that a genre represents a type of literature which is characterized by the formulation of a particular pattern, the creation of which employs certain literary techniques, rules, and laws. The structure may in fact vary from author to author depending upon his purposes and the particular response desired from his audience. As such, genre transcends the notions of "form" and "structure" when conceived only in their external connotations. It is more than the summation of its component parts and is not to be determined on the basis of source criticism when concern is primarily with the character of the sources utilized. A genre may make use of a variety of methods, forms, themes, topics, and even collected materials in the fulfilment of its desired effect. Genre is a dynamic notion of literature as preserved by a variety of cultures, and each genre must

be examined in its cultural and sociological context. Finally, genre criticism is concerned with the whole, and with the pattern that emerges from the total configuration of the text. Creativity may be seen in the manner by which an author makes use of the generic patterns at his disposal, and it is inconceivable that new patterns will emerge which are completely sui generis. The task of the genre critic, therefore, is to identify, in so far as possible, the genre of the whole in order to facilitate a proper understanding of the relationship among the parts. At the same time, he is aware that the explanation of the whole will be related to an analysis of the parts. In this process, his aim is to identify those forces which reside behind and contribute to the generic pattern of a particular narrative in order to understand more clearly its origin and the intent of the person or persons responsible for the whole. Basic to the entire process is the task of unravelling to whatever extent possible the intent of the author as objectified in the text. For the gospel critic, this task will involve the disciplines of form, redaction, and genre criticism. It is this understanding of a literary genre which serves as a backdrop for our consideration of a literary genre with which the gospels may be identified.

2. A Genre with which the Gospels May Be Classified

Preliminary Considerations

As we move from a discussion of the theory of genre to a consideration of a literary genre with which the gospels may be related, three presuppositions should be stated and further clarified from the outset. First, our investigation of gospel genre quite properly concerns the synoptic texts as they have been preserved in their present literary character. That is to say, the question of genre arises when the separate and, in some cases, unrelated traditions (whether oral or written, or some combination of the two) are committed to writing. In a written narrative such as the synoptics, these traditions, which must have originally circulated independently of our gospels, tend to lose at least some of their characteristics as "sources" and become known only in the context of a literary whole. At precisely this point the question of genre emerges; for, the manner in which source is employed (either in a verbatim or edited form), is given a context (in the case of the synoptics, the appearance of a bios), and is committed to writing (Greek) is indicative of the intention of an author to communicate (i.e., to proclaim the "good news" as he understands it) to a particular audience (Greek speaking, Hellenistic, non-Palestinian).

Therefore, on a priori grounds, we consider the question of genre to be basic to the exact interpretation of each of the synoptic gospels; for it pertains to the organization of the whole in relation to the author's intended meaning. Second, a genre for the gospels should serve as a satisfactory explanation for most of what is contained in the narratives. That is to say, it should be one which accounts for the literary procedures and decisions implicit in the production of the gospels as they have been preserved: it should provide a handle by which the gospels individually may be grasped and more deeply appreciated as wholes. Further, if we seriously consider the results of other types of New Testament criticisms, we must assume that the genre will admit to features not usually associated with its general characteristics: e.g., as defined and identified; it must allow for the influence of the kerygma as an operative factor in the creation and unfolding of the gospel narratives. In other words, it must as a literary entity be flexible enough to allow for the presence of a non-literary factor, "faith", in the creation of the gospel narratives. Accordingly, the appropriate genre will account for the whole while at the same time providing ample provisions for the presence and function of the individual parts. Therefore, according to our understanding of the theory of genres, it is not

necessary for us to show that a particular genre accounts for every aspect and element contained in the gospels: only that the pattern developed therein conforms sufficiently to the generic pattern in question, and that those features present in the gospels which are not commonly associated with the characteristics of the genre do not detract so significantly from the pattern as to require a different genre in order to explain them. Third, we understand our task to be associated not only with literary criticism but also with historical research. For this reason, the identification of a relevant genre should be historically grounded on sufficient examples which indicate its literary place and function within the ancient world. That is to say, the genre which would account for the gospels is one which would provide meaning both for the "editor" who employed it and for the audience to whom the narratives were directed. In retrospect, Votaw's categories of popular/historical biography are helpful for the comparison of literary images, as are Roland Frye's for the descriptive impact of the narratives in relation to other later narratives;⁹⁵ but both fall far short of the kind of historical verification we deem

⁹⁵ Roland Frye, "A Literary Perspective for the Criticism of the Gospels", Jesus and Man's Hope (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971), Vol. II, pp. 206ff.

requisite for the identification of a genre contemporary with and relevant for the construction of the gospel narratives. Therefore, according to our understanding of the theory of genres, the reconstruction of them based upon principles of interpretation alone -- apart from clearly documentable, historical evidence related to the "author's" time and milieu -- is, for the purposes of the present research, excluded from consideration. We are clearly looking for terms descriptive of genres contemporary with the evangelists in order to identify both the nearest parallels and the literary process which adequately explains the generic form (understood as pattern) of the whole. If the pre-supposition is valid and the task successful, we should arrive at a fuller understanding of the gospels as literature.

Evidence for an Appropriate Genre

Assisting the investigator in his quest for a suitable genre into which the gospels fit are two important observations concerning the nature of these narratives. The first is so basic as hardly to require mentioning: namely, that the gospels are related to the person of Jesus. I referred to this fact earlier by calling it the bios factor, a term intended to denote that the traditions directly attributed to Jesus have been preserved in the gospels in a way and

context that gives emphasis not only to the traditions themselves, but even more emphatically to the person around whom the traditions were formulated. It is this factor which directs our attention to genres of a biographical nature current at the time the gospels were written. The second observation, which may serve to eliminate some of the generic options, is simply that the gospels are apparently not primarily conceived for the purpose of conveying historical information. This is not to say that one is not concerned with history when he examines the gospels, nor are we saying that it is not possible for one to glean reliable historical information through a very careful examination of the texts. In fact, the pictures the evangelists draw may be more accurate from their respective standpoints than our summaries and reconstructions are willing to admit. We are saying, however, that the texts do not reflect a predominant interest in complying with the canons of historiography (ancient or modern). When combined, these two observations provide important insight for the search for the genre of the gospels: the evangelists have presented 1) traditions related to Jesus in a literary narrative about Jesus which 2) was not designed with the intention of presenting all of the information related to Jesus in a manner consistent with historiography, even ancient historiography.

One of the chief obstacles to a solution to the problem of the genre of the gospels is the apparent absence of a type of literature with which they may be classified as literary wholes. To be sure, it is true that on the surface no literary type projects itself with unmistakable clarity. In spite of the absence of direct, form critical evidence for the adherence on the part of the evangelists to an obvious generic type readily available to the would-be investigator, there is sufficient evidence available which does point to the existence of a literary type which could have contributed a great deal (from a literary point of view) to the basic format the gospel writers appropriated for their own proclamation. The evidence to which we refer exists in a type of bios literature the primary purpose of which was praise: a body of bios literature whose characteristics, because of its primary concern for praise, may be delineated through an examination of its rhetorical roots -- epideictic oratory and, more specifically, the encomium. It is the nature of the gospels as conveyed in the two observations above that points to this particular type of literature; for, like the gospels, this body of literature has as its subject a person of significance and accomplishment, the narrative about whom does not have as its primary purpose historiographical methodology. We shall begin our own presentation of this evidence at the

point where the nature of this material as just described is most evident: the dichotomy which existed in the ancient world between history and some biographical counterpart.

Polybius (second century B.C.) is perhaps the earliest author to make the distinction between history and biography in a clear and precise manner. When, in his Histories, he comes to the point of discussing the achievements of Philopoemen, he digresses briefly to explain his literary procedure. He first notes the importance of narrating the exploits and character of eminent men; affirming the worthiness of such a topic in comparison with accounts of "lifeless buildings", cities, etc. Next he explains that he has previously composed an extensive, separate account of the life of Philopoemen, one which includes his education, family, and achievements. In his current history, Polybius has decided to omit most of the detail from his earlier account, preferring instead to present only a brief summary of his subject's accomplishments. The essential difference between the two narratives is explained in the following manner:

For just as the former work, being in the form of an encomium, demanded a summary and somewhat exaggerated account of his achievements, so the present history, which distributes praise and blame impartially, demands a strictly true account and one which states the ground on which either praise or

blame is based. (X. 21. 8)⁹⁶

At this point, the contrast is obvious: history, which distributes praise and blame impartially, "demands a strictly true account", and when praise or blame is warranted, history states clearly the ground on which that praise or blame is based. Encomium (a form of biographical narrative), on the other hand, is described as one which demands a "somewhat exaggerated account of . . . achievements", one in which the author may praise at will.

In Epistulae ad Familiares, Cicero (first century B.C.) requests a favour of a friend. Aware that Lucius Luceius was in the process of writing a history of Rome which would include the period of his own contributions, Cicero asks Luceius to write about him in a manner which would render him a figure of great importance. He is aware that such a request would necessitate a digression from the purposes of the historical narrative. Setting aside all modesty, however, Cicero boldly describes the kind of narrative he is soliciting:

So I frankly ask you again and again to eulogize my actions with even more warmth than perhaps you feel, and in that respect to disregard the canons of

⁹⁶W.R. Paton, trans., Polybius: The Histories, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), Vol. 4.

history; and . . . if you find that such personal partiality enhances my merits even to exaggeration in your eyes, I ask you not to disdain it, and of your bounty to bestow on our love even a little more than may be allowed by truth. (V. xii. 3)⁹⁷

Thus in a manner similar to that of Polybius a century earlier, Cicero bears witness to history which does not admit to exaggeration, and to a type of bios narrative which freely provides for the bestowal of "love even a little more than may be allowed by truth".

In the second century A.D., Lucian wrote a polemical treatise by the title of How to Write History, a treatise composed as an invective against those misusing the discipline of history in their descriptions of the Parthian War. As with Polybius, the contrast is again between history and encomium; and, as might be expected in such a composition, the latter does not fare well in comparison with the former.

To begin with, let us look at this for a serious fault: most of them neglect to record the events and spend their time lauding rulers and generals, extolling their own to the skies and slandering the enemy's beyond all reserve; they do not realize that the dividing line and frontier between history and encomium is not a narrow isthmus but rather a mighty wall: . . . if indeed the encomiast's sole concern is to praise and please in any way he can the one he praises, and if he can achieve his aim by lying, little will he care!

⁹⁷ W.G. Williams, trans., Cicero: The Letters to His Friends, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), Vol. 1.

But history cannot admit a lie, even a tiny one, any more than the windpipe, as sons of doctors say, can tolerate anything entering it in swallowing.

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Without belabouring the point, it is apparent that Lucian's distinction, though asserted through invective, is identical to that of both Polybius and Cicero.

A consideration of the dichotomy of history and biographical works would be incomplete without at least two additional references. The first is a statement by Cornelius Nepos (contemporary of Cicero) who, as far as we know, was the first to organize his "lives" in parallel form. In this regard, he may be considered the forerunner to Plutarch. The statement with which we are primarily concerned appears in a preface to his treatment of Pelopidas, at which point Cornelius Nepos states his literary problem and provides us with his procedural solution.

Pelopidas, the Theban, is better known to historians than to the general public. I am in doubt how to give an account of his merits; for I fear that if I undertake to tell of his deeds, I shall seem to be writing a history rather than a biography; but if I merely touch upon the high points, I am afraid that to those unfamiliar with Grecian literature it will not be perfectly clear how great

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K. Kilburn, trans., Lucian, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), Vol. 6.

a man he was. Therefore I shall meet both difficulties as well as I can having regard both for the weariness and the lack of information of my readers. (XVI. 1.1)⁹⁹

The dichotomy now is that of history and biography; that is, vita. It occurs almost as an apology; for, whereas his primary task is stated as that of relating the merits and greatness of his subject, the obscurity of the subject would seem to require a more extensive treatment.

Plutarch (late first century A.D.) will be the last author to be considered in connection with the dichotomy. Plutarch's reference appears in his parallel lives: more specifically, in his introduction to the lives of Alexander and Caesar:

It is the life of Alexander the king, and of Caesar, who overthrew Pompey, that I am writing in this book, and the multitude of the deeds to be treated is so great that I shall make no other preface than to entreat my readers, in case I do not tell of all the famous actions of these men, nor even speak exhaustively at all in each particular case, but in epitome for the most part, not to complain. For it is not histories that I am writing, but lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of the virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall, or the greatest armaments, or sieges of cities. Accordingly, just as painters get the likenesses in their portraits from the face and the expression of the eyes, wherein the character shows itself, but make very little account of the other parts of the

⁹⁹J.C. Rolfe, trans., Cornelius Nepos, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

body, so I must be permitted to devote myself rather to the signs of the soul in men, and by means of these to portray the life of each, leaving to others the descriptions of their great contests. (Alexander I)¹⁰⁰

What is significant for our purposes is the manner in which the dichotomy evolves. The history of which Plutarch speaks is concerned with "all the actions", "battles", "armaments", "sieges of cities", and the like. Conversely, the bioi Plutarch is engaged in producing seek to capture an "epitome", the "character", and/or such "signs of the soul" as may be reflected more acutely in a mere phrase or jest. He is interested in the portrait of the person rather than a detailed description of every aspect of his life or even every great contest or battle in which the subject was engaged. Consequently, to suit his peculiar purposes, history has been discounted in favour of a biographical alternative he calls "bioi".

At this point we may make several observations in connection with the dichotomy implicit in the above references. First, the distinction is consistently upheld in each case. When one realizes that the time spanned by these authors constitutes four centuries, he is even more convinced of the importance and stability of the history/biography

¹⁰⁰Bernadotte Perrin, trans., Plutarch's Lives, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), Vol. 7.

dichotomy. The examples cited represented both Greek and Roman authors as well as diverse intentions: an appreciative historian Polybius, the "humble" request of Cicero, the invective of Lucian, the explanation of Cornelius Nepos, and the clarification of Plutarch. In each case, however, there is a remarkable continuity present, and the distinction would appear to be representative of the ancient world as a whole. Second, from our contemporary perspective, it will be noted that the literary objective in each case focuses upon a distinctive type of historical truth claim. This means that according to the classical writers the truth contained in history consisted, among other things, of the proper and faithful recording of events along with the chief actors and ingredients contributing to them. The truth of biography, on the other hand, aimed at the proper assessment of the person and his character in accordance with the intentions of the particular author, and the availability and nature of the traditions relative to the literary portrait.¹⁰¹ Thus, for example, the responsible historian could not admit a lie whereas the biographer might of necessity have either to resort to exaggeration or to limit the scope of his material

¹⁰¹In Cicero's case, the truth of biography as described in terms of character assessment would be in direct proportion to the request made by Cicero and the extent to which Luceius intends to honour that request in his literary production.

so as to include only those aspects which revealed the character of the person in order to affirm both the significance and the model nature which made the portrait worthy of the attention of his audience. It is clear, therefore, that -- given the dichotomy -- the hermeneutical principles employed in the examination of any literary text of the period will depend upon the type of text under investigation, especially where history and biography are concerned.

Finally, it follows that these authors are referring to methodology as well as to individual kinds of narratives. History, for example, must not be limited to such grandiose projects as Polybius's history or Lucceius's history of Rome. History must also be understood to embrace the far less ambitious attempts to recount past battles, single events, or the actions of generals in war -- oratorical attempts with which Lucian is primarily concerned. These authors have the genre of history in mind as well as the methodological principles by which books or treatises classified under this genre are produced. Furthermore, there appears to be a consensus concerning the nomenclature related to the genre. Works may vary as to topic, scope, and to some extent purpose: but the term "history" is applicable in each case and each author appears to understand its designate even though, if pressed, there might be differences in the particulars of

what history really is.

It is likewise true that one cannot place arbitrarily restrictive definitions upon the type of biography to which the dichotomy refers. For example, one must not make the mistake of limiting his definition of the "encomium" to the formal literary exercises common to secondary education of the Greco-Roman period. Nor should one be overly restrictive in his understanding of bios literature of that period. Biographical literature (as contrasted with history) is also indicative of a literary type marked by particular methodological presuppositions related to the treatment of a literary subject. It is precisely at this point, though, that we must recognize an important aspect related to the state of biographical literature of the ancient world; unlike historical literature which could be and was classified or referred to as "history", there is no single nomenclature serving as an umbrella under which the many various biographical treatises or books could be categorized. Thus it seems we have arrived at perhaps the most perplexing point in the question of the generic understanding of the gospels: New Testament scholars feel relatively comfortable with the reference to Luke as a "historian" even in a general classical sense, but continue to sift through what amounts to be the more limited Hellenistic types of biographical compositions in search of

a genre broad enough to include the gospels. Finding none which fit precisely, they then tend to exclude all possibilities for ancient biographical relationships. The fact may be that the ancients themselves had similar problems with their own biographical literature. Consider, for example, the dichotomy to which we have referred. In each case, "history" represents the common denominator and is to be compared and/or contrasted (methodologically speaking) with another kind of literature. On three occasions (Polybius, Cicero, and Lucian) the biographical reference is to "encomium" either directly or by inference. In the case of Cornelius Nepos and Plutarch, the references are to vitae or bioi respectively. The question is: does the change in terminology point to different biographical treatises indicative of separate genres and different methodological presuppositions?

When we look again briefly at the authors previously mentioned for an initial answer to our question, we find that Polybius describes the encomium as "a somewhat exaggerated account of his achievements"; Cicero asks his friend to "eulogize [his] actions" in such a way that "enhances [his] merits even to exaggeration"; while Lucian complains that "most of them neglect to record the events and spend their time lauding rulers and generals, extolling their own to

the skies and slandering the enemy's beyond all reserve". The common denominator in each case is the portrayal of greatness and merit. It is this literary objective which may cause an author to dispense with the canons of history either by exaggeration (amplification) or by presenting only a partial account. The use of the term, "encomium" is an appropriate one; for it represents the rhetorical justification for such a literary procedure. The encomium was a literary exercise common in Greco-Roman education designed to train the student in literary portraiture, and the rhetoricians prescribed the topoi and techniques needed for positive literary characterization. To be sure; some themes may be common to both history and encomium (i.e., birth, education, events, achievements, death, things which happen after death, etc.), but history will reflect a certain detachment (impartial use of praise and blame) in her assessment of greatness whereas the encomium will utilize these themes drawing freely upon the techniques of comparison and amplification in accomplishing the task of developing a case for the merits of a literary subject.¹⁰²

When we consider the two authors who employed the terms vita and bios, the question is: do their statements

¹⁰²For a more detailed discussion of the encomium and its importance in the delineation of the laudatory type of biography under discussion, cf. below, pp. 97ff.

indicate a different task? The dilemma to which Cornelius Nepos addresses himself gives little indication of a purpose radically different from the three discussed above: "I am in doubt how to give an account of his merits; for I fear that if I undertake to tell of his deeds, I shall seem to be writing a history rather than a biography; but if I merely touch upon the high points, I am afraid that to those unfamiliar with Grecian literature it will not be perfectly clear how great a man he was". By his own statement, Cornelius Nepos was also interested in building a case for greatness. Plutarch admittedly presents a more complicated case: but it may be said that he does admit to employing the rigorous process of selection and amplification, even to the point of giving emphasis to a phrase or a jest to build his literary portrait. Closely related to this observation concerning Plutarch is the suggestion by D.L. Clark that the rhetorical device known as the comparison, a device which has literary associations with the encomium, just may provide the key to understanding the format of his parallel lives.¹⁰³ It is true that one does not have to look far in Plutarch's Lives before encountering evidence supporting the impact of the encomium upon his work as far as topoi and techniques are

¹⁰³ D.L. Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), p. 199.

concerned, but it is equally true that Plutarch has not dispensed entirely with the canons of history-writing (cf. e.g. Theseus I. 3). In spite of the complexity involving both Plutarch and Cornelius Nepos, a weighing of the evidence tends to support the following conclusion: there is little indication of a major generic shift in the biographical type as indicated by the dichotomy as presented by each of the five authors we have mentioned thus far.

For additional evidence for the existence of a genre of laudatory biography, we move from the dichotomy of history and biography to a brief presentation of other passages which reflect the intentions of specific authors. We defer until later a consideration of total literary entities. For now it is only important to note the common denominator in each of these passages which bears upon the task to which the whole is addressed: namely, the intent to praise and to demonstrate the greatness of the person in whose honour the narrative has been written. A good example to begin with appears in the Agesilaus by Xenophon:

I know how difficult it is to write an appreciation of Agesilaus that shall be worthy of his virtue and glory. Nevertheless the attempt must be made. For it would not be seemly that so good a man, just because of his perfection, should receive no tributes of praise, however inadequate. (I.1)¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴E.C. Marchant, trans., Xenophon: Scripta Minora, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957).

Here the objective is obvious: "an appreciation . . . worthy of his virtue and glory". This objective is consistent with another literary model which contains a similar generic pattern: Isocrates's Evagoras. Representative of Isocrates's intent would be Evagoras 1-4:

. . . I judged that Evagoras (if the dead have any perception of that which takes place in this world), while gladly accepting these offerings and rejoicing in the spectacle of your devotion and princely magnificence in honouring him, would feel far greater gratitude to anyone who could worthily recount his principles in life and his perilous deeds than to all other men; for we shall find that men of ambition and greatness of soul not only are desirous of praise for such things, but prefer a glorious death to life, zealously seeking glory rather than existence, and doing all that lies in their power to leave behind a memory of themselves that shall never die . . . But the spoken words which should adequately recount the deeds of Evagoras would make his virtues never to be forgotten among all mankind.¹⁰⁵

The object is again praise: and the effect of the "spoken words" (i.e., the encomium he is writing) is the preservation of the greatness of Evagoras for posterity.

Philo states very clearly what he is attempting to accomplish by his De Vita Mosis. He writes:

I purpose to write the life of Moses, whom some describe as the legislator of the Jews, others as the interpreter of the Holy Laws. I hope to bring the story of this greatest and most perfect of men to the knowledge of such as deserve not to remain in ignorance of it; . . . Greek men of letters have refused

¹⁰⁵ Larue Van Hook, trans., Isocrates, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), Vol. 3.

to treat him as worthy of memory, possibly through envy, and also because in many cases the ordinances of the legislators of the different states are opposed to his But I will disregard their malice, and tell the story of Moses as I have learned it, both from the sacred books, the wonderful monuments of his wisdom which he has left behind him, and from some of the elders of the nation; for I always interwove what I was told with what I read, and thus believed myself to have a closer knowledge than others of his life's history. (1-2, 4)¹⁰⁶

With equally high ambition, Lucian would retain the memory of Demonax as a model for aspiring philosophers. In Demonax, Lucian writes:

It was on the cards, it seems, that our modern world should not be altogether destitute of noteworthy and memorable men, but should produce enormous physical prowess and a highly philosophic mind. I speak with reference to . . . Heracles and . . . especially to Demonax, the philosopher It is now fitting to tell of Demonax for two reasons -- that he may be retained in memory by men of culture as far as I can bring it about, and that young men of good instincts who aspire to philosophy may not have to shape themselves by ancient precedents alone, but may be able to set themselves a pattern from our modern world and to copy that man, the best of all the philosophers whom I know about. (1-2)¹⁰⁷

Tacitus appears to have accomplished similar purposes to his Agricola if we can depend upon one of his concluding remarks:

Whatever we have loved in Agricola, whatever we have admired, abides, and will abide, in the hearts of men, in the procession of the ages, in the

¹⁰⁶F.H. Colson, trans., Philo, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), Vol. 6.

¹⁰⁷A.M. Harmon, trans., Lucian, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

records of history. Many of the ancients has Forgetfulness engulfed as though fame nor name were theirs. Agricola, whose story here is told, will outlive death, to be our children's heritage. (46)¹⁰⁸

In each of the examples offered, the stated purpose is essentially the same: namely, the building of a case for praise with respect to the subject of the treatise whose life is considered by each author to be worthy of the attention of his audience, beneficial for those who would emulate the possessors of high virtues and excellences, and deserving of the attention of posterity. Accordingly, they would qualify as belonging to the type of biography so frequently contrasted with history by the ancients.

What we have attempted to demonstrate first by reference to the classical dichotomy between history and biography and second by references to passages weighty with authorial intent is that there did exist a type of literature whose primary concern was with the greatness and merit of individuals. The combination of the two provides ample evidence for the existence of such a genre. Based upon the character of the testimonies cited, this body of literature must have been both extensive and diverse; but, regretfully, it carries no single nomenclature. At times, these treatises were appropriate for delivery at games and festivals; at other times,

¹⁰⁸E.G. Hutton, trans., Tacitus, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

at funeral celebrations; at still other times in legislative assembly settings with an emphasis upon defense or personal vindication. Regardless of the occasion, the primary purpose was that of praise and one's praiseworthiness. For the present, we may be satisfied with the designation, laudatory biography.

Description and Definition

Having established the probability of its existence, the problem which immediately arises concerns a more precise description and definition of the genre. We can begin with a general summary of those factors recurring in the characteristics of the dichotomy cited above. In this connection, it may be tentatively described as an account of a person which approaches that of a portrait produced by a painter (Plutarch), one which is not so much concerned with every detail but rather one devoted to the communication of the impression or picture desired by the author. It is one which is more than the repetition of facts, events, achievements, or virtue alone, though it may involve any or all of these. Some treatises belonging to this general type are admittedly exaggerated accounts (Polybius, Cicero): some possibly to the point of a lie (Cicero, Lucian). While some which specifically bear the title, bioi, appear to be preoccupied with

character delineation (Plutarch), all are in one way or another concerned with greatness and, implicitly if not explicitly, the praiseworthiness of the central figure. At least some are designed to entertain: all have been composed to expound the praise of heroes and their importance. Further, the additional passages cited tend to confirm these general observations.

Fortunately, it is not necessary for us to rely solely upon the scattered references just mentioned for a proper understanding of the genre under discussion. The specific references to the "encomium" and the now recognized role of the encomium in the development of ancient biography,¹⁰⁹ provide us with ample justification for turning directly to the rhetorical discussions of the encomium in order to delineate characteristics commonly encountered in treatises related to this general type of literature. What better way could one find with which to construct the characteristics of this genre than to examine the rules and literary principles which were formalized and codified within the educational system out of which came those practitioners who continued to

¹⁰⁹Cf. especially the discussions of Stuart, Epochs, and Momigliano, Development. In addition, see Cairns, Generic Composition, p. 104 and Katherine Thaniel, "Quintilian and the Progymnasmata", unpublished dissertation, McMaster University, Hamilton, 1973, pp. 111-113.

develop this popular laudatory type?¹¹⁰ A word of caution accompanies this procedure from the outset; for our venture into the "how-to-write" questions is undertaken solely for the purpose of elucidating a clear definition of the genre under discussion. It should not be understood as constituting an equation of questions of genre with those secondary "how-to-write" questions so vital to one's educational development. That is to say, we are not primarily concerned with asserting direct affinities of the gospels with the encomium per se; nor, for that matter, are we arguing that the evangelists were writing with a book on rhetoric before them thereby producing something which would resemble what some have called a "biographical encomium".¹¹¹ Rather, we are primarily concerned with identifying the topoi and techniques commonly associated with what we have referred to as laudatory biography. The procedure is valid only in so far as the

¹¹⁰It has been argued by Stuart and others that Greek biography descends from the encomium while Roman biography has its more immediate roots in the funeral oration (cf. Stuart, Epochs, pp. 189ff.). Such a hypothesis does not, however, invalidate the procedure adopted in the present work. In the first place, by the time the gospels were written, Latin rhetoricians had incorporated the Greek encomium. Second, the gospels have close affinities with the Greek tradition. Finally, the encomium and the funeral oration are both primarily concerned with the topoi and techniques of praise, and are in many respects quite similar.

¹¹¹This term has been identified with a thesis of Gudeman by which he explains the genre of Tacitus's Agricola. By the use of this term, Gudeman means that the Agricola has

specific rules and techniques -- the usage of which in the genre was totally dependent upon the specific purposes and desires of the writer -- are helpful in understanding that genre whose existence is verified by the testimonies of those cited above.¹¹²

The encomium is commonly known as a literary form whose development and popularity is clearly evident for well over five centuries based upon the testimonies of rhetoricians in addition to the literary examples which have been preserved. A brief survey of the rhetorical evidence reveals that one of the earliest rhetorical works which includes a discussion of the encomium is The Art of Rhetoric by Aristotle (fourth century B.C.). Much attention is here devoted to the basis of praise and 'censure' (the concepts of virtue and vice), and secondary emphasis is accorded to the techniques of amplification and comparison (Rhetoric, I. 6. 9).

been written in accordance with the formal rules laid down by the rhetoricians. Cf. the relevant discussions in Cornelii Taciti, De Vita Agricolae, R.M. Ogilvie and Sir Ian Richmond, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 12f. and Cornelii Taciti, De Vita Agricolae, H. Furneaux, ed., Second Edition revised by J.G.C. Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), pp. xxivf.

¹¹²Classical scholarship offers a parallel to our procedure which is worthy of noting. In the revised edition of Tacitus Agricola originally edited by H. Furneaux, J.G.C. Anderson has described a type of biography which was current and provides the background for a proper understanding of the Agricola. This biographical type is comparable to the type we have identified: indeed, the two appear to be

Rhetorica ad Alexandrum is a second rhetorical work which has been preserved under the authorship of Aristotle. The authorship, however, has been disputed even though its rules for encomium-writing (Ad Alexandrum, III-IV) approximate those of Aristotle. The date is fixed at the beginning of the third century B.C. These two works are followed by Rhetorica ad Herennium, which has been attributed to Cicero, and it was written circa the first century B.C. Cicero (first century B.C.) wrote a treatise entitled De Partitione Oratoria which devotes considerable attention to the art of encomium-writing (De Partitione, XXI). Two additional authors can be mentioned: Theon of Smyrna (second century A.D.) and Hermogenes of Tarsus (second century A.D.).

identical. Anderson writes:

Biographies of this type were well known in Rome and familiar to Romans of Tacitus' day in the form of lives of political martyrs, such as those of Thrasea and Helvidius, to which reference is made in c. 2. They were all frankly eulogistic -- encomia, not critical appreciations. The custom of writing them grew up side by side with, and perhaps directly out of, the practice of delivering funeral speeches . . . over the dead. They shared the purely laudatory character of these orations, and sometimes took their place. They were modelled either by direct imitation or indirectly, through influence of Greek rhetorical doctrine, on the Greek biographical encomium, of which the oldest surviving examples are the Agasilaus of Xenophon and the Evagoras of Isocrates. These two came to be regarded as models in this branch of literature, and formed the basis of the rules formulated by later rhetoricians for composition in the encomiastic style. [Anderson, Agricola, p. xxii. Cf. the similar description by Ogilvie, Agricola,

The history of the form cannot be limited to the dates of the rhetoricians. It apparently had an esteemed history as a poetic device prior to the development of its prose counterpart. Isocrates, for example, who extols the virtues of prose in comparison with poetic expression, credits himself with the transition of the poetic encomium into a prose format. Although this is indeed a questionable assertion on his part¹¹³ (perhaps an example of the encomiast's interest in "first" credits, cf. Quintilian, III, vii, 10-18; below, p.115) it is interesting to note the comments of Isocrates: poets, for example, "can represent the gods as associating with men, conversing with and aiding in battle whomever they please"; "can treat of these subjects not only in conventional expressions, but, in words now exotic, now newly coined,

pp. 11f. Anderson's assessment is based upon the classic research of F. Leo, Die griechisch-romische Biographie nach ihrer literarischen Form (Leipzig: Teubner, 1901).

At a later point in his discussion, Anderson argues against Gudeman's view that Tacitus's Agricola conforms directly to the formal rules laid down by the rhetoricians for the encomium. It is his conclusion which offers the precise parallel: "In short, so far as the Agricola conforms to the rhetorical rules, the correspondence is fully explained by the biographical nature of the rubrics which the rhetoricians drew up for formal encomium". (p. xxv) Thus, in effect, the argument is that the rules for the encomium actually mirrors those characteristics commonly found in laudatory biographical treatises with which the Agricola may be classified generically, and no theory of direct relationship need be posited. It is this "reflection in the mirror" to which our own investigation is directed.

¹¹³Stuart, Epochs, pp. 91ff.

and now in figures of speech, neglecting none, but using every kind with which to embroider their poetry"; and can make use of "metre and rhythm" (Evagoras 8-11). By contrast, orators are not permitted such literary luxuries: "they must use with precision only words in current use and only such ideas as bear upon the actual facts". In fact, however, Isocrates admits elsewhere that another device at the orator's disposal which helps him significantly in his uphill task is the use of extravagant language (Busiris 4). However one may wish to assess Isocrates's own claims to originality of composition, he does testify to the prevalent use of the encomium as a poetic form in the ancient world. Exactly when and how the form was adapted to prose cannot be determined precisely, but it is clear (and here, too, Isocrates is a good example) that the transition was made without diminishing popular results.

When one turns to the rhetorical schools, he finds the encomium listed under one of three common divisions of rhetoric: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic.¹¹⁴ It is included under the third of these divisions said by Wright

¹¹⁴ Art I. 3. 3; Ad Alexandrum 142lb. 5; Diogenes Laertius VII. 42; Ad Herennium I. 1. 2; and Quintilian III. 4. Cf. also Edward P.J. Corbett, Classical Rhetoric (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 146ff.

to have originated with Gorgias.¹¹⁵ Its prominence within this category is attested to by the fact that in several of the rhetorical works, the third division is referred to as "encomiasticon" rather than "epideictic".¹¹⁶ This diversity of terminology is probably nothing more than a reflection of the important characteristics of the third division with its more commonly utilized and applied function, that of praise. Consonant with the practical emphases of rhetorical education, the threefold division is largely based upon the purposes and occasions for which speeches were to have been prepared. Aristotle, for example, states that the "deliberative" speech may either be hortatory or dissuasive; "for both those who give advice in private and those who speak in the assembly invariably either exhort or dissuade" (Art I. 3. 3): purposes indicative of legislative settings. The forensic speech may be either accusatory or defensive; "for litigants must necessarily either accuse or defend" (I. 3. 3): purposes consonant with judicial deliberations. The epideictic speech "has for its subject praise or blame" (I. 3. 3): sort of a catch-all category for use in celebrative, ceremonial, or

¹¹⁵W.C. Wright, trans., Philostratus and Eunapius, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. xxvi.

¹¹⁶Cf. Diogenes Laertius VII. 42, pp. 70-71 of the Loeb text. Also compare the use of demonstrativum in Rhetorica ad Herennium with that of laudationes in Cicero and Quintilian.

official or extra-official settings not requiring legislative or judgmental actions.¹¹⁷ This functional and practical basis for the separation of the divisions leads the rhetoricians to note that there may be considerable interaction, since common categories or phrases may be employed for different purposes and settings. For example, the author of Rhetorica ad Alexandrum writes:

All the species of oratory have now been distinguished. They are to be employed both separately, when suitable, and jointly, with a combination of their qualities -- for though they have very considerable differences, yet in their practical application they overlap. In fact the same is true of them as of the various species of human beings; these also are partly alike and partly different in their appearance and in their perceptions. (1427b. 30-35; cf. Art I. 9. 35-36)¹¹⁸

Quintilian also notes:

All other species fall under these three genera: you will not find one in which we have not to praise or blame, to advise or dissuade, to drive home or refute a charge, while conciliation, narration, proof, exaggeration, extenuation, and the moulding of the minds of the audience by exciting or allaying their passions, are common to all three kinds of oratory. I cannot even agree with those who hold that laudatory subjects are concerned with the question of what is honourable, deliberative with the question of what is expedient, and forensic with the question of what is just: the division made is easy and neat rather than true: for

¹¹⁷Cf. Quintilian III. 4.5. Also, cf. Corbett, Rhetoric, pp. 146ff.

¹¹⁸H. Rackham, trans., Rhetorica ad Alexandrum, Aristotle, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

all three kinds rely on the mutual assistance of the other. (III. 4. 15-16)¹¹⁹

The essential purpose of the epideictic division of oratory is that of praise or censure. Aristotle, for example, defines it concisely by saying: "The epideictic kind has for its subject praise or blame" (I. 3. 3), and Cicero emphasizes its importance by referring to it as "the nurse of that orator whom we wish to delineate and about whom we design to speak more particularly" (Orator XI. 37). The encomium, an important part of the epideictic division, was concerned with praise in particular. Although the encomium did have its distinctive characteristics, it made use of literary techniques common to the division as a whole. Among the techniques, two should be especially noted; for they are commonly encountered in the laudatory biographical genre as well as in encomia. The first is amplification. This aspect was encountered previously in connection with the testimonies related to the dichotomy of history and biography though the technique itself was not then isolated for discussion. It was present in Polybius's statement in which the encomium was referred to as a form comprising "a summary and somewhat exaggerated account". In Cicero, it appears to be amplification in the form of exaggeration that

¹¹⁹H.E. Butler, trans., Quintilian, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1922), Vol. 3.

is requested: "to bestow on our love even a little more than may be allowed by truth". In Lucian, such exaggeration is tantamount to lying. In Plutarch, it is evident in a slightly different way: namely, the projected emphasis upon and amplification of something as seemingly insignificant as a mere "phrase" or "jest". In each of these cases, a literary technique common to the epideictic kind is involved. In fact, within the division itself the technique may work both ways as the author of Rhetorica ad Alexandrum clearly states:

The eulogistic species of oratory consists, to put it briefly, in the amplification of creditable purposes and actions and speeches and attribution of qualities that do not exist, while the vituperative species is the opposite, the minimization of creditable qualities and the amplification of discreditable ones. (1425b. 35)

In the case of the encomium, the method obviously consists of "accentuating the positive" and at least minimizing if not completely "eliminating the negative". There is no better testimony as to the extent to which the technique was to be employed than two references in Aristotle's Art of Rhetoric:

". . . for we should praise even a man who had not achieved anything, if we felt confident that he was likely to do so"

(I. 9. 33) and "even if a man has not actually done a given

good thing, we shall bestow praise on him, if we are sure

that he is the sort of man who would do it" (I. 9. 5; cf.

25-30). Reference to the omission of negative aspects or

qualities is cited by Cicero in his De Partitione XXII. 74.

This reference involves a brief statement of the use of a person's family in an encomium: "this must be praised briefly and with moderation, or if it is disgraceful, or if of low station, either passed over or so treated as to increase the glory of the person you are praising . . ."

The same procedure was applicable to other topoi.¹²⁰ Although difficult to document, two examples have been noted. Aristotle, in his Politics (1311b) states that Evagoras was murdered, "but Isocrates is silent with respect to the manner of

¹²⁰ It is interesting to note (if only in passing) that other literary endeavours reflect similar methodological procedures. Recently, for example, Farmer has referred to the text critical methodology of the Alexandrians which consisted in part at least of the omission of passages from classical texts if and when such passages were considered to be "offensive to or unworthy of the gods" [Wm. R. Farmer, The Last Twelve Verses of Mark (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974); p. 15]. Citing evidence ranging from the fourth through the second centuries B.C. (evidence he feels to be relevant in certain respects to procedures adopted and utilized by early Christians such as Origen in the determination of "accurate texts") Farmer concludes that modification of classical Greek texts edited in Alexandria was "done with a conscious recognition of the fact that improved copies of the Greek classics were being made not so much to satisfy the curiosity of the antiquarians as to the practical needs of the contemporary reading public" [*Ibid.*]. Such text critical practices would find close kinship with the technique of amplification under discussion; for they would include not only omission but corrections and even additions. One should note that such alterations were thought to improve the accuracy, not distort or falsify.

of the death of his hero Evagoras ".¹²¹ Since the manner of death is important for the encomiast, it is difficult to understand why Isocrates omits any such reference in his Evagoras except for the reasons offered by Cicero above. Stuart has documented the second example.¹²² In the Hellenica Xenophon tells how Agesilaus's "stiff knee . . . might have altered the course of history". But there is no reference to it in his Agesilaus; nor, indeed, is there a sketch of his personal appearance.¹²³ In practice, therefore, amplification and its opposite, minimization and in some cases omission, were common in epideictic oratory; and Stuart has captured the purpose vividly in comparison with more modern tendencies: "His business was to magnify, not to dissect".¹²⁴

The second technique deserving of comment, comparison, was also germane to epideictic oratory. In short,

¹²¹Van Hook, Isocrates, Vol. 3, p. 2.

¹²²Stuart, Epochs, p. 62.

¹²³Ibid., p. 77. Similar procedures are attributed to Theocritus by Cairns in his discussion of the basilikos logos. Cf. Generic Composition, pp. 110ff.

¹²⁴Stuart, Epochs, p. 62. It is in such magnification that an author may display originality. So, according to Cairns, he may employ macrologia: i.e., "figures of thought" which are "simply means of amplifying upon, repeating, emphasizing, or magnifying a topos". (Generic Composition, pp. 119ff.)

comparison consisted of a comparing of the central character with another person or character for the purpose of illustrating how the former excelled the latter. Rhetorica ad Alexandrum tends to prefer a comparison of the central character to one of obviously lesser accomplishment.

A third way is to set in comparison with the thing you are saying the smallest of the things that fall into the same class, for thus your case will appear magnified, just as men of medium height appear taller when standing by the side of men shorter than themselves. (III. 25-30)

So, for example, in the Agesilaus Xenophon describes some of the weaknesses of the "Persian king" in comparison with whom Agesilaus is seen to have possessed far greater qualities (Agesilaus VIII-IX). Aristotle, on the other hand, prefers a comparison between two of approximately equal rank thereby demonstrating how the subject chosen for praise excels another great figure.

The comparison should be with famous men; that will strengthen your case; it is a noble thing to surpass men who are themselves great. It is only natural that methods of 'heightening the effect' should be attached particularly to speeches of praise; they aim at proving superiority over others, and any such superiority is a form of nobleness. Hence if you cannot compare your hero with famous men, you should at least compare him with other people generally, since any superiority is held to reveal excellence. (Art I. 9. 20-25)

Consider, for example, how Isocrates's assertion of Helen's beauty and attraction is enhanced by the character of her

suitors (chief among whom is Theseus). Or consider how, immediately preceding Agricola's victory in Britain, Tacitus uses the speech of Calgacus, which reflects the quality of the opposition, in order to illustrate Agricola's skill both as an orator and as a military general (Agricola 29-30).

It is also true that comparisons do not have to be direct.

They may be inferred in general statements:

In view of these facts, if any of the poets have used extravagant expressions in characterizing any man of the past, asserting that he was a god among men, or a mortal divinity, all praise of that kind would be especially in harmony with the noble qualities of Evagoras. (Evagoras 72)

Justly may the man be counted blessed who was in love with glory from early youth and won more of it than any man of his age; who, being by nature very covetous of honour, never once knew defeat from the day that he became a king; who, after living to the utmost limit of human life, died without one blunder to his account, either concerning the men he led or in dealing with those on whom he made war. (Agesilaus X. 4)

Comparison, therefore, may be considered, along with amplification, as an important technique of encomium-writing.

Having examined briefly two techniques characteristic of epideictic literature and frequently encountered in encomia, the next step in the description of laudatory biography is to identify more precisely the particular occasions, subjects, and topoi with which the encomium is primarily concerned. The encomium, already identified as one of the more

important types of epideictic oratory, may be described as a form of display or public oration. As such, it served as a basic elementary exercise fundamental to the educational systems throughout the Greco-Roman world,¹²⁵ a device to be mastered fully by every aspiring orator at an early phase in his education because of its relevance for all aspects of public life. As previously noted, its purposes include the entertainment of audiences and, for this reason, it was particularly relevant for all types of festive occasions such as, for example, public games. They were commonly delivered at victory celebrations whether they be in honour of the victors of athletic contests or in celebration of the return of conquerors. Indeed, the funeral, viewed as an occasion to celebrate the illustrious deeds and accomplishments of the deceased, could provide for the commissioning of one to compose an encomium of a person which would closely resemble a funeral oration.¹²⁶

¹²⁵H. I. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), pp. 272f. Thaniel also identifies the encomium as one of the progymnasmata employed in Greco-Roman education ("Quintilian", pp. 94-114) and devotes a chapter to its function and influence as such. Cairns would further classify progymnasmata as a separate category of genres (Generic Composition, p. 75). As such, "they can be considered as the minimum formal rhetorical equipment of any literate person from the Hellenistic period on" (ibid.).

¹²⁶So, for example, Isocrates's Evagoras and perhaps even Tacitus's Agricola although length alone tends to argue against delivery of either at the funeral. A celebration at

Generally speaking, almost any subject could lend itself to encomiastic treatment. Polybius, for example, has noted that cities were honoured with encomia. Quintilian, too, recognizes the variety of subject matter even while stating that the most common use is in relation to the praise of gods and men: "This form of oratory is directed in the main to the praise of gods and men, but may occasionally be applied to the praise of animals or even inanimate objects" (III. 7. 6). Isocrates's Helen contains references to encomia praising "bumble-bees and salt and kindred topics" (Helen 13; for salt, cf. also Plato, Symposium 177b). Certainly Lucian's "The Fly" must stand as a classic example, perhaps even a model, for the comic use of the encomium in praise of subjects other than human beings. In addition, the treatments of Helen of Troy by both Gorgias and Isocrates serve as examples of a subject which, although purporting to be treatment of a personage, are concerned with a mythological figure, as is Isocrates's treatment of "Busiris". The above illustrates the variety of subjects which may be and were treated in encomia. At times one can see interaction of praiseworthy subjects: e.g., men of greatness may derive honour from the character of the city in which they were

a later time, however, would have been an appropriate time for either work. Cf. also Pericles's Funeral Oration (Thuc. 2, esp. 41), and Anderson's comments, n. 112, pp. 99ff.

born; conversely, cities may derive additional greatness from the heroes nurtured within their walls. A good example would perhaps be Plutarch's parallel treatment of Theseus and Romulus, the founders of Athens and Rome respectively (cf. Theseus II. 1). In this instance, the honour of the characters chosen for treatment by Plutarch is enhanced by the greatness of the cities they founded. Likewise, the greatness attained by the cities may be attributed to the character of their founders. Consequently, Plutarch's treatment constitutes a tribute to both founder and city.

When the subject to be developed by the encomiast has been chosen, there were topics and procedures readily available providing him with numerous possibilities and choices for the accomplishment of his peculiar literary purposes. A good example of such rules has been codified by Quintilian.¹²⁷ The text will be quoted extensively (at the risk of becoming laborious) in order to give the reader an idea of the numerous possibilities involved as well as an appreciation of one rhetorician's understanding of what is required for an encomium of a human being written in the first century A.D.

¹²⁷ Thaniel devotes a chapter to a discussion of the encomium and the topoi employed therein. Clearly demonstrated is the influence of such progymnasmata on the literature of the ancient world. Cf. Thaniel, "Quintilian", pp. 99ff.

There is greater variety required in the praise of men. In the first place there is a distinction to be made as regards time between the period in which the objects of our praise lived and the time preceding their birth; and further, in the case of the dead we must also distinguish the period following their death. With regard to things preceding a man's birth, there are his country, his parents and his ancestors, a theme which may be handled in two ways. For either it will be creditable to the objects of our praise not to have fallen short of the fair fame of their country and of their sires or to have ennobled a humble origin by the glory of their achievements. Other topics to be drawn from the period preceding their birth will have reference to omens or prophecies foretelling their future greatness, such as the oracle which is said to have foretold that the son of Thetis would be greater than his father. The praise of the individual himself will be based on his character, his physical endowments and external circumstances. Physical and accidental advantages provide a comparatively unimportant theme, which requires variety of treatment. At times for instance we extol beauty and strength in honorific terms, as Homer does in the case of Agamemnon and Achilles; at times again weakness may contribute largely to our admiration, as when Homer says that Tydeus was small of stature but a good fighter. Fortune too may confer dignity as in the case of kings and princes (for they have a fairer field for the display of their excellences) but on the other hand the glory of good deeds may be enhanced by the smallness of their resources. Moreover the praise awarded to external and accidental advantages is given, not to their possession, but to their honourable employment. For wealth and power and influence, since they are the sources of strength, are the surest test of character for good or evil; they make us better or they make us worse. Praise awarded to character is always just, but may be given in various ways. It has sometimes proved the more effective course to trace a man's life and deeds in due chronological order, praising his natural gifts as a child, then his progress at school, and finally the whole course of his life, including words as well as deeds. At times on the other hand it is well to divide our praises, dealing

separately with the various virtues, fortitude, justice, self-control and the rest of them and to assign to each virtue the deeds performed under its influence. We shall have to decide which of these two methods will be the more serviceable, according to the nature of the subject; but we must bear in mind the fact that what most pleases an audience is the celebration of deeds which our hero was the first or only man or at any rate one of the very few to perform: and to these we must add any other achievements which surpassed hope or expectation, emphasizing what was done for the sake of others rather than what he performed on his own behalf. It is not always possible to deal with the time subsequent to our hero's death: this is due not merely to the fact that we sometimes praise him, while still alive, but also that there are but few occasions when we have a chance to celebrate the award of divine honours, posthumous votes of thanks, or statues erected at the public expense. Among such themes of panegyric I would mention monuments of genius that have stood the test of time. For some great men like Menander have received ampler justice from the verdict of posterity than from that of their own age. Children reflect glory on their parents, cities on their founders, laws on those who made them, arts on their inventors and institutions on those that first introduced them; for instance Numa first laid down rules for the worship of the gods, and Publicola first ordered that the lictors' rods should be lowered in salutation to the people. (III. 7. 10-18)

A second example which we shall include are the rules of Hermogenes (circa 150 A.D.). Although the presentation by Hermogenes differs slightly from that of Quintilian, the rules are essentially the same. For the sake of brevity, we include only those rules related to encomia of men.

Topics for encomia of a man are his race, as Greek; his city, as Athens; his family, as Alcmaeonidae. You will say what marvelous things befell at his birth, as dreams or signs or the like. Next his

nurture, as, in the case of Achilles, that he was reared on lions' marrow and by Chiron. Then training; how he was trained and educated. Not only so, but the nature of the soul and body will be set forth, and of each under these heads: for the body -- beauty, stature, agility, might; for the soul -- justice, self-control, wisdom, manliness. Next his pursuits, what sort of life he led -- that of philosopher, orator, or soldier, and most properly his deeds, for deeds come under the head of pursuits. For example, if he chose the life of a soldier, what did he achieve in this? Then external resources, such as kin, friends, possessions, household, fortune, etc. Then time, how long he lived, much or little, for either gives rise to encomia. A long-lived man you will praise on this score; a short-lived, on the score of his not sharing those diseases which come from age. Then, too, from the manner of his end, as that he died fighting for his fatherland, and, if there were anything extraordinary under that head, as in the case of Callimachus, that even in death he stood. You will draw praise also from the one who slew him, as that Achilles died at the hands of the god Apollo. You will describe also what was done after his end, whether funeral games were ordained in his honour, as in the case of Patroclus; whether there was an oracle concerning his bones, as in the case of Orestes; whether his children were famous, as Neoptolemus. But the greatest opportunity in encomia is through comparisons, which you will draw as the occasion may suggest.¹²⁸

To give one an idea of the extent to which the minute detail could be present in the discussions of topoi by some rhetoricians, Marrou's outline of the system of Theon (114-140 A.D.) is of considerable interest.

¹²⁸ The translation is that of D.L. Clark who incorporated it into his discussion of Greco-Roman rhetoric (Rhetoric, pp. 196-197).

Suppose a certain person, living or dead, real or mythical, is to be eulogised. According to the theory, there will be thirty-six definite stages, divided and subdivided as follows:

I. Exterior Excellences

(a) Noble birth

(b) Environment

1. Native city
2. Fellow citizens
3. Excellence of the city's political regime
4. Parents and family

(c) Personal advantages

1. Education
2. Friends
3. Fame
4. Public service
5. Wealth
6. Children, number and beauty of
7. Happy death

II. Bodily Excellences

1. Health
2. Strength
3. Beauty
4. Bubbling vitality and capacity for deep feeling

III. Spiritual Excellences

(a) Virtues

1. Wisdom
2. Temperance
3. Courage
4. Justice
5. Piety
6. Nobility
7. Sense of greatness

(b) Resultant Actions

(A) As to their objectives:

1. Altruistic and disinterested
2. Good, not utilitarian or pleasant
3. In the public interest
4. Braving risks and dangers

(B) As to their circumstances:

1. Timely
2. Original
3. Performed alone
4. More than anyone else?
5. Few to help him?
6. Old head on young shoulders?
7. Against all the odds
8. At great cost to himself
9. Prompt and efficient

All this was absolutely basic, and other sections might be added -- how highly eminent men had thought of him; all the striking deeds he would undoubtedly have done if he had not unfortunately died; . . . 129

In Marrou's discussion of the encomium, the rigidity of the system and the multiplicity of themes are emphasized as the above summary-in-outline illustrates; and Marrou argues that the educational system demanded strict conformity with the form. Whereas this observation may have been true in the school room, the conclusion of strict conformity must be tempered by the previous statement of Quintilian ("according to the nature of the subject") and by the fact that none of the models which have been preserved comply without variation. Some of the variations may be accounted

for by the fact that not every school advocated the same rules and topics in exactly the same manner. This is evident from a cursory reading of the writings of the rhetoricians listed above. Another reason for variation lies in the nature of the subject chosen. Not every category could be expected to apply to every individual. What is applicable to the soldier is not necessarily important for the orator. What is important for the philosopher might differ from that which is praiseworthy for either the soldier, statesman, or orator. A third reason for variation is possible; for variation can be expected in the application of technique even when the subject of two different encomia is the same (cf. the treatments of Helen of Troy by Gorgias and Isocrates). The variables, therefore, are numerous; and the decision involved in the composition of an encomium is, in the final analysis, dependent entirely upon the nature of the subject, the purposes of the author, and the occasion for which the encomium is composed.

Turning again to the description of that laudatory biography evidenced by the works of Polybius, Cicero, Cornelius Nepos, Plutarch, and Lucian, it may be concluded that this type of literature was closely associated if not identical with the intent and purposes of epideictic oratory described by the rhetoricians. As a genre, it most certainly

had at its central axis the techniques of amplification and comparison in addition to those rules of praise codified in the formal encomium even though, as the dynamic of any genre indicates, the application of the techniques and the rules were contingent upon the specific designs of the individual authors. It may be said, therefore, that the genre was concerned with the portrait of the individual: the presentation of the bios pattern from birth to death (where applicable according to the designs of the author). The particular contents of that pattern usually included praiseworthy actions, deeds, accomplishments, sayings, etc., either in toto or in part, depending again upon the particular purposes of the author. It would now seem profitable, before comparing the gospels with the genre as currently defined, to examine more fully some of the treatises which are related to this type of laudatory biography. Examples chosen for consideration include selected works of Isocrates, Xenophon, Philo, Tacitus, Lucian, and Josephus.

3. Selections for Consideration

Three works by Isocrates are clearly part of the genre described above. They are his Helen, Busiris, and Evagoras. The first two, according to Isocrates, are written as correctives to earlier works (Helen, a corrective to

Gorgias's treatment of Helen, and Busiris, a corrective to a work bearing the same title by an author identified as Polycrates) and as such are intended to illustrate how such literary tasks could be done in a much more appropriate and correct manner. They are, therefore, intended as literary models and were so considered by other writers after Isocrates (especially his Evagoras). Evagoras was a treatise commissioned by Nicocles to be presented on the occasion of a festival held to commemorate his deceased father, Evagoras. It represents one of the earliest extant encomia of a human personage, and it illustrates the close affinity of the encomium with the funeral oration. In each of these works the importance of the subject chosen is emphasized as worthy of the ensuing literary treatment; and in the Evagoras, Isocrates makes the point that his task is an especially difficult one (a rhetorical technique the successful accomplishment of which enhances the stature of the author).

Helen is of particular interest both for the topoi and the techniques employed in this treatise of praise.

The starting point for this "model" encomium is Helen's descent (Helen 16). She is first distinguished by having

Zeus as her father: "For although Zeus begat every man of the demigods, of this woman alone he condescended to be called father". In comparison with Gorgias, whose encomium

of Helen also includes the praiseworthiness of her parentage, it is interesting to note that it is Isocrates who omits all references to the praise derived from her mother's side of the family. Chief among her many qualities is her beauty, the source of which is said to have been Zeus. Then, by a comparison of qualities, Isocrates elevates her to a rank equal with, if not above, that of Heracles:

While he [Zeus] was devoted most of all to the son of Alcmena [Heracles], and to the sons of Leda, yet his preference for Helen, as compared with Heracles, was so great that, although he conferred upon his son strength of body, which is able to overpower all others by force, yet to her he gave the gift of beauty, which by its nature brings even strength itself into subjection to it. (16)

The comparison of Helen with Heracles continues by referring to the manner by which each attracted a similar glory from their admirers: Heracles from wars and combats, a life of danger and hardship, while Helen's fame accrued from her nature and a life of ease.

And knowing that all distinction and renown accrue, not from a life of ease, but from wars and perilous combats, and since he wished, not only to exalt their persons to the gods, but also to bequeath to them glory that would be immortal, he gave his son a life of labours and love of perils, and to Helen he granted the gift of nature which drew the admiration of all beholders and which in all men inspired contention. (17)

Much of Helen's praiseworthiness is derived from the character^s of those who sought to be her suitors. Following

a rather lengthy digression revolving around Theseus (one of her suitors whose significance will be discussed later), Isocrates specifically states that he has used the illustrious reputation of Theseus as a basis for the worthy character of Helen.

As for Helen, daughter of Zeus, who established her power over such excellence and sobriety, should she not be praised and honoured; and regarded as far superior to all the women who have ever lived? For surely we shall never have a more trustworthy witness or more competent judge of Helen's good attributes than the opinion of Theseus. (38)

He then continues to show how the conflict over Helen, which eventually led to the Trojan War, was inevitable due both to the numbers of those seeking her favour (39-40) and to the choice by Alexander of Helen above all else (41-45). In the latter case descent is again a factor: Alexander "could leave no more glorious heritage to his children than by seeing to it that they should be descendants of Zeus, not only on their father's side, but also on their mother's" (44, a statement which adds further interest to Isocrates's own omission of Helen's maternal ancestry). Isocrates continues to explain Alexander's choice in the following manner:

For he knew that while other blessings bestowed by Fortune soon change hands, nobility of birth abides forever with the same possessors; therefore he foresaw that this choice would be to the advantage of all his race, whereas the other gifts would be enjoyed for the duration of his own life only. (44)

Even from the ensuing tragedy of war can praise be heaped upon Helen. It is derived from the willingness of both the Greeks and the Trojans to fight against each other for the honour of claiming her as a resident.

And they were not acting in this way as eager champions of Alexander or of Menelaus; nay, the Trojans were upholding the cause of Asia, the Greeks of Europe, in the belief that the land in which Helen in person resided would be the more favoured of Fortune. (51)

So intense and universal was this belief that even the gods did not choose to dissuade their own children from battle even though they foresaw the fate of their offspring (52).

Isocrates then turned his attention to the primary basis of praise, that of her beauty. Here amplification may be seen as the operative principle. It was of the "highest degree", of all things "the most venerated", "the most precious", and "the most divine". Refusing to stop with Gorgias's recognition that she possessed extraordinary beauty, Isocrates goes on to assert the relationship of beauty to the other virtues:

And it is easy to determine its power; for while many things which do not have any attributes of courage, wisdom, or justice will be seen to be more highly valued than any one of these attributes, yet of those things which lack beauty we shall find not one that is beloved; on the contrary, all are despised except in so far as they possess in some degree this outward form, beauty, and it is for this reason that virtue is most highly esteemed, because it is the most beautiful of ways of living. (54)

He then concludes his treatment of her beauty by relating this quality to divinity: "The greatest proof of my statement is this: we shall find that more mortals have been made immortal because of their beauty than for all other excellences" (60). Of course, the inference here is that she has attained a divine state.

The last portion of Isocrates's encomium of Helen is devoted to relating some of her activities which reveal her power and her divine status in relation to men. She first raised her brothers to divine stations, and they were thereafter granted the power to save sailors in peril when called upon to do so (61). Thus to Helen has been granted the power to raise mortals to divine stations. She also saved and raised Menelaus to divine status (62). Then Isocrates inserts a story of the restoration of sight to Stesichorus.

And she displayed her own power to the poet Stesichorus also; for when, at the beginning of his ode, he spoke in disparagement of her, he arose deprived of his sight; but when he recognized the cause of his misfortune and composed the Recantation, as it is called, she restored to him his normal sight.
(64)

He relates an appearance story in which Helen appeared to Homer commanding him "to compose a poem on those who went on the expedition to Troy" in honour of their death. Isocrates adds that the relation of Helen to mankind is to be seen in her power to punish.

Since, then, Helen has power to punish as well as to reward, it is the duty of those who have great wealth to propitiate and to honour her with thank-offerings, sacrifices, and processions, and philosophers should endeavour to speak of her in a manner worthy of her merits; for such are the first-fruits it is fitting that men of cultivation should offer. (66)


Thus Helen in her divine state has the power to elevate to divine status, to punish, and to reward: ample reason for man to make her the object of his supplications (perhaps a "cultic" motive behind Helen 66?).

Isocrates concludes his "model" encomium by relating what to him is Helen's major accomplishment: ". . . it is owing to Helen that we are not the slaves of the barbarians".

He continues:

For we shall find that it was because of her that the Greeks became united in harmonious accord and organized a common expedition against the barbarians and that it was then for the first time that Europe set up a trophy of victory over Asia; . . . (67)

Our survey has revealed sufficient grounds for classifying Helen in the epideictic category. It contains both amplification and comparison, and it utilizes those topoi of the encomium deemed appropriate to the subject being presented. Of special note is the fact that only a few of the topoi prescribed by the rhetoricians have actually been employed by Isocrates with respect to Helen, i.e., only those needed to fulfil his purposes. The use of the technique of comparison



is especially instructive and deserves additional attention.

Although we have noted the technique of comparison in the portrayals of those seeking Helen's love, the attention given in this treatise to Theseus is extraordinary. This digression illustrates the use of the comparison technique and could be considered a forerunner of the format later adopted by both Cornelius Nepos and Plutarch. In his discussion of Helen's suitors, Isocrates has chosen to emphasize the illustrious character of only one, Theseus. This treatment of Theseus is unusual, because in the process of turning his attention to Theseus, he actually leaves the subject of Helen in a suspended state. It is striking that Isocrates's discussion of Theseus occupies over one third of the entire encomium of Helen which he is offering as a "model". Throughout the Theseus section proper, Helen's name rarely occurs, and there is only one reference to the fact that he has chosen Helen, not Theseus, as his original topic. Form critically, one could argue rather convincingly that Isocrates has cleverly inserted a separate treatise, which was originally intended to praise Theseus, into the narrative on Helen. The oddity and length of the digression plus the internal unity of the Theseus section argue for the probability of the incorporation of a separate work. Furthermore, section thirty-nine and following may be moved to a position

immediately after section seventeen (thereby omitting the section on Theseus and the transitional statements) without seriously impairing the unity of the encomium of Helen as a whole. Indeed, if by some stroke of fate the section on Theseus had been preserved apart from the remaining portions of the encomium, scholars would perhaps smile slightly at a freshman's imaginative suggestion that the "Encomium of Theseus" might have originally been a part of another work in praise of Helen. The "model" encomium, as measured by the prescriptions of the rhetoricians, is in fact the section on Theseus. Whereas the above can only be considered speculative at this stage, it does point to the problems created by Isocrates's digression within his larger work on Helen.

The transitional statement developed by Isocrates to introduce the Theseus section reveals that he is indeed aware of the problems created by his literary procedure. He responds at three specific points to ease the situation he himself has created. First, he immediately acknowledges the relationship of Theseus and Helen. Theseus is one of Helen's admirers, and her abduction by him may be attributed to his love for her. It is his admirable character and superior accomplishments which cause this work to be considered "an encomium of Helen" and not "an accusation of Theseus" (21). Praise of Helen is derived from the qualities of those

attracted to her. Second, in the midst of the Theseus section (29), Isocrates admits: "But . . . I perceive that I am being carried beyond the proper limits of my theme and I fear that some may think that I am more concerned with Theseus than with the subject [here unspecified] which I originally chose". Third, after summarizing the major contributions of Theseus, Isocrates explains his digression in a short transitional paragraph:

As for Helen [the first time she is mentioned by name since Helen 17 with the single exception of 21 which is more of an editorial comment than a reference integral to the narrative], daughter of Zeus, who established her power over such excellence and sobriety, should she not be praised and honoured, and regarded as far superior to all the women who have ever lived? For surely we shall never have a more trustworthy witness or more competent judge of Helen's good attributes than the opinion of Theseus. But lest I seem through poverty of ideas to be dwelling unduly upon the same theme and by misusing the glory of one man to be praising Helen, I wish now to review the subsequent events also. (38)

Turning now to the portrait of Theseus, one notices that he begins (as in the case of Helen) with references to his family background: "reputedly the son of Aegeus, but in reality the progeny of Poseidon" (18). Then follows a statement of Theseus's desire for and abduction of Helen. He continues by pointing out that Helen's abduction was not accomplished by any ordinary person: an observation which leads him into a direct statement of Theseus's qualities.

If the achiever of these exploits had been an ordinary person and not one of the very distinguished, it would not yet be clear whether this discourse is an encomium of Helen or an accusation of Theseus; but as it is, while in the case of other men who have won renown we shall find that one deficient in courage, another in wisdom, and another in some kindred virtue, yet this hero alone was lacking in naught, but had attained consummate virtue. (21)

Helen's praise is derived from the fact that such a person "loved and admired" her. At this point, Isocrates devotes his entire attention to the portrait of Theseus.

Again, as in the case of Helen, Heracles becomes important for the sake of comparison. "The fairest praise that I can award to Theseus is this -- that he, a contemporary of Heracles, won a fame which rivalled his" (23). The comparison results in the following proposition which Isocrates proceeds to prove by example: "It came to pass that Heracles undertook perilous labours more celebrated and more severe, Theseus those more useful and to the Greeks of more vital importance" (23).

Isocrates's portrait of Theseus is summarized in sections 31-37. There appears first a list of his virtues: "his courage displayed in these perilous exploits which he hazarded alone"; "his knowledge of war in the battles he fought . . ."; "his piety toward the gods"; "and finally, he revealed his other virtues and his prudence not only in the deeds already recited, but especially in the manner in which

he governed our city" (31). Next, Isocrates provides his reader with a long list of the accomplishments of Theseus while serving in this latter capacity. Consequently,

. . . Theseus passed his life beloved of his people and not the object of their plots, not preserving his sovereignty by means of alien military force, but protected, as by a bodyguard, by the goodwill of the citizens, by virtue of his authority ruling as a king, but by his benefactions as a popular leader; for so equitably and so well did he administer the city that even to this day traces of his clemency may be seen remaining. (37)

It is at this point that Isocrates again returns to his original topic, Helen, having completed his digression on Theseus, whose qualities and actions make the praiseworthy nature of Helen even more convincing.

The second work by Isocrates to be examined is Busiris. Busiris was apparently a mythological figure, king of Egypt, who had been eulogized earlier by a man named Polycrates. Isocrates had obviously read this work and felt compelled to compose a corrective on the following stated grounds:

For although everyone knows that those who wish to praise a person must attribute to him a larger number of good qualities than he really possesses, and accusers must do the contrary, you have so far fallen short of following these principles of rhetoric that, though you profess to defend Busiris, you have not only failed to absolve him of the calumny with which he is attacked, but have even imputed to him a lawlessness of such enormity that it is impossible for one to invent wickedness more atrocious. (Busiris 5)

It is obvious that Busiris belongs to the same group of oratory as Helen, i.e., epideictic; but Isocrates does not refer to it as an encomium. He rather considers himself to have written an "apology" (ἀπολογία, 4 and 9). Isocrates considered Gorgias's Helen to be an apology, but the principles of portraiture employed by Isocrates are not essentially different from those utilized by Gorgias. One can conclude that the line separating the two "forms" is indeed a fine one.

Isocrates begins his portrait of Busiris by referring to his noble lineage:

Of the noble lineage of Busiris who would not find it easy to speak? His father was Poseidon, his mother Libya the daughter of Epaphus the son of Zeus, and she, they say, was the first woman to rule as queen and to give her own name to her country. (10)

Next, he refers to the accomplishments of Busiris. Busiris expanded his mother's domain conquering "many peoples" and acquiring "supreme power". He "established his royal seat" in Egypt". His choice of this country is so commendable as to warrant a brief section in praise of Egypt (12-14). Then Isocrates lists Busiris's administrative accomplishments (15-29), including at the top of the list his "reverence for the gods". Although one has no idea what the criticisms of Busiris were to which Polycrates addressed himself, it may

be surmised that the defense portion of Isocrates's present work is contained in this longer section which consists of the political and administrative accomplishments of the hero. For all practical purposes, Isocrates has concluded his portrait of Busiris, because following the long section on the accomplishments, he returns to his polemic against Polycrates.

The third work from the hand of Isocrates is his Evagoras. Isocrates begins this encomium (διὰ λόγων ἐγκωμιάζειν, Evagoras 8) by relating what he would consider a function of his present efforts: "But the spoken word which should adequately recount the deeds of Evagoras would make his virtues never to be forgotten among all mankind" (4). Following a rather lengthy discussion of the difficulty of the subject, which accents the honour of the author who has undertaken such a task, Isocrates begins his portrait with the "birth and ancestry of Evagoras" (12). He recounts not only the list of ancestors, but also their glories so that he can show how Evagoras "proved himself not inferior to the noblest and greatest examples of excellence which were of his inheritance". Also, in this section Isocrates refers to history of Salamis prior to the birth of Evagoras. Two key sentences bring the reader to the climactic beginning of Evagoras's life: "So distinguished from the beginning was the heritage transmitted to Evagoras by his ancestors" (19)

and "Such was the state of affairs in Salamis, and the descendants of the usurper were in possession of the throne when Evagoras was born" (21). Thus the lineage and historical setting, for which the birth of this child is of utmost importance, have prepared the way for the advent of Evagoras into the world.

The treatment by Isocrates of Evagoras's birth is very interesting. He makes an allusion to the presence of miraculous events, but does not choose to go into detail:

I prefer to say nothing of the portents, the oracles, the visions appearing in dreams, from which the impression might be gained that he was of superhuman birth, not because I disbelieve the reports, but that I may make it clear to all that I am so far from resorting to invention in speaking of his deeds that even of those matters which are in fact true I dismiss such as are known only to the few and of which not all the citizens are cognizant. (21)

In spite of such a disclaimer, it is obvious that the reader is to conclude that such events did occur on the occasion of Evagoras's birth.

Isocrates continues his portrait by referring to some of the characteristics of Evagoras. Some of these characteristics, it will be noted, correspond with those connected with encomia as described by the rhetoricians.

"When Evagoras was a boy he possessed beauty, bodily strength, and modesty, the very qualities that are most becoming to that age" (22). When Evagoras reached manhood, he not only

retained the above qualities but added manly courage, wisdom, and justice, each "in extraordinary degree". The reponse of kings to the advent of such a person upon the political scene is vividly described:

So surpassing was his excellence of both body and mind that when the kings of that time looked upon him they were terrified and feared for their throne, thinking that a man of such nature could not possibly pass this life in the status of a private citizen, but whenever they observed his character, they felt such confidence in him that they believed that even if anyone else should dare to injure them, Evagoras would be their champion. (24)

Isocrates then tells of one political aspirant who sought to have Evagoras slain after he (the aspirant) assassinated the tyrant ruler. The attempt upon the life of Evagoras was made because he thought Evagoras to be the only obstacle potentially blocking his desire for the throne. Evagoras was only able to save himself by fleeing to Cilicia (25-27).

While in exile, his spirit was not humbled as had been the case with so many others under similar circumstances (comparison). Rather, Evagoras determined to acquire the throne and, with only fifty men, attacked the palace upon his return.

It was "as if a god were their leader, they one and all held fast to their promises, and Evagoras, just as if either he had an army superior to that of his adversaries or foresaw the outcome, held to his resolution" [i.e., his guiding principle: "to act only in self-defence and never to be the

aggressor"] (28-32). The valour (ἀρετή) of his rise to power and the greatness of his deeds have thus been related (33).

There then follows a long section (33-69) in which Isocrates shows that no sovereign, since the beginning of time, has won his "honour more gloriously than Evagoras". This section includes a comparison between Cyrus and Conon on the one hand, and the illustrious Evagoras on the other. Included are analyses of military qualities, of the governed, and of their respective accomplishments. In each case, neither man excels Evagoras: rather does Evagoras excel each one in a glorious manner.

Isocrates concludes his treatise by seeking to evaluate this person about whom he has written. The key word used is "immortal": ". . . if any men of the past have by their merit become immortal, Evagoras also has earned this preferment. . . ." At another point, he sweepingly refers to the poets in a similar context.

In view of these facts, if any of the poets have used extravagant expressions in characterizing any man of the past, asserting that he was a god among men, or a mortal divinity, all praise of that kind would be especially in harmony with the noble qualities of Evagoras. (72)

Isocrates then summons Nicocles to emulate these deeds and qualities and to pursue the study of philosophy. This reveals

the didactic function of the present encomium. It also lends support to Gerhardsson's thesis concerning the narration of the fathers, especially among the Hellenistic traditions:

In Antiquity what was narrated concerning the fathers had a practical purpose: that of providing examples to be emulated, warnings, or other definite lessons. Jewish, Hellenistic and Christian traditions in the sources are all tendentious, whether edifying or otherwise didactic.¹³⁰

Reference to the death of Evagoras is missing. It is extremely difficult to know what is intended by this omission: It was previously observed that Aristotle referred to Evagoras's death as murder.¹³¹ Furthermore, murder would not be a proper end for such an illustrious portrait as that created by Isocrates. On the other hand, why could Isocrates not have used the occasion for the condemnation of his murderers and thereby emphasize the praise and merit of Evagoras? Of course, the political climate which prevailed at the time of the delivery of this encomium could have discouraged such a literary procedure. It can only be stated that Isocrates did not feel the need to present any account of the death of Evagoras, and the rationale for such a procedure remains open to

¹³⁰ Birger Gerhardsson, Memory and Manuscript (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1961), p. 182.

¹³¹ Above, p. 107.

question and speculation. The omission of such an account was certainly his prerogative as an encomiast.

Another example of an encomium of an individual comes from the hand of Xenophon and is known as the Agesilaus. It was modelled after Isocrates's Evagoras, though he "was not the man to follow Isocrates blindly".¹³² Of its literary style, Stuart writes: ". . . the structural plan of the Agesilaus shows a compartment-like exactness characteristic of the rhetorical patterns emanating from Gorgias and his kind".¹³³ Thus there can be little question as to its place within the epideictic classification of literature: it is concerned both with praise and with vindication. What will be of interest for the sake of the present study will not so much be the manner in which praise is rendered, since it resembles the previous examples cited, but rather the organization of the treatise as a whole.

Xenophon begins his treatise in a typical and formal manner:

I know how difficult it is to write an appreciation of Agesilaus that shall be worthy of his virtue and glory. Nevertheless the attempt must be made. For it would not be seemly that so good a man, just because of his perfection, should receive no tributes of praise, however inadequate. (Agesilaus I. 1; cf. Ad Herennium III. 6. 11-12)

¹³² Momigliano, Development, p. 50.

¹³³ Stuart, Epochs, p. 69.

Then follow references to the praiseworthy descent of Agesilaus which may be traced back to Heracles. Very little attention is given to the nurture or early childhood. Xenophon moves directly to the stature of the country over which he was to rule in such a long and glorious manner, a country worthy of the greatness of Agesilaus. The early signs of the excellence of Agesilaus are mentioned only in relation to the fact that he was chosen at a very early age to assume leadership (I. 5-8).

After such a brief prelude, Xenophon begins his account of the rule of his hero. For the most part, the account of his reign is presented in chronological order, interrupted occasionally by references to the character of the king as evidenced by his deeds (cf. I. 20, 27, 36; II. 8, 12, 21, etc.). This section represents the first way Xenophon illustrates the greatness of his hero.

With chapter three, Xenophon begins another section in which he specifically treats the virtues of Agesilaus. In the first paragraph, Xenophon presents the organizational structure of the entire work:

Such, then, is the record of my hero's deeds, so far as they were done before a crowd of witnesses. Actions like these need no proofs; the mere mention of them is enough and they command belief immediately. But now I will attempt to show the virtue that was in his soul, the virtue through which he wrought those deeds and loved all that is honourable and put

away all that is base. (II. 1; cf. Quintilian
III. vii. 10-18, above pp. 114-115)

The virtues cited for development (e.g. piety, justice, self-control, courage, and wisdom) are standard, even in terms of the order in which they were discussed.¹³⁴ It is interesting to note that this section contains various statements attributed to Agesilaus which illustrate each virtue under discussion. It also contains comparisons of Agesilaus with "the Persian king" (VII. 6; IX. 1-2), the point of which is to demonstrate the superiority of the former to the latter. Also included in this general section are statements which encourage the emulation:

If line and rule are a noble discovery of man as aids to the production of good work, I think that the virtue of Agesilaus may well stand as a noble example for those to follow who wish to make moral goodness a habit. For who that imitates a pious, a just, a sober, a self-controlled man, can come to be unrighteous, unjust, violent, wanton? (X. 2)

The treatise is concluded by Xenophon with a summary of the virtues that have been discussed followed by only a brief reference to his death:

So complete was the record of his service to his fatherland that it did not end even when he died: he was still a bountiful benefactor of the state when he was brought home to be laid in his eternal resting-place, and, having raised up monuments of his virtue throughout the world, was buried with royal ceremony in his own land. (XI. 16)

¹³⁴ Momigliano, Development, p. 51.

The importance of Xenophon's Agesilaus for our present study is threefold: first, it represents the standard pattern of praise for the individual within the epideictic category of oratory; second, the organizational structure was based both upon chronological and thematic principles (a procedure evident not only in the rules of Quintilian but also in the lives of Suetonius, especially his Deified Julius); and third, Xenophon includes both sayings and deeds in an organizational manner unique among the literature currently available for investigation from that period.

There is a gap of some four centuries between the works of Isocrates and Xenophon and our next example, Philo. The gap is due in part to the scarcity of sources from this period and in part to the desire to discuss works more contemporary with the gospels. The point of this section, however, is not to trace the development of the encomium historically (or epideictic literature in general), but to illustrate how the praiseworthy lives of famous men were portrayed. We have already observed the continuity of the descriptions of the historians and rhetoricians in connection with this literature. It remains to be seen whether the literary procedures evident in extant biographical works also testify to the presence of such continuity.

It will be recalled that one of the works cited by Hadas and Smith as representing the aretalogical tradition was Philo's De Vita Mosis.¹³⁵ It is perhaps here that one notes what must have been the close proximity of aretalogy to epideictic literature, if indeed one accepts the reconstruction of the tradition by Hadas and Smith. Colson, for example, commenting on the lives written by Philo (Abraham, Joseph, and Moses), observes:

. . . the separate stores are admirably told with much fire, vigour and lucidity. The "stilted and frigid" speeches repel us, but to Greek readers living in the age of Epideictic oratory, they would be congenial enough.¹³⁶

According to Goodenough, Philo is concerned to describe Moses "in terms of the king-saviour conception of his day: he is the perfect king, lawmaker, priest, and prophet".¹³⁷ Moses clearly represents the "pattern of the ideal man and saviour". In his idealistic presentation of Moses, Philo's allegorical methodology is less conspicuous than in his other works.¹³⁸ In addition, he employs amplification freely,¹³⁹ as evident,

¹³⁵Above, p. 36.

¹³⁶Colson, Philo, p. xvi.

¹³⁷E.R. Goodenough, An Introduction to Philo Judaeus (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p. 147; cf. esp. pp. 145ff. and 33ff.

¹³⁸Colson, Philo, p. xiv. Goodenough acknowledges the distinctive features of De Vita Mosis, but his discussion of allegory reminds us that Philo's methodology has not receded far into the background.

¹³⁹Colson, Philo, p. xvii.

for example, in his account of Moses's education (Mosis I. 21ff.), which conforms with what one might expect to have been the case with an Egyptian prince in spite of the absence of evidence from the biblical narratives. Furthermore, as will be demonstrated, comparison is also utilized. Thus, it may be concluded that the life of Moses belongs to the same general category as do the other works offered for consideration. Tiede, for example, refers to De Vita Mosis as a "complete encomium".¹⁴⁰ It is perhaps this fact, more than any other, which accounts for the peculiarities cited by Colson:

Philo's arrangement of the life of Moses under the four heads of king, lawgiver, priest and prophet does, no doubt, serve for a logical basis to the work, but it leads him into many oddities. While the story of Moses as king or leader is carried on consistently to the end of Exodus xviii., what next to the deliverance itself is the central point of the story, the theophany on Sinai, is entirely omitted; the account of Balaam and Balak, which has little to do with Moses himself, is given a disproportionate length, while the stories of the Red Sea and the Manna and the Golden Calf are given twice over.¹⁴¹

These peculiarities may be attributed to the particular purposes of an author making use of his sources to accomplish

¹⁴⁰ Tiede, Charismatic Figure, p. 127. Tiede may be more correct than he realizes; for it is not clear from the text that he has the classical form in mind.

¹⁴¹ Colson, Philo, p. xv.

specific aims in full accord with established literary principles evident in epideictic literature.

The purpose of Philo is stated at the beginning of the treatise and reiterated at the conclusion: to call to one's attention the story of the greatest and most perfect of men:

I purpose to write the life of Moses, whom some describe as the legislator of the Jews; others as the interpreter of the Holy Laws. I hope to bring the story of this greatest and most perfect of men to the knowledge of such as deserve not to remain in ignorance of it; for, while the fame of the laws which he left behind him has travelled throughout the civilized world and reached the ends of the earth, the man himself as he really was is known to few. Greek men of letters have refused to treat him as worthy of memory, possibly through envy, and also because in many cases the ordinances of the legislators of the different states are opposed to his But I will disregard their malice, and tell the story of Moses as I have learned it, both from the sacred books, the wonderful monuments of his wisdom which he has left behind him, and from some of the elders of the nation; for I always interwove what I was told with what I read, and thus believed myself to have a closer knowledge than others of his life's history. (I. 1-2, 4).

Such, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, was the life and such the end of Moses, king, lawgiver, high priest, prophet. (II. 292)

The latter reference contains the organizational basis upon which the treatise is presented. The presentation under the four categories (king, lawgiver, high priest, and prophet) is consistent with accepted principles of writing of an encomium (cf. Xenophon's Agesilaus and Quintilian III. 7.

10-18¹⁴²) and is further stated by Philo in the transition statements uniting books I and II.

We have now told the story of Moses's actions in his capacity of king. We must next deal with all that he achieved by his powers as high priest and legislator, powers which he possessed as the most fitting accomplishments of kingship. (I. 334; cf. II. 1-6)

At the beginning of book II, the contents of book I are summarized emphasizing that what has been described (presented largely in a chronological order) is praiseworthy.

The former treatise dealt with the birth and nurture of Moses; also with his education and career as a ruler, in which capacity his conduct was not merely blameless but highly praiseworthy; also with the works which he performed in Egypt and during the journeys both at the Red Sea and in the wilderness -- works which no words can adequately describe; further, with the troubles which he successfully surmounted, and with his partial distribution of territories to the combatants. (II. 1)

Following the introductory remarks of II. 1-6, the material in the second book is organized thematically, and is designed to support the thesis that Moses was not only king but law-giver, high priest, and prophet. Thus one notes the similarity of this work with Xenophon's Agesilaus.

The portrait of Moses begins with references to his birth and ancestry. "I will begin with what is necessarily the right place to begin. Moses was by race a Chaldean but was

¹⁴² Above, pp. 114-115. With respect to the transition statements of Philo which follow, cf. Xenophon Agesilaus III. 1.

born and reared in Egypt" (I. 5). "He had for his father and mother the best of their contemporaries, members of the same tribe, though with them mutual affection was a stronger tie than family connections. He was seventh in descent from the first settler who became the founder of the whole Jewish nation [Abraham]" (I. 7). Then follows Philo's interpretation of the biblical account of birth followed by an account of his early childhood and educational excellences. Such phrases as approval "of his beauty and fine condition" (I. 15), "noble and goodly to look upon" (I. 18), "he applied himself to hearing and seeing what was sure to profit the soul" (I. 20), and "his gifted nature forestalled their instruction" punctuate this portion of the narrative in a manner calling forth admiration from the reader. His accomplishments and qualities were such that his associates could hardly discern his true nature, whether it be human or divine or some mixture of the two (I. 27). Indeed, here was a man of true and rare greatness:

And, in his desire to live to the soul alone and not to the body, he made a special practice of frugal contentment, and had an unparalleled scorn for a life of luxury. He exemplified his philosophical creed by his daily actions. His words expressed his feelings, and his actions accorded with his words, so that speech and life were in harmony, and thus through their mutual agreement were found to make melody together as on a musical instrument. (I. 29)

His first flight from Egypt is attributed to the envy

and fear of those close to the king who proceeded to convince the latter that his rule was jeopardized by Moses's continued presence (I. 46). Even during the exile, the strength of his character is demonstrated by his continued development and discipline carried out under the guidance of "an admirable trainer, the reason within him" (I. 48). His experience as a shepherd, a vocation in which Moses proved more skilful than any other (I. 63), provided the unexpected training for the command he was later to assume over his people (I. 60f.). His response to the commissioning by God is cited as indicative of his modesty (I. 84).

The relation of Moses to God is illustrative of the biographical function of the narrative. The narrative revolves around the person of Moses: to be sure an instrument of His activity, but the central figure nevertheless. For example, in I. 148ff., there is contained a summary of Moses's function.

The appointed leader of all these was Moses, invested with this office and kingship, not like some of those who thrust themselves into positions of power by means of arms and engines of war and strength of infantry, cavalry and navy, but on account of his goodness and his nobility of conduct and the universal benevolence which he never failed to show. Further, his office was bestowed upon him by God, the lover of virtue and nobility, as the reward due to him. For, when he gave up the lordship of Egypt, which he held as son to the daughter of the then reigning king, because the sight of the iniquities committed in the land and his own nobility of soul and magnanimity of

spirit and inborn hatred of evil led him to renounce completely his expected inheritance from the kinsfolk of his adoption, He Who presides over and takes charge of all things thought good to requite him with the kingship of a nation more populous and mightier, a nation destined to be consecrated above all others to offer prayers forever on behalf of the human race that it may be delivered from evil and participate in what is good. (I. 148-149; cf. I. 198)

More specifically, this relationship is described as a partnership with God:

And so, as he abjured the accumulation of lucre, and the wealth whose influence is mighty among men, God rewarded him by giving him instead the greatest and most perfect wealth. That is the wealth of the whole earth and sea and rivers, and of all the other elements and the combination which they form. For, since God judged him worthy to appear as a partner of His own possessions, He gave into his hands the whole world as a portion well fitted for His heir. Therefore, each element obeyed him as its master, changed its natural properties and submitted to his command, and this perhaps is no wonder. (I. 155-156)

Thus Moses stands not only as an illustrious character, but as a saviour-model:

Thus he beheld what is hidden from the sight of mortal nature, and, in himself and his life displayed for all to see, he has set before us, like some well-wrought picture, a piece of work beautiful and godlike, a model for those who are willing to copy it. Happy are they who imprint, or strive to imprint, that image in their souls. (I. 158-159)¹⁴³

¹⁴³According to Goodenough, more than emulation is intended by his treatment of Moses. Goodenough writes: ". . . the career of Moses is not so much the career of one who, like Abraham and Jacob, had the experience of development which we may reproduce, but was the career of the saviour of men who, given to them as a special loan from God

It is not possible to deal exhaustively with the whole of Philo's treatises on Moses, but one should note, in addition to the above characteristics, his use of comparison. Perhaps the clearest example occurs in the second book in connection with his discussion of Moses as lawgiver. The use of comparison begins with a general statement:

That Moses himself was the best of all lawgivers in all countries, better in fact than any that have ever arisen among either the Greeks or the barbarians, and that his laws are most excellent and truly come from God, since they omit nothing that is needful, is shewn most clearly . . . (II. 12)

At a later point in the narrative, the laws attributed to or delivered through Moses are compared with those of other nations.

The Athenians reject the customs and institutions of the Lacedaemonians, and the Lacedaemonians those of the Athenians; . . . We may fairly say that mankind from east to west, every country and nation and state, shew aversion to foreign institutions, and think that they will enhance the respect for their own by shewing disrespect for those of other countries. It is not so with ours. They attract and win the attention of all, of barbarians, of Greeks, of dwellers on the mainland and islands, of nations of the east and the west, of Europe and Asia, of the whole inhabited world from end to end. (II. 19-20)

The above statement calls to mind the praise of Helen derived from the opinion of her suitors. Still later, another proof

can lead them out of the world to the apprehension of God. For the mystic experience of men consists in 'going up to the aethereal heights with their reasonings, setting before them Moses, the type of existence beloved by God, to lead them on their way.' [Conf.95]". Goodenough, Introduction, p. 147.

of superiority is offered (II. 29ff.) in the person of Ptolemy:

Ptolomy, surnamed Philadelphus, was the third in succession to Alexander, the conqueror of Egypt. In all the qualities which make a good ruler, he excelled not only his contemporaries, but all who have arisen in the past; and even till to-day, after so many generations, his praises are sung for the many evidences and monuments of his greatness of mind which he left behind him in different cities and countires, so that even now, acts of more than ordinary munificence or buildings on a specially great scale are proverbially called Philadelphian after him. To put it shortly, as the house of the Ptolemies was highly distinguished, compared with other dynasties, so was Philadelphus among the Ptolemies. (II. 29-30)

It is precisely this man whose qualities are uncontestable and unequalled in the past or present (even by Moses?) who recognized the innate value of Moses's law and commissioned the translation of the Septuagint (II. 31ff.), a translation miraculously completed through the dictates of God (II. 37).

As is the case with most of the treatises of this type, Philo's conclusion contains a reference to Moses's death, the occasion of his supreme glorification (II. 288ff.) and details of which were revealed to Moses prior to their occurrence. Also, like the death of all who possess true greatness, "all the nations wept and mourned for him" (II. 291).

The purposes behind Tacitus's Agricola have been the

object of considerable debate.¹⁴⁴ Tacitus was Agricola's son-in-law, and the treatise closely resembles in tone a funeral oration. The length of the treatise, however, argues against its use as such. It is quite similar in other respects to an apology, and comes close to stating apologetic intent in the last part of section 3. Its portraiture, as we have noted previously in the case of Isocrates's Euagoras and Xenophon's Agesilaus, brings it close to the panegyric (encomium) even though the abundance of material related to Britain tends to point to at least a pretense of the character of history. These problems, however, do not weigh against its inclusion in the category of display oratory. Whereas Tacitus's competency with respect to "physical science", "geography", and "military science" has been questioned by some,¹⁴⁵ his rhetorical skill and biographical intent are unassailable. Generally speaking, therefore, we are in agreement with the assessment of Ogilvie and Richmond:

The Agricola is a biography. Its full title is de Vita Iulii Agricolae, and Tacitus makes it plain that he has set out to write a life of his father-in-law in the accustomed manner (c. I, 4 narraturo mihi vitam defuncti hominis; c. 46, 4 Agricola posteritati narratus) -- narrare vitam is the phrase which Nepos used to distinguish the character of his

¹⁴⁴For example, see the discussions of the issues involved in Anderson, Agricola, pp. xxiff. and Ogilvie, Agricola, pp. 11ff. (Also, n. 112 above). A similar discussion appears in Hutton, Tacitus, pp. 152ff.

¹⁴⁵Hutton, Tacitus, pp. 152ff.

Lives from other historical works . . . the Agricola remains first and foremost an account of Agricola's life and achievements . . . There is, therefore, a tendency in the Agricola, as in his other writings, for events to be accommodated to the characters as Tacitus saw them, and this tendency is liable to entail distortion. But Tacitus knew and loved Agricola and the biography which he has left us in an intimate and penetrating record of a man.¹⁴⁶

The treatise begins with a reference to the practice of writing about famous men:

To hand down to posterity the works and ways of famous men was our fathers' custom: our age has not yet abandoned it even now, indifferent though it be to its own children, whenever, at least some great and notable virtue has dominated and overpowered the vice common alike to small states and great -- misapprehension of integrity and jealousy.

But in our fathers' times, just as the doing of deeds worth recording was natural and more obvious, so also there was inducement then to the brightest spirits to publish such records of virtue. (Agricola 1)

The reference calls to mind the statements of Isocrates and Xenophon concerning the benefits to be derived from imitating such famous personages. Indeed, at the end of the speech (46), imitation is specifically requested as the natural response to the character of Agricola:

Let reverence rather, let unending thankfulness, let imitation even, if our strength permit, be our tribute to your memory: this is true respect, this is kinship's duty. This would I say to wife and daughter, so to venerate the memory of husband and of father as to ponder each word and deed within their hearts, and to cleave to the lineaments and features of the soul rather than of the body.

¹⁴⁶ Ogilvie, Agricola, pp. 11-12, 14, and 20.

The portrait itself begins in section 4 with a reference to the family of Agricola. "Gnaeus Julius Agricola was a scion of the ancient and illustrious Roman colony of Forum Julii . . .". Each of his grandfathers was "Procurator of Caesar", an office defined by Tacitus in terms which attribute greatness to the occupant. His father attained the rank of Senator and excelled both in rhetoric and philosophy. "His mother was Julia Procilla, a woman of rare virtue. From her fond bosom he imbibed his education . . .". His early training is described in some detail, and of him it is said, "he achieved the rarest of feats; he was a student, yet preserved his balance". After referring to an illustrious apprenticeship in Britain during which time he gained insight into the conditions of the province and cultivated the virtue of humility (5), he married Domitia Decidiana, "a woman of high lineage". Even the marriage provides ample reason for praise (6).

Next follows a series of events which depict both the development of Agricola as a leader and some of the qualities which mark his greatness. At one point it is said:

Agricola accordingly restrained his own energy and applied a check to his enthusiasm, in order that it might not grow too strong; he was trained to habits of deference, and skilful in tempering duty with expediency . . . He traced his success to the responsible general whose agent he was: so by scrupulous obedience and modesty in self-advertisement he escaped envy without missing distinction. (5)

And later:

Agricola, thanks to his native shrewdness, though surrounded with civilians, administered without friction, yet without sacrifice of justice When the decisions of the council-chamber demanded he was serious, keen, strict, yet generally merciful; when he had fulfilled the demands of office he dropped the official mask: reserve, pompousness, and greed he put away from him; and yet in his case, the rarest of cases, neither did amiability impair authority nor strictness affection. It would be an insult to the qualities of a man so great to dwell here upon his probity and self-control. Fame itself, which even good men often court, he never sought by parading his virtues or by artifice; incapable of rivalry among his colleagues, incapable of wrangling with the Imperial Agents, he counted it inglorious to succeed in such fields, and contemptible to let himself feel sore. (9)

The next portion of the Agricola is concerned with a description of Britain, the character and condition of her peoples, and a list of those who had ruled her under Roman authority (10-17). The effect of this section is to set the stage ("Such was the condition of Britain" [18]) and to specify the tasks confronting him when he assumed command ("such the alternations of war and peace which Agricola found . . ." [18]). Then follows a year by year (chronological) account of his successful rule (18-39). Throughout, there are tributes to his excellences, two direct statements that he was the "first" to do something (20, 25), and the climactic account of his defeat of Calgacus, leader of the opposing coalition of tribes. The conflict involving

Calgacus is portrayed in terms of greatness in opposition to greatness, thereby illustrating Agricola's superiority. This is especially evident in the comparison of the speeches of Calgacus and Agricola immediately preceding the final battle. The speeches reflect the native abilities of each general and vividly portray the excitement to battle generated among those who heard each of them respectively. Even so, it is apparent that Agricola's is the better; for his speech is often interrupted enthusiastically (33). Though outnumbered, Agricola placed himself at the front of the battle line (35), and the resulting victory was second to none.

Tacitus is quick to point out that Agricola sought no glory for himself. At a time when Rome was hungry for triumphs, it was this course of action that successfully precluded the envy and suspicion of his superiors (39-41).¹⁴⁷ He handed to his successor a peaceful province and returned to an unassuming welcome home. While Rome suffered setbacks elsewhere, Agricola brought with him victory, and he avoided self-destruction by remaining in the background. In this way, he lived to a ripe old age, and his death was mourned by all (43f.), spared of the grief which would have been his

¹⁴⁷Ronald Syme, Tacitus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), Vol. I, pp. 23f.

had he been aware of subsequent events (44): "Happy your fate, Agricola! happy not only in the lustre of your life, but in a timely death" (45). The conclusion is consistent with the speech as a whole:

Whatever we have loved in Agricola, whatever we have admired, abides, and will abide, in the hearts of men, in the procession of the ages, in the records of history. Many of the ancients has Forgetfulness engulfed as though neither fame nor name were theirs. Agricola, whose story here is told, will outlive death, to be our children's heritage. (46)

It will be remembered that Lucian was cited earlier for his invective against encomia being passed off as histories.¹⁴⁸ The intensity of his invective, however, should not be taken as tantamount to a lack of appreciation of the literary form when employed in the proper setting. A good example of this appreciation would be the treatise to which we now turn, his "Life of Demonax". It is difficult to know the exact occasion for the speech, but in character and structure the speech most certainly belongs to the epideictic classification, even more specifically to the encomium species. It is interesting to note that at least one scholar feels that of all the possible classical parallels to gospel literature, the one coming the closest (still leaving much to be

¹⁴⁸ Above, pp. 82-83.

desired) is the present treatise.¹⁴⁹

At the beginning of the speech, Lucian states his purpose for writing, one very similar to others previously encountered.

It was on the cards, it seems, that our modern world should not be altogether destitute of noteworthy and memorable men, but should produce enormous physical prowess and a highly philosophic mind. I speak with reference to the Boeotian Sostratus, whom the Greeks called Heracles and believed to be that hero, and especially to Demonax, the philosopher. . . . It is now fitting to tell of Demonax for two reasons -- that he may be retained in memory by men of culture as far as I can bring it about, and that young men of good instincts who aspire to philosophy may not have to shape themselves by ancient precedents alone, but may be able to set themselves a pattern from our modern world and to copy that man, the best of all the philosophers whom I know about. (Demonax 1-2)

Thus Lucian is preserving for posterity an account of a man of noteworthy qualities, one that can serve as a model for those who desire to follow. The passage conveys additional weightiness by the reference to Heracles (comparison), a reference which places both heroes on an equal status albeit for different achievements. The preface is followed immediately by a reference to his lineage ("a Cypriote by birth"), the advantages of which, though high and praiseworthy, were minimized commendably by Demonax's aspirations for a higher

¹⁴⁹J. Arthur Baird, "Genre Analysis as a Method of Historical Criticism", reprinted in the Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Literature (1972), p. 387.

life, philosophy. Accordingly, "he despised all that men count good, and, committing himself unreservedly to liberty and free-speech, was steadfast in leading a straight, sane, irreproachable life and in setting an example to all who saw and heard him by his good judgment and the honesty of his philosophy" (3). The decision to take "his departure from life, leaving behind him a great reputation among Greeks of culture" (4), was not one at which he arrived hastily; for he had been brought up on the poets and had "trained his body and hardened it for endurance", and had been an accomplished speaker. Next, Lucian describes briefly the philosophical style of Demonax, and he states that Demonax had most in common with Socrates and Diogenes. This provides Lucian with the occasion to describe the character of Demonax:

He never was known to make an uproar or excite himself or get angry, even if he had to rebuke someone; though he assailed sins, he forgave sinners, thinking that one should pattern oneself after doctors, who heal sicknesses but feel no anger at the sick. He considered that it is human to err, divine or all but divine to set right what has gone amiss. (7)

And he continues to amplify:

For this reason he was everyone's friend, and there was no human being whom he did not include in his affections, though he liked the society of some better than that of others . . . And in all this, his every word and deed was smiled on by the Graces and by Aphrodite, even; so that, to quote the comedian, "persuasion perched upon his lips". (10)

Even a person of such qualities and recognized abilities was not lacking in opposition, and this theme brings Lucian again to a comparison with Socrates.

He too had his Anytus and his Meletus who combined against him and brought the same charges that their predecessors brought against Socrates, asserting that he had never been known to sacrifice and was the only man in the community uninitiated in the Eleusinian mysteries. (11)

The comparison, however, is not developed to the point of death. On the contrary, Demonax succeeded in convincing his opponents of his "love for humanity" where Socrates had failed: "So the Athenians, who already had stones in both hands to throw at him, became good-natured and friendly toward him at once, and from that day on they honoured, respected and finally admired him" (11). This change of attitude was not intended to mean that Demonax was not prepared to die, nor that he compromised his position. His defense was simply more convincing than and hence superior to that of Socrates. His speech to the Athenians was direct and forceful: "Men of Athens, you see me ready with my garland: come, sacrifice me like your former victim, for on that occasion your offering found no favour with the gods!" (11).

The rest of the speech consists predominantly of the sayings of Demonax; for it is from his philosophical sayings that Lucian would derive his praise of Demonax. In terms of

length and content, the treatise is largely made up of the sayings of Demonax which Lucian presents without comment.

Supplying only brief transitional statements, Lucian allows the sayings to be evaluated by the reader himself.

The death of Demonax is recorded in such a way as to enlist praise. When he reached the age (longevity) at which point he could no longer care for himself, he refrained from all food and thereby "took leave of life in the same cheerful humour that people he met always saw him in" (65). His end was thus consistent with his life as a whole. Lucian concludes by describing the tributes paid him and by stating what his narrative has accomplished:

To honour him, they did obeissance to the stone bench on which he used to rest when he was tired, and they put garlands on it; for they felt that even the stone on which he had been wont to sit was sacred. Everybody attended his burial, especially the philosophers; indeed, it was they who took him on their shoulders and carried him to the tomb.

These are a very few things out of many which I might have mentioned, but they will suffice to give my readers a notion of the sort of man he was. (67)

We cannot leave the subject of examples of epideictic literature without at least a mention of one more example which, on the surface, may seem somewhat strange. Momigliano has previously shown the close affinity of autobiography with

biography,¹⁵⁰ and the "Life of Josephus" stands as a good example of the close proximity of the two. If our thesis is correct -- namely, that there is an identifiable type of laudatory biography into which each of the examples cited falls and with which the gospels may be classified -- then it would not seem odd for one to find similar techniques and topoi present in such an autobiographical narrative as this one by Josephus.

It is probable that Josephus composed his autobiography as a defense against a rival historian, Justus by name, who had stated his case falsely and maligned Josephus (Life 336-340). The narrative certainly reads like a defense of his character, and this apology begins at the very beginning. Josephus states that he possesses an excellent family background and offers for proof both his mother's and his father's side of the family. Of the former he writes:

My family is no ignoble one, tracing its descent far back to priestly ancestors. Different races base their claim to nobility on various grounds; with us a connexion with the priesthood is the hallmark of an illustrious line. Not only, however, were my ancestors priests, but they belonged to the first of the twenty-four courses -- a peculiar distinction -- and to the most eminent of its constituent camps. Moreover, on my mother's side I am of royal blood; for the posterity of Asamonaeus, from whom she sprang,

¹⁵⁰Momigliano, Development, pp. 11f. Here, it is clear that Momigliano includes both biography and autobiography in his treatment of the development of Greek biography.

for a very considerable period were kings, as well as high-priests, of our nation. (1-2)¹⁵¹

His father's side of the family is described as follows:

"Distinguished as he was by his noble birth, my father Matthias was even more esteemed for his upright character, being among the most notable men in Jerusalem, our greatest city" (7).

Immediately following is an account of his education and early signs of excellence.

I made great progress in my education, gaining a reputation for an excellent memory and understanding. While still a mere boy, about fourteen years old, I won universal applause for my love of letters: insomuch that the chief priests and leading men of the city used constantly to come to me for precise information on some particular in our ordinance. At about the age of sixteen I determined to gain personal experience of the several sects into which our nation is divided. These, as I have frequently mentioned, are three in number -- the first that of the Pharisees, the second that of the Sadducees, and the third that of the Essenes. I thought that, after a thorough investigation, I should be in a position to select the best. So I submitted myself to hard training and laborious exercises and passed through the three courses. (8-11)

After associating for three years with a man named Bannus

"who dwelt in the wilderness", Josephus returned in his nineteenth year and subjected himself to Pharisaic rule.

¹⁵¹H. St. J. Thackeray, trans., Josephus, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966) Vol. I.

The remaining portions of his autobiography consist largely of an account of his actions (chronologically organized) while serving in his command in Galilee before the siege of Jotapata. To this brief half year period, according to Thackeray,¹⁵² have been added "brief sketches of his youth in Palestine and his later years in Rome . . . as prologue and epilogue". It is apparently to this brief period of his life that Justus has addressed his chief criticisms against which Josephus would vindicate himself; hence, the preoccupation in an autobiographical style with only one amplified segment of his life. Josephus punctuates his account of this period with a defense of his conduct. It includes sympathetic response (forgiveness mixed with just punishment) to his opponents whom he consistently succeeds in eventually overcoming (cf. 84ff., 102-103, 110-111, 168, 262-264, 266, 304-308, etc.). He describes himself as the innocent victim of those who envy his high station (e.g. 80ff., 84-86, and 204). He states that he was a just and fair administrator, and the narrative contains ample evidence of his many virtues including wisdom, self-restraint, courage, piety, and compassion. Indeed, he does not seem to be sparing in his own account of glory. His aim was to preserve

¹⁵²Ibid., p. xiv.

the peace in Galilee (77), and the revolt against Rome by the Tiberians Josephus attributes directly to the life and actions of his accuser (340ff.).

There is ample space provided for the reader to compare the life and character of Josephus with those of his adversaries (cf. 80ff., 134f., and 191ff.). In each case, Josephus is the superior. In 204ff., Josephus has decided he has had enough of public life and informs his friends of his intention to vacate his present office. The account of the events leading to a reversal of his decision to leave is representative of the epideictic nature of the treatise as a whole.

That night I beheld a marvellous vision in my dreams. I had retired to my couch, grieved and distraught by the tidings in the letter, then I thought that there stood by me one who said: "Cease, man, from thy sorrow of heart, let go all fear. That which grieves thee now will promote thee to greatness and felicity in all things. Not in these present trials only, but in many besides, will fortune attend thee. Fret not thyself then. Remember that thou must even battle with the Romans." Cheered by this dream-vision I arose, ready to descend into the plain. On my appearance, the whole crowd of Galilaeans, which included women and children, flung themselves on their faces and with tears implored me not to abandon them to their enemies nor, by my departure, leave their country exposed to the insolence of their foes. Finding entreaties unavailing, they sought with adjurations to coerce me to stay with them; bitterly inveighing against the people of Jerusalem for not allowing their country to remain in peace.

With these cries in my ears and the sight of the dejected crowd before my eyes, my resolution broke down and I was moved to compassion; I felt that it

was right to face even manifest perils for so vast
a multitudie. So I consented to remain; . . .
(208-212)

The treatise concludes with references to various honours bestowed upon Josephus, a personal reference to his own family including references to the praiseworthiness of his wife, and references to his continued friendship with those in high places. Obviously a reference to his death would have been inappropriate.

4. Summary

We began this portion of the present work with a succinct discussion of the concept of a literary genre. A literary genre was defined as a type or category of literature characterized by a common pattern of constituent elements. This pattern could be seen as varying slightly from treatise to treatise depending upon the particular purposes of the author, the occasion for which the treatise was prepared, the nature of the subject to be developed, and the audience for whom it was created. In so far as a particular treatise conveyed a similar pattern based upon the discernible purposes, literary techniques, and topoi of a given genre, it could be said that the treatise in question belonged to or could be classified as a member of the genre

appropriate to the pattern.¹⁵³

The generic pattern which was chosen for discussion was a particular type of bios pattern. Its existence in terms of a literary genre was established by the references to Polybius, Cicero, Lucian, Cornelius Nepos, and Plutarch. The definition of the genre drew from these testimonies, and, in addition, from the rhetorical traditions of antiquity. Though lacking in a single generic name, we have identified it with the purposes and techniques of epideictic oratory, and more specifically with the topoi prescribed for the encomium. The positive character of praise associated with the encomium (also with apology and funeral orations) plus the topoi and techniques listed as options for development related to authorial intent would justify, even require, the use of the term "encomium" in a generic sense as the more precise designation of the genre

¹⁵³We cannot leave the important question of literary genre without at least referring to the discussions involving the "theory" of genres which have surfaced in recent years. These discussions (long overdue) are concerned not only with the questions of identification and definition, but also with hermeneutics and meaning. In addition to those works mentioned above in footnotes 66 and 92, we would especially recommend Cairns, Generic Composition, pp. 3-124 and Klaus W. Hempfer, Gattungstheorie (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973). The latter includes an excellent bibliography. Regrettably, our own discussion does not approach the philosophical level of most of these works. However, such a discussion will hopefully follow once it is acknowledged that the gospels may indeed be viewed constructively from the perspective of generic meaning.

we have previously referred to as laudatory biography.¹⁵⁴ The term encomium would indeed be appropriate provided the generic usage not be confused with the literary exercise described by Marrou as being so important for Greco-Roman educational systems. To be sure, the emphasis of the educational systems of antiquity must have contributed to the development and continued popular use of this genre (so accurately do its encomium rules mirror the character of the genre), but the practical use outside of the classroom was much more flexible and less restrictive than the rhetorical rules permitted. The rhetorical traditions are thus valuable aids in the reconstruction of the literary genre we are discussing, but they are not to be viewed as identical with it. The qualified phrase, "encomium" biography, however, does seem to describe appropriately and accurately the literary phenomenon in question.

As the examples cited illustrated, the bios pattern was employed in various ways by different authors. Indeed, a comparison of any of these works with another (with the possible exception of Isocrates and Xenophon) would result in

¹⁵⁴The use of "laudatory" is not an inappropriate one, especially if its use commonly conveyed its historical antecedents in the Roman rhetorical schools (cf. n. 116 above). This, however, is not usually the case and we do not usually think of encomiastic when we refer to laudatory works. Since our research includes the search for historically accurate terminology as well as descriptive terminology, the use of

almost as many differences as similarities. They have been referred to as encomium, apology, and funeral oration; and the pattern which emerges has been that of king, soldier, philosopher, statesman, and religious leader. In each case, however, the patterns have been so similar as to warrant the same generic classification ("encomium" biography if the title be permitted). Each has made use of the techniques of amplification and comparison in accordance with the author's design. Each has employed traditions related to the life of the subject either in a pretense of relative completeness (from birth to death) or in part (emphasizing only a portion of the life of the subject) as deemed appropriate by the author.¹⁵⁵ Each has sought to maximize those praiseworthy qualities, actions, and virtues of the hero considered appropriate by the author. And several of the heroes (Evagoras, Moses, Agesilaus, Agricola) have been considered by their authors as worthy not only of honour but of emulation. In addition, the basic organizational procedures prescribed in the rhetorical rules of the encomium have been followed

"encomium" appears to us to be the more appropriate as stated in the text.

¹⁵⁵We must acknowledge that whichever format was adopted, it was the finished product as evident in the adult life which usually received attention. As Stuart writes: "The ancient biographer was . . . chiefly interested in the man as he was when he had emerged a finished product. The chronicler tended to see in character and personality static things that it was his task to analyze and describe, . . ." (Stuart, Epochs, p. 178).

(i.e., they are implicit) in each instance. It may be concluded, therefore, that there did exist a bios genre of considerable importance in antiquity whose primary purpose was to present a portrait of a person in such a way as either to call forth praise from an audience or to persuade an audience of his praiseworthiness. Thus the first of the criteria, referred to above as basic observations (pp. 77f.), for a genre appropriate to the gospel narratives has been met: a bios narrative in which the person stands in the center of the literary stage.

The examples cited included another aspect which, though noted, has yet to receive comment. Several of the works include statements to the effect that the author intends the narrative to be an account of a famous man to be preserved for posterity. Consider, for example, Evagoras 4: "But the spoken words which should adequately recount the deeds of Evagoras would make his virtues never to be forgotten among all mankind". Or consider the words of Tacitus in Agricola 1: "To hand down to posterity the works and ways of famous men was our fathers' custom". In addition, Agricola 46 should be included:

Whatever we have loved in Agricola, whatever we have admired, abides, and will abide, in the hearts of men, in the procession of the ages, in the records of history. Many of the ancients has Forgetfulness engulfed . . . Agricola, whose story here is told

will outlive death, to be our children's heritage.

Or, finally, consider Lucian's words in Demonax 2: "It is now fitting to tell of Demonax . . . that he may be retained in memory by men of culture . . . and that young men of good instincts who aspire to philosophy . . . may be able to set themselves a pattern from our modern world . . ." Similar concerns are commonly expressed in the prologues of historians and provide one of the motives for the heroic epic. In each of these cases, the emphasis is upon the presentation of tradition to be read and remembered by succeeding generations: a practice identified as common in the past and relevant for the present and future.¹⁵⁶ In the case of the authors mentioned above, there is no indication that they are engaged in the writing of history or that their narratives are in fact historically accurate. The main purpose, that of praise, is not altered. What is set forth and preserved for posterity is bios, not histories; character, not the recording of events. These portraits, therefore, although they may include traditions which are historical, are nevertheless lacking in the intent to record history, and are

¹⁵⁶A similar motive is evident in the autobiographical traditions attributed to an aristocracy in Rome (circa 1 B.C.) which was interested both in the preservation of nationalistic ideals and in an illustrious family heritage. Cf. Momigliano, Development, pp. 95f., 103.

solely dependent upon the occasion, audience, and particular purposes of the individual authors. They are pictures presented for approval: portraits the positive acceptance of which convey moral implications for those who would shape their own character accordingly. Thus the second criterion set forth as requisite for an appropriate genre for the gospels has been met. The "encomium" biography consists of bios narratives of praise which were not originally intended by their authors to be received as historical records.

In addition to having met the two criteria for a genre appropriate for the gospels, it should be further noted that the "encomium" biography could include materials which were not prescribed by the rhetoricians. The examples cited certainly contained such material, even in large amounts. If Tacitus, for example, is permitted his interest in the geography of Britain and Isocrates his preoccupation with Theseus, then the gospel writers cannot be faulted for their strong concern for the kerygma and other materials which may be viewed by some as having influenced the portrait of the person, Jesus. In this respect, the "encomium" biographical genre may be viewed as a "free form", as evidenced by the very different emphases which contributed to the bios pattern present in the works chosen as examples, and the gospels would be no exception. This genre, therefore, would

provide ample explanation for the wholeness of the gospels as literary units while, at the same time, providing for the inclusion and development of the constituent parts. What remains to be demonstrated by appeal to techniques and topoi is whether or not the synoptic narratives may be classified with the "encomium" genre which we have identified. It is to this question that we now turn.

III

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE GOSPELS TO THE "ENCOMIUM" GENRE

It is a trite but true observation that examples work more forcibly on the mind than precepts: and if this be just in what is odious and blameable, it is more strongly so in what is amiable and praiseworthy . . . A good man therefore is a standing lesson to all his acquaintance, and of far greater use in that narrow circle than a good book. But as it often happens that the best men are but little known, and consequently cannot extend the usefulness of their examples a great way; the writer may be called in aid to spread their history farther, and to present the amiable pictures to those who have not the happiness of knowing the originals; and so, by communicating such valuable patterns to the world, he may perhaps do a more extensive service to mankind than the person whose life originally afforded the pattern. In this light I have always regarded those biographers who have recorded the actions of great and worthy persons of both sexes. . . . In all these, delight is mixed with instruction, and the reader is almost as much improved as entertained.¹⁵⁷

The problem of establishing the relationship of the synoptic gospels to the "encomium" genre is not a question which, methodologically, is easily addressed. The methodological issue was skirted in the selection of the examples

¹⁵⁷ Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews and Shamela, ed. by Martin C. Battestin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), p. 13. Joseph Andrews was first published in 1742.

cited above from antiquity, but must now be considered. Perhaps to some, the most convincing type of argument would come from a comparison of the gospel narratives (or any narrative for that matter) with literary examples from antiquity on a one to one basis. The frustrations of this approach have already been noted in our study in the work of Votaw and the response by Schmidt.¹⁵⁸ We are now in a position to note some of the reasons for the deficiencies of such an approach to questions of genre. First, in a given genre it has been noted that no two authors write for the same purposes or occasions. Were there in existence an author who looked upon his literary hero in exactly the same manner and wrote for precisely the same reasons as did the gospel writers, then perhaps such a one to one comparison could be set up with the controls requisite for sound methodological results. But this was not even the case with the examples presented earlier for consideration. Even among works by the same author, the literary techniques of amplification and comparison were used in different ways, as were the particular topoi employed. Tacitus appears far removed from Philo, Lucian, and Josephus, not to mention Isocrates and Xenophon. The same is true when each example is compared with the others. Second, the dynamic aspect of genre which presupposes literature in flux would appear to work against the notion of placing authorial,

¹⁵⁸ Above, pp. 3ff. and 11ff.

creativity into fixed and arbitrary molds. One might think, for example, that as a test case one of the gospels could be compared directly with Philo's De Vita Mosis and, to be sure, more such comparative work needs to be done. This particular comparison would have the advantage of the same general time period; both have as their subjects men of religious conviction acting on the basis of divine design; both are apologetic in tone designed to present the subjects in a favourable light; both give evidence of authors loyal to their sources -- all of these tend to argue for the relevance of such a comparison. The disadvantages of such a task, however, would tend to create considerable problems. In the first place, Philo is seeking to elevate the stature of Moses in a Hellenistic society whereas the gospel writers seek to enlist a faith response in relation to the divine man of whom they bear witness. In the second place, one can be relatively certain as to the way in which Philo has made use of his sources (Scriptures) and this provides some control over the assessment of Philo's method and approach. On the other hand, although it is certain that the gospel writers made use of sources, the exact scope and nature of those sources are still the objects of many critical questions, so that the resulting comparisons would hardly be conclusive. And these problems do not take into consideration the relative abilities and skills of the

respective authors. There are simply too many variables and unknowns connected with the gospels and bios literature to conclude that comparisons on a one to one basis are methodologically sound in a treatment of questions of genre.

Methodologically, therefore, the problem is not to begin by identifying the "closest" examples with which comparisons are to be made, but rather to arrive at a procedure similar to that adopted previously by Weeden in his treatment of Mark.

The only way to interpret the Gospel as the author intended it is to read his work with the analytical eyes of a first century reader. That means in some way assuming the conceptual and analytical stance of a reader in the first century, a solution that is easier stated than implemented. We cannot ignore the fact that we are historically and culturally bound by our own life situation. We cannot take a time-machine journey back to the first century. Even if we could, we would still tend to think in the categories of the twentieth century mind-set rather than in the thought patterns of the first century. Yet this should not deter us from trying to approximate as closely as possible the stance which the first century reader might have taken toward the Gospel.¹⁵⁹

Weeden continued by stating that there was no reason why the first century reader would recognize the Gospel of Mark as either a "passion narrative or a resurrection story with a long introduction".¹⁶⁰ Neither would he perceive that the

¹⁵⁹Theodore J. Weeden, Mark -- Traditions in Conflict (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 11.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

hermeneutical principle "for the Gospel genre is the messianic secret".¹⁶¹ Furthermore, there is no way of knowing that the reader of the first century would have known much about the kerygma. "Consequently, he would not have known that the document he was reading was not a 'completed' Gospel and that its author had shortchanged him on the teachings of Jesus and other data".¹⁶²

The problem, of course, is trying to determine how a first century reader would have viewed the gospels. According to Weeden, the "best way to begin thinking like a first century reader is to be guided by the same principles and procedures of literary analysis that he was".¹⁶³ He then turns to Marrou's A History of Education in Antiquity for a presentation of these principles. Heading the list was the pedantic study of the great literary works of the past with primary attention "in the primary and secondary stages of Greek education" on "the epic poets, particularly Homer, and the tragedians, especially Euripides, Aeschylus, and Sophocles" in addition to such prose writers as Herodotus, Xenophon, Hellanicus, and Thucydides. Of primary importance throughout this educational process was an intense interest in characters and characterizations. Here, though not noted by Weeden, it is important to observe that Marrou has cited

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

the encomium as a vital part of this phase of the educational process. Weeden describes the final stage in the following manner:

The final step in a Greek student's investigation of a literary work was "judgment." This involved extrapolating some moral principle from the thoughts and behavior of the characters. The fact that the author might not have intended such moralization appears not to have been considered by Hellenistic grammarians. It was their assumption that the heroes of ancient works served as models for human virtue and vice.¹⁶⁴

To be specific, Weeden argues that Mark's readers would have been thoroughly familiar with this process of characterization and interpretation. It is significant to observe that two other scholars have reached similar conclusions with respect to Luke and Matthew: both working independently of the other and of Weeden. Also referring to the work of Marrou, Farmer specifically refers to the author of the Gospel of Matthew in the following manner: "Hellenistic rhetoric provided the evangelist with the knowledge of what to include in his gospel if he were to succeed in eliciting and evoking praise and emulation of Jesus".¹⁶⁵ Farmer's position is that rhetorical education was indeed widespread: it was a tool of the educated and certainly no stranger to the populace. For example, "The Chreia was a well-known literary form which,

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁶⁵ William R. Farmer, "Jesus and the Gospels: A Form-critical and Theological Essay", Perkins Journal, 28 (1975), No. 2, p. 45.

because of its place in Hellenistic rhetoric, probably exerted an influence even beyond the educated classes" [he cites Tacitus, Dialogue 19 for support].¹⁶⁶ Stanton, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with the Gospel of Luke in his analysis of his topic, Jesus of Nazareth in New Testament Teaching.¹⁶⁷ In chapter five, he broadens his investigation to include the gospels in general and clearly states his position in the opening paragraphs: "The main contention of this chapter is that, on the contrary, failure to read the gospels sufficiently carefully against the background of biographical writing in the ancient world has led to confused interpretations of their nature and intention".¹⁶⁸ Although Stanton stops short of positing direct relationships of a conscious nature, his conclusion in part confirms the contentions of both Weeden and Farmer: "The gospels differ fundamentally from the biographical writing of the first centuries A.D. [perhaps not as fundamentally as Stanton thinks], but, significantly for our purpose, the differences are least in evidence when the ways in which the character of a person

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 21. Farmer is referring to the presence of the Chreia form in the gospels including Matthew. For his discussion of rhetoric and the gospels, cf. pp. 45ff. Also, cf. R.O.P. Taylor, The Groundwork of the Gospels (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), pp. 75ff.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. above, page 39, Note 50.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 117.

was portrayed are considered".¹⁶⁹ Thus all three would agree that the gospels would "have been considered in the Hellenistic world of the first century A.D. to be 'biographical', to indicate what sort of a person Jesus was".¹⁷⁰

The research mentioned above corresponds with what we have thus far argued: namely, that a first century reader, be he Greek or Roman, Jew or Gentile, Christian or otherwise, would have been thoroughly familiar with literary characterization and hence with what we have identified as literature belonging to the "encomium" biographical genre. Indeed, epideictic literature was commonplace both inside and outside the classroom. It must not be assumed that with the advent of the Suetonian and Plutarchan types of bioi the other types ceased to be in vogue. Encomia were frequently employed (Lucian) and death surely made the funeral oration no less important a form of display oratory (Tacitus's Agricola is the nearest to an example cited thus far in this study). Victories of all sorts continued to be celebrated by those with both the gift and skill of word. In this context, it is noteworthy that one scholar has traced the Christian use of

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. Perhaps a brief qualification should be added with respect to what all three would agree to: "to indicate what sort of a person Jesus was as seen through the eyes of each evangelist".

κῆρυγμα to its Hellenistic use on such festive occasions.¹⁷¹

One of the most impressive documents linking the "world of religion" with the "world of literature" at a time not far removed from that of the evangelists is Oxyrhynchus Papyri 1381, a document which, until recently, has received only occasional reference. The preface contains the story of the author and the divine task to which he is belatedly responding. The following quotation is from the preface, which must have been attached to a larger narrative devoted to the praise of a deity.

In as much as you had effectively taken note of my neglect of the divine book, O Master, I hastened on to the divinely compelled struggle with the critical task [of interpretation], after recognizing that you have foreknowledge [of this task], and after being energized by your divinity; and, I intend to spend my life interpreting your thought. (I have also, [as you know], truly explained the persuasively-argued myth of creation in another book using native speech.) Throughout the book [i.e., the 'divine book' of v. 28] I have supplied what was necessary, deleted what was superfluous, abridged a narrative where it was unnecessarily detailed, and explained, once for all, a symbolic myth. Since such a writing is in tune with your divine nature, O Master, I conclude that the book has been completed, not according to my intention but by your grace - you are the inventor of this writing.

O Asclepius, Greatest of Gods, Teacher, by the gratitude of all men [for this gift] you will be made known. For every gift of votive offering or sacrifice flourishes [with respect of making the power of

¹⁷¹Gerhard Friedrich, "κῆρυγμα", Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Gerhard Kittel, ed., Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1965), Vol. III, p. 698.

God known] only for the moment, (it presently perishes), but a writing is an indestructible gift, rejuvenating the memory (of God's power) from time to time.¹⁷²

Regretfully, the preface is all that has been preserved.

Scholars generally refer to this work as an aretalogy. The exact form and structure of the treatise, however, cannot be determined. What is important for the student of the gospels is the fact that that portion of the narrative which is extant was written by a person skilled in rhetoric¹⁷³ who employed several terms of considerable import for the evangelists:

κηρύσσω , δύναμις , διδάσκαλος , and ἀποδίδομι ,
 in addition to βίβλος and γραφή . Of particular interest, furthermore, is the obvious call and dedication of the author to his divine task and the editorial procedure he claims to have employed, both of which are evident in the above passage. Thus we encounter in P. Oxy. 1381 an educated author who shares both some of the dominant concerns and some of the terminology with the evangelists. Here, as with the gospels if to a lesser degree, the world of literature and the concerns of faith meet.

¹⁷²The extant text contains numerous inaccuracies, minor omissions, and broken sentence structure. The present restoration and translation is based upon the efforts of a graduate seminar at Southern Methodist University and involves in particular the work of Frank Collison and David Peabody.

¹⁷³B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, The Oxyrhynchus Papyri (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), Vol. XI, pp. 224-225.

There is one additional negative characteristic of the gospel narratives which has been used to argue against the kind of relationship we are attempting to establish. That characteristic is sometimes referred to as the absence of the "literary I", the absence of the personality of the author, or "indirect characterization". Stanton responds directly to this argument by noting that the primary method of character portrayal is "the recognition that a person's actions and words sum up his character more adequately than the comments of an observer" [including an author].¹⁷⁴ Consequently, an author would frequently be content to remain in the background, thereby allowing the actions and words to speak for themselves. For support, Stanton cites Xenophon's Memorabilia I, 3, 1; Evagoras 76 by Isocrates; Agesilaus I, 6; and Plutarch, Alexander, I. 2. In addition, we have previously seen this procedure adopted by Lucian in his portrayal of Demonax. Stanton therefore cautiously concludes:

This method of indirect characterisation, in which the personality of the author himself remained in the background, was a widely practised technique in ancient historiography generally. It is true, as R. Bultmann notes, that unlike Hellenistic biographies, the gospels do not let the personalities of their authors appear. But in sketching out a person's character, ancient writers were content to let the actions and words of their subject speak

¹⁷⁴Stanton, Jesus, p. 122.

for themselves; at this point the gospels do not differ markedly.¹⁷⁵

Weeden's argument is not as direct as Stanton's; but the effect is the same. Agreeing that indirect characterization was common in ancient historiography, Weeden refers to the precedent set by Livy:

Livy's view that the meaning of history is best seen in the people who act it out is well attested by the remarks addressed to his readers in the preface to his Ab Urbe Condita. . . In drawing out this meaning of history through his characters, Livy rarely offers direct personal commentary on the ramifications of their lives. He chooses, rather, to provide such interpretation indirectly by the way in which he depicts and highlights traits and actions of his characters within the historical drama . . . Often the effect which Livy wishes to create for the reader's judgment requires that he take serious liberties with historical personages: reshaping, redirecting, in fact rewriting their lives to meet his own needs. The concern for historical accuracy is set aside. The heroes are idealized. The villains are denigrated. For Livy, this is not misrepresentation of history but its proper interpretation.¹⁷⁶

In particular, Weeden concludes his analysis by stating that there is no reason why the author of Mark could not have adopted a similar indirect method of presenting his narrative. Of course, the same is equally true with respect to Matthew and Luke.

It would appear, therefore, that the relationship of the synoptic gospels to the "encomium" biographical genre is

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Weeden, Mark, pp. 15-16. Cf. P.G. Walsh, Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods (London: Cambridge Press, 1961), pp. 82-109.

not as farfetched a notion as hitherto believed. To be sure, as Schmidt and others have observed, the gospels and their writers may fall short of "high" literary endeavours. They may, indeed, be less educated as authors, and their work less "self-conscious"; but the pattern which was presented and developed by them is in many ways common to the ubiquitous pattern found in laudatory biography of the ancient world. The dramatic nature of their narratives¹⁷⁷ argues for the type of relationship which is more than accidental: natural, because of the ubiquity of the pattern, but certainly not altogether accidental.

For reasons stated above, the demonstration of the relationship of the gospels to the "encomium" biography will not be based upon comparisons on a one to one basis with examples of the genre that have been cited. The presupposed familiarity of the first century writers (including the gospel writers) with details of the genre because of its popularity outside the classroom and the important place of the encomium inside allows the demonstration of the relationship to be made on the basis of an analysis of the techniques and topoi common to both.¹⁷⁸ Our presentation will seek to show

¹⁷⁷Cf. Votaw, above, p. 4; R. Frye, above, p. 76; and Weeden, Mark, pp. 17ff.

¹⁷⁸Cairns refers to genre identification in terms of primary and secondary elements (Genre Composition, pp. 21ff.). Using these categories, the primary element of the genre we

how each gospel as a whole as well as important elements contained therein makes sense against the background of the "encomium" genre as identified in the previous chapter. The following analyses are not intended to presuppose any particular solution to the source question or the synoptic problem. Each gospel will be treated individually as a whole literary unit in a manner presupposed by the redaction and composition critics.

1. Matthew

Although it is not yet the place to discuss the question of authorial intent, I wish to begin this discussion of Matthew with a general reference to the gospels (including John). The observation is made by C.F.D. Moule in his book, The Birth of the New Testament.

It has become fashionable to relate the Gospels of Matthew and Mark primarily to Christian worship, and Luke-Acts to apologetic. But there is much to be said for finding apologetic as a prominent motive in all three Synoptic Gospels and perhaps also in St. John's Gospel, in the sense that they constitute works of 'explanation'.¹⁷⁹

have examined is the praise of the bios, and the secondary elements are the topoi and literary techniques required for the fulfilment of the praiseworthy portrait. The presence of the primary element in the gospels will become apparent in the examination of authorial intent as well as in the discussions of the topoi and literary techniques (where that intent is also in evidence).

¹⁷⁹C.F.D. Moule, The Birth of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 86.

With respect to Matthew, Moule proposes:

Here are just the sort of arguments that might have been used in such conflict, and it is easy to see Matt. as a text-book for Christians living very near (if not in) a Jewish ghetto: possibly 'near' rather than 'in', for it has been questioned whether the Christians from whom it springs were themselves Jewish . . . Here is a body of Christians 'explaining' themselves as true Israel, vis-a-vis near neighbours who spit out their name as unclean.¹⁸⁰

What is significant for the purposes of the present work is not the question of Jewish or Gentile authorship or Jew/Gentile audience, but rather the apologetic function which Moule feels the narrative serves. Such apologetic designs, as have been observed previously (be they exactly as Moule posits or no), are consistent with the manner by which authors made use of the "encomium" genre, especially as noted in the discussions of Philo, Tacitus, and Josephus. The examination of Matthew's relationship in particular to the genre will consist of an examination of the topoi, techniques, and purposes.

Topoi

The first topos with which Matthew is concerned is the family background of Jesus. This includes not only his father and mother, but also those genealogical relationships with significant figures of his Jewish heritage. It is the presentation of this topos which constitutes the precise

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

"beginning" of the gospel viewed as a literary unit.¹⁸¹ In Mt 1:1, Jesus is described as the "son of David" and the "son of Abraham"; and the genealogy which follows proposes to verify these identifications.¹⁸² The structure of the genealogy is conveyed in v. 17, at which point Matthew notes that fourteen generations separate Abraham from David, David from the deportation, and the deportation from Jesus. Aside from the fact that he only has thirteen names in the last section, this kind of structure reflects the artificiality implicit in the assertion of a theological point at the expense of genealogical history. This observation is consistent with the unhistorical nature of the gospel as a whole.

¹⁸¹In this respect, it has been noted (accurately, I think) that the phrase biblos geneleos refers to more than just the genealogy which follows. For example, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann write: "But for the first reader of Matthew, it called attention to the birth (genesis) not only of Jesus, but of the whole new order to which that birth gave rise". [Matthew, The Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1971), p. 2. Cf. also Floyd V. Filson, A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew, Black's New Testament Commentaries (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960), p. 52]. The only qualification I would add to Albright and Mann's particular observation is that it is the beginning point of Matthew's presentation of the whole new order as initiated by Jesus whose story is about to be related. Further, the genealogy is Midrashic in character, and serves as an "interpretation and goal of history" designed to establish the predetermined character of the Messiah's coming. From its reading, one knows the Messiah has come. Cf. Marshall Johnson, The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), pp. 139ff.

¹⁸²See Julius Schniewind, Das Evangelium nach Matthäus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), pp. 9f.; Ernst

The number fourteen is a plenary one, as is Philo's "seven" in his account of the generations from Abraham to Moses (Mosis, 11. 7). Stendahl's observation that Matthew's genealogy, which includes the names of three women (and a reference to a fourth), anticipates the "holy irregularity" evident in tracing the lineage of Jesus via the virgin Mary, is a reasonable conclusion.¹⁸³ The genealogy builds to a climax which is Jesus' birth. Thus, at the beginning of Matthew's gospel, Jesus is traced back through the illustrious parentage of David and Abraham, the former especially important for messianic expectation and the latter indicative of God's promise "that He would bless all the families of the earth (Gen. xii 3)".¹⁸⁴ The genealogy serves the important function of calling one's attention to the significance and anticipated accomplishments of the person with whom the whole gospel is concerned. It authenticates the identity of Jesus and makes viable subsequent identifications of Jesus with the Messiah.

Lohmeyer, Das Evangelium des Matthäus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), pp. 1f.; Krister Stendahl, "Matthew", Peake's Commentary on the Bible, Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley, eds. (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), p. 770; and J.C. Fenton, Saint Matthew (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 37ff.

¹⁸³ Stendahl, "Matthew", 674d, p. 771. Cf. also Albright and Mann, Matthew, pp. 5-6.

¹⁸⁴ Albright and Mann, Matthew, p. 5.

(e.g., 16:13f.). The genealogy, therefore, points beyond itself in preparation for accomplishments and greatness to be presented later in the narrative.

Stendahl has described the birth narrative (vv. 18-25) as an extended footnote to the genealogy which answers the question "how": i.e., how is it possible to trace the lineage back to David via a virgin? Whereas we would agree with Stendahl as to the close relationship of the birth story to the genealogy, the primary emphasis in interpretations of this passage is upon the virgin birth itself.¹⁸⁵ Hence, the genealogy brings the reader to the presence of Jesus, and the virgin birth describes the advent of the Messiah: both thereby giving emphasis to the fact that the time was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. In view of the presence of Joseph as the central character in this pericope, as Stendahl himself has observed,¹⁸⁶ it is difficult to accept the term, "footnote", without further qualification: i.e., Matthew's

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Krister Stendahl, "Quis et Unde?", Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche, Festschrift für J. Jeremias, W. Eltester, ed. (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1960), pp. 94-105 and compare with Albright and Mann, Matthew, pp. 9-10 and Theodore H. Robinson, The Gospel of Matthew, Moffat New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), pp. 4-6.

¹⁸⁶ Stendahl, "Matthew", 674, p. 771; also A.W. Argyle, The Gospel According to Matthew (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 27; and Johnson, Genealogies, p. 128.

emphasis upon Joseph supports the "legal descent" from David while the birth itself is attributed to a "virgin".¹⁸⁷

Joseph, therefore, may not be the paternal father, but his function as earthly father through whom is traced the legal descent from David is important enough for Matthew to accord him more than a mere passing reference in this text. Of special note is the fact that the revelations of God by dream are directed to Joseph (not to Mary as is the case in Luke¹⁸⁸). Further, Matthew makes a qualitative judgment concerning the character of Joseph: he is referred to as "a just man" (dikaios). This judgment is substantiated by his discussion of the question of divorce, which is described as Joseph's problem when he learns that Mary is pregnant.¹⁸⁹ Thus it would appear that the pericope serves a fourfold purpose:

¹⁸⁷E.g., Philip A. Micklem, St. Matthew (London: Methuen & Co., 1917), p. 7.

¹⁸⁸Fenton, Matthew, p. 42.

¹⁸⁹Fenton writes: "According to Deut. 22:23ff., a betrothed virgin who willingly commits fornication with a man other than her future husband is to be stoned, along with the man; and she is referred to in this passage in Deuteronomy as his neighbour's wife -- which shows that, to the Jews, betrothal was a more important step than engagement is with us; compare v. 20, where Mary is called your wife, although they are not yet married". (Ibid.) The importance of the theme of divorce is related to the dilemma Mary's pregnancy creates for Joseph (according to Matthew). Thus the consideration of a private divorce is in accord with the actions of an upright man who is concerned for Mary as well as himself. It is equally significant to note that this term appears only once more in Matthew's gospel as a designation of the character of

1) a clear indication of the fulfilment of time in connection with the birth of Jesus, 2) the tracing of Jesus' genealogy through his virgin mother, Mary, 3) the specific identification of the quality of his earthly and "legal" father as a just or righteous man, and 4) the prefacing of his birth with an act of God (dream). It will be recalled that each of these purposes coincides with the topoi commonly found in examples of "display" literature. For the relationship of the latter topos to birth, cf. Cicero (De Partitione XXIII. 82) and especially Hermogenes, who writes: "You will say what marvelous things befell at his birth, as dreams, signs or the like".¹⁹⁰

Chapter two consists of the stories of the Magi, the slaughter of the innocents, the flight into Egypt, and the settlement of the holy family in Nazareth. It is not possible here to deal with each story individually. It is generally acknowledged that there is a relationship between the relating of these events in the early life of Jesus and the early life of Moses as reported in the book of Exodus. Fenton sees in this chapter the beginning of the theme of the rejection by the Jews and the theme of the mission to the Gentiles.¹⁹¹

Jesus (in chapter 27 where Pilate's wife warns Pilate not to have anything to do with Jesus).

¹⁹⁰Clark, Rhetoric, p. 196.

¹⁹¹Fenton, Matthew, p. 44.

Stendahl tends to minimize these kinds of identifications.¹⁹²

There are parallels to the slaughter of the innocents in Hellenistic literature in addition to the life of Moses.¹⁹³

This fact reveals more about the popularity of the theme than it does about Matthew's source. One also notices throughout the chapter the presence of supernatural events (the star¹⁹⁴ guiding the Magi and the instructions to the holy family via dream) and the escape of the hero from the threat of a premature death (ingredients previously encountered in connection

¹⁹²Stendahl, "Matthew", 675, pp. 771-772.

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴The use of the dream has already been noted as an example of divine intervention which points to the excellent nature of the subject, a theme encountered in "Encomium" literature. With regard to the theme of the star related to birth, Albright and Mann note: "In the minds of the people at that time, it was inconceivable that the birth of an important personage should go unattended by a stellar harbinger, and such a star is reported to have greeted the birth of Mithridates (ca. 131-63 B.C.). A late Jewish legend ascribes such a star to the birth of Abraham. But for Judaism there was another consideration, and that was the prophetic oracle of Balaam (Num xxiv 17). The promise is that of a 'star coming from Jacob'; not only would this oracle be well known, but in circles which studied the prophets to find interpretations of the contemporary scene (such as the Essenes) such an oracle could not in the nature of the case have been without fulfilment. A messiah's advent must be hailed by a star. (The leader of the patriots in the second Jewish War, A.D. 130-135, Bar Kosba, changed his resistance name, which probably meant 'son of a young ram', to Bar Kokhba, 'son of a star'. This is known from the recently published Muraba'at letters.)" (Matthew, pp. 14-15). In spite of the statement that a messiah's birth "must" be accompanied by a "stellar harbinger", Albright and Mann do note the absence of a

with the "encomium" genre).¹⁹⁵ The essential problem of the chapter has been properly identified as the reconciliation of the traditions related to the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and those referring to the home of Jesus in Nazareth.¹⁹⁶ In this respect, the dream plays a significant role in the unfolding of events. Because of opposition implicit in the actions of Herod, Joseph is instructed by dream to flee to Egypt. After Herod's death, the family returns to Nazareth (again on the instructions of God via dream). In this way, all is fulfilled (e.g., 2:5, 15, 17, 23).¹⁹⁷ Thus in the first two chapters, Matthew has presented the illustrious lineage of Jesus via his mother, his miraculous birth of a virgin, his upright earthly father, the time and place of his birth, his escape

reference of the "that it may be fulfilled" type related to the star's appearance. Thus, here Matthew appears to be accenting the marvelous event apart from the motive of fulfillment so common elsewhere in this chapter. This leads to the conclusion that Matthew is following a more specific, genre motivation rather than making a theological assertion.

¹⁹⁵ For these motifs, cf. also Bultmann, History, pp. 292ff. Cf. below n. 198.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Robinson, Matthew, pp. 10-11; and also Ben F. Meyer, "Religion 2E6: Beginnings of Christianity", Unpublished resource for a course offered in the Department of Religion of McMaster University, p. 88. Subsequent references will be referred to as Meyer, "Notes".

¹⁹⁷ Beare cites this as one of the characteristics of Matthew. Cf. F.W. Beare, The Earliest Records of Jesus (New York: Abingdon Press 1964), pp. 30-31.

from death as an infant,¹⁹⁸ and his hometown -- all of which, accompanied by dreams, stellar illumination, and the adoration of the child, establishes the fact of Jesus' greatness from the time preceding, at the time of, and immediately following his birth. Though Matthew does possibly have sources before him in these two chapters, I am inclined to accord him credit for the essential structure and emphases, if not its total composition.¹⁹⁹ In any case, it is evident that through chapter two, Matthew's gospel would appeal to both Jew and Gentile, and it would qualify as a good example of the manner in which the ancients praised their heroes.

The issues in chapter three are concerned with the baptism of Jesus and the person and work of John the Baptist. John is clearly identified with Elijah, and is thus a forerunner of the Messiah. The real climax of the story occurs

¹⁹⁸This theme is cited by Quintilian (III. 7. 5) as evidence for divine origin. We have encountered it previously in Isocrates's Evagoras (above, pp. 135-136), in Philo's Mosis derived from the sources at his disposal (above, p. 146), and in a related manner, in Tacitus's Agricola (above, p. 153).

¹⁹⁹The question of the composition of the first four chapters of Matthew's gospel continues to be the object of much discussion. The opinion of the present critic coincides with those of Dibelius, From Tradition, pp. 128-129; Bultmann, History, pp. 291-293; and K. Stendahl, The School of St. Matthew (Uppsala: G.W.K. Gleerup, 1954), p. 204. If it should turn out to be the case that Matthew (i.e., the "final" redactor) did not actually compose this part of Matthew, it is nevertheless clear that he applauded its essential design and approved its incorporation into the narrative.

with the baptism itself which is performed at Jesus' insistence followed by a theophany account in which the spirit of God descends in the form of a dove and alights on Jesus.

The whole episode seems to depict the empowering of Jesus by God's spirit; and the voice from heaven says, "This is my

beloved Son . . ."²⁰⁰ Usual interpretations of this chapter tend to view these events as related in some manner to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Stendahl, for example, has stated: "All the four Gospels begin with John the Baptist

. . ."²⁰¹ In a similar manner, Meyer places the baptism account under the heading, "The Ministry of Jesus", and refers to it as an "initiation event".²⁰² In support of these interpretations is the obvious problematic gap in time between the settlement of Jesus and his family in Nazareth and the advent of John. From a literary point of view, however, one wonders if Matthew is not continuing a trend of thought begun in chapter one: one which will not be broken until the actual beginning of Jesus' ministry in 4:12. In chapter one, Jesus is identified as "son of David". In chapter two, Herod's fear is the threat to his throne, i.e.,

²⁰⁰ So Bultmann, History, p. 250.

²⁰¹ Stendahl, "Matthew", 676a, p. 772.

²⁰² Meyer, "Notes", p. 89. Cf. also Argyle who writes: "John the Baptist marks the beginning of the Christian message of salvation" (Matthew, p. 35).

the misunderstood implications of messianic kingship. In chapter three, the identity has progressed to divine sonship (recognized by Meyer as central²⁰³). And in chapter 4:1-11, it is this latter identity which provides the occasion for the temptation (cf. vv. 3 and 6).²⁰⁴ Thus it would seem that all of 1-4:11 constitutes a preliminary section emphasizing clearly the identity of Jesus, an identity set forth by Matthew in his account of the background and early signs related to Jesus. In this way Matthew has prepared his readers for the full impact and authority of the ministry of Jesus which is to occupy a major section of his gospel. This literary procedure, as was noted previously, is common in what has been identified as the "encomium" genre.²⁰⁵ What has been substituted for accounts of early childhood and youth excellences are baptism and temptation accounts: themes far more appropriate to the religious nature of this subject than to accounts of kings, philosophers, statesmen, and the like.

²⁰³Meyer, "Notes", p. 92.

²⁰⁴Gerhardsson feels that it is this identity which provides the exegetical key to the passage as a whole. Cf. Birger Gerhardsson, The Testing of God's Son (Lund: C.G.K. Gleerup, 1966), pp. 19ff.

²⁰⁵The procedure referred to is the practice of beginning with the birth account and continuing through early signs of greatness based upon early childhood and youth excellences. Such accounts point beyond themselves thereby making more convincing and intelligible the praiseworthy character of the adult which is the primary concern.

Whereas the difference between this understanding of 1-4:11 and that of Meyer is very slight in that "initiation" is not yet involvement in the "ministry", this view would seem to conflict with such structural analyses as those of Bacon,²⁰⁶ Kilpatrick,²⁰⁷ and Stendahl,²⁰⁸ whose arguments for a five-fold structure in Matthew include the presence of related narrative material preceding each discourse (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount preceded by chapters three and four). While the view affirmed by the present author in no way detracts from the theological meanings of the individual units, it does support an understanding of both the baptism and temptation accounts as preliminary events, along with the birth narratives, so presented by Matthew as to make the reader more receptive to the authority and integrity of the account of the ministry of Jesus which does not properly begin until John's arrest (4:12ff.).

The temptation account of 4:1-11 has given rise to numerous interpretations. In each of the three synoptic gospels, the account is closely related to the baptism; and it is the spirit who leads Jesus into the wilderness. Satan, the figure who tempts, is fully aware of Jesus' identity as

²⁰⁶Cf. B.W. Bacon, Studies in Matthew (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1930).

²⁰⁷G.D. Kilpatrick, The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), pp.135-136.

²⁰⁸Stendahl, School, pp. 24-25; and "Matthew", p. 770.

"son of God" (vv. 3 and 6). There are three specific episodes of tempting, two of which are prefaced by the phrase, "if you are the son of God . . ." Fenton tends to identify Jesus with the whole of Israel on the ground that Jesus's responses to Satan (which are based on Deuteronomy) refer to the "testing of Israel in the wilderness, after crossing the Red Sea".²⁰⁹ Whereas Beare agrees,²¹⁰ Best argues against this interpretation, but his argument is weak.²¹¹ Meyer writes: "The three temptations have a fundamental unity: Jesus is urged to initiate his messianic destiny spontaneously, without waiting on God".²¹² In addition, Stendahl notes: "In this pericope, . . . 'temptation' covers the meaning well although it should be remembered that by overcoming Satan Jesus has withstood the assault of him who puts Jesus' followers through trials and tribulations, trying to make them apostates, see 24:12, 22, etc.". ²¹³ Whatever particular interpretation one adopts, it is apparent that the literary unit presents Jesus as a person whose character evidences considerable moral strength: a person capable both of

²⁰⁹Fenton, Matthew, p. 62. ²¹⁰Beare, Earliest, p. 43.

²¹¹Ernest Best, The Temptation and the Passion: the Markan Soteriology (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), p. 5.

²¹²Meyer, "Notes", p. 94.

²¹³Stendahl, "Matthew", 677c, p. 774.

withstanding temptation and of giving spiritual and scriptural leadership. As Gerhardsson notes: "Jesus was tempted in everything, as we are, yet he was without sin".²¹⁴ It should not be forgotten that we have encountered others whose characters were elevated for praise because their vocational choices were not swayed by various other tempting possibilities (e.g., Agricola by fame, Moses by his royal inheritance in Egypt, and Démonax by wealth). In each case, Jesus included, the allegiance to "higher" aims and responsibilities is indeed commendable and authenticating. It is precisely at this point in the narrative that Matthew turns to the account of the ministry of Jesus.

The final group of topoi to be considered will be those surrounding the death of Jesus. The problems surrounding the composition of the Passion narrative are too complex to be discussed in detail.²¹⁵ One can say, however, that there is considerable truth to the statement that all that is recorded prior to the death and resurrection in the gospels is designed to lead the reader up to these climactic events. Specific references to the impending death of Jesus begin in Matthew's gospel as early as 16:21ff. Three additional

²¹⁴Gerhardsson, Testing, p. 79.

²¹⁵For a brief view of the complexities of this problem, one might begin with the discussions by Dibelius (From Tradition, pp. 178ff.) and Bultmann (History, pp. 262ff.).

predictions are to follow before the account of the death is actually presented and only two of these predictions have Marcan and Lucan parallels. These initial observations serve to demonstrate the importance of Jesus' death to the tradition and the importance of the event for Matthew. Our concern is particularly with the manner in which Matthew specifically develops his account of this event and what accompanies its occurrence.

The death of Jesus is attributed to the plotting and planning of Jesus' opponents.²¹⁶ In Mt 26:3-5, the chief priests and the elders take counsel against him in order "to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him" (par. Mk 14:1/Lk 22:2). They again take counsel in Mt 27:1/Mk 15:1/Lk 22:66, but only Matthew repeats the sinister design: "to put him to death". Following the arrest, it is only Matthew who includes the story of the repentance and death of Judas (27:3-10). This particular story has been properly called an aetiological tale²¹⁷ to which has been added the theme of fulfilment.²¹⁸ From a literary point of view, one cannot fail to see how

²¹⁶A more extensive treatment of this theme will be presented below in connection with Matthew's use of the technique of comparison, pp. 214ff.

²¹⁷In this respect, it explains the name, "Field of Blood" (v. 8). Cf. Bultmann, History, p. 272 and Argyle; Matthew, pp. 210-211.

²¹⁸The fulfilment passage to which this pericope refers is Zech 11:12f. Cf. Robinson, Matthew, p. 225; Albright and Mann, Matthew, pp. 340-341; and Fenton, Matthew, p. 431.

this special treatment by Matthew reflects upon Jesus' character and innocence. His own betrayer has realized his mistake and has attempted unsuccessfully to rectify it.

When one compares the supernatural events surrounding the death of Jesus in each of the gospels, he finds that there is an intensification in Matthew's account at several notable points. Pilate, for example, is warned to have nothing to do with Jesus, who is described as a "righteous man".²¹⁹ This warning (only in Matthew) is issued by Pilate's wife as the result of a dream (27:19).²²⁰ Both Matthew and Mark include references to the darkness over the land at the time of Jesus' death (27:45) and to the damage to the curtain in the temple (27:51), but it is Matthew alone who adds the further word: "the earth shook and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went and appeared to many" (27: 51b-53). This reference to the earthquake and the additional phenomena of resurrection and appearance is in Matthew related specifically to Jesus' death, even though a portion of the text obviously refers to Jesus' resurrection. It

²¹⁹ Cf. above, p. 191 for the use of dikaios in connection with Joseph.

²²⁰ See, for example, the use of dream in chapters 1-2, above, pp. 191ff.

certainly adds to the dramatic significance of the occasion.

Fenton writes: "These legendary events are included by Matthew to show that the death of Jesus was an act of God, which God endorsed by the earthquake and by splitting the rocks; . . ."²²¹ Stendahl agrees, adding that the reference to the dead rising "must have been a piece of primitive Christology" which did not survive since it did not fit into what came to be the basic Christology "with Jesus as the 'first fruit of those who had fallen asleep' (I Cor 15:20)".²²² It also seems to be a testimony that with Christ "the general resurrection has begun".²²³ Finally, it is only in Matthew that a second earthquake is reported on the first day of the week as a preface to the descent of an angel whose appearance is described as being like lightning and whose raiment is white as snow. Regardless of the precise interpretation one chooses to adopt individually, all of these events serve as remarkable literary proof of and testimony to the significance of Jesus' death in accordance with God's design and the magnificence of the resurrection by which Jesus is glorified.

The accounts surrounding the death of Jesus also provide the occasion on which Matthew elaborates on the innocence

²²¹Fenton, Matthew, p. 444. Cf. also Albright and Mann, Matthew, pp. 351-352.

²²²Stendahl, "Matthew", 694c, p. 797.

²²³Ibid.

of Jesus. In this connection, reference has already been made to the repentance and suicide of Judas. Further, Stendahl thinks that the dream of Pilate's wife anticipates the Matthean addition in which Pilate washes his hands of the guilt of Jesus' blood (27:24-25), a direct indication of his personal view of Jesus' innocence. In addition, not only did the centurion and others witness the damage to the temple (Mt 27:51/Mk 15:38), in Matthew they witnessed the additional signs and responded in unison: "Truly this was a son of God!" (cf. Mt 27:54/Mk 15:39/Lk 23:47).²²⁴

Finally, Matthew reserves a special place for the soldiers at the tomb. In Mt 27:63f., Pilate establishes a guard to prevent the theft of Jesus' body and to squelch all possible rumours of a resurrection. Only a few verses later (28:4), it is the soldiers themselves who are witnesses to the rolling away of the stone from the tomb by the gloriously adorned angel; and their response is one of extreme fear. Still later (28:11-15), the soldiers are bribed and instructed to change their testimony in such a way as to accuse the disciples of having stolen the body. No doubt

²²⁴The structure of the verse would tend to represent certain confirmation on the part of "neutral" -- no, biased testimony of the opposition and therefore more conclusive for Matthew's purposes -- witnesses to the proposed identity offered progressively in chapters 1-4:11 (above, pp. 196f.). This identification, Jesus as son of God, has most certainly been questioned; for no "son of God" could conceivably have died in such a humiliating manner.

these events are directed to the accusation current during the evangelist's time against the fact of the resurrection.

As Bultmann has noted:

It is further possible to reckon among the faith legends those that are due to apologetic motives: . . . The stories about the sepulchre guards Matt. 27:62-66, 28:11-15; and a number of small features in the Passion narrative, . . . 225

Consequently, Matthew's readership can rest assured of the resurrection based not only upon the empty tomb account but also upon the direct testimony from the guards, commissioned by the Jewish authorities, who witnessed the event. In a striking literary manner, therefore, Matthew employs Jesus's judge as proof of his innocence, his betrayer as testimony to the truth of Jesus's ministry and mission, the centurion and others as witness to his divine sonship (confirmed in the face of his humiliation), soldiers posted at the tomb at the insistence of his enemies as proof of his resurrection, and natural phenomena as evidence for the significance of the events in relation to God's action. Thus Matthew, by elaborating and amplifying, successfully transforms for his readers the lowliest form of death in the Greco-Roman period into a victorious glorification of Jesus: a literary task which would be equal to any school exercise assigned on the

²²⁵Bultmann, History, p. 306. Cf. also Stendahl, "Matthew", 695h, p. 798.

basis of the difficulty of the subject matter. A humiliating manner of death has been so presented as to solicit both praise and faith from the reader.

Techniques

When we turn our attention to the techniques employed by Matthew for the accomplishment of his purposes, several observations are worthy of note. Matthew does not attempt to trace the steps of Jesus throughout his entire life; but when he does cite geographical references, they seem to convey theological meaning.²²⁶ He displays certain "historicizing" tendencies which are simply the processes of creating the character of history around the transmission of the kerygma.²²⁷ Matthew prefers the use of "formula quotations" and authenticates his narrative by the use of Old Testament questions.²²⁸ In addition to these, he displays a preference for the presentation of collections of material: e.g., the Sermon on the Mount (5-7), the mission charge (10), parabolic materials (13), church discipline (18), and teaching concerning the

²²⁶Lohmeyer, Matthäus, cf. pp. 152-153, 161-163, 230, 295-296; and Meyer, "Notes", p. 80.

²²⁷Marxsen, Introduction, p. 146; and G. Strecker, "The Concept of History in Matthew", JAAR, 35(1967), pp. 219-230.

²²⁸Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 78-79; also, Marxsen, Introduction, p. 147. For an excellent analysis of Matthew's use of scripture in his overall scheme, cf. Farmer, "Jesus and the Gospels", pp. 37ff.

Pharisees, the parousia, and the last judgment (23-25).²²⁹ Fenton even suggests that these five discourses have been organized by Matthew into a concentric structure.²³⁰ Held has successfully shown that the series of miracles and related material of chapters 8-9 represent a thematic unity.²³¹ In connection with these observations, only a few parallels may be offered in passing for consideration. Regarding the use of geographical references for purposes other than precise historical documentation, one need only read Tacitus's Agri- cola. The presentation of an apparent historical setting for the purposes of verifying a point of the author is not uncommon in literature belonging to what has been identified as "encomium" biography (cf., e.g., the speeches of Calgacus and Agricola) in Agricola 29-36). In connection with verification from scripture, one on occasion encounters quotations from ancient poets to support the praiseworthiness of a given subject.²³² It is equally clear that the organization of the

²²⁹The particular scheme of the discourse materials above was taken from Marxsen, Introduction, p. 146. The scheme will vary slightly from author to author (e.g., Kilpatrick and Stendahl), but there is agreement that a stereotype phrase ends each section (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; and 26:1).

²³⁰J.C. Fenton, "Inclusio and Chiasmus in Matthew", Texte und Untersuchungen, Walther Eltester and Erich Klostermann, eds. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1959), Vol. I, pp. 174-179.

²³¹Held, "Interpreter", pp. 211ff.

²³²In at least two of his lives, Plutarch uses quotations from ancient poets in support of the praiseworthiness

text into thematically related units is not foreign to the prescriptions of the encomium.²³³ Even though the immediate milieu may indeed be Jewish (e.g., reference to scriptural authority) and even though the theological significance of each of the above observations may overshadow the conclusiveness of the above parallels offered for consideration, one should note that these procedures are well within the scope of the techniques evident in the "encomium" genre as posited above, if not entirely derived from it (e.g., organizational procedures and unhistorical considerations).

With respect to the particularly characteristic techniques isolated for discussion in connection with the "encomium" genre, i.e., amplification and comparison, it will be observed that both have been employed by Matthew. The technique of amplification has been encountered previously and need only be summarized briefly. The emphasis upon the

of his subjects (Philopoemen XI, 2-3 and Aristides III, 4). It is true that Plutarch has not been identified specifically as representative of an author whose works may be classified without qualification among the examples of "encomium" biography. What has been stated in connection with Plutarch's task is that his emphasis upon the "qualities of the soul" or the character he seeks to portray places the techniques and topoi at his disposal even though he has apparently not chosen to employ them in every instance apart from the techniques of history writing. It must be admitted, however, that evidence derived from these kinds of parallels is not conclusive in every instance.

²³³Cf. above, pp. 114-115.

identity of Jesus as it progresses through 1-4:11 almost at the total expense of the recording of the early historical events in a life of Jesus would represent the first example. The second consists of the discussion of the topoi surrounding Jesus' death. The manner in which both of these sections are heightened and elaborated upon by the use of dream, supernatural phenomena, and the additional presence of witnesses are sure examples of this technique. In addition to these two examples which have been discussed previously in a different context, amplification is also evident in the particular portions of Jesus' life chosen for presentation by Matthew. As is the case with Josephus's autobiographical account, only a relatively small portion of the whole has been selected for elaboration and presentation: namely, the brief preliminary traditions relating to the birth and (to the prelude to the beginning of the ministry per se, the ministry itself which must be viewed as representing only a concentrated portion of his life, and the accounts of his death and subsequent events of his glorification. Whereas these relatively few periods chosen for presentation would hardly qualify the end result as an example of a complete "life" in modern terms, they are most certainly adequate for the portrait Matthew wishes to create and project. In this respect, Matthew does not differ markedly from other "lives"

of the same period. After all, from these concentrated traditions, one can well discern the identity projected, the message proclaimed and the actions performed, the nature of the opposition Matthew offers as the reason for Jesus' death, and the actions and purposes of God throughout the entire process. In other words, these are the traditions Matthew has decided to "amplify" in his narrative in order to accomplish his particular ends; and the literary decisions implicit in his choices are well within the scope and characteristics of the "encomium" genre. The same type of decision must have been operative, for example, in Josephus's autobiography,²³⁴ and in Philo's Mosis,²³⁵ and they are implied in Plutarch's preface to his life of Alexander.²³⁶ Indeed, a preface similar to that of Plutarch would have been appropriate for Matthew's narrative. Thus rather than serving as a viable argument for the removal of Matthew's gospel from bios literature, the limited scope of Matthew's narrative specifically argues for its inclusion within the "encomium" biographical genre when viewed from the perspective of the technique of amplification, a technique in which incompleteness serves the author's purposes. If this technique is

²³⁴Cf. above, pp. 160ff.

²³⁵Cf. above, pp. 142ff.

²³⁶Cf. above, pp. 84-85.

taken seriously by New Testament critics, then it would seem to call into question, if not completely remove from the arena of the synoptic problem, arguments based solely upon the omission of tradition.²³⁷

The technique of comparison is also present in Matthew and may be addressed in a more precise manner. In chapter three, Matthew performs a very important task for his audience. He presents the traditions which convey the relationship between two very important figures, Jesus and John the Baptist (previously discussed in connection with Jesus' baptism). It is apparent, from the traditions of John the Baptist as preserved in all of the gospels and Acts, that John was an important figure in his own right, that he

²³⁷Perhaps examples of the type of argument to which we refer should be made more explicit. Take, for example, the following: Mark must have preceded Matthew; otherwise, how can one account for the absence of so many of the sayings traditions from his narrative? Or, similarly: if Luke had had Matthew before him, how is one to account for the discrepancies which are obvious between Matthew's presentation of the Sermon on the Mount and Luke's Sermon on the Plain (or the Lord's Prayer, for that matter)? There are several fallacies in the above arguments even though the logic implicit in them may appear sound. For one thing, it presupposes that the precise intentions of each author are in our possession to the extent that one can say that Mark would have functioned in a certain way were all of the materials before him. For another, it presupposes a loyalty to the tradition which may not have in fact been operative. In spite of the fact that loyalty to tradition is apparent in the synoptics, it is certain that allegiance to the traditions was not always exercised in rote fashion apart from authorial intent. For another, the tension between "author" and "copier" may be far more complex than most are willing to admit. In any case, these arguments (and others like them) must be

both preached and baptized, and that he attracted a following of disciples.²³⁸ What is important for present considerations is the manner in which Matthew structures these traditions which depict the relation of Jesus to John. To begin with, Matthew allows the tradition of John to reflect the important relation between the two. John is a voice in the wilderness preparing the way of the Lord. Matthew differs from both Mark and Luke (and John) by his presentation of the content of John's preaching as identical with that of Jesus (cf. Mt 3:2 and 4:17). Both Matthew and Luke preserve the tradition found in Mt 3:7-10; but Matthew identifies the group coming for baptism as the Pharisees and Sadducees, whereas Luke identifies them as the "multitudes". Thus Matthew brings into parallel the message

considered highly suspect in view of the varying emphases evident when one gospel is set along side of another. The answer to such arguments may be as simple as this: what is omitted was not considered essential, for one reason or another, to the particular portrait Mark (Matthew or Luke) was attempting to paint. Or, conversely, it may point to complexities which are impossible for the historian to unravel. Hopefully, the answers to the problems to which such arguments have been addressed lie somewhere in between these two polar positions.

²³⁸For relevant discussions pertaining to John the Baptist traditions, cf. Dibelius, From Tradition, pp. 124f.; Bultmann, History, p. 294; C.H. Kraeling, John the Baptist (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964); and William Robinson, Der Weg des Herrn, Theologische Forschung (Hamburg: Herbert Reich, 1964), p. 15.

and opponents of Jesus with the message and opponents of John.²³⁹ The final ingredient in Matthew's narrative worthy of note is the conversation between Jesus and John immediately preceding the baptism (a conversation peculiar to Matthew). So that the reader will not mistakenly consider Jesus as having become a disciple of John through baptism (a conclusion warranted by the identification of John's message and opponents with those of Jesus), John himself balks momentarily. By his own testimony, in which he reveals his willingness to be baptized by Jesus, he clearly eliminates any claim of his or his followers to supremacy over Jesus, or even equality with him. In fact, John's significance through his identification with Elijah serves to enhance the importance of Jesus in the eyes of those who read this account. John is indeed one preparing the way for another, another greater than he. Following the baptism, the heavenly voice and the descent of the dove add further confirmation to the precise role of each. It is further to be noted that John (in Matthew) is placed under arrest prior to the beginning of Jesus' ministry, presumably to avoid any possible confusion. Therefore, secondary to the empowering of Jesus by the Spirit

²³⁹ The harmonizing of the opponents (and message) of Jesus with John's is not evident until one reads further in the gospel. Here, John is portrayed as if on his own terms.

is the following critical literary affirmation: if John can be considered great, as indeed he can be and is, how much more evident is the superiority of Jesus.

A brief examination of the relationship between Jesus and his opponents is equally instructive for Matthew's use of the technique of comparison. For the most part, Matthew's presentation is consistent with Mark and Luke both in the order and content of the conflict pericopes. It should be added, however, that Matthew treats Jesus' conflict with his opponents in a more dramatic and progressive manner. The initial indications of opposition are covert and indirect. The first indication of what is to come appears at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount to which there are no Marcan or Lucan parallels: "And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes" (7:28-29). Here the reference is obviously to the superiority of the authority of Jesus to that of the scribes. Though unstated, the seeds of envy have been planted. The second indication appears in 9:10 (par. Mk 2:16/Lk 5:30), at which point the Pharisees ask his disciples: "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" To this question Jesus offers a general response, one not directly addressed to the Pharisees. It is as though the Pharisees are

not present for Jesus' response. In 9:34 Matthew adds the comment that Jesus is casting out demons by the prince of demons, a charge levelled by the Pharisees (no parallels). To this charge, Jesus makes no reply as he does in 12:22f., at which point the same charge is made. The fourth preliminary reference appears in chapter 10, where Jesus warns his disciples, whom he has just commissioned to go to the House of Israel (10:6), of the opposition they will encounter (10:16-25). There are no parallels to the pericopes cited in chapter 10. It is apparent that the rejection his disciples will encounter will be the same as that which Jesus himself is about to experience. Thus prior to 12:1 and the episode involving the picking of grain on the Sabbath, the opposition to Jesus is minimized and the direct conflict between Jesus and his opponents is largely avoided in favour of developing the reader's anticipation of what is to come. In this way, it would seem that Matthew has sought to prepare his readers for the direct conflict which is eventually to result in Jesus's death.

The conflict stores are presented in a more direct and intense manner with the beginning of 12:1ff.. Jesus is confronted directly when his disciples pluck grain on the Sabbath, and he is challenged when he heals the man with the withered arm (12:1-13). At the conclusion of the second

pericope, there appears the first reference to the plot against his life: "But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him, how to destroy him" (y. 14). There are two additional conflict stores in chapter twelve, and the reader is aware for the remainder of the narrative up to the time of his death that the opposition to him is both overt and sinister. The particular view of Matthew is also apparent in this general portion of the ministry when Matthew uses as the context for 12:38f. (for which there are no Marcan or Lucan parallels) the theme of the seeking of a sign, a theme which also appears in 16:1f. (which has Marcan and Lucan parallels: cf. Mt 9:34 and 11:22f./Mk 3:19f./Lk 11:14f.).

The conflict narratives again become concentrated in chapter 21 and build to a climactic point in 22:45. Mark and Luke have a similar climax (cf. Mk 12:34 and Lk 20:40), but Matthew's account is again distinctive. Throughout the conflict narratives to this point, Jesus has seemed content to "holding his own" amid conflict. In 22:41-46, however, he is pictured for the first time as the aggressor (following a series of confrontations at the instigation of his opponents) and he asks the Pharisees a question (a context totally different from the Marcan and Lucan parallels). Matthew describes the response of silence in the following manner: "no one was able to answer a word, . . ." (22:46a, peculiar to

Matthew). Then follows the statement: ". . . nor from that day did any one dare to ask him any more questions". (22:46b/Mk 12:34/Lk 20:40). Thus in Matthew, whereas Jesus successfully answered all of his opponents' charges and questions, his opponents were at a loss to answer his challenge. Conclusion? Jesus is superior to his opponents, a fact which accounts in part for his eventual suffering and death. The answer, of course, is true with each of the synoptic gospels, but Matthew sets up the comparison in his own dramatic way: there is an initial phase of impending conflict, a phase of direct conflict during which time both sides are actively engaged (Jesus primarily defensively), and the climax at which point the superiority of Jesus is affirmed without question. Throughout the entire process, one is reminded of the envy previously encountered in works related to the "encomium" genre: the envy encountered by Moses prior to his first flight from Egypt, the envy attributed to the opponents of Josephus, and the envy successfully avoided by the humble actions of Agricola which account for his longevity. In fact, according to Matthew (par. Mk 15:10), it is Pilate who recognizes that Jesus stands before him for judgment because of envy (27:18), envy which must have been generated in part by the conflicts cited above. Matthew's dramatic treatment of conflict and the victory of his main character is consistent

with what one might expect from an author whose hero's actions and life, following an unjust and degrading death, are glorified by God's act of resurrection.

What is true with John the Baptist and Jesus' opponents is also true of all other personages in Matthew's gospel. However commendable or degrading their actions, Matthew's characters serve to focus upon the central character, Jesus. To be sure, Matthew is not as harsh on the disciples as is Mark,²⁴⁰ but he does preserve a sufficient amount of material revealing their weaknesses so that the central character stands out. Another example of the constant focus upon the central character is the way in which Matthew uses the opinions of the other characters to demonstrate various points he wishes to make. In this respect, we have already noted the warning of Pilate's wife in which her opinion of Jesus as a "righteous man" is stated (29:19, no Marcan or Lucan parallels), the testimony of the centurion and others together to the fact that this man was a son of God (27:54f./Mk 15:39/Lk 23:47), and possibly the account of Judas committing suicide. To these may be added the impression Jesus made on Pilate (cf. "But he gave them no answer, not even to a single charge; so that the governor

²⁴⁰ Cf. Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, Tradition, pp. 118ff.

wondered greatly"²⁴¹ [Mt 27:14] in comparison with "But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate wondered" [Mk 15:5], and Pilate's symbolic attempt to rid himself of the responsibility of the crucifixion by means of the washing of hands (cf. 27:24f. to which there are no Marcan or Lucan parallels). These techniques remind one of Isocrates's use of Theseus in connection with his praise of Helen and of Philo's use of the opinion of all nations related to Jewish law, an opinion which adds to the stature of the lawmaker, Moses.²⁴² More important, the technique of comparison as illustrated in this discussion demonstrates the affinity of the gospel of Matthew to those narratives composed in the ancient world for the praise and presentation of a historical bios. One may conclude, therefore, that Matthew, like the treatises cited in the previous chapter as examples of the "encomium" literature, utilizes both amplification and comparison in a manner which is essential to the structure and purposes of his gospel.

Purpose

What has been demonstrated in this chapter thus far are ways in which Matthew may be understood in relation to bios literature. There is sufficient evidence for one to

²⁴¹ Underlining indicates phrases peculiar to Matthew.

²⁴² Cf. also the prescriptions of Theon as presented by Marrou, above, pp. 117-118.

identify ingredients common with this literature. There are traditions about the birth, family, heritage, death, and what happened after death. There are testimonies of men in authority, opponents, natural events, and dreams which accent the points Matthew seeks to make in relation to Jesus. In the place of accounts of early childhood, there have been substituted stories of initiation and preliminary events which point ahead to and display his greatness and identity prior to and beginning with his ministry. There is conflict with and sinister plots against Jesus. There are stories of his actions and story settings for the presentation of his message. Matthew has employed techniques of organization, amplification, and comparison which are similar to those employed by other authors of "encomium" biographies. Up to this point, one might be willing to say that Matthew's work may be classified with the other biographical works referred to as the "encomium" genre. There remains one additional question to consider before drawing such a conclusion: namely, the question of Matthew's intentions.

An extensive treatment of Matthew's intent or literary purpose is beyond the scope of the present work. Many have undertaken such treatments and the results are varied. Moule, for example, would offer an apologetic motive.²⁴³

²⁴³ Moule, Birth, pp. 86ff.

Stendahl would see a didactic function closely akin to a book of discipline.²⁴⁴ Trilling sees in Jesus' presentation by Matthew the assertion of the Christian Church as the "new Israel".²⁴⁵ Strecker views it as a radical demand of righteousness,²⁴⁶ while Walker discusses Matthew's work in terms of Heilsgeschichte.²⁴⁷ Perhaps the common denominator undergirding each of these analyses and interpretations (along with the numerous others not mentioned) is the recognition that Matthew's gospel is interested in more than the person of Jesus. Walker, for example, has stated this explicitly: "Aus dem Gesagten ergibt sich, dass Matthäus in seinem Evangelium mehr schreibt als eine vita Jesu".²⁴⁸ Indeed, what is presupposed by each is the fact noted by Dibelius and Bultmann that the gospels were interested in Jesus as Messiah, and Matthew is no exception. This was demonstrated in the present work in the analysis of chapters 1-4:11, and the identification of Jesus as Messiah continues to permeate the work (e.g., 8-9, 16, etc.) through 28:16-20, at which point

²⁴⁴Stendahl, School. Moule also tends to lean in this direction: cf. Birth, p. 86.

²⁴⁵Wolfgang Trilling, Das Wahre Israel (München: Kosel-Verlag, 1964).

²⁴⁶Georg Strecker, Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962).

²⁴⁷Rolf Walker, Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967).

²⁴⁸Ibid., p. 114. Underlining mine.

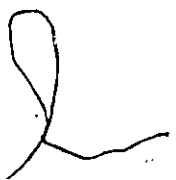
the presence of the glorified and finally victorious Messiah provides the occasion for the divine commission to go to all of the world. Furthermore, it is this identification that accounts for Matthew's use of the Old Testament references and his particular identification of the Messiah by quoting passages from Isaiah.²⁴⁹ This messianic nature of the subject, i.e., Jesus is the Christ, accounts for the distinctive character of the gospel narratives.

The bios materials of the Greco-Roman world are never confronted with the task of establishing the identity of the subject under consideration. Plutarch is never confronted with the task of proving that Alexander was a military general or a great ruler of the Greek world. Tacitus does not have to establish the fact that Agricola was ruler of Britain as a representative of Rome, nor does he seek to show that Agricola was the greatest ruler Britain has ever had. The question of praise or defense is, therefore, one of sifting through the traditions and presenting them in such a manner as to praise or defend a recognized personage. Thus one may wonder why Socrates died, and his death may have been the result of injustice; but there was never any doubt that Socrates was a great philosopher. Nor does it appear that an

²⁴⁹ For a clear and concise discussion of the import of Isaiah for the Matthean narrative, cf. Farmer, "Jesus", pp. 37ff. and 49ff.

encomium's purpose was to establish the fact that Evagoras was the man: i.e., the greatest man who ever lived.

But when one turns to the gospel of Matthew (Mark and Luke as well), one is confronted by precisely this kind of superlative: Jesus is Christ, the Christ. The kerygma is inherent in the subject of the narrative. Matthew states his subject in the first line of his text: "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham". And this purpose accounts for the digression from those prescriptions usually attributed to biographical works in general. Though one, for example, can cite references in the rhetorical schools of the relative unimportance of physical appearances (e.g., Quintilian III 7. 12), the omission of such references and those of personal virtues in the gospels is more easily understood in terms of the messianic proclamation which is the subject of these narratives. It is this kerygmatic purpose that makes such references unnecessary in Matthew. In laudatory biographies, such characteristics serve to indicate accomplishments and development at an early age thereby laying the groundwork for praise which is to follow in the account. In the case of Matthew, accounts of baptism and temptation simply perform the task more effectively. By the same token, the nature of the messianic subject intensified the attention to Old Testament documentation, the nature



and meaning of messiahship, the clear delineation of the role of suffering, the function of miracle, the word, the death which by its very nature would call the messianic identity with Jesus into question, and the full significance of the resurrection and post-resurrection Christian community (which now includes the Gentiles). These particular concerns of Matthew warrant the use of the term "distinct" in connection with other types of bios literature. But, as has been demonstrated, they do not warrant his removal from those other types which affirm the praiseworthiness of the subject, especially those we have identified as belonging to the "encomium" biographical genre.

What Matthew desires from his reading and listening audience is indeed praise: but, even more important, the assent to Christ's messiahship in the form of faith. He has obviously employed those topoi and techniques which would elicit such a response and has done so with his audience in mind. He is concerned with words, deeds, and apology. He has placed these elements in a bios context: i.e., the life of the Messiah in which a chronological account of events is of little consequence. Matthew's gospel, therefore, can be understood as an "encomium" type: it belongs to what may be called the "encomium" biographical genre. (The fact that its milieu is both Greco-Roman and Jewish and the fact that

Matthew has made use of a popular literary genre account for its popular reception and continued preservation.

2. Mark

Mark has occupied a special place in the genre discussion of the gospels. This is because of the position it has held under the Two-document hypothesis as the earliest of the four gospels. So considered, scholars traditionally begin with the discussion of the generic character of Mark and proceed to show how the "later" authors expanded upon or altered the Marcan text in their own development of the "gospel" form. Marxsen, for example, in his work following the principles of redaction criticism, adds a separate section to each of his four studies in Mark; two bearing the title, "Alterations in the Major Gospels",²⁵⁰ and two, "Further Development in the Major Gospels".²⁵¹ Weeden likewise adopts a similar methodology in order to demonstrate his analysis of the Marcan materials.²⁵² Although it is not possible, because of the nature of the materials, to avoid reference to

²⁵⁰Willi Marxsen, Mark the Evangelist (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969), pp. 44ff. and 95ff. The original version, published in German, was published in 1956 by Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, Germany.

²⁵¹Ibid., pp. 138ff. and 189ff.

²⁵²Weeden, Traditions. Though not demonstrable from a structural standpoint, an example of this type of argument is evident on pp. 138ff. and many other places.

the direct relationship of each gospel to the other, it is not our purpose to defend or argue against any particular solution to the synoptic problem. Until such time as an adequate solution does in fact emerge critically, the questions which have been raised by Farmer²⁵³ and others continue to contravene our attempt to trace a trajectory of development with any real degree of certainty. This does not, however, deter us from our ~~task~~ of identifying the relationship of Mark (as previously illustrated in the case of Matthew) to the literary genre identified in chapter two. Accordingly, the analysis of Mark will also consider the relationships in terms of topoi, literary techniques and purpose.

Topoi

The first observation to be made with respect to the topoi commonly found in the "encomium" genre is that several of the more obvious ones are missing from Mark's gospel. Mark obviously has nothing to say about the birth and genealogical history of Jesus. Neither does he have anything to say about the childhood or youthful excellence. There are at least two possible explanations for such omissions. The first is that such information was not at his disposal. The second is that Mark did have access to tradition(s) related

²⁵³William R. Farmer, The Synoptic Problem (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1964).

to the early life of Jesus, but such information was not considered important by him for the accomplishment of his particular purposes. We will consider briefly the first explanation before proceeding to the second. The peculiarity of the Marcan beginning has been noted by Robinson, who writes: ". . . one is struck by the fact that Mark opens [his story] in medias res. He picks up the story of Jesus at a point in his adulthood," ²⁵⁴ What is striking to Robinson (and rightly so) is the fact that Mark does seem to have information concerning Jesus' background at his disposal which, for some reason, he does not choose to present at the beginning of his gospel (cf. 6:3, which, however, has little to say about the exact nature or extensiveness of this material). Thus it would appear that the first possible explanation for the absence of the early history of Jesus at the beginning, does not adequately account for the facts of the situation. ²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ James M. Robinson, The Problem of History in Mark (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 21.

²⁵⁵ If it could be proved convincingly that Mark did not know anything about Jesus' early life, then Mark's omissions could be used to argue for Marcan priority from which point one could then point to the later developments by Matthew and Luke. It is impossible at this point, however, to determine precisely what Mark did or did not know about this phase of Jesus' life based on textual evidence. Thus Marcan priority cannot be convincingly argued from the omissions cited. After all, he could have known Matthew and Luke (Griesbach Hypothesis) in which case his omissions could be easily explained on the basis of radically conflicting traditions. A choice (of one over the other or of conflation)

This means that the second explanation, that such tradition did not serve Mark's particular purposes, is the weightier argument. The question which immediately surfaces in view of the latter alternative is this: does Mark's decision not to begin with an account of Jesus' birth and/or early childhood remove his narrative from the type of bios literature with which our thesis is concerned?

One could respond to the above question by citing other instances in which birth and childhood accounts have been minimized by ancient bios authors. We have already encountered one such instance, that of Xenophon's life of Agesilaus.²⁵⁶ A second example would be Plutarch's life of Camillus.²⁵⁷ These examples and others like them serve to illustrate the fact (already, it is hoped, evident) that such

between such radically different options and the type of conflict which could ensue therefrom would serve only to weaken his own literary exposition (in a way similar to the situation confronting Xenophon and the treatment of the disability of Agesilaus [cf. above p. 108]). At this stage of the discussion, the question of Marcan priority is best left to more relevant types of evidence.

²⁵⁶Cf. above, pp. 138 ff.

²⁵⁷Plutarch does not record the events of birth and/or youth excellences of Camillus. He does, however, use the omission as a means of enhancing his account: "At a time when the house of the Furii was not yet very conspicuous, he by his own efforts, was the first of his clan to achieve fame" (II. 1).

accounts are functional in that they serve the bios intentions of the author who is creating the literary portrait. They generally serve to point beyond themselves in preparation for what is to be related later in the narrative with respect to assertions of greatness, achievement, virtue, and/or praiseworthiness in general. To the fulfillment of this end, they are "options" which are often included because they suit the author's purposes and in some way enhance his portrait. When they do not contribute in a positive manner, they may be minimized or omitted entirely.²⁵⁸ This is also true with respect to Mark: and it is possible to go even further in a consideration of what is accomplished by Mark with his rather abrupt beginning.

In order to arrive at a satisfactory solution to the problem of the Marcan introduction, it will be necessary to examine the manner in which Mark develops the early portions of his gospel. There is sufficient evidence in support of the observation that Mark has indeed carefully structured the material he covers in the first chapter. He first sets the stage, then moves directly into the narrative of his story of Jesus. His beginning is at the point he feels is appropriate

²⁵⁸In addition to n. 257 above, one could refer also to Plutarch's treatment of Themistocles. He begins: "In the case of Themistocles, his family was too obscure to further his reputation" (I. 1). In spite of this fact, Plutarch records more about Themistocles than the parallel, Camillus. The point is that Plutarch (and other authors) make use of

(ἀρχή, v. 1), namely with John the Baptist. Of this beginning Robinson writes:

His subject matter is 'the good news about Jesus Christ'. Yet the first verse is concerned not simply with the definition of the subject matter, but also with the location of its 'beginning'. Here Mark is using what seems to have been a technical term employed by the early Church for defining the kerygma (Luke 23.5; Acts 10.37) and apostleship (Luke 1.2; Acts. 1.22; John 15.27). It was adopted by all the evangelists in their presentation: Matt 2.17; Luke 3.22; 4.21; Acts 1.1; John 1.1; 2.11. In view of such a deliberate beginning, . . . 259.

In verse 2, Mark identifies Isaiah's prophecy which he considers fulfilled by the advent of John. To be sure, Mark is working backwards, as Marxsen suggests,²⁶⁰ by viewing John's ministry from the perspective of that of Jesus'. This is because Mark is convinced that John's person does in fact "prepare" (the reader) for the Messiah, Jesus. As Robinson comments: "Thus the ministry of John is set apart, as having a special preparatory significance for the ministry of Jesus . . .".²⁶¹ We can say, therefore, that the advent of John (vv. 4f.), which includes the prophecy, John's description, the baptism of Jesus, and John's arrest, serves as a preliminary account designed to prepare the reader for the presentation of Jesus' ministry. To this preliminary section may such accounts in service of the larger objectives implicit in the total narrative.

²⁵⁹Robinson, Problem, p. 21. ²⁶⁰Marxsen, Introduction, pp. 33f. and elsewhere.

²⁶¹Robinson, Problem, p. 23.

be added the reference to Jesus' temptation (vv. 12f.); for, though deserving of note, it is obviously not meant to call attention to itself.²⁶² It serves to contribute, along with the accounts preceding it, to the identity and significance of Jesus. This identification was specified in v. 1 as "Christ" and "Son of God". The introduction, therefore, is specifically designed to serve a bios function of identifying the subject of the narrative and conveying his significance, thereby preparing the reader for literary tributes to follow, an identity and significance which are reiterated by the voice from heaven in v. 11.

Following the temptation account, Mark moves quickly into the ministry itself, and to the description of its success. The content of Jesus' preaching is summarized in v. 15 and the first of his disciples are chosen in series (Simon, Andrew, James and John -- vv. 16ff.). The true identity is recognized by the unclean spirit (v. 24), and his fame and authority spreads throughout the surrounding region of Galilee (v. 28; cf. also, v. 45). The command to silence (the messianic secret motif) occurs in v. 34 and again in v. 43. Thus in the brief span of one chapter, Mark presents

²⁶²I agree with Lightfoot that Mark's "introduction" extends beyond v. 8, and further with his observations related to the unity especially evident in chapter 1. Cf. R.H. Lightfoot, The Gospel Message of St. Mark (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), pp. 16ff.

several important themes: Jesus' identity, his call to "Christian" discipleship, the content of his preaching and a preview of his deeds, and the testimony to the overwhelming success with the populace throughout the territory of Galilee. What has been stated in the preliminary section (in my view, vv. 1-14) is fully actualized in the remaining portion of the first chapter: i.e., it points beyond itself. It is precisely the manner in which Mark develops the preliminary section in preparation for the positive reception of the ministry of Jesus that one sees its affinity with the type of bios narratives discussed previously. Although no birth account or childhood accomplishments are presented, none are needed for Mark's purposes. As ~~was~~ the case with Matthew, the function of the topoi of birth and early childhood in literature of praise has been more than adequately addressed by the preliminary sections.

Furthermore, the above literary effect is not accidental, i.e., it is not the product of one merely copying down what has been "heard of old". Such a conclusion may seem warranted by such characterizations of the structure of Mark's gospel as that of Nineham, who writes:

. . . what the Evangelist had to work on, apart from an outline Passion narrative and perhaps ~~one~~ or two short collections of material relating to special subjects, was a series of essentially disconnected stories. This at once explains an otherwise puzzling

feature of the Gospel, the way it consists of a number of unrelated paragraphs set down one after another with very little organic connexion, almost like a series of snapshots placed side by side in a photograph album.²⁶³

Although some of the stories which now appear in chapter 1 have originally been unrelated, it is more than clear that Mark's intention is to structure them in such a way as to present a single, continuous, and rapidly moving narrative. In fact, we have the distinct impression that Mark -- perhaps aware that he is departing somewhat from the norm by the distinctive manner in which he has presented his preliminary section and by the rapidity and abruptness with which he has plunged into his account of the ministry of Jesus per se -- has actually overstated his case in his presentation of the tradition in a believably coherent manner. His intensification of the material, for example, by his use of εὐθύς creates the impression that all of the events recorded occurred in only a few hours at the most (in spite of the various geographical and temporal references inserted here and there).²⁶⁴

²⁶³D.E. Nineham, Saint Mark (Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1973), p. 27. This commentary was first published in 1963.

²⁶⁴Lightfoot, taking note of the impression Mark creates in chapter 1, suggests, as one of several possibilities, that "St. Mark desires to give at the outset a picture of typical activities of Jesus Christ under the form of events loosely represented as occurring more or less within twenty-four hours; . . . it is the day of the manifestation, or

The significance of the above comments warrants further discussion of the use of εὐθύς in chapter 1 of Mark's gospel. That εὐθύς is characteristic of Marcan redaction is not a subject of debate.²⁶⁵ A quick count reveals that the term appears seven times in Matthew, two times in Luke-Acts, and three times in John, compared with forty-two times in Mark.²⁶⁶ Of the forty-two times it appears in Mark, it is used eleven times in chapter one. Generally, the term conveys the meaning of "immediately" or "at once",²⁶⁷ and Mark commonly employs the term in this temporal sense both in chapter one and elsewhere (e.g., 1:10, 18, 20, 28, 30, 42, 43; 2:12, etc.). But Mark possesses the distinctive character of using the term in a weakened or paratactical sense in which case it conveys the sense of "then" or "so then".²⁶⁸ Used in this latter way, εὐθύς serves the redactional function of transition as Mark proceeds from one story or episode to

epiphany, of our Saviour Jesus Christ; . . . It is one of intense activity and unceasing strain for the Lord". Cf. Lightfoot, Message, pp. 24ff.

²⁶⁵E.G., C.E.B. Cranfield, The Gospel According to Saint Mark (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 20.

²⁶⁶W.F. Moulton and A.S. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1957), p. 400.

²⁶⁷W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 321.

²⁶⁸F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament, trans. by R.W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), pp. 55-56.

another. This paratactical usage of εὐθύς occurs at least ten times in Mark's gospel, four of which occur in chapter one (vv. 12, 21, 23, and 29).²⁶⁹ In spite of the fact that we find these two usages of εὐθύς (i.e., temporal and the more weakened and stylistic form), the high degree of concentration of the temporal connotations obviously present argues against a purely connective function in vv. 12, 21, 23, and 29. It is apparent that the paratactical meaning in these instances cannot be considered devoid of all temporal connotations; for the tone of the entire chapter hardly allows for interludes of any appreciable length between the episodes that have been redactionally joined together. Thus immediately following the heavenly voice's proclamation of Sonship, then, at that precise moment, the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness (v. 12). At precisely the moment they reached Capernaum, which happened to be on a Sabbath, i.e., right after the sons of Zebedee "followed" Jesus (v. 20), Jesus then entered the Synagogue. That it might have taken some time to travel from the Sea of Galilee (vv. 16 and 19) to Capernaum is of little concern for Mark: his narrative has other more pressing purposes. Immediately following Jesus' authoritative

²⁶⁹The Lexicon cites three instances of the weakened use of εὐθύς omitting v. 12. In spite of the fact that "the Spirit" which descends in v. 10 is presumably "the Spirit" which drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted in v. 12, Mark is clearly relating two distinct episodes

teaching (v. 22), at that time Jesus was confronted by a man with an unclean spirit (v. 23). And finally, without any hesitation or pause for rest or refreshment, Jesus leaves the Synagogue and goes directly into the house of Simon and Andrew (v. 29). Thus, though not the natural consequence of any action on the part of Jesus (as, for example, is often the case in the exorcism stories), εὐθύς continues to convey a temporal connotation in chapter one even in its paratactical use. There is an unmistakable sense of immediacy and urgency attributed to Jesus' tireless activity. Just as the drama of action is enhanced by the reality of the firing of the starting gun in a race, Mark, in the initial phases of his presentation of Jesus, pictures Jesus as having set a staggering pace. In view of this Marcan emphasis, it is easy to see, from Mark's point of view, how extended birth and childhood accounts (however concise), prefaced to the preparatory pericopes related to John, could have had a neutralizing effect upon, if not a total disruption of, the sense of urgency Mark has obviously taken such care to create.

We conclude, therefore, that Mark's introduction is equal to any of those examples cited previously in setting

connected by εὐθύς. A similar transition appears in v. 23 where the Sabbath provides the context both for the teaching of v. 22 and the healing of vv. 23f. connected only by the same εὐθύς. Thus we find four definite occasions of the paratactical use of εὐθύς in chapter one.

the stage for the drama that is to follow. In the first chapter, though he does not make use of the more common topoi related to birth, childhood, and youth excellences, he has prepared his audience for the identity of Jesus, both by direct reference via title and by the portrayal of John the Baptist as the forerunner of the Messiah "immediately" forthcoming. This messianic identity prepares the reader for and points him ahead to future accomplishments in the way that comparable accounts of miraculous birth and childhood excellences anticipate the accomplishments and significance of great generals, philosophers, and the like. Mark moves quickly into the account of Jesus' ministry through a summary of the essential content of his teaching and a brief account of his activity, both of which account for the rapid and "immediate" circulation of his fame. Mark pauses only to record the call of four of Jesus' disciples, thereby conveying the fact that Jesus acquired his disciples and general following from the outset of his ministry. Further, Mark has accomplished all of the above in such a way as to give the appearance of continuous and connected activity. Mark, the author, is nowhere more evident than in the first chapter of his gospel. As with Matthew, we can expect Mark to have his peculiar concerns: but these concerns as reflected in chapter one do not unfold in a literary manner different from

the basic intent and functions evident in other introductory stages found in "encomium" biographical narratives.

In other respects, Mark does employ topoi commonly identified with the genre discussed above ("encomium" (genre)). Because of the similarity of the material to that already discussed in our treatment of Matthew and the requirement of brevity, we shall confine this part of the discussion to general observations. The portion between 1:14 and Jesus' arrest in chapter 14 consists of Mark's presentation of the ministry of Jesus. This includes accounts of Jesus' actions and teachings (though the latter are not presented in the same detail as found in Matthew and Luke). Robinson has noted that Mark's major emphasis in this portion is upon the powers of the exorcist, whose authority and power over Satan and demonic forces are convincingly asserted and demonstrated.²⁷⁰ Weeden has further described Mark's presentation as one which depicts a particular type of suffering Messiah whose portrayal serves to combat other more common "divine man" concepts current in Mark's day and community.²⁷¹ In either case, the accomplishments of Jesus and the events leading up to his death are presented in accordance with Mark's

²⁷⁰Robinson, Problem, esp. pp. 33-53.

²⁷¹Weeden, Traditions, esp. pp. 70ff.

understanding and purposes; no more and no less than would be expected of any author whose biographical narrative is designed to enlist praise of and assent to a particular portrait of the hero. In Mark's case, it is the presentation of a suffering Messiah whose suffering, acts, and final victory are so depicted as to create the proper response of Faith and Parousia expectation.

It is also clear that the ministry, including the introduction, is structured to bring the reader to the climactic event of Jesus' death and to a full understanding of its significance. Many indications point to this forthcoming event, not the least of which are the conflict stories and the predictions of the suffering "son of man". Indeed, the shadow of this event permeates each of the gospel narratives to the extent that Martin Kähler has described them as "passion narratives with an extended introduction".²⁷² Thus, with respect to Mark's gospel, to be added to those topoi evident in the portrayal of Jesus' words and deeds (i.e., his accomplishments and power) is Mark's extensive concern for the topos of Jesus' death. For our purposes it is not necessary to recount the events surrounding his death in

²⁷² Martin Kähler, The So-called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ, trans. Carl E. Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 80, n. 11. Cf. also Marxsen's comments, Mark, pp. 30-31.

detail. At several points Mark's account is distinctive in comparison with Matthew and Luke. For example, when Mark relates the examination of Jesus by the high priest (14:53ff.); Jesus affirms his identity. When asked "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?", Jesus responds readily, "I am; and you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (cf. Mt 26:64/Mk 14:62/Lk 22:69-70). There are other differences in Mark's account which could be noted, but this one is especially important in that it has been interpreted as the self acknowledgment of his identity and a reference to the imminent future time when that identity will be truly actualized and recognized in the Parousia.²⁷³ The death for Mark is not the end of the story but only a preliminary event which will culminate in and make possible the final victory of Jesus and those who truly believe in his messiahship. Thus the horrible death Mark vividly describes in connection with the Messiah whose life he has in part portrayed is not, as it would normally seem, the scandal to be borne in shame by the believer, but rather an occasion which, when viewed from the proper perspective, points beyond itself to the hope and anticipation of the imminent Parousia.

²⁷³ Cf. the discussion presented by Weeden, Traditions, pp. 126ff.

Mark also has something to say about what happened after the death of Jesus. Exactly what he says is still the subject of considerable debate; for many questions have been raised with respect to the authenticity of those traditions contained in Mk 16:9-20.²⁷⁴ If these are authentic traditions recorded by Mark in 16:9-20, then one can cite appearance stories designed to authenticate the presence of the risen and glorified Christ. Further, v. 19 could be seen as the fulfilment of 14:62. Understood in these terms, then, one could say that Mark has cited several topoi related to what happened after death: the empty tomb account, resurrection appearances and Jesus' ascension. If, on the other hand, the more common position is maintained -- "Today it is generally recognized that the report of the Resurrection and Ascension (16:9-20) found in the majority of manuscripts and versions was not a part of the original Mark" (i.e., Marcan redaction)²⁷⁵ --, then one is left with only the empty tomb

²⁷⁴For relevant material, cf. the discussion and references in Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 71-72. This question has most recently been addressed by Wm. R. Farmer's review of the external and internal evidence. Whereas he leans toward the assessment of authenticity, his main thesis is that the question is essentially "open" and that the best hope for conclusive answer is in "new papyrological discoveries, and in further progress in our understanding of the history of the development of text types . . ." Cf. The Last Twelve Verses in Mark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

²⁷⁵Kümmel, Introduction, p. 71.

account of 16:1-8. By itself, the empty tomb account would be sufficient for an author to build a literary case for the fact of the resurrection and to offer it as testimony to Jesus' glorification by implication. The astonishment and fear of the women (cited in v. 8) could be understood as appropriate responses to their confrontation with the angelic "young man" (v. 5) coupled with his words that Jesus will precede them into Galilee at which time they would "see" him (v. 7). Similar responses have been noted by Mark elsewhere in his gospel. Still it must be admitted that, if Mark's gospel ends with 16:8, the ending is abrupt and leaves the reader in mid air.

Both Marxsen and Weeden have argued that such an incomplete state of affairs is precisely what Mark has intended his readers to experience. According to Marxsen, Mark's gospel is a "Galilean gospel" and Galilee is the locale of the Parousia whose coming is believed by Mark to be imminent.²⁷⁶ Thus 16:7 provides specific instructions to the women, disciples, and Mark's readers to go to Galilee where the final events of his gospel will be experienced and where Jesus will truly be glorified through his return in power. Weeden, though he differs slightly in detail, is in basic agreement

²⁷⁶ Marxsen, Mark, pp. 92ff.

with this interpretation.²⁷⁷ If this interpretation is valid, then one can see that Mark has not actually limited his topoi related to Jesus' glorification after death to that of the empty tomb account (assuming Mark concludes the gospel at 16:8) or to the accounts of the empty tomb, resurrection appearances, and ascension (assuming Mark is responsible for 16:9-20). More of his story of Jesus' final and complete victory, and the victory of those who are his true disciples, is yet to unfold at the time of the Parousia. Thus it is apparent that Mark has indeed included in his account of Jesus topoi related to the events which happened after and directly related to the death of Jesus. Such a literary procedure is consistent with what is encountered in other examples of bios literature whose purposes include that of praise and/or apology on behalf of the narrative's hero.

We conclude, therefore, that Mark does utilize a considerable number of topoi commonly found in bios literature of the type discussed in the previous chapter. He has included those topoi in the presentation of the ministry of Jesus which are appropriate for both the preacher and the miracle worker with emphasis upon the latter. He has done so with the specific design to convince his readers of the true

²⁷⁷Weeden, Traditions, pp. 111ff.

reality of the "suffering Messiah" with whom Jesus is identified. To this end, we see that the manner in which Mark has chosen to begin his narrative accomplishes the precise functions served in other bios narratives by their inclusion of birth and youthful accounts: namely, the setting forth of the preliminary events from which anticipated greatness will be seen to emerge in the narrative to follow. Further, we have noted how Mark moves with particular care and speed into the essentials of that ministry in chapter one. In addition, Mark draws extensively from the traditions surrounding Jesus' death, and he has structured the greater portion of his narrative in anticipation and in the description of this event. Finally, he has addressed himself to the event(s) which "immediately" followed Jesus' death and, in a remarkable fashion, the event which is still forthcoming, the Parousia. Throughout the whole of the Marcan mosaic, the person of Jesus stands in center stage: so much so that one can readily understand why a first century reader would have more than likely received it as a bios narrative. The topoi are there -- so too are the message, acts, drama, and the ground for future expectation.

Techniques

When we turn to a consideration of the literary techniques employed by Mark in the development of his narrative, several possibilities immediately come to mind. Even more

than was the case with Matthew, reference could be made to Mark's theological use of geographical references. Marxsen, following Lohmeyer at many points, has discussed this in considerable detail.²⁷⁸ In addition to the theological mileage gained from the geographical references, Weeden specifically identifies two emphases which he calls "literary techniques": 1) the manner in which Mark emphasizes the "radical differences between the disciples and the populace in their perception of and response to Jesus" and 2) "the employment of an identity motif".²⁷⁹ The former motif as presented by Weeden closely resembles the technique of comparison discussed previously. Here, the comparison is between two groups of literary characters rather than between the "hero" and other personages. It must be added, however, that the "hero" is integral to the comparisons being made by Mark. The second motif identified by Weeden is in accord with the development of a literary assertion such as would be applicable in the characterization of a general's exceptional prowess on the field of battle: assertions supported by actions, words, etc. Finally, many, following Wrede's famous study,²⁸⁰ have noted

²⁷⁸Marxsen, Mark, pp. 54-116.

²⁷⁹Weeden, Traditions, pp. 56-57.

²⁸⁰William Wrede, Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), first printed in 1901.

the manner in which the "messianic secret" motif permeates Mark's gospel. The uniqueness of this type of approach is a peculiarity of the author (or, as Weeden would argue, of the material available to him).²⁸¹ If Mark is concerned with a "secret" motif, then this becomes a literary concern peculiar to the purposes of Mark and would not argue against the inclusion of the narrative within the classification of any bios genre. In fact, in my view, none of the above techniques may be understood as being at variance with the techniques commonly found in the "encomium" genre. On the contrary, with the exception of the latter Marcan trait, these techniques are commonly encountered in works found in the "encomium" bios narratives.

In connection with the techniques of comparison and amplification, a few general remarks are appropriate. As with Matthew, Mark focuses upon the central character of Jesus, his words and deeds, his death and (future) glorification. Throughout his characterization, no other personage remotely approximates the qualities and accomplishments of the hero. John the Baptist perhaps comes the closest in the presentation of a person of comparable greatness. But, here, unlike Matthew,

²⁸¹ Weeden, Traditions, pp. 138ff.

no direct comparison is intended,²⁸² and the Baptist vacates the scene before Jesus' ministry actually begins (1:14f.). Crowds press upon him constantly; but, remaining devoid of identity, they only serve to testify to his popular reception (when viewed from the standpoint of character identity). Demons and unclean spirits recognize him, but Jesus' awesome power is decisively evident whenever such confrontations are presented. Even his closest associates fail miserably in comparison with Jesus' understanding and power. In fact, Weeden would have us believe that Mark carries out a vendetta against Jesus' closest associates (disciples), so poorly are they characterized by comparison.²⁸³ Those who oppose him fare no better. The fact is that Mark is consistent in his portrayal of Jesus and his relation to other personages. There is simply no one over whom Jesus does not tower by comparison.

Similarly, the technique of amplification is evident in the structure of the gospel as a whole. Mark obviously intends his case to be built upon the picture of an adult Jesus, his ministry, death, and forthcoming glorification.

²⁸²Cf. Marxsen, Mark, pp. 30-53.

²⁸³Cf. Weeden, Traditions, pp. 50-51, 59ff., and 139. Contrary to Weeden, the term "vendetta" is an overstatement of Mark's concern. We are of the opinion that Mark's primary interest is in accenting the positive character of Jesus, rather than that of maximizing the negative qualities of the disciples. Accordingly, in comparison with the disciples, Jesus is far

To this end he limits his presentation to events and traditions related to this phase of his activity.²⁸⁴ One may regret Mark's decision in this respect, but no one can deny him his literary right to make such a delimitation. Further, Mark appears to be more interested in the miraculous deeds, and hence in Jesus the exorcist, even though he creates the distinct impression that Jesus did teach and preach (both in the limited presentation of Jesus' words and in summary statements to that effect). This type of amplification does tend to lend credence to Robinson's assessment of Mark's interest in the power of Jesus and possibly to Weeden's thesis of Christological conflict as occupying his main concern. In either case, one can see both comparison and amplification present in the Marcan characterizations.

It is particularly in the Marcan characterization that one sees additional affinity with the "encomium" type of bios narrative. Weeden is correct in his description of the Greco-Roman educational emphasis upon characterization.²⁸⁵ Further, superior in all respects.

²⁸⁴ Stanton has observed that the ancient biographer was primarily concerned with the "finished product" in his characterizations. Consequently, portraiture dealt with the character of the adult and the words and deeds from which that portrait of character could be constructed. Mark's portrait, therefore, does not represent a radical departure from this procedure. Cf. Stanton, Jesus, pp. 122f; also, Stuart, Epochs, p. 178.

²⁸⁵ Weeden, Traditions, pp. 13ff.

his basic methodological assertion must be taken seriously:

Thus we are on fairly safe ground in assuming that the first reader would have instinctively turned to the Markan characters, their portrayal, and the events which engulfed them as the starting point for understanding the composition. From careful reflection upon the attitudes, speeches, and behaviour of these characters he would have extrapolated insights which would have guided him in understanding the intention and message of the writer. He would have taken this approach not only because he would have known no other way to proceed in interpreting this type of literature but also because the author likewise would have intended and assumed such an approach. Thus there is no question as to where a twentieth century reader should begin in his understanding of the Gospel, if he wishes to understand it in a manner in any way approximating that in which his first century predecessor read it. The twentieth century reader must start with the Markan characters. They hold the key to the mystery surrounding the creation of the Gospel.²⁸⁶

Consistent with his presupposition as to procedure, Weeden then proceeds to identify the characters which dominate Mark's narrative.

The major Markan characters or groups of characters are the religious "Establishment", the ubiquitous crowds, the disciples, and Jesus. These figures enter and exit with recurring regularity from the beginning to the end of the Markan drama. Other personae such as John the Baptist, Pilate, and the Galilean women play significant roles. Their exposure on stage, however, is minimal compared to that of the major figures. If the key to Mark's intent lies in his characterization, then these major characters offer the most likely place to find the key.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 20.

The significance of Weeden's observation is the fact that the particular intention of the author may be discerned in the way by which the characters, upon whom the drama turns and in whose hands the key to the drama resides, are portrayed; i.e., the way they are made to interact and conflict with one another or the way they are made to affirm and complement one another. Mark is not writing historical biography: he is rather seeking to express his point of view in the characterizations of the actors and the way they are made to enter and exit from scene to scene. One might even refer to the end result as a sermon in portraiture. The gospel of Mark, therefore, from the standpoint of literary characterization and technique, is the kind of bios which seeks to convince or persuade, and the characters employed in the drama are developed in service of the essential message(s) of the whole portrait. It is precisely this observation which argues strongly for ties with that type of literary portraiture or bios narrative identified previously as belonging to the "encomium" type.

To illustrate the use of characterization in relation to authorial intent, the function of Mark's use of the "crowds" as they appear in the Marcan drama will be briefly examined. In general, Weeden's observations hold true:

That role [scil., the role played by the crowd] is to dramatize, by contrast with the religious leaders, the positive response to Jesus. The crowds flock to him with eagerness (1:32ff., 37; 3:7-12; 4:1; 6:53-56; 9:15; 11:8ff.), listen to his teaching enthusiastically (1:22, 27; 12:37b), and respond to his healing powers with anticipation (1:32ff.; 3:7ff.; 6:53ff.)²⁸⁸

In addition to these general remarks, it is significant to note those points where the Marcan presentation deviates from the other synoptics in its description of the masses present on various occasions.²⁸⁹ For example, in 1:32-34, the healing of many possessed with demons is presented in summary fashion. The passage has been exaggerated to depict the healing powers of Jesus. The people bringing the ones to be healed are referred to in the undesignated construction of the verb, ἔφερον ("they"), of v. 32. The ones brought were all (πάντας) who were sick or possessed by demons. The Matthean and Lucan parallels to 1:32 (Mt 8:16/Lk 4:40) present a less exaggerated version. Mk 1:33 is peculiar to Mark: "And the whole city was gathered together about the

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

²⁸⁹ An investigation of this kind is admittedly hampered by the current state of the synoptic problem. With regard to the passages now to be considered, the following methodological presupposition should be noted. If, on the one hand, Mark is indeed first, then those passages which do not find parallels in the Matthean and Lucan texts may be understood as having been considered by Matthew and Luke as peculiar Marcan emphases, emphases which were deemed worthy of alteration. If, on the other hand, Mark was written after Matthew and Luke, it may be considered plausible that the additions represent Mark's redaction. Therefore, given the

door". In this context and in the midst of these many witnesses, Jesus heals. The favourable reaction of the crowd to Jesus' activities is restated only a few verses later in the words addressed to Jesus, who is at prayer: "Everyone is searching for you" (v. 37, only in Mark). Luke does present the same essential meaning (Lk 4:42), but Mark's description of the massive popular response is unique.

In 2:1-12, Mark describes the healing of the paralytic who had to be lowered through the roof. The reason for this form of entry is given in v. 4: "And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, . . ." (par. Lk 5:19). Unlike Luke, Mark in v. 2 has anticipated this explanation of the means of entry which, under normal circumstances, would have been through the door. "And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; . . ." (v. 2, peculiar to Mark). In this way Mark's account is the more dramatic. And again, in Mark 3:7-12, the crowd plays an instrumental role. Jesus has gone to the sea followed by a great multitude (par. Lk 16:17f.) In the Marcan version, the "great multitude" is identified twice, vv. 7 and 8. Jesus' response to this situation is

addition and/or the distinctive presentation by Mark which are by nature more descriptive (i.e., redactional) than integral to the tradition, one may assume the Marcan hand regardless of the temporal sequence of the three narratives under consideration.

recorded only in Mark: "And he told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, lest they should crush him; . . ." (v. 9). It is noticeable that it is only in Mark that the "crowd" poses any personal threat, by the pressure created by numbers, to his person. The dramatic effect is obvious: so popular is he and so great is the multitude surrounding him that he must be concerned for his own safety. A similar theme appears in 3:20 where Mark alone reads: ". . . and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat". The crowds again pose a problem, this time for eating (6:31 with no parallels), but this hindrance is more logically understood than the previous reference in 3:20; for it occurs in the introduction to the Marcan account of the feeding of the five thousand (6:30-44/Mt 14:13-21/Lk 9:10-17). Further, in Mk 7:24, his popularity is described in such a way as to make his coming and going common knowledge to all: "And he entered a house and would not have any one know it; yet he could not be hid" (no parallels). And in Mk 9:15, the more common literary use of the crowd is presented (this time without parallels): "And immediately all the crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed, and ran up to him and greeted him". The peculiar way in which Mark portrays the presence and magnitude of the crowd, from a literary standpoint, makes even more plausible those

references to the fear of the religious authorities who would have arrested Jesus (cf. 11:18; 12:12; and 14:1-2).

Mark describes one additional role played by "the crowd" which is deserving of note. Matthew and Mark (and indirectly, Luke) refer to the custom of releasing a prisoner on the occasion of the Passover feast (Mt 27:15f./Mk 15:6f./Lk 23:18f.). In Matthew, the reader receives the impression that Pilate is the one who brings this custom to the attention of the crowd, perhaps as a possible "out" for Pilate, who feels Jesus is not deserving of death. The crowd, however, has different designs. Mark differs from Matthew in that it is specifically "the crowd" which raises the issue (cf. v. 8). It is as though they are the ones seeking to close every possible means of Jesus' escaping death before the possibility presents itself. Thus v. 15, "So, Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd", carries considerable dramatic weight as well as logical sequence in the account of the release of Barabbas.

We conclude, therefore, that Mark does increase the dramatic effect of his narrative through the introduction and use of the various characters contained therein. The movement of the narrative does, as Weeden has noted, involve the portrayal of the actors in a manner similar to other bios narratives of the ancient world. With respect to the

Marcan narrative, the popularity of Jesus with the masses is evident, the validity of his identity is enhanced by the forerunner, the necessity of his death is made even more intelligible by the persistent conflict with his opponents, and the personal stability and power of the central figure is accented by the portrayal of the vacillating character of those more closely associated with him. It may very well be the case that Mark has more specifically theological goals to accomplish in the portrayal of his main characters (as Weeden suggests) than we are presently prepared to admit. This question, however, is secondary to our present purposes.

Purpose

It would not be improper to say that Mark's purpose in writing includes the intention of presenting his hero in as favourable and illustrious a fashion as possible so as to invite faith as the proper response from the reader. On the one hand, such a statement corresponds with the purposes of the more popular "encomium" literature: on the other hand, it points to the particularly unique character of faith which is accounted for by its Christian context and kerygma. Mark's narrative reveals the author and the Christian. It functions as literature to be both read and remembered: at the same time, it is kerygma to be accepted in faith. Further

delineation of the Marcan purpose will probably result in numerous hypotheses related to the more general faith context. Indeed, this is evident in the research of others who have examined the text. Jesus is the Messiah whose identity cannot be hid in spite of the demand for secrecy (Wrede) or whose identity is publicly proclaimed through the use of tradition which contains the command to silence (Weeden).

Jesus is the Messiah whose messianic identity is made relevantly known in the cosmic struggle presented in the Marcan narrative (Robinson). Mark's narrative is the proclamation of Jesus the Messiah; a proclamation formulated for the liturgical mode of the Christian community (Carrington). The Marcan narrative has been so constructed as to convey the true meaning of the Messiah as that of the suffering Messiah whose return at the time of the Parousia offers to each believer the final victory of faith (Marxsen, Weeden). Each of these positions has something to be said for it, though perhaps in varying degrees. Still, the central thrust of Mark consists of the person and acts (including suffering) of the Messiah, the portrait of whom calls for the response of faith from the reading audience.

Our own analysis has revealed that the manner in which Mark has chosen to carry out his purposes does relate the end product to similar tasks undertaken by authors whose

writings may be classified among the "encomium" biographical genre. Mark has chosen to present the "gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" in the form of a bios narrative beginning with John the Baptist followed by the ministry of Jesus and climaxing with the account of his death. The conclusion has yet to be written; for only after the Parousia will the drama reach its final victorious climax. For the Christian community, therefore, Mark explains its viable existence and proper meaningful role in the present tense, and provides for that community, of which he himself is a part, the basis for its future hope. In so doing, he has made use of a popular literary form as evidenced by his choice of the topoi, literary techniques, and the structure of the bios pattern.

In order to accomplish his tasks, no doubt Mark has had to make some adjustments. The story is not entirely his own creation. He has made use of traditions handed down to him. In this respect, the research of others is not nullified by that of our own, but rather complemented. Robinson, for example, writes:

However the present analysis has served to show that this loftiness of Jesus, although unquestioned by Mark, is not central in his presentation, which is rather concerned with Jesus' struggle, action and suffering. The Marcan Jesus is not of history, but on the other hand he is not aloof from history; rather he comes, gives himself into the historical.

situation, and performs a history-creating function.²⁹⁰ Our own analysis offers an explanation of the precise manner in which this "history-creating function" was dramatically translated into literary form. On the other hand, it is equally apparent that the literary form itself underwent modifications under the influence of the character of the proclamation (kerygma). Marxsen writes:

His aim is to preserve the character of the work as proclamation -- it is meant to remain kerygma. He achieves this aim by a very skilful linking of the varied material, so that the Gospel is not a series of sermons but one sermon, which in view of the evangelist's intention we should not divide again into sections. If we wish to expound particular sections nowadays we have in effect to ignore Mark's editorial alterations -- which means that we are not really expounding pericopes from the work as a whole, but forms from the Synoptic tradition . . . The main message of Mk. can therefore be summarized briefly as follows: the evangelist proclaims the One who once appeared as the One who is to come, and who -- in secret epiphany -- is present now as the proclamation is made.²⁹¹

Thus in Mark one can sense the tension between message and popular literary form: both are combined in the production of the resulting narrative.

We may conclude this section on the Marcan purpose in a manner similar to that of Matthew. What Mark desires from his reading and listening audience is indeed praise: but,

²⁹⁰Robinson, Problem, p. 69.

²⁹¹Marxsen, Introduction, p. 144.

even more important, the assent to Christ's messiahship in the form of faith and anticipation. He has obviously employed those topoi and techniques which would elicit such a response and has done so with his audience in mind. He is concerned with the deeds, apology, suffering, struggle, and to some extent with the words of Jesus. He has placed these ingredients together in a dramatic bios context. Mark's gospel, therefore, can be understood as an "encomium" type: it belongs to what may be called the "encomium" genre. The fact that its milieu is both Greco-Roman and Jewish and the fact that Mark has made use of a popular literary genre account in part for its popular reception and continued preservation.

3. Luke

In the preface to his gospel (1:1-4), Luke writes that others before him have undertaken the task of compiling a narrative concerning the things which have taken place. Although Luke himself has followed all things closely, he admits his dependence upon materials which have been delivered to him by eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; but he assures us that his sources are primary, because they were "from the beginning". Thus from the outset two things become clear to the student of Lucan writings. First, unlike Matthew and Mark, Luke freely admits to being a second

generation Christian. Second, also unlike the other two evangelists, this type of prologue (which is common to Hellenistic historiography) demonstrates Luke's familiarity with standard literary forms of his time.²⁹²

The use and organization of his sources and materials into the Luke-Acts structure not only indicate Luke's desire to relate history, but also to interpret the meaning and significance of the events of which he writes. Fuller is correct in his statement: "Luke writes professedly as a historian, and not only as an evangelist; but it is a theological history which he is concerned to present".²⁹³ Likewise, Cadbury, after noting Luke's affinity to history, feels led to make a further comment with respect to all of the evangelists:

²⁹²Luke's preface has been identified as a literary topos commonly found in Hellenistic historiography. For relevant discussions, see F.J. Foakes Jackson, Kirsopp Lake, and Henry J. Cadbury, The Beginnings of Christianity, Part I The Acts of the Apostles (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1922), Vol. II, pp. 133-137, 489-510; Henry J. Cadbury, The Making of Luke-Acts (London: SPCK, 1958), pp. 194-198; Betz, Lukian, pp. 117, n. 4 and 144, n. 2; Gunter Klein, "Lukas 1, 1-4 als theologisches Program", Zeit und Geschichte, Dankesgabe an Rudolf Bultmann zum 80. Geburtstag, Heil und Geschichte in der Theologie des Lukas (München: Chr. Keiser Verlag, 1965), p. 61. For an example of a similar statement in the introduction of a bios narrative, cf. Plutarch's Cimon II, 2-3.

²⁹³G. Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, The Book of the Acts of God (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1960), p. 317.

. . . Luke's purpose in writing the gospel conforms to the standard of purpose which Mark and others had set. The fullest expression of aim is in John: "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." Whether the motive is expressed or not, all the gospels appear to have been intended to create an admiration or something more than admiration for Jesus, their hero. Their ways of glorifying him naturally vary, their intention is similar. Luke aligns himself with his predecessors: "It seemed good to me also."²⁹⁴

Luke, therefore, should not be understood merely as a collector of tradition any more than Matthew or Mark. He is an editor, redactor, and in many ways an author who molds, shapes, and places his materials into a scheme which reflects his basic understanding of past, present, and future events. Dibelius has analyzed Luke's methodology and called him the "first Christian historian",²⁹⁵ With few qualifications, Dibelius's conclusions have been echoed by Conzelmann,²⁹⁶ Bornkamm,²⁹⁷ Barrett,²⁹⁸ Käsemann,²⁹⁹ Robinson,³⁰⁰ and

²⁹⁴Cadbury, Making, p. 300.

²⁹⁵Martin Dibelius, Studies in the Acts of the Apostles (London: SCM Press, 1956), pp. 123ff.

²⁹⁶Conzelmann, Theology, pp. 12ff.; idem., Die Apostelgeschichte, Handbuch zum Neuen Testament (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1963), pp. 6-8.

²⁹⁷Bornkamm, "Evangelien", cols. 735ff.

²⁹⁸C.K. Barrett, Luke the Historian in Recent Study (London: Epworth Press, 1961).

²⁹⁹Ernst Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus", Essays on New Testament Themes, (London: SCM Press, 1964), pp. 28-29.

³⁰⁰Robinson, Der Weg, pp. 24-25, 39ff.

Haenchen.³⁰¹ Although there may be some question as to the exact nature of the scheme of history into which Luke fits his sources,³⁰² there can be little doubt that Luke understands history as a Heilsgeschichte in which God's plan for salvation and redemption is anticipated (prophecy), related (fulfilment and prophecy of Jesus), and set into perpetual motion (fulfilment of prophecy of Jesus and the activity of the church).³⁰³

In view of the recognized familiarity of Luke with his Greco-Roman literary milieu, it may seem strange to observe that there is a continued reluctance to credit him directly with having written a "life of Jesus". The phrase is admitted on occasion, but only with certain qualifications. Kümmel expresses the delimited meaning quite clearly:

Luke was probably the first to represent the history of Jesus as the beginning of the still continuing church history (Lk 19:11; 21:8), in that he has Acts follow Luke as the second book of a connected historical report. In that way the history of Jesus becomes past history and the report of this history becomes the "first life of Jesus" (E. Käsemann, ZthK 51, 1954, 137 = Essays of New Testament Themes, 1964, 28f.; likewise Conzelmann, Barret, Haenchen, Apq., Meyer III¹³, 86f.).³⁰⁴

³⁰¹Ernst Haenchen, Die Apostelgeschichte, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956), pp. 40-41.

³⁰²See Conzelmann, Theology, pp. 12ff. and Robinson Der Weg, pp. 24-25, 39ff.

³⁰³The themes of "God's plan" and "redemptive history" are important terms for understanding Lucan theology. See Conzelmann, Theology, pp. 149ff.

³⁰⁴Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 98-99.

In other words, the "life of Jesus" is admitted only in the context of a particular stage in the total drama of Heilsgeschichte reflected in Luke-Acts.³⁰⁵ To ascribe the title to Luke apart from Acts is another question entirely. Marxsen, noting the absence of the term, "gospel", in Luke, is willing to give ground somewhat, but the reluctance to admit a bios narrative is still apparent: "The fact is that he did not write a 'Gospel' -- he avoids the concept -- but something more akin to a 'Life of Jesus'".³⁰⁶ Marxsen's reluctance notwithstanding, there is ample reason for viewing Luke's treatment of Jesus as a type of bios narrative, one which is complete in itself. It is for good reason that M. Smith singles out Luke as an example of aretalogy, apart from Acts. Furthermore, Talbert applies "architectural" analysis to Luke-Acts and finds that the whole is closely related ". . . to that type of ancient biography in which the life of a philosophical founder is followed by a list or narrative of his

³⁰⁵An exception to what we have observed is the most recent work by Charles Talbert. His argument is that the whole of Luke-Acts is comparable to such bios efforts as that of Diogenes Laertius. Diogenes Laertius's concern is for schools, and his discussion includes the account of a teacher followed by an account of those who perpetuated the teachings of that teacher. Though we have not had sufficient time to digest all of Talbert's work, his thesis appears to have strong supportive evidence. Cf. Charles H. Talbert, Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke-Acts (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974). Also, below, pp. 263-264.

³⁰⁶Marxsen, Introduction, p. 160.

successors and selected other disciples . . ." (e.g. as is the case with Diogenes Laertius).³⁰⁷ Our own interest is primarily with Luke's portrait of Jesus. As was the case with Matthew and Mark, Luke's relationship with bios literature of the "encomium" type will be examined under the three categories: topoi, literary techniques, and purpose.

Topoi

Following a carefully developed introduction, Luke embarks upon a presentation of the background of the person in whose life he is primarily interested. As in the case of Matthew and Mark, this background is specifically designed to prepare the reader for the reception of the narrative which is to follow. This includes the topos, birth. In fact, Luke feels that his account would be benefitted by the inclusion of not one but two birth accounts. Thus, whereas it is true to say that both Matthew and Mark begin their story of Jesus with John the Baptist, who prepares for the coming of the Messiah, only Luke feels that Jesus' story (and that of the church) properly begins with the birth of John. The manner in which Luke has chosen to organize his materials related to the birth accounts is striking. Rather than presenting the account of the birth of John in toto

³⁰⁷Talbert, Literary Patterns, pp.134f.

followed by the account of Jesus' birth in a sequential order, as might have been expected, Luke has chosen to weave the accounts together in a parallel and comparative manner.³⁰⁸ This organizational structure may be diagrammed in the following manner:

Introduction (1:1-4)

- | | | |
|--|----|---------------------------------|
| 1. Conception by Elizabeth
(1:5-25) | // | Conception by Mary
(1:26-38) |
|--|----|---------------------------------|

Elizabeth Visited by Mary (1:39-56)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| 2. Birth of John (1:57-79) | // | Birth of Jesus (2:1-39) |
| 3. Summary of nurture
(1:80) | // | Summary of nurture
(2:40) |

In addition to the general parallelism evident in the above presentation, there are also parallel motifs within each of the accounts. Between the stories of conception, for example, the following motifs are present in both accounts:

- | <u>Conception of John</u> | <u>Conception of Jesus</u> |
|--|--|
| 1. Time and Place (1:5) | 1. Time and Place (1:26) |
| 2. Identification of parents (1:5) | 2. Identification of parents (1:27) |
| 3. Quality of parents (1:6) | 3. Quality of parent (Mary -- 1:28, 30) |
| 4. Conditions surrounding conception leading into miraculous nature of same (age -- 1:7, 18) | 4. Conditions surrounding conception leading into miraculous nature of same (virgin -- 1:27) |
| 5. Visitation of Angel (1:11f.) | 5. Visitation of Angel (1:26f.) |

³⁰⁸Talbert has analyzed the following parallel and others of the same nature in Luke-Acts and has shown that the resulting architectural pattern achieves a literary balance, a feature of Lucan redaction. Cf. *ibid.*,

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6. Response of fear followed by command not to fear (1:12-13) | 6. Response of fear followed by command not to fear (1:29-30) |
| 7. Statement of son's name and future greatness (1:14f.) | 7. Statement of son's name and future greatness (1:31f.) |
| 8. Question "how" followed by restatement of condition (1:18) | 8. Question "how" followed by restatement of condition (1:34) |
| 9. Statement of God's role (1:19) followed by sign as proof (1:20) | 9. Statement of God's role (1:35) followed by sign as proof (1:36) |
| 10. Statement from Elizabeth concluding account (1:25) | 10. Statement from Mary concluding account (1:38) |

Following these two accounts, which, up until v. 36, are presented without references to each other, Luke establishes the relationship in the story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth (1:39ff.). Here, the significance of Jesus' birth is anticipated by the mysterious movement of Elizabeth's baby at the precise moment of Mary's greeting of Elizabeth (1:41f.). Further, Mary's words add to the anticipation of the coming of greatness (1:46ff.). Finally, one should note that the meeting of these two is harmonious: there is no question even prior to birth of the relationship of Jesus to John.

Then follow the stories of birth. Here, too, the parallelism is apparent, though not as abundantly so. Both accounts state that "the time came for . . . to be delivered"

pp. 15ff. Our intent is first to demonstrate how the parallelism involves the use of the topos of birth and second, that this topos is employed for purposes of comparison: John remains subordinate throughout the dual portrayal.

(1:57a/2:6) and "she gave birth to a (her first-born) son" (1:57b/2:7a). Both accounts contain stories of circumcision and the naming of the children (1:59f./2:21). Both contain miraculous events of a supernatural character: Zechariah's speech returned at the time of the naming of John (1:59f.) and the visit by shepherds prompted by the visitation of an "angel of the Lord" and "a multitude of the heavenly host" (2:8f.). Finally, both infants have their significance affirmed: John's through the words of Zechariah, who was filled with the Holy Spirit (1:67f.), and Jesus via the old prophet, Simeon, who (also possessed by the Holy Spirit) had been told he would see the "Lord's Christ" before death. Immediately following both accounts, there is a statement of the manner in which each child is developing: John is growing and becoming "strong in spirit" (1:80) while Jesus is increasing "in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man" (2:40).

The importance of noting the parallelism of the above is that it demonstrates how Luke develops the topos of birth with considerable thought and care. The births of John and Jesus (the accounts of the latter being more developed than those of the former) are significant for the Lucan narrative as a whole. Luke is doing more than merely conforming to the standards of history-writing or of presenting topoi expected

of "bios-writing". Throughout these sections, the initiative and activity of God are clearly discernible: in the conception stories where age and virginity are seemingly insurmountable barriers, the angelic visitations, the miraculous events surrounding the birth, and Luke's introduction and use of the "Holy Spirit" (so important for the history of the church in Acts). Thus the continuity of the Lucan corpus has been aptly described by Fuller: "This history is the story of what God has done through the Holy Spirit, who is the initiator of each successive step".³⁰⁹ Further, with respect to Conzelmann's observation that Luke conceives of his account of Heilsgeschichte in three epochs (the time of the law and prophets [old covenant], the mid-time [Jesus], and the time of the church [Acts]),³¹⁰ the birth narratives serve to illustrate the period of the law and the prophets.³¹¹ The description of John's parents as "righteous before God" and of Mary as one who has found favour with God; the references to the rites of circumcision; the references to Simeon and Anna; etc. -- all serve to show that these events have taken place under the jurisdiction of the standards of the law and the prophets, standards which are more than adequately

³⁰⁹Wright and Fuller, Acts, pp. 317-318.

³¹⁰Conzelmann, Theology, pp. 12ff.

³¹¹E.g., Bo Reicke, The Gospel of Luke (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 29f.

met. Finally, the numerous references to time and place provide the proper historical setting for God's redemptive activity to unfold. Luke, therefore, has ably described the "beginning" of his narrative: a beginning which points beyond itself to what is to follow and helps to make what follows more intelligible. What does in fact follow should come as no real surprise to the reader because the signs of greatness and accomplishment were evident in these initial, preliminary episodes. Thus the significance of the hero of Luke's narrative has been presented in a highly developed manner, one that conforms with portrayals common to the "encomium" genre. Luke amplifies the birth topoi in a manner which goes beyond the mere recording of events, and this amplification argues for the bios context of his gospel as a whole. The literary effect of these sections is to depict true greatness in accord with supernatural design, greatness evident ~~before~~ prior to and at the time of birth.

Luke 2:41-51 contains an account of Jesus' visit to the temple at the age of twelve. The account is the only account of its kind in the synoptics that describes Jesus as a young person. One wonders why Luke has included this single account since there is no consistent attempt on his part to describe Jesus' early childhood or adolescence save for this one example. It is possible that Luke's desire was

to give emphasis to the summary statement of 2:40 which is again repeated in a similar though slightly different form at the conclusion of this youthful experience (2:52). That it does testify to the truth of both summary statements is evident from the story. Jesus, now twelve, accompanies his parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Passover as was their custom. Upon their return, he becomes separated from his parents. Three days later, they find him in the temple, "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (2:46). Luke obviously wants to make it clear that Jesus was an impressive participant: "and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers" (2:47). Even more amazing for the reader (although prepared for by the birth accounts) was his response to his mother's question concerning why he had created such a problem for them: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (2:49). Immediately following is Luke's comment that his parents "did not understand" (2:50) Jesus' words; a lack of understanding to be contrasted with Jesus' "understanding", which had earlier amazed all who heard him (2:47). Thus Luke has presented a portrait of a youth of exceptional insight: one who cannot only astound his elders with his questions and understanding, but also one who confounds his own parents as well.

This story, therefore, gives literary documentation to the assertion that "Jesus [as a youth] increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man": a common literary procedure of "encomium" biographical narratives.

As was the case with Matthew and Mark, Luke continues to prepare his readers for the ministry of Jesus by the presentation of John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism. In one sense, we can again see Lucan parallelism evident in that the traditions surrounding John are presented in a more complete (that is, more complete than in Matthew or Mark) form: one which indicates that John himself was also engaged in "ministry". Like Jesus, he "went into the region . . . preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (cf. 3:3 with 5:20f. and 7:37ff.). "Multitudes" came to hear and be baptized by him. The words, "So, with many other exhortations, he preached good news to the people" (3:18), provide the summary of John's activity. Following the baptism of Jesus, v. 23 states that Jesus "began" his ministry. Thus John's ministry (3:1-22) is placed in parallel to Jesus' ministry (beginning with v. 23): a parallelism difficult to grasp due to the extensive treatment by Luke of the latter. The awkwardness of this parallelism is evident in two ways: 1) the genealogy (vv. 23bff.) falls into the section previously identified by Luke as the "Ministry" (v. 23a) as does

2) the Lucan account of the temptation of Jesus (4:1-13).

In spite of this awkwardness of Luke's organization, the presentation of John serves the purpose of creating an "expectation" (v. 15) for the type of greatness projected in the conception and birth accounts and stated by John concerning the one to come after him (vv. 16f.). This ministry of creating expectation is set in parallel to that ministry which constitutes the fulfilment of the expectation. One concludes, therefore, that Luke intends the parallelism in spite of the awkwardness of transition.

The genealogical pericope, its position in the narrative notwithstanding, performs its functions of tracing the ancestry of Jesus in a concisely detailed manner. The particulars differ from the Matthean version in many ways, not the least of which is the tracing of the line of succession to God via Adam, the first man. This fact, given the position in the narrative, would tend to lend credence to the observation that the ministry of Jesus, followed by accounts of his death and resurrection is to have an impact upon all mankind and hence upon the whole of God's creation. Thus Davies's observation that "the mission of the world-wide Gospel is already present in the ministry of Jesus"³¹² is perhaps even

³¹² Davies, Invitation, p. 224.

more appropriate than he himself realized. The mission reaches cosmic proportions. The literary impact of this genealogical topos, therefore, is one in which the illustrious heritage of Jesus serves to authenticate the world-wide drama of redemptive history initiated by God in the birth of Jesus and actualized in the life which Luke is writing.

Space does not permit an extensive presentation of the topoi present in the ministry of Jesus, but several general observations supported by the text are appropriate. If the praiseworthiness of a general is derived from his deeds in battle and that of a philosopher from his words, one can understand why Luke feels that the praiseworthiness of Jesus, the Messiah, would be derived from both his words and deeds. This was shown to be the case with both Matthew and, to a lesser extent, Mark. It is definitely the approach adopted in Luke's presentation. This fact may be illustrated by the manner in which Luke prepares for the call of both Peter and Levi to discipleship. To be noted first is the fact that Luke's account of the call to discipleship occurs well within the ministry of Jesus. Mark records the call at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus (cf. Mk 1:14f.) as does Matthew (Mt 4:17f.). In Luke, however, Jesus' ministry is well under way [his having taught in the Synagogue in Galilee (4:15), having taught and been rejected in Nazareth. (4:16f.)], having

taught successfully in Capernaum (4:13f.), having cleansed a man of unclean spirits (4:33f., 40f.), having healed Simon's mother-in-law (4:38f.) and having begun his ministry in Judea (4:44)]. By the time Jesus issues his call to discipleship, the reader well understands why his fame is spreading (4:14, 37). The vocation stories have been placed amid the context of Jesus' successful ministry which is characterized in 24:19 ("Concerning Jesus of Nazareth who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people") as word and deed. The response of those who "follow" Jesus is to the totality of that ministry.

Consider, for example, the call of Peter (James and John) (5:1-11). The story is introduced by the presence of the people pressing upon Jesus "to hear the word of God" (5:1). So pressed, Jesus requisitions Simon's boat which has been vacated after a less-than-successful fishing excursion. With Simon's help, he "puts out a little from the land" and "'teaches' the people from the boat" (5:4). Later, he instructs Simon to move to deeper waters and lower his nets, the obedience to whom culminates in a miraculous catch of fish. The response of Peter (and of James and John, who are only added characters introduced late in the story) is that of faith. Returning to land, they "left everything (including the catch?) and followed him". The immediate response

of faith is to the miraculous catch; however, encompassing and integrally involved in the miracle is the pervading presence of Jesus' "word" identified by Luke as the "word of God". Thus the response of discipleship (Peter) is to miracle prefaced by and involving word.

In the case of Levi (5:27-28), the reverse is the case, perhaps designed to provide a necessary balance to word and deed. Jesus sees a taxcollector and says, "follow me". The response of Levi to this command is both immediate and consistent with that of Peter above: he left everything and followed. The initial response is to Jesus' word.

From a literary standpoint, it should not go unnoticed that immediately preceding the call of Levi are two miracle stories: one involving a man with leprosy and one a paralytic. These are the only two stories separating the call of Levi from the call of Peter (James and John). Thus, this time, the response is to Jesus' word in the context of his mighty deed. It would seem that a balance (no doubt, intentional) has been struck in a manner similar to his presentation of Jesus and John. Jesus' call to discipleship has been issued through both miracle and word. Further, this dual thrust appears to be the heart of the first portion of Luke's Heilsgeschichte; for in his introductory remark in Acts, Luke describes precisely this as having been his purpose: "In

the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach . . ." (Acts 1:1). The character of the ministry, therefore, which Luke intends his readers to grasp consists of what Jesus did and what he said (his deeds and words equally emphasized). These topoi thus become the basis for one's evaluation of the Lucan presentation of Jesus along with those topoi related to Jesus' death and resurrection.

Finally, the topoi of death and what happens after death are included in Luke's presentation of Jesus. The charges levied against Jesus are obviously trumped up charges (so the reader is led to believe).³¹³ They are designed to incur the sentence of death from civil authorities (cf. 23:1-2). Matthew and Mark wrote in a manner depicting Jesus' innocence, and Luke's account is even more emphatic. Following a pronouncement of innocence (23:4; the first pronouncement of three, this one with no parallels), Pilate sends him to Herod, who in turn returns him to Pilate. The pronouncement of innocence prevails on two more occasions (23:14, 22),

³¹³Stanton describes the false charges in terms of the technique of comparison. He writes: "By listing accusations which are obviously incorrect, Luke points indirectly to the true nature of the ministry and character of Jesus and thus reveals not only his literary skill, but also his intention to present Jesus as misunderstood and innocent. The accusations stem from Luke's hand . . . and thus confirm that his stylistic abilities result in a clearer characterisation of Jesus". Cf. Jesus, p. 45.

but still the crowd persists to the point of rebellion. Hence, the irony and tragedy emerge from Luke's account through comparison: Jesus, three times declared innocent by his judge of the accusations of insurrection, is sentenced to die, while Barabbas, guilty of both insurrection and murder, is freed (cf. Lk 23:25/Mk 15:15/Mt 27:26). In addition to the Barabbas pericope, only Luke records the declaration of Jesus' innocence rendered by one of the criminals who was to die alongside of Jesus (23:29ff.). This declaration was a rebuke to the one asking Jesus to "save yourself and us". The validity of this verbal defense is affirmed by the reward to be received as a result of the rebuke: "today you will be with me in Paradise" (v. 43). Finally, the character of Jesus is especially evident in Luke's description of death by the inclusion of two statements attributed to Jesus which have no Marcan or Matthean parallels: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (23:34) and "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" (23:46). Luke's account is obviously that of an innocent man facing an ignominious death in a self-controlled and noble manner.

The glorification of Christ after death is represented in a number of ways. There is an account of the empty tomb (23:1-12) followed by the account of Jesus' appearance to two (undesigned) on the road to Emmaus (23:13ff.). The

latter is not a peculiarly Christian or Lucan story; for it has a history of circulation in Greco-Roman literature in diverse forms as indicative of the greatness of one who has died.³¹⁴ Finally, in Luke's gospel, there is an account of Jesus' appearance to those gathered in Jerusalem (24:36ff.). Proof of his glorification is offered both by the invitation extended to those present to touch and see, and by his demonstration of eating a piece of fish (24:38-43). The literary effect is to demonstrate to the reader that the risen Christ is no mere apparition. What Matthew accomplishes with the "soldiers" posted at the tomb Luke accomplishes by Jesus' eating and being touched. Following these "deeds" are more "instructions" at the conclusion of which Jesus is "carried up into heaven" (24:51). The length of his sojourn on earth after death is not specified in Luke's gospel, but in Acts it was said to have been forty days: "To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). The transition between the conclusion of Luke's gospel and the beginning of Acts may be somewhat rough as currently preserved, but the point is clear: Jesus, the one

³¹⁴ Cf. e.g., A.A.T. Ehrhardt, "The Disciples of Emmaus", NTS, 10 (Oct. 1963 - July 1964), pp. 193ff.

crucified though innocent has been glorified. Those who have witnessed all things from the beginning (Acts 1:22) and who have had the blindness removed from their eyes (Lk 24:31) by the deeds and the instructions of the risen Christ are now prepared to participate fully in the mission of the church. The first part of Luke's work, that of the bios of Jesus including the relevant topoi considered by Luke as important for his purposes, has reached its conclusion.

Techniques

Luke employs numerous literary techniques in his development of the drama of redemption unfolding first in the life of Jesus. Conzelmann, for example, has noted that Luke the historian is more properly understood as Luke the interpreter of history whose concept of a threefold scheme emerges from the Luke-Acts narratives. Salvation history, accordingly, consists of 1) "the period of Israel" (Law and the Prophets), 2) "the period of Jesus", and 3) "the period of the church and of the Spirit".³¹⁵ It has further been observed that all of Luke's sources and materials have been organized and used by him in the service of this three-fold scheme. Hence, for example, Marxsen observes: "All these geographical references [i.e., Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria] are a foreshadow of the

³¹⁵Conzelmann, Theology, pp. 144-150; cf. pp. 16-17.

church's mission".³¹⁶ Another example would be Luke's interpretation of the activity of Satan. Active prior to the ministry of Jesus (his last "official" act being his involvement in the temptation of Jesus), Satan exits stage right and does not reappear until the Passion narrative (specifically in the story of Judas and his betrayal).³¹⁷ Consequently, Satan is pictured as having been present during the first phase, absent during most of the second, and active again through the third until the final victory and the time of the Parousia. Another literary technique is apparent in Luke's conception and exaggeration of a single, rather extensive journey to Jerusalem. This journey has taken the form of a "travel section" in which Luke has assembled vast amounts of material in order to depict Jesus' final and fateful journey.³¹⁸ The historicizing tendencies of Luke are evident in his inclusion of names (e.g., 1:5f.; 2:1; 3:1; etc.), dates (e.g., 1:26, 37; 2:1, 42; 3:1f.; etc.), and even the age of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry (cf. 3:23, at which time Jesus is thirty years old). Finally, Kümmel has presented relevant material related to Luke's desire to present Jesus as sympathetic to the poor and

³¹⁶Marxsen, Introduction, p. 160.

³¹⁷Conzelmann, Theology, pp. 156-157; cf. Marxsen, Introduction, pp. 157-158.

³¹⁸cf. Kümmel, Introduction, pp. 99-100 for relevant discussion on the meaning of the Lucan "travel" section.

oppressed,³¹⁹ as innocent in the eyes of the Romans,³²⁰ and as free of the personal inequities evident in both Marcan and Matthean versions.³²¹ Through the use of these and other techniques, Luke produces a continuous literary narrative, one which builds from one stage of redemptive history to another. In each case, the control exercised over the tradition by Luke corresponds with that of the "encomium" genre in the accomplishment of the author's intentions.

Whereas the above may be valid in each case, the question confronting us is this: does Luke use amplification and comparison? In effect, most of the observations cited above represent examples of Lucan amplification: that is, the amplifying of the tradition in such a way as to confirm the purposes of the author. Thus the treatment of Satan by Luke represents the manner in which the ministry of Jesus is amplified as a special time in salvation history, a time unencumbered by the presence of Satan. The shaping of large amounts of material into a "travel narrative" represents a Lucan amplification of Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem to keep his appointment with death. Mark, too, presents a single journey as does Matthew, but Luke's presentation represents considerable amplification with respect to its more vivid

³¹⁹Ibid., p. 98

³²⁰Ibid., p. 99.

³²¹Ibid., pp. 97-98.

portrayal of the "journey" (cf. esp. 9:51; 13:22, 33; 17:11 with which there are no parallels) and with respect to the amount of material presented while en route.

One also notices amplification in connection with the messianic identity of Jesus. As Kümmel (following Conzelmann) has stated, Jesus acknowledges his messianic identity from the beginning of his ministry (4:21).

. . . and thus already the earthly Jesus is addressed as κύριε by Peter (5:8), and frequently in the narrative is called ὁ κύριος by the evangelist (7:13; 10:1, 41; 22:61, and often), because in Jesus' activity the time of salvation has broken in . . . ³²²

It is true that Luke preserves tradition which in Mark may be related to what has been identified as the messianic secret. But, as Conzelmann has shown, in Luke "It is only the 'necessity' of the Passion that is a secret".³²³ "The fact that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah was always public knowledge".³²⁴ Thus Kümmel correctly refers to this emphasis as an "accentuation of the Messiahship and Lordship of the earthly Jesus"³²⁵ and this emphasis represents one of the Lucan amplifications of Jesus' personhood and identification.

³²² Ibid., p. 98.

³²³ Conzelmann, Theology, p. 84.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Kümmel, Introduction, p. 98.

Closely associated with this amplification are other characterizations noted by Kümmel:

With this emphasis upon Jesus' feelings of sympathy is to be taken the fact that Jesus, in Luke more so than in Mark and Matthew, expresses God's love for the despised through his conduct and his message: to sinners (5:1ff.; 7:36ff.; . . .); to the Samaritans (10:30ff.; 17:11ff.); the women (7:12, 15; 8:2.; . . .). Here belongs also the more strongly stressed rejection of riches (12:15ff.), . . . the woe upon "the rich" and those "that are full now" (6:24f.), and the beatitude of the "poor" and "those that hunger now" (6:20f.).³²⁶

Thus the amplification of certain aspects of Jesus' person is evident and has been so confirmed by past research. In comparison with the other two synoptics, Luke's version represents an exaggeration: the type of exaggeration commonly encountered in the "encomium" genre.

One additional comment with respect to amplification is appropriate in connection to Lucan writings. If the three-epoch scheme of salvation history as identified by Conzelmann is correct (as it seems to be), then one can see how the entire life of Jesus has been amplified in relation to the ongoing ministry of the church in Acts. It is now generally acknowledged that, in contrast to Mark and Matthew, Luke's presentation is narrated in terms of past event. Typical of this conclusion are Marxsen's words:

³²⁶ Ibid.

By writing Acts Luke makes it plain that his 'Gospel' is meant to be understood as part of a historical account. The story of Jesus is now told as something belonging to the past, and for the first time the historical sequence is stressed.³²⁷

This interpretation receives support by noting the change of terminology employed by Luke in the designation of discipleship. Throughout the narrative of the ministry of Jesus, disciples are those who "follow" (ἀκολουθέω) Jesus. Whereas in Mark and Matthew, it continues to be possible for one to follow him by direct obedience to his commands or instructions (by returning to Galilee in the case of Mark or by heeding the Divine Commission with respect to Matthew), in Luke it is no longer possible to follow Jesus directly. One becomes a disciple, accordingly, by participating in the ongoing ministry of the church. The change in terminology is from the consistently pregnant use of ἀκολουθέω in Luke's gospel to the use in Acts of a multiplicity of terms including μαθητής and ὄχλος (retained from the gospel but used in a different context), ἐκκλησία, Χριστανός, ἀδελφός, πιστεύω, ἅγιος, and at times λαός and αἵρεσις. Thus for Luke, the life of Jesus itself has been so amplified as to give authenticity, authority, and meaning to the ongoing community gathered in his name to continue his work of ministry, service, and worship. Failure to accomplish the

³²⁷Marxsen, Introduction, p. 156.

first half of his work could have had considerable ramifications for those to whom the second half was addressed and for whom both were written. Hence, in one sense, the whole Lucan bios represents an amplified way of treating the "life" of the Messiah in such a way as to convince the reader of the validity of the world-wide mission of the church (to the Jew first and then to the Gentile). Naturally, Luke's design in relating Jesus to the history of redemption differs from that of Polybius in his portrayal of Philopoemen. Luke must address himself to the praiseworthiness of the hero in a way approximating the "encomium" genre in order to make valid his thesis related to the history of the church; conversely, Polybius³²⁸ is writing about only one of many personages contributing to the development of the history he is engaged in recording. Polybius, consequently, can continue to preserve his narrative of praise in a separate work. Luke, if he is to maintain literary consistency given his purposes, cannot. Furthermore, only Luke could create the particular pattern required to give the validity and continuity desired to the second half of his work. It is easy to see that merely attaching Mark or Matthew (or, for that matter, John) to the beginning of Acts would fail to produce the intended literary effect. We conclude, therefore, that amplification is


³²⁸Above, p. 80f.

important for Luke's bios pattern.

In addition to amplification, it is also true, as was the case with the two evangelists previously discussed, that Luke organizes his gospel narrative around the central figure of Jesus in his desire to demonstrate how Jesus is to be ~~p~~raised and revered above all others. To this end, he has employed the technique of comparison, and this technique may be demonstrated in several ways.

First, comparison is intended in the parallel manner in which the traditions of John the Baptist are developed alongside, though separate from, those of Jesus.³²⁹ Like Matthew, Luke feels it necessary to demonstrate through comparison how John, whose function and greatness are positively set forth, nevertheless falls far short of the character of Jesus. The detail of the parallelism has been previously discussed and need not be repeated here. What is distinctively Lucan is the manner in which his parallelism serves to demonstrate Jesus' superiority both in the person and mission through the radical separation of the two personages. For example, the stories relating the conceptions by Elizabeth and Mary are presented with no apparent connection

³²⁹Stanton demonstrates that John the Baptist is not the only character radically separated from Jesus in Luke's gospel. Comparison involving separation is equally applicable to other figures. Cf. Stanton, Jesus, pp. 40ff.



except for the account of Mary's visit to Elizabeth's home. The literary effect for the reader is this: keep an eye on the child to be born of Mary; for here is the embodiment of divine presence (evident in the movement of Elizabeth's baby). Following the brief episode, the separation of the two continues as the parallel birth accounts are presented without reference to each other. The relationship of the two is merely inferred by the summary statement following each account and by the inherent parallelism. Then, at the moment deemed appropriate by Luke, the appearance of John and the account of his ministry are presented with no mention of Jesus. Luke retains the separation of the two by his refusal to admit any direct contact between Jesus and John. Even the account of baptism admits no direct contact; for it has been accomplished 1) after John's arrest and 2) with no reference to the identity of the one who performed the rite. For one unfamiliar with either Matthew or Mark, the questions which easily present themselves include by whom and at what place was Jesus baptized. From the Lucan text alone, one might even conclude that the baptism took place in prison. Apparently Luke is unconcerned with these types of questions which his narrative invites; for to him the importance of maintaining the separation of the two persons takes precedence over any difficulties which arise from the particulars

of his account. Luke must feel that there is somehow a greater risk of misunderstanding on the part of his readers by relating the two personages than by keeping their accounts radically separate.

In spite of the desire to keep the traditions of the two separate, it is still true that Luke intends the comparison to be made by his readers. In Luke, John's statement of the one "mightier than I" who is still to come is made in direct response to the questioning by those present "concerning John, whether perhaps he were the Christ" (cf. Lk 3:15-16/Mt 3:11/Mk 1:7-8). No such question is raised by Matthew or Mark. Further, this response of Luke carefully avoids the "after me" phrase contained in Matthew and Mark, a phrase reserved in Luke's gospel as a technical term implying discipleship. Thus, in Luke, John denies the christological title and messianic identity which Jesus readily admits (cf. 4:16f.). The literary effect accomplished through the christological references by Luke is that the one mightier (greater) than John is in fact Jesus. John's greatness, as in Matthew, serves to enhance the greatness of Jesus. Further, it is only Luke who mentions the "expectation" (3:15) created by John's ministry. Thus while John teaches the multitude and baptizes, Luke's real purpose is to point beyond him in such a way as to render the ministry and person of Jesus as

the fulfilment of expectation: expectation not only resulting from Old Testament prophecy, but even more immediately the expectation created by the ministry of John. John's own ministry, therefore, is incomplete and lacking. The literary effect created by Luke is thus intensified to include his ministry: if John and his ministry display greatness, how much greater are the ministry and person of Jesus both of which together fulfil the expectation of salvation. Finally, it is to be noted that as the ministry of John is incomplete in itself, so, too, is the discipleship his person and ministry produces.³³⁰ Although many scholars agree that it was not the intention of John to found a sect, he nevertheless acquired a following.³³¹ Luke apparently thinks so, because on four occasions in his gospel he refers to "disciples" of John (5:33; 7:18, 19; 11:21). The first reference is one which refers to the disciples of John and the Pharisees as those who observe laws of fasting in contrast with the disciples of Jesus (Lk 5:33/Mk 2:18). Such a joint reference cannot be considered a complimentary reference to John's

³³⁰perhaps this is the reason for Luke's desire -- in his account of the baptism -- to avoid even the remote possibility that Jesus was a disciple of John.

³³¹Dibelius refers to "worshippers of John" and to "the Baptist movement" (Tradition, p. 124); Bultmann cautiously refers to "some Baptist sect" (History, p. 295); and Käsemann refers to "a community owing allegiance to the Baptist" ("The Disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus", Essays, p. 142). Bornkamm, however, warns against viewing a "sect"

disciples. In 7:18, 19 John's disciples come asking for confirmation of Jesus as the Messiah, further indication of the incompleteness of "following" John. Only in 11:1 is a positive reference found: i.e., when the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray "as John taught his disciples" (only in Luke). When we turn to the references in Acts, Luke is more definite in his assessment of the inadequacy of a discipleship which continues to attach itself to John (thereby having missed the real importance of his ministry, which was that of preparing the way for Jesus). In Acts 18:24f. Luke makes it clear that knowing about Jesus and remaining outside of the ministry of the church are no longer adequate. Thus Priscilla and Aquila took Apollos, who knew only the baptism of John, and "expounded to him the way of God more adequately". And in Acts 19:1f. disciples who knew only the baptism of John are instructed and "re-baptized" by Paul. It is clear, from the two episodes in Acts, that a discipleship which attaches itself to John and is thereby based primarily on "expectation" is inadequate. The one expected has come, and the salvation proclaimed by him is even now operative. Therefore, through the use of comparison; Luke asserts three things: 1) Jesus is the Messiah and is greater than the one who prepared for

of John (Günther Bornkamm, Jesus of Nazareth (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 48.

his coming, 2) the ministry of John was one of expectation and is therefore secondary to the ministry of Jesus which fulfils all expectation, and 3) a discipleship whose pivotal axis is John is inferior to that whose centre is faith in what God has already accomplished through Jesus. If all that John has accomplished is great, as indeed it is; then how much greater is what has been accomplished through Jesus.

One could continue with the analysis of the other characters related to Jesus in Luke's gospel and the results would be the same.³³² The absence of Satan, for example, could be interpreted in terms of Jesus' power over him, because Luke specifically states that he "departed from him until an opportune time" (4:13). He does reappear to exert an influence upon Judas, but by that time Jesus is aware that his own role includes death. It is significant that Satan does not return again to tempt Jesus directly. Further, Satan continues to be present throughout the history of the church in Acts indicating that Jesus succeeded where others continue to fail.³³³ Another example would be Pilate's

³³²Stanton, for example, cites portions of the passion narrative concluding: "At a number of places in the passion narratives Luke has directed the attention of the reader to Jesus and allowed other participants in the drama of the passion to fade into the background". Cf. Jesus, pp. 45-46.

³³³Stanton considers the role of Satan in the desertion of Jesus by his disciples to enhance the characterization of Jesus. He identifies "indirect characterization" to

characterization. Luke pictures Pilate as being a just judge; for on three occasions he pronounces Jesus innocent of wrongdoing and once states his intention to "chastise him and release him" (23:16). The portrait of an upright judge is shortlived, however; for Luke immediately states: "So Pilate gave sentence that their [viz., the "crowd"] demand should be granted" (23:24). One could continue with such observations but there is little need to do so. Luke portrays Jesus as a person whose identity, accomplishments, and faith are second to none. In the presentation of his portrait, Luke has made good use of both amplification and comparison.

Purpose

Of the three synoptics, only Luke includes a passage which contains the self-proclaimed purpose of the author. We noted at the beginning of our study of Luke that it is his avowed intention to "compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us". Luke himself has "followed all things closely" and intends that his is to be an "orderly account". It is indeed regrettable that Luke was not more specific with regard to the precise type of narrative he be involved in the description of Barabbas and Jesus. Cf. ibid., pp. 44-45. In both instances, what Stanton has affirmed we have previously identified as comparison by contrast: i.e., the positive actions of Jesus in comparison to the disobedience of the disciples and the character of Barabbas. Cf. Rhetorica ad Alexandrum III. 25-31; above, p. 109.

is about to produce. There is no reference to "history", "biography", or, perhaps more surprising, "gospel". Equally obscure is the scope of the material to be presented. Luke's purpose, therefore, is a general one designed to be all-inclusive: his only qualification being that the account is a responsible one.

✓ The lack of specificity in the above respect does have its advantages for Luke, and may be considered intentional. While, on the one hand, he displays in his introduction familiarity with the literary standards of his day, he does not permit literary questions (with the exception of intelligibility) to be the basis for judgmental evaluation. Of primary concern to him is the faith he professes, i.e., the faith which dominates the narrative as a whole and which itself becomes the appropriate response desired from the reader.

In spite of the above assessment, it is not inappropriate to speak of the character of the literary type by which Luke has expressed his faith. If one is planning to take a journey, then the manner of transportation is of no little importance to him. Likewise, the particular vehicle (or vehicles) Luke has employed in reaching his literary destination is of importance to the Lucan interpreter.

The generally accepted characterization of Luke's work (Luke-Acts) is that of a historian with the certain qualification allowing for the dominance of his faith. The two quotations which follow illustrate both the assessment of Luke and his work (Luke-Acts) and the qualification required by faith. The first is by Fuller:

It is often maintained that Luke is primarily an historian, and indeed a good and accurate historian. True, he launches his work (1:1ff.) just like any other historian of his day. He also links his story to the secular history of the time (1:5 and 3:1). He is interested in the secular rulers who played their part in the story of Jesus, Herod and Pontius Pilate. He tells us that he has put in a good deal of research (1:3); that he has striven to be accurate (1:3 R.S.V. margin); and that he has written up his account in an "orderly" way. We must give Luke full credit for all this. But he is more than a mere historian. For it is not just history that he is setting out to relate. It is the "word" (1:2), that is, God's self-communication to man in the story of Jesus Christ. Luke writes as a Christian believer. His aim is to proclaim the history as the mighty act of God for us men and for our salvation. He seeks not merely to inform, still less to entertain, but to evoke a decision of faith in Jesus Christ. Luke in other words is not just an historian, he is an evangelist. This means that he selects, arranges and handles the material in his sources to serve a theological rather than an historical purpose.³³⁴

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Reginald Fuller, Luke's Witness to Jesus Christ (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), pp. 12-13.

The second comes from the hand of Marxsen:

His aim is to write past history, and to do this as accurately as possible, and he reads his sources -- although with a critical eye -- as historical records. If Luke wishes to be a 'historian' he can only achieve this by writing history, and he therefore sets out the units of proclamation as a succession of past events, but at the same time he characterizes the story by describing the events as 'fulfilments', and as fulfilments of a Divine plan of salvation which has unfolded itself in a sequence of history. Luke sets the story in the context of secular history (ii. lff.; iii. lff.), but he does not allow it to merge into it. As a 'historian' he is always the believer, and his account of history is always determined by his belief. 335

I personally find no fault with either of the above evaluations when applied to the Luke-Acts material. Luke is indeed a historian: but he is more than that. He is a believer whose record of history is governed by his faith. According to him (I agree with Conzelmann) God's plan of redemptive history falls into three epochs, and Luke has carried out his threefold scheme in a twofold literary manner: 1) the time of Jesus prefaced by brief accounts of John and the early history of Jesus containing allusions to the fact that Jesus' roots were in the life of Israel, and 2) the time of the church prefaced by references to the presence of the risen Christ and his ascension, both of

335 Marxsen, Introduction, pp. 156-157.

which point back to the time of Jesus. This twofold literary scheme is also evidenced by 1) John's community of expectation prior to the advent of Jesus and 2) the community of expectation prior to Pentecost and the reception of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, the separation of Luke from Acts in the canon does not spell total disaster for Luke's central thesis.

When we turn our attention specifically to that portion commonly referred to as Luke's gospel, we see that Luke has truly sought to present a "life" of Jesus as viewed through the eyes of faith. This is clear not only from the topoi employed in his presentation but also through the use of literary techniques commonly found in "encomium" biographical literature. It is a self-contained story which does not necessarily require the book of Acts for a proper understanding of the impact of the Messiah upon the Greco-Roman world. With respect to the function of the bios portion of Luke-Acts contained in the gospel, we are reminded again of Cadbury's words, which are as applicable to Luke the biographer as to Luke the historian: ". . . all the gospels appear to have been intended to create an admiration or something more than admiration for Jesus, their hero".³³⁶ Furthermore, faith in the

³³⁶ Cadbury, Making, p. 300.

Lucan portrait of Jesus is precisely what is required for a full understanding of the continuity of the ongoing history of the church in Acts. It is precisely this faith which in Luke's eyes will continue to sustain and nurture the church until the time of the Parousia whose imminent coming is no longer central. Thus, whereas Luke's gospel is complete in itself, Acts is dependent upon what has preceded it for an understanding of the total picture of God's redemptive act.

The distinctive character of the Lucan history does not reside in his incorporation of portraiture into a broader historical framework. Portraiture is fairly common in many historical narratives as we have previously noted. It is the peculiar requirement of admiration and faith necessary for a proper understanding and full appreciation of the history of the church which accounts for Luke's distinctiveness as a historian. This emphasis which is similar to that of the "encomium" genre, does not permit Luke to portray his hero in the same way that a Polybius would incorporate portraits into his historical accounts. The difference is in the type of portrayal required to meet the purposes of the author. Luke's purpose is not merely to acquaint his readers with the

contributions of a great personage. Rather his purpose is to confront his audience with the demand of faith in the person, words, deeds, and suffering which will culminate in their participation in the ongoing life of the church. It is only in those persons so confronted that the Spirit can dwell meaningfully (cf. the disciples of John in Acts 18:24f. and 19:1f.). Because of this, Luke's portrait of Jesus of necessity is not so nearly comparable to the personages of histories as it is to the idealized portraits of the "encomium" genre.³³⁷ It is related to this genre in the same way that Mark and Matthew are: namely, praise with the added dimension of faith. If Luke-Acts may be considered as having come from the hand of a believing historian, then Luke's gospel may be truly referred to as the product of a first century, believing biographer. Luke's gospel is a bios of the "encomium" type which has been composed to occupy the central and pivotal position in Luke's account of salvation history.

³³⁷Talbert's thesis with respect to a specific bios type treated around the teacher-pupil (philosopher-disciple) model would be more convincing had he noted the idealized character of Luke's portrait of Jesus, which links it with the "encomium" genre. Luke's Gospel is a type that not only records (as did Diogenes Laertius) but also persuades and defends. There is more involved in Luke-Acts than a record of the doctrine of the teacher

4. Summary

We began this chapter with a discussion of the methodological bases for establishing generic relationships. As a result of this discussion, the decision was made against proofs derived from direct comparisons of one piece of literature with another. In a comparison of one gospel with another, in spite of the many evidences of direct relationships, it is the manner in which they differ that so often commands our attention. The differences which may be directly attributed to the hand of each respective author emerge with such magnitude as to raise the question as to whether or not the works collectively belong to the same literary category.³³⁸ Viewed from the perspective of the recognized characteristics of the "encomium" genre, however, the differences which exist between Matthew, Mark, and Luke are placed into their proper context. What has been demonstrated (given the different purposes of the authors involved) is that they are all concerned primarily with the bios of Jesus. Each one seeks to instruct and convince to the extent of enlisting the response of faith from the audience. To this end, they may properly

traced through a line of descendents. It is possible, however, that Luke has actually combined the "encomium" type with biographical history as described by Talbert. Cf. Literary Patterns, pp. 125ff.

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E.g., cf. Marxsen, Introduction, p. 163.

be described as testimonies to Jesus, the Messiah: in this respect, they were each one received as a bios of Jesus by their respective audiences.

The relationships of each of the synoptic gospels to the "encomium" genre have been examined in terms of three essential characteristics of the genre: topoi, literary techniques, and purpose. With respect to topoi, our analyses demonstrated the presence and use of numerous topoi commonly encountered elsewhere in "encomium" literature. All three evangelists have included words and acts accomplished by their hero, and all three have included accounts of death: with the object in each case of praise and more. Matthew and Luke have included events surrounding and depicting birth: Mark has formulated his introduction so as to perform a similar functional task. Luke has included one account of Jesus' youth. Matthew has substituted other accounts which perform the same basic literary function for his narrative: the anticipation of future accomplishments and greatness. In each case, those topoi which have, for one reason or another, been omitted do not detract significantly from the particular, clearly identifiable bios pattern each author has undertaken to portray. There are differences, to be sure, but there is little deviation from each author's preoccupation with the portrait of the central character and the affirmation from

the audience which is intended.

An examination of the literary techniques isolated for investigation reveals that each author has made use of both comparison and amplification. Marcan characterization, for example, is so developed as to convey Mark's own view through the interaction of the participants in the drama. Matthew develops his characters in such a way as to leave little doubt concerning the most righteous, superior, and heroic. Luke, through a process of almost total separation, likewise leaves little doubt as to the central soteriological figure in the unfolding of his understanding of salvation history. In each case, the author has maximized and minimized, i.e., amplified, both the scope of the tradition and the manner in which it is portrayed, in order that the desired results may be accomplished.

The three evangelists do share a common concern in their narratives, that of persuading the audience of the messianic identity of Jesus for the purpose of a faith response. To this extent, as Cadbury noted, each one seeks to enlist admiration and more than admiration. It is the "more than" which accounts for the critical role of the kerygma in the bios of Jesus, and it is the kerygmatic quality which provides the gospels with their unique character in the history of literature. One should note, however, that the

essential literary character is that of a particular type of bios: it is in the manner the bios is dominated by the Christian kerygma accompanied by the appeal for faith that one discerns the uniquely Christian character of the whole. In spite of the common purpose of affirming the messianic nature of Jesus which all three evangelists exhibit, variations in purpose are also discernible. Mark writes in anticipation of the imminent Parousia at which time the suffering Messiah (the power of the "divine man") will break, once and for all time, the bonds of secrecy in a final climactic event marking the end of history. Matthew provides the justification for the church's mission to the world, preaching in the manner and on the authority of the risen Lord. Luke would have us understand that the ministry of Jesus, which is now relegated to the state of past event, is to be viewed as the truly authoritative basis for the ongoing ministry of the church, guided by the Holy Spirit, to both Jew and Gentile. Throughout the fulfilment of these and other purposes which must go unnamed for the present, the praiseworthy bios of Jesus and the desired response of faith dominate the entire literary process by which is dramatically depicted the impact of the visitation of God upon mankind for the purpose of redemption.

We conclude, therefore, that the manner in which

Matthew, Mark, and Luke portray respectively the "praiseworthy" bios of Jesus (however inadequately or incompletely by our own contemporary standards) does correspond to the literary characteristics discernible in the "encomium" genre. Their narratives may be properly understood as examples of the "encomium" type with the qualification that they are written to accomplish more than admiration, namely, faith.

IV.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main point is that when we say art, we say image; and when we say image or symbol, we say meaning, we say communication. The arts, old and new, the fine arts, the practical arts, and the popular arts are peculiarly the carriers of meaning and value in our society as in all societies. The church is learning that it cannot ignore such expressions of the society in which it lives. The encounter of the Gospel with the world, whether in evangelism, religious education, apologetics, or theology, requires a deep appreciation of, and initiation into, the varied symbolic expressions of culture.³³⁹

Having thus argued our case, there remain several questions to be discussed briefly before bringing this study to its conclusion. The first series of questions is connected with the relationship of the present thesis to the work of Votaw on "popular" biography and that of Hadas and Smith on aretalogy. Are these theses, which on the surface appear to be distinct and unrelated, mutually exclusive? If so, why? If not, why not? If the latter should be the case,

³³⁹ Amos N. Wilder, Theology and Modern Literature (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 51-52.

then what is the relationship of each one with the other? Perhaps the value of such questions is that they point to areas of research in need of further exploration; for space does not permit an extensive treatment of all of the issues involved. At the risk of oversimplification, however, an initial response would seem to be necessary.

Votaw, it will be recalled, defined "popular biography" in general terms:

In the popular sense, a biography is any writing which aims to make one acquainted with a historical person by giving some account of his deeds and words, sketchily chosen and arranged, even when the motive of the writer is practical and hortatory rather than historical.³⁴⁰

One should take special note of the manner in which he has composed his definition. He has chosen to use the phrase, "in the popular sense", rather than "a popular biography is . . ." or a similar type of construction. Throughout his article, therefore, the phrase "popular biography"³⁴¹ literally means a "biography understood in the popular sense". The implication is that Votaw is concerned with those biographical works which enjoyed a certain popular appeal and perhaps a more widespread circulation than did historical biographies. He further argues that this type of biography was

³⁴⁰Votaw, "The Gospels", p. 49. Cf. above, p. 5.

³⁴¹Cf. e.g., Ibid., p. 51.

not contingent upon adequate chronology, genetic relation, or an account of the hero's influence upon his times.³⁴²

Such works were described as loosely organized and sketchily presented: the only requirement being that the work consist of a favourable presentation designed to acquaint one with a historical person through a loosely organized presentation of his words and deeds. In Votaw's description, therefore, little emphasis is given either to the skill, abilities, and/or education of the author or to the quality of the composition as a determining factor for the classification of "popular biography".

With this delineation of "popular" biography, we are in basic agreement except for one point: namely, the use of "sketchily chosen and arranged" as a requirement for classification: i.e., assuming that Votaw intends this description as essential to all popular biographical works and not merely a description of what sometimes occurs therein. We have seen that biographies in the first century A.D. "popular" sense may be "sketchily arranged"; but they may also be well organized and carefully designed to meet the author's peculiar purposes. For the most part, however, what Votaw claims to be the case with "popular" biography we have found to be

³⁴²Cf. Ibid., pp. 51 and 223. As a matter of fact, very few ancient biographical works display these characteristics. Cf. Stanton, Jesus, pp. 117ff.

equally true with the "encomium" genre. As a form of "display" oratory, epideictic literature is deserving of the descriptive term, "popular". Chronicling intent was not an absolute requirement: and, depending upon the scope and purposes of the author in relation to his audience, the author could include genetic relations and/or the hero's influence upon his times as and to the extent desired. This close relationship is nowhere more evident than in Votaw's general statement about the works (including the gospels) he has chosen for consideration: "They eulogize and idealize their heroes, they select their best sayings and interpret them for practical use, they give the memorabilia in an atmosphere of appreciation, they commend the message to the faith and practice of all".³⁴³ Rather than totally discrediting the work of Votaw, our investigation has served to confirm him in several important respects by re-establishing the biographical dimension as important for a proper understanding of the gospels. We, therefore, commend his article to more careful and weighty analysis. The present work has in fact provided a specific historical genre which vindicates Votaw's description of a situation which existed in the field of biographical literature at the beginning of the Christian era.

³⁴³ Votaw, "The Gospels", p. 55.

With respect to the thesis of Hadas and Smith, the astute reader may have already anticipated that our position also affirms rather than denies the possibility of a close relationship with the aretalogy involving the bios pattern. The most obvious difference is specifically the delineation of the type of subject under consideration. In the discussion of the "encomium" genre, the subject to be treated was broadly defined. The subject could be that of a king, statesman, orator, military general, athlete, philosopher, etc., or a person of high religious quality. According to Hadas and Smith, the aretalogy can be understood as a technical term primarily applicable to the "lives" of philosophers or religious personages. In view of our investigation, I should tend to view this understanding of aretalogy as a sub-type of the "encomium" genre, but this relationship is by no means an assured conclusion. Since the rhetoricians do not specifically deal with the bios of a religious personage and since there is no easily identifiable example of an aretalogy of this type available for investigation, one cannot be absolutely sure of such an assessment. In any case, whereas we do not discount completely the hypotheses of Votaw and Hadas and Smith, we must again emphasize the contributions of our investigations in comparison to the other theories. Votaw was primarily concerned with comparison of portraits: we have

identified a historically relevant genre. Likewise, the response to Hadas and Smith and the current state of the question of the concept of aretalogy have not produced reliable insight to the bios factor present in the gospels. By contrast, our research into the "encomium" biographical genre historically vindicates and defines the biographical character of the synoptic gospels in terms of the intentions of the authors which have been objectified in the texts. To be sure, all of the evidence has not been presented: but, the evidence that has been examined is more than sufficient to account for the literary character of the gospel narratives.

A second question which comes to mind in view of our present research is: which of the gospels is the more representative of the "encomium" genre? The question is raised in response to the generally accepted observation that Luke is the closest to "biography", followed next by Matthew. Mark hardly registers a vote. Viewed from one perspective one can readily understand such assessments. Luke, for example, appears to be more interested in biographical detail because of his inclusion of more detailed references to time and place, the addition of a story of Jesus' adolescence, his account of Jesus' death, and his more detailed description of what happened after the death of Jesus. Matthew depicts most of this but is lacking at several points. Mark,

on the other hand, includes nothing about Jesus' early history and begins with John the Baptist. Mark's narrative is considerably shorter and emphasizes only the death of Jesus (depending upon what one does with 16:9-20). On the basis of such information, one is inclined to concur with the general view. Further, this assessment is especially enticing for those who see a trajectory of development in gospel literature: a development beginning with Mark, whose basic form (related to no other narrative) is incorporated and improved upon by Matthew and Luke. Here, the presupposition would appear to have the added weight of logical progression. However, viewed from another perspective (that of genre criticism which understands the fluidity of form and type within a general category), the generally accepted view is not so obvious. On this level, the essential questions are those of species determination. For example, which is the more representative of the classification of mammal: the horse, Homo sapiens, or whale? The answer to the question of species resides in the application of certain basic criteria set as the minimal standard for each category. In this case, without going into great detail, all three are considered as mammals even though there are differences which are by no means insignificant. In a similar manner, we have applied the basic criteria of pattern based upon topoi, literary

techniques, and purpose to each of the gospels, and our conclusion has been that there is sufficient reason to classify each one as belonging to a particular literary type. This conclusion has been based upon the application of "minimal standards"; not those of a nonexistent, pure, or idealized form. In spite of the conclusion, it was also noted that there are differences between the gospels themselves and between the gospels and other examples of the same type (generically speaking) which cannot be considered insignificant. The type, in other words, embraces various forms. The question of "more or less" is, therefore, essentially descriptive rather than determinative on the level of genre classification, and neither argues for (or against) nor provides support for (or against) any theory of trajectory apart from convincing, external (historical) evidence. Given the subject and the peculiar purposes of the author, Lucian's Demonax is as much bios as Tacitus's Agricola or Philo's Mosis, irrespective of the numerical count of topoi and/or techniques. The same may be said of the synoptics. There does not seem to have been a single, pure model toward which the gospels were moving: rather, they serve the purposes of the authors involved in their production and the audiences to whom they were addressed. That one gospel contains more of the topoi or techniques than another may be indicative of nothing more

than a difference of ability and/or training: i.e., Mark, as is commonly assumed, simply did not have the sophistication of Luke, Isocrates, or Xenophon. Thus, whereas a tabulation of topoi and techniques might lead to conclusions of a "more or less" nature, one must be very careful in assuming that one evangelist is closer than another to some idealized model. He must be even more careful of positing a hypothetical trajectory based on the theory of genres. Therefore, on the basis of our understanding of genre, we conclude simply that each of the synoptics in his own way properly belongs to the "encomium" type.

We have now reached the end of our study, and it is time to review what has been attempted. Briefly stated, our thesis may be reviewed in three parts: 1) the statement of the problem, 2) the identification of an appropriate solution, and 3) the testing of the solution through an examination of the evidence.

It will be recalled that the problem was presented by referring to the works of Votaw, Schmidt, and Hadas and Smith. The thesis of Votaw consisted of the delineation of two types of biography, popular and historical; and he argued that the gospels belonged to the former category. Schmidt's thesis was that the proper distinction to be made was between Hochliteratur and Kleinliteratur and that the gospels belonged

to the category of Kleinliteratur, thereby precluding any literary relationships with other examples not falling in the "folk" literature category. Hadas and Smith, on the other hand, proposed another literary type to which the gospels possibly belonged, that of aretalogy. It will be noted that only Schmidt's thesis was discounted both on the basis of the problem of the Hoch- and Kleinliteratur dichotomy and the subsequent developments of redaction and composition criticism. Whereas we have now admitted the possible relationships of popular biography (Votaw), aretalogy (Hadas and Smith, Tiede), and the solution we proposed to one another, the problem as presented prior to our proposal was shown to be lacking in a satisfactory manner approximating consensus.

The solution to the problem presented was introduced by a brief discussion of the concept of genre. The position assumed in this work was that the concept itself is fluid and dynamic: i.e., it can only refer to a general type which may embrace many specific forms and many variables with respect to the purpose and the utilization of the topoi and techniques. Absent from the concept is a single "pure" form even though there often emerges within a general type certain literary models which exert considerable influence upon later works. Identifiable within the generic concept is a discernible pattern common to the literary works classified therein. It is

through the examination of the topoi, and literary techniques which comprise the pattern and the purposes for which the pattern has been developed that one is able to identify a literary genre. Thus, Polybius can distinguish (from a methodological point of view) two distinct literary genres related to the presentation of Philopoemen: one related to the writing of history, the other to the task of praise and persuasion. Although broadly defined, a genre, including the one we have identified for discussion, is not so vague as to admit all literature involving the same subject: rather, it is delimited by the common topoi and literary techniques employed in the development of the pattern and by the function given the pattern by the author.

The next stage in formulating a solution was the identification of a particular type of bios literature which could lend itself both to portrayal and to other concerns evident in the gospels. The presence of such a "type" or "kind" was first evident in the writings of Polybius, Cicero, Cornelius Nepos, Plutarch, and Lucian. It was then given a more precise definition by turning to the prescriptive literary bases as evident in the educational system of the Greco-Roman world. Noticeably absent from this general type of literature which must have been popular was a single nomenclature. This fact may be indicative of a lack of clarity

on "genre", a fact which points to a state of development within biographical literature in general. Thus, whereas the ancients had a relatively high degree of clarity with respect to what "history" should be and consist of, the recording of the lives of men exhibited considerable variety, whether in terms of content, approach, and/or purpose. There was a type of biography which did specifically seek to praise, honour, and/or defend: and because this common type is clearly evidenced in the rhetorical descriptions of the literary exercise, encomium, the title "encomium" was supplied for lack of a better term. Identified as integral to this type of literature were topoi relevant to the praise of a person and literary techniques of comparison and amplification, both of which provided the author with the suitable tools and freedom to develop the particulars of the bios pattern in compliance with his own specific design. In contrast with history, for example, detail and sequential recording of events were only included to the extent to which they served the pattern being developed by the author. These treatises were portraits created for and dedicated to the character of the hero. Finally, secular examples of the genre were offered for consideration, including works by Isocrates, Xenophon, Philo, Tacitus, Lucian, and Josephus. In most cases, many of these examples differed from one another but they each one embraced

the bios pattern evidenced through the use of topoi, literary techniques, and purposes of praise and/or vindication.

The third portion of the thesis was devoted to the examination of the synoptic gospels and their relation to the genre identified as the "encomium" genre. The analyses revolved around those characteristics previously associated with this literary type: topoi, literary techniques, and purpose. In each case, there was sufficient evidence to indicate that, given the specific theological purposes of each one, the reader to whom it was addressed would have received it as a bios of the "encomium" type designed to fill him with praise for God and Jesus and to convict him with faith. Accordingly, in one sense, we would not be doing the evangelists a disservice by listing their works among the examples cited at the end of the second chapter. In another sense, the radical demand of faith would preclude such a listing, even beside Philo's Vita Mosis. It is not, however, the consideration of the nature of literature which precludes such a classification, but rather the added purpose on the part of the author of presenting his hero in kerygmatic terms: i.e., Jesus is the man among men in whom all mankind finds salvation resulting from God's direct actions. Jesus is the religious figure in whose suffering all men find salvation through faith. Although with the radical dimension added, Jesus can neither be compared nor

classified with any other person, the manner in which his literary portrait is presented is significant. In the "encomium" genre, the evangelists either consciously or unconsciously appropriated a ubiquitous literary type broad enough and flexible enough to embrace and project their kerygmatic claims and, at the same time, carry out their peculiar literary designs.

The final question to be addressed briefly is this: assuming the validity of our study, what are the contributions of our hypothesis to the state of synoptic studies? Perhaps the most significant implication to be derived from the fact that the gospels belong to that laudatory biography identified as the "encomium" genre is that we need no longer either qualify or apologize for our references to these narratives as "biographies". Too long has the justifiable reaction to the nineteenth century Leben-Jesu-Forschung clouded the vision of gospel critics to the real biographical emphasis each one of the narratives possesses. The gospels as literature truly stand in an ancient and respected tradition of literature which has been designed specifically for the purpose of praising the hero of a biographical composition. To be sure, this type of biographical narrative differs both from historical portraiture of antiquity (e.g., Polybius) and from the more modern concepts of biography. No attempt is

made to provide a comprehensive presentation: nor is there an effort to comply with ancient notions of historiography by presenting impartial records of events. But, as we have noted, there is an attempt to portray and to characterize Jesus in a manner which is identifiably that of the "encomium" genre. Thus, the biographical dimension, which has long been apparent but never fully explained, has been verified and identified in our study. This means that the evangelists were not irresponsible in their tasks of proclamation. Their literary products may not be considered exercises in the art of deception and distortion. When we have identified the gospel literary type, we become cognizant of the methodological considerations which are inherent in these treatises by virtue of the genre into which they are now classified. The evangelists, therefore, were indeed men of literary integrity and their works are reflective of that integrity: i.e., the gospels are real biographies of the "encomium" biographical type.

Second, a recognition of the genre of the gospels is an invaluable contribution to the exact interpretation of the synoptic texts. Now, for the first time, Loneragan's "hermeneutic circle" is indeed made available to the synoptic critic. Not only are there parts, the examination of which has occupied the concepts of both form and redaction criticism

(the latter in terms of the manner in which the parts are utilized by the author), but now there is a comprehensible whole. The relation of the parts to the whole and the whole to the parts may thus be examined in connection with the gospel narratives; and future research involving this approach should serve to verify and/or refine previous work of gospel interpreters as well as provide new possibilities heretofore unconsidered.

Finally, there are implications from our study for those currently involved in historical Jesus (research). We can now understand the failure of the "old quest" in a new and more meaningful way. Its lack of success was not due to the fact that the gospels are not biographical, but because of the particular type of bios they represent. In addition to this new understanding, there is a new possibility that emerges from the literary type into which we see the gospel narratives fitting. This new consideration is the distinct possibility that the evangelist's narratives on the whole do in fact represent, each from his own perspective, a true and accurate assessment of Jesus' identity and character. If on the basis of genre consideration, for example, we may now apply the rhetorical principle of Aristotle (cf. above, pp.106-107) -- namely, that those traditions attributed to the person are to be consistent with what the person would

have said and done even if he didn't actually say and do them --, then we have even more valid grounds on which to posit the continuity between the evangelists' witness to the Jesus event and the sort of person Jesus actually was. It certainly opens new avenues to be explored. Meanwhile, we can expect that efforts to get behind the narrative to those authentic traditions which were utilized to create the portraits will continue. The advantage we now have is that there is a much better understanding of the character of the narratives behind which the investigator of the historical Jesus would seek to go.

In the final analysis, the advantages just stated have yet to materialize. We are convinced that through our study we have made significant contributions to synoptic research, but only additional research can determine whether or not the possibilities now open can in fact produce tangible results. For the present, such research will have to be deferred to another writing if not another writer. Until then, we are confident, based upon the evidence, that the gospels reveal numerous concerns, not the least of which was ~~actualized in the fact that Jesus is portrayed in narratives~~ belonging to a literary type that was overtly designed to enlist praise and that was used by the evangelists to enlist faith from the reader: narratives, that is, which belong

to the "encomium" biographical genre.

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