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## The Claims of the Prologues and Greco-Roman Rhetoric: The Prefaces to Luke and Acts in the Light of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Strategies

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This essay is the result of a request by the editor of this volume to describe the Greco-Roman rhetorical strategies in the prefaces to Luke and Acts. Such a task, one might suppose, is quite easy. After all, a person of no less stature than Friedrich Blass described the preface to Luke as a “remarkable specimen of fine and well-balanced structure, and at the same time of well-chosen vocabulary.”<sup>1</sup> In addition, H. J. Cadbury made it commonplace to think of Luke and Acts as part of the Greek literary world and to consider the preface to Luke to establish an undeniable place for Luke and Acts in the literary tradition of Greek historiography.<sup>2</sup>

But things have changed. A significant challenge now stands before interpreters to take a more nuanced view of these writings and their prefaces. Two decades ago, Charles H. Talbert initiated a major debate with an analysis that concluded that Luke and Acts are more accurately described as biographical writings about a founder and his successors than historiographical writings about Christianity as a political, religious movement.<sup>3</sup> In a context in which many interpreters are

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ignoring the substance of his insights, he has raised the question whether interpreters really can think that Luke and Acts use political history (the subject matter proper of Greco-Roman historiography) as the host genre for their presentation of the character of the individuals and peoples (the subject matter proper of Greco-Roman biography) who populate Luke and Acts.<sup>4</sup> It should be obvious, he proposes, that Luke and Acts use the medium of the words and deeds of Jesus and specific followers to communicate their view of God, the world, the nature of history, and the nature of the future. Richard Pervo, in turn, has exhibited dimensions of Acts that are closer to ancient romance literature than to historiography.<sup>5</sup> The novelistic aspects of Acts, then, must be given as much attention as events that can be interpreted in the context of specific political events in the Mediterranean world.<sup>6</sup> In the midst of this broader genre discussion Loveday C. A. Alexander has performed the most comprehensive and systematic analysis of prefaces in Greek, Roman, and Hellenistic literature in recent times and concluded that

the conventions employed in the [Lukan] Gospel preface do not accord with the common classification of Luke's work with Greco-Roman historiography: the scope and scale are wrong, dedication is not normally found in historical writings, the customary topics for historical prefaces do not appear, and both the style and the motifs of the Lucan preface are better paralleled elsewhere, in the broad area of Greek literature (too broad to be called "genre") which I have called "the scientific tradition."<sup>7</sup>

In turn, she concludes that

the opening conventions used in the Book of Acts are not sufficient to establish the genre of the work as "history" within the frame of reference defined by

Greek literary convention.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, Alexander has argued that Socratic intellectual biography is a very important tradition for understanding the portrayal of Paul in Acts.<sup>9</sup> Gregory L. Sterling, in turn, has refined the historiographical approach through careful investigation

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of a subgenre he calls “apologetic historiography.”<sup>10</sup> In addition, Kota Yamada has identified a subgenre he calls “rhetorical historiography”<sup>11</sup> in an attempt to adapt historiographical terminology to the nature of Luke and Acts.

Given the deep-seated nature of current disagreements over the nature of Luke and Acts, it may be futile to try to enter, or re-enter,<sup>12</sup> the debate with a goal of changing anyone’s mind. Yet, one of the characteristics of works like Luke and Acts is the variegated texture of their discourse – they inherently defy simple classification.<sup>13</sup> Precisely because they contain multiple generic features that interact dynamically with one another, they regularly evoke new insights from highly-disciplined and well-informed interpreters. If Luke and Acts were simple writings, most interpreters would have walked away from them long ago. The work of both Sterling and Yamada calls attention to the argumentative nature of the discourse in Luke and Acts: to them Luke and Acts function in a historiographical mode that employs selective, conventional strategies of persuasion for specific purposes. Alexander, however, has made her case, and continues to make it, with an argument that one of the most noticeable features of the prefaces to Luke and Acts is their absence of rhetorical pretension or flourish.<sup>14</sup> For her the prefaces exhibit an absence of rhetorical skill characteristic of literature she describes as scientific discourse in the Mediterranean world. Talbert, in addition, emphasizes that the character of individuals and peoples is the primary medium Lukan discourse uses to communicate its view of the world: for

him the discourse uses human agency in a powerful and important manner. Pervo, in turn, emphasizes the exciting, adventurous, and entertaining aspects of Acts: for him Lukan discourse is not only informational or edifying, but it has a quality that appeals to the aesthetic and adventuresome dimensions of human life.

The question is if it might be possible, at least implicitly, to address all four of the primary issues under debate – argumentative historiography, absence of developed rhetorical statement, biography, and novelistic literature – in a manner that advances the discussion of the nature of Luke and Acts rather than simply activates usual disagreements among interpreters. Among other things, I am concerned that some who defend the historiographical nature of Luke and Acts leave the impression, whether they mean to or not, that Lukan discourse is virtually equivalent in kind to the mode of writing present in Herodotus, Thucydides,

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and Polybius. They are not. This, as I understand it, is the issue Alexander has attempted to address in her comprehensive study of prefaces in Mediterranean antiquity, and it would be beneficial if current interpreters would build on the implications of her study. The likelihood, as Alexander has shown through her extensive gathering and analysis of prefaces in Mediterranean writings, is that the author of Luke and Acts writes at a “middlebrow” rather than literarily elite social and cultural level.<sup>15</sup> This level of writing regularly exhibits an overly formal approach in the preface, at the same time that it reveals an absence of truly sophisticated rhetorical skill.

Unfortunately, some current interpreters of Luke and Acts overlook the profound implications of Alexander’s results.<sup>16</sup> One of the reasons may be her choice of the term “scientific” to describe the kind of literature that contains prefaces most analogous to the preface to Luke. Perhaps a better description of the literature with analogous prefaces is “profession-

oriented writings.” This literature is written by and for networks of people in “the world of the crafts and professions” in Mediterranean society: artisans, tradesmen, businessmen, businesswomen, physicians, engineers – people at the level of the professions and guilds – rather than networks of people in the literary circles of Mediterranean society.<sup>17</sup> This literature exhibits either limited access or indifference to literature produced by the major literary circles.<sup>18</sup> The result is literature that transmits data within a targeted sector of society for the purpose of advancing specific practices and points of view among those for whom it is written and to whom it is read. In other words, this is not truly “public” literature, intended for those who have access to the major literary collections of the time. Rather, it is writing for networks of people who exchange goods and services with one another regularly because they share a belief that Jesus of Nazareth and his followers are continuing the history of Israel.

The beginning of Luke evokes this story of Israel as the angel, in the opening chapter, tells Zechariah that his son John will “turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God” (Luke 1:16). Soon after this, the angel Gabriel appears to Mary and tells her that the Lord God will give her son Jesus “the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:32-33). This perception of the continuation of the story of Israel reaches a highpoint in Luke when Jesus tells his disciples that he assigns to them, as his Father assigned to him, “a kingdom, that you may eat

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and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:29-30). The preface to Acts evokes a continuation of the story of Israel through Jesus’ disciples when the disciples ask Jesus if at this time he will restore the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6). Jesus’ response reconfigures their perception of the kingdom of Israel by introducing a

program whereby the words and deeds of Jesus will be taken to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8). The narrative enacts this program, then, until the final verse when Paul, evidently at the end of the earth in Rome, preaches the kingdom of God and teaches about the Lord Jesus Christ openly and unhindered (Acts 28:31).

To address the rhetorical qualities of the level of writing Alexander perceives to be present in Luke and Acts, I will approach the prefaces to Luke and Acts from the perspective of “progymnastic” rather than “fully” rhetorical discourse. The term “progymnastic” comes from the contents of the handbooks called Progymnasmata (Preliminary Exercises) that rhetoricians wrote for grammarians who were preparing students at the end of secondary education for advanced instruction in rhetoric.<sup>19</sup> Progymnastic rhetoric specializes in “the ‘re-performance’ of well-known traditions.”<sup>20</sup> In the environment of this overall approach, it “uses specific personages for its context of communication,” makes traditions either generally or specifically argumentative in nature, and envisions a process of “rhetorical elaboration” (ἐργασίᾳ) that “works a tradition toward the form of an essay or speech that presents a complete argument.”<sup>21</sup> The present essay, therefore, contains insights gleaned primarily from the Progymnasmata of Theon and Hermogenes and includes data from other rhetorical manuals only as a way of filling out the meaning of what is in the Progymnasmata. The challenge is to identify both what is present and what is absent in the prefaces to Luke and Acts for the purpose of understanding more fully the nature of Lukan discourse. A truly careful description of the nature of Lukan discourse holds the potential for a deeper understanding of the power of this mode of writing in relation to other modes of writing in the New Testament. In other words, we have the opportunity to provide a new description of early Christianity on the basis of the kinds of discourse it generated to communicate its vision of God, the world, and the nature of human life

in this world and beyond it.<sup>22</sup> If we learn how to achieve new insights about discourse in the New Testament, we have the potential for transmitting a fuller understanding of the nature of Christianity to people who will face the challenges not only of the first half but also of the last half of the twenty-first century.

One of the features of the debate during the past twenty years has been continuous appeal to literature outside of Luke and Acts. This has been very fruitful, revealing dimensions of Luke and Acts that had not been prominent. The time

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might be right, however, to correlate more of these observations with aspects of the inner texture of Luke and Acts. In this way it may be possible to discover anew how this discourse attains its persuasive power. By what means does this discourse evoke such loyal advocates of its view of the world? What features within the discourse itself encourage some of its readers to consider its portrayal of people and events to be virtually fully trustworthy, reliable, and true – indeed, almost without flaw? Why do some readers, on the other hand, express uncertainty about the reliability of Luke and Acts? Why do some readers consider Luke’s account to claim more about its picture of earliest Christianity than it reliably delivers? The answer, as we will see, lies in the dialogical relation of modes of discourse to one another. While one reader is responding to portions of Luke and Acts that sound like historical description, another reader is responding to portions that sound like popular adventure stories. Still other readers will be responding to specific guidelines for obedient action, while others will be responding to stories that challenge stereotypes and reconfigure dispositions and attitudes. The key to the persuasiveness of Luke and Acts lies in its interweaving of multiple kinds of discourse into a two-volume story about Jesus and his followers.

## The Preface to Luke

### Rationale (1:1)

The first line of the Lukan preface is a natural place to begin. As L. C. A. Alexander has explained, the message of the first clause is something like “Since many have tried to put together an account of the business that has happened among us.”<sup>23</sup> But this is not a proper representation of the voice of the narrator. Rather, the inscribed author narrates in a formal manner more appropriately represented by translating the Greek into “Inasmuch as (ἐπειδήπερ) many have undertaken the task of compiling an account of the matters which have come to fruition in our midst.”<sup>24</sup> But more about the formal quality of this clause in a moment. In rhetorical terms, the opening clause is a rationale – it explains the reason why the author has written the following discourse. In his *Progymnasmata*, Hermogenes of Tarsus presents the rationale as the first step in reconfiguring the statement of an authoritative individual into an argumentative elaboration.<sup>25</sup> The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* II.18.28, in turn, gives the rationale primary position in moving a proposition toward “the most complete and perfect argument.” Aristotle, indeed, saw that the rationale was the crucial feature for moving assertions into the realm of logical reasoning and argumentation (*Rhet.* 1.1.3-11; 1.2.8-22).

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NT writings show that early Christian writers differed from one another both in the subject matter they gave highest priority and in the precise reasons for which they wrote. Sometimes the writers only subtly express their reasons; at other times they make their reasons very explicit. The Gospel of John, for example, exhibits a writer (perhaps the author of a Signs Gospel incorporated into the Gospel of John) whose focus was on the many signs Jesus



performed (John 20:30). In the context of this focus, the Gospel of John transmits an explicit reason for the composition of the account. A display of both the unexpressed presuppositions and the explicit statements produces the following chain of reasoning:

**Rule:** Believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, produces life in his name.

**Case:** Experiencing signs that Jesus performed, either by reciting or hearing them from a written account, produces belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

**Result:** Therefore, I have written these signs [selected from many that exist] so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and believing you may have life in his name.

The premises underlying the author's activity of writing exhibit three convictions: (1) that extraordinary religious benefits come to people who believe in Jesus' special relation to God; (2) that signs performed by Jesus have a special potential for eliciting belief from people; and (3) that Jesus performed many other signs before his disciples that he, under the appropriate circumstances, could "re-perform" in a writing. The reasoning in this author's statement has an explicit sacred texture that concerns the nature of Jesus as a holy person and the means by which people can invite God's powers of human redemption into their lives.<sup>26</sup>

Many interpreters have noticed that the Lukan preface does not contain such an explicit sacred texture.<sup>27</sup> It mentions neither Jesus nor God. Moreover, it does not mention faith or belief; the gospel; eternal life; salvation; or the kingdom of God. The preface, then, does not contain some of the most common vocabulary within early Christian discourse. Rather, it uses compound compositions and verbs with complex expressions that make its meanings significantly obscure. The crucial words in the preface for describing the subject matter of the discourse are "of the matters which have come to

fruition in our midst” (περὶ τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων). Following Cadbury, Alexander points out that the natural clause for comparison in Lukan discourse is Luke 2:15: “this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.”<sup>28</sup> Luke 2:15 speaks clearly about its subject matter, while Luke 1:1 is an overly formal mode of discourse that obscures rather than openly reveals its subject matter. Did the author want, with the perfect participle πεπληροφορημένων, to characterize the “matters” as events

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that “fulfill” the promises of God found in the scriptures?<sup>29</sup> If so, he does not clearly say so in the opening clause of his preface.

This aspect of the Lukan preface comes to light even more when the opening clause is compared to the opening of Josephus’ *Jewish War*. Josephus, like Luke, opened his preface with a rationale (obscured by the translation in the Loeb Classical Library). It also describes the subject matter of the ensuing narrative. In contrast to Luke, it states clearly what that subject matter is:

Since the war of the Jews against the Romans – the greatest not only of the wars of our own time, but, so far as accounts have reached us, well nigh of all that ever broke out between cities or nations – has not lacked its historians (Josephus, J. W. 1.1).

Josephus announces his topic immediately and clearly: “the war of the Jews against the Romans.” If one were to argue that Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* rather than *Jewish War* is more analogous to Luke and Acts, this comparison is even more revealing. First, the preface to the Antiquities, like usual prefaces to histories, is very long – clearly imitating the scope of historical prefaces in a manner that the preface to Luke does not. Second, the

preface to the Antiquities clearly describes the subject matter of the account as “our entire ancient history and political constitution” (1:5: ἅπασαν τὴν παρ’ ἡμῶν ἀρχαιολογίαν καὶ [τὴν] διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος). Some interpreters have argued that the Gospel of Luke must be historiography rather than biography, because it does not refer to Jesus in the preface.<sup>30</sup> The truth is that the preface to Luke does not state its subject matter clearly, whether it be historiography, biography, or novel. The manner in which it refers to its subject matter is more concerned to be formal than explicitly informative. There is an additional comparison that sheds still another glimmer of light on the nature of the preface to Luke. Acts 15:24-26 recites a letter the apostles and elders sent with Judas and Silas as they accompanied Paul and Barnabas. Like the preface to Luke, this letter begins with a rationale:

Since (ἐπειδὴ) we have heard that some persons from us (τινὲς ἐξ ἡμῶν) have troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, . . . (15:24).

This rationale calls to mind that especially a preface that addresses another person directly (you, most excellent Theophilus: 1:3) and uses a first person singular construction to refer to the author’s involvement in the composition (it seemed good to me also: 1:3) exhibits the influence of both oratorical and epistolary prefaces on its mode of presentation.<sup>31</sup> But, once again, the unusual feature of the opening clause to the preface to Luke is its extraordinary formality. The letter in Acts 15 opens with ἐπειδὴ, the less formal conjunction that Josephus used to open his Wars. Like the Lukan preface, however, the opening clause in Acts 15:24 only describes in a general manner the subject matter it

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addresses. The reason is simple, and undoubtedly it is the reason for the highly general mode in

the opening clause to Luke: one need not describe one's subject matter explicitly to an audience "in the know" about the basic subject matter under discussion. This is one of the very important results of Alexander's investigation of prefaces in Mediterranean antiquity. If one is writing a truly "public" treatise, one will clearly announce the subject matter of that treatise. If, on the other hand, one is writing at a "profession-oriented" level, the audience will know basic things about the subject matter. Thus, one will not need to describe the subject matter with great specificity. A general reference to the subject matter in the preface will function perfectly well. In essence, the preface to Luke, like the letter in Acts 15:24-29, begins with statements that presuppose that the recipient(s) will already know basic things about the subject matter that follows. In terms of subject matter, then, the preface to Luke has the nature of building on conversations that have occurred at previous times. This becomes clear in the final line of the preface, when the writer asserts that the one to whom he is writing has already been informed about the things he is addressing (Luke 1:4). For this reason, the writer simply "points" to the subject matter. There is no reason to describe it in a manner that would clarify for the "general public" what the subject matter is. Simultaneously, then, the preface to Luke begins with a generally argumentative tone (presenting a rationale), adopts an extraordinarily formal style, and describes the subject matter in a mode characteristic of an epistle addressed to people who already know a significant amount about the subject matter to be discussed.

### **Argument from Comparison (1:2)**

The preface continues with an argument from comparison:

just as the original eyewitnesses and ministers of the word handed [the tradition] to us,...

A comparison (παράβολή) supports an argument inductively (Aristotle, Rhet. 2.2-8). This

means that the primary effect of a comparison is to persuade a reader or hearer on the basis of similarity from particular to particular.<sup>32</sup> People are moved to believe something when they see at least two things that share something similar in common. Hermogenes features an argument from comparison (παρὰβολή) immediately after the rationale and argument from the opposite in the elaboration of the chreia.<sup>33</sup> In this position, it builds on phenomena introduced in the rationale and the argument from the opposite.

Comparisons are highly complex figures of thought and argument, since they introduce dissimilarity at the same moment they introduce similarity. In an environment of similarity there are four basic kinds of argument: (1) from the similar

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or same; (2) from contrast, contrary, or opposite; (3) from greater to lesser; and (4) from lesser to greater.<sup>34</sup> When the preface to Luke is analyzed from the perspective of these four kinds of comparative argument, its complexity becomes apparent.

First, since there is no “thus” in the preface after the “just as” clause (v. 2), the “just as” clause may be read as the last part of a comparison that begins with the “inasmuch as” clause (v. 1). Alexander introduces this possibility when she makes “the tradition” the subject of the third plural verb παρέδοσαν in her translation of v. 2.<sup>35</sup> With this translation, the emphasis in the comparison can be that “the matters which have come to fruition in our midst” (v. 1) are the same (option 1 above) as “the tradition that was handed down to us” (v. 2). As Alexander says, “The tradition is simply there, to be received at its own valuation; ...”<sup>36</sup> Just as the tradition was available to others who wrote it down, so it is available to the writer of Luke, who is in touch with the living tradition and has properly learned the “craft” of the tradition. Reading the comparison in this way can lead to the view that the preface to Luke presents at its outset a

“tradition based validation” of its contents.<sup>37</sup>

Second, the reader may merge vv. 1-2 so thoroughly (since “the tradition” in both instances is “the same”) that the comparison is perceived to lie between the narrative many “have compiled” (v. 1) and the “more accurate, orderly account” Luke has written (v. 3). Interpreters who understand the preface in this way modulate between presenting the argument from comparison as an argument “from lesser to greater” and “from contrast, contrary, or opposite.” An argument from the opposite asserts that those other narratives were not well ordered and effective, but the accurate, orderly account in the Gospel of Luke is.<sup>38</sup> An argument from lesser to greater argues that if the works of the predecessors were good, because they were based on traditions from eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, Luke’s account is better (because it is more accurate as

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a result of being better ordered). Luke T. Johnson’s commentary reads the argument from comparison in the preface as an argument from the opposite (with a few qualifications included):

Luke’s language suggests dissatisfaction with the earlier attempts. Many had “put their hand to arranging,” which suggests they did not quite succeed. Why? We must take seriously the force of the phrase “just as the eyewitnesses ... handed on.” Perhaps efforts such as Mark’s were regarded by Luke as rhetorically ineffective because, too dependent on the way materials were transmitted by communities, they lacked a convincing sort of order. We remember the complaint by the second-century author Papias about Mark’s lack of order (Eusebius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History 3, 39, 15). What this means – if we can judge from the improvement Luke himself made – is

that they did not make sufficiently clear “connections” between events (cf. Lucian, How to Write History, 55). This was, in any case, the way that Eusebius understood Luke’s prologue (Ecclesiastical History 3, 24, 14-16).<sup>39</sup>

I say “with a few qualifications included,” because the statement about the eyewitnesses and the use of “quite” and “sufficiently” slightly reduce the sharpness of the contrast. Finally, however, the series of negative phrases – “dissatisfaction,” “did not quite succeed,” “rhetorically ineffective,” “lacked a convincing order,” “did not make sufficiently clear connections” – imply that the writings of the predecessors were not effective while Luke’s account is. Most recent interpreters are unwilling to state the contrast so sharply.<sup>40</sup> Talbert, indeed, says: “If there is any criticism of his predecessors implied, it is muted. It may very well be that his predecessors encouraged the evangelist to write by their example.... The absence of explicit critical comments about his predecessors sets Luke apart from most Greco-Roman prefaces.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps most common is an argument “from lesser to greater”: the writing of the predecessors was good, but the Lukan account is better. This appears, for example, to be the position of Alexander. She agrees that some of the language in the preface is a “mild and ambiguous deprecation,” but adds that the comments about the predecessors “are only there to reassure the reader that the subject is worth spending time on. The informational value of the clause lies more in the apparently incidental opportunity it gives the author to identify his subject matter.”<sup>42</sup> Fred R. Craddock, perhaps as well as anyone, uses language that implies “from lesser to greater” when he states:

Luke voices no criticism of the earlier narratives, but the thoroughness of his research, his recording the events “in order,” and his desire to give the reader certainty in matters about which the reader was already informed combine to

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argue that Luke found in the prior accounts something confusing, erroneous, or incomplete.<sup>43</sup>

If interpreters perceive the argument from comparison in the preface to be between the first two verses and the third verse, the emphasis is likely to lie either on an argument from lesser to greater or an argument from contrast, contrary, or opposite.

Third, an interpreter may consider the “just as [they] ... ” clause (v. 2) to reach its conclusion in “[so] I too ...” (v. 3). In this instance, as in the first reading above, the comparison is an argument “from the same” or “from similarity.” This way of reading the comparison focuses on the credentials of Luke to write, rather than on the nature of the tradition itself. Robert Tannehill features this way of reading the argument from comparison:

The author’s qualifications to write this work are presented in verse 3. The clause in verse 2 prepares for this by referring to the availability of a tradition that goes back to the original participants in the events. The “many” made use of this tradition “handed on to us” by the original eyewitnesses, and the author of Luke will too. The author does not claim to be an eyewitness, but he claims a foundation for his work in a reliable tradition that comes from a group of eyewitnesses.<sup>44</sup>

The point is that just as “they” handed on a reliable tradition, so Luke has access to reliable tradition as well. The emphasis is on the potential for Luke to write a trustworthy account. The argument is that as they were able to present a trustworthy account, so is he in that position. They are not in a better position than he. Rather, he is in as good a position as they. Thus, emphasizing the sequence “Just as [they] ... [so] also I ...” holds



the potential for interpreting the argument from comparison as an argument either from the same or from the similar.

Analysis of the argument from comparison in the preface to Luke reveals some of the reasons why it is one of the most disputed aspects of its discourse. Depending on how a reader hears the construction of the argument, the comparison may emphasize either the close association of the writer with “all his predecessors” (same or similarity) or a significant mode of dissociation of the writer from others who have written.<sup>45</sup> Analysis of the argument from comparison reveals that the absence of a clearly definable structure of this aspect of the preface makes it one of its most highly debated dimensions. Recent interpretation, however, has produced evidence that suggests that the comparisons are more “associative” than “dissociative” in tone. The major effect of the highly nuanced comparison is to link the writer with tradition that predecessors have handed down. One of the noticeable differences between the preface to Luke and other contemporary prefaces is the absence of a statement like the following, which appears in Josephus’

Against Apion:

But since I see that a number of persons, influenced by malicious slander from certain people, discredit statements in my history concerning our antiquity and offer

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as proof of the comparative modernity of our race the fact that it has not been considered worthy of mention by the best-known Greek historians, I consider it my duty to write briefly about all these points, to convict our detractors of opprobrium and deliberate falsehood,

to correct the ignorance of others, and to instruct whoever desires to know the truth about the antiquity of our race.<sup>46</sup>

This prose has a very different tone from the preface to Luke. Yet, many interpreters (including Fitzmyer) include this portion of Josephus' preface in their discussion of "close parallels" between the preface to Luke and other contemporary writings. One of the major reasons is that Against Apion contains a retrospective preface, with direct address to Epaphroditus, at the beginning of book 2. The observation by Talbert (cited above) should be heeded, that one of the major differences between the Lukan preface and many other contemporary prefaces (except for the "profession-oriented" prefaces discussed by Alexander), is the absence of a strong "argument from the opposite" in its discourse.

The tone of the Lukan preface, in this regard, is also very different from the tone of Josephus' War:

some who have taken no part in the action but have collected from hearsay casual and contradictory stories which they have then edited in a rhetorical style, while others who witnessed the events have, either from flattery of the Romans or from hatred of the Jews, misrepresented the facts, their writings exhibiting alternatively invective and encomium, but nowhere historical accuracy; in these circumstances I – Josephus, son of Matthias, a Hebrew by ancestry, a native of Jerusalem and a priest, who at the opening of the war myself fought against the Romans and in the sequel was perforce an onlooker – propose to provide the subjects of the Roman Empire with a narrative of the facts by translating into Greek the account I previously composed in my vernacular tongue and sent to the barbarians in the interior.

The preface to Luke, in contrast to the preface to Josephus' War, does not suggest that the people who wrote the other narratives were not in touch with eyewitnesses and reliable traditions of the tradition. Quite the opposite. The preface to Luke shows a concern to exhibit that this writer can transmit the tradition just as reliably as they transmitted it. The exigency he must overcome is precisely the one that Josephus aims at his detractors: they were not participants in the events themselves. Luke glosses this issue, since he himself can make no claim to be a disciple who traveled around with Jesus, or of being one of the seven selected by the church in Jerusalem to attend to the needs of the widows in the daily distribution (Acts 6:1-6). The primary goal of the argument from comparison in the preface to Luke, therefore, is to establish a firm link between the other people who handed on the tradition and the tradition this writer hands on in his account. The same subject matter, he claims, is available to him that they had available to them. In fact, they are the source of much of the reliable subject matter. As the antecedent writers based their accounts on tradition handed down by eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, so the author of Luke has followed all things closely; namely, he has kept

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in touch both with the tradition as people have handed it down and with things that happened afterwards among the apostles.<sup>47</sup>

### **The Author's Explicit Assertion and Supporting Rationale (1:3-4)**

Luke 1:3 contains the primary assertion in the preface: it seemed good to the author to write an account for Theophilus. Accompanying this assertion is an implication that the account the author has written follows. Also accompanying it is a rationale: (because) he has kept in touch with all things from the beginning. V. 3, then, is an assertion that imitates the qualities of an enthymeme, because it contains a statement that supports the assertion.<sup>48</sup> But what does this

statement support? It does not explain why the author is writing. Rather, it supports an unexpressed assertion that this writer has the data available to write a well-informed account for Theophilus. The rationale in v. 3, as well as the rationale and the comparison in vv. 1-2, support an unexpressed assertion that this writer is able to write a very good account, because many already have written accounts based on reliable tradition (which are available to him), and he has kept in touch with all things from the beginning, both as they have been transmitted and as he has experienced them. V. 1 and the dative participial clause in v. 3, then, are complementary rationales that support an unexpressed assertion that it is possible for this author to write an excellent, reliable account for Theophilus. Where, then, is the rationale for the assertion in v. 3 that it seemed good for the author to write this account?

V. 4 gives the reason why it seemed good for the author to write the account: “so that you may (“because I wanted you to”) find out for certain about the things in which you have been instructed.”<sup>49</sup>

### **Summary**

In contrast to the usual way of understanding the preface as a two-verse protasis followed by a two-verse apodosis, it is necessary to understand the first two verses as a rationale and comparison that support an unexpressed assertion that the author has the data available to write a good, reliable account. The last half, then, contains an explicit assertion and rationale that have only a conjoined relation to the first half.

### **The Preface to Acts**

The preface to Acts does not exhibit the extraordinarily formal features present in the preface to Luke. Rather, it summarizes aspects of the Gospel of Luke in a manner that reconfigures them as inaugural events for the actions of Jesus’

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followers in the ensuing narrative. One of the goals of the preface to Acts is to provide a rationale for the presence of the eleven disciples, women, and Jesus' brothers and mother in Jerusalem. Another goal is to depict the followers of Jesus as obedient to Jesus' command and God's divine action. Still another goal is to introduce a program for the activity of Jesus' followers throughout Acts.

### **Summary of the Gospel of Luke (Acts 1:1-2)**

The preface to Acts begins by presenting Theophilus with a summary of the Gospel of Luke. The inscribed author, narrating in first person singular, describes the "first account" (τὸν πρῶτον λόγον) as a depiction of "all that Jesus began to do and to teach." Although some interpreters disregard the import of this opening statement,<sup>50</sup> it is clear that the author of the preface to Acts views the Gospel of Luke as a biographical account of Jesus' action and speech.

While the opening verse of the preface to Acts summarizes all that Jesus "began" (ἤρξατο) to do and to teach, it continues in the second verse by summarizing the end of the account: until the day, after having commanded through the holy spirit the apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up. This clause within a clause represents a standard performance of the progymnastic rhetorical act of abbreviation (συστέλλειν)<sup>51</sup> of the last ten verses of Luke (24:44-53). As the writer composed, he wrote freely in his own words (a skill acquired in the initial progymnastic exercise of recitation (ἀπαγγελία)<sup>52</sup> In other words, Acts 1:2 does not replicate any of the actual wording of Luke 24:44-53. The end of Luke does not use the term "the day" to introduce the setting of Jesus' ascension, it uses the verb ἀναφέρειν rather than ἀναλαμβάνειν to describe Jesus' ascent into the heavens (contrast Acts 1:11), it does not call Jesus' speech "commands," it does not refer to the "holy spirit," it does not refer to those gathered as

“apostles,” and it does not speak of “those whom Jesus chose.” The first two verses of the preface to Acts, then, present a concise summary of the “beginning and end” of the Gospel of Luke in words freely chosen by the writer to describe its contents.

### **Rationale for Staying in Jerusalem (Acts 1:3-5)**

After the opening summary (1:1-2), formulated in terms of direct address to Theophilus, the preface continues in a mode of progymnastic chreia composition, namely prose featuring speech attributed to specific individuals as it is taught in the Progymnasmata.<sup>53</sup> With this compositional strategy, biographical prose becomes the medium for a chronological account of successors to Jesus’ action and speech. Acts 1:3-5 is an expanded chreia introduced with a dative-case relative

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pronoun but handled in such a manner that the situation and the attributed speech can be recited in nominative case. This is a skill acquired by performing the inflexion exercise during the phase of progymnastic education (κλίσις).<sup>54</sup> Using nominative case, the author has composed an expanded chreia that resembles the expanded chreia (ἐπεκτείνειν) Theon presents in his Progymnasmata.<sup>55</sup> The opening statement summarizes Jesus’ time on earth “after his suffering” in terms of forty days in which he “presented himself alive by many proofs” and spoke “of the kingdom of God.” While the Gospel of Luke describes Jesus’ time of testing prior to his public words and deeds as “forty days in the wilderness” (Luke 4:2), it does not indicate that Jesus appeared to women and the apostles during a period of forty days prior to his ascension into heaven (Luke 24:1-53). It appears that the “beginning” of the account of the words and deeds of Jesus in Luke has influenced the summary of the “ending” of the account in Acts. The description of Jesus’ action and speech is similar to Theon’s summary of Epameinondas’

“display of outstanding deeds of great courage” prior to the poignant statement he makes while he is dying.<sup>56</sup> The differences are twofold: (1) the expanded chreia in Acts focuses on the period of time after Jesus’ death and resurrection rather than on his initial earthly ministry; and (2) part of Jesus’ persona is both to teach well and to act well, not simply to act with great courage. The description of Jesus’ teaching is especially interesting, since neither the term “kingdom” nor the phrase “kingdom of God” occurs in Luke 24 (though they occur frequently throughout the rest of Luke). During the forty day period in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus teaches them primarily about scripture and his suffering and death rather than the kingdom of God (24:25-27, 32, 44-46). The preface to Acts, then, describes the teaching of Jesus during the interim period between the resurrection and the ascension in terms of its content prior to Jesus’ suffering and death. Here again we see biographical dimensions at work. The nature of Jesus during his lifetime was both to perform mighty works and to teach the kingdom of God. In biographical writing, one can expect that the persona of a person during his lifetime prior to death is appropriate to attribute (μετ’ εὐστοχία ἀναφερομένη)<sup>57</sup> to him when he appears after his resurrection. In essence, the persona of a person follows that person wherever he or she goes.

As the expanded chreia continues, it introduces a context for poignant speech by Jesus, just as Theon’s expanded chreia creates a context for poignant speech by Epameinondas.<sup>58</sup> Again the handling of content within the preface to Acts is instructive. The narrational prose in Acts 1:4 uses the mode of indirect speech (which approximates the content of Luke 24:49) to establish a context for attributing direct speech to Jesus about John’s baptizing with water and about Jesus’ followers being baptized with holy spirit. Speech attributed to Jesus in Luke 24:49 – “And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the

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city, until you are clothed with power from on high” – is presented by the narrator as indirect speech in Acts 1:4 – “And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father.” This indirect speech establishes the context for direct speech by Jesus: “which” he (Jesus) said, “you heard from me, because John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with holy spirit not many days from now.” This speech embedded within speech is unusual. This occurs as a result of attributing to Jesus the rationale that explains why Jesus’ followers should stay in Jerusalem. In the Gospel of Luke (3:16), the statement about John baptizing with water and Jesus baptizing with holy spirit is attributed to John, not to Jesus. Acts presents this saying two more times, and each instance is instructive for seeing how speech attributed to one person may travel in biographical narrative. In Acts 11:15-16, Peter says: “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with holy spirit’.” Here, Peter attributes the saying to Jesus rather than John, just as the narrator of Acts attributes it to him in Acts 1:4-5 – in a context where the narration exhibits the fulfillment of the prophecy of John. Later in the narrative (Acts 19:1-7), this process moves one step further – content that the inscribed author previously narrated now occurs in dialogue between Paul and followers of Apollos before it occurs anew in the inscribed author’s narration.

[Paul] said to [disciples of Apollos]: “Did you receive holy spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have never even heard that there is a holy spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is,



Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the holy spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:26).

In this setting, the narrator of Acts attributes speech to Paul that exists partly as narration in Luke 3:3: and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3); and partly as speech attributed to John the Baptist: “he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with holy spirit and with fire” (Luke 3:16). Paul recites John’s speech in his own words, much like the inscribed author of Acts narrates speech of Jesus in his own words. John, according to the Gospel of Luke, did not literally tell people to “believe in the one who was to come after him.” Paul, however, attributes this wording authoritatively to John (Acts 19:14). Here we see not only story as fulfillment of earlier prophetic speech but also different wording of speech handed on authoritatively by followers of Jesus who adapt the wording to their own favorite terminology. By this means, Christian discourse gradually modulates the speech attributed to predecessors into speech that perpetuates later terminology and meaning. The compositional process we see in Acts 1:2-4, then, is characteristic of composition of speech and action in settings of people who later embody the tradition.

The goal of the sequence (1:3-5), then, is to provide a reason for Jesus’ followers to remain in Jerusalem. One can think of at least two reasons why such a rationale is called for. First, one might imagine that Jesus’ followers should have departed

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Jerusalem immediately to preach the gospel to all nations. But the Gospel of Luke (21:12-19) does not contain the assertion in Mark 13:10 that “first it is necessary to preach the gospel to all

nations.” Second, one might imagine that Jesus’ followers would go to Galilee after Jesus’ death, where they expected to see him (as he told them). But the Gospel of Luke does not contain a directive by a personage at the empty tomb to go to Galilee but to remember that Jesus told them in Galilee that the Son of man would rise up.<sup>59</sup> The Gospel of Luke focuses on Jerusalem and its vicinity as the place where Jesus appears after his resurrection. In accord with this, Jesus’ command to his followers has an apotreptic feature (“do not depart from Jerusalem”: Acts 1:4; cf. Luke 24:49) and a protreptic feature (“wait for the promise of the father”: Acts 1:4; cf. Luke 24:49) with the rationale that “you will be baptized with holy spirit before not many days” (Acts 1:5; cf. Luke 24:49).

### **A Program of Action for Jesus’ Followers (Acts 1:6-8)**

Acts 1:6-11 presents the result (therefore: οὖν) of Jesus’ command to his followers. Again the unit is composed in the manner of an expanded chreia. In this instance, the scene begins with a question from Jesus’ followers: “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” This question calls forth the scene at the last supper when Jesus told the disciples he would assign them the kingdom his Father assigned to him (Luke 22:28-30). The disciples, then, simply want a yes or no answer, because they presuppose they know what the restoration of the kingdom will mean (they will eat and drink at table and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel: Luke 22:30). In the terms of Theon’s Progymnasmata, Jesus treats the question not as a simple question (κατ’ ἐρώτησιν) that calls only for a yes or no answer, but as an inquiry (κατὰ πύσμα) requiring a substantive answer.<sup>60</sup> The answer Theon provides to an inquiry clarifies the answer by providing both a positive assertion and a negative clarification.<sup>61</sup> In Acts 1:7-8, Jesus responds with a negative assertion (“It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority”) and a positive clarification (“But you will receive power when

the holy spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth”). It is noticeable that Jesus’ response does not answer the question whether or not Jesus will at this time restore the kingdom to Israel, nor does it provide a rationale for their not knowing times or seasons the Father has established. Rather, the question provides the context for Jesus to reconfigure the program of the kingdom so it coheres with the command he had given them in Acts 1:4. The disciples must not depart from Jerusalem, because

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they will be baptized with holy spirit so they may be “witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” A new program of action, then, emerges in a chreia statement attributed to Jesus. If there will be a time when the apostles will eat and drink at Jesus’ table in the kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, this is not it. A new program has emerged, and this is the program that guides the ensuing narrative. In this way the program of Acts is authorized by Jesus himself, the founder and validator of the Christian movement.

### **Jesus’ Ascension as Divine Action Witnessed by His Followers (Acts 1:9-11)**

Immediately after Jesus’ speech has introduced a program for his followers’ activity from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, a “passive” chreia exhibiting divine action on Jesus depicts the departure of Jesus into the heavens: he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of sight (1:9). This action by God upon Jesus is a validation of Jesus as the inaugurator of the time of God’s action upon his followers. A passive chreia is an action chreia rather than a sayings chreia, and it is an action chreia in which something is experienced rather than done by the person to whom the chreia is attributed.<sup>62</sup> In contrast to the version of the ascension in Acts, the version in Luke 24:50-51 presents Jesus as the subject of all the action except his final ascent into heaven: he led

them out, lifted up his hands, blessed them, parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. Jesus is the subject of the account who leads his followers, blesses them, and departs from them before divine action takes him into heaven. In Acts, in contrast, Jesus' followers are active as Jesus experiences divine action upon himself: they look on as he is lifted up and they gaze into heaven after a cloud takes him out of sight (1:9-11). The effect of this way of telling the story is twofold. First, while the version in Luke emphasizes authoritative actions by Jesus, the version in Acts emphasizes powerful divine action upon Jesus. Second, while the account in Luke depicts Jesus' followers as passive during the ascension, the account in Acts depicts Jesus' followers as active witnesses of the event, looking on as Jesus is lifted up and gazing into heaven as he is taken out of sight. These changes transform speech of Jesus that describes his followers as witnesses (Acts 1:8) into an action of witnessing events beyond Jesus' words, deeds, death, and resurrection. As they witness Jesus' ascension and gaze into heaven with wonderment, the issue is what this might mean for their future activity.

The final two verses address the witnesses' future, as two men in white robes ask a question that reorients the apostles' wonderment toward the return of Jesus. By means of these two men, Acts 1:10-11 presents a commentary (ἐπιφώνησις)<sup>63</sup> on the event. By contrast, "bystanders" do not interpret Jesus' ascension in Luke 24:50-53. The reader learns of "great joy" among the followers of Jesus that leads them to "bless God" continually in the Temple. But this is standard reaction to the miraculous in the Gospel of Luke, not an interpretation for what will unfold in Acts. The commentary in Acts gives "divine" insight into the event. Just as God has taken Jesus into heaven, as witnessed by his followers, so God will send Jesus back to earth at some future time, which only God knows (cf. Acts 1:7). The correlation of Jesus' ascent with his return in Acts 1:10-11 is part of the reconfiguration of the episode for its new context, the

beginning of the acts of Jesus' followers, in which they receive the power to become Jesus' witnesses to the end of the earth. From the perspective of Acts, the issues are what Jesus' followers will do now that Jesus has gone and what God and Jesus will do concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. The issue is not

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simply Jesus' ascent into heaven as the last act of his resurrected life, but Jesus' ascent as an event his "witnesses" observe and as an event that establishes a model for Jesus' return.

### **Authoritative Pronouncement and Divine Action**

#### **Produce Obedient Response (Acts 1:12-14)**

The final unit in the preface to Acts (1:12-14) is not a chreia but a narrative (διήγημα),<sup>64</sup> which Theon defines as an explanatory account of matters which have occurred or as if they have occurred.<sup>65</sup> A narrative contains six elements: (1) one or many characters; (2) the act of the character(s); (3) the place of the act; (4) the time of the act; (5) the manner of the act; and (6) the reason for these things. The characters in this narrative are eleven apostles, women – including the mother of Jesus – and the brothers of Jesus (1:13-14). The act is devotion to prayer, and the place is the upper room in Jerusalem where they had been previously staying. The time is immediately after Jesus' ascension into heaven, and the manner is "with one accord." The reason is not stated in the unit itself, but it is evident from the information provided in 1:4-5.

In contrast to the previous units in the preface to Acts, this unit uses key words in its counterpart at the end of Luke (24:52) as a beginning point for amplification. The key words are "they returned to Jerusalem" (ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ: Luke 24:52//Acts 1:12). Similar to previous units, however, the episode is substantively reconfigured for its new setting. Luke 24:52-53 gives the impression that Jesus' followers return to the temple. Acts 1:13 has them

return to the upper room where they previously had been staying. The account in Acts amplifies their return to this new venue, lists the people who gather there, and describes their activity as “devotion to prayer with one accord.”

With this unit, the preface to Acts makes a transition to the narrative account. Whether Acts 1:12-14 is the final unit of the preface or the introductory unit in the account of Jesus’ followers in Jerusalem is not certain. The final unit adopts a “narrative” mode, which differs from the “chreia” mode that characterizes every other unit in the preface. This means that the unit contains neither attributed speech, either as authoritative pronouncement or commentary, nor poignant action that introduces a decisive thought. The major portion of the preface prepares the reader for the ensuing account by attributing speech to various personages. The initial speech is by Jesus (1:4-5); followers ask Jesus a question (1:6); Jesus responds to his followers (1:7-8); and two men in white robes interpret the meaning of the ascension for Jesus’ followers (1:11). In contrast, Acts 1:12-14 contains no attributed speech. Rather, it shows how the directives, rationale, program beyond Jerusalem, and commentary on Jesus’ ascension produce a decisive response by Jesus’ followers to the authoritative

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pronouncements in the preceding units. With one accord, Jesus’ followers and family return to Jerusalem, to the upper room, and devote themselves to prayer, awaiting their baptism with holy spirit.

## **Conclusion**

The claim of the preface to Luke is solidarity with others who have written narratives about the Christian movement. My analysis reveals an absence of significant concern to correct what others have written. Interpreters often have overlooked that the major exigency the author

had to overcome was that he could write a good, reliable account for Theophilus. The major interest is in writing a “continuous” account – one that tells the story from the beginning to Rome. The preface to Acts builds on this interest, exhibiting how the words and deeds of Jesus’ followers in Acts “grow out” of the words and deeds of Jesus in the Gospel.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> F. Blass, Philology of the Gospels (London: Macmillan, 1898) 7. Cf. C. H. Talbert, Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel (1982) 10-11: “The style [of ancient prefaces] was often highly rhetorical. This is certainly true of 1:1-4.... The exalted style of 1:1-4 simply conforms to cultural expectations for a rhetorical beginning.”

<sup>2</sup> H. J. Cadbury, “The Purpose Expressed in Luke’s Preface,” The Expositor 8/21 (1921) 431-41; idem., “Commentary on the Preface of Luke,” The Beginnings of Christianity. Part I, The Acts of the Apostles; Vol. ii, Prolegomena ii: Criticism (ed. F. Jackson and K. Lake; London: Macmillan, 1922) 489-510; idem., “The Knowledge Claimed in Luke’s Preface,” The Expositor 8/24 (1922) 401-20; idem., The Making of Luke-Acts (New York: Macmillan, 1927) 344-48, 358-59; idem., “‘We’ and ‘I’ Passages in Luke-Acts,” NTS 3 (1956/7) 128-32.

<sup>3</sup> C. H. Talbert, What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); idem., “Biographies of Philosophers and Rulers as Instruments of Religious Propaganda in Mediterranean Antiquity,” ANRW II.16.2 (ed. H Temporini and W. Haase; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter) 1619-51; idem., “Once Again: Gospel Genre,” Semeia 43 (1988) 53-74; idem., “Biography, Ancient,” ABD (vol. 1; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 745-49.

<sup>4</sup> C. H. Talbert, “The Acts of the Apostles: Monograph or ‘Bios’?”, History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts (ed. B. Witherington; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 58-72.

<sup>5</sup> R. Pervo, Profit with Delight: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles (Philadelphia: Fortress

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Press, 1987).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. S. P. Schierling and M. J. Schierling, "The Influence of the Ancient Romances on the Acts of the Apostles," The Classical Bulletin 54 (1978) 81-88.

<sup>7</sup> L. C. A. Alexander, "The Preface to Acts and the Historians," History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts (ed. B. Witherington; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 77-78; cf. idem., The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 and Acts 1.1 (SNTSMS 78; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Alexander, "The Preface to Acts," 101.

<sup>9</sup> L. C. A. Alexander, "Acts and Ancient Intellectual Biography," The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting. Vol. 1, The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting (ed. B. W. Winter and A. D. Clarke; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993) 31-63.

<sup>10</sup> G. E. Sterling, Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephos, Luke-Acts, and Apologetic Historiography (NovTSup 64; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992).

<sup>11</sup> K. Yamada, "A Rhetorical History: The Literary Genre of the Acts of the Apostles," Rhetoric, Scripture and Theology: Essays from the 1994 Pretoria Conference (ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht; JSNTSS 131; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 230-50; idem., "The Preface to the Lukan Writings and Rhetorical Historiography," paper delivered at the 1996 Pepperdine Conference (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. V. K. Robbins, "Prefaces in Greco-Roman Biography and Luke-Acts," Perspectives in Religious Studies 6 (1979) 94-108 = SBLSP, vol. 2 (1978) 193-207.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. the comment of Alexander, "The Preface to Acts," 102, n. 69, that Acts and some other Hellenistic Jewish writings "tend to fall at the overlap between history and biography."

<sup>14</sup> Alexander, "The Preface to Acts," 97, 101.

<sup>15</sup> L. C. A. Alexander, "Luke's Preface in the Context of Greek Preface-Writing," NovT 28 (1986) 48-74; idem., The Preface to Luke's Gospel.



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<sup>16</sup> Cf. the following in W. J. McCoy, “In the Shadow of Thucydides,” History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts (ed. B. Witherington; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 30: “... the prologue or exordium in Lk. 1.1-4 reflects Luke’s rhetorical interests.... He writes in a clear and direct manner in this sentence, as Quintilian required in an exordium (Inst. Or. 4.1.34).

<sup>17</sup> Alexander, “Luke’s Preface,” 66-71; cf. Robbins, “The Social Location of the Implied Author of Luke-Acts,” The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation (ed. J. H. Neyrey; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991) 305-32.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander, “Luke’s Preface,” 67.

<sup>19</sup> B. L. Mack and V. K. Robbins, Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1989) 31-35.

<sup>20</sup> V. K. Robbins, “Progymnastic Rhetorical Composition and Pre-Gospel Traditions: A New Approach,” The Synoptic Gospels: Source Criticism and the New Literary Criticism (ed. C. Focant; BETL 110; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993) 112.

<sup>21</sup> Robbins, “Progymnastic Rhetorical Composition,” 119-31.

<sup>22</sup> V. K. Robbins, The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology (London: Routledge, 1996) 240-43.

<sup>23</sup> Alexander, The Preface to Luke’s Gospel, 113. Cf. Talbert, Reading Luke, 7: “If we take εἰπεῖν/per as causal, then ‘inasmuch as’ would mean ‘because,’ and Luke would be using the work of previous writers positively to justify his own venture.”

<sup>24</sup> Alexander, The Preface to Luke’s Gospel, 113.

<sup>25</sup> R. F. Hock and E. N. O’Neil, The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric. Vol. I. The Progymnasmata (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 177.

<sup>26</sup> V. K. Robbins, Exploring the Texture of Texts (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996) 121-22, 125-26.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Alexander, The Preface to Luke’s Gospel, 124: “Luke goes out of his way to avoid explicitly

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Christian language in the preface.”

<sup>28</sup> Alexander, The Preface to Luke’s Gospel, 113.

<sup>29</sup> D. P. Moessner, “The ‘Script’ of the Scriptures in Acts,” History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts (ed. B. Witherington; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>30</sup> E.g., T. Callan, “The Preface of Luke-Acts and Historiography,” NTS 31 (1985) 578.

<sup>31</sup> Robbins, “Prefaces in Greco-Roman Biography.”

<sup>32</sup> K. Demoen, “A Paradigm for the Analysis of Paradigms: The Rhetorical Exemplum in Ancient and Imperial Greek Theory,” Rhetorica 15 (1997) 133.

<sup>33</sup> Hock and O’Neil, The Chreia, 176-77; cf. Rhetorica ad Herennium 4.44.57.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Demoen, “A Paradigm,” 136.

<sup>35</sup> Alexander, The Preface to Luke’s Gospel, 116.

<sup>36</sup> Alexander, The Preface to Luke’s Gospel, 124-25.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Alexander, The Preface to Luke’s Gospel, 82-85, esp. 84. Darrel L. Bock, Luke. Volume 1: 1:1 – 9:50 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994) 57 reads the argument from comparison emphatically in this manner: “The term [kaqw&j] stresses the reliable basis on which these accounts rested: traditions passed down to reporters by the eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word. There is a two-step process described here; but the nature of the sources guarantees the quality. Luke is still describing the earlier accounts here, not his own study, which he will describe in 1:34” D. P. Moessner presents a somewhat different view in “‘Eyewitnesses,’ ‘Informed Contemporaries,’ and ‘Unknowing Inquirers’: Josephus’ Criteria for Authentic Historiography and the Meaning of PARAKOLOUQEW, NovT 38 (1996) 121: “... Luke refers to another group of ‘eyewitnesses’ and/or ‘attendants’ upon whom he – in solidarity with the ‘many’ – is dependent for his information....” Idem., “The Meaning of KAQECHS in the Lukan Prologue as a Key to the Distinctive Contribution of Luke’s Narrative among the ‘Many,’” The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neiryneck (vol 2; ed. F. Van Segbroeck, C. M. Tuckett, G. Van Belle, and J. Verheyden; BETL 100; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992) argues that Luke is using comparison (Luke 1:2) both as

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affirmation and critique; both as (4) “from lesser to greater” and (2) “from contrast, contrary, or opposite.”

<sup>38</sup> J. A. Fitzmyer, The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX) (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1981) 292, cf. 287, 298-99 exhibits evidence in support of the view that ἀνατάξαι διήγησιν means “to compile an orderly account” (1981: 292, cf. 287, 298-99).

<sup>39</sup> L. T. Johnson, The Gospel of Luke (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991) 30.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. R. A. Culpepper, The Gospel of Luke (New Interpreter’s Bible 9; Nashville: Abingdon Press) 40.

<sup>41</sup> Talbert, Reading Luke, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Alexander, The Preface to Luke’s Gospel, 116.

<sup>43</sup> F. B. Craddock, Luke (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990) 18.

<sup>44</sup> R. C. Tannehill, Luke (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996) 34.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969) 190-92, 411-59 for association and dissociation.

<sup>46</sup> Josephus, Against Apion 1.1.2-3, as quoted by Fitzmyer, Luke, 288.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Moessner, “‘Eyewitnesses’.”

<sup>48</sup> Cf. G. A. Kennedy, Aristotle On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 297-98.

<sup>49</sup> For this wording, cf. Alexander, The Preface to Luke’s Gospel, 137-38.

<sup>50</sup> E.g. Callan, “The Preface of Luke-Acts,” 581, n. 11.

<sup>51</sup> Hock and O’Neil, The Chreia, 100-101.

<sup>52</sup> Hock and O’Neil, The Chreia, 94-95.

<sup>53</sup> Hock and O’Neil, The Chreia, 82-83.

<sup>54</sup> Hock and O’Neil, The Chreia, 94-99.

<sup>55</sup> Hock and O’Neil, The Chreia, 100-103.

<sup>56</sup> Hock and O’Neil, The Chreia, 100-103.

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<sup>57</sup> Hock and O'Neil, The Chreia, 82-83.

<sup>58</sup> See Hock and O'Neil, The Chreia, 100-103.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Mark 16:7//Matt 28:7 and Mark 14:28//Matt 26:32 with Luke 24:6-7 and 22:31-34).

<sup>60</sup> Hock and O'Neil, The Chreia, 84-87.

<sup>61</sup> (Positive): A woman who has intercourse with her husband may go immediately in purity to the Thesmophorion. (Negative): But a woman who has intercourse with a man who is not her husband is never able in purity to go to the Thesmophorion. See Hock and O'Neil, The Chreia, 87.

<sup>62</sup> Hock and O'Neil, The Chreia, 88-89, 96-99.

<sup>63</sup> Hock and O'Neil, The Chreia, 98-101.

<sup>64</sup> J. R. Butts, The Progymnasmata of Theon: A New Text with Translation and Commentary (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1987) 290-401.

<sup>65</sup> Butts, The Progymnasmata, 291.