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## Narrative in Ancient Rhetoric and Rhetoric in Ancient Narrative

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A new era in analysis and interpretation began about fifteen years ago with insights into the rhetorical nature of the chreia and chreia elaboration in New Testament literature (Hock and O'Neil; Mack and Robbins; Mack 1990; Watson and Hauser: 115-20). Now the time has come to broaden the discussion to the narrative and the fable in addition to the chreia. This essay includes only a few observations about the fable. For the most part, it adds insights from rhetorical discussion of the narrative in antiquity to insights about chreia and chreia elaboration. Discussion of chreia elaboration has brought insight into the nature of the "complete argument" in New Testament literature (Mack in Mack and Robbins: 51-63). Discussion of the rhetorical characteristics of narrative introduces insight into the nature of a "complete situation." The most important information for this essay has been gleaned from the first five chapters of Theon of Alexandria's *Progymnasmata* — a first century treatise written in Greek during the last half of the first century CE (see Theon). These chapters contain systematic rhetorical discussion of the chreia, the fable, and the narrative. Building on insights from Theon's discussion in these chapters, this essay explores the presence of chreia, fable, and narrative in Luke and Acts. Then it explores the creation of complete situations as contexts for elaborated speech both in Luke and Acts. The goal is to gain insight into the rhetorical nature of historiography as it exists in Luke and Acts.

### The Rhetorical Characteristics of Narrative

Among the writings in the New Testament, the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are narrative compositions. The effect of each is to narrate a story. Embedded in the narrational texture of each story, however, is an argumentative texture. As the beginning, middle, and ending of the story unfolds, the story presents an argument. From the perspective of ancient rhetoricians, argumentation regularly unfolded in one of three modes. It would indict or acquit certain people, thus be judicial; it would move people to act in one way rather than another, thus be deliberative; or it would confirm presupposed values through praise and censure, thus be epideictic (Kennedy 1984: 19-20). Charles H. Talbert's investigation of biographical historiography in antiquity revealed five argumentative types. If an interpreter uses guidelines from the ancient rhetoricians to understand the argumentative texture of these five types, the result is as follows:

#### Epideictic Biographical Historiography

Type A, which "simply provide[s] the readers a pattern to copy," is epideictic in nature. The primary strategy is praise, like in Lucian's *Life of*

*Demonax* (2) where the author states: "It is now fitting to tell of Demonax ... that young men of good instincts ... may be able to set themselves a pattern from our modern world and to copy that man, the best of all philosophers whom I know about" (Talbert 1977: 94). An example in the life of a ruler exists in Plutarch's *Life of Cleomenes*, where the text states: "In all these matters Cleomenes was himself a teacher. His own manner of life was simple, plain, and no more pretentious than that of the common man, and it was a pattern of self-restraint for all" (13; Talbert 1977: 96).

#### Judicial Biographical Historiography

Type B, which "aim[s] to dispel a false image of the teacher and to provide a true model to follow" (Talbert 1977: 94), is judicial in nature. The primary strategy is to acquit a person from a reputation of wrongdoing, like Xenophon's *Memorabilia* where the author states: "To me then he seemed to be all that a truly good and happy man must be. But if there is any doubter, let him set the character of other men beside these things; then let him judge" (4.8.10; cf. Robbins 1994: 239). An example in the life of a ruler exists in Pseudo-Callisthenes' *Life of Alexander*, where "he is idealized as a god-like king over against the supposed misrepresentations of him elsewhere" (Talbert 1977: 96).

Type C, which "intends to discredit a given teacher by exposé" (Talbert 1977: 95), is also judicial in nature. The goal is to indict the person as a wrongdoer, a charlatan, like Lucian's *Alexander the False Prophet* where the author states: "I blush ... because I am devoting my energy ... to the exploits of a man who does not deserve to have polite people read about him, but rather to have the motley crowd in a vast amphitheatre see him being torn to pieces by foxes or apes" (2). An example in the life of a ruler would be the account of "Clitarchus who accompanied Alexander's expedition and wrote of it as a brilliant adventure conducted by a tyrant spoiled by fortune" (Talbert 1977: 97).

#### Deliberative Biographical Historiography

Type D, which "had as their purpose to indicate where the 'living voice' was to be found in the period after the founder" (Talbert 1977: 95), is deliberative in nature. In answer to the question "where the true tradition of the school is to be found," a biography of the life of a founder of a philosophical school followed by a list or narrative about his successors — like Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* — directs the reader toward the truth which is beneficial from this tradition. According to Talbert, "[n]o biographies of rulers fall into this category" (1977: 97).

Type E, which "aim[s] to validate and/or provide the hermeneutical key for the teacher's doctrine" (Talbert 1977: 96), also is deliberative in nature. Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*, for example, provided a basic introduction to Plotinus' way of life and thought that made it an integral part of the collection of his works. An example in the life of a ruler exists in Philo's *Life of Moses*,

which "functioned as an elementary introduction to the ideals of Judaism" (Talbert 1977: 97).

As Talbert assessed the NT Gospels and Acts, he considered Mark to be very much like a Type B biography, Luke-Acts like a Type D life of Jesus, and Matthew like a Type E biography (Talbert 1978: 1649-50). This would mean that Mark is primarily judicial and that Matthew and Luke-Acts are primarily deliberative in nature.

This is not the proper place to evaluate Talbert's assessment of the overall rhetorical nature of the Gospels and Acts in the New Testament. Rather, the goal is to use his insights into biographical historiography of teachers and rulers in Mediterranean antiquity as a springboard for discussing narrative in ancient rhetoric and rhetoric in ancient narrative. Rhetorical analysis of the Acts of the Apostles began with interpretation of Paul's defense speeches (e.g., Veltman 1978). This analysis points to a substantive amount of judicial rhetoric in Acts. In *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels*, analysis of Plucking Grain on the Sabbath and the Beelzebul Controversy points to an interplay between judicial and epideictic rhetoric (Robbins in Mack and Robbins: 107-41, 161-93; cf. Robbins 1991a); analysis of the sayings about Foxes and Birds and Leaving the Dead in Matthew 8 and Luke 9 and the elaboration of the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4 reveals deliberative rhetoric (Mack and Robbins: 69-84, 143-60); and Mack's analysis of the Markan and Lukan versions of The Anointing of Jesus reveals judicial argumentation that moves to a deliberative thesis in order finally to conclude with an epideictic emphasis (Mack and Robbins: 85-106). Willi Braun, in turn, found a movement from judicial and epideictic to deliberative rhetoric in the Lukan account of the Great Banquet (Braun 1995: 158-75). Rhetorical analysis of the Gospels and Acts, then, points to a lively interplay of judicial, deliberative, and epideictic rhetoric in their discourse.

#### Making a Long Story Short and a Short Story Long

The question now is how interpreters can move yet further ahead in rhetorical analysis of the Gospels and Acts. This paper attempts to draw some things together programmatically by reaching beyond the chreia into the full range of the anecdotal tradition (Robbins 1989). Key to the discussion are insights from the *Progymnasmata* of Theon, which was written during the first century CE in Greek (Hock and O'Neil: 63-5), and the *Progymnasmata* of Hermogenes, which was written during the second century in Greek (Hock and O'Neil: 155-8). Theon considered the chreia, the fable, and the narrative to be primary constituents of writing in antiquity. A chreia is a brief statement or action with aptness attributed to a specific person (III.2-3 [Butts]); a fable is a fictional story depicting a truth (IV.2 [Butts]); and a narrative is an explanatory account of matters which have occurred or as if they have occurred (V.2-3 [Butts]). In the second chapter of his *Progymnasmata*, Theon gleans examples of fable, narrative, elaboration, and rebuttal from Herodotus and Thucydides, as well as other writers. This is instructive for analysis and interpretation of the Gospels and Acts. The inner cultural constituents of writings in the Mediterranean world, including the New Testament, are brief statements or actions attributed to specific people (which New Testament interpreters recently have learned to call chreiai), fictional stories depicting truths (which New Testament literature regularly calls parables), and explanatory accounts of events (which rhetoricians during late antiquity called narratives). Internally, each anecdote exhibits the art of making a long story

short. But when all are put together, they hold the key for making a short story long. More than this, anecdotes are a key resource for making a story persuasive. They contain the insights into life that move people to indict or acquit, to act in one way rather than another, and to censure one person and praise another.

Burton Mack launched rhetorical analysis of the Gospels by focusing on Hermogenean elaboration of the chreia (Mack 1984, 1987, 1988, 1990; Mack and Robbins 1989). This was a natural place to begin, since Hermogenean elaboration shows how the rhetorical goal of anecdotes in late antiquity was closely related to the rhetorical goal of judicial, deliberative, and epideictic speeches. We need to move beyond this mode of analysis by merging Hermogenean focus on the "complete argument" with Theonian focus on the "complete situation." Hermogenes' interest in elaborating the chreia into a complete argument is the result of thinking back from the standard constituents of a speech to anecdotes that bring the life of a culture into a speech. On the basis of information from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* at the beginning of the first century BCE, we can see that rhetoricians considered the major constituents of a complete argument in a speech to be: thesis, rationale, contrary, analogy, example, supportive citation, and exhortative conclusion (Hock and O'Neil: 177; Mack and Robbins: 51-63). It has been remarkable to find many "complete arguments" both in epistolary and narrative literature in the New Testament (Mack 1990).

In contrast to Hermogenes, who wrote toward the chreia chapter and chreia elaboration as the highpoint of his rhetorical analysis of the anecdotal tradition, Theon placed the chreia chapter first and wrote toward the narrative as the bearer of the "complete situation." The reason for Theon's strategy is twofold. First, he had a deep interest in historiographical writing and found substantive rhetorical resources in it. Second, he had reflected on the relation of the anecdotes he found in all kinds of literature in antiquity to the creation of speeches that move people to indict or acquit, to act in one way rather than another, or to engage in praise or censure on the basis of presupposed values in the culture. Interpreters of the Gospels and Acts must merge insights from the Theonian approach with insights from the Hermogenean approach to make new advances in rhetorical analysis and interpretation of the Gospels and Acts. Distinctions between the chreia, the fable, and the narrative were not as important to the ancient rhetoricians as the insight that exercises with the entire anecdotal tradition were, as Theon says, "the foundation stones for every form of writing" (II.139-40 [Butts]), including historiography.

Major advances in analysis and interpretation of the Gospels and Acts can emerge if interpreters use insights from Theon's chapter on narrative. Theon uses the Greek terms *διήγησις* and *διήγημα* interchangeably for narrative as he describes how grammarians should use short narratives in the training of young people during the grammatical phase prior to the rhetorical phase of education. Theon begins with a definition of narrative (*διήγημα*) as "an explanatory account of matters which have occurred or as if they have occurred" (V.2-3 [Butts]). Then he lists six elements (*στοιχεῖα*) of narrative: character (*πρόσωπον*); act (*πράγμα*); place (*τόπος*); time (*χρόνος*); manner (*τρόπος*); and cause or reason (*αἰτία*) (V.5-38, 477-81 [Butts]; cf. Quintilian IV.2.2-3). Here the reader sees the constituents of the "complete situation." Theon recognizes that some accounts of situations are not complete. As he says:

Since these are the main elements of which the complete narrative (*ἡ τελεία διήγησις*) is comprised, it is composed from all of them plus what is related to

them. The narrative which lacks one of these elements is incomplete (*ἐλλιπής*) (Theon V.8–11 [Butts]).

This means that the most satisfactory historiographical account will create a series of complete situations as contexts for complete arguments. If we detect movement toward this goal in Luke and Acts, we will be in a position to assess their rhetorical qualities as historiographical writing.

Of special importance for interpretation of New Testament narrative is Theon's placement of character (*πρόσωπον*) before act, place, time, manner, and cause in his discussion of narrative. Theon, like other rhetoricians in Late Antiquity, placed persons at the center of analysis and interpretation of narrative. The centrality of people in narrative signals the "biographical" orientation of narrative during this period of Mediterranean antiquity. In addition to race, gender, training, disposition, age, and fortune, Theon includes motive, action, speech, death, and what is after death as central to narrative (V.12–14 [Butts]). The reader will recognize that this description gives narrative a close affinity with chreia. Central to both chreia and narrative are individual people. The reader also will recognize that these attributes are central to the study of christology, discipleship, soteriology, and eschatology in New Testament narratives. The depictions of Jesus' motives, actions, speech, death, and resurrection are the inner fabric of the Gospels, and depictions of the motives, actions, speech, and death of followers of Jesus are the inner fabric of the Acts of the Apostles.

The second most important attribute of narrative for Theon is "act" (*πράγμα*). Theon's definition of a chreia, in contrast to a narrative, includes either a statement (*ἀπόφαισις*) or an action (*πράξις*) by a specific person, or a combination of both (Theon III.22–84 [Butts]). A narrative, in contrast, focuses on actions. Within the inner nature of act, Theon includes not only the degree to which an act is important, dangerous, possible, easy, and necessary but whether it is advantageous or disadvantageous, just or unjust, or honorable or dishonorable (V.15–18 [Butts]). The reader will recognize these categories as the goals of the three basic types of rhetoric. The purpose of deliberative rhetoric is to move people toward action that is advantageous or beneficial (*σύμφερρον*) and to dissuade them from action that is disadvantageous or detrimental (*ἀσύμφερρον*). The purpose of judicial rhetoric is to acquit those who are just (*δίκαιον*) and to indict and punish those who are unjust (*ἄδικον*). The purpose of epideictic rhetoric is to praise that which is honorable (*ἔνδοξον*) and to censure that which is dishonorable (*ἄδοξον*). Thus, actions in narrative, according to Theon, produce deliberative, judicial, or epideictic rhetorical discourse.

Beyond character and act are place, time, manner, and cause or reason (*αἰτία*). Certainly one would expect place, time, and manner to be internal ingredients in narrative. But we also consider an account of the cause of the event to be central to historiography. In the context of a rhetorical discussion, it is important to notice that the presentation of a cause or reason evokes a rhetorical syllogism, commonly called an enthymeme. In Hermogenes' elaboration of the chreia, presentation of the cause or reason (*αἰτία*) creates the context for the unfolding of a complete argument (Mack in Mack and Robbins: 51–8). Likewise, the presentation of the cause or reason for the actions (*αἰτία τῶν πράξεων*) in narrative evokes a logical environment for argumentation in historiography. Theon lists the following kinds of reasons within a complete narrative:

whether it has occurred for the sake of acquiring benefits, or for removing evil; or because of friendship, or because of a wife, or for the sake of children, or because of emotions (love, hate, envy, pity, drunkenness, and passions similar to these) (Theon V.35–8 [Butts]).

The reference to acquiring benefits reminds one of the rationale in the elaboration of a theme into a complete argument with seven parts in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* IV.xliii.57:

since it is from our country that we receive all our advantages, no disadvantage incurred on her behalf is to be regarded as severe.

Likewise, the reference to removing evil reminds one of the rationale in the example of the complete argument in *Rhetorica ad Herennium* II.xix.28:

Indeed he wished to rid himself of his bitterest enemy, from whom, with good cause, he feared extreme danger to himself.

The cause or reason internal to a complete account of a situation evokes a syllogistic environment that can call forth a complete argument. Rhetorical analysis of the Gospels and Acts, then, should be attentive to the interaction between situation and argument. Where complete situations are a context for complete arguments, New Testament narrative has reached a level of rhetorical completeness that would function well in Mediterranean society and culture.

#### Anecdotal Tradition in Luke and Acts

With this information about chreia and narrative, let us now turn to Luke and Acts. To write well in antiquity, one had to manipulate anecdotal tradition skillfully — which meant chreiai, fables, and narratives. This was a skill the writer of the Gospels and Acts possessed. Luke manipulates the anecdotal tradition exceptionally well. Certain anecdotes in Luke contain an exceptionally economical use of words to make them brief. The cleansing of the temple is a prime example. With twenty-five Greek words, Luke 19.45–6 presents Jesus' action in the temple in the form of a chreia:

And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer'; but you have made it a den of robbers."

Matthew 21.12–13 uses twenty more Greek words than Luke to present the scene, and Mark 11.15–17 uses thirty-six more words. In contrast to the *καί* paratactic construction in Matthew and Mark, the Lukan construction skillfully uses participles to create the kind of abbreviated chreia Theon displays in his *Progymnasmata* (see Hock and O'Neil: 1–7, 24, *et passim*).<sup>1</sup> Skillful chreia composition also exists in the Acts of the Apostles, though there are only a few chreiai in it. One chreia occurs in Acts 1.4–5:

And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

The text of the Gospel of Luke exhibits the same efficiency with fable-parable tradition. Luke 8.5–8 recounts the parable of the sower with seventy-six Greek words, in contrast to

<sup>1</sup>Also see Luke 3.10–11; 3.12–13; 3.14; 6.5D; 8.19–20; 9.49–50; 13.22–25. See discussion in Robbins 1988.

Matthew 13.3b-9, which uses ninety-one words, and Mark 4.3-9, which uses one hundred four. In addition, Luke 11.24-26 uses only fifty-five Greek words to present the fable of the unclean spirit who exits and returns with seven additional spirits, and Luke 15.8-9 uses only thirty-nine Greek words to recount the story of the woman who lost and then found one of ten drachmas. Truly, Lukan text exhibits excellent skill at crafting brief chreiai and fables.

Lukan text also contains well-crafted short narratives. An excellent narrative exists in Acts 11.27-30:

Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world; and this took place in the days of Claudius. And the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea; and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Another excellent narrative exists in Acts 12.20-23:

Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; and they came to him in a body, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and made an oration to them. And the people shouted, "The voice of a god, and not of man!" Immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he did not give God the glory; and he was eaten by worms and died.

Theon would distinguish between these two types of narrative. The first narrative fits the category of "event narrative" (*πρατικὸν πρᾶγμα*), which is an account of an occurrence that has political or historical significance (V.26-33, 46-59 [Butts]). The second narrative is a "mythical narrative" (*μυθικὸν πρᾶγμα*), which is a story that includes gods, heroes, or other mythical figures (V.20-5, 39-45 [Butts]). In both instances, Lukan text exhibits skill with composition of brief narratives.

A writer also needed to acquire the skills to expand an anecdote efficiently. An excellent display of Lukan skill in expansion is Luke 8.42b-34: the Woman with a Hemorrhage. With one hundred fourteen words, the Lukan text presents action of Jesus, action of the crowd, description and action of the woman, the woman's healing, Jesus' response, Peter's response, Jesus' counter-response, the woman's action and response, and Jesus' final response. The Markan text uses forty-eight more Greek words to recount the same episode with similar action in it (Robbins 1987). At the same time, the Lukan text contains quite long, well-crafted fable-parables, like the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31), which contains two hundred forty-four Greek words, and the Prodigal Son (Luke 15.4-32), which contains three hundred ninety Greek words.

The writer of Luke and Acts, then, contains a high level of skill at manipulating anecdotal tradition. The text shows an excellent facility with participles and infinitives that makes it possible to write short anecdotes efficiently and it shows an ability to write long anecdotes with an economical use of words. Such an ability to manipulate chreiai, fables, and narratives is fundamental to writing good historiography, and the writer of Luke and Acts shows this ability very well.

### Narrative Introductions to Elaborated Speech in the Gospel of Luke

The search to understand the rhetorical relation of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles reveals a related pattern of creating narrative introductions for rhetorical elaborations. The point is that Lukan composition moves "chreia elaboration" towards "narrative elaboration" by creating narrative introductions that articulate topics for which the subsequent elaboration creates amplified argumentation. Since the elaborations in the Gospel of Luke use a series of anecdotal traditions — contraries, analogies, examples, and supportive citations — they are properly called "progymnastic elaborations" (Robbins 1993a). In Acts, many narratives exhibit the nature of progymnastic composition. Yet, many of the speeches in the Acts of the Apostles exhibit characteristics of more advanced stages of rhetorical elaboration. This is analogous to the presence of progymnastic elaborations in certain portions of Plutarch's writings (Robbins 1991b) and rhetorical elaborations that exhibit more advanced stages in other portions (cf. Aune 1978).

To set the stage for analysis of Luke and Acts, it may be helpful to be clearer about the nature of a narrative. As we saw above, Theon emphasizes act rather than speech in a narrative. Nevertheless, speech may be present in a narrative. An example exists in Herodotus 1.31, to which Theon refers in II.28-9 (Butts). The narrative is as follows:

There was a feast of Hera at hand for the Argives, and their mother needs must ride to the temple; but the oxen did not come from the fields at the right moment. The young men [Cleobis and Biton], being pressed by lack of time, harnessed themselves beneath the yoke and pulled the wagon with their mother riding on it; forty-five stades they completed on their journey and arrived at the temple. When they had done that and had been seen by all the assembly, there came upon them the best end of a life, and in them the god showed thoroughly how much better it is for a man to be dead than to be alive. For the Argive men came and stood around the young men, congratulating them on their strength, and the women congratulated the mother on the fine sons she had; and the mother, in her great joy at what was said and done, stood right in front of the statue and there prayed for Cleobis and Biton, her own sons, who had honored her so signally, that the goddess should give them whatsoever is best for a man to win. After that prayer the young men sacrificed and banqueted and laid them down to sleep in the temple where they were; they never rose more, but that was the end in which they were held. The Argives made statues of them and dedicated them at Delphi, as of two men who were the best of all.

Internal to the narrative is response of various people to the action performed in it. In this story in Herodotus, the responses emerge in the form of indirect quotation. It is only a small step, however, to a formulation of these statements in direct speech, since the narration indicates the content of the responses. The Argive men congratulate the two sons "on their strength," the women congratulate the mother "on the fine sons she had," and the mother prays for Cleobis and Biton "that the goddess should give them whatsoever is best for a man to win." We will see below that the narration in Luke and Acts uses direct quotation more often than it uses indirect quotation.

Equipped with this insight into narratives, let us turn to the Gospel of Luke, which contains a number of sections that various interpreters have identified during the last thirty-five years as rhetorical elaborations (cf. Braun: 148-51):

- (a) Luke 5.27-39 (Braun: 149)
- (b) Luke 7.18-35 (Cameron 1990)
- (c) Luke 7.36-50 (Mack in Mack and Robbins: 100-4)
- (d) Luke 11.14-36 (Robbins in Mack and Robbins: 185-91)
- (e) Luke 11.37-54 (Gowler 1993)
- (f) Luke 12.13-21 (Braun: 148; Farmer: 307-10)
- (g) Luke 13.1-9 (Braun: 148; Farmer: 305-6)
- (h) Luke 14.1-24 (Braun: 158-75)
- (i) Luke 15.1-32 (Braun: 148; Farmer: 305-6)
- (j) Luke 16.14-15, 19-31 (Braun: 148; Farmer 305-6)
- (k) Luke 19.1-27 (Braun: 148-50).

These elaborations are properly termed "progymnastic elaborations," since they unfold as brief units of material in a sequence, like the chreia elaboration in Hermogenes' *Progymnasmata* (Robbins 1993a). As we attempt to understand the relation between the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, it is informative to look carefully at the introductions to these elaborations. Analysis of the introductions to these elaborations reveals that in some instances the narration is so fully developed that it fulfills Theon's criteria for a "complete narrative." Where this is the case, the elaborations approach the characteristics of a "narrative" elaboration rather than a "chreia" elaboration. These introductions, then, are an initial place to see the nature of the Gospel of Luke as a narrative (*διήγησις*: Luke 1.1). Narrative introductions to sections of material are an important characteristic, in turn, of historiography.

There is not space here to analyze character, act, place, time, manner, and cause in each of these introductions. Therefore, the discussion will focus on selected instances and will display a special characteristic of introductory narratives that exists both in Luke and in Acts. As Lukan narratives establish a context for elaborated speech, they introduce topics through thought or speech of people in the setting that become major topics in the elaborated speech. In most instances, though not all, the Lukan text presents this thought or speech in the form of direct quotation. The thought or speech in the narrative introduction then calls forth the elaborated speech of the main character in the unit.

Luke 7.36-9, the Anointing of Jesus, is an excellent example:

One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and took his place at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisees's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."

Luke 7.40-50 elaborates the issues raised by this narrative, as Burton Mack has shown (Mack and Robbins: 100-4). Mack displays the elaboration under the following argumentative topics: introduction, analogy, example, rationale and contrary, conclusion, and judgment. For our discussion here, it is important to look carefully at the opening narrative, which Mack properly designates a *narratio* (*διήγημα/διήγησις*). In accord with

Theon's criteria for a narrative, it focuses on a person (Jesus), an action (anointing by a woman), a place (Pharisee's house), a time (when a Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him), the manner (the woman came up from behind Jesus, wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them; at which the Pharisee murmured), and the reason (the woman was a sinner). The amount of detail in the narrative introduction exhibits well the nature of Lukan composition. The elaboration of Jesus' speech in response to the situation displays Lukan skill with anecdotal tradition. Jesus tells the Pharisee a fable-parable about two debtors in 7.41-2. The dialogue that emerges creates the setting for paraphrasing the action of the woman in the initial narrative (7.44-5), introducing a contrary (7.46), and creating a maxim ("One who is forgiven little, loves little"). The unit displays classic Lukan composition. In truth, the unit is a "narrative" elaboration rather than a "chreia" elaboration.

Another excellent example is Luke 11.14-36, the Beelzebul controversy. The narrative introduction to this elaboration is as follows:

Now he was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marveled. But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons"; while others, to test him, sought from him a sign from heaven.

Luke 11.17-36 elaborates the issues raised by the narrative (Robbins in Mack and Robbins: 185-91; cf. Robbins 1991a). In this instance, the material topics in the narrative (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* I.4-8; Kennedy 1984: 20) establish the overarching framework for the elaboration, into which argumentative topics are embedded. The material topics in the narrative introduction are as follows:

Situation

Now he was casting out a demon that was dumb;

Topic: Exit

when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke,

Topic: Praise

and the crowds marveled.

Topic: Censure

But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons";

Topic: Test

while others, to test him, sought from him a sign from heaven (Mack and Robbins: 185).

In this instance, the details in the narrative introduction are less developed concerning place, time, and manner. It is noticeable, however, that the narrative introduces the person Jesus with a decisive act (exorcising a demon from a man who is dumb). Like the introduction to the story of the anointing, the focus is on the response of the people in the setting once the nature of Jesus' action has been presented. The people marveled at Jesus' exorcism, but some of them said he performed it by Beelzebul and others sought from him a sign from heaven. As the elaboration unfolds, it becomes clear that the topics in the introduction provide the context for elaborating "from the parts" of the narrative (Theon III.276-82; Hock and O'Neil: 107; Robbins 1993b: ix-xvi). The outline of the elaboration of Jesus' speech then emerges as follows:

Topic: Censure  
 Analogy  
 Counterdefinition (Contrary)  
 Analogy  
 Inference  
 Topic: Exit  
 Fable  
 Topic: Praise  
 Chreia with praise  
 Topic: Test  
 Thesis  
 Rationale  
 Example  
 Analogy  
 Contrary with application  
 Concluding Exhortation (Mack and Robbins: 186-9)

The point of displaying this is twofold. First, material topics rather than argumentative topics may establish the primary framework for a rhetorical elaboration. Because Theon talks about elaborating the chreia "from the parts" of the chreia, it seems appropriate to call this Theonian elaboration. Hermogenean elaboration, in contrast, follows the procedures of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* in unfolding the elaboration on the basis of the argumentative topics of the complete argument. The elaboration of Jesus' speech in the Lukan version of the Beelzebul Controversy unfolds on the basis of topics in the parts of the introductory narrative. In turn, the elaboration embeds the argumentative topics of a complete argument in the structure that emerges from elaborating the parts (censure, exit, praise, test). Second, the complexity of this elaboration exhibits well the nature of more developed rhetorical elaboration in Mediterranean literature. The "progymnastic" exercises available to us in Theon and Hermogenes were meant to function simply as "beginnings" for the purpose of learning how to manipulate anecdotal tradition toward the goals of rhetorical speaking and writing. Luke 11.14-36 displays both the rudiments of elaboration, using progymnastic techniques of arguing from the parts and from the argumentative topics of the complete argument, and some of the more complex moves elaboration may contain when its writer has skillfully performed a historiographical composition.

One more unit will occupy our attention briefly before we turn to a summary of narrative introductions in Luke and to narrative introductions in Acts. Willi Braun has performed an outstanding analysis of Luke's account of the Great Banquet in Luke 14.1-24 (Braun 1995). In his analysis, he outlines the elaboration on the basis of the argumentative topics of the complete argument. This produces the following outline:

Setting  
 Challenge and Question  
 Response  
 (1) Introduction  
 (2) Chreia  
 (3) Rationale

Setting  
 (5) Analogy  
 (7,4) Judgment and Contrary  
 (5) Analogy  
 Challenge/Question  
 (6) Example  
 (8) Conclusion (Braun: 162-4)

The numbers in the outline represent the sequence of argumentative topics in Hermogenes' elaboration of the chreia. The headings of setting, challenge, and question signal the possibility of a narrative-like beginning, and the additional headings of setting and challenge/question signal the kind of complexity an interpreter encounters in historiographical writing. Braun mentions in footnote 42 on page 158 that:

V. Robbins ... has challenged the claim that the pattern of argumentation in Luke 14 is best exposed with reference to the Hermogenean *ἐργασία*, an elaboration pattern that is based on the thesis/proofs logic of the 'complete argument' .... He suggests that Luke 14 is better understood as a Theonian *chreia* 'argument' (*ἐπιχείρημα* or *ἐπιχειρήσις* rather than *ἐργασία*, 'elaboration', ('working out'), a manner of dialectically expanding upon (*αὐξήσις*) the parts of a *chreia* that is guided by epideictic interests as its 'major impulse'."

This challenge occurred when my own analysis suggested that the overarching structure of the elaboration was addressing material topics in the introduction. For me, the parts of the introduction unfold as follows:

Topic: Sabbath  
 One sabbath  
 Topic: Guest  
 when he went  
 Topic: Eat Bread  
 to eat bread  
 Topic: Host  
 at the house of a ruler who belonged to the Pharisees, they were watching him.

This brief narrative introduction sets the stage for the chreia in Luke 14.2-4, which features both speech and action on behalf of Jesus in Luke 14.2-4. The end result of Luke 14.1-4 is a merger of narrative composition with chreia composition. The initial narrative sentence introduces four major material topics, and the remaining sentences create a dramatic situation for the elaboration that follows. Through Braun's skillful research and interpretation, we know the cultural "thickness" of these opening verses. Jesus' healing of the man with dropsy in the Pharisee's house on the sabbath enacts a healing of insatiable thirst and hunger which resonates symbolically with the Lukan depiction of Pharisees as filled with "*ἀρπαγή* (11.39 [Q], 'exortion'), *πλεονεξία* (12.15, 'greed') and *φιλαργυρία* (16.14, 'love of money'; cf. 16.13, *δουλεύειν μοιωνῶ*)" (Braun 1995: 39). In the end, this chreia plus the opening verse introduces a "complete situation" which the elaboration addresses in detail.

For a display of the elaboration, I prefer the following outline:

- Topic: Sabbath
  - 14.5 Rationale
  - 14.6 Commentary
- Topic: Guest
  - 14.7–10 Contrary
  - 14.11 Judgment
- Topic: Host
  - 14.12–13 Contrary
  - 14.14 Rationale
- Topic: Eating Bread
  - 14.15 Situation
  - 14.16–23 Example
  - 14.24 Concluding Rationale

It appears to me that the topics that provide the overall structure for the elaboration are the four material topics displayed in this outline. This means that each unit does not simply recycle the meaning of the initial unit, as in Hermogenean elaboration (see Mack and Robbins: 57–63), but each unit provides new insight on an additional part of the opening scene. This procedure is more natural to epideictic rhetoric than judicial or deliberative rhetoric (Kennedy 1984: 78–79). Step by step, the elaboration unfolds on the basis of a sequence of material topics. The interesting thing about this unit, as Braun has shown so well, is that it also contains the internal ingredients of a complete argument. The same thing, however, applies to the Lukan version of the Beelzebul controversy. By the time the elaboration is complete, the text has encountered the hearer or reader with all the argumentative topics necessary to make a complete argument in the context of the material topics the situation raises for discussion.

There is not space here to analyze the remaining elaborations listed above. Each in its own way exhibits the dynamics of a narrative introduction which establishes a context for dynamic interaction between material and argumentative topics as the elaboration unfolds. It is important for us, rather, to move on to a discussion of narrative introduction and elaboration of speech in the Acts of the Apostles.

#### Narrative Introductions to Speeches in Acts

It is remarkable how the narrative introductions to major speeches in Acts exhibit compositional characteristics similar to the narrative introductions to elaborations in the Gospel of Luke. For purposes of displaying the similarity, the narrative introductions to five of the speeches are especially interesting:

- (a) Acts 6.18–7.60: Stephen
- (b) Acts 17.16–34: Paul at Athens
- (c) Acts 21.27–22.29: Paul arrested in the Temple
- (d) Acts 24.1–23: Paul before Felix
- (e) Acts 25.13–26.32: Paul before Agrippa and Berenice

Overall, the narrative introductions in Acts contain greater amplification than in the Gospel of Luke. Thus, in some instances the direct speech is much longer than in Luke.

Acts 6.18–7.70, which features Stephen's speech and death, exhibits Lukan elaboration of narrative and speech exceptionally well. Todd C. Penner, in an essay in this

volume, shows how the initial narrative (6.8–15) introduces the topics the subsequent speech and narration elaborate. For our purposes here, it will be helpful to observe the nature of Acts 6.8–15 as a "complete narrative." Acts 6.8 begins by referring specifically to the character (*πρόσωπον*) Stephen, who, "full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people." The reader knows that the place (*τόπος*) is Jerusalem (6.7) and the time (*χρόνος*) is after the experience of Pentecost and a sequence of encounters with the Jerusalem authorities. Acts 6.9–13 presents the act (*πράγμα*) of people who belonged to diaspora synagogues and the manner (*τρόπος*) in which they did what they did: they stood up and argued with Stephen; they secretly convinced people to speak against Stephen; they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes who confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council; and they set up false witnesses against him. Acts 6.10 describes the reason: "they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke." In Theon's terms, this is a "complete" narrative (IV.8–11 [Butts]).

A special characteristic of Lukan style, as we observed above, is to introduce direct speech into a narrative introduction. Thus, two sayings attributed to people engaged in the action occur in the context of the opening narrational prose:

- (a) Then they [those who belonged to the diaspora synagogues] secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God."
- (b) And they set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us."

The presence of these two sayings makes this unit analogous to narrative introductions in the Gospel of Luke where speech of one or more people other than Jesus moves the narration toward a "complete narrative." Often the statements of the people introduce key topics that are elaborated by the speech of the main character. Sometimes the statements provide the reason for the event to unfold as it does. Stephen's speech (7.1–53) is a response to this situation, and the concluding narration explains the people's response to his speech. See Penner's essay in this volume for further comments on this unit.

The narrative introductions to four other major speeches in Acts also reveal this basic Lukan approach to rhetorical elaboration. Again, direct speech in these narrative introductions are especially interesting in relation to the material topics the speech of the main character addresses. The following list exhibits these sayings:

- (b) Acts 17.17–20: And some [Epicurean and Stoic philosophers] said, "What would this babbler say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities" — because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. And they took hold of him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you present? For you bring some strange things to our ears; we wish to know therefore what these things mean."
- (c) Acts 21.27–28, 36: the Jews from Asia ... cried out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching men everywhere against the people and the law and this place; moreover he also brought Greeks into the temple, and he has defiled this holy place." ... the mob of the people followed, crying, "Away with him!"



(d) Acts 24:2-9: " ... we have found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him about everything of which we accuse him." The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all this was so.

(e) Acts 25.14-21: Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, " ... When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed; but they had certain points of dispute with him about their own superstition and about one Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive...."

In each instance, the subsequent speech by Peter, Stephen, or Paul, plus the conclusion, elaborate topics introduced by the narrative introduction. We also know, from previous and ongoing analyses of the speeches in these contexts that a significantly elaborated speech then occurs in the context, followed by a significant conclusion. For further analysis of the speeches that emerge in the context of these narrative introductions, see the essays in this volume by Mark D. Given, H. Stephen Brown, and Frank L. Crouch.

#### Conclusion

A major goal of this essay has been to display rhetorical dimensions of narrative as they appear in the writings of rhetoricians contemporary with the Gospels and Acts. At the outset, one of the discoveries was that rhetoricians saw extensive anecdotal traditions in historiographical writings. For Theon, chreiai, fables, and narratives are major constituents of the all forms of writing in antiquity, so he wrote a chapter on each after the two introductory chapters to his *Progymnasmata*. Building on this insight, our goal has been to take some initial steps in rhetorical analysis and interpretation of anecdotes in Luke and Acts to exhibit inner rhetorical dimensions of historiographical composition as these two writings display it. One result of the analysis and interpretation has been the discovery of a similar procedure of narrative elaboration in Luke and Acts. Both in Luke and Acts, a narrative introduction creates a complete situation which contains material topics that the main character addresses in elaborated speech. There has not been space or time to perform any kind of comprehensive analysis in this essay. Rather, the mode has been to present some beginning insights with the hope that others will join in the task of detailed rhetorical analysis throughout Luke and Acts.

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Some Observations about Mysticism and the Spread of Notions of Life After Death in Hebrew Thought

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The Bible remains an enigma to the study of mysticism. Critical notions of mysticism in the West often begin with the Christian definition that mysticism is the knowledge of God from experience spliced together with some attention to a discipline to transform consciousness. While the Hebrews certainly found God in their lives, nothing approaching the kinds of disciplines we normally associate with both the Jewish and Christian versions of mysticism has come down to us in biblical texts. Even when we begin from the notion that each mysticism is unique and needs to be understood in its own terms before any comparative observations can be offered, we are still left with the dearth of evidence concerning the biblical period.<sup>1</sup> One problem in Hebrew thought is to trace the beginnings of the notion of ecstatic experience before specific techniques have been recorded. Another problem is that our evidence seems at first anomalous.<sup>2</sup> What is particularly interesting in Hebrew thought is the close connection between the rise of orthodox notions of a heavenly afterlife and the heavenly ascent to attain it after traditional prophecy was widely believed to have ceased. In this paper, I survey the evidence of life after death broadly in biblical thought in order to show that notions of resurrection in Hellenistic times form the basis of Jewish mysticism and the definitive innovations of Christianity.

The earliest parts of the Bible do not concern any life after death worth having; the Bible at times even seems deliberately to avoid talking about it. Rather than discuss the notion, as was quite common in the literature of Israel's neighbors, the advice of the Bible is curt and practical "Teach us to number our days that we may gain a wise heart" (Psalm 90:12). This life with its inevitable death is what the Bible wants to emphasize.

Any reader who systematically surveys the oldest sections of the biblical text becomes impressed with how the Bible studiously avoids the concept of life after death. The reasons for this silence must be supposed and cannot be demonstrated but one sensible guess would be an editorial enmity for foreign cults. We know well that the Bible normally turns the objects of veneration in other neighboring countries into the material objects of God's creation. Thus the heavens of Hebrew life are not gods but the handiwork of God. At the same time, we have clear evidence that the Israelite populace did venerate these objects and were opposed by prophet and priest.

<sup>1</sup> See the frequently cited preface to the collection of essays edited by Steven Katz, *Mysticism and Religious Traditions* (New York: Oxford, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> For more on this interesting subject, see David E. Aune *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).